

REGION

2



**PUNJAB CM FELICITATES 8 PARTICIPANTS & MEDAL WINNERS OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS WORLD SUMMER GAMES-2023**

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

5



**INDIAN TECH INDUSTRY LEADERS FAST ADOPTING GENAI, ALBEIT WITH CAUTION**

POTPOURRI

8



**TARSEM JASSAR TRANSFORMS INTO WITTY & COURAGEOUS IN MASTANEY RELEASING ON AUGUST 25**

## Flood Crisis : Entire government machinery including Helicopter at the disposal of people

FW DESK  
Hoshiarpur

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Thursday toured the flood affected areas of Hoshiarpur district in a boat to take stock of the situation at the ground level.

Aboard the boat with NDRF officials, the Chief Minister visited Rara and Fateh Kulla villages and then visited village haler, Motla and Kolia. He asked the officers to ensure evacuation of the people in low lying areas to safe places. Bhagwant Singh Mann categorically said that every life is precious for the state government and no stone should be left unturned for bailing the



people in this hour of crisis.

Later on interacting with the media persons, the Chief Minister said that the entire government machinery including the Helicopter of state government is at disposal of people in

this hour of crisis. He said that though no rain has taken place in the state but due to heavy downpour in hilly states flood has been caused in these areas. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that he is constantly in touch with

the BBMB authorities and the Himachal government to assess the situation.

The Chief Minister further said that the havoc has been caused in district due to release of excess water from Pong Dam. He said that though Pong dam is above the danger mark by six feet but still there is nothing to worry as in past it has been above ten feet then the danger level. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the water is being released in a controlled manner from the dam for the safety of people.

Likewise, the Chief Minister said that the water at Bhakra Dam is below the danger mark. He said that every effort is being made to bail out the people in

this hour of crisis. Bhagwant Singh Mann also said that people of the state are blessed with indomitable spirit to fight against the hostile situations.

Punjab Chief Minister said that the people of state are displaying remarkable bonhomie with each other in this hour of crisis. He said that people are helping each other with missionary zeal thereby cementing the ethos of communal harmony and brotherhood. Bhagwant Singh Mann lauded the people for this rare gesture and said that this has proved that people follow the footsteps of great Gurus, saints and seers to serve the people in distress.

## India on track to become 3rd Largest Economy: Economists



**NEW DELHI:** India may well be on track to becoming the third largest economy in the world in the coming years, as per economists stating that the country has the potential to grow by a robust 6.5-7% per annum.

The experts are of the opinion that a number of factors including the performance of other countries, skilling of our workforce as well as a sustained revival in domestic consumption demand would play a key role in achieving this. "India is very much on target to becoming the third largest economy based on the IMF's projections as well as domestic estimates. Our real rate of investment is about 33%, the current account deficit is lowering and our demographic dividend is coming into play," said DK Srivastava, Chief Policy Adviser, EY, while noting that India has also managed to meet the challenges thrown up by the Russian-Ukraine war that has led to supply side bottlenecks for many countries.

He, however, stressed that

creating productive jobs for the labour force while adopting new technologies such as AI to enhance the productivity must be taken up. "A large part of the government budget would have to be spent on training and reskilling the labour force," he said. Apart from GDP, India is also doing better on other parameters such as overall indebtedness of the economy, which is much lower at about 170% of the GDP. Japan has the largest debt to GDP ratio at over 400%, Srivastava said, while China's is at close to 300% and Germany's is about 190%.

According to IMF projections, India overtook the UK to become the fifth largest economy last September, and was behind only the US, China, Japan and Germany. The Indian economy grew at 7.2% in 2022-23 and is expected to grow at a slower 6-6.5% this fiscal. Many agencies are likely to review their GDP growth forecast for the fiscal after the first quarter GDP data is released on August 31.

## NIA raids multiple locations in J&K in connection with terror conspiracy



FW DESK

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) carried out a series of raids in Jammu and Kashmir's Bathindi area and Shopian on Friday as part of an ongoing investigation into a case involving a criminal conspiracy to carry out terrorist and subversive activities. The NIA had started the investigation into the case on June 21, 2022, focusing on uncovering potential terrorist plots and subversive operations within the region. In a coordinated effort, the agency conducted searches at eight different locations across Jammu and Kashmir. Specifically, the raids in Shopian targeted a terror-related case, with a particular focus on the residence of Mohammad Yousuf Wani. Wani, a resident of Choti-gam area in the Shopian district of south Kashmir. He is identified as a farmer by occupation. Earlier, a successful operation by Sopore Police resulted in the arrest of two individuals affiliated with the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militant group. These individuals were identified as Over Ground Workers (OGWs) for the LeT. During their apprehension, law enforcement authorities confiscated eight rounds of pistols and grenades from their possession.

## CJI Chandrachud stresses on granting access to justice to citizens



**NEW DELHI:** Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud on Tuesday emphasised on granting access to justice to the citizens, saying the court provides a safe democratic space for individuals to seek protection of their lives and liberties. Addressing the Independence Day celebrations organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) here, CJI Chandrachud said: "It is important for us to recognise the fact that the Supreme Court Bar as the leading bar of the country, stands for the protection of the rule of law." Mentioning the lawyers, the Chief Justice said: "Without you (lawyers), without your fearlessness, without your independence, we as judges would be really ciphers in the sands of time."

"When I get requests from a member of the bar, sometimes to take up a matter immediately on the same day, I yet hear it very carefully and assign a bench at the earliest opportunity. Because irrespective of the outcome of the case, I believe the real strength of our system is granting access to justice to our citizens," the CJI said. He also said "our freedom struggle offered a Constitutional space for the marginalised and the down-trodden to raise their voice against such an influence of a hegemony, social structure".

## EU Flags privacy concerns over India's proposed MSME portal at G20

**NEW DELHI:** The European Union (EU) has objected that India's proposed G20 MSME portal has some data privacy concerns.

The portal is sought to have details of MSMEs of every G20 member including the sectors and products they deal with.

It would offer integrated research, trade and business information for market research by the MSMEs.

"Some members, including the EU, have raised data privacy concerns. They have asked how the portal and data will be managed," said an official.

Officials said that setting up the MSME portal is one of the three high-ambition goals. It is an outcome on which is being seen at the upcoming G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial meeting in Jaipur from August 24 to 25

SUNIL THAPLIYAL  
New Delhi

## Congress-AAP Rift Wide Open Ahead of I.N.D.I.A. Alliance's Next Year Poll

The Congress and the AAP engaged in a tug-of-war after Delhi Congress leader Alka Lamba declared that the Congress would take all seven seats in the national capital in the forthcoming general elections in 2024. Ms Lamba, while talking to the media, said, "About 40 senior leaders presented their views in meetings. After a three-hour meeting, it was decided that the party will contest elections for all parliamentary seats" However, the Congress rejected Alka Lamba's declaration to contest for these seats alone, but another party leader, Sandeep Dikshit, defended her.

Few leaders in the Congress believe that an alliance with the AAP would undoubtedly pose a major challenge to the BJP. Many believed that the AAP was the biggest threat to the Congress at the time of its formation, and they were



proved wrong when it replaced the Congress in 2013 and was completely annihilated in the 2015 and 2020 elections. The AAP won 67 of the 70 seats in Delhi Assembly election in 2015 and 64 in 2020, while the Congress did not win a single seat in either election.

According to political pundits, the state leadership is against an alliance with the AAP for this reason. They believe that

it would be suicidal to give it a lifeline at this stage. The AAP is being investigated on corruption charges against its senior officials, including former deputy CM Mannish Sisodia and former health minister Satyander Jain, who have been detained in Tihar for months. The incumbent chief minister and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal is also under fire for the liquor scam and general corruption

in the newly constructed CM house in the capital.

In the past, the AAP has tried to establish itself in many states of the country. Their efforts have not yielded satisfactory results. Its recent victory in Punjab, though remarkable, is not enough to dethrone the Congress as the national party.

The Congress, a 137-year-old party, is present in every state and has an organisational structure in virtually all of them. The AAP has a long way to go before it can challenge the Congress nationwide.

Growing tensions between the AAP and the Congress over the alliance ahead of the 2024 general elections could have an impact on assembly elections in three states this year.

Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, while the BJP is in power in Madhya Pradesh. Moreover, the Lok Sabha elections are also likely to affect Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.

## CM Mann's absence from Guv's function highlights tussle between the two



CHHAVI BHATIA  
Chandigarh

In an unusual turn of events, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's absence at the 'At Home' reception hosted by Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Independence Day has raised eyebrows and underlined the growing tensions between the two prominent figures. The event, a customary gathering of dignitaries at Punjab Raj Bhawan, witnessed the Chief Minister's decision to skip the reception, marking a departure from the usual protocol.

Notably, sources within the political circles have pointed out that it's a rarity for the Chief Minister of Punjab to miss this reception. In the past, former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal was known for his unwavering attendance,

even as former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh often sent his wife Preet Kaur as a representative in case of his absence.

Governor Purohit's light-hearted remark about ceremonial cannons outside the Raj Bhawan, made in jest during a media interaction, shed some humor on the Chief Minister's absence. The comment alluded to Mann's earlier statement about these cannons, which he had mentioned in a speech as tools to intimidate.

The 'At Home' ceremony, intended to foster unity and collaboration among dignitaries from various walks of life, has inadvertently highlighted the strained relationship between the Chief Minister and the Punjab Governor. This tension has become increasingly evident with the Gov-

ernor's decision to withhold Bills passed by the Vidhan Sabha in a recent special session, citing concerns over their legal sanctity.

Governor Purohit, during his conversation with the media, emphasized that the Chief Minister's office had acknowledged the invitation, indicating that Mann's absence was a deliberate choice. As the event serves as a platform for political networking and relationship-building, Mann's decision to forgo it has only fueled speculation about the ongoing discord between the two key figures.

The implications of this strained relationship for Punjab's governance and political landscape remain to be seen, as both sides continue to navigate their differences while carrying out their respective duties.

## Chandrayaan-3 : countdown begins as Lander separates from propulsion module, set for touchdown

ARUN KUMAR RAO  
Bengaluru

As Final countdown begins for successful moon landing of Chandrayaan-3, Vikram, the lander, with Pragyan (the rover) sitting inside it, successfully separated from the propulsion module 34 days after they were launched together, taking Indian another step closer to Moon landing.

According to ISRO, "Landing module is set to descent to slightly over orbit upon a de-boosing planned for Aug 19 at 4 pm. India now has three spacecraft—Chandrayaan-2 orbiter, Chandrayaan-3 propulsion module and landing module around Moon.". The de-boost manoeuvres, beginning Friday, will eventually see Vikram reach an orbit where the Perilune (closest point to Moon) is expected to be 30km and Apolune (farthest point from Moon) around 100km.

Isro chairman Somanath confirmed to section of media that the mechanism employed for separation on Thursday was the same as Chandrayaan-2. That is, two halves of metal flat spring held the two modules. The springs were preloaded using two bolts. The bolts were sheared, releasing the lander.

After the integrated pace craft—propulsion module and landing module together was stabilised in the orbit ideal for separation, Isro would have loaded the sequence of commands for the separation, which would have been autonomously executed by the onboard systems. The cylindrical structure on top of the



fuel tank, is where the lander with the rover inside it, was sitting. Both these modules were held together by clamps with two bolts.

The propulsion module whose primary job of carrying the lander and rover from the injection orbit to the lunar orbit from where separation was to be done, also carries the Spectro-polarimetry of Habitable Planetary Earth (SHAPE).

SHAPE will look at the Earth from the Moon to study the former's habitable planet-like features and use the information to explore exoplanets in the future. While there was no immediate confirmation on whether Isro has made SHAPE operational as yet—scientific instruments need to be turned on through commands—the propulsion module, subsequent to lander separation,

is designed to operate for a three-six months.

Though an exact orbit may not be achieved, but those margins would be accounted for in Isro's planning. Once 30km X 100km orbit has been achieved, the process of reducing the velocity of the lander from 30km height to the final landing will begin, Vikram's orientation would be changed from horizontal to vertical and the successful final descent would see it soft-land on Moon on August 23.

While a successful launch is only the first step towards a long journey for the spacecraft, Isro's role in carrying it through has seen great appreciation, and it has become a symbol of national pride for many. That has been the case for long, such as in 2014, when the Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) was inserted into the Martian orbit. The low

cost of the mission was also highlighted as an achievement. Since its inception in 1969, the country's space agency Isro has carried out altogether 89 launch missions carrying satellites into space.

Chandrayaan-2 failed to achieve the desired soft landing on the moon surface in 2019, leaving the ISRO team dejected. Images of an emotional then ISRO chief K Sivan being consoled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who was present to achieve the rare feat, remains vivid in the memory of many. Scientists at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, after investing many hours of handwork, now aim at mastering the technology of soft-landing on the surface of the moon. A success would make India only the fourth country achieves the feat after the United States, China and the former Soviet Union.



# Punjab CM felicitates 8 participants & medal winners of special Olympics world summer games-2023

**CHANDIGARH:** Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann today felicitated eight specially able players and their coach who had recently brought laurels for the state during Special Olympics World Summer Games-2023 held in Berlin.

The Chief Minister congratulated these players who had won three gold, one silver and four bronze medals in various events. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that these players have played an important role in the best performance of the Indian contingent in the recently concluded Special Olympics World Summer



Games-2023 in Berlin. He said that the state is proud of these players who have bagged medals for the country in these special Olympics.

The Chief Minister said that it is significant that these children with special needs have participated in sports and excelled in them with their

hard work and perseverance. He said that despite several hardships and difficulties these specially able players have won medals for the country. Reiterating the firm commitment of the state government to promote sports in the state, Bhagwant Singh Mann said that in the recently introduced sports policy major thrust has been laid on Special Olympics/Deaf and Blind Games players along with para sports.

The Chief Minister felicitated players including MD Nisar who won a gold medal, Renu who bagged two bronze medals and Sita one bronze medal in roller skating event.

He also honoured Jatinder Singh and Harjeet Singh who won gold in traditional football, Priya Devi who won silver in basketball and Jyoti Kaur who won bronze medal in unified football. Pertinently, as many as 9 members from Punjab including 7 special players, one unified partner and one coach were part of the Indian contingent.

On the occasion Cabinet Minister Gurmeet Singh Meht Hayer, Special Chief Secretary Sarjit Singh, Special Principal Secretaries to CM Ravi Bhagat and Kumar Amit besides others were also present on the occasion.

# 180 bags govt owned wheat recovered from private flour mill during CM Flying Squad raid

SATISH HANDA

Team of CM Flying Squad during raid at a private flour mill: Mittal Flour Mills in Mohan Nagar on Rohtak Road at Sonapat recovered 180 bags wheat owned by Haryana state government which was brought from Gohana as revealed during preliminary investigation. The owner of the mill failed to produce trade license issued by the municipal authorities, nor paid market fee on the same. According to raiding team, mark FCI Government of Haryana was printed on the bags. The stocks were seized by the Squad which imposed Rs Rs 33,300 fine on the flour mill. During raid flying squad team recovered a total number of 580 bags containing



wheat in the mill, of these FCI was found printed on 180 bags. Information also revealed that the raiding team also recovered 5 kg wheat bags having not mentioned any expiry date on these bags. The Flying Squad also recovered stocks of 50 kg wheat bags with expiry date

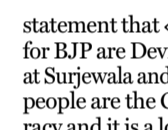
mentioned thereon, which were found already expired long ago. Bijender Singh Market Committee supervisor of the grain market said that investigation in this flour mill still going on and they are trying from where government owned wheat stocks were procured by the mill owner.

# Randeep Surjewala's optical nerve is damaged, see very blurred, and see the devil in people: Anil Vij

SATISH HANDA  
Ambala

Haryana Home and Health Minister Anil Vij while interacting media persons here took a dig at Congress leader Randeep Surjewala and said that "I think Randeep Surjewala's optical nerve is damaged and, they have very blurred vision, that's why they are seeing the devil in people".

The Home Minister was responding to a question asked by media persons about Congress leader Randeep Surjewala's statement that 'those who vote for BJP are Devils'. Vij hit back at Surjewala and said that 'these people are the Gods of democracy and it is a low mentality to say like this'. He said that he should get his eyes treated by a good eye specialist, for this he can suggest him a good specialist. Responding to the question asked about Brij Yatra, Home Minister Anil Vij said that no such application has come to us so far. but the constitution allows every man to perform his religious rituals and it is our responsibility to protect them and we protect everyone.



# Majithia demands arrest of AAP MLA Amarpal Singh for summoning a SI to his office & getting him beaten by his supporters

JAGMOHAN SINGH  
Amritsar

Former minister and senior Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Bikram Singh Majithia today demanded the immediate registration of an FIR and arrest of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) legislator Amarpal Singh for summoning a Sub Inspector to his office and getting him beaten by confidantes.

In a statement issued here, Majithia said "even though Sub Inspector Kailash Chander was summoned by the legislator and beaten up when the latter was sitting in his office, an attempt is being made to dilute the case by registering an FIR against two AAP office bearers".

Giving details, he said the Sub Inspector had in his complaint mentioned that he was told by his SHO that he had been summoned by the legislator and should meet him. He said following this when the SI reached the MLA's office one the latter's closest confidantes and convict undergoing a ten year imprisonment thrashed him and even disrespected his turban. The SI said even as the convict - Devender Singh, who is on bail, beat him, another close confidant of the MLA -



Harjinder Singh threatened him with dire consequences. He said all this happened when the legislator was sitting in his office.

Demanding the arrest of MLA Amarpal Singh in the case, Majithia said "since the legislator had called the SI to his office and the police officer was beaten up in the MLA's office the latter is the prime accused in the case and should be proceeded against immediately. He also demanded that the case be probed by a judge since the Batala police could not be trusted to take action against the legislator. "The Batala SSP took ten hours to register a case against the legislator's supporters Devinder and Harjinder who are Youth President and Circle President of AAP in Hargobindpur respectively and are covering up Amarpal's involvement in the case".

# Picnic point at holy 'Amrit Sarovar' in Panjokhra Sahib Gurudwara

SATISH HANDA  
Ambala

Work for developing a picnic point at holy 'Amrit Sarovar' in historic Panjokhra Sahib Gurudwara in village Panjokhra Sahib near twin city Ambala is going on with project cost worth Rs 78 crore. Large number of pilgrims from distant places are visiting this holy temple. Walking track on all sides of this holy Sarovar has already been constructed where people from adjoining rural areas arrive for the morning walk. Kinni Gupta BDPO Block- 2 Ambala and Amarjit Singh former Sarpanch village Panjokhra said that holy Sa-



rovar exists in nearly 5.5 acre area having shelters constructed on two sides and the place for taking bath by the visitors on the third side. They said, there will be provision for boating

also for the visitors arriving for the picnic.

Gupta said that the government has decided to further purify water in this holy Sarovar which visiting people

# On CM directives, Jimpa takes stock of on ground situation in flood-affected areas of Hoshiarpur

FW DESK  
Chandigarh

After Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann directed his cabinet colleagues to protect lives and property of people during the recent flood situation, Minister for Revenue, Rehabilitation and Disaster Management Bram Shanker Jimpa today visited the flood affected villages of Tanda and Mukerian in Hoshiarpur district. He reviewed the rescue operations and he himself went to the flooded villages via boat and evacuated them safely.

He said that at present the priority of the Punjab government is to evacuate the people of the flood affected villages safely. He said that the Punjab government under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minis-



ter Bhagwant Singh Mann is standing with the flood affected people. Power Minister Harbhajan Singh ETO, MLA Jasveer Singh Raja Gill and Deputy Commissioner Komal Mittal were also present with him during the visit to Urmur

Vidhan Sabha constituency.

Jimpa said that on the instructions of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, the rescue operations in the flood-affected villages of the district are going on, on war footing. He said that the

teams of NDRF and SDRF in the district are engaged in the work of evacuating the people safely. Currently, the entire district administration is alert and working day and night for the safety of the flood affected people.

He said that due to the heavy rains in Himachal Pradesh for the past few days, the water level of the Pong Dam had increased significantly, due to which the water of the Beas River has entered the villages. He appealed that the people of the villages located on the banks of the river should go to safe places or to the relief camps set up by the administration. He assured that efforts are being made by the district administration to provide all possible facilities in the relief camps, where the people will not face any kind of problem.

# 509 schools in Haryana to be named after the martyrs says Dushyant Chautala

SATISH HANDA

On this Independence Day, state government has taken decision as a tribute to the martyrs as many as 509 government schools in Haryana state will be named after the martyrs. This initiative to rename government schools in the state has been taken by Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala when a year ago he had taken a similar decision in Dhandheri village of Hisar district. He said, starting from August 15, the names of 509 government schools in the state will be changed to honor the Haryana's valiant soldiers who laid down their lives for the sake of the country. Chautala said that this change will be reflected in all records and on the official website of the State's Education Department

from the midnight of August 14.

On August 15 last year, Dushyant Chautala visited the home of martyr Nishant Malik from Dhandheri village in Hansi region, who had sacrificed his life in Jammu and Kashmir sector while fighting terrorists and on the same day, the name of the village government school was changed in the name of the martyr. Following this, on various occasions Deputy Chief Minister Chautala as well as the state government announced the renaming of schools after martyrs' names in few other villages. Now, the decision has been taken that 358 high or senior secondary schools and 151 middle or primary schools in the state will carry the names of the brave soldiers who made sacrifices for the nation. Information reveals that initially

carrying martyrs name the schools to have change in the names with immediate effect include district Charkhi Dadri having 28 schools, Jhajjar having 28 schools, Gurugram having 25 schools, Kaithal having 21 schools, Mahendragar having 16 schools, Hisar having 13 schools, and Fatehabad district with 10 schools. Similarly, eight schools each in Ambala, Faridabad, Kurukshetra and Sonapat districts would be renamed at initial stage apart from 94 schools from Rewari, 85 schools from Bhiwani, 61 schools from Jind. 38 schools each from Palwal and Rohtak, 36 schools from Yamunanagar, 5 schools each from Panchkula and Panipat, 4 schools from Karnal and 1 schools from Nuh district will be renamed with immediate effect.

# Criminals either leave crimes or leave Haryana state: DGP Shatrueet Kapoor

SATISH HANDA  
Ambala

Shatrueet Kapoor new Director General Police, Haryana took charge from former Director General Police P.K. Aggarwal on Wednesday, visited Home & Health Minister Anil Vij at his camp office Ambala on Thursday. While talking to media persons here Kapoor said that among

his priorities include reforms in nearly 55000 police personnel working in Haryana state, besides he would hold improvement in law and order in the state, bring transparency in work, would arrest criminal activities all over in the state so that females in the state may feel themselves safe and secure. He warned that criminal should either leave crimes or leave Haryana



state immediately. Kapoor prior to present new

portfolio was Director General Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) in the state and as many as 44 senior officers of IAS and IPS officers remained on his vigilance radar against whom corruption cases were registered by him.

Information reveals that Shatrueet Kapoor took charge as

vigilance chief in the state on 3rd September 2021 and took action against 56 gazetted officers and 294 non-gazetted officers so far, who were arrested by the police allegedly involved in corruption. While he was ACB chief he arrested nearly 200 corrupt officials rede-handed while collecting bribe, whereas nearly a dozen cases are presently in Punjab and High Court under trial.

# Developing IMT at Ambala City was, and will remain my dream project: Vinod Sharma

SATISH HANDA  
Ambala

"Developing an Industrial Model Township (IMT) at Ambala City was my dream project when I was MLA Ambala for a decade, which remained unfulfilled due to a group of political leaders from political parties in opposition in the area, who opposed the same for their self-vested political reasons," while talking to the media persons the former Union Minister and MLA Ambala City Vidhan Sabha constituency twice Vinod Sharma said that in case proposed IMT for which approval for the project was sought from the government would have been set up in Ambala City for which process for the acquiring nearly 400 acre land facing on Chandigarh as well as Naraingarh road was going on, if completed nearly 25000 unemployed youths of the area would have been able to get employment opportuni-



ties, but also the town had lot of prosperity due to entry of new industries in the area.

Vinod Sharma was in the town on Saturday and visited nearly a dozen villages adversely affected by the recent floods at Ambala, where he was warmly welcomed by huge gatherings. Sharma said, in 2011 when he was MLA at Ambala City his dream project for developing IMT at Ambala City was approved by the government but the proposal could not be digested by a handful of political leaders of opposition political

parties and they started opposition, as such the same was to be dropped, which not only adversely affected the prosperity of town as well as industrial growth in the area, besides thousands of unemployed youths in the area were deprived of their rights for getting employment.

Talking to media persons, former Union Minister Sharma said that developing IMT in Ambala was and will remain his dream in future also. He said he was blessed by people in the area who elected him twice when he numbered for a maximum number of BPL cards for families living below the poverty line and also constructed residential houses for low income group families. Sharma said, he has not done favour to any one, but performed his duty sincerely for the people of his constituency when he was MLA in the area, and if given a chance again he will complete all pending jobs for the welfare of the people.

# Will the precious land of Railways be given to PM's Friends?

JAG MOHAN THAKEN

Railways have about 62000 hectares of land across the country. Are preparations being planned to give this land on lease? Is there any plan going on to secretly allot valuable railways land at prime locations in cities on long lease to the friends of the Prime Minister to erect business malls, hospitals and schools, where people's pockets will be loosened?

If the statement released to the press by Kumari Selja, General Secretary of All India Congress Committee, former Union Minister and a former State President of Haryana Congress, is to be believed, then this is going to happen very soon. In her statement, Kumari Selja has said that the BJP government at the Centre has made preparations to hand over the railways land across the country



to the business friends of the Prime Minister. Instead of selling these lands to these friends, there is a plan to allot them on long term lease at throwaway prices. These businessmen will build malls, hospitals, schools on this prime location land, where the pockets of the people of the country will be loos-

ened. It would be better if the central government allots these valuable lands to the state governments so that these governments can open schools, hospitals etc. there.

In a statement issued to the media, Kumari Selja divulged that the Railways has secretly prepared a blueprint to bring most of its land into commer-

cial use. Railways have about 62000 hectares of land across the country. Preparation is on to give this land on lease. This land is to be given on priority basis for building schools, colleges, hospitals, malls, markets, restaurants etc. For this, the Railway Land Development Authority has finalized its planning. The former Union Minister said that it is clear from the intention of the Central Government that big businessmen will be encroached on this land with mutual connivance because, if the Railways tried to sell this land, then it would have faced protesting on a large scale, so a middle way out is being adopted, it has been decided to give it on lease. This lease will be for 99 years, which means that once it is allotted to someone, no one will be able to vacate it.

Kumari Selja said that the State Governments are short of land in the cities and often they refuse to open schools,

colleges, hospitals etc citing the expensive land. In such a situation, the Railways should give its land to the state governments for use, so that it can be developed according to the needs of the local people, but on the contrary, the intention behind giving this land to corporate and big businessmen is clearly visible. The former Union Minister said that at present, the beginning of razing this land has been started from small and medium cities and after that the number of big cities will come. Big businessmen will earn manifold profit by grabbing this land, because by collusion they will get prime location land. In these schools and colleges fees will be very expensive, while hospital treatment will not be affordable for the ordinary poor common man.

Jag Mohan Thaken is a Haryana based retired Senior Bank Manager, views are personal



# PM Modi praises SC for delivering judgments in regional languages

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday thanked the Supreme Court for its decision to provide the operative part of their judgments in regional languages and underlined that the government was taking several steps to promote the mother languages.

Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort here, PM Modi highlighted how the Supreme Court has decided to make its judgments available in regional languages.

"We have emphasised in the direction that the students can study in their mother languages," he said underlining the importance of the regional languages.

"I even want to thank the Supreme Court for deciding that now the operative part of its judgments will be available in one's mother tongue. The significance of regional languages is increasing," the Prime Minister said.

Following the remarks of the Prime Minister, Chief Justice



of India D.Y. Chandrachud, who was among the guests at the Independence Day event at the Red Fort, acknowledged PM Modi's remarks with folded hands. Notably, this year the Supreme Court under the leadership of CJI DY Chandrachud released translation of over 1, 200 judgments in different Indian languages.

The translated versions of Judgments were made available in 13 Indian languages, i.e., Assamese, Garo, Hindi, Kannada, Khasi, Malayalam, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu at the e-SCR portal.

The portal is the repository of the electronic version of

Supreme Court Reports (SCR), the official publication of the Supreme Court of India. The Apex Court in 2019 launched a neural translation tool called SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software), a machine learning based software for translating judgments into vernacular languages.

The tool trained by Artificial Intelligence has the capacity and capability of translating English Judicial documents, Orders or Judgments into vernacular languages scripts and vice versa.

The work of translation of Supreme Court judgments in Indian language is a continuous process and the translated

## PM Modi hoists Tricolour at Red Fort



**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday hoisted the national flag at the iconic Red Fort here on the occasion of 77th Independence Day.

He inspected the Tri-Services guard of honour. On his arrival at the Red Fort, the Prime Minister was welcomed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister of State for Defence Ajay

versions are uploaded on a regular basis for the benefit of

Bhatt. Earlier, before heading towards the Red Fort, Prime Minister Modi paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat.

"Best wishes on Independence Day. We pay homage to our great freedom fighters and reaffirm our commitment to fulfilling their vision. Jai Hind!", the Prime Minister wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter.

the litigants and other stakeholders.

## PM's Independence Day address lays blueprint for India to become a developed nation by 2047: ASSOCHAM

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address from the ramparts of Red Fort on 77th Independence Day of India would further the national resolve to become a developed country by 2047 while the country is marching fast to be amongst the third largest economy of the world, ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood said.

"India has surely seized the initiative to lead the world in several transformational areas like clean energy, global peace and prosperity with equity," Sood said, lauding the Prime Minister's inspirational speech. Focus on wider development and usage of innovation and technology for the people of the country is visible in several initiatives of the government.

The ASSOCHAM Secretary General said he admired the courage and a vision of the Prime Minister in foreseeing India's great destiny based on the decisions and the policies of today, the Am-



**ARUN KUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

rit Kaal>>.

He said the Modi commitment to India's human resource encompassing work force, aspirational women power is reflected in the 1-Day speech.

The Vishwakarma Yojna with an outlay of Rs 15,000 crore for the workforce would empower human resources at the shop floor. The broad message of 'Reform, Perform and Transform' of the Prime Minister should keep us all motivated to take our great country to the summit of the developed world, Sood said.

Deepak Sood extended the Independence Day felicitations to the nation on behalf of over four lakh members/organizations of the ASSOCHAM, which has a rich legacy of over 100 years.

## Karnataka to scrap NEP from next academic year says CM Siddaramaiah



**ARUN KUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said, at Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) meeting at the party office that Karnataka will scrap the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) from the next academic year. CM said, "The NEP must be abolished after the necessary preparations, which could not be done on time this year. By the time the election results were out (this may) and the new government formed, the academic year has already started. And making changes to NEP in the middle of the academic session would have created problems". He added, "Students, parents and lecturers have raised their objections to NEP. Siddaramaiah accused the BJP of hindering the interest of students by implementing NEP in Karnataka, even before the other state could do so. However, Academics in the state had mixed reactions to the CM's announcement.

## Hizb terrorist's brother hoists Tricolour in Jammu and Kashmir



**FW DESK**

Rayees Mattoo, the brother of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Javid Mattoo, raised the tricolour at his residence in the north Kashmir town of Sopore. The act was captured in a video where Rayees Mattoo could be seen waving the flag from a window. Javid Mattoo, also known by aliases such as Faisal, Saqib, and Musaib, is an active member of the Hizbul Mujahideen terror group and has been listed as one of the top 10 targets by security agencies in the valley. In the lead-up to Independence Day, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called upon citizens to participate in the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' (Every Home a Flag) movement, which encouraged the widespread display of the national flag between August 13 and 15.

## Custom officials seized 490 grams of raw gold and 57 iphones having market value of Rs. 94.83 lacs



**JAGMOHAN SINGH**  
Amritsar

Custom officials have seized 490 grams of raw gold and 57 iPhones from the Shri Guru Ramdas ji International Airport from two different passengers who landed here from Sharjah by 6E1428 flight.

In a statement issued here today, Custom official informed that two passengers coming from Sharjah by Indigo flight 6E1428 in the evening of 15.08.2023 were intercepted. On their personal search, one passenger was found to be carrying 245 grams of raw gold chain and ring, 18 iPhones 14 pro and 11 iPhones 13 pro. The other passenger was found to be carrying 245 grams of raw gold chain and ring along with 17 iPhones 14 pro and 11 iPhones 13 pro. Thus a total of 490 grams of gold and 57 iPhones having market value of Rs. 94.83 lacs were seized under section 110 of Custom Act, 1962. Further investigation is under process.

## 'Modi hoisting Tricolour from Red Fort for last time': Lalu Prasad



**PATNA:** RJD chief Lalu Prasad on Tuesday claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is hoisting the flag from ramparts of Red Fort for the last time as the country is miffed with his 'jumlebaaji'.

While hoisting the National Flag at 10 circular road residence of his wife and former Bihar chief minister Rabri Devi in Patna to celebrate 77th Independence Day, Lalu Prasad said that a large number of people sacrificed their lives to get Independence. "We want to keep the history intact. However, the BJP is trying to change the history. Due to our great freedom fighters, we have achieved Independence. Today is a day to salute them," Lalu Prasad said. "Narendra Modi is hoisting the National Flag from the ramparts of Red Fort for the last time. We will form next government at the Centre. We are hoping that Modi would do right thing in his last speech from Red Fort.

## Muslims in India are descendants of Hindus: Ghulam Nabi Azad



**FW DESK**

Former top Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, and head of the Democratic Azad Party, has ignited a social media frenzy with his recent comments about the historical religious landscape of Kashmir. In a viral video addressing the people, Azad asserted that Hinduism predates Islam saying while the introduction of Islam to the region might have occurred from outside influences, those who converted were Hindus and didn't come from outside.

The majority of conversions, Azad said, took place within the borders of India itself. Referring to the Mughal period, Azad mentioned that only a small number of conversions can be attributed to individuals from

the Mughal army, emphasizing that the broader population which embraced Islam came from Hindu and Sikh backgrounds. The veteran leader further emphasized the inclusive nature of the Indian nation, asserting that it was established to unite individuals from diverse backgrounds, including Dalits, Muslims, and Hindus.

"10-20 people from the Mughal army. The rest have converted from Hindus and Sikhs," he said. Azad recounted his interactions in parliamentary sessions, recalling a debate with a fellow MP who claimed that some citizens were outsiders. He argued against this view, highlighting the long-standing presence of both Islam and Hinduism within India's borders. Referring to Kashmir, Azad said those who converted to Islam were Kashmiri Pandits. The comments made by Ghulam Nabi Azad have sparked vigorous discussions across social media platforms, with netizens engaging in debates about the historical evolution of religious beliefs in Kashmir.

## Teaching Amidst Turmoil: Phayeng High's Quest for Quality Education

**ARIBAM BISHWAJIT**

Nestled a mere three kilometers from the conflict zone in Manipur, where Meitei community's village defence volunteers have endured numerous tragic losses to suspected Kuki militants, Phayeng High School emerges as a symbol of strength and hope. Positioned strategically near the Uripok-Kangchup main road, this institution serves students from regions like Phayeng, Kadangband, Kangchup, Ireng, and other neighboring areas. Despite the adversity, approximately 140 students continue their pursuit of education here daily.

In an environment once characterized by nature's serenades, the school's surroundings are now marred by the disturbing cacophony of gunshots, blasts, and sirens. The violence engulfing Manipur has left an indelible mark on the psyches of these students. As multiple schools in areas like Kangchup and Singda, including Little Seed and Smart-stalk, have fallen victim to the fiery wrath of mobs, Phayeng High School has witnessed an influx of students. Its location, within a predominantly Meitei region, has provided a semblance



In the school, students spanning from grades 1 to 5 are grouped together in a single classroom, where they receive instruction from the only available primary teacher dedicated to their education.

of safety from potential Kuki onslaughts. However, the challenges plaguing Phayeng High School extend beyond the external strife. A burgeoning crisis is the significant staffing shortage that has deterred many parents from admitting their children here, even though it's a government-endorsed institution.

Angom Tomba, Phayeng High School's diligent Headmaster-in-charge, is deeply perturbed by this internal crisis. Operating with a slender team of ten teachers, including himself, the establishment faces immense challenges in delivering quality education. Astonishingly, a single primary teacher is saddled with the responsibility of teaching

five grades. Tomba expressed, "We're in dire need. While we should have five primary teachers, we've managed with just one. The authorities have yet to provide reinforcements." Taking proactive measures, Tomba has even employed a local teacher, covering her wages from his own finances.

Tomba, who walked the corridors of Phayeng as a student, harbors ambitions of propelling the school to unparalleled heights. "This institution is close to my heart," he reflected, "My vision is to uplift Phayeng to match the state's top-tier schools. But to realize this dream, we urgently need an influx of educators," he emphasized, noting the school's

requirement for arts, science, and primary teachers.

While the school boasts a roll call of 180 students, the recent wave of violence meant that 60 of these pupils hail from institutions crippled by the ongoing conflict. Tomba shared, "We distributed 100 admission forms. However, the realization of our limited teaching staff meant only 60 enrollments. The teacher shortage is palpable, affecting our credibility."

Moreover, logistical challenges compound the school's problems. Students from places like Kadangband village, situated about three kilometers away, now face perilous commutes. The route to Phayeng High School from Kadangband has transformed into a high-risk zone, with crossfires becoming all too common. For the Meitei community, this has meant complete isolation from certain areas, like the Uripok-Kangchup road to Kadangband village. Amid these pressing challenges, it's the students who bear the brunt. Telheiba, a determined tenth-grader, gave voice to the students' concerns. "The glaring gaps in faculty, especially in pivotal subjects, jeopardize our future. We urgently appeal to the authorities for timely intervention," he passionately conveyed.

## Tribals in the Journey of Economic, Social, and Cultural Development



**SATISH SINGH**

India's economy is the fifth largest in the world in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). Per capita income is continuously improving in the country. India's per capita income in FY 2023 was US \$ 2,450 i.e., Rs 201587.47. However, the income of every person here is not that much. This is the average income. There is a huge disparity in the income of people in India. Only a handful of people are very rich, while most people are poor. Even today crores of people are not getting food for two times in a day. For this reason, India ranks 144th in the list of 194 countries of the world on the scale of per capita GDP, while it ranks 33rd among Asian countries.

### India's Development Journey

In view of the continuous improvement in the Indian economy, it is expected to reach the level of 3 trillion to 5 trillion by the year 2025. At the same time, in the recent report of HSBC, the Indian economy has been estimated to reach the level of 7 trillion in 5 to 10 years.

In the 7 decades of independence, a network of roads has been laid in every village of the country. According to the data of the financial year 2018-19, there are 68.03 lakh kilometres of roads in USA, while India has network of 63.31 lakh kilometres road. As of March 2019, the share of rural roads in the total

road network was 71.4 per cent. Today electricity has reached almost every house in India. Also, the production capacity of electricity has also increased 300 times since independence.

India had a literacy rate of 69.3 percent according to the 2011 census, with literacy rates for males and females at 78.8 and 59.3 percent, respectively. Despite this, a lot of work needs to be done in the education and health sectors. According to the Rural Health Statistics 2021-22 report, the presence of surgeon doctors in the rural areas of the country is just 13 percent, while the presence of paediatricians and general physicians is 19 and 21 percent respectively.

### Tribal Participation in Development

Basic facilities i.e., schools, health centres, roads, electricity, drinking water facilities are either not available in the tribal areas or are negligible. Villages across the country have been connected with roads and electricity, but even today most of the tribal villages are not linked with electricity and roads, and there is also a lack of primary health centers and primary schools, because most of their villages are located in forests or remote areas. According to the 2011 census, the literacy rate of the Scheduled Tribes was 59 percent, while the education rate of the country was 69.3 percent.

The economic, social, and cultural status of tribals is still lower than other sections of the society. Even though the President of the country is a tribal woman. Still, the partici-



pation of tribals in the areas of justice, administration, police, education, health etc. is less. Some leaders are tribals, but they are not doing much for the betterment of their community.

### Population of Tribal

According to the 2011 census, the population of Scheduled Tribes in the country was 10.45 crore, which is 8.6 percent of the total population. The tribal population is 11.3 percent in rural areas and 2.8 percent in urban areas. According to the 2011 census, the Bhil tribe is the largest tribal group in India. The tribals mainly live in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, and Northeastern states. In addition, they sporadically reside in Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh etc. Among the states, Madhya Pradesh has the largest number of tribals, while maximum number of tribal live in Daman and Diu among the union territories. Tribal Communities like Bhil, Gond, Anih, Kharwar, Bodo, Kol, Munda, Khadya, Koli, Sahariya, Santhal, Birhor, Pardhi,

### Tribals in Jharkhand

A total of 33 tribes of tribals reside in Jharkhand, whose population is about 86,45,042, which is 26.2 percent of the total population of Jharkhand. Out of these 33 tribes, 8 are primitive tribes, whose population is 1,92,425, which is 0.72 percent of the total population. Jharkhand has registered a decline of 10 percent in the population of tribals after independence. In 1951, the number

of tribals in undivided Bihar was 36.02 percent, while in 2011 their number decreased to 26.02 percent. The reason for the decrease in population is due to migration to other states for employment and untimely death due to large number of diseases and malnutrition. Due to the increase in the level of education in Jharkhand, the tribals have started becoming economically strong, due to which some tribals are also able to get out of the cobweb of diseases and malnutrition. Today they are holding important positions in the government and non-government sectors. They are also bringing laurels to the country in sports like hockey, football, archery etc.

### Meaning of Tribal

The word Adivasi is derived from the word Adi by adding it to Vasi, which means the native. It also indicates the tribals are the original inhabitants of India. In ancient writings, the tribals have been called Atvikas. At the same time, Mahatma Gandhi called them Girijan, because they protect the forest, river and mountain. In the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, tribals have been given the status of Scheduled Tribes.

### Economic life of Tribal

Animal husbandry, handicraft manufacturing and industrial labour are the basic sectors of the tribal economy in India. Agriculture is a major contributor to the Indian economy. Agricultural products are being traded in the country as well as at the international level. Many tribals have been displaced due to deforestation, construction of dams, digging of mines. Most of the tribals engaged in agriculture are landless, due to which they have to do farming on sharecroppers or go to other states or they are forced to work in brick-kilns or factories. Along with this, there are some tribals who are doing employment today and giving employment to others. Instead of making

liquor from Mahua, they are enriching themselves by making medicines, pickles, and sweets.

### Social Life

The language, tradition, culture, lifestyle, religion etc. of the tribals are different from other sections of the society. Rural society mainly lives in villages or in forests, whose basis is dependence on nature since time immemorial. City life is different from rural life, and it is influenced by other sections of the society, because many sections of the society live together in the city, whose culture, tradition, and religion are different. Features like complex and formal organization are absent in tribal society. Society is based on relationships and tradition. The basis of land ownership is community. There is no discrimination between boys and girls in this society. The sex ratio in these is 1000-990, which is much better than other sections of the society.

### Cultural Life

The Culture is the part & parcel of rituals. Dress, tradition, worship, and social customs etc. are part of culture. Tribals have been keeping their culture intact since time immemorial. However, the tribals living in the city have been influenced by the tradition, customs, and culture of other sections of the society. Many tribals have adopted other religions, which has also affected their culture, lifestyle, and customs.

### Conclusion

It would not be correct to say that there has been no improvement in the economic, social, cultural, and religious life or condition of the tribals. Today the tribals have understood the importance of education. The government is also helping them. About 90 lakh tribals live in 14 districts of Gujarat. This year only 592 tribals from Gujarat have been selected in NEET i.e., Medical, while 83 students have been selected for IIT. Financial assistance has been given to 48 meritorious tribal students of Gujarat for pursuing higher education abroad. This is just example of changing status of tribals. Their conditions are improving in other state too. Every year on August 9, Adivasi Diwas has been celebrated in all over India, in which tribals participate in a big way, which is an indicator that they have now become aware and have started fighting for their rights. Despite this, it would be right to say that even today the tribal society is lagging other sections of the society. The scheduled castes are also backward in the country, but the economic, social, educational, and cultural condition of the tribal society is worse than them. For the all-round development of the tribal society, there is still a need to improve the economic and educational status of the tribals. By doing this, their cultural, social, and religious status will automatically improve.

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





## Vishwakarma is a step forward, but not enough

The Cabinet's approval of the PM Vishwakarma scheme, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Independence Day, is a commendable effort to support traditional craftspeople and artisans. With an outlay of Rs 13,000 crore, the scheme aims to provide loans of up to Rs 3 lakh at a concessional interest rate of 5% to individuals from 18 trades, including cobblers, toy makers, and coir weavers. The government expects the scheme to benefit five lakh families in the first year and 30 lakh families over five years. However, while the scheme addresses the immediate need for affordable credit, it falls short of addressing the deeper challenges faced by these communities. The lack of patronage for their goods and services, or the skewed undervaluation of their economic output, are issues that cannot be resolved by cheap credit alone. The lack of access to formal credit may be a symptom of a more fundamental problem - the lack of economic viability for their output. The Vishwakarma scheme includes skilling programs and financial assistance for modern tools, but it must go further. By emphasizing the intergenerational nature of knowledge dissemination, the scheme risks perpetuating traditional low-paying trades, many of which are practiced within a caste straitjacket. The next generation may find themselves trapped in these trades, with limited opportunities for upward mobility. It is crucial to create an ecosystem that not only provides financial support but also fosters innovation, market access, and fair valuation of their work. The Vishwakarma scheme is a step in the right direction, but it must be complemented by a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of the challenges faced by traditional craftspeople and artisans. Only then can we ensure their long-term economic viability and preserve the rich cultural heritage they represent.

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**GS BAJPAI** EXPLAINS WHY REFORMS TESTED BY IMPACT ON VULNERABLE, VICTIMS, AND POOR

## New bills shape legal reforms



### Some of the reformatory measures

The recent introduction of three Bills — the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita to replace the Indian Penal Code; the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita to replace the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill to replace the Indian Evidence Act — transforming criminal laws has ignited a spectrum of reactions, underscoring pivotal facets related to criminal law reforms. Preliminary objections aside, the nature and the extent of the changes requires months, if not years, of study, discourse and deliberations. Amidst this unfolding discourse, however, a prevailing challenge in the Indian context lies in effectively channelling these debates to generate substantive and pertinent contributions. The Bills hold the potential to shape the future landscape of criminal law. Therefore, the task of testing their sustainability; efficacy; adherence to rule of law; and, justice delivery capacity, becomes paramount.

In his seminal work titled 'Crime, Reason and History', Alan Norrie states: "...far from being free-standing foundations for a rational criminal law, the central principles of the law are a site of struggle and contradiction." Capturing the collective aspirations of the public within criminal law reforms presents a formidable challenge given the disparities between polarised popular opinions which must be balanced with the state's perspective. Revision of India's Macaulay-era criminal law is undeniably complex, as the functionalities and stakeholders of this legal framework have been conditioned by the same for over 162 years. The Indian criminal law is undoubtedly an instrument of social control, moulding and guiding us in more ways than one.

It is too early to say whether the Bills will usher in sweeping and substantial changes in the legal landscape. The success or failure of criminal law reforms hinges significantly on their inception, formulation, and subsequent approach to their longevity and oversight. The purported 160 alterations pale in comparison to the deep-seated challenges besieging India's criminal justice system. Seemingly, the Bills also mark an abundance of missed opportunities.

At the same time, the assertion that these Bills are draconian compared to their previous iterations lacks merit. Instead, the Bills exhibit several moderate modifications, including linguistic adjustments for gender inclusivity and replacement of outdated terms such as 'insanity' with 'mental illness'. There is also a measured reconfiguration in the punitive degrees for minor and serious offences. Significantly, the integration of ICT applications with the criminal justice process is noteworthy. Although the scope is limited, innovations such as trial in absentia and the introduction of community service are commendable. The exclusion of attempted suicide and adultery aligns the black letter of the law with the Supreme Court of India's decisions. Notably, the offence of sedition has been judiciously tempered to prevent misuse, facilitated by introducing a test for criminal intent. Newly created offences such as terrorism, organised crime, mob lynching, and negligent acts adds novel dimensions.

The debate on the Bills should not revolve merely around ascertaining whether the changes yield positive or negative outcomes. Instead, the pivotal concern lies in ascertaining whether the fundamental tenets of criminal jurisprudence are being upheld throughout this process. Currently, the trajectory of these reforms and their operational dynamics remain to be determined. Nonetheless, we can methodically examine if

the reforms adhere to a principled foundation of criminal laws. The primary principle for such adjudication remains the extent to which reforms address the needs and the concerns of the people impacted by crime and justice, especially in terms of enforcement of fundamental and statutory rights. Considerable critique of criminal law reforms originates from concerns about the potential significant infringement upon individual liberties. Therefore, evaluating amended laws must revolve around striking a delicate equilibrium between state security imperatives and individual freedoms. Additionally, the efficiency of the revised laws hinges on their capacity to curtail any potential misuse by law enforcement agencies effectively. Criminal laws are generally detested as they fail to discharge their public function as a protective tool for its subjects. Reforms in laws typically fail on this count.

Questioning whether the established principles of criminalisation have been followed in creating new offences is equally pertinent. There is a need to study the principled basis of the harm or the moral/legal offence caused by such criminalised conduct. Additionally, criminal laws in India further a class divide as the rich and the resourceful get better access to justice than the marginalised and the vulnerable. The principle of equality and equitability, therefore, becomes an essential check on criminal law reform. Arguably, the realm of criminal laws

confronts a crisis of public trust, resulting in deficient legitimacy on this count.

It is a fallacious to assume, without conclusive evidence to the contrary, that the populace opposes stringent measures against terrorists or organised criminals. At the same time, the level of leniency or severity in laws does not inherently shape public confidence in the criminal justice system. The upcoming Bills, therefore, face a pivotal challenge in bridging the gap between rhetoric of the law and its reality. The potency of reforms hinges on their alignment with the criminal justice system's capacity to implement it effectively. Regardless of their textual merit, numerous legal provisions remain infeasible due to systemic shortcomings. Finally, the effectiveness of the reforms will also be tested on the basis of its impact upon the status of the vulnerable, the victims and the poor.

### State's power asset

Over the years, the essence of criminal law has been transformed by the very actors and agencies responsible for its enforcement, often rendering it ineffectual. The political executive has consistently sought to wield criminal law as a pre-emptive tool. Criminal law remains a strategic power asset for the state. Concepts of risk, endangerment and dangerousness continue to contaminate the criminal law jurisprudence in great measure. The proliferation of this preventive approach to criminal law raises legitimate concerns.

As the Bills are placed before the select committee for its consideration, it is expected that this committee will allow greater engagement to improve the drafts in terms of both language and substance. The space must be utilised to accommodate greater provisions concerning victims' rights and participation, hate crime, bail, sentencing framework and legal aid in the pending Bills. The envisioned criminal law reforms must be made in a manner that fosters the rule of law and fortifies the pursuit of justice for aeons to come.

*GS Bajpai is Vice-Chancellor, National Law University Delhi. Views are personal*



**BINOY VISWAM** WARNS BJP-LED GOVERNMENT'S TWO BILLS COULD HARM THE ENVIRONMENT

## The future will not forgive the government

The day on which the Consultative Committee on Environment, Forest and Climate Change had an early morning meeting — August 2, happened to be the same day the Union government completed its process of passing the Forest Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2023. The previous day, the government completed the legislative formalities regarding the Biodiversity (Amendment) Bill, 2023 too. At the Consultative Committee meeting, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupendra Yadav spoke of the importance of the conservation of wetlands in the country. He told the members about the Ramsar Convention of 1971, considered to be a landmark initiative for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection.

The same afternoon, Mr. Yadav proposed a Bill which is set to become a disaster for the country's forests and the forest-dependent people. And, a government that has dealt fatal blows to each and every aspect of the environment, forest and biodiversity, will be put to trial by the coming generations.

### Not walking the talk

The timing of the Bill has to be noted for it has been mooted in the run-up to the G-20 summit which is set to take place in India in September. Climate change and the environment have been given due importance on the G-20 agenda. Moreover, as a signatory of the Paris Agreement, India has all along lectured about the necessity to protect the environment, forest and biodiversity. But, by passing the above Bills on Biodiversity and Forest Conservation, the government is signalling that



it can't practise what it preaches.

Both these Bills collectively undermine the Forest Rights Act, 2006 which guarantees the rights of the tribals and other traditional forest dwellers. The government is trying to push back India's well-founded ideas on conservation going back to the Forest Conservation Act of 1980. Ease of doing business is the watchword of governance in the Modi era and the arithmetic and calculations of business guide the government in all its activities. But, the government has failed to understand that it is difficult for big capital and conservation to go together. For business in the corporate age, the only concern is profit whereas conservation has to take into account the concerns of nature above all.

### 'Business' of conservation

Safeguarding the rights of the people is the primary 'business' of conservation. But the

propagators of corporate ideology devoted to the unending greed of market fundamentalism have little regard for the environment. They mask their intentions by talking about development. The same approach can be seen in the current Bills. Any development causing peril to the environment cannot be sustainable. The present Bills give no thought to this basic fact. The amendments made to the Forest Conservation Act widen the way for forest clearance for all developmental projects.

One of the consequences of the Bill is the overturning of the celebrated judgments of TN Godavarman vs Union of India (1996). This judgment expanded the meaning of forest to any piece of land with forest-like characteristics. With the passage of the new Bill, land deemed as forest will be opened for non-forest use. The Bill also provides a blanket exemption for defence-related projects in the name of national security. When the defence sector is being heavily privatised, many of these projects will only defend the business motives of corporate players. Experts say the passage of the Bill will lead to the loss of 20%-25% of forest area in the country.

In the Biodiversity Amendment Bill, all rights of the tribal population on forest produce and their traditional knowledge are hijacked to be surrendered to private players. The community rights of the tribals and other forest dwellers will also become a story of the past. In the Divya Pharmacy vs Union Of India (2018) case, the court had mandated that even Indian companies were to take permission from State Bio-diversity Boards and share their revenue with the local community. With this Bill, the

government removes the basis of this judgment and gives corporate looters free rein to exploit tribals and forest dwellers. It is worth remembering the following lines from the manifesto of the BJP for the 2019 elections, "We have continuously protected and promoted the interest of forest dwellers particularly the tribal communities... We are committed to continuing our work in this direction."

### The fallout

The assault on 'mother earth' propelled by the unending greed of humans is causing unbearable havoc on nature and human life itself. The repeated floods and landslides in the Himalayas tell us about the impending danger. But our development strategists and their political bosses are not in a mood to listen. Pope Francis rightly called the Earth 'Our Common Home'. When all inhabitants of this home are faced with looming dangers of climate challenges, what should be the Indian response to it? The famous saying of Mahatma Gandhi comes to mind: "The Earth has enough resources to meet the needs of all but not enough to satisfy the greed of even one person." When the government itself is feeding to the greed of crony corporates, the country has to become more vigilant. This is a duty we have to shoulder for future generations. On this wanton destruction of nature, whatever may be the waxed rhetorical response of the Prime Minister, future generations will not absolve him.

*Binoy Viswam is the leader of CPI in Parliament and former Forest and Housing Minister of Kerala. Views are personal.*



### BOOKS: REVIEW

## How a PM's decisions shape the destiny of a country

In "How Prime Ministers Decide," veteran journalist Neerja Chowdhury delves into the decision-making processes of six Indian Prime Ministers, offering readers an insightful and comprehensive analysis of their political chemistry, fantasies, phobias, compulsions, and vulnerabilities. Chowdhury's book is a testament to her commitment to veracity, as she meticulously examines the actions and decisions of these leaders, shedding light on their intentions and the impact of their choices on their party and the nation.

The book explores the notion that the Prime Minister of India, when strong and charismatic, becomes the embodiment of India's identity, influencing the country's image, economic status, technological and scientific stature, and position in the world of weaponry. The Prime Minister's

decisions, even those made by unstable occupants of the office, are seen as the decisions of the government of India. Chowdhury's analysis reveals that these decisions are often calculated to enhance the Prime Minister's standing with the people and trump the Opposition. When such decisions are taken exclusively in the interests of the nation, distinct from that of the ruling party or the Prime Minister, they are exceptions that prove the rule.

Chowdhury's rigorous analysis of her subjects is evident throughout the book. She does not aim to portray any of the six Prime Ministers in a poor or flattering light. Instead, she seeks to share her knowledge gleaned over decades of their thought-paths, working methods, and political instincts. Chowdhury's narrative is enriched by one-on-one interviews conducted in the hush

**The candid tellings by officers and diplomats, who chose frank recollections over sterile tightlipped-ness, add authenticity to the narrative**

of confidence and the bestowal of trust. The candid tellings by officers and diplomats, who chose frank recollections over sterile tightlipped-ness, add authenticity to the narrative. The book serves as a living archive, a speaking book, with personal recountings that are honest, confessional, and almost cathartic for the speaker.

The six Prime Ministers featured in the book are Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, P.V. Narasimha Rao, A.B. Vajpayee, and Man-



*How Prime Ministers Decide*  
By Neerja Chowdhury  
Aleph  
608 pages; Rs 799

mohan Singh. Chowdhury brings them to life in her narration, capturing their unique personalities and characteristics. The book also includes the political and professional thought-partners and colleagues of these six Prime Ministers, allowing them to talk, talk, and talk. The result is a biographical equivalent of the records of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, wringing veracity out of reticence, ownings and acknowledgments of wordless consciences, and history out of closeted memories.

Chowdhury's narrative acknowledges the inherent and unavoidable flaws of the Prime Ministers as humans, part of an imperfect genera, species that

should and can but every so often do not overcome their limitations. The Prime Minister who emerges virtually unscathed by Time's witnessings as recorded by Chowdhury is Dr. Manmohan Singh, a felicity that is heartily endorsed.

A surprising lack in the book is the absence of a focus on the South of India. While Jayalithaa's 'tantrums' with Vajpayee are touched upon, Kamaraj gets a bare mention, Karunanidhi figures but twice fleetingly and has his name mis-spelt in the index, and MGR plays truant.

In conclusion, "How Prime Ministers Decide" is a compelling and insightful exploration of the decision-making processes of six Indian Prime Ministers. Chowdhury's meticulous analysis, candid tellings, and commitment to veracity make this book a valuable addition to the literature on Indian politics. It offers readers a deeper understanding of the actions and decisions of these leaders, their intentions, and the impact of their choices on their party and the nation.



# Google announces new Transparency Center

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Google has announced a new 'Transparency Center'-- a central hub for quickly and easily learning more about the company's product policies.

"The Transparency Center collects existing resources and policies, and was designed with you in mind, providing easy access to information on our policies, how we create and enforce them, and much more," the tech giant said in a blog-post on Thursday.

The company further mentioned that as the online threat landscape changes, its policies evolve, helping to prevent abuse on its platforms. And since the uses of the products differ, the company tailors its policies to each



platform, aiming to create a safe and positive experience for everyone.

With the Transparency Center, users can learn about Google's policy development process, how it enforces its policies, and view each policy by product and service. "Some of our most impor-

tant guiding principles are also available to view, including Google's AI principles-- first launched in 2018," the tech giant said.

Users can also access the new central hub to read about the background of the company's transparency reports. Moreover, the hub has a

dedicated page to help users find ways to report harmful content and make appeals across several of the services.

"Our appeals process aims to ensure due process, efficiency and transparency for users appealing our enforcement decisions," the company said.

Last week, Google had announced the launch of 'Project IDX', an artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled browser-based development environment for building full-stack web and multiplatform applications.

The project currently supports frameworks, such as Angular, Flutter, Next.js, React, Svelte and Vue, and languages like JavaScript and Dart, with support for Python, Go, and others in the works.

# Boeing Begins Production on E-model Apaches for Indian Army

**ARUN KUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

Boeing is starting production of the Indian Army's Apaches in Mesa, Arizona. The company will deliver a total of six AH-64E Apaches fulfilling the Indian Army's requirements according to company statement here today.

Earlier this year, Tata Boeing Aerospace Limited (TBAL) delivered the Indian Army's first AH-64 Apache fuselage from its advanced facility in Hyderabad, India.

"We are pleased to reach yet another significant milestone, highlighting Boeing's unwavering commitment to support India's defense capabilities," said Salil Gupte, president, Boeing India. "The advanced technology and proven performance of the AH-64 will enhance the Indian Army's operational readiness and strengthen its defense capabilities."



In 2020, Boeing completed delivery of 22 Indian Air Force E-model Apaches and signed a contract to produce six AH-64Es for the Indian Army. The delivery of the Indian Army's Apaches is scheduled for 2024.

"The AH-64E continues to be the world's premier attack helicopter," said Christina Upham, vice president of Attack Helicopter Programs and senior Boeing Mesa site executive. "The AH-64 provides customers with unparalleled lethality and survivability, and we are thrilled to provide those capabilities to the Indian Army."

Boeing is focused on delivering value to Indian customers with advanced technologies and is committed to creating sustainable value in the Indian aerospace sector -- developing local suppliers, and shaping academic and research collaborations with Indian institutions. Boeing has strengthened its supply chain with more than 300 local companies in India and a joint venture to manufacture fuselages for Apache helicopters and vertical fin structures for the 737 family of airplanes. Annual sourcing from India stands at over \$1 billion. Boeing currently employs over 5,000 people in India, and more than 13,000 people work with its supply chain partners. Boeing's employee efforts and country-wide engagement serve communities and citizenship programs to inspire change and make an impact on more than 500,000 lives.

# Ex-Google CEO Eric Schmidt starting AI firm to solve scientific challenges



**SAN FRANCISCO :** As artificial intelligence (AI) makes deeper inroads into our lives, former Google CEO Eric Schmidt is building a new organisation to tackle scientific challenges and potentially create breakthroughs from drug discovery to material sciences. Schmidt has hired two distinguished scientists Samuel Rodrigues, founder of the Applied Biotechnology Laboratory at the Francis Crick Institute and Andrew White, a pioneer in the use of AI in chemistry -- to run the nonprofit initiative, reports Semafor. According to the report, the effort is similar to Microsoft-backed OpenAI which developed ChatGPT. "Funding will come mostly from Schmidt's personal wealth, but outside funds may be necessary given the ambition of the project," the report claimed, citing people familiar with the plans. The project is still in early stages and exact plans could change. In a recent article in MIT Technology Review titled "This is how AI will transform the way science gets done", Schmidt wrote: "With the advent of AI, science is about to become much more exciting -- and in some ways unrecognisable. The reverberations of this shift will be felt far outside the lab; they will affect us all."

With his wife Wendy, he co-founded Schmidt Futures, a philanthropic organisation that funds research projects that have the potential to generate a big impact. The couple funded several other AI-related projects, including the nonprofit AI2050 and the AI in Science Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme, according to the report.

# UPL SAS, NSL Sugars ink pact to enhance sugarcane yield



**MUMBAI:** UPL Sustainable Agriculture Solutions on Friday said it has signed an agreement with NSL Sugars to promote sustainable sugarcane production and promote green agriculture through optimised usage of natural resources.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) with NSL Sugars will indirectly add about 50,000 farmers across Telangana, Karnataka and Maharashtra, UPL Sustainable Agriculture Solutions (UPL SAS) said in a statement. The primary objective of this partnership is to achieve a minimum of 15 per cent increase in yield to over 5 tonnes per acre, which will help farmers earn an additional income of Rs 12,000-15,000 per acre, the statement said.

# POSSPOLE launches Ecosystem of High-Tech Product Creation, Market Access & Manufacturing

**ARUN KUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

POSSPOLE announce the launch of a First-of-a-Kind Ecosystem aimed at fostering High-Tech Product Creation, Market Access, and Manufacturing in Bengaluru. The cutting-edge ecosystem at POSSPOLE is the destination for aspiring product creators and manufacturers who have wanted an end-to-end product launch pad. POSSPOLE aims to position India as "The Destination" for High Tech Products and Manufacturing.

As part of the Ecosystem, POSSPOLE will set up theme-based manufacturing hubs in the areas of Food, Electronics, Future Mobility, Health, Tech, and Defence. These hubs will come with a range of central and state government benefits, including tax incentives and streamlined customs



procedures, as well as private investments. POSSPOLE will also provide access to global markets and a supportive regulatory environment, all under one roof.

Addressing the Media Kiran Rudrappa founder POSSPOLE said, Product creation is complex and capital intensive. Many great products don't see the market due

to lack of talent, market access, fund and infrastructure. Indian companies need to create global quality products to compete with their international counterparts. Market opportunity is huge and it is a right time for Indian businesses to move quickly and create world class products from India for global market.

# Indian tech industry leaders fast adopting GenAI, albeit with caution

**NEW DELHI:** As generative AI (aka chatbots) spark a lot of debate among its stakeholders, industry leaders in India believe that while there are some risks associated primarily related to data, privacy and security, generative AI has more opportunities than risks and we are yet to explore its true potential to improve productivity, ingenuity, creativity, efficiency, and communication.

Generative AI refers to algorithms that have the capability to create original content, including text, images, videos, or audio.

"Generative AI (GenAI), specifically around large language models (LLMs) has lately garnered a lot of interest and sparked a lot of discussion in the community. GenAI is an assist-



ive and augmented technology when used by humans, it can add to the creativity and ingenuity of humans," Vic Gupta, Chief Technology Officer, Coforge, media reports. To adapt and empower the workforce with the necessary skills and tools, Coforge has proactively developed internal

learning paths and curriculum. "To demonstrate our preparedness and effectiveness in various industries and across different use cases, we have identified over 100 potential scenarios, use cases and solutions that solve one or more client business problems," Gupta informed.

# PMJ Jewels Unveils Exquisite SITARA Collection along Solitaire Exhibition in Bengaluru

**ARUNKUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

PMJ Jewels, South India's most popular fine jewellery brand, a name synonymous with elegance and craftsmanship, launched their much-awaited "SITARA Collection" at their biggest Solitaire Exhibition in their flagship store at Jayanagar, Bengaluru.

The five day exhibition will showcase various collections of



PMJ Jewels including the newly launched SITARA Collection. The SITARA Collection represents a culmination of artistry, in-

novation, and heritage in designer diamond jewellery. Showcasing a range that has never been witnessed before, the collection is a testimony to PMJ Jewels' commitment to delivering timeless pieces that reflect the grandeur of special occasions. From intricately designed necklaces to mesmerizing bracelets, each piece in the SITARA Collection narrates a story of love, beauty, and luxury.

# Planview opens "Global Capability & Innovation Center" in Bengaluru

**ARUN KUMAR RAO**  
Bengaluru

Planview, the leading platform for connected work from portfolio planning to delivery, Inaugurated its new and significantly expanded "Planview Global Capability & Innovation Center (CIC)" in Bengaluru. The expansion of Planview footprint in India is a key strategy to support the company's continued growth, expand its capabilities, and ultimately better serve and support value creation for its



global customer base. With over 4,500 customers and 2.6 million

users across Financial Services, Healthcare, Insurance, Auto-

motive, Technology and more, Planview has been a leader in the industry for more than 34 years.

"Planview is very bullish about its India operations," said Razat Gaurav, Global CEO, Planview. "The total investment in digital transformation efforts across the globe continues to accelerate year over year. In the next 18 months, more than half (55%) of all Information and Communication Technology (ICT) investment will focus on transformation, with many of those initiatives led by teams in

India innovation centers. Our expanded footprint allows us to support global clients at a time of increasing digital transformation and business activity in the world's fastest-growing economic region. Our CIC will help customers fast-track their digital transformation while supporting the economic growth of the region." Gaurav has identified a series of initiatives that will bolster India's operations and drive the company's global growth objectives, some of which have already begun.

# Shriram AMC to Launch Shriram Multi Asset Allocation Fund

**FW DESK**  
New Delhi

Shriram Asset Management Company, part of the Shriram Group, will launch the Shriram Multi Asset Allocation Fund on August 18th 2023. This new fund aims to offer long term inflation-adjusted wealth creation through exposure to multiple assets such as equity, debt, and gold/silver ETFs. The New Fund Offer (NFO) will close on September 1st 2023.

Fund Allocation - Between 65% to 80% of the fund's corpus will

be invested in equity, which includes 30 to 40 stocks from Shriram AMC's proprietary Enhanced Quantamental Investment (EQI) model. The model relies on statistical data to make the right investment decisions for better fund performance while integrating quant as well as fundamental inputs for portfolio construction. The minimum allocation of 65% to equities allows investors in this fund to benefit from Long Term Capital Gains tax of 10%. The fund would also allocate 10% to 25% of funds in high quality (AAA) Short to Medium term debt, preferably in government and government-backed securities to avoid any credit risk; 10% to 25% in gold/silver ETFs, with the option up to 10% in Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs).



Investment Options- Investors can regularly invest in this fund through Systematic Investment Plans (SIP), top-ups or Systematic Transfer Plans (STP) from liquid or overnight funds to meet their financial and family goals. The minimum investment amount for lumpsum is Rs 5,000 while for SIPs it is Rs 1,000 per month or R 3,000 per quarter. There is no lock-in period involved.

The fund offers the investor the benefit of Long Term Capital Gains tax (LTCG) @10% (plus surcharge and cess) if they cross Rs 1 lakh of capital gains in a fiscal year. If an investor buys/sells equity, debt, gold separately to rebalance their asset allocation, they might face capital gains tax with each transaction. When the fund manager transacts within the scheme, there is no capital gains tax on the scheme. These two aspects make this fund a tax efficient investment option for investors.

# Social- Economic Inequality causes Poverty



**DR P S VOHRA**  
NitiAayog released its latest report on the National Multidimensional Poverty Index in July. This report of more than 400 pages presents in great detail the economic development of India, the economic condition of the states, and poverty and destitution in Indian society through various dimensions. A preliminary analysis of this report shows that the number of people living below the poverty line in India is steadily decreasing. The Multidimensional Poverty Index, based on various criteria, was 24.85% of the population in 2015-16, and now, according to the data from 2019 to 2021, it stands at 14.96%. Due to the decrease in this multidimensional poverty index, it is also estimated that during the period from 2015 to 2021, over 113 million Indians have moved above the poverty line in terms of their economic and social standards of living. This positive trend highlights that in comparison to urban areas, a higher percentage of rural population in India has moved above the poverty line. Even after 75 years of independence, a significant rural population in India remains connected to rural economies and agriculture. The recent NITI Aayog report suggests that in the past 6 years up to 2021, around 13.31% of India's rural population has moved out of poverty, while in urban areas, only a marginal change of 3.38% has been observed during the same period. However, ap-

proximately 19% of India's rural population still lives below the poverty line, largely due to the lack of alternative employment opportunities other than the agricultural sector. Additionally, the continuous decline of the agricultural sector's prominence in India's economy is also identified as a significant contributing factor. Moreover, the report also highlights that around 6% of India's urban population is living below the poverty line in the present time.

It is very important to understand here that people living below the poverty line, or poor people, do not mean that they do not have the means of livelihood for sustenance. In contrast, the NITI Aayog report examines and estimates the National Multidimensional Poverty Index on a total of 12 different dimensions. These dimensions mainly include health, education, and an advanced lifestyle. The analysis of three main points in health includes the integration and examination of various statistics related to the quantity of nourishment in the form of food items used by children, women, and men, the number of child and adolescent deaths, and maternal health. In education, the number of years spent by children in school and their attendance serve as the primary basis. Additionally, various dimensions affecting people's living conditions are integrated, including the types of fuel used for cooking, sanitation, access to clean water, housing, electricity, types of property, and access to banking services. The recent report from the NitiAayog indicates substantial changes within



these three dimensions. Regarding nutrition or the inclusion of nutritional elements in food items, from around 2015 to 2021, there has been an approximate 6% change in India. Previously, over 37% of the population did not have nutritious elements in their diet, which has now reduced to around 31%. On the other hand, while the current child and adolescent mortality rate is around 2%, concerns arise due to maternal health, with the current figure at 19%. Similarly, in terms of education, there hasn't been significant change in the number of years spent in school or attendance. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that a significant portion of India's population is illiterate. The third crucial dimension, determined by the poverty index, evaluates various aspects of lifestyle, and the most substantial changes have been noted in electricity availability in households. Only 3% of the country's population is now deprived of these amenities now. Likewise, for banking services, the figure lies between 3% and 4%, which signifies remarkable progress. On the other hand, the

fact that around 44% of people still lack access to cooking fuel--of which LPG is now a significant source--raises alarming questions about the terrible reality. Talking about sanitation, 30% of the population lacks access to clean and sanitary facilities. Another surprising observation is that nearly 7% of the population still lacks access to clean water, as per the NitiAayog's report. Regarding the dimension of clean water consumption, it's mentioned that if you have access to clean drinking water within 30 minutes of walking, you are capable of living an improved lifestyle.

According to this report from the NitiAayog, the highest Multidimensional Poverty Index is in the state of Bihar, which constitutes a third (33.7 percent) of its population. Additionally, the corresponding percentages for Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh are 28.81, 27.79, 22.93, and 20.63 percent, respectively. In all other states, this index is less than 20 percent of their population. The lowest Multidimensional Poverty Index is in Kerala, at 0.55

percent. It's worth noting that during the previous two reports of the National Multidimensional Poverty Index, the highest reduction in the poverty index (18.13 percent) was observed in Bihar. If around 135 million people in India have risen above the poverty line, the majority of them are associated with the state of Bihar. Another noteworthy point is that even in the state of Gujarat, which is the most developed and prosperous state in terms of per capita income, more than 11 percent of the population lies below the poverty line. Similarly, in West Bengal, which has about half the per capita income of Gujarat, approximately 9.4 percent of the population has emerged from poverty in the last 7 years. This percentage has remained roughly 7 percent in Gujarat. It's crucial to keep in mind while comparing these two states that West Bengal has a population that is more than one-third larger than Gujarat's. Therefore, it is important to know that West Bengal has experienced the relative eradication of poverty more quickly than Gujarat.

These days discussions about India's potential to become the world's third-largest Economy in the upcoming days, are common everywhere. It appears to be a major topic of discussion for the forthcoming elections as well. This surely makes every Indian proud, but it also spreads a false impression. In particular for a country like India with a big population, it is critical to consider that alongside GDP, there must be a major increase in individual incomes comparatively if we are to prevent a sizable per-

centage of society from remaining imprisoned in poverty. For the past two to three decades, the private sector has been responsible for economic growth, which has led to consistent economic growth that can be gauged by GDP growth. We should focus on boosting individual incomes as well in order to lower poverty rates. India is now ranked 125th in the world in this category. The per capita income currently exceeds 1.70 lakh rupees, up from about 80,000 rupees per year ten years ago. However, the government continues to consider 80 million people as being below the poverty line and provides them with free food.

India is a diverse country. This diversity is exemplified by the various kinds of religions, civilizations, cultures, languages, and physical characters. But by using the NITI Aayog study, it is possible to view poverty and misery from a variety of perspectives. As a result of the wealthy having access to more resources while the poor continue to lack even the most basic comforts, this shows how economic inequality in India is steadily increasing. The availability of basic amenities has not yet reached every member of society, despite governments developing a variety of social and welfare programmes in this area, which is their democratic duty. This is acknowledged by NITI Aayog's poverty index. As a result, it has become a common belief that achieving a complete eradication of poverty in a country like India is not feasible. Dr P S Vohra is Writer, columnist and financial thinker, View are personal



# Reserve Bank of India Launches Public Tech Credit Platform

**RBI launches an innovative public tech platform to connect lenders and borrowers seamlessly to enhance financial inclusion**



**NEW DELHI:** The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Public Tech Platform, a pilot project for effortless credit delivery by connecting lenders and borrowers, is set to commence on August 17, 2023.

The platform will facilitate non-collateral Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) loans, Kisan Credit Card loans up to Rs 1.6 lakh per borrower, and dairy, personal, and home loans through participating banks to enhance credit penetration into underserved areas.

The platform aims to create a shared space for various central and state government entities, banks, credit information companies, digital identity authorities, etc., to share data for credit appraisal. "For digital credit delivery, the data required for credit appraisal are available with entities like central and

state governments, account aggregators, banks, credit information companies, digital identity authorities, etc. However, they are in separate systems, creating hindrance in frictionless and timely delivery of rule-based lending," said RBI. By collating this information, the digital platform is expected to bring transparency, efficiency, cost reduction, faster disbursement, and scalability to the lending process.

"The platform shall enable linkage with services such as Aadhaar e-KYC, land records from onboarded state gov-

ernments (Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra), Satellite data, PAN validation, transliteration, Aadhaar e-signing, account aggregation by account aggregators (AAs), milk pouring data from select dairy co-operatives, house/property search data etc.," RBI says.

Karthikeyan K. co-founder and CTO of KreditBee says that the public tech platform will streamline the flow of digital information to lenders, leading to smoother credit delivery. He says this will result in lowered costs, quicker distribution, and

enhanced scalability.

The platform is designed to have an open architecture and open application programming interface (API) standards, allowing players to connect in a 'plug and play' model easily.

Says Souparno Bagchi, COO of Balancehero India: "The launch of RBI's public tech platform for frictionless credit is a ground-breaking step with substantial advantages for lenders. This initiative simplifies the integration of vital financial data through open APIs, boosting operational efficiency. Centralizing potential borrowers' information on a unified platform streamlines processes."

"The 'plug and play' model encourages innovation, driving the lending sector toward greater accessibility, cost reduction, and efficiency," Bagchi said.

Anil Pinapala, founder & CEO of Flexplay by Vivivi, expressed optimism about the platform's expansion to include NBFCs and fintech firms. "Integrating banking, credit, corporate, and governmental information enables swift and reliable underwriting," he says.

# India's foreign exchange reserves rise USD 708 mln to USD 602.16 bln

**MUMBAI:** India's foreign exchange reserves jumped USD 708 million to USD 602.161 billion for the week ended August 11, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Friday.

This is the first increase in the kitty after declining for three consecutive weeks. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined USD 2.417 billion to USD 601.453 billion.

In October 2021, the country's foreign exchange reserves touched an all-time high of USD 645 billion.

The reserves took a hit as the central bank deployed the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments since last year.

For the week ended August 11, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased USD 999 million to USD 534.399 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI.



Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves were down USD 340 million to USD 44.34 billion, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up USD 51 million to USD 18.324 billion.

The country's reserve position with the IMF was down USD 2 million to USD 5.098 billion in the reporting week, as per the apex bank data.

# Third G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting begins in Gandhinagar

**GANDHINAGAR:** The third G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBGs) meeting began in Gandhinagar today. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and RBI Governor Dr. Shaktikanta Das, are jointly chairing the meeting.

Addressing the inaugural session, Sitharaman called for enhanced economic cooperation to tackle global challenges such as food and energy insecurity, and climate change. Nirmala Sitharaman said as global economic growth remains uneven and low, coordinated international efforts are needed to ensure sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth. Talking about the outcomes of the G20 deliberations, the minister said three important deliverables have been prepared.



During session 1 of the FMCBG meeting on Global Economy and Global health, delegates deliberated on issues pertaining to the global economic outlook, economic risks, and policy responses to support recovery. Discussions will focus on finalising the G20 Joint Finance Health Agenda under Indian G20 presidency. Nearly 500 delegates including Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the G20 member countries, invited countries, and heads of International Organisations are attending the meeting.

# Punjab National Bank celebrates 77th I'Day

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI**  
New Delhi

Punjab National Bank (PNB), nation's leading public sector bank, commemorated the 77th Independence Day at its headquarters and across all its Circle and Zonal Offices as well as 10,000+ branches in the country. PNB MD & CEO Atul Kumar Goel hoisted the National Flag at PNB Head Office in Dwarka in the presence of the Executive Directors, Chief General Managers, General Managers, and other bank employees.

Honouring the memories of martyrs, Atul Kumar Goel, MD&CEO, Punjab National Bank, said: "Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and ignited the eternal flame of freedom. That majestic flame is still burning brilliantly and acts as a constant reminder of the sacrifices made by our warriors, without whom we wouldn't have been living in a democratic society. We should never forget the valour of all of our freedom fighters who fought with the British monarchy and gave their lives to free India, provide its people and future generations a brighter and more promising future."

# FPIs sold stocks to the tune of Rs 7,543 cr in August

**NEW DELHI:** In August, FPIs sold stocks to the tune of Rs 7,543 crore, V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

After three months of sustained buying with cumulative investment of Rs 1,37,603 crore, FPIs have turned sellers in India.

Strength in the dollar index and the US 10-year bond yield remaining well above 4 per cent is a short-term negative for Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) flows to emerging markets like India, he said.

FPIs continue to be buyers in financials, capital goods and financials and also in IT



selectively. A significant trend in the market is that FPI selling is countered by strong DII buying, he added.

In view of the strong dollar and high US bond yields FPIs may continue to sell in India, he added. Also, since the markets have rallied smartly during the last three months,

some profit booking by FPIs would be rational and can be expected. Despite the outflow of FPI in July, sustainability of the stock market also indicates the strength of domestic investors and their maturity, says Kislay Upadhyay, small-case manager and Founder of FidelFolio Investments.

# Sensex falls below 65K mark

**NEW DELHI:** BSE Sensex has fallen below the 65,000 points mark and is trading down 291 points on Friday morning. BSE Sensex is trading at 64,859 points. IT stocks are leading the fall with TCS, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, Infosys down more than one per cent.

Nifty is down 3 % from the July peak of 19979, moving in sympathy with the global cues, says V.K. Vijayakumar, the Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. There are no immediate triggers that can lead to sharp rebound in the market, he added. Further weakness in the market will make valuations reasonable. Long-term investors can utilise market



corrections to buy high quality stocks in growth sectors like capital goods, banking, automobiles and construction, he said.

Globally stock markets have declined this month.

There are no immediate triggers that can lead to sharp rebound in the market, he added. Further weakness in the market will make valuations reasonable. Long-term investors can utilise market corrections to buy high quality stocks in growth sectors like capital goods, banking, automobiles and construction, he said. Globally stock markets have declined this month. In the US market the S&P 500 is down by 4.25 per cent. This pull back has been triggered mainly by the rising dollar and spiking US bond yields in the US, which, in turn, is in response to the view of most Fed officials that the Fed will have to tighten rates more to rein in inflation, he said.

# Rupee closes at all-time low against US dollar

**NEW DELHI:** The rupee pared its initial gains and settled for the day lower by 2 paise at an all-time low of 83.10 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, weighed down by a strong greenback overseas and a negative trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said rupee is likely to trade with a negative bias on risk aversion in global markets and rising US dollar.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 83.10 against the

dollar, and it finally ended the day at the same level 83.10 (provisional), registering a fall of 2 paise from its previous close.

During the session, the local unit touched a peak of 82.99 and a low of 83.16. On Monday, the rupee depreciated 26 paise to settle at an all-time low of 83.08 against the US dollar. Forex market was closed on Tuesday and Wednesday on account of Independence Day and Parsi New Year, respectively. Meanwhile, the dollar index,



which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.05 per cent to 103.48. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.52 per cent to USD 83.88 per barrel. "The Indian rupee traded lower in line with the Asian currencies and risk-averse sentiments," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

The greenback enjoyed good momentum reacting to July FOMC minutes that signalled clear openness to more tightening. "We remain bullish on the pair and a crossing of 83.30 will pave the way for 83.50 and 83.70 while expected to hold

the support at 82.70," Parmar added.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed 388.40 points or 0.59 per cent lower at 65,151.02 points. The broader NSE Nifty declined 99.75 points or 0.51 per cent to close at 19,365.25 points.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Wednesday as they purchased shares worth Rs 722.76 crore, according to exchange data.

# Jan Dhan accounts cross 50 crore mark in less than 9 years : Govt



**NEW DELHI:** The total number of Jan Dhan accounts in the country has crossed 50 crore-mark, with 56 per cent of the accounts belonging to women, the finance ministry said on Friday. About 67 per cent of these accounts have been opened in rural and semi-urban areas, it said in a statement.

The total deposits in these accounts are above Rs 2.03 lakh crore while around 34 crore RuPay cards have been issued with these accounts free of cost. The average balance in Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) accounts is Rs 4,076 and more than 5.5 crore of these are receiving Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), it said. The National Mission on Financial Inclusion -- popularly known as PMJDY -- which was launched on August 28, 2014, has been successful in changing the financial landscape of the country, it added. PMJDY offers multiple advantages to account holders such as a bank account without the requirement of a minimum balance, free of cost RuPay debit cards with in-built accident insurance of Rs 2 lakh, and an overdraft facility of up to Rs 10,000.

# Initiative to Make the Economy Stronger

**SATISH SINGH**

To maintain the pace of growth, it is necessary that the repo rate should not be increased further, therefore, the Reserve Bank has kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the third consecutive time in the monetary review on 10 August. Earlier, the repo rate was kept unchanged at 6.5 per cent in two consecutive bi-monthly monetary reviews in April and June this year. The Reserve Bank started increasing the policy rates in the month of May last year, but at the time of the bi-monthly monetary review of April and June this year, the retail inflation situation in the country was not uncontrollable, due to which the repo rate was kept unchanged.

bank. However, banks are also forced to raise lending rates, as their cost of capital has increased and the spread between deposit and loan rates has narrowed, reducing their profits, and compel them to make a strategy to expand the deposit base. The banks will have to run a campaign for making it possible. Though, some banks are doing this on priority basis. After a continuous decrease in retail inflation for the last 4 months, the consumer price index (CPI) or retail inflation in June 2023 reached a level of 4.81 percent, while it was 4.31 percent in May, whereas it was 4.7 percent in April 2023, while it was 5.66 percent in March. However, even in the month of June, the retail inflation rate is below the Reserve Bank's tolerance level of 6 percent, but this year heavy rains in many states of the country have adversely affected the production of Kharif crops and vegetables and expected that the situation will worsen in the coming months. The threat of El Nino remains intact. In such a situation, there are chances of further increase in retail inflation in the coming months.

According to statistics ministry data, the Consumer Food Inflation (CPI) or food inflation rose to 4.49 per cent in June from 2.96 per cent in May, compared to 7.75 in the same period of last year. Whereas in the month of April, it was 3.84 percent. The prices



of almost all green vegetables including tomatoes are shoot up at present. It is noteworthy that food items account for half of the CPI basket.

The RBI tries to fight inflation mainly by increasing the repo rate. When the repo rate is high, banks get loans from the Reserve Bank at a costlier rate, due to which banks also give loans to customers at a costlier rate. By doing this, the liquidity of money in the economy decreases and due to lack of money in the pockets of the people, the demand for goods decreases and due to the high price of goods and products, their sales decline, which leads to decreasing of inflation. Similarly, to speed up the developmental works when the economy is slow, efforts are made to increase the liquidity of the currency in the market and for this the repo rate is cut, so that the banks get loans from the Reserve Bank at a cheaper rate & also give loan to the customers at a cheaper rate.

According to Reserve Bank Governor, Shri Shakti Kant Das, banking, and non-banking financial institutions (NBFCs) remain strong in India despite the corona pandemic, geo-political crisis, inflation, slowdown in the global economy. The financial performance of the banking sector is continuously improving. In the first quarter of the current financial year i.e., during April-June 2023, the profit of 12 public sector banks increased to Rs.34,774 crore, while the profit of State Bank of India increased by 178.24 percent to Rs 16,884.29 crore. At the same time, an increase of 12.3 percent was registered in the country's industrial production in the month of June. In comparison, in June 2021, a growth rate of 13.8 percent was seen in the industrial production of the country. It shows that there is great need to improve the situation in this regard. In the last quarter of the fi-

nancial year 2022-23, the gross domestic product (GDP) was estimated to be 4.2 percent, but it was 6.1 percent. Due to the improvement in the GDP growth rate in the fourth quarter of the financial year 2022-23, there has been an improvement in the growth rate of the entire financial year. During the financial year 2022-23, the MPC had earlier estimated 6.8 percent of GDP, which was 7.2 percent.

Right now, the target of the Reserve Bank is to follow the path of development, so that the economy gets strengthened, at the same time it is also keeping an eye on retail inflation, because of this, the pace of GDP growth slows down. For the past years, retail inflation remained at a high level continuously, however, there was a partial decline in retail inflation during the last few months, but now again retail inflation is on the rise. Therefore, speculations are being made that India's growth rate may remain low in the long term, due to which the economy may slow down. Slower economic growth may result in lower tax collections. The year 2024 is an election year. Therefore, this year the fiscal deficit may increase instead of decreasing, as the government may increase government expenditure to woo the public for getting vote. Right now, the government is stressing

on capital expenditure. It is also necessary because India needs huge investment in infrastructure. Only through this, the vehicle of development can move forward at a fast pace.

In such a situation, the government will have to accelerate both capital expenditure and revenue collection and work towards fiscal consolidation by striking a balance between the two, as there are dangers of strengthening infrastructure by taking more loans.

In such a situation, it can be said that due to rising inflation, the Reserve Bank may be forced to increase the policy rates in the upcoming monetary reviews and subsequently, banks will increase the loan rate and demand will decrease due to costlier loans. Due to rising inflation, the spending capacity of the people has also reduced, due to which private expenditure is coming down in strengthening the infrastructure. Therefore, keeping the repo rate unchanged by the Reserve Bank is an immediate step. Stability will come in this only when the retail inflation is low. Nevertheless, this decision of the Reserve Bank can be called expedient & suitable keeping in the view of present circumstances.

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

# FIIs unlikely to pour more money into Indian market as they did in June, July

**NEW DELHI:** With the dollar index at 103.5 and the US 10-year bond yield at 4.27 per cent, Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) are unlikely to pour more money into the Indian market as they did in June and July, says V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. Rather than looking at index movements, investors may focus on performing sectors like capital goods, automobiles and construction. High quality banking stocks present opportunities for buy on dips, he said. Global cues for markets continue to be weak. There are two negatives weighing on global stock markets now: One, the US Fed minutes indicate that one more rate hike may be needed in this rate hiking cycle to tame inflation. Two, Chinese macro data indicate that the economy is slowing more-than-feared earlier, and this will impact global economic growth, he added. In this scenario the Indian market is unlikely to break out to newer highs on a sustained basis and decouple from the rest of the world. However, a sharp correction appears unlikely, he said. BSE Sensex is down 173 points at 65,366 points in Thursday morning trade. ITC is down 1.7 per cent and Powergrid is down 1.2 %.



## Pak Authorities must ensure protection of minority Christian community says Amnesty International

FW DESK

Responding to the attack and arson of at least five Churches and many Christian homes in Jaranwala in Pakistan, Rehab Mahamood, interim regional researcher for South Asia at Amnesty International said: "The Pakistani authorities must urgently ensure the protection of the minority Christian community in Jaranwala in accordance to their needs and wishes and that those found responsible for the arson and attacks on Churches and homes are held accountable. Such attacks add to the climate of discrimination and fear for religious minorities. "The authorities in Pakistan must immediately address the climate of impunity around violence against religious minorities. The vicious mob attacks are just the latest manifestation of the threat of vigilante violence which anyone can face in Pakistan after a blasphemy accusation



— with religious minorities disproportionately vulnerable to the same. The existence of blasphemy laws continue to embolden groups and individuals who threaten, attack or attempt to kill the accused, or anyone connected, including members of their community. "Pakistani authorities need no more evidence to see how dangerous the blasphemy laws are. The broad, vague and co-

ercive nature of the blasphemy laws violate the human rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of expression. They have long been misused to target some of the most marginalized people in society. "The blasphemy laws should be repealed as a matter of urgency and in the meantime, the authorities should put in place effective safeguards against their abuse. By ignoring the

longstanding call to repeal the blasphemy laws and instead strengthen them by attempting to increase the punishment under such laws, Pakistani authorities continue to create a permissive environment for human rights violations."

**Background-** After allegations of blasphemy made against two Christian residents of Jaranwala, in the district of Faisalabad, vigilante mobs attacked at least five churches in the area.

Earlier this year, on 7 August 2023 a teacher accused of blasphemy in Turbat was shot and killed. In February 2023, in Nankana, a man accused of desecrating the Quran was dragged out of a police station by a vigilante mob and beaten to death. Similarly, in December 2021, a Sri Lankan man accused of blasphemy was lynched to death. Amnesty International has previously documented how the blasphemy laws enable abuse in its report, "As good as dead": The impact of the blasphemy laws in Pakistan.

## Twenty Churches, 86 houses of Christians burnt down by mob in Pak: Police

**LAHORE:** At least 20 churches and 86 houses of Christians were burnt down by the mob in Pakistan's Punjab province and a total of 145 suspects have been taken into custody, police said in a preliminary report submitted to the government on Friday on the unprecedented attack on the minority community. The report also hinted at the presence of radical Islamist Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) elements that spearheaded the mob that unleashed the attack in Jaranwala tehsil of Faisalabad district, some 130 km from Lahore on Wednesday. The mob was enraged over reports that two Christians had desecrated the Quran.

"At least 20 churches and 86 houses of Christians were burnt down by the mob in Jaranwala. Two Christians who were accused of desecrating the Quran have also been arrested. Besides, a cleric who made announcements from five mosques inciting people to attack Christian homes and churches is among 145 suspects arrested so far," says the Punjab Police report submitted to the government.

## Pakistan appoints Kashmiri separatist Yasin Malik's wife as special advisor to caretaker PM

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan has appointed Mishal Hussain Malik, wife of the jailed Kashmiri separatist Yasin Malik, as a special advisor to the country's newly appointed caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar.

Malik's appointment drew a sharp reaction from India's ruling BJP, which said that the move vindicated India's charge that Pakistan harbours terrorists who attack India. Malik's name was included in the five Special Advisor to Prime Minister (SAPM) list unveiled late on Thursday night after President Arif Alvi administered an oath to the 19-member caretaker Cabinet at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the presidential house.

Mishal, a Pakistani national married to Malik, was appointed special advisor to the caretaker Prime Minister Kakar on human rights and women empowerment.

A special advisor has a lower status than a junior minister but provides assistance to the prime minister on key relevant issues.



Mushaal Hussain Malik, a Pakistani national married to Yasin Malik, who is serving a life sentence in Tihar Jail in a terror-funding case, was appointed special advisor to the caretaker PM Kakar on human rights and women empowerment.

Among other four special advisors, Jawad Sohrab Malik has been appointed SAPM for overseas Pakistanis, vice admiral (retired) Iftekhar Rao as an advisor on maritime affairs, TV anchor and writer Wasih Shah on tourism, and Syeda Arifa Zehra as an advisor on federal education and professional training. Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Yasin married Pakistani artist Mushaal in Rawalpindi in 2009. The

two met while Yasin was on a tour of Pakistan in 2005.

Mushaal and her daughter reside in Islamabad. Born in 1985, Mushaal graduated from the London School of Economics. Yasin was sentenced to life imprisonment by a trial court in a terror funding case in May.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has approached the Delhi High Court seeking the death penalty for Yasin, who is serving his sentence in Tihar Jail in Delhi.

## Google introduces AI-based 'Memories' view for Photos



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Google has introduced a new 'Memories' view for the photo sharing and storage service 'Google Photos'.

"We're introducing the new Memories view, a home for your memories that is automatically curated and organised with the help of AI, "the tech giant said in a blogpost on Tuesday. The company describes the new view as a "scrapbook-like timeline" that allows users to easily relive, customise and share their most memorable trips, celebrations and daily moments with their loved ones. The Memories view is currently rolling out in the US and will be available globally in the coming months.

"You can rename your memories to make them recognisable and reflect the meaning and feeling of the moment," the tech giant added. Users can also let Photos provide a set of customised title suggestions created with generative AI by using the 'Help me title' button. If users don't like what they see, they can edit the suggested titles or ask for more options. Users can even steer the suggestions toward important details to include by selecting the 'Add hint' button. "This is an experimental feature from Google Labs and will initially be available to select accounts in the US, " the company said.

The tech giant further mentioned that users will now be able to co-author their memories with others.

Moreover, the company will soon add the ability to share memories as videos.

## Ex-US President Donald Trump indicted in fourth case

**WASHINGTON:** Former US President Donald Trump was charged along with 18 alleged accomplices in connection with attempts to overturn the 2020 presidential election count in the state of Georgia.

Late Monday night, Trump was charged with 13 counts, including violating Georgia state's racketeering act. The other charges were about soliciting a public officer, conspiring to impersonate a public officer, conspiring to commit forgery in the first degree and conspiring to file false documents.

Besides Trump, the others who were indicted included the former President personal attorney Rudy Giuliani and many members of his legal team who led efforts to overturn the 2020 election outcome not only in Georgia but also other states, which are not included in the Monday indictment, such as Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and



Michigan. Those indicted, including the former president, have until Friday to surrender. These charges emerged from an investigation launched by Georgia's Fulton County district attorney Fani Willis into a phone call from Trump to Georgia's Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger in January 2020. "What I want to do is this," Trump said in the call with Raffensperger, according to the recording. "I just want to find, uh, 11, 780 votes, which is one more than (the 11, 779 vote margin of defeat) we have, because we won the state."

The Fulsome County indictment is the fourth for the former president, following, in the order listed, charges of paying off an adult film star to keep quiet about an affair (filed by New York City), mishandling official papers from his presidency (filed by Justice Department), conspiring to overturn the 2020 presidential election (filed by the Justice Department). The former president has countered these indictments by calling them politically motivated, to prevent him, the leading candidate for the Republican nomination for the 2024 president election. Trump has already been charged by federal prosecutors in Washington D.C. with conspiring to overturn the 2020 election, which he lost to incumbent President Joe Biden.

The former President has pleaded not guilty in all the cases.

## India moves a step closer to collar 26/11 accused Tahawwur Rana after ruling by US court

**NEW DELHI:** In what brings 26/11 terror attack accused Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana closer to extradition to India, a US court has denied the writ of habeas corpus filed by him.

The denial has paved the way for US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to issue a certification for him to be extradited to India where he is facing a trial for his alleged involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. "The court has denied Tahawwur Rana's petition for writ of habeas corpus by a separate order," read orders by Judge Dale S Fischer, United States District Judge, Central District of California. During the recently concluded monsoon session of the Indian parliament the Home Minister Amit Shah had informed the House that Tahawwur Rana would face the Indian judiciary soon.

Rana has filed an appeal against



the order and sought a stay on his extradition to India till the time his appeal in the Ninth Circuit Court is heard. He had filed "writ of habeas corpus" in June this year challenging a court order that acceded to the request of the US government that the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks accused be extradited to India. The special public prosecutor of the 26/11 case Ujjwal Nikam said that it was a great diplomatic success and a major blow to terrorism. "With extradition almost finalised, we now need to decide which court he will be tried, whether in the NIA court at Delhi or elsewhere, those questions will be decided by the investigating agency," Said Nikam.

Justice Fischer in his rejection order said that he didn't find any solid grounds as Rana has only made two basic arguments in the writ. First, he claims that, pursuant to the treaty, he cannot be extradited because India plans to prosecute him for the same acts for which he was charged and acquitted in a United States court. Second, he argues that the government has not established that there is probable cause to believe that Rana committed the Indian offenses for which he is expected to stand trial, the judge said.

"Given that, even if (David) Headley's testimony were the entire basis for the probable cause finding, it would be sufficient for the purposes of habeas review because it constitutes some competent evidence supporting the finding. For the reasons stated above, Rana's petition for a writ of habeas corpus is DENIED," the judge wrote.

## Musk calls Indian-American Ramaswamy a "promising candidate"



**WASHINGTON:** Billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk on Friday praised Indian-American Republican presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy, calling him a "promising candidate".

Sharing a video of Ramaswamy's interview with political commentator and talk show host Tucker Carlson on X (formerly Twitter), Musk said: "He is a very promising candidate." Ramaswamy, who is the youngest presidential candidate at 38, entered the now crowded Republican presidential nomination contest as an outsider in February. He is now positioned at number three, just after former president Donald Trump and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. The tech entrepreneur has the support of 9 per cent of leaders within the Republican Party, while Trump has a staggering 47 per cent, followed by 19 per cent for Ron DeSantis. Known to mince no words, Ramaswamy has said that China is the biggest threat that the US faces and that he would go for "complete decoupling" with Beijing if voted to power. He has even vowed to "promptly" pardon Trump if elected to the White House next year, and has even earned praises from the former President for doing well in a Republican Primary poll. Meanwhile, Ramaswamy and other Republican rivals are actively preparing for the Republican Party's first 2024 presidential debate next week.

## In a historic win, Sikh graduates US Marine boot camp with articles of faith

**NEW YORK:** A Sikh army recruit, who fought a two-year-long legal battle to keep his articles of faith, has graduated from the US Marine Corps recruit training with his turban, beard and unshorn hair, paving way for religious freedom in the American military.

Jaskirat Singh, who was shipped off for boot camp in May, graduated on August 11 after three months of hard training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

"I am honored to serve my country in the Marine Corps, and proud that I was able to do so while respecting my Sikh faith," Jaskirat was cited as saying in a Sikh Coalition release.

"I hope that my graduation sends a clear message to other young Sikhs who are consider-



ing military service: Your faith does not have to be a barrier to any career," he said.

"He was a squad leader throughout training," Major Joshua Pena, a spokesman for the Marine Corps Training and Education Command, told Military.com.

"He met all the standards. He's a Marine... We're really

excited to see what he does with his career," Major Pena added.

Jaskirat, along with Aekash Singh and Milaap Singh Chahal, had sued the US government in April last year after the Marine Corps offered an accommodation that would require Sikhs to surrender their turbans and beards while at boot camp.

## Sri Lanka thanks India for helping to protect airspace, sea

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka has thanked India for helping to protect the island nation's airspace and the sea including its exclusive economic zone through maritime and coastal surveillance operations.

The gratitude towards India came on Wednesday from Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe's senior Advisor on National Security Sagala Ratnayaka when he was accepting a successor Indian Navy Dornier aircraft handed over to the Sri Lanka Air Force. The Dornier-228 maritime surveillance aircraft will replace the one which was handed over exactly a year ago to the island nation by the Indian government. The Dornier had to be returned to India for scheduled mandatory maintenance.

Following a request by Sri Lanka during a bilateral security discussion on the potential acquisition of maritime surveil-



lance aircraft between India and Sri Lanka in January 2018 in New Delhi, the Dornier which was part of the Indian Navy's fleet was given to Sri Lanka on free of cost for a span of two years. Ratnayaka appreciated India's support, especially during the financial crisis Sri Lanka was going through last year and said "India stepped up beyond the call of duty to lend us a hand". He also stressed that the two neighbours, Sri Lanka and India, "will have to work together to ensure the safety of each other". He also recalled that the US and Australian governments also came forward in the area of maritime security to

assist the Sri Lanka Air Force and the Sri Lanka Navy.

Indian High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Gopal Baglay said that India has remained committed towards capacity building and sustained development of Sri Lanka's Defence forces, as a reflection of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' (SAGAR).

He also said that this engagement would be further cemented by sourcing additional Dornier aircraft by Sri Lanka with Indian assistance in the future. Baglay emphasised that the Indian Navy Dornier deployed last year made a significant contribution towards maritime reconnaissance and SAR missions in Sri Lanka. "The aircraft's operational availability was impressive and was able to streamline the SOPs between the two services."

## PCB releases new video with Imran Khan after backlash

SUNIL THAPLIYAL  
New Delhi

Pakistan has never failed to insult its hero, be it in sports, academics, politics or any other field. The most recent example of such disrespect was when the Pakistan Cricket Board released a promotional video for Pakistan Cricket ahead of the upcoming World Cup and left out its greatest cricketer and only World Cup captain, Imran Khan. However, after heavy criticism on social media and in the sport, the PCB responded with an improved video showing clips of Imran Khan carrying the 1992 World Cup trophy after winning the final.

Wasim Akram, a well-known Pakistan cricket hero, expressed disappointment that the PCB removed cricket icon Imran Khan from a film commemorating the national team's historic achievements since its inception in 1952. Since the release of the video, the PCB has been met with outrage. Many called for the removal of the video as one of the sport's biggest personali-



ties is not featured in it.

Akram expressed his feelings on the social network X, formerly known as Twitter. While pointing out political differences, He stressed that Khan's important contribution to cricket cannot be overlooked. He demanded that the PCB apologise for the mistake.

"Regardless of political differences, Imran Khan remains a

global cricket icon who transformed Pakistan into a formidable power in his era and gave us a direction," he said. The PCB should immediately remove the video and apologise," Akram demanded.

The two-minute and 21-second video, released on August 14, tells the story of Pakistan's debut in international cricket in 1952, winning the 1992 World Cup and making it to the final

of the 2022 T20 World Cup. The Pakistan team, led by Babar Azam, made it to the final of the 2022 T20 World Cup. Making history is not just a one-day game, as the description of the video says. The Pakistan cricket team has left a lasting legacy."

The film features players like Javed Miandad, Wasim Akram, Shoaib Akhtar, Waqar Younis, Shahid Afridi and Babar as well as footage from the 1992 World Cup final, 2009 T20 World Cup final and 2017 Champions Trophy final.

Khan, widely regarded as one of Pakistan's most successful captains, led the national team to its only World Cup victory in 1992. He also played a crucial role in nurturing cricketing legends like Akram, Waqar Younis and Moin Khan.

Former cricketer and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was convicted in the Toshakhana case. The Islamabad court sentenced Imran to three years in prison and fined him one lakh rupees. Since then, he has been serving his sentence in Attock Jail.

## Oscar Winners Offer £1 Million to Prince William to Promote Plant-Based Food in Earthshot Prize

Prince William was recently seen serving sustainable burgers with vegetables grown in India for the promotion of the Earthshot prize.

Three Oscar winners are among the celebrities who have written to Prince William and Earthshot Prize council members urging them to include a new category that rewards plant-based food innovators for their role in protecting the planet.

Animal agriculture is a leading cause of deforestation, habitat destruction, wildlife loss, species extinction, freshwater use, land use, climate breakdown, water pollution, and air pollution. Recognising the severity of the impact of this industry on the planet, Earthshot Prize council member Sir David Attenborough has already urged the public: "We must change our diet. The planet can't support billions of meat-eat-



ers." Currently, there are five Earthshot Prize categories: protect and restore nature; clean our air; revive our oceans; build a waste-free world, and; fix our climate. "Yet," the letter says, "these five Earthshots fall short of what's fundamentally necessary to preserve our planet. They neglect one challenge that we simply have to address. Without doing so, we can't effectively fight climate

change, restore nature, clean our air, revive our oceans, eliminate waste, or achieve our UN Sustainable Development Goals. That challenge is to: Advance a plant-based food system."

The Earthshot Prize was founded by the UK's Prince William in 2021 and awards £1 million to the winners of each environmental category. Previous winners have included Khyeti, a sustain-

able farming start-up from Hyderabad and Takachar, who was awarded the prize money for their biomass converter. Two more innovators from India were also finalists in 2021. But to date, Earthshot has overlooked the role of animal farming in the multiple environmental crises we face.

Dame Emma Thompson, Olivia Colman, and Mark Rylance have joined Sharon Osbourne, Annie Lennox, Alicia Silverstone, Benjamin Zephaniah, Deborah Meaden, Chris Packham, James Moore, Gemma Whelan, Edie Falco, and George Monbiot not only to urge Earthshot to include a new plant-based category for its awards, but to offer the £1 million prize fund for that category. The prize fund for the proposed 'Advance a Plant-Based Food System' category is to be donated by international NGO Generation Vegan.





Members of the Sikh community take part in a prayer meet known as Ardas to remember the victims of 1947 partition and to pay tributes at the Akal Takht, Sikhs highest temporal seat, inside Sri Harmandir Sahib complex on Wednesday. Around 10 lakh Punjab men, women and children were killed during the Partition of Punjab between India and Pakistan in 1947. PHOTOS: PRABHJOT GILL

# Tarsem Jassar Transforms into Witty & Courageous in MASTANEY releasing on August 25

KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

Entertainment enthusiasts around the world are eagerly counting down the days as "Mastaney," a spellbinding cinematic masterpiece, gears up for its highly anticipated release on August 25, 2023. With acclaimed actor Tarsem Jassar stepping into the mesmerizing role of "Zahoor", this film promises to redefine heroism and courage on the silver screen. In "Mastaney," Tarsem Jassar takes on the captivating persona of Zahoor, a character whose wit, humour, and indomitable spirit are set to captivate audiences like never before. As Zahoor finds himself thrust into a world brimming with intrigue and peril, he embarks on a journey that challenges his very identity and tests the limits of his bravery. "Mastaney" explores the essence of identity, bravery, and the indomitable human spirit. Tarsem Jassar's impeccable portrayal brings Zahoor's journey to life, leaving audiences awestruck. Brace yourselves for a captivating narrative that delves into the uncharted territories of love and valour. Tarsem Jassar, the lead actor, is delighted to share their experience. "It is definitely a proud moment for me to play

this role. We have heard about our unsung heroes, our Gurus, our warriors fighting for the rights of the Sikh community. Their sacrifices, bravery, their kindness I mean everything which even today make Sikhs outshine worldwide. We have tried showing our youth and making them connect with their own brave roots. It's truly

an honour for me to play such a character." Presented by Vehli Janta Films and Omjee's Cine World, "Mastaney" is a collaborative project produced by Manpreet Johal alongside Aashu Munish Sahni. The film is written and directed by the brilliant Sharan Art. The "Mastaney" trailer offers a glimpse into the extraordinary world created by the talented team, featuring a stellar cast that includes Tarsem Jassar, Simi Chahal, Gurpreet Ghuggi, Karanjit Anmol, Rahul Dev, Arif Zakariya, Avtar Gill, Honey Mattu, and Baninder Bunny.



## POTPOURRI

### Salman, Bhagyashree to launch Rajveer, Paloma's title track from 'Dono'



**NEW DELHI :** Salman Khan and Bhagyashree, the stars who redefined the concept of love in 1989 with the film 'Maine Pyar Kiya' are all set to launch the title track of the upcoming film 'Dono', starring debutant actors Rajveer Deol and Paloma.

Rajveer is the younger son of Bollywood star Sunny Deol, while Paloma is the daughter of Poonam Dhillon. It is also the directorial debut of Avnish S. Barjatya, son of veteran director Sooraj R. Barjatya. For its 59th Film Production, 'Dono', Rajshri is in association with Jio Studios. 'Dono' has set the promise of it being an innocent love story, dealing with the urban issues of romance and relationships with its clutter-breaking teaser. The formula of a romance saga with debutant actors capturing the pulse of a generation is 'Dono's' vibe right now. Back in 1989, Rajshri's 'Maine Pyar Kiya' had the same vibe. It made Salman everyone's Prem and gave us the unforgettable Suman in Bhagyashree. The couple took the nation by storm and went on to create path breaking box office records for a debutant film! Thirty three years later, Sooraj Barjatya's son - Avnish is all set to take this legacy forward! Salman and Bhagyashree will together launch the title track of 'Dono' on August 16, crowning Rajveer and Paloma as the new Rajshri romantic pair. This will be the first song to come from 'Dono's' anticipated album done by Shankar-Ehsan-Loy. Directed by Avnish, and produced by Kamal Kumar Barjatya, Late Rajkumar Barjatya, and Ajit Kumar Barjatya. Creative Production is led by Sooraj R. Barjatya. Set against the backdrop of a lavish destination wedding, 'Dono' deals with urban relationship conflicts of self-worth. It is the story of Dev (Rajveer), friend of the bride, who meets Meghna (Paloma), friend of the groom, and an unexpected bond is made.

## Tiranga : The symbol of Freedom, Pride and Emotion

KAVITA SHARMA New Delhi

Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan India will celebrate 77 years of its Independence this 15th August. Ahead of this day preparations are in full swing around the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi have urged the citizens to participate in "Har Ghar Tiranga" Movement and upload a photo with it between 13th and 15 August. The shops in the market are flooded with Flags of all sizes and everybody is purchasing the flag to hoist in their offices, shops, balconies and premises. Seeing the excitement of Tiranga in the hearts of the people, I spoke to various people of the society. Anuj Tiwari, a Shopkeeper in Noida said the demand of flag is at its peak since the Flag campaign has been launched. Last year also the sale of Flags increased 20% more than normal and this year also we run short of flags every day. Right



from school, colleges, offices and homes everyone wants to put tricolor flag at their places, we have sold around 1500 flags in last one week, says Satish Arora another shopkeeper in Delhi. Earlier I used to sell only 100-150 flags but now after the Tiranga campaign, the sale is increased, I have sold 2000 flags till now and sale is still on, says Meenu Sharma.

The feeling of patriotism rules the heart of every Indian irrespective of their caste, culture and religion. For an Urdu Poet Aziz Ahmed, Tiranga is love. When I asked him what Tiranga means to him, he said "Marjaun kahin Bhi, wahin mujhko dafan kar dena, Mere watan ke tiranga ko bas mera kafan kar dena". A school teacher Anamika Sharma says, I have deep respect for Indian Flag, it gives me an immense pride to hoist flag in my balcony. For an Advocate Hilaluddin Khan, Tiranga is always in his car, he does not need Independence day or Republic day to show respect for the Flag. For students of Delhi University Tiranga means Dignity and Bravery.

### Flag Code of India

As a part of the Har Ghar Tiranga campaign, it is also important to understand the Flag

Code of India. To make access to the National Flag easier for the people, the Flag Code of India was amended by the government in July 2022. It consists of set laws concerning the use, display and hoisting at Public or Private places. The amendments made by the government of India allowed the display of the Flag both day and Night and that too in the open, but earlier it was to be flown between sunrise and sunset.

### Dos and Don't of National Flag at Home

- ❑ The tricolor on display should be placed distinctly.
- ❑ A damaged Flag should never be displayed. The Flag should be proper condition.
- ❑ The Tricolor should never be placed in inverted form, The saffron band should be at the top.

## Town in Haryana having more than 25 wrestling nurseries



SATISH HANDA Rohtak

Rohtak district having more than 25 'Akhadas' in the area at present has been emerged as a nursery of national and international wrestlers in past years having large number of renowned wrestlers, both males and females brought honour for the state as well as for the country and bagged large number of medals in national as well as international level games including Olympic, World Championship, Commonwealth Games, Asian Championship and SAF Games. That was the time when there were no gymnasium and offering only basic facilities such as a hall, mats and a rope and wrestlers were having training at private gymnasiums

by paying from their own pockets. With the passage of time the craze for wrestling increased not only in the country but also across the world. The stadiums at Rohtak have produced wrestlers who have made their presence felt in prestigious global sporting events such as the Olympics, Asian Championships, Commonwealth Games and SAF Games, besides participating in various national, state and inter-university sports competitions. Presently, there is great enthusiasm for wrestling among local youths, especially girls since after 2010 and now there are more than 100 wrestlers in Haryana state including around 50 girls undergoing training in different 'Akhadas' at Rohtak. International

wrestler Sakshi Malik is also a product of the famous Chhotu Ram Stadium at Rohtak who won medal in wrestling in 2016 for the country. She won a bronze medal in wrestling at the Rio Olympics in 2016, a silver medal in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014 and a bronze medal in the Doha Senior Asian Championship in 2015. Not only male and female wrestlers from Haryana, but also male youths of both sexes from other states Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are visiting wrestling nurseries at Rohtak. Among few prominent names of female wrestlers include Pooja Gehlot, Manisha, Ritu Malik, Tina, Mansi, Annu, Jyoti, Neetu, Reena, Pinki Malik, Rekha Rani, Shiksha, Sudesh, Rakhi and Mansi who had training at the Rohtak stadium for the past four or five years and attribute their success to coach Mandeep and bagged Gold, Silver and Bronze medals for the country in National and International championships. Director (Sports and Youth Affairs) said that wrestlers from the Rohtak stadium are doing very well at the national and international events and the state government is committed to facilitating sports persons and working for their betterment.



Indian army personnel rescue Residents shift to a safer place from a flood-affected area as the swollen Beas river inundated nearby areas following heavy monsoon rains, near Kapurthala district, some 60kms north-west of Jalandhar on Friday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL



BSF personnel rescue villagers from a flood-affected area as the swollen Beas river inundated nearby areas following heavy monsoon rains, near Ferozepur district of Punjab on Friday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL



National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel rescue villagers from a flood-affected area as the swollen Beas river inundated nearby areas following heavy monsoon rains, near Ferozepur district of Punjab on Friday. PHOTO: PRABHJOT GILL

## Delhi court allows Jacqueline to fly abroad sans prior permission

**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi court has modified the bail conditions for Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez, who is one of the accused in the Rs 200 crore money laundering case in which jailed 'conman' Sukesh Chandrasekhar is the prime accused. The court has allowed her to leave the country without prior permission, as long as she informs the court and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) three days prior to her departure. The decision was made by Special Judge Shailendra Malik, who recognised that Jacqueline's professional commitments necessitate frequent overseas travel. The judge noted that Jacqueline has never misused her bail conditions and that the initial requirement for prior permission could hinder her career opportunities. The court noted that Jacqueline, a Sri Lankan citizen residing in India since 2009, has consistently paid income tax and has not violated any bail



conditions. The modification comes in response to Jacqueline's application stating that seeking court approval for travel often leads to financial losses and reputational implications due to the time-consuming processes. Jacqueline has claimed that being an actor of international acclaim, she frequently engages in film shooting, appears at events, participates in various award functions etc., which are indispensable for her professional occupations and livelihood.



Border Security Force (BSF) personnel exchange sweets during a ceremony to celebrate Indian Independence Day at the India-Pakistan joint border check post of Attari-Wagah border, about 35 kilometers (22 miles) from Amritsar on August 15. PHOTOS: PRABHJOT GILL

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