

REGION

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HARYANA POLLS: BJP'S FIGHT FOR LEGACY AS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES MOUNT

India set to become World's 3rd-Largest Economy by 2030: S&P Global Report



NEW DELHI: India is on track to become the world's third-largest economy by 2030-31, driven by an expected annual growth rate of 6.7 per cent for the current fiscal year, according to a report released by S&P Global on Thursday.

The report forecasts even stronger growth of 8.2 per cent in FY2024, highlighting the importance of ongoing reforms in sustaining this economic momentum.

These reforms are aimed

at improving business transactions, enhancing logistics, attracting private sector investment, and reducing reliance on public capital. S&P Global emphasised that these structural changes will be pivotal in fostering long-term growth and competitiveness.

India's equity markets are also projected to remain vibrant, fuelled by strong growth prospects and a more robust regulatory framework.

The report pointed to a surge in foreign investment

in Indian government bonds, attributed to India's inclusion in major emerging market indices, with further increases anticipated in the future.

To maximise trade opportunities, the report stressed the need for continued infrastructure development, particularly in port facilities along India's extensive coastline.

Given that nearly 90 per cent of India's trade is conducted via sea routes, robust port infrastructure is essential to manage the anticipated rise in exports and bulk imports.

Addressing India's growing energy needs, the report advocated a transition toward sustainable energy sources such as renewables and low-emission fuels. This shift is seen as critical for balancing the country's energy security with its climate goals.

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

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INDIAN EV INDUSTRY TO BECOME MAJOR POWER CONSUMER AMID ROBUST GROWTH

Chief Minister announces to *clean Buddah nullah* on mission mode

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Friday announced to embark on a three phase multi pronged program to clean the Buddah nullah in Ludhiana on mission mode.

Chairing a meeting here with the world renowned Nebula group, the Chief Minister lauded the group for its expertise in dealing with the problem of water pollution. He said that the current campaign will be started in collaboration with the Nebula group and will aim at cleaning Buddha Nallah in Ludhiana to remove impurities that cause cancer, with Nebula Ozonation technology at the nano level. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the target will be to reduce Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) level of water to below 100, making it fit for drinking. The Chief Minister said that



it is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that Nebula Ozone's nano-level technology is a proven remedy to remove cancer-causing elements and impurities from water. He said that the three phase program to be launched by the state government is aimed at restoring water quality in the Buddah Nallah. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the team

has already undertaken site visits along with officials of Punjab Water Supply and Sewerage Board, PPCB and other stakeholders.

During the meeting it was decided that the phase I of the project will involve installation of the ultrasonic water metering systems and the software modelling for the analysis of the sewage network to identify

sampling points across Ludhiana. Likewise, it will also focus on identification and installation of various pre-treatment plants for the dyeing industry across Ludhiana. These 200 units discharge around 95 MLD into the CETPs adding that this move will help in checking the pollution.

Likewise, it was decided that Phase II will focus on identification of the problematic discharge points and installation of small-scale effluent treatment systems to improve sewage quality. In the third phase thrust will be laid on design and implementation of lining the Buddha Nallah. It was decided that Nebula Group and the state government will work together for implementation, maintenance and operation of the III phases and the operation of the treatment systems installed across Ludhiana.

POTPOURRI

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ALIA-DILJIT'S 'CHAL KUDIYE' IS A POWER PACKED TRACK FOR EVERY WOMAN

Amit Shah unveils 'White Revolution 2.0' initiative to strengthen dairy sector



NEW DELHI: In a major push to transform India's dairy cooperative sector, Union Minister Amit Shah on Thursday unveiled 'White Revolution 2.0', a comprehensive initiative aimed at empowering women farmers and creating job opportunities.

The programme focuses on four key areas - empowering women farmers, enhancing local milk production, strengthening dairy infrastructure, and boosting dairy exports. The programme is one of the three initiatives undertaken in the first 100 days of the Modi government's third term.

"Maximum women are engaged in the dairy sector, with some generating business worth Rs 60,000 crore in Gujarat alone. This new initiative will focus on empowering women and further strengthening the fight against malnutrition," Shah said.

The minister also launched the nationwide rollout of RuPay Kisan Credit Cards for dairy farmers and the installation of micro-ATMs at dairy cooperative societies. Under White Revolution 2.0, the government aims to increase milk procurement.

Health Minister Nadda seeks detailed report on Tirupati laddu issue



NEW DELHI: Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda on Friday sought a full report on the Tirupati laddu issue, saying the government will further examine matter and take suitable action.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's claim that animal fat was used in Tirupati laddu during the previous government has triggered a massive political row, with the YSRCP accusing Naidu of indulging in "heinous allegations" for political gains and the TDP circulating a lab report to back its claim.

During an NDA legislature party meeting on Wednesday, Naidu claimed that the previous YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government did not even spare the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Tirupati and used substandard ingredients and animal fat to make laddus.

Cong chief Kharge extends condolences to families of BSF jawans killed in accident



NEW DELHI: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday extended condolences to the families of four Border Security Force (BSF) jawans who lost their lives in a tragic accident that occurred in Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K) Budgam district while they were returning from election duty.

Taking to his social media handle on X, the Congress chief remarked, "Extremely pained to hear about the terrible tragedy in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam, where 4 BSF Jawans have lost their lives and around 28 Jawans have been injured, as the bus carrying them for election duty, fell into a gorge."

"Our heartfelt condolences to the families of the bravehearts. May they get the strength to overcome this irreparable loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with the injured, as we wish them a speedy recovery," he added.

The tragic accident occurred in Budgam district of J&K on Friday evening when a bus carrying the BSF personnel veered off the road and fell into a deep gorge, resulting in the loss of four jawans and injuries to 28 others.

The bus that was transporting 36 jawans posted on election duty met with the accident near Brel village of Waterhail in Budgam district, causing the bus to crumple completely.

J&K authorities are investigating the cause of the accident.

CM reiterates demand for naming Halwara airport after Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Friday reiterated the demand for naming the Halwara airport after the name of iconic Martyr Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha.

In a letter to Union Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu, the Chief Minister recalled that Punjab Legislative assembly had in its sitting on March 22, 2023 unanimously passed an official resolution urging the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India to name the upcoming International Airport at Indian Airforce Station, Halwara, District Ludhiana, Punjab as "Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha International Airport". He said that the interim terminal building of this airport is expected to be ready by the end of this month. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that flights are expected to start from the airport by the year end adding



that he had also requested the previous Union Civil Aviation Minister in this regard.

The Chief Minister said that he had personally taken up the matter with him as this issue is associated with the emotions of Punjab. He reiterated that naming the airport after Kar-

tar Singh Sarabha will be a humble tribute to the iconic martyr who laid down his life at the altar of the motherland. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that this young martyr had been an inspiration for the young generations since ages to work for their country self-

lessly.

The Chief Minister said that the great martyr played a pivotal role in emancipating the country from the clutches of foreign imperialism adding that as an active leader of Ghadar party he worked untiringly for attaining freedom first abroad and then within the country. He said that due to strenuous efforts of the state government, the Mohali International Airport has already been named after Shaheed Bhagat Singh adding that naming of Halwara airport after Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha will be a humble tribute to the martyr. Bhagwant Singh Mann further said that naming the airports, universities and other institutions in the name of these iconic martyrs is important to perpetuate their glorious legacy adding that naming these institutions after great national leaders can inspire our youth for selfless service towards the country.

Household consumption poised to grow faster in Q2 as headline inflation eases: RBI



India's retail inflation surges 5.5% in November from 4.8 per cent in October

NEW DELHI: Household consumption is poised to grow faster in the second quarter of the current fiscal (FY25) as headline inflation eases, with a revival of rural demand already taking hold, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Friday.

Private consumption and gross fixed investment were robust in India and net exports remained sequentially positive in their support to gross domestic product (GDP) growth in Q1 of FY25, the central bank said in its monthly bulletin. "The underperformance of agriculture was compensated for by a buoyant manufacturing sector and resilient services," said the RBI.

Consumer price index (CPI) inflation came in below the RBI's target for the second consecutive month in August, "although in light of the recent experience, food price volatility remains a contingent risk", it added. The year-on-year inflation rate (3.65 per cent), based on the All India Consumer Price Index (CPI), for the month of August was the second lowest in the last five years, below the RBI's 4 per cent inflation target.

India's foreign exchange reserves rose to an all-time high of

\$689.2 billion (as of September 6), equivalent to more than 12 months of imports for 2023-24 and more than 103 per cent of total external debt outstanding in end-March 2024.

"India accumulated \$66.8 billion in 2024 so far (as on September 6), the second highest among major foreign exchange reserves holding countries," said the RBI. The Indian rupee exhibited the least volatility among major currencies during August 2024, depreciating by 0.4 per cent (on-month) compared to the US dollar. The rupee depreciated by 1.9 per cent (on-month) in August in terms of the 40-currency real effective exchange rate (REER) on account of the depreciation of the rupee in nominal effective terms and negative relative price differentials. According to the central bank, a flexible and robustly equipped regulatory architecture in the financial sector would be essential to stay ahead of the curve and minimise risks.

"Macroeconomic policymakers and other stakeholders must also be quick to adopt a forward-looking approach to navigate the difficult bends and turns on the road ahead.

PM Modi departs for US to attend Quad Summit, address UNGA

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday embarked on a three-day visit to the US, where he will attend the Quad Leaders' Summit and address the United Nations 'Summit of the Future'. Besides, the PM will also be attending a community programme and interacting with the Indian diaspora there.

"Today, I am embarking on a three-day visit to the United States of America to participate in the Quad Summit being hosted by (US) President (Joe) Biden in his hometown Wilmington and to address the Summit of the Future at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York,



"Prime Minister Modi said in his departure statement on Saturday. "I look forward joining my colleagues President Biden, (Australia's) Prime Minister (Anthony) Albanese and (Japan's) Prime Minister (Fumio

Kishida for the Quad Summit. The forum has emerged as a key group of the like-minded countries to work for peace, progress and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region," he added.

Prime Minister Modi further said that his meeting with President Biden will "allow us to review and identify new pathways to further deepen India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership for the benefit of

our people and the global good".

The Prime Minister said that he is eagerly looking forward to engaging with the Indian diaspora and "important" American business leaders, who are the "key stakeholders" and provide "vibrancy to the unique partnership between the largest and the oldest democracies of the world".

Termining 'The Summit of the Future' an opportunity for the global community to chart the road ahead for the betterment of humanity, Prime Minister Modi said: "I will share views of the one-sixth of the humanity as their stakes in a peaceful and secure future are among the highest in the world."

Farooq Abdullah: J&K would have been part of Pakistan without NC's role

FW DESK

In a strong rebuttal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks during his rally in Srinagar on Thursday, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) President Farooq Abdullah declared that without the NC's intervention in 1947, Jammu and Kashmir would have become part of Pakistan due to its Muslim-majority status.

Speaking at a rally in Udhampur in support of NC candidate Sunil Verma, Abdullah emphasised that the region's decision to align with India was due to the NC's vision for a secular and inclusive future.

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir should be thankful that the NC was present during Partition," Abdullah said. "Had we not been there, Jam-



mu and Kashmir would have become part of Pakistan due to its Muslim-majority status. We chose the path of Gandhi and Nehru, believing in a vision of India where citizens of all faiths—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Buddhists—are equals."

Abdullah countered Modi's

accusations that the NC, along with the Congress and People's Democratic Party (PDP), were responsible for the "destruction" of the region. He pointed to decisions made by previous governments, such as the 1989 release of terrorists in exchange for Rubaiya Sayeed and the 1999 Kandahar hi-

jacking, as pivotal moments that contributed to the rise of terrorism in J&K.

"Who released the terrorists in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in 1999 in exchange for the hijacked plane, and for Rubaiya Sayeed in 1989? The same terrorists are now running terror operations from Pakistan," Abdullah remarked. "Yet today, they shift the blame onto us—NC and Congress."

Criticizing the BJP's handling of terrorism and its "One Nation, One Election" proposal, Abdullah expressed doubts about its practicality. He also dismissed the BJP's claims of forming the next government in the region, questioning the party's accomplishments in addressing issues like inflation, land dispossession, and the preference for non-local officials over experienced locals.

'Emergency' film a deep conspiracy to defame Sikh community and Punjab: Akali Dal

LUDHIANA: The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) alleged that the 'Emergency' film was a deep rooted conspiracy to defame the Sikh community and Punjab even as the party asserted that its 19 month struggle should be included in the film if the producers were serious about depicting real situation of that period.

Addressing a press conference here, senior SAD leader Maheshinder Singh Grewal said it was shocking to note that in the 'trailer' of the film, the producers had presented Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale as a terrorist whereas as per historical facts, he was a sevadar of the Taksal during 1975 when Emergency was imposed by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Maheshinder Singh Grewal said the wrong presentation of



historical facts was a serious issue and appeared to be part of a deep rooted conspiracy to defame Punjab in general and the Sikh community in particular.

He said the truth was that the Shiromani Akali Dal agitated against 'Emergency' for 19 months and a Jatha courted arrest daily as part of this protest. He said not a single drop of bloodshed

took place but the film had tried to portray that there was widespread bloodshed during emergency which was totally false and untrue. Mr Grewal said that if the film producers were really serious about presenting what happened during 'Emergency' then they should include the 19 month agitation by the SAD and real facts on all those who were jailed by Indira Gandhi for opposing

Emergency. He said the Akali Dal would oppose the false narrative being built by the movie so that future generations were not misguided.

Grewal said the SAD would represent to the Censor Board not to approve any film based on wrong historical facts. He said need of the hour was to present the real facts before the people and Kangana Ranaut should do that only. He said it appeared that Ranaut had been specifically deputed to do harm to the image of the Sikh community which had always stood for safety, security and unity of the country. The SAD leader said that even the Judiciary should also ensure that no film should be allowed which portrayed any community or its religious leader as terrorists.

Haryana Polls: BJP's Fight for Legacy as Internal and External Challenges Mount

Assembly elections have become a crucial test for the BJP, where internal rifts, anti-incumbency sentiments, and strong opposition coalesce to create a formidable challenge. With high stakes on both state and national fronts

TARUN BHAJINI
Chandigarh



Modi has framed the Haryana election as a significant battlefield, likening it to a "Kurukshetra" where the stakes could not be higher. The election presents both external challenges from opposition parties and internal rifts within the BJP. Modi, speaking at a rally in Kurukshetra, invoked the state's electoral tradition, reminding voters that for the past 50 years, Haryana has voted for the same party that governs at the center. The BJP is channeling all its resources to maintain this legacy.

However, issues such as anti-incumbency, and discontent among key groups like farmers, wrestlers, and soldiers have made it difficult for the BJP to

campaign freely. The situation has forced the party to adopt a defensive posture, an unusual strategy for a party known for its assertiveness.

Internal Struggles and Strategic Shifts

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who has led the state for over nine years, has been notably sidelined. In a dramatic move, Khattar was removed from his post just six months prior to the elections. His absence from Prime Minister Modi's rallies, and campaign materials further signals the BJP's strategic shift. His omission from speeches and posters suggests the leadership perceives him as a liability due

to growing public dissatisfaction, even though the party itself may still hold sway.

Additionally, the BJP has struggled with internal dissent, with complaints rising about ticket distribution. The party has cut tickets for 15 sitting legislators, moved seven others to different constituencies, and introduced 40 new candidates. This restructuring has sparked rebellion within the ranks, with 23 candidates contesting as independents, which could dilute the BJP's vote share in several regions.

Achievements Overshadowed by Protests

Despite the internal strife, the BJP is touting its governance record over the past decade. It claims to have tackled corruption, especially in job recruitments, and expanded the Minimum Support Price (MSP) to cover 24 crops. However, the public's perception of these achievements remains uncertain. The party's outreach through public grievance camps, aimed at resolving issues related to property identification and family ID cards, has yielded mixed results.

NIA conducts search at locations linked to SFJ chief Pannun in Punjab



CHANDIGARH: In a major action against banned terror organisation Sikh For Justice's (SFJ) chief Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday conducted searches at four locations across Punjab in a case related to him for the promotion of terror-related activities and violence.

NIA teams swooped down at one location in Moga, two locations in Bathinda, and one location in Mohali at premises connected with suspects in the case.

The searches led to the seizure of various incriminating materials, including digital

devices, which are under examination.

The case relates to the conspiracy by Pannun, one of the founders of the US-based separatist group SFJ who actively lobbies for a separate state for Sikhs, which they call Khalistan, in the US, Canada, and the UK, with other members of the SFJ. SFJ, a fringe organisation, was declared unlawful under Section 3(1) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and he was declared a designated terrorist by the Indian government in 2020.

The NIA had registered the case against Pannun on November 17, 2023, under Sec-

tions 120B, 153A and 506 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), and Sections 10, 13, 16, 17, 18, 18B 8 20 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, relating to funding of terrorist activities in Punjab from abroad, creating disharmony among communities and radicalising youth for terrorist activities.

In September last year, the NIA had confiscated two properties of Pannun in Amritsar and Chandigarh. The properties include 46 kanal of agricultural property in the ancestral village Khankot, located on the outskirts of Amritsar district. It has also confiscated his residential property in the Sector 15 area of Chandigarh. After confiscation, Pannun lost rights to the property which now belongs to the government. In 2020, his properties were attached, which meant he could not sell the property.

Pannun's father Mohinder Singh Pannun was a resident of Nathu Chak village of Patti subdivision in Tarn Taran district before the Partition. After the Partition, the family shifted to Khankot village.

Punjab Police busts trans-border narcotic smuggling network in Amritsar



JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

City Commissionerate Police has busted a trans-border narcotic smuggling network with the arrest of a drug smuggler identified as Kanwaljit Kaur alias Massi of Golden Avenue, Hargobindpura, Chheharta, after recovering 4.580 kg of heroin from her possession, said CP Amritsar Ranjit Singh Dhillon here on Tuesday.

CP Ranjit Singh Dhillon said that accused Kanwaljit Kaur and her son-in-law, Jugraj Singh, son of Partap Singh, resident of Golden Avenue, Hargobindpura, Chheharta, were directly in touch with various Pakistan-based drug smugglers and had been engaged in drug trafficking. Drones were being used to transport the drug consignments from Pakistan, he added. Investigations are ongoing to establish backward and forward linkages in this case, he added. Sharing operation details, Commissioner of Police (CP) Amritsar, Ranjit Singh Dhillon said that police teams had received reliable inputs that drug smuggler Kanwaljit Kaur had retrieved a drug consignment, which was presently in her possession.

Anil Vij claims to be Chief Minister if voted to power, despite Nayab Singh Saini declared BJP choice by Narender Modi



SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Former Haryana cabinet minister and senior Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) leader won assembly polls from Ambala constituency six times in past Anil Vij on Sunday while addressing a press conference said claimed the chief minister's post in view of his seniority if the BJP returns to power in upcoming Assembly elections in the state. According to information, while addressing poll rally in Kurukshetra on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciating the performance of Nayab Singh Saini in past couple of months after his appointment as CM Haryana, stating the way he has impressed everyone in the state due to his devotion towards his duty round the clock in spite of belonging to a low class family after the former Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar became a Union Minister, made it clear that Saini will be the Chief Minister if the party is voted to power in the state.

AAP MLA Kunwar Vijay Partap's wife dies

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

AAP MLA Kunwar Vijay Partap Singh's wife Mrs. Madhumeeta dies due to cardiac arrest. She was shrived by two daughters and husband. Earlier, yesterday in the morning she complained uneasiness in her chest, immediately shifted to private hospital where she was diagnosed tachycardia. After her admission she started heavy breathlessness and dies due to cardiac arrest. She was around 48. Her cremation was largely attended including his voters and entire city bureaucracy, senior police officials and party MLAs and cabinet ministers from Amritsar.



Four including 3 teenage girls arrested smuggling Rs 1.25 crore drugs



SATISH HANDA
Yamunanagar

CIA-1 staff Yamunanagar police on a secret information that smuggled drugs are being sold by a youth accompanied by a group of three teen-age girls of age around 15 years arriving at Jagadhri railway station, police team started search at the platform and outside the railway station Saturday late evening, and saw four including three females sitting in a 'dhaba' near the railway station carrying bags. During the search police recovered 33 kg 900 gm 'charras' kept in four bags of value worth Rs 1.25 crore.

The youth was identified as Raj Bali a resident of village Sadarghat Tangraia in Betiah district in Uttar Pradesh was arrested by the police and a case under NDPS Act was registered against them. During preliminary investigation youth Raj Bali admitted crime and said that he used to smuggle drugs frequently from Bihar brought from the main supplier for onward supply along with three teen-age girls in a second class ordinary coach having less chances of checking by Railway Protection Force and they were being paid an amount worth Rs 5000 each. The police started searching for the main supplier.

Cong unveils 7 guarantees in Haryana poll manifesto; BJP leaders said these are bundle of lies

SATISH HANDA
Chandigarh

Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister P. Chidambaram on Monday hit out at the BJP government in Haryana, terming its tenure a total failure that has rendered the State's economic complete shambles, among the worst in the country.

"Haryana is essentially an agricultural State as more than 70% of its population earns its livelihood from this sector. Due to the callous attitude of this government, farmers had to resort to agitations and come on the roads. The BJP regime has been a complete failure," said Chidambaram, addressing a press conference in Press Club Chandigarh on Monday.

A couple of days ago, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Bhupinder Hooda released the party's guarantees for the Haryana poll. While talking to media persons, he said the winning MLAs would choose the Chief Minister in case Congress



secure a majority in the October 5 Assembly elections in the state. Kharge was talking to reporters after unveiling seven guarantees promised by the Congress to the voters of the state.

The seven guarantees include enacting a law to ensure Minimum Support Price (MSP), caste census so that resources could be channelised to benefit deserving groups, increase in the creamy layer from Rs 6 lakh to Rs 10 lakh, LPG cylinders available to the consumers at the rate Rs 500

each, a monthly allowance of Rs 2,000 for women between age 18 to 60, a monthly pension of Rs 6,000 for seniors citizens, the disabled and widows, restoration of the old pension scheme, free supply of 300 units of electricity and free medical treatment up to Rs 25 lakh as against Rs 5 lakh at present.

According to financial experts, seven guarantees announced by Congress if it comes to power in Haryana after assembly polls will put an

additional strain on Haryana's poor economic health if it is voted to power since the state is already under debt expected to reach rupees 3.18 lakh crore in 2024-25 according budget estimates. Among the other promises made by Congress in a 53 page manifesto include filling up two lakh government posts, allocation of 100-yard plots and houses for economically weaker families in the state. Among other promises in the manifesto included building a monument in the state in memory of farmers who died during the agitation against the three farm laws and the children of the martyred farmers would be given jobs. On the question of Chief Minister's face in Haryana, Kharge said the Congress did not project the name of Chief Minister and left the decision on the MLAs to choose their leader after the election results were announced, however deserving candidates were given priority for the CM face.

Police failed to arrest Chairman of Agrofed Society cheated over 200 youths assuring jobs since past 14 years

SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Police failed to arrest P.S Sandhu originally hailing from Amritsar, started Agrofed Society in Ambala City along with seven others hailing from Punjab, Uttarakhand and Delhi, offering employment to unemployed youths for the posts for supervisors, clerks and peons. The firm was started on 23rd Au-

gust 2005 having head office at Ambala and a network of branches in adjoining states, which was registered in 2006 at Delhi. The firm allegedly cheated more than 200 youths offering them employment and issued them fake appointment letters and as many as 24 cases were registered against the prime accused Sandhu who was arrested by the police and he was sent jail for one and half

year and was granted bail in 2008, thereafter he went underground. Sandhu was declared an offender by the court on 29th March 2012.

P.S Sandhu when started Agrofed Society was known as an VIP in the area having contacts with the high profile persons, including senior political leaders as well as bureaucrats in state as well as in center, usually traveling in luxury cars having

red light on it accompanied by gunmen. After his arrest, police during raids at Sandhu's office and the residence seized 327 gm gold, Rs 1.66 crore cash and 15 vehicles and the matter was also referred to the Enforcement Department for investigation. During the case under trial in the court 25 accused alleged involved in the case were acquitted in the absence of sufficient evidence against them.

Punjab govt provides jobs to 30 Kins of Farmers died during anti-farm laws protest



CHANDIGARH: Punjab Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Gurmeet Singh Khudian on Friday distributed appointment letters to 30 persons from the families of farmers, who lost their lives during the protests against the farm laws. Among these, 25 will serve as clerks, while five will work as Sewardars in the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department.

Additionally, the appointment letters were handed over to eight more youths including two Veterinary Inspectors and four clerks, with three clerks being appointed on compassionate grounds, in the Animal Husbandry department and two stenographers received appointment letters in the Dairy Development department.

While congratulating the

newly recruited officials, Gurmeet Khudian exhorted them to work for the development of Punjab and to give their utmost to ensure transparent and efficient delivery of services to the people of the state.

He further mentioned that the Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann-led Punjab Government has provided 44, 974 government jobs in various departments so far. He emphasized that this recruitment process has been carried out solely based on merit, following a completely transparent procedure.

Director Agriculture Jaswant Singh, Director Animal Husbandry Dr. Gursharanjit Singh Bedi, Director Dairy Development Kuldeep Singh and other officials were also presented on the occasion.

Congress' Manifesto is a letter of deceit, a bundle of lies & should be thrown into the river: Anil Vij



SATISH HANDA
Ambala

Haryana's former Home and Health Minister Anil Vij criticizing the manifesto released by Congress said this is not a manifesto, but a letter of deceit and a bundle of lies. It should be thrown into the river. Vij was interacting with media persons while campaigning from shop to shop in the markets of Ambala Cantt.

Vij mocked Congress' promise of making Haryana drug-free, saying, «Congress is a habitually deceitful party. During the Himachal elections, they promised to give women gas cylinders for Rs 500, but what's the current situation? They can't even pay salaries. As for Congress' promise to make Haryana drug-free, it's nothing big.

In Himachal, they said they will cultivate cannabis and sell it and in Haryana, they say they'll make it drug-free. It's the same party, and how it changes its stance after winning can be seen in our neighboring state,» he added.

When asked about the election campaign, Vij said that the enthusiasm among the workers is increasing day by day and the storm that has risen will uproot the opposition. Vij, along with hundreds of BJP workers, campaigned shop-to-shop in the markets, asking for votes amidst loud slogans, the campaign started from Sadar Chowk and passed through all markets in the town and was various market associations welcomed him, and honored him with a traditional turban.

Ambala Cantt to witness triangular contest in assembly polls

SATISH HANDA
Ambala

The Ambala Cantonment Assembly are likely to have a triangular contest between the Congress candidate Parvinder Parri, BJP contestant Anil Vij a former Home & Health Minister in the state won Vidhan Sabha polls from Ambala Cantt constituency in past and Independent candidate Chitra Sarwara daughter of a senior Congress leader Nirmal Singh, a former state minister, presently contesting from Ambala City Vidhan Sabha seat on behalf of Congress. Chitra Sarwara was an expected contestant from Ambala Cantt constituency on behalf of Congress and also preparing to contest on this seat since past few months, but when she was refused ticket by the Congress high command in the last stage she decided to contest polls as an independent candidate

and filed her nomination on the last day.

Chitra Sarwara had also contested in 2019 Vidhan Sabha polls against Anil Vij and the Congress candidate a near and dear to KUMari Shelja, but failed to win the race. A survey reveals, the Ambala Cantt Assembly segment now is set to witness a tough triangular contest between three candidates: Parvinder Parri of Congress, Anil Vij from BJP and the Independent candidate Chitra Sarwara who was confident of getting Congress ticket, but after the party fielded Parvinder Parri - a loyalist of Kumari Selja, Chitra Sarwara decided to contest present poll as an Independent candidate. Chitra Sarwara gained sufficient popularity due to massive door-to-door poll campaign all over in the constituency in the past couple of months, thus now posing a challenge for BJP candidate, the former Home & Health Minister Anil Vij, having won this seat six times in past, as well as Congress candidate Parri.

Removal of minimum export price by govt likely to bring boom in export of basmati rice in Haryana



PARVESH HANDA
Karnal

The Union Government has decided to remove the minimum export price (MEP) thresholds on the export of basmati rice, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a statement on Saturday. The government aims to boost farmers' incomes by allowing the export of basmati rice, a premier GI-tagged variety from India.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Union Government on Saturday has announced to remove the minimum export price (MEP)

thresholds on the export of basmati rice aiming to boost farmers' incomes by allowing the export of basmati rice, a premier GI-tagged variety from the country. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) will closely monitor export contracts of basmati rice to ensure transparency in export business. Information reveals, in August 2023, in a decision the price of USD 1,200 per metric tonne (MT) was set for basmati rice exports as a temporary measure due to a tight supply and rising rice prices in the domestic market, and also prevent the

misclassification of non-basmati rice as basmati during exports transactions, since the export of non-basmati white rice was adversely affecting domestic demand. According to the president of All India Rice Exporters Vijay Setia and Haryana State Rice Exporters Association President Susheel Jain, Basmati rice is being produced in the country in 95 districts of the seven states: Haryana, Punjab, Western U.P, Himachal, Uttarakhand and Jammu-Kashmir being cultivated in 7.8 lakh hectare area. During last year 5.30 Million Ton (MT) Basmati rice was exported from the country which included 1.86 MT basmati rice exported from Haryana having more than 35% share.

Rice industry in Haryana has nearly 1800 rice mills and nearly 100 rice exporters. According to information, the decision for removal of MEP on basmati rice is likely to bring more than 10% growth in export business in the state, likely to bring an increase in income to the farmers growing basmati rice worth rupees 10 thousand crore annually.

Congress files complaint against 4, including Ravneet Bittu, for 'threatening' Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI: The Congress has lodged a police complaint against four BJP leaders, including Union Minister of State Ravneet Singh Bittu, for making objectionable remarks against the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi.

Congress treasurer and former Union Minister Ajay Maken went to the Tughlak Road Police Station in Delhi on Wednesday morning with this complaint.

Maken stated that BJP leader Tarvinder Singh Marwah had issued a death threat to Rahul Gandhi in Delhi last week.

According to Maken, this BJP leader said, "Rahul Gandhi, be careful, or the same fate will happen to you as it did to your grandmother." (Translation of Marwah's Hindi statement)

Talking to the reporters outside the Tughlak Road Police Station, the Congress Rajya Sabha MP said, "We all know that Indira Gandhi was mar-



tyred after taking 34 bullets to her chest. Rajiv Gandhi was blown to pieces because he initiated peace talks. Rahul Gandhi's family has made sacrifices for the country, and today, Rahul Gandhi is being told to be careful, or he will meet the same fate." Maken further stated that politics in India cannot stoop any lower than this. He criticised the BJP for not condemning the statement or taking any action against it.

"How can you say things like

"If someone doesn't like what Rahul Gandhi says because he speaks in the interest of the country, the poor, and the labourers, it doesn't justify issuing a threat to cut his tongue," Maken pointed out.

Congress warned the BJP, stating that both the Congress party and Rahul Gandhi are not afraid of such threats.

Maken emphasised that their voice would not be silenced, and Rahul Gandhi would continue to raise his voice for the backward, Dalits, and the poor.

He also mentioned that Bittu called Rahul Gandhi a terrorist just because he didn't like what the LoP in the Lok Sabha said. Consequently, Congress has filed a police complaint to ensure strict action is taken against these individuals.

Maken stressed that if someone says that Rahul Gandhi will meet the same fate as his grandmother, it is a "direct death threat."

Cabinet approves Chandrayaan-4, first module of Bharatiya Antariksh Station by 2028



NEW DELHI: Expanding the Chandrayaan series, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the fourth mission to the Moon and also gave a green signal for the building of the first unit of the Bharatiya Antariksh Station (BAS) by 2028.

The Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved Chandrayaan-4 to develop and demonstrate technologies to help astronauts return to Earth after successfully landing on the Moon.

The mission also aims to col-

lect Moon samples, bring them back safely and analyse them on Earth.

The Chandrayaan-4 mission will achieve the foundational technologies capabilities eventually for an Indian landing on the Moon (planned by year 2040) and return safely back to Earth, "according to a Cabinet Communication."

"Major technologies that are required for docking/un-docking, landing, safe return to Earth and also accomplish lunar sample collection and

analysis would be demonstrated," it added. Chandrayaan-3 successfully demonstrated the safe and soft landing of Lander on the tricky lunar surface. It established vital technologies and demonstrated capabilities that only a few other nations possess.

The ability to collect lunar samples and return them safely back to Earth remains the next challenge. The Chandrayaan-4 mission is "planned for Rs 2, 104.06 crore", and the development of the spacecraft and its launch will be handled by ISRO.

The Cabinet said the "cost includes spacecraft development and realisation, two launch vehicle missions of LVM3, external deep space network support and conducting special tests for design validation, finally leading to the mission of landing on the Moon's surface and safe return to Earth along with the collected lunar sample."

The mission is expected to be "completed within 36 months of approval", the Cabinet said.

3 HC ex-chief justices opposed simultaneous polls: Kovind report



Three former high court chief justices and one former state election commissioner were among those who objected to the idea of 'one nation, one election' during the consultations by a high-level committee headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind.

However, all four former Supreme Court chief justices -- Justice Dipak Misra, Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde and Justice UU Lalit -- the committee consulted provided written responses which were in favour of holding simultaneous elections, according to the Kovind panel's report.

The report accepted by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday has recommended simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and state assemblies as the first step followed by synchronised local body polls within 100 days.

Among the former chief justices of high courts, nine supported simultaneous elections, highlighting their potential benefits while three raised concerns or objections.

Former Delhi High Court chief justice Ajit Prakash Shah opposed the concept of simultaneous elections, noting it may curb democratic expression along with concerns about distorted voting patterns and state-level political alterations.

"Additionally, he said that simultaneous elections hinder political accountability, as fixed terms offer representatives unwarranted stability without performance scrutiny, challenging democratic principles," the report noted.

Former Calcutta High Court chief justice Girish Chandra Gupta opposed simultaneous polls, saying the idea is not conducive to the principles of democracy.

"Justice Sanjib Banerjee, former Chief Justice, Madras High Court, opposed simultaneous elections due to concerns that it would undermine India's federal structure and be prejudicial to regional issues.

"He cited empirical data showing frequent midterm state elections, emphasising the importance of allowing people to exercise their choices. He suggested state funding of elections as a more effective reform to tackle corruption and inefficiency," the report said.

All four former chief election commissioners, who were consulted by the panel, favoured simultaneous elections.

Engineer Rashid's Awami Ittehad Party and Jamaat-e-Islami form pre-poll alliance in J&K



FW DESK

In a move that could reshape the political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir, the Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) and the banned Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) announced a pre-poll alliance ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections on Sunday. The alliance is seen as a significant challenge to the region's traditional parties, such as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the National Conference (NC). Describing the collaboration as a "strategic alliance," an AIP spokesperson said the partnership is aimed at advancing the interests of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The deal was sealed following a meeting between AIP chief and Member of Parliament Engineer Rashid and a delegation from JeI, led by Ghulam Qadir Wani. Though JeI is banned from contesting elections directly, it has fielded independent candidates.

J&K people enthusiastic about elections, keen to make poll process vibrant

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that the turnout in the first phase of the Assembly election in J&K has shown that the people there are very enthusiastic about the elections and are keen to make the poll process vibrant.

PM Modi will be in the union territory to address two election rallies in J&K -- Srinagar and Katra. The second phase of the Assembly polls in the UT is scheduled for September 25.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "I look forward to being among the people of Jammu and Kashmir today. Will address a rally in Srinagar and Katra. Yesterday's turnout has shown that the people of J&K are very enthusiastic about the elections and are keen to make the poll process vibrant."

He further said in the post that he would speak about the development agenda and "seek people's blessings". The Prime Minister is slated to address a



public rally at Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium in Srinagar around noon, followed by another at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Sports Complex in Katra at 3:00 p.m. This will be the Prime Minister's first election rally in Kashmir for ongoing Assembly elections. Earlier, he addressed a public meeting for the BJP in Jammu's Doda on September 14. BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh has said that Prime Minister Modi's visit to J&K would

be a "game changer". Talking to reporters after he visited the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium on Wednesday, Chugh said: "People of J&K love the Prime Minister. We have seen in the past whenever he has visited J&K, people in large numbers have welcomed him. Thursday's visit of PM Modi will be a game changer, rather a milestone event for the people of J&K."

Foolproof security arrangements in coordination have

been made in and around the rally venues. An SPG team had arrived in Srinagar four days ahead of Prime Minister Modi's visit to coordinate with the UT authorities regarding the details for the protection of the VVIP.

Located in the Ram Munshibagh area of Srinagar, Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium can accommodate a large number of people. The passage for participants at the venue in Srinagar will be regulated and police said some traffic diversions will also be made.

"For the visit of the Prime Minister, there is a detailed standard operating procedure (SoP) governing such a visit and we are following that to the minutest detail," said police.

All high-rise buildings around the venue will be taken over by sharpshooters of the security forces and electronic surveillance will be augmented by human security to ensure foolproof security set-up.

NDA's 'indifference' towards Dalits at its peak in Bihar: Mallikarjun Kharge



NEW DELHI: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday condemned the NDA's double-engine government for its "failure" to prevent a violent incident in Bihar's Nawada district and "indifference" towards Dalits.

His remarks come a day after more than 25 homes in the Dalits' settlement in Nawada were set ablaze by miscreants over a property dispute.

"The terror inflicted on the Mahadalit colony in Nawada, Bihar, is yet another example of the jungle raj under the NDA double-engine government," Kharge stated in a post on X.

Kharge expressed his outrage over the attack, saying, "It is condemnable that around 100 Dalit houses were set on fire, there was firing, and everything the poor families had was stolen in the dead of night."

He criticised both the BJP and JD-U, accusing the double-engine government of

"neglecting" its duty to maintain law and order in Bihar.

"The BJP and its allies' complete disregard for the Dalits and the underprivileged, their criminal neglect, and their encouragement of anti-social elements have reached its peak. Prime Minister Modi remains silent as usual, Nitish Kumar is not bothered by his greed for power and the NDA allies are speechless," Kharge added.

Opposition parties have also blamed the government for "failing" to curb the rise in crimes against marginalised communities across the country.

According to villagers, many homes were reduced to ashes in the blaze.

Police have reportedly arrested 10 suspects in connection with the attack and the search for other accused is underway.

Following the incident, there was widespread panic, forcing many victims to seek shelter in neighbouring villages.

Three terrorists killed in Baramulla encounter ahead of PM Modi's Visit



FW DESK

Three terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in the Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday morning, following an operation that began late Friday night. The encounter took place in the Chak Tapper Kreeri Pattan area after a cordon-and-search operation was launched. The encounter occurred just a day after two Indian Army soldiers lost their lives in a separate operation in the Kishtwar district. The developments unfolded ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's planned visit to Doda district, where he addressed a rally as part of his election campaign.

Amit Shah slams Rahul Gandhi over Agnipath scheme



Home Minister says will give jobs to Agniveers after serving in Army

NEW DELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah hit out at Congress MP Rahul Gandhi for "playing politics" over the Agnipath scheme and said that is the BJP's responsibility to ensure jobs for Agniveers from Haryana, who are not retained after their four-year tenure in the armed forces under the short-term military recruitment plan.

Addressing a rally in Loharu in Bhiwani district of Hary-

ana, which goes to the polls on October 5, Home Minister Shah accused the Congress of spreading fake narratives.

"They claimed that Agniveer soldiers would have neither work nor pensions. But I want to tell you that under the Agnipath scheme, soldiers are receiving 20 per cent reservations in police services... If any Agniveer returns, he will not be without a job and the BJP takes responsibility for this," he said.

Targeting Rahul Gandhi, Home Minister Shah said: "The Congress, especially Ra-

Birthday wishes pour in for PM Modi from across party lines



NEW DELHI: As Prime Minister Narendra Modi turned 74 on Tuesday, leaders from across party lines extended their birthday greeting to him.

Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge took to X to wish the PM: "Best wishes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji on his birthday. May he be blessed with good health and long life."

National President of the Bahujan Samaj Party, Mayawati, also shared her wishes for the PM. Her post on X translates as: "Hearty congratulations to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on his birthday today and best wishes for his long life."

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. K. Stalin, too, registered his greeting on the micro-blogging site: "Warmest birthday wishes to Hon'ble Prime Minister Thiru @narendramodi. Wishing you a long life with enduring health in the years ahead."

National President of Samajwadi Party, Akhilesh Yadav also congratulated the Prime Minister on the occasion and extended his heartfelt wishes.

President Droupadi Murmu, Union Ministers and numerous Chief Ministers extended their best wishes as the Prime Minister turned 74 on Tuesday.

PM Modi is scheduled to be in Odisha during the day to attend a series of events.

PM Modi interacts with PMAY beneficiaries in Odisha slum



BHUBANESWAR: Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana at Sabara Sahi in the Gadakana area of Bhubaneswar during his one-day visit to Odisha on Tuesday.

During his interactions with the beneficiaries in the locality, PM Modi enquired about their economic conditions and the benefits they got under other government schemes.

Thanking PM Modi and the government, the beneficiaries were informed about benefits through various social welfare schemes such as PMAY, Swachh Bharat Yojana, Svanidhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Jan Dhan

using plastics and polythene bags while buying anything from the market.

He offered to visit one of the beneficiaries' homes and have a meal there.

PM Modi also took part in the 'Gruha Prabesha' of the beneficiaries at the slum in the Gadakana area on the occasion of his 74th birthday.

The residents of the slum accorded a grand welcome to the Prime Minister as per the local tradition with 'Anga Bastra' and sandalwood paste. He also relished the sweet Odia delicacy, 'Khiri' or Payas at one of the beneficiary's new homes where he also worshipped Lord Jagannath.

While sharing his experience of participating in the Grih Pravesh and eating Khiri during his speech at the launching programme of the SUBHADRA scheme, the Prime Minister reminisced about his mother and said that he can never forget their (beneficiaries) happiness and the satisfaction of their faces.

"This experience, this feeling is worth the treasures of my entire life. This happiness as a result of change coming in the lives of the poor, Dalit, deprived and tribal society gives me the energy to work harder," PM Modi affirmed.

Bus accident in J&K's Budgam kills 4 BSF jawans, injures 28



FW DESK

A bus carrying Border Security Force (BSF) personnel for election duty met with an accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district, killing four of them and injuring 28.

The vehicle fell into a gorge in the Brelh Water-hail area.

The bus was transporting 35 BSF troopers ahead of the second phase of assembly elections sched-

uled for September 25.

Local residents and officials rushed to help the injured personnel, taking them to City Hospital. Two troopers remain in critical condition, while the others are reported to be stable.

Senior officers, including the IGP of Kashmir Zone and BSF officials, visited the hospital to check on the injured troopers. A civilian driver was also hurt in the accident.



Fair tax sharing is an urgent need for states

The recent meeting of Finance Ministers from five Opposition-ruled states in Thiruvananthapuram has reignited a critical debate on the fiscal autonomy of states in India. They demanded an increase in the divisible pool of taxes from the current 41 per cent to 50 per cent and sought to limit the Centre's collection of cesses and surcharges. These levies, which lie outside the devolution mechanism, often strain the financial capacities of the states. Karnataka's Chief Minister Siddaramaiah also proposed a meeting with Chief Ministers from all states to discuss the growing constraints on states' ability to generate revenue post-GST. This issue gains further significance against the backdrop of limited central funding for key state projects like Bengaluru's Suburban Rail, Kerala's Vizhinjam Port, and the Chennai Metro's second phase. Additionally, natural calamities such as floods in Tamil Nadu, heavy rains in Gujarat, and landslides in Kerala highlight the need for flexible state finances to address emergency and developmental needs. The Finance Commission's formula, which favours poorer states with higher weightage for their State Gross Domestic Product (GSDP), has resulted in reduced allocations to economically robust states like Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. While this approach aims to address regional disparities, it constrains states with higher revenue contributions from meeting their own unique development and climate challenges. With the Sixteenth Finance Commission's recommendations due by October 2025, it is imperative to revisit the current devolution framework. Providing greater fiscal autonomy to states would not only allow them to address their specific economic and social needs but also promote a truly federal governance model. Empowering states with more financial control remain crucial for fostering regional growth, enhancing disaster response, and ensuring a more balanced national development strategy. Strong states will make India even stronger with a bright future for one and all.

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SUBHRAKANT PANDA DISCUSSES THE CHALLENGE OF EMPLOYING YOUNG, ASPIRATIONAL POPULATION

Demography: The economy's sweet spot

Much has been written about India's emergence as an economic giant — it is the world's fastest growing big economy, and is currently the fifth largest. Demographics is a major factor in propelling this rise given that the median age is around 28 years and 63 per cent of the population is of working age. However, the labour force participation rate stood at 55.2 per cent in 2022, according to a recent report released by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which goes on to state that falling labour intensity is likely due to growth being led by the services sector rather than manufacturing. Therefore, while we are certainly not experiencing "jobless growth", more steps are needed to harness the demographic dividend.

First and foremost, there is a need to press ahead with the ongoing reforms agenda to maintain, if not accelerate, India's growth trajectory as that by itself will create opportunities galore. There was a welcome reference to this in Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget speech to initiate and incentivise improvements in productivity and to facilitate markets and sectors to become more efficient. While there is much that the Centre has done to enhance ease of doing business, much of what needs to be done next, especially in the context of production, concerns the States (which is where the action is now). Hence, both need to walk in lockstep to broaden and deepen reforms.

The Economic Survey for 2023-24 states that technological advancements have led to a declining capital-to-output ratio and an increasing capital-to labour ratio. It was perhaps in this context that Arvind Panagariya, economist and Chairman



of the 16th Finance Commission, while speaking at a recent event in the Federation Of Indian Chambers Of Commerce and Industry said capital-led economic growth is not ideal as the country has an abundance of labour.

The reluctance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, the backbone of employment, to grow in size and scale as well as that of large business houses to foray into labour-intensive sectors can be attributed to the compliance burden and costs imposed by outdated labour laws.

The impasse over implementing the new labour codes approved by Parliament is sending a wrong signal to existing and prospective investors alike. It is important that one or two States with an evolved manufacturing ecosystem break the logjam by taking the lead.

The Centre's efforts to give a boost to the manufacturing sector is generally viewed from the angle that it is untenable for 45 per cent of the workforce to be employed in the agricultural sector which accounts for

only 18 per cent of GDP. While taking steps to enhance agricultural productivity, we must not forget those who are engaged in the unorganised and non-agricultural sectors — about 19 per cent of the workforce — which are highly fragmented and suffer from low productivity.

It is important to address their aspirations by focusing on high-growth potential sectors such as toys, apparel, tourism, and logistics which are also labour intensive. Then, as skills get upgraded, there will be an opportunity to move up the value chain and provide even better and higher paying jobs.

Skilling is a continuous process

Skilling is an important aspect of making future generations productive members of society. The Economic Survey highlighted that only 4.4 per cent of the workforce in the age cohort of 15-29 years is formally skilled. This is a huge concern, and the dichotomy of labour surplus and skills shortage must be addressed through meaningful public-private partnerships wherein industry plays an integral role in devising the curriculum and imparting 'on the job training'. Moreover, skilling is not a one-time intervention but a lifelong process which requires flexibility in institutional mechanisms as well as learning agility. The emphasis of the New Education

Policy (NEP) 2020 on foundational skills as well as higher order cognitive skills and critical thinking is a good step but, in a constantly changing world, the document must be reviewed periodically and updated.

Impact of AI/ML

Finally, in an era of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), repetitive tasks with low skills are most at risk but there will always be a need for human intervention and oversight. While we must not underestimate the impact of AI/ML, neither should it be demonised. The key is to have appropriate regulations govern its use while harnessing what it has to offer. In addition to the opportunities offered by various emerging sectors, AI/ML itself is estimated by Statista to grow by nearly nine times to become a \$826.73 billion worldwide market by 2030. Further, according to NASSCOM, India already has the second largest talent pool globally in this field but the current gap between demand and supply is 51 per cent which is projected to widen. Though very niche, it is an opportunity which should not be missed.

Gainfully employing a large, young and aspirational population is not easy but it is a far better challenge to have than dealing with an ageing one with its attendant economic and societal implications. India is in a sweet spot and must employ a holistic approach to create a talent pool so as to harness its demographic dividend for the benefit of the world at large.

Subhrakant Panda is Managing Director, Indian Metals and Ferro Alloys Limited (IMFA). Views are personal

G. KISHAN REDDY ON HOW DISTRICT MINERAL FOUNDATIONS HELPS GROWTH AND COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM.



A human touch to India's mineral ecosystem

In the year 2014, the higher judiciary turned the spotlight on the allotment of coal blocks with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's report of 2012 focusing on the allocation of coal blocks between 2004 and 2009.

In 2015, the Narendra Modi government amended the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act mandating auctions. As a part of the Bill, the government created a new body in the form of a District Mineral Foundation (DMF) where licensees and leaseholders pay the DMF a certain amount of the royalty. This was driven by the Prime Minister's firm belief that local communities are the key stakeholders in the nation's natural resource-led development.

Today, ten years later, the DMF has received a corpus of almost Rs 1 lakh crore through which decentralised community-centric development works are carried out in mining affected districts. The journey from huge losses in crores to the national exchequer to an almost Rs 1 lakh crore corpus in the DMF is a transformation worth narrating. September 16 is District Mineral Foundation Day as the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) scheme enters its tenth year. Today, the DMFs have resulted in three lakh projects being sanctioned across 645 districts in 23 States, transforming mineral wealth into a lifeline for development in mining affected regions. The objective in the PMKKKY is to implement developmental and welfare projects/programmes in mining affected areas alongside existing schemes/projects of State and central governments; minimising the impacts of mining on the people in mining districts and ensuring that those affected have long-term sustainable livelihoods.



At a recent DMF Gallery launch in New Delhi, I had the privilege of meeting some talented women from self-help groups set up by DMFs in Odisha. These women were not just artisans but were also entrepreneurs in the making. In Katni, Madhya Pradesh, DMFs are helping young minds master drone technology. Many have landed jobs and others are gearing up for new opportunities.

In India's rapidly evolving mining landscape, where we have just launched the National Critical Minerals Mission to secure our footing in strategic and critical minerals and are expanding our global footprint through our international public sector unit, Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL), DMFs complement this goal through the welfare of the local communities in mining areas. DMFs institutionalise this strategy by making State governments active partners and stand as a veritable picture of the philosophy of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas Sabka Vishwas Sabka Prayas'.

With a District Collector at the helm, funds flow to where the needs are greatest. The 'National DMF Portal' digitises the administration and the oversight of DMFs across In-

dia, enabling greater transparency and efficiency in operations. DMFs are not only spearheading national priorities but also supplementing efforts of the district administration in improving the socio-economic and human development indicators of the region.

Innovation at every DMF

It is also interesting to note how every DMF is innovating to maximise the impact of the initiatives and devising strategies to address unique challenges and needs. For instance, some DMFs are ensuring inclusivity by including elected representatives in the governing bodies while some have non-elected members of gram sabhas as well. Some DMFs have also adopted measures such as establishing a dedicated engineering department and deputing personnel from the State Public Works Department to ensure the efficient implementation of projects.

Ensuring a well-planned outlook, DMFs are also chalking out a three-year-plan to ensure targeted goal achievement. After studying these various models, our aim now is to ensure that such best practices are standardised across all DMFs without taking away the local context and knowledge that resides within the district. These efforts will ensure that DMFs take up long-term and well-planned projects while avoiding the earlier fragmented approach.

To further integrate DMFs operations, we

are encouraging district administrations to dovetail the activities and goals of the DMFs with ongoing central and State schemes in aspirational districts and supplement efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. We are also aiming to use DMFs to augment the livelihood of forest dwellers by taking up projects in the plantation, collection and processing of medicinal herbs. The DMFs will also identify and nurture rural athletes while developing sports infrastructure and facilities. DMFs, in short, can be seen as microcosms of the government's 'whole of government' approach, and will continue to be leveraged to reach out to the impacted communities

Advantage of convergence

The DMFs are a fine example of cooperative federalism and have the unique advantage of converging central and State schemes. Aligning goals and resources at three levels of governance ensures that national priorities meet local needs and amplify the impact and reach. Moving forward with a 'whole of government' approach, DMFs are becoming powerful tools for truly inclusive governance, reaching every corner of the nation. By tapping into India's mineral wealth, these initiatives are transforming historically underserved regions, turning natural resources into drivers of local development. Beyond just empowering marginalised communities, India is reshaping how the world thinks about resource management, setting an example of how nations must balance economic growth with social welfare and rights.

G. Kishan Reddy is Union Minister of Coal and Mines and represents the Secunderabad Lok Sabha Parliamentary constituency. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

New book reflects on Muslim marginalisation

Mujibur Rehman's *Shikwa-e-Hind: The Political Future of Indian Muslims* is a thought-provoking analysis of the socio-political conditions of Muslims in contemporary India. Taking its title from the famous poem *Shikwa* by Muhammad Iqbal, Rehman's book offers a complaint, not to God as Iqbal's poem did, but against majoritarian India. The book argues that the country is systematically marginalising its Muslim population through "de-Islamisation" policies and sustained attacks on everything associated with Muslims.

Rehman's work is meticulously researched, but it is also overwhelmed by historical references that feel tangential to the core issue: the future of Muslims in India. The detailed recounting of Muslim political exclusion before, during, and after Partition weighs down the narrative. Rehman's exploration of

these historical events, though valuable in setting a context, seems to detract from a more urgent discussion on present-day solutions. The book could have benefited from a tighter focus on contemporary challenges and actionable strategies for the Muslim community's political and social upliftment.

One of the key issues that *Shikwa-e-Hind* highlights is the increasing demonisation of Muslims in the public sphere, often painted as extremists or jihadists by certain elements of Indian society. This rhetoric has escalated to violence in some cases, prompting even the Supreme Court of India to suggest legislation against lynching. Rehman points out that the Hindu Right appears to view Muslim political empowerment as a step toward the establishment of Sharia law in India, a fear further stoked by inflammatory figures like Yati Narsinghanand, who has called

for Hindus to increase their population to avoid India turning into an Islamic state.

However, Rehman's proposed solutions to these deeply ingrained issues fall short. The book offers platitudes, such as suggesting Muslims explore alliances with secular citizens of other faiths to build a truly secular polity. While theoretically sound, such suggestions lack depth and practicality, leaving the reader without a clear understanding of how these goals can be achieved in a country as complex and diverse as India.

In an unexpected twist, the author also contemplates the idea of a separate Muslim nation, suggesting that if the option had not been exhausted with the creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh, it might still be on the table. This notion is as perplexing as it is controversial, raising more questions about Rehman's political stance



Shikwa-e-Hind: The Political Future of Indian Muslims
By Mujibur Rehman,
Simon & Schuster,
365 pages, Rs 999.

than offering any real solutions for Muslims in India.

The book is particularly weak in its examination of the role of Muslim religious leaders and bodies. While Rehman criticises Muslims' focus on religious issues, he overlooks the responsibility of organisations like the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), whose rigid stance on matters like Sharia law only serves to reinforce the fears of the Hindu Right. The AIMPLB's opposition to progressive legal rulings, such as the Supreme Court's decision on the maintenance of divorced Muslim women, goes unchallenged in the book. Instead, Rehman seems to absolve such organisations by stating that the Board has been "committed

to the role and rights of women," despite evidence to the contrary.

The absence of critical engagement with the internal issues within the Muslim community, particularly the role of conservative religious leaders, is one of the book's most glaring omissions. Muslim political exclusion, as Rehman rightly points out, is a reality, but the reasons for it are not solely external. The community's focus on religious identity over political identity, as advised by leaders like Maulana Azad, has also contributed to its marginalisation. The book's failure to address this self-imposed isolation makes its overall argument less convincing.

Rehman's analysis of Muslim schools mandating hijabs and skullcaps also lacks balance. While the book rightly argues that banning the hijab in educational institutions can impede Muslim girls' education, it does not take the same stance when Muslim schools impose these garments on their students. This selective criticism highlights an inconsistency in Rehman's argument about the role of religious identity in Muslim education.

Indian EV Industry to become major power consumer amid robust growth

MUMBAI: With nearly four million electric vehicles (EVs) sold in India cumulatively by March this year, the market is in the midst of an explosive growth phase and will become a major power consumer, a report said on Thursday.

From merely 1.3 lakh EVs sold in 2020, an estimated 1.6 million EVs were sold in the country in 2023, which is a sizeable compounded annual growth rate of 133 per cent in the last three years.

For the same period, the share of petrol vehicle sales of total vehicle sales reduced from 86 per cent in 2020 to 76 per cent in 2022, with diesel vehicles share remaining relatively flat at 11-12 per cent, according to a report by OmniScience Capital.

India has set an ambitious target of 30 per cent EV penetration by 2030, supported by government subsidisation and EV-Infra schemes such



as FAME India (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles) which aims to provide subsidies to EV customers, and PLI (Production Linked Incentive) schemes to boost domestic manufacturing of EVs and EV components.

In addition, with fossil-fuel prices rising and global EV

adoption in India in future.

"With an anticipated total power consumption of approximately 100 TWh by 2030, EVs have the potential to rank among the nation's single largest power consumers," said Vikas Gupta, smallcase Manager and CEO at OmniScience Capital.

The power sector in India has witnessed a major turnaround post-Covid, with power consumption growing at an annualized rate of nearly 10 per cent from FY21 to FY24 which is expected to continue till 2030.

The growth in power consumption will be in sync with India's nominal GDP growth which is expected to cross \$7 trillion by 2030, the report mentioned.

The data centres' market in India is also expected to grow exponentially as data protection and localisation is prioritised.

MSME Ministry Unveils 'Swabhav Swachhata, Sanskaar Swachhata' Campaign For 2024



NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) inaugurated the 'Swabhav Hi Seva' (SHS) 2024 Campaign on September 17, 2024, marking the 10th anniversary of the Swachh Bharat Mission.

The campaign, set to run until October 2, 2024, was launched with a Swachhata Pledge-taking ceremony led by Union Minister of MSME, Jitan Ram Manjhi, with over 150 field formations participating virtually across the country.

This year's campaign theme, 'Swabhav Swachhata - Sanskaar Swachhata,' aims to integrate cleanliness as both a natural habit and a core societal value.

The initiative emphasises public participation (Jan Bhagidari) and seeks to mobilise citizens, particularly youth, in cleanliness activities. It also highlights the crucial role of sanitation workers (Safai Mitras) in maintaining public hygiene.

The Ministry of MSME has outlined several key initiatives

for the campaign. Identified areas will undergo cleaning through community service (Shramdaan), transforming them into well-maintained spaces as part of the Cleanliness Target Units (CTUs) program.

In recognition of their vital role, safety kits will be distributed to sanitation workers, and special camps (Safai Mitra Suraksha Shivirs) will be organised for health check-ups and awareness about social security schemes.

Environmental sustainability efforts will include tree planting drives, aligning with the 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' initiative.

The Ministry is also actively promoting public participation in cleanliness drives, with a particular focus on youth involvement. In preparation for the campaign, the Ministry has taken several steps. Nodal officers have been appointed at both ministry and field levels to coordinate and monitor the campaign's progress.

Enough is enough, says Elon Musk over US FAA fining SpaceX 'for trivia'



Blasting the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for fining SpaceX "for trivia", CEO and founder Elon Musk on Friday said, "enough is enough".

Taking to his social media platform X, Musk lashed out at the FAA for "attacking SpaceX for petty matters" while not taking any action against Boeing "for putting astronauts at risk".

The FAA had on Tuesday, proposed \$633,009 in civil penalties against SpaceX for allegedly failing to follow its licence requirements during two launches in 2023, by statutorily-set civil penalty guidelines, a statement read.

The FAA stated that SpaceX used the unapproved launch control room for the PSN SATRIA mission and did not conduct the required T-2 hour poll on June 18, 2023. The agency also offered SpaceX a 30-day time to respond.

"The @FAANews leadership spends their resources attacking @SpaceX for petty matters that have nothing to do with safety while neglecting real safety issues at Boeing. This is deeply wrong and puts human lives at risk," he said.

"NASA deemed the Boeing capsule unsafe for astronaut return, turning, out of necessity, to SpaceX, yet instead of fining Boeing for putting astronauts at risk, the FAA is fining SpaceX for trivia! Enough is enough," the Tesla CEO added.

The billionaire's comments came as Boeing's Starliner which launched Indian-origin Sunita Williams and Butch Wilmore to the International Space Station was deemed unfit by NASA to return the astronauts. While the spacecraft returned safely to Earth without the crew, the US space agency roped in SpaceX to bring the astronauts back next year. Earlier SpaceX said that for nearly two years, the company "has voiced its concerns with the FAA's inability to keep pace with the commercial spaceflight industry". It said that the agency does not have the resources to review licensing materials timely, but "focuses its limited resources on areas unrelated to public safety".

Musk also called FAA allegations politically motivated, and stating to file a "suit against the FAA for regulatory overreach".

Lenovo to make AI servers, set up R&D centre in India



NEW DELHI: Lenovo India will start manufacturing 50,000 GPU-based AI servers in India next year, the company said on Tuesday.

Lenovo India Managing Director Shailendra Katiyal said the company will make servers locally and also export them from its manufacturing unit in Pudukcherry. "Lenovo will make 50,000 servers annually and the production will start next year. It will be manufactured at our Pudukcherry facility," Katiyal said. Lenovo is among the firms that have been selected for the Rs 17,000-crore IT hardware production-linked incentive scheme.

The company is also setting up its fourth-largest research and development centre in India. "We are setting up the fourth-largest research and development centre for Lenovo globally. The number of benches across our four big R&D centres is the same. India will have high skillset ecosystem that matches our global facility and all four units are at par with each other," Lenovo India, Infrastructure Group, Managing Director, Amit Luthra said.

Government cuts port charges to reduce export costs

NEW DELHI: The government on Thursday announced a cut in certain charges at ports and the purchase of five additional used container vessels by Shipping Corp as part of steps to resolve shipping-related woes being faced by exporters and importers.

These decisions were taken in an inter-ministerial meeting, held here under the chairmanship of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. The meeting was held to address rising freight costs, shipping delays, shortage and non-availability of containers and congestion at ports being faced by exporters.

Exporting community and



experts have flagged shipping-related issues which are hurting exports, as outbound shipments

contracted by 9.3 per cent in August. The issues figured in the discussions include container

shortage, surge in ocean freight rate and shipping cost, shipping delays at the Indian ports, and turnaround time at the ports.

Briefing media after the deliberations, Goyal said that the decisions taken by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Ministry of Railways in the meeting will result in significantly breaking down shipping costs, improving availability of containers, resolving empty containers issue, faster evacuation of export consignments and reducing congestion at the ports. "I am confident that it will result in significantly bringing down the shipping cost, improve the availability of empty containers..." he said.

Bajaj Housing Finance debuts at Rs 150 with premium of 114 pc over issue price

MUMBAI: Shares of the Bajaj Housing Finance Limited listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and National Stock Exchange (NSE) at Rs 150 per share each with a premium of 114 per cent against its issue price of Rs 70 per share.

Bajaj Housing Finance's housing finance arm became the most demanding IPO this year. Its public issue was subscribed 63.61 times on its final day. Reserve quota for the Institutional investors subscribed the most more than 200 times.

Bajaj Housing Finance's public issue size was Rs 6, 560



crore but it had a subscription worth Rs 3.23 lakh crore.

This offer for sale (OFS) of Bajaj Housing Finance was a

mixture of fresh issues. There was an OFS of Rs 3, 560 crore and a fresh issue of Rs 3, 000 crore. The money raised under

OFS goes directly to the promoters of the company. The money raised under the fresh issue goes to the company.

According to the exchange, Bajaj Housing Finance IPO -- institutional quota subscribed 209.36 times, non-institutional quota subscribed 41.36 times, retail quota subscribed 7.04 times, employee quota subscribed 2.05 times and reservation portion for shareholder subscribed 17.53 times. Bajaj Housing Finance IPO opened between September 9 - September 11 with a price of Rs 66 (lower end) to Rs 70 (higher end).

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



India's telecom and aviation sectors face critical challenges. Vodafone Idea must manage its mounting debt while staying competitive, and SpiceJet's survival hinges on financial restructuring and operational stability.

India's telecom and civil aviation sectors, once celebrated for their rapid expansion and potential, are now grappling with significant financial challenges. Two of the most notable examples of this downturn are Vodafone Idea, a debt-ridden telecom provider, and SpiceJet, an airline struggling to stay afloat. These companies mirror the broader struggles of their respective industries, where mounting debts, regulatory hurdles, and operational inefficiencies threaten their future.

Vodafone Idea (VIL), once a leading telecom player in India, now finds itself in a precarious financial position. The company, born from the merger of Vodafone India and Idea Cellular in 2018, has been drowning in debt, with a liability that exceeds Rs 2.2 lakh crore. VIL's troubles can be traced to a combination of factors: the fierce price war initiated by the entry of Reliance Jio, regulatory issues like the Adjusted Gross Revenue

(AGR) dues, and a lack of substantial capital infusion. The government's recent attempts to ease the sector's financial burden, such as the moratorium on spectrum payments, have provided temporary relief, but VIL's future remains uncertain.

In the first quarter of FY24, VIL reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 7,840 crore, indicating the continuing financial strain. While the company has managed to sustain its subscriber base, it has struggled to raise capital, and its ability to invest in much-needed 5G infrastructure remains in doubt. The Indian telecom sector is on the cusp of a significant shift, with 5G services expected to drive the next growth phase. However, VIL's financial woes could result in it falling further behind rivals like Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel, which are aggressively expanding their 5G networks.

In parallel to VIL's struggles, the civil aviation sector, particularly low-cost carriers like SpiceJet, faces severe

Turbulent Times for Voda, SpiceJet



headwinds. SpiceJet, once India's second-largest airline by market share, has seen its fortunes dwindle. With losses mounting and operational challenges growing, the airline has been fighting to stay airborne. Recent data shows SpiceJet has a fleet size far below its previous peak, with only about half its aircraft currently in operation.

SpiceJet's financial troubles can be attributed to multiple factors: rising fuel costs, competition from other low-cost carriers, the grounding of its Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The airline reported a net loss of Rs 789 crore in the June quarter of FY24, its highest in recent years. Additionally, its debt burden continues to grow, with unpaid dues to lessors, fuel suppliers, and airports creating further operational difficulties.

Despite these challenges, SpiceJet remains hopeful, with plans to raise funds through external investments and the potential sale of a stake in its cargo business, SpiceXpress. However, the airline's future remains uncertain, and if it

can restructure its finances and improve operational efficiency, it may face the same fate as Jet Airways, which was grounded in 2019.

The struggles of Voda-Idea and SpiceJet are not isolated cases but indicative of broader issues plaguing India's telecom and aviation sectors. Both industries have been hit by external factors such as global economic uncertainty, rising fuel and operational costs, and domestic regulatory pressures. For the telecom sector, the AGR dues, amounting to over Rs1.6 lakh crore, have added a significant financial burden to companies already operating on thin margins. On the other hand, the civil aviation industry continues to face high fuel taxes, making it difficult for carriers to operate profitably.

India's telecom sector is dominated by a few players, with Reliance Jio leading the pack. Jio's aggressive pricing strategy has forced competitors like Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel to slash tariffs, significantly declining average revenue per user (ARPU).

While beneficial to consumers, this price war has eroded the telecom companies' profitability, leaving them with massive debts and limited room for investment in new technologies.

Similarly, the civil aviation sector is witnessing consolidation, with market leaders like Indigo capitalizing on the struggles of weaker players. SpiceJet is fighting for survival in an environment where competition is fierce and operational costs are soaring. With airlines facing additional pressures from environmental regulations and the rising demand for sustainable aviation practices, the road ahead appears difficult.

Both the telecom and civil aviation sectors in India are at critical junctures. Vodafone Idea's challenge is overcoming its mounting debt while ensuring it does not lose further ground to its competitors. SpiceJet's survival depends on restructuring its financial obligations and regaining operational stability. As these two companies navigate their respective challenges, the broader industries they represent will watch closely as their fortunes intertwine with the future of Indian telecom and civil aviation.

The writer is a senior journalist and columnist. Views are personal. Twitter @narvijayyadav

Daikin Invests Rs 1,400 Crore Investment in Indian Operations



NEW DELHI: Daikin Industries, Japan's leading air-conditioning manufacturer, has made a substantial investment of Rs 1,400 crore into its Indian subsidiary, Daikin Air-conditioning India.

This marks the largest capital infusion to date for the company's operations in India, according to recent reports.

The investment, aimed at bolstering local production capabilities, was executed in two phases. Regulatory filings with the Registrar of Companies (RoC) indicate that Rs 600 crore was invested in June, followed by an additional Rs 800 crore in August.

Consequently, the subsidiary's paid-up share capital has increased to Rs 1,582.9 crore.

In anticipation of future growth, Daikin Air-conditioning India has also expanded its authorised share capital from Rs 1,500 crore to Rs 3,000 crore.

This move, implemented in May, allows for potential additional capital infusions.

KJ Jawa, Chairman and Managing Director, Daikin Air-conditioning India, stated that the funds will be utilised to enhance manufacturing capacity, with a particular focus on increasing the production of components such as com-

pressors. The company aims to raise the localization rate of its air conditioners from 75 per cent to nearly 90 per cent, further solidifying its position in India's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for air conditioners.

The investment will support various aspects of the company's operations, including construction, research and development infrastructure, skill development, brand promotion, and internal operations.

A significant portion of the funds will be directed towards maximizing the potential of Daikin's 75-acre manufacturing facility in Sri City, Andhra Pradesh, which includes a compressor and device factory.

This strategic move comes as Daikin India competes in the Rs 30,000 crore Indian air-conditioning market, alongside major players such as Tata-owned Voltas, LG Electronics, and Havells-owned Lloyd.

The substantial investment underscores Daikin's commitment to the Indian market and its ambition to strengthen its manufacturing presence in the country.

As the air conditioning industry in India continues to grow, this capital infusion positions Daikin to capitalize on emerging opportunities and enhance its competitiveness in the sector.

Net direct tax mop up rises 16% to Rs 9.95 lakh crore

NEW DELHI: Net direct tax collection grew 16.12 per cent to over Rs 9.95 lakh crore so far this fiscal on higher advance tax mop up.

Refunds worth over Rs 2.05 lakh crore were issued, a 56.49 per cent jump over the same period last fiscal. The net personal income tax (PIT) collection grew 19 per cent to Rs 5.15 lakh crore between April 1 and September 17. Corporate tax collection went up 10.55 per cent to over Rs 4.52 lakh crore. Revenues from Securities Transaction Tax (STT) stood at Rs 26,154 crore.

After taking into account



refunds, net collection from PIT and corporate taxes stood at Rs 9,95,766 crore so far this fiscal, a growth of 16.12 per cent over the year-ago period.

Advance tax collection grew 22.61 per cent to Rs 4.36 lakh crore. The growth in PIT advance tax mop up was 39.22 per cent while for corporate

tax, it was 18.17 per cent.

Gross direct tax collection stood at Rs 12.01 lakh crore, a growth of 21.48 per cent so far this fiscal.

The government has budgeted to collect Rs 22.12 lakh crore in the current fiscal from direct taxes (personal income tax, corporate tax and other taxes), up 13 per cent over the previous fiscal.

Rohinton Sidhwa, Partner, Deloitte India, said personal income tax continues to show strong growth and is pulling ahead of corporate income tax — a continuing trend over the last two years.

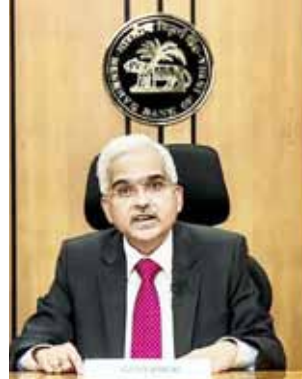
India can sustain 8% growth over medium term: RBI Governor

NEW DELHI: India can sustain economic growth of up to 8 per cent over the medium term, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das.

In an interview with CNBC on Sunday, Das also suggested that policymakers are not actively considering an interest rate cut in October, stressing that monetary policy decisions will be based on domestic conditions rather than influenced by the US Federal Reserve.

India has held interest rates steady for over 18 months, with Das cautioning against premature rate reductions amid ongoing inflation concerns.

While inflation remained below 4 per cent for a second



consecutive month in August, this was attributed mainly to statistical factors.

When asked about the possibility of a rate cut in October, Das responded, "No, I can't say that," indicating that the RBI

is not leaning toward such a move at present.

Looking ahead, the RBI governor projected India's growth rate to hover around 7.5 per cent in the coming years, with potential upside. Although growth dipped to 6.7 per cent in the last quarter from 7.8 per cent in the previous three months, Das remains confident that India's broader growth drivers are robust, sustaining a 7 per cent+ expansion trajectory.

Das reiterated remarks he made during a recent forum in Singapore, where he underscored India's resilience and strong growth fundamentals.

RBI to Modernise Currency Management Infrastructure over Next 5 Years



NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced plans for a comprehensive modernisation of its currency management infrastructure over the next 4-5 years.

This initiative aims to bolster storage and handling capacities to meet the future cash requirements of India's growing economy.

According to an RBI document, the proposed upgrades include establishing new currency management centres, implementing warehouse automation, enhancing security and surveillance systems, introducing an inventory management system, and creating a centralised command centre.

The central bank has issued an Expression of Interest (EoI) for consultancy and project management services to support this extensive modernisation effort.

Despite a recent slowdown in the growth rate of Notes in Circulation (NIC), the RBI anticipates continued positive growth in the coming years, albeit at a more moderate pace over the next decade. As of March 31, 2024, the NIC volume stood at 146.87 billion pieces, up from 136.21 billion pieces a year earlier. Coins in Circulation (CIC) also saw an increase, reaching 132.35 billion pieces by March 31, 2024, compared to 127.92 billion pieces the previous year.

The RBI emphasised that the current infrastructure requires modernisation to ensure adequate capacity, optimise operations, and make the process more secure and environmentally friendly. This move aligns with the bank's Clean Note Policy, which is expected to generate an increased volume of soiled notes requiring processing. Currently, banknotes are printed at four presses and coins are minted at four mints across India. The new currency is received at 19 Issue Offices and distributed to approximately 2,800 Currency Chests operated by scheduled banks. The RBI's decision follows similar initiatives by central banks and monetary authorities in other countries, including Austria, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, and the United States.

Banks to play key role in 'Viksit Bharat' drive: FM



NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the banking sector will have to play a crucial role in driving the agenda of making India a developed nation or Viksit Bharat by 2047.

The minister was speaking at an event here to mark the 90th Foundation Day of the Bank of Maharashtra, a public sector lender. She said the vision of a Viksit Bharat by 2047 has key pillars of economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance.

"Banks will have to play a crucial role in driving the agenda set by the vision of the Prime Minister and by your role, we are going to give greater momentum to achieving this dream," she said.

The vision of Viksit Bharat, Sitharaman added, envisages providing strong momentum in infrastructure; ensuring availability of need-based funding to MSMEs; bringing the unbanked population under the ambit of formal banking channels; and providing insurance net to all citizens.

FM launches NPS Vatsalya; parents can open pension a/c for children

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday launched the NPS Vatsalya scheme, which will allow parents to save for their children's future by investing in a pension account.

Parents can subscribe to NPS Vatsalya online or visiting a bank or post office. The minimum contribution to open Vatsalya account is Rs 1,000. Subscribers will have to contribute Rs 1,000 annually thereafter. The guidelines for withdrawal from NPS accounts are being finalised.

Launching the scheme, Sitharaman said NPS has generated very competitive returns and offers the option to people to save while ensuring future income.

NPS Vatsalya is an extension of the already existing NPS to children. In the last 10 years, NPS has 1.86 crore subscribers with an Asset Under Management (AUM) of Rs



13 lakh crore.

Children below the age of 18 years can open NPS Vatsalya account, which will automatically get converted to regular NPS account on completion of 18 years of age. Pension will come from the account only upon attainment of 60 years of age.

NPS has generated 14 per cent, 9.1 per cent, and 8.8 per cent returns for investments in equity, corporate debt and G-Secs, respectively, Sitharaman said. NPS Vatsalya was announced in the FY25 Budget presented in July.

Many lenders, including ICICI Bank and Axis Bank, have joined hands with the PFRDA to launch National Pension Scheme (NPS) - Vatsalya.

"India will continue to grow at fast pace"

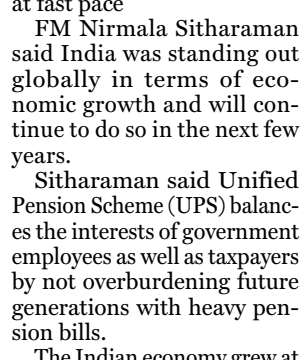
FM Nirmala Sitharaman said India was standing out globally in terms of economic growth and will continue to do so in the next few years.

Sitharaman said Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) balances the interests of government employees as well as taxpayers by not overburdening future generations with heavy pension bills.

The Indian economy grew at 8.2 per cent in 2023-24. The Economic Survey 2023-24 tabled in Parliament in July projected the economy to clock 6.5-7 per cent growth this fiscal year.

"We are much better off than many other countries, even if they are advanced countries, today they are struggling to grow..." she said.

Sensex trades higher on positive global cues



MUMBAI: Indian equity indices opened in green on Friday following positive cues from Asian and US markets.

At 9.46 a.m., Sensex was up 82 points or 0.10 per cent at 83,267 and Nifty was up 40 points or 0.16 per cent at 25,455.

Buying was also seen in the midcap and smallcap stocks. Nifty midcap 100 index was up 313 points or 0.53 per cent at 59,665 and Nifty smallcap 100 index was up 137 points or 0.72 per cent at 19,282.

Almost all sectoral indices were trading in the green. Auto, PSU Bank, fin service, FMCG, metal, realty, energy and infra were major gainers.

In the Sensex, JSW Steel, Tata Steel, M&P, Maruti Suzuki, Bharti Airtel, I&P, Nestle, Reliance, Bajaj Finserv, HUL, Sun Pharma, SBI and Kotak Mahindra Bank were top gainers. Titan, Axis Bank, Tata Motors, NTPC, Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, TCS and Ultra-Tech Cement were top losers.

Hardik Matalia, Derivative Analyst at Hardik Matalia said, "After a positive opening, Nifty

can find support at 25,350 followed by 25,300 and 25,250. On the higher side, 25,500 can be an immediate resistance, followed by 25,600 and 25,650."

Most of the markets in Asia are bullish. The markets of Tokyo, Hong Kong, Seoul and Bangkok are in the green. The markets of Shanghai and Jakarta are trading in the red. US markets closed in the green on Thursday.

The yen remained volatile ahead of a Bank of Japan monetary policy decision, as traders anticipated clues about potential tightening. Japan's consumer price index inflation rose as expected in August, reflecting increased consumption driven by higher wages. This reading came just before the Bank of Japan's meeting later that day.

The foreign institutional investors (FIIs) turned net sellers as they sold equities worth Rs 2,547 crore on September 19, while domestic institutional investors extended their buying as they bought equities worth Rs 2,012 crore on the same day.

Indian Bank Raises Rs 5,000 Crore through Long-Term Infrastructure Bonds

NEW DELHI: In a significant financial move, state-run Indian Bank successfully raised Rs 5,000 crore through the issuance of long-term infrastructure bonds.

The private placement saw an overwhelming response, attracting a total of 88 bids amounting to Rs 13,680 crore—2.74 times the issue size.

The bank initially set a base issue of Rs 2,000 crore with a greenshoe option to retain an oversubscription of up to Rs 3,000 crore, leading to a total issue size of Rs 5,000 crore.

The bids were accepted at a coupon rate of 7.24 per cent per annum, a competitive rate given the prevailing market conditions. The issuance highlights strong market confidence in the bank's creditworthiness, especially as the bonds have been rated AAA with a stable outlook by both CRISIL and CARE. The bonds, which have a fixed maturity period of 10 years, are senior, rated, listed, unsecured, redeemable, long-term, fully paid-up non-convertible bonds.

They are exempt from regulatory requirements such as main-



taining the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) and Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), which makes them an attractive investment tool for financing infrastructure projects. The funds raised will be strategically used by Indian Bank to support its credit growth and refinancing of infrastructure

projects—a key focus area in India's economic development. Given the bank's established history and stable performance, the market's strong response underscores investor confidence in the bank's future direction and the nation's growing infrastructure demands.

The allotment of these bonds took place on Friday, and the issuance marks another step in Indian Bank's commitment to mobilising resources efficiently to fuel India's infrastructure sector, essential for the nation's long-term growth trajectory.

Indian Economy-A constant struggle between Liberalization & Welfare State



DR. P S VOHRA

In India, the private sector has never been given a monopoly in economic policies. Since independence, economic policies have remained under government patronage. However, the economic growth figures testify that the economic policies made, nurtured and increased under the patronage of the government, which is called the facade of socialism or the idea of creating a welfare state, gave a slow growth to the economic development of the country for a long time, while the need was for rapid economic growth. That is why we lagged behind developed countries in terms of economic development.

These days there is opposition to the economic policies of capitalism in America and there is a demand that the economy should now turn from capitalism to socialism. Since then, the discussion has started in all the major economies of the world that they also have to adopt a change or it is still delayed. In India, too, it has been heard loudly for some time that the number of capitalists in the country is increasing while poverty is not decreasing. This is not a surprise, but the result of the economic disparity created by capitalist economic policies. The opposition to capitalism in society is also justified by the fact that almost everywhere governments hand over the reins of economic development entirely to the private



sector and sometimes even protect them in spite of their mistakes. And it's all too common in America. There, usually big companies are bailed out by the government, as seen in the case of GM Motors, Citi Bank, etc. In 2005-06, everyone saw the American recession due to the wrong policies of the private sector. But here it is also necessary to think whether through socialism the economic development can be given the same speed which is given by the policies of capitalism? Perhaps not.

During the three decades from 1960 to 1990, average per capita income growth in India was only 1.6 per cent under government patronage of economic policies. Since 1990, it has been 3.6 percent. At the same time, the period from 2005 to 2010 was a period of rapid growth due to economic reforms, so the growth rate was 4.3 percent and since 2010, the per capita growth rate touched its maximum level of 4.9 percent due to the rapidly emerging image of India at the global level. It is pertinent to mention here that since 1991, liberalization was incorporated in Indian economic policies and government control continued

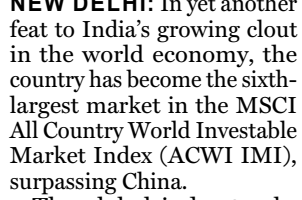
of personal income tax was around Rs 10.22 lakh crore, which was 3.45 per cent of GDP. Does this mean that Indian companies are making less profit and paying less tax? That's a wrong concept. According to the latest data, the pre-tax profits of about 35,000 Indian companies have increased by about 144 per cent in the last five years. In addition, the profits of 5,000 companies listed on the stock market have increased by 186 per cent in the last five years, while the tax paid by them has increased by 35 per cent. Due to this continuing shortfall in corporate tax collections, it has fallen from 3.51 per cent of GDP to 3.11 per cent in the last 5 years. At the same time, the collection of personal tax has increased from 2.44 percent to 3.45 percent. The situation can also be explained with the conclusion that during the economic reforms of 1991, the tax rate on companies was 45 per cent, which has been reduced to just half at present. However, the main reason behind this reduction is to bring the products of Indian companies at a competitive price in the global market. Whereas in the public mind, companies have to be protected more and because of this, governments always have a soft attitude towards companies. However, the general perception is that companies are excessively protected, and this softer stance by the government towards companies prompts the public to once again turn towards socialism in their view of economic development.

In the context of India, it is essential to consider any

changes in economic policies under the umbrella of democracy. The truth is that India has never fully adopted the model of capitalism. It has always tried to maintain the image of a welfare state. This aspect has led to significant contradictions in current policies, leaving the public unsure whether welfare state policies are for their development or just a means to entice them. Some see it as economic policies made for social and public welfare by the government, while others refer to it as mere giveaways. Consequently, many statistics indicate that due to the image of a welfare state, the rapidly increasing fiscal deficit and the growing financial debt of states on the center, along with their total dependency on the central government, point towards their economic decline. So, should governments do nothing for the welfare state? In this context, it is also necessary to mention the pension policies for government employees. In the last 24 years, a second new pension policy for government employees has been introduced, showing the government's responsibility towards its employees and their families. On the other hand, why have governments not yet been able to similarly encourage the private sector? This remains a question that persists among the public, reinforcing the belief in the welfare state model for their economic development.

Dr P S Vohra is Writer, columnist and financial thinker. View are personal

India becomes 6th largest market in global MSCI IMI index, surpasses China



NEW DELHI: In yet another feat to India's growing clout in the world economy, the country has become the sixth-largest market in the MSCI All Country World Investable Market Index (ACWI IMI), surpassing China.

The global index tracks capital market performance across the world. The index includes large- and mid-cap stocks and is a more inclusive version of the widely tracked MSCI ACWI Index.

India's weight in the MSCI ACWI IMI stood at 2.35 per cent in August, 11 basis points higher than China's 2.24 per cent. India trails France marginally, by just three basis points. China's weight has

fallen by half since peaking in early 2021, while India's weight has more than doubled during this period.

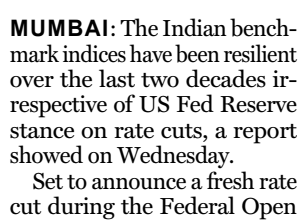
Earlier this month, strong fundamentals helped India pip China in the MSCI Emerging Market (EM) IMI to become the largest weight. The MSCI Emerging Markets IMI captures large, mid and small cap representation across 24 Emerging Markets (EM) countries.

India's new position as the top emerging market in the MSCI EM IMI, along with the sixth-largest weight in the MSCI ACWI IMI, highlights the country's growing prominence on the world investment map. There is financial stability and the growth momentum in the economy continues to be strong.

Other reasons include a high growth rate, stable government, reduction in inflation and financial discipline by the government.

As per a note by global brokerage Morgan Stanley, "India will continue to gain share due to market outperformance, new issuance, and liquidity improvements".

Indian markets resilient over last 2 decades after US Fed rate cuts



MUMBAI: The Indian benchmark indices have been resilient over the last two decades irrespective of US Fed Reserve stance on rate cuts, a report showed on Wednesday.

Set to announce a fresh rate cut during the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting, US Fed has had six alternating easing and tightening cycles over the last 34 years.

For Indian markets, the most productive cycle was the US Fed's easing cycle from July 1990 to February 1994 where Nifty witnessed a gain of 310 per cent, followed by the tightening cycle in June 2004 to September 2007 where it witnessed a gain

-0.2 per cent. Nifty has outpaced or, at worst, matched the S&P500 in local currency terms over the last two decades.

According to Anoop Vijaykumar, Investments and Head of Research at Capitalmind, of the 78 US Fed announcements in the last 34 years, Nifty has witnessed a positive change on 50 accounts on the following trading day of the announcement. The year 1995 was the only calendar year to witness both rate increases and decreases by the US Fed. "Since the global financial crisis (GFC) in 2008, rates have been perennially low until 2016, when the Fed started raising rates after years of Quantitative Easing.

INTERNATIONAL

Bangladesh army gets magisterial powers to improve law, order

Bangladesh's interim government has granted magisterial powers to the army for two months to improve law and order in the violence-hit country and prevent "subversive acts".

The Ministry of Public Administration issued a notification on the government's decision on Tuesday, saying it will be applicable with immediate effect. The powers will be given to commissioned officers of the Army. The order will remain in force for the next 60 days.

Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Md Jahangir Alam Chowdhury said on Wednesday that the people will get the benefit of bestowing magistracy power upon the army, state-owned BSS news agency reported.

"Police officials who are yet to join the services, won't be allowed to join anymore," he said, adding that the "people of Bangla (Bangladesh) will reap the benefit of bestowing the magistracy power upon the commissioned officers of



Bangladesh Army.

Responding to questions from the media after the closing ceremony of the basic training for 40th BCS (Ansar) officers and 25th batch sepoy recruits at the Bangladesh Ansar and VDP Academy in Safipur, Chowdhury said, "The Army has been given the magistracy power to ensure public service and maintain the law and order."

He said the law enforcement agencies lack manpower and the magistracy power has been given to the Army to fill up the

gap. "Bangladesh Army is a disciplined and people-friendly force. The commoners have no problem communicating with them as well as taking help from them," he said in response to another question.

Section 17 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, or CrPC, which awards Army officers the status of special executive magistrates, says these officers shall be subordinate to the district magistrates, or deputy commissioners, bdnews24.com reported.

This authority including ar-

rest and dispersal of unlawful rallies has been conferred upon commissioned officers of the Army. In self-defence and extreme need, the officer can open fire, said an adviser to the interim government on Tuesday, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

"We are witnessing subversive acts and disrupted stability in several places, especially in the industrial areas across the country. Given the situation, Army personnel have been given magistracy power," Law Adviser Asif Nazrul said. He said he believed the army personnel would not misuse this authority.

Another adviser, requesting anonymity, said, "Police are yet to be properly functional. Subversive activities are taking place..."

Australian population passes 27 million

CANBERRA: Australia's population has officially surpassed 27 million people, with migration primarily driving growth.

Official data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on Thursday revealed that the Australian population was 27.12 million at the end of March 2024, Xinhua news agency reported.

The population grew by 615,300 people - or 2.3 per cent - in the 12 months to the end of March.

"Net overseas migration drove 83 per cent of this population growth, while births and deaths, known as natural increase, made up the other 17 per cent," Beidar Cho, head of demography at the ABS, said in a statement.

Net overseas migration, which is calculated by subtracting overseas departures from overseas arrivals, was 509,800 people in the year to March - down from a record high of 559,900 in the 12 months to September 2023.

Natural increase added 105,500 people to Australia's population in the year to



March, with 289,700 births and 184,200 deaths registered in that period.

The state New South Wales (NSW) remains the most populous of Australia's eight states and territories, with 8.46 million people - 31.1 per cent of the national population - at the end of March.

The east coast states of NSW, Victoria and Queensland account for 77.3 per cent of the Australian population.

Western Australia recorded the fastest-growing population, up 3.1 per cent in the 12 months to March, while the island state of Tasmania had the lowest growth at 0.4 per cent.

Illustrating policy ambivalence, Trump now says he will 'get along with China'



NEW YORK: Former US President Donald Trump has said that he will "get along well with China" and did not think that nations and others like Russia are the "enemies" that President Biden's administration considers them.

"I think we'll get along great with China," the Republican presidential candidate said on Monday during an online interview on X Spaces that again brought out his foreign policy ambivalence and his mercurial approach to policy.

The claim was in contrast to his threats to impose tariffs of 60 per cent or more on imports from China during his current campaign.

While he was President, he had accused China of "malfeasance" in causing the spread of Covid-19 and said that it had "raided our factories, offshored our jobs, gutted our industries, stole our intellectual property".

Trying to grab the mantle of a peacemaker in his current phase, he also said, "I think we'll get along great with Russia. I want to get Russia to settle up with Ukraine and stop this millions of people being killed."

He repeated his earlier assertion that he wanted bring the Ukraine war to an end "before I even take office, I want to get that done as President-elect".

Trump's interview was during the launch of a cryptocurrency enterprise mostly owned by his family, World Liberty Financial.

His son 18-year-old Barron, who started college this semester and has so far stayed away from the spotlight, is involved in the business and Trump praised his knowledge of cryptocurrency. Trump said that he would make the US the "cryptocurrency capital of the world" and that if the US didn't act, China would dominate the field.

Trump promoting it during the election campaign is another example of him mixing politics and business, and if elected could create a conflict.

A virulent critic of Biden, on Monday, he took a conciliatory attitude to him during the interview. "He was very nice, that he called up to make sure that I was OK," Trump said.

Biden also asked him about the security measures and if "we need more people on my detail," he added.

No one is even trying to assassinate Biden/Kamala: Musk on Trump attack



FLORIDA: Elon Musk made a controversial statement saying why "no assassination attempts were being made on US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris". Trump on Sunday (local time) faced the second assassination attempt after gunshots were fired outside a golf course in Florida where he was playing. He was the target of an alleged assassination attempt in Florida, the FBI said, with the Republican presidential candidate's campaign and law enforcement reporting he was safe and unharmed.

Responding to a question from an X user, "Why they want to kill Donald Trump?", the Tesla CEO wrote: "And no one is even trying to assassinate Biden/Kamala." The Tesla and SpaceX chief is a Trump supporter and has often been writing posts in his favour. The US Secret Service confirmed one or more of its agents "opened fire on a gunman" located near the boundary of Trump's golf course, and that an "AK-47 style rifle" was recovered along with a video camera.

UNGA calls for end to Israeli occupation in Palestine within a year

UNITED NATIONS: The UN General Assembly (UNGA) has passed a non-binding resolution demanding an end to Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory within the next 12 months by an overwhelming margin.

The resolution was adopted on Wednesday with 124 votes in favour, 14 against and 43 abstentions, during the UNGA's 10th emergency special session considering Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Xinhua news agency reported. The resolution demanding that Israel comply with all its legal obligations under international law, including advisory opinions by the International Court of Justice, was introduced by the



State of Palestine on Tuesday and was co-sponsored by more than two dozen nations.

By the newly adopted resolution, the UNGA "demands that Israel brings to an end without delay its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

which constitutes a wrongful act of a continuing character entailing its international responsibility and do so no later than 12 months from the adoption of the present resolution".

The UNGA also demands that Israel comply without delay with

all its legal obligations under international law, including as stipulated by the International Court of Justice. In remarks before the vote, Mohamed Issa Abushabab, the permanent representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, said the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza must be addressed through unimpeded access to those in need, a ceasefire deal and the full implementation of all related Security Council resolutions.

A credible peace process must be relaunched to work towards a two-State solution to diffuse this conflict, he said, expressing support for the State of Palestine's full statehood and UN membership. "The time has come to end the suffering," he noted.

Will meet fantastic man PM Modi during his US visit, says Trump

NEW YORK: Former President Donald Trump has said he will meet "fantastic man" Prime Minister Narendra Modi next week when he visits the US.

"He happens to be coming to meet me next week, and Modi, he's fantastic. I mean, fantastic, man," Trump said on Tuesday at a town hall meeting in Flint, Michigan.

PM Modi will be in the US from Saturday to Monday, according to the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Ministry's programme listed only PM Modi's participation in the Quad Summit in Delaware on Saturday, his speech to the Indian diaspora on Long Island on Sunday, and his address to the United Nations Summit of the Future on Monday.

It did not mention meeting with Trump but said, "On the sidelines of the Summit, the Prime Minister would be holding bilateral meetings with several world leaders and discuss issues of mutual interest."

Trump's campaign calendar shows him in North Carolina on Saturday and in Pennsylvania on Monday evening, with nothing pencilled in for Sunday.

The former president mentioned the meeting with PM Modi while talking about trade



imbalances and how he would hike duties on imports from India through a Trump Reciprocal Tax Act.

He called India "a very big abuser" of the tariffs system because of the high duties it imposes on some imports from the US and said New Delhi "is very tough" in negotiations. "If anybody charges us 10 cents, if they charge us \$2, if they charge us 100 per cent 250, we charge them the same," he said.

Listing India among them, he said that countries the US was trading with are "the sharpest people. They're not a little bit backward... they're at the top of their game, and they use it against us".

He added, "China is the toughest of all, but we were taking care of China with the tariffs, so we're going to do a reciprocal trade."

While in office Trump tangled with India over tariffs, putting a spotlight on the duties on Harley-Davidson motorcycles and whiskey.

Resolution Life appoints Moses Ojeisekhoba as President

FW DESK Hamilton (Bermuda)

Resolution Life, a global life insurance group focusing on the acquisition and management of portfolios of life insurance policies, today announces that it has appointed Moses Ojeisekhoba as President with effect from October 1, 2024 to deliver the next phase of the Company's growth plans, working closely with Sir Clive Cowdery, the Founder, Chairman and CEO. Moses is expected to succeed Clive Cowdery as CEO during 2026



with Clive remaining Executive Chairman of Resolution Life.

Moses is an accomplished insurance executive with over 30 years' experience in the sector. He joins from Swiss Re where he spent over 12 years in multiple senior executive

positions. He was most recently CEO Global Clients & Solutions where amongst other things, he was responsible for managing relationships with some of Swiss Re's key clients. Before this, he served as CEO Reinsurance and was instrumental in developing this division into its strong industry position today. Prior to this, he was CEO Reinsurance Asia and Regional President Asia and significantly grew its business in this region.

Prior to his roles at Swiss Re, Moses held a number of senior leadership positions

at Chubb Group and Unico American Corporation. He is a member of the Board of Directors of Jones Lang LaSalle Incorporated (JLL) and holds a master's degree in Management from the London Business School and a Bachelor of Science in Statistics from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Moses will be responsible for the leadership of the commercial, market-facing division of Resolution Life and will drive the strategy, growth, profitability, and value creation of the business.

SCO's Summit in Islamabad

Faces Dark Shadows of Islamists in Dacca, Conflict Within Army

GOPAL MISRA The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a 23-year old joint Sino-Russian outfit, has recently been witnessing a decline in its influence or effectiveness, especially due to India's recent cool responses towards it.

The Indian apathy can be traced to the myopic policies of Beijing and its ally, Pakistan. Interestingly, the attitude of China towards India has continued less than friendly during the past ten years of the Modi regime despite being benefited by more than 1100 billion USD by accessing India's vast consumer market without any hindrance.

On the insistence of the Chinese President Xi Jinping India had reluctantly joined the SCO in 2017. Encouraged by this proximity between Beijing and New Delhi, the Russian President Vladimir Putin asked for a strategic alliance among the three countries Russia, India and China (RIC), but China foolishly torpedoed the emerging close ties among them by attacking the Indian border posts at the Galwan Valley in the Eastern Ladakh.

During the past four years, Chinese diplomacy has been active against India from Mal-

dives to Bangladesh. On her part, India has been trying to keep the Dragon in good humor by allowing liberal imports even at the cost of her own industry. It cannot be denied that the demonetization in 2016 had further boosted Chinese imports. Most of the industries in the small sector producing cheaper consumer products had either been shut down or were getting their products manufactured in mainland China.

Therefore, the Indian reservations regarding the personal presence of Modi at the SCO summit scheduled on October 15-16 in Islamabad is natural.

It is high time that both China and Pakistan have to realize that conspiracy and co-operation cannot go together.

Sharif Under Pressure of GHQ

In recent months, the increased activities of terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir and the takeover of Bangladesh by Muslim radicals are a part of a larger conspiracy against India. Their aggressive tone against India's secular polity was much pronounced at the death anniversary programme of Mohammad Ali Jinnah held in Dacca recently.

The recent events in Pakistan indicate that the army and its hybrid government led by Shahbaz Sharif is facing its existential crisis being under pressure from the army to enact laws, including some



constitutional amendments, to limit the powers of the judiciary.

As a part of its agenda to crush the country's main Opposition represented by the former prime minister Imran Khan. Khan's supporters in the army like Faize Hamid are facing court martial.

The survival of the hybrid government of Shahbaz Sharif in Islamabad would depend on how efficiently he could script the epitaph of Pakistan's fragile democracy.

Dark Shadows on SCO

Both China and Russia are aware of the importance of the presence of Modi in the SCO summit, an alliance comprising most of the countries of South Asia and Eurasia.

The Dragon has waved an olive branch during the brief talks held in Moscow recently between India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Yi has also announced that his country is going to retreat its border

forces a few hundred meters in Eastern Ladakh, where since 2020, the Chinese and Indian forces are in combat gear after the Galwan clashes in the high Himalayas.

It is for the Mandarins of the South Block, which houses India's External Affairs Ministry, that how much they could trust China.

It may be recalled that the SCO, which was just a group comprising Russia, China and some Eurasian countries, gained credibility with India's joining in 2017. Later, with the Chinese attack on the Indian defence posts in the Galwan Valley of the Eastern Ladakh, India's enthusiasm for the SCO has weakened.

In spite of the crucial meeting held on September 11 between Doval and Yi, the presence of the full Indian contingent in Islamabad is to be finalized by New Delhi.

In spite of the trust deficit between India and China, Yi's assurance to Doval has received positive media response in the Indian media.

India's Reluctance

The Indian hesitation regarding her strong presence in the summit could also be traced to the joint mischief of China and Pakistan in Maldives and Dacca. They have successfully got their protege installed in the two countries.

Their most successful strategy was in Bangladesh, where they ousted the PM Sheikh Hasina with the help of the army and the Islamists.

It is intriguing why the US intelligence agency, CIA has suddenly become a collaborator with China and Pakistan. During late sixties and seventies even before the visit of the then US President Richard Nixon to Beijing CIA agents were working with Pakistan and China for fanning insurgency in India's north-eastern region.

Remembering Jinnah

The Islamists, having the support of the CIA, China and Pakistan have succeeded in installing a military government in Dacca with a civilian face. Bangladesh is under the control of the army without the declaration of martial law.

Their success in Bangladesh could be judged by the fact that for the first time since India's partition in 1947, the death of the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah was never mourned publicly. During the period, 1947 to 1971, even during the repressive regime of the then

Pakistani military, Jinnah's death anniversary was never observed.

The remembrance was observed at the Dacca Press Club recently, where the programme was conducted in Urdu.

The speakers were seen vying with each other in praising Jinnah for promoting the twonation theory that the Hindus and Muslims are two different nations. The programme was presided over by Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner, Kamaran Dhangal.

With the unbridled power being enjoyed by the establishment, an euphemism for the army in Pakistan, the internal conflicts have increased in recent months. There is a growing realization that by separating from secular India, a historical blunder has been committed. Instead of correcting the mistake the establishment has unleashed Islamists within the country and the region that too with active cooperation of two world powers, the US and China.

It will be quite embarrassing for the Indian leadership to sit with the country's enemies on the high table in Islamabad at the SCO.

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

Italian PM Meloni, top diplomats and politicians greet PM Modi on his 74th birthday

NEW DELHI: Several world leaders, diplomats and people from all walks of life, greeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 74th birthday on Tuesday.

"Happy birthday to the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi. I am sure that we will continue to strengthen our friendship and collaboration between Italy and India, to face together the global challenges that await us," Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister of Italy, posted on X.

In his birthday greetings, Australia's High Commissioner to India, Philip Green highlighted strong bilateral relations and India-Australia 'dosti' (friendship).

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, many happy wishes to you on your birthday! We wish you good health. I am confident that under your leadership the Australia-India partnership will reach new heights. Happy Birthday PM Modi, Australia-India Dosti," he posted on social media.

Russia's Ambassador to India, Denis Alipov called PM Modi a "true friend of Russia" in his birthday wishes.

"On the auspicious occasion of his 74th birthday, our heartfelt greetings and best wishes for good health, long life and success of the honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a true friend of Russia and a staunch supporter of our countries' privileged strategic partnership!"



wrote Alipov. Earlier in the day, several top politicians of the country also extended their wishes to PM Modi on his birthday.

"I extend my heartfelt wishes to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on his birthday. May he be blessed with good health, strength, and wisdom to continue leading our nation towards progress and prosperity," said Telangana Chief Minister A Revanah Reddy.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, N Chandrababu Naidu too sent his wishes to PM Modi.

"I pray for his good health and long life in service to the nation. May our nation continue to prosper under his visionary leadership," said CM Naidu, whose TDP is a key partner in the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan also conveyed heartfelt birthday wishes to PM Modi, calling him an "inspirational world leader, selfless Karmayogi, and architect of modern India".

The Jana Sena leader prayed for the Prime Minister's good health, long life, and continued strength.

Alia-Diljit's 'Chal Kudiye' is a power packed track for every woman



MUMBAI: Actress Alia Bhatt has shared the much-anticipated track 'Chal Kudiye' from her upcoming action thriller film 'Jigra'.

On Tuesday, Alia took to her photo-sharing platform Instagram and shared the first track from the film featuring actor-singer Diljit Dosanjh and herself. Alia also captioned the

starts with 'Chal Kudiye, Uth Kudiye'. The vibrant track features Alia in a black oversized t-shirt with a print of one iconic shot from the film as 'Ghar' showing the bond of the sister with her brother. Meanwhile, Diljit appeared in complete white attire. After a while Alia joins in the next stanza of the song in her soothing voice that completely delves with the energy of the song. The video song has a duration of 2 minutes and 58 seconds and has been beautifully sung by Alia Bhatt and Diljit Dosanjh in their calming voice, and beautifully penned by renowned poet and lyricist Harmanjeet Singh. The song is available on Saregama Music's YouTube channel. For the unversed, Alia Bhatt and Diljit mark their second collaboration with 'Chal Kudiye' as they previously sang together 'Ikki Kudi' from the 2016 film 'Uda Punjab' helmed by di-

Priyanka Chopra celebrates treasured gift given by Anushka Sharma

MUMBAI: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who is currently shooting for the second season of her streaming show 'Citadel', received a special gift from actress Anushka Sharma. Priyanka took to the Stories section of her Instagram on Wednesday, and shared a picture of herself donning a Chacha Chaudhary t-shirt gifted to her by the 'Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi' actress. She wrote on the picture, "Still love my @chachachaudhary_official t-shirt. Thx @anushkasharma". Chacha Chaudhary is an Indian comic book series. The titular character is a middle class Indian, frail but an extremely intelligent elder. The word chacha means uncle in Hindi, while Chaudhary is a term used for landlords. A common saying about him is that Chacha Chaudhary's brain runs faster than a computer,



which is a testament to his unparalleled wisdom and wits. Recently, Priyanka shared her nostalgic moments on her husband singer Nick Jonas' birthday as he performed in London, United Kingdom. The actress shared some pictures with Nick and their daughter as she enjoyed one of her best nights in London. Meanwhile, on the work front, Priyanka is shooting for the second season of the Richard Madden-starrer 'Citadel' helmed by Joe Russo and Anthony Russo of Russo brothers. 'Citadel' is an American spy action television series created by Josh Appelbaum, Bryan Oh, and David Weil for Prime Video, with the Russo brothers acting as executive producers. In the show Richard Madden essays the role of Mason Kane, and Priyanka plays Nadia Sinh. As per the show's narrative, Kane, a spy for Citadel, discovers a new organisation, Manticore, led by Dahlia (Lesley Manville), leading to a bad accident.

Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia to make Punjabi film debut opposite Guru Randhawa



MUMBAI: Actress Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia is all set to make her Punjabi film debut in the movie christened 'Shaunki Sardar' opposite sensation Guru Randhawa. Speaking about her debut, Nimrit said: "It's an absolute honour to make my debut in a Punjabi film, especially alongside Guru Randhawa, who is such an icon in the industry. She added that the film celebrates the culture and spirit of Punjab. 'Shaunki Sardar' is a beautiful story that celebrates the rich culture and spirit of Punjab, and I couldn't have asked for a better project to begin this journey. I'm incredibly excited for my fans to see me in this new avatar!" The film, produced under Guru Randhawa's own banner 751 Films and directed by Dheeraj Kedar Nath, promises to be a heartwarming and entertaining treat for the fans. In other news, Nimrit, who performed death defying stunts in the show 'Khatron Ke Khiladi', recently shared that she had to undergo physiotherapy for muscle pulls and to alleviate the physical pains that she still feels.

Talking about her experience, Nimrit shared: "Participating in Khatron Ke Khiladi has been one of the most exhilarating and intense experiences of my life. I was so engrossed in doing these stunts, pushing myself beyond my limits, that I didn't realise how exhausted I was." "I had to undergo physiotherapy for muscle pulls and to alleviate the physical pains that I still feel. But despite the challenges, I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. It taught me resilience, courage, and the importance of mind over matter." Nimrit said that she is grateful for every moment in the Rohit Shetty-hosted show and hopes her journey inspires others to face their fears head-on.

Shraddha Kapoor channels Sridevi's elegance in her latest photoshoot

MUMBAI: Actress Shraddha Kapoor took to her social media handle and shared pictures from her latest photoshoot as she channelled legendary actor late Sridevi.

shoot, I think of the grace with which she came within all her performances. Yeh, apke liye," she captioned the pictures with a heart emoji. The 37-year-old actress also added a song titled 'Naa Jaane Kahan Se' from Sridevi's 1998 film 'Chaalbaaz' sung by Kavita Krishnamurthy and Amit Kumar. In the pictures, Shraddha was seen happily posing in an elegant Indo-western attire. In the second picture, the 'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkar' fame



actor donned an off-shoulder white dress that made her awe-inspiring. In the third and fourth, the

actress shifted her gears towards the traditional outfits that can take anyone's breath away. Shraddha posed confidently in a cream-coloured saree with a touch of silver glitter. In the last snapshot, Shraddha smiled for the camera in a silver coloured traditional outfit that made her spectacular. Shraddha's post has received immense love and appreciation from her die-hard admirers and fans all around.

Kareena Kapoor on 25 years in Bollywood, working with Saif, Taimur's fame



MUMBAI: Actor Kareena Kapoor Khan has said she wants to once again share the screen space with husband Saif Ali Khan and hopes that an opportunity to collaborate will come her way soon. The 43-year-old actor said she is looking forward to Saif's Telugu debut "Devara: Part 1", which is set to be released in theatres on September 27. "I would love to work with him right now. He's also going to taste blood because he's coming for the first time in a Telugu film that's releasing next week. So I think that people are really excited, so I would love to do something with him soon, hopefully," Kareena told reporters on Wednesday night. She was speaking at a press event ahead of a film festival that will celebrate 25 years of her career. At the event, Kareena officially announced the festival, titled "PVRINOX celebrates 25 Years of Kareena Kapoor Khan Festival", at PVR INOX Lido Cinema here. The week-long film festival will run in over 30 cinemas halls in 15 cities from September 20 to September 27. Kareena, who first worked with Saif on JP Dutta's war drama "LOC Kargil", followed by hits like "Omkaara", "Tashan", "Kurbaan" and "Agent Vinod", said he was extremely happy when he heard about the festival. "When I told him about this, he was very excited. So he wants to watch 'Omkaara' and 'Ashoka' for sure," she added.

event ahead of a film festival that will celebrate 25 years of her career. At the event, Kareena officially announced the festival, titled "PVRINOX celebrates 25 Years of Kareena Kapoor Khan Festival", at PVR INOX Lido Cinema here. The week-long film festival will run in over 30 cinemas halls in 15 cities from September 20 to September 27. Kareena, who first worked with Saif on JP Dutta's war drama "LOC Kargil", followed by hits like "Omkaara", "Tashan", "Kurbaan" and "Agent Vinod", said he was extremely happy when he heard about the festival. "When I told him about this, he was very excited. So he wants to watch 'Omkaara' and 'Ashoka' for sure," she added.

Farmers' Voice: Will It Remain Unheard forever?



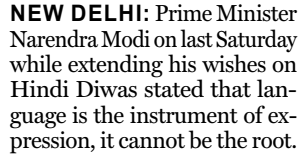
JAG MOHAN THAKHEN why doesn't it implement its farmer schemes in Karnataka and Telangana, where the Congress is in power? How many crops do they buy at MSP in Karnataka and Telangana? All development work in Karnataka and Telangana has come to a standstill. Congress is a dishonest party." While giving the details of Union Cabinet decision about the approval in the increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for all mandated Kharif Crops for Marketing Season 2024-25, which was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a PIB release dated June 19, 2024, divulged that during the period 2003-04 to 2013-14 for 14 crops covered under Kharif Marketing Season, the minimum absolute increase in MSP was Rs.745/- per quintal for Bajra and maximum absolute increase was Rs.4,130/- per quintal for Moong while during the period 2013-14 to 2023-24, the minimum absolute increase in MSP was Rs.780/- per quintal for Maize and maximum absolute increase was Rs.4,234/- per quintal for Nigereed.



creased the price of paddy by 14%, which amounted to an annual increase of just 2.3%. In contrast, under the Manmohan Singh government, the MSP of paddy was increased by a total of 143%, or 14.3% annually. Since 2014, the Modi government has only raised paddy prices by 54.1%, equating to an annual increase of 6%. The former Union Minister said that between 1999 and 2004, the BJP Alliance government increased the MSP of wheat by just 10.3%, with an annual increase of 1.7%. However, during the Congress-led Manmohan Singh government, the MSP of wheat saw a 126% increase, or 12.7% annually. In comparison, the Modi government has increased it by only 39.3% in ten years, compared to the Congress's 126%. Kumari Selja further said that the Manmohan Singh government not only increased the MSP of rice and wheat but also raised the prices of all crops by 150-200%, or two and a half to three times. In contrast, the Modi government has barely increased MSP by 50%, while the cost of farming has increased several times during this period. Taxes have been imposed on farming-related goods and equipment. The former minister pointed out that the Congress government never imposed taxes on agriculture, while the Modi government reduced the weight of fertilizer bags from 50 kg to 40 kg and decreased the nitrogen content, leading to increased usage and expenses for farmers. Electricity prices for farmers have risen, and despite cheaper crude oil, diesel prices have not been reduced, further increasing the cost of farming. This shows that the BJP government has consistently conspired to empty the pockets of farmers, said Kumari Selja.

farmer friendly and agriculture and farmers welfare is his top priority, has some truth, then why despite unprecedented repression resorting to on farmers during the 13 months agitation in which 750 agitating farmers reportedly lost their lives, MSP guarantee is not being legalised as per farmers' demand? And why are the farmers opposing the BJP party in Haryana assembly elections? It is pertinent to mention here that the Haryana Sanyukta Kisan Morcha has decided to expose the anti-farmer and anti-people BJP rule during the forthcoming state assembly elections. In a meeting of the Morcha a review of the announcements about MSP made recently by Haryana Chief minister was undertaken and found that these were just election gimmicks to overcome the anger of farmers and other sections. The question still stands, "Have the farmers forgotten the repression resorting to on farmers during the 13 months agitation in which hundreds of agitating farmers lost their lives, as stated by SKM?" Answer comes in 'No'. Haryana and Punjab Farmers are still on agitation and a Maha panchayat at new grain market in Jind's Uchana Kallan, on September 15, 2024, held under the banner of Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (non-political) pressing for their demands of a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) on all crops. While addressing the congregation, farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal, as reported by Hindustan Times website, reminded, "As many as 833 farmers had sacrificed their lives in the farmers' protest in 2020-21 and 33 farmers died in the ongoing agitation. Our struggle is not to make MPs or MLAs but to protect the future of farmers and labourers. We ask you to vote against the party which has used batons on us," he added. Will someone listen to the screaming voice of the farmers? Or the painful voice, of the food giver to the country, will remain ignored and suppressed by political tricks and sticks? Why is the ruling party not heeding towards the resentment of the farmers? Is it not caring for the vote bank of this aggrieved strata? However, it is crystal clear that presently the winds blowing over the Haryana ground do not seem favourable for the BJP. Let us see which way the wind blows in the coming days.

PM Modi on Hindi Diwas highlights strength of 'Hindi Bhasha'



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on last Saturday while extending his wishes on Hindi Diwas stated that language is the instrument of expression, it cannot be the root. "The way there is consciousness in life, it lies in language as well," said PM Modi. Reflecting on his connection with the Hindi language, the Prime Minister said, "I sometimes think that if I did not understand Hindi language, Hindi, despite not being native speakers themselves. "In our country, the Hindi language movement was led by figures like Subhas Chandra Bose, Mahatma Gandhi, Lokmanya Tilak, Kakasaheb Kalelkar, and Rajagopalachari, whose mother tongue was not Hindi, yet they worked tirelessly for the protection, conservation, and promotion of the language. This gives us motivation," said PM Modi.

how would I have reached out to people or connected with them? I know the strength of the Hindi language personally." He also paid tributes to several prominent leaders who played a key role in promoting

Both the major parties of India- BJP as well Congress slam each other and claim itself the only well-wisher and the real protector of the farmers, but who is the real one, is the question that requires answer and analysis. Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan, on 14 September, said that the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is farmer friendly and agriculture and farmers welfare is his top priority. The Modi government has taken some big decisions in the interest of farmers. Chouhan said that farmer friendly Modi government has taken a decision to increase the import duty on edible oils from 0% to 20% and on adding other components, the total effective duty will be 27.5%. On September 14, 2024, while addressing a Haryana assembly election rally in Kurukshetra, a stronghold of farmers' movement, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, attacking the congress, alleged that it did not care for farmers, and 'extended false promises' and spread 'anarchy'. Reporting the version of PM Modi in Kurukshetra rally, 'The Hindu', an esteemed English daily posted on its web portal, "The Congress has never been bothered about the problems of the people. There is no other party in the country that is more dishonest and deceitful than the Congress. The Congress talks big for farmers, shows them big dreams. It's nothing but a lie. These people make so much noise about minimum support price (MSP), whereas it is in Haryana, where the BJP is in power, that 24 crops are purchased at MSP. I challenge, if Congress has the guts,

Why the Farmers not satisfied with the Government's MSP? The central government claims that while calculating the MSP, it considers all expenditures and includes all paid out costs such as those incurred on account of hired human labour, bullock labour/

machine labour, rent paid for leased in land, expenses incurred on use of material inputs like seeds, fertilizers, manures, irrigation charges, depreciation on implements and farm buildings, interest on working capital, diesel/ electricity for operation of pump sets etc., miscellaneous expenses and imputed value of family labour. Farmers say that the government sets MSP at 1.5 times the Cost of Production (CoP), where Cop is A2+FL. The Swaminathan Commission, however, suggests that CoP should be based on C2, proposing the 'C2+50 per cent' formula for setting MSP. The commission recommended that the MSP should be 1.5 times the farmers' input costs. For the calculation of input costs, however, the Swaminathan Commission laid down a different formula. Along with the paid-out cost (A2) and the imputed value of family labour (FL), also included the interest on the value of owned capital assets, rent paid for leased-in land, or the rental value of owned land (C2). Sanyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella body of farmers' unions says that the Haryana Chief Minister had attempted to misguide the farmers by falsely claiming MSP for 24 crops consciously hiding the fact that the procurement rate is not based on C2+50% but on the current rate of A2+FL+50%. How does a loss occur to the farmers due to A2+FL+50%? The SKM calculates that the C2+50% rate of paddy, one of the major crops of Haryana, is Rs.3012/qntl while the current rate (as per A2+FL+50%) is Rs. 2300/qntl, means less by Rs.712/qntl. Paddy farmers alone in Haryana had a loss of Rs.3851.90 crore in the year 2023-24. If we rely on the calculations by SKM as per C2+50% formula, we can assess how a huge loss is being burdened on the farmers. Now question arises—if the BJP government is so anxious about the farmers' interests and the claim of the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan, that "The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is

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