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**DELHI-NCR'S FIRST MULTIMODAL ACTIVE MEMORY AND DEMENTIA CENTRE LAUNCHED IN GURGAON**



**RESERVE BANK OF INDIA REVIEWS FLOW OF CREDIT TO MSME SECTOR**



**PAKISTAN CRICKET BOARD CHIEF ZAKA ASHRAF CALLS INDIA AN 'ENEMY COUNTRY'.**

## Kejriwal reaffirms AAP's commitment to INDIA bloc amid Punjab controversy

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday reaffirmed the AAP's unwavering commitment to the INDIA opposition bloc, despite the ongoing dispute between his party and the Congress in Punjab regarding the arrest of the latter's firebrand legislator Sukhpal Singh Khaira over drug-related charges.

Addressing reporters, Kejriwal, who had previously downplayed reports of internal conflicts within the bloc, aimed to ease tensions once more by stating: "AAP is firmly dedicated to INDIA, and we will not part ways with the INDIA alliance."

He also emphasised that his party remained steadfast in its fight against drug abuse.



"I've been informed about the Punjab Police's arrest of a Congress leader yesterday. While I lack specific details, you can obtain them from the police. Our commitment to eradicating drug addiction remains resolute. I won't comment on individual cases, but our goal is to combat this men-

ace," he said.

Earlier in the day, Congress leaders comprising state party chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring and Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa were stopped from meeting Khaira, who was arrested on Thursday, in police custody.

The Congress has accused the AAP government of doing "vendetta politics". In March 2021, the Enforcement Directorate carried out searches at eight locations linked to Khaira in Chandigarh, Punjab and Delhi in connection with drugs money laundering and a fake passport racket case.

The legislator from Bholath, Khaira had resigned from the AAP citing the 'dictatorial' attitude of Kejriwal.

## Kejriwal to PM Modi : Will you resign if nothing found in probe

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday asked the Prime Minister Narendra Modi that if nothing is found against him in the fresh inquiry initiated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the alleged corruption related to fraudulent renovation involving his residence, will he resign. He made the remarks a day after the CBI initiated a preliminary enquiry (PE) in connection with the alleged corruption related to alleged fraudulent renovation involving crores of rupees in Kejriwal's residence.

Speaking to the media here, a defiant Kejriwal hit back at the BJP government and said: "This is not for the first time. This shows that the Prime Minister is in panic mode. This is not

first inquiry. They have got 50 inquiries done. They have alleged me in liquor scam, bus scam, school scam and road scam. They had filed 33 cases against me." He said that they had inquired everything against me in the last eight years and they did not get anything.

"In the new inquiry too again they will find nothing. So what do you expect from the fourth pass king," he said in an apparent jibe at the Prime Minister.

Attacking the government, he said that they keep on playing inquiry game round the clock. "They don't work. They want to break me and should bow before them. This is not going to happen. Kejriwal will not bow down. No matter how many false cases they file, I will not bow down," Kejriwal said.

## India emerging as alternative supply source, says Hardeep Puri

**NEW DELHI:** As the global supply chains are realigning, India is emerging as an alternative supply source given its raw materials, low labour costs, growing manufacturing knowhow, and entrepreneurial ability, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Puri said on Friday.

Addressing the annual meeting of industry chamber PHDCCI, Puri said that with the transition witnessed by energy sector in recent years, India is simultaneously pursuing both traditional fuel exploration and energy transition.

The minister said that India aims to increase its net geographic area under exploration from 8 per cent (0.25 million square km) to 15 per cent (0.5 million sq. kms) by 2025. India is a global exporter of petroleum products, and boasts the fourth-largest refining capacity globally, he added. Referring to the

significant milestones achieved in biofuel revolution, he noted that the ethanol blending that has increased from 1.53 per cent in 2013-14 to 11 per cent in 2023.

About India's manufacturing aspirations, Puri said that the manufacturing sector currently comprises 17 per cent of the nation's GDP and over 27.3 million workers. The minister said that economic reforms and policies such as GST, IBC, asset monetisation, labour law reforms, PLI, National Infrastructure Pipeline, and Gati Shakti mission for multimodal connectivity, have fixed many structural deficits.



## BJP serves notice to 8 Kashmir based BJP leaders over anti-party activities

**NEW DELHI:** Eight Kashmir-based BJP leaders have been served notices by the party's disciplinary committee for their alleged involvement in anti-party activities. The leaders, including Sofi Yousuf, Altaf Thakur, Manzoor Bhat, Anwar Khan, Arif Raja, Ali Muhammad Mir, G M Mir, and Aasif Masoodi, have acknowledged receiving the notices. Sunil Sethi, the Chairman of the disciplinary committee, confirmed the issuance of the notices and stated that it has been observed that these leaders are engaged in anti-party activities.

## Diplomatic Tensions Worry Punjab Amid Visa Suspension for Canada

CHHAVI BHATIA  
New Delhi

Diplomatic tensions between India and Canada have unleashed a wave of unease, particularly among students aspiring to study in Canada. The recent suspension of visa services for Canadians by India, effective September 21, has left many eagerly awaiting their visas in a state of anxiety.

Harvinder Brar, an immigration consultant based in Bathinda, voiced the collective apprehension gripping students and their families. He stated, "Today, over a dozen parents visited me to know about the impact of the tension between the two nations. They are worried that visas will be rejected. As of now, there's nothing much to worry about for students. However, if Canada retaliates and issues restrictions



on visas, then there would be a huge impact, especially on students in Punjab."

For parents whose children are already pursuing studies in Canada, there is a growing concern about their safety in the midst of reports of gang violence in the country. The situation has prompted India to issue an advisory urging Indian nationals in Canada, including students, to exercise utmost caution while traveling within the nation. Tara Chand whose daughter is in Canada said, "I was planning to visit her but if visa restrictions are put in place it's going to be tough. I am worried about my daughter as I don't know how things will unfold in the days to come." In response to the escalating situation, political leaders have made appeals for resolution. Sukhbir

## Union Home Minister Amit Shah chairs 31st meeting of the NZCouncil at Amritsar

JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah chaired the 31st meeting of the Northern Zonal Council at Amritsar, Punjab, today. Chief Ministers of Punjab, Haryana & Himachal Pradesh, Lt. Governors of Delhi, Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh, Administrator of Chandigarh, Senior Ministers from member States, Union Home Secretary, Secretary, Inter State Council Secretariat, Chief Secretaries from the member States in the Northern Zone and other senior officers from the States and UTs and Central Ministries & Departments participated in the meeting.

In an official release issued here, Amit Shah said that in the last 5 years, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the role of zonal councils has changed from advisory na-



ture to action platforms. He said that Northern Zonal Council has an important place from the point of view of development and security of the country, with 21% of the country's land and 13% of the population, more than 35% of the food grains are produced in the Northern region. Shri Shah said that the majority of personnel in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Army, guarding the country's borders, come from the states and Union Territories in the Northern Zonal Council.

Union Home Minister said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the government has been successful in cracking down on narcotics and terrorism. He said that the Modi government is committed towards strengthening the security system on the border, soon anti-drone system will be deployed on our country's borders.

## 111 terrorists active in J&K, 71 of them foreigners

FW DESK

A total of 31 terrorists have been killed in the Kashmir Valley so far this year through a series of successful joint operations involving the Army, Police, and paramilitary forces, according to Jammu and Kashmir Police.

Official sources reported that, as of September 26, a total of 47 terrorists have been eliminated by security forces in the J&K Union Territory. These statistics include 38 foreign terrorists and nine local militants.

In 2022, a total of 187 terrorists were neutralized, comprising 57 foreign and 130 local insurgents.

The data further reveals that from January 1 to September 26, 204 terrorists were apprehended. Presently, Jammu and Kashmir has 111 active terrorists, with 71 being foreign and 40 local combatants, marking a significant decrease from the 137 active terrorists recorded the previous year.

## SGPC executive passes special resolution on India-Canada issue

STATEMENT OF PRIME MINISTER IS NOT CONSIDERED COMMON IN PARLIAMENT OF ANY COUNTRY: SGPC

**AMRITSAR:** The executive meeting of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) held on September 25, expressed concern over the allegations levelled by the Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, in the Parliament of Canada, of the involvement of officials of Indian agencies in the murder case of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a resident Sikh there.

In a special resolution passed in the executive meeting presided over by the SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhami, it has been said that the statement given by the Prime Minister in the Parli-



ment of any country is not understood as common, rather considered to be fact-based within the scope of the dignity of the concerned country's constitution. Everything said by the Prime Minister in the Parliament cannot be rejected easily. The truth of the alle-

gations made by the Prime Minister of Canada against the Indian agencies should be brought to the light of the people through a sincere approach by both the countries by going beyond politics. If this case is suppressed only because of politics, it will be considered as injustice to human rights.

The resolution further strongly condemned the hate propaganda being spread against Sikhs and Punjab out of this entire phenomenon on the mainstream media and social media platforms openly. It is said that the India-Canada issue has been deliberately focused by a large part of the media only on character assassination of Sikhs. Through the resolution, the SGPC executive demanded from the Government of India to take this issue seriously and take action against those who tarnish the image of Sikhs.

## Sitting Congress MLA arrested in AAP-ruled Punjab



**FW DESK Chandigarh**

In an early morning swoop, Punjab police on arrested suiting Punjab Congress MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira on Thursday from his Chandigarh residence in an old drugs case.

Khaira had been booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in 2015 at police station Jalalabad in Fazilka district of Punjab. As the police raided his residence, Khaira went live on Facebook alleging his arrest was politically motivated. He is seen raising slogans denouncing Punjab police in a video clip shared on social media platform X, formerly Twitter.

The firebrand leader had been elected as the ruling AAP MLA from Bholath assembly constitu-

## Congress tears into Modi's lies on women reservation

KAVITA SHARMA  
New Delhi

Congress party tore into the lies of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for alleging in Madhya Pradesh that the party (Congress) was against women's reservation.

Congress spokesperson and Chairman of the Media and Publicity Pawan Khera described Modi as a certified liar for speaking such blunt lies. Narendra Modi is the only Prime Minister who has identified himself as a "certified liar", he alleged. Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here today, Pawan Khera referred to Modi's election speech in Bhopal, where he falsely accused Congress of being against the women reservation.

He said, nothing can be far from the truth than what the PM alleged. He pointed out, it was the Congress which had started the process of reservation for women in local bodies way back in 1989 when the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had brought a law for this. He said, while the bill was passed



yesterday the PM only spoke about the Congress and did not mention a single achievement of his party's government during last 18 years. He said, only if the PM starts speaking some truth he can become the 'star campaigner' of the Congress party.

Replying to a question about BJP releasing the list of candidates, Khera said, the BJP probably was trying to copy Congress in Karnataka as it released the list early, hoping that might fetch victory. He said no matter how early you release the list, field whoever you want to field, but what is going to happen is obvious. He said, it is being seen in all surveys by the television channels and BJP's own survey.

To another question on Enforcement Directorate (ED) raids on a Rajasthan Minister, Khera remarked, it would be surprising if there were no such raids. He said, the ED was conducting special recruitment's for five states, going to polls this year, for another three months. He said, they had made a joke of the CBI and ED.

## NIA court rejects bail plea of 10 Hurriyat activists

FW DESK

A special NIA court in Srinagar has denied bail to ten second-rung separatist leaders and activists. These individuals were arrested earlier this year in connection with a case involving the revival of the banned outfit JKLF.

The arrests took place on July 9 when the police detained 43 individuals at Habib Restaurant in Srinagar. Subsequently, 33 of them, including 32 adults and one juvenile, were released after furnishing bonds as no incriminating evidence was found against them. However, the remaining ten accused were arrested and have been facing legal proceedings.

The Additional Sessions Judge, designated under the NIA Act, Sandeep Gandotra, rejected the bail applications of these ten individuals, expressing concerns that their release at this stage could pose a risk to public and state interests. The accused had been charged under various sections of the UAP Act, but the court noted that it had not reached a stage where it could confirm the truthfulness of these allegations.

The court stressed that se-



rious allegations had been made against the accused, and objectionable and incriminating materials, including letters written by Yaseen Malik advocating for the freedom of Jammu and Kashmir and photographs promoting "Kashmir Banega Pakistan," were seized from some of them. Additionally, it was alleged that some of the accused had been in contact with terrorists across the border in Pakistan.

The court also mentioned that investigations were ongoing, with reports from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) pending, including CCTV and DVR footage from Habib Restaurant and electronic gadget analysis. One of the accused, Mohammad Yaseen Bhat, had a report spanning 55,000 pages related to his case.

As a result, the court ruled that the accused individuals were not entitled to bail at this stage. It cited section 43(D) proviso 5, suggesting that their release could jeopardize public and state interests.

The denied bail applications pertain to Firdous Ahmad Shah, Jahangir Ahmad Bhat, Saheel alias Suhail Ahmad Mir, Khurshid Ahmad Bhat, Syed Rehman Shams alias Shams-u-din Rehmani, Sajad Hussain Gul, Mohammad Rafiq Phaloo alias Salim Nanaji, Ghulam Hassan Parry alias Firdousi, Mohammed Yaseen Bhat, and Shabir Ahmad Dar.



## Delhi-NCR's first Multimodal Active Memory and Dementia Centre Launched in Gurgaon

FW CORRESPONDENT  
New Delhi

Delhi-NCR gets its first state of the art memory and dementia centre which was inaugurated on Sunday by Dr. N k Jain, Retd. Director Health, Government of Haryana in presence of Sunita Duggal, Member of Parliament, Sirsa.

This memory and dementia centre will play a big role in the lives of individuals living with dementia and their families and will address the pressing challenges of dementia. Doctors, trained psychologists and social workers will be at the forefront of addressing patients' needs, providing empathetic and informed assistance.

This Memory and Dementia Centre will provide a comprehensive expert-led cognitive assessment platform for the elderly. The initiative is aimed at



supporting families and persons with dementia through post-diagnostic care and support. While there is a huge dearth of memory clinics, psychiatrists, geriatricians and neurologists in our country, this centre is expected to help those with dementia and their families get timely diagnosis and expert advice for post diagnosis clinical management.

This Centre has been launched under "Bhul na Jana Campaign" which is said to

be India's biggest campaign on Dementia awareness and management, which recently launched free national dementia helpline number 9818687903.

Dr. Praveen Gupta, renowned neurologist under whose advisory role this centre will function said "Vata Vriksh Memory Centre will work for early diagnosis of Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's cases which remains under-diagnosed in elderly. The first part of the solu-

tion is to raise awareness and then make facilities accessible to more patients in need. This centre will offer comprehensive management of dementia including cognitive rehabilitation and caregiver support for persons with dementia. We are planning to open more such memory centres in future to manage dementia cases which is rising at a fast pace".

Speaking at the event as a guest of Honour, Dr. N k Jain, Retd. Director Health, Government of Haryana said, "I congratulate and thank team of doctors for the launch of the first memory clinic in Gurgaon. These services will be of great boon and benefit to people with memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's and their caregivers. Through this launch, we hope they feel a sense of comfort and support as they cope with their memory loss".

## Gangster-terrorist nexus: NIA detains several suspects in multi-state raid

NEW DELHI: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday detained several suspects during a multi-state crackdown on the terrorist-gangster-drug smuggler nexus, connected with 'listed terrorist' Arsh Dalla and many dreaded gangsters.

State Police forces provided the necessary support and assistance in the raids.

The NIA said that a total of 53 locations were raided during the day-long operation, which started early this morning. Pistols, ammunition, large numbers of digital devices and incriminating material, were seized during the raids that spanned the six States of Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, UP, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and the UT of Chandigarh.

Besides Dalla, others under the NIA scanner in these raids, were notorious gangsters Lawrence Bishnoi, Sukha Duneke, Harry Maur, Nander alias Lali, Kala Jathari, Deepak Tinu.

These were the seventh in the series of such crackdowns launched by NIA following the registration of five cases since August 2022, including the two new cases registered



against organised criminal gangs in July 2023. The cases relate to conspiracies of targeted killings, terror funding of pro-Khalistan outfits, extortion, etc by the gangsters, many of whom are lodged in various jails or are operating from various foreign countries, including Pakistan, Canada, Malaysia, Portugal and Australia.

"The focus of today's raids, aimed at dismantling the terror-gangster-drug smuggler nexus, was on weapon suppliers, financiers and logistics providers associated with various hardcore gangs and their operatives. These gangs are working with drug smugglers and terrorists based out of other countries, includ-

ing Pakistan, UAE, Canada, Portugal," said the official.

The NIA investigations have revealed that the conspiracies were being hatched in jails of different states and were being executed by an organised network of operatives based abroad. Notable among such conspiracies were the sensational killing of Maharashtra builder Sanjay Biyani, mining trader Mehal Singh and international Kabaddi player Sandeep Nangal Ambia in Punjab last year. "Many of the criminals and gangsters who were earlier leading gangs in India have fled abroad in recent years and are now pursuing their terror and violence related activities from there, as per NIA investigations.

India to become major technology and manufacturing hub for homeland security: Rajendra Agrawal

NEW DELHI: At the 8th India Homeland Security Summit on the theme Managing New Age Challenges - Opportunities for Safety and Security Industry, Summit-Excellence Awards, Rajendra Agrawal, Hon'ble Member of Parliament spoke about the efforts of the Indian government and various state governments to modernize and upgrade the police forces across the country.

"We should be ready for anything that comes up and updated in all forms", he said while addressing the conference organised by ASSOCHAM at New Delhi today. "Furthermore, technologies have a profound impact on homeland security". Smart policing, border security solutions, and innovation are opportunities for the homeland security sector and for India to become the next major manufacturing center.

SN Shrivastava, IPS (Retd), Former Commissioner, Delhi Police Member, Public Police NGO said cyber security glitches need to be addressed and adopting new tech is a viable option to minimize operational overheads. Cyber security concerns and attacks have a potential of affecting protection and production quality and safety of human lives. Dr. Vikram Singh, IPS (Retd), Former DGP, UP Police highlighted that we should be a generation ahead of our neighboring countries in terms of adopting new technologies and updation. This will lead to a success of law and enforcement. We have customized solutions related to artificial intelligence and machine learning, he added. Yashovardhan Azad, IPS (Retd), Former Special Director, Intelligence Bureau & Secretary, Security, Government of India shared that homeland security is an imperative concern and our rich history faces unique challenges that demands innovative solutions and collaboration from stakeholders.



## On World Lungs Day, Gurgaon Doctors made largest standing lungs shape to Spread awareness

FW CORRESPONDENT  
Gurugram

On the occasion of World Lungs day respiratory and chest physicians of Gurugram came together to spread awareness about lungs care and ways how lungs can be protected.

On this day "Healthy Lungs, Healthy Haryana" Campaign was launched by doctors to spread awareness and take steps to keep lungs healthy.

On the occasion of World Lungs day doctors did a Free Lung function test for more than 100 patients and free consultation was given.

The aim of the campaign is to screen airway diseases so that people can get treatment on time. Under this campaign free Lung function test will be done for more than 10,000 people in association with RWA's of Gurgaon, offices and senior citizen clubs.

The Largest lung shape was put up at Marengo Asia Hospital Gurugram. Speaking on the occasion Dr. Pratibha Dogra, Head, Department of Pulmonology at Marengo Asia hospital Gurugram said "On world Lungs Day we want to spread the message that lung diseases can be prevented by detecting and treating the underlying causes early. Quitting smoking, avoiding pollution, regular exercise and taking vaccines on time are some of the important ways we can keep our lungs healthy. The theme for this world lung day is "Access to Prevention and treatment for all. Leave no one behind" so through our campaign we will be doing free checkup of lungs of people of Gurugram and motivate them to keep lungs healthy".

## IISER Bhopal finds 75% increase in greenhouse gas emission in India

NEW DELHI: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Bhopal, have developed a novel satellite technology which showed a whopping 75 per cent increase in greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural residue burning across India in the past decade.

To clear their fields to sow subsequent crops, farmers burn some 87 million tonnes of crop residues annually, surpassing the entire agricultural waste production of peers in the neighbouring countries. "Crop residue burning has significant repercussions, as it releases pollutants and greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, leading to severe and adverse impacts on climate, public health, and food security," said Dhanyalekshmi K. Pillai, Assistant Professor



at IISER Bhopal. The team, including from CIMMYT and University of Michigan, leveraged remote sensing technology to offer precise insights into the scale of such emissions across the country.

Punjab emerged as the highest emitter, with 27 per cent of its cultivated area burned in

2020, closely followed by Madhya Pradesh, revealed the data published in the journal Science of the Total Environment.

The burning of rice, wheat, and maize crops accounted for 97 per cent of India's agricultural burning emissions, with rice being the largest contributor at 55 per cent.

## Rain breaks unprecedented dry spell in Kashmir

Overnight rain broke the nearly two-month long unprecedented dry spell in Kashmir on Monday as season's first snowfall occurred in the ski resort of Gulmarg.

With just 20 mm of precipitation till Saturday in September, Kashmir received a deficient September rainfall of 55 mm as against the average of 75 mm.

Summer temperatures had remained unusually high in the Valley this year resulting in a heatwave the locals have not been accustomed to.

On September 12, summer capital Srinagar recorded 34.2



degrees Celsius which was a shade less than the all-time highest recorded temperature of 35 degrees Celsius in 1934.

Unprecedented dry spell had become highly worrisome for apple growers as lack of required moisture was already affecting the quality of the crop in various areas of the Valley.

Gulmarg recorded a minimum temperature of 4 degrees Celsius Monday because of the fresh snowfall in the meadow.

Pahalgam hill station had 7.8 and Srinagar 10.8 as the night's lowest temperature. Srinagar, Sep 25 (IANS) Overnight rain broke the nearly two-month long unprecedented dry spell in Kashmir on Monday as season's first snowfall occurred in the ski resort of Gulmarg. With just 20 mm of precipitation till Saturday in September, Kashmir received a deficient September rainfall of 55 mm as against the average of 75 mm.

## Five railway officers suspended in iron scrap fraud, few others on CBI radar

SATISH HANDA  
Yamunanagar

Railway vigilance department detected a scam in disposing of huge stocks of actual quantity iron scrap at Jagadhri railway workshop in which the officers and the staff were supplying excessive quantity of iron scrap as compared to the actual quantity in the documents while weighing material at the 'Dharamkanta' installed inside the workshop and the practice was going on since a long time, when a vigilance team from railways headquarter New Delhi conducted a surprise raid and caught three trucks loaded with iron scrap outside the workshop and found that over 17 ton extra iron scrap was being supplied in these trucks as compared



to the documents carried by the truck drivers. Later, during investigation it was observed that a chip was attached to the weighing machine. Vigilance team also recovered a remote from a truck driver.

When the matter was exposed, Chief General Manager Northern Railways Shobhan Choudhary took immediate action against the concerned officers and transferred as many as nine officers suspected involved in this conspiracy to Ludhiana, Amritsar, Badgaon and DRM office Ambala.

## JD(S) formally joins NDA, Kumaraswamy says seat-sharing talks after Dasara

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

Speculation for past couple of weeks on possible pre-poll tie-up, Janata Dal (Secular) headed by party supremo and former PM HD Deve Gowda, formally joined the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The decision was announced by BJP chief JP Nadda and Union home minister Amit Shah after JD(S) CM HD Kumaraswamy met them in Delhi on Friday.

Kumaraswamy however said discussions on seat-sharing will be finalised after Dasara festival, though former BNJP CM BS Yediyurappa had said



weeks earlier that the regional party would get four seats in its borough, Old Mysuru region, in the general elections. Karnataka has 28 lok sabha seats.

In a post on X, JP Nadda said "I am happy JD(S) has decided to be party NDA". He further expressed that his alliance will further strengthen the NDA and the vision of PM

Modi for 'New India, Strong India'. Amit Shah wrote "Expressing their trust in Modi's vision of development India, JD(S) has decided to be part of the NDA. I warmly welcome JD(S) to the NDA family. Their association will lead Karnataka on the path of development and pave the way for a stronger NDA and a strong India."

## Haryana textile industry association to invest Rs 2000 crore in U.P

SATISH HANDA

Impressed by the Uttar Pradesh government policies for industry, improved law and order and reduction in crimes in the state, a delegation of 21 members of textile industry in Haryana led by the president of textile association Bhupinder Singh met U.P chief minister Yogi Adityanath and expressed desire to make industrial investment or shift their existing textile units in Uttar Pradesh. The members of the delegation including S.P Agnihotri of KKK Textile Pvt Ltd and Pankaj Gupta of RMP Textiles Pvt Ltd were warmly welcomed by the chief minister Yogi along with other entrepreneurs who said that inspite of making huge investment they are not getting co-operation in



government officers and have to run from one seat to other even for petty jobs as well as have to face lot of harassment even for getting a license to start a new industry.

However, U.P chief minister Yogi assured Haryana textile entrepreneurs full co-operation in case they make investment in the state, offered them attractive facilities, provide land at much subsidised rates and assured regular supply of electricity in case they set up industry in Uttar Pradesh.

## Central Railways to install CCTV cameras with face recognition system in Mumbai, and around stations

MANMOHAN SINGH NAULA

Central Railways to Install Video Surveillance System having 3652 CCTV Cameras against Nirbhaya fund in AI, A, B and C category stations with the help of RailTel. In this regard a MoU has already been signed between Railway Board and RailTel. This CCTV cameras will have Face Recognition System, Video Analytics, Video Management System and will be installed in 117 Stations of Central Railway. Apart from this, 2470 Cameras will be installed in Central Railway's 247 D&E category stations.

Central Railway stations, including all stations on the Mumbai Suburban Network, will soon be equipped with face recognition cameras, a technology that will help apprehend wanted criminals and manage crowded areas. Central Railway plans to install cameras with a face recognition system at 117 stations, all featuring 4K technology. This project will cover all stations within the Mumbai Division, except for stations already equipped with Integrated Security Systems (ISS) like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Dadar, Kurla, Thane, Lok-



manya Tilak Terminus, and Kalyan.

Cameras with Face Recognition Systems, Video Analytics, Video Management System will Enhance Passenger Safety, Control Crime, Deter Law Abusers, and Monitor Compliance with Railway Rules. PTZ type cameras can be controlled by RPF personnel and will have a tilt angle of 180 degrees on vertical axis and 360-degree view on horizontal axis, hence will ensure no blind spots. Essentially, these cameras will assist security agencies in monitoring crowds, detecting abandoned objects, and preventing trespassing at the stations. Data collected from these cameras will be transmitted through an IP network to surveillance stations and further relayed to a unified control command centre. With this system, all 117 stations will

be under constant digital surveillance. These cameras can recognize a person whose face is stored in the database, instantly alerting the administration to the presence of known criminals as they enter the station. These cameras can identify various parts of the face, such as the retina or forehead. Additionally, a multi-layered monitoring network will oversee the cameras, and the data collected will be stored for 30 days. These cameras represent a significant step towards comprehensive surveillance, enhancing passenger security and safety.

This project ensures the installation of CCTV cameras in waiting halls, reservation counters, parking areas, main entrances/exits, platforms, foot over bridges, and booking offices, all networked via optical fiber cable.

## Rice miller trapped in Rs 197 crore alleged fraud in 4783 quintal rice



SATISH HANDA  
Ambala

Naraingarh police station in Ambala district registered a fraud case against three persons identified as Ram Karan owner of Shri Krishna Rice Mill at village Dharelikalan in Naraingarh sub division of Ambala district and two others Izaz Ali a resident of village Saidpur in Yamunanagar district and Aman Kumar a resident of village Talhedi (Naraingarh) both were the guarantors in the agreement allegedly non-supply of rice after milling paddy crop given to the rice mill for milling which was not returned to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) allotted to the rice mill by the HAFED after milling. Alleged fraud case was registered by Naraingarh police station on the complaint of Amit Kumar, District Manager The Haryana State Cooperative and Marketing Federation Ambala.

## Congress only alternative in Haryana, need no alliance with any political party: Hooda

SATISH HANDA

Former Haryana chief minister and leader of opposition in Haryana Vidhan Sabha Bhupinder Singh Hooda said that he alongwith HPCC president Uday Bhan while touring across all 90 assembly segments in the state and to hold rallies till the end of this year to uproot the BJP-JJP government, so far has observed that people in the state looking for a change in the government, and it has been observed that Congress is an only viable alternative to the BJP-JJP alliance government, blaming the ruling government in the state failing on all fronts. Recently, addressing a rally in Hisar under 'Vipaksh Aapke Samaksh' programme, Hooda asserted that the Congress was the main opposition party in Haryana and now the public was considering them as the only alternative to government in the state. He said, Congress is self-sufficient to contest 2024 Vidhan Sabha polls independently and need no alliance with any political party.

While addressing a rally at Hisar, Hooda said that there is a shortage of teachers in schools, government hospitals are facing acute shortage of doctors, government offices are without



staff and police stations do not have cops. to maintain law and order in the state. He added unemployment among youths is rising, the government has no control over fast rising prices of every essential commodity as well as crimes in the state are increasing. Hooda said, ruling government has introduced 'Kausal Rozgar Nigam' to darken the future of educated youths. After coming to power, we will scrap all these portals which are just means to harass the public. Hooda said he has turned 76 and wants to fight a last battle to throw the BJP-JJP government out of power in the state and bring a 'people's friendly government' in Haryana.

However, Hooda appreciated ruling government's recent decision to introduce 33% reservation for females, however this

proposal was started when Rajiv Gandhi was Prime Minister, but at the same time he desired that OBC females should also be benefited alongwith SC/ST desiring the scheme should be implemented since from the coming 2024 polls. He raised a question why the ruling BJP government took no decision on this important issue in past 9 years rule, perhaps the ruling government has now remembered women and took such an important decision since the next elections are approaching. Hooda said that the present alliance government in Haryana is facing severe opposition by the people in state during their 'Jan-samvad Programmes' being organised in the state, whereas at the same time Congress is getting full support by the people in the state during all rallies.

## Eight labourers injured in explosion in J&K's Anantnag, terror angle ruled out



FW DESK

An explosion in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district today left eight labourers injured, according to police.

However, authorities have ruled out any terrorist involvement, attributing the blast to a "load carrier" vehicle transporting a concrete vibration machine, a portable generator, and a can of oil.

The incident took place at Larkipora in Anantnag, where an explosion occurred within the cement mix settling vibration machine, alongside a portable generator and a tin can of oil, all of which were being transported by the labourers in the load carrier.

The injured labourers, who sustained burn injuries, are currently receiving treatment at a hospital. The police have initiated an investigation into the matter.



## Women's Reservation Bill has now become law, President Draupadi Murmu approved

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA  
New Delhi

The Women's Reservation Bill passed recently during the special session of Parliament has got the approval of the President. President Draupadi Murmu has signed this bill, after which it has taken the form of law. As soon as President Draupadi Murmu's consent was received, the Government of India has issued a gazette notification for the Women's Reservation Bill. With this, PM Narendra Modi's government has fulfilled its promise to half the country's population. Let us tell you that this bill was introduced in the Parliament under the name of 'Nari Shakti Vandan Bill', which has now become a law.

After the enactment of the Women's Reservation Act, now 33 percent seats have been reserved for women in both the houses of the country's Parliament - Lok Sabha and Rajya



Sabha. Besides, women have got the right to 33 percent reservation in the legislative assemblies of all the states of the country. Now one-third seats have been reserved for women in all the assemblies including the Parliament of the country. Earlier in the all-party meeting, many leaders of political parties had strongly advocated for reservation for women.

This bill was stuck for almost 27 years. It is known that the Women's Reservation Bill has been hanging in the balance since 1996.

## One country one election: The Law Commission could not take a decision in the meeting

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA  
New Delhi

The Law Commission held a meeting on Wednesday to prepare the final report on 'One Country One Election'. However, after the meeting, the commission said they needed more time. The Law Commission said that more detailed discussion is needed on the matter.

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No final decision was taken in Wednesday's meeting chaired by Chairman Rituraj Avasthi. The commission may report next week. Similarly, the Law Commission may give a report on the POCSSO Act very soon. The law commission is supposed to prepare a report on



increasing the age limit for the enforcement of the POCSSO Act from 18 to 16. A third matter is also pending before the Law Commission. That is to amend the law to make filing of FIRs online. The Law Commission has said that constitutional amendment is necessary to make 'one country one election'. Also, the Law Commission wants to discuss the issue with the recognized regional and national parties in the state government, MPs and other parties.

On the other hand, the central government has formed a committee under the leader-

ship of former President Ram Nath Kovind to recommend 'one country, one election'. Two other retired judges are also on the committee with him. This new committee is going to look into whether the policy of 'one country one vote' can be implemented in the country at present.

According to sources, BJP's All India President JP Nadda reached Ramnath Kovind's house with a wreath as soon as the name of the new committee chief was announced. However, it is not known what was the discussion between the two big shots.

## Textiles Ministry approves 18 R&D projects

FW DESK  
New Delhi

Ministry of Textiles has approved 18 R&D projects worth Rs. 46.74 crore across key strategic areas of Geotech, Protech, Indutech, Sustainable Textiles, Sportech, Smart E-Textiles, Meditech segments during the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of Mission Steering Group (MSG) of National Technical Textiles Mission Thursday in New Delhi.

Chairing the meeting Union Minister Piyush Goyal emphasized that Industry and Institute's pro-active and robust engagement was essential for the indigenous development of technical textiles in India.

Among these 18 R&D projects, 14 are high value Projects, 3 are Prototype Grant projects and 1 is Ideation Grant project. The projects cover different application areas of technical textiles including 1 Projects from Geotech, 2 of Protech, 2 Indutech, 2 Sportech, 5 Sustainable Textiles, 3 Meditech, 3 Smart & E-Textiles and 1 Geotextiles were approved. The approved projects were led by institutes and research bodies including BTRA, ATIRA, IIT Delhi, IIT Jammu, NIT Jalandhar, IIT Kharagpur, CSIR New Delhi, IIT Madras, among



others. Union Minister reviewed the progress of different components of National Technical Textiles Mission including review of sanctioned R&D products, R&D projects in Mission mode, Formation of a committee for Startups in Technical Textiles under GREAT Guidelines, Outreach activities and events including 6th Edition of MOT-FICCI-BIS National conclave on Standards & Regulations and Meditech conference in July and September 2023, respectively.

Emphasis should be on R&D for globally highly imported technical textiles items, apart from import-dependent technical textiles items and specialty fibres in India, he further added. Besides, the progress on the education, training & skill development front was also reviewed by the Union Minister wherein 26 applications from 15 Public and 11 Private institutes valuing Rs. 151.02 crore were approved for introducing papers, procuring laboratory infrastructure and training of trainers across different application areas of technical textiles.

## I challenge Rahul Gandhi to contest against me in Hyderabad: Owaisi



HYDERABAD: AIMIM Chief Asaduddin Owaisi has challenged Congress MP Rahul Gandhi to contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections against him from Hyderabad and not from Wayanad.

Participating in a rally on Monday, Owaisi said, "Is baar Wayanad se nahi Hyderabad mein muqabla karo" ("This time fight from Hyderabad and not Wayanad). I am challenging you (Rahul Gandhi) don't go to Wayanad, come to Hyderabad and contest elections."

"You keep giving big statements, come to the ground and let's have a contest. People from Congress will say a lot of things, but I am ready. Come and face this man with beard and sherwani, you will know what a contest means," he stated.

"Babri Masjid and Secretariat's mosque were demolished under the Congress regime," he charged.

## PM pays tributes to Jan Sangh leader Deen Dayal Upadhyaya on birth anniversary



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday paid tributes to Jan Sangh leader Deen Dayal Upadhyaya on his birth anniversary.

Modi, in a post on X (formerly Twitter), said that the personality and work of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, the founder of Antyodaya, who dedicated his entire life to the service of Mother India, will always remain a source of inspiration for the countrymen.

The prime minister also shared his thoughts on Deendayal Upadhyaya.

Upadhyaya was a Jan Sangh leader, who was born on September 25, 1916. Jan Sangh was the forerunner of the BJP.

## Manipur Violence: Massive protests even reach Chief Minister's Home Turf

ARIBAM BISHWAJIT  
Imphal

The atmosphere in Manipur has grown tense, marked by the unmistakable and increasingly frequent sounds of tear gas canisters being fired. This underscores the state government's mounting challenges in maintaining order. Highlighting the severity of the situation, a large crowd believed to be from various valley districts made a significant move by attempting to besiege the residence of Chief Minister N Biren Singh in Luwangsangbam on Thursday evening.

This mobilization was not merely an impulsive act of unrest. The crowd was an integral part of a broader protest movement, demanding that the state administration apprehend those responsible for the tragic deaths of two students from the Meitei community - Hijam Linthoingambi and Phijam Hemjit. Images capturing the harrowing



final moments of these young individuals, as well as haunting shots of their lifeless bodies, rapidly spread across social media platforms. The profound grief and indignation evoked by these images have struck a particularly poignant chord with those residing in the valley districts, especially among members of the Meitei community. Their collective call for justice and accountability grows louder with each passing day.

Following the escalation at Chief Minister N Biren Singh's residence, valley areas have become a hotspot for clashes between protesters and security

forces. The state has borne witness to numerous demonstrations, resulting in swift and often heavy-handed reactions from the authorities. These confrontations have left many injured in their wake.

In a particularly intense episode from yesterday's late-night protest, participants denounced the alleged overuse of force by security personnel during a demonstration led by the student community on September 27. This specific incident, which resulted in multiple student injuries, has ignited a series of similar confrontations across the region. The standoff that transpired

last night persisted well into the early hours of today. Beginning around 8 p.m., it reached its peak intensity at around 1.30 a.m. From northern and southern vantage points, determined protesters sought to converge on the chief minister's residence. Despite stern warnings from the security forces, the crowd's palpable frustration and anger towards perceived governmental shortcomings overpowered their sense of restraint. Their relentless march was met with an equally unyielding response, as security forces deployed tear gas and smoke bombs to disperse the swelling ranks of protesters.

## Speaker Om Birla referred complaints to Privileges Committee of Ramesh Bidhuri's Unparliamentary remarks case

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA  
New Delhi

Days after several opposition MPs wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla regarding BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri's unparliamentary remarks against BSP MP Kunwar Danish Ali, he has forwarded the complaints to the Privileges Committee. According to sources, Speaker Birla has sent the complaints against Bidhuri, Lok Sabha MP from South Delhi Parliamentary Constituency, to the Privileges Committee. Chairman of Privileges Committee is BJP MP Sunil Kumar Singh. BJP MP Nishikant Dubey thanked Birla for handing over the matter to the Privileges Committee.

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey said that today it was possible because BJP has majority in Lok Sabha. Otherwise, in the first Lok Sabha in 2006, RJD-JD(U)-Congress fought over shoes and uprooted microphones. In 2012 Sonia Gandhi's attack, in 2014 during the formation of Telangana many MPs were injured. At that time neither committees were formed nor anyone was punished. It is



significant that BJP MP Bidhuri had used insulting words against Danish Ali during the special session of Parliament. After which the controversy started.

After BJP MP Ramesh Bidhuri's unparliamentary remarks, BSP MP Danish Ali wrote to Speaker Birla asking him to hand over his case to the Privileges Committee and also requested him to order an inquiry into the matter. BJP has even issued show cause notice to party MP Bidhuri for using unparliamentary words against BSP MP in Lok Sabha. Bidhuri's unparliamentary remarks sparked outrage and opposition leaders demanded strict action against her. Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Choudhary and MPs from other opposition

parties, the then Speaker on the chair, K Suresh, including DMK's Kanimozhi, NCP's Supriya Sule, demanded Bidhuri's suspension from Parliament, saying the words he used were such as could not be uttered by anyone inside or outside the Parliament. Speaker Om Birla "seriously noted" the objectionable comments made by Bidhuri in the House and warned him of "stern action" against repeating such conduct in future. Meanwhile, 11 BJP MPs including Nishikant Dubey, Ravi Kishan and Harmath Singh Yadav wrote to the Speaker and accused Danish Ali of incitement. So, there is a discussion in the political circles whether Danish Ali will get justice from the said committee or not.

## Bengaluru bandh called to protest release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
BENGALURU:

The dawn-to-dusk Bengaluru bandh called to protest release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu had all parties showing a support for Farmer groups that had called for bandh hailed it as complete success and the government thanked people for the peaceful protest. However, normal life wasn't exactly crippled as public transport remaining operational but without many passengers to travel.

Anticipating disruption in transport services, Many IT and other establishments, schools had declared a holiday. Most of IT firms switched to the work from home option with a few schools choosing to engage kids through web classes. BMTC, KSRTC buses and Metro services were available, but they reported poor occupancy. Auto rickshaws stayed off the roads though App based cabs and bike taxis were available. Private vehicles moved about on near empty roads. While many hotels downed their shutters, they yet operated for food delivery platforms.

As near total bandh observed in Bengaluru over Cauvery water sharing controversy, the Cauvery Water Regulatory Committee (CWRC) recommended release of 3,000 cusecs of water to TN daily for 18 days from Sept 28 against the demand of TN of 12,500 cusecs daily. The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA), which is expected to meet shortly, will take a call on the committee's recommendation. Karnataka is expected to seek further reduction in the water to be shared with Tamil Nadu.



Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah said, he would consult the state's legal team to decide on the next course of action. This has come as a minor relief to the state government, which is facing widespread protest in the Karnataka capital over release of Cauvery water to TN. Besides Bengaluru shutdown on Tuesday, another bandh this time across Karnataka is being planned for Friday. Siddaramaiah, while pointing out the supreme court had banned bandhs, he admitted that people also have the right to protest in a democracy. On call for state-wide bandh on Friday, Siddaramaiah said government "will not obstruct the protest. Meantime Siddaramaiah endorsed the demand of Former PM and JD(S) supreme HD Deve Gowda to setup an independent agency to study the dispute and make appropriate remonations. He said, "It is welcome step. We hope the newfound friendship between BJP and JD(S) will help the state."

Taking a strong objection to police arresting people protesting the release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu, former CM and JDS(S) leader HD

Kumaraswamy criticised the government and called the state Congress unit the 'B' team of the DMK government in Tamil Nadu.

South interior Karnataka, which hosts Cauvery basin districts and is looking at a 27% deficit in rainfall so far, is very unlikely to receive any relief from the southwest monsoon, which will withdraw by month end. The crisis is acute in Cauvery basin districts with deficit ballooning to a whopping 32% --or, the region hasn't received a third of its quota of rainfall. Karnataka is reeling under an overall 19% deficit.

According to IMD, THE Cauvery catchment area in Karnataka should have received 47.5cm of rainfall till date. It has received only 32.2 cm so far, creating a 32% deficit. Given that monsoon will officially draw to close over Karnataka in a week, the deficit over Cauvery catchment will continue. IMD also stated that southwest monsoon has nothing much to improve the bleak scenario. The only hope is the retreating monsoon. From the first to the second week of October, the Cauvery catchment may receive 8cm Rainfall, they added.

## PM Modi, Kharge, Rahul, Stalin greet ex-PM Manmohan Singh on his birthday

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, party leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday greeted former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on his 91st birthday and recalled his achievements.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "Birthday wishes to former PM Dr. Manmohan Singh Ji. I pray for his long life and good health."

Kharge in a post on X, formerly Twitter, said, "On his birthday, I extend my best wishes to Former Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh Ji. He is a rare example of simplicity, dignity and grace in politics. A true statesman Prime Minister, whose actions spoke more than his words, we are forever grateful for his tremendous contribution to the nation. Wishing him good health, happiness and a long life ahead."

Rahul Gandhi in a post on X said, "Former Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh ji's integrity, unwavering commitment to nation-building and economic upliftment of the masses will always be an inspiration to me. Wishing



him good health and happiness on his birthday." Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra greeted Singh on his birthday and said, "Wishing Manmohan Singh Ji a very very Happy Birthday."

"As a leader, he showed us the value of patience and humility in politics. As a Prime Minister, his honesty, courage, vision and wisdom paved the way for our country to forge ahead into the 21st century with self assurance and pride. Deepest respect always," she said in a post on X.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK leader M.K. Stalin greeted Manmohan Singh on his birthday and said, "Birthday greetings to former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh! As PM, his leadership during the global financial crisis and commitment to inclusive policies reshaped India's future."

## Centre introduces amendments to cable television network rules

FW DESK  
New Delhi

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India has issued a notification amending the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994, thereby introducing a procedure for the renewal of Multi-System Operator (MSO) Registrations.

In addition, an enabling provision has been inserted in the Rules for the sharing of infrastructure by the Cable Operators with Broadband Service providers to promote internet penetration to the last mile. Salient features of the amended Rules for MSO Reg-

istration are :- MSOs shall apply for the registration or renewal of registration online at the Broadcast Seva Portal of MIB. MSO registrations shall be granted or renewed for a period of ten years; The processing fee of Rs. One lakh is kept for the renewal of registration also; The application for renewal of registration shall be within a window of seven to two months before the expiry of the registration.

The renewal procedure is in line with the Government's commitment to ease of doing business as it will provide certainty to cable operators to continue their services without interruption

## Despite allocation of funds by Modi Government, No speed in work for river front development

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA  
New Delhi

The Center has already started development of drainage infrastructure in several states. This work is being done under the 'Namami Gange' programme. In the same program, the development work of various riverside areas has also started. The name of which has been given as 'River Front Development Project'. But the Modi government is struggling to complete the work of this development project. At least the latest report by the Ministry of Water Resources says so.

It appears that out of the seven projects of this project, only one has been completed by the central government so far. Out of the money given to the states for the implementation of those seven projects



under the respective central government programs, about five and a half crore rupees have not been spent so far. In this regard, the report cards of the two BJP-ruled states Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand are the worst.

The latest report has been published by the Ministry of Water Resources based on the data received till August 31.

From that report, it is seen that initially three states have been selected for the development of different areas along the river banks. They are Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Only Bihar's project has been implemented. Work is still pending in Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand. However, each project was approved 1-2 years ago.



and therefore make the sector attractive for foreign investment. IB Ministry has further said that MSOs whose registration is expiring within 7 months are re-

quired to apply online through the BroadcastSeva Portal. In case any assistance is required, the helpline number available on the portal may be contacted, or an email

may be sent to sodas-moiab@gov.in. Earlier, only fresh MSO registrations were granted under the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994. The Rules did not specify the period of validity for MSO registrations, nor did they recognize the mandatory filing of online applications.

The inclusion of a provision related to the sharing of infrastructure by cable operators with broadband service providers will provide the twin benefit of enhanced internet penetration and efficient utilization of resources. It will also reduce the need for additional infrastructure for broadband services.



## Aadhaar blends progress with privacy concerns

A recent report by Moody's Investors Service on "Decentralized Finance and Digital Assets" has brought to the fore some pressing concerns about India's Aadhaar, the world's largest digital ID programme. While Aadhaar's scale is undeniably impressive, encompassing biometric and demographic details of over a billion residents, Moody's cautionary note on the potential security and privacy risks of such "centralised" systems cannot be ignored. Aadhaar, controlled by a single entity, presents vulnerabilities that decentralized ID systems might mitigate. These decentralized systems, as proposed by Moody's, would offer users greater autonomy over their personal data. Furthermore, the report underscores the challenges of Aadhaar's biometric authentication, particularly its reliability in adverse climates and for manual labourers. The current government's enthusiastic endorsement has seen the 12-digit ID become almost ubiquitous, essential for a plethora of services from welfare benefits to tax remittances. While the integration of Aadhaar with banking and mobile services has streamlined benefit transfers, eliminating fraudulent beneficiaries, it has not been without its pitfalls. There are numerous accounts of individuals, particularly the elderly and manual labourers, facing exclusion due to biometric verification failures. Last year's audit of the UIDAI by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India further highlighted issues that could compromise data security and privacy. The report also pointed out inconsistencies in the enrolment process, leading to potential data duplication. India's advocacy for digital public infrastructure, modelled on Aadhaar, for G-20 nations is commendable. However, before further expansion, especially in critical areas like electoral rolls or MGNREGA payments, a comprehensive review is imperative. The recent appointment of a part-time chief to the UIDAI after a four-year hiatus is a step, but what's needed is a thorough evaluation and recalibration of the Aadhaar programme to ensure it serves its purpose without compromising the rights and privacy of its billion-plus users.

### LETTERBOX

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## THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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RITWIK SHAARMA BELIEVES ROBUST DELIMITATION DISCUSSION NEEDED SOON TO AVOID SEAT ALLOCATION DELAY

## Back to the drawing board



Its political motivations aside, the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2023, which promises 33 percent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha, and in the Legislative Assemblies of States and the National Capital Territory of Delhi, sheds the spotlight on another crucial aspect of representative democracy — the delimitation of electoral constituencies. The exercise of carving electoral constituencies and fixing their boundaries is referred to as delimitation.

Given their almost festive nature in India, elections are traditionally considered to be the primary site where democracy translates into action. Equally significant is the carving out of the boundaries of electoral constituencies, an issue that has implications for adequate representation of voters' interests as well as the number of members from each State who find space in the Parliament.

Since the 1970s, there has been no change in the number of Lok Sabha seats. The Constitution (Forty-Second Amendment) Act, 1976 froze the delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies as per the Census of 1971, up to the Census which was to be conducted in 2001. However, in 2001, the day of reckoning was pushed further to 2026. This was done through an amendment to Article 82 by the Constitution (Eighty-Fourth Amendment) Act. While the boundaries of electoral constituencies were redrawn in 2002, there was no change in the number of seats in the Lok Sabha. Only after 2026 will we consider changing the number of seats in the Lok Sabha. Strictly speaking, the relevant numbers as to population (and its distribution) are expected to come from the 2031 Census, which will be the first census after 2026.

### Delimitation as of now

Article 81 of the Constitution says that each

State gets seats in the Lok Sabha in proportion to its population. The freeze on delimitation effected in 1976 was to allay the concerns of States which took a lead in population control and which were faced with the prospect of reduction of their number of seats in the Lok Sabha. The practical consequences, however, of the 1976 freeze is that the allocation done on the basis of the 1971 Census continues to hold good for the present population figures. India's population has, of course, increased significantly since then. Using figures from 1971 to represent today's population runs contrary to the grain of the Constitution besides obviously distorting what representative democracy stands for.

The exercise of delimitation also implicates the constitutional values of federalism and representation of States as consolidated units. In the preceding decades, the population of the north has increased at a faster pace as compared with the south. In practical terms, this means that MPs in States in north India represent more voters than MPs in the south. Given this context, the ques-

tion of delimitation necessarily has serious implications for both the individual voter as well as the States. The southern States run the risk of losing some of their seats in Parliament once the delimitation exercise is completed based on current population figures.

### Delimitation in the near future

The new Parliament building appears ready to house over 800 MPs in the Lok Sabha. How these MPs will be spread out across India's electoral constituencies, and how many people each MP will represent, are questions that beg urgent answers. The freeze in 1976 was necessitated by States' apprehensions embedded in the consequences of their population control measures and widely differing fertility rates. Such concerns hold good even today.

The delimitation of constituencies will need answers to certain vexed questions. The first question might seem more logistical than anything else, where should the population figures come from to inform the exercise of delimitation? The 2021 Census was pushed

courtesy of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Union Home Minister has indicated that the next Census and subsequent delimitation will be conducted after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Interestingly, if the next Census were to be actually conducted in 2031 (which is when it is due), the population figures from 1971 would have informed the distribution of seats in the Lok Sabha for more than half a century. Let us also not forget that upon completion of the Census and the redrawing of electoral boundaries, the change in the numerical composition of the Lok Sabha will have to be reflected in the Constitution through an amendment.

Even more vexed are the qualitative concerns that will determine how boundaries of electoral constituencies will be redrawn. If done entirely in terms of proportion of population, the redrawing of constituencies would yield more seats to States in the north, given their higher population. Besides concerns around representation, this will also lead to distrust on the part of States in the south.

The recently concluded delimitation in Assam, ahead of the 2024 Assembly elections, witnessed widespread concerns around how altering the boundaries of certain districts and renaming certain constituencies can have a potentially acute impact on the representation of specific communities. That is all the indication needed to start a robust conversation around delimitation sooner than later, so that lifting of the freeze on allocation of Lok Sabha seats does not have to be pushed ahead further. That will be a stop-gap solution to an imminent concern, one that cannot be wished away.

Ritwika Sharma is a Senior Resident Fellow at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy and team lead, Charkha, Vidhi's constitutional law centre. Views are personal.



ARUN CHAWLA EXPLAINS HOW MEDIATION ACT 2023 CONNECTS MEDIATION AND ARBITRATION TO EASE COURTS' LOAD

## A clear message to industry on dispute resolution

Any conversation about the Indian litigation system eventually veers toward the term Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). ADR refers to a bouquet of mechanisms that enables disputing parties to resolve their differences amicably, without the intervention of courts. Given the delays in Indian court proceedings and increasing cost of litigation, the significance of ADR in India cannot be understated. Until recently, these discussions largely focussed on arbitration or conciliation of disputes under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (A&C Act). But mediation of disputes is finally getting its due.

In the recent monsoon session of Parliament, both Houses passed The Mediation Bill, 2023, and upon receiving the assent of the President of India, is referred to as the Mediation Act, 2023 ("the Act"). The Indian legal framework already encourages courts to refer the disputing parties to ADR procedures, including mediation, if there were elements of settlement which the parties may accept. The Act will take this encouragement a step forward. Irrespective of a prior mediation agreement, it will obligate each party to take steps to settle their dispute through pre-litigation mediation before approaching an Indian court. To facilitate this process, the Act will also require courts and relevant institutions to maintain a panel of mediators.

### Many benefits

The potential benefits are several. This requirement is expected to reduce the filing of frivolous claims before Indian courts. Owing to the confidentiality of a mediation, it may also mitigate the risk of deterioration of the parties' relationship



due to a publicly fought dispute. Yet, at the same time, concerns are raised about the feasibility of a mediation conducted under the sword of an obligation as opposed to a sincere desire to arrive at an amicable resolution. In the latter scenario, this may empower a recalcitrant defendant to delay a genuine claim. Fortunately, the Act will provide some safeguards against these concerns. On the one hand, it will require the mediation to ordinarily be conducted by an empanelled mediator, who must always be neutral and have uncompromising expertise.

Subject to an extension by the parties, they must also complete the mediation within 180 days from the parties' first appearance. On the other hand, the Act will not remove the refuge of Indian courts entirely. A party may, in exceptional circumstances, seek urgent interim reliefs from a court before the commencement or during the continuation of a mediation. These provisions prioritise expertise and efficiency, while ensuring that the obligation of pre-litigation mediation is

not weaponised. The aim is to create a balanced framework which encourages the parties to focus more on their commercial dealings and less on their disputes.

The aspect of mediation and arbitration In these discussions, however, one aspect has gone unnoticed. The Act will effectively position mediation similar to commercial arbitration in India. The similarities between their respective supporting pieces of legislation are obvious. Both pieces of legislation impose stringent timelines for the conduct of proceedings, mandate confidentiality, obligate Indian courts to refer the parties to mediation or arbitration, provide a default mechanism for the appointment of a mediator or arbitrator, and prescribe the procedure for the termination of their mandate. Likewise, both ensure the enforceability of a mediated settlement agreement and an arbitral award, respectively. The establishment of a Mediation Council of India equally mirrors the proposal in 2019 to establish an Arbitration Council of India (that is yet to be implemented).

Mediation and commercial arbitration are thus made allies, albeit at different stages of the same journey.

Parliament's message to Indian industry is clear — in commercial matters, courts must no longer be the default venue for dispute resolution. Parties are expected to resolve their dispute amicably through mediation, and, alternatively, through commercial arbitration. While the doors of Indian courts are open if required, this access must be perceived as a matter of last resort. To this extent, the Act will foster camaraderie between the mediation and arbitration of commercial disputes, and reduce the burden on Indian courts.

### Service providers

In this context, a final key parallel emerges. Similar to how the recent amendments to the A&C Act prioritised institutional arbitration of disputes, the Act also places emphasis on institutional mediation in India. It envisages "mediation service providers" to provide not only the services of a mediator but also all the facilities, secretarial assistance, and infrastructure for the efficient conduct of mediation. A mediation service provider is synonymous with arbitration institutions. India is already home to experienced arbitration institutions, some of which provide mediation services that are on a par with global best practices. These institutions are, therefore, expected to play a meaningful role in India's mediation journey. Only then would India become a global hub not only for arbitration but also for all aspects of commercial dispute resolution.

Arun Chawla is Director General, Indian Council of Arbitration. Views are personal.



### BOOKS: REVIEW

## Resilient tale of navigating life in quest for connection

Elaine Feeney's "How to Build a Boat" is a poignant exploration of grief, identity, and the complexities of human relationships. As one of the four Irish writers longlisted for the Booker Prize this year, Feeney's narrative is both intimate and universal, delving deep into the intricacies of parenting in a world that often feels like it's on the brink of collapse.

The story revolves around Jamie O'Neill, a 13-year-old boy with a neurodiverse condition that the author deliberately leaves unnamed. Drawing inspiration from her own son's hyperlexia, Feeney crafts Jamie as a bright, sensitive soul who finds solace in the natural world, literature, and patterns. His affinities — from the mathematical drawings of Maryam Mirzakhani to the writings of Edgar Allan Poe — paint a vivid picture of a young mind seeking understanding and connection.

The heart of the story lies in Ja-

mie's relationship with his father, Eoin. Both are grappling with the loss of Jamie's mother, Noelle, who died during childbirth. Their individual griefs, though stemming from the same tragedy, manifest differently. While Eoin is consumed by a rage he can't shake off, Jamie feels an emptiness, a void where maternal love should reside.

Feeney's portrayal of Noelle as a champion swimmer whose life and career were tragically cut short adds another layer to the narrative. Jamie's obsession with water, possibly a connection to his mother, leads him on a quest to invent a 'Perpetual Motion Machine'. This journey introduces him to Tess Mahon and Tadgh Foley, two teachers battling their own personal demons, who become instrumental in guiding Jamie towards building a boat, his interpretation of the perpetual motion machine.

The novel shines brightest in its moments of introspection. Whether it's Jamie and Eoin's attempts to

**The novel's research-driven approach can be a double-edged sword. While it provides a comprehensive backdrop**

navigate their grief-stricken world or Tess and Foley's endeavors to find meaning, Feeney captures the essence of human vulnerability and resilience. Her reflections on parental anxiety, as she mentioned in an interview, resonate deeply, touching upon the universal fears and hopes that parents harbor for their children.

Feeney's rich descriptions of western Ireland, from its socio-economic dynamics to its post-colonial influences, add depth to the narrative. Her concerns about the oppressive church regime and



How to Build a Boat  
By Elaine Feeney  
Harvill Secker,  
256 pages; Rs 799

its lingering impacts on the culture are thought-provoking, offering readers a glimpse into Ireland's tumultuous history.

However, the novel's research-driven approach can be a double-edged sword. While it provides a comprehensive backdrop, it occasionally feels like an information overload, potentially distancing some readers from the emotional core of the story.

Elaine Feeney's choice to leave Jamie's neurodiverse condition unnamed is a bold narrative decision that speaks volumes. It challenges the reader to see Jamie as an individual first, rather than through the lens of a diagnosis. This choice underscores the novel's broader themes of acceptance and understanding. In a world quick to label and categorize, Feeney prompts us

to question: do we truly see the person beneath the labels we assign?

The setting of western Ireland is not just a backdrop but a character in its own right. Feeney's intricate descriptions paint a vivid picture of a land steeped in history, tradition, and change. The juxtaposition of pagan and Christian traditions, the influence of colonialism, and the evolving socio-economic landscape provide a rich tapestry against which Jamie's story unfolds. This setting serves as a mirror to Jamie's own journey, reflecting the tensions between the old and the new, tradition and progress, and the known and the unknown.

Lastly, the title "How to Build a Boat" is metaphorically resonant. Just as a boat navigates the unpredictable waters, each character in the novel is trying to find their way through the turbulent seas of life. The boat, symbolic of Jamie's quest for understanding and connection, also represents each individual's journey to find solid ground amidst life's uncertainties. In building this boat, Jamie is not just constructing a physical vessel, but he's also piecing together the fragmented parts of his identity, history, and future.



# Haryana turning as industry hub: CM Khattar

SATISH HANDA

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and deputy CM Dushyant Chautala a couple of days ago in a function laid the foundation stone for Flipkart's regional distribution centre in Manesar. Khattar said that the Flipkart is making substantial investments in Haryana including this regional distribution centre in Manesar, spread across 140 acres area with the investment of Rs 1389 crores, which will also provide employment opportunities to large number of youths in the state. While addressing CM Khattar said that Haryana has been offering a favourable environment for investors and industries in the state, highlighting the state as an emerging manufacturing hub in the country. CM said, this distribution centre is poised to become Asia's largest centre likely to create direct and indirect employment opportuni-



ties for approximately 10,000 individuals.

Khattar said that the 'Global City' being developed in Gurugram district will add a new chapter in the development of the area as well the state due to the state's investor-friendly policies and services. He said, Haryana is strategically developing the National Capital Region (NCR) as a robust warehousing and logistics hub where multiple projects are underway to

enhance logistics connectivity including the expressways, railways and national highways. The chief minister said that the Flipkart has become as a key player in Haryana's economic landscape, having created over 95,000 jobs and providing market access to sellers through its extensive supply chain network, as such Haryana is marching ahead towards industrial growth, job creation and economic development

as a result not only within the country manufacturers from abroad are willing to set up their manufacturing industry in Haryana state.

Khattar said he suggested that Flipkart help 5 lakh women associated with 55,000 self-help groups in Haryana by including their products as such farmers' products should be delivered to the consumers through farmer-producer organisations, and also include small shopkeepers in their chain for which the Haryana government will support them. Meanwhile, Haryana Energy Minister Ch. Ranjit Singh Chautala said that industrial units in the state will now get express delivery of electricity. Under this, power corporations will ensure 24-hour power supply to industries, which will make industries generator free. He said, a policy in this regard has been prepared and it will be finalized in the next 6 months.

# Netherlands Cricket Team roped in Nordek as its title sponsor for upcoming ICC World Cup

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

Ahead of the much awaited ODI Cricket World Cup 2023, Netherlands Cricket Team roped in Global Blockchain and Web3 Payments company Nordek as its title sponsor for the upcoming ICC World Cup Cricket 2023 announced during press conference in Bengaluru.

Nordek's sponsorship of Team Netherlands (nicknamed 'The Flying Dutchmen') comes after a slew of major fintech and edutech players have become title sponsors in past few years of major Cricket teams including that of Team India. Founded by Blockchain entrepreneurs Kashyap and Kishor, the company aims to capitalize its presence in European blockchain market.

The European blockchain market is anticipated to witness remarkable growth, expanding from a valuation of US\$ 1.2 billion in 2021 to a substantial US\$ 59.1 billion by 2028.

Speaking on the occasion, Nordek's Founder & Promoter, Kishor and Kashyap said, "This is a great period of boom in sports especially in India, which is the fastest growing economy. With venturing into Cricket, we aim to reach out to the Global Sports Fans and students who can explore more opportunities in blockchain. Nordek strives to be the most business and consumer-friendly blockchain ecosystem for mainstream adoption of web3 payments. And, our target audiences are the ones who understand the length, breadth and depth of agility, just like their understanding of Cricket. We believe, the Cricket fans would also fall in love with the fast and most EVM-compatible Network Blockchain, i.e., Nordek."

To this, Monica Visser, CEO of Netherlands Cricket reiterated that, "With growing business of blockchain across the world and the

revolutionizing of fintech industry, we are happy to on-board Nordek as the Title Sponsor. The partnership will not only build trust in the ever evolving fintech industry but will also open new market avenues in tandem with sporting events for learning as well as growing, together" she said.

With venturing into the world of Cricket, Nordek is planning to make its brand presence felt across countries where blockchain is gaining traction, including the Middle East where blockchain and technology in fintech is taking a tenfold increase. Nordek also provides education to universities and colleges on the subject called 'blockchain'. The company is providing free of cost education to more than 100 universities and colleges. The global blockchain market is expected to reach \$56 billion by 2026, growing at a CAGR of 56.9% forecast and Nordek plans to be a major player in the market.

Team Netherlands has arrived in India to have an acclimatization camp in Bengaluru, where they will play a couple of local sides. Following that, they will face India and Australia in the pre-tournament warm-up matches at Thiruvananthapuram. The Dutchmen qualified for the World Cup earlier in July ahead of teams like two-time champions West Indies.

# India May Ban Sugar Exports From October



**NEW DELHI:** India is likely to ban sugar exports in the new season, starting October 1, government officials told Moneycontrol on Thursday.

A notification in this regard can be expected in the first week of November, they added.

The sugar season starts in October of a year and ends in September the next year. After selling a record 11 million tonnes (MT) of sugar in 2021-22, India restricted the amount of exports during 2022-23 to ensure supply in domestic markets and keep a lid on prices.

"In the beginning of the 2022-23 sugar year, the government restricted sugar exports to around 6 MT. Even this quota is being eliminated with rising prices. Our main priority is to keep domestic prices low," an official told Moneycontrol.

Below-normal showers in the top cane-growing districts in the western state of Maharashtra and the southern state of Karnataka, both of which account for more than half of India's total sugar output, had been as much as 50 percent below average till August this year.

While the rainfall situation has since improved with the all-India deficit coming down from 10 percent on August 31 to 5 percent on September 25, fears of a fall in production cannot be erased.

# Freshworks Report Reveals Massive Opportunity for IT Leaders Leveraging AI

**SAN MATEO:** Freshworks Inc. released the findings of its second annual "State of Workplace Technology" report, which found a 71% increase in the number of software applications on IT teams' work computers over the last year. To manage this spiraling complexity, the report found that IT pros—especially senior leaders and younger generations—are embracing AI to automate workflows and boost efficiency with 86% of IT pros reporting that their organizations are already using AI.

AI is poised to save companies time and money - While IT departments are expected to grow this year, it doesn't mean they need to spend more. Freshworks found that companies in the U.S. could save over \$15,000 per IT employee each year using AI to eliminate time wasted on repetitive tasks. This means that an enterprise-sized company with at least 5,000 employees and an average of 200 IT professionals on staff could save at least \$3 million annually using AI. The survey also revealed:

IT professionals are managing more software than ever and see an opportunity to simplify. The number of software applications on IT teams' work computers increased 71% over the last year. Despite this, IT professionals only use one-third of the applications available to them daily (just eight out of 24), compared to half in 2022. IT teams put efficiency first. They rank ease of use and efficiency as top attributes of business software, ahead of feature suite, reliability and cost-effectiveness.

AI eliminates repetitive tasks. IT pros agree AI frees up time otherwise spent on repetitive tasks (49%) and allows them to do more complex, meaningful work (45%). Moreover, IT pros estimate they could save more than five hours per week by using AI to complete repetitive tasks.

# Central Railway Mumbai division invites Tender for Cine Dome at Dombivli, Khopoli, Juchandra and Igatpuri stations

MANMOHAN SINGH NAULA

An open online tender has been published and will be closed on 12/10/2023 at 15.00 hrs. It will be under Non-Fare Revenue (NFR) Earning model, for Setting up & Operating Pre-Fabricated Cine Dome at Dombivli, Khopoli, Juchandra and Igatpuri stations for a period of Ten years.

The proposed Cine Dome will be a full-fledged cinema for showcasing movies including latest movie releases



& documentaries and other content etc. along with meals/snacks/beverages for customers/visitors/Guests. However, no permanent structure will be allowed to be constructed. The Cine Dome will be manned by the tenderers own operators. Crowd

management shall be the sole responsibility of the party

Setting up, Operation, Maintenance & Management of Pre-Fabricated Cine Dome shall be the sole responsibility of the licensee and the cost for the same is to be borne by the licensee (it includes cost of erecting structures, Pre-Fabricated Cine Dome related items, safety & security, necessary amenities, laying cables, electrical connection, electricity consumption charges, electricity deposit & other incidental expenses etc.).

# Lumina Datamaticswins Prestigious Operational Excellence through Digital Transformation Award

FW DESK  
Mumbai

Lumina Datamatics, a strategic partner to global publishers providing content, analytics, and technology solutions, is thrilled to announce that its innovative publishing platform, BluPencil, has been honored with the esteemed "Operational Excellence through Digital Transformation Award" at the 5th Edition of the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) DX Awards 2023. The award ceremony concluded at Le Meridien, New Delhi, on September 26, 2023.

BluPencil, Lumina Datamatics' online author-proofing platform, has redefined how authors collaborate, edit, and review their work. This platform allows authors to instantaneously enhance their content, leveraging the platform's intuitive UI and auto-validations, while maintaining the XML integrity of the content. BluPencil's recommendations and notification capabilities simplifies editing and facilitates seamless communication between authors and editors

during the submission and proof review process. There are over 6,000 authors across the world using BluPencil.

The DX Awards recognize the innovative, resilient, and sustainable strategies for introducing or adopting digital technologies and serve as a benchmark for other industries in their journey for Digital Transformation. Speaking about the win, Sameer L. Kanodia, Managing Director & C.E.O., Lumina Datamatics, said, "We are honored to receive the DX Award for BluPencil. This recognition reaffirms our commitment to technology innovation and excellence within the publishing industry. Lumina Datamatics remains steadfast in our dedication to crafting solutions that empower organizations to excel in the digital era."

Lumina Datamatics is a strategic partner to global publishers providing content, analytics, and technology solutions. Lumina Datamatics enables publishers and aggregators to be at the forefront of content workflows by managing the entire publishing process - from content creation to product delivery.

# Aluminium Industry claims 2-3 per cent profit drop due to delayed RODTEP rates for SEZs and EOUs

**CHENNAI:** The aluminium industry is witnessing a 2 to 3 per cent decline in its profits because the government has not yet released the rates for the Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product (RODTEP) scheme for special economic zones (SEZs) and export-oriented units (EOUs).

India exported 2.5 million tonne of aluminium in FY23 worth USD 5 billion. With the scrapping of the earlier Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS), aluminium exporters are feeling the squeeze, Aluminium Association of India (AAI) member governing council Himanshu Singh said.

"The AAI has already submitted a representation to the Union ministry of commerce and industry seeking urgent intervention for notification of rates under the scheme as this would help boost exports," he added.

In FY23, India produced 4.1 million tonne of aluminium and also imported 2.5 million tonne of which 1.7 million tonne was



scrap import. With over USD 20 billion invested, India is today the second largest aluminium producer in the world.

However, the AAI pointed out that while RODTEP rates for aluminium products manufactured in domestic tariff areas (DTAs) have been notified, the rates for those manufactured within SEZs and EOUs are yet to be informed even through SEZs and EOUs cumulatively represent the source of over 30 per cent of all aluminium

exports from India.

At present, unremitted taxes and duties comprise anywhere between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of aluminium production costs for SEZ-based operations.

"But with MEIS scheme already withdrawn and the beneficial rates under RODTEP yet to be extended to this segment, the domestic aluminium industry is struggling to remain competitive in global markets against foreign producers, especially from China," he added.

# KISNA renowned jewellery brand launches its first store in Karnataka

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bangalore

KISNA, a renowned jewellery brand under the Hari Krishna Group, Launches first-ever franchise showroom in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Over 18 years of expertise in jewellery designing, manufacturing and sales. With innovative "Mines to Market" setup, continually adapt to evolving consumer preferences, offering exquisite collections for every occasion and budget.

Latest showroom in Bangalore is a testament to dedication to serving local tastes and preferences. This exclusive showroom is meticulously designed to provide an extensive range of high-quality and trendsetting designs, perfect for everyday wear and the festive season.

The opening of Bangalore showroom in presence of Ghanishyam Dholakia, Founder & Managing Director of KISNA, Tulsi Dholakia, Founder & Director Hari Krishna Group and Parag Shah, Director of KISNA.

KISNA, which was established in 2005, has adopted a distribution-driven model and has expanded its footprint to



over 3500 showrooms across India. Prior to the Bangalore showroom, KISNA had launched stores in various cities, including Siliguri, Hyderabad, Hisar, Ayodhya, Bareilly, Raipur, Delhi, Mumbai, Jammu, and now Bangalore.

Expressing his thoughts during showroom launch, Ghanishyam Dholakia said, "We are elated to establish KISNA's first showroom in Bangalore and introduce our latest designs to the city. Our goal is to make diamonds accessible to every woman in the country, and our expansion plans aim to reach every household across India. At the new showroom, we want consumers to experience the expertise of the Hari Krishna Group and provide them with a variety of diamond and gold jewellery options suitable for any occasion."

# Manipal Hospital launches SOS QR Code and CPR to save critical patient during "Golden Hour"

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bangalore

On occasion of "World Heart Day", Manipal Hospital, Bangalore, launched an advanced SOS QR code, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) Education program aimed at saving lives during medical emergencies. The main objective of the launch was to ensure every critical patient receives timely assistance during the "Golden Hour". QR Code and CPR Launched by Dr. G. Parameshwara, Karnataka Home Minister and Dinesh Gundu Rao, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, along with Dr. Sudarshan Ballal, Chairman of Manipal Hospitals. This groundbreaking service of detecting the



accurate location of the patient in need and providing ambulance service underscores the hospital's dedication to transforming Bengaluru into a Heart Smart City. In a symbolic gesture, Manipal Hospital has also transformed traffic signals into heart-shaped symbols, underlining their commitment to heart health awareness.

The trend that was set by branding red heart signals last

year at key traffic junctions is reinitiated at 37 traffic signals this year as well, with the support of Bangalore City Traffic Police and BBMP. These signals have SOS QR codes stationed for easy access to the ambulance service. The heart-shaped signal at the traffic junction is a sign of reminder to everyone that every life counts and not to neglect their own hearts.

As per data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), almost 47% of cardiac arrest fatalities occur prior to a patient's arrival at the hospital. The key to saving lives during heart attacks lies in delivering prompt assistance such as CPR during the golden hour.

# Freshworks Customers Using Microsoft Teams Increase Employee Experience & Productivity

**Uptick in Microsoft Teams adoption among Freshservice customers helps businesses of all sizes speed up employee service management with the AI-enabled integration**

FW DESK  
San Mateo [Calif]

Freshworks Inc announced a significant increase in Microsoft Teams usage by Freshservice customers to improve the employee experience through more efficient AI-powered virtual agent support. Microsoft Teams adoption among Freshservice customers has seen an average increase of 42% over the past three years. As a result, businesses using Freshservice are now able to amplify productivity for more than 250,000 users.

The generative-AI-powered Virtual Agent within Freshservice, an IT service management (ITSM) solution, along with Microsoft Teams' ServiceBot, gives employees round-the-clock support and can facilitate



rapid resolution of their needs within Microsoft Teams. The integrated solution also enables IT and other business teams to deflect tickets that helps save clicks and streamline work. In a July 2023 study commissioned by Freshworks, Forrester estimated a mid-sized company could save \$2.1 million in three years by improving user productivity with the Freshservice Virtual Agent.

"Microsoft Teams has rapidly grown as the hub for collaboration," said Sridhi Raghavan, VP of Microsoft Teams Ecosystem. "Through our work with companies like Freshworks that share our vision for AI, we aim to enable teams across multiple channels to solve employee issues swiftly, ultimately saving

money and driving efficiency with next-generation AI for customers of all sizes."

Using Freshservice, which is built natively on the Freshworks Neo platform, with Microsoft Teams, companies of all sizes can increase user productivity. Using AI-powered virtual agents, they can improve collaboration across business teams during critical incidents, and enhance the employee experience with faster resolution to allow for:

Automated conversational support that boosts employee experience with faster resolution. Automation eliminates the constraints of working hours, giving employees access to conversational support from virtual agents within Microsoft Teams

to speed up issue resolution whenever they need it.

Increase agent productivity through AI-powered virtual agents. Freddy AI-powered Freshservice virtual agents empower business departments to focus on high-value tasks, allowing the virtual agent to handle common and mundane issues that often bog down humans. Agents can more quickly handle ticket updates and approvals.

Improve collaboration during critical incidents. Freshservice notifies on-call agents directly in Microsoft Teams. IT operations teams can swiftly communicate to resolve major incidents, maximizing service availability and minimizing downtime all without leaving a single app.

Customers like A&E Networks and Haynes International are using Microsoft Teams with Freshservice to improve employee service management. Haynes International, a US-based materials manufacturer, increased business user productivity by 50% since using Freshservice integrated with Microsoft Teams.

Lyle Snyder, Senior Support Analyst at Haynes International said, "Traditional support chan-

nels for employees typically have complicated portals, which slow down support and are no longer acceptable for the modern workforce. The Freshworks and Microsoft Teams' integration helps us deliver a simple and modern employee experience, all on one platform. We've already seen impressive productivity increases and expect both apps to scale with our evolving business and employee needs."

The Office for Students, the independent regulator of higher education in England, was able to decrease its average resolution time by 67% with the Freshservice virtual agent integrated with Microsoft Teams. "Our goal was to move away from employees emailing the service desk, and instead use Teams as a channel," said Karen Spray, IT Service Support Manager at Office for Students. "Adopting the Freshservice Virtual Agent was easy, and the technical rollout took us about 10 minutes. Easy access to the Virtual Agent within Microsoft Teams made it all the more convenient and helped our employees solve many issues on their own thanks to powerful self-service features."



# RBI reviews flow of credit to MSME sector

**MUMBAI:** The RBI's Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) reviewed the flow of credit to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises on Friday at its meeting held in Lucknow, a central bank said in a release.

The 28th meeting of SAC was chaired by RBI Deputy Governor Swaminathan J, and attended by senior officials from ministries of MSME and finance.

"During the meeting, the SAC reviewed the flow of credit to MSMEs and deliberated on issues related to assessing and bridging the credit gap for the sector, exploring digital solutions for improved credit linkage, accelerating adoption of TReDS, credit support to women entrepreneurs, revival



and rehabilitation of stressed MSMEs, and credit guarantee schemes, among others," the RBI said.

The deputy governor in his keynote address emphasised the significant role of the MSME sector, particularly in the context of the goal of

attaining developed economy status by 2047.

He stressed the need for collaborative efforts on the part of all stakeholders to unlock the full potential of MSMEs.

Swaminathan highlighted various initiatives taken by the RBI such as the Account Ag-

gregator (AA) framework, the digital Public Tech Platform to enable delivery of frictionless credit and the regulatory sandbox on MSME lending.

He also dwelt on the important role of industry associations in information dissemination and capacity building among MSMEs, the RBI said.

Chairman of SIDBI, Executive Director of RBI, senior management of major banks and NABARD, senior executives of credit guarantee fund trust for micro and small enterprises, National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Indian Banks' Association and MSME Associations, too participated in the meeting.

## PM Vishwakarma gets over 1.40 lakh applications within 10 days of its launch



**NEW DELHI:** The PM Vishwakarma scheme has received more than 1.40 lakh applications within a period of ten days, said Narayan Rane, Union Minister for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) on Wednesday.

Providing information on the success of the PM Vishwakarma Scheme, through his post on X (formerly Twitter), he wrote that PM Vishwakarma Yojna is a result of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's farsighted vision.

"Receiving of such high numbers of applications within ten days of the launch of the scheme is a testament to the success and the paramount importance of the scheme," he added.

The Union Minister further stated that the PM Vishwakarma Scheme, will be a milestone for the comprehensive development of our socially and economically underprivileged Vishwakarma brothers and sisters and it will restore their lost identity which has been long awaited.

Through this scheme Vishwakarma brothers and sisters will be provided training, tool kits, and collateral free loans.

After successfully verifying the received applications, all the scheme's benefits will be extended to our Vishwakarma brothers and sisters.

The Union Minister said that this scheme aims to enhance traditional artisans and craftspersons production capacity and take their products to domestic and global markets.

Under the scheme, 18 types of artisans and craftsmen will be benefited.

# Rs 256 Cr granted to MSMEs under 'Vivad se Vishwas-I'

**NEW DELHI:** The Ministry of Finance announced on September 26 that over 10,000 claims of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) under Vivad se Vishwas - I scheme have been accepted since its launch.

This has led to grant of more than Rs 256 crore to MSMEs and increased flow of bank credit through freeing up of guarantees, said the Ministry.

The highest relief of Rs 116.47 crore has been granted by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG).

This includes the claims settled and amount paid by the agencies under the administrative control of the MoPNG.

Ministry of Railways is the second highest relief granter with Rs 79.16 crore amount paid and 2,090 number of claims accepted.

This is followed by Ministry



of Defence, Ministry of Steel and Ministry of Power, as per the data released by Ministry of Finance.

The Vivad se Vishwas I - Relief for MSMEs scheme was announced by the Union Finance Minister in the Budget Speech 2023-24.

The scheme was launched by

Ministry of Finance through Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal on 17 April, 2023.

The last date for submission of claims for relief, on the GeM portal, under the scheme was 31 July, 2023. GeM had developed a dedicated portal for the purpose of this scheme.

# Bank Credit Growth likely to slip at 13-13.5% in FY23-24 : CRISIL

**NEW DELHI:** Credit growth is seen at 13-13.5% year-on-year (y-o-y) in 2023-24 (April-March), lower than nearly 16% y-o-y in 2022-23, CRISIL Ratings said in a report on Thursday.

The growth numbers do not account for the merged entity of Housing Development Finance Corporation and HDFC Bank. As per media reports the rating agency expects the credit growth to improve to 13.5-14% y-o-y in 2024-25 as the economic growth picks up.

While on the basis of the broad-based economic recovery the credit growth had hit 16% y-o-y in 2022-23, the moderation in credit in 2023-24 can be attributed to an expected decline in gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2023-24, which will impact overall credit growth.

A significant part of growth in wholesale credit in 2022-23 was driven by higher working capital demand in a high-inflation environment. The easing of inflation in 2023-24 will have a bearing on the



demand for working capital from corporates and hence, impact overall loan growth. With the rise in interest rates, corporates have been tapping the bond market for their financing requirements.

Bank credit's substitution of debt capital markets, which also supported wholesale credit growth in 2022-23, is unlikely to play out to the same extent this year, the credit rating agency said.

A higher base in the second half of the previous financial year is also expected to reflect in credit growth numbers in the current financial year. "In fiscal 2025, overall

credit growth trends should see a turnaround and start inching up on the back of an expected improvement in GDP growth to 6.9%," said Krishnan Sitaraman, Senior Director and Chief Ratings Officer, CRISIL Ratings.

Overall loan growth in 2024-25 is expected to be lifted by higher capacity utilisation levels and capital expenditure announcements. On the services side, demand from non-banks should continue to support corporate credit growth as they are themselves seeing decent growth tailwinds, the report said.

# Short-term additional surveillance measure on SME Stocks to be effective from Oct 3

**NEW DELHI:** Exchanges have extended the short-term additional surveillance measure (ST-ASM) framework to SME stocks to enhance market integrity and safeguard the interest of investors. The framework for SME stocks would be effective from 3 October, 2023.

The move was taken after a joint surveillance meeting with market regulator the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). Market players said the curbs will clamp down on speculative activity and attract serious buyers. However this latest curbs imposed on companies that are traded on the small and medium enterprises (SME) platform could apply brakes on rising volumes. The average daily turnover (ADTV) for BSE's SME segment has shot up three times from Rs 28.4 crore in February to Rs 85.2 crore last month, indicating growing investor and trader interest. Similarly, NSE's Emerge platform for SME companies has witnessed over 3x year-on-year growth in ADTV to Rs 67 crore for the fourth month ending July 2023.

# Uttarakhand CM inks Investment MOUs worth Rs 4,800 cr during London visit

**DEHRADUN:** The Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhama signed investment MoUs worth Rs 4,800 crore with different companies in London.

The minister was in London to attend a roadshow for the Global Investors Summit which will be held in Uttarakhand this December.

As per reports, MoU worth Rs 380 crore were signed with Kayan Jet, while investment agreements totalling Rs 100 crore were signed with Usha Breco.



Up to 80 business houses from various fields like education, tourism, IT, and health

sectors of London participated in the main event organized in London.

During the visit, the delegation had the opportunity to tour India House and Parliament House. At India House, the state government delegation engaged in extensive discussions with representatives from major travel and tourism companies in London. Chief Minister Dhama invited all investors to join the forthcoming Global Investor Summit. The Indian High Commissioner, Vikram Doraiswami, commended the Uttarakhand government for its diverse policies and optimistic vision.

# Money laundering via illicit trade hovering at 5% of India's GDP: FICCI

**NEW DELHI:** India Inc. is worried over the staggering growth in illicit trade and views it as a threat to the economy and security of the country that needs to be tackled on a war footing.

A report released by the FICCI on Thursday based on data from international agencies states that the impact of India's illicit financial flows works out to around 5 per cent of the country's GDP. "Trade-based money laundering in India soared to a whopping \$674.9 billion for the 10-year period from 2009 to 2018 which reflects the magnitude of illicit trade that has emerged as a major threat to the country's economy and security," the report said.

"Based on UNDOC estimates, when the Indian economy surpassed the \$3 trillion mark in 2021, the quantum of money laundering in India can be es-



timated at \$159 billion which is around 5 per cent of GDP. This accentuates the magnitude of the problem driven by the rise in illicit markets (trade, illegal drugs, arms etc.) and non-market actors." It cites recent data provided by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) to illustrate India's substantial trade gap due to mis-invoicing and highlights the growing illicit trade. Smuggling in India report 2021-22 identified 437 instances of duty evasion totalling Rs 3,924 crore, which was a 40 per cent jump

from the corresponding figure of Rs 2,810 crore in 2020-21.

Currently India's illicit trade gap as estimated by Global Financial Integrity (GFI) is 20 per cent, which will translate into nearly \$300 billion when the country's economy reaches the 5 trillion-dollar mark. FICCI has flagged this as a major concern as its study shows that illicit trade is directly linked with organized crime and terrorism. The study also cites the examples of various countries worldwide in this regard. "The convergence of trade-based money laundering with terrorism raises significant concerns for our national security," the report observes. Counterfeiting and illicit goods in India pose significant risks, including financial risks, public health threats in the case of fake pharma products and intellectual property issues as well, the report points out.

# Indo-Pacific Chamber of Commerce Launched in Kolkata

**KOLKATA:** The Indo-Pacific Chamber of Commerce was launched on Thursday during the Indo Pacific Economic Conclave 2023 organized by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry in association with the Ministry of External Affairs.

Through the Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave 2023, the Bengal Chamber aims to foster economic cooperation, regional integration, and sustainable development across the Indo-Pacific region, the release said.

The Conclave brought together Chambers of Commerce, leaders representing industry, diplomats and trade agency experts from 11 Indo-Pacific countries for the formation of the Indo-Pacific Chamber of Commerce.

As per reports, after discussions with the delegates of 11 participating countries, a Charter was also released.

"Indo-Pacific is an important framework and we are already beginning to build the financial, physical, economic, and commercial architecture by concrete step-by-step measures," Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council Member Sanjeev Sanyal who



was the Guest of Honour of the Conclave said in his address.

Emphasizing that the Indo-Pacific Framework is a maritime concept, Sanyal said, "The maritime aspect of this is absolutely critical because without taking this into account much of the conversation is meaningless but once you go into a maritime framework then the way you look at the world changes. So once you begin to think in maritime terms you begin to have a far more flexible world view than when you have a landlocked view of the world."

Speaking about the financial aspect of this framework,

he said, "Instead of having rigid financing systems we need to have a globally fluid network of financing. Indo-Pacific region also has some serious finance hubs. Example: Singapore, Tokyo, Mumbai. Interlinking all of these is the key."

"We intend to internationalize the Indian Rupee over the next decade or so for it to be much more widely used. India aspires to be like other hard currencies like Yen, Pound, Singapore Dollar, and Euro. We do expect that the Indian bonds will be more widely used. India is becoming a more prominent part of the international financial network,"

he added.

He also mentioned that ESG (environmental, social and governance) is becoming more and more popular. However, Sanyal cautioned that the way norms are defined or the way these norms are monitored is still being worked out in the North Atlantic which is problematic.

"Many of the global frameworks and ranks are still almost done exclusively by institutions that are in the North Atlantic. So, if there is to be Indo Pacific Framework and if ESG are to be a part of this at all, then this must be redefined otherwise it will not work," he said.

Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry President and Managing Director and CEO of Exide Industries Ltd Subir Chakraborty said that the theme for the first day of the Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave is 'Collaboration and Cooperation towards Common Goals in the Indo-Pacific'.

As the global economic landscape continues to evolve, the Indo-Pacific region holds immense potential and significance, making it a focal point for international economic discussions.

# SIDBI to Launch GST Sahay, App for Invoice Financing Loans for MSMEs

**NEW DELHI:** The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) will soon launch an app-based based invoice financing loans platform for MSMEs called GST Sahay, an official said.

The aim is to enhance the economic and financial sustainability of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), said the SIDBI official.

SIDBI, Chief General Manager (CGM), Rahul Priyadarshi announced this at a customer outreach programme on Wednesday.

"The MSMEs are vital for the economic growth and development of India. They create jobs and contribute enormously to the socio-economic development of the country. Although several measures for the MSMEs have been taken in the past few years by the government, the crunch in working capital credit is one of the major issues for them. Now, SIDBI is in the process of launching an app-based 'invoice financing' loans platform for them," he said.

"The new invoice platform-GST Sahay will reduce the problem of delayed pay-



ments and consequential cash flows mismatches for the MSMEs. The GST Sahay will be an invoice-financing marketplace where MSMEs can use their unpaid invoices to get quick working capital loans," said Priyadarshi.

While speaking about industrial growth in Bihar, the CGM said, "There is no doubt that the industrial growth is taking place in the state, but SIDBI wants to take this region at a greater height. There is a lot of scope for agro-processing, medical and agri tourism in the state. We are always focused on such businesses and SIDBI

wants this region to prosper further."

SIDBI wants to enhance its loan assistance further in the state, he said, adding the loan book of SIDBI's Patna region has grown at 35 per cent (from March 2023 till the date).

"The jump of 35 per cent in lending (of the Patna region), which is at Rs 232 crore now, is quite satisfactory. We want to increase it further. Now the acceleration of growth is on in this region," he said.

Transparency and trust is the principle on which SIDBI does its businesses, he said.

Anubha Prasad, Regional Head of SIDBI Patna, speaking at the event said, "SIDBI is dedicated to fostering strong relationships with its valued customers. SIDBI hopes to aid the development of the two states (Bihar and Jharkhand) through its credit-plus approach, and create stronger footprints for enterprise development at the grassroots level, creating employment and empowering entrepreneurs, as well as work with the two state governments to add value to their initiatives."

SIDBI has appraised 17 proposals involving assistance of approximately Rs 196 crore under Micro and Small Enterprises - Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP) for Bihar Industrial Area Development Authority (BIADA) clusters in the state, she added.

Highlighting the bank's comprehensive range of offerings, Prasad said, "SIDBI is also providing financial assistance and support for green projects in the MSME sector as aligned to the nation's commitment to reduce the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions."

# Upcoming Festive Season to witness 75% rise in online advertising by small sellers on E-Commerce Platforms

**NEW DELHI:** This festive season, the small sellers on e-commerce platforms are looking to spend 75 percent more than they did in the year on online advertising to drive sales, according to a latest report by management consulting firm Redseer.

Mrigank Gutgutia, Partner at Redseer, said, "The festival period would likely enable sellers, especially the smaller ones, to come out of the challenging sales environment and they were optimistic of strong growth." "Accordingly, they are willing to significantly ramp up their advertising spending on the e-commerce platforms during this festive period," Gutgutia said.

The festival season typically runs from late September or mid-October to December when consumer spending sees a spike.



Overall, across different-sized sellers, the report anticipates a 15 percent spending growth in online ads from the previous year's festive season and a 50 percent growth versus business-as-usual periods of this year.

Flipkart and Amazon, the biggest e-commerce platforms in the country, have announced their flagship season sales in the second week of October, which will build up to Diwali in the second week of November, reported Money

control.

Online retailers expect festive season sales to rise up to 20 percent from the year-ago period to over Rs 90,000 crore as consumer spending normalises and margins improve due to rising ticket sizes of purchases.

The first online festive season sales were held in the country in 2014. Over these 10 years, the ecommerce market has grown almost 20 times from a gross merchandise

value (GMV) of Rs 27,000 crore in the fall of 2014 to an expected level of Rs 5,25,000 crore in 2023.

The number of annual transacting users has jumped 15 times to hit 230 million this year. The festive season is expected to see a minimum of 140 million shoppers doing transactions online.

This year could see increased contributions from higher margin categories like beauty & personal care (BPC), home & general merchandise, fashion, etc, the report said.

"Over the last several quarters, we are seeing enhanced GMV contributions from categories beyond electronics. While electronics sell a lot in the festive period, looking at the bigger picture and comparing the festive sale periods over the last several years, there is a clear trend of category diversification," Gutgutia said.



INTERNATIONAL

# US provided Canada with intelligence on Nijjar's killing: NYT

**NEW YORK:** US intelligence agencies provided information that led Canada to hold India responsible for Khalistan leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar's killing, according to Western-allied officials, The New York Times reported. Following Nijjar's killing on June 18 outside a Sikh temple in British Columbia, "American spy agencies offered their Canadian counterparts context that helped Canada conclude that India had been involved." However, the two allied officials, who spoke to the newspaper on the condition of anonymity, said the "most definitive intelligence" on the killing was collected by Canada. The report coincides with US Ambassador to Canada David Cohen's claims that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegation against India was based on "shared intelligence



among Five Eyes partners". Other than Canada, the five eyes intelligence sharing network is made up of the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand, and was founded in 1946. The US remained unaware of the plot, or evidence linking India's involvement in it, until

the target of an Indian government plot". The United States routinely, and automatically, shares huge amounts of intercepted communications with its closest intelligence partners, including Canada. But the contextual information about the killing was shared deliberately as part of a package of various intelligence streams, "The Times report said. The NYT reached out to a White House spokesman who declined to comment. According to the report, the US officials were reluctant to discuss the killing because America wants to maintain a fine balance between both its allies. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has urged India to cooperate with Canada and ensure "accountability" over Nijjar's killing. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly on Friday, Blinken said the US has been in touch both with India, with which it has warming ties, and Canada, a close ally. "We want to see accountability. And it's important that the investigation runs its course and leads to that result," Blinken said. After claiming that Indian agents played a role in the murder of Canadian citizen Nijjar on Canadian soil, Trudeau on Thursday called on India to cooperate on the investigation. He said that Canada shared evidence on Nijjar's killing with India "many weeks ago". Trudeau's accusation has led to a diplomatic spat between India and Canada with New Delhi rejecting Ottawa's claims as "absurd and motivated", followed by tit-for-tat expulsions of senior diplomats and travel advisories.

## On behalf of Canada, Trudeau apologises for honouring Nazi veteran



On behalf of Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has apologised for honouring a Ukrainian man in Parliament who fought for a Nazi unit during the Second World War. In a statement on Wednesday, Trudeau said: "This is a mistake that deeply embarrassed parliament and Canada," the BBC reported. "All of us who were in this House on Friday regret deeply having stood and clapped even though we did so unaware of the context... It was a horrendous violation of the memory of the millions of people who died in the Holocaust." He said what happened was "deeply, deeply painful" to Jewish people and the many millions who were targeted by the Nazi genocide. Trudeau also apologised directly to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who was visiting Canada and present in Parliament at the time of the incident on September 22, saying: "Canada is deeply sorry." Zelensky was among those pictured applauding the 98-year-old Yaroslav Hunka, who had served in the 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division, a voluntary unit made up mostly of ethnic Ukrainians under Nazi command. The Division members have been accused of killing Polish and Jewish civilians, although the unit has not been found guilty of any war crimes by a tribunal. In the Canadian Parliament, Hunka got a standing ovation and was praised as a Ukrainian and Canadian "hero". Trudeau's apology comes a day after Parliament Speaker Anthony Rota, who has assumed responsibility for inviting the veteran, resigned, saying he was not aware of Hunka's Nazi ties. "The Speaker was solely responsible for the invitation and recognition of this man, and has wholly accepted that responsibility and stepped down," the BBC quoted the Prime Minister as saying in his statement on Wednesday. The incident has drawn widespread condemnation. Pierre Poilievre, leader of Canada's opposition Conservative Party, called the incident the "biggest single diplomatic embarrassment" in Canada's history. Canadian Jewish organisation Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies has said "questions remain as to how this debacle occurred". The debacle has also played into Russia's accusations that Ukraine is run by neo-Nazis, even though Zelensky is himself Jewish. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov expressed outrage about the Canadian honour and said: "Many Western countries, including Canada, have raised a young generation that does not know who fought whom or what happened during the Second World War."

## British Indian MP, 21 others urge UK to halt FTA talks over Manipur violence

**LONDON:** Indian-origin British MP Nadia Whittome has tabled an early day motion in the House of Commons calling the UK to halt its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) talks with India in the wake of the ethnic violence in Manipur. The motion, signed by 21 other MPs, also urged the government to raise the issue of human rights violations in Manipur with the Indian government. "While the Tories are negotiating a free trade agreement with India, minorities face persecution under BJP rule. I tabled a motion highlighting the campaign of violence against the Kuki-Zo people in Manipur," Whittome wrote on X (formerly Twitter) recently. "FTA talks must be halted while this continues," the Labour MP for Nottingham East added. The motion tabled earlier this month notes "the ongoing, grave human rights violations in Manipur, India, including acts of sexual violence, extrajudicial killings, home destruction, forced displacement, torture and ill-treatment, predominantly targeting the Kuki-Zo people, a tribal community who are largely Christian". Highlighting that UN experts have raised serious concerns about the slow and inadequate response by India, the motion stated that it "recognises that these human rights violations occur as part of wider attacks on religious and ethnic minorities across India, many of which public officials have been accused of aiding and abetting".

## Fisheries Development Oman Participates in Russia's Global Fishery Forum & Seafood Expo 2023



Muscat (Oman) Fisheries Development Oman (FDO) participated in the sixth Global Fishery Forum & Seafood Expo from 27th to 29th September 2023 in St. Petersburg, Russia, as part of its commitment to sustainable growth and global expansion. The Expo featured over 400 companies from 34 Russian regions and 14 countries, sprawling over 26,000 square meters of exhibition space. With 139 speakers on the roster, the event promises a convergence of industry leaders, traders, and retailers. Badar Said Al Naabi, Group Director - Business Development, remarked, "As a key player in Oman's fisheries and aquaculture sector, FDO's involvement underscores Oman's position as a large fish producer in the GCC region, in addition to its role as a net exporter of fish and fish products. To elevate this position, Oman is working to expand its seafood exports and access new markets. This involves complying with market requirements and best practices, focusing on food safety, and sustainability, and maintaining an environmentally friendly approach. In addition, the Sultanate of Oman offers attractive business incentives and ensures a clear business environment, alongside continuous improvements in fisheries infrastructure and regulation of the value chain".

## Pro-Khalistani protests held outside Indian diplomatic missions in Canada

**TORONTO:** Several Khalistan supporters rallied outside Indian diplomatic missions in the Canadian cities of Vancouver, Ottawa and Toronto following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegation of India's involvement in the murder of radical Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Nijjar, a designated terrorist in India, was gunned down outside a Sikh temple in Surrey on June 18 this year with Khalistanis across Canada holding Indian diplomats responsible for his death. In downtown Vancouver, around 75 people gathered outside the Consul General of India on Monday chanting pro-Khalistani slogans, where demonstration was staged atop a large flag of India placed on the wet ground, the CBC news outlet reported.



Vancouver police closed the 300 block of Howe Street in anticipation of the event -- called by Khalistani outfit Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) -- which came amid a heavy police presence. Meera Bains, a Sikh-Canadian journalist posted a video of the protest on X, which showed a poster of Prime Minister Narendra Modi garlanded with slippers. She wrote: "Protest in front of the Indian consulate underway on Howe Street in Vancouver. So far a few dozen people but very organised with flags, signs, loud speakers, and PM Modi image on cardboard."

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, leader of SFJ, which was banned by India in 2019, was also present during the protests in Vancouver, and said that they are here "to shut down every Indian Consulate in the world today because the Indian back face has come to the front face". While announcing the protests a week ago, Pannun had said that they would also be calling for the expulsion of High Commissioner Sanjay Verma. Pannun, whose properties in Punjab were recently confiscated by the Indian government, had recently released a video with a view to divide Hindu and Sikh communities in Canada, asking all Hindus of Indian-origin to go back to their mother country.

## Indian agencies discuss threats to Sikhs, Hindus in Canada from Khalistani supporters

**NEW DELHI:** A meeting of Indian intelligence agencies discussed how Canada-based Khalistani terrorists are now openly threatening local Hindus and pro-India Sikhs and defacing temples there, sources said. Pro-India Sikh leader Ripudaman Singh Malik was killed in Canada's Surrey in 2022 and sources said his murder was orchestrated by Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was recently killed by rivals. However, Canadian agencies never initiated any probe against Nijjar or any Khalistani operatives, they said. Incidents of defacing of temples in the recent past were also discussed in the meeting. The officials also discussed

Intelligence agencies' records indicated that Punjab was currently facing significant challenges due to extortion schemes originating from Canada. "Gang members based in Canada employ drones to transport drugs from Pakistan, which are then distributed throughout Punjab. A portion of the proceeds from these illegal activities is funneled back to Khalistani extremists operating in Canada. It is also affecting Punjab," a source said. After 2016, Punjab witnessed target killings of Sikhs and Hindus and Nijjar was behind this. It was discussed in the meeting that Canadian agencies, instead of doing a fair probe, were giving shelter to Khalistani extremists.

## 'US economy headed China's way as debt outpaces growth'

**WASHINGTON:** The US economy seems to be heading the China way with a burgeoning debt outweighing slow growth as the spurt in federal spending since 2021 touches a whopping \$8 trillion. Also, the dollar's reign as the unipolar global currency is threatened with regional blocs in Asia and Europe wanting to trade in local currencies. The US economy could face a "long, slow grind" as huge debts take their toll. There has been \$8 trillion in new federal spending since 2021. "Many nations have come to regret massive stimulus campaigns, as the resulting debts weighed on growth," UK's Financial Times reported. Americas "mini growth miracle" spurred by trillions of dollars in government spend may turn



out to be a burden on the US economy eventually. According to the Rockefeller International chair the US economy's resilience against aggressive rate hikes from the Federal Reserve was indeed surprising. The foundation however warned the spurt in federal spending -- and debt -- under the Biden administration will eventually take its toll, report said. Many nations have come to regret massive stimulus campaigns, as the resulting debts weighed on growth. Big spender China was credited with 'saving the world

after 2008 global meltdown, but it has experienced slow growth since then. "Post-miracle, the US will face similar headwinds. When the stimulus and other temporary boosts wear off, the American economy could settle into a long, slow grind," the Times observed. An anti-dollar drive spearheaded by Asia has spread to Europe, with France growing sour on the greenback's dominance. Economic experts feel the emergence of regional groups such as BRICS, SCO, ASEAN, pose a great threat to the US greenback as trading within the groups start rising. The dollar's supremacy in global trade faces fresh challenges as several countries float plans to use local currencies

in commerce. Russia and Iran are working to create a gold-backed stable coin, while France has pursued a trade deal with China in Yuan, US media reports said. More and more countries draft plans to boost the use of alternative currencies. Nations from China and Russia to India and Brazil increasingly want to trade in non-dollar units -- with projects ranging from the use of local currencies to a gold-backed stablecoin and a new BRICS reserve currency. Now, even Europe appears to be jumping on the anti-dollar bandwagon, with French president Emmanuel Macron recently warning against the continent's dependence on the greenback, the Business Insider noted.

# India's Headache Since 1971

## PAKISTANI ARMY'S OPERATIONS IN KPK REMINDS GENOCIDE OF BANGLADESH

**GOPAL MISRA** The on-going clashes since September 6 on the Afghan-Pakistan borders have caused worries in New Delhi, if not anxiety, that how are they going to impact the already fragile security environment in the region. The situation appears to be heading towards a worst scenario following the reports of a large scale military's crackdown on the Afghan refugees in Karachi. India through diplomatic channels has been pleading with the democratic world that the repression of the hapless Afghan refugees should immediately be stopped. It should also be examined from a larger perspective, especially the confrontation between the Pakistani army and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which might lead to a large scale repercussion. The Taliban Government in Kabul has not only denied the Pakistani allegation that the TTP is being backed by the Afghan Government, it has also been countered and have accused Islamabad for indulging in lies and double-speak. Therefore, the sudden eruption of the Khalistan issue having full support of Pakistan needs to be examined from a larger security perspective of the region, point out Indian strategic affairs experts. It is also being stated that following the exit of the USA from Kabul, China's influence in the region has further increased. The trust deficit between Afghanistan and Pakistan has further caused anxiety in the region. In this context, the biography of the Pakistani

military dictator, General Pervez Musharraf, is being frequently quoted that much funds in dollars had been raised by Pakistan from America by handing over the underground Taliban leaders to the Americans in lieu of millions of US dollars. The case of Abdul Salam Zaeef, the Taliban ambassador to Pakistan, was handed over to American agents, just after the September 11th attacks on New York. With a large number of the Afghan refugees in India, the deteriorating Pak-Afghan relationship would also be impacting India. Islamabad's open support to Khalistanis could be an effort to divert the world's attention from the bigger crisis brewing between the two countries. The recent crack-down by the army on the Afghan refugees in Karachi might become human tragedy. It is estimated and also according to a UN report, the numbers of the Afghan refugees are being estimated to be about 15000, but the actual figures could be in lakhs. Many among them might seek asylum in India. Already a large number of them are staying in India on emergency visas. **Pakistani Army's Hard-line** For the Indian strategic affairs experts, the grim situation is getting further alarming with the each passing day, especially following the adoption of the hard-line against Kabul being adopted by the generals in Rawalpindi, the headquarters of the army. Earlier, it was hoped that the new army chief, Asif Munir, would finally succeed in winning back the confidence of the Afghan Taliban and a permanent truce might finally



be arrived at between Islamabad and Kabul. It appears that Asif Munir is busy in asserting his political role. He has already succeeded in installing Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, as caretaker PM. However, according to the watchers of the political and military developments in Pakistan, he has so far not been able to win confidence of army's powerful factions once the erstwhile army chief, Jawed Qamar Bajwa and Faize Hamid. These two top military officers had always been enjoying confidence of the Taliban. If Bajwa is remembered as one of the most influential chiefs, Faize Hamid was one of the most effective chief of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). Both Bajwa and Faize Hamid are known to be having excellent ties with Kabul, while the present incumbent in the ISI, Nadeem Ahmed Anjum, does not enjoy the proximity his predecessor have had with the Taliban. Similarly, Kakar's elevation as PM, who is from Baluchistan and a first-time senator, could not obtain much support from the strife-torn province, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), where the TTP has emerged as a major political force. The former PM



Imran Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has been ruling the province for several years, is not opposed to TTP. Similarly, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), which is running hundreds of schools or madarasas has students supporting TTP. Another influential political outfit in KPK is Awami National Party of Wali Khan, son of the legendary Abdul Gaffar Khan or Frontier Gandhi. It means that the Pakistani army does not have adequate political ground support in the region, where the TTP continues to occupy vast territories of Chitral. **Political Solution** Unless fresh polls are held and the two former prime ministers, Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan Muslim League - Noon and Imran Khan are allowed to contest, the army does not have adequate political support to deal with the strife. There is a trust deficit between Kakar and the people of KPK. He had initiated his political career in the Muslim League of the army dictator, General Pervez Musharraf. Earlier, he was groomed by the GHQ known for having closed door sessions with the country's policy makers, briefings to the country's political and military elite, sessions on building anti-Baluchistan narrative. Born in 1971, he is a post-graduate in political science and has been closely associated with the National Defence University, Islamabad. Earlier, with a view to accommodate the regional aspirations of the people of the region, Islamabad had conceded the erstwhile territories of the FATA in to the existing province of KPK. With this it has become multiethnic comprising Pashtuns, Hindkowans, Saraikis and Chitralis. Indian Concerns - Earlier, KPK was a part of the all-inclusive Indian culture and was known as Gandhara. The ruins of its ancient capital, Pushkavati still narrate its glorious past. It has frequently been mentioned in Vedic epics, including Rig Veda, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, and its valiant people had repulsed the invading army of Alexander. Before the colonial rule, it was under the secular regime of Maharaja Ranajit Singh, though British called him a Sikh ruler. The region has always been a part of India. During the Mughal rule as well as under the British regime, the people from Afghanistan could freely move in the undivided India. It may also be noted that during the country's freedom movement, the people of the region were on the forefront of the freedom struggle. Abdul Gaffar Khan, who is also remembered as Seemant Gandhi or Frontier Gandhi, one of the confidants of Mahatma Gandhi, had vehemently opposed India's partition in 1947. It may be recalled that on January 20, 1988, much against the advice of the then Pakistani dictator, Zia-ul-Haq, Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi had flown to Peshawar to pay last respect to the Frontier Gandhi. He was accompanied by Sonia, and several Indian ministers. Late Abdul Wali Khan, son of the Frontier Gandhi, had launched the National Awami Party. Its current president is Asfandyar Khan, one of the grandsons of the Frontier Gandhi. Tens of thousands of mourners attended his funeral including Afghan President Mohammad Najibullah, marching through the Khyber Pass from Peshawar towards Jalalabad, where he was later buried as per his wishes. He had never accepted divi-

sion of Paktoon territories by the Durand Line, and the issue continues to haunt Pakistan-Afghan relations. The failure of the 20-year US-led military operations in Afghanistan finally leading to the exit of the western power could not force the people of the war-ravaged country to succumb. It, however, led to a large number of refugees being poured into Pakistan. They are estimated to be in millions during decades of successive wars facing unprecedented hardships. Many among these refugees are reported to be living in peace in the aid camps with restricted access to education, healthcare and employment. It is estimated that 1.3 million are registered refugees and 880,000 more have legal status to remain in Pakistan, according to the latest United Nations figures. The ongoing crackdown against the Afghan refugees, many among them living since two generations, in and around Karachi, are being implicated in false cases as drug trafficking or for smuggling in weapons. The crisis, according to the observers in New Delhi, might further deepen leading to a much-bigger eruption of violence. It is being apprehended that any large scale confrontation between Afghanistan and Pakistan might not only disrupt the fragile peace in the region, it would adversely be affecting India too. *Gopal Misra has been associated with national and international media. His books on journalism and geo-politics have been well-appreciated. Views are personal.*

## US UAW to add strike targets against 'Big Three' automakers



The US United Auto Workers (UAW) union has planned to add strike targets against the 'Big Three' American auto giants -- Ford, GM Stellantis -- on Friday if there was no major progress in their contract negotiation, a source told the media. The list of potential strike targets in the next stage involves engine and transmission facilities, as well as large pickup trucks and SUV factories, Xinhua news agency quoted the UAW source as saying to The Detroit News on Wednesday. Like last week, the new locations for strike would be announced at 10 a.m. on a Facebook livestream hosted by the union, and the strike will begin at noon on Friday. The UAW's unprecedented strike against the Big Three is now on its 13th day. The UAW went on strike on September 15 at three select facilities of Ford, GM and Stellantis, and expanded the strike to 38 General Motors (GM) and Stellantis facilities on September 22. Nationwide, 18, 300 UAW autoworkers at 41 Ford Motor Co, GM and Stellantis NV facilities in 20 states are on strike, asking for higher wages, pensions for all workers and elimination of the tiered wage systems.



# PCB chief Zaka Ashraf calls India an 'enemy country'.

SUNIL THAPLIYAL  
New Delhi

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Zaka Ashraf has spouted venom against India. After a long time, the Pakistan cricket team has come to India to participate in the World Cup. The arrival of the Pakistan team is triggering a wave of joy among the cricket fans of both countries. The Pakistani players have received a warm welcome in India.

Meanwhile, a video has been circulating on social media in which Ashraf calls India an 'enemy country'. While talking about the new contracts given to the players by the PCB, Ashraf used such words about India. Such statements by this official of the Pakistan Cricket Board are met with strong disapproval in India.

In this video, Ashraf says, 'We have given these contracts to our players with a lot of love and affection. In the history of Pakistan, the players have never received so much money. My aim is to increase the enthusiasm of our players who have gone abroad. They have participated in a competition in an enemy country.'



The Pakistan team will play a practice match on Friday ahead of the World Cup. The team will face New Zealand at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad. For security reasons, fans will not be allowed entry to this match. Pakistan's second match will be against Australia on October 3 at the same ground. In the World Cup, Pakistan will also play both its two opening matches at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium.

Pakistan will play its first two matches in the 2023 World Cup at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad.

Earlier, Zaka Ashraf had threatened not to send his team to India for the World Cup. However, later, the Pakistan Cricket Board had to relent and send his team to India. Ashraf had also raised hurdles during the Asia Cup. India had clearly refused to visit Pakistan for the tournament.

The BCCI had demanded that the Asian Cup be played at a neutral venue, and this was done. For this reason, only four matches of the Asia Cup were played in Pakistan, while nine matches were organised in Sri Lanka.

Pakistan team for the World Cup Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Abdullah Shafiq, Mohammad Rizwan, Saud Shakeel, Iftikhar Ahmed, Salman Ali Agha, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Shaheen Afridi, and Mohammad Wasim.



Hindu devotees carry idols of the elephant-headed Hindu god Ganesha for immersion into a canal on the final day of the 10 days long Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Amritsar on Thursday. The festival is a celebration of the birth of Ganesha, the Hindu god of wisdom, prosperity and good fortune. PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

## India's nomination in the Oscar race is Malayalam film "2018 - Everyone is a Hero"

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA  
New Delhi

As we know, nowadays, the southern part of India is reigning the 'film award winner' and again the Malayalam film chosen for Oscar. The Malayalam film '2018: Everyone is a Hero' took up the baton to represent the country at the Oscars, leaving everyone behind. This film by Jude Antony Joseph is made in the context of the terrible floods in Kerala in 2018. The film starring Tovino Thomas, Kunchacko Boban, Alif Ali took the box office by storm when it was released in May this year. According to statistics, it is the highest grosser in the history of Malayalam cinema.



Jury board chairman Girish Kasarvalli told the media that the film was chosen for its innovative subject matter like 'climate change'. In the crowd of 22 films like 'The Kerala Story', 'Rocky Aur Rani Ki Prem Kahani', 'Ghumar' in the list, finally it is in favour of fate, '2018-Everyone is a hero'. This time, '2018' is going to compete for the best international feature film on the stage of Oscar. Everyone from the director to the crew is naturally excited about this news. In the words of lead actor Tovino Thomas, '2018 is finally India's official entry on the stage of the Oscars, there could be no better news than this. After the adversity we shot, this kind of news is really heartening. Director Joseph said, "It feels good to think that the film will represent the country at the Oscars."

## Meeting Ali Fazal on the sets of 'Fukrey' was serendipity says Richa Chadha



MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Richa Chadha, who has been an integral part of the 'Fukrey' franchise, shared her feelings about missing her actor-husband Ali Fazal, on the sets of 'Fukrey 3'. Ali is known for his role as Zafar in the comedy series, but couldn't be a part of the third instalment due to scheduling conflicts. It was during the filming of the very first instalment of the film, when Richa and Ali's love story blossomed. As they fondly remember their journey, Richa acknowledges the role that 'Fukrey' played in bringing them together. "Meeting Ali on the sets of 'Fukrey' was serendipity," Richa said.

## Ramita bags twin medals at Asian Games 2023



ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

Ramita Jindal logged India's first individual medal with a bang in the Asian Games 2022 being played in Hangzhou. Touted as one of the most promising shooters in India, the Gun for Glory (GFG) athlete fired her way to a bronze medal in the individual 10 air rifle women's event while her GFG stablemate and Olympic hopeful Mehuli Ghosh finished fourth. Also, the duo along with Ashi Chouksey brought home the team silver medal. "I feel like being on top of the world. It is like a dream come true. The medals belong to everyone who believed in me and supported me," said the 19-year-old from China. "I dedicate these medals to my parents who have supported me through the thick and thin of my shooting journey thus far," said the Hansraj College student.

Ramita's performance at the 2023 Asian Games was nothing short of a remarkable feat. With unparalleled precision and unwavering focus, she showcased her extraordinary talents throughout the competition, ultimately securing the bronze medal behind Chinese athletes Han Jiayu and Huang Yuting who secured Gold and Silver respectively. Her achievement is a testament to her relentless commitment to excellence and the world-class training she receives at Gun for Glory Shooting Academy which was founded by London Olympic medalist Gagan Narang—who is an Asian Games medalist in his own right and Shri Pawan Singh, Hon Secretary General, National Rifle Association of India.

## Waheeda Rehman will be honored with Dadasaheb Phalke Award

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA  
New Delhi

Waheeda Rehman will be honored with Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Hon'ble I & B minister Anurag Thakur said. Actress Waheeda Rehman, who has left an indelible mark with her acting in the cinema world, has once again come into limelight. The actress has been selected for the biggest award in the cinema world, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award. This is a time when the historic Nari Shakti Vandan Act has been passed by the Parliament. During this time, this Lifetime Achievement Award is being honored to those women who have dedicated their lives after



films. Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur has announced the name of the 53rd Dadasaheb Phalke Award. Last year this honor was given to Asha Parekh. Now this honor will be given to Waheeda Rehman. Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur tweeted, "I feel extremely happy and honored to announce that Waheeda Rehman ji will be honored with the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Lifetime Achievement Award this year for her outstanding contribution to Indian cinema. Being honored with".

## India Ageing Report unveils critical insights into elderly care



FW DESK  
New Delhi

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), India, in collaboration with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), unveiled the highly anticipated "India Ageing Report 2023." This report sheds light on the challenges, opportunities and institutional responses surrounding elderly care in India, as India navigates a demographic shift towards an ageing population. The report was jointly released by Saurabh Garg, Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India and Ms. Andrea M. Wojnar, UNFPA India Representative and Country Director Bhutan.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann reaches at Taj Hotel to attend the 31st Northern Zonal Council Meeting in Amritsar on Tuesday, September 26. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann during the 31st Northern Zonal Council Meeting at Taj Hotel in Amritsar on Tuesday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah reaches at Taj Hotel to attend the 31st Northern Zonal Council Meeting in Amritsar on Tuesday. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also seen in Pic. Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Governors and Chief Ministers of northern states at the 31st Northern Zonal Council Meeting, in Amritsar on Tuesday. PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

## Poonawalla Fincorp Launches new campaign 'Log toh Sawaal Kareng Hi'

NEW DELHI: Poonawalla Fincorp Limited, a Cyrus Poonawalla group promoted non-banking finance company, launched the digital campaign 'Log toh Sawaal Kareng Hi'. With this new campaign, Poonawalla Fincorp throws light on how people end up taking loans at high interest and pay higher EMIs despite having good credit behaviour

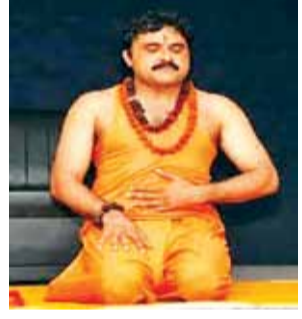


and high credit scores. This campaign is targeted at borrowers with high credit scores to explore hassle-free loan options with affordable interest rates, other benefits and to consider transferring their high interest loans to Poonawalla Fincorp. This campaign has two short humorous and witty films, creating awareness about Poonawalla Fincorp's capabilities of providing instant & hassle-free loans at low interest rates to people with high credit score through its website, mobile application, or call centre platforms.

## Dimension called Pitir Lok and propitiation techniques...!

YOGI ASHWINI

The soul incarnates into a physical body which is made up of the five elements in various permutations and combinations, reincarnating birth after birth depending on the kind of karmas which one does in a lifetime. There are certain souls who do not reincarnate, either because they are finished with their karmic cycle of bhulok [the prithvi lok] or because they are stuck in a different dimension of existence and are unable to manifest in the human body, as their karmic balance is not sufficient to entitle them for a human birth. These souls either



remain suspended as energies called ghosts and spirits or they go to a different dimension of existence called the Pitir Lok or the lok of the ancestors. Whatever dimension or level of existence they are in, unless

they have been freed from the cycle of birth and death, they need energy from their offsprings to enable them to reincarnate again. Shrads are an important part of the Hindu/Vedic culture and cater to these ancestors' needs. On these days the constellations are such that the gateways to the other dimensions open and they are allowed to visit the earth to meet their near and dear ones. These ancestors depend on their children and grandchildren to do good deeds in their name and to chant specific mantras, both these acts free the souls from bondages of these not desired yonis or levels of existences.

## World Tourism Day 2023 focuses on Green Investments...

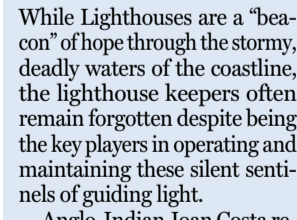


KAVITA SHARMA  
As the world celebrates Tourism day September 27 it is important to understand the responsibilities we all have, to save the beauty and diversity of our beautiful Planet Earth. Tourism does not only have an economic impact but also influences social, cultural and sustainable development. It is our responsibility to offer a clean and green environment for the future generations. Every year the United Nations World Travel Organization (UNWTO) selects a host country to create a unique theme for the event. This year Saudi Arabia is the host country and theme for World Tourism Day 2023 is "Tourism and Green Investments". It focuses on investments in environment friendly tourism projects. The two-days (27-28sept) Tourism event started in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia with participation of around 500 government officials and tourism experts from 120 countries. UN Secretary Antonio Guterres says "Tourism is a powerful force for progress and mutual understanding. But this force must be protected and nurtured to deliver its full benefits. On the World Tourism day we recognize the vital need for green investments to build a tourism sector that delivers for the people and the planet. So let us do more to harness the full potential of sustainable tourism because it is for betterment of future for all." Green Investments for a sustainable future  
Tourism is one of the largest industries that contributes to the global economy. It pro-

# Indian Lighthouses Festival in Goa highlights Maritime Tourism

DOMINICK RODRIGUES  
Panjim

Lighthouses have been associated with legendary tales, even as they guided shipping to safe shores amidst the deadly, rocky outcropping in the sea that often smashed up unwary ocean-going vessels. Today, Lighthouses are being given a new lease on life through focus on their unique tourism aspects that provide thrills to tourists. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently expressed happiness over the inauguration of the Indian Lighthouse Festival (Bharatiya Prakash Shambh Utsav) at Aguada Fort in Goa and noted the growing enthusiasm towards Lighthouses as key tourist spots.



While Lighthouses are a "beacon" of hope through the stormy, deadly waters of the coastline, the lighthouse keepers often remain forgotten despite being the key players in operating and maintaining these silent sentinels of guiding light. Anglo-Indian Joan Costa recalls the exciting journey of two generations of lighthouse keepers in her family. "My paternal grandfather William Noronha, who was a Portuguese, was a lighthouse keeper and when he retired at Tangasseri in Kerala, his son Bertram answered an advertisement to join as Assistant Lighthouse Keeper at Vengurla in Maharashtra, and embarked on this career journey that also



included the lighthouses in +Oyster Rock+ (Karwar) and Bhatkal in Karnataka, besides Jaigarh, Uttan and Tarapur in Maharashtra. "The lighthouse keeper's job was to flash the lighthouse light from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. daily for warning shipping and helping them to identify and avoid the rocky areas on their journey.



Contact to the mainland was through a signalling lamp, besides a Grundig radio for music and news" Joan said. "Going to the main coast for shopping and food supplies often witnessed Mum and a 'Khalasi' rowing the dinghy with Dad steering on the Rudder." "Dad took a milch cow to the Island to provide milk for his

growing family (numbering nine children), while some protein came from our own poultry and from the fish we caught in the sea. Since the lighthouses were on islands in the sea, rowing a boat to and fro to shore for life's necessities and emergencies was the norm, where otherwise Mum Blanche Jacob was the family all-rounder including house doctor."

"Dad even ferried soil to the rocky island and grew vegetables, besides also two coconut trees of which one still stands tall even today." "Once the Prince of Bhavnagar came to buy an island and my Dad Bertram took him around the lighthouse. The Prince's cousin Luv Kumar was an avian researcher and he came here to visit some islands, where he caught a huge eagle that they took to their palace in Bhavnagar. They later wrote a book about us and the lighthouse. Spooky stories were plentiful on these lighthouse islands and some lighthouse keepers still narrate tales about the +ghosts+ that haunt these places.

performances, light and sound shows, melodious evenings with celebrity singers, coastal cuisine and community engagements. Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal had inaugurated the Festival along with the Goa Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant and Union MoS Shripad Naik, besides State Tourism Minister

Rohan Khaunte and Goa MLA Michael Lobo. The Festival aims to transform historic lighthouses into tourist hotspots through the Public Private Partnership route," Sonowal said, adding "This Festival is a process to unravel the rich heritage of these iconic sites, while rejuvenating the age-old classics among these lighthouses across coastal India to become

catalysts of educational, cultural and tourist hotspots." "For far too long, these silent sentinels of our coastlines were left ignored while serving as the light of hope to scores of sailors and ships amidst the darkest nights," he said, adding "This Festival is our Mission to inform, engage and educate all about the vital role this historic

beacons have played in our nation's history." The Festival is aimed at rejuvenating the rich maritime history of India's 75 historical lighthouse sites that will be developed as major tourist destinations, while also unraveling their illustrious stories to the world. The Marina Beach in Chennai recently hosted a satellite event that celebrated

the rich heritage of the Indian lighthouses. As part of the "Reform to Transform" initiative, the Modi Government enacted the "Marine Aids to Navigation Act, 2021 by repealing the Lighthouse Act, 1927 to provide a framework for development, maintenance and management of aids to navigation in India

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