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PUNJAB EDUCATION MINISTER EXCHANGE MOU WITH FINNISH AMBASSADOR FOR PRIMARY TEACHER TRAINING



Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann undergoing heart-related tests: Hospital bulletin



CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has been undergoing some heart-related tests and examination, the results of which are still awaited, the hospital said on Friday.

"Due to an increase in pressure in the Chief Minister's pulmonary artery, there was pressure on his heart, leading to irregular blood pressure. Currently, all vitals of the Chief Minister are completely stable," Fortis Hospital in Mohali said in a medical bulletin. "The doctor will make further decisions only after the results of the heart tests and examinations are available. The Chief Minister is responding well to treatment, and it is hoped that his condition will improve soon," it added.

Mann was admitted to the hospital late Wednesday night.

"The Chief Minister has been hospitalised as he's undergoing a thorough examination," a senior AAP leader said. He refused to reveal Mann's ailment, adding the Chief Minister's health is "fine", and that he will be discharged from the hospital "after a few more necessary tests".

CORPORATES & INDUSTRY

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TEXTILES INDUSTRY TO GROW TO \$350 BN BY 2030, CREATE UP TO 6 CR JOBS: UNION MINISTER



India's Economic Growth Surges to 6.7% in Q1 FY25 : Finance Ministry



NEW DELHI: In its latest monthly update, the Ministry of Finance has highlighted a robust economic performance in India during the first quarter of FY25.

The report indicates that India's economy has not only recovered from the impacts of the pandemic but has also undergone transformational changes across various productive sectors. By the end of FY24, the country achieved an impressive cumulative real GDP growth of approximately 27 percent from FY21, laying a

strong foundation for continued expansion.

The data reveals that India's GDP at constant prices grew by 6.7 percent in Q1 FY25, signaling a sustained upward trajectory. Notably, growth across all major non-agricultural sectors remained well above 5 percent, underscoring a broad-based economic expansion. The favourable monsoon season has also contributed positively, with kharif sowing gaining momentum, which bodes well for agricultural production in the coming months. A key aspect of this growth narrative is the robust demand across major components of the economy. Private consumption, fixed investment, and exports have all shown sig-

nificant increases, reflecting a strengthening of the domestic and international economic landscape. Although the general government expenditure is gradually picking up due to the general elections held in April-June, the overall investment climate remains positive, with a notable growth of 7.5 percent in Q1. This indicates a reinvigorated private investment cycle, crucial for sustaining long-term economic growth.

High-frequency indicators further corroborate the Ministry's optimistic outlook. Growth in Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, along with encouraging trends in purchasing managers' indices, points to a vibrant business environment. Additionally, rising air and port cargo volumes signal robust trade activity, further fueling economic expansion.

POTPOURRI

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ALIA BHATT'S NEW PHOTOSHOOT: A BOSS LADY LOOK JUST IN TIME FOR 'JIGRA'



UK PM Keir Starmer backs India's bid for permanent UNSC seat



Starmer calls for reforms to ensure the global multilateral system is "more representative and more responsive".

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer joined the leaders of the US and France in backing India's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to make it a more representative body that is not "paralysed by politics".

During his speech at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York on Thursday, Starmer called for reforms to ensure the global multilateral system is "more representative and more responsive". Besides permanent representation for India, Africa, Brazil, Japan and Germany, the UK also made a pitch for more seats for elected members of the Security Council.

"We need to make the system more representative and more responsive to those who need it most," said Starmer. "So we will make the case not just for fairer outcomes, but fairer representation in how we reach them; and this also applies to the Security Council. It has to change to become a more representative body, willing to act – not paralysed by politics. We want to see permanent African representation on the Council, Brazil, India, Japan and Germany as permanent members, and more seats for elected members as well," he said. The Labour Party leader, making his first UNGA address as UK Prime Minister after the July general elections, also set out a change in Britain's approach. He said: "To support this we will also change how the UK does things. Moving from the paternalism of the past towards partnership for the future. Listening a lot more – speaking a bit less. Offering game-changing British expertise and working together in a spirit of equal respect."

LoP Rahul seeks clarification from PM on Kangana's statement on farm laws



NEW DELHI: A statement made by BJP MP Kangana Ranaut regarding the three controversial farm laws has sparked a major political row. Despite withdrawing her comments, the actress-turned-politician continues to face backlash not only from the Opposition but also from members of her own party. On Wednesday, Rahul Gandhi, Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, called upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi to clarify his stance on Ranaut's remarks. LoP Gandhi questioned whether the Prime Minister supports or opposes the views expressed by the BJP MP. "One of their MPs talked about reviving the repealed farm laws. Modi ji, you need to clarify – are you for or against it? Will you revive the farmers' law or not? If you do, I guarantee that the India Bloc will stand firmly against it," the Congress MP said.

Parliamentary standing committees formed, Rahul Gandhi in Defence

NEW DELHI: The Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committees for 2024-2025 were constituted with the Congress members chairing four committees, including the External Affairs.

Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi is a member of the standing committee on Defence.

Each committee is a combination of members from both Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha.

The Congress has been given the chairmanship of four key panels. The committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports will be headed by Digvijaya Singh, the committee on Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing will be led by former Chief Minister of Punjab Charanjit Singh Channi, Rural and Panchayati Raj will be led by Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka and Shashi Tharoor will head the External Affairs.

BJP's Radha Mohan Singh will head the committee on Defence. Bhartruhari Mahtab will head the committee on Finance.

Former Union Minister



Anurag Thakur and Rajiv Pratap Rudy have been given the chairmanships of committees on Coal, Mines and Steel; and Water Resources respectively.

BJP member Nishikant Dubey has been made the chairman of the committee on Communications and Information Technology.

Radha Mohan Das Agrawal of the BJP will head the committee on Home Affairs. The committee on Commerce will be headed by TMC's Dola Sen. Health and Family Welfare will be headed by Ram Gopal Yadav of the Samajwadi Party. Tiruchi Siva of DMK will head the panel on Industry.

This committee is tasked with overseeing and provid-

ing legislative oversight on issues related to commerce, trade policies, and economic development in relation to India's commerce sector.

The committee plays a vital role in reviewing policy matters and ensuring that the commerce sector contributes effectively to the nation's economy.

The Committee on communications and IT has as members SP's Jaya Bachchan, SS (UBT)'s Priyanka Chaturvedi, BJD's Sushmit Patra and Congress' KTS Tulsani from the Upper House, as well as BJP MPs Anil Baluni, Kangana Ranaut and Poonam Madam, and TMC's Mahua Moitra from the Lok Sabha.

However, UPA chairperson

Sonia Gandhi's name does not figure in any of the committees. Major BJP allies such as the TDP and Janata Dal (United) besides its partners in the poll-bound Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena and the NCP, will be heading one committee each.

Former Union Minister Radha Mohan Singh will chair the Committee on Defence. Rahul Gandhi is a member of the panel on Defence. Haris Beeran, Samik Bhattacharya, Ajay Mankan, Derek O'Brien, Nabam Rebia, Neeraj Shekhar, Kapil Sibal, GK Vasan and Sanjay Yadav are the other members of the panel on Defence.

The panel on Home Affairs will be headed by BJP member Radha Mohan Das Agrawal.

The lone NCP Lok Sabha member Sunil Tatkare will be heading the panel on Petroleum and Natural Gas and Shiv Sena's Shrirang Appa Barne will helm the committee on Energy. JD(U)'s Sanjay Jha will be heading the committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture. TDP MP Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy will chair the committee on Housing and Urban Affairs.

SC launches page on website providing summaries of landmark verdicts

NEW DELHI: In another citizen-centric initiative, the Supreme Court on Friday announced the launch of a new webpage on its official website providing summaries of landmark judgments.

The initiative will make it easier for citizens to understand the important decisions delivered by the top court in line with its broader goal of ensuring an informed citizenry, promoting legal awareness, and enhancing public engagement with the law, said an official statement released by the Supreme Court.

It added that SC decisions impact diverse areas of public life nationwide, however, complex legal language and the length of judgments can serve as a barrier to citizens' understanding and may even lead to misconceptions about important verdicts.

"The court therefore recognises the importance of making its judgments accessible to all citizens. To overcome this barrier and to ensure that all persons can easily understand its significant decisions, the new webpage provides accurate summaries of important



decisions in simple and clear language," it said. The 'Landmark Judgment Summaries' webpage on the official site of the apex court features a year-wise curated list of significant judgments of public interest. The summaries are written in a manner that allows readers to understand both the outcome of a case and the reasoning of the court, the statement said.

"The webpage will continue to be updated to include summaries of new decisions as well as important historical decisions. The summaries are prepared by the Centre for Research and Planning of the Supreme Court," it added. Further, the statement said that each case is identifiable by a subject line that provides a one-line description of the case and offers direct links to view the full judgment along with video recordings of the hearings and oral transcripts of the arguments, if available.

NIA conducts raids in Jammu & Kashmir following Reasi bus attack



FW DESK

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has launched searches at seven locations across Jammu and Kashmir as part of its ongoing investigation into the Reasi bus attack that claimed the lives of nine pilgrims. The raids, which began early Friday, target areas linked to hybrid terrorists and Over-Ground Workers (OGWs) and include sites in the Rajouri and Reasi districts.

Congressmen live for their families, for BJP workers national interest is above everything: PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday drew a sharp contrast between the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) 'nation first' policy and Congress' 'family over everything' approach and asserted that the party's victory in Haryana was certain as the people of the state have decided to bless it again.

In a direct interaction with BJP booth workers of Haryana through the NaMo App, PM Modi said, "National interest is paramount for every BJP worker, and the people of Haryana have decided to give BJP a chance to serve once again."

Launching a diatribe at Congress, he said, "The entire focus of those who are contesting against us is based on lies. Spreading lies and canards, talking nonsense and vitiating the atmosphere has been their strategy." "Most of their time is spent in factionalism, fighting, settling scores with each other. The party which has remained indifferent to public issues for 10 years, which lives for its own family or its own group, such people can never win the trust of the people of Haryana," PM Modi further said.

He also said that Congress has failed as an Opposition in the past ten years and added that



the party, despite its big boasts, is not making an impact on people.

The Prime Minister further highlighted the achievements of the BJP government in Haryana in the past decade and said that the corruption-free dispensation ensured that employment was being given without any slip or expenditure for the first time in the state.

"Therefore, the people of Haryana are with us, their blessings are with us, victory is certain," he said, exuding confidence.

"Congress people live only for their own families. Congress is not concerned about anyone else's children," PM Modi told the booth workers.

The Prime Minister also took potshots at the Congress over its 'aversion' against any person from a backward caste taking up the highest offices of the country.

"They (Congress) are worried about how the country's PM came from a backward community, how the Haryana Chief Minister came from a backward community. That is why these people spread lies because they think that if the power of the backward communities increases, what will happen to them? I would also like to tell my brothers to ask the Congress for an account of how many lies it dished out regarding MSP," he said, addressing the gathering of booth workers.

BJP denies reports on Sunil Jakhar's resignation as Punjab chief

CHANDIGARH: The BJP on Friday denied rumours about the resignation of Sunil Jakhar as Punjab unit president, the party's prominent Hindu face in the state.

However, there is no official statement from the party so far.

Party sources said Jakhar has been upset for some time over the state of affairs and has already apprised the top leadership about his unwillingness to work as the state party president. He is said to have conveyed that he is unable to work freely, the sources added.

"He has offered to step down but the party advised him to continue to hold the

post till the next election to the post likely in December and he agreed upon the advice," a senior party leader told to Media.

The sources said rumours about his purported "differences" with the party gained strength when he preferred to remain absent from a meeting called by him on Thursday to finalise the party's strategy for the ongoing membership drive. "After abstaining from the meeting, rumours spread that he boycotted the meeting in protest," a source said.

Jakhar has just returned from abroad after a month-long visit. Coming forward



to deny media reports over the resignation of Jakhar, senior Punjab BJP leader Harjit Singh Grewal debunked "fake reports" of Jakhar's resignation and unwillingness to work.

"Jakhar is the party's senior-most leader and I met him two-three days ago and he has not expressed anything (over his decision to resign)," Grewal told a news channel, adding "owing to his preoccupations, he might not be able to attend the meeting (on Thursday)".

"For his non-availability, it is wrong to link his resignation or disappointment with the party's (central) leadership," he added.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in July 2023 appointed former Congress leader Jakhar as its state unit president.

Gram Panchayat Elections in Punjab to be held on 15th Oct 2024: R. K. Chaudhuri

CHANDIGARH: Punjab State Election Commission has announced the Election Schedule for the conduct of the general Gram Panchayat Elections, in accordance with the Notification dated 19.9.2024 issued under s. 209 of the Punjab Panchayati Raj Act, 1994 by the Department of Rural Development & Panchayats.

Punjab State Election Commissioner Raj Kamal Chaudhuri said that with the announcement of the Election Schedule, the Model Code of Conduct for Gram Panchayat Elections for the guidance of candidates and State has come into force with immediate effect, which will remain in force till the completion

of the electoral process.

He further informed that as per the election schedule, the period for filing of nominations by candidates will commence from 27th September, 2024 (Friday) between 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the offices of the concerned Returning Officers. The last date for filing nominations will be 04.10.2024 (Friday). He added that no nominations will be accepted on 28.09.2024 being a public holiday under Negotiable Instruments Act. Scrutiny of the Nomination papers would take place on 05.10.2024 (Saturday). The last date for withdrawal of Nominations is 07.10.2024 (Monday) upto 03:00 p.m.

Sharing more details, he



revealed that the poll will be held on 15.10.2024 (Tuesday) from 08.00 a.m. to 04.00 p.m. through the use of Ballot Boxes. The polled votes will be counted on the same day at the polling station itself, after the completion of polling of votes. Furthermore, he added that Polling, wherever required, would be held for 13,237 Sarpanches and 83,437 Panches. Total electorate con-

sists of 1,33,97,922 registered voters consisting of 70,51,722 Males, 63,46,008 Females, and 192 others. In addition to this, he added that the expenditure limit notified for a candidate contesting for the post of Sarpanch is Rs. 40,000/-, whereas for Panch expenditure limit has been fixed at Rs. 30,000/-. Moreover, he said about 96,000 personnel will be deputed on election duty and 23 senior IAS/PCS Officers would be appointed as General Observers in the districts so as to ensure smooth and peaceful conduct of the polls at 19,110 polling booths. The Commission has made all the arrangements to conduct the elections in a fair, free and peaceful manner.

Punjab Education Minister exchange MoU with Finnish Ambassador for primary teacher training

NEW DELHI: Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains, on Friday, exchanged memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Finnish Ambassador in New Delhi to provide international-level training for government primary school teachers of the state of Punjab. He was accompanied by former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

Speaking on the occasion, Harjot Singh Bains expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "I am delighted to announce the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding with Finland. This collaboration will not only enhance the primary education framework in Punjab but also foster cultural exchange between India and Finland." It is noteworthy that following Delhi's lead, Punjab has become the second state



in India to establish an agreement for providing advanced training to primary school teachers in Finland.

Elaborating on the agreement, Harjot Singh Bains said, Punjab's government primary school teachers will receive advanced training at the University of Turku in Finland, adding that while five Finnish universities had expressed interest in providing

this training, the University of Turku was ultimately selected. The Education Minister highlighted Finland's global reputation in early childhood education, praising its innovative approach that emphasizes play, exploration and daily experiential learning. He said that the Finnish education system prioritizes early childhood education and care as the cornerstone for lifelong

learning and development.

The Cabinet Minister also spotlighted Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann led Punjab government's ongoing efforts to enhance educator skills. "Since February 2023, under Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann's leadership, 202 principals and education administrators have undergone training in Singapore. Besides this, 102 headmasters have completed courses in Leadership, School Management and Education Department at the prestigious Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad", he added.

Teachers interested in participating in the Finnish training program can submit their applications through the designated website up till the evening of September 27, 2024.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann admitted to hospital in Mohali after 'fainting'

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann has been admitted to a private hospital in Mohali, sources said.

Mann was admitted to the hospital late Wednesday night after he fainted thrice, the sources said.

"The Chief Minister has been hospitalized as he's undergoing a thorough examination," a senior AAP leader said. He refused to reveal Mann's ailment, adding the Chief Minister's health is "fine", and that, he will be discharged from the hospital "after a few more necessary tests".

The Fortis Hospital, where he is undergoing treatment, refused to comment.

Further details are awaited.

Chief Minister Mann was admitted to Delhi's Apollo Hospital last week for observation, according to hospital sources.



Hospital sources told to media that CM Mann came for a routine checkup and was doing fine.

There was no official statement either by the AAP or the Punjab government about CM Mann's condition.

Opposition parties, like the Akali Dal and the Congress, had fired salvos at CM Mann and the AAP over the incident, demanding that they reveal his whereabouts and ailments/

They also took a jibe over the tall claims of the AAP governments in Punjab and Delhi for the best state-run hospitals and clinics.

“Yet when it comes to their own health, CM Mann opts for a private hospital in Delhi! The hypocrisy is staggering. It's clear now that these so-called 'champions of the common man' have been misleading the public with their tall claims”

“Yet when it comes to their own health, CM Mann opts for a private hospital in Delhi! The hypocrisy is staggering. It's clear now that these so-called 'champions of the common man' have been misleading the public with their tall claims,” Congress leader Partap Singh Bajwa wrote on X.

Congress may lose political grip in Haryana due to rift between senior leaders



SATISH HANDA Ambala

It cannot be denied that Congress vote bank in Haryana state has witnessed much increase as compared to the 2019 Vidhan Sabha polls. In most of the constituencies in the state Congress wave is visible, but at the same time increase in rift seen between two groups in the party led by the former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Kumari Selja (Sira MP) and senior Congress leader Randeep Surjewala, both are presently seen absent in Congress poll promotion activities in support of contestants going to contest in coming 90 assemblies. However, the photographs of both Congress leaders are visible in posters but they are not seen present in the rallies as well as on the stage.

Sources reveal, both Kumari Selja and Surjewala feel themselves neglected by Congress high command at the time of distribution of tickets to the candidates of their choice contesting assembly polls in the state on October 5 as compared to the candidates suggested by Bhupinder Singh Hooda. Information also reveals that out of the total number of 90 assembly seats, as many as 72 tickets have been offered to the candidates of Hooda's choice, 10 tickets have been offered to the candidates of Selja's choice and tickets for two candidates (including a ticket offered to Surjewala's son to contest from Kaithal assembly seat) have been given on the recommendation by Randeep Surjewala and remaining tickets have been offered to the candidates of high command's choice, as such both Kumari Selja and Randeep Surjewala feeling neglect by Congress high command perhaps have lost interest in the present assembly polls and are seen not visible in Congress poll rallies, which may be harmful for the congress at this stage.

Attack on the patient in Ambala civil hospital emergency dies on way to PGI



PARVESH HANDA Ambala

Murder took place in Ambala Cantt civil hospital in broad daylight on Wednesday, where a patient identified as Amrik Singh an auto driver a resident of village Shahpur adjoining Ambala Cantt arrived for treatment after he was hit by bricks and stones by a couple of persons of his village due to personal rivalry. Amrik was rushed to the hospital for treatment and was chased. The accused stabbed Amrik several times on his neck and stomach with a knife when he was having treatment at the emergency where blood spread all over and hospital staff managed to escape in the emergency ward.

According to police, Amrik Singh was leaving the village with his children when suddenly some youths of the village attacked him. When he went to the police to complain about this, the police asked him to get a medical checkup done. On this Amrik Singh went to the civil hospital to get a medical checkup done and the attackers also followed him to the civil hospital and attacked him in the emergency ward. The accused stabbed Amrik several times in the neck and stomach.

Vigilance Bureau arrests PSPCL JE for accepting Rs 25000 bribe

JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

The Punjab Vigilance Bureau (VB), during its ongoing campaign against corruption in the state, on Thursday apprehended Junior Engineer (JE) Ranjit Singh, posted at Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd (PSPCL) Sub Division, Amritsar South while he was allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 25,000.

Disclosing this here today an official spokesperson of the state VB said the above-mentioned accused has been arrested based on a complaint lodged by Navdeep Singh, a



resident of Amar Avenue, Ajnala Road, Amritsar.

He further informed that the complainant has approached the VB and alleged in his complaint that

the accused had demanded a bribe of Rs 1,00,000 for slashing the fine of Rs 6,00,000 lakhs imposed on the complainant. The complainant further informed that the said

accused had earlier taken Rs 50,000 as first instalment of bribe money. He added that after a preliminary inquiry into this complaint a VB team laid a trap during which the accused was caught red handed while accepting a bribe of Rs.25,000 in the presence of two official witnesses.

He added that in this regard a case under Prevention of Corruption Act has been registered at VB Police Station, Amritsar range. The accused would be produced in the competent court tomorrow and further investigations of this case was under progress, he said.

Punjab Cabinet gets five new faces, drops four



CHANDIGARH: The Cabinet led by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Monday inducted five new faces after dropping four ministers -- the fourth reshuffle in the two-and-a-half-year-old AAP government.

The newly inducted ministers were administered the oath of office by Governor Gulab Chand Kataria at a simple ceremony in Raj Bhawan here.

Four ministers-- Chetan Singh Jouramajra, who held

the Mining and Horticulture portfolios, Bram Shankar Jimpa (Revenue), Balkar Singh (Local Bodies) and Anmol Gagan Mann (Tourism)--submitted their resignation letters on Sunday. The inducted were Baraminder Goyal, a legislator from Lehra, Hardeep Singh Mundian from Sahnewal, Ravjot Singh from Sham Chaurasi, Tarunpreet Singh Sond from Khanna and Mohinder Bhagat, who got elected from Jalandhar (West) in a bypoll in July.

BJP releases 'Nayab Sankalp Patra' for every district in Haryana

SATISH HANDA

BJP National President JP Nadra released the party's 20-point manifesto, 'Nayab Sankalp Patra' for every district in Haryana state ahead of the Assembly polls to be held on 5th October promising two lakh government jobs, Rs 2,100 monthly assistance to women and guaranteed government job to 'Agniveers' hailing from the State. Apart from this, the party also promised 11 'Sankalp' for every district, which is first time by any political party ruled over in any state, and creation of 10 industrial towns and full scholarship to Scheduled Caste (SC) and other Backward Class (OBC) students of govern-



ment medical and engineering colleges in the state. Among those present on this occasion at Rohtak during the release of the 'Sankalp Patra' were Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Union Ministers Manohar Lal Khattar, Rao Inderjit Singh, Krishan Pal Gurjar and head of the party's poll manifesto committee.

The ruling government has already promised to purchase 24 crops at Minimum Support Price (MSP). Facing controversy by opposition parties over the 'Agnipath' scheme, which is for short-term military recruitment, Nadra said there will be a guarantee of government job for every 'Agniveer' hailing from Haryana, promised Rs 2,100 per month for all women under the 'Lado Lakshmi Yojna' as well as two lakh government jobs will be given to the youths without 'kharchi-parchi' as alleged corruption prevailing earlier under the Congress regime.

There is no respect for women and Dalits in Congress : Anil Vij

Anil Vij asks, where was Congress when the partition of India happened, and people wandered homeless?

PARVESH HANDA Ambala/Chandigarh

Former Home Minister of Haryana, Anil Vij said there is no respect for women in Congress, and there is no respect for Dalits either. If someone can use casteist words about such a prominent leader like Kumari Selja, then what must be the situation in Congress be? Everyone should be aware of this.

Vij was responding to questions asked by the media persons today. Taking a jibe at the Congress party's mindset, he said, I read long ago about a former Congress Prime Minister who wrote about women.

Vij said, "As far as Bhupinder Singh Hooda raising the



Punjabi issue, I want to ask him, where was he when the partition of India happened, and people wandered homeless? Where was Congress then?" Additionally, he said, "I want to point out that those people came from India to India itself, but Congress did not treat them the way they should have been treated."

When asked about the welcome extended by Central Minister Manohar Lal Khat-

tar regarding the possibility of Kumari Selja joining, Vij said, one does not respond to mere possibilities, but if Manohar Lal Ji is saying something, then there must be something to it.

In response to another question regarding Congress accusing BJP of granting bail to Kejriwal to cut into Congress's vote bank, Vij said, Congress is cutting its own vote bank because Congress is a congregation of various

factions. All these factions are standing against each other, either directly or indirectly, in several constituencies, cutting into each other's votes. This way, Congress is destroying its own vote bank. Regarding the ongoing campaigning in the Ambala Cantt Assembly constituency and the continuous engagement of people, Vij said this time, the election in Ambala Cantt is a historic one. This election is between those who talk and those who work, and people are appreciating the work.

Vij said, if anyone has done as much work here as I have, let them come forward. On the other hand, the other party and Congress have ruled for 50 years—if they have done even one project, let them show it. All the projects have been approved and completed by me, and that is why people are supporting those who work.

Hooda assured: Congress govt will open Shambhu border for farmers

***Give legal guarantee of MSP & assured to build IMT in Ambala to boost industry**

SATISH HANDA Ambala

Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupendra Singh Hooda on Monday said the Congress would open the Shambhu border for farmers after it forms the government in the state. He stated that the Congress would start an IMT at Ambala to boost industrial and employment growth in the region.

Addressing an election rally on Monday, Hooda said BJP has no faith in democracy. "This dictatorial government first imposed three anti-farmer laws and then used lathes and fired bullets on farmers, when they opposed these laws. Roads were dug to stop the farmers and even now the Haryana government has stopped the farmers at Shambhu border. Due to this, traders are also suffering huge losses. He said when the Congress government is formed, Shambhu border will be opened and farmers will be given legal guarantees of MSP. At the same time, Rahul Gandhi is fighting for the demand of implementing the Swaminathan Commission report for the farmers at the



Center," he added.

During this, Congress state president Chaudhary Udaibhan, Ambala MP Varun Mullana, Congress candidate from Ambala city Nirmal Singh, candidate from Mullana Pooja Chaudhary, candidate from Yamunanagar Raman Tyagi and former Punjab minister Bijendra Singla also addressed the public meeting and appealed to the people for votes. Hooda said Ambala had neither a sewer system, nor a stadium nor walkable roads before the formation of the Congress government. "The Congress government established all the facilities in Ambala. Now our goal is to establish IMT here to take Ambala forward from an industrial point of view. With the establishment of IMT, new employment opportunities will develop in Ambala. Along with this, the seven guarantees given by the Congress till now will be

fulfilled. BJP is raising the question that where will the budget come from. First of all, the BJP should tell where they bring the budget from, because BJP has copied the manifesto of Congress," he questioned, saying Congress promises that when it forms the government, it will give women an honorarium of Rs 2000. Along with this, Rs 6,000 old age pension, gas cylinder for Rs 500, 2 lakh permanent recruitment on merit and OBC's creamy layer will be increased to Rs 10 lakh.

On this occasion, Congress State President Ch. Udaibhan said we have to take answers from the BJP people as to why they stopped the farmers at the border for 13 months. "Who is responsible for the martyrdom of 750 farmers? Farmers were stopped at Shambhu border and attacked with drones and rubber bullets.

Family Politics : How Haryana's Veterans are Shaping the Future of Thier Children

In Haryana, political dynasties are in full force, with veteran leaders playing pivotal roles in the campaigns of their successors.

TARUN BHAJINI Chandigarh

As Haryana gears up for the October 5th elections, the battleground is witnessing an influx of next-generation politicians. Behind these fresh faces, however, stand political heavyweights—veteran leaders who are actively directing their children's campaigns, strategizing, and ensuring that the family's political legacy is carried forward. In many cases, these new entrants are mere figureheads, while their experienced parents are handling the ground-level operations, from rallies to voter outreach. The upcoming election will determine which among these political heirs manage to establish themselves, and who might fade from the scene.

Naina Chautala's Drive for Dushyant Chautala

Former Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala is contesting once again from



the Uchana Kalan seat. With the added responsibility of managing his party's campaigns across the state, much of his personal election effort has fallen to his mother, Naina Chautala. A seasoned campaigner herself, Naina is diligently traveling through villages, particularly focusing on connecting with women voters. She has taken complete charge of Dushyant's campaign, with occasional help from his father, Dr. Ajay Singh Chautala.

Randeep Surjewala's Full-Scale Effort for Aditya

Aditya Surjewala, running for office from Kaithal on a Congress ticket, is another

new face in this election. However, the driving force behind his campaign is none other than his father, Raja Sabha MP Randeep Singh Surjewala. From devising election strategies to rallying votes in every village and city street, Randeep has taken complete control of the campaign. His commitment is so intense that he reportedly manages just three hours of sleep each day.

Birendra Singh's Determination for Brijendra Singh

Chaudhary Birendra Singh, a former Union Minister, may have announced his retirement from active politics, but his dedication to securing a

political future for his son remains undeterred. Brijendra Singh, contesting from Uchana on a Congress ticket, is the beneficiary of both his father's and mother's full support. Birendra and his wife, Prem Lata, are engaged in a tireless campaign to drum up support, attending village meetings, addressing concerns of disgruntled voters, and canvassing in every corner of the constituency.

Kiran Choudhary and Ranbir Mahendra in a Legacy Battle

In Tosham, a fierce battle over the legacy of Chaudhary Bansilal is playing out. BJP's Kiran Choudhary is campaigning hard for her daughter, Shruti Choudhary, while Ranbir Mahendra is leading the charge for his son, Anirudh Choudhary, who is the Congress candidate. Both families are working tirelessly to mobilize voters and claim the political legacy of the region.

Ajay Yadav and Rao Inderjit's Push for Their Children

Ajay Yadav is overseeing the campaign for his son, Chiranjeev Rao, the Congress candidate for Rewari. Drawing from his deep un-

derstanding of local political dynamics, Ajay is actively uniting long-time supporters and workers behind his son's candidacy. Similarly, Union Minister Rao Inderjit Singh is campaigning vigorously for his daughter, Aarti Rao, who is contesting from Ateli on a BJP ticket. Both leaders are fully committed to ensuring victory for their children.

Nirmal Singh Distanced from Chitra Sarwara's Campaign

One of the few exceptions to this trend of parental involvement is the case of former minister Nirmal Singh and his daughter, Chitra Sarwara. After her Congress ticket from Ambala Cantonment was canceled, Chitra is now contesting as an independent candidate from Ambala City. Both father and daughter are running separate campaigns, with Nirmal unable to assist Chitra due to their differing political paths.

As these senior politicians continue to push for their successors, the electorate's decision on October 5th will reveal whether the next generation can live up to their family legacies, or if they will face an early exit from the political arena.

Karnataka High Court Dismisses CM Siddaramaiah's Petition

Bengaluru Court Orders Lokayukta Probe in MUDA Scam Case

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

In a significant legal and political development, the Karnataka High Court has dismissed Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's petition challenging Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot's approval to prosecute him in connection with alleged irregularities in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case. The allegations revolve around the allocation of 14 prime sites in Mysuru city to Siddaramaiah's wife, raising concerns of corruption.

The High Court's ruling came after anti-corruption activists T.J. Abraham, Snehamayi Krishna, and Pradeep Kumar sought the Governor's sanction to pursue legal action against Siddaramaiah



under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. Section 17A mandates approval from a competent authority before an inquiry or investigation into a public servant can proceed. Siddaramaiah had contested the Governor's decision, arguing it was made hastily in just 20 days, while similar requests for investigations against BJP ministers had been pending for over two years. However, Justice

M. Nagaprassanna of the Karnataka High Court dismissed this argument, affirming that the Governor's order was based on detailed reasoning recorded in the files, even if not included in the final order.

The court also emphasized the Governor's ability to act independently in exceptional circumstances, which it deemed applicable in this case. While the Governor usually acts under the

advice of the Council of Ministers, the High Court upheld that the sanction was lawful and valid, enabling the investigation to move forward.

Further escalating the legal challenge, just a day after the High Court's ruling, a Bengaluru court directed the Lokayukta police to conduct an investigation into Siddaramaiah over the alleged irregularities in the MUDA site allotments. Special Court Judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat ordered the probe, marking a crucial step in the case. This decision has intensified scrutiny of the Karnataka Chief Minister's involvement in the land grant controversy.

Responding to the court's directive, Siddaramaiah expressed his readiness to face the inquiry. "I am not afraid of a probe," he told reporters. "I am ready for a legal fight. I had said this yesterday, and I am reiterating it today as well."

'Yuva Halla Bol' merges with Congress



KAVITA SHARMA
New Delhi

The national president of 'Yuva Halla Bol' and prominent social worker Anupam, along with several other members of the youth movement, have joined the Congress party now.

The team members were inducted into the Congress by party General Secretary

Organization KC Venugopal in presence of the Chairman of the AICC Media and Publicity Pawan Khera and Bihar Congress president Akhilesh Prasad Singh.

Welcoming Anupam into the Congress, Khera said his team has raised the issues concerning the youth like unemployment, which have also been raised by the Congress party. He said Anupam

expressed confidence in the leadership of Rahul Gandhi as he was raising the real issues concerning the public.

Speaking on the occasion, Anupam said, right now there were two forces prevailing in the country; on the one side were the forces bent upon selling the country and dividing its people while on the other hand there were the forces aiming to protect the country and keep it united.

He said it was the Congress party and its leader Rahul Gandhi who were defending and protecting the country against the authoritarian and dictatorial forces and that was the reason that his team decided to join the Congress.

Along with Anupam, other prominent members of the team, including Prashant Kamal, Govind Mishra, Rajat Yadav and Rishav Ranjan also joined the Congress today.

J&K polls: Vote for your rights & prosperity, says Rahul Gandhi



NEW DELHI: As the second phase of polling was underway in Jammu and Kashmir, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi urged the people to come out in large numbers and exercise their vote. In a post on X, he wrote that people must come out in large numbers to vote for their rights and prosperity.

"My brothers and sisters of Jammu and Kashmir, today is the second phase of voting, come out in large numbers and vote for your rights, prosperity and blessings - Vote for INDIA." Gandhi attacked the Centre for downgrading J&K to the UT status and promised to restore the statehood. He further wrote on X in Hindi (translated as): "By snatching your statehood from you, the BJP government has insulted you and played with your constitutional rights. Your every vote given to INDIA will break this maze of injustice created by BJP and bring Jammu and Kashmir on the path of prosperity." Rahul Gandhi will be addressing two rallies in the UT on Wednesday — one in Jammu and the other in Kashmir. He will first hold an interaction after he arrives in Jammu with professionals at the Radisson Hotel in the city. The interaction will start around 11.25 a.m. After the interaction, Gandhi will address a Congress campaign rally at JK Resort ground in Jammu at 12.30 p.m.

BJP demands Siddaramaiah's resignation after HC dismisses his plea challenging Guv order



Karnataka BJP on Tuesday demanded Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's resignation after the High Court dismissed his petition challenging Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot's approval for an investigation against him in a site allotment case.

The party's state chief B Y Vijayendra noted that the HC has ruled that the Governor's permission is as per law.

"I request the Chief Minister to keep aside his charges against the Governor, respect the High Court order and, since there are allegations that your (Chief Minister's) family is involved in the MUDA (site allotment) scam, you should respectfully resign your position as Chief Minister," he said.

The Chief Minister had challenged the approval given by the Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot for an investigation against him in the alleged irregularities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) in a prime locality. After completing the hearings on the petition in six sittings from August 19, the single judge bench of Justice M Nagaprassanna on September 12 reserved its verdict.

The Governor on August 16 accorded sanction under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, for the commission of the alleged offences as mentioned in the petitions submitted to him by complainants Pradeep Kumar S P, T.J. Abraham and Snehamayi Krishna.

EPFO adds highest-ever 19.94 lakh members in July, surge in 1st-time job seekers

NEW DELHI: The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) added 19.94 lakh net members in the month of July, marking the highest recorded increase since payroll data tracking began in April 2018, data from the Ministry of Labour and Employment showed on Monday.

The EPFO added 10.52 lakh new members in July, a 2.66 per cent increase over June and a 2.43 per cent rise compared to the same month last year.

The surge in new memberships can be attributed to growing employment opportunities, increased awareness of employee benefits, and EPFO's successful outreach programmes, said Union Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya.

About 14.65 lakh members who had exited the system rejoined EPFO in July. This fig-



ure represents a 15.25 per cent year-over-year increase. These members opted to transfer their provident fund accumulations rather than withdraw them, thus maintaining their long-term financial security.

The highest growth was observed in the 18-25 age group, with 8.77 lakh net additions in July.

Nearly 3.05 lakh new female members joined EPFO in July, reflecting a year-over-year growth of 10.94 per cent. In total, 4.41 lakh net female members were added, marking the highest monthly addition for women since payroll tracking began, with a 14.41 per cent increase compared to July 2023.

As per the ministry, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Gujarat accounted for 59.27 per cent of the total net member additions, collectively adding 11.82 lakh members. Maharashtra led among the states/UTs, contributing 20.21 per cent of the total new members, the data showed. Notably, 38.91 per cent of net additions came from expert services, including manpower suppliers, contractors, and security services, among others.

Democracy was also European concept: P Chidambaram flays TN Guv for 'secularism not Indian' quip

CHENNAI: Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister, P Chidambaram on Tuesday came out strongly against Tamil Nadu Governor, R.N. Ravi for saying there was 'no need for secularism in India'.

P Chidambaram in a post on social media platform X said, "Having draped Tiruvalluvar in a saffron robe, the Governor of Tamil Nadu has now discovered that secularism was a European concept and it has no place in India. He is not correct, but assume he is right."

The senior leader added, "Federalism was also a European concept. Shall we declare that Federalism has no place in India? One person, one vote was also a European concept. Shall we declare that some people will have no right to vote? Democracy was also a



European concept not known to India that was ruled by maharajas and rajas. Shall we declare that democracy will be jettisoned in this country?" P Chidambaram further said that Constitutional functionaries, especially those who hold titular positions, should take a vow of silence.

It may be recalled that R.N. Ravi had in a public function at Kanyakumari on Sunday said that secularism was a European concept and was

not relevant in India.

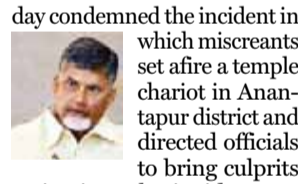
Governor Ravi had said, "A lot of frauds have been committed on the people of this country, and one of them is they have tried to give a wrong interpretation of secularism."

The Governor had said, "What does secularism mean? Secularism is a European concept, and it is not an Indian concept. In Europe, secularism came because there was a fight between the Church and the king... How can India be away from 'dharma'? Secularism is a European concept and let it be there only. In India, there is no need for secularism."

Congress leader and Member of Parliament from Virudhunagar constituency Manickam Tagore had also come out against Ravi on this statement.

Andhra CM Chandrababu Naidu Condemns Burning of Temple Chariot

AMARAVATI: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday condemned the incident in which miscreants set afire a temple chariot in Anantapur district and directed officials to bring culprits to justice.



The incident occurred in Hanakanahal village of Kanekal mandal in the early hours of Tuesday. Unidentified miscreants set the chariot in the Ram temple. The chariot was completely burnt by the time fire services personnel reached there. The police said they were investigating the case and were trying to identify the culprits with the help of CCTV footage in the vicinity. The Chief Minister has strongly condemned the heinous act of setting fire to the temple chariot.

SGPC delegation meet Meghalaya Govt's Chief Secretary at Shillong



Memorandum handed over to stop demolition of 200-year-old Gurdwara Sahib in Punjabi Colony in Shillong

JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

A delegation of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) today met the Mr. Donald Phillips Wahlang, Chief Secretary of the Government of Meghalaya and submitted a memorandum to immediately stop the proceeding of demolition of 200-year-old Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar located at the Punjabi Colony in Bara Bazar of Shillong by the state government.

In a statement issued here today, staged that recently, Gurjit Singh, President of Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar had approached the SGPC and Secretariat Akal Takht Sahib (highswt Sikh temporal seat) and informed that a high-level committee of the Meghalaya government had recommended the demolition of the concerned Gurdwara Sahib and other religious places located at Punjabi Colony in Bara Bazar, Shillong. Due to this, there was a severe resentment in the Sikh community in Shillong and across the country. Gurjit Singh had demanded that by intervening in this matter, action should be taken to keep the Gurdwara Sahib safe at the Punjabi colony site in Bara Bazar. Acting on

this, according to the guidelines of SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhami, a delegation comprising SGPC General Secretary Rajinder Singh Mehta, SGPC Member Advocate Bhagwant Singh Sialka and additional secretary Gurinder Singh Mathrewal reached Shillong to hold talks with the Meghalaya Government and strongly raised the voice of the local Sikhs.

Sharing information in this regard, SGPC General Secretary Rajinder Singh Mehta said that the Chief Secretary of the Meghalaya Government has been informed about the entire situation and it is expected from the state government it will stop the proceedings of recommended demolition immediately while respecting the sentiments of the Sikhs. He said that the primary duty of the government is to protect the religious sentiments of the people of every religion and community living in the state. He said that the case of demolition of the houses of the Sikh families living at Punjabi Lane in Shillong has been long pending and the Meghalaya government should continue the negotiation process to reach a mutually acceptable agreement while protecting the housing rights of the local Sikhs.

On this occasion, the convener of Save Shillong Sikhs organization Prof Jagmohan Singh and local Sikh representatives were also present.

Odisha govt battles for police torture controversy



ARABINDA MOHAPATRA
Bhubaneswar

The BJP government in Odisha is battling a major controversy following allegations of a woman and her fiancé, an Army officer, being subjected to violence and physical abuse at a police station in Bhubaneswar. The issue has triggered a nationwide furore with National Commission for Women (NCW) intervening in the matter and even the Army taking note of it. Five police personnel have been suspended and a Crime Branch probe into the incident has been ordered. Seven hooligans who chased the car of the couple forcing them to seek police help have also been nabbed but public uproar over the incident is far from subsiding. The woman, who is daughter of a retired Brigadier, told media-persons that she was molested, kicked and dragged through the corridors of Bharatpur police station where the couple had gone on September 15 night seeking help after being chased by a gang of hooligans.

Pakistan deeply pained at witnessing celebration of democracy in J&K, says Rajnath Singh

JAMMU: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday that Pakistan has started feeling deep pain and anguish after witnessing the festival of democracy (holding of elections and turnout of voters) in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a BJP poll campaign rally in Poonch, Rajnath Singh said: "After seeing the great festival of democracy being celebrated in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan has started feeling deep pain and anguish. We don't want to have bad relations with Pakistan. We want to have friendly relations with all our neighbours. But, Pakistan has internal problems and to divert attention from their internal problems, Pakistan continues to do unholy acts against India.

"Pakistan defence minister said recently that the National Conference (NC) and Congress will get back Article 370. What right does Pakistan have to comment on our democratic process? There was 61 per cent voting in the first phase of Jammu and Kashmir elections. This has hap-



pened after decades." The veteran Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said that the world has been watching everything, while realising that India's decision to abrogate Article 370 was justified and is in the interest of the people in Jammu and Kashmir.

"I salute the people of Jammu and Kashmir for raising the flag of democracy so high that the world is clearly seeing it. I have been in politics for a long time. For 35 years, I have either been an MLA or in the Parliament. I can assure you if you elect BJP candidate, Abdul Ghani Choudhary from this assembly constituency, he will give a powerful voice to you and help solve your problems," he said. The Union Minister further said that "today, many members of our Sikh community have joined the BJP". "I can say with pride that whenever there was a challenge to the sovereignty of the country, our Sikh brothers have defended the pride and glory of India," he said.

Criticising the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Rajnath Singh said: "These NC and PDP leaders are telling you that they will restore Article 370.

They don't have the power to restore Article 370. They are throwing dust into your eyes. I believe that politics should be clean and such that you can look into the eyes of the people and say what you have to say.

"Refugees came here from West Pakistan, many of them were Muslims. NC, PDP and Congress governments did not give them the right to vote, they deprived the Valmiki Samaj people also of their right to vote. I want to make it clear that we would not allow Article 370 to be restored. Jammu and Kashmir has suffered heavily due to Article 370. Almost 80 per cent of the people killed in terrorism have been our Muslim brothers.

"When Article 370 was there, the Constitution of the country did not apply to Jammu and Kashmir in letter and spirit. Today, the Constitution of the country applies to Jammu and Kashmir in letter and spirit. Nobody can now stop us from unfurling the Tricolour in Lal Chowk," the Defence Minister said.

Urging the voters to support

the BJP, the Defence Minister further said: "You elect our government in Jammu and Kashmir, and we promise to make it the most developed state of the country. When the people of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir look at the changes in Jammu and Kashmir, they say we want to join Jammu and Kashmir. We always welcome them, we never think of whether they are Muslims or of any other religion.

"To divide people on these lines is the work of NC, PDP and Congress. These politicians belonging to three families have destroyed Jammu and Kashmir. However, I have seen strong love and affection for Jammu and Kashmir in the heart of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. He will never allow Jammu and Kashmir to be destroyed. "Late-former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee once stressed 'Insaniyat, Jamhooriyat and Kashmiriyat' but the politicians of these three families always think about 'politics, politics and politics'," Rajnath Singh said.

Strict action should be taken against Odisha police officers accused of sexually assaulting daughter of a Sikh army officer - Dhami



JAGMOHAN SINGH
Amritsar

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhami condemned the sexual assault on the daughter of a Sikh army officer in a police station in Bhubaneswar in Odisha and demanded strict action against the guilty police officers from the state government. Advocate Dhami said that many tragic incidents have happened to women in the country, but the govern-

ments are not paying serious attention to the same.

In a statement issued here today, he said that according to the information received through media, the lawyer daughter of a Sikh army officer who protects the country goes to the police station to complain against mischievous elements who are chasing her, but the police officers who had the responsibility to protect her, abused the daughter, which is a very serious matter.

The SGPC President said that the job of the police

administration is to protect the lives and property of the people, but when the police officers, instead of performing their duties, only insult the people who have brought complaints, where will justice come from? He said that soldiers are performing duty at the borders to protect the country and it is more embarrassing for the government that such an incident took place with their family.

Dhami asked the Odisha government to take immediate strict action against the concerned police officers and punish them.

He sought intervention of Union Home Minister Amit Shah in this matter and asked that concrete steps be taken to stop such unfortunate occurrences, because it is often seen that injustice towards Sikhs is increasing in the country. He said that the Home Minister should direct the state government to take action against the accused police officers.



Ruling protects speech; prevents govt overreach

The recent ruling by the Bombay High Court, striking down the Centre's move to create a 'fact-checking unit' for removing 'fake, false, or misleading' information from digital platforms, is a significant win for free speech. In a 2:1 judgment, Justice A.S. Chandurkar agreed with Justice G.S. Patel, who had earlier ruled that the provision violated the right to freedom of expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. The fact-checking unit, introduced in 2023, aimed to flag content deemed false or misleading, forcing platforms to take it down or face losing their 'safe harbour' protection. This protection shields them from liability for third-party content. However, the rule raised concerns about censorship and control over media, particularly for journalists and political satirists. The court's primary concern was the lack of clear definitions for terms such as 'fake,' 'false,' or 'misleading,' leaving room for subjective interpretations. Furthermore, the provision applied only to information concerning the central government, raising questions about fairness and selective scrutiny. The judgment underscores that truth or falsity alone is not a constitutionally valid ground to restrict free speech, as outlined in Article 19(2), which lists specific conditions under which speech may be curtailed. Justice Neela Gokhale, who dissented, argued that the rule was clear and did not inherently suppress speech, as platforms could issue disclaimers and retain safe harbour. Nevertheless, the majority opinion prevailed, reflecting the judiciary's caution against any mechanism that allows the government to regulate content about itself. While combating misinformation is critical, it should not come at the cost of fundamental freedoms or enable government overreach. This judgment emphasizes the delicate balance between regulating misinformation and preserving citizens' constitutional rights in a democracy. Now the government should not find ways to overturn the ruling, and suppress the freedom of expression right.

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R.K. VIJ EXPLAINS HOW SECTION 107 GRANTS COURTS UNCHECKED POWERS TO SEIZE PROPERTY

A provision fraught with practical problems

The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, introduced Section 107, which deals with properties which are "proceeds of crime". Until recently, this term was known by its mention either in the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, or in the chapter, 'Reciprocal Arrangements for Assistance in Certain Matters and Procedure for Attachment and Forfeiture of Property', under the erstwhile Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). While the provisions of attachment of property of a person absconding under Sections 82 and 83 of the CrPC are also replicated under Sections 84 and 85 of the BNSS (with some minor changes), the provision in Section 107 of the BNSS did not feature in the CrPC. Section 107 of the BNSS gives unbridled powers to the court to not only attach any property (on the request of the police during investigation), but also to forfeit the proceeds of crime to the government under certain conditions. Under this section, any police officer making an investigation, with the approval of the Superintendent of Police or the Commissioner of Police, may make an application to the court for the attachment of property if he has reason to believe that the property is derived or obtained as a result of a criminal activity. The PMLA says where an officer has reason to believe that a person is in possession of any proceeds of crime, the officer should record the reason for such belief in writing. If the officer has reason to believe at "such proceeds of crime are likely to be concealed, transferred or dealt with in any manner which may result in frustrating any proceedings relating to confiscation of such proceeds of crime, he may, by order in writing, provisionally attach such prop-



erty for a period not exceeding 90 days." There is no such condition prescribed under Section 107 of the BNSS. Further, while the property may be attached by an authorised officer only after forwarding the report to a magistrate under Section 173 of the CrPC (i.e., on completion of investigation), the property under Section 107 of the BNSS may be attached during the investigation itself. The PMLA provides that the property involved in money laundering shall be disposed of by the Adjudicating Authority only on the conclusion of a trial of the offence. However, Section 107 of the BNSS is silent about the stage of disposal of such property. It says that if the court or magistrate "finds the attached or seized properties to be the proceeds of crime", it shall order the District Magistrate "to rateably distribute such proceeds of crime to the persons who are affected by such crime". In case there are no claimants or there is any surplus after satisfying the claimants, such proceeds of crime shall stand forfeited to the government. An entire chapter of the BNSS deals with the disposal of property. These provisions replicate the CrPC provisions except that Section 497 of the BNSS mandates the court or the magistrate to take a photo or video of the property to enable these to be used as evidence during trial or inquiry. The Supreme Court in *Sunderbhai Ambalal Desai v. State of Gujarat* (2003) had dealt with the jurisdiction of the court to record evidence promptly to avoid tampering, so that the police or the court would not be required to keep the article in safe custody and the owner of the article would not suffer. This chapter deals with contingencies such as the custody and disposal of property pending trial, the disposal of property at the conclusion of the trial, and restoration of possession of immovable property. Even if the property is perishable, it may be sold, but the final disposal is to be done only on the conclusion of trial or inquiry by the court. **Safeguards** Section 107 of the BNSS requires the court to issue a show-cause notice returnable within 14 days on why an order of attachment of property (i.e., proceeds of crime) shall not be made. If the person concerned does not represent his case, the court may proceed to pass the ex parte order. Further, if the court finds the attached properties to be the proceeds of the crime and it orders the District Magistrate to distribute the property to its claimants, the District Magistrate shall distribute such property within 60 days of the order. There are no guidelines for the District Magistrate to identify the claimants to do the needful. Thus, theoretically, the proceeds of crime or property may be disposed of in about three months of time, without the investigation or trial coming to an end. This section is silent about the stage at which the court or the magistrate has to take this call. Article 300A of the Constitution says "no person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law". It has been given the status of a basic human right. It is also a settled principle that "law" means a validly enacted law which is just, fair, and reasonable. There is no provision in the BNS which defines or deals with the 'proceeds of crime' except for the use of similar terms in sections dealing with 'organised crime' and 'terrorist act'. The legislative intent of introducing Section 107 in the BNSS appears to be to empower States (as the PMLA is a Central Act) to undertake expeditious disposal and distribution of the proceeds of crime to its rightful claimants. But it is fraught with legal and practical problems. While identifying the rightful claimants may not be easy for the investigating officer, final disposal of such property by the court without a proper trial does not appear to be a just, fair, and reasonable procedure.

R.K. Vij is a former Indian Police Service officer. Views are personal



PRABHASH RANJAN ON HOW AMENDING DOMESTIC LAWS BOOSTS INDIA'S DEFENCE TRADE CREDIBILITY

Defence exports versus humanitarian legislation

The Supreme Court of India, earlier this month, dismissed a public interest litigation (PIL) asking that the central government be directed to stop exporting defence equipment to Israel as Tel Aviv is allegedly committing war crimes in Gaza. The top court refused to intervene, reportedly because foreign policy is not its domain. However, the issue that the PIL raised is a normative one that goes beyond Israel. It must be clearly understood given India's aspirations to become a major defence exporting nation. It is critical to recall that quite a few countries have curbed defence exports to Israel. For instance, a court in the Netherlands ordered the Dutch government to block the export of all F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel. The basis of this order is a European Union (EU) regulation, which prohibits military equipment export to a country if there is a clear risk that the recipient country would use such equipment to violate international humanitarian law (IHL). Likewise, the United Kingdom government, acting under the Export Control Act, reviewed Israel's compliance with IHL concerning the ongoing conflict in Gaza. It concluded that there is a clear risk: if certain arms are exported to Israel, they would be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of IHL. There is no equivalent of the U.K.'s Export Control Act or the EU regulations in Indian law requiring an assessment of a country's compliance with IHL obligations in deciding whether to export defence equipment to such a country. The Indian Foreign Trade Act, 1992 (FTA) read with the Weapons of Mass Destruction and their



Interestingly, India is not a signatory to this treaty. As a result, this treaty is not binding on India and cannot be judicially incorporated, though some provisions of the ATT reflect customary international law.

The obligation
What about India's liability under the IHL? Common Article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, which is binding on India, obligates all states 'to respect and to ensure respect for' IHL. As it was held by the International Court of Justice in *Nicaragua vs United States*, this provision imposes a negative obligation on states. Thus, countries are under obligation not to supply weapons to a country 'if there is an expectation, based on facts or knowledge of past patterns, that such weapons would be used to violate the Conventions'. Scholars argue that the certainty required for the exporting state that its weapons will be used by the importing state to commit violations of the Geneva Conventions is quite high. When India's domestic laws, the WMDA and the FTA, are read in light of India's IHL obligations, a clear duty arises not to supply weapons to a country that would use them to breach its IHL obligations. But rather than deriving this obligation using international law, it would be better for India to amend the WMDA and the FTA, to explicitly assess the IHL compliance of countries importing Indian defence goods. This way, India will shore up its credibility as a responsible defence-exporting nation.

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

Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) (WMDA) Act, 2005 empowers the central government to regulate the export of designated goods relevant to India for various reasons. These reasons are listed in Sections 3(5) and 2(1) of the WMDA and FTA, respectively. In addition to things such as India's national security, an important factor listed in these sections is India's "international obligations under any bilateral, multilateral or international treaty, Covenant, Convention". In short, the central government can prohibit the export of defence goods due to India's international law obligations. This is the closest Indian law gets to connecting the export of defence goods with international law. As per India's domestic law, the central government, unlike in the U.K. and the EU countries, is not under an obligation to review the IHL compliance of the country to which India is exporting defence goods. Thus, the legal gap. The Supreme Court, in several cases, such as *Vishakha vs State of Rajasthan*, has

not just used international law to enlarge the content of domestic law but has also judicially incorporated international law to fill the vacuum created by the absence of domestic law on the subject. The current situation falls squarely in this category. This is how we need to legally frame this issue instead of making it a foreign policy topic. So, the next question is about what the international law on arms trade is and how it binds India. **International law** The most important treaty in this regard is the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), aimed at regulating international trade in conventional arms. Article 6(3) of the ATT bars a country from supplying conventional arms if it has the "knowledge" that these arms "would be used" to inter alia commit war crimes. Article 7 obligates states to assess whether the conventional arms they export would be used by the importing country to commit or facilitate a serious violation of IHL.

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 con-



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

such organisations by stating that the Board has been "committed to the role and rights of women," despite evidence to the contrary. The absence of critical engagement with the internal issues within the Muslim community, particularly the role of conservative religious leaders, is one of the book's most glaring omissions. Muslim political exclusion, as Rehman rightly points out, is a reality, but the reasons for it are not solely external. The community's focus on religious identity over political identity, as advised by leaders like Maulana Azad, has also contributed to its marginalisation. The book's failure to address this self-imposed isolation makes its overall argument less convincing. Rehman's analysis of Muslim schools mandating hijabs and skull-caps 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.

Textiles Industry to Grow to \$350 Bn by 2030, Create Up to 6 Cr Jobs: Union Minister

NEW DELHI: The Indian textiles industry is estimated to grow to \$350 billion by 2030, generating 4.5-6 crore jobs, the government said on Friday.

Setting a target of 50,000 metric tonne silk production and employment generation of 1 crore by 2030, Union Textiles Minister Giriraj Singh said cultivation of silk is linked to employment generation of farmers.

The minister further said that the Eri Sericulture Promotional Project launched in Gujarat will be expanded across the country benefiting castor farmers.

He informed that under PM MITRA (Pradhan Mantri Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel) Park, a total of Rs 70,000 crore investment is expected, resulting in the creation of 21 lakh jobs.



"Bharat Tex is a huge platform that will help India attract foreign investment in the textile sector and will help India achieve 4S — style, scale, skill and sustainability," the minister added.

As part of the government's transformative vision for the textiles sector, the ministry has

technical textile in the country as it is used in all sectors and set an export target of \$10 billion by 2030.

The global trade of technical textiles is around \$300 billion while India's domestic market size stands at \$25 billion with an export of \$2.6 billion.

Highlighting handloom and handicraft, Minister Singh said that 1 crore artisans are connected and there are efforts to organize craft village initiatives in tourist places in the country.

The ministry has approved 11 startup proposals under the component for Grant for Research and Entrepreneurship across Aspiring Innovators in Technical Textiles (GREAT) initiative under National Technical Textiles Mission. Support up to Rs 50 lakh per startup is provided under the scheme.

taken several initiatives during the first 100 days, covering all segments of textile sector (infrastructure, technical textiles, research and development, startups, empowering artisans/weavers, strengthening natural fibre sectors like silk and jute).

The minister further said that there is huge potential for

India's pharmaceutical sector projected to reach \$130 billion by 2030



NEW DELHI: India is on the cusp of a transformative era in its pharmaceutical sector which is projected to reach \$130 billion by 2030, a report showed on Thursday. The world's third-largest drug producer by volume, India is currently exporting pharmaceutical products to over 200 countries, establishing its influence in the global pharmaceutical arena, according to a Deloitte's whitepaper launched at the ASSOCHAM's annual pharma summit here. The paper highlighted India's potential to transform from a leading generic drug producer to a powerhouse of pharmaceutical innovation, driven by advancements in research, regulatory reforms, and strategic global partnerships.

50 new plants will be completed in two years under the PLI scheme: Dr. Arunish Chawla

NEW DELHI: The upcoming 50 new plants in the PLI scheme will be completed in the next two years. More than 50 new greenfield manufacturing plants for pharmaceuticals and medical devices have already been completed. The PLI plants have catalyzed 10 billion dollars of exports from India to countries with the highest regulatory standards, said Dr. Arunish Chawla, Secretary Department of Pharmaceuticals Government of India at Annual Pharma Summit 2024 organized by ASSOCHAM today at New Delhi.

While addressing the event, Dr. Arunish Chawla, Secretary Department of Pharmaceuticals said, many reforms have been done in both the regulatory framework and in the schemes. We are working very hard to upgrade the quality framework for all pharma and drug units. We want to make India not just a pharmacy of the world, but a reliable pharmacy of the world. The all-big pharma companies, global and multina-



tional companies are now expanding their footprint and their business in India and also locating their value chains here.

In addition to that, a huge number of CRDMO (Contract Research Manufacturing and Development Organizations) are coming up in India. Our innovation and regulatory framework are also reforming incrementally. India is already called the pharmacy of the world. We want to be the reliable pharmacy

of the world, so we are focusing on quality, that's our mission. We have upgraded our regulatory frameworks. In addition to that, we are moving from the generics to the biosimilar space.

Dr. Arunish Chawla further highlighted that we are the third largest producer of drugs and pharmaceuticals by volume. Drugs and Pharma and Meditech is the fourth largest merchandise export from India. Nine out of top 25 generic firms

India set to host its 1st World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly next month

NEW DELHI: World telecom leader, experts and academia from more than 190 countries are set to attend the 10-day World Telecom Standardisation Assembly (WTSA2024) in India next month, as the country becomes a global leader in telecom-related technologies.

The 'WTSA 2024' is being held for the first time in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) history of 150 years in the national capital from October 14-24.

According to DoT, India hosting the 'WTSA-2024' is an opportunity to influence the global telecom agenda as we prepare for advancements like 6G and beyond.

Now, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has set the ball rolling by launching the WTSA 2024 Outreach Sessions. Scheduled in Delhi, Hy-



derabad, and Bengaluru, the outreach sessions aim to provide a distinctive platform to students for learning and direct engagement with industry experts, fostering meaningful interactions and knowledge exchange.

On Friday, the outreach sessions were held at Delhi Technical University (Delhi), Indian Institute of Science (Bangalore) and Indian Institute of Information Technology (Hyderabad).

Prominent members from ITU, National Communication Academy, Telecom Engineering centre, senior professors

and leading experts from the telecom industry engaged students in discussions about the WTSA, ITU, and the critical role of telecom standards in fostering global connectivity and innovation.

The sessions emphasised how standardisation supports the deployment of technologies like 5G and the upcoming 6G, ensuring interoperability and influencing the future of global telecommunications.

The event was attended by more than 500 students across the three institutes, in addition to more than 450 participants joining virtually.

The DoT also launched the 5G-6G Hackathon 2024, designed to identify and promote innovations and applications tailored to India's unique needs, fostering the development of next-generation telecom technologies.

Avi Ansh Textile's IPO Performance Surges on NSE



NEW DELHI: Shares of Avi Ansh Textile debuted impressively on the National Stock Exchange (NSE), trading at Rs 71.40, reflecting a notable premium of 15.16 per cent over its issue price of Rs 62.

The stock initially listed at Rs 68, marking a 9.68 per cent gain over the initial public offering (IPO) price. Currently, the shares are frozen at the upper limit of 5 per cent above the listing price, indicating strong investor confidence. The counter demonstrated volatility during the trading session, hitting a high of Rs 71.40 and a low of Rs 64.60. Approximately 23.80 lakh shares exchanged hands, highlighting robust trading activity following the IPO.

Avi Ansh Textile's IPO, which opened for bidding on September 20 and closed on September 24, garnered significant interest, being subscribed 8.06 times. The IPO consisted of a fresh issue of 41,93,541 shares, which has resulted in a dilution of the promoter and promoter group shareholding from 95.67 per cent pre-IPO to 66.98 per cent post-IPO. The Punjab-based manufacturer specialises in producing 100 per cent cotton yarn, including combed and carded varieties across various counts.

The company caters to both domestic and international markets, providing a diverse range of yarns and fabrics tailored to meet the needs of its clientele.

As of March 31, 2024, Avi Ansh Textile reported revenue from operations of Rs 141.38 crore and a net profit of Rs 3.31 crore, showcasing a stable financial performance amid a competitive landscape.

The proceeds from the IPO are earmarked for several strategic initiatives, including the repayment of term loans, funding working capital requirements, and general corporate purposes.

UP MSMEs Demand Conversion of 46,500 Acres of Leasehold Industrial Land to Freehold

LUCKNOW: Industrialists in Uttar Pradesh, particularly those from the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector, are urging the state government to convert nearly 46,500 acres of leasehold industrial land into freehold.

These parcels, spread across 156 industrial areas and promoted by the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA), are considered crucial for bolstering the state's industrial landscape.

Business leaders argue that converting these leasehold lands into freehold will unlock their full potential, contributing to initiatives like 'Ease of Doing Manufacturing' and 'Make in UP'. Neeraj Singhal, national president of the Indian Industries Association (IIA), emphasised that this move could significantly propel Uttar Pradesh's ambitious goal of achieving a USD 1 trillion economy.

"The leasehold law dates back to the British colonial era and was introduced to promote industrial growth in India," said Singhal.



"It is time we shed this outdated law for faster industrial development in UP." A formal request has already been submitted to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to expedite the process. Singhal also pointed out that other states, such as Haryana, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, have already adopted freehold policies, facilitating faster industrial growth.

Uttar Pradesh did introduce a policy for converting industrial land to freehold in 2016, but it only applied to units larger than a hectare, leaving micro and small industries ineligible.

Converting leasehold land to freehold could generate significant revenue for the state—estimated at nearly Rs 50,000 crore—through fees and levies.

Indian Pharmaceutical Companies: Investment in R&D for "Jai Anusandhan"



DR. ANIL KUMAR ANGRISH **AJAY SHAM PAWAR**

Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw called for more investment in Research and Development (R&D) so as to drive innovation while addressing Global Bio-India 2024 event on September 12, 2024. R&D is a key component of slogan of new India — 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan' of which 'Jai Anusandhan' was added by Prime Minister Modi in his speech during Indian Science Congress 2019, 'Jai Vigyan' was added by Atal Bihari Vajpayee and 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' was the slogan given by Lal Bahadur Shastri. In pharmaceutical sector, R&D results into creation of new drugs and technologies. It is through investment in R&D that Indian pharmaceutical companies can grow in value terms as Indian pharmaceutical industry has established itself as one of the largest pharmaceutical manufacturers of generic drugs.

Multiple studies have shown that R&D expenditure has positive impact on the financial performance of pharmaceutical companies. In financial literature, cost accounting textbooks, R&D is still treated as a 'discretionary expense', i.e., the cost which can be curtailed or eliminated altogether in the short-run without affecting current revenues, and this cost is not tied to operations. But in pharmaceutical sector, new drugs or innovative products, or innovative technologies do not come up in short-run, and require consistent efforts for long-term. Current revenue for R&D intensive pharmaceutical companies is attributed to their past R&D

expenditure and efforts. A Lancet study (August 2024) based on examination of 81 projects found that the median development time from first-in-human study initiation to obtaining marketing authorisation was 7.3 years.

Role of R&D expenditure in innovations and IP creation is recognized by companies across the sectors, e.g., Sindh Gangadhara, MD & Head of Customer Innovation Services, SAP Labs India recently stated that India is the largest R&D hub outside of their headquarters, and approximately 40% of their global R&D workforce is based in India, developing innovations for the world. In terms of creation of Intellectual Property (IP) of the global patents filed by SAP originate from SAP Labs India. Pharmaceutical sector is not an exception.

R&D expenditure of top pharmaceutical companies in India in last five years shows a positive trend in absolute rupee terms but it is not consistent if we observe R&D expenditure as a percentage of total revenue of these companies. Of course, there are multiple factors which affect R&D expenditure, e.g., increase in revenue, company's priorities, tax incentives for investment in R&D, etc. R&D spending in absolute rupee terms and as a percentage of total revenue are considered key measures when we see long-term play. Many persons attribute low R&D expenditure to 'trader mentality' as a cultural phenomenon too. It is also relevant to note that Indian pharmaceutical companies are relatively small if we compare these companies with their global counterparts. Top Indian pharmaceutical firms invest less than 10 per cent of sales in R&D whereas this percentage is in mid-teens for top global pharmaceutical companies.

Sun Pharma which holds numero uno position in Indian pharmaceutical industry spent Rs. 22,489 mn in 2017-18 and for next four years, amount spend on R&D was below that



level, i.e., Rs. 19,847 mn in 2018-19, Rs. 19,736 mn in 2019-20, Rs. 21,499 mn in 2021-22, and Rs. 22,194 mn in 2022-23. Decline in R&D expenditure can be attributed to pandemic for about two years. In 2022-23, R&D expenditure has crossed the level of 2017-18 for the company. Increase in R&D expenditure was not even sufficient to factor the inflation during this period. R&D expenditure as a percentage of total revenue in 2022-23 became 5.5 per cent in comparison to 8.6 per cent in 2017-18.

Similar trend is visible for Cipla which spent Rs. 17,040 Mn in 2017-18 and till 2022-23, it could not touch that level. R&D expenditure in 2018-2019 was Rs. 17,040 mn, Rs. 11,750 mn in 2019-20, Rs. 9,240 mn in 2020-21, Rs. 11,220 in 2021-22, and Rs. 13,440 in 2022-23. R&D expense as a percentage of total revenue exhibited a downward trend. In percentage terms, it stood 7.1 per cent in 2017-2018, and increased to 7.4 per cent in 2018-19 but declined thereafter for three years, thereby touching 6.9 per cent in 2019-2020, 4.8 per cent in 2020-21, and 4.8 per cent in 2021-22. Marginal increase was there in 2022-23 when it touched 5.16 per cent.

The trend becomes a concern when top pharmaceutical companies are not able to maintain consistency in R&D expense in absolute rupee terms by considering inflation factor as well as R&D expenditure as a percentage of total revenue. Top ten pharmaceutical companies based

on the market capitalization as of March 2024 were: Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, Cipla, Divi's Labs, Zydus Lifesciences, Dr. Reddy's Labs, Torrent Pharma, Lupin, Aurobindo Pharma, Alkem Labs, and Ipca Labs. Hence, observing their R&D expenditure pattern is relevant to the context.

For Divi's Labs, R&D expenditure in rupee terms has shown upward trend in last five years. In 2018-19, R&D expenditure was Rs. 379.4 mn which went up to Rs. 394.5 mn in 2019-20, Rs. 512.6 mn in 2020-21, Rs. 590.5 mn in 2021-22, and Rs. 693.4 mn in 2022-23. But R&D expenditure as a percentage of total revenue showed a decline from 1.12 per cent in 2017-18, 0.78 per cent in 2018-19, and going down to 0.66 per cent in 2021-22. It has increased to 0.91 per cent in 2022-23 but it is still less than the level that the company had in 2017-18 at 1.12 per cent.

Zydus Lifesciences spent Rs. 6,900 mn in R&D during 2017-18 which increased to Rs. 7,482 mn in 2018-2019, Rs. 8,501 mn in 2019-20, and touched Rs. 9,184 mn in 2020-21. In 2021-22, it declined to Rs. 8,346 mn, and further declined to Rs. 8,148 mn in 2022-23. Similar trend is reflected in the R&D expenditure as a percent of total revenue which was 5.71 per cent in 2017-18, 5.91 per cent in 2019-20, 6.06 per cent in 2020-21. In 2021-22, R&D expenditure as a percentage of revenue stood at 5.44 per cent, and further declined to 4.67 per cent in 2022-23.

are located in India. And going forward, our contribution to humankind will increase.

We are improving our innovation framework. We have already taken a large number of reforms. Some of these reforms have been notified. A Scheme for Promotion of Research and Innovation in Pharma MedTech Sector (PRIP) has been launched and going forward, this ecosystem will energize further, said Dr. Chawla.

In the closing year, India exported as much bulk drugs as it imported from abroad. Last year, more than 50% of the drug and pharma produced in the country was exported. In the closing year, in the surgical and consumable space, the Indian Meditech industry exported more than what the country imported. In other rising sunrise sectors like imaging devices, body implants, in vitro diagnostics (IVDs), achieved double digit growth and exports grew more than double digits.

Dr. Reddy's Labs has shown positive trend in R&D expenditure over a period of four years. The company spent Rs. 15,410 mn in 2019-20, Rs. 16,541 mn in 2020-21, Rs. 17,482 mn in 2021-22, and Rs. 19,381 mn in 2022-23. For DRL too, R&D expenditure was Rs. 18,265 mn in 2017-18 which showed decline in 2018-19 to Rs. 15,607. R&D expenditure as a percentage of revenue for DRL has consistently gone down from 12.9 per cent in 2017-18 to 10.1 per cent in 2018-19, 8.7 per cent in 2020-21, 8.2 per cent in 2021-22 to 7.9 per cent in 2022-23.

For Torrent Pharma, R&D expenditure went up to Rs. 4,149.6 mn in 2022-23 from Rs. 3,693.2 mn in 2017-18. For two years, there was increase in R&D expenditure in comparison to previous year. In 2018-19, it went up to Rs. 3,980.8 mn from Rs. 3,693.2 mn. Then there was decline for 2019-20, and 2020-21. In 2021-22, there was increase in R&D expenditure when it touched the level of Rs. 4,299.8 mn. In 2022-23, there was decline in comparison to 2021-22. R&D expenditure also declined as a percentage of revenue from 8.92 per cent in 2017-18 to just 5.5 per cent in 2022-23. In percentage, R&D expenditure decline from 2017-18 onwards except for 2021-22 when it went up to 6.45 per cent.

For Lupin, there was decline in R&D expenditure in absolute rupee terms as well as in percentage terms. R&D expenditure declined from Rs. 17,749 mn in 2017-18 to Rs. 12,800 mn in 2022-23. R&D expenditure as a percentage of revenue declined from 13.1 per cent in 2017-18 to 7.9 per cent in 2022-23. In Aurobindo Pharma, R&D expenditure has gone up from Rs. 6,490 mn to Rs. 14,115 mn in 2022-23. Substantial increase was visible in 2020-21 when R&D expense increased to Rs. 15,096 mn from Rs. 7,616 mn in 2019-20. R&D expenditure as a percentage

of total revenue went up to 6.7 per cent in 2021-22 but declined to 5.7 per cent in 2022-23. For Alkem Labs, R&D expenditure increased from Rs. 3,646 mn in 2017-18 to Rs. 5,674 mn in 2021-22. From 2017-18 to 2021-22, there was upward trend, and marginal decline was there in 2022-23 when R&D expenditure declined to Rs. 5,394 mn. R&D expenditure as a percentage of total revenue remained in the range of 5.3 per cent to 6.3 per cent from 2017-18 to 2021-22 and it declined to 4.7 per cent in 2022-23 as it declined in absolute rupee terms too. For Ipca Labs, R&D expenditure increased from Rs. 893.5 mn in 2018-19 to Rs. 1,564.9 mn. There was decline in 2018-19 in comparison to 2017-18. Similar trend was visible for R&D expenditure as a percentage of total revenue which stood at 3.73 per cent in 2017-18, went down to 2.5 per cent in 2018-19, and stood at 2.71 per cent in 2022-23.

Changes in R&D expenditure can be attributed to reduction of the weighted deduction from 200% to 150% from the financial year 2017-18 to FY2019-20, and then from the FY2020-21, the deduction was restricted to 100%. But increase in R&D expenditure by Indian pharmaceutical companies over a period of five years shows that these companies are realizing that research allows them rewards of the invention and innovation. Still Indian pharmaceutical companies have miles to go when seen in the background of R&D expenditure.

Dr. Anil Kumar Angrish-Associate Professor (Finance and Accounting), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), Ajay Sham Pawar- MBA (Pharm.), Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER S.A.S. Nagar (Mohali), DISCLAIMER: Views are personal and do not represent the views of the Institute.

Divyadhan Recycling Industries Limited launches Rs 24.17 cr IPO

DOMINICK RODRIGUES
Mumbai

Divyadhan Recycling Industries Ltd proposed to open its Initial Public Offering of 37,76,000 shares — priced at Rs 60 to Rs 64 per share, aggregating Rs 24.17 crore — that will open on September 26, 2024 and close on September 30, 2024.

Varun Gupta, Managing Director, Divyadhan Recycling Industries Limited told media here recently that the net proceeds from the IPO — which is to be listed on the NSE Emerge platform — will be primarily used for funding Capital Expenditure and General Corporate Purposes.

Describing the IPO as a crucial step in expanding the company's production capabilities while embracing new opportunities in sustainable manufacturing, Gupta said



the funds would help invest in state-of-the-art technologies, improved infrastructure and scaling of operations to meet increasing demand for recycled polyester products.

Expressing excitement about this new phase of development, Gupta noted that the IPO presented an opportunity to not only grow the company, but also contribute to a more sustainable future. With plastics and PET bottles contributing to pollution, recycling them through their factory made it possible for conversion into three fibres as raw materials for usage in various sectors like knitting, textiles and so on, he said.

Hyundai Motor, Kia launch joint tech project for EV battery development

NEW DELHI: Hyundai Motor and Kia, South Korea's leading automotive companies, said on Thursday they have launched a joint project to develop cathode material technology for producing LFP (lithium iron phosphate) batteries for electric vehicles.

The joint project, also involving Hyundai Steel Co. and Ecopro BM, aims to develop a technology for synthesising materials directly without using precursors during the manufacturing of LFP battery cathodes, reports Yonhap news agency.

Hyundai Motor and Kia, in collaboration with Hyundai Steel, plan to develop high-purity fine iron powder processing technology using recycled steel. Ecopro BM will utilise this to develop directly synthesised LFP cathode materials.

The project, supported by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy, will run for four years, the automakers said. The companies' representatives held a meeting Wednesday to discuss



future cooperation.

If the project is proven successful, LFP battery production could become more cost competitive, as currently most cathode precursors are produced in a few specific countries, leading to high import dependency.

The project could potentially enable the establishment of a stable domestic supply chain for raw materials for LFP batteries, reducing reliance on imports and enhancing supply chain security for the country, the companies said.

"Through this project, we hope to reduce reliance on foreign imports and internalise the necessary technologies, thereby enhancing the technological competitiveness of both the nation and Hyundai Motor Group," the automakers said.

Govt to Borrow Rs 6.61 Lakh Cr in Second Half of Current Fiscal

NEW DELHI: The government on Thursday said it plans to borrow Rs 6.61 lakh crore in the second half of the current fiscal through the issuance of dated securities, including Rs 20,000 crore of Sovereign Green Bonds (SGrBs).

The government, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), has finalised its borrowing programme for the second half (H2) of FY 2024-25.

Out of the gross market borrowing of Rs 14.01 lakh crore budgeted for FY 2024-25, Rs 6.61 lakh crore (47.2 per cent) is planned to be borrowed in H2, sticking to the gross market borrowing plans.

As per the Ministry of Finance, the gross market borrowing would be completed through 21 weekly auctions. "The market borrowing will



be spread over 3, 5, 7, 10, 15, 30, 40 and 50-year securities. The share of borrowing (including SGrBs) under different maturities will be 3-year (5.3 per cent), 5-year (10.6 per cent), 7-year (7.6 per cent), 10-year (24.8 per cent), 15-year (13.2 per cent), 30-year

(12.1 per cent), 40-year (15.9 per cent), and 50-year (10.6 per cent)," the ministry said. The borrowing programme for the government is managed by the Department of Expenditure, which is part of the Ministry of Finance. The government said it will

carry out switching/buyback of securities to smoothen the redemption profile. It will continue to reserve the right to exercise the greenshoe option to retain an additional subscription of up to Rs 2,000 crore against each of the securities indicated in the auction notifications.

In the third quarter of FY25, weekly borrowing through issuance of Treasury Bills is expected to be Rs 19,000 crore for 13 weeks with issuance of Rs 7,000 crore under 91 DTBs, Rs 6,000 crore under 182 DTBs, and Rs 6,000 crore under 364 DTBs, respectively. In order to fix temporary mismatches in government accounts, the central bank has fixed the Ways and Means Advances (WMA) limit for the second half of FY 2024-25 at Rs 50,000 crore.

RBI Governor Highlights Improved Coordination in Economic Management

NEW DELHI: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has emphasised the positive impact of enhanced co-ordination between the central bank and the government in managing the trade-off between inflation control and economic growth.

Speaking at the First Himalaya Shumsher Memorial Lecture at Nepal Rastra Bank in Kathmandu on Tuesday, Das outlined how the pandemic experience has demonstrated the efficacy of synchronised monetary and fiscal policies in achieving better economic outcomes. "During the pandemic, central banks collaborated closely with governments to address the unprecedented crisis," Das stated. He explained, "Subsequently, as central banks tackled multi-decade high inflation, governments implemented supply-side



measures to alleviate inflationary pressures." "This coordinated approach minimised the output sacrifice required to reduce inflation," Das further added. The RBI has consistently maintained that low inflation is crucial for sustainable long-term growth. However, the bank acknowledges that its monetary actions to curb inflation can have immediate impacts on growth through demand suppression. Das noted a shift in

central banking models over the past decade. While previously focused solely on price stability, central banks now operate under a broader mandate that encompasses sustained growth and financial stability alongside price control. To illustrate this coordination, Das pointed out that the RBI injected over Rs 5.5 lakh crore of liquidity to mitigate lockdown-induced stress on businesses.

Later, when the RBI raised interest rates in 2022 to combat inflation, the government complemented these efforts with measures to stabilise commodity prices. The governor's remarks underscore the evolving nature of economic management in India, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach to addressing complex economic challenges in the post-pandemic era.

BSE Urges Investment Bankers to Strengthen Due Diligence for SME IPO Listings



NEW DELHI: In a move to enhance the integrity of India's burgeoning initial public offering (IPO) market, BSE Ltd., the operator of the Bombay Stock Exchange, has called upon investment bankers to intensify their due diligence processes for Small and Medium enterprises (SME) listings, sources close to the matter report.

During a meeting on Tuesday, BSE Chief Executive Sundararaman Ramamurthy reportedly instructed bankers to implement more rigorous oversight measures. These include verifying the accuracy of financial data presented by IPO aspirants and conducting thorough on-site assessments of prospective listing candidates.

This directive comes in response to identified inconsistencies in the filing documents of several recent small-cap IPOs. The initiative aims to bolster standards within a segment of the market that has experienced a significant influx of retail investment, while simultaneously drawing regulatory attention.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the country's market regulator, issued a cautionary statement in August regarding investments in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Mutual fund investments in India move beyond top 15 cities



NEW DELHI: Investors from smaller cities in India are embracing mutual funds like never before and the share of such investors in cities beyond the top 15 have risen significantly in the last four years, a new report showed on Saturday.

While Mumbai and Delhi continue to hold their place with most number of investors, accounting for 39 per cent investors as of June 2024, other cities have steadily contributed over 30 per cent of investors since March 2021, according to a Franklin Templeton report.

Mumbai and Delhi also contributed over 40 per cent investors till December 2023 but the contribution of these metros slipped to 39 per cent in March this year, the report mentioned.

Also, the assets under management (AUM) of investors in below 30 cities outpaced the top growth in the AUM of the top 30 cities in the country.

The top 30 cities saw AUM growth from Rs 20 lakh crore in December 2018 to Rs 54 lakh crore in August 2024 - a CAGR of 19 per cent.

On the other hand, the below 30 cities saw a CAGR of 24 per cent, from Rs 4 lakh crore AUM in December 2018 to Rs 12 lakh crore by August 2024.

Telangana accounts for 63.89 per cent of investors in India with the highest average AUM growth. It is followed by Rajasthan with 51.19 per cent growth. Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Gujarat also make it to the list with more than 40 per cent growth.

New Delhi and Maharashtra saw the least growth over the year with a little over 30 per cent growth in average AUM.

National Pension Scheme sees 62,880 new contributing subscribers in July

NEW DELHI: The Centre on Wednesday said the total number of new contributing subscribers under the National Pension Scheme (NPS) stood at 62,880 in the month of July.

In June, 64,799 new contributing subscribers joined the NPS in June.

The newly registered employees and paying contribution under the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) scheme in July stood at 16,61,836 which was 16,33,848 during the month of June, informed Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

The Cabinet last month approved the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for government employees, which will provide



an assured minimum pension and a family pension. Around 23 lakh Central government employees will benefit from the Unified Pension Scheme.

These employees will now have the option to choose between the NPS and the UPS. In UPS, the government has

offered several advantages of the previous Old Pension Scheme (OPS) like assured pension, family pension and indexation benefits. This pension scheme is only for government employees unlike NPS which is offered to both government and private employees.

In a key move to secure the financial future of young children in India, the government has also launched the NPS Vatsalya pension scheme, which offers flexible contributions and investment options for parents or guardians.

The Vatsalya scheme is a saving-cum-pension scheme, which will be regulated and administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory Authority

of India (PFRDA). Under the NPS Vatsalya scheme, parents can invest a minimum of Rs 1,000 per month with no upper limit. The scheme will be operated by parents until the child reaches 18. At the age of 18, the account will transition into the child's name.

Meanwhile, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has added 19.94 lakh net members in the month of July, marking the highest recorded increase since payroll data tracking began in April 2018. EPFO added 10.52 lakh new members in July, a 2.66 per cent increase over June and a 2.43 per cent rise compared to the same month last year.

City Union Bank Launches Cutting Edge Payment Solutions for MSMEs at Global Fintech Fest 2024

MUMBAI: City Union Bank (CUB) has unveiled a suite of innovative digital payment products aimed at enhancing the financial ecosystem for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and retail customers.

CUB's newly introduced solutions include a diverse range of digital offerings designed to cater to the evolving demands of India's rapidly growing fintech sector. Among the products launched are Delegate payments, UPI Lite auto top-up, National Common Mobility Card, Credit line on UPI, Rupay credit card on UPI, and Loan against securities (Mutual Fund). Additionally, two innovative services aimed at the MSME and retail sectors—Open Network Digital Commerce (ONDC)



for MSMEs and ONDC for Retail—promise to boost the way businesses manage their financial operations and reach customers.

In a statement, the lender highlighted the significant role of ONDC in addressing the diverse needs of MSMEs, offering services like digital store creation, digital ledger management, inventory tracking, e-invoicing, and access to collateral-free business loans.

India Seeks Australian Pension Fund Investments in Fintech, Renewable Energy, Agritech & Manufacturing

NEW DELHI: India's Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal, has called on Australian pension funds to explore investment opportunities in sectors like renewable energy, manufacturing, education, fintech, and agritech.

The appeal comes during Goyal's official visit to Australia as part of the Joint Ministerial Commission, where he is working to strengthen bilateral ties across a range of industries. In a statement from the Commerce Ministry, Goyal highlighted the Indian government's "robust policies and reform agenda," which have bolstered investor confidence and driven significant growth in emerging sectors.

He met with senior representatives of Australia's leading pension funds, urging them to capitalise on the growing opportunities in India's fast-evolving market.

Goyal also held discussions



with Tania Constable, CEO of the Minerals Council of Australia, to deepen cooperation in the critical minerals sector.

Critical minerals like cobalt, lithium, and rare earths are essential components for clean energy technologies, including electric vehicles and wind turbines.

As global demand for these minerals rises, Goyal emphasised India's strategic interest in securing sustainable supply chains, which could be strengthened through collaboration with Australian companies.

Additionally, the Commerce Minister met with Joel Katz,

Managing Director of the Cruise Lines International Association, to explore opportunities for enhancing coastal tourism in India.

Given India's vast coastline and growing interest in tourism, the discussions focused on tapping into the cruise industry's potential to further boost the country's tourism sector.

In another high-level meeting, Goyal interacted with Robin Khuda, Founder and CEO of AirTrunk, a leader in data infrastructure.

The discussions centered on India's rapid digitalisation and how the two countries could collaborate to develop robust data centers and digital infrastructure to meet future demands.

Australia is currently the 25th largest investor in India, with foreign direct investments (FDI) totaling USD 1.5 billion from April 2000 to June 2024.

September the busiest month for IPOs in 14 years: RBI



NEW DELHI: As Indian stock markets remain resilient amid global challenges, September is set to be the busiest month for initial public offerings (IPOs) in 14 years, with over 28 companies entering the market so far, according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Financial markets are undergoing shifts. In the primary equity market, there is a surge of interest in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) IPOs, including from domestic mutual funds, with massive oversubscriptions.

About 54 per cent of IPO shares allotted to investors were sold within a week of listing, according to the Central Bank's monthly bulletin.

"A growing number of listed companies are turning to qualified institutional placements (QIPs) for raising capital, estimated at around Rs 60,000 crore in the first eight months of 2024," it read.

With intermittent corrections on global cues, benchmark indices in the secondary market have moved up, and the outlook remains bullish, said the RBI.

Global funds have been investing heavily in the Indian debt market for the fifth month in a row since May 2024. On the other hand, corporate debt issuances remained low during the financial year so far despite easing yields as issuers awaited the US rate cut.

The RBI said that as large risk capital investors tread cautiously, the early-stage investment landscape is seeing an increasing number of micro venture capital firms and founder-led funds.

Despite guardrails and concerns about interconnectedness with the regulated financial system, the footprint of private credit - non-bank lending in high-yielding and illiquid debt-like instruments - is gradually expanding to cater to customised requirements of borrowers that are underserved by traditional sources of capital.

Impact of Federal Reserve's Rate Cut



SATISH SINGH The Federal Reserve of USA is the leader of central banks around the world, the biggest reason for which is that the US dollar is one of the strongest currencies in the world and USA is the strongest country in the world from a strategic and economic point of view. Generally, central banks around the world follow the footsteps of the Federal Reserve. However, due to the economic conditions of all countries being different, sometimes the central banks of some countries take decisions other than the Federal Reserve. Barring a few exceptions, India also takes steps in line with the decisions taken by the Federal Reserve.

For the first time in the last 4 years, the Federal Reserve has cut the policy rates by 50 basis points on September 18, after which the possibility of central banks of other countries of the world also cutting policy rates has increased. It is also being seen as the growing apprehensions of the Federal Reserve about a possible economic recession in USA, because at present the pace of development in USA is slow, in which it is necessary to do so to accelerate it.

After the latest decision of the Federal Reserve, foreign institutional investors have invested more in the Indian market. On 24 September, Sensex and Nifty managed to touch their highest level. Sensex reached the level of 85,163 and Nifty reached the level of 25,940. USA's Dow Jones, Japan's Nikkei, Hong Kong's Hang Seng and China's Shanghai Composite Index also saw a rise. The possibility of weakening of the dollar, reduction in lending rates, growth in investments and businesses etc. has increased, which is being confirmed by the growth in investments.

China is currently grappling with the problem of good governance, due to which foreign investors are refraining from investing there and some investors are turning to India. Like the US, the growth rate of parameters like production, consumption etc. in China is



also slower than expected. In the month of August, the unemployment rate reached a 6-month high of 5.3 per cent and the urban unemployment rate reached 17.1 per cent in July, which was 13 per cent in June. To accelerate the growth rate, China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, has cut lending rates, so that there is a rise in borrowing and economic activities accelerate.

The question that is bound to arise here is whether the Reserve Bank of India will cut the repo rate in the upcoming monetary reviews on the lines of the Federal Reserve, because to maintain the balance between inflation and growth, the Reserve Bank has not made any change in the repo rate since February 2023, and it remains at 6.5 per cent. Therefore, before reducing the repo rate, the Reserve Bank will have to discuss in depth the current economic situation, GDP growth rate, inflation situation, pace of economic activities etc.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures in India are continuously improving. Global rating agency Moody's has increased India's GDP growth forecast for calendar year 2024 to 7.1 per cent, which was earlier 6.8 per cent and 6.1 per cent. However, Moody's has kept India's GDP growth forecast for 2025 unchanged at 6.5 per cent, while the GDP growth forecast for 2026 is 6.6 per cent. Even though Moody's has lowered the GDP growth forecast for calendar year 2025 and 2026 compared to the calendar year 2024. However, these figures are better than the many developed countries of the world.

Retail inflation remained below 4 per cent in July and August and the price of food items is expected to come down after the end of rains, due to which retail inflation is expected to come down further in the coming months. Moody's has projected inflation in India at 4.5 per cent and 4.1 per cent in 2025 and 2026. According to the Reserve Bank of India, inflation may come down to 4.5 per cent in FY 2025.

HSBC manufacturing PMI fell to 56.7 in September 2024 from 57.5 in August. Service PMI also fell to 58.9 percent in September from 60.9 in August. Of course, manufacturing and service PMI have registered a partial decline in September as compared to August. Still, it is above 50, which shows that the manufacturing and service sector is in a bullish trend.

The repo rate has been maintained at 6.5 per cent since February 2023. Nevertheless, borrowings remain robust. Credit offtake grew by 5.8 per cent as compared to December 2023 and grew by 0.4 per cent sequentially for the fortnight ended August 9, 2024. In absolute terms, in the last 8 months, credit offtake grew by Rs 9.2 lakh crore to reach Rs 168.8 lakh crore as of August 9, 2024. This is a good sign. If the repo rate is cut, borrowings and growth will accelerate even further.

At present, GDP is growing, and inflation is also under control. Also, retail inflation is expected to remain within the tolerance limits set by the Reserve Bank of India in FY 2025 and FY 2026. As the dollar remaining weak and investment and loan uptake increasing, economic activity is picking up pace, to boost this further, the Reserve Bank of India may cut the repo rate by at least 25 basis points in the next monetary review.

Satish Singh, Ahmedabad Based Senior Columnist, views are personal.

Sensex trades near all-time high, Infosys and Wipro top gainers

MUMBAI: Indian frontline equity indices were trading near record highs as heavy-weight IT stocks like Infosys, Wipro, TCS and Tech Mahindra gained after a positive revision of Accenture's revenue guidance for FY25.

At 9:49 a.m., Sensex was up 94 points or 0.11 per cent at 85,930 and Nifty was up 46 points or 0.18 per cent at 26,262.

Sensex and Nifty made a new all-time high of 85,966 and 26,271 respectively in early trade.

The broader market trend remained positive. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), 1,448 shares were in the green and 824 shares in the red.

Buying was also seen in the midcap and smallcap stocks. Nifty Midcap 100 index was up 148 points or 0.25 per cent at 60,618 and the Nifty Smallcap 100 index was up 96 points or 0.51 per cent at 19,359.

Among the sectoral indices,



IT, PSU Bank, Auto, Pharma, FMCG, Metal, Pvt Bank and PSE were major gainers. Fin service, Realty, Media, Energy and Infra were laggards.

Hardik Matalia, Derivative analyst at Choice Broking said, "After a positive opening, Nifty can find support at 26,100 followed by 26,000 and 25,900. On the higher side, 26,300 can be an immediate resistance, followed by 26,350 and 26,400."

In the Sensex pack, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Wipro,

HCL Tech, TCS, Sun Pharma, Tata Steel, Titan, IndusInd Bank, Tata Motors, JSW Steel, Tata Motors and SBI were the top gainers. Power Grid, L&T, Bharti Airtel, M&M, Maruti Suzuki, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank were the top losers.

Most of the markets in Asia are trading at a brisk pace. There is a rise in Tokyo, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Bangkok. Only Seoul and Jakarta are trading in the light red. US markets closed in the green

on Thursday.

Other market experts said, "An important trend emerging in the market is the clear outperformance of large-caps over mid and small-caps. The outperformance has been pronounced during the last five trading days which saw Nifty appreciate by 2.85 per cent against a mere 0.6 per cent up move in the small-cap index."

They further said this is a healthy trend which can impart resilience to the market and, given the gush of domestic liquidity, take it higher. It appears that smart money is moving from mid and small-caps to largecaps.

The foreign institutional investors (FIIs) turned net buyers as they bought equities worth Rs 629.96 crore on September 26, while domestic institutional investors extended their buying as they bought equities worth Rs 2405 crore on the same day.

INTERNATIONAL

US, India reveal roadmap to build secure global clean energy supply chain

NEW DELHI: The \$1 billion India-US initiative to build a safe and secure global clean energy supply chain aims to capture the benefits of the clean energy transition, including the creation of high-quality jobs, acceleration of clean energy deployment and achievement of global climate goals, the government said on Sunday.

The funding will support supply-side manufacturing capacity expansion for key technology verticals, focusing on solar, wind, battery, energy grid systems, and high-efficiency air conditioner and ceiling fan supply chains.

"As an important aspect of our economic growth agendas, we are committed to working together to capture the benefits of the clean energy transition," said the government after the meeting between President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the sixth Quad Leaders' Summit in Wilmington, Delaware. Both the countries aim to expand manufacturing capacity for clean energy technologies and components and lay the groundwork for enhanced cooperation in third countries, with a focus on partnerships in Africa.



The effort will build on existing clean energy cooperation between the US and India, including clean energy initiatives launched during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States in 2023, the Strategic Clean Energy Partner-

ship led by the US Department of Energy and Government of India ministries, technical assistance provided by US laboratories, and novel financial platforms such as the Payment Security Mechanism established to support the rapid deployment of electric buses in India.

The US and India are working to unlock \$1 billion in new multilateral finance through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) for projects that include catalysing India's domestic clean energy supply chain buildout.

"Over time, we seek to mobilise additional financing into priority clean energy manufacturing sectors that harness public and private financial tools and pioneer innovative financial vehicles to meet the rapid demand for flexible climate finance solutions," the government informed.

US Congress passes short-term funding bill to avert gov shutdown before elections



WASHINGTON: US Congress overwhelmingly passed a short-term funding bill to avert a looming government shutdown.

The Senate voted 78-18 on Wednesday evening to clear the measure, following the House's approval with a 341-82 vote. All opposition in both chambers came from

Republicans, reports Xinhua news agency. The package, negotiated by House Speaker Mike Johnson and leading Democrats, would maintain government funding at current levels through December 20, setting the stage for another budget battle three months later.

It also includes an additional US\$231 million for the Secret Service to boost the agency's resources related to the security of the presidential campaign, following two apparent assassination attempts on former President Donald Trump, the Republican presidential candidate.

Trump has publicly demanded that congressional Republicans force a govern-

ment shutdown unless they pass the so-called Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, which would have required all Americans to show proof of citizenship to register to vote, even though it is already illegal for noncitizens to vote in federal elections.

Regardless of Trump's demand, Johnson and other prominent Republicans have argued that a GOP-driven government shutdown just a little over a month before Election Day would be "political malpractice," worrying that their party would be blamed for a government shutdown.

The bill has now been sent to President Joe Biden, who is expected to quickly sign it into law before the current government funding expires on September 30, when the fiscal year ends.

Russia will not resume nuclear test unless US does: Deputy FM



MOSCOW: Russia will refrain from conducting nuclear tests as long as the United States does the same, local media reported quoting Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov.

Ryabkov noted that while Moscow can conduct nuclear tests, it will refrain from doing so as stated earlier by the Russian president, provided that Washington will do the same, reports Xinhua, quoting Russian news agency TASS.

"I would like to draw attention to recent media reports indicating that the infrastructure of the test site on Novaya Zemlya is fully prepared," Ryabkov said on Monday.

He stressed that "this was also done in response to Washington's actions, which over the past few years has been focused on improving the infrastructure that they have in this field." The testing facility, located at the Novaya Zemlya archipelago in northern Russia, is currently ready to resume full-scale testing activities, the head of the nuclear site Andrei Sinityn said in a recent interview for local Rossiyskaya Gazeta. He noted that if an order is received, testing could be resumed at any moment. In November 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law withdrawing Russia's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT is a multilateral agreement that bans all nuclear explosion tests conducted for peaceful or military purposes. The treaty was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996, signed by 187 nations, and ratified by 178 as of September 2024.

Kharge congratulates Anura Dissanayake on winning Sri Lankan presidential elections



NEW DELHI: Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday extended his congratulations to Anura Kumara Dissanayake for his victory in the Sri Lankan Presidential elections. He expressed India's eagerness to enhance bilateral ties further.

"On the behalf of the Indian National Congress, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Anura Kumara Dissanayake on being elected the Executive President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka," Kharge said in a post on X.

"India and Sri Lanka have a rich legacy of multifaceted cooperation and interaction, which dates back centuries, the Congress President said, adding that India looks forward to "strengthening our ties and shared values for the benefit of our region."

PM Modi an incredible student, seeks to democratise AI in India: Nvidia's Jensen Huang



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an incredible student who always seeks to not only learn more about artificial intelligence (AI) and chip technologies but also how to democratise them for the larger benefits of society as well as industry, Jensen Huang, Founder, President and CEO of graphics chip giant Nvidia, said on Sunday.

After attending the CEOs' roundtable here with PM Modi in the presence of fellow tech leaders, Huang said AI is a new industry, offering several manufacturing opportunities and he is looking forward to "partnering with India in a very deep way to make that possible".

"We are helping India gain access to our most advanced technologies. We're partnering with Internet companies like digital transformation service provider Yotta Data Services and other Internet companies to create latest-generation AI supercomputers in India," the Nvidia CEO emphasised.

Stressing that India is the third-largest startup economy, he said the new generation of

startups are based on AI and in order to achieve more, they have to have an AI infrastructure.

"We are partnering with startups, IITs and many companies in India. We're teaching students how to upskill in this new world of AI. AI really democratises computing and this is India's moment to seize the opportunity," Huang added.

PM Modi interacted with technology industry leaders in New York in a roundtable anchored by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), School of Engineering. The tech roundtable focused on AI and quantum; biotechnology and life sciences; computing, IT and communication; and semiconductor technologies.

The Prime Minister highlighted the economic transformation happening in India, particularly in electronics and information technology manufacturing, semiconductors, biotech and green development. He stated that his government was committed to making India a global hub of semiconductor manufacturing.

Anura Dissanayake takes oath as Sri Lanka's 9th President

COLOMBO: Anura Dissanayake, leader of the Marxist-leaning Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) party, was sworn in on Monday as the ninth President of Sri Lanka, marking a historic moment as the country's first leftist head of state.



The swearing-in ceremony took place at the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo, where Chief Justice Jayantha Jayasuriya administered the oath.

The result was decided Sunday evening after Sri Lanka's first-ever presidential run-off with the counting of second preference votes following both Dissanayake and Samagi Jana Sandhanaya candidate Sajith Premadasa failing to get the required percentage of votes.

"The dream we have nurtured for centuries is finally coming true. This achievement is not the result of any single person's work, but the collective effort of hundreds of thousands of you. Your commitment has brought us this far, and for that, I am deeply grateful. This victory belongs to all of us," 55-year-old Dissanayake, also popularly known as AKD, said in a post on X after the final result was announced by the Lankan Election Commission post 7 p.m on Sunday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday congratulated Dissanayake on securing the win.

"Congratulations Anura Dissanayake, on your victory in the Sri Lankan Presidential elections. Sri Lanka holds a special place in India's Neighbourhood First Policy and Vision SAGAR. I look forward to working closely with you to further strengthen our multifaceted cooperation for the benefit of our people and the entire region," Prime Minister Modi said in a post on social media platform X late Sunday.

Thanking PM Modi, Dissanayake posted, "Thank you, Prime Minister Modi, for your

kind words and support. I share your commitment to strengthening the ties between our nations. Together, we can work towards enhancing cooperation for the benefit of our peoples and the entire region."

Indian High Commissioner was one of the first to meet Dissanayake on Sunday following his victory announcement.

"HC Santosh Jha called on Sri Lankan President-elect Anura Dissanayake. Conveyed greetings from India's leadership and congratulated him on winning the people's mandate. India as Sri Lanka's civilisational twin is committed to further deepening ties for the prosperity of the people of our two countries," the High Commission posted on X.

Earlier on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also extended his congratulations to Dissanayake for securing the win and being elected as the 9th Executive President of Sri Lanka. India's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Santosh Jha, also called on Dissanayake and conveyed greetings from India's leadership. Sri Lanka's Marxist-leaning leader Dissanayake of Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) party will be sworn in as the country's ninth - also, the first Leftist - President on Monday, following his triumph in the island nation's first presidential election since its worst-ever economic crisis.

Thousands travel from across US to attend PM Modi's diaspora event in Uniondale

NEW YORK: More than 16,000 people - many of them travelling from all corners of the US overnight - are expected to gather at the Nassau Coliseum on Long Island on Sunday to give a thunderous welcome to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and listen to his much-awaited speech at the community reception. "After programmes in Delaware, landed in New York. Eager to be among the diaspora at the community programme in the city and to take part in other programmes," PM Modi posted on X after landing in



New York early Sunday morning, India time.

This would be the second big event that Nassau County authorities will be handling in less than a week after former US President Donald Trump held an election rally at the Nassau Coliseum on Wednesday.

On Saturday, immediately

after his arrival in Philadelphia, the Prime Minister had shared his eagerness to meet the Indian diaspora and Americans from across the US at the New York event. "The Indian community has distinguished itself in the USA, making a positive impact across diverse sectors. It's always a delight to interact with them. At around 9:30 PM India time on Sunday, 22nd September, I will address the 'Modi and US' programme in New York City. Let's celebrate the bonds that connect our nations!" he mentioned after landing in Philadelphia following a nearly 16-hour journey from New Delhi.

Preparations for the key engagement, sandwiched between the Quad Summit convened by US President Joe Biden in Delaware on Saturday and PM Modi's address to the United Nations Summit of the Future on Monday, have been going on for past many weeks with the organisers overwhelmed by the number of people who wanted to attend the event billed as 'Modi and US, Progress Together'.

Montana Technologies Establishes Intel Office in the United Arab Emirates

Company to showcase transformational AirJoule technology at the Water, Energy, Technology, and Environment Exhibition (WETEX) in Dubai



RONAN: Montana Technologies Corporation, the developer of the transformational AirJoule technology for atmospheric water generation, today announced that it has established its first international office in the United Arab Emirates ("UAE") to accelerate the deployment of AirJoule® in the region.

"Establishing an office in the UAE will help us to efficiently address the significant demand for AirJoule's advanced dehumidification and atmospheric water harvesting capabilities from potential customers in the fast-growing markets of the UAE, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, and India.

Our UAE presence also bolsters the Company's efforts to strategically calibrate the roll-out of our transformative technology globally," said Ramdas Rao, President, International of Montana Technologies who heads this new office.

"AirJoule's market-leading efficiency when delivering distributed water security and power-efficient comfort cooling is our key differentiator and has the potential to support responsible decarbonization while supporting this region's rapid development trajectory and critical infrastructure growth," Rao added.

India's New Defense Doctrine

India's Leap for Generation Next Technologies and Exports of Weapons



GOPAL MISRA
With India's Defense exports, especially artillery shells being siphoned off to Ukraine has alerted New Delhi.

Initially, it may adversely affect the country's exports of defense systems and ammunition, but her defense production companies might resort to stringent regulations. The issue has recently cropped up, when the Russian foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, took up the issue with his Indian counterpart, S.Jaishankar. The Russians told India how the artillery shells were being diverted from the European buyers to Ukraine.

In spite of this setback to the Indian defense exports, her multi-pronged strategy to boost indigenous production of high-tech weapons and developing security systems stressing self-reliance is to continue.

No More a Holy Cow

During the past one decade, India's defense doctrine has undergone paradigm changes. Its focus has shifted from preparing only for the defense to the concept of the offensive defense. It means, if you engage India in one sector, the conflict might escalate to other regions too.

Since 1947, India has been averse to joining any defense pact, avoiding arms race and genuinely

subscribing to the concept of peace, non-violence and opposition to nuclear weapons. However, the situation has changed in recent years. With the new war strategies being witnessed in the two war theaters, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Eastern Europe, and the escalation of the limited terrorists' attack initiated by the Hamas with the support of Iran now triggering off into a full-scale flare-up.

The successful use of technologies such as drones or the unmanned aircrafts equipped with deadly missiles could cause havoc on the enemy. The formidable armored vehicles and tanks could even destroy the artillery with a negligible cost. Also, the export of armaments helps in generating resources for further research; for example, initially the US had developed internet it's defense communication, but later it has led to the development of mobile phones and using the communication satellites.

The 1962 Chinese attack has also transformed the Indian emphasis towards peace and war. The Indian army just having the guns of the World War-II years could not resist the Chinese army which had automatic guns. In 1965, the Pakistani attack further exposed India's vulnerability. Later, in 1967, Indira Gandhi, the legendary Prime Minister, for the first time punished the much-trumpeted People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the Nathu-la conflict. The then



Chinese ambassador in New Delhi pleaded that the casualties of the PLA in the conflict should not be revealed; however later Vietnam also taught a lesson to the PLA for daring to attack the freedom-loving people. In 1967, the peaceful implosion of a thermo-nuclear device at Pokhran in Rajasthan further established the Indian capacity to develop her own nuclear weapons, if the threats continue to haunt her.

In spite of the three wars, the Chinese aggression in 1962 and two Pakistani attacks of 1965 and 1971, India did not join the nuclear club. She detonated nuclear devices only in 1998, when China helped Pakistan to develop nuclear weapons. India despite her technological achievements did not enter in the sensitive field of the production of nuclear weapons and defense systems. Her reluctance to seek a share in the multi-billion USD international armament market was continued. However, during the past 10 years of the Modi regime, India has decided to enter

the global armament market. Admittedly, it has her own challenges such as the buyers might divert the weapons and explosives to other countries. The issue recently hit the headlines, when Russia complained that Ukraine is using shells of Indian origin. The countries like the Czech Republic, according to the available information, purchased artillery shells from India, which were later sold off to Ukraine.

Blending of Technologies

The ongoing negotiations with the US and French authorities regarding the development of engines for the stealth aircrafts and nuclear-powered submarines in India is expected to be finalized by the end of this month.

The focus is that India's strategic partners, the US and France should share their technologies with her. France has indicated that it has no reservation on the issue of the transfer of technologies, but the US companies have shown reluctance that they could share only 80 percent of their technologies.

The Indian negotiators, however, cautioned Americans that if they do not share and cooperate with India, China will overtake them by 2030 in the development of new strategic weapons. It is also being stated that with the launch of nuclear powered submarines developed in her shipping yards, India has acquired the necessary technological competence not only to assimilate the new technologies, but also ready to contribute to further research.

India's second nuclear submarine, Arighat, was commissioned on August 29, this year, which could be equipped with ballistic missiles. The success of Arighat has prompted the Indian authorities to expand the indigenous base for the production of a new generation of fighter aircrafts and naval ships.

Upgrading Indian Technologies

With the commissioning of Arighat, the first nuclear submarine in 2016, India's strategic policy shifted to the offensive defense. It has also become necessary following the unprecedented expansion of the Chinese navy and its air force. The Chinese have already declared that it would not allow the Indian Ocean, a lake of India. In recent years, it has been supplying new weapon systems to Pakistan, including new frigates and submarines.

It is hoped that with the National Security Advisor, Ajit

Doval's meeting with the Diplomatic Advisor, Emmanuel Bonne, on September 30 and October one in Paris, the decks will finally be cleared for the assimilation of new technologies in the time Indian defense systems. The forthcoming meeting is a sequel to the visit of the French President Emmanuel Macron on the Republic Day, January 26, this year.

The French cooperation in the development of water drones, submarines and aircraft engines have become crucial for India, especially when the security concerns are becoming complex with the sudden expansion of the Chinese navy and air force. In number of ships, the Chinese navy already has overtaken the American navy.

Meanwhile, in spite of a number of meetings held between the US and Indian representatives, the American defense production companies are quite slow in manufacturing aircraft engines and other hi-tech equipment. India, however, continues to be optimistic and hopes that with the saddling of the new President in Washington in 2025, the US Administration will focus on defense partnership with India.

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

Death Toll from Israeli Attack on Gaza School rises to 15



GAZA: The Palestinian death toll from an Israeli attack on a school housing displaced persons in the northern Gaza Strip has risen to 15, including children and women, the Civil Defence in Gaza said Thursday.

Palestinian security sources told Xinhua news agency earlier on Thursday that Israeli aircraft bombed the al-Faluja school west of the Jabalia refugee camp with at least one missile. Medical sources said 10 people were injured in the attack, all of whom have been taken to the hospital.

Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in a statement on Thursday that the

Israeli Air Force conducted a precise strike on militants operating in a command and control center inside a compound that previously served as the al-Faluja school in northern Gaza.

Israel launched a large-scale offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip to retaliate against a Hamas rampage through the southern Israel border on October 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people were killed and about 250 taken hostage.

The Palestinian death toll from ongoing Israeli attacks in Gaza has risen to 41,534, Gaza-based health authorities said in a statement on Thursday.

Alia Bhatt's new photoshoot: A boss lady look just in time for 'Jigra'

MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt, who is currently preparing for the release of her much-anticipated movie 'Jigra', on Friday treated her fans to a stunning new photoshoot that exudes boss lady vibes. Taking to Instagram, Alia, who boasts 85.3 million followers, shared a series of striking pictures showcasing her in a blue and grey bralette top, elegantly paired with a black coat and beige trousers. Opting for her signature minimal makeup, she wore her short hair down, completing the look with silver earrings and matching rings. In her post, she teasingly captioned, "Trailer dekha? #Jigra," prompting excitement among fans and friends alike. The post garnered likes from celebrities such as Rashmika Mandanna,



Varun Dhawan, and Ananya Panday. Fans flooded the comments section with praise, calling her a "slayer woman," and expressing admiration with remarks like "Slaying" and "You are so pretty, highlighting her undeniable charm and style. 'Jigra' is helmed by director

Vasan Bala and also features Vedang Raina, Manoj Pahwa, Rahul Ravindran and Rahul Nanda in crucial roles. The upcoming action thriller film will be theatrically released on October 11, 2024, in a clash with Rajkumar Rao-Triptii Dimri starrer- 'Vicky Vidya Ka Woh Wala Video'.

Apart from that, Alia will also be seen in Shiv Rawail's directorial titled 'Alpha' alongside 'Munhya' fame actor Sharvari Wagh. 'Alpha' is the first female-based espionage thriller in the 'YRF Spy Universe'. The project has been bankrolled by Aditya Chopra under the banner of Yash Raj Films. Meanwhile, Alia made her debut as the lead in 2012, with Karan Johar's teen film 'Student of the Year', alongside debutants Sidharth Malhotra, and Varun Dhawan. She has then appeared in movies like-- 'Highway', 'Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania', 'Udda Punjab', 'Badrinath Ki Dulhania', 'Raazi', 'Gully Boy', 'Gangubai Kathiawadi', 'RRR', 'Brahmastra: Part One - Shiva', and 'Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani'.



People shower petals on a portrait of Bhagat Singh, a revolutionary socialist in India's independence movement, as they pay tribute on the eve of his 117th birth anniversary in Amritsar. PHOTO-PRABHJOT GILL

When A Cockroach Interrupted Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, Simi Garewal's Chat



MUMBAI: Actress Simi Garewal's talk show 'Rendezvous with Simi Garewal' is one of the most iconic shows of India given its guest list, and the nature of conversations. However, the show was equally fun off the camera. During one of the episodes of the show featuring Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, a similar off-camera banter happened when Simi spotted a cockroach crawling next to Aishwarya. Simi was asking a question about beauty eclipsing the woman in Aishwarya when she saw the cockroach on the set, and pointed towards it. Aishwarya, who was non-

chalantly answering the question, soon realised what they were dealing with. However, she didn't lose her cool or got anxious, and politely asked the spot boys to help remove the cockroach. The BTS bits show Simi and Aishwarya talking about how the spot boys were absolutely stuck in their places till they had to be called twice. As Simi did the touch up, she said, "Men have changed" in reference

to spot boys being absolutely frozen and not swinging into the action. "Rendezvous with Simi Garewal" over the years featured the who's who of the Hindi film industry. One of the famous episodes is that of veteran Bollywood icon Amitabh Bachchan and his wife Jaya Bachchan. During the episode, Simi asked the couple whether Big B was 'romantic'. While Amitabh immediately said 'no', Jaya took it as an opportunity to roast her husband on national television. She shared that he has never been romantic with her. She said, "No, not with me (laughing out loud). I've started trouble" thereby roasting her husband involuntarily on the show. However, once she realised the fun of it, she landed another punchline. Big B looked shocked and asked whether 'romantic' means to go on 'knees and propose, Valentines day'. Jaya Bachchan interrupted him, and said, "He is very shy. I don't think he, maybe if he had a girlfriend he'd do it." Amitabh and Rekha were romantically involved once while Big B was married to Jaya.

Jaya Bachchan interrupted him, and said, "He is very shy. I don't think he, maybe if he had a girlfriend he'd do it."

Dhami wishes best to Air Marshal Amar Preet Singh on appointment of Chief of Indian Air Force



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee president Harjinder Singh Dhami has congratulated and wished best to Air Marshal Amar Preet Singh on his appointment as the Chief of the Indian Air Force. In a press release, he said that it is a matter of great pride for Punjab and especially Sikhs that a Sikh officer will lead the Air Force of the country. He said that earlier Air Marshal Arjan Singh and Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoahad served as the Chief of the Indian Air Force for a long time. He said that Punjab and especially Sikhs have contributed greatly in the defence of the country and the young Sikh generation should participate in the competition for higher positions taking guidance from their history. He expressed hope that Air Marshal Amar Preet Singh will work for the further advancement of Sikh identity by adopting turban and Sabat Soorat (with unshorn hair) Sikh lifestyle.

Alchemist Hospital leads the way with first ABO Incompatible Kidney Transplant in North Haryana

FW DESK

Alchemist Hospital Panchkula, announced a groundbreaking achievement that strengthens its position, not just as Haryana's leading Kidney transplant centre rather one of the pioneers in entire Northern India as far as care of kidney patients is concerned. After performing nearly 350 successful kidney transplants in a short span of time, hospital's Kidney Transplant Program has become the first in the North Haryana to start ABO Incompatible (ABOi) kidney transplants, this marks a landmark accomplishment that underscores its commitment to pioneer cutting-edge technologies and advanced medical techniques. Dr Neeraj Goyal, Associate Director of Urology and Chief Kidney Transplant Surgeon at Alchemist Panchkula, highlighted that "Successful ABO Incompatible Kidney Transplants are a milestone achievement for us that underscores the continued efforts and relentless dedication of our team. We are aimed to provide best possible care to the patients suffering from this deadly disease of kidney failure." Dr Neeraj further elaborated: "An ABO incompatible transplant is a complex procedure where the donor and recipient have different blood groups. There are certain pre-existing antibodies due to this difference of blood groups that presents as a natural barrier between them. This poses a significant challenge due to potential immune reactions that can lead to rapid rejection and failure of



the transplanted organ. Unlike standard kidney transplants with same or compatible blood groups, ABO incompatible transplants require advanced pre-transplant treatments such as plasmapheresis and intensive immunosuppressive therapies, to remove these pre-existing antibodies and desensitize the patient's immune system. The meticulous post-transplant monitoring and intensive care make these procedures particularly demanding. Addition of this facility, will provide a new lease of life to the patients, not having a blood group compatible donor in family. Our focus on leveraging the latest technologies and techniques ensures that the patients receive the best possible outcomes, and this milestone reflects our unwavering commitment to excellence." Dr Neeraj Goyal, further emphasized the broader impact of this milestone: "This achievement places our hospital and our city at the forefront of Kidney Transplant not just in Haryana, but across whole of North India. Our team's ability to successfully execute ABO Incompatible Kidney Transplant program is a clear indication of our commitment towards patient care. Till now kidney patients, not having same blood group donor in family, either were devoid of this facility or had to visit larger Metro cities for this facility." Dr Ramesh Kumar and Dr Charanjit Lal, both Senior Consultant Nephrologists at Alchemist Hospital, further highlighted the hospital's role as a pioneer in kidney care. "Being recognized as the leading Kidney Transplant Centre of Haryana, it is our responsibility to cater to each and every needful patient suffering from kidney failure. Dr Sumita Bhogal, Consultant Nephrologist said: "Our mission is to lead by example, bringing the latest advancements in transplant medicine to patients and setting new standards for care. I am deeply proud of the extraordinary work of our team led by Dr Neeraj Goyal. This milestone is not just a testament to the skill and dedication but also a reflection of our commitment to delivering transformative healthcare." Jitender Singh Gill, a resident of Rohtak was present at the event who explained transfor-

mation of his life after a successful ABO incompatible Kidney transplant. He was suffering from Kidney failure at a young age and narrated his ordeal of being on dialysis, as he had no donor in family with a matching blood group. However, after a successful ABOi transplant, his life completely transformed and he was delighted to share his happiness and gratitude. Another patient, Sh Surinder Kumar, from Yamunanagar also explained his experience of successful ABOi kidney transplant. Not having a same blood group donor in family, he was on regular dialysis for long time that led to continuous deterioration of his health. However, an ABOi transplant completely changed his life to normal. He defied all the myths and misconceptions, surrounding the process and success of ABOi Kidney transplants. Dr Neeraj Goyal re-emphasized the ever-improving outcomes of ABOi kidney transplants, that can give a new lease of life to patients who don't have a donor with matching blood groups. He highlighted that with meticulous surgical skills and improving specialized care, ABO incompatible transplants are able to give good results that may be at par with same blood group transplants. He also highlighted the critical role of intraoperative management in ensuring the success of complex transplant surgeries by expert transplant anesthesiologists and the dedicated blood bank team under leadership of Dr GP Saluja, Senior Consultant and Incharge of Blood Bank.

RUN FOR HEART HEALTH ON WORLD HEART DAY- SEP 29

Motive of Race will focus attention on prevention of heart diseases



Dr. Harinder Singh Bedi, "Every minute four people die of heart attack in India, 25 percent of those who die are under the age of 40." **KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh** In view of health-related issues assuming a critical proportion worldwide including India, a 5-km long 'Run for Heart Health' will be organized by Grecian Park Hospital in Mohali on Sunday, September 29, 2024, which is being celebrated as World Heart Day. Dr Harinder Singh Bedi, Director, Cardiac Sciences, Park Grecian Hospital and Dr. Neeraj Bhargava, Lab Director & Additional Medical Superintendent, Park Grecian Hospital held a press conference at Chandigarh Press Club here to share details of the pertinent activity being organised on the occasion of World Heart Day. A poster of the upcoming run was also unveiled at the press conference. Dr Bedi said, "The run is aimed at creating awareness

about heart diseases, especially their prevention. People should know how physical activities help keep our hearts healthy. For a good heart, one needs to manage stress, control BP, maintain ideal weight, have a sensible diet and do regular yoga." The event is in sync with the theme of 'Use Heart for Action' supporting individuals to care for their hearts and take cardiovascular health seriously. Dr Bedi added, "The run assumes significance due to the alarming situation related to heart health mainly among younger Indians. Every minute, four people die of a heart attack in India and the age group affected is usually 30 to 50 years. It is unfortunate indeed that according to the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study, 25 percent of heart attack deaths in India occur in people below 40 years of age. This has been highlighted in recent times by well-known media and social site personalities being attacked by the disease."

Will BJP succeed to sail through the turbulent waters riding on OBC card?



JAG MOHAN THAKREN

In order to neutralize the anti-incumbency wave that arose due to the issues of 'farmer-soldier-wrestler' against the BJP government, the BJP after keeping Prime Minister Modi's trusted confidant Manohar Lal Khattar on the Chief Minister's throne for about nine and a half years, brought Nayab Singh Saini, who belongs to the backward caste, to power only six months before the elections so that the Other Backward Class (OBC) vote bank could be unilaterally cashed in favour of the BJP. With this hope, the BJP had also declared before the Haryana Assembly elections that even after the elections, Nayab Singh Saini would remain as the Chief Minister in their government. To woo the OBC votes en masse under the chief ministership of Nayab Singh Saini, BJP fielded 21 OBC candidates out of total 90, but adopting the same tactics, to snatch its share of OBC votes from BJP's clutches, Congress also gave 20 seats to OBC category, which is now barricading the BJP's efforts. BJP thought that by making Saini the Chief Minister, BJP will get OBC vote bank in bulk, but BJP probably failed to assess that Saini is not being considered as the face of OBC, but he is being considered as Khattar's face mask. Why would the largest OBC section, Ahir (Yadav) caste, be happy with Saini being promoted? The vote bank of Ahirs (Yadavs) has its influence in about one and a half dozen assembly constituencies and can turn anyone's victory into defeat. The Yadav vote bank has understood that no matter how

much Rao Indrajit Singh claims to bring power in South Haryana, the BJP will never let Rao's plans come true. Therefore, this time the Yadavs seem to have made up anti-BJP mood. Before the elections, Union Minister Rao Indrajit Singh had been expressing anger on almost every platform that this time he will bring the helm of Haryana to South Haryana. Without naming anyone, he has repeatedly mentioned that people junior to him are being given cabinet rank posts in the Union Cabinet, whereas he has not been able to rise beyond the post of Minister of State for the last 15 years. Rao's supporters are also angry with this helplessness of Rao Indrajit Singh and due to this, BJP is also afraid of losing votes in Ahirwal. To calm down the anger of Rao and his supporters, Rao's daughter Aarti Rao, who was denied party ticket in 2019, this time has been made a candidate in the assembly elections, but how much this lollipop will be able to pacify the resentment, only the election results will tell. BJP's OBC card theory got another jolt when the former minister and president of BJP's Haryana OBC Morcha, Karan Dev Kamboj, who is upset at not getting a ticket in the assembly elections, assessing the declining position of the BJP, left all types of BJP membership including the OBC Morcha presidency and joined the Congress alleging that the saffron party considers the backward community as a mere vote bank and is not ready to give them rights. Seeing anger of farmers against the party and on not getting the ticket, BJP's Haryana OBC Morcha president and former MLA Sukhvinder Mandhi has also bade



goodbye to the party and joined the Congress. Smelling the weak position of the party and decreasing gravitational force of the top leadership, especially PM Modi and Amit Shah during the current Lok Sabha elections, wherein BJP lost its 50 percent seats in 2024 in comparison to 2019 in Haryana, party's many stalwarts have also left the party. To mention a few more; India's richest woman, Jindal group chairperson, BJP leader Savitri Jindal has joined the electoral fray and filed papers as an independent candidate after she was denied the ticket by the BJP. A former minister and two-time MLA, she put her foot down to take the field opposite BJP candidate Kamal Gupta from Hisar assembly constituency, despite the fact that her son Naveen Jindal is a BJP MP from Kurukshetra. Former power minister, and a candidate of BJP in just held Lok Sabha election from Hisar, Ranjeet Singh Chautala has also left the BJP and is fighting assembly election against the BJP candidate as an independent. What's on ground and why it's so? In the present scenario, the BJP seems to be losing the ground badly. Political analysts suggest that BJP hardly will cross the 25

mark and it will remain between 20-25 out of 90 seats, whereas its main opponent Congress playing on high pitch seems to get a major chunk and may get its share somewhat between 55-60, leaving behind a scope of winning 5 to 10 seats for others, including independents. Former Deputy Prime Minister, late Chaudhary Devial's clan may suffer the most. The ground report shows that the atrocities against the agitating farmers, tyranny over women wrestlers, squeezing the scope and employment opportunities for the youth willing to serve the Indian Military by enforcing Agniveer scheme; are some major reasons for the resentment in Haryana's voters and the thin position of the BJP. However, harassing the people through Property ID, Family ID, different types of portals and mockery with unemployed youth allowing uncontrolled frequent paper leaks are also the factors of creating an anti-incumbency wave. Will Saini get the CM throne again, if BJP comes to power? Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, while addressing a worker meeting on June 29 at Panchkula, Haryana declared that even after the elections, Nayab Singh Saini would again be the Chief Minister in the BJP government. Shah said,

"BJP will fight the next assembly elections under the leadership of Saini, who will also be the next chief minister." Commenting over the statement of Shah, an Unemployed youth says, "Na Nau Mann Tel Hoga, Na Radha Nachegi (If sky falls, we shall catch the larks). He adds - Saini is being presented as the second Channi, just to woo the OBC votes, to whom Congress had floated as next CM of Punjab to fetch the Dalit votes in the assembly election of 2022 in the state. Now, from the claims of the state level leaders of the BJP and the promise of Amit Shah in Behal, Bhiwani rally held on 17 September in favour of state finance minister J P Dalal from Loharu constituency, it seems that even if the BJP government is formed, then also the Chief Minister could be someone else instead of Saini. Union Minister Rao Indrajit Singh had been expressing his desire to become the Chief Minister indirectly almost on every platform that this time he will bring the helm of Haryana to South Haryana. Now the former Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij too has staked his claim to the CM chair. On September 15, 2024, he said, "I am the senior most MLA of BJP in Haryana. I have contested elections for 6 times. On the demand of people, I will claim for the designation of CM on the basis of my seniority this time. However, it is in the hands of high command whether they will make me CM or not. If they make me the CM I will change the picture of Haryana." BJP candidate from Loharu constituency, the finance minister in the present government, J P Dalal has also started to present himself as the sure shot future

Chief Minister of Haryana in his speeches after the Behal rally of Amit Shah on September 17, in which Shah had exhorted the people of Loharu to elect him the MLA and the party will make him a 'Bada Aadmi'. (Tum Dalal ko MLA Bana Do, Party Ise Bada Aadmi Bana Degi.) "You make him MLA; the Party will make him a big person." Some Political Analysts think that BJP top leadership has smelt the essence of the ground and they have concluded that the Nayab Singh Saini is not being taken as the leader of entire OBC category and his name can only woo the Saini voters upto some extent, so the party has started to lure the different segments of the society by projecting the candidates of other castes also as Chief Minister and it seems that the party itself has allowed to pose them as potential CM, otherwise, the leaders of Dalal level, only one time MLA, can never claim to become the Chief Minister in BJP rule, wherein six times MLA and Home Minister in previous Khattar government, Anil Vij and Three times MLA, Six times Member of Parliament and Minister of State in the central ministry for more than last 15 years, Rao Inderjeet Singh have not been ever considered even for the waiting list for the Chief Ministership. Anyway, according to Galib - 'Humko Malcolm Hai Jannat Ki Hakiqat, Lekin Dil Bahlaane Ko Galib Khayal Aachha Hai.' (I know the reality of heaven; but this thought is good to entertain the heart.) Jag Mohan Thakren is a Senior Journalist, Columnist & Political Analyst, views are personal.