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REGION



THREE YEAR OLD WITH MOTHER DROWN IN HALF-OPEN DRAIN IN GHAZIPUR AREA OF EAST DELHI



INDIAN BANK EASES LENDING NORMS TO SERVE SMA MARKED MSMES WITH **GOOD TRACK RECORD**



PRIYANKA CHOPRA IS EXCITED TO USE THIS 'WILD' PROP FOR HER PERIOD DRAMA 'THE BLUFF'

Delhi government plans to introduce a bill to regulate coaching centers

OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

After the tragic death of three IAS aspirants who drowned in the flooded basement of an institute in Old Rajender Nagar, the Delhi government swung into action to bring a law to regulate coaching centers in Delhi. During a press conference,

Minister Atishi announced that the Delhi government will form a committee consisting of government officials and students from various coaching hubs to draft new regulations for coaching centres. The proposed law will address infrastructure standards, teacher qualifications, fee regulation, and the prevention of misleading advertisements. Public feedback will also be sought.

Atishi emphasized that strict actions have already been taken against coaching centres operating libraries in their



coaching centres in Rajinder jinder Nagar tragedy. We will Nagar, Mukherjee Nagar, not wait for the central govern-Laxmi Nagar, and Preet Vihar ment to implement their rules. have been sealed, and notices We have decided to enforce have been issued to 200 other regulations for coaching cencoaching centres," she stated. tres, regardless of whether they She further mentioned, cater to UPSC, JEE, or NEET. "Strict action will be taken if

We are introducing a regulaany officers are found guilty tory act for these institutes." in the incident. The illegal use Atishi also highlighted that

tigation into the Old Rajinder Nagar incident will be revealed within a week. This probe aims to determine if any bureaucrat ignored an initial complaint from an IAS aspirant about the illegal occupancy of Rau's IAS Study Circle's basement, where the tragic incident oc-

GST collections record 10 per cent YoY growth, cross Rs 1.8 Trillion in July '24 As per data released

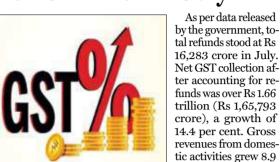
NEW DELHI: The Finance Ministry reported on Thursday that Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections for July 2024 totalled Rs 1.82 trillion, representing a 10.3 per cent increase compared to the same month last year. This figure also surpasses the Rs 1.74 trillion collected in June 2024. While July's receipts did not

match the record Rs 2.1 trillion collected in April, financial analysts view the current figures as consistent with the overall robust trend in GST revenue. Experts anticipate further

growth as the country approaches the festive season, traditionally a period of increased consumer spending. It is worth noting that July's GST figures reflect sales from June 2024, typically considered a slower month for com-

merce before the onset of festive activities. At the net level, after ac-

counting for refunds of Rs



lion (Rs 1.34 lakh crore) in 16,283 crore, GST collections showed a more substantial July. The GST revenue from increase of 14.4 per cent comimports jumped 14.2 per cent pared to last year. This growth to Rs 48,039 crore. The data occurred despite a 19.4 per clearly suggests that overall GST collection has shown an cent year-on-year decrease in refunds issued.

The data reveals that producer states continue to be of India's economic activity the primary contributors to GST revenue. Maharashtra, and tax compliance. As the Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, country moves into its festive and Tamil Nadu emerged as the largest collectors by value, closely monitoring GST collecunderscoring their significant tions for indications of broader roles in the national economy. economic trends.

ED raid being planned over Chakravyuh speech, claims Rahul Gandhi



NEW DELHI: Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi has claimed that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was planning a raid on him.

He said some ED insiders had told him about a raid being planned, and that he was

'waiting with open arms'. In a post on X on Friday, Rahul Gandhi said, "Apparently, 2 in 1 didn't like my Chakravyuh speech. ED 'insiders' tell me a raid is being planned. Waiting with open arms, @dir ed. Chai and biscuits on me." He was referring to his July 29 speech in the Lok Sabha during a discussion on the Union Budget.

The Congress leader had alleged that the "NDA government had stabbed the middle class in the front and the back with announcements in Budget 2024 amid an atmosphere of fear across the country."

While referring to Mahabharata, he said, "Thousands of years ago, in Kurukshetra, six people trapped Abhimanyu in 'Chakravyuh' and killed him. I did a little research and found out that 'Chakravyuh' is also known as 'Padmavuyh' -- which means 'Lotus formation'... In the 21st century, a new 'Chakravyuh' has been formed ... What was done with Abhimanyu, is being down with India -- the youth, farmers, women, small

and medium businesses. BJP MP Anurag Thakur slammed Rahul Gandhi over the Chakravyuh statement and said the country has seen many 'Chakravvuhs of Congress Party"

counting seven Chakravyuhs while saying that the first Chakravyuh was Congress it-"The same can be better as- self, which divided the country. Finance Minister irmal Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2024 in the Lok Sabha on July 23.

SC of India suggests identifying 'creamy layer' in SC-STs

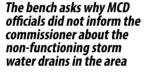


NEW DELHI : The Supreme Court on Thursday suggested the application of the "creamy layer" principle to the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) for availing benefits of affirmative action.

A 7-judge Constitution Bench was dealing with the question of whether a sub-classification amongst reserved category groups for giving more beneficial treatment would be permis- nal case.

sible under the Constitution. the majorit

Delhi High Court transfers coaching Coaching centre deaths: Court centre deaths case to CBI



NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Friday transferred the probe into the drowning of three civil services aspirants at the basement of a coaching centre in Rajinder Nagar here to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Manmohan asked the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) to appoint a senior officer to oversee the probe by the CBI in the crimi-

The court castigated the po-It asked why MCD officials did not inform the commislice and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) over the sioner about non-functioning drowning incident, saying it storm water drains in the area. was unable to fathom how the The bench, also comprising students could not come out. Justice Tushar Rao Gedela,

said MCD officials are not bothered and it has become

a norm. Hitting out at the police, the high court said, "Merci-fully, you have not challaned rainwater for entering the basement, the way you arrested the SUV driver for driving his car there."

Manuj Kathuria was accused of driving his SUV through the street that was flooded by rainwater on July 27, causing the water to swell and breach the gates of the three-storey building housing the coaching centre and inundate the basement, where the three students were killed.

grants bail to SUV driver after cops drop culpable homicide charge

on Thursday allowed the second bail plea of an SUV driver, arrested for his alleged role in drowning of three civil services aspirants in the basement of a coaching centre.

During the proceedings, the Delhi Police told the court that they had decided to drop harsher charge of culpable homicide not amounting to murder against Manuj Kathuria, the SUV driver.

Additional Sessions Judge Rakesh Kumar was hearing an appeal against the denial of bail to Kathuria by a magisterial court on Wednesday. "The bail is allowed," the judge said.

Kathuria was accused of is Force Gurkha car riving

NEW DELHI : A court here the gates of the three-storey building housing the coaching centre and inundate the basement.

During the proceedings, the Delhi police told the court that they had decided to drop 'culpable homicide not amounting to murder' charge against Kathuria.

per cent to Rs 1.34 tril-

encouraging trend.

These figures provide in-

sights into the current state

season, stakeholders will be

"During the further investigation, as carried out in the preceding 48 hours, it has transpired that the ingredients of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) section 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to He attacked Congress by murder) is, at this stage, not being sufficiently established," the investigating officer (IO) said in his reply to the appeal.

essed when the expert team from IIT-Delhi visits the spot and post inspection, submits its findings.

overturned its 2004 judgement, which had ruled against giving preferential treatment to certain sub-castes within scheduled castes (SCs). However, the apex court clarified that while providing for sub-classification. the government would not be entitled to reserve 100 per cent seats available for SCs in favour of a particular sub-class to the exclusion of other castes in the List.

In his detailed opinion, Justice B.R. Gavai said: "When the 9-Judge Bench in Indra Sawhney held that applicability of such a test (creamy laver test) insofar as Other Backward Classes are concerned would advance equality as enshrined in the Constitution, then why such a test should not also be made applicable to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe."

"Can a child of IAS/IPS or Civil Service officers be equated with a child of a disadvantaged member belonging to Scheduled Castes, studying in a Gram Panchayat/Zilla Parishad school in a village?" he asked.

Modi announced Thursday that both countries have decided to

further strengthen their Com-

prehensive Strategic Partner-

ship by adopting a "new plan

"New steps have been taken

for cooperation in the field

of defence and security. The

Army Software Park built in

Nha Trang was inaugurated

today. The agreed US\$300 mil-

lion credit line will strengthen

Vietnam's maritime security.

of action".

Wayanad Tragedy: GPS coordinates, aerial drone pictures used by rescuers to locate survivors

A family of four is rescued from an isolated house -aiving hope to hundreds of rescuers

WAYANAD: Rescue teams on Friday used GPS coordinates from aerial drone pictures and cell phones, including the last location of people who lived in the landslides-hit areas of Wayanad to help locate survivors, amidst accelerated search operations after the completion of the 190-foot-long Bailey

bridge by the Army. A family of four was rescued from an isolated house in an area near Padavetti Kunnu on the fourth day of the deadly landslides, giving hope to hundreds of rescuers, racing against time to search for survivors. The

death toll is expected to go up. The search and rescue operations that resumed early morning received an impetus



as the Bailey bridge helped the rescue teams to move the heavy machinery, including excavators, and ambulances to the worst-affected Mundakkai and Chooralmala hamlets.

According to official sources, the extent of human loss will emerge when rescuers clear houses covered by debris and wooden logs using heavy machinery

India and Vietnam adopt 'new plan of action' to solidify strategic partnership

Mundakkai, Punchirimattam, Vellarimala village, GVHSS Vellarimala and riverbank, of ficials said.

The joint teams include personnel from the Army, NDRF, DSG, Coast Guard and Navy. In addition, a three-pronged

search operation has also been launched, focusing on the Chaliyar river. The eight police stations, along the 40-km stretch of the river, have joined forces with local swimming experts to

Authorities reported that search for bodies that may have many more body parts had been flowed downstream or trapped collected and genetic testing along the riverbanks. Simultaneously, another was under way to identify the re-

search operation is being conmains. Earlier in the day, Kerala ADGP MR Ajith Kumar said ducted using a police helicopter. Besides, the Coast Guard, 300 people were still missing. Around 40 rescue teams Navy and Forest Department

along with cadaver dogs are also jointly conducted a search operation focusing on the riverconducting search operations in six zones of the landslides-hit arbanks and areas where bodies eas -- Attamala and Aaranmala, may be trapped.

through the street that was flooded by rainwater, causing the water to swell and breach

Death toll reaches nearly 300



WAYANAD: The death toll in the Wayanad landslide disaster on Friday reached 297, and missing more than 200 people. The rescue operations continued on the fourth day of the state's worst-ever natural

calamity. More than one thousandmember rescue team drawn In a clear indication that asfrom various forces besides locals divided into nine groups are working tirelessly to help people and search for the missing ones. The worst-affected land-

slide areas are Churalpara, Velarimala, Mundakayil and Punchirimadom.

With a 190-foot Bailey Bridge now erected, the connectivity between Churalmalai and Mundakayil has been restored.

Sniffer dogs have also been pressed into service. The rescue team is also equipped with heavy earth-moving equipment. An officer heading the operations said there were some houses buried in one of the affected places where they were headed

"Around 10 houses were there at the place we are reaching soon. According to what we are being told there might be some people, maybe alive," said the official.

Currently, there are now 91 relief camps where 9,328 people have been evacuated safely.

Wayanad landslide: EC hints at imminent Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir



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FW DESK

sembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir are imminent, the Election Commission (EC) has directed the union territory administration to transfer officers posted in their home districts. This standard preelection exercise aims to ensure impartiality and fairness.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during a visit to Srinagar in June, had assured that assembly polls would be conducted in the union territory and statehood would be restored. The Supreme Court, in its hearing on the Article 370 case last year, instructed the EC to hold elections in the union territory by September 30, 2024.

The EC's communication to J&K's chief secretary and chief electoral officer said that no official connected directly with polls shall be allowed to continue in the present district (revenue district) of posting if she/he is posted in her/his home district or if she/he has

no official connected directly with polls shall be allowed to continue in the present district (revenue district) of posting if she/he is posted in her/his home district or if she/he has completed three years in that district during the last four years or would be completing three years on or before September 30, 2024"

completed three years in that district during the last four years or would be completing three years on or before September 30, 2024.

The directive aligns with similar instructions issued to the chief secretaries of Maharashtra, Haryana, and Jharkhand, where elections are also due.

NEW DELHI: Emphasising operation will be strengthened that India's 'Viksit Bharat 2047' on the issues of terrorism and and Vietnam's 'Vision 2045' cyber security, " PM Modi ancontinue to accelerate developnounced while addressing the media along with Vietnamese ment and have opened up many new areas of mutual coopera-PM Pham Minh Chinh at the tion, Prime Minister Narendra Hyderabad House in New Delhi.

Both leaders held bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Modi who also hosted a luncheon in the honour of the visiting high-level delegation from Hanoi, which included several ministers, deputy minis-

ters and business leaders. In his remarks, PM Modi highlighted how the dimensions of relations between New Delhi and Hanoi have expanded and

deepened over the last 10 years with the relationship transform-



tegic Partnership.

"Our bilateral trade has increased by more than 85 per cent. Mutual cooperation has expanded in energy, technology, We have also decided that co- ing into a Comprehensive Stra- and development partnership.

Mutual cooperation in defence and security areas has gained new momentum. Over the past decade, connectivity has increased. And today we have more than 50 direct flights be-

tween the two countries. Along with this, tourism is continuously increasing, and people have also been given the facility of e-visa, " said PM Modi.

He also mentioned the extensive conservation and restoration work done by the Archaeological Survey of India at the UNESCO heritage site of My Son Sanctuary in Quang Nam province of Vietnam.

"As we all know, Buddhism is our shared heritage, which has connected the people of both the countries at a spiritual level. We invite people from Vietnam to the Buddhist circuit in India. And we want the youth of Vietnam to also take benefit of the Nalanda University, "stated PM Modi.

REGION

Three year old with mother drown in halfopen drain in Ghazipur area of east Delhi

Both had gone to the market to purchase school uniform when the incident took place

NEW DELHI: Thursday, August 1, was going to be Priyansh's first day at school. All necessities and formalities were completed, and only thing remaining was a uniform.

His mother went to the market Wednesday evening to purchase him one. But that uniform would never be worn, that school path would never be walked! They drowned in a half-open under construction drain in a waterlogged street as heavy rains pelted down on the Delhi-NCR Wednesday evening. The mother was still holding her son in her arms when rescuers recovered them metres away from where they slipped into the drain in Khoda Colony in the Ghazipur area of east Delhi

"Tanuja is my sister-inlaw. Priyansh was recently enrolled into a nearby school and she had gone to a market to buy a dress for him since



Pinky followed her.

said.

When they fell in the drain,

Pinky also jumped in to save

them. Locals pulled Pinky out

as she had her hands above

the water, but they could not

find Tanuja's hands as she was

holding her son," the relative

pulled her out of the drain.

Finally, when the authorities

his classes were about to start from Thursday. However, they drowned into an open drain which was waterlogged," said Karan Bisht. "When the authorities took them out from the drain, they declared the mother dead and said that Priyansh had one per cent chance to survive. But, even he lost his life," Karan said. Another relative said Tanuja was with her sister-in-law Pinky and her two kids when the incident took place.

"I was at the hospital with my daughter-in-law. They (Tanuja and Pinky) had first gone to Mayur Vihar Phase 3 to visit their relatives. It was

she was holding her kid, said the relative.

Karan alleged, "When the incident happened, my relatives told me that there was initially a fight between the Delhi Police and UP Police related to the jurisdiction. However, it was later decided that the drain falls under the jurisdiction of Delhi.'

Manish Katariya (31), an eyewitness, said the victims were recovered from several raining and they kept waiting metres away from the spot for the rains to stop. However, where they drowned. "I was when it did not stop even after present when the incident took a while, Tanuja left for home. place. The whole area was wa-Pinky first asked her to wait, terlogged and the slab over the but when Tanuja insisted, drain also submerged. A portion of the drain, which is over "Tanuja was holding Pri-10-ft-deep, was not covered." yansh and a bag in her hands.

Mahesh Kumar, a local, said the waterlogging in the area is very common during the rainy season.

"This incident is very tragic. We have been living here in such state where we all are vulnerable to such incidents. I hope that the authorities take appropriate steps in order to prevent such incidents," Kufound her three hours later and

Delhi government, has been

devoid of hope. People are

suffering and dying, and the

Delhi government has taken

no action. We are taking cog-

nizance and have sent my team

to investigate." Sharma also

mentioned that the NCW is

conducting an audit of the

night shelters overseen by the

mar said

CBI files charge sheet in excise policy case naming CM Kejriwal as accused



NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed its chargesheet before a special court here against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and others accused in the corruption case linked to the alleged liquor policy scam. This comes as a significant move from the probe agency since the Delhi High Court is scheduled to take up the bail plea filed by CM Kejriwal on Monday for a hearing. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had already filed its prosecution complaint in connection with the money laundering case, naming Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its national convenor Arvind Kejriwal as accused. On July 12, the Supreme Court ordered CM

Kejriwal to be released on interim bail in connection with the ED case. However, he was not able to walk out of jail since he was arrested by the CBI

Increasing cases of Hepatitis due to infected needles, drugs and liquor addiction in Haryana

body. Whereas, hepatitis C is

generally caused due to use of

infected needles while inject-

ing blood or any other liquid

in the body. A general study

revealed that people living in

rural areas are most affected

due to Hepatitis disease, which

include nearly 70% cases, of

which nearly 50% patients were

found taking drinks or drugs

excessively or were indulged

in frequent sex, and often vis-

iting prostitutes. On the other

hand, nearly 30% of patients

suffering from this disease visit-

ing hospitals for treatment are

are also paying a high price for LPG cylinders, he said.

come a hub of crime due to

unemployment, where crimi-

nals are firing on traders in

broad daylight and demand-

ing extortion and monthlies

and the government is unable

to control rising crimes and

ransom demands by anti-

social elements forcing them

to shift their business to other

that cannot protect its people

protest of demands the trad

Garg said Haryana has be-

PARVESH HANDA

Haryana is becoming a hot spot due to fast increasing cases of Hepatitis disease. According to Dr Praveen Malhotra PGIMS Rohtak, the root cause of spread of this disease is due to use of infected needles, liver damage due to excessive use of liquor and drugs, as a result thousands of patients are seen suffering from Hepatitis are detected in OPD in government and private hospitals in Harvana state daily. Surprisingly, nearly 150 youths donated blood in the recent past and some time were found suffering from Hepatitis. Similarly, females are found suffering from Hepatitis during tests at the time of delivery. Dr Malhotra said in the past 10 years nearly 28,000 patients have been detected suffering from Hepatitis C and 9,652 patients detected suffering from Hepatitis B, on an average nearly 80 persons daily which include 15 to 20 new patients in OPDs every day. Hepatitis B is generally

caused due to infected blood found residing in rural areas transfusion, infected semen and or belonging to families below exposure of other fluids in the poverty line. Among patients

suffering from this highly infectious disease are usually seen 65% males and 35% females.

Hepatitis basically is a disease due to viruses consisting of five types of serious nature viruses A.B.C.D. and E in which the liver gets swollen. B and C viruses are highly infectious and cause Hepatitis, as a result large numbers of patients suffering from this dreaded disease lose lives every year if not treated timely. Symptoms of Hepatitis disease include suffering from Jaundice, change in urine colour, tiredness, frequent vomiting sensation, stomach ache, uneasiness, lack of appetite and loss in weight.

The Death of Ravi in the Ukraine war has exposed the truth of the government's promises of employment creation says Kumari Selja



SATISH HANDA New Delhi

The General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee, former Union Minister, and MP from Sirsa, Kumari Selja while addressing media persons today said it is extremely sad that Ravi, a son of Kaithal, had to leave his country due to unemployment and join the Russian army, where he lost his life in the Ukraine war. News coming in from Haryana and all parts of the country is continuously exposing the truth of the government's promises and efforts for ent creation. After th

13 Specially-abled children die at Delhi Shelter home in 20 days; probe ordered ^{Traders allege over BJP govt's wrong} conference at Panipat on 11th August **OUR CORRESPONDENT** Delhi government

New Delhi

An investigation by the Subdivisional magistrate's investigation revealed that 13 children succumbed to death within the last 20 days at Asha Kiran, Rohini, a Ďelhi government-operated shelter for the specially-abled.

So far, 27 deaths have been reported at the governmentrun facility for the specially abled since January this year. The high number of fatalities has led to allegations of neglect and substandard living conditions from the Bharativa

Janata Party (BJP). The reasons for the deaths at Asha Kiran remain unclear. The SDM noted that the death toll is significantly higher than the previous year and stated that the actual causes of death



the autopsy reports. The National Commission for Women (NCW) has dis-

patched a fact-finding team to the shelter, criticizing the AAP government for its negligence. NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma expressed her concerns. stating, "For years, the Asha would be determined following Kiran home, managed by the

However, Delhi Minister Atishi disputed the reported number of deaths and directed the Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) of the Revenue Department to initiate a magisterial investigation, with a report

due within 48 hours. In her letter, Atishi clarified that there had been 14 deaths at the shelter home since January 2024. She also requested recommendations for actions against those responsible for any negligence leading to the deaths, as well as suggestions for preventing similar inci-

dents in the future. Atishi stated, "It is very shocking to hear such bad news in the capital city of Delhi, and we cannot tolerate such lapses if found true. This is a very serious issue and needs to be thoroughly investigated.



PARVESH HANDA

Haryana Pradesh Beopar Mandal's state president Bajrang Dass Garg alleged that wrong policies of the BJP government in Haryana adversely affecting trade and industry businesses, due to which the trade and industries were lagging and unemployment rising in the state. Interacting with the media on Tuesday, Garg said, in the last states. He said, a government decade the BJP government in Haryana put a financial should not have any right to burden on people by impos- levy taxes. Garg said that in are made, Vij remarked Rahul's has led to high inflation across the state. The government has clothes, sugar, milk, curd and these items as well. Garg said

Mamata Banerjee is only playing politics after leaving the NITI Aayog meeting: Anil Vij SATISH HANDA

Ambala

Former Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij when talking to media persons here on Sunday commented on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee leaving the NITI Aayog meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that the Finance Minister's state-

ment has come that she had finished her speech while her turn was supposed to come later. By

tepping out, she is only playing politics. Vij was responding to media person's queries about Mamata Banerjee's leaving from the NITI Aayog meeting. Notably, Mamata Banerjee claimed she was the only opposition representative at the meeting but was not allowed to speak.

Regarding Rahul Gandhi sitting with a cobbler, sewing sandals and asking how shoes so now he i ing for some job or business. He is trying various things, like seeing how motorcycle repairs are done, how seeds are sown in agriculture fields and now how shoes are polished to select one of these jobs. Rahul Gandhi also gave the cobbler a shoestitching machine, to which Vij commented that it's a good thing they have given something since this family has never given anything to anyone before.



Congress forms the government in Haryana, we will prioritize ensuring that no youth from the state has to leave the country in search of employment.

In a statement to the media. Kumari Selja said that after the death of 22-year-old Ravi hailing from Matour village in Kaithal district in Russia, his family is pleading with the government to bring his

body back. On the other hand, the whereabouts of five other youths from the village are still unknown. Last year, these six youths were sent to Russia by an agent with the lure of a good job. They were given cleaning jobs in the army, but later, according to their families, they were thrown into the Russia-Ukraine war. forcibly. Ravi's family has pleaded with the Indian government and administration to bring his body back to the village. They said that during the Russia-Ukraine war in March, the

family was informed that one of the youths, Sahil, was shot in the leg.

Rahul Gandhi sends shoe stitching AAP responsible for machine to Sultanpur cobbler AAP responsible for UPSC aspirants' death, says Delhi BJP chief machine to Sultanpur cobbler

NEW DELHI: Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha and Congress MP, Rahul Gandhi, on Saturday sent a shoe stitching machine to the cobbler he had met the previous day in Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

"Yesterday, our leader Rahul Gandhi met cobbler Ram Chait in Sultanpur (UP) and learned machine. about the details of his work. To support him, Rahul Gantwo pairs of shoes to Rahul dhi has sent a shoe-stitching Gandhi as a gesture of thanks, machine, which will ease his according to media reports. work. This gesture exemplifies Additionally, some experts Rahul Gandhi's dedication as from the team provided Chait a leader for the people, truly a Ram with a briefing on how to leader for everyone," Congress operate the machine. wrote on X.

The cobbler Chait Ram received a phone call in the Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh, as morning notifying him that Rahul Gandhi had sent a shoestitching machine for him. In the afternoon, members

of Rahul Gandhi's team arrived at the cobbler's workshop in a police jeep to deliver the



ing footwear for over 40 years Overjoyed, Chait Ram sent from his makeshift shop. A video of their interaction circulated online, earning praise from netizens for Gandhi's thoughtful gesture.

This visit follows another similar event on May 15, when Gandhi visited a barber shop On Friday, Rahul Gandhi engaged with the cobbler in in Raebareli for a haircut and beard trim, inquiring about the latest haircut trends.

part of his visit related to a Last September, Gandhi defamation case. The Conmade headlines for his unanress MP, who was there for nounced visit to the Anand legal proceedings, took the Vihar Inter State Bus Terminal opportunity to learn about (ISBT) in New Delhi, where he the cobbler's trade and skills. donned a coolie uniform and Ram Chait, has been mak- carried luggage on his head.



NEW DELHI: Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva slammed the AAP government

and held it responsible for the tragic incident at a library of a coaching centre in Rajendra Nagar which claimed the lives of three Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) aspirants. The students died in the

flooded basement of Rau's IAS Study Circle, a popular coaching centre at Old Rajendra Nagar. The basement was flooded after heavy rain in the national capital. Sachdeva accused the AAP government of negligence, terming the incident as a "murder," and blamed widespread corruption for the "unsafe" conditions in the national capital.

"How a library was operating from a basement without proper authorisation, "he wondered. "Does someone have answers to this?" he said. Mounting the attack on the Delhi government, he said its previous assurances of investigating unsafe buildings following a similar incident in Mukherjee Nagar were either

Sachdeva also pointed fingers at the Delhi Fire Services and the Municipal Corporation, questioning their roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, without taking Delhi Water Minister Atishi's name, he targeted her for not visiting the spot promptly and demanded her resignation. He said, "Delhi Minister is yet to visit the site after so many hours of the tragedy. She has just assured investigation. What will you investigate? You should

ers organizations are going to have a state level traders also imposed market fees on conference at Panipat on 11th vegetables and fruits. Earlier, August. He also invited lotax was never imposed on cal traders for a state-level conference scheduled to be lassi, but now the government held in Panipat on August has slapped 5 per cent GST on 11 to consider their problems in which the former Chief the prices of petrol and diesel Minister Bhupinder Hooda had also skyrocketed due to and state congress president the imposition of VAT, excise Uday Bhan would be the chief duty and other taxes. People guests on the occasion.

Congress leaders condole victims of Delhi tragedy, call for strict action

NEW DELHI: The incident of flooding in the basement of a popular coaching centre here that claimed three lives, has garnered responses from Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and K. C. Venugopal who called the tragedy a result of "criminal negligence."

Taking to X, Kharge, President of Indian National Congress stated: "It is very sad that three youths lost their lives due to waterlogging in the basement of an IAS coaching centre in the capital Delhi due to criminal negligence of the government and administration. Our deepest condolences to their families.

Drawing attention to a pointed out: "Earlier, another UPSC aspirant died due to electric shock due to waterlogging in Patel Nagar. According to reports, eight people have lost their lives due to electric shock in the last few days.'

Going further, with regard to the city's administration, he said: "Congress had made Delhi an international city. Today, the capital of India is suffering from indifference. Accidents keep happening

every day.'

Highlighting the gravity of this incident taking place in the national capital, Kharge expressed: "Such an accident in the country's capital is a similar recent incident, he matter of great concern for all of us. We have to make our capital better so that our citizens remain safe and those who live and come here have the confidence that they will not be neglected in the country's capital." On the same note, Congress General Secretary and MP K. C. Venugopal, too, turned to X and shared

> his thoughts. "The tragedy in a coaching centre in Old Rajender Nagar, Delhi has shaken us to the core. My sincere con-

dolences to the families of the departed."

He reiterated: "Three innocent students lost their lives due to absolute criminal negligence. This is not caused by a natural disaster but because of greed and indifference on the part of the authorities."

"We demand strictest actions against all those responsible for allowing such a disaster to take place, " he concluded.

On Saturday evening, three students died due to flood and waterlogging in the basement owing to heavy rainfall. Subsequently, students came out in protest against the "negligence" of the government.

....

Delhi govt hatching preparation to tackle air pollution in winter: Gopal Rai

OUR CORRESPONDENT New Delhi

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said the Delhi government initiated preparations to address air pollution during the upcoming winter season. A review meeting was convened with senior officials from the Environment Department, the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), and the Development Department to strategize on this critical issue.

Rai stated that several important suggestions emerged from the meeting, highlighting key focus areas such as dust pollution, vehicle emissions, stubble burning, and garbage burning. "Work will center around these points," Rai said, emphasizing



the need for targeted efforts.

Addressing industrial polthe public and ensure timely lution, Rai announced that all action on complaints. registered industrial units in Rai identified pollution Delhi would be converted to hotspots in Delhi, where resi-PNG (piped natural gas) to redents suffer the most, as another duce emissions. He mentioned focus area. He introduced the the establishment of the Green Real-Time Apportionment War Room and the Green Delhi Study, aimed at identifying the real-time causes of pollution. App, which will be upgraded to

Additionally, Rai highlighted the development of India's first E-Waste Eco Park in Holambi Kalan village, which will operate on a zero-waste policy.

The minister also outlined plans to expand Delhi's green areas and promote public awareness and participation in the fight against pollution. An awareness campaign will be launched to educate the public on pollution issues.

enhance communication with On August 21, a 'Save Environment' Round Table Conference will be held at the Delhi Secretariat, bringing together environmental experts to discuss the main focus points in detail. The insights and suggestions from this conference will form the basis of a comprehensive 'Winter Action Plan.'

insufficient or nonexistent.

resign. You are all woven together in this whole corruption."

NATION

FinMin slams Oppn's 'misleading campaign' 82 pc construction work on Delhi-Mumbai Fxnresswav completed · Nitin Gadkari on Budget 2024, cites UPA-era figures

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday reiterated her defence of the Union Budget 2024-2025 and said that the government didn't 'discriminate' between BJP and non-BJP states, as claimed by the Opposition parties

She also lashed out at the Opposition over a 'motivated and misleading' campaign and said that not naming any state didn't mean that it was deprived of its right and revenue. FM Sitharaman, who presented her seventh consecutive Budget this year, also sought to turn the tables on the Congress by recalling the financial documents of UPA eras, which didn't mention all the states. "In 2004-05, the Budget didn't name 17 states,

Farooq Abdullah

warns of war amid



in 2005-06, there was no mention of 18 states, in 2006-07, 13 states were missed out, in 2009-10, a whopping number of 26 states were left out while the 2012-13 budget didn't mention 13 states," the FM pointed out. "Does that mean no money

was allotted to these states? Does that mean that these states were bereft of funds?" she asked. Flagging statements of Opposition leaders on coopera-

tive federalism, she said that a deliberate attempt was made to delude and mislead the public

at large. A misleading campaign is being run by the Opposition parties and as part of this gameplan, they are spreading canards and fake information. She added that they are trying to create fear in people's minds by distorting the facts. The Finance Minister also shared details of various allocations and outlays in the current Budget for the states, which were not named in her speech. "Talking about Railway projects alone, the one in Bihar, Bengal and Jharkhand has been allocated Rs 12, 000 crore while the one in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh will entail a cost of Rs 770 crore, "FM said, citing random figures.

"In terms of road highway projects, Kerala has been allocated Rs 9, 600 crores while

Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Harvana and Delhi together have been sanctioned Rs 18, 274 crores, "she added.

She further lambasted the Congress-led Opposition for keeping mum on years of 'malpractice' (of not naming states in the Budget) and said that an unnecessary controversy has been created because a chaiwala turned Prime Minister is running an efficient administration. Notably, the INDIA bloc had

raised questions over Budgetary allocations and also accused the Modi government of favouring two states Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, ruled by BJP and its allies. Protesting against the Budget 2024, they called it an "assault on the sanctity of the federal structure of India.'

Expressway completed: Nitin Gadkari

NEW DELHI: As much as 82 per cent of the physical work on the construction of the 1, 386 km Delhi-Mumbai Expressway has been completed as a cumulative length of 1, 136 km has been built as of June this year. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

The minister said that the construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway including spurs comprises, "53 Nos. of packages having 1386 km length total 26 Nos. of packages have been completed."

The revised schedule for the completion date of the Expressway is October 2025, he added. The corridor provides connectivity to major economic centres within Delhi. Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

As per the detailed project report (DPR), the Expressway will reduce the distance from Delhi to Jawahar Lal Nehru Port (JNPT) in Mumbai by about 180 km and reduce travel time by up to 50 per cent to connected destinations, the minister added.

Apart from reducing travel time between the financial capital and the national capital, the expressway is also expected to strengthen the real estate sector.

Narendra Modi exposed AAP on roof leakage in the parliament



economy of its regions.

The quicker transport of goods is expected to give a fillip to industrial growth and exports

The Expressway is expected to provide leverage to the tier-2 and tier-3 cities that it connects as the region is expected to see a rise of smart cities which can attract investors.

Industry experts anticipate that the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway region will see a pool of investment opportunities in developing business clusters, residential properties, retail, malls, hospitals and educational institutes.

The Expressway also covers a lot of tourist spots including Ranthambhor, Keoladeo, and Sariska national parks as well as historic cities such as Ajmer and Jaipur. This is an opportunity for the hospitality and tourism industry to grow. The rise of the hospitality industry will be backed by the

their own projects are full of corruption. He said that it is very unfortunate that water started dripping in the first rain in a building built with thousands of crores. Not only this, the roof of the Delhi International Airports also collapsed a few days ago. Apart from this, many more bridges collapsed which were built during the Narendra Modi

rain on Wednesday and said

that this has exposed the corrup-

tion of Prime Minister Narendra

spokesperson of Punjab Neel

Garg said that Prime Minister

Narendra Modi and BJP lead-

ers always talk about fighting

against corruption while all

Senior AAP leader and

Modi and his government.

government. He said that water did not drip only from the temple of democracy, Parliament House, water also dripped from the roof of the Ram temple that he built. The saying 'mukh par Ram, baghal mein chhuri' completely fits the actions of BJP.

President Murmu appoints new **Governors in nine states**

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu has appointed new Governors in nine states and a new Lieutenant Governor in Puducherry.

Former Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Haribhau Kisanrao Bagde has been appointed Governor of Rajasthan while former Tripura Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Dev Varma has been appointed

Governor of Telangana. The President has

appointed former Rajya Sabha MP

Om Prakash Mathur as Governor of Sikkim. Similarly, former Union Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar has been appointed as Governor of Jharkhand while former Lok Sabha MP from Assam Ramen Deka has been made Governor of Chhattisgarh.

Former Karnataka Minter C H Vijavashar

with Kerala CM, announces ex-gratia rising militancy in Jammu and Kashmir

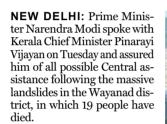
FW DESK

National Conference president and former chief minister Faroog Abdullah on Tuesdav expressed concerns about escalating militant attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, hinting at the potential involvement of Pakistani commandos, given the sophistication of the recent attacks. He apprehended that the situation could lead to war if the situation didn't improve in Jammu.

During a press interaction, Abdullah acknowledged the troubling increase in terrorism and the lack of progress in ongoing operations to apprehend the infiltrators.

"There is no doubt that terrorism is growing and highly trained people are coming. We pray to God that we will be saved from this calamity. We want them (Pakistan) to come to their senses. This will not solve problems but further deteriorate the situation," he

Abdullah stressed the need for peace between India and local people and a team of probut warned of the ris ing impatience among Indian citizens



"Distressed by the land-

slides in parts of Wayanad. My thoughts are with all those who have lost their loved ones and prayers with those injured. Rescue ops are currently underway to assist all those affected. Spoke to Kerala CM Shri @pinarayivijayan and also assured all possible help from the Centre in the wake of the prevailing situation there, "PM Modi posted on X. The Prime Minister also an-

nounced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from PMNRF for the next of kin of each deceased in the landslides in parts of Wayanad.

Wayanad landslides: PM Modi speaks

The injured would be given Rs 50,000, said the Prime Minister's Office in a post on X.

Sources said the Prime Minister also spoke with the two Union Ministers from Kerala, Suresh Gopi and George Kurien, about the situation.

PM Modi has instructed BJP president J.P. Nadda to mobilise party workers in the region to



assist with the ongoing relief efforts, the sources also said. The landslides were reported

to have occurred at around 2 a.m. Kerala Chief Secretary V. Venu told local media, "Around 2 a.m., landslides took place at least two to three times. At this point, few affected areas are cut

off. The weather is also adverse for NDRF teams to go to some

rescue in a coordinated manner. We are still ascertaining about how many people are trapped. All options, including airlifting people, are being looked into to ensure rescue work is carried out." State Forest Minister A.K.Saseendran, who rushed to the spot said it was a bit early to assess the damages.

of these affected areas. Everyone

is on alert. We will carry out the

"At least 53 people are admitted to a hospital here and six bodies are there. At another hospital, 13 injured are admitted and six bodies are also there. We have started the rescue operations and are waiting for helicopters to arrive. A new ropeway is going to be erected soon and the Army will be building a temporary bridge also to rescue people who are trapped in the area after a bridge was swept away," said Saseendran.

Deeply anguished by Wayanad landslides: Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI: In response to the devastating landslides near Meppadi in Wayanad, Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge and Privanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday expressed deep sorrow and called for urgent rescue and relief operations.

The area was cut off, and the engaged in locating people in the area, which has been ripped into two, with around 400 families being isolated. Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, conveyed his condolences to the families affected by the tragedy. Taking to his X handle, he said, "I am deeply anguished by the massive landslides near Meppadi in Wayanad. My heartfelt condolences go out to the bereaved families who have lost their loved ones. I hope those still trapped are brought to safety soon." Mentioning his discussions with Kerala Chief



where several people are re-

condolences to the families of

tral governments to "expedite

relief and rescue operations and

provide urgent medical help to

the victims, in coordination with

ers should put in all their efforts

to provide every possible as-

sistance to the people, "he said

in a post on X, advising them

to "coordinate with doctors,

paramedics and kindly follow

"Congress leaders and work-

He urged the state and Cen-

the bereaved.

all the agencies."

I have requested them to ensure coordination with all agencies, set up a control room, and inform us of any assistance needed for Mamata Banerjee's mike-off charge 'completely false': says



BENGALURU: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman dismissed West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's allegation of her mike being muted during a NITI Aayog meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra On objections raised by Karnataka Congress lead-

Modi, as "completely false". ers to the ED action, she Answering a question posed by media in this restated, "If ED goes and finds gard in Bengaluru, Sitharablack money, can we say the man stated, "It was good that Congress will get unhappy, don't do it. Tha West Renga CM came and voiced her view. She said she is talking on behalf of all opposition which is also very well. For the allotted time, we heard her. If she wanted more time, like other CMs, she would have got it." "But, she went outside and said 'my mike was put off and I walked out of the meeting' which was wrong. It is completely false. CM from Karnataka and the opposition didn't attend it. It's sad. They always say our voice is not heard. This was the forum to come and speak. To an extent Mamata Banerjee Ji was right. She







"Instead of peace, there could be an attack. That is what we fear. If it (militant attacks) continues, there will be a time when India will not tolerate this. People of India will want the government to take some steps so that terrorism stops," he said.

When asked about the possible infiltration of Pakistani commandos, Abdullah remarked, "It could be they are commandos, the way they are attacking. They seem to be highly trained. That is why we see a big danger.

the Wayanad District Collector, he said they assured him that

rescue efforts are underway. "I have requested them to ensure coordination with all agencies, set up a control room, and inform us of any assistance needed for the relief efforts. I will speak to Union Ministers and request them to provide all assistance possible to Wayanad, 'he further wrote, advising all the United Democratic Front (UDF) workers to assist in the rescue and relief efforts.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge also expressed his grief, saying, "Extremely pained Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and

DOMINICK RODRIGUES

ment of a five-trillion-dollar

Shinde was expressing Maha-

presided over by Prime Minister

Describing Maharashtra's

One District, One Product."

Narendra Modi.

Mumbai

the relief efforts by the landslides in Wayanad,

up with the agencies to support the victims of the tragedy. portedly trapped. My deepest

Echoing similar sentiments, Congress leader Privanka Gandhi stated, "I am deeply saddened to see the devastation caused by the massive landslide near Meppadi, Wayanad. My heartfelt condolences and prayers are with all those who

have lost loved ones. She urged the government to expedite relief and rescue operations and called on UDF workers to provide support and comfort to those affected by the tragedv

did when they were in rule. Not allowed CBI to take action as their ministers would become targets. Actually, wherever they are going to search, they come with wall-level cash and a suitcase full of gold. Black money has to be searched and brought out.'

When asked if her budget was a copy of Congress manifesto, she said, "Congress can never come up with a well thought out plan. It always believes in tokenism. Throw monev and finish it off. How can we copy a poorly made scheme from them?

to echo the claims of Amjad

Ayub Mirza, an who resides

While police sources ac-

knowledge that dozens of Paki-

stani militants have crossed

into India, particularly into the

Jammu region this year, they have dismissed Vaid's claim

of a large-scale infiltration by

Vaid, who served as the DGP

of Jammu and Kashmir from

2016 to 2018 made the state-

ment in a video. He cited un-

SSG commandos

FW DESK

in Britain.

been appointed as Governor of Meghalaya. C.P. Radhakrishnan who is presently Governor of Jharkhand has been made Governor of Maharashtra. Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria has been appointed as Governor of Punjab and Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh. Similarly, Sikkim Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharva has been appointed as Governor of Assam and has also been given additional charge as

Governor of Manipur. Former IAS officer K. Kailashnathan has been appointed Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry.

Ex-DGP alleges covert war by

Pakistani commandos in J&K

Soldier killed, Army Major among 4 injured in Kupwara encounter



FW DESK

The Indian Army successfully thwarted an attack by Pakistan's Border Action Team (BAT) in an encounter along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara on Saturday. The encounter resulted in the death of one soldier and left four others, including a Major, injured.

A Pakistani terrorist was also killed in the encounter.

The BAT, known for previous infiltration attempts, comprises commandos from the Pakistan Army and terrorists. The operation in Kupwara's Kamkari area was initiated following intel-

established the "Maharashtra Institution for Transformation" (MAITRI) on the lines of Niti Aayog.

ligence reports about possible terrorist movements.

The injured soldiers were rashtra's commitment towards promptly evacuated from the making the concept of "ViksitBsite as the gunfight continued. harat@2047" a reality, while Defence Ministry sources respeaking at the 9th meeting of ported that the BAT team inthe Governing Council of Niti Aavog at the Ashok Mandap in volved likely included regular Pakistan Army troops and SSG Rashtrapati Bhavan, which was commandos collaborating with terrorist organizations.

The incident marks the second such encounter in GDP development rate at 8.7% Kupwara within three days. Earlier, on July 24, security forces killed an unidentified terrorist in the Lolab area of Kupwara, where a soldier also lost his life.



Maharashtra to contribute \$1 trillion to

Urging the Prime Minister

to consider the price policy for procurement of onion for buffer stock under the price stabilization fund (PSF) scheme, Shinde said Maharashtra is establishing an 'Onion Mahabank' that will be based on nuclear technology to help increase the 'shelflife' of onion and its storage capacity to 10 lakh tonnes.

The coming five years will with growth rate set for 15%, he said Maharashtra is the "first" witness 25 lakh hectares of land State in India to announce its being brought under natural agriculture produce export farming in implementation of policy, while also finalising 72 the Dr Punjabrao Deshmukh natural farming campaign, he

said. The last two years witnessed Maharashtra signing MOUs

for investment of Rs 5 lakh crore during the World Economic Forum in Davos, and three lakh jobs would be generated due to these agreements,

districts have been selected under ODOP, the Chief minister said while noting that 30%

tracted towards Maharashtra and 18,000 'Start-ups' have been successfully registered

will initiate a new policy of housing provision for 'Senior Citizens,' besides efforts being made on all GIF-based urban development schemes to ensure their transparency and acceleration.

While a 'Rs 1.25-lakh crore', 390-kms-long 'Metro' route is under construction in Metropolitan Mumbai, metro route construction work is also underway in Nagpur and Pune, he said adding that big road projects are going on with the 'Konkan Coastal Road' and 'Konkan Green Field Expressway' likely to be 'milestones' in the development of the Konkan Region.

Maharashtra is also the first named sources and claimed State to announce the 'Green that Adil Rahmani, the GOC Hydrogen' policy in which inof the SSG commandos, is vestment of Rs 2.11 lakh crore orchestrating the operations. is expected for manufacturing According to Vaid, around 600 910 KTPA Green Hydrogen. SSG commandos have been



earmarked for this mission, with many already infiltrated and more attempting to do so.

"This is an act of war intended to fully engage the 15 Corps and 16 Corps based in Kashmir and Jammu," Vaid stated. He also mentioned the involvement of a Lt Colonel Shahid Saleem of Pakistan Army, allegedly directing operations and activating local sleeper cells.

In a later post, Vaid partially revised his statement, indicating that only a few SSG commandos had infiltrated, with more expected to follow. He urged India to prepare for a prolonged conflict.

With 46 lakh registered

he said. units contributing 18% of industrial produce, Maharashtra is ahead in MSME and 72 manufacturers across 36

in the State.

Indian economy: CM Eknath Shinde FDI of the nation has been at-Shinde said Maharashtra

Reformed NITI Aayog to boost federalism

he recent boycott by seven Chief Ministers of the ninth Governing Council meeting of the NITI Aayog, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. has sparked a crucial debate about the think tank's efficacy and its perceived role as an advisory body. The protest, driven by dissatisfaction over allocations and projects in the Union Budget, highlights a deeper issue of discontent among States, especially those governed by the opposition. The NITI Aayog, established to replace the Planning Commission, aimed to foster cooperative federalism by moving away from a top-down approach. However, its limited role in resource distribution and focus on creating state indices has inadvertently fostered competitive federalism. This dynamic has left the Finance Ministry with significant control over state grants, reducing the scope for consultation with States-a practice the Planning Commission facilitated despite its own criticisms. The BJP's political strategy of promoting "double engine" governments has further complicated matters. Oppositionruled States allege preferential treatment for BJP-ruled States in investment projects. This perception of bias is exacerbated by the NDA government's dependence on support from Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, regions with notable developmental challenges. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's targeted budgetary support to these States underscores this contention, despite her intentions to address developmental deficits. To address the growing dissatisfaction, there is a compelling need to re-envision the NITI Aayog. Restoring some of the Planning Commission's responsibilities, particularly in terms of consulting with States on grants and projects, is essential for genuine cooperative federalism. While the Finance Ministry and the 16th Finance Commission focus on macroeconomic stability and financial system health, a balanced approach neces sitates robust institutional support for statelevel infrastructure and capital investments. Revitalizing the NITI Aayog with these considerations can bridge the current disconnect, ensuring that the vision of cooperative federalism is realized, fostering balanced growth and development across all Indian States.

SANJAY PRASHAR DELVES INTO INDIA'S SHIPOWNING AND SHIPBUILDING ECOSYSTEM

What's a perfect shipping budget?

hipping is a high-volume, cash-heavy business dealing almost exclusively in foreign exchange where margin percentages are often low but can be surprisingly high too sometimes. India's top regulators, policymakers and tax authorities have not shown a real appreciation of its nuances

India has a glorious history of shipbuilding and owning that the British destroyed even as they took control of the country. They then squelched efforts to rebuild the native shipping industry into the 20th century. More than 100 years after the British stamped out V O Chidambaram Pillai's swadeshi shipping initiative, India still does not have a robust shipowning, shipbuilding ecosystem

Some in the past in India did see shipping as a crucial component of reinforcing national sovereignty and there were some stellar efforts. But, today, shipping in India continues to be a consequence of global shipping trends and governed largely by decisions made outside India.

In the last ten years, the total tonnage of India has only gone down. Practically no merchant ship is built today in India. China has become the world's No 1 shipbuilder while we have the biggest scrapyards.

Among the positives are the emergence of many Indian ship management companies that are, however, mostly registered and operating outside India, and Indian seafarers who bring in vital foreign exchange.

Budget 2024-25 did contain several measures to support Indian shipping. The Economic Survey spoke about ship leasing structures in Gift City in Gujarat and how that is a model. That shipping is being talked about is a welcome sign and an indicator that decision-makers in the government



are indeed interested in its development. Among the details in the budget was removing customs duty on imported ship spares which is highly welcome. The previous set of laws led to arbitrary demands at customs and many shipping companies suffered severely as a result. And those laws were themselves indicative of how successive governments had little interest in shipping. In the past, policies often supported a government-owned national company, the Shipping Corporation of India, but little else. There were several large private shipowners but almost all are extinct now - some done in by zealous tax authorities left wide-eyed by the millions of dollars in transactions that bank accounts of shipping companies were seeing every day. Today, ship stocks

little visibility in India's corporate sector. Even as the government pushes for trade linkages with countries based on container

are not traded much in the Bombay Stock

Exchange, and shipping companies have

movement such as the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor, it needs to come up with policies to support the manufacture of containers within India. India is lacking in container manufacture and it is a key trade bottleneck

The current BJP government has been making the right noises over the years but has less to show in terms of concrete results. Its major port project was the Vadhavan project in Maharashtra, announced in 2016. In 2021, some Rs 51,000 crore was allocated out of the Rs 1 lakh crore budget allocation for shipping. In 2024, Rs 76,000 crore was announced. The government as yet has not indicated a timeline for its completion.

Gift City is being talked about when the horses have, for the most part, bolted. Attracted by the availability of liquidity, a fair and transparent arbitration system, as well as a welcoming regulatory regime, many Indians have blossomed as shipowners in Dubai. Luring them back will require much

effort and attractive policies

EDITORIAL

COPINION

In 2022, a new Merchant Shipping Act was promised but did not make its appearance in Parliament. One hopes we will see it at least this year. The new leasing, ownership, flagging policy has also been promised before but has not been seen yet.

Even in the case of ships managed and manned by Indians that has seen tremendous growth, the government's disallowing of Indian private security contractors has made those ships vulnerable to drone attacks and unmanned boats. Other countries have gone ahead with this and reaped the benefits of ensuring the security of their ships.

The three lakh Indian seafarers sailing in ships all over the world are among the least cared for by their parent nation among all the nationalities. They often endure gross human rights violations abroad and their government sees them largely as a tax opportunity.

The government may well consider making one of India's islands function with an pen registry of ships that would allow foreign entities to register ships on that island. The island could allow free anchorage and bunkering so it becomes an attractive destination. Hong Kong's emergence as a major international finance and commerce center was due in-part to its shipping-friendly policies and it could be a model.

Bold and big-ticket initiatives are needed to truly leverage the potential of India's shipping to make the nation prosperous. Shipping awaits its dream budget.

Sanjay Prashar is a shipping industry professional and a former member of the National Shipping Board who contributed in formulating the Maritime Vision 2030. Views are personal.

N. RAMA RAO ON HOW LACK OF CENSUS SINCE 2011 HINDERS WELFARE SCHEME ACCESS

Any further delay in Census taking is perilous

nen the Centre did not extend the deadline of June 30, 2024 to freeze administrative boundaries for the purpose of the Census, hopes were raised that the decennial Census operations, initially scheduled to begin in 2020 as a prelude to Census 2021, would at least commence in October 2024. It usually takes about three months after the boundaries are set to make massive preparations for the field work. However, these expectations were belied when the Budget 2024-25 recently allocated Rs 1,309.46 crore for the Census, a significant reduction from 2021-22 when Rs 3,768 crore was allocated for the decadal exercise, thereby indicating that it may not be carried out even after the considerable delay. The next Census, therefore, continues to be on hold with the government yet to announce the new schedule.



of administrative areas, pre-testing draft Census questionnaires, training of officers and core staff, who would

tabulation plan.

not to have delimitation of the constituencies till the first Census conducted after 2026. In the event of the Centre thinking in terms of having the Census in 2027 and utilising the population figures obtained from it for delimitation purposes, then the Census reference date should be announced soon, with the new deadline for the freezing of the boundaries of the administrative units by the State governments and Union Territory administration. To create a comprehensive database of usual residents in the country, the NPR with details of persons usually residing in villages and towns and other rural and urban areas was first prepared in 2010 during the Houselisting and Housing Census phase of Census 2011. It was updated in 2015 incorporating changes due to birth, death and migration. This process was put through

The Constitution (Eighty fourth Amend-

under the Citizenship Act, 1955. The NPR would be updated again during the House listing and Housing Census Operations (Phase 1) of the forthcoming Census.

The draft form of the NPR for the next Census has questions such as "mother tongue, place of birth of father and mother and last place of residence" - which were not in the NPR of 2011 Census prepared in 2010. The inclusion of the new questions has been opposed by some States and citizen groups as the NPR is the first step toward compilation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), according to the Citizenship Rules 2003. The Centre has however clarified that NPR data will not be used in the preparation of the NRC.

The Centre has to make a decision whether to retain or not the contentious questions in the NPR format to be updated in the first phase of the upcoming Census.

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LETTERBOX

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

Either you run the day, or the day runs you.

- Jim Rohn

THE FINANCIAL WORLD

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EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY

(*RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF NEWS UNDER THE PRB ACT)

An absolute necessity

Conducting the Census on a priority basis is a must, as in the absence of a Census after 2011, a majority of our country's population is unable to access several schemes, benefits and services. Moreover, the implementation of the women's Reservation Act passed in the Parliament last year, reserving 33% of seats in Parliament and Assemblies for women, awaits the conduct of the Census.

It is imperative that sufficient provisions are made in the 2025-26 Census Budget so that the 2021 Census that has been postponed could be held at the earliest, in 2026, on completion of the first phase in 2025 that would include house listing and housing census and updating of the National Population Register (NPR). The preliminary arrangements for the Census, such as preparing updated maps and lists

number of field staff in collecting the Census data digitally, i.e., on mobile app, planning the field work, logistics, budgeting have all been taking place in the Census Directorates in States and Union Territories for the past few years in anticipation of putting through a Census

My visit to the Census Directorate of Tamil Nadu in Chennai and talks with the officials there have revealed that they are ready to undertake the task once the new Census date is fixed. All that is required is quick refresher training for them. The amount of Rs 1,309.46 crore allocated in the 2024-25 budget could be utilised by the Census department to carry out several preliminary activities such as firming up of the enumeration areas, questionnaire finalisation, refresher training of the core staff in the proposed digital census, and

= BOOKS: REVIEW

New book captures essence of Mumbai through 21 stories

ow does one capture the essence of a city as dichotomous as Mumbai? A city that oscillates between allure and repulsion, that has been a muse for writers since its inception. In the anthology Maya Nagari - Bombay-Mumbai: A City in Stories, editors Shanta Gokhale and Jerry Pinto offer a profound exploration of Mumbai through a collection of 21 carefully curated stories. The editors, rather than aiming to encapsulate the financial capital in its entirety, have compiled stories that they have read and loved, resulting in a rich tapestry of the city's multifaceted existence.

The anthology features a stellar lineup of writers, including liter-ary giants such as Saadat Hasan Manto, Ismat Chughtai, Eunice de Souza, Cyrus Mistry, Bhupen Khakkar, Ambai, Urmila Pawar, Jayant Kaikini, and Maharashtra's beloved humorist Pu La Deshpande. Gokhale and Pinto themselves contribute to this collection. Reflecting Mumbai's linguistic diversity, the anthology includes stories written in English, with translations from Marathi, Tamil, Hindi, Urdu, Kannada, and Gujarati. As Gokhale eloquently states in the introduction, "To understand our own lives better, we must enter other lives, and we do that best with literature.

The stories offer a glimpse into the lives of Mumbai's diverse inhabitants: chawl residents, street dwellers, mill workers, single women, advertising executives, and furtive lovers. Dubbed the "most expensive slum in the world," Mumbai is portrayed as a city teeming with energy and grime. While the anthology largely delves into the city's bleak underbelly, it is not devoid of hope. For instance, in Deshpande's "A Cultural Movement Is Born," chawl life is depicted with its fair share of intrigues and tragedies, but also its comedies: "Batatyachi Chaal (chawl) and Bharat shared the same raashi.

As a result, caste skirmishes, absence of unity, disease and earthquake-like tremors when matrons of a certain girth went up or down the stairs, presented everyday dangers.'

The 21 stories are not only wellchosen but also beautifully translated, many by the editors themselves. The Ganesh Chaturthi festival, the city's chawls, and the closure of its mills serve as recurring themes in the book. Within these narratives, the church of St. Don Dosco becomes Don Boss, and a building called 'Queen's Diamonds' overlooks a garbage heap. God visits Dadar Bridge only to be ensnared y the city's gritty side, and a British policeman finds a semblance of respectability in India only to end up in a metaphorical no man's land after Independence.

The anthology presents a spectrum of contrasting realities: a Ram devotee and an atheist forge an unlikely friendship, a Ganesh idol is held hostage, a sex worker strives to census to be conducted by the Centre to precisely understand the economic wellbeing of the marginalised communities. In an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court of India on September 23, 2021, the Union Government had stated that a caste census (except that for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes done traditionally) was unfeasible, and "administratively difficult and cumbersome".

The Centre has to take a call now on whether or not to collect caste information in the next Census.

N. Rama Rao is Retired Deputy Registrar General (Census and Tabulation), and former United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Census Adviser for Cambodia and some other countries. Views are personal.

> sity of voices and perspectives. Each story, with its unique narrative style, adds a layer to the city's complex identity. From the bustling streets to the quiet, introspective moments of its characters, the anthology paints a vivid picture of Mumbai's relentless pace and its capacity for intimate, human connections. The editors choice to include stories in multiple languages also pays homage to Mumbai's rich cultural mosaic, making the anthology not just a literary collection but a celebration of the city's multilingual heritage.

> Maya Nagari – Bombay-Mumbai: A City in Stories is more than an anthology; it is a journey through the heart of Mumbai. It is a must-read for anyone looking to understand the complexities of this vibrant city. Through these stories, readers can experience the city's pulsating life, its perpetual dance between despair and hope, and the indomitable spirit of its people. Gokhale and Pinto have succeeded in offering a literary map of Mumbai, one that is both enlightening and deeply moving. This collection stands as a testament to the power of storytelling in capturing the soul of a city that is forever in flux.

Maya Nagari | Bombay-Mumbai A City in Stories Ed. Shanta Gokhale, Jerry Pinto Speaking Tiger 400 pages; Rs 799

earn money for a trip home, and a young journalist and a trade union leader become lovers. These stories draw readers into the characters' grief, joy, anxieties, and celebrations, delivering emotional gut punches

along the way. In Manto's "Babu Gopi Nath," the titular character explains his love for kothas (brothels) and shrines: "Because both establishments are an illusion. What better refuge can there be for someone who wants to deceive himself?" This sentiment captures the essence of Bombay/ Mumbai-a city of illusions and myriad contrasting realities. Maya Nagari aptly represents the sea of stories the city creates daily, rivaling the vast ocean that lines its shore. The book's ability to capture the essence of Mumbai lies in its diver-

CORPORATE GINDUSTRY

Trom Industries Soars 90 pc above IPO price in stellar NSE SME debut

NEW DELHI: In a dazzling market debut on August 1, Trom Industries, a prominent player in the solar EPC sector, saw its shares skyrocket on the NSE SME platform.

The stock opened at Rs 218.50, marking a stellar 90 per cent premium over its issue price of Rs 115, igniting investor enthusiasm and highlighting the growing appetite for renewable energy stocks. The company's initial public offering (IPO), which concluded on July 29, garnered overwhelming interest from investors across categories.

The issue was oversubscribed by a staggering 459 times, with the non-institutional investors (NII) category leading the charge at 751.90 times subscription. Retail investors and qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) also showed robust participation, with subscription



rates of 483.14 and 197.07 times, respectively. Trom Industries' IPO comprised a fresh issue of 27.28 lakh shares, priced in the band of Rs 100 to Rs 115 per share. The company successfully raised Rs 8.93 crore from anchor investors on July 24,

setting a positive tone for the public issue. Founded in 2011, Trom Industries has established itself as a key player in the solar energy sector, offering a range of services including residential solar rooftop systems, industrial solar power plants, groundmounted solar power plants, and solar street lights.

The company plans to utilise the IPO proceeds for capital expenditure to set up a new solar power plant, meet working capital requirements, and fund general corporate purposes.

The impressive listing and overwhelming subscription rates underscore the market's confidence in Trom Industries' business model and the broader solar energy sector. As India pushes towards its ambitious renewable energy goals, companies like Trom are well-positioned to capitalise on the growing demand for solar solutions. Investors and market watchers will be keenly observing Trom Industries' performance in the coming months, as it navigates the challenges and opportunities in the rapidly evolving renewable energy landscape.



NEW DELHI: India's manufacturing sector continued its robust performance in July, albeit with a slight moderation in growth, according to the latest HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) released on August 1.

The seasonally adjusted PMI eased to 58.1 in July from 58.3 in June, primarily due to a mar-

ginal slowdown in new orders and output growth. Despite this small dip, the index remained well above the long-term average, indicating sustained strength in the manufacturing sector at the start of the second quarter.

in July, Sector Remains Strong

Pranjul Bhandari, chief India economist at HSBC, commented, "India's headline

"EliteBook Ultra and

ONDC unveils Manufacturing PMI Dips to 58.1 **Interoperable QR Code** to boost E-Commerce

manufacturing PMI showed a marginal slowdown in the pace of expansion in July, but with most components remaining at robust levels, the small drop is no cause for concern.

A notable bright spot in the report was the strong performance of exports, with international sales expanding at the second-strongest rate in over 13 years. This surge in external demand has helped maintain high employment levels in the sector.

However, the positive demand conditions have also led to increased input costs, with inflation accelerating. Manufacturers have been able to pass on these higher costs to consumers, resulting in the rate of inflation rising to its highest level in about 11 years. Bhandari warned that this trend "may signal further inflationary pressure in the economy.

NEW DELHI: In a landmark development poised to reshape

the digital commerce landscape the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), an initiative of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has introduced its innovative interoperable QR code. This announcement marks

a significant step in ONDC's mission to democratise e-commerce, making it accessible for every seller, from local artisans to neighbourhood shopkeepers.

On Tuesday, ONDC unveiled the QR code during its ongoing alpha phase. This tool allows sellers to create a unique QR code that customers can scan using any ONDC-registered buyer app.

Following initial testing, the QR code is set to expand across the entire ONDC network, promising a transformative shift in how digital transactions are conducted.

T Koshy, Managing Director and CEO of ONDC, emphasised the importance of this development, stating, "Now, every seller has the power to reach customers digitally, just like the e-commerce giants. It is a massive leap towards an open, inclusive, and democratised

digital marketplace.^{*} The new QR code system provides sellers with unprecedented flexibility. They can display their unique QR codes on storefronts, products, marketing materials, or social media platforms. This enables instant connection with customers, whether they encounter the code in a physical

For consumers, the QR code introduces a new level of convenience. Scanning the code with any QR scanner app or an ONDC Buyer App connects them directly to the seller's online store through their preferred buyer app. This seamless integration bridges the gap between offline and online shopping experiences. enhancing accessibility and customer engagement.

SA Tech Software Debuts on India's Core Sector Growth Slows To 20-Month Low In June HP Launches Powerful NEW DELHI: India's eight core **NSE SME With 90% Premium**

NEW DELHI: SA Tech Software, an IT consulting subsidiary of SA Technologies Inc., made a strong debut on the National Stock Exchange's Small and Medium Enterprise (NSE SME) platform on Friday.

The company's shares opened at Rs 112.1, marking a 90 per cent premium over its issue price of Rs 59. Prior to the listing, the grey market had indicated a premium of Rs 53, suggesting strong investor interest.

The initial public offering (IPO), which consisted entirely of fresh equity issuance totalling 39 lakh shares, garnered significant attention from investors, with the issue being oversubscribed by more than 600 times. The company plans to utilise the net proceeds from the public offer for debt repayment, working capital requirements, and general corporate purposes.

Headquartered in Pune and Bengaluru, SA Tech Software specialises in AI-driven IT outsourcing solutions and global development centres (GDCs).

The firm offers a range of services, from individual support to large-scale enterprise transformations, with the capability to scale its professional



workforce from 1 to 1000 as per client needs. SA Tech's GDCs focus on innovation, research and development, cost-efficient solutions, quality assurance, and round-the-clock operations. The company has over a decade of experience serving both global and domestic clients.

Through its service partnership with its parent company, SA Tech caters to international clients and maintains a diverse portfolio ranging from small businesses to large enterprises. The company emphasises its ability to leverage global talent to address complex technological challenges. In its pre-listing statement, SA Tech highlighted its long-standing relation-

ships with enterprise clients as a key factor in building trust and providing a mix of stability and growth opportunities. For the fiscal year ending

March 2024, SA Tech Software reported total revenues of Rs 23.88 crore and a net profit of Rs 2 48 crore

industries, which account for 40 per cent of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), experienced a significant slowdown in growth during June 2024. The core sector growth rate declined to 4 per cent, marking a 20-month low, compared to 6.4 per cent in May and 8.4 per cent in June

2023The first quarter of the fiscal year saw overall growth of 5.7 per cent, down from 6 per cent in the same period last year. This deceleration was primarily driven by a slowdown in five of the eight key industries including

crude oil, refinery products, steel, electricity, and natural gas. Coal maintained strong performance with 14.8 per cent growth, while cement rebounded to 2.7 per cent growth after contracting in May.

Production growth between 3.5-5 per cent, following May>s

NEW DELHI: Manoj Mittal takes charge as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI). following his appointment by the Government of India.

Manoj Mittal has over 33 years of extensive experience in the Finance sector, including his previous tenures as Managing Director and CEO at In-

However, steel growth sharply credit rating agency, projects June>s Index of Industrial

per cent

ment Bank of India (SIDBI)

was established on April 2,

1990, under an act of the

Indian Parliament. SIDBI is

mandated to serve as the Principal Financial Institution for

executing the triple agenda of

promotion, financing and de-

velopment of the MSME sector

and coordination of the func-

tions of the various Institutions

engaged in similar activities.

Manoj Mittal takes charge as Chairman & Managing Director of SIDBI

dustrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI) and Deputy Managing Director at SIDBI. Small Industries Develop-

5.9 per cent increase. Despite the current slowdown, experts remain optimistic about India>s economic outlook. The Reserve Bank of India recently revised its growth forecast upward to 7.2 per cent for the fiscal year, while the International Monetary Fund projects 7 per cent growth. The government>s Economic Survey estimates growth between 6.5-7

declined to 2.7 per cent from 6.8 per cent in May, and electricity growth nearly halved to 7.7 per cent. Economists suggest that this slower core sector growth may impact overall industrial production. ICRA, a

are HP's first Copilot+ PCs. Both models are engineered around the Snapdragon® X Elite processor with its dedito run language models and generative AI locally on the device.

Ipsita Dasgupta, Senior Vice President & Managing Director, HP India, remarked, We're at the dawn of a new era of AI PCs that will redefine personal computing. This innovation is poised to unlock new possibilities and transform the future of work. Our next-gen AI PCs are designed to enhance work efficiency, boost security, and offer per-

OmniBook X["] for Enterprises and Retail Customers ARUN KUMAR RAO HP has unveiled its most powerful AI PCs, designed to empower large enterprises,

AI PCs with Copilot

growth.'

As the nature of work continues to evolve beyond traditional office settings, the EliteBook Ultra is tailored for modern, on-the-go business leaders. These leaders, who frequently interact with clients, require stylish, mobile devices that offer unique AI capabilities to boost productivity, enhance collaboration, and ensure top-tier security. The HP EliteBook Ultra features the thinnest design in its class and boasts a powerful battery. It is equipped with enterprisegrade endpoint security to safeguard data, especially in an era of increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks.

startups, and retail consumers

with an unprecedented PC experience. The newly launched laptops, the HP EliteBook ltra and HP OmniBook X,

Bengaluru

cated Neural Processing Unit (NPU), capable of 45 trillion operations per second (TOPS)



sonalized experiences for hybrid workstyles. We are excited to see how these innovative devices will drive India's digital transformation and economic

store or via online channels.



SAI KINNERA KUMAR ANGRISH

oluntary licensing refers to the practice of Intellectual Property (IP) holders voluntarily granting licenses to their patents or other Intellectual Property (IP). Regarding pharmaceutical industry, voluntary licenses are private contractual agreements through which licensors, i.e. patent-holding pharmaceutical companies set out the terms under which mia (Oncology) respectively a generic version of a patented medicine is allowed to enter the in each case. Out of 34 cases market from licensees or alternate suppliers. In contrast to AIDS had dominant share, i.e., this, in Compulsory Licensing, a government authority grants a third party a license to the Intellectual Property. Section 84 of the Patents Act, 1970 provides for grant of Compulsory Licence on Patent on any of the grounds, namely:-(a) that the reasonable requirements of the public with respect to emergence of high-prevalence the patented invention have not been satisfied, or (b) that blood-related disorders. the patented invention is not

available to the public at a reasonably affordable price, or (c) that the patented invention of India.

Voluntary Licenses can be Exclusive Voluntary Licenses or Non-Exclusive Voluntary Licenses. In case of Exclusive Voluntary Licenses, the licenses and provide them sole rights to use the patented technology whereas in case of Non-Exclusive Voluntary Licenses

are allowed to use the patented technology. In pharmaceutical sector, it has been observed that non-exclusive voluntary licenses are given out to multiple licensees to increase marprices of drugs as this leads to competitive pricing and wider distribution.

ket access and bring down the all these pharmaceutical com-Out of 34 Voluntary License deals observed during the period 2011-2024, therapeutic categories such as HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, and Covid-19 have received maximum number of

Voluntary Licenses, i.e., 31 out of 34 Voluntary Licenses. It can be attributed to high prevalence, and the existing cost of treatment in these therapeutic segments. Tuberculosis, Gramnegative infections and Leukehad one Voluntary License of Voluntary Licenses, HIV/ 50 per cent. In 2017, it was for the first time that a drug was licensed for Tuberculosis condition. Year-wise details observed and Condition-specific aspects have been covered in Table 1. This also reflects the

list of high-priced drugs due to diseases such as cancer and The Access to Medicines

need to reassess the priority

Foundation has judged various pharmaceutical companies based on the actions which is not worked in the territory companies have taken to address kev access to medicine priorities, i.e., Governance on Access, R&D, and Product Delivery. Pharmaceutical companies have been ranked by the foundation. Descending are granted to specific licensee Order is: GSK, J&J, AstraZeneca, Novartis, Merck KGaA, Pfizer, Takeda, Sanofi, Bayer, Roche, Novo Nordisk, Eisai Co., Boehringer Ingelheim, got access in upper-middle in-(NEVLs), multiple licensees Gilead Sciences, BMS, Astel- come countries, Lower Middle There are instances where in requirements on providers and

las Pharma, Daiichi Sankyo, Merck & Co., AbbVie and Eli Lilly. Although these pharmaceutical companies have been rated so high with respect to 'increasing market access' but panies are not implementing voluntary licensing as a method to achieve 'market access'. There are many pharmaceutical companies whose drugs are listed on WHO's Model List of Essential Medicines, and are therefore, fit candidate under Non-Exclusive Voluntary Licenses. Rather,

these pharmaceutical companies are opting for 'parity pricing', 'competitor-based pricing', among other measures.

Gilead Sciences has signed the highest number of Voluntary Licensing deals, and the number of deals for the company stood at 11 out of 34 in the period from 2011 to 2022. ViiV Healthcare had 4 deals during this period, followed by AbbVie (3), Merck & Co. (3), Bristol Myers Squibb (2), and Shionogi & Co. (2). Other nine deals had involvement of organizations - AstraZeneca, Eli Lilly, J&J, Novartis, Otsuka, Pfizer, Pharco Pharmaceuticals, Russian Direct Investment Fund and Tibotec and each had one VL deal.

At the time of Voluntary Licensing deal, it is mentioned that the move will have positive impact so far as gaining market access is concerned. In 21 out of 34 Voluntary Licensing deals, innovator pharmaceutical companies gained access in more than 100 countries through each Voluntary Licensing deal. In 8 out of 34 VL deals, companies gained access in 55 to 99 countries, and in 5 cases, these companies got access in 15 to 55 countries through each VL deal. Innovator pharmaceutical companies



Voluntary Licensing in Pharmaceutical Industry: Impact on Market Access & Pricing

Income Countries (LMICs), and Lower Income countries in different regions such as Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, North Africa and the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

It is commonly observed that prices of originator drugs are quite high, and the generic versions of the same drug seem to be quite affordable for people with poor-paying capacity. At any point of time, prices vary for each drug, e.g., Daklinza (Daclatasvir) 60 mg price of Bristol Myers Squibb was US\$ 75,000 whereas generic versions from Zydus, Mylan, and Hetero had the price tag of \$17.96, \$17.96, and \$35.93 respectively in May 2024. So, generics price in this case was around 0.02% - 0.04%of the originator's price. For another drug - Vemlidy (Tenofovir Alafenamide) which is used in HIV/AIDS, available in 25 mg, Gilead had a price of \$1407 whereas generic version from Natco and Macleods had a price tag of \$14.45 and \$14.95 respectively. In this case, generic price was just 1-1.1% of the patented drug price.

Voluntary licenses are signed based on certain terms and conditions. An important condition is regarding the royalty payment by the generic manufacturers to the patent-holders. Usually, certain percentage of net sales is charged as royalty.

cases of emergency and highburden, licenses are issued royalty free too. For example, in 10 VLs, royalty was not charged so these were royalty-free deals in the cases of pediatrics and APIs. In 5 cases, royalty rate was 5 per cent. In 2 cases. royalty percentage was 3-5%. There are instances where innovator pharmaceutical companies preferred tiered charging of royalties. A report by MSF ('Voluntary Licenses: Full brief by Medecins Sans Frontieres Access Campaign') cited that ViiV Healthcare (GSK) entered into a licensing agreement for adult formulations of dolutegravir with the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP). Agreement had royalty clause of 5-10% in countries where a patent is active and granted. Further, sub-licensed generic manufacturers were obligated to pay royalties of 5 per cent in Moldova, the Philippines, India and Vietnam; 7.5 per cent in Indonesia, Egypt, Morocco, Armenia, and Ukraine; and

> 10 per cent in Turkmenistan. Voluntary licenses include 'anti-diversion' clauses so as to prevent generic medicines from being resold outside the licensed territory, protecting lucrative markets for patent holders. Patent-holders apply many other means of control. Gilead's sofosbuvir (for Hepatitis-C) license imposed stringent

Table 1:- Voluntary Licenses Issued (2011-2022)

Therapeutic Category	2011	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	2020	2021	2022	Total
Covid-19	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	5	1	8
Gram-negative Infections	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Hepatitis-C	-	-	3	1	1	1	-	-	-	6
HIV/AIDS	6	2	4	2	1	-	1	-	1	17
Leukaemia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
ТВ	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	6	2	7	3	3	1	3	5	4	34

Source: Based on announcements of respective Voluntary Licensing deals

processes. These clauses direporting requirements and strict monitoring of third-party distributors.

pivotal for enhancing regional availability and local manufacturing capacity of medicines. Gilead, Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS), and ViiV Healthcare exemplify this approach. For example, Gilead has NEVLs for Hepatitis C and HIV treatments, including technology transfers for products like remdesivir. Similarly, BMS initiated technology transfers for atazanavir, benefiting local manufacturers in Brazil. ViiV Healthcare partnered with the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) for NEVLs on HIV products and established public-private for dability. In certain cases such partnerships (PPPs) to expedite generic child-friendly formulations of dolutegravir.

'Grant Back' clauses are also integral component of Volun- sulting in minimal price reducto purchase or exclusively lideveloped. This restricts sub- it potentially limits the scope of

patients, complicating treat- licensees from freely marketing ment access and procurement their innovations. This clause has implications for equitable rectly affect 'parallel importa- access to affordable medition' by imposing burdensome cines, particularly in regions with critical healthcare needs. Through these clauses, innovator pharmaceutical compa-Technology Transfers accom- nies create barriers for generic panying voluntary licenses are manufacturers to develop and supply improved formulations,

impacting global health out-

comes. There are instances where Voluntary Licenses restricted the sourcing and production of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs), which significantly impacts production cost. For instance, Gilead's licenses (of Tybost, Elvitegravir, Vemlidy, and Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate) with Indian pharmaceutical companies, and the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) limit API sourcing and supply, hindering competition and afas the Otsuka-Mylan agreement on the TB medicine - delamanid, licensees were prevented from manufacturing APIs, re-

tary Licenses which require tions for generic versions. These licensees to grant patent hold- constraints ultimately limit acers rights to any improvements cess to affordable medicines. in manufacturing or formula- In certain cases, patent holdtions. For example, AbbVie's ing companies prevent generic agreement with the MPP for companies from conducting any glecaprevir/pibrentasvir man- research or clinical trials on dated that sub-licensees must the licensed products without first offer AbbVie the option prior written consent from the patent-holding company. Such cense any new formulations a restriction raises concerns as

permissible research activities, infringing on statutory research exemptions under national laws and the WTO Agreement on TRIPS, which typically allow such activities.

To address concerns highlighted, the licensing criteria should be based on 'health needs' rather than only 'income'. 'Grant Back' terms should balance innovation and competition. Alignment of license agreements with international research exemptions can foster broader scientific advancements and better healthcare solutions globally. Voluntary Licensing is definitely an effective mechanism that addresses global health disparities. Impact of Voluntary Licensing is visible in terms of market access, especially in low income and middle-income countries. In the process, innovator companies get enhanced revenue as royalty, generic players gain on account of patient reach, and patients get access to medicines at lower prices.

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Accounting), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Punjab Telukunta Sai Kinnera MBA (Pharm.), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), **DISCLAIMER:** Views are personal and do not represent the views of the Institute.

BANKING S FINANCE

Indian Bank eases Lending Norms to Serve SMAUnion Budget : A little for
all, but wait for a long haul

NEW DELHI: Indian Bank's Managing Director and CEO, Shanti Lal Jain, has announced the bank's willingness to lend to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Special Mention Account (SMA) category.

This decision comes in response to the government guar-antee announced in the Union Budget 2024. Indian Bank is open to lending to SMA 1 and SMA 2 category customers, citing their existing relationship and customer history. Jain emphasised that the bank's familiarity with these customers and their track records makes them comfortable with extending credit to this segment. The move aligns with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's budget announcement of a new mechanism to support MSME

credit during stress periods. Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME) had made a forceful presentation before the Finance Minister during prebudget consultations that rigid



SMA framework was leading to forced closures of MSMEs. FISME had made submissions before two deputy Governors of Reserve Bank of India also in this regard. This initiative aims to facili-

tate the continuation of bank credit to MSMEs experiencing temporary financial difficulties, preventing them from sliding into non-performing asset (NPA) status. To support this effort, a government-promoted fund will provide guarantees to facilitate credit availability for MSMEs in the SMA stage. This measure is expected to

NEW DELHI: In a significant

ruling, the Supreme Court of

India has mandated that banks

and Non-Banking Financial

Companies (NBFCs) must ad-

here to the government's 2015

framework before classifying

loans to Micro, Small, and Me-

dium Enterprises (MSMEs)

as Non-Performing Assets

The court ruled that the

'Framework for Revival and

Rehabilitation of MSME'

from 2015 and subsequent

Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

directions have statutory force.

This means that all scheduled

commercial banks licensed to

operate in India by the RBI are

According to the ruling,

bound by these regulations.

banks must identify "incipient

stress" in MSME accounts be-

fore classifying them as NPAs.

(NPAs).



ing lending to businesses facing short-term challenges. As part of this broader strategy, stateowned lenders are expected to develop in-house capabilities for MSME credit assessment. This approach marks a shift away from traditional asset or turnover-based criteria, potentially opening up credit access to a wider range of MSMEs, including those without formal accounting systems.

Indian Bank reported a 2 per cent drop in MSME collection efficiency in Q1 FY2024, at-

tributed to factors such as heat waves, elections, and seasonality. Despite this minor setback, the bank remains committed to the MSME sector, recognising its importance to the overall economy. In a move to further strengthen its MSME lending portfolio, Indian Bank is set to finalise a co-lending partnership with Arka Fincap within the next two months. This collaboration is expected to enhance the bank's reach and efficiency in serving the MSME segment.

Indian Bank's Q1 FY2024 results show a 40.6 per cent year-on-year increase in net profit, with gross advances growing by 12 per cent and RAM (Retail, Agriculture, and MSME) advances by 13 per cent. These figures underscore the bank's strong performance and its continued focus on key lending sectors. This initiative reflects the banking sector's efforts to support MSMEs during challenging periods, aligning with the government's focus on strengthening this crucial segment of the economy



NEW DELHI: The week gone negative to positive by much by was dramatic in more ways than one. Markets lost on the first four days of the week and extended losses for five consecutive days before a complete turnaround happened on Friday, which was the first day of the August futures series.

Incidentally, the Union Budget was declared on Tuesday and markets were on a losing streak before and after the announcement. Losses in the first four days of the week were covered and converted from

clarified that if MSMEs fail to

declare their status before NPA

classification, banks can pro-

ceed under the Securitisation

and Reconstruction of Finan-

tutions. It underscores the

importance of early stress

more than the losses.

The gains on Friday were 1, 292 points on BSESENSEX and 429 points on NIFTY. At the end of the action-packed week, BSESENSEX ended with gains of 728.07 points or 0.90 per cent while NIFTY gained 303.45 points or 1.24 per cent to close at 24, 834.35 points.

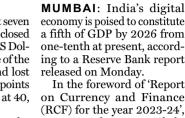
The broader markets saw BSE100, BSE200 and BSE500 gain 1.65 per cent, 1.83 per cent and 1.92 per cent respectively. BSEMIDCAP was up 3.13

Digital economy to make up 1/5th of GDP by 2026: RBI

per cent while BSESMALL-CAP was up 3.45 per cent. The week ended with gains in one trading session and losses in four sessions. FPIs incidentally bought on Monday and Friday and were sellers on the remaining three days.

The Indian Rupee lost seven paisa or 0.08 per cent. It closed at Rupees 83.73 to the US Dollar. Dow gained on three of the five trading sessions and lost on two. It gained 301.79 points or 0.75 per cent to close at 40, 589.34 points.

One wonders whether the US markets follow India or vice-versa. However, one thing is clear there is a correlation between the two and that the same is very close. On Friday we saw a sharp rally in Indian bourses and that reversed the losses for the week and enabled markets to close in the positive. The same happened in the US as well with Dow gaining 654 points on Friday. This would be something which should be watched closely going forward.



on Currency and Finance (RCF) for the year 2023-24', Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das emphasised that digitalisation in finance is paving the way for next-generation banking and improving access to financial services at affordable cost.

India is at the forefront of the digital revolution, the report said. The country has embraced not just financial technology (FinTech) by speeding up digital payments but has also celebrated India Stack comprising biometric identification, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), mobile connectivity, digital lockers and consent-based data sharing.

The digital revolution is galvanising banking infrastructure and public finance management systems covering both direct benefit transfers and tax collections, the report said. Vibrant e-markets are springing up and expanding their reach

"It is estimated that the digital economy currently accounts for a tenth of India's GDP; going by growth rates observed over the past decade, it is poised to constitute a fifth of GDP by 2026," the report said. Several enabling forces have come together to energise this revolution. Although internet penetration in India was at 55 per cent in 2023, the internet user base has grown by 199 million in the recent three years

Punjab National Bank's Q1 net profit surges by 159 per cent to Rs 3,252 crore

पंजाब नेशनल बोंस punjab national ban

India's digital payments record double-digit growth: RBI data



MUMBAI: Digital payments in India have registered a 12.6 per cent increase year-on-year with the RBI's Digital Payments Index (RBI-DPI) rising to 445.5 at the end of March 2024 compared to 418.77 in September 2023 and 395.57

in March 2023 "The RBI-DPI index has increased across all parameters driven by significant growth in payment performance and payment infrastructure across the country over the period, " the RBI said on Friday.

The Reserve Bank has been publishing a composite RBI-DPI index since January 1, 2021 with March 2018 as the base to capture the extent of digitisation of payments across the country.

The RBI-DPI comprises 5 road parameters



Banks must follow 2015 Guidelines before declaring MSME loans as NPAs : SC

three sub-categories under the themselves of the protections offered by the framework. "Special Mention Account" to detect early signs of financial

Notably, this verdict overturns a previous Bombay High Court order that deemed the 2015 framework non-mandatory. The Supreme Court termed the High Court's finding as "highly erroneous," reinforcing the binding nature of the framework.

This process involves creating for MSMEs seeking to avail

Cases only says Revenue Secretary of India



SIDBI Partners with C2treds and UGRO Capital to Boost MSME Lending NEW DELHI: In a significant move to enhance credit access for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), the Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) has announced strategic partnerships with

C2treds and UGRO Capital. These collaborations, established under the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) co-lending framework, aim to leverage the strengths of banks and Non-**Banking Financial Companies** (NBFCs) to boost priority sector lending. Sidbi, the apex institution for MSME promotion and development, has onboarded C2treds, a platform operating under the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) initiative. C2treds, regulated by the RBI, enables invoice discounting and promises to

SIDBI sidbi

provide MSMEs with liquidity within 24 hours through an online bidding process. This platform is part of C2FO, a global on-demand working capital platform serving nearly 2 million businesses worldwide.

Prakash Kumar, Deputy Managing Director of Sidbi, emphasised the institution's commitment to increasing credit flow to MSMEs, stating, "TReDS has become an effective tool for the prompt realisation of MSMEs' receivables, and Sidbi is onboarded on all operational TReDS platforms.

ernment is to make India a



identification and rehabilitation efforts in the MSME sector, a crucial component of India's economy. The verdict is expected to have far-reaching implications for both the banking sector and MSMEs, potentially altering the landscape of small business financing

However, the court also

RBI Targets Fintech Lenders in Comprehensive Section 11A as Proposed in the Budget for Exceptional **Review of Loans under Rs 50,000**

distress. The court emphasised

that MSMEs must provide

authenticated documents to

prove their status under the

Micro, Small and Medium

Enterprises Development

This requirement is crucial

(MSMED) Act.



of 'evergreening' - a practice where new loans are used to repay existing debt, potentially masking underlying financial distress. More worryingly, there are suspicions that some of these funds may be finding their wa

cial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act. This caveat ensures that enterprises cannot misuse the legal process by belatedly claiming MSME status. This ruling aims to protect MSMEs while ensuring due diligence by financial insti-

in India.

the measurement of penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods.

These parameters are --(i)Payment Enablers (weight 25 per cent); (ii) Payment Infrastructure – Demand-side factors (10 per cent); (iii) Payment Infrastructure - Supplyside factors (15 per cent); (iv) Payment Performance (45 per cent), and (v) Consumer Centricity (5 per cent).

Each of these parameters has sub-parameters which, in turn, consist of various measurable indicators.

MUMBAI: In a move that signals growing regulatory concern over the burgeoning small-ticket loan market, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a comprehensive review of loans up to Rs 50,000 across banks and fintech lenders.

This scrutiny comes in the

behaviour and potential risks to financial stability. Sources close to the matter reveal that the central bank's attention was drawn to data indicating that a significant portion of borrowers in this segment simultaneously maintain three active loans.

This trend has raised red wake of alarming patterns ob- flags among regulators, who for various sub-segments by served in consumer borrowing suspect it could be indicative

into the capital markets, further exacerbating concerns about financial system stability and the misuse of unsecured credit. This latest move by the RBI

should be viewed in the context of its November 2023 directive, which mandated that all regulated entities (REs) reassess their exposure limits for consumer credit.

The central bank specifically highlighted unsecured consumer credit exposures, requiring banks and other lenders to establish board-approved limits February 29, 2024.

NEW DELHI: The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (AS-SOCHAM) today organised a Post Budget Conference to undertake an analysis of taxrelated proposals. The conference saw in-depth analysis of both direct and indirect tax related proposals contained in the recent budget.

Speaking at the inaugural session, Sanjav Malhotra, Secretary, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance said, "Consultation is an important part of the budget process and many of the proposals we received from industry bodies like ASSOCHAM has been incorporated in the budget and in the finance act. Simplification of capital gains is one such example and we look forward to your continuous feedback. The proposed insertion of Section 11A in GST Act is aimed at removing ambiguities and must be invoked only in exceptional cases and not resorted

Highlighting the role of the

you asked for it and we must know that simplification does not always mean that rates or

the tax incident will ultimately go down. It is a simplification measure and not a tax increasing or a revenue increasing, revenue augmenting measure. The revenue increase is marginal at 10 to 12.5 percent and we will all benefit by avoiding the burden of complexity."

Ravi Agrawal, Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes, (CBDT), Ministry of Finance in his special address said, "The provisions introduced in the budget relating to direct taxes can be broadly categorized into simplification, standardisation and compliance. The purpose of tax administration is not penalty and prosecution but to provide comfort to the taxpayers. We are one of the leading nations to provide the facility of pre-filled forms and compliance has improved because of that. Last year we saw about 8.5 crore income tax returns, which is a significant increase. Also, about 72 lakh updated returns were filed indicating the enhanced ease in compliance."

"The Honourable Finance Minister has announced that we would be reviewing the Income Tax Act. The underlying thought here is that how do we rationalize and how do we make it simple for the taxpayer to actually navigate through the act and to the extent possible, their need for taking help or assistance of a professional may be minimized, at least for the common taxpayer. We will be working on it. And I hope that in the next few months, we should be able to make a comprehensive review." He added.

Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman, Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, (CBIC), Ministry of Finance said, "The goal of the gov-

o ensure that our industries remain globally competitive. The budget proposal to reduce to zero import duty on 25 critical minerals will give a significant boost to domestic manufacturing. The reduction of BCD for critical mobile components to 15% reflects the sector's maturity and deeper value chain.'

"GST revenue growth of the last financial year has outperformed GDP growth, reflecting the inherent efficiencies in the GST tax regime and improve compliance levels. The proposed amendments to reduce the pre-deposit amount required for filing appeals at first stage and second stage to 10% with a cap of 40 crores (which comprises of 20 crores for CGST and 20 crores for SGST) will ease cash flow for businesses. The comprehensive review of the rate structure to be conducted over the next 6

months will seek to rationalise and simplify the rate structure to facilitate ease of trade, address duty inversions and reduce disputes." he added.

At the Post Budget Conference on Analysis of Tax-Related Proposals, Rahul Garg, Advisor, National Council on Direct Taxes, ASSOCHAM, set the context on the Direct Tax matter. He emphasized that the budget aims to enhance industry competitiveness by aligning with the industry's goals. He mentioned the progress in simplifying compliance through digitization, though he acknowledged ongoing challenges due to complex laws that sometimes hinder effective digitization. Furthermore, he underlined the need for a two-way effort to streamline processes where digitization may become ineffective and to adapt laws to better accom-

modate digital advancements. Pratik Jain, Chairman, National Council on Indirect Taxes ASSOCHAM focused on the Indirect tax matter.

NEW DELHI: Governmentowned Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Saturday reported a 159 per cent surge in its net profit to Rs 3, 252 crore for the April-June quarter of 2024.25 compared to the corresponding figure of Rs 1, 255 crore in the same quarter of 2023-24.

The public sector bank's net interest income (NII) during the guarter rose by 10.23 per cent to Rs 10, 476 crore from Rs 9, 504 crore in the same period last year, according to a filing with the stock exchanges.

PNB also recorded an improvement in its asset quality with gross non-performing assets (NPA) declining to 4.98 per cent of total loans as on June 30, 2024 from 7.73 per cent as in June 2023. As part of its strategy to improve profitability, PNB has been focusing on expanding retail, agriculture, MSME (RAM) portfolio, extending good corporate loans, controlling slippages and improving recovery, a senior official said.

The Delhi-headquartered bank also has plans to add another 150 branches to its network of 10, 136 branches across the country. PNB also has plans of opening an office in Dubai during the current financial year. Currently, the bank has overseas operations in the UK, Bhutan and Nepal. The bank also has a branch in IFSC GIFT City Gandhinagar as the bank is focusing on improving its foreign exchange income.

PNB had also signed an MoU with Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) for a collaboration in the field of lending in the Renewable Energy sector.

With this step, both institutions will lend to those companies who are engaged in promoting green energy solutions in the country which would also enable India to achieve its global commitments to fight climate change.

Government committed to making India a developed nation by 2047 says Piyush Goyal

Strong fundamentals in place for a \$55 trillion economy

NEW DELHI: ASSOCHAM organized a special session on Bharat@100: Leveraging unprecedented opportunities' Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce & Industry, Government of India graced the event as the Chief Guest. A book titled India@100: Envisioning Tomorrow's Economic Powerhouse authored by Dr K V Subramanian, Executive Director, IMF was launched by Commerce and Industry Minister.

Speaking at the event, Pivush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce & Industry, Government of India said, "We have the ability, we have the willingness, the desire, we have the talent, skill and capability. As policy makers we have the intent and are deeply committed to making India a developed nation by 2047. The focussed efforts towards self-



sufficiency in defence, electric sufficient in defense, we are mobility and enhancing the looking at a rupee appreciaquality of our manufacturtion. We can replicate, if not ing setups combined with better, the China story between 2000-20." added the minister. enhanced transparency and

technology adoption will help us have a stronger currency and a stronger macro-economy to get us to a \$55 trillion economy.

"Our economy will be at \$5 Tomorrow's Economic Powtrillion in the next 3-3.5 years making us the third largest a strong case that India is at economy in the world. As we a turning point that cannot be disregarded, with a daring increase our shipping, focus on electric mobility and become vision based in Indian reali-

macroeconomic emphasis on growth, the microeconomic focus on social and economic inclusion, the vision of ethical wealth creation, and the strategy of a virtuous cycle sparked by investment-are examined by Subramanian through meticulous research and perceptive analysis. He thoroughly discusses the options for policy and the areas in need of reform within each pillar.

India@100 effortlessly ignites the reader's imagination and inspires a collective drive towards a future where India emerges as a dominant economic force. This is an Krishnamurthy Subramainvaluable book for anyone interested in the rise of the nian examines this once-ina-century opportunity that Indian economy. Addressing is knocking on India's doors the august gathering Deepak in India@100: Envisioning Sood, Secretary General AS-SOCHAM said, "The signifierhouse. India@100 makes cant strides that the country has made in the preceding years is not by chance, it' is by design, and the last 10 years are a testament of that.

ties. Four major pillars-the to as the norm.'

industry, he said "Not only are you the taxpayers, but you are also the tax collectors, the tax deductors and the eyes and ears of the government. I am confident that you will continue to support the government in this endeavour to raise revenue for the welfare of the

country and I assure you that

the government's efforts have always been to make life as simple as possible while you are paying your taxes.' On the changes in the Capital Gains tax, he said "The changes in the capital gains tax has been brought because all of

INTERNATIONAL

Biden, Netanyahu discuss new deployments of US troops in Israel amid Iranian threats

dent Joe Biden discussed new American military deployments to counter Iranian threats of direct attack against Israel during a call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday night.

"The President reaffirmed his commitment to Israel's security against all threats from Iran, including its proxy terrorist groups Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis, "the White House said in a statement after the call.

Together with this com-

UAE and Andhra Pradesh Explore Greater Economic and Investment Engagement

NEW DELHI: The UAE Embassy in Delhi, in collaboration with the UAE-India CEPA Council (UICC) and the Government of Andhra Pradesh, convened an economic and investment roundtable in Vijavawada, Andhra Pradesh. The event was co-chaired by Abdulnasser Alshaali PhD. the Ambassador of the UAE to India, and Sri T.G. Bharath, the Minister for Industries and Commerce and Food Processing of Andhra Pradesh.

UAE participants at the roundtable included Ahmed Aljneibi, the Director of the UICC, as well as representatives from UAE companies, Abu Dhabi Ports, Air Arabia, Aramex, DP World, DUCAB, Emaar, Emirates Airlines, Emirates NBD, FlyDubai, the Lulu Group, and Tabreed. From the Andhra Pradesh side, 50 senior government officials and company representatives were present at the event. Speaking on the occasion of the roundtable, Dr. Alshaali underlined the centrality of Andhra Pradesh within the UAE-India strategic partnership, and the need to exert all efforts to increase people-to-people, economic, and investment engagement. "It is essential to increase the level of economic and investment collaboration between

the UAE and Andhra Pradesh.



mitment to Israel's defence, to de-escalate broader ten-Biden also stressed the imsions in the region. US Vice President Kaportance of ongoing efforts

mala Harris also joined the call.

Meanwhile, the Israeli army has geared up for any Iranian assault against Israel after the assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on Wednesday

Sources in the Israeli Defence Minister's office told to media that after Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei's remarks about a retaliatory attack on Israel to avenge the killing of Haniyeh, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has prepared itself for any eventuality.

9/11 mastermind, 2 other defendants agreed to plead guilty: Pentagon

mind of the September 11, 2001 attacks on US soil, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and two of his accomplices have agreed to plead guilty, the Pentagon said in a statement. They are held at the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The Pentagon said that the Convening Authority for Military Commissions, Susan Escallier, has entered into pretrial agreements with Khalid Shaikh Mohammad,

Walid Muhammad Salih Mubarak Bin 'Attash, and Mustafa Ahmed Adam al Hawsawi, three of the co-accused in the $9/11\ \mathrm{case}\ \mathrm{said}$ the statement. The official said that the specific

terms and conditions of the pretrial agreements are not available



to the public at this time. The three accused, along with Ali Abdul Aziz Ali and Ramzi Bin al Shibh, were initially charged jointly and arraigned on June 5, 2008, and then were again charged jointly and arraigned a second time on May 5, 2012, in connection with their 2001, attacks against the US, the Pentagon said. US Senate Repub-

lican Leader Mitch McConnell condemned the plea deals. "The Biden-Harris Administration's cowardice in the face of terror is a national disgrace. The plea deal with terrorists, including those behind the 9/11 attacks, is a revolting abdication of the government's alleged roles in the September 11, responsibility to defend America and provide justice" McConnell stated on X.

United Kinadom: Violent mob clashes with cops outside mosque in Southport



clashed with police outside a mosque in northwest England's Southport near the scene of a horror stabbing that left three dead. Merseyside Police said that the English Defence League is believed to be behind the violent protests.

Speculation about the alleged attacker's identity circulated online, fuelling the tension that already existed after Monday's horrific knife attack, The Sun reported. Protesters threw bricks at the mosque, set fire to cars and wheelie bins and caused damage to a local convenience store, police said. At least 22 police officers, responding to the situation, were injured and 11 were hospitalised after clashes.

Russia to counter US missile deployment in Germany : Putin

ST. PETERSBURG: Russia will take corresponding countermeasures if the US deploys long-range weapons in Germany, President Vladimir Putin has said. "If the US implements such plans, we will consider giving up the previously assumed unilater-



ing the naval parade ceremony at Russia's annual Navy Day in St. Petersburg on Sunday. The US announced earlier this month the decision to begin episodic deployments of long-range weapons in Germany from 2026 to demonstrate its commitment to NATO and Europe. During his speech, Putin stressed that such missiles possibly equipped with nuclear warheads would hit targets on Russian territory within 10 minutes, Xinhua news agency reported.

US national debt surpasses \$35 tn for 1st time Trump vows to make US'crypto capital of the planet' completely foreseefoundation said.

WASHINGTON: The US federal government's total public debt has surpassed \$35 tril-lion for the first time, again sparking concerns about the nation's escalating debt problem and its implications for the US

economy. The total public debt out-standing climbed to \$ 35 trillion on Friday, according to the newly released Daily Treasury Statement released by the Treasurv Department Monday. The data is updated at the end of each business day with data from the previous business day, Xinhua news agency reported. Just seven months ago, the

US national debt surpassed \$ 34 trillion in late December 2023. Three months before that, the United States reached a historic milestone by passing \$



addressing US long-term fiscal 33 trillion. "The borrowing just keeps marching along, reckless challenges, the national debt of and unyielding, " said Maya \$35.001 trillion translates to MacGuineas, president of the nearly \$104, 000 of debt per Committee for a Responsible person in the United States. Federal Budget, in a statement. "Yet despite all the risks and warning signs, these alarm bells seem to be falling on deaf ears."

"We are going to have to get serious about the debt, and soon. Election years cannot be an exception for trying to prevent

"Our deficits are caused mainly by predictable structural factors: our ageing baby-boom generation, rising healthcare costs, and a tax system that does not bring in enough money to

Desmond Lachman, a senior able dangers -- and fellow at the American Enterthe debt is one of prise Institute and a former ofthe major dangers ficial at the International Monwe are facing, "said MacGuineas. etary Fund, told Xinhua earlier that "there can be no question According to the Peter G Peter-

son Foundation, a

nonpartisan organ-

isation focused on

pay for what the government

has promised its citizens, " the

that the US budget deficit is on an unsustainable path.' The "dangerous trajectory' oses "serious questions for the dollar" and inflation's long-run

outlook, Lachman said. Analysts have joined the chorus of voicing serious concerns about the US debt problem. Economist E J Antoni, a research fellow of the Heritage Foundation, reports that based on the Fed's June numbers, interest on the national debt is the equivalent of 76 per cent of all personal income taxes collected by the government.

S-Korea, US, Japan ink document formalising trilateral security cooperation

SEOUL: The defence chiefs of South Korea, the United States and Japan signed a document on the Trilateral Security Cooperation Framework (TSCF) on Sunday, Seoul's defence ministry said, in a move solidifying their continued commitment to three-way security cooperation against North Korean threats.

South Korean Defence Minister Shin Won-sik and his US and Japanese counterparts, Llovd Austin and Minoru Kihara, respectively, inked a Memorandum of Cooperation on the framework in Tokyo amid their deepening secu-



ties, it provides the direction rity cooperation in response to the North's persistent nuclear and policy principle for areas and missile threats and growof high-level policy consultaing military alignment with tions, information sharing and Russia, Yonhap news agency trilateral drills, according to reported. the ministry. "Accordingly, the ministers

As the first document that institutionalises joint efforts of the three nations reaffirmed for trilateral security cooperation among defence authori-

the unwavering nature of the new era of trilateral coopera-**KILLING OF THE HAMAS LEADER**

tion, " it said in a joint press statement. A ministry official said the

document is meant to ensure the conditions for trilateral security cooperation are continuously pursued amid a fluid international security environment.

Under the agreement, the three nations are expected to step up cooperation for the effective operation of their real-time sharing of North Korean missile data and regularly carry out joint drills, including the multidomain Freedom Edge exercise, based on a multiyear plan.

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump, the former US President and Republican nominee for the White House, has pledged to turn the US into the "crypto capital of the planet and the Bitcoin superpower of the world" if elected and unveiled a plan to unlock the potential of the fledgling industry.

The former President on Saturday also promised to appoint an advisory council to frame his administration's cryptocurrency policy, fire Gary Gensler, the current head of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), which oversees the industry; and free a jailed American who ran the Silk Route market, a darknet platform, by commuting his life-term sentence to time served in jail. A one-time sceptic who called cryptocurrency -- digital money that is not backed by any central bank -- a "sham", Trump has embraced it in recent months and said in a speech to an annual conference of the industry in Nashville, Tennessee, that Bitcoin -- a type of cryptocurrency -- "stands for freedom, sover-

"This afternoon, I'm laying out my plan to ensure that the United States will be the crypto capital of the planet and the Bitcoin superpower of the world, "he said. "We'll get it done. If crypto is going to define the future, I want it to be mined and made in the

eignty and independence from

government coercion".

USA. It's not going to be made anywhere else. I want America to be the nation that leads the way. And that's what's going to happen, though, you're going to be very happy with me, " the former President added.

Trump's journey from aversion to cryptocurrency to conversion was marked by intense industry outreach to him and to his campaign and donations. The first real sign of the shift in

his thinking came in the Republican party's platform release ahead of the convention in Milwaukee. "Republicans will end Democrats' unlawful and un-American crypto crackdown and oppose the creation of a Central Bank Digital Currency, " said the platform.

ing increasing the capabilities of the coastal troops of our Navy, " Putin said dur-

Spins off the Race for Multi-billion USD Business for Laser Weapons

GOPAL MISRA Tith the as-

sassination of the Hamas chief.

Ismail Haniyeh, conventional warfare has triggered off a race for inducting laser technologies for the use of energy in destroying the enemy with minimum collateral damages. The Israelis have destroyed

two of their arch enemies, Ismail Haniyeh and Fuad Shukr, a veteran Hezebullah commander, recently, but the Hamas leader has given two different strategies were new confidence to the Biden adopted in their elimination. Administration that its war Ismail Haniyeh was eliminat- industry is going to get an ed in Tehran with minimum unprecedented boost with the damages to the property and life, on the other hand, Fuad his associates.

The third sensitive spot reelection. in global politics, where the possibility of large scale vio- being one of the top produclence could not be ruled out ing countries in oil rich counis Venezuela. The country, tries is necessary. Earlier, its of the wealthiest regions in run by American companies, held presidential election. the country has been facing a There are reports of largescale manipulations in getting the present incumbent, sensitive spots in contem-Nicolas Maduro, re-elected. porary geo-politics, where nounced that its laser assault

The world is already facing the two unending conflicts Interestingly, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine zones, East Europe, West and the ongoing war between Asia and Venezuela are also Israel and Hamas, a terrorist major producers of oil. Since outfit having the direct sup- in Venezuela, the country's port of Iran and blessings of opposition leaders have al-Russia and China. Meanwhile ready rejected the poll rethe West Asian conflict.



It is being believed among denying that these conflicts help war industries to test the experts of strategic affairs that the assassination of their new weapons, though causing large scale miseries. **Kinetic Energy**

warfare strategy. At pres-

ent, the US and China are at

the forefront of laser-based

weapon systems, but in recent

years, Russia and India too

The recent elimination of the Hamas leader appears to Tehran operation. have rescripted the current

In the case of Maduro, Shukr was killed at Beirut the US has already expressed destroying a part of the build- its displeasure, but Russia ing and wounding scores of and China didn't hesitate to congratulate Maduro for his

The reference of Venezuela a little late. has announced its intention which has always been one oil industries, mostly being to produce medium tactical vehicles. The company has America, is facing a political were nationalized. With the already received a sum of 10 crisis following the recently exit of the American capital, million USD for developing weapons, which could destroy perennial financial crisis. It artillery, small weapons and drones with laser beams. is also now among the three

rifle. ZK ZM-500. is ready for violence may erupt anytime. mass production. These weapons based on the use of direct energy systems have caused anxiety among India's straterule out that in the next conflict on the India-Tibet border, , the US-supported Israel has sults, it means the situation the dragon might deploy its now finally the upper hand in in the country might lead to laser weapons. Earlier, India's a major upheaval. There is no warfare strategists were wor- the Israeli intelligence that

brought in paradigm changes words, with these weapons, China and its crony, Pakistan, could cause huge embarrassment to India, if they engage their southern neighbor in new generation weapons. It is a worldwide phenomenon, when the energy based technology for warfare is getting attention. The Blue halos locus laser defense system. recently developed in the US, has caused worldwide concerns

The new technology could be used for the defense as well as in offensive operations. It is being claimed that it could intercept a small drone before it hit the target, as well as for destroying the enemy.

have joined the race, perhaps, One of the scholars of the Henry Jackson Society, The US company, Ray- Major Andrew Fox, also theon Laser Technology, a former paratrooper, is convinced that the recent wars, especially the 20-year conflict in Afghanistan has promoted the use of energy in modern warfare.

It is not official, but it has been noticed that the laser weapons used in killing the Meanwhile, China has an-Hamas leader didn't cause any noise. Azerbaijan being its strategic ally, Israel might have sent its drone from the facilities in the country developed under its supervision. The drones or missiles hit the gic affairs experts. They don't target without much noise to cause any alarm. They just crossed the Caspian sea to hit the target

It also goes to the credit of

ried about the growing use they could keep a watch on of drones in future conflicts the terrorist leader, who had with Pakistan and China. The traveled to Tehran with his new generation weapons have companions in a private jet. It is also being asked why Israel regarding security concerns in didn't attack the residences of the Indian context. In other the Hamas leaders in Qatar , the answer, perhaps, could be that Israel has already assured the ruler of Qatar being used as a mediator in the West Asian conflicts that it would an armed conflict with the not be attacking the Hamas hideouts in their country.

India's Durga-2

India's defense establishment has taken steps to learn the laser technologies for upgrading the country's defense systems, but compared to China and the US, the Indian efforts are still at a nascent stage.

Initially, the Delhi-based Laser Science and Technology has been entrusted to develop laser based weapons. It is not known when India would be able to showcase her success in this field. Both the US and China have already established themselves in this game changing technology.

India too is expected to join this coveted field, but it appears her formal presence in the development of the energy based system could be delayed due to the paucity of resources. It may be noted that our investment is estimated to be only 100 million USD while other countries have been investing much more funds in developing war technologies.

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

Views are personal.

Biden calls for US SC reform to 'restore faith'

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has announced a plan to reform the Supreme Court, saying that he looked forward to working with Congress to prevent the abuse of presidential power and "restore faith" in the nation's highest court.

"President Biden believes that no one -- neither the President nor the Supreme Court -- is above the law, " the White House said in a fact sheet.

In the face of this "crisis of confidence" in America's democratic institutions, Biden was calling for three reforms to "restore trust and accountability": No immunity for crimes a former president committed in office; Term limits for Supreme Court justices; Binding code of conduct for the Supreme Court, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the fact sheet.

Firstly, Biden called for a constitutional amendment that makes clear no president is above the law or immune from prosecution for crimes committed while in office.

This came in response to the court's July 1 ruling, which determined that presidents cannot be prosecuted for "official acts" performed while in office, a decision related to a case involving former President Donald Trump, who was indicted by a federal grand jury for his efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

Secondly, Biden supported a system in which the president would appoint a Justice every two years to spend 18 years in active service on the Supreme Court. Currently, Supreme Court Justices serve lifetime appointments on the court.

During his tenure, Trump nominated three conservative justices, shifting the balance of the Supreme Court from a 5-4 to a 6-3 conservative major-



ity, thereby strengthening the duct. Thomas did not disclose conservative advantage. Biden has become more vocal in his criticism of the Supreme Court and its decisions.

"In recent years, the Supreme Court has overturned longestablished legal precedents protecting fundamental rights. This Court has gutted civil rights protections, taken away a woman's right to choose, and now granted Presidents broad immunity from prosecution for crimes they commit in office, the White House said.

Thirdly, Biden believed that Congress should pass binding, enforceable conduct and ethics rules that require Justices to disclose gifts, refrain from public political activity, and recuse themselves from cases in which they or their spouses have financial or other conflicts of interest.

"Recent ethics scandals involving some Justices have caused the public to question the fairness and independence that are essential for the Court to faithfully carry out its mission to deliver justice for all Americans, according to the fact sheet.

Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito have faced scrutiny for their personal con-

receiving extravagant travel from wealthy Republican donors. Alito's wife displayed flags outside their homes associated with the Jan. 6, 2021, Capitol riot and efforts to overturn the 2020 election.

"President Biden and Vice President (Kamala) Harris look forward to working with Congress and empowering the American people to prevent the abuse of Presidential power, restore faith in the Supreme Court, and strengthen the guardrails of democracy, " the White House said.

In a statement released Monday, Harris, who has become the Democrats' likely White House nominee, said that "there is a clear crisis of confidence facing the Supreme Court as its fairness has been called into question after numerous ethics scandals and decision after decision overturning long-standing precedent."

Implementing term limits and an ethics code for the Supreme Court would likely necessitate new legislation, which means the currently divided Congress is not anticipated to address this issue before the vearend.

Priyanka Chopra is excited to use this 'wild' prop for her period drama 'The Bluff'

MUMBAI: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who is busy shooting for her upcoming movie 'The Bluff', is having a great time during the film's schedule and seems to be enjoying every bit of it.

The actress recently took to the Stories section of her Instagram, and shared a BTS picture from the sets of the film which shows a vintage gun

She wrote on the picture: "Wild! Our period appropriate props are so cool #thebluff #moviemaking.

'The Bluff' is an American swashbuckler drama film which also stars Karl Urban, Ismael Cruz Córdova, Safia Oakley-Green and Vedanten Naidoo.

ment.

it's a statement of intent.

professional growth.

FW DESK

Kashmir V



The film is set in the Caribup to her bean islands during the 19th century, and sees Priyanka film 'Mujhse Shaadi Karoge' in the role of a former female co-starring Salman Khan, pirate who must protect her and Akshay Kumar recently family when her past catches completed 20 years. Priyanka

Rs 3 Lakh Crore Gender Budget Signals

New Era of Women's Empowerment

Meanwhile, Priyanka's

Chopra celebrated the 20th anniversary of the film's release as she shared a throwback photo on her Instagram.

In the picture she can be seen posing with Akshay and Salman. She wrote on the picture: "20 years of being Rani! Woah! Those brows tho."

'Mujhse Shaadi Karoge was directed by David Dhawan and released in 2004. It quickly became a blockbuster hit. The film revolves around a love triangle involving Samir (played by Salman Khan), Rani (played by Priyanka Chopra), and Sunny played by Akshay Kumar), blending comedy, romance, and a series of misunderstandings that keep audiences entertained all the time.

Sanjay Dutt gifts himself brand new Range Rover on 65th birthday

This gesture not only showcased his enthusiasm for his new

acquisition but also

allowed fans to see him

in a more personal light.

took the new car for a spin

himself. This gesture not only

showcased his enthusiasm for

his new acquisition but also

allowed fans to see him in a

The actor's hands-on ap-

proach, driving the car himself,

added a special touch to the

On the work front, Sanjay

Dutt will soon be seen in a

string of releases, such as

"Ghudchadi", "Double iSmart",

"Sheran Di Kaum Punjabi",

"KD - The Devil", "Baap" and

The new Bhartiya Nagrik

Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)

under Section 173 intro-

duces the requirement for

a preliminary inquiry before

registering an FIR to verify a

prima facie case. This require-

ment allows police to delay or refuse FIRs on the pretext of

verifying a prima facie case.

Filing FIRs has always been

difficult, and the introduc-

tion of a preliminary inquiry

The 2017 lynching of Pehlu

more personal light.

delivery experience.



MUMBAI: Sanjay Dutt, the the occasion with him. celebrated Bollywood actor, on Monday (July 29) celebrated his 65th birthday while also gifted himself a brand new Range Rover.

Dutt was spotted embracing his special day in style wearing a casual printed shirt and denim jeans. The actor radiated a relaxed yet charming aura. He stepped out to greet his fans, who had gathered to celebrate

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the delivery of his new Range Rover. Known for its luxury and performance. the Range Rover is a fitting addition to Dutt's collection of high-end vehicles. With its sleek design and top-notch features, the car stands as a testament to the actor's refined taste and status.

In a delightful twist, Dutt more.

POTPOURRI

Varun's father David Dhawan didn't like what his son became during 'Badlapur'



star Varun Dhawan has revealed that his father and director David Dhawan didn't like what the actor became after doing 'Badlapur'

On Thursday, Varun attended the special teaser launch event of his upcoming spy action streaming show 'Citadel: Honey Bunnv' at the Mehboob Studios in the Bandra west area of Mumbai, along with his costar Samantha Ruth Prabhu, the show creators Raj & DK and the music director duo Sachin-Jigar. Varun interacted with the media stationed at the venue, and shared that his character in the revenge

drama 'Badlapur', in which he was pitted against Nawazuddin Siddiqui, took a toll on him and bled into his personal life.

The actor revealed that he started behaving differently during the making of 'Badlapur' and the character triggered a change in his personality.

Varun then shared that his role in <mark>'Citadel: Honey</mark> Bunny' is also in a dark space but is not as disturbing as it was in 'Badlapur'.

What's interesting is that David was all praise for Varun and how he handled his character during the making of the show.

'Badlapur' is a neo-noir action thriller film directed y Sriram Raghavan of 'Andhadhun' fame. The film was based on the novel 'Death's Dark Abyss' by Italian writer Massimo Carlotto. It also stars Huma Qureshi, Yami Gautam, Vinay Pathak, Kumud Mishra, Divya Dutta and Radhika Apte.

Elsewhere during the event, Varun also revealed that his upcoming spy action streaming show 'Citadel: Honey Bunny' has a one take action sequence which lasts for 12 minutes.

'Citadel: Honey Bunny' which is the Indian coun terpart of the global streaming series 'Citadel', features many exhilarating moments and action sequences, of which the one with a runtime of 12 minutes, stands out.

Varun also lauded Satowards the series and pull-

ing off action sequences de-

spite battling her medical

condition.

rific show.'



The Finance Minister's announcement of working women's hostels and 17,000 economy, a subject of Nikore Palna Ghars nationwide is a Associates' recent publication cited in the Economic Survey transformative step towards addressing the care burden 2023-24, underscores the that often hinders women's growing recognition of un-

Mitali Nikore, a prominent economic analyst, aptly described this as "societal transformation," emphasising how these measures will support women in balancing their household and professional responsibilities.

candidates

paid domestic and care work's economic value, estimated at 15-17 per cent of GDP. The budget also tackles the

pressing issue of employment head-on. The Finance Min-

Rain breaks the spell of unprecedented heatwave in Kashmir

This focus on the care the paradox highlighted in the Economic Survey 2024 - industries with openings struggling to find qualified

> This situation underscores the urgent need for targeted skill development programs, a point strongly advocated by experts like Nikore.

In line with this, the introduction of a new internship ister's emphasis on creating scheme and the proposal for 75 million jobs annually is stronger industry-academia a bold move in response to linkages are promising steps.

New Criminal Laws: Eroding Civil Liberties and Targeting Minorities in India

India's new criminal laws, present as reforms, risk deepening systemic discrimination and eroding civil liberties with severe impacts on minority communities, especially Muslims

NADEEM KHAN

he Indian government's recent overhaul of criminal laws hailed as a

revolutionary step forward threatens to erode civil liberties and minority rights. The changes presented as neces sary updates to modernize the criminal justice system pose severe risks, particularly to the Muslim community. While the historical biases and systemic discrimination already plague India's criminal justice system, the new laws could deepen these injustices.

Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and various human rights organizations paint a troubling picture of discrimination and arbitrary targeting. For instance, a significant Muslim population state of Uttar Pradesh in 2018 acers belong to backward classes



Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Reports from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International documented how investigations disproportionately targeted Muslims. Both organizations have reported how the UAPA has been used to detain individuals, particularly Muslims, without trial for extended periods. The data from the Ministry of Home Affairs revealing that nearly 75% of those arrested under UAPA between 2015 and 2018 were from minority communities, with Muslims being the most affected does not prove otherwise. The integration of the Unlawful Activities (Preven-

tion) Act (UAPA)-like provisions into ordinary criminal law is alarming. This has led to concerns about the law being and religious minorities, in- used to suppress dissent and

cluding Muslims. The figures target minority communities. in recent years. reveal how deeply embedded A study by the Centre for Victims of ha Victims of hat

requirement deepens these challenges. This could make it nearly impossible for victims and dissenting Muslim voices of mob lynching and other like Umar Khalid were suphate crimes to get justice. Khan despite clear video evidence faced significant delays and obstructions in filing the FIR illustrating systemic hurdles in prosecuting hate

crimes. Police also showed reluctance to register an FIR against the perpetrators of Mohammad Akhlaq who was a significant concern in India. lynched in 20215 in Dadri The rise in such incidents is of Uttar Pradesh. These are alarming and often linked to subtle examples of prejudices in law enforcement. allegations of cow slaughter The lack of safeguards or beef consumption, deeply and oversight in the new tied to religious and cultural sentiments. According to a laws compounds the issues 2019 report by IndiaSpend, of bias and discrimination. 84% of those killed in cow-These laws fail to introduce related violence from 2010 adequate measures to prevent to 2017 were Muslims. Moremisuse, leaving room for arbiover, 97% of these attacks octrary and biased application. curred after 2014, indicating The absence of robust overa sharp rise in such incidents sight mechanisms means that these laws could be employed

counted for nearly half of all preventive detention cases in India. A study by the National Law University, Delhi, found that 74% of death row prison-

tends to the misuse of the prominent student activists

pressed. The arrest of journalist Siddique Kappan under UAPA while on his way to report the Hathras rape case is another example of misusing sedition and anti-terror laws to stifle dissent. Further, mob lynching and hate crimes, particularly targeting Muslims have become

est recorded temperatures in According to the meteoro-

Although rain on Monday has

broken the prevailing heat-

wave, July witnessed the high-

logical office, Srinagar city recorded a high of 36.2 degrees Celsius on Sunday. This was the hottest July day since July 9, 1999, when the mercury had settled at 37 degrees Celsius. The hottest July day in Srinagar was recorded on July 10, 1946, with the mercury rising to 38.3 degrees Celsius.



The Met office has forecast a bring down the mercury. Srispell of rain at isolated places in nagar is currently experiencthe Kashmir valley over the next ing the rain which has brought 24 hours, which is expected to much needed relief to people.

these biases are within the the Study of Developing Socicriminal justice system.

The biased approach of law enforcement became glaringly evident during the Delhi Riots of 2020. Despite evidence of violence from both sides, the majority of those arrested were Muslims, reflecting a discriminatory stance by the authorities. This pattern ex- CAA protest in 2020 in which biased investigations.

eties (CSDS) found that 50% of police personnel showed laws are enforced but also contributes to the discrimiwithin the system. The pat-

cluding mob lynching, face significant challenges in filing FIRs. Police reluctance, bias against Muslims. This intimidation by perpetrators, tribute to these difficulties. equality are upheld. Human Rights Watch has natory treatment of Muslims documented numerous in-

stances where police failed tern was observed during the to register cases or conducted

to target individual on their religious identity. The government must take immediate action to address these concerns, ensuring that bias not only influences how and societal pressure all con- the principles of justice and

> Nadeem khan is a human rights activist Associated with APCR and Spect Foundation. Views are Personal

He said Samantha's physical training for the show outdid his preparations. The actor told the media, 'She has inspired me, the creators, and put up a ter-

Haryana Khaps constitute 51 members committee seeking ban on love marriages without parents consent and live-in relationships

SATISH HANDA Narwana (Jind)

After Punjab and Haryana High Court decision on several writs, the representatives of nearly 300 khaps from northern states Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh attended a 'Sarv Jatiye Sarv Khap Sammelan' in Jind's Danoda village in Haryana on Sunday and constituted a 521 members committee which passed resolutions seeking bans on live-in relationships, same-sex relationships and same-sex marriages, apart from demanding parental consent for a love marriages. The representatives of 23 Khaps in Haryana at a meeting sought an amendment in the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, to ban the marriages within the same village and gotra (sub-caste) in the State and make live-in relationships strictly illegal.

Majra Khap chief Gurvinder Singh Sandhu, also secretary of five-member co-ordination committee for the Khaps said marriages within the same village and gotra (sub-caste) were not allowed in these parts of rural Haryana and the young boys and girls marrying against the social norms usually led to disputes after some time. However, the government is giving police protection to such



couples which is encouraging courts had recognised certain this unwanted practice. Sandrights of live-in partners at par with the married couples, hu said such marriages are not acceptable in most parts but there was no provision for of Haryana, especially Raghulegal separation in such relabir Nain president of Binain tionships similar to a divorce in a marriage and staying in Khap appointed president of 51 the members committee live in relationship is a black spot leaving ill effect on chilsaid the live-in relationships also cause social disorder and dren compelled to lead normal life without parents and many must not be allowed. Parents' consent is necessary for love times indulge in criminal activities. They demanded an marriages as well, said Sandhu that the Khaps across Haryana immediate ban over whether had been demanding a ban on such couples living in relamarriages within the same tionships should be treated village and gotra (sub-caste) illegally. The need for better co-ordination among Khaps since a long time, but the government had failed to listen to was also stressed at the meetthem. He alleged, government ing and a 23-member presiwanted to weaken the Khaps dent board was constituted by facilitating settlement of for making collective decisions minor disputes at community on important matters. The level without legal separation. khaps will launch an agitation Khap members said the if their demands are not met,

they said. Talking to the media, Nain said they will talk to the government to amend the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and keep girls' marriage at 18. Few members also met Haryana CM Nayab Saini demanding immediate implementation of their demands in the state. Binain Khap chief Raghubir Nain was deployed to hold dialogue with the Union government also in this regard.

Raghubir Nain said, "We have seen many married women and men staying in live-in relationships with other men or women and this is a dangerous trend. Their children suffer the most because of their parents' action, causing a significant rise in the number of hate crimes (honor -killing) in the state. We urge the government to ban live-in relationships, no marriage in the same village, gotra and neighbouring villages. We have also sought parental consent mandatory in love marriages," he added. We are not against love marriages but such marriages should be solemnised with the consent of their parents. Chahal Khap president Balbir Singh said the khaps have also demanded action against the parents who solemnise child marriage of their wards, ban on usage of drugs, save environment and restriction on dowry in marriages.

Mili is now well-known in Bollywood

RUCHI GOSWAMI ili Goswami's VL reputa-

tion in Bollywood's Costume & Design profession is very wellknown today. She has proven her skills as a Costume Specialist in many Bollywood films & Events up until now and she has developed a distinct area of expertise for herself.

This article describes the extraordinary achievements and boundless talent of Mili, a name that resonates with innovation & dedication in her skills and artistic brilliance. Mili's versatility and exper-

tise are evident in her career path. Her work as a costume stylist encompasses many short films, advertisements, and major events. Her role as the Chief Assistant Stylist for Dream 11 and Congress advertisements, as well as her contribution to the Max Kids Fashion Advertisement, showcases her abilities in managing high-profile projects with precision. Her career has taken her to notable projects such as 'Toxic Movie (A Fairy Tale for Grown-Ups)' and the critically acclaimed Netflix series 'Kohrra'.

in creating visually compelling and memorable costume designs, as evidenced as an assistant stylist in Netflix short



videos featuring Nawazudher a respected figure in the din Siddiqui and the Bandra industry. Christmas short film.

Presently, she is only 23 Mili's leadership and inyears old and was born in Biterpersonal skills are wellkaner city of Rajasthan. From known beyond her technical the very beginning, Mili had big dreams and she always received skills. Her roles often extend beyond styling, taking on reencouragement and support sponsibilities such as being from her family for them. Mili's early education took place at the 2nd Assistant Director for TVF's 'Builders' and 'Half Sophia School in Bikaner. Fol-CA'. Creativity is not enough lowing that, Mili pursued her for these positions, they also higher education in Fashion require strong organizational design at a prominent institute skills and the ability to make such as INIFD to pursue the quick decisions under prescareer of Costume Design. At a sure. Mili's stint as a Cuslater point, this young girl also tomer Relationship Officer received higher education in at Tommy Hilfiger gave her Management & Entrepreneurvaluable insight into the busiship. Subsequently, Mili gave her aspirations wings and took ness side of fashion, making the path to Bollywood.

Mili's dedication and hard work have been well-received. Her work for high-profile clients, including styling for Baas part of a team has made

run Sobti at the Critics' Choice Awards 2024, and her role in the critically acclaimed series 'Dream Giri2' by Balaji Telefilms, has earned her recognition and respect within the industry. Mili Goswami's name represents more than just creativity and excellence; her journey from a small town to the heights of the fashion and film industry inspires numerous others. This is also very certain that she will continue to break new ground and set higher standards in the upcoming years.

Mili is a source of inspiration for today's teenagers who are very well versed in technology and want to make a new type of career a means of their velihood.

There is no question that this young person is highly talented and has a promising future.

Mili is renowned for her skill

her better at marketing and problem-solving. Her ability to handle social media, multitask, and work efficiently