

REGION

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## TRIDENT FOUNDATION INITIATIVE "PARALI SAMADHAN": A LIFELINE FOR FARMERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT



# AAP's appeal to the Guv - Do not violate the Constitution to please your central leadership

**CHANDIGARH:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) reacting to the Supreme Court reprimanding the Punjab Governor on the Punjab Government vs Governor dispute. The party thanked the Supreme Court for this decision and said that this decision is going to strengthen the country's constitution and democracy.

Addressing the media at the party office in Chandigarh on Friday, AAP Punjab chief spokesperson Malvinder Singh Kang said that three crore people of Punjab have elected the AAP government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to take decisions related to the functioning of the state, not to the Governor.

He said that the Constitution



of the country gives the right to take decisions to those elected by the people. The Governor has very limited authority in this matter. The court has also said the same.

He said that Punjab has suffered a lot due to the Governor calling the session illegal and



withholding the bills passed by the Assembly. This way is not good for our democracy.

Kang said that according to Article 200 of the Constitution, the Governor can either give his assent to the bills passed by the House or send them back to the Assembly Speaker or reserve

them for the President's approval. In the matter of bills, the Governor has no other option. Kang appealed to the Governor and said that he should not do anything unconstitutional to please his central leadership. Preserve the democratic system and follow constitutional decorum, advised Kang.

Kang condemned the opposition parties for supporting the Governor and said that the opposition leaders should apologize to the people of Punjab for this. They supported the Governor's unconstitutional takes. He said that the opposition leaders should decide whether they are with the non-constitutional activities of the Modi government or with the Constitution of our country.

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

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## 'INSTASHIELD- THE VIRUS SLAYER' SIGNS MOU WITH MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOR EXPANSION IN US MARKET



# Surge in October GST Collection due to Increased Economic Activity, says CBIC Chairman

**NEW DELHI:** The increase in Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections for October was primarily a result of heightened economic activity rather than an outcome of tax authorities issuing notices, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Sanjay Kumar Agarwal said Wednesday.

Speaking at the side-lines of the DPIIT-CII National Conference on Ease of Doing Business, Kumar informed that the department will soon start sending advisories to businesses who are non-compliant in issuing e-invoices to their B2B customers.

"The growth in October GST collections was riding on economic activity and not because of notices that were sent (to online gaming companies) notices were sent



because of the time limitation which was coming to an end for the year 2017-18. So it's not because of that. Also, the notices issued to online gaming companies are in dispute but the growth has come purely on the economic activity which has taken place in the country," Agarwal said.

In October, GST revenue experienced a 13.4 percent

increase, reaching Rs 1.72 lakh crore, marking the second-highest level since the introduction of the indirect tax system. The peak collection in April reached Rs 1.87 lakh crore. Notices have been sent to companies by GST authorities for the underpayment of taxes in the 2017-18 fiscal year, as the deadline for issuing these notices for that fiscal year was September 30, 2023.

"The robust growth in GST revenue from Integrated GST (IGST) on imports, primarily attributed to an increase in imports in comparison to previous months. This surge in imports could be attributed to companies possibly restocking their inventory, or it could be in anticipation of the upcoming festive season," he said.

POTPOURRI

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## KAREENA KAPOOR BACK IN BLAZING NEW AVATAR AS AVNI BAJIRAO IN 'SINGHAM 3'



# PM Modi and Kharge greet nation on Dhanteras



**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday greeted the people of the country on the occasion of Dhanteras.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "Many congratulations to all my family members of the country on Dhanteras, a festival symbolizing health, happiness and prosperity. I wish that with the grace of Lord Dhanvantari, all of you always remain healthy, prosperous and happy, so that the determination of a developed India continues to get new energy."

Dhanteras is celebrated two days prior to the festival of lights, Diwali, across the country. In fact, Dhanteras marks the beginning of Diwali.

Diwali is one of the most awaited festivals of the year. This year, Diwali will be celebrated on November 12. Dhanteras is celebrated on the thirteenth lunar day of Krishna Paksha of the Hindu month of Kartik.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge also greeted the nation on the occasion of Dhanteras, saying let the festival bring happiness and prosperity in lives.

Kharge in a post on X said, "Best wishes to all the countrymen on the holy festival of Dhanteras.

"On this auspicious occasion, we wish that Goddess Laxmi brings happiness, peace, prosperity and glory in your life."

Dhanteras is celebrated two days prior to the festival of lights, Diwali, across the country.

# SIA conducts raids at multiple locations in Kashmir in terror funding case



The State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Friday conducted raids at multiple locations in Anantnag and Pulwama in south Kashmir, as part of an ongoing investigation into a terror-funding case.

Officials stated that the raids were carried out in connection with the "illegal raising, layering, and laundering of proceeds of crime" by the accused individuals.

Earlier on Wednesday, the SIA had also conducted raids at multiple locations in Jammu and Kashmir in relation to a terror-funding case.

In another development, a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) trooper allegedly shot himself dead with his service rifle near Jawhar tunnel in Qazigund area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district, officials said.

# SGPC General House passes several resolutions regarding Sikh issues

INDIA AND CANADA URGED TO JOIN HANDS TO REMOVE THE BITTERNESS IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES

**JAGMOHAN SINGH**  
Amritsar

The General House session of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) on November 8 has passed several resolutions regarding Sikh issues, which were approved by the members present. These resolutions include an important resolution regarding the release of Bandi Singhs (Sikh prisoners).

Moreover, the resolutions demanded simplification of SGPC's voter registration process besides increasing the time for registration, ending the discrimination against the Punjabi language, taking care of Sikh heritage in Pakistan, and standing in favor of Punjab for water issues especially the Satluj Yamuna Link (SYL) canal.

Targeting the governments in a resolution demanding the release of the Sikh prisoners, it was said that this discrimination was a violation of human rights. The Sikh prisoners are not being released even after completion of their sentences. Through this resolution, it was demanded from the Centre and concerned state (Delhi and Karnataka) governments to stop discrimination against the Sikhs and release the Sikh prisoners immediately. In this regard, the General House appealed to all



Sikh bodies, religious organizations, Sant Samaj, Nihang Singh organisations, and Sikh political parties to unite against the governments. Sikh prisoner Bhai Balwant Singh Rajoana also appealed that the entire Sikh community is with the Bandi Singhs, so he should not take any step inside the jail which would create anxiety in the community.

Through a resolution, a demand was made to simplify the process of SGPC's voter registration and extend the time for this process. It was said that the Gurdwara Election Commission should play an impartial role in the process of SGPC voter registration that should be free from any government influence. Through this resolution, the Chief Commissioner of Gurdwara Elections was asked to extend the time for voter registration, to ensure arrangements for special camps to register SGPC

votes at the booth level besides permitting the submission of voter forms collectively to save the voters from harassment. It was also apprehended that the incumbent Punjab government is working on a policy to show a reduced number of Sikhs in Punjab through the Gurdwara Election Commission.

In the resolution passed regarding the discrimination against the Punjabi language, it has been said that in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, the people of Punjabi origin are forced to submit applications in the government offices for their work in Hindi and English languages, which should stop immediately. Moreover, the governments were asked to adopt a serious approach to stop the discrimination against the Punjabi language in Chandigarh and Punjab.

In a resolution, India and Canada were urged to join

hands to remove the bitterness in the relations between the two countries. The resolution passed said that due to the situation between the two countries, Sikhs and Punjabis are facing hate propaganda for no reason. This is extremely unfortunate, towards which the governments should give serious consideration.

Through a resolution, a commitment was expressed to protect the waters of Punjab and oppose the SYL canal. It was said that the SGPC will play a leading role in every struggle for the waters of Punjab.

Through a resolution, it was also demanded that the Punjab government should release the outstanding amount worth crores of rupees of the post-matric scholarship scheme for the SC/ST/OBC students studying in the educational institutions of the SGPC. It was said that more than Rs 50 crores of the educational institutions of the Sikh body are outstanding towards the Punjab government, due to which the institutions are going towards financial crisis. The government should release this amount immediately.

In a resolution, the government of Pakistan has been appealed for the maintenance and preservation of Sikh heritage and historical Gurdwara Sahibs in the neighbouring country.

# Indian Railways generates Rs 224.95 cr revenue, frees up 11.8 lakh sq ft of space

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian Railways freed up 11.80 lakh square feet of space and generated revenue of Rs 224.95 crore through scrap disposal in offices and workplaces under its 'Special Campaign 3.0'.

The campaign was launched by the government focusing on cleanliness all around, reducing pendency of public matters and improving work-culture at the work places.

The Special Campaign 3.0 was taken up by the Railways from October 2 to October 31 with increased enthusiasm and wider ambit of targets to further promote cleanliness and good governance.

The Railway Ministry in a statement said that during the campaign, 23,672 cleanliness campaigns were conducted across the entire Indian Rail-



ways including zonal offices, divisional offices, PSUs, PUs, training institutes, railway workshops and stations.

"Special focus has been given to scrap disposal in offices and workplaces which resulted in freeing up of 11.80 lakh square feet of space and generated revenue of Rs 224.95 crore," the ministry said. It also said that more than 2.8 lakh public grievances have been resolved during the campaign.

# Bankruptcy Act not violative of fundamental rights, few clauses to be reconsidered: Supreme Court

**MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA**  
New Delhi

The Supreme Court upheld the amendment to the Bankruptcy Code. However, a top court bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Mishra on Thursday accepted the need to review some sections of the new bankruptcy rules.

However, the three-judge bench on the whole did not agree



to call the new bankruptcy rules 'arbitrary'. Cases of a total of 391 petitioners, including Surendra B Jivaraj, were heard together in the apex court. Incidentally, the Supreme Court refused to accept the allegations that the rule was against the 'fundamental rights', 'right to fair trial' and 'right to livelihood' of

the Indian Constitution.

The amendment to the Bankruptcy Code introduced by the Narendra Modi government said that, if necessary, action can be taken under the Bankruptcy Act against the guarantor of the debtor. Even after the approval of the revival plan of the ailing and insolvent company, the guarantors of the said loan will not be relieved of their liability. The Supreme Court had already dismissed the objection.

# Two facilities to reduce stubble burning in 40,000 acres in Punjab



**CHANDIGARH:** Compressed biogas developer EverEnviro Resource Management Private Ltd on Wednesday signed off-take agreement with Torrent Gas to be facilitated by GAIL India Ltd to reduce stubble burning in 40,000 acres of fields in Punjab, a major cause of smog over the Delhi NCR. As per the agreement, signed under CGD Synchronisation scheme, the biogas will be produced by company's two facilities in Sangrur and Patiala.

Each plant is slated to daily produce approximately 15 tonnes per day of compressed biogas or bio CNG and is capable of utilizing over 40,000 metric tonnes of paddy residue annually.

Collectively these plants have the capacity to produce over 25,000 tonnes fermented organic manure annually.

# Since 2018 arrest warrants not served to diamantaire Nirav Modi & kin, court orders separate trial

**NEW DELHI:** With uncertainty looming over the extradition of fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi and his brother Neeshal Modi, a special court has allowed the CBI to separate their trial from two others accused in the multi-crore rupees Punjab National Bank scam.

While Nirav is facing extradition proceedings in the UK, Neeshal is a Belgium citizen.

Two others accused in the same case, an authorised signatory of Modi's firms, Hemant Bhatt, 71, and former PNB Deputy Manager Gokulnath Shetty, 66, have remained in CBI custody for over five years, since the scam erupted in January 2018. In October, the CBI Special Public Prosecutor A. Limosin had submitted a plea before the Special CBI Court Judge S.M. Menjoge, saying that after completing the probe, a charge sheet was filed against 25 people before the court on May 14, 2018, and later named 30 accused in its supplementary charge sheet.

However, the Modi siblings Nirav and Neeshal were unavailable during the entire probe, so the Special Court had issued non-bailable warrants



of arrest against them after 10 days, which remain unserved as the two wanted accused are abroad.

The plea said that though Nirav's extradition process is on with uncertainty on how long it could take, there were little prospects of Neeshal's immediate return as he is a citizen of Belgium, and sought to separate the Modi brothers' trial from the other two.

Observing that "speedy trial is the right of any accused and they cannot keep languishing in jail without trial," the Special Judge Menjoge has permitted the CBI to try the duo of Shetty and Bhatt separately.

The Modi brothers, along with others, including their family members and bank officials are accused in the sensational PNB fraud of over Rs 14,000-crore that hit the banking industry in January 2018.

Efforts by the CBI and other agencies to nab them proved futile as they already fled the country days before the PNB admitted to the scam, and later the Enforcement Directorate also entered the probe.

Declared a fugitive economic offender in December 2019, Nirav Modi also faces money-laundering charges and several of his properties-assets were seized and some of them sold off to recover a small portion of the huge dues to the banks.

# Winter session of Parliament from 4th to 22nd Dec, 15 meetings will be held in 19 days

**MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA**  
New Delhi

The winter session of Parliament will be held from 4 to 22 December, during which 15 meetings will be held. Besides, 12 recommendations regarding the report of MP Mahua Moitra's case will also be presented in the House in this session. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Prahlaad Joshi had posted this information on X Handle. He told that the winter session will be held from December 4 to December 22. There will be a total of 15 meetings in these 19 days. He is hopeful that there will be serious discussions on legislative work and other topics during the session amid Amrit Kal. This time, the results of the assembly elections of five states will also be declared on December 3 and the winter session will start from the very next day.

According to the source, three key Bills replacing the key criminal law (Crpc) are likely to be considered/ passed during this session. The Stand-



ing Committee on Home Affairs recently accepted its report on the 3 Bills. Besides, other bills are also pending in Parliament, regarding the other key issues is appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioner. The government did not insist on passing this bills in the special session of Parliament amid opposed from the opposition. Through this bill, the government wants to bring the status of the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioner equal to that of the Cabinet Secretary, currently they have the status equal to that of a Supreme Court judge.

# Eknath Shinde unveils Shivaji statue in Kashmir's Kupwara

**FW DESK**

A statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, a 17th-century Maratha king, was unveiled in Kupwara district of Kashmir, marking a new symbol of nationalism. The unveiling ceremony was led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and attended by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Maharashtra Cultural Affairs Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar, Major General Girish Kalia, GOC, Vajr Division, and other senior army and civil officers.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is a historical figure known for his battles against Muslim Mughal rulers. However, he is widely regarded as a secular king who belonged to a marginalized caste.

Before the revocation of special status in 2019, Kashmir had limited statues installed in public places. One of the few existing ones was a bust of Major Somnath Sharma, a war hero who died while defending against tribal invaders from Pakistan in 1947. The newly unveiled statue stands at 10 feet and portrays the Maratha warrior king riding a horse. It has been erected at a Maratha Light Infantry Regiment camp in Kupwara, and the occasion was marked with special prayers conducted by a priest. A joint effort between the Pune-based NGO Anhi Punekar and the 41 Rashtriya Rifles of the Indian Army (Maratha Li), the statue was welcomed with enthusiasm by numerous army personnel, who celebrated its arrival in Kupwara.



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# Supreme Court's decision in Punjab government Governor case is a victory of democracy : AAP

**CHANDIGARH:** The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab thanked the Supreme Court for its verdict in favour of the Mann government in the Punjab Government-Governor dispute and said that this decision is a victory of the people of Punjab and democracy.

Addressing the media at the party headquarters in Chandigarh on Monday, AAP Punjab chief spokesperson Malvinder Singh Kang launched an attack on the BJP government at the Center and said that the Constitution of India gives the right to rule the state to the representatives elected by the people. But unfortunately, the Modi government is continuously trying to control the opposition ruled states through governors.



Kang said that the Modi government has damaged the dignity of the governor's post by using it for political interference. This entire incident has hurt the dignity of Punjab Governor's post too.

Kang said that the Supreme

Court questioned the Governor's lawyer that when the Punjab Government came to the Supreme Court, then the Governor passed the pending bills. He did not have any concrete answer to this.

Kang said that according to

the Constitution, the Governor is the constitutional head of the state, but it is clearly written in the Constitution that the Governor is bound to work as per the advice of the Council of Ministers. Therefore the role of the elected government is more important.

Kang said that the way the Governor interfered in the daily functioning of the Punjab government and carried out political interference, Punjab suffered a lot because of that.

Kang also criticized opposition leaders for supporting the governor in his wrong decisions. He said that the opposition leaders have betrayed Punjab too. All of them should apologize to the people of Punjab for supporting the Governor.

# Harjinder Singh Dhama elected SGPC President for third consecutive term

**JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar**

Harjinder Singh Dhama elected President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) for the third consecutive term, during the annual election of the SGPC office-bearers. Of the total polled 137 votes, Dhama bagged 118, his opponent Balbir Singh Ghunas bagged 17 and two votes were cancelled.

During the house, the head granthi of Sachkhand Sri Harmandir Sahib and Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib Giani Raghbir Singh, Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib Giani Sultan Singh, additional head granthi of Sri Akal Takht Sahib Giani Malkit Singh and 137 members of the SGPC were present.

SGPC member Harbhajan Singh Masana was elected unopposed as senior vice-president, Gurbakhsh Singh Khalsa as junior vice-president and Bhai Rajinder Singh Mehta as general secretary in the house. Eleven members of the SGPC's executive committee include Mohan Singh Bangi, Raghbir Singh Saharanmaja, Jasmer Singh Lachhru, Khushwinder Singh Bhatia, Bibi Hardeep Kaur Khokh, Indermohan Singh Lakhmirwala, Gurpreet Singh Jhabbar, Bibi Malkit Kaur Kamalpur, Amarjit Singh Bhalaur, Bibi Jaspal Kaur, and Jaswant Singh Puraun.



### HIGHLIGHT

- Dhama bags 118 votes, while Balbir Singh Ghunas 17 votes
- Harbhajan Singh Masana to be senior vice-president, Gurbakhsh Singh Khalsa as junior vice-president, Bhai Rajinder Singh Mehta as general secretary

there are also many Panthic issues. He said that whether it is the Centre government or the Punjab government, interference is being made in the voter registration process. He raised the apprehension that the Gurdwara Election Commission giving little time for SGPC's voter registration process, it appears to be the government's intention to register fewer Sikh voters so that they are shown as a minority in Punjab.

Dhama said that today there is a big issue before the Sikh community of Sikh prisoners, for which appropriate steps will be taken. Responding to a question from the media, the SGPC President said that today's election result of SGPC office-bearers shows that the entire party members are united and trust their party.

He clarified the priorities of SGPC's future plans and work to be done and said that along with religious preaching, health and education will be progressed under new measures. Moreover, building new sarais (inns)

for the Sangat arriving at Sri Darbar Sahib will also be on the agenda. He said that there are many other community-related tasks to be done, which will be worked on with the opinion of scholars and the SGPC members. He said that according to the need, administrative reforms will also be made.

After being elected as SGPC President, Harjinder Singh Dhama and other office-bearers paid obeisance at Sachkhand Sri Harmandir Sahib and thanked the Guru, where they were honoured with Siropao by the head granthi Giani Raghbir Singh. The SGPC President along with office-bearers also went to Sri Akal Takht Sahib to thank the Guru. After this, the SGPC President assumed his duties at the office and expressed his commitment to take all Panthic parties along.

Harjinder Singh Dhama's name was proposed by the former SGPC president Prof Kirpal Singh Badungar

During the SGPC general house session, the name of Harjinder Singh Dhama as candidate was proposed by former president Prof Kirpal Singh Badungar, seconded by Bhai Gobind Singh Longowal and further seconded by Bhai Gurcharan Singh Grewal.

In competition to Harjinder Singh Dhama, the name of Balbir Singh Ghunas was proposed by SGPC member Amrik Singh Shahpur, seconded by Baldev Singh Chungan and further seconded by Nirmail Singh Jaulan.

# Five corrupt police officers in Haryana caught taking bribe every month with 49 arrested this year

**SATISH HANDA**

Corruption is no less in Haryana Police, five officers are caught taking bribe every month; 49 police employees have been arrested.. DGP Shatruijit Kapoor also handling the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has taken a strong action against corrupt officers and employees as well



as private people giving bribes. The Bureau has registered 140 cases within the last 10 months, information reveals among those arrested include a total of 31 gazetted officers, 149 non-gazetted officers and 30 persons from the private sector have been arrested by the Bureau team for taking and giving bribes. The Bureau has also arrested 49 police officers for taking bribes this year, with bribes ranging from Rs 2,000 to Rs 1 lakh. Every month five police officers and employees are caught taking the bribe.

The scenario reveals that last year 2021 the Bureau had arrested 21 gazetted officers, 140 non-gazetted officers and 26 private persons during this period, arrested eight gazetted officers, 40 non-gazetted officers and 49 private individuals. "This means that corruption is being continuously attacked by the Anti Corruption Bureau" Haryana Director General of Police Shatruijit Kapoor heads the Anti-Co. He said that no matter who the corrupt person is, the Bureau will take action by adopting a policy of zero tolerance. By taking proactive steps this year, the Bureau has acted on the unwavering and unwavering commitment of Chief Minister Manohar Lal towards providing corruption-free governance. He said that the Anti-Corruption Bureau has disposed of these cases promptly, while in the year 2021, the Bureau disposed of 51 cases from January to the end of October, whereas in the year 2022, the Bureau has disposed of 147 cases during this time period.

# Three of a family killed in Tarn Taran

**JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar**



A Triple murder case reported from Tarn Taran district wherein three members of a family including two females were brutally killed inside the house.

Confirming the murder of three, police said that the unfortunate incident took place at Tung village under Harike Patan area of Tarn Taran district where husband, wife and sister-in-law were found dead inside the house.

The dead were identified as Iqbal Singh (65), a resident of Kang village, his wife and sister in law. The bodies were found in the different rooms of the house as their mouths were choked with a piece of cloth and hands tied with rope, said police, adding that the incident occurred today with the intention of robbery.

# Punjab Government appealed to celebrate a garbage- and pollution-free and safe Diwali

**CHANDIGARH:** The government led by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann is committed to making the state pollution-free. Giving this information, Punjab Local Government Minister Balkar Singh said that the Punjab government is committed to celebrating a garbage- and pollution-free and safe Diwali in the state.

During the meeting conducted through video conferencing with all Municipal commissioners at the Municipal Bhawan today, Balkar Singh directed the Municipal Corporation officials to give special priority to cleanliness in their respective cities to celebrate 'Swachh Diwali and Shubh Diwali' and to support the government's efforts.

Cabinet Minister directed the officials to ensure a clean, environment-friendly, and garbage-free Diwali. He also stated that single-use plastic items should not be used in their respective cities during the Diwali festival. Market associations, trade associations, resident welfare associations, and ward committees should be sensitized, and self-help groups, NGOs, youth clubs, and



civic groups should be involved in this campaign.

Balkar Singh said that awareness should be created among the people to use local products and alternatives to single-use plastic on the occasion of Diwali. He directed the officials to provide face masks, eye protection glasses, and local products to celebrate Diwali while taking special care of Safai Mitras. He also said that RRR (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) centers should be made operational quickly. He appealed to the citizens of the state to show their commitment to celebrating a clean Diwali through mygov.app. He encouraged citizens to take an oath to celebrate a clean Diwali and make necessary

arrangements to deal with any untoward incident in the cities on the occasion of Diwali.

Local Government Minister further stated that the condition of not using plastic bags and other single-use plastics, keeping dry waste in bags and not littering should be observed at the time of allotment of stalls for the Diwali fair. He also emphasized the collection of dry waste from the fairgrounds and special arrangements for cleaning the grounds after the end of the fair, avoiding the use of plastic films for the decoration of sweets and gifts in shops, and promoting the use of natural flowers instead of plastic decoration materials.

# Spurious liquor death in Yamunanagar takes toll to 14

**SATISH HANDA/ GULSHAN KUMAR Yamunanagar/Ambala**

The death toll due to the consumption of spurious liquor on November 8 has reached 14, with five additional deaths reported in Yamunanagar district on Friday, police said. Of the total casualties, 12 are from Yamunanagar, and two are from Ambala.

SP Yamunanagar Ganga Ram Punia told media persons that seven people have been arrested in connection with the case while two others have been apprehended for allegedly manufacturing the liquor illegally in neighbouring Ambala district.

Asked about the source of the suspected spurious liquor, Punia said, the preliminary investigations have revealed that it was manufactured illegally. In this regard a separate FIR has been

registered at Mullana area in Ambala district. The SP said that seven accused in the case have been arrested include Rocky a resident of village Peermajra used to supply liquor, Ramesh Bhandi resident of Mandebri, wine contractor Gaurav son of a Jannayak Janta Party Raj Kuma, Mange Ram resident of Marupur a Congress leader, Pradeep a resident of village Kulpur, Kapil a resident of village Thambad in Ambala district. He said that two of them are local illegal vendors and the rest are connected with the illegal vend either as salesmen or for subletting the place. SHO, Mullana in Ambala district, Inspector Surender said two persons were arrested for illegally manufacturing liquor.

Meanwhile, SHOMullans said that illicit liquor was being manufactured illegally with a chemical (Ethno) ENA used in distilleries in an abandoned factory in an



isolated area in the middle of sugarcane fields from where the two arrested accused were involved in the illegal act and supplied this liquor in Yamunanagar district, while further investigations are on. The SHO said they received empty drums, empty bottles, stickers and other articles from the spot. Earlier on Wednesday,

SP Yamunanagar Punia, said that they received information about a death linked to suspected spurious liquor from a hospital in Yamunanagar. Police had launched an investigation and enquired in nearby villages. They found that three other people were cremated on Tuesday and two more on Wednesday from two villages in Yamunanagar district as suspected spurious liquor poisoning incidents died under suspicious circumstances. He said the families of the five deceased cremated the bodies without informing the police and no post-mortem examination could be conducted in these deaths, whereas the body of another deceased was sent to the government hospital for postmortem which confirmed death due to poisonous substance. Leaders of the political parties in opposition slam ruling Khatargovt in the state failed to learn lessons from past incidents.

# Drugs, mobile phones being supplied to prisoners in Ambala central jail, 35 drug smugglers on NCB radar in Haryana

**SATISH HANDA**

On a secret clue, security team in the Ambala central jail conducted a surprise raid on Sunday late evening inside a barrack of Ambala central jail and caught five prisoners while attempting to cross the wall when saw the raiding team and were caught. During the search, the team recovered 11 mobile phones, 4 chargers, 3 sim cards and 78 intoxicated tablets from them. Prince Kumar DSP (Jail) said that among those arrested prisoners include Rajat and Puneet from whom two mobile phones and intoxicated tablets were recovered, whereas 4 mobile phones, two chargers and sim cards were recovered from the prisoners Kamaljit, Shubham and Rishabh, against them cases were registered

Haryana State Narcotic Con-



According to Suresh Kumar, in-charge Headquarter the involvement of jail staff cannot be denied and usually the mobile phones, chargers and sim cards are being thrown from the outside of the jail fourwall as such the mobile phone ring frequently being ringing inside the jail barracks. Information reveals that a proposal for the project for installation of jammers in this central jail is pending in files since past several years without action in this jail having large number of terrorists and VIPs lodged inside the jail.

trol Bureau (NCB) which is being presently monitored by the DGP Haryana Shatruijit Kapoor himself told that as many as 35 drug smugglers in Haryana state involves in illegal activities since a long times are on NCB radar under drug control act 1988, having number of cases registered against them under NDPS Act in Ratia, Hansi, Kaithal and Taraori (Karnal) police, which can be taken into the custody by the police under PIT-NDPS Act.

Meanwhile, two policemen identified as constable Sunil and constable Krishan posted at Maloya police station were suspended and sent to the police line allegedly involved in releasing two drug smugglers after accepting Rs 12 lakh bribe from them. During investigation by the DSP both were found involved in the conspiracy.

# Trident Foundation Initiative "Parali Samadhan": A lifeline for farmers and the environment

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh**

Trident Foundation, dedicated CSR wing of the global textile conglomerate Trident Group, is helping farmers with machinery and knowledge support to manage and dispose of agro-waste around Barnala region in Punjab. The 2023 Parali Samadhan Program is dedicated to preserving the environment and supporting local communities by addressing the problem of agricultural stubble burning, curbing air pollution, benefiting nature and community well-being at large.

"Today, North India is facing a severe air pollution crisis, with the AQI reaching 470, making it extremely unhealthy to breathe. Thus, we are all concerned and looking for a possible solution to mitigate the pollution. Through our 'Parali Samadhan Yojna' under Trident Foundation, we at Trident Group have been addressing the pressing issue of crop burning by empowering local farmers with the machinery and



knowledge needed for efficient agro-waste management. This year, we are determined to raise the bar and aim to expand our reach for a greener and healthier future, where our communities thrive alongside a sustainable environment," said Madhu Gupta, Chairperson, Trident Foundation.

Agricultural stubble burning is a perilous practice that poses a significant threat to our environment. This practice, detrimental to nature and human health, has been a long-standing concern especially in the northern parts of India. In FY 22-23, Trident Foundation successfully



lifted 7500 Tons of Parali from the farms impacting over 3000 acres of land and reducing GHG emission with over around 8000 Ton/Year Co2 Equivalent, benefiting farmers and residents with better air quality.

Trident Foundation is committed to raising standards and reaching more people. The initiative, "Parali Samadhan", not only ensures cleaner air and healthier environment but also the welfare of the rural population at large. The company is dedicated to taking care of the environment and building a healthier community.

# Government to take over 97 aided colleges in Haryana

**SATISH HANDA**

Resentment prevails among teaching and non-teaching staff of the government-aided degree colleges in Haryana state as they have not been paid salaries for the past few months, despite the issue being raised before the Chief Minister many times. More than 2500 teaching and non-teaching staff including the principals of as many as of 97 government-aided colleges in the state have not received their salaries since July 2022, Dayanand Malik, president, Haryana Government Aided College Teachers Association said.

He claimed a proposal to allocate a total budget of Rs 470 crore for the salaries of government-aided colleges' staff for the period starting from March 1 to February 29, 2024 was passed by the state government to ensure timely payment of their salaries, leave encashment and gratuity but it did not work out. The president of the association said that the state authorities had also got details of

bank accounts of the colleges and their employees, despite this the salaries have not been credited to their bank accounts for the past three months.

According to information, ruling BJP government in the state has now fulfilled the commitment made in their 2019 poll manifesto to take over the possession of government aided colleges in the state and chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar has now approved the same and on Tuesday State Higher Education Minister Pt Mool Chand Sharma had a meeting with the office bearers of the teaching and non-teaching staff



in the presence of senior bureaucrats Rajesh Khuller, Chief Principal Secretary of the Chief Minister, Additional Chief Secretary (Higher Education) Anand Mohan Sharan, Virender Singh Dahiya OSD to Chief Minister and Dr Vikas Chahar President of the Aided College Teachers Association. Pt Mool Chand Sharma said that 95% salary of the teachers in government aided schools is provided by the state government, whereas only 5% payment towards teachers salary in private government aided schools is paid by the school managing committee.



# Ethics committee gave its seal to the proposal to reject Mahua Moitra's Membership from Parliament

CONGRESS MPS TO SEND 'PROTEST LETTER' SUPPORTING MAHUA WHICH IS MENTIONED 'DANGEROUS' & 'CRIMINAL' IN ETHICS COMMITTEE REPORT

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA  
New Delhi

Ethics committee's proposal to disqualify Trinamool MP Mahua Maitra as Member of Parliament. On the Ethics Committee meeting, 6 Members out of 11, casted vote in favour of the proposal to dismiss Mahua's Membership. Four opposition MPs opposed the proposal, they are V Vaithilingam of Congress, T Natarajan of CPI, Giridhari Yadav of JDU and Danish Ali of BSP. The proposal will be submitted to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday. Another Congress MP participated in the committee's voting on Thursday, Pranet Kaur, Wife of BJP leader and former Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh. It

is because of her husband that she has now left away from the Congress camp. In Ethics Committee's voting, she supported the BJP MPs and voted against Mahua. Meanwhile, Congress MP Naresh Uttam Kumar Reddy could not participate in the polling on this day as he is in Telangana. He was unable to attend the polls as he went to his home state to file nominations. The winter session of Parliament is likely to begin in the second week of December. At that time, the future of Trinamool MP can be decided. As a result, the problem of Mahua is considered to be increasing gradually.

Not only MP posts are dismissed, the ethics committee has raised one explosive charge after another in the draft report proposed against Mahua



Maitra. The main point of the 500-page report is that the Trinamool leader should be stripped of her MP post and a central agency probe should be conducted against her. According to the committee's draft report, the Trinamool Member of Parliament has misused his position as an MP. The charges leveled against

her include compromising national security. Mahua's work is 'highly dangerous, immoral and criminal'. It is said that what Mahua has done, she needs to be severely punished. The committee also recommended that there should be a separate investigation into Mahua's financial dealings with Darshan Hiranandani.

The ethics committee passed the draft report on Thursday. After that it will be submitted to the Speaker.

The Ethics Committee did not have any difficulty in passing this draft by its majority. However, two Congress members of the committee, Naresh Uttam Kumar Reddy and V Vaithilingam, refused to accept this report. Being a minority in the committee, it is not possible for them to prevent this draft from being passed. So they are going to write a protest letter to the Speaker against this draft. BSP MP Danish Ali is also going to write a protest letter supporting to Mahua. According to sources, the Congress MPs also wanted at least their protest to be recorded separately.

## BSF Head Constable killed in Pakistan firing in Jammu And Kashmir's Samba



FW DESK

A Border Security Force (BSF) personnel lost his life due to firing by Pakistani troops along the international border in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district.

BSF Head Constable Lal Fam Kima, aged 50 and hailing from Aizwal in Mizoram, was critically injured during the unprovoked firing by Pakistan Rangers in the Ramgarh sector. He was immediately shifted to a hospital but succumbed to his injuries this morning.

The BSF promptly responded to the firing, which began around midnight. This marks the third ceasefire violation by Pakistan Rangers in the past three weeks, reflecting an escalation of tensions in the region.

The incident is a yet another breach of the ceasefire understanding that was established between India and Pakistan in February 2021.

## PM Modi does not even know how to make tea, only know 'jumlebaazi': Mann

BHOPAL (MP) : Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday campaigned in favor of Aam Aadmi Party candidates for the Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections. Both the leaders along with the AAP candidates held road shows in the assembly constituency Chachaurabinaganj and appealed to the people to vote for the Aam Aadmi Party.

While addressing the people during the road show, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann fiercely attacked BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said that Prime



Minister Modi and BJP leaders only do 'jumlebaazi'. In the last nine and a half years of its rule, the Modi government has not done anything for the common people.

Mann said that his promise

of Rs 15 lakh turned out to be a 'jumla', two crore jobs promise turned out to be a jumla. He said that during the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, PM Modi used to talk about selling tea, but I doubt that he does not

even know how to make tea.

Mann accused the Modi government of worsening the condition of the country's farmers and said that the farmers who feed the country are forced to sleep hungry today because of the failure of the Modi government. They (politicians) filled their own coffers. Seeing the huge crowd of people in the road show, Bhagwant Mann said that this is the sign of change in Madhya Pradesh. Just as people have gathered in large numbers in our road show in Madhya Pradesh today, there used to be a similar enthusiasm among people in Punjab and before that in the people of Delhi.

## 7th anniversary of demonetisation, should we celebrate or mourn for abysmal failure: Adhir Ranjan

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Wednesday took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over seventh anniversary of 'demonetisation', asking 'should we celebrate the occasion or mourn for the abysmal failure'.

In a post on X, Chowdhury, who is also the Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha said, "Respected Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji, today is the seventh anniversary of demonetisation touted as your visionary step for eradi-

ation of black money from India.

"Now should we celebrate the occasion or mourn for abysmal failure."

His remarks came on the seventh anniversary of Modi government's decision to demonetise Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currencies.

The Prime Minister on November 7 in a television address to the nation announced the decision of demonetising Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes to curb black money, terrorism.

## Centre notifies appointment of three judges in SC

NEW DELHI: The President has appointed three high court chief justices as judges of the Supreme Court. The names of Justices Satish Chandra Sharma, Augustine George Masih and Sandeep Mehta were cleared by the Centre within a period of two days after the Supreme Court Collegium, headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud, on November 7 recommended the elevation of these three high court Chief Justices as the judges of apex court.

"The Swearing-in-Ceremony of Hon'ble Justice Satish Chandra Sharma, Chief Justice, High Court of Delhi, Hon'ble Justice Augustine George Masih, Chief Justice, High Court of Rajasthan



will function with a full strength of 34 judges. Justice Sharma was appointed as a Judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on January 18, 2008. He was elevated as Chief Justice of the High Court of Telangana on October 11, 2021 and thereafter, transferred to High Court of Delhi on June 28, 2022. Justice Sharma has served as a judge of the High Court for more than 15 years and as Chief Justice of the High Court for more than two years. Justice Masih was appointed as a Judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court on July 10, 2008. He was elevated as Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court on May 30.

After the swearing in of three new judges, the Supreme Court

## Amarnath Shrine in Kashmir now accessible by vehicles

SRINAGAR: The Amarnath shrine, situated at an elevation of 13,000 feet in the Jammu & Kashmir region, has seen the first-ever movement of four-wheelers to the cave temple. The sacred site, discovered by a Muslim shepherd named Buta Malik in 1850, was previously only accessible by non-motorized transport.

Vehicles reached the cave shrine via the Baltal route in central Kashmir's Sonamarg. This route, spanning 14 kilometers, is shorter than the 20-kilometer Pahalgam axis in south Kashmir's Anantnag. Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has built a network of roads to make the pilgrimage easier for devotees.

"The Border Roads personnel achieved a historic milestone with the successful arrival of the first set of vehicles at the



holy cave," a spokesman from the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) said.

The BRO's Project Beacon has played a role in the restoration and enhancement of the Amarnath Yatra tracks.

Responsibility for maintaining these challenging pilgrimage routes was transferred to the BRO by the Indian government following the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution in 2019. The BRO has been tasked with widening and upgrading the tracks to ensure a smoother journey for pilgrims.

## Combines are the root cause of Smog

### Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



Faulty Combine Harvester machines leave stubble in the fields which becomes a hurdle to the farmers and they prefer to burn it then and there instead of spending huge money to shift the crop residue to other places. The problem of smog in Delhi NCR can be reduced by improving these Combines.



Delhi NCR has been struggling with the problem of smog for more than a decade. Earlier, the Capital took some positive steps to curb air pollution, which included shifting to CNG vehicles, Metro trains and other measures. Air pollution in Delhi is becoming deadly these days. When deaths were occurring on the spot due to COVID-19, everyone was concerned, whereas air pollution kills slowly; hence it gets ignored by people and the governments. Not only the ruling party, but even the Opposition parties ignore this crucial issue.

Moreover, governments are promoting complex and impractical solutions and ignoring simple methods. On the other hand, the common public is unaware that due to its own acts, the crisis is growing year by year. All of us are responsible for deteriorating air quality and expect the governments to do some magic to end the problem.

The act of stubble burning in the neighbouring

states causes ten times more smog in Delhi NCR in just two months than automobile-induced air pollution in a year. Burning of paddy straw in the fields gives rise to smoke, which reaches the Capital with north-westerly winds and worsens the condition of the region. After all, why do farmers burn stubble, especially farmers of Punjab? Actually, Combine Harvester machines are widely used there to harvest the paddy crop. There is a major shortcoming in these machines made in India due to which the problem of stubble arises. These machines cut the grainy part of the paddy plant and leave the remaining stem in the field. This straw or stubble itself becomes a problem for the farmers.

Nowadays, farmers rear less cattle, so they do not have much need for fodder. It is a costly affair for them to dispose of stubble from the fields. To get rid of this, they set fire to the stubble in the fields itself. Therefore, the problem lies

in the poor design of the indigenous Combine Harvester machines. If these machines cut the entire paddy plant from the field and make straw bundles, then the problem can be solved easily. Unfortunately, neither the government nor the public has paid attention to this angle. That is why Delhi starts sighing every year in November and December.

Another problem is the mishandling of the issue by the people in power. The government offers subsidies on machines which are expensive and inadequate to solve the issue of stubble burning. Also, these subsidised machines do not match traditional farming practices, so most farmers are not interested in them. Secondly, despite getting subsidies, these machines are expensive for the farmers. They prefer burning the stubble to prepare their

fields for the next crop. The incidence of stubble burning in the fields of Punjab is more than 60 percent, whereas in Haryana this figure is much less.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Government has started taking some measures to curtail air pollution in the Capital city by implementing the Odd-Even scheme, banning diesel vehicles from entering the city, and other curbs. It also planned to create artificial rain over Delhi with the help of IIT Kanpur scientists. Artificial rain or cloud seeding is a weather modification technique, in which silver iodide is released into the atmosphere to aid the formation of ice crystals and improve the ability of clouds to create rain.

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

## BJP names BSY son Vijayendra as Karnataka BJP unit president



BY ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

BJP appointed BY Vijayendra, son of former chief minister and BJP Parliamentary Board member BS Yeddyurappa, as president of Karnataka BJP for a three year term in a bid to consolidate the party's core support base among Lingayats. After months of wait rife with speculation BJP appointed 47 year old first time MLA Vijayendra. With this yeddyurappa and Vijayendra become the first father son duo to occupy the top post. Yeddyurappa was president of the state BJP unit three times.

The elevation of Vijayendra comes at a time when the party appears to be disarray following its poll defeat, and several BJP functionaries including a few MLAs, are looking to shift to the Congress. At the same time party's desperation to win back Lingayats-its major vote bank ahead of the LS polls also prompted Vijayendra's promotion. After taking new

post as bjp cheif vijayendra said thae party will elect opposition leaders in both Houses of the state legislature Friday (Nov17). Speaking to media vijayendra said, I am not new to the party though first time MLA, I have worked at various levels in the past 12 years. I have served BJP Bengaluru secretary, general secretary of the Yuva Morchha and even party vice-president. I have the experience, and I am confident that with guidance from my seniors, I will be able to take BJP to new heights in Karnataka. He said It is my duty to take all our seniors along while giving more opportunities to youth in our party. I do not anticipate any major dissent. Analysts say BJP's dismal outing had much to do with the saffron party trying to cut its ties with Yeddyurappa and sidelining his during most of the campaign. Now though, it has thrown its weight behind Vijayendra to revive the party's flagging fortunes in Karnataka ahead of Lok Sabha elections next year.

## Nitish Kumar has brought shame to the country: PM Modi

NEW DELHI: A day after Nitish Kumar's comments in the House on population control methods created a furore in political circles, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing an election rally in Madhya Pradesh's Guna said the Bihar Chief Minister had brought shame to the country.

Modi asked the INDIA bloc leaders why they were silent on the Bihar Chief Minister's statement.

"There were women sitting in the Vidhan Sabha and that INDIA bloc leader talked in the most vulgar manner," Modi said and slammed Nitish for being insensitive and asked how could his government save the honour of women if they did not respect them?

The National Commission for Women (NCW) chief Rekha Sharma, too, on Wednesday lambasted Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for his remarks in the state Assembly. She likened his comments to a "C-grade movie dialogue."

In a press conference called shortly after Nitish Kumar issued an apology for his remarks, stating, "I apologise and take back my words..." Sharma expressed her disapproval of Kumar's statement, describing it as reminiscent of low-quality film dialogues.

Asserting that the remarks had broader implications for women and society as a whole, the NCW chief highlighted the disappointing reaction of male MLAs in the House, who were seen laughing.

Sharma characterised Kumar's actions and gestures as an "unfortunate and inappropriate" attempt at humour.

Furthermore, Sharma raised concerns about the Assembly



Speaker not yet expunging Kumar's statements from the record.

She demanded that the Speaker take action against the Chief Minister and ensure that his statements were expunged from the official records.

"National Commission for Women, vehemently condemns the recent statements made by Nitish Kumar in the Vidhan Sabha concerning women's fertility and education and linking it to the population of the country. Such remarks are not only regressive but also egregiously insensitive to women's rights and choices. Bihar's Chief Minister should issue an apology to women across the country for these deeply offensive remarks," the NCW had posted on X on Tuesday.

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, too, slammed Nitish Kumar for his comments.

"The Vidhan Sabha is a separate place. It is not like you are sitting on the road or in the house or in the cinema. Vidhan Sabha has its own sanctity. He is a Chief Minister of a state and the way he has made the statement was extremely vulgar. He could have said that when a woman becomes educated she decides when the child is required. Instead he made vulgar comments and actions. At least you should respect where you are standing. It is Bihar Vidhan Sabha and not a cinema theater where a picture with an A certificate was running," said Owaisi.

## Rahul to re-starts 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' from Dec till Feb 2024



MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA  
New Delhi

The journey from Kanyakumari to Kashmir is over. Now, Congress is going to start "Bharat Jodo Yatra" again in the same way from West India to East India. This time again Rahul Gandhi will lead the journey. But this time he will not walk the whole way, Cars will also be used in some areas.

Needless to say that last year from September 7 to January 30, Rahul Gandhi walked in the first phase of Bharat Jodo Yatra. Rahul got very good response on the journey of about 4 thousand kilometers. The Congress says Rahul's journey has infused new vigor among Congress workers. Many workers who became lazy and unable or disaffected, those workers and leaders have rejoined the core organization of the party. The grand old party now wants to drag the streak of that success till 2024 Lok Sabha elections. So that public relations can continue till 2024 Lok Sabha.

According to sources, preparation work for yatra also done, the states which were left out in the previous yatra will be touched in this phase of the yatra. But this journey is going to be more challenging for the Congress than the previous one.

## Congress guarantees Rs 2.5 lakhs for 'Meri Bitiya Rani' scheme in Madhya Pradesh



KAVITA SHARMA  
Bhopal (MP)

In a major guarantee to parents of newborn daughters in Madhya Pradesh, the Congress today promised that every girl child will be given Rs 2.5 lakhs from the birth to their marriage under the 'Meri Bitiya Rani' scheme. This was announced by the Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi at a public rally here today.

Priyanka Gandhi appealed to people of Madhya Pradesh, women in particular, to vote wisely and carefully as it was too precious for the future of their children.

Gandhi urged people, it was the time to get back the government which they had elected in 2018, but was stolen by the BJP using money.

Referring to the 'Ladli Scheme' of the BJP government announced just two months ago, she cautioned against getting lured. She asked, why was the scheme

launched just two months before. Did women not need this help during the last five years? she asked.

Taking a dig at the BJP leaders for asking what the Congress did, she said, the school Mr. Modi went to, was made by the Congress. "I don't know whether Mr. Modi went to the college, but I am sure that his 'Entire Political Science degree' certificate was printed on a computer that was brought by the Congress", she remarked, while pointing out, it was her father late Rajiv Gandhi who had introduced computers in India when he was the Prime Minister.

Gandhi also referred to the progressive foresight of first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who set up the IITs and IIMS and so many public sector industries, which provided jobs also. "But their (the BJP's) thinking is different as they are selling everything to their industrialist friends", she remarked.



## PLI Scheme in focus as India navigates chip challenge

In the high-stakes game of semiconductor manufacturing, India's bet through the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme is ambitious but fraught with uncertainty. The government's allocation of Rs 38,601 crore to bolster semiconductor and display manufacturing is a bold move, yet over 80 per cent of these funds remain under-utilised. This begs the question: what tangible outcomes are we seeking with such hefty investments? The PLI scheme's promise of employment and value addition to India's electronics sector is not as straightforward as it seems. Semiconductor manufacturing, while critical for a plethora of hardware and appliances, is highly automated and does not significantly contribute to employment relative to the value of sales. The defence sector's import-heavy spending is a testament to the fact that not all large-scale investments yield substantial domestic job creation. While the PLI constellation is a gamble worth taking, it must be complemented by nurturing domestic semiconductor design talent. Initiatives like the design-linked incentive scheme are steps in the right direction. Yet, the focus remains disproportionately on subsidising large-scale manufacturing units that rely heavily on imported materials. Consequently, multinational chipmakers are hesitant to make significant commitments, despite the incentives. The government's outlay must be tied to clear objectives. Is the goal to ensure cyber sovereignty and insulate India from supply chain disruptions akin to those experienced during the pandemic? Is it to reduce the cost of electronics for Indian consumers or to position India as a global hub for electronics manufacturing? Defining these goals is crucial for accountability and adaptability. Without a clear direction, we risk pouring funds into an initiative with little to show for it. It's time for the Union government to articulate its vision for the PLI scheme, ensuring that every rupee spent is a step towards a well-defined, strategic outcome for India's technological future.

### LETTERBOX

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CREATE IT!**

**THE FINANCIAL WORLD**

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R.K. VIJ HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF MANDATING E-AUTHENTICATION FOR INSTANT VERIFICATION AND IMMEDIATE E-FIR REGISTRATION.

## Move towards e-FIR, but with caution

The Law Commission of India, in Report No. 282, recommended that "in cases where the accused is not known, registration of an e-FIR should be allowed for all cognisable offences". If the accused is known, as a preliminary step, registration of an e-FIR may be allowed for cognisable offences wherein the punishment provided under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and other laws is up to three years.

The verification of the complainant, the Commission said, could be done by verifying the mobile number through an OTP and mandating the uploading of valid ID proof such as Aadhaar. It also said that the name of the suspect on the centralised national portal is to be secured until the e-FIR is signed by the complainant. Further, in case the registered information is not signed by the informant deliberately within the prescribed time, the information shall be deleted within two weeks.

### An e-FIR

The Commission has not demystified the concept of an 'e-FIR'. The procedure laid down in the Report says that the police station will check the contents of information received from the portal to verify whether a cognisable offence is made out as recommended. Only then will the received information be entered in the prescribed format within three days. In other cases (punishable with more than three years of imprisonment), the conventional method prescribed under the IPC needs to be followed. In the next step, the police officer is required to get the signature of the complainant within three days to register an e-FIR. Otherwise, the e-FIR shall not be registered,



reasons shall be communicated, and the said information shall be automatically deleted after two weeks from the portal. The procedure is given only for cases where the accused is known.

Though the Commission mentioned that eight States are lodging an e-FIR, it did not discuss any of the models adopted by those States, particularly the method of obtaining signatures.

It is thus clear that the concept of 'e-FIR' is nothing but obtaining information/complaint through electronic means using a common national portal and then getting the information/complaint signed by the complainant physically within three days to convert the complaint into an actual FIR. It is obvious that the 'e-FIR' is not an automatically registered FIR using electronic means, including electronic signature of the complainant. The online facility will have only limited efficacy. Also, any investigation done prior to the actual registration of the FIR shall not be an investigation undertaken in the true spirit of the Code of Criminal

### Procedure.

Still, there are at least two benefits of obtaining complaints electronically. First, the police will have to take cognisance of the complaint as the system will automatically generate receipt. This will ensure almost free registration of crime. Second, they will not be able to change the contents of the complaint.

### Human intervention is crucial

While most of the eight States are registering FIRs using the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems or State portals, mostly in property offences where the accused is unknown, the Law Commission has recommended e-FIR for all cognisable offences where the accused is not known, without discussing other related aspects. For example, the accused may initially be unknown in a case of kidnapping where not only immediate medical examination of the victim may be important, but also timely visit to the scene of crime. In fact, interaction with a police officer is valuable in solving blind crimes. An experienced police officer may extract a lot of information from the complainant or victim, which may help in finding the culprit.

Though the option to approach a police station for reporting any cognisable offence shall always be open, the legally permissible period of three days may give a false impression to a common man that it will not affect his case in that period. The complainant may not understand the nuances of a crime. Therefore, only cases where human interaction can be postponed for a limited period without having an adverse impact on

the case may be permitted to be registered electronically.

### E-authentication technique

The Commission has also not discussed using the 'e-authentication technique or digital signature' as defined in the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, for signing complaints. Under the Act, any information 'rendered or made available in an electronic form; and accessible so as to be usable for a subsequent reference' is legally acceptable. Similarly, any electronic record can be authenticated by 'such electronic signature or electronic authentication technique which is considered reliable...'. Thus, one can imply that in case a paper-based signed complaint is to be replaced by an equivalent document in electronic form, one must affix electronic signature or use e-authentication technique notified by the government in the Second Schedule to the IT Act.

In 2015, 'e-authentication technique using Aadhaar e-KYC services' was notified in the Second Schedule as a legally recognised technique. This is widely used by the income tax department to facilitate filing of returns electronically. The law also recognises 'digital signature' which uses an asymmetric cryptosystem and hash function. Without affixing digital signature or using e-authentication technique, an electronic record transmitted to the police would legally be considered not more than an unsigned complaint. Therefore, it would be better if the use of e-authentication technique is mandated for the verification of complainant, and an e-FIR is registered immediately.

R.K. Vij is a retired Indian Police Service Officer. Views are personal



PRABHASH RANJAN EXPLAINS HOW THE NESTLE RULING DEFIES GLOBAL LAW, EXPOSES INDIA TO VULNERABILITY

## A judgment that undermines obligations under international law

One of the foremost challenges foreign investors face in India is the uncertainty in taxation measures. Taxation-related improbabilities arise not just due to the actions of the executive but also the judiciary. This makes doing business in India difficult for foreign players. The Supreme Court of India's recent judgment in the Assessing Officer Circle (International Taxation) New Delhi vs M/s Nestle SA case, which disposed of 11 petitions involving corporations such as Nestle (a Swiss multinational company) and Steria (a European company) deserves to be seen in this light. The critical question in the case was whether the most favoured nation (MFN) clause in tax treaties such as the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs) that India has signed, could be given effect in India without notification for the same under Section 90 of the Income-Tax Act. This provision allows India to sign tax treaties with other countries to avoid an income being taxed twice.

### On Most Favoured Nation status

India's bilateral DTAAs with the Netherlands, France, and Switzerland — all three countries are members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) — require imposing a 10% withholding tax (tax on dividends paid by Indian entities of foreign companies to the residents of Netherlands, France, and Switzerland). These DTAAs also contain an MFN provision. Thus, if India extends a preferential tax treatment to any third country "which is a member of the OECD", the same treatment should be accorded to the Netherlands, France, and Switzerland under their respective DTAAs. India's DTAAs with Slovenia, Colombia, and Lithuania have a



lower withholding tax requirement of 5%.

When India signed DTAAs with these countries, they were not OECD members but joined the group later. When the matter initially came before the Delhi High Court, it held that under the MFN provision, the preferential tax in, say, the India-Slovenia DTAA should extend to the India-Netherlands DTAA. However, the Supreme Court overruled this, holding that when the India-Netherlands DTAA was signed, Slovenia was not an OECD member. Thus, the benefits given to Slovenia, which became an OECD member later, do not apply to the India-Netherlands DTAA. This ruling will impose a tax burden estimated to be Rs 11,000 crore on foreign investors. It may also lead to opening past cases.

This reasoning is specious because it freezes the provisions of a treaty in time. There is nothing in the text of the India-Netherlands DTAA, for example, to prove that the words "is a member of the OECD" are restricted to countries that were members on the day the treaty was signed. It is puzzling that the top court used domestic interpretative techniques to interpret a term

in an international treaty. Such an interpretation defeats the purpose of including non-discrimination standards such as MFN in economic treaties. MFN in a treaty ensures that future benefits given to a third country by one of the treaty-signing countries become automatically available to its treaty partners.

### Dualism strikes back

The Supreme Court held that to give effect to the MFN provision in the DTAA, notification under Section 90(1) of the Income Tax Act is necessary and mandatory. Thus, the Court advocated the doctrine of dualism wherein international law is not enforceable domestically till it is transformed into municipal law through enabling legislation. While it is true that the Indian Constitution provides for such formal dualism, the Supreme Court has moved away from this principle toward the monist tradition of incorporating international law in the domestic legal regime, even if it is not explicitly incorporated, provided the international law is not inconsistent with domestic law.

This principle has been laid down in cases such as PUCIL vs India, Vishakha vs State of Rajasthan, and Puttaswamy vs Union of India. The premise in these cases was the 'presumption of compatibility' or 'presumption of consistency' between domestic and international law. This presumption can be rebutted only if a domestic law explicitly contravenes international law. In other words, wherever possible, domestic law should be interpreted in a manner that does not contradict India's obligations under international law. This approach ensures that progressive international law is given

effect by the courts to protect the rights of citizens and persons even if the legislature and the executive have not acted to transform it into domestic law for whatever the reason.

Thus, international law is not just an interpretative tool. It has essential implications domestically. Surprisingly, the Court did not refer to this line of cases in its reasoning. This decision is a setback to the progressive judicial journey unleashed by cases such as Vishakha to take international law seriously. If India had issued a notification that expressly went against the MFN provision in some of the DTAAs, one could have plausibly argued that there is an inconsistency between domestic and international law. Thus, the former should be given effect, not the latter. However, without a notification under Section 90(1), the Court should have harmoniously interpreted India's international law obligations contained in the DTAA with that of the Income Tax Act. It should have read the DTAA provision as part of Indian law. In any case, issuing a notification under Section 90(1) is an executive, not a legislative act. So, even from the principle of dualism, the Court's reasoning is suspect.

The Court's interpretation allows the executive to undo its international law obligations by not issuing the relevant notifications domestically. This not only rationalises violation of international law but also makes India susceptible to international claims under other instruments of international law such as bilateral investment treaties.

This judgment has once again proved the adage that the Supreme Court is supreme because it is final, not because it is infallible.

Prabhash Ranjan teaches at the Faculty of Legal Studies, South Asian University. Views expressed are personal.

### BOOKS: REVIEW

## The making of modern Assam from a historian's perspective

In "The Quest for Modern Assam: A History (1942-2000)," Arupjyoti Saikia presents a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of Assam's political and social evolution during a pivotal period in both the state's and India's history. Saikia, a history professor at the Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati, embarks on a scholarly journey beginning with the decisive battles of World War II in India's northeastern frontiers, traversing through the tumult of India's fight for independence, and culminating in the signing of the Assam Accord in 1985.

Saikia's work is a testament to the complexities of Assam's relationship with the Indian Union, the internal divides within the Congress party, and the profound impact of the anti-foreigner movement and the tragic Nellie massacre. He deftly examines the repercussions of Sir Cyril Radcliffe's Partition Award on Assam's geography and identity, highlighting the seismic

shifts brought about by the stroke of a pen.

The book delves into the intricate fault lines of language, religion, culture, and customs that have defined Assam. Saikia discusses the British administrators' attempts to merge Assam's hill areas with parts of Burma, the fears of the hill tribes, and Gopinath Bordoloi's influential report that led to the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, underscoring the ongoing quest for political empowerment among local communities.

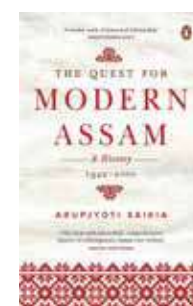
Saikia's narrative is rich with the chaos of wartime Assam, as it became a strategic location for the Allied Forces against the Japanese. He paints a vivid picture of the transformation of towns like Dibrugarh into bustling hubs of military activity and the harrowing experiences of those fleeing Burma, exposing the British administration's neglect.

The author's storytelling prowess shines as he intertwines Assa-

**The book delves into the intricate fault lines of language, religion, culture, and customs that have defined Assam**

me literary classics with historical events, offering a cultural perspective on the era's turbulence. Saikia's meticulous research is evident in the extensive notes, bibliography, and index that make up a significant portion of the book, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in Assam's history.

"The Quest for Modern Assam" is not just a historical account; it is a deep reflection on the state's quest for recognition and its place within the larger Indian narrative. Saikia's work stands out for its depth of research and its ability to contextualize Assam's past within the broader themes of nationalism,



The Quest for Modern Assam: A History (1942-2000)  
By Arupjyoti Saikia; Penguin, 896 pages; Rs 1,299.

federalism, and identity politics.

This book is a significant contribution to the understanding of Assam's modern history. It is an essential read for historians, political scientists, and anyone keen to understand the forces that have shaped the contours of Northeast India. Saikia's scholarly yet accessible writing ensures that "The Quest for Modern Assam" will be a treasured addition to the libraries of academics and lay readers alike, offering a window into the soul of Assam and its people's enduring spirit.

Saikia's examination of Assam's history is not merely a chronological recounting of events; it is an analytical discourse on the socio-political fabric of the region. He scrutinizes the impact of the "Grow More Food" campaign and the

subsequent migration from East Bengal, which sowed the seeds of demographic and cultural shifts still relevant today. The anti-foreigner movement, which Saikia discusses, was not just a political phenomenon but a reflection of deep-seated anxieties about identity and survival amidst changing demographic realities. The Assam Accord, a result of these movements, is dissected for its historical significance and its implications for peace and conflict in the region.

Furthermore, Saikia's work is a tribute to the resilience of the Assamese people, who have navigated the complexities of war, migration, and political upheaval. He captures the essence of Assam's cultural renaissance during these trying times, as seen through the lens of its literature and arts. The works of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya and Jyotiprasad Agarwala, as Saikia illustrates, are not just literary masterpieces but also sociopolitical commentaries that offer insights into the psyche of a society in transition. These cultural artifacts serve as a mirror to the era's challenges and triumphs, providing a more intimate understanding of the historical narrative.



# 'Instashield- the virus slayer' signs MoU with Montgomery County for expansion in US market

FW CORRESPONDENT  
New Delhi

Instashield, a medical technology startup specializing in disrupting viruses and fungi, has officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Montgomery County, Maryland, USA. The company made this announcement in a press statement on Monday, attributing the successful agreement to the support provided by the US-India SME Council during the Economic Development Trade Mission to India.

The MOU signing event occurred during the US India SME Council Annual 2023 Incredible Inc 50 event in Hyderabad, as mentioned in Instashield's official statement.

Instashield went on to detail the core objectives of the trade mission, which included establishing partnerships with technology companies focused on growth, fostering research and development opportu-



nities, expanding sales and market presence in the United States, and exploring potential collaborations across various sectors, such as Biotech, Healthcare, Cybersecurity, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Cleantech.

The MOU was formally inked by Hitesh Patel, the Managing Director of Instashield, and Marc Elrich, County Executive of Montgomery, Maryland, in the presence of delegations representing both the United States and India. This MOU opens the

door to collaboration in various areas, including offering international soft-landing and economic development programs to support market expansion activities in the U.S., as well as introducing valuable business networks and resources.

Instashield's groundbreaking medical device technology, endorsed by the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Government of India, is capable of neutralizing a range of viruses, including COVID-2. It accom-

plishes this by emitting hyper-charged high-velocity electrons that strategically target the S-protein of coronaviruses, thereby reducing infectivity and transmission. This device activates within 18 minutes and can cover areas as large as 5,000 square feet, certified for safety by accredited labs. In 2021, Instashield successfully entered the Indian market through distributors, institutions, hospitals, pharmacies, and online platforms like Amazon, according to the company's statement.

Hitesh Patel, the Managing Director of Instashield, expressed, "Through our innovative medical device technology, this agreement marks a significant stride in the global fight against viruses and preparedness for potential future pandemics. We extend our gratitude to both Montgomery County and the US India SME Council for their unwavering support in promoting startups like ours."

# Manufacturing, construction, real estate account for bulk of IBC resolution plans: ASSOCHAM

FW DESK  
New Delhi

Manufacturing, real estate and construction accounted for 71% of the CIRPs admitted under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code upto June, 2023 with majority of them being able to weave together revival plans of the companies referred under the IBC, an ASSOCHAM-PWC report has noted.

"Manufacturing, real estate and construction continue to bear the burden of insolvency procedures, as is clear from data published by the IBCI. Up until June 2023, these three industries accounted for 71% of the CIRPs that were admitted," the report said.

The revival plans for the companies from these sectors were to the extent of 73% of the references under the IBC.

ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood said, "The launch of the creditor-friendly model of IBC has greatly accelerated the growth of the private credit sector in India by laying a solid platform for credit enforce-



ment. As for the three sectors most referred under the IBC, all the key stakeholders focus on putting together pertinent enabling laws and tailored resolutions to assist them.

With regard to MSMEs, an attempt has been made to address the challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic through a pre-packaged insolvency resolution mechanism implemented in April 2021. The rationale behind this approach is the recognition that resolving financial distress among MSMEs necessitates a distinct

approach due to the specific characteristics of their business operations.

In contrast to formal corporate insolvency proceedings, the pre-packaged insolvency process enables an informal agreement between debtors and creditors as a means of addressing debt issues before formal insolvency procedures commence. This informal arrangement involves obtaining approval from a minimum of 66% of creditors before initiating the pre-packaged insolvency resolution process.

# Vedanta plunges into Rs 1,783cr loss in July-Sep quarter

FW DESK  
New Delhi

Billionaire Anil Agarwal-controlled Vedanta Resources has piled up a consolidated net loss of Rs 1,783 crore for the July-September quarter of the current financial year, the company reported in an exchange filing on Saturday.

The company had made a profit of Rs 1,808 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

The revenue of the company stood at Rs 38,945 crore during the reporting quarter.

The loss was mainly due to a sharp increase in the net tax outgo which increased to Rs 9,092 crore from Rs 1,674 crore a year ago.

This was due to tax deduction on a one-time gain of Rs 1,223 crore, and on account of the adoption of the new tax regime.

Vedanta earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) grew by 49 per cent YoY to Rs 11,479 crore.

# AVer's CAM570 Audio Tracking Camera Earns Microsoft Teams Certification

TAIPEI, (TAIWAN) : AVer Information Inc., an award-winning provider of video conferencing solutions, revealed that its CAM570 Dual-Lens 4K Audio Tracking Camera has been certified for Microsoft Teams Rooms Systems. This official recognition from the experts at Microsoft designates the CAM570 as ideal hardware for pairing with Microsoft Teams to facilitate efficient and productive remote meetings in mid-to-large spaces.

"Our aim has always been to tailor solutions to end users' specific needs," said AVer Director David Kuo, "and receiving Microsoft Teams Certification for the CAM570 — one of our most versatile and powerful meeting devices — is an attestation of our dedication to achieving that goal. We're grateful that Microsoft has continued to recognize AVer as a great match for its innovative remote collaboration platform."

Engineers at Microsoft put the CAM570 through an intense series of tests to verify its fit with the Microsoft Teams software. In the end, the tests proved that the CAM570 is an excellent choice for delivering high-quality video for collaborative sessions run through Microsoft Teams in both medium and large meeting rooms.

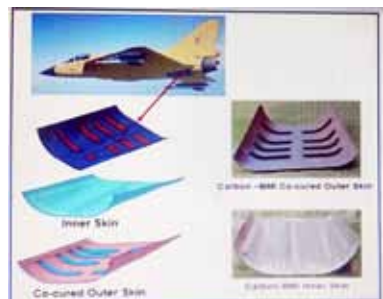
When Microsoft Teams users choose the CAM570 as their audiovisual hardware, they can enjoy the following benefits:

# HAL signs ToT with CSIR-NAL for BMI Engine Bay Door for Series Production of LCA-Tejas

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has signed a Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement with CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) for the manufacturing of BMI Engine Bay Door for the series production of LCA - Tejas Mk1A, an indigenous 4.5 generation, all weather and multi-role fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Force, press statement from HAL said.

Over last 3 decades, CSIR-NAL has developed many critical technologies for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) - Tejas and continues to support this major national programme. Advanced Composites Division (ACD) of CSIR-NAL has pioneered the design & development of composite structures



using innovative and cost-effective manufacturing technologies including co-curing/co-bonding constructions.

The laboratory has played a pivotal role in the development of the composite parts for LCA-Tejas which include; Fin & Rudder, Wing Spars, Wing Fuselage Fairings, Fairings blocks, Centre Fuselage parts & Under carriage doors. The innovative technology developed by CSIR-

NAL not only reduces the cost but also improves the structural efficiency by minimizing the number of mechanical joints. The innovations have resulted in more than 20% cost savings and 25% weight reduction in the parts of the LCA-Tejas.

In continuation to the above indigenous development, for the first time in the country CSIR-NAL has developed manufacturing process technology of

High Temperature Resistant Co-cured Composite Structures using Carbon-BMI Prepreg for the engine bay door where it can withstand the service temperature of about 200 degree C. The processing of Carbon-BMI is very tricky, because the resin become very thin as viscosity reaches 8-10 centipoises at higher temperatures. Hence retaining the resin within laminate is a major challenge.

# BASF register net sales of Rs 3,706.60 crore, up 3.48% at Sep 2023

FW CORRESPONDENT  
New Delhi

BASF India Limited, registered sales of Rs. 37,066.0 million for the second quarter, which ended on September 30, 2023, as compared to Rs. 35,819.9 million in the corresponding quarter of the previous year, representing an increase of 3.5%. The Company reported Profit before tax (before exceptional items) of Rs. 2,002.7 million as compared to profit before tax (before exceptional items) of Rs. 1,489.7 million in the prior year quarter. For the half-year ended on September 30, 2023, the Company registered sales of Rs. 70,812.5 million, as compared to Rs. 74,697.8 million for the corresponding period of the previous year, a decrease of 5.2%. Profit before tax (before exceptional items) stood at Rs. 3,521.4 million for the half-year, compared to Profit Before Tax (before exceptional items) of Rs. 4,131.1 million for the corresponding period of the previous year. Profit after tax (after exceptional items) stood at Rs. 2,617.8 million in the second half of 2023, as compared to Profit after tax (after exceptional items) of Rs. 3,098.6 million reported in the corresponding period of the previous year.

# HAL and Airbus Sign Contract for Establishing Civil MRO facility for A-320 family at Nashik

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru/New Delhi

HAL and Airbus have signed a contract for establishing MRO facilities for A-320 family of aircraft during a function in New Delhi. This collaboration with the largest European aircraft manufacturing company will strengthen Make-in-India mission by achieving self-reliance in the aircraft Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) industry in India. HAL intends to establish an integrated MRO services in India and seeks to provide the commercial airlines a one stop MRO solution, according to HAL press statement here.

Under the collaboration, Airbus will supply the A320 family tool package and offer specialised consulting services to HAL to establish MRO facility for A-320 family of aircraft. The partnership between HAL and Airbus will support the growing demand for MRO



services in the country and expand the commercial fleet, especially the A320 family of aircraft.

"HAL wants to establish an integrated MRO hub in the country and provide Airlines with an effective MRO solution. This step by HAL is also aligned to civil-military convergence and Make-in-India mission of Govt. of India," said Saket Chaturvedi, CEO (MiG Complex), HAL.

Rémi Maillard, President & Managing Director, Airbus India and South Asia emphasized that Airbus is committed to grow the aviation ecosystem in India and development of a strong MRO infrastructure is a key element of this ecosystem.

# Pristine Logistics bids for DLI, aiming to become leading private sector container train operator in India

FW DESK  
New Delhi

Pristine Malwa Logistics Park Pvt Ltd (Pristine Malwa) and its holding company Pristine Logistics and InfraProjects Ltd have entered into a share purchase and shareholders' agreement for the acquisition of Distribution Logistics Infrastructure Private Ltd and its group companies (DLI India). The agreement has been entered into with AIM

(London Stock Exchange) listed Infrastructure India Plc (IIP), the holding company of DLI India and DLI Mauritius. Under the agreement, DLI Mauritius will sell 100% of the equity of DLI India to Pristine Malwa. Pristine Malwa is already the holding company of listed entity SICAL Logistics Ltd (Sical). On completion of the transaction, which is subject to fulfilment of customary conditions precedent and approvals from



DLI India's lenders, Pristine Malwa will hold 100% shares in all logistics firms of IIP in India. The consideration for the acquisition shall be a mix of shares in Pristine Malwa and

cash consideration, which shall be finalised at the completion of the deal on the basis of customary adjustments. The transaction is expected to be completed within 60 days, following which Pristine Malwa will be the holding company of both Sical and DLI India. This is likely to turn Pristine Logistics into the largest private sector container train operator in India, with a terminal footprint spread across most of the significant catchment areas.

# Uneven Road for Pottery

SATISH SINGH

The life of the potter and the pottery makers who give the desired shape to the clay with their fingers on a rapidly rotating wheel is becoming bleak. However, clay pots have many benefits. According to an estimate, pottery has been in use for 15000 years BC. In ancient times, various chronologies were divided using pottery made from clay. During the Neolithic period, pottery was made by hand. The pottery of the Harappan period was colourful and of various shapes. Their colour was usually black and shiny, painted grey etc. Over time, metal utensils replaced earthen utensils.

According to the structure, there are two types of earthen pots. First, permeable, which are water absorbent and second, impermeable, which are not water absorbent. Both permeable and impermeable can be glazed or unglazed. Red and unglazed pots fired at a temperature of 1,000 degrees Celsius or less are called terracotta. Colourful utensils can be made from normal clay without any shine or lustre. Earthen utensils are found in the form of ceramic, clay, pots, pans, terracotta etc.

In India for several thousand years, because there are countless benefits of using earthen pots. According to Ayurveda, if food is to be made nutritious and tasty then it should be cooked in earthen pots on low flame. Due to soil being permeable or porous, there is uniform distribution of heat in an earthen pot, due to which the food gets cooked completely, whereas in a metal pot, there is no uniform distribution of heat. Nowadays, due to obesity or being cautious about health, the demand for non-stick utensils has increased a lot because food can be cooked in less oil in them. However, clay utensils are many times more effective than non-stick utensils. Very little oil is required for cooking food in it. In this, the food items do not stick to the pan or pot. In earthen pots, food gets cooked quickly due to the water present in the food or the moisture present in the pot.

Due to the alkaline nature of soil, it, along with the acid available in the food, controls the pH of the food, which helps us avoid dangerous diseases like cancer. Soil does not allow too much heat to penetrate inside it. Due to this quality, clay utensils keep hot foods hot for a longer time and cold foods cold for a longer period than modern utensils. Food kept in earthen pots does not spoil quickly.



To keep our body healthy, a person should consume 18 types of micronutrients daily, which we can get by cooking food in earthen pots. Cooking food in aluminium pressure cooker destroys 87 percent of the nutrients in food. Cooking food in brass utensils destroys 7 percent of the nutrients. By cooking food in bronze utensils, 3 percent of the nutrients are lost, whereas by cooking food in earthen utensils, all the nutrients present in the food remain intact.

Cooking food in aluminium pressure cooker can cause dangerous diseases like TB, diabetes, asthma, paralysis etc., because metal utensils contain many deadly chemicals, which melt when the metal gets heated and mix with the food items. Whereas elements like calcium, phosphorus, iron, zinc, sulphur etc. are found in

earthen pots, which together with the food items, make the food tasty and help us in staying healthy.

Earthen pots are environment friendly. If used with care, it can be used for a long time. These are made of soil, break down and get mixed back into the soil, which does not cause any harm to the environment. In India, clay utensils are much cheaper than metal utensils. These are available in all sizes in the market. It also looks beautiful. Wonderful artwork is done on them and the adjustment of colours in the paintings made on them is pleasing to the mind.

In cities, people fear that earthen utensils cannot be cleaned, due to which their use may lead to diseases, but this notion is completely wrong. It is very easy to clean it. There is no need for chemical soap, powder, or liquid for cleaning. Utensils

can be cleaned simply by washing them with hot water. To clean greasy utensils, lemon juice is mixed in hot water. Lemon is considered the enemy of lubrication. This makes the utensils completely clean. If someone wants to clean the utensils by rubbing, then he or she can use the outer bark of the coconut i.e., coconut jute. Thus, if anyone wants to use clay pots in their daily life, then they can easily use it.

Morning tea can be drunk in Kulhar. A pot can be kept in the house to cool the water. An earthen plate can be used for eating, an earthen glass for drinking, an earthen pan for making vegetables, an earthen pan for making bread, an earthen pot for making rice, etc. People have this notion that earthen pots can be used only on earthen stoves, but this concept is completely wrong. It can be easily used on gas stove also.

Now the heritage of soil and the fragrance of belongingness is gradually disappearing. The attachment to the soil has been left behind. It is becoming rare to see earthen lamps, utensils, toys, stoves etc., whereas there was a time when potters used to wait eagerly for Diwali and Chhath Pooja. There was huge demand for earthen lamps, deities, utensils, and toys in the market. The potters would start work three months in advance

to meet the demands of the customers. There used to be a rush of people to buy clay items in the market during Diwali and Chhath pooja. But in the changing environment, only a few potters are seen making earthen lamps and utensils. Even in summer, people do not use earthen pots to keep water cool. People also do not like to cook food in earthen utensils. However, by cooking food in earthen pots, both the taste and quality of the food remains intact. Therefore, now dieticians and nutritionists have also started advising to cook food in earthen pots.

Potters have become unemployed today because of neglect of pottery. They have no hope of rehabilitating their traditional profession. Therefore, they have stopped making pottery and started adopting other professions. By the way, it is not just the potters who suffer from the death of pottery. We also suffer from this. It is also dangerous for the environment. Therefore, today there is a need to rehabilitate the potters. The art of making pottery should be kept alive. For this, along with planning for the rehabilitation of potters, there is also a need to implement it wholeheartedly. Our active participation in this process can act as a lifesaver. Satish Singh, Ahmedabad based Senior Columnist, Views are personal.

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

Indira Foods, the home-grown company famous for its ready to Cook / Ready to eat millets (ragi) and various pastes and food formulations, using very Indian natural spices with zero additives, has announced its ambitious expansion plans. Among its many initiatives is the launch of its rasam paste (available in the market till late, only as powder) and lines of new products that are designed to disrupt the market further. The company has also roped in industry veteran Ullas Kamath who had turned round the fortunes of several companies with his astute business acumen to lead it into a new era as advisor on board. In addition to the new product line and a high-profile business entity who will lead the company from the front, a new 1.2 lakh sq. ft. manufacturing facility is coming up in Karnataka's Mandya District with an investment of Rs 25 crores. Sathish Ninasam, a popular kannada Film star from the same region has also been roped in as the face of the brand. The brand also stands as a testimony to women entrepreneurship with Indira who started the venture from a small garage, which is now one of the fastest growing FMCG company.

Indira Foods has many firsts to its name. Pioneering Ragi products with modern convenience way back in the 1990s when there were no other brands doing ragi products. It is

also the largest exporter of 100% natural tamarind concentrate in the country. Indira Foods was also 1st & only company to introduce 100% natural tomato paste and thick and tasty ketchup in spout pouches. It is among the few companies which has a large market overseas as it is well immersed in the domestic markets. With zero debts and a very responsive market that is seeing year-on-year growth in bottom lines, the company is all set to turn the tide in the FMCG market, especially in the Indian ready-to-cook product line. The company currently sell its products in Karnataka and plans to expand to more states in the near future.

Indira, Chairman, Indira Foods said, "New technologies and new production features, with healthy and nostalgic edibles, ensures qualitative offerings that the new generation is tuned to. We are the modern-day answer to modern-day needs with the old touch of quality and wellness which is the touch of the hour." Award winning Kannada Actor Sathish Ninasam and the brand ambassador of Indira Foods said, "I am honoured to be associated with Indira Foods which is one of India's most iconic companies with a rich legacy of innovation and integrity. Their new plant is coming up where I come from and the product bouquet is something that resonates with the soil here. I look forward to working with the company as they embark on a new chapter in their journey of growth and success."



## MSMEs grapple with unpaid dues: 1.64 Lakh applications filed in 5 yrs, Totaling Rs 39,058 Crore on Samadhaan Portal

**NEW DELHI:** Since the initiation of MSME Samadhaan five years ago, a total of 1.64 lakh applications have been submitted and these applications represent unpaid dues amounting to Rs 39,058 crore for micro and small enterprises, reported Financial Express.

The government's portal to monitor delayed payments to micro and small enterprises (MSEs) from their buyers was launched on October 30, 2017. The portal has so far facilitated the disposal of 32,628 cases (19.8 per cent of total applications) involving Rs 5,741 crore through MSE Facilitation Councils set up in every state.

As per the information accessible on the portal, over the course of five years, 42,833 applications, constituting 26 per cent of the total, were declined, accounting for Rs 8,200 crore. Additionally, 15,287 applications, amounting to Rs 1,949 crore, were mutually resolved between Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) and their buyers.



Presently, different councils are reviewing 35,476 cases, while an additional 38,301 cases are awaiting examination by the councils.

The data showed that the maximum applications of 39,613 filed by MSEs were against proprietorship firms followed by 13,394 applications against MSMEs buying goods from other micro and small units, 10,005 applications against different state

governments, 5,952 applications against central public sector units, 3,286 applications against state public sector units, 2,339 applications against central government departments, 1,200 applications against central ministries, and more during the five-year period.

To tackle the issue of delayed payments that adversely affect the working capital of MSMEs, the government has implemented various measures.

These include directing CPSEs and companies with a turnover of Rs 500 crore or more to register on the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TRDS).

Furthermore, companies failing to make payments within 45 days of purchasing goods are mandated to submit a half-yearly report to the government, detailing the outstanding payment amounts and reasons for the delays. Additionally, buyers can only claim deductions under Section 43B of the Income Tax Act for expenses related to payments when the actual payment is made to MSMEs.

Moreover, following the government's decision in 2020 to levy a 1 per cent penalty on government departments and agencies for delayed payments to vendors selling goods on the public procurement portal GeM, the portal's CEO PK Singh had said in September that a provision to impose penal interest would be fully operational from the end of September, according to media reports.

## HSBC to build large personal banking business in India: Country CEO

**MUMBAI:** HSBC aims to further expand personal banking in India to serve the country's fast-growing pool of high-earning professionals, after the launch there in July of its private bank, its India CEO said on Thursday.

In addition to the wealth management services offered by the new private bank, the business will also provide digital credit cards and personal loans to affluent customers, Hitendra Dave said in an interview with Reuters. The bank has long had a retail, or personal, banking business in India, but has not focused on building that up, Dave said. "What has changed in the last three years is that the target market for HSBC in India has exploded," Dave added.

"We intend to build a very large retail, or what we call a personal, banking business." HSBC's new private banking business in India, part of a wider focus on Asian wealth management, targets ultra high net worth customers, typically defined as those a net worth of over \$30 million.



Beyond the most affluent, HSBC will also target a growing number of Indian professionals, whose earnings and spending capacity has risen significantly over the last few years, said Dave. For this segment, HSBC will launch a "digital card issuance program" and a digital loan product "fairly soon", in addition to its mortgage loans.

The number of high net worth individuals - those with an asset value above \$1 million - is seen more than doubling from 2022 to 1.65 million by 2027.

The retail banking push will mean more investment in technology and expansion of the bank's branch network, Dave said. "We intend to build a profitable business," he said.

## 72% Indian businesses optimistic about surge in B2B spending in 2023: Amex Survey

**NEW DELHI:** About 72 per cent of Indian businesses from 513 firms expect an increase in B2B spending in 2023, outpacing the global average of 49 per cent, as per an American Express survey. The survey is a report of 513 senior decision makers from sole enterprises, MSMEs and large businesses in India. The study highlighted that the surge in B2B spending in India is fuelled by technology investments leading the way with 88 per cent of businesses planning to spend more on it in the first half of 2023 compared to the rest of the year. The survey was part of a global study Trendex: B2B edition commissioned by American Express with the UK's consultancy firm Centre for Economics and Business Research (Cebr). Another major factor in the growth of expected spending was business travel, as 72 per cent of businesses said they are expecting to increase spending on travel, entertainment, and expenses.

## PHD Chamber Proposes To Merge National and State MSME Policies

**NEW DELHI:** Industry body PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry has suggested the alignment of national and state-level MSME structures into a unified and comprehensive MSME policy, reported FE.

In its recent report the chamber has noted that many Indian states have distinct policies for supporting MSMEs and about one-third have developed comprehensive strategies to boost MSME growth.

The chamber has urged the government to relook at the proposed national MSME policy in order to address the unique interests and needs of MSMEs in each state and region by considering the diverse structure across the states.

It said that the government should resist the "allure of a one-size-fits-all policy, particularly in manufacturing which shows more heterogeneity across states."

## Investors should exercise caution in small & mid cap stocks, say analysts



FW DESK

The mid and small-cap rally is partly driven by retail exuberance and since the valuations in this broader market are high, investors have to exercise some caution, says V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

The 8-day winning streak in S&P 500 was halted by a slightly hawkish statement from the Fed chief Jerome Powell that "the Fed will not hesitate to tighten policy if needed." The lingering concern that "the rates may remain higher for longer" will continue as a headwind for stock markets for some time, but is unlikely to drag it down meaningfully, he said. The Indian market texture indicates that the "buy on dips" strategy will continue to work. In Samvat 2080, Financials are likely to do well supported by attractive valuations and impressive growth. Sustained FII selling in financials, which is impacting the sector, will be only temporary. For investors with a 2-year time horizon, the leading private banks and 3 or 4 PSU banks are good buys with good return potential, he said.

## Call for Vocal For Local to help India reach Rs 50,000 Crore Sales On Dhanteras: CAIT

**NEW DELHI:** A trade of over Rs 50 thousand crore is expected on Dhanteras as the demand for Made-in-India goods is on a rise, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) said on Thursday.

Stating that the purchase of a new item on Dhanteras is considered auspicious, CAIT said that precious metals, utensils, kitchenware, vehicles, garments, electronics, electrical goods, tools, computers, furniture, and brooms register a tremendous increase on the occasion every year.

Pankaj Arora, National President of All India Jewellers and Goldsmith Federa-



tion (AIJGF) said, "There is great enthusiasm among the

jewellery traders across the country regarding the sale of

Dhanteras today and tomorrow, for which the jewellery traders have made elaborate preparations. There is an abundant stock of several items including new design jewellery and jewellery of gold, silver, diamond etc."

He said that along with this, a huge demand for artificial jewellery is also visible in the markets this year, while gold, silver coins, notes and idols are also likely to be bought in large quantities on Dhanteras.

Dhanteras is being celebrated across India on November 10 to mark the appearance of the god of medicine Lord Dhanvantari, who is believed to have started Ayurveda.

## India Retains 6% Forecast in FY24 Showcasing Sturdy Growth: S&P

**NEW DELHI:** India's economy is showing strong growth and retained its 6 per cent growth forecast for current fiscal year, said S&P Global Ratings on Wednesday.

In Asia-Pacific Credit Outlook 2024 titled 'Slowing Dragons, Roaring Tigers', S&P said gradual capital deepening, favourable demographics, and improving productivity are essential growth factors. "India's economy has a track record of strong growth. We expect this momentum to continue and



forecast growth of 6 per cent for FY 2024, then 6.9 per cent for FY 2025 and FY 2026," S&P said.

It said India's economic growth shines brightly. However, its yields remain high,

as they have been historically, which puts additional pressure on the cost of funding India's large debt stock. While growth supports market confidence and revenue generation, rates dynamics will be an additional determinant of India's debt trajectory over the next few years, the US-based rating agency said.

Gradual capital deepening, favourable demographics, and improving productivity are essential growth factors. "Challenges for unlocking the next phase of growth include

labour force participation, climate resilience, and further improvements in business environment," S&P said. It said the Indian economy is reliant on strong growth performance in services industries.

The influence of services in the economy has grown over time, while agriculture and other primary industries have reduced economic shares. "We expect share of services in the economy to rise further as comparative advantages are still in that space," it added.

## Uttarakhand Govt signs Rs 30,200 Crore worth MOU's in Mumbai

DOMINICK RODRIGUES  
Mumbai

The Uttarakhand Government signed a whopping number of MOUs worth Rs 30,200 crores with industrial groups during its roadshow 'Uttarakhand Global Investor Summit 2023' that was held in Mumbai recently.

Uttarakhand has so far signed MOUs totally worth Rs 1.24 lakh crore in several roadshows covering Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad, besides holding four roadshows abroad in London, Birmingham, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The industries signing the MOUs included: Tourism, Hospitality, AYUSH wellness, Manufacturing, Pharma, Food Processing, Real Estate Infra, Pumped Storage sector, Green and Renewable Energy, and Automobile sector.



The Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama had addressed the gathering of industrialists from different sectors during the roadshow in Mumbai. Describing Uttarakhand as the country's "spiritual" capital, Dhama said that the State has set a target of doubling its GDP within the next 5 years for which the "Strong Uttarakhand Mission" had been started, besides the "Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit-2023" to be held on December 8-9 this year. Noting that investment in the

industrial sector would ensure sustainable employment opportunities for Uttarakhand, the Chief Minister said that besides receiving over Rs one lakh crore worth investment proposals, the State was making unprecedented progress in "Ease of Doing Business" by adopting the core principles of "Simplification, Resolution and Satisfaction" alongside adopting the 'Pro-Active Governance' and 'Timely Implementation' formula for effective administration given by the Prime minister in 2015.

## First MSME Economy monitor Index launched by SIDBI and Jocata

DOMINICK RODRIGUES  
Mumbai

"Sumpoom" - India's first MSME Economic Activity Index - was launched here recently by JOCATA and SIDBI to highlight a "consent-based GST sales data Index" that represents a transformative step forward in the evolution of Indian MSMEs.

Sivasubramanian Ramann, CMD, SIDBI, said that though the MSME sector was a significant player in the Indian economy, data paucity in this sector was a challenge for industry members



and policymakers, and Sumpoom would help in measuring "transaction health" of SIDBI's customers. "We at SIDBI have been constantly engaged in the development of the MSME sector including through institutions to bridge the information symmetry to enable informed decision-making by stakeholders," Ramann said, adding that this "Sumpoom" created by Jocata carried an Index measuring economic activity of the MSMEs leveraging the GST data.

"The underlying authentic data of GST provides credibility to the Index and, with time, can be expanded to include more dimensions to provide a rich perspective on prevalent trends in the MSME sector," he said. Describing MSMEs as the "life-blood of the Indian economy," Prashant Muddu, MD/CEO, Jocata, said "Sumpoom is focused towards MSMEs manufacturing activity by monitoring economic activity through the 'prism of sales.'"

## Diwali's good news: Corona's economic losses are over



DR P S VOHRA

**D**iwali lights up every nook with its bright splendour, a source of enormous joy for the Indian economy, similar to the celebration that surrounds us. The economy is receiving newfound strength from the revival of consumer confidence among Indians. It's noteworthy that the Reserve Bank of India continues to make efforts to understand various emotions of Indian consumers on different dimensions. In this context, a new report from the RBI is currently being widely discussed these days, which could be officially announced or interpreted as an indication that the economic impact of COVID-19 on Indian society has reached the brink of complete resolution. The figures presented in this report are based on a survey conducted in the month of September. This report confirms that now every ordinary Indian is thinking the same way for their present and future as they did in the year 2019 or before. The statistics in this report reaffirm that the Consumer Confidence Index or the CCI recorded 92.2 in the month of September, slightly above the level it was in the year 2019. These facts also validate that Indian economic policies are moving in the right direction.

This survey conducted by the Reserve Bank of India primarily aims to understand the thoughts and sentiments of Indians on five key economic aspects. It analyzes the economic conditions, cur-

rent level of employment, inflation and its impact, changes in personal economic income, and various types of expenditures. The other aspect of this survey is that it attempts to understand the perspective of Indians towards economic progress in the future, along with the analysis of the present situation. This survey for the month of September is also presenting that the Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) will reach a level of 122.3 for the upcoming year 2024, which is approximately the same as it was in the year 2019. After the economic setback caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CCI had declined to around 40 points from the year 2020 to 2022. The main reasons behind this decline were the significantly negative annual GDP growth in the year 2020-21 and a prolonged period of economic dip in all sources of income, along with uncertainties affecting society. It is noteworthy that the world's most populous country has emerged from the economic downturn within just three years.

Despite all this, it has now become extremely necessary to think deeply about the fact that the thinking of a common man in the Indian society does not seem to be very positive towards the present and future regarding the increase in employment. Under the same survey of the Reserve Bank of India, more than two-thirds of the people have accepted that the situation regarding the availability of employment at present is the same as a year ago and about more than 10 per cent of the people didn't express their



opinions about employment. In this report, about 30 per cent people refused to give their opinion regarding the increase in employment for the next year. More than 25 per cent people believed that after one year there will be a decline in the level of employment in the Indian economy and society. Only 18% of people believe that the situation a year from now will remain the same as the current state, where the increase in employment opportunities in mainstream India is not very hopeful. Analysing the underlying reasons, two aspects come into play: there is a scarcity of jobs in the public sector, while the private sector consistently exhibits higher instability.

What is the ultimate solution to unemployment? This question reflects deep contemplation considering that in the past three decades, the unemployment rate in India has never fallen below 5%, even as the country's population has increased by around 500 million during this period. In other words, the number of unemployed individuals in India is increasing rapidly each year. Therefore, India is recognized as

a country with "jobless economic growth". This poses a significant question about India's economic identity, apart from the fact that our GDP number is consistently growing. If economic policies focus on the rapid development of the manufacturing sector, a robust solution to the problem of unemployment can emerge. The manufacturing sector is the most significant means of providing employment in the economy. Through this, the poverty line in society can also be eradicated because it leads to the equitable distribution of economic wealth among various sections of society, resulting in an increase in individual incomes. Since at present the service sector in India is holding the reins of economic progress and the employment created by it is not reaching all sections of the society, that is why India remains a poor nation. In the labour-intensive manufacturing industry, India's global contribution is only 2.5%, whereas China's share is 32%. Consequently, large industries and factories are not prevalent in Indian cities. Moreover, India's manufacturing sector contributes less than 2% to its

exports, whereas Vietnam, with just 7% of India's population, surpasses India significantly in export contribution. Another challenge is that India not only faces competition from China in the Asian continent's manufacturing sector but also from several small economies like Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines, Korea, and neighbouring Bangladesh, which have effectively controlled costs and carved out a significant space in the global market. It has been observed that the raw material costs in these countries are approximately 20 to 30 per cent lower than Indian products. Consequently, Indian materials are not being sold well globally. Therefore, India's contribution to global manufacturing sector is very low. So, what should be done to elevate our manufacturing sector to new heights? One viable option, seen as a policy issue, is to focus on India's research and development (R&D) sector. According to statistics, economic investment in research and development in India is still less than 1%, whereas in developed countries, it ranges from 5% to 7%. India continually misses the opportunity to take a significant step forward in the development arena. This certainly deprives India of taking a big initiative on the development front in the future, hence if India wants to increase the contribution of its manufacturing sector, it will have to pay more attention to this.

Dr P S Vohra is Writer, columnist and financial thinker. Views are personal

## DAY-NRLM and SIDBI inks MoU to boost Women-led enterprises in Self Help Groups

FW CORRESPONDENT  
New Delhi

To promote women led enterprises among experienced members of Self Help Groups (SHGs), the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) and the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) signed a MoU on Thursday. According to a statement by the rural development ministry, the partnership focuses on multiple aspects to boost women entrepreneurship.

The MoU, a plan for two years, was inked on Thursday by DAY-NRLM and SIDBI in the presence of Secretary Rural Development Shailesh Kumar Singh and Chairman and Managing Director SIDBI Sivasubramanian Ramann.

The primary focus of this collaboration is to demonstrate on-the-ground activities that establish a reliable and sensitive support structure for the capacity enhancement of women entrepreneurs (WEs).

Furthermore, it aims to institutionalize standard protocols, systems, and procedures for streamlined access to formal finance, as well as the development of a comprehensive framework for new financial products and schemes. Additional Secretary Rural Livelihoods Charanjit Singh signed the document on behalf of DAY-NRLM while



SIDBI was represented by their Chief General Manager Dr S.S. Acharya, said a press statement.

Key outcomes expected from this collaboration are:

- Enhanced capacity and ability of State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLM) teams to promote the graduation of seasoned SHG members into micro-entrepreneurs
- The establishment of a reliable and sensitive support architecture for women-led enterprises, involving a network of field cadres, mentors, and experts
- The implementation of standardized protocols within DAY-NRLM to support women-led enterprises
- The formation of partnerships with financial institutions and a network of financiers
- The design and implementation of new financial schemes, such as credit guarantees and interest subventions

The creation of clear, scalable models for promoting women-

led enterprises that can be replicated nationwide

### Background

DAY-NRLM is the flagship initiative of the rural development ministry to cover 7 crore rural poor households, across 600 districts, 6,000 blocks, 2.5 lakh gram panchayats and 6 lakh villages in the country through SHGs and federated institutions and support them for livelihoods collectives in a period of 8-10 years. The scheme enables one member (preferably a woman) from each rural poor household to be brought under the SHG network.

As of July this year, 19.43 per cent of MSMEs registered on the government's Udyam portal were owned by women, according to data shared by Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma, Minister of State in the MSME Ministry in the Parliament. Moreover, under the government's Stand-Up India scheme, which enables credit for women and SC-ST entrepreneurs, 2.07 lakh loans amounting to Rs 46,737 crore were sanctioned so far since its launch in April 2016.



# INTERNATIONAL

## Conditions at Gaza's largest hospital 'disastrous'

In a joint statement, the UN Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) and World Health Organization (WHO) said conditions at the Al-Shifa Hospital — the largest in the Gaza Strip and one of the oldest Palestinian health institutions — were "disastrous" amid the raging Israel-Hamas war.

The statement issued on Wednesday said there are currently almost two patients for every bed available and emergency department and wards were overflowing requiring doctors and medical workers to treat wounded and sick patients in the corridors, floor and outdoors.

"The number of wounded increases by the hour while patients are undergoing immense and unnecessary pain as medicines and anaesthetics are running out. In addition, tens of thousands of displaced people have sought shelter in the hospital's parking lots and yards," it said.



The statement went on to say that for over a month, no fuel has been allowed into the Gaza Strip, including to the Al-Shifa Hospital.

The two UN bodies also renewed "their urgent call for the delivery of fuel to humanitarian agencies in the Gaza Strip".

"Without fuel, hospitals and other essential facilities like desalination plants and baker-

ies cannot operate, and more people will most certainly die as a result," the joint statement added.

As a result of the fuel shortage, the Al Quds hospital in Gaza City shut down key services on Thursday, while the Al Awda hospital, the only provider of maternity services in northern Gaza, warned about an imminent closure.

The joint statement came a day after the UNRWA and WHO delivered medical supplies and medicines to the Al-Shifa Hospital.

This was only the second delivery of lifesaving supplies to the hospital since the escalation of hostilities and the total siege of Gaza began.

Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces and the govern-

ment have alleged that the Al-Shifa Hospital was doubling up as the command centre for Hamas and several underground tunnels were operating under the facility.

Last week, Israel had claimed responsibility for an attack outside the hospital, saying that a fighter jet struck an ambulance used by Hamas militants.

As of Thursday morning, the death toll in Gaza since the war broke out stood at 10,569, of whom 67 per cent are said to be children and women.

About 2,450 others, including 1,350 children, have been reported missing and may be trapped or dead under the rubble.

The fatalities also include at least 192 medical staff, of which 16 were on duty when killed, according to WHO.

A total of 92 UNRWA staff and 18 Palestinian Civil Defense personnel have also lost their lives in the raging conflict.

## Russia officially exits European arms control treaty

**MOSCOW:** Russia has formally withdrawn from the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) at midnight on Tuesday, the Foreign Ministry in Moscow announced.

"As of 00:00 hours on November 7, 2023, the CFE withdrawal procedure for Russia, which was suspended by our country in 2007, has been completed. Thus, the international legal document has finally gone into history for us," Xinhua news agency quoted the Ministry as saying. Russia does not currently see the possibility of concluding arms control agreements with NATO countries, it added.

"Authorities of NATO member states and the bloc's clients clearly demonstrated their inability to negotiate. As of today, any arms control agreements with them are impossible."



Two other agreements related to the CFE had ceased to be valid for Russia -- the Budapest Memorandum of November 3, 1990, which set the maximum levels of conventional weapons and equipment for the six Warsaw Pact countries; and the Flank Agreement of May 31, 1996, which modified the original treaty. The CFE, originally signed in 1990 by the then NATO members and the then six Warsaw Treaty states, came into force in 1992. The pact was aimed at establishing a balance between the two military alliances by setting limits on the quantities of weapons and military equipment that all parties were allowed to amass.

## Hamis leaders rake up Kashmir in talks with Pakistani leader



FW DESK

Senior Hamas leaders Ismail Haniyeh and Khaled Meshaal have mentioned that have equate Palestinian issue with Kashmir during a meeting in Qatar with a Pakistani delegation led by Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman of Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Pakistan.

They are quoted to have said that the alleged human rights abuses in Kashmir and Palestine serve as a litmus test for advocates of human rights.

The Hamas leaders have emphasized the importance of the Muslim world's support for the Palestinian cause.

Haniyeh told the Pakistani leader that the countries claiming to stand for human rights were sending ships filled with weapons to Tel Aviv.

Hamas' mention of Kashmir is certain to rile the Indian government which otherwise shares good relations with Palestinian Authority ruling the West Bank. India also supports the two-state solution to resolve the lingering Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

## SPEE3D Printers to Aid in Ukraine's War Efforts



**MELBOURNE (AUSTRALIA):** SPEE3D, a leading metal additive manufacturing company, announced that it is working with the Australian Government to deploy 3D printers and equipment training to support Ukraine in its ongoing war.

As part of the agreement, three WarpSPEE3D printers will be deployed in various locations throughout Ukraine. Their use will be bolstered by SPEE3D training enabling Ukrainian soldiers and engineers to leverage the company's manufacturing technology. This capability will allow Ukrainian soldiers to rapidly fabricate critical parts for military equipment in hours, rather than waiting for replacements or dealing with obsolescence.

"We're pleased to provide Ukrainian soldiers with Australian tech that keeps them resilient and ready for the fight," said Byron Kennedy, CEO of SPEE3D. "We look forward to teaching them how to operate the machines, as well as how to leverage our technology to reengineer parts of consequence to solve problems in real-time. We recognize this technology will offer a competitive advantage to Ukraine and are proud to join fellow nations in supporting their heroic efforts."

## Biden believes reoccupation of Gaza by Israeli forces isn't good: WH official

A senior White House official said President Joe Biden "believes that a reoccupation of Gaza by Israeli forces is not good" after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed his country "will have the overall security responsibility" in the besieged enclave once the war ends "for an indefinite period".

Speaking to CNN on Tuesday, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said: "The President still believes that a reoccupation of Gaza by Israeli forces is not good. It's not good for Israel; not good for the Israeli people."

"One of the conversations that Secretary (Antony) Blinken has been having in the region is what does post-conflict Gaza look like? What does governance look like in Gaza? Because whatever it is it can't be what it was on October 6. It can't be Hamas."

Kirby's remarks came a day after Netanyahu told ABC News that he believed Israel will have a role to play for an "indefinite period" once and when the raging fighting ends. "Those who don't want to continue the war of Hamas... It certainly is not -- I think Israel will, for an indefinite period will have the overall security responsibility because we've seen what happens when we don't have it."

"When we don't have that security responsibility, what we have is the eruption of Hamas terror on a scale that we couldn't imagine," he told ABC News.

Last month, Biden had said that it would be a "big mistake"



for Israel to occupy Gaza.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters on Tuesday, the President said that he has not had a chance to speak with Netanyahu but did asked the latter to consider a humanitarian pause when they spoke on Monday.

"I didn't get a chance to talk to him today. I did ask him for a pause in the past -- yesterday. I'm still waiting to hear from other people," CNN quoted Biden as saying. Israeli government officials have not commented on how Gaza will be governed if the Hamas militant group is wiped out from the enclave. On Tuesday, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said that Israel will "retain complete freedom of action to respond to any situation in the Gaza Strip" once the war ends. "At the end of this 'campaign' Hamas, as a military organisation or governing body in Gaza, will cease to exist," he asserted.

Speaking to CNN also on Tuesday, Mark Regev, a senior adviser to Netanyahu, said that Israel is "not talking about any sort of ongoing occupation of the Gaza Strip".

## UK Sikh MP writes to Justice Secy after kirpan-wielding man barred from jury duty

**LONDON:** Stating that Sikhs' rights and religious freedoms need to be respected, British Sikh MP Preet Kaur Gill wrote to the UK Justice Secretary after a man from the community was barred from taking part in jury service for carrying a kirpan (religious dagger).

In a letter addressed to Alex Chalk, Gill said Jatinder Singh was made to "feel like a criminal" after he was prevented from taking part in jury service at the Birmingham Crown Court last month.

"I believe this incident highlights a pressing issue that re-

quires attention to ensure that individuals, regardless of their religious background, can engage in civic duties without facing discrimination," Gill said in her letter published in BirminghamLive.

Baptised Sikhs are required to carry the five Ks with them at all times, as a symbol of their faith, which include Kesh (uncut hair), Kara (bangle), Kanga (comb), Kaccha (undercloth) and Kirpan (dagger).

"Mr Singh, who possesses a Kirpan as permitted by the Criminal Justice Act 1988, found himself being refused



entry to the court during his jury service. This incident is deeply concerning, as it not only raises issues of religious freedom but also affects the credibility and inclusivity of our legal system," the MP from Edgbaston stated

in the letter last week.

"It is vital that we ensure that individuals like Mr Singh, who are summoned to perform their civic duties, are able to do so without any compromise to their religious beliefs," she added. Jatinder said he adhered to Ministry of Justice (MoJ) guidelines for Sikh community members wishing to enter a court building and was wearing a five-inch sword.

The MoJ rules allow bringing in a kirpan not more than six inches long (15 cm) and with a blade no more than five inches (12 cm) in length.

## Top UK lawyers fear Jagtar Johal won't receive 'due process' in India: Report

**LONDON:** Top lawyers have asked UK Foreign Office minister Lord Ahmad to retract his recent comments saying that British Sikh Jagtar Singh Johal would receive "due process" in India where he has been detained since 2017 over terror charges.

In a debate about Johal's case in the House of Lords in September, Ahmad said the UK would not call for the release of an individual or interfere in another country's legal process "where a due process is being followed". Ken MacDonald, Elish Angiolini and Jim Wallace, who have held senior public roles, expressed fears that Johal will not receive "due process" in India amid claims of torture and arbitrary detention, The Guardian reported.

In a letter to Ahmad, coinciding with the sixth anniversary of Johal's detention, the law-

yers said that "there can be no due process where proceedings have been tainted by torture", or where charges are politically motivated and punish freedom of expression.

Dumbarton-based Johal was in Punjab for his wedding when he was arrested in Jalandhar on November 4, 2017, over his alleged role in killings by the Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF), a banned terrorist organisation.

According to his family, the 36-year-old has been tortured, including through electric shocks, before being made to sign a blank confession document -- allegations that have been denied by the Indian authorities. He is currently being held at the Tihar Jail and faces a possible death penalty over 10 accusations of murder and conspiracy to murder.

The lawyers' letter stated that in the six years Johal has been



in jail, no credible evidence has been forthcoming, and called on Ahmad to retract his "unsustainable" comments about due process.

Cutting across party lines, a group of more than 70 MPs had called on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to seek "immediate release" of Johal, as he travelled to New Delhi to attend the G20 leaders' summit in September.

Responding to Scottish National Party MP Martin Docherty-Hughes, Lord Ahmad said that with Johal's trial underway in India, a call for his release would be considered interference in the Indian judicial process, which could jeopardise UK's ability to offer consular assistance.

He further said that with Johal's trial underway in India, a call for his release would be considered interference in the Indian judicial process, which could jeopardise UK's ability to offer consular assistance.

The Minister told Docherty-Hughes that Johal's issue was brought up by the British Foreign Secretary during his meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on March 1.

"Where appropriate, the Prime Minister will also raise Johal's case during his upcoming engagements with the In-

dian government," Lord Ahmed wrote in his letter to the MP.

Sunak confirmed that he raised Johal's case during his talks with counterpart Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the summit but didn't provide details.

In response to the development, campaigners for Johal said the UK government should declare Modi's response to Sunak on the issue, and that it is "meaningless" if the Prime Minister didn't call for "immediate release".

A Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office spokesperson told The Guardian that it was committed to resolving Johal's case "as soon as possible".

"We continue to provide consular assistance to Mr Johal and his family and have consistently raised his case directly with the government of India," the spokesperson added.

## Saudi's Silence Pays Off: Belated OIC Meet Thwarts Iran-Chinese Game, HAMAS Finally Humbled!



GOPAL MISRA

**D**uring the past 35 days or so, the Israel-Hamas war has been overwhelming the international media predicting the collapse of the détente being recently worked out between Israel and its estranged Arab countries following prolonged negotiations.

It, however, it goes to the credit of Mohammed bin Salman or MBS, crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, that he quietly bids time to allow his rivals in the West Asian region, especially Iran, play their respective power games, but with the defeat of Hamas looming large, Iran's power game operating through its proxies such as Hamas and Hezbollah known as outfits of dreaded terrorists, appears to have exhausted. MBS now poised to play the leading role for peace in the region.

It is being widely believed that the arrival of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, just four days before leaving for Riyadh to attend the emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) scheduled for November 12, to the Indian PM, Narendra Modi, for mediation in ending the war is just rhetoric. He asks Modi "to use India's capacities to end Israeli actions in Gaza,

expressing support for global efforts towards ceasefire", but there has been no immediate Indian response. His inability to criticise Hamas's terrorist attack on Israel on the morning of October seven, perhaps, has led to the Indian silence.

There is little chance of the OIC endorsing a joint military campaign against Israel; it is also not being ruled out that MBS succeeding in persuading Iran to adjust with the obtaining realities in West Asia. Iran's present confrontation with the West, especially its zeal to obtain nuclear weapons despite being signatory to the NPT, has only driven it to the camp of North Korea, China and now Russia. It is also being stated that while MBS is introducing reforms in his country, Iran is subjugating its women. In this back ground, it may just be a wishful thinking that the two regional powers could be reaching to a consensus at the OIC. However, Iran, which had agreed to resume diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia in March after seven years of hostility, might also relent from its approach and usher in an era of cooperation among them, thus ending their intense rivalry.

The Hamas strategy to prevent any strong reprisal from Israel following its terrorist attack has now petered out. Israel is being criticised for its "cruel revenge" against the Hamas housed in the Gaza, but it has



also taken has revenge against the carnage of the Hamas terrorists' attack on the morning of Oct. 7, killing some 1,400 Israeli civilians, and taking more than 240 people hostage. Israel's counter attack has already destroyed most of Gaza and its tunnels, causing large scale destruction and deaths, almost killing ten thousand civilians, including children estimated to be four thousand or so.

There are reports that by the time OIC takes place, Israeli seizes of Gaza might have been relaxed for enabling the UN relief team to help the war victims. India, which is being asked to mediate for peace, has already been sending medical relief through the UN agencies to the victims of war.

The Indian Initiative- The South Block in New Delhi, which houses the offices of the prime minister and foreign ministry, is exploring the possible role of India in West Asia's peace process. The mature leadership of Saudi Arabia and Egypt appears to have already thwarted

the threat to their growing cooperation with Israel caused by the invasion of Hamas.

The prevalent mood, however, in the region is not to intensify war, but much will depend upon the OIC and its approach towards the human crisis and the restoration of peace. It is also being keenly watched whether the OIC would advice for peace or would cling to the anti-Jew rhetoric. The reality is that the Israeli offensive has already derailed the strategic calculations of Hamas and its patrons, especially Iran.

Saudi Arabia is the Leader - With the final defeat of Hamas in Gaza, MBS is finally on a commanding situation in the regional politics. It is natural for China to be upset, because the reassertion of cooperation between Israel and Arab countries might be denying its ambitious programme to have "strategic depth" in the Gulf and also to replace the USA in this oil-rich region. The OIC might also pave the way for better cooperation between Iran and its

Arab neighbours. It is also being asked whether the support of China and Russia to Iran and its proxies really help Hamas.

Iran is aware that the beginning of cooperation between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain signed on September 15, 2020 is now poised for a new level of understanding in the region. It is to be seen, whether Raisi's visit to Saudi Arabia, would be prompting Iran to reorient its current policy of sabotaging the peace process through its proxies. Meanwhile, Palestinians can hope for a liberal financial assistance from the civil society of the USA, UK and France and other European powers. The developed world is already shocked by the ongoing genocide in the Israel-Hamas War and keen to extend full humanitarian assistance to the war victims.

The UN relief team has already lost nearly 90 volunteers in the conflict zone. The number of deaths is increasing with the passage of time. It is estimated that more than 20,000 dead and 17,000 severely wounded, the dark shadow of this holocaust might be haunting all of us for decades now.

Gopal Misra has been associated with national and international media. His books on journalism and geo-politics have been well-appreciated. Views are personal.

## Fluence wins Gold Award for Battery Storage Project of the Year at Asian Power Awards 2023

FW DESK  
Melbourne (Australia)

Fluence Energy, a leading global provider of energy storage products and services, and optimisation software for renewables and storage, today announced that it has won the Gold Award in the Battery Storage Project of the Year category at Asian Power Awards 2023 for the successful delivery of the 150 MW / 150 MWh Hazelwood Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) jointly funded and developed by ENGIE and Eku Energy.

The Hazelwood BESS is Australia's first battery-based energy storage system to be hosted at a retired coal-fired power plant in Victoria's Latrobe Valley, east of Melbourne, and represents a key moment in repurposing former thermal assets for renewable energy technologies. Currently a 150 MW / 150 MWh system, the project's innovative design and the site's unique location provide the flexibility to scale up storage capacity quickly and cost effectively, both in size and duration, to meet future network and market demand.

Fluence supplied and will maintain the Hazelwood BESS under a 20-year contract with ENGIE and Eku Energy. Hazelwood BESS is the first project in Australia



## Cellebrite Equips Investigators with Next Generation Cloud-Based Solution



**TYSONS CORNER (ISRAEL):** Cellebrite DI Ltd. a global leader in Digital Intelligence (DI) solutions for the public and private sectors, announced Cellebrite Smart Search, a new SaaS-based solution that securely automates the collection and review of publicly available online data. Gathering data manually from open sources, especially social media platforms, is time-consuming and often complex, and surfacing actionable insights from this data can be equally challenging. Smart Search can save investigators hours of work.

Available now, Smart Search is Cellebrite's next generation of open-source intelligence (OSINT) offerings. Built specifically for investigators, Smart Search collects all publicly available online data on a desired individual or organization and surfaces the most relevant information, quickly generating a standardized, shareable report for stakeholders. The digital world is an extension of the physical crime scene and therefore leveraging the online presence of subjects of interest is critical -- to both support an investigation and regain momentum when leads go cold.





Re-elected Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) president Harjinder Singh Dhani (C) along with other elected office bearers pays his respect at the Sri Harmandir Sahib on Wednesday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

# Kareena back in blazing new avatar as Avni Bajirao in 'Singham 3'

**MUMBAI:** Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor is now back with fire as she will be making her return as Avni Bajirao in superstar Ajay Devgn's upcoming 'Singham 3'. Superstar Akshay Kumar also revealed the poster and wrote: "Avni Bajirao Singham returns...mess at your own risk!" Revealing the poster of her character, director Rohit Shetty wrote: "Meet the strength behind Singham...Avni Bajirao Singham..."

He added: "We first worked together in 2007...3 blockbuster films till now. 'Golmaal Returns', 'Golmaal 3', 'Singham returns... And now we are working on our fourth project... 'Singham Again'. 16 year long association. Nothing has changed, Bebo is still the same, simple, sweet, and hardworking." In 'Singham Returns', Kareena played the character who was Bajirao Singham's love interest and in 'Singham 3' she will now be playing his wife as the movie takes place 10 years after the previous film. A powerful woman in her own right, Kareena's poster sees her in a bright flaming light with shades of dark, as her character is blazing with collected confidence.

Covered in some wounds on her forehead as well as her lips, the '3 Idiots' actress is shown having a cold killer like gaze, similar to that of an experienced cop as she is pointing her pistol. Behind her covered in the shadows are what look like police commandos wearing technical gear. Part of Rohit Shetty's 'Cop Universe', his upcoming 'Singham Again' (or Singham 3) will star Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgn, Deepika Padukone, Kareena Kapoor, and Ranveer Singh in pivotal roles. The movie will hit theatres on Independence Day.



## POTPOURRI



# People in India are exposed to nearly 12 fake messages daily, reveals McAfee's Scam Message Study

ARUN KUMAR RAO Bengaluru

McAfee Corp., a global leader in online protection, today released its first-ever Global Scam Message Study. The study surveyed more than 7,000 adults in seven countries, including India, to understand how scam messages, and the increased scam sophistication brought about by artificial intelligence (AI), have impacted the lives of consumers worldwide. AI is a scammer's favorite tool, helping cybercriminals increase the scale and sophistication of scam messages. The speed of phishing and text message scams is on the rise - a new phishing site is created every 11 seconds. This spotlights the in-



creasing need for solutions that turn the tables on AI scammers; there has never been a more critical time for the country's 900 million internet users to protect themselves online. This study reveals that Indians receive nearly 12 fake messages or scams each day via email, text or social media daily. An average Indian consumer spends 1.8 hours a week

reviewing, verifying or deciding whether a message sent through text, email, social media is real or fake. 82% of Indians have clicked on or fallen for fake messages. 49% of Indians said that scam messages no longer have typos or errors, making them more believable and harder to identify. Amongst the most common forms of sophisticated trickery, the most Indian consumers fall for fake job notifications or offers (64%) and bank alert messages (52%). An average Indian spends 105 minutes each week reviewing, verifying or deciding whether a message sent through text, email, social media is real or fake. This amounts to more than two full work weeks each year, spent on scam-spotting.

About 90% of Indians surveyed indicate that they receive fake messages or scams via email and text on a daily basis, and 84% say the same about social media. "It's truly a sign of the times that most Indian consumers would rather subject themselves to the pain and distress of a root canal than be subjected to scam texts and messages throughout the year," said Roma Majumder, SVP of Product at McAfee. "And it's not just the speed and volume, but the sophistication. Thanks to AI it can be incredibly difficult to know if that delivery text message or bank alert notification is real or not. So much so that 73% of Indians believe they have a better shot at solving the Rubik's cube than identifying a scam message."

# Significance of Training and Awareness in Security

GARIMA GOSWAMY AND PRAKRITI PANDIA



In Today's rapidly evolving technological landscape, the imperative to adapt and grow professionally is universal. For security professionals, this demand for continuous development is particularly acute. There is a huge skill gap particularly in cyber security, which is more in demand within the security domain. As per 2022 Cybersecurity Skills Gap Report published by Fortinet (a cybersecurity company), skill shortage in cyber security amounts to 80% of breaches. As per a study conducted by TeamLease, a tech staffing firm, as of May 2023, cyber security had 40,000 open opportunities but the demand and supply gap stood at 30%. Some constructive steps are being taken. For instance, since 2020, Central Investigation and Security Services Limited (CISS) has trained at least 2,000 personnel in corporate and security management, command center operations, capacity building for security executives, and hands on training for dog handlers. This is part of a memorandum of understanding between CISS group of companies and Rastriya Raksha University. On similar lines, to fulfil the requisite training and awareness requirements in physical security, companies like DridhG Security International Private

Limited is also in talks with prominent institutes. Hurdles Given the fast pace in which technological advancement is taking place, there is a need to update and upgrade Oneself. The security professional is no different. However, in India, there are various challenges faced by organizations to provide the kind of platform that is required for knowledge enhancement. Usually those in decision making position ask for a valid reason for investing in programs pertaining to training and development from operations' heads. Very few are able to present a case to their management. At times, even after recognizing the requirement, there are roadblocks. More often than ever, the reason for not investing in training and awareness sessions is claimed to be budget constraint. Once budget allocation is done, the next task is to look for an efficient trainer. This process of identifying the training needs, getting the necessary approval for conducting the requisite training and awareness sessions, search and the process of shortlisting of qualified external trainers, and setting up a training calendar becomes a lengthy process in some organizations. Then again, there are some other factors which also act like a very big hurdle. We opine that not many companies have a good culture of training and awareness because there is a very deep-rooted insecurity. Many managers think "If I train my team, what if they supersede me?" So, a lot of people do not wish to engage in training and awareness not because of budget constrain or time constrain, but because there is an insecurity that a youngster might just supersede and what will happen to the legacy of those who have been in the system for quite some time. In training and awareness also, there is a need of what Immanuel Kant used to call "goodwill" which can be loosely understood as "doing good for the sake of goodness." Training and awareness sessions should be conducted for the sake of training and awareness, that is, for knowledge enhancement. Training and awareness sessions should be conducted in a process-oriented way, letting go of the subjective thoughts of managers or even senior leadership. There should be a realization that it is being done for the overall good of the company by enhancing the quality of professionals working in the organization.



**Film stars are struggling, OTT stars moving forward: Neil Nitin Mukesh**

**MUMBAI:** Film star Neil Nitin Mukesh, who will soon be seen as a judge on a mentor-based fashion reality show 'Glam Fame', said actors are struggling in films, but OTT stars are getting more and more work. The actor, who was last seen in the film 'Bypass Road' in 2019, will soon appear as a mentor along with actresses Sunny Leone and Esha Deol in the reality show that promises to fulfill the dreams of aspiring models all across the country. In a candid conversation, the actor spoke about the show, his experience, changing trends of OTT and much more. In today's world, when OTT is ruling the world, how the show will help the contestants, he said: "Today is the time of OTT. So many shows are coming on OTT, we are watching the trend. We film stars are struggling and OTT stars are progressing and moving forward. Today everyone wants to be on the platform where they can reach a larger audience. If the contestants are able to connect with any casting director or director, it can definitely change their lives." Talking about the show 'Glam Fame' he said: "I am very excited for the show. It is one show which will encourage the youth who want to make a career in the fashion industry. There are some big names who will be mentoring these aspiring youth."

# India Book of Records appoints Narvijay Yadav as COO

FW DESK New Delhi

Narvijay Yadav, a renowned media personality, has been appointed as Chief Operations Officer (COO) of the premier record keeper of the nation - the India Book of Records (IBR), an esteemed platform that brings together record holders from across India. Prior to his new role at India Book of Records, Narvijay worked with Dainik Bhaskar, Chandigarh; Rashtriya Sahara, Noida, and Free Press Journal,



an English Daily from Indore. He has held the positions of Feature Editor, Business News Editor, and Defence Corre-

spondent. Later, his entrepreneurial venture 'SpectrumPR' became a hit among the entertainment industry bigwigs of Bollywood and Polywood. His weekly column 'Talking Points' is quite popular in the country and his expertise lies in news and reputation management. On his appointment, Neerja Roy Chowdhury, Managing Editor, India Book of Records said, "It gives me immense joy to announce the appointment of Narvijay Yadav as the COO of IBR. With his 35 years long rich experience in every aspect

of the media industry and his strategic and functional knowledge in operational excellence, Narvijay is best suited for this post of key responsibility." Dr. Biswaroop Roy Chowdhury, Editor-in-Chief, India Book of Records said, "Our commitment lies in identifying excellence and honouring the most deserving individuals. I am sure that with his dynamic approach and wide understanding of the editorial requirements, Narvijay will add value to the organization and take it to the next level."

# Pakistan's dream of the World Cup is virtually over



SUNIL THAPLIYAL New Delhi

Pakistan is almost out of the race for the semi-finals of the 2023 Cricket World Cup, as its next match will be against England. Pakistan will only progress to the semi-finals if they beat England by 287 runs in their final league game. This math applies if Pakistan bats first. If the Pakistan team bowls first and starts chasing the target, then it has to reach the target in 16 balls. That means whatever target England sets for Pakistan must be achieved with 284 balls remaining. Of the total 300 balls in the match, only 284 need to be kept; this target is only possible by a miracle. The Pakistan cricket team could not put up a credible performance in this entire World Cup. During this time, the Pakistan cricket

team has remained in the news more for controversies than for its matches. The Pakistan team management said during the World Cup that the players were not given beef to eat, which led to a drop in performance. The Pakistani team is having a tough time at the current World Cup. Just a few days ago, the Pakistan cricket team was ranked number one. They went into the World Cup as favourites, but within about two weeks, the Pakistan team completely collapsed. The level of disgrace Pakistan has experienced in the World Cup so far has rarely befallen a team in such a major tournament. Pakistani cricket lovers would have tolerated the defeat against India, but the defeat against Afghanistan had triggered massive criticism at home in Pakistan. This begs the question: why

did the Pakistan team perform so badly? Just two months ago, during the preparations for the Asia Cup 2023, Pakistan was the number one ODI team in the world. All the big Pakistani names were loudly claiming in the debates on TV channels that Babar's team would beat India. Pakistan had beaten India in the 2021 T20 World Cup, while Australia had given a tough fight in the T20 World Cup, so their morale was at its peak. When the Indian team traveled to Sri Lanka for the Asia Cup, the first match was against hosts Pakistan on September 2. The match was not completed due to rain, but the Indian team was seen capitulating to the storming balls of Shaheen Afridi, Haris Rauf, and Naseem Shah. Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, and Shreyas Iyer had returned to the pavilion within 66 runs of each other. Here, Ishan Kishan and Hardik Pandya scored half-centuries to take India to 266 runs. However, the match was suspended due to rain and was later declared a draw. After the first match, the Pakistan cricket fraternity, especially former cricketers, journalists, and even politicians, mocked India, claiming that the Indian team was weak and unable to play against Pakistan's fast bowling.

# OTT Awards for best web series introduced at 54th IFFI

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA New Delhi

In the IFFI Best Web Series (OTT) Award has been introduced this year. Aimed at acknowledging, encouraging and honouring, the flourishing content and its creators of OTT platforms. 32 entries have received in 10 languages from 15 OTT platforms. Certificates and a cash prize of 10 Lakhs will be given as prize money to the winning series, which will be announced in the closing ceremony. Massive response to International Section, 600 Entries for 'Creative Minds of Tomorrow' (CMOT), which is Hon'ble I & B Minister's brain-child for youth.



75 Creative Minds of Tomorrow (CMOT): A brain-child of Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, the initiative aims to identify, encourage and nurture young creative talents from various trades of filmmaking. Short TV is the conceptual Programming Partner, which is the world's largest catalogue of high-quality short movies and series available on TV, on mobile, online, and in theaters. These selected 'creative minds' are divided into 5 teams for the 'Film Challenge', to make a short film each, all in 48 hours. This year the candidates will also have professional classes especially curated by the masters of cinema and a "Talent Camp" for recruitment will be organised with more than 20 leading companies. Michael Douglas to receive Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award at the 54th International Film Festival at Goa. 54th International Film Festival of India to be held from 20th to 28th November in its permanent destination Goa. Anurag Singh Thakur, Minister for Information and Broadcasting shared the details, 198 films to be shown in International Section including 13 world premiers. 'Catching Dust' to be the opening film; 'About Dry Grasses' to be the Mid-fest Film and 'The Featherweight' to be the Closing Film to be shown. 19 award-winning films from various prestigious international film festivals this year, have been assorted in the IFFI Kalei-

corners of the world. Minister of State Dr L. Murugan in his brief statement said that IFFI is one of the biggest film and cultural extravaganza of the world. He informed the audience that International Jury is being headed by acclaimed filmmaker Shekhar Kapur. Minister Thakur spoke about the booming startup ecosystem in the country and Governments focus on creating a support system to nurture such entities. He added that to bolster the startup ecosystem in film sector, and to recognise talent from the remotest corners of the country, we had started the "Creative Minds of Tomorrow" initiative. He said, "there are over 600 entries in this section for this year. This year's selection of 75 winners will take the total of such winners to 225 in 3 years". In his statement, the Minister stated that this year Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award will be conferred on Michael Douglas, a shining star of world cinema and who is known for his immense contribution in the cinematic universe. Anurag Thakur informed that the International Section of IFFI has seen a three times spike in number of films received and this is a display of the fascination of international film industry for IFFI.