

REGION

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ED SEARCHES LOCATIONS LINKED TO DELHI AAP MLA AMANATULLAH KHAN



Enforcement Directorate till October 13. The ED's money laundering case stems from the CBI FIR. According to the CBI and the ED, irregularities were committed while modifying the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22 and undue favours were extended to licence holders. The Delhi government had implemented the excise policy on November 17, 2021, but scrapped it at the end of September 2022 amid allegations of corruption.

FW CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Friday agreed to list during the day a plea by AAP leader Sanjay Singh against his arrest in a money laundering case related to alleged irregularities in the scrapped Delhi excise policy. The matter was mentioned for urgent hearing by a lawyer for the Rajya Sabha MP before a bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Sanjeev Narula. Singh's lawyer said proper grounds of arrest were not provided to him. Alright, the court said. On October 10, a trial court had remanded Singh, arrested earlier this month, to the custody of the

BANKING & FINANCE

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G20 MINISTERIAL FOR SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION OF ROADMAP TO DEAL WITH CRYPTO ASSETS



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that government schools in the national capital will host large-scale Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) on October 13 and 14, urging all parents to be part of this initiative. Kejriwal encouraged parents to visit their children's schools and engage with teachers to discuss their students' progress and explore ways to further enhance their educational journey. In a post on a social media platform, AAP's national convenor emphasized the substantial impact parents have on their children's success, designating these two days as 'Parents' Day' in both Delhi Government and MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) schools. He extended an invitation to parents to join the Mega-PTMs, which are taking place over these two days in all Delhi government and MCD schools, and encouraged them to openly converse with teachers about their children's progress and how to collectively improve their future prospects. Kejriwal emphasized the ongoing partnership between parents and educators, fostering a collaborative approach for the future. The Department of Education (DoE) also stressed the importance of the parent-teacher partnership in a student's overall development through a circular, highlighting the crucial role that PTMs play in facilitating this connection.

FW CORRESPONDENT
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Kejriwal urges parents to attend 2 days delhi's school PTM



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POTPOURRI

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WORLD, OLYMPIC AND ASIAN CHAMPION NEERAJ CHOPRA APPOINTED LAUREUS AMBASSADOR



E-commerce MSMEs from Non-Metro cities receive higher Diwali orders this season



NEW DELHI: MSMEs from non-metro cities are clocking more Diwali orders this year than sellers from metro cities, as per a report by Tech-enabled logistics platform and unicorn Shiprocket. The report unveiled that the e-commerce opportunity could be at a staggering USD 13 billion for the Indian MSMEs during the festive season. It noted that with e-commerce gaining traction, it anticipates around 10-15 per cent of the total order volume to be attributed to first-time shoppers. Shiprocket estimates the Indian e-commerce opportunity will be at a staggering USD 13-billion for the Indian MSMEs during the festive season, it said. Observing that as much as 56 per cent of its order volume originates from non-metro cities, the platform said this underscores the rapid adoption of online shopping and digital transactions in smaller towns and rural areas. In this spirit, MSMEs from tier-2, tier-3 and tier-4 cities are expecting higher Diwali gift orders than sellers from metro cities, it stated. Shiprocket said it anticipates that around 10-15 per cent of the total order volume will be attributed to first-time shoppers, adding that Delhi NCR leads the charge with a commanding 28 per cent share of festive sales, closely followed by Mumbai at 13 per cent and Bengaluru at 7 per cent, as observed in the festive sales data. With Delhi NCR being a thriving business environment, including a high number of MSMEs, this economic activity is fuelling consumer spending during the festive season, the platform said. Shiprocket further said it is also witnessing a rise in festive exports from India with leading categories for global exports including artificial jewellery, beauty and grooming, clothing and accessories, healthcare, books, automotive accessories, home furnishings and decor, and pet supplies. This demand is mostly driven by the US, the UK, Germany, Australia, Canada, France and the UAE, it said.

'No frenzy on Israel Hamas conflict', warns Yogi Adityanath

NEW DELHI: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered stringent action against any person who tries to whip up a frenzy by making comments contrary to India's stand on Israel-Hamas conflict. The chief minister also warned the district police chiefs of action in instances of obscene songs and loud music being played in Shobha Yatras and at religious places. Yogi gave the directives while reviewing the government's preparation for the festive season and Mission Shakti rollout on Thursday evening. Referring to the ongoing Israel-Palestine war, he told the police officials to stay in touch with religious leaders to ensure that no statements or action is done against the Indian stance on the issue. He asked the officials to monitor statements being made on social media or from places of worship. "If somebody makes a deliberate statement on this issue not in line with the stand of India, then strict action should be taken against him/her immediately," he said. In the wake of upcoming festivals of Navratri, Durga Puja, Dussehra, Diwali and Chhath, Yogi Adityanath said, all staff -- from beat constable to electricity in charge and every officer, including the district police chief -- must remain in the field. The people must be assured of their security. He added that due to planned efforts in the past years, loudspeakers installed at religious places were removed, but information about their re-installation is being received from some areas.

Retail Inflation down to Three-Month Low in September : Report



NEW DELHI : India's retail inflation is down to a three-month low of 5.02 in September, mainly due to food prices, according to the government data released on Thursday. As per the data, inflation has come back to the Reserve Bank's comfort level of below 6 per cent after a gap of two months. The inflation based on the consumer price index (CPI) was 6.83 per cent in August and 7.41 per cent in September 2022. The data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed that the manufacturing sector's output increased by 9.3 per cent in August 2023.

The previous low was in June this year when the reading stood at 4.87 per cent. According to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the inflation in the food basket came down to 6.56 per cent in September from 9.94 per cent in the preceding month. India's factory output, as measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), has meanwhile come in at 10.3 per cent for the month of August 2023. A year ago for the same period, the reading was at 0.7 per cent. The data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) showed that the manufacturing sector's output increased by 9.3 per cent in August 2023.

Stricter scrutiny of firms doing Business with China & Pakistan



NEW DELHI : The central government has stiffened economic security regulations by barring direct participation of both domestic and overseas corporate entities having any "commercial arrangement" with hostile countries such as China and Pakistan, two people aware of the matter told to media on Wednesday. According to the officials this information has been communicated to all states. The government has already amended its July 2020 order, making prior screening and registration mandatory for all those bidders who have any commercial arrangement with entities of countries that share a land border with India, they told to media requesting anonymity. Without naming any particular country, the government on July 23, 2020 restricted purchases for public projects from companies in countries that share a land border with India, citing national security. The Union government has recently sent a missive to all states, directing them to seek approval before having any business relationship with hostile neighbouring countries due to increased security concerns, they said. The communication has been sent to all chief secretaries recently after it was noticed that some private firms located in certain states were trying to engage Chinese contractors in infrastructure projects, one of them said. The chief secretary is often the top bureaucrat and principal executive officer in a state. The decision was taken on the basis of security inputs received from agencies much before the October 7 terror attack in Israel, a second person said.

There is no reason why India cannot take back 'Sindhu': Yogi Adityanath

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that if Shri Ram Janmabhoomi can be taken back after 500 years, there is no reason why India cannot take back 'Sindhu' - the Sindhi province, now in Pakistan. According to a press statement issued by the state government late on Sunday night, the Chief Minister, while addressing the two-day National Sindhi Convention, said: "After 500 years, a grand temple of Lord Ram is being constructed in Ayodhya. Ram Lalla will be seated again in his temple by the Prime Minister in January. If Ram Janmabhoomi can be taken back after 500 years, there is no reason why we cannot take back Sindhu." Yogi Adityanath's remarks drew a resounding applause, the statement said. The Chief Minister also said the Sindhi community needs to tell its present generation about its history and added that the community suffered the most after the partition. He further said that the stubbornness of just one person led to the partition. "When the

partition of the country took place, lakhs of people were massacred. A large area of India became Pakistan. The Sindhi community suffered the most as it had to leave its motherland. Even today, we have to bear the brunt of the tragedy of partition in the form of terrorism." He said: "If we have to move forward on the path of the welfare of humanity, then the evil tendencies of the society will have to end. Our religious scriptures also give us the same inspiration. Be it respected Jhulelal ji or Lord Shri Krishna, everyone has talked about protecting the good and eliminating the evil for human welfare."

Delhi High Court dismisses plea by NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha

NEW DELHI : Delhi High Court on Friday dismissed the pleas moved by NewsClick founder and editor-in-chief Prabir Purkayastha and HR head Amit Chakravarty challenging their arrest and remand in a Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) case following allegations that the news portal was given money to spread pro-China propaganda. A single-judge bench of Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, after considering the contents of the remand application, said, "It appears that the substratum of the allegations which would comprise the reasons for arrest is indeed contained in the said application." The court said that it was undisputed that the remand application was given in writing to Purkayastha's counsel during the remand proceedings within 24 hours of his arrest. The court also said that it was not disputed that Purkayastha's counsel had participated in the remand proceedings and had opposed the

same "though telephonically directly to the special judge". The high court further observed that nothing was placed on record to demonstrate that the timelines averred in Purkayastha's plea were factually correct. The court said that while Purkayastha contended that the FIR copy was given to him only after he filed a plea making such a request before the special judge, who allowed the same on October 5, there is "not a single whisper" on what transpired in respect of the plea raising objections against the remand which was filed on October 4. The high court said that grounds of arrest were conveyed to Purkayastha "as soon as may be" after the arrest. The court said that there was no "procedural infirmity or violation of the provisions of the Section 43B of the UAPA or the Article 22(1) of the Constitution of India" and the arrest was in accordance with the law. The court was also of the view that while there may be similarities in certain portions



of the language, however, Section 19(2) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) is not "pari materia" (on same subject/matter) with Section 43B of the UAPA. The high court said that as per sections 19(1) and (2) of the PMLA, unless the reasons are recorded in writing the arrest would be void. "It is pertinent to observe that no such provision is present in section 43B of UAPA, where "reasons to believe", for the purposes of arrest, need not be recorded in writing. This is the distinction drawn between provisions of section 19(1) & (2) of PMLA on the one hand and section 43A & 43B of UAPA on the other," the high court said. The court said that the Supreme Court's decision in the case involving M3M directors Pankaj Bansal and Basant Bansal came in the particular facts of that case on the "disparate procedure conveying the grounds of arrest". "It has also passed the said judgement directing that it would be necessary henceforth,

no similar legal obligation cast upon the authorities under sections 43A and 43B and thus, the Supreme Court decision in the M3M directors' case is not "squarely applicable" to a UAPA case. "Thus considering the aforesaid analysis of the law as also the judgements of the Supreme Court, it is held that the grounds of arrest need to be informed to the arrestee within 24 hours of such arrest, however furnishing of such grounds, in written, are not mandated by the UAPA. Keeping in view the law laid down by the Supreme Court in Pankaj Bansal (supra), and also considering the stringent provisions of UAPA, it would be advisable that the respondent, henceforth, provide grounds of arrest in writing, though after redacting what in the opinion of the respondent would constitute "sensitive material". This too would obviate, as held by the Supreme Court, any such challenge to the arrest as made in the present case," the high court said. With respect to UAPA, the high court said that there is

On that basis, the impugned arrest orders and the orders of remand passed by the learned Sessions Court were set aside and the appellants therein were directed to be released forthwith" that a copy of such written grounds of arrest is furnished to the arrested person as a matter of course without exception. On that basis, the impugned arrest orders and the orders of remand passed by the learned Sessions Court were set aside and the appellants therein were directed to be released forthwith," the high court said. With respect to UAPA, the high court said that there is

Contribution of Sikh Gurus cannot be repaid for thousands of years says Amit Shah



NEW DELHI : Union Home Minister Amit Shah attended the felicitation programme held by the Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC) on Friday. Lauding the Sikh community at the event, the minister said the contribution of Sikh Gurus to the country cannot be repaid for years. Addressing the gathering at the event, Amit Shah said, "Be it India's freedom struggle, fight against the Mughals or fight against Britishers, partition or sacrificing for the country, the Sikh community has always been one number one." He said the whole world today is following the teachings given by Guru Nanak Dev at a time when all religions were fighting for their respective sects. He praised the Sikh community for moving forward taking both religion and Karma equally. "Under CAA, PM Modi gave citizenship to those Sikh brothers who wanted to come here from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, or Pakistan. This Panth has done so much for the country, society, and humanity. The contribution of Sikh Gurus for this country cannot be paid back for thousands of years," Shah said. The Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee also felicitated the Home Minister at the event. Amit Shah said that it is only Sikh community around the world whose Gurus from Guru Nanak Dev ji to Guru Gobind Singh always raised voice against social injustice and gave sacrifices. He said that he has studied world history and there is no parallel in the world on sacrifice by Sikh Guru Sahiban. He said that Guru Gobind Singh ji sacrificed all his four sons and still said that "char muye to kya hua zivat kayi hazaar" means what if four sons have died many thousands are still alive. He said that only Guru Gobind Singh can that because he considered all humanity his family. Lauding efforts of Sirsa, he told the gathering that he was best advocate for Sikh community and was all set to become their voice. He also honoured Mr. Sirsa on the occasion. Earlier addressing the gathering Mr. Manjinder Singh Sirsa shared in details how Modi government and Mr. Shah have worked for welfare of Sikh community. He said that Modi government has appointed five prominent Sikhs as Chancellors and Vice Chancellors of Central University and head of National Vocational training Institute. He said that Sikh community was indebted to Modi government for all great works done by the government. Sirsa also disclosed that Modi government took decision to train college professors and for this it selected Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College in which Guru Angad Dev ji Teacher Training Institute was established in which more than 80 thousand teachers have got training till date.

AAP workers protest against Sanjay Singh's arrest by ED

NEW DELHI: Following the arrest of AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, the party workers and leaders on Tuesday held a protest in the national Capital. The AAP also claimed that while they were on the way to gherao BJP headquarters, the Delhi Police thrashed party workers and detained hundreds of them. Scores of AAP party workers and leaders also raised slogans "Sanjay Singh sher hai" and "Modi jab-jab darta hai, ED ko aage karta hai." AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak said during the protest that the BJP had got Sanjay Singh arrested in a bogus case because they know that now it is difficult for the saffron party to stop the AAP. "The BJP is misusing institutions like the ED and the CBI for its electoral gains. The BJP is conspiring to destroy the Constitution and democracy. I want to tell the BJP government that



no matter how many fake cases they file against AAP leaders, no matter how many AAP leaders they put in jail, it will not scare us. Now, it is impossible for

them to stop the AAP. "For us, national interest comes first and our fight is to save the Constitution of the country. We will fight against

the BJP dictatorship and end it once and for all," said Pathak. During the protest, AAP MLA Kuldeep Kumar said that for the last 15 months, the ED

and CBI had been investigating a bogus case at the behest of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but they could not find anything. "The Supreme Court also said that if this case goes to the court on basis of the allegations levelled by the ED, it will not last a minute. Even after this, they continue to arrest our leaders. "MP Sanjay Singh is the loudest voice of the poor. He does not hesitate to speak against the Modi government. That's why the Modi government has got him arrested through ED," said Kumar. "The police have beaten our workers brutally even though they were protesting peacefully. Many people received head injuries. They even thrashed the women. This brutality of the police shows that Modi has destroyed the Constitution and democracy," he said.

ED searches locations linked to Delhi AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan



NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday carried out searches at several locations linked to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Amanatullah Khan in the national capital. An ED source confirmed that the agency sleuths were carrying out the searches in the premises linked to Khan. The source said that the agency's actions were in connection with the Waqf Board case. However, officials remained

tight-lipped on the case. The ED action comes in the wake of the CBI and Delhi government's ACB registering the case in the Waqf board. The ACB had arrested Khan, an AAP MLA from the Okhla Assembly constituency in South Delhi in September last year. The action comes days after the ED arrested party Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh last Wednesday in connection with the alleged liquor scam case.

Salaries of Ram temple priests hiked



LUCKNOW: The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Tirath Kshetra Trust has further hiked the salaries of priests performing daily rituals at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. This information was given by Acharya Satyendra Das, head priest of the temple. Now, Das will get Rs 32,900 monthly salary while his four assistants will get Rs 31000 each. Along with Das, five priests perform daily rituals at the makeshift temple in Ram Janmabhoomi.

14 charred to death and 5 injured in fire at cracker warehouse in Bengaluru

ARUN KUMAR RAO Bengaluru
At least 14 people burned to death and more than five hospitalised with injuries after devastating fire broke out at a firecracker warehouse near Attibele, on the Karnataka-Tamilnadu boarder an outskirts of Bengaluru. Rescue operation were on as a total of 20 workers were at the site. The deceased labourers are mostly from neighbouring Tamil Nadu, according to police report. Fire broke out on Saturday evening at the Balaji Traders facility on Attibele Main road, along Bengaluru-Hosur Main Road, while truckload of crackers was being unloaded ahead of the Deepavali festivities. Exact reason behind the blaze was not known, there were speculations about sparks flying around while the crackers boxes were being dumpted, while some said fire could have been triggered by a discarded burning cigarette butt.

Rs. 798.44 cr Return and Compensation amount paid to Contractors due to 12 Toll Plazas closed & exemption on 53 plazas

MANMOHAN SINGH NAULA Mumbai
In March 2016 Maharashtra's 12 Toll Plazas closed down and exemption on 53 plazas, the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) and the Public Work Development (PWD) Departments have to pay Rs. 798.44 crores as compensation & return to the Toll Plaza Contractors, revealed an RTI filed by activist Anil Galgali. Anil Galgali for RTI filed with the Minister of then PWD Chandrakant Patil, asking for information on the Toll Plazas closed and about the exempted ones. Shailendra Borse, Under Secretary & Public Information Officer in the reply dated on March 2016,

stated that out of the total 38 Plazas managed by the PWD 11 were closed and Rs. 226.51 crores was paid to the contractor as full & Final payment. Whereas out of the 53 plazas maintained by the MSRDC only 1 was closed for which the full & Final payment return amounted to Rs. 168 crores. Out of the 19 projects of the PWD in the 27 toll plazas the Car's, Jeep's, State Transport Buses (ST) and School buses were given exemption. But this amounted to return of Rs. 179.69 crores as compensation for Year 2015-16. Similarly for MSRDC's 12 projects which consists of 26 Toll Plazas because of the exemption given to the Cars, Jeep, ST & school buses the compensation for Year 2015-16 amount to return of Rs.

224.24 crores. Closed Toll Plazas Out of 53 Toll Plaza's under the MSRDC only 1 has closed. Because of the closure of one Railway over Bridge (ROB) in Chandrapur, Rs. 168 crore were returned as full & Final payment to the Contractor. And in case of the PWD where 11 Toll Palzas were closed out of the 38, they were identified as Alibaugh-Pen-Khopoli, Vadgaon-Chakan-Shikrapur near Maval 2 toll plazas (Pune), Mohole-Kurul-Kamati-Mandrup, then one at Tembhorni-Kurduwadi-Barshi Latur road at Solapur, Ahmednagar-Karmala Tembhorni Road, Nashik Vani Road, Yaaval-Bhuswal road at Bhusawal and Khamgaon Ring Road.

Haryana IAS officer arrested while accepting Rs 3 lakh bribe

SATISH HANDA
Two Haryana IAS officers arrested in corruption cases only in two days. Chief of Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) Haryana Shatruijit Kapoor while talking to media persons said that nearly one and half dozen senior bureaucrats of IAS and IPS rank allegedly involved in corruption cases are on ACB radar on the direction by Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khatter. According to information by the ACB officials, a middleman and a trader in Panchkula was arrested in the case while ac-



cepting the bribe of Rs 3 lakh against total amount settled Rs 5 lakh, allegedly on behalf of 2009 batch IAS officer who also worked as Deputy Com-

missioner Bhiwani earlier Arya. A case in this regard was lodged on Wednesday against both arrested accused produced in the court on Thursday. The information reveals that the arrest of the IAS officer was not merely based on the statement of the tout. The ACB was following the case after having received a complaint in this case earlier, besides also having other evidence, including some recordings. A day after the arrest of another senior IAS officer Vijay Singh Dahiya in a corruption

case, the Anti-Corruption Bureau Haryana on Wednesday nabbed a second IAS of the state, Jaibir Singh Arya in bribery case. Arya, the Managing Director of Haryana State Warehousing Corporation has been arrested under charges of seeking bribe for sanctioning a transfer of an officer of the corporation as Divisional Manager in Kurukshetra. The money was scheduled to be delivered at a Panchkula shop. Jaibir Arya is among those 38 state civil services officers who were elevated to the IAS cadre in 2019.

Vij assured all assistance for proposal to set up hybrid electric flying car factory in Ambala

SATISH HANDA Ambala
Yogesh Ramanathan, Founder and CEO of Vinata Aeromobility, met Haryana Home and Health Minister Shri Anil Vij at his residence in Ambala, proposing to set up a "Hybrid Electric Flying Car"

factory near the Ring Road in Ambala. Ramanathan, who came from Dubai, deliberates the proposal of setting up a factory in Ambala in detail with Home Minister Anil Vij. He said that the company is to set up the second factory of hybrid electric car in the country and he wants it to be established in Ambala,

Haryana. On this, Home Minister Anil Vij assured CEO Yogesh that Haryana Government will provide all possible assistance in setting up the factory. He asked the company officials to submit the documents related to setting up the factory. It is noteworthy that the Domestic Airport (Civil Enclave)



is going to be established in

Ambala and the foundation stone laying ceremony of the construction work of the Domestic Airport is on the first Navratri on 15th October. Now multi national companies are moving towards Ambala after getting air connectivity. CEO Yogesh Ramanathan thanked the support given by Home

Minister Anil Vij and said that our company is developing Asia's first hybrid flying car. The CEO said that today there was a detailed discussion with Home Minister Anil Vij and he has assured all possible cooperation on the company's proposal. The company will soon proceed with the paperwork to set up the

factory here. CEO Yogesh said that Hybrid Electric Flying Car is the future of mobility that is taking shape as electric vehicles. Flying cars are the future of the world and it has already started in the country also. The company has set up a flying car manufacturing factory in Chennai, which is still small in size.

Budget of Rs 2000 crore would change the structure of government schools in Haryana

SATISH HANDA New Delhi
Government in the centre has sanctioned an amount worth Rs 2013 crore for face-lifting the structure and upgrade the standard of education in 3893 government schools functioning in Haryana state. Sanjiv Kaushal, Chief Secretary Haryana, while talking to media persons said that the state government will focus in this respect since most of the educational institutes located in rural areas are facing severe neglect as well as shortage of teachers in imparting education as well as provide basic structure to the students. He said, a decision has been taken



that during the first stage as many as 124 senior and middle schools would be given 'PM Shree' status on which amount worth Rs 85 crore 27 lakh will be spent. He said that students will be provided special train-

ing in different fields including cyber crimes, personality development, self-security for the development of a strong future for a which budget for an amount worth Rs 10 crore 75 lakh has been sanctioned.

Sanjiv Kaushal said that programmes for self-defence by the female students would be introduced in 4098 schools in Haryana state. Chief Secretary said, there will be a provision for supply of sanitary pads free of cost to the female students in the schools for which amount worth Rs 39,500 each school has been sanctioned for the purchase of SPVI machine initially for 1304 schools across the state for which budget for amount worth Rs 5.5 crore has been approved by the government. He said, the state government has already purchased as many as 350 machines and procurement for the purchase

of another 464 machines is under process. He said that the School Learning Acceleration Programme for female students in Nuh district is being started by the Mewat Development Agency for which amount worth Rs 7 crore for 805 primary schools and amount worth Rs 1 crore 13 lakh for 127 middle schools has been released by the government. Sanjiv Kaushal said that Rs 300 monthly allowance is being provided to every handicapped student apart from an monthly amount up to Rs 200 is being provided to each physically-handicapped students unfit to walk. enabling such students to attend the school.

Two illegal drug de-addiction centres busted at Kharkhoda and Ambala, 69 inmates rescued

SATISH HANDA Sonipat
Two illegal drug de-addiction centres in Haryana at Kharkhoda in Sonipat district and at village Matehri Shekhan near Ambala City illegally running without having license and docor were detected by the health department and the police in past couple of days in which 37 drug addicted youths under treatment were rescued at Kharkhoda and 32 youths were rescued at Matehri Shekhan respectively. CM Flying Squad team accompanied by health department team jointly conducted a surprise raid on an information and preliminary investigation revealed that the drug addicted youths lodged in Kharkhoda illegal centre was run by a police head constable Sonu Hooda working in the Ganaur police station along with another companion and youths lodged in the centre were often ill treated and also severely beaten.



Sunil Kumar Sub Inspectors accompanied by the duty magistrate Ashok Kumar, Naib Tehsildar told media persons that the organizers of the centre having 37 patients failed to produce any license or availability of a doctor to treat drug addicted patients. There were only 13 beds in the centre and three inmates used to share a single bed during night and the organizers were charging the inmates exorbitantly for fraudulent treatment, investigators revealed. The youths lodged in the centre narrated their pathetic stories how they were brutally treated, manhandled, without having proper food requesting to free them. The alleged irregularities were detected during inspec-

tion based on a tip-off. The centre did not have a valid registration number under the Haryana De-addiction Centres Rules, 2010, Amended 2018, to run a de-addiction centre. Surprisingly, health department team led by Dr Yoginder Goel Deputy CMO during checking by the raiding teams recovered stocks of drugs, intoxicated injections and tablets in the centre which were seized. Meanwhile, ACP Ganaur Gorakh Pal Rana arrived at Ganaur police station in search of police head constable Sonu Hooda but he was found missing during working hours and no body could give any information as regard his whereabouts and the information was passed to the higher authorities. In another case at Ambala, joint teams of the Health Department, District Administration and the Police jointly raided an illegal drug de-addiction centre at village Matehri Shekhan near Ambala City functioning without having a license from the district administration for the past 10 months. The raid continued on Monday for about 10 hours in which the visiting team had a talk with 32 youths lodged in the centre, which included 29 youths from Punjab and one each from Panchkula, Yamunanagar and Pehowa in Kurukshetra district. The youths disclosed to the raiding team how they are mercilessly beaten during night after removing their clothes in the basement so that no one may be able to hear their cries for help and injury marks were also seen on the body of few inmates. Inspector Sunita Dhaka told media persons that there was no doctor available in the drug de-addiction centre run by two persons originally hailing from Rajpura and Patiala. The raiding team had a personal talk with all 32 youths lodged in the centre and also inspected kitchen, toilets and a hall in the basement which were found in the most unhygienic condition harmful for the health. Information reveals that the organizers of the drug de-addiction centre used to charge amounts ranging between Rs 7 to Rs 32 thousand from the inmates lodged in the centre. Sunita Dhaka said that the parents of the youths lodged in the centre were sent messages to take their wards but out of a total number of 32 only 13 parents arrived till Monday night to take the youths.

Three workers found dead in chemical tank at Panipat textile industry

SATISH HANDA Panipat
Three workers of a Panipat textile unit were found dead in a chemical tank of the factory in the Jalapur Industrial area. FIR was registered against three owners of the unit under Sections 302, 34 and 323 of the IPC on Sunday. Family members of workers found dead staged a protest outside the factory on Sunday. The family members held a protest outside the factory and demanded the police to book the owners of the factory on charges of murder. The family members also damaged the window glass of the ambulance at the civil hospital. The family members alleged that the victims were murdered and later their bodies were dumped into the tank to divert police attention. Later, police officials managed to pacify the protesters and they agreed to allow



the postmortem of the bodies. The police said that on the complaint of the family members, an FIR has been registered against the three owners of the unit under Sections 302, 34 and 323 of the Indian Penal Code. Additional superintendent of police Mayank Mishra assured the family members of

fair investigation in the case. The actual cause of the death could be ascertained only after postmortem examination. A probe into the matter is underway, Panipat superintendent of police Ajit Singh Shekhawat said that the FIR has been registered against the owners and the investigation is going on.

Postmaster booked for Rs 4 Crore embezzlement in UP's Mainpuri

MAINPURI: The postmaster of the local post office in the Augautha area in Uttar Pradesh's Mainpuri has been accused of embezzling Rs 4 crore from the accounts of residents of at least 16 villages in the district. The scam was unearthed after several villagers went to the post office to withdraw their savings, but were told there was no money in their accounts. On their complaint, police filed a case against the postmaster under IPC sections 409 (criminal breach of trust by a public servant), 420 (cheating) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy), and started an investigation. Postmaster Omprakash Shakya, who has been working at the post office for several years, is now absconding, said police. The postal department has ordered an internal probe

and suspended four employees for "negligence". Head postmaster of Augautha post office, Vivek Pratap Singh, said, "Our divisional superintendent is monitoring the matter and a probe is underway by officials." Ravi Kumar, an investigating officer, added, "We identified 40 customers who claimed to have lost their money. We are collecting evidence and details of victims." Showing more than a dozen post office certificates of their saving accounts and fixed deposits, some local villagers pointed out that "the scam could be over Rs 4 crore". Station house officer of Mainpuri Kotwali Anil Singh said, "The postal department may have the total number of victims. We are trying to arrest the accused."

INDIAN SPACE CONCLAVE 2023

Exploring opportunities for Indian downstream spacetechnology

FW CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

India's space programme has made significant progress in the past few years with successful missions to the Moon and Mars, and the launch of various commercial satellites, driving growth and innovation.

Deep diving into the potential growth prospects of the Indian space sector, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP, in collaboration with Nasscom and the Indian Space Association (ISPA), launched the "Exploring opportunities for Indian downstream spacetechnology" report at Indian Space Conclave 2023. The report talks about India's booming space economy and collaboration opportunities for the private sector and the government specifically focusing on downstream spacetechnology.

It offers an in-depth, multi-dimensional perspective on the country's space sector. It highlights ways to bridge the gap between space technology and real-world applications while recognising the strategic and dual-use facets combining commercial possibilities with implications for national security and strategy. Primarily sub-segmented within three core



satellite commercial application areas - Remote Sensing/Earth Observation (EO), Positioning, Navigation, and Timing (PNT), and Satellite Communication (SATCOM), the report identifies more than 200 use cases. It also deep dives into ~25 strategic use cases, focusing on earth observation, satellite communication, and positioning/navigation services. These services are poised to drive growth and innovation in the Indian spacetechnology sector in the next five years.

For example, earth observation has found critical applications in agriculture (ranging from crop insurance, yield monitoring, disaster management), and biodiversity conservation

(such as natural resource extraction mining and urban development). Similarly, SATCOM-as-a-service can create multiple applications in areas such as in-flight and remote area connectivity, DTH broadcasting, and augmenting healthcare in the form of telehealth, and tele-education. India's PNT programme, including NavIC, can assume a pivotal role in transportation, communication, and defence. Focusing on comprehensive data aggregation and analysis of space-based data, along with a cross-sectoral and cross-segment approach, has an immense business potential to address real-world problems and unlock value hitherto considered

impossible. The government's role of acting as a catalyst cannot be understated. As technology matures and newer business models are explored to service demands in various sectors within a commercially viable framework, newer service delivery/business models will enable more applications across sectors.

Expressing his aspirations towards the Indian space sector, Sreeram Ananthasayanam, Partner, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP, shares, "The India Space Policy 2023 heralded a pivotal moment, unlocking private capital to bolster public initiatives and igniting a dynamic, competitive space industry. Private enterprises, start-ups, and gov-

ernment initiatives are converging to reshape India's thriving space economy. The downstream space sector has the potential to make a significant impact on India's economy and society. By working together to address the challenges around awareness and adoption to bring an impact at scale, India can position itself to become a global leader in this sector and reap many benefits that it has to offer." Downstream applications are key to generate revenue and impact in the space economy that can support and sustain advancements in other areas. With a focus on innovation, cost-effectiveness, and dynamic growth prospects in areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning, the downstream space sector is a promising frontier for forward-thinking investors.

Marked by the participation of private enterprises and capital in core space activities, the launch of NewSpace in India is primed to redefine industry norms and goals. Lt. Gen. Anil Kumar Bhatt, Director General, ISPA, states, "In the dynamic space arena, India's dual-purpose mission prioritises safeguarding national security and strengthening defence capabilities.

"Indian space economy could grow to \$44 billion by 2033"

FW CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

India's space economy has the potential to reach USD 44 billion by 2033 with about eight per cent of the global share. Presently, the country's share in the global space economy is 2 per cent, said a top government official on Tuesday.

IN-SPACE (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre), the single-window autonomous agency under the Department of Space (DOS) today unveiled the decadal vision and strategy for Indian space economy.

Addressing mediapersons, IN-SPACE Chairman Pawan Goenka said, "As we unveil the decadal vision for the Indian Space Economy, we emphasise that the future of the Indian space sector is a shared endeavour. Hence, our strategy fosters an era of collaboration between all stakeholders to accelerate growth." He said ISRO is opening its doors wider than ever to private sector participation, so that together, we can successfully boost the space economy for a resurgent 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India).

At present, the Indian space



economy is valued at around USD eight billion with a two per cent share in the global space economy. India's space economy has the potential to reach USD 44 billion by 2033 with about eight per cent of the global share, Goenka explained. The decadal vision and strategy has been developed by IN-SPACE and ISRO along with other stakeholders. IN-SPACE said in a statement.

The strategy defines India's vision as a dominant global space power, which accelerates India's growth through space applications, strengthens capabilities in space, creates socio-economic benefits and capabilities for growth to meet the country's ambitions for the

space sector, it added.

The vision focuses on achieving its goal through key strategic and enabling capabilities, such as demand generation, earth observation platform, communication platform, navigation platform, R&D, ecosystem, creation of talent pool, access to finance, international synergy and collaboration, policy and regulation.

Goenka said the decadal vision addresses creation of demand, local manufacturing capabilities, infrastructure and provides a clear and comprehensive regulatory framework that will encourage and facilitate NGE (non-governmental entities) participation in the growth of the space sector.

Mamata Banerjee called Rahul Gandhi, next meeting of 'INDIA' may be on November 4 or 5

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

Trinamool Chairperson Mamata Banerjee was called and spoke to privately Rahul Gandhi, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and NCP leader Sharad Pawar. According to sources, Rahul enquired about health and the physical fitness of the Chief Minister of West Bengal, there was talk about the next meeting of "INDIA", between them. Congress and NCP leaders were reportedly interested in the meeting later this month in Nagpur (where the RSS headquarters is situated). Then Mamata said that it would not be possible for her to go because of Lakshmi Puja at that time. But she can attend if the meeting is held by November 4 or 5. By the way, assembly election in Mizoram on November 7. If everything goes well after this phone conversation, the next meeting of 'INDIA' will be held in Nagpur on November 4-5 and Mamata will attend it.

Two LeT terrorists killed in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian



FW DESK

Security forces killed two terrorists belonging to the proscribed terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in the Alshipora area of Shopian in South Kashmir. Acting on credible intelligence, the security forces launched a targeted operation, leading to the encounter with the terrorists.

The encounter resulted in killing of two LeT militants, identified as Morifat Maqbool and Jazim Farooq, also known as Abrar. One of them believed to have killed a Kashmiri Pandit, Sanjay Sharma. Sharma was killed in a militant shootout at his home in Achan (Pulwama) in February. This led the family to migrate for the first time since 1989. The State Investigating Agency is probing the murder case. The encounter took place after intelligence inputs pointed towards the presence of terrorists in the Alshipora area. The security forces, including local police and army units, cordoned off the area and initiated the operation, leading to a fierce gun battle with the militants.

Rahul Gandhi to visit poll-bound Mizoram and Telangana

NEW DELHI: Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi will be touring the states of Mizoram and Telangana for almost five days ahead of the crucial assembly elections.

A party source said that Rahul Gandhi will be travelling to Mizoram on October 15 and 16. The source said that Gandhi will be attending the meeting of the party's Central Election Committee (CEC) on October 17 and then leave for Telangana in the evening. Rahul Gandhi will be participating in the bus yatra programme of the Congress in Telangana for next three days on October 18, 19 and 20. The source said that Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is also likely to participate in the bus yatra on October 18. The source further said that party



chief Mallikarjun Kharge will be addressing a public meeting in Rajasthan on October 16.

He will also kick off a yatra in Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ECRP) areas from Kota's Baran. The source said that yatra will be hybrid, at some places it will be pad yatra at some places it

will be on vehicle. The polling for 118-member Telangana assembly is scheduled on November 30, while 40-member Mizoram and 200-member Rajasthan assemblies will vote on November 7 and November 25 respectively. Counting of votes will take place on December 3.

Center govt may extend free ration scheme for 6 months

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

Five state assembly polls are announced followed by the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. In that context, the Modi government first reduced household cooking gas and increased the amount of subsidy given to Ujjala consumers. According to the sources of the Ministry of Food, Hence the speculation has started, the period of free ration 'Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana' may be extended even after December.

However, so that this free ration does not go into the hands of ineligible citizens, the center wants to link Aadhaar with ration card to 100 percent as soon as possible. Steps have been asked to step up initiatives. Also, the deadline for ration



card-Aadhaar linking has been extended till December 31. The Center claims that only after hundred percent Aadhaar linkage is done, the government will know exactly how many people are getting ration and how much money will be spent for it. However, even after Aadhaar linking is done, there are al-

legations that there are many fake ration cards are still there. So there is a demand to install 'anti-cloning machines' in ration shops. General Secretary of All India Fair Price Shop Dealers Federation Biswambar Bose has written to Union Food Minister Piyush Goyal in this regard. He wrote in it, 'In many cases

even after linking Aadhaar, phone number and ration card, fraud is also happening in many places. Therefore, an anti-clone device should be installed along with the e-pos machine in the ration shops. It is known that the center will look into this proposal of the shopkeepers and take action. The central government provides free rice and wheat to 81.35 million citizens in the entire country. Earlier, it was bought at the rate of rupees two and three per kg, but it is free from January this year. The poor get this food grain because of the National Food Security Act. Five kg per head per month is given to the common poor through ration shops. 35 kg per family per month under 'Antyodaya Anna Yojana'. But this free ration is effective till December.

Kashmiri woman and family trapped in Gaza appeals for help

FW DESK

A Kashmiri academic, Lubna Nazir Shaboo, along with her family, is currently stuck in Gaza amid the ongoing conflict and has made an urgent plea to the Indian government for rescue. Lubna, a resident of Srinagar, explained that the bombardment has made movement impossible, and the Gaza Strip is completely surrounded, leaving no safe exit.

"We are not able to go anywhere because there is no safe place for us anywhere and the Gaza Strip is too small and it is closed from every side. There are no exit points over here," she said in a social me-



dia video.

The situation in Gaza is dire, with over 1,100 people, including 326 children, reported killed in Israel's retaliatory airstrikes, and thousands more injured. Lubna and her family find themselves in a perilous situation, and their internet access is unreliable, making communication challenging.

BJP in crisis in all four of the 5 states, Cong ahead, according to ABP-C Voter Survey

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

On Monday, the Election Commission announced the results of voting in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram. Just after that, a famous psephology organization published a public opinion survey of these 5 states. According to the BJP voter survey, four of these five states are likely to be swept by the BJP. There could be a big rise for Congress. Madhya Pradesh: The survey indicates a neck-to-neck fight in Madhya Pradesh. But Congress is slightly ahead in that fight. According to the ABP-C Voter survey, Congress is likely to win 113 to 125 seats out of 230 seats



and BJP can get 104-116 seats.

RAJASTHAN: Congress is currently in power in Rajasthan. According to the survey, the power will change in the desert this time too, keeping the pattern of the last few decades. Saffron Brigade will snatch Rajasthan from Congress. There BJP can get 127-137 seats. Congress can be stuck with only 59-69 seats. Among the five states, only Rajasthan has good news for the BJP.

BJP has produced many extremists like Godse in last ten years: Mehbooba



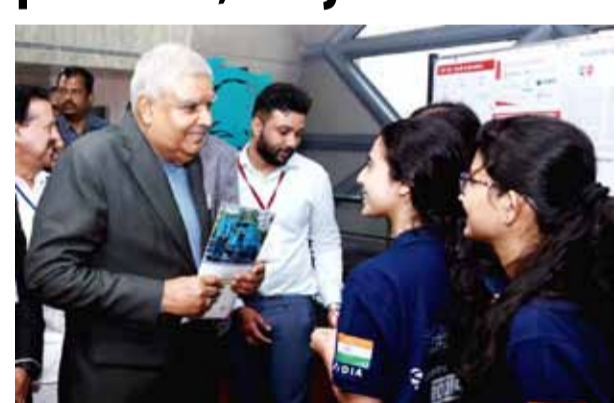
FW DESK

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and PDP president, Mehbooba Mufti, on Friday criticized the BJP and its alleged promotion of individuals with extremist ideologies. She claimed that the BJP had produced many individuals with ideologies similar to Nathuram Godse, the assassin of Mahatma Gandhi, in the last decade.

Mufti's comments came in response to a BJP poster portraying Congress leader Rahul Gandhi as a 'new age Ravana,' which she viewed as a sign of BJP's frustration with the opposition and their divisive tactics. She expressed concern over the rise of individuals with Godse-like ideologies in recent years and contrasted this with Rahul Gandhi's efforts to promote Mahatma Gandhi's ideals. She stated, "You (BJP) produced the army of Godse. He tries to become Gandhi. We could not produce Gandhi in the last 70 to 75 years, but they produced a number of Godses in the last 10 years."

Mufti stressed the importance of the principle of Vasudev Kutumbakam, which means "the entire world is one family," and criticized the BJP for not adhering to this principle. She questioned whether the BJP, which claims to uphold the values of Sanatan Dharma, truly understands the teachings of this ancient philosophy, given their portrayal of political opponents as Ravana.

Vice President asks farmers' children to become job providers; not job seekers



FW DESK

New Delhi

The Vice-President, Jagdeep Dhankhar today felicitated the progressive farmers from Haryana by calling them to the Parliament House as he had promised and had lunch with them. It may be noted that on the 8th of October, 2023, Dhankhar had visited Hisar in Haryana, where he inaugurated the Krishi Vikas Mela at Chaudhary Charan Singh Agricultural University. While addressing the farmers in Hisar, he had invited them to Delhi to visit the new Parliament building.

Acting on his words, today more than fifty award-winning farmers from Haryana visited the Parliament House today. The Vice President interacted with the farmers and honoured them with certificates and shawls. It is noteworthy that these farmers were awarded by the Haryana Government for their excellent performance by using innovative technologies in various fields like agriculture, horticulture, dairy and fisheries.

Addressing the farmers, the Vice-President described them as the backbone of country's economy and said that being a farmer is a matter of pride.

Underlining the importance of agriculture in our economy,

he said, "When the farmer is happy, it brings happiness to the whole country & all sections of the society enjoy prosperity!"

Expressing delight at the visit of the farmers in the Parliament House, he remarked, "Today is a special day as the parliamentarians from around the world & from the G-20 nations are in our country. Your visit to the Parliament coincides with this momentous day. This Parliament stands as the largest Panchayat in the country, and today, the rightful individuals have gathered here. Discussions regarding farmers & farming should take center stage in this forum."

Expressing his happiness over the Prime Minister introducing him in the Rajya Sabha as 'Kisan Putra', the Vice President said that he has been diligently visiting the institutions which are related to farmers' welfare.

Congratulating the farmers on receiving awards from the Government of Haryana, he said that they are a source of inspiration for others and people should emulate them. The Vice-President also highlighted that there is a huge trade & business opportunity in agricultural products and food items, and today's youth educated from IIT, IIM are also coming into this area.

CWC passes unanimous resolution for Caste Census

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The Congress Working Committee passed a unanimous resolution for conducting the caste census across the country, which it said will set a new paradigm of development.

Addressing a press conference after a four-hour long CWC meeting presided over by the Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said, his party will force the Prime Minister to conduct the caste census or will make him get out of the way. Rahul Gandhi said, all the four Chief Ministers of Congress ruled states, who were also present at the press conference, have decided to get caste census done in their respective states. Describing 'Caste Census' as a very-very progressive and powerful step for the emancipation of the poor people in our country, the senior Congress leader said that it will set a new paradigm of development in the country as it will establish the actual status of the OBCs, Dalits, the Adivasis and the poor. He



said, otherwise right now there are "two Indias", one represented by people like Adani and the rest the others. He said, a new political and economic model will be built in the country based on the caste census.

To a question whether other INDIA bloc partners were also supporting the caste census, he said, by and large everybody was in agreement. 'Most of the parties in the INDIA alliance are unanimous that the caste census should be implemented. There might be a few, who might have a slightly different position and that's fine, we are quite flexible', he added. On the Prime Minister's observation about giving proportionate representation to people

according to their population, Mr Gandhi maintained that he (the PM) was used to resorting to distracting the issues and he was doing precisely the same thing. "The Prime Minister is making unconnected statements. What the caste census has to do with representation of the south is very difficult to understand now", he asked. He said that the PM will resort to such distracting tactics more and more in the coming days.

He said, out of four Congress Chief Ministers, three were OBCs, while out of ten BJP Chief Ministers only one was an OBC and even he will no more be the Chief Minister very soon, while referring to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj

Singh Chauhan, suggesting that the BJP was going to lose from there in the assembly elections scheduled for next month.

Responding to the charges of the Prime Minister that caste census would divide people, he retorted, how does it divide people? He said, it is about due participation of people in the government based on their numbers. He pointed out, of the 90 most powerful officers, only 3 were from among the OBCs.

Rahul Gandhi expressed confidence that the Congress party will win elections in all the five states for which dates were announced today. He said, there was an overwhelmingly positive atmosphere in favour of the Congress.



GST Council's decisions are a step forward

The recent decisions by the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council have brought clarity to a number of long-standing tax ambiguities. Notably, the resolution of the tax treatment on corporate and personal guarantees for bank loans and the significant reduction of GST on molasses from 28% to 5% are commendable moves. The latter, in particular, is expected to ease the financial burden on sugar mills, thereby accelerating payments to farmers. However, the Council's decision to abstain from taxing extra neutral alcohol (ENA) used in alcoholic beverages is particularly noteworthy. Given that alcohol for human consumption remains outside the GST purview, taxing ENA would have complicated matters, especially since the tax couldn't be offset against State levies on the final product. The industry's plea for clarity on this matter has finally been addressed, marking an end to years of legal wrangling and inconsistent court rulings. The increased frequency of the Council's meetings this year, compared to the previous year, is a positive sign. Looming large is the Council's upcoming discussion on the future of the GST Compensation Cess and its potential replacement. While the initial intent of this Cess was to compensate States for revenue losses during the first five years of GST, the pandemic-induced economic downturn led to its extension till March 2026. While discouraging the consumption of certain goods through taxation is a valid strategy, any new cess should be introduced as part of a broader GST rationalization effort. Despite the commendable steps taken by the Council, the GST regime still requires comprehensive reform. The ongoing exclusion of items like electricity, petroleum, and alcohol from the GST net is a glaring omission. While addressing immediate concerns is crucial, the Council must also focus on a holistic reform plan for the GST, ensuring it truly becomes the 'Good and Simple Tax' it was envisioned to be.

LETTERBOX

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THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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KALEESWARAM RAJ EXPLORES HOW PARLIAMENT ERRED LINKING WOMEN'S RESERVATION WITH DELIMITATION.

Women's quota — rhetoric and reality

The celebration of the passing of the Women's Reservation Bill by both Houses of Parliament glosses over certain realities about this conditional legislation. The conduct of a census in the country followed by a delimitation of constituencies based on this census are the conditions for this legislation to take effect. Once it is accepted that reservation for women in legislative bodies is a progressive measure, there is no legal or political justification to prolong its implementation.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, Home Minister Amit Shah justified these conditions saying that there could be legal challenges against the legislation if it is passed without relying on criteria fixed by way of a process of delimitation. No doubt, a legislation should be based on a solid foundation, and have valid reasons for existence. In the case of the Women's Reservation Law, the reality is that about half of the population are women and they are under-represented in Parliament and State legislative bodies. Reports show that, of the maximum allowed 550 seats in the Lok Sabha, only 82, i.e., 15% are represented by women, and out of the 250 members in the Rajya Sabha, only 31, i.e., 12% are women. The Global Gender Gap Report places this in a macroscopic context by showing that India ranks 141 out of 185 in its list.

Contentious issue

Article 81 (2) (a) of the Constitution states that the number of seats in the Lok Sabha for a State should have a co-relation with the population of the State and "so far as practicable", the criteria should be the same for all States. Article 170, concerning the legislative Assemblies of States, also takes population as the basis for designing constituencies. However, delimitation in India is a con-



tentious issue. It acts as an incentive for population expansion with scant regard to development and family planning. This was why a full-fledged delimitation was kept in abeyance in India since 1976. It is now expected to be carried out after the Census which will only be held by 2026 at the earliest.

But, as scholar Nilakantan R.S. predicts, this "demographic detonation" will cause "another big fork in the future allocation of political power and associated resources between the north and south". In his book South vs North (2022), Mr. Nilakantan has demonstrated how South India has performed well in sectors such as health, education, economy etc. in comparison to the North. South Indian States reduced their population by scientific means whereas North Indian States in general and States such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in particular have failed to do so. The South Indian States have raised concerns about this proposed delimitation. This could lead to two outcomes: the delimitation would get prolonged by years which in turn will defer the materialisation

of the women's quota law, or it might happen based on population which in turn could translate to undue advantages for certain States in the North.

These are situations that the relevant provisions in the Constitution, namely Articles 81 and 170, failed to foresee. Thus, Parliament has committed an egregious folly in fusing women's reservation with delimitation.

Articles 330 and 332 of the Constitution deal with the reservation of the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) in the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assembly of States respectively. Though these Articles mention the relationship between reservation and the population of the SC and ST groups, such a parameter is irrelevant to women's quota. That their share in the total population is almost 50% is undisputed. Further, there cannot be a drastic variation in their population from one constituency to the other, as it could happen with SC or ST.

Unwarranted conditions

A census to understand the population

of women for the purpose of reservation is also unwarranted. The criteria, process and purpose of the Women's Reservation Bill are qualitatively different from those of the delimitation exercise. And, reservation for women in local bodies, which materialised through the 73rd and 74th Amendment Acts of the Constitution, and came into effect in 1993, was not contingent on any delimitation exercise for that purpose. Parliament, however, has lost sight of these aspects.

How far a constitutional Amendment can be done by way of contingent legislation is an issue too, as certainty is regarded as one of the hallmarks of modern constitutions. In Hamdard Dawakhana vs Union of India (1959), the Supreme Court hinted that in conditional legislations, for the statute to take effect, there could be a further dependence on the executive or even on the legislature of the future day, among other things.

Such enactments might be needed on various occasions for multiple reasons. But, by amalgamating the demand for women's reservation with the uncertainty of a future delimitation process, that too in the case of a constitutional amendment, Parliament has made populist rhetoric at best or committed a constitutional blunder at worst. The secrecy maintained on the subject till the commencement of the special session was also thoroughly undemocratic, which in turn, prevented the exposure of the follies of the legislation.

Therefore, with regard to the future of the women's quota in the legislature, one can only have the pessimism of the intelligence and optimism of the will, as Antonio Gramsci famously put it, in a different context.

Kaleswaram Raj is a lawyer at the Supreme Court of India. Views are personal



VINAY SITAPATI EXPLAINS HOW HAMAS'S TERRORISM DELAYS PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD FOR DECADES

The end of the two-state solution

The answer was always known; it was the question that had been unclear. From the very beginning of the Jewish-Arab conflict, the only viable long-term solution has been to divide the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea by creating two countries for two people.

Both the Arabs and Jews have had strong self-conceptions of nationhood tied to the same land — self-conceptions that did not reckon for the other. But for much of this 100-year war, Jews accepted the inevitability of partition while the Arabs rejected it. For the last few decades, however, the situation seems to have been reversed. One section of the Palestinian leadership, much of the Arab world, and all of the West seem to have agreed on a two-state solution, while it is Israel that is balking at creating a sovereign Palestinian state in West Bank and Gaza, with its capital in East Jerusalem. Understanding its reason is central to predicting the consequences of Hamas's recent terror attacks on Israel, one that has killed more than 700 Israelis and provoked the Israeli response. At first glance, there seem to be many stakeholders to this never-ending conflict such as the Palestinian people, the multiple Palestinian leaderships of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli voters, the Israeli government with its many coalition partners, the Arab countries, Iran, the West led by the U.S., and now even China. From a position of justice, one could argue that the only two stakeholders who should matter are the Palestinian and Israeli people.

But as a matter of realpolitik, the key stakeholder has always been the Israeli public. This is because, without the acquiescence of the more powerful Israel, no solution is possible. And since Israel is a democracy, without the



agreement of the Israeli public no Israeli acquiescence is possible. So, the only question to ask is: will Hamas's attacks push the Israeli public into creating a sovereign Palestinian state?

Some opinion-makers think so. They feel that Israel's trauma from Hamas's strikes will finally make the people understand that a sovereign Palestinian state is a prerequisite for peace. But it is more likely that Israel will come to the opposite conclusion: that a two-state solution — one where a Palestinian state will have its own Army and security — will empower Palestinians to attack Israel even more effectively. They fear that an independent Palestine will behave as Hamas has been doing all along.

Hamas's stance

Hamas does not accept Israel's right to exist in any shape. It attacked Israel on its southern borders that will remain with Israel in any eventual peace deal, and killed and abducted innocent civilians, not religious settlers occupying the West Bank. The attack was directed at the very existence of Israel as a Jewish state. That the supposedly moderate

Palestinian Authority in the West Bank has supported Hamas will only heighten Israeli fears that an end to the conflict will not be a Palestinian and Jewish state living side by side, but a single Palestinian state between the river and the sea. This is not a semantic difference. A citizen may accept the division of her country under some circumstances, but in no circumstances will she accept its annihilation. The central obstruction to a two-state solution has not been the Israeli occupation of West Bank and Gaza — there was after all a murderous conflict between the two sides even before the occupation in 1967. The main roadblock has been the inability of the Palestinians to convince Israeli voters that if given sovereignty in some part of the land, they would leave the Jews alone in the other.

There has always been a radical Israeli fringe unwilling to see the Palestinians as a people deserving a state. These religious bigots had historically been on the margins of Israeli politics. Today, they are key members of the ruling coalition, reflecting a widening distrust among Israeli voters of Palestinians as partners in any eventual peace.

Lesson gleaned

The lesson Palestinians have learnt from their decades-long occupation and daily humiliations has been that Israeli civilians need to share their pain to force them to reduce it. But from the Israeli perspective, every wave of violence against their civilian community has made them less likely to risk ending the occupation of Palestinians. The recent terror attacks will further Israeli suspicions that if this is what Hamas can do with a tiny bit of power, what would they do to Israel with sovereign state power?

Hamas's unprecedented attack will reinforce among Israelis the only two options they feel they have: they can either endure the continuing moral shame of ruling over another people or they can risk their very existence by creating a sovereign Palestinian state that might then wipe out Israel as a Jewish state.

Given the power imbalance between Israel and the rest of the Arab world, there is only one way for Palestinians to get their sovereign state. That will be to convince Israeli voters that an eventual Palestine will live peacefully next to Israel. But for this generation of Israelis who are scarred by images of a kidnapped 84-year-old grandmother being paraded in a golf cart by Hamas, the immorality of occupying another people will be preferable to risking the annihilation of one's own people. The only way forward is for a Palestinian leadership that can credibly signal to the Israeli people that it will not use the freedoms it gains from any peace deal to hurt Israel. The prospects for that seem dim.

Vinay Sitapati is a professor of law and politics, and author of *Half-Lion: How PV Narasimha Rao Transformed India* and *Jugalbandi: The BJP Before Modi*. Views are personal.

BOOKS: REVIEW

Yerawada diaries: A glimpse into women's lives in incarceration

In "From Phansi Yard," Sudha Bharadwaj offers a poignant and intimate account of her life, choices, and experiences as a trade unionist and activist. The narrative is a testament to her unwavering commitment to the upliftment of the marginalized in Chhattisgarh and her brave stance against the concentration of wealth.

Bharadwaj's journey is nothing short of remarkable. From her early years in the U.S. and U.K., her return to India, and her eventual renunciation of American citizenship, she paints a vivid picture of a life shaped by strong socialist values. Her mother, Professor Krishna Bharadwaj, played a pivotal role in molding her worldview, exposing her to an environment where social awareness and the fight against poverty and discrimination were paramount.

The book delves deep into her transition from the academic

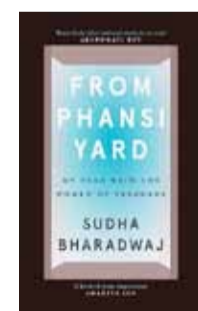
comforts of Cambridge to the gritty realities of Chhattisgarh. Bharadwaj's descriptions of her immersion in union work and the camaraderie she found among her peers are both heartwarming and enlightening. Her reflections on the challenges faced by unions, particularly the Chhattisgarh Mines Shamik Sangh, underscore the complexities of grassroots movements and the sacrifices made by their leaders.

A significant portion of the book is dedicated to her arrest in connection with the Bhim-Koregaon case and her subsequent time in prison. Bharadwaj's portrayal of her fellow inmates in Yerawada Jail's Phansi Yard is both harrowing and hopeful. Through her eyes, we see the resilience of the human spirit, even in the face of adversity. The bonds formed in prison, the shared struggles, and the acts of kindness shine a light on the often-overlooked humanity

The bonds formed in prison, the shared struggles, and the acts of kindness shine a light on the often-overlooked humanity within prison walls

within prison walls. Bharadwaj's narrative is a powerful commentary on the state of democracy and the shrinking spaces for dissent in contemporary India. Her story is a clarion call for the protection of democratic values and the importance of standing up against injustice.

In "From Phansi Yard," readers are not only offered a glimpse into the life of a fearless activist but are also challenged to reflect on their own roles in upholding justice and equality. This book is a must-read for anyone interested



FROM PHANSI YARD: My Year with the Women of Yerawada By Sudha Bharadwaj Juggernaut Publication; 264 pages; Rs 799

in understanding the complexities of activism, the human cost of dissent, and the indomitable spirit of those who fight for a better world.

Beyond the personal narrative, "From Phansi Yard" serves as a mirror reflecting the broader socio-political landscape of India. Bharadwaj's experiences, both as an activist and a prisoner, shed light on the systemic challenges that plague the nation. The book raises pertinent questions about the role of the judiciary, the media, and other institutions in safeguarding or, at times, undermining the democratic ethos of the country. Her observations on the concentration of power and the conflation of dissent with criminal activity are particularly thought-provoking, urging read-

ers to critically evaluate the state of democracy in India.

Bharadwaj's writing style is both evocative and accessible. She masterfully weaves together personal anecdotes with broader socio-political commentary, making the narrative both intimate and universal. Her descriptions of the women she encountered in prison, from those who committed crimes in self-defense to those abandoned by their families, are especially moving. These stories highlight the multifaceted nature of crime and punishment, challenging readers to look beyond black-and-white narratives and understand the complex socio-economic factors at play. Another commendable aspect of the book is its emphasis on hope and resilience. Despite the challenges and injustices she faced, Bharadwaj's narrative is imbued with a sense of optimism. Her belief in the power of collective action, the importance of solidarity, and the potential for change is palpable. This underlying message of hope serves as a beacon, encouraging readers to believe in the possibility of a better future, even in the face of overwhelming odds.

InCred Financial Services Limited public issue of NCDs of Rs 300 cr

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

InCred Financial Services Limited announced here recently a public issue of secured, rated, listed, redeemable, Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) with Base size of Rs 150 crores with an option to retain over-subscription up to Rs 150 crore — aggregating up to Rs 300 crores. The NCD issue opens on October 25 and closes on November 7, 2023. The NCDs are proposed to be listed on BSE Limited, which is the designated stock exchange for the issue.

InCred Financial Services Limited is a non-deposit-taking, systematically-important, NBFC registered with RBI. Bhupinder Singh, Whole-Time Director and Chief Executive Officer, InCred Financial Services Limited, said "We have established ourselves as a diversified lending NBFC with a business model rooted in cutting edge tech and analyt-



ics and focused on risk metrics reflected in the strength of our asset quality." Describing this as a consequence of a tried and tested approach to credit risk and collections, he said the company continuously leverages technology and data science to make lending quick, simple and hassle-free. "A key component of

our growth so far has been the success of our liabilities strategy, and this public issuance of NCDs will play a role in further diversifying and strengthening our borrowing mix."

Noting that success in this business is dependent on risk-taking, Singh said that the company has a very high Capital

Adequacy Ratio and its model gives it far greater resiliency during adverse times. "Technology is playing a great role in measuring risks on an ongoing basis," he said. Highlighting market segments that are still highly under-penetrated, he said "student loans+ presented a big market for bright students wanting to study abroad. "One student, whose father was earning barely Rs 15,000 monthly salary, went abroad such a loan and is today earning around a crore rupees salary," he said, adding "Schools too are our customers as banks don't have a last-mile touchpoint." The fiscal year 2023 highlighted the company's consolidated total revenue from operations at Rs 864.58 crores and consolidated net profit before tax at Rs 203.17 crores. For the three months ending June 2023, total revenue from operations stood at Rs 266.94 crore and Profit before tax at Rs 83,000 crore. InCred

Financial Services Limited caters to lower middle class to middle class Indian households for their personal finance needs like education loans and personal loans. It also offers secured and unsecured business loans to small business, secured loan to K12 Indian schools for their expansion plans, supply chain financing, lending profitable financial institutions and micro-finance companies and escrow-backed lending through its SME vertical.

As on June 30, 2023, the asset under management for the Company was Rs 6,483.50 crore while also catering to 4,18,794 customers. JM Financial Limited and InCred Capital Wealth Portfolio MANAGER Private Limited are the lead managers to the issue, CRISIL Ratings Limited is the Credit Rating Agency, while Catalyst Trustee Private Limited is the Debenture Trustee to the issue and link Intime India Private Limited is the Registrar to the issue.

India notices a steady decrease in fuel prices over the past two years despite global volatility: Hardeep Puri

FW DESK
Chandigarh

Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs and Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, recently participated in a significant interaction with members of the media during his visit to Shri Guru Gobind Singh College in Chandigarh. This momentous occasion coincided with the vibrant celebration of the Zonal Youth and Heritage Festival, providing the perfect backdrop for the Minister to share his insights on various topics of national and global importance.

Addressing a query on the recent middle east crisis, Minister Puri firmly condemned acts of terrorism in the Middle East and said, "India stands firmly committed to global peace, security, and stability."

When questioned about the impact of the Middle East crisis on petroleum prices, Hon'ble Minister assured the public that India's fuel supply remains secure and affordable. He emphasized India's diverse sources of



oil supply and its position as the world's third-largest consumer of oil. Minister Puri pointed out the resilience of India's energy policies, stating that "India has witnessed a steady decrease in fuel prices over the past two years, providing economic relief to our citizens."

Furthermore, the Union Minister emphasized the effectiveness of the Jan Andolan approach, where government policies transform into a mass

movement. He highlighted that this approach enables policies to reach the grassroots level, ensuring a direct, positive impact on the lives of citizens. Minister Puri expressed his belief that initiatives like Swachh Bharat can achieve full success when they become a Jan Andolan, bridging the gap between policy-making and practical implementation, and enhancing the overall quality of life for the people.

VNG Digital Business unveils cutting-edge solutions for business digital transformation at Tech4Life

VIETNAM: VNG Digital Business has recently introduced two offerings at the Tech4Life Exhibition & Summit: the Cloud Camera AI solution for Smart City operations and the VNG Cloud Computing platform designed to empower businesses in their digital transformation journey. Representing the latest addition to VNG's quartet of core business segments, VNG Digital Business is dedicated to driving B2B technology solutions that facilitate seamless and secure digital transformation for organizations.

Cloud Camera AI, an advanced AI system developed by Veka.ai (formerly vCloudcam), is designed to address the specific requirements of diverse enterprise sectors, including Banking, Retail, Security, Traffic Management, Building/Apartment Complexes, Factories, and Industrial Zones. This robust system boasts a comprehensive feature set centered around analytics, alerting, security enhancement, and risk prevention. It excels in optimizing operational efficiency and management for various entities, such as retail chains, residential and urban areas, ultimately enhancing the customer experience. In essence, Cloud Camera AI serves as a catalyst, expediting the digital transformation journey for businesses and municipalities throughout Vietnam.

According to Market Research Future, the global Camera AI market has surged to a substantial USD 20.1 billion in 2022 and is projected to further expand to USD 23.1 billion by 2023. Annual growth rates are expected to reach an impressive 15.2% during the period of 2023 to 2032. This remarkable ascent results from the escalating demand for surveillance and management solutions in commercial settings, aimed at bolstering operational efficiency and enhancing the overall customer experience.

Vu Van Tiep, Head of Veka.ai, VNG Digital Business, shared his view on the market prospect: "In Vietnam, the scope for AI Camera development remains significantly expansive. In addition to capitalizing on the domestic market and an in-depth understanding of customer needs, Veka.ai leverages the robust foundation of VNG's Cloud and Data Center infrastructure. This combination empowers us to develop AI-powered features and products catering to the diverse demands of numerous sectors, thereby serving tens of millions of individuals."

During the Tech4Life 2023 Exhibition & Summit, Veka.ai representatives further offered insights into their solutions. These include the management of remote security barriers, automated vehicle and personnel checks through precise detection, and early warning capabilities for fire and explosion risks, aided by a heatmap for enhanced operational quality and utmost safety for both property and human life.



IRM Energy Limited coming out with Rs 541 crore IPO for natural gas network

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

IRM Energy Limited a city gas distribution (CGD) company engaged in laying, building, operating and expanding a city or local natural gas distribution network -- has come out with its maiden Initial Public Offering (IPO) with price band of Rs 480 to Rs 505 per Equity Share.

The IPO will open for public issue of 1,08,00,000 equity shares - totaling Rs 541 crores on October 18, 2023 and close on October 20, 2023 with no 'Offer for Sale' component. The equity shares are proposed to be listed on BSE and NSE.

Noting that Rs 541 crores is expected to be raised through this IPO, Harshal Anjaria, CFO, IRMEL, said the company's focus is mainly on CNG and Rs 42 crores contribution came from its Japanese partner "whose technology partnership is valuable."



The company intends to utilize about Rs 307.26 crore for funding capital expenditure requirements for development of the City Gas Distribution network in the geographical areas of Namakkal & Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu) in coming years, while Rs 135 crore will be used for prepayment or repayment of all or a portion of certain outstanding borrowings availed by the company, and for general

corporate purpose.

The company has operations at Banaskantha (Gujarat), Fatehgarh Sahib (Punjab), Diu and Gir Somnath, and Namakkal & Tiruchirappalli - serving 184 industrial customers, 269 commercial customers, 52,454 domestic customers as at June 30, 2023.

Banaskantha GA: is highlighting: CNG demand from floating vehicles, western dedi-

cated freight corridor and an upcoming Indian Air Force base in Deesa.

Fatehgarh Sahib GA: is witnessing over 90% demand and opportunities with industries (as per NGT order) switching to PNG. Mandi Gobindgarh has over 400 industries (of which the company is catering to 180 of them), besides the upcoming Pharma and Textile Park expected to drive PNG volume.

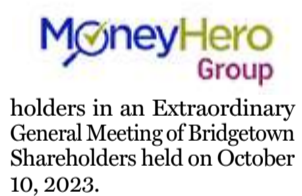
Diu and Somnath GA: is highlighting the upcoming Chhara LNG terminal that is expected to reduce transportation costs of CNG. The company operates 15 CNG stations here.

Namakkal and Tiruchirappalli GA: highlights five company-operated stations, besides the area having 6 industrial estates, one industrial complex, and also being a Hub for Transportation and Manufacturing of engineering goods, alongside being connected to 5 national highways.

MoneyHero Group Successfully Completes Business Combination with Bridgetown Holdings Limited

FW DESK
Singapore & Hong Kong

CompareAsia Group Capital Limited, a market leading financial products platform in Greater Southeast Asia, completed its previously announced business combination with Bridgetown Holdings Limited, a special purpose acquisition company formed as a collaboration between Pacific Century Group ("Pacific Century") and Thiel Capital LLC on October 12, 2023 (Eastern Time). The business combination was approved by Bridgetown share-



holders in an Extraordinary General Meeting of Bridgetown Shareholders held on October 10, 2023. MoneyHero Limited's ("PubCo") ordinary shares and public warrants are expected to begin trading on the Nasdaq Stock Market under the ticker symbols "MNY" and "MNYWW" on October 13, 2023.

The completion of the business combination values MoneyHero at an enterprise value of

~US\$310 million and an equity value of ~US\$283 million after reflecting net proceeds from the transaction.

MoneyHero received ~US\$100 million in gross proceeds entirely through the contribution of cash held in Bridgetown's trust account, after taking into account redemptions of approximately 36% of Bridgetown's public shares.

"We are proud to have achieved this significant milestone in our journey," commented Prashant Aggarwal, Chief Executive Officer of MoneyHero.

Infinity Learn's Leap into AI-Powered Education, 'Launches VISTA - The Vertical AI for Education'



ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bangalore

Taking a pioneering step in the realm of education built on new age tech platform, Infinity Learn by Sri Chaitanya, fresh off its announcement of joining the 100cr club and achieving profitability, proudly unveils its magnum opus: IL VISTA: Virtual Intelligent System for Tailored Academics. This landmark initiative is underpinned by an impressive investment of close to a million dollars, with an anticipated commitment of an additional 4-5 million dollars set aside for its upcoming phases.

IL VISTA is a groundbreaking tech initiative in the world of education. The Virtual Intelligent System for Tailored Academics, aims at leveraging the full potential of AI, to resolve the challenges faced by educators and learners alike. The vision is brought to life for the users through unified mobile and web applications in the form of various tools, ensuring that cutting-edge technology is always at their fingertips.

Sushma Bopanna, Academic Director of Sri Chaitanya Educational Institutions and Founder Director/Infinity Learn by Sri Chaitanya said, "It's truly amazing to see our dreams come to life, where technology is like a friendly guide, making teaching easier

for educators and learning more fun for students. I imagine a future where countless teachers feel supported and countless students benefit from our latest offering, VISTA by Infinity Learn. This launch is our big step into creating that brighter, more inclusive world of learning for everyone", she added.

Unique and innovative approach to conversational AI-enabled scaffolding is the core of VISTA's commitment to a personalized approach towards learning. Traditionally, a teacher caters to learners guiding them with hints to develop the right approach until they are independent to resolve the questions on their own. In VISTA's world, scaffolding is taken up by Doubts AI, a new-age ally of educators with traditional values. It will comprehend and steer the student's learning, guiding them step-by-step, in a way that they grasp the concept and not just the answer.

Ujjwal Singh, the Founding CEO of Infinity Learn by Sri Chaitanya, further elaborated, "Beneath the surface of IL VISTA lies a powerful AI engine, diligently analysing every interaction, every query, and every feedback from learners and educators. This isn't just about streamlining the learning process but elevating the entire educational ecosystem", he added.

Gujarat Govt woos Punjab Traders to Invest in State



CHANDIGARH: The Gujarat Government has reached out to Punjab's industrialists with the aim to woo them to invest in the state, according to a report in the Tribune.

As per the report, senior government functionaries met with industry leaders across sectors such as textile, apparel, engineering and medical equipment, and urged them to invest in Gujarat for expanding their operations.

The Gujarat government delegation led by Consumer Protection Affairs Minister Kunvarjibhai Bavaliya visited Ludhiana-based Avon Cycles and Ganga Acroworks and interacted with prominent industrialists in Chandigarh.

Hat-trick win: Trident Group's Branding Studio bags India's 'Best In-House Design Studio' Award



KULBIR SINGH KALSI
Chandigarh

Trident Group's Branding Studio has been honored with 'Best In-house Design Studio' Award at India's most prestigious design show 'India's Best Design Awards' (IBDA) initiated by Design India Magazine. This marks the third consecutive year that the conglomerate has secured this coveted recognition. IBDA is a reputable platform that honors Design Studios for their expert work, ethical business procedures, and transparency. It recognizes India's best and brightest design teams and projects. Trident's Branding Studio comprises artists from different parts of India. Coming from India's most prestigious Design Institutes like NID and NIIFT, each member is a skilled professional and upholds the core brand essence of Trident's values in their communication and design efforts. Their recent campaign 'Passage to India' has received appreciation from stakeholders across the globe. From accomplishing distinctive projects to creating campaigns that impact audiences on a larger scale, Trident's design team always stands out with their creativity, technical knowledge and deep understanding of market trends. Congratulating the team, Chairman Emeritus Padma Shri Rajinder Guptasaid "Our aim is to provide innovative products with exemplary experience to our customers across the globe. This recognition reaffirms Trident's unwavering commitment to excellence and innovation in each step of a product journey. I also thank IBDA for recognizing the efforts that the team has made in their amazing campaigns."

eské Raises \$1.5 Mn in Pre-Series a funding led by Mistry Ventures to build a global lifestyle brand from India



MUMBAI: eské, a Mumbai-based Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) lifestyle brand that offers premium handbags, briefcases and accessories has raised a total of \$1.5 Mn (INR 12 Crores), in a pre-series A round of funding led by Mistry Ventures. This round also witnessed continued support from Fluid Ventures, one of eské's existing investors.

Having been a key supplier for international luxury brands, eské was launched five years ago, and has seen tremendous traction in a short span of time. Born in India, and made for the world, eské offers a range of handbags, briefcases, and accessories for the global modern consumer in the price range of Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 10,000.

Quantum AMC launches Quantum Small Cap Fund

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Quantum AMC announced here recently the launch of a "new fund offer" (NFO) with Quantum Small Cap Fund that opens for subscription on October 16 and closes on October 27, 2023.

The Fund - which is an open-ended equity scheme predominantly investing in Small Cap Stocks and will have a Direct and Regular Plan --will be managed by Chirag Mehta - Chief Investment Officer and Abhilasha Satele, Quantum AMC.

The scheme will be benchmarked against S&P BSE 250 Small Cap total return index (TRI) with its investment objective being generation of capital appreciation by investing in Small Cap Stocks.

The scheme will have a Direct and Regular Plan. The Fund managers will allocate 65%-100% to the equity and equity-related instruments of Small Cap Companies.

The Scheme Investment Philosophy features: True to Label Fund (Disciplined about fund capacity to prevent large size becoming a hindrance to performance); Prioritizing Liquidity (Minimum Rs 2 Cr Average Value per day in all stocks);



High-Conviction Portfolio: (comprising of 25 to 60 Stocks for optimal diversification to avoid becoming a "Closet" Small Cap Index); Agile Portfolio Construction (Track Record since 2006 of judiciously building portfolios); Ensuring Limited Ownership (General limit of 5% of market capitalisation holding in all stocks); Sizeable Stock Exposure (Minimum weight of 2% at cost in each stock).

"Our Small Cap Fund is meant for investors who are looking for long-term capital appreciation," Chirag Mehta, Chief Investment Officer & Fund Manager, Quantum AMC, said. "We have seen that in the long term, Small Cap stocks have demonstrated the capability of giving good returns potential."

He said "To ensure good

returns for our customers, we will make investments in lesser-known, smaller businesses with growth prospects. Over a period of time, these companies increase their revenue and earnings, which can ensure good returns for our investors."

"However, the biggest challenge in the small cap mutual fund space today is a large asset under management (AUM) size," Mehta said while noting that funds with large AUM tend to face liquidity issues if they end up owning a big part of a small-cap stock's market capitalization.

"They may be compelled to have a long tail of stocks with unsubstantial weights or they may be forced to either sit on cash or to invest incremental inflows into mid or large-cap names, which is not what a

G20 ministerial for swift implementation of roadmap to deal with crypto assets

NEW DELHI: The finance ministers of the G20 nations have called for swift and coordinated implementation of the G20 roadmap to deal with the issues related to crypto assets.

The G20 Roadmap on Crypto Assets adopted by the G20 Finance Ministers was spelt out in a Synthesis Paper prepared jointly by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Financial Stability Board (FSB).

"We adopt the roadmap proposed in the Synthesis Paper as a G20 Roadmap on Crypto Assets... We call for swift and coordinated implementation of the G20 Roadmap, including implementation of policy frameworks; outreach beyond G20 jurisdictions; global coordination, cooperation and information sharing; and addressing data gaps," said a communique issued during the fourth meeting of the FMCBG on Thursday.

The Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FM-CBG) of G20 nations met on the sidelines of IMF-World Bank annual meetings in Marrakesh, Morocco.



However, the communique made no mention of the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. At least 2,800 people in Israel and Gaza have been killed in the conflict, with thousands of others injured since October 6.

Asked why there was no reference to the Israel-Hamas war as it has global economic implications, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, "The communique was released last evening after the first session and there were not very many discussions on the conflict and therefore it didn't find a place on the in the communique."

On the impact of the conflict on the global economy, she said, "The recent crisis in the

Middle East and the concerns about fuel (price rise) is back again. These are worries that many countries do hold and they expressed these as well. The concern and uncertainties are about the peace... fuel concerns affecting the food security aspects and fragmentation of supply chains... Asked about the impact on the ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), Sitharaman said this India initiative is for long-term benefit and short-term development will not have any bearing on this.

Talking about the G20 Roadmap on crypto assets, she said it is a detailed and action-oriented roadmap that will help coor-

dinate global policy as well as develop mitigating strategies and regulations on such assets while also taking into consideration the specific implications on Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs).

Going forward, regular updates on the progress of the roadmap will be provided by the IMF and the FSB in G20 meetings, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in the media briefing in Marrakesh.

The G20 has asked to identify an appropriate and coordinated timeline to commence exchanges by relevant jurisdictions under the Crypto Assets Reporting Framework (CARF), she said.

Considering the aspirations of a significant number of jurisdictions, she said, it has been decided that the information exchanges by CARF will start by 2027 by these jurisdictions.

To establish this process, the CARF group was formed in September 2023, she said, adding FMCBG expressed their commitment to take forward the actions mandated by the G20 Leaders in New Delhi. The

Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FM-CBG) communique drew guidance from the G20 New Delhi Leaders Declaration (NDLD) and benefited significantly from the consensus that was reached at the Leaders' Summit last month, a press statement issued by the finance ministry said.

The communique was unanimously adopted at the fourth and final meeting of the G20 FM-CBG under the Indian Presidency in Marrakesh, Morocco on the sidelines of the IMF-WB Annual Meetings. The G20 or Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies. It comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US and the European Union (EU). The ministers appreciated the work undertaken by the G20 Independent Expert Group (IEG) in preparing Volume 2 of their report.

Haryana signs memorandum of agreements with RBI to boost MSME sector

SATISH HANDA

While presiding a meeting at Chandigarh in which Dushyant Chautala Deputy Chief Minister, State Employment Minister Anup Dhanak and Additional Chief Secretary Anand Mohan Sharan were also present, Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar said emphasised over the current need of boosting the MSMEs ecosystem by active participation of suppliers, buyers, bankers etc there is need of industries and commerce department to exchange memorandum of agreements (MoAs) with three Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved TReDS (trade receivables discounting system) entities. The MoAs were exchanged in the presence of all on chief minister on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Khattar said that Haryana primarily relies on agriculture, but the scope of this sector is limited due to decreasing land holdings. At the same time Khattar said there is a pressing need to diversify into industries and other sectors. He said the gov-



ernment is actively pursuing various schemes to promote and nurture the growth of MSMEs. He also emphasised the present need of boosting the MSMEs ecosystem through active participation of suppliers, buyers, bankers etc.

Deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala said the industries in Haryana have experienced significant growth in recent years, fostering various forms of industrialisation. He highlighted the increasing number of MSMEs in the state and assured that the government is committed to providing enhanced security and support for these enterprises. Khattar made an

appeal to the private industry sector for 75% reservation in jobs in their organization to youths belonging to Haryana state as per policy 2020. During the meeting, permission was granted for four schemes having Rs 1041 crore investment in Haryana state. Permission was also granted for sanction of 100 acre land in IMT Rohtak for developing R&D centre.

Speaking on the occasion, Khattar said Haryana primarily relies on agriculture, but the scope of this sector is limited due to decreasing land holdings. Consequently, there is a pressing need to diversify into industries and other sectors in the present.

Reliance, HDFC Bank and FMCG stocks could drive Nifty higher: Analysts

MUMBAI: The Nifty rallied in the last couple of days as fears around geopolitical concerns were absorbed by the market.

At close on Wednesday, Nifty was up 0.62 per cent or 121.5 points at 19,811.35, while Sensex settled at 66,473.05, up 394 points or 0.60 per cent.

The Nifty gained 1.5 per cent for the week driven by front-line stocks like Reliance and HDFC Bank, said Jaykrishna Gandhi, Head of Business Development, Institutional Equities, Emkay Global Financial Services. The market also found support by the comments from Fed officials who hinted at a lower probability of rate hike going forward.

"The Indian market will kick off the earnings season on Wednesday. Near term, the market, despite geopolitical concerns, seems to be on a strong footing and we believe front-line stocks like Reliance, HDFC bank and FMCG names could drive the Nifty higher," Gandhi said.

HDFC Bank to report Q2 result on Oct 15



MUMBAI: India's biggest private lender, HDFC Bank, will announce the quarterly financial result of the merged entity for the first time on Sunday, October 15, for Q2-FY24.

Led by portfolio gains from erstwhile HDFC Ltd, analysts expect the lender to clock up to 44 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth in net profit. Net interest income (NII), meanwhile, may increase in the range of 33 per cent to 40 per cent YoY, they project. "Q2-FY24 will be the first quarter post the merger and, thus, there is likely to be a fair degree of volatility over estimates. Key variables to watch would be opening

cost of funds, yield on loans, and impact of incremental cash reserve ratio (ICRR) to understand the net interest margin (NIM) profile of the merged entity," said analysts at Kotak Institutional Equities.

On October 4, HDFC Bank informed the exchanges that its gross advances grew 57.7 per cent YoY to Rs 23.54 trillion at the end of the September quarter, rising from Rs 14.93 trillion last year.

Its deposits, meanwhile, aggregated to Rs 21.73 trillion at the end of Q2-FY24, clocking a growth of around 30 per cent over Rs 16.73 trillion as of Q2-FY23.

Imports from Russia up 67 pc to USD 30.42 bn in Apr-Sep

NEW DELHI: India's imports from Russia rose by about 67 per cent to USD 30.42 billion during the April-September period this fiscal on higher shipments of crude oil and fertiliser, according to the commerce ministry data.

With this, Russia has become India's second-largest import source during the first half of this fiscal. The imports were USD 18.24 billion during April-September 2022. From a market share of less than 1 per cent in India's import basket before the start of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Russia's share of India's oil imports rose to over 40 per cent. India, the world's third-largest crude importer after China and the United States, has been buying Russian oil that was available at a discount after some countries in the West shunned it as a means of punishing Moscow for the invasion of Ukraine.

The ministry's data showed that imports from China dipped

to USD 50.47 billion during the period against USD 52.42 billion in the same period last year.

Similarly, imports from the US declined to USD 21.39 billion during the period under review from USD 25.79 billion in April-September last year. Imports from the UAE contracted to USD 20.7 billion during April-September 2023 compared to USD 27.8 billion a year ago. During the first half of this fiscal, imports also dipped from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Indonesia, Singapore and Korea. Among all the top ten import source nations of India, imports from Hong Kong increased to USD 10.21 billion as against USD 10 billion in April-September 2022.

On the export front, India's exports to seven of its top 10 destinations have recorded a negative growth rate during



the period. During the first six months of this fiscal, the country's merchandise exports to the US, the UAE, China, Singapore, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Bangladesh have dipped. However, exports to the UK, Australia and the Netherlands have recorded positive growth.

India's merchandise exports contracted by 2.6 per cent to USD 34.47 billion in September even as the country's merchandise trade deficit narrowed to USD 19.37 billion during the month under review, according to the government data released on Friday.

Govt extends 20 pc export duty on parboiled rice till March 31 next year

NEW DELHI: The government on Friday extended the duty on export of parboiled rice by over five months till March 31. The 20 per cent export duty on parboiled rice was imposed on August 25 till October 16 to maintain adequate local stock and keep domestic prices under check.

The finance ministry through a notification extended the duty till March 31, 2024. With these curbs, India has now imposed restrictions on all varieties of non-basmati rice. Non-basmati white rice constitutes about 25 per cent of the total rice exported from the country.

In July, the government banned export of non-basmati white rice to boost domestic supply and keep retail prices under check during the upcoming festive season. In September last year, exports of broken rice were prohibited. In the April-June period this fiscal, about 15.54 lakh tonnes of non-basmati white rice was exported against only 11.55 lakh tonnes



in the year-ago period.

The ban on exports of non-basmati white rice was imposed due to the rise in prices of the foodgrain and higher exports. The annual retail or consumer price inflation was at a three-month low of 5.02 per cent in September. India's total exports of basmati rice stood at USD 4.8 billion in 2022-23, while in volume terms it was at 45.6 lakh tonnes. Exports of non-basmati stood at USD 6.36 billion in the last fiscal. In volume terms, it was 177.9 lakh tonnes.

India's rice production is estimated to have risen to 135.54 million tonnes in the 2022-23 crop year (July-June) from 129.47 million tonnes in the previous year, according to the agriculture ministry data.

Initiative to Accelerate Development



SATISH SINGH

To maintain the pace of growth, it is important that the repo rate is not increased further. Therefore, in the monetary review concluded on October 6, the Reserve Bank maintained the repo rate at 6.5 per cent for the fourth consecutive time. Earlier, the Reserve Bank had increased the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in the monetary review of February 2023.

The repo rate was increased by 2.50 percent in 6 times during May 2022 to February 2023, due to which inflation, global geopolitical crisis, high price of crude oil etc. in the international market, but except inflation, there is not much impact of other factors on growth, because the lethality of other issues has reduced significantly. However, an increase in the scope of the war between Israel and Hamas may increase some problems. Therefore, the Reserve Bank wants to implement various measures to accelerate the growth rate. In this sequence, in the recent monetary review, all the members of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously in favour of keeping the repo rate unchanged.

By keeping the repo rate unchanged by the Reserve Bank, the loan instalments of existing borrowers will not increase, and businessmen and the public will be able to get loans at cheaper rates. Due to fluctuations in the repo rate, the loan instalment increases or decreases, whereas if it is kept constant, the loan rate generally also remains the same. The Reserve Bank tries to fight inflation by increasing the



repo rate. When the repo rate is high, banks get loans from the Reserve Bank at higher interest rates, due to which banks also give loans to customers at expensive rates. By doing this, the liquidity of currency in the economy reduces and due to people not having money in their pockets, the demand for goods decreases and due to high prices of goods and products, their sales decline, which leads to softness in inflation. Similarly, when the economy is weak, efforts are made to increase the liquidity of currency in the market to accelerate the developmental works and for this the repo rate is cut, so that banks can get loans from the Reserve Bank at cheaper interest rates and after getting the loan, banks can also give loans to the customers at cheaper interest rates.

In the monetary review, the Reserve Bank Governor also released inflation and gross domestic product (GDP) estimates. According to the Central Bank, inflation may be 5.4 per cent in the financial year 2024. Earlier the Reserve Bank had estimated inflation to be 5.1 per cent. The Reserve Bank has projected real GDP to grow at the rate of 6.5 percent in fiscal year 2024 and 6.6 percent in fiscal year 2025. The Reserve Bank had earlier also predicted

the GDP to grow at the same rate in the financial year 2024 and financial year 2025.

According to Reserve Bank Governor Shakti Kant Das, the fight against inflation will continue, because the pace of inflation has still not reduced. The Central Bank has set a target of keeping inflation at 4 per cent instead of lower-level 2 per cent & higher-level 6 per cent, but for this the Reserve Bank will have to depend on many reasons like, weather movements, international factors like Global Geo-Political crisis, price of crude oil in the international market etc. It will not be easy for the Reserve Bank to achieve this target, because inflation rate of many food items are still high.

Retail inflation came down to 6.83 percent in the month of August, which was at the level of 7.44 percent in the month of July. However, due to lower prices of vegetables in the month of September, retail inflation came down to 5.02 percent, which is within the upper limit of 6 percent tolerance limit set by the Reserve Bank. In the month of September, the inflation rate in rural areas was 5.33 percent. Although retail inflation has come down in the month of September, the inflation rate of many food items has increased. The inflation rate

of sugar has increased to 4.52 percent, which was 3.8 percent in the month of August. The inflation rate of pulses has increased to 16.38 percent, which was 13.04 percent in the month of August. In September, the inflation rate of spices reached above 23 percent. Despite all efforts by the government to control the price of wheat, its price is increasing, and its inflation rate has reached a level of more than 4 percent in October. The price of rice has also increased by 22 percent in one year. The inflation rate of grains is around 11 percent. The inflation rate of fruits is 7.30 percent. Retail inflation in Rajasthan was the highest in the country at 6.53 percent, while Haryana was at second place with 6.49 percent and Karnataka was at third place with 6 percent.

There has also been an improvement in the industrial production rate in the month of August. This month this rate has been 10.3 percent, whereas in the month of July it was only 6 percent and in the month of June it was 3.7 percent. The improvement in industrial production rate shows that demand and supply have picked up and economic activities are mounting.

Retail inflation came down to 6.83 percent in the month of August, which was at the level of 7.44 percent in the month of July. The main reason for the decline in inflation was the weakening in the prices of vegetables. Wholesale inflation reached minus -0.52% in the month of August. In the month of July, it was 1.36 percent. This is the fifth consecutive month when wholesale inflation remained negative i.e., below zero. The main reasons for the difference between retail

and wholesale inflation are transportation expenses, level of city, area of city, price of fuel in the international market, etc. Therefore, the government can reduce the difference between wholesale and retail inflation through its machinery.

Inflation is directly related to purchasing power. For example, if the inflation rate is 7 percent, Rs 100 earned will be worth just Rs 93. Therefore, people should invest only keeping inflation in mind. Otherwise, the value of your money will reduce. Therefore, it is important to keep inflation under control to maintain the pace of growth.

Inflation has remained at a high level for the last few months, which is hindering development. In such a situation, the Reserve Bank has kept the repo rate unchanged. If the Reserve Bank had increased the repo rate to control inflation, then inflation would have reduced, but it would have also reduced the pace of growth, because the increase in repo rate. Reserve Bank by doing; Gives loans to banks at higher interest rates and due to this, banks also give loans to the public and businessmen at higher interest rates, due to which the prices of various products increase and their demand decreases. Such a situation slows down the pace of development. Therefore, the Reserve Bank wants to move forward by maintaining a balance between inflation and growth, so that the Indian economy remains strong, and the common people and businessmen do not have to face much difficulties.

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

World Bank President Ajay Singh Banga arrives in Morocco

RABAT: President of the World Bank Group Ajay Singh Banga arrived in Morocco on October 8 to attend the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank annual meetings.

Upon his arrival, Minister of Economy Nadia Fettah Alaoui welcomed the World Bank President, who will attend the annual meetings alongside high-profile officials from across the world, including IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva. The event, which will kick off tomorrow in Marrakech, will mark the attendance of over 14,000 attendees from across the world.



Risk monitoring helps Air India prevent revenue loss of over Rs 3 cr

MUMBAI: Full-service carrier Air India has prevented revenue loss of over Rs 3 crore in the last 18 months owing to its risk monitoring and fraud prevention mechanism, the airline's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Campbell Wilson said on Friday.

Wilson in his weekly Friday message to Air India employees, also said that the airline has taken delivery of its second wide-body A350 aircraft, which is expected to arrive in January next year. Air India announced the acquisition of its first A350 plane late last month. Airlines are a high-profile target for fraudsters, whether it be attempts to use stolen credit cards on our websites, to fraudulently claim frequent flier miles, or other scams, Wilson said.

The airline has a risk monitoring and fraud prevention unit and preventing fraudulent transactions is one of its important works, he said. Thanks to the unit's vigilance and close liaison



with airport staff, it has prevented revenue loss of over Rs 3-crore in the last 18 months, Wilson informed employees. "Erstwhile Air India was somewhat of an easy target in the past but, as we completely modernise our systems, this is no longer the case and with our continued investment in state-of-the-art capabilities, we will increasingly be able to turn the tables on criminals, he said.

Wilson also said the airline received this week the first of 21 A320neos (VT-RTF), of the 25 narrow-body planes that airline had announced to lease last year, adding that four new A321neos from this batch are already in service, with the remaining 20 A320neos progressively arriving between now and August 2024.

IT Raids former Corporator residence recovered Rs 42 cr cash

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Income Tax (IT) department have recovered Rs 42 crore cash from the residence of former Bengaluru corporation Ashwathamma and her husband Ambikapathy. Sources said, The couple have close ties with congress.

The Income Tax Department found cash amounting to crores beneath the bed at a flat in Bengaluru, sources stated on Friday. The IT officers are questioning a former woman corporator and her husband in connection with the case. Sources said that vast amount of money is being collected from gold jewellers and other sources in Bengaluru to fund coming



Assembly elections, On getting tip offs in this regard, the IT Department is conducting raids in the city. The cash, amounting to Rs 42 crore, was found during a raid conducted late on Thursday night at a flat located in Atmananda Colony near RT Nagar. According to sources I-T department conducted raids and searches at 25 places in Bengaluru belonging to two civic contractors over

suspected tax evasion. Sources said that the large sum in Rs 500 denominations was stored in 23 cardboard boxes at the house of an ex-corporator of Ward 95. The officials raided the house in Atmananda Colony in RT Nagar belonging to Ashwathamma and R Ambikapati, sources added.

The cash was likely to be transported to a neighbouring state but an official statement is awaited. A local resident said the I-T officials arrived at around 7 am and asked them to stay inside the house. I-T sleuths raided the offices of two contractors - BSR Infratech and Star Infratech - in Sahakar Nagar, Sanjaynagar, among others, besides searching the homes of the people concerned.

INTERNATIONAL

P-20 Summit : World is facing crises due to conflict, it is not in anyone's interest says PM Modi

MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

PM Modi said that about 20 years ago terrorists had targeted our Parliament. At that time, Parliament was in session and the terrorists intention was to abduct and eliminate the MPs. The world is also realizing now how big a challenge, terrorism is for the world.

'Stop supporting Hamas', EU raised the issue of terrorism in P20 conference. European Union's Vice President Nicola Beer said that political and financial support to Hamas should be stopped. The recent terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israeli citizens have shocked the world. This is an expression of the unimaginable violence that terrorists commit against innocent people. It shakes our sense of security and sense of trust.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday inaugurated the 9th conference of the Presiding Chairmen of Parliaments of G20 member countries (P20) at the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre. During this, he



said that this summit is in a way a "Mahakumbh of different parliamentary practices" from around the world. All of you representatives are experienced in different parliamentary working styles. It is a great pleasure for all of us that you are coming to India with such rich democratic experiences.

Without naming anyone, the crisis arises in Israel, PM Modi said that no one is untouched by whatever is happening in different corners of the world today. Today the world is facing crises because of conflict. This

is not in anyone's interest. A divided world cannot provide solutions to the great challenges facing humanity. This is a time of peace and brotherhood. It's time to move forward together. This is the time for everyone's development and welfare. We have to overcome the global trust crisis and move forward on human-centric thinking. We must move the world forward with "One Earth, One Family and One Future". Presiding officers of the parliaments of G20 countries are participating in the conference. 25 Speakers,

10 Deputy Speakers, 50 Members of Parliament and others are going to participate during this two-day global event. The Pan African Parliament is also participating in the G20 event in India for the first time.

PM Modi said, 'Next year, general elections are going to be held once again in India. I extend an advance invitation to all of you delegates at the P20 Summit to watch the general elections to be held next year. India will be very happy to host you again.'

He said that in India we consider general elections as the biggest festival. Since independence in 1947, 17 general elections and more than 300 assembly elections have been held in India. India not only conducts the world's largest elections, but people's participation in it is also increasing. The countrymen have made my party victorious for the second consecutive time. The 2019 general election was the biggest human exercise in human history. 60 crore voters took part in this.

Israel-Hamas war to have Major Impact on Trade if Conflict Widens: WTO Chief



NEW DELHI: World Trade Organization's (WTO) Chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has warned that Israel-Hamas conflict could have a "really big impact" on already weak global trade flows if it widened throughout the region.

Hoping the Israel-Hamas conflict could be ended quickly, Okonjo-Iweala made this statement while she in Mo-

rocco to attend this week's annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

"Middle East violence could add to factors throttling trade growth, including higher interest rates, a strained Chinese property market and Russia's war in Ukraine," said the chief.

"We hope this ends soon and it's contained. Our biggest

fear is if it widens, because that will then have a really big impact on trade," she said in an interview. "Everybody's on eggshells and hoping for the best," she added.

Okonjo-Iweala said global uncertainty was already limiting growth in trade, but that would be exacerbated by the sudden onset of war between Israel and the Islamist Hamas group that controls the Gaza Strip.

The Geneva-based trade body last week halved its growth forecast for global goods trade this year, citing persistent inflation, higher interest rates, the slowing Chinese economy and the war in Ukraine. The WTO said merchandise trade volumes would increase by just 0.8% in 2023, compared with its April estimate of 1.7%.

For 2024, it said goods trade growth would be 3.3%, a forecast virtually unchanged from its April estimate of 3.2%.

P20 summit : Canada kept away from any further discussion on Khalistan!



MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

After the grand event of G20 conference, P20 conference has going on in Delhi. It is being organised at India International Convention and Expo Center - Yashobhoomi in Dwarka from 12 to 14 October. Speakers and presiding officers of the parliaments of G-20 countries are participating in this conference. However, Canada has maintained distance itself from it to avoid further controversy.

It is believed that Canada has decided not to attend the conference to avoid discussing this matter after the souring of relations with India after the killing of Khalistani terrorist Nijjar. Regarding this, it has been told by the Ministry of External Affairs that Canadian representatives will not attend P20. All leaders and all countries have been invited to participate in it.

Let us tell you that earlier Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla had said that India will raise all the issues with the Canadian President of the Senate during the upcoming Parliament-20 meeting of the presiding officers of G20 countries. It was believed that he would also raise the issue of Khalistanis thriving in Canada. Canadian speaker Raymonde Gagné had also confirmed her participation in the conference. But now his spokesperson said that he will not be able to attend the conference. They were not even told the reason for this also.

Indo-Canadian Foreign Ministers held a secret meeting in America to resolve the crisis : Report



MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

Though, neither Canada nor India's foreign ministry has confirmed the meeting of two countries diplomat but according to the British newspaper Financial Times, Canadian Foreign Minister, Melanie Jolie had a secret meeting with Indian Foreign Minister, S Jaishankar in Washington a few days ago, amid a diplomatic standoff between the two countries over Canada's allegations of India's involvement in the killing of Khalistani activist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

The report also stated that the Canadian government was making efforts to resolve the tense diplomatic situation with New Delhi, following the reports said that Canadian diplomats were given a deadline to leave India or take risk losing their diplomatic immunity. The Canadian foreign minister said earlier this month that they were trying to resolve the issue privately.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also said that his country does not want to "escalate the strain situation" with India and affirmed that the Canada will continue to "engage responsible and constructive relationships with India".

A recent report by Canada's CTV News mentioned that the country also has transferred around 30 diplomatic embassy staff members from India to either Kuala Lumpur or Singapore. Needless to mention, relations between India and Canada deteriorated after Trudeau alleged that the Indian security agent's "possible" involvement in the killing of Khalistani criminal Hardeep Singh Nijjar in British Columbia on September 19. On June 18, Nijjar was shot dead by two masked gunmen and Hardeep Singh Nijjar was a Canadian citizen.

Rejecting the allegations, India's Ministry of External Affairs reacted strongly and described the allegations as "absurd" and "influenced". In a sharp reaction to Canada's expulsion of an Indian embassy official, New Delhi had also expelled a senior Canadian diplomat.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind voices concern over eruption of hostilities between Israel and Palestine

NEW DELHI: Jamaat-e-Islami Hind has voiced concern over the recent large-scale eruption of hostilities between Israel and Palestine. In a statement to the media, the President of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Syed Sadatullah Husaini said, "We are deeply concerned over the recent large-scale eruption of hostilities between Israel and Palestine. It must not be forgotten that the current spate of violence is the result of Israeli aggression unleashed by the most right-wing Netanyahu government against the Palestinians that has claimed the lives of hundreds of people including children, so far.

The continued Israeli policies of occupation and settlements and the provocative desecration of Aqsa mosque are depriving the region of any serious opportunity for peace and stability in the region. The United Nations and the international community must immediately spring to action, de-escalate the situation and immediately stop the expansion of Jewish settlements. We also call on the international community to prevent Israel from using these events as an excuse to launch a disproportionate war against Palestinian civilians in Gaza. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind believes in the famous saying of Gandhiji that has been the basis of India's age-old policy that 'Palestine belongs to the Palestinians just as England belongs to the British, or France belongs to the French' Jamaat wants the Indian government to support the Palestinians, help the Palestinians establish their own state, and use its global influence to bring peace in the region."

New funding, to protect 370 million children from polio every year, puts world on verge of eradicating polio once and for all

BRUSSELS: European Commission, the European Investment Bank and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation announced a new financing partnership to address critical global health opportunities: eradicating polio and ensuring that innovations in health are more accessible to the people who need them most. The World Health Organization and UNICEF, as implementing partners for the polio funding, will deploy the resources to eradicate polio, support the distribution of other childhood immunizations and strengthen health systems so they are better able to respond to emerging health threats. The expected €1.1 billion financing package aims to provide new funding to eradicate a human disease for only the second time in history and help solve the health and development challenges faced by the world's most vulnerable people, who otherwise do not get fair access to healthcare services and innovations.

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said: "We are about to wipe polio off the face of the Earth. The European Commission, the EIB and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are partnering to get through the final stretch. With 1 billion euros supported by our European investment strategy Global Gateway, we will invest in stronger health systems globally and local vaccine and medicines production, manufacturing and administration, where it is most needed. Global cooperation has helped us put an end to the CO-



VID-19 pandemic. Now it will help us get rid of polio once and for all." The partnership marks a significant increase in funding for global health and human development under the European Commission's European Fund for Sustainable Development plus (EFSD+) and is expected to include a match of new complementary funding for global health by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, maximising the impact of every Euro committed by the EU and the European Investment Bank.

"Today we are united to write the final chapter in the history of polio. The European Investment Bank is playing its part in a unique partnership with philanthropy and health partners, by providing EUR 500 million for investment in support of the Global Polio Eradication Programme. This initiative will be a milestone in scaling up immunization and strengthening healthcare, ensuring that every child, regardless of their circumstances, can be protected against polio," said Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank.

To promote swift progress towards eradicating wild poliovirus, the partnership aims to deliver €500 million in payments to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative - specifically the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

India gets ready to host G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit



OM BIRLA
Speaker,
lok sabha

The unprecedented success of the G20 summit chaired by India has been praised all over the world. It is a matter of pride that this Summit concluded with a Joint Declaration strengthening our concept of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" - One Earth, One Family, One Future". G20 also underlined India's growing global influence, as it successfully played the role of a consensus builder.

Coming on the heels of the G20 Summit, the Parliament of India is getting ready to host another important congregation, i.e. the P20 or the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit on 13th and 14th October in New Delhi. P20 brings together the Speakers or the Presiding Officers of Parliaments of G20 and invitee nations. Parliament is the supreme legislative body of every nation, through which the public representatives present aspirations and expectations of the people in the Houses and formulate laws and policies.

India is one of those ancient civilizations of the world with a rich cultural heritage. Democracy is an ingrained concept in India since ages. Even in our ancient texts, there is mention of participatory institutions like Sabha and Samiti, which existed as public representative institutions in Vedic age.

Democracy, diversity and democracy have been our strengths during the 75 years journey since independence. With the power of democracy, we have created harmony among all sections of the society and ensured social and economic

development for all. It must be said that people-centric development and inclusive development are at the centre our democratic journey.

Even in our Parliament, public representatives form a collective view on issues after extensive discussion. This helps us find collective solutions to challenges. Therefore, in the P20 conference also, the Parliament of India will try to develop a common vision to address the important contemporary issues facing the world and humanity. The importance of organizing the P20 Conclave in India increases because the consensus on global issues is related to the common future of humanity. The focus of the P20 conference will be on Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, women-led development and shared future of humanity. It will also discuss the topics related to Lifestyle of Environment i.e. Mission LiFE.

Sustainable Development Goals : The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have certainly given impetus to efforts to realize the concept of holistic human development in the world. As we approach the year 2030, it becomes even more important to assess the achievements made under this initiative and accelerate efforts to realize them. Among the SDGs, there are many whose impact is universal. There is a need to discuss and dialogue on these issues in the parliaments and reach consensus to eliminate all contradictions. Policy consensus needs to be developed while maintaining the sovereignty of nations.

Sustainable Energy: Towards a Green Future : India has attempted to adapt its development process to the needs of a green future even while facing the challenges of huge population and

maintaining the aspiration of becoming a developed nation. Today, India is in a leadership role in the field of alternative energy. Policy initiatives like the International Solar Alliance, International Bio Fuel Alliance championed by India have received wide global support. Environment related issues have also been discussed continuously in our Parliament. Through this dialogue, a consensus has been formed in the country on policy making for renewable energy beyond political differences.

From Women Empowerment to Women-led Development : Women have been considered the embodiment of power and devotion in India's ancient culture. Women have proved their capability and strength in all fields, be it science and technology, defence, space science or in the field of sports. Our Constitution has empowered women by giving them equal rights in all spheres, including voting rights. As our journey of democracy progressed, policy decisions were taken to provide political and economic empowerment to women and to give them leadership opportunities. Initially, laws were made for reservation for women in Gram Panchayat and municipal level elections. Taking this forward, laws have since been made for reservation for them in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. There has been a consensus on this law among every political party in the entire country. We will



ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE

share our positive experiences on this topic at the P20 conference and strive to make women-led development a global movement.

Transforming people's lives through public digital platforms : India has been at the forefront of digital transformation, leveraging technology to improve the lives of its citizens. Initiatives like Aadhaar, the world's largest biometric identification system, have streamlined access to government services. UPI (Unified Payments Interface) has become one of the largest financial inclusion tools that brought digital banking to the masses. The Digital India programme aims to provide digital access to all citizens and is revolutionizing governance at grassroots level. Lives of millions of Indians have been transformed with the adoption of digital technology across various sectors like education, agriculture, finance, etc. At the P20 summit, we will share this landmark achievement with the parliaments of the world so that India's success in digital transformation becomes a model for the entire world.

India's Parliament has played a big role in shaping the destiny of the world's largest democracy. Our Parliament has made public welfare laws after extensive discussion always keeping the interests of the public in mind. Despite having a multi-party system, we have reached consensus on issues. In this way our Parliament has presented a model of meaningful discussion and dialogue to the world.

I am confident that just as the G20 summit achieved consensus on global challenges, the P20 summit will also underline the essential role of parliaments in addressing contemporary challenges and usher in a new era of cooperation between parliaments on global issues.

New Delhi Condemns Tactics of Hamas, Israel Must End Revenge Approach

GOPAL MISRA

India's peace plan is expected to be announced within next few days asking for the immediate ceasefire, returning of the hostages, estimated to be 100 or more, including American and some Belgian citizens. Meanwhile, the death toll on the ongoing conflict is rising with the passage of each day, which had begun on Saturday, October seven.

The peace initiative may stress for completing the unfinished task of the setting up of an independent Palestine state immediately as per the Oslo Accords of 2004. It is believed that while the Israelis were not keen to implement the Accords, Hamas leadership, perhaps, prompted by its own political ambitions, had rejected the Award signed between Yasser Arafat, the chief of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the then Israeli PM Peres. Indians have great respect or the legendary leader, who have had personal friendship with the Indian leadership, especially PM, Indira Gandhi.



The suggestion asking to return the hostages might prevent any direct American intervention, as the reports pour-in of massive naval build-up in the region. The apprehension is that an afghan-likesituation may develop in the region for a prolonged war.

For any peace, it is imperative that all the concerned parties must work for restoring the trust deficit between the Hamas, a faction of the Palestinian leadership, and Israel. It is also being claimed that the present Israeli leadership did not implement the Accords seriously, if not sabotaged it deliberately.

With the failure of UN Security Council to initiate peace

process gets, Indian initiative gets significance. It is believed that the Indian proposals might be including a request to the four key players, Iran, Israel, Qatar and Lebanon in this ongoing conflict to begin their discussions without any further delay.

Indian authorities, according to sources, have debunked the allegation that PM, Narendra Modi's statement supporting Israel facing the unprecedented terrorists attack masterminded by Hamas, has brought him to an untenable position of being partisan in the conflict.

It may be recalled that Modi is the first Indian PM, who visited Israel and Palestinian territories in 2017, asking them to work for

peace together. Only a month ago, Hamas had suggested talks with Israel for peace, but it violated its own promise by invading Israel. In this ongoing surprise attack, the terrorists are killing innocent civilians, violating women, and even abducting young boys and girls to be enslaved. It is estimated that nearly 5000 Hamas terrorists armed with the state-of the art weapons obtained from the USD seven billion dollar paid by South Korea to Iran, it had bought the petroleum products. They payments were frozen following the sanctions imposed on Iran. However, it is also stated that since the money was deposited in the Qatar banks, it was used for funding Hamas

to obtain weapons.

The war strategy adopted by Hamas has shocked the strategic planners across the continents. It is stated that Hamas terrorists had stormed Israel by hanging even on big drones, motor bikes or walking into Israeli territories by cutting the barbed wires. On its part, Hezbollah, a terrorist outfit supported by Iran, has not only supported Hamas's military campaign, but claimed that it would be cooperating with Hamas in its war against Israel. It, however, did not confirm how it is helping Hamas by allowing infiltration from the areas of Lebanon under its control.

Meanwhile, Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh, who was just

adopted immaculate precision strategy in their current operations generally evolved in the war rooms by professional armies. It could be a cause for envy to any regular force.

ISI Collaborates with Terrorists

For quite some time, the Special Force trainers believed to be a part of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of the Pakistani army has reportedly been training the Hamas. It might have led to India's prompt reaction to the terrorists' invasion of Israel. India herself being a victim of the ISI-sponsored 2008 Mumbai attack remembered as 9-11 operation of Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists nurtured in the training camps of Pakistan, could immediately notice the similarities between the two aggressions.

In fact, the Hamas operations are much more professionally organized and being conducted on a much larger scale. The initial reports suggest that the recent visits and exchanges of the army officers and intelligence exchanges between Pakistan and Iran could also have further empowered the Hamas operation. The terrorists have

adopted immaculate precision strategy in their current operations generally evolved in the war rooms by professional armies. It could be a cause for envy to any regular force.

In its bid to camouflage the impending operations, Hamas had offered an olive branch to Israelis only a month ago, announcing its intention to negotiate permanent peace. Indians recall that when Pakistan talks about peace, it is generally followed by terrorists' attacks. It appears that adopting the same tactic, soon after its peace overtures, Hamas chooses a Jews festival, Simchat Torah, to start the well-planned attack. It was a surprise for Israelis, who were holidaying. Initially, Hamas and Hezbollah were opposed to each other, but their joint aggression against Israel on the morning of Saturday October seven reaffirms the rumours of a new tie-up between the two arch-enemies.

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

PM performs pooja at Parvati Kund, in Uttarakhand



NEW DELHI: The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi performed darshan and pooja at Parvati Kund, Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand. In a post on X the Prime Minister expressed joy on being able to have Darshan of Aadi Kailash. He prayed for the welfare and happy life of all the countrymen.

India shines at the Asian Games

SUNIL THAPLIYAL
New Delhi



India excelled at the 2023 Asian Games, winning a total of 107 medals. At the same time, Pakistan could win only three medals in the competition. In 1958, India won only 13 medals while Pakistan bagged 26. Since then, India's performance has steadily improved while Pakistan's has deteriorated.

The 2023 Asian Games have been finished. The Indian athletes have returned to their country where they were warmly welcomed by their countrymen.

Pakistan has won a total of three medals at the 2023 Asian Games. These include one silver and two bronze medals. Pakistan had last won gold in this competition in 2014. At the same time, India won 28 gold medals that year. Currently, Pakistan's performance may be very poor compared to India, but there was a time when Pakistan won twice as many medals as India.

The Asian Games were held for the first time in New Delhi. India had won 51 medals in the competition held in New Delhi. Pakistan did not participate in this competition. Thereafter, India's performance declined in 1954 and India received only 17 medals. At the same time, Paki-

stan participated in the Asian Games for the first time and won 13 medals. In 1958, India had its worst performance in the Asian Games and could win only 13 medals. This time Pakistan won 26 medals, exactly twice as many as India. After that, in 1962, Pakistan won 28 medals and India 33 medals. Pakistan's performance started to decline in 1970, and India's performance continued to improve.

Until 2002, Pakistan always won about 10 medals, but this number never exceeded 17. At the same time, India continued to improve its performance during this period. India, which usually wins 20 to 30 medals, won 57 medals in 1982. This was the country's best performance at that time. From 1998 onwards, India's medal consistency improved and the number of medals was above 30 from then on. At the 2006 Asian Games, India won 53 medals.

Make Self-Defence Mandatory for Girls in Schools: Kiran Bedi

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

It will be a great Initiative if every school makes self-defence a mandatory subject for girls in schools says Kiran Bedi. "Teaching to defend is something that is very important, and like yoga it should become an integral part of our National Education Policy, and we should tell the Government of India to move accordingly. Make self-defence for girls mandatory. We must make this a school program, just like sports and yoga. We need to create an ecosystem for the woman who is vulnerable, and we have to strive towards this. If we want to be in a place where our women and girls are safe, we need an ecosystem, that allows them to feel free," said Kiran Bedi.

The need for a well-designed self-defence training program for women in India is well documented. Unfortunately as that maybe, India is now on the verge of launching a unique self-defence program, that will be at a national level, and will also be made available virtually, by SPEFL-SC (Sports, Physical Education, Fitness and Leisure Skills Council). The virtual program was launched



on October 12 at FICCI federation house, by none other than Kiran Bedi, who is India's first woman IPS Officer, the former Lt. Governor of Puducherry and Founder of the India Vision Foundation. Also present on the august occasion was Jalaj Dani (President Emeritus, SPEFL-SC), Neeraj Jain (President, SPEFL-SC), Poonam Sharma (Vice-President, FICCI Ladies Organisation), Dr Anubhuti Chauhan (President, Arunodaya Foundation) and Tahsin Zahid (CEO, SPEFL-SC).

The self-defence programs originated from the thoughts of putting into practice various techniques that would help women remain fit and agile, such that they can take on any given situation, no matter how uncomfortable it may be. The Ministry of Skill Development has approved a National curriculum which

will be delivered by certified trainers. "While many programs teach martial arts as a form of self-defence, the national curriculum, which is anchored and pioneered by SPEFL-SC, takes on a different approach, placing utmost importance

on situational awareness, dialogue and finally, combat and run. Combat training is developed basis research on the various ways a woman might find herself and then the many responses they can use to tackle the situation. With the blessings of the Indian Government, the training programs for women were launched in 2021, and since then has gone on to conduct more than 20,000 training programs with certified trainers involved in the process. The programs have traversed across the length and breadth of the nation, from Jammu Kashmir

to Karnataka, including states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh too.

"We should always engage in activities and initiatives that promote safety of women. We must exercise caution and responsibility in our online activities, protecting our personal information and being aware of the potential risk associated with the digital realm. When women feel secure, they can conquer the world. When women feel secure, they are most likely to enter the workforce, start business and contribute to the country. I must congratulate SPEFL-SC for creating this self-defence model which is based on the best of the systems in the world," said Poonam Sharma.

"Self-defence is a very essential nowadays, and it is very important that those who need the guidance on this is given a proper grounding, because without that, it can be very difficult to tackle a situation. And it is very essential to make this available to everyone in our country. We would like to thank Kiran Bedi for associating with this initiative. She is an inspiring personality and one of the foremost minds in terms of women's safety and self-defence," said Tahsin Zahid.

World, Olympic and Asian Champion Neeraj Chopra appointed Laureus Ambassador

ARUN KUMAR RAO
New Delhi

Neeraj Chopra, the reigning Olympic, World and Asian champion in men's javelin, was today named a Laureus Ambassador, pledging his support to Laureus Sport for Good, the global foundation supporting over 300 programmes that use sport to eradicate inequality and discrimination for young people around the world.

His association with Laureus goes back to 2022, when he was nominated in the Breakthrough of the Year category at the Laureus World Sports Awards, following his gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics - the first won by an Indian track and field athlete. Learning more about Laureus, Neeraj found was attracted to the athlete-led organisation which celebrates the power of sport.

This year, Neeraj has climbed to the World No.1 ranking with golds at the World Championships and, earlier this month, the Asian Games. His gold medal run has catapulted him to an incredible level of fame in his home country. August 7, the date of his winning throw in Tokyo, is now celebrated as



National Javelin Day and he is in constant demand for endorsements and media appearances.

New Laureus Ambassador Neeraj Chopra, said, "It's a big honour for me to join Laureus as an Ambassador. To use my platform and the power of sport to help young people in India and around the world is something I am looking forward to doing. To see the many legends that have been a part of this program and the difference they have made in the world is inspiring, and I share the same belief; that sport has the power to change the world."

"I've heard about the many

programmes that Laureus supports in India, and the stories remind me of the many ways in which we can help young people. Every athlete knows that sport can be a big part of that story. People are watching and following my sport now more than ever and I believe that, working with Laureus Sport for Good, I can use that platform to change lives," he added.

As a Laureus Ambassador, Neeraj joins a unique team of elite athletes from across the generations, including Academy Members and icons of Indian sport Kapil Dev, Rahul Dravid and Sachin Tendulkar.

Drake disappoints fans for allegedly shading ex Rihanna on new song



Rapper Drake appeared to have disappointed his fans due to his remarks on one of his new songs. Shortly after his track 'Fear of Heights' was released, the 'Hotline Bling' rapper was alleged to have thrown shades at his former girlfriend and singer Rihanna, reports aceshowbiz.com. The 36-year-old rapper became a hot topic on X, formerly known as Twitter, as his fans voiced their thoughts on the new single. One of them wrote: "Drake rapping about Rihanna in 2023 and sounding as mature as he did in 2013 is as disappointing as it is predictable." Meanwhile, another candidly penned: "Drake dissing rihanna on the album is crazyyyyy [a laughing emoji] he's so salty I'm weaaaaaak." That same day, Rihanna's fans came to her defense on the same social media platform.

Breast cancer cases rising alarmingly in Indian women

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Breast cancer cases have registered an alarming increase among younger Indian women aged between 25 and 50 with tragically 60% of these cases being diagnosed at advanced stages that reduce their survival rates considerably.

October is observed as Breast Cancer Awareness month.

SBI Life Insurance in its fifth year of its "Thanks-a-Dot" initiative recently launched here an innovative tool to promote self-breast examination for women by using a 'hot water bag' with 'special lumps engraved' on it.

Ravindra Sharma, Chief of Brand, Corporate Communication & CSR, SBI Life Insurance, said "The lumps help women to experience how a real breast cancer lump would feel during self-examination, besides also training, educating and reminding Indian women about making self-breast-examination a regular habit and importance of early detection."

Expressing SBI Life's commitment to spreading this initiative far and wide -- especially among the country's rural areas, Sharma also urged all organisations to join this cause by producing and distributing these specially-designed bags + free-of-cost to their customers and employees thus making this life-saving tool a part of every household alongside making self-breast examination a regular habit among Indian women. Indian actress Mahima



Chaudhry, who is a breast cancer survivor, narrated briefly her successful journey in battling this cancer and emphasized the importance of early detection.

Breaking down in tears as she began her narrative, the Bollywood filmstar said she was crying in happiness at having overcome this killer cancer in the face of its deadly strike, while also having to provide positive assurance to her worried child.

"I used to always do these tests but they always were negative for breast cancer. One day when they were found positive, I strangely felt no fear but prepared in battling it towards my successful recovery," she said while reiterating the need for early detection and the step-by-step treatment. She also narrated the case of Hollywood star Angelina Jolie, who went in for breasts mastectomy since her family members too had died of breast cancer. Devieka Bhojwani, Vice-President, Womens Cancer Initiative Tata Memorial Hospital, recalled her encounter and success in overcoming this cancer 20 years

ago when it was discovered in its early stages. However, those years also revealed a sad part of life among other cancer-struck women who queued in hospitals for treatment.

"I watched these women sitting sad and alone in the hospital and, on talking to them, I found that they while having had been abandoned by their families to their own fate still remained in hope for recovery."

Furious over this discovery, Bhojwani vowed that when she got better, she would do everything possible to help these women in battling and overcoming breast cancer. She is now making such efforts as the Vice-President, Womens Cancer Initiative Tata Memorial Hospital.

However, the need of the hour is to create awareness about breast cancer as these affected women "hide their (breast cancer) lumps" and come to the hospitals for treatment when it's too late, she said while noting that SBI Life's latest initiative would greatly help such women.

Symbolic Significance of different animals at the Gates of New Parliament Building



MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA
New Delhi

Different animals have been installed on the 6 doors of the new parliament building. What is their importance and why have they been established? Let's know what is its religious and mythological significance and what are the idols of these animals. The new Parliament building has already attracted world with its headlines due to its unique architecture. What is the spiritual, mythological significance of the animals on all 6 doors of the new building? All these are inspired by where they are installed here. Thus, in the new building, the three doors of knowledge, power and karma have been discussed more. Meaning, three gates are discussed. In fact, there are six entrances and exits in this building. Gyan Dwar, Shakti Dwar and Karma Dwar will be used by Prime Minister, Vice President and Speaker of Lok Sabha. The remaining three Makar, Hans and Shardul gates will be used by members of Parliament, common people and officials-

employees etc. Acharya Swami Vivekananda of Aayodhya says that all the animal statues installed at the door of the new parliament building have great spiritual and mythological significance. All these are symbols of our culture and knowledge in the scriptures. Give motivation to keep going. It is a symbol of happiness, peace and prosperity. Red sandstone idols of auspicious animals have been established as guardian idols in Indian culture based on their importance, their aesthetic appearance, positive qualities and the study of Vastu Shastra. Let's know what is the connection of the 6 doors of Parliament with the names of different animals.

GAJDWAR: It is in the north direction of the building, Gaj means elephant. Two statues of elephants are installed here. Elephant represents knowledge, progress, wealth, wisdom and memory. It is also a symbol of aspirations. Gaja is the representative of Lord Ganesha, fresh more finance or income are also symbols.

Rise in knee osteoarthritis in younger population



INTAKE OF CAFFEINATED DRINKS, UNHEALTHY LIFESTYLE, OBESITY, AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE ARE MAIN REASONS

YOGESH KANT
New Delhi

Healthcare experts across the country are reporting a sharp increase in knee Osteoarthritis in the younger population, a condition typically associated with ageing. While joint pain at any age is known to negatively affect the overall well-being and productivity, early onset is bringing an altogether different set of challenges to deal with.

"Of late I have been receiving patients as young as 40-41, complaining of severe knee pain and work absenteeism. Unlike elderly knee osteoarthritis patients, who are more into pain management, this young working lot is focussed on complete and quick recovery so that they could resume work as soon as possible. In cut-throat competition, they cannot afford low productivity in their working

age," says Dr L. Tomar, Director, Dept. of Orthopaedics, Max Super Speciality Hospital, New Delhi.

In younger age, knee pain is reported to cause loss of productivity and a poor career growth at the prime of career, it also increases apprehension concerning financial obligations and makes it difficult for the patients to sustain a normal family and social life.

Rise in knee osteoarthritis in the younger population is surprising as it is a condition which develops due to wear and tear of weight bearing joints, mostly due to ageing.

According to the doctors, Knee Osteoarthritis triggers due to some morphological and biochemical changes in the knee joints, creating a gap between the joints that leads to abrasion and joint degeneration, a classical symptom of ageing. And even in the older age, doctors believe that regulating certain modifiable risk factors, like increasing physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, ensuring an optimum sun exposure and refraining

from substance abuse, like tobacco and alcohol, could help delay or completely eliminate the chances of knee pain.

So a rise in knee osteoarthritis at an unusual age seeks explanation. Dr Tomar says, "An early onset of degenerative joint disease simply means that factors like unhealthy lifestyle, obesity, lack of sun exposure and substance abuse played their part way too well."

According to the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, another reason for weak bones in young age is an excessive intake of caffeinated drinks, especially in childhood and adolescence. According to a study published in PubMed3 more than ninety percent of total bone mineral content (BMC) is generated before the age of 17 years, so technically the stage for weaker joints is set at an early age.

Clearly, we are falling short in ensuring bone health at almost every front, leading to a sharp rise in knee arthritis in working age.

As far the treatment of knee osteoarthritis in younger patients, it depends entirely on the stage of the disease, explains Dr Tomar, "At an early stage we prefer medication and lifestyle modification. Usually attaining a healthy body weight, ensuring doctor-assisted physical activity and improving bone density by diet and supplements helps with pain, and sometimes even stops joint degeneration. However, for the patients with chronic pain and advanced osteoarthritis, when such interventions are late to work, knee replacement surgery offers a sustainable solution."