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KARNATAKA TOPS INDIA WITH 19% YOUTH ASPIRING TO BE DIGITAL INFLUENCERS, 16% TO FOUND STARTUPS; 'THE IQOO QUEST REPORT 2024'

Delhi Doctors stage protest, seek justice for Kolkata rape and murder victim

NEW DELHI: Outrage over the brutal rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Hospital in Kolkata has intensified, with Resident Doctor Associations across Delhi uniting for a joint protest march at Nirman Bhawan on Friday. The medical community has come together in a powerful show of solidarity, demanding swift justice and stronger protections for healthcare workers as anger mounts nationwide. Doctors from various hospitals marched towards Nirman Bhawan, where the Health Ministry is located, carrying placards that read: "Tomorrow is too late, stand up for women today", "Hands that heal should not bleed! Save our saviours", "Justice delayed is justice denied", and "77 years but injustice continues... We fight for your lives, who will fight for ours?"

Ahead of the march, Dr Kumar Kartikay from AIIMS, Delhi, stated, "We are here to peacefully demand our rights. We need a Central Protection Act for healthcare workers. Our strike will continue until we receive a written assurance. We will not step back or remain silent until we are assured that action will be taken."

Dr Aakash of RML Hospi-



tal echoed these sentiments, saying, "We are calling on the government to implement a Central Protection Act. Our protest will persist until we receive a concrete commitment that steps will be taken."

Resident and junior doctors shared their fears about working under increasingly

unsafe conditions. Dr Jyoti expressed, "We no longer feel safe at work... Every moment feels like a potential tragedy."

Dr Aditi said, "We are tired of protesting. This is not why we studied medicine. We didn't go through rigorous entrance exams to be out here protesting. We love our work

at the hospitals, but we need safety to return to our duties." Despite their weariness, the doctors are adamant about continuing the protest until their demands are met. Dr Sandeep warned, "If our voices go unheard, we will be forced to halt all emergency services. This is not something

we want to do, but it will be our last resort if we are not listened to."

The protest by doctors reflects a growing sense of urgency and frustration within the medical community as they demand action and accountability in the wake of the tragic incident.

CBDT Reports 22 pc Surge in Direct Tax Collections

NEW DELHI: The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has released data indicating a significant rise in direct tax collection for the current fiscal year. As of August 11, the net direct tax collection, after adjusting for refunds, reached Rs 6.92 trillion, marking a 22.48 per cent increase from the Rs 5.65 trillion collected during the same period last year.

Personal income tax collections have shown remarkable growth, surging by 30 per cent year-on-year to Rs 4.47 trillion. Corporate taxes, while growing at a more modest rate of 6 per cent, still contributed Rs 2.22 trillion to the total. A noteworthy development is the performance of the Securities Transaction Tax, which has more than doubled compared to the previous year, amounting to Rs 21,599 crore. The government has set ambitious targets for the fiscal year 2025, aiming to collect Rs 10.2 trillion in corporate taxes and Rs 11.87 trillion in personal income taxes.

Before adjusting for refunds, the total direct tax collection stood at Rs 8.13 trillion, a 22.19 per cent increase from the previous year's Rs 6.55 trillion. This figure comprises Rs 3.08 trillion in corporate taxes and Rs 4.81 trillion in personal income tax receipts.

The trend of personal tax col-



lections outpacing corporate tax growth has continued for the second consecutive year. Analysts attribute this to rising incomes, changes in dividend taxation policy, and improved compliance through technological advancements. Other taxes, including equalisation levy, fringe benefit tax, and various legacy taxes, have also seen an uptick, rising to Rs 1,617 crore from Rs 1,383 crore in the previous fiscal year.

During the recent budget presentation, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman emphasised the government's commitment to simplifying the tax structure, enhancing taxpayer services, and reducing litigation while ensuring adequate revenue for development and welfare schemes.

The finance minister also noted the increasing adoption of simplified tax regimes, with 58 per cent of corporate tax revenue in FY 2022-23 coming from the new regime, and over two-thirds of personal income taxpayers opting for the new structure in the last fiscal year.

IMF Deputy Chief Bullish on India's Economic Prospects

NEW DELHI: In a recent statement that has caught the attention of economic analysts worldwide, Dr. Gita Gopinath, Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), expressed optimism about India's economic trajectory. Speaking to India Today, Dr. Gopinath projected that India could ascend to become the world's third-largest economy by 2027, a milestone that would mark a significant shift in the global economic landscape. The IMF's latest 'World Economic Outlook' report has revised India's growth projection for the 2024-25 fiscal year upward to 7%, surpassing the Indian government's own forecast of 6.5%. This bullish outlook is underpinned by several key factors, according to Dr. Gopinath. "India's growth performed better than expected during the last fiscal year," Dr. Gopinath noted, highlighting the carryover effects influencing the current forecast.



Sharad Pawar slams PM Modi for 'one nation one election' pitch

MUMBAI: Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 'one nation one election' announcement citing the Election Commission's decision not to announce the Assembly election in Maharashtra is contradictory. "PM Modi, while speaking from the Red Fort on August 15, announced that the elections across the country should be held simultaneously proposing 'one nation one election'. However, less than 12 hours after making that announcement, we heard that the elections of J&K and Haryana were announced while Maharashtra and Jharkhand elections were not announced. PM Modi is proposing the policy of holding elections simultaneously while the Election Commission's decision regarding the elections in Maharashtra is contradictory," Pawar said.

Ardas at Akal Takht Sahib in memory of lakhs of Punjabis who lost their lives during 1947 partition

AMRITSAR: In memory of lakhs of Punjabis who lost their lives during the partition of the country in 1947, an ardas (Sikh prayer) was organised today at Sri Akal Takht Sahib by Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). After the bhog (concluding ceremony) of Sri Akhand Path Sahib, the hazuri raagi jatha of Sri Harmandar Sahib performed Gurbani Kirtan. Ardas was offered by Bhai Prem Singh and the holy hukamnama was recited by Giani Malkeet Singh, head granthi of Akal Takht Sahib. On the occasion of the event, head granthi of Sri Harmandar Sahib and Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib Giani Raghbir Singh, SGPC President Advocate Harjinder Singh Dhama, and other prominent personalities were present.

Addressing the gathering on this occasion, Giani Raghbir Singh said that during the partition of 1947, Punjabis suffered a lot, and especially the Sikhs suffered the most. The line that was drawn during this partition was drawn on the chest of Punjab. He



said that Punjab, the heritage country of the Sikhs, was divided into two parts, due to which the Gurdwara Sahibs, dear to the lives of the Sikhs were separated. The Sikhs who owned large lands and businesses in the Western Punjab (now Pakistan) had to leave their properties and millions of Punjabis lost their lives during these partition-related disturbances. He said that the leaders of India forgot the promises they made with the Sikhs and on the contrary, called the Sikhs as criminals by profession. He said that it is sad that even after 77 years, the governments of both countries have not even said two words of regret for the people who were killed at that time.

Giani Raghbir Singh said that injustice to Sikhs continues even today. Many Sikhs have been lodged in jails for three decades even after completing their sentences and the government is not releasing them. He questioned the Union Home Minister that he should tell under which law and authority the Sikh prisoners are kept in jail even after completion of their sentences.

He also asked why there is a separate law for Sikhs in the country. He urged the Sikh community to renounce factionalism and mutual division and unite in the struggle against injustice. He said to tackle and prevent conspiracy to divide the Sikhs on social media, the attacks on Sikh Maryada and traditions, the Sikhs should be matured in Gurmat (teachings of Sikh Gurus) by getting initiated into the Sikh way of living and connecting to Gurbani.

On the occasion, SGPC member Gurinderpal Singh Gora, head granthi Giani Malkeet Singh, SGPC secretary Partap Singh, Balwinder Singh Kahlan, Kulwinder Singh Ramdas, Tejinder Singh Padda, Preetpal Singh, manager of Sri Darbar Sahib. Bhagwant Singh Dhangera, assistant secretary Balwinder Singh Khairabad, Harbhajan Singh Vakta, superintendent Nishan Singh, Malkit Singh Beharwal, manager Narinder Singh, additional manager Gurpreet Singh Rode, Gurinderpal Singh and Sangat were present.

Delhi coaching centre deaths: Court reserves order on accused's bail applications



NEW DELHI: A Delhi court is likely to pronounce on August 23 its order on the bail applications of four jailed co-owners of a coaching centre basement where three civil service aspirants drowned last month. Principal District and Sessions Judge Anju Bajaj Chandra on Saturday reserved the order after hearing arguments from the CBI as well as the accused Parvinder Singh, Tajinder Singh, Harvinder Singh and Sarbjit Singh. During the arguments, the accused told the court that the incident was an "act of god" which could have been avoided had the civic agencies performed their onerous duties which they have miserably failed to do," the advocate for the accused had told the judge.

The counsel submitted that the basement was not a library but a waiting area for the students before their classes commenced. He claimed that a fire department inspection was done on the premises a few days before the incident occurred, which had pointed out that basement was being used for storage purpose and the building was safe and fit to run an educational centre.

The counsel also submitted that in order to invoke the section for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, there has to be intention to commit the crime along with knowledge.

Nitish Kumar misled people on special status: RJD



PATNA: RJD Spokesperson Chitrnanjan Gagan on Friday alleged that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar misled the people of Bihar regarding the demand for special status during his Independence Day speech at Gandhi Maidan Patna. Chitrnanjan Gagan said that Nitish Kumar falsely claimed that he had raised the demand for special status for Bihar after becoming Chief Minister in 2005. He also released two photographs showing former Chief Minister Rabri Devi with the late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. "The first photograph, dated February 3, 2002, was taken during the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Digha-Sonepur bridge. During that event, Rabri Devi had formally requested special status for Bihar from PM Vajpayee in a public gathering at Patna's Gandhi Maidan," Gagan said. The RJD spokesperson further substantiated his claims against Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar by releasing another photograph from May 2002.

Prez Murmu, PM Modi pay tributes to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar paid tributes to former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his death anniversary on Friday at his memorial 'Sadaiv Atal' here. Union Ministers and NDA leaders also paid their homage to the former Prime Minister. Home Minister Amit Shah in his tribute to the former PM wrote on X in Hindi, "Whenever there is talk of political correctness, loyalty to national interest and steadfastness towards principles in the country, Atal ji will definitely be remembered. On one hand, by establishing BJP, he popularised the ideology of national interest, on the other hand, as the Prime Minister,



he strengthened the country strategically and economically. I pay my deepest respects to Bharat Ratna respected Atal ji on his death anniversary."

Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari in a post on X, said, "Former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna revered Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji is a source of inspiration for crores of workers of the country. As a skilled organiser, Atalji's life based on ideology and principles was always dedicated to the nation. Millions of salutes to him today on his memorial day."

'Terrorism, extremism and separatism serious threats to our societies': PM Modi at Global South Summit

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday flagged concerns over the consequences of global uncertainties on developing countries, especially in areas of food and energy securities. In his opening remarks at the third Voice of Global South Summit, Modi also assured the participating countries of India's unwavering commitment to extend full support to them in various key areas, including in the domain of digital public infrastructure. "We are not only facing the challenges of climate change, but now there are also concerns about health security, food security, and energy security," he said. The prime minister also referred to challenges of terrorism, extremism and separatism. "Terrorism, extremism and separatism remain serious threats to our societies,"



he said. "Technology divide and new economic and social challenges related to technology are also emerging," Modi said. He said, "The global governance and financial institutions created in the last century have been unable to meet the challenges of this century. Modi said the Voice of Global South Summit has become a platform to discuss issues relating to development. During India's leadership of G20, it made the agenda of the grouping based on

expectations, aspirations and priorities of the Global South, the prime minister said. Modi also said that India took forward G20 in a development-oriented approach. India hosted the summit in a virtual format. "Today we are meeting at a time when there is an atmosphere of uncertainty all around. The world has not yet completely come out of the impact of Covid. On the other hand, the situation of war has created challenges for our development journey," Modi said. The strength of the Global South lies in its unity, Modi said, adding, "On the strength of this unity we will move towards a new direction."

"Voice of Global South Summit is a platform where we are giving voice to the needs and aspirations of those who have been unheard till now," he added.

Loss worth cores due to closure of Shambhu border since past 185 days

SATISH HANDA

A ray of hope was seen by the residents, traders and industry owners of Haryana and Punjab states suffering huge loss since past about 185 days due to closure of highway at Punjab and Haryana border Shambhu, where farmers from Punjab are protesting since 10th February this year demanding to move to Delhi in support of their demands, when Haryana government sealed the border deploying police force and paramilitary staff as a result people in trade and industry, transporters and travelling passengers on this route are suffering a lot since past several months. Those suffering due to the sealed border were shocked when the Haryana state government moved



a writ in the Supreme Court of India in protest of the High Court decision to open the sealed border. Now after the recent Supreme Court direction to open a part of the highway enabling emergency services are not affected residents of both states may find relief to some extent. Shambhu on Haryana and Punjab border is an important transit place and the meeting point between Delhi and Jammu-Kashmir and for the people travelling between Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu-Kashmir and rest part of country from where between 60 and 65 thousand vehicles pass daily having a Toll Plaza near Shambhu border operated by National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) suffered heavy revenue loss worth Rs 135 crore towards toll tax so far.

No interim bail to CM Kejriwal, SC issues notice to CBI

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to release Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on interim bail from Tihar jail in connection with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) case linked to alleged excise policy scam. Issuing notice on CM Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest in the corruption case as well on a distinct petition seeking bail, a bench of Justices Surya Kant sought a response from the central investigative agency and posted the matter for further hearing on August 23.



However, the Bench, also comprising Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, declined to pass any order to release the petitioner on interim bail.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo, submitted that the top court, on July 12, ordered CM Kejriwal to be released on interim bail in connection with the money laundering case lodged by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). However, he was not able to walk out of

orders, while also pressing for bail.

He assailed the Delhi High Court's August 5 judgment, which ruled that his arrest was neither illegal nor without justifiable grounds because CBI presented "evidently enough evidence" to warrant his detention and remand.

In its impugned decision, the bench of Justice Neena Bansal Krishna of the Delhi High Court asked CM Kejriwal to approach the trial court for interim bail.

On Monday, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi mentioned CM Kejriwal's petitions before Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud for urgent listing.

In response, CJI Chandrachud assured the senior counsel of the urgent listing of the matter and asked him to send an email to the apex court registry.

"Send an email, I will examine it," the CJI said.

The Delhi High Court is yet to pronounce its decision on a bail plea filed by CM Kejriwal in connection with the CBI case. Before it reserved its verdict on July 29, the CBI had filed its charge sheet before a special court here against the AAP supremo and other accused persons in the excise policy case.

The ED had already filed its prosecution complaint in the money laundering case, naming AAP and its national convener Kejriwal as accused.

Meanwhile, a court here has extended the judicial custody of CM Kejriwal till August 20 in the excise policy case.

CM Kejriwal moves SC challenging his arrest by CBI in liquor policy case

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has petitioned the Supreme Court challenging his arrest by the CBI in the corruption case linked to the alleged liquor policy scam.

The special leave petition filed before the apex court challenges the August 5 decision of the Delhi High Court dismissing CM Kejriwal's plea against CBI arrest and subsequent remand.

On Monday, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi mentioned the matter before CJI D.Y. Chandrachud for urgent listing. At this, CJI Chandrachud asked the senior counsel to send an email to the registry. "Send an email, I will examine it," the CJI said. In its impugned decision, a bench of Justice Neena Bansal Krishna of the Delhi HC said that it cannot be said that the arrest was without any justifiable reasons or was illegal. The Delhi High Court is yet to pronounce its decision on a bail plea filed by the AAP supremo in connection with the CBI case and recently, reserved its verdict on July 29. Earlier that day, the CBI filed its charge



sheet before a special court here against the AAP supremo and other accused.

The ED had already filed its prosecution complaint in the money laundering case, naming the AAP and its national convener Arvind Kejriwal as accused. On July 12, the Supreme Court ordered CM Kejriwal to be released on interim bail in connection with the money laundering case lodged by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). However, he was not able to walk out of jail since he was arrested by the CBI.

Meanwhile, a court here extended the judicial custody of CM Kejriwal, till August 20 in the excise policy case.

Interstate 'Bagaria' gang of burglars busted with 5 arrests



SATISH HANDA Gurugram

Police busted the interstate Bagaria gang committing burglaries, housebreaking and thefts. Five members of the gang were arrested by Gurugram police along with the kingpin. The gang members used to conduct criminal activities under the guise of begging and collecting junk, targeting houses during night that were locked. The police recovered two iron rods and two screwdrivers from their possession. The gang members during preliminary investigation admitted to have committed over a dozen thefts in the past few months.

The arrested accused were identified as Vinod, alias Bagaria (31), Babulal, alias Sonu (23) and Mangal (23) all residents of Ajmer district in Rajasthan, Bunty (43) a resident of Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh and Pannalal (55) a resident of Kekri district in Rajasthan from Gurugram crime department team led by Inspector Sandeep Kumar arrested Vinod, Babulal, Bunty and Mangal at Leisure Valley Park on Friday night, whereas Pannalal was arrested from his village Ramliya in Rajasthan the following night. Pannalal, a goldsmith, used to buy stolen jewellery from the gang.

Police investigations revealed that all accused the

members of the Bagaria gang were led by Vinod, alias Bagaria who was the mastermind, identified as gang leader. The gang used to choose a city, town, or colony to target while residing in a nearby slum to avoid suspicion. They used to keep a woman to cook food, making it appear as though a family lived in the slum. During the day, the gang members used to scout the area under the pretence of asking for food. If they found a house that was locked or appeared unoccupied they break in during daylight with two accomplices standing guard outside the house. After a theft, one member would travel to Rajasthan to deliver the stolen goods to Pannalal. The arrested accused conducted a theft about two weeks ago in a nearby rural place.

Information revealed that the gang members frequently changed locations, staying in one place for a period of only 15 to 20 days. The accused during preliminary investigation confessed to committing eight burglaries and thefts in different areas of Gurugram apart from two other burglaries in Delhi. Their criminal records showed that more than a dozen cases of burglary, housebreaking and theft were registered against them in states like Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, said a police spokesperson from Gurugram investigating the case.

Jammu and Kashmir Police arrest 9 over-ground workers aiding terrorists in Kathua



FW DESK

The Jammu and Kashmir Police have arrested nine over-ground workers in Kathua on Monday. They have been accused of aiding foreign terrorists in entering and conducting operations within India, according to officials.

These individuals were allegedly involved in supporting terrorist activities in the upper regions of Doda, Udhampur, and Kathua along the India-Pakistan border, as stated by the police. The security forces have noted a recent increase in terrorist activities, particularly in the Jammu region, with the influx of militants believed to have crossed over from Pakistan.

The operation to bust the module was initiated based on intelligence provided by central agencies, following the elimination of three foreign militants in July in the Gandoh area of Doda district, according to a PTI report.

Police have identified Mohammad Lateef as the ringleader of the module, describing him as a guide who organized logistical support for the militants traveling through the region.

The terror module not only provided initial shelter and logistical aid but also directed the militants to the mountainous and forested areas of the Udhampur-Kathua-Doda districts, particularly around the strategically important Kailash mountain tri-junction.

NCRTC invites bids for co-branding rights for its five stations

OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

In a lucrative opportunity to partner with India's first RRTS System and Namo Bharat Train, NCRTC invites bids for exclusive semi-naming and co-branding rights for five strategically located stations on the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor.

This initiative aims to enhance passenger experience and convenience while generating Non-Fare Box Revenue to support the operational costs of the RRTS Corridor. By participating, brands can significantly increase their visibility by associating their names with RRTS stations, enabling impactful advertising campaigns that reach a broad audience.

Brands awarded these rights will have the opportunity to prefix or suffix their names to station



names, incorporate their brand colors on station walls, hoardings, and entry/exit points, and utilize both bare and built-up retail spaces. The branding will extend to station interiors at the concourse and platform levels, as well as exteriors, including columns and piers on both sides of the station, providing visibility to road traffic and pedestrians alike.

In addition to these extensive

branding opportunities, NCRTC will also feature in-train audio announcements with the co-branded station names, further enhancing brand interaction with daily commuters. Brand logos will be prominently displayed on station maps, and mobile canopies can be set up in unpaid areas for experiential marketing.

More than 22 Lakhs passengers have already traveled on

the Namo Bharat trains. The RRTS stations are strategically situated along the Delhi-Meerut highway and are centrally located in densely populated areas, surrounded by markets, educational institutions and residential neighborhoods. This prime location offers excellent brand visibility for marketing purposes. The semi-naming rights for Guldhar RRTS station have already been acquired under this initiative.

Tender documents for acquiring semi naming rights are available on the Central Procurement Portal (CPP) and NCRTC's official website, www.ncrtc.in. A pre-bid meeting is scheduled for August 20, 2024, at 3:00 PM via video conferencing (VC). Interested parties can join the VC by sending a request to the email address provided in the tender documents.

The RRTS is India's first

rail-based, high-speed, high-frequency regional transit system, connecting metropolitan areas, major cities, towns, and urban nodes across the National Capital Region. It offers a significant benefit by providing fast and seamless regional transit for all sections of society.

The Namo Bharat trains, with design speed of 180 kmph and operational speed of up to 160 kmph, dramatically reduce travel time within the region by one-third. Once the 82 km Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor is completed by the targeted deadline of 2025, passengers will be able to travel between Delhi and Meerut in under an hour. Currently, a 34-km section between Sahibabad and Modi Nagar North, featuring eight elevated stations on this pioneering corridor, is operational for public.

JD-U will not even win 20 seats in 2025 Assembly polls: Prashant Kishor

PATNA: Prashant Kishor, the chief of the Jan Suraj campaign on Tuesday said that the Janata Dal (United), led by Nitish Kumar, will struggle to secure even 20 seats in the upcoming 2025 Assembly elections.

"In 2015, the Grand Alliance government in Bihar was only formed because I supported Nitish Kumar. In the 2020 Assembly elections, Nitish's party significantly declined, securing just 43 seats. The 2025 elections will result in an even more drastic outcome. The JD-U will be uprooted from Bihar politics along with the RJD," Prashant Kishor told media persons in Jamui district.

Kishor's remarks came in response to the statement of JD-U state president Umesh Kushwaha, who dismissed Kishor's political relevance, saying that "he is merely running an agency and is not a leader."

Kushwaha even denied



acknowledging Kishor and his Jan Suraj campaign as significant players in Bihar's political landscape.

Kishor, in turn, intensified his criticism by asserting that the people of Bihar would eventually reject the leadership of Lalu Prasad Yadav, Nitish Kumar, and the BJP.

He also attacked the RJD, noting that the party has been issuing letters urging members not to leave. The top leaders of RJD are appealing to workers that if they believe in the ideology of Lalu Prasad Yadav, they will not leave the party.

"This is a sign that RJD leaders no longer find inspiration in Tejashwi Yadav and are only staying due to Lalu's legacy," Kishor said.

Comments war between Congress & BJP ahead of elections

Commission & Corruption was Congress mission when ruling, whereas BJP believes in neat & clean mission

SATISH HANDA Sonipat

Congress held a state-level meeting in Sonipat on Sunday for the implementation of the 'Haryana Maange Hisaab' campaign. Haryana Congress in-charge Deepak Babaria called for giving one last push to drive out the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party from Haryana. In the 51 members committee meeting, Deepak Babaria along with former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Haryana Congress President Chaudhary Udaibhan instructed party leaders and workers to contribute strongly to the campaign against the ruling BJP in the state.

Deepak Babaria stated that it is the responsibility of every Congressman to take the campaign to every home and every person across the state enabling to push out BJP from the state.



Praising Hooda and Chaudhary Udaibhan, Babaria said Congress destroyed the caste politics of BJP in the Lok Sabha elections taking all sections along and giving representation to all castes and will be the priority of Congress. Congress will raise the slogan of 'BJP ko ek dhakka aur do' in the coming Assembly elections, which talks about changing and abolishing the Constitution, Babaria said, advising all leaders and workers in the meeting to work completely within the party line and discipline. In his address, Bhupinder Singh Hooda said under 'Haryana Maange Hisaab', all leaders and workers will expose the misdeeds of BJP before the public and tell that Haryana, which was the number one state in the country in per

capita income, per capita investment, employment, sports persons and welfare schemes till 2014, has been made number one by ruling BJP in unemployment, crime, drug addiction, and misery. Hooda said, this government has implemented such an exploitative policy of Kaushal Nigam in which there is no permanent job for the youth, no post, no promotion, no merit, transparency, and reservation.

While on the other hand, during 'Sankalp Rally' in Gurugram district Nayab Saini Chief Minister said while the BJP government in Haryana is working in 'mission mode' towards equitable development in the state, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday, slamming the previous government led by Bhupinder

Manish Sisodia is moving from a smaller jail to a bigger jail - Getting bail is not the same as being released: Anil Vij

PARVESH HANDA New Delhi

Haryana's former Home Minister Anil Vij took a dig at Manish Sisodia coming out of jail and said that Sisodia is moving from a smaller jail to a bigger jail. Vij mentioned that Sisodia has to report to the police station twice a week, and his passport has been ceased, so he cannot travel anywhere. Therefore, he has moved from a smaller jail to a bigger jail. Vij emphasized that getting bail is not the same as being released. He was interacting with media persons today.

Vij said, recently, BJP's state president Mohan Lal Badoli stated that this time, the BJP will give opportunities to 25% new faces in the assembly elections.



revealing anything to her parents on returning home.

The girl, having severe pain in her stomach and legs started weeping and burst into tears when her parents were having an arguments the parents got suspicious while talking to her mother the girl disclosed the entire incident, following which, the parents approached the police and got the complaint registered against school principal Yashpal and a case was registered against him. However, during preliminary investigation Yashpal denied the incident, saying that the minor girl has been misguided by someone wanting to spoil his as well as school's reputation under a conspiracy.

Sex Racket busted at 3 Spa centers, 15 men and 3 Men arrested

SATISH HANDA Sonapat

The police conducted raids on Saturday night at several spa centers located in malls along GT Road, Sonapat. The raid was carried out following complaints about illegal activities going on under the guise of spa services in the area. The police arrested 15 women and three men from three different spa centers. According to the information, multiple teams from Sonapat Police conducted sudden raids late Saturday night at three prominent and well-known malls situated on the National Highway-44 near Kundli and surrounding areas. The police had received information that these spa centers were involved in illegal activities and that girls from Delhi and other states were being brought in for sex business



under the cover of spa services. The police raided the spa centers in KFC Mall and other locations in Kundli. A total number of 15 women and three men were taken into custody from three different spa centers. The police registered a case against the spa owners and those arrested were produced in Sonapat Court. According to the police the spa centers were involved in illegal activities by bringing

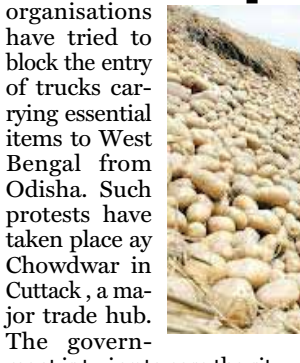
in girls from Delhi and other states. Naveen Kumar of police conducting the operation said that the police had received a tip-off about the illegal activities happening under the cover of spa services at the KFC Mall. Based on this information, a team was prepared under the orders of ACP Headquarters for the raid. The team successfully raided three different locations and arrested 15 women and three men.

Odisha reels under potato crisis

ARABINDA MOHAPATRA Bhubaneswar

Odisha is reeling under a severe shortage of potatoes which is an essential item for cooking in almost every Odia household. The issue has not only rocked the state assembly it has also forced people to take to streets in different parts of the state. The crisis persists despite chief minister Mohan Majhi speaking to his West Bengal counterpart Mamata Banerjee to ease the situation by allowing the import of tuber from her state.

Former chief minister and leader of opposition Naveen Patnaik has also sought Mamata's help in the matter but the shortage continues with prices rising as high as Rs. 60 per kg in most areas. With news spreading that Odisha is facing shortage of this staple because of the non-cooperative attitude of the neighbouring state, people in Odisha including social



organisations have tried to block the entry of trucks carrying essential items to West Bengal from Odisha. Such protests have taken place at Chowdwar in Cuttack, a major trade hub. The government is trying to ease the situation by importing tuber from Uttar Pradesh but the quality of potatoes coming from the heartland state is not as good as those grown in Bengal.

Odisha has been dependent on West Bengal for its potato requirements since long. Things started taking a serious turn when towards mid-July the West Bengal government banned the supply of potatoes to other states to stabilise the price of the tuber in the state.



Besides there has been a fall of about 20 percent in potato production in Bengal this year due to bad weather. However West Bengal government has been trying hard to keep the retail prices in check.

West Bengal is among the largest producers of potatoes in India. Its production volume is only second to Uttar Pradesh. Comparatively potato production in Odisha is much lower, despite it being an essential food item in the state.

10 years old girl sexually abused by principal in the school bathroom

SATISH HANDA Jind

A 10-year-old girl - a class 4 student was allegedly sexually abused in the toilet by the principal of a private school up to class 5 in a village under Narwana Sadar police station in Jind district on Friday. The women police station, Jind registered a case under Section 6 of the POCSO Act and Sections 65 (2) and 127 (2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita on the complaint of the mother of the victim on Saturday. Jind police SP Sumit Kumar said on getting complaint police nabbed the alleged accused and both the victims had been medically examined. The victim said that the principal took her to the toilet and lured her to have illicit relations with her forcibly. The minor was so shocked due to the assault that she couldn't



reveal anything to her parents on returning home. The girl, having severe pain in her stomach and legs started weeping and burst into tears when her parents were having an arguments the parents got suspicious while talking to her mother the girl disclosed the entire incident, following which, the parents approached the police and got the complaint registered against school principal Yashpal and a case was registered against him. However, during preliminary investigation Yashpal denied the incident, saying that the minor girl has been misguided by someone wanting to spoil his as well as school's reputation under a conspiracy.

Congress faces backlash over Shah Bano, Emergency after Jairam slams PM Modi's 'communal' civil code remark

NEW DELHI: Political analysts on Thursday questioned Congress' claim that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "communal civil code" remark made during his Independence Day speech was a "gross insult" to B.R. Ambedkar.

They argued that it was the Nehru-Gandhi family which undermined the Constitution shaped by Baba Saheb Ambedkar.

The debate heated up following Prime Minister Modi's Independence Day speech from the Red Fort on Thursday, wherein he criticised the existing civil codes as "communal" and "discriminatory", making a compelling argument for adopting the Uniform Civil Code (UCC).

On social media, critics and experts are pointing out that it was the Congress government which overturned the Shah Bano case judgment and imposed Emergency, which many view as a flagrant disregard for the Constitution.

"Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution was always secular. It was the way Nehru-Gandhi Parivar implemented it that converted the lived-reality into a ghastly communal experience," said an expert in a post on X.



"Was it Ambedkar who overturned the SC judgement in the Shah Bano case? Was it Dr. Ambedkar who mangled the Constitution during Emergency? In fact, it is Dr. Ambedkar's Constitution which has Article 44 as Directive Principles - something which successive generations of Nehru Parivar have scuttled," the post added.

The X post went on to say, "Here is what Dr. Ambedkar said when the provision for a Uniform Civil Code was being debated - 'My friend, Mr Hussain Imam, in rising to support the amendments, asked whether it was possible and desirable to

have a uniform code of laws for a country so vast as this. Now I must confess that I was very much surprised at that statement for the simple reason that we have in this country a uniform code of laws covering almost every aspect of human relationship. We have a uniform and complete Criminal Code operating throughout the country, which is contained in the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code. We have the Law of Transfer of Property, which deals with property relations and which is operative throughout the country. Then there are the Negotiable Instru-

ments Acts. I can cite innumerable enactments which would prove that this country has practically a Civil Code, uniform in its content and applicable to the whole of the country. The only province the Civil Law has not been able to invade so far is Marriage and Succession'."

"So Jairam, better start schooling third time fail Rahul Gandhi on true history of his family rather than continuously feeding him with venomous lies," the expert pointed out.

Earlier, Congress' Communications chief Jairam Ramesh wrote on X, "The non-biological PM's capacity for malice, mischief, and maligning of history knows no bounds. It was on full display today from the Red Fort. To say that we have had a 'communal civil code' till now is a gross insult to Dr. Ambedkar, who was the greatest champion of reforms in Hindu personal laws that became a reality by the mid 1950s. These reforms had been bitterly opposed by the RSS and the Jan Sangh."

Ramesh also quoted a 21st Law Commission's consultation paper on reform of family law dated August 31, 2018, which said UCC "is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage".

Congress launches 100 day 'Save Constitution Campaign'

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The Congress today launched 100-day 'Samvidhan Rakshak Campaign' to enrol people as protectors of the Constitution, who will work to protect Constitution at all costs. This campaign will conclude on November 26, 2024, to coincide with 75 years of the adoption of the Constitution of India.

Launching the campaign here today, senior Congress leader and Treasurer Ajay Maken, along with the Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav and Chairman of the SC department of the AICC, Rajesh Lillothia, said that the campaign will cover all the seventy assembly segments in Delhi.

Maken said, the challenges and threats to the Constitution were still prevailing as the same people were in power who wanted to change the Constitution before the elections.

Maken pointed out, India was the only country in the region, which was strong and stable while all others were facing turmoil and unrest. He observed that India succeeded as a democracy just because of the Constitution.



Maken said, as Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had committed during his campaign that the party will ensure to defend and protect the constitution at all costs, the campaign was being launched all across the country.

Maken said, so far three lakh Constitution Protection Volunteers had enrolled themselves. He said, the Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and he himself had also enrolled as the Constitution Protection Volunteers.

Giving further details of the campaign, Chairman of the SC department of the AICC Rajesh Lillothia said that the same forces who had opposed the Constitution while it was being drafted and had even burnt its copies were in power today.

He said there was a continuous threat to the Constitution.

Lillothia disclosed that the campaign will be extended across the country to every village. He said, two Constitution Protection Volunteers, one male and one female, will be identified in every village who will be trained for the purpose.

He said the campaign in Delhi will conclude on November 26 with a massive programme in Talkatora Stadium. This will also mark 75 years of the adoption of the Constitution.

Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee president Devender Yadav said, the campaign was being launched at the right time since the forces who wanted to change it were still in power and the threat to the Constitution was very much there.

MUDA CASE Karnataka Guv gives consent for prosecution against CM Siddaramaiah



BENGALURU: In a major development, Karnataka Governor Thaawar Chand Gehlot gave sanction for prosecution against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday in connection with the irregularities in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA).

The development is a major setback for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the Congress government in Karnataka.

The Karnataka Governor's Secretariat released an official order in this regard on behalf of Governor Gehlot.

R Prabhushankar, Special Secretary to the Governor issued an order in this regard on Saturday.

"As directed by the Hon'ble Governor, I am enclosing herewith, the copy of the decision of the Competent Authority on the request of sanction for prosecution against the Chief Minister Shri Siddaramaiah, under Section 17 of the Prevention of the Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 for the commission of the alleged offences mentioned in the petitions," the order stated. Social activists Pradeep Kumar SP, TJ Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna had filed petitions against CM Siddaramaiah in connection with the alleged MUDA land scam. They had claimed that CM Siddaramaiah had misused his office to create fraudulent documents over 3.17 acres of land near Mysuru city and got 14 sites allotted from the MUDA in the name of his wife.

CM Siddaramaiah had refuted the allegations and maintained that the Congress government would fight politically and legally if the permission for prosecution against him in the case was granted by the Governor. The Karnataka Cabinet had also taken a decision and advised the Governor to reject the petitions against CM Siddaramaiah and not to accord sanction for prosecution.

Army captain killed in encounter with terrorists in J&K's Doda



FW DESK

An army officer lost his life in an encounter with terrorists in the Akar forest area of Doda on Wednesday. According to official sources, Captain Deepak led the operation from the front, guiding his team in their efforts to eliminate the terrorists. During the intense exchange of fire, Captain Deepak sustained gunshot wounds. He was evacuated to a hospital but succumbed to his injuries.

Doc's rape & murder: Rahul Gandhi accuses Bengal govt, hospital of shielding accused



KOLKATA: The Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Wednesday launched a scathing attack against the West Bengal government on the heinous rape and murder of a junior doctor at state-run RG Kar Medical College & Hospital last week.

The Congress MP accused the state administration and the hospital authorities of trying to save the accused.

"The attempt to save the accused instead of providing justice to the victim raises serious questions on the hospital and the local administration.

"This incident has forced us to think that if doctors are not safe in a place like a medical college, then how can parents send their daughters outside for studies?"

"Why are even the strict laws made after the Nirbhaya case unsuccessful in preventing such crimes?" LoP Rahul Gandhi said in a strong statement posted on his official X handle.

According to him, the RG Kar incident is bound to create an atmosphere of insecurity in the medical fraternity and women.

"The entire country is shocked by the gruesome incident of rape and murder of a junior doctor in Kolkata. The way the layers of the cruel and inhuman act against her are being revealed, there is an atmosphere of insecurity among the doctors' community and women," Rahul Gandhi commented.

"Every party, every section of society will have to hold serious discussions and take concrete steps on the continuously increasing incidents against women from Hathras to Unnao, and from Kathua to Kolkata," he added while emphasising that the culprits in the case should be given such a punishment that it is presented as an example in society.

Political observers said that this post by the Congress MP is quite significant especially in the backdrop of his sister and Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi's recent post in the matter, just appealing to the West Bengal government to take immediate and strict action in the case.

"I appeal to the state government to take immediate and strict action in this case and ensure justice to the victim's family and fellow doctors," her post on X read.

Khurania to head new DGP of Odisha

ARABIND MOHAPATRA
Bhubaneswar

Odisha government had appointed 1990 batch IPS officer, well known for his achievements, as the new Yogesh Bahadur Khurania as the new director general of police (DGP) of the state. He takes over from Arun Sarangi. The move has been hailed widely as Khurania enjoys the reputation of being a highly efficient and honest police officer.

Sources said that the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) had recommended three names for the top post and state government selected Khurania to head the state police force. Khurania, who was serving as the special director general (DG) of Border Security Force (BSF), western command in Chandigarh, was repatriated to his parent cadre on August 2.

The 1990 batch officer who had served as police commissioner of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack before he proceeded on Central deputation has vast experience in Odisha where he has served in various positions. Among the important positions



he has held is that of vigilance director and Bhubaneswar-Cuttack police commissioner before he left on central deputation and joined the BSF in 2018.

One of his major achievements as a police officer was to arrest Dara Singh who had led a mob and set afire a station wagon in which Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons were burnt to death in their sleep in January 1999. The incident took place at Manoharpur village in Keonjhar district and Khurania was then serving as DIG.

He also served as SP of Nayagarh, Jajpur, Ganjam, Mayurbhanj and Rourkela districts. On promotion to the rank of

deputy inspector general, he was posted as DIG southern range, Berhampur and others. Khurania also held the post of Director, Biju Patnaik State Police Academy-cum-IG Training, Bhubaneswar.

A highly efficient officer Khurania, during his service, has received many commendations and rewards. Notable among them are the Governor's Medal and President's Police Medal for Meritorious Service, Ati Utkrisht Seva Medal and Police Antrik Suraksha Seva Padak.

As special DG of BSF, Khurania played an important role in securing India's borders and preventing cross-border crimes.

Those who know him say that his expertise and experience would be invaluable for the state police and come in handy when he discharges his duty as the head of state police force.

Born in the small district of Kaithal, Haryana, on 9 March 1966, Khurania rose through the ranks and earned a reputation for his integrity and commitment. He has left a lasting impact on all the jobs he has carried out so far in his long and illustrious career.

Most importantly his career has been untarnished by controversies which often dog senior police officers. Instead he has left a lasting imprint on every assignment he has carried out so far including the crucial role of Commissioner of Police for the Twin City of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. His tenure as police commissioner was particularly noted for its effectiveness and innovation. He set a high standard for policing in the region. He is expected to bring the same kind of efficiency to his new assignment. Policing in the state is certain to improve under him.

Probe into Pandian's chopper rides to begin soon

ARABINDA MOHAPATRA
Bhubaneswar

Once the most powerful bureaucrat of the state, VK Pandian, who took voluntary retirement from IAS to join full time politics, seems to be in serious trouble following the installation of state's first BJP government. Now the government has decided to launch a probe into expenses made from the state exchequer to build helipads and to pay for his chopper rides to various parts of the state.

"As 5T secretary, Pandian did not have the provision to use the helicopters. How the government gave permission and facilitated the landing



of the helicopter? Who was bearing the helicopter costs for Pandian's visit? It should be clear," state law minister Prithviraj Harichandan said recently adding "The previous government passed the order

for the construction of helipads and those were constructed at the government's expense. Pandian had visited nearly 400-500 places in a helicopter and the expenses were made from the state exchequer. All

these will come under the purview of the investigation."

Pandian, who was former chief minister Naveen Patnaik's Man Friday for 11 years, was appointed as chairman of 5T (transformational initiatives) after he opted for voluntary retirement. He had earlier served as private secretary to Patnaik. In his capacity as chairman 5T with cabinet rank he did a lot of work, much of which has become questionable now. Recently state commerce and transport minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena said a probe into the statewide chopper tours of the 2000-batch Indian Administrative Service officer between 2020 and 2023 was going to be launched soon.

J&K LG Manoj Sinha leads 'Tiranga Rally' in Srinagar

FW DESK

Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha led a 'Tiranga Rally' in Srinagar on Monday, emphasizing the importance of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign. Sinha noted that the campaign has evolved into a people's movement, with widespread support from citizens across the Union Territory.

The rally, which drew approximately 10,000 participants, began at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) by Dal Lake and concluded at the Botanical Garden. It was part of the broader 'Har Ghar Tiranga' initiative encouraging citizens to display the national flag at their homes in celebration of India's In-



dependence. During his address, LG Sinha urged all communities—Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, and Hindus—to work together for the prosperity of Jammu and Kashmir. He also paid tribute to Pingali Venkayya, the designer of the Indian national flag, and encouraged citizens to participate in various related activities,

including Tiranga Rallies, Tiranga Concerts, and Tiranga Melas. Since the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, hoisting the national flag on August 15 has become mandatory at all government buildings, schools, colleges, and universities, symbolizing the unity and integrity of India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

Wayanad landslide: Search continues for missing

WAYANAD: Search operations for the over 150 missing people continued on Monday, the 14th day of the Wayanad landslide tragedy, said officials here.

The biggest-ever natural disaster in a single place in the state took place on July 30 which has left 416 dead.

On Monday, according to authorities, the first set of DNA test results are expected. These are of the victims who have been buried in the 64 cents of land in the Meppadi village council, where a mass burial took place last week over three days of unidentified bodies and numerous body parts.

Each of the graves has been numbered. The survivors will be able to identify their near and dear ones after the DNA results are out. And, if they need any further religious events or rituals to be done after identi-



fication, they can do so accordingly, said the officials. Another important activity of the day is that all the survivors will apply for lost certificates at special counters set up in and around the relief camps. More than 11,000 people are now housed in over 100 relief camps.

The authorities have promised they will do everything to move people from relief camps

to homes and other places in the area. Around 250 locked homes have been identified and the authorities will be making allotments to those in the relief camps. The Pinarayi Vijayan government has started deputing government officials from various departments to Wayanad to help the current staff in various offices to speed up the rehabilitation process.

Wayanad landslide: Search continues for missing

More and more health officials, especially counsellors, are being deployed in the affected areas. The day-long visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, when he spent three hours more than planned on Saturday, brought cheer to the survivors when he met them and those in the hospitals, and assured them that the government would help them in every possible way. Even though the Vijayan government has submitted a preliminary report seeking a Rs 2,000 crore assistance, PM Modi after seeing a detailed presentation, while chairing a special review meeting at Wayanad on Saturday, has promised all help and has asked the state to submit a detailed report. Leader of Opposition V.D. Satheesan has asked the state government to submit its report at the earliest.



C.P. RAJENDRAN ON GOVT'S STRATEGY BEHIND ANUSANDHAN NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Corporatising science research



are now more closely integrated than ever, and scientific advances can now end up as marketable products more rapidly. This transformation has also led to intellectual property rights allowing universities to sell the patents to private corporations, even if the research is publicly funded. The adoption of neoliberal economic policies across the globe has also accelerated the greater involvement of the private sector in funding science.

part of the result may not be apparent at all. A generally accepted working definition of basic scientific research reads: "the pursuit of knowledge to understand a natural process irrespective of the potential applications that might arise from such knowledge".

Country comparison

Although India is ranked among the top 10 by gross domestic product (GDP), the ratio of public funding for science research in India has been 0.6% to 0.7% of GDP for the last decade. A country such as South Korea, only a third the size of India and its population, spends about 2% to 3% of its GDP. While the private sector is encouraged to fund, the government must increase its basic science and non-profit research allocation. If that does not happen, the country will eventually witness the decline of curiosity-driven science in our universities, which could also undermine public trust in science when it gets dominantly mediated by private interests. Equally important is to nurture an ambience of free enquiry and maintain the financial and administrative autonomy of the institutes. This should have been amplified in the ANRF Act itself. As Niraja Gopal Jayal writes in the India Forum, although the heavy hand of the educational bureaucracy has always been hovering over public universities, constraining their autonomy, in recent times "the state intervention has become more manifestly political in a partisan way, and openly ideological within an ecosystem that attaches no value to academic freedom". It all boils down to a grand vision, but it does not evolve in a repressive society.

C.P. Rajendran is an Adjunct Professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. The views expressed are personal.

During the inaugural address of the 107th Science Congress in Bengaluru in January 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reflected on the government's take on how science should be conducted in India. It was conveyed to young researchers in his usual aphoristic manner of speaking: "innovate, patent, produce, prosper". By expressing it in a maxim, the Prime Minister was hinting at the birthing of a new policy on knowledge production under his leadership.

Over several years, the current ruling regime has been directing laboratories and other research centres to earn their revenue from external sources by marketing their expertise and investing the surplus to develop technologies for national missions. This policy position can be traced to the 'Dehradun Declaration' prepared by the directors of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research labs in 2015, where it was decided to market patents as a means to self-finance research. In other words, this was a call for the corporatisation of science research — a process of converting any state-owned entity into a market commodity and being able to follow the business model to support itself, rather than relying on public support. Science institutes are now encouraged to develop research centres registered as Section 8 companies, wherein private companies or shareholders can invest money.

The ANRF and research

This line of thinking can be seen in the formulation of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF). Established under the ANRF Act of 2023, this new mechanism is designed to fund research in the country and to improve linkages between research and development, academia and industry. The Finance Minister echoed the same in her July 23,

2024 Budget speech: "We will operationalise the ANRF for basic research and prototype development." The "prototype development" is a significant part of the innovation cycle to assess the marketability of a product — yet another hint of the government's overriding interest in funding the research that will cater to the market. Another giveaway is the way funding proportion is designed. The ANRF will receive Rs 50,000 crore over five years, 72% of which is expected to be from the private sector. Judging from the way the resources are currently scheduled for the ANRF, it is clear that the government intends to reduce its role in funding the research and expects private entrepreneurship to pitch in a big way.

Even in the United States, where research and development has significantly outstripped government funding over the last decade, it is clustered mostly in IT and pharmaceuticals. The knowledge thus generated through research is considered a commodity to be marketed. The entrenchment of market-oriented perspectives comes from two sources, as discussed by Prabir Purkayastha in his book, Knowledge as Commons. What makes science different from the Renaissance period and after that is that science and technology

Signals despite the stated objective

The understated objective of the ANRF is to fund research in natural sciences, but in reality, there are sufficient hints that the government is planning to place the university research system subservient to what Ellen Meiksins Wood calls "the dictates of the capitalist market". The curiosity-driven research in natural sciences involves understanding and predicting natural phenomena based on empirical evidence and experimentation. The private sector cannot be expected to finance curiosity-driven science because it will not invest money unless the research finds some immediate application that maximises its profits. Interestingly, the same stringency in government funding is not shown while supporting the branches of the 'Indian Knowledge Systems', which are not part of evidence-based science. Science is driven by the zeal to understand the world through scientific tools. This can be encouraged only by increasing the share of public funding. The research proposals in basic science need to be assessed based on the proposers' ability to acquire knowledge about a problem defined by conducting observations, experimentation and analyses. The application



KANIKA AGARWAL HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF PRECISION NUTRITION IN SPORTS

Nutrition strategy to avert Olympic-like agony

The high-stakes case, of the disqualification of Indian woman wrestler Vinesh Phogat from the women's 50kg wrestling final in the Paris Olympics 2024, was a setback for India. She was found to be 100 grams heavier than permissible limits. This incident highlights the role of support staff including the sports nutritionist, doctors, and the team management in the Indian contingent.

A myopic view indicates a slip, but the situation highlights the need to integrate precision nutrition in sport. Precision nutrition tailors dietary recommendations based on specific individual requirements, characteristics and circumstances. This process focuses on better understanding and meeting an athlete's individual requirements, particularly their individual response to different food/supplement intakes and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

Precision nutrition involves understanding an individual's metabolism, microbiome, and how their body responds to food and calorie expenditure to determine the best dietary practices for them. It focuses on systems biology and a multi-omics approach (including genomics, proteomics, metabolomics, microbiomes, and epigenetics), integrated with bioinformatics and machine learning to provide evidence-based individualised nutrition recommendations. This data-driven approach allows for adjustments based on an athlete's physiological responses, ensuring they are in peak condition for a competition. The integration with bioinformatics and machine learning will help in the identification of patterns and predict how different nutritional strategies affect an athlete's performance. The gut microflora may be influenced by diet, especially a plant-based diet and regular exercise, resulting in the production of short chain fatty acids which may support athletic performance and post-exercise metabolic recovery.

An effective nutrition recommendation rides on high granularity of an individual's dietary



intake and physical activity data. Traditional questionnaire/interview-based methods of collecting such data have drawbacks such as self-reporting, memory bias, high respondent burden, and socially desirable responses. Combining this subjective information with targeted individual continuous monitoring (for example, continuous blood glucose monitoring) can provide more specific and individualised recommendations for athletes that not only address dietary requirements but also check the regulatory requirements of sport. Many wearable sensors track and provide information on physical activity levels, stress, sleep quality, and heart rate monitoring. This incident with Ms. Phogat underscores the importance of continuous and real-time tracking of targeted outcomes for athletes during training sessions, making it easier to achieve and maintain target weight.

Glucose monitoring

Continuous glucose monitors (CGM) are commonly used by people with diabetes to monitor interstitial blood glucose responses to food. These devices, implanted in the subcutaneous layer (just under the skin), record blood glucose levels minute

by minute. The use of CGMs, under the supervision of a trained nutritionist, can help monitor athletes' blood glucose responses to food. The information collected can be used to individualise recommendations for building muscle, boosting energy, reducing inflammation, and maintaining body weight — important parameters for an athlete.

A few players have reportedly improved their sports performance using CGM. Retired Olympic gold medal-winning Australian swimmer Chelsea Hodges, once admitted that CGM helped manage her fuel levels and exhaustion during training sessions. Long-distance runner Eliud Kipchoge of Kenya has been using the CGM since 2021 to build personalised nutrition plans that give him a competitive advantage. The Union Cycliste Internationale (the world governing body of cycling and recognised by the International Olympic Committee) has banned the use of CGM by healthy athletes during competitions. However, these could potentially be used during training sessions to see how players respond to food. This use of technology for personalised nutrition recommendation is still in its early stages and requires further exploration.

The need for such personalised approaches becomes more apparent in weight-based sports, where "making weight" is crucial. Athletes in weight-based sports, such as boxing, wrestling, and martial arts, often struggle to stay within their designated weight class. To do so, they resort to extreme measures such as starvation, intentional dehydration, and using saunas or sweat suits to reduce weight quickly before weigh-ins. These drastic measures jeopardise their mental and physical health and adversely impact their performance. Reports indicate that Ms. Phogat spent an entire night trying to shed extra weight. Likewise, another Indian woman wrestler, Antim Panghal, reportedly starved herself for two days to make weight. Such instances would severely impact the capabilities of such sportspersons in such high-level competitions.

A role for sports nutritionists

A study found that coaches and fellow players play an influential role in deciding what dietary regimen works best for the athlete during training and competition. Athletes need sports nutritionists trained in precision nutrition to monitor their nutritional requirements, intake, and understand their body composition and metabolism.

It would be in everyone's best interest if nutritionists are assigned to different types of sports and become involved with the athletes longer, allowing their recommendations and body responses to be tracked and tested over time. These nutritionists must familiarise themselves with the rules of the sports, weight categories, weigh-in procedures, and methods to reduce weight without compromising an athlete's performance and annual training cycles.

Flourish logoInteractive content by Flourish

Integrating precision nutrition into sports involves not only individualising dietary plans but also continuously monitoring and adjusting them based on the athlete's changing needs. This approach can help prevent the drastic measures often resorted to by athletes, in turn promoting healthier, and more sustainable practices.

In conclusion, the disqualification of Ms. Phogat underscores that there is a critical gap in the Indian sports support system. Precision nutrition, a data-driven approach to dietary planning, is imperative to prevent such setbacks and optimise athlete performance. By integrating technology and expert nutritionists, India can revolutionise its sports training, ensuring that sportspersons reach their full potential while prioritising their health and their well-being.

Kanika Agarwal is Faculty Fellow, Koita Centre for Digital Health, Tricredi School of Biosciences, Ashoka University. Views are personal.

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“
There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”
COLIN POWELL

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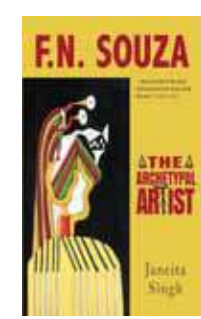
BOOKS: REVIEW

Book explores the depths of Souza's artistic vision

F.N. Souza: The Archetypal Artist, authored by Janeita Singh, is a profound exploration of the works of Francis Newton Souza, one of India's most celebrated modern painters. Through a collection of 21 essays, Singh delves into the cultural, psychological, and philosophical underpinnings of Souza's art, offering a multifaceted interpretation that draws on psychoanalysis, feminism, Eastern and Western philosophy, and Jungian analysis. Souza's significance in the Indian art scene is indisputable. As a founding member of the Progressive Artist's Group in Mumbai in the 1940s, his contributions were instrumental in shaping modern Indian art. His journey from India to the UK and eventually to the US mirrors his evolving artistic vision. Over the years, Souza's works have gained immense recognition, commanding high prices at art auctions. However, for those who cannot

own a Souza painting, Singh's book offers an opportunity to appreciate and engage with his art through detailed reproductions and insightful analysis. Singh's approach is both scholarly and accessible. She challenges readers to confront the often provocative and unsettling nature of Souza's paintings, particularly his depictions of nudes and heads. Singh interprets these works through the lens of psychoanalysis, exploring concepts like the male gaze, the perception of the nude, and alternative ways of seeing. Her analysis is rooted in the idea that Souza's art taps into the collective unconscious, drawing on archetypal imagery that resonates on a deeply personal level with viewers. One of the book's strengths is its examination of the female form in Souza's work. Singh connects Souza's depictions of women to the iconography of fertility goddesses, suggesting that his art celebrates

female confidence and sexuality in a way that challenges conventional social codes and religious authority. She argues that Souza's paintings offer a vision of the female body imbued with self-assurance and authority, contrasting sharply with the often submissive and objectified portrayals of women in Western art history. Singh's writing is particularly compelling when she describes her first encounter with Souza's art. She reflects on how his female subjects defy traditional representations, appearing neither shy nor self-effacing but instead exuding a raw, almost primal energy. This connection to nature, Singh suggests, is central to Souza's artistic vision. He was deeply attuned to the natural world, and this affinity is evident in the vitality and vigor with which he expressed himself on canvas. The book's exploration of Souza's use of the collective unconscious is another intriguing aspect. Singh



F.N. Souza: The Archetypal Artist
By Janeita Singh
Niyogi Books
320 pages;
Rs4,500

draws on Jungian psychology, particularly the concept of the 'anima,' to interpret Souza's work. She posits that his art reveals a deep connection to the archetypal feminine, a force that is both nurturing and powerful. This interpretation adds a layer of psychological depth to Souza's paintings, inviting readers to consider the ways in which his work speaks to universal human experiences and emotions. In addition to its rich textual analysis, F.N. Souza: The Archetypal Artist is visually stunning. The book includes around 130 images of Souza's artworks, reproduced in excellent color and detail. These images allow readers to fully appreciate the complexity and richness of Souza's artistic output. The visual component of the book complements Singh's analysis, providing a comprehensive understanding of Souza's oeuvre. Singh's work is not just an art historical study; it is a meditation on the cultural constructs of life, body, and sexuality. She offers readers a lens through which to view Souza's art as a commentary on these themes, highlighting the ways in which his work challenges and subverts traditional narratives. For those interested in modern Indian art, psychoanalysis, or cultural studies, F.N. Souza: The Archetypal Artist is an essential read. In conclusion, Janeita Singh's F.N. Souza: The Archetypal Artist is a thought-provoking and richly layered exploration of one of India's most important modern artists. Through her insightful analysis and the inclusion of a wide range of visual and theoretical sources, Singh offers readers a new way of understanding Souza's work, one that is deeply informed by both art history and psychoanalysis. This book is a valuable contribution to the study of Souza and a must-read for anyone interested in the intersection of art, culture, and psychology.

BMW recalls 1.3 million vehicles in China that may have Takata airbag inflators

BEIJING: BMW was recalling more than 1.3 million vehicles in China that might have Takata airbag inflators following a similar recall in the United States last month, officials said Friday.

The recall covers nearly 600,000 vehicles made in China between 2005 and 2017 and more than 750,000 imported vehicles made between 2003 and 2018, the Chinese State Administration for Market Regulation said. It includes a wide range of models, from series 1 to series 6 cars and the X1, X3, X4, X5 and X6 SUVs. A small number of vehicles in the recall may have Takata inflators if the owner changed the steering wheel, the Chinese regulatory body said. The in-



flator can explode when the airbag deploys, sending fragments into the car and injuring the occupants, it said.

Takata airbag inflators have been blamed for the deaths of at least 35 people since 2009 in the United States, Malaysia and Australia.

U.S. regulators said last month that BMW would recall more than 390,000 vehicles because the original steering wheel may have been replaced with a sport or M-sport steering wheel equipped with a Takata inflator.

Ford and Mazda warned the

owners of more than 475,000 vehicles in the U.S. earlier this week not to drive them because they have Takata airbag inflators. The vehicles were built between 2003 and 2015.

Stellantis, following a fatal explosion in the U.S. last year, urged the owners of some 2003 Dodge Ram pickups to stop driving them if their air bag inflators had not been replaced.

The Chinese regulator said that BMW owners can visit a dealer to have their steering wheel checked or upload a photo of their steering wheel and their vehicle identification number to get an answer in two weeks. BMW will replace the driver's side airbag free of charge in affected vehicles.

EEPC India and ISSDA Collaborate to Boost MSME Exports of Steel Products

NEW DELHI: In a move aimed at boosting exports from India's micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC India) and the Indian Stainless Steel Development Association (ISSDA) have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The agreement, signed on Tuesday, outlines a collaborative effort to enhance the export potential of MSME members in the engineering and stainless steel sectors.

The partnership encompasses several key initiatives designed to promote export growth. These include the identification of potential export products, organisation of



trade exhibitions, buyer-seller meets, and economic summits.

Additionally, the agreement facilitates the exchange of trade information and encourages international investment through joint ventures and technical collaborations.

The MoU was formally signed by EEPC India's Execu-

tive Director, Adhip Mitra, and ISSDA's Executive Director, Rohit Kumar.

The signing ceremony was attended by ISSDA President Rajamani Krishnamurti and senior officials from EEPC India, underscoring the importance of this collaborative effort.

Hindenburg trying to malign SEBI, creating market trust deficit: Mutual Funds body



MUMBAI: The Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) on Sunday slammed the latest Hindenburg report against SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and her husband Dhaval Buch, saying the US short-seller is trying to create a trust deficit in market ecosystem.

In a statement, the AMFI said that external comments on the markets regulator's Chairperson "not only attempt to undermine Madhabi Buch's contribution to the Indian capital market, but it also undermines our country's economic progress, and creating a trust deficit in the market ecosystem must be seen for what they truly are -- attempts to create sensation by connecting random events done in the past".

The mutual fund industry body warned that if the allegations were left unchecked, they can create unnecessary hurdles in the path of the world's fastest-growing economy.

"Hindenburg's claims lack context and understanding of the Indian regulatory environment, said the AMFI, adding that the report also "seeks to malign the hard-earned achievements of our nation".

The AMFI further said that the market structure in India is "strong".

"Over a period, the regulator has created a well-functioning market trusted by both local and global investors with several measures taken under the current leadership of SEBI Chairperson," said the industry body.

According to the IMFI, several important measures have been taken under the leadership of the current SEBI Chairperson, and SEBI regulations have made mutual funds the most transparent and effective product.

Walmart Vriddhi Announces Webinar on Global Opportunities for Women-Owned Businesses



NEW DELHI: Walmart Vriddhi, a supplier development initiative, has announced a webinar titled 'Unlock Your Global Business Potentials' specifically targeting women entrepreneurs. The virtual session is scheduled for August 21, 2024, from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM, and will be led by Poonam Mehdiratta, India Market Lead, WEConnect International.

The webinar aims to provide insights into learning, networking, and global business opportunities available to women-owned businesses through the WEConnect International network. Key topics will include the advantages of supplier diversity, the exclusive Women-Owned business certification, and success stories from the field. Participants will gain knowledge on leveraging these resources to enhance their business profiles and engage with large buyers and multinational corporations.

'Make in Bharat for the World' has become a reality: Ashwini Vaishnaw

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Railways, Electronics and IT and I&B, Ashwini Vaishnaw, on Tuesday said the aim of the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme is to build scale in domestic manufacturing, as tech giant Apple exceeded its export targets in the first four months of the current fiscal. The company exported 85 per cent of the freight-on-board production value of its iPhones, worth more than Rs 40,000 crore, in the April-July period.

"Make in Bharat for the World has become a reality," Minister Vaishnaw posted on X social media platform.

Apple registered about \$8



billion revenue in India in the last fiscal year (FY24). Driven by the PLI scheme of the government, Apple's iPhone market in the country is all set to reach 7 per cent by the end of this year, surpassing \$9 billion in revenue.

The tech giant achieved record export numbers around \$3.8 billion in the April-June period (Q2 FY25) in the coun-

try. According to industry experts, the long-term growth outlook remains positive with Apple being well-positioned to capitalise on India's growth trajectory over the next decade. In 2023, Apple achieved a milestone of 10 million shipments in one full year.

According to Apple CEO Tim Cook, the company set a quarterly revenue record in India in the June quarter. "And we set an all-time revenue record in services, which grew 14 per cent," Cook told analysts during the company's quarterly results.

According to industry estimates, iPhone shipments are projected to increase by

over 20 per cent this year on the back of domestic manufacturing support and strong distribution.

Meanwhile, the tech giant is set to make its 'Make in India' iPhone 16 Pro and 16 Pro Max models available in the country right after the global launch this fall. iPhone 16 is set to be made available on the first day of global sales in India, just like last year when iPhone 15 arrived in the domestic market on the very first day of the global sale. It will be shortly followed by iPhone 16 Plus models. The company is attracting many first-time users for its newly-launched iPhones in India.

SMIORE announces new CEO, COO in its forward journey

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai/Bengaluru

The Sandur Manganese & Iron Ores Ltd (SMIORE or the Company), a leading player in the mining and metals industry, recently announced the appointment of Krishnendu Sanyal as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Manjunath Prabhu as Chief Operating Officer (COO).

The Company made these



appointments in augmenting its management bandwidth and driving forward its ambitious plans for integration and sustainability in the metals and mining industry, a release stated.

Describing this as a milestone, the SMIORE Managing Director Bahirji A Ghorpade said the Company's transition towards a sustainable and integrated future emphasized building the required management bandwidth to drive the execution of its crucial strategic priorities.

Highlighting the experience and qualities of the new CEO and COO, Ghorpade said "I look forward to working closely

with both of them as we scale new heights and continue to innovate and excel, creating a future-ready organisation poised for sustainable value creation."

SMIORE CEO Krishnendu Sanyal said that with many potent triggers in the offing, including its recent mining expansion, SMIORE is on a path to creating a lasting legacy in the Indian metals and mining industry.

DIFFERENT ROUTES AND SAME DESTINATION

Indian Pharmaceutical & FMCG Companies in Wellness Segment



DR. ANIL KUMAR ANGRISH

Pharmaceutical companies and companies from Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector are tapping opportunities in Indian Consumer Healthcare Market. Traditionally, Pharmaceutical and FMCG sector are considered different from each other but this distinction gets blurred if we look at the manner in which prominent companies from both sectors are exploring Wellness Segment. If we dig deeper then we can find certain recognizable differences in their approach towards Wellness Segment in terms of product portfolio, marketing and consumer engagement.

Health is defined by the World Health Organization as being "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." The Global Wellness Institute defined wellness as "the active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health". Several key areas of one's lifestyle are considered different dimensions of overall Wellness which include social connectedness, nutrition, exercise, sleep, and mindfulness as Wellness is an individual endeavour. Wellness Universe now comprises varied and diverse sectors such as Traditional & Complementary Medicine, Workplace wellness, Wellness tourism comprising wellness resorts, wellbeing centers, retreats, and ashrams, Healthy eating, Nutrition & Weight Loss - Wellness Cuisine

(Organic, low-carb, farm-to-fork etc.), Thermal/Mineral Springs Industry, the Spa Economy, Preventive & Personalized Medicine and Public Health, Fitness - Body (Exercise, Gyms, Yoga, Fitness Centers, etc.) and Mind (Mental Health and Wellbeing), Personal Care, Fitness Wear, Beauty & Anti-Aging Industries, among others.

Pharma and FMCG companies' portfolio categories in Focus under Wellness Segment include Supplements, Skin Care, Personal Care, Gut Health, Women's Health, Pain Management, Respiratory Health, Sports Nutrition, Diet and Weight Management, and Children's Health and Baby Care. Supplements Category encompasses a broad range of products aimed at enhancing overall health and addressing specific nutritional needs. This category includes multivitamins which cater to general nutritional supplementation. This category also features specific vitamins and minerals. It also comprises specialized supplements like Omega-3 fish oil for heart health, probiotics for gut health, weight management supplements and immune boosters. For example, Sun Pharma has 7 products in 'Supplement' category such as Revital, Prohance, etc. Torrent Pharma has Shelcal 500, LupinLife has BE ONE, and P&G Hygiene & Health Care has 5 products namely Evion, Livogen, Polybion, Neurobion, and Seven Seas. Cipla Health has 6 products, and Morepen Labs has 17 products, e.g., Fat Burner, Omega-3 Deep Sea Fish Oil. FMCG companies such as Dabur India has 17 products such as Vedic Suraksha Tea, Glucose D, Honey, Chayawanprash, Giloy Neem Juice with Tulsi, etc. under Health Supplements category. Emami has 41 products in Health Supplements category which comprise Chyawanprash,

Nityam Vati, Honey, Detox juice range, etc.

Skin Care category is also prominent category for Pharma as well as FMCG companies and includes products targeted at diverse skincare needs, providing solutions for daily care as well as specialized treatments for conditions like acne, eczema, and fungal infections, e.g., Sun Pharma has Abzorb Powder and Abzorb Bar, Cipla has Cipladine Povidone Ointment, Cipladine Microbicidal Solution, Cloclip Antifungal dusting Powder etc. Mankind Pharma has AcneStar Soap/gel, Ring Out, Heal-OKind, Piramal Pharma has Lacto Calamine Oil Balance Lotion, Tetmosol, Neko, etc. FMCG major Zydus Wellness has at least 19 Skincare products with Everyuth range including Scrub, Face Wash, Lotion, etc.

Women's Health category is designed specifically for women's health needs across various life stages. Cipla Health has a range of products under Mamaxpert, LupinLife Consumer Healthcare has one product (V-Bath), Piramal Pharma has products like i-pill, i-know, and i-can, and Amrutanjana Health Care has Comfy pads. Mankind Pharma has at least 9 products such as Unwanted-72, Prega News, etc.

Gut Health is gaining momentum and it focuses on digestive health and related issues. The category includes Probiotics, and digestive aids such as laxatives. The market focus of this category is on addressing digestive disorders, supporting gut flora balance, and promoting overall digestive wellness with products tailored for different age groups and specific digestive issues. Cipla Health has Prolyte ORS, Probiotics Sachets, Mankind Pharma has KOFZOVAC, LUPIZYME, AP-TIVATE. FMCG major Emami has Zandu Triphala capsules,



and Pancharishta.

Pain Management category provides relief from various types of pain through topical and oral formulations. Key products include topical pain relief gels, creams, sprays, as well as oral pain relievers. This category targets consumers seeking effective pain relief solutions for headaches, muscle pains, joint pains, and other discomforts. Companies like Sun Pharma has Volini Gel, Cipla Health has omigel, Amrutanjana Health Care has Pain Balm, Roll-on, Stick-On Patch, whereas FMCG major Emami has six products such Zandu Balm, Ortho Vedic Oil, Knee Pain Relief Patch, etc.

Products in respiratory health category focus on treatment and prevention of respiratory ailments. This includes cough syrups, nasal sprays, and respiratory supplements for allergy relief and congestion management. Sports Nutrition category provides nutritional support for athletes and fitness enthusiasts. Key products include protein supplements, energy boosters for stamina and recovery, and the market focus is on active individuals looking to enhance performance, muscle growth, and recovery through nutritional supplementation. Diet and Weight Management category aims at supporting weight loss, weight gain, and overall

lakh retailers by March 2023 through digital platforms. Torrent Pharma is another notable player that launched Shelcal 500 in OTC segment which was previously prescription-based. Torrent Pharma had acquired Shelcal from Elder Pharma in 2013.

LupinLife, Consumer Healthcare Division of Lupin Limited has expanded brand portfolio from one to multiple brands since 2017. Softovac, the flagship product has recorded 14% YoY growth in FY23. It has transitioned products like Vovilup in Pain Management and Lupihist in Cough and Cold categories. Glenmark Pharma has expanded its product range across three flagship brands namely Candip Powder, La Shield and Scalpe+. Candip Powder had 17 per cent revenue growth in FY23, La Shield portfolio had 73 per cent revenue growth during the same period whereas Scale+ portfolio had 13 per cent revenue growth in FY23.

Piramal Pharma, a subsidiary of Piramal Enterprises has the Consumer Products Division which caters to the Indian self-care market and is one of the fastest-growing businesses of the company. Piramal Enterprises forayed into the Over-the-Counter (OTC) market after acquiring Saridon from Roche and Lacto Calamine from Duphar in the early 1990s. The Consumer Products Division has a diverse product range of 21 brands across categories such as Skin Care, antacids, Vitamins & Nutrition, Gastrointestinal, Analgesics, and Baby-Care. Most of its brands are either no. 1 or no. 2 in their respective markets and product categories. In addition to this, six brands feature among top 100 OTC brands. Product innovation and expansion can be observed from the fact that it launched 26 new products and 37 new Stock Keeping Units

(SKUs) in FY2023 along, and new launches since April 2020 accounted for 18 per cent of the Consumer Business revenues in FY23. Kerala Ayurveda Limited is also a notable early entrant (set up in 1945) that has vast wellness product range with more than 170 products in diverse categories.

Companies from FMCG sector have significant presence in Wellness Segment, e.g., Dabur India's Health Care Segment contributes 31.7 per cent of the company's overall FMCG business in India. This segment encompasses various sub-categories such as Health Supplements (Chyawanprash, Honey, Glucose, Vita and Vedic Tea), Digestives (Pudin Hara, Hingoli, Nature Care, Sat Isabgol etc.), OTC products (Honitus, Dabur Baby range, Dabur Lal Tail, etc.), and Ayurvedic Ethicals such as Rheumatil, Nectolac granules, etc.

Zydus Wellness, established in 1988, as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Zydus Lifesciences also falls in FMCG category, and has seven leading brands in its portfolio, namely Complian, Glucon-D, Sugar Free, Nycil, Everyuth, I'm lite and Nutralite.

Emami is another leading FMCG company that has a Domestic Consumer Care Division. Emami initiated Project Khoj as a market reach expansion strategy that focuses on enhancing rural distribution coverage. It is also leveraging digital and geo-coded initiatives to gain insights into buying patterns and consumer behavior. Impact of the project can be observed from the fact that before the project, Emami covered 32,000 villages, but within two years, the company added 20,000 villages, reaching a total of 52,000 in FY2022-23. Emami's Domestic Consumer Care Division boasts an extensive retail reach that covers approximately 9.4

lakh retailers through a robust multi-layer network of direct distributors, super stockists, sub-distributors, and wholesalers. Emami launched over 20 new products and integrated 'Dermi-cool' brand that it acquired from Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare in March 2022 for Rs. 432 crore.

Regarding their approach towards Wellness segment, pharmaceutical companies are dedicated to offering a diverse range of wellness products, and their product line includes vitamins, dietary supplements, OTC products, herbal and traditional remedies, and contraceptives. These companies heavily rely on scientific credibility to promote their products. Their retail presence gets enhanced through extensive pharmacy networks and a growing presence of e-pharmacy platforms. Pharmaceutical companies engage with healthcare professionals and prescribers to ensure their products remain visible and credible in the medical community. In contrast to this, FMCG majors are focusing on integrating wellness into their existing product portfolios, placing a strong emphasis on natural and traditional health solutions. FMCG companies are developing fortified foods, herbal supplements, and home remedies by leveraging their brand's legacy in personal care and food products to meet increasing consumer demand for health-oriented options.

Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish, Associate Professor (Finance and Accounting), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Punjab Shubham Sahu, MBA (Pharm.), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER, SAS Nagar (Mohali) DISCLAIMER: Views are personal and do not represent the views of the Institute.

RBI cracks whip on NBFC P2P platforms

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday issued a new master direction on Friday to tighten rules for NBFCs on their peer-to-peer lending platforms.

The RBI said it has been observed that some of these platforms have adopted certain practices which are violative of its directions.

Such practices include, among others, violation of the prescribed funds' transfer mechanism, promoting peer-to-peer lending as an investment product with features like tenure-linked assured minimum returns, providing liquidity options and at times acting like deposit takers and lenders instead of being a platform.

The new master direction states: "An NBFC-P2P shall not provide or arrange any credit enhancement or credit guarantee. NBFC P2P shall not assume any credit risk, either directly or indirectly, arising out of transactions carried out on its platform. In other words, the entire loss of principal or interest or both, if any, in respect of funds lent by lenders



to borrowers on the platform shall be borne by the lenders."

The RBI has also stated that an NBFC-P2P will not cross-sell any product except for loan-specific insurance products.

"An NBFC-P2P shall be required to disclose the following: publicly disclose portfolio performance including share of non-performing assets (NPAs) on a monthly basis and segregation by age on its website. It may be noted that such disclosures shall also include all losses borne by the lenders on principal or interest or both."

The P2P platform is also barred from promoting peer-

to-peer lending as an investment product with features like tenure-linked assured minimum returns and liquidity options.

The master direction further stipulates that the aggregate exposure of a lender to all borrowers at any point of time, across all P2P platforms, shall be subject to a cap of Rs 50 lakh provided that such investments of the lenders on P2P platforms are consistent with their net worth.

The lender investing more than Rs 10 lakh across P2P platforms shall produce a certificate to P2P platforms from a practicing Chartered Accountant certifying mini-

Private Banks Increase Risk Weights on Microfinance Loans Following Regulatory Directive



NEW DELHI: In a recent development, several large private banks have raised the risk weights on their microfinance loans from 75 per cent to 125 per cent over the past ten days.

This adjustment comes in response to a directive from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), according to sources familiar with the matter, reported Moneycontrol.

The RBI has reportedly communicated this mandate to at least five major private banks, effectively placing microfinance loans in the same risk category as unsecured loans.

A senior official from one of

the affected banks, speaking on condition of anonymity, confirmed that this change has been implemented with immediate effect. This increase in risk weights will require banks to allocate more capital to cover potential loan losses, which could impact their profitability.

The move stands in contrast to lower-risk loans such as affordable housing, which carry a risk weight of only 35 per cent. Industry insiders suggest that this regulatory action aims to ensure bank capital positions accurately reflect the risk profile of their assets.

Some in the sector anticipate further tightening of regulations on microfinance loans in the coming months.

Sources cite concerns over lapses in determining household incomes, overall borrower exposure, and the number of loans availed by individual borrowers.

These practices have reportedly led to signs of overheating in the microfinance sector. There are indications that if these concerns persist, risk weight increases may be extended to all banks.

The lack of adequate end-use monitoring for microloans is another factor believed to have prompted regulatory action.

Some industry executives argue that microfinance loans, originally intended to improve borrower productivity, are increasingly being treated similarly to unsecured loans due to reduced lender scrutiny. Bandhan Bank, in its recent quarterly earnings report, disclosed that it had increased risk weights on its microfinance loans (classified internally as emerging entrepreneurs' business) to 125 per cent from 75 per cent.

Govt simplifies FDI rules to help Indian firms expand via mergers, acquisitions



NEW DELHI: The Finance Ministry on Friday issued a notification amending the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019, to simplify FDI rules for enabling easier cross-border share swaps between Indian and foreign companies, as announced in the Budget 2024-25.

This will facilitate the global expansion of Indian companies through mergers, acquisitions, and other strategic initiatives, enabling them to reach new markets and grow their presence worldwide, said a Finance Ministry statement. "In pursuance of the Union Budget 2024-25 announcement made by Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman to simplify rules and regulations for Foreign Direct Investment and Overseas Investment, as one of the initiatives, the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance, has amended the Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019, vide notification dated 16.08.2024," the official statement said.

The amendments aim to simplify cross-border share swaps and provide for the issue or transfer of Indian company equity instruments in exchange for foreign company equity instruments. Another key change brings further clarity on the treatment of downstream investments made by Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)-owned entities on a non-repatriation basis, aligning it with the treatment of Non-Resident Indian (NRI)-owned entities, the statement explained. The amendments will also enable Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in White Label ATMs to boost financial inclusion nationwide. ATMs set up, owned and operated by non-banks are called White Label ATMs (WLAs). Non-bank ATM operators are authorised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). For a customer, using a WLA is just like using an ATM of any bank. The rationale to allow non-bank entities to set up WLAs is to increase the geographical spread of ATMs for enhanced customer service, especially in the semi-urban and rural areas.

Wholesale inflation falls to 3-month low of 2.04% in July



NEW DELHI: Wholesale inflation fell to a 3-month low of 2.04 per cent in July on decline in prices of food items especially vegetables, government data released today showed.

The decline in wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation in July came after it rose for four months in a row till June, when it was 3.36 per cent. It was (-) 1.23 per cent in July last year.

In April wholesale inflation stood at 1.19 per cent.

As per the data, food inflation in July was 3.45 per cent, down from 10.87 per cent in June, mainly due to month-on-month decline in prices of vegetables, cereals, pulses and onion.

Vegetables recorded a deflation of 8.93 per cent in July, against a 38.76 per cent inflation in the previous month.

Bharti to acquire 24.5 pc stake in British Telecom Group worth \$4 bn

Bharti Global to buy 9.99 per cent stake in BT Group from Patrick Drahi's Altice

New Delhi: Telecom czar Sunil Bharti Mittal's conglomerate will buy a 24.5 per cent stake in Britain's largest broadband and mobile company, British Telecom (BT) Group, worth about USD 4 billion.

Bharti Global, the international investment arm of Bharti Enterprises, will buy 9.99 per cent stake in BT Group from Patrick Drahi's Altice immediately and purchase the remainder after it had secured the necessary regulatory approvals, the firm said in a statement.

However, it did not disclose financial details but market watchers say that at BT's valuation of roughly USD 15 billion dollars, the deal could be in the ballpark of USD 4 billion range.

Bharti, India's second largest telecom operator with about 400 million subscribers, has had a relationship with BT previously as well. BT owned a 21 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel from 1997 to 2001. The company is neither keen



on making an offer to acquire the whole of BT, nor is it seeking a board position.

Altice, an investment conglomerate controlled by billionaire Drahi, is exiting BT as it struggles with high debt. It first took a stake in BT in 2021, acquiring a 12 per cent holding which it later increased to 24.5 per cent.

BT's shares have fallen by about a third since Altice first became an investor.

"Bharti Global, the international investment arm of Bharti Enterprises, a leading Indian business group with world-class companies in telecoms, digital infrastructure and space communications, has reached an agreement to acquire an interest in 24.5 per cent of the issued share capital of BT Group plc from Altice UK," Bharti said in a statement.

Bharti hopes the investment will further help create new synergies in the telecom sector between India and the UK in the areas of AI and 5G R&D and core engineering among

India Targets Sustainable Development to Become Developed Nation By 2047: Economist Shamika Ravi

NEW DELHI: In a departure from traditional growth models, India is aiming to become a developed nation by 2047 through a sustainable approach, according to economist Shamika Ravi, Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

Speaking at the 'Youth Sabha 2047: Shaping India's Future' event in New Delhi, Ravi emphasised that India would not follow the 'growth at all costs' strategy adopted by OECD countries, reported Livemint.

Instead, the nation is committed to a growth trajectory that is both equitable and environmentally responsible. The government's Viksit Bharat @2047 vision outlines ambitious targets, including expanding the GDP from USD 3.4 trillion to USD 30 trillion by 2047.

This comprehensive plan encompasses economic growth, social progress, good governance, and environmental sustainability.

NITI Aayog Proposes Guidelines to Enhance Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

NEW DELHI: In a move to strengthen the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), the government think tank NITI Aayog has recommended establishing guidelines for assessing creditworthiness and conducting background verifications for loan applicants.

This proposal comes as part of a comprehensive report titled 'Impact Assessment of PMMY,' recently published on the Aayog's website. The PMMY, launched in 2015, has been a cornerstone in supporting India's vast Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector. To date, the scheme has provided credit support of Rs 18.39 lakh crore to 34.93 crore accounts, playing a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurship and driving socio-economic development. Key recommendations from the report include implementing E-KYC authentication for loan underwriting to enhance assessment checks. The Aayog also suggests developing a set of guidelines for creditworthiness assessment and background verification to provide a security net for banks, given the collateral-free nature of these loans. Furthermore, the report proposes establishing a reward mechanism for banks



based on their scale of operation and performance. To streamline data collection, the creation of a portal for real-time upload of beneficiary data has been recommended. These suggestions aim to address the challenges faced by banks in verifying small entrepreneurs with limited documentation, while also ensuring the sustainability and success of the scheme. The report highlights the significant growth in credit disbursements to MSMEs across all segments, which have doubled compared to pre-pandemic levels. However, it also notes a concerning trend in the rise of Non-Performing Asset (NPA) accounts, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 22.51 per cent since FY 2017. The MSME sectors' importance to the Indian economy cannot be overstated. It contributes 33 per cent of the country's total manufacturing gross value output, accounts for over 40 per cent of exports, and adds more than 28 per cent to India's GDP.

In Perfect Balance - Inflation and Development



SATISH SINGH
To strike a balance between inflation and development, in the latest monetary review, the Monetary Policy Committee has not changed the repo rate for the 9th consecutive time and has kept it unchanged at 6.5 percent. Earlier, the repo rate was increased in February 2023.

The Reserve Bank mainly tries to fight inflation by increasing the repo rate. When the repo rate is high, banks get loans from the Reserve Bank at a higher rate, due to which banks also give loans to customers at a higher rate. By doing this, the liquidity of money in the economy decreases and due to lack of money in the pockets of the people, the demand for goods decreases and due to the high price of goods and products, their sale decreases, due to which a decline in inflation is recorded.

Similarly, when there is a slowdown in the economy, efforts are made to increase the liquidity of money in the market to accelerate the developmental work and for this also the repo rate is reduced, so that the banks get loans at cheaper rates from the Reserve Bank and after getting loans at cheaper rates, the banks also give loans to the customers at cheaper rates.

At present, the inflation rate remains a matter of concern for the government and the Reserve Bank of India. According to Care Edge Rating, despite the loan rate not softening, the loan growth rate



has been around 16 per cent in the financial year 2023-24 and it is estimated to be between 14 to 14.5 per cent in the financial year 2024-25. Such a situation is very positive for the Indian economy. However, this can be called an exceptional situation. However, due to the rapid pace of lending, both economic activities and growth rate are accelerating. For this reason, the Reserve Bank of India has increased its growth forecast for the financial year 2025 from 7.00 per cent to 7.2 per cent.

The GDP growth rate in the fourth quarter of FY 2023-2024 was 7.8, while it was 6.1 per cent in the same quarter last year. At the same time, the GDP growth rate in the financial year 2023-24 was 8.2 per cent, which is 1.2 per cent more than the estimate of the Reserve Bank of India i.e. the Reserve Bank had estimated the GDP growth rate to be 7 per cent during the financial year 2023-24. The GDP growth rate was 7 per cent in the last financial year. According to the Ministry of Statistics, the growth rate remained fast during the period under review due to strong performance in the

manufacturing and mining sectors. The manufacturing sector has grown by 9.9 per cent, which was minus 2.2 per cent in the financial year 2022-23. Similarly, the mining sector grew at the rate of 7.1 per cent during the financial year 2023-24, which was 1.9 per cent in the financial year 2022-23. It is noteworthy that the manufacturing sector plays an important role in employment generation.

Retail inflation remains a matter of concern, as the price of food items is expected to remain high in the months of July, August and September due to floods and rains. However, there may be some softening in it in winter. Although the Reserve Bank of India has projected inflation to be 4.5 per cent in the financial year 2025, this level is not enough to take decisive decisions for development.

According to the National Statistical Office, retail inflation in June rose by 0.33 per cent to 5.08 per cent as compared to May, while it was 4.75 per cent in previous month, which was a 12-month low. There was some reduction in retail inflation in April, but it was slightly higher than

May at 4.83 per cent. Retail inflation was 4.81 per cent in June 2023, while it was 4.44 per cent in July 2023.

Inflation is directly related to purchasing power. For example, if the inflation rate is 6 per cent, then the value of Rs.100/- earned will be only Rs.94/-. Therefore, investors should invest according to the level of inflation, otherwise they will get less returns. The increase and decrease of inflation depend on the demand and supply of the product. If people have more money, they will buy more products and buying more products will increase the demand and if the supply is not according to the demand, the price of the products will increase.

In this way, the market will get caught in the vicious circle of inflation. Excessive flow of money in the market or shortage of products causes inflation. On the other hand, if the demand is less and the supply is more, then inflation will be less.

Customers buy goods from the retail market and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures the change in the price of products available in the market. The CPI measures the average price paid for products and services. Apart from crude oil, prices of products, cost of production, there are many other things which play an important role in determining the retail inflation rate. Currently, there are about 300 products based on whose prices the retail inflation rate is determined.

Thus, inflation plays an important role in determining one's purchasing power. When inflation increases, the

prices of both goods and services increase, which reduces the purchasing power of an individual and reduces the demand for goods and services. Then, their sales decrease, their production decreases, the company incurs losses, workers are laid off, employment generation decreases, etc. Due to this, economic activities slow down, and the pace of development is hampered.

Despite the lending interest rate remaining high for the last few months, loan disbursement is increasing, and the pace of growth also remains high. However, such a situation is an exception.

HSBC India's PMI figure stood at 58.1 in July 2024, which was 58.3 points in June and 57.5 points in May, while it was 58.8 points in April. This figure reflects the boom in economic activities and this figure being more than 50 points means that economic activities in the country are booming.

Inflation in India is at a worrying level despite being within the tolerance limit set by the central bank. Therefore, the policy rates have been kept unchanged in the monetary review by the Reserve Bank of India. 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, so that the common man does not face any problem and the pace of development also remains fast.

Satish Singh, Ahmedabad based Senior Columnist. Views are Personal

Nifty, Sensex rally on positive global cues

MUMBAI: Indian equity indices opened strong on Friday following positive global cues, including optimism around a potential rate cut by the US Federal Reserve next month.

At 9:50 a.m., Sensex was up 608 points or 0.76 per cent at 79,714 and Nifty was up 166 points or 0.69 per cent at 24,310. The market trend was bullish in the opening trade. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), 1,704 shares opened in green mark and 345 shares in red. INDIAMIDEX was trading at 14.79, down 4.21 per cent compared to the previous trading session. This showed that the market remains stable.

Along with largesecap, positive trends were being seen in mid-cap and smallcap stocks. The Nifty Midcap 100 index was at 57,057, up 522 points or 0.92



per cent, and the Nifty Smallcap 100 index was at 18,274, up 187 points or 0.25 per cent.

All indices were trading in the green. Auto, IT, PSU Bank, fin Service, pharma, FMCG, realty and energy and healthcare were major gainers. Vaishali Parekh, Vice President (Technical Research) of

Prabhudas Lilladher, said, "Nifty witnessed a consolidated session with very narrow rangebound movement and as mentioned earlier, would have the 24,000 zone as the crucial and important support as of now which needs to sustain to maintain the overall trend intact."

ASSOCHAM shares I-Day resolve to make India a developed nation

NEW DELHI: Sharing the optimism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address, ASSOCHAM today said India Inc would be an active partner in the national resolve to make India a developed nation by 2047 when we could celebrate 100 years of Independence day.

"The Prime Minister has a great ability to connect with the people of the country. His address from the ramparts of Red Fort would reinforce enthusiasm of 140 crore Indians to work together and realise the national objectives of achieving excellence with the help of technology and innovation in agriculture, manufacturing, health services and education to make our country Atmanirbharta across different sectors of the economy", said ASSOCHAM



Secretary General Deepak Sood. In his congratulatory message, the chamber secretary general said, "it is reassuring to see the Prime Minister conveying his resolve to make lives easier for the people of India. Stress on minimum government interference, reforms in governance would help the nation leverage the innate strength of our people, particularly the youth who form the majority of the human resource". Citizens' aspirations to live a

better life and participate in national progress forms the core of the PM's address to the nation. The I-Day address has emphasized upon scaling up India's health services. Introduction of 75,000 new medical seats, as announced by Shri Narendra Modi, reflects the government's commitment towards making 'Swasth Bharat' along with 'Viksit Bharat', the chamber said.

ASSOCHAM secretary general Deepak Sood said the initiative to rope in states to establish clear policies to attract investments would be a double-down approach for scaling up investment-led growth.

Reiteration of India's goal for a sustainable economic growth provides an impetus to the goal of 500 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2030.

INTERNATIONAL

Kamala Harris unveils 'populist' economic agenda to cut costs

WASHINGTON: US Vice-President Kamala Harris on Friday unveiled a plan to "lower costs for American families" that included proposals to ban price gouging, build 3 million new housing units and grant a tax credit of \$6,000 per newborn.

These much-awaited economic proposals, which Harris will announce at an election rally in North Carolina, offer the first public view of her governing agenda as president in coming three weeks after she was catapulted to the top of the Democratic ticket after President Joe Biden exited the race bowing to pressure from with the party following his disastrous performance in the first presidential debate. The Harris campaign said in a statement these proposals for her first 100 days in office are intended to "bring down costs for American



families" and will "cut taxes for the middle class, reduce grocery costs, take on price gouging, lower the costs of owning and renting a home, continue to bring down the costs of prescription drugs, and relieve medical debt for millions of Americans".

High prices are the focus of the 2024 presidential election. Former President Donald Trump has made it a key element of his re-election bid and held a news conference on Thursday focussing on inflation, which dropped under 3 per cent for the

first time since 2021 according to data released for the annual inflation rate for the month of July. Acknowledging the centrality of the issue, Harris, unlike President Joe Biden, has taken on the issue headlong. The plan, which was called "aggressively populist" by The Washington Post, proposes the "first-ever federal ban on price gouging on food and groceries" and empowering regulators to crackdown on violations; the expansion of the Child Tax Credit to provide a \$6,000 tax cut for families with newborn children for the first year of their life; lowering the costs of prescription drugs and relieving medical debt; and a slew of measures to offset high costs of buying and renting homes by building 3 million new units over 4 years and a \$25,000 down-payment subsidy for first-time home buyers.

UN chief calls for banning nuclear testing 'for good'

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for banning nuclear testing "for good" in an observance message for the International Day against Nuclear Tests, observed annually on August 29.

In the message, Guterres said on Thursday that across nearly eight decades, more than 2,000 nuclear tests were conducted at more than 60 sites around the world, leaving "a legacy of destruction, rendering lands uninhabitable and creating long-term health problems for people". Xinhua news agency reported. The UN chief warned that recent calls for the resumption of nuclear testing demonstrate that the terrible lessons of the past "are being forgotten, or ignored". "On the International Day against Nuclear Tests, the world must speak with one voice



to end this practice once and for all," he stressed. Noting that the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty is the only prohibition on all nuclear testing, and an essential, verifiable security tool, Guterres lamented: "But it is not yet in force." "In the name of the victims of nuclear tests and future generations, I call on all countries whose ratifications are needed for the Treaty to enter into force to do so -- immediately and without conditions," Guterres said. "Let's pass the test for humanity -- and ban nuclear testing for good," he added.

Indian-Owned Textile Factories Resume Operations in Bangladesh Following Unrest



NEW DELHI: In the aftermath of recent civil unrest in Bangladesh, textile factories owned by Indian companies have recommenced operations, according to a senior official from the Commerce Ministry. Concurrently, cross-border truck movement between India and Bangladesh has resumed at the Petrapole border crossing. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated, "After a period of disruption and uncertainty lasting several days, these manufacturing units have now reopened." He added, "They have communicated to us that operations are currently proceeding without issues."

On Saturday, Minister Sitharaman expressed concerns regarding Indian investments in Bangladesh, with a specific focus on the textile sector.

She highlighted that many of these investments originated from entrepreneurs based in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. "These investments were made in good faith, anticipating success in the textile and garment industries, which indeed materialised," Minister Sitharaman remarked.

The further expressed hope for the safety of these investments amid the recent turmoil.

The resumption of factory operations and cross-border trade suggests a return to normalcy in the region, though the situation continues to be monitored closely by both governments.

Lack of adequate geographic representation hobbling UNSC: India



UNITED NATIONS: The lack of adequate geographic representation in the Security Council is responsible for its failures, and giving Africa permanent membership will be essential to make the highest decision-making body effective, R. Ravindra, charge d'affaires of India's UN mission has said.

Speaking on behalf of the G-4, the group of India, Brazil, Germany and Japan, on Monday at an open debate of the Council on reforming itself, he said, "A primary reason for the underperformance of this critical institution remains the non-representation of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and the under-representation of Asia-Pacific in the permanent category". "We are convinced that African representation in both permanent and non-permanent categories will be an indispensable part of UNSC reform for a more representative and effective Council," he said. The meeting of the Council was convened by Sierra Leone, which holds the rotating presidency, to push Africa's case for reforming the Council to give the continent better representation.

Putin lauds India's 'widely-recognised track record of success' in I-Day greetings to President Murmu, PM Modi

MOSCOW: Lauding India's "widely-recognised track record of success", Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that Moscow attaches great importance to the privileged strategic partnership between the two countries.

In another statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry also hailed the longstanding partnership between the countries, saying that India now enjoys a

"well-deserved authority" in the world arena. "Over the course of 77 years of its development as an independent nation, your country has achieved a widely-recognised track record of success in social, economic, scientific, technical affairs, as well as in many other spheres, and has earned great prestige on the international stage," Putin wrote in his message to President Droupadi Murmu



and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of India's Independence Day. "We attach great importance

to the relations of a privileged strategic partnership with India, and I am certain that our consistent efforts to fulfil the agreements resulting from our recent talks in Moscow will contribute to further expanding the multifaceted cooperation between Russia and India. There is no doubt that this would serve the interests of our friendly nations, while strengthening international stability and security," he

added. Meanwhile, the Russian Foreign Ministry also hailed the diplomatic relations between the two countries, saying that the friendly Russian-Indian ties are based on equality, mutual respect and trust. "India enjoys well-deserved authority in the world arena, playing a major constructive role in international affairs. Today, our relations can be defined as a special and privileged strategic partnership."

India expects landmark global cybercrime pact will be strong force to fight threat

UNITED NATIONS: India expects that the landmark international treaty to fight cybercrime will be a very strong force to fight the threat through international cooperation, according to its delegate to the negotiations for the landmark pact.

The 193 members of the world organisation reached a consensus for a comprehensive treaty to fight cybercrimes, ranging from terrorism and hacking to financial fraud and child porn after more than two years of negotiations. "We anticipate that this treaty will establish a very strong foundation for international cooperation, one that allows us to effectively combat cyber threats while respecting the sovereignty of each nation," Arvinder Singh, India's representative at the negotiations has said.

Speaking at the concluding session of the negotiating com-



mittee on Friday, he said, "This will act as a strong deterrent against the cyber criminals who exploit the boundaries of nations while committing cyber crimes."

The negotiators for the landmark treaty reached their agreement on Thursday and the draft will go before the General Assembly where its passage is assured.

It will come into force when

40 countries have signed it.

"The finalisation of this Convention is a landmark step as the first multilateral anti-crime treaty in over 20 years and the first UN Convention against Cybercrime at a time when threats in cyberspace are growing rapidly," said Ghada Waly, the executive director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC), which served as the secretariat for the negotiations.

US welcomes India's peace efforts in Russia-Ukraine war

WASHINGTON: The US has expressed support for India's involvement in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and its efforts to bring peace between the two countries, US State Department Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel has said here.

Patel made the remarks on Wednesday while addressing potential upcoming travel by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Ukraine later this month.

"I will let the (Indian) Prime Minister's office speak to any of his own travels. I don't have anything to offer there," he said during his daily news conference on Wednesday.

"We are in touch with our Indian partners on a number of issues and, of course, would welcome India's engagement in the war between Russia and Ukraine, especially as it relates to ensuring that we get to a just and durable peace that is reflective of what our Ukrainian



partners are attempting to do, which is to defend their territorial integrity and sovereignty," Patel added.

PM Modi is likely to visit Poland and Ukraine from August 21 to 23. No official announcement in this regard has been made yet.

Earlier, PM Modi was on an official visit to Russia from July 8-9 and met Russian President Vladimir Putin. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed disappointment over PM Modi's visit to Russia,

UK Police arrest 1,000 people following riots



LONDON: More than 1,000 people have been arrested by the UK Police in connection with the riots involving violence, arson and looting as well as racist attacks which took place over the last two weeks in Britain, officials said on Tuesday. The riots, which followed the killings of three young girls in the northern English town of Southport, began after the July 29 attack was wrongly blamed on a Muslim migrant based on online misinformation, Reuters reported.

TWO-NATION RHETORIC REINVENTED

Pakistan Army Hopes to Claim Intimate Ties with Pro-Islamists Regime in Dacca



GOPAL MISRA Reinvigorated with the success of his brethren in uniform in deposing Sheikh Hasina, an elected civilian prime minister for 15 years, in Bangladesh, with the support Jamaat-E-Islami, Pakis invoke two-nation theory. The ideology was dead in 1971, when Pakistan's majority Muslim province in the east decided to become a secular democratic Bangladesh.

In spite of the reports of some Muslim students guarding Hindu temples, the interim government led by Mohammad Yunus, an economist and Nobel laureate, has a strong presence of radical Islamists in the new setup. Yunus has inducted Abul Fayed Mohammad Khalid Hossain, president of Hafazat Islam, a known anti-India outfit in Bangladesh. He is also for the implementation of the Sharia laws in the country's judicial system.

The continuous attacks on the supporters of the erstwhile secular democratic regime of Sheikh Hasina cause concerns in India, but the democratic regimes in the US-led West are maintaining silence officially, but their media is supporting the military coup in Bangladesh.

The frustrated Islamists that despite the physical re-

moval of Sheikh Hasina from power, are scared of the supporters of democracy and the identity of Bangladesh. On August 15, they attacked those who were paying homage to the founder of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Forty nine years ago, on this day, he along with his family was martyred. Mujibur could escape gallows in Pakistan. A section of the army having close ties with the Pakistani intelligence agencies, ISI, and Mullahs had committed this heinous crime.

History might remember Yunus, not as an economist, but as a Trojan horse of the new military rulers responsible for ending democracy with the Pakistani-backed Islamists.

Kashmir - an Unfinished Agenda Mirth and happiness was irresistible for Pakistan's army chief Syed Asim Munir, stated to be well-versed in the Holy Koran, when he claimed that Kashmir as a majority Muslim area should have been given to Pakistan as an unfinished agenda of India's partition in 1947. He was addressing a gathering of Islamic scholars at Islamabad.

The new camaraderie is natural between Asim Munir and the Bangladesh army chief General Wakeruz-Zaman. Both control the civilian governments of their



respective countries. They draw their political strength from radical Islamists and are being blessed by China and the US-led West.

Munir's Initiative

It was a calculative move of the Pakistani army chief to raise the two-nation theory to camouflage the bloody past of his predecessors. In 1971, the blood-thirsty Paki soldiers had committed genocide in Bangladesh, then the eastern province of Pakistan. They had massacred more than 20 million Bengali Muslims and violated at least one million women in the age-group of 16-60.

In an upbeat mood, Asim Munir asserted before a select audience of Ulemas and Mashaikhs, experts in Islamic laws and scholars of Islam respectively, that the recent events in Bangladesh have reaffirmed the ideology of two-nation is alive. Without referring to the

bloodless coup in Dacca that toppled the secular government of Sheikh Hasina, he reiterated his commitment to the Sharia law. If anyone dared to oppose the Islamic law would be branded a non-Pakistani, told the gathering of radical Muslims held recently in Islamabad.

The Mashaikhs and Ulemas were also appreciative of the timely coup by the Bangladesh army. For them, it was the return of the Muslims to return to the faith in Bangladesh from the influence of secularism and democracy. Forty nine years ago, they were a part of Pakistan. Also, they were on the forefront of the movement for a Muslim country i.e. Pakistan.

Ulema's Hope

The conference didn't pass any formal resolution welcoming Hasina's removal, but their discussions centered around

emphasizing Islam's role in the governance. There was a sense of satisfaction that like Pakistan, Bangladesh too would become an aggressive Islamic regime. The meeting was held within a week of the bloodless coup, jointly conspired by the chiefs of army, navy and airforce in Dacca. The chiefs prevailed upon Hasina to resign and escape in a helicopter before the menacing crowd of students led by Islamists decimated her like Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Mujibur Rahman, Hasina's father, was killed along with his sons, brothers and even their spouses and children by a group of young army officers. These officers were never punished.

It was quite satisfying for the Ulemas and Mashaikh that despite being under the anti-Islamic forces for half-a-century, the Islamists have reasserted in Bangladesh. They also hoped that with the defense forces occupying the pivotal role, Bangladesh is expected to adopt the Sharia laws in near future.

Since 1971, a secular and democratic Bangladesh had become a challenge to the basic concept of the partition of India i.e. the two-nation theory. It was cleverly implemented by the outgoing colonial power. The British Parliament had enacted the Indian Independence Act in

1947, thus the twins, Pakistan and India, were delivered by the white mother. Pakistan had two wings in East and the West, separated by 1500 kilometers of Indian territories.

Partition Negated

During British rule, seeds of India's partition were sown with the setting up a provincial unit of the Muslim League in Bengal, especially enrolling the rich landlords. In a bid to win the support of the poor Muslims, a series of communal riots were engineered. The Razakars, though noticed when they resisted the merger of Nizam's state, Hyderabad, with India, were being nurtured by Muslim landlords on the advice of the British. These Razakars were sent to Bengal to spread communal violence.

General Munir, who is known as a zealot Muslim, who has learnt Holy Koran by heart and could recite the holy text without reading it, was so happy that it is heartening that the two-nation theory propagated by Muhammad Ali Jinnah is back on the agenda of the sub-continent.

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

Parliament elects Thaksin's daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra as Thailand's prime minister



BANGKOK: Thailand's Parliament elected Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the youngest daughter of the divisive former leader Thaksin Shinawatra, as the country's new prime minister Friday.

Paetongtarn becomes Thailand's third leader from the Shinawatra family, after her father, who was ousted by coup before returning from exile last year, and her aunt Yingluck Shinawatra, who lives in exile. Paetongtarn also became Thailand's second female prime minister after her aunt and the country's youngest leader at 37.

She is the leader of the ruling Pheu Thai party but was not an elected lawmaker, which was not required for her to be a candidate for prime minister. Paetongtarn was the sole nominee and got a majority of the votes in Parliament with the voting ongoing. The last prime minister had been removed by the constitutional court two days ago over an ethics violation.

Thaksin is one of Thailand's most popular but divisive political figures and was ousted by a military coup in 2006. He is widely seen as a de facto

leader of Pheu Thai, the latest in a string of parties linked to him. His residual popularity and influence is a factor behind the political support for Paetongtarn. Her public entry into politics came in 2021 when the Pheu Thai party announced she would lead an inclusion advisory committee. She was appointed as leader of Pheu Thai last year, after she was named one of its three prime ministerial candidates ahead of the polls.

When Paetongtarn was on the campaign trail for Pheu Thai, she acknowledged her family ties but insisted she was not just her father's proxy. "It's not the shadow of my dad. I am my dad's daughter, always and forever, but I have my own decisions," she told a reporter.

However, her father's shadow is too big to be dismissed and her work will not be easy with him continuing to call political shots for Pheu Thai, said Petra Alderman, a political research fellow at England's University of Birmingham. "Thaksin was a political force to reckon with, but he was also a liability," she said, "He has a tendency to overplay his political hand, so serving in his shadow has never been easy." Paetongtarn's nomination followed the removal of Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin on Wednesday after less than a year in office. The Constitutional Court found him guilty of a serious ethical breach regarding his appointment of a Cabinet member who was jailed in connection with an alleged bribery attempt.

Karnataka tops India with 19% youth aspiring to be digital influencers, 16% to found startups; "The iQOO Quest Report 2024"

ARUN KUMAR RAO Bengaluru

iQOO, a sub-smartphone brand of the vivo group, proudly announces the release of its inaugural "iQOO Quest Report 2024" in collaboration with CyberMedia Research (CMR). This report provides an in-depth analysis of Gen Z traits and trends related to dreams, careers, and aspirations, capturing the journey of one of the world's largest and most optimistic generations. With insights from 6,700 respondents aged 20-24 across seven countries—India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia—the report explores three core areas: the spirit and motivation driving Gen Z Questers to achieve their dreams, the obstacles and barriers that disrupt their pursuit of passion, and the career choices that fuel their interests.

media world, fame and success are increasingly measured by online popularity, with Gen Z often seeking their 15 minutes of fame. This trend raises important questions about the allure and ethics of such careers. While influencer culture thrives, India's startup ecosystem is also booming, now ranking as the world's third-largest. This dynamic underscores a critical consideration for the youth: whether to aspire to be "job creators" or "digital celebrities" in this rapidly evolving landscape. The report delves into various aspects of what success means to Gen Z, decoding their drive, passion, and ambition through a quantitative metric known as the Quest Index, or "QI." The findings reveal India's QI at 9.1, followed by Malaysia at 8.7, Thailand and the USA at 8.2, Indonesia at 8.1, the United Kingdom at 8.0, and Brazil at 7.8. Nipun Marya, CEO of iQOO



India, commented on the report's findings, stating, "At iQOO, we resonate with the spirit of quest that defines Gen Z. Our brand is dedicated to pushing boundaries and striving for more, values that we share with our Gen Z audience. Last year, we demonstrated our commitment to supporting young talent by appointing India's first 23-year-old Chief Gaming Officer from Kanpur. We continue to create opportunities that empower the youth to pursue their

passions. This report is part of our ongoing effort to inspire Gen Z to overcome challenges and achieve their dreams. The insights from the report enable us to better understand and cater to their needs."

Prabhu Ram, Vice President of the Industry Research Group at CMR, shared his thoughts on the report, saying, "In today's complex, digitally-driven world, the youth face unprecedented challenges. At CMR, we are committed to understanding these evolving consumer dynamics. The Quest Report, commissioned by iQOO, delves into the perspectives of a bold new generation across Asia, Europe, North America, and South America, offering invaluable insights into their mindset and aspirations. The report highlights the clarity, focus, and ambition of today's youth in India."

Indian Hockey team pays obeisance at Sri Harmandir Sahib



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

The Indian Hockey team was accorded a warm welcome on reaching Shri Guru Ramdas ji International Airport by the Member Parliament Gurjeet Singh Aujla and Punjab Cabinet Minister Kuldip Singh Dhaliwal here today.

On reaching the airport, the team went to Sri Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) where they were received by SGPC officials. The ten players who

paid obeisance at the Golden Temple all belonged to Punjab whereas five belonged to Amritsar.

During visit to Sri Harmandir Sahib the family members of the Hockey team were also seen enormously happy while seeing the winning team here.

All the Blue turbaned players hugged their family members when they reached outside the Golden Temple from Airport.

Team took a full round of marbled periphery around the water pool of Golden Temple before entering in the sanctum sanctorum where they paid obeisance. Thereafter, team also paid obeisance at the highest Sikh temporal seat Akal Takht.

Due to Sunday, there was

heavy footfall of devotees in the Sri Harmandir Sahib, but the team was provided fool proof security by the SGPC task force. The visiting devotees were seen making mobile selfies with players who happily obliged everybody who asked them for a mobile selfie.

Talking to media, Indian hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh said, "We are here to thank the Waheguru (Almighty) the unseen power which has given us the enormous internal strength in the playground to maintaining stamina which led us to victory to clinch medal for the nation. In future in the coming Olympic in 2028 the team will do more hard practice to change the color of the present medal in Gold with the Grace of Waheguru".

"It was a unique, inexpressible feeling when the team won the bronze medal the Indian flag was seen everywhere in the limelight at Foreign land in Paris", said emotional team captain Harmanpreet Singh.

Another player Germanjeet Singh said the team was thankful to SGPC which accorded a warm welcome here that boosted up the morale of the team as special honor was accorded to the entire team by the SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhani.

Later the team was honored by the SGPC president Dhani in the information centre of the Sri Harmandir Sahib with a gold plated replica of the Sri Harmandir Sahib, set of Sikh religious books and shawls to each team player.

Abhay Deol to star alongside 'Elvis' actress Natasha Basset in 'Don't You Be My Neighbor!'



NEW DELHI: Indian actor Abhay Deol will be seen sharing screen space with "Elvis" actress Natasha Basset in the upcoming indie romantic comedy titled "Don't You Be My Neighbor!".

The film will portray an unlikely connection between Jay essayed by Abhay and Emily played by Basset, who have different perspectives on love and life.

As they work through their contrasting beliefs and life experiences, they are challenged to confront their preconceptions and open their hearts to unexpected possibilities, per the synopsis, reports deadline.com.

The film is directed by Harry Grewal and the script is penned by David Lambertson. "We are excited to bring this lighthearted and thought-provoking story to life. Abhay Deol and Natasha Basset bring their immense talent and dedication to the lead roles, making them perfect for these

characters," Grewal said.

Grewal produces through his Grewal Films International banner alongside production partner Donna Grewal. Raman Palta and Payal Palta produce through their Palta Film Production label, and Jason Cherubini is the executive producer.

Producer Raman Palta added that the film would "resonate with audiences as it delves into the heartache of losing love and the joy of finding it again," saying: "It's a story that needs to be told, and we are thrilled to be working with such an exceptional team."

Basset was seen playing Dixie Locke, Elvis Presley's first girlfriend, in Baz Luhrmann's "Elvis" and portrayed Britney Spears in the 2017 Lifetime movie, "Britney Ever After".

Manoj Bajpayee: Feel very proud that 'Gulmohar' is chosen for 3 awards



MUMBAI: Acclaimed star Manoj Bajpayee says he feels proud that his film "Gulmohar" has been chosen for three honours including Best Film, Best Screenplay awards and the actor getting a Special Mention at the 70th National Film Awards.

"All I can say is that I am too happy for my director and feel very proud that Gulmohar is chosen for 3 awards! A film which holds a very special place in my heart," Manoj told IANS.

"Gulmohar", which also stars Sharmila Tagore, released in March 2023. It told the story of a family

drama revolving around the multi-generation family who is all set to move out of their 34-year-old family home. It also marked the return of Tagore on the screens after 13 years as she was last seen in "Break Ke Baad" starring Imran Khan and Deepika Padukone.

Manoj is a recipient of numerous honours including three National Film Awards and two Asia Pacific Screen Awards. He was feted with India's fourth-highest civilian honour, the Padma Shri, for his contributions to art in 2019. In 2003, he won the Special Jury National

Award for "Pinjar". He was named for the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in 2016 for his work in filmmaker Hansal Mehta's "Aligarh".

The actor was last seen in the action thriller film "Bhaiyaa Ji" directed by Apoorv Singh Karkki, with whom he had previously worked in the film "Sif Ek Banda Kaafi Hai".

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting revealed the winners in the National Capital. On October 2024, the winners, including the recipient of the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award, will be honoured by President

Droupadi Murmu in a ceremony. The awards were announced by the chairperson of the Feature Film Jury, Rahul Rawail; Nila Madhab Panda, chairperson of the Non-Feature Film Jury; and Gangadhar Mudalair, chairperson of the Best Writing on Cinema Jury.

Rishabh Shetty was named the Best Actor for his performance in the Kannada film "Kantara," while Nithya Menen and Manasi Parekh shared the Best Actress award for their work in "Thiruchirambalam" and "Kutch Express" respectively.

When Sunny Kaushal had a full-on boxing match with brother Vicky in Punjab

MUMBAI: Actor Sunny Kaushal has recounted his mischievous past with his brother-star Vicky Kaushal, sharing a story about their childhood vacation to Punjab, where the duo had a full-on boxing match with each other.

Sunny appeared on the new episode of 'Aapka Apna Zakir', hosted by comedian and actor Zakir Khan.

He was accompanied by the stellar cast of the romantic thriller, 'Phir Aayi Hasseen Dillrubaa'—Taapsee Pannu, and Vikrant Massey.

In a fun conversation, the cast opened up about their relationship with their beloved siblings, diving deep into some fun and unknown secrets.

With excitement in their eyes, Vikrant and Sunny shared their



experiences as younger brothers, revealing the common struggles of being the target of their older siblings' playful pranks. Taapsee also chimed in with her own sibling stories.

Spilling the beans, Sunny, who is the son of Bollywood action director Sham Kaushal,

said: "Vicky and I are only a year and four months apart, but that was enough to cause plenty of sibling rivalry. We'd fight over everything from clothes to what to watch on TV. He was into sports, and I was more of a cartoon fan as we had only one TV in the house."

Ricky Kej and The Leela Palaces Collaborate to Set New Standards in Celebrating Indian Exceptionalism

ARUNKUMAR RAO Bengaluru

The Leela Palaces, Hotels, and Resorts recently achieved a remarkable milestone, reinforcing its reputation as a symbol of Indian excellence. Recognized among the Top 3 World's Best Hotel Brands for 2024 by Travel + Leisure USA, this marks the fourth consecutive year that The Leela has received this prestigious honor. The Leela Palace Bengaluru also secured the #4 spot in Asia and was named the #1 Best City Hotel in India at the World's Best Awards 2024. This recognition highlights The Leela's unwavering commitment to service excellence and its celebration of Indian heritage.

To commemorate this achievement, The Leela Palaces partnered with Ricky Kej, a 3X Grammy® Award Winner and United Nations Goodwill Ambassador. Known for his extraordinary talent and dedication to Indian art forms, Kej was a perfect collaborator for this



event, which underscored The Leela's dedication to creating immersive, experiential luxury.

The centrepiece of this celebration was the unveiling of a groundbreaking new rendition of the Indian National Anthem by Ricky Kej. This ambitious project, which has earned a Guinness World Record, featured the largest orchestra ever assembled to perform the anthem. The performance included a 14,000-member choir of tribal children from the Kalunga Institute of Social Sciences in Bhubaneswar.

Bollywoods Kareena Kapoor highlights GJEPC Gems & Jewellery Show 2024



DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai

A new bigger Exhibition & Convention Centre in Mumbai and "Smart Manufacturing" will be included in Maharashtra's new Industrial Policy which will be announced in September 2024, according to Dr Harshdeep Kamble, IAS, Principal Secretary, (Industries), Government of Maharashtra.

He stated this during the 40th edition of the India Inter-

national Jewellery Show 2024 (IJS) Premiere Show organised by The Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) in Mumbai recently.

Noting that the future of the Gem & Jewellery sector lies in smart manufacturing and technological advancements, he said "Magnetic Maharashtra is poised to lead the way in this new era of industrial development, where this event showcases the brilliance of gems and jewellery industry, and also highlights Maharashtra's

role as 'hub' of innovation and excellence. Vipul Shah, Chairman, GJEPC, while noting the growth of IJS into the world's second-largest B2B gem and jewellery show, said the overwhelming participation of over 2,500 international visitors and 15 international delegations underscored the global impact of this industry and this show. "With the continued government support and the industry's collective efforts, we are confident of achieving our vision of elevating India's gem and jewellery exports to US\$ 100 billion by 2047," he said.

Varghese Alukkas, Managing Director, Jos Alukkas, while commending the GJEPC for this outstanding jewellery show and also the IJS's important role in furthering domestic and international exports, noted that the recent Union Budget and the duty cuts have "spurred new energy and dynamism into the gem & jewellery business."

Sara celebrates 'Abba' Saif Ali Khan's birthday with brother Ibrahim, Kareena Kapoor



MUMBAI: Actress Sara Ali Khan on Friday celebrated the 54th birthday of her father and actor Saif Ali Khan, by bringing him a delicious chocolate cake.

Sara took to Instagram and shared pictures from Saif's

birthday celebration at his residence.

The snap shows birthday boy Saif wearing a half white sleeve T-shirt and blue denim jeans. Sara is wearing a blue sleeveless crop top and off-white trousers. Ibrahim, the younger brother of Sara, looked dapper in white shirt and blue denim jeans.

The photo also features Saif's second wife and actress Kareena Kapoor, who is donning an all denim outfit. The decoration shows balloons with 'best dad' written on it.

Honesty Rewarded for IAS Nikunja Behari Dhal

ARABINDA MOHAPATRA Bhubaneswar

Senior IAS officer Nikunja Bihari Dhal earned a name for himself as the chief electoral officer (CEO) of the state overseeing a landmark election which saw a BJP government being formed in the state for the first time. Following the announcement of election results the officer was appointed as Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister Mohan Mahji. He was also given charge of chairman of IDCO.

A 1993-batch IAS officer of Odisha cadre, Dhal is known for honesty and integrity. He



has given ample proof of this in every job he has held in his glittering career. He was appointed Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Odisha in March 2023. He ensured free and fair elections and carried out the orders of the Election Commission of India with the same kind of integrity and courage. The recently held elections

saw a fierce battle between BJP and the Naveen Patnaik-led Biju Janata Dal (BJD). The latter, having remained in power for 24 years without a break, was seen as very powerful and some of its officers were indulging in acts which were objected to by the Election Commission of India. For example the commission ordered the transfer of Mission Shakti commissioner Sujata Karthikeya, wife of former IAS and chief minister's confidant VK Pandian while campaigning was on following complaints that she was trying to influence the elections by prevailing upon women self help group members to vote for the BJD.

Manisha Koirala calls Richa Chadha, Ali Fazal 'best couple in the film fraternity'

MUMBAI: Actress Manisha Koirala met new parents Richa Chadha and Ali Fazal and said that they are the best couple in the film fraternity she has met.

Manisha met Richa, with whom she worked in the series "Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar", weeks after she welcomed her firstborn, a girl.

Sharing a picture from their home, Manisha wrote: "Most definitely the best couple in the film fraternity that I have met. Love the cozyness that surrounds their home... Thank you Richa Chadha and Ali



Fazal for yesterday!! See you guys soon!! with Heeramandi writer n dear friend Moin Beg (sic)."

In the image, the 53-year-old actress is seen posing with Richa, Ali, and the writer of the Sanjay Leela Bhansali directed series Moin Beg. On July 18, Richa and Ali

announced the arrival of their first child, a daughter. In a joint statement, Richa and Ali confirmed that they welcomed a "healthy baby girl" on July 16.

The statement read: "We are tickled pink with joy to announce the arrival of a healthy baby girl on 16.07.24! Our families are overjoyed, and we thank our well-wishers for their love and blessings! Love, Richa Chadha and Ali Fazal."

In February, the couple announced on social media that they were expecting their first child.

Will be great to see kabaddi receive special attention on Independence Day: Puneri Paltan's Aslam Inamdar

KAVITA SHARMA New Delhi

The Pro Kabaddi League Season 10's Most Valuable Player and Puneri Paltan Captain Aslam Inamdar led his team to their first-ever PKL title in the last season. The defending champions have shown confidence in their triumphant side and have retained 12 players for Season 11. Speaking about the retained group, Aslam said, "I am really happy that we've retained our core group of players. We are also glad to see so many players coming from the Yuva Paltan Academy and doing well in the Pro Kabaddi League. All the players in our team had a strong bond last season and that



bond with the retained players will continue this season as well." When asked about how he feels about the PKL Season 11 Player Auction being held on Independence Day, the all-rounder said, "Kabaddi is India's game and it'll be great for the sport

to receive attention on the day our country celebrates its Independence Day. It'll be a different feeling to see franchises bid for players on a special day. The players will also remember that they were acquired by a franchise on Independence Day."