

REGION

2



DELHI LG VK SAXENA ORDERS TO CURB THE MENACE OF ILLEGAL PARKING, IMPROVE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

BANKING & FINANCE

6



RBI HIKES LIMIT FOR TAX PAYMENTS VIA UPI FROM RS 1 LAKH TO RS 5 LAKH

POTPOURRI

8



HOCKEY INDIA ANNOUNCES CASH PRIZES FOR INDIAN MEN'S TEAM

25 percent of 'Delhi budget' allocated only to education: Atishi

OUR CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

Delhi Education Minister Atishi recently highlighted the significant impact the Arvind Kejriwal government has had on the education sector in the capital, emphasising that it is the only government in India to allocate 25 percent of its total budget to education.

In a press conference, Atishi announced that 14 new schools are under construction across Delhi, along with 1,541 new classrooms in existing schools.

Atishi contrasted the current state of government schools with their condition before 2015, noting that prior to the AAP administration, Delhi's schools were in a state of disrepair. Classrooms were overcrowded, often accommodating up to 150 students, and facilities like blackboards, electricity, and basic infrastructure were severely lacking. Atishi argued that these conditions made it nearly impossible to deliver quality education.

Under the Kejriwal government, she claimed, these issues have been addressed, and Delhi's government schools now rival, and in some cases surpass, private schools in terms of infrastructure. She highlighted that from 1947 to 2014, only 24,000 rooms were built in government schools across the city, but between 2015 and 2024, the Kejriwal administration



added 22,711 rooms. These new facilities come equipped with modern amenities such as smart boards, advanced laboratories, libraries, sports facilities, and high-quality desks.

Atishi also accused the BJP-led central government of targeting Chief Minister Kejriwal and former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, both of whom she claimed have been unjustly jailed in a "false case."

Despite these challenges, she reaffirmed the AAP government's commitment to improving education in Delhi. She asserted that while the BJP may have imprisoned Kejriwal and Sisodia, it cannot hinder their mission to enhance the city's educational infrastructure. The ongoing construction projects are part of Kejriwal's vision to provide top-quality education to all students across Delhi.

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Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus assumes charge of Interim Govt in Bangladesh



DHAKA: Nobel Peace Prize winning economist Muhammad Yunus sworn in as the head of the country's caretaker government on August 8, three days after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to quit and flee the country following violent protests.

Muhammad Yunus, 84, was recommended for the role by student protesters and returned to Dhaka on Thursday from Paris.

A 16-member council of



advisers was announced to assist Yunus in running the state's affairs. Md Nahid Islam and Asif Mahmud, two key organisers of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, were also part of the advisory council.

"The country has the possibility of becoming a very beautiful nation," an emotional Yunus told reporters at the airport. "Whatever path our students show us, we will move ahead with that."

The student-led movement that ousted Hasina grew out of protests against quotas in government jobs that spiralled in July, provoking a violent crackdown that drew global criticism.

Ensure safety of minorities says Indian PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday extended best wishes to Muhammad Yunus as he took oath as the head of an interim government in Bangladesh, hoping for early return of normalcy and ensuring safety of Hindus and other minority communities in that country. In a post on X, Modi said, "India remains committed to working with Bangladesh to fulfil the shared aspirations of both our peoples for peace, security and development."

RBI Maintains Repo Rate At 6.5%, Signals Cautious Stance on Inflation



NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, Shaktikanta Das, announced in the bi-monthly monetary policy statement that the repo rate, the central bank's rate for short-term loans to banks, will remain unchanged at 6.5 per cent. The decision reflects a cautious approach amid evolving economic conditions.

Governor Das highlighted that inflation and growth are currently balanced, but emphasised the need for vigilance concerning food prices. In the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, a majority of members voted to maintain the current rates, with four in favor and two against. Governor Das indicated that while the overall inflation trajectory is moderating, vigilance is necessary. The RBI will maintain a flexible approach to liquidity management.

He underscored the resilience of the Indian financial system, which continues to gain strength from broader macro-economic stability.

The Indian Rupee has remained largely stable in August. However, Das cautioned banks about potential structural liquidity issues due to declining deposits and raised concerns over the rising disbursements of top-up home loans, urging lenders to take corrective actions.

The Governor also noted that the Current Account Deficit is expected to remain manageable during this fiscal year. India's forex reserves have reached a record high of USD 675 billion as of August 2.

Jammu and Kashmir Assembly polls to be held in September: Reddy



FW DESK
Union Minister G. Krishna Reddy, the Election Incharge for the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections, said on Monday that the elections in the Union Territory will be held in September.

Speaking at the 'Ekatma Mahotsav' rally organized by the BJP at Bana Singh Stadium in RS Pura, Reddy expressed confidence in the BJP's chances of securing a majority. The rally marked the fifth anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370, which was repealed by Parliament on August 5, 2019.

Reddy urged voters to support the BJP to maintain the pace of development and to combat terrorism. He noted a reduction in ISI activities in Jammu and Kashmir since the revocation of Article 370 by the Modi-led government and warned neighboring countries against supporting terrorism, stating that such actions would have serious consequences.

The rally was attended by senior BJP leaders, including National General Secretary Tarun Chugh, J&K BJP President Ravinder Raina, and former Deputy Chief Minister Kavinder Gupta. Reddy highlighted the positive changes in Jammu and Kashmir following the abrogation of Article 370, including the empowerment of women and other marginalized groups and the reduction of terrorism and separatist activities.

SKM expresses deep solidarity with Vinesh Phogat in her hour of trial



NEW DELHI: The Samyukta Kisan Morcha expresses deep dismay at the disqualification of Vinesh Phogat, who had bravely fought her way into the finals of the wrestling event of the Paris Olympics. SKM supports her appeal to grant her Silver Medal.

SKM has also condemned the attitude of the Indian Olympic Association and the Government of India for this entire episode. The social media platforms of Vinesh Phogat running on social media show that many officials of the Wrestling Federation of India and the Indian Olympic Association were trying to stop her from going to the Olympics. The people of the country are also well aware that Vinesh Phogat, who raised her voice against sexual harassment against the then BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, a favourite of the central government, was already a thorn in the eyes of the Modi government.

Expressing deep sorrow over the decision of Vinesh Phogat, who brought laurels to the country, to retire from a great player of the country.

SKM solidly stands with Vinesh in her hour of trial. Even though Vinesh was disqualified by the Olympic Association, no one can take her place as an Olympic gold medalist in the hearts of the people of India.

Bail for Manish Sisodia, booster jibe for AAP party ahead of Delhi election

OUR CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) gained a significant boost on Friday when the Supreme Court granted bail to Manish Sisodia, a founding member of the party and its former Deputy Chief Minister. The decision came soon after a Delhi court extended the judicial custody of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal until August 20 in the same case.

Sisodia, who was accused of providing kickbacks to liquor vendors under the now-scrapped Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22, had been in jail for nearly 18 months. The Supreme Court granted him bail, citing delays by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in commencing the trial. His release follows a similar development for AAP MP Sanjay Singh, who was also detained in connection with the same case. The release of these two senior leaders significantly bolsters AAP's position and challenges the BJP's narrative that the party, which rose to power on an anti-corruption platform,

is now mired in corruption itself. The release of Sisodia is particularly important for AAP due to his key role within the party. As the second-in-command to party leader Arvind Kejriwal, Sisodia's return is expected to rejuvenate the party, especially with the Delhi elections on the horizon. Sisodia's importance to both the party and the Delhi government is underscored by the fact that he was managing 18 departments at the time of his arrest in February last year. He is widely recognized as the architect of AAP's development agenda, particularly in the areas of education and health, where he played a pivotal role in transforming Delhi's infrastructure. Beyond his influence in Del-



hi, Sisodia is also seen as vital to AAP's national expansion strategy. The party has already made significant gains in states like Punjab, where it formed a government, and is now focused on extending its influence in other states. Haryana, which is set to hold elections this year, is a key target, with AAP planning to contest all 90 Assembly seats. The party has already promised to extend its five core guarantees—free electricity, medical treatment, education, a monthly stipend for women, and employment for youth—if it secures power in the state.

The Supreme Court's decision to grant bail to Sisodia was met with widespread celebration among AAP leaders. Sanjay

Singh, who was recently released in the same case, hailed the decision as a victory for truth and justice, describing the charges against Sisodia as baseless and politically motivated. He also expressed hope that Kejriwal and former minister Satyendra Jain, who are also in custody, would soon be released.

Prominent AAP leaders took to social media to express their relief and gratitude. Atishi, a key leader in the party, tweeted, "Truth prevails," while MP Raghav Chadha praised Sisodia as the hero of Delhi's education revolution. Chadha expressed deep gratitude to the Supreme Court, noting that Sisodia's only crime was his efforts to secure a better future for Delhi's children.

Sisodia's bail has provided a much-needed morale boost for AAP as it gears up for the upcoming elections. The party has reaffirmed its commitment to its core values and remains determined to counter the BJP's narrative. Sisodia's release not only strengthens the party's internal unity but also enhances its ability to challenge its political rivals in the crucial months ahead.

Chair, and I remember when I went to school..." On this, a visibly angry Dhankhar interrupted, saying "Enough of it." "You may be anybody, you may be a celebrity, you have to understand the decorum, no, nothing doing...Never carry an impression that only you build reputations...we live up to reputations, nothing doing," he said.

When an Opposition party member raised an objection to how Dhankhar could call Bachchan a celebrity when she was a senior Member of Parliament, the Chairman retorted: "(Does) a senior member of Parliament has a licence to run down the reputation of the Chair... to question the tone and tenor?"



switched off when he stood up to speak in the House. The trouble started when the SP member wanted to make a point on an ongoing heated discussion between Opposition parties and the Chairman in the Rajya Sabha over certain remarks made by BJP MP Ghanshyam Tiwari on Kharge

a few days ago. Dhankhar allowed her saying, "Jaya Amitabh Bachchan, make your point."

Bachchan rose to say: "I, Jaya Amitabh Bachchan, want to say I am an artist. I understand body language and expressions. Forgive me but your tone is not acceptable. We are colleagues, sir. You may be sitting in the

Face-off between Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and Jaya Bachchan in Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI: Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar and actor-politician Jaya Bachchan were involved in a face-off on Friday after Bachchan raised objection to his "tone" while giving her floor to speak and the former asserting that even a celebrity like her needs to follow decorum.

Opposition parties also staged a walkout following the exchanges between Dhankhar and Bachchan, a Samajwadi Party MP. Later, while talking to reporters in the Parliament complex, Bachchan said she was upset with the tone of the Chairman, and also the way the mic of Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was



switched off when he stood up to speak in the House. The trouble started when the SP member wanted to make a point on an ongoing heated discussion between Opposition parties and the Chairman in the Rajya Sabha over certain remarks made by BJP MP Ghanshyam Tiwari on Kharge

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Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill introduced in LS

Bill seeks to give customers an option to increase the number of nominees per bank account

NEW DELHI: Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary on Friday introduced in the Lok Sabha the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which seeks to give customers an option to increase the number of nominees per bank account to four, from existing one, among others.

Another proposed change relates to redefining 'substantial interest' for directorships, which could increase to Rs 2 crore instead of the current limit of Rs 5 lakh, which was fixed almost six decades ago. Congress member Manish Tewari opposed the introduction of the Bill saying the power to legislate with regard to cooperative societies vests



with state governments.

Responding to opposition's remarks, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the banking regulation act and the cooperative banks do have a relationship and hence any amendment has to be taken through this route. "There is no attempt to undermine the cooperatives, particularly cooperatives dealing with everything other than banks. Banks, cooperatives with a licence for

banking will have to have a rule and therefore we have shown this," Sitharaman said.

The Bill also seeks to give greater freedom to banks in deciding the remuneration to be paid to statutory auditors. It also seeks to redefine the reporting dates for banks for regulatory compliance to the 15th and last day of every month instead of the second and fourth Fridays.

The Bill, which was approved by the Union Cabinet last week, proposes to amend the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the State Bank of India Act, 1955, the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970, and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980.

Punjab announces Rs 1 cr cash prize for Punjab players in Indian Hockey team

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Thursday congratulated the Indian Hockey team for creating history by bagging the Bronze Medal in Paris Olympics games.

In a congratulatory message, the Chief Minister said that the Indian players have made the entire country proud by exhibiting the best game and trouncing Spain by 2-1. He said that the Indian Hockey players displayed one of the finest games in this prestigious match and steered their team to victory.

Bhagwant Singh Mann said that India has won two consecutive medals in Tokyo and Paris after a gap of 52 years. Prior to this, the Indian Hockey squad had won two consecutive medals



in 1968 at Mexico and 1972 at Munich.

The Chief Minister reiterated that this historic win will pave way for restoring the pristine glory of national game in the country. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the entire team has made

the entire country feel proud by this spectacular victory against Spain adding that this victory will go down in golden words in the annals of sports history. Showering heaps of praise on the team, he said the team has once again upheld the glorious legacy of the

great Hockey players produced from the country adding that 10 players from state, who displayed finest hockey during these Olympics, will be rewarded with cash prizes worth Rs 1 crore each as per policy of state government.

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Delhi LG VK Saxena orders to curb the menace of illegal parking, improve traffic management

OUR CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

Emphasizing the critical need for road safety, Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena has voiced concerns over illegal parking on roadsides, flyovers, and other areas, particularly by buses. He pointed out that such practices not only inconvenience commuters but also compromise road safety. In response, Saxena has issued a series of directives aimed at enhancing traffic management and ensuring smoother commutes across the city.

To address these challenges, joint enforcement teams made up of the Traffic Police and the Transport Department will be established to monitor and prevent the overloading of commercial vehicles and the overcrowding of passenger buses. The Traffic Police will also identify key congestion points and deploy dedicated teams



to ensure the smooth flow of traffic.

In a move to streamline the issuance of fines, the process of sending challans via WhatsApp will be accelerated, providing violators with timely information and enabling them to pay fines conveniently. This is expected to increase the rate of challan realization. Additionally,

AI-based Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras will be installed to capture traffic violations, with consequent challans issued through SMS and WhatsApp. This approach will reduce human intervention and improve coordination between the Transport Department and Traffic Police.

Further measures include

a plan to relocate ISBT Kashmir Gate to alleviate traffic congestion in that area. A drive will also be conducted to impound illegal e-rickshaws operating without valid registration, as they contribute to congestion and pose safety risks to passengers.

Moreover, the Transport Department, along with the MCD and Traffic Police, will develop an action plan to implement the Parking Policy. Joint drives by the Traffic and Transport Departments will ensure compliance with PUC certification and enforcement.

Special enforcement drives will target bus lane regulations, especially on major routes such as Ring Road, Airport Road, and national highways, with zero tolerance for violations. These initiatives are designed to significantly enhance road safety and traffic management in Delhi, addressing the pressing issues of illegal parking and traffic violations.

SC upholds appointment of aldermen to MCD by Delhi L-G

NEWDELHI: The Supreme Court on August 5 upheld the decision of the Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G) to appoint 'aldermen' to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) without the aid and advice of the elected government.

In May last year, a bench headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud and comprising Justices P.S. Narasimha and J.B. Pardiwala had reserved its judgment on a plea filed by Delhi government challenging the gazette notifications, whereby the L-G appointed 10 nominated members to the MCD on his own initiative, and not on the aid and advice of the council of ministers.

Pronouncing the verdict, Justice Narasimha said that the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act made by Parliament required the L-G to act in his discretion.

"The text of Section 3(3) (b) of the Act (as amended from time to time) expressly enables the Lieutenant Governor to nominate persons having special knowledge to the Corporation... The power



to be exercised is the statutory duty of Lieutenant Governor and not the executive power of the state," the top court ruled.

In its plea, the Delhi government said: "This is the first time since Article 239AA came into effect in 1991 that such a nomination has been made by the Lieutenant Governor completely by-passing the elected government, thereby abrogating to an unelected office a power that belongs to the duly elected government."

The plea contended that nominations in question have been made under Section 3(3) (b)(i) of the Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957 (DMC Act), which provides that the

MCD should include, apart from the elected councillors, ten persons of not less than 25 of age and who have special knowledge or experience in municipal administration, "to be nominated by the administrator", adding that neither the section nor any other provision of law says anywhere that such nomination is to be made by the administrator in his discretion.

It said it is a settled position of constitutional law for the last 50 years that the powers conferred on a nominal and unelected head of state are to be exercised only under the "aid and advice" of the council of ministers.

In a written response filed before the apex court, the L-G office, defending its decision, said that the governance of municipalities is independent of the regime of governance of the elected state governments and the role of L-G as an administrator under the DMC Act is not a "mirror-image" of what is provided under the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD Act), or Article 239AA of the Constitution.

38,400 bottles intoxicated cough syrup seized by HSNCB



SATISH HANDA
Sonapat

Team of Haryana State Narcotic Control Bureau (HSNCB) from Rohtak, on a clue seized 38,400 bottles containing 100 ml. intoxicated restricted cough syrup, generally consumed by the drug addicts, being taken to Tripura in a consignment of nearly 200 bags booked as 'Paan Masala' kept under the luggage in a canter. Rajpal Singh ACP crime department said that they got secret information about the canter having Rajasthan registration number parked on Kundli-Manesar (KMP). Police team stopped the vehicle when it was about to start at a flyover and during checking found 384 cases packed in 200 bags containing intoxicated restricted syrup in the consignment booked as 'Paan Masala'.

Nearly 50 depositors frauded by the postal agent issued fake Pass Books & receipts



SATISH HANDA
Bhiwani

Large number of agitated depositors were duped of an amount worth crores of rupees by the postal department agent Leela Krishan gathered at the Bhiwani Post Office. The agent had printed postal deposit copies similar to those being issued to the depositors by the post office, duly having fake signatures and rubber postal stamps. While talking to media persons, cheated depositors said that post office agent Leela Krishan used to collect money and the pass book and return the same along with the entries of money deposited in the post office along with receipt of money duly signed and stamped by bank employee. The practice has been going on for a long time. They suspected other bank employees were also involved in this cheating game going on since a long time. Cheated depositors said they had opened savings accounts at the post office through this agent and paid him money every month for depositing in their post office accounts. They said the agent was not depositing the amount but rather returning their pass books with fake stamps and signatures from the post office. The complainants said the scam came to light when they went to the post office to withdraw the money in the completion of the schemes in which money was being deposited in the post office, but were told that there was no money in their accounts, adding that when they showed the passbooks of the post office with the stamps they were told that the stamps were fake and no money had been deposited. They said complaints were made to the police and higher officials of the post office. According to senior officers in post office, when first complaint about the cheating came to light in January 2023, a complaint was lodged with the Deputy Commissioner as well as police requesting to attached the properties of agent Leela Krishan, and it was found that he was having a house in old Housing Board Colony area, whereas his other properties are located in other states.

11 cyber 'thugs' in Ambala & 27 cyber 'thugs' in Mewat arrested in 48 hours

PARVESH HANDA
Ambala/ Nuh

Cyber police team Ambala busted a gang of 11 persons involved in cyber crimes allegedly robbed 13 persons recently in different states including Kolkata, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. Police while investigating a case held three members of gang from Jodhpur and Badmer on 1st August identified as Harish Kumar resident of Dharasar (Badmer), Tarun Hooda resident of village Bhadra in Sirsa district and Parvinder resident of Badmer in Rajasthan. The arrested accused were brought to Ambala and produced in the court which sent them to police remand for seven days. ASP Srishati Gupta while addressing media persons here said that police recovered Rs 44 lakh along with 4 mobile phones.

ASP said that during remand police has been able



to find out the names and whereabouts of as many as 11 members of the gang who had cheated large number of persons in U.P., Bihar, Punjab and other states including a female who lost amount worth Rs 3 crore in share market through this gang and a complaint was made

to Ambala cyber police. Information also revealed that this gang was also operating 'Hawala' payment transactions.

In another case, Rajasthan police launched 'Anti-virus Campaign', Rajasthan Range Special Police Team during a raid with the help of Hary-

The arrested accused were brought to Ambala and produced in the court which sent them to police remand for seven days

ana police arrested four cyber 'thugs' residents of Nuh in Mewat. During several raids police arrested 27 cheats used to black mail people. The gang had cheated a teacher, a resident of Chhindwara in Madhya Pradesh and even after taking from him Rs 5 lakh still blackmailing him as a result he committed suicide on 11th June this year.

Information reveals, during the 'Anti-virus' campaign launched by the Rajasthan police has arrested 256 cyber 'thugs' including six minors in the past about two months from which a namount worth Rs 48 lakh has been recovered. While checking messages in their mobile police recovered a large number of messages for cheating people.

Haryana's CM Flying Squad raid at illegal hookah bar, FIR against four persons

SATISH HANDA
Karnal

joint teams from the Chief Minister's Flying Squad, local police, excise and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) during a raid on Monday late evening unearthed an illegal hookah bar operating from a restaurant-cum-bar in Sector 7, Karnal and recovered recovered stocks of material containing nicotine beyond permissible limits. They used to serve Hookah alongwith costly wine. During the search, an excess quantity of nicotine was detected which was harmful for the health and was strictly prohibited. The raiding officers said that running a hookah bar was strictly prohibited, whereas despite this the owners were charging Rs 3,000 per hookah.

An FIR was registered against four persons: identi-



found hookahs being served to customers. Ajit Singh DSP CM Flying Squad said during the inspection, the team found mango flavour containing 0.5 per cent nicotine along with 21 boxes containing various flavours of tobacco. He added, samples of different flavours were collected by the Drug Control Officer and have been handed over to the local police to be sent to the FSL, Madhuban (Karnal), for testing. Information reveals, when the team was conducting raids the employees working in the hotel and the customers managed to flee, but police stopped two managers and during investigation it was observed that the excise department had issued license for running the bar from 27th March till 11th June. The stocks of flavoured tobacco mixed with nicotine were seized.

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Diarrhoea spread: 5 died, over 50 admitted in hospitals due to contaminated water supply

PARVESH HANDA
Karnal

As a result of consuming contaminated water being supplied by the Public Health department at Kunjpura in Karnal district large number of people are suffering from diarrhoea since past about a month and in-spite of several complaints to Gaurav Saini SDO there is no relief except assurances, said residents of the area. Large number of residents blocked roads and traffic remained blocked for several hours, when police intervened into the matter assuring immediate action in this regard. According to complainants, five persons have died so far and more than 50 patients suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting are admitted in the hospitals at present, which include a maximum number of children and women. Dr Sandeep Abrol Senior Medical Officer said that he has not received a test report of water being supplied by the Public Health department.



A couple of days ago, a meeting was held in which Panchayat members including female Sarpanch Suman Devi and a representative from the police department were also present. Gaurav Saini SDO said that the problem for supply of contaminated water is being received since after the repairs of streets in residential areas sometime ago by the village Panchayat in which spurious quality water pipes were used by the contractor started leaking and water supplied by Public Health department mixed with the contaminated sewerage water and trouble started SDO said that the maintenance of the pipelines and supply of water in residential areas is sole responsibility of the Panchayat.

Deepender questions BJP government's silence on 10-yr 'misrule' posers

SATISH HANDA
Rohtak

Member Parliament from Rohtak Deepender Hooda while addressing a gathering at Nangal Choudhary in Mahendragarh on Saturday again targeted the BJP on the silence it has maintained on the repeated posers by the Congress on its 10-year rule in Haryana. He said in the past 10 years, the BJP government has ended government jobs in the state, and made it the capital of temporary jobs without quota, without pension, without merit on contract basis. Hooda was holding a 'padyatra' under the Congress 'Haryana Mange Hisaab' campaign. Mahendragarh being a part of Ahirwal, the region dominated by the Ahir community and the BJP had won three of the four seats in the district in previous polls.

Deepender Hooda raised the issue of lack of potable and canal water and the short-



age of doctors in government hospitals and teachers in government schools during the march. and said that there is no water in canals, no doctors in hospitals and no teachers in schools, which have not been recruited over the last 10 years and as such most of the schools have been closed down and locked. Haryana has become a state, where even sports persons had to sit on a dharna to get justice and when we are posing questions to the BJP government there is no answer, Hooda said. Those present

in the 'padyatra' raising the slogan of 'BJP sarkar-hisab do, hisab do'. Expressing concern, Deepender Hooda claimed that the BJP was using the Central agencies to target Opposition leaders. "ED raids are being conducted on Congress MLAs' premises, but after two months, people of Haryana will target the BJP, and throw it out of power," he said the state was plagued by illegal mining and corruption in government offices and people are fed up with fast

increasing crimes and cases of drugs smuggling. He said, The BJP government insulted every class: Sarpanches, youths demanding the Ahir regiment, Anganwadi and Asha workers were all lathicharged. As many as 750 farmers lost their lives in the farm protests who were falsely assured of double income. Hooda raised the issue of lack of jobs in the state and said the BJP government has made Haryana the capital of temporary jobs without reservation, without pension, without merit.

Former Home Minister of Haryana, Anil Vij sharply reacted to the statement of Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, that the ED is preparing to raid him, saying, "Rahul Gandhi dreams of the ED even at one o'clock in the night because there must be something that causes him to dream of the ED." Anil Vij

"Rahul Gandhi dreams of the ED even at one o'clock in the night because there must be something that causes him to dream of the ED": Anil Vij



SATISH HANDA
Chandigarh

Former Home Minister of Haryana, Anil Vij sharply reacted to the statement of Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, that the ED is preparing to raid him, saying, "Rahul Gandhi dreams of the ED even at one o'clock in the night because there must be something that causes him to dream of the ED." He further said that Rahul Gandhi says, "I am ready, if the ED team comes, I will even serve them breakfast." He stated that serving breakfast to the team conducting the raid is also corruption. Additionally, he called Rahul Gandhi ignorant. Vij was responding to questions from journalists today. Commenting sarcastically on the formation of a Congress organization in Haryana after 11 years, former Home Minister Anil Vij said, "Can this be considered a party that could not even form its own organization for 11 years? Regular elections are necessary for a party. Parties that do not have democracy within party cannot protect the democracy of the country." In Parliament, Congress leader Surjewala told Anurag Thakur, who questioned Rahul Gandhi's caste, that if you want to know Rahul Gandhi's caste, ask the farmers with whom he worked in the fields, or ask the cobbler with whom he sat and stitched shoes.

28 cyber criminals including six females arrested running fake call centre in 2 raids

SATISH HANDA
Faridabad

The cyber police Ballabgarh arrested 28 cyber criminals including six females running two fake call centres from whom recovered 50 laptops and six mobile phones, ACP Cyber Crime Cell Abhimanyu Goel while talking to media persons said the police on a secret information raided a fake call centre in Sector 86 and arrested three persons identified as Yash Taneja, Avideep and Chirag Arora. Preliminary investigation revealed that a female Deepiks Arora was the



owner of this fake call centre. The arrested accused disclosed that they are running the call center along with another four persons Hemant Tiwari, Lavi

Guglani, Athil Gulati and Sahil Sodhi. The raiding team seized five laptops and five mobile phones from the call center. The raiding team on

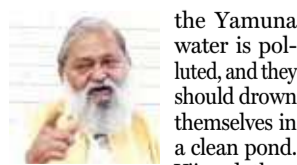
their information also arrested the prime accused Sameer Srivastava.

He said the modus operandi of the criminals was offering part time jobs, earning profits through investment in share market, offering easy bank loans, different types of on-line blackmailing and luring people to deposit money for higher refund. Goel said, during a second raid by a cyber team jointly along with cyber police station Ballabgarh and Sector 7 police station a fake call centre near YMCA University as many as 17 persons including five females were arrested.

Cancellation of Kejriwal's bail in High Court proves a case against him, claims of political vendetta false, He should drown himself in a pond.

PARVESH HANDA
Ambala

Former Haryana Home and Health Minister Anil Vij, in response to the Delhi High Court's validation of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest and denial of bail, quipped that it's a legal process that allows one to approach higher courts if dissatisfied with lower court decisions. He emphasized that the High Court's decision negates the repeated claims of political vendetta by Kejriwal, confirming a legitimate case against him. He sarcastically added that for the Aam Aadmi Party, even



the Yamuna water is polluted, and they should drown themselves in a clean pond. Vij made these remarks while interacting with media persons today.

Regarding Rahul Gandhi's recent statement after meeting a cobbler, where he highlighted the potential of changing the nation's destiny with the right support for talent, Vij mocked him and suggesting he should implement such ideas in Congress-ruled states. Vij advised Gandhi to stop

selling balloons because they are fleeting and can burst quickly. He suggested that if Gandhi wants to craft impactful narratives, he should consult a more capable person.

Responding to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's accusation that Haryana is politicizing the farmers' issue, Anil Vij retorted that while Mann makes grand promises to farmers, those sitting at Punjab's border are the responsibility of the Punjab government. Vij noted that Haryana has set the MSP for 24 crops, the highest in India, and questioned why Punjab has not done the same.

'Cannot jeopardise careers of 2 lakh': SC dismisses plea for postponement of NEET-PG exam

NEWDELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea seeking directions to the National Board of Examinations (NBE) to reschedule the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-PG 2024, which is scheduled for August 11.

Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, representing the petitioners, submitted before a bench, headed by CJI D.Y. Chandrachud, that administration cut down the number of examination centres for the NEET-PG exam from 1,200 to 500 against the backdrop of allegations of paper leak and other irregularities in the conduct of NEET-UG exam this year.

Due to the decrease in the number of centres, the NEET-PG will be conducted in two shifts, said Hegde, flagging the risks arising from the normalisation process. Declining to exercise its discretionary jurisdiction, the bench, also comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, remarked that the examination where two lakh students are going to appear cannot be halted at the instance



of four petitioners.

As it dismissed the plea, the apex court said: "We will not reschedule or pass any orders. There are 2 lakh students and close to 4 lakh parents who would weep if we touch this matter. At the best of four-five petitioners, we cannot jeopardise the careers of two lakh students. We will not do it."

On Thursday, CJI Chandrachud directed the registry to urgently list the matter for hearing after advocate Anas Tanwir, representing petitioners, mentioned the plea for urgent listing.

The petitioners sought the postponement of the exam on the

ground that candidates have been allocated cities which are highly inconvenient for them to reach and the formula for normalisation is unknown to them. It also sought details and disclosure of the formula for the normalisation of the four sets of question papers to eliminate any possibility of arbitrariness in the process.

"The examination will be conducted in two batches... There is a likelihood that one batch of candidates may face a more difficult question paper than the other batch. Therefore, it is prayed that the formula for normalisation should be disclosed before the conduct of

examinations thereby ruling out any fear of arbitrariness," it said. Further, the plea stated that the allocation of test cities was made on July 31 and the specific centres are scheduled to be declared on August 8, and given such short notice, it has become highly difficult for students to make arrangements for their travel to their specific cities.

"That more than two lakh students are scheduled to appear in the examination. The examination is scheduled to be held in 185 test cities, therefore, resulting in the non-availability of train tickets as well as the hiking of airfares due to dynamic pricing, thereby making it almost impossible for a large number of students to reach their test centres," it added.

On June 22, the NEET-PG, which was scheduled to be held on the very next day, was postponed by the Union Health Ministry in "best interests of the students and to maintain the sanctity of the examination process". Last year, the top court had declined to entertain petitions seeking postponement of the NEET-PG 2023 exam.

Wayanad disaster: Search continues for missing 152 people



WAYANAD: Search operations for the missing 152 people continued on Friday, the 11th day of Kerala's worst-ever natural calamity in Wayanad in which 413 casualties have taken place so far.

The search operations were taking place in the Mundakayil and Panchirimatom areas.

State Tourism Minister P.A. Mohammed Riyas, who is spearheading the rescue and relief operations, said the search operation will end on Friday, and on Sunday again a similar search operation with the help of the villagers will be held as they are

familiar with the area.

Like in the past few days, a few teams on Friday continued to search areas in and around the area where the Chaliyar River originates in Wayanad and passes through the Malappuram district. So far 78 bodies and over 150 body parts have been recovered.

Meanwhile, Friday appears to be crucial as the Kerala High Court suo moto decided to register a case.

The High Court decided to register the case based on media reports and on a letter it received which said that

there has been unbridled exploitation of fragile areas in Wayanad and other environmentally sensitive areas.

Experts have time and again pointed out that disasters are waiting to happen and even after clear signals coming from smaller tragedies, the authorities continued to remain silent.

Successive governments in Kerala have blinkered the reports of top experts like Kasturirangan and Madhav Gadgil.

Even though Kerala has four state-run agencies to tackle environmental and climate change issues, nothing much has come from these agencies as there is a serious shortage of experts.

Eyebrows were raised when the Pinarayi Vijayan government entrusted the Kottayam-based Institute of Climate Change Studies to conduct a study and submit a report on the Wayanad landslide.

After having seized of the widespread damage being caused to the environment when tourist resorts owned by the big and mighty have sprung up in eco-fragile areas and homestays, all eyes are on how the High Court.

Election Commission to review poll preparations in J&K



FW DESK

The Election Commission of India (ECI) will visit Jammu and Kashmir from August 8 to 10 to review the preparations for the upcoming assembly elections in the union territory. The visit comes as Jammu and Kashmir has been without an elected government since June 2018, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ended its alliance with the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP).

The last Assembly election in J&K was held in 2015.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, will lead the review. During their visit to Srinagar, they will engage with political parties and meet with the chief electoral officer, the union territory's police nodal officer, and the central forces coordinator to assess election readiness.

The commissioners will also hold discussions with the chief secretary, police chief, district election officers, and superintendents of police from each district. On August 10, the ECI officials will travel to Jammu to evaluate coordination with enforcement agencies, followed by a press conference to update the media on election preparations.

Earlier in March, the Chief Election Commissioner visited Jammu and Kashmir before the Lok Sabha elections and assured political parties and the public that assembly elections would be conducted soon.

The Supreme Court has directed the Central government to hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir by September 30, 2024, and to restore statehood at the earliest. The ECI has also requested the Jammu and Kashmir administration to reassign officials stationed in their home districts and those involved in the election process who will complete a three-year term before the end of September.

Since June 2018, after the BJP-PDP alliance collapsed and Mehbooba Mufti resigned as chief minister, Jammu and Kashmir has been under Governor's rule. The legislative assembly was dissolved in November 2018. In August 2019, the Modi government abrogated Article 370, ending the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcating it into two union territories.

August 5 is a black day for J&K, Constitution: PDP



JAMMU: On the occasion of fifth anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370, People's Democratic Party (PDP) Spokesperson Virendra Singh has called it a "black day" for Jammu & Kashmir as well as for the Constitution of India.

"With the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, which were granted to us by the Constitution, are snatched away. Jammu and Kashmir was converted into a prison and the state was divided into two parts. It has been five years. There is no one to listen to our grievances here. Those who say that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir has changed are making empty claims."

He remarked: "Terrorism has increased of late in Jammu. After the removal of Article 370, there has been a spike in terrorist incidents in Jammu which was not there before." "While the Central government is considering giving special status to another state," he said while making a reference to Bihar, he questioned: "Why are our rights taken away? What did we do wrong?" "The people of Jammu have understood that they have been deceived," he added.

Centre moves Waqf (Amendment) Bill in LS, Congress calls it 'draconian'

NEWDELHI: Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju moved the Waqf Act (Amendment) Bill, 2024, in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, sparking disruptions by the Congress.

The Bill seeks to amend the Waqf Act of 1995 and repeal the Mussalman Waqf Act of 1923. Congress leader KC Venugopal raised strong objections, calling the Bill an attack on the Constitution.

"I would like to raise an objection to this draconian law introduced by the government. Fundamentally, this is an attack on the Constitution," Venugopal said. The Congress MP argued that the Bill violates Article 26 of the Constitution, which grants the right to form and maintain



institutions for religious and charitable purposes, manage religious affairs, and administer property according to the law. "Through this Bill, they (the Centre) are putting a provision that non-Muslims can also be members of the governing council. Can anyone imagine a non-Hindu being part of the Supreme Court-constituted Ayodhya Board? This provision directly attacks

the faith and freedom of religion," Venugopal asserted. He expressed concerns that the government might target other religious communities next, saying, "Now you are going after Muslims, next you will go for Christians, and then Jains."

"There is a fundamental principle. What is the tradition and the culture of India? We believe in traditions and culture. We respect each other's

faith. We are Hindus, we are believers, but at the same time, we respect the faith of other religions also," Venugopal said.

Slamming the Bill as the Centre's political move, the Lok Sabha MP said, "This Bill is specialised for Maharashtra and Haryana elections. You did not understand when, last time, the people of India taught you a lesson. The countrymen will not buy this kind of divisive politics now. This is a clear attack on the federal system."

Accusing the government of attempting to create conflict and "spread violence," he asserted, "Your fundamental idea is to create conflict and anger between communities... This Bill cannot pass, and it cannot be introduced."

Congress alleges, BJP won 79 seats in LS polls by manipulating voter turnout figures

Seeks ECI clarification over variation in initial, final voter turnout figures.

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

Alleging that the BJP won 79 seats in the 2024 General Elections by voter turnout manipulation, the Congress has sought clarification from the Election Commission of India (ECI) over the substantial difference in the preliminary/initial and the final voter turnout figures in the 2024 General Elections.

Quoting a report by the 'Vote for Democracy' (VFD), senior party leader and ex-MP Sandeep Dikshit said while the overall difference in the voter



turnout between what the ECI said initially and what figures it gave finally, was on an average 4.7 percent, it counted to about 5 crore votes nationally.

Quoting the VFD report he disclosed that in some states like Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, where the BJP or its allies did unexpectedly better, the difference between the initial and final turnout figures

was 12.5, which is huge and needs answers from the ECI.

The senior Congress leader observed that while a difference of around 1 percent is understandable, but the massive difference up to 12.5 percent and in some places like Lakshadweep up to 25 percent raises serious questions. Quoting the same report, Dikshit said, it had specifically identified 79 constituencies that the BJP won, where the final voting percentage increased substantially from the initial figures given by the ECI.

He also wondered why it took the ECI so much time to come out with the final voting percentage, while in the modern days of technological pro-

cess, the figures are updated every two hours. He pointed out, while for the first phase it took ECI eleven days to come out with the final figures, for the second phase it took 6 days and for the subsequent phases 4 to 5 days. Dikshit said, this had raised questions not only on the credibility of the ECI, but has also created doubts about the entire electoral process. He did not agree with the ECI explanation like communication and Internet issues for delay in coming out with the final poll percentage figures. He observed that with the availability of sophisticated technology there should not be so much variation between the initial and final figures.

Congress targets BJP govt over failure to defend Vinesh Phogat

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The Congress today blamed the Bharatiya Janata Party government at the centre for failing to safeguard the interest of ace wrestler Vinesh Phogat just because some people in power would have had problems with her winning a medal.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here today, party general secretary and MP Randeep Singh Surjewala said that the entire country was seeking justice for Phogat, who had been thrown out of the Olympics under a deliberate conspiracy. "Phogat was sacrificed at the altar of sports politics," he remarked.

The Congress general secretary tore into the failure of the Indian Olympic Association and the Wrestling Federation of India to come to the rescue of Phogat.

He said it was unprecedented in the history of Olympic games that an athlete had been disqualified for being overweight



by just 100 grams.

He also quoted the Olympic rules, including Article 11, where a player is allowed one or two hours to adjust his/her weight in case it is slightly higher. He asked why Phogat not given this time to reduce her extra weight. He asked what was the huge entourage of officials, who outnumbered the players, doing in Paris and why they could not assist and guide Phogat.

Surjewala narrated the entire sequence of events and the related background as how people in power including the

Prime Minister were reluctant to congratulate Phogat when she defeated a so-far-invincible wrestler to become first Indian woman wrestler to qualify for the finals.

He observed that it was apparently because Phogat had led a struggle against sexual exploitation by the then Wrestling Federation of India and former BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, that a conspiracy was hatched to deny her medal in the Olympics. He said, people in power in the country would have had a problem with her

winning the medal.

The Congress leader raised certain technical questions substantiating his charges of conspiracy. He wondered how 100 grams of weight could not be managed, which could have been done very easily, even by a haircut.

Asserting and reiterating his charge, he pointed out, the silver medal could still have been saved, if the organisers and managers had made her opt out, citing illness or injury.

He pointed out, while there were consolatory tweets after Phogat was disqualified, nobody in the government had congratulated her when she had won the semifinals or pre-quarterfinal by defeating a wrestler who had never lost a bout in the last 82 games.

Surjewala said, the Congress party does not want consolation, but justice for Phogat, who was unduly and unjustifiably disqualified from the Olympic games under a conspiracy, thus denying her the opportunity to win a medal and create history.

Army opens fire on suspected infiltrators along LoC in J&K's Akhnoor and Sunderbani sectors



FW DESK

The Army opened fire upon detecting movements from suspected infiltrators along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Akhnoor and Sunderbani sectors early Monday morning, officials reported.

In Akhnoor's Battal sector, near Jammu, Army troops spotted suspicious movement by three to four individuals around 1:30 am. The area was illuminated with flares, put under drone surveillance, and reinforcements were mobilized to establish a tight cordon. A search operation commenced at dawn to prevent any potential infiltration across the border.

NEW DELHI: Raising questions on partial amendment in indexation in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Raghav Chadha said the Modi government is taxing the people of the country for voting for the BJP.

The only mission of the government is to collect tax. The people of the country are being taxed on everything, including waking up and sleeping, laughing and crying, eating and drinking, studying and medicine, buying and selling, road and air travel, earning and sweets.

On the amendment brought by the Finance Ministry in the Finance Bill, Raghav Chadha said that this is a minor amendment as only those investors who buy land and buildings before 23 July 2024 will get the benefit of indexation. Any property bought after 23 July 2024 will not be benefitted by indexation. He demanded from the Union Finance Minister to reimplement 100% indexation on all types of investments as before.

Expressing his views on the issue of indexation in Rajya Sabha, AAP MP from Punjab Raghav Chadha said a few days ago we had presented our views on indexation in tax. Our suggestion was accepted by the Union Finance Minister and the indexation that was taken away from the country's



investors two weeks ago has been restored. This raises a big question mark on the tax policy of our Government of India, how confused our country's tax policy is. "On 23 July 2024, the central government says that it is withdrawing indexation from the investors of India, but on 6 August it reversed its decision and said that indexation will not be withdrawn, but it will be implemented again.

This situation makes it clear that when the government will get the budget prepared by people who do not have knowledge of economics, then such irregularities will be seen," he said.

Raghav Chadha said that taking away indexation from the investors of India is like breaking their back. I had earlier demanded the complete restoration of indexation in the House, but the Finance

Ministry has talked about reimplementing indexation only partially in the proposal to amend the Finance Bill. In this, indexation is not being rolled back on all types of properties, but it is being reapplied only on immovable properties like land and building. Apart from this, the benefit of indexation will not be available on properties purchased after 23 July 2024.

Raghav Chadha requested the central government to completely restore indexation. "It should be applied to all types of properties and properties purchased after 23 July 2024 should also get its benefit. Abolishing indexation on asset classes raises questions on the Finance Minister whether she does not believe in inflation-adjusted benefits and does she not have knowledge of the impact of inflation.

PERCIVAL BILLIMORIA & SIDDHARTHA K GARG BAT FOR SCIENTIFIC METHODS OVER KILLING STRAY DOGS



The tale of stray dog policy



Supreme Court then stated that any parties with issues regarding these new laws can challenge them in the relevant High Courts. In the meantime, the governing law of the land remains the Central law (PCA Act 1960 and ABC Rules,

that we are promised to deliver us from all evils? Science certainly does not back the claim that killing helps reduce the population.

WHO's Expert Consultation on Rabies, which met in Geneva in October 2004, in its technical report endorses the sterilisation program by stating that it is the only effective and humane method of controlling stray dog populations.

A 2014 report commissioned by the Bombay Municipal Corporation stated that sterilisation is the only scientific humane solution. The same corporation in a 1994 circular admitted that killing strays does not affect the population.

In this circular, the Bombay Municipality admitted to killing about 4.5 lakh stray dogs between 1984 and 1994 and spent more than Rs 2 crores. But what takes the cake is that, despite no evidence to prove the efficacy of killing and evidence to the contrary, the same Bombay Municipal Corporation approached the Supreme Court seeking permission to kill stray dogs in this case.

One can only hope that the spirit of scientific temper and humanism, as enshrined in the fundamental duty in our Constitution under Article 51A(h), imbues itself in the minds of our citizens. We must eschew unscientific and barbaric methods such as the killing of stray dogs in favour of the scientific approach, which is a win-win for everyone. We domesticated stray dogs around 10,000 years ago and let us not let them or ourselves down.

Percival Billimoria is a Senior Advocate and founder of All Creatures Great and Small Animal Sanctuary, while co-author Siddhartha K Garg is an Advocate and founder of Angel Trust Animal Rights NGO. Views are personal.

“Under all circumstances, there cannot be any indiscriminate killings of canines and the authorities have to take action in terms of the mandate and spirit of the prevalent legislations in place.”

With this single line, the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India brought to an end a 15-year-old case titled Animal Welfare Board of India & Anr Versus People for Elimination of Stray Troubles & Ors, also known as the All India Stray Dogs case or AWBI vs PEST. The last hearing was held on May 9 this year when the judgment was reserved. Since then, all dog lovers (and regrettably, all dog haters) have been waiting with bated breath for the final judgment. That judgment came out on July 12 and has been cheered in some circles and criticised in others.

The case centred on whether municipal and local authorities can wantonly kill stray dogs to reduce the stray dog population, eradicate rabies, and prevent man-animal conflict, or whether local bodies must follow the World Health Organization (WHO)-backed scientific approach of sterilisation, which achieves these objectives. Legally speaking, the matter was framed as a battle of supremacy between State and Municipal laws, which authorise the killing of stray dogs (euphemistically referred to as culling) as opposed to the Central law (Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960, and the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2001), which mandates that killing is strictly prohibited and, the only recourse is the scientific solution of sterilisation.

Final mandate

These State and Municipal laws permitting the killing of stray dogs were challenged in various High Courts. The High Courts of

Bombay, Karnataka, and Himachal Pradesh ruled that local authorities have discretionary powers to kill stray dogs and are not bound by the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. On the other hand, the Kerala High Court ruled that local bodies possess no such discretionary powers, and, that they are guided by Central law, which penalises cruelty to animals, specifically canines. All these judgments were appealed and came to a head in the Supreme Court, which then issued notices to all the States and Union Territories in 2015, taking the case to a pan-India level.

The denouement of this case was reached when the final order was uploaded on the Supreme Court's website. The Supreme Court laid down that since the inception of the case, a lot of water has flown under the bridge and, specifically, there has been a change in the legislative landscape with the notification of the new ABC Rules, 2023 under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. These two pieces of legislation mandate that wanton killing by municipalities is prohibited and that sterilisation must be followed. The

2023), which prohibits the killing of stray dogs by local authorities or municipalities.

'Duty of every citizen'

The court then capped off this judgment with these stirring lines: "Compassion to all living beings, is the enshrined Constitutional value and mandate, and cast obligation on the authorities to maintain." This refers to Article 51A(g) of the Constitution of India, which deals with the fundamental duties of the citizens and states: "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures."

With such a positive and compassionate conclusion to a very scientifically backed judgment, the Supreme Court ended this matter. The dog haters, or to put it politely the cynophobes, can certainly go to the High Courts and file writ petitions praying for the striking down of the new Central Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023. But the question is what good would that do? Is killing all the stray dogs the panacea

KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN ON HOW POLITICAL TRENDS BLUR THE DEMOCRACY-AUTOCRACY LINE IN US



The United States shifts to autocratic trends

Since the Second World War, Washington has defined its foreign policy as a moral conflict between democracies and dictatorships, though this definition proved malleable and redacted to those siding with the United States and those against. The binary between democracy and autocracy is now further blurred by political trends within the U.S. itself.

In the past, American presidential politics comprised differences over policy and principle, when Presidents and Congress jostled for advantage and the boundaries of executive authority were negotiated. Despite serious disagreements, the norms of civility and forbearance prevailed in a mood consistent with democratic governance.

That situation no longer prevails. The populist faction, perhaps majority, that dominates the Republican Party, embraces a strongman vision of leadership that operates beyond customary democratic norms. This is now centre-stage in U.S. politics, endorsed by the July 1, 2024 ruling of the Supreme Court which granted former U.S. President Donald Trump's desire to guarantee that that his attempts to overturn the 2020 presidential election would not go to trial before the presidential election in November.

The Supreme Court allowed American Presidents an absolute immunity from prosecution for core official acts and Chief Justice John Roberts summarised the decision of the majority comprising six conservative Justices thus; "We conclude that under our constitutional structure of separated powers, the nature of Presidential power requires that a former President have some immunity from criminal prosecution for official acts during his tenure in office. At least with respect to the President's exercise of his core constitutional powers, this immunity must be absolute. As



for his remaining official actions, he is also entitled to immunity."

The Supreme Court decision does not place Presidents above the law, but removes restrictions on possible presidential abuse of power placed by both Democrats and Republicans since the 1970s, when growing executive authority and abuse of power were checkmated after Watergate.

Three liberal judges dissented from this decision, warning that granting presidential immunity would impact American democracy. Justice Sonia Sotomayor said, "the category of presidential action that can be deemed unofficial is destined to be vanishingly small."

Phases of transformation

The American presidency has undergone periods of transformation in the modern era, each involving a dramatic expansion of power. The first was the rise of the administrative state under Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, which grew in size and cost under Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, when bi-partisan values broadened the scope of government interven-

tion and generated a complex bureaucracy to address social problems and social welfare. This administrative state, with its resources and agencies, enabled Presidents from both parties to direct public policy and construct their legacies. They needed to

bring the administration under their direct control, which led to the centralised apparatus that resides in the Executive Office of the President.

Dangerous precedent: On the U.S. President and majority ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court

Far-right opinion began to regard the ever-expanding administrative state as unconstitutional, socialist and opposed to individual liberties. With growing Republican strength in the southern States and political activation by evangelicals, the conservative movement led to the conviction that the answer lay in a leader wielding top-down power and a different orientation towards laws that impeded his ambitions. President George W. Bush signed the Patriot Act that assumed some autocratic powers, expanded the surveillance capabilities of the administration, and allowed torture of prisoners contrary to statutory law.

The populist tendency of Republican conservatism is concentrated among less educated, blue-collar, white, rural, religious

populations disadvantaged by globalisation, threatened culturally and economically, and driven by grievance and anger. They seek a leader to attack the prevailing system, flout its procedures and take remedial action on their behalf. Democrats are seen as their enemies rather than political opponents, the contest pitting the people against big government and the corrupt and illegitimate Washington establishment.

The new normal

In Donald Trump, the populists found their natural leader. From the moment he announced his intention to seek the presidency, he made it clear that he had little use for the legal limitations of democracy. During his tenure, Mr. Trump waged a campaign against the norms and institutions of two-party politics, the climax being shortly after his 2020 election loss, when, despite his deploying the authoritarian actions of a strongman presidency, he was prevented from overriding Joe Biden's electoral victory.

Populist extremism is the new normal of the political Right that has taken over the Republican Party. It energises the party with hatred for the administrative state and embraces a strongman presidency as the panacea for its grievances, thereby threatening the basic fundamentals of democracy. This is given substance by Mr. Trump himself through ambiguous but ominous pronouncements to supporters such as in Florida on July 26 — "you don't have to vote again, we'll have it fixed so good you're not going to have to vote." Unless such sentiments are blunted in the years to come, democracy in the United States faces an uncertain future

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary. Views are personal.

LETTERBOX

Readers' feedback adds value to the newspaper. Please email comments on reports, features and columns to fwletters@gmail.com. We will publish them on this page.

"Develop success from failures. Discouragement and failure are two of the surest stepping stones to success."
— Dale Carnegie

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BOOKS: REVIEW

Jalil's curated gems explore contemporary Urdu narratives

Urdu: The Best Stories of Our Times, edited and translated by Rakhshanda Jalil, offers a rich anthology of contemporary Urdu fiction, capturing a diverse range of themes and tones. Jalil, in her comprehensive introduction, emphasizes her intention to spotlight modern writers, specifically from the 1990s, thus consciously omitting stalwarts like Manto, Chughtai, Rajinder Singh Bedi, and Krishan Chander. This deliberate focus on contemporary voices underscores the vibrant and evolving nature of Urdu literature today.

Jalil's anthology challenges the stereotypical associations of Urdu fiction with Muslim culture, Sufism, or romanticism. Instead, the collection of 14 stories presents a multifaceted view of life, touching upon issues faced by marginalized communities, the unpredictability of public transportation, the mystical allure of ancient manuscripts, and even surreal post-modern worlds. Through these

diverse narratives, readers are invited into landscapes of fear, longing, greed, violence, and oppression, reflecting the complexities of human survival in an unequal world.

The anthology opens with Suren-dra Prakash's Scarecrow, a poignant story that revisits Hori, the protagonist from Premchand's Godan, portraying the exploitation of hardworking individuals by the very systems they trust. Qurratulain Hyder's The Halfway View unfolds a three-sided love story through the perspective of a maid, ending with a surprising revelation. Stories like Suffocation by Khurshid Akram and The Halted Train by Abdus Samad use the confined spaces of an overcrowded bus and a stalled train to explore how people's behaviors shift under duress.

Communal tensions, a recurring theme, are depicted with fresh perspectives in many stories. In The Vultures of Doongerwadi, Ali Imam Naqvi narrates the perplexity of corpse bearers at the Parsi Tower of

Silence over the absence of vultures, drawing a parallel to the urban decay and societal indifference. Ghazanfar's Circumcision of Khalid portrays a boy's fear of being asked to prove his identity during communal riots, highlighting the pervasive sense of insecurity. Anwar Qamar's What Happened on the Ship tells of people hiding in a ship's cargo hold to escape violence, and Tariq Ansari's The Line shows how communal lines disrupt shared traditions and celebrations.

The stories in this anthology are not only reflective of the socio-political environment but also delve into the psychological impacts of these external conflicts. For instance, Hyder's The Halfway View not only presents a love triangle but also subtly comments on the complexities of human relationships in a rapidly changing world. Similarly, Prakash's Scarecrow is not just about exploitation but also about the resilience of the human spirit in the face of systemic failures. Jalil's editorial choice to focus on



Urdu: The Best Stories of Our Times Edited by Rakhshanda Jalil; Harper Perennial; 200 pages; Rs 399.

contemporary writers brings forward the voices that resonate with today's readers, making the anthology highly relevant. Her translations maintain the essence and cultural nuances of the original Urdu texts, ensuring that the stories retain their authenticity. By doing so, Jalil opens up the rich world of Urdu literature to a global audience, fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

Jalil asserts that her collection does not claim to represent the best of Urdu fiction but aims to offer a fair sampling of significant voices in modern Urdu literature. This selection provides nuanced perspectives, showcasing the language's plurality in addressing varied issues across different settings.

The strength of Urdu: The Best Stories of Our Times lies in its abil-

ity to present contemporary Urdu fiction as a living, breathing entity that is deeply engaged with the socio-political and cultural realities of our times. Each story, while distinct in its narrative style and thematic focus, collectively paints a broad canvas of the human condition, making the anthology a significant contribution to the understanding and appreciation of modern Urdu literature. Jalil's careful curation and insightful translations ensure that the essence and richness of these stories are accessible to a broader audience, fostering a deeper appreciation of the language and its literary heritage.

For readers unfamiliar with Urdu literature, this anthology serves as an excellent entry point, offering a glimpse into the diversity and depth of contemporary Urdu storytelling. For those already acquainted with the language, it provides a refreshing perspective on modern themes and issues, reaffirming the enduring relevance and adaptability of Urdu fiction. In conclusion, Urdu: The Best Stories of Our Times is a compelling collection that captures the essence of contemporary Urdu literature, making it a must-read for literary enthusiasts and casual readers alike.

Indian investors are increasingly trusting mutual funds: Ananth Narayan Gopalakrishnan, Whole Time Member of SEBI

NEW DELHI: At the ASSO-CHAM 16th Mutual Fund Summit, Chief Guest Ananth Narayan Gopalakrishnan, Whole Time Member, Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said, amidst stable macroeconomic conditions and robust corporate earnings, the financial landscape in India has witnessed a significant shift, with more individuals channeling their savings towards risk capital formation. The mutual fund ecosystem has played a crucial role in this transformation, stepping up remarkably to earn the trust of Indian investors.

This is evident from the impressive growth in unique mutual fund investors, reflecting a compounded annual growth rate of 18% during this period. The digitization of services and user-friendly access have further accel-



erated this trend, laying a strong foundation for sustained growth. He added "Over the past three years, key benchmarks, including the Sensex, have delivered a commendable compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14%, with an annualized realized volatility of just 14.3%. Compared to global markets, this performance stands out for its higher returns and

lower volatility.

By unlocking the potential of investment opportunities in India for the goal of Viksit Bharat, He shed light on increasing the number of investor advisors in the country, focus should be on expanding the network of distributors and enhancing the role of the mutual fund industry, which has delivered remarkably

as a flagship of the securities market. Mutual fund members have gained the trust of investors through initiatives like light regulations, reduced compliance, and fostering innovation. As a responsible partner in capital formation, the mutual fund industry is committed to furthering financial inclusion, raising awareness of higher risks, and streamlining structures to increase efficiency. By ensuring that funds are passed on the day of settlement, we are reinforcing our role in market development and regulatory advancement", he added.

The primary regulatory change that has occurred in the past year is the democratization of access to information, according to Sundararaman Ramamurthy, Managing Director & CEO of BSE Ltd.

MSMEs vital for India's goal to become 3rd-Largest Economy: Gujarat CM

GANDHINAGAR: Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel emphasised the crucial role of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India's ambition to become the world's third-largest economy.

Speaking at the launch of the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) MSME Centre of Excellence in Ahmedabad on Thursday, Patel underscored the importance of these enterprises in the nation's economic growth.

"The IACC-MSME Centre of Excellence will serve as a bridge between MSMEs in Gujarat and American companies," Patel stated, pledging the state government's support as a facilitator for MSME growth.

He highlighted Gujarat's economic significance, noting that despite occupying only 5 per cent of India's landmass, the



IACC National President Pankaj Bohra outlined the challenges faced by Indian MSMEs in accessing the U.S. market, including lack of capacity, awareness of good manufacturing practices, quality certification requirements, and export documentation.

He explained that the new Centre of Excellence in Ahmedabad aims to address these issues through training, market information dissemination, and buyer meets.

The IACC, a bilateral chamber of commerce promoting India-U.S. trade, operates 14 offices across India and collaborates with 38 partner organisations in the U.S.

The chamber has been instrumental in fostering bilateral trade, which reached USD 200 billion last year.

state contributes 8.63 per cent to the national GDP and hosts 100 Fortune 500 companies along with 19.8 lakh registered MSMEs.

Patel expressed confidence in Gujarat's pivotal role in achieving the goal of a developed India by 2047, citing the state's comprehensive road infrastructure and round-the-clock electricity supply to villages.

He stressed the importance of maintaining high-quality services and infrastructure.

PhonePe launches pre-approved term life insurance



NEWDELHI: PhonePe on Friday announced the launch of a 'pre-approved term life insurance' feature on its platform.

The feature aims to make insurance coverage more accessible and affordable for millions of Indians by waiving the requirement for proof of income at the time of policy purchase. With this launch, PhonePe ushers a new era of financial inclusion in India by making insurance products inclusive with the added advantage of quick and convenient access to life insurance coverage, without requiring extensive income verification.

The company has partnered with leading insurers to enable this feature on its platform. This partnership also supports insurance providers to now serve more users, specifically over 30 million individuals, who previously could not avail of term insurance due to the lack of income proof. Millions of PhonePe users including merchants, self-employed individuals, gig workers, and many more user groups who don't have formal proof of salary or income, can now avail of term insurance products seamlessly on the PhonePe platform. In fact, the company is focused on scaling up this offer tremendously and expanding its reach to make it accessible to up to 50 million users by later this year.

"We are excited to announce the launch of the 'pre-approved sum assured (PASA)' feature on our platform. This launch is aimed at bringing the previously underserved customers into the term life insurance net by making the products more accessible and affordable to Indians across various socio-economic strata," said Vishal Gupta, CEO at PhonePe Insurance Broking Services. "By partnering with industry leaders and collaborating with them deeply we are able to simplify user experience and deliver tailor-made offerings that are industry-leading and solving for specific cohorts in an inclusive manner. Our mission is to drive insurance adoption in the country by making the insurance buying process simple, easy, and affordable for all," Gupta added.

Handicraft industry witnessed boom after 'Bunkar Sewa Kendra' was set up in Panipat in 1975



SATISH HANDA
Panipat

Prior to independence in 1947 there was no handicraft industry in the country and people used to manufacture few handicraft products manually on 'Khaddis', but afterwards this industry witnessed drastic boom in 'Textile City' Panipat after 1975 when handloom products manufactured in the town earned name and fame not only in the country as well as across the world. Information reveals, there are more than 31,050 units in 'Textile City' manufacturing textile products, blankets, carpets, bed sheets and other handicraft products by nearly 15,350 workers involved in this business with a strength of nearly 15,700 exporters.

Government plans to introduce online mechanism to handle grievances related to inflated airfare

Making airfare affordable top priority for government, says Aviation Minister while moving Bhartiya Vayuyan Vidheyak Bill, 2024, for passage in Lok Sabha

New Delhi: Amid complaints over inflated airfare, Union Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram-mohan Naidu on Friday said the government was planning to introduce an online mechanism to address grievances to ensure passengers were not exploited by unnecessary fare hikes.

Moving the Bhartiya Vayuyan Vidheyak Bill, 2024, for passage in the Lok Sabha, Naidu explained that airfare was in-



fluenced by a variety of factors, including market demand, that were beyond the airlines merely setting their own prices. "We must ensure that the airlines are not under so much pressure that

they cannot operate. So a balanced approach is needed," he said. The minister emphasised the importance of a regulatory environment that prevented exploitation while ensuring that the airlines remained financially viable.

He assured the Lower House that making airfare affordable was a top priority for the government. "One of my top priorities is to make airfare affordable for the common man," he said, drawing attention to the significant shift in India's civil aviation sector since 2014.

He contrasted the situation

before and after 2014, saying, "Until 2014, civil aviation was like 'civilised aviation' but after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is considered 'civilian aviation', which reflects our commitment."

In response to the issue of rising airfare, the minister announced plans to establish an online grievance redress mechanism.

"We are considering setting up an online mechanism to handle grievances, with a dedicated team, to ensure passengers are not exploited by unnecessary airfare hikes," he said.

Trent Q1 net profit more than doubles to Rs 393 crore

NEWDELHI: Fashion major Trent Ltd on Friday reported a 126 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 392.6 crore for the April-June quarter of the current financial year, from Rs 173.48 crore in the same quarter of the previous financial year.

The revenue from operations for the Tata Group company came in at Rs 4,104.4 crore, up 56 per cent from Rs 2,628.37 crore in the same quarter last year, the company said in a regulatory filing.



The company's EBIDTA margin rose to 14.91 per cent during the quarter compared to 13.93 per cent in the year-ago period.

Noel Tata, Chairman, Trent Limited is upbeat about the

company's outlook.

"The market opportunity associated with building brands and a pure play direct-to-customer business like ours is immense," he remarked.

"The overall market sentiment remains subdued with increased competitive intensity. On our part, we continue to witness encouraging traction for our lifestyle offerings across brands, concepts, categories and channels. Focus on delivering consistent and improved value propositions to keep us

relevant for our customers," he added.

Trent opened 25 new stores during the first quarter. As part of the Tata group, Trent's flagship concept, Westside offers branded fashion apparel, footwear and accessories for women, men and children, along with a range of home furnishings & decor.

With a presence in 178 cities, the company's business has spread across 228 Westside stores, 559 Zudio and 36 stores across other lifestyle concepts.

Risk Management and Pharmaceutical Companies in India



DR. ANIL KUMAR ANGRISH
WAGH SAURABH RAJENDRA

Pharmaceutical companies are prone to risks like companies operating in any other sector. To deal with these risks, pharma companies put in place their risk mitigation strategies. Pharmaceutical sector is highly regulated at each stage of value chain. Further, pharmaceutical companies operate in different geographies, each having its own regulatory landscape, continuously evolving, changing, and undergoing increased scrutiny from the regulators. Any non-compliance with regulations or scrutiny processes can dilute the financial position or jeopardize that company's reputation. Top 20 pharmaceutical companies reported compliance with cGMP regulation. In June 2024, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) revealed that the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) had conducted risk-based inspections of more than 400 pharmaceutical manufacturing units over the past year and a half. Further, he said that he was not very happy to say that more than 36% of them had to be closed because these MSMEs cannot meet the expectations of the regulators.

Top pharmaceutical companies reported about integration of 'Quality by Design (QbD)' to build quality into all processes and use of quality tools to minimize process risks. Other regulatory compliance risk mitigation measures include 'building a robust quality culture', 'robust compliance management sys-

tem', 'independent assessments and audits', 'product life cycle management and timely recalls', 'engaging consulting firms to establish, train and constantly monitor Quality Culture Excellence', to name a few.

To deal with credit risks, pharma companies ensure 'credit approvals', 'establish a credit policy', 'establish credit limits', 'monitor the creditworthiness of counterparty', and 'expected credit loss model' for assessing the impairment loss. To deal with liquidity risk, these companies have 'prudent liquidity risk management', 'monitoring of rolling forecasts of the company's liquidity position and cash and cash equivalents', 'cash flow forecasting models', and development of a 'robust cash management system'. To deal with 'foreign exchange risk', pharma companies opt for foreign exchange forward contracts, Option contracts, or Currency swap contracts. To mitigate 'interest rate risk', pharma companies opt for interest rate swaps, diversification of portfolio and review the interest rate gap statement and the mix of floating and fixed rate assets and liabilities.

To mitigate cyber-security risk, top pharmaceutical companies in India have implemented perimeter security, anti-virus, patch management, firewalls, encryption and cyber training. In certain companies, their internal team is regularly performing Vulnerability Assessment and Penetration Testing (VAPT), e.g., Divi's Labs and Torrent Pharma reported about their team. Further, this is also reviewed by external consultants. Pharmaceutical companies also establish a robust Information Security Management System Framework, e.g., Lupin reported that their system is ISO/IEC 27001:2013 certified.

Pricing and Competition Risk

remains a concern for pharmaceutical companies. Pharmaceutical product pricing for existing portfolios and new launches is subject to price controls as prices for 928 formulations have been fixed by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) in India till date. Adverse pricing regulations of essential pharma products may adversely impact pharmaceutical companies' revenue flow and earnings. Some top Indian pharmaceutical companies get significant revenue from the US and Europe market, e.g., selling specialty products in the USA and Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region exposed Lupin to downward pricing risks due to government efforts to reduce prescription drug prices. In Integrated Annual Report 2023-24, Lupin highlighted that the pharmaceutical market in EMEA with an estimated value of US \$363 Bn, accounts for 25 per cent of the global market, and Lupin's sales in the EMEA region constitute 10 per cent of the company's global sales. To mitigate Pricing & Competition Risk, pharma companies focus on establishing a robust and diversified product portfolio, strengthen in-licensing and out-licensing of products, cost reduction, efficiency improvement, expansion of volumes of existing products and launch of new products. Pharmaceutical companies also resort to launch team of innovative, differentiated, and value-accretive products for which better pricing can be secured. This risk has been cited by 13 out of 20 top pharmaceutical companies as critical threats to their business viability and expansion prospects.

Supply Chain Risk in pharmaceutical sector is dual-fold risk that involves securing the supply of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and critical materials for products and



ensuring a consistent supply of final products to domestic as well as global customers. For FY2022-23, 16 out of 20 leading pharmaceutical companies reported supply chain disruptions as a paramount risk impacting their operations worldwide. Companies like Zydus Lifesciences, Sun Pharma, Aurobindo Pharma are encouraging local sourcing which in turn improves supply chain resilience, limits various risks, including currency risk and reduces supply timelines. Cipla has 360-degree vendor reviews. Mankind Pharma has reported about inbound and outbound automation of warehouses using scanning technology, implementation of Vendor-Managed Inventory (VMI) systems, automation in product expiry management at points of sale and the adoption of digital demand planning and forecasting tools. Lupin has focused on forward and backward integration to reduce dependence on distributors and API suppliers, and 30% of its API requirements are fulfilled through its own API manufacturing sites.

Pharmaceutical companies are susceptible to many legal challenges such as breach of contract disputes, product recalls, product liability claims, regulatory investigations, Para IV litigations, among others. To mitigate these risks, lead-

ing pharma companies conduct patent searches, monitor patent expiry dates, and assess validity and enforceability. Mankind Pharma has reported about conducting comprehensive due diligence prior to entering into any agreements to deal with contract related risks. Zydus Lifesciences has a 'Global Product Liability Insurance' as a safeguard against potential claims regarding the quality of products.

Pharmaceutical Product Development Lifecycle is characterized by risks such as costly upfront investment in R&D, potential patent litigation, clinical trial delays, delays in regulatory reviews and approvals, etc. To mitigate R&D risks, pharmaceutical companies put in place robust project management to identify schedule slippages and prioritize timely de-risking interventions. A targeted approach is being adopted in specialized fields, as exemplified by Lupin's concentrated efforts in the domain of inhalation and injectable solutions. Lupin implemented Integrated Business Planning in FY23 to identify the product portfolio well in time, and to work towards 'First to Launch' / 'First to File' alongwith higher Return on Investment (ROI). Torrent Pharma seeks suitable alliances with partners at appropriate stages to share the risks and rewards of the project, while continuing to develop NCEs

for India.

Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) is taken into account by stakeholders while evaluating companies. Pharmaceutical companies are increasing use of renewable energy, improving processing of solid waste to avoid incineration/landfill disposal, opting for rainwater harvesting and water recycling, following principle of the RT (reduce, reuse, recover, recycle, and rethink) for managing natural resources, etc. Certain pharmaceutical companies have designed a multi-pronged strategy, e.g. Torrent Pharma has designed the strategy with four core pillars namely 'Responsible Consumption', 'Responsible Practices', 'Responsible Communication', and 'Responsible Supply Chain'.

9 out of 20 top leading pharma companies have identified Quality Risk as a major risk that entails failure to comply with Good Laboratory Practices (GLP), cGMP etc. Risk Mitigation strategy includes adherence to global cGMP guidelines, quality standards, and SOPs, robust Quality Management Systems, Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA), integration of Quality by Design (QbD) to build quality into all processes and use quality tools to minimize process risks, Quality Audit, among others. Piramal Pharma highlighted that the company is moving from 'quality for compliance' to 'quality as a culture', and the company has a dedicated team of Corporate Quality Assurance Group.

Commodity Risk has also been mentioned as a significant risk by 6 out of 20 companies as this risk arises from the company's purchases and sales of APIs, including raw material components for such APIs. Effective risk management strategy can safeguard a pharmaceutical company against the

volatility of commodity prices, which has been exacerbated by factors such as supply chain disruptions as happened during Covid, inflation, geopolitical tensions. To mitigate this risk, pharmaceutical companies develop robust sourcing policies, streamline their product portfolios, and renegotiate procurement contracts to secure more favourable terms.

One-fifth of top 20 leading companies have acknowledged Manufacturing Risk that can significantly affect their operational capabilities, e.g., Alkem Laboratories mentioned it a major risk as mostly domestic production is done at their Sikkim facility; any disruption in production or supply chain due to natural or manmade causes may directly affect earnings. To mitigate this risk, Alkem is looking to set up alternative in-house manufacturing facilities and forge contract manufacturing partnerships. Piramal Pharma assesses the quality of current preventive maintenance and generates a five-year plan for maintenance/replacement, with appropriate prioritization that is based on risk/impact.

People Risk or Talent Management is not merely about risk avoidance; it is about creating an environment where talent thrives, propelling the business forward in a highly competitive and regulated industry. 30% firms among top 20 leading firms reported it as a significant factor. Pharmaceutical Companies initiate targeted recruitment and retention for strategic businesses, geographies, and functions. Undertaking employee surveys, performing engagement and team building initiatives, evaluation of individual performance through Performance Management System (PMS), strategic tie-ups with reputed institutions for enabling company to attract

skilled talent, Leadership Development Programmes, Rewards and Recognition are key components of mitigation strategy for this risk.

25% of the leading 20 pharmaceutical companies reported Pharmacovigilance (PV) Risk as a major risk that includes adverse drug reactions (ADRs), unexpected side effects, drug interactions and medication errors. Leading pharmaceutical companies employ centralized PV processes, global PV programme, ensure adherence to the International Council for Harmonization of Technical Requirements of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) guidelines on PV, and maintain dedicated portals for reporting adverse events.

Finally, Ethical Conduct has been mentioned by leading pharma companies as a key risk for the industry. Ethical Issues include employee behavior, bribery, corruption, and fair dealings with all stakeholders. Certain pharmaceutical companies comprehensively define layers of preventive and detective controls to ensure compliance with laid down processes and applicable regulations, harness risk analytics to automate and identify areas of non-compliance, fraud and business waste, conduct annual e-training that embeds the Code of Conduct, among other initiatives.

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RBI hikes limit for tax payments via UPI from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh

RBI is also making a provision for the introduction of 'Delegated Payments' through UPI which will enable a secondary user to make payments using UPI by making use of the bank account of the primary user

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to enhance the limit for tax payments through Unified Payments Interface (UPI) from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh per transaction, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das announced on Thursday.

"UPI has become the most preferred mode of payment, due to its seamless features. Currently, the transaction limit for UPI is capped at Rs 1 lakh. Based on the various use cases, RBI has periodically reviewed and enhanced the limits for a few categories like capital



markets, IPO subscriptions, loan collections, insurance, medical and educational services, etc.," Das said.

"As direct and indirect tax payments are common, regular and high value, it has been decided to enhance the limit for tax payments through UPI from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh per transaction. Necessary instructions will be issued separately," he added.

RBI is also making a provi-

"It is proposed to introduce 'Delegated Payments' in UPI. Delegated Payments would allow an individual (primary user) to set a UPI transaction limit for another individual (secondary user) on the primary user's bank account. This product is expected to add to the reach and usage of digital payments across the country. Detailed instructions will be issued shortly," he added.

UPI has been a key driver in India's digital payment ecosystem, experiencing a 10-fold increase in transaction volume over the past four years, according to the RBI report on Currency and Finance 2023-24. The volume of UPI transactions skyrocketed from 12.5 billion in 2019-20 to 131 billion in 2023-24, now accounting for 80 per cent of all digital payment volumes in the country.

Indian economy likely to grow at 7-7.2 per cent in FY25, says Deloitte



NEW DELHI: India's economy is expected to grow at 7-7.2 per cent in the current fiscal year driven by robust economic fundamentals and continuity in domestic policy reforms, Deloitte India said on Monday.

The August update of Deloitte's India Economic Outlook said several initiatives in the Union Budget 2024-25 toward improving agriculture productivity, creating jobs for the youth, and in manufacturing and addressing the challenge of access to finance for micro, small, and medium enterprises, would help improve supply-side demand, curb inflation, and prop up consumer spending, especially in rural areas.

Deloitte India Economist Rumki Majumdar said, India would witness robust growth in the second half after a period of uncertainty in the first six months of the year.

Price, financial stability are at the core of RBI monetary policy: ASSOCHAM

NEW DELHI: Decision of the RBI-Monetary Policy Committee to keep the benchmark REPO rate unchanged at 6.50 per cent has come about in the wake of robust GDP prospects of 7.2 per cent in FY25 providing an elbow room to the central bank to continue with its focus on moderating inflation for a resilient and sustained economic growth, ASSOCHAM said.

"The message in the RBI monetary policy is to keep price stability at the top of its priority list with an objective of a sustained economic growth. We see convergence in these two objectives even as there is an expectation of change in stance towards 'accommodation' in the next one or two policy reviews," ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood said.

He shared RBI's optimism on retaining the GDP growth projections at 7.2 per cent for the current fiscal and assessment that food inflation should moderate with improved sowing of Kharif crops.

Sood further said, "The RBI policy statement reflects resilience of the Indian economy in



the face of multitude of global headwinds including volatile financial markets, slowdown in major economies and geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. A nimble policy response by RBI and the government have provided strength to the Indian economy". He said moderation of inflation and financial stability are the twin tracks which are welcome features of the monetary policy review.

The chamber welcomed several other measures announced by the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. Enhancing the UPI tax payment limit from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh is a step forward in the direction of easy tax administration while the proposal for 'delegated UPI payment' would prove to be useful for senior citizens.

Top Payment Companies Eye RBI's E-Rupee Pilot, Including Googlepay And Amazonpay

NEWDELHI: Five prominent payment companies, including GooglePay, Walmart-backed PhonePe, and AmazonPay, have applied to participate in the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) digital currency pilot program, according to sources close to the matter.

The initiative aims to facilitate transactions using the e-rupee, India's digital alternative to physical currency, reported ET.

The RBI launched the e-rupee pilot in December 2022, initially limiting participation to banks. However, in April, the central bank expanded eligibility to include payment firms, subject to RBI approval. Indian fintech companies Cred and Mobikwik have also submitted applications to join the pilot.

These payment firms are collaborating closely with the RBI and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the country's domestic payments authority. Sources indicate that access to e-rupee transactions through these platforms could be rolled out within the next three to four months.

The move comes as the e-rupee faces challenges in gaining widespread adoption, mirror-

Minimum account balance rules not applicable to PM Jan Dhan & saving accounts: Nirmala Sitharaman



NEW DELHI: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said that minimum account balance rules do not apply to PM Jan Dhan and basic saving accounts.

"Minimum account balance rule does not apply to PM Jan Dhan accounts and basic savings accounts. It applies only to those bank accounts where customers are required to maintain a certain minimum balance in their accounts," the Finance Minister said in response to a question

in Rajya Sabha on the penalty of Rs 8,500 crore collected by public sector banks in the last five years for non-maintenance of minimum balance in bank accounts by customers.

The government banks that charged fines for not maintaining minimum balance include Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, Punjab and Sind Bank, Union Bank of India Bank, UCO Bank, Indian Bank, Canara Bank, Bank of Maharashtra and Central Bank of India.

Credit card spendings via UPI platform touch new high

Minister of State (MoS) for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary had told the Lok Sabha last month that public sector banks have collected a fine of Rs 2,331 crore in FY24 for not maintaining minimum balance. "This amount was 25 per cent more than the amount from last year," the MoS said.

In the financial year 2023-24, a penalty of Rs 633 crore was collected by Punjab National Bank, Rs 386 crore by Bank of Baroda and Rs 369 crore by Indian Bank for non-maintenance of minimum balance. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (Jan Dhan or PM-JDY), the Union government's financial inclusion plan, envisages at least one basic banking account per household, improved financial literacy, and access to credit, insurance, and pension facilities.

Launched in 2014, PMJDY accounts are now about 23 per cent of India's total savings accounts by number.



MUMBAI: The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) platform, a flagship of the Indian Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) which has gone global, has added another feather to its cap.

According to Dilip Asbe, Managing Director and CEO of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), credit card spendings via UPI has touched Rs 10,000 crore a month.

The NPCI CEO also informed that credit lines on UPI account has reached about Rs 100-Rs 200 crore, as the remainder comes from the RuPay credit card on UPI facility.

According to him, ICICI Bank is one of the leading banks offering credit on UPI, with other five to six lenders live on the platform.

NPCI launched "credit line on UPI" last year, offering low-ticket, high-volume retail loans to people and businesses.

Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Indian Bank, Punjab National Bank (PNB), and State Bank of India (SBI) are live with this facility.

Among the digital platforms, BHIM, Google Pay, Paytm, PayZapp, Navi, and Tata Neu are live on this product offering.

RuPay Credit Cards on UPI provide a seamless, digitally enabled credit card lifecycle experience for the customers. Currently, as many as 16 banks are facilitating this product.

Meanwhile, the UPI-based transactions touched Rs 20.64 lakh crore in July against Rs 20.07 lakh crore in the previous month - a huge 35 per cent surge (year-on-year). The total UPI transaction count went up almost 4 per cent (month-on-month) to 14.44 billion in July from 13.89 billion in the previous month.

As the UPI success story is being adopted by several countries, the average daily transaction volume stood at 466 million last month, compared with 463 million in June.

No need to be panic, Indian Stock Market remain strong & resilient

SATISH SINGH

On August 5, 2024, the fear of recession in US caused panic in stock markets around the world. The biggest decline of 12.40 percent was recorded in Japan's Nikkei, the leading share market of Asia, while Korea's Kospi recorded a decline of 8.77 percent.

The US stock market Nasdaq recorded the biggest decline of 4.95 percent, while in the Europe, Germany's stock market, Dax recorded the biggest decline of 2.34 percent. At the same time, the Sensex in the Indian stock market closed at 78,759 with a decline of 2,222 points, 2.74 percent, while the Nifty recorded a decline of 662 points, 2.68 percent and closed at 24,055.

In the Indian stock market, metal, government bank stocks particularly State Bank of India and media stocks fell by more than 4 percent, while auto, IT, and oil and gas stocks fell by more than 3 percent. Investors who invested in Tata Motors, Adani Port, Tata Steel and Power Grid stocks suffered the biggest losses.

There are many reasons for the panic in the stock market, but the most important reason among them is the fear of recession in US. The likelihood of war between Iran and Israel, geopolitical crises such as the war between Russia and Ukraine continuing for a long time, constant uncertainty in the global market, etc. also caused the world's big investors to start selling, which caused panic in the



stock markets of many countries of the world.

Except India, many developed countries of the world are struggling with the problem of inflation since the Corona pandemic and some countries are in a state of recession, while some countries are fearing recession. US is also one of them among such countries.

The most important reason for the biggest decline in Japan's Nikkei stock market is the Bank of Japan raising the interest rate from 0.1 percent to 0.25 percent, which is the highest level in 15 years. At the same time, the valuation of shares in the mid and small-cap segment in the Indian stock market is very high. Therefore, a fall in this segment clearly means that a phase of correction is going on in this segment. Also, the rupee is weak.

This is the second biggest fall in the Indian stock market in 2024. Earlier on June 4, the Sensex had fallen by 5.74 percent. Investors have suffered a loss of Rs.16.00 lakh crore due to selling in the stock market, due to which the overall market cap of the companies listed

on the Sensex came down to Rs.441 lakh crore on August 5.

Since, in the past months, there has been a huge reduction in the number of foreign investors and the amount of investment in the Indian stock market. Therefore, the prospect of recession in US or the continuation of the slowdown in the world or the apprehension of downturn in some countries will not have much impact on the Indian stock market.

The position of the stock market in India continues to remain strong on the strength of domestic investors. In 2024, domestic investors have invested more than Rs.2.28 lakh crore in the stock market. Not only this, domestic investors have played an important role in taking the Sensex from 75,000 to 80,000. Companies like Reliance, Mahindra & Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India and HDFC Bank have also played an important role in taking the Sensex from 70,000 to 80,000.

Talking about sectors, banking, BSE Power, BSE Realty, Auto, Telecom etc. have helped in maintaining the boom in the shares. Apart

from Sensex, Nifty 50 is also continuously showing an upward trend. In the coming days, it may touch the level of 26,000 to 27,000 and by the end of this year, it may close at the level of 30,000.

Hon'ble Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman has again become the Finance Minister. Therefore, it is expected that the government will continue its old policy towards the banking and economic sector, as the earlier policies of the government have helped in strengthening the Indian economy and accelerating the pace of development.

India is continuously moving forward on the development front. The GDP growth rate in the fourth quarter of the financial year 2023-2024 was 7.8, while it was 6.1 percent in the same quarter last year. At the same time, the GDP growth rate in the financial year 2023-24 was 8.2 percent, which is 1.2 percent more than the estimate of the Reserve Bank of India.

According to the Ministry of Statistics, the growth rate remained high in the period under review due to strong performance in the manufacturing and mining sectors. The manufacturing sector has grown by 9.9 percent, which was minus 2.2 percent in the financial year 2022-23. Similarly, the mining sector grew at a rate of 7.1 percent during the financial year 2023-24, which was 1.9 percent in the financial year 2022-23.

According to the National Statistical Office, retail inflation in June rose by 0.33 percent to 5.08 percent as compared to May, while in May it was 4.75 percent, which was

the lowest level in 12 months. There was some reduction in retail inflation in the month of April, but it was slightly higher than May at 4.83 percent. Retail inflation was 4.81 percent in June 2023, while it was 4.44 percent in July 2023. The central bank is very sensitive about inflation and it wants to keep the economy strong by maintaining a balance between inflation and growth rate.

Here, despite the lending interest rate remaining at a high level for the last few months, loan disbursement is increasing, because the banking sector remains strong, which is giving strength to development. In such an environment, it is natural for Sensex and Nifty to remain bullish. In the short term, the Indian stock market has plunged due to concerns arising from global economic activities, but there is little chance of such a situation being repeated.

Nevertheless, big investors who buy and sell shares every day need to keep a close eye on the domestic and foreign markets and global movements. The stock market is a kind of casino and those who always dream of becoming rich with the help of this platform need to be cautious. Otherwise, the proverb "Saavdhani Hati, Durghatna Ghati" can come true at any time, but those investors who invest only in the shares of premium companies and always remain satisfied with low profit, need not worry at all.

Satish Singh, Ahmedabad based Senior Columnist. Views are Personal

DFS Secretary calls on Fintechs to Aid in Developing Credit Assessment Model for MSMEs

NEW DELHI: Vivek Joshi, Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS), has called upon fintech companies to assist public sector banks (PSBs) in creating a new credit assessment model for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) based on their digital footprints.

Speaking at a fintech conference organised by the industry body FICCI, Joshi emphasised the need for innovative approaches to credit evaluation that go beyond traditional reliance on balance sheets and returns.

In the FY25 Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had urged PSBs to lead in developing this novel credit assessment model.

The proposed model would focus on the digital activities of MSMEs, especially micro and nano enterprises, rather than conventional asset or turnover



criteria.

Sitharaman highlighted that this approach would be a significant improvement, particularly for MSMEs lacking a formal accounting system.

Joshi underscored the pivotal role fintech companies can play in enhancing banks' digital lending capabilities. "I urge fintechs to collaborate with banks in creating and implementing this credit assessment model," he said.

He pointed out that fintechs have transformed the financial sector with innovative solutions and should work closely with banks to understand and address their specific chal-

lenges. Addressing the issue of collaboration, Joshi noted that fintechs often develop solutions independently before approaching banks, which can lead to a mismatch in addressing the banking system's challenges.

"Since fintechs are not working closely with banks, they may have limited information about the challenges the banking system faces," he stated. He further explained, "Therefore, we should work towards having fintechs address problems identified by banks. Many banks have started empanelling startups for this purpose, and it would be highly beneficial to provide them with problems and seek tailored solutions."

Joshi also highlighted the importance of balancing innovation with regulatory compliance.

Armed robbers loot Rs 21 lakh from PNB Bank in Bihar

PATNA: Seven unidentified armed robbers looted Rs 21 lakh from a Punjab National Bank (PNB) branch in Patna's outskirts village on Monday.

The police said that the robbers arrived on bikes in Jamui Koraiya village, under the jurisdiction of Dulhnbazar police station in the district and committed the crime. In a daring daylight robbery, armed criminals entered a branch of Punjab National Bank, taking employees and customers hostage at gunpoint. They looted approximately Rs 21 lakh. The robbery took place just a few hours after the bank opened on Monday.

The district police are currently investigating the incident. The criminals also took away the Digital Video Recorder (DVR) of the bank's CCTV system, which



will likely hinder the investigation. Patna West City SP Abhinav Dhiman said that about Rs 21 lakh was looted from the PNB branch, adding that authorities are working diligently to track down the perpetrators and recover the looted money.

He said that the incident has prompted an extensive investigation, with authorities scanning CCTV footage from nearby shops and utilising a dog squad team to track down the perpetrators. "The bank manager has said that Rs 21 lakh were looted. Dur-

ing the robbery, the criminals also took away the DVR of the CCTV installed in the bank. We are scanning the CCTV cameras in the adjoining shops to find some clues about the robbers. The dog squad team has been informed, and further action is ongoing," Patna West City SP Abhinav Dhiman said.

In recent months, there has been a surge in crime incidents in Bihar and the opposition leaders are blaming the Nitish Kumar government for the failure of law and order in the state.

However, the state government claims that preventive measures are being taken to curb these incidents. Despite these claims, the rising crime rate remains a significant concern for the residents and authorities of Bihar.

INTERNATIONAL

Kamala Harris declines Trump's offer to shift presidential debate

WASHINGTON: Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, has declined Donald Trump's suggestion to move the presidential debate to Fox News, media reports said.

Trump, 78, and President Joe Biden had agreed in May to two presidential debates. The first which was with CNN took place in June while a second one slated for September 10 was planned to be hosted by ABC News. But Biden dropped out in the previous month and therefore, Vice-President Harris is the declared presidential candidate for 2024 in the Democratic Party. The assessment was published before Saturday, when Trump said he had agreed to an offer by Fox News to debate Harris on September 4, in what would be a departure from the planned format if reported



by CBS News.

Trump said, "I have decided with Fox News to debate Kamala Harris on Wednesday, September 4. The previous debate that was supposed to be conducted with sleepy Joe Biden on the ABC channel is no longer possible. Bianchi is no longer a participant in a legal battle against the ABC Net-



work and George Slopodopoulos, thus there is a conflict of interest." Consequently, Harris countered using platform X declined Trump's debate invitation on Fox News. "It's interesting how 'any time, any place' becomes 'one specific time, one specific safe space'. I'll be there on September 10, like he agreed to. I hope to see

him there," Harris said. The Harris campaign also offered an affirmation of their stand to adhere to the ABC News debate plan. They claimed that Trump was 'running scared' and required Fox News' help to avoid the scheduled debate with ABC News. "He needs to stop playing games and show up to the debate he already committed to on Sept. 10," the report quoted Michael Tyler, the Harris campaign communication director, as saying.

"The Vice President will be there one way or the other to take the opportunity to speak to a prime-time national audience," Tyler said, adding that the campaign is open to discussing further debates but only after the one both campaigns have already agreed to takes place.

Kamala Harris picks Governor Tim Walz as her running mate



WASHINGTON: US Vice-President Kamala Harris has picked Tim Walz, the Democratic Governor of Minnesota, as her running mate, according to multiple media reports.

Walz, 60 is a former schoolteacher, a military veteran, a member of the House of Representatives, two-term Governor and, in recent days, the man who coined the word "weird" to describe the Re-

publican nominee for President, former President Donald Trump and his running mate Senator JD Vance and their views that were quickly adopted by the Harris campaign and her allies.

Walz will make his first appearance along with Harris, who secured on Monday night, the official nomination of the Democratic party for President, at an election rally in Philadelphia later on Tuesday and then go with her on a tour of battleground states.

We must unite to prevent Afghanistan from again becoming 'terrorism hotbed': UN official

UNITED NATIONS: UN Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov has called on the Security Council members to unite to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a "hotbed of terrorism".

"We must unite to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a hotbed of terrorism," Voronkov said on Thursday while warning about the danger of Islamic State group affiliate in that country launching attacks abroad.

He made the remarks while briefing the Security Council on Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' report on the threat from Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL).

Voronkov said that the terrorist group's Central Asian affiliate, ISIL-Khorasan, "has improved its financial and logistical capabilities in the past six months".

ISIL, which is also known as Da'esh from its Arabic acronym and as ISIS, is extending its reach by "tapping into Afghan and Central Asian diasporas for support", he said.

"The activity of Da'esh and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan remains a significant concern. We must unite to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a hotbed of terrorism," he added.

Efforts by neighbouring countries "to counter and prevent the spread of the threat emanating from Afghanistan is very important", he said.

Da'esh was emerging as a greater threat in Africa where two of its affiliates have expanded and consolidated their areas of operations, Voronkov said.

"Should these groups extend their influence in northern littoral States, a vast territory stretching from Mali to northern Nigeria could fall under their effective control," he said.

Sierra Leone's Permanent



Representative Michael Imran Kanu, who presided over the meeting, said, "We share the concern of the Secretary-General (that) the risk that the continued expansion of terrorist groups will result in an expanding area of instability across West Africa."

He said that it was already in North West Nigeria.

Despite facing "leadership attrition and financial setbacks, Daesh and its affiliates have retained their capacity to conduct terrorist attacks and project threat beyond the areas of operation", he said.

Natalia Gherman, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) said that a "one UN approach" of all the member nations and UN agencies and regional and sub-regional groups working together "is crucial in our common endeavours to effectively combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations".

While China has been providing an umbrella from sanctions for some Pakistan-based terrorists like Lashkar-e-Tayyiba leader Sajid Mir, its Permanent Representative Geng Shuang spoke out at the meeting against double standards.

He said, "All countries should uphold the concept of common security, abandon ideological bias, eradicate double standards or selectivity in counterterrorism efforts, and effectively respect and protect the security of each and every country."

Love & peace, not revenge, will rebuild our country: Khaleda Zia



DHAKA: A day after her release from house arrest, Bangladesh's former prime minister and BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia on Wednesday thanked the people of the country for their "struggle to make possible the impossible" and said it is not "anger" or "revenge" but "love and peace" which will rebuild the nation.

In her first public speech since 2018, delivered via video link at the BNP rally in Nayapalton, 79-year-old Zia appealed for calm. She thanked people as they fought and prayed for her to be released from imprisonment, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

"I have been released now. I want to thank the brave people who were in a do-or-die struggle to make possible the impossible." "Youths are our future... No destruction, no anger and no revenge, we need love and peace to rebuild our country," she said. Zia was sentenced to 17 years in prison for graft in 2018.

Simla agreement to be noted in settling Kashmir dispute: UN

UNITED NATIONS: The Simla Agreement of 1972 is also to be noted while finding a final settlement to the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Charter, according to Farhan Haq, the deputy spokesperson for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

He said, "Our position on Kashmir remains unchanged: That the final settlement of the dispute concerning Jammu and Kashmir is to be reached by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and full respect for human rights." "The Secretary-General also recalls the 1972 agreement on bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, also known as the Simla Agreement," he added. The pact was reached



in Shimla between Indira Gandhi, then the prime Minister of India, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's president at that time, in the aftermath of the Bangladesh War of Independence.

The agreement between the two countries stipulated that

disputes between the neighbours, including over Kashmir, were bilateral issues to be resolved without the involvement of third parties. Haq was replying to a question at the daily UN briefing from a Palestinian journalist who alleged that the UN was silent

on the "atrocities committed for the past five years" since Article 370 of India's Constitution that gave Kashmir special status was abrogated on August 5, 2019.

UN's position "is governed by the Charter of the United Nations and applicable Security Council resolutions", Haq said.

Security Council Resolution 47 adopted on April 21, 1948, requires the Pakistani government "to secure the withdrawal from the State of Jammu and Kashmir of tribesmen and Pakistani nationals not normally resident therein who have entered the State for the purpose of fighting, and to prevent any intrusion into the State of such elements and any furnishing of material aid to those fighting in the State".

Holding 'around-the-clock' talks to prevent war in Middle east says President Biden

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has held crisis talks on a potential Iranian counterattack on Israel as his administration said it was working around the clock

to avoid all-out war in the Middle East. Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken engaged in frantic diplomacy to try to ease tensions sparked by a suspected Israeli attack that killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, KLAX-TV reported. "We are engaged in intense diplomacy, pretty much around the clock, with a very simple message -- all parties must refrain from escalation," Blinken said after joining other top officials in a White House meeting.

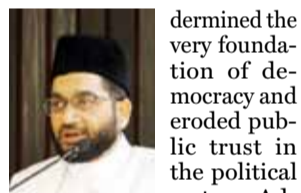


Jamaat-e-Islami Hind appeals for peace and an end to violence in B'desh

KAVITA SHARMA New Delhi

The President of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH), Syed Sadatullah Husaini has expressed concern over the ongoing situation in Bangladesh and its far-reaching consequences for the region. The current unrest in Bangladesh is a direct result of the Shaikh Hasina government's dictatorial and draconian approach to governance. The elections in Bangladesh in January 2024 were marred by widespread allegations of unfair practices, leading to the entire opposition boycotting the electoral process. This un-

dermined the very foundation of democracy and eroded public trust in the political system. Additionally, the previous government's efforts to silence dissenting voices through vendetta politics were deeply troubling, with prominent opposition leaders being unjustly imprisoned which stifled the democratic discourse and in-



creased political tensions. The JIH President further stated, "The response of the Shaikh Hasina regime towards protesting students was excessively violent and repressive, akin to the measures used in warfare. Jamaat-e-Islami Hind calls upon the officials at the helm of affairs of Bangladesh to take immediate and decisive action to restore peace and form and interim Government immediately which have the trust of people.

Crucial UN talks to evolve mechanism on genetic resources

MONTREAL: Marking a potentially pivotal moment, more than 300 delegates will convene in Montreal, from August 12 to 16 to advance a 2022 global agreement to share fairly and equitably the multi-trillion dollar annual revenues and other benefits derived from uses of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources, including the DNA of plants, animals, and microorganisms.



The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Benefit-sharing from the Use of DSI on Genetic Resources, established by the 196 nations to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), will work through

options for operationalising the multilateral mechanism, including a global fund. The multilateral mechanism and the associated global fund were adopted at COP15 as part of the historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), the world's master plan guiding biodiversity actions through 2030 towards achieving the vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050.

ARMY'S RENEWED ROLE

Muhammad Yunus Becomes the Face of the Hybrid Regime in Dacca

GOPAL MISRA

With the swearing-in of Muhammad Yunus, a noted economist and Nobel laureate, as the Chief Adviser, the decks have been cleared for a non-political consensus government in Bangladesh. The nomenclature of the chief advisor instead of appointing Yunus as the prime minister has been used to avoid political controversy regarding the veteran economist.

It is not known when the fresh polls in the country will take place, but the interim government having the blessings of the army chief General Waker-uz-Zaman, might continue till the supporters of the erstwhile government were finally subdued. The army has adopted the strategies being adopted in Pakistan, where the elections took place only after destroying Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI). His supporters have also been deprived of the PTI's symbol to contest elections. It means, the agenda of the new regime in Dacca would be crushing all political opinions having secular or progressive agenda.

The final takeover of the Islamists under the Army's patronage has not taken place suddenly. Earlier, the deposed Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, was cautioned regarding the political ambitions of Zaman, but she ignored the advice. She elevated him, her close relative, on June 23 this year, who within 40 days of his elevation physically chased out his mentor using disparate political

elements, including Jihadists and students. In the presence of the air force and navy chiefs, he ensured her farewell from the coveted office.

Zaman and his colleagues had scripted a foolproof strategy for the unceremonious removal of an elected prime minister without firing a single bullet. It is also quite intriguing how the issue of the reservation quota in jobs, which was already resolved by the Hasina Government, could cause massive countrywide protests among students. The issue became alive recently, when the beneficiaries of the reservation moved the Supreme Court. The apex court, however, allowed only a six percent quota for the weaker sections and the descendants of the Mukti Bahini, the irregulars who had finally ousted the Pakistani army from the then East Pakistan.

There is hardly any criticism of the end of democracy in the West. Instead, Hasina's removal is being described as the end of a dictator. Zaman is also being praised for ensuring Hasina's escape to India in a helicopter without any physical harm.

It is stated that before forcing Hasina to resign, Zaman had held the meeting of the army commanders on August three. He told them that Hasina's removal was necessary to prevent further chaos in the country. He, however, cunningly camouflaged his role in preventing the civil police in diffusing the situation based on a false narrative and propaganda, and got Yunus agreeing to become the face of the military sponsored regime.

The Resignation: Zaman was exposed when he announced

the resignation of Hasina instead of the president of Bangladesh, Mohammad Shahabuddin. He, however, announced the dissolution of Parliament by conceding the demand of the agitating students.

Zaman-led the security establishment supported by Islamists have also been maligning Hasina by making selective leaks. Thus, before being finally evicted from the coveted office, she was maligned as a leader crushing her opponents as well as the agitating students opposed to the job reservation.

After her forceful undemocratic eviction, Zaman appears to have emerged as a political figure, who was holding meetings for restoring peace with the Islamists and supporters of the country's main Opposition, Bangladesh National Party.

A Prophetic Statement: A few weeks before her departure from Dacca, Hasina had been cautioning that a few foreign countries were keen to push her country towards political instability. These forces will be undoing the financial and political stability achieved during her 15-year rule.

Few can really believe that the student movement led by a 26-year old sociology student, Nahid Islam, could topple the government and even suggested Yunus as the new ruler. Yunus also agreed to the request.

These developments indicate a large conspiracy hatched by the army using a non-existent agenda of job reservation using the youths, thus finally scripting the epitaph of the Hasina regime.

A Warning for India: The exit of an elected government in



Bangladesh should caution India's political class. The perennial communal and reservation issues for political gains might erupt in large scale agitations across the country. The forces inimical to the country's democracy, her institutions might cause irreparable damages to the Indian state, its economy and political stability.

The mandarins in New Delhi, perhaps unaware of the threats to the Hasina Government and its implications for India, could not take appropriate steps to protect the only democratic regime in the country's neighborhood.

The lackluster statement of the External Affairs Minister, S.Jaishankar, in Parliament on the Bangladesh crisis has further exposed the poor management of the present rulers as well as their helplessness. The government should avoid boasting about India's foolproof foreign policy and the invincibility of her security establishment.

The Indian media too has exposed its poor understanding of the issues being faced by the country. In recent years, New Delhi has failed to protect its friendly regimes in Male, Sri Lanka, Nepal and now Bangladesh.

our neighborhood. They could not counter the influence of the Jamaat-e-Islami penetration in friendly countries like Bangladesh. The attacks on Hindus and Ahemedias and their places of worship were pre-planned.

The Conspirators: During the recent crisis in Bangladesh, the Indian establishment and its friendly media has further exposed the vulnerability of the country and her institutions. They were either indulging in unsubstantial facts or diverting the issues by focusing on the attacks on minorities i.e. Hindus. Also, its accusations against China, Pakistan and the US should have been supported by facts. Even they didn't care to give old references that how these three powers have been working against India since the sixties even before the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971.

Hasina and her family were in Europe, when her father, Mujibur Rahman and other members of the family were killed on August 15, 1975, 49 years ago, at their ancestral home in Dacca. The then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had promptly contacted Hasina and ensured her safe stay in New Delhi. On the other hand, Jaishankar was evasive in Parliament whether India would offer asylum to the deposed leader.

The Threats: Hasina, apart from facing the political enemies of her father, also has recently been facing threats from the ISI, CIA and the Chinese proxies. In recent years by supplying weapons to Bangladesh, the Chinese have gained much influence in the Bangladesh army. The dragon has also liber-

ally funded the radical Islamists as well as bribing senior government and military officers. It is also stated that if Hasina had not escaped, she too might have been assassinated or arrested facing treason charges like the Aung Saan Su Kyi of Myanmar.

During the past one decade or so, Beijing has dumped its dated weapons at throwaway prices to Bangladesh.

And now in lieu of this assistance, it was keen to obtain contracts for the downstream projects of the river Teesta, worth billions of USD. Since the contract was finally awarded to the Indian companies, China naturally became furious. For this Hasina had to be punished. It was indicated during Hasina's recent visit to China, where she was not accorded the protocol befitting a prime minister.

Amidst these developments, the Biden Administration too became unhappy with Dacca for denying the US a military base in Bangladesh.

It appears that history is repeating itself. During the sixties, the CIA, ISI and the Chinese had joined hands against India for supporting Naga and Mizo insurgencies. The CIA operatives at the American consulate in Dacca, then the provincial capital of East Pakistan, were activated for using the Christian missionaries to access the insurgents. The British secret police, MI-6, however, refused to join the conspiracy. The Chinese were providing weapons and training and the CIA was helping the insurgents in Europe with funds and media coverage. It was happening much before the US President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972.

The details about these anti-India conspirators have already been published in a book recently written by the erstwhile Chief Minister of Mizoram, Zoram Thanga, also a former insurgent.

The recent outbursts of the Biden Administration against the Hasina regime has renewed the colonial agenda for setting up a Crown Country in India's north-eastern region comprising the predominant Christian states of India, Nagaland and Mizoram. For this, the US needs a favorable government in Dacca.

It may be recalled that before their departure from India, the British wanted to separate the region from the mainland, but they could not implement their full agenda of fragmenting the country in 1947. They could partition India only by creating Pakistan.

Being the successor state of the British Empire in world politics, the US is now conniving with China, which has attained a sizable economic presence in the region with its technologies and capital for completing the unfinished British agenda.

There is hardly any serious study regarding the penetration of the forces perennial inimical to India. With the end of the Hasina regime in Bangladesh, the Dragon's agenda to encircle its southern neighbor, perhaps, has been finally achieved.

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

Hockey India announces cash prizes for Indian Men's Team

Historic Bronze medal victory at 2024 Paris Olympics, India defeated Spain 2-1 to retain their Olympic Bronze medal

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

8th August 2024: Hockey India is proud to announce a cash prize of INR 15 lakhs for each player of the Indian Men's Hockey Team and INR 7.5 lakhs for each member of the support staff in recognition of their outstanding achievement at the 2024 Paris Olympics. The team secured a historic Bronze medal, defeating Spain 2-1, marking their second consecutive Olympic medal, an achievement last accomplished 52 years ago.

The match, held at the Yves-du-Manoir Stadium here on Thursday, was especially significant as it also served as the farewell game for legendary Indian goalkeeper PR Sreejesh, who played his last international match. The



Indian team, led by Captain Harmanpreet Singh, delivered a stellar performance, with the skipper scoring two crucial goals in the 30th and 33rd minutes. Their victory not only secured the Bronze medal but

also solidified India's position as a dominant force in international hockey.

Hockey India President Dr Dilip Tirkey lauded the team's historic performance, stating, "This victory is a testament to

the hard work, determination, and resilience of our players and support staff. Winning back-to-back Olympic medals is an extraordinary achievement that reflects the resurgence of Indian hockey on

the world stage. On behalf of Hockey India, I congratulate the entire team and support staff for their exceptional performance and dedication. The cash prizes are a token of our appreciation for their relentless pursuit of excellence. I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to PR Sreejesh for his stellar career and invaluable contributions to Indian hockey. His legacy will inspire future generations."

Hockey India Secretary General Shri Bhola Nath Singh added, "The Indian Men's Hockey Team has once again made the nation proud with their remarkable achievement in Paris. The team's unity, skill, and perseverance have brought joy to millions of hockey fans across the country. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Captain Harmanpreet Singh, legendary PR Sreejesh, and the entire squad for their historic feat. Hockey India remains committed to supporting our athletes and fostering the growth of hockey in India."

Golden boy Neeraj Chopra wins silver for India

MAHIE JK

India's Golden Boy Neeraj Chopra wins silver medal at Paris Olympics 2024. The first Indian to win track and field medals at two Olympic Games. Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem grabs top position with a monstrous throw of 92.97 in second attempt gave a tough competition to India's Neeraj Chopra who threw 89.45 in his second attempt.

The Javelin throw turned out to be India versus Pakistan just like in cricket with Pakistan's Nadeem, grabbing first position in Javelin throw followed by India's Neeraj Chopra getting silver and Anderson Peters from Grenada getting bronze.

India is yet to win gold in these games and this is the fifth medal overall, Chopra has won many medals and has placed himself in the golden books of Indian Sports.

After winning silver medal Neeraj chopra said, it was probably not my day. 'Every day is not yours, losing and



winning is a part of game'. Either we win or lose. "It was Arshad's day,

Aaj Arshad ka din tha... "I gave my best but it was Arshad day it's time to improve the game now..." he added.

On Neeraj Chopra winning a silver medal his mother Saroj Devi said, 'We are very happy, for us silver is also equal to gold... he was injured, but still he played well, so we are happy with his performance',

She is also happy for

Nadeem performance who won gold. 'All the athletes are like her own children.' She also reveals that she will cook Neeraj's favourite food when he returns home. Her comment is winning millions of hearts on social media.

Neeraj became the first Indian to win back to back Olympic medal after independence. He is an inspiration to millions of Indians, the whole country is proud of him and is celebrating his victorious win.

Vicky Kaushal is thrilled for brother Sunny's performance in 'Phir Aayee Haseen Dilruba'



MUMBAI: Vicky Kaushal, who is basking in the glory of his latest film 'Bad Newzz', is going gaga over his brother Sunny Kaushal's performance in 'Phir Aayi Haseen Dilruba'.

The actor, who is known for his grounded nature and genuine support for his family, did not hold back from showering praises on his talented sibling. He took to Instagram and highlighted his work in Tapsee- and Vikrant-starrer 'Phir Aayee Haseen Dilruba', noting how his brother has delivered an exceptional performance.

Vicky made a joint appearance with Sunny at the film's premiere. Sharing their picture on his Instagram stories, he wrote: "You have truly surprised me with your ability to pull off such a twisted character. So tastefully done, I know how excited you were to take up this part and could see you having fun playing it through and through. So proud. Onwards and Upwards brother." The younger Kaushal has been steadily carving a niche for himself with versatile roles, earning both critical acclaim and a growing fanbase. While Sunny may have initially been in the shadow of his elder brother's towering success, he has now firmly established himself as a promising actor in his own right. Sunny Kaushal has his debut in 2016 with 'Sunshine Music Tours and Travels'. He later worked in films like 'Gold' and 'The Forgotten Army: Azaadi Ke Liye'.

Priyanka Chopra shares BTS of a rainy day from the sets of 'The Bluff'

MUMBAI: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas experienced a full spectrum of events on the sets of her upcoming movie 'The Bluff'.

On Thursday, the actress took to the Stories section of her Instagram, and shared a short video from the sets of the film which shows the drizzling. Priyanka says in the video: "It's a rainy day on 'The Bluff'. But, we don't stop. Rain rain, go away, we want to play."

The video shows huge blue screens with track marks mounted on the sets for VFX purposes. The actress geotagged the location of Gold Coast in Queensland.

Earlier, PC had shared several pictures from the sets of 'The Bluff' in which she was seen drenched in blood and bruises courtesy the realistic makeup and prosthetics. In one of the videos, PC asks her makeup artiste how she creates burnt hair, to which the latter responds by crushing breakfast cereals and sprin-



kling over her hair.

She wrote in the caption: "Bloody Fun times on #TheBluff Last week of filming! PS: fyi for the unversed, I'm on a film set and it's all make-up. The 1800s on pirate ships were violent times! Incredible to see how every department on a film crew creates make-believe into reality. #magicofthemovies."

The actress has wrapped up the filming for the movie and often shares the archival pictures and videos from the

film's sets.

Talking about 'The Bluff', the movie is a swashbuckler drama, co-written by Frank E. Flowers and Joe Ballarini with Flowers also directing. The film also stars Karl Urban, Ismael Cruz Cordova, Safia Oakley-Green and Vandanten Naidoo.

The film is set in the Caribbean islands during the 19th century and sees Priyanka in the role of a former pirate who must protect her family when her past catches up with her.

Anil Vij advises Wrestler Vinesh Phogat not to retire, win and lose is part of game

SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Former Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij advised wrestler Vinesh Phogat against retiring, stating she should not give up because sports always involve both victory and defeat. What she could not achieve now should be accomplished in the next Olympics, as the country has high expectations from her. Vij was replying to a questions asked by the media persons here.

Following Vinesh Phogat's announcement of retirement after being disqualified from the Paris Olympics, Vij advised her to continue her efforts. He recounted a childhood poem, "King Bruce and the Spider," which illustrates a king who, after repeated failures, sees a spider climbing a wall despite many attempts, suggesting Vinesh should also persist.

Former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda had



stated that if his position was stronger, he would have seated Vinesh in the Rajya Sabha. Commenting on this, Vij said, Hooda ji always makes promises and assurances that cannot be fulfilled. He had announced a reward of 6 crore rupees for winning a gold medal at the Olympics. Hooda should give that amount to Vinesh Phogat from his own share, but he will not do it. Bhupinder Singh Hooda makes promises he cannot fulfill.

Attacking opposition lead-

ers, Vij said it is unfortunate that some leaders born in the democracy of this country are talking about incidents similar to those in Bangladesh happening in India. "These are people who have no faith in the country's democracy. Defeated individuals who cannot achieve their goals democratically are making such statements," Vij said.

Leaders Who Incite and Stir Up Violence Will Never Succeed. Responding to such leaders, Vij said, "I want to inform

them that India's democracy is the largest and strongest democracy in the world. It has the capacity to defend itself. Leaders who are attempting to incite and provoke violence will never succeed. Every citizen of India is ready to sacrifice their lives to protect democracy, but no harm will come to our democracy."

Vij said, Nothing Can Undermine India's Democracy. Former Haryana Home Minister tweeted (now X) saying, "bhidraatantr ke kuchh neta bhaarat mein bhee bangala desh jaisee ghatana kee baat kar rahe hain. yah vah log hain jo lokatantr mein bilkul bhee vishvaas nahin karate hain. yah bhaarat ke lokatantr ko lekar aae hain, jo lokatantr ke poorvajon se chait kar dostee karane kee koshish kar rahe hain, lekin vah nahin jaanate ki bhaarat ka vishv ka sabase majaboot lok tantr isamen kuchh bhee nahin dikha sakata hai. >

Mallika Sherawat says 'feels great to be back home' after holidaying in Paris

MUMBAI: Indian actress Mallika Sherawat was missing Los Angeles as she returned home from her holiday in Paris.

Mallika took to Instagram, where she shared a video of herself opening her backyard door, and cuddling her pet dog, a Labrador Retriever.

"Feels great to be back home, Los Angeles I have missed you," she wrote as the caption.

The actress last month shared a video of herself enjoying herself in the ocean in a teeny-weeny bikini.

"I love playing with the ocean waves, the wild rhythm of the sea evokes a sense of boundless freedom," she had captioned the



post. She then shared a video montage of herself posing on a motorbike.

"I may not know how to ride a motorbike but I sure know how to pose with it," she had written.

Tagged as one of the most bold actresses in Hindi cinema in the 2000s, Mallika made her debut in films with a small role in the 2002 film "Jeena Sirf Merre Liye", where she was

credited as Reema Lamba.

Her performance in "Murder" starring Emraan Hashmi, which was released in 2004, popped eyeballs. She gained international acclaim with her work in movies such as 'Hiss' and 'Politics of Love'. She has also worked in films such as "Khwahish", "Bachke Rehna Re Baba", "Pyaar Ke Side Effects", "Aap Ka Surroor - The Real Love Story", "Welcome" and "Kis Kis Ki Kismat" among many others.

On the work front, Mallika was last seen in 'RK/RKay', a comedy-drama by Rajat Kapoor. The film also features Ranvir Shorey, Manu Rishi Chadha, and Kubbra Sait.



BSF Deputy Commandant Devender Pal Singh along with Nature Artist Harpreet Sandhu and BSF officers & Jawans depicting the tallest flag of India installed during the release of pictorial brochure and teaser of depicting the tallest flag of India installed at the Joint Check Post (JCP) on the Attari - Wagah border, about 35 km from Amritsar on Tuesday. Dedicated to 78th Independence Day at JCP Attari. PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

Kartik Aaryan, director Kabir Khan to celebrate 'Chandu Champion' at IFFM 2024



MUMBAI: Actor Kartik Aaryan and filmmaker Kabir Khan are all set to celebrate their latest film "Chandu Champion" at the 15th edition of The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM).

The celebration will include a special "fan interactive session" featuring Kartik and Kabir. The actor-filmmaker duo will be talking to a live audience about "Chandu Champion", on August 17.

In the session, the two will be talking about the making of the sports biopic. They will share insights into the creative process, the challenges faced, and the extraordinary dedication required to bring the story of Murlikant Petkar to life, read

a statement. Released in June 2024, "Chandu Champion" traces the journey of India's first Paralympics gold medalist, Murlikant Petkar.

This will be the second time Kartik will be making an appearance in the festival, which will commence on August 15. He first made an appearance in 2023 as the Rising Global Indian Superstar of Indian Cinema.

Festival director Mitu Bhowmik Lange said in a statement: "Their collaboration on 'Chandu Champion' has set a new standard for sports biopics, inspiring audiences with its powerful narrative and exceptional performance that Kartik has given."

DDCA appoints cricketer Virender Sehwag as brand ambassador of inaugural season of Delhi Premier League

The grand launch event also witnessed unveiling of the DPL trophy, franchise owners, & team jerseys

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) on Friday announced former Indian cricketer Virender Sehwag as the brand ambassador for the inaugural season of the Delhi Premier League (DPL). The announcement was made during a grand launch event for the league held in New Delhi. Present on the occasion was the entire Apex Council of DDCA.

The DDCA is excited to introduce the DPL as a premier T20 cricket competition. The league, which is chaired by the league commissioner Shri Bimal Julka, a retired IAS officer, aims to showcase the best cricketing talent from Delhi and beyond, offering a platform for emerging players to shine and for seasoned profession-

als to continue inspiring fans. The involvement of DDCA, a cornerstone institution in Delhi's cricketing landscape, ensures a strong foundation for the league's success.

Notably, the launch event also revealed the six franchises and their owners. A total of six men's teams were sold for INR 49.65 crore. The franchise names and owners are as follows:

Men's Teams:

- South Delhi Superstars - Acquired by Real Force Resources Pvt Ltd for INR 8.95 crore
- Purani Dilli 6 - Acquired by SISL Infotech Pvt. Ltd. for INR 8 crore
- Central Delhi Kings - Acquired by Utech Developers Pvt. Ltd. for INR 8.25 crore
- North Delhi Strikers - Acquired by Gupta Jee Tent Services Pvt. Ltd. for INR 8.15 crore
- West Delhi Lions - Acquired by Brew Force Limited for INR 8 crore



- East Delhi Riders - Acquired by Areion Finserve Pvt. Ltd. for INR 8.3 crore
- The top four bidders in the men's franchise auction also secured the women's teams, which include:
- South Delhi Superstars - Real Force Resources Pvt Ltd
- Central Delhi Queens - Utech Developers Pvt. Ltd.
- North Delhi Strikers - Gupta Jee Tent Services Pvt. Ltd.

Pvt. Ltd. □ East Delhi Riders - Areion Finserve Pvt. Ltd. Speaking at the launch event, Mr Rohan Jaitley, President, Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) said, "We are honoured to have Virender Sehwag, one of India's greatest cricketing legends, as the brand ambassador of the DPL. His passion for the game and his deep roots in Delhi cricket make him the perfect choice

to inspire and guide the next generation of players. His involvement will undoubtedly add tremendous value to the league."

"Also, the unveiling of the DPL Trophy and the jerseys for all franchises symbolizes the start of an exciting journey. We are proud to showcase the unique identities of each team and the spirit of competition they bring to the league. This event is a celebration of Delhi's

rich cricketing heritage and a glimpse into the bright future we envision for the sport in our region," he added.

Meanwhile, Virender Sehwag, who is known for his explosive batting style and fearless approach, expressed his excitement for being appointed as the brand ambassador of the DPL and said, "I am excited to join the Delhi Premier League as its brand ambassador. Delhi has always been close to my heart, and I believe this league will provide a fantastic platform for young and talented cricketers from the region to shine. I look forward to being a part of this exciting journey and contributing to the growth of cricket in the Capital."

DPL is set to run from 17th August to 8th September 2024, with all matches taking place at Shri Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi. The inaugural season of the T20 league will consist of 40 matches, including 33 games in the men's category and 7 in the women's.