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HOW CAN AN IAS OFFICER JOIN PARTY? PUNJAB CM BHAGWANT MANN WARNS OF RAMIFICATIONS





COTTON PRICES EASE AS MULTINATIONALS OFFLOAD STOCKS AMID MUTED **DEMAND**



RAHMAN'S IDEA FOR 'AMAR SINGH CHAMKILA' WAS TO MERGE WESTERN MUSICALS, **PUNJABI CULTURE**

CM Mann reiterates firm commitment to lift every single grain of wheat in smooth & hassle free manner

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann has reiterated the firm commitment of state government to lift every single grain of the farmers during the Rabi marketing season 2024-25.

After reviewing the procurement status, the Chief Minister said that this year Area Under Cultivation of wheat was 35.07 lakh hectares. Likewise, he said that Estimated production of wheat during RMS 2024-25 was around 161.30 Lakh Million Tons. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that elaborate arrangements have already been put in place for purchase of every single grain of wheat in the state.

Punjab Chief Minister said that the yield of crop was 12 Lakh Metric ton more as compared to last year. He said that

produced by the farmers.

the state government is duty bound to ensure smooth and Bhagwant Singh Mann said hassle free procurement of that payment to the farmer every single grain of wheat will be made immediately

when the wheat is produced from his trolley adding that a viable mechanism has been evolved for this.

Punjab CM said that Punjab Mandi Board has notified 1908 regular Purchase Centers for procurement of Wheat. He said that the allotment of these purchase centres amongst various agencies as per the procurement shares of agencies and availability of nearest storage points has been done. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that as per recommendations received by districts, public places and rice mills are being declared as temporary yards to avoid glut and ensure smooth procurement.

CM Mann also said that farmers will not face any sort of inconvenience during the entire procurement process.

Mann-Kejriwal meet: Tihar, Delhi, Punjab police officials holds meet to discuss security plans



NEW DELHI: Tihar jail officials, Delhi Police and Punjab Police on Friday discussed the security arrangement for Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's meeting with AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal lodged in the prison, officials said. The meeting started at 11 am at the office of the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) in Tihar, a jail official said. It is being held to make security arrangements and complete codal formalities, as mandated in Delhi Prison Rules, to arrange a meeting between Mann and Kejriwal. Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann had sought time from the Tihar administration to meet the Delhi chief minister who is lodged in Tihar's jail number 2 in a money laundering case linked to the nowscrapped Delhi excise policy and will be in judicial custody till April 15.

ADB ups India's GDP growth forecast to 7% for this fiscal

NEW DELHI: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday raised India's GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal to 7 per cent, from 6.7 per cent earlier, saying the robust growth will be driven by public and private sector investment and improvement in consumer demand.

In its April edition of the Asian Development Outlook, ADB said India would remain "a major growth engine" in the Asia and Pacific region.

For the 2025-26 fiscal, ADB has projected India's growth at 7.2 per cent. Growth will be robust despite moderating in FY2024 and FY2025, it said. The growth estimates for the current fiscal is lower than 7.6 per cent estimated GDP expansion in 2022-23 fiscal. Strong investment drove GDP growth in the 2022-23 fiscal as consumption was muted, ADB said.

The Manila-based multilateral institution in December last year projected the Indian economy to expand by 6.7 per

cent in the 2024-25 fiscal.

in fiscal 2023 with strong mo- expectations of normal monmentum in manufacturing and soon, moderating inflationservices. It will continue to ary pressures and sustained momentum in manufacturing grow rapidly over the forecast horizon. Growth will be driven and services sectors. The triggers for growth in FY2024 primarily by robust investment demand and improving consumption demand. Inflation will continue its downward trend in tandem with global trends," said the Asian Development Outlook.

ADB's growth forecast for the current fiscal is in line with the projections made by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The RBI last week had said GDP growth in the current fis-"The economy grew robustly cal is projected at 7 per cent on

SBI refuses to disclose electoral

will come from higher capital expenditure on infrastructure development, rise in corporate investment, strong service sector performance and improved consumer confidence. Robust pvt investment, consumer demand Asian Develop-

ment Bank (ADB) has said the robust growth will be driven by public and private sector investment and improvement

India's GDP Growth **Potential to Reach** 10%: CII President



NEW DELHI: India is poised for an impressive 8-9 per cent GDP growth trajectory, with the potential to reach close to 10 per cent over the mediumterm, according to R Dinesh, President of the Confederation

of Indian Industry (CII). However, achieving this ambitious growth depends on how the country navigates global headwinds like the fluid eopolitical situation and

ing commodity prices.
Dinesh highlighted India's focus on developing physical and digital infrastructure in recent years as setting the base for economic growth momentum. The government and RBI have also managed to keep inflation under control, a positive factor, reported BL.

While the CII currently maintains its 2024-25 GDF growth forecast at over 7 per cent, Dinesh hinted at a possible upward revision in the coming days.

The industry body expects the next government to unleash land and labour reforms to fuel inclusive economic

Dinesh called for an employment-linked incentive plan, especially in sectors like tourism. logistics, and health, which have significant job creation

Sukhbir Badal demands judicial probe into the Punjab liquor scam

Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal demanded a judicial probe into the Punjab liquor scam as well as misuse of State resources to fund Aam Aadmi Party's election campaign in various States following the rejection of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's petition challenging his arrest on charges of corruption.

The SAD president, who toured Nabha and Patiala Rural constituencies as part of the party's Punjab Bachao Yatra along with senior leader N K Sharma and Surjit Singh Rakhra, said "it is now abundantly clear that Arvind Kejriwal resorted to gross acts of corruption. The Delhi high court, while rejecting his plea challenging his arrest has put



suggested that Kejriwal had demanded kickbacks of Rs 100 crore, some of which were used to fund the campaign expenses for the 2022 Goa election". He said evidence in the form of statements of approvers as well as an AAP Goa legislator's statement that he had been paid with the kickbacks had also been put on record".

Sukhbir Badal, who received a tremendous response in both

Singh Lalka and Jaspal Singh Chatha (constituency incharges), YAD president Sarabjit Singh Jhinjar and party Spokesperson Arsh Kler were present, expressed surprise as to why no action had been taken in the Punjab liquor scam, which was perpetrated in the same manner as the Delhi scam with the same persons drafting the Punjab excise policy and even granting concessions to the same players, Mr Sukhbir Badal said it seems chief minister Bhagwant Mann has prostrated himself before Delhi to save his chair as there cannot be any other explanation for inaction in this case". Badal said in return the chief minister had refused to take action against it on record that material Nabha and Patiala Rural con- Haryana police officials who

had killed one youth and severely injured another during the ongoing farmer agitation. NEW DELHI: The State Bank "This is reason enough to reject all Delhi based parties as well as those who do secret deals with the centre against the interest of Punjabis", he added.

Sukhbir Singh Badal also chided the AAP government for acting in frustration by alleging that a child had been forced to raise pro-SAD slogans. He said the fact of the matter was that every section of society, be it children, their parents or the elderly, were disillusioned with the AAP government. "What the child said was the voice of his heart and the voice of Punjabis as they are fed up of AAP rule and want to show the door to the corrupt and anti-Punjab



of India (SBI) has refused to disclose under the RTI Act the details of the electoral bonds furnished to the Election Commission (EC), claiming that it is personal information held in a fiduciary capacity, even though the records are in the public domain on the poll panel's website.

Holding that the electoral bonds scheme was "unconstitutional and manifestly arbitrary", the Supreme Court directed the SBI on February 15 to furnish the complete details of the bonds purchased since April 12, 2019 to the EC, which would publish the information on its website by

deadline and ordered it to disclose the details of the electoral bonds to the EC by the close of business hours on March 12.



EC after the Supreme Court's order. The bank denied the infor-

mation citing two exemption clauses given under the Right to Information (RTI) Act-On March 11, the court section 8(1)(e) that is related dismissed the SBI's petition to records held in a fiduciary capacity and section 8(1)(that allows withholding per-

is containing details of pur-RTI activist Commodore chasers and political parties

exempted under sections 8(1) (e) and (j) of the RTI Act," the response furnished by the central public information officer and deputy general manager of the SBI said on Wednesday.

Batra had also sought the details of the fees paid by the SBI to senior advocate Harish Salve to defend its case against the disclosure of the electora bonds' records, citing that the sonal information. records are held in a fiduciary $\hbox{``Information sought by you}\\$ capacity and the information

is personal in nature. It is "bizzare" that the SBI denied the information that is already on the EC's website,

Lokesh Batra (retired) ap- and hence, cannot be disclosed proached the SBI on March as it is held in fiduciary ca-13 seeking the complete data pacity disclosure of which is Batra told to media.

India & Czech Republic in Talks to Forge Defence Partnership defence industry, traditionally

NEW DELHI: India and the Czech Republic are engaged in discussions to enhance their defence cooperation, capitalising on the shared experience of utilising Soviet and Russianmade defence platforms between the two nations. The talks revolve around

the possibility of Czech defence firms providing maintenance services, spare parts, and equipment to the Indian Army and Air Force.

Eliska Zigova, the Czech Republic's Ambassador to India. revealed that the discussions centre on leveraging the Czech Republic's extensive knowledge about Soviet weaponry, stemming from the erstwhile Czechoslovakia's cooperation with the Soviet Union's de-



Czech companies have proposed to collaborate with India in maintaining spare parts and modernising common defence platforms. The Czech government is keen to facilitate discussions between its intergovernmental defence

cooperation agency and India's defence ministry to facilitate such cooperation.

The potential for this partnership has increased since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, which has posed challenges for Russia's

India's primary supplier. Consequently, India has been

diversifying its sources for defence equipment to reduce its dependence on Russia.

Both India and the Czech Republic have expressed mutual interest in enhancing security ties, with a commitment to encouraging cooperation in areas such as research and development, training, and innovative production solutions involving stakeholders from both coun-

During the India-Czechia Strategic Partnership on Innovation in January 2023, the two nations underlined the importance of innovations in defence and expressed satisfaction with existing connections among their entities in these areas.

Afghanistan: Sikhs & Hindus will be given back their lands and houses, announced by the Taliban administration



MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA New Delhi

Lands and houses taken away from Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan will be returned. The Taliban administration has assured the Indian government in this regard. According to diplomatic sources, the Taliban administration has started an investigation into the incidents of attacks on Indians during the previous US-backed government in Afghanistan. Even after the Taliban regained power, many people from the minority community left the country. Their land and houses were dispossessed. This was the case even before the Taliban came

that they have started the process of restoring the lands, houses and businesses of the minority Hindus and Sikhs. Narendra Singh Bhatti was recently brought back from Canada to convey the message that minorities are safe under the Taliban rule. He is the representative of the Hindu-Sikh community in the legislature of Afghanistan. He moved to Canada from Afghanistan with his family in turbulent

According to official sources, the new rulers of Kabul, who are interested in establishing relations with India, have taken this decision. Diplomatic circles consider this announcement of the Taliban administration to be very significant ernment issued a notification to grant Indian citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Budstan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Russian regions grapple with severe flooding amid rising water levels



MOSCOW: At least 13,000 people have been evacuated in parts of Russia as of Thursday, as multiple regions continue to battle extreme floods amid rising water levels, local authorities said.

In some of the worst flooding in decades due to a continuous rise in daily average temperatures, snowmelt and rivers thawing, Russia's western Siberia, the Volga region and the Central Federal Dis-

trict have been flooded. A state of emergency has been declared in the Orenburg, Kurgan and Tyumen regions, Xinhua news agency

reported. In the worst-hit western Orenburg region, 7, 800 people have been evacuated, according to the regional government, with water levels in the Ural river around the

region breaking records last

Thursday night. The flooding is expected to peak in the region in the near future, the Russian Ministry

than 6,000 people have been dhists expelled from Afghani- evacuated, said regional governor Vadim Shumkov.

Liquor Policy Case: Court reserves order on CBI plea seeking five-days custody of K Kavitha listed due to the pressure of Highlighting that there are

OUR CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi

Delhi Rouse Avenue Court on Friday reserved for later in the day its order on the CBI's plea seeking five-day custody of BRS leader K Kavitha, arrested in connection with a corruption case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

Special Judge Kaveri Baweja reserved the order after hearing arguments by the CBI as well as the counsel appearing for Kavitha on the application. The daughter of former Telangana chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao was held in Tihar Jail, where she has been lodged after her arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The CBI told the court that Kavitha was not cooperating in the investigation and was evasive in her

Advocate Nitesh Rana,



posed the CBI's plea, terming the arrest as illegal. He further accused the probe agency of violating Kavitha's fundamental rights

CBI officials had recently questioned Kavitha inside prison after obtaining per- ment of Rs 11.9 crores. Chats ission from a special court.

The ED arrested Kavitha (46) from her Banjara Hills residence in Hyderabad on March 15

approver) has confirmed in his statement that Abhishek Boinpally informed that Rs 100 crores was given to Vijay Nair. Statement of Hawala operators under Section 161 & 164 CrPC confirms the payrecovered from Buchibabu reveal that she was holding a partnership in Indospririts. Licenses were given to Indo-

spririts even after being black-

accused Manish Sisodia," CBI further said. We have sufficient mate-

rial, WhatsApp chats, and statements of the associated accused," the central probe agency stated. CBI further claimed that BRS leader K. Kavitha is withholding information that is solely within her knowledge. Despite prior notices, according to the probe agency, she has not cooperated with the investigation. "Therefore, we require a five-day custodial remand to uncover the conspiracy," stated the CBI public prosecutor.

Kavitha's Counsel says the arrest is illegal

Contesting CBI's application to interrogate the BRS leader, Kavitha's counsel asserted that the court needs to look a the two aspects of the case, first, CBI's power to arrest and second, the exercise of that power.

no provisions in CRPC, Kavitha's counsel stated: "An application is moved before this court to interrogate Kavitha by CBI. There is no provision in CRPC which would enable an investigating agency to interrogate an accused in another case. Assuming that prison rules facilitate examination of the person, they can't override CRPC." The counsel further told the court that the central probe

agency did not provide any prior notice, and thus CBI's application to interrogate affects Kavitha's "constitutional right." Kavitha, who has been incarcerated in Tihar Jail since her arrest on March 15 by

the Enforcement Directorate

probing allegations of money

laundering in the excise policy

investigating the case.

case, was arrested by the CBI Recently, the current rulon Thursday, which is also ers of the Kabul have assured through diplomatic channels

back to power. Now, the Kabul administration is preparing a after the Narendra Modi govlist of Indian Hindu and Sikh

of Emergency Situations said. In the Kurgan region, molre

How can an IAS officer join party? Punjab CM warns of ramifications

Shiromani Akali Dal's (SAD) leader Sikandar Singh Maluka's daughter-in-law Parampal Sidhu joined BJP in Delhi on Thursday, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said that her resignation as a bureaucrat has not been accepted by the

The official order issued by Department of Personnel and Training would confirm that a bureaucrat is relieved of their

In a post on X, Mann asked her to understand the procedure for acceptance of voluntary retirement.

He also warned Sidhu that joining a political party with-



out her resignation having been accepted could land her

Last week, Sidhu, a 2011 batch officer of Punjab cadre, took voluntary retirement from the Indian Administrative Ser-

vice (IAS). There is speculation that she may get the ticket to contest from the Bathinda parliamentary seat, currently represented by SAD leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal, wife of Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Badal.

Punjab and Haryana High Court issues notice to Punjab Government on woman's in-laws assaulting her and parading her half-naked

TARUN BHAJNI Chandigarh

The incident described involving the assault and public humiliation of a 55-yearold woman in Tarn Taran is deeply disturbing and calls for urgent action. It's heartening to see that the Punjab and Haryana High Court has taken suo-motu cognizance of the matter, treating it as a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) after Administrative Judge Justice Sanjay Vashisth referred it to the Acting Chief Justice Gurmeet Singh Sandhawalia for

Justice Vashisth's note, drawing parallels to the historical event of Draupadi's humiliation in the Mahabharata,

The delay in police action, as underscores the gravity of the highlighted in the note, raises situation and the need for immediate intervention by the serious concerns about the efjudicial system. The fact that fectiveness of law enforcement the incident was captured on in addressing such heinous video and circulated on social crimes promptly. The High Court's decision to issue notice media adds to its egregiousto the State of Punjab indicates

countability and justice for the victim and her family.

It's imperative that the authorities undertake a thorough investigation into the matter, ensure the safety and well-being of the victim and her family, and take stringent action against the perpetrators. The adjournment of the matter until April 30 signifies the seriousness with which the High Court intends to pursue this case

Ultimately, incidents of gender-based violence and the violation of women's rights cannot be tolerated in any society, and it's encouraging to see the judiciary taking proactive steps to address such

Shaheed Beant Singh's Son to contest lok sabha election from Faridkot

CHANDIGARH: One of the assas sins of late Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, is contesting the parlia-

mentary elections in Punjab from the Faridkot (Reserved) constituency as an Independent. A class XII drop-

at her residence.

out, Sarabjit Šingh Khalsa (45) is the son of Beant Singh, one of the two assassins of the late Prime Minister. In 2014 and 2009, Sarabjit Singh Khalsa unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha polls from the Fatehgarh Sahib (Reserved) and Bathinda seats, respectively. In 2019, he was the Bahujan Samaj Party candidate. Beant Singh and Satwant Singh, bodyguards of then PM Indira Gandhi, had riddled her with bullets on October 31, 1984

join BJP anytime include the names of Devinder Babli for-

Maluka's daughter-inlaw joins BJP, likely to contest against Badal's daughter-in-law



to the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), its senior leader Sikandar Singh Maluka's daughterin-law and former bureaucrat Parampal Sidhu on Thursday joined the BJP in Delhi. Sources said she is likely to

be fielded against Akali leader and former Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal. Last week the 2011 batch

officer of the Punjab cadre took voluntary retirement from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). There is speculation that she may get the ticket to contest from the Bathinda parliamentary seat, currently represented by SAD leader Harsimrat Kaur Badal, wife of Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Badal.

Maluka's son Gurpreet Singh also joined the saffron party in the presence of the party's general secretary Vinod Tawde, Union Minister Hardeep Puri and other leaders.

Bhupinder Singh Hooda says Saini is merely a 'dummy CM' in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

Targeting the ruling BJP government in Haryana state on the stage during 'Jan Aakrosh Rally' at Beri in Jhajjar district, Congress leader Bhupinder Singh former Chief Minister in the state Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Sunday termed Nayab Singh Saini a merely a "dummy CM", saying there is nothing in his hands and he replaced Manohar Lal Khattar in a swift change claiming that the state had falled behind on various developmental parameters, per capita income during the last nearly 10 years rule in the state. Hooda said, "Nayab Singh toh naam ka mukhya mantri hai, ye toh dummy mukhya mantri hai. Iske bus ka kuchh nahi hai (Nayab Saini is a dummy chief minister. There is nothing in his hand)." Reminding past, Hooda said, "Earlier too, such an experiment took place when Ch. Om Prakash (Chautala) had made Master Hukam Singh chief minister in 1990-91), Similarly, Saini) has been made the CM", he said while addressing the rally.

Former CM appealed to the electorate of Beri to ensure that this time his son Deepender Hooda wins by a margin of more than one lakh votes from the Rohtak



seat. Deepender Hooda, a Congress Rajya Sabha member, had failed to retain the Rohtak seat in the 2019 general elections and lost to BJP's Arvind Sharma, and made an appeal for Deepender victory by a margin of more than one lakh votes since both Beri and Kiloi assembly segments are part of the Rohtak parliamentary constituency in which polling for the Lok Sabha seats will be held in sixth phase of the seven phase general elections on May 25. Hooda said that in 2014, Haryana, which was number one in per capita income, per capita investment, in giving jobs to unemployed, in-spite of the fact two lakh government jobs are lying vacant in the state, on the law and order front, the situation is bad, in sports but has fallen

> to 5 gm. According

to a health

depart-

ment lady

behind during the last 10 years. Hooda said making an attacking the BJP, "today. Haryana is number one in unemployment, in inflation and in crime," the former chief minister said, that the BJP assured of doubling farmers' income by 2022, that did not happen, but input costs of agriculture have doubled due to diesel and fertilizer prices as well as the labor cost has been drastically rising. Bhupinder Singh Hooda said, the situation of crime today has become bad to worst, the ransom demand calls to traders and businessmen have become common, smuggling of drugs in the state fast increasing, an atmosphere of fear prevails and it appears that the government does not exist

Sanjay Tandon is BJP's candidate from Chandigarh



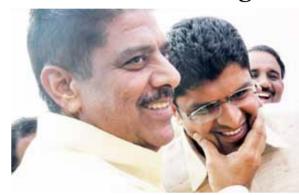


CHANDIGRH: (Bharatiya Janata Party) announced former party's Chandigarh President Sanjay Tandon as its Lok Sabha candidate from the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

He replaced two-time MP Kirron Kher. Four-time MP former union minister Pawan Kumar Bansal is likely to be fielded by the Congress.

The AAP and the Congress, both constituents of the IN-DIA bloc, have decided to allot the Lok Sabha seat to

After the BJP-JJP govt alliance break, JJP now on the verge of collapse those JJP MLAs suspected to



PARVESH HANDA Chandigarh

After running government in alliance with BJP in Haryana state for about four and half years, JJP seems to be now moving ahead towards collapse when senior leaders of JJP including state president Nishan Singh, the state general secretary Kamlesh Saini, secretary Ramesh Godara, MLA Satvinder Rana have already submitted their resignation from the party, and several other JJP senior leaders as well as MLAs are likely to say good-

bye to the party and join BJP. Past scenario reveals that JJP led by Dushyant Chautala son of Ajay Singh Chautala and grandson of the former Hary-

mer Panchavat Minister in the state, Ram Kumar Gautam. Ram Niwas Surajkheda, Ch. Ishwar Singh and Jogi Ram Sihag as a result BJP is likely to be benefited prior to the coming Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha polls this year. Information reveals that Dushyant Chautala has been ana CM Om Parkash Chautala had launched new political

unsuccessful to convince his party>s dis-satisfied MLAs. Meanwhile, while talking to media persons, JJP National party JJP after leaving INLD President Ajay Singh Chautala said it is better to be defeated, and won as many as 10 Vidhan Sabha seats during 2019 rather than having fto ight with Vidhan Sabha polls and had the dis-satisfied MLAs within alliance with the BJP to form the party. Moreover, we are government in Haryana state, not worried over our MLAs and was appointed Deputy leaving the party at this crucial Chief Minister in the state. JJP stage prior to the elections, Ajay Singh Chautala said that had also contested Lok Sabha elections in 2019 on all 10 seats INLD is a political party many in which BJP was winner in times started from class I and all Lok Sabha constituencies. reached up to graduation in During the past four and half the past also. Ajay Chautala years, nearly 50% JJP MLA said that in case our Supremo were seen inclined towards Om Parkash Chautala permits, we may unite again to join the the ruling BJP government INLD network once again, but in the state, now few of them have already joined BJP or are on the other hand INLD National General Secretary Abhay in the process of joining BJP and rest of the JJP MLAs are Singh Chautala refused to join likely to join Congress. Among hands with JJP now.

Health Survey: Every fifth pregnant Amritpal's mother arrested in Amritsar woman in Haryana anemic

SATISH HANDA

According to a recent health survey report, every fifth pregnant woman in the state have been found anemic, having a shortage of blood in their body. Information reveals that on an average nearly 18000 pregnant women are having treatment in the government hospitals in Harvana state every month, of them more than 7200 women are identified anemic, and every fifth woman attending OPD at the government hospitals in the state found having shortage of blood in her body. Moreover, according to the National Family Health Survey Report, in the age group 18 to 49 years more than 60% women in the state have shortage of blood in their body, which include more than 40% (nearly 7200) pregnants found suffering from anemia and many of them have even less than 7 than 11 gm and nearly 25% fe-period for the health of woman imprisoned in Assam's Dibrugm blood and require more males have HB quantity hardly and unborn child in her womb. garh jail along with nine others



by the health department every month.

Health department information in twin city Ambala every month on a specific day checks the health of pregnants in female wards, suggesting them use of medicines and the diet taken by them. According to the doctors, nearly 200 pregnant women are visiting OPD daily in the maternity ward, of whom nearly 40% females have hemoglobin less

doctor in the civil hospital Ambala, in most of the cases they need to inject than 200 unit blood arranged blood in their body. Most of the

health experts advise intake of healthy diet during pregnancy period, rather getting injected blood to increase blood units in their body. While having medical check up of pregnant during OPD in maternity ward it has been observed that most of the women are not taking care of the diet taken by them during the pregnancy, since human body needs enough quantity of vitamins, minerals, fiber and iron during this



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Balwinder Kaur the mother of Waris Punjab De head Amritpal Singh has been arrested in Amritsar in view of 'Chetna March' which was scheduled to be organized tomorrow demanding to shift Singh in Punjab Jail who is currently

under the National Security Act (NSA)

Confirming the arrest of Amritpal Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (law & Order) Alam Vijay Singh said that she was arrested and sent to judicial custody. He said that it was a preventive arrest and refused to divulge more details about her arrest.

The uncle of Amritpal Singh Singh Aujla.

Police along with Kaur.

Kaur had planned to carry out the Chetna March (consciousness procession to disseminate a message in favour of Amritpal Singh) from Dam Dama Sahib to Akal Takht Amritsar but they were arrested the day before the planned Chetna March.

It may be added here that Balwinder Kaur and kin of other detainees were on hunger strike since February 22 near the Golden Temple at Heritage Street in Amritsar. Earlier, she had said that they would continue the hunger strike till Amritpal and other detainees were brought to the Punjab jail. The nine associates of Amritpal Singh who were booked under the NSA were Daljeet Singh Kalsi, Papalpreet Singh, Kulwant Singh Dhaliwal, Varinder Singh Johal, Gurmeet Singh Bukkanwala, Harjit Singh, Bhagwant Singh, Basant Singh and Gurinderpal

CM Saini seeks vote for Ambala LS candidate Sukhchain Singh and three Banto Kataria during Vijay Sankalp Rally



SATISH HANDA Ambala

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, while addressing a large gathering in Vijay Sankalp rally in support of BJP candidate Banto Kataria in Ambala City on Thursday, called upon the party workers to help Banto Kataria to win Ambala Lok Sabha seat. Saini said, he is grateful to all party workers and leaders always supported him ensuring that the respect of the party workers will always be maintained after the model code of conduct is lifted after present Lok Sabha elections, if any party workers approach any official for public work the officials do their work sincerely. He said that his door is open for everyone and will be honored.

Saini highlighted the achievements and welfare policies of the present government in the state and initiated several projects in past about 10 years for which his government has prepared a roadmap for the future. He said, double-engine government has worked for the welfare of the people of Haryana and focused on strengthening the road and rail network and did a lot in health care, farmers' welfare and education sectors. He made an appeal to take a pledge to make Banto Kataria win the coming Lok Sabha polls from Ambala seat as well as play a vital role in Rally.

making the Modi government win for the third time.

Pointing at Congress, Saini said that Congress always misguided people making false assurances, aiming no developments except corruption everywhere and people in the state cannot forget when they were forced to wait in long queues for getting even a LPG cylinder. He said, all essential amenities are now and available at the door in the state under good governess policy by the ruling government, and people below poverty line are getting free health services under 'Ayushman' and 'Chirayu'schemes, nearly 12.5 crore farmers in the country are getting benefits under 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme' and Haryana is only state across the country in which government procuring 14 type of crops from the farmers on minimum support prices fixed by the government.

Among those present at the occasion were state minister Aseem Goel, BJP district president Mandeep Rana, BJP press incharge Raj Singh, former MLAs Santosh Sarwan, Rajbir Barara, Pawan Saini and BJP Lok Sabha candidate contesting from Ambala constituency Banto Kataria. However, inspite of the long wait former home & health minister Anil Vij was not present in this 'Sankalp

CM Nayab Saini's 'Sankalp Rallies' at Rohtak and Hisar

PARVESH HANDA

Addressing the 'Vijay Sankalp' rally in Rohtak and Hisar districts in support of BJP contestants in the state, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini tried to woo women voters and farmers for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls by propagating the policies executed by the Modi Government in the past decade rule in the country. Saini said that during the past decade of the Congress regime, Rs 1,100 cr compensation for crop losses was given to farmers while the BJP government has provided Rs 12,000 cr in the past nine and a half years rule. Accusing Congress of disrespecting women and giving no relief to



to grab votes from people but victory base of former Chief did nothing for their welfare, and their government tried only grab votes but did nothing for their welfare but only to break the country and the states. The prices of urea and DAP used to increase every year during the previous Congress regimes and the farmers were compelled to buy it at high rates but the Modi government decided to provide urea and DAP to the farmers at the earlier price, he pointed out. Saini said that Congress did nothing while ruling in the country for 55 years.

After becoming the CM, it was Saini's first rally in the Rohtak parliamentary constituency in support of Dr Arvind Sharma, considered to be the immediately.

seeking votes for BJP nominee Arvind Sharma. Briefing the welfare activities of the work done by the BJP government in favour of farmers, the CM pointed out that Prime Minister Modi had distributed a total Rs 3 lakh crore among farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, besides providing adequate compensation to the farmers for their crop losses. Expressing deep concern over rising criminal activities activities against women, on-line crimes and cases of drug smuggling, Saini warned criminals in the state either to leave crimes or Haryana state

Minister Bhupinder Hooda

Elections are fought to save democracy and Constitution says Rahul Gandhi

KAVITA SHARMA Tirunelveli

Asserting that India was a country of diversities and every language and culture was equally important, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi today lashed out at the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for propagating the idea of "one leader and one language" in the country.

Addressing a largely attended public rally of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) here today, Gandhi said, it was an ideological fight between the Congress on one side and the RSS and the BJP on the other. "This election is being fought to save Indian democracy and it is being fought to protect the Indian Constitution and I am confident; we are going to win this fight", he added.

"Today, there is an ideological battle taking place in India; on one side are the ideas of Periyar like social justice, freedom and equality and on the other side are the ideas of the RSS, Mr Narendra Modi and his government", he observed while remarking, "Narendra Modi says, one nation, one leader, one language".

Gandhi asserted that the Tamil language is no less than



any other Indian language. "There are many different languages many different traditions, many different histories and cultures in this country and all of them are equally important to us", he added.

About the Tamil in particular. he said, it is not just a language, it is the way the Tamil people understand themselves and "an attack on the Tamil language is an attack on the Tamil people and nothing less".

"I have come here to tell you that for us your language, your tradition, your history are most important for us in our politics", he said amidst thumping applause, adding, "there can be no India without Tamil, without Bengali, without the large number of languages that our

people speak and that is really what the fight is about".

Gandhi recalled that he had started his Bharat Jodo Yatra from Tamil Nadu as it represented the same ideas he was fighting for.

"You have given giants to the world like Periyar, Annadurai, Kamaraj and Kalaignar and you have shown the rest of the country how to walk on the path of social justice", he remarked.

Lashing out at the BJP government at the centre, he said, they have brought the country to such a situation that India is more unequal today than it was during the British period. He said, 21 people owned as much wealth as 70 crore other

Besides, he added, the un-

'Don't ever dare to change Article 370', Shah warns Congress farm laws: Akhilesh



provide legal guarantee for the BHOPAL: Union Home Min-Reiterating his charge of ister Amit Shah, while addresscrony capitalism against Modi, ing a public rally in Madhya he said, "two or three large in-Pradesh on Thursday, warned dustrialists none of them from Congress, saying "don't ever dare to change Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir".

> The Home Minister said the decision to abrogate Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir is of the BJP workers and Prime Minister Narendra

> "Although the Congress can't return to power again, if it happens by chance, I would warn Congress to not dare to change Article 370. Kashmir is part of India. Your (Congress) politics of appeasement is over now, "Amit Shah said.

Addressing a public rally

in Mandla, one of the five Lok Sabha seats reserved for the Schedule Tribe (ST) in Madhya Pradesh, Amit Shah said the BJP government has introduced several schemes to uplift tribals in the country.

The Union Minister highlighted PM Modi's flagship schemes, especially for tribals in the last 10 years. He said it was PM Modi's idea to celebrate Tribal icon Birsa Munda's birthday as 'Janjatiya Gaurav Divas'.

"The first Janjatiya Gaurav Divas was celebrated in Madhya Pradesh (On November 15, 2021). BJP implemented the PESA Act for tribals first in Madhya Pradesh, "Amit Shah added.

Farmers' strength made BJP take back



Party President Akhilesh Yaday on Friday said that the realisation of the strength of farmers had made the BJP government at the Centre scrap the three "black" farm

Launching his election campaign from Pilibhit, he said the people of Pilibhit have made up their minds to defeat the BJP and the ruling party is scared. "The faces of BJP people

turn 'peela' (yellow) on hearing the name of Pilibhit, " he said. The SP President also at-

tacked the BJP government over the issue of electoral bonds and demonetisation. "Tell me if this electoral

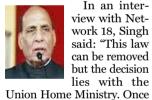
tion are not ways to turn black money into white. They have made all their black money into white, "he alleged.

The Samajwadi Party has pitted Bhagwat Sharan Gangwar against Jitin Prasada of the BJP and Anis Ahmed of the BSP in this seat. Pilibhit, which has over 18 lakh voters, will go to polls in the first round of the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections on April 19.

The Samajwadi Party, Congress and All India Trinamool Congress are contesting the polls in Uttar Pradesh as part of the INDIA alliance.

Defence minister also hints at AFSPA revocation in J&K

Defense Minister Rajnath Singh has indicated the potential withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from the Kashmir valley, although emphasizing that the final decision rests with the Union Home Ministry.



reports reach the concerned ministry, the decision will be made accordingly." AFSPA, which grants extensive powers to armed forces personnel in troubled areas, including the authority to search, arrest, and use force for maintaining public and Kashmir during the 1990s. Last week, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had also hinted at the possibility of revoking AF-SPA from Jammu and Kashmir in recent statements. The Act was implemented in response to perceived disturbances in various parts of the state, allowing defense forces to contribute to peacekeeping efforts.

EC modifies voting process for Kashmiri migrant voters JAMMU: The Election Comcial polling station. attest the certificate appended

mission (EC) on Thursday, after receiving representations from different organisations of Kashmiri migrant voters about difficulties being faced by them in the filing of form-M, has modified the voting process for the migrant voters.

An order issued on Thursday by the EC said: "All the 22 poll-to camps/zones ensuring that ing stations (21 in Jammu and 1 every zone has at least one spe-



with RSS people".

"In case there are multiple polling stations in each zone, the zonal officers shall earmark the intra-zonal jurisdiction of each such polling station, keeping in mind the distance/ease of approach for each set of electors, the order said.

employment was at its 45 years worst and 83 percent unem-

Similarly, he noted, the plight of farmers was very

deplorable with 30 farmers committing suicide every day

He said, while Modi waived

off the Rs 16 lakh crores debt

of a few industrialists, he was not prepared to waive off single

penny of the farmers.
Gandhi promised that the

INDIA government will waive

off the farmers' debt and also

Tamil Naidu get all the con-

He said, every single industry

"The ports, the airports,

electrical power, wind power,

solar power, defence industry

all of it is handed to him and

the entire small and medium

industry has been destroyed by

demonetisation and a flawed

GST", he said and added, "all

India's institutions, all India's

agencies have been stuffed full

is being handed over to them

just because Mr Adani is close

tracts, all the benefits".

to the Prime Minister

ployed are youngsters.

in the country.

The order further mentioned: "To remove the hassle of looking for the gazetted officer to

with form-M, self-attestation of these forms can suffice.

"However, in order to avoid impersonation at the special polling station, they shall be required to produce either EPIC or any of the alternate documents prescribed by the commission for the identification of electors at the polling

Congress and National Conference to contest 3 seats each in Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh

KAVITA SHARMA New Delhi

Indian National Congress and National Conference today announced the seat sharing agreement for the five constituencies of Jammu and shmir and one constituency of Ladakh.

The announcement was made at a joint press conference by senior Congress leader and former union minister Salman Khurshid and National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah and Cong leader Pawan Khera. Under the seat sharing

agreement, the Congress will constituencies, while the Na-



contest from Jammu, Udhampur and Ladakh parliamentary tional Conference will contest from Anantnag-Rajouri, Srinagar and Baramulla.

Abdullah said the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (ÎNDIA) will fight the elections jointly in all the six constituencies. While the candidates have been announced for the Udhampur, Jammu and Anantnag-Rajouri three candidates for Srinagar, Baramulla and Ladakh will also be announced soon.

He expressed confidence that INDIA will sweep all the six constituencies of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state, which also included Ladakh, which, like JK, is a separate union territory right

Congress upset over construction of Ram Mandir, says PM Modi at rally in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched a scathing attack at the Congress for turning down the invitation to attend the January 22 Pran Pratishtha ceremony of Ram Mandir in Avodhva, while criticising the grand old party over its "appeasement tactics" Addressing a rally at Bastar

Lok Sabha constituency in Chhattisgarh, PM Modi said: "The dream (Ram Mandir construction) came true after 500 years. It is natural for the people of Chhattisgarh to be happy, as it is the home of Lord Ram's maternal grandparents. But the Congress and the INDIA bloc are angry over the construction of Ram

PM Modi also took a potfamily, saying "the royal family of Congress rejected the invite for Ram Mandir's Pran Pratishtha". "The Congress leaders, who termed this decision wrong, were removed from the party. It shows that the Congress can cross any limit for appeasement, "he

PM Modi said the Oppo-



sition was in fear as his government had decided not to compromise with corruption.

"After Independence, the Congress thought that it had the license to loot the country, Addressing a massive gath-

Modi said they (Opposition) will abuse him because he has shut their shops. "So who will protect me?

The crores of people... my countrymen, my mothers, and sisters have become my 'raksha kavach' today, "PM Modi said.

Continuing his criticism of the Congress, PM Modi said the party has always played May 7, respectively.

politics of appeasement and used tribals for its own politics. "The tribal community

was always insulted by the Congress, but the daughter of the same tribal community is the President of the country today. The BJP has Minister to Chhattisgarh, PM Modi said.

Polling for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections will be held in Chhattisgarh in three

The first phase of polling in the state is on April 19, while the second and third phases will be held on April 26 and

Vice President quietly shifted to new house in Central Vista. built for Rs 200 crores!

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA New Delhi

Under the Central Vista Project, a new house was to be built for the Prime Minister as well as the Vice President, the construction of the house has been completed. The puja has also been done and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar has shifted to the new house with his family quietly. According to sources, approximately Rs 200 crore has been spent on the new house. In which many facilities like sports complex, conference room facility and swimming pool have been provided.

According to sources, Vice President Dhankhar had got the puja done in the new house in Central Vista on the occasion of Basant Panchami on 14 February. After this, the process of shifting from Upa-Rashtrapati Bhawan on Maulana Azad Road started. Then on April 4, the Vice President also quietly moved to the new house. No official information regarding this has been revealed yet. Even on the Rajya Sabha website, the address of the Vice President appears to



President or 'V-P Enclave' is built on 15 acres of land near North Block and Rashtrapati Bhavan. The complex includes the Vice-President's house and a separate secretariat building which houses his office and a conference room. Apart from this, there is also a sports complex and swimming pool which were added to the project later.

In November 2021, the Central Public Works Department had given the contract for the construction of the complex to Kamladitva Construction Private Limited of Jharkhand for Rs 206.49 crore. According to information received from the sources, the cost of the project has increased to around Rs 300 crore. But, there was no

officials of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs or CPWD on the final cost of this project. Now the old bungalow of the Vice-President means Upa-Rashtrapati Bhawan on Maulana Azad Road will soon

Let us tell you that apart from the V-P Enclave, under the Central Vista Project, a new Parliament Building, Kartavya-Path, General Central Secretariat, Central Conference Centre, New Commerce Building, new residence and office for the Prime Minister and a new facility Building for IGNCA are to be built. About Rs 20,000 crore is being spent on the entire Central Vista project.

Mapuca (Goa)

Taximen in North Goa expressed support for the Congress Party and urged the voting public to ensure electoral victory for Congress candidate Ramakant Khalap in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Describing as "horrible" the lathicharge against the agitating taximen, besides also this violent action against protesting fisherfolk and mining elsewhere, the speakers urged

Shripad Naik for his "indifference" in solving their problems like high fuel rates, benefitting from usage of their taxis at MOPA Airport.

Addressing a press conference at the Congress office in Mapuca recently, the speakers highlighted "lack of positive efforts" by the BJP candidate in regard to the people working in the Fisheries, Agriculture and Mining

"While bringing in new



the focus instead should be on heat of the summer, which

projects that did not benefit solving the people's problems the public in Goa is useless, such as lack of water in the

Taximen express support for Congress in North Goa and unhygienic" tanker sup-

> "If the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar-written Constitution is being ignored, then what is left for us with joblessness being the order of the day?" said Daniel Dsouza, ex-Sarpanch, Arambol.

The Congress representatives included: Navaya Redkar, Mandrem Block President, Sanjay Kolekar, District Secretary, Babi Bagker, VP, Surya Chopdekar.

Amid Oppn outcry over central agencies, PM Modi says action against corruption will not stop

Narendra Modi has said his government is committed to fighting corruption even as the opposition is crying foul over actions taken by the central

In an exclusive interview with Hindustan, PM Modi said that "any level of corruption impacts the people of India and action against those who steal money meant for people's welfare will not end".

The Prime Minister's statement comes amid the opposition's chorus against the action of the Central agencies

in several cases of corruption. The opposition's INDIA bloc recently held a rally in the national capital to pro-

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister test against the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the alleged liquor excise scam case. The opposition has also been raising the flag in the former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren's arrest case. In West Bengal, the agencies have come under direct attack from the ruling Trinamool Congress and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

PM Modi said in the interview, "Those who see benefits in a corrupt system are the ones who are crying foul and presenting the wrong picture in front of the people

In the interview, he highlighted his government's record on development and social welfare. He also referred

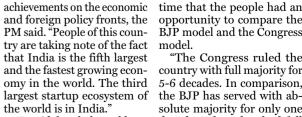


the abrogation of Article 370 in J&K and the Ram Temple inauguration.

He also expressed confidence that the BJP will win a historic third term in the Lok Sabha elections. "What you have witnessed

in the last 10 years is just the trailer. A lot more work has to be done, " said the Prime Minister.

Hailing the government's



He said the whole world was discussing the country's space missions, the Make in India campaign, and the unprecedented speed of infrastructure development.

In the interview, the PM drew a contrast between the BJP model and the Congress

model, and said that "the for-

mer strengthened the country,

the latter was focussed on the

family". He said it was the first

opportunity to compare the BJP model and the Congress model.

"The Congress ruled the country with full majority for 5-6 decades. In comparison, the BJP has served with absolute majority for only one decade. When they had full majority governments, all they did was strengthen their family. Today, when we have a majority government, our priority is to strengthen the country -- villages, the poor, our farmers, and the middleclass society.

The Prime Minister said the world was witnessing the difference between the two models.



Electoral bonds expose flaws in political funding

he revelation by the State

Bank of India, as mandated by the Supreme Court of India, regarding the details of donations via electoral bonds to political parties has sparked a significant controversy, challenging the integrity of political financing in India. Instituted by the BJP-led government in 2018, the electoral bonds scheme was touted as a step towards transparency in political donations. However, recent investigations, including a notable one by The Hindu, have unveiled unsettling facts that not only question the scheme's transparency but also its very purpose. Remarkably, companies incurring aggregate losses exceeding Rs 1 lakh crore between 2016-17 and 2022-23 were found to have donated nearly Rs 582 crore, with 75% of this amount benefiting the ruling BJP. The anomalies don't end here; profit-making firms donated sums surpassing their profits, while others, bereft of any profit or loss data, raised suspicions of being mere fronts for laundering money. Questions about the legitimacy of such donations and the potential evasion of tax by profitable firms failing to report net direct taxes have further muddied the waters. The scheme's critics, including officials from the Reserve Bank of India and the Election Commission of India, had forewarned about its potential misuse for money laundering and tax evasion. Yet, these concerns were overlooked by the Union Finance Ministry. Now, with thousands of crores encashed by political parties under this scheme predominantly by the BJP-the Supreme Court's intervention has shed light on the murky underbelly of political financing in India. As India gears up for the general election, this controversy serves as a crucial juncture for the electorate to reflect on the implications of the electoral bonds scheme. Beyond the elections, it is imperative for Parliament and regulatory bodies to undertake a comprehensive investigation into these donations, scrutinizing the legality of the funds and their sources. The judiciary's role in prompting such an

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examination cannot be understated.

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THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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> **EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY** (*RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF NEWS UNDER THE PRB ACT)

COLONEL SHASHANK RANJAN (RETIRED) ON WHY SUSTAINING TECH ABSORPTION IN INDIAN REMAINS CHALLENGING

Marching ahead with technology

e Indian Army is observing the year 2024 as the Year of Technology Absorption'. This theme underscores the Army's steadfast focus on embracing technology to transform itself so as to keep ahead of

adversaries in the context of the evolving character of warfare. The means and end in this regard are visualised under the umbrella of Atmanirbharta The absorption will be mainly in terms

of disruptive technology (DT) comprising artificial intelligence, autonomous weapon systems such as drones, sensors, robotics, space technology, and hypersonic weapon systems. Several nations, led by the United States and China, have remarkable accomplishments in the field of DTs. The strategic competition and engagements in the future are going to be inevitably decided by the edge a nation possesses in absorbing these technologies.

In military parlance, absorption implies the acquisition, adaptation and integration of technologies into existing structures called legacy systems. These cover various nuances that are usually not apparent to the uninitiated. In addition, a few misnomers prevail vis-à-vis the absorption of DTs. Certain facets are enumerated below for a nuanced understanding of the issue.

To begin with, time-tested weapon platforms and tactics are here to stay, even with the induction of DTs. It is more about discovering a practical use of the new discoveries rather than about the discovery per se. As said, integration as part of absorption wherein the new DTs complement existing platforms is crucial. Discarding the prevailing systems to be substituted by the new will not necessarily be the way ahead.

Complimenting legacy systems

Although the new technologies could significantly alter the character of future wars we must still refrain from being lulled into complacency because of the mere



acquisition of technology. The strategies that military organisations use to employ technologies will be critical in understand ing their effects on the battlefield.

Analysts who see a military revolution in technology, usually argue that new technologies have made the modern battlefield more lethal. However, it is brought out that 'realised lethality' as opposed to the visualised 'potential lethality' in recent wars such as Russia-Ukraine and Armenia-Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh), is not very much different from that seen in wars of an earlier era. This corroborates the fact that technological advances will not be the sole determinative in war and are only a part of what shapes outcomes.

Also, as we have seen in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, the initial benefits that Ukraine could muster no longer gained traction as the war progressed. One of the reasons behind 'advantage Russia' on the battlefield now is in the Russian army employing traditional methodologies to fight the war. Aspects such as consolidating traditional defence lines and a stronger military industrial base are what matter finally. The Indian military by focusing on DTs and indigenous upgrades in defence manufacture in tandem, is certainly striking the way ahead.

Adapting to new conditions is crucial

Technical countermeasures in wars quickly limit the performance of new technology-enabled weapons employed by an adversary. The most important adaptations are often not technological but operational and tactical, i.e., how a military fights at various levels. They involve changes in the way armies use the tools at their disposal. Over a century ago, armies developed tactics that reduced their exposure to enemy fire by exploiting dispersion, cover and concealment. Such practices hold even more importance in the current era.

In present battle conditions, weapon olatforms such as tanks must adapt to become more survivable. This will require a change in tactics and a greater integration of different types of capabilities. With a plethora of sensors on the battlefield, it has become almost impossible to hide. Tanks, for example, will have to operate widely

dispersed, accompanied by electronic warfare units to detect and jam aerial platforms of the enemy. Similarly, the infantry on the battlefield, while operating dispersed will need an excellent standard of junior leadership to lead men in compartmentalised and high-tech battles.

Planning ahead

Rather than discarding conventional platforms in favour of purely digital solutions, the technology and its attributes need to be at the centre of planning for future plans. This will be a process that starts with the acknowledgement of vulnerabilities and sensitivities and the gap between them.

An understanding of the latest technologies, their potential, and the context in which they can be utilised are essential. The absorption will have to visibly manifest itself at the unit levels, as against being controlled only at the higher levels. This democratisation in employing technology at cutting-edge levels is an imperative to usher in true transformation.

Technology absorption will also necessarily include several macro level aspects such as organisational restructuring, the management of human resources and cultivating specialists not merely at the higher levels but also decentralised at execution levels, civil military fusion, having a structure and policies to ensure data integrity, and having a procurement policy that is applicable to DTs.

The Indian military is moving in the desired direction but the challenge will be to sustain this with a nuanced understanding of the requirements as applicable. In this context, there are many lessons from recent and ongoing wars, and should not be lost sight of.

Colonel Shashank Ranjan (retired) is an Infantry Officer having served in the Indian Army for almost 33 years. He teaches at the O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonepat, Haryana

ARUNA BHATTACHARYA EXPLAINS HOW UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE ENSURES ACCESSIBLE, QUALITY HEALTH FOR ALL

The road to universal health Coverage: Challenges and solutions



signifies universal accessibility to comprehensive, high-quality health services, without financial hardship. UHC ensures that people receive care whenever and where ever they need it. It covers the full continuum of essential health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care. The delivery of these services relies on strong, efficient, and equitable health systems deeply rooted in the communities. UHC is built on the ethos of strengthening primary healthcare to ensure that all health needs are addressed in an integrated manner, supported by a wellequipped health and care wo

On December, 12, 2012, the UN General Assembly unanimously endorsed a resolution urging countries to accelerate progress towards UHC. In India, the high level expert group report, submitted to the Planning Commission in 2011, outlined a government intent to increase public financing for health to 2.5% of India's GDP during the 12th Plan (2012-17). The economic growth of the country makes this increase feasible. The National Health Policy, 2017 articulates "the attainment of the highest possible level of good health and well-being, and universal access to good quality health care services without anyone having to face financial hardship as a consequence" as its goal, which aligns with the UHC target.

Right to health

India lacks a constitutional provision for the fundamental right to basic health. However, the Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV of the Constitution provides a basis for the



humane conditions of work and maternity relief; and Article 47 casts a duty on the state to raise the nutrition levels and standard of living, and to improve public health. The Constitution not only mandates the state to enhance public health but also endows the panchayats and municipalities to strengthen public health under Article 243G. The theme of International UHC day is

'Health for all: Time for Action' and of World Health Day is 'my health - my right'. How should access to health be envisaged? Given that health is a state subject and the UHC policy is envisaged at the national level, there is a need for discourses on implementation. India has a large migrant population: the total number of inter-State migrant workers was about 41 million (Census 2011), and the total migration rate was 28.9% (Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2020-21). With 49% of the population living in urban slums, according to UN-Habitat/World Bank, the focus availability and accessibility of primary health services.

Isaiah Berlin spoke about two types of freedom. The first is 'freedom from' or negative freedom; the second is 'freedom to' or positive freedom. 'Freedom from' means the absence of obstacles or constraints, whereas 'freedom to' recognises the possibility of

second freedom, where every citizen has the possibility to achieve health and wellness as part of their rights to access to public health. The constitutional right to health is critical to breaking the vicious cycle of poverty and poor health that will otherwise continue to perpetuate inequality in all spheres of life, including education, opportunity, wealth, and social mobility. The two critical components of the UHC

policy — strengthening primary healthcare and reducing out-of-pocket expenditure demand focused attention. To align electoral mandates with UHC implementation, political leaders should consider the following

Four suggestions

The first is to address urban migrants' health needs, and reforms in informal sectors. Given the surge in migration and mobility, primary healthcare needs a shift in vision. There is a need to include the element of mobility and portability of access to health care services to aid continuity of treatment.

The second is to simplify the reimbursement processes for reducing out-of-pocket expenditure. The design of cash transfers and reimbursement in India's public healthcare system needs adaptation for migrant and marginalised communities.

The third is to create inclusive health systems. We need to integrate health management information system dashboards with both public and private systems and ensure better information systems considering language barriers and diversity in the urban context. The fourth is to implement communit primary healthcare in urban and peri-urban areas with seamless referral systems. We need to foster integration of services at the primary healthcare level, ensuring follow-up and adherence to healthcare.

A healthy population is an empowered population. The lighter the disease burden, the better the country's financial health. This election, UHC can be a transformative offering of political parties. Committing to investing in health systems and effectively implementing UHC necessitates political will, substantial investment, and a clear, long-term vision. Establishing a coherent policy pathway to execute the national UHC policy consistently across States is imperative for its success.

Aruna Bhattacharya leads the urban health/public health domain at the School of Human Development, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bengaluru. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

Technofeudalism: A new face of capitalism in digital age

n "Technofeudalism: What Killed Capitalism," Yanis Varoufakis, a prominent economist and former Greek finance minister, presents a grim autopsy of capitalism's demise, attributing its death to the rise of what he terms "cloud capitalists" or "cloudalists." These new-age barons, according to Varoufakis, have ushered in an era that echoes the feudal past, creating a landscape dominated by market monopolies, unpaid labor, and rent-seeking, thus undermining the foundational capitalist principles of market competition and profit-seeking. Varoufakis's thesis is built on the

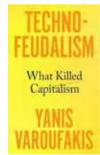
premise that the digital revolution has transformed capitalism into a system resembling feudalism, where a few tech-enabled entities control vast resources and data, much like medieval lords dominated land and agricultural output.

This comparison is not novel; writers and thinkers, including science fiction author Bruce Sterling, have previously suggested that modern digital networks and relentless data capture are leading to a new form of feudalism. However, Varoufakis adds depth to this discussion by linking three significant developments—the privatization of the internet, sustained quantitative easing post-2008 financial crisis, and China's economic ascent—as catalysts in this transformative

The book insightfully explains how companies like Amazon and Google have established "cloud fiefs," analogous to feudal territories, where they accumulate wealth not through the production of goods but through the extraction of rents. This rent derives from their monopolistic control over platforms that are crucial gateways for commerce and information. Varoufakis uses the term "vassal capitalists" to describe businesses that, while operating within these platforms, pay rent to the cloudalists, much like peasants once paid dues to medieval lords.

However, Varoufakis's argument has its contentious points. He equates the appropriation of user data on digital platforms with the feudal lords' entitlement to peasant produce, which might oversimplify the complex dynamics at play in digital economies. These platforms, unlike their feudal counterparts, invest heavily in research and development and continuously innovate—activities that are not typically associated vith feudal lords.

Furthermore, Varoufakis critiques the modern neoliberal strain of capitalism, which he argues has become particularly exploitative



Capitalism By Yanis Varoufakis Bodley Head;

and is characterized by significant intellectual property rights that restrict competition. He sees these rights as modern enclosures, paralleling the historical enclosures that privatized common lands and catalyzed the rise of capitalist markets.

The book's proposed solutions, including an alliance between "cloud serfs" (users and workers) and "vassal capitalists" (smaller businesses operating under the cloudalists), suggest a unified front against the cloudalists. This is perhaps one of the more provocative aspects of Varoufakis's argument, positing a convergence of interests where traditional class divisions might not so cleanly apply.

Despite the compelling narrative

provided, Varoufakis's prognosis for counter-politics feels somewhat underdeveloped. While he excels in diagnosing the issues with stark clarity, his strategic solutions appear less convincing, perhaps reflective of his own challenging experiences confronting Europe's financial authorities. The notion that disparate groups affected by technofeudalism could coalesce into a coherent oppositional force remains an optimistic, if not idealistic, scenario. "Technofeudalism: What Killed

and the thorough historical context

Capitalism" is an essential read for those intrigued by the evolving nature of capitalism in the age of digital technology. Varoufakis offers a deep dive into the mechanisms through which contemporary capitalism is mutating and the possible social and economic repercussions of these changes. While readers may find some of his analogies and solutions debatable, the book undeniably provides a provocative analysis that challenges the status quo and invites a critical examination of what the future holds for global economic systems.

Worst is behind us, operations Cotton prices ease as multinationals have stabilised: Vistara CEO

significant flight disruptions recently, Vistara CEO Vinod Kannan on Thursday told the airline staff that the "worst is behind us" and operations have already stabilised. Pilot woes have forced the Tata Group airline to temporarily cut down capacity by 10 per cent or 25-30 flights daily.

While acknowledging that things should have been planned better, Kannan said it has been a "learning experience". He also said it had been a challenging start to the new financial year and the airline faced significant operational disruption from March 31 to

"The anxiety and frustration felt by our customers was

Banle Group to report

host Investor Webinar

HONG KONG: Banle Group,

a reputable marine fuel logistic

company in the Asia Pacific, announced today it will file its

annual report on Form 20-F

for the year ended December

31, 2023 on Thursday, April

Banle Group will host an

Investor Webinar on Tues-

day, April 23, 2024, at 9:00

will discuss the Group's busi-

ness strategies and recent de-

About CBL International

Limited: Established in 2015,

CBL International Limited

(Nasdag: BANL) is the list-

ing vehicle of Banle Group, a

reputable marine fuel logistic

company in the Asia Pacific

Chiu, Banle Chief

Financial Officer

18, 2024.



matched in even measure to the pain that all of us felt in seeing our much-loved brand from various quarters... I assure a message to the staff. you that the worst is behind us, and we have already stabilised our operations, with our on-time

performance (OTP) increasing to 89 per cent on 9 April 2024 (second highest among drawing negative commentary all Indian airlines)," he said in

The full-service carrier has around 6,500 people, including about 1,000 pilots.

offload stocks amid muted demand ket has seen a downturn recently, with multinational traders in

India starting to offload their stocks due to muted global demand and prospects of a better crop in countries like Australia.

The May cotton futures contract on the Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) touched a high of 103.80 cents on February 28 but has since eased to 85.89 cents on April 10. The December 2024 contract hovers around International cotton prices

have dropped by around 17-18 per cent from their recent highs due to weak demand, especially from China. Domestic prices in India have also declined by 8-9 per cent.

"Multinationals have started selling for April, May, June and



July delivery, mainly due to the COFCO International, and decline in ICE futures and low demand," said Ramanuj Das Boob from the All India Cotton Brokers Association, reported BL. Cotton prices range from Rs 60,000 to Rs 62,000 per candy, about 3 per cent lower than a month ago. Cotton sold by multinationals like Viterra,

Louis Dreyfus Company is being purchased by traders and mills.

Despite a slowdown in arrivals, stocks remain sufficient with the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), ginners, and traders. Daily arrivals across various states are around 50,000-60,000 bales of 170 kg each.

lakh bales at the minimum support price for the 2023-24 crop season and has sold 5.12 lakh bales so far, leaving stocks at 27.72 lakh bales. Farmers and ginners are not happy this year due to unlucrative cotton prices, according to Pradeep Jain from the Khandesh Gin Press Factory Owners Association.

Arrivals are negligible, and demand is poor, with farmers potentially holding back stocks in anticipation of better prices.

Most North Indian cotton mills have covered their requirements for the next six months. However, mills are buying cautiously due to limited demand for yarn at higher prices. Export opportunities are also limited due to a lack of price parity

for raw materials and limited

marketing avenues within the

state, exacerbated by the hostile

borders. The members drew

attention to the fact that while

previous incentive packages

granted substantial extension of

benefits to existing units on par

with new units, the NCSS-2021

Scheme notified by the Ministry

of Commerce and Industry in

2021 excluded existing units

from the GST-linked incentive,

for Regulation and Compe-

tition (CIRC), emphasised

Creative Graphics Solutions Debut on NSE SME Platform with 106% Premium



NEW DELHI: Creative Graphics Solutions, a specialised flexographic printing plates manufacturer, made a strong debut on the NSE SME platform today.

The company's shares listed at Rs 175, a whopping 106 per cent premium over the issue price of Rs 85. The robust listing gain exceeded expectations, as the stock was trading at a premium of only 77.65 per cent in the grey market before the official listing. Creative Graphics Solutions' Rs 54.40 crore initial public offering (IPO) received an overwhelming response from investors, with the issue being subscribed 201.86 times.

Established in 2014, Creative Graphics Solutions specialises in the production of various types of flexographic printing plates, including digital flexo plates, conventional flexo printing plates, letterpress plates, metal back plates, and coating plates. The company was formerly known as Tanushii Industries Private Limited.

Workers at Tata UK plant vote for strike



LONDON: Around 1,500 Tata Steel workers based at two plants in Wales voted in favour of industrial action over the company's plan to shut its blast furnaces and shed 2,800 jobs. The steel major said it was "disappointed" over the move while consultation continues and pointed to "significant irregularities" in the ballot

2023 financial results and Stakeholder Discussions on New Labour Codes



am EST. During the webinar, **NEW DELHI:** Federation of In-Teck Lim Chia. dian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME) is gearing Banle Chairman & Chief Execuup to make representations to tive Officer and the new government after the Mr. Raymond upcoming general elections.

The key demands revolve

around seeking a phased implementation of the recently passed labour codes and holding comprehensive stakeholder discussions before enforcing the reforms. "We will request the new government to facilitate stakeholder discussions before implementing the labour codes. The last such discussions took place in 2021," said Rakesh Chhabra, Vice President, Federation of Indian Micro and

Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME). The labour codes in question include the Industrial Relations Code, Code on Social Security, Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, and the Code on Wages, that were approved by Parliament in 2020 and 2019, respectively.

However, the rules necessary for their implementation have not been formulated and notified yet. Chhabra explained, "The cost burden on MSMEs should not

increase due to gratuity. Workers should be covered under the Rs 5 lakh Ayushman Bharat scheme for medical insurance without additional charges on MSMEs."

FISME seeks Phased Implementation, FOIJ Delegation Seeks MSME Ministry Lifeline For Struggling J&K Industries

NEW DELHI: A delegation from the Federation of Industries Jammu (FOIJ), met with S.C.L. Das, Secretary of the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), to seek support for the struggling industrial units in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The delegation highlighted

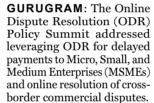
the precarious situation faced by existing industrial units in J&K due to the dilution of fiscal incentives in the post-GST regime and the Industrial Policy



of units might be forced to shut with outside suppliers due to

putting the majority of them on the verge of closure.

CUTS-SGT University ODR Policy Summit Explores Solutions for MSME Delayed Payments



Themed "Building Trust in Commerce through ODR", the summit aimed to drive policy measures and adoption of ODR as a cost-effective and accessible alternative of dispute resolution, as MSMEs often lack the resources and time to engage in lengthy legal "The adoption of ODR will

be a gradual process with evolving phases. Crucially, raising awareness among MSMEs will play a pivotal role in its successful implementation," stated Justice Hemant Gupta, Chairperson of the New



Delhi International Arbitra-

Dr. Navneet Sharma, Director General of CUTS Institute the significance of the summit, stating, "Disputes inflict substantial costs in terms of time, money, and effort on affected parties. For MSMEs and startups, the consequences of disputes can be particularly detrimental. Therefore, effective dispute resolution holds the key to successful enterprise process in favour of strikes. and a thriving economy.

Prescription for Segment Reporting by Pharmaceutical Companies in India





DR. ANIL KUMAR ANGRISH

egment reporting by an in better understanding the exchange control regulations, performance of the enterprise, and underlying currency risks better assessment of the risks in identifying geographic segand returns of that enterprise, ments. Emphasis was also laid and to make more informed on identification of 'enterprise judgments about the enter- revenue', and then identifyprise as a whole. Accounting ing segment revenue, seg-Standard 17 (AS-17) on Seg- ment expense, and segment ment Reporting was made result. Through identificamandatory for certain enterprises from April 1, 2004. The objective of Accounting Stan- the users in identification of dard was to establish prin-risks and return from a given ciples for reporting financial segment. Further, for deterinformation, about different mination of risks and return. types of products and services segments used to be classified an enterprise produced and the different geographical areas in which it operated. Indian Accounting Standard (Ind-AS 108) came up with 'management approach' in contrast to the 'risk and return approach' followed by AS-17. India-AS 108 emphasized on 'reportable segments' for which information is required to be disclosed and sought to cus, as well as macro view. We apply aggregation criteria for segment which have similar economic characteristics. Hence, this approach allowed entities to report the statistics in the same way as these were to be reported for internal purposes. To achieve this, it markets. It was also observed used to be observed that seg- that certain pharmaceutical ments were similar in certain companies such as Dishman respects namely the nature of the products or services, entific, Caplin Point Labs, etc the nature of the production processes, the type or class of markets only. Another imporcustomers for the products or tant observation is that Indian services, the methods used pharmaceutical companies to distribute the products or sold pharmaceutical products provide the services, and in in more than 200 countries, certain cases, the nature of and the USA was the most regulatory environment, e.g., important market as about 30 banking, insurance or public per cent of the total revenue utilities. In contrast to this, for these 40 companies came AS-17 emphasized on the term from the U.S. market. It is

providing products or services within a particular economic environment. For this purpose, it asked for taking into consideration factors such as similarity of economic and political conditions, relationdifferent geographical areas, proximity of operations, speenterprise helps users cial risks associated with opof financial statements erations in a particular area, tion of segment assets and segment liabilities, it helped as Primary and Secondary. Essentially, emphasis was on 'geographical areas' and 'different groups of products and services'.

Top 40 listed pharmaceutical companies in India reported their revenue earned from domestic market as well as from overseas market, thereby giving enterprise-specific foobserved that for FY2021-22, the share of domestic revenue in total revenue of top 40 pharmaceutical companies from India was just 32 per cent and 68 per cent share came from overseas Carbogen Amics, Sequent Sciprimarily catered to foreign - Geographic Segment, as a significant fact as these top distinguishable component 40 companies accounted for



is the world's third largest market, remained untapped by domestic pharmaceutical companies from India. Only 0.17 per cent revenue share out of total revenue of the selected 40 pharmaceutical companies was from Japan for 2021-22. At the same time, it also pointed out that only a small number of business entities get a sizable portion of overall industry revenue. Selected 40 pharmaceutical companies also catered to emerging markets. Emerging markets included BRIC-MT that included Brazil, Russia, India, China, Mexico, and Turkey. Certain pharmaceutical companies have come up with their own categorization, e.g., Dr. Reddy's Labs categorized Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries and Romania as emerging markets. Others included Rest of the World (ROW) that included Australia, Asia-Pacific (APAC), Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Latin America (LA-

TAM), and Gulf countries. Top 40 pharmaceutical companies reported about their business segments which included Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), generics, branded generics, animal health, Contract Development and Manufacturing Organization (CDMO), Contract Research and Manufacturing companies in India showed Services (CRAMS), Contract Research, formulations, biosimilars, Over-the-Counter (OTC), and Specialty Chemiof an enterprise, engaged in nearly 72 per cent of the total cals. These companies gave ments but that reporting was

the list of therapeutic areas try's revenues. Japan, which for which their products are relevant. The range of therapeutic areas varied for these pharmaceutical companies. e.g., Cipla had presence in 19 therapeutic areas, followed by IPCA with 17 therapeutic categories, Sun Pharma (16), Lupin (15), Alembic (15), J.B. Chemicals (15), Dr. Reddy's Labs (14), Indoco Remedies (14), Eris Lifesciences (14), among others. It has been observed that selected pharmaceutical companies which generated highest amount of revenue did not have presence in the highest number of therapeutic segments.

Segment reporting by the selected 40 pharmaceutical companies for 2021-22 also showed the focus of therapy areas of these companies. Out of 40 companies, thirty four (34) companies had presence in Cardiovascular System (CVS) segment, followed by 32 in Central Nervous System (CNS), 31 in anti-inflammatory/pain/allergy, 30 in anti-diabetes, 24 in Gastrointestinal (GI), 24 in Anti-infective, 20 in Respiratory, 19 in Anti-retroviral (ARV), 19 in Ophthalmology, 17 in Oncology, and 15 in Dermatology. Details also showed that domestic pharmaceutical companies had laid less emphasis on Oncology segment. Further, analysis of segment reporting of selected 40 pharmaceutical

whereas IPCA provided therapeutic contribution to overall formulation's exports as well as for domestic branded riding it into new launches and existing products. This reflected the differences in segment reporting, lack of uniformity, thereby presenting the need for standardization in reporting that can be helpful for users of segment reporting. In contrast to this, out of

pharmaceutical companies namely Johnson & Johnson, AbbVie, and Bristol Myers & Squibb earned more revenue from their domestic markets, and overall, top 10 global pharmaceutical companies earned more revenue from international markets (54%) in comparison to domestic markets (44%) for 12 months' period. Top 10 pharmaceutical companies in the world classified their revenue – earned from domestic market and foreign markets. These companies classified their revenue on the basis of geographic segment by citing major markets such as the U.S. Market, Europe, Japan, China, emerging markets, and Rest of the World (ROW). Besides geographic segment, another similarity was of segment reporting through business segments, and revenue reported on the basis of therapy areas. For this, example of Johnson & Johnson is relevant as it reported three key business segments as Consumer Healthcare, MedTech and Pharmaceuticals. At the same time, it reported therapy areas such as immunology, anti-infective, CNS, Oncology,

CVS and Metabolism. Country-specific differences are evident in Segment-reporting as US-based companies namely J&J, Pfizer, that certain pharmaceutical Merck & Co., AbbVie, and companies such as Divi's Labs, Bristol Myers & Squibb fol-Sun Pharma, Torrent Pharma, lowed US GAAP (ASC-280), etc reported therapeutic seg-Switzerland-based companies such as Novartis and Roche

limited to Indian market only are following IFRS-8. Companies like GSK (UK), and Sanofi (France) are also following IFRS-8 whereas AstraZeneca follows US GAAP formulations. Gland Pharma and FRS-101. Distinguishwent further and reported ing component is the details MNCs, e.g., for 2022, Astra-Zeneca reported sales of each of their products together with sales of those products in each geographical unit. Even at the level of specific drugs, performance in respective geographical area was reported. That can be definitely attributed top 10 pharmaceutical comto any innovator company as panies in the world, three their blockbuster drugs contribute significantly to their total revenue.

Domestic pharmaceutical companies need to follow a uniform pattern as some companies have reported only business segments whereas other domestic pharmaceutical companies reported geographic, business, as well as therapeutic segments. Further, domestic pharmaceutical companies should report revenue generation from all therapeutic categories in locations where these pharmaceutical companies operate. Besides reporting of segment revenue, segmentspecific expenses, segment assets, and segment liabilities can add more value for the user. Through this, a user's ability to see an entity through the eyes of management gets enhanced, and it also enables the user to predict actions or reactions of the management of an enterprise which can significant affect the enterprise's prospects for future

Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish

the views of the Institute.

Associate Professor (Finance and Accounting), Dept of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Punjab, Lubhavani H. Sahu, MBA (Pham.), Dept of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Punjab Disclaimer- Views are personal and do not represent

Infosys Foundation Commits over INR 33 Cr to Empower Karnataka Police Against Cybercrime

ARUN KUMAR RAO Bengaluru

The philanthropic and CSR wing of Infosys, Infosys Foun-

dation, has announced today the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D) of Karnataka and the Data Security Council of India (DSCI) in Bengaluru. This collaboration aims to renew their partnership for the Centre for Cyber Crime Investigation Training & Research (CCITR) located at the C.I.D Headquarters.

In a commitment to enhance the cybercrime investigation capabilities of the Karnataka police, Infosys Foundation has pledged a grant of over INR 33 crore. This grant extends the association with CCITR for an additional four years. building upon the groundwork laid since 2018. Through this renewed MoU, the focus remains on strengthening the state police force's abilities in cybercrime prosecution, achieved through advanced training and resecarch in digital forensics and cybercrime investigation.

In addition, the joint initiative will bring together innovators, large enterprises, user enterprises, academia, and the government to fulfil the following objectives: Enhancing the capabilities of the police, prosecution, and judiciary in managing investigations and crafting standard operating procedures (SOPs) for cybercrime inquiries. Conducting research in digital forensics and cybercrime investigation to enhance the prosecution of cybercrime cases handled by the Karnataka Police. Encouraging entrepreneurship to facilitate the creation of domestic cyber forensics products and solutions. Providing training and certification to police personnel in critical fields such as cybercrimes and digital fo-



forensics domains to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange. Dr. M A Saleem IPS, Di-

rector General of Police, CID, Economic Offences & Special Units, Karnataka, expressed, "The Criminal Investigation Department of Karnataka has significantly strengthened its capacity enhancement endeavors through collaborative initiatives with the Infosys Foundation and the Data Security Council of India. Beyond just training police personnel, CCITR has expanded its reach to include other kev stakeholders in the criminal justice system, namely, the prosecution and judiciary. With the renewal of this collaboration, we anticipate further advancements in digital forensics, ultimately enhancing the investigation and prosecution of cybercrime cases. I extend my gratitude to the Infosys Foundation and the Data Security Council of India for their partnership in our shared mission to combat the escalating threat of cybercrimes.

Vinayak Godse, Chief Executive Officer, Data Security Council of India, said, "On this special occasion of renewing our commitment, I would like to acknowledge and express our profound gratitude towards the Infosys Foundation and the Criminal Investigation Department of Karnataka for their pivotal partnership through CCITR. This collaboration has set an excellent example of how public-private partnerships can effectively contribute to handling cybercrime threats. Looking ahead, this renewed collaboration will enable us to develop even more advanced training programs, workshops, rensics. Partnering with both and knowledge-sharing initianational and international or- tives."

Govt focus on Infrastructure to drive Investment Cycle revival: RBI

a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) report, the government's emphasis on infrastructure development, coupled with buoyant business optimism, could foster a sustained revival in the investment cycle

The RBI's Monetary Policy Report for April 2024 highlights that domestic economic activity, backed by strong fundamentals, remained robust in the first half of 2023-24, despite challenges from muted global demand.

The report states that fixed investment and a lower drag from net external demand propelled real GDP growth, while

MUDRA Loans Cross

Rs 5 Lakh Crore Mark,

Record Growth in FY24

LOAN

NEW DELHI: The Prad-

han Mantri Mudra Yojana

(PMMY) scheme witnessed

an exceptional performance

in the financial year 2023-24 (FY24), with small business

loans under the program cross-

ing the milestone of Rs 5 lakh

According to the latest gov-

ernment data, the loan dis-

bursals under PMMY reached

a record high of Rs 5.20 lakh

crore in the year ended March 2024, marking a significant in-

crease from Rs 4.40 lakh crore

The total loans sanctioned

in FY24 stood at an impres-

sive Rs 5.28 lakh crore, fur-

ther highlighting the scheme's

success in providing financial

support to small businesses

revealed that since the intro-

duction of PMMY in 2015,

approximately Rs 46 lakh

crore has been disbursed as

Mudra loans, including the

provisional figures for FY24,

The official also high-

reported Businessline.

A senior Mudra official

and entrepreneurs.

in the previous fiscal year.

crore in disbursals



construction activity remained

firm, driven by buoyant housing

demand and the government's

ahead, private consumption

on-the-go, at their convenience.

the mobile app, RBI Governor

Shaktikanta Das told the Eco-

Direct Scheme was launched

Commenting on the launch of

The RBI report notes, "Going

thrust on infrastructure.

private consumption received supply chains. Additionally, support from steady urban

On the supply side, manufacturing activity strengthened further, benefiting from lower input costs and improved global

Bank of India (RBI) has un-

veiled a new mobile application

that will allow retail investors

to trade in various government

securities, including central gov-

ernment bonds, state govern-

ment bonds, and Treasury bills.

greater convenience and deepen

the government securities (G-

could only access and invest in

these government securities by

logging onto the Retail Direct

portal website. However, with

the launch of this dedicated mo-

and sell government securities

bile app, investors can now buy nomic Times, "The RBI Retail

Previously, retail investors

sec) market.

This move aims to provide

RBI launches Mobile App for retail investors to trade Govt Securities

It further states, "The government's continued emphasis on infrastructure creation, coupled with an uptick in private corporate investment and buoyant business optimism, could nurture a sustained revival in the investment cycle, which augurs well for boosting productivity and growth in the economy.

will get support from improved

prospects for rural demand and

rising consumer confidence."

The report suggests that the impact of a lower fiscal impulse on growth could be offset by higher growth-inducing capital

in November 2021. It is now

proposed to launch a mobile app

for accessing the Retail Direct

venience to retail investors and

"This will be of greater con-

Indian Banks Encouraged to Lead INR Derivatives Market: RBI Governor

NEW DELHI: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das emphasised the need for increased participation by Indian banks in rupee derivatives trading, both domestically and in offshore markets, while stressing the importance of prudent risk management practices, on Monday.

In a keynote address at the FIMMDA-PDAI Annual Conference in Barcelona, Das noted that presently, only a small number of domestic banks are active market makers in de-

Indian banks' participation in obal rupee markets is growing but remains relatively limited, with most acting as clients of

deepen the G-sec market," he

In a separate statement, the

central bank provided further

details about the app, stating,

"RBI Retail Direct Scheme,

launched in November 2021,

gives access to individual inves-

tors to maintain gilt accounts

with RBI and invest in govern-

The statement highlighted,

"The Scheme enables inves-

tors to buy securities in primary

auctions as well as buy/sell se-

curities through the NDS-OM

platform. To further improve

ease of access, a mobile applica-

tion for the Retail Direct portal

further added.

ment securities.'



than market makers themselves.

"Going forward, our focus should be on enhancing and widening the participation of Indian players in markets for INR derivatives, both domestically and offshore, while being prudent," Das stated.

He advised banks to carefully assess their risk appetites before expanding derivatives activities.

The Governor highlighted several areas requiring further progress, including improved pricing transparency, narrowing the divergence in pricing between large and small customers, and enhanced vigilance against misuse of banking channels for unauthorised forex trading. Das framed the RBI's recent financial market reforms as laying the groundwork for Indian markets to better meet funding needs, provide costeffective hedging, and enhance competitiveness in global markets. He affirmed the central bank's openness to introducing

new products and infrastructure based on evolving market

Govt Plans Financial Sector Overhaul, **Including Privatisation** & Consolidation



NEW DELHI: The Modi government, if re-elected, is planning a comprehensive overhaul of the financial sector as part of its 100-day agenda, according to two individuals privy to the matter.

The roadmap entails privatisation of one or more public sector banks (PSBs) and a general insurance company, stake sales in five PSBs, creation of at least one mega-global bank, and strengthening of digital infrastructure, reported

These financial sector reforms are aligned with the government's Viksit Bharat 2047 plan, which outlines two roadmaps, one for the first 100 days and another for five years, aimed at strengthening the foundations of the economy.

One of the sources revealed that the reforms would also involve the complete stake sale and privatisation of the lossmaking Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI).

He also mentioned that the reforms would also involve the launch of an initial public offering (IPO) for India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL) within weeks of the new government taking charge.

In the initial 100 days, the government may revisit the ong-pending privatisation of two PSBs and lay out plans for stake sales in more than one general insurance company, as well as a possible merger of two or three general insurers after recapitalisation, according to the second source.

Furthermore, the government plans to consolidate PSBs further to create at least one mega-bank in the short

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has stated in an interview that India needs more banks that are "maybe three times the size of SBI (State Bank of India)," as SBI itself is not among the top 10 banks globally.

This would mean further consolidation of PSBs along the lines of the 2019 exercise, where as many as 10 PSBs were

CBDT issues interim action plan for FY25

NEW DELHI: The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has come out with an interim action plan for 2024-25 fiscal year, which include identification of potential cases of prosecution, wherein there is short-payment of TDS and faster disposal of appeals. The action plan also stipulates timeline for approval of refunds, identification of cases where seized assets are due for release and release the same by June 30, 2024.

It also called for finalisation of compounding proposals pending as on March 31, 2024, and disposal of at least 150 appeals by June 30. Priority should be given to disposal of the appeals filed prior to April 1, 2020, followed by disposal of appeals filed after April 1, 2020, it said.

AKM Global, Partner-Tax, process," Sehgal said.



Sandeep Sehgal said the CBDT has unveiled its interim action plan for FY 2024-25, marking a significant stride towards enhancing tax administration efficiency. Immediate measures have been initiated to address grievances through e-Nivaran and CPGRAM platforms. "Taxpayers are now required to file applications before the assessing officer for pending refunds pertaining to their

This proactive approach aims to expedite the refund

WTO forecasts gradual recovery in Global Trade amid Geopolitical Risks

NEW DELHI: The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has forecasted a gradual recovery in global goods trade this year following a contraction in 2023, driven by the lingering effects of high energy prices and inflation.

According to the WTO's Global Trade Outlook and Statistics report, the volume of world merchandise trade is projected to increase by 2.6 per cent in 2024 and 3.3 per cent in 2025, after falling 1.2 per cent in 2023.

However, the WTO cautioned that regional conflicts, geopolighted the institutional litical tensions, and economic policy uncertainty pose subframework that encourages lenders to boost Mudra loan stantial downside risks to the



Conflicts in the Middle East have already diverted sea shipments between Europe and Asia, while tensions hlighted signs of notential

fragmentation in services trade. with the United States' imports of information, computer, and telecommunications (ICT) elsewhere could lead to trade services from North American fragmentation. The WTO report trading partners increasing to

The decline in merchandise exports in 2023 was partly due to falling prices for commodities, such as oil and gas. However, the WTO expects inflation to gradually abate in 2024 and 2025, allowing real incomes to grow again in advanced economies, boosting consumption of manufactured goods.

WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala emphasised the importance of mitigating risks like geopolitical strife and trade fragmentation to maintain economic growth and stability, stating that resilient supply chains and a solid multilateral trading framework are vital for improving livelihoods and welfs

Reserve Bank starts survey of manufacturing companies

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank has launched the next round of quarterly order books, inventories and capacity utilisation survey of manufacturing companies, a key input for the monetary policy formulation. The 65th round of survey is

for the reference period January-March 2024 (Q4:2023-24), the central bank said.

The RBI has been conducting the order books, inventories, and Capacity Utilisation sector on a quarterly basis



includes quantitative data on new orders received during the reference quarter, backlog of Survey of the manufacturing orders at the beginning of the quarter, and pending orders at

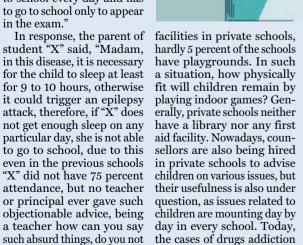
merged to create four large

Commercialization of Education & Mounting Insensitivity among Teachers

SATISH SINGH Principal of a renowned private school in Ahmedabad told the father of class 9 student, who is suffering from epilepsy, "Get her enrolled in the open school, so that she gets free from the bondage of going to school every day and has to go to school only to appear in the exam.

in this disease, it is necessary for the child to sleep at least attack, therefore, if "X" does to go to school, due to this or principal ever gave such question, as issues related to a teacher how can you say such absurd things, do you not know that doing this can have of school goers and selling a negative psychological effect of nude picture & videos of on the child's mind, her over-schoolgirls in dark market is all personality development also flourishing particularly in may also be hampered etc."

ical advice cannot be expected doing nothing. from the Vice Principal, that too in front of the sick student, nual fee of Rs.1.0 to 1.5 lakh is but in the transition period in the education sector, it is difficult to envisage that teachers are sensitive. Now the layer of taken separately. Parents have difference between teacher to spend money in the name of and butcher is being eroded art and craft and other activivery fast. Perhaps therefore ties. The standard of educamany children in Kota and across the country are com- is not up to mark. The inframitting suicide every year. structure & academic quali-



metro & big cities, but school-Such insensitive and uneth- teachers & managements are ment tests, projects, extracurbeing collected from parents right from nursery class & onwards. Bus charges are being tion in most of such schools

are worse than government schools. Due to low salary of teachers in private schools. inefficient & ignorant teachers are teaching. Even, they are not trained in teaching. Owing to unemployment,

vouth are ready to teach in school even at low salary, but their household needs are not met with the salary, on account of this, they have to give tuition. It is easiest to convince the parents of children for tuition. For this, children are taught in school in such a way that they do not understand the topics, even they do not cover entire syllabus. Also, in the annual examination in the high school, 20 marks out of 20 in internal assessricular activities are given to In private schools, an an- only those children, who take tuition. This process is not transparent and compliance with the rules by teachers is not ensured.

Because of the desire to earn huge money, 40 to 50 children are taught in a class, in which the number of intelligent children is hardly 4 to 5. Teachers pay attention only to the intelligent If we are talking about ties of many private schools children in the class, due to Private schools have under-

the subject. However, it is true & pay attention towards every student in the school, then children will never need to take tuition.

Currently, the school is charging commission on the purchase of pen, pencil, copy, school bag, shoes, socks, dress, book etc. Parents are forced to buy all these from a particular shop so that they can get commission on each item. Private schools pretend to sell books at MRP, as their MRP is many times higher than their actual price.

According to a report by the Unified District Information System for Education of school management has (UDISE), the total number of schools in India in 2022 was 14.08 lakh, while the number of private schools was around 3.40 lakh. Even though the number of government schools is high, financially strong parents prefer to get enrolled their children in the private schools so that they may become proficient in English, be able to speak English fluently, gain proficiency in communication skills etc. In this category, financially weak parents are also included, because they feel that their children will become self-reliant by studying in a private school.

If we look at it, such an ecosystem has been created in the country today, in which government schools are being looked down upon. It is believed that only if children study in a private school, their future will be safe & bright.

which most of the children's stood this weakness of parents concepts are not clear about very well. They have come to know that parents can go that if teachers teach properly to any extent for the better future of their child, that is, they can pay any price to make the future of the child bright. Therefore, teachers and management of private schools do not leave any prospect to extract money from the parents. In nutshell, we can say

that the level of knowledge of teachers in most private schools is average as qualified & efficient teachers do not like to teach in private schools due to low salaries. Education has become a business, because of which sensitivity and humanity is also disappearing in the temples of education. The aim become to earn profits instead of imparting knowledge to everyone. Therefore, the aura of private schools across the country is being continuously made bright, attractive, and impressive, so that the common people themselves get attracted towards them.

The appearance of English is still very positive in the Hindi belt of the country. Therefore, common people easily fall prey to the allurements offered by private schools to make their children competent in English and develop their overall personality. School was once called the temple of education, but today it has become a market and, in this market, even after paying huge fees, parents are not able to say anything in front of teachers due to fear.

Satish Singh, Ahmedabad based Senior Columnist, Views are personal

NBFCs Co-lending Portfolio Crosses Rs 1 Lakh Cr; **Projected to Grow by 35-40% Annually: CRISIL**

NEW DELHI: After more than 5 years since its inception, the co-lending assets under management (AUM) for nonbanking financial companies (NBFCs) in India is approaching a staggering Rs 1 lakh crore milestone. This burgeoning sector is

projected to maintain impressive growth momentum of 35-40 per cent annually over the medium term, driven by rising interest from both NBFC and banking partners.

A comprehensive CRISIL study analysing around 100 major NBFCs, representing over 90 per cent of the industry's total AUM, reveals these promising trends. Notably, only about a third of these finance companies currently have active co-lending portfolios, indicating substantial room for further expansion.

"Co-lending presents a mutually beneficial arrangement for NBFCs and banks alike, enabling risk and reward sharing," explained Ajit Velonie, Senior Director at CRISIL Ratings.

"For NBFCs, especially midsized and smaller players, it facilitates access to bank funding and diversifies their funding sources - a crucial advantage given recent increases in risk weights for bank lending to NBFCs. The model also supports capital-efficient growth for NBFCs. Conversely, banks gain optimal access to niche customer segments and geographic markets while meeting priority sector lending targets,"

Velonie added. Currently, personal loans comprise approximately one-



This shift aligns with the government's emphasis on boosting the MSME sector's GDP contribution and the 'Housing for All' initiatives"

AUM, trailed by housing loans at around 20 per cent, unsecured MSME loans and gold loans each constituting around 13 per cent, while secured MSME loans (including loan against property) and vehicle loans make up the remaining 20 per cent.

While all asset classes under the co-lending umbrella are poised for growth, the pace of expansion for personal loans is expected to moderate compared to recent highs.

This adjustment follows the Reserve Bank of India's revision, increasing the risk weight for unsecured consumer credit to 125 per cent from the previous 100 per cent. Consequently, the growth rate for unsecured loans is prothird of the overall co-lending jected to decelerate to 25-35

per cent in fiscal 2025, down from an estimated 35 per cent in fiscal 2024.

With recalibrated growth for personal loans due to increased risk weights, their share of the co-lending book could decline in fiscal 2025, while MSME and home loans are likely to gain a larger proportion," stated Malvika Bhotika, Director at CRISIL Ratings

"This shift aligns with the government's emphasis on boosting the MSME sector's GDP contribution and the 'Housing for All' initiatives. Overall, co-lending will continue attracting heightened traction as NBFCs seek alternative funding sources to meet the robust demand for retail loans," Bhotika added.

The growth trajectory will also be reinforced by the controlled asset quality witnessed thus far in the co-lending portfolios of banks and NBFCs. Sustaining this asset quality emerges as a critical factor for the long-term success of the co-lending business model, alongside monitoring the evolving regulatory landscape governing this sector.

Biz tycoon Truong My Lan sentenced to death in Vietnam's largest fraud case

estate tycoon Truong My Lan was sentenced on Thursday to death by a court in Ho Chi Minh City in southern Vietnam in the country's largest financial fraud case ever, state media Vietnam Net said

The 67-year-old chair of the real estate company Van Thinh Phat was formally charged with fraud amounting to \$12.5 billion, nearly 3 per cent of the country's 2022 GDP.

Lan illegally controlled Saigon Joint Stock Commercial Bank between 2012 and 2022 and allowed 2,500 loans that resulted in losses of \$27 billion to the bank, reported state media VnExpress. The court asked her to compensate the bank \$26.9 million.

Despite mitigating circumstances, this was a first-time offense and Lan participated in charity activities — the court attributed its harsh sentence to the seriousness of the case, say-

Australia appoints special

advisor to examine Israeli

CANBERRA: A former head

of the Australian Defence

Force (ADF) has been ap-

pointed as the country's special

advisor on Israel's response to

strikes that killed aid workers

Chief Marshal (ACM) Mark

Binskin will oversee official

investigations into the strikes

that killed seven World Central

Kitchen (WCK) staff in Gaza,

Xinhua news agency reported.

Australian citizen Zomi

Frankcom was among the

WCK humanitarian workers

who were killed when the con-

voy they were travelling in was

hit by an Israel Defense Force

(IDF) airstrike in central Gaza

Penny

Wong, Austra-

lian minister

for foreign af-

fairs, on Mon-

day announced

that retired Air

airstrike investigation



ing Lan was at the helm of an orchestrated and sophisticated criminal enterprise that had serious consequences with no possibility of the money being recovered, VnExpress said.

Her actions "not only violate the property management rights of individuals and organizations but also push SCB (Saigon Joint Stock Commercial Bank) into a state of special control; eroding more market-oriented approach people's trust in the leadership

SURREY: With eight lakh

Sikhs calling Canada their

home, April is observed as Sikh

Heritage Month to celebrate the

rich history and contributions

As per the Canadian ency-

clopedia, Sikhism is a major

world religion that arose from

the teachings of Guru Nanak.

There are about 27 million Sikhs

worldwide, making Sikhism the

we'll feature prominent Sikh

Canadians and events related

to the Sikh community that had

a strong impact on Canadian

history," said Historica Canada,

a non-profit Canadian organisa-

tion dedicated to enhancing

According to City of Surrey's

awareness of Canadian history

official account on X, "It is an

opportunity to remember, cel-

ebrate, and educate about the

vital role Sikhs have played, and

continue to play, in our com-

This year's Vaisakhi Parade

"Throughout the month,

fifth-largest religion.

of the community there.

of the Party and State," VnExpress quoted the judgement as saying.

Her niece, Truong Hue Van, the chief executive of Van Thinh Phat, was sentenced to 17 years in prison for aiding her aunt. Lan and her family established the Van Thing Phat company in 1992 after Vietnam shed its state-run economy in favor of a that was open to foreigners.

The official page of Veterans

Affairs Canada says: "Today, we

remember Buckam Singh -- one

of the first Sikhs in Canada to

Son of Badan and Chandi

Kaur Singh and husband of Pri-

tam Kaur of Jalandhar, Buckam

Singh was in Canadian Infantry

(Eastern Ontario Regiment).

His enlistment was on April

Mayor of Brampton, Pat-

rick Brown, said: "Brampton

is proud to be home to so many

people of Sikh heritage making

tremendous contribution to

enlist in our military

mother, a Chinese businesswoman, to sell cosmetics in Ho Chi Minh City's oldest market, according to state media Tien

Van Thinh Phat would grow to become one of Vietnam's richest real estate firms, with projects including luxury residential buildings, offices, hotels and shopping centers. This made her a key player in the country's financial industry. She orchestrated the 2011 merger of the beleaguered SCB bank with two other lenders in coordination with Vietnam's central bank. The court found that she used this approach to tap SCB for cash. She indirectly owned more than 90 per cent of the bank — a charge she denied — and approved thousands of loans to "ghost companies," according to government documents. These loans then found their way back to her, state me-

Multinationals view India as alternative manufacturing base; investments 'strong': UN



remains a "strong" recipient of foreign investments as mulstrong. tinationals recognise it as an alternative manufacturing base for supply chains, according to

"India is benefiting by grow-Development 2024 Report.

The report released on Tuesday said that in contrast to large particularly in India, remains

While discussing India's role for multinationals as an "alternative manufacturing base, "the report did not directly mention China, which is the motivating factor behind the development because of geopolitical issues.

In contrast to India and some other countries, the report said the developing world as a whole was facing a "sustainable development crisis" because of staggering debt burdens and sky-high borrowing costs".

These "prevent developing countries from responding to

the confluence of crises they

Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed said, "We are truly at a crossroads and time is running out. Leaders must go beyond mere rhetoric and deliver on their promises. Without adequate financing, the 2030 (UN sustainable development) targets cannot be met.

"We're experiencing a sustainable development crisis, to which inequalities, inflation, debt, conflicts and climate disasters have all contributed, " she added while speaking at a news conference on the report's

Mohammed said that the global financial institutions created after World War II were no longer relevant and needed urgent reforms to meet the contemporary challenges.

The report said that New Development Bank (NDB), created by BRICS is planning to issue between 2022 and 2026, 30 per cent of its loans in national currencies, including Indian rupee-denominated bonds.

China tried to interfere but Canadians decided the polls in 2019, 2021: Justin Trudeau



Minister Justin Trudeau has said China tried to meddle in the election process in his country twice -- 2019 and 2021, but asserted that it was fair.

The elections were decided by Candians, Trudeau said on Wednesday in his testimony before a commission probing alleged foreign interference in the polls.

The commission was set up last year after media reports about China's interference in

However, the Chinese Embassy in Canada denied any interference in Canadian

The commission is set to complete its initial report by May 3 and final report by 2024 end, The Guardian reported.

Earlier, India was accused of meddling in the polls and later the allegation was ruled out by Canada.

Canadian Security Inteloperations in China, ligence Service (CSIS) on Monday said that China has which re-"clandestinely and deceptively" reliant interfered in the Canadian

> "We know that the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) clandestinely and deceptively interfered in both the 2019 and 2021 elections, "CSIS said during a briefing to the com-



the United Nations.

ing interest from multinationals, which see the country as an alternative manufacturing base in the context of developed economies' supply chain diversification strategies, "according to the Financing for Sustainable

swathes of the developing coun-

Sikhs in Canada observe April as Heritage Month China sanctions 2 US firms over 'support for arms sales to Taiwan'

announced sanctions against two US defence companies over what it says is their support for arms sales to Taiwan, the self-governing island democracy Beijing claims as its own territory to be recovered by force if necessary. The announcement freezes

the assets of General Atomics Aeronautical Systems and General Dynamics Land Systems held within China. The



ing the country. Filings show General Dy-

on foreign aerospace technology presence in the field. The com-

mains heav-

Trudeau's Liberal Party had

pany helps make the Abrams mission. namics operates a half-dozen measure also bars the compatank being purchased by Tai-Gulfstream and jet aviation wan. won both the elections. nies' management from enter-

lled as bus falls into ravine in Balochistan

KARACHI: At least 17 persons were killed and 38 others injured when a bus carrying pilgrims fell into a deep ravine near a border town of Pakistan's Sindh and Balochistan provinces, the police said on

The pilgrims were going to pay homage at the Sufi shrine Shah Noorani in the Khuzdar district of Balochistan when their bus fell into the ravine in the Hub town on Wednesday. In another incident, 15 peo-

ple celebrating Eid drowned when their boat capsized in the Indus in northwest Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



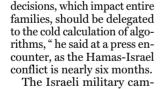
UN chief voices concern over reports of Israel using AI to identify targets in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has voiced concern over reports about the Israeli military using artificial intelligence (AI) in its bombing spree in Gaza.

Reports showed that AI was used to identify targets, particularly in "densely populated residential areas, resulting in Friday. a high level of civilian casu-



"No part of life-and-death



paign has reportedly killed more than 32, 000 and injured more than 75, 000 others, the vast majority of them women and children, Guterres was

quoted as saying by Xinhua news agency

Progressive Intercultural

Community Services (PICS)

Society President and CEO

Satbir Singh Cheema said that

the month of April "is an ac-

knowledgement that gives us

the opportunity to celebrate the

contributions and efforts of the

Sikh community in the past and

in the present to make Canada

PICS is a registered non-

profit society that has been

serving the local community

in British Columbia since 1987.

providing a broad spectrum of

programmes and services that

assist new immigrants, seniors,

a more inclusive place.

More than half of the population in Gaza -- over a million people -- are facing catastrophic hunger, with children dying for lack of food and water, he

"Nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people, "said the

Ukraine parliament passes law to boost troop numbers

passed a controversial law on the country calls up new soldiers at a time when it needs to replenish depleted forces who are increasingly struggling to fend off Russia's advance.

The law was passed amid escalating Russian campaign that has devastated Ukraine's energy infrastructure in recent weeks. The country desperately a time when doubts about the needs more troops — and they need more ammunition — at



supply of Western aid are increasing. The law — which was identify every draft-eligible

watered down from its original

law, men aged 18 to 60 will be showing they have registered with the military and present them when asked, according to Oksana Zabolotna, an analyst for Center for United Actions.

Power plant destroyed - A massive missile and drone attack destroyed Ukraine's Trypilska power unit, one of the largest plants. The attack was part of a renewed Russian campaign targeting energy infrastructure.

Nijjar killing: 'We have stood up for Canadians', Imran Khan's jail security measures PM Justin Trudeau tells public inquiry panel

Trudeau accuses the previous Conservative government in the country of being 'cosy' with current Indian government

OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who testified at a public inquiry looking into foreign interference in Canada's electoral process said that his government was firm on the issue of protecting Canadians, including addressing the killing of Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was shot dead in Surrey last June.

During a hearing of the Foreign Interference Commission which is headed by Quebec judge Marie-Josee Hogue, Trudeau accused the previous Conservative government in the country of being "cosy" with the current Indian government.

Asked about foreign interference during the 2019 elections and redacted parts in the 2019 annual report of the NSI, Trudeau said, "In a public setting, I can't speak to redactions made

Canada from anywhere in the world has all the rights of a Canadian to be free from extortion, coercion, interference from a country that they left behind and how we have stood up for Canadians, including in the very serious case that I brought forward to Parliament of the killing of Nijjar, demonstrates our government's commitment to defending the rights and freedoms of Canadians. "And the suggestion that

we haven't and we won't do everything we can to defend Canadian rules and values ments. and defend Canadians from foreign interference is simply misplaced," Trudeau is heard in a video of the inquiry proceedings shared by Canadian newspaper The Global and Mail. "Our government has always stood up to defend minorities in Canada and the rights of minorities to speak out even if it irritates their home countries overseas,

Trudeau said. An investigation into the allegations of foreign meddling in Canadian politics was triggered by several media for national security. But, reports that cited unnamed I will say that the principle sources and leaked docu-



A briefing document from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) says that China "clandestinely and deceptively" interfered in the last two federal elections.

Trudeau appeared before the national public inquiry after several days of testimony from members of his cabinet, political party representatives, intelligence officials and senior bureaucrats.

During the hearing, the Canadian Prime Minister spoke about the measures his government had taken to address foreign interference since assuming power

Asked whether appropri-

ate steps were not taken to expose foreign interference, Trudeau said, "I think that's certainly a question one needs to ask of the previous conservative government that was known for its very cosy relationship with the current Indian government. Whereas our government has always stood up to defend minorities in Canada and the rights of minorities to speak out, even if it irritates their home countries overseas," according to the video shared by The Global and Mail.

In a classified February in-

of Inquiry, Trudeau called it extremely damaging to the confidence of the people of Canada in the democratic process. A public summary of the interview was revealed at the inquiry on Wednesday, where Trudeau testified at an open hearing.

Trudeau expressed his frustration that intelligence leaked to media had been "sensationalized" and taken out of context, Canada-based CTV News reported.

According to the summary, Trudeau noted that these leaks were "particularly frustrating" as the Liberal government had placed robust mechanisms to track and combat interference, however, it was "painted as negligent in the media."

Trudeau also considered that the leaks showcase the dangers of making conclusions based on a single piece of intelligence, without sufficient context and without analysing its reliability.

Allegations of foreign interference in the past two general elections - suggestions triggered by anonymous leaks to the media resulted in calls for a public inquiry.

stan prime minister Imran Khan's jail security measures at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi are costing a hefty monthly bill of over Rs 1.2 million (12 lakh), according to prison authorities

According to the report submitted by the jail superintendent to the Lahore High Court (LHC), the specialised facilities provided to Khan, 71, within the prison premises include a separate CCTV camera system installed for Rs 500,000, distinct from the system overseeing the 7,000 other prisoners.

Khan's meals are prepared in a dedicated kitchen under the watchful eye of the assistant superintendent and are subject to inspection by a medical officer or deputy superintendent before being served, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

A team of over six doctors from Holy Family Hospital is stationed to provide medical care to the former prime minister, with additional specialist teams conducting regular

Khan occupies two of the seven special cells available, while the remaining five are is allocated for Imran Khan's



kept closed for security reasons. Typically, 35 prisoners are accommodated in these

Access to Khan's cell is tightly restricted, requiring permission for entry, and professionally trained personnel are assigned to ensure the se-

curity of his ward. While Adiala Jail typically assigns one personnel for every ten prisoners, Khan's security detail comprises 15 personnel, including two security officers and three dedicated to his personal security.

Moreover, a designated area within the jail premises

recreational walks, equipped with exercise machines and other amenities Strict regulations are en-

forced for visitors, and com-

prehensive security protocols are implemented during court proceedings. The report reveals the collaborative efforts of jail police,

Rangers, and district police in ensuring the security of Adiala Jail, including regular search operations and mock drills. Additional police forces,

Rangers, and elite personnel are deployed both within and around Adiala Jail to maintain a secure environment for Imran Khan and all inmates.

Dharmendra shares

pic with Dilip Ku-

Emraan Haashmi

MUMBAI: A string of personali-

ties, such as Dharmendra, Jr.

NTR, Emraan Hashmi, and

Nimrat Kaur, to name a few,

have wished joy, peace, and

prosperity on the occasion of

Bollywood's veteran star

Dharmendra shared a mono-

chrome picture with Dilip Ku-

mar and wrote: "Eid Mubarak." Star Jr. NTR hoped for joy,

peace, and prosperity for others. He wrote: "Eid Mubarak! May

this Eid bring you joy, peace,

Anupam Kher tweeted: "Wishing all #Eid_Mubarak!

Actress Nimrat Kaur wished

everyone "Eid mubarak" and

wrote: "Aap sabhi ko Eid bauhaut bauhaut mubaarak... #Ei-

dUlFitr #Eidmubarak2024."

Actor Emraan Hashmi simply

Suniel Shetty urged every-

one to cherish the spirit of unity

and embrace kindness. Suniel

tweeted: "On this auspicious

day, let's cherish the spirit of

unity and embrace kindness

and spread gratitude. Wishing

perity! #EidMubarak." Actor

Abhishek Bachchan said: "Eid

mubarak." Singer Papon added:

"Eid Mubarak!! Best wishes on

Eid Ul Fitr! Love and peace to

playing the piano and wrote:

TERI KASAM (Acoustic Pi-

ano)... Jamming at Home!!

EID MUBARAK! #adnansami

#unplugged #music #Eid-

Mubarak." Actor Arbaaz Khan

said: "EID MUBARAK to ev-

eryone." Singer Armaan Malik

wished everyone and urged

them to have a "blessed time"

Actor Sai Dharam Tej

wished everyone and their fam-

ily "a joyous Ramzan filled with

love, peace, and happiness!!!

Sabko EID MUBARAK."

with their loved ones.

you all happiness and pros-

said: "Eid Mubarak.

Love, peace and prosperity!"

Eid on Thursday.

and prosperity.



Indian Sikh pilgrims arrive in Pakistan through the Pakistan-India Wagah border post, about 35km from Lahore on Saturday.

Rahman's idea for 'Amar Singh Chamkila' was to merge western musicals, Punjabi culture



MUMBAI: Oscar and Grammy-winning music composer A. R. Rahman, who next has the biopic 'Amar Singh Chamkila' waiting in the wings, shared the core idea behind the film's music with IANS.

The composer shared the

Western musicals and Punjabi culture. The story of 'Amar Singh Chamkila' is told musically but at the same time, it is very rooted and feels quite

The composer told to media

At a grand event in New

Delhi, makers of the series

Heeramandi: The Dia-

mond Bazaar on Tuesdav

dropped the trailer in the

presence of the entire cast.

The trailer showcased a saga

of love, freedom, betrayal

The three minute video

transported the viewers to

the 1940s and the lives of

the courtesans, filled with

love, betrayal, power and

the fight for independence.

The trailer launch start-

'Heeramandi' trailer

showcases a saga of love, freedom, betrayal and power

So you can't do stuff which is too much out of the box. We decided to take the formula of western musicals where people sing, dance and there is a narrative going forward musically. As much as the information is being fed to the audience at the same time it is very much enjoyable.'

He further mentioned: "The dea then struck to us that what if we merge the Punjabi culture with the western musical. So we designed the songs keeping them very rooted with rhythm changes and the time signature changes but at the same time they were designed in the way of a Broadway musical."

Preity Zinta shares throwback picture from 1st photoshoot when she was in her 20s



Preity Zinta, who is currently busy with the ongoing season of IPL with regards to her team Punjab Kings, went through her archives on Monday.

The actress shared a picture from her 1st photoshoot.

The actress took to her Instagram and shared a throwback picture. The picture is a close-up of the actress.

She wrote in the caption: "Was going through some old stuff and found this photo! OMG! My first photo shoot ever... I was all of 20 & I thought I knew everything I needed to know about the world ... except how to pose for a photo shoot #20yearoldme #memories #throwback #ting." Earlier, Preity Zinta took a walk down memory lane and recalled her 2004 film 'Veer-Zaara' with Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan, who she says helped in "brightening" her day after she felt like a "zombie" during re-

hearsals. Taking to X, Preity shared a video featuring the two stars during their dance rehearsals. The song 'Tere liye' could be heard playing in the background as they practised. The actress wrote in the caption: "This was us rehearsing for an award show. I remember I had no sleep for two days and I felt like a zombie. @iamsrk helped brighten the day and the rehearsal with his easy charm and timely jokes." Preity then talked about a dance step, which she revealed was taken from the song 'Jiya jale'

from the 1998 film 'Dil Se'.

Allu Arjun wields an axe and stares chillingly in new 'Pushpa 2

MUMBA: The stage is set, the release date is locked for the mar on Eid; festive wishes from Jr NTR. upcoming Allu Arjun-starrer 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' and with the anticipation building high for the sequel, a new poster from the film was unveiled on Sunday.

The new poster shows Allu Arjun's titular character of Pushparaj sitting on a chair with an axe in his hand as he stares at the camera in fullswag. The teaser for the film is set to drop on Monday at 11:07 AM on the occasion of Allu Arjun's birthday.

Taking to social media, the makers shared the poster. They wrote in the caption: 'He has risen above all the odds. And now, he is coming to RULE. #Pushpa2TheRule-Teaser out tomorrow at 11:07 #HappyBirthdayAlluArjun the poster, writing: "#Push-



#Pushpa2TheRule Grand Release Worldwide on 15th AUG 2024." Allu Arjun took

pa2TheRuleTeaser tomorrow

'Pushpa 2: The Rule' is diam. #PushpaMassJaathara to his social media and shared #HappyBirthdayAlluArjun the poster, writing: "#Push-stars Allu Arjun, Rashmika

Mandanna, and Fahadh Faasil. Produced by Mythri Movie Makers and Muttamsetty Media. 'Pushpa 2: The Rule' will be released on August 15, 2024.

Ekyana Retreat by Patanjali Wellness unveiled at Panchkula



Ekyana Retreat by Patanjali balance, and peace. With reall" Singer-musician Adnan Wellness is a sanctuary for storative experiences in a luxury the tranquil and picturesque health seekers seeking a mind-Shivalik foothills. Our name "Ekyana" represents the idea of "one path" towards holistic health, where all of our healing that offers such facilities, commodalities work together to create a balanced and harmonious approach to wellness.

With the blessings of Param Pujya Swami Ramdev ji Maharaj and the guidance of Acharya Balkrishanji, we intend to retreat offers a range of carefully align Ekyana with the grand vision of spreading integrated therapy and holistic healthcare practices in the region. We have

created an experiential journey that paves a road to harmony, setting. Ekvana is suited for ful, peaceful getaway.

We are proud to be the only wellness retreat in the region bining the transformative power of nature with the ancient healing practices of Ayurveda, naturopathy, and yoga. A haven of wellness where ancient wisdom meets modern techniques. The curated programs and therapies tailored to promote inner balance, vitality, and overall

«We are thrilled to introduce Ekyana Retreat as an extension of our commitment to promoting holistic health and wellness,» said NK Verma, Managing Director of Ekyana Retreat. «In today»s fast-paced world, it is pertinent to take time for self-care and reconnect with our inner selves. Ekyana Retreat provides the perfect

Ekyana Retreat features a diverse array of wellness programs, including Naturopathy | yurveda | Yoga and Meditation Physiotherapy | Shirodhara | Hydrotherapy | Panchkarma Shringi | Acupressure | Acupuncture | Shatkarma and more.

setting for individuals to embark

on a journey of self-discovery

and healing.»

NK Verma claimed, "Diseases treated include Respiratory Disorders (Asthma, Bronchitis), Digestive Disorders (Indigestion, Constipation), Joint and Musculoskeletal Disorders (Arthritis, Back Pain), Skin Disorders (Acne, Eczema), Stress-related Disorders, Lifestyle Disorders (Diabetes, Obesity), Chronic Pain, Insomnia, Skin Conditions, Hormonal Imbalances, Immune System Support and more".

Zee Punjabi's **Star Surbhi Mittal Embraces Navratri Traditions with Fervor**



Chandigarh

Yesterday, As the festival of Navratri sweeps across the nation with its vibrant colors and joyous celebrations, Surbhi Mittal, the role of "Shivika" in Zee Punjabi's hit show "Shivika - Sath Yugan Yugan Da," is embracing the festive spirit with immense enthusiasm. During the auspicious days of Navratri, Surbhi Mittal. known for her dedication to her craft, takes a break from her hectic schedule to immerse herself in traditional rituals and festivities. She expresses, "Navratri is a time of profound spiritual significance and cultural richness. It's a joyous occasion that brings people together in devotion and celebration."

Unleashing the Magic: The World of Professional Dog Trainers

ed with each cast mem-

ber, including Sonakshi

Sinha, Manisha Koirala,

Richa Chadha, Aditi Rao

Hydari, Sanjeeda Sheikh

and Sharmin Sehgal, giving

an intriguing introduction

to their characters in the

form of poetry. The trailer

is packed with clashes and

fights for India's freedom.

Making a debut into the

world of the web, this San-

jay Leela Bhansali series

will be released on Netflix

on May 1.

ADITI CHAHAR

and power.

Dogs are often referred to as man's best friend, and for good reason. Their loyalty, companionship, and unwavering ove make them beloved members of countless households around the world. However, like any relationship, the bond between a dog and its owner requires effort, understanding, and effective communication. This is where professional dog trainers sten their expertise to unlock the full potential of every canine companion. Let's delve into the fascinating world of dog trainers and discover the magic they bring to the lives of dogs and their human counterparts. This is where I would like to introduce a wonderful trainer, Satish Kumar who starts his day at 5 am daily to train and discipline the naughty four legged pupils. So exactly what does he do....

Satish says he educates every canine for one hour evervdav.

According to Satish Kumar, a nicely educated canine ought to be capable of understand and obey instructions, stroll and stay silent at home. "though we teach them pets. fundamental commands, retaining all this relies upon at adopt a canine because they the proprietor who wishes to see it on social media and want

preserve the instructions in practice," he says. "The general public consider that dog trainers are very harsh

with the pets and addition-

ally hit them. That is not real. dogs are sensible animals they gauge your temper with the aid of the tone of your voice and react hence ," he says. Having been within the career for over twenty five years, Satish has been a witness to the converting traits of the dog industry in the tricity. He says that owning a pet, particularly

a canine of exotic breeds has

always been a status image.

But, nowadays social media

additionally plays a huge role

in making humans preserve "Several human beings

the equal. Nowadays not many hassle to analyze about which breed to undertake or what needs to be completed to ensure the pet's proper protection. Numerous breeds such as the Rottweiler, Germ an Shepherd or Saint Bernard aren't suitable for apartments. Smaller breeds like Beagle and Dachshunds are more suitable for apartments; however human beings do not take those factors into consideration," he provides. He says that at the same time as a decade in the past breeds like pug, Labrador and Doberman were preferred, today Golden Retreiver, Beagle and French bulldogs are the fashion. Addressing the developing call for for pets within the city, Suresh is well known through his expertise

A Petition filed seeking to stop holding of IPL matches in Mullanpur

TARUN BHAJNI Chandigarh

The petition filed by Nikhil Thamman, a final-year law student at the University Institute of Legal Studies (UILS), Panjab University, Chandigarh, seeks to restrain the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) from conducting Indian Premiere League (IPL) matches at Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium, Mullanpur, Mohali. Thamman, identified as an RTI activist and environmental enthusiast, argues that the construction of the stadium violates the Environment Impact Assessment Notification of 2006 issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. Thamman, represented by counsel Sunaina, Abhishek

Khurana, and Narinder Singh, contends that the stadium's construction lacks necessary clearances, particularly from the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) mandated by the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, as the project is within the 10-kilometer radius of the Sector 21 Bird Sanctuary, Chandigarh.

The petition calls for the high court to direct BCCI and PCA to refrain from hosting IPL 2024 matches as scheduled and to

halt ticket sales for these matches immediately. Furthermore, the petitioner seeks legal action against responsible officers for permitting the unauthorized construction of the stadium and its subsequent use for events such as IPL 2024.

Thamman highlights the absence of essential clearances, including environmental and forest/wildlife clearances, required before commencing construction on a new stadium.

First successful Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement done at Alchemist Hospital

PANCHKULA: In another milestone for the Alchemist Hospital, sector 21 Panchkula, the Cardiac Team did the first successful Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR). The procedure was performed by Dr. Rohit Parti, Associate Director Department of Cardiology, along with Dr. Sud-hanshu Budakoty, Consultant Department of Cardiology, at Alchemist Hospital, Panchkula under the able guidance of Dr Rajat Datta, Director Department of Cardiology.

TAVR is a minimally invasive procedure to replace an aortic valve that is narrowed and doesn't open fully.The aortic valve is between the for people who cannot have left lower heart chamber and heart surgery to replace aortic the body's main artery.Nar- valve due to eldely age,other rowing of the aortic valve is comorbid conditions. A pacalled aortic valve stenosis. The tient's experience with a TAVR valve problem blocks or slows procedure may be similar to blood flow from the heart to the body.

Usually valve replacement



TAVI procedure can be done through very small openings that leaves all the chest bones in place.It amy be an option coronary angiogram in terms of recovery

Individuals facing aortic require an open-heart proce- stenosis are encouraged to dure with a "sternotomy",in engage in a comprehensive which the chest is surgi- discussion with healthcare cally separated(opened) for professionals to receive per-

the procedure. The TAVR or sonalized advice tailored to their specific situation.

Saving Hearts with Compassion, Empathy and Excellence.

Heart diseases are still the major contributors of morbidity and mortality in today's world, the epidemic of diabetes, obesity, modern lifestyle has led to increase in the cases of heart attack and heart failure . Alchemist hospital offers a holistic approach to deal with this much burden of heart disease. We believe in timely diagnosis, early detection and then treat the disease with excellent short and long term

outcomes for our patients.



List of procedures performed at Alchemist Hospital Advanced Cardiac Centre

Primary angioplasty Complex coronary angio-

Peripheral angioplasty

Below the knee interventions Balloon mitral valvotomy

Balloon pulmonary valvotomy

TAVR (Trans Aortic Valve Replacement)

Permanent pacemaker implantation Cardiac resynchronization

therapy (ČRT-P /D)

Carotid angioplasty

AICD Implantation Leadless pacemaker implantation

Balloon aortic valvulo-Coronary Rota ablation Intravascular lithotripsy EVAR (endovascular aortic repair)