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BJP'S VOTE BANK INCREASED IN PUNJAB, SAYS STATE CHIEF JAKHAR

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY



INDIA'S \$220 BILLION **CHEMICAL INDUSTRY HAMSTRUNG BY COMPLIANCE BURDEN**



SUNNY DEOL TO RETURN WITH 'BORDER 2', THE SEQUEL TO INDIA'S MOST LOVED WAR EPIC

Ludhiana, Gurdaspur MPs submit resignations as Punjab legislators

CHANDIGARH: Ludhiana MP and Congress' Punjab unit chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring on Friday submitted his resignation as legislator from Gidderbaha to the Assembly Speaker here.

Fellow Congress legislator Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, who represents Dera Baba Nanak, also resigned after being elected as the MP from Gurdaspur.

State Cabinet minister and AAP leader Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer will also resign as he was elected as the MP from Sangrur, the bastion of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. His win has resulted in the Barnala constituency becoming vacant. Likewise, AAP candidate Raj Kumar Chabbewal's win in the Hoshiarpur

Kuwait fire tragedy:

Plane carrying mortal

remains of 45 Indians

KOCHI: A special Air Force

aircraft carrying the mortal re-

mains of 45 Indians, who died in

a devastating fire in Kuwait on

June 12, landed here on Friday

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vi-

jayan, Union Minister of State

Suresh Gopi, Leader of Opposi-

tion V.D. Satheesan and several

state cabinet ministers were

Rajeeve said since the maxi-

mum number of deceased was

from Kerala, the flight landed

here first and then it will leave

for Delhi, with the remaining

The victims include 23 from

Kerala, seven from Tamil

Nadu, three each from Andhra

Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, two

from Odisha, and one each

from Bihar, Punjab, Karna-

taka, Maharashtra, West Bengal,

The mortal remains of the

The state government ar-

ranged for an inspection of the

bodies that were received and

an ambulance was also allotted

to carry each of the bodies to

mains were placed for a while

for people to pay their last re-

spects after which the bodies

were handed over to the rela-

their respective homes.

tives of the deceased.

victims from Kerala, Karnataka

and Tamil Nadu will be sent to

their respective destinations.

Jharkhand, and Haryana.

State Minister of Law P. Modi is attending the summit

present at the airport.

and will later fly to Delhi.

lands in Kerala



with his resignation. He had represented the Chabbewal Assembly segment as a Congress legislator before joining AAP ahead of the parliamentary elections.

Lok Sabha constituency has ring said: "It has been an honled to the Chabbewal (re- our to serve the people of Gidserved) seat falling vacant derbaha for the past 12 and a half years. I hope I have justified their trust and worked diligently for the people."

"The support and trust from the people of Gidderbaha has given me the strength to rise Addressing the media, War- against all adversities and fight

for the interests of Punjab and its people. This very strength helped me overcome challenges in Ludhiana and emerge victorious. I will now continue to champion Punjab's rights in Parliament and ensure our voice is heard.' Regarding the upcoming

by-elections in Gidderbaha, Warring said: "I have a deep connection with Gidderbaha. I have achieved much in the last few years, and Gidderbaha has played a significant role in that. The candidate for the upcoming by-elections will be chosen after deliberation by the party's senior leadership, with the best interests of the party and the constituency in mind.'

In the Lok Sabha polls, the Congress won seven of 13 seats in Punjab.

Punjab hikes power rates for domestic, industrial consumers



CHANDIGARH: Punjab on Friday hiked power tariff for domestic users by 11 paise per unit, while for industry it was 15 paise per unit.

The new tariff will be applicable from June 16 to March 31, 2025. However, the hike will not affect a majority of domestic consumers as the government already provides 300 units of free power to each

consumer and neither will it have a bearing on the agricultural sector that also gets free power. The Punjab State Electricity Regulatory Commission said from April 1 to June 15 the tariff or charges shall be applicable as per the tariff order for 2023-24.

The commission decided to extend the kVAh tariff and from January 1, 2025, for the domestic supply consumers with loads exceeding 20 kW.

Special night tariff with 50 per cent fixed charges for all industrial consumers using electricity exclusively from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. has also been continued. This year's variable energy charge has been fixed as Rs 5.31 per kVAh.

On the demand of the industry, the facility for use of electricity by the night category consumers during the extended four hours from 6 am to 10 am at normal tariff has also been continued.

Earlier, the Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd (PSP-CL) had submitted an aggregate revenue requirement petition to the commission, seeking an ARR of Rs 53, 360.48 crore due to a revenue deficit of Rs contract demand II system 5, 419.82 crore up to 2024-25.

Wayanad or Raebareli? Rahul Gandhi

likely to decide on Monday

CII Projects Robust 8% GDP Growth for India in 2024-25



NEW DELHI: The Confedera tion of Indian Industry (CII), India's apex industry association, has forecasted a robust 8 per cent economic growth rate for the country in the fiscal year 2024-25. This projection is notably higher than the Reserve Bank of India's growth estimate of 7.2 per cent for the current fiscal year.

CII's optimism stems from expectations that the newly reelected Modi government will implement second-generation reforms on a mission mode, coupled with anticipated improvements in global trade growth rates over the next couple of

Sanjiv Puri, the newly ap-pointed CII President, expressed confidence in India's economic prospects during his inaugural media interaction. The government has placed the economy on a much stronger foundation through its policy interventions on ease of doing business," Puri stated, citing robust high-frequency economic indicators at the start of the current year.

The industry body anticipates positive developments across various fronts, including favorable monsoon conditions leading to better agricultural production, and an improved performance in the IT sector due to an expected uptick in global trade later this year.

CII envisions all three sectors - agriculture, industry, and services - firing on all cylinders, contributing to the projected 8 per cent growth rate.

For 2024-25, CII forecasts agricultural growth at 3.7 per cent, industrial growth at 8.4 per cent, and services sector the larger interest of the party. growth at 9 per cent. Additioninflation to remain closer to the Reserve Bank of India's target of 4 per cent, hovering around 4.5 per cent.

Puri highlighted India's

remarkable economic progress, with the country's GDP doubling from USD 1.7 trillion in 2010-11 to USD 3.4 trillion in 2022-23 over a decade. He expressed optimism that the next doubling of GDP to USD 7 trillion will occur in a shorter span of seven years, by 2029-30, reflecting India's economic ascent.

economic transformation, CII has outlined a 14-point agenda for the new government. The agenda focuses on fostering a globally competitive India through partnerships for sustainable and inclusive growth.

To drive the next phase of

India fastest growing economy, to clock 6.7 per cent growth over 3 years: World Bank

PM Modi holds talks with Zelenskyy, Macron, Sunak on the sidelines of G7 Summit in Italy

NEW DELHI: India will remain the fastest-growing major economy recording a steady growth of 6.7 per cent in the next three years including the current financial year, said a World Bank report released on Tuesday. In India, growth is estimated

to have picked up to 8.2 per cent in fiscal year (FY) 2023-24 (April 2023 to March 2024) -- 1.9 percentage points higher than estimated in January, according to the World Bank's latest Global Economic Prospects report. It said global growth is projected to hold steady at 2.6 per cent in 2024 before edging up to an average of 2.7 per cent

on the invitation of Italian

President Georgia Meloni

BARI (ITALY): Prime Min-

ister Narendra Modi on Fri-

President Volodymyr Zelen-

skyy, French President Em-

manuel Macron and his British

counterpart Rishi Sunak on

the sidelines of G7 Summit

It is learnt that Ukrania's

Zelenskyy briefed Modi on

Ukraine conflict. Modi had

met Zelenskyy on the sidelines

of the previous G7 summit in

Hiroshima in May last year as

well. India has been maintain-

ing that the conflict in Ukraine

must be resolved through dia-

ther strengthen the strategic

partnership, including in areas

of defence, nuclear and space,

and exchanged views on key

global and regional issues.

Modi and French President

logue and diplomacy.

At the airport, the mortal re- Macron discussed ways to fur-

various aspects of the Russia-

in Italy's Apulia region.



in 2025-26. That is well below the 3.1 per cent average in the decade before Covid-19.

"The forecast implies that over the course of 2024-26 countries that collectively account for more than 80 per cent of the world's population and global GDP would still be growing more slowly than they did in the decade before Covid-19," it said.

The two leaders met in the

"Taking Strategic Partner-

ship to new levels! PM @na-

rendramodi met President @

EmmanuelMacron of France

on the sidelines of the 50th

G7 Summit in Apulia, Italy,"

Ministry of External Affairs

spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal

"The two leaders discussed

ways to further strengthen the

partnership including in areas

of defence, nuclear, space, edu-

cation, climate action, digital

public infrastructure, critical

posted on X.

southern resort town of Italy.

Growth in the South Asia (SAR) region is projected to slow from 6.6 per cent in 2023 to 6.2 per cent in 2024, mainly due to a moderation of growth in India from a high base in recent years. With steady growth in India, regional growth is forecast to stay at 6.2 per cent in 2025-26. Among the region's other economies, growth is expected to remain robust in Bangladesh, though at a slower rate than in the past several years, and to strengthen in Pakistan

and Sri Lanka. "India will remain the fastestgrowing of the world's largest economies, although its pace of expansion is expected to moderate. After a high growth rate in FY2023/24, steady growth of 6.7 per cent per year, on average, is projected for the three fiscal years beginning in FY2024/25," the report said. This moderation is mainly due to a slowdown in investment from a high base. "However, investment growth

is still expected to be stronger than previously envisaged and remain robust over the forecast period, with strong public investment accompanied by private investment," it said.

It said that private consumption growth is expected to benefit from a recovery of agricultural production and declining inflation.

with a warm hug as they met

on the sidelines of the 50th G7

Summit at the luxury resort of

Modi reaffirmed his com-

nership in the third term of

the NDA government and re-

viewed the progress made in

the ongoing FTA negotiations.

Modi posted on X soon after

'There is great scope to deep-

We also talked about further

cementing ties in the defence

The spokesperson of the

Ministry of External Affairs

Randhir Jaiswal described

the meeting between the two

sector," Modi wrote.

leaders as "fruitful."

their meeting.

"It was a delight to meet

Borgo Egnazia in Apulia.

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is likely to end his dilemma on Monday over which Lok Sabha seat to retain -- Wayanad or Raebareli. Sources in the Congress said that he will make the decision known on Monday. Gandhi won both the seats

with a thumping majority.

In Wayanad, he was the sitting Lok Sabha member which he contested and won in the recently concluded polls. He also mitment to further strengthen won from Raebareli, considered to be the family's traditional seat. It was last represented by his mother Sonia Gandhi, who did not contest the seat and became a Rajya Sabha member. in the Wayanad Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday constituency, said all of them was in his constituency to thank

seat to retain and which to quit. He said whatever decision he makes, all will be happy. After this statement, speculation is rife that his sister, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, may be fielded At a public meeting in Kal-

he was in dilemma over which

petta on Wednesday, State Congress president and Kannur Lok Sabha member K. Sudhakaran said that Rahul Gandhi will vacate the Wayanad seat for

However, Congress tor and former State Minister A.P. Anilkumar, who represents the Wandoor Assembly seat want Rahul Gandhi to retain the Wavanad seat.

PM @RishiSunak in Italy. I reiterated my commitment to his voters where he said that technologies, connectivity and further strengthen the Indiaculture. They also exchanged UK Comprehensive Strategic TRAI refutes claims of views on key global and re-Partnership in the third term gional issues," he wrote. It is Prime Minister Modi's of the NDA Government,"

NEW DELHI: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

The telecom regulator said



claims are being circulated to

charging for multiple SIMs

en ties in sectors like semiconductors, technology and trade. (TRAI) refuted the claims being circulated that the regulator will impose charges on customers for holding multiple

> in a post on social media X (previously Twitter) that such



mislead people. "Such claims are unfounded and serve only to mislead the public," the regulator said.

BJP to 'retain' LS Speaker's post

to "retain" the post of Speaker for the 18th Lok Sabha, with a BJP MP expected to be elected for the role, sources said.

Dismissing media reports

suggesting that BJP's allies had demanded the Lok Sabha Speaker's post, a senior party leader said that the matter would be first considered internally before discussing it with NDA allies to reach a consensus. In the Modi government's

first term, Sumitra Mahajan, a BJP MP from Indore, Madhya Pradesh, served as Lok Sabha Speaker, while in the second term, Om Birla, a BJP MP from Kota, Rajasthan, held the position. Although the BJP does not hold a majority as it did in 2014 and 2019, speculation was rife that the TDP and a JD(U) MP were vying for the Speaker's post.

Sources indicate that the name of the new Lok Sabha Speaker will be deliberated upon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from Italy.



mands regarding the position arise from allies, the BJP will consider a new formula.

During the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha, starting on June 24, the BJP will reach out to opposition parties to ensure the Speaker is elected unani- 3.7.24 for oath/affirmation of mously. If the opposition agrees to the government's proposal,

an election will not be necessary. However, if the opposition fields its candidate, a vote for the new Speaker might take Speaker assuming office on the same day. On Wednesday, Parliamen-

tary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju posted on X, "First Session of 18th Lok Sabha is being summoned from 24.6.24 to newly elected Members, Election of Speaker, President's Address and discussion thereon. 264th Session of Rajya Sabha will commence on 27.6.24 and conclude on 3.7.24.

NEW DELHI: The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), a prominent economic think tank, released a comprehensive policy agenda on Thursday, urging the implementation of strategic reforms

first foreign trip after assum-

ing office for a third time this

month. The two leaders last

met in January when the

French President visited India

to attend the 75th Republic

PM Modi's meeting with

his British counterpart Sunak

followed his talks with French

President Macron. The two

leaders greeted each other

Day of India.

According to the GTRI, India stands at the cusp of a transformative era, necessitating comprehensive economic reforms. The proposed agenda ad-

across various sectors

dresses a wide range of issues, from simplifying the customs duty structure and pioneering regulatory frameworks for emerging sectors like cryptocurrencies, to boosting the MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) sector through GST (Goods and Services Tax) reforms and fortifying the nation's energy security. One of the key recommendations is the simplification of the convoluted customs duty structure, which currently affects imports worth

USD 680 billion. The current structure, which has not been reviewed in 20



years, features over 27 different duty rates and over 100 specific or mixed duty slabs. Notably, 85 percent of customs duty revenue comes from less than 10 percent of tariff lines, while 60 percent of tariff lines contribute less than 3 percent of revenue.

The GTRI suggests that with some adjustments, the average import tariff could be reduced from 18.1 percent to below 10 percent without impacting essential products. This simplification would not only address global criticism, such as former US President Donald Trump's portrayal of India as the "tariff king," but also contribute to the nation's broader economic objectives. Furthermore, the think tank proposes increasing the GST exemption limit for a

firm's annual turnover from Rs 40 lakh to Rs 1.5 crore.

This move is anticipated to be transformative for India's MSME sector, promoting job creation and growth. Firms with less than Rs 1.5 crore turnover account for over 80 percent of GST registrations but contribute less than 7 percent of the tax collected. Addressing concerns over India's growing reliance on Chinese imports, particularly in sectors like electric vehicles (EVs) and active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), the GTRI recommends avoiding incentives for low value-added EVs and instead focusing on developing domestic capacity for API production. Finally, the agenda highlights the need to simplify e-commerce export rules, which could enable more than 20 lakh Indian firms to explore export opportunities,

thereby boosting the nation's

exports across various sectors,

including handicrafts, jewelry,

ethnic wear, decorative paint-

ings, and Ayurvedic products.

Akali Dal chief to meet leaders Reforms in GST, Custom Duty, MSMEs to Push India's Growth: GTRI for future strategy: Core group



romani Akali Dal (SAD) on Thursday discussed the prevailing political situation in Punjab, including analysing and introspecting on the party's performance in the just concluded Lok Sabha poll.

At a meeting of the party's core committee lasting over six hours at the party headquarters here, it was decided that "in the coming days SAD President Sukhbir Singh Badal would seek suggestions from party leaders individually as well as collectively to formulate the party's overall agenda and strategy for future"

The meeting placed on record its appreciation of the "spirited, selfless and resolute leadership provided by the

CHANDIGARH: The Shi- party President, Sukhbir Badal, especially during the past six months leading up to the polling date". The party places full faith

and confidence in his leadership and salutes his singleminded devotion to the party's interests, " said a statement by the party.

The meeting also considered the party's likely strategy for the forthcoming by election in the state. A final decision on these will be taken in the coming days.

Earlier, the core committee also took a serious view of the vilification campaign against the party and its leadership The meeting reposed full faith in his leadership, said the statement.

BJP's vote bank increased in Punjab, says state chief Jakhar

that votes polled in favour of the BJP in Punjab in the Lok Sabha polls is a step towards the party's bigger role, state BJP President Sunil Jakhar said on Saturday the party's vote bank has increased to 18.5 from 6.5 per cent. He said a significantly high-

er voter percentage showed the party has "done better and needs to keep working hard to achieve its aim of serving the state in the next Assembly

"We have done better in Lok Sabha polls but better is not enough and we need to succeed more to serve the state in 2027, " Jakhar told the media here while accepting that the results of traditional seats of Gurdaspur, Amritsar and Hoshiarpur were not on expected lines.\ "We have secured over 18.5 per cent of votes from our earlier performance of 6.5 per cent, which shows we have done better and people of all com-



BJP, "said Jakhar, expressing gratitude to party workers, leaders and people for their Patras, "he said.

(constituencies) in which we and Food Processing Ravneet have performed exceedingly Bittu, thanked Prime Minister

munities have voted for the well and the party will honour our mandal and booth pradhans (heads) with Sammaan

Jakhar, amid the presence of We have identified mandals Minister of State for Railways

We have secured over 18.5 per cent of votes from our earlier performance of 6.5 per cent, which shows we have done better and people of all communities have voted for the BJP"

Narendra Modi for the inclusion of the latter in the Union

"Ravneet Bittu's induction reflects the PM's special focus on Punjab, "Jakhar said.

Underlining that people's trust in the BJP in Punjab has lent greater responsibility to the party, Jakhar said though the BJP at present has two legislators in the Assembly, it will play the role of true Opposition to "expose the illegal nexus" between AAP and Congress.

Kaithal businessman attacked, case of 'insulting religious beliefs' investigated by SIT

Haryana Police has announced Rs 10,000 award for the arrest of accused

PARVESH HANDA Kaithal

Police on Tuesday registered a case against two unknown suspects based on allegations by a Sikh businessman that he was called a 'Khalistani' and attacked on Monday night by two bikeborne assailants suspected under the influence of liquor. The charges of insulting religious beliefs and criminal intimidation were invoked in the first information report registered on the complaint of Sukhwindar Singh who owns a furniture showroom in Kaithal city. The victim bleeding heavily alleged that he was thrashed and called a 'Khalistani' by motorcycleborne youths when he was heading home on his scooter. SP Kaithal Upasana expressed deep concern over the unfortunate incident and a five member SIT led by Gurvinder Singh DSP was constituted to probe matter and arrest the accused. A reward for amount Rs 10,000 was announced for the arrest of the ac-



cused. Police obtained footage of a two youths who fled from the spot. CCTV camera on which two youths The man claimed that he did not were seen travelling on a motorknow who the youths were and he cycle. The SGPC, Congress and the was not able to see the registration Shiromani Akali Dal condemned plate of the motorcycle properly.

the incident, calling for immediate Police, which reached the hospital where he was admitted, have action against the culprits. Police said the man alleged that he was registered a case of assault against attacked while he was waiting at two unidentified men. Civil Lines Kaithal Police Station Inspector a railway level-crossing here for a train to pass. There was an argu-Sheelavati said the case was registered on a complaint by the man ment between the man and the when police visited the hospital. two youths when vehicles started moving after the crossing's gates The inspector said the medical were opened. Talking to media report of the complainant revealed persons on Tuesday, Sukhvinder that he had also consumed alco-Siungh, who was hospitalised, said hol. Meanwhile, Haryana SGPC that they abused me and called president Bhupinder Singh Asandh and former jathedar Baljit Singh me a Khalistani. One person got down from the motorcycle and hit Daduwal have demanded that the me with bricks when some youth police immediately arrest the cul-(later identified as Raju Dhull Pai) prits, saying that police registered FIR after about 18 hours. intervened and saved him from the

Police busted gangsters group, criminals syndicate recording up to 61% drop in past 18 months: DGP Haryana

PARVESH HANDA Panchkula

Addressing media persons Shatrujit Kapoor DGP Haryana said that after police in the state given free hand, Haryana state during last and up to 30th June this year has record-



ed up to 61% drop in crimes related to murders, dacoities. robberies, rapes and

Kapoor said that Haryana government followed Uttar Pradesh Yogi government's policies to curb criminal activities in the state on the directions by Haryana former chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar and present chief minister Nayab Saini with the assistance of CID chief Alok Mittal, which helped a lot to control increasing crimes in Haryana state in past about one and half year.

Bhiwani MC alleged scam worth crores: **HC orders CBI probe**

SATISH HANDA Chandigarh

The Punjab and Haryana high court has ordered a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into an alleged scam reported in Bhiwani municipal council (MC) in 2022 and submit its report within four months The allegation in one case was that the then chairman (Ran Singh Yadav), then vice chairman (Maman Chand) and other MC officials including Executive Officer, Secretary, Accountant along with the bank officials (when MC was having account in Axis Bank) and few touts committed a scam worth crores of public money by way of issuing cheques from the account of the MC to some bogus company in 2019. Due to shortage of staff in CBI the court asked the state government to provide a deputy superintendent of police rank officers to facilitate the conduct of the preliminary

inquiry by the CBI. The high court acted on the plea from one Suhsil Kumar After a long time 'Kala Kachha Verma, who had moved a Gang' once again spreads terror High Court in 2022 seeking CBI probe and alleged that lapses were committed by the investigating agency and they deliberately misdirected the investigation to extend benefits to the persons who are beneficiaries in ensuring disposal of the state property and misappropriation of the funds of the municipal council caused heavy financial loss to government thus committed a scam worth crores of public money by way of issuing cheques from the account of the MC to some bogus com-

pany in 2019. It was alleged, the land of the public toilets was illegally converted into shops and sold out with the connivance of the private persons by the officials then posted at Bhiwani MC. Further, it was also alleged embezzlement of the funds meant for the rejuvenation and revamp of the public ponds and carving out plots on them and encroachment of the same by near and dear ones of the accused persons. Five FIRs were registered on different complaints in 2022 registered vide FIR No. 149 dated 10th March 2022 against Vinod Goel and ACB has not produced challan so far, FIR No. 206 dated 10th April 2022 against government employee but PC Act was not imposed in the same. FIR No 224 dated 16th April 2022 against government employee without PC Act, FIR No 251 dated 26th April 2022 against government employee without imposing PC Act and FIR No 469 dated 17th August 2022 but polic has not submitted investigation report in this case in the court so far. Sushil Verma Convener Bhiwani Bachao Aandolan, who moved writ in the High Court said that the number of alleged accused being sheltered by the profile and influential persons will further increase during CBI investigation.

"De-addiction Centre" inaugurates by Health Department **GULSHAN KUMAR**

Yamunanagar

On June 12, a "De-addiction Centre" is inaugurated by Health Department Yamunanagar in newly constructed 200 bedded building of Mukand Lal District Civil Hospital Yamunanagar by Honorable MLA Yamuna Nagar Ghanshyam Das Arora. On this occasion Civil Surgeon Dr. Manjeet Singh, Principal Medical Officer Dr. Divya Mangala, Dr. Charu Kalra, Dr. Naveen Sharma, Dr. Geeta Bainiwal, Dr. Bhupinder and other officers- employees were present. Rotary Club Jagadhri donated 250 bedsheets for the Patients & during the program, Deputy Governor of Rotary Club Narendra Pal Singh along with Raman Dahiya, Naveen Batra, Hemant Shahpuri and Dalip Sharma were present.

Arora said that drug addiction ment Yamunanagar is running said that de-addiction center



is a curse for the society and any kind of addiction affects whole family and society of the addict. Therefore, everyone should protect themselves and their family members from drug addiction and if any person is addicted then they should take full consultation from the doctors. He

a drug de-addiction program in the district, due to which free consultation and treatment is available for the patients suffering from drug addiction in Civil Hospital Yamunanagar. Therefore, contact the consultants and get complete treatment.

Civil Surgeon Yamu-M.L.A. Ghanshyam Das said that the Health Depart- nanagar Dr. Manjeet Singh

pital Yamunanagar, under which 20 beds have been arranged in the ward where the patients will be kept for treatment, so that the patient can give up the addiction through

counseling and medicines. Principal Medical Officer Dr. Divya Mangla told that a drug de-addiction camp is organized in Mukand Lal District Civil Hospital, Yamunanagar, under which patients are brought to the camp by Police, N.G.O. and by the parents. During the camp, the person suffering from drug addiction is given complete counseling by trained counselors, health workers and doctors and if necessary. treatment is also given with medicines. She told that the de-addiction program is provided completely free of cost by of Mukand Lal District Civil Hospital, Yamunanagar.

High Court fined Haryana PWD Rs 50000 having practice not to release payment due to contractors

SATISH HANDA

Punjab and High Court imposed Rs 50 thousand fine on Haryana Govt, having routine practice of not releasing payment due to contractors unless there is an intervention from the court. While imposing a cost of Rs. 50,000 on Haryana Public Works Department, (PWD), the bench of Justice Vinod S. Bhardwaj observed, "this Court would like to express its anguish and concern towards the act and conduct of the respondents in unreasonably withholding the dues of the contractors. Honorable Court said every week it receives an average of 10-15 cases only for seeking release of undisputed liability and in many such cases, the government has



release the same for paucity

of funds and the contractors

have to knock at the doors of

Court for seeking release of their admissible dues for no fault on their part, which put them under financial burden and creates unnecessary litigation, it added. The writ petition was filed seeking direction to the Executive Engineer, Panchayati

well within the prescribed time, the respondents have withheld the legitimate dues of the petitioner. After hearing the submissions, the Court noted that the parties have consented and it thus directed the authority concerned to treat the present petition as a representation and decide it within three months. However, the Court expressed disapproval of such practice of the government and deemed it fit to impose costs to be deposited with the Raj, Public Works, Haryana, poor patients welfare f to release the payment of PGIMER, Chandigarh. poor patients welfare fund.

running bill of one Shashi Bhushan along with 18% in-

terest from the date of bills

till actual realization. The

counsel for petitioner contended that despite having

completed the allotted work

'Kala Kachha' gang spreads terror in Ambala City

six members of the gang attempted robbery in a house in posh Jail Land residential area in Ambala City after climbing over the wall, but failed to enter inside the house due to tight security arrangements by the house owner during mid night. According to the footage in the CCTV camera installed in the house, six persons wearing undergarments attempted to en-



ter inside the house, but failed, managed to flee. The owner of the house lodged a complaint with Baldev Nagar police station

in the morning which arrived to investigate the matter but the case

having covered their face with masks entered in a house owned by a retired police Sub Inspector in railway police Bant Singh in Naresh Vihar under Sadar police station area Ambala City when the couple was in fast sleep in an airconditioned room and in the morning saw the door lying closed from out-

side. When the wife of a retired

police officer came out from another door, found a grill of a window lying in the open in Meanwhile, in another case the house and the luggage in a durin same night six persons bedroom was scattered. Durthat 100 gm gold ornaments, about 900 gm silver jewellery and Rs 50,000 currency notes were missing from the almirah. During checking of footage in a CCTV camera installed outside by Sadar police team found that six persons wearing under garments and covered their face with maskshad entered inside the house jumping over the gate.

Farmer Unions Rally Behind Constable, Women's **Union Demands Apology from MP Kangana Ranaut**

FW DESK

In a show of solidarity, farmer the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) constable who reportedly slapped newly elected Member of Parliament Kangana Ranaut at the airport. This collective support comes in response to Ranaut's derogatory remarks about women participating in farmer protests, sparking outrage among farmer groups.

Leaders of various farmer unions, including Kisan Mazdoor Morcha and Punjab Kisan Union, condemned Ranaut's comments and expressed support for the constable's actions. Saran Singh Pandher of Kisan Mazdoor Morcha emphasized the need to understand the constable's reaction, citing the gravity of insulting remarks towards one's mother.

unions, led by Rajwinder ures and farmer groups, with farmer protests.



Kaur, president of Mahila Kisan Union, have demanded an apology from MP Kangana Ranaut for her derogatory statement. Kaur, who witnessed Ranaut's remarks firsthand at the Shambhu border. reiterated the importance of respectful discourse, especially from elected officials.

The incident has reignited Meanwhile, women's tensions between political fig-

2022 TARN TARAN CHURCH DESECRATION CASE

sentiments running high postelections. Women's organizations plan to visit the family of Kulwinder Kaur, the constable involved, extending unwavering support in solidarity.

As the fallout from Ranaut's comments continues, the demand for accountability and respect in public discourse remains at the forefront of the ongoing

Amritsar lad dies for Russian Army fighting in the Ukraine battlefield

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Pall of gloom descended when the news of the killing of Tejpal Singh was received by the family members of Tejpal Singh who was killed in the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Talking to our correspondent, Parminder Kaur, wife of slain Tejpal Singh (30) who was keen to join the Indian Army went to Russia on tourist Visa when he didn't get a job in the Indian army.

With sobbing eyes she said, "Mere Sar the Sai" (my husband) had gone to Thailand to seek a job to earn livelihood in December last year. After staying a few days in Thailand he along with his friends went to Russia on January 12, 2024 where he was recruited in the Army". Tears rolled down on her cheeks when she told, "Just two days before a telephonic call was received by one of his friends who told me about the death of my husband Tejpal Singh killed in the Ukraine battlefield".

Adding further with wet eyes she said, "the friend of my husband informed that he was killed in the month of March his death surfaced much late



due to conflict of two warring

Adding further she said that she was informed that yet nobody was sure about the body as nobody knew about it where it was, whether its with Russia or still in the custody of Ukraine. No official words either from Russian Army or Indian officials are with family".

Last evening we sent emails to the Russian Army, Indian MEA (Ministry Of External Affairs) ministry to bring the body here to perform the last rites of departed soul".

India on Tuesday said two of its nationals, who were recruited by the Russian Army, have recently been killed in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine this year but information of conflict, taking the number of such deaths to four.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said India has strongly taken up the matter with Russia and sought early release and return of all Indian nationals who are with the Russian Army. In a firmly-worded state-

ment, it said India has demanded that there be a 'verified stop to any further recruitment of Indian nationals by the Russian Army" and that such activities would not be in "consonance with our partnership".

"We regret to state that two Indian nationals who had been recruited by the Russian Army have recently been killed in the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine," the MEA

"We offer our deepest condolences to the families of

the deceased. Our embassy in Moscow has pressed the Russian authorities, including the Ministry of Defence, for early repatriation of mortal remains," it said.

In March this year, 30-yearold Hyderabad resident Mohammed Asfan succumbed to injuries sustained while serving with Russian troops on the frontlines with Ukraine.

In February, Hemal Ashwinbhai Mangua, a 23-yearold resident of Surat in Gujarat, died in a Ukrainian air strike while serving as a "security helper" in the Donetsk

case with the arrest of alleged region. The Ministry of External key accused Jaswinder Singh Affairs and the Indian embassy alias Munshi of Talwandi Sobha in Moscow have strongly taken Singh in district Tarn Taran, up the matter with the Russian said Director General of Police Ambassador in New Delhi and (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav with Russian authorities in here on Sunday in a official Moscow respectively, for early statement. release and return of all Indian nationals who are with the covered one illegal 9mm pistol

Russian Army," the MEA said. along with one magazine and The statement by the MEA two live cartridges, one Splencame hours after Foreign dor Motorcycle and one mobile Secretary Vinay Kwatra atphone from the possession of tended the Russian National arrested accused person. Day reception at the Russian embassy.

unidentified persons with their According to reports, faces covered had vandalised around 200 Indian nationstatues of Lord Jesus and als were recruited as security Mother Mariam at a Church in helpers in the Russian military. Thakkarpura village of district

Punjab Police arrests key accused Jaswinder Munshi from Amritsar; one pistol recovered AMRITSAR: Amritsar Rural Police in an intelligence based operation has solved the 2022 Tarn Taran Church Desecration

Police teams have also resetting the Pastor's car on fire in August 31, 2022. In connection with the incident, the FIR no. 148 dated 31-8-2022 had been registered under sections 295-A. 452, 427, and 34 of the Indian As per the information, four Penal Code (IPC) and section 25 of the Arms Act at Sadar Patti

Police Station in Tarn Taran. DGP Gaurav Yadav said that during preliminary investigations, it was revealed by accused



Sharing operation deof Tarn Taran and fled after tails, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Amritsar Rural Satinder Singh said that following an intel-input that accused Jaswinder alias Munshi is going to deliver weapon consignment on his black Splendor motorcycle, Police teams laid a special Naka in the area of Police Station Chatiwind and managed to arrest the accused person after recovering a pistol from

his possession.

J&K security meet: Deploy full spectrum of counter-terror capabilities, PM directs officials



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday directed the officials to deploy a full spectrum of counterterror capabilities after chairing a review meeting on the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, in the wake of

multiple terror attacks in the last four days.

The topmost security officials including National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval attended the security review meeting and gave the Prime Minister a full overview of the

security-related situation in the Union Territory.

Prime Minister was apprised of the counter-terror measures undertaken by the security forces. He was also briefed about the Army's strategies and operations for neutralising the terrorists. PM Modi directed the officials to deploy and utilise the full spectrum of counter-terror capabilities.

Besides the review meeting, PM Modi also spoke to Home Minister Amit Shah and discussed the deployment of security forces and how the forces were executing counter-terror operations. Prime Minister also spoke to Jammu and Kashmir LG Manoj Sinha and took stock of the ground situation.

Terrorists launch 3rd attack in 3 days on Jammu and Kashmir Army base

Terrorists attacked an army base in the Chattargala area of Doda late last night, marking the third such incident in the region over the past three days, according to police reports early this morning.

A joint checkpoint manned by the Army and Police in Chattargala was targeted in the assault. "The Army and Police joint checkpoint has engaged terrorists in the Chattargala area of Doda. Firefight is going on," a police spokesperson said. Initial reports indicate that two soldiers were injured during the early exchange of gunfire. The condition of the injured sol-



diers has not been disclosed. This attack follows a deadly assault in Kathua district just hours earlier, where terrorists opened fire, killing one person and injuring two oth-

ers. Three days ago, terrorists attacked a bus carrying pilgrims, causing it to crash into a gorge and resulting in the tragic deaths of nine

Massive hunt for bus attackers in Jammu and Kashmir



FW DESK

A large-scale search operation is underway to capture the terrorists responsible for the attack on a passenger bus in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, which left nine people dead and 41 injured, officials said.

Teams from the National Investigation Agency (NIA), State Investigation Agency (SIA), and the Forensic Department have visited the scene of the attack to begin their investigation.

On Sunday, terrorists fired upon a 53-seater bus carrying pilgrims from Shiv Khori temple to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine near Teryath village in the Poni area. The bus subsequently fell into a deep gorge due to the gunfire.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj the grouping said.

sengers at GMC and Narayana hospitals on Monday. He said that the terrorist attack was part of a malicious plan to create chaos in the ammu region, a plan that will be thwarted. The Director General of Police (DGP), along with senior officers, including Army personnel, is scheduled to visit the site to gather firsthand information

about the incident.

The Hurrivat Conference condemned the terrorist attack on the bus carrying pilgrims in Reasi district, expressing grief over the incident. "The Hurriyat Conference has and will alwavs condemn all forms of violence against humanity. The loss of precious human lives is deeply disturbing,"

Remove 'Modi Pariwar' tag from your profile, ordered PM to **Workers: is under pressure of RSS?**



MEENAKSHI BHATTACHARYA New Delhi

'I am bigger than the team' - he has been enjoying this dream the most. And today that image is falling fast! Born in 1980, the Bharatiya Janata Party was a party of collective leadership. In the last 10 years, his identity has changed in the Modi Janata Party. Keeping the NDA under wraps, the government was also named 'Modi government'. 'Party or government promises'. that too were 'Modi's guarantee'. It was not said that 'BJP can do it'. The slogan was created, 'Modi hai to mumkin hai'. However, a single election result has ended

this tyranny of Narendra Modi. The Prime Minister himself, on the first day of his new government, gave instructions to the party member and its followers that no one should associate the phrase 'Modi's family' with their name, that part should be removed. Modi's message, this love from all over the country gave him strength during the election. After that, he said, the countrymen have given the majority to the NDA. That phrase will be dropped, but we will be part of the same family of improving the country by main-

What is significant in this case? 'Us' or 'We'. "I" aside! Why? The of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). For last10 years,

taining this bond.

raising questions about the declining fate of the RSS. But took this opportunity, the Sangh raised its voice to corner Modi, the result of which is this change. Before the polls, there was a craze across the country among BJP leaders, activists, ministers and supporters to write 'Modi's family' next to their names. The reason is only one, Modi always attacks and insults opponents with familyism, why is he not responsible for his owr family? The opposition raised this question, and then the trend started. After the disastrous result in the election, now Modi himself asked to remove it! And in that one message, it is more clear, RSS is not sitting with closed eyes.

On Monday, Sarsangchalak Mohan Bhagwat said, To be a volunteer, one must be humble, arrogance is forbidden. There is no room for egoism here.' This 'advice' of Bhagwat is not an iso-

In the recent issue of the Sangh's mouthpiece 'Organizer', the BJP leadership has been lambasted. It clearly states, "This is what happens with overconfidence, arrogance roots. You can't win an election the Constitution. and selfies. You have to work on the ground. In this election, did Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh workers asked for any help? No, answer is only one - the pressure it did not asked for. BJP has assumed that RSS is probably BJP's field worker. It has been forgotten he made the BJP his own party, that the Sangh is no one's worker".

Sonia Gandhi unanimously re-elected CPP Chairperson Ms Gandhi told them that has been for a decade now. No

KAVITA SHARMA

New Delhi

Former Congress President Sonia Gandhi was today unanimously re-elected the Chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party at a meeting of the party MPs from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

In her address after being reelected as the CPP Chairperson, she thanked the Congress MPs and assured she will do her best.

Expressing confidence and satisfaction over the revival of the party, she pointed out, 'many wrote our obituaries".

Hitting out at Prime Minister Modi, she said, he had suffered a political and moral defeat as he had sought the mandate solely in his name to the exclusion of both his party and its allies.

"In reality, he has lost the mandate he sought and there-



by lost the right to leadership as well", she observed, while adding, "yet, far from taking responsibility for failure, he intends to get himself sworn in again tomorrow"

Congratulating the newly elected parliamentarians she told them, "you have fought a tough election under the most challenging of circumstances. You have surmounted many obstacles and campaigned so

their success had given the Congress a much greater presence in the Lok Sabha and a more effective voice in its proceedings, both of which will help give greater strength to the party's participation. "Our numbers in Parliament

have increased significantly", she said, while adding, "not only is the Indian National Congress a large contingent in the Lok Sabha but we are bolstered by the strength of our INDIA partners, some of whom have themselves come back impres-

She told them that as members of the CPP, they have a special obligation to be "watchful, vigilant and proactive in holding him (the PM) and his new NDA government accountable".

"No longer can and should Parliament be bulldozed like it

longer will the writ of the ruling establishment be permitted to disrupt Parliament, whimsically mistreat members or push through legislation without due and proper consideration and debate", she said, adding, "no longer can and should Parliamentary Committees be ignored or by-passed like they have been since 2014. No longer will Parliament be muzzled and stifled as it has been over the past ten years". Ms Gandhi said, the Indian National Congress has once again demonstrated its resilience. "It was up against a mighty and malevolent machine that was doing its utmost to destroy us", she observed, while pointing out, "it tried to cripple us financially. It carried out a campaign against us and our leaders that was full of lies and defamation".

Pandian retires from active politics

ARABINDA MOHAPATRA

Bhubaneswar

Bureaucrat-turned politician and caretaker chief minister Naveen Patnaik's Man Friday VK Pandian on Sunday announced his retirement from active politics. In a self-made video Pandian, who has been squarely blamed for Biju Janata Dal's defeat in the elections, said that his only intent in joining politics was to help Patnaik and it was his shortcomings that he was not able to effectively counter some of the political narratives at the right time.

«I come from a very humble family and a small village. My dream since childhood has been to join IAS and serve the people. Lord Jagannath made it happen. Because of my family from Kendrapada, I came to Odisha. Since the day I set foot on the soil of Odisha. I have received immense love and affection from the people of Odisha. From Dharamgarh to Rourkela to workers of the Samajwadi Party Mayurbhanj to Ganjam, I have and other INDIA bloc partners. tried to work very hard for the

CM>s office,» he said. «It was an honour to be working for Shri Naveen Patnaik; the experience and the learning I had from him are for a lifetime. His grace, leadership, ethics, and, above all, his love for the people of

Odisha always inspired me. His expectation of me was to implement his vision for Odisha and we successfully crossed many milestones in health, education, poverty reduction, sports, investments, women>s empowerment, infrastructure, and also in temple and heritage projects,» Pandian added while giving details of the work he has done for the state under Patnaik's guidance.

«Working for the youth, school, and college children gave me great satisfaction. My own childhood memories of studying in a convent school helped me to implement the honorable CM>s visions for school transformation under 5T. During COVID-19, we traveled to almost all 30 districts to ensure that the health serve the people. At this time, we faced two super cyclones and we worked hard to save every precious life. I left the IAS taking voluntary retirement and joined the BJD to assist my mentor Shi Naveen Patnaik,» he said.

Uttar Pradesh has changed the direction of India's politics says Rahul

Raebareli

Newly Elected MP, and Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi today thanked and congratulated the people of Uttar Pradesh for changing the course and direction of politics in the

Addressing a largely attended thanksgiving public meeting in Raebareli, Gandhi said, people of Uttar Pradesh had conveyed a strong message that they were against the politics of hatred and violence and also against the and lack of touch with the grass- attempts of the BJP to replace

dent also congratulated the people for making the Prime Minister Narendra Modi affirm his faith in the country's Constitution, which otherwise, he was Droupadi Murmu enter the trying to replace. Referring to Ram Temple because she was Modi's picture bowing before the an Adivasi. He said, nor was any

this change goes to the people of Uttar Pradesh.

Gandhi observed that this election had conveyed multiple messages. He said they made it clear that they were against the politics of hatred and violence, which was being openly preached by Prime Minister ister Amit Shah. He pointed out, the BJP was even defeated from Ayodhya. He said, the BJP did not even let the President

any OBC seen in the temple as it was only people like Ambani, Adani, film and cricket stars who were there at the inauguration. Gandhi also said that people were fed up with unemployment and rising prices. Besides, he added, it was for the first time a government was working only few hillionaires like nis and Adanis and people sent a clear message that they did not like such kind of politics.

Gandhi cautioned the Congressmen including the MPs, MLAs, leaders and workers that they must not fall prey to ar-Constitution, he said, credit for poor, any farmer, any Dalit or rogance. He said, their job had

nal discord and sabotage within

the ranks of the BJP leadership,

reflecting a lack of cohesion and

effective management at the grassroots level. This disunity

left the party vulnerable and

lem significantly impacted the

youth demographic in Uttar

Pradesh, providing opposition

and leaders have to preach and spread love and harmony. Asserting that the people of Uttar Pradesh had conveyed a straight and strong message, he said, if Priyanka Gandhi had contested from Varanasi, the Prime Minister of the country would have lost by about three lakh votes. The senior Congress leader had special praise for the

e said, it was for the

not ended with the resounding

victories but had actually just

begun. He told the workers and

leaders that wherever the BJP

will try to spread hatred and

violence, the Congress workers

that the alliance partners had worked together with full commitment and dedication towards each other and that is the reason it performed extraordinarily well everywhere in the country whether in Uttar Pradesh or in Tamil Nadu.

NDA partners should promote inclusive policies and oppose any actions that divide society: JIH President, Syed Sadatullah Husaini PM Modi to address farmers in Varanasi on June 18



The President of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH), Syed Sadatullah Husaini has advised the NDA partners to promote inclusive policies and oppose any actions that divide society. Addressing the regular monthly press conference at the JIH headquarters, Syed Sadatullah Husaini spoke on a range of issues and answered questions by the media regarding the recently held Lok Sabha elections.

Regarding the election results, the JIH President said, "We consider the election results a resounding mandate against hate and divisive politics. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind congratulates the people of India for their enthusiastic and active participation in the electoral

Talking about political parties and the ruling dispensation, Sadatullah Husaini said, "We urge all political parties to learn from this mandate and move away from the politics of hate, communal and caste divides, stereotyping, labeling, and stig-

abandon extreme capitalist policy formulations and instead focus on building a society where everyone feels valued and respected, irrespective of religious and caste considerations. We strongly urge the new government to end the misuse of state machinery and constitutional bodies against political or ideological opponents. Such practices undermine the principles of democracy and erode public trust in our insti-

Advising the opposition parties and the NDA partners, the JIH President emphasized, "The responsibility of NDA partners in the ruling party has increased manifold. People expect them to be vigilant, fair, and responsible. Succumbing to pressure from the ruling dispensation and compromising on core values and principles would be a serious betrayal of the people of India who voted for them to play a crucial role. We urge these partners to actively promote policies that foster unity, respect, and inclusiveness, and

that may divide our society.

tutions.



nasi on June 18 where he will

BJP Kashi region president Dilip Patel said that this will be tĥe first visit of Prime Minister Modi to Varanasi after the formation of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led NDA government for the third

the farmers' conference which may be held in Rohania or Sevapuri Assembly constitu-

Patel added that after adat the Dashashwamedh Ghat.

The Bharatiya Janata Party's defeat in Ayodhya sent shockwaves through political circles, prompting an urgent analysis of the underlying factors. Among the key contributors to this unexpected setback were six major lapses on the part of the party.

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav

the unraveling of the Bharatiya Janata Party>s tar Pradesh reveals a multifaceted narrative. Particularly beneath the surface for quite striking was the party-s loss in Ayodhya, the site where a monumental Ram temple awaited the opportune moment had been erected after years to voice their grievances, culmiof fervent dedication. Initially nating in a resounding verdict confounding, the reasons behind this setback are gradually the complex dynamics at play.

In the aftermath, the BJP has the pulse of Ayodhya mere days of the Ram temple. Notably, the district administration orchestrated a commendable campaign to galvanize voter traders into their community. participation, setting noteworthy precedents under the the overwhelming disillusionleadership of the District Magistrate, whom I felicitated with a record certificate.

During my visit, interactions with the local populace significant defeat in Ut- unveiled a palpable discontent towards the BJP, simmering some time. The electorate, harboring pent-up frustrations, that left observers astounded.

Six primary factors have emerging, shedding light on emerged as crucial in understanding the BJP>s defeat in Ayodhya. Foremost among of the Ram temple, airport, commenced a thorough examithem is the deep-seated renation of the defeat, diligently sentment among those whose seeking out potential factors homes were demolished to and individuals perceived as make way for the wide, picdisloyal. Personally witnessing turesque roads that now charm tourists. Despite compensabefore the polls, I found myself tion or alternative housing immersed in its essence, from arrangements, the lingering the tranquil banks of the Saryu sadness among these individu-River to the majestic presence als is palpable, compounded by grievances over incomplete compensation packages and the encroachment of external

> The second-factor centers on ment with Lallu Singh, who had been representing this seat for a focal point of the election disthe last two terms. Local senti-

Six Key Factors Behind BJP's Defeat in Ayodhya ter promptly and effectively. The fifth element was inter-



ment was firmly against his reelection, with widespread anticipation of his inevitable defeat. However, despite mounting complaints from party workers, the leadership failed to heed the warning signs, mistakenly believing that the construction and infrastructure projects would secure victory. Despite the ubiquitous presence of BJP flags, the ground reality painted a starkly different picture, with support for other parties gaining momentum.

The third catalyst was a controversial statement by Lallu Singh, suggesting that the constitution could be amended with a landslide victory of 400 seats. This assertion was seized upon by the Samajwadi Party>s Akhilesh Yadav, who skillfully turned it into a rallying cry, making constitutional integrity

course. Ultimately, this proved

detrimental to Lallu>s campaign, resulting in a resounding victory for the Samajwadi Party>s Avdhesh Prasad, with a margin of 54,500 votes.

The fourth factor contributing to the BJP>s defeat was the propagation of unrealistic promises by Rahul, including Congress' Guarantee to provide every woman with an annual payment of one lakh rupees and guaranteeing unemployed youths a monthly income and jobs. While falsehoods may lack substance, the relentless dissemination of these claims by the Samajwadi Party and Congress led to widespread confusion, particularly among rural voters who were more susceptible to such messaging. Additionally, these parties capitalized on fears regarding the potential elimination of reservations for minorities, and

ill-prepared to confront the strategic maneuvers employed by their adversaries. A sixth and pivotal factor was the pervasive issue of unemployment in the state, exacerbated by the recurring incidents of competitive exam paper leaks. This systemic prob-

parties with fertile ground to exploit and garner support. Consequently, not only in Ayodhya but across Uttar Pradesh, disenfranchised and disillusioned voters, particularly those lacking formal education, were swayed by alternative candidates perceived as alternatives to the BJP. Reports from the Center for the Study of Developing Societies corroborate this trend, highlighting a shift in voting patterns, with the BJP gaining traction in urban areas while Congress is getting support from rural regions.

The writer is a senior journalist and columnist. Views are backward castes, a narrative that the BJP struggled to counpersonal,Twitter @narvijayyadav



Narendra Modi will visit Varaaddress a farmers' conference.

time at the Centre. Kashi region BJP media incharge Navratan Rathi said that the Kashi region BJP is working to select a venue for

Varanasi BJP office-bearers' meeting was held at the party office in Gulab Bagh to discuss the plan for the preparations regarding the visit of the Prime Minister.

dressing the Kisan Sammelan, Prime Minister Modi will offer prayers to Baba Kashi Vishwato stand firm against any actions nath and attend Ganga Aarti



Research bodies need dedicated leadership

he recent portfolio allocations for the newly sworn-in Ministers of the 18th Lok Sabha reveal a continuation of roles from the previous regime, with the Bharativa Janata Party (BJP) retaining major portfolios such as Home and Telecommunications. Meanwhile, coalition allies share the remaining positions. Among the notable appointments is Jitendra Singh, Minister of State with independent charge over the Departments of Space (DoS) and Atomic Energy (DAE), the Ministries of Earth Sciences (MoES), Science and Technology (MST), and Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions. Each of these portfolios is substantial. The DoS is navigating the complexities of private sector involvement in national space initiatives and developing human spaceflight missions. The MoES is embarking on seabed exploration for mineral resources and addressing climate adaptation and mitigation. The MST is steering India's top research departments amid global advancements in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, multiomics, and advanced energy storage solutions. The DAE is pushing forward with nuclear power expansion, aiming to start phase two of its reactor program and commission one facility annually. Given the vast technical scope and societal implications, these portfolios deserve more than a shared Minister of State. These fields also face persistent challenges. Fellowship and grant disbursements for young researchers are notoriously delayed. Facilities for interdisciplinary research remain localized and uncooperative, hindering collaboration. Cutting-edge research is stymied by inconsistent regulations, weak intellectual property rights protection, and limited translational research, often confined to certain sectors. Additionally, India's gross domestic expenditure on research and development as a fraction of GDP has been declining since 2008-09. While increased funding is necessary, it must be accompanied by capacity building to effectively utilize these resources, which has been sporadic at best. India urgently needs dedicated Ministers, ideally of Cabinet rank, for each major research body to address these longstanding issues and ensure their needs are met. This approach is crucial for achieving meaningful progress, particularly under the challenging conditions of a coalition govern-

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HARBANS MUKHIA SAYS INDIA'S ANCIENT CIVILIZATION REJECTS HATE; POLL RESULTS PROVE IT



The ideology of social peace

n a reaction to the invitation that was extended to the President of the Indian National Congress, Mallikarjun Kharge, to the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh Minister Yogendra Upadhyay is reported to have said: "They (the Congress) rejected [the] Ram Mandir invitation. If they do the same this time, then it will show their shallow mentality.'

The comparison between the invitation to the consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on January 22, 2024 and Mr. Modi's oath-taking ceremony on June 9, 2024 shows, if anything, the same mentality that led Mr. Modi to deny, or at least doubt, while on the election trail, his own biological birth, and claim to be of divine origin.

Between an invocation and the election

Media orthodoxy has it that the fixation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with Lord Ram is still bringing it huge electoral and political dividends, which has convinced the BJP leadership that this indeed is an inviolable truth. Any amount of empirical evidence to the contrary is dismissed as hypothetical at best, and/or false at worst. The ascendance of the BJP, from a mere two Lok Sabha seats in 1984 to a secular rise to 303 seats in 2019 is proof enough of the link with Lord Ram at its heart. What other proof is required?

The exploitation of Lord Ram for political ambitions was unambiguous in BJP veteran L.K. Advani's famous statement in the middle of the launch of the rath yatra, that he was a political and not a religious leader, i.e., aiming at political, and not religious gains. In the timing of the installation of the statue of Lord Ram and the massive fanfare that accompanied it, followed by

the consecration of the temple in Ayodhya on January 22 this year, it was clear that the proximity of the 2024 general election was the determinant. The link between the election and the invocation of Lord Ram, whatever the occasion, was forever highlighted rather than hidden. Yet, the failure of the link has been loud and clear on several occasions. On December 6, 1992, with the demolition of the Babri Masjid, the BJP's top leadership must have imagined that the path to electoral victory now lay clear and unhindered. Assembly elections held in some of the main States in the Hindi belt, in 1993, led in the opposite direction: the BJP lost in Uttar Pradesh to arch rival of the Samajwadi Party Mulayam Singh Yadav (and Bahujan Samaj Party) and had to wait for a decade to return home. The wave of "liberating Ram Lalla" from the precincts of the masjid was feeble. There were electoral losses in Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh too. Its government in Rajasthan survived the debacle, though with a considerably reduced majority, as Chief Minister Bhairon Singh Shekhawat had kept

and the resultant events of December 6. The formation of the first BJP government in 1998 was not due to the Ram Mandir movement but more the result of infighting within the various constituents of the then ruling coalition. But learning a lesson from it and keeping Lord

Ram out of politics would have required a rethink of the communal perspective, which is central to the Sangh Parivar. In 2014, there had to be camouflaging of the communal agenda using the more general slogan of vikas (development).

The Ayodhya result

In the 2024 general election, the defeat of the BJP in Ayodhya itself demonstrates the dysfunctional link between electoral politics and the invocation of Lord Ram. It was no ordinary defeat, for the BJP candidate lost by over 50,000 votes. The BJP's Lallu Singh was a veteran, taking on a Dalit rival, Awadhesh Prasad. And this happened after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Sangh Parivar's investment in the construction of the Ram temple and its location in politics.

The 2024 general election result shows that the Indian voter has expressed a repugnance for the politics of hatred, of divide and rule, and the politics of the Prime Minister himself, whose electoral rhetoric this time was indecorous. Where was the language that one saw in the speeches of Prime Ministers like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee?

Will Mr. Modi, or the BJP as a party, or the RSS learn a lesson from Lord Ram? The people of India have made their preferred choices clear. It is very unlikely to happen. After the Supreme Court of India's famous judgment of 2019 on the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi dispute, which, among other things, had forcefully upheld the view that no temple, much less a Ram temple lay demolished under the debris of the masjid (a view advanced by several professional historians and archaeologists) and that the demolition of the masjid was a criminal act for which the guilty should be tried in a court of law, one still hears echoes of "undoing the injustice of 500 years" doing the rounds. Never mind what the historians and the Supreme Court have said.

In placing constraints on the politics of hatred, which is the hallmark of the Modi government, India's millennia-old civilisation has asserted itself. In doing so, salience is due to the civilisation of our medieval centuries that has given us the legacy of numerous saintpoets, the Bhakti sants, who brought calm to the strained religious divide of rival gods by conceptualising one universal god where their rivalry gets submerged. For, in the midst of considerable bloodshed on the battlefields, between political and denominational factions extending over five and a half centuries, the first genuine communal riot between common people of different faiths — of which we have recorded evidence — happened in 1714, seven years after Aurangzeb's death. Clearly, the ideology of social peace was working.

Harbans Mukhia taught history at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Views are personal.

grace reflected in person, behaviour and

ANWAR SADAT EXPLAINS WHY THE OPINION OF ITLOS MARKS A MILESTONE IN CLIMATE LITIGATION

A push for more climate action



nternational climate change litigation reached a milestone on May 21, 2024 when the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) delivered an advisory opinion (the Opinion) sought by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS) concerning the specific obligations of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on climate change mitigation. The COSIS is an association of small island states set up in 2021. The ITLOS advisory opinion generates more attention in the context of the advisory proceedings to be decided by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the near future on the "Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change"

are not parties to the COSIS Agreement. That is when the request touches principally upon the obligations of states that are not party to the agreement authorising the request. The Tribunal, in its Opinion, laid down very clearly that under Article 194(1) of the UNCLOS, "the Parties have specific obligations to take all necessary measures to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)".

The Opinion has also removed doubts whether the release of carbon dioxide by man, directly or indirectly, into the marine environment qualifies to be in the category of substance or energy having potential deleterious effects on the marine environment within the meaning of Article 1(1)(4) of the UNCLOS

The ITLOS clarification on carbon as pollutant bolsters the position taken by the scientific community that the sur-



the progressive acidification of sea water. Other greenhouse gases (GHGs) do not have this effect. In addition, the sea also absorbs over 90% of the excess heat ('energy') generated by global warming, resulting in higher ocean temperatures and, ultimately, in sea-level rise.

Understanding its legal importance

The principle of prevention or no harm rule which governs state behaviour towards regulation of shared natural resources (between two or more states) so as to avoid transboundary harm of a significant nature in another state has its two main limitations when the rule is sought to be applied to regulate climate crisis: its anchoring in a bilateral frame, and, the principle is not helped due to obstacles relating to attribution and standing in establishing a breach of obligation to climate change

The Opinion, by siding with the principle

is a collective interest as compared to bilateral ones). adds a new chapter. The necessary measures are to be decided in the light of the best available science and the relevant international rules and standards contained in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Climate Change Agreement 2015, and also 1.5° Celsius rather than $2^{\rm o}$ C as the global average temperature goal

for climate change (which

The Opinion describes The ITLOS took a radical step by acface ocean absorbs around a quarter of the obligation relating to the taking of cepting the request of COSIS with the aim the CO2 emitted into the atmosphere, necessary measures as due diligence obligation but the standard of it is of the Opinion is stringent one given the high risks of serious and irreversible harm to the marine environment from such emissions. But the Parties' obligations in terms of taking all necessary measures to reduce anthropogenic GHG emissions within Article 194 (1) are very general in nature. This can be interpreted to mean that neither the release of all pollution (GHGs) must be prevented nor that anthropogenic GHG emissions must cease immediately or even eventually.

Measures that gradually reduce marine pollution by lowering GHG emissions over a period of time would be sufficient. Still, the identification of a general obligation by the ITLOS underlines one thing - that states do not have unfettered discretion in addressing climate change. Mere identification of general obligation will be of symbolic value and is inadequate.

Christina Voigt, an expert on environ-

mental law, says as "most states are already implementing some action on climate change mitigation, the crux of the matter is not the existence of an obligation to mitigate climate change, but rather its content, in particular the standard of conduct applicable in relation to this obligation". The example to substantiate this point is the decision of the Netherlands Supreme Court, in Urgenda Foundation vs The Netherlands, where the court held that to comply with a general mitigation obligation inferred from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in light of the standard of due care, the Netherlands had to reduce GHG emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 (as opposed to the government's insufficient existing pledge of 17%).

The court identified this target largely least cost method of achieving the 2° C temperature goal in the Paris Agreement. The Opinion has not been able to identify the methodology concretely that can be used to assess a state's requisite level of mitigation action — as in the Urgenda judgment. Moreover, the necessary measures to be taken, as per the Opinion, are to be subject to the means available to the states and their capabilities, which means that the principle of equity cannot be ignored in deciding the requisite level of mitigation action, if any.

Though advisory opinion lacks legal force, it does not necessarily affect its political pull as authoritative judicial pronouncements.

Anwar Sadat teaches International Environmental Law at the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

New book decodes Indian polls; offers masterclass on coalitions

hen one thinks of coalition politics in India, Eswaran Sridharan's name is often the first to come to mind. His book, Elections, Parties, and Coalitions in India: Theory and Recent History, compiles a series of his articles that have profoundly shaped the understanding of Indian politics

This collection covers themes such as party system transformation, the rise and fall of political parties, political finance, and various aspects of coalition politics.

Although these articles have been previously published in academic journals and edited volumes, their consolidation in one book makes Sridharan's scholarship more accessible to a broader au-

Sridharan's work stands out for its blend of theoretical rigor and empirical analysis, embracing the 'soft-rational choice' tradition. This approach assumes that while human actions are goal-oriented, they are not solely driven by the maximization of individual benefits.

Political parties, therefore, are motivated by more than just election victories; they are also guided by policy preferences, goals, and

Sridharan's analysis is deeply rooted in the institutional school of thought, which has enriched the understanding of coalition behavior in India and enhanced comparative political studies.

Most traditional coalition theories derive from political systems that are unitary rather than federal, use proportional representation instead of the first-past-the-post system, and operate in consensual rather than majoritarian parliamentary settings.

Sridharan highlights the limitations of these conventional theories when applied to India's unique political landscape.

Among the key findings of Sridharan's work is the impact of the first-past-the-post system on coalition politics. Unlike proportional representation systems where postelectoral alliances are common, first-past-the-post incentivizes pre-electoral coalitions to avoid vote wastage.

Additionally, a small vote swing in this system can disproportionately affect seat shares, making third-placed parties or candidates pivotal players if they strategize effectively

Sridharan also explores the fedral dimensions of coalition politics in India. He notes that the division of power between multiple levels of government makes state-level power attractive, leading to the



Elections, Parties and Coalitions in India: Theory and Recent History By Eswaran Sridharan Permanent Black; 372 pages; Rs 1,095.

formation of single-state parties and resulting in two-party or bipolar state-party systems. This dynamic, combined with the country's cultural and linguistic diversity, contributes to a multi-party system

at the national level. One of the book's significant contributions is its analysis of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) alliance strategy. By forming strategic alliances and leveraging its position in different regions, the BJP was able to expand its geographical footprint and overcome the weaknesses that led to the fall

of its government in 1996. This "bridging alliance" strategy enabled the BJP to increase its numbers, build a support base, and challenge the Congress party, the other main polity-wide party. As a result, territorial compatibility and alliances have become crucial components of India's coalition

Sridharan's work also sheds light on the formation and survival of minority governments in India. He argues that minority governments can survive in executivedominated majoritarian systems under certain conditions: ideological division among the opposition, parliamentary rules that favor survival, payoffs collected at different federal levels, and state-level party competition that creates a "lock-

Regarding the Congress party's future, Sridharan suggests that it faces significant challenges in recovering its position as an umbrella party. The party must balance growth and equity in response to social and economic transformations. However, positioning itself as a 'pro-poor party' could be selflimiting in a country where a large portion of the electorate identifies as middle class.

India's \$220 Bn Chemical Industry Increasing prices of raw material hits Hamstrung by Compliance Burden Yamunanagar plywood industry

220 billion chemical industry. a major employment generator and export earner, is being severely hindered by an excessive regulatory compliance burden, particularly for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), according to industry experts.

Each unit in the sector is required to meet an estimated 635 compliance requirements per month spanning areas like factories, health, explosives, hazardous materials and food safety regulations.

Navigating this complex web of rules is proving extremely challenging for most MSMEs due to a lack of training and skilled manpower, "Even understanding the compliance needs is difficult for most MSMEs. said Rishi Agrawal, CEO of compliance solutions firm TeamLease RegTech. "Lack of training and skilled manpower makes it more challenging."

Tesla stockholders

approve Musk's \$56

billion pay package

SAN FRANCISCO: Tesla

stockholders have overwhelm-

ingly approved the \$56 billion

pay package (now valued at

\$44.9 billion) for the com-

pany's CEO Elon Musk, along

with reincorporating the elec-

tric vehicle company in the US

state of Texas, moving it from

The Tesla board won ap-

proval for Musk's 2018 pay

package with 73 per cent of

the vote, according to the

The company last valued

Musk's package at \$44.9 bil-

lion (in April) as Tesla's stock

has nosedived by nearly 25 per

'Tesla stockholders over-

whelmingly approved the

ratification of the 2018 CEO

Performance Award and the

re-domestication of the com-

pany to Texas, "the electric

car maker said in a statement.

award to Musk that was ap-

proved by the stockholders

The stockholders gave their

cent this year.



the frequent revision of regulatory norms by authorities, with 200 compliance changes made in just the last week, 700 in the prior month, and around 1,963 in the current quarter, Agrawal

While larger players can leverage dedicated in-house teams, MSMEs face immense difficulty staying compliant. "It may be relatively easy for big players...but for MSMEs, it re-

Exacerbating the problem is ally is a big challenge," Agrawal stated.

> Industry representatives are calling for reforms to streamline the compliance process. Jaimin Vasa, chairman of the Gujarat Chemical Association, advocated for "industry-specific generalised licensing, instead of different ones for regulations under the Factories Act and for health, explosives, hazardous materials, food etc.'

across states have added another layer of complexity for companies operating in multiple locations. Vasa urged the government to "help the units" comply by making the application process simple and clearances faster."

Agrawal identified rent-seeking behaviour around licenses and registrations as a major impediment that could potentially be addressed through digitalisation and a controlled environment fostering private entrepreneurship.

The Indian chemical industry accounts for 11 per cent of national exports and is projected to grow to USD 1 trillion by 2040.

It has risen from 142nd to 63rd rank in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index between 2014-2019. However, regulatory overhaul may be crucial for unleashing the sector's full potential.

Out of 1020 manufacturing units 351 already closed

PARVESH HANDA Yamunanagar

According to the manufacturers of Yamunanagar plywood industry which started booming since after 1980, having total number of 1020 licensed manufacturing units in the town including 872 pressing units, 713 saw mills, 734 peeling units and 102 chipper units were known all over in the country in manufacturing plywood and providing employment to nearly two lakh persons. But as a result of rising prices of basic raw material 'popular' wood used in plywood industry, presently available at the rate Rs 1700 per quintal, which was earlier available at the price between Rs 500 to 600 per quintal, the production cost of plywood have been much increased now and it has become difficult for Yamunanagar plywood manufacturers to compete plywood being manufactured in Kerala or plywood being imported from Vietnam which is available at the cheaper prices as compared to the locally manufactured plywood.

Information also reveals that out of the total number of the area due to poor demand 1020 manufacturing licenses and increased prices of the

basic raw material <poplar> issued by the Harvana state

government in Yamunanagar, 351 plywood manufacturers have become completely sick and have not applied for the renewal of their manufacturing license at present. While having a talk with a plywood manufacturer in Yamunanagar, they told that huge stocks of plywood manufactured by them are lying demped in their godown in the absence of buyers. They said earlier 300 to 350 truck loads carrying plywood were being dispatched to the buyers in different places across the country from Yamunanagr every day, but now the manufacturers have no orders, besides huge stocks of (popular) wood are also lying unsold in Mandoli wood market in

wood. Few manufacturers said that they are planning either to shift their manufacturing units to other states or change their business for

their survival. According to Yamunanagar olywood manufacturers, during year 2002-03 when Yamunanagr plywood industry was booming, the new licenses for manufacturing plywood in the area were discontinued by the state government enabling to stop cutting of trees thus shrinking green area, when matter was taken to the Supreme Court of India by the manufacturers who convinced court that the production of <popular> trees fall under the agriculture sector, when the court lifted the ban over issuing new licenses to manufac-

Nokia, Ericsson to pick Rs 2,458-cr stake in Vodafone in lieu of dues



NEW DELHI: Debt-ridden tele-

com operator Vodafone Idea will allocate shares worth Rs 2,458 crore to vendors Nokia India and Ericsson India to clear their partial dues, a regulatory filing said on Thursday. The board of Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) has cleared allotment of shares on preferential basis at about 35 er cent higher price compared to the follow-on offer price of the company, and comes with a lock-in of 6 months. "The Board of Directors of Vodafone Idea Limited today approved preferential allotment of about 166 crore equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each, at an issue price of Rs 14.80 per share, for an aggregate consideration of up to Rs 2,458 crore, to two of its key vendors, Nokia Solutions and Networks India Private Limited and Ericsson India Private Limited," the filing said. Nokia and Ericsson will participate for up to Rs 1,520 crore and Rs 938 crore respectively, subject to approval by VIL shareholders at the EGM to be held on July 10, 2024, the telco said in a release.

200 Al cabin crew chargesheeted, union protests

MUMBAI: An Air India Express staff union has said the airline has issued charge sheets against 200 cabin crew members, who went on strike on May 7 to protest against the alleged mismanagement in the airline, resulting in cancellation of hundreds of flights.

The Air India Express Employees Union has termed the move as "unfortunate and unfair labour practice".

Ola Electric gets Sebi's nod to launch IPO

NEW DELHI: Electric twowheeler company Ola Electric has received capital markets regulator Sebi's clearance to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO) — the first issue by an automaker in the country in more than 20 years, people familiar with

The proposed IPO is a combination of a fresh issue With this funding, Lens- crore and an offer for sale of 9.52 crore equity shares by

the matter said on Tuesday.

India Poised to Sign FTA with Oman in Early Days of Modi's Third Term

NEW DELHI: The government of India is expected to finalise a long-awaited free trade agreement (FTA) with the Sultanate of Oman in the opening 100 days of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third consecutive term, according to officials familiar with the negotiations.

The proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) had been under discussion during Modi's previous tenure but was delayed due to the enforcement of the model code of conduct ahead of India's recent general election.

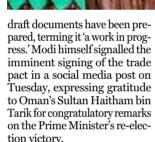
However, senior officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, have indicated the deal is now nearing completion and awaits formal political approval from both nations. "The India-Oman FTA is almost finalised, awaiting [formal] political nod from both sides," one official stated. Another confirmed that

10 deals this week as Lok

consent to a Tesla proposal to Sabha election results were TR Capital, Trifecta Capital

ratify the 100 per cent per- declared, paving the way for and Amara Partners.

to power.



"The centuries-old India-Oman strategic ties are destined to scale new heights," Modi af-

secondary transactions) led by

founder and CEO, Fibe, said

The Indian startup ecosystem, lending platform Fibe secured

the world's third largest, saw \$90 million (\$65.5 million in

\$97.3 million in funding across primary capital and the rest via

The fintech sector led the with this capital injection, the

firmed. For India, the CEPA with Oman is anticipated to bolster energy security through cheaper imports of fertilisers and fossil fuels from the Gulf nation. It could also open avenues for increased Omani investments across sectors. Conversely, the agreement may reduce tariffs on Indian exports like rice, tea, dairy, meat, apparel, steel, and machinery entering the Omani

Stanley Lifestyles Limited announces IPO of Rs 537 cr DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai Stanley Lifestyles Limited has

come out with its maiden initial public offering (IPO) with price band set at Rs 351 to Rs 369 per equity share aggregating to Rs 537 crores and opening on June 21 to close on June 25, 2024.

The IPO was announced by Sunil Suresh, Managing Director and Mrs Shubha Sunil, Whole-Time Director, at a press conference here today. The equity shares are proposed to be listed on BSE and NSE. Stanley Lifestyles Limited, the country's largest super

reach, strengthen technologi-

its impact across the country.

MassMutual Ventures. It had

earlier raised \$4.6 million led



products across multiple catalogues, designs, configurations and SKUs with options offered in 10 different types and over 300 colours of leathers and fabrics. Stanley holds the fourth posi-

tion in terms of revenue in the home furniture segment in India for fiscal 2022 and stands out as

cal infrastructure and deepen prospecting platform Clodura. tailer Lenskart raised \$200

driven, low-code test automa- additional backing from Mal- firms Temasek and Fidelity

tion platform Testsigma raised pani Ventures. The funding Management and Research

expand its user base.

ill help the startup further develop its AI capabilities and

Artificial Intelligence (AI)- Bharat Innovation Fund with ment from global investment

Jigani Link Road, Bengaluru, Karnataka. It operated 38 companyowned /operated COCO stores located in Major metrocities like Bengaluru, Chennai, New Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad. Axis Capital Limited, ICICI Securities Limited, JM Financial Limited and SBI Capital Markets

one of the early Indian companies

to venture into the super-premium

and luxury furniture segment. The

company operates two manufac-

turing facilities located in Elec-

tronic City and Bommasandra

Limited are the book running lead managers and KFin Technologies Limited is the registrar to the offer.

kart's market valuation has

Another AI-driven sales funding, leading evewear re-

AI raised \$2 million led by the million in secondary invest-

Apart from primary startup touched \$5 billion. overall startup funding. Digital startup is set to expand its Accessibility and Affordability of Biologics in Low-Middle Income Countries

Startups in India raise over \$97 million in election result week





VANSHIKA ANGRISH

iopharmaceuticals especially Biologics have shown immense promise in treating conditions which were previously challenging to address with conventional drugs. Biologics have revolutionized the treatment of various cancers, autoimmune disorders, and mies", i.e., economy with a genetic diseases. Certain biopharmaceuticals have become integral components of mod- income economies", i.e., econern medical treatment as these have been included in the between \$4,466 and \$13,845 World Health Organization and "high income economies", (WHO) Model List of Essential Medicine. But due to high cost of biopharmaceuticals especially biologics, access to lighted the challenges surtherapies remains limited in rounding the 'accessibility' Low-Middle Income Coun- and 'affordability' of differtries (LMICs). High cost of ent biologics in LMICs, e.g., biologics can be observed from immuno-oncology (IO) drugs. the fact that Tagrisso (Active In November 2023, the high Pharmaceutical Ingredient: Osimertinib) that is used for treatment of Non-small treatment of Spinal Muscular cell lung cancer (NSCLC) is Atrophy (SMA) in children priced at Rs. 1,51,670 for 10 tablets strip, Stelara (API: Ustekinumab) used in the expensive drug developed by treatment of Crohn's disease is priced at Rs. 1,11,218 for had a cost of Rs. 17 crore for 1 vial of 90 mg (single dose a single dose which was being injection), Kisqali (API: Ribociclib) used in the treatment Underlying reasons behind of breast cancer is priced at high price were cited as high Rs. 15,000 for 3 tablets strip, cost of drug development, im-

lizumab) used in the treat ment of cancer is priced a Rs. 1,97,250 for a vial of 4 m

There are 54 economie which fall in the categor of LMICs, and India is th largest lower-middle incom country. LMICs have the high est burden of diseases, and sti these countries have limite access to biopharmaceuticals World Bank institutions class sify countries on the basis of income as "low-income econo mies", i.e., economy with GNI per capital of \$1,135 o less in 2022, calculated usin the World Bank Atlas method "lower-middle income econo GNI per capita between \$1,136 and \$4,465), "upper middleomy with a GNI per capita i.e., an economy with a GNI

per capita of \$13,846 or more. Multiple studies have highcost of Zolgensma, one-time gene therapy that is used in became a headline in newspapers across India. Highly Novartis, a Swiss company, sought for a 15-month old boy.

t- t- tt- l. es y ee e le ll d ss or g d d, o-	lable 1:- Region-wise Low-Middle Income Countries (LMICS)	
	Region (Number of Economies)	LMICs
	Sub-Saharan Africa (19)	Angola, Benin, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Congo, Comorc Cabo Verde, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritar Nigeria, Senegal, Sao Tome and Principe, Eswatini (formerly Swaziland), Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabv
	East-Asia and Pacific (13)	Micronesia, Fed. Sts., Cambodia, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Mongolia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Vietnam, Vanuatu, and Samoa
	Middle East & North Africa (8)	Djibouti, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocc and Tunisia
	South Asia (6)	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan
	Europe & Central Asia (4)	Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan
	Latin America & Caribbean (4)	Bolivia, Honduras, Haiti, and Nicaragua
a	Source: Compiled	from the World Bank website



Even in developed economies, affordability is an issue for such drugs, e.g., in the USA alone, there were 10,000 to 25,000 children and adults company claimed that it provided about 300 children in 36 countries with the gene therapy free of charge. Proposed solutions to deal

port cost, taxes, among others. with the situation include increasing resources for healthcare, stimulation of research on cost-effectiveness, modifications in patent laws for biosimilars and generics, inliving with SMA in 2023. The tellectual property licensing, collective procurement efforts, leveraging pharmacologic knowledge to optimize dosing regimens potentially reducing costs and improve access

of regulatory pathways, collaborations between innovator players, public-private partnerships, innovative financing models, among others. This is being done to address 'barriers to access' and to ensure equitable treatment for patients suffering from those diseases which can be treated with the use of biopharmaceuticals. Biopharmaceutical availabil-

ity may itself become a concern due to lack of a reliable and sustainable supply chain. Most recently, in the first week of June 2024, South Korea, India, the United States, Japan, and the European Union (EU) came together to launch 'Biopharmaceutical Alliance' as a response to the 'drug supply shortages' experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants in the Bio International Convention 2024 held in San Diego emphasized on the importance of a 'reliance and sustainable' supply chain, and agreed to coordinate the respective countries' bio policies, regulations, and research and development support measures. It was acknowledged during the Convention that the 'production of essential raw materials and ingredients' is concentrated in a few countries. Therefore, they agreed to work together to build a detailed pharmaceutical supply chain map.

To make biopharmaceuticals especially biologics accessible, leading biopharmaceutical companies have also started recognizing the need for their contribution. Their and Novartis in Dermatology. profitability in higher-income

to treatment, harmonization moves include 'plans to forgo patent protection on products in LMICs', 'grant licenses to gecompanies and leading generic neric manufacturers', 'launch of programmes which offer treat-LMICs at a minimal costs', 'offering discounted chronic treatments', among others. Leading biopharmaceutical companies understand that LMICs hold immense potential in terms of patient population, increasing investment in healthcare spending in these economies, higher possibility of integrating new biopharmaceutical interventions under existing healthcare structures & ongoing healthcare programmes, and possibility of developing innovative delivery

mechanisms by prioritizing affordability. Top innovator biopharma companies globally have strength and resources to contribute in this endeavour. Therapeutic segments provide insights on high cost biologics and companies dominating in that segment. Oncology is the segment in which top 13 globally namely AbbVie, Astra- made interventions through Zeneca, Bristol Myers Squibb, Eli Lilly, Gilead Sciences, Johnson & Johnson, Novartis, Roche, Takeda Pharma, Am- Differential pricing essentially gen, Pfizer, Sanofi, and Merck involves 'charging different & Co., have presence. In Neuroscience as well as Immunology segment, 11 out of these 13 may be buyer's ability to pay, biopharmaceutical companies market segment, or simply have presence. In contrast to this, there are segments where differential pricing, biopharonly one company is present maceutical companies make out of these top 13 biopharmaceutical companies, e.g.,

AbbVie is only company that areas. Roche is said to have has presence in Aesthetics, Eye applied 'four-tiered pricing' Care and Women's Health. too. Four-tiered pricing is also Top selling products of these a specific type of 'differential biopharmaceutical companies ments for chronic diseases in clearly show their strength, e.g., Humira from AbbVie, Tagrisso from AstraZeneca, Trulicity from Eli Lilly, Biktarvy from Gilead Sciences, Stelara from J&J, Kisqali from Novartis, Keytruda from MSD to name a few. These companies consider 'regulatory environment', 'intellectual property protection', 'price controls', and 'reimbursement constraints' as major barriers in LMICs for launch of biologics. Some of these companies

programs to make biopharmaceuticals accessible such as Access to Care by AbbVie Inc., Healthy Heart Africa by AstraZeneca, Life for a Child Program by Eli Lilly, Max Access Solution by BMS. Novartis, Takeda and Pfizer, ALIVE by Roche, and Blincyto Humanitarian Access Program by Amgen. Certain biopharpricing, e.g., Tiered Pricing by Johnson & Johnson, and Differential Pricing by Roche. prices for the same product based on certain criteria that geographic location. Through medications more affordable in lower-income regions whereas Pfizer in Internal Medicine, these companies maintain

pricing' only. But in this case, a biopharmaceutical product is offered at four different price levels based on predefined criteria. And predefined criteria may include a country's income levels, disease burden or healthcare infrastructure. In this way, pricing strategies by 3 out of 13 top biopharmaceutical companies have been designed to align with the economic realities of different regions, thereby enhancing

access to biopharmaceuticals. Top biopharmaceutical have reported about their companies need to report their initiatives targeted at making biologics accessible. For this, there need to be better reporting on number of persons who have been supported, total amount of support, total amount of support as a percentage of total number of persons affected in a given region, total donations as a percentage of total biopharmaceutical companies maceutical companies have revenue from that product, to name a few.

> Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish, Associate Professor (Finance and Accounting),

> Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Punjab Vanshika Goyal, MBA (Pham.), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER, SAS Nagar (Mohali),

Punjab **DISCLAIMER:** Views are personal and do not represent the views of the Institute.

Union Budget 2024-25 likely to be presented in Late July

ment is expected to present the full Budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 during the second fortnight of July, according to sources within the adminis-

This timeline emerges following an announcement from Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju, who stated that the first session of the 18th Lok Sabha will convene from June 24 to July 7.

Concurrently, the 264th session of the Rajya Sabha will commence on June 27 and conclude on July 3.

After a recess following the Moharram festival on July 17, the second part of the session will reconvene, with the presentation of the Economic Survey for the fiscal year 2023-24, followed by the full Budget.

The government aims to com-



August 14, as a vote-on-account has been taken for the period between April and August.

While the interim Budget primarily focused on the economic achievements of the Modi Government over the past decade and facilitated the vote-on-account, the full Budget is anticipated to include policy and continued growth in tax the Lok Sabha.

plete the budgetary process by announcements and outline a vision for the upcoming fiveyear term.

> Additionally, the fiscal deficit projection, initially estimated at 5.1 percent for the fiscal year 2025, will be closely monitored.

> Factors such as the record transfer of surplus from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

potential downward revision of this deficit projection by 10 to 20 basis points. However increased allocations for capital expenditure and various Central Sector Schemes could offset any deficit reduction efforts.

Unlike the usual practice, the Demands for Grants and tax proposals will not undergo scrutiny by the Departmentrelated Standing Committee, as no recess is planned after the presentation of the full Budget. **Both Houses of Parliament**

will deliberate on all expenditure proposals, except those charged on the Consolidated Fund. Once the Lok Sabha approves the Budget, the Rajya Sabha will discuss and potentially suggest amendments before returning the financial statement and Finance Bill to

Deposit rates at peak, may now move down: SBI chief

NEW DELHI: State Bank of India (SBI) Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara has said that deposit rates have peaked and will move southward in the medium term.

The country's largest lender also said the RBI may start easing the interest rate cycle from the third quarter of the current financial year.

Last week, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) left its key interest rates unchanged for the eighth time in a row, keeping the focus on inflation amid robust economic growth.

"We are hoping that in the third quarter starting from October, perhaps there would be some possibility of inflation trajectory moving towards 4 per cent, and that will be the right time when he said.



we can expect some interest cut (from RBI)," he said.

As far as the interest rate in the banking system is concerned, the SBI chairman said more or less they have already peaked.

...I think, if we look at the medium-term trajectory of interest rate, perhaps it would be a downward trend,"

Nirmala Sitharaman takes charge as Finance Minister



NEW DELHI: Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday assumed charge as the Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs at South Block in Delhi.

After taking charge she signed some files. Sitharaman was accompanied by Pankaj Chaudhary who took charge as Minister of State (MoS) in the Ministry. Nirmala Sitharaman is among a few who have been Union Minister in both the 2014 and 2019 Modi cabinets. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sent a clear message of continuity in the government's economic policy with the reappointment of Nirmala Sitharaman as Finance Minister.

Sitharaman's return comes on the back of a successful track record with the Indian economy clocking a robust 8.2 per cent growth in 2023-24, which is the fastest among the world's major economies,

and inflation coming down to below 5 per cent. During her tenure as Finance Minister, the fiscal deficit has also been reduced from more than 9 per cent of GDP in 2020-21 to the targeted level of 5.1 per cent for 2024-25. After having presented an interim budget ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Sitharaman now faces the challenge of presenting a full budget that ensures the economy continues on the high growth trajectory and creates more jobs while at the same time keeping in mind the aspirations of the coalition partners of the Modi 3.0. In 2014, she served as the Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs and later the Minister for Commerce and Industry with Independent Charge. In 2017, he became the Defence Minister In 2019. Sitharaman assumed charge as the Union Minister of Fi-

nance and Corporate Affairs.

GST Council to meet on June 22



NEW DELHI: The first GST Council meeting under the new central government will be held here on June 22. The GST Council is chaired by the Union finance minister and consists of representatives from all states, usually the finance ministers, to decide on rate slabs for items under GST.

This will be the 53rd meeting of the GST Council.The GST will take up some pending issues such as taxability for the online gaming sector, ESOPs and corporate guarantees.

SBI to raise \$3 billion through long-term debt **NEW DELHI:** State Bank of tiple tranches either through

India (SBI) plans to raise up to a public offering or private \$3 billion through long-term debt in the current financial year (2024-25), according to nominated in US dollars or a stock exchange filing by the country's largest bank.

The proposal has been approved by the board of directors and SBI intends to secure of SEBI Regulations, 2015, we

placement of senior unsecured notes. These notes will be deother major foreign currencies, according to the bank's statement.

"Pursuant to Regulation 30 the funds in single or mul- submit that the Executive Com-



mittee of the Central Board at its meeting held today, i.e., 11th

June 2024, has approved, inter alia, to examine the status and decide on long-term fundraising in single/multiple tranches of up to US\$ 3 Billion...through a public offer and/or private placement of senior unsecured notes in US Dollar or any other major foreign currency during FY 2024-25, "SBI said in an exchange filing.

This move comes as Indian banks, including SBI, are strengthening their capital reserves to cater to increasing loan demands. Several other state-run banks including Canara Bank and Punjab National Bank also have plans to raise funds through the debt route during the current financial year.

CredAble raises Rs 30 Cr through SIDBI for MSME Financing NEW DELHI: CredAble, a

Mumbai-based financial technology start-up, has raised Rs 30 crore in debt funding from the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

The company plans to utilise the newly acquired capital to expand its operations and provide affordable financing solutions to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as well as women-led businesses

Additionally, a portion of the funds will be allocated towards the development of new market-leading financing solutions for CredAble's global



customer base.

Founded in 2017 by Nirav Choksi and Ram Kewalramani, CredAble offers financial growth olutions to businesses.

The start-up's investor portfolio includes Oaks Asset Management, Plutus Wealth Management LLP, and Axis Bank Limited. CredAble currently serves a growing base of over 350,000 businesses globally. "The MSME sector is poised

for significant growth over the next five years," said Manu Prakash, Managing Director and Head of Partnerships and FI Coverage, CredAble.

He further explained, "From providing affordable financing to scaling up their operations, we're focused on meeting the growing demands of small and medium-sized businesses. This latest injection of capital from SIDBI will further bolster our efforts to strengthen the MSME sector and women-led busi-

PLI scheme to attract Rs 3-4 lakh crore investment



NEW DELHI: The PLI scheme is expected to attract investments of Rs 3-4 lakh crore in the next four years and generate 2 lakh jobs as large projects in sectors, including semiconductor and pharmaceutical intermediaries, are expected to take off, the ICRA said.

Indian Bank extends Rs 500 Crore credit to



ported a significant credit disbursement to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Chennai during a recent credit camp. According to a statement released by the bank, over 440 sanction tickets totaling more than Rs 500 crore were distrib-

CHENNAI: Public sector

lender Indian Bank has re-

The credit camp, organised by Indian Bank in the city, aimed to support local businecessary financial resources.

uted to MSME customers on

MSMEs, known for their crucial role in India's economic landscape, often face challenges in accessing formal credit.

This initiative by Indian Bank aligns with the broader national agenda of strengthen- terms of the loans or the proing the MSME sector, which files of the beneficiaries. Howis a major contributor to the ever, the scale of disbursement the coming months.

MSMEs in Chennai

country's GDP and employment generation. The bank's statement did not provide details on the

indicates a significant boost to the local MSME ecosystem.

Financial analysts will be closely monitoring the impact of this credit infusion on Chennai's business environment in

Banking Sector will Remain Strong



efore, dur-

ing and after the corona pandemic, the government implemented many schemes and initiatives to strengthen the economy and the banking system, due to which today Indian banks and the country's economy are in a very strong position. Now the NDA government has been formed again. Therefore, it is expected that the government will stick to its old policies, which will make the Indian economy and Indian banks stronger.

released by the Ministry of burden, then India's rating Statistics, GDP growth of can be improved further in 7.8 percent was recorded the next 24 months. Meanin the March quarter of FY 2023-24 and the overall boom in economic activities, growth rate in FY 2023-24 the Monetary Policy Comwas 8.2 percent, while it was mittee (MPC) kept the policy 7 percent in FY 2022-23. The rates unchanged in its latest sharp increase in GDP has monetary review, so that the been possible mainly due to pace of development can be the increase of 9.9 percent accelerated even more. in the manufacturing sector in FY 2023-24, which is has collected Rs 1.73 lakh much higher than the minus crore from Goods and Servic-2.2 percent in FY 2022-23. es Tax (GST) in May 2024. Similarly, the mining sector This is the fourth highest registered a growth of 7.1 GST collection ever collected percent during this period, in any month and the second the financial year 2022-23. 2024-25. Earlier, the gov-It is noteworthy that the ernment had collected the manufacturing sector plays an important role in pro- lakh crore from GST in April viding quality employment 2024. The overall GST colto the youth coming out of lection has increased by 10 the engineering institutes percent on an annual basis. and colleges of the country.

improvement in the Indi- can implement the works an economy, S&P recently that accelerate development. changed India's rating from Outlook Stable to Positive 4.75 percent which stood at to improved strong economic of Rs.1.4 lakh crore, which after 14 years. According to 4.83 percent in April 2024 condition, rapid growth in is 35 percent more than last S&P, if economic reforms & in the month of March, loans, reduction in NPAs and year.

pressure on the government According to the data and reducing the interest while, keeping in view the

The central government which was 1.9 percent in highest GST collection of FYhighest amount of Rs 2.10 With the increase in revenue In view of the continued collection, the government

Retail inflation in May is are taken forward along with it was 4.85 percent. The increase in profits. According

reducing the increased debt Reserve Bank of India has projected the average retail inflation to be 4.5 percent in the financial year 2024-25 due to the possibility of good monsoon and reduction in factors disrupting the supply chain. The overall inflation rate has come down by 1.3 percent to 5.4 percent in the

> The inflation outlook is expected to remain positive due to easing pressure on the supply chain, macro-level moderation in core (non-food-non-energy) inflation and the possibility of above-normal rainfall in

financial year 2023-24.

banks have performed the best compared to their counterparts in Asia. The country's 3 big banks, namely State Bank of India, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank, have made it to the list of top 50 banks in the world in 2023, while in 2022 only 2 banks of the country made it to the top 50 banks in the world. According to the S&P Global report, Indian the cumulative profit of public banks have strengthened due sector banks crossed the level

to this report, the assets of banks have increased by 50.5 percent to \$ 1.51 trillion in 2023. In July 2022. HDFC Bank's assets grew by 51.3 percent to \$ 466.35 billion. This helped the bank jump 13 places to 33rd position in the top 50 list. According to S&P Global, the loan given by Indian banks has increased rapidly in recent months. As of 29 December 2023, it had reached the level of 15.6 percent, which was 14.9 percent a year ago.

In the financial year 2023-24, Bank of Baroda and Canara Bank have earned a profit of more than Rs 10,000 crore. In recent months, Indian State Bank of India has earned a profit of Rs 61,077 crore during this period, which is more than 40 percent of the total earnings of public sector banks. In the last financial vear, State Bank of India had earned a profit of Rs 50,232 crore. Out of 12 public sector banks, only Punjab & Sind Bank has registered a decline in profit. On March 31, 2024,

In the financial year 2022-

earned a net profit of Rs. 1,04,649 crore. During this period, the net profit of Punjab National Bank was Rs 8,245 crore, which is 228 percent more than last year, while Union Bank of India earned a profit of Rs.13,649 crore, which is 62 percent more than last year. Other public sector banks like Central Bank of India earned 61 percent, Bank of India 57 percent, Bank of Maharashtra 56 percent and Indian Bank 53 percent more profit than the previous financial year. Thus, after the loss of Rs.85,390 crore of public sector banks in the financial year 2018, this is the story of the journey of recording

record profits in 2024.
The NDA government stood with the public sector banks at every step from the financial year 2016-17 to the financial year 2020-21 and recapitalized the public sector banks by Rs.3,10,997 crore. The Reserve Bank of India also took appropriate steps in this matter during this period. Due to these combined efforts, the net non-performing assets (NPA) of all banks came down to below 1.70 percent in the financial year 2023-24.

The NDA government has been formed again and the work of the Finance Ministry is also in the hands of Nirmala Sitharaman. Therefore, the policies and steps taken by the government and the Reserve Bank of India will remain favourable for Indian banks in the future as well. At present, the net profit of public sector banks is continuously increasing and NPA is decreasing. Apart from this, Indian banks are also performing well on other important parameters.

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

India Exim Bank Expands Presence in East Africa



NEW DELHI: The Export-Import Bank of India (India Exim Bank), a state-run institution focused on facilitating the country's international trade and investment, has inaugurated a new representative office in Nairobi,

This strategic move aims to bolster India>s commercial ties with the resource-rich and demographically burgeoning East African region. Through this newly established East Africa Representative Office, India Exim Bank anticipates heightened engagement with the region>s industries, private and public sector entities, banks, and financial institutions.

Such interactions are expected to augment trade and investment flows between India and East African nations, including Kenya. Trade data underscores the

growing economic relationship between India and East Africa. Merchandise trade between the two regions has witnessed considerable growth over the past decade, escalating from USD 9.7 billion in 2013 to USD 12.9 billion in 2022. Indias exports to East Africa, which stood at USD 8.6 billion in 2013, rose to USD 9.4 billion by 2022. As India>s premier trade finance institution, India Exim Bank plays a pivotal role in financing, facilitating, and promoting the country>s international trade and investment endeavours.

The bank's activities extend to policy formulation and project export finance initiatives aligned with India's economic diplomacy efforts. In addition to its new Kenyan outpost, the bank maintains regional offices in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, and Johannesburg, South Africa. Under its Overseas Investment Finance Program, India Exim Bank has thus far provided financing for 77 ventures established by over 50 companies across 14 African countries. Since 2022, the bank has

supported 76 transactions

totalling nearly USD 800 million in 18 African nations, aiding 22 Indian exporters, including 10 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), based in 14 cities across nine Indian states through its Trade Assistance Program (TAP) and other trade facilitation initiatives. Furthermore, on behalf of the Indian government, India Exim Bank has extended over 200 Lines of Credit to 42 African nations, amounting to more than USD 12 billion. These credit facilities aim to support socio-economic development in the region by facilitating access to essential infrastructure, improving livelihoods, boosting agricultural productivity, enhancing industrial output, and promoting sustainable development. This multi-faceted engagement simultaneously creates opportunities for companies in Africa and India across traditional and emerging

sectors, benefiting a multitude

of MSMEs in the value chain while creating and sustaining

employment opportunities.

G7 leaders agree \$50bn loan for Ukraine from Russian assets

G7 has agreed to use frozen Russian assets to raise \$50bn (£39bn) for *Ukraine* to help it fight invading Russian forces.

US President Joe Biden said it was another reminder to Russia "that we're not backing down", but Moscow has threatened "extremely painful" retaliatory measures

The money is not expected to arrive until the end of the year but is seen as a longer-term solution to support Ukraine's war effort and economy.

Also at the G7 summit in Italy, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Mr Biden signed a 10-year bilateral security deal between Ukraine and the US, hailed by Kyiv as "historic".



The agreement envisages US military and training aid to Ukraine - but it does not commit Washington to send troops to fight for its ally.

Some \$325bn worth of assets were frozen by the G7, alongside the EU, following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine

The pot of assets is generating about \$3bn a year in interest. Under the G7 plan, that \$3bn will be used to pay off the annual interest on the \$50bn loan for

international markets. Speaking at a joint news

the Ukrainians, taken out on the

venue in Puglia, southern Italy, President Biden said the \$50bn loan would "put that money to work for Ukraine and send another reminder to [Russian President Vladimir] Putin that we're not backing

The US leader stressed that the Mr Putin "cannot wait us out, he cannot divide us, and we'll be with Ukraine until they prevail in this war".

President Zelensky thanked his American and other allies for their unwavering support.

And referring to the new security deal, he said: "It's a truly historic day and we have signed the strongest agreement within Ukraine and the US since our independence [in 1991]".

The G7 group of rich nations,

conference at the summit's Canada, France, Germany, Italy, venue in Puglia, southern It- Japan, the UK and US, have been important financial and military supporters of Ukraine as it battles to contain occupying Russian forces.

Other G7 leaders also hailed the \$50bn loan deal, with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak describing it as "game changing".

Most of the frozen assets of the Central Bank of Russia are being held in Belgium.

Under international law, countries cannot confiscate those assets from Russia and give them to Ukraine.

Several hours before the G7 decision was announced, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova warned that there would be "extremely painful" retaliatory

US: Greek-owned vessel damaged by Houthi attack



WASHINGTON: An unmanned surface vessel launched by Iran-backed Houthi rebels has hit a Greekowned and operated ship off the coast of Yemen, the US Central Command (CENT-COM) said in a statement.

The impact of the hit caused severe flooding and damage to the ship's engine room. There were no injuries reported. The Liberian flagged M/V Tutor most recently docked in Russia. CENCTOM said on Wednesday that its forces destroyed three anti-ship cruise missile (ASCM) launchers in a Houthicontrolled area of Yemen and one uncrewed aerial system also launched from a Houthi area over the Red Sea in the past 24 hours.

"This continued malign and reckless behaviour by

the Iranian-backed Houthis threatens regional stability and endangers the lives of mariners across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, "the statement said. Houthi militants have repeatedly fired on merchant ships in the critical Red Sea shipping corridor that connects to the Mediterranean through the

Suez Canal since the start of

the war in Gaza in October.

The militants have said the attacks are intended to support the Palestinian militant group Hamas by making it more difficult for cargo ships to reach Israel. In response to the attacks, the US and the UK have carried out several military strikes against Houthi positions in Yemen. The European Union has also launched a military operation to protect merchant shipping in the Red Sea. **Canada announces** rockets and other military aid for Ukraine



BRUSSELS: Canada will supply Ukraine with rockets, small arms ammunition and remotecontrolled weapon mounts for vehicles, Canadian Defence Minister Bill Blair announced in Brussels on Thursday. "Canada will provide Ukraine with 2, 300 Canadian Rocket Vehicle 7s or CRV rocket motors, "Blair said. He added 'Canada will send an additional number of rounds of small arms ammunition, as well as 29 Nanuk remote systems, "which are remote-controlled weapon mounts for military vehicles. He said the CRV7s were "formerly used by the Royal Canadian Air Force on our CF-18 aircraft." Meanwhile, "the Nanuk is a remotely-controlled weapon station used by the Canadian Army on our light armoured vehicles." He added, "This week, Canada is beginning the shipments of a new fleet of 50 armoured vehicles to Ukraine. The first four vehicles are departing Canada this week, and they will be delivered to the Ukrainian armed forces in the coming weeks."

North Korea warns of 'new counteraction' against South Korea



SEOUL: The sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has warned that South Korea will face unspecified "new counteraction" by the North if it keeps sending anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets and playing its loudspeaker broadcasts across the border.

The statement by Kim Yojong came after the South resumed propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts toward the North for the first time in six years, in retaliation against the North's repeated sending of trash-carrying balloons, reports Yonhap news agency.

"If the ROK simultaneously carries out the leaflet scattering and loudspeaker broadcasting provocation over the border, it will undoubtedly witness the new counteraction of the DPRK, "Kim said in the English statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency on Sunday, using the acronyms for the official names of the South and the North.

Kim claimed that the North had sent some 7.5 tonnes of "waste paper" in 1,400 balloons across the border over the weekend, arguing that they were just garbage that contained nothing related to political propaganda, unlike anti-Pyongyang leaflets sent by North Korean defectors from the provocative political agitation rubbish scattered by the scum of the ROK against the DPRK, "Kim said, adding that embarrassment of picking up waste paper without rest, and it will be its daily work."

UN chief condoles death of Malawi's Vice President in plane crash

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condoled the plane crash that killed Malawi's Vice President and nine other people, said his Deputy Spokes-

"The Secretary-General was very saddened to hear of this plane crash which claimed the life of the Vice President of Malawi and many other senior Malawian officials, "



"We offer condolences to their families and we stand with the people of Malawi at this sad time, "he added as quoted by Xinhua news agency report.

Malawian Vice President Saulos Chilima and nine other individuals who were on board a military aircraft were found dead after the plane crash on

Pak PM sends 'felicitations' to PM Modi; Nawaz Sharif says let's replace hate with hope

NEW DELHI: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif sent "felicitations" to Narendra Modi on taking oath as the Prime Minister of India for the third consecutive time. In a short message on X,

Shehbaz wrote, "Felicitations to Narendra Modi on taking oath as Prime Minister of India. Prime Minister Modi and his Council of Ministers took

oath in a historic ceremony held

at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in

Delhi on Sunday. While dozens of global leaders have sent congratulatory messages, Pakistan PM's message to his Indian counterpart holds quite a significance considering the tense relationship between the neighbouring nations during the past two terms

of the Modi government.

"PM Shehbaz's felicitation message shows clearly the rift that persists between the two wards normalisation of relations between the two countries. Instead, it seemed more like a forced formality that the prethe South "will suffer a bitter mier had to undertake, " said senior political analyst Javed Siddique.

It should also be noted that



tation to Pakistan to participate in the swearing-in ceremony like he did in 2014 when then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif

Interestingly, a vast difference is also seen in the messages sent to PM Modi on Monday by PM Shehbaz Sharif and by his elder brother Nawaz Sharif, the President of the country's ruling party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

In his message to the Indian PM, Nawaz Sharif congratucountries. The message didn't lated him on assuming office hate with hope" for better future Maryam Nawaz Sharif. progress of the two nations.

"My warm felicitations to Modi Ji on assuming office for the third time. Your party's suc-prise visit to Lahore in 2015 cess in recent elections reflects the confidence of the people in your leadership. Let us replace Umra residence.

portunity to shape the destiny of the two billion people of South Asia, "he posted on X. While PM Shehbaz enjoys a

close relationship with the coun-

try's powerful establishment

currently running a coalition

government, his elder brother is seen as a leader who refuses to fall in line with the country's Having failed to secure a majority to form the government after the general polls held in February this year, Nawaz

Sharif is managing party politics show any sign of warmth or for the third consecutive time through his daughter and Chief PM Modi's close relations with Nawaz Sharif also became evident when he made a sur-

penetration in the region.

the hill tribes comprising

a broad spectrum of tribes

such as Naga, Lushai, Chins,

Kukis and even Meitei be-

long to a common gene stock

New Delhi for becoming a

ing with New Delhi for the

specifically the request was

submitted to the then PM

Vishwanath Pratap Singh.

Much significance is be-

of the Nepalese PM Kamal

Dahal, who was accompa-

nied by his winsome daugh-

ter, Ganga, known for her

political intelligence. It is

quite known in India that

she brought truce among

her father's peers in the

Proximity with Nepal

Therefore, it is not surpris-

on the latter's invitation and even spent time at Sharif's Jati

UNSC endorses Gaza hostage freedom for ceasefire deal proposed by US

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council with near unanimity signed on to a deal proposed by the US for a ceasefire in Gaza in exchange for the release of hostages putting the responsibility on Hamas for ending the conflict with Israel. The US-sponsored resolu-

tion that includes a long-term resolution of the Israel-Hamas war was adopted on Monday with 14 members of the Council, including China, voting for it, while a reluctant veto-wielding Russia abstained, allowing it to go through. The resolution puts into play

a three-phase peace proposal US President Joe Biden made last month in which Qatar and Egypt have a role. US Permanent Representative to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfiel, said after the vote, "Today, this deal on the t already agreed to this deal and the fighting could stop today if Hamas would do the same, she added.

"Egypt and Qatar have assured the US that they are continuing to work to ensure that Hamas engages constructively,



'she said. "And the US will help ensure that Israel lives up to its obligations as well, assuming Hamas accepts the deal.'

Israeli diplomat Reut Shapir Ben-Naftaly told the Council, "The war will end if Hamas were to release the hostages and turn themselves in; not one Council sent a clear message to more shot needs to be fired." Hamas: Accept the ceasefire The Security Council resolution came amid important developments in Gaza and in Israel over the weekend and the arrival of US Secretary of State Antony also include military means. the proposal. Israel's Opposition perfect example of how this leader Benny Gantz, who had joined the Israeli war cabinet, reporters outside the Council

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of putting his political interests ahead of getting the hostages back and ending the war and failing to come up with a post-war plan for Gaza.

Israeli special forces made a dramatic rescue of four hostages on Saturday from a Hamas-held area in Gaza. Ben-Naftaly said, "Hamas's refusal to release the hostages through diplomacy has proven that the effort to bring our hostages home must Blinken in Israel to promote And this Saturday was the can be achieved." Speaking to resigned on Sunday accusing chamber, Palestine's Observer

Riyad Mansour said, "We the Palestinian people are united in seeing the implementation of the resolution.

Asked about the US assurances about Israel being on ooard, he said, "The proof is in the details and we want to see that this resolution is implemented beginning with the ceasefire and that this ceasefire to be permanent."

At the same time, he said: "We saw the loss of a tremendous number of people" and will continue to seek accountability for the killings.

The Palestine Authority, hich nominally governs the occupied Palestine territories, does

not control the Gaza Strip which is ruled by a hostile Hamas. The plan approved by the Council is the latest attempt

by the splintered Council to end the bloodshed that began with the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on October in which about about 1, 200 Israelis were killed and about 240 taken hostage.

In Israel's retaliatory attacks, over 35, 000 Palestinians have been killed, according to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Health

SOUTH ASIA TO EUROPE

New Mandate Reinvigorates Modii for a Major Peace Offensive



▼ndia's renewed bid to win back the immediate neighborhood for

It's indication didn't get unnoticed, when the heads of the governments of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka were personally present to greet Prime Minister

pronounced in the coming

majestic forecourt of the cessfully winning the polls.

Narendra Modi at the

too hot, when the swearing-in South Asian region braved the weather, including the Delhi -based high -profile members of the diplomatic corps, faith in India and her democracy. The presence of Mukesh club of the richest industrialists on the earth added a new be the vehicle of progress and prosperity.

of society in the swearing-in Protestant priests to camp in

poised for initiating a new mode of development

It is believed that their presence was jointly planned by neighbors in her India's External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, and the closer economic and strategic National Security Advisor, ties is expected to be more Ajit Kumar Doval.

The Crown Country The presence of the Bangla-

desh Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, during the swearingin ceremony, perhaps, has finally nailed the dream project of the US and its satellite country, UK. for setting up a Crown Country with the help historic Rashtrapati Bhawan of Beijing. Earlier this year on Sunday, June nine for suc- in January, the Americans wanted to set up a multidi-The weather, indeed, was mensional military base at St. Martin Island, just nine took place. The leaders of the kilometers from Cox Bazar in Bangladesh.

of the American Deep State have accessed an old file in the thus, finally reaffirming their British archives for creating a Christian State for fragmenting India. It is true that the Ambani and Gautam Adan, British wanted to carve out known as the members of the an independent state comprising India's north-east region. About 150-year ago confidence that India would in 1873, the British had introduced the inner line system to keep the hilly regions of The presence of the political Assam insulated from the rest leaders accompanied by the of India, thus prohibiting the presence of the people rep- people of the rest of India to resenting a broad spectrum visit the hills, but allowed the



the region. The agenda was to alienate these brave tribes from the rest of India

During the late 19th. century, when the US was an agricultural country, the unemployed youths from American Universities were recruited to spread the faith in these remote areas.

It is not known whether the renewed initiative for a It appears that the buffoons Christian State is being carved out with the help of Beijing Earlier, during sixties, just a few years before the visit of the then US President Richard Nixon, to China, the CIA agents deployed at the US mission in Dacca, then the provincial capital of East Pakistan, were actively promoting insurgency in Mizoram and Nagaland. In this task, they were shamelessly conniving with China, though pronounced an enemy by American media l.

Chin's Love for India

In spite of the colonial ruling party, Nepal Com-

some adverse comments in media, she has been assisting her father following the unfortunate deaths her brother, Prakash, and sister This visit was expected to

enable her to understand the challenges her most intimate neighbor India is facing from the Dragon.

President Muizzu Welcomed

In spite of some decline in the India - Maldives ties after Mohamed Muizzu, who had won the coveted post of the President in the Island state, by criticizing India. He, however, was accorded a warm welcome in New Delhi at the ing that the Chin insurgents have already appealed to swearing-in ceremony. It is hoped that the two countries part of India.A proposal in would finally improve their this regard has been pend-

The other leaders such as past three decades, more the Present of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickermsinghe, Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnath, the PM of Bhutan, Tshering Tobogay and Ahemed of Seychelles attended the function. Modi had also met them separately, ing attached to the presence thus further cementing their ties with India

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

Bangladesh's PM Sheikh Hasina Accepts **GCA Local Adaptation Champions Award**

GCA CEO's official visit to Bangladesh paves way for enhanced collaborations for climate resilience

DHAKA (BANGLADESH): Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina graciously accepted the Global Center on Adaptation's **Local Adaptation Champions** Award from GCA CEO Professor Patrick V. Verkooijen today, on the occasion of his official visit to Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, the first government to receive the global Local Adaptation Champions Award, won in the Innovation in Devolving Finance category for the Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC). Implemented by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-Operatives, Government of Bangladesh, LoGIC provides a mechanism for accessing and managing climate finance from various sources, a platform for sharing best practices and lessons learned, and a system for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness and impact.

"I am deeply honored to accept this prestigious award on behalf of the Government and people of Bangladesh, whose unwavering resilience and innovative spirit have always guided us through natural adversities," declared Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. "This recognition underscores our commitment to sustainable development and climate resilience, and we are grateful for the Global



Center on Adaptation's invaluable support in our journey towards a prosperous and resilient future."

H.E. Ban Ki-moon, 8th Secretary of the United Nations and Chairperson of the Board of the GCA, lauded Prime Minister Hasina, stating: "Once again, Bangladesh stands at the forefront of supporting the most climatevulnerable populations, demonstrating leadership in channelling essential climate finance to those in dire need.'

Professor Verkooijen added The GCA's Global Hub on Locally Led Adaptation, inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2022, is dedicated to amplifying the voices of the most vulnerable. The insights and ownership in their locally led People's Adaptation Plans are invaluable for guiding international financial institutions. At GCA we are supporting the scaling up of such initiatives and linking them to larger funding sources. We know for climate action to be effective it must prioritize protecting those living on the frontlines of our climate

emergency.

US military says aid flow through Gaza pier has resumed



WASHINGTON: The US military said that the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian aid for Gaza residents has resumed after a temporary pier on the territory's coast was repaired.

The temporary harbour had been damaged in rough seas at the end of May, just a few days after its completion. Due to strong waves, four US military ships anchored in the area broke free from their moorings.

The regional command Centcom on Saturday said in a statement that at about 10:30 am local time (0730 GMT), it "began delivery of humanitarian assistance ashore in Gaza.

"Today, a total of approximately 492 metric tonnes (1.1 million pounds) of much-needed humanitarian assistance was delivered to the people of Gaza. To date, USCENTCOM has assisted in the delivery of more than 1, 573 metric tonnes (3.5 million pounds) of humanitarian aid, the statement continued.

The regional command stressed that "no US military personnel went ashore in Gaza.'

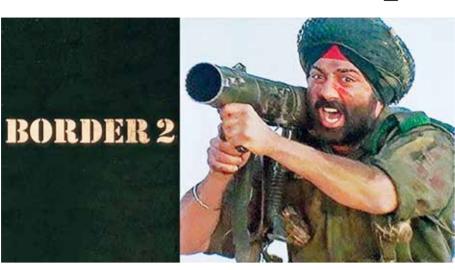
Sunny Deol to return with Border 2', the sequel to India's most loved war epic

MUMBAI: After rocking the theatres with 'Gadar 2', actor Sunny Deol is all set to return with the sequel to another iconic movie, 'Border'.

On Thursday, the makers of the film announced 'Border 2' with a special video.

The video, which contains only text and no visuals, begins with a voice-over by Sunny Deol, saying, "27 saal pehle, ek fauji ne waada kiva tha ki wo vapas aayega. Usi waade ko poora karne, Hindustan ki mitti ko apna salaam kehne, aa raha hai fir se (27 years ago, a soldier made a promise to return. To keep the promise, and to salute the soil of India, the soldier is coming back).

The video ends with Sonu Nigam singing the song, 'Sandese Aate Hai'.



Kumar, JP Dutta and Nidhi

'Border', which was released in 1997, featured an ensemble 'Border 2' is written by cast including Suniel Shetty, Nidhi Dutta and produced Jackie Shroff, Akshaye Khancast including Suniel Shetty, Mukherjee.

by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan na, Sudesh Berry, and Puneet Issar, alongside a supporting cast including Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Tabu, Raakhee, Pooja Bhatt, and Sharbani

The film showcased the films.

Battle of Longewala, albeit in a fictional way. It featured music by Anu Malik and lyrics by Javed Akhtar. The film became a watershed moment in India's repertoire of war

Diljit Dosanjh on playing a Punjab cop in 'Jatt & Juliet 3'



CHANDIGARH: Punja- team members. bi singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh, who was present at the trailer launch of his upcoming film 'Jatt & Juliet 3', opened up about playing a cop in the movie and shared how the attitude and style of Punjab

At the trailer launch, Diljit wore a brown coat, matching trousers, and a white shirt. He was accompanied by his co-star

Police is very different, say-

ing he has tried to copy as

much as he can.

Talking about his role as a police officer, Diljit said: "The attitude of the Punjab Police is very different from others. Just as the Maharashtra police have their own attitude and style. Similarly, the Punjab Police has an altogether different style. So, we have seen that a lot in our childhood, like you are going on a scooter, you

see Punjab Police every day." "They have a very sweet, witty humour, and style. We cannot copy each and every-Neeru Bajwa and other thing, but we tried to copy

as much as we can, "said Diljit, who is known for his work in movies like 'Honsla Rakh', and 'Mukhtiar Chadha' among others.

Recalling an incident from the shoot, the 'Arjun Patiala' actor added, 'I remember we were in costume and shooting in Canada. I went into a mall to use the washroom, and I met an Indian man who said to me, 'Tussi ethe bhi aa gaye' (You have come here too).

'Jatt & amp; Juliet 3' is written and directed by Jagdeep Sidhu and produced by Balvinder Singh, Dinesh Auluck, Gunbir Singh Sidhu, Manmord Singh Sidhu, and Diljit Dosanjh.

The film also stars Jasmin Bajwa, Rana Ranbir, BN Sharma, Nasir Chinyoti, Akram Udas, Hardip Gill, Mohini Toor, and Sukh Pindiala. It is set to be released on June 28.

Masaba Gupta turns co-producer with upcoming reality show rooted in fas<u>hio</u>n



MUMBAI: Celebrated fashion designer and actress Masaba Gupta is set to don the hat of a producer with her upcoming reality television show. The upcoming yet-to-be-titled show, in which she serves as a co-producer, blends fashion with the emotions surrounding Indian weddings. It will feature glimpses of the unique sense and emotions of wearing the quintessential Masaba silhouettes. The reality show focuses on real people, their candid stories, and the raw emotions that drive the celebration of love and the joy of getting married

Co-produced with Lucifer Circus, the show promises to strengthen the idea of fashion beyond barriers and revolutionise traditional wear showcased by Masaba. Talking about the new development, Masaba said: "I'm thrilled to bring you captivating stories and everything in between. Join us as we go behind the scenes of one of life's most cherished moments for any Indian -- the wedding. Together, we'll showcase the joy, traditions, and heartfelt moments that make these moments that make these celebrations truly special." The show follows the success of her bridal collection, which paid tribute to the regal heritage of Hyderabad and Patiala. Meanwhile, the latest bridal collection from her bridal collection from her label, featuring Kareena Kapoor Khan, serves as a testa-ment to her distinct aesthet-ics. Each ensemble curated by Masaba stands as a symbol of strength, independence, and empowerment.

SC halts release of Annu Kapoor movie 'Hamare Baarah'

NEWDELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday halted the screening of the Bollywood movie 'Hamare Baarah' till the petition challenging its release is decided by the Bombay High

Asking the high court to expeditiously decide the plea challenging the certification given by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), a vacation bench of the apex court presided over by Justice Vikram Nath rejected the filmmakers' contention that objectionable parts were taken away from the teaser.

"We saw the teaser this morning. It continues with all those offensive dialogues, added the Bench, also comprising Justice Sandeep Mehta.

In an order passed on June 7, the Bombay High Court lift-



the release of the film after a that the filmmakers have volpanel formed by the CBFC on untarily agreed to delete certhe court's direction sought an extension of time to give an uninfluenced opinion on

ed the interim stay granted on Patil of the high court noted tain controversial dialogues. Last week, the Karnataka

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government banned the reease of the film in the state, Further, a bench of Justices stating that it may disturb Kamal Khata and Rajesh S. communal harmony.

Raveena Tandon sends defamation notice to man for 'fake' road rage video

MUMBAI: Actor Raveena Tandon has sent a defamation notice to a man for not removing a video posted by him on social media in connection with an alleged road rage incident.

In the video, which went viral

on social media, the man had claimed Tandon's car hit his mother and had accused the actor of assaulting her on being questioned. The man had also claimed

the incident took place when his mother, sister and niece were near the actor's home here. However, a Mumbai police

probe found the actor's car did not dash into anyone.

The defamation notice, sent

man about the "true and correct facts" as has been revealed

the man asked the actor to send



from the police investigation. As per the defamation notice,

of the video from his X account, which was sent on June 5 via

"However, you (the man) have denied deleting the post from your handle and more-

initiate legal action if the said request letter is not withdrawn within 24 hours," the notice In the notice, Tandon said

the man had defamed her on social media and news portals through the video "which is admittedly fake news" and is also derogatory. It has been made to defame her in public by causing her mental harassment and agony, the notice further said.

"We are currently taking all necessary legal steps to address this issue and ensure that justice is served and action is taken against him for perpetuating this defamatory campaign, advocate Khan said.

