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REGION



SAD DELEGATION MEETS GURDWARA **ELECTIONS COMMISSIONER REQUESTS TO EXTEND REGISTRATION OF VOTERS TO MARCH 31**



CENTRE ISSUES NOTICE TO APPLE, OLA, UBER OVER SOFTWARE PERFORMANCE, **DIFFERENTIAL PRICING**

POTPOURRI



HARYANA IMPROVES SEX **RATIO FROM 861 TO 910 IN LAST 10 YEARS: CHIEF** MINISTER

WEF 2025: Ashwini Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann Ridicules Intention is to bring natural gas, aviation **Vaishnaw Highlights** BJP's Empty Promises, Calls them 'Jumlas' fuel under GST says Hardeep Puri Thrust on Manufacturing, "

NEW DELHI: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann led a high-energy roadshow in Kasturba Nagar, it was followed by two Jansabhas (public rallies) in Mehrauli and Chhatarpur Assembly Constituencies, where Mann addressed thousands of enthusiastic supporters.

During the roadshow, Mann was greeted by a sea of AAP supporters, who cheered and chanted slogans as he made his way through the crowded streets of Kasturba Nagar. The Punjab Chief Minister interacted with locals and urged them to vote for AAP candidates.

Addressing the gatherings, Mann expressed his gratitude to the people for their overwhelming support. "I can see the enthusiasm and energy of the people, and I am confident that on February 5, the broom will sweep the elections, " he said. "We have worked tirelessly for the people, and now it's time for the people to elect

their representatives.' Mann also emphasized the importance of electing representatives who understand the problems of the common people. We are not here to make false



politics, "he said. "We are committed to working for the people, and we will ensure that their voices are heard.' The Punjab Chief Minister

as per list sent by SGPC

demanded that the entire list of

the Sikh pilgrims sent by the

SGPC for visiting Gurdwaras

in Pakistan should be given

JAGMOHAN SINGH

Amritsar

"This is because they have no also highlighted the achieve- constructive work to showcase.' ments of the AAP government In contrast, Mann said that the in Punjab, including providing AAP's focus is on delivering 50,000 jobs and ensuring that tangible benefits to the people, citing the example of Punjab 90% of households receive zero electricity bills. "We have delivwhere the party has provided ered on our promises, and we 50,000 jobs without requiring will continue to work for the

Mann also highlighted the people, " he said. Mann also drew attention to significance of the AAP's electhe contrast between the AAP's tion symbol, the broom. "Our commitment to public service symbol represents cleanliness

and purity, and under Arvind Kejriwal's leadership, we will bring about a cleanliness drive across the country, " he said. Mann expressed confidence that the people of Delhi would elect AAP representatives who would work tirelessly for their welfare, and urged them to press the 'jharoo' button on the EVM to bring about a positive change.

Mann also ridiculed the opposition's empty promises, cit-ing the example of the BJP's claim to provide Rs 2, 500 to women. "Did they fulfill their earlier promise of depositing Rs 15 lakh into everyone's bank account?" he asked. "Their promises are nothing but hollow jumlas, and the people of Delhi will not fall for them."

Mann criticized BJP for its hypocrisy, saying, "They accused Kejriwal of distributing freebies, but today in their manifesto, they have promised 2500 for women and free gas cylinders among other freebies." But the people of Delhi know that only any recommendations or bribes. Kejriwal fulfill his Guarantees, other parties copied his word 'guarantee' and his guarantees but they don't deliver anything after getting your votes.

NEW DELHI: Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Hardeep Puri on Friday said that there is a growing consensus to bring natural gas under the ambit of GST, but stopped short of hinting at a timeline.

"LPG gas is already 100 per cent saturated," he said, referring to LPG gas connections and the success of PM Ujjwala scheme.

On the matter of GST on LPG, the government maintained that it was under the GST since the beginning. "LPG is under the ambit

of GST since the beginning," Petroleum and Natural Gas Secretary Pankaj Jain said, who was also present during the press conference. Commercial LPG cylinder

attracts 18 per cent GST and domestic attracts 5 per cent. Ujjwala gas currently sells at Rs 503 per unit, and non-Ujjwala at Rs 803 per unit in Delhi.

The minister, responding to a reporter's question, asserted that aviation turbine fuel will also be taken up for consideration under the GST. "Our sense out of the last

GST meeting was that ATF (aviation turbine fuel) is likely to come on soon under GST but bringing Natural gas is also on the cards," the minister said.

"There were a large number of states which earlier had reservations like Gujarat, Maharashtra, AP, but they are now more or less seeing the benefits of that. I don't want to put a timeline, because its not my field. I am the line ministry, and the taxation issue falls under the finance ministry and GST council,' said the minister. "If you ask me, I would say sooner than later (it will happen)."

There have been discussions of bringing petrol and diesel under the GST regime, but several states, from time to

There were a large number of states which earlier had reservations like Gujarat, Maharashtra, AP, but they are now more or less seeing the benefits of that"

time, have opposed this idea. Petroleum products are currently not part of the GST framework.

Moving on to biofuel blending with petrol, Minister Puri said that 20 per cent blending of ethanol with petrol will be completed next month.

The government has been ambitious of attaining 20 per cent ethanol-blended petrol by 2024-25 financial year and 30 per cent by 2029-30. The government has advanced the target of E20 fuel from 2030 to 2025.

E20 blending in petrol was introduced by the Centre to reduce the country's oil import cost, energy security, lower carbon emissions and better air quality.



DAVOS: Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday highlighted India's balanced approach to economic development with both manufacturing and services driving the nation's growth in his speech at the World Economic Forum.

Addressing global leaders and captains of industry here, the minister said: "It cannot be manufacturing or services; it has to be manufacturing and services as both these sectors are integral to India's economic trajectory.

He emphasised India's transformation from focusing solely on import substitution to adopting a ["]Make in India, Make for the World" approach.

With 99 per cent of mobile phones used domestically now manufactured in India, the growth strategy has shifted towards export-led growth across sectors such as pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and garments, he said.

Vaishnaw highlighted India's ascent in the semiconductor and AI sectors, stating that "most semiconductor industry leaders believe today that India will soon join the top three destinations for semiconductors".

Emphasising why global companies are increasingly gravitating towards India, the Union Minister highlighted the nation's "unique advantage" rooted in trust, abundant talent, and exceptional design capabilities.

He credited the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for creating an environment of global trust, attracting companies to shift not just supply chains but also value to India. "With nearly

Congress hits out at the Modi govt over the free fall of the **Indian rupee**

"जैसे-जैसे रुपया गिरता है, प्रधानमंत्री की प्रतिष्ठा गिरती है



KAVITA SHARMA New Delh

The Congress today lashed martyrdom day of Sri Guru Arover the free fall of rupee against the dollar. The party flagged its grave concern over the rupee dangerously almost touching 87 mark, against the US dollar. Swati Maliwal Slams 'Z-Plus' Security for "Looks like the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has resolved to make the rupee hit the century against the dollar", party spokesperson and Chairperson of the Social Media and Digital Platforms, Supriya Shrinate chided the government, during a press conference at the AICC headquarters here today. She asked the government whether it realized how much impact the falling rupee will have on the common people as imports will be expensive which will lead to inflation and price rise of essential commodities Shrinate quoted Modi himself, as he used to say before becoming the Prime Minister, that "the Prime Minister's dignity was falling along with the value of the rupee". She wondered how low the PM's dignity had fallen today.



Singh Mehta, secretary Partap Singh and assistant secretary Jaswinder Singh.

personal attacks. "The BJP

resorts to abuse and slander,

targeting Arvind Kejriwal from

morning till night, " he said.

visas and that the Sikh Jatha should be allowed to be sent as Sharing information in this per the approved Nanakshahi calendar on the occasion of the Mehta said the past, a

ing which a meeting has been held with Pakistan's officials today. It has been said that the SGPC is a representative orgaregard, Kulwant Singh Man- nization of Sikhs, which sends nan and Bhai Rajinder Singh Jathas every year to visit various Gurdwaras in Pakistan on the

Singh and Parkash Gurpurb of Sri Guru Nanak Dev. It is said that for these Jathas, the Punjab state has an approved quota of 1800, 600, 300 and 1800 visas, respectively. However, for the last few years, the entire list of Sikh pilgrims sent by the SGPC is not given visas by the Pakistan High Commission and a large number of names are deducted from the SGPC's list.

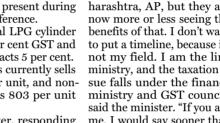
The SGPC officials said that today this matter was raised with the officials of the Pakistan High Commission and it was demanded that visas be issued to the maximum number of pilgrims from the SGPC list ing in mind the devo



MUMBAI: Defence Minis-The blast was of such an ter Rajnath Singh on Friday intensity that it was heard condoled the death of workfrom 5 km away. A thick ers in a blast at the Ordnance smoke was seen from the Factory at Bhandara, Mahafactory in a video captured rashtra. At least eight people from a distance. died and seven others were injured in the evolosion

In an earlier post on X, hief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the SDRF and Union Minister Nitin 2,000 Global Capability Centers Nagpur Municipal Corpora-(GCCs) working on advanced tion team was deployed for designs, India is poised to be a the rescue operation. The major player in global manudistrict administration was also coordinating with mul-

Ordnance factory blast: Rajnath Singh condoles death of workers



jan Dev. The SGPC delegation included its chief secretary and member Kulwant Singh Man- SGPC to Pakistan High Com-

large number of visas of the Sikh pilgrims from the list sent by the nan, member Bhai Rajinder mission were deducted, regard- anniversary) of Maharaja Ranjit

occasion of Khalsa Sajna Diwas (Vaisakhi), martyrdom day of Sri Guru Arjan Dev, barsi (death

he protect this man

so much and promote

Maliwal's comments

followed a revelation

that Kumar, despite be-

him repeatedly?"

tion and religious sentiments of the Sikh pilgrims towards the historical Gurdwaras in Pakistan

Gold hits all-time high of Rs 82,900



NEW DELHI: Gold prices rose Rs 170 to hit a fresh record high of Rs 82,900 per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a positive global trend, ac-cording to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal had

closed at Rs 82,730 per 10 grams on Wednesday. In about one year, the precious metal surged Rs 20,180 or 32.17 per cent to Rs 82,900 per 10 grams from Rs 62,720 per 10 grams on February 23, 2024. Extending the gains for the seventh Punjab Child Rights Commission Takes Serious Note of Stray Dog Bites on Children, Orders Sterilization of Stray Dogs

Gadkari in a media event in Nagpur said that eight people died in the explosion. Expressing grief and praying for the speedy recovery of the injured, Rajnath Singh tiple teams.

wrote on X, "Deeply saddened to know about the blast ot (at) Ordnance Factory at Bhandara, Maharashtra. My condolences to the bereaved families. Praying for the speedy recovery of the injured.'

The rescue teams were deployed at the site and all efforts were being made to provide assistance to those affected

The blast occurred in the LTP section of the factory around 10.30 a.m., District Collector Sanjay Kolte had said earlier. The blast led to the roof collapse and trapped over a dozen workers. In the initial efforts, three were rescued alive and one was found dead. An excavator was used to remove the debris, said the senior official.

The CM, who is returning from the World Economic Forum summit held at Davos, said in the earlier post on X. "Medical assistance teams are ready too. As per the information received till now, one worker unfortunately lost his life. My condolences to his family. We stand with the family in this tough time. There is a news of incident where 13-14 workers are trapped due roof collapse caused by an explosion at the ordnance factory in Bhandara district. 5 workers have been safely rescued. Bhandara Collec-

tor and SP are at the site

and ensuring immediate

rescue measures and all

required support. I pray

for speedy recovery of the

injured."

facturing," he remarked. With artificial intelligence (AI) in the services sector poised to play a prominent role in shaping India's future, driving innovation and creating opportunities, the Union Minister also highlighted the need for laying special emphasis on training the talent pool in AI. He emphasised India's potential to become the "use case capital" of the world, creating innovative applications for in-dustries globally. He noted that while AI models are becoming increasingly commoditised, the focus should shift to develop ing use cases, applications, and solutions that cater to global industries. "Experts believe that India has the potential to lead the world in AI services, just as it has successfully done in the IT services sector," the minister remarked, underlining India's capability to shape the future of

AI on a global scale.

he orchestrated the assault on her by his aide last year. In an exclusive interview with media Maliwal expressed shock and dismay over the

protection being afforded to Bibhav Kumar, a man she claims brutally assaulted her



claiming that she believes that motion of him only point to a deeper conspiracy

She said, "It has been heard that the same goon, Bibhav Kumar, who mercilessly dragged me and beat me in Arvind Kejriwal's drawing room, has been given Z-plus security by the Punjab governin Kejriwal's official residence. ment. After all these months, According to Maliwal, Kejri- I believe from my heart that wal's protection of a "mere Arvind Kejriwal got me beaten goon," and his repeated pro- up. If it wasn't so, why would

Attacking the BJP further,

ing labeled a "goon" by the Supreme Court, has been given significant political clout She claimed that after being restricted by the court from holding important positions, Kumar was appointed as Chief Advisor to the Punjab Chief Minister and enjoys a salary higher than Cabinet ministers.

Maliwal described Punjab government granting Z-plus security to Kumar as an excessive provision usually reserved for high-ranking officials.

'Security withdrawn from Kejriwal after instructions from EC, Delhi Police': Punjab DGP

NEW DELHI: After Delhi Chief Minister Atishi criticised the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the withdrawal of security for Aam Aadmi Party national convenor Arvind Kejri wal, Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav has said following instructions from the Election Commission of India (EC) and the Delhi Police, they have withdrawn components of the Punjab Police deployed for the security of former Chief Minister.

"From time to time, we get reports of threats to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Arvind Kejriwal and we share them with the concerned agencies. Following the directions of the Delhi police and the Election Commission today, we with-



drew the component of the the life" of former CM Kejriwal. Punjab police in the security of Kejriwal ji, "Director General CM Atishi questioned the Election Commission for being a of Police Gaurav Yadav told the media on Thursday in Patiala. "mute spectator" despite "re-Earlier on Thursday, CM Atipeated attacks" on the leader of a national party. "Shameful. On

shi also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minthe instructions of Amit Shah ji, @DelhiPolice today forcibly ister Amit Shah of "playing with

removed @ArvindKejriwal ji's Punjab Police security. And on the same day, Kejriwal ji was attacked by BJP goons in Hari Nagar. Does Modi-Shah want to play with Kejriwal's life? How long will the Election Commission remain a mute spectator? Why is there silence on the repeated attacks on a leader of a national party?" Atishi said in a post on X on Thursday. This comes after the Punjab Police withdrew its security for AAP chief Kejriwal. Atishi's remarks came after AAP Chief Arvind Kejriwal earlier on Thursday, while taking to social media X, alleged that some people of the opposition candidate entered his public meeting in Hari Nagar and attacked his car.

straight session, gold of 99.5 per cent purity appreciated by Rs 170 to hit an all-time high level of Rs 82,500 per 10 grams. The metal had finished at Rs 82,330 per 10 grams in the previous trading session. Gold of 99.9 and 99.5 per cent purity grew Rs 2,320 each in the last seven trading sessions. However, silver prices declined Rs 500 to Rs 93,500 per kg from the previous close of Rs 94,000 per kg on Wednesday. Bullion traders attributed the rise in precious metal prices to heightened demand by jewellers and retailers, along with a strong trend in the international markets.

In futures trade on Thursday, gold contracts for February delivery rose Rs 19 or 0.02 per cent to trade at Rs 79,583 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX).



the matter. The Chairman highlighted that media reports have revealed alarming incidents, including the tragic deaths of two children within a week in Hasanpur village near Ludhiana due to stray dog attacks. Similar incidents have been reported from various parts of Punjab, including Mohali, Zirakpur, Amritsar, Machhiwara Sahib, and Nabha, raising serious

public concern. The Chairman further informed that he has written to the Administrative Secretaries of the Punjab Local Government Department and the Rural Development &

Panchayat Department, urging them to implement the provisions of the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, as notified by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India, on March 10, 2023. He emphasized that timely implementation of these rules will help control the stray dog population and prevent further attacks on children.

of stray dog attacks on children, Kanwardeep Singh, Chairman of the Punjab State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, has directed the Local Government and Rural Development Departments to conduct a census of stray dogs in all cities. He has also urged immediate sterilization to prevent further

incidents. The Chairman has stated that reports of stray dog attacks on children have been brought to the commission's attention through media sources. Expressing deep concern over these incidents, the commission has taken suo-motu notice of

REGION

SAD delegation meets Gurdwara Elections commissioner requests to extend registration of voters to March 31

CHANDIGARH: A Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) delegation led by Working President Bal-winder Singh Bhundar, former President Sukhbir Singh Badal and SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami today met Gurdwara Elections Chief Commissioner Justice (retd) S S Saron and requested him to extend the process for registration of voters for the Shiromani Committee elections to March 31 besides weeding out all bogus votes.

While presenting the memorandum to the chief commissioner, Mr Sukhbir Badal informed Justice Saron that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government had directed booth level officers to register votes en mass from voter lists due to which thousands of non-Sikhs had been given the voting right for the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak (SGPC) elections. He said besides this genuine



as part of the conspiracy to take over control of the SGPC by hook or by crook. Mr Badal urged the chief commissioner to issue directions for the review of all voter lists so that bogus also appealed for extending the

votes were being deleted even eligible voters had still been left as bogus votes were being added out from the election process. votes could be weeded out. He Dr Daljit Singh Cheema said

Mr Badal also gave the example of Himachal Pradesh where the voter list had also not been made till now. Later while briefing newsmen about the memorandum,

the SAD stood for registration time period for making new of genuine voters but it was votes saying a large number of condemnable that the AAP

banks to follow RBI guidelines

government was coming in the way of this exercise. He said the situation was such that thousand of non-Sikhs who had not applied to be registered as voters for the elections had been given this right. He said the delegation had also apprised the chief commissioner about the Sikh rehat maryada under which it was compulsory to suffix Singh or Kaur with Sikh names. "We have submitted voter lists to the Commission in which the names of voters are in contravention to the Sikh rehat maryada.

SAD Working president Balwinder Singh Bhundar said the delegation had also requested the Gurdwara Elections to direct the government to ensure rules governing registration of voters was adhered to strictly. The delegation included Hira Singh Gabhria, Amarjit Singh Chawla and Arshdeep Singh Kler.

SGPC opens Char Sahibzade MRI and CT Scan Center in Mumbai

SGPC President Harjinder

MRI and CT scan facility will be provided to economically weaker sections for Rs 10: Advocate Dhami

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Char Sahibzade MRI and CT Scan Center was inaugurated today at Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Matunga in Mumbai, under the management of Shijot Singh, OSD of SGPC Satbir romani Gurdwara Parbandhak Singh Dhami, Jasbir Singh Dham and other personalities

Committee (SGPC). Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht were present at the inaugura-Sahib Giani Raghbir Singh, tion ceremony SGPC President Advocate Harjinder Singh Dhami, Singh Dhami said that the rep-Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesresentative body of the Sikh community, the SGPC, is doing garh Sahib Giani Sultan Singh, Jathedar of Takht Sri Hargreat services in public welfare mandir Ji Patna Sahib Giani works. Under this, an MRI Baldev Singh, SGPC member and CT Scan Center dedicated Gurinder Singh Bawa, Presito the four Sahibzadas of Sri dent of Takht Sri Patna Sahib Guru Gobind Singh has been Management Committee Jag-



said that at this center, MRI, CT Scan, X-ray test services will be provided to the people of economically weaker sections for just Rs 10. Apart from this, medicines will be provided at a rate 25% lower than the market rate from the pharmacy run under the name Guru Nanak Mission 1313 and medical blood tests will also be done at 50% cheaper rates. He said that these services will be provided to the common started in Mumbai today. He people at very affordable rates.

11454 samples of milk & milk products collected in 4 northern states, 3107 cases registered against adulterators



SATISH HANDA

People residing in four northern states Punjab, Haryana, Himachal and Chadigarh are fond of milk and milk products, where adulteration in such products has been observed. According to Health & Family Welfare Ministry report, during year 2023-24 a total number of 11,454 sampled of milk and milk products collected in above states 3107 samples which include 1653 cases in Punjab, 935 cases in Harvana, 351 cases in Himachal and 165 cases in Chandigarh were found adulterated witnessing increase of 733 cases in Punjab and 524 cases in Haryana as compared to the previous year. Information revealed that under Food Security Quality Rule 2006, as many as 2866 cases were also registered against firms allegedly involved in wrong branding of food products.

According to a doctor of Gastro-antrology Department of PGIMS Chandigarh, use of adulterated milk and its products is very harmful for the health causing medical disorders like kidney and liver problems, apart from the infections including the food poisoning, stomach pain, diarrhoea, intestine infection and typhoid. According to the report, out of 6041 samples of food products collected in Punjab during the year 2023-24, adulteration was not found in 929 samples, whereas civil cases were registered in 1577 and criminal cases in 76 cases

Similarly, in Haryana out of a total number of 3485 collected samples, 856 samples were found correct, whereas 818 civil and 117 criminal cases were registered against the adulterators. In Himachal, out of a total number of 1617 samples as many as 396 samples were found correct, whereas 346 civil and 8 criminal cases were registered against the samples found adulterated. In the 311 samples collected from Chandigarh, 128 civil and 31 criminal cases were registered against the adulterators.

Two Punjab police officers hospitalized after burn injuries **JAGMOHAN SINGH**

Amritsar

Two Punjab Police officers have been hospitalized after they suffered burn injuries at the time of disposal of seized narcotics consignments.

Confirming the incident here today, Punjab police official Rajiv Pal said two officers who suffered burn injuries were Superintendent of Police Mr. Tarun Rattan and Deputy Superintendent of Police Mr. Sukhamrit Singh both were from Khanna district of Punjab. Adding further, he said that both the officers were here for the disposal of seized drug (narcotic) consignments in the furnace at Khanna Paper Manufacturing unit in Amritsar. Telling about the incident

he said that when they were throwing the drug consignments wrapped in the plastic bags in the furnace, all of sudden embers of fire bounced back and hit on the legs of police officers resulting in burn injuries on their lower legs

Immediately, both the officers were rushed to a local private hospital where they were declared out of danger. DSP Sukhamrit Singh was discharged after first aid and another officer SP Mr. Tarun Rattan to be discharged tomorrow as per doctors, said.

RAJU WILLIAM Panchkula

Even as Haryana Police is strengthening the system to control cybercrime, the state's Director General of Police (DGP) Shatrujeet Kapur has urged the banks and fintech companies to chip in for the purpose as fake bank accounts are used by cybercriminals to commit frauds.

Chairing a state level conference here, the DGP gave necessary directions to officials of banks and fintech companies to follow the new Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines, specifically keep an eye on fake bank accounts and take appropriate action.

In this conference, the banking sector and fintech companies were briefed in detail about the new RBI guidelines of November 2024 and January 2025 regarding cybercrime control.

RBI's Regional Director Vivek Srivastava, NPCI, and senior officials from around 50 banks and fintech companies across the country, including Google Pay, Paytm, Amazon Pay, and PhonePe, along with senior police officers attended the conference.

of Police, Harvana



Cyber Frauds: Haryana DGP directs

ing a good job in controlling to Rs 980 crore. This figure cybercrime, but to control it effectively, all stakeholders need to work together so that the defrauded amount can be frozen as oon as possible, he said.

In September 2023, only 7% of the amount of cyber fraud was held by Haryana Police, which increased to 27% in November 2024. The DGP emphasized the need to increase this percentage rate to 70% through joint efforts, which can be done after all the banks adopt the RBI's Mulehunter Artificial Intelli-

gence software. With the passage of time, the cases of cyber fraud have also increased. In 2023, cyber fraud of Rs 602 crore was committed in Haryana, while Though some banks are do- in 2024 this figure increased December 2023, this number

shows that there is an increase in cybercrime cases, which need to be curbed in time. Since cyber fraud is done

through digital means, it is very important to use the digital platform effectively to stop it. Apart from this, he also appealed to inform the helpline number 1930 immediately in case of cvber fraud.

DGP Kapur urged the bank officials to keep an eye on suspicious transactions in bank accounts and take appropriate action if they find any suspicious bank account transactions.

Interestingly, Inspector General of Police (Cyber) Shivas Kaviraj shared that while 72927 bank accounts were opened in

increased to 128963 in November 2024, which is a serious issue. If every banker works under the new policies of RBI, then cybercrime can be controlled. Bank officials should take immediate action as soon as they receive a complaint of cybercrime.

RBI's Regional Director Vivek Srivastava explained in detail about the new RBI policy, the system and procedure in case of cyber fraud, and asked all banks to follow its guidelines. Along with this, he also cleared the doubts of the representatives

In the conference, Parul, an officer from the RBI, shared detailed information about the AI-based Mulehunter software developed to identify fake bank accounts involved in cyber fraud. With this system, fake bank accounts can be identified with 90% accuracy.

Samarjith, a representative of NPCI, also shared information about the technical aspects being taken to control cybercrime through a PowerPoint presentation. During this, the process of searching for an automated response system for money trails on the NCRP portal and points related to stopping the amount defrauded in the banking channel were discussed.

Haryana BJP President Badoli should quit until cleared of rape charge says Anil Vij

PARVESH HANDA

Ambala

Haryana's Energy, Transport and Labour Minister Anil Vij while addressing media persons here said state BJP president Mohan Lal Badoli, who is a co-accused in a gangrape case registered in Himachal Pradesh, should resign to maintain the sanctity of the party. In a reply to a question raised by media persons. Vij said: "Mohan Lal ji has said he is innocent, and the witness has also stated her innocence. I have full confidence that the Himachal Pradesh Police's investigation will prove him innocent. However, until the Himachal Police clear him, he should resign from his position to maintain the sanctity of the party.

Vij made these statements in Ambala Cantonment after inaugurating of various developmental projects. Rhough, earlier, he had described the allegations as serious. Badoli and singer Rocky Mittal were named in a gangrape case, registered on December 13, 2024, at Kasauli police station. A woman had alleged that Badoli and Mittal had forced her to consume alcohol and raped her at a hotel in Kasauli (Solan) in July 2023, and even added that they had also shot her compromising videos and photos when she was instructions to the agency to under the influence of liquor begin their work immediately."



and assured her job in Haryana.

Meanwhile, regarding a letter issued against "corrupt" patwaris, Vij said if they had done anything wrong, action would be taken against them. "The government has collected data, and I appreciate the government for gathering this information." He also appealed to patwaris to work for the welfare of the people. Vij said that "If they have done anything wrong, action will

be taken against them. He also appealed to Patwaris saying that "Work for the people, and there should be no corruption. On the issue of Yamunanagar thermal power plant,

Vij said, "All hurdles for estab-

lishing an 800 MW thermal

power plant have been cleared.

I spoke to the Environment

Minister about this a couple

of days ago, and I hope his let-

ter will be received. When the

letter is received, we will issue

from the banks.

Over 12 percent reduction in rape cases Nayagaon front objects to old ESZ proposal in Haryana in year 2024: DGP Haryana by Punjab forests department

SATISH HANDA

According to National Crime Record Bureau analysis crimes against women have been happening since ancient times, but there were few reported and what about those which remain unreported. But after 2008 the incidents of such crime against Women in Harvana came to light. Information reveals that during 2008 the number of dowry cases reported to police stations in Haryana state was 302 which increased to 1122 in 2011. Similarly, domestic violence cases against women reported 2435 in 2008 increased to 10471, rape cases increased from 454 in 2008 to 2506 in 2011, sexual harassment cases witnessed increase from 447 to 1632 in four years, molestation cases increased from 477 reported in 2008 to 1886 in 2011 and the total number crime against women reported in police stations in Harvana in vear 2008 increased from 4115 to 17617 in the year 2011.

In the state of Haryana the crime rate among women witnessed much hike due to literacy and advancement among women in society and increase in crimes against women had to undergo tremendous forms of violence in various stages of their lives for instance rape. bride burning, domestic violence, harassment, violence due to demand for dowry, etc. with positive variation of 12.5% in the registration of domestic violence cases due to the orthodox and patriarchal mindset of people of Haryana. The economic dependence of the women on her family to fulfil their needs is also one of the main reasons behind such kinds of crimes.



The social and economic status of women can be both a cause and consequence of violence against women causing a large number of dowry deaths as well as cruelty or harassment by husband or any relative of her husband's family.

According to NCEB data, the dropped by 27.21% as of June 30. Additionally, there was a rate of crime against women in the state of Haryana was 6.46% reduction in cases reghigher than its neighbouring istered under the Protection of state Punjab and national av-Children from Sexual Offences erage, and highest reported (POCSO) Act and a 25.23% decases of sexual harassment cline in dowry deaths compared were reported in the district of to the previous year, he added in a statement. DGP Kapoor said Faridabad and Rohtak, lowest reported cases were from district that several measures were taken Mewat and second lowest from to ensure women's safety and district Yamunanagar as per security in the State. Prioritizing women's safety, Kapoor said 2011 NCRB data. Faridabad being an industrial town and is that the meetings with senior police officials led to the foralso in close approximation to capital New Delhi, was one of mulation of an action plan to the reasons for highest number ensure women feel safe. Police Commissioners and Superintenof sexual harassment cases reported from this district. District dents were instructed to iden-Mewat has been dominated by tify hotspots and hot routes in Meo-muslims community, who their jurisdictions. Police teams value traditional and patriarchal were deployed on these routes frameworks. In the past women to take action against offenders were generally perceived as inand those with criminal tendenferior beings in comparison to cies. Officers were also given duty men in almost every sphere of in plain clothes on these routes life, though the situation has and near schools, colleges and gradually changed at present. other educational institutions The female literacy level was to provide a safe environment lowest in Haryana in the past as for women. He said, a group per census 2011 recorded as 35.1 of female officers in Gurugram percent which further had conhas been trained to interact with girls and women in educational tributed to low status of women due to restrictions in women's institutions to understand their movements, mobility, their acissues closely

cess to resources and services RAJU WILLIAM such as employment. Women Chandigarh were not allowed to go out for

work as such contributed to Nayagaon Ghar Bachao Manch, low crime rate against women. a prominent Chandigarh-based public front has strongly object-According to a recent meeitng, ed to the latest move of Punjab's Shatrujit Kapoor DGP Haryana stated over 12 percent reduction Forest and Wildlife Conservain rape cases in Haryana in a tion Department in which an vear, claiming decline in crimes old proposed notification for an eco-sensitive area in the vicinity against women have vielded positive results due to police efof Chandigarh has been sent for approval of the state cabinet. forts, leading to a 12.64 percent

reduction in rape cases in 2024 The notification is meant for compared to 2023. Similarly, declaring an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) up to 3 km. for Sukhna attempted rape cases decreased Wildlife Sanctuary adjacent to by 60.28% and molestation cases the Nayagaon Municipal Committee, SAS Nagar (Mohali) district Mohali.

The move amounts to defying the Supreme Court orders as well as bypassing the high-level committee constituted by the

Punjab government, comprising three cabinet ministers Lal Chand Kataruchak, Dr Ravjot Singh and Hardeep Singh Mundian, alleged Vineet Joshi, chairman of the manch and senior BJP leader of Punjab. He demanded that a joint

meeting of ministers and officials of the concerned departments should be convened immediately to take a decision per law on the objections raised before the high-level committee during the public hearing.

Harvinder Kalyan Appointed as Member of AIPOC Standing Committee

GULSHAN KUMAR Chandigarh

Haryana Legislative Assembly Speaker, Harvinder Kalyan, has been nominated as a member of the Standing Committee of All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC), the highest body of presiding officers in the country. The committee, chaired ex-officio by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, includes Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh Narayan Singh as Vice-Chairman and a Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha as an ex-officio member. Additionally, seven legislative assembly speakers from various states are also part of the committee. The committee's secretary is Lok Sabha Secretary General Utpal Kumar Singh

Sabha Secretariat.

Notably, Kalyan, who assumed office as Haryana Legislative Assembly Speaker on October 25, 2024, has been appointed to this prestigious committee within just three months of assuming office. He expressed his gratitude to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla for the opportunity and pledged to fulfill the responsibilities expected of him as a member of the Standing Committee.

The Standing Committee is responsible for setting the Kalyan's appointment fills dates, venue, and agenda for the vacancy created by the the annual conference of Preresignation of Sikkim Legissiding Officers. It also overlative Assembly Speaker, Arun sees the implementation of Kumar Upreti. He has been resolutions passed by AIPOC and addresses national and nominated to the committee starting January 17, 2024, as international constitutional per a notification from the Lok and parliamentary matters.

Prostitution racket in hotel exposed: 4 Thai, one Nigerian woman & a hotel operator were arrested

Hisar leads in crime in Haryana

SATISH HANDA Hisar

A prostitution racket running in a hotel in Haryana's prominent Hisar district

has been exposed. Prostitution was being conducted in The Redwood Hotel near a cinema in the Red Square Market in the town. The police have arrested the hotel operator Rajkumar and sent him to jail. Four Thai and one Nigerian women are also said to be involved in this sex racket. In this case, the prime accused hotel operator Rajkumar was arrested and produced before the court and after his police remand was sent to jail by the police. Police investigation revealed that the accused had met a woman in Delhi. After this, the accused made contacts there and brought four Thai and one Nigerian women to his hotel in Hisar. With their help, the accused started the business of prostitution in his hotel.

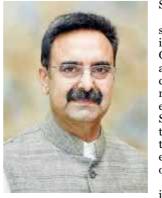
On January 10, the police received information regarding sex trade going on in the hotel, after which the police formed a team and raided the hotel. The police sent a fake customer to the hotel by giving him Rs 1000. When the bogus customer asked to provide a girl, the hotel staff agreed. The hotel was raided by a police team on the signal of the bogus customer. The operator and manager Rajkumar of Tibba Danasher was arrested by the police waiting outside the hotel.



During a raid in the hotel boys and girls were found in objectionable condition during a search operation in the rooms. After which the police registered a case against Rajkumar. The police presented the accused in the court on Wednesday and sent him to jail.

According to police record, Hisar a prominent town of Haryana state is leading in large number of criminal cases, which include 209 cases of rape registered in Hisar division during previous year 2024. Police records revealed that Hisar police division registered 24 cases of dowry murder and 612 cases of domestic violence against women registered during the year 2024. Whereas, 260 out of 264 registered cases of molestation against women and 329 out of 350 registered cases of kidnapping were

settled by the police. According to a police spokesperson reveals, in Hisar division, action has been taken in all 18 cases by registering cases against the complaints received from people belonging to scheduled caste and tribe. He said that Hisar police has registered eight cases of dowry deaths during the past year which included three cases registered in Hansi, five cases registered in Jind, five cases registered in Sirsa and four cases registered in Fatehabad.



NATION

R-Day parade to showcase valour & discipline of armed forces

NEW DELHI: The Republic Day parade will be a powerful showcase of the strength. valour and discipline of armed forces, an army official said on Thursday.

He noted that in preparation for the parade, a full dress rehearsal was organised at Kartavva Path

"The 76th Republic Day Parade on 26 January will be a grand celebration of India's rich heritage and its progress as a nation," the official said.

He pointed out that the Army's Bhishma Tank-T90. SARATH Infantry Carrying Vehicle BMP-II, NAMIS (Nag Missile System), CHETAK (All Terrain Vehicle), BRAHMOS, AGNIBAAN and PINAKA missile system will be displayed at Kartavya Path on Republic Day.

"The army will also showcase its KAPIDHWAJ (Specialist Mobility Vehicle), BAJRANG



(Light Specialist Vehicle), AI-PRANALI 10M (Short Span RAWAT (Vehicle Mounted Bridging System 10M) and Infantry Mortar System), Akash Weapon System," the NANDIGHOSH (Quick Reofficial said The official added that the action Force Vehicle (Heavy), TRIPURANTAK (Quick Reac-Brigade of the Guards, Mecha-

tion Force Vehicle (Medium), nised Infantry Regiment, Pun-SANJAY (Battlefield Surveiljab Regiment, Rajput Regiment, lance System (High Altitude JAT Regiment Contingent, Gar-Areas), SANJAY (Battlefield hwal Rifles Regiment Contin-Surveillance System (Desert), gent, Sikh Light Infantry and LAGHU ANTARAL SETU Bihar Regiment will also par-

ticipate in the marching and band contingents of the Army during the parade.

He said that before the parade, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the nation in paying tribute to the martyrs by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial.

"The parade will begin at 10:30 AM with the 'National Salute' and will continue for 90 minutes, reflecting the journey of India's heritage and growth, the official said.

He said that during the parade the army will display New Generation Equipment in Mechanised Column.

"Six marching contingents from the Army, 08 Mechanised Columns and Mounted Cavalry will participate," he said.

He further added that there will be tableaux of Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and Veterans.

The Jute Corporation of In-

any losses incurred during these

ceasefire between Israel and

Hamas as good news for hu-

man rights activists across

the world and hoped that the

Narendra Modi government

will allow farmers to go to

In a slamming statement,

issued by AAP on January

22, the party has strongly

condemned the statement

cratic right.

Union Govt to Step Up Procurement of Pulses from Farmers in Rabi Marketing Season



NEW DELHI: The Centre has prepared plans to go for increased buying of pulses in the current Rabi season to ensure that farmers get remunerative prices for their crops and step up

cultivation of pulses to reduce dependence on imports. A senior official confirmed that directions have been issued to Central nodal agencies National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED) and National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India Limited (NCCF) to step up buying of Tur, Urad and Masur pulses during the

Rabi marketing season through

the Price Support the government is committed Scheme (PSS) and to procure these pulses at MSP Price Stabilisation from farmers registered on the Fund (PSF). portal. He urged the state govern-

ments to encourage more and

more farmers to register on this

portal so that they can avail the

facility of assured procurement.

season the Centre had procured

4,820 crore, which benefited

The procurement to support

Similarly, 12.19 LMT of oil-

During the start of the Kharif

season, market prices of soybean

were ruling much below the

MSP, leading to great hardship

During the 2023-24 Rabi

The two agencies have preregistered around 21 lakh farmers from large pulse producing states

such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karna-6.41 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) taka on their portal for purchase of pulses at an MSP value of Rs of their crops.

Union Minister of Agricul-2.75 lakh farmers, according ture, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, to official figures. had earlier assured the states the farmers included 2.49 LMT that the Centre is committed of Masoor, 43,000 MT of Chana to procure 100 per cent of Tur, Urad and Masur produced by and 3.48 LMT of Moong. farmers at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) to ensure crop seeds of Rs 6,900 crore of MSP diversification and achieve selfvalue were procured from 5.29 sufficiency in the production lakh farmers. of pulses.

Chauhan said the e-Samridhi portal has been launched through NAFED and NCCF for registration of farmers and

Mamata Banerjee unhappy on RG Kar verdict, says 'death penalty was sought'



KOLKATA: As a special court

in Kolkata on January 20 sentenced Sanjay Roy, convicted in the case of ghastly rape and murder of a junior women doctor of the state-run R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital within the hospital premises in August last year to life imprisonment, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed her displeasure and dissatisfaction over the quantum of sentence. "We demanded 'death penalty' for the convict. I don't know how ... had the case been in our hands (state police or Kolkata Police). the death sentence would have been pronounced much earlier, 'the Chief Minister told mediapersons just after the sentence was pronounced by the special court. However, when specifically asked whether the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had failed to carry out the investigation properly, thus leading to just "life imprisonment" and not the "death penalty", the Chief Minister refused to make any direct comment. "I do not want to say anything on these lines. All I can say is that recently in the three cases of similar rape and murder which were handled by the state police, the 'death penalty' was pronounced within a much shorter period, " the Chief Minister said. BJP's IT Cell chief and the party's central observer for West Bengal Amit Malviya issued a statement that the verdict by the special court must be appealed and the Chief Minister should stop shielding the criminals. "Agencies also need to investigate the role of the then Kolkata Commissioner and the Chief Minister in the destruction of evidence. Justice must not only be done but must also be seen to

be done, "Malviya's statement read. Senior advocate of Calcutta High Court and CPI-M Rajya Sabha member, Bikas Ranjan Bhattacharya, however, said that in his opinion, life imprisonment for Roy is quite a strong punish-

Congress leaders prepared to sacrifice lives for people, equality & democracy: Priyanka Gandhi

BELAGAVI: Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi on Tuesday claimed that her party leader is prepared to sacrifice lives for people, equality and democracy. "We are ready to sacrifice our

lives for the people, equality, and democracy. Our heritage is one



said Priyanka Gandhi while addressing the 'Jai Bapu, Jai Bhim, Jai Samvidhan' convention in Belagavi on Tuesday, commemorating the centenary of Mahatma Gandhi taking over

as the President of Congress. She appealed to the public, "Do not allow anyone to cast aspersions on the Constitution. Take a pledge not to tolerate any insult to Ambedkar or the Constitution. Protect it with the same dedication as you derive protection from it.

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that the Centre has taken a significant step to benefit farmers in the jute-producing sector, including in West Bengal, by ap-

proving a hike in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of raw jute for the 2025-26 marketing season.

Taking to X, PM Modi said, "Our government has taken a big step in the interest of juteproducing farmer brothers and sisters across the country. An increase in the MSP of raw jute has been approved for the year 2025-26. This will benefit lakhs of farmers associated with this sector in many states of the country, including West Bengal. The Cabinet Committee

on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by PM Modi, has fixed the MSP of raw jute (TD-3 grade) at Rs 5, 650 per quintal for the 2025-26 season, ensuring a 66.8 per cent return over the all-India weighted average cost of production.



Union Govt hikes MSP of raw Jute

of Rs 315 per quintal over the directly dependent on the jute MSP for the 2024-25 marketindustry, with about 4 lakh ing season. The increase aligns workers employed directly in with the government's principle jute mills and trade. Last year. of fixing MSP at least 1.5 times jute was procured from 1.7 lakh the weighted average cost of farmers, with 82 per cent of jute production, as announced in the farmers based in West Bengal 2018-19 Union Budget. and the remaining from Assam

The MSP of raw jute has witand Bihar, contributing 9 per nessed a significant rise under cent each to national producthe current government, from tion Rs 2, 400 per quintal in 2014-15 to Rs 5, 650 per quintal for dia (JCI) will continue as the 2025-26, marking a 2.35 times nodal agency for Price Support increase of Rs 3, 250 per quintal. Operations, with the Central The livelihood of 40 lakh Government fully reimbursing

This represents an increase farm families is directly or in-

"

Our government has taken a big step in the interest of juteproducing farmer brothers and sisters across the country. An increase in the MSP of raw jute has been approved for the

operations, the statement noted. The official statement highlighted the difference in payments made to jute farmers over the years. Between 2014-15 and 2024-25, the amount stood at Rs 1, 300 crore, compared to Rs

441 crore during the period of 2004-05 to 2013-14.

its "sensitive" nature. "We are granting you time by way of a last chance. Either you take a decision or otherwise, we will hear it on merits. " added the Bench, also comprising Justices P.K. Mishra and K.V. Viswanathan, as it adjourned the hearing till March 18.

The apex court was hearing a writ petition filed by Rajoana challenging an over

Supreme Court grants 'last chance' to Centre to decide Balwant Singh Rajoana's mercy plea

to farmers.

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on January 20 granted a "last chance" to the Union government to decide the mercy petition filed by Balwant Singh Rajoana, a death row convict in the 1995 assassination case of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh and others.

A Special Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai agreed to 12-year-long delay in deciddefer the hearing till March ing the mercy petition seek-18 after Solicitor General (SG) ing commutation of his death Tushar Mehta, the secondpenalty. In an earlier hearing, highest law officer of the Centhe Justice Gavai-led Special tre, submitted that Rajoana's Bench had granted the Union mercy petition is under congovernment four weeks more sideration of the Union Home to decide Balwant Singh Rajoana's mercy petition. It had Ministry and the matter would agreed to defer till January 20 require more time, considering the hearing after SG Mehta submitted that more inputs

from agencies were needed, considering the "sensitivities" involved in the matter. In an order dictated in open court on November 18, the top court had requested President Droupadi Murmu to consider

within two weeks the mercy petition filed on behalf of Balwant Singh Rajoana.



NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday extended her greetings to the neonle of and Manipur on the occasion of their Statehood Day, wishing them a "peaceful and prosperous future." The three states attained full statehood on January 21, 1972, under the North Eastern Areas Reorganisation Act, 1971. In a message shared on X, President Murmu wrote, "Greetings to the residents of Meghalaya, Tripura and Manipur on Statehood Dav! The enterprising people of these states have made remarkable contributions to the development of the country. I convey my best wishes to the residents of these states for a peaceful and prosperous future. May their diverse culture, vibrant traditions and rich biodiversity continue to flourish!" Prime Minister Narendra ibly proud of the role played by in the times to come."



ment.

Verma had said in Delhi on Tuesday, "Thousands of vehicles with Punjab registration nteract- plates are roaming around ing with here (Delhi). Who are in those



baseless remarks.

year 2025-26"



JAG MOHAN THAKEN

pants from Indian Institute of Democratic Leadership Delhi). What something big (IIDL) at Vice-President's are they going to do here that enclave on Wednesday, the could put our security system Vice-President, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar stressed on the significance of expression and dialogue, stating, "We take pride, we are mother of **political atmosphere and the** democracy. We are all this democracy, but are we justifying that claim? If I look around.... I'm a worried man. The political climate in the responding to the statement country is alarmingly worrisome. Political parties have no Minister, Bhagwant Mann, meaningful dialogue amongst quoted stating on his X acthemselves. They do not deliberate on issues of Nationalism, of India, and people from Security or Development. You will find a confrontational stance solidifying. Distur- across the country, and there bance has been weaponized is no restriction on their as a political strategy, and movement. BJP's statement look at the kind of language used from all quarters-right, left and centre that not only belittles the Indian mind, but tarnishes the fair name of our Punjabis. They are insinuatcivilization.

these twins, fundamental to blossoming of any democratic value, are fast receding in background. People are judgmental. They have a view. I am alone right, all of view", he added.

It shows that in the present scenario how pained the soul of the worthy Vice-President is!

We can't say why the Vice-President has reacted so, but the statement of BJP leader Parvesh Verma style persons surely might have stained some effect on this version.

What Parvesh Verma Said ?

In an update on January

vehicles? Preparations for celpartici- ebrating January 26 (Republic Day) are going on here (in at risk.

This reportedly quoted version of Parvesh Verma has boiled the political leaders have slammed Verma with red mouth.

In a release of Aam Adami Party, on January 21, of Verma, Punjab Chief count. "Delhi is the capital every state live here. Vehicles from every state move freely questioning the presence of legacy. Punjab-registered vehicles in Delhi is not only appalling but also deeply insulting to

ing that Punjabis are a threat "I am concerned as Vice- to national security simply President of the country that because of their state of orithe expression and dialogue, gin. This is unacceptable and an insult to the patriotism of every Punjabi CM Mann further ques-

tioned the BJP's priorities saying, "Home Minister Amit Shah cannot secure others are wrong, without the country's borders nor listening to the other point prevent illegal infiltrations of thousands of Bangladeshis and Rohingyas. Yet, he and

his party leaders label Punjabis traveling to Delhi as a security threat. This reflects their dangerous mindset and complete disregard for Punjab's immense contributions to the nation's security and progress. BJP owes an apology to the Punjabi community for this baseless and shameful

allegation." Aman Arora, Punjab AAP

and patriotism added, "It was the Punjab farmers, agitat-Punjabis who made over 80% ing at Khanauri and Sambhu of the sacrifices for India's borders, are being barred to freedom. It was Punjabis carrying on their 'Delhi Chalo' march? What threat does the who stood at the forefront to BJP-led central government protect the country, then and and its double engine Harynow. The Gurus of Punjab gave their lives for the nation's ana government inhale from unity and humanity. Even the Punjab farmers march to today, whenever danger looms Delhi? Why are Punjab farmover India's borders, it is the ers not allowed to enter their Punjabi soldiers who stand own country's capital to press tall and defend the country upon their demands? Are the with their lives. For BJP leadcountrymen not even entitled ers to question the lovalty of to visit their capital? Why is Punjabis is an insult to this the central government treating Punjab farmers as if they

AAP leader Sanjay Singh @ SanjayAzadSIn reacted to BJP leader Parvesh Verma's 'vehicles from Punjab entering Delhi' remark.

"This statement is a huge disrespect to Punjabis. Delhi is the capital of the country... vehicles of every state are here. I think Amit Shah should seek apology from the Sikh community for this statement. People will teach them a lesson in the (Delhi) election by the power of their vote."

Why Punjab is toed upon every time?

This is not the first time that such a derogatory statement against Punjabis has been issued by someone. During the 13-month long farmers' agitation in 2020-21, some people, having a grudge against the farmers' movement, even tagged the farmers as terrorists and Khalistanis. Why did the farmers stop en-

tering Delhi? Why were they 22, Wednesday, The Tribune, President reminding the BJP barricaded with nails? Not an English Daily quoted that of Punjab's legacy of sacrifice only that time, even today, of the Himachal leader stat-

supplied to Himachal from Punjab, alleging that Punjab has been actively working to destabilize Himachal's youth. Thakur also made unfounded remarks about Punjab's efforts to curb drug abuse and questioned the state's initiatives like the establishment of a military academy.

The release quotes that

in his controversial state-

ment, Thakur claimed that

Responding sharply to these allegations, Punjab AAP leader Neel Garg stated, "The statement by the Himachal Congress MLA is completely baseless, devoid of facts, and a deliberate attempt to malign Punjab's reputation. It is ironic that the Congress. whose leadership has repeatedly failed to control the drug menace in its own state, is now pointing fingers at Punjab."

Garg further exposed, "Himachal is home to illegal drug manufacturing hubs are not our natives, as alleged that have been repeatedly by the farmer leader, Sarvan flagged by law enforcement Singh Pandher. UNI reportagencies. Instead of addressing these hotspots and ing on January 18, quoted Pandher, "Union government strengthening local policing, should not treat farmers as Congress leaders are busy playing the blame game." citizens of an enemy country." Pandher cited the news of

"Punjab's youth have already suffered due to the drug menace, and it is shameful for Congress to further malign a state that has been battling this issue on multiple fronts, Garg said.

New Delhi and protest peace-Now the question arises fully, which is their demo-Isn't some foul smell being fuelled in the air with the Not only on farmers' isintention of defaming Punjab sues, Punjab is targeted on on every nook and corner? Is other platforms also. As there someone scripting this alleged by the Aam Aadmi conspiracy to defame Pun-Party (AAP) Punjab, Hijab, the country's food court. machal Pradesh Congress with some hidden agenda or MLA Chandrashekhar motive? Everyone will have Thakur has accused Punjab to think over this to counter of being responsible for the negative agenda and stabilise drug problem in Himachal. harmony in the society.

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



Modi also took to social media to extend his wishes to the people of the three states, highlighting their contributions and potential for growth. In his messages, he wished for the continued progress and development of Meghalaya, Tripura, and Manipur. For Manipur, the Prime Minister wrote, "Greetings to the people of Manipur on their Statehood Day. We are incred-

the people of Manipur towards India's development. My best wishes for the progress of Manipur." Sharing his sentiments for Meghalaya, he posted, "On Meghalaya's Statehood Day, I convey my best wishes to the people of the state. Meghalaya is admired for its natural beauty and the industrious nature of the people. Praying for the continuous development of the state

Fire breaks out at Maha Kumbh Mela venue after 'gas cylinder explosion'

A fire broke out at the Maha Kumbh Mela venue in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, reportedly following the explosion of two gas cylinders inside a tent. The fire quickly spread to several nearby tents, burning them to the ground. Thankfully, no injuries have been reported.

According to police, the fire started in Sector 19 of the Maha Kumbh site, where the cylinders exploded. Fire trucks, which were already stationed at the venue as part of safety measures for the large-scale event, rushed to the scene and managed to control the blaze.

As a precautionary measure, people living in surrounding tents were promptly evacuated to ensure their safety. The incident, though alarming, did not result in any casualties, thanks to the swift response from the authorities.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has sent senior officials to the site to assess the situation.

ation continues to be monitored by local authorities to ensure the safety of all participants and attendees at the massive religious gathering.

Meanwhile, drones were used to assess the fire situation at the Maha Kumbh Mela venue. They provided real-time aerial views, helping authorities monitor the spread of the blaze and coordinate the firefighting efforts effectively, ensuring swift response and better management of the crisis.

Meanwhile, the official X handle of the Maha Kumbh Mela expressed concern. stating, "Very sad. The fire incident at Maha Kumbh has shocked everyone. The administration is ensuring immediate relief and rescue operations. We pray to Maa Ganga for everyone's

> safety. The incident has raised concerns but has been managed efficiently, with the fire under control and safety measures being promptly enacted. The situ-

Infra push alone won't sustain India's recovery

he Centre's reliance on public capital expenditure (capex) to drive post-pandemic economic recovery has been pivotal. Investments in infrastructure have bolstered demand for key sectors like cement and steel while generating jobs and creating a multiplier effect. However, in Budget 2024-25, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement of Rs 11.11 lakh crore in capex, amounting to 3.4 per cent of GDP, faces hurdles. Spending curbs during the election-affected first quarter make this ambitious goal harder to achieve. While the government's push for infrastructure continues, private sector participation remains lukewarm. Data reveals a sequential decline in private investment plans in two out of three quarters this fiscal year. Despite a recovery in Q2, investment intentions weakened again in Q3. Projects Today reports a 1.4 per cent drop in domestic investments from Q2 and a 22 per cent decline in the value of new projects year-on-year, according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. The private sector's hesitation stems from several factors: weak corporate earnings, global uncertainties, rising costs, and tepid demand in urban markets. These challenges undermine the risk appetite needed for factory expansions and new projects. A sustainable recovery demands that private capital take the lead. Public capex alone cannot sustain economic momentum while balancing fiscal consolidation and funding welfare programs. Mere exhortations and incentives targeting import substitution will not suffice. Policymakers must focus on fostering an environment conducive to private investments by boosting incomes, stimulating consumption, and expediting macro- and micro-level reforms. The absence of a promised economic policy framework for next-generation reforms is a glaring gap. India's growth story depends on synchronised public and private efforts. Creating viable demand, ensuring policy clarity, and easing project realisation must remain priorities for long-term economic stability and progress. Right approach can not only put India's economy back on track but also take it forward.



SANJEEV JOSHIPURA & KAPIL SHARMA ON WHY US AND INDIA MUST WORK ON REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION

United States-India relationship has evolved into an increasingly vital strategic partnership ever since the Clinton administration laid the foundation for a new direction in the 1990s. Today, broad bipartisan consensus supports building upon these ties even further, driven by converging interests in economic growth, regional security, and democratic values. As global dynamics shift, the importance of this relationship for the Trump administration becomes even more pronounced.

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) agreement presents a tremendous opportunity for President Donald Trump to solidify this multilateral partnership while advancing both the strategic interests of the U.S. and India. By leading the effort to secure cooperation among the participating nations, the U.S. can help create a robust economic corridor to ensure free and open trade routes, with enhanced energy security and technological innovation, which, in turn, will also benefit American companies.

More conceptual now

Announced in 2023, IMEC represents an ambitious vision to forge an integrated network spanning three vital regions through advanced physical and digital infrastructure. The corridor must develop efficient transportation routes, including railways, shipping networks, and maritime connections, while also establishing cross-border electricity and hydrogen pipelines and digital communication cables. The end goals should be to enhance trade connectivity and reduce transportation costs, while diversifying global supply chains and promoting deeper economic integration among participating countries (India, the U.S., the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Italy, France, Germany, and the European Commission).



At the moment, it is reasonable to suggest that IMEC is more conceptual than concrete. Meeting its lofty goals requires extensive planning and cooperation. The Trump administration's leadership on this matter could enhance his legacy on the international stage By supporting IMEC, the U.S. and India can establish a compelling alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), creating a more balanced global economic architecture that aligns with western democratic values and market principles

IMEC was never destined to be a straightforward endeavour. Each participating nation faces a complex calculus of investment. political will and economic strategy. The corridor demands substantial infrastructure investments that directly compete with other national priorities. Moreover, private sector engagement introduces another layer of complexity. Corporate investors require clear pathways to return on investment; and without active engagement from the private sector, it is unlikely that the project could succeed.

Several countries, such as Greece and Italy, have shown substantial initiative on IMEC. France has distinguished itself by appointing a special envoy in Gérard Mestrallet, who is not a traditional diplomat. France's President Emmanuel Macron has chosen a proven business leader from France to head this geopolitical and economic initiative, as he recognises its economic potential for France. The UAE and Saudi Arabia appreciate the role IMEC can play in advancing relationships with the West, and have spearheaded efforts for its implementation. Without regular, strategic engagement, there is a significant risk of creating

an uneven economic landscape that could breed tension and political friction among participating nations. The corridor offers transformative economic opportunities not just for coastal regions and primary ports but also for inland areas that could become crucial nodes in this expansive trade network. Even within the region, we have already seen countries such as Iraq and Türkiye initiate trade agreements to compliment IMEC.

As an alternative to China's BRI

IMEC promises substantial economic advantages for India by dramatically reducing trade costs and transforming maritime logistics. This strategic network reduces vulnerability to potential disruptions such as those that might occur in the Suez Canal, but also creates compelling opportunities for increased foreign direct investment. By positioning itself as an alternative to the BRI, the corridor allows India to strengthen diplomatic ties with West Asian and European countries.

Better for the environment

There are implications to this deal that could impact the earth's climate health. India has emerged as a significant player in green hydrogen development, positioning itself as a potential global leader in this emerging clean

energy technology. The country has launched ambitious initiatives to develop green hydrogen as a strategic component of its energy transition and decarbonisation efforts.

EDITORIAL

COPINION

India is collaborating with international partners such as Germany and Japan, and developing infrastructure for green hydrogen production, storage, and transportation. This will help reduce carbon emissions, decrease dependence on fossil fuel imports and create new job opportunities in emerging green technology sectors.

The Trump administration's role in facilitating the Abraham Accords proved instrumental in creating the diplomatic conditions that made IMEC possible. Former U.S. President Joe Biden has been a strong proponent of IMEC. Looking ahead, questions remain about IMEC's future under potential new U.S. leadership. One intriguing factor is Mr. Trump's warm personal relationship with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This rapport could prove significant to ongoing relations. Now that there is a peace agreement between Israel and Hamas, both leaders could facilitate the much needed (and required) meeting of IMEC participants to discuss the next steps.

This endeavour transcends traditional nfrastructure development; it represents a fundamental reimagining of regional economic cooperation that requires unprecedented levels of coordination among diverse stakeholders. The U.S. and India, as key architects of the corridor, must work closely to shepherd this project to completion, recognising both its economic significance and environmental implications for all participating countries.

Sanjeev Joshipura is Executive Director of Indiaspora. Kapil Sharma is Principal at Kapstone Strategies and Non-Resident Fellow. Atlantic Council. Views are personal.

KUMAR RITWIK EXPLAINS HOW ACADEMIC EXPERTISE CAN ENHANCE INDIA'S JUDICIARY'S OUTPUT QUALITY

critical aspect of a judicial system is the effective and timely delivery of justice. This can be achieved in the Indian judicial system only if the significant crisis of backlogs and vacancies is addressed urgently by both the judiciary and the government. Data as of January 1, 2025, show that 371 posts of the 1,122 posts sanctioned across the High Courts of the country remain vacant. The Allahabad High Court functions at only 50% of its total sanctioned strength. Naturally, this has a direct impact on the already alarming levels of backlog. As millions of people have to wait for a long time for justice, their faith in the judicial system is eroding. Although this has been a perennial issue, there are now about 60 lakh cases pending across all the High Courts, an astonishing number. To solve this, we need both immediate remedial

steps and reformative measures. e it is true that the pace of



These provisions allow for the appointment of individuals who, in the opinion of the President (read Collegium), are 'distinguished jurists', as judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts. Unfortunately, Article 124(3)(c) remains unutilised and Article 217(2)(c) has been repe

Involving the world of academia directly into the mainstream Indian judicial system can bring both immense benefits and challenges. A vast pool of specialised knowledge, research-based critical thinking, and expertise can provide unique insights and add a hitherto missing dimension to the judiciary's understanding of complex socioeconomic and socio-legal cases. At the same time, the lack of courtroom experience, procedural knowl-

edge, understanding of limits to exercising judicial power, and a certain degree of resistance among the status quoists within the institution are challenges that will need to be overcome as well.

An important message

sure that the judicial discourse is enriched and that judicial decision-making is further strengthened.

Granting an opportunity to distinguished academics to effectively engage with the complex problems of the contemporary legal world would lend a fresh perspective to the cause of justice. Such appointees would naturally serve as a bridge between academia and practice. This would lead to a synergistic interaction of legal research with the more nuanced and practical aspects of delivering justice.

Therefore, the need of the hour is to tide over the current crisis of increasing backlogs, and bridge the widening gap between the actual strength and the sanctioned strength of courts. First, the government must comply with the Collegium's recommendations within a strict time frame. Second, deploying innovating solutions, such as re-introducing and invoking Article 217(distinguished jurists to High Courts, would help fill existing vacancies. Tapping into the academic world as a valuable resource sector would help ensure that the Indian judicial system remains dynamic, robust, and diverse, grounded in practical realities as well as an in-depth understanding of its underlying constitutional principles. By drawing upon the expertise of our sharpest academic minds, India will be able to address the existing concerns and enhance the quality of the judiciary's output. Such a step could prove to be transformative for the Indian judiciary in the years to come.

LETTERBOX

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THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY

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recommendations and the resulting appointments has picked up in the last couple of years, it has unfortunately not been able to match the number of retirements and ever-increasing number of filings. In turn, this has put enormous strain on the system, compelling judges to take on a higher caseload than feasible. This is likely to adversely impact both the time given to as well as the depth of engagement with a particular case. Therefore, a well-staffed judiciary functioning at near-total sanctioned strength is the need of the hour.

A game changer

In that context, Article 124(3)(c) and Article 217(2)(c), now repealed, of the Constitution become increasingly significant.

= BOOKS: REVIEW

any stated reason. In other words, no jurist has been found to be distinguished enough to be appointed to these posts till date. Although it is a routine practice in jurisdictions across the globe to appoint jurists as judges, appointments to the High Courts and the Supreme Court in India have always been either from the Bar (practising advocates) or the judicial services

At a time when the issue of vacancies and backlogs is stifling the system, introducing and invoking the provision to appoint 'distinguished jurists' to High Courts of the country can turn out to be a game changer. In fact, a similar idea was floated by Shri Shibban Lal Saxena but negatived by the Constituent Assembly on June 7, 1949, without any meaningful deliberation.

A number of countries (such as the United States, Poland, Myanmar, Kenya, Thailand, Spain and Italy) that allow jurists or professors of law to be appointed to posts equivalent to that of a judge in the High Courts and/or the Supreme Court of India have vastly benefited from this practice. In India, where academia has expressed its legitimate concerns and grievances of not having been adequately nurtured or supported, re-introducing Article 217(2)(c) and appointing jurists or academics as judges of the High Courts would send across an important message. At the same time, with adequate training of procedural know-how and courtroom experience, the presence of our sharpest academic minds on the Bench would en-

Kumar Ritwik is a Delhi-based Advocate, currently serving as a Law Clerk in the Supreme Court of India. Views are personal.

Memoir revisits 2002; recounts personal pain, collective memory

' ara Chowdhary's memoir, The Lucky Ones, is a poignant and courageous exploration of survival. memory, and healing. At the tender age of 16, Chowdhary witnessed the devastating communal riots that engulfed Gujarat in 2002. The violence, sparked by a fire on a train in Godhra that killed over 50 Hindu kar sevaks, unleashed unprecedented turmoil, leaving over 2,000 Muslims dead (a figure contested by the govern-ment) and tens of thousands displaced. In this deeply personal narrative, Chowdhary revisits the tragedy, recounting its profound impact on her family and her identity as a Muslim in India.

Unlike investigative accounts such as Revati Laul's The Anatomy of Hate or Manoj Mitta's The Fiction of *Fact-Finding*, which delve

into the systemic and sociopolitical dimensions of the riots, The Lucky Ones offers an intimate lens. Chowdhary's voice is unflinching yet devoid of sentimentality, weaving her personal trauma with the larger sociopolitical fabric of India. She recalls the harrowing initial days of curfews, fear, and violence, juxtaposing them with her mundane adolescent concerns, like the postponement of her school-leaving exams. Yet, this microcosmic perspective expands to examine the subcontinent's brutal history including the rise of rightwing ideologies and their implications for democracy. Central to her narrative

is the horrifying account of Bilkis Bano, a survivor of gang rape during the riots, and the Gulbarg Society mas sacre that claimed the life of Congress leader Ehsan Jafri. Chowdhary ensures these

atrocities are not forgotten, meticulously documenting the desecration of religious sites, the destruction of homes, and the human cost of hatred.

Amidst this chaos, Chowdhary's family, residing in Jasmine Apartments in Ahmedabad, finds an unexpected ally in their elderly neighbour, Mrs. Pant. This act of solidarity underscores the enduring potential for humanity even in times of division. The memoir also reveals cracks within her familv-strained relationships and unresolved tensions that mirror the fractured society outside their home.

Chowdhary's ability to connect personal grief with collective trauma is one of the book's greatest strengths. She writes about Ahmedabad's history of communal strife, contextualising the 2002 riots within a broader narrative of recurring violence. Yet,

The Lucky Ones By Zara Chowdhary Context/Westland Books; 324 pages; Rs 699.

she also celebrates moments of harmony, such as the family's peaceful years in Baroda. These reflections lend the memoir a balance that avoids reducing Gujarat's history to a single, tragic event.

One of the most evocative sections of the book is Chowdhary's reflection on her love for Sanskrit. Her three-year study of the language, typi-cally associated with uppercaste Hindus, offers a unique perspective. She describes Sanskrit as both structured and fluid, a language that carries the weight of millennia. This academic passion becomes a metaphor for her ability to find beauty and meaning even amidst loss.

Another poignant thread in the memoir is how trauma

reshapes identity. Chowdhary delves into the feeling of "unbelonging" within her own country, a sentiment ampli-fied by the targeted violence against Muslims. Yet, instead of being consumed by despair, she channels this pain into resilience and inquiry. Her reflections transcend the personal, addressing universal questions about the fragility of coexistence and the

Ultimately, *The Lucky Ones* is a story of survival told without bitterness but with a profound sense of purpose. Chowdhary's narrative is a call to remember, not just to recount horrors but to understand their origins and consequences. By documenting her journey and connecting it to broader historical and political currents, she offers a deeply human perspec-tive on one of India's darkest chapters. This memoir is not just a recounting of the past but a reflection on the future, urging society to learn, heal, and ensure such tragedies are never repeated.

strength required to rebuild fractured lives.

CORPORATE **GINDUSTRY**

Centre issues notice to Apple, Ola, Uber over WEF Davos Summit: Maharashtra Govt Signs software performance, differential pricing

NEW DELHI: The Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has issued notices to tech giant Apple Inc and cab aggregators Ola and Uber following consumer complaints about software performance and pricing disparities, Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Thursday.

Apple has been asked to respond to technical issues reported by iPhone users after a recent software update.

"The department, after examining consumer grievances, has issued a notice to Apple through the CCPA, seeking a response on the matter," Joshi said in a social media post.

A survey by LocalCircles revealed that 60 per cent of iPhone users experienced service problems, with call failures being the most significant issue.

OLA pick-up zone

Nearly 90 per cent of surfor bug fixes

Separately, Ola and Uber veved iPhone users attributed their difficulties directly to an have been served notices coniOS update, with no blame cerning allegations of differplaced on WiFi or mobile ential pricing based on users' mobile operating systems. Apple has been releasing "As a follow-up to the earlier

updates, including iOS 18.0.1 observation of apparent #Difin October to address screen ferentialPricing based on the and camera freezing issues, different models of mobiles and the latest 18.2.1 update (#iPhones/ #Android) being

used, Department of Consumer Affairs through the CCPA has issued notices to major cab aggregators #Ola and #Uber, seeking their responses," Joshi said in a social media post.

Joshi had earlier termed this practice a "prima facie unfair trade practice" and a "blatant disregard" for consumer rights. The minister stressed the

government's "zero tolerance for consumer exploitation" and directed the CCPA to conduct a thorough investigation into the allegations.

Comments from Apple, Ola, and Uber could not be received at the time of filing this report. The companies have not yet responded to the notices issued by the CCPA. The notices mark a signifi-

cant step in protecting consumer interests in the rapidly evolving tech market.

MoU with RIL for Rs 3.05 Lakh Cr Investment MUMBAI: The Maharash-Fadnavis said." The MoU

tra government and Reliance Industries on Wednesday at the slide lines of the World Economic Forum summit at Davos signed a MoU with an investment of Rs 3,05,000 crore with over 3,00,000 employment opportunities across diverse sectors, including new energy, retail, hospitality, and high-tech manufacturing.

With this, is the state government has so far inked 32 MoUs with investment proposals worth Rs 9,30,457 crore.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in his post on X said, "Massive step for Maharashtra! MoU worth Rs 3,05,000 crore with Reliance Industries, will create about 3,00,000 job opportunities. Thank you so much, Shri Anant Ambani and Reliance Industries!" He further added that it will boost Maharashtra's growth.



The chief minister's office said, "Anant Ambani lauds PM Shri Narendra Modi for his transformative efforts in building a Viksit Bharat, with RIL committed to contributing to a New India. He also thanks CM Shri Devendra Fadnavis for his leadership in positioning Maharashtra as the gateway to India's \$5 trillion economy and, soon to be first trillion-dollar

economy. Earlier, JSW signed a MoU with an investment of Rs 3 lakh crore for Maharashtra's Green Transformation and Tata Group shil Realty for an investment of will also make an investment Rs 25,000 crore for the development of the data centre. It will of Rs 30,000 crore in multiple generate 500 jobs.

Adani Energy Solutions Wins Its Largest-Ever Rs 25,000 Cr Bhadla-**Fatehpur HVDC Project**



AHMEDABAD: Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) on Tuesday said it has wor a Rs 25,000 crore Bhadla (Rajasthan)-Fatehpur (Uttar Pradesh) high voltage direct current (HVDC) order, its largest-ever order win to date.

his prestigious win takes AESL's under-execution order book to Rs 54,761 crore and transmission network to 25,778 circuit kilometres (ckm) and 84,186 megavoltamperes (MVA) transformation capacity.

By enabling efficient evacuation of renewable energy from some of the most inhospitable regions of the country and connecting them to the national grid, AESL is playing its role in India's decarbonisation journey," said Kandarp Patel, CEO, ÁESL.

We will be deploying the latest technology and practices to deliver the project in time and with minimal environmental impact," Patel added.

AESL, India's largest private transmission and distribution company and part of the globally diversified Adani portfolio, won the project under the tariff-based competitive bidding (TBCB) mechanism and REC Power Development & amp; Consultancy Ltd (RECPDCL) was the bid process coordi-

nator. The project SPV was formally transferred to AESL on January 20, 2025.

Called "Transmission system for evacuation of power from REZ in Rajasthan (20 GW) under Phase-III Part I", the project includes the establishment of a 6,000 MW HVDC system between Bhadla to Fatehpur (2,400 ckm) along with 7,500 MVA transmission capacity.

According to the company, the project will help evacuate 6 GW of renewable energy from various REZs in Rajasthan beyond Bhadla-III to the demand centres in North India and the national grid. AESL will deliver the project in 4.5 years.

AESL is the only player in the private sector to own an HVDC asset, which is preferred for long-distance power transmission.

Deriv recognised as "Most Innovative MUMBAI: With the pos-Broker - MEA 2025"



FW DESK Dubai (UAE)

Deriv has proudly been named the "Most Innovative Broker - MEA 2025" at this year's Dubai iFXEXPO. This prestigious award highlights the company's commitment to groundbreaking innovation, building trust, and providing exceptional service to both clients and partners. With 25 years of industry leadership, Deriv has made trading more accessible worldwide by offering a wide array of platforms, products, and advanced solutions

Deriv's focus on innovation has driven the integration of AI across its operations, enhancing efficiency and user experiences. To streamline workflows and empower its teams, Deriv has embraced low-code platforms. These tools have reduced development times, enabling quicker iterations and improvements across projects like website updates and user onboarding. By addressing the challenges of traditional codeheavy systems, this strategy has fuelled innovation ac

sibility of handling up to 1,000 initial public offerings (IPOs) in the next two years, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is adopting artificial intelligence (AI) to make the process of reviewing IPO documents in a faster and more efficient way, its Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch said on Tuesday. Speaking at the Association of Investment Bankers of India's (AIBI) annual con-

networks

vention here, Buch said SEBI is working on a standardised IPO template to simplify the filing process for companies and their merchant bankers.

follow a "fill-in-the-blanks" format. Any information that mat will be flagged separately gathering.

The new template would doesn't fit the standard forfor closer review, she told the



IPO documents into two parts: standard information and exceptional details.

sections that deviate from the template, SEBI hopes to make it easier for its officers to identify and address irregularities. The initiative is expected to save time for both companies and regulators. "With the pos-This system aims to divide sibility of handling up to 1,000

volved," Buch noted.

three key ways - document tent check.

mechanism will further improve efficiency. By separating standard and non-standard

sections, officers can prioritise their scrutiny where it is most needed, streamlining the review process.

"This approach will not only save time but also enhance the overall efficiency of IPO

review," Buch added. Mahavir Lunawat, Chairman. AIBI. said that the initiatives launched at this year's convention mark a significant step toward building a robust and future-ready merchant

"New initiatives aim to address critical gaps, such as the growing need for skilled professionals and the need for standardising practices. These efforts underscore AI-BI's commitment to fostering innovation, transparency, and cross-border collaboration to support the nation's ambitious economic growth agenda," Lu-

Maha Kumbh a Blessing for MSMEs : Sectors like transport, FMCG & hotels to get boost says



Turntide Technologies Expands into Indian Market with Advanced **Electric Mobility Solutions** FW DESK

Bengaluru (India)

Turntide Technologies, a global leader in electrification solutions, announces the launch of its low and highvoltage power electronics series, along with its advanced axial flux motors, to support India's growing demand for sustainable transportation.

Turntide's Gen 4 series of inverters provide a compact, scalable solution for low-voltage applications (48 V to 80 V), making them ideal for twoand three-wheelers. Their high reliability and flexibility allow seamless integration across different vehicle platforms. The Gen 5 series of inverters, operating at a nominal voltage of 350 VDC and offering up to 400 A peak current, are designed for hybrid and electric vehicles, combining robust performance with advanced flux vector motor control.

Our latest innovation, the Gen 6 series of inverters, is designed for a voltage range of 48 V to 800 V and offers superior efficiency and reliability for both traction and auxiliary systems, meeting the rigorous demands of Indian roads and environmental conditions. The Turntide Gen 6 series is powerful, and easy-to-use elec- components.

trification, seamlessly integrating with any existing motor or system. Designed to elevate **OEM** electrification systems, it features industry-leading

power density, a streamlined design, and straightforward implementation. With advancements in software architecture and power electronics, the Gen 6 Series offers superior performance tailored for EV and hybrid applications. Turntide's axial flux mo-

signed today paves the way for

Maharashtra's comprehensive

Chief Minister met with key

executives of several companies

and invited them to invest in

Maharashtra. Among these,

Tata Group Chairman N Chan-

drasekaran held discussions

with Fadnavis, during which it

was confirmed that Tata Group

would invest Rs 30.000 crore

The government signed a

MoU with Waaree Energy with

a total investment of Rs 30,000

crore in green energy and solar

components. it will create 7,500

Hitesh Joshi was present.

obs. The company chairman

The government inked an

MoU with Blackstone-Panch-

in the state.

growth and development."

tors complement these power electronics, offering high torque density and compact design that enables better vehicle performance while reducing energy consumption and the total cost of ownership. The compact design of the motor allows for it to

be integrated and packaged easily in applications with space constraints, e.g., hybrid electric vehicles where the vehicle manufacturer must find space for the electric powertrain while maintaining the space claim for the engineered to deliver compact, internal combustion engine

Big blow to factories manufacturing single-use plastic in Haryana, will have to pay heavy fine

SATISH HANDA Chandigarh

Companies manufacturing single-use plastic in Haryana may face a major setback in case of violation of rules. Haryana state government has strictly warned t those factories y directions may be closed and the shopkeepers' licenses can be cancelled. According to a government spokesperson, singleuse plastic is strictly banned in Haryana, despite this it is being used indiscriminately and now onward those violating directions will have to suffer heavy fines, to stop this, the state government has shown strictness. He warned that street vendors and shopkeepers will have to pav Rs 10 thousand and a fine of Rs 5,000 per tonne will be imposed for the first time violation by the



IPOs in the next two years, this

By focusing attention on

step will significantly reduce the workload for everyone in-The AI tools will help in

review, online search and con-SEBI's exception reporting

AI to Help SEBI Process 1,000 IPOs in Next 2 Years: Madhabi Puri Buch

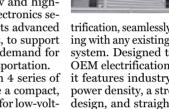
document preparation and

banking ecosystem.

nawat added.

ASSOCHAM





the organisation.

This accolade coincides with a transformative phase in Deriv's journey as it pivots towards becoming an AI-first company. "In 2025, our focus will be on integrating AI into the DNA of every department and empowering our teams to build their capabilities," said Rakshit Choudhary, Co-CEO of Deriv. "We plan to use AI to automate tasks, leverage data analysis, streamline processes, and scale smarter.

Deriv's vision for artificial intelligence spans multiple facets of its operations, including predictive support to address client queries, enhanced compliance protocols, and optimised recruitment processes. Bevond its internal advancements, Deriv plans to use AI to innovate and deploy new product offerings.

take action against the accused. Taking a tough stand on this the state government has now made preparations to levy heavy fines on the producers and manufacturers of single use plastic as well as municipal corporations, councils,

municipalities and panchayats by fixing accountability. While local bodies may have to pay up to Rs 1000 crore annually as environindustries as well as suppliers. mental compensation according Commissioner and Secretary of to the population, factories making single-use plastic will have to Urban Local Bodies Department Vikas Gupta has issued orders in pay a fine of up to Rs 500 crore. this regard. Not only this, CEOs Gram Panchayats will also have to of Zila Parishads, Social Educapay up to Rs 50,000 as environmental compensation. According tion and Panchayat Officers and to orders, every local body will XENs, SDOs and JEs of Panchayati Raj Department have be responsible for developing now strict action will be taken also been given the authority to or setting up infrastructure for



segregation, collection, storage, transportation, processing and disposal of plastic either by itself or through an agency. Hefty fines will also be levied on those found burning plastic waste in the open.

Secretary of Urban Local Bodies Department Vikas Gupta said, factories were directed not to manufacture carry bags made of unused or recycled plastic with a thickness of less than 75 microns till September 30, 2021 and 120 microns after December 31, 2022. Non-woven plastic carry bags shall not be less than 60 grams per square metre, but orders are being violated and on violation of orders

NEW DELHI: Maha Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj, billed as world's largest congregations, would be one of the major drivers of consumption demand especially in sectors of specific interest to micro, small and medium enterprises, apex chamber

ASSOCHAM has said. The six -week Mela expected to be visited by 400 million devotees is already witnessing a critical impact not only on economy of Uttar Pradesh but also across different states.

"While clear data is expected to be shared by state and central organizations at the conclusion of the grand spectacle, a visible impact is seen in sectors including transportation - road, rail and air, hotels, restaurants, roadside eateries, construction and maintenance of civic infrastructure amongst others in terms of brisk demand," AS-SOCHAM Secretary General Manish Singhal said.

He said such gatherings create catalysts also in sectors like Fast Moving Consumer Goods, footwear, winter wear, automobile and telecom. Increased transactions take place across different financial products particularly payment gateways, micro finance in a spiraling way. For instance, devotees may be extended micro finance while eateries would be able to circulate funding fast creating a unique economic opportunity. Lakhs of additional man

hours will be utilised amongst cab drivers, hotel staff, construction and maintenance workers, utility and security services, the ASSOCHAM Secretary General said. "We thank and compliment Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for providing inspirational leadership and support for organising such a grand event, leveraging technologies and organizational skills". It would go lown as a case study of its kind.

Union Minister lauds PHDCCI for its ideas to improve MSMEs lending

RAJU WILLIAM New Delhi

Union Minister of State (MoS) Finance Pankaj Chaudhary has appreciated PHDCCI suggestions like collateral free loan to MSME up to 5 crore, help desk for people seeking loans and taxing registered MSMEs at a flat 25% rate.

The Minister was addressing the Conference on MSME Financing: A Key Driver for Viksit Bharat 2047 & PHDCCI's 1st MSME Banking & NBFC Excellence Sammaan - 2025 held at PHD House, New Delhi held Monday, January 20, 2025.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has prioritized infrastructure development, increasing spending from Rs 5 lakh crore to Rs 11.11 lakh crore, he said emphasizing the need for growth in every sector of the economy, aligning with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 of the PM

Under the Mudra Yojana, more than 31 lakh loans have been disbursed, with over 60% of the beneficiaries being women. Furthermore, 55 crore Jan Dhan accounts have been opened, of which 55% belong to women, he added.

He congratulated the PHDC-CI on completing 120 years and acknowledged its role in providing a shared platform to strengthen the backbone of our economy, which are MSMEs.

To make industries more efficient, the government has abolished 1,500 unnecessary laws and initiated steps to promote MSMEs. Over the last 10 years, there has been a notice-

able change in the government's approach toward industries; the cost and time for businesses have reduced significantly.

Concluding his address the Minister emphasized that achieving the goal of making India a developed nation by 2047 will require a significant contribution from the MSME sector.

On the occasion, Dr. Ishita Ganguli Tripathy, Additional Development Commissioner, Ministry of MSME, Government of Indiainformed that 5.86 crore enterprises have registered on the Udyam portal till now which drives employment of 24.8 crore persons.

The formalised identity enables enterprise to avail the benefits focusing is on upward mobility. In 2022, a notification was brought out which entailed that previous category and benefits could continue after 3 years. More than 5 lakh enterprises have availed this and grown.

She informed that under the Credit Guarantee Scheme for MSEs, women-owned enterprises have seen a 90% increase in credit guarantees. From 2000 to December 31, 2024, approximately 1.01 crore guarantees have been approved. Under

the Self-Reliant India Fund. equity funding support has been provided to MSMEs. A total of 59 Daughter Funds have been empanelled; 533 MSMEs have been assisted; approximately Rs 9,999 crore have been invested in MSMEs. The average investment has been around Rs 19 crore.

Shachindra Nath, Chair, BFSI Committee, PHDCCI & Founder and Managing Director, UGRO Capital discussed that unsecured loans are critical for MSMEs in India, as many of these businesses, particularly first-generation enterprises, lack access to adequate collateral.

Dr. Ranjeet Mehta, CEO & Secretary General, PHDCCI deliberated that there were three critical challenges for MSMEs - financing, market access, and access to technology. However, when the financial challenge is resolved to a great extent, the others can be easily sorted out. Another Key issue he addressed was the scheme of collateral free loan to MSME up to 5 crore but in practical most of banks ask for collateral security for giving loan, here PHDCCI suggest if there can be a help desk for people seeking loans it can be sorted out.

LS Digital offering limited period 'Free' Al Marketing Stack

DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai

LS Digital -- an integrated digital business transformation (DBT) company - announced here recently that it will be sharing 'free' its plans of "Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabling," comprising its revolutionary AI Marketing Stack, to all its clients

Highlighting the present rapidly-transforming digital landscape where CMOs face immense pressure to integrate AI into their marketing operations, Prasad Shejale, Founder/CEO, said LS Digital is offering 'free' exclusive access to the Research Artificial Intelligence component of its AI Marketing Stack.

While AI is a tool and also foundation for future marketing success, making its AI Stack as default offering removed barriers to adoption, creative, data and insights,



besides also empowering technology, UI/UX and CX, brands to achieve unprecto enable brands to embrace a edented growth and innovafuture where AI is the default tion alongside ensuring every driver of marketing success marketer had the opportunity said Venugopal Ganganna, Coto explore and implement AIfounder/CIO, LS Digital.

"Our Marketing Stack focus driven solutions in making their brands unstoppable, he is on: Research at Scale, Generate at Scale, and Predictive "With businesses increasingly at Scale for clients (free for recognizing AI's transformative a limited period) to explore potential, LS Digital is posi-AI-driven insights, assess their tioned as a catalyst for change transformative potential, and through its expertise in media, achieve measurable resultsall without financial barriers."

he added

Replying to questions, he said the company's two-year, Rs 2.5 million research in AIassisted multiple client industries including 1,200 people successfully, while also becoming ready for present-day markets. "In using this AI for barely a few weeks, one can understand the competition and occurring trends to start up and scale - including for Gen Next, New Age youngsters and startups entering the market."

"The biggest skill required today is HI (Human Intelligence) asking AI (Artificial Intelligence) the right question, while also the need for bridging the gap between clutter and implementation of the technology in its use for the market where the FMCG space is massive, besides also other segments of industry," he noted.

said

BANKING S FINANCE

RBI steps to boost liquidity in banking Kotak Mahindra Bank Acquires Standard Chartered system are smart, pragmatic : SBI India's Personal Loan Biz For Rs 3,330 Cr the bank further said. This is UNIONIEUDGET

MUMBAI: More changes in the RBI Liquidity Management Framework are likely after the daily dynamic VRR has been taken as the first step to manage liquidity in the banking system, according to an SBI research report.

"Such changes and frontloading next round of moves are smart and pragmatic by the RBI...A delicate mix of temporary and permanent liquidity injection and withdrawal remains a work in progress, the report states.

As a corollary to intervention in the forex markets juxtaposed with volatile movements in government cash balances, liquidity has been shrinking in the banking system and alarmingly blowing past the comfort zone

This persistent liquidity conundrum, along with the anticipation of a rally in DXY has prompted the regulator to revert to daily dynamic VRR (variable



rate repo) to effectively manage leakage and liquidity impact of RBI forex intervention, the the liquidity along the revised report observes. LMF (Liquidity Management Framework) in place from Feb-"To negate this, in a smart

move RBI has started to sell Given that such daily VRR in Spot and NDF forwards transactions are akin to tranand then doing short-term sient liquidity injections, repo buy-sell swaps to replace the transactions should ideally commaturing forward sale position pensate for changes in governand also to counter the durable ment cash balances, but this is liquidity drain from spot insomehow also substituting for tervention. We also think RBI permanent durable liquidity may announce longer term shortfall arising out of currency (2-3 years) buy sell swaps to

shore up reserves and release liquidity, " according to the SBI report.

In principle, liquidity management per se still has some operational challenges like improving the market microstructure, a proper indicator of liquidity tightness in the system and most importantly maintaining a delicate balance between an effective mix of durable and transient liquidity injection or withdrawal, the report points out.

According to the report, the system liquidity situation remained tight and turned to injection mode since 16 December 2024, due to many reasons like tax outflows, GST payment, forex market intervention and volatility in capital flows. Further with the implementation of Just in Time (JIT), the system liquidity has been impacted through movements in government cash balances.



MUMBAI: Kotak Mahindra Bank on Thursday said it has completed the acquisition of the personal loan portfolio of Standard Chartered India for Rs 3.330 crore The acquisition, which re-

ceived the necessary regulatory approvals, will help Kotak strengthen its position in the retail credit market, Kotak Mahindra Bank said in an exchange filing. The bank said the high-quality loan portfolio will enhance its presence in the affluent customer segment and further solidify its leadership in retail lending. According to the exchange filing, "we refer to our intimations dated October 18, 2024 and November 27, 2024 in relation to the proposed acquisition by the Bank of the Personal Loan

book of Standard Chartered Bank, India, as stated therein". "In this regard, we now wish to inform you that, after having received the necessary regulatory approvals and upon fulfillment of the relevant conditions precedent, the Bank has, today, i.e., on January 23, 2025, completed the aforesaid acquisition,"

MUMBAI: India's largest

private lender HDFC Bank

on Wednesday reported a 2.2

per cent rise in its net profit

for Q3 this fiscal, as its gross

non-performing assets (NPA)

ratio rose during the quarter.

For the December quarter,

HDFC Bank Clocks 2.2 Pc Net Profit Growth in Q3, Gross NPA Deteriorates

Budget 2025 to Boost Startups & MSMEs with **Expanded Financial Support**

EXPECTATIONS

the first major acquisition under Ashok Vaswani, who took charge as the Managing Girector and CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank on January 1 this year. Kotak Mahindra Bank is ex-

pecting to align the acquisition to its strategy to drive growth, expand market share and unlock opportunities in the 'Salaried Affluent' segment. Earlier, under Uday Kotak's leadership, the bank had explored the possibility of acquiring Citibank India's consumer business, which included its credit card portfolio. However, Axis Bank eventually acquired the business. For the quarter that ended December 2024, Kotak Mahindra Bank reported a 16 per cent year-on-year increase in advances, reaching Rs 4.33 lakh crore. The share of unsecured retail advances, including microcredit, fell to 10.5 per cent of net advances from 11.3 per cent in the previous quarter.

HDFC BAN

bank's asset quality deteriorated,

with the gross NPA ratio rising

to 1.42 per cent as of December,

compared to 1.36 per cent in

the previous quarter. The net

NPA ratio rose to 0.46 per cent

from 0.41 per cent in the prior

According to the filing, earn-

ings per share for the quarter

ended December 31, 2024 was

Rs 23.1 and book value per share

as of December 31, 2024 was

HDFC Bank's operating ex-

quarter.

Rs 656.6.

NEW DELHI: India's upcoming Union Budget for 2025-26 is set to strengthen financial support for startups and small businesses, which form a crucial backbone of the national economy contributing approximately one-third of the country's economic output. According to a recent Mint report, the government plans to tackle key financial challenges faced by these sectors, particularly in areas of working capital accessibility, trade finance, and

growth funding under favorable terms. The government's initiative is expected to expand support through existing frameworks overseen by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

This development comes at a critical time when the MSME sector, which accounts for over 29 percent of India's GDP and provides employment to more than 247 million people, has been grappling with rising capital costs following the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee's 250 basis points rate increase since May 2022. The DPIIT's Fund of Funds for Startups, established in 2016, has demonstrated significant impact by supporting 1,120 startups with funding of

Rs 19,992 crore, as reported by the Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi). The scheme, which currently operates with a budget allocation of Rs 1,200 crore in the present fiscal year, channels capital to startups through Sebi-registered alternative investment funds using equity and equity-linked instruments. In a potential policy innovation, the Centre is reportedly considering allowing startups to leverage their intangible assets, including patents, trademarks, and copyrights, as collateral for financing. This move could open new avenues for startup funding and

Indian stock market opens higher, IT sector shows promise post Q3 earnings



MUMBAI: Indian benchmark indices opened higher on Friday, extending gains to day three this week, as Nifty Bank, auto, FMCG and IT sectors led the morning trade.

In early trade, Nifty rose 0.31 per cent to 23, 277, while the 30-stock Sensex advanced 0.31 per cent to 76, 765. Seven out of the 12 sectors on the NSE advanced, with Nifty Metal and Nifty Oil and Gas gaining the most.

The broader markets underperformed its larger peers, with the BSE MidCap slipping by 0.12 per cent and the Small-Cap falling by 0.20 per cent.

ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Infosys and PowerGrid contributed to the advance on the Nifty 50. Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise, Maruti Suzuki, a 39 per cent jump compared and Kotak Mahindra Bank to the corresponding figure of weighed on the benchmark index. According to market period of the previous financial experts, the strength of the year, according to a State Bank et with S& P 500

India's Digital Economy to Drive 20 pc Of GDP By 2030: MeitY Report NEW DELHI: India's digital

ruary 2020

economy is set to experience exponential growth, projected to contribute nearly one-fifth of the country's national income by 2029-2030, according to a report released by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) on January 22.

The comprehensive study, titled 'Estimation and Measurement of India's Digital Economy', represents the first systematic attempt to quantify the value and employment generated by the nation's digital sector. It forecasts a transformative trajectory that will see the digital economy surpassing both agriculture and manufacturing in less than six years.

MUMBAI: Indian companies

have announced investments

of over Rs 32 lakh crore during

the first nine months (April-

December) of the current fi-

nancial year, which represents

Rs 23 lakh crore for the same



Added and Rs 31.64 trillion in GDP. The report projects this share to increase to 13.42 percent by 2024-25, with the

largest contribution coming from information and communication services, telecommunications, and electronics manufacturing. The sector's growth is ex-

pected to be driven primarily by digital intermediaries and platforms, with increasing

digital diffusion and broader economic digitalisation.

Currently, big tech players, digital platforms, and intermediaries account for nearly 2 percent of the national Gross Value Added, while industries like banking, financial services, insurance, trade, and education contribute an additional 2 percent.

that the digital economy employed 14.67 million workers in 2022-23, representing 2.55 percent of India's total workforce.

the largest employer with 263.6 million workers, and

Employment data reveals

This stands in stark contrast to agriculture, which remains

The bank also saw an increase in interest earned, which grew by 7.6 per cent. It earned Rs

At the same time, HDFC

However, the private sector for the same period last year.

penses stood at Rs 17,110 crores, an increase of 7.2 per cent from Rs 15,960 crores in the same period last year. The company's cost-to-income ratio was 40.6 per cent in Q3. The average deposits also increased in the same quarter

> address the sector's persistent demand for more accessible and affordable credit options.

billion as of Private firms demonstrated Bank paid Rs 45,354 crore in September stronger hedging practices, interest for the quarter, which was a 7.7 per cent rise from Rs by 15.9 per cent at Rs 24,52,800 $20\overline{2}4$, a slight covering about 74 per cent of their exposure. They brought increase from 42,111 crore in Q3 FY24. crore from Rs 21,17,100 crore the previous the overall hedging ratio for

non-rupee-non-FDI ECBs to approximately 68 per cent, Non-rupee according to the report. The and non-FDI components account for on the rise with two-thirds of **NEW DELHI**: Leading pay-\$155 billion, the total ECBs being hedged as ments and financial services

the bank's profit stood at Rs 16,736 crore, compared to Rs 16,373 crore in the same period last vear. Net interest income, or the bank's core income, rose nearly 8 per cent (year-on-year) to Rs 30,650 crore. Core net interest

margin stood at 3.43 per cent for the bank and 3.62 per cent on an interest-earning asset basis.

In the September quarter, the respective figures were at 3.46 per cent and 3.65 per cent.

> 76,007 crore in Q3FY25, up from Rs 70,583 crore in the

Paytm log 10 pc revenue jump at Rs 1,828 cr in Q3, PAT improved by Rs 208 cr

PAT now stands at Rs (223) crore. i m - The company's contribution margin (evoluting UP



Rs 32 Lakh Cr in April-Dec 2024: SBI Report

practice of hedging has been

same quarter last year.

setting yet another record high and the 10-year US bond yield remaining strong around 4.65 per cent will continue to weigh on the Indian market. The Q3 results of IT companies and the management commentary indicating improving prospects for the sector suggest that the sector is a safe bet now, they added.

A strong pipeline of Rs 13.63 lakh crore in work-in-progress capital, as of March 2024, reflects a strong growth momentum in the coming years, the report states.

of India (SBI) report

Government investment

per cent, which is the highest since FY16. Preliminary FY24 data, expected by the end of February, is likely to show private investment nearing 12.5 per cent of GDP.

Meanwhile, external comreached 4.1 per cent of gross mercial borrowings (ECBs) domestic product (GDP) in remain a key funding source FY23, the highest since FY12 for Indian companies, with accounted for the remaining while private sector investment outstanding ECBs at \$190.4 37 per cent (\$55.5 billion).

120

volatility from hedging. Private companies hold 63 per cent (\$97.58 billion) of these borrowings, with 74 per cent of their exposure hedged.

quarters.

Private companies held around 63 per cent (\$97.58 billion) of these borrowings, while public sector companies

of September 2024, up from 55 per cent two years ago.

Among the unhedged portion, some are backed by government guarantees, while others benefit from natural hedges, where borrowers earn in foreign currency. As of September 2024, natural hedges accounted for around 1.5 per cent of unhedged ECBs, the report added.

growth across key financial metrics. The company's operating revenue surged by 10 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) to Rs 1, 828 crore in Q3 FY2025, driven by its pavments business and expanding financial services distribution portfolio.

The company reported a



QoQ to Rs (208) crore, while its cash reserves increased by Rs 2, 851 crore QoQ to Rs 12, 850 crore. The key highlights include a Rs 181 crore QoQ improvement in EBITDA, which by Q4 FY25.

ment tives) held steady at 52 per cent, translating to a contribution profit of Rs 959 crore, up 7 per cent QoQ, according to the company. EBITDA before ESOP costs improved by Rs 145 crore QoQ to Rs (41) crore, with the company maintaining its target to achieve EBITDA profitability before ESOP costs

Union Budget 2025: Expectations of Pharmaceutical Industry



the root of all heartache', sums up the message regarding expectations from people or situations, and subsequent disappointments when those expectations are not met. With respect to the Union Budget, all industries and stakeholdthe Union Finance Minister. and the finance minister is expected to satisfy all of them. The finance minister has many constraints, and is expected to consider many competing

interests, priorities at a given point of time, resources available to name a few while accommodating different stakeholders. Industries also vary in size, nature, stage of development, support required, and influence. Accordingly, expectations of respective industries get considered, and get accommodated. Pharmaceutical Industry in India is now known as the Pharmacy of the World.

For FY 2023-24, India's pharmaceutical industry was

US \$ 26.5 bn and the domestic consumption contributed US \$ 23.5 bn (PIB Release dated December 17, 2024). Ratio of exports to domestic consumption was 53:47. Intions are dia's pharmaceutical industry is ranked the world's third largest in volume terms. This reflects the strength of Indian

pharmaceutical industry in international markets as net foreign exchange earner, as well as the capacity to serve domestic market and interers have expectations from national markets. Product portfolio of pharmaceutical companies has gone beyond generic products or vaccines, and now covers biologics, biosimilars, bulk drugs, Complex Generics, Medical Devices, etc. Given the diverse nature

> of pharmaceutical industry, growth of biologics, biosimilars, emergence of medical devices industry, and developments in MedTech, each component of value chain requires attention in the Union Budget for holistic development of the industry, be it R&D, manufacturing, or exports.

Exports form major chunk of revenue for many pharmaceutical companies in India. Pharmaceutical industry from India as a whole, now heavvalued at US \$ 50 bn, out of ily relies on exports so credit addition to their own resourc-



Export of medical devices has shown encouraging signs. Export incentives presently range from 0.6% to 0.9% under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) Scheme that became applicable from January 1, 2021. This Scheme had replaced the existing Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS).

Changing nature of pharmaceutical business demands attention in all areas of value chain. Research and Development (R&D) in pharmaceutical sector is crucial, cost-intensive, and time-consuming. At the same time, the risky nature of drug discovery does not go well for each pharma enterprise. Due to this, pharmaceutical enterprises primarily rely on grants and soft loans in

support exports, are desirable. Continued focus on R&D is needed to transform India into a value-driven economy as Indian pharma industry is still 14th in terms of value of production.

The size of the Indian pharmaceutical Industry has grown from about \$15.2 billion in 2014 to \$50 Bn in 2024. To maintain existing momentum, appropriate interventions are required from time to time. Like any other year, industry leaders have expressed their expectations from the upcoming Union Budget 2025-26 that is going to be presented on February 1. R&D tax incentive is widely expressed as a major demand since it was reduced to 100%. In his budget speech in 2016, the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had announced the reduction of the weighted deduction which exports contributed schemes and policies which es for carrying out the R&D. from 200% in FY 2017-18 to has increased from 29.0% in and incentives are needed to and highly sophisticated &

on Research and Development (R&D) expenses was reduced to 100%. Pharmaceutical companies kept on demanding R&D tax incentive as these companies have to incur R&D expenses outside their facilities too which include bioequivalence studies, clinical studies, patent filings, product registration to name a few. **Research-linked Incentives** (RLI) has remained a consistent demand. Research on

Orphan drugs needs encouragement through incentives. From government perspective, underlying rationale appeared that there was demand from corporate sector for reduction of corporate tax rate and at the same time, there were weighted deductions.

A key expectation remains the focus on 'increasing healthcare funding' as 47 per cent contribution to India's pharma industry is from domestic consumption. The government health expenditure's share in India's total Gross Domestic Prod-2021-22. Further, the share of Government Expenditure

150% in 2019-20. From the FY 2014-15 to 48.0% in 2021-22 boost investments in AI in costly instruments which are 2020-21, weighted deduction as per the National Health general. Pharma-specific ar- required to develop precision Accounts Estimates for India 2020-21 and 2021-22 which been observed from 64.2% in 2013-14 to 39.4% in 2021-22. National Health Policy (2017) had recommended that the government should spend by 2025.

Production-linked Incentive Bulk Drug Parks and Medical Devices, Pharmaceutical rival nations in the business-Technology Upgradation Assistant Scheme (PTUAS), Jan Aushadhi Scheme, Promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma Med-Tech (PRIP), and the scheme on Human Resource Development in Medical Devices Sector need allocation as higher allocation will help respective players participating in these areas.

With technological advancements, emphasis is on application of Gen AI and other tools by pharmaceutiuct (GDP) has increased from cal companies too. Sustainable 1.13% in 2014-15 to 1.84% in manufacturing in pharma and integrating sustainability with advanced technologies is the in Total Health Expenditure need of the hour. Measures input materials, consumables,

eas are likely to be benefited. Top pharma companies globwere released on September ally are extensively applying 25, 2024. A decline in out- AI and other such tools in of-pocket expenditure out of research, clinical trials, and total health expenditure has other upstream activities. Globally, countries want to remain competitive in this domain, e.g., The US Presi-dent Donald Trump on his 2nd day of his Presidency an-2.5% of GDP on healthcare nounced 'Stargate Project', a private sector investment of up to \$500 billion to fund (PLI) Schemes, Promotion of infrastructure for artificial intelligence, aiming to outpace

> critical technology. Industry leaders have voiced the concern from the point of view of end-users/patients, e.g., Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw stated that cancer-related drugs are expensive so any drug used for a chronic therapy with a monthly cost of treatment exceeding Rs. 5,000 should be exempted from tax altogether. Chronic patients have to buy medications by paying a tax of 12 per cent which is quite high as medicines for such patients are necessity, and not luxury. In a similar manner, import

duties need to be reduced on

medicines used in cancer treatment. This will reduce outof-pocket cost of patients. In July 2024 when the Finance Minister in her 7th consecutive Budget speech brought down the customs duty on X-ray tubes used in medical X-ray machines, and allowed dutyfree import of three medicines, Trastuzumab, Deruxtecan, Osimertinib, and Durvalumab from existing 10 per cent customs duty, then the move was

widely appreciated. The Union Budget determines the roadmap for different sectors for a short period of one year but it has the potential to halt or ensure continuity in the journey towards becoming a developed nation, or Viksit Bharat. Pharma and Meditech sectors collectively need adequate attention in budget as in first four months of FY 2024-25, it became the 4th largest merchandise export item for the Indian economy.

Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish-Associate Professor (Finance and Accounting), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), **DISCLAIMER**: Views are personal and do not represent the views of the Institute.

INTERNATIONAL

Trump threatens Russia with tariffs, sanctions if 'ridiculous war' in Ukraine not ended

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has warned his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to end the 'ridiculous war in Ukraine or face high tariffs and further sanctions.

Trump, who was sworn in as the 47th President of the United States on January 20, said this on Truth Social on Wednesday, a social media platform owned by him. Trump called out Russian President Putin by name in the social media post, arguing that he always had a good relationship with the leader, but that it was time to settle "this ridiculous War!" Asserting that he is looking to hurt Russia, Trump said he wants no more lives to be lost in the war.

"Let's get this war, which never would have started if I were President, over with! We can do it the easy way, or the hard way - and the easy way is always better. It's time to "MAKE A DEAL." NO MORE LIVES SHOULD BE LOST !!!" Trump said. "I love the Russian people, and always had a very

good relationship with President Putin - and this despite the Radical Left's Russia, Russia,



War! IT'S ONLY GOING TO

GET WORSE. If we don't make

a "deal," and soon, I have no oth-

er choice but to put high levels of

Taxes, Tariffs, and Sanctions on

anything being sold by Russia to

the United States, and various

other participating countries,"

appeal to the Russian leader.

Russia HOAX. We must never forget that Russia helped us win the Second World War, losing almost 60,000,000 lives in the process," he said.

He also warned that if there was not a ceasefire deal soon, he would "have no other choice" but to impose tariffs, taxes and sanctions on "anything being sold by Russia to the United States, and various other par-

ticipating countries." "All of that being said, I'm economic sectors, including its going to do Russia, whose Econoil and energy sectors earlier omy is failing, and President Puthis month, in an effort to cut tin, a very big FAVOUR. Settle off its revenues to fund the war now, and STOP this ridiculous in Ukraine.

Trump has for months called for a ceasefire in Ukraine, urging both sides to negotiate. Russian forces invaded Ukraine in early 2022, and both sides have sustained heavy losses in the nearly three years of fighting since.

During his campaign, Trump repeatedly said he could settle the war between Russia and Ukraine in one day if he was elected president. He would go on to claim that Putin would never have invaded had Trump been president, the National Public Radio reported.

On Tuesday, Trump said he is ready to meet Putin anytime, but at the same time, he warned that he would likely impose sanctions on Russia if the latter does not come to the negotiations table on the issue of Ukraine.

Trump said making an open "It sounds likely," Trump told The Biden administration reporters when asked if the US has already imposed numerous will impose additional sanctions sanctions on various Russian on Russia if Putin doesn't come to the negotiation table.

Trump also said that Ukraine's President Zelensky told him that he would like to have peace.

It Was Pak Which Stopped Trade with India In 2019: Jaishankar

WASHINGTON: Addressing the status of India's trade relations with Pakistan, External Affairs Minister (EAM), S. Jaishankar, has clarified that it was the Islamabad administration that decided to halt trading with New Delhi in 2019.He said in a press conference in Washington DC on Wednesday (local time) reiterating India's longstanding

concern regarding the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status, which India had extended to Pakistan but which the latter didn't reciprocate. "We did not stop trading.

Their administration made the decision in 2019 to not continue trading with us," Jaishankar said in the press statement. "Our concern about this issue was from the beginning that we should get MFN status. We used to give this status to Pakistan but they did not give it to us," the

EAM added. Noting that there have been no recent discussions or initia-



tives on trade from either side, he added, "So, neither such talks have taken place with Pakistan regarding trade from our side, nor did they take any initiative from their side."

Higlighting India-US ties, EAM Jaishankar said both nations have a "very strong degree" of trust and convergence. "We have a very strong de-

ree of trust today between India and the United States, a very high level of convergence of our interests," he said.

He also noted that the two nations share a sense of global good and are committed to serving their national interests on January 20.

Mexico, US in Formal **Talks on Bilateral Issues, Says Mexican** Prez Sheińbaum

while building their bilateral partnership. "A sense that while

we serve our national interest, while we build our bilateral partnership, definitely on regional issues and global issues, there is a lot of good that we can do. So that sense of global good was also very evident conceptually in what we discussed." "In terms of the bi-

lateral ties, this was the first day of the administration, so we had sort of essentially a broad brush conversation, didn't get too deep into details, but there was an agreement, a consensus between us that we need to be bolder, bigger and more ambitious, e added.

EAM Jaishankar represented India at US President Donald Trump's inaugural function. He also carried a letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for President Donald Trump. Trump took oath as the 47th US President



on bilateral issues, such as immigration and security, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said. The talks began Tuesday after the newly-appointed US Secretary of State Marco Rubio telephoned his Mexican counterpart, Juan Ramon de la Fuente, said the president on Wednesday. "It was a very good, very cordial conversation," Sheinbaum said during her usual morning press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City. "They talked about immigration issues and security issues," she said, adding that contrary to the speculation "that there is no communication (between the two governments), vesterday it was formally established." Rubio's first call as secretary of state "was to Mexico," stressed the president, "and it was a very cordial call, the foreign minister (De la Fuente) informed me yesterday."

Australian PM commits

\$1.2 billion to transition

CANBERRA: Australia's

Prime Minister Anthony Al-

banese on Monday announced a

2-billion-Australian-dollar (1.24

billion US dollars) plan to in-

centivise aluminium smelters to

transition to renewable power.

scheme that will pay aluminium

smelters for every ton of the

The funding will be used for a

to renewable power

Will use US oil reserves as a weapon to assert power globally: Trump



WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump will use the US oil reserves as a weapon to assert its power and prevent friends and foes from "pushing it around". "We're not going to let all of our nations, our friendly and unfriendly nations, push us around from any standpoint, including the economy because we have something that they don't have," he said on Monday.

"We have a power that they don't have -- liquid gold under our feet, the likes of which no other nation has," he said about his strength through energy policy. He made exploiting the huge petroleum and gas reserves that the US has as an import plank of his election platform, both to bring down prices and to assert US power abroad.

cil of Parties of the King Abdul-Trump was speaking to memlah Bin Abdulaziz International bers of the military at the Com-Centre for Interreligious and nander in Chie where

CALIFORNIA: Millions of Southern Californian residents have been advised to limit outdoor activities due to bad air quality amid devastating wildfires, according to the US National Weather Service (NWS).

The NWS has issued several air quality alerts covering the South Coast Air Basin, Coachella Valley and eastern Riverside County, reports Xinhua news agency.

Very strong Santa Ana winds and extreme fire weather have been forecasted for portions of Los Angeles and Ventura counties starting Monday.

Stronger and more widespread Santa Ana winds are to the NWS Los Angeles.

Dialogue (KA)



Californian residents warned to avoid outdoors

as wildfires continue to deteriorate air quality

ity Management District has issued a windblown dust and ash advisory due to strong Santa

Ana winds expected throughout the region through Tuesday

evening. The NWS has issued Red Flag Warnings, High Wind Warnings, and Wind Advisories for much of the area.

Last week, local authorities confirmed that fierce wildfires across Southern California have killed at least 27 people and destroyed at least 12,300 structures after more than a week.

The Palisades Fire, the largest active wildfire in the Los Angeles region, has scorched 23, 713 acres (95.96 square km). The fire, which broke out on January 7, is 31 per cent contained, up from 22 per cent early Thursday.

Trump administration sued on

ganisations have filed a 17-page and illegal.

an executive order aimed at ending birthright citizenship in the United States, a coalition of civil rights and immigration groups filed a lawsuit challenging the move, setting the stage for a

in American society."

The lawsuit seeks to have the court declare the executive order unlawful and issue both temporary and permanent injunctions

not be eligible for US citizento block its enforcement. Trump's order argues that ship, including passports, startthe federal government should "issue c ruments recognis ing United States citizenship" to children born on US soil to parents who are unlawfully or temporarily in the country. It specifies that the policy will apply to children born 30 days after the order's signing.

initiatives at WEF 2025

expected overnight to the typical The South Coast Air Qualwind-prone areas of Los Angeles and Ventura counties, according

Council of Parties Appoints Ambassador Almeida - Ribeiro as KAICIID Acting Secretary-General January 2025

Expressing his gratitude for the trust placed in him, His Excellency stated: "In today's evolving global landscape, the Centre plays a crucial role in advancing and promoting the

beiro added: "I commend the significant accomplishments that KAICIID has achieved since its founding, building a credible and trusted international organization dedicated to spreading peace through interreligious and intercultural dia

1st day over order aiming to end **Birthright Citizenship in America** state chapters, and other or-

lawsuit in federal court in New Hampshire on behalf of immigration rights groups, arguing the order is unconstitutional "For plaintiffs -- organisations

with members impacted by the order -- and for families across the country, this order seeks to strip from their children the priceless treasure' of citizenship, threatening them with a lifetime of exclusion and fear of deportation from the only country they have ever known,

"But that is illegal. The Constitution and Congress -- not President Trump -- dictate who is entitled to full membership parent is a US citizen or lawful

local aluminium industry is a "massive opportunity" to create jobs and set Australia up for "We've got the resources, the workers, and the know-howthe only thing we don't have is time to waste, "Albanese said. "We are building Australia's future, not taking Australia backwards.

Global leaders call for action on Al,

regional reforms, environmental

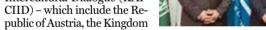
WASHINGTON: Hours after President Donald Trump signed

The executive order, signed Monday night, directs federal the lawsuit states. agencies to deny recognition of US citizenship for children born on American soil to parents who are in the country illegally or on temporary visas unless one

metal produced using renewable electricity over a 10-year period to 2036, reports Xinhua news agency.

He said that investing in the

they celebrated his inauguration as president. He told them that he would build the military stronger and its success would be winning without fighting wars through a show of the country's strength.



of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of His Excellency Ambassador Spain, and the Vatican State as a António de Almeida - Ribeiro founding observer, alongside the as Acting Secretary General Republic of Portugal as a guest of the International Dialogue Centre – KAICIID, effective and host state – have appointed

moderation through dialogue among followers of different religions and cultures. KAICIID will continue to work closely with international partners to achieve this important mission." Ambassador Almeida - Ri-

logue, despite the challenges it has encountered. Looking ahead, the Centre is determined to build on this success, enhancing and expanding its impact through programmes and projects in the regions it serves worldwide.

er, which he or a long-standing legal consensus that the 14th Amendment of the Constitution guarantees birthright citizenship, has drawn immediate backlash.

major legal battle.

permanent resident.

It states that children born

under these circumstances will

ing 30 days from its signing.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), several of its

TRUMP'S INAUGURAL

Dhruva Ensures Ambani Attends Trump's Swearing-in, but Jaishankar Couldn't Obtain Invite for Modi



t is not surprising that in the diplomatic circles, a joke that

Dhruv, who serves as the Exserver Research Foundation (ORF), America, a proxy of the Indian tycoon, Mukesh Ambani, has succeeded in obtaining an invitation for the Indian industrialist and his spouse to attend the inaugural ceremony of the new president, Donald Trump.

January 20, 2025, congratulated 'friend' Donald Trump after he became the 47th US President on X. Modi's post comes marking his remarkable return to power for a second term. Meanwhile, it was a little surprise or perhaps, intriguing, for the observers of the US-China ties that the ity of a closer US-China ties Chinese President, Xi Jinping, could not be ruled out. The who, earlier, had rejected the invitation to attend the inauguration ceremony, suddenly decided to send his vice-president, Han Zeng, to attend the function. Earlier, the Chinese foreign office at Beijing had told media persons that China though dwarfed by China's would be represented by its automaker BYD, a Chinese ambassador in the US.

GOPAL MISRA It is believed that the tel-

FW DESK

Lisbon (Portugal)

The member states of the Coun-

ephonic conversation between Jinping and Trump, just three days before the inauguration, appears to have softened the attitudes of the two world leaders. In this the crucial while father S. Jaishankar role of Elon Musk having could not get an entry pass close financial ties with China for his boss, Prime Minister could not be ruled out. It is Narendra Modi, but his son, also stated that Zeng would be meeting his counter-part, ecutive Director of the Ob- J.D. Vance, and other business leaders

Dhruv's Role

Most of the defence and foreign affairs experts in New Delhi appear to be in unison that despite the muchtalked about the American hard-line against China under Modi, however, on Monday, the Trump Administration, there is a possibility of an

unprecedented cooperation between China and US under the Trump's second inning in the White House. For many, it may appear far-fetched, but with the growing assertive role of Elon Musk in the Trump Administration, the possibiltwo countries might soon be reinventing a new format for forging their much closer economic alliance. Elon Musk, who manufac-

tures Tesla, the electric car, is having a big unit in China, vices of the knowledgeable electric vehicle producer, persons instead of being solely forts by scholars and lobbyists.



share. It may be noted that BYD had overtaken Tesla as the world's largest producer of pure electric cars in the fourth quarter of 2023. BYD's sales were higher than Tesla's by more than 20 per cent.

In this context, especially when Elon Musk, a key-player in the White House, it is hoped that people of Indian origin like Dhruv having thorough knowledge of the functioning of American establishment could be playing a crucial role, if engaged for promoting Indian interests. Earlier, it was being whispered in the diplomatic circles in New Delhi that the services and cooperation of knowledgeable people like Dhruv, who appear to have excelled many other lobbyists in Washington should be engaged, but now many experts of foreign and strategic affairs openly talk about seeking ser-

hopes to regain the market depending upon the normal diplomatic channels. It is being recognized that the services of these lobbyists, who have successfully blended their thorough knowledge in the foreign affairs, international trade and diplomacy accompanied by a rare courage to face and succeed in the world of international lobbying, should be sought.

During the past six years, perhaps, since 2018, Dhruva has been working at the ORF America, a new DC-based institute affiliated with India's ORF, an Ambani outfit. Being educated in the US and also having clarity in the international affairs, this 37-year old scholar offers a rare blending of knowledge of the world affairs, thus, getting respect and connectivity in the corridors of power in Washington. The inability of the foreign office to get an invite for Modi should be an eye-opener that we should complement our ef-

It is true that we may not be able to get a person like Dhruv in our foreign service, who has become an American citizen. However, it may be noted that his grandfather, K. Subramaniam, known for his proximity with the prime minister, P.V. Narsimha Rao (1991-96), is remembered for framing India's nuclear deterrent doctrine. It maybe recalled that India had detonated nuclear devices in 1998 after a secret dinner meeting at the residence of Rao attended by the Congress Presi-

dent, Sonia Gandhi and the then PM, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. For maintaining the secrecy, the American deep state, i.e. CIA never forgave Sonia and Rao for not sharing the crucial information.

The Indian diplomacy needs to be reinvigorated, because the country would continue to suffer, if it remained glued to the old medieval approach towards diplomacy. If the tycoons like Vivek Ramaswamy and Elon Musk could be playing a strong role in the American administration, in India too the role of the billionaires in the politics should be recognized, says Professor K.C. Sharma, a political scientist. According to him, it is now an established fact that the West confides in people like Mukesh Ambani than any

other civilian face in India.

His presence at the inaugura-

tion of Trump in Washington

should be considered beneficial for the country.

It is hoped that the political bosses in New Delhi would not hesitate in inducting scholars, businessmen and others in her diplomacy instead of being wedded to the conservative tradition of being represented only by career diplomats. The existing structure in the foreign office needs to complemented with new innovative talents, but it should be retained for the routine jobs. It is true that the present incumbent India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar enjoyed respect as a career diplomat, but now it is being recognized that he should have refused the political job, which needs a different set of responsibilities. It may be recalled that the founder of the Indian Foreign Service, Sir Girja Shanker Vajpayee, who had also served as a member of the Viceroy's council in undivided India, a post equivalent to a cabinet minister, did not accept the position of cabinet minister. He had served as the Secretary General of the External Affairs Ministry under the PM Jawaharlal Nehru.

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

the Congo River Basin.



DAVOS (SWITZERLAND): The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting, which is taking place in Davos-Klosters from 20 to 24 January 2025, convenes global leaders under the theme Collaboration for the Intelligent Age. Global leaders have called for action on artificial intelligence, regional reforms, and environmental initiatives at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2025, discussing key issues such as social media reform in Europe, closer regional integration in Asia, the creation of the world's largest tropical forest reserve in Africa and opportunities for

progress in the Middle East. President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, on Wednesday at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025 announced the creation of the world's largest tropical forest reserve, according to a press release. The Kivu to Kinshasa Green Corridor Reserve will protect over 550,000 square kilometres of forest throughout

initiative will transform not only our natural landscapes but also the livelihoods of millions of our citizens," he said, adding that the initiative goes far beyond environmental preservation and includes economic development. As he prepares to assume the ASEAN chairmanship, Ma-

"This historic, unprecedented

lavsian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim expressed optimism about the 10-nation union's future and Malaysia's role in it.

"The spirit of collaboration and esprit de corps between (ASEAN) leaders is unique," Anwar said, pointing to the contributions that closer regional integration in green energy has made to Malaysia's emergence as a high-tech manufacturing powerhouse.

Anwar noted that while the US remained the largest single investor in Malaysia, the nation's "closeness, investment and trade with China" are growing. Stressing the importance of dialogue over conflict, he remarked, "We don't go to war or threaten--we discuss, get a little angry, but focus on economic fundamentals and move on."

In a special address, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez called for a reform of social media governance across the European Union to curb misinformation and cyber harassment.

POTPOURRI

Haryana Improves sex ratio from 861 to 910 in last 10 years: Chief Minister

Government committed to providing educational opportunities & ensuring rights for girls **GULSHAN KUMAR**

Chandigarh

Haryana Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini, said that under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign, the state government has made continuous efforts over the past 10 years to eliminate gender discrimination, provide girls with proper educational opportunities, fulfill their aspirations, and ensure their rights. He highlighted that the nationwide Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign, launched on January 22 in 2015 from the historic land of Panipat under the leadership of Prime Minister Sh Narendra Modi,



has played a significant role provements in the state's sex in combating this social evil. ratio over the last decade, the Through unprecedented im- sex ratio has risen from 861 in

Punjab police personnel take selfies during a full dress rehearsal for the upcoming Republic Day parade at the PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL Guru Nanak Stadium, in Amritsar on Friday, January 24, 2025.

Ranveer, Deepika and Shahid-starrer Padmaavat' to re-released her defiance against the ruthless

MUMBAI: As Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone and Shahid Kapoor's magnum opus "Padmaavat", directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, is all set to turn seven, the makers will be re-releasing the movie on January 24 to mark the milestone. Bhansali Productions took to

Instagram, where they shared the film's poster and made the announcement.

"Witness the epic tale on the big screen again. #Padmaavat in cinemas on 24th January.

@ranveersingh @deepikapadukone @shahidkapoor @ iimsarbhforreal @aditiraohydari #SanjayLeelaBhansali @ Sultan Alauddin Khilji, and her unyielding courage. Released in 2018, "Padmaavat" also stars Aditi Rao Hydari, Jim Sarbh, Raza Murad, and Anupriya Goenka. The film

admaava revolves around Queen Padmavati, who is happily married ajit_andhare @bhansaliproto a Rajput ruler until a ruthless ductions @Viacom18Studios sultan, Alauddin Khalji, declares @tseries.official #Padmaavat war on their kingdom due to #7YearsOfPadmaavat, " read his obsession with her beauty. Despite not being released in

the caption. The blockbuster historical drama, based on the poem Padmavat by Malik Muhammad Jayasi, tells the tale of Rani Padmavati's legendary beauty, to many controversies.

2014 to 910 today. The state government is making sustained and serious efforts to completely eradicate this social evil. Chief Minister Haryana was interacting with media persons on Wednesday.

In response to a question, Chief Minister explained that the state government is diligently working to further improve the sex ratio. Officials have been instructed to work with full commitment to completely eradicate this social evil at its root. In addition. during a recent review meeting of the Women and Child Development Department, it was decided to appoint women Sarpanches as ambassadors in their respective villages. This initiative aims to strengthen efforts for improving the sex ratio and promoting further progress.

Avurveda's new hope for Alzheimer's treatment



RAJU WILLIAM New Delhi

A new study that provides a multipronged approach to treatment of several neurodegenerative diseases, offers hope for Alzheimer 's disease, Dementia, and related diseases. Prof. Anirban Bhunia and his team at the Bose Institute in Kolkata, an autonomous institute of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India (GoI) repurpose a drug called Lasunadya Ghrita (LG from Ayurveda, the ancient traditional Indian medicine, which has previously shown efficacy in treating depression-related mental illnesses. They utilize chemically synthesized peptides to combat amyloid beta aggregation.Amyloid proteins and peptides play a pivotal role in various neurodegenerative diseases includingAlzheimer's disease (AD). This research offers hope to individuals suffering from Alzheimer's disease and highlights the potential some states of India, it became the third highest-grossing Inof Ayurveda, or ancient Indian dian film of 2018. Ahead of the traditional medicine, as a viable solution to complex neurodegen-erative disorders like Alzheimer's. release, the film was subjected



Kangana Ranaut and Diljit Dosanjh's fates are intertwined through their films



tress Kangana Ranaut and Punjabi sensation Diljit Dosanjh's fates are intertwined through their films "Emergency" and 'Panjab 95" due to the chatter around both the movies.

On Tuesday morning, Diljit took to Instagram, in India.

the movie Panjab 95 will not release on 7th Feb due to circumstances beyond our

The movie, which is based on the life of prominent Jaswant Singh Khalra, was proposed to be named as Ghalughara initially, which means massacre, but after the objection of the Censor Board the movie title was renamed to Punjab 95 with 120 scene cuts.

Sikh religious body, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), inbut asked the title to still be across the nation.

MUMBAI: Bollywood ac- changed. According to reports, the film's trailer was launched on YouTube the same year but was removed a day later.

In Kangana's case with "Emergency", the film has been halted in Patiala, Amritsar and Bathinda amid fear of protests.

Protests took place across Punjab as different leaders of Sikh organizations including The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) asked for ban on "Emergency" as they claim the film "tarnishes the image of Sikhs and distorts history"

A tweet by SGPC also stated that it demands a ban on the film in Punjab, which is scheduled to release on January 17, 2025. The film is touted to be controversial due to its subject matter, which revisits the tumultuous period of the 1975 Emergency declared by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The film delves deep into the historical and political upheaval of the time, shedding light on tervened, and the Censor a chapter that continues to Board relented with the cuts evoke polarising reactions



Devastating destruction—UNITED SIKHS volunteers are tirelessly working on the ground to bring relief to those affected in the fires around Los Angeles. Over 40,000 acres burned, at least 25 lives tragically lost, and ore than 150,000 people forced to leave their homes

Haryana's tableau to showcase divine view of prosperity, heritage, and development

Tableau designed on the theme 'Samridh Haryana- Virasat Aur Vikas

GULSHAN KUMAR Chandigarh

This year's Republic Ďay celebrations will feature Haryana's tableau on New Delhi's Kartavya Path, show-

casing a divine depiction of the state's prosperity, heritage, and development. The tableau will highlight Haryana's rich cultural heritage through the portrayal of the divine message of the Bhaga-vad Gita, delivered by Lord Shri Krishna to Arjuna in Kurukshetra. Additionally, it will offer a glimpse of a modern Haryana, a sports powerhouse, reflecting the state's continuous development in technology and innovation, alongside the stellar

achievements of its athletes. This information was shared by K.M. Pandurang, Director General of the Department of Information, Public Relations, Languages and Culture Haryana, while presenting Haryana's tableau to the media at the Rashtriva Rangshala Camp in New Delhi today. He explained that the front part of the tableau portrays Lord Krishna delivering the message of Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna before the Mahabharata war at the sacred Jyotisar Tirtha in Kurukshetra. This divine message, imparted by Lord technical advancements.

Krishna to humanity through Arjuna, stands as a testament to Haryana's enduring contribution to India's spiritual and cultural heritage.

The middle section of the tableau features a craft cart inspired by the Surajkund Mela, showcasing Haryana's rich art and handicrafts. Behind the craft cart, a 'Haryanvi Tau' is depicted working on a laptop, symbolizing how Haryana's farmers are utilizing information technology to enhance their daily lives and farming practices. Through digital platforms like 'Meri Fasal-Mera Byora,' they access government schemes and check crop prices online. Nearby, two schoolgirls in uniform represent Harvana's commitment to women empowerment and gender equality, reflecting the impact of programs like

Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao. Pandurang said that the rear section of the tableau depicts a blend of skyscrapers, modernization, and urbanization in Gurugram. This part highlights how Haryana has emerged as a leading state in technology, innovation, and

where he posted a note apologising that his film "Panjab 95", has once again faced a hiccup in its release "We are very sorry and it pains us to inform you that

control," he wrote. Sikh human rights activist

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav

Al promises a brighter future for ordinary Indians. In the next five years, it will transition from a futuristic concept to an integral part of everyday life in India.

(AI) is rapidly transforming the global landscape, and Ininfluence almost every facet of life for ordinary Indians, revolutionizing sectors such as education, employment, finance, AI will revolutionize comhealth, communication, and mobility. This technological evolution promises to bridge gaps, create opportunities, translation tools will allow and redefine how people interact with the world.

will bridge the gap between India's growing healthcare de-nation. Advancements in Telemedicine powered by AI diagnostic tools will provide accurate results in record time, reducing dependency on specialized labs. Predictive and preferences. analytics will play a crucial role in preventive healthcare, identifying risks based on patient data and enabling early interventions. AI-powered wearables will monitor vital signs in real-time, empowering individuals to take charge

of their health. Advanced AI algorithms will congestion in urban areas, Chatbots and virtual assis-

rtificial Intelligence ized financial planning tools will help individuals manage their money better, and AIdriven investment platforms dia is no exception. Over the will make wealth-building next five years, AI is poised to strategies available to the av-influence almost every facet of erage Indian, democratizing financial growth.

Super Communication: munication, especially across divides. AI-based real-time vehicles will improve trans-rise, allowing individuals to seamless conversations in multiple regional languages, Affordable Healthcare: AI fostering greater collabora-

mands and limited resources. Natural Language Processing and accessible. AI-driven platwill make digital interactions will enable remote consulta- more intuitive, enabling even tions, offering medical advice those unfamiliar with techto patients in the country's nology to use it effectively. remotest corners. AI-driven Virtual assistants like Siri and Alexa will evolve into more culturally aware entities catering to local needs

Innovative Travel: India's transportation sector is poised for an AI-led transformation. While autonomous vehicles are still nascent, they may become more prevalent in controlled environments like factories or campuses. AI-powered traffic manage-Revolutionizing Finance: ment systems will reduce

enhance fraud detection, making commutes faster and reducing financial crimes. more efficient. Ride-sharing platforms will leverage AI to tants will streamline customer optimize routes and reduce

AI's Next Move in India



portation infrastructure and safety in rural areas.

Personalized Learning: AI in education will make learning more personalized forms like adaptive learning apps can tailor lessons to each student's pace and style, ensuring no one is left behind. Virtual tutors powered by AI will provide 24/7 support, breaking the limitations of traditional classroom-based teaching. AI-powered tools

can translate content into regional languages, bringing quality education to millions who previously lacked access.

Skill Transformation: Integrating AI into industries will reshape the job market. While automation may replace repetitive tasks, it will simultaneously create demand for new skills and job roles. Fields like data analysis, AI development, robotics, and ethical AI governance will flourish, requiring workers to service, enabling faster reso- costs, benefiting consumers. upskill and adapt. Freelancing lution of queries. Personal- AI-driven predictive mainte- and gig-based opportunities

work remotely for global companies and increasing income

avenues for Indians. The Bigger Picture: AI

will enhance governance and social welfare beyond these sectors. AI-powered tools can analyze vast datasets to identify patterns and make policy recommendations, improving resource allocation and tackling issues like poverty and unemployment. Furthermore, AI's role in addressing climate challenges, such as optimizing renewable energy usage and predicting natural disasters, will have a significant indirect impact on ordinary Indians' lives. While the potential benefits of AI are immense, challenges such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the digital divide need to be addressed. Ensuring ethical AI deployment and investing in digital literacy will be crucial for inclusive growth.

The author is a senior journalist and columnist, views are personal. Twitter @narvijayyadav

at Bella Vista Launches "Give a Little, Change a Lot" **Donation Drive**

The Commons



Panchkula

The Commons at Bella Vista, a vibrant hub for food, community engagement, and children's activities, is proud to announce the launch of its second annual donation drive, "Give a Little, Change a Lot," in partnership with two of tricity's leading NGOs, Pukaar and Yuva Stambh. Set in the buzzing heart of the Commons' amphitheatre, this initiative reflects its ongoing commitment to fostering unity and goodwill within the Tricity community. The focus this year remains

on collecting essential items, including clothes, books, and toys for children. Collection boxes will be placed at the amphitheatre to encourage contributions, symbolizing the collective power of a community coming together to create positive change. Once filled, the items will be distributed to Pukaar and Yuva Stambh, two NGOs renowned for their impactful work in the local community. "We at The Commons at

Bella Vista firmly believe in the power of community," shared Executive Director Ms. Nanki Aurora Singh. "As we say, 'Give a Little, Change a Lot,' even the smallest acts of generosity can have a profound impact on someone's life.

A complete **KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE**



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