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ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT STAYS MP-MLA COURT'S SENTENCE AWARDED TO AAP LEADER SANJAY SINGH IN 2001 PROTEST CASE



STOCK MARKETS MARGINALLY UP IN VOLATILE TRADE AHEAD OF US FED CHIEF SPEECH



SONAKSHI SINHA SHARES LOVED UP GLIMPSE OF HER 'HEART AND HOME'

Delhi govt unveiled a draft new environmental policy

OUR CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Wednesday unveiled a draft of a new environmental policy aimed at tackling the growing challenges posed by climate change. The policy includes the creation of an "environment health cell" to address climate-related diseases, an expansion of solar power generation, and plans to establish waste-to-energy plants.

The draft action plan, which will be submitted to the central government within the next two weeks, highlights a vulnerability assessment of various regions in Delhi. According to the assessment, Northeast Delhi, East Delhi, and South Delhi have high vulnerability, while New Delhi, Central Delhi, and North Delhi have a lower vulnerability index.



Health adaptation plans are a key component of the action plan, focusing on diseases caused by air pollution, disaster management related to heat and cold waves, water-borne illnesses, and zoonotic diseases. The policy also emphasizes ensuring accessible healthcare services with no shortage in bed capacity, adding a 10 percent buffer, and achieving

100 percent coverage of health interventions for vulnerable populations.

The draft also outlines a strategy for energy efficiency, with a goal of achieving 100 percent saturation of LED bulbs, LED tube lights, and energy-efficient fans by 2030, along with the widespread adoption of energy-efficient LED streetlights. Additionally, DIS-

COMS are tasked with installing smart meters for all consumers in alignment with the Department of Power's Vision 2041.

During a press conference, Rai stressed the urgent need to address climate change, noting its severe impacts on Delhi, including record-breaking heatwaves and unprecedented rainfall this year. He explained that the rapid environmental degradation has prompted the need for a comprehensive review of the city's 2019 Climate Action Plan. The new policy targets seven critical sectors: energy, water, waste management, green cover, transport, health, and agriculture. More than 40 departments, experts, and officials have been involved in updating the policy, which will be submitted to the Centre for approval. Once approved, the policy will be implemented with necessary revisions based on feedback.

ICRA Predicts Slower GDP Growth for India



NEW DELHI: India's economic growth is expected to decelerate to a six-quarter low in the first quarter of fiscal year 2025, according to a recent report by rating agency ICRA.

The agency forecasts year-on-year GDP expansion to fall to 6.0 per cent in Q1 FY2025, down from 7.8 per cent in the previous quarter. This projection stands in contrast to the Reserve Bank of India's more optimistic forecast of 7.1 per cent growth for the same period.

ICRA attributes the slowdown to several factors, including a contraction in government capital expenditure and a de-

cline in urban consumer confidence. Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist and Head of Research & Outreach, ICRA, noted, "Lower volume growth combined with diminishing gains from commodity prices weighed upon the profitability of some of the industrial sectors."

The report highlights temporary lulls in certain sectors due to the Parliamentary elections and sluggish government capital expenditure at both central and state levels.

Additionally, urban consumer confidence showed an unexpected downturn in May and July 2024, according to the RBDs

Consumer Confidence Survey. ICRA also points to the lingering effects of last years unfavourable monsoon and an uneven start to the 2024 monsoon as factors preventing broader improvement in rural sentiment.

The agency projects gross value added (GVA) growth to ease to 5.7 per cent in Q1 FY2025 from 6.3% in the previous quarter.

This decline is expected to be driven by the industrial sector, with a mild easing in services expansion and a slight uptick in agricultural GVA growth.

The gap between GDP and GVA growth is anticipated to narrow to 30 basis points in Q1 FY2025, compared to 148 basis points in the previous quarter.

This reduction is attributed to an expected lower expansion in net indirect taxes due to changes in government subsidy outgo.

While a heatwave negatively impacted footfall in various service sectors, it provided a significant boost to electricity demand.

Liquor policy case: CBI justifies Arvind Kejriwal's arrest in Supreme Court



OUR CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) defended the arrest of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, stating that it was necessary due to his "evasive and non-cooperative" responses during questioning related to the alleged excise policy scam on Friday. In a detailed affidavit filed with the Supreme Court, the CBI accused Kejriwal of playing a key role in formulating the now-scrapped excise policy, acting in collusion with the then-deputy chief minister, Manish Sisodia.

The CBI argued that Kejriwal's arrest was crucial to ensuring a fair investigation, as he was purportedly "derailing" the probe by not cooperating. The affidavit, submitted before a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan, emphasized that the decision to arrest Kejriwal was also based on the evidence gathered, which implicated him in the criminal conspiracy surrounding the excise policy.

The agency highlighted that Kejriwal, as both the Chief Minister and the national convenor of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), wielded significant influence over government decisions and party activities. The CBI claimed that Kejriwal had been confronted with sensitive documents and witness statements during his interrogation, and there was a risk that he might influence witnesses if released.

The CBI's affidavit also dismissed the notion that Kejriwal was entitled to parity with other co-accused who were granted bail, arguing that his release would "gravely prejudice" the trial, which is still in its early stages. The agency contended that the interim bail granted to Kejriwal in a related money laundering case had no bearing on the corruption charges being investigated by the CBI.

Furthermore, the CBI argued that Kejriwal's release on medical grounds was unwarranted, asserting that any required medical treatment could be provided within Tihar Jail or its referral hospitals, in accordance with jail rules. The affidavit detailed how the investigation had pointed to Kejriwal's pivotal role in the formulation of the excise policy, with the necessary permission to investigate him under the Prevention of Corruption Act being obtained in April. According to the CBI, Kejriwal, along with other accused, deliberately manipulated the policy to increase the profit margin for wholesalers from 5% to 12%, allegedly in exchange for a Rs 100 crore bribe from a group of businessmen and politicians, referred to as the 'South Group', to fund AAP's election campaign in Goa.

Delhi govt release pension of 1 lakh elderly resident: Minister Atishi

OUR CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Delhi Minister Atishi announced on Friday that the Delhi government has successfully transferred five months of pension payments to the accounts of 90,000 elderly residents, which had been previously withheld by the BJP-led central government. Atishi stated that the remaining 10,000 pensions would be credited to the accounts of elderly residents by the end of the day.

Addressing the media, Atishi claimed, "For the past five months, these one lakh elderly residents were not receiving their pensions because the portion funded by the central government was being withheld by the BJP-led administration."

She explained that four lakh elderly residents in Delhi receive old-age pensions, with one lakh of these pensions comprising contributions from both the Delhi and central governments. Atishi alleged that despite Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal being



jailed, he fought against the BJP-led central government to ensure these pensions were paid.

Congratulating the beneficiaries, Atishi shared that the Social Welfare Department of Delhi began transferring the pensions yesterday, successfully disbursing around 90,000 payments, with the remaining 10,000 expected to be completed today. Atishi criticized the BJP, accusing them of consistently harassing Delhi residents and obstructing their services. She assured that the Kejriwal government would continue to fight for the people of Delhi, stating, "Just as we fought to ensure the elderly received their pensions, we will fight to get all pending work done for Delhi residents."

CBDT Chairman Announces Comprehensive Review of Income Tax Act, 1961

NEW DELHI: In a significant development for India's taxation landscape, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman Ravi Agrawal has unveiled plans for a comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

This initiative, announced during an event marking 165 years of income tax in India, aims to simplify the law, improve compliance, and expedite the appeals process.

At the heart of this reform is the formation of an internal committee comprised of income tax officials from across the country. This panel has been tasked with the crucial role of identifying areas for improvement in the existing law, ensuring that the review process is thorough and inclusive.

A key focus of the committee will be to study and potentially adopt international taxation practices. This move towards incorporating global best practices is expected to enhance India's tax framework, bringing it in line with world standards



and potentially making it more competitive on the global stage.

The review process will also target the elimination of redundancies within the current Act. Outdated clauses and those that have reached their sunset will be removed, streamlining the law and making it more relevant to current economic realities. This pruning of obsolete elements is expected to significantly simplify the Act for both tax authorities and taxpayers.

Simplification for taxpayers is a central goal of this review. By making the law more concise and easier to understand, the CBDT hopes to reduce disputes and litigation, potentially leading to greater compliance and a smoother tax collection process.

Anti-Sikh film Emergency should be banned immediately: Jathedar Akal Takht

FIR should be registered against Kangana Ranaut-Dhami
JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

Akal Takht the highest Sikh temporal seat Jathedar Gyani Raghbir Singh and the Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhami have demanded an immediate ban on the film 'Emergency', which portrays the character of Sikhs in a wrong way. They said that this film has been made by actress Kangana Ranaut, who remains in controversy due to her anti-Sikh and anti-Punjab expressions, with the intention of deliberately character assassinating Sikhs, which the Sikh community cannot tolerate.

Jathedar Akal Takht and SGPC president Dhami said that by creating an anti-Sikh narrative about the martyrs of June 1984, this is a despicable act of disrespecting the community. They said that the community can never forget the anti-Sikh brutality of June 1984 and Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhindranwale has been declared a Qaumi Shaheed (community's martyr) by Sri Akal Takht Sahib, while Kangana Ranaut's film is trying to character assassinate him. He said that Kangana Ranaut has often deliberately made expressions that provoke the sentiments of Sikhs, but instead of taking action against her, the government is protecting her. He said that the government should file a case against Kangana Ranaut for inciting religious sentiments of Sikhs for her act through the film Emergency.

Expressing strong objection, they said that it is clear from the released excerpts of the Emergency film that it has deliberately misrepresented the character of Sikhs as sepa-



ratists, which is part of a deep conspiracy.

They said that on the one hand, the release of the film 'Punjab '95', made on the life of human rights Sikh activist Bhai Jaswant Singh Khaira, was not approved even after 85 cuts, while this Emergency film presenting false facts about Sikh community has been given clearance immediately. He said these double standards are not in the interest of the country, so the government needs to seriously discuss this issue.

Dhami said that there have been many such cases related to films in the past when Sikh sentiments have been hurt due to misrepresentation of Sikh characters and religious concerns of Sikhs. He demanded an immediate ban on the Emergency film of Kangana Ranaut from Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Shri Ashwini Vaishnav, and said that it should be ensured from now on that no film with anti-Sikh sentiments is released. Harjinder Singh Dhami called for the inclusion of Sikh members in the Central Board of Film Certification, as biased decisions are being taken due to the absence of a Sikh member. He said that the SGPC has earlier passed resolutions in its general meeting several times and demanded that a representative of Sikhs must be included in the Central Board of Film Certification, but it is sad that the government is not implementing the same.

Centre launches online National Medical Register to boost quality healthcare



NEW DELHI: In a bid to strengthen the digital healthcare ecosystem, the government on Friday launched National Medical Register (NMR) portal that will be a comprehensive and dynamic database for all allopathic (MBBS) registered doctors in the country.

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, J.P. Nadda, inaugurated the NMR Portal of the National Medical Commission (NMC), in presence of Union Ministers of State (MoS) Anupriya Patel and Prataprao Jadhav (in virtual mode), in the national capital. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision is to make India digitally sound and that can happen if the health ecosystem is also "digitally sturdy".

The NMR is linked with the Aadhaar ID of the doctors which ensures the individual's authenticity. "The National Health Register is a much-awaited step in this direction

that will strengthen the digital healthcare ecosystem and will ensure quality healthcare to the people," the minister said.

The online register will be upgraded and augmented with continuous improvements in the registration process on the portal.

Highlighting the role of the state medical councils (SMCs), Minister Nadda stated that SMCs are major stakeholders in the development and maintaining of National Medical Register and facilitating the registration process.

He urged the SMCs "for their active participation and to fasten the registration process" as their "efforts of authentication and speed of authentication will be a key factor in the success of NMR".

"We are also moving in the direction of launching a similar register for the paramedics and other healthcare professionals," the minister informed.

Prime Minister greets nation on 1st National Space Day, lauds India's space scientists

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday greeted the nation on the maiden National Space Day to celebrate the achievements of Chandrayaan 3, which scripted history in 2023 by becoming the first to land on the South Pole of the Moon.

"Greetings to everyone on the first National Space Day," PM Modi said in a post on X.com.

The Prime Minister also lauded the efforts of the nation's space scientists.

"We recall with great pride our nation's achievements in the space sector. It is also a day



to laud the contributions of our space scientists," he said. PM Modi also said the government has taken several measures to boost the space sector. "Our Government has taken a series of futuristic decisions relating to this sector and we will do even more in the times to come," he said. Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft consisted of a propulsion

module (weighing 2,148 kg), a lander named Vikram (1,723.89 kg), and a rover named Pragyan (26 kg). It landed near the South Pole of the Moon on August 23 after travelling about 3.84 lakh km for over 40 days. With Chandrayaan-3's success, India also became the fourth nation after the erstwhile USSR (now Russia), the US, and China to make a soft landing on the Moon. National Space Day is being celebrated nationwide, involving departments, ministries, educational institutions, science organisations, NGOs, and the public.

CBI submits status report in SC in Kolkata doctor rape-murder case

KOLKATA: The CBI, on Thursday, submitted its status report to the Supreme Court on the progress of the investigation into the rape and murder of a woman doctor in state-run R.G Kar Medical College & Hospital in Kolkata, and as per sources the agency has found several missing links.

The apex court's division bench headed by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) D.Y. Chandrachud is hearing the matter. This is the second hearing at the CJI's division bench in the matter and all eyes now are on the proceedings at the division bench.

Sources said the first missing link is the substantial gap between the time of the discovery of the body at the seminar hall of the



hospital building on the morning of August 9 and that of intimation to the local police station about the tragedy.

Sources said that the investigating Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials are trying to figure out why the hospital authorities, especially, the former and controversial R.G. Principal Sandip Ghosh took so much time to inform the police after the discovery of the body.

Congress-National Conference forge Pre-Poll Alliance for Jammu & Kashmir Assembly polls

FW DESK

Congress and National Conference on Thursday announced their decision to form a pre-poll alliance in Jammu and Kashmir. The announcement followed after senior Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi met with National Conference (NC) president Dr. Farooq Abdullah and vice-president Omar Abdullah in Srinagar.

Dr. Abdullah confirmed that the alliance, which also includes CPI(M) leader MY Tarigami, has finalized its seat-sharing arrangement for all 90 seats in the Jammu and



Kashmir Assembly. He emphasized the need to restore full statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, a priority for the coalition.

"The alliance is on track and will work successfully. The people of J&K have suffered

immensely without an elected government for years. We are committed to restoring statehood with all powers," Dr. Abdullah said after the meeting.

Rahul Gandhi, speaking to party workers in Srinagar,

reiterated the Congress party's commitment to restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. He highlighted the importance of the upcoming election, the first since the abrogation of Article 370, in giving the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh their democratic rights back.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge expressed confidence in the alliance's prospects, expecting the Congress to secure 40 to 45 seats in the elections. He assured the people of Jammu and Kashmir that the Congress would work to protect their land, forests, and other rights.

Allahabad High Court stays MP-MLA court's sentence awarded to AAP leader Sanjay Singh in 2001 protest case

LUCKNOW: The Allahabad High court on Thursday stayed the execution of the sentence awarded by the MP-MLA court of Sultanpur to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh in a 2001 street protest case.



The special court had on January 11 last year sentenced Singh to three months of rigorous imprisonment and slapped a fine of Rs 1,500 on him for creating obstructions on a public road and inciting violence during a protest in Sultanpur district of Uttar Pradesh in 2001.

Hearing an urgent plea on Wednesday, the Lucknow Bench of the High Court had held that Singh need not surrender before the Sultanpur court till its order comes on his bail plea, which was scheduled for hearing on Thursday.

Singh and five others were convicted by the MP-MLA court on January 11, 2023, and their appeal was dismissed by the sessions court on August 6.

"Till further orders of this court, execution of the sentence awarded by the judgment and orders under revision shall remain stayed," the bench said while admitting the petition for final hearing.

The bench said the revisionist—Singh—will have to furnish a personal bond of Rs 50,000 to the satisfaction of the special court, with an undertaking that he or his counsel shall appear before it when the revision petition

is listed for hearing.

Passing the order, the judge said, "Prima facie, the ingredients of sections 143 and 341, IPC are missing and the judgments of both the courts below are perverse."

The special court had convicted Singh under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Sections 143 (being member of unlawful assembly) and 341 (wrongfully restraining any person).

Representing Singh in the high court, senior counsel and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader S C Mishra argued that the testimony of the prosecution witnesses falsified the prosecution case.

"Singh has falsely been roped in a few other criminal cases due to political vendetta," Mishra said.

Delhi govt seeks detailed report on development work in villages



OUR CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

The Delhi government directed the officials to accelerate the ongoing development projects in the city's villages, emphasizing the need to meet set deadlines. Development

Minister Gopal Rai reviewed the progress of these initiatives and instructed officers to submit detailed reports on all schemes approved by the Delhi Gram Vikas Board at the upcoming meeting on September 10.

Rai highlighted that the gov-

ernment has allocated Rs 900 crore for the comprehensive development of Delhi's villages. The goal is to ensure that rural areas receive the same standard of basic amenities as urban parts of the city.

A meeting at the Delhi Secretariat, attended by officials from the development, irrigation and flood control departments, and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, focused on the progress of these efforts.

Minister Rai noted that under the leadership of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the government is committed to improving infrastructure in the villages, including roads, parks, drains, and multipurpose community centers. The development work is being executed by the irrigation and flood control department, along with other relevant departments and the civic body.

Son-in-law prime accused among four arrested in gold jewellery robbery



PARVESH HANDA
Kurukshetra

Crime department of police arrested four accused including son-in-law of the victim's family living in Kang Colony and robbed gold jewellery of value worth over Rs 50 lakh on 5th August this year. Among those arrested by Kurukshetra police, the mastermind was identified as Arun a resident of Housing Board Colony Ambala City, son-in-law of the victim along with three other youths hired by him, identified as Mursaleen, Faizan and Vishal all residents of Meerut district in Uttar Pradesh. They were produced in the court after their arrest and remanded to police custody, when a complaint was lodged with Krishna Gate police station, Kurukshetra on 5th August this year by Naresh Kumari, mother-in-law of the prime accused Arun living alone with her husband in the house since her son and the daughter-in-law were settled abroad.

According to the complainant, she was alone in the house since her husband had gone to Jind on 5th August, when her son-in-law Arun arrived from Ambala at around 1.30 PM. She offered him a cold drink and Arun went to the bathroom, whereas she went to her bedroom. In a complaint to police Naresh Kumari said, in the meanwhile three unidentified youths entered her bedroom, pushed her on the bed, masked her face and tied her arms and legs. She said the three unidentified youths threatened her not to raise an alarm if she wanted to remain alive and demanded cash and jewellery she was having. Meanwhile, Arun also entered the room when the youths also caught him and tied with rope.

Deepak Sharma Senior Member ASSOCHAM gave his welcome address about the modernization of railways as a key component in India's vision of "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India). This initiative aims to transform the Indian Railways into a world-class network that supports economic growth, enhances connectivity, and improves the quality of life for millions of people.

Sanjay Bajpai, Co-Chairman, National Council on Logistics & Warehousing, ASSOCHAM & Executive Director, Container Corporation of India Ltd talked about how AI and machine learning are useful in terminals for 100% cargo visibility. We aim to have last mile connectivity as we are working on the Gati Shakti plan, he added.

Animesh Gupta, Decision Scientist Goldratt Research Labs USA discussed the gaps in railways related to technology and freight. We need to reach 40% freight by rail to meet the demands. There's a need to reduce the environmental footprint of railway operations. The railway sector needs to ensure that digital solutions are secure and protected from cyber threats.

Congress is not a party but rather a clan & a gang that comes together during elections to loot and deceive the state: Anil Vij



SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Haryana's former Home and Health Minister Anil Vij today responded to the resignation of JJP MLAs following the announcement of the Assembly elections, saying, they were already broken and never stood together..even in the assembly they did not stand united. They could not technically announce earlier, but now that the elections have been declared and there is no longer any significance, they are announcing their exit from the party, Vij was interacting to media persons here.

Regarding Randeep Surjewala's statement that BJP will be ousted in the elections, former Minister Vij has taken jibe and asking, "Which party is Surjewala referring to? On one hand, he speaks against Bhupinder Singh Hooda, and on the other hand, there is no party by the name of Congress in the state. How can you call it a party when no elections have been held for many years? Congress is not a party; it is a clan and a gang that comes together during election time to loot and deceive Haryana. There has not been an election within the party for 16 years, and the Election Commission should take note and revoke the party's recognition. There is no democracy within the Congress party, so how can it protect the democracy of the country?," he said.

Beware of fake CM Flying Squad conducting raids

PARVESH HANDA
Charkhi Dadri

A fake team of CM Flying Squad is active in conducting raids at the medical stores located in rural areas, allegedly involved in checking the registration and the medicine stocks in the medical stores, threatening the owners of the stores to seal their shops for one reason or the other in order to collect amount towards bribe. Information revealed that the members of the gang also included a female member accompanied by a person in police uniform. The flying squad had conducted raid on August 16 at a medical store in village Sanwad in Charkhi Dadri district, followed by another incident of a fake raid at a medical store on Jui Road at Barhada in Charkhi Dadri district on Wednesday when the raiding team comprising of five to six members including a female and another person in police uniform, all having



covered their faces with mask arrived at the medical store and started checking stocks and other documents, since the pharmacist was not present at the shop they threatened to seal the medical store.

When the members of raiding team asked to disconnect CCTV connection, the owner of the store Pradeep Kumar suspected a foul smell and contacted the police post in

the area, and in the meanwhile few shopkeepers also gathered and unmasked the faces of CM Flying Squad members, who immediately managed to slip in two cars. Meanwhile, a police team arrived at the medical store, checked the footage of CCTV cameras installed in the shop and started investigation for the arrest of cheats falsely posing as members of CM Flying Squad.

Investigation revealed that fake CM Flying Squad members had collected Rs 27,000 during the raid conducted at a medical store at village Samvad on August 16 threatening to seal the store. Information also revealed that the fake Squad members, consisting of two females having covered their faces with masks, had also raided a medical store owned by Manoj Kumar at Salhawas in Hajjar district and collected stocks of costly general medicines along with Rs 15,000 towards bribe, threatening to seal his medical store. According to police information, they are trying to investigate the medical stores where the members of the fake CM Squad had conducted raids and collected money towards bribes. The registration number of both vehicles in which gang members were travelling were identified in the footage of CCTV cameras. Police claim to arrest them soon.

Sugarcane growers said CM's promise for co-operative sugar mill at Naraingarh merely a 'Chunavi Jumla'

SATISH HANDA
Naraingarh (Ambala)

The farmers held a meeting at Naraingarh in Ambala district on Wednesday. On the Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini's announcement during of establishing a co-operative sugar mill in the area during his visit during 'Jan Ashirwad Rally' home town Naraingarh recently has failed to impress sugarcane growers, who while talking to media persons termed it merely a poll promise only to attract voters, allegedly said that the farmers usually supplying sugarcane to the private Naraingarh Sugar Mill every year are



not getting long overdue payments for supply of sugarcane for months every year, and have yet to recover huge amount against supplies made last year payments against supply of sugarcane from the sugar mill, in-spite of intervention by the government.

During the Jan Ashirwad Rally in Naraingarh on Tues-

day, the CM had expressed concerns over the inconvenience caused to farmers due to delayed payments by the Naraingarh Sugar Mills Limited every year and had promised to set up a cooperative mill if voted to power in coming Vidhan Sabha polls. Bhartiya Kisan Union spokesman Rajiv Sharma along with sugarcane

farmers said Rajiv Sharma said, though Naraingarh Sugar Mills Limited is private, it is being run under the supervision of the Haryana Government since 2019, in-spite of sugarcane farmers holding repeated agitations every year, as well as during current year to get their payments for amount worth over Rs 22 crore of the previous season which ended in March this year. Farmers said, in-spite of promising a new sugar mill, the CM could have issued directions to Naraingarh Sugar Mills to clear the pending dues, which would have given the farmers the much-needed relief.

Why are cases of sex exploitation of female medical staff in hospitals increasing?

Another case of kidnapping, torture by a resident doctor of PGIMS Rohtak reported on Monday

SATISH HANDA
Rohtak

In recent past few days, a large number of sex exploitation cases in hospitals in the country have appeared on headlines in newspapers, which remind of the sensational 'Nirbhaya' gangrape incident at Delhi in 2012. After the recent case of murder of a female doctor while on duty in RG Kar Medical College in Kolkata, presently under trial in the Supreme Court of India, Delhi Medical Association has demanded a special law for the security of doctors and other health care staff in the hospitals in the country. In a recent case reported at Rohtak in Haryana, a dental student has accused a resident doctor of kidnapping and assault by a resident doctor, who has been arrested by the police and expelled from the campus. Information reveals that no evidence of sexual harassment or rape has been found yet



during police investigation so far. On Tuesday, the Supreme Court of India during hearing in the case expressed deep concern over the horrific rape and murder of the trainee female doctor in Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The three-judge bench led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud has formed a 10-members National Task Force to work out modalities for the safety of doctors at the workplace.

BDS first year student at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS) in Rohtak accused a resident doctor identified as Maninder Kaushik, an MD anatomy resident doctor from the anatomy department of PGIMS of kidnapping, beating and assaulting her in a complaint was filed on Friday at policer post inside the campus on Au-

gust 16, after which the police arrested the resident doctor and started the investigation. As per the dental student's allegations, the doctor kidnapped her from the government medical institution and later took her to Ambala and Chandigarh. She was allegedly assaulted there. According to the victim's statement and the undergoing police investigation, there is no evidence of sexual harassment or rape as of now, the report said. Victim's statement was recorded in the presence of her family members and Legal Aid Counsel of the DLSA. An FIR was registered and the alleged accused was immediately arrested. The victim has been medically examined and her statement has also been recorded before a Judicial Magistrate.

Haryana to have tough contest between Congress & BJP in 2024 Assembly polls

SATISH HANDA

Nearly two months after the Lok Sabha elections, Haryana state will now vote to elect a new state government after the Election Commission on Friday has announced a single-phase election in 90 assembly constituencies in the state on October 1. Though, there is a presence of several political parties contesting in the upcoming polls but the recent Lok Sabha election results indicate there will be a tough contest only between ruling Bhartiya Janta Party and the Congress. There are total number of nearly 2.01 crore voters in Haryana which include nearly 1.06 crore male and nearly 95 lakh female voters, among those nearly 2.5 lakh voters are of age above 85 years, besides nearly 4.52 lakh new voters are going to cast vote first time in coming elections at 20,629 polling stations across the state, which include nearly 7000 in urban and above 13,000 in rural areas.

In 2019 Vidhan Sabha polls in Haryana state BJP was able to win 40 seats, Congress won 31 seats, newly launched Janhot Janta Party (JJP) by Dushyant Chautala, (JJP) former Deputy Prime Minister in the state had won 10 seats, independent candidates won 7 seats, both INLD



and HALOPA were able to win one seat each when BJP formed government in the state second time having alliance with JJP. But the situation is different now, and the present scenario reveals the state is going to have a tough contest between BJP and Congress candidates in the coming Vidhan Sabha polls to be held on October 1. As regard Lok Sabha polls held in 2019 BJP won all 10 seats, whereas during recent 2024 Lok Sabha polls held in the state both BJP and Congress were winners on five seats each in which out of total number of 90 Vidhan Sabha seats in the state BJP was leading in 44 and Congress leading in 42 seats. However, during coming Vidhan Sabha polls INLD jointly with Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is going to contest on all seats, whereas now JJP also claiming

to contest polls on all seats in Vidhan Sabha polls, although the party seems to be on the verge of collapse due to most of its MLAs has already resigned from the party. Moreover, in recent past Lok Sabha polls the performance of INLD, JJP and AAP contestants was completely unsatisfactory.

According to political experts in the state, the political situation in the state that led to a hung assembly verdict in 2019, the scenario is quite different this time. They said, there has definitely been a rise in anti-incumbency against the ruling BJP as result of recent past Lok Sabha polls showed. The party was left with a massive drop in its vote share as well as in its number of seats. They are of opinion the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) a new political party born out of Chautala family split

in the once-dominant Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) in which the party supremo Om Parkash Chautala was able to have Chief Minister's chair five times in the state now seems not as formidable as it did in 2019, when it emerged king-maker and helped BJP to form its second successive government in the state. According to political experts, the INLD hopes success after tying up with the Bahujan Samaj Party, but the revival of the INLD does not appear in sight due to the party's overall weakening after the family divide. Moreover, an earlier alliance between the INLD and BSP too had failed. As regards the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), also trying its luck to rule over in Haryana appears to have little space to grow as well. It contested one Lok Sabha seat at Kurukshetra in alliance with the Congress, but lost and the Congress decided not to ally with the AAP in Vidhan Sabha polls. On the whole, the Congress remains the major challenger to face BJP's bid to form a government for the third time in the state, which exhibited its better-than-expected performance in the recent Lok Sabha polls due to the consolidation of Jat, farmer and Dalit voters in its favour.

Amid uproar over RG Kar horror, Mamata writes to PM Modi seeking stringent anti-rape law

KOLKATA: Amid the nationwide uproar over the ghastly rape and murder of a junior doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College in Kolkata, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking exemplary punishment against those involved in such dastardly crimes.

Confirming the development, Chief Advisor to Mamata Banerjee, Alapan Bandyopadhyay, read out contents of the letter before mediapersons, which said the Chief Minister has suggested the setting up of special fast-track courts for speedy trials in such cases.

"I wish to bring to your kind attention the regular and increasing occurrence of rape cases throughout the country and in many cases, rapes with murder are committed.

"According to the available data, it is horrifying to see that almost 90 cases of rapes occurring daily throughout



the country. This shakes the confidence and conscience of the society and the nation. It is bounden duty for all of us to put an end to it so that women feel safe and secure," read the letter which was also uploaded on the official X handle of the Chief Minister.

"Such a serious and sensitive issue needs to be addressed in a comprehensive manner through stringent central legislation prescribing

seminar hall of the R.G. Kar Medical College on the morning of August 9. The state authorities have drawn flak for the subsequent handling of the case, triggering massive protests and strikes by doctors and citizens across the country.

The Supreme Court, which took suo moto cognisance of the case, has set up a National Task Force to recommend steps to improve the working conditions for healthcare professional for ensuring their safety.

Earlier on Thursday, Trinamool Congress General Secretary and Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee gave a call to all the state governments to put pressure on the Centre to formulate a comprehensive anti-rape law to ensure speedy trial and justice.

He also claimed that the country needs stricter laws that mandate completion of trial and conviction within 50 days, followed by severe punishment and "not just empty promises".

SC sets aside Calcutta HC order advising adolescent girls to 'control sexual urges'

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday set aside a Calcutta High Court ruling, wherein adolescent girls were advised to "learn how to control their sexual urges".

A bench, headed by Justice Abhay S. Oka, pronounced its verdict in a suo moto proceedings initiated in the wake of "sweeping observations" made in the high court order, including on the appeal filed by the West Bengal government.

In December last year, the top court had exercised suo moto cognisance due to "highly objectionable and completely unwarranted" findings recorded by the Calcutta High Court suggesting "every female adolescent control sexual urge/urges as in the eyes of the society she is the loser when she gives in to enjoy the sexual pleasure of hardly two minutes".

The observations were made by a division bench of the Calcutta High Court as it dealt with an appeal against conviction under Sections 363 and 366 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC),



1860 as well as Section 6 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (PoCSO) Act.

The bench of Justices Chitta Ranjan Das and Partha Sarathi Sen overturned an earlier order by a lower court sentencing a teenager to 20 years imprisonment for having sex with his romantic partner, who is also a minor. It acquitted the teenage boy after the minor girl, also a teenager, admitted that the physical relations were consensual since both had decided to marry each other at a later stage. She also admitted that neither she nor her romantic partner, both hailing from remote ru-

ral areas, were aware that 18 was the official age of sexual relationship as per Indian law.

"In the appeal against conviction, the High Court was called upon to adjudicate only on the merits of the appeal and nothing else. But we find that the High Court has discussed so many issues which were irrelevant. Prima facie, we are of the view that while writing a judgment in such an appeal, the Hon'ble Judges are not expected to express their personal views. They are not expected to preach," the Supreme Court had said, as it took suo moto cognisance of the issue.

PM Modi's vision in spotlight as India marks National Space Day



NEW DELHI: As India commemorates National Space Day this Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for space development and reforms takes centre stage, highlighting their pivotal role in the success of last year's Chandrayaan-3 mission. Leading scientists across the nation lauded the Prime Minister following the mission's achievement, and their interactions with PM Modi were both inspiring and indicative of deep contemplation in this direction.

The National Space Day commemorates India's landmark achievement as on August 23 last year, India became the fourth country in the world to land on the moon and the first to reach its southern polar region.

The theme for this year's National Space Day is "Touching Lives while Touching the Moon: India's Space Saga". ISRO Chairman S. Somanath in a video message said that the Prime Minister has strengthened the space ecosystem in the country through policy intervention. As a prime minister, he has undertaken many initiatives to reform the space sector. The National Space Policy was announced in which the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Space have been clearly delineated. Similarly, under the new foreign direct investment policy for the space sector, private and foreign investments are now allowed with certain controls and regulations which was not possible earlier, Somanath said.

Wayanad Landslides: JIH Kerala Announces First Phase of ₹10 Crore Rehabilitation Project

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi:

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) Kerala, under the leadership of President P. Mujeeburahman, has launched the first phase of a comprehensive Rs 10 crore rehabilitation project aimed at the victims of the catastrophic Wayanad landslides. This initiative, part of JIH's ongoing commitment to relief efforts, is grounded in a professional survey report and addresses the urgent needs of the affected communities. During a press conference held at Hira Centre, the State Headquarters of the organization, Mujeeburahman announced that temporary shelters would be provided for dialysis patients, bedridden individuals, senior citizens, and other vulnerable groups until permanent residential facilities are arranged by the government. In addition to housing, the project includes provisions for ensuring education continuity from the primary to higher secondary levels, in collaboration with Wadi Rahma School in Kodyathoor.

Massive paramilitary forces deployed in Kashmir Valley for upcoming VS polls



FW DESK

The Central government has significantly ramped up security measures throughout the Kashmir valley in view of the upcoming Assembly Elections in 2024. Nearly 300 paramilitary companies, including units from the CRPF, BSF, SSB, and ITBP, have been deployed to ensure a peaceful and orderly election process, given the region's history of political instability.

A senior police official noted that these forces have been strategically placed across various locations in the valley, from the bustling streets of Srinagar to the remote areas of Kupwara. Key districts such as Handwara, Ganderbal, Budgam, Baramulla, Bandipora, Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama, Awantipora, and Kulgam are also under tight security.

The highest concentration of forces is in Srinagar, where 55 companies have been stationed. Anantnag follows with 50 companies, and Kulgam has 31 companies. Other districts, including Budgam, Pulwama, and Awantipora, have received 24 companies each, while Shopian, Kupwara, Baramulla, Handwara, Bandipora, and Ganderbal have been allocated varying numbers of companies to ensure balanced security coverage.

Fight to save Constitution still on: Kharge

KAVITA SHARMA
Mumbai

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge today said that the fight to save the Constitution was still on and it was important that INDIA bloc wins maximum states to get adequate numbers in the Rajya Sabha.

Addressing the Sadbhavna Sammelan to commemorate the eightieth birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi here today, Kharge said, even after getting 415 seats, Rajiv Gandhi showed no arrogance.

He said, Gandhi transformed India and put it on the progressive path of development for the twenty-first



FW DESK

century. Congress president pointed out the growth rate was over ten percent during Gandhi's time which was a record in itself. He said, the computerisation programme launched by Gandhi had borne the fruits and that is the reason India had become the software powerhouse.

Similarly, he referred to Gandhi's revolutionary decision to bring down the voting age from 21 to 18 years.

He said, Gandhi had launched the universal vaccination programme among children way back in 1985 to ensure health for all.

Kharge said, Gandhi had brought the anti-defection law

to protect the elected governments. In stark contrast, he said, Modi was uprooting the elected governments. He pointed out how elected governments were stolen in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and other states.

Appealing people to vote for the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi in the Assembly elections ahead, he said, the fight to save the constitution was not finished as yet.

He said, it was very important for the INDIA bloc to win the state elections as from there members to Rajya Sabha get elected. He said, once INDIA bloc has sufficient members in the RS Modi cannot change the constitution.

Children share heart-warming moment with PM Modi during Raksha Bandhan celebrations



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday celebrated the festival of Raksha Bandhan with many schoolchildren, who tied rakhis on his wrist and also shared a memorable and gratifying moment with him.

The school children not only tied rakhis to PM Modi but also engaged in a brief banter where some sought his suggestions on contributing in nation-building while others recited small poems and bhajan. PM Modi had a light-hearted conversation with many children, as the latter posed a series of questions ranging from his favourite colour to suggestions on staying fit.

In a video released by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), many school children could be seen making a beeline for the 7 Lok Kalyan Marg, with their eyes beaming and faces brimming with joy.

Many young girls from various schools arrived at PM's residence on Monday and tied the sacred thread on his wrist. A specially designed rakhi captured the attention of all, as it featured PM Modi and his mother Heeraben's picture, highlighting the theme of "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam".

"You made a very beautiful rakhi," an elated PM Modi said while the girl tied rakhi on his

wrist. Many students, who brought flowers, sweets and even a handmade portrait of PM Modi, also shared their excitement and joy of meeting the Prime Minister for the first time and celebrate the special occasion with him.

"I am feeling overjoyed as I will meet him for the first time," said a girl student while another said, "He looked like a friend to me, I felt very good."

A girl student enquired from the Prime Minister on how they can contribute to his Viksit Bharat vision, to which he replied, "keep yourself and society fit and healthy."

"Whatever we do, there should be a feeling of greater well-being for the society," he further advised.

PM Modi also gave an autograph to a girl child and shared a hearty laugh when she sought 'one more' for her sister. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister extended his heartfelt wishes to the nation on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan. "Best wishes to all countrymen on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, a festival symbolizing the immense love between brother and sister. May this holy festival bring new sweetness in your relationships and happiness, prosperity, and good fortune in life," he wrote on X.

Kolkata doctor had multiple injuries, all inflicted before death

KOLKATA: The post-mortem report of the woman doctor of state-run R.G. Kar Medical College & Hospital in Kolkata, who was raped and murdered on August 9, has suggested that the body had 14 injuries. Sources said the report mentioned that all the injuries were antemortem. As per the post-mortem report, sources said that multiple injuries were traced in different parts of the body including the head, cheeks, lips, nose, right jaw, chin, neck, left arm, left shoulder, left knee, ankle and inside genitalia. Haemorrhage was noted in the lungs, with blood clots in other parts of the body as well as a white thick viscid liquid present inside the genitalia. The findings of the report suggest that the death of the victim was due to the effect of manual strangulation associated with smothering with the manner of death being homicidal, said the sources.

Amarnath Yatra concludes, nearly 5 lakh pilgrims pay obeisance

FW DESK

The annual Amarnath Yatra will conclude in Jammu and Kashmir on August 21, after 52 days, with nearly five lakh pilgrims visiting the cave shrine in the Himalayas.

'Chhari Mubarak', carried by Mahant Swami Deependra Giri, started the last leg of its journey from Panchtarni to the holy cave this morning.

The yatra started on June 29 and will end today after 52 days amid high-security cover.

It will conclude on the occasion of 'Shravan Purnima' coinciding with the Raksha Bandhan festival.

Amid traditional 'puja' and rituals, daylong prayers will be offered for world peace and prosperity of mankind after which the Chhari Mubarak will return to Panchtarni.



Chhari Mubarak left its seat at Dashnami Akhara temple in Srinagar on August 14. After paying obeisance at various temples en route, it stayed at Pahalgam for two nights before starting its onward journey to the cave shrine on August 16.

Swami Deependra Giri, the custodial of Chhari Mubarak, expressed satisfaction over the

improved arrangements made by the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) headed by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha and the union territory administration for the pilgrims.

Swami Giri said with the increased facilities, including the widening of the track to the cave shrine the influx of pilgrims has increased.

Rahul Gandhi pays tribute to Rajiv Gandhi on his birth anniversary

Rahul says 'Your dreams for India are my own'

NEW DELHI: The Congress party on Tuesday paid tributes to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 80th birth anniversary, celebrating his contribution to India's political and technological landscape.

Party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, and Rajya Sabha MP Jairam Ramesh were present on the occasion.

Rahul Gandhi shared on X a photo from Veer Bhumi, paying floral tribute to his father, and said: "A compassionate personality, an epitome of camaraderie and goodwill... Papa, your teachings are my inspiration, and your dreams for India are my own - I will fulfill them, taking your memories with me."

Mallikarjun Kharge posted a video of Veer Bhumi and said: "Today, India is celebrating Sadbhavna Diwas. Former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, was a great son of India. He ignited a ray of hope in crores of Indians and with his unprecedented contribution, he brought India



into the 21st century."

"His many notable initiatives like lowering of voting age to 18 years, strengthening of Panchayati Raj, telecom and IT revolution, computerisation programmes, continuing peace accords, women empowerment, universal immunisation programme and new education policy with emphasis on inclusive education brought about transformational changes in the country. We pay heartfelt tribute to Bharat Ratna, Rajiv Gandhi ji on his birth anniversary," he added.

Jairam Ramesh also cel-

ebrated Rajiv Gandhi's contribution to India's political and technological landscape.

"Today is Rajiv Gandhi@80. His was a short but very consequential political life. The March 1985 Budget in which he played a key role heralded a new approach to economic policy." "In 1985, 165, 000 villages had been identified as not having easy access to any potable water source. By 1989, 162, 000 villages of these villages had been provided with at least one safe source

of drinking water. Institutions that are now doing the country proud, like C-DAC, were established in the late 1980s. Financial institutions like the National Housing Bank and the Small Industries Development Bank of India came into being," he wrote in his post.

"The New Education Policy of 1986, anchored in progressive values, bore his personal imprint. Today's Navodaya Vidyalayas emerged from this initiative. The voting age was reduced to 18 years and Swami Vivekananda's birthday was declared as National Youth Day. Article 243 of our Constitution is a tribute to his fierce commitment to empowering elected panchayats and nagarpalikas. Today, we have over 3 million elected representatives in these institutions of self-government, of whom over 40 per cent are women. We recall not just a Prime Minister today but also a very fine and caring human being who bore no malice, showed no vindictiveness, sought no revenge, indulged in no bombast and self-glory, and exhibited no qualities of self-delusion," Jairam Ramesh concluded.

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Former Jharkhand CM Champai Soren set to join BJP: A New Twist in Jharkhand Politics

MANPREET SINGH
Jamshedpur

The possible entry of former Chief Minister Champai Soren into the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could mark a significant shift in Jharkhand's political landscape. If this move materializes, it could strengthen BJP's tribal vote bank, boosting their prospects in the upcoming assembly elections.

Change in BJP's Strategy

As the assembly elections approach in Jharkhand, the BJP's central leadership has intensified its strategic efforts. The party's think tank is closely analyzing Jharkhand's political equations. Amid this, former Chief Minister Champai Soren, who is reportedly discontent with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), is emerging as a potential tribal face for the BJP.

Hints of Champai Soren Joining BJP

Champai Soren has recently expressed his dissatisfaction with remaining in the JMM. According to sources, the BJP



has offered him the position of Chief Minister of Jharkhand. Soren has allegedly met with several BJP leaders in Delhi, although he has not officially confirmed these meetings.

Grand Event Planned

It is speculated that the BJP is planning to hold a grand event in Ranchi, where Champai Soren will formally join the party. The BJP aims to contest the Jharkhand assembly elections under his leadership, positioning him as a chief ministerial candidate.

BJP's Search for a Tribal Leader

The BJP's central leadership

has previously experimented with leaders like Babulal Marandi and Arjun Munda as tribal faces in Jharkhand, but the expected results were not achieved. Therefore, the party is now considering Champai Soren as a new option, given his strong recognition within the tribal community.

Champai Soren's Emotional Letter

Recently, Champai Soren shared an emotional letter detailing his political journey and experiences within the JMM. In the letter, he expressed how he faced humiliation within the party and how he decided to explore new options to protect his self-respect.



Hydropower at the cost of sustainability?

As Kerala's Wayanad district slowly recovers from the devastation of last month's landslide, another landslide in Sikkim on August 20, 2024, has caused significant damage to six houses and a building of the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation at the Teesta-5 hydropower station in Gangtok. While the absence of casualties in Sikkim offers some relief, the event raises alarms for a different reason: this is the second time in less than a year that a natural disaster has targeted a hydropower project along the Teesta River. The previous incident occurred last October, when a deluge from the South Lhonak glacier destroyed the Chungthang dam, crippling the Teesta-3 power station, once the largest hydroelectric project in Sikkim. The project, which originally supplied 1,200 MW, is now operating at a fraction of its capacity. The Teesta-5 project, producing 510 MW, has also been rendered non-functional since the glacial lake outburst. These events highlight the vulnerabilities of hydropower projects in the region. The allure of harnessing the Teesta River for energy has been strong, with plans dating back nearly three decades for 47 power projects across Sikkim and West Bengal. However, only five projects have materialized, and several others remain in limbo. The Teesta, a tributary of the Brahmaputra, flows through challenging terrain that poses significant risks to any infrastructure built along its course. Yet, the quest for profit has often overshadowed the need for robust environmental assessments and disaster-proof construction. In the case of Teesta-3, reports suggest that cost-cutting measures led to the construction of a concrete-faced rock fill dam instead of a more durable concrete gravity dam, contributing to its destruction. This underscores the urgent need for comprehensive environmental impact assessments that accurately account for the risks and costs associated with such projects. By doing so can we ensure that these projects are not only economically viable but also environmentally sustainable and resilient to the challenges posed by nature.

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“
You don't build a business, you build people, then people build the business.
”
ZIG ZIGLAR

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ANISH GAWANDE ON HOW MANIFESTOS BRING HOPE, BUT BUDGET ALLOCATIONS DASH IT

The budgetary disappointment



Following a "manifesto moment" in the lead-up to the 2024 general election where several major political parties pledged support for the LGBTQ+ community, the 2024 Union Budget has dashed the hopes of queer Indians yearning for recognition in national politics. A transformative overhaul of the government's approach towards LGBTQ+ rights was never expected — especially given the Solicitor General's vehement opposition to marriage equality before the Supreme Court of India last year. Yet, the mention of transgender rights in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s own manifesto had sparked a glimmer of hope for progress under a Modi 3.0 government.

Instead, the LGBTQ+ community found itself reduced to a mere footnote in the Budget: the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's allocation for "Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons" under the Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE) programme. This programme promises to fund Garima Grahas (shelter homes), scholarships, and the National Council for Transgender Persons.

Meagre funding

On paper, the budgetary outlay for transgender welfare increased from Rs 52.91 crore in FY24 to Rs 68.46 crore in FY25. But a closer look reveals a harsh reality: actual expenditure was a meagre Rs 22.82 crore in FY24. Nowhere is the impact of this discrepancy more starkly reflected than in the fact that most Garima Grahas have shut down over the past two years due to lack of funding, and the NCTP is barely functional. With just a meagre increase for this financial year, who will fulfil the guarantee



to build Garima Grahas, promised in the BJP's 2024 Sankalp Patra? SMILE is not the only victim of the government's apathy. Even more troubling is the reduction in funding for the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) from Rs 3,079.97 crore in FY24 to Rs 2,892.00 crore in FY25. NACO, tasked with both combating HIV/AIDS and preventing Sexually Transmitted Infections, plays a crucial role in public health. Despite decades of progress, India still faces one of the largest HIV epidemics in the world, with LGBTQ+ Indians at a higher risk of contracting the virus and facing distinct psychosocial challenges. Today, over 2.4 million people in India live with HIV. Of those, almost 900,000 are not linked to treatment—and more than half a million are unaware they are even infected. The last credible study by NACO in 2003 estimated that 6% of India's adult population was infected with STIs. The more recent National Family Health Survey (2019–21) highlighted that 23.3% of sexually active

A denial of rights

The lack of budgetary allocation is not just about misplaced priorities or ideological differences. It is a systematic denial of the rights of millions of LGBTQ+ Indians, blocking their access to an equal share over the country's resources. The numbers lay bare the reality. The 2011 Census counted 4.9 lakh transgender Indians. Even if we accept this disproportionately low figure, the 2024 Budget allocated a meagre Rs 1,400 for the welfare of each transgender citizen. More realistic estimates suggest that the transgender population in India is around 1.22 crore, making this average allocation a pitiful Rs 56 a person. Young Indians, emboldened by recent court victories affirming that the Constitution of India protects every single Indian citizen regardless of gender or sexuality, need a government that creates safe spaces to ensure that they are not harassed or bullied in schools — one that provides inclusive mental health care to prevent rising suicide rates among young LGBTQ+ youth, and one that guarantees equal access to education and employment.

Political support helps

I hope that Members of Parliament from the Opposition parties, including my own party (the Nationalist Congress Party), which raised the demands of the LGBTQ+ community in their election manifestos, stand up for the rights of LGBTQ+ Indians in Parliament. I also hope — perhaps naively — that those in the government who got transgender rights included in the BJP's manifesto in the first place realise their missteps and work towards a shared vision of an inclusive future.

For too long, queer Indians have relied upon courts as guarantors of rights. As we navigate new political paradigms, it is important for the queer movement to build upon an impressive history of active political engagement — one that saw the Namdeo Dhasal march, in 1988, with trans women and sex workers from Kamathipura to the then Chief Minister Sharad Pawar's residence to demand protection from moneylenders and Shabnam Mausi being elected elected as India's first transgender MLA from Sohagpur in Madhya Pradesh in 1998.

Recent successes, such as the establishment of the transgender welfare board in Maharashtra in 2020 and the drafting of Tamil Nadu's LGBTQ+ policy in 2024, indicate that judicial progress results in executive action only when sustained by civil society pressure. We must take this lesson to heart, working not only with the Centre but also States and local bodies to ensure that rights recognised on paper are effectively implemented in practice.

Anish Gawande is National Spokesperson, Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) and Founder, Pink List India. Views are personal.



PRABHAKAR RANJAN EXPLAINS HOW JOINT INTERPRETATIVE NOTES DILUTE INVESTMENT PROTECTION

Protecting Indian capital in Bangladesh



The dramatic developments in Bangladesh that led to the resignation and fleeing of its former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have created a political vacuum and, thus, uncertainty in India's eastern neighbour. Besides the political and diplomatic fallout of this crisis for India, another significant aspect is how this will impact Indian companies operating in Bangladesh. Indian companies have invested in Bangladesh in sectors such as edible oil, power, infrastructure, fast-moving consumer goods, automobiles, and pharmaceuticals. Despite political opposition, the Sheikh Hasina government rolled out the red carpet for Indian investors and adopted several measures to invite them, such as starting designated special economic zones. Unhappy with India's alleged support of Ms. Hasina's regime, her opponents launched an "India out" boycott movement targeting Indian goods. Since Ms. Hasina is no longer in power, the interim or the new government may adopt a hostile attitude towards Indian companies. It might change the existing laws or adopt new regulatory measures that may adversely impact Indian capital. What options do Indian businesses have in such an eventuality?

Legal protection for Indian investors

As Jeswald Salacuse argues, three basic legal frameworks broadly apply to foreign investment. First, the domestic laws of the country where the investment is made. Second, contracts may have been signed between the foreign investor and the government of the host state, or among foreign investors and companies of the host state. Third, the international law contained in applicable treaties, customs,



and general legal principles that have attained the status of international law. The Indian companies that have invested in Bangladesh can use the first two legal frameworks to protect their investments from regulatory risks. For instance, Indian companies can rely on Bangladesh's Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act. However, there are limitations to relying on the domestic law of the host state because it can be changed unilaterally by the state to the investor's detriment at any time. Likewise, contracts may be of limited value when it comes to challenging the sovereign actions of the state that adversely affect foreign investment. Therefore, the third legal framework, international law, assumes importance.

The India-Bangladesh BIT

International law cannot be changed unilaterally and can be used to hold states accountable for their sovereign actions. When protecting foreign investment, the most crucial instrument in international

law is a bilateral investment treaty (BIT). A BIT is a treaty between two countries aimed at protecting investments made by investors of both countries. BITs protect investments by imposing conditions on the regulatory behaviour of the host state, thus preventing undue interference with the foreign investor's rights. These conditions include restricting host states from unlawfully expropriating investments, imposing obligations on host states to accord fair and equitable treatment (FET) to foreign investment and not to discriminate against foreign investment. BITs also empower foreign investors to directly sue the host state before an international tribunal if the investor believes that the host state has breached its treaty obligations. This is known as investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS). According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), by the end of 2023, the total number of known ISDS claims that have been brought stands at 1,332.

In case of adverse sovereign regulation, Indian companies can rely on the India-Bangladesh BIT signed in 2009. While India has unilaterally terminated almost all its BITs, the one with Bangladesh continues to exist. The India-Bangladesh BIT contains broad substantive investment protection features, such as an unqualified FET provision that can come in handy for Indian companies challenging Bangladeshi sovereign regulatory conduct.

However, the twist in the tale is the Joint Interpretative Notes (JIN) that India and Bangladesh adopted in 2017 to clarify the meaning of various terms in the 2009 treaty. This JIN, now a part of the BIT, was adopted at India's insistence. As part of overhauling its investment

treaty practice to safeguard its regulatory power, India proposed such JINs to several countries. This was done without considering whether India has an offensive or defensive interest vis-à-vis a specific country. This JIN has diluted the investment protection features of the BIT. For instance, taxation measures are excluded from the ambit of the BIT.

Likewise, the FET provision is linked to customary international law that would require a higher threshold to show a violation of the treaty. The JIN has been designed from the perspective of the capital-importing country to safeguard its regulatory conduct from ISDS claims. Between India and Bangladesh, New Delhi is the capital exporter, and Dhaka is the importer. Ironically, the JIN that India developed might work to the advantage of Bangladesh, and not the Indian capital operating there.

The larger question

While Bangladesh provides the immediate reference point, the issue is not restricted to India's eastern neighbour. India's outbound investments have grown manifold. According to UNCTAD, outward foreign direct investment from India in 2023 stood at about \$13.5 billion. India is among the top 20 capital-exporting countries. Thus, the issue of legal protection for Indian companies abroad assumes salience. India should, therefore, evolve its investment treaty practice, keeping both its host and home status in mind and not just the former.

Prabhakar Ranjan is a Professor at the Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

New book reveals untold stories of Naipaul family

The Naipauls of Nepal Street by Savi Naipaul Akal is an intimate and poignant family memoir that delves deep into the lives, struggles, and triumphs of one of the most celebrated literary families of the 20th century. While the spotlight inevitably falls on V.S. 'Vidia' Naipaul, the Nobel Prize-winning author, this memoir provides a broader view of the Naipaul family, capturing the dynamics, aspirations, and complexities that shaped not only Vidia but all seven children of Seepersad and Droopati Naipaul. The book's title is both literal and symbolic, referencing the family's home at 26 Nepal Street in Trinidad, which served as the anchor for the Naipauls' lives. This home, like the family itself, was marked by ambition, struggle, and resilience. Seepersad Naipaul, the patriarch, was the first in his family to change the surname

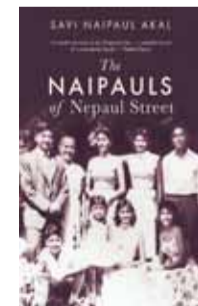
from 'Nepal' to 'Naipaul,' signaling a departure from the past and a determination to forge a new identity. His influence looms large in the memoir, as he instilled in his children the importance of education and the pursuit of one's true self. The emphasis on academic achievement was a cornerstone of the Naipaul household, with examinations carrying an almost sacred significance, as Savi Naipaul Akal recalls.

Vidia Naipaul's early departure to Oxford University on an "island scholarship" in 1950 marked the beginning of a literary career that would catapult him to global recognition. However, the memoir is careful not to solely focus on Vidia's achievements. Savi's narrative sheds light on the collective efforts of the Naipaul siblings to support one another, financially and emotionally, as they pursued their education and careers. Kamla, the eldest sister,

was the first to leave for higher education, securing a scholarship to study at Banaras Hindu University in India. Savi herself would also venture abroad for studies, eventually becoming a teacher.

The memoir's strength lies in its balanced portrayal of the Naipaul family. While Vidia and his younger brother Shiva, who also became a writer of note, are central figures, Savi ensures that the lesser-known members of the family are not overshadowed. The relationships among the siblings are portrayed with honesty, highlighting both the supportive and strained dynamics. Shiva, who was deeply cherished by his sisters, had a complicated relationship with Vidia, a tension that is explored with sensitivity and nuance.

At the heart of The Naipauls of Nepal Street is Droopati Naipaul, the matriarch, whose



The Naipauls of Nepal Street
By Savi Naipaul Akal
Speaking Tiger,
212 pages, Rs 499.

life unfolded in tandem with her marriage to Seepersad and the subsequent achievements of her children. Savi's depiction of her mother is one of quiet strength and adaptability. As her children flourished, Droopati began to carve out her own space in the world, traveling and developing her own routines. The memoir vividly brings to life her personality and the central role she played in the family's cohesion.

Savi Naipaul Akal's writing is marked by warmth, wisdom, and candor. She navigates the delicate task of chronicling her family's history with a steady hand, acknowledging the political attitudes, small joys, and hurtful slights that shaped their lives. Importantly, Savi does

not shy away from addressing the more controversial aspects of Vidia's life, including the revelations in Patrick French's biography. Her ability to convey these complexities without privileging any one perspective is a testament to her skills as a writer and chronicler.

The memoir is not just a recounting of the Naipaul family's past; it is also a social history that reflects the broader context of colonial Trinidad, the challenges of migration, and the pursuit of education as a means of upward mobility. Savi's late emergence as a writer in a family of renowned authors adds another layer to the narrative, as she brings her own voice and perspective to the Naipaul legacy.

In The Naipauls of Nepal Street, Savi Naipaul Akal has crafted a memoir that is both a tribute to her family and a reflection on the forces that shaped their lives. It is a deeply moving account that resonates with warmth, honesty, and an open heart, offering readers a fuller understanding of the Naipaul family and the remarkable, if complicated, life of V.S. Naipaul.

MSME industries will play a vital role in Developed India-2047 mission: FinMin Nirmala Sitharaman

JAIPUR: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said that the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) industries will play a vital role in fulfilling the resolution of Developed India-2047, adding these industries have been given special priority in the Budget.

The Finance Minister said this while addressing a discussion programme with MSME marble cluster units at 'Marble Bhawan' in Sukher Industrial Area of Udaipur on Thursday evening.

The programme was chaired by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi. Finance Secretary M. Nagaraju, SIDBI Chairman Manoj Mittal and Udaipur MP Manna Lal Rawat among others.

Addressing the programme, Finance Minister Sitharaman said that the contribution of Mewar to India's culture and prosperity just cannot be expressed in words.



"Dialogue with stakeholders is necessary in implementing the Budget announcements. The Budget is for the public... after the Budget is presented to the public, we make amendments based on the feedback. The participation of MSMEs is important in realising the vision of Developed India-2047. Therefore, it has been given special priority in the Budget," she said.

In this series, dialogue programmes are to be conducted

with 250 MSME clusters across the country, which has started from Thursday from the Marble Cluster in Udaipur.

She said that it is necessary to hold discussions with stakeholders to understand the needs of the MSME industry of the Mewar region. Sitharaman said that Small Industries Development Bank (SIDBI) is now providing loans directly to micro industries, which is a matter of great relief. Now, convenient loans will be easily made avail-

able to micro industries.

Meanwhile, MSME Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi said that India will soon become the third largest economy in the world.

Speaking at the programme, he said that efforts are being made to eliminate unemployment through such dialogue programmes across the country.

"MSME sector has a big contribution in eliminating unemployment. Micro and small industries are the backbone of India's economy, which contributes 30 per cent to the country's economy and provides employment to 20 crore people of the country. It is a matter of pride for us that today, the country is the fifth largest economy of the world under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Soon, the country is going to become the third-largest economy of the world."

"While the rate of global economic progress is 3.2 per cent, India is growing at the rate of 7 per cent in terms of economic progress," the Minister said.

India Unveils Post-PLI Strategy to Boost Medical Devices Sector



NEW DELHI: In a significant development for India's healthcare industry, the government has announced plans to introduce a comprehensive scheme aimed at bolstering the medical devices sector beyond the current Production Linked Incentive (PLI) framework.

This news comes on the heels of the successful implementation of PLI schemes in the sector and the recent approval of the Medical Devices policy.

Dr. Arunish Chawla, Secretary of the Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, revealed the government's intentions during a

recent industry event.

"The PLI schemes for the medical devices sector have succeeded, and we are now looking at the post-PLI framework," Dr. Chawla stated. He emphasised that this new initiative is designed to support the industry and reduce India's import dependence in the coming years.

The proposed scheme, according to Dr. Chawla, will be built upon five key components. First, it will focus on establishing Common Facilities for medical devices clusters, providing shared infrastructure and resources to boost manufacturing capabilities.

Second, the scheme will

prioritise Capacity Building and Skill Development, ensuring a well-trained workforce to support the industry's growth.

Third, a Marginal Investment Scheme will be implemented to reduce import dependence, encouraging domestic production of critical components and devices.

Fourth, there will be a dedicated focus on clinical trial support, recognising the crucial role of research and development in the medical devices sector.

Lastly, a comprehensive medical device promotion scheme will be launched to enhance the visibility and competitiveness of Indian-made medical devices in global markets.

Dr. Chawla underscored the importance of aligning these efforts with India's broader national goals. "We need to bring the policy stack together in a manner that enables India to achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047," he said, referring to the country's ambitious development targets.

Indian Phosphate Limited coming out with Rs 67 crore IPO



DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Udaipur

Indian Phosphate Limited is coming out with its Initial public Offering (IPO) priced at Rs. 94 to Rs. 99 per share equity share and opening on August 26 and closing on August 29, 2024.

Of the fresh issue worth Rs. 67.30 crores, Rs. 33.18 crores will be used for setting up a new facility at SIPCOT INDUSTRIAL PARK, Tamil Nadu for manufacturing LABSA 90 %, Sulphuric Acid and Magnesium Sulphate, while Rs. 24.90 crores will be used to meet working capital requirements and for general corporate purposes.

Indian Phosphate Limited was incorporated in 1998 and has presently acquired 1,00,000 Sq. mts. Land on lease from MIDC Dhule, Maharashtra to manufacture Single Super Phosphate Fertilizer, Di-Calcium Phosphate, Sulphuric Acid, Oleum 65% and Organic Fertilizers.

The Company has employed state-of-the-art manufacturing process and control technology in their Chemical and Fertilizer plant. Current production capacity of LABSA 90% (Linear Alkylbenzene Sulphonic Acid) stands at B350 MT/day and that of SSP - 400 MT/day.

The Company supplies LABSA 90% directly to their B2B customers at their various production sites.

Revenue from operations for FY24 stood at Rs. 704.17 crores, FY23 Rs. 768.69 crores and FY22 Rs. 557.15 crores, while Profit After Tax in FY24 was Rs. 13.47 crores, FY23 Rs. 16.59 crore and FY22 Rs. 16.16 crore.

EV Testing Facility in Bengaluru to Boost India's Green Mobility Sector

BENGALURU: In a significant move to bolster India's electric vehicle (EV) industry, Union Minister Pralhad Venkatesh Joshi is set to lay the foundation stone for a state-of-the-art EV Testing Facility in Bengaluru on Thursday.

The facility, to be established at the National Test House (NTH) RRSL Camp, marks a crucial step in expanding testing capabilities for the burgeoning EV sector in southern India.

The new laboratory, equipped with cutting-edge technology, will conduct comprehensive tests on EV batteries and chargers. These tests will cover a wide range of parameters including electrical safety, electromagnetic compatibility, functional safety, durability, and environmental resistance. This facility is expected to play a pivotal role in ensuring that EVs meet stringent quality and safety standards before entering the market. "This initiative aligns with India's commitment to sustainable and green energy solutions," said a senior official from the Department of Consumer Affairs. "It will provide vital support to EV manufacturers in southern India, fostering innovation and growth in the automotive technology sector."

The National Test House, operating under the Department of Consumer Affairs, has been at the forefront of quality assurance across various industries.

Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz Eye Local EV Manufacturing in India under New Policy

NEW DELHI: Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz, two prominent German automakers, have expressed interest in local electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing in India, according to a senior government official.

This move appears to be in response to the country's new EV policy, which offers reduced import tariffs for companies committing to significant local investment and production, reported Moneycontrol.

The policy, announced on March 15, provides import duty concessions to firms that invest a minimum of USD 500 million and establish manufacturing facilities within three years, with at least 25 per cent local component sourcing.

Qualifying companies can import up to 8,000 EVs annually at a reduced 15 per cent duty for vehicles priced at USD 35,000 and above, a significant reduction from the standard 70-100 per cent import tax.

While both Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz have substantial operations in India, neither has officially confirmed their plans regarding the new policy.

A Skoda Auto Volkswagen India Private Limited representative stated they



had no comment at this time, while a Mercedes-Benz India spokesperson declined to address what they termed 'speculations.'

Mercedes-Benz has already invested over Rs 3,000 crore in Pune, where it operates an EV assembly line. Volkswagen is reportedly considering assembling its ID.4 electric car at its Aurangabad plant for a potential 2024 launch.

The Indian government is expected to release draft guidelines for the revised EV policy soon.

These guidelines will likely include details about a Project Management Agency (PMA) to provide managerial and implementation support, as well as information about a dedicated portal.

This development comes as India seeks to boost its domestic EV manufacturing capabilities and reduce reliance on imported vehicles.

The government's initiative aims to attract foreign investment and technology transfer in the rapidly growing electric vehicle sector.

Committed to advancing India's EV ecosystem, fostering local manufacturing: Union Minister

NEW DELHI: The government is committed to advancing India's electric vehicle (EV) ecosystem, fostering local manufacturing and promoting sustainable growth, Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel, H.D. Kumaraswamy, has said.

During a post-budget webinar in the national capital, Kumaraswamy said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for 'Viksit Bharat 2047' and achieving net zero by 2070 guides our mission at the Ministry.

"We are committed to advancing India's EV ecosystem, fostering local manufacturing, and promoting sustainable growth through key initiatives such as



PLI, FAME, EMPS, and advanced capital goods schemes. These efforts will accelerate India's journey towards greater self-reliance and enhanced Aatmanirbharta," the minister emphasised. Minister of State Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma

said that India is on track to become a \$5 trillion economy, with the automotive sector playing a pivotal role.

The Ministry of Heavy Industries is driving innovation and self-reliance through initiatives such as the PLI Scheme for

Shriram Properties Unveils New Brand Identity as Part of Ambitious Growth Strategy

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

Shriram Properties Limited (SPL), one of South India's premier real estate developers, has announced a significant brand transformation as it steps into its 25th year of operations. This milestone marks not just a celebration of past achievements but the beginning of a bold new chapter in the company's growth trajectory.

A New Identity for a New Era - To commemorate this silver jubilee, SPL has launched a new



brand identity aimed at solidifying its position as a mature and visionary player in the real estate sector. This transformation is not merely cosmetic; it represents SPL's commitment to evolving with the times while maintaining

the core values and customer-centric approach that have been the bedrock of its success.

Addressing Media Mr. Murali Malayappan, Chairman and Managing Director of Shriram Properties, expressed the significance of this rebranding: "As we enter our 25th year, we are embracing a new identity that reflects our evolution as a company. This will allow us to create a distinct presence and re-position the trusted Shriram brand among the next generation of homebuyers."

Orient Technologies coming out with Rs 120-crore IPO

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Orient Technologies Limited, a Mumbai-based IT solutions provider, has come out with its IPO having price band of Rs 195 to Rs 206, which will open on August 21 and close on August 23. The IPO consists of fresh issue of upto Rs 120 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of upto 4,60,00,000 equity shares by Promoter Selling Shareholders.

The proceeds from the fresh

issuance to the extent of Rs 10.35 crore will be used for acquisition of office premise at Navi Mumbai, and Rs 79.65 crore for funding its Capital Expenditure requirements and general corporate purposes.

Orient Technologies was incorporated in 1997 and has built deep expertise to develop products and solutions for specialised disciplines across its business verticals such as IT Infrastructure Products and solutions, IT enabled services (IteS), Cloud and Data Management services.

REPORTING ON SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS

Learning from Global Pharmaceutical MNCs



DR. ANIL KUMAR ANGRISH

Pharmaceutical sector, with its substantial environmental footprint, finds itself at a pivotal moment in addressing sustainability challenges. Multiple ESG frameworks have been devised by various institutions and organizations to help investors, stakeholders, and companies understand and manage the risks and opportunities related to environmental, social, and governance aspects. Global Reporting Initiative (1997), Carbon Disclosure Project (2000), Equator Principles (2003), Principles for Responsible Investment (2006), ISO 26000 (2010), Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (2011), United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG) (2015), and Business Reporting and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) (2021) are prominent among these frameworks.

Emissions, in the context of Environmental Science, refer to the release of pollutants into the air. Scope 1 emissions are the most direct form of emissions which come from sources which

Table 1: Scope 3 Emissions

Scope 3 Category	Reporting	Future
1. Purchased goods and services	✓	✓
2. Capital goods	✓	✓
3. Fuel- and energy-related activities (not included in Scope 1 or Scope 2)	✓	✓
4. Upstream transportation and distribution	✓	✓
5. Waste generated in operations	✓	✓
6. Business travel	✓	✓
7. Employee commuting	✓	✓
8. Upstream leased assets	✓	✓
9. Downstream transportation and distribution	✓	✓
10. Processing of sold products	✓	✓
11. Use of sold products	✓	✓
12. End-of-life treatment of sold products	✓	✓
13. Downstream leased assets	✓	✓
14. Franchises	✓	✓
15. Investments	✓	✓

Source: Based on GRI 305: Emissions 2016 issued by the Global Sustainability Standards Board (2024)

are directly owned or controlled by an organization, e.g., natural gas used in the manufacturing process. Scope 2 emissions are the indirect emissions, e.g., emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating, and cooling consumed. Scope 3 emissions are the most complex and far-reaching and are the result of activities of assets not owned or controlled by the reporting organization, and includes everything from the emissions generated when customers use the organization's products.

From Table 1, one can understand that for some Scope 3 categories, emissions occur

simultaneously with the activity, e.g., from combustion of energy, so emissions occur in the same year as the company's activities. For some other categories, e.g., Capital goods, emissions may have occurred in previous years whereas for other Scope 3 categories, e.g., processing of sold products, emissions are expected to occur in future years. Table 2 gives an overview of the Time Boundary for Scope 3 Emission categories.

Top 20 global pharmaceutical MNCs namely J&J, AstraZeneca, GSK, Eli Lilly, Novo Nordisk, Amgen, Gilead Sciences, Bayer, Merck KGaA, and Teva Pharmaceuticals have demonstrated compre-

Table 2: Time Boundary for Scope 3 Emissions Categories

Scope 3 Category	Past Years	Reporting Year	Future Years
Purchased goods and services	✓	✓	✓
Capital goods	✓	✓	✓
Fuel- and energy-related activities	✓	✓	✓
Upstream transportation and distribution	✓	✓	✓
Waste generated in operations	✓	✓	✓
Business travel	✓	✓	✓
Employee commuting	✓	✓	✓
Upstream leased assets	✓	✓	✓
Downstream transportation and distribution	✓	✓	✓
Processing of sold products	✓	✓	✓
Use of sold products	✓	✓	✓
End-of-life treatment of sold products	✓	✓	✓
Downstream leased assets	✓	✓	✓
Franchises	✓	✓	✓
Investments	✓	✓	✓

Source: Based on The GHG Protocol Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard issued by World Resources Institute and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

hensive reporting practices, assessing all eight upstream emission factors. Roche, Merck, Pfizer, Sanofi, Novartis, Bristol Myers Squibb, and Takeda report on most upstream factors, with some gaps indicating areas for improvement. Boehringer Ingelheim and Viatrix are reporting 4 of 8 factors only whereas AbbVie does not report on any upstream emission factors.

Chart 1: Reporting on Upstream Scope 3 Emission Factors assessed by Global Pharma MNCs

ly, Amgen, Gilead Sciences, Bayer, Merck KGaA, and Teva Pharmaceuticals have a broad reporting scope, assessing nearly all downstream emission factors, demonstrating a proactive approach in managing their product lifecycle emissions. J&J, Pfizer, Merck, Sanofi, Novo Nordisk, and Takeda show moderate reporting practices, with some downstream factors assessed. AbbVie, Bristol Myers Squibb, Roche, Boehringer Ingelheim, and Viatrix report on very few or none of the downstream factors, indicating limited engagement with the full lifecycle impacts of their products.



In case of top 20 global pharmaceutical MNCs, the extent of reporting varies significantly, indicating a lack of standardization and comprehensive disclosure across the industry. Upstream emission factors are more frequently reported than downstream factors. It is expected that these companies should give equal importance to downstream emissions to fully capture their environmental impact.

Chart 2: Reporting on Downstream Scope 3 Emission Factors assessed by Global Pharma MNCs

In contrast to this, on Upstream Scope 3 Emissions reporting in Annual Reports for FY23, top 20 pharmaceutical companies based on TSA Moving Annual Total (MAT) February 2024 values, in India exhibit less comprehensive re-

porting practices compared to their global counterparts. The list also includes subsidiaries of MNCs listed in India. This could be attributed to strict regulatory environment and higher stakeholder expectations in developed markets. Lupin Limited stands out for its comprehensive assessment of upstream emission factors, indicating a strong commitment to environmental transparency. Companies like Sun Pharma, Dr. Reddy's Labs, and Glenmark report on several upstream factors, though not so extensively as their global counterparts do. Companies such as Zydus, Abbott India, Cipla, Mankind, Alkem, Torrent, GSK India, Pfizer India, Ipca Labs, and Sanofi India show minimal to no reporting on upstream emission factors, suggesting

need for improved sustainability practices in their supply chains.

On Downstream Scope 3 Emissions, most of pharmaceutical companies in India do not report on downstream factors. Four Companies namely Sun Pharma, Lupin, Dr. Reddy's Labs, and Glenmark have reported only one factor - Downstream transportation and distribution, out of seven Downstream Scope 3 Emission factors.

Enhanced reporting on Scope 3 Emissions by pharmaceutical companies in India will help in aligning with global best practices. Pharmaceutical companies which excel in this area can demonstrate leadership in sustainability that in turn, can enhance their reputation, meet regulatory requirements, and address the growing demands of stakeholders for transparency and accountability in environmental practices.

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

Stock markets marginally up in volatile trade ahead of US Fed chief speech

MUMBAI: Benchmark Sensex and Nifty edged up in volatile trade on Friday following buying in blue-chip stocks such as ICICI Bank and Bharti Airtel amid mixed global trends ahead of the US Fed chair's speech at Jackson Hole Symposium.

Rising for the fourth straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 33.02 points or 0.04 per cent higher at 81,086.21.

In early trade, the benchmark declined 169.93 points or 0.20 per cent to a low of 80,883.26. Later, it bounced back 178.3 points or 0.21 per cent to hit a high of 81,231.49 but gave up gains towards the end.

The NSE Nifty edged up 11.65 points or 0.05 per cent to close at 24,823.15 registering gains for the seventh session in a row.

From the Sensex pack, Tata Motors, Sun Pharmaceutical,



Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra and JSW Steel were the gainers.

Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Asian Paints, Titan, Infosys, State Bank of India, Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC Bank were the laggards.

"Ahead of the FED chair Powell's speech, the Indian indices

oscillated around the flat trajectory and mixed global market sentiments further catalysed this scenario," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Investors are exercising caution and awaiting Powell's signals for more insights on the interest rate path, Nair added. European markets were trad-

ing with significant gains in the mid-session deals while Asian markets were mixed.

The US stock markets closed lower in overnight trade on Thursday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,371.79 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) again bought equities worth Rs 2,971.80 crore on Thursday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude rose 1.01 per cent to USD 78 a barrel.

On Thursday, the 30-share BSE index rose 147.89 points to close at 81,053.19, registering gains for the third day in a row. Extending gains to a sixth session in a row, the NSE Nifty went up by 41.30 points to end at a two-week high of 24,811.50.

RBI Deputy Governor Urges Financial Institutions to be Empathetic for MSME Needs

MUMBAI: In a significant move to bolster the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor Swaminathan J has called on financial institutions to implement supportive measures for these businesses.

Speaking at the annual day of the Foreign Exchange Dealers' Association of India (FEDAI) on Thursday, Swaminathan emphasised the need for a more empathetic approach towards MSMEs, given their crucial role in the economy.

The deputy governor outlined several key initiatives that financial institutions should consider. These include restructuring options, grace periods, and tailored repayment plans. These measures are aimed at helping MSMEs recover and regain stability during challenging times.



Swaminathan stressed the importance of a nuanced approach to assessment and follow-up, taking into account the unique challenges faced by MSMEs. These challenges include low capital base, lack of scale, cash flow constraints from delayed payments, fluctuating market conditions, and external economic pressures. The RBI's stance aligns with the government's recent efforts to encourage banks to provide collateral-free loans to small businesses and offer additional financial support during periods of economic stress.

Swaminathan highlighted several issues plaguing the MSME sector, including limited access to affordable finance, delays in receiving payments, infrastructure bottlenecks, and high compliance costs.

He noted that the increasing adoption of digital payment systems, mobile banking, and online accounting tools by MSMEs could lead to better risk assessment and the development of customized financing products. The deputy governor also mentioned RBI initiatives to promote innovation in MSME financing, such as the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) launched in 2014. While there has been an uptick in transactions, Swaminathan emphasised the need for greater participation from corporate buyers and MSME sellers to fully realize the platform's potential.

Asset-based Lending Approach by Banks Results in Exclusion of MSMEs: RBI



NEW DELHI: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor Swaminathan J addressed the financial hurdles faced by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in a recent speech, emphasising the limitations of traditional banking practices in serving these businesses.

Speaking at the annual day of the Foreign Exchange Dealers Association of India on Monday, Swaminathan pointed out that many small businesses lack sufficient assets to use as collateral for loans, particularly for working capital needs.

This asset-based lending approach, commonly employed by banks, often results in the exclusion of smaller enterprises from formal banking sector funding opportunities.

The Deputy Governor's remarks, which were made available on the RBI website on Thursday, shed light on several key issues affecting MSMEs.

He noted that many of these enterprises operate in the informal sector, creating information asymmetry that makes it challenging for lenders to accurately assess their creditworthiness.

Swaminathan also highlighted the problem of delayed payments, which frequently extends the operating cycles of small businesses and impacts their ability to fulfil orders or secure new business.

This issue is compounded by the reluctance of MSMEs to invoke existing statutory provisions that penalise late payments.

According to the Deputy Governor, this hesitation stems from their weak bargaining position and fears of losing future business opportunities.

These observations underscore the complex challenges faced by small businesses in accessing formal financial services and managing their cash flows effectively.

National Stock Exchange Tightens Listing Norms for SMEs



NEW DELHI: The National Stock Exchange (NSE) is set to implement stricter regulations for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) seeking to list on stock exchanges, effective September 2024. This move comes in response to the recent surge in initial public offerings (IPOs) within the SME segment. Under the new guidelines, companies will be required to demonstrate positive Free Cash Flow to Equity (FCFE) for at least two out of three financial years preceding their application. FCFE is a metric that represents the amount of cash available for distribution to shareholders. The exchange clarified in a circular that these additional criteria will apply to all Draft Red Herring Prospectuses (DRHPs) filed on or after September 1, 2024, while other existing criteria remain unchanged.

GST Collections Surge, Manufacturing and Services Sectors Thrive in Q1 FY25

NEW DELHI: The Indian economy has maintained its growth trajectory in the first quarter (April-July) of FY25, according to the latest monthly economic review from the Department of Economic Affairs.

Key indicators point to a strong economic recovery across various sectors.

GST collections saw a significant rise in the first four months of FY25, attributed to a broader tax base and increased economic activity. This increase was supported by a double-digit rise in e-way bill generation.

Both manufacturing and services sectors demonstrated strong performance, driven by high demand and greater capacity utilisation. The manufacturing growth was characterised by expanding demand conditions, increased new export orders, and rising output prices. The RBI's Order Books, Inventories, and Capacity Utilisation Survey (OBICUS) indicates an expansion in manufacturing



capacity utilisation. The services sector has also flourished, notably benefiting from tourism and hospitality industries. Employment conditions show mixed signals, with the RBI Services and Infrastructure Outlook Survey revealing optimism about the overall business situation, turnover, and employment conditions in Q1 of FY25.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have been net buyers since June 2024, reversing previous trends. Net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows

have increased in the first three months of FY25, leading to foreign exchange reserves reaching USD 675 billion by August 2, 2024, sufficient to cover 11.6 months of imports. Retail inflation fell to a near five-year low of 3.5 per cent in July 2024, primarily due to moderated food inflation. The progress of the southwest monsoon has positively impacted kharif sowing, and increased reservoir levels are expected to benefit crop production.

The Union Budget FY25

focuses on fiscal consolidation, projecting a reduction in the fiscal deficit supported by robust revenue collection, controlled expenditure, and a strong economy. Merchandise exports and imports in FY25 have surpassed the previous year's levels, signalling a recovery in global demand. While the merchandise trade deficit has widened due to strong domestic demand, services exports have risen, increasing net services receipts.

Labour market indicators have shown positive trends, with the quarterly urban unemployment rate steady at 6.6 per cent in Q1 FY25.

Net EPFO payroll additions increased year-on-year in Q1 FY25, bolstered by growth in PMI employment sub-indices in July. The Naukri Jobspeak index also improved.

These economic indicators paint a picture of resilience and growth across various sectors, setting a positive tone for the remainder of FY25.

PM Modi congratulates RBI Guv for top global rating 2nd time in a row

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday congratulated RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on being rated "A+" for the second time in a row in the 'Global Finance Central Banker Report Cards 2024'.

Responding to a post on X by the Reserve Bank of India, PM Modi said, "Congratulations to RBI Governor Shri @Das-Shaktikanta for this feat, and that too for the second time".

"This is a recognition of his leadership at the RBI and his work towards ensuring economic growth and stability," said the Prime Minister.

The Global Finance magazine released the names of Central Bank Governors who earned the highest grades, "A+", "A" or "A-", in the 'Central Banker Report Cards 2024'.

The report, published annually since 1994, grades the central bank governors of nearly 100 key countries, territories and districts, as well as the European Union, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, the Bank of Central African States



and the Central Bank of West African States.

Grades are based on success in areas such as inflation control, economic growth goals, currency stability and interest rate management.

"Central bankers have waged war against inflation over the past few years, wielding their primary weapon: higher interest rates. Now, countries around the world are witnessing the tangible results of these efforts, as inflation has dropped significantly," said Joseph Giarraputo, Global Finance founder and editorial director.

Meanwhile, Das said on Tuesday that banks need to carefully monitor the persistent gap between credit and deposit growth because it could become a challenge, leading to liquidity issues.

Blueprint for Sustained Growth in Rural India



SATISH SINGH
To strengthen the agriculture sector, a provision of Rs.1.52 lakh crore has been made in the budget for agriculture and allied sector, out of which Rs.60,000 crore has been allocated for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi. Along with this, the government has indirectly made many provisions, which will brace the rural India.



easily buy seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. Further, in loan requirements, investment and non-agricultural activities were linked to it in 2004. Due to the great success of this scheme, KCC will be issued in 5 more states on extensive basis, where it is still not distributed among eligible farmers, so that farmers deprived of this facility can take advantage of this.

Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) will be implemented in the agriculture sector to make farmers and their land a part of the digital network within 3 years. DPI creates a physical network, which is necessary for people to connect with each other and access various types of goods and services. The central government is currently running this concept as a pilot project in collaboration with the state government, but there is a proposal to implement this concept on the ground.

National Co-operation Policy will increase opportunities for banks to enter into loan agreements with co-operative societies. In this case, banks can increase the portfolio of Agri loans by entering into agreements with Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), co-operative societies and Agri startups. By entering into agreements or partnerships with them, banks will be able to understand the cash flow of farmers. This will encourage farmers to produce horticulture and other cash crops, because even non-Indian farmers are doing farming in a traditional way.

A provision of Rs.86,000/-

crore has been made in the budget for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGN-REGA), under which adult members of each family willing to work will be provided employment for 100 days. During the Corona period, employment was provided to rural youth under MGN-REGA, due to which they were successful in supporting themselves and their families.

The National Health Mission was launched in April 2005, which aims to ensure the availability of quality health facilities for children, women and underprivileged sections living in rural areas, since only a healthy person can improve productivity and upsurge economic activities. The government has made a provision of Rs.28,000/- crore for this initiative, which will improve the health of the villagers, enabling them to bring happiness & prosperity at home & society.

In India, farming is still dependent on monsoon. Equal irrigation facilities are not available across the country. At the same time, the crops of farmers are sometimes ruined by floods and sometimes by drought. In such a situation, the importance of crop insurance raises. Insurance works as a lifesaver for the farmer in difficult times. The bank gets the farmer's crops insured, who have taken Kisan Credit Card (KCC) from the bank, but those who have not taken loan from the bank have to get their crops insured themselves. To ensure that farmers do not face financial problems

in times of crisis, the government has made a provision of Rs.14,600/- crore in the crop insurance scheme.

Ayushman Bharat Yojana or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) is a health scheme of the Government of India, which was implemented all over India on 23 September 2018. People belonging to Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe category or a family in which there is no earning member above the age of 16 years or whose annual income is less than Rs.2.5 lakh per annum or listed in the PMJAY beneficiary list can take advantage of this scheme. This is dedicated to improving the health of the deprived or weaker sections of the society. Therefore, to ensure that maximum number of people can avail the benefits of this scheme, the government has made a provision of Rs.7,300/- crore in the budget.

The Pradhan Mantri Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) scheme is being implemented through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), which acts as the nodal agency at the national level. PMEGP was started in 2008 by combining the Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Yojana and Rural Employment Generation Programme. It is a loan linked subsidy scheme, which is monitored by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). The objective of this scheme is to create new employment opportunities in rural and urban areas by promoting new self-employment related ventures, small enterprises and projects and to stop the migration of rural youth by making people economically self-reliant. A provision of Rs.2,300/- crore has been made in the budget to support this scheme.

In the year 2000, Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee had launched the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak

Yojana, under which the unpaved roads of villages were connected to the paved roads of cities. Now under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana, there is a plan to connect small and big villages to the paved roads of cities and to give it a concrete shape, a provision of Rs.19,000/- crore has been made in the budget.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana, banks are financing the craftsmen and artisans of the unorganized sector to make them economically self-reliant, so that they can be brought into the mainstream. The government has made a provision of Rs.4,800/- crore for consolidation of this scheme.

Farmers use fertilizers to increase the productivity of crops, in which a large part of the farmers' income is spent. Therefore, to provide financial relief to the farmers, the government has proposed to give a subsidy of Rs.1.19 lakh crore in the purchase of urea, a kind of fertilizers, which is being used by the farmers on large scale in India for increasing productivity of their crops.

A large part of the population in our country is unable to get meal a day. To ensure that no person in the country remains hungry, a provision of Rs.2.05 lakh crore has been made in the budget for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY). Under this scheme, 81.35 crore beneficiaries will be provided 35 Kilogram and 5 Kilogram food grains as per their eligibility free of cost from January 1, 2024, for the next 5 years.

To continue the continuity of development in the rural area, it is necessary to ensure the availability of basic facilities in rural India. It seems that budgetary provisions will help in ensuring sustainable development in rural India.

Satish Singh, Ahmedabad based Senior Columnist. Views are Personal

Finance Ministry sees food inflation easing further on back of better monsoon

NEW DELHI: Inflationary pressures in the Indian economy eased in July and food inflation is expected to come down further with this year's better monsoon leading to higher agricultural production, according to the Finance Ministry's monthly review released on Thursday.

Retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index eased from 5.1 per cent in June 2024 to 3.5 per cent in July 2024, the lowest since September 2019.

This was mainly due to a significant fall in food inflation. It declined to 5.4 per cent in July 2024 from 9.4 per cent in June 2024, the review states.

The substantial fall witnessed in food inflation was helped majorly by a decline in vegetable inflation from 29.3 per cent in June 2024 to 6.8 per cent in July 2024 and mild deflation in 'oils and fats' and spices.

On the other hand, core inflation (which excludes food and fuel) was at a moderate level of



3.3 per cent in July 2024.

Overall, the retail inflation rate moderated to 4.6 per cent in the first four months of FY25 as compared to 5.3 per cent in FY24 (April-July), according to the review. With moderate core inflation and positive progress in the monsoon, the headline inflation outlook is positive. Assuming a normal monsoon, CPI inflation for FY25 is projected at 4.5 per cent by the RBI, with Q2 inflation at 4.4 per cent.

A steady progress in the southwest monsoon has supported agricultural activity. The

cumulative southwest monsoon rainfall was 3 per cent higher than the long-period average up to August 19, 2024. Further, the spatial distribution has improved, with 84 per cent of subdivisions receiving normal or excess rainfall. This has enabled healthy Kharif sowing. As of August 16, the actual sowing area under total foodgrains was 4.8 per cent higher than the corresponding period of the previous year, while progress in cereals and pulses was 4.6 per cent and 5.7 per cent higher than the previous year.

Rural India Faces Higher Inflation Rates than Urban Counterparts

NEW DELHI: Recent economic data reveals that rural areas in India have been experiencing higher inflation rates compared to urban regions for over a year.

This trend is particularly pronounced in predominantly rural states such as Bihar and Odisha, where inflation rates have consistently surpassed the national average, as reported by businessline.

According to official figures, rural inflation reached 7.6 per cent in July 2023, exceeding the urban rate of 7.2 per cent.

Although both rates have since decreased, the disparity persists. As of July 2024, rural inflation stood at 4.1 per cent, while urban areas reported a rate of 3 per cent. Experts attribute this divergence to several factors. Madan Sabnavis, Chief



Economist, Bank of Baroda, highlights the significant impact of food prices on rural inflation.

"Food products carry substantial weight in the overall inflation calculation, especially in rural areas," Sabnavis stated.

Ramendra Verma, Partner, Grant Thornton Bharat, points to differences in energy costs

and housing as contributing factors. "Rural areas rely more on traditional fuels like firewood and charcoal, which have seen price increases," Verma noted.

He also mentions that urban areas benefit from lower housing inflation, a component not included in rural Consumer Price Index (CPI) calculations.

INTERNATIONAL

Kamala Harris remembers her mother Shyamala in acceptance speech

WASHINGTON: Kamala Harris while accepting the Democratic nomination for US president during the party's convention in Chicago on Friday spoke about her life and her Indian mother.

Harris said her Jamaican father, Donald Jasper Harris, always taught her to be "fearless", and her mother, Shyamala Gopalan, was "tough and courageous".

"My mother taught Maya (her sister) and me to never complain about injustice, but do something about it," she said.

"My mother Shyamala Harris had one of her own. I miss her every day, especially now. And I know she's looking down tonight, and smiling," she said.

Harris said her mother was just 19 and travelled alone to the US to pursue a dream of being a scientist. "So my mother was 19 when she crossed the world



alone, travelling from India to California with an unshakable dream to be the scientist who would cure breast cancer. When she finished school, she was supposed to return home to a traditional arranged marriage, but as fate would have it, she met my father, Donald Harris, a student from Jamaica. They fell in love and got married, and that act of self-determination made my sister Maya and I grow up,

or the flatlands. We lived in the flats, a beautiful working-class neighbourhood of firefighters, nurses and construction workers, all of who tended their lawns with pride, my mother worked long hours, and like many working parents, she leaned on a trusted circle to help raise us," Harris said.

"I grew up immersed in the ideals of the civil rights movement. My parents had met at a civil rights gathering, and they made sure that we learned about civil rights leaders, including lawyers like Thurgood Marshall and Constance Baker Motley, those who battled in the courtroom to make real the promise of America. So at a young age, I decided I wanted to do that work. I wanted to be a lawyer. And when it came time to choose the type of law I would pursue, I reflected on a pivotal moment in my life.

we moved a lot," said Harris.

Speaking of her father, Harris said, "From my earliest years, he taught me to be fearless, but the harmony between my parents did not last. When I was in elementary school, they split up."

"... it was mostly my mother who raised us before she could finally afford to buy a home. She rented a small apartment in the East Bay, in the bay, in the bay, you either live in the hills

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh hails growing India-US ties



NEW DELHI: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh praised the growing strength of India-US relations while addressing the Indian diaspora in Washington DC during his four-day visit to the United States at the invitation of US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin. He said that both countries are long-standing allies capable of working together to promote global peace and prosperity.

Rajnath Singh emphasised the importance of maintaining cultural values and loyalty

to both India and the United States and also hailed the country's message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (The entire world is a family).

In his address on Thursday (US time), the Union Minister urged Indians working in the US to remain dedicated to their work and uphold their commitment to both nations.

"You should always be dedicated to India, but your commitment to America should also not be doubted," he stated, highlighting the integrity and honesty inherent

in Indian culture.

He further stressed the Indian philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,' noting that India views all global communities as one family, a belief rooted in its spiritual heritage.

He pointed out the rapid transformation India has undergone over the past decade, which has significantly enhanced its global stature.

Additionally, two significant defence agreements -- the Security of Supplies Arrangement (SOSA) and a Memorandum of Agreement regarding the Assignment of Liaison Officers -- were also signed between the US Department of Defense and the Indian Ministry of Defence amid Rajnath Singh's visit. The SOSA ensures reciprocal priority support for national defence goods and services between the two nations, aimed at mitigating supply chain disruptions. Both countries also pledged to prioritise each other's critical defence procurement needs.

More than a dozen aid trucks cross into famine-hit Sudan: UN



UNITED NATIONS: In a breakthrough, more than a dozen aid trucks, including from two UN agencies, have crossed into Sudan's Darfur region from Chad, UN humanitarianists said.

The UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on Wednesday said trucks from the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) were among the dozen vehicles allowed across the key Adre crossing, reports Xinhua news agency.

OCHA said the crossing is the most effective and direct cross-border route to deliver humanitarian assistance to Sudan at the scale and speed required to respond to the enormous hunger crisis in the country. WFP reported that trucks could cross into Darfur via Adre and reach key distribution points the same day.

"It is critical to sustain the flow of food and nutrition assistance into and across Sudan, where more than a dozen areas are either in or at risk of famine," the office said. "WFP is scaling up food assistance there and aims to support more than 8 million people by the end of the year."

OCHA said WFP reported its trucks carried sorghum, pulses, oil and rice for 13,000 people at risk of famine in Kereneik, West Darfur, and IOM reported the essential relief items it delivered to Sudan will support more than 12,000 people in need.

US ready for new chapter with Kamala Harris, says Obama

Former US President Obama said the US is ready for a new chapter with Kamala Harris in the lead role.

He said this while addressing the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

The four-day event began on Tuesday.

"The US is ready for Harris's presidency," said Obama, adding: "America is waiting for a new chapter, America is waiting for a better story. We are ready for president Kamala Harris, and Kamala Harris is ready for the job".

Obama said, "We have a chance to elect someone who has spent her entire life trying to give people the same chances, America gave her... It has been 16 years since I had the honour of accepting this party's nomination for President... Looking back, I can say without question that my first big decision as your nominee turned out to me as one of your best friends... History will remember Joe Biden as an outstanding president who defended democracy at a moment of great danger. I am proud to call him my president and even prouder to call him my friend..."

Obama highlighted Harris' history as a prosecutor going after big banks and child sexual abusers. "After the home mortgage crisis, she pushed me and my administration too hard to make sure homeowners



got a fair settlement," said the former president.

Obama said that Kamala Harris and Tim Walz believe in an America "where we the people includes everyone... And despite what our politics might suggest, I think most Americans understand that... That sense of mutual respect has to be part of our message."

The former US president told Democrats that "Harris will be focused on your problems" and "won't just cater to her own voters and punish those who refuse to bend the knee."

Obama said that the rest of the world is watching "what happens in the elections in November. Praising Walz, Obama said he is "the kind of person who should be in politics - someone who was born in a small town, served his country, taught kids, coached football, and took care of his neighbours... He knows who he is and what's important."

Continuing his attacks on Trump, Obama says that the Republican nominee "sees power as nothing more than a means to his ends..."

PM Modi highlights Gandhi's message of peace ahead of talks with Zelenskyy in Ukraine

KYIV: Prime Minister Narendra Modi began a historic visit to the Ukrainian capital Kyiv under the shadow of war to hold talks with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in what is being seen as a reflection of India's concerns over the continuing conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

It is the first-ever visit to Ukraine by an Indian Prime Minister after Ukraine became independent in 1991, and his trip comes amid Kyiv's fresh military offensive in Russia's western Kursk region.

On his arrival following a nearly 10-hour train journey from Poland, Modi was accorded a warm welcome by members of the Indian community at the Hyatt Hotel.

Soon after, Modi visited the multimedia Martyrologist exposition on children at the

National Museum of History in Kyiv.

Zelenskyy warmly hugged and shook hands with Modi at the exposition.

The Prime Minister was deeply touched by the poignant exposition set up in memory of children who have lost their lives in the conflict, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Modi expressed his sorrow at the tragic loss of young lives and as a mark of respect placed a toy in their memory, it said.

The Prime Minister's visit to Kyiv is expected to last for around seven hours.

Ahead of his talks with Zelenskyy, Modi also paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at his statue located in the 'Oasis of Peace' park in Kyiv.

Modi underscored the timeless relevance of Gandhi's message of peace in building a har-



monious society and noted that the path shown by him offered solutions to present-day global challenges, the MEA said.

"Reached Kyiv earlier this morning, The Indian community accorded a very warm welcome," Modi said on 'X' shortly after reaching the Ukrainian capital.

Modi is holding both one-on-

one and delegation-level talks with Zelenskyy with a focus on bringing peace and stability to Ukraine and the larger region.

The prime minister's visit to Kyiv comes nearly six weeks after his high-profile trip to Moscow and it is seen as a balancing act as the prime minister's trip to Russia triggered anguish among the Western countries.

Rupee Trade & Agri-Tech Collaboration Proposed to enhance India-Africa Economic Cooperation

NEW DELHI: At the 19th edition of the CII India-Africa Business Conclave held in New Delhi, prominent business leaders emphasised the need for innovative financial solutions to bolster trade relations between India and Africa.

The event highlighted potential strategies to overcome existing challenges and strengthen economic partnerships.

Noel Tata, Chairman of the CII Africa Committee and TATA International Ltd., stressed the importance of exploring new financial mechanisms.

"To address these challenges, we are exploring the concept of



Rupee trade," Tata stated, pointing to this as a possible solution to current trade obstacles.

Tata underscored the significance of building trust between financial institutions in both regions. "Our goal is to build

mutual trust between our (India and Africa) financial institutions and expand private sector participation, thereby facilitating the implementation of innovative financial solutions," he explained.

Bangladesh interim government revokes ousted PM Sheikh Hasina's diplomatic passport

DHAKA: Bangladesh's interim government has revoked ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina's diplomatic passport along with that of all members of the former Cabinet, over two weeks after she resigned and fled to India following a student-led uprising against her government.

A statement by the Security Services Division of the Home Affairs Ministry on Thursday said diplomatic passports received by the former prime minister, ex-PM's advisors, ex-cabinet members and all members of the recently dissolved



Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) and their spouses would be revoked immediately, the official BSS news agency reported.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin in August dissolved the 12th Parliament after Hasina, 76, fled the country. Currently, an interim government led by Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus is running

the country. Diplomatic passports of the officials would also be revoked immediately upon termination of their tenure or appointment, it said. The release said ordinary passports may be issued in their favour based on the reports of at least two investigating agencies, it added.

Hasina fled to India after being forced to resign in the face of a student-led mass uprising on August 5. According to the Indian visa policy, Bangladeshi citizens holding diplomatic or official passports are eligible for visa-free entry and a stay of up to 45 days, The Daily Star newspaper said.

HOSTAGES' RELEASE AWAITED

The US and China Team Up for an Imminent Peace in West Asia

GOPAL MISRA Finally, the decks for an immediate cessation of conflict in West Asia are being cleared with the arrival of the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken in Tel Aviv on August 19. In the next three-four days, a peace formula for ceasefire and the exchange of the remaining hostages is likely to be finalized.

Blinken, with a clear message from the White House, is visiting the war zone that Israel has to accept a ceasefire immediately. His visit is taking place

following a week-long talks at Doha among the representatives of Egypt, Qatar and the US for ending the conflict. The optimism in the US Administration was reflected during the ongoing presidential campaign of the Democratic Party's presidential nominee Kamala Harris, presently the Vice-President, in Pennsylvania. It is believed that there are no time constraints for Blinken during this peace mission. He has been mandated to broker peace during this ninth visit. The outgoing US President Joe Biden doesn't want to be remembered as a war-monger in American history. It is also expected that

the proposed ceasefire in West Asia might also improve Kamala Harris's prospects in the forthcoming presidential election. Her Republican Party rival, Donald Trump, a former president, has been repeatedly stating that if he is back in the White House, he would be promoting peace. Before the end of his four-year tenure Trump had signed a peace accord with the Taliban ensuring a peaceful withdrawal of the US-led NATO forces. However, in a bid to embarrass his erstwhile predecessor, Biden withdrew the US forces before the withdrawal schedule agreed upon by the Trump Administration, thus abandoning the pro-West government in Kabul and left the state-of-the-art weapons worth billions of dollars. Also, allowed the Taliban to butcher the top political, administrative and military officers of the pro-West regime in Afghanistan.

During his two-day stay in Israel before flying to Egypt, Blinken met Israel's top leadership including President Issac Herzog, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Defense Minister Yuan Gallant. They were told that the three countries mediating for the peace, Egypt, Qatar and the US are for halting most military operations in Gaza. He reportedly told the



Israeli government that the ongoing revenge against the Hamas attack of October 7 last year cannot be accepted. The large number of killings of the Palestinians is being stated that the Chinese advice to Iran has prevented escalation of the conflict.

The US and China appear to be working on a common agenda to explore possibilities of immediate ceasefire and also get the Israeli hostages released from the captivity of Hamas.

There is no denying that the conflict had begun following the unprovoked attack of the Hamas terrorists on the civilian population of Israel. During their sudden attack on the civilian population of Israel, the Hamas terrorists killed a large number of civilians in Israel. They also abducted more than 250 civilians. It is believed despite a few re-

leases during previous brief ceasefires, there are as many as 110 hostages still being kept as hostages by Hamas.

It is difficult to assess the impact of the Chinese initiative on the ongoing peace efforts. There are also reports that Beijing has also advised Hamas to sort out their internal difference,

Earlier, China had helped Iran and Saudi Arabia to renew their diplomatic ties. It has helped to prevent further complications in the Iran-Arab ties.

The Sunni-Shia differences and the inability of the Iranian leadership to modernize their governance and education have also adversely affected the prospects of a common platform against Israel.

The Chinese advice to Iran not to avenge the killing of the Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh has been quite timely. It might help in renewing peace prospects in the troubled region. It is yet to be ascertained who killed Ismail Haniyeh on July 31, 2024, at a highly secured guest house in Tehran. He had been visiting the Iranian capital at the swearing-in ceremony of the new president, Mosoud Peshkian.

Nobody has so far claimed the responsibility of killing Haniyeh.

According to the Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps

(IRGC), the killers had hit the guest house with a deadly missile, where Haniyeh was staying in Tehran.

The Iranian media has blamed Israel for his assassination. Iran has promised to take revenge against the elimination of the Hamas leader.

It is widely believed that Beijing has quietly played the role of a good Samaritan in diffusing the situation in West Asia.

In recent years, China has been liberally investing in the region. It has developed huge industrial complexes near the Suez Canal. Also, it is one of leading importers of oil from the region.

The proximity between the Biden Administration and China is well-known. Biden's son, Hunter is known to have huge financial stakes in China. It appears China is keen that Democrats reoccupy White House, especially when Trump is committed to shift a large part of American investments in the US from China, thus hurting the long-term financial interests of Dragon.

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

Nearly half of New Zealanders affected by workplace incidents



WELLINGTON: Nearly half of New Zealanders are affected by a workplace incident to themselves, colleagues, family, or friends, a report said on Monday.

The cost of poor workplace health and safety performance, including the cost of lost lives and earnings, serious injury costs to the government's Accident Compensation Corporation, and health issues, rose to 4.9 billion NZ dollars (\$2.97 billion) last year, the report said. That cost was 4.4 billion NZ dollars (\$2.67 billion) in 2022, according to the report of the Business Leaders' Health and Safety Forum, which has been committed to reporting annually on the performance of New Zealand's health and safety system, Xinhua news agency reported.

New Zealand is falling behind its overseas counterparts when it comes to workplace

health and safety, it said. The country has a 60 per cent higher fatality rate than Australia and the rate is 500 per cent higher than Britain, despite all three countries having similar legislative settings, the report said.

"A worker in New Zealand is twice as likely to die than they are in Australia," said the forum's chief executive Francois Barton. About 50 per cent had a positive perception of New Zealand's health and safety performance and response following an incident at work, the report said.

Labour Party's workplace relations and safety spokesperson Camilla Belich called for effective investment in WorkSafe, New Zealand's primary workplace health and safety regulator, so it can undertake its important role, in investigation and investment in injury prevention.

Sonakshi Sinha shares loved up glimpse of her 'heart and home'

MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha has shared a sneak-peek from her holiday in New York with her husband Zaheer Khan, whom she referred to as her "heart and home." Sonakshi took to Instagram, where she posted a handful of romantic pictures featuring her and Zaheer. The first image has her husband holding her. The second image has the two enjoying some wine at a tasting. In the third photograph, Zaheer can be seen giving a soft kiss to his wife. "Home is where the heart is... and wherever in the world... my heart is with my home - @iamzahero," she wrote as the caption. This is not the first time Sonakshi has expressed love to Zaheer. Earlier this week,



the actress took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a picture of a dessert which had "I love you more than ice cream" written on it. The description read: "Everyone needs a cutie like you to laugh with, cuddle upto, and make really bad decisions with. We're like a tiny (but mighty) little gang. If you haven't noticed already, I think you're pretty cool. Honey, honestly, you complete me xo." Tagging her husband in the

picture, she wrote: "Its true." Sonakshi got married to her longtime beau Zaheer in a civil ceremony on June 23. They had their families and close friends around them during their intimate wedding. On the work front, Sonakshi was last seen starring alongside Riteish Deshmukh and Saqib Saleem in 'Kakuda', a horror comedy set in a curse-inflicted village in the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh. Next in line for her is the upcoming film titled 'Nikita Roy and the Book of Darkness', directed by Kussin Sinha. She will be seen starring alongside names such as Arjun Rampal, Paresh Rawal and Suhail Nayyar in the upcoming film. The film was shot across London and other locales of the UK.

Veteran Footballers rock in Goa's North-South 'Conceicao Cup'

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mapuca, Goa



"Old is Gold" was the clarion call by veteran Indian footballers as they rocked the crowd with their rusty skills and enduring spirit in the North Goa versus South Goa 'Conceicao Cup' friendly match at the Duler Stadium here recently. Loud music by ABBA rocked the Stadium amidst the holiday football crazy crowd roaring their cheers from the gallery on the occasion. While the North Goa team lifted the winner's cup with Elvis Goes' brace to win 3-1 against South Goa, the game still highlighted the veterans' skills where - despite many exciting goal-scoring opportunities lost in vain - the veterans kept

pounding their rivals' goalposts relentlessly. The first half saw North Goa's Elvis Goes--now based in Portugal -- scoring their first goal in the fifth minute as he shot the ball past the rival's former India goalkeeper Brahmanand Sankwalkar. Goes' second goal was exciting to watch as he slammed a left-footer ball in a curving trajectory into the goal past the helpless goalkeeper. North Goa's Claudio Pacheco took the total to three when he shot a lifter well over the head of goalkeeper Sankwalkar into the goal. The second half of the match witnessed South Goa putting on the pressure with former India captain Roberto Fernandes manning the defence.

SONAM KAPOOR flaunts her 'minimal, bold and effortlessly on point' look



MUMBAI: Bollywood actress and fashionista Sonam Kapoor brought out her A-game in fashion, where she flaunted "minimal, bold and effortlessly on point" look. The actress took to Instagram, where she shared a string of pictures. In the pictures, she is seen wearing a powder pink shirt, paired with a blazer and long skirt. She completed her look with sunglasses.

"Celebrating @perniaq season 2 podcast drop with that sleek @phoebephilo energy--minimal, bold, and effortlessly on point. Shout-out to the squad for keeping the vibe," she wrote and also mentioned that she is styled by her sister Rhea Kapoor. Recently, Sonam shared several glimpses from her son Vayu's vintage car themed cake as he turned two on August 20.

Sonam took to Instagram, where she shared a reel of the two-tier toddler friendly, refined sugar free chocolate cake. It featured a vintage ice blue car atop of the cake with the number 2 written on it. The actress had also penned a heart-felt note for her son Vayu.

"My baby turns two today!!! Happy 2nd Birthday to our sweet, precious Vayu! W Being your mom is the greatest gift I could ever receive. You've filled our lives with so much joy, laughter, and wonder," Sonam said.

The actress shared that with her son, everyday is an adventure filled with "your boundless curiosity, your infectious laughter, and your sweet, loving nature."

"You've brought so much light and happiness into our world, making every moment more beautiful and every relationship stronger. You've deepened the love between your dadaa and me in ways we never imagined, and you've brought pure, unfiltered joy to everyone who loves you-your nani and nana, dadi and baba, kaaa masa, Masi and chachu," she said.

Yo Yo Honey Singh declares himself a true 'Lahori', take a look inside



MUMBAI: Rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh, who is known for 'Blue Eyes', 'Angrezi Beat', 'Brown Rang' and others, has said that he is a true Lahori when it comes to food choices. The rapper recently took to the Stories section of his Instagram, and shared a picture of his culinary indulgence, the kheer.

He wrote on the picture, "Heer nahi toh kheer sahi. I'm a true Lahori when it comes to food".

Yo Yo Honey Singh hails from Hoshiarpur in Punjab which is 150 kms away from Lahore in Pakistan. The two cities on either sides of the border share similar culinary history.

The rapper, who predominantly raps in Punjabi, started his career in 2003, and broke out on the scene 2011 with his songs like 'Angrezi Beat', 'Brown Rang', 'Dope Shope' and others.

He made his foray into Bollywood in 2012 with the Deepika Padukone and Saif Ali Khan-starrer 'Cocktail' in which his track 'Angrezi Beat' was reused.

The Lexicon Group of Institutes Announces Smt. Kamal Sharma Award for Academic Excellence

Nominations open for Prestigious Awards on Teachers Day 2024



NEW DELHI: The Lexicon Group of Institutes has announced the fifth season of the Smt. Kamal Sharma Award for Academic Excellence, which will take place on Teachers' Day, 5 September 2024. This esteemed award, named in honor of the late Smt. Kamal Sharma, a dedicated Trustee whose visionary support was crucial to the institution's growth, aims to recognize exceptional educators. Smt. Kamal Sharma's legacy continues to inspire the field of education through

this global accolade. The award categories include Exceptional Teacher - International Acclaim, Distinguished Educator Lifetime Award, Outstanding Educator Award, Innovative Teaching Award, Community Impact Award, Excellence in

Student Engagement Award and Excellence Enablers Award to be felicitated on 5th September 2024.

Pankaj Sharma, Director of The Lexicon Group of Institutes, expressed his enthusiasm about the award, stating, "The Smt. Kamal Sharma Award for Academic Excellence represents a profound tribute to the values and dedication that Smt. Kamal Sharma embodied. It is a celebration of the outstanding contributions of educators who, like her, are committed to advancing education and making a meaningful impact on students' lives."

When Salman gave his co-star Bhumika Chawala valuable tips about industry

MUMBAI: A video of actress Bhumika Chawla, who was last seen in the Hindi movie 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan', has resurfaced in which she was seen sharing her experience of shooting with Bollywood superstar Salman Khan for 'Tere Naam'.

The archival video shared by Lehren, shows the actress talking about her trajectory, and how she had worked in Tamil and Telugu films before making her foray into the Hindi cinema.

She says, "Before 'Tere Naam', I had already done a few south projects in Tamil and Telugu. I have worked with producer Mr. Sunil Manchanda



long back in ad films. Satish ji (Satish Kaushik) saw my film 'Khushi' and my performance and they got in touch with me and asked if you would like to work in 'Tere Naam' and I said of course, and it all just happened so organically and rest

you know is a history". "Tere Naam" is a remake of the Tamil film 'Sethu'. The film was based on a real-life incident of a guy, who fell in love, lost his mind, and ended up at a mental asylum. Salman's portrayal of Radhe Bhaiyya in the

film is widely considered to be one of his best performances.

The actress also spoke about her equation with her co-star Salman with whom she has worked in his home production, 'Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan'. "Salman sir is really an amazing actor and person with so much experience.... he literally took me in as a little girl and he would always guide me how I can make my performance better... he helped with a few tips about the industry and how it functions. He is such a big star with a very giving nature and yes of course it was a great experience to work with," she was seen saying in the video.



A delegation headed by the President-INS, Rakesh Sharma during meeting with Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Ashwini Vaishnaw on 21.08.2024.

Manushi Chhillar ends her 'many moods' with her 'favourite food'



MUMBAI: Actress Manushi Chhillar has shared her many moods and how she ended it with her "favourite food", bhel-puri, a delicacy from Mumbai.

Manushi took to Instagram, where she shared a string of mirror selfies of herself sitting in her vanity van. She ended it with a picture having bhel-puri and posing for the camera.

"Fake bruise, many moods and ending it with my fav food," she wrote.

A former beauty queen, Manushi, who hails from Haryana was crowned with the Miss World 2017 title, 17 years after Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas was feted with the honour. She made her debut in Hindi cinema in 2022 with Akshay Kumar-starrer historical drama "Samrat Prithviraj", directed by Chandraprakash Dwivedi. It told the story of the life of Prithviraj Chauhan, a king from the Chahamana dynasty.

A year later, she was seen in the comedy-drama "The Great Indian Family" starring Vicky Kaushal. It was directed by

Vijay Krishna Acharya. After taking a break for two years, she was then seen as a wing commander in the Hindi-Telugu bilingual action drama movie "Operation Valentine", opposite Varun Tej.

"Operation Valentine" was based on the 2019 Pulwama Attack and the retaliatory Balakot Air Strikes, was directed by Shakti Pratap Singh Hada.

She was recently seen in Ali Abbas Zafar's science fiction action film "Bade Miyan Chote Miyan" starring Akshay Kumar, Tiger Shroff, Prithviraj Sukumaran, Manushi, Alaya F, and Sonakshi Sinha. The film is co-produced by Jacky Bhagnani, Vashu Bhagnani, Deepshikha Deshmukh, and Himanshu Kishan Mehra under Pooja Entertainment and AAZ Films.

Coming up next for Manushi is set to appear in the action thriller "Tehran", directed by Arun Gopalan and produced by Dinesh Vijan. She will be seen starring opposite action star John Abraham in the geopolitical film.

A. R. Rahman unveils soundtrack of his musical film 'Le Musk'



The film was earlier presented at Cannes XR, following experiences at Los Angeles and Toronto. The tracks echo the film's story of love, memory, and sensory exploration, and the album promises to be a one-of-a-kind listening experience for both long-time Rahman fans and newcomers.

The 12 track album features collaborations with artists such as Nora Arnezeder, Sana Moussa, Linda Lind, Mayssa Karaa, Hiral Viradia, Simona Gilbert, The Firdaus orchestra and the Budapest Orchestra, the soundtrack of Le Musk also marks the association with the award-winning music engineer Greg penny. The film's soundtrack has been released under the label of Believe Music. Rahman recent album 'Amar Singh Chamkila' too was a huge hit in which he collaborated with Imtiaz Ali, Irshad Kamil and Mohit Chauhani, they're often referred as the dream team given their earlier successes like 'Rockstar' and 'Tamasha'.

MUMBAI: The Oscar-winning composer A. R. Rahman has released the soundtrack of the movie 'Le Musk'. The soundtrack consists of 12 tracks, and features a blend of ethereal compositions. The OST of the film features a fusion of Jazz, Orchestra and eclectic elements.

'Le Musk' is a virtual reality thriller film written, directed and co-produced by A. R. Rahman. It stars Nora Arnezeder, Guy Burnet, Munir Grace and Mariam Zohrabyan. The film promises an innovative sensory cinematic experience as it blends music, fragrance, and visual storytelling to immerse audiences in a new kind of film and narrative. Talking about the soundtrack, A.R. Rahman said, "Music is the heartbeat of 'Le Musk'. It carries the soul of the film, guiding the audience through an emotional and sensory journey. The film is a labour of a lot of hard work and love, where we tried to push the boundaries of how we use technology to create something truly immersive".

He further mentioned, "I am thrilled to finally share this soundtrack with the world and offer a glimpse into the world we've created".

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