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REGION



PUNJAB CEO HOLDS MEETING WITH POLITICAL PARTIES; **APPRISES ABOUT KEY ELECTION PROCESS**

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY



INTEREST SUBSIDY CAP FOR MSME EXPORTERS TO **REMAIN RS 2.5 CRORE IN Q1 OF FY24-25**

POTPOURRI



PRIYANKA CHOPRA, NICK JONAS OFFER PRAYERS AT RAM MANDIR WITH DAUGHTER MALTI

Excise Policy Gate: CM Kejirwal sent to ED custody; opposition slams

OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was on Friday remanded to the custody of the Enforcement Directorate for seven days i.e., till March 28, a day after he was arrested by the probe agency in connection with the Delhi Excise Policy case linked to a money laundering case

Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court on Friday sent CM Kejriwal to ED custody in the money laundering case related to the alleged excise policy scam.

Special CBI judge Kaveri Baweja of the Rouse Avenue Court (/topic/rouse[1]avenuecourt) passed the order after Kejriwal was produced on Friday following his arrest on Thursday night by the central probe agency.

Senior Advocates Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Vikram Chaudhari, and Ramesh Gupta along with Advocates Rajat Bharad waj, Mudit Jain and Mohd Irshad appeared for the Delhi CM Kejriwal.

ASG SV Raju and Special Counsel Zoheb Hossain appeared for the probe agency. The case pertains to alleged

electoral bonds

scheme was good

irregularities and money laundering in framing and implementing the Delhi excise policy case 2022, which was later scrapped.

"ED (/topic/ed) was asking for a 10-day remand. They said that to trace the money trail, a custodial investigation is necessary. Considering all aspects, the judge gave a 6-day custodial remand. He will be presented here again ω on 28 March. ED (/topic/ ed) argued that the money used for the Goa elections was ill-gotten. They said they have

statements of some witnesses which prove this fact." Arvind Kejriwal's lawyer Madan Lal told reporters. After the court's decision, one, Atishi further said that

would explore all possible legal routes for further actions. "We, very respectfully and humbly disagree with the decision of the court. ED (/topic/ed) has no proof even after 2 years of investigation... ED (/topic/ ed) forced their witnesses to give statements against Arvind Kejriwal... We will explore all possible legal routes... One by one opposition parties are being targeted in front of the judiciary... Arvind Kejriwal

now," she said.

will always be the CM of Delhi. There is no Constitutional bar on him not being the CM. He

leaders.

Terming the day as a «dark»

bodies a commitment to nurtur-

has not been convicted till

Atishi said that the party the democracy in the country

has been murdered today>. resign ... » AAP (/topic/aap) «BJP wants to contest elec- leader and Delhi Minister tions from behind the ED (/ Saurabh Bharadwaj said that topic/ed)... Is ED (/topic/ed) the «countdown of the Central a part of the BJP that the party government has begun on 21 is issuing their press release? March> with the arrest of Delhi To date, no proceeds of crime CM. ω "... It is Arvind Kejriwal today, it can be someone else have been found by the ED (/ topic/ed) against the AAP (/ tomorrow. topic/aap) leaders... Today This government will spare no one... The world is supis a dark day in the history

porting Arvind Kejriwal. And of democracy of the country. when things like this happen People of the country are seeing this murder of democat a global scale, revolutions racy which has been done tohappen and governments are day,» she added. The arrest by overturned. The countdown the central agency has drawn of the Central government severe criticism for the BJPhas begun on 21 March... BJP

led centre from the opposition supporters are also coming to us and saying, all was fine till now, but this has become a Delhi Minister Kailash Gahlot, while questioning the little too much," he said. Samajwadi Party Chief action by the federal agency said, «We met the family of Arvind Kejriwal after much delay... We have been saying from the very beginning that this case is false and the only motive is to stop Arvind Kejriwal. What recovery has been made by the ED (/topic/ed) till now?... It is the party>s stand the government wants. This that the CM should not resign. raises the question of whether The government will be in a democracy, institutions

Bhagwant Mann meets Kejriwal's family



NEWDELHI: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Friday reached the residence of AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal.

This came after a day when the Delhi CM was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in the alleged excise policy case in a late night development.

After meeting the family of Kejriwal, Mann said the current situation had been on for many years under which the agencies were being used as a tool. "Where they don't have their government, they are harassing through the Governor. The CM of Kerala went to Jantar Mantar (against the same), the CM of Tamil Nadu is fed up with his Governor. Mamata didi is being harassed and Hemant Soren has been arrested," he said.

"A desperate attempt to malign the image of CM Kejriwal" says wife Sunita Kejriwal

OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

CM Arvind Kejriwal found himself in a maelstrom of controversy as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) apprehended him on allegations of corruption pertaining to the issuance of liquor licenses. This dramatic turn of events prompted a fervent response from his wife, Sunita Kejriwal, who condemned the action as a betrayal of the people of

Delhi. In a public statement, Mrs. Kejriwal expressed unwavering support for her husband, emphasizing his dedication to the welfare of the nation. She underscored Mr. Kejriwal's longstanding commitment to the people, both during his tenure as Chief Minister and beyond.

Arvind Kejriwal's arrest marked a significant escalation in the ongoing legal battle, stemming from accusations related to money laundering in connection with the excise policy. Despite founding the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on an anti-corruption platform, Kejriwal's integrity was called into question as he faced allegations of misconduct.

The Enforcement Directorate's decisive action followed the denial of protection from coercive measures by the Delhi High Court. Kejriwal, flanked by law enforcement officers, reiterated his dedication to the nation as he was led into court. However, uncertainty loomed as the court deliber-

ated on his detention status. Notably, Arvind Kejriwal had previously disregarded multiple summons from the central agency, leading to his eventual arrest. His in- policy. Allegations of financarceration paralleled the detention of several senior AAP members awaiting trial in the same case, further intensifying the political storm surrounding the party. In response to the uproar

Furthermore, the up scal-ing of enterprises and the

emergence of sunrise sectors

are expected to drive quality

employment opportunities,

The review also highlighted

increased demand for residen-

tial properties in tier-2 and

tier-3 cities, which bodes well

turing sector.

activity.

sparked by Arvind Kejriwal's arrest, AAP vehemently rejected claims of impropriety, characterizing the situation as a smear campaign against their leader. Party officials affirmed Kejriwal's unwavering commitment to his role as Chief Minister, asserting his intention to continue governing from behind bars. However, prison authori-

ties indicated adherence to protocol, hinting at potential challenges in Kejriwal's continued governance from jail. Amidst mounting legal battles and public outcry, Delhi Education Minister Atishi Marlena Singh affirmed Arvind Kejriwal's steadfastness in his position, underscoring the party's determination to navigate the crisis.

Legal proceedings saw the **Enforcement Directorate** branding Mr. Kejriwal as the alleged mastermind behind the Delhi liquor policy scandal, seeking an extended cus-tody period. In his defense, senior lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi decried the arrest as unprecedented and unnecessary, highlighting the absence of compelling

reasons for detention. The gravity of the accusations against Mr. Kejriwal was further compounded by the arrest of BRS leader K Kavitha, with the ED alleging collusion between her and AAP leaders in the manipulation of the excise cial impropriety, including substantial bribes, added fuel to the fire engulfing Mr. Kejriwal's administration, casting a shadow over his political future.

Intention behind PM Modi inaugurates modern hospital built with Indian assistance in Bhutan

THIMPHU: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bhutanese counterpart Tshering Tobgay on Saturday inaugurated a modern

says Nitin Gadkari hospital built with Indian assistance here which will offer quality healthcare for women and children and be a shining example of India-Bhutan development cooperation.

The Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Wangchuk Mother and Child Hospital is a state-of-the-art 150-bedded facility that has been NEW DELHI: Union min- built with the assistance of the

ister Nitin Gadkari has said Government of India in Thimphu, velopment of the hospital in in a press release. "Inaugurated the Gyaltsuen

Hooch Tragedy: Death toll in Sangrur rises

ing a healthy future generation. "A boost to partnership in healthcare. PM @narendramodi together with PM @tsheringtobgay of Bhutan inaugurated the Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Mother and Child Hospital in Thimphu. The state-of-the-art hospital is a shining example of India-Bhutan development cooperation," Ex-

ternal Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in and was completed recently, the a post on X. India has supported the de- Ministry of External Affairs said

. The first phase was

is. We have no problem with this and no law says he should

Akhilesh Yadav voiced criticism of the arrest of Kejriwal, alleging that government institutions like ED (/topic/ed), CBI, and income tax work as instruments for the government. "These are government institutions, they'll do what

run from wherever the CM operate as instruments and are working as instruments to please the BJP.

PERSONAL PROPERTY.

gurating the Gyaltsuen Jetsun Pema Mother and Child Hospital," he said, adding that this hospital is purely dedicated to the mothers and the children of Bhutan. He added that there is a proposal for a cancer hospital which will come up on this campus only. "We are referring all the cancer patients to India. So after the completion of the

cancer hospital, I think this will also enhance the tertiary care esthesiology, Operation Theatre, of health services in Bhutan, he added. Modi, who arrived Neonatal Intensive Care and Pein Bhutan on Friday for a twoday State visit to fur ier cement India's unique relations with the Himalayan nation, called on the King of Bhutan, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and held "It is an honour for us to have talks with Prime Minister Tobgay

possible to run a political party without funds, and added that the Centre had introduced the electoral bonds scheme, now struck down as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, in 2017 with a "good intention".

The senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said all political parties need to sit to 20, four-member SIT formed to probe together and deliberate if the Supreme Court gives any further direction on the matter. He made the comments at an event organised by a media house in GIFT City near Gandhinagar on Friday.

"When Arun Jaitely was (Union finance) minister, I was part of that discussion (regarding electoral bonds). No party can survive without resources. In some countries, governments fund political parties. There is no such system in India. Thus, we chose this system of financing political parties," said Gadkari on a question about electoral bonds.

India seeks MDB collaboration for sustainable development goals by 2047

NEW DELHI : In a bid to accelerate its journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, India has initiated collaborative efforts with Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)

The finance ministry recently convened a meeting with MDB representatives on March 7 to solicit their expertise in project implementation and strategic planning.

According to sources familiar with the discussions, casualties have been reported the ministry outlined a comprehensive «budget-plus and finance-plus» strategy, aimed at encompassing all facets of project execution beyond mere financing and planning.

Jetsun Pema Wangchuck Mother and Child Hospital, which stands as a beacon of hope for several families, offering quality healthcare," Modi posted on X.

constructed at a cost of Rs 22 crore and has been operational since 2019. The construction of the second phase was taken up in 2019, as part of the 12th Five He said the new facility em- Year Plan at a cost of Rs 119 crore,

structed hospital would add value to the quality of mother and child health services in Bhutan. The new facility will house state-ofthe-art facilities for Pediatrics, Gynecology and Obstetrics, An-

said that the

Wangchuk Mother and Child Hospital stands as a shining example of India-Bhutan partnership in health care," it added.

altsuen Jetsi

diatric Intensive Care.

Shri Narendra Modi here, inau- on Friday.

Arrested because of his misdeeds says Anna Hazare



on the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal by the ED, social activist Anna Hazare said that he was upset that the AAP chief was making liquor policies.

"I am very upset that Kejriwal, who used to raise his voice against liquor, is now making liquor policies. But what will he do? Nothing works in front of power. His arrest is because of his own deeds. Everything will happen as per law. The courts and the government will decide what is good and what is not," he said

Hazare said that when Arvind Kejriwal and former Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia joined him in the movement, he advised them to always put nation first but they didn't pay heed to the advice.

"I have written letters to Kejriwal on this issue," Hazare added. Arvind Kejriwal and Anna Hazare worked together when they were part of the anti-corruption movement from 2010 to 2013.

CHANDIGARH: The death toll due to the suspected consumption of spurious liquor in Punjab's Sangrur district has climbed to twenty, with six more persons succumbing, tragedy.

officials on Saturday said. Meanwhile, a four-member special investigation team (SIT), led by an additional director general of police (ADGP) rank officer, has been set up in connection with the incident.

Eleven people are undergoing treatment at Patiala's Rajindra Hospital and six at the Civil Hospital in Sangrur.

Sangrur Civil Surgeon Kirpal Singh on Saturday said that 20 people have died so far in the incident.

The officials said that the from Gujran, Tibbi Ravidaspura and Dhandoli Khurd villages in Dirba and Sunam blocks. The police have made six arrests in the case so far, they said.

The AAP government has been under fire from the opposition parties Congress and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) over the Sangrur hooch

> A case has already been registered under Section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Excise Act.

The police on Saturday said that a high-level committee has been set up to supervise uncovering of the backward and forward linkages in a professional and scientific manner to unearth the nexus behind the whole matter.

A four-member SIT headed by ADGP (law and order) Gurinder Singh Dhillon will supervise the investigations.

Deputy Inspector General (Patiala Range) Harcharan Bhullar, Senior Superintendent of Police, Sangrur, Sartaj Chahal, and Additional Commissioner (Excise) Naresh Dubey will be part of the SIT.

NEW DELHI : The Indian economy is poised for robust growth in FY25, propelled by vigorous investment activity and strong private consumption demand, as highlighted in the finance ministry's economic review for February.

Despite sluggish global growth, the finance ministry remains optimistic about India's economic outlook. However, challenges such as the ongoing crisis in the Red Sea and escalating crude oil prices cast shadows over the horizon. The ministry cautioned that disruptions in shipping due to



the crisis could lead to infla-

tionary pressures. Additionally, grain shipments from key regions like the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Europe face disruptions, posing risks to global food security. The report stated, "Sus-

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2024

Finance Ministry forecasts robust Indian Economy driven by Investment & Consumption

Punjab Police fully geared up to ensure free, fair and peaceful polls: DGP

TARUN BHAJNI

Chandigarh

The Election Commission of India (ECI) announced the dates of the poll for the General Elections 2024, Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav said that Punjab Police is fully geared up to ensure free, fair and peaceful elections in the border state.

The DGP accompanied by Special DGP Law and Order Arpit Shukla was virtually briefing all the senior Police officers from headquarters, Range ADGsP/IGsP/DIGs and CPs/SSPs to take stock of the security arrangements in the state ahead of the General elections

Pertinently, with the announcement of the election dates the model code of conduct



has come into force. Polling for the general elections in Punjab will be held in the last phase of

polls on June 1. DGP Gaurav Yadav directed all the officers to strictly adhere to all aspects of the Model Code of Conduct and follow all the instructions and guidelines from the Election Commission of India for holding free and fair elections

He said that a special campaign has been launched to arrest Proclaimed Offenders

(POs) and Parole Jumpers and for execution of non-bailable warrants (NBWs). SSPs and CPs have also been asked to ensure surveillance over people indulging in selling of illicit liquor and narcotics and psychotropic substances, he added.

the finance ministry noted

positive signs of strengthening

private consumption demand,

citing increasing air passenger

traffic, robust sales of passen-

ger vehicles, growing digital

payments, and improved con-

sumer confidence.

The DGP also directed the CPs/SSPs to ensure the deposition of weapons in compliance with the ECI norms.

Sharing more details, Spl DGP Arpit Shukla said that security has been beefed up across the state and field officers have been asked to carry out audit of police force and muster 75% of the police force for deployment during elections. All the CPs/SSPs have already been asked to keep vigil around the anti-social elements and carry out flag marches in their jurisdictions to build confidence

among the general public, he added. He said that the checking at

from agriculture.

Inter-state borders has been intensified to check the movement of criminals, bootleggers and drug smugglers. The 25 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) have been deployed in vulnerable districts of the state to instil confidence among the general public as well as to dominate sensitive and hyper-sensitive areas in the state, he added.

The 25 companies include five coys of Central Reserved Police Forces (CRPF), 15 coys of Border Security Force (BSF) and five covs of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

Meanwhile, the Spl DGP said that all the Police officers have also been circulated the guidelines issued by ECI.

for furthering construction In addition, non-farm employment has seen a revival, signalling improved capacity to absorb labour transitioning **NEW DELHI** : Commenting

REGION

Punjab CEO Holds Meeting with Political Parties; apprises about key election process

Chandigarh

Punjab's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sibin C, convened a meeting with representatives from major political parties in the state to discuss essential aspects of the upcoming elections. During the session, he provided detailed insights into the election process, highlighting key statistics such as the total number of voters (2,12,71,246), including Male voters (1,11,92,959), Female voters (1,00,77,543), Transgender voters (744), Persons with Disabilities (PwD-1,57,257), Overseas Voters (1597) and the number of polling stations (24,433).

Additionally, he informed attendees about recent provi-

AAP strengthens in Sangrur and Sri Fatehgarh Sahib Lok Sabha constituencies



TARUN BHAJN Chandigarh

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab gained more strength in Lok Sabha constituencies of Sangrur and Sri Fatehgarh Sahib when hundreds of Congress office bearers and Sarpanchs of many villages joined them.

On Tuesday, prominent Congress leader Mai Roop Kaur Bagrian, with her entire family, Simarjit Singh Sehke (Vice Chairman Punjab Pradesh Congress Kisan and Mazdoor Cell, Punjab) along with many other Congress office bearers of Sangrur and many Sarpanchs of Amargarh and Fatehgarh Sahib constituencies, along with their all panchayat members, joined

the Aam Aadmi Party. Senior AAP leader Harpal Singh Cheema and AAP candidate from Sri Fatehgarh Sahib Gurpreet Singh GP welcomed all the new members to the Aam Aadmi Party. MLA Bassi Pathana Rupinder Happy, Singh Rai and Milkfed Chairman Narinder Singh Shergill were also present. Harpal Singh Cheema said that the Aam Aadmi Party will register big wins in Sangrur and Sri Fatehgarh Sahib. He said that common people as well as leaders who want to work for the betterment of Punjab are with the AAP.



sions allowing PwD voters and boasts 150% availability, enindividuals aged 85 and above suring a surplus of 50% more to opt for voting at home. Regarding Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) availability, Sibin C stated that the state

JAGMOHAN SINGH

the

than required. Furthermore, he assured that all polling stations would be equipped with essential facilities such as ramps,

water supply, proper lighting arrangements, and toilets. He emphasized that all polling stations would be conveniently located within 2 kilometers of voters> addresses.

He elaborated on various intricacies of the electoral process, including candidate qualifications for Lok Sabha elections, disqualification provisions (both constitutional and statutory), nomination procedures, grounds for rejection of nominations, and rules governing withdrawal of nominations, as well as symbol allotment regulations.

ČEO also outlined the key provisions of the Model Code of Conduct, stressing that political parties and candidates must refrain from hate speech, religious or caste-based vote solicitation, personal attacks on

opponents, or criticism based on unverified reports. He further emphasized the necessity of obtaining prior permission from district authorities for meetings and other events.

He provided insights into the Suvidha portal and its role in simplifying the nomination process and obtaining various permissions for political parties. Through the Suvidha portal, candidates can file nominations and affidavits online, schedule meetings with returning officers for document submission, and streamine administrative procedures. The meeting was also at-

tended by Additional CEOs Harish Nayyar and Abhijeet Kaplish, Joint CEO Sakkatar Singh Bal and other officials of CEO office.

the Bargari sacrilege case, it is clear that Dera Sirsa head was behind this

entire anti-Sikh crime. He said that

from time to time the governments

of the state have only played politics

instead of giving justice to the Sikhs

Dhami asked the Punjab gov-

ernment that now when the names

of Dera Sirsa head Gurmeet Ram

Rahim and his follower Honeypreet

have clearly come out from the state-

ments of accused Pardeep Kaler, the

government should immediately

arrest both of them and bring them

on this serious matter.

Punjab DGP directs police officers to ensure free, fair & peaceful LS Poll

ensure that foolproof arrange-

ments have been made by the

gun house owner for safe stor-

He directed the officers to

carry out mapping of vulner-

able areas to identify the sensi-

tive and hyper-sensitive areas

so that extra force could be de-

ploved to avoid any untoward

situation ahead of the General

the officers to make special

involved in heinous crimes

of election-related offences.

The DGP ordered officers

to intensify the checking of

vehicles, especially commercial

There should be no let up in

He said that a special

age of firearms.

TARUN BHAJNI Chandigarh

In order to ensure free, fair and peaceful forthcoming General Elections 2024, Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav on Tuesday, directed all the CPs/SSPs of the state to lav effective interstate/inter-district nakas to keep vigil on the movement of anti-social elements, drug smugglers and bootleggers, and mobilise maximum force for area domination and confidence-building measures.

The DGP was chairing a state-level meeting through VC at his office with senior police officers, Range ADGs/IGs/ DIGs, CPs/SSPs, all gazetted officers posted in districts, and all SHOs in the state to review preventive measures ahead of elections and apprise them about the guidelines of the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Emphasising on the need to Elections. He also directed all build a positive environment in the state, DGP Gaurav Yadav efforts to nab accused persons directed all the police officers to do professional policing and and expedite the investigastrictly adhere to all aspects of tion and prosecution of cases the Model Code of Conduct and follow all the instructions and guidelines from the ECI to hold free and fair elections. The instructions of the ECI should be further disseminated

vehicles, entering and exiting the state to check the influx with the entire force, he said. of narcotics and illicit liquor. DGP Gaurav Yadav informed the officers that there the ongoing campaign against drug traffickers, criminals and is a complete ban on the issuance of new arms licenses. He gangsters, he said. also directed the CPs/SSPs to ensure the deposition of campaign has already been weapons in compliance with the ECI norms.

He also asked CPs/SSPs to Jumpers and for execution of non-bailable warrants frequently carry out checking at gun houses to review the (NBWs) security arrangements and

Pertinently, since the launch f special campaign from January 1, 2024, Police teams till now have arrested as many as 2890 POs, while, preventive action has been taken initiated against 2456 people under sections 107/151 of the CrPC act. Similarly, of a total 2110 Non-Bailable Warrants, 1175 NBWs have been executed successfully.

Notably, the 25 companies f Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) have been deployed in vulnerable districts of the state to instil confidence among the general public as well as to dominate sensitive and hypersensitive areas in the state. The 25 companies include five covs of Central Reserved Police Forces (CRPF), 15 coys of Border Security Force (BSF) and five coys of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

Meanwhile, the DGP asked all the officers to have an excellent inter-departmental liaison and cooperation so that all stakeholders and departments work in tandem to ensure peaceful elections.

launched to arrest Proclaimed vestigation to give justice to the Sikhs. Offenders (POs) and Parole Demand for a separate HC in Haryana hanging on fire since a long time

PARVESH HANDA

Demand for a separate High Court for Harvana is although a long pending issue, but in fact serious efforts have never been taken in this regard so far by the government who so ever ruled over in the state, except few political leaders raising demand prior to the elections only to attract vote bank. However, the former chief minister Rs 10,000 each to be deposited in Manohar Lal Khattar had suggested government in centre for a separate High garh before 23rd May 2024 for not Court for Haryana by dividing the existing Punjab and Haryana High Court in two parts, similar to the Secretariate building in Chandigarh in which both Haryana as well as Punjab government offices are functioning separately under a roof by dividing the area, which will save huge amount to be spent over procurement of land and on construction of building, he said. Information reveals that more than 6,50,000 court cases are lying pending under trial in Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh, which include nearly 40% cases belonging to Haryana state. Information also reveals that nearly 8 lakh cases are lying pending under trial in Punjab courts for a long time and nearly 14 lakh cases are lying pending under trial since a long time



MORE THAN 6,50,000 COURT CASES ARE LYING PENDING UNDER TRIAL IN PUNJAB AND HARYANA

If people keep the memory of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh in their mind, they will not dare to do wrong: Anil Vij



PARVESH HANDA Chandidarh Former Home and Health Minister of Haryana, Anil Vij said, "I believe that if people keep the memory of Shaheede-Azam Bhagat Singh in their mind, they will not dare to do wrong". Vij said that Ambala Cantonment pays homage to the martyrs, and our effort is to walk the path shown by the martyrs. Vij was interacting to the media persons on Saturday after unveiling the statue of the immortal martyr Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh in Ambala Cantonment today. On this occasion, the chant of "Inquilab Zindabad, Shaheede-Azam Bhagat Singh Amar Rahe" filled everyone with patriotism. Vij also raised slogans of "Inquilab Zindabad". He said that the statue of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh



Punjab govt should arrest Dera Sirsa head,

SGPC office on Saturday, Dhami corded in the court by the accused Pradeep Kaler, who was arrested in

ECI directs to transfer Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar

TARUN BHAJNI

his follower Honeypreet.

In a statement issued from the

Election Commission of India (ECI), on the basis of a complaint has directed to transfer Jalandhar Deputy Commissioner, Vishesh Sarangal. The letter issued in this regard, specifies that he should be transferred from

said that with the statements re-

Also directs to transfer Ropar Range and Border Range Police Officers

Chandigarh

DIG of Border Range, Narindpresent posting to some other er Bhargav, have been directed place not in his home district. to be transferred. These two it must to ensured that officers have also to be transferred out of the district and not posted within is not posted within the same the same parliamentary constituency. Above both officers ECI has demanded a panel of are getting retirement in April 3 Officers to be appointed the and June respectively. The Commission has demanded panels of 3 names for both postings, from whom new posting would be done



SATISH HANDA

The Bench of Working Chief Jus-

tice Gurmeet Singh Sandhwalia and

Justice Lapita Banerjee fined both

Haryana and Punjab governments

submitting the status report as per

order dated 22nd May 2018 regard-

ing the pitiable condition of cow sheds

and the animals lodges in these cow

sheds across the state a result large

number of animals die due to neglect,

hunger and lack of medical facilities.

The honorable court also ordered a

status report in this regard by this

In the writ submitted in this re-

gard, the complainant had specified

severe neglect towards the animals

not producing milk as such their

condition became bad to worse due

to starvation in the absence of feed,

allegedly adopting double standards

by the government. According to the

complainant filed writ most of the

cowsheds in these states are function-

ing as milk dairies and the animals,

cows unable to produce milk and

buffaloes are being illegally smuggled

to other states for slaughtering in

which police as well as few govern-

ment officers are also providing as-

sistance to these smugglers for their

self-vested interest.

date to avoid further action.

Chandiharh



Chandi

to Punjab and proceed with the in-

the officer should be transferred out of the district and parliamentary constituency. new Deputy Commissioner of Jalandhar.

Similarly, ADGP of Ropar Range, Jaskaran Singh, and



A terrible accident happend on Zirakpur-Patiala Road

PHOTO: RAVINDER SINGH

tiny into the dynamics at play.

Could it be interpreted as a

genuine display of guru-shishya

Haryana CM Saini's close association with Khattar raises concerns about the autonomy & decision-making authority

TARUN BHAJNI Chandigarh

In the ever-evolving landscape of Indian politics, transitions of power often carry the weight of anticipation and intrigue. Nayab Saini's ascent to the position of Haryana's 11th Chief Minister on March 12 has sparked a keen interest not just for the policies he's set to implement, but also for the figure lingering in his shadow: his predecessor, Manohar Lal Khattar. The presence of Khattar alongside Saini has sparked numerous speculations and raised eyebrows across the political spectrum. Is it rooted in sincere mentorship, with Saini regarding Khattar as his guiding light? Or does it



mask a more strategic agenda, meticulously crafted by higher echelons of political power? In every official and personal

affection, with Saini seeking engagement, the duo's cama-Khattar's sage counsel? Or does raderie remains unmistakable. it hint at a carefully orchestrated plan to ensure Khattar Khattar's ubiquitous presence during Saini's visits, whether retains a prominent position in official or personal, invites scruthe political limelight?

PARVESH HANDA

Guru-Shishya Affection or Political Strategy

The recent inauguration of the Sant Shiromani Samark in Kurukshetra on March 15 provided vet another tableau for this curious dynamic. While Saini's association with Khattar may be interpreted as a genuine display of guru-shishya affection, it also raises questions of a broader political strategy at play. The deliberate efforts to keep Khattar in the limelight, as evidenced by official press releases of the Public Relations department and joint appearances, hint at a calculated move to leverage his popularity and administrative experience for the party's benefit.

HIGH COURT, CHANDIGARH, WHICH INCLUDE NEARLY 40% CASES BELONGING TO HARYANA STATE

justice to the people. Information also reveals that a proposal was made to set Southern part of Haryana state for the convenience of the people residing in the area at a distant place from Chandigarh arriving to attend appearance in the case in the High Court, but the proposal remain dumped in files without any action for a long time due to lack of interest by the government as well as senior political leaders in the state.

Information reveals, presently there are 55 judges providing justice to the people in Punjab and Haryana High Court Chandigarh, whereas according to the workload 85 judges in this court. The since a long time.

in Haryana courts, delaying issue of separate capital and a separate High Court for Haryana has been going on for the past many years, up a High Court Bench in in which neither Haryana nor Punjab state are prepared to leave their right on Chandigarh as their capital. Similarly, efforts have been made by the Haryana state government for a separate High Court in the state for a long time but brought no result, since both Punjab and Haryana state governments feel that in case separate High Courts are developed, who will have the right over Chandigarh union territory? As such political leaders are not taking interest in this matter, in spite of the fact justice has been delayed to the people having their cases there is a requirement of under trial in the High Court

this country was liberated by sacrificing lives. He informed that this statue, costing about 68. lakh.rupees, has also been made by the same artists who made the statue of Sardar Valabhbhai Patel. Vij said that in the same

will always remind people that

way, we have also installed a statue of Subhash Chandra Bose in the heart of the Ambala Cantonment. This statue also inspires people to fight against the British government. He worked against the British government and raised arms. A memorial of international level is being built at a cost of 500 crores to remember them and to pay tribute, because the first freedom struggle started from Ambala in 1857. Earlier, former Home Minister Anil Vij, addressing the people present on this occasion, said that a 12-foot-high statue of Shaheede-Azam Bhagat Singh has been installed near the entrance gate of Ambala Cantt at a cost of 68 smugglers of value worth Rs lakh rupees. This statue will communicate patriotism to six crore and the campaign everyone and will be a source against drug smuggling will

of inspiration for us.

Two arrested with 4kg opium on the highway at Ambala

Ambala

CIA -2 staff of Ambala police on a clue that drugs are being smuggled by two youths, arrested two persons carrying 4 kg opium on a motorcycle brought from Jharkhand to for supply in Punjab near Kali Paltan bridge on the National Highway No. 1 at Ambala Cantt. Both arrested were identified as Jaspreet Singh a resident of Patiala district in Punjab and Ramjit Ganjhu resident of village Jaled in Chatra district in Jharkhand.

While addressing media persons here Jashandeep Singh Randhawa SP Ambala said that during preliminary investigation, the accused admitted supplying opium being smuggled from Jharkhand in Punjab for a long time. Rand-



hawa said that the arrested accused were produced in the court on Monday and remanded to police custody for six days. He said that a case has been registered against both accused under NDPS Act at Parao police station Ambala Cantt. He further disclosed that with effect from r1 this year till 18h March Ambala



continue.

NATION

'Blessings of people with Arvind Kejriwal': AAP's Raghav Chadha on Delhi CM arrest

NEW DELHI: AAP leader and Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha has criticised the arrest of AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal saying that the person who gave free electricity to lakhs of families and arranged free bus services for women has been arrested.

The AAP leader claimed that the blessings and love of 135 crore Indians are with Arvind Kejriwal, who, as per the Chadha, "was arrested under a conspiracy." The Enforcement Directorate arrested Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in connection with the Delhi excise policy case on Thursday night, in which two senior AAP leaders are already in judicial custody.

The case pertains to alleged irregularities and money laundering in framing and imple-

Omar Abdullah wants simultaneous Lok Sabha, Assembly polls in J&K



SRINAGAR: Former J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday urged the Election Commission of India to ment. He said the Congress was fully prepared to usher prioritize the restoration of full democracy in the Union Territory (UT)

Talking to reporters, Abdullah emphasized the importance of scheduling both Parliament and Assembly elections to ensure democratic representation in the region. Abdullah expressed his

lack of expectations from the Election Commission, asserting that their primary focus should be on facilitating the democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir. He highlighted the prolonged absence of Assembly elections in the region, stressing that it has been a decade since the last such electoral exercise took place. "We have no expectations

from the Election Commission. The Election Commission should play a role in its mission of bringing democracy. It has been ten years since Jammu and Kashmir has seen Assembly elections," Omar said.

Abdullah further questioned duct of Lok Sabha elections ers), Yuva Nyay (justice for and the delay in holding Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.



menting the Delhi excise policy to its senior citizens, gave free electricity to lakhs of families, case 2022, which was later scrapped. gave every household access to In a video message posted on water, sent senior citizens to

KAVITA SHARMA

Congress president Mal-

likarjun Kharge today said

that India was on the cusp of

change as the people across

the country were fed up with

the ten years of misrule and

injustice of the Modi govern-

Kharge presided over a

meeting of the Congress Work-

of Himachal Pradesh & Telan-

gana and other senior leaders

Kharge said, the country was

In his opening remarks,

and party functionaries.

New Delhi

that change.

X, the AAP leader said, "The Teerth Yatra and arranged free person who gave education to bus services for mothers and sislakhs of children in Delhi, proters. Today that person, Arvind Kejriwal, has been arrested." vided better and free treatment

"It was anticipated for a long time that Arvind Kejriwal ji would be arrested under a conspiracy. And it has been proven right. In this difficult situation, the love and blessings of 135 crore Indians are with Arvind Kejriwal ji," he said.

Meanwhile, Delhi Minister and AAP leader Gopal Rai announced that the battle has begun and said that the Aam Aadmi Party will hold a nationwide protest against the "illegal" arrest of Arvind Kejriwal.

"If the BJP thinks that they can finish the Aam Aadmi Party and threaten the entire Opposition by arresting Arvind Kejriwal, then they are wrong...A battle has begun. We have decided that we will stage a protest at the BJP headquarters at 10 am...," Rai said.

Rahul Gandhi Slams Centre for Freezing Elections in J&K Congress accounts, calls it criminal act

KAVITA SHARMA New Delhi

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi today questioned the silence of the constitutional bodies like the courts and the Election Commission of India over the freezing of party's bank accounts during General Elections.

"Idea of India being the largest democracy in the world is a lie", said Gandhi in his fierce remarks at a press conference he addressed along with the party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson, Ms Sonia Gandhi.

"Hate filled 'Asura-Shakti' has frozen our bank accounts to murder Indian democracy", he remarked. He said, imagine what will happen if a family or a business account is frozen, the family will starve and business will cripple. "That is precisely what has been done

with the Congress party, litereven can its leaders travel from ally, two months before elecone place to another. Alleging that it has been

tions", he said, while adding, the party is not even able to orchestrated to cripple the party financially during elecbook advertisement slots. tions, Rahul Gandhi said, it

Gandhi observed that even if the accounts are unfrozen now, the damage has already been done. He pointed out, the party cannot support its workers and candidates nor

Jamaat-e-Islami condemns attack on foreign students during namaz in Hostel of Gujarat University 'Manifesto of Hope' for India

KAVITA SHARMA New Delhi

The Vice President of Jamaat-

e-Islami Hind, Prof Salim Engineer has condemned the attack on foreign students in a hostel in the Gujarat University. In a statement to the media, the JIH Vice President said, "Jamaat-e-Islami Hind condemns in the strongest terms the shocking incident that occurred in the campus of Gujarat University on Saturday night, where a group of

Danish Ali from UP and Pappu Yadav from Bihar join Congress today

KAVITA SHARMA New Delhi

In a major development that will have significant bearing on General Elections in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar. Jharkhand and Jammu and Kashmir, one sitting, two former MPs and a sitting MLA today joined the Congress at the party headquarters.

Congress spokesperson and Briefing reporters after the meeting of the Congress Chairman of the Media and Working Committee, Congress Publicity in the Communica-General Secretary, organizations Department of the AICC Pawan Kĥera, while briefing the reporters said that the joining of ers from other pa



foreign students, were brutally assaulted for offering prayers during Ramadan. Accordand the responsible officers ing to reports, five students were injured and two had to tion of the police present at be hospitalized. These foreign students were offering namaz on the premises of the hostel. elements do not fear the law."





from Rajasthan and Haryana had joined the party earlier and more leaders were to follow.

They include sitting BSP MP from Amroha Kanwar Jammu and Kash

before September: **Home Minister**



FW DESK

was being done at the behest

of the Prime Minister and the

Home Minister as nothing

can happen in today's India

Some outsiders entered the

campus and misbehaved with

the students followed by stone

pelting and vandalism. It was

surprising that the police did

not act on time and allowed

the perpetrators to commit

arson within the university

campus. Inaction of the police

also should be investigated

should be punished. The inac-

the campus points out why

hatemongers and anti-social

without their knowledge.

Union Minister of Home and Cooperation Amit Shah on Vednesday said that elections in Jammu and Kashmir would be held before September

Speaking at the fourth edition of the CNN-News18 marquee leadership conclave **Rising Bharat Summit** 2024 - which was held in New Delhi from March 19 to 20, the Home Minister said that the elections in the union territory will be held

before September. Supreme Court has given the government deadline until September this year to hold polls.

Home minister said that the three dynastic parties never allowed democracy to flourish in Kashmir.

"However, for the first time during the Prime Minister Narendra Modi government, more than 30,000 Panch and Sarpanches have been elected," Shah said. "I want to appeal to the Muslim brothers and sisters in Kashmir that if they want democracy to be deepened then do not vote for the three dynastic parties the Congress, the Peoples Democratic Party, and the National Conference.

MSMEs to Drive India's Green Transition, **Carbon Neutrality by 2070**



NEW DELHI: Under the aegis of the Ministry of MSME, the **RAI Industries Association** (RIA) and the Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Me-Danish Ali, five time MP from dium Enterprises (FISME) Bihar Pappu Yadav, two time organized a landmark international conference on "Climate Change Regulations & Green solution.' Technology To Reduce Carbon During the inaugural ses-Footprints in MSMEs" in New sion, Vanessa Erogbogbo, Delhi today. Chief, Green and Inclusive

has to carry the entire carbon footprint accumulated through the value chain. The MSME industry producing the final product is currently carrying this burden. By discussing production processes, we to figure out an equitable

Value Chains, Division of Sus-

tainable and Inclusive Trade.

ITC, Geneva, highlighted that

decarbonization and trade are

atically shaping the trade pros-

pects of countries worldwide.

For India to achieve carbon

neutrality by 2070, MSMEs

will have to be drivers for the

green transition," she stated.

unanimously agreed on the

need for internationally recog-

nized certifications, standards,

and a global regulatory body to

ensure equitable outcomes as

countries are at different stages

of green technology transition.

ing trade and climate poli-

cies to drive innovation in the

MSME sector through trans-

parent cross-border consulta-

They emphasized harmoniz-

The panelists and experts

"Climate change is system-

inter-linked concepts.



share). Every commitment for justice includes five further guarantees each

Congress promises to bring

Congratulating Rahul Gandhi for Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, he said, these were not just "political Yatras", but the largest "mass contact movement in our political history".

fervently seeking a change. He "One can't ignore the fact predicted that the guarantees currently being doled out by that nobody in our times has the Modi government would undertaken such a massive meet the same fate as that of exercise", he pointed out, while the "India Shining" slogan of adding, both Yatras immensely helped in bringing the issues concerning the common man

Referring to the 63 days long Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, he said, both he and Rahul

Kharge stressed on the need to spell out the five commitments of justice and the 25 guarantees across the country tion KC Venugopal along with commitments which included and the agenda for the party's the General Secretary Comgovernment for next fiv



on the national centrestage. Gandhi addressed a num-

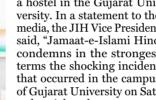


ing Committee (CWC) here today. It was attended by the dari nyay (justice for rightful based on dialogue with tens of thousands of people during the **Congress Parliamentary Party** Chairperson, Mrs Sonia Gan-Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat dhi, former Congress President Jodo Nyay Yatra. This is go-Rahul Gandhi, chief ministers

ing to change the lives of all Indians through revolutionary guarantees like that of employment and proportionate participation and representation in the decision making process, he added. Gandhi said, the Congress

will fight the elections on the agenda of 'five resolutions of justice' with five guarantees each for every resolution making it a total of '25 guarantees' which will touch every Indian's life.

ber of public rallies in which they promised guarantees and



ay (justice for farm-

youth), Naari Nyay (justice for Rahul Gandhi said that the women), Shramik Nyay (jus- Manifesto is not merely a tice for workers) and Hisse- document but the roadmap

Former Congress president and Pawan Khera said that the 25 guarantees will be the "game changer" of the ensuing elections.

munications Jairam

going to be a continuous process as the winds of change have two sittings BJP MPs, one each Jai Prakash Patel.

mir Lal Singh and three time MLA and party whip of the started blowing. He pointed out, BJP in Jharkhand assembly

Has BJP deployed RSS to counter farmers' agitation?



the reportedly anti-farmer statement of RSS second-in-command. the farmers' union have become so furious that they have even rebuked the RSS by stating – 'the betrayer of freedom struggle, RSS has no right to question the

nraged

with

patriotism of farmers." Vijoo Krishnan General Secretary and Dr Ashok Dhawale President of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), on March 18, referred that in the recently concluded Akhil Bharativa Pratinidhi Sabha of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) at Nagpur, Dattatreya

Hosabale, its General Secretary, has denigrated the ongoing farmers' protests in Punjab and Haryana by terming them as anti-national. Citing media reports, wherein Hosabale, the in his official General Secretary's report, reportedly placed that "disruptive forces" are behind the farm protests. AIKS alleges that Hosabale also added that to spread "separatist terrorism" in Punjab under the guise of the farmers' movement. "This

canard spread by the betrayers the entire country was on the of the freedom struggle is out streets condemning the hangof vengeance against the inces- ing of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru sant SKM-led united movement and Sukhdev, the RSS and of farmers which has forced pro-corporate Farm Acts."

Farmer unions unearthing the **RSS history Roots**

Unearthing the history of RSS, AIKS, a major body of farmers, divulges that various official inquiry commission reports have identified the nefarious role of the RSS in inciting communal riots. "This very reason led to its ban in 1948 after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination and in 1992 after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. The role played by the Sangh Parivar functionaries

in the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom as well as in the 2002 Gujarat genocide are well documented. AIKS calls upon all patriotic forces to isolate and expose fascistic elements led by the RSS who are spreading canards against the farmers' movement.

Criticizing RSS over its reportedly anti-farmer stand and statement. All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), a part of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) has commented that it is of the firm opinion that the audacity second-in-command of the RSS, demonstrated by Hosabale to demonise the farmers' movement in general and the Punjab movement in particular is a loyal continuum of the RSS' trajectory of collaborating with British there are well orchestrated plans imperialism and denigrating the greatest anti-imperialist martyrs like Bhagat Singh

AIKS alleges that when other Hindutva outfits were the Narendra Modi-led BJP busy denouncing them. The



the name opted to belittle the immense sacrifices of these revolutionaries as "failure", as clearly demonstrated in Golwalkar's "Bunch of Thoughts".

AIKS has got outraged to note that the RSS has used the term "disruptive forces" to characterise the patriotic farmers of Punjab and Haryana who are fighting against the corporatisation of agriculture. AIKS alleges that the reality is that it is Hindutva terrorism that is acting as the most disruptive internal threat to the unity and diversity of the country. Hindutva fascistic politics is closely aligned with international finance capital and big business which is threatening Indian farmers. AIKS reminds that RSS should not forget its history of collusion with the imperialist forces and with im-

perialist agencies like the CIA. CIA Agent J A Curran, who enjoved unusual access to the top brass of RSS from 1949 to 1951, in his book had identified RSS as a tool that would help the Government to withdraw the RSS which couldn't produce imperialist block led by the USA

and workers' movement in independent India. By demonising the farmers' movement against corporatisation, RSS is showing its support for imperialist forces in their project to devour Indian agriculture.

Haryana SKM has also sharply reacted to the RSS stand and criticised this stating the statement as highly disparaging and outrageous remarks by the RSS in Nagpur branding the farmers struggle of Punjab and Haryana of causing disruption.

SKM leader, Dr. Inderjeet Singh sharing a statement stated that the General Secretary of Rashtriya Pratinidhi Sabha of RSS has in his narrative accused that terrorism and separatism were raising their 'ugly head' under the garb of farmers movement in Punjab.

"While taking a very strong view of RSS insinuations in its bid to tarnish the image of the farmers struggle the SKM has recalled the treacherous role of RSS during freedom struggle as a result of that there is not a single freedom fighter worth to contain the militant peasant a single freedom fighter in the expose the Corporate-Criminal-

ranks of BJP and RSS. True to their pro-British collaborationist historical legacy the BJP is still in alliance with the communal -corporate and corrupt nexus", divulged Dr. Singh. Haryana SKM has also called

upon all farmers organisations and sections fighting for the defence of their livelihood to expose the real face of RSS among people and teach them a lesson to save the country.

Why the RSS in fray to attack farmers?

It is pertinent to remind that the farmers are on agitational path for not implementing the agreement with SKM dated 9.12.2021 regarding MSP@ C2+50% with guaranteed procurement to all crops, Comprehensive Loan Waiver for farmers despite 1.00.474 farmers committed suicide (2014-2022), Rapid Privatisation of Electricity, Protecting the Ajay Mishra Teni, Union (MoS) Home Affairs- the Killer of Farmers at Lakhimpur Kheri,

as alleged by farmers. In its letter of Resolution issued at Ramlila Ground Mahapanchayat, on March 14, SKM has called a country wide mass protest against BJP under its slogan- "EXPOSE, PROTEST. PUNISH BJP / BJP KA POLE KHOLO, VIRODH KARO, SA-JAA DO" and Observe 23rd and March 24 as 'Save Democracy Day' in all villages to Protest BJP giving Kheri seat to the

alleged killer of Lakhimpur Kheri farmers, Ajay Mishra Teni Union (MoS) Home and

Corrupt nexus under BJP. Just after two days of farmers' call, RSS has reportedly denigrated the ongoing farmers' protests in Punjab and Haryana by terming them as anti-national.

But BJP leadership is keeping mum over the farmers agi tational program. Then why did RSS react so sharply? Doesn't it indicate that BJP has deployed its commanding RSS wing to counter the farmers³ attack on the party? Political analysts deduce that as BJP, being a political party, fears that attacking the farmers directly at this crucial junction, when the Lok Sabha election clouds are hovering over the country, may further enrage the farmer community and it can harm its vote share. However, how many votes the BJP will fetch, can't be predicted at this time, because farmers remain farmers till they are in Delhi, as and when they come to their villages they convert into the village groups and vote as per their village politics forgetting what they have undertaken in Delhi. That is why, the farmer unions are keeping the iron hot through their regular agitational programs. How much they will succeed in retaining the farmers as farmers till they press the EVM button, which can oust the BJP from reigning the country. Let us see which way the wind blows.

Jag Mohan Thaken is a Senior Journalist, Columnist & Political Analyst, views are personal

Speaking on the occasion, Mercy Epao, Joint Secretary-SME at the MSME Ministry, announced plans to establish two new institutes - the National Institution of MSMEs and Green Economy Technology Centre in Hyderabad.

'These institutes will handhold MSMEs for documentation, exploring potential markets for green products, and transitioning from non-renewable to renewable sources," she said.

In his welcome address, Rakesh Chhabra, Vice-President, FISME and President, Rai Industries Association. emphasized the need to develop mechanisms to address the carbon footprint burden on MSMEs producing final products.

"While assessing the carbon footprint, the finished product tion and cooperation.

Kerala Financial Corporation Raises **Rs 307 Crore For MSME Finance**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: to its distinguished AA credit The Kerala Financial Corporation (KFC) has successfully secured Rs 307 crore for financing initiatives aimed at bolstering the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector within the state. These funds are secured through Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) with 10-vear term bond issuance. facilitated via the BSE Electronic Book Platform (EBP), carries a competitive coupon rate of 8.89 per cent.

rating from both the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and SEBIapproved rating agencies. Sanjay Kaul, Chairman and Managing Director, KFC,

highlighted the market's confidence in the corporation's financial robustness, evident in the successful mobilisation of funds through NCDs. He emphasised that the lower coupon rate and robust investor demand underscore the market's trust in KFC's sustainability-

driven approach.

lined plans to further augment its financial resources, aiming to raise approximately Rs 700 crore from the bond market in the upcoming fiscal year.

KFC attributes its ability to secure funds at favourable rates

Additionally, KFC has out-

He stated, "The lower coupon and strong demand from investors show the market confidence in the financial strength of KFC. It is the success of our sustainabilitydriven strategy.'

Export leap helps India deal with global headwinds

n a year fraught with economic challenges and logistical nightmares, India's goods exports have delivered a welcome sur-■ prise. With an 11.9% jump in February, reaching a staggering \$41.4 billion, the nation has witnessed its healthiest growth in exports in 20 months. This achievement is not just about numbers; it's a beacon of resilience in uncertain times. February's performance marks only the third time in two years that India's exports have crossed the formidable \$40 billion threshold. This surge is particularly noteworthy, given it outpaced the average \$35.4 billion export tally observed in the first ten months of the fiscal year. The backdrop to this achievement includes daunting challenges such as disruptions in the Red Sea and a droughtstricken Panama Canal, which have constricted key trading routes, elevating both the cost and time of shipment. While recent trade figures might suggest India is navigating these logistical hurdles with ease, the reality could be more complex. Some of February's success could be attributed to earlier dispatches, now reaching their destinations through longer, alternate routes. This scenario suggests a blend of backlogged orders coming to fruition and signs of demand picking up, despite the high interest rates casting a shadow over global market conditions. Despite a challenging narrative for exports in 2023-24, with electronics goods exports barely budging, policymakers remain cautiously optimistic. Yet, the latest readings for electronic components trade and a marginal growth in electronics imports and exports in February underscore the need for vigilance and support for sectors like textiles, and gems and jewellery, which are critical for employment and economic stability. As India celebrates its export milestone, the focus must remain on navigating the lingering challenges in global trade. The trade deficit, though widened by a significant jump in imports, including pricey gold, should not distract from the pressing need to bolster support for exporters.

MK NARAYANAN FEARS AI'S INFLUENCE ON 2024'S GLOBAL ELECTIONS COULD UNDERMINE DEMOCRACIES.

Generative AI puts democracy to test

e rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) models suggests that we are at an inflection point in the history of human progress. The speed with which the development of newer skills is taking place suggests that the day is not far off when Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) will transform into Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), which can mimic the capabilities of human beings. Such a situation could revolutionise our ideas about what to expect from machines. Breakthroughs in the Al domain will bring about a new chapter in human existence, including the way people react to both facts and falsehoods.

The potential of AI is already clear. Many such as Sam Altman of OpenAI in the United States, believe that it is the most important technology in history. AI protagonists further believe that AI is set to turbocharge, and dramatically improve, the standard of living of millions of human beings. It is, however, unclear, as of now, whether, as many Doomsday savers aver, whether AI would undermine human values and that advanced AI could pose 'existential risks'.

Al and the electoral landscape

With the seven-phase general election in India having been announced, and to be held from April 19 to June 1, 2024, political parties and the electorate cannot, however, afford to ignore the AI dimension. This year, elections are also scheduled to be held (according to some reports) in as many as 50 other countries across the globe, apart from, and including, India, Mexico, the United Kingdom (by law, the last possible date for a general election is January 28, 2025) and the United States.

These elections are set to alter the fate of millions of people, and policymakers and the electorate need to ponder over the positive and negative impacts of this new technology. Rapid technological breakthroughs in AI (especially its latest manifestation, such as Generative AI, that provides dynamic simulations and mimics real world interactions) carry their own burdens. It may be too early to fully contemplate the possible impact of AGI- AI systems that simulate the capability of human beings — but all this is indicative of yet another dimension to electoral dynamics that cannot be ignored.

It may, hence, not be wrong to consider the



elections of 2024 as a curtain-raiser to whether AI and its offerings (such as Generative AI) would prove to be a game changer. The world is by now aware that AI models such as ChatGPT, Gemini Copilot are being employed in many fields, but 2024 would be a test case as to whether AI's newer models could alter electoral behaviours and verdicts as well. The good news, perhaps, is that those wishing to employ Generative AI to try and transform the electoral landscape do not have adequate time to fine-tune their AI models. It would, however, still be a mistake to underestimate the extent to which AI could impact the electoral landscape this time as well. What might not happen in 2024, may well happen in the next round of elections, both in India and worldwide. A recently published Pew Survey (if it can be

treated as reliable) indicates that a majority of Indians support 'authoritarianism'. Those employing AI could well have a field day in such a milieu to further confuse the electorate. As it is, many people are already referring to the elections in 2024 worldwide as the 'Deep Fake Elections', created by AI software. Whether this is wholly true or not, the Deep Fake syndrome appears inevitable, given that each new election lends itself to newer and newer techniques of propaganda, all with the aim of confusing and confounding the electorate. From this, it is but a short step to the inevitability of Deep Fakes.

Tacking AI 'determinism'

AI technology makes it easier to enhance falsehoods and enlarge mistaken beliefs. Disinformation is hardly a new methodology or technology, and has been employed in successive elections previously. What is new is that sophisticated AI tools

will be able to confuse the electorate to an extent not previously known or even envisaged. The use of AI models to produce reams of wrong information, apart from disinformation, accompanied by the creation of near realistic images of something that does not exist, will be a whole new experience. What can be said with some degree of certainty is that in 2024, the quality and quantity of disinformation is all set to overwhelm the electorate. What is

more worrying is that the vast majority of such information would be incorrect. Hyper realistic Deep Fakes employed to sway voters, and micro targeting are set to scale new heights. The potential of AI to disrupt democracies is, thus, very considerable. Simply being aware of the disruptive nature of AI and AI fakes is not enough. It may be necessary, for democracies in particular, to prevent such tactics from distorting the 'thought behaviour' of the electorate. AI deployed tactics will tend to make voters more mistrustful, and it is important to introduce checks and balances that would obviate efforts at AI 'determinism'. Notwithstanding all this, and while being mindful of the potential of AGI, panic is not warranted. There are many checks and balances available that could be employed to negate some of AI's more dangerous attributes

The wide publicity given to a spate of recent inaccuracies associated with Google is a timely reminder that AI and AGI cannot be trusted in each and every circumstance. There has been public wrath worldwide over Google AI models, including in India, for their portrayal of persons and personalities in a malefic manner, mistakenly or otherwise. These reflect well the dangers of 'runaway' AI.

Inconsistencies and undependability still stalk many AI models and pose inherent dangers to society. As its potential and usage increases in geometric proportion, threat levels are bound to go up. As of now, even as the potential of AI remains very considerable, it tends to be undependable. More so, its 'mischief potential' cannot be ignored. As nations increasingly depend on AI solutions for their problems, it is again important to recognise

what many AI experts label as AI's 'hallucinations'. In simple terms, what these experts are implying is that 'hallucinations' make it hard to accept and endorse AI systems in many instances. What they further imply, specially in the case of AGI, is that it tends at times to make up things in order to solve new problems. These are often probabilistic in character and cannot be accepted ipso facto as accurate. The implication of all of this is that too much reliance on AI systems at this stage of development may be problematic. The stark reality, though, is that there is no backtracking from what AI or AGI promises, even if results are less dependable than one would like.

EDITORIAL

SOPINION

We cannot also afford to ignore other existential threats associated with AI. The dangers on this account pose an even greater threat than harm arising from bias in design and development. There are real concerns that AI systems, oftentimes, tend to develop certain inherent adversarial capabilities. Suitable concepts and ideas have not yet been developed to mitigate them, as of now. The main types of adversarial capabilities, overshadowing other inbuilt weaknesses are: 'poisoning' that typically degrades an AI model's ability to make relevant predictions; 'back dooring' that causes the model to produce inaccurate or harmful results; and even 'evasion' that entails resulting in a model misclassifying malicious or harmful inputs thus detracting from an AI model's ability to perform its appointed role. There are possibly other problems is well, but it may be too early to enumerate them with any degree of probability.

India's handling of Al

Elections apart, India being one of the most advanced countries in the digital arena, again needs to treat AI as an unproven entity. While AI brings benefits, the nation and its leaders should be fully aware of its disruptive potential. This is pecially true of AGI, and they should act with due caution. India's lead in digital public goods could be both a benefit as well as a bane, given that while AGI provides many benefits, it can be malefic as well.

M.K. Narayanan is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, a former Governor of West Bengal, and a former Executive Chairman of CyQureX Private Limited, a U.K.-U.S. cyber security joint venture. Views are personal

GAUTAM BAMBAWALE SAYS BHUTAN-INDIA LEADERSHIP TRUST SIGNIFICANTLY STRENGTHENS BILATERAL RELATIONS. Ties that epitomise India's neighbourhood first policy

ople have always marvelled at how ittle Bhutan with an area of 38,394 square kilometre and a population of 7.7 lakh as compared with its giant neighbour India with an area of 3.28 million sq.km and a population of 140 crores have been the closest of partners and the best of friends over the past 50 years and more.

The answer is quite simple. Both nations look to each other as equals, we treat each other with the utmost respect and we have long realised that size does not really make a difference in relations between two sovereign nation states. Thus, India has constantly respected Bhut nese identity, Bhutan's unique religious practices and its desire to be economically prosperous while retaining its own way of life. On its part, Bhutan has long known that there is no real threat to its sovereignty or identity from its southern flank. Hence, it has looked to India to help it grow, develop and prosper. India has lived up to this expectation. Over the decades this has developed into a unique level of trust amongst the leadership of the two countries. It has been in evidence in the recent past.



is expected to play a significant role The anchor of hydropower cooperation

back-to-back visits of the Prime Ministers of Bhutan and India to each other's nations is a manifestation of this attention placed on the relationship by both overnments.

This is a good augury for the continued growth and development of India-Bhutan ties. It epitomises India's Neighbourhood First policy approach.

Measures to consider

that this model continues in the future too. India must contribute

sistance partner to Bhutan and contributed Rs

5,000 crore to its 12th Five Year Plan which just

concluded. Critical in this process of develop-

ment assistance is the fact that India does not

merely undertake projects which are of benefit

to it but pays a lot of attention to the priorities

of the Bhutanese people so that projects of

direct benefit to them are constructed. Such

confabulation and discussion is an integral part

of the successful partnership for prosperity

between New Delhi and Thimphu. It is critical

LETTERBOX

Readers' feedback adds value to the newspaper. Please email comments on reports, features and columns to fwletters@gmail.com. We will publish them on this page.

If agriculture goes wrong, nothing else will have a chance to go right. M. S. Swaminathan

THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY

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

The Gelephu project

The King of Bhutan paid a visit to India in November 2023 during which he hinted at his plans for a Mindfulness City at Gelephu in southern Bhutan. It is to be like a Special Economic Zone to attract foreign investment and advance prosperity for that nation. Naturally, India, including its business

= BOOKS: REVIEW

in this effort. Simultaneously, the Gelephu Mindfulness City is to keep sustainability, well-being and environmental concerns at the forefront. Such a project is expected to lead the people of Bhutan to higher income levels while allaying any concerns about its impact on Bhutan as a carbon negative country. Gelephu city is expected to focus on human well-being too with an emphasis on yoga, rest and recreation, spa therapies and mental relaxation channels.

The visit last week by the Prime Minister of Bhutan to India was a follow-up to the king's earlier visit and there were excellent discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as the President of India, Droupadi Murmu. This week, Mr. Modi is to pay a return visit to Bhutan. We must understand that any relationship, whether it is between two individuals or between two nations, needs constant tending, regular dialogue and a lot of care and cooperation. The

New book helps navigate the soul's dark chambers

n the realm of contemporary fiction, Aparna Sanyal's İnstruments of Torture emerges as a haunting anthology that ventures deep into the psychological labyrinths of the human psyche. Published by HarperCollins, this collection of stories is a bold exploration of the dark corners of the mind, where the lines between reality and nightmare blur. Each narrative, ingeniously named after medieval torture devices, serves as a metaphor for the internal torment and existential dread that define the human condition

The thematic brilliance of Sanyal's work lies in its ability to use historical instruments of physical agony as conduits for delving into psychological torment. In stories such as The Rack, where a child is subjected to hormonal treatment to cure dwarfism, or The Judas Cradle, depicting a perilous love affair, Sanyal skillfully intertwines the physical with the psychological, suggesting that the greatest tortures are often self-inflicted or society-imposed. Sanyal's prose is described by Namita Gokhale as carrying "tenderness in its brutality," a testament to the author's ability to navigate the complexities of human emotion with a gentle yet unflinching hand. Sonali Bendre praises the collection for taking readers on a "hypnotic journey to hell and back," highlighting Sanyal's mastery over twisted tales that probe the darkest facets of human nature. Instruments of Torture is not just a

collection of stories; it is an introspective journey that challenges readers to confront their deepest fears and darkest desires. The mirror it holds up to the subconscious reveals not just individual vulnerabilities but also societal flaws-our collective obsession with normativity, the cruelty of unattainable standards, and the violence of suppression and repression. The book's inception, as shared

by Sanyal, traces back to a physical exhibition of medieval torture devices, a macabre inspiration that beautifully encapsulates the essence of the stories within. This origin story adds a layer of intrigue, hinting at the depth of research and the period of gestation these tales underwent in the author's mind before taking shape on paper.

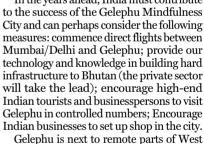
Prerna Gill, commissioning editor t HarperCollins India, aptly describes the book as "serrated yet mesmerizing," a work that draws the reader's imagination towards the wonders and horrors of the human psyche. This sentiment captures the essence of Sanyal's anthology-it is a work that mesmerizes even as it disquiets, a rare feat in contemporary literature.

This anthology marks Sanyal's first foray into fiction, building on her established reputation as a poet with a keen eye for the macabre and the whimsical. Her debut book, Circus Folk & Village Freaks, laid the ground-

Hydropower cooperation is the bedrock of India's relations with Bhutan. Several cooperative hydroprojects have been completed and commissioned by the two governments which supply clean electricity to India and provide Thimphu with a stream of revenue due to which it has graduated out of the Least Developed Country status. The delayed Punatsangchhu-II hydropower project is expected to be completed in 2024 - yet another successful example of the government-to-government model of cooperation in hydropower.

In recent years, a new joint venture model was developed for the construction of hydroprojects between India and Bhutan, but none of the proposed five projects has really taken off. Perhaps, it is time to acknowledge that this new proposed model is flawed and there is a need to go back to the drawing board to work out a more practical and potentially successful new model for hydroprojects.

India has also been a major development as-



Bengal and Assam and the success of the Mindfulness City will have positive socio-economic spillovers for these geographies as well. It will provide yet another example of the win-win cooperation between India and Bhutan.

Gautam Bambawale is a former Indian Ambassador to Bhutan and is currently the trustee of the think-tank, Pune International Centre. Views are personal.

Torture by Aparna 200 pages; Rs399 the complexities of the human soul and the instrumental roles our inner demons play in shaping our realities.

Furthermore, Instruments of Torture transcends the traditional boundaries of fiction, inviting readers into a participatory experience that demands reflection and, at times, selfexamination. The stories, while rooted in the grotesque and the unsettling, are imbued with a profound sense of empathy for the human condition. Sanyal's narrative technique, which seamlessly blends the real with the surreal, compels the reader to question the very nature of reality and the constructs of the mind.

This collection not only entertains but also educates and enlightens, offering a lens through which to view our own lives and the societal norms that bind and sometimes constrict us. Through this intricate tapestry of pain and introspection, Sanyal achieves a rare harmony between the aesthetic and the therapeutic, making Instruments of Torture a seminal work in the exploration of human consciousness and a significant milestone in the landscape of Indian English literature.



Instruments of Sanyal HarperCollins

work for her exploration of the fringes of society and the mind, themes that she delves into with greater darkness

and depth in Instruments of Torture.

The book is a compelling read that does not merely entertain but also provokes thought and introspection. It is a mirror reflecting not just the individual reader's subconscious but the collective psyche of society. With its intricate blend of historical references, psychological insights, and lyrical prose, the book stands out as a significant contribution to contemporary fiction and a must-read for those willing to explore the depths of the human mind and the dark side of human history. As we close the pages of this haunting collection, we are left with a deeper understanding of

CORPORATE **GINDUSTRY**

Interest subsidy cap for MSME exporters to remain Rs 2.5 crore in Q1 of FY24-25

NEW DELHI: The government will maintain a cap of Rs 2.5 crore on interest subsidies for individual export units during the first quarter of the upcoming fiscal year 2024-25.

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) issued a notification on Wednesday, specifying that the Rs 2.5 crore cap per Importer Exporter Code (IEC) will remain in effect until June 30, 2024, covering the quarter starting from April 1, 2024.

President of Federation of Indian Micro and Small &

ED action against **Pharma Company** alleged over Rs 1626 crore fraud



SATISH HANDA

Enforcement Department (ED) registered a case against a pharmaceuticals Chandigarh based firm Parabolic Drugs Company under Prevention of Money laundering Act (PMLA) against three persons Pranav Gupta, Vineet Gupta both promoters of the company and the Chartered Accountant S.K. Bansal about six months ago. According to a 225 page report submitted by ED, the comapny allegedly cheated 12 banks for amounts worth Rs 1626.74 crore by obtaining loans on the basis of fake documents and failed to pay back the amount, which was invested by them in another firm.

ED investigations revealed that most of the firms in which the money was invested were in the names of their near and dears as well as staff members shown as director of the firms and surprisingly according to ED investigation the driver of their firm Harvinder Pal who was totlaly uneducated was shown as director of 14 firms and when he was

offered job in the com-

DR. ANIL KUMAR



Medium Enterprises (FISME) "Interest Equalisation Scheme Prashant Patel has expressed satisfaction on the development. MSMEs to maintain competi-

is an important tool for Indian

SNAPCHAT

and beauty

tive advantage with competing nations in sectors where margins are razor thin in MSME dominated sectors such as apparel and leather", he added.

This measure falls under the widely utilised Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) targeting specific sectors and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

This decision follows the continuation of the capping policy introduced earlier in the current fiscal year, aimed at ensuring broader accessibility to the scheme's benefits.

engagements of this influential

demographic. Snapchat offers

a unique platform for engaging

these young audiences in creative

ways, standing out as a vibrant

hub for dynamic users who are

not readily accessible on other

platforms. Our commitment is

to deepen our connection with

Young India, making Snapchat

their go-to platform for authentic

self-expression, real connections,

and innovative brand interac-

tions." He added.

Samsung to Bring AI and Hyper Connectivity to Tech-savvy Indian Consumers : CEO, JH Han **ARUN KUMAR RAO**

Bengaluru

Jong-Hee (JH) Han, Vice Chairman, CEO and Head of the Device eXperience (DX) Division at Samsung Electronics, visited Samsung BKC at Jio World Plaza, Mumbai for the first time since the store's opening and underlined the Company's commitment to the Indian market by bringing AI and hyper connectivity to its tech-savvy consumers. He also invited consumers to come and experience Samsung's latest AI innovations across its product portfolio, from televisions and digital appliances to smart-

phones Jong-Hee (JH) Han Said. "AI will enable cd technologies to improve people's daily lives while always remaining non-intrusive and in the background. With our model of open collaboration, we want to bring AI and hyper-connectivity to all our consumers. India is the next big playground for AI and our flagship Samsung

BKC store is an embodiment of our 'AI for All' vision and will showcase 'One Samsung'. At the various zones of the at our R&D centres to bring cut-

Gol approves e-vehicle policy for India as manufacturing hub

NEW DELHI: Government of India (GoI) has approved a scheme to promote India as a manufacturing destination so that e-vehicles (EV) with the latest technology can be manufactured in the country. The policy is designed to attract investments in the e-vehicle space

by reputed global EV manufacturers This will provide Indian conaddition (DVA) during manufac-

sumers with access to latest technology, boost the Make in India initiative, strengthen the EV ecosystem by promoting healthy competition among EV players leading to high volume of production, economies of scale, lower cost of production, reduce imports of crude oil, lower trade deficit, reduce air pollution, particularly in cities, and will have a positive impact on health and environment. The policy entails the following:

Minimum Investment required: tal number of EV allowed for Rs. 4150 Cr (USD 500 Million) import would be limited to the No limit on maximum investinvestment made or Rs. 6484 Cr ment.

Timeline for manufacturing: 3 years for setting up manufacturing facilities in India, and to start commercial production of e-vehicles, and reach 50% domestic value



ting edge technologies such as store, consumers can see our AI to the world. We are proud AI vision in reality and experience how smarter, better of them," experiences will redefine how we live,

Earlier this year, Han unveiled Samsung's 'AI for All' vision at CES, showcasing how AI will enable people to experience their devices more intuitively and conveniently than ever before. As part of its 'AI for All' vision, Samsung in January unveiled Galaxy AI in its new Galaxy S24 smartphone series.

Han said, "India has a large population of tech-savvy young consumers that inspire us to state-of-the-art manufacturing innovate. Here, thousands of young, enterprising youth work thousands of people.

the maximum. Domestic value

turing: A localization level of 25%

by the 3rd year and 50% by the

5th year will have to be achieved

applicable to CKD units) would

be applicable on vehicles of mini-

mum CIF value of USD 35,000

and above for a total period of 5 years subject to the manufac-

turer setting up manufacturing

facilities in India within a 3-year

The duty foregone on the to-

period.

The customs duty of 15% (as

Mediation Act 2023 has crucial role in ADR DOMINICK RODRIGUES

Mumbai

The Mediation Act 2023 will play a crucial role in meeting the urgent need for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods that are quicker, less costly and more flexible than the traditional adversarial system in India's already burdened judiciary sys-

tem, according Roopa Shetty, Founder, Lex Situs Ïndia with

its dense population sees

innumerable disputes that remain backlogged in the judiciary system where the District judiciary alone had 44.79 million pending cases in January 2024, while the High Courts had a backlog of 6.2 million cases in that period and the Supreme Court had 69,766 cases pending by July, 2023.

The Mediation Act 2023 which brought in strategic amendments to the Mediation Bill 2021 -- highlights a significant evolution in India's approach to dispute resolution, which further leverages technology to enhance access to justice.

Indian direct selling takes a leap stride, grows at 12%, crosses Rs. 21000 crores: survey average growth (CAGR) of the

FW DESK New Delhi

> Blooming back with a leap stride, the Indian direct selling industry has registered Year-On-Year (YOY) growth of more than 12%, with the gross industry turnover at Rs 21,282 crore in 2022-23, according to an annual survey report released by the Indian Direct Selling Association (IDSA) here on Wednesdav.

Samsung recently inaugu-

rated the connected lifestyle

experience store Samsung BKC

where consumers can experi-

ence 'One Samsung'. This entails

Samsung's latest AI innova-

tions and how it powers the

Company's connected devices

The Company has been in

India for over 28 years, having

begun operations here in 1995.

Samsung continues to be deeply

committed to India with two

plants, three R&D centres and

one design centre that employ

ecosystem.

The survey, compiled by leading market research company KANTAR, released by G. Kamala Vardhan Rao, Chief Executive Officer. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in a function here. Shri Rao took this opportunity to congratulate IDSA on releasing this report.

According to the report, there (equal to incentive under PLI has been a comprehensive imscheme) whichever is lower. provement in all areas of the Maximum 40,000 EVs at the direct selling industry and the rate of not more than 8,000 total sales have increased by Rs 2252 crore compared to the year the country. The growth trajecper year would be permissible he investment is of USD 800 was partially 2021-22 whi marred by the pandemic. The

about 20% of the total manu-

facturing sites registered with

the USFDA and situated out-

side of the USA. The success of

Indian pharmaceutical compa-

nies in international markets

can be gauged from the fact

that about two-third of India's

pharmaceutical exports goes to

NAFTA (North American Free

Trade Agreement that estab-

lished free trade zone between

the U.S., Canada and Mexico),

Europe and Africa. It is worth-

while to note that over 55% of

the exports from India are to the

'highly regulated markets'. For

2021-22, the USA was the larg-

est importer from India with a

share of 29%. In April-March

FY23, the U.S. share in imports

of drugs, pharmaceuticals and

fine chemicals from India stood

at 29.72%, followed by Belgium

(2.82%), South Africa (2.59%),

U.K. (2.55%), Brazil (2.53%),

Netherland (2.34%), Rus-

sia (2.26%), France (2.24%).

Germany (2.06%), Nigeria

(2.03%), among others. Fur-

ther, 8 out of 20 global generic

global best-selling drugs were

biologics. In that background,

pharmaceutical companies in

India have to focus on biologics,

biosimilars, vaccines and other

such drugs. With that transition

along with current strength.

it will be able to sustain the

Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish Associate

Professor (Finance & Accounting),

Department of Pharmaceutical

(Mohali), Punjab. Views are

views of the Institute.

Management,NIPER, SAS Nagar

personal and do not represent the

momentum of exports.

In 2016, 8 out of the top 10

companies are from India.

direct selling business in the four years from the year 2019-20 to 2022-23 has remained at 8.3 percent. The Northern region continues to take the lead with 30% of turnover, followed by the East

with 25%, West 22%, South 15%, and North East 9%. Maharashtra led at the top with 12%, followed by West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh with 10% each among the states, the survey highlights.

Wellness and nutraceutical products remained the preferred segment, accounting for 73.5% and cosmetics and personal care 11.3% of the gross turnover. The industry has recorded an 8.3% CAGR over four years, with the number of active direct sellers reaching around 86 lakhs, from 84 lakh in 2021-22, the survey says. Vivek Katoch, Chairperson, IDSA, said, "The report showcases an encouraging trend for the direct selling industry in tory of the industry h a surge over the years.



Bangalore

ARUN KUMAR RAO

Snap Inc. hosted its debut event

in Bengaluru, underscoring

the city>s significance as a key

growth region and unveiling the

platform>s unique appeal to the

local youth. During the event,

Snap leadership delved into the

platform>s growth trajectory,

distinctive features, leadership

in Augmented Reality (AR),

and the compelling reasons why

brands are increasingly choos-

Bengaluru

Samsung, India's largest consumer electronics brand, announced the launch of Galaxy A55 5G and Galaxy A35 5G with awesome innovations in Bengaluru today. The new A series devices have multiple flagship-like features including Gorilla Glass Victus+ protection, camera features enhanced by AI, and a tamperresistant security solution, the Samsung Knox Vault, amongst

many other new features. During the Launch Ghufran Business, Samsung India, said for the l ast two



popularity among India's MZ consumers. The launch of Galaxy A55 5G & A35 5G reinforces our commitment to make flagship-Alam, Senior Director, MX like innovations accessible to all. Galaxy A55 5G & A35 5G will "Galaxy A series has been the help us consolidate our leaderhighest-selling smartphone ship in the 5G smartphone segment and the fastest-growin

Ghufran Alam addressing Media on Flagship like Design and Durability said," For the first

time, Galaxy A55 5G gets a metal frame and Galaxy A35 5G gets a premium glass back. These phones are available in three trendy colours - Awesome Lilac, Awesome Ice blue and Awesome Navy, and are rated IP67, which means they can withstand up to 30 minutes in 1 meter of fresh water. They are also built to resist dust and sand. With a 6.6-inch FHD+ Super AMOLED Display and minimized bezels, the 120Hz refresh rate provides extremely smooth performance. These smartphones come with Flagship like durability with Corning

ARUN KUMAR RAO



while 66% commend its role in relieving the pressure of posting content for likes and shares - reaffirming its status as the go-to platform for genuine interaction experiences, including fashion among youth nationwide2.

In India, Snapchat boasts of a

200 million strong user base1. A

recent YouGov survey found that

in Bengaluru, 85% of Snapchat-

ters use the app daily. The study

also revealed that 78% of Indians

Snapchat's Debut Event in Bengaluru Spotlights Snap's Unique Appeal for Youth to Connect with Friends and Family Commenting on the Young India opportunity and Snapchat's vision for growth in India, Pulkit Trivedi, Managing Director, India, Snap Inc., said, "India is home to 20% of Gen Z worldwide, presenting an unmatched opportunity for brands and businesses to tap into the priorities and technological

papers

years, showcasing its immense mid-premium (INR 30,000-INR on the front and back⁵ he added addition (DVA) within 5 years at Million or more.

Transition from Import dependent to Net Exporter: *Journey of India's Pharmaceutical Industry*

a Glass Victus+ protectio

Eicher expands Maharashtra footprint with 4th Dealership



DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai

Eicher Trucks & Buses – a business unit of VE Commercial Vehicles Ltd. continued its strategic growth by expanding its footprint in Maharashtra through inauguration of its new 3S dealership in Mumbai recently.

While this is the 4th AV Motors dealership in Mumbai, it is strategically situated alongside NH160, barely 15 kms from Bhiwandi (Asia's largest warehousing hub which contributes significantly to transit of goods and materials in the region) in offering easy accessibility to local and transit vehicles from Nasik to Mumbai and Nhave Seva port, according to Vinod Aggarwal, MD&CEO, VECV.

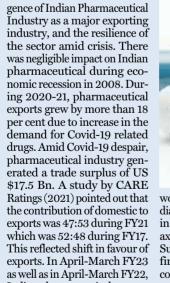
Emphasizing Eicher's customer-centric approach alongside its continuous expansion, Aggarwal said the goal was to enhance productivity and profitability of customers through vehicle uptime and superior service.

Ëicher takes pride in being the first player to introduce a 100% connected range of vehicles with its advanced telematics solution, he said, adding that the new AV Motors Bhiwandi dealership would operate along with its three other branches in Panvel, Nalasopara and Mira Road in facilitating 'best-in-class' service experience.

ANGRISH ndian pharmaceutical sector contributed about 2 per cent to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and around 8 per cent to India's total merchandise exports by mid-2021 (RBI Bulletin, July 2021). Exports of Drugs and Pharmaceuticals constituted 5.71 per cent of the total exports from India by June 2023. Exports of Drugs and pharmaceutical products grew from Rs. 90,415 Crore in 2013-14 to Rs. 2,04,110 Crore in FY2022-23 with growth of almost 126 per cent. Drug Formulations and Biologicals formed 72.54 per cent of total pharmaceutical exports in FY2022-23, followed by Bulk Drugs and In- ceuticals & Fine Chemicals to termediates (18.43%), Vaccines

(4.01%), Surgicals (2.54%), and Ayush and Herbal Products (2.47%)

India (Pharmexcil), pharmaceutical exports from India are 2023-24. It will be almost 10.2 per cent growth as compared to FY2022-23. Data on actual exports and growth rate achieved for the current financial year will emerge in next 10 days, i.e., by March 31, 2024. Export of pharmaceutical products for 2021-22 stood at Rs. 1,74,955 Crore, and imports for the same period amounted to Rs. 60,060 exported bulk drugs/drug intermediates worth Rs. 33,320 Crore whereas import of bulk and Rs. 150 Crore by 1965. drugs was Rs. 35,249 Crore for the same period.



One notable fact is the emer-

Indian pharmaceutical companies exported Drugs, Pharma-214 countries

Numerous factors contributed to the emergence of pharmaceutical industry in India as As per the Pharmaceuticals a major foreign exchange earner Export Promotion Council of due to export focus. Entrepre neurship, availability of trained manpower, policy interventions likely to touch US \$28 Bn in including Intellectual Property laws, pricing norms, foreign exchange related law, have made

immense contribution to make India a net exporter. In 1947, indigenous production of drugs was worth only Rs. 10 Crore (Rs. 100 mn), and there was domination of western Multinational Companies (MNCs) having control over 80-90% of Indian pharma-Crore. In FY2021-22, India ceutical market. Output of the pharmaceutical industry was valued Rs. 100 Crore by 1962 Sumantra Ghoshal et al.



work titled - World Class in India: A Case Study of Companies in Transformation that Ranbaxy Laboratories (now, part of Sun Pharmaceuticals) was the first Indian pharmaceutical company to look for 'an export market' in the 1970s. By the year 1997, Ranbaxy had 16 per cent of the Indian pharmaceutical export market share. The Company also won the Indian Chamber of Commerce 'Trishul' award for export achievements

on multiple occasions.

Patent Act of 1970 allowed Indian companies to reproduce patented foreign pharmaceutical products as long as these were produced in a novel way. Many Indian companies developed novel processes to manufacture generic versions, e.g., Ranbaxy had developed a novel process for the manufacture of the antibiotic doxycycline in 1978, and developed a nonpatent infringing process for the antibiotic cefaclor which was a complex molecule of a leading Multinational Corporation (MNC) - Eli Lilly. Ranbaxy started targeting export markets in developing economies. The company focused on the (2002) shared in their popular export of bulk pharmaceutical percentage of total production

feedstocks and intermediates. Export emphasis can be gauged from the fact that the company had an average annual growth rate of 34 per cent from the year 1986 to 1996. By mid-1990s, about 50 per cent of company's turnover was from exports. Not only this, the company had entered into joint ventures with various foreign companies in order to establish market presence in foreign markets.

Drug (Prices Control) Act, 1979 capped the prices of drugs sold within the country, thereby restricting the profit margins of pharmaceutical companies. Many pharmaceutical companies started catering to foreign markets to achieve growth, e.g., Ranbaxy considered this as an opportunity and became a leading exporter of pharmaceutical products under Davinder Singh Brar who went on to become CEO and Managing Director of Ranbaxy. He had joined the company as a Business Development Manager in 1977. Entire pharmaceutical industry started following the trend which meant focus on exports in addition to local market. Share of exports as a

ber of manufacturing facilities of pharmaceutical products from almost 2,000 in 1970 to about 24,000 in 1995. Pat-

about 24% in 1994-95.

There was a rise in the num-

and efficacy, there was need to primarily demonstrate the bioequivalence of the product. In 1997, share of Indian companies in total number of ANDA approvals was mere 1.7 per cent. In 2003, Indian Pharmaceutical firms filed 73 ANDAs with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, i.e., 20%

From time to time, many Indian pharmaceutical companies came up with innovative pharma products at low cost which catered to patients in many countries, e.g., in 2001, CIPLA introduced the world's first ever recommended 3-in-1 fixed dose combination to fight AIDS, and it was made available at less than \$1 per day compared to over \$12,000 per patient per year. Price Competitiveness gave an edge to

of pharmaceuticals went up Indian pharmaceutical com- API & FDF) registered with from just 3.22% in 1980-81 to panies. Dinesh Kumar and T. the USFDA which constituted L James (2021, February) in their paper observed that India had price competitiveness in most of the pharmaceutical products over major exporters of pharmaceutical products in 1996. For this analysis, they had clubbed exports of all formulations into twenty one pharma-

ceutical product groups. The setting up of Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil) on 12.05.2004 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry with the mandate to promote pharmaceutical exports, played pivotal role. Products and services falling under the purview of the Council include bulk drugs, finished dosage forms, nutraceuticals, surgicals, biologics, collaborative research, contract manufacturing, regulatory services, clinical trials and consultancy. The Council acts as the facilitator of pharmaceutical exports through organizing trade delegations abroad, organization of business meetings in India and abroad, etc. Reports such as Study Report on Market Access Barriers in Key Export Destinations, Market Research Reports, etc. created awareness among organizations focusing on exports of pharmaceutical products.

Setting up of world-class manufacturing facilities gave edge to Indian pharmaceutical companies in international markets. Many pharmaceutical companies from India came up with facilities which fulfilled the requirements of foreign drug regulators, e.g., 741 USFDAapproved facilities as of August 2021. By April 2023, India had 703 manufacturing sites (for

of the total ANDAs.

ent Act provisions on Process Patents helped Indian Pharmaceutical Industry to tap the opportunity presented by off-patented drugs. Many blockbuster drugs (patented drug that is able to generate more than US \$1 Bn sales annually) which were patented drugs, became off-patent, e.g., Lipitor of Pfizer, Advair of GlaxoSmithKline, Nexium from AstraZeneca, to name a few. Companies from India tapped opportunities by filing for Abbreviated New Drug Applications (ANDA) approvals. ANDA approval meant that in order to establish safety

BANKING S FINANCE

RBI Tightens Supervision on Retail Lending, Warns of High-Risk Areas

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is stepping up its efforts to tackle the "exuberance" in retail lending, expanding its attention to include emerging sectors like mortgage-linked "top-up" loans

Concerns regarding the rising risks to the financial system have led the central bank to bolster its supervision of the industry and urge individual lenders to limit credit in identified high-risk areas, reported Reuters

Though no formal enforcement measures have been implemented yet, the report indicates that the RBI is actively tightening supervision and prodding financial institutions to take proactive measures.

In the past six months, the RBI has rolled out several measures aimed at curbing retail lending by both banks

and non-bank financial institutions

Additionally, it has issued public warnings cautioning against "all forms of exuberance" in lending practices. This heightened scrutiny, effectively serving as a warn-

and a record rally in the US

markets after the Federal

Reserve indicated three rate

markets staged a smart re-

covery. The 30-share BSE

Sensex climbed 190.75 points

or 0.26 per cent to settle at

72,831.94. However, a sharp

correction in IT and tech

stocks limited the rise. Dur-

ing the day, it jumped 474.43

After falling in early trade,

cuts this year.

ing for financial institutions, marks a shift for the central bank. Notably, as recently as September, the RBI had stated



did not suggest the emergence of systemic stress.

According to sources cited in the report, the RBI is adopting a four-step approach to supervision, encompassing monitoring, warning, penalising, and taking action.

The aim is to provide entities with an opportunity to rectify their course based on public or specific warnings, that India's credit expansion while also taking action when

necessary

Initially, the RBI generally utilises moral persuasion tactics like delivering speeches, engaging in discussions with bank executives, and holding individual meetings to prompt banks to address concerns before considering more assertive enforcement actions.

The report further reveals that the RBI is cautioning lenders about mortgage topups, advising them on the risks associated with algorithmbased credit models, and encouraging some institutions to moderate co-lending.

In a related development, **RBI** Governor Shaktikanta Das, in December, emphasised that the central bank does not wait for the house to catch fire before taking action, particularly when discussing the stricter regulations announced for personal loans.

RBI injects Rs 75,000 Crore to Offset **Impending Liquidity Crunch** of another VRR auction in the

NEW DELHI : The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bolstered the banking system with a significant infusion of Rs 75,000 crore through a Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction on Friday. This proactive move aims to counteract the impending liquidity crunch anticipated due to forthcoming advance tax and Goods and Services Tax (GST) payments. Projections indicate

that these tax obligations could collectively drain nearly Rs 2.5 trillion from the banking system Concerns loom over a potential liquidity deficit in the coming week as these tax payments draw nearer. Expressing this sentiment, a treasury head from a

public sector bank emphasised the importance of maintaining sufficient liquidity within the banking system.

The success of Friday's VRR auction underscores the RBI's commitment to ensuring adequate liquidity levels, with indications suggesting the possibility

near future. Of the anticipated outflow, GST payments are estimated at approximately Rs 1.5 trillion, while advance tax payments stand at around Rs 1 trillion. The deadline for advance tax payment was March 15, with GST payments due on March 20. During the seven-day VRR auction held on Friday, banks submitted bids totaling Rs 76,560 crore. The RBI accepted bids at a rate of 6.52 per cent, which is lower than the marginal standing facility rate of 6.75 per cent. This rate differential provides banks with a viable avenue to ac-

cess liquidity overnight through the RBI's marginal standing facility, particularly in times of interbank liquidity constraints. Ultimately, the repo auction serves as a strategic mechanism

employed by the central bank to inject liquidity into the banking system, mitigating potential liquidity shortages.

India Set to become 3rd-Largest Economy and Stock Market, says Amitabh Kant

riculture

(MSMEs).

He underscored the need

for India to enhance learning

outcomes and skills, aiming to

provide 30 per cent of the global

Additionally, Kant empha-

sised the necessity of fostering

a conducive ecosystem for large

companies to thrive, thus sup-

porting the growth of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

He advocated for a signifi-

cant increase in research and

development spending from the

current 0.7 per cent to at least

Moreover, Kant highlighted

the simplification of business

procedures at the central level,

resulting in the elimination of

1500 laws. He also commended

the Start-up India movement,

which has witnessed remark-

able growth, with the number

of start-ups skyrocketing from a

mere 150 to 125,000, including

115 unicorns.

5-3 per cent of GDP.

skilled manpower by 2047.

NEW DELHI: India's G20 Sherpa and former NITI Aayog CEO, Amitabh Kant, made a bold proclamation, on Thursday, stating that within the next five years. India is poised to surpass Japan and Germany, emerging as the third-largest economy and stock market globally.

During his address at a conference titled "The Deccan Conversations, Accelerating Our Growth Story," Kant highlighted India's remarkable growth trajectory, citing a consistent growth rate of 8.3 per cent plus over the last three quarters. The conference was organised

by the Confederation of Indian Industry (Southern Region), where he emphasised India's resilience during this period, characterizing the nation as a formidable powerhouse.

Quoting insights from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Kant projected that India would contribute nearly 20 per cent to the world's economic expansion in the coming decade.

He stressed the pivotal role of South India as the engine driving India's growth narrative towards achieving a USD 35 trillion economy by 2047. Identifying key areas for

growth, Kant emphasised the importance of manufacturing, smart urbanisation, and ag-

MSEs battle Rs 20,000 cr in Pending Payments, Samadhaan Portal Data Reveals

NEW DELHI: The cumu- Rs 3,094 crore against varilative amount entangled in pending applications and cases filed by micro and small enterprises (MSEs) against delayed payments from their customers has surpassed Rs 20,000 crore.

According to statistics from the delayed payment monitoring portal, Samad-haan, by the MSME Ministry, a staggering Rs 20,413 crore remains trapped in 82,215 pending delayed payment applications since the portal's inception in October 2017.

Among the significant figures reported, the portal has received a total of 1.80 lakh applications, representing a settled within 45 days (with substantial Rs 41,804 crore. an existing agreement) or However, only 34,991

ous state governments, Rs 2,201 crore against different central public sector enterprises, Rs 1,679 crore against multiple state public sector enterprises, Rs 1,964 crore against proprietorship entities, and other miscellaneous

entities. An important provision to highlight is clause h under Section 43B of the Income Tax Act, scheduled to become effective on April

, 2024. This provision is designed to address delayed payments by prohibiting buyers from claiming expenses on invoices from MSEs unless they are within 15 vs if there

Previously, in January

& Healthy Balance MUMBAI: Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty **Sheets To Drive** closed higher for the third **Economic Growth: RBI** straight session on Friday, following gains in index majors L&T, ITC and Maruti

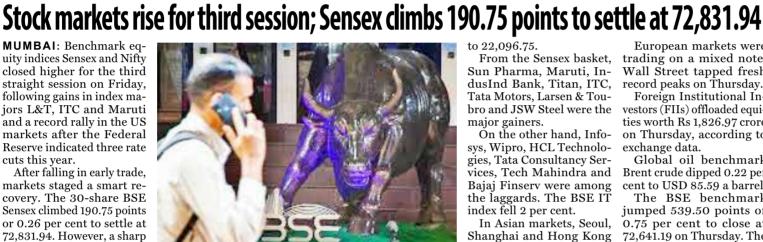
Structural Demand



NEW DELHI: In its latest monthly bulletin, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) projects that robust structural demand and healthier corporate and bank balance sheets will serve as primary catalysts for sustained economic growth.

The bulletin highlights India's real GDP reaching a sixquarter peak in the third quarter of FY24, attributed to robust momentum, solid indirect tax revenues, and reduced subsidies. Despite the festive season coinciding with the third quarter, private final consumption expenditure remained subdued, according to the RBI's 'State of the Economy' report authored by officials, including MD Patra. However, the outlook for premium consumer businesses remains strong, indicating a notable shift in per capita income. RBI officials emphasised the burgeoning opportunities in small towns, fuelling growth across various lifestyle segments.

Companies venturing into these markets early are reaping ignificant benefits, indicating a promising trajectory. They stated, "Small town opportunities are leading to growth of business across lifestyle segments, with companies that entered these markets enjoying the fruits of being first movers. High-frequency indicators further bolster optimism, pointing to sustained domestic demand vigour in February 2024, as evidenced by e-way bills, toll collections, and growth in automobile and retail sales



The NSE Nifty advanced points or 0.65 per cent to 84.80 points or 0.39 per cent ritory. 73,115.62.

From the Sensex basket, Sun Pharma, Maruti, IndusInd Bank, Titan, ITC, Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro and JSW Steel were the major gainers.

On the other hand, Infosys, Wipro, HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra and Bajaj Finserv were among the laggards. The BSE IT index fell 2 per cent.

European markets were trading on a mixed note. Wall Street tapped fresh

In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower, while Tokyo ended in the positive ter-

exchange data.

Outward FDI pace ahead Inward FDI in Feb 2024

record peaks on Thursday. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,826.97 crore on Thursday, according to Global oil benchmark

Brent crude dipped 0.22 per cent to USD 85.59 a barrel. The BSE benchmark jumped 539.50 points or

.75 per cent to close at 72,641.19 on Thursday. The NSE Nifty climbed 172.85 points or 0.79 per cent to 22.011.95.

as highlighted sions with Bhargav Dasgupta, Vice-

NEW DELHI: Finance Min- public and private sector enti-

ister Nirmala Sitharaman ties in India's growth journey,

Finance Minister meets ADB VP to

Explore Development Collaboration

President, Asian Development Bank (ADB), on Monday to explore avenues for

During the meeting, both parties exchanged perspectives on how ADB could partner with India to advance the They also delved into strategies for leveraging ADB's con-

ministry in a post on X.

The Finance Ministry, through a post on X, stated, "Both exchanged views on development collaboration. how @ADB_HQ may partner with India to further the development agenda. They also discussed harnessing ADB's convening power to development agenda further. crowd in other public and private sector institutions to participate in India's vening power to engage other growth.

from USD 2.18 billion in January 2024.

MUMBAI: India's outward

foreign direct investment

(FDI) commitments witnessed

a significant rise in February

2024, reaching USD 3.47

billion, as per the latest data

released by the Reserve Bank

This surge marks a notable

increase compared to the FDI

commitments of USD 2.82

billion recorded in February

that the sequential growth

trend continued from the

previous month, with FDI

commitments also clin

The data further revealed

of India (RBI).

2023

Breaking down the components of outbound FDI, it consists of equity, loans, and guarantees.

Equity commitments saw a decline to USD 502.14 million in February 2024 from USD 776.79 million the previous year, and notably lower than the USD 764.29 million recorded in January 2024.

Similarly, debt commit-

ments decreased to USD was also markedly higher compared to the USD 1.11 billion 251.08 million in February recorded in January 2024, as 2024, down from USD 334.75 million in February 2023, per RBI data. and also lower than the USD

The surge in outward FDI 306.59 million recorded in commitments signals growing confidence among Indian in-However, guarantees for vestors in exploring opportunioverseas units witnessed a subties beyond domestic borders. stantial increase, swelling to This trend reflects positively on India>s expanding pres-ence in the global investment USD 2.71 billion in February 2024 from USD 1.71 billion in landscape, fostering economic This surge in guarantees growth and diversification.

cases, amounting to Rs 6,112 agreement in place. crore, have been disposed of to date.

Typically, an application reviewed by the council undergoes conversion into a case under various stages of hearing. Conversely, 46,438 applications, totalling Rs 9,218 crore, have been rejected thus far.

cations and cases includes

2019, the government introduced the half-yearly MSME return form or MSME-1 form for buyers who default on payments beyond 45 days. Failure to submit this form

involved in pending appli- Rs 1,000, up to a maximum

incurs a penalty of Rs 20,000 by the company and every involved party. Subsequent The outstanding amount defaults attract a daily fine of of Rs 3 lakh.

Unlocking Financial Security: A Practical Guide to Using Gold Bonds for Emergency Funds



cal gold, which comes with storage and security concerns, gold bonds offer a convenient 'n times and secure way to invest in of un- the precious metal. Here are certain- some reasons why gold bonds could be an attractive option ty, havfor emergency funds:

STABILITY: Gold has

historically maintained its

even during periods of market

can be easily bought and sold

viding liquidity when needed.

Adding gold bonds to your

all volatility.

DIVERSIFICATION:

LIQUIDITY: Gold bonds

ing a robust financial safety net is crucial. While traditional options like savings accounts and fixed deposits are value over time, making it a popular choices for emergency relatively stable investment funds, exploring alternative avenues can provide added turbulence flexibility and security. One such option worth considering is investing in gold bonds. In in the secondary market, pro-2023, Indians purchased the largest quantity of sovereign gold bonds (SGBs) at 7.77 tonnes worth a whopping R 4,604 crore in the first series of this fiscal year, underscoring the preference for an asset that acts as a hedge against inflation and a safe-haven are backed by sovereign guarasset at times of global uncertainty.

Why Consider Gold Bonds for **Emérgency Funds?**

Gold has long been resource of returns. garded as a reliable store of value and a hedge against eco- in Gold Bonds for Emergency nomic volatility. Unlike physi- Funds:



investment portfolio can help Research and Evaluate: Bediversify risk and reduce overgin by researching different gold bond offerings available Government-backed: Gold in the market. Evaluate factors bonds issued by governments such as interest rates, tenure, and liquidity to find a bond antee, offering an added layer that aligns with your financial goals and risk tolerance. of security. Interest Income:

Many gold bonds offer fixed Assess Your Emergency interest income, providing Fund Needs: Determine the investors with an additional size of your emergency fund based on factors like monthly Practical Steps to Investing expenses, income stability, and potential financial obligations. Aim to allocate a por-

tion of your emergency fund to gold bonds to diversify risk. Purchase Gold Bonds: Once vou've identified suitable gold bonds, proceed to purchase them through authorized channels such as banks, financial institutions, or designated stock exchanges. Pay attention to the application process,

documentation requirements, and associated fees Monitor and Rebalance: Regularly monitor the performance of your gold bonds

and rebalance your portfolio as needed. Reassess your emergency fund requirements periodically and adjust your gold bond holdings accordingly.

January 2024.

February 2023.

Stay Informed: Stay updated on market developments, economic indicators, and regulatory changes that may impact the performance of gold bonds. Consider seeking advice from financial professionals or conducting thorough research before making investment decisions.

Incorporating gold bonds into your emergency fund strategy can provide a valuable laver of protection and diversification against financial uncertainties. By understanding the benefits of gold bonds and following

practical steps for investing in them, you can enhance the resilience of your emergency fund and safeguard your financial well-being in the long run. Remember to conduct thorough research, assess your needs, and stay informed to make informed

Author Sumit Sharma is Founder of Radian Finserv Pvt Limited

investment choices

Fourth Quarter Advance Tax Receipts Rise by 6%, Indicating **Economic Momentum**

NEW DELHI: The Centre's advance direct tax receipts for the fourth quarter of the current fiscal from companies, LLPs, and individuals have increased by a notable 6 per cent quarter-on-quarter, reaching Rs 2.85 trillion as of March 15 of the current financial year.

This sequential rise in advance tax collections in Q4 follows a 19 per cent annual increase in advance tax receipts for the third quarter of FY24, suggesting sustained traction in economic activity.

Advance tax collections serve as a reliable indicator of corporate profitability and individual earnings, with March 15 marking the deadline for fourth-quarter advance tax payments by companies and individuals.

Despite experiencing higher refunds during the period leading up to March 15, direct tax receipts (post-refund) amounted to Rs 18.91 trillion, representing 97 per cent of the full-year revised estimate of Rs 19.45 trillion for FY24. This indicates that receipts for the full year are poised to



surpass the revised estimate.

The additional collections (post-devolution) are expected to assist the Centre in maintaining the fiscal deficit within the revised estimate of 5.8 per cent of GDP in FY24, despite a slightly lower nominal GDP size than initially projected.

In the budget unveiled on February 1 this year, the Centre augmented the direct tax receipts target by Rs 1.22 trillion to Rs 19.45 trillion, primarily attributing the increase to buoyancy in personal income tax receipts.

As of March 15 of the current fiscal year, refunds amounted to Rs 3.34 trillion, marking a 9 per cent increase compared to Rs 3.07 trillion in the entirety

of FY23, indicating accelerated processing of refunds. The continuous rise in cor-

porate profitability across diverse sectors contributed to the sustained buoyancy in the quarterly advance tax mop-up. Advance tax receipts witnessed an upward trajectory, starting from Rs 1.17 trillion in Q1FY24, escalating to Rs 2.39 trillion in Q2, Rs 2.7 trillion in Q3, and finally reaching Rs 2.85 trillion in Q4FY24. The rise in corporate profitability across various sectors led to continued buoyancy in the quarterly advance tax mop-up. Advance tax receipts rose from Rs 1.17 trillion

in Q1FY24, Rs 2.39 trillion in Q2, Rs 2.7 trillion Q3 and Rs 2.85 trillion in Q4FY24.

INTERNATIONAL

border with Ireland – benefit-

ted the UK-Irish relationship

Varadkar's first stint lead-

ing Ireland lasted from 2017 to

2020, before he took up the role

as Tanaiste, or Deputy Prime

Minister, from 2020 until De-

cember 2022. He has been in a

"rotating Taoiseach" agreement

that underpinned a three-party

coalition with Fianna Fail and

After a party leadership

contest, a new Taoiseach is set

to be in place when the Irish

Parliament Dail returns after

Easter next month. Varadkar

has said he plans to carry on

as a member of parliament for his Dublin West constituency.

His announcement on

Wednesday does not automati-

cally trigger a general election

in Ireland, which must be held

by March 2025, five years after

the last election. Meanwhile,

Ireland's political parties are

facing local government and

European Parliament elections

Tanaiste Micheal Martin paid tribute to Varadkar, adding that

he was "very surprised" about

his resignation which he was

informed about on Tuesday

IMF and Pakistan

reach deal on

in June.

the Green Party.

immensely.

140 dead, 100 injured in Russia concert hall attack; Ireland's Indian-origin PM Leo Varadkar Islamic State group claims responsibility

The prosecutor's office said

several men in combat fatigues

entered the concert hall and fired

on concertgoers. Dave Primov.

who was in the hall during the at-

tack, described panic and chaos

and others trampled on them."

incessantly.

In fresh offensive, Israeli

"There were volleys of gun-

when the attack began.

MOSCOW: Assailants burst into a large concert hall in Moscow on Friday and sprayed the crowd with gunfire, killing over 140 people, injuring more than 100 and setting fire to the venue in a brazen attack just days after President Vladimir Putin cemented his grip on power in a highly orchestrated electoral landslide.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement posted on affiliated channels on social media. A US intelligence official told The Associated Press that US intelligence agencies had learned the group's branch in Afghanistan was planning an attack in Moscow and shared the information with Russian officials. It wasn't immediately clear what happened to the attackers after the raid, which state investigators were investigating as terrorism.

The attack, which left the concert hall in flames with a collapsing roof, was the deadliest in Russia in years and came as the country's war in Ukraine dragged into a third year. Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin called the raid a "huge tragedy." The Kremlin said Putin was informed minutes after the assailants burst into Crocus City Hall, a large music venue on Moscow's western edge that can accommodate 6,200 people.



The attack took place as crowds gathered for a performance by the Russian rock band Picnic. The Investigative Committee. the top state criminal investigation agency, reported early Saturday that more than 140 people were killed. Health authorities released a list of 100 injured including five children. Some Russian news reports suggested more victims could

have been trapped by the blaze that erupted after the assailants threw explosives. Video showed the building

on fire, with a huge cloud of smoke rising through the night sky. The street was lit up by the blinking blue lights of dozens of firetrucks, ambulances and other emergency vehicles, as fire helicopters buzzed overhead to dump water on the blaze that took hours to contain.

have been killed at the start of the attack, Russian media reported. Some Russian news outlets suggested the assailants fled before special forces and riot police arrived. Reports said police patrols were looking for several vehicles the attackers could have used to escape.

In a statement posted by its Aamaq news agency, the Islamic State group said it attacked a large gathering of "Christians' in Krasnogorsk on Moscow's outskirts, killing and wounding hundreds. It was not immediately possible to verify the authenticity of the claim. However, US intelligence of-

ficials confirmed the claim by the Islamic State group's branch based in Afghanistan that it was responsible for the Moscow attack, a US official told the AP.

fire," Primov told the AP. "We The official said US intelliall got up and tried to move togence agencies had gathered ward the aisles. People began to information in recent weeks that panic, started to run and collided the IS branch was planning an attack in Moscow. He said U.S. with each other. Some fell down officials privately shared the in-Videos posted by Russian media telligence earlier this month with and on messaging app channels Russian officials. The official was showed men toting assault rifles briefed on the matter but was not shooting screaming people at authorized to publicly discuss point-blank range. One video the intelligence information and showed a man in the auditorium spoke to the AP on condition of saying the assailants had set it anonymity.

Noting that the IS statement on fire, as gunshots rang out cast its claim as an attack target-Guards at the concert hall ing Christians, Aymenn Jawad didn't have guns, and some could al-Tamimi, an expert on the ter-

rorist group, said it appeared to reflect the group's strategy of "striking wherever they can as part of a global fight the infidels and apostates everywhere." In October 2015, a bomb planted by IS downed a Russian passenger plane over Sinai, killing all 224 people on board, most of them Russian vacation-goers returning from Egypt. The group,

which operates mainly in Syria and Iraq but also in Afghanistan and Africa, also has claimed several attacks in Russia's volatile Caucasus and other regions in the past years. It recruited fighters from Russia and other parts of former Soviet Union.

On March 7, Russia's top security agency said it thwarted an attack on a synagogue in Moscow by an Islamic State cell, killing several of its members in the Kaluga region near the Russian capital. A few days earlier, Russian authorities said six alleged IS members were killed in a shootout in Ingushetia in Russia's Caucasus region.

On Friday, statements of outrage, shock and support for those affected by the concert call attack streamed in from around the world.

Some commentators on Russian social media questioned how authorities, who relentlessly surveil and pressure Kremlin critics, failed to identify the threat and prevent the attack.

LONDON: Ireland's Indianorigin Prime Minister, Leo Varadkar, on Wednesday sent shockwaves across the country by announcing his sudden resignation citing "personal and political reasons", triggering a leadership contest.

The 45-year-old Taoiseach, as the Irish Prime Minister is known, made the announcement in an emotional statement delivered from the steps of the government buildings in Dublin. Varadkar said he believed a new leader "will be better placed than me" to gain seats for his party Fine Gael in the next general election, scheduled for next year.

"My reasons for stepping down now are personal and political, but mainly political ... After seven years in office, I don't feel I'm the best person for this job anymore," said Varadkar

"There are loyal colleagues and good friends contesting local European elections, and I want to give them the best chance possible. On a personal level, I've enjoyed being Taoiseach... However, politicians are human beings and we have our limitations. We give it everything until we can't anymore. And then we have to move on. he said.

"That's it. I have nothing else lined up or in mind. No definite



resigns for 'personal, political reasons'

personal or political plans, but I am looking forward to having the time to think about them. he added

Varadkar was born in Ireland to a Mumbai-born father and Irish mother and has led the Fine Gael party since 2017, when aged 38 he became the country's youngest and first openly gay Prime Minister, and has served as Taoiseach twice since.

In his speech, Varadkar added that he was proud that the country is "more equal and more modern place when it comes to the rights of children, the LGBT community, equality for women and their bodily autonomy".

Last month, he joined Britain's Indian-origin Prime Minister to unveil a historic powersharing pact when Varadkar and Sunak agreed that a "stable, effective and successful" Northern Ireland – part of the

evening. "I want to take this opportunity again to wish him the very best in his personal life and in his career into the United Kingdom and sharing a future," he said.

British Army celebrates Sikh festival of Holla Mohalla



LONDON: The British Army celebrated the Sikh festival of Holla Mohalla with several British Sikh officers from the Defence Sikh Network (DSN) organising the annual spring festivities that showcase the spirit of courage, preparation and readiness.

The festival dates back to the 18th century when it was initiated by Guru Gobind Singh as a celebration of military prowess during which martial skills are honed and exhibited in fierce but well-natured com-

forces kill 9 in West Bank Israeli forces killed two Palestinians in separate incidents in the occupied West Bank on Thursday, increasing to

nine the number of Palestinians killed in the territory over 24 hours, a Palestinian news agency reported. Since the Gaza war began,

Israel has stepped up military raids in the West Bank, where violence had already been surging for over a year. UN records show Israeli forces or settlers have killed hundreds of Palestinians in the West bank since Hamas' October 7

attack on Israel that triggered the Gaza war. A 19-year-old Palestinian died after being shot by Israeli forces in El Bireh near Ramal-



Palestinian near settlement of El'azar, it reported.

The Israeli military said soldiers had fired shots towards "a Palestinian who aroused their hit was identified and

Palestinians in the Nur Shams refugee camp in the West Bank city of Tulkarm overnight, the

Palestinian Red Crescent said. In Gaza, Israel's offensive lah on Thursday morning, the suspicion at the El'azar Junc- focused on the Al Shifa hospital. Israel said its troops ha

Gurpatwant Pannun 'murder' plot: US federal prosecutors say Nikhil Gupta had agreed to 'pay an assassin US\$1,00,000'

NEW YORK: The United States is working with the Indian government to hold accountable those behind a plot to kill Khalistani separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun on American soil, according to the Biden administration.

An Indian national, Nikhil Gupta, was charged by federal prosecutors in November last year in connection with his involvement in a foiled plot to assassinate Pannun, who holds dual citizenship of the US and Canada

US federal prosecutors have charged that Gupta was working with an Indian government employee and had agreed to pay an assassin US\$ 1,00,000 to kill Pannun, who lives in New York City

India has already constituted soil. We take this in the admina probe committee to investigate istration incredibly seriously and have raised it at the high During a Congressional hearlevels with India.' "We are at the moment working on Wednesday, Assistant ing with India to encourage Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Donald Lu told India to hold accountable, those members of the House Foreign responsible for this terrible to kill Pannun.



justice is done," Lu said. ment has attempted to kill an

Lu was responding to a question from Congressman Dean Phillips from Minnesota, who asked if sanctions similar to those placed on more than 500

bailout review ISLAMABAD: The IMF on Wednesday said it has reached a staff-level agreement with the new government in cashstrapped Pakistan on the final review of a \$3 billion bailout,

> India itself has announced that they have created a committee of inquiry to look into this matter and we ask them to work quickly and transparently to make sure

International Monetary Fund (IMF) to be held in April. ister Muhammad Aurangzeb, who assumed charge last week,



serious issue. A serious issue between the United States and India. The Department of Justice has alleged that an Indian citizen at the behest of someone working in the Indian govern-

This year's British Army Sikh Holla Mohalla event took place at the Ash Ranges in Hampshire, south-east England, on Tuesday and involved traditional games such as tug of war as an ode to the military forebears who played these games.

Defence Sikh Network said its members, mainly the soldiers from the British Army, celebrated the Sikh Military Festival by taking part in the military shooting competition, traditional Sikh martial arts and traditional Sikh military games and finally finished the festival with rang, the throwing of coloured powder as a mark of victory.

The network is the official organisation within the UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD) that supports inclusion from a Sikh perspective. The network said the festival particularly resonates with the Sikhs within the country's armed forces and, therefore, it began celebrating it in the British Army in 2021.

"We feel this should be one of the premier events in the Sikh calendar to ensure our martial tradition continues."

said. The agency said he was he was later pronounced dead," wounded during confrontait said, adding that military tions with Israeli forces. South of Bethlehem, Israeli

estinian health ministry

gation into the incident. forces shot dead a 63-year-old Israeli forces also killed four Israeli soldiers.

killed more than 50 Hamas gunmen over the previous day, police had opened an investitaking those killed around the hospital to 140, along with two

individuals relating to the killing of Lexie Navalny in Russia are being considered for those believed to be behind the plot

had said that his priority was to start negotiations with the Washington-based IMF to bail out the country from its financial woes.

paving the way for the release

of the last \$1.1 billion tranche

The agreement, however,

is subject to the approval of

the Executive Board of the

Pakistan's new finance min-

from the global lender.

Hyderabad student goes 'missing' in US, family receives 'ransom' call



NEW DELHI : A 25-yearold student from Hyderabad, studying in the US, has gone missing there since March 7 and his family here said they received a "ransom" call.

Mohammed Abdul, a resident of Nacharam here, went to the US in May 2023 to pursue a Masters in IT from Cleveland University and was staying in Cleveland, his family said.

Mohammed Saleem, Abdul's father, said his son last spoke to him on March 7, and since then he was not in touch with his family and his mobile phone was switched off. Abdul's roommates in the US informed him that they have lodged a missing complaint with Cleveland Police.

However, on March 19, Abdul's family received a call from an unidentified person, who claimed that Abdul had been kidnapped allegedly by a gang selling drugs and demanded \$1,200 to "release" him. The caller also threatened to sell Abdul's kidneys if the ransom wasn't paid, his father said.

Amritsar likely to have US consulate: Ex-ambassador

Under the reciprocal plan to

countries, two new consulates

are to be opened by the USA in

Amritsar may soon get the US consulate. This was disclosed by former Ambassador of India to the US Dr Taranjit Singh Sandhu, who is considered to be one of the BJP probables for the Amritsar seat.

Dr Sandhu had a meeting with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and claimed that Amritsar could be chosen as the destination for setting up an American consulate. Barack Obama

As an Ambassador, Dr Sandhu had to his credit the opening of the Indian consulate in Seattle, USA, during his stint in November 2023.

The decision to open a consul-India. Earlier, Dr Sandhu had ate here was taken seven years the honour of opening the Indian ago in 2016 by PM Narendra Embassy in Kiev, the capital of Modi and then US President Ukraine in 1992, after the dis-

integration of the Soviet Union. He said with the opening of the American consulate in Amritsar, the people of the border area would get many facilities to get visa from here and traders might expand their businesses.

Two new consulates are proposed to be opened in India by the USA. The Foreign Minister has assured me that efforts will be made to open one in the holy city," he said

Meanwhile, Dr Sandhu also discussed with him initiating open new consulates in both cargo services from Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport, Amritsar, and increas ing air connectivity. Underlining that Amritsar's growth potential will increase manifold with the improved connectivity, he said.

Indian-origin Kashmiri Pandit couple, daughter killed in 'suspicious' fire in Canada's Brampton

igin couple and their teen- time. The charred remains age daughter were killed in a "suspicious" fire which tore through their home last week in Canada's Ontario province, police said on Friday.

A fire engulfed a home at the Big Sky Way and Van Kirk Drive area of Brampton on March 7, a press release by the Peel Police said.

After the blaze was put out, investigators located what was believed to be human remains within the gutted house, but the number of people killed

OTTAWA: An Indian-or- couldn't be ascertained at the were on Friday identified as those of three family members: 51-year-old Rajiv Warikoo; his wife, 47-year-old Shilpa Kotha; and their 16-year-old daughter, Mahek Warikoo.

Police said that they resided at the address before the fire. Peel police Constable Taryn Young on Friday said the fire

had been deemed suspicious, the CTV news channel reported. "At this time, we are investi-

gating this with our homicide

bureau, and we are deeming this as suspicious as the Ontario Fire Marshal has deemed that this fire was not acciden-

tal," the report quoted Young as saying. "There's not much left to it,"

Young said when asked about the possible cause of the fire.

Looking into something like that as a fire marshal, I'm sure it's very tough when there is not much left to look at. But we are exhausting all avenues,⁷ she said.

bour, Kenneth Yousaf, said that the family had lived on the street for about 15 years, and he never noticed any problems with them.

CARBOGEN AMCIS announces successful ANVISA audit of its facility in China

American citizen on American



BUBENDORF (SWITZER-LAND) : Switzerland-based CARBOGEN AMCIS, a pharmaceutical process development and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) manufacturing company, announces the successful completion of its first Brazilian Regulatory Authority Agency (ANVISA) routine inspection of its facility in Shanghai.

was undertaken, which concluded successfully with no critical and no major observations raised. A Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certificate has been granted to the site by the authority.

CARBOGEN AMCIS, said: "I want to congratulate the Shanghai team on their first

successful independent regulatory inspection, and for being commended by the inspectors for their transparent and open approach. The GMP certification is a reflection of our high-quality standards and the commitment of our teams at this important site." CARBOGEN AMCIS' Shanghai site employs 140 people and specializes in arge-scale manufacturing

of highly potent chemicals up to category III; GMP product release and analytical support for development activities.

focused on areas including utilities, maintenance and calibration, production, qual-

Harry Wong, General Manager of CARBOGEN

the same high standards our clients expect globally. We are an integral part of the company supply chain, offering the group great possibilities in terms of capacity and geographical flexibility. Martin Schneider, Vice President Quality & ESH of CARBOGEN AMCIS, said: 'I was pleased to support the Shanghai site through their first international authority inspection and impressed by how professional the inspection was prepared and hosted. This success adds to our history

AMCIS' Shanghai site, said:

"We are delighted to establish

ourselves as a crucial part

of the CARBOGEN AMICS

CDMO network, meeting

of positive global inspections at our facilities around the world,

The ANVISA audit was ity control and assurance.

which we are, and the local team can be very proud of."

Between 6-10th November of raw materials, intermedi-2023, a five-day inspection ates and API; manufacturing

Pascal Villemagne, CEO of

The deceased family's neigh-

Priyanka Chopra, **Nick Jonas**

offer prayers at Ram Mandir with daughter Malti



Vidya Balan, Ileana D'Cruz's Do Aur Do Pyaar teaser out now



MUMBAI: Makers of the Do Pyaar, starring Vidhya Balan and Ileana D'Cruz, unveiled its official teaser on Thursday

On its official Instagram, Applause Entertainment released a video clip introducing the audience to the world of two couples, Vidya Balan-Sendhil Ramamurthy and Ileana D'Cruz-Pratik Gandhi.

The video provides a peek into the dynamics of modern-day relationships with a perfect blend of romance, humour, and relatable storytelling.

The teaser starts with a upcoming film Do Aur married couple, played by Vidya and Pratik, sharing a meal on their couch. When Pratik offers Vidya his ice cream, she declines, mentioning she's vegan. He then points out that her facewash contains milk. The video also features affectionate moments between another couple, played by Illeana

and Sendhil All four characters are seen attempting to rekindle the passion and excitement in their relationships. They go on movie dates and trips, striving to bring back marital happiness.

AYODHYA: Priyanka Chopra, Nick Jonas offer prayers at Ram Mandir with daughter Malti Priyanka Chopra, who is currently in India, offered prayers at Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Ayodhya with her husband, singer Nick Jo-nas and daughter Malti

Marie In the videos captured by the paparazzi, Privanka was seen inside the temple premises with her family.

The ace actor can be seen wearing a yellow sari. Nick, too, opted for the ethnic outfit.

Meanwhile, on the work front, Priyanka will be seen in Heads of State, alongside John Cena and Idris Elba. She is also set to lend her voice to Disnevnature's upcoming film Tiger. She will also be seen in Farhan Akhtar directorial Jee Le Zaraa

Kareena Kapoor lauds Kunal Khemu's directional debut film Madgaon Express



MUMBAI: Kareena Kapoor Khan shared her thoughts on brother-in-law Kunal Khemu's directorial debut, Madgaon Express. The Jab We Met actress posted the

film's poster on her Instagram story and praised Kunal's directing skills. "So, so funny and brilliantly

directed. So, so proud of you, Kunal Khemu. Outstanding

performances. Bravo, guys, she wrote.

The film marks Kunal's directorial debut. It features Divvenndu, Pratik Gandhi and Nora Fatehi.

#bavarea.'



alongside Kareena Kapoor On the work front, Khan, Tabu and Kriti Sanon

Quasar Salon Mohali Sets New Standards in Beauty & Wellness

KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

Today marked a momentous occasion as Aruna Rov Chauhan. the proud owner of Quasar Salon, Spa, and Beauty, unveiled their exquisite establishment in Sector 79, Mohali. The grand inauguration, graced by Avneet Kaur Sidhu, witnessed the convergence of beauty aficionados and professionals alike. Many artists including Gurnazar, Rupinder Handa, Aatish, Nirman, Karan, and Guri participated!!

Quasar Salon sets itself apart with a distinguished blend of luxury and innovation. Spearheaded by Vikas Bawa, Varun Jain, and Shubham, the salon introduced revolutionary treatments. including the Dubai facial team>s expertise, cutting-edge hairstyling, and the novel concept of non-alcoholic wine and champagne pedicures. Notably, Quasar is also a pioneer in

Punjab Kings unveils incredible

introducing pain relief therapies,

promising unparalleled relaxation and rejuvenation.

PPS CID Avneet Kaur Sidhu expressed her joy, saying, "It's a very positive sign that women are leading in various

fields across society. In today's world, it's a beautiful thing to see a businesswoman leading both at home and outside, all while maintaining a smile in the face of challenges.

Students smeared with Gulal (colour powder) celebrate Holi, the Hindu spring festival of colours at the Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar on PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL Friday. Holi is the Hindu religious spring festival celebrated by Hindus as a festival of colors.

Man to Take Public Shower to Show Meat's Devastating Impact on the Planet



duce 1 kilogram of vegetables. In contrast, the production of animal-derived foods uses much more water: 1 kilogram of milk equires 1020 litres, 1 ki of eggs requires 3265 litres, 1 kilogram of poultry requires 4325 litres, 1 kilogram of pork requires 5988 litres, 1 kilogram of mutton requires 8763 litres, and 1 kilogram of beef requires a staggering 15,415 litres. The meat and dairy industries are also incredibly polluting: the world's top five meat and dairy corporations alone are responsible for more greenhouse gas emissions that exacerbate climate change - particularly through the methane emitted from cattle and other ruminant animals used for food - than major oil and gas companies ExxonMobil, Shell, or BP. And while 224.3 million people are undernourished in Îndia and 91 million people in the country lack suitable access to water, the production of meat, eggs, and dairy uses a third of the world's freshwater resources and a third of the world's cropland - which could the Water Footprint Network, it be used to feed humans instead

talent.

said.

global scale.



KULBIR SINGH KALSI

Summer is here, we know it

Coz Rasna's New Campaign

is out! This year like every

year Rasna has come out with

a fresh new campaign that

Chandigarh



Ahead of the 17th edition of the



POTPOURRI

Diljit Dosanjh drops song 'Khutti' with 'ice girl' Saweetie; says she 'just landed in Panjab'

MUMBAI: Punjabi rapper and actor Diljit Dosanjh has joined forces with Saweetie for the song 'Khutti' and he quipped that the American rapper has 'just landed in Panjab'. Taking to Instagram, Diljit shared a glimpse of

the music video, where the two are seen twinning in yellow and pink. Saweetie is seen rap-

ping in English, while the 'Lover' hit maker is seen mouthing his lines in Punjabi.

For the caption, Diljit wrote, 'Khutti out now with ice girl @saweetie. Just landed in Panjab.

Diljit will be seen in 'Crew'

AMRITSAR: Behind a shower curtain that reads, "1 kg of Meat = 1 Year of Showers. Clean Your Conscience: Go Vegan," a People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India and Aashray Foundation supporterill take a public shower in Amritsar tomorrow to markWorld Water best thing that people can do to countless animals.'

Srinagar's Dal Lake on Sun-

day played host to the region's

first-ever Formula-4 car racing

event. The picturesque Bou-

levard road witnessed sleek

racing cars roaring against

the backdrop of the majestic

Zabarwan Hills, captivating

spectators with a thrilling

The racing demonstration

along the banks of the Dal

Lake was held to promote

motorsports in Jammu and

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi, in a social media post,

appreciated the efforts of the

spectacle.

Kashmir.

save water and the environment is to go vegan.

"It's impossible to be truly ecofriendly without going vegan," explains PETA India Campaigns Coordinator Utkarsh Garg. "Just by changing the way we eat, concerned people can save precious water resources and help protect Day (22 March). Our point? The the Earth, our own health, and

The meat, egg, and dairy industries put a serious strain

on the world's water supply by watering crops that farmed animals eat, providing billions of animals with drinking water each year, and cleaning the filth from farms, trucks, and slaughterhouses. According to takes 322 litres of water to pro- of farmed animals.

not only highlights their 21 Vitamins and Minerals that energise us but also highlights the emotions it stirs up that of Vitamins of Love, Happiness, Josh and Success. On the basis of deep market research and blind product taste results, Rasna is reformulated as a vitamin, mineral, and glucose drink with real fruit extracts. The new ad is a result of extensive Kashmir hosts maiden Formula-4 car racing event along Dal Lake market research done Pan India to help us understand our customers and their evolving region's growing reputation as an needs. It focuses on the natural, healthier, and great taste adventure tourism destination and aspects targeted towards SEC A and B households and repoits commitment to nurturing local sitions it as a tastier, thicker, and healthier drink that sat-"With the introisfy rational aspects as well duction of highas working as a catalyst in octane events like providing energy, Josh, hapthis, we are not piness, and the most imporonly entertaining tant vitamin, Vitamin Love. but also investing This years' highlight of the campaign of course is the onin the future of Kashmir's youth boarding of the sensational and tourism in-Tamannaah Bhatia, the face

dustry," Yaqoob of youth and the heartbeat of many. In fact, Tamannaahhas He further highlighted been a fan of Rasna and conthat the race would serve as suming Rasna since childhood, a platform for local talent, and has a distinct memory of nurturing a new generation herself as a kid saying Love of sports enthusiasts with You Rasna in actual life and aspirations to compete on a that is why having her onboard was only natural.

Punjab Kings launched their highly anticipated new matchday jersey. The jersey was revealed in a spectacular event at the Elante Mall in Chandigarh on Saturday in the presence of renowned personalities from all walks of life.

A standout comic performance by Jasmeet Singh Bhatia left the audience in splits. Afterwards, Punjab Kings co-owner Preity G Zinta and team Captain Shikhar Dhawan unveiled the new colors and revealed the stunning new design in all its glory. The other members of the team along with coaching staff also graced the ceremony.

Further adding to the glamour and entertainment on the night was the Punjabi singer & actor Gippy Grewal, who mesmerized the jam-packed sher squad and set the stage ablaze with his vibrant performance.

The new red jersey, manufactured by playR has been made according to international standards and embodies passion, spirit, and vigor- something the Shers of Punjab stand for. The fabric for the new jersey has been imported from Vietnam and the manufacturing of the same has been done in India by PlayR. It is 20% lighter and 30% more stretchable and has been designed with anti-sweat, anti-odour, anti-bacterial, and anti-pilling technologies. The new jersey is also resistant to UV rays, and hence, will avoid colour fading.

We are delighted to launch our new jersey infront of our loyal fans, who are the backbone of the team. The new colors reflect the emotions and pulse of Punjab and everything it stands for. The team will represent the fans on the field and make some unforgettable memories in the new stadium." *said Preity G Zinta, Punjab Kings co-owner*.

At the bottom of the jersey, the kesari patterns are inspired by fire, a symbol deeply rooted in our traditions, resonating



with auspicious beginnings. It further highlights the fire within the Shers. The Indian tri-colour, on the shoulder blades, marks a tribute to our nation, and to our honourable armed forces. The nihal blue arrows on the sides reflect upward movement and symbolise the weapons of the warriors of Punjab. The honeycomb pattern on the lower end of the jersey is dedicated to the fans and the spirit of teamwork, inspired by the unity of honevbees, who work in synergy

towards one goal. The love and passion of the sher squad is infectious and it is hard for me to put in words how happy I am, to back here. We have an exciting team this season that will give everything on the pitch as we look forward to don the vibrant new jersey and play at the new home ground infront of all of you." *said Shikhar Dhawan, the Captain of upcoming talent.

Punjab Kings*

The new jersey will be available on Punjab Kings website and soon-to-be-launched app in India. It will also be available in UK, Canada, Australia and UAE for international fans.

About Punjab Kings

One of the eight inaugural franchises of the Indian Premier League, Punjab Kings (previously Kings XI Punjab) is owned by a consortium of prominent industry figures like Ness Wadia, Mohit Burman, Preity G Zinta, and Karan Paul. Based in Chandigarh, Punjab Kings thrive on their fighting spirit, coupled with the wholeheartedness and positive outlook that represents Punjab. The brand's infectious personality has built a strong affinity with the fans as a team that strives to provide a global platform for local and

Director of Tourism Kash-

sentiment, emphasizing the

This is very heartening to see. It will help further show-

case the beauty of Jammu and Divisional Commissioner Kashmir. India offers great opportunities for motorsports to thrive and Srinagar is right



can happen!" PM Modi said in a post. stimulate the local economy.

Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, lauded the occasion as a mir, Raja Yaqoob, echoed this symbol of the Valley's progress,