MISTAKES CAN BE FORGIVEN,

NOT INTENTIONAL BETRAYALS

**KULTAR SINGH SANDHWAN** 

**AND CRIMES: SPEAKER** 



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THE STORY OF 'ARJAN **VAILLY' WITH BHUPINDER** BABBAL ON 'RANG PUNJAB DE'

### SC upholds abrogation of Article 370, calls for polls by September next year

Court on Monday upheld the government's decision to abrogate Article 370, which bestowed special status on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, and said steps should be taken to conduct elections in the assembly by September 30 next year.

Writing the judgement for himself and Justices Gavai and Surya Kant, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud said Article 370 of the Constitution was a temporary provision and the president has the power to revoke it.

The apex court also upheld the validity of the decision to carve out the union territory of Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. The erstwhile state of Jammu and



Kashmir does not have intertion as valid," the CJI said. other states of the country, he Indian Constitution can be applied to J-K," the CJI said.

We hold the exercise of constitutional order abrogat- manent body," the CJI stated. ing Article 370 of Constitu-

Article

nal sovereignty different from Jammu and Kashmir became an integral part of India and said. "... all provisions of the this is evident from Articles 1 and 370, he said while pronouncing the judgment. "The Constituent Assembly of J&K presidential power to issue was never intended to be per-

was an interim arrangement due to war conditions in the erstwhile state. Justice Chandrachud said.

The princely state had become an integral part of India and this is evident from Articles 1 and 370, the CJI said.

The bench comprising CJI DY Chandrachud and Justices Gavai, Surya Kant, Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Sanjiv Khanna, assembled at 10.56 am to pronounce the three separate and concurring judgements Justices Kaul and Khanna wrote their judgments separately.

The apex court reserved its verdict in the matter on September 5 after a 16-day hearing on a batch of petitions challenging the abrogation of

### **Sukhbir Singh Badal tenders unqualified** apology in front of Sri Akal Takhat Sahib

Says Be-adbi incidents were a conspiracy to permanently sabotage possibility of Panthic Govts in future too

AMRITSAR: Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal today tendered an unqualified apology to "Guru Sahiban and Guru Panth" on the precincts of Shri Akal Takhat for the sacrilege incident and its aftermath during the Akali government. "It inflicted deep pain on the heart of both Parkash Singh Badal and on my own that these incidents happened during the Akali government and that we could not arrest and punish the perpetrators of this heinous crime. Badal sahib left us, carrying this wound on his heart."

Badal was addressing a congregation at Gurdwara Bhai Gurbakash Singh adjacent to Akal Takhat Sahib (highest Sikh temporal seat) in the Darbar Sahib complex to commemorate the 103 years of SAD's foundation.

"In retrospect, I believe it was a huge blunder to allow some so-called Panthic personalities and organisations to pressurise the government into handing over the probe to the CBI instead of conducting it ourselves. It was only later that their game plan became clear to us but by that time the probe had already been handed over to the central agency.," said Mr Badal , adding that he and Mr Badal were deeply aggrieved at our failure to catch, expose and punish the actual culprits as well as those behind the sacrilege tragedy."

Minister said that he did not done to any Akali worker in want to offer any alibis for this the past either by him or by failure. "As a government, we Parkash Singh Badal or by any should have realised the games other leader or member of the that some elements masquerparty. I take respossibility for ading as Panthic organisations anything that went wrong and I were playing to not only destaapologise to all the brave Akali bilise the then government but soldiers who felt estranged with also to permanently sabotage the party. Both personally and the possibility of a Panthic govas party president, I take full ernment in Punjab. We failed to responsibility for all this." ally ensure that the mistakes of

realise that they were actually driving a wedge between the Khalsa Panth and its warrior force, the SAD. The worked hard to turn the community against its own right arm .That was the only way they could weaken the Khalsa Panth." He asked the Sikh masses to note how the forces that were so loud and active against SAD govt on sacrilege had become silent on sacrilege incidents even at Harmandar Sahib or on the police assault on Sikh

He sent out a call for "complete unity in the Panth under the Akali flag and principles. He said that both personally and as president of the SAD. he owned responsibility for

shrines, including the one at

Sultanpur Lodhi.

massive security lapse in Lok Sabha on Wednesday, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has banned the visitor's pass and also called for an all party floor leaders meeting later in the day.

LS Speaker bans visitor's

pass, calls meeting of all party floor leaders

The decision was taken after a massive security breach in Lok Sabha on Wednesday afternoon, when two persons jumped from the visitor's gallery in the House causing a commotion.

The two persons also sprayed some gas. The Lok Sabha Speaker has also demanded for a detailed report on how this security breach took place on the 22nd anniversary of the 2001 Parliament attack. Meanwhile, Delhi Police

Commissioner Sanjay Arora, Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla have also reached the Parliament to access the situ-

One of the persons wearing a blue jacket was seen climbing on the tables as he ran inside the House spraying yellow gas spreading fear on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament attack. All the galleries of the Lok Sabha had two security officials present during the proceedings.

According to Delhi Police sources, both the persons who created a massive lapse from the visitor's gallery of Lok Sabha causing a massive security scare in the House have been identified as Sagar Sharma and Manoranian.

#### **Chief Justice of India** seeks reports over woman judge alleges sexual harassment by senior, says wants to die

in 'dignified way'



**FW CORRESPONDENT** 

A woman judicial officer posted in Uttar Pradesh's Banda district has written a letter to Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud accusing a district judge of sexual harassment and seeking his permission to end her life in a "dignified way", prompting the CJI to call for a report from the Allahabad High Court administhe status of inquiry The woman judicial officer, in her two-page letter, sought the CJI's permission to end her life following the abuse and harassment she had faced in her career during her posting in Barabanki.

"I have no will to live anymore. I have been rendered to a walking corpse in the last year and a half. There is no purpose in carrying this soulless and lifeless body around anymore. There is no purpose left in my life. Kindly permit me to end my life in a dignified way," the letter, which went viral on social media, said. According to apex court sources. the Supreme Court's secretary general, under orders from the CJI, has asked the registrar general of the Allahabad high court about the status of the proceedings before the internal com- elevator to the visitors gallery. plaints committee (ICC) that is dealing with the complaint of the judicial officer.

#### Parliament security breach: Delhi Police register FIR under UAPA

Article 370, which was ab-

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi Police have taken legal action against the individuals implicated in the breach of Parliament security, invoking UAPA and various sections of the IPC, including charges of trespassing and criminal conspiracy.

Sources indicate that the case, registered at the Parliament Street police station, involves sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 452 (trespassing) 153 (provocation with intent to cause a riot), 186 (obstructing public servants in the discharge of public functions), and 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servants from duty)



16 and 18 of UAPA. The investigation is now being handed over to the Special Cell.

Among the four arrested are

Manoranjan D. from Mysuru, Sagar Sharma from Lucknow, Neelam from Harvana's Jind, and Amol Shinde from Maharashtra's Latur.

#### Senior MPs are vocal in their demand to return to the old building as there is many fault in the new parliament building

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA

The main reception gate of te new parliament building is on the just opposite side of the Rail Bhawan, some parts as shaped reception room is not there any more, old one has been demolished. Now, in the general reception at that place is look like railway counter type. Security fence in two consecutive phases are there to enter the building. The first is a body search through a metal detector door frame, then face reading sliding door. Just Walk in, when entering the main building through the Shardul Gate, there is also a Face reading metal detector door frame. The way to go up to the second floor in the

There is also a body search through sliding doors with metal and hand detectors.



before. But the mushroom- As such, six times checking whereas there were three times in the old building. Even so, the security system of the parliament was so secure. In telligence (AI) systems, the number of Security Staff has decreased. 70 percent posts of Parliament Security Service which was earlier called "Watch and Ward", are vacant. The post of Joint Secretary is vacant, as he is the head of the Parliament Security Service(PSS). The 'AI' system has not started working. Senior MPs and experts are asking question again, "Why so hurry to start the session in the new parliament building without making complete"?

### Shiromani Akali Dal will participate in Delhi protest march by SGPC Sikh community on the issue of

from every aspect.



**JAGMOHAN SINGH** 

Amritsar

the name of new artificial in- The Shiromani Akali Dal will register its full presence in the protest march to be organized by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) in Delhi on December 20, regarding the release of Sikh prisoners. This announcement was made by Shiromani Akali Dal President Sukhbir Singh Badal during a special meeting with the district presidents, constituency in-charges, and SGPC members at the SGPC office. A large number of Shiromani Akali Dal leaders participated in this gathering.

On this occasion, SGPC President Advocate Harjinder Singh Dhami thanked all the parties who supported the December 20 Delhi protest march In his address, Shiromani

being organized by SGPC regarding the release of Sikh Akali Dal President Sukhbir prisoners and said that this Singh Badal giving support struggle is for the protection to the December 20 protest of the human rights of Sikhs march by SGPC said that all which will register a historic appearance with unity. He party leaders and workers will said that this protest march participate in this cause with enthusiasm. He said that full in a peaceful manner would attendance will be recorded prove to be an example. On this from every constituency and occasion, senior Akali leader the SGPC will be given support Balwinder Singh Bhundar, Prof. Prem Singh Chandumajra, and Dr. Daljit Singh Cheema also Sukhbir Badal said that since Shiromani Akali Dal is a politiaddressed the gathering. During this gathering, some resolucal party representing the Panth, it will perform its duty in the tions were also presented by forefront on the community's Prem Singh Chandumajra on Panthic matters, which were issue of Sikh prisoners. He strongly criticized the govern- approved by the present leadment and said that it was not ers amid Sikh victory slogans.

#### **Abrogation of Article 370: Congress says** debate closed, SC verdict bound on everyone.

WANTS IMMEDIATE STATEHOOD RESTORATION, ELECTIONS IN JK



**KAVITA SHARMA** 

New Delhi

The Congress today said that the debate over the abrogation of Article 370 was closed after the Supreme Court today held that the article was abrogated in accordance with the constitution.

He said that he will person

the past are not repeated. "I will

personally attend to the griev-

ances of every Akali worker

and every Punjabi, like Badal

Sahab used to do. He said that

a united and strong Akali Dal

was a prerequisite for a strong

and progressive Punjab. "We

need to remain united in order

to save the precious resources

of our Punjab including river

waters and control over BBMB.

But make no mistake: SAD

alone can guarantee that our

heritage and culture is saved

from conspiracies to erode and

dilute it." The party also con-

demned the brazen sacrilege

committed by the police at the

sacred Gurdham at Sultanpur

The Congress pointed out that the party was neither a petitioner nor a stakeholder in any of the petitions, which had challenged the abrogation of the Article 370, hence there was no question of it seeking any review of the judgement. The party made it categorically clear, "since accession, Jammu & Kashmir was -- and is -- an integral part of India. The people of Jammu and Kashmir are Indian citizens. We reiterate our resolve to work for the security, peace, development and progress of Jammu & Kashmir", the party added.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here today, P Chidambaram and Dr Abhishek Manu Singhvi, both MPs Senior Spokespersons, said "the Supreme Court has held that the Article 370 was abrogated in accordance with the Constitution that is the law of the country. And all of us are bound by the law of the country. We can have opinions, but that

Dr Singhvi said, according to the Constitution, the Supreme Court's is the final word and hence the debate over the abrogation of the article is closed. He pointed out, the Congress was neither a party nor a stakeholder in any of these petitions challenging the abrogation. "Hence the decision is final and the Congress neither has any agenda nor has the party ever said that it will seek the review of the decision", he clarified.

P Chidambaram said, while the judgement of the apex court has decided many issues, it has left open some issues that are also vitally important. "Prima facie, we respectfully disagree with the judgement on the manner in which Article 370 was abrogated. We reiterate the CWC resolution dated 06-08-2019", Mr Chidambaram said. He said, "we are also disappointed that the Hon'ble Supreme Court did not decide the question of dismembering the State and reducing its status to two Union Territories". That question has been reserved for adjudication in a suitable case in the future. he pointed out.

Welcoming the SC decision directing restoration of the statehood of J&K, the Congress leaders said that the Indian National Congress has always demanded the restoration of full statehood for what has become the Union Territory of J&K. We welcome the Supreme Court's verdict in this regard. Full statehood must be restored immediately. The aspirations of the people of Ladakh must also be fulfilled", they added.

The party also welcomed the court's direction to hold assembly elections. However, the leaders added, "we believe that the elections should be held immediately and there is no reason to wait until September 30, 2024.

Kulwant Singh the close aide of Amritpal Singh chief of Waris Punjab De' outfit has been arrested by the Punjab Police.

accused Kulwant Singh, Deputy Superintendent of police Riputapan Singh said on Friday that accused was a resident of Moga district of Punjab. However, Amritpal was arrested in the month of April this year from Moga

DSP said that Kulwant Singh was coming absconding and was produced in the court today which sent him on four days police remand. Singh made it clarified that he was arrested on Thursday,

However, Amritpal Singh was declared fugitive in March this year and was arrested af-

ter one month in April 2023, thereafter Amritpal Singh and his associates were lodged to Dibrugarh jail in Assam. Nine of his associates were also lodged in the same prison as National Security Act (NSA) was invoked against all the accused.

Police Station Ajnala had

# Confirming the arrest of

booked Amritpal Singh and his nine associates for allegedly spreading disharmony, attempt to murder, attack on police personnel and obstructing the lawful discharge of duty by public servants.

#### **December 13 security lapse in Parliament: Congress** firm on Home Minister's statement in both houses is the collective stand of the wise, the Home Minister can

**KAVITA SHARMA** 

New Delhi

The Congress today expressed its firm resolve seeking a statement of the union Home Minister Amit Shah in both the houses of the parliament over the serious security lapse that took place in the Lok Sabha on December 13. It said, without his statement it did not see any possibility of the two houses functioning.

The party also accused Amit Shah of contempt of parliament by speaking at a television channel on the subject when the house was in session.

Addressing a press conference here today, AICC general secretary incharge of the Communications Department, Jairam Ramesh pointed out, while the government was try-matter is very serious. ing to brush aside the incident



minor one, later it invoked the stringent UAPA charges against the accused.

Without going into the merits whether UAPA should have been invoked or not, he observed, the very fact that such a stringent act has been invoked makes it incumbent upon the Home Minister to make a statement in both the houses of the parliament as the

Jairam Ramesh said, this

Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) partners that the Home Minister should come to both the houses of the parliament make a statement and take questions on the issue. The Congress general secre-

tary pointed out, only yesterday the Home Minister gave a detailed interview to a television channel. He said, if he can speak at length on television on the matter, why he cannot speak in the parliament when

the house is in session. He observed that this is the contempt of the parliament and the parliamentary traditions that the minister spoke on such a pressing issue when the house is very much in session.

Taking a dig at the Home Minister, Ramesh said, other-

mostly be seen in the house but this time he probably did not find any excuse to blame Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for the incident. Taunting the Home Minister for trying to blame everything on Nehru, he remarked, he was sure if Mr Shah could establish a link between Nehru and those involved in the incident, he

would be definitely making a

statement in the parliament.

The Congress general secretary reiterated that his party as well as the INDIA partners did not have any intention to wash out the parliament. He said their demand was simple that the Home Minister should come to both houses of the parliament, make a statement and take questions as to how this security breach of such magnitude could take place.

#### Kulwant Singh the close aide of Amritpal Singh arrested **JAGMOHAN SINGH**

## Mistakes can be forgiven, not intentional betrayals and crimes: Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan

tions on the Shiromani Akali Dal Badal President Sukhbir Singh Badal's apology for the 'unfortunate incidents' of sacrilege. Kultar Singh Sandhwan, Speaker Punjab Vidhan Sabha, said that it is very necessary to see what is the purpose of Sukhbir Badal behind this apology.

In 2015, in the Parkash Singh Badal government, a series of incidents of desecration of the sacred Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji took place but the Akali Government adopted a completely negligent attitude, which emboldened the anti-social elements. Sukhbir Singh Badal, then Home Minister of Punjab, used to say that nothing happens in Punjab without their knowledge and orders. But due to their negligence these incidents of blasphemy contin-



did not catch any of the conspirators and accused.

Sandhwan questioned that Sukhbir Badal has apologized for the sacrilege incidents for his political interests but who will apologize for the martyrs Bhai Gurjit Singh and Bhai Krishan

ued and the Badal government Bhagwan Singh who were killed in a peaceful protest for the justice in sacrilege incidents. When will he apologize for Behbal Kalan and Kotkapura firing.

Speaker Sandhwan also said that as a devoted Sikh and believer of Blessed Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, I think that there can

be no apology for the incidents of desecration of Guru Granth Sahib Ji. If Sukhbir Badal truly wants to repent for the crimes of blasphemy, then he should leave active politics and bow down at Sri Akal Takht Sahib and in front of all the Sikh Sangat as a humble Sikh of the Guru. In this his apology, sought by the President of Akali Dal Badal, he cried about his political degradation and asked people to once again hand over the state to the Badal family, so it was all a political drama. He further said that Sukhbir Badal has added another crime to his pile of sins by playing political tricks under the pretext of pardon. History tells us that whoever tried to take such advantages in the name of Guru, they have never succeeded

# Nine years of Modi govt have become a shining example of good governance, development & prosperity: Vanathi Srinivasan

Amritsar

Bharatiya Janata Party Punjab, Mahila Morcha organised their first state executive meeting in Amritsar today since Jai Inder Kaur took over as the state President.

The meeting was presided over by National President Vanathi Srinivasan, State President Jai Inder Kaur and state prabhari Updesh Andotra.

Addressing the team of State Executive Members of Punjab Mahila Morcha Vanathi Srinivasan said, «I am grateful to the people of Punjab for their warm love and affection that they have showered upon me on since my arrival in Punjab. Visiting Sri Darbar Sahib and the historic Jallianwala Bagh have been a surreal experience for me and I will cherish these

Talking about Modi Govt>s policies she said, «The 9 years of the central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi have become a shining example of good governance, development and prosperity in the country. The pro people policies of Modi Government have won the hearts of every

countrymen which has been reiterated now by the thumping victory of the BJP in 3 assembly elections.» She further said, «Construction of Sri Kartarpur Sahib Corridor, Punishment to perpetrators of 1984 Riots, FCRA to Sri Harmandir Sahib, Bringing the saroops of Sri

Guru Granth Sahib Ji from Afghanistan to India with full the betterment of the party in respect and honor have been some of the steps taken by the Modi government for the betterment of Sikhs and Punjabi community. Now its the duty of each and every worker of Mahila Morcha to take these and all the other works of Modi government to the common public of Punjab.»

Addressing the meeting Jai Inder Kaur said, «First of all its my pleasure to welcome our National President Vanathi Srinivasan on her maiden visit to Sri Amritsar Sahib. It has been an enlightening experience for us all to get the guidance of Vanathi ji and I assure her that the Punjab Mahila Morcha will work hard for

Talking about Modi Govt>s pro women policies Jai Inder Kaur said, «The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinivam (Women>s Reservation Bill) was a historic move of the central government for the empowerment of women and ensuring inclusive governance at the highest level.

1103 criminals arrested in 653 FIRs in raids by 1309 teams comprising of 7049 policemen under Operation Aakraman'in Haryana



SATISH HANDA

According to Shatrujit Kapoor, Director General Police Haryana, under 'Operation Aakraman' compaign launched in the state against hard core criminals, drug and liquor smugglers and anti-social elements in the state as many as 1309 police teams comprising of 7049 policemen have been successful in arresting 1103 persons against whom 653 cases have been registered against under various sections of IPC including NDPS, Excise and Arms Act. DGP Kapoo said that the campaign against such anti-social elemernts would continue till the state becomes completely crime free. He said that as many as five similar campaigns have been conducted in Haryana state in past years also and this was the sixth campaign launched in the state led by SPs and DSPs in each team that provided satisfactory result.

While talking to media persons DGP Kapoor disclosed that during recent raids police was able to seize 57 arms, 62 cartridges, and two magzines, 4 kg 528 gm ganja, 31.99 gm heroine, over 22 kg doda post, 1415 kg opium, over 53 gm smack, 1.38 gm charas, 2030 intoxicated tablets, capsules and injections, a stolem motorcycle and Rs 65,200 currency notes from arrested accused. DGP said that among those arrested included eight criminals having prize announced by the government for their arrest.

#### Amritsar police bust inter-state arms smuggling racket; one held with 13 pistols

**JAGMOHAN SINGH** 

Commissionerate Police busted an Inter-state arms smuggling racket with the arrest of its one key member from the area of Village Bhaini in Amritsar, said CP Amritsar Gurpreet Singh Bhullar here on Tuesday. Addressing the press

conference here today, Singh said that the arrested person has been identified as Amritpal Singh alias Kallu (28), a resident of village Bhullar in Tarn Taran. The arrested accused has been facing at least eight criminal cases pertaining to the NDPS Act and Hurt in various districts. The police team has also recovered 13, .32 bore pistols along with 24 magazines and two live rounds, apart from impounding his Hyundai I-20 car.

Singh said that acting swiftly on secret information about illegal weapons being smuggled from Madhya Pradesh to supply them to criminal elements in the state, the Police team launched a special operation and apprehended the accused m Village Bhair Police Station Chheharta,

Amritsar "During questioning, the arrested accused disclosed that he used to buy one pistol from Madhya Pradesh for Rs 35,000 and sell it for Rs 50,000 in Punjab," he said, while adding that Police teams were putting all efforts to unearthing the whole network, identify the complete procurement and supply chain across to bust the network.

A case FIR no. 273 dated 10-12-2023 has been registered under Section 25/54/59 of the Arms Act at Police Station Chheharta, Amritsar.

#### First meeting of high-level committee formed by Akal Takht Sahib on the issue of Bandi Singhs held

Meeting to be held soon with Prime Minister Narendra Modi: Dhami **JAGMOHAN SINGH** 

Amritsar

The first meeting of the fivemember high-level committee formed by Sri Akal Takht Sahib to hold talks with the Centre government on the issue of Bhai Balwant Singh Rajoana and other Bandi Singhs (Sikh prisoners) was held on December 9 at the headquarters of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).

The meeting was attended by SGPC President Advocate Harjinder Singh Dhami, Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee President Harmeet Singh Kalka, Rajoana's sister Kamaldeep Kaur Rajoana and senior Akali leader Virsa Singh

After holding serious discussions in the meeting which lasted for more than two hours, speaking to the media, Har-

CIA-1 staff team of Ambala



jinder Singh Dhami said that it has been decided to hold talks with the Centre Government about Bhai Rajoana and other Sikh prisoners. In this regard, a letter is being written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to give time for a meeting with this committee formed by Akal Takht Sahib. He said that in the initial meeting of this committee, it has been decided to negotiate with the Government of India on the issue of Sikh prisoners in a friendly atmosphere and further steps will be taken in this direction.

Dhami said that every step will be taken according to the

valuable suggestions of the committee members and we want the talks with the government to go ahead in a good atmosphere in the case of Sikh prisoners. The SGPC President said that efforts will be continued democratically to ensure the protection of the human rights of Sikh prisoners.

The SGPC President said that this committee is representing Akal Takht Sahib and every member of it has expressed commitment to perform their responsibility with sincerity. Every member has the feeling that the case of Sikh prisoners must reach a conclusion and hopes that it will be successful.

### Punjab police bust drug smuggling racket; four held with 3-kg heroin, 9 lac drug money

**JAGMOHAN SINGH** 

Punjab Police have busted a drug smuggling racket with the arrest of four persons after recovering 3Kg heroin and Rs.9 Lac drug money from their possession, said Commissioner of Police (CP) Amritsar Gurpreet Singh Bhullar here on Tuesday.

Those arrested have been identified as Vikramjeet Singh alias Vicky of Lohgarh in Amritsar, Rashpal Singh of village Hoshiar Nagar in Amritsar,



Singh Colony in Amritsar and Sahil Kumar alias Manthan of Durgiana Abadi in Amritsar. Apart from seizing heroin, Police teams have also impounded their Innova car (PB11ÂX7843),

in which they were going to supply the heroin consignment. Bhullar said that following

reliable inputs Police teams conducted a special police checking in the area of Gol Bagh backside Railway Station Amritsar and arrested all the four accused persons when they were going to deliver the heroin consignment in their Innova car. Bhullar said that the arrested accused Rashpal Singh has already been facing two criminal cases pertaining to theft and NDPS act at Amritsar Rural and Tarn Taran.

### SAD leadership led by Sukhbir Badal initiates Akhand Path at at Sri Akal Takht Sahib to mark 103rd foundation day of the party

SAD leadership led by Sukhbir Badal initiates Akhand Path at at Sri Akal Takht Sahib to the party **JAGMOHAN SINGH** Amritsar

The senior leadership of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) led by its president Sukhbir Singh Badal today initiated Akhand Path at Gurdwara Shaheed Baba Gurbaksh Singh at Sri Akal Takht Sahib here to mark the 103rd foundation day of the party on December 14.

The SAD president along with the senior leadership performed 'joda sewa' by cleaning shoes of devotees besides washing utensils at the 'langar' hall. The leaders also swept the 'Parikrama' of Sri Darbar Sahib on the occasion besides listening to 'kirtan' in the evening.

Sukhbir Badal told media that the entire rank and file of the party as well as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parhandhal Committee (SGPC) would engage in religious service at Sri Darbar Sahib for the next two days to mark the 103rd anniversary of the party which would culminate with the 'bhog' of Sri Akhand Sahib followed by 'kirtan' and 'ardas' on December 14.

Asserting that he was overwhelmed by the response of the party rank and file towards the programme, he said the party had steadfastly performed this duty assiduously for the last 103 years and would continue to do so in the future also. "We will continue to serve the 'quom, (Community) Punjab and Punjabis and stand up against repression in all its forms", Badal added.

#### Two arrested smuggling top brand wine of value Rs 1.5 crore under pesticides stocks by Ambala police **SATISH HANDA**

police on a secret information on Friday late evening sropped a truck at a police barrier near Ghas Mandi T-Point Devinagar near the Toll Plaza on the G.T. Road Ambala City. The truck was bearing registration number HP93-4117carrying stocks of pesticides used in agriculture. During checking police party recovered 40 cases of top brand English wine of value worth Rs 1.5 crore hidden under the consignment of the pesticides, which included 4 cases Signature brand wine, 12 cases 100 Piper Black brand wine, one case 100 Piper Gold brand wine, 10 cases Blender Pride brand wine, 10 cases Teacher brand wine, 6 cases Royal State brand wine, 1 case Blender

Pride Reserve wine along with 1084 cases of pesticides in the vehicle. The consignemt receipt ticide drugs.

According to police information, CIA staff of police arrested two persons in the truck, seized wine stocks and impounded the vehicle. The arrested persons were identified as Mehar Chand a resident of village Basot under Nalagarh police station in Solan district (H.P) originally hailing from Balaji Nagar in Telangana state, whereas Mehar Singh alias Bittu was a resident of Kirat Sahib in Ropar district (Punjab). Information reveals that GR of the consignment was issued by BASF India Limited c/o R.K. Enterprises Malerkotla (Ludhiana) in the name of Suvadeep Agro Service Private Limited, Shamirpet, Hyderabad



### CM has now directed SSP's to embroil SAD social media heads in fake cases – alleges Sukhbir Badal

**JAGMOHAN SINGH** Amritsar

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal today said chief minister Bhagwant Mann had allegedly now directed district police chiefs to embroil SAD social media heads in fake cases

Talking to the media here, the SAD president said "I want to tell Bhagwant Mann that neither the SAD nor its workers will be cowed down by such pressure tactics. The SAD has a long and glorious history of fighting against repression. The more we are repressed, the stronger we bounce back"

Badal said the chief minister had first forced the cyber crime cell to register a frivolous case against party general secretary Parambans Singh Romana who had got relief from court with the latter even observing that the case seemed to be one of political vendetta. He said following this a fraudulent case had also been



legislator Kaur Maiithia which was also stayed by the high

court. "Now the chief minister is trying to silence senior leader Bikram Majithia by issuing summons in a case in which the Punjab Police has failed to present a challan for the last two years". He said such acts would not intimidate the SAD which would continue to expose the chief minister at every available

Detailing the latest pressure tactic of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, Badal said "Now the Punjab CID head has on instructions of the chief minister decided to silence SAD social media voices that are exposing him every day". He said district police chiefs had been

cooked up directed to implicate SAD social media heads in false cases. "This Majitha is condemnable. The more cases are registered against us, the more we will share matters exposing you", Badal told the chief minister adding "I will share the same matter on my own personal account. Register a case against me if you want".

Answering another query, Badal alleged AAP legislators had unleashed a flood of violence and intimidation in the State by resorting to capture cable television operations as well as all sand mining quarrying. "Even the chief minister's wife Dr Gurpreet Kaur is leading such activities in Patiala". He said simultaneously gangsters had become a law unto themselves in Punjab by running flourishing extortion rackets from jail. He said the State police instead of moving against the gangsters and law breakers was busy in providing security to the chief minister and his family including Mann's wife, sister and mother.

### Junior wing students show talent

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI** Chandigarh

Annual function 'Guldasta' for the session 2023 of the junior wing was held with great zeal and enthusiasm at I.S. Dev Samaj Senior Secondary School Sector 21C Chandigarh. A galaxy of dignitaries

graced the function. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Anup Gupta, Mayor UT Chandigarh. Principal. Sabeeha Dhillon Mangat felicitated the worthy Chief Guest. Dr.. Agnese Dhillon - Secretary Managing Committee Dev Samaj Colleges and Incharge Dev Samaj Vidhya Vibhag, Bruno Dhillon, Iqbal Singh Dhillon, Maanvinder Singh Mangat - Chief Administrative Officer - The Dev Samaj, Dr. Richa Sharma, Dr. Meena Chopra, Loveleen Bedi, Sahil Abhi and Lt. Kesu Singh presided as Guests of Honour. Dr. Jaspal Kaur Manager I.S. Dev Samaj School was also present on the occasion.



The cultural extravaganza began by invoking the blessings of Bhagwan Dev Atma, founder of the Dev Samaj through school prayer 'Bhala Chahna'.

The 2 days' extravaganza was beautifully showcased through dazzling dances, couplets, nursery rhymes, 'show and tell' and skits related to the current issues of the society by the students of the junior wing. The students mesmerized the audience with the motivational song 'Hum Honge Kamyab', couplets related to the animal and birds Kingdom. The audience were enthralled by the Gujarati, Lazium and Koli dance presented by the students. The students sensitized the audience through their two impactful plays on 'Swachhta' and 'Jalim Singh'.

### Dev Samaj School's Annual Function 'Guldasta': Jan Aushadhi Kendras scheme to help patientsin in Haryana became sick

SATISH HANDA

Medicines for the treatment of gastric disorders, Blood Pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular ailments and pain management with sales rising about 170 since past somtime were started sold through Jan Aushadhi Kendra all over in Haryana state as a result citizens saved about Rs 20,000 crore in past nine years, The Jan Aushadhi Kendras selling generic drugs at affordable prices have seen their sales rise more than 170 times in last nine years, but the government has no intention of making them available online in the near future. There were three stores opened inside the hospitals in three districts and 86 stores in private sector, of these as many as 58 stores have been closed down in the absence of proper infrastructure

CEO of the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Bureau of India Dhadhich said that



generic medicines to treat such medical disorders gaslketric issues, diabetes, cardiovascular ailments and pain have seen the highest sale at these Jan Aushadhi Kendras under under the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana scheme. The drugs sold at these Kendras are 50% to 90% cheaper in prices than their branded counterparts available at the medical stores. He said, there are plans to increase the number of drugs and surgical equipments

available at these Kendras in the near future and currently the country has 9484 Jan Aushadhi Kendras and there is a proposal to increased to 10,000 with the product basket of about 1800 drugs and 285 surgical items. According to the informa-

tion, there are currently four warehouses under the scheme located at Gurugram, Chennai, Guwahati and Surat, with the central warehouse at Gurugram being the largest among four.

### Prez Murmu, PM Modi, Kharge, Sonia pay tributes to 2001 Parliament attack victims

padi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and CPP chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday paid tributes to the security personnel who died during the 2001 Parliament attack.

The Prime Minister, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Lok Sabha chairman Om Birla, Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Leader of Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien paid floral tributes in the Parliament premises to the fallen security personnel.

President Droupadi Murmu in a post on X, said, "On this day, 22 years ago, the nefarious plan of terrorists to eliminate the top line of political leader-



age our Temple of Democracy everywhere was foiled by the brave security personnel, including the nine forms and who laid down their lives for the motherland. The nation will forever remain in their debt. Their sacrifice will not in a post be allowed to go in vain as we on X said, reiterate today our pledge to



PM Modi



and pay heartfelt tributes to the brave security personnel martyred in the Parliament attack in 2001. Their courage and sacrifice in the face of danger will forever be etched in our nation's memory.' Kharge also in a post on X

said, "We remember the brave personnel who made the suoreme sacrifice while the Parliament was attacked on this day in 2001." "We bow to their indomitable courage and are forever indebted to them. Our thoughts remain with their families. India stands united against terrorism, "he added. Terrorists of the Pakistan-based Lashkare-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed outfits attacked the Parliament complex on December 13, 2001, killing nine people. All five terrorists were gunned down by

### **Quiz-Master, Trinamool Congress's** spokesperson Derek O'Brien suspended from Rajya Sabha for the remaining winter session



**MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA** New Delhi

Quiz Master & Spokesperson of Trinamool Congress, Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien has been suspended for the remaining part of the winter session. This action has been taken against him due to his 'condemnable behaviour' in Rajya Sabha. According to the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, "Derek O'Brien had entered the well of the House and raised slogans there and disrupted the proceedings of the House."

On Wednesday, there was high drama in both houses of parliament on Thursday, December 14, a day after there was a security breach in the Lok Sabha. Opposition parties were asking questions in the House regarding the major lapse in security of the Lok Sabha. Seeing the increasing noise and commotion, the proceedings of the House were adjourned. Other opposition parties including Congress were asking questions as to how there was such a huge negligence in the security of the House. INDIA Alliance demands that Home Minister Amit Shah will answer this question in both the houses.

It is noteworthy that there was a major lapse in the security of Parliament on Wednesday, the black 13 December. In 2001, on the anniversary of the Parliament attack, two people jumped into the floor of the House from the visitor's gallery in the Lok Sabha.

These people carried smoke

stick cannister, sprayed yellow gas and raised slogans. Zero hour was going on when this incident happened inside the House. In the Rajya Sabha on Thursday, opposition members demanded a short-term discussion on the security breach the day before. The Chairman of the Rajya Sabh Jagdeep Dhankar informed the house that he had received 26 notices demanding suspension of business to discuss the security breach but said that he did not find merit in the notices and he rejected all. Both houses were adjourned within an hour of proceedings starting.

When the Rajya Sabha resumed proceedings at noon, a motion was moved by the leader of the house and BJP MP Piyush Goyal against Derek O'Brien. Chairman Dhankar accused TMC MP O'Brien of "gross misconduct" and "gross defiance of the directions of the chair".

Parliament smoke attack case: Hang my son if he has done any 'injustice', says father of accused Manoranjan

Bengaluru- The father of Manoranjan, who was arrested following his smoke canister attack in the Lok Sabha while the proceedings were underway on Wednes-day, said that his son should be hanged if he is done any

Devaraje Gowda said that he condemned the incident. "If he has done any injustice to the society, he is not my son at all. If he is guilty, let him be hanged. We are not connected to any political

party, "he said in Mysuru. "Manoranjan had completed his BE degree and was moving to Bengaluru and New Delhi. Former PM H.D. Deve Gowda had helped my son to get a seat in the en-gineering college, "Devaraje Gowda stated.

Meanwhile, a police team headed by the ACP rank officer has reached the residence of Manoranjan in Vijayanagar locality of Mysuru and is collecting information about him.

Mysuru-Kodagu MP Pratap Simha, from whose office the passes were issued to the accused youth, said that they had sought them to watch the proceedings. Meanwhile, Chief Min-

ister Siddaramaiah, at the assembly session in Belagavi Suvarna Soudha, condemned the development and termed it is a serious security lapse. The issue resulted in heat-

ed arguments between the the Congress and the BJP. Rural Development and

Panchayat Raj, IT and BT Minister Priyank Kharge attacked the BJP, asking what would have happened in case the pass would have been issued by the Congress MP?

"Don't the Members of Parliament have responsibility while issuing passes? Would BJP leaders be quiet? They would have branded us with the label of anti-national.

### PM Modi, Mallikarjun Kharge greet Sharad



Narendra Modi and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday greeted Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) founder Sharad Pawar on his birthday. PM Modi took to X, and said. "My best wishes to Sharad Pawar Ji on his birthday. May he be blessed with a long and healthy life." Kharge in a post on X in Marathi said, "Happy Birthday to Nationalist Congress Party President, former union minister, Sharad Pawar Ji. I wish him good health and long life." Pawar, 83, has served as a chief minister of

NEW DELHI: A day after the BJP announced Mohan Yadav

as the Madhya Pradesh chief

minister designate, Congress

on Tuesday took a dig at the

saffron party, saying there

against him, including large-

scale manipulation in the Uj-

jain masterplan and asked if

this was the Prime Minister

'Narendra Modi's guarantee'

In a post on X, Congress

General Secretary Jairam Ra-

mesh said, "Eight days after

the election results, the BJP

elected the Chief Minister of

Madhva Pradesh, a person

against whom there are many

serious allegations including

large-scale manipulation in

He said, "Out of the 872

acres of land reserved for

Simhastha, the land was

alienated by changing the

land use. Many of his videos

are also viral on social media

the Ujjain masterplan."

for the state.

#### Centre's 'Unrealistic' demands' killing Pawar on his 83rd b'day gaming sector: Priyank Kharge the sector, but is also driving

Karnataka Minister for IT & BT, Priyank Kharge, while flaying the Centre's "Unrealistic demands", sought legitimacy for the gaming industry in the country, saying it could result in a windfall in investments. Kharge comment came after state government passed a bill hiking goods and services tax (GST) on the gaming industry to 28% at the winter session in Belgavi, a move which merely endorsed a levy by the Centre.

Priyank Kharge, Qoting studies on the Indian gaming industry, in a series of comments on X, SAID BE-TWEEN 2020-2023 (during pandemic), the online gam-

MP CM-designate Mohan Yadav,

questions 'Modi's guarantee'



country has a staggering 42.5 crore gamers. He said, "with a market size of 16,428 crore in 2023, Industry estimates suggest it will reach 33,243 crore in a couple of years. The sector directly and indirectly employs ing sector in India registered around one lakh individuals, a 28% growth. He said the with the prospect of expanding

to 2,50,000 job opportunities by 2025", he added.

Lambast the Centre priyank said, "Gaming companies want to be regulated, but the central government is being unrealistic and unreasonable with their demands, which is not only killing employment in

in 2023 alone. "In gaming purchases and deposits contributed Rs 8,370 crore

through UPI transactions and the online real money gaming segment enterprise has a valuation of Rs 1,60,000 crore, The estimated corporate tax and TDS contribution to the exchequer by the real money gaming sector between FY24-28 will be Rs 6,500 -6800 cr, with GST contribution to the exchequer between FY24-28 could be around Rs 76,000

away gamers to Chinese and

European gaming sires where

He said, country has as

many as 1,400 online gam-

ing start-ups and reports sug-

gest 430 crore downloads of

gaming apps were recorded

they are being duped.

### Congress flags allegations against Bhim Army chief slams Mayawati for practising nepotism



Chandra Shekhar, who is seen as a potential contender to don

Kashi Ram laid the foundation of this party on April 14 1984, he had decided to keep family and relatives away from politics to do something in politics selflessly. I will also keep my family away from politics and now she has forgotten her own commitment to the people." Meanwhile, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) national coordinator Akash Anand has called ers to gear up to fight for social justice. Party chief Mayawati had named him her political successor at a national level meeting held

at the state unit office on Sunday. "Party chief Mayawati has entrusted upon me the responsibility of carrying forward the ideology of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram, for the development of Dalits - the exploited and deprived society in the country...I will undertake the responsibility with full devotion and honesty, " Anand said in a post on social

media platform X "The Bahujan Samaj Party is a mission, and we have to take it to every corner of the country. I express my heartfelt gratitude to all workers and supporters. The support of all young friends is very

#### MP Raghav Chadha staunchly opposed bill of appointment of Chief Election **Commissioner in Rajya Sabha**



NEW DELH: Aam Aadmi tioned the BJP, asking if the Party's (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha vehemently opposed the controversial bill related to the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners in parliament on Tuesday. The AAP Rajya Sabha MP stated that the BJP wants to control the Election Commission by introducing this bill. If passed, it will bring the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner along with two additional Election Commissioners completely under the control of the central government, enabling them to choose anyone they wish. MP Raghav Chadha emphasized the importance of a non-partisan Election Commission in the country's democracy. The Election Commission determines when and where elections will take place in the country, the maintenance of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), and where they will be deployed. He mentioned that this bill is not only disrespectful to the Supreme Court but also to Lal Krishna Advani, a founding member of the BJP. L.K Advani had advocated for the formation of a 5-member committee in the Chief Election Commissioner's selection committee, comprising the Prime Minister, opposition leader, Law Minister, and leaders from both the Lok Sabha

withdraw this bill. AAP's Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab, Raghav Chadha staunchly opposed the highly contentious bill related to the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners. The Rajya Sabha MP of the AAP ques-

BJP wants to end non-partisan elections in the country. Does the BJP's government not understand the importance of democracy? Does the BJP not value constitutional institutions? Does the BJP want to make a puppet of every constitutional institution? Does the BJP not respect the decisions of the Supreme Court or understand its importance? These are some questions emerging after reading this bill because this government wants to completely bring the Election Commission of India (ECI) under its control through this bill. They want complete dominance over it. The selection and appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two additional Election Commissioners (ECs) out of the 3 members of the Election Commission will fall into the hands of the government, allowing them to appoint anyone as the Election Commissioner

as they desire.

tioned, "The Election Commission plays an important role in our country's elections. The Election Commission decides whose vote will count, the date and number of phases for elections. The Election Commission determines the management, control, coordination. and usage of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). This Election Commission is a crucial institution for conducting impartial elections in this country. This bill is going to destroy one of the few remaining independent institutions in India i.e. the Election Commission, and thereby dislodge free and fair elections from India.'

MP Raghav Chadha men-

#### house arrest claim of Mehbooba Mufti



Sinha on Monday rubbished claims of former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti that she has been put under house arrest. Sinha released a video statement in which he said that nobody has been put under house arrest in J&K

hbooba's claim of having been put under house as 'spreading rumour'. Earlier, the PDP had said on its official social media page that Mehbooba Mufti had been put under house arrest on the eve of the historic verdict on Article 370 by the 5-judge constitutional bench of the Supreme Court.

# tionable statements." "Is this

Is this 'Modi's guarantee' for Madhya Pradesh?" Ramesh took a swipe at the Prime Minister over his statement of 'Modi

threatening and making objecthe state capital.

**ARABIND MOHAPATRA** 

Bhubaneswar

ki Guarantee'

'Modi's guarantee' for Madhya Pradesh?" Ramesh took a swipe at the Prime Minister over his statement of 'Modi ki Guarantee'. Ramesh also attached a news clipping to back his claims.

The Madhya Pradesh unit of the BJP made Mohan Yadav the next Chief Minister of the state on Monday.

The decision came after the party's legislative meeting in

the mantle of a Dalit leader, has slammed Mayawati's decision to name Akash Anand as her politi-Reminding the BSP chief of

her earlier statement of keeping relatives, brothers and sisters away from politics, Chandra Shekhar , in a series of posts on X, said, Bhim Rao Ambedkar had said, "Earlier, the king was born from the gueen's womb, but now I have made arrangements that the king will no longer be born from the queen's womb, but from the bal-

Chandra Shekhar stated,

Party chief Mayawati has entrusted upon me the responsibility of carrying forward the ideology of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram, for the development of Dalits"

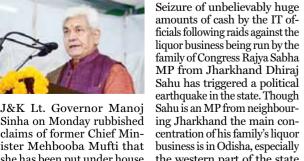
"Speaking in a public meeting, Mayawati had said that when important in this journey.

> early elections in the state. The charge, though, has been trashed by the BJD which describes it as the figment of BJP's

While the BJD has demanded a thorough probe into the issue the Congress insists that the probe has to be impartial to bring out the whole truth. The party has no faith in agencies like ED, CBI or even the income tax department for they all are run by the state government.

which has been in liquor business for a long time, owns the BDPL group which consists of four companies including Boudh Distillery Private Limited which is based in western Odisha's Boudh district and Baldeo Sahu Infra Private Limited which is based in Bolangir. The business is said to have been established by late Rai Saheb Baldeo Sahu, father of Dhiraj Sahu. Today the group has country liquor and IMFL shops all over Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal.

### in which he is seen abusing, J&K L-G rubbishes



The IT officials, who began searches on December 6, are The Lt Governor called Mesaid to have recovered around Rs.350 crore in cash, following raids at several locations in Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal. These are states where the Sahu family has been running its liquor business successfully. The raids lasted around six days with the biggest cash recover-

#### Income Tax Raids trigger political slugfest Bhubaneswar in Odisha where the Sahu family dominates the

This is being described as the biggest cash recovery in the history of the IT department in a single operation. So huge was the recovery that it took nearly 50 bank officials assisted by 40 counting machines to count the seized cash. Sahu family run BDPL group is said to have a virtual monopoly of country liquor manufacturing and marketing business in Odisha with the western part of the state control over 250 country liquor units in the western parts of the where Mahua-based country liquor is extremely popular. state where mahua-based liquor is quite popular.

country liquor trade.

Sources said that raids against the group began on December 6 on the suspicion of tax evasion but the cash recovery was mind-boggling. Though the IT department is vet to come out with a detailed official statement sources said the raids commenced after suspicion was allegedly aroused by the ies being made from Bolangir, group's inconsistent and low net Sambalpur, Sundergarh and



of Balangir town. Recoveries were also made from Sambalpur and Sundargarh, among others. Some of the seized currency notes were covered with mildew as they had obviously been stored for a long time. Several bundles of Rs. 500 denomination notes were found torn in the middle and dumped near the boundary wall of Boudh Distillery Private Limited.

The recovery had triggered the political blame game. While profits. Major cash recoveries the Congress, which has refused



and the seized money would have helped the regional party in the elections.

A senior BJP leader went to the extent of saying that the bulk of the recovered cash was deliberately hidden in a backward district like Bolangir to avoid arousing suspicion. The cash would have been used by the BJD which was planning

imagination.

Sources said Sahu family,

and Rajya Sabha. My demand is that the government should



### Holding rates amid inflation is MPC's balancing act

he recent decision by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to hold the benchmark interest rates steady at 6.5% for the fifth consecutive bi-monthly meeting, despite raising the forecast for full-year GDP growth and acknowledging potential food price shocks, raises questions about the risks of lagging in anchoring inflation expectations. The MPC's move comes amid signs of inflation quickening in November-December, driven by uncertainties in food prices and an unfavourable base effect, potentially derailing the disinflation process. With the likelihood of price gains accelerating in the coming months, coupled with the volatility in oil prices and global financial markets, the risks to price stability remain significant. The RBI's 'Households' Inflation Expectations Survey' from November starkly reflects this, with households anticipating higher inflation rates in the near and medium-term future. The central bank's messaging, however, shows a dissonance. On one hand, the MPC has upgraded its real GDP growth projection for the fiscal year ending in March 2024 to 7%, from 6.5% in October. This optimistic outlook is attributed to robust investment, manufacturing strength, construction buoyancy, and a gradual rural recovery potentially boosting household consumption. On the other hand, the MPC's caution on inflation and the cumulative 250 basis point increase in the benchmark rate since May 2022 suggest a more guarded stance. This paradox is further compounded by the RBI's 'Consumer Confidence Survey', indicating that consumers maintain negative sentiments on both current and future price conditions. High inflation is evidently hampering discretionary spending, as Deputy Governor Michael D. Patra highlighted. This situation underscores a broader challenge: achieving a delicate balance between fostering economic growth and ensuring price stability. As the MPC navigates these complex economic dynamics, its primary task remains clear. Ensuring price stability is crucial; without it, the benefits of GDP growth and employment could be undermined by diminishing purchasing

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(\*RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF NEWS UNDER THE PRB ACT)

### BINOY VISWAM EXPLAINS WHY THE GOVT MUST DISCUSS CLEAN AIR FIGHT IN PARLIAMENT'S WINTER SESSION

### No more hot air about air pollution

and his colleagues in the Bharatiya Janata Party must have forgotten what they have said about the menace of air pollution in their manifesto for the 2014 elections. To brush up their memory, here is a quote from page 36 of the said manifesto: "The present generation has to make this world a better place to live. A better place not only for us, but for our future generations as well. We have

ndia's Prime Minister Narendra Modi

to nurture the environment, institutions, people, resources and amenities... We will take Climate Change mitigation initiatives with all seriousness and work with the global community and institutions in this regard. We will: (do) Ecological Audit of projects and pollution indexing of cities and townships will be done on a scientific basis. Pollution control mechanisms will be set up on priority basis"

After ruling for five years, in the election in 2019, the BJP proclaimed its pollution control commitment in the following words, in Point 21 of the 2019 manifesto: "We have evolved technologically better strategies and devices to map the level of pollution in cities and rivers and have taken effective steps to reduce the level of pollution in major cities, including the national capital. We will convene the National Clean Air Plan into a Mission and we will focus on 102 most polluted cities in the country. Through concerted action, we will reduce the level of pollution in each of the mission cities by at least 35% over the next years." Living in Delhi and breathing its polluted air, they should have understood by now that the promises

still remain the same — as only promises. In the million-plus (population) cities where the National Clean Air Programme is supposed to have done miracles, people still experience tortured breathing in the aftermath of profit-motivated growth for which the BJP is full of self-praise. When



IQAir released the World Air Quality Report 2022, 39 Indian cities were named in the list of the 50 most polluted cities in the world. The report said that air pollution is the second biggest risk factor for disease in India. In 2019, a Lancet study found that nearly 1.6 million deaths in India could be attributed to air pollution, comprising 18% of the total deaths in the country.

#### Disease burden

India's air pollution is solely responsible for the highest number of respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (50% of all cases in the world are in India), asthma (13% of global burden is in India) and rising cases of cancer and stroke throughout the country

The result is that people in these cities have a reduced life expectancy, of nine years, at the present stage. Even the World Economic Forum reports that the cost India pays in terms of air pollution is Rs 7.91 lakh crore annually.

While the National Clean Air Programme that BJP promised in its manifesto was officially launched in 2019, comprising 131 most polluted cities, due to the utter

negligence of the government, the programme has ended up being a non-starter. When the G-20 was hosted by India with fanfare, the Modi government boasted that India, the 'Vishwaguru', was ahead in every developmental yardstick. But the reality is evident to all: the pathetic living conditions of our people. The adapted safety standards of the World Health Organization have said that the annual average concentrations of PM2.5 should not exceed

5 ug/m3. As India is nowhere near the safety zone, the people are helpless victims of the pollution crisis.

Lured by power and guided by corporate greed, the party in power has never cared to revisit the promises made to the people. Let the country have a look at the amendments made by the Modi government in the forest and environment-related legislations. They were all meant for the destruction of forests and environment: not for their protection. The Great Nicobar Development Plan is an assault on the richness of the biodiverse abundance of the islands, with a disastrous impact on the air, water and environment conditions of India as a whole. The Central Vista project of the BJP government, which has been boasted about lot, has caused unimaginable damage to the air of the capital. The Rs 20,000-crore project has resulted in the loss of tens of thousands of trees in Lutyens' Delhi. To ensure the Central Vista Project, the government blatantly disregarded building laws in the country and found shelter in the outdated Government Buildings Act of 1899! Pollution from the indiscriminate demolitions (recently, 80,000 tonnes of debris were heaped in Noida) and carbon

number of vehicles (over 3.38 million private cars in 2021 in Delhi) cannot be ignored. Yet, discussions on air pollution by the government and the political forces behind it always revolve around stubble burning and 'irresponsible' farmers.

This greed of the capital along with its market-controlled path of development at the expense of people, brings to memory what Karl Marx wrote in the first chapter of the Communist Manifesto in 1848. He characterised the bourgeois government as the "executive committee for managing the general affairs of the capitalists". That statement remains true in the era of LPG, i.e., Liberalisation, Privatisation, and Globalisation

#### Practices worth examining

The existing and alarming situation of air pollution in the country warrants an urgent proactive plan on the part of the government to protect life expectancy. The government should understand that people and their lives are of paramount importance; not the profits of the government cronies. If the government is serious, it should find the time to discuss in the winter session of Parliament the severe crisis caused by the frightening rate of air pollution. There are various worthy practices worth emulating such as "wind path forests" in different countries and India's own concept of "Social Forestry". This is the time to act, and to give hope to the people. The Prime Minister should convene an all-party meeting urgently to set the ground for India's fight for ensuring safe air and environment.

Binoy Viswam, a Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament, is a member of the CPI National Secretariat. He has been nominated as Secretary of the CPI's State Committee. Views are personal.

NISSIM MANNATHUKKAREN SAYS WESTERN COMPLICITY IN PALESTINIAN PLIGHT STEMS FROM COLONIAL, IMPERIAL ROOTS

### The hypocrisy of Western democracy



ith a staggering 17,000 Gazans already killed since October 7, Palestine is seeing one of its greatest tragedies. The West has shockingly enabled this in various ways: it has supported Israel's "right to defend' by reducing Palestine to Hamas; conflated critiques of Zionism and the Israeli state with anti-Semitism; weaponised the Holocaust; and attempted to erase history (the White House described Hamas' attack as "unprovoked").

Western societies that profess democracy have also scotched their own people's freedom of expression — not with official diktats but by demonising and targeting citizens speaking in support of Palestine. Western universities have become the major ground for this. In Ivy League instit Harvard and Columbia, the private details of students who signed pro-Palestine letters have been made public. Prominent Jewish donors (and supporters of the Israeli state) have withdrawn funding from universities including Harvard and Pennsylvania alleging inaction against anti-Semitism and anti-Israel speeches on campuses (note: 45% of Harvard's revenue of \$5.8 billion in 2022 came from philanthropy). University administrations in North America put out official statements condemning only Hamas. And scholars working on Palestinian freedom have faced various unwritten codes of harassment.

The media has been key in framing the Palestine-Israel conflict for Western citizens for 75 years. The fundamental problem here, with a few honourable exceptions,



has been the overwhelming bias towards Israel. As 1,200 academics and educators from North America noted in a recent open well as the illegality of Israeli occupation in international law are not discussed. Words such as apartheid, ethnic cleansing, genocidal intent, settler colonialism — used by scholars, human rights organisations such as Human Rights Watch, prominent Israeli rights group B'Tselem, and the United Nations, to describe Israeli actions — go missing

The liberal face of institutions like Hollywood now stands exposed. The initial lack of response to the Hamas attack by unions such as the Writers Guild of America led to a backlash. Then, about 700 people from the entertainment industry signed an open letter declaring their support for Israel. On the other hand, pro-Palestinian voices chose to remain anonymous in their letters to avoid being doxxed or blacklisted as anti-Semitic. Some actors, artist agents, and magazine editors have had to face professional consequences

The most egregious actions have taken place in Europe, the supposed bastion of free speech. Countries including the U.K., France, Germany, and Italy emphatically declared their support for Israel and imoosed various kinds of bans (some of them blanket) on pro-Palestinian protests. Austria, for instance, banned a pro-Palestinian demonstration citing the inclusion of the phrase "from the River to the Sea" in invitations, as a justification. Ironically, this is the same "free" Europe where blasphemy laws are abolished (Denmark, Sweden) and caricatures of religion are allowed (France) and have led to burnings of the Koran and

There is no denying that there are inflammatory positions, fake news articles, and also celebration of brutality on both sides of the divide, all of which are not conducive to reasoned debates. If incidents of racism towards Palestinians/Arabs have increased, so has anti-Semitism.

But the root cause of Western complicity in Palestinian oppression lies in colonialism and imperialism, which is masked by the facade of liberal democracy. Democracy has seemingly thrived in the West, which has perpetuated colonialism and imperialism elsewhere. But even those democratic freedoms at home seem under threat now.

#### An exposé

The way out of the complicity in Israel's colonisation of Palestine can only be through an exposé of the hypocrisies of Western democracy. This has been undertaken by those on the margins of this democracy. For instance, the Canadian governmentappointed National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was forced to acknowledge that the Canadian state has perpetrated genocide against the Indigenous people. There is resistance to the war in Palestine, not just by Arabs and Palestinians but also by Jewish dissenters. The horrors unfolding in Gaza are also changing opinions. Mainstream Western media has given more space to Palestinian stories this time, even if they are not enough. In recent U.S. opinion polls, almost 70% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters under 35 years disapproved of President Joe

As the Israeli carnage in Gaza resumes, the West has to listen to people such as Israel-born Omer Bartov, one of the world's foremost Holocaust scholars, who, while rightly expressing empathy with the Jewish victims of Hamas' heinous war crimes, warned of genocide and asked leaders and scholars "to publicly warn against the rageand vengeance-filled [Israeli] rhetoric that dehumanises the population of Gaza...'

As another Holocaust scholar Raz Segal asserted, "No justice is possible... without a truthful reckoning of how we got here." The West must acknowledge its own monstrous role in getting Palestine to this precipice.

Nissim Mannathukkaren is Professor, Dalhousie University, Canada, and posts @ nmannathukkaren. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

### New book helps in navigating the complexities of modern life



the self-help Mandeep S.

Jalota's debut book, "Reset Your Mind, Body, and Spirit," stands as a compelling testament to the resilience of the human spirit. Jalota, who serves as the Joint Commissioner, GST, in Mumbai, brings a deeply personal touch to his writing, drawing from his own battle with depression. This authenticity lends the book a powerful credibility, making it not just a guide but a companion for those seeking solace in turbulent times.

At the heart of Jalota's message is the belief that our mental anguish – be it anxiety, sadness, or depression – is often rooted in our patterns of thought. He contends that obsessing over past negatives, fretting about

trap of constant comparison are key contributors to a disturbed mental state. His insights here are particularly striking, resonating with a contemporary audience that is often caught in these exact mental loops.

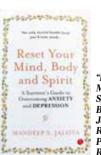
"Reset Your Mind, Body, and Spirit" goes beyond mere diagnosis, offering actionable advice on maintaining mental, physical, and emotional wellness. Jalota emphasizes the insidious nature of stress, which, borne out of daily uncertainties, can spiral into depression if left unchecked. His perspective on the mind's power to create personal hells or heavens is thought-provoking, highlighting the significant role our mental state

plays in our overall well-being. One of the book's strengths is its holistic approach. Jalota doesn't just focus on the mind; he stresses the importance of a healthy body in fostering a healthy mind. Disciplined living - en-

the future, and falling into the **Jalota emphasizes** the insidious nature of stress, which, borne out of daily uncertainties, can spiral into depression if left unchecked

> compassing nutritious eating, adequate sleep, and regular exercise - is championed as a bulwark against stress and disease. The author's practical tips here are grounded in simplicity, steering lear of overcomplication.

Jalota's exploration of happiness is another highlight. He delves into the subjective nature of happiness and how our internal dialogues and worries about past and future events can influence our mental health. His argument that a self-motivated person, armed with a clear vision and



"Reset Your Mind, Body, and Spirit' By Mandeep S. Rupa Publication

positivity, is better positioned to achieve their goals is particularly motivating.

The book also addresses the impact of mental health on physical wellness. Jalota makes a compelling case that mental disturbances can manifest as physical ailments and that positive thinking, coupled with a disciplined lifestyle, can act as a preventive measure. This mind-body connection is a recurring theme, underscoring the book's holistic ethos.

For parents, "Reset Your Mind, Body, and Spirit" offers sage advice on child-rearing. Jalota underscores the importance of instilling positive values in children to ensure their future well-being and mental health. This focus on early intervention is a vital inclusion, broadening the book's

appeal and relevance.

A significant portion of the book is devoted to navigating life's latter stages. Jalota's perspective on old age is refreshingly optimistic. He argues that the elderly, often unburdened by the attachments and worries that define younger years, are in a unique position to live life fully for themselves. His encouragement to embrace every moment with positivity is both uplifting and grounding.

The book's relevance in today's stress-filled, materialistically driven world cannot be overstated. Jalota's emphasis on living a balanced life, amidst constant challenges, is a timely reminder of the need for personal well-being in the face of relentless societal pressures.

In conclusion, "Reset Your Mind, Body, and Spirit" is more than just a self-help book; it is a guide to living a fulfilling life. Mandeep S. Jalota's personal journey, combined with his insightful observations and practical advice, makes this book a valuable resource for anyone looking to navigate the complexities of modern life. It's a book that doesn't just aim to reset your state of being; it aims to transform it.

### Repos Energy and Cummins India Limited Collaborate MSME Sector Struggles To Regain to Redefine Fuel Management, Unveil DATUM

Bengaluru

In a ground-breaking collaboration, Repos Energy, a pioneer in the Doorstep Fuel Delivery industry, and Cummins India Limited, a leading power solutions technology provider, have partnered to revolutionise fuel management in India with DATUM X (Data Automated Teller Ultimate Machine). As a part of this collaboration, Cummins India Limited will market and distribute Repos Energy's DATUM X range of products through its vast distribution network across the country. The association was announced at "CII EXCON 2023" held at the

Founded by Aditi Bhosale Walunj and Chetan Walunj, and co-founded by Aparajit Subramanian, Repos Energy is on a mission to make all forms of energy available at the doorsteps

ARUN KUMAR RAO

Scania Commercial Vehicles

Pvt. Ltd. Unveiled G500 8x4

Super Heavy Tipper, a ground-

breaking addition to its fleet of

mining tippers at EXCON 2023

in Bengaluru, this powerful and

eco-friendly truck sets a new

standard for the mining and

transport sector. Engineered

to meet the toughest emission

standards globally, the G500

Super boasts a low-emission,

biodiesel/FAME-compatible

engine in the 500-horsepower

range, making it the epitome of

fuel efficiency. Demonstrating

its global efficacy, achieving a

notable 8% fuel savings, Scania's

Super engine takes the lead in

NEW DELHI: The Open Net-

work for Digital Commerce

(ONDC), has partnered with

the Ministry of Micro, Small and

Medium Enterprises to onboard

MSMEs onto the network via

existing seller applications, said

Minister of State, Ministry of

the MSME ministry through

the National Small Industries

Corporation (NSIC), serves as

a Business-to-Business (B2B)

platform facilitating market

ONDC is also working to

integrate MSME-Mart, which

has more than 2 lakh MSMEs,

It accomplishes this by of-

fering a digital showcase for

MSMEs to present their prod-

ucts and services, facilitating

seamless connections between

buyers and suppliers.

access for MSMEs.

he added.

Commerce, Som Parkash.

Bengaluru

Bengaluru International Exhibi-

novations. DATUM X, Repos Energy's patented technology invention, offers an unmatched suite of features catering to the evolving needs of businesses reliant on diesel applications. With a relentless focus on enhancing operational efficiency and safety, Repos' DATUM X introduces a transformative approach to fuel procurement. It is an intelligent diesel storage and management machine for DG Set Consumers, offering Fuel Level Tracking, Digital Dashboards, and Safe Fuel Storage at their site. Currently, customers face

multiple challenges while managing their fuel operations including cumbersome procurement processes, fuel pilferage and adulteration, high dead-mileage operations, and unbalanced diesel inventory. Managing fuel requirements for multiple sites through conventional and manual processes locks working capital, of end consumers by bridging contributing to a higher Total the gap between supply and Cost of Ownership (TCO) and

Scania Unveils Cutting-Edge G 500

addressing the industry's dual

challenge of emission reduction

and profitability. Scania Super

is also a proud winner of the

prestigious Green Truck Award

The G500 Super powered by

XT promises a SUPER Horse-

power with the highest torque

offering on the market, a highly

efficient New G33 Heavy-duty

Gearbox, a robust 395L steel

Fuel tank with Fuel optimiza-

tion unit, a New chassis compo-

sition generation, 40% Stronger

ONDC Collaborates With MSME Mart, 2 Lakh MSMEs Onboarded: MoS Som Parkash

for the year 2022.

Super Truck at EXCON 2023



lower profitability, DATUM addresses these customer challenges by offering a solution that enhances the visibility into the downstream diesel value chain, driving cost and operational efficiency for its users.

Aditi Bhosale Walunj, Founder, Repos Energy, highlighted the partnership's potential to catalyse a fuel distribution transformation, stating, "We are excited to collaborate with Cummins India Limited to offer the DATUM range of products to consumers across the country. This tech-enabled tool will en-

power train, robustness specifically developed for Mining, and

higher safety margins on criti-

cal components. With superior

drive-ability and outstanding

technical hardiness, the G500

Super ensures it conquers the

operational challenges of the

Johan P Schlyter, Managing

Director of Scania Commercial

Vehicles India., expressed his ex-

citement about the G500 Super.

stating, "This launch signifies

a new era in Mining, combin-

ing cutting-edge technology,

unmatched performance, and

eco-friendly design. The G 500

Super is not just a vehicle; it's a

revolution, redefining standards

and setting new benchmarks in

food and beverage (F&B) sell-

ers are present on ONDC and

overall, more than 2.3 Lakh

sellers and service providers

including small, medium and

large enterprises, as reported

Parkash noted that ONDC

has implemented several mea-

sures to enhance awareness,

adoption, and training for small

businesses aiming to leverage

ext decade

able end consumers to avail fuel delivery at their desired location with just a click on their phone. It will not only improve easy fuel accessibility for consum-

ers but also help in structuring

and organising the fuel delivery

industry. Chetan Walunj, Founder, Repos Energy, added "With Cummins India Limited onboard, our intent to take this solution across industries and geographies is only bolstered. We are thrilled to partner with the team, and we are confident that this will be a huge step forward towards

**NEWDELHI**: Total 3,16,05,581

MSMEs have been registered

since 1 July, 2020 to 4 December,

2023 as per Udyam Registration

Portal, informed MoS for MSME,

Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma in a

written reply to the Rajya Sabha

on Monday. This total number

includes informal micro enter-

prises registered on Udyam Assist

From this the total number of

 $women\ owned\ MSMEs\ registered$ 

during that period across India

was 1,17,36,406, said the MoS.

achieving our mission to make energy available at the doorsteps of end consumers by bridging the gap between supply and demand using tech-enabled DATUM leverages sensors

and digital technologies to pro-

vide real-time updates on fuel inventory and consumption across multiple installations. The safe and certified smart fuel storage solution enables remote monitoring of fuel levels, sends alerts when fuel level is low and facilitates 24x7 doorstep delivery of diesel thereby enhancing the efficiency of operations while reducing its carbon footprint. The entire process from fuel ordering to payment and invoicing is digital. The customer benefits from reduced fuel procurement costs, improved management of diesel inventory, higher asset utilisation and assurance of quality and quantity of fuel consumed. This has shown a direct reduction of up to 10% in fuel costs, coupled with a significant improvement in operational uptime.

Further in the reply, he gave a brief

information about the steps taken

by the ministry in ensuring growth

of the MSME sector and the ex-

penditure incurred. For non-tax

benefits the government extended

it for 3 years in case of an upward

change in status of MSMEs w.e.f.

18 October, 2022. The Ministry

also launched the Udyam Assist

Platform on 11 January, 2023 to

bring Informal Micro Enterprises

under the formal ambit for avail-

ing the benefits under Priority

Sector Lending, he said.

### Pre-Pandemic Momentum

**NEW DELHI:** The share of stantial USD Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021-22 was 29 per cent, reflecting a decline from the sector's pre-pandemic highs, attributed to the lingering impact of COVID-19.

Data presented in Parliament on Monday revealed that the contribution of MSMEs to India's gross value added, a measure of the country's total output, reached 31 per cent in 2018-19 but subsequently witnessed a decline during the pandemic years.

While India's overall exports witnessed a 44 per cent increase from USD 313 billion in FY20 to USD 450 billion in FY23, the contribution of MSMEs to this growth re-

mained subdued Despite achieving a sub-

MSMEs share in India's total exports fell to a concerning five-year low of 44 per cent.

Meanwhile.

the closure of over 13,000 MSMEs in FY23, representing the highest number in the past four years, contradicts the government's targets for the sector's contribution to GDP and exports.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari announced in 2020 the government's aim to substantially enhance the MSME sector's contribution to the GDP, targeting an increase from 30 per cent to 50 per cent, and to its export share, aiming for a rise from 49 per cent to 60 per cent, within a five-year timeframe.

Over 123 million individuals have found employment in the sector since 2020-21, with Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, and Telangana leading the way in

### **BEL receives orders worth Rs 4878 crores**

**ARUNKUMAR RAO** 

Bengaluru

Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has received an order of Rs. 4,522 Crore from Indian Army for the supply of Fuses for various calibres. This contract has been signed on December 15, 2023, by Maj Gen Gurpreet Singh Choudhry, SM, VSM [JS (Army & TA)/DMA] & Bhanu Prakash Srivastava, CMD, BEL, in the presence of Vice Admiral Atul Anand, AVSM, VSM, Additional Secretary (DMA). Indigenisation of critical technologies was the key requirement of the tender, press statement from

This project will have December 2023 and the year 2023-24.



Electronics and associated Industries, including MSMEs which are sub-vendors of BEL. The equipment manufactured by BEL are part of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' programme.

The company has also received additional orders cumulatively received orders worth Rs 356 Crores since the last disclosure on 6th

said orders pertain to other products like EW (Electronic Warfare) Testers, Medical Systems (Exports), Consumables and Batteries for **Electronic Voting Machines** (EVMs), Night Vision Devices Spares and Services.

With the above, BEL has worth Rs.2,3176 Crores (excl. taxes) in the current financial

### Veson Nautical extends data analytics and collaboration capabilities with acquisition of Shipfix

**Veson Nautical will** strengthen its unique data position, Al expertise, and ability to optimize workflow across the value chain, while integrating internal and external communication tools to the IMOS Platform, which furthers its vision to be the standard platform that propels maritime commerce

**BOSTON:** Veson Nautical (Veson), the global leader of maritime freight management its acquisition of Shipfix, the collaborative data platform for the maritime and trade sectors driven by advanced AI-enabled tools. As Veson's second acquisition this year, Shipfix will further Veson's pursuit to deliver quality, contextual data to the industry. Veson will continue to offer Shipfix's suite of maritime solutions and bring the full

Shipfix team onboard. Shipfix was founded in 2018 to solve the email overload challenge encountered by chartering desks. By developing innovative products and groundbreaking AI-enabled tools, Shipfix provides a unique data platform allowing trade professionals to make smarter decisions and ultimately trade smarter and faster. Their product suite has expanded beyond front-line trading and chartering into operations teams and physical trading. Shipfix supports dry and tanker clients alongside other customers

interested in freight market ing and other Construction insights. Shared clients will see the tion of critical industry reference data.

solutions, today announced contextual data across vessel specifications, ownership structures, commodities, trade flows, and tonnage flows, all in one place. I am thrilled to officially welcome Shipfix's expert team to Veson as we add their market-validated and accepted chartering and operations platform to our

> Antoine Grisay, Co-founder and Co-CEO at Shipfix said: Together with Veson Nautical, we will deliver the ultimate integrated workflow and data experience shipping and trading companies have demanded for over a decade. We are very excited to start executing on the synergies between the companies. Our combined expertise will allow us to build a set of trading and operating insights that meet the increasingly sophisticated requirements of freight market participants."

suite of solutions.

Serge Allevne, Co-founder and Co-CEO at Shipfix, said: "When Antoine and I founded Shipfix five years ago, our vision was to emerge as the ultimate solution for the maritime and trade community, commencing with an AI-powered collaboration platform and a suite of data insights products. Today, as Shipfix joins forces with Veson Nautical, it presents a unique opportunity for us to truly become the premier maritime platform, integrating best-inclass maritime expertise, data insights, and communication workflows from pre to post-fixtures. This union aims to maximise our clients' efficiency and operations in ways never seen before. It's the perfect match for us, leveraging extraordinary data and workflow synergies to accelerate our growth and consistently deliver maximum value for the entire shipping

industry. About Veson Nautical -Veson Nautical delivers maritime



MSME Registrations At Udyam Portal Cross 3 Crore Mark

lated to the MSME sector has a total contribution of 45.56 per cent in all India exports as of September in the current financial year, informed the MoS MSME Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Importantly, India's overservices combined) in April-September 2023 exhibited a negative growth of 2.97 per cent over April-September

period last year the exports amounted to USD 387.8 billion vis-a-vis USD 376.29 billion till September in the current fiscal, data from the commerce ministry showed.

been declining year-on-year



even as the country's overall dise and services grew by an estimated 13.84 per cent

From 49.77 per cent in FY20, the share of MSME-

During the six-month

The share of export of MSME-specified products in all India exports has also



related products dropped to 49.35 per cent in FY21 and 45.03 per cent in FY22. It further declined to 43.59 per cent in FY23 while the value of MSME exports had increased to USD 190 billion in FY22 from USD 143.9 billion in FY21 and USD 54.8 billion

2021, the primary objective

of the eShram portal is to es-

tablish a database for unor-

ganised workers, facilitating

the delivery of Social Security

and welfare schemes to this

Key features include Aad-

haar-seeded registration,

capturing family details of

migrant workers, and sharing

construction workers' data

with states/UTs for Build-

Workers (BoCW) board reg-

vital workforce.

#### **Young Employees** Account For 47.76% Of **New Registration Under** ESI Scheme In Oct

**NEW DELHI:** The provisional payroll data of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) revealed on Friday that 17.28 lakh new employees have been added in the month of October, 2023. During the same month around 23,468 new establishments have been registered and brought under the social security umbrella of the Employees State Insurance Corporation, thus ensuring more coverage.

According to the data presented by the Ministry of Labour & Employment, more jobs have been generated for the youth.

As out of the total 17.28 lakh employees added during the month of October 2023, 8.25 lakh employees up to the age group of 25 years constitute the majority of new registrations which is 47.76 per cent of the total employees. Genderwise analysis of payroll data indicates that net enrollment of female members has been 3.31 lakh in October, 2023. The data shows that a total of 51 transgender employees have also got registered under ESI Scheme in the month of October, 2023.

### Over 29 Cr Workers Secure eShram Cards Through Portal Registration

In a written reply to a ques-

tion in the Rajya Sabha, Parkash

stated that ONDC is currently

collaborating proactively with

industry associations such as

the National Restaurant As-

sociation of India (NRAI) and

the Federation of Hotel & Res-

taurant Associations of India

(FHRAI), to bring restaurants

onto the network using different

Currently, over 59,000 ONDC's benefits.

food aggregators.

of Labour and Employment has issued eShram cards to over 29.20 crore unorganised workers registered on the eShram portal, informed Union MoS Labour and Employment, Rameshwar Teli, in a written reply in the Lok Sabha on Monday

He highlighted the registration numbers and widespread participation in the initiative, as of December 4, 2023.

to register across 400 occu- creating a comprehensive



The portal allows workers pations in 30 broad sectors, national database. Launched on August 26,

#### **Govt Pushes Industrial Policy After Elections to Take Fresh Look**

NEW DELHI: The central government has put the proposed industrial policy on the back burner and decided to work on changes possibly after the general elections of 2024, reported Mint. This will make the wait for India's new industrial policy a bit longer than anticipated, sources told Mint.

Government plans to take a fresh perspective at a range of matters such as global supply chain shifts, greater urgency on the green agenda, and geopolitical developments, two

people aware of the matter told Mint. In 2022, the Union Commerce Ministry had circulated the draft of Industrial Policy 2022 - Make in India for the world, aimed to replace the 1991 policy. The proposed document aimed to address challenges faced by the industry through policy measures to foster and create an innovative and competitive ecosystem.

"As far as the proposed new industrial policy goes, it is currently on the back burner," an official told Mint.

#### **Agri Product Value Addition Set to Propel Economy and Job Growth**

Value addition to agricultural products and the incorporation of local cuisine in ready-to-eat forms could significantly broaden the product's reach, Sanjay Kumar, Chairman, Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board said on Speaking at the 37th Foundation Day of the ICAR-Indian Institute of Soybean Research, Kumar highlighted the significance of innovation and modernization in agriculture for fostering economic growth and generating job opportunities.

food sector is experiencing an

istration.

annual growth rate of 8 per cent, with expectations of even higher expansion in the future, attributed to the growing inclination of consumers toward healthier options in the packaged food The ready-to-eat packaged segment, he said.

combined impact of Veson Nautical and Shipfix as Shipfix's pre-fixture data and insight capabilities are combined with Veson's existing end-toend workflows to produce an unmatched freight trading and operations solution for the market. In addition, the data intelligence offerings from both Veson Nautical and Shipfix will become stronger through the consolidation, rationalization, and standardiza-

John Veson, Co-founder and CEO at Veson Nautical, said: 'A massive amount of data goes into pre-fixture decisionmaking. We're fortunate to have a growing integrated dataset that helps clients leverage



freight management solutions that propel the global shipping economy. Trusted by buyers and sellers of bulk marine freight in every region of the world, Veson solutions are responsible for managing \$109 billion in freight traded and moving 4.4 billion tons in

annual trade each year. With a suite of offerings in marine freight trading and operations, vessel documentation, and data and analytics, Veson's products are widely recognized for their strong utility, sustained innovation, and measurable business impact.

Veson is a champion of progress that actively supports its clients, partners, and broader community in navigating change while shaping the best practice workflows and standards of tomorrow's connected maritime shipping ecosystem. Veson.com

About Shipfix-Shipfix is a collaborative workflow and data platform for the maritime and trade sectors, driven by ground-breaking AI-enabled tools. Shipfix went live in 2018 and has over a thousand users globally across more than 70 global clients. The platform streamlines maritime workflows using market and operational intelligence with a focus on shipowners, commodity traders, industrials, freight forwarders and shipbrokers. The company has 4 offices globally in Paris, London, Singapore and Tbilisi Georgia).

With Shipfix, maritime and trade professionals make betterinformed decisions and move faster. Users are enabled to find their market edge in highly volatile markets by turning their communications data into a competitive advantage. Shipfix is pioneering data transformation across the industry by enabling a subtle mix of artificial and human intelligence.

# Indian Economy to Grow at 7.5-8% in FY24: FICCI

economy is expected to grow by 7.5 per cent to 8 per cent in the current fiscal year Anish Shah, President, the Federation Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), said on Monday.

During an interview with PTI. Shah said that due to strong growth momentum, positive sentiments, and increase in private investments, the economy will grow by 8 per cent in the next fiscal year (2024-25) as well. The FICCI President cautioned that geopolitical factors could be a concern for India's growth

"We have seen great growth numbers so far at 7.8 per cent, 7.6 per cent. I expect that to continue because we have got

**Gurugram, Noida Operating** 

**NEW DELHI:** Different parts

of India are operating at vari-

ous levels of world economies.

such as people in Noida and

Gurugram are operating in first-

world economy level, said for-

mer RBI Governor Raghuram

Rajan who is the Katherine

Dusk Miller Distinguished

Service Professor of Finance at

Chicago Booth, said that while

the Indian economy is largely

playing catch-up, many parts

of the economy are operating

at "first-world" levels, but many

are worse even than third-world.

Akash Banerjee's The Desh-

bhakt channel podcast, he said,

"Parts of the Indian economy

are first world, "further adding,

"People in Noida or Gurgaon

are essentially operating in

a first-world economy." He

worse than third-world or sub-

Considering our growth, he

said India will become a USD

10,000 per capita economy

by 2047, which is still USD

3,000 behind China. "Our cur-

rent per capita is around USD

Saharan Africa

the current growt

Speaking at YouTuber

In First-World Economy:

Raghuram Rajan



strong momentum. We are seeing 
The growth rate for the first half multiple companies investing, adding capacities, something that Mahindra group has done as well," he said. Notably, the Indian economy logged a growth rate of 7.8 per cent in the first quarter of FY24, and 7.6 per cent in the quarter ended September 2023.

of the current fiscal year came out to be 7.7 per cent.

Regarding the economy's pressure points, Shah said the main pressure points remained outside India

"We are seeing stress with regard to Israel and Gaza, added to Our hope is that it does not expand or accelerate any further from there," he stated.

Shah stated that the government needs to maintain the growth momentum to deal with the issues arising globally.

Expressing his views about the RBI's decision to keep interest rates unchanged for the fifth consecutive time, the he said, One needs to give lot of credit to RBI for being pro-active, because they have acted early. That has helped. More important factor is to have inflation under control, than to reduce rates. It has worked so far. I would rely on the experts of the RBI to manage the economy which they have done very well so far.'

#### **RBI Aims to Strengthen Digital Infrastructure with Cloud Storage Services**

creasing volume of data. Many

of them are utilising various

public and private cloud fa-

cilities for this purpose. The

Reserve Bank is working on

establishing a cloud facility for

**NEWDELHI**: Former Gov-

ernor of the Reserve Bank of

India Raghuram Rajan Tues-

day warned states that opting

for the old pension scheme

over the new would ultimately

Delhi launch of the book

Breaking the Mould: Rei-

magining India's Economic

Future, co-authored by him

and economist Rohit Lamba.

chief also spoke about the

larger trend of political parties

competing with each other to

offer non-targeted cash trans-

fers and other financial incen-

"Direct benefit transfers,

when targeted, can help those

at the very bottom," Rajan said,

in response to a question from

the moderator about states

increasingly opting for cash

transfers. "They can help feed

children, and send them to

transfers are untargeted and

there's competition between

parties over how much to

give," he added. "A no-go area

is switching from the New Pen-

sion Scheme (NPS) to the Old

Pension Scheme (OPS). This

will only bankrupt the govern-

So far, five states — Rajast-

han, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand,

Punjab and Himachal Pradesh

have reverted to the OPS.

ken, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh

Governments have re-

cently changed in Rajasthan

and Chhattisgarh, where the

BJP stomped to power in the

recently-concluded Assembly

While there has been no of-

ficial announcement yet, it is

expected that the new govern-

ments will restore the NPS as

that has been the stand of the

The main difference be-

tween the NPS and OPS is

how the pension payable to re-

tired civil servants is financed.

BJP at the Centre and in the

states it governs.

elections.

and Himachal were led by the

ment down the line."

"The problem is when these

tives to woo voters.

The former central bank

Rajan was speaking at the

cripple their finances.

tory policies.

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is working on setting up a cloud facility for India's financial sector to enhance its security, integrity and privacy.

The service, which will be developed by a subsidiary of the central bank, will directly compete with similar services offered by American companies like Amazon, Google and Microsoft.

The central bank is taking the similar approach as it has done with setting up 'digital public infrastructure' (DPI).

There the underlying technology is built by the government, and is later outsourced to the private sector for developing various applications. The biometric identity pro-

gramme Aadhaar and United Payments Interface (UPI) are key examples of DPI. "Banks and financial entities

are maintaining an ever-in-

The facility will be set up and initially operated by the Indian Financial Technology & Allied Services (IFTAS), a wholly-owned subsidiary of

Eventually, the cloud facility will be transferred to a separate entity owned by the financial sector participants, the central bank said. The service is intended to be rolled out in a calibrated fashion in the medium term.

While details about the cloud service, especially around its adoption, are yet to be released, the fintech industry is looking forward to whether the central bank would require companies to switch to its cloud offering.

the financial sector in India. The regulator already has The proposed facility would enhance the security, integrity an exhaustive set of norms of localisation of data, and many and privacy of financial sector data," RBI said in its statement in the industry believe that the on developmental and regulacloud service could take those norms a step further.

pays the retiree their pension

using its own funds — that is,

the retiree does not contrib-

ute anything towards their

their service. Further, the gov-

ernment itself needs to make

utes 14 percent towards their

pension, throughout the course

of the employee's service. The

accumulated funds are then

step backwards', says RBI -

Economists are of the view

that the OPS may save the gov-

ernment and the employees

money right now, since they

don't have to make regular

contributions to the pension

States and reports of some

other States moving in the

opponent of the OPS.

cial implications.

Rajan recounted.

"They would do it before

elections, but afterwards

would ask me: 'Sir, kaise ka-

Notably, in the run-up to

rein' (Sir, how can we do it),'

year, outgoing Congress chief

minister Bhupesh Bhagel had

announced his government

would waive farm loans if

used to pay for the pension.

employee retires.

Former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan warns

states opting for old pension scheme

Over 51 Cr PM Jan Dhan Accounts Opened, 4.30 Cr **Remain Dormant: Union** MoS Finance



of Finance stated that over 51.04 crore Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts have been opened as of 29 November, 2023. holding a total deposit balance of Rs 2,08,855 crore, as informed by Union Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Kisanrao Karad in a written reply in Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

The Minister also stated that as on 22 November, 2023, a total of 4.30 crore PMJDY accounts are dormant, i.e., having zero balance, since the scheme provides an inbuilt feature of non-requirement of maintaining any minimum balance in PMJDY accounts.

The Minister further stated that there is no inbuilt provipension during the course of sion of micro-investments, such as flexi-recurring deposits, in PMJDY scheme.

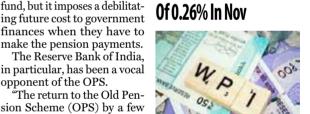
However, PMJDY account the payments only once the holders can avail benefit of Under the NPS, government micro-investments such as employees contribute 10 perflexi-recurring deposits etc. cent of their basic salary (inas per the terms and concluding dearness allowance), ditions of their respective and the government contrib-

Launched in 2014 as the National Mission for Financial Inclusion, the scheme aims to ensure comprehensive financial inclusion in the country by providing univerevery unbanked adult.

#### Reversion to OPS 'major sal access to banking facilities and basic bank accounts to

India Hits 8-month High

Wholesale Price Inflation



same direction would exert a huge burden on State finances and restrict their capacity to time since March 2023 Inundertake growth enhancing dia's wholesale inflation paced out of the deflationcapital expenditures," the central bank had said in a report ary zone as it jumped up to The RBI further said that a as per data released by the reversion to OPS by the states Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Thursday. would be "a major step back-

wards", "compromising the Wholesale Price Index interest of future generations". (WPI) inflation was at -0.52 During the book discussion, per cent in October 2023 and Rajan, who was governor of the 6.12 percent in November RBI from September 2013 to 2022.

September 2016, also spoke At 0.26 per cent, the latest about how states announced wholesale inflation print is farm-loan waivers without the highest in eight months. The WPI data comes two thinking through the finan-

days after the statistics ministry said the headline retail inflation fell to a three-month low of 5.55 per cent in November, still down 189 basis points from the 15-month high of 7.44 per cent in July. Wholesale inflation has the Chhattisgarh elections this zoomed 149 basis points over

> One basis point is onehundredth of a percentage point.

the same period.

#### World Economy's Disintegration Into Regional Power Blocs Will Wipe Out Open Trade Gains: IMF

**NEW DELHI:** The global economy is on the edge of a second cold war that could "annihilate" progress made since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Gita Gopinath, IMF's first deputy managing director

tion of the world economy into regional power blocs - centred around the US and China risked smearing out trillions of dollars in global output, she



The increasing fragmenta- may not see mutually assured economic destruction. But we could see an annihilation of the gains from open trade," said the senior official.

Warning that the world was at a "turning point" as ten-"If we descend into cold war sions mounted between the two, knowing the costs, we planet's most powerful nations, globalisation, fault lines are entirely.

and work together on shared

Her intervention comes amid a slowdown in international trade since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 inflamed pre-existing tensions between the US and European nations in the west and China and Russia in the

"While there are no signs of broad-based retreat from

Gopinath urged governments emerging as geo-economic to pull back from the brink fragmentation is increasingly a reality. If fragmentation deepeconomic priorities where ens, we could find ourselves in a new cold war," she said.

Setting out the potential damage from a collapse in trade between the two blocs - divided along the lines of the UN vote on the 2022 Ukraine resolution - Gopinath said the world economy could expect to see losses worth about 2.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), or about USD 2.5tn (£2tn) if trade was eliminated

### Retail Inflation Reaches a Three-Month Peak, Surging to 5.55% in November

NEW DELHI: India's Consumer Price Index (CPI)- based inflation rose to 5.55 per cent in November from 4.87 per cent in October, denoting a threemonth high, as per a data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Tuesday.

This is due to a spike in prices of onion led a rather broadsaid that parts of India are based rise in food inflation.

However, the latest print being at the lower end of the forecasts by analysts and the continued moderation of core inflation to a 44-month low of 4.1 per cent, would offer comfort to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The govern-2,500. India cannot become a ment has recently taken a host prices of key vegetables which to a 16-month high of 11.7 per developed country by 2047 at of steps to boost supply of food items including v

Google's Digital Push to



and onion. The central bank in the December monetary policy statement unveiled last week had anticipated "an increase in

Separate data released on Tuesday showed factory output, measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), rose may push CPI inflation higher cent in October from 6.2 per

favourable base, and a rise in manufacturing output amidst festive demand. Inflation in onions was at

a 38-month high of 86.46 per cent in November, which pushed vegetables inflation to 17.7 per cent during the month from 2.70 per cent in October. The massive increase in onion prices are a consequence of fresh kharif harvest arriving late in

However, the prices of onions are likely to cool off towards December end partly aided by ban on the exports of the staple vegetable imposed last week, easing inflationary pressures. As on Tuesday, retail prices of onion were down 6 per cent At the time the decision was

#### Congress, while the party was part of the ruling coalition in Jharkhand. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), also in the Opposition coalition, governs



**MUMBAI**: BSE Sensex is down 249 points on Wednesday morning trade as IT stocks face selling pressure.

BSE Sensex is trading at 69, 301 points with Infosys, TCS down more than 2 per cent. Vaishali Parekh, Vice Presi-

dent - Technical Research, Prabhudas Lilladher, said Nifty has been roped in with a tight resistance near 21, 000 zone and has witnessed some profit booking during the intraday session to dip towards 2,0850 zone to end in the red nesses with a valuable opnear the 20, 900 levels.

With near-term support positioned near 20, 850 zone, we can expect some consolidation and would need a decisive breach above 21,000 levels to carry on with the uptrend and expect for next higher targets of 21, 800-21, 900 levels in the coming days with major support lying near 20, 550 zone of the rising trendline zone. The

seen at 21, 050. V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services said the

support for the day is seen at

short-term undercurrent of the market is bullish despite the high valuations.

The growth momentum in the economy, the sustained buying by DIIs and retail investors, reversal of the FPI strategy from selling to buying and favourable global cues will keep the market resilient. From the global perspective, tonight's Fed message is important in setting the global market trend. Markets will wait for the Fed chief's message before taking a decisive turn.

Even though India's CPI inflation has come higher at 5.55 per cent in November compared to 4.87 per cent in October, this print is lower than the market expectation of 6 per cent. IIP growth of 11.7 per cent in October indicates continuation of the growth momentum in the economy. Steadily declining Brent crude (now below \$74) is strengthening India's macros. Leading banks, capital

20800 while the resistance is goods, cement, oil marketing companies and the leading airline company are on strong wicket, he said.

### India's retail inflation rises to 5.55% in November

Under OPS, the government voted back to power.

India's retail inflation increased to 5.55 per cent in November after having slowed to a four-month low of 4.87 per cent in October, with higher food prices pushing up the cost of living and stretching household budgets. The increase in the inflation

level above the RBI's 4 per cent target means that the central bank is not likely to go in for a rate cut to spur economic

Food inflation, which accounts for nearly half of the overall consumer price basket, rose by 8.7 per cent during November compared to 6.61 per cent in October as the prices of vegetables such as onion, fruit, and pulses went up sharply during the month, data released by the Ministry of Statistics on Tuesday

The prices of pulses, which are the main source of proteins in the country's diet, shot



up by a whopping 20.2 per cent during the month while vegetable prices increased by as much as 17.7 per cent and fruits turned costlier by 10.9 per cent. Cereal prices too rose by double digit figures while spices turned costlier by

21.55 per cent. However, there was some consolation in fuel prices showing a marginal dip compared to the same month last year as the government reduced the price of LPG and kept petrol and diesel prices on hold during the month.

### **NEW DELHI**: Google plans to make a calculated investment in digital payments

with the aim to strengthen the dynamic Indian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) market, said Sanjay Gupta, country head and Vice President of Google India, in an exclusive interview with Mint.

Google plans to expand its impact beyond payments, aiming to unlock India's MSME potential through financial inclusion and digital empowerment, noted Gupta, while speaking to Mint.

Recognizing the limited access to credit hindering MSME growth, Gupta said, "India still suffers deeply from lack of access to credit MSME part in this country. MSMEs only contribute 28 to 29% of GDP, whereas in the US and China, it goes

We haven't built a great MSME part in this country. MSMEs only contribute 28 to 29% of GDP, whereas in the US and China, it goes to 55 to 60% because there is not enough capital (in India) which is

We haven't built a great India) which is easily accessible.'

easily accessible

He added, "If we can enable credit to be made affordable to every Indian in a simple and to 55 to 60% because there easy manner, it will be a game is not enough capital (in changer," reported Mint.

#### Empower India's MSMEs Google Cloud's support for the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) aims to foster a thriving digital com-

Gupta told Mint. Beyond just payments, Gupta stated, Google envisions smartphones as gateways to citizen services, leveraging AI to personalize and simplify access in local languages, overcoming the barrier of an English-dominated internet.

merce ecosystem, further

boosting MSME activity,

While the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged many industries, Google took a step to support the struggling media landscape. Recognizing the vital role of media in informing and engaging communities, Google implemented initiatives to help small and large publishers weather the

One of the key initiatives involved opening up the Discover platform, a prime space for brand visibility, to a wider range of media publishers. This provided small busi-

portunity to showcase their brands to a vast audience, fostering brand awareness and growth Google offered access to cutting-edge technology and tools to help publishers opti-

mize their content, improve

user engagement, and generate

revenue.

By opening up the Discover platform and investing in digital transformation initiatives, Google played a crucial role in helping small businesses and publishers not just survive but thrive during the pandemic.

### Sensex down more than 200 points as IT heavyweights lag



# India Will Retaliate Against EU's Carbon Tax If Required: Piyush Goyal NEW DELHI: India is ready to address the issue concerning the European Union's (EU) These products would be hit by CBAM. India exported these goods worth USD 7.4 Lillian in 2002 to the EU

plan to impose a carbon tax on certain imported goods.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal said that "I will retaliate" if required

The CBAM (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism) or carbon tax (a kind of import duty) will come into effect from January 1, 2026.

However, from October 1 this year, domestic companies from seven carbon-intensive sectors, including steel, cement, fertiliser, aluminium and hydrocarbon products, will have to share data with regard to carbon emissions with the EU. "Bharat will address the

Norway, Switzerland

attempt to Finalise

Trade Deal with India

before Elections of 2024

NEW DELHI: Norway and Swit-

zerland have expressed optimism

about settling an agreement on

a trade pact with India as their

respective Trade Ministers con-

cluded their visit to Delhi this

week, reported India Today. The

trade pact would be with four

European countries that make up

the European Free Trade Associa-

tion (EFTA) outside the European

Union (EU): Iceland, Liechten-

stein, Norway, and Switzerland.

began 15 years ago, and the at-

tempt is to sign an agreement

before the General Elections due

in India in May 2024, reported

In an exclusive interview with

India Today TV, Norwegian

Trade Minister Jan Christian

Vestre and Swiss State Secretary

for Economic Affairs Helene

Budliger Artieda spoke about their vision to enter into a trade

When asked about the time-

line, Jan Christian Vestre, Nor-

wegian Trade Minister told In-

dia Today, "Let's see. Let's find out. But we are progressing.

And we have, you know, put

our best experts on this journey

on the Indian side, the minister

himself, Goyal, is very personally

engaged in those topics. He is

a great way. We are here. We

brought our colleagues. As well.

So I think, in respect of the ne-

gotiations, it's a bit too early to

say it, but it's a good progress.

And that makes us happy, of

Talking about the benefits,

Helene Budliger Artieda, Swiss

State Secretary for Economic

Affairs, said, "India is going

currently very strong so that's

maybe also what pushed us. We

really feel great ambition and

great hunger by Swiss compa-

course," added Vestre.

presenting Indi:

extremely knowledgeable."

India Today.

pact with India.

Negotiations for a trade deal



problem of CBAM with confidence, and we will find soluconvert CBAM to our advantage if it comes in. Of course, I will retaliate. You need not worry about it," he said at an industry chamber event.

20-35 per cent tax on select imports into the EU, starting

India's 26.6 per cent of exports of iron ore pellets, iron, steel, and aluminium products billion in 2023 to the EU.

He also said that India retaliated against the US after it imposed additional customs duties on certain steel and aluminium products.

To resolve the issues, India and the US ended all the bilateral disputes that they had in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The minister also asked the industry to help promote the electric vehicle mission of the country to promote sustainable growth.

There is a need to quickly replace the existing public buses and trucks in the country with electric vehicles, besides two and four-wheeler vehicles in a mission mode, he added.

other order on Thursday also rejected a request by the former President to allow his legal team to seek a review of the gag order by the Court of Appeals, New York's highest court. Trial testimony ended on

**NEW YORK:** A court in New

York has rejected former US

President Donald Trump's

challenge of the gag order in

his civil fraud trial, that bars

him and the attorneys from

speaking publicly about the

case's presiding Judge Arthur

the appeals court said Trump

did not use the proper legal

vehicle to challenge the gag

order and sanctions, reports

The appellate court in an-

In its rejection on Thursday,

Engoron's court staff.

The parties are scheduled to file supplemental briefs in the case on January 5, 2024

Wednesday after 11 weeks in

New York Attorney General Letitia James, who brought the lawsuit, is suing the former President for \$250 million and seeking to bar him from and return for oral arguments

real estate empire.

January 11 before Judge Engoron renders a final verdict. The civil fraud case strikes at

Trump was expected to testify on Monday, but he did not appear.

doing business in the state. James, a Democrat, has

alleged that the Trump Organization deceived lenders, insurers and tax authorities by inflating the value of his properties using misleading appraisals.

electronic components, among other ICT goods, reported by

> The European Union (EU) brought the case and a WTO panel in April stating that India had violated global trading

India Seeks Review of WTO Panel's Decision

against Tariffs on ICT

NEW DELHI: India on

Thursday placed an appeal

for a review challenging a

decision by the World Trade

Organisation's (WTO) dispute

settlement body that had ruled

against New Delhi's imposition

of tariffs on mobile phones and

Goods

In response, India has sought a review by the Appellate Body and said in its appeal, "Of the errors of law and legal interpretation by the panel in its report and requests finding by the Appellate Body".

Similarly in May, India had appeal a ruling that had favoured Japan but the WTO gave three months, till September 19, to India and the EU to settle the dispute.

Clearing the allegations puts forward by EU, India said in its appeal, "The products which, as the EU alleges, should be given tariff-free treatment were never covered under the ITA and hence were not negotiated." To make its appeal stronger,

India argued that the concessions under the ITA were available to all WTO members, and not only to the ITA participants.

"In particular, the panel erred because the order of analysis conducted is correct," India said in the appeal.

India has requested the Apellate Body to reverse, modify, or declare moot and of no legal effect, the findings, conclusions,

rulings, and recommendations of the panel.



CBAM will translate into a

tions. We will see how we can January 1, 2026, as per a report of the think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

### Biden touts 'unshakeable support' for Israel

**WASHINGTON: US Presi**dent Joe Biden has touted his "unshakeable support for the safety of the Jewish people and the security of Israel and its right to exist" as the Jewish nation and Hamas continue their war in Gaza. He made the remarks on

Monday night at a reception hosted by him and First Lady Jill Biden to celebrate the fifth night of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, CNN reported. President Biden was joined

by Second Gentleman Doug Emhoff and a group of White House officials that descended from Holocaust survivors who lit the White House menorah. The event featured some

800 guests, including Holocaust survivors, lawmakers and various Jewish leaders, according to the White House. In his address, the President said: "We'll continue to provide

military assistance to Israel until they get rid of Hamas, but we have to be careful — they have to be careful. The whole world's public

opinion can shift overnight, we can't let that happen. The President also hailed

**Israel Minister calls** 

on war cabinet not

to allow Palestinian

Israel National Security Min-

ister Itamar Ben Gvir, who is

known for his extreme far-right

cabinet has been deliberating

upon the prospects of whether

to allow Palestinians from the

West Bank area into the country

for work. Ben Gvir in a social

media post on Saturday night

said, "Letting in workers from

the Palestinian Authority who

are drenched in incitement to

Israel right now is a continu-

ation of the concept and the

understanding that we did not

views, called on

war cabinet not

ian workers back

into the country.

The Israel war

workers to return



"We're working relentlessly for the safe return of the hostages. I personally spent countless hours -- and I mean it, probably up to 20 hours with the Qataris and Egyptians, the Israelis -- to secure the freedom of hostages, to get the trucks in, to get the humanitarian aid flowing, to convince them to open the gate, to have (Egyptian President Abdel Fattah) El-Sisi make sure he

opened the gate into Egypt. "And there's a whole range of things going on now that are really very, very difficult. We've gotten more than 100 hostages out and we're not going to stop till we get every one of them home, "CNN quoted President Biden as saying.

According to the White House, there are still seven American men and one woman unaccounted for since the Israel-Hamas war began. Four Americans -- a four-year-old girl and three women -- have been released so far.\ Israeli officials have said that about 137 people remain captive in Gaza, including foreign nationals.

During the humanitarian pause from November 24-30, 86 Israeli and 24 foreign hos-

Hezbollah militant killed in Israeli attacks

al-Shaab, Xinhua news agency

Israeli warplanes and drones

carried out six airstrikes tar-

getting houses and forests in

the border areas, destroying six

houses and damaging another

15, according to the source.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Re-

sistance, the military wing of

**NEW DELHI:** Congress MPs

reported.

on Lebanon's southern border

### **NEW DELHI:** The U.S. and

US, EU countervail RoDTEP with retaliatory duties on 4 Indian Goods

the heart of the Trump Organi-

zation, the former President's

the European Union (EU) have retaliated against India's Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) scheme by imposing countervailing duties (CVDs) on four Indian products. The products for which coun-

tervailing investigations have been conducted and a final determination of CVD has been made include paper file folders, common alloy aluminium sheet and forged steel fluid end blocks by the U.S. and certain graphite electrode systems by the European Commission (EC), Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel told Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

The Indian government and the affected exporters have strongly defended the subsidy allegation against various programs & schemes of the government, both at Central & State

Hezbollah, said its fighters

carried out 10 attacks on 10

Israeli sites, killing one and

media reported that three sol-

country's border with Lebanon

and were transported by he-

licopter to Rambam hospital

in Haifa, a northern Israeli

The Lebanon-Israel bor-

der has witnessed increased

tension since October 8, af-

ter Lebanese armed group

Hezbollah fired dozens of

rockets toward Shebaa Farms

in support of the Hamas at-

tacks on Israel on October 7.

prompting the Israeli forces

to respond by firing heavy

artillery toward southeastern

Later on Saturday, Israeli

re wounded on the

injuring another.

port city.

Lebanon.



responses during the conduct of investigations," she noted. Asked if India is willing to

lodge a formal dispute with measure that are inconsistent the World Trade Organisation (WTO) if the matter was not re-

**NEW DELHI:** One of the

most important and expected

outcome of the COP28 climate

meeting is tripling of renew-

able energy which contributes

to additional emission reduc-

tions between now and 2030.

installed capacity of renewable

energy, and doubling of an-

nual improvements in energy

Together, these two mea-

sures have the potential to

avoid emissions of about 7

billion tones of carbon di-

oxide equivalent between

The 2023 United Nations

efficiency.

currently taken.

Cong gives adjournment notices in LS on census exercise, 8 ex-navy men in Qatar jail

It calls upon countries to

party may approach the WTO Dispute Settlement mechanism, if a WTO member adopts any with the agreements under the

#### **COP28 Agreement Implores Countries to Triple Brvan Adams recalls** 'meeting' Princess **Global Installed Capacity of Renewable Energy**



was the 28 United Nations

Climate Change conference, held from 30 November until 12 December at Expo City in Dubai. The COP28 climate meeting delivered some important outcomes - a first-time acknowledgement of the need to move away from fossil fu-

now and 2030, more than all the net result of all the els, a first promise to reduce other climate actions being methane emissions, operationalisation and capitalisation of the loss and damage Climate Change Conference fund, and an agreement on or Conference of the Parties a framework for the global of the UNFCCC, more comgoal on adaptation.

LOS ANGELES: Singersongwriter Bryan Adams recently opened up on the beginning of his close friendship with Princess Diana. The singer, 64, showered the late princess with

the song called 'Diana', which many believed was inspired by the princess' 1981 marriage to Prince Charles. "I said, 'I used your name on a song once, 'and Diana said, 'Yes, I know, very funny. Actually I'd like to hear it again', " he recalled. "So I sent a copy to Kensington Palace, got an invitation to tea back and that's how we became friends. Their friendship grew over time, he said. "When I first went round to [Kensington Palace] she wasn't, like, 'I really need to talk to somebody, 'and you don't bulldoze into someone's

life wanting to know every-

thing in the first 10 minutes,

he continued. "It was, 'Let's

have a cup of tea.' But later,

the more friendly we got the

more I learnt what was really

going on." Adams said the lyr-

cs to "Diana" were "laddish

humour," and noted that the

original inspiration behind the

song was from "that guy who

(had) broken into the Queen's

bedroom and sat on her bed

smoking." However, he noted

that he "retired (the song) after

Diana died out of respect to

her and her boys".

#### nies to strengthen their presence understand anything from Oclah militant died from Israeli airstrikes on the village of Aita Indian origin Canadian sentenced to 15 yrs

to 15 years in prison for drug trafficking.

Surrey was sentenced in November for smuggling 80 kg of cocaine into British Columbia. through the Canada-US Pacific Highway border crossing.

being sought as a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest Mehmi, pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said on Wednesday Mehmi was initially arrested

on November 6, 2017 by the British Columbia RCMP after the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) discovered 80 sealed bricks of cocaine hidden inside a semi-trailer truck being driven, and owned by Mehmi.

At the time of this seizure, the bulk street value of the



Under the Controlled Drugs

and Substances Act (CDSA), Mehmi was charged with Importation of a Controlled Substance, Section 6 (1) CDSA, and Possession for the Purpose of Trafficking, Section 5 (2)

Supreme Court Judge found Mehmi guilty on both charges, and a sentencing hearing was

scheduled for January 9, 2023. On October 11, 2022, Mehmi fled to India after boarding a flight from Van-

to appear for his sentencing hearing, an application to sentence him in absentia was filed, and subsequently granted on September 15, 2023

Police said Mehmi's Canadian passport was seized and turned over to Passport Canada at the time of his arrest.

However, due to the length of time between his arrest and conviction, he was able to legally obtain another passport through Passport Canada, which he ultimately used to flee, the CTV News reported, citing an RCMP spokesperson.

Describing Mehmi as approximately 6 feet tall and weighing 200 pounds, police have urged people not to approach him and contact their Manickam Tagore and Manish Tewari on Wednesday gave adjournment notices to discuss the delay in census exercise and the issue of eight former Indian Navy personnel on death row in Qatar.

In his notice in the Lok Sabha, Tagore, who is the MP from Tamil Nadu's Virudhu Nagar, said, "I hereby give notice of my intention to ask for leave to move a motion for the adjournment of the business of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent importance, namely -- to discuss about the abnormal intentional delay of the Central government for mitigating census exercise and to direct the government to initiate steps for the census process immediately without

Tagore said that was a matter of utmost importance that directly impacted the nation's governance and the well-being of its citizens. "The Census 2021 was initially postponed due to the severe COVID outbreaks in 2019 and later it has been subject to abnormal and intentional delays. The Central

further delay.



reasons such as the availability of population projections based on Census 2011 data and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, has continuously deferred the commencement of field activities for Census.

"In March 2022, certain amendments to Census Rules were notified, allowing citizens to self-enumerate themselves in the Census and the National Population Register (NPR). Despite this, the actual initiation of the census has been further delayed. The Office of the Registrar General of India announced in January this year that the freezing of administrative boundaries had been extended to July 1, 2023, pushing the commencement of the census well into 2024. But due to impending general

elections in 2024, the process



"This intentional delay in conducting the census is becoming a significant hurdle in understanding the actual needs of our people. It has resulted in the failure of implementing various schemes and plans designed to cater to the specific requirements of our diverse population. As responsible citizens, we cannot overlook the adverse effects this delay may have on policy making, resource allocation, and the overall development of our nation, "the Congress MP said.

"Therefore, I urge this august House to have a discussion regarding the urgent need for conducting the census immediately. The timely completion of the census is crucial

effective governance and the successful implementation of government programs. Tewari gave the adjournment notice to have a discussion re-

garding the retired-Indian Navy personnel imprisoned in Qatar. "I hereby give notice of my in-

for accurate data collection.

which in turn is essential for

tention to ask for leave to move a motion for the adjournment of the business of the house for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent importance, namely -- That this House do suspend Zero Hour, Question Hour, and other Businesses of the Day to have a discussion regarding the retired-Indian Navy personnel imprisoned in Qatar. Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Captain Saurabh Vasisht, Commander Amit Nagpal. Commander Purnendu Tiwari, Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Sanjeev Gupta, and Sailor Ragesh, were sentenced by the Qatari court on

October 26, 2023.' He said that he has been constantly raising this matter since August 2022 both inside and outside the House but there has been no response from the government for 14 months.



praise and kind words "straight from the heart", report People magazine. He spoke in a new interview with The Sunday Times and recollected his friendship with the late princess, "We had a lot of really, really good conversations, I have to tell you. In fact it's strange and surreal to think about," he told the outlet. "I really, really liked Diana, she was an amazing woman and a super-great inspiration. Meeting her was truly one of the greatest things that ever happened to me." As per People, he said he was introduced to the princess on an aeroplane after he co-wrote and released

#### in jail for drug smuggling, flees to India SURREY: A Canada-wide arrest warrant has been issued against a 60-year-old Indian truck driver in British Columbia province who fled to India after he was sentenced

Raj Kumar Mehmi from An Interpol Red Notice is cocaine was estimated at \$3.2

On September 6, 2022, a

couver, and arriving in New Delhi the following day, the

BEIRUT: A Hezbollah mili-

tant was killed in Israeli at-

tacks on border areas in

southern Lebanon, a Lebanese

The source, who spoke on

condition of anonymity, said

on Saturday that the Hezbol-

military source said.

Since Mehmi failed

On November 16, 2023, the Surrey Provincial Court of British Columbia sentenced Mehmi (in absentia) for importing drugs and six

years for possession of drugs.

local police agency. government, citing various

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI** Chandigarh

he esteemed singer Bhupinder Babbal, the voice behind the hit song "Arjan Vailly," is all set to grace the stage of "Rang Punjab De" exclusively on Zee Punjabi on December 11.

Babbal's live performance promises to captivate audiences with his soulful rendition of "Arjan Vailly" and an insight into his experience of creating this mesmerizing melody for the movie. His melodic prowess and emotive delivery have already won hearts, and now viewers will have the chance to witness his magic firsthand.

Tune in today to witness a memorable evening filled with music, anecdotes, and the essence of "Arjan Vailly" brought to life by Bhupinder Babbal, exclusively on "Rang Punjab De".



# for 'Vedaa' in Kashmir

Bollywood star John Abraham recently concluded the shooting schedule of his upcoming film 'Vedaa' in Kashmir alongside co-star Sharvari Wagh. The duo wrapped up filming after a four-day stint that covered picturesque locations in Srinagar, Pahalgam, and South Kashmir's Ashmugam area.

The crew shot the last sequence in Ashmuqam before the team departed for Mumbai. Throughout the shoot, John Abraham was visibly enamored by Kashmir's natural beauty and the warm hospitality extended by locals.

Expressing his admiration for the region, John encouraged people to explore Kashmir beyond its significance as a shooting destination. Clad in traditional Kashmiri attire, he emphasized the inviting nature of the locals and invited others to experience the valley's charm beyond film sets.

tor urged visitors to consider Kashmir for vacations, not just for filming purposes. He highlighted the warm welcome received and advised against littering, stressing the importance of preserving the valley's pristine beauty.

Kashmir not only for shooting but for holidays as well," he said.

"We had a great welcome here, and everyone here wants to work. The people always look at you with a smile and an open heart," John added.

#### **POTPOURRI**

#### Jan-Jan Ke Adarsh, Mann-Mann Ke Aaraadhya - Siya Ram are revealed in Sony Entertainment **Television's Shrimad Ramayan**

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI** Chandigarh

Amidst heightened anticipation, Sony Entertainment Television brings to life the divine'Shrimad Ramayan', starting January 1, 2024 and will airevery Monday to Friday at 9:00 PM. The show promises a renewed telling of this great Indian epic and the channel has now dropped the next promo which reveals Jan-Jan Ke Adarsh, Mann-Mann Ke Aaraadhya - Siya Ram.

The revered Sita will be essayed by the talented actress Prachi Bansal, who is poised to embody the grace, resilience, and strength that define this Goddess. Actor Sujay Reu breathes life into Lord Ram, an embodi-



characterized by unwavering devotion and integrity. The devotional promo highlights Sita's unwavering faith and admiration for Lord Ram, perceivinghim not merely as a prince but as the epitome of an ideal life partner.

### Cold wave grips Kashmir Valley



Kashmir remained gripped by a persistent cold spell as temperatures plunged well below freezing point across the valley, officials reported on Friday.

Srinagar, the summer capital, saw the mercury drop to minus 3.5 degrees Celsius on Wednesday night, marking a slight rise from the previous night's minus 5.4 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam, a key base camp for the annual Amarnath Yatra pilgrimage, recorded a chilling minus 5.0 degrees Celsius. Meanwhile, the renowned Gulmarg resort in Baramulla district registered a low of minus 3.44 degrees Celsius.

Other areas in the valley also experienced harsh cold, with Qazigund at minus 2.8 degrees Celsius, Kokernag at minus 1.9 degrees Celsius, and Kupwara at minus 4.2 degrees Celsius.

In Jammu, temperatures hovered at 7.3°C, slightly below the usual for this time of year. Banihal recorded 1.7°C, Batote 4.2°C, and Bhaderwah 0.4°C

The relentless cold wave persists across Kashmir, impacting various parts of the region with significantly below-average temperatures.

#### Post breakup with Asim, Himanshi Khurana enroute on 'Chaar Dham Yatra' spiritual visit with her mother.



**MOHALI**: Known for her major works in Punjabi industry, actress and singer Himanshi Khurana has shared a glimpse of her recent visit to the Puri Jagannath Temple in Odisha, and said she is on a 'chaar dham

The actress, who was in a relationship with her 'Bigg Boss' co-contestant Asim Riaz, has recently announced her breakup over religious reasons. Now, post breakup, Himanshi is on a

Taking to Instagram, she shared pictures of herself from the Jagannath Temple. Himanshi is wearing a brown

long kurta with long sleeves and a grey dupatta. With her hair left open, she accessoried the look with a silver neck piece. In the stories section, the

32-year-old actress shared a breathtaking glimpse of snow clad mountains and roads.

The actress captioned the post as: "Jaganath puri with maa Chaar dham yatra......"

Himanshi has done movies like 'Sadda Haq', 'Afsar', 'Shava Ni Girdhari Lal'. She had also participated in the 13th season of the controversial reality show

#### Shreyas Talpade suffers heart attack, undergoes angioplasty MUMBAI: Actor Shreyas Tal-

pade, who is known for 'Igbal', Golmaal' franchise and 'Poster Boys', suffered a heart attack.

The actor was shooting for a film and after completing the shoot collapsed due to a heart attack on Thursday evening.

As per media reports, he was rushed to the hospital and underwent angioplasty at the city's Bellevue Hospital in Andheri West. The angioplasty was conducted at around 10 p.m. and currently the actor is doing fine now.

The actor shot through the day, and was absolutely fine. He even joked around with the crew on the set, and shot sequences that had a bit of action. However, once he went home, he told his wife that he was feeling uneasy.



He was then rushed to the hospital, the medical profesthe way. Once he reached the plasty and is now stable.

hospital but he collapsed on sionals conducted the angio-

global scale. To-

inspired by pos-

itive change.»

Bhavpreet

Singh high-

need for in-

sightful discus-

sions to inspire

and enlighten,

bring together

thought leaders

### Shriya Pilgaonkar plays small town girl in Nitin Gadkari Inaugurates GICA, Honours relationship with an alcoholic in 'Dry Day'

MUMBAI: Actress Shriva Pilgaonkar, who is gearing up for the release of her streaming film 'Dry Day', has shared that she plays the role of a small town girl who is stuck in a relationship with a guy addicted to alcohol.

The film also stars Jitendra Kumar. The actress also shared that the film explores the transformative power of

Talking about the same, the actress said: "The story of our film 'Dry Day' is entertaining, authentic and will have a lovely cast and team. I play the character of Nirmala, a feisty, charming small educated family but ends up being stuck in a relationship with Gannu who is addicted to alcohol.

She further mentioned: "She does her best to take charge and get him to mend his ways for their future. The film explores certain social themes and also highlights the transformagenre and I had a wonderful and Kannada.



chord with the viewers. We relationship of Nirmala and Gannu. Emmay entertainment has produced some of the best content of the town girl who comes from an recent past and collaborating with them on this film and working with Saurabh sir was incredibly rewarding and enriching.

Directed by Saurabh Shukla and produced by Monisha Advani, Madhu Bhoiwani and Nikkhil Advani of Emmay Entertainment, the film will premiere exclusively on Prime Video on December 22 tive power of love. I enjoy in Hindi along with dubs in comedy and social satire as a Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam,

#### 12 Eminent Personalities from Tricity **KULBIR SINGH KALSI** Chandigarh

The Global Indians Conclave and Awards (GICA) was inaugurated by Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways of India in the national capital. The Chief Guest, Nitin Gadkari, felicitated 24 distinguished individuals from various fields. including philanthropy, science, real estate, educa-

tion, sports, business, and

literature. These awardees vere landed for their plary contributions to society, the country, and the world at large. Tricity based individuals made a mark as many from the region were felicitated for their achievements. The event was organized by the NGO <I am Still Human>.

12 eminent personalities from tricity were honoured and these included Piyush Kansal - Director Royale Estate Group, Neeraj Kansal - Director, Crack Academy , Acharya Manish - Founder of HIIMS and Shuddhi clinics, Dr Ravul Jindal - Director Fortis congratulated NGO (I am Still Hospital Mohali, Jagjit Singh Human> for their work to-Majha, CMD, PCL Housing,



La Pino'z Pizza Nitin Gadkari, in his address to the audience, congratulated the awardees and urged everyone to work tirelessly for the nations development. He wards social welfare and also

and Sanam Kapoor - Founder,



direction of road safety. Operational since 2015, the NGO presently works majorly for the welfare of the Veterans, Martyr Families and the Indian Armed Forces

Co-organizers of GICA, Vivek Mehra (also Founder of NGO (I am Still Human) and Bhavpreet Singh, expressed their gratitude and shared the vision behind GICA. Vivek Mehra emphasized the importance of recognizing global achievements, saying, «GICA serves as a platform to honour those Indians whose contribu-

tions have made a significant

that can drive positive change globally. Through these discussions, we aim to create a blueprint for a brighter future.» Lt Gen K J Singh (Retd), For-

mer GOC in C Western Command also shared the stage with Nitin Gadkari, adding a distinguished presence to the event. Several other notable personalities from tricity also attended GICA, including Vineet Joshi, Former Media Advisor to Government of Punjab, Drishmeet Singh Buttar, Managing Partner, Healing Hospital, Harteg Singh, Real estate investment expert, and Chandan Sanwal, Founder Chandigarh Bytes.

### Germany beat India into the semi-finals of FIH junior world cup hockey SUNIL THAPLIYAL

New Delhi

The Indian team suffered a crushing defeat in the semi-finals of the Junior Hockey World Cup on Thursday. Germany defeated them 4-1 in the match played in Kuala Lumpur. The İndian team will now play Spain for the bronze medal in the tournament. India had not just 1-2 but 12 penalty corners in the match but could not convert a single penalty corner into a goal. The team had to take the consequences and was defeated 4-1 by Germany in the semi-final. Germany shattered the Indian team's dream of winning the title for the third time. The Indian team now has to play Spain for the bronze medal on Saturday. At the same time, Germany will meet France, who beat Spain 3:1 in the second semi-final, in the final. Six-time world champions Germany were awarded two penalty corners in the semifinal match, both of which led to goals. The Indian team, which had recorded a spectacular 4-3 win over the Netherlands in the quarter-finals match, was unable to maintain that momentum in this game.

The Indian team, who staged a comeback from a two-goal deficit in the quarter-finals, had no answer to the strong German

Germany scored in all four quarters, while the only goal for India was scored by Sudeep Chirmako in the 11th minute. For Germany, Ben Hasbach scored a field goal in the 8th minute and a penalty corner in the 30th minute. Paul Glander converted



the 41st minute. Florian Spirling sealed the 4:1 victory by scoring a field goal two minutes before the final whistle. The match was evenly poised in the first quarter when Hassbach scored in the 8th minute and Chirmako equalised for India after 3 minutes. India was awarded 4 penalty corners in the first quarter. The six penalty corners it got in the next quarter were in vain. At the same time, Hasbach scored a penalty corner goal for Germany. In the third quarter, Paul scored at the second penalty corner to give Germany a 3:1 lead. Spurling sity (TMDU) have created a scored the fourth goal in the 58th minute. India won the Junior Hockey

World Cup in 2001 in Hobart and 2016 in Lucknow. The Indian team also finished runners-up in the 1997 World Cup in Milton Keynes, England . Two years ago, at the last Junior World Cup in Bhubaneswar, it had to settle for fourth place. This year, India met Germany five times and lost all five times. The last time Germany beat them 6-3 in the semi-finals of the Johor Cup. At the 2021 Junior World Cup in Bhubaneswar, Germany also

beat India 4-2 in the semi-finals.



Team of Researchers have created a new artificial intelligence (AI) model capable of predicting long-term visual impairment risk in patients dealing with high myopia, which ranks among the top three causes of irreversible blindness in various parts of the world. The experts at Tokyo

Medical and Dental Universpecial AI that can predict the risk of long-term vision loss. This kind of AI, called machine learning, helps computers learn from information to become better at tasks.

The team at the Toyo Medical and Dental University (TMDU) said its machine-learning model works well for predictingand visualising—the risk of visual impairment over the

Machine learning is a type of AI focused on building computer systems that learn

from data, enabling software to improve its performance over time. People with extreme

shortsightedness (called high myopia) can clearly see objects that are near to them but cannot focus on objects at a distance.

Contacts, glasses, or surgery can be used to correct their vision, but having high myopia can lead to a condition called pathologic myopia, a leading cause of blindness. "We know that machine-

learning algorithms work well on tasks such as identifying changes and complications in myopia but in this study, we wanted to investigate something different, namely how good these algorithms are at long-term predictions," said Yining Wang, lead author of the study.

The study, recently published in the journal JAMA Ophthalmology, looked at the visual acuity of 967 Japanese patients at TDMU's Advanced Clinical



Center for Myopia after 3 and 5 years had passed.

The researchers formed a dataset from 34 variables that are commonly collected during ophthalmic examinations, such as age, current visual acuity, and the diameter of the cornea

They then tested several popular machine-learning models such as random forests and support vector machines. Of these models, the logistic regression-based model performed the best at predicting visual impairment at 5 years.

However, predicting outcomes is only part of the story, the researchers said.

"It is also important to present the model's output in a way that is easy for patients to understand and convenient for making clinical decisions," said Kyoko

Ohno-Matsui, senior author of the study. The researchers used a

nomogram to visualise the classification model. Each variable is assigned a line with a length that indicates how important it is for predicting visual acuity.

These lengths can be converted into points that can be added up to obtain a final score explaining the risk of visual impairment in future, they said. People who permanently lose their vision often suffer both financially and physically as a result of their loss of independence.

The decrease in global productivity caused by severe visual impairment was estimated to be \$94.5 billion in 2019.

Although the model still has to be evaluated on a wider population, this study has shown that machine learning models have good potential to help address this increasingly important public health concern, which will benefit both individuals and society as a whole.