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DELHI HC SETS ASIDE CHARGES FRAMED AGAINST MOTHER FOR FAILURE TO REPORT POCSO OFFENCES COMMITTED ON DAUGHTER

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INDIA CAN SUSTAIN 8 PER CENT GROWTH OVER MEDIUM TERM: RBI GOVERNOR

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PRIYANKA CHOPRA CELEBRATES TREASURED GIFT GIVEN BY ANUSHKA SHARMA

Atishi to be sworn in as Delhi Chief Minister today

NEW DELHI: AAP leader Atishi is set to take oath as Delhi's sixth Chief Minister on Saturday.

Lt Governor V.K. Saxena is slated to administer the oath to Atishi and her Council of Ministers at the Raj Niwas at 4.30 P.M. Four present ministers - Gopal Rai, Kailash Gahlot, Saurabh Bhardwaj, and Imran Hussain - will retain their berths while Dalit MLA Mukesh Ahlawat will be a new face in the Cabinet. One ministerial post will still be vacant. Atishi will be Delhi's third woman CM -- after Sushma Swaraj of the BJP and Sheila Dikshit of Congress.

The Kalkaji legislator, who held multiple portfolios in the Arvind Kejriwal government, was chosen as the next leader of the legislative party on Tuesday morning - two days after Kejriwal announced his intention to



resign. Though released from jail after the Supreme Court granted him bail in the CBI case in the liquor policy matter, Kejriwal faced restrictions on his functioning, including being barred from visiting his office or the secretariat or signing files unless urgent for the clearance of the Lt Governor. On Tuesday evening, Atishi

accompanying Kejriwal to meet the Lt Governor at the Raj Niwas, where he submitted his resignation and she staked her claim to form the government. The Lt Governor subsequently proposed September 21 as the swearing-in date.

The AAP leader will prove her government's majority in a

special session called on September 26-27. The ruling AAP in Delhi is already into its fourth year of power, and Atishi will lead the government for the remaining term that is slated to run till February, when elections are due.

With Kejriwal vowing that he will return to the post if the people deem him honest in the next polls, CM-designate Atishi on Friday expressed support for him, claiming that only his leadership can enable a "better life and promising future" for Delhiites by ensuring free electricity and water.

She further said that it's important that the people of Delhi again elect Kejriwal as their leader and make him the Chief Minister again, otherwise "what is happening in Uttar Pradesh will become a norm in the capital too".

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.

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 laddus 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.

AAP demands govt accommodation for Arvind Kejriwal

NEW DELHI: MP Raghav Chadha said the party will be writing to the ministry concerned for this Aam Aadmi Party on Friday demanded an accommodation for outgoing Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, saying he is entitled to it on account of being the convener of a national party.

At a press conference here, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha said the party will be writing to the ministry concerned for this. "I hope we will not have to fight a legal battle for this. Kejriwal decided to resign for the sake of his morals and will move out of his official residence," he said. "He does not have a property or even his own house. As the convener of a national party, he is entitled to a government accommodation. The Centre should give him that," Chadha added.

Women not safe in police stations of BJP-ruled states: Congress

Army officer's fiancé sexually exploited in Odisha.

KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The Congress has condemned the brutal and barbaric sexual exploitation of an army officer's fiancé in an Odisha police station where she had gone for help a few days ago.

"Women are not safe even inside the police stations of the BJP ruled states", Congress spokesperson and Chairperson of the Social Media and Digital Platforms, Supriya Shrinete told a press conference in New Delhi.

Supriya Shrinete pointed out how the fiancé of an Army Major from the Sikh Regiment had been brutally and barbarically exploited sexually inside the police station when she went there for help. She said, it was an irony that while the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken of women empowerment in the same state, within 72 hours of his speech, a woman was being subjected to such brutal torture,



which included sexual exploitation by some monstrous policemen inside the police station.

Supriya Shrinete said, the victim was no ordinary woman, but a lawyer and a restaurateur, besides being engaged to an officer of the Indian army and despite that she was subjected to such bone chilling monstrous and macabre treatment.

Questioning the BJP leaders' silence, Prime Minister's in particular, Shrinete said, they rightfully protested against the West Bengal rape and murder,

but why they chose to remain quiet on Odisha incident.

She asked why was it happening in the BJP-ruled states as earlier in Manipur, where two women were paraded nude, one of whom was Kargil war hero's wife and recently in another BJP-ruled state of Madhya Pradesh, female companions of Army officers were meted with the same treatment.

Giving details of the Odisha incident, Shrinete said, the woman was going back to her home, when some catcalling,

and eve-teasing happened. "She went to the nearest police station. Instead of helping her out, the police tied her hands and her feet, a male police officer came and disrobed her, took off her undergarments, kicked her on her breast and flashed his own private parts before her and what he said, thereafter, I cannot say it in public domain", Shrinete added.

"Is this how safe our women are? The Prime Minister is absolutely silent. The BJP rightfully protested in West Bengal. What about Odisha now, are you going to keep quiet?" she asked, adding, they don't want to speak in Badlapur, they don't want to speak in UP, in Bihar or any place that is controlled by the BJP.

Referring to the pin drop "stony silence" of the Women and Child Development Minister, she said, she rarely speaks rather she doesn't speak. She also questioned the silence of the women MPs of the BJP and also that of the National Women's Commission, which she observed, had just become a fontal organisation of the BJP.

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.

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 transport-

ing 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.

Delhi HC sets aside charges framed against mother for failure to report POCSO offences committed on daughter

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court has set aside a trial court order framing criminal charges against a mother for failure to report incidents of sexual assault allegedly committed on the daughter by her father.

A single-judge bench of Justice Anish Dayal allowed the petitioner-mother's plea challenging the May 2 order passed by the Additional Sessions Judge (POCSO), North West/Rohini framing charges against her under Section 19(1) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, punishable under Section 21 POCSO.

Justice Dayal, in a detailed judgment, said: "A mother is sought to be prosecuted for delay in reporting of sexual offence on a child by her own husband, despite the fact that the mother herself was allegedly subject to severe abuse, sexual and otherwise, in her matrimonial home." "The delay in reporting was only because both the mother



and the child were living under a protracted, severe, immense trauma, under the shroud of the threat of further physical and sexual abuse, that they could not muster the courage, space, or the spirit to go and report to the police," he added.

After evaluation of the facts and circumstances, the Delhi HC ruled that there ought to be no reason to prosecute the mother, clarifying that its order should not prejudice the ongoing trial proceeding where the

husband is the accused.

Setting aside the charges framed against the mother of the prosecutrix, it said: "Letting the charge under Section 21 POCSO against petitioner, in the facts and circumstances of this case, would cause grave prejudice to not just the petitioner who herself is a victim, but also to the prosecutrix who is solely dependent upon her mother/petitioner for support."

In her complaint, the prosecutrix had alleged that she was

sexually assaulted by her father on several occasions and was also beaten up by him. Further, the accused is also said to have brutally beaten up the petitioner (his wife) and threatened her in case she reported the alleged incidents. Thereafter, an FIR was lodged under Sections 354, 354A, 377, 323, and 376 of the IPC (Indian Penal Code), 1860 and Sections 6 and 10 of the POCSO.

During the course of the investigation, the petitioner, in her Section 164 CrPC statement, alleged that her husband used to watch pornographic content on his phone and later, she came to know that he showed pornographic videos to their daughter and also molested her.

In her plea filed before the high court, the mother contended that not only the daughter, but she herself was a victim of severe abuse and due to severe threats to their life and safety, they did not have the courage to come to the police earlier.

Delhi High Court asks Puja Khedkar to respond to UPSC's perjury allegations

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Thursday sought the stand of Puja Khedkar on UPSC's allegation that the former IAS probationer committed perjury by making a false statement in relation to her anticipatory bail plea.

Justice Subramaniam Prasad asked Khedkar to file her reply to the commission's application, which is filed in the proceedings on her pre-arrest bail plea.

"I will issue notice. File your reply," Justice Prasad told Khedkar's counsel, and listed the matter for hearing on September 26.

Khedkar has been accused of cheating and wrongly availing OBC and disability quota benefits in civil services examination. She has denied all allegations against her.

In its application filed through lawyer Vardhman Kaushik, UPSC submitted that Khedkar, in her rejoinder, made an "absolutely false" statement on affidavit that the commission had collected her biometrics



during personality tests.

Seeking initiation of inquiry and appropriate proceedings against her for the violation, the application alleged that even in another proceedings pending in the high court, Khedkar has committed "perjury", which is an offence under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Senior advocate Naresh Kaushik, appearing for UPSC, said her conduct was "dangerously wrong".

"The claim that the commission collected her biometrics is absolutely false made with the sole aim and purpose of deceiving this Hon'ble Court for obtaining favourable orders.

The said claim is denied since the commission did not collect any biometric (eyes and fingerprints) during her personality test or carried out any attempts verification on the basis of the same.

The commission has not collected any biometric information from any candidate during the personality test of the civil services examinations held so far," the application said.

"There is little doubt in the conclusion that the conduct of Ms Puja Manorama Dilip Khedkar amounts to perjury," it asserted.

Khedkar's counsel, on the other hand, termed the application a "pressure tactic".

Khedkar allegedly misrepresented information in her application for UPSC Civil Services Examination 2022 to get reservation benefits.

Bank's deputy manager held in cyber fraud case



SATISH HANDA Gurugram

The arrest of Harpreet Singh, branch sales manager and Akashdeep, the deputy manager at the same branch of ICICI Bank branch in Fatehgarh Sahib, on July 9, police said. The duo allegedly opened a bank account in Devendra's name and provided it to cyber fraudsters. So far, 18 other bank employees involved in different cases of cyber frauds have also been arrested by the police this year.

Gurugram Team of cyber police led by inspector Sunil Kumar arrested the deputy manager of ICICI Bank, a Punjab branch on Monday. The accused was identified as Akashdeep Singh. Two accomplices of the accused, Harpreet Singh and Devender Singh of the same bank were also arrested earlier in providing bank accounts to cyber fraudsters. Earlier, an employee of Mandi Gobindgarh branch in Punjab of the same bank was arrested on July 9 this year.

ACP Cyber Crime Cell Priyanshu Diwan while addressing media persons disclosed that the cyber police arrested the deputy manager of the ICICI Bank who provided bank account details to cyber fraudsters. The accused was involved in a fraud of Rs 25 lakh and 50 thousand in the name of investment in the stock market. Akashdeep has been working in this bank since 2022.

Three criminals of Thak-Thak gang involved in 85 highway robbery cases arrested



SATISH HANDA Sonipat

The Crime Branch team of Police in Sonipat has arrested three accused of 'Thak Thak Gang' used to commit crimes by breaking the glass of the cars with a slingshot. They have been arrested in connection with a recent robbery of about Rs 11 lakhs. During interrogation, more than a dozen people were arrested. Preliminary investigation revealed that about 85 criminal cases are registered against the three accused across the country. The arrested accused were identified as Suraj alias Khopdi, Karna alias Avtar and Vishal alias Vishu originally hailing from Chennai and Tamil Nadu and were presently living on rent in Rajapur and Madhu Vihar in Delhi. The police produced the accused in court on Monday and took them on four-day remand. The complainant, an Advocate Ajay a resident of Sector-4, Gurugram had told Rai police station in Sonipat district in his complaint that he is working as an advocate in Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh and District Court, Gurugram.

Kurukshetra to be developed as cultural tourism hub having world wide identification



PARVESH HANDA Kurukshetra

Addressing a poll rally at the religious, historic town Kurukshetra in Haryana, Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his fifth visit in the town in past 10 years said that Kurukshetra will be developed as a cultural tourism hub by the government in the state having international identification for the tourists visiting the country. PM Modi said there are more than a dozen places in Haryana having attractions for the tourists from the country as well from abroad, which would be developed by the government as cultural tourism hubs in the near future.

Prime Minister said, holy religious town Kurukshetra is famous due to God Srikrishna associated Arjun in the 'Rath' during war between 'Kaurav' and 'Pandav' in 'Mahabharat' and large number of pilgrims from the country as well as abroad visit this historic and religious town taking holy bath in the 'Sarovar' surrounded by temples inside the town, which also have Sant Ravidas Smarak and famous gurudwara Chhati-Patshahi where Shri Guru Gobind Singh ji visited. Prime Minister Modi said he feels lucky to visit this historic, religious town.

Delhi CM Kejriwal to visit Hanuman Temple, AAP headquarters

NEW DELHI: A day after being granted conditional bail by the Supreme Court in the liquor policy case, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will visit the Hanuman Temple in Connaught Place on Saturday.

He is scheduled to reach the temple at 12 noon, accompanied by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders and workers.

In a post on social media platform X, CM Kejriwal stated, "Today at 12 noon, I will go to Hanuman Temple at Connaught Place to thank God and seek his blessings." Following his prayers, the AAP National Convenor will head directly to the party's headquarters, where he is expected to address his party leaders and workers.

Speculation is rife that the Delhi CM may unveil his plans for the Haryana elections and the days ahead during this gathering.



CM Kejriwal was released from Tihar Jail on Friday, hours after the Supreme Court granted him bail. Upon CM Kejriwal's release, hundreds of enthusiastic AAP workers and leaders who had been waiting for hours for him to come out of prison even in the driving rain, met him with cheers and slogans like 'Bharat Mata Ki

Ja' and 'Vande Mataram'.

While party workers celebrated his release, the Delhi CM thundered that his courage and spirit remain unfazed by the incarceration, and he feels more energised and invigorated to serve the nation.

Slamming the Centre, CM Kejriwal said that prisons won't

shackle his resolve and he would be back for the service of the people with greater determination. "I have been fighting the anti-India forces, and today I vow to step up this fight with greater intensity than before," the AAP chief declared.

Despite his release, the Delhi CM's powers have been significantly limited by the Supreme Court. He has been barred from visiting the Secretariat and signing any official files unless necessary to obtain approval from the Lieutenant Governor. Additionally, CM Kejriwal has been prohibited from commenting publicly on the merits of the case, interacting with witnesses, or accessing any official files related to the case. While CM Kejriwal expressed determination to continue serving the nation, his legal battle in the liquor policy case is far from over.

Khap Panchayats in Haryana launch drive against increasing drug addiction among youths in rural areas



A Sarvkhaap Panchayat of Khaaps from all over Haryana was held at Khaap 84 platform in Rohtak on saving the youths in Haryana from drug addiction presided by Rohtak Khaap 84 Pradhan Chaudhary Hardeep Ahlawat said that discussions were held in the Panchayat on increasing drug addiction among youths in rural areas.

SATISH HANDA Rohtak

A meeting of sarv-khap panchayat was organised in Rohtak on Sunday in which representatives of different khaps from various parts of Haryana state attended the panchayat meeting. The participants discussed the menace of drugs and to save the state's youths especially those living in rural areas who are worst affected due to this. The meeting was led by Rohtak's Khaap-84 head Hardeep Ahlawat, said an awareness campaign will be organized and the members and representatives of khaps would go to the schools and colleges across the state to make the students aware of the disastrous consequences due to use of drugs. Ahlawat said this meeting has been called to discuss issues related only for the

betterment of society and no discussion on politics would be held. He said, increasing use of drugs by the young generation, especially living in rural areas is a burning issue in society today.

The members present in the meeting suggested identifying those anti-social elements supplying drugs in rural areas and handing them over to the police with the help of the Narcotics Control Bureau developed by the state government to curb smuggling and supply of drugs. Ahlawat said that in case of drug addiction, consult a doctor in a government hospital in the early stage of drug addiction. The Khap Panchayat approved various issues to save not only youths but also adults from drug addiction which included awareness programmes in every village enabling youths of both sexes to have interest in sports instead of drugs, hand over those anti-social elements supplying drugs to the police, marriages in rural areas should be organized only in day time since liquor and drugs is usually served in excess in marriages celebrated during night, rather avoid use of liquor in marriages, village Panchayats should allot land to unemployed youths and females under self-employment schemes.

YOGI GOVT TO PURCHASE 120 E-BUSES FOR ENHANCED PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN UP

UP govt to purchase 120 e-buses for enhanced public transport

NEW DELHI: The Government of Uttar Pradesh will purchase 120 electric buses which will operate across Lucknow, Aligarh, Moradabad, Ayodhya, and Gorakhpur.

Under the directives of UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the process to add 120 electric buses (in addition to 100 buses) to the fleet of the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) is progressing rapidly.

These buses will operate in five cities of Aligarh, Moradabad, Lucknow, Ayodhya, and Gorakhpur. These electric buses will be equipped with modern facilities and advanced equip-



ment. Aligarh and Moradabad regions will each receive 30 electric buses, while Lucknow, Ayodhya, and Gorakhpur will each have 20 electric buses operating.

According to Transport Minister Dayashankar Singh, in the Aligarh region, 10 electric buses will operate on the Aligarh-Noida via Jewar route, four buses on the Aligarh-Ballabgarh-

One Nation, One Election is a historic decision in country's interest: Anil Vij



SATISH HANDA Ambala

Haryana's former Home Minister Anil Vij said that One Nation, One Election has been approved by the Modi Cabinet, and it is a historic decision in the country's interest as elections were putting the country on standstill for extended periods. He said that this decision should have been taken earlier, but Modi is the first Prime Minister to genuinely think about the country. Vij was responding to questions asked by media personnel today.

On the approval of One Nation, One Election by the Modi

an owl that doesn't like light, and Congress is just like that; they don't like anything good.

Referring to Congress leader Shamsheer Gogoi's remarks about filling their own pockets after forming the government and Congress candidate Neeraj Sharma from Faridabad promising jobs in exchange for votes, Vij responded, no matter how much they try to hide, their real face will eventually be exposed. He added that this is their true nature; someone always ends up revealing their real motives, which is why they entered politics. He accused Congress of trying to bring back the practice of selling jobs, whereas the BJP provided jobs based on merit. Vij urged Haryana's youth to oppose such practices.

Reacting to Congress National President Mallikarjun Kharge's statement that the CM candidate will be decided after the election results, Vij mocked Bhupinder Singh Hooda, saying that those who are not even certain to become Chief Minister should not bother thinking about it. He added that Hooda has already been told to give up his desire to become CM.

Congress 'most dishonest and deceitful party' in the country: Narendra Modi



SATISH HANDA Kurukshetra

While campaigning in Haryana, the PM Narendra Modi while addressing a large gathering on Saturday during poll promotion of the Haryana assembly election in historic town Kurukshetra made severe attack on the main opposition party Congress, alleging it did not care for farmers, made false promises and spread 'anarchy'. Campaigning the first rally in Haryana, where the Assembly election is scheduled for October 5, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a massive attack on the Congress party, terming it the most dishonest and deceitful party in the country, saying the Congress has never been bothered about the problems of the people and there is no other party in the country that is more dishonest and deceitful than the Congress.

Theme song 'Bharosa Dil Se, BJP Phir Se' launched by BJP

PARVESH HANDA Rohtak

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and many other senior BJP leaders including Haryana election co-incharge Biplab Deb, state in-charge Dr. Satish Poonia, state president Mohan Lal Badoli at the inauguration of party's media center in Rohtak on Friday late evening launched party's theme song 'Bharosa Dil Se, BJP Phir Se'. While address-

ing media persons, Saini said people in Haryana state have faith in the BJP and that the party was going to form the government in the state for the third time. He said the BJP government in Haryana has worked in a planned manner and made people's lives easier in the past 10 years, while the schemes made by the Congress regimes before 2014 did not reach the poor people for about a decade, on the other hand the BJP

government worked with the spirit of 'Antyodaya' and took the government schemes to the last person.

The Chief Minister said the BJP state government during rule worked free from regionalism, nepotism, corruption and dynasty politics and developed the state with four-lane roads in all the districts, set up as many as 15 medical colleges in the state. He said, BJP exists in the heart of every 'Haryanvi'.

J&K Assembly Elections 2024: From PDP to BJP, the common link in manifestos, no women issues

SHAMSHAD ALI

"The political parties have totally ignored women", Zahida, a college student in Srinagar, is disappointed as first assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of Article 370.

"Leave male candidates, even women contestants are not given much importance to grave issues such as domestic violence, rape, harassment against women at workplaces and streets. So far, we have not seen any candidates discussing these issues in rallies in Srinagar," said another student,



Mehak

Jammu and Kashmir, a region known for its intricate political and social dynamics, is witnessing its first assembly polls in a decade. The last Assembly elections were

held in 2014, and since then, the political landscape has undergone significant changes. While enthusiasm for democratic exercise has gripped the Union Territory, there is a wave of dismay among women in Kashmir and the reason is election manifestos devoid of women issues despite female voters constituting nearly half of the total proportion of voters.

In Srinagar district, the number of women voters are more than men in eight assembly segments. In the first two phases of J & K polls, there are only 15 women candidates fielded by

different political parties.

"It is unfortunate that political parties, particularly regional parties, ignored women safety issues in their manifestos. Like other states of India, Kashmir is also witnessing rising cases of crimes against women. The present manifestos fail to outline concrete measures for tackling violence, harassment, and discrimination, it shows women's safety and their well-being are not priorities in our political landscape," women's rights activist, member women mediator from commonwealth Ezabir Ali said.

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 U.U. 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.

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.

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 VIP.

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.

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-

hul 'Baba', is playing politics. I want to tell Haryana's youth that 'Hooda and company', whose job is to spread lies, are saying what will happen to Agniveers later... but what I say, I do it."

He was referring to former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

The Agnipath scheme was introduced by the Central government on June 14, 2022, for short-term induction of personnel in the armed forces. It seeks to recruit soldiers for only four years, with a provision to retain 25 per cent of them in regular service. Those recruited under the new scheme are called Agniveers.

The government said replacing the legacy system would lower the age profile of the armed forces, ensure a fitter military and create a technically skilled war fighting force capable of meeting future challenges. But the decision sparked widespread protests and forced a concerted outreach by the government to scotch apprehensions about the scheme.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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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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

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.



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

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," Katiyal said. Katiyal is Managing Director, 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.

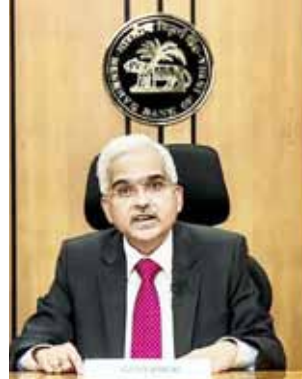
India can sustain 8% growth over medium term: RBI Governor

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"

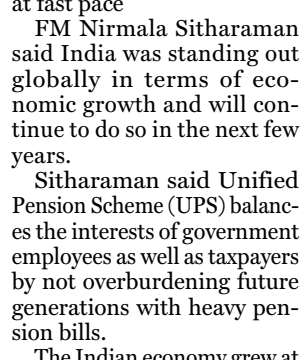
FM Nirmala Sitharaman said India was standing out globally in terms of economic growth and will continue to do so in the next few years.

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-



maintaining 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

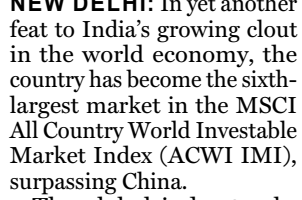
of personal income tax was around Rs 10.22 lakh crore, which was 3.45 per cent of GDP. Does this mean that Indian companies are making less profit and paying less tax? That's a wrong concept. According to the latest data, the pre-tax profits of about 35,000 Indian companies have increased by about 144 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.

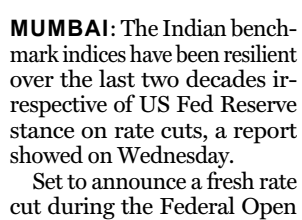
Earlier this month, strong fundamentals helped India pip China in the MSCI Emerging Market (EM) IMI to become the largest weight. The MSCI Emerging Markets IMI captures large, mid and small cap representation across 24 Emerging Markets (EM) countries.

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.

of 202 per cent, according to a report by Capitalmind Financial Services. The only stretches of negative Nifty returns came during tightening cycles in February 1994 to July 1995 at -23 per cent and March 1997 to September 1998 at -14 per cent.

The median Nifty return on the day after the announcement (since the Fed announcement happens after India close) is

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..."

Many police personnel in Bangladesh have been absent from the streets since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led government on August 5 amid a mass uprising.

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!"



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 Revanth 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.

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, Mantecore, led by Dahlia (Lesley Manville), leading to a bad accident.

Eight years later, he's living quietly as Kyle Conroy, with his memory wiped, until an old colleague (played by Stanley Tucci) needs his help.

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.

Taking to Instagram, the 'Luv Ka The End' actress, who has 93.1 million followers on the social media platform, posted her breathtaking pictures from the photoshoot of a renowned magazine.

"Sridevi ji - my inspiration. Every time I dress, talk, walk or 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.

Legendary actress Sridevi

took her last breath on February 24, 2018, in the United Arab Emirates. She was last seen in her 300th film titled 'Mom' helmed by Ravi Udyawar. She also made a special cameo appearance in Shah Rukh Khan-starrer 'Zero' helmed by 'Raanjhanaa' fame director Aanand L. Rai.

On the work front, Shraddha was last featured in the 2024 horror-comedy 'Stree 2: Sarkate Ka Aatank' opposite actor Rajkummar Ravi. The film, helmed by Amar Kaushik, also featured Pankaj Tripathi, Abhishek Banerjee, Aparshakti

“Sridevi ji - my inspiration. Every time I dress, talk, walk or shoot, I think of the grace with which she came within all her performances”

Khurana, Atul Srivastava, Mushtaq Khan, Sunita Rawar, Anya Singh and Arvind Bilgaiyan in crucial roles.

The 2024 blockbuster also featured a special cameo appearance by Akshay Kumar, Tamannaah Bhatia, and Varun Dhawan, leaving numerous questions for the horror universe.

For the unversed, 'Stree 2' has gained a new benchmark and became the highest-grossing Indian film ever. The film has surpassed Shah Rukh Khan-starrer 'Jawan' helmed by Atlee's lifetime collection in India.

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 allevi-



ate 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. Earlier this month, the actress talked about her bond with Rohit Shetty.

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 video, "Chal Kudiye. Out now. Jigra in cinemas, 11th October". The song comprises the theme of hope and power for every woman who faces various difficulties in their day-to-day life. The power-packed track starts with the dialogue of Alia

that later catches the vibe of the environment along with the soothing voice of Diljit which 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 director Abhishek Chaubey. The film featured Shahid Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Kareena Kapoor and Diljit Dosanjh in the lead roles.

Meanwhile, the teaser-trailer of Alia Bhatt's 'Jigra' has completely shaken the internet as fans are now waiting to witness the magic of Alia on the big screen.

The upcoming action thriller film will be theatrically released on October 11, 2024, in a clash with Rajkummar Rao-Triptii Dimri starrer- 'Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video'.

'Jigra' helmed by director Vasan Bala also features Vedang Raina, Manoj Pahwa, Rahul Ravindran and Rahul Nanda in crucial roles.

Ram Manohar Lohia a Pioneer of Economic Empowerment



SATISH SINGH

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia is called the originator of socialist philosophy, and his followers are called socialists. According to Dr. Lohia, socialism is the theory by following which even the deprived sections can be brought into the mainstream of development. In line with the definition of socialism, it is a political and economic system in which the means of production and property are publicly owned and are not controlled by the government. Its basic essence is that public ownership of the means of production plays an important role in bringing equality in the society. For this reason, it is considered the best hypothesis of development in many countries of the world. However, a mixed economy has been adopted in India. That is, here the ownership of the means of production is in both government and private hands. In other words, it is a mixture of capitalism and socialist principles.

In accordance with the socialism theory, Dr. Lohia was a supporter of inclusive development, that is, he wanted the participation of all the people of the country in ensuring development. This will be possible only when all the people of the country are self-reliant, that is, someone may be employed or self-employed, but not unemployed. He was also an advocate of individual freedom and democracy, that is, everyone should be personally independent, use their rights, but at the same time also discharge certain responsibilities, because only then our society and country can move forward on the path of development.

Apart from socialism, Dr. Lohia was also influenced by Gandhism. He always tried to follow in Gandhi's footsteps. Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Lohia had similar ideologies regarding the ways to boost the rural economy. According to Dr. Lohia, to support the rural population of the country, it is necessary to establish cottage and small-scale industries in rural areas, as well as to provide basic facilities in rural areas, strengthen the infrastructure, reinforce the system of health, education etc.

Dr. Lohia believed that there is a lack of capital and technical skills in the country

and hence, the pace of development in India cannot be accelerated by adopting the developmental strategy of Europe or Russia. He wanted that the path between Gandhiji's cottage industry and Nehru's heavy industry vision should be adopted in the country, so that inclusive development can be strengthened in the country.

As said by him, there should be equality in the pace of agricultural and industrial development so that farmers and villagers can also be taken forward on the path of development. Dr. Lohia wanted that heavy industries like railways, steel etc. should run under the supervision of the central government, but the ownership and management of agriculture-based industries should be left to districts, tehsils and villages. Such thinking of Dr. Lohia advocates giving concrete form to the decentralized system in the country for the proper development of democracy and socialist economic ideology.

In accordance with Dr. Lohia, the government's plan should not be one that protects capitalism. The deprived section of the society also has the right to live. Capitalist policy increases poverty, unemployment, anarchy, corruption etc. Therefore, the government should implement schemes that ensure the development of all. He was also against untouchability and considered discrimination because of caste and colour as the biggest obstacle in the path of development. As stated by him, rural areas and villagers are backward because of these. Unless all the people in the country become self-reliant, the development of villages, towns, cities and the country cannot happen smoothly.

Dr. Lohia gave special preference to youth and women. He believed that youth are the leaders of the country because they remain involved in the development of the country for a long time. Therefore, they need to be skilled so that they do not remain unemployed and continue to play an important role in increasing economic activities in the country. Women in India have been living as slaves for centuries. Sometimes of parents, sometimes of husbands and sometimes of sons. They have been bought and sold in the market like a commodity. Because of this, they are backward from men in all af-



fairs. Therefore, Dr. Lohia was strongly against discrimination based on gender. Consistent with him, the problem of gender discrimination can be eradicated from the root by giving women equal status as men in the field of education and in this case, women only need to be given priority in every task instead of equal opportunity. In this sequence, women should be given equal status as men on political, social and economic fronts.

To ensure socialist movement and inclusive development in the country, participation of women in economic activities is as important as that of men. Without active participation of women in mainstream activities, the country cannot be taken forward to the pinnacle of progress and development. Dr. Lohia wanted to make women economically self-reliant. He wanted to provide women not only equal pay for equal work but also equality of opportunity and law. Not only this, he was also in favour of providing special opportunities to women to compensate for their natural deficiencies in working on par with men.

Dr. Lohia knew that in a large country like India, the deprived sections cannot be ignored. They cannot be left alone in poverty and in times of crisis. Therefore, he supported the "Ghera Daalo" movement going on in Deoria in Uttar Pradesh and Daltonganj in Bihar to solve the problems of food in case of famine in the country. Socialist ideology believes in the method of "Ghera Daalo" movement, which appeals to the government to either "Give Food to the Hungry" or "Send them to Jail" so that they can get meals at least two times in a day. Dr. Lohia's support to this movement shows that the socialist ideology wants to move forward by taking along all sections of society.

Dr. Lohia was in favour of international trade, but he was not in favour of one-sided trade in any case, that is, he

wanted that imports and exports with other countries should be equal, so that there is no trade deficit in the country and the concept of "Made in India" gets promoted. He wanted cottage, small, medium and large industries to be developed in the rural areas, along with improving the infrastructure there, providing basic facilities etc. This will stop the migration of villagers and the development of rural areas will also be smooth.

Along with Dr. Lohia, developed countries should support and help developing countries in global trade, so that backward and developing countries can move forward. They should be helped in acquiring such economic systems, which can help them move forward. Man's fight should be against hunger, disease and illiteracy. Economic inequality is the main source of discord and war in the world.

Dr. Lohia believed in decentralization of economic and political powers. Administration in India gives the concept of "four-pillar state", which is based on the principle of separation of powers. In accordance with Dr. Lohia, the four pillars of the state are the village, district, province and centre, which have an interdependent relationship. Sovereign powers should not remain alone in the centre. It should also extend to the district and villages. In accordance with Dr. Lohia, there should be decentralisation of political and economic powers among these four columns. Unless this is done, democratic institutions cannot flourish and active participation of people in administration cannot become a reality. Concentration of economic power gives rise to inequality and in the concept of capitalism, economic power is concentrated in a few hands, which is an obstacle to the inclusive development of the country.

Dr Lohia was against imperialism and colonialism. As per him, such a policy of any country cannot lead to the development of that country, and it is a serious obstacle to individual freedom and equal development in the countries of the world and is also against humanity.

He was a supporter of capital formation. He believed that industrialization is not possible without capital. In a

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