

REGION

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MCD WRONGLY OVERPOWERED, MANDATE STOLEN, SAYS KEJRIWAL AFTER BJP WINS PANEL POLL

Arvind Kejriwal slams BJP for 'halting' development in Delhi, thanks SC for bail

New Delhi: AAP national convener and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the BJP, accusing them of deliberately halting development work in the national capital during his absence.

Speaking in the Delhi Assembly, Kejriwal, who recently secured bail from the Supreme Court, accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of using his power to derail Delhi's progress.

"With the blessings of God and the support of the people of Delhi, I stand here today after being released from jail. The opposition may be disheartened to see both me and (former Deputy Chief Minister) Manish Sisodia here today," he said.



Acknowledging the Prime Minister's political influence, Kejriwal remarked: "PM Modi is very powerful, with vast resources. But he is not God. There is a higher power that stood with us, which is why the Supreme Court granted me bail today."

He claimed that the BJP had intentionally sabotaged Delhi's infrastructure during his absence, citing the deterioration of roads around Delhi University as an example.

"When I got out of jail, people told me the roads in Delhi University had wors-

ened. I inspected them with the Chief Minister (Atishi) and requested her to order repairs, which she promptly did," he said.

Kejriwal further revealed that during a conversation with a senior BJP leader, he was told that his arrest was intended to halt Delhi's development.

"I was shocked. How can anyone take pleasure in ruining the lives of 2 crore people in the capital? How can politics stoop so low?" he questioned.

Kejriwal accused the BJP of focusing on tarnishing AAP's image instead of working for the people. He pointed out that the BJP had failed to win Delhi's elections for 27 years and was now resorting to obstruction tactics.

BANKING & FINANCE

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RESERVE BANK OF INDIA GOVERNOR HIGHLIGHTS IMPROVED COORDINATION IN ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

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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'LAAPATAA LADIES', AND THE LEGACY OF AAMIR KHAN PRODUCTIONS WITH INDIA'S OFFICIAL OSCAR SUBMISSIONS

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 Sanjay 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

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.

HARYANA ASSEMBLY POLLS

Amit Shah slams Congress's 'cut, commission and corruption' regime

YOGESH KANT
Rewari, Haryana

Lauding the BJP's efforts, Home Minister Amit Shah addressed the Jan Ashirwad Rally in Rewari on Friday, emphasizing key initiatives undertaken by the Modi government. These included the purchase of 24 crops at the minimum support price (MSP) and the successful implementation of the One Rank-One Pension (OROP) scheme, among other notable achievements. Shah's speech reflected the BJP's significant progress since Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched his election campaign in 2014 while delivering sharp criticism of the previous Congress-led government in Haryana.

Shah emphasized that the long-pending demand for OROP, raised by army personnel for 40 years, had finally been fulfilled under Modi's leadership. He said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi started his election campaign in 2014 from Haryana and promised to fulfill the demand of One Rank-One Pension. For 40 years, Congress could not implement it. You gave Modi ji the opportunity to serve, and he fulfilled that promise." He also mentioned that the third version of the OROP scheme



had been implemented just a month ago. "And assured that no Agniveer in Haryana would be deprived of a pensionable job, promising that both the central and Haryana governments would ensure permanent jobs for every Agniveer," he added.

Highlighting the inclusive nature of the BJP government, Shah noted that under Congress rule, development was limited to the chief minister's home district, while corruption and hooliganism spread in other areas. In contrast, the BJP, he said, has ensured equitable growth for all 36 communities across Haryana.

Shah launched a scathing attack on Congress, accusing the party of deep-rooted corruption. He asserted that under Congress, Haryana was governed by cuts, commissions, dealers, middlemen, and

"sons-in-law." Shah claimed that in the ten years since the BJP came to power, these corrupt practices had been eradicated.

Directing his criticism towards Rahul Gandhi, Shah claimed that NGOs had misled Gandhi into believing that promises about MSP would secure votes. He questioned Gandhi's understanding of agricultural matters, asking whether he even knew the difference between rabi and kharif crops. Shah pointed out that the BJP now purchases 24 crops at MSP in Haryana. Under Congress, the price of paddy was Rs 1,300, which has since risen to Rs 2,300 under the BJP. He promised that if re-elected, the BJP would raise the price further to Rs 3,100, and listed other crop MSPs along with increased compensation under the BJP's leadership.

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 factional-

ism, 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.

Congress storming to power in Haryana says Rahul Gandhi

KAVITA SHARMA
Assand (KARNAL)

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi today said that Congress was storming to power in Haryana with a sweeping majority. He said, the new government will belong to everyone and everybody will get his due.

Addressing a largely attended public rally in Karnal, Gandhi alleged that the RSS had captured all the institutions in the country whether the bureaucracy, the media or the intelligence services.

Gandhi, who recently returned from a US visit, narrated the sad story of about 20 people from Haryana who had made their



way through a lot of difficulties. He said they were trapped in the US and cannot come back for another ten years while their relatives were crying to see them back home.

He also said, there were thousands of people like them who were struggling in the US. Those people were forced to leave their

native places by selling their land or taking money on exorbitant interest. He said, on an average these people had spent Rs 50 lakhs each to reach there. Gandhi blamed the BJP government in Haryana for the plight of these youth who were forced to leave the country, as there were no avenues in the state.

He promised that once the BJP government is thrown out and the Congress returns to power, it will create employment avenues so that people are not forced to leave under such circumstances. He said he was pained to see a child crying while making a video call to his father in the US. He promised that the Congress party would wipe the tears of all those people.

The Leader of the Opposition alleged that the Narendra Modi government had created a monopoly and helped his friends like Ambanis and Adanis only. He said, while no farmer's debt was waived off, Rs 16 lakh crores of debt of 25 billionaires like Adani and Ambani had been waived off.

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. Nagaprasanna 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 Khara and Bihar Congress president Akhilesh Prasad Singh. Welcoming Anupam into the Congress, Khara 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 for 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 Nagaprasanna 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

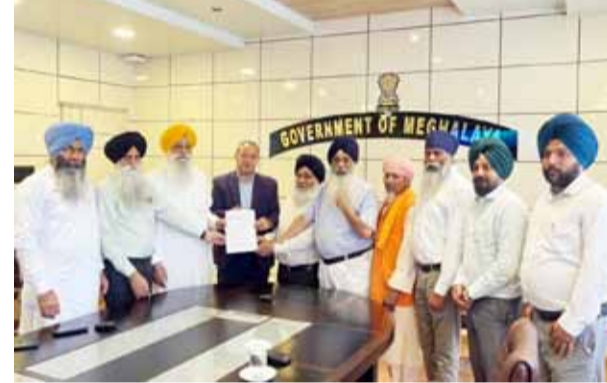


European concept not known to India that was ruled by maharajas and rajas. Shall we declare that democracy will be jettisoned in this country?" P Chidambaram further said that Constitutional functionalities, especially those who hold titular positions, should take a vow of silence. It may be recalled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



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar
A memorandum handed over to stop demolition of 200-year-old Gurdwara Sahib in Punjabi Colony in Shillong

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 Dhani, 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.

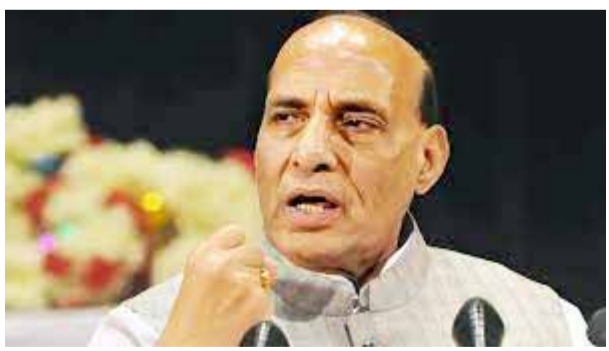
Odisha govt battles for police torture controversy



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's 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 happened 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 - Dhani



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar
The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhani 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 Dhani 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. Dhani 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.



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

A provision fraught with practical problems



The Bharatiya Nagrik 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

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.

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.



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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Quality in a service or product is not what you put into it. It is what the customer gets out of it

Peter Drucker

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BOOKS: REVIEW

New book reflects on Muslim marginalisation

Mujibur Rehman's *Shikwa-e-Hind: The Political Future of Indian Muslims* is a thought-provoking analysis of the socio-political conditions of Muslims in contemporary India. Taking its title from the famous poem *Shikwa* by Muhammad Iqbal, Rehman's book offers a complaint, not to God as Iqbal's poem did, but against majoritarian India. The book argues that the country is systematically marginalising its Muslim population through “de-Islamisation” policies and sustained attacks on everything associated with Muslims. Rehman's work is meticulously researched, but it is also overwhelmed by historical references that feel tangential to the core issue: the future of Muslims in India. The detailed recounting of Muslim political exclusion before, during, and after Partition weighs

down the narrative. Rehman's exploration of these historical events, though valuable in setting a context, seems to detract from a more urgent discussion on present-day solutions. The book could have benefited from a tighter focus on contemporary challenges and actionable strategies for the Muslim community's political and social upliftment. One of the key issues that *Shikwa-e-Hind* highlights is the increasing demonisation of Muslims in the public sphere, often painted as extremists or jihadists by certain elements of Indian society. This rhetoric has escalated to violence in some cases, prompting even the Supreme Court of India to suggest legislation against lynching. Rehman points out that the Hindu Right appears to view Muslim political empowerment as a step toward the establishment of Sharia law in India, a fear further stoked by

inflammatory figures like Yati Narsinghanand, who has called for Hindus to increase their population to avoid India turning into an Islamic state. However, Rehman's proposed solutions to these deeply ingrained issues fall short. The book offers platitudes, such as suggesting Muslims explore alliances with secular citizens of other faiths to build a truly secular polity. While theoretically sound, such suggestions lack depth and practicality, leaving the reader without a clear understanding of how these goals can be achieved in a country as complex and diverse as India. In an unexpected twist, the author also contemplates the idea of a separate Muslim nation, suggesting that if the option had not been exhausted with the creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh, it might still be on the table. This notion is as perplexing as it is 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.

'Laapataa Ladies', And The Legacy Of Aamir Khan Productions With India's Official Oscar Submissions

MUMBAI: The Kiran Rao directorial 'Laapataa Ladies' has been selected as India's official entry for the upcoming edition of the Academy Awards. It has become the third film from Aamir Khan's production house, Aamir Khan Productions to have been submitted as India's official entry by the Film Federation of India.



It all started with the Aamir Khan-starrer 'Lagaan' which was not just sent as India's official entry to the Oscars but also secured a place in the final nominations. The film, which is an epic period musical sports drama, was written and directed by Ashutosh Gowariker. It was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 74th Academy Awards, and became the third Indian film to be nominated in the

the making of the film Aamir got in touch with Kiran, and over the years, they grew close. However, the film didn't win 74th Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film, and lost out to the Bosnian film 'No Man's Land' which was directed by Danis Tanovic. It was after Lagaan's loss at the Oscars that Aamir completely lost his faith in awards, and stopped attending any award ceremony following his heartbreak and disappointment. Then came 'Taare Zameen Par', which marked Aamir's directorial debut. The film, a psychological drama, told the story of a dyslexic kid who is taken under the wings by Aamir's character of Ram Shankar Nikumbh, an art teacher as the latter realises his true potential.

Leveraging AI and IoT for Enhanced Data-Driven Decision-Making in Security Management

ARUN KUMAR RAO
Bengaluru

"AI and IoT have become invaluable in modern security applications. Their ability to continuously learn, adapt to new threats, and offer predictive insights is fundamentally transforming physical security management," says Sandesh Kaup, Director at Luxriot India Pvt. Ltd. "These technologies empower organizations to make data-driven decisions, enhance surveillance systems, and ultimately ensure safer environments across industries."



smarter, more robust security solutions that go beyond traditional surveillance systems, allowing them to stay one step ahead in an increasingly complex security environment.

video analytics, which provide unparalleled precision in monitoring and safeguarding physical spaces. With video management software (VMS) becoming more cost-effective, reliable, and accurate, its adoption is expected to surge. These systems not only improve efficiency but also reduce crime rates by integrating seamlessly with third-party systems such as fire alarms, intrusion detection, and video analytics. This creates a comprehensive security ecosystem, empowering facility managers to monitor multiple camera views and respond quickly to potential threats.

pattern recognition, enabling real-time image and video analysis, anomaly detection, and predictive insights. These systems are self-learning and continuously improve through technologies like transfer learning, adapting to new threats and minimizing false alarms. As a result, AI is a powerful tool in detecting, analyzing, and responding to potential security threats in real-time.

AI and the Future of Security Management

AI plays a pivotal role in modern security solutions. Powered by neural networks and deep learning models, AI excels in complex

Urvashi Rautela narrates an interesting episode from 'Mahabharata'



MUMBAI: Bollywood actress Urvashi Rautela shared photos of her favorite spot from her ongoing spiritual journey. Taking to Instagram, Urvashi, who has 73 million followers, shared her pictures and narrated an interesting story from the mythological epic Mahabharata.

The 'Skanda' actress wrote, "Back at my Fav place (with orange heart) Once in Mahabharata, Bhima was proud of his strength. At that time Hanumanji broke the ego of Bhima. The place where Bhima and Hanumanji met is still situated near Uttarakhand. This place is known as Hanuman Chhatti". In the pictures, Urvashi is seen seeking blessings from Lord Hanuman and reading about the shlokas from Mahabharata and their sacred meanings. Earlier, Urvashi shared a clip from the Kedarnath Temple and offered a glimpse of her spiritual visit. In the clip, Urvashi is seen holding the damru in her hand as she seeks blessings from a naga-sadhu sitting behind her. She made her film debut in 2013 with the action movie 'Singh Saab the Great', directed by Anil Sharma. The film starred Sunny Deol, Amrita Rao, and Prakash Raj in the lead roles.

A Rare Convergence of Innovation, Resilience and Affordability

THE KHUL JA SIMSIM FOR EXPORTERS



KIRAN MISRA

The resource-starved Indian exporters finally saw optimism rising for the goods sent abroad and awaiting the payment from the overseas buyers. Many suffered financially due to delays in the payments they hoped, but many times their consignments were sent back. Many exporters even had to suffer bankruptcy. The crucial meeting held on September 24, between STENN also known as the International Trade Finance Company, an outfit headquartered in London and the Federation of Indian Exports Organization has opened the magic gate to the much needed resources for the medium and small industries across the country.

It has all begun, accordingly to the Noel Hillman, Chief Commercial Officer of STENN, who was present at the crucial meeting recalls that the innovative ideas crystallized in 2021, when the co-founder of the organization, Paul Tren noticed his winsome wife Linda rubbing a frozen banana, that smooths her skin, and thus a new business idea was born to market frozen pops i.e. skincare products.

Honesty is the Key

Paul's strategy is to promote honesty and quality in the international trade facing all sorts of mischief from the Chinese companies mostly owned by the Communist Party and its armed forces. Also, the small and medium sectors in India have almost collapsed after the demonetization. During the past six years the Indian markets have been flooded with Chinese goods. It is estimated that China is getting 100 billion USD every year, because India has been unable to

compete with the Chinese goods and trade practices. The Indian financial institutions or banks only indulge in rhetoric. In case the Director General of FIEO, Ajay Sahai, really does succeed in his mission, India's 65 million resource-starved industries might regain their financial health and also contribute to exports.

Financial Liquidity

It is yet to be seen whether the bureaucracy in the states and the Finance Ministry genuinely reorient their attitude in rejuvenating the people's initiative in the sector. The cost of running an industry is quite high in the country. In spite of the trade shows being held in the NOIDA and Greater NOIDA, the small and medium industries have been suffering for decades. The saree industry in Varanasi, despite the assurances of PM Narendra Modi, is struggling for its survival. The UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

has been assuring the small and medium sectors for a friendly environment, the cases of ransoms are still being reported in the UP districts, including NCR. It is yet to be confirmed why the state government has not created a special police force for protecting the entrepreneurs.

Need for Convergence

A bigger challenge awaits for Ajay Sahai after the conclusion of the MOU signed between his organization and STENN that is how to take the non-performing government officials in the states like UP, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh. The concept of the double-engine governments i.e. the state and the Union are being governed by the same party appears to have petered out. The job seekers from the backward districts from the states continue to rush towards the cities like Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and other areas. It is not known if Ajay Sahai would be able to convince the government officials, who only believe in getting assignments for personal benefits, to work for the industry which can usher in prosperity. It is high time that the Paula idea of convergence really triggers the status conscious bureaucrats to converge the state machinery for genuinely promoting small and medium industries. The poor Ali Baba has the magic mantra, 'khul ja simsim', but the 40 thieves are too active to let him regain his strength.

Non-payment of maternity benefits should be addressed immediately for betterment of women in workplace: Delina Khongdup, Member NCW



NEW DELHI: At the ASSOCHAM 5th Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards and Conclave 2024, Chief Guest Delina Khongdup, Member National Commission for Women, addressed the audience by stressing the need for diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

This should be a constant practice in the organisations for the entitlement of women and all genders. This is a human and social responsibility to achieve gender diversity for all walks of society. India has a vast diversity and there should be a feeling of inclusivity in all the places possible. There has been an amendment to the Companies Act to increase the representation of women in board of directors, but the reality is there is less than 5% of women at the CEO level in the Indian workforce. Corporate India should recognise this inclusivity and bridge the gender balance relationship at working spaces. Harassment in the workplaces and non-payment of maternity benefits should be addressed immediately for betterment. We should apply a holistic approach to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat @2047, she said.

Srimathi Shivashankar, Chairperson, ASSOCHAM National Empowerment Council and Corporate Vice President and Global Head, EdTech Business, HCL Technologies gave her welcome address and said that this is a pivotal moment where diversity and inclusion are no longer just buzzwords but essential pillars of sustainable growth. We should aim to inspire action and collaboration toward a future where everyone, regardless of background, can thrive. In his vote of thanks Ravi Bhatnagar, Co-Chairperson, ASSOCHAM National CSR & Empowerment Councils and Director External Affairs & Partnerships, South Asia, Reckitt highlighted the importance of recognizing employee wellbeing at workplaces so that gender diversity can take center stage. India's mission is to achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion as a lot can be done in this country to make it a developed nation. Embracing this diversity is vital for nurturing an inclusive workplace culture. Dnyan Shah, Co-Chairperson, ASSOCHAM National Empowerment Council and SVP & Global Head, DEI, Employee Experience & En-

agement, Mphasis shared how India's heritage of unity in diversity must extend to our workplaces and communities, creating environments where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute. An inclusive India is a prosperous India. Helping with training sessions for the person with disabilities is the need of the hour. True inclusion in India means bridging gaps - not only across regions and languages but also across gender, ability, and opportunity, said Gurpreet Arora, Head of Group Finance Service Delivery India, UBS Business Solution (India) Pvt. Ltd. In a diverse nation like India, inclusion isn't just a choice; it's a responsibility. Every individual must feel they belong, no matter their background or identity, he added. Award ceremony was organized at the 5th Diversity and Inclusion Excellence Awards and Conclave 2024 where organisations were recognized under various categories. Best Employer for Policies on Diversity & Inclusion was won by Edelman India Pvt Ltd (small); Myntra designs pvt ltd (Medium); KPMG India (large). Best Employer for Persons with Disabilities was won by Bizsolindia Services Private Limited (small); CSG Systems International (India) Private Limited (medium); TVS motor company (large). Reflections Info Systems Pvt Ltd (small); Swiss Re (medium); KPMG (large) won under the category Best Employer for Women. D&I Champion category (large) was bagged by Devendra Patodi (Vice President - Nagpur Plant Operations) CEAT Limited and Ruchika Malhan Varma (Chief Marketing, Customer and Impact Officer) Future Generali India Insurance Co. Ltd.(medium).

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav



As India continues its journey toward becoming a global economic giant, it must address the growing issue of excessive work pressure in corporate jobs. Growth should not come at the cost of human life and well-being.

India is rapidly progressing towards becoming the third-largest economy in the world, trailing only behind the US and China. As the nation prepares for this monumental achievement, global interest in India continues to rise, with developed countries increasing their investments. India's massive population, a challenge for the government, presents an opportunity for large corporations, especially in the context of affordable labor, a strong work ethic, and a growing consumer base. However, while this growth trajectory boosts profits and productivity, it also comes at a significant cost: the mental and physical health of India's corporate employees buckling under excessive work pressure. The recent death of Anna Sebastian Peraiyal, a 26-year-old chartered accountant at Ernst & Young (EY) India, shocked the nation. She had

Pushed Beyond Limits



newspaper's feature editor and business news editor. Long sitting hours pushed me to a medical emergency, where surgery was required on the back of my neck. This highlights how ignoring health due to work commitments can have irreversible consequences. In a similar case, another senior journalist in Delhi died due to heart complications. Despite knowing about his deteriorating condition, he continued working without taking time off for treatment, and eventually, the pressure cost him his life. The fierce competition in India's job market has worsened the issue of excessive work pressure. With unemployment still a pressing concern, employees feel obligated to prove their utility always. This often results in profes-

contribute effectively, leading to higher attrition rates, absenteeism, and reduced efficiency. Institutions must recognize the importance of promoting a balanced work-life approach. Pushing employees to work relentlessly for the sake of higher profits or meeting goals only sets the stage for long-term consequences, including mental and physical exhaustion, reduced motivation, and, in severe cases, premature death. Organizations must implement measures to ensure employee well-being, such as offering flexible working hours, promoting a culture where employees can take breaks without fear, and providing mental health support. Additionally, management should ensure realistic targets and workloads and encourage open communication, allowing employees to raise concerns about work pressure without being stigmatized or facing repercussions. A reevaluation of corporate culture is not just necessary; it is imperative. Only by striking the right balance between work and life can employees and organizations flourish in the long run. The writer is a senior journalist and columnist. Views are personal. Twitter @narvijayyadav.

Human Resources leaders collaborate to resolve the jobs and talent crisis



OUR CORRESPONDENT
New Delhi

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, India's top Human Resources and Skill Development leaders met in Delhi on Friday to collaborate to resolve the jobs and talent crisis in the country. The collaboration will bridge the skill gap and employability, thereby making India's workforce future ready and globally competitive. This initiative brought together industry leaders and senior HR professionals to discuss strategies for reskilling and upskilling corporate and industrial workforce, in response

to a fast-changing employment landscape triggered in part by technological advancements and the changing nature of work itself, post the pandemic. During the event, Ved Mani Tiwari, CEO of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Managing Director, NSDC International (NSDCI) said, "NSDC and SHRM both are purpose-driven organizations and this collaboration is aimed at skilling India better in line with the Honourable Prime Minister's vision. In developing and nurturing future talent, HR has visibility over the entire talent pipeline. We want our employees to be proficient and it is important therefore to be able to help reskill and upskill them in response to skill gaps. It's imperative that we not only unlock value for each employee but this unlocking should also happen at the company and the industry level and taken in the aggregate, this would serve the larger skilling requirements for the country as a whole." "To transform India into a \$5 trillion economy by 2025, we must accelerate the pace of skilling. With every fourth worker in the global workforce being Indian, equipping our youth with the right skills is essential. It's not just about growth; it's about ensuring every Indian benefits from this demographic advantage," he added. Achal Khanna, CEO of SHRM, India APAC and MENA emphasized the significance of skilling initiatives for India's workforce. She remarked, "It gives me immense pride to collaborate with NSDC as we work together to build the foundation for a more skilled and prosperous nation. The HR Leadership Council Connect is a transformative platform that bridges the gap between the corporate world and the skilling ecosystem. Through India's first CHRO Council for HR Leaders exclusive 'Future-ready Workforce Initiative' we aim to create an efficient skilling eco-system that is adaptable and addresses the current and future needs of the workforce. We are proud to be a part of Kaushal Bharat and Viksit Bharat agenda".