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Mann claims Punjab govt is the *govt of the people*, jobs, education, health, electricity are our priority

CHANDIGARH: Commending Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab said that this time Diwali of more than 50,000 families of Punjab has become happy thanks to the government jobs continuously given to the youth during the last one and a half years by the Mann government.

Addressing the media at the Chandigarh party headquarters on Wednesday, AAP Punjab spokesperson Ahbaab Grewal said that in the last 18 months, the Mann government has given more than 37 thousand government jobs, means around 23 thousand every year. Whereas, the previous Congress government had given only 56 thousand government jobs in 5 years,



means around 11,325 jobs per year.

Apart from this, the Mann government has regularised 12,000 contractual employees. By December 31, 2023, about 9 thousand more employees will be regularised.

The salaries and allowances of these employees have also increased three times.

Talking about investment, the AAP leader said that around Rs 1 lakh 17 thousand crore was invested in Punjab during the period

2017 to 2022 of the Congress government. On the other hand, in just 18 months of the Mann government, investments worth Rs 56 thousand crores have been made. He claimed that these figures will increase further in the upcoming days.

With these investments, about 3800 new projects are started in Punjab which will generate about 3 lakh jobs. In the previous governments, Punjabis were only misled in the name of jobs, Captain Amarinder Singh distributed job cards and fooled Punjabis that they would get jobs through those cards, but gave no jobs. We don't go back on our promises, we deliver what we promise.

Retail Inflation In Control But Not Out Of Woods Yet: RBI

MUMBAI: India is still not close to being secure with regards to the burden of high prices however the moderation in retail inflation over the last two months is a relief, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in its November bulletin published on Thursday.

"We are not out of the woods yet and have miles to go, but (inflation) readings of around 5% and 4.9% in September and October, respectively, are a welcome relief from the average of 6.7% in 2022-23 and 7.1% in July-August 2023," the RBI said in its 'State of the Economy' article in the bulletin.

India's annual retail inflation eased to a four-month low of 4.87% in October but remained above the RBI's 4% target. The central bank expects inflation to average 5.4% in 2023-24. High-frequency food price



central bank said, noting the momentum of the change in gross domestic product is expected to be sequentially higher in October-December on the back of "ebullient" festival demand.

Investment demand also appears to be resilient given the government's infrastructure spending, an uptick in private capex and digitalisation, among other reasons, the central bank said. The RBI also said the calibrated normalisation of surplus liquidity and robust credit growth strengthened transmission during the current tightening phase, although the transmission is still not complete. The transmission of rates to term deposits has been robust, while savings deposit rates have exhibited "rigidity," the central bank said.

data for this month up to Nov. 13 indicates that cereal and pulse prices have increased further, while edible oil prices continued to decline, the RBI said. India's growth continues to depend on domestic demand, which provides a cushion against external shocks, the RBI said. The country's external sector has remained viable, with a modest current account deficit financed by resilient capital flows, one of the least volatile currencies in the world and a "healthy" level of India's economic growth has also picked up, the

Punjab Police serving ASI shot dead



JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

A serving Assistant Sub Inspector Saroop Singh was found shot dead by the unidentified assailants.

Confirming the incident here today, police said that the body of Saroop Singh was found at village Khankot with a bullet mark on his head.

Police said that ASI was coming missing since last night when he left his house with some important official documents for the police station Nawa-Pind where he was posted. His murder came to light in the morning today, when a passerby noticed and informed the police which reached on the spot and identified the body as ASI Saroop Singh.

Police said that as per preliminary investigation, he died with one single shot of bullet on his head. Throughout the night the body remained on the road and facts came to light when a passerby informed the police about the murder of ASI.

Superintendent of Police Jugraj Singh said that police have got some vital clues about the death of Saroop Singh and shortly police will reach a logical conclusion.

However, family members of ASI denied about any kind of personal enmity of ASI with anyone and demanded speedy probe to bring out the truth about the mysterious murder of Saroop Singh.

Five militants killed in South Kashmir's Kulgam district



FW DESK

Security forces killed five terrorists during an ongoing encounter in Jammu and Kashmir's Kulgam district. "Kulgam Update - Day 2: Five terrorists neutralized by Kulgam Police, Army, and CRPF. #Incriminating materials recovered. #Operation in final stage; area being sanitized," said a police spokesman on X.

There was no immediate word on the identity of the slain terrorists.

The operation, underway since Thursday afternoon in the Samno pocket of DH Pora area, involved joint efforts by the Army's 34 Rashtriya Rifles, 9 Para (elite special forces unit), police, and CRPF.

FM Sitharaman sees Israel-Gaza conflict as major challenge for India-Middle East-Europe connectivity corridor

NEW DELHI: The ongoing conflict between Israel and Gaza will impose its geopolitical challenges on India-Middle East-Europe Connectivity Corridor (IMEC), said Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Calling IMEC as one of the most promising connectivity projects, she said will be a win-win situation for all states involved.

"However, it is not without its geopolitical challenges and the ongoing conflict in Israel and Gaza is a worrying manifestation of these," she said. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addresses the 2023 Edition of the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue on the theme 'Geopolitical Impacts Upon Indo-Pacific Maritime Trade And Connectivity', in New Delhi. Further she said India is expected to overtake Japan and Germany



to emerge as the third largest economy in the world by 2027.

Addressing the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue here, Sitharaman said India's economic growth is estimated to be just under 7 per cent during the year, the highest among major economies, despite global headwinds. The Indian economy is therefore on the right track and is heading towards a bright future, she said.

Residents to get around 42 citizen centric services at their doorsteps: Punjab CM

Announces to develop state as 'Hub of medical tourism' in the country

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Friday announced that residents of the state will get delivery of more than 42 citizen centric services at their doorsteps from the coming Parkash Purb of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji.

Addressing the gathering after dedicating OPD Block and OT Complex in State Cancer Institute, Radiation Therapy Block, Senior Resident Hostel Block, Nursing Hostel Block, Boys Hostel and Auditorium in E Hospital Project as a part of Centennial Celebration Program of Government Medical College Amritsar, the Chief Minister said that in order to provide citizen centric services at the doorsteps of the people, the state government will start a unique drive on November 27- the parkash purb of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji. He said that under this drive 40-42 services will be available to the people at their doorstep without any hassle and inconvenience. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that this will be a big facility to the people as they will not have to run pillar to post for



availing these services.

Announcing to develop the state as 'a hub of Medical Tourism' by giving a major flip to the Medical education sector, the Chief Minister said that the state government is already making all out efforts in this regard. He said that there is no dearth of funds for this purpose and the state government will leave no stone unturned for this noble cause. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the state has huge potential for this sector and thrust will be laid to ensure that medical tourism is promoted in the state.

The Chief Minister said that ever since assuming the charge of office, his government has accorded top priority to the Health and Education sector.

The Chief Minister also announced that by January 26 all the hospitals in the state from tehsil and district level will be equipped with X-ray

16 new Medical colleges in the coming five years that will enhance the total tally of medical colleges in the state to 25 thereby ensuring that every district of the state touches a medical college. He said that one such medical college will be dedicated to the people of the state on Saturday in Hoshiarpur during a function. Mann said that more such colleges will be opened very soon to ensure that people get quality medical facilities.

He envisioned that the students aspiring to pursue medical education will no longer have to go to countries like Ukraine as they will be provided quality medical education in these medical colleges. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that earlier governments have not paid any attention towards it but his government is laying major thrust on it.

The Chief Minister said that the state government is committed to make Punjab a progressive, peaceful and prosperous state. He said that there is no dearth of talent in the state but the need of the hour is to channelize this energy in a positive direction by creating opportunities. He said that the state government is making strenuous efforts to create infrastructure in fields of education, health, employment and others.

He further said that in a major push to medical education in Punjab, the state government has decided to construct

Sales of PC in India surges by 14 pc in Jul-Sept due to Import Licensing Notice

NEW DELHI: During the third quarter of the current fiscal, the sale of personal computers (PCs) in India, including desktops and notebooks, rose 14 per cent to 4.5 million units, as compared to the same period last year, according to the latest data from the International Data Corporation (IDC).

In its Worldwide Quarterly Personal Computing Device Tracker, IDC said that the desktop category grew by 19.3 per cent while the notebooks saw a rise of 13.1 per cent. The rise in sales was attributed to higher



demand for inventory owing to the Centre's decision to impose import licenses for PCs.

"In August, the Government of India declared a mandatory requirement of import licenses for PCs from October 30. Though this decision was later put on hold, vendors shipped significant channel inventory to avoid

any risks of supply shortages or price hikes, not to mention ensuring sufficient supplies for festival season sales," said Bharath Shenoy, senior research analyst, IDC India.

Under the proposed norms, IT hardware companies will be required to register and disclose data related to their imports and the countries they import from.

According to the Centre, the main reason behind the measure is to restrict imports of laptops and computers, especially since a majority of them come from China.

Nadda urges people in MP, Chhattisgarh to vote in large numbers



BHOPAL: As voting in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh got underway on Friday, BJP President J.P. Nadda urged the people of both the states to come out and vote in large numbers.

In a post on X in Hindi, Nadda said, "Today, on the great festival of democracy in Madhya Pradesh, I appeal to all the voters, especially the youth, to vote in large numbers and participate in the development journey of the state. Your one vote will provide prosperity to all sections of the society and will lead to the bright future of the state. It will prove decisive in shaping the future."

Urging the voters of Chhat-

tsigarh to establish peace and prosperity in the state, the BJP National President posted on X and said, "Today, on the occasion of the second phase of Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh, I appeal to all the voters to use their franchise in maximum numbers to establish peace and prosperity in the state and elect a government that will take the state on the path of continuous development. Your every vote will create a bright future for Chhattisgarh."

Voting is taking place on all 230 seats of Madhya Pradesh and in Chhattisgarh, polling is being held on the remaining 70 seats.

Bank Employees to go On Strike for six days in Dec



NEW DELHI: Banking services might be impacted next month as bank employees will go on nationwide strike with a slew of their demands.

The All India Bank Employee Association (AIBE) has issued a notification in this regard and stated that there will be a strike which will be held by the employees of various banks and both government and private banks will be part of the strike. AIBE will hold bank-wide strikes from 4 to 11 December.

According to the notification, the bank employees will go on strike on these days next month.

The employees of State Bank

of India (SBI), Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Punjab & Sind Bank will go on strike on 4 December followed by employees of Bank of Baroda and Bank of India going on strike on 5 December.

The employees of Canara Bank and Central Bank of India will be on strike on 7 December, employees of Union Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra will be on strike on 8 December. The private banks will go on strike on 11 December.

The All India Bank Employee Association in its list of demands have stated that the government should stop outsourcing of permanent jobs

in banks and also adequate recruitment of Awarad Staff should be done in banks.

AIBE general secretary C H Venkatchalam had pointed out earlier that outsourcing of jobs by some of the banks are putting privacy of customers and their money at risk apart from reduction in recruitment at the lower level.

Some banks are also indulging in violation of Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Act. Even where the labour authorities have intervened, the management has ignored their advice, violated the provisions of Industrial Disputes Act and forcibly transferred the employees, he had stated.

Red alert issued in Punjab in case of stubble burning, strict action will be taken

HOSHIARPUR: In order to ensure compliance with the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court to put a full stop to stubble burning, Special Director General of Police (Spl DGP) Law and Order Arpit Shukla on Wednesday said that a red alert has been sounded in all the districts and legal action will be initiated if anyone found burning stubble. Pertinently, DGP Punjab Gaurav Yadav had appointed Spl DGP Arpit Shukla as the Police Nodal Officer to monitor action against stubble burning.

He said that CPs/SSPs have been directed to engage farmers, citizens and various stakeholders to sensitise them about the ill effects of the stubble burning, which is also a violation of law and action and action could be



initiated against them. "All DSPs and SHOs have been asked to have discussions with Sarpanches and Kisan leaders to sensitise them about the ill effects of stubble burning, which not only affect the urban people but each and every individual," said Spl DGP Arpit

Shukla, who was on a whirlwind tour to review the stubble burning cases in Hoshiarpur and SBS Nagar district.

He also called a meeting of all the gazetted rank officers and Station House Officers (SHOs) in Hoshiarpur and SBS Nagar to review the status of stubble

burning in their areas. The Special DGP urged farmers to cooperate and not put matchstick on crop residue, which will not only lead to deterioration of the environment but will also affect the health of children.

He said that depending on the area and size of the Police Station, a sufficient number of additional patrolling parties are already activated, while, flying squads have also been keeping vigil on stubble burning. Strict legal action will be taken against violators, he reiterated.

Meanwhile, Spl DGP Arpit Shukla accompanied by SSP Hoshiarpur Sartaj Singh Chahal also visited the venue of a rally, scheduled to be held on November 18, to review the security arrangements.

Centre should give MSP on Moonggi and Maize to encourage crop diversification: Sanghera

CHANDIGARH: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab on Tuesday commended the Mann government of the state for being successful in keeping the AQI moderate in Punjab even on Diwali. Punjab on Diwali (from 7AM on Nov 12 to 6AM on Nov 13) recorded average AQI 207 which was moderate and significantly better than last year.

Addressing a press conference from the party office in Chandigarh AAP spokesperson Jagtar Singh Sanghera, along with Babbi Badal and Bikramjit Passi, said that it is a matter of pride for the Punjab government that the air quality index this year was better by 22.8 percent compared to 2022. The air quality index was 7.6% better in 2022 compared to 2021 Diwali and this year further



improvement was registered. The air quality index from 7 am on the day of Diwali to 6 am the next day was 268 in 2021, whereas last year the air quality index was 224, this year it was 207.

Sanghera added that it was the result of the Mann government's continuous efforts. Punjab gov-

ernment, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, has established continuous ambient air quality monitor stations in six cities, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Khanna, Mandi Gobindgarh and Patiala, which continuously monitor air quality and collect exact data.

He said that stubble burning

instances are down by 70% in Punjab, which is a big factor in better air quality. The Mann government, since day one, is working diligently to save resources of Punjab, water, air and soil, and improve the environment in the state. Around 1 lakh 40 thousand machines have been distributed which are used for paddy stubble management. Co-operative societies and NGOs get 80% subsidy on these machines and individuals get 50% subsidy. More and more organisations and societies are being encouraged to buy these machines. Farmers are getting education, awareness and means to save our environment. He said that stubble is being used to produce biofuel and farmers are getting additional income sources.

Passengers vandalise Punjab's Sirhind Rly station over cancellation of Bihar bound special train



CHANDIGARH: Chaotic scenes were witnessed at Punjab's Sirhind railway station after a special train to Bihar's Katihar was cancelled on Tuesday. Irked by the cancellation, hundreds of passengers waiting for the train vandalised the railway station. According to Northern Railway officials, some angry passengers reportedly pelted stones after they came to know that the train which was supposed to leave for Katihar was cancelled. Meanwhile, Northern Railway CPRO Deepak Kumar said that connecting rake got delayed and the train was put back at 3 a.m. He said that regular announcements have been made at the railway station. Bihar-bound trains are witnessing heavy rush post-Diwali as thousands of people travel back to the state for the Chhath puja, which is celebrated with great fervor.

Last date for enrolling as SGPC voter extended to February 29th, 2024



CHANDIGARH: The last date for enrolling as a voter in order to vote in the SGPC elections has been extended from 15th November 2023 to 29th February, 2024.

Disclosing this here today while releasing the revised schedule, Commissioner Gurudwara Elections, Punjab, Gurkirat Kirpal Singh said that following directives received from Justice (Retd) S.S. Saron, Chief Commissioner, Gurudwara Elections, the schedule has been released.

The respective Deputy Commissioners of all the

Districts would ensure the publication of preliminary rolls by March 21st, 2024 while the last date for receiving claims and objections is April 11th next year.

Last date of disposal of claims and objections and communication of decisions by the revising authority thereon to the Deputy Commissioners is 21st April, 2024 and preparations of manuscript of the supplementary roll and printing of supplements are 2nd May, 2024. The date of final publication of the rolls would be May 3rd, 2024.



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann flags off an anti-drug cycle rally from the grounds of Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), in Ludhiana on Thursday. CM Mann flagged off the cycle rally on the martyrdom day of Kartar Singh Sarabha. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

Prime accused in spurious liquor tragedy caused several deaths held

SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Crime investigation agency (CIA) Shahzadpur in Ambala district arrested Ankit Mogli a resident of Ugala village, the accused of manufacturing the spurious liquor which claimed more than 20 lives in Yamunanagar and Ambala districts. Ambala superintendent of police Jashandeep Singh Randhawa said that Ankit was arrested at Kala Amb on Monday evening and was produced in the court on Tuesday. He was remanded to police custody for 6 days for interrogation. The Yamunanagar police sealed 23 illegal liquor outlets selling illicit liquor, said Yamunanagar Superintendent of police



Ganga Ram Poonia that claimed a large number of lives in the hooch tragedy at Yamunanagar.

Of the 20 people who recently died in Haryana's hooch tragedy which included 18 from Yamunanagar district and two from Ambala district, whereas another couple of persons still stated serious and admitted in hospitals. Police claim to have arrested 13 people so far and efforts are being made by the police for the arrest of few others. The mastermind in

manufacturing spurious liquor Ankit Mogli studied up to matric was involved in this illegal business since a long time after getting manufacturing process from YouTube, and earlier started manufacturing illicit liquor at Saha in Ambala district during when the entire country was in the grip of epidemic outbreak and most of the liquor vendors were closed down. He had close association with gangster Monu Rana when both were lodged in the jail and both constituted a plan to start a factory to produce spurious liquor after their release from the jail when Mogli hired a closed factory located at a lonely place at village Dhanaura under Mulana police station in Ambala district.

Drug addiction among youths affect families, 4 fast-track courts to expedite hearing of drugs related cases in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

Fast increasing addiction among youths in Haryana is avital issue for the state government today. It affects the person using substances. According to information heroine and smack are widely used by the youths As addiction progresses, the impact only gets worse with time having short and long term health effects, loss of jobs, increasing financial troubles, and run-ins with involvement in criminal activities to meet the demand of drugs. Living in active addiction is not a simple way to live adversely affecting the immediate family members. Whether it's a child, parent, or spouse, drug addiction alters the lives of anyone



who loves the person. Addiction affects the entire family in many ways. The specific effects depend on which person in the family unit has the problem including relationships, finances, safety, and more are all at risk. There are countless effects of drug addiction on the family. Strained relationships, financial difficulties, and increased risk of abuse are only the start.

Addiction strains relationships, no matter which family

member has the problem. It doesn't matter if it's a parent, child, spouse, or sibling. Every family member struggles alongside the addict to an extent. Living with someone with active addiction is a daily challenge for each person in the home. As usually seen it becomes very difficult to leave the use of drugs by the addicted persons. A survey conducted in five districts in southern area in the state revealed that in as many as 211 villages 3512 youths were identified having addiction to drugs mainly heroine and smack during current year and in a period of 10 months, of them 378 youths succeeded in leaving use of drugs after the counselling and the treatment of 1760 youths is still going on.

Father alleges gross negligence by Dr Pardeep Aggarwal, Dr V Kaul in son's operation



TEHELKA WEBDESK
Chandigarh

A Panchkula resident, Ajay Bansal has alleged "gross negligence" by doctors of Paras Hospital, Panchkula-Dr. Pardeep Aggarwal and Dr. V Kaul in conduct of operation of his son when a simple fracture led to removal of leg.

In a complaint shared with Tehelka, Bansal alleged that his "son was admitted to Paras Hospital on 05/11/2023 for fracture of left lower leg in evening. According to notes put in their files everything was all right at time of admission. He was operated by Dr Pardeep Aggarwal on 06/11/2023 morning but there was no relief in pain after surgery. We complained to the duty doctor and he assured us that this is usual and there is nothing to worry about. Dr Pardeep Aggarwal didn't visit post operation".

BSF shoots down drone, seizes another with narcotics near Indo-Pak Border

AMRITSAR: Border Security Force (BSF) shot down a drone and seized another with a packet of narcotics attached to it near the International Border in Punjab. In the first incident on the night of Tuesday, BSF troops intercepted a drone near Mianwali village in the Tarn Taran sector. During a joint search operation carried out with Punjab Police on Wednesday morning, the drone was recovered in a broken condition along with two batteries from the fields adjacent to the village. In a separate incident, BSF troops while carrying out an area domination patrol ahead of the border fence found a suspicious item lying in the fields near Roranwala Khurd village in the Amritsar sector.

Rape and murder mystery of 15 yrs old girl in Panipat factory solves

SATISH HANDA
Panipat

A sensational case of rape and murder of a 15 year old girl on September 11 2023 has come to light in Panipat. The accused contractor identified as Kuldeep murdered the girl by hitting her head with a brick after sexually assaulting her, put the body in a bag and threw it in waste on the third floor of the factory located in Sector 25, Part-II under Chandni Bagj police station in Panipat. The mother of the girl a resident of village Hardoi who left her daughter at the factory in the morning approached police station to lodge a complaint when her daughter did not return in the late evening but the concerned police staff took the matter lightly, took no immediate action advising to get printed and distribute the the pamphlets



of her missing minor daughter. However, later on it was identified that the contractor Kuldeep had committed the crime and thrown body of minor girl on the third floor in factory wastes enabling to later on throw the body in the canal or at a lonely place in the presence of the duty magistrate, police recovered the body on Thursday night after 55 days after the murder when police swing into action following strict orders from the Home Minister Anil Vij when victim's mother appealed to the minister for justice and the police made a major revelation

in the case of rape and murder and arrested the accused contractor, who admitted crime and kept the body in the mortuary. Following strict orders from the Home Minister, the police made a major revelation in the case of rape and murder. According to information, Chandni Bagh police station had registered tacase of missing girl in this case. when the parents of girl reached Panipat on September 28 and appealed to Haryana Women Commission Chairperson Renu Bhatia for justice who instructed the SP to take action when no action was taken in this matter by the police on the repeated requests of the mother of the victim girl and also made an appeal to the Home Minister and on his strict orders SP Ajit Singh Shekhawat handed over the case to CIA-1.

The CIA-1 in-charge Deepak Kumar checked the CCTV

footage of the factory in which the girl was seen going with the contractor inside the factory, but did not return. Police interrogated contractor Kuldeep on suspicion. The police reached the factory late Thursday night in the presence of Duty Magistrate Dr. Krishna Kumar and the body of the girl which was reduced to a was recovered from the room on the third floor of the factory.

The accused confessed during police interrogation that he had molested the girl, he was also hit on the head with a brick. Police also recovered blood-stained bricks which was sent to the forensic laboratory for investigation. Kuldeep admitted that after killing her the body was thrown in the room. The police kept the body in the mortuary and arrested the accused contractor.

Two top 10 category criminals of Bihar attempted robbery in Mannapuram Finance Company arrested

SATISH HANDA
Ambala

CIA staff Ambala policer arrested 2 top 10 category criminals of Bihar looted gold of value worth crores. They attempted a robbery that took place on 4th August in the branch of Manappuram Gold Loan Finance in Amba Cantonment. CIA has arrested both criminals included in the top-10 most wanted of Bihar who had also earlier committed crimes like murder. Both the miscreants are main members of Subodh Singh gang of Bihar. The accused are associated with an inter-state gang which has committed crimes at many places in Haryana.

Addressing media persons Jashandeep Singh Randhawa SP Ambala said that the CIA-1 team, acting under the leadership of Inspector Harjinder Singh arrested both the criminals near the flyover located



on Ambala GT Road. CIA also recovered an illegal pistol, two magazines and 7 live cartridges from the possession of the accused.

The accused were identified as Rohit and Anu, residents of village Bharpura, district Saran of Bihar. Police have also recovered a Swift vehicle car with Bihar number from the possession of the miscreants bearing registration number BR 01HG-4969, found from

the accused during the search which was impounded along with weapons.

SP Randhawa said that many cases were already registered against the accused Rohit wanted in two cases. The miscreants had committed the robbery on August 29 in West Bengal in which they had looted 4.5 kg gold. Along with this, a case of attempt to murder is registered against him at Patna in Bihar in the year 2021.

Laljit Singh Bhullar reclaims 203 acres of illegally encroached government land in Bhambotar village of Talwara block

HOSHIARPUR: Punjab Rural Development and Panchayat Minister Laljit Singh Bhullar, on Wednesday, reclaimed 203 acres of illegally encroached panchayat land in Bhambotar village of Talwara block of district Hoshiarpur.

While addressing reporters at the village community center, the Panchayat Minister said that total 252 acres of panchayat land across four villages in Bhambotar had been encroached upon, of which 203 acres were voluntarily vacated by the village panchayats and farmers. He mentioning that some people had constructed houses on the remaining land. Assuring a forthcoming policy to resolve such encroachments, he vowed to prevent any inconvenience to the people. He said that the reclaimed land was utilized for planting khair and



teak trees, which are now ready for harvesting. These trees will be harvested after taking approval from the department and the amount received from harvesting will be deposited in the state exchequer.

Addressing the query, Cabinet Minister stated that around 13000 acres of Panchayat lands have been reclaimed from illegal encroachment across the state. He emphasized that the department is expediting efforts to resolve court cases, aiming to vacate remaining encroached panchayat land soon.

He affirmed that Chief Minister S. Bhagwant Singh Mann

led government is fully committed to reclaiming panchayat land from unlawful occupation, asserting that no individual, regardless of their influence, will evade consequences for illegally encroaching upon government land.

The Cabinet Minister said that the departmental cell tasked with removing illegal encroachments from government land, has been strengthened so that there is no difficulty in getting rid of encroachments from panchayat land.

Laljit Singh Bhullar was accompanied by MLA Dasuya Karambir Singh Ghuman, Joint Director RD&P Department Jagwinderjit Singh Sandhu, Divisional Deputy Director Jalandhar Amardeep Singh Gujral, ADC (D) Balraj Singh, DDPO S. Bhupinder Singh Multani and BDPO Talwara Sukhpreet Pal Singh.

Out of 157 corruption, cheating and fraud cases being investigated by ACB permission to take action granted in 120 cases

SATISH HANDA

On the direction of Haryana chief minister permission has been granted to Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) to take action registering FIRs, arrests of 120 corrupt government employees including officers involved in corrupt practices, cheatings and frauds, besides suspending them or terminating their services. However, as many as 37 cases are pending with the ACB which require either certain clarifications or being sheltered by the political leaders as well senior bureaucrats and influential persons. Among those undergoing investigation include corrupt few IAS, HCS, police, Haryana Urban Development Authority officers and corrupt officers from PWD department in the state and revenue department officers, most of them blessed by the political leaders.



Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee President advocate Harjinder Singh Dhami with members of the committee and Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib Giani Ragbir Singh offer prayers at Sri Akal Takht Sahib on the occasion of the departure of the delegation, meet the Governor of Punjab to convey the voice of 26 lakh people registered by the Shiromani Committee for demanding the release of Sikh prisoners (Bandi Singhs) who have completed their various jails term of the country on November 16. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

Rahul appeals to vote for Congress in Rajasthan, BJP will reverse all welfare schemes, he warned

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi today warned the people of Rajasthan that in case the Bharatiya Janata Party came to power, it will reverse all the welfare schemes his party's government has launched in the state during the last five years as it only works for the billionaires. He made a passionate appeal for returning Congress to power to ensure the common man's welfare.

At the same time, Gandhi expressed confidence that Congress would sweep the Rajasthan elections with an emphatic majority as people here have had the first-hand experience of Congress government working for the common people like the farmers, the labourers, the small shopkeepers and traders and the youth.

Addressing largely attended election rallies at Tara Nagar, Nohar and Sadulshahar in Rajasthan today, Mr Gandhi said, the BJP only worked for bil-



lionaires like Adani, while the Congress worked for common people like the farmers, the labourers, the unemployed, small traders and shopkeepers.

Rahul Gandhi also announced several guarantees including Rs 10,000 yearly assistance for the woman head of every family in the state. The other guarantees included LPG cylinder for Rs 500, 25 lakhs health insurance cover,

Rs 15 lakh insurance cover against natural calamities, free English Medium education, legal guarantee for 'old pension scheme' by enacting a law for it and dung procurement at the rate of Rs 2 per kg for the rural areas at Chhattisgarh pattern, which has proved to be a great success in solving stray cattle problem.

Accusing the BJP leaders of dividing people in the

name of religion and caste, he said, while they (the BJP) divided people, the Congress unites them. "Hum nafrat ke bazaar mein mohabbat ki dukan kholte hain", he said amidst thunderous applause from the crowd.

Reminding people about various welfare schemes Gandhi said, the Congress government opened 3,600 English Medium schools, 309 new government colleges and nine new government universities. He said, compared to that, the BJP privatises everything including the education and health sectors. He also took a dig at the BJP leaders for asking people to teach their children only Hindi and not English, while sending their own children to English Medium schools.

Gandhi pointed out how the Rajasthan government handled the COVID situation and referred to the "Bhilwara Model" that became popular across the country. He said, while Prime Minister Modi asked people to switch on the

lights of their mobile phones and bang the utensils to fight the COVID, the Rajasthan government and the youth Congress volunteers went house to house distributing oxygen, medicine and food.

Rahul Gandhi reiterated that the Congress government at the centre in 2024 will hold the caste census at the national level and the Rajasthan government will hold caste census in the state immediately after returning to power. He said, it was very important to ensure the due participation of the OBCs in the government. He said, otherwise, right now the OBCs were not getting their due as far as their participation in governance was concerned. He quoted the example of how the 90 Secretaries in the government of India, just three belonged to the OBC category.

Rahul Gandhi was accompanied by Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, CWC member Sachin Pilot, PCC president Govind Singh Dotasra and other senior leaders of the party.

ED issues fresh summons to Neville Roy Singham in NewsClick case

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to Shanghai-based millionaire Neville Roy Singham for allegedly funneling funds to media portal NewsClick.

Singham - a US citizen currently located in Shanghai - was issued fresh summons to record his statement with the central agency last month through the Ministry of External Affairs with the Chinese authorities, a source said. Earlier last year, the Chinese authorities had reportedly refused to serve summons to Singham. The ED is probing how Singham's media company was promoting Chinese propaganda in India.

Notably, the Delhi Police had arrested NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha and the company's HR Head Amit Chakravarty last month on charges of alleged anti-India activities. As part of its inquiry, the ED had attached a flat in New Delhi's Saket linked to Prabir Purkayastha, editor-in-chief of NewsClick, in connection with its money laundering probe against the news portal.

The property worth Rs 4.52 crore attached under the Prevention of Money Laundering



Act (PMLA) was allegedly part of the proceeds of crime.

ED is probing "fraudulent" foreign funds infusion of over Rs 86 crore into the company that runs the portal.

The probe agency had raided Purkayastha's premises in September 2021.

As per ED officials, the company claimed "receiving export remittance" of Rs 76.84 crore, Rs 1.61 crore, Rs 26.98 lakh, and Rs 2.03 lakh from Justice and Education Fund Inc USA, The Tricontinental Ltd Inc USA, GSPAN LLC USA and Centro Popular De Midas, Brazil, from March 2018 until the 2021 raids. Officials said the agency has not found any evidence of exporting of services to these entities. ED is also probing at the foreign direct investment (FDI) transfer of Rs 9.59 crore in April 2018 by way of subscription of shares of PPK NEWSCLICK Studio Pvt Ltd from a company named Worldwide Media Holdings LLC, USA (a Delaware Limited Liability Company).

'Strengthen democracy', Kharge appeals to voters in Chhattisgarh to exercise their franchise



RAIPUR: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday appealed to the voters in Chhattisgarh to exercise their franchise in a post on X, Kharge said. "It is a humble request to all the voters of Chhattisgarh to cast their valuable votes in the second phase of elections. You have to maintain just governance, which is capable of providing development, progress and social security to Chhattisgarh. "Special greetings and congratulations to our young voters who are voting for the first time. Strengthen democracy, keep the faith because it's a matter of pride Chhattisgarhiya of self-respect," Kharge added.

Congress questions timing of release of PM-Kisan installment



NEW DELHI: Congress on Wednesday questioned the timing of the release of PM-Kisan amount to farmers coinciding with the ongoing Assembly elections to five states, and asked if it was 'deliberate'.

In a post on X, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said, "The sixth installment of PM-Kisan was released on August 1, 2020, ninth installment on August 9, 2021 and 12th installment on October 17, 2022. "Now 15th installment of the PM-Kisan is coming today on November 15, 2023. When the elections for Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are going to polls in two days and in next 10 days election in Rajasthan and in 15 days in Telangana, then today 15th installment for farmers is being released. "Wasn't this delay done deliberately?" Ramesh asked. His remarks came ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi all set to release the 15th installment of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme at a function to be held in Jharkhand on Wednesday.

PM Modi pays tributes to Nehru on his birth anniversary



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday paid tributes to India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on his 134th birth anniversary.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister said, "Tributes to our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru Ji on his birth anniversary."

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge after paying tribute to Nehru at Shanti Vana in a post said, "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the prime architect of modern India. In his understanding, only a Democratic structure which gave space to various cultural, political, and socio-economic trends to express themselves could hold India together."

"Today, as we gather in Shanti Van, to pay our revered tributes to him, we must preserve, protect and defend India's Constitution and our long-cherished Democratic institutions and principles - his enduring legacy," Kharge said.

Nehru's birthday is celebrated as the Children's Day or 'Bal Diwas'.

Blast at bus stand in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch



FW DESK

An explosion shook the Surankote bus stand area near a temple in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Wednesday night. Although there's been no official confirmation, reports indicate no casualties resulting from the blast.

However, shrapnel was discovered on the temple walls adjacent to the bus stand, hinting at the intensity of the explosion.

Authorities are still investigating the cause behind this incident, with a forensic team summoned to the scene by the police. Security measures have been significantly heightened in the vicinity following the blast.

Eyewitnesses described the suddenness of the explosion, prompting immediate responses from security personnel.

The situation remains under scrutiny as authorities work to determine the cause of the blast.

Kashmiri woman in Gaza escapes to Egypt amid conflict



FW DESK

A Kashmiri academic, Lubna Nazir Shaboo, along with her family, who was stuck in Gaza amid the ongoing conflict has managed to escape to Cairo in Egypt. Shaboo, who is married to a Palestinian, had earlier made an urgent plea to the Indian government for rescue.

"Amb @AjitVGupte received Mrs Lubna Nazir Shaboo, Indian national who has just arrived safely in Cairo, after being evacuated from Gaza. She and her family are in good health. Mrs Lubna expressed deep

gratitude to @indembcairo, @indemtel and @ROIramallah for their assistance," India's embassy in Cairo stated in a tweet on X.

The situation in Gaza is dire, with over 1,100 people, including 326 children, reported killed in Israel's retaliatory airstrikes, and thousands more injured.

Earlier when the war began, Shaboo in a social media video had urged for help. "We are not able to go anywhere because there is no safe place for us anywhere and the Gaza Strip is too small and it is closed from every side.

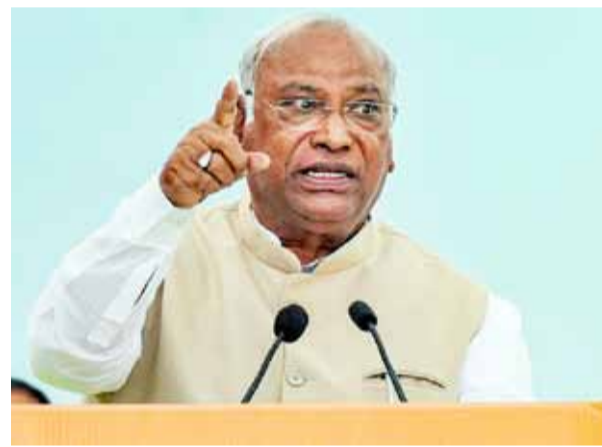
Young India fed up with betrayal of government, says Congress

NEW DELHI: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday slammed the Centre over the issue of unemployment after a girl climbed up an electric pole in Telangana during the Prime Minister's rally, saying 'young India is fed up with betrayal of the government'.

Targeting the government, Kharge in a post on X said, "While the Prime Minister was speaking in Telangana, in a very disturbing visual, a girl climbed up an electricity pole in order to attract attention to the real issues facing the nation.

"Young India is fed up with Modi government's rank betrayal. They aspired for Jobs, but in return got a 45-year-high Unemployment rate," he said.

He said that they wanted economic empowerment, but in return the BJP gave a backbreaking price rise, which



has reduced their savings to a 47-year low.

"They yearned for social and economic justice, but in return the Modi government gave them ever-rising economic inequality. Richest five per cent Indians own over 60 per cent of India's wealth, while the middle class and poor suffer. They strived for a safe India

for our women and children, but crimes against women, children, dalits, adivasis and backward classes have sadly increased by leaps and bounds," Kharge said.

"They wanted unity and harmony in a diverse country like us, but got hate and divisiveness. Modi government and BJP are crushing

Naveen-Pandian Jugalbandi begins in Odisha

ARABNDA MOHAPATRA
Bhubaneswar

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Chairman of 5T and Nabin Odisha VK Pandian partnership has begun in the right earnest with both working in sync to ensure the implementation of government programmes. This is crucial considering that general elections are barely a few months away.

The effectiveness of their partnership was evident when recently initiatives under Ama Odisha Nabin Odisha, the government's flagship rural welfare scheme, were launched in three more districts—Sundargarh, Dhenkanal and Boudh. The chief minister sanctioned Rs 280 crore for the implementation of 7,228 projects under the scheme in these districts.

People in these districts are impressed by the speed with which the government is moving to implement the scheme. Pandian, who took voluntary retirement from IAS recently, was appointed chairman Nabin Odisha and 5T, the government's reform initiative, with a cabinet rank. He is now ensuring the implementation of Ama Odisha Nabin Odisha initiatives in different districts.

Sources said 3,016 projects under the scheme will be implemented in six assembly constituencies of Sundargarh district with an investment of Rs. 139.5 crore. The projects will be implemented in 279 gram panchayats of 17 blocks of these constituencies. Similarly, Rs 106 crore has been sanctioned for four constituencies of Dhenkanal district. A total of 3,053 projects will be implemented in 212 gram panchayats of eight blocks of Dhenkanal, Kamakhyanagar, Parjang and Hindol constituencies in the district.



Besides, Rs 34.5 crore has been sanctioned for two constituencies of Boudh for the implementation of 1,159 projects. The chief minister reiterated that the scheme aims to develop villages and panchayats besides promoting, preserving and protecting the Jagannath culture and tradition of the state.

Chairman of 5T and Nabin Odisha VK Pandian gave the details of the projects and the funds sanctioned for their implementation. The pace of implementation of Ama Odisha Nabin Odisha is being accelerated at the right time with elections not far away. Considering that majority of voters reside in the rural areas of the state this scheme can play a big role in creating a mood in favour of the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) as people want the development of panchayats and are equally keen to see the Jagannath culture spreading not only across the state but even beyond it.

Pandian is also chairman 5T (Transformation and Initiatives), a very important governance initiative which has

been the focus of Patnaik in his fifth innings as the chief minister of the state. The new governance formula of the chief minister stands for Teamwork, Transparency, Technology, Time, and Transformation and was launched with the aim of improving governance and ensuring efficient delivery of public services. With Pandian supervising its implementation right from the beginning initiatives like Mo Sarkar, aimed at building a bridge between the ruler and the ruled and involving people in governance by seeking their feedback, were launched. Currently every department of the government is under the purview of Mo Sarkar but the efficacy of the initiative was first tested in the Home and Health departments. This is significant because the chief minister himself wields the Home portfolio and the police force directly works under him. When Mo Sarkar was launched in 2019 Patnaik himself took feedback from people visiting police stations to know their reactions. Most people he spoke

to reported that the behavior of men in khaki had improved surprisingly and they were not only behaving in a friendly way but also redressing grievances expeditiously. The quality of investigation improved as much as the behavior of policemen towards people visiting police stations to lodge complaints. Simultaneously a drive was launched to improve health services, especially in the district hospitals. Hospitals were upgraded with modern equipment and doctors were asked to become more people-friendly. Pandian, who was then playing the dual role of secretary to the chief minister and state's 5T secretary, himself made repeated visits to districts to see the condition of hospitals for himself. During some of these trips he also met people who had grievances. He tried his best to redress their grievances and, in the process, the condition of hospitals also improved.

The most important contribution of Pandian has been that he has galvanized the state administration which is now working much more efficiently with a high degree of transparency. While the working of different departments has improved, the focus right now is on the implementation of major pro-people schemes like Ama Odisha Nabin Odisha which focuses on rural development. As it is the government has launched a raft of poverty alleviation schemes with most of them running quite successfully. The government's flagship poverty alleviation schemes under which rice is sold for Rs. 1 per kg (and may soon be available for free to the poor) has made a huge impact, pulling lakhs of people out of the abyss of poverty. In the urban areas schemes like meals for Rs.5 have made a tremendous impact.

Tunnel Collapse: Augur drilling machine gets to work, Union minister V.K. Singh takes stock

UTTARKASHI: Rescue operations to bring out the 40 workers trapped in an under-construction tunnel in Silkyara in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi resumed for the fifth day on Thursday as an Auger drilling machine began to operate to expedite the process of digging through the debris and rescuing the people.

This heavy drilling machine has been brought from Delhi to Uttarakhand by the Indian Air Force's Hercules cargo aircraft.

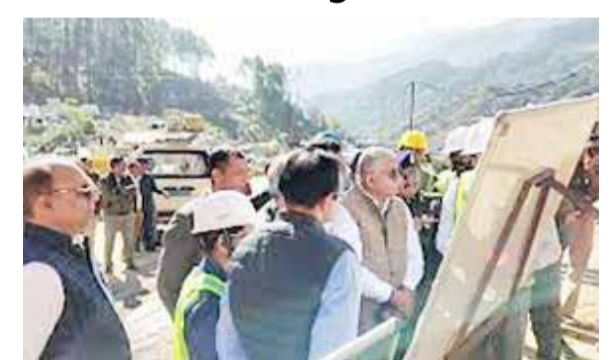
National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL) Director Anshu Manish Khalkho said that the 25 ton heavy Auger machine drills five to six metres per hour.

If this drilling machine works well then all the 40 workers trapped in the tunnel can be rescued in the next 10 to 15 hours. However, the working of this machine will also depend on how far the workers are trapped inside the tunnel.

After the installation of the Jack and Push Earth Auger machine sent from Delhi, it has started drilling and pipe pushing. At present, the entire process is going on satisfactorily. In case there is no glitch in the rescue operation, it is expected that the trapped workers will be rescued by late Thursday evening or Friday.

Meanwhile, Union Minister V.K. Singh arrived at the tunnel on Thursday to take stock of the rescue operation, where he spoke to the rescue officials and tried to find out the reasons behind the accident that took place in the tunnel.

The Minister said that all the 40 workers are trapped in a 2-km empty space inside the



tunnel where there is some light and the authorities are sending food and water to the trapped workers.

This new drilling machine is operating more powerfully and speedily than the older one.

On the fifth day of the tunnel collapse, Uttarakhand Director General of Police Ashok Kumar also reached the spot and took stock of the situation. Later, he told the media that all the Central and the state agencies are trying their best to rescue the trapped workers.

He added that all the people trapped in the tunnel are completely safe. "We all have to maintain their (trapped workers) morale by playing a positive role. Now the Army and Air Force have also been involved in the rescue operation," he stated. On Tuesday night, when the efforts being made at the state government level were not successful, the PMO, which was continuously monitoring the situation, sprung into action. After this, the Central government sent the Jack and Push Earth Auger machine weighing 25 tonnes to Uttarkashi in two parts on the IAF's Hercules cargo aircraft.

Both the planes carrying the machines arrived at the Chiny-

alisaur airstrip and from there the administration created a 'Green Corridor' on the highway from Chinyalisaur to Silkyara to quickly transport the parts of the machines.

Expert agencies of Thailand and Norway have also been consulted to rescue the workers. Help was sought from the Thailand agencies which had rescued children trapped in a tunnel last year. At present, an Army team led by Colonel Deepak Patil is also involved in the relief and rescue operations.

Apart from these, a team of 200 people is working round the clock. Soldiers and personnel of various state agencies, including the NDRF, SDRF, local police, fire service, ITBP, BRO, Rail Vikas Nigam have also been deployed in the operation. SDRF Commandant Manikant Mishra is at the spot for the fifth day along with local administration and police officials. Engineer and drilling expert Aadesh Jain said late on Wednesday night that till November 14, debris had covered in six times and its radius had increased to 70 metres. The drilling machine that was installed earlier could work only up to 45 metres.



Digital footprints are as significant as physical ones

The Supreme Court's directive to the Indian Union government to establish guidelines protecting media professionals from arbitrary seizure of their digital devices is a crucial and timely intervention. This decision comes in the wake of recent incidents where journalists' laptops and smartphones were seized and scrutinized, sending a disconcerting message to the media community and sources who rely on confidentiality. Such actions not only threaten press freedom but also hinder journalists' right to livelihood, as digital tools are indispensable in modern journalism. The necessity for these guidelines stems from the need to balance law enforcement prerogatives with the sanctity of journalistic work. The guidelines should mandate that law enforcement cannot seize or search journalists' devices without a prior judicial warrant. This warrant must specify the information sought, preventing unchecked intrusions under the guise of broad allegations. It's critical to ensure that journalists are not coerced into self-incrimination or revealing their sources by providing access codes or biometric data. Technological solutions, like device cloning, should be employed to allow journalists to continue their work without losing access to their data indefinitely. Additionally, a comprehensive record of the device at the time of seizure is essential to prevent the malicious implantation of incriminating material during the investigation. The Court's call for a "balancing of interests" emphasizes the need for transparency and public consultation in drafting these guidelines. This is not just a media issue; it's about upholding the fundamental right to privacy for all citizens in a digital age where personal and professional lives are increasingly intertwined with handheld devices. Finally, this situation underscores a broader necessity – updating existing laws on search and seizure to reflect the digital realities of today's world. It's not just about protecting journalists but ensuring that the rights of all citizens are safeguarded.

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TARA KARTHA BELIEVES COUNTER-TERRORISM REQUIRES CAREFUL, THOUGHTFUL ACTION, NOT IMPULSIVE MACHISMO

Handle terror with realism, not machismo

There are animated discussions on social media on the Israel-Hamas conflict, with a large number of people sympathising with Israel, which suffered an unprecedented attack by Hamas on October 7. This is perhaps because India went through the trauma of the Mumbai attacks in 2008 (known as 26/11), among others. Opinion, however, became more strident when The New York Times columnist, Thomas Friedman, published an article last month praising former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's "remarkable act of restraint" in not attacking Pakistan immediately after the Mumbai attacks. Some social media warriors were outraged, condemning India's past inaction as an act of cowardice. This is perhaps because India prides itself on its air strikes on Balakot in Pakistan in 2019 to avenge the Pulwama terror attack.

But counter-terrorism is a delicate act; it is to be carried out with due thought and realism, not raging machismo, as India showed. First, terrorists strike in the hope of eliciting a response that will highlight their cause. Hamas attacked Israel when the Saudis and Israelis were on a path to peace, which would have led to the Palestinian cause taking a back seat. With Israel's violent response, the Palestinian issue has taken centre stage now. Let's assume that after 26/11, India had bombed major cities and cantonments in Pakistan. That would have led to a nuclear stand-off, with the international focus shifting to how to 'solve' the India-Pakistan issue, which centres around Kashmir, rather than terrorism itself.

Here is what happened by doing nothing. The gravity of the 26/11 attacks was equated to that of the 9/11 attacks in the U.S. Soon after the attacks, U.S. President George W. Bush sent a strong statement of support to India, world leaders condemned the attacks, and India was praised for being a "responsible nuclear power". The



path-breaking India-U.S. Civil Nuclear agreement was operationalised just a month before the attacks in Mumbai. In addition, there was another issue. The global financial crisis had just hit, with the collapse of the Lehman Brothers. In India too, the stock market crashed by 41% between June and December. A war would have been disastrous.

Second, it is vital to frame an issue in terms of the prevailing international circumstances and how that can best be used to achieve one's own objectives. Delhi decided to ally itself with the 'war on terror', which was being fought across continents. The result of a war would have been not just finger-wagging from the international community, but also the loss of international money. Investors hate instability.

Pakistan's fortunes began to tumble soon after 26/11, furthered by an internal mess of its own making. The country, under General Pervez Musharraf, milked 9/11 for all it was worth: the U.S. military's aid rose exponentially during this period in

order to enable Pakistan to fight Taliban and al Qaeda militants. Joe Biden, who was Senator, repeatedly called for reducing this aid in 2008. Real GDP growth crashed after 2008-09 and later recovered briefly, but it never recovered to previous growth rates. Foreign Direct Investment, which had risen in the 9/11 period, dropped by 42% by 2010, as Pakistan became identified with the 'war on terror'. The focus on Pakistan increased further when the United Nations designated the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) as a terrorist organisation in 2010. In 2009, the U.S. Senate passed the revised version of the Kerry-Lugar Bill, which tripled U.S. non-military assistance to Pakistan from \$400 million to \$1.5 billion annually for the next five years, with clauses that Pakistan considered offensive. For instance, the bill said that Pakistan must show that it is "ceasing support" for terrorists and that it must prevent groups such as LeT from carrying out attacks on "neighbouring countries." Pakistan was furious. This narrative began to build as

notable scholars such as Stephen Cohen began to call it "America's most dangerous ally". India was de-linked from Pakistan as it drew closer to the U.S., while Pakistan's future was evaluated entirely by its terrorist antics.

It can be argued that the collapse of present-day Pakistan is in part due to India's decision not to attack and instead craft an international response. Alongside, India created a path for a \$3 trillion economy, while Pakistan's economic fortunes continue to tumble. None of this might have happened if India had gone to war.

Showing strength

However, this does not reduce the vital importance of the air strikes on Balakot. Those were carried out when India's defence capability had vastly improved, its economy was strong, and it enjoyed a solid relationship with the U.S. The strikes were carefully calibrated to send a signal to Pakistan that its terrorism was not cost-free. Importantly, it freed Indians from a defensive mindset. Strong leadership matters. But strength can come from a deliberated move rather than the kind of chest-beating that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has adopted.

Finally, whether then or now, there is no question of having 'boots on the ground' given that India and Pakistan are nuclear powers. Pakistan can be punished, but without being invaded. Those calling for India to be as "decisive" as Israel miss the point. Mr. Netanyahu has just given Hamas the priceless gift of publicity; now, support for the Palestinian cause has swelled everywhere. The trick is to outwit a country, even as the threat of a slashing sword is seen to be ever-present.

Tara Kartha, formerly with the National Security Council Secretariat, is a Distinguished Fellow at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies. She posts on X as @kartha_tara



DR. V. MOHAN SAYS A 'DIABETES COMPLICATIONS FREE' INDIA IS ACHIEVABLE, IF NOT DIABETES-FREE

Remission of diabetes, desirable, but not essential

The concept of a reversal of diabetes has become very popular recently. Several commercial organisations have jumped on the bandwagon of a 'reversal of diabetes' and are making tall claims. Therefore, it is important to consider the pros and cons of a reversal of diabetes.

First, the term 'reversal' of diabetes is scientifically incorrect; the appropriate term is 'remission' of diabetes. Reversal implies that the condition has permanently reverted to normal and a cure has been achieved. 'Remission' implies that diabetes has only gone away temporarily. We know for instance that cancer can go into remission, but can come back in a more virulent form.

Remission and type 2 diabetes

Diabetes is not a single condition but consists of several types. When we talk of remission of diabetes, we are referring most often to type 2 diabetes. However, there are other forms of diabetes such as type 1 diabetes where long-term remission is very unlikely to occur.

Can everyone with type 2 achieve remission? Some diabetes reversal programmes claim that they can reverse type 2 diabetes at any stage of the disorder. This is not true.

There are certain individuals with type 2 diabetes who are more likely to achieve remission. This can be identified by the letters ABCDE. A refers to A1c (glycated haemoglobin) which should not be very



high; B refers to Body Mass Index (BMI) or body weight. If it is high, you are more likely to achieve remission due to weight loss; C stands for C-Peptide, a measure of insulin secretion. If it is good, you can achieve remission more easily; D stands for Duration of diabetes; the shorter the duration, the greater the chances of remission; and E stands for an Enthusiastic individual who is keen to achieve remission.

One should remember that even if one achieves remission of diabetes only for a few months or years, it is still worthwhile because it leads to a good 'legacy effect' which provides protection from complications caused by diabetes.

What about those who cannot achieve remission? Should they be disheartened? Definitely not. Indeed, in my experience, the majority of people with type 2 diabetes would find it difficult to achieve long-term

remission of their diabetes. Even among those who do so, in the majority of cases, diabetes returns after a few months; the severity of the diabetes is often much worse than when it was before the person went into remission.

Leading a long and healthy life

I would like to reassure people who do not achieve remission that nothing is lost. My experience over the last four to five decades has taught me that all that is needed to have a long and healthy life despite diabetes is to follow another set of ABCD-linked mantras: A: A1c or glycated haemoglobin should be below 7% (or if possible even below 6.5%); B: Blood Pressure should be less than 130/80 mm/Hg L or as appropriate for the age; C: Cholesterol (LDL cholesterol) should be less than 50 mg/dl or at least below 70mg/dL; D: Discipline which includes healthy diet, exercise and frequent check-ups with your diabetologist. We were among the first to show that if ABCD is maintained, people with diabetes can live long and healthy lives. Indeed, 50 or 60-years of survival with diabetes and with no complications whatsoever, is possible.

The ultimate aim of the treatment of diabetes is to have a diabetes complications-free life. Today, diabetes remains sub-optimally controlled which is why it is the leading cause of blindness, amputation,

heart attacks, stroke, kidney failure and impotence. Very often we find people in the prime of their life affected by one or more of these devastating complications which affects not only the individual but also his or her family. It can ultimately even impact the economy of the country.

Data on India

According to our recent Indian Council of Medical Research-India Diabetes (ICMR-INDIAB) study, there are currently 101 million people with diabetes and 136 million people with prediabetes in India. In those with prediabetes, preventing the majority of these individuals from developing diabetes for a considerable number of years is possible with just lifestyle modifications. In those who already have diabetes, we should, of course, try to achieve remission of diabetes. But if this is not possible, meeting the ABCD guidelines of the treatment of diabetes will ensure that they can all live a long and healthy life without any diabetes-linked complications.

Even though we may not be able to make India 'diabetes free', my dream is that we can at least have a 'diabetes complications-free India'. On the occasion of World Diabetes Day (November 14), let us rededicate ourselves to achieve this dream.

Dr. V. Mohan is Chairman, Dr. Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre and the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation, Chennai. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

Chronicles of Change: Understanding India through Saradamoni's memoir

K. Saradamoni's memoir, 'In Search of Answers,' is a remarkable journey through the life of a social scientist, economist, activist, and a woman who dared to challenge the norms of her time. This introspective memoir is not just a personal history but a profound reflection of a woman's scholarly spirit and resilience. With a career that spanned several decades, Saradamoni's story is both inspiring and empowering, offering a unique insight into the socio-political landscape of the 1960s and beyond.

Saradamoni's narrative is steeped in the socio-political context of her time, yet it maintains a simplicity and subtlety that makes it accessible and engaging. Her account is an honest examination of her life and career, unshadowed by her long string of successes. The memoir recounts her numerous travels, interactions, and the challenges she faced, painting a vivid

picture of her evolution as a person and a professional.

The early chapters of the book provide a nostalgic glimpse into her childhood in Kollam, a port town rich with history and culture. Saradamoni's father, an avid reader and traveler, named her after the wife of Sri Ramakrishna, the mystic seer of Bengal. His diverse collection of books, ranging from literature to medicine, philosophy to translations, played a significant role in shaping her intellect and interests. These initial chapters are not only a personal recollection but also serve as a historical account of Kollam, evoking its sights and sounds from a bygone era.

Saradamoni's career is a testament to her passion for research and activism. The book covers her academic journey in Madras, Delhi, and France, highlighting her relentless pursuit of knowledge and social justice. Her exploration into various aspects of gender and Dalit studies, particularly her groundbreaking

The book covers her academic journey in Madras, Delhi, and France, highlighting her relentless pursuit of knowledge and social justice

work 'Emergence of a Slave Caste: Pularayas of Kerala,' showcases her dedication and perseverance as a researcher. Her time in France, as she narrates, was transformative, providing her with a new perspective on society.

Beyond her professional achievements, 'In Search of Answers' delves into Saradamoni's personal life, revealing her as a person deeply committed to her ideals. Her decision not to wear a 'thali' (mangalsutra) at her wedding at the age of 24, and her lifelong crusade for women's



In Search of Answers: A Memoir By K. Saradamoni Tulika Books; 248 pages; Rs 995.

rights and social justice, reflect her unwavering commitment to her principles. The memoir paints a tender picture of her relationship with her husband N. Gopinathan Nair, and her role as a homemaker, adding depth to her character.

The structure of the memoir is eclectic, part diary, part travelogue, and part socio-political commentary, which adds to the richness of the narrative. Saradamoni's memoir is not just her story; it is a narrative that needs to be heard and acknowledged for its contribution to understanding the social fabric of India.

Continuing the review, Saradamoni's memoir also serves as an invaluable chronicle of India's socio-political evolution. Her observations on the shifts in social

and political ideologies over the decades provide readers with a nuanced understanding of India's complex history. Her narrative is interwoven with historical events, bringing to life the era's defining moments through her personal lens. Saradamoni's experiences during significant political movements and her reflections on these events add depth to the narrative, offering readers an intimate look at history in the making.

Moreover, 'In Search of Answers' is a compelling testament to Saradamoni's role as a woman in academia and activism at a time when such paths were less trodden by women. Her journey is emblematic of the struggles and triumphs of women in a predominantly male-dominated field. The memoir does not shy away from discussing the gender-based challenges she faced, yet it is her resilience and determination that shine through. Her story is an inspiration, serving as a beacon for young women aspiring to make their mark in academia or activism. It's a reminder that with perseverance and dedication, societal barriers can be challenged and redefined.

Indian Manufacturing Companies to Recruit 15-30 pc more Graduates in 2024: Report

NEW DELHI: The Manufacturing companies in India are planning to hire 15-30 per cent more graduates from the 2024 batch than they did from the 2023 batch, according to an ET report.

The companies are planning to ramp up hiring as they look to expand their operations and meet the growing demand for their products. This comes as the recent economic uncertainty which has wrought havoc on fresher recruitment across India's top business and engineering institutions has not stopped some of India's biggest corporations from doing just the opposite.

Blue-chip firms including Tata Steel, Maruti Suzuki, Larsen & Toubro, JSW Group, Dabur, Vedanta, Schneider, and



RPG are significantly expanding their intake of entry-level, tech-savvy talent.

This is in stark contrast to the tech sector, traditionally the largest recruiter of white-collar workers, which has dramatically cut back fresher hiring due to

macroeconomic uncertainty.

Dilip Pattanayak, chief human resources officer at JSW Group told ET, "Young minds are often up-to-date with the latest trends and technologies, possess a strong understanding of digital tools, and can contribute effectively towards digital transformation initiatives."

"Hiring young fresh talent provides opportunities of reverse mentoring for the leaders with whom these talents work," Pattanayak added.

Maruti Suzuki India, the nation's leading car manufacturer, announced plans to enlarge its workforce by recruiting nearly 1,400 fresh candidates, primarily from IITs and NITs. This initiative sees a significant increase of over 20 per cent from last year's recruitment numbers.

In line with this trend, Vedanta, a diversified conglomerate, plans to recruit around 1500-1800 graduates from the 2024 batch of top-tier institutes such as IIMs and IITs, disclosed Madhu Srivastava, its CHRO.

IREDA launching Rs 2,150 cr IPO for Renewable Energy projects

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA) is launching its IPO at a price band of Rs 30 to Rs 32 per equity share (aggregating Rs 2,150 crores) from November 21 to November 23, 2023.

Pradip Das, Chairman, IREDA, said here recently that the issue proceeds would be used to augment its capital base and onward lending.

Highlighting IREDA's Triple A status with the future envisaging installation of 500-GW green energy installations by 2030, he said the last three years had witnessed its business — including lending to NBFCs — growing exponentially.

"While solar and hydro are the traditional technologies we have been financing, newer technologies are emerging such as: battery storage systems, EV charging infrastructure etc.," he said, adding that 75% of its loans went to private borrowers who are the largest investors in RE.

"Thermal technology will be out but at present we are still dependent on it. Post-IPO, we will tap green renewable energy resources wherever possible," Das said while noting that IREDA had no major NPA in the last three years in the wake of its continuous monitoring of OEMs performance and technology utilization.

Noting that solar projects



in India had grown by 25 times, he said IREDA is also viewing globally technology and best practices, besides recruiting the best talent from law schools, IIT and other institutions.

"Our NPA management is extremely robust, as can be seen in how we brought it down to 1.66 percent at present," he said while highlighting this success to IREDA's "hand-holding developers and helping in corporate governance."

IREDA is a 36-year-old financial institution that is promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for new and renewable energy projects, and energy efficiency and conservation projects, through its comprehensive range of financial products and related services from project conceptualization to post-commissioning.

While IREDA is India's largest +Pure-Play Green Financing+ NBFC, it is also the issuer of 'first debt security' (Green

Masala bond) in India listed on the IFSC exchange, and is also the country's first financial institution to raise green masala bonds and global funds for climate financing from DFIs/Multilaterals in India.

IREDA also extends lines of credit to other non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) for lending to RE and EEC projects, besides offering loans to government entities and financing schemes for RE suppliers, manufacturers and contractors, and providing consultancy services on techno-commercial issues related to the RE sector.

As of September 30, 2023, IREDA had a diversified portfolio of term loan outstanding amounting to Rs 475,144.8 million.

Its fiscal year 2023 net interest income rose to Rs 13,237.65 million against Rs 11,280.44 million in 2022. Net Profit increased from Rs 6,335.28 million in fiscal 2022 to Rs 8,646.28 million in fiscal 2023.

DGTR initiates Suo-Motu Investigation against four Chinese Products to protect MSMEs



NEW DELHI: The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) the investigation arm of Commerce Ministry has "suo-motu" initiated probes against the alleged dumping of four products, including roller chains, glass mirrors and fasteners, by Chinese companies, reported Business Standard.

The authority seeks to guard MSME units against cheap imports from the neighbouring country, an official said on Wednesday. Generally the anti-dumping investigations are initiated based on an application filed by domestic producers. But the fragmented industries did not have the know-how of the procedures involved in the trade remedy probe, the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) has undertaken the exercise to investigate the matter on its own initiative.

Directorate General of Trade Remedies Anant Swarup said that these products are mainly manufactured by MSMEs. He said that the import of these four products together stood at about Rs 800 crore and they are coming from China.

Varchas announces West Indies' cricket legend Sir Vivian Richards as Brand Ambassador for their premium products



ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Varchas, a product of Shankar Distillers out of Troy, Michigan, announced former west Indies cricket legend Sir Vivian Richards as the brand ambassador for their premium products.

Varchasvi Shankar, CEO, said addressing media that Varchas takes pride in producing high-quality products that embodies the rich heritage and craftsmanship of the distilling industry. The association with Sir Vivian Richards, a personality admired and respected by millions, will further establish the brand as a symbol of perfection and excellence in the world of spirits.

Shankar Distillers were established by Varchasvi Shankar, a serial entrepreneur, and the CEO of the global technology company V2Soft, a 25 year old company. In 2022, a remarkable partnership blossomed during a Cricket Legends event in Michigan when he and the iconic Sir Vivian Richards joined forces. Together, they are not only dedicated to building the Varchas brand but also actively contributing to charitable causes in Antigua, the United States, and India. While Sir Viv supports Renal Society, Varchas has been supporting Wildlife Conservation Foundation in India. We are thrilled to welcome Sir Vivian Richards to the Varchas Moments family.

His dedication, charisma, and passion perfectly complement our commitment to crafting exceptional moments. Together, we aim to create memorable experiences for our consumers and take our brand to new heights, said Varchasvi Shankar, President and Founder, Shankar Distillers and V2Soft.

Tata Technologies Launching Rs 3,043 cr IPO

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Tata Technologies Limited is launching an IPO, after two decades, of 100% 'Offer for Sale' equity shares priced at Rs 475 to Rs 500 each and aggregating total Rs 3,043 crores. The issue will open on November 21 and close on November 24, 2023.

Describing the company as a "Pure-Play Engineering Services" company seeking to 'engineer' a better world, Warren Harris, CEO/MD, Tata Technologies Ltd, told media here recently that the company highlighted 80% 'bizmix' in its professional services that included developing and launching products from scratch, alongside managing its 19 delivery centres globally.

"India is expected to be the future +Innovation Hub+ with 25% share in this \$2 Trillion global market space as the country is growing at a fast pace," he said while noting that India's



Automobile sector is being transformed alongside the Tata Group investing in Aerospace also over a decade. "Even as the clockspeed of technological change is continuing, we are also witnessing a growing demand for the necessary skills in this changing technological process," Harris said.

Pointing out that the company's forward strategy included 'diversifying its client mix while identifying top R&D spenders having the 'capability of working with us' in the areas of aerospace, transport, software, digital etc.,

that would differentiate us from others,' Harris said "We plan to invest in different parts of the world, and we will continue to look for associated vertical opportunities."

The Equity Shares offered through the Red Herring prospectus are proposed to be listed on both the BSE Limited and the National Stock Exchange of India Limited. JM Financial Limited, Citigroup Global Markets India Private Limited, and BofA Securities India Limited are the Book Running Lead Managers to the Offer ("BRLMs").

Gandhar Oil Refinery (India) Ltd launching Rs 500 cr IPO

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Gandhar Oil Refinery (India) Limited is launching its IPO with price band of Rs 160 to Rs 169 per equity share — aggregating Rs 500 crores — that will be opening on November 22 and closing on November 24, 2023.

Ramesh Parekh, CMD, Gandhar Oil Refinery (India) Limited, said here recently that the company is the largest such company in India, while also being among the top five companies globally manufacturing +white oil+ which is the fastest-growing segment.

He said that the company intends to use the proceeds of the IPO for: investment in Texol through loan for financing the repayment/pre-payment of a loan facility availed by Texol from Bank of Baroda; capital expenditure through purchase of equipment and civil work required for expansion in capacity of automotive oil at the company's Silvassa plant; funding the company's working capital



requirement, and general corporate purposes.

Aslesh Parekh, Joint Managing Director, Gandhar Oil Refinery (India) Limited, said that the company has 25% share of the white oil market in India, besides its overseas operations in 100-plus countries contributing 53.32% revenue.

Noting that the company is drawing 40% revenue from its exports, he said the company's FY23 sales amounted to Rs 20,982.98 million from primary end industries like consumer and healthcare.

Replying to questions, he said the company has its manufac-

turing plants in Silvassa and Talaja in Gujarat, and Sharjah (UAE), and is expanding into newer geographies, besides also increasing its product portfolio and its ability to respond to emerging industry needs.

While it is into manufacturing capacity expansion to 522,403 KL since June 2023, its strategies include enhanced focus on the consumer and healthcare industry; strengthening its manufacturing and R&D capabilities as the 'white oil' segment is expected to grow to double digit CAGR, he said, adding that white oil is also used in the plastic industry.

Indian Manufacturing Sector Growth Expected To Continue In Q2FY24: FICCI



NEW DELHI: Despite a slowdown in developed nations, India's manufacturing sector is expected to register a strong growth momentum during the second quarter of the fiscal year 2023-24, FICCI said.

The latest quarterly survey from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry revealed that in Q1 (April-June), 57 per cent of respondents reported increased production levels, which gained further traction in Q2 (July-September) with over 79 per cent noting higher production. Order books also reflect this positive trend, with 80 per cent of respondents reporting increased orders, indicating optimistic demand conditions.

The survey covered ten major sectors, drawing responses from over 380 manufacturing units with a combined annual turnover exceeding Rs 4.88 lakh crore. FICCI survey revealed that an average capacity utilisation stands at 74 per cent, slightly higher than in previous quarters, reflecting sustained economic activity.

Infosys Science Foundation announces 6 prize winners for 2023

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

The Infosys Science Foundation (ISF) announced the winners of 15th edition of Infosys Prize. The award for 2023, which carries a cash award of \$100,000, recognised scientists and researchers from six categories: Engineering and Computer Science; Humanities; Life Sciences; Mathematical Sciences; Physical Sciences and Social Sciences. Since its inception in 2008, the Infosys Prize has honoured the accomplishments of the recipients and awarded them for their contributions to scientific research and scholarship impacting India.

The winners were shortlisted from 224 nominations by an international panel of jurors comprising world-renowned scholars and experts. The awards will be presented on January 13, 2024.

Kris Gopalakrishnan, president, Infosys Science Foundation, said, "This year marks a landmark moment in Infosys Science Foundation's journey. Over the course of 15 years, the Infosys Prize has recognized mid-career researchers who have done impactful, groundbreaking work across disci-



plines. The prize has helped drive conversations around their work and, on a larger scale, created meaningful engagement around science and society. I congratulate the winners of the Infosys Prize 2023. Winners of the Infosys Prize 2023 :

Engineering and Computer Science: is awarded to Sachchidanand Nand Tripathi, Professor, Sustainable Energy Engineering (SEE), IIT-Kanpur, for the deployment of large-scale sensor-based air quality network and mobile laboratory for hyper local measurement of pollution, data generation and analysis using artificial intelligence and machine learning for effective air quality management and citizens awareness.

HUMANITIES: The Humanities is awarded to Jahnvi Phalke, founding director, Science Gallery Bengaluru, for

her granular insights into the individual, institutional, and material histories of scientific research in modern India.

Life Sciences: is awarded to Arun Kumar Shukla, Professor, Biological Sciences and Bioengineering, IIT-Kanpur, for his outstanding and far-reaching contribution to the field of G-protein coupled receptor (GPCR) biology. Mathematical Sciences: is awarded to Bhargav Bhatt, Fernholz Joint Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study and Princeton University, for his outstanding and fundamental contribution to arithmetic geometry and commutative algebra. Prof. Bhatt's joint work in prismatic cohomology, with German mathematician Peter Scholze, introduces new ideas and powerful methods in this area at the heart of pure mathematics.

Sahara Group Chairman Subrata Roy passes away at 75

Subrata Roy, passed away at Mumbai's Kokilaben Hospital due to cardiorespiratory arrest amidst health complications. Roy faced controversies and legal battles, particularly over alleged Ponzi schemes.

MUMBAI: Sahara Group chief Subrata Roy died due to a cardiorespiratory arrest at a private hospital in Mumbai on Tuesday after a prolonged illness, according to a company statement. He was 75.

Having created a huge business empire across retail, real estate and financial services sectors, Roy was at the centre of a huge controversy and faced multiple regulatory and legal battles in connection with his group firms that were accused of circumventing regulations with Ponzi schemes, allegations his group always denied.

According to the company statement, he was admitted to the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital & Medical Research Institute in Mumbai on Sunday

after his health deteriorated.

He passed away at the hospital at 10.30 pm on Tuesday due to a cardiorespiratory arrest following an extended battle with complications arising from metastatic malignancy, hypertension and diabetes, it added.

"It is with profound sadness that Sahara India Pariwar informs the demise of our Hon'ble 'Sahasri' Subrata Roy Sahara, Managing Worker and Chairman, Sahara India Pariwar," the group said in the statement.

Calling him an "inspirational leader and visionary", the statement said, "His loss will be deeply felt by the entire Sahara India Pariwar. Sahasri ji was a guiding force, a mentor, and a source of inspiration for all who had the privilege to work alongside him." Sahara India Pariwar is committed to upholding Roy's legacy and will continue to honour his vision in driving the organisation, it added.

In his prime, Roy had made the Sahara Group a multi-billion dollar enterprise that counted itself among the biggest employ-



ers of the country. He was also known to have friends among the famous and powerful across the fields of politics and Bollywood. Having scripted one of the most famous rags-to-riches stories of the country, Roy went on to expand his business across various sectors ranging from finance, housing, manufacturing, aviation and the media and became a household name.

His enterprise went on to own landmark global properties, including New York's Plaza Hotel and London's iconic Grosvenor House. Under his leadership,

Sahara also sponsored the Indian cricket and hockey teams and owned a Formula One racing team. Weddings of his two sons some two decades ago are still among the biggest parties ever seen in India. He lived in Lucknow.

His troubles began in November 2010 when stock market regulator Sebi asked two entities of Sahara Group not to mobilise funds from equity markets or from issuance of any security to the public while restraining Roy from approaching the public for raising money.

Roy was arrested in 2014 on the orders of the Supreme Court after he failed to appear before it in a contempt case arising out of non-refund of more than Rs 20,000 crore to investors by two of his companies.

He was later granted bail but troubles continued for his various businesses. Two Sahara Group companies — Sahara India Real Estate Corporation (SIRECA) and Sahara Housing Investment Corporation — raised funds in 2007-08 through a debenture instrument OFCD. Later in June 2011, the regulator asked the two group entities to refund money collected from investors through Optionally Fully Convertible Debentures (OFCD) along with the return.

After a long process of appeals and cross-appeals, the Supreme Court had ordered in 2012 refund of deposits of its investors along with 15 per cent interest. Sahara was eventually asked to deposit an estimated Rs 24,000 crore with Sebi for further refund to investors, though the group always maintained it amounted to "double payment"

as it had already refunded more than 95 per cent of investors directly. Once asked for proof of repayment, Roy famously sent across 100 truckloads of documents to SEBI, triggering a unique warehousing crisis for the regulator. In another incident, a man from Gwalior threw ink on Roy's face and called him a thief when he was brought to the Supreme Court in his trademark waistcoat and tie amid chaotic scenes.

The Sahara Group had earlier said it has always built its businesses by productively channelizing human capital spread across India and giving employment and work at people's doorstep.

"In this way, Sahara is providing bread and butter to more than 14 lakh people in their own villages and towns. It is the country's second-largest human capital after Indian Railways. This amount could have been used by the organisation to generate more employment and work and helped the country and therefore its economy," it had said in an earlier statement.

Walmart Growth Summit to Help MSMEs access Cross Border Trade Supply

HYDERABAD: Retail giant Walmart will be hosting its first Growth Summit in India on 14-15 of February, 2024 in New Delhi.

It will offer export-ready suppliers, micro-medium and small size enterprises (MSMEs) for cross border trade suppliers, and innovative supply chain companies an opportunity to pitch for business. The application process started on November 9 and registration for the event will close on 11 December.

The two-day event will bring together Indian companies and several dozen Walmart buyers from the United States to evaluate their products for export, with buyers offering real-time, on-the-ground deals and prospects.

Aligned with Walmart's commitment to annually source USD 10 billion of goods from India by 2027, the goal of the event is to partner with the Make in India initiative, increasing exports across categories where India has expertise



including food, consumables, health and wellness, general merchandise, apparel, shoes, home textiles and toys.

The event will further enhance Walmart's efforts to support India's ambition to develop the country's supply chain to be a leading participant in global markets, bringing together the Walmart sourcing innovation team and India-based supply chain innovators. Andrea Albright, Executive VP, Sourcing, Walmart, said: "Walmart has long invested in India, and sees tremendous opportunity in continuing to expand exports with our existing suppliers while developing relationships with new ones. The Growth Summit will help us do just that."

India's GDP to grow about 6.5% in FY24 and FY25: Morgan Stanley

NEW DELHI: India's economic growth is expected to be approximately 6.5% for FY2024 and FY2025, citing strong domestic fundamentals, said Morgan Stanley Research on November 13.

The research arm of the investment bank, in its 2024 India Economics Outlook, said the domestic demand supported by strength in corporate and financial sector balance sheets and the follow-through of policy reform measures will aid India's growth amid a global slowdown. The latest forecast from Morgan Stanley comes amid an escalation of conflict in Israel that threatens to impact oil prices.

High oil prices not only increases inflation but also results in higher import bills, leading to higher fiscal deficit and balance of trade challenges, which impact the economy.

Recently, Moody's Investor Services retained India's economic growth at 6.7% for 2023,



citing the country's remarkable resilience amid a global slowdown buoyed by solid domestic demand. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also raised its 2023-24 growth projection for India, to 6.3% from its July estimate of 6.1%, citing stronger-than-expected consumption during Q1.

Morgan Stanley expects headline inflation to moderate to 4.9% in FY2025 from 5.4% in FY2024.

"On the external balance

sheet side, we expect the current account deficit to remain in a range of 1.5-1.7% of GDP in F2025-26, steady terms of trade, and strength in net service exports," it said.

"India's inclusion in the GBI-EM index from Jun-24 will likely support the balance of payments by augmenting capital flows and thus aiding the funding profile," it added.

In September, JPMorgan Chase & Co. said it will add Indian government bonds to

its benchmark emerging-market index from June 2024.

The inclusion of Indian bonds in JPMorgan's emerging market debt index is expected to bring in more foreign inflows into the country.

Meanwhile, Morgan Stanley expects India's central bank, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), to keep interest rates steady till the first half of 2024.

"However, we maintain our expectation of a shallow rate cut cycle from June-24, driven by visibility of sustained moderation in inflation. We build in two rate cuts of 25bps each, which will keep real policy rates averaging at about 100bps in 2024," it said.

"Risks of a delayed start to the easing cycle could emerge from higher commodity prices (especially oil) pushing up inflation and/or tighter global financial conditions weighing on the currency and adversely impacting macro stability," it added.

Fedbank Financial Services Services Limited launching Rs 1,092 crores IPO

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Fedbank Financial Services Services Limited (FedFina) is launching its IPO at Rs 133 to Rs 140 per equity share – aggregating Rs 1,092 crores – from November 22 to November 24, 2023.

Anil Kothuri, MD/CEO, said here recently that FedFina is a double A-plus rated NBFC that is targeting the small self-employed customer and has arranged 86% secured loans through property and gold. Describing the retail industry as "large, growing and underpenetrated," he said India has the world's largest gold holdings and FedFina has been scaling up profitably annually while focusing on optimising its performance including using a slew of technologies.

Noting that people are looking at FedFina for long-term loans towards buying homes, he said "There is huge runway for growth in India and we are in for the long



term through ushering sustainable growth of credit to business."

Highlighting FedFina's branch network growth by five times in five years, Kothuri said "Our strategy of competing involves providing 'easy access' for loans against pledge of gold or property. While people have to go to the bank branches to secure loans, our model of working witnesses us going to the customers' doorstep."

"Our target market is significantly underserved by 25%, despite 50% of gold loans in India being through informal lenders and higher lending rates. Our gold loans represent 32% of our port-

folio with the rest being MSMEs and private sector."

He said about 40% of FedFina's transactions are done digitally through its App where the unique advantage lies in its mix of short-term and long-term loans. "Therefore, in a liquidity crisis, we are much less stressed than others," he added.

Fedbank Financial Services is a subsidiary of The Federal Bank Ltd, which provides gold loans, home loans, loan against property and business loan services with clientele coming mainly from MSME and emerging self-employed individuals sectors.

World Cup Cricket Fever: Bengaluru to Ahmedabad one-way flight Rs 33,000



ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Cricket fans in Bengaluru may have got lucky with that all important match ticket to the Nov 19th cricket World Cup final in Ahmedabad. Yet, if they have not been smart enough to get air ticket for the trip sorted by now, chances are they are staring at big surprise. While regular Bengaluru-Ahmedabad one-way fares start at Rs 5700, as of Thursday evening, a one way ticket for the same sector for Saturday, November 18, was going for Rs 33,000. Cheapest early morning and 7pm flights at Rs 26,000 and Flight with stopover priced over Rs 16,000. With the Indian team having stormed into the title clash, airfares to the match city have just shot through the roof. This despite IndiGo operating six direct flights from Bengaluru to Ahmedabad.

IMF includes climate change to its economic risk assessment



NEW DELHI: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has added climate change to one of its top priorities, considering it a systemic risk for the stability of the global economy and financial system.

The fund's lending tools have been expanded to include the Resilience and Sustainability Trust and started five pilot programs (in Costa Rica, Barbados, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Jamaica). Periodic transition management reviews are underway, and climate is now included in the main flagship reports. As the IMF moves from setting targets to implementation, it will need to consider how tackling the climate crisis may run counter to its usual 'crisis response mode'. Previous IMF interventions may have reduced a country's ability to invest in transition. Now, the IMF's response to, or management of, an economic crisis must also consider solutions that are not building the fragilities of the future.

Vietnamese Digital Economy Remains Fastest Growing In Southeast Asia: Report



NEW DELHI: Vietnam for a second year in a row is the fastest growing digital economy in Southeast Asia, reported 8th Southeast Asia Digital Economy report released by Google, Temasek and Bain & Company last week.

According to the report the Southeast Asian country is expected to hold this position until 2025.

The report covering Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam says despite global economic headwinds, the region's gross merchandise value (GMV) remains on an upward trajectory, growing at 11 per cent a year, and is set to reach USD 218 billion.

It says the region's revenues from the digital economy are poised to hit USD 100 billion this year.

Vietnam's GMV is expected to grow from USD 30 billion this

year to around USD 45 billion in 2025 driven by e-commerce and online travel.

The former will grow by 11 per cent this year, and at a CAGR of 22 per cent between 2023 and 2025, reaching around USD 24 billion.

Full recovery in the travel sector is expected this year, driven primarily by sharp growth in domestic travel. Online travel will grow at 21 per cent to USD 7 billion.

According to the report, the irreversible offline-to-online behaviour shift continues to drive growth in digital financial services adoption, including digital payments. While in Southeast Asia digital payments adoption has reached 50 per cent, Vit Nam is also embracing digital payments and is the fastest growing country, growing by 19 per cent in 2022 and 2023 and at 13 per cent CAGR in 2023-25.

SIDBI, TDB join hands to provide MSMEs easy credit access for Indigenous Tech



HYDERABAD: Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Technology Development Board (TDB) with an aim to ease access of credit to MSMEs which are attempting development and commercial application of indigenous technology or adapting imported technology for wider domestic applications.

The MoU was exchanged by Rahul Priyadarshi, Chief General Manager, SIDBI and Rajesh Jain, Director, TDB.

This pact is an arrangement for a joint initiative by TDB and SIDBI, to extend financial assistance to eligible MSMEs as per the terms & conditions of TDB & SIDBI.

Speaking about the arrangement, Rahul Priyadarshi, Chief General Manager, SIDBI said, "SIDBI's emphasis is on strengthening the MSME eco-system and realizing GoI's ideology of 'Make in India' and making India 'Self-reliant'."

Visa Tokenisation Report Forecasts Six Digital Payment Trends in India

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Visa, the global leader in digital payments, unveiled a comprehensive report detailing how tokenisation is driving India's digital economy. The report, «Enabling the Digital Shift: Tokenisation in India's Economic Landscape», marks one year since the effective date of the RBI's mandate on tokenization for e-commerce transactions. It underscores the rapid progress India has made, issuing over 560 million tokens within a year including 300 million tokens issued by Visa. This is a substantial portion of its over 7.5 billion tokens issued globally, and leading to card authorisation rates rising by 4.5% since the introduction of tokenisation, according to the press release stated here.

The report provides a comprehensive view of India's tokenisation journey, considering the perspectives of key stakeholders such as merchants, issuers, and payment processor and identifies six future trends on account of India's tokenisation success, Simplified Payments: Tokenisation will make payments much easier including through voice assistants and smart devices



that employ augmented and virtual reality. Revolutionising Commerce: Issuing digital cards will be faster, subscription-based services simpler, and even change the retail experience with grab-and-go stores.

Faster Token Provisioning: Simplified ways of tokenisation will make the process of moving tokens (digital representation of card information) between the card issuer and destination wallets and website faster and easier.

Frictionless Authentication: Tokenisation can be combined with biometric authentication (like fingerprint or facial recognition) to reduce card-related fraud. Improved B2B Payments: Thanks to tokens, businesses can streamline reconciliation, issue unlimited virtual cards and set transaction spending limits to mitigate risks. Contextual Commerce: By com-

binning tokenisation with social media, users can enjoy a seamless shopping experience right within their favourite platforms.

Vasudevan P, Executive Director, RBI, while commenting on the report, said, "The Visa report provides valuable insights into the transformative role of tokenisation in India's digital payments landscape. As the country pushes towards a digital economy with an increasing volume of transactions, tokenisation has immense potential to further digitise the payment ecosystem. We appreciate the efforts of all ecosystem players, including Visa, in championing tokenisation and highlighting its benefits. With a substantial 560M tokens already in circulation and a fast-paced growth rate, we foresee tokenisation becoming a pivotal force in the evolution of digital payments."

Sandeep Ghosh, Group Country Manager for India & South Asia at Visa, commented, "The RBI's visionary policies and supportive regulatory framework have positioned India as a global leader in digital payments. This has catalysed the rapid growth of digital payments and the seamless implementation of innovations like tokenisation.

SIDBI Launches MSME Economic Activity Index With Jocata

NEW DELHI: The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has partnered with Jocata, a digital lending transformation platform, to launch an initiative named 'Sumpoorn'—a unique MSME Economic Activity Index. This index aims to provide a real-time snapshot of India's vital MSME sector, which contributes significantly to the country's Gross Value Added (GVA) and exports. Unlike existing macro indices that rely on subjective opinions and survey data, 'Sumpoorn' is designed as a high-frequency indicator specifically tailored for the MSME segment. The index utilizes consent-led and anonymized monthly sales data from over 50,000 credit-seeking MSMEs, as reflected in official GSTN returns. A collaborative effort by a team of credit experts, data scientists, and senior economists, the 'Sumpoorn' Index has been meticulously developed and tracked over the past four years. This ensures its accuracy in representing the MSME economy and its ability to capture the nuanced impact of macroeconomic conditions.

On the Road of Inclusive Growth



SATISH SINGH
The poorer caste nor religion. It is difficult for them to live every day. When it is not possible for the villagers to survive in villages, then they move to big cities or metros in search of employment. When they are unable to get employment even in cities due to lack of technical skills, they start self-employment. Usually they sell vegetables, readymade clothes, toys, decorative items, flowers etc. on the roadside. Still their life is full of struggle. Due to lack of capital, they are not able to earn enough to meet their daily needs. To help such people or make them self-reliant, the government had launched the PM Street Vendor Self-reliant Fund (PM Swanidhi) on 1 June 2020. Under this scheme, a loan of Rs.50,000 is given to the street vendor without any guarantee or security. This amount is released to the borrower in 3 instalments i.e., Rs.10,000, Rs.20,000 and Rs.20,000. There is a provision in the scheme to release the second and third instalments only after the first instalment has been paid, so that the possibility of the loan account turning into a non-performing asset (NPA) is reduced and the borrowers remain aware of the responsibility of repaying the loan. There is also a provision in the scheme to give interest subsidy of 7 percent to the borrowers who repay the loan regularly. Cashback up to Rs.1200 is given

every year to the borrowers who do digital transactions, so that the culture of digital transactions develops among them, and they can keep pace with the digitalization campaign of the government.

Till now, under this scheme, all three instalments have been disbursed in 70 lakh loan accounts, amounting to Rs.9100 crore. The percentage of taking and repaying the loan is 68 percent from the first to the second instalment and 75 percent from the second to the third instalment. As awareness increases, the tendency to repay loans can improve further.

Government banks are playing an important role in giving shape to PM Swanidhi, in which State Bank of India is at the top. It has disbursed 31 percent of the total loan amount disbursed. Bank of Baroda is at second place with loan disbursement of 11 percent, while Union Bank of India is at third place with loan disbursement of 10 percent.

At the time of launch of this scheme, the government had set a target of disbursing the first instalment i.e., Rs.10,000 to 50 lakh street vendors. Later, due to high demand, public sector banks disbursed 106 percent loans more than the target. Seeing the success of the scheme, the government revised the old target and set a target of disbursing loans as first instalment to 63 lakh vendors instead of 50 lakh vendors, while including the second and third instalment, it will be disbursed to 88.5 lakh vendors by December 2023. However, this target has not been achieved yet, but it is expected that banks will achieve this target soon.



Among the beneficiaries of PM Swanidhi, 75 percent are from non-upper caste, in which the percentage of backward classes is 44, while the percentage of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is 22. The number of women among the beneficiaries is 43 percent and the number of men is 57 percent. 26 percent people from the upper caste have taken advantage of this scheme, while 8 percent people from the minority class have taken loans under this scheme. Among those taking benefit of this scheme, the number of people aged between 26 to 45 years is two-thirds and the number of people aged between 18 to 45 years is three-fourth, while the average age of those taking benefit of the scheme is 41 years. These figures show that the weaker sections of the society including women, young and old are all trying to become financially strong with the help of this scheme.

After loan disbursement, the percentage of people spending through debit cards has increased by 50 percent in the year 2023 as compared to the year 2021. The average

expenditure has increased by Rs.28,000 in just 2 years. Beneficiaries of PM Swanidhi spent Rs.51,672 through debit cards in the financial year 2021, while Rs.60,974 were spent in the financial year 2022, Rs.79,372 in the financial year 2023 and Rs.32,555 in the current financial year till the month of August, which shows that the beneficiaries of PM Swanidhi are gradually becoming self-reliant. Due to PM Swanidhi Yojana, the spending propensity of street vendors and their acceptance towards digital transactions has increased. Now they have started shopping online with the help of debit cards. They have also started taking advantage of cashback, earned points, discounts on debit card transactions etc.

It is also being seen that those who had taken loan under PM Swanidhi in the financial year 2023 were spending more than those who had not taken any loan in the financial year 2022. Similarly, those people who have taken the second and third instalment of the loan, their financial capacity has improved further, and they are spending regularly. The national average

of such people who spend regularly is 22 percent. However, the percentage of such people varies state-wise. In this case, the percentage of some states is more than the national average, while the percentage of some states is less than the national average. Presently more than 9 lakh street vendors are spending regularly after loan disbursement. 63 percent of the people, whose age is less than 25 years or more than 60 years, were spending beyond basic needs after the loan amount was disbursed.

According to PM Swanidhi dashboard, 5.9 lakh borrowers live in big cities, while the rest live in other cities. In Banaras, 45 percent of borrowers are spending regularly, which is the highest in the country. In this case, Bengaluru is at second place, Chennai is at third place and Prayagraj is at fourth place. The dashboard also shows that people from small towns are also taking benefits from PM Swanidhi Yojana. If this trend becomes stronger, the percentage of workers migrating from small towns to metropolitan cities will reduce.

After opening the account under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, people usually used to spend money to meet their basic needs or used the bank account to transfer money, but after getting the loan under PM Swanidhi Yojana, people used to spend money to fulfil other than basic needs, because their business has strengthened, and beneficiaries have now started spending on other items as per their wish.

There has been an incremental increase of 8 percent in credit

from accounts opened under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and loans being given under PM Swanidhi. In the last 9 years, 30 percent are the beneficiaries who had opened a deposit account for the first time or had also taken loan facility for the first time. At the same time, the gross domestic product (GDP) has increased by 6 percent from fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2023.

In the last 9 years, the government has started many schemes to eradicate poverty. Overdraft facility was also given to those who regularly transact in the accounts opened under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, which helped the weaker sections of the society to improve their financial condition. Under Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, 42 percent new accounts were opened only because of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. Subsequently, to bring the weaker sections of the society into the mainstream, ensure inclusive growth and help businesses during the Corona pandemic, the government implemented PM Swanidhi, Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, ECLGS etc. Today, due to these schemes, 6 percent of the workers working in the informal sector have been formalized, which has increased the possibility of providing more facilities to the needy people, strengthened the economy and strengthened inclusive development. Besides, the possibility of increase in government revenue in the coming years has also increased.

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

Temenos to work with MAS to advance sustainable finance

Collaboration with Gprnt on technology solutions powering the future of sustainable finance



SINGAPORE: Singapore FinTech Festival – Temenos announced a collaboration with Gprnt, a new integrated digital platform launched by the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), to cooperate on technology solutions, explore data integration and foster product development innovation capable of powering the future of sustainable finance.

Temenos is the first core banking software vendor to collaborate with Gprnt and will join MAS and partners on the ESG Stage at the Singapore FinTech Festival 2023 to discuss the potential opportunities that Gprnt will open up to better support financial institutions' balance sheet decarbonization, ESG risk management and regulatory compliance needs.

Gprnt is the culmination of MAS' Project Greenprint and aims to address the financial sector and real economy's needs in collecting and accessing trusted climate- and sustainability-related data. Potential product co-development use cases with Temenos include enhanced KYC that takes ESG data from verifiable sources through Gprnt platform, and feed directly into a bank's client onboarding. Also augmented data analytics incorporating additional ESG metrics for bank's loan origination system flow, setting targets for pipeline loans that increasingly will see embedded elements of sustainability. Tony Coleman, Chief Technol-

ogy and Innovation Officer at Temenos, said: "Temenos has integrated ESG into its operations and product offerings, providing banks with the technology needed to help them transition to a low-carbon economy and achieve their ESG goals. We look forward to supporting Gprnt and exploring opportunities that will help mobilize capital, monitor sustainability commitments, and measure impact."

Sopnendu Mohanty, Chief FinTech Officer, MAS, said: "Technology is a key enabler for financial institutions to surmount the challenges of green transition and achieve their net-zero targets. Temenos is a global name in developing banking platforms and we are delighted to have them onboard Gprnt to cooperate on initiatives to power the financial sector's mounting need for better sustainable finance solutions." Temenos Banking Cloud, Temenos' SaaS offering, helps banks decrease energy use and minimize greenhouse gas emissions up to 95% compared to on-premise deployments. Temenos also continues to improve the efficiency of its code to minimize its environmental impact, by 32% improvement in the latest software release validated by GoCodeGreen.

INTERNATIONAL

US not trying to 'decouple' from China, but seeks improved ties, says Biden

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden has said that the US is not trying to "decouple" from China, but pursuing better relations with its assertive rival, as he prepares for a summit with the Chinese leader this week. Biden's remarks on Tuesday apparently set an amicable tone ahead of the summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping slated to take place in San Francisco on Wednesday on the margins of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, Yonhap news agency reported.

"As I told you, we are not trying to decouple from China," he said during a press conference on efforts to address climate change. "What we are trying to do is change the relationship for the better."

Asked about how he would define success with the upcoming



summit with Xi, Biden said it would mean the normalization of bilateral communication. "Get back on a normal course of corresponding, being able to pick up the phone and talk to one another in a crisis, being able to make sure our militaries still have contact with one

another," he said in response to the question. But Biden staked out his position against China's trade practices. "I am not going to continue to sustain the support for positions where if we want to invest in China, we have to turn over all of our trade secrets," he said.

In recent months, Washington has been hammering away at the mantra of "de-risking" the relationship with Beijing as it is striving to elicit international cooperation on climate change, public health, global security threats and other challenges. US officials have said that Biden and Xi are expected to discuss a "whole range" of issues, including bilateral relations, North Korean threats, Taiwan, the war between Israel and the Hamas militant group, and Russia's protracted war in Ukraine, according to them.

This week's meeting between the leaders will be their second in-person summit following their last talks during the Group of 20 summit in Bali, Indonesia, last November. It will also mark their seventh interaction since Biden took office in January 2021.

U.S. Chamber, CII Host U.S. Commerce Secretary Raimondo and Indian Minister of Commerce Goyal, launching U.S.-India 'Innovation Handshake' Initiative

SAN FRANCISCO (CALIFORNIA): On the periphery of the 2023 APEC Leaders Summit and in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) hosted the inaugural discussion roundtable on "Decoding the Innovation Handshake," an industry-driven collaborative effort between the United States and India promoting innovation and fostering the development of critical and emerging technologies. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo and Indian Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal jointly led the event. Suzanne P. Clark, President & CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General of CII, represented the American and Indian private sectors, respectively, alongside founders and c-suite executives from over thirty American and Indian companies.

The inaugural roundtable presented the opportunity for political and industry leaders to hear firsthand the steps required to ensure both democracies can continue leading the way globally in critical areas, including artificial intelligence, quantum computing, defense, semiconductors, space and geospatial technologies, telecommunications, supply chains, and clean energy. The roundtable also addressed how private equity and venture capital are crucial in accelerating and promoting innovation while delivering scalable and commercially viable solutions to global challenges. The discussions and topics built on talks held and hosted earlier this year by the U.S. Chamber and USIBC, including the Track 1.5 launch of the U.S.-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) in January, followed by the new India-U.S. Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS



X) Initiative in June. "Through the Innovation Handshake, the United States and India are forging a critical tech partnership that will further strengthen our interconnected innovation ecosystems," said Secretary Raimondo. "This is an important step to bolster the U.S.-India commercial relationship, and I look forward to building on this progress with Minister Goyal to help U.S. and Indian workers and businesses succeed."

"The Innovation Handshake signals a joint commitment to strengthen the startup ecosystem and promote cooperation in Critical and Emerging Technologies between India and the United States," said Minister Goyal.

A CII-led delegation of entrepreneurs and innovators from across India also participated in the program, highlighting specific opportunities and recommendations that would ease operational and early-stage challenges faced by startups in both markets. Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General of CII, said, "Today exemplifies what's possible when government and industry work collaboratively and in consultation. In many ways, the startup ecosystem created in India is only made possible through our government's digital public infrastructure priorities."

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Cellebrite Continues Global Growth with Appointment of First Global Chief Revenue Officer, Marcus Jewell

TYSONS CORNER: In a move that signals international momentum and market leadership, Cellebrite DI Ltd. (Nasdaq: CLBT), a global leader in Digital Intelligence (DI) solutions for the public and private sectors, announced today the appointment of Marcus Jewell as Global Chief Revenue Officer (CRO), effective November 15, 2023.

As CRO, Jewell will oversee worldwide sales for both the public and private sectors in support of the Company's strategic priorities. Together with the executive leadership team, Jewell will operate from Cellebrite's American headquarters in Tysons Corner, Virginia, and report directly into CEO Yossi Carmil.

"We are thrilled to welcome Marcus to the team and are confident his deep expertise will help further our leadership in the digital intelligence space, build our business in the private sector, and help customers harness the power of the cloud," says Carmil. "With a growing global customer base, a legacy for industry-leading end-to-end solutions, and a dedicated, talented team, we have an amazing opportunity before us to elevate the Cellebrite suite and brand."



Jamaat-e-Islami Hind welcomes India's decision to vote in favor of UN resolution against Israeli settlements

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind has welcomed India voting in favor of UN resolution against Israeli settlements in Palestine. In a statement to the media the President of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Syed Sadatullah Husaini said, "We welcome the decision by the Government of India to vote in favor of UN resolution against Israeli settlements in Palestine. This is a step in the right direction. By voting with 145 countries to condemn Israeli settlement activities in 'Occupied Palestinian Territory', including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan - India has sent the right message that it is against the illegal grabbing of Palestinian land and the forcible annexation and eviction of civilians. India has always been an advocate of the Palestinian cause and has supported the Palestinians in their legitimate struggle against the illegal occupation of their land by the Israelis."

FW DESK New Delhi

Britain in small boats. So far this year, more than 27,000 have arrived this way. Launched in April 2022 by then Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the Rwanda plan aims to discourage asylum seekers from making the perilous journey of about 20 miles across the Channel from Europe in small boats or inflatable dinghies to England's southern beaches. Under the plan, anyone who arrived in Britain illegally after January 1 last year faced deportation to Rwanda. Following a last minute injunction from the European Court of Human Rights, the first deportation flight in June 2022 was blocked. According to media reports, UK is presently spending over three billion pounds per year on dealing with asylum applications, and the cost of housing migrants as their claims are processed runs at about 6 million pounds per day.

Cellebrite's 2024 Industry Trends Survey Reveals Urgent Digital Challenges in Law Enforcement

TYSONS CORNER: Cellebrite DI Ltd., a global leader in Digital Intelligence (DI) solutions, unveils the critical insights from its 2024 Industry Trends Survey for the Public Sector. Now in its fifth year, the survey findings reveal the urgent need for agencies to digitally transform key workflows to address severe staffing shortages and a growing volume of evidence.

The survey, gathering insights from 2,000 law enforcement leaders and practitioners, underscores challenges in device access, data extraction, evidence management and analysis. A notable majority report increased overtime and insufficient training to tackle digitally driven crimes. Disturbingly, many still rely on outdated paper-based reviews or manual digital tools, resulting in a staggering 45 hours typically spent reviewing digital evidence per case. With three out of four practitioners agreeing digital evidence is pivotal in case resolution, it is critical for agencies to adopt technologies that will transform their workflows, increase productivity and create efficiencies to solve cases faster, smarter and more defensibly.

"Technology has changed the nature of crime," says Steve Foster, Special Agent in Charge at the Georgia Bureau of Investigations whose unit utilizes Cellebrite technology to solve crimes. "We need the tools and people in place to be able to work through the challenges."

Smart City Expo Doha 2023 focuses on data, connectivity and sustainability to improve the future of cities



BARCELONA (SPAIN): The Qatari capital will host the third edition of the region's leading urban innovation event from 29-30 November. Under the motto "A World of Data: Connecting People, Elevating Lives", Smart City Expo Doha (SCE Doha) will lead the debate on sustainable urban development and the importance of data in building smarter, more liveable cities. Organized by the Qatar Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), SCE Doha is an event of Smart City Expo World Congress and Fira Barcelona International, the event will feature more than 70 speakers, over 100 countries represented and 40 companies and organizations, and will be held within the International Horticulture Exhibition of Qatar, that will take place at Al-Bidda Park. The centrepiece of Smart City Expo Doha 2023 will be a conference featuring more than 70 experts, including Renée Cummings, Founder & CEO, Urban AI, Columbia University Community Scholar.

Israeli forces continue to comb Gaza's largest hospital, expand raids

Israeli forces have continued to comb Gaza's largest hospital, Al-Shifa, expanding their searches for hostages and militant activity to other hospitals in the area, while all communications have collapsed across the besieged enclave due to the depletion of fuel.

During the searches on Thursday, "an underground tunnel shaft has been found beneath the hospital", Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesman Daniel Hagari said in a press briefing on Thursday night.

He said a vehicle with "many ammunition" was also found below the medical centre, reports Xinhua news agency. Beneath the Rantisi Hospital, "a complex web of tunnels was found".

"This is a combat area, where our forces are still fighting (with militants)," said Hagari, adding that "many weapons" were also found at the Al-Quds Hospital.



At the briefing, he presented photos showing automatic weapons, hand grenades and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs).

Earlier, the army announced that the remains of Yehudit Weiss, an Israeli woman who was abducted by Hamas militants on October 7, were extracted by IDF troops from "a structure adjacent to the Al-Shifa Hospital".

The body was transferred to

Israeli territory. It was the second time that Israeli forces raided Al-Shifa Hospital.

On Wednesday, the army released photos of some automatic weapons, RPGs and hand grenades that they said were found in the building but have not provided evidence for a central Hamas military headquarters, which Israel repeatedly claims is concealed below the medical compound.

'Go home Indian': Sikh restaurateur racially targeted in Australia



MELBOURNE: A Sikh restaurateur living in Australia for 15 years, has been left shaken after he found excrement smeared on his car for several days in a row and racist letters that told him, "go home, Indian".

Jarnail 'Jimmy' Singh, who runs 'Dawat - The Invitation' restaurant in Hobart, Tasmania, said he has been continuously targeted for over the last two, three months.

"It's mentally very stressful when it comes to your house, and particularly (being targeted) with your name on it... It's too much mental stress. Something has to be done," Singh told ABC News on Tuesday.

Singh first assumed the letter had been written by a young person, and did his best to ignore it, according to the report. Recounting the first incident, he said dog excrement was smeared on the door handles of his car for four or five days in a row, followed by a racist letter in his driveway, telling him "go home, Indian".

While the incidents were brought to the notice of police and video cameras were installed at his property, the spiteful letters continued to arrive. He told ABC News that the next letter was received about a month later, and it was even more offensive than the first -- including comments like "you can **** off back to India".

His car was also scratched outside his workplace. "This kind of thing has to be stopped. Definitely, we do need

a change," Singh rued. Tasmania Police Commander Jason Elmer said in a statement that the incidents had been reported to police and were being investigated.

He said current legislation allowed for courts to "consider that a motivation of racial hatred or prejudice can be an aggravating factor in sentencing". Commander Elmer said there was "no excuse for any form of verbal or physical harassment" in the community, and that people were encouraged to contact police immediately if they believe they have been the victim of a prejudice-related incident.

Aimen Jafri, the chair of the Multicultural Council of Tasmania, told ABC that incidents like those experienced by Singh were far too common -- and increasing.

"It's definitely getting worse at the moment," she said. Singh said he hoped speaking out about his experiences could help prevent others from facing anything similar.

After police opened investigation, Singh took to his social media page and wrote that "there is no space for racism in our beautiful country, Australia". He also thanked his supporters and customers who "stood with him in hard times".

"I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for the incredible support I have received in many ways, phone calls, messages, and personal visits to our restaurant just to check on me," he wrote on Facebook on Monday.

Supreme Court rules UK gov't Rwanda asylum policy unlawful

In a big setback to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's government, the UK's Supreme Court on Wednesday rejected plans to send migrants to Rwanda as unlawful as it would put them at risk.

Issuing a unanimous judgment, the country's highest court said that the policy would put asylum seekers at "risk of ill-treatment" as they could be sent back to their home countries once they land in Rwanda.

Sunak, who has vowed to stop migrants reaching Britain in small boats across the English Channel, said the ruling "was not the outcome we wanted". "We have seen today's judgment and will now consider next steps. This was not the outcome we wanted, but we have spent the last few months planning for all eventualities and we remain completely committed to stopping the boats," he said in a statement.

The Prime Minister, however



said that his "commitment to stopping the boats is unwavering". "The Government has been working on a new treaty with Rwanda, and we'll finalise that in light of today's judgment. If necessary, I am prepared to revisit our domestic legal frameworks," Sunak wrote on X on Wednesday.

The development comes just after sacked Home Secretary Suella Braverman, in a searing

letter, accused Sunak of betraying his pledge to do "whatever it takes" to stop small boats crossing the Channel. Braverman said that the PM had no "Plan B" if the government lost the Supreme Court case. Since Brexit, net immigration has continued to mount, touching a record of 606,000 in 2022. Last year, a record 45,775 people were detected arriving without permission in

Britain in small boats. So far this year, more than 27,000 have arrived this way. Launched in April 2022 by then Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the Rwanda plan aims to discourage asylum seekers from making the perilous journey of about 20 miles across the Channel from Europe in small boats or inflatable dinghies to England's southern beaches. Under the plan, anyone who arrived in Britain illegally after January 1 last year faced deportation to Rwanda. Following a last minute injunction from the European Court of Human Rights, the first deportation flight in June 2022 was blocked. According to media reports, UK is presently spending over three billion pounds per year on dealing with asylum applications, and the cost of housing migrants as their claims are processed runs at about 6 million pounds per day.

UNGA President urges Security Council reform to avoid paralysis

In a world shadowed by the turmoil in Ukraine and Gaza, the urgency for reforming the UN Security Council has reached an unprecedented peak, Dennis Francis, President of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), has said.

Amid the assembly's annual discourse, evaluating the United Nations' foremost platform for peace and security, Francis conveyed with deep conviction that without fundamental structural reform, the council's effectiveness and credibility are destined to progressively diminish, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Violence and war continue to spread in regions across the world, while the United Nations seems paralyzed due largely to the divisions in the Security Council," he said. With the world changing quickly, the council is "dangerously falling short" of its mandate as the primary custodian for the maintenance of international peace and security, he said, adding, "Absent structural reform, its performance and legitimacy will inevitably continue to suffer, and so too, the credibility



and relevance of the UN itself." While the question of equitable representation has been on the assembly's agenda since 1979, the calls for reform have grown amid widening conflict worldwide, underscored the UNGA president.

At September's annual high-level debate, council reform was a common refrain from the podium, including expanding its membership. Recent crises and the inability of the Security Council to agree on a unified position such as on the Ukraine crisis and the Israel-Palestine crisis, have further underscored that urgency.

The Security Council passed its first resolution on the Israel-Palestine conflict on Wednesday since the crisis erupted on Oct. 7.

Pak Government Appeals Supreme Court Decision On Civilian Trials In Military Courts

ISLAMABAD: The ongoing legal saga surrounding the trial of civilians in military courts in Pakistan has taken a new turn, with the government filing an appeal against the Supreme Court's order. The five-member bench had previously declared such trials as "null and void" on October 23, instructing authorities to shift the hearings of cases involving former Prime Minister Imran Khan's supporters to ordinary criminal courts, media reported.

The Ministry of Defence, in its intra-court appeal, is urging the apex court to overturn the October 23 decision and reinstate the sections of the Official Secrets Act that were deemed illegal by the bench. Additionally, the government is seeking the restoration of Section 59(4) of the Army Act. The petition emphasizes the potential harm to the country if certain sections of the Army Act and Official Secrets Act remain illegal.

The Supreme Court's earlier ruling allowed for the trial of 103 individuals and others connected to the May 9 and 10 events to be conducted in



criminal courts established under ordinary or special law. These events stemmed from violent protests by hundreds of Imran Khan's supporters who had clashed with military and government facilities, even setting a general's house on fire, following the former prime minister's brief arrest on May 9. Notably, the Defence Ministry's appeal follows similar pleas from the caretaker Sindh government and the Shuhada Forum, Balochistan, both contesting the judgment that declared the trials of civilians in military courts unconstitutional. The Sindh chief secretary, in a separate appeal, requested the apex court to set aside its October 23 order and suspend its operation pending the appeal.

Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party and others have already voiced concerns about the lack of transparency in military trials and have approached the Supreme Court on this matter. The use of military courts was initially authorized by the government of Shehbaz Sharif, who concluded his term in August, handing over to a caretaker government overseeing the upcoming February 8 elections.

In a related development, on November 15, senators from three major political parties in Pakistan staged a protest in the Senate against the swift passage of a resolution rejecting the Supreme Court's verdict on military courts, calling for its immediate withdrawal. The situation remains complex, with legal and political dimensions intertwining in the debate over the trial venue for civilians involved in the May 9 protests.



Sikh warriors arrive during a **FATEH DIVAS** celebration a day after 'Bandi Chhor Divas' in Amritsar on November 13. PHOTOS: PRABHJOT GILL



Sikh devotees watch as fireworks explode over the illuminated Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) on the occasion of **Bandi Chhor Divas**. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

India into the World Cup final, Shami, Virat and Ayer shine

SUNIL THAPLIYAL
New Delhi

India broke the jinx and reached the final of the World Cup after a gap of 12 years. Team India beat New Zealand by 70 runs at the historic Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai in the first semi-final. India last made it to the final and won it in 2011. India reached the World Cup final, losing for the fourth time, winning two in 1983 and 2011 and losing one final in 2003.



For the last decade, India has lost eight semi-finals or finals in ICC events. Be it the World Cup semi-finals in 2015 and 2019, the T-20 World Cup final in 2014, the ICC Test Championship final in 2017, the T-20 World Cup semi-finals in 2016 and 2021, and the ICC Test Championship finals in 2019-21 and 2021-23 the final round of the ICC Test Championship in 2019-21 and 2021-23.

Later, shreyas Ayer came in and hit some massive boundaries, taking the pressure off Virat Kohli, who played an anchor role in the Indian innings. On the other hand, Virat was determined to help India score 397 against New Zealand, scored his 50th century and set a milestone by breaking Sachin Tendulkar's record of 49 ODI hundreds.

seven wickets and upset the Kiwi batsmen. However, the Kiwi batsmen fought back valiantly, with Mitchell and his 181-run stand with Williamson in particular making life difficult for the Indians in the field. Shami took seven wickets, becoming the first bowler to take seven wickets in a World Cup semi-final.

On the other hand, Shreyas Ayer scored his second consecutive century in this World Cup with his batting prowess and gave Team India the perfect platform to put a big result on the board. Kohli and Ayer helped India reach a high total with their centuries, especially with Virat Kohli who broke Sachin Tendulkar's record (49th century) and scored his 50th century. On the other hand, Shubham Gill scored an unbeaten 80 runs and KL Rahul scored 40 runs to help India reach 397 runs. After the batsmen, the Indian team dominated the bowling. Muhammad Shami picked up

five wickets and upped the ante with his 181-run stand with Williamson in particular making life difficult for the Indians in the field. Shami took seven wickets, becoming the first bowler to take seven wickets in a World Cup semi-final. He is also one of the best wicket-takers in this World Cup. Bumrah also bowled well and kept the Kiwi batsmen at bay. On the other hand, Jadeja, Kuldeep Yadav and Siraj have also performed well to keep the Kiwi batsmen below 330 runs. India It was a cohesive team performance by the Indian team that helped India beat the mighty Kiwis in the semi-finals. India will now contest the final at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday and will face the winner of the second semi-final between Australia and South Africa.

LEONARDO DICAPRIO, Vittoria Ceretti get cozy at his 49th b'day bash



Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio celebrated his 49th birthday alongside his new Italian model girlfriend Vittoria Ceretti. The 'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood' actor and the Italian model showcased PDA at his 49th birthday party which was attended by fellow big names, including Jay-Z, Beyonce Knowles and Kim Kardashian among others, reports aceshowbiz.com. A source told People that the actor and Ceretti weren't shy in getting intimate in public at the bash on November 11. They were "affectionate and kissing throughout the night," the source claimed. The informant further shared that the 'Titanic' star had a total blast at the party, which also featured Lil Wayne performing. "At one point everyone was singing classic hip hop," said the insider, adding that the birthday boy was "raised and carried around the room." The new report stated that the party didn't stop until the early hours of the morning. It was also said that many of the guests, which included Snoop Dogg, Tobey Maguire, Taika Waititi and Axl Rose, stayed past 4 a.m. Leo and Vittoria are no strangers to showing PDA at parties. Last month, they were snapped getting handsy while attending a Halloween house party in Los Angeles.

India has won Cricket World Cup 2023. Here's how

AMARINDER SANGHA AND RAJU WILLIAM
Newcastle (UK)/Ludhiana

The World Cup is in the final stages. And of the last two, the penultimate is slated for November 15 when India, the only unbeaten team in this tournament so far, takes on New Zealand at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai. Of course, the top-four finishers competing for the final honour of lifting the World Cup are the deserving ones to be in this top bracket, according to their performances.



It's an apt question, since every team has already played against every other participating team before this top-four stage. Hasn't the superiority team India in all departments of the game over all other participating teams been convincingly decided? What more does it have to take to show that it's the best side? As an Indian it's a very pertinent question too, since India have topped in this World Cup, winning all their league games. They've beaten every other team by a convincing margin and have emerged as the top team by a fair distance. By that yardstick, the trophy should be awarded to India! Isn't it? India topped the league phase in the previous World Cup too.

Only 45 minutes of bad cricket cost India dearly and they lost to New Zealand in Manchester then. Is it fair, that your performance in the entire tournament gets set aside and you are knocked out on the basis of 45 minutes of bad cricket? There's another point of serious consideration. And that is all other teams reaching this last four stage have lost against India. Is this system of giving them another chance of 'avenging' their defeat at the hands of the Indian side justified by any standard of sports' ethics? Also, this is a highly ironical and tremendously discriminating treatment of making the Indian team prove its worth not once but twice more on the ground as the best of the participating lot.

Guneet Monga, celebrity chef Vikas Khanna board 'American Sikh'



LOS ANGELES: Oscar-winning producer Guneet Monga and Michelin-starred chef and filmmaker Vikas Khanna have boarded Oscar-qualified animated short 'American Sikh' as executive producers. 'American Sikh' tells the true tale of an American-born, turban-wearing Sikh illustrator, writer, performance artist, diversity speaker and creator of Sikhtoons.com, Vishavjit Singh, who after a lifetime of

facing prejudice, self-doubt and violence, finally finds acceptance in a superhero costume. Singh is publicly known for his Captain America persona, a turbaned and bearded Sikh, fighting against bigotry, intolerance and perceptions of what an American should look like post 9/11, reports variety.com. 'American Sikh' was created in partnership with Singh as the director-producer and Ryan Westra. The film has won best short animation at Sidewalk Film Festival in Birmingham, Alabama, best animation at San Diego International Film Festival, the grand jury award for best short documentary at and the audience choice award at the Tasveer Film Festival in Seattle, a special mention at Chicago International Film Festival and an honorable mention at Tallgrass Film Festival.

'Badhte Chalo' from 'Sam Bahadur' to be played during India-NZ semi-final

The legendary composer-writer-director and poet Gulzar's battle track 'Badhte Chalo' for Vicky Kaushal's upcoming biopic 'Sam Bahadur', which is the first song from the film will now be played during India-New Zealand cricket semi-finals. What distinguishes this song from a lot of other military tracks in Indian cinema is that it involves several historical war cries from various regiments of the Indian Army into its lyrics. Even more, to make it as authentic as possible, the song utilises actual soldiers to do the war-cry. Some of the war-cry used in the song include the motto of the Madras

Regiment, Maratha Regiment, Sikh Regiment, Jammu & Kashmir Rifles, Rajputana Rifles, Rajput Regiment, Garhwal Rifles, Bihar Regiment, and the Kumaon Regiment. Every person involved in the song is an actual soldier, adding a layer of sincerity and connection to the themes of valour, honour, courage, self-sacrifice, and duty.

CBFC and Information & Broadcasting Officer authorized to direct blocking/removing any website/app/link having pirated film content

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

Since the film industry suffers a loss of Rs 20,000 crore every year due to piracy, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has taken strict steps to stop piracy. Now, CBFC and Information & Broadcasting Officers are authorized to direct blocking, removing any website/app/link having pirated film content.

After Parliament passed the Cinematography (Amendment) Act 1952 during the monsoon session this year, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has set up a set of nodal officers to receive complaints against piracy and direct intermediaries to remove pirated content on digital platforms. As of now, there is no institutional mechanism to take direct action against pirated film content except legal action under copyright law and IPC. With the spread of the Internet and almost everyone being interested in watching film content for free, piracy has seen a rise. With the above action, immediate action will be taken by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in the case of piracy and the industry will



Bollywood actress Karishma Kapoor offers prayers at the Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple), on Friday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

Kim Kardashian says she's 'more religious than most people guess'



Reality TV star Kim Kardashian claims she and her children pray every day together even if they are not in the same place. She said her Christian faith has helped her through the toughest times in her life and she wants her children - North, Chicago, Saint, and four-year-old Psalm, whom she has with ex-husband Kanye West -- to have religion to guide them through life, too. "I'm probably more religious than most people guess. That's how I manage life. I look at everything as lessons. Things happen exactly the way that they are supposed to and take you exactly where you need to be. Even if it doesn't make sense at the time, it's leading you to a path," Kim told GQ's 28th annual Men of the Year issue -- of which she is a cover star, reports aceshowbiz.com. The family also read Bible stories that her late father Robert Kardashian read to her and her siblings as kids. "The Kardashians' star has followed in her dad's footsteps by training to become a lawyer and she wants her children to have a strong work ethic like the legal eagle and not forget their "responsibilities."

Alia reacts to 'wipe it off' controversy on 'Koffee With Karan'

MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt, who graced the latest episode of the popular chat show 'Koffee With Karan' along with her sister-in-law Kareena Kapoor Khan, reacted to the "wipe it off" controversy surrounding her actor husband Ranbir Kapoor. A few weeks ago, Alia Bhatt mentioned that Ranbir asked her to wipe her lipstick off because he doesn't like her wearing lipstick. This led to a huge controversy on social media with a section of the Internet users calling Ranbir an "apparent red



flag" and a "toxic" partner. Some people also called Alia "blinded by her love" for Ranbir. However, now Alia has reacted to the controversy saying that her husband is the exact opposite of what the people have perceived him to be. The 'Udda Punjab' actress told the show host Karan Johar, "I

have a very candid way of speaking. So when I talk about anything in my life, I like to imitate the person, give anecdotes, and make it personal. I feel a lot of things get picked out of context, which happened recently with the video. My team told me 'Ye kuch out of hand jaa raha hai'. I was like, okay theek hai jaane do". She continued, "Then I realised that there were serious articles written about how he was a toxic man, and I thought, 'are we serious?' There are many issues in the world to give more attention to."

the purpose of this law is to fulfill the long-standing demand of the film industry to curb film piracy. The law was amended 40 years later to include provisions against film piracy, including digital piracy, with the last significant amendment being made in 1984. The amendment includes stricter punishment of minimum 3 months imprisonment and fine up to Rs 3 lakh. The punishment may extend up to 3 years and a fine up to 5% of the audited gross production cost may be imposed. Secretary of the I & B, Apurva Chandra clarified, Who can ap-

ply to do so? The original copyright holder or any person authorized by him for this purpose may apply to the nodal officer for removal of pirated material. If a complaint is made by a person who does not hold the copyright or is not authorized by the copyright holder, the Nodal Officer may hold a hearing on a case-by-case basis to determine the genuineness of the complaint before issuing directions. He further clarified that under the law, the digital platform will be bound to remove such internet links providing pirated content within a period of 48 hours after receiving instructions from the nodal officer. The Cinematography (Amendment) Act 2023 (12 of 2023), passed by Parliament

in the monsoon session, addressed issues related to film certification, including the issue of film piracy by unauthorized recording and screening of films and broadcast of unauthorized copies on the internet. There are strict penalties for piracy. This amendment is in line with the existing laws that address the issues of film piracy i.e. the Copyright Act, 1957 and the Information Technology (IT) Act 2000. The newly inserted section 6ab of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 provides that no person shall use or abet the use of any infringing copy of any film for being exhibited to the public for profit at any exhibition place, which is not licensed under any law or rule made thereunder, or in a manner which would infringe copyright under the provisions of the Copyright Act 1957 or any other law for the time being in force. Further, the newly inserted section 7 (1b) (ii) of the Cinematograph Act provides that the Government may take appropriate action to remove, disable access to such infringing copy hosted, displayed or displayed on any intermediary platform in violation of the section.