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ON SACRED OCCASION OF PARKASH PURAB OF SRI GURU NANAK DEV JI, CM PAYS OBEISANCE AT GURDWARA CHEVIN PATSHAHI

On this National Press Day

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Happy National Press Day-FW Team



ing input costs soaring.'

current account deficit to re-

main in the safe zone on the

back of robust services export

to rise to 1 per cent of GDP

Meanwhile, the latest data

released by the Commerce

and Industry Ministry show

that India's merchandise

exports jumped by a robust

17.25 per cent to USD 39.20

billion during October this

year, as compared to USD

33.43 billion during the same

The double-digit growth in

exports amid the slowdown

in global trade was driven by

engineering goods, electronic

goods, organic and inorganic

chemicals and textiles which

reflects the growing strength

of India's manufacturing

sector. India's total exports

(merchandise and services

combined) for October 2024

are estimated at USD 73.21

billion, registering a growth

of 19.08 percent vis-à-vis Oc-

tober 2023. Total imports

combined) for October 2024

is estimated at USD 83.33

month last year.

DILJIT PROUDLY SAYS 'PUNJABI AA GAYE ABU **DHABI' DURING HIS DIL-LUMINATI TOUR**

SGPC rankles in govts' eyes for being like state within state: Harjinder Singh Dhami

SGPC was celebrated

JAGMOHAN SINGH

Speaking during the congregation held on the occasion of the 104th foundation day of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), the SGPC President Harjinder Singh Dhami said that this Sikh organization has run the Gurdwara management as per the Panthic (community's) spirit during its glorious journey of more than a century and has always played a leading role for preaching Sikhi and guarding Sikh concerns.

He said that the SGPC has

always raised the voice of truth while remaining active to stand for the sui generis distinct entity of Sikhs. This is the reason why the SGPC for being like a state within state rankles in the eyes of the governments.

that constant efforts are being made to subvert the existence of the SGPC, a Sikh organization that came into existence in 1920 with great sacrifices after

mahants (priests). "Governments are continuously trying to limit its jurisdiction. After indirectly taking over the management of Takht Sri Patna Sahib, Takht Sri Hazur Sahib (Nanded), Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee and Haryana Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, now their intention is to grab the management of SGPC", said Dhami. He appealed to the Sikh community to unite under the leadership of Sri Akal Takht Sahib to fight the anti-Panthic forces and promised that the SGPC will always be ready for the rising spirit of Sikhi in the direction of its history, tradiliberating the holy Sikh reli-tions and functions.

Indian Economy to Touch \$7 Trillion Mark by 2031: Report



NEW DELHI: The Indian economy is expected to clock a medium-term growth of 6.7 per cent on average between fiscal 2025 and 2031, and touch the \$7 trillion mark, according to a report by rating agency CRISIL.

This would be similar to the 6.6 per cent growth seen in the pre-pandemic decade, driven by a capex push and surge in productivity.

The report projects India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at 6.8 per cent during the current financial year as high interest rates and stricter lending norms are expected to impact urban demand.

"A somewhat lower fiscal impulse to growth (as the Central government pursues fiscal consolidation) should also weigh on growth," the trade and push up oil prices, growth of 7.77 per cent vis-ET-Crisil India Progress Reimpacting inflation and send-à-vis October 2023.

Inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is likely to ease to 4.5 per cent on average in 2024-25 from 5.4 per cent in the previous year, driven by lower food inflation. However, the report sees weather conditions and geopolitical uncertainties as key risks to its growth and inflation forecasts.

"Although kharif sowing is higher this year, the impact of excess and unseasonal rains needs to be ascertained. An adverse weather event through the rest of this fiscal remains a constant risk to food inflation and agriculture income," the report states.

According to the report, (merchandise and services "any further escalation in geopolitical tensions could constrain supply chains, disturb Billion, registering a positive

Punjab's farmers to join hands to adopt crop diversification The report forecasts India's

Sandhwan calls



han Sabha Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhawan has called farmers to come forward to adopt crop diversification and said that they should leave wheat and paddy cycle and adopt vegetables & other alternative crops, besides to make a joint strategy to answer various allegations made by BJP led Union Government.

In a press statement issued here today, S. Sandhwan said that the farmers of the state should refrain from cultivation of wheat and paddy and earn handsome returns by cultivating various other crops such as oil seeds crops. He said that by adopting crop diversification, the farmers can get out of the wheat-paddy cycle on one hand and they can get rid of the restrictions deliberately imposed by the BJP government on the other. He said that the union government deliberately not converting milled rice from Punjab Shellers and not clearing the requisite space, due to which the farmers were facing hardships.

Emphasizing the need to reduce

the area under paddy, S. Sandhwan said that the Union Government was trying to push the agricultural sector into crisis. He earn profit from their crops. The speaker further said that the state government is trying to achieve the goal of crop diversification with support of farmers. He said that the Punjab government is taking all possible steps for the welfare of the farmers. He said that the underground water resources of Punjab were continuously decreasing and crop diversification has become a need of the hour. He said that it is our responsibility to use natural resources as much as

Shiromani Akali Dal protests move to allocate land in Chandigarh to Haryana for new Assembly



opposition Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Thursday said any decision to allocate land to Haryana in Chandigarh would be unconstitutional as it would violate Article 3 of the Constitution, whereby the Parliament alone could change state

Akali Dal leader Daljit Singh Cheema, while urging Union Home Minister Amit Shah to rescind the decision, said it was in violation of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966. Terming the entire move to allocate land to Haryana for a new Assembly in the Union Territory as a d sign to end Punjab's right over Chandigarh, Cheema said: "It is clear that the Haryana government is colluding with the Centre against Punjab." He also accused the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab of being hand in glove with Haryana and the Central government.

"Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) did not object when Home Minister Amit Shah made this announcement at a meeting of the North Zone Council meeting, "Cheema said. He said Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann weakened Punjab's case by refusing to object to Harvana's proposal and instead asked for land for Punjab also under the same premises."The Chief Minister should have realized that Punjab is the owner of Chandigarh before making any such request." Making it clear that the Akali Dal would not allow this move to succeed, Cheema said: "We will seek legal counsel and also chart out the

next course of action soon. No

sacrifice is too big to protect the

interests of Punjab.

He also asked the Haryana government to make its new Assembly in its territory, adding that the land which has been earmarked for the Assembly building in the UT is two to three km from Haryana's territory. Meanwhile, the Akali Dal leader said while a demographic fraud had been perpetrated on Punjab by taking Census figures of 1961, instead of 1955, to identify Hindi-speaking areas that resulted in a truncated state post reorganisation, now a land fraud was being done to award land to Haryana in the Union Territory. Cheema said land worth hundreds of crores in the UT was being given to Harvana in exchange for land worth nothing in Haryana to the UT administration. He said 10 acres of land being given to the UT administration was in the Sukhna catchment area and could not be developed.

Hindu pilgrim on way to Nankana Sahib shot dead in Pak hospital in a critical condition,

A Pakistani Hindu pilgrim, who was going to attend 555th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev in Nankana Sahib, was shot dead by robbers, police

A native of Larkana city of Sindh province, Rajesh Kumar, was going to Nankana Sahib from Lahore by a car along with his friend and brother-in-law when three robbers intercepted them on the Mananwala-Nankana Sahib Road, some 60 km night, Kumar was shifted to a

Act in Insolvency Cases

NEW DELHI: On October 29,

2024, the National Company

Law Tribunal (NCLT) Mum-

bai upheld the initiation of the

Corporate Insolvency Resolu-

tion Process (CIRP) against

Perfect Infraengineers Limited

The Tribunal dismissed the

Corporate Debtor's challenge to

the July 15, 2024 order, ruling

ruptcy Code (IBC) supersedes

the provisions of the Micro,

Small, and Medium Enterprises

Development Act (MSMED

Act) in cases of financial default,

even for MSMEs. NCLT noted

that the provisions of the IBC, a

later legislation, take precedence

over the earlier MSMED Act. It

found no merit in the Corpo-

rate Debtor's argument that it

should first undergo the MSME

revival mechanism, as outlined

in a 2015 government notifica-

tion. The Tribunal emphasised

that financial creditors, like the

Technology Development Board,

("Corporate Debtor").



After Kumar resisted, the robbers opened fire on him and fled," police said. After the robbery and firing incident on Wednesday

NATIONAL COMPANY LAW

can independently trigger CIRP

without needing to follow the

MSME framework, particularly

where a default has occurred.

the jurisdiction of civil courts is

ousted in insolvency matters un-

der the IBC, and any procedural

issues related to MSME recovery

guidelines do not prevent the

initiation of the CIRP under

Section 7 of the IBC. The dis-

pute arose after the Technology

Development Board ("Financial

Creditor") filed a petition un-

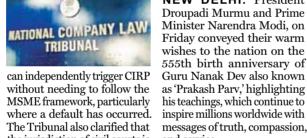
been registered against unidentified men on the complaint of

where he succumbed to his in-

iuries on Thursday. A case has

Kumar's brother-in-law under relevant sections of the Pakistan Penal Code. On Friday, the main the driver, event of Guru Nanak birth an niversary was held in Gurdwara Janamsthan Nankana Sahib, in which over 2,500 Sikhs from India and a good number of local and foreign pilgrims participated.

NCLT Rules IBC Supersedes MSMED President Murmu and PM Modi extend greetings on Guru Nanak's Prakash Parv **NEW DELHI:** President transformative role, he said, "At



Taking to the social media platform X, President Murmu shared a heartfelt post honouring Guru Nanak's enduring legacy. "On the auspicious occasion of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all Indians living in India and abroad, especially to

der Section 7 of the Insolvency the Sikh community," she wrote. and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to "Guru Nanak Dev Ji has shown us the path of spirituinitiate CIRP against Perfect Infraengineers Limited, a comality based on hard work and pany allegedly in default of its has taught us to build a society based on truth, contentment, financial obligations. On July 15, 2024, NCLT Mumbai ordered kindness, and love. He emphathe commencement of the CIRP. sised sharing in social life, which



harmonious and egalitarian society." PM Modi also conveyed his wishes, emphasising Guru Nanak's guidance toward compassion and unity. "Congratulations on the birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji," PM Modi posted on X.

"May the teachings of Guru



kindness, and humility. His message motivates us to serve society and contribute positively to the world," he added. In a special video message, PM Modi expanded on the pro-

found impact of Guru Nanak's teachings. "The learning from the Guru leads us to God, and once the ego is destroyed it leads us to the light which spreads," he noted.

Reflecting on Guru Nanak's

a time when the country was weakened by divisions of caste and religion, Guru Nanak Dev Ji taught us that the divine light resides in everyone, and that caste is not an identity. He urged us to live a life dedicated to chanting the name of the divine, earning honestly, and sharing with others." PM Modi further e

his wishes for Dev Deepawali, a festival observed with great fervour in Varanasi, where thousands of divas are lit in devotion.

"On this auspicious day, I extend my greetings for both Prakash Parv and Dev Deepawali," he said, recognising the

Union Home Minister Amit Shah echoed the tributes, hon-

"Best wishes to all the countrymen on the Prakash Parv of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji," he wrote on X.

said that the Union Government has suppressing farmers' struggle on behest of corporates. He said that the BJP leaders are holding the farmers responsible for worst Air Quality Index. He said that instead of resolving the issues of farmers and finding appropriate solutions, they are being harassed under a political conspiracy. S Sandhwan urged farmers to adopt organic farming, through which they can earn a substantial returns. Apart from this, farmers can also establish small enterprises by forming cooperative groups and

significance of both celebrations.

ouring Guru Nanak as a symbol of truth, mercy, and equality.

generations. Venture Debt Surge in India Fuels Fintech and EV Innovation

possible for the better life of future

National Tribal Pride Day: PM Inaugurates Projects Worth Over Rs 6,000 Cr In Jamui

PATNA: On the 150th birth anniversary of the revered tribal leader Bhagwan Birsa Munda, also celebrated as National Tribal Pride Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a series of development projects worth Rs 6,640 crore in Jamui, Bihar on Friday.

Bihar's top leaders and officials, including Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary, Vijay Kumar Sinha, Girirai Singh, Jitan Ram Manihi and other Union Ministers, MPs, and MLAs, joined the Prime Minister on stage for this significant event.

In his speech, PM Modi honoured Birsa Munda, also known as Dharti Aaba (Father of the Earth), and extended warm wishes to the tribal communities of India. He recalled his visit to Ulihatu, Munda's birthplace, during last year's National Tribal Pride Day, highlighting the deep respect and recognition for the contributions of tribal heroes in India's history. PM Modi also paid



region, acknowledging Jamui's historic legacy in India's freedom struggle and the valour of its indigenous people. During the inauguration ceremony in Jamui, PM Modi emphasised the nationwide celebration of the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda, which will continue for a year, highlighting the importance of tribal history and contributions to India's cultural and historical heritage. Approximately one crore people from hundreds of districts across India joined

The PM elaborated on the significance of the Rs 6,640 crore worth of projects inautribute to Tilka Manjhi, another gurated and their focus on

the event virtually.

improving the lives of tribal communities. We have provided accep-

tance letters for 1.5 lakh concrete houses for tribal families under various housing schemes. schools and hostels to ensure quality education and a bright future for tribal children, healthcare facilities tailored for tribal women's needs, road infrastructure spanning hundreds of kilometers to enhance connectivity in tribal regions,' PM Modi said. In his speech, PM Modi celebrated the cultural and historical contributions of the tribal community, stating, "Tribal society is the one that made Prince Ram into Lord Ram," thereby acknowledging the key role of

tribal communities in Indian traditions and struggles. He pointed out that tribal leaders like Bhagwan Birsa Munda and movements like the Ulgulan, Santhal, and Kol revolutions played pivotal roles in India's fight for freedom and the protection of its culture. The Prime Minister also criticised post-Independence politics, which he alleged often sidelined the contributions of tribal communities. "Why were movements led by tribal leaders such as Birsa Munda and others necessary if a single party or family had been solely responsible for India's Independence?

"In the decades after Independence, attempts were made to erase the invaluable contribution of tribal history. There was selfish politics behind this too. The policy was that only one party should be given credit for India's Independence. But if only one party, only one family has brought Independence, then why did Lord Birsa Munda's Ulgulan movement take place, what was the Santhal revolution, what was the Kol

revolution?" PM Modi said.

NEW DELHI: The venture debt market in India is steadily

maturing, mirroring the early stages of venture capital, particularly in high-growth sectors like fintech and electric vehicles

A report by global invest- debt to bridge financial gaps ment firm Lighthouse Canton, released Thursday, highlights this expansion, driven by Indian founders' growing preference for non-dilutive funding options. In a funding landscape constrained by limited equity investments, founders are increasingly turning to venture



while retaining ownership. According to the report, the primary allure of venture debt lies in its non-dilutive nature, with 40 per cent of founders citing it as the top reason for choosing this financing option.

Additionally, flexible repayment schedules appeal to

underscoring its adaptability for scaling businesses. "India's startup ecosystem holds immense potential, and the growth of venture debt funding is playing a pivotal role in driving its development," said Sanket Sinha, Managing Director and Global Head of Asset Management at Lighthouse Canton. "This funding mode fosters innovation, empowers startups, and supports sustainable growth across the nation's dynamic business landscape,

LIC's Entry into Health Insurance to Significantly Boost Its Market Share

NEW DELHI: The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is expected to enter the health insurance industry in 2025 by acquiring a stake in a standalone health insurance entity, that could significantly boost the market share of country's largest insurer, according to a report on Friday.

According to GlobalData, India's health insurance industry is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.5 per cent from 1.3 lakh crore in 2024 to Rs 2.1 lakh crore in 2028, in



ums (GWP). By capitalising on its existing customer base, the company's expansion into the health insurance domain could significantly boost its market share in the insurance sector in the country, said Global Data, a leading data and analytics company. By acquiring a stake in a private, independent health insurance firm, LIC seeks to

establish a strong foothold in the nation's burgeoning health insurance industry, said Manogna Vangari, insurance analyst at GlobalData. This strategy is consistent with LIC's objective of retaining strategic participation while minimizing the risks inherent in majority ownership, Vangari added. Last week, LIC MD and CEO Siddhartha Mohanty said the state-owned company will take a call on buying a stake in a standalone health insurer in the current financial year and "the groundworks are done".

On sacred occasion of parkash purab of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji, CM pays obeisance at Gurdwara Chevin patshahi

Prays for peace, progress and prosperity of state

JAGMOHAN SINGH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Friday paid obeisance at Gurdwara Chevin Patshahi and prayed for the progress of the state and prosperity of people.

According to official release, the Chief Minister paid obeisance at Gurdwara Sahib and prayed to almighty for the peace, progress and prosperity in the state. He also prayed that the ethos of communal harmony, peace and brotherhood are strengthened in the state with every passing day and Punjab leads the country in every sphere. Extending his heartiest greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Prakash Purb, Bhagwant Singh Mann said that Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji was a great spiritual ambassador who guided humanity to attain salvation by spreading the cult of devotion to God.

The Chief Minister said that Guru Ji's eternal teachings of

Chandigarh residents

government schemes,

have been suffering

Jagmohan Singh Raju

over the years: Dr

KULBIR SINGH KALSI

of the capital Chandigarh have

to suffer serious disadvantag-

es in terms of employment,

benefits of state government

schemes etc., which are avail-

able to other residents of Pun-

jab as a state. The legal reason

for this is that Chandigarh has

since November 1, 1966. This

was stated by former IAS of-

ficer Dr Jagmohan Singh Raju

during a press conference held

affirmed by the Punjab Government in response to RTI applica-

tion of Dr. Raju. Punjab Govt has

away from this debate.

routine letter to Government

up action, whatsoever, has been

any reminder issued.

Sector 27 on November 9. This legal position has been

Chandigarh

are not getting

the benefits of all

Vand Chako' are still relevant in the present materialistic society. He said that Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji envisioned a casteless society free from rituals. thereby redeeming the suffering humanity from the pangs of agony. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji motivated mankind with new

'Kirat Karo, Naam Japo and ideas, aims, and aspirations and called upon it to dispense with the maladies of hypocrisy, falsehood, pretensions and casteprejudices.

The Chief Minister appealed the people to imbibe the spirit of service and humility as preached by the Great Guru and strive hard for carving out a peaceful, prosperous and healthy society

of Guru Nanak Dev ji . He exhorted people to celebrate this sacred occasion with utmost devotion and dedication rising above the parochial considerations of caste, colour, creed and religion. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that through his udaasis Guru Nanak Dev ji, who is re-

vered across the globe as Jagat

Guru, preached communal har-

mony and brotherhood.

Likewise, Chief Minister said that Guru Nanak Dev ji through his teachings opposed tyranny, injustice and oppression during the invasion of Mughal emperor Babar. Quoting verse 'Pawan Guru, Paani Pitaah, Mata Dharat Mahat' from Gurbani, he said that Guru ji have equated air (pawan) with teacher, water (paani) with father and land (dharat) with mother adding that Guru ji had at that time taught the people to preserve environment when its pollution nowhere in scene. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji was also a firm advocate of women empowerment and equal status for females in

AAP delegation submits memorandum to Governor, demands protection of Punjab's right over Chandigarh

the Governor House, Min-

ister Harpal Singh Cheema

stated that the matter was

of immense importance for

Punjab and its rightful claim

over Chandigarh. He said that

Chandigarh is the capital of

Punjab and belongs solely to

the state, and the AAP govern-

ment is firmly opposed to any

attempt to allot land in the city

for the construction of Hary-

has the right to build its leg-

islature here, "said Harpal

'Chandigarh is Punjab's

ana's Legislative Assembly.



CHANDIGARH: A delegation from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), led by Punjab's Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, today submitted a memorandum to the Governor of Punjab, Gulab Chand Kataria, registering their strong opposition to the Haryana government's proposal to set up a Legislative Assembly complex in Chandigarh. The memorandum was handed over by the delegation, which also included Minister Harjot Singh Bains, AAP leaders Deepak Bali and Parminder Singh Goldy.

In a press briefing outside

in exchange for 12 acres in Panchkula. This proposal is part of their clear agenda to establish their assembly complex in Chandigarh. AAP strongly opposes this move and will not allow even an inch of Chandigarh to be given to Haryana." Cheema further pointed out that previous governments had

failed to safeguard Punjab's interests regarding Chandigarh. He reminded that when Punjab and Haryana were created, it was clearly understood that Harvana would establish its own capital in Panchkula, and not in Chandigarh. He stressed that Haryana should build its Legislative Assembly in Panchkula. The AAP delegation also

expressed concern that the revious state governments had failed to take a firm stand on this issue, allowing the situation to become more complex over time. "We will not allow any further erosion of Punjab's capital, and no other state rights. Punjab is a state known for its sacrifices for the nation, and we will continue to fight Singh Cheema. "The Haryfor what is rightfully ours, " ana government has sought Cheema added.

Haryana CM Naib Saini claims only 4 per cent unemployment in state



Chandigarh

The unemployment rate in Haryana has come down to just 4% at present, Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini responded to the questions of the opposition. He said, the BJP government has given 1.7 lakh government jobs in the past 10 years while the Congress had given only 86 thousand jobs in their 10 years rule in the state. He also claimed that the law and order situation in the state has improved while ruling in the state. While answering the questions raised by the opposition after the discussion on the Governor's address in Vidhan Sabha session, CM Saini said that the unemployment rate in the state has come down to just four percent and this much unemployment is

Saini said about 10 years ago the number of registered unemployed in the state was 7, 75,000, which has now come down to 4,04,000. He said that it is not necessary that every registered youth is unemployed. Some are self-employed while some are looking for better employment. Therefore, on the basis of these figures the opposition should not spread false propaganda that unemployment is increasing in the state. He raised a question from the opposition that when the Congress knew that two lakh government posts were vacant, then why did they not fill them during their tenure? Chief Minister Nayab Saini was responding to questions raised by opposition MLAs in the Assembly on Thursday while talking to media persons and said that the BJP government has given 1,70,000 government jobs in its 10-year tenure, whereas the Congress gave only 86 thousand jobs in its 10-year rule. He said earlier jobs were sold, but now jobs are given on the basis of qualifica-

Claiming that law and order has improved in the state, he said on the basis of statistics that now FIRs are being registered for even the smallest crimes. No matter how big a person breaks the law, strict action is being taken against

Punjab police busts Narco smuggling & Arms cartel, 2 held with 8.2KG heroin

Police teams also recover 13.1kg chemical, 6kg opium from their possession

JAGMOHAN SINGH

Amritsar

Commissionerate Police has busted trans-border narco smuggling and arms cartel with the arrest of two persons and seized 8.27kg Heroin, 6kg opium, 13.1kg chemical and 4 pistols including one sophisticated 9MM Glock along with 17 cartridges from their posses sion, said Director General of Punjab is the only state in the Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav country wherein the residents Yadav here on Friday.

Those arrested have been identified as Aditya Pratap alias Kaka (23), a resident of Bhalla Colony in Cheharta, Amritsar and Shambhu Kabir (35), a resident of Prem Nagar, Kot Khalsa now Bhai Manjh Sahib, Tarn Taran Road in not been a part of Punjab state Amritsar.

In a statement issued here today, DGP Gaurav Yadav said that both the arrested accused



act and Arms Act registered against both of them, while, accused Shambhu Kabir is also wanted in a murder case.

He said that further investigations are going on to establish backward and forward linkages in this case.

Sharing more details, Commissioner of Police (CP) Amritsar Gurpreet Singh Bhullar said that following reliable inputs about the involvement of accused Aditya alias Kaka in smuggling of weapons, popersons have criminal history lice teams from Police Station Shambu Kabir was arrested Islamabad laid a trap and ar-

rested him from Band Bhatha at Prem Nagar Road in Kot Khalsa, Amritsar and recovered two pistols—including .32 bore and .30 bore, and 13 live cartridges from his pos-

He said that during followup investigations in this case, name of other accused Shambu Kabir was also cropped up, following which, police teams have immediately nominated him and launched an operation to nab him. Accused

Horticulture Minister said that

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann

led government is making con-

certed efforts to increase area

under horticulture in the state.

While describing the horticul-

ture department as an advisory

Ki Wadali Road in Kot Khalsa, Amritsar. During course of investigation on disclosure of accused Shambu, police teams have recovered 275g Heroin, 11.1 Kg chemical (used to mix with heroin) and one .32 bore pistol from his possession.

The CP said that in further course of investigation on the disclosure of accused Aditya alias Kaka two parcels of 5kg and 3kg Heroin each, 2kg Chemical, 6kg Opium and one 9MM Glock Pistol along with one live cartridge were recovered from him. More arrests and recoveries are expected in coming days, he said

Meanwhile, three separate cases including a case Fir No 240 dated 6/11/23 under section 25 of the Arms Act at Police Station Islamabad, FIR No. 247 under sections 18 and 21-C of the NDPS Act and section 25 of the Arms Act at Police Station Islamabad and FIR No. 246 dated 13/11/24 under section 21-C tered against th

A big negligence in Ambala's Heart Centre, instead of a cardiologist a BAMS doctor treating the heart patients

SATISH HANDA

Ambala

A big negligence has come to light in Ambala's Heart Centre inside the Civil hospital Ambala Cantt where instead of a cardiologist, a BAMS doctor was treating the patients, when this truth came to light after a complaint was made on the CM window and the investigation was handed over to Ambala's District Medical Negligence Board. Surprisingly, it is merely negligence with the lives of heart patients admitted in heart centres located inside the famous civil hospital Ambala Cantt, usually known as mini PGI at Ambala, running under the PPP policy in the district with the Badshah Khan Hospital of the industrial city Faridabad. It has come to light that instead of a cardiologist, a BAMS doctor treating patients in the heart center running in the district civil hospital of Ambala Canton-Station Islamabad have been after a complaint was made by



Walia on the CM window. Ambala>s District Medical Negligence Board has also clearly written this in the report. Vinay Walia>s brother Nigam Walia died during treatment at the Heart Centre.

According to the report, the centre management is negligent in the case of Nigam Walia>s death. Director General of Health Dr. Kuldeep Singh a former CMO in the twin city hospitals has considered the matter very serious, considering it to be the centress negligence. Vinay Walia had taken his brother Nigam Walia to the city-s civil hospital on January 31 last year when his health deteriorated. The doctors there asked the patient to go to the heart centre of Ambala of the NDPS Act at Police ment. The truth came to light Cantonment. Vinay Walia said that he brought his brother to

ion and merit only.

legitimate demands of Industrialists



tory legislation enacted by the Congress Government in 1966. As an example, he said that in the CHANDIGARH: Punjab's Andhra Pradesh Reorganization enacted by the Congress Government in 2014, it was categorically provided that Hyderabad shall be common capital for States of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh for 10 years and thereafter there shall be a new capital for the State of Andhra Pradesh. But in the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966, the then Congress Government made no provision for capital for the State of Punjab. Instead, the Act says that Chandigarh ceases to be part of Punjab State. Dr Raju said that on 25th July 2024, he had invited Amrinder Singh (Raja of their issues Warring) President, Punjab

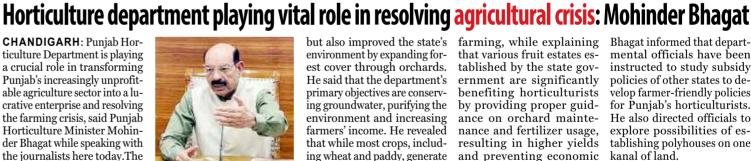
Pradesh Congress Committee for a public debate, preferably on 1st August, 2024, but he has run On 1.4.2022 Punjab Vidhan Sabha passed a resolution recommending "to the state Government to raise the matter with Central Government to immediately transfer Chandigarh to Punjab". But from information obtained under RTI it has been found that Bhagwant Mann Government has just done a mere eyewash by writing a

vided for these specific issues. Sond assured that Punjab of India on 1.4.2022. No follow is establishing better coordination between various detaken after 1.4.2022. Neither, the partments to create a more Chief Minister called for this file conducive and suitable enviagain after 1.4.2022 till date nor ronment for industrialists. On dustrial federations, chambers, this occasion, the industrialists

gestions related to PSIEC to his attention, and the Minister pledged full support to resolve these issues. He added that the state government is committed to the phased maintenance of all focal points and the prioritization of issues related to the upkeep of industrial areas

he assumed the role of Minindustries.

by Rajya Sabha Member Sanjeev Arora, Additional Chief Secretary of the Industry Department Tejveer Singh, CEO of Invest Punjab DPS Kharbanda, MD of PSIEC Varinder Kumar Sharma, and representatives of various in-



nomically beneficial guidance, department's initiatives. Punjab's farmers have established extensive orchards under crop diversification. This has not body for farmers, providing enonly increased the availabil- earning Rs.20 lakh per acre in the state, which will soon are being filled promptly to vironmentally friendly and eco-

but also improved the state's farming, while explaining Bhagat informed that departenvironment by expanding forest cover through orchards. He said that the department's primary objectives are conserving groundwater, purifying the environment and increasing farmers' income. He revealed that while most crops, including wheat and paddy, generate income between Rs.30, 000 to Rs.55, 000 per acre, farmers to Rs.5 lakh per acre through horticulture

He cited an example of a Ludhiana district farmer ity of health-promoting fruits annually through polyhouse be dedicated to the public. strengthen its operations.

that various fruit estates established by the state government are significantly benefiting horticulturists by providing proper guidance on orchard maintenance and fertilizer usage, resulting in higher yields and preventing economic losses from excessive fertilizer use, which further saves Bhagat listed that through the can earn between Rs.1 lakh approximately Rs.7, 000 per acre for horticulturists.The Cabinet Minister announced that guava, litchi and pear estates have been established

velop farmer-friendly policies for Punjab's horticulturists. He also directed officials to explore possibilities of establishing polyhouses on one kanal of land. The Horticulture Minister informed that the state's horticulturists have already secured orders to export 600

quintals of litchi in the com-

ing year.He said that all va-

cant posts in the department

mental officials have been

instructed to study subsidy

policies of other states to de-

FIR against 4 Karnal rice millers allegedly embezzled rice of value worth Rs 17.80 crore

SATISH HANDA

Four rice millers working as CMR (custom milled rice) have embezzled rice of amount worth about Rs 17.80 crore of the government, of these three rice millers are from HAFED while one rice miller who alone embezzled government rice worth Rs 10.34 crore is from the DFSC department, which include a rice miller who embezzled the highest amount is from the DFSC department. These rice millers were allotted paddy under Kharif 2023-24 by HAFED and DFSC procurement agency and had to return 67% of their rice after milling to these agencies but they have embezzled rice worth Rs 17.80 crore, an FIR has been registered against the owners of these rice millers as well as their guarantors by the police having investigation in these cases.

These rice millers involved in

In the first case, according to Inspector Sandeep of Food Civil Supplies and Consumer to be sent to the Food Corporation of India at the rate of 67%.



According to which, 27995,9285 quintals of rice is still outstanding on the rice miller which include value worth Rs 10 crore 34 lakh 98 thousand 988. Accused Vipin Gupta Old Housing Colony, Ruchi Gupta, Anil Kumar Ramesh Nagar, Sushil Kumar Phafdaana have together embezzled the rice.

In the second case, embezzlement of rice for amount worth Rs 2 crore 66 lakh 53 thousand 704 has been alleged by the Hafed

manager told that as per the CMR policy of Kharif-2023-24, Hafed had an agreement with Bajaj Rice Mill Gharaunda for taking paddy for custom milling of rice and its delivery to FCI, under which 49444.13 quintals of paddy was allotted to this rice mill by the department. Alleged accused mill owners Mohit, Ved Prakash and Mahindra residents of Gharaunda Bajaj Colony alleg-

edly embezzled 5025.425 quin-

tals of stock of the department amounting worth Rs 2 crore 66 lakh 53 thousand 704. The accused neither returned the rice to the department as per the condition nor paid its price.

Similarly, rice of value worth Rs 1.26 crore was not returned the Hafed as per an agreement was made on October 3, 2023 with Dinesh Lumba, partner of Surya Rice General Mill Jundla, Hanumant Indane Gas Agency Jundla to take paddy for custom milling of rice and its delivery to FCI as per the CMR policy of Kharif 2023-24. In this case, 22353.38 quintals of paddy was allotted to this rice mill, of which 3226.64 quintals of rice was embezzled by the rice mill worth Rs 1 crore 26 lakh 75 thousand 850. Accused Lumba, Gyan Chand resident Shiv Mandir Jundla and Manjit Singh and Karambir allegedly committed this embezzlement jointly.





Minister of Industry and Commerce, Tarunpreet Singh Sond, has assured the state's industrialists that their legitimate demands will be addressed promptly. Presiding over a meeting at the Udyog Bhawan with prominent industrialists and senior department officials, Sond emphasized that and plots. the Punjab government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, is ister of Industry and Commaking swift and meaningful efforts for the development of industries and the resolution He stated that for the first

time, various industrial federations, chambers, and industrialists are being invited personally to discuss their concerns. Sond promised that all valid demands of the industrialists would be fulfilled very soon. He also mentioned that a onetime settlement scheme (OTS) and some other policy-related decisions require consultation and guidance from the Chief Minister, and after discussions with him, solutions will be pro-

brought several issues and sug-Sond mentioned that since

merce, he has been holding continuous meetings with senior department officials and Punjab's industrialists to bring forward meaningful policies and schemes for the advancement and development of the industrial sector. He assured industrialists that, under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, they would not face any obstacles or difficulties, and the Punjab government would extend full support for establishing new The meeting was attended

and prominent industrialists.

embezzlement and facing action include Saraswati Agro Food of Jundla and a case has been registered against it in Sadar police station. Hafed has lodged a case against Bajaj Rice Mill of Gharaunda in Gharaunda police station, Surya Rice General Mill Jundla in Sadar police station and Ram Industries Sohna Road Phoosgarh in Sector-32 police station. In all these cases, the police have registered cases against 18 people.

Affairs Department, during Kharif 2023-24, an agreement was made with Saraswati Agro Food, Pingli Road Karnal for milling of government paddy. 49983.750 quintals of paddy was allotted to the rice mill. Of which 33489.1125 quintals of rice was

Top Army Officer Reviews Emerging Security Situation and Operational Preparedness in Manipur

toured some Manipur districts to review the emerging internal security situation in the ethnic violence-hit state and discuss operational preparedness with senior Army and Assam Rifles officials, defence officials said on Thursday.

A Defence spokesman said that Dimapur-headquartered Spear Corps commander, Lt Gen Abhijit S. Pendharkar, visited the Red Shield Division, based in Manipur's Leimakhong, during his two-day visit.

During his visit, the GOC visited Leimakhong Military Station and Bishnupur district to review the emerging internal security situation and operational preparedness," the spokesman said

Lt Gen Pendharkhar held discussions on various con-



temporary issues with the Red Shield Division's commander, the Assam Rifles' Inspector General, East, the Deputy Inspector General, South, and the formation commanders on the challenges of the operating environment and road map for assisting the state in bringing peace and stability.

According to the spokesman,

the Corps Commander complimented all ranks of the formation for the high standards of professionalism, commitment, high morale, and neutral, and unbiased approach. The visit of Lt Gen Pendharkar underscores the commitment of the Indian Army in addressing the evolving security dynamics in Manipur,

the spokesman said.

Meanwhile, amidst the recent escalation of violence, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has provided an additional 20 companies (around 1,700 to 1,800 personnel) of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) to deal with the prevailing law and order situation.

A top Manipur Home Department official said that the 20 companies, comprising 15 companies of the CRPF and five of the BSF, already arrived in Manipur from Assam and Tripura, respectively.

The MHA communication, accessed by IANS, also added that with the deployment of an additional 20 companies, a total of 218 companies of CAPFs, comprising the CRPF, the RAF, the BSF, the ITBP, and the SSB are now available with the Manipur government.

Rahul Gandhi announces increased reservations for OBCs, SCs, STs

KAVITA SHARMA

Jharkhand

Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi today said that had Prime Minister Narender Modi read the Constitution of the country, he would not be spreading hate and violence and making people fight against

public rally here today, Gandhi said, it was an ideological fight and a fight to defend and protect the Constitution. He said, the Constitution of the country carried thousands of years old values and ideas, and thoughts of great people and saints like Mahatma Gandhi, BR Ambedkar, Birsa Munda, Phule Ji. Guru Nanak Ji, Narayan Guru, Basavanna and others. He said, the Constitution carried the soul of India.

He told the people that what-



Addressing a largely attended ever rights they have got were only because of the Constitution, unlike before when Rajas and Maharajas ruled as per their own will. He said, the right of one vote to everyone was given and guaranteed by the Constitution only. He accused the BJP and the RSS of attacking the Constitution from behind the closed doors.

Gandhi accused Modi of playing in the hands of a few big billionaires. He said, whatever the billionaires want him to do, he does, like handing over the

and forests to them.

The senior Congress leader reiterated and reaffirmed his commitment to get the caste census done in the country, saying it was a revolutionary step and would prove to be the solution to discrimination prevailing

in the country. He pointed out, there were about 15 percent Dalits, 8 percent Adivasis, about 50 percent OBCs and 15 percent minorities, which roughly adds up to 90 percent. But, he added, the share of

this 90 percent population in the country's decision-making process or control over resources was negligible. He said, all this needs to change and the caste census will change it and start an era of a different kind of politics in the country. He also reiterated that the 50 percent "wall" (ceiling) on reservation

Justice Sanjiv Khanna sworn in as 51st Chief **Justice of India**



Khanna was on Monday sworn in as the 51st Chief Justice of India, President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office to Justice Khanna at a brief swearing-in ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan at 10.30 AM.

Justice Khanna succeeds Justice DY Chandrachud, who demitted office on Sunday on attaining the age of 65 years.

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal ,outgoing CJI DY Chandrachud, ministers, sitting and former judges attended the five-minute ceremony. Appointed as a Judge of the Supreme Court of India on January 18, 2019, Justice Khanna will have a six-month tenure as the CJI. He will retire on May 13, 2025. The Centre had notified his appointment as the next CJI on October 24, following Chief Justice Chandrachud's recommendation on October 16. Reducing pendency of cases and speeding up justice delivery are said to be his priorities. There has been a convention of the CJI recommending the senior-most udge of the Supreme Court as his successor. Only twice, it has not been followed - Justice AN Ray was appointed the 14th CJI on April 25, 1973, superseding three senior-most judges, and Justice MH Beg was appointed the 15th CJI on January 29, 1977, superseding Justice HR Khanna. Justice HR Khanna--his uncle--was denied the appointment as CJI by the Indira Gandhi-led government for his sole dissenting opinion in ADM Jabalpur versus Shivkant Shukla (1976) on the suspension of fundamental

rights during Emergency.

BJP's top leaders rally across Maharashtra for Assembly Elections



Assembly elections on November 20, BJP's top leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, will spearhead rallies to support Maha-Yuti alliance candidates. PM Modi will address three major gatherings in Chimur, Solapur, and Pune, while Amit Shah is set to campaign in Mumbai's Ghatkopar and Kandivali areas. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari will undertake an ambitious seven-rally schedule, covering key locations like Devani, Killari, and Nagpur Central. Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath and Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini will also join the campaign, focusing on Akola, Amaravati, and Nagpur.

Providing Better Healthcare Biggest Priority: PM Modi

Narendra Modi on Wednesday reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to providing better healthcare and improving the living conditions of the coun-Later in the day, the Prime

Minister will visit Bihar to lay the foundation stone for AIIMS Darbhanga as well as multiple development projects worth Rs 12,100 crore across the state.

Taking to X, PM Modi posted, "Providing better health facilities to the countrymen and making their lives easier is our biggest priority. In this direction, today at around 10:45 a.m., along with laying the foundation stone of Darbhanga AIIMS in Bihar, we will have the privilege of inaugurating and laying the foundation stone of many other projects.

He will travel to Darbhanga and inaugurate, lay the foundation stone, and dedicate mul- healthcare facilities to the peo-



tiple development projects to the country

To provide a major boost to health infrastructure in the region, Prime Minister Modi will lay the foundation stone of AIIMS Darbhanga worth more than Rs 1,260 crore.

It will comprise a super-spe ciality hospital/AYUSH block, medical college, nursing college, night shelter, and residential facilities, among others.

It will also provide tertiary

ple of Bihar and nearby regions. A special focus on development projects will boost connectivity in the region across

road and railway sectors. The Prime Minister will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple National Highway projects worth around Rs 5.070 crore in Bihar.

Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate the four-lane Galgalia-Araria section of NH-327E. This corridor will provide an alternate route from Araria on the East-West Corridor (NH-27) to the neighbouring West Bengal at Galgalia.

He will also inaugurate two Rail over bridges on NH-322 and NH-31.

The Prime Minister will also inaugurate a major bridge on NH-110 at Bandhuganj, which will connect Jehanabad to Bihar Sharif.

Prime Minister Modi will lay the foundation stone of eight

National Highway projects, which include the construction of a two-lane road with paved shoulders from Ramnagar to Rosera, Bihar-West Bengal border to Manihari section of NH-131A, Hajipur to Bachhwara via Mahnar and Mohiuddin Nagar, Sarwan-Chakai section,

among others. He will also lay the foundation stone of Raniganj Bypass on NH-327E; Katoria, Lakhpura, Banka, and Panjwara bypasses on NH-333A; and a four-lane link road from NH-82 to NH-

The Prime Minister will dedicate and lay the foundation stone of railway projects worth more than Rs 1,740 crore.

He will lay the foundation stone of the Sonenagar Bypass Railway line from Chiralapothu to Bagha Bishunpur in the Aurangabad district of Bihar, worth more than Rs 220

Congress leaders pay heartfelt tributes to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

NEW DELHI: Congress leaders on Thursday remembered India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, on his 135th birth anniversary, lauding his fearless spirit as the foundation of the country's democracy. Pandit Nehru, born on November 14, 1889, in Allahabad (now Prayagraj), was educated at prestigious institutions such as Harrow School in London and the University of Cambridge and was a freedom fighter, thinker, writer and statesman. Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, posted a tribute on X, saying, "Respectful salutations to the father of modern India, creator of institutions, first Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru ji on his birth anniversary. Reflecting on Pandit Nehru's legacy, he added, "Democratic, progressive, fearless, visionary, inclusive - these values of 'Hind ke Jawahar' are our ideals and the pillars of India and will always remain so." Congress National



a quote from late PM Nehru, "There should be unity of mind and heart, there should be a feeling of living together..." and hailed him as "Hind ke Jawahar." In a post on X, he wrote, "On the 135th birth anniversary of the 'Hind ke Jawahar, 'the one who took India from zero to the peak, the architect of modern India, the one who made India a developing country in scientific, economic, industrial, and various fields, the one who constantly gave the message of 'unity in diversity' to the country, the fearless sentinel of democracy and our source of inspiration, we remember his unprecedented contribution to

'Adaptive Defence' not strategic choice, but necessity: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh

NEW DELHI: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday voiced concerns to create an 'Adaptive Defence' in the country, saying that it is not a for the defence of the nation. "Adaptive Defence' is not

merely a strategic choice but a necessity. As the new threats have evolved, we must also evolve our defence systems and strategies. We should be prepared for all future contingencies. It is more than just protecting our borders, it is about securing our future, " said the Defence Minister while addressing the Delhi Defence Dialogue (DDD) in New Delhi.

He added that the 'Adaptive Defence' is not merely responding to what has happened but anticipating what could happen, and preparing for it proactively.

"In essence, it involves cultivating a mindset and capability to adapt, innovate and thrive, even in the face of unpredictable



Defence Minister.

diverse range of security challenges faced by India, from traditional border-related threats to unconventional issues such as terrorism, cyber-attacks, and hybrid warfare.

Modi accuses Rahul Gandhi, JMM govt

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister rallies in Jharkhand on Wednesto scrap reservations for SC, coalition in the state facilitated could change Jharkhand's iden-

At a rally in Deoghar, Modi warned of a "deep-rooted conspiracy" to undermine reservations and promised to thwart any such attempts. He recalled how Rahul Gandhi's father, former PM Rajiv Gandhi, had criticized reservations as "slavery" and issued ads to remove them, but was ultimately defeated in



resilience, agility, and integration with futuristic technologies are the keys to understanding and creating 'Adaptive Defence'. It must be the mantra of our strategic formulations and operational responses, 'said the He also threw light on the

of conspiring against Jharkhand's identity & reservation policies

Narendra Modi, addressing BJP day, accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, referring to him as "Shehzada," of conspiring ST, and OBC communities to "weaken" them. Modi also alleged that the ruling JMM-led infiltration by outsiders, which

The Prime Minister also highlighted concerns about in-

filtration in Jharkhand, claiming that the tribal population

in Santhal Pargana had halved due to unchecked immigration. "The JMM-led government allowed infiltrators to become permanent citizens, Modi alleged, accusing them of endangering the state's security and identity. In his address at Godda,

Modi also criticized the JMM's "Abua Awas" housing scheme, calling it a "farzi" (fake) initiative aimed at corruption. He further alleged that the ruling coalition had fostered "mafia raj," stalled development, and forced people into unemployment and migration.

Pollution: Why the farmers alone are being made scapegoats?

on celebrations of Diwali festi- Now, a fine of Rs 5,000 will be val for the farmers, especially imposed on landowners with ana. It is the harvest season for two to five acres, and Rs for paddy just before the sowing of the next crop. Farmers than five acres, if they adopt have to vacate the land for the the stubble burning. The government wheat showing immediately ernments of Uttar Pradesh, and they don't have much time Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, to manage the straw of paddy and Delhi will be required to just harvested. In order to implement these rules. quickly prepare their fields for the wheat crop, many farmers simply burn leftover plant de-

THAKEN

stubble burning. Due to the short period for stubble management and lack of readily available alternative means within reach of region, making it very difficult the farmers and no proper even to breathe in due to the proportionate monetary help by the governments, the farmers have to adopt the old ferers, create much hue and method of stubble burning. cry, and as the country gov-The surprising thing is that the governments do not seem there, so the issue becomes seriously ready to resolve their problem, rather enforcing the farmers by inflicting the fine, Ashok Dhillon, Agricultural depriving the farmers of MSP for the next two crops and lodging FIR against them.

practice is known as paddy

While stubble burning is a compulsive need for the farmers, it has become a noose around the neck for the government also

this practice by 'Rule(stick) in the guise of Rule', Haryana Agricultural department has issued a letter on October 17, 2024 for lodging an FIR and restricting the farmers, who highlights – A child, who is burn stubble, from selling exposed to unsafe levels of their crops in Mandis through the e-Kharid portal.

have burnt stubble during hood can lead to: Stunted the current season i.e from 15-09-2024, an FIR should be registered against them developing asthma, Acute and a Red entry should be lower respiratory infections, made in their MFMB records Impaired mental and motor restricting them from selling development, Behavioural distheir crops in Mandis through the e-Kharid portal during mature birth, Infant mortality, the next two seasons, says the Childhood Cancers, Increased

To give another hammer blow to the farmers, recently tubble the central Ministry of Enviburning ronment has also issued a no-tification to double the penalty puts a damper amount on stubble burning. 30,000 for those with more

How Polluted Air affects health?

Around the Diwali festibris after harvesting rice. The val season, every year, a thick smoke laver covers up the sky umbrella almost in all the areas of Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, especially the NCR polluted air and atmosphere. Delhiites, being the most suferning authorities are sitting more complicated and gets highlighted in all spheres. Dr scientist, Ambala Agricultural Science Centre, says that due to burning of paddy residue, 70 percent carbon dioxide, 7 percent carbon monoxide along with gases like methane and nitrous oxide etc. get dissolved in the atmosphere To control the menace of which is very harmful for hu-

man health as well as animals. World Health Organization (WHO), spreading awareness about the 'CLEAN AIR FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH', pollution, can face a lifetime of health impacts. Exposure "Farmers who burn or in the womb or in early childlung growth, Reduced lung function, Increased risk of orders, Low birth weight, Pre-



and stroke in adulthood.

It adds that household and ambient air pollution cause more than 50% of acute lower respiratory infection in children under 5 years in lower and middle-income countries.

WHO further warns that in 2016, ambient and household air pollution caused 543,000 deaths in children under 5 years and 52,000 deaths in children aged 5-15 years. What a horrific crisis is hovering over the world, one can imagine easily!

Is stubble burning the sole major factor of pollution?

Punjab farmers' front 'Bharatiya Kisan Union Ekta Dakounda', through its statement November 12,2024, strongly condemning orders issued against the farmers, alleged that the authorities are ignoring the ground realities and ordering coercion on the farmers who produce only 4.4% of the pollution, while 95.6% are emitted by firecrackers, diesel generators, factories and transport. Instead of taking any action against the polluters, only reports are being sought about them. According to the instructions of the National Green Tribunal, it is the responsibility of the administration to arrange for the collection, transportation and consumption of straw. Neither the administration has fulfilled its responsibility nor the courts have taken any action against the administration. On the contrary, farmers are being made the scapegoat,

which is a reprehensible act. Terming the centre government's allegations against the farmers as unscientific claims, Department of Agriculture, risk of heart disease, Diabetes All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS)

through its release to media on November 8, 2024, pleads that the claim that stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana is leading to air pollution in NCR is bogus, because air quality in these States, which should be more directly affected has been consistently

lower than in the NCR. It is notable that vehicular pollution, pollution from factories and brick-kilns are going on unchecked and scientific studies point out that they are more responsible for the pollution in the NCR Region. AIKS adds that according to NASA's Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) data there reportedly has been a 51 per cent drop in the total number of farm fires between 2018 and October, 2024. Data shared by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) indicate that between 12th October and 21st October this year, on average stubble burning accounted for only 0.92 per cent of the PM2.5 (Particulate Matter 2.5) levels in Delhi. Clearly, the dominant reasons for the

emissions, emissions from factories, brick-kilns etc. If we analyse the NASA's data referred by AIKS, which show that there reportedly has been a 51 per cent drop in the total number of farm fires between 2018 and October, 2024, then why the AQI of Delhi and NCR has not lowered 51 %, if the stubble burning is the sole major factor for pollution?

pollution in NCR are vehicular

Why the farmers alone are made scapegoats?

Punjab governor Gulab Chand Kataria, presiding over an international conference at a system so that farmers do not

Punjab Agricultural University on November 12,2024, said that it was wrong to blame only farmers for the air pollution. He underscored the need for ensuring crop residue management (CRM) machinery to farmers in sufficient numbers in order to curb ment had sought Rs. 1200 crore de hurning incidents The farmer won't give up paddy unless he is given a crop that yields more profit (than paddy). They put in so much hard work; they need profit. Farmers have no choice. They have to sow wheat in time, he said.

Kataria added that the state government and centre have tried to make residue management machines available but it is still far from the number of machines required to deal with the issue.

The All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) alleges that while the urban rich and capitalists are not being fined and little is being done to regulate the proliferation of vehicles, the poor farmers are being targeted for their role in the historic farmers' struggle against the procorporate Farm Acts as well as the electoral set-back for BJP in the rural areas. In fact, the farmers through Agro-forestry and protection of green cover are doing an ecological service to the nation and the BJP led Union Government is punishing them.

Former Union Minister and the General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee, Kumari Selja, also alleges that instead of working in the interest of the farmers, the BJP government is focused on oppressing and exploiting them.

Kumari Selja adds that following strict remarks from the Supreme Court on the issue of air pollution caused by stubble burning, the central government has now taken out its frustration on farmers by deciding to double the fine for stubble burning.

In a statement released to the media, she said that stubble burning is not a recent issue; it has been happening for years. There is no doubt that stubble burning increases air pollution. The government should create

have to burn stubble. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

has also strongly criticised the Central Government's decision to double the fine for stubble burning. AAP senior leader and spokesperson Neel Garg said that the Punjab Governfrom the (issue and reduce incidents of stubble burning by providing financial incentives to farmers to discourage the practice. He questioned why the Centre had refused to provide this assistance if they were genuinely concerned about stubble burn-

If the Centre had provided the requested financial support, these incidents would have dropped even further. However, instead of offering help, the Centre has imposed

Haryana Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Shyam Singh Rana has said that the State Government is promoting the use of straw as manure by encouraging farmers to incorporate it into their fields. He added that attributing the rising pollution in Delhi solely to stubble burning is misguided. He advised the Delhi government to implement concrete measures similar to those in Harvana. Head of the department

of climate change and agriculture meteorology of Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), Prabhjyot Kaur Sidhu, who had compiled a study on stubble burning effects in 2020, said, "Every paddygrowing state is suffering from factors adding to its air pollution. In simple terms, Punjab's smoke is not travelling 300-400 km to choke the lungs of Delhi, rather Punjab farmers are harming their own children and brethren by setting the fields on fire."

stop the blame game of alleging the farmers for each and every smoke particle hovering over Delhi and NCR in the name of Stubble Burning? Jag Mohan Thaken is

Will Delhi governments

a Senior Journalist, Columnist & Political Analyst, views are personal



Time to balance private rights and public good

he recent Supreme Court

verdict on the interpretation

of Article 39(b) and (c) of the

Constitution is a significant examination of the balance between individual rights and the state's duty to serve the common good. Articles 39(b) and (c) advocate for the distribution of community resources to prevent the concentration of wealth and ensure equitable access, reflecting socialist ideals in the Directive Principles of State Policy. However, the extent to which these provisions should be interpreted has sparked much debate. The nine-judge Bench ruled that not all private resources fall under the "material resources" of the community. In a departure from earlier interpretations that encompassed all private resources, the Court's majority opinion has limited this scope. It emphasises that the directive cannot be applied through any single ideological lens, aligning more closely with present-day economic realities. While theoretically, private resources could fall under community resources, practical considerations will guide state action. Factors such as the nature, necessity, and scarcity of resources are key, ensuring that eminent domain or nationalisation is applied judiciously. The verdict reflects a nuanced understanding of the Constitution's economic philosophy, allowing flexibility for future regimes without binding them to a specific economic model. Justice Dhulia's dissent, however, is noteworthy. He suggests that the Court should refrain from restricting the term "material resources," leaving broader discretion to the legislature to address evolving inequalities. His perspective serves as a reminder of the Constitution's enduring relevance in addressing societal inequities, advocating a legislative approach to resource distribution. His position underscores the need for a dynamic interpretation, sensitive to the changing needs and disparities in society. Now, the ball is in the policymakers' court, and they must proactively lead from the front, addressing this issue in a manner that is both

LETTERBOX

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TIKENDER SINGH PANWAR HIGHLIGHTS HOW FUNDAMENTAL SHIFTS IMPACT INDIA'S URBAN WORKFORCE, ESPECIALLY INFORMALLY



The hubs of precarious employment

owns a car that he operates under Uber in Delhi, which also links him to the gig economy. This writer recently hired his car and during the trip was told by him that he has not visited his home in Darbhanga, Bihar, for the past three years. He does not have a house in Delhi and so sleeps in his car. For his daily ablutions, he uses the washrooms in petrol pumps. He said, "I drive for 15 hours a day,

bhishek is just 25 years old. He

and the rest of the time is spent resting and taking care of other activities." Once a week, he finds a place to bathe and hands his clothes over to a dhobi to be washed and ironed. The money he saves is sent back home to support his mother and a younger

brother, who is studying.

Is Abhishek an exception? Or does his story represent a broader pattern among urban workers in India's metros? This writer would say that his case lies somewhere in between. Without the 2021 Census, we rely on various data sets to understand the urban workforce. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that around 92% of India's workforce is employed informally, without formal contracts or limited job security.

The lofty promises of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) fall flat in cases like Abhishek's. The fact is that even slums in Indian cities are becoming unaffordable for newer sections of the working class. The World Bank estimates that over 40% of India's urban population lives in slums. However, even these spaces are increasingly out of reach for migrant workers, who are arriving in cities not by the thousands but

Precarious nature of work in urban India

In recent decades, there have been fundamental shifts in India's urban workforce and city development.

The first is the process of city building,



which was once linked to national development objectives and industrialisation. and has withered to a large extent. Until the mid-1980s, industrial growth drove city formation. But in the following years, industrialisation dwindled and the rise of a service-driven economy became the new norm. The informal economy became dominant. City planning, once centered on social housing and housing as a right for the working class, gave way to marketdriven solutions. Real estate development and land pooling became the primary tools for urban development.

Second, the organised strength of the urban working class, previously drawn from large production centres such as cotton textile mills and other industries, began to fade. This shift was driven by the fragmented nature of the global capitalist production system, which began in the 1970s and hit India post-1990. Although the number of workers in the cities increased, those engaged in direct production decreased. As a result, the ability of workers to bargain with employers or the State diminished significantly.

Third, the informal economy and the service sector expanded rapidly. Platformbased employment models, where work is facilitated through apps or online services, gained traction.

The rise of platform work

In India, the rapid expansion of the service sector, along with affordable access to technology and the Internet, has led to a rise in platform enterprises such as food delivery services. These platforms offer informal and temporary jobs. with little pay and no worker protection. Workers are tightly controlled and lack security. Those who participate in this form of work may do so

regularly or occasionally, either for primary or supplementary income.

The scale of informal work in India is immense. About 92% of Indian households rely on informal work for their income. Such work arrangements lack a safety net - there are no pensions, health insurance or other benefits, leaving individuals and their families vulnerable to daily challenges. For example, the absence of health insurance alone forces 12 million households into poverty every year, amounting to approximately 60 million people across India.

Moreover, 92% of the 61 million jobs created after the economic liberalisation of 1991 were informal (according to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, 2017-18), indicating the precarious state of employment in India's labour market. Digital technologies, while creating new work opportunities, have exacerbated the precarious nature of gig work. The insecurity of platform-based work increases the vulnerability of workers and makes collective action or unionisation

This results in a situation where workers have little bargaining power, even though the value they create for platforms is substantial. This not only harms individual workers but also has broader implications for socio-economic inequality.

Capital-intensive production model

Production processes have become more capital-intensive and labour-saving over time. Fewer workers were employed between 2000 and 2029 when compared to the 1990s. Gross value added increased by 6.2% between 2000 and 2012, while employment only grew by 1.6%. From 2012 to 2019, gross value added increased by 6.7%, but employment growth stagnated at a mere 0.001%. Thus, while economic growth occurred, there was a significant decline in employment opportunities, increasing job insecurity. Structural imbalances favour organisations that control capital and technology, leaving workers such as food delivery workers at the bottom of the economic pyramid, without appropriate compensation or the means to improve their social conditions. This entrenches the inequalities that modernisation and technological innovation are supposed to alleviate. In the traditional economy, workers could demand labour rights and social security. However, platform workers lack the mechanisms to organise and influence labour market institutions. Regulatory frameworks are not pressuring platform aggregators to improve working conditions. The coexistence of on-demand platform work with conventional jobs further blurs the line between traditional workers and gig workers.

A call for social protection

Young workers such as Abhishek need a broad social protection system that safeguards both their livelihoods and their living conditions. Labour unions and urban planners must advocate for labour hostels and rental housing as essential demands for ensuring that workers have access to decent living conditions in India's rapidly growing cities.

TikenderSingh Panaxaris former Deputy Mayor, Shimla, and currently Member of the Kerala Urban Commission. Views are personal.

SHASHANK PANDEY EXPLAINS WHY THE COUNTRY'S CARBON CREDIT SYSTEM MUST ALIGN WITH REALITIES

India's carbon credit mechanism needs review



November 11 to 22, 2024, in Baku, Azerbaijan, is about to shift focus to the heated discussion on the aspect of climate finance again. An essential component of this discussion will be the carbon credits framework and disagreements over it between developed and developing countries. India updated its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2023 to underline, among other things, the establishment of a domestic carbon market as a part of its climate strategy. The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act of 2022 provided a statutory mandate for such a Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS). Through this, India aims to align its climate commitments under the Paris Agreement with broader economic goals. Yet, for the market to truly support these objectives, it must be meticulously designed to edibility, efficiency, and global experiences, India must incorporate two pivotal lessons in its carbon market framework

Upholding integrity of carbon credits

At the heart of any carbon market lies the integrity of its carbon credits. The global experience has seen the repercussions of inadequate accountability in credit generation, leading to instances of greenwashing. This issue is pronounced in the voluntary carbon market (VCM), where investigations have exposed overstatements of project benefits, especially within the forestry sector. A similar risk is feared in India's voluntary carbon market operationalised under the Green Credit Programme (GCP). The tree plantation guidelines released by the government under the GCP were criticised for perpetuating greenwashing by encouraging non-scientific tree plantation. It is also feared



that under the CCTS, projects may fail to ensure "additionality", a critical measure ensuring that emission reductions exceed those of a business

To navigate these challenges, India must ticity of generated carbon credits. A proposed national registry would be a robust mechanism to track carbon credits and address potential double-counting issues. Additionally, independent third-party verifiers can play a crucial role in assessing the additionality and permanence of carbon reduction projects. By emulating international best practices from entities such as the IETA or Gold Standard that have greatly emphasised the generation of carbon credits, India can cultivate a high-integrity market, attracting domestic and global investors.

Alignment with global standards

India's carbon market must also harmonise with international carbon trading mechanisms, notably Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. Article 6.2 facilitates countries in achieving their climate objectives through Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs), making compli-

ance a critical aspect for participating nations. The Article 6 rulebook, finalised at the COP26 summit in Glasgow, outlines how countries can engage in carbon trading while upholding environmental integrity. For India, this means incorpo-

rating mechanisms to prevent the double counting of credits, a crucial step to maintain the credibility of global emission reduction efforts. India can align its market with domestic and international standards by integrating transparent

systems for accounting emissions reductions and carbon credit transfers. Such alignment and a focus on global best practices will enable India to contribute to global emissions reductions while actively safeguarding national interests.

mental integrity, specifically under Article 6.2, which establishes a framework for countries to cooperate on climate mitigation efforts through international carbon markets. The World Bank's "Ensuring Environmental Integrity under Article 6 Mechanisms" report emphasised maintaining robust environmental integrity within carbon markets, especially under the Paris Agreement's Article 6 framework. It highlights that carbon markets risk double-counting emissions reductions without stringent safeguards, which can dilute the credibility of climate commitments. The report stressed that high governance, verification, and accountability standards are necessary to avoid "low-quality" carbon credits from entering the market.

Focus on disclosure

Ensuring transparency is one mechanism to ensure compliance and conformance with such standards. To enhance transparency and uphold environmental integrity within India's carbon credit system, it is imperative to have comprehensive disclosure of project details, including carbon reduction techniques, benchmarks and third-party verification reports, on a centralised, easily accessible platform. Ensuring that projects adhere to stringent additionality criteria guarantees that the credits reflect real, additional emissions reductions. Regular audits are essential for verifying the sustainability of these projects. Oversight by independent auditors approved by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in India is crucial, alongside real-time tracking of credit transactions to boost accountability and provide insights into the type of projects and their environmental impacts.

The Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative (VCMI) framework introduces a credit claims. This is to ensure the credibility of carbon offset claims, aiming to enhance market transparency. However, implementation faces challenges, especially within India's CCTS initiatives, due to potential transparency issues and the high costs of establishing monitoring, reporting, and verification systems. These costs could deter smaller projects initially.

India's carbon credit mechanism, albeit nascent, demands stringent enforcement and an alignment with international and domestic realities to be effective. By focusing on transparency and integrity, India has the opportunity to not only provide for a more mature carbon market but also to stimulate its climate finance aspirations, paving the way for practical, sustainable development.

Shashank Pandey is a Research Fellow at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

Ethics and influence: New book explores Ratan Tata's journey

n Ratan Tata: A Life, author Thomas Mathew delves into the life of one of India's most iconic industrialists and philanthropists, providing an intricate portrait of Ratan Tata and the series of pivotal decisions that shaped his legacy. This biography is more than just a timeline of Tata's achievements; it explores his values, complex relationships, and the difficult choices he had to make, particularly regarding the controversial appointment and subsequent removal of Cyrus Mistry as Chairman of Tata

Mathew, a retired bureaucrat, draws from numerous interviews with Tata, his family, friends, former colleagues, and business associates, giving readers a rare glimpse into Tata's inner thoughts and struggles. One of the central themes is Tata's relationship with Mistry, who was initially chosen as Tata's successor in 2011 and eventually took over as Chairman of Tata Sons in December 2012. Tata himself approved the selection of Mistry, though

with two key conditions: that Mistry sever his ties with the Shapoorji Pallonji Group, of which he was managing director, and that he undergo a year-long apprenticeship under Tata's mentorship to better understand the group's complex ethos and operations.

The book reveals that although Tata initially felt confident in Mistry's capabilities, his confidence wavered as the year progressed. Mathew notes that Tata's observations of Mistry's "sharp interventions" raised questions about his alignment with the Tata ethos. While Mistry possessed a keen ability to identify potential pitfalls in strategies, Tata grew concerned that these qualities might not always serve Tata Sons' best interests. This hesitation foreshadowed the eventual fallout in October 2016 when Mistry was ousted from his position in a move that reverberated throughout the Indian business community.

In recounting Tata's decision to dismiss Mistry, Mathew skillfully conveys the personal toll it took on Tata,

highlighting a side of the businessman rarely seen by the public. According to Nitin Nohria, former dean of Harvard Business School and Tata's advisor, the decision to remove Mistry was "the most painful and difficult thing for Ratan." Mathew's narrative suggests that Tata's inner conflict was profound, portraying him as a man who found himself at odds with actions that went against his personal values. Tata reportedly wished that Mistry would have voluntarily stepped down after losing the board's confidence, sparing both of them the eventual fallout and public scrutiny. His comments about the "surgical" nature of the dismissal reflect Tata's regret over the manner in which the decision had to be executed, revealing a sense of discomfort in a choice that felt, in Tata's own words, out of character.

The biography also addresses Tata's thoughts on Noel Tata, his half-brother, as a potential successor. Ratan believed Noel needed more exposure to challenging assignments to



Ratan Tata: A Life By Thomas HarperCollins 712 pages; Rs1,499

fully prepare for such a role. Although Noel ultimately did not succeed Ratan as Chairman of Tata Sons, he later assumed leadership of Tata Trusts, which controls a significant portion of the conglomerate. This segment offers readers an insight into Tata's vision for succession and his efforts to ensure the stability and continuity of the Tata legacy.

Mathew's narrative does not shy away from examining the public and private criticisms leveled against Tata during this turbulent period. Critics argued that Tata had brought the crisis upon himself by distancing himself from the selection process, but Mathew's portrayal suggests that Tata made these decisions with a sense of integrity and hope that the right

choices had been made. What makes Ratan Tata: A Life

particularly engaging is the way it examines Tata's deeply personal challenges in a larger-than-life corporate setting. The book illustrates Tata's commitment to values, even when such dedication came at a personal cost. Readers gain a clearer understanding of the emotional weight behind Tata's choices, which were often scrutinised in the public domain without awareness of the internal conflict they caused.

In tracing Tata's story, Mathew offers readers an insightful look into the internal dynamics of Tata Sons and the values that underpin one of India's most respected conglomerates. The biography is balanced, presenting both the triumphs and the setbacks of Tata's life. Mathew's skillful storytelling and meticulous research allow readers to see Tata not just as an industrialist but as a man committed to the principles he holds dear. Ultimately, Ratan Tata: A Life is more than just a recounting of events; it is a profound exploration of legacy, leadership, and values. Mathew's portrayal is empa-thetic and nuanced, shedding light on the man behind the corporate giant. It is a compelling read for anyone interested in Indian industry, leadership challenges, and the ethical complexities that come with wielding immense influence and power.

Will Continue to Invest in India Market amid Digitation, Minister Goyal Highlights Strategic Focus on Infrastructure Push: Uber South Asia President FTAs and MSME Growth to Reach Export Goal

third-largest market for ridehailing company Uber by volume and it continues to grow rapidly, Uber India and South Asia President Prabhjeet Singh said on Thursday, adding that the company will continue to invest in the domestic market.

"We believe that the demographic dividend which India enjoys, the digitisation which is happening at scale and the infrastructure creation, all of them are strong tailwinds for categories which we operate in," Singh told to media on the sidelines of an event here.

He further stated that India offers an "incredible opportunity to leapfrog private vehicle ownership and embrace shared mobility"

"All the signals in the market actually reflect that there is a great chance for India to digitise and scale ride-hailing in a very meticulous way. India is today one of our fastest growing markets and we feel excited about both the near term and long



term in this important market,"

The Uber India executive said they are incredibly proud of the scale and profitability of the business in the country.

We are incredibly excited about the growth in the macro ecosystem and the growth which we are experiencing on the platform, both on the number of riders and drivers joining the platform," Singh noted.

According to the latest com- to voluntarily give up a good pany report, Uber Auto and

Moto are expected to drive Rs 36,000 crore in economic activity in the country in 2024. While rides with Uber generated Rs 80,000 crore in consumer surplus for riders in Bengaluru, rides with Uber created Rs 130,000 crore in consumer surplus for riders in Delhi. Consumer surplus is one of the most important mea-

sures of economic welfare – the

amount you would pay someone

Prabhjeet Singh Singh told to media that Uber, available in 125 cities, continues to invest heavily in introducing new products for riders in the

"We will continue to expand both our footprint and introduce new services to serve every segment of the population," Singh added.

At the event, Uber unveiled

a suite of new features aimed

at enhancing the daily experiences of its drivers in India. It has more than 1 million monthly active drivers in the country. The new features are Helmet Selfie', 'Women Rider Preference' and 'Audio Recording'. Uber also announced the promotion of registrations on the government's e-Shram portal — a unified database for gig workers and unorganised workers. To encourage participation and accelerate registrations, Uber is offering cash incentives to the first 10,000 drivers who register on

FTAs and MSME Growth to Reach Export Goals



NEW DELHI: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal emphasised the need for collective action to achieve India's ambitious export target of USD 2 trillion by 2030, speaking at the annual convocation of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) on

The minister expressed confidence in reaching this goal, noting that India's exports are expected to surpass USD 800 billion in the current fiscal

year, up from USD 778 billion in FY24. Goyal urged stakeholders to identify specific sectors where India can enhance its role in the global economy. He particularly emphasised the importance of studying non-tariff barriers faced by Indian products in international markets, suggesting that such insights would strengthen India's position in future free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations. The minister also

stressed the significance of

making FTA benefits accessible to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and small traders, highlighting how new market opportunities could boost business growth and create employment. He emphasised that achieving the export target would require deliberate choice and concerted effort rather than circumstantial growth.

At the same event, Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal announced IIFT's plans to establish a dedicated centre for negotiations, recognising the crucial role of negotiation skills in FTA discussions. The institute is also developing India-specific case studies to enhance practical learning opportunities for students. IIFT Vice Chancellor Rakesh Mohan Joshi reported significant progress in the institute's standing, noting its twelve-place improvement to rank 15th in the management category of the National Institutional Ranking

India's Index of **Industrial Production** shows 3.1 % growth in September 2024



of Industrial Production (IIP) demonstrated a significant turnaround, recording a 3.1 percent growth in September 2024, a marked improvement from the negative 0.1 percent growth observed in August 2024, according to the latest Quick Estimates released by the government.

The manufacturing sector emerged as the primary driver of growth, posting a robust 3.9 percent increase, while the mining and electricity sectors showed modest gains of 0.2 percent and 0.5 percent respectively.

The overall IIP reached 146.7 in September 2024, compared to 142.3 in the corresponding month of the previous year. Within the manufacturing sector, several industries displayed notable performance. The manufacture of electrical equipment led with an impressive 18.7 percent growth, followed by coke and refined petroleum products at 5.3 percent, and basic metals at 2.5 percent, emerging as the top three positive contributors for the month. Use-based classification data revealed broadbased growth across categories. Consumer durables showed the strongest performance with a 6.5 percent increase, while intermediate goods grew by 4.2 percent. Infrastructure and construction goods registered

Shriram AMC to launch India's first Multi Sector Rotation Fund



DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai

Shriram Asset Management Company Limited -- which is part of the Shriram Group -- announced that it will be launching its "Shriram Multi Sector Rotation Fund" and described it as the "first of its

kind' in the industry

Kartik Jain, MD &CEO, Shriram AMC, said here recently that this Fund aims at giving capital appreciation over the medium to long term in an actively-managed equity portfolio, which rotates across identifiable trending sectors that are performing well.

The Fund's strategy is to leverage sector rotation to capture opportunities in outperforming sectors, while reducing exposure to underperforming sectors, he said.

"Feedback from advisors

get caught in "sector traps" when they invest in upcoming sectors that are trending due to macro-economic cycles or policy shifts," he said, adding 2032." "While their portfolio benefits from the uptrend, they usually remain invested even when the trend reverses or plateaus, due to inertia or behavioural

NTPC Green Energy Limited announces Rs 10,000 crore IPO



DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai

NTPC Green Energy Limited – a wholly-owned subsidiary of NTPC Limited -- announced its IPO with equity shares priced at Rs 102 to Rs 108 per share, aggregating Rs 10,000 crores. The issue will open on November 19, 2024 and close on November

He said the IPO issue proceeds will be utilized to the extent of Rs 7500 crore for investment in its wholly-owned Subsidiary, NTPC Renewable Energy Limited (NREL) for repayment/prepayment, in full or in part of certain outstanding borrowings availed by NREL and general corporate purposes.

Describing India as the world's 2nd largest renewable energy market while also look-Chief Managing Director, told media here recently that the company's Vision is "60GW renewable energy capacity by

Noting that NTPC Green is ing the country's needs for green energy and its sustainability also on green hydrogen, green and more.

molecules, green chemicals and storage of green energy, besides deploying cloud-based monitoring using AI.

We will be reaching 6,000 MW by March 2025 and are also looking at thermal storage, besides making inroads into battery storage. We are close to starting work on our 12-acre coastal hydrogen hub at Vizagapatnam, but we don't want to get into EPC as we don't want to get stuck in it," he said.

To a question, he said that hydro energy projects could last upto 100 years – depending on the topography of the area.

"To reduce reliance on China for solar modules, we are looking at "Make in India" suppliers and also viewing storage cell manufacturing upto 8MW and

Singh said "We are becoming ing at reducing emissions by future-ready and after 10 to 12 +Green Molecules+. We have 62MW production in +floating solar plants+ and are even having agriculture being done below some solar plants."

With NTPC holding 25% playing a 'pivotal' role in fulfill- market share in India, he said efforts were continuing to ensure that the Renewables segfor India, he said the focus was ment also grew to that figure

Vistara Merger with Air India Takes Off, Group to Now Operate 300 Aircraft

MUMBAI: The Air India Group on Tuesday completed the operational integration and legal merger between Air India and Vistara, creating a full-service carrier of scale and marking a significant milestone in the post-privatisation transformation journey. Post-merger, Air India Group

will operate a combined fleet of 300 aircraft covering 55 domestic and 48 international destinations, with 312 routes and 8,300 flights per week. The collective staff strength stands at over 30,000 now.

According to the national carrier, the new full-service entity Air India operates over 5,600 weekly flights and connects



international destinations with a fleet of 208 aircraft. Low-cost entity Air India Express operates 2,700 weekly flights and connects more than 45 domestic and international destinations with a fleet of 90 aircraft.

"The merger of Air India and

Vistara completes the consolidation and restructuring phase of the Air India Group's postprivatisation transformation journey, and is thus a significant milestone," Air India Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Campbell Wilson, said.

Consequent to the merger of

Airlines, which held a 49 per cent share in Vistara, becomes a 25.1 per cent shareholder in the resultant Air India group.

"Given the scale and scope of this project and its unprecedented nature, I would like to acknowledge the support received from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and others in making this merger possible," Wilson added.

This followed the merger of the Group's low-cost airlines Air India Express and AIX Connect (formerly Air Asia India)

a 3.3 percent growth, followed by capital goods at 2.8 percent and primary goods at 1.8 percent. Consumer non-durables recorded a 2.0 percent increase.

MSMEs Struggle to Navigate Commodity Price Volatility amid Global Economic Uncertainty MSMEs operate on thin profit

and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are crucial to India's economic fabric, contributing about one-third of the country's GDP and employing around 18

These enterprises play a come inequality by fostering regional development and offering widespread employment opportunities.

economic uncertainties, exacerbated by the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical tensions, have introduced significant volatility in commodity prices-fuel, agri-



However, recent global culture, and basic metals—cre- variations ranging from -15 per ating challenges for MSMEs, as reported by professors at ICFAI Business School, Hyderabad.

Over the past five years, the prices of primary commodities have fluctuated sharply, with relatively stable, varying only

cent to +15 per cent from their long-term averages

However, the prices of output goods—those produced by MSMEs—have remained

between -2 per cent and +2 This discrepancy reveals a

key vulnerability: MSMEs often cannot pass on increased input costs to customers, undermining their ability to set prices, forecast sales, or budget effectively.

MSMEs works as subcontractors or local suppliers in the B2B sector, offering generic products or project-specific services. A minority operates branded businesses with original equipment manufacturer (OEM) status.

However, these enterprises often lack the financial and strategic resources to cope with rising input costs. Many

margins and face distress when commodity prices rise unexpectedly, pushing them into a cycle of borrowing and repayment. Research across 17 states has

identified several key challenges faced by MSMEs: the inability to negotiate fixed-pr tracts, limited access to capital for stockpiling commodities, and reliance on informal, cashbased transactions.

Moreover, the absence of commodity price forecasting expertise prevents them from locking in prices, resulting in a loss of market share to larger, professionally managed

Monitoring Prices, Availability, Accessibility & Affordability of Medicines- *Role of PMRUs*

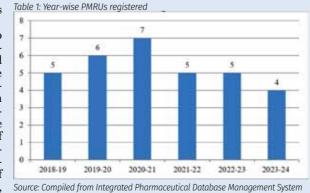
ANGRISH rice fixation/re-

vision of prices of scheduled formula- expected to be key collaborattions as listed in Schedule I of ing partners of the NPPA with the Drug (Prices Control) Order information gathering mechais the key task entrusted to the nism at the grassroot level. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA). In addithe PMRUs included monitortion to this, two main functions ing of notified prices of mediof the NPPA are: Monitoring cines, detection of violation of and enforcement of the notithe provisions of the DPCO, fied prices and providing inputs to the Government for policy availability of medicines, moniformulation and other specific issues related to availability, accessibility and affordability formulations, revision of price of medicines for all. On July 16, 2020 guidelines were issued by the manufacturer based on the the NPPA for setting up Price monitoring and Resource Units sale Price Index (WPI), oversee-(PMRUs) at the State/Union Territories under the Central Sector Scheme of Consumer Awareness, Publicity and Price Monitoring. It was felt that jobs on annual basis. Additionally, such as collection, compilation/ creation and analysis of mar- of collection and compilation of ket-based data must become market-based data of scheduled an integral part of the working of the NPPA. It was desirable under the National Pharma-

Order 2013 too. To achieve this,

DR. ANIL KUMAR Monitoring and Resource Units (PMRUs)

PMRUs were expected to function under the direct supervision of the concerned State Drug Controller and were objectives behind setting up of pricing compliance, ensuring toring of the price movement of scheduled and non-scheduled of scheduled formulations by annual increase in the Wholeing the price non-scheduled formulations as prices of such formulations are not allowed to increase beyond 10 per cent PMRUs were entrusted the task as well as non-scheduled formulations and analyse them, collection of test samples of medicines and the Drug (Prices Control) required, conducting training, seminars and workshops at the the support from the States/ State and District levels for con-Union Territories is necessary sumer awareness and publicity



2.0 Public Dashboard of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) role and functions of the NPPA, total population and comprised

among others. Mandate for PMRUs is very comprehensive and to perform the role effectively, PMRUs have to constantly interact with different stakeholders comprising State government department, State Drug Controllers, consumer groups, and public at large. State/Union Territories (UTs) have been divided into three categories namely Category I, II and III. Category I comprised States/UTs having population of more than 3 per cent of the total population and included Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, ceutical Pricing Policy 2012 at the retail market whenever Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Category II comprised States/UTs having population of less than 3 per

Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Harvana, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Kerala, Punjab, and Telangana. Category III comprised States/UTs having population of less than 1 per cent of the total population and included Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh. Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tripura,

As on November 14, 2024 there are 32 registered PMRUs comprising 10 PMRUs under Category I, 9 PMRUs under category II and 13 PMRUs under Category III as per the Integrated Pharmaceutical Dathrough the setting up of Price covering aspects relating to the cent but more than 1 per cent of tabase Management System 2.0

and Uttarakhand.



under Category I and under Category III, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Manipur, and Sikkim are yet to initiate PMRUs.

The need for the data on monitoring of prices along with other aspects was felt in the past, e.g., 54th Report of Standing Committee on Chemicals & Fertilizers (2018-19) on the subject 'Pricing of Drugs with special reference to Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013' that was presented to the Lok Sabha on February 13, 2019 had the comments of the Committee. The Committee had asked about the details of periodic survey conducted by the NPPA on prices of drugs sold in the country with particular reference to percentage of National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)

covered drugs/medicines in the

Public Dashboard. Tamil Nadu market, it was stated that NPPA was collecting market price data from the agency named All India Organization of Chemists & Druggists & Advanced Working, Action and Correc-

tion System (AIOCD AWACS). Further, it was stated that NPPA had made agreement with the AIOCD AWACS who makes the collection of the data of the prices of the medicines, who collect the information from the majority of the distributors across the country. The information was provided on monthly basis. Based on analysis of the information submitted by the AIOCD-AWACS, NPPA monitored the prices of the medicines and issued notices for violation of the prices of medicines and therefore, objective of the survey used to be fulfilled.

The NPPA is entrusted with

task of fixation of ceiling price therapeutic category has a huge of scheduled formulations (para number of formulations and 14 of the DPCO, 2013), revision of ceiling price of scheduled formulations (para 16), fixation of ceiling price of a drug under special circumstances (para 19), monitoring the prices of nonscheduled formulations (para 20), monitoring the availability of scheduled formulations (para 21), recovery of overcharged amount (para 23), among others. Each of these aspects is crucial in nature. For example, by June 30, 2022 the NPPA had fixed the ceiling prices of 890 scheduled formulations of medicines under the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) 2015. Regarding recovery of overcharged amount, during the financial year 2023-34 alone, Rs. 72.73 crore have been recovered from the defaulting companies wherever found selling formulations at prices higher than the permissible price.

Depth and breadth of pharmaceutical market can be gauged from the fact that during August 2019-July 2020 itself, there were 47,478 brands associated with 2,871 formulations in the pharmaceuticals market in India as per 'Market Study on the Pharmaceutical Sector in India: Key Findings and Observations', Competition Commission of India (CCI) dated November 18, 2021. Each

brands, e.g., in Vitamins, Minerals and Nutrients category, there were 141 formulations and 5,236 brands thereby resulting into 37 brands per formulation. Same study cited 305 formulations in gastro-intestinal category with 5551 brands thereby having 18 brands per formulation. Currently, the number cited is more than 60,000 generic brands across 60 therapeutic categories in India.

The revised/modified scheme on setting Price Monitoring and Resource Units (PMRUs) at the State/UTs under the Central Sector Scheme of Consumer Awareness, Publicity and Price Monitoring was to be implemented in four years from the financial years 2020-21 through 2023-24. With most of these PMRUs in place, data will start pouring in to achieve objectives of price monitoring, along with comprehensive data on availability, accessibility and affordability of medicines.

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

Indian economy sailing smoothly amid global Piyush Goyal urges RBI to Cut Interest Rates headwinds, says Reserve Bank Governor

Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday said the Indian economy has been sailing "smoothly" amid the global headwinds.

Speaking at an event organised by CNBC-TV18 here, Das declined to comment on a suggestion by Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal for a rate cut, maintaining that the rate-setting panel will take an appropriate call on it at its next meeting in December.

In comments made days after headline inflation shot up beyond the 6 per cent tolerance band of RBI for October, Das said inflation is "expected to moderate despite periodic humps". The Governor said the domestic economy has sailed very well through the prolonged period of turbulence in the recent past exhibiting resilience, but added that there are a slew of headwinds prevailing in the global economy right now like rising bond yields, commodity prices showing a divergence and a contradiction of financial markets showing resilience despite rising geopolitical risks.

"The Indian economy is sailing smoothly, powered by buffers like strong macroeconomic

India's Net Direct Tax

Collections Rise 15.4%

to Rs 12.1 Lakh Crore in

Direct Taxes (CBDT). Refunds: Rs

2.9 lakh crore in tax refunds were

issued, marking a 53% increase.

Corporate vs. Individual Contribu-

tions: Rs 5.10 lakh crore collected

in corporate tax; Rs 6.62 lakh

crore from non-corporate sources.

Other Tax Revenues: Rs 35,

923 crore from the Equali-

ture investment, welfare schemes,

and lower fiscal deficits, which

collectively enhance economic

stability and job creation.

April-November



fundamentals, a stable financial system and a resilient external sector," said the bureaucratturned-central banker, who will be completing six years at the helm at RBI soon. With the rupee hitting new lows, Das said India's external sector has exhibited "strength and stability" in the recent period as seen in the current account deficit remaining at a manageable level, merchandise exports starting to grow, and service exports growth being strong.

He reminded that the country has the fourth largest forex

reserves in the world. The forex reserves, which stood at USD 682 billion as of October 31, are sufficient to cover the entire external debt and a year's import payments, he added. The Governor also made it clear that the RBI does not target a rate for the rupee, and the fore interventions are for ensuring orderly movement and curbing

olatility in the currency. "If the Indian rupee has remained relatively stable despite severe external shocks, including the largest and the steepest tightening by the US Fed in

2022 and 2023, it speaks volumes about the sea change in our macro fundamentals from the days of the taper tantrum," Das said. On the issue of regulation, he said the RBI will be issuing a draft of the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) framework and the final guidelines will come out post public comments. Without giving a timeline for the introduction of the draft guidelines, Das said the RBI had issued a discussion paper on the subject in 2023 and also constituted a working group to study the comments received on it. Das said the RBI is taking a very "careful" approach on ECL, which is widely feared to increase the provisioning requirements for Indian lenders as they need to set aside money ahead of an asset being classified as nonperforming, and also called it a 'major transformation".

"Now the idea is to get stakeholder comments on certain specifics of the (ECL) framework, considering its significance for the banking sector," Das said, making it clear that the RBI's endeavour is to maintain a balance between banking sector stability

NEWDELHI: Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has urged the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to reduce interest rates on Thursday, arguing that such action would boost India's economic growth.

Speaking at a CNBC TV18 event, the former Chartered Accountant challenged the central bank's approach to monetary policy, particularly its consideration of food inflation in ratesetting decisions.

"I certainly believe they should cut interest rates, growth needs a further impetus," Goyal stated, emphasising India's position as the world's fastestgrowing economy.

The minister characterised the use of food inflation as a metric for rate-setting decisions as 'flawed theory,' a stance he claims to have maintained for two decades, including during his time in opposition.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, who attended the same event, declined to comment on Goyal's suggestions, indicating that the six-member monetary policy committee would address such considerations at their upcoming December meeting.

The minister's position ained support from finance industry veteran Deepak Parekh, who advocated for reductions

stance signals a transformative

moment for Bitcoin and the

broader digital asset market,"

said Green. Trump adminis-

tration has a clear mandate to

regulate crypto constructively,

and his plan to elevate Bitcoin

to a strategic asset class is a pow-

erful endorsement. "This is the

most significant tailwind we've

seen for Bitcoin since its incep-

tion. With inflation concerns on

the rise amid looming economic

policy shifts, Bitcoin's role as

a hedge against eroding cash

value is also gaining traction,"

he mentioned

I certainly believe they should cut interest rates, growth needs a further impetus," Goyal stated, emphasising India's position as the world's fastestgrowing economy

in both the repo rate and cash reserve ratio (CRR). The debate over inflation metrics has gained prominence as India's headline inflation reached 6.2 percent in October, exceeding the RBI's mandated 2-6 percent range.

Goyal projected that inflation rates would decrease in December and January due to base effect adjustments, noting that the past decade has witnessed the lowest inflation rates in India's history under the current administration.

Addressing broader economic indicators, Goyal highlighted substantial growth in private capital expenditure and encouraged businesses to focus on volume-based strategies to serve India's vast consumer

Consumer durables have demonstrated particular resilience, recording a 6.5 percent year-on-year growth in

This upturn in non-durables is especially significant as it reflects strengthening consumption patterns in rural areas and their positive impact on the fast-moving consumer

However, the overall industrial growth has shown signs

Bitcoin may touch \$100,000 by January end after Trump takes office

NEW DELHI: World's biggest cryptocurrency Bitcoin is heading towards \$100,000 amid US President-elect Donald Trump's **NEW DELHI:** India's net direct pro-crypto stance and promise tax collections, covering corporate for clearer cryptocurrency regutax and personal income tax, surged lations. On Tuesday, the Bitcoin price was hovering around by 15.4% year-on-year, totaling Rs 12.1 lakh crore from April 1 to No-\$87,880 apiece. Bitcoin price vember 10. Gross tax collections has surged about 30 per cent exceeded Rs 15 lakh crore, a 21% since the US election. rise, as per the Central Board of

According to Nigel Green of deVere Group, "Bitcoin could hit \$100,000 by the end of January 2025 after Donald Trump takes office". The bullish prediction from Green comes after the



cryptocurrency has experienced a staggering 93 per cent price rise year-to-date. "We expect coming Trump administration. that this is just the beginning, President-elect's crypto-friendly

80 Pc of Global Banks Have Stable Rating Outlooks in 2025: Report

break more records under an in-

geographies," he mentioned.

According to the report, credit costs (a gauge of provisioning) will likely keep rising as a percentage of gross loans. This reflects stresses over the past few years, including via a steep and fast increase in

Digital Transfers of Funds for Public Services Up 56 Pc in 2024: RBI

JAIPUR: The average number of daily e-transactions to access public services in India has increased by 56 per cent in 2024 compared to the previous year while there has been a transfer of Rs 6.9 lakh crore through the digitallypowered Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) under 314 schemes, benefiting 176 crore beneficiaries in the financial year 2023-24, RBI deputy Governor Michael Patra said on Wednesday.

Addressing the conference on 'Digital Technology, Productivity and Economic Growth in India', Patra said over the years, these DBTs have resulted in estimated cumulative cost savings of Rs 3.5 lakh crore up to March 2023. The RBI deputy governor further stated that India is uniquely positioned to unlock new growth avenues and optimise existing ones with its digital public infrastructure (DPI), a vibrant information technology (IT) sector and a burgeoning youth population,



talent bases. Forecasts suggest that generative AI will contribute \$359-438 billion to India's GDP by 2029-30. Indian firms' integration of AI into production processes has increased from 8 per cent in 2023 to 25 per cent in 2024. India has also committed Rs. 1.25 trillion towards its semiconductor industry development, he added. India is at the forefront of the digital revolution. Financial technology (FinTech) is speeding up digital payments. The India Stack is expanding financial inclusion, galvanising banking infrastructure and public finance management systems covering both direct benefit transfers and

Rural Growth, Govt Spending to Drive India's Economy in H2FY25: ICICI Bank



NEW DELHI: India's economic growth in the latter half of the fiscal year 2024-25 is expected to be primarily driven by rural demand and government expenditure, according to a recent report by ICICI

The analysis highlights an emerging momentum in the rural economy, complemented by the government>s sustained focus on infrastructure development and welfare initiatives.

The manufacturing sector has shown encouraging signs, with 19 out of 23 sub-sectors registering growth, marking significant improvement from the previous month's figure of 12.

Notable expansion has been

observed in electrical equipment, transport equipment, furniture, and rubber and plastics manufacturing, indicating a broad-based recovery in the sector.

eptember. Following three months

of decline, consumer nondurables witnessed a modest recovery with 2 percent growth, primarily attributed to increasing rural demand.

goods (FMCG) sector.

of moderation. The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) registered a growth of 2.6 percent year-on-year in the second quarter of FY25, considerably lower than the previous quarters 6.9 percent and the robust 7.8 percent recorded in Q2FY24. The cumulative IIP growth for the first half of FY25 stands at 4.0 percent, down from 6.2 percent in the corresponding period last year. Despite the deceleration in industrial growth, the outlook remains positive, with rural demand and government spending expected to be key growth catalysts in the coming months.

sation Levy, gift tax, etc. With a target of Rs 22.12 lakh of global banks will keep on a do not envision macro tailwinds est rate cycle already turning in crore for 2024-25, these robust stable ratings course in 2025 as will be sufficient to strengthen numerous banking jurisdictions, collections reflect India's strong the credit standing of banks". easing inflation will help bor-"some relief is finally within fiscal position, aiding infrastruc-

rowers and reduce stresses on harder-hit sectors including commercial real estate, a report showed on Thursday. However, S&P Global Rat-

NEW DELHI: About 80 per cent ings said in its report that "we Gavin Gunning, with the inter-Positive ratings movements

will more likely be driven by "idiosyncratic country and bank bank-specific factors".

sight for bank borrowers".

"Banks' asset quality will eventually benefit although the transmission effect will According to credit analyst take time and will vary across policy rates.

Domestic investors making market stronger



SINGH

he dominance mestic investors in the stock market is increasing rapidly. Apart from big cities like

Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, cities like Jaipur, Indore, Rajkot, Pune, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Patna etc. are also becoming strongholds of domestic investors. According to the data of Bombay Stock Exchange and National Stock Exchange, the number of domestic investors has increased the most 1.01 crore investors are assoin Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West ciated with the stock market Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and there. Rajasthan on an annual basis. Bihar has come in the top 10 Maharashtra has 3.34 crore instates in terms of investing in the stock market. After Ma- investors increased by 25.70 harashtra in the list, Uttar Pradesh secures the second position with 1.96 crore in-

National Stock Exchange, on-year in 2023. Rajasthan has in May 2024, 1.93 lakh new 1.07 crore investors and the investors opened Demat ac-number of investors increased count in Delhi and 71.5 thouby 37.60 percent year-on-year sand in Mumbai. At the same in 2023. Karnataka has 96.2 time, the number of investors lakh investors and the number opening Demat accounts in of investors increased by 28.90 Bengaluru was 25.8 thoupercent year-on-year in 2023. sand, 25.5 thousand in Pune, 22.8 thousand in Surat, 21.7 thousand in Ahmedabad, 19.9 investors increased by 37.70 thousand in Jaipur and 14.1 thousand in Nagpur. According to the data of the National Tamil Nadu is 86.6 lakh and on Stock Exchange, the number an annual basis, the number of of investors investing in the investors there has increased by stock market on an annual basis increased the most in Bihar by 49.40 percent in the calendar year 2023, including (SIP) in India has increased this, the number of people which today a total of 71.9 two and a half times from opening Demat accounts inlakh investors of Bihar are Rs 8,183 crore to Rs 20,904 investing in the stock market, crore. Apart from villages and while Uttar Pradesh stood towns, the trend of invest- to a report by the Securities



47.80 percent and 1.96 crore investors are associated with the stock market there. At the same time, West Bengal is at the third place with an increase of 39.10 percent and

Other states, for example, vestors and the number of new percent year-on-year in 2023. Gujarat has 1.67 crore investors investing in the stock market and the number of investors in-According to the data of creased by 26.60 percent year-Madhya Pradesh has 94.0 lakh investors and the number of percent year-on-year in 2023. The number of investors in

25.60 percent in 2023. Investors' investment in Systematic Investment Plan

small cities as well these days. People are giving preference to investing in mutual funds and stock market instead of traditional investments, due to which banks are facing a shortage of deposits.

The analysis also shows that the number of new investors has not increased rapidly in major urban areas or metros. At the same time, there has been a significant increase in the number of investors in small cities. With these investors joining the stock market, investment in the country has increased and dependence on foreign investment has reduced. Most new investors are investing in Futures and Options (F&O). However, trading in it is risky, as their investors are doing this in the desire to get money quickly.

In fact, in recent years, the desire to earn money as soon as possible has increased among the youth. The Indian economy remained strong during the Corona epidemic as compared to the developed countries of the world, due to which the Sensex and Nifty also remained bullish and the investor kept earning. Due to creased during the Corona period and after that. According

(SEBI), 1 crore 7 lakh Demat accelerate loan growth amid accounts were opened during April 2020 to January 2021, because buying and selling in the stock market can be done only through a Demat account. By March 2024, the total number of Demat accounts in India reached a new high of 15 crore 10 lakh. In March 2024 alone, about 30 lakh new Demat accounts were opened.

Due to the change in the traditional investment pattern in the country, there is a shortage of deposits in banks at present. In this regard, banks have made a double mistake in the matter of deposits. First, they stopped running attractive schemes to increase deposits and second, bank deposits started being used to increase mutual fund and insurance business. Bank employees started luring customers with high returns in mutual funds and insurance. Due to this, customers started investing in mutual funds and insurance by withdrawing from term and savings accounts. Over time, to collect maximum tax or increase revenue collection, the government made valuation is very high, but the interest on savings and recurring deposits taxable and due to the availability of cheap capital in the initial period, the interest rate on term deposits was significantly reduced by the banks, due to which customers started avoiding investing in bank

deposit schemes. One reason for the deposit problem is that banks set aside a portion of the deposits collected for regulatory requirements, such as cash reserve ratio (CRR) and statutory liquidity ratio (SLR), which has reduced the lendable amount. In recent quarters, banks used second with an increase of ing in SIP has increased in and Exchange Board of India their surplus SLR holdings to

slow deposit growth, which led to a reduction in the SLR buffer and banks faced the challenge of balancing profitability as well as deposit rate

Recently Bloomberg

conducted a survey on the increasing number of new investors in the stock market, according to which the Indian stock market can give higher returns than the US in the second half of the current calendar year. Not only this, the survey also said that investing in the Indian stock market can give better returns than Japan and China in Asia. Two-thirds of the investors surveyed believe that the Asian market will give returns around 10 percent by the end of this year. The Indian market will remain safe from the negative effects of the ongoing tension between the US and China or the global geopolitical crisis. Asian equities will outperform US stocks due to Fed rate cuts and cheap borrowing. According to a Bloomberg survey, the stock market in the country will remain in a booming condition and corporate profits will also improve in the coming days, which will also lead to a boom

in foreign investment. Since 2014, the Indian economy is continuously getting stronger, due to which investors in the stock market and mutual funds are getting attractive returns. Due to this, people are avoiding depositing their capital in the bank and are giving priority to investing in the stock market. Therefore, the number of investors in the stock market

 $Satish\ Singh, Ahmedabad$ Based Senior Columnist, views are personal

is continuously increasing.

India's Public Sector Banks Clocks 11 Pc Growth at Rs 236 Lakh Crore in April-Sep FY25

NEW DELHI: Public sector banks (PSBs) showed strong performance in the first half of current fiscal (FY25) with 11 per cent annual growth as their aggregate business stood at Rs 236.04 lakh crore in the April-September period, the

government said on Tuesday. Global credit and deposit portfolio grew by 12.9 per cent and 9.5 per cent (year-on-year), and stood at Rs 102.29 lakh crore and Rs 133.75 lakh crore, respectively, according to a Ministry of Finance statement.

The operating and net profit for H1 FY25 was Rs 1,50,023 crore (14.4 per cent YoY growth) and Rs 85,520 crore (25.6 per cent YoY growth).

The gross and net NPA stood at 3.12 per cent and 0.63 per cent (as on September 2024) as





















necessary systems/controls to

tackle cyber security risks and

taking multiple steps to provide

PSBs have also shown sigbest-in-class customer services. Canara Bank Hosts Retail Expo in Bengaluru to Empower Homeownership

gross and net NPA declined by

108 bps and 34 bps, respectively.

The capital-to-risk-weighted as-

set ratio (CRAR) stood at 15.43

per cent in September, against

the regulatory requirement of

11.5 per cent, according to the

Ministry of Finance.

BENGALURU: Canara Bank hosted a successful two-day Retail Expo on November 13th and 14th, 2024, at Manyata Tech Park, Bengaluru, showcasing a wide variety of real estate projects and home loan offerings. The event was inaugurated by Mahesh M Pai, the esteemed Bengaluru Circle Head and General Manager of Canara Bank, along with Shekhar H K, Senior Vice President of Shriram Properties, and Rohit Mehta, Director of Svamitva Group.

A total of 42 prominent builders and 12 car dealerships participated, exhibiting their latest property developments and automotive offerings. This unique event gave customers the chance to explore a range of residential projects and connect nificant move to provide imwith leading developers—all in mediate assistance to aspiring



one place. The event was further enriched by the presence of Canara Bank's Executive Director, Sri Bhavendra Kumar, who addressed the audience on the bank's commitment to supporting homeownership dreams.

Highlighting the event's starstudded appeal, the renowned international cricket legend and Canara Bank brand ambassador, Venkatesh Prasad, graced the occasion. In a sig-

homeowners, Canara Bank offered on-the-spot in-principle sanctions for home loan and vehicle loan applications. The bank presented these financial products with some of the most competitive interest rates in the market, along with zero processing charges, making home and vehicle ownership more accessible to a wider audience.

The event not only strengthened Canara Bank's position as a leading financial institution but also emphasized its customercentric approach to financing and its commitment to making homeownership a reality for many. The Retail Expo proved to be a successful platform for customers, builders, and car dealers alike, fostering collaboration and offering a seamless experience for all attendees.

Welcome Back, says Biden as he receives Trump in Oval Office

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden received Presidentelect Donald Trump to the Oval Office at the White House on Wednesday in a customary gesture marking the peaceful transfer of power that had not been shown to him four years ago by the latter. "Welcome, welcome back,"

Biden said to Trump at the start of their meeting.
"Politics is tough," Trump

responded. "And in many cases not a very nice world, but it is a nice world today, and I appreciate very much a transition that's so smooth, it'll be as smooth as it can get. And I very much appreciate that.' A more detailed readout of

their conversation is awaited. The practice of the sitting

President receiving their incoming successor signals the lost. And, in fact, in January

Israeli airstrikes kill 12



start of a peaceful transfer of a crowd of his supporters had power, which is completed raided the Capitol to prevent with the inauguration of the new President on January 21 with the ceremonial swearing-in on the steps of the Capitol.

Trump had refused to accord Biden the same meeting Palm Beach, Florida. in 2020, as he had refused to accept the verdict that he had

tory. He had also refused to attend Biden's inauguration and had left the same morning for his resort home in Biden also told Trump in remarks before the meet-

to make sure (of) accommodating what you need".

The transition from one administration to another is a massive effort with over 4,000 federal government vacancies left by the outgoing administration to be filled by the incoming President and campaigns usually have a long and detailed transition plan ready much in advance. Trump has started filling

the top positions and has announced a string of nominees for the cabinet in the last few days — Pete Hegseth for secretary of defense, Kristi Noem for secretary of homeland se- $\operatorname{curity}-\operatorname{and}\operatorname{other}\operatorname{positions}$ in the White House like Susie Wiles as chief of staff and Mike Waltz as the national

Sri Lanka's leftist coalition wins landslide victory, eyes sweeping reforms



Sri Lankan President Anura in the 225-member parliament. Kumara Dissanayake's leftist coalition, the National People's Power (NPP), secured a decisive victory in Thursday's snap general election, winning 137 of the 196 directly elected seats. Local media project that the total will surpass 150 seats once proportional representation is factored in, giving Dissanayake a commanding two-thirds majority

This victory gives Dissanayake the power to push through

his reform agenda, including plans to abolish the executive presidency. In total, the NPP secured almost 62% of the vote. or around 7 million ballots, up from 42% in the presidential election held in September. Dissanayake, a political outsider, is now poised to reshape Sri Lanka's

NEW YORK: US President-

elect Donald Trump has nom-

inated Indo-American Tulsi

Gabbard, a former Democrat

member of Congress, to his cabi-

net as the Director of National

spirit that has defined her illus-

trious career to our Intelligence

Community, championing our

Constitutional Rights, and se-

curing Peace through Strength,

Trump said on Truth Social

on Wednesday announcing his

pick for the post. "For over two

decades, Tulsi has fought for our

Country and the Freedoms of all

Americans," Trump said refer-

ring to her rank as a Lieutenant

Colonel in the Army Reserve

serving in the Iraq War. She

quit the Democratic Party and

formally joined the Republican

Party this year and campaigned

for Trump, urging Indian Amer-

It was an ideological 180-de-

icans to vote for him.

"Tulsi will bring the fearless

Intelligence.

political landscape, having built strong support among minorities and the wider electorate. While the clear mandate strengthens political stability, there is some uncertainty over Dissanavake's economic policies, especially his intention to alter the terms of Sri Lanka's \$2.9 billion IMF bailout. The IMF deal has been crucial to the country's tentative economic recovery following the 2022 crisis, which saw Sri Lanka default on its debt and its economy contract by 7.3% in 2022 and 2.3% in 2023.

Dissanayake, who has promised to reduce taxes and prioritize welfare for the country's poor, aims to negotiate with the IMF to revise income tax targets and free up funds for social spending. However, analysts warn that revisiting the bailout terms could delay future IMF disbursements and make it harder to meet a critical fiscal target of a 2.3% primary surplus by 2025.

Russia Denies Trump-Putin Post-Election Call as "Pure Fiction"



recent US media reports that President-elect Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke via phone following Trump's election victory. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov dismissed the alleged conversation as "completely untrue, "adding that "there was no conversation." In response to the reports, Peskov questioned the reliability of American media sources and their information quality. The dismissed reports claimed that Trump called Putin from his Mar-a-Lago residence, discussing Ukraine and proposing measures to de-escalate tensions. The Kremlin's statement highlights the caution Russia s exercising around reports of interactions between the two leaders, as Trump's campaign had emphasized resolving the Ukraine conflict as a priority. However, Kyiv confirmed it was not informed of any recent Trump-Putin discussions. This exchange adds to the ongoing scrutiny and speculation around US-Russia relations and the potential direction of foreign policy

under Trump's leadership. Trump Selects John amid Speculation of



WASHINGTON: Presidentelect Donald Trump has chosen John Ratcliffe, former Director of National Intelligence (DNI) and ex-congressman, to lead the Central Intelligence

Trump's first term. Ratcliffe, praised for his outaltz who is the co-chair of the

Ratcliffe as CIA Director Kash Patel Appointment



spoken positions on Russian collusion claims and transpar-

India, South Africa Among Solar 'Business Hotspots': Oxford Report

a joint sitting of congress

from certifying Biden's vic-

ing that his administration

BAKU: Drawing on the first comprehensive dataset of more than 2,300 renewable energy start-ups across Africa and South Asia, a team led by the University of Oxford on Friday revealed India and South Africa among solar 'business hotspots'. The analysis also investigates

why some countries, such as Chile and Namibia, produce more solar energy relative to their potential while others fall short — even when factors such as hours of sunlight, availability of fossil fuels or hydropower, and GDP are accounted for. "Our report identifies the

countries where — all other things being equal — proac-tive policies and simple social affinity have created a betterthan-expected environment for solar energy," said lead author Lorenzo Agnelli. By comparing start-up activity with the cost of

identifies: Business hotspots: difficult conditions and limited such as India and South Africa, which combine vibrant start-up ecosystems with low solar costs.

Business headwinds: in countries, such as Nigeria, where entrepreneurial activity is high there are challenges such as low energy access rates. Dormant opportunities: in countries including Botswana and Namibia, with favourable conditions for solar but limited start-up activity. Bleak business outlook: for electricity, the report further example, Chad and Malawi, have

start-up activity — but where strategic support could unlock entrepreneurship in the future.

"The global energy transition is not just about new technology — it is about new, often more inclusive ways of providing energy," says Sam Fankhauser. Professor of Climate Policy at the Oxford Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment.

"Across the Global South, it has empowered agile, dynamic entrepreneurs. And the business

opportunities only tell part of the story — often these new business models are uniquely suited to drive electrification and energy access." The report highlights concrete actions to overcome challenges to renewable energy entrepreneurship, including localising supply chains, holding renewable energy auctions, and adopting alternative consumer payment systems. "The energy transition is happening, but it's not happening fast enough, or equitably enough. With ambitious (but non-binding) targets already in place at a global level to treble renewables by 2030, now is the time for an acute focus on the practical steps required to unlock the necessary investment on the ground in a way that leaves nobody behind, especially the Global South," says Sam Peacock, MD Corporate Affairs, Regulation and Strategy, SSE.

gree turn because she had been associated with the Democratic Party's Left and had supported While prescribed burns are aimed the Leftist Senator, Bernie Sandat reducing fire intensity, the ers, for the presidential nomination in 2016.

She will become the second Indian on the US cabinet, after Arati Prabhakar, the director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, now serving with

After a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019, Gabbard said, "India is with 20+ years since their last and one of the United States' most important partners in the

Asia-Pacific region." "We spoke about the need

Trump names Indo-American Tulsi Gabbard to

his Cabinet as Director of National Intelligence

to continue to work together to address the pressing issues that impact us and the world," she said. "We discussed the situation

in Kashmir, civil rights, empowering women, and addressing poverty, as well as the concern about escalating tensions with Iran," she added The Director of National In-

telligence coordinates the work of 18 intelligence agencies, and her office includes the National Counterterrorism Center, the National Counterintelligence and Security Center, the National Counterproliferation and Biosecurity Center, the Cyber Threat Intelligence Integration Center, and the Foreign Malign Influence Centre.

The director's high-profile role is preparing the daily intelligence briefing for the President, an overview of the global situation, and an early warning system for emerging dangers.

In the national security sector, Trump has nominated Mike

Agency (CIA). This move came despite widespread speculation that Indian-American lawyer Kash Patel would take the role due to his strong support of Trump's policies and contributions to investigating opposition efforts during

India Caucus in Congress, as his previously served as DNI in new National Security Adviser. Trump's administration.

Lebanese rescue workers in civil defense center



ics from civil defence teams were killed in an Israeli airstrike on their centre in Duris, a village in Baalbek in eastern Lebanon. media reported. According to Lebanese news

website Elnashra, Baalbek Governor Bachir Khodor said on Thursday that the bodies of 12 civil defence members were recovered from under the rubble, and the debris removal process is still ongoing. He added that around 20

paramedics were at the centre during the airstrike, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Contact is lost with the head of the regional civil defence centre in Baalbek, Bilal Raad," he was quoted as saying. Since September 23, the Is-

raeli military has intensified airstrikes on Lebanon in an escalation of conflict with Hezbollah. Israel also launched a ground operation across its northern border into Lebanon in early October. As of Thursday, the death toll from Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon since the beginning of the Palestinianconflict on October 8 2023, has reached 3,386, while injuries went up to 14,417.

Over Half of Australian Species Decline Post-2019-20 Megafires, Study Reveals

SYDNEY: New research from tional deaths from Melbourne's Deakin University, published in Nature, highlights the extensive impact of Australia's 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires on the country's biodiversity. This study, which analyzed 1, 380 native animal and plant species, reveals that 55% of them experienced declines following the 3 million hectares primarily on the east coast, causthat disadvantaged others. ing 34 direct fatalities and addi-

smoke inhalation. The report shows

mammals were especially affected, with population declines double those of other groups. However, about 44% of spe-

Compiled by over 100 sci- conducted pre-bushfire season. burn.



especially fuel-reduction burns

study finds that they could lead to larger ecosystem disruptions when large fires occur. Key findings include: Areas burned three or

more times in the past 40 years had a 93% higher negative biodiversity impact. Sites burned in the decade before the Black Summer had 70%

AMIDST THE REPORTS OF JUDICIARY'S RETREAT

Trump's Cabinet Formation to Redefine Delicate Balance in Domestic and Geopolitical Forces

he cheap

outgoing Biden

main political adversary, Don- of the Trump Administration ald Trump, finally fell apart on November 15, when a federal judge, Tanya Chutakan, allowed special counsel, Jack Smith's request to clear all court deadlines from the case bor from India to work on against the President-elect. sugar farms. The appointment Earlier, Smith's accusation of Vivek Ramaswamy in the Federal Emergency Man- ing any animosity against any that Trump mishandled clas- new cabinet has already been sified information was dismissed on a technical ground that he did not have the man-

date to prosecute him. to the official of the Justice Department is just a tip of any friendly approach toan iceberg of the paradigm wards China. It means that changes being witnessed in the Trump Administration the US establishment undergoing unprecedented churning of the systems; it is hoped with the US's foreign adverthat the battle lines between saries like China, Iran and the old order and the am- Cuba. The recent revelation bassadors of changes will be of the names of the three Iramore pronounced, when on nian conspirators by Justice January 20, 2025, the Trump Department for planning to Administration will finally be inaugurated. Meanwhile, the have much tougher American appointment of Matt Gaetz as the Attorney General, who has just quite his seat in the Congress, might further expose the inability of the approach, has been noticed Justice Department to take even in the distribution of appropriate action against the much-needed assistance the growing Chinese influto to the victims of the cyclones ence in American media. The off the Mexico coast. The cy-Chinese companies owned by clones hit the regions during the Communist Party of China October-November every year.

in major media channels and newspapers. It is not only, Tanya Chuta-

political kan, a judge from a non-white vendetta background, the proposal to conspired by the appoint Senator, Marco Rubio, as Secretary of State, a La-Administration against its tino, indicates that the stress would be focused on a multiethnical system of governance. It may be noted that Tanya's grand-parents were brought to Jamaica as indentured laannounced. It may be noted that if

Rubio's elevation is finalized, it is expected to have The court's permission worldwide repercussions. He is not known for not having would be pursuing a more hardline approach in dealing assassinate Trump might also policy against the radical Islamists worldwide.

New Narrative: In domestic policies, the partisan



agement Agency director, Deanne Criswell, stated that an employee of her organization has recently been terminated for denying assistance to the victims for supporting the President-elect, Donald Trump.

During the recently held elections, the party has not only got its nominee, Donald Trump, elected to the presidency, it has overwhelmed the political adversary, the Democrats, in the bicameral American Congress, the Senate and the House of Representatives. It, perhaps, might have been surprising, if not shocking, to a large number of political commentators that despite favoring stringent laws for the immigrants, how Trump could successfully enlist the support of the Latino population in the recently held presidential

election. It is also believed that his decision to appoint a multiethnic cabinet, Trump might have been trying to position rights and also offering them and the Red Army have shares
It was confirmed, when the
himself as a leader not harbor-

social group by appointing a Cuban-American as the Secretary of State.

The political observers as well as the experts of the strategic affairs in New Delhi and Washington, perhaps, are in unison that during his presidency, Joe Biden, has been following, if not indulging, in policies without any focus. In case of India, his administration, including the deep state or CIA, has been signing huge contracts, but only a fraction of these commitments could percolate down at the ground level during the past

Both Biden and his protégé, Kamala Harris, a descent of Indian-African couple and the Vice-President, who was later fielded to contest for presidency on the Democratic Party ticket, have been seen a befitting nominee for the highest office for supporting the illegal immigration, and later giving them voting being an ardent follower of National Security Advisor, Ajit the President Barrack Obama traditions of the Democratic Party, she could not carve out a strong constituency even among the Latino and other It appears that her politi-

in convincing a large number of the American voters, representing the migrants from South Asia, including Indians, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis that she was for them. On the other hand, for many, she symbolized the American establishment promoting anti-democratic elements in Asia and other parts of the world. It may be noted that there is a sizeable presence of Bangladeshis as taxi drivers, tea vendors and others doing blue collar jobs in New York metropolitan areas. It was not taken kindly by them, when a democratically elected Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, was forcefully evicted from the high office by the Islamists in Dacca. It is also being noted that the Biden Administration has not only been reluctant to condemn the end of democracy in Dacca, but even was seen blessing the conspirators. It is widely believed that the ouster of Hasina was conspiracy, a joint venture of the Bangla-

intelligence. Further, the voters of the Indian origin were unhappy that while Biden Administration pampered the Sikh extremists, a welfare allowances. In spite case was lodged against India's

desh Army, Jamaat-e- Islam,

the Chinese and the American

Doval. Similarly, Biden Administration did little to support the democratic forces in Myanmar. Instead, it was also being accused for conspiring to promote a new state, Crown Country, indeed a dream of the British cal detractors have succeeded rulers in India, comprising the pre-dominant Christian states of India's north-eastern region, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya and the border provinces of Myanmar comprising the Chin and Shan areas. Similarly, Joe Biden had abandoned the issue of the autonomy for Tibet. During his vice-presidency, he had met his then counterpart, Xi Jinping, now president of China, in Tibet, thus formally ending any commitment or support towards the hapless people of the region and their leader, Dalai Lama.

For many, Trump's agenda for peace, accompanied by fortifying the demographic aggressions from the neighbors, emphasizing on taking affirmative initiatives for ending the Russia-Ukraine War and the ongoing conflict in West Asia, might look like a mission of Don Quixote. And in the case of Cuba, it has to abandon its policy allowing the Chinese to set up intelligence devices to pry on American institutions, especially military deployments in the region.

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

Canada's First Domestic H5N1 Bird Flu Case Raises Awareness on Avian Influenza



The recent confirmation of Canada's first domestically acquired human case of H5N1 bird flu in British Columbia has raised both public concern and awareness of the risks associated with avian influenza. The case, confirmed by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), involves a teenager who was hospitalized on November 9 and subsequently confirmed positive for the H5N1 strain. This article provides insights into H5N1 in Canada, its symptoms, precautions, and ongoing efforts to control avian influenza.

Understanding H5N1: A Global and Domestic Concern

H5N1, a highly pathogenic avian influenza virus, has been circulating among bird populations globally, with sporadic human cases. In Canada, H5N1's emergence in poultry had already sparked heightened surveillance, but this human case signals the virus's potential impact on public health. It's important to note that, per PHAC, this case remains isolated, and the risk to the general public is still considered low.

What Does This Mean for Canadians?

While avian influenza primarily affects birds, human cases can occur through close contact with infected birds or contaminated environments. PHAC reassures that this particular H5N1 strain found

in British Columbia's poultry differs from that affecting dairy cattle in the United States. Canadians, especially those in high-risk jobs such as poultry farming, should exercise caution when handling birds, following all public health guidelines on protective gear and handling protocols.

Symptoms of H5N1 in Humans Individuals infected with H5N1 may experience symptoms similar to

seasonal flu, including fever, cough,

and muscle aches. Severe cases can

lead to respiratory complications

and may require hospitalization. **Precautions and Prevention** Avoid Unprotected Contact: Those working directly with birds or in close proximity to poultry should use protective gear, including masks and gloves. Report Unusual Bird Deaths: Anyone noticing unusual deaths among bird populations should report them to local health authorities. Stay Informed: Public

health agencies in Canada provide

regular updates, and it's essential

to stay informed of any changes in risk levels or guidelines. Conclusion- Canada's first con-

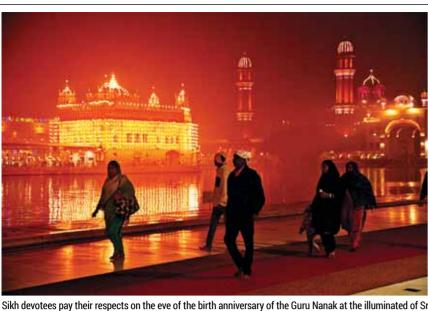
firmed case of H5N1 in a human serves as a reminder of the importance of vigilance and precau-

tion. While the risk remains low, understanding H5N1, recognizing symptoms, and following preventive measures can help mitigate the spread of avian influenza in Canada.

Diljit proudly says

'Punjabi aa

gaye Abu Dhabi' during his Dil-Luminati Tour





Sikh devotees pay their respects on the eve of the birth anniversary of the Guru Nanak at the illuminated of Sri Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) on Thursday

PHOTOS: PRABHJOT GILL

Myopia numbers increasing in technology-addicted **Children: Experts**



DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai

"Children nationwide and globally are in danger of developing severe "myopia" and damaging their eyes in an uncontrolled atmosphere of vision-related activities, if corrective actions are not undertaken immediately," said Dr Jay Goyal while launching Mumbai's "1st Myopia Clinic for Kids" on Childrens Day.

The doctor also unveiled and highlighted the use of Western India's first cutting-edge technology device --"Oculus Myopia-Master" -- in assessing and managing progression of myopia in children. This device played a crucial role in early detection, treatment and monitoring of myopia, he added.

Highlighting a 6-month study through a "Childrens Camp" held in a school recently, Dr Goyal, Director of the Surya Eve Institute and Research Centre, said that a recent school camp covering 1,256 students witnessed barely 36% students having normal vision with the

note, 946 of these students received treatment success-

the Sports Carnival

GULSHAN KUMAR

The Sports Carnival was an

action-packed day of thrilling competitions, showcasing the

athletic prowess of over 500 stu-

dents from Classes Pre-Nursery

to 12.The students had been

training tirelessly under the

guidance of experienced coaches

to demonstrate their skills in

various track and field events.

After the Inaugural cer-

emony on 16 October 2024,

the Sports Carnival comprised

several events, including sprint,

relay, long jump, shot put and

many other novelty races. The

Carnival witnessed participation

from students across classes

Pre Nursery to 12th. The clos-

ing of the Sports Carnival was

held on 14 November 2024 with

Ishan Malhotra as the Chief

Guest(Cricketer, IPL) and

Yamuna Nagar

St.Thomas School, Jagadhri

hosted its Annual Sports Day,

left untreated leads to retina detachment, besides causing headaches, eye strain, squinting, excessive blinking etc.

While 40% of Indian children are likely to be affected by myopia by 2030, he said the School Camp's activity figures had prompted the Centre to create a "myopia" awareness campaign that would be focusing on the schools level in Mumbai, before planning to spread nation-wide gradually.

Underlining the causes of myopia among children as "uncontrolled use of mobiles, computers and television, dietary factors, besides greater time spent indoors," he said muchneeded lifestyle changes in this regard -- including 'Sunlight Progression' (playing and other activities in sunshine), 'reducing screentime', using myopia glasses and eyedrops, and also educating the parents on this issue – would bring about 80% change in the children.

es rapidly in children, causing complications like amblyopia, However, "on a positive nificantly impacting academic performance, while early detection and treatment significantly fully," he said, while noting that reduces the progression of the "Myopia (near-sightedness) if condition," he added.

backbone of the event said

teamwork. The Himalaya House

lifted the trophy for the Best

March past while the Aravali

House won the trophy for the

Cock House. St.Thomas School

believes in fostering a holistic

education that combines aca-

demic excellence with physical

fitness. Our Annual Sports Day

is a celebration of teamwork,

Shiven Sharma as the guest of discipline, and sportsmanship.

A Sikh priest carries the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy book) during a religious procession on the eve of Gurpurav (birth anniversary) of Guru Nanak in Amritsar on Thursday. Shael Oswal Unveils "Rabba Kare" with Urvashi Rautela

KULBIR SINGH KALSI Chandigarh

Get ready to be swept away by Shael Oswal's latest release, Rabba Kare! Set to be this season's definitive romantic anthem, this song combines heartfelt lyrics with a soulful melody that will linger in listeners' hearts.

The music video features the glamorous Urvashi Rautela, whose screen presence adds a dazzling touch to the track's visual storytelling. Speaking on the release, Shael shares, "Every lyric and note in Rabba Karecaptures emotions that words alone can't express. Collaborating with Urvashi has been incredible, and I'm thrilled to bring this musical journey to everyone. I truly



believeRabba Karewill become a song of the heart this season."

Urvashi Rautela reflects on her experience, "Rabba Kareis a beautiful exploration of love, filled with emotion and melody. Working with Shael, whose passion shines in every note, has

been incredibly rewarding. I've been a longtime fan of his music, especially his hit Heeriye, and being part of this project feels both special and fulfilling. I'm confident that Rabba Karewill

Kashmir valley welcomes season's first ange in the children. "Untreated myopia progress"Untreated myopia progress"Untreated myopia progress"Untreated myopia progress"Untreated myopia progress"Untreated myopia progress-



across the valley. Snow also fell at the tourist resort of Sonamarg, located

on the border with union territory of Ladakh, and Zojilla pass that connects Jammu and Kashmir with Ladakh, closing it. The snow clearance work started on the pass soon after. The Drass area of Kargil in

tures, marking the onset of

winter in the region. Snowfall

was also reported in uninhabited mountainous areas, adding

to the wintery transformation

Ladakh also received snowfall of about 3 inches. This has brought temperature down in Kashmir Valley and Ladakh.

India's Sports Market to reach \$130 Billion by 2030, Create 10.5 Million Jobs



that it was a blessing of God Almighty that such an event was conducted at such a scale The Carnival that spanned over a month, encouraged students to achieve excellence and touch the zenith of fitness and

The report also projected the creation of up to 10.5 million

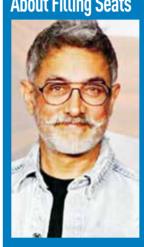
This growth — nearly double

content, the report noted. The sports goods and apparel market is leading the way, expected to double in value to \$58 billion by 2030, driven by a rising fitness culture and increased discretionary spending. "This is a pivotal moment for sports in India and the report outlines a clear path to unlock the value of sports for the nation. We're witnessing a surge in multi-sport fandom, a growing popularity of digital platforms, and deep engagement from Gen Z, who

for organisations and businesses to connect with passionate fans across the nation. "We see immense potential in leveraging the digital ecosystem

to enhance the fan experience and advance the growth of the sports sector, especially with AI-driven personalisation and insights, immersive technologies, and greater digital accessibility. We are excited about the opportunities to partner with the ecosystem to drive innovation and growth in the sector," Chobey added. The rise of digital platforms has transformed sports consumption in India. Most fans now access sports content digitally. This trend is even more pronounced among Gen Z, who make up 43 per cent of the fan base, and are driving demand for interactive, personalized experiences, the report mentioned.

Aamir Khan Defines Real Stardom: "It's **About Filling Seats'**



MUMBAI: Bollywood icon Aamir Khan recently spoke about the true can fill in theaters. In a video shared widely on social media, Aamir, in conversation with Holly wood Reporter, stressed that while many actors may be beloved, filling cinemas is the real mark

'If you are able to fill cinemas, then you are a star, " Aamir explained, underscoring the difference between draw audiences for box office success. Reflecting on his role in the 2009 olockbuster 3 Idiots, he credited the film's succes a star primarily impacts the initial draw—the opening days.

The film itself is what



where he shared a glimpse of his performance in Abu Dhabi. Before starting, he said: "Pun-jabi aa gaye Abu Dhabi" and then crooned the number "Tu Mujhe Kabool" sung by Kavita Krishnamurthy and Mohammed Aziz from the 1992 movie 'Khuda Gawah."

He captioned the video: "Marhaba Abu Dhabi."

'Khuda Gawah" is a 1992 Indian epic drama directed by Mukul S. Anand. It stars Amitabh Bachchan, Sridevi in a double role, Nagarjuna, Shilpa Shirodkar, Danny Denzongpa, Kiran Kumar in pivotal roles. In the film, Badshah Khan

travels from Afghanistan to India to find the killer of Benazir's father so that he can impress her. He succeeds but soon finds himself framed for a murder and trapped in an Indian prison. It was on Novmber 4, when

Diljit departed from Jaipur after his concert was held on Sunday. Diljit was seen wearing a red

turban and black sweatshirt at the airport with Jaipur written in red on it.

"I have received a lot of love from Jaipur. I will never forget this love. Diljit in fact also shared a post on his X

"Thank You So Much Jaiour. A lot of love and respect for everyone Thanks to @ jaipur_police for Your Co-LUMINATI TOUR Year 24." brother.)

He shared pictures from his visit at City Palace Jaipur as well as from his concert Earlier on Sunday he also praised Jaipur city and said: BEAUTIFUL PINK CITY JAIPUR RAJASTHAN... It was a Beautiful Experience Eating Dal Bati Churma is going to be a great pleasure

During his performance in Jaipur, Diljit expressed his love for the country and added "yeh pagdi hamari shaan hai.' The singer-actor took to his

this evening.

Instagram stories, where he shared a reel from his team's profile. In the video, Diljit was joined by a fan on stage, who was sporting a traditional Rajasthani turban.

Diljit was heard saying "Inki pagdi ke liye zor daar taaliya. Yeh pagdi hamari shaan hai. Yeh humari desh ki khoobsurati hai... (Please clap for his turban. The turban is our pride. This is the beauty of our

"Har do-teen chaar ghante baad humaari boli, khaana change hojata hai. Yeh humaari desh ki beauty hai. (In every two-three hours our language and food changes. This s the beauty of our country.)"

He then talked about his love for the country. "Aur hum jaahan jaahan se hai – koi Jaipur se hai, Koi Gujarat se hai, Delhi se hai,

Haryana se hai, Punjab se hai, -- Hum sab ko pyaar karte hai. Aur hum sab ke saath is desh ko pyaar karte hai. Marwariyo ke liye zor daar taaliyon. (And wherever we are from Jaipur, Gujarat, Delhi, Haryana or Punjab - We love all. And together we love our country.

in Baramulla district and at higher reaches saw the season's first snowfall on Monday. Sadhna Top in Kupwara disbringing an end to a monthtrict, while Srinagar and other long dry spell, officials said. plains received rainfall later in Light snowfall was reported in the afternoon.



NEW DELHI: India's sports market is poised to reach \$130 billion by 2030 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14 per cent, a Google and Deloitte report said on Thursday.

jobs and \$21 billion in indirect tax revenue by 2030.

the pace of India's GDP — signifies a fundamental shift in how Indians consume and engage with sports, driven by increasing government investments, a rising trend of multi-sport culture, wide digital adoption,

and a range of quality sports represent the largest segment of India's sports fanbase," said

Roma Datta Chobey, Managing Director (Interim Country Lead), Google India. These trends create a fertile ground for innovation and engagement, presenting unique opportunities

