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SINGLE ENDOSCOPIC PROCEDURE **USED TO TREAT DUAL OBSTRUCTION AT FOOD PIPE WITH ADVANCED LIVER CIRRHOSIS** 

# Arvind Kejriwal promises Rs 2,100 for Delhi women India's GDP Set to Reach USD 9 Trillion by if AAP wins polls, BJP takes 'lollipop' jibe

**NEW DELHI:** Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday announced that every woman of the capital will get monthly monetary assistance of Rs 1,000/- and this would be raised to Rs 2,100 if the party is voted to power in upcoming Assembly elections.

The big announcement, apparently inspired from schemes in other states, comes days ahead of Assembly elections in the capital, slated for February next year.

He further said that the scheme, dubbed as 'Mahila Samman Yojana' has been approved by the Delhi cabinet. leading to enhancement of the monthly amount from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,100.

AAP chief said that since electhemselves registered and tion dates will be announced in the capital in next few days, be directly transferred to their



**DELHI CHIEF MINISTER** 

ATISHI BLAMES BJP

FOR SHELTERING

**ROHINGYAS** 

transfer of money couldn't be done now, however the registration process for availing the benefits under the scheme will begin from tomorrow.

To avail this benefit, women Addressing the people, the beneficiaries will need to get once done, the amount will

bank accounts. Notably, AAP is

contesting the upcoming elections solo, having ruled out any alliance partnership with the Congress. The party's top leadership, embroiled in controversy over series of scandals including liquorgate and sheeshmahal is faced with a tough task of convincing

the voters on its 'clean politics' plank and getting elected to power for fourth time in a row. Soon after the public announcement, Delhi CM Atishi called it 'Kejriwal's guarantee'

and congratulated the city residents. "Arvind Kejriwal had promised to give a monthly hono- he said.

rarium of Rs 1000 to every woman in Delhi. Today the Delhi government fulfilled this promise. Now Arvind Kejriwal has promised that if his government is formed again, every woman in Delhi will be given an honorarium of Rs 2100 every month. This is Kejriwal's guarantee. It is sure to be fulfilled, "wrote Atishi on X.

nouncement of the 'poll sop', the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) mocked its attempt to win over public with offer of

Minutes after AAP's an-

'lollipops'.

Delhi BJP chief Virendra
Sachdeva said, "This is just a lollipop as elections come closer.

"You must tell who is ruling Punjab. You had promised the same thing in Punjab but no one got anything there,

# 2030: Chairman 16th Finance Commission

hensive economic assessment, Arvind Panagariya, chairman of India's 16th Finance Commission, has outlined an optimistic trajectory for the nation's economic growth, projecting the country's gross domestic product (GDP) to expand to between USD 6.5 and USD 9 trillion by 2030.

Speaking at the Times Network India Economic Conclave 2024, Panagariya highlighted the remarkable resilience of the Indian economy, which has demonstrated substantial growth despite facing significant challenges including the financial crisis, non-performing assets crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these obstacles, the economy has maintained an impressive growth rate of approximately 10 per cent. The economist emphasised the potential for accelerated economic expansion, suggesting that implementing pending reforms could



current dollars to 11-12 per cent.

Even with a conservative estimate of 8 per cent growth, Panagariya projects the economy will exceed USD 7 trillion, positioning India significantly ahead of the next competing nation. Global financial perspectives appear to align with this assessment. In September, rating agency S&P Global predicted India would become the world's third-largest economy by 2030-31, with an anticipated annual growth rate of 6.7 per cent in 2024-25.

However, recent economic data indicates a more measured performance, with GDP growth slowing to 5.4 per cent in the September quarter and 6.7 per cent in the first quarter of the current fiscal year, compared to 8.2 per cent in the previous year.

Addressing concerns about economic inequality, Panagariya challenged prevalent narratives about uneven recovery.

He characterised the postpandemic economic rebound as comprehensive, stating, "As we have grown, we have lifted all the boats." While acknowledging an increase in the proportion of wealth held by the top 1 per cent relative to the bottom 5 per cent, he dismissed claims of systemic economic disparagement. The finance commission chairman expressed confidence in the fundamental strength of India's economic foundations, predicting a return to approximately 7 per cent annual economic growth and characterising the country's pandemic recovery as successful with flying colours."

SC refers to CJI Cong leader's petition for verification of EVMs used in Haryana polls



NEW DELHI: A 2-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on Friday directed the apex court registry to place before the Chief Justice of India (CJI) for passing an appropriate order to list a plea filed by Congress leader seeking verification of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) used during Haryana Assembly polls.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and P.B. Varale opined that the matter should be placed before the same Bench which had passed directions on EVMs in April this year.

It said that the present petition seeking directions to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to lay down a memorandum for the checking and verification of the original burnt memory/microcontroller of the four components of the EVM relates to interpretation and implementation of the previous judgment of the apex court and therefore, the registry should place the papers before CJI, who is the master of the roster, for passing appropriate orders as to whether the petition should be listed before the previous Bench.

In order to strengthen the in-

tegrity of the election process in the country, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna (now CJI) and Dipankar Datta, in April this year, had passed a direction for checking and verification of the burnt memory/microcontroller in 5 per cent of EVMs for any tampering or modification on a written request made by candidates securing second and third highest votes in an election. The court said the checking and verification exercise was directed to be undertaken by a team of engineers from the manufacturers of the I with the candidates and their representatives having the option to remain present at the time of such exercise. The fresh petition filed by Karan Singh Dalal, a former 5-time MLA, said that the ECI has not issued any procedure for checking and verification of the original burnt memory/microcontroller of the four components of the EVM (Control Unit, Ballot Unit, VVPAT and Symbol Loading Unit) in terms of SC judgment.

### Congress picks Sandeep Dikshit for Kejriwal's New Delhi Assembly seat **NEW DELHI:** The Congress for Sadar Bazar. Bhardwaj is Jain (Shalimar Bagh), Mudit

party on Thursday released its first list of 21 candidates for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. A major highlight of the list

is the candidature of Sandeep Dikshit, son of former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, who will contest from the prestigious New Delhi constituency. The seat is currently held by Arvind Kejriwal, the national convenor of AAP and former Delhi Chief Minister. Sandeep Dikshit's nomination was approved by the Congress's Central Election Committee (CEC).

The Congress has fielded several prominent leaders for

Yadav, the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) president, will contest from the Badli constituency.

Adarsh Shastri, grandson of former Prime Minister been named the candidate

key constituencies. Devender Lal Bahadur Shastri, has been given the ticket for the Dwarka seat. Haroon Yusuf, a senior party leader, will contest from Ballimaran, while Anil Bhardwaj has

the chairman of the party's communication department for the Delhi unit. Congress spokesperson Ragini Nayak has been fielded from Wa-Another significant name

on the list is Abdul Rehman, a former AAP leader who recently joined Congress. He will contest from Seelampur, a seat he has represented as The full list of candidates

includes Aruna Kumari (Narela), Mangesh Tyagi (Burari), Shivank Singhal (Adarsh Nagar), Jai Kishan (Sultan-

Agrawal (Chandni Chowk), PS Bawa (Tilak Nagar), Abhishek Dutt (Kasturba Nagar), Rajinder Tanwar (Chhatarpur), Jay Prakash (Ambedkar Nagar), Garvit Singhvi (Greater Kailash), Anil Kumar (Patparganj), and Ali Mahndi (Musta-

This announcement marks the beginning of Congress's election campaign as it looks to challenge the AAP and BJP in the crucial Delhi Assembly elections. With a mix of experienced leaders and new faces, the party aims pur Majra), Rohit Chaud- to strengthen its presence hary (Nangloi Jat), Praveen across the national capital.

### **Onion Exporters Call for Rollback** of 20% Duty amid Expected **Surge in Crop Arrivals**

NEW DELHI: Onion exporters are urging the Indian government to revoke the 20 per cent export duty on onions, as they anticipate a substantial increase in the arrival of fresh crops in the coming months.

The Horticulture Produce Exporters Association (HPEA) plans to formally request the Centre to withdraw the export duty within the next few days, citing the need to remain competitive in the global market.

Vikas Singh, vice-president of HPEA, emphasised that India's current onion export prices are significantly higher than those of neighboring Pakistan and other countries. "India's export prices range

from USD 600 to USD 720 oer tonne, while Pakistan of fers onions at around USD 500 per tonne," Singh noted. He believes that removing

the export duty would bring India's prices closer to USD 500 per tonne, making Indian onions more attractive on the international stage.

The call for a rollback of the export duty comes as India braces for a bumper crop of late kharif and summer onions.

Singh pointed out that the



Earlier this year, on September 13, the government eased export restrictions by reducing the onion export duty from 40 per cent to 20 per cent and removing the minimum export price requirement of USD 550 per

the volume of onion exports has still declined. According to the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority (APEDA), India exported 4.03 lakh tonnes of onions in the first half of this financial year. a sharp drop from 13.10 lakh tonnes during the same period

planting of these varieties has surged this year, with expected arrivals set to increase from next month.

This influx could lead to a further drop in domestic wholesale prices, making it critical to bolster exports to avoid market saturation.

Despite these adjustments,

# Zafar-II seeks posses-

Kin of Bahadur Shah



Court on Friday rejected the plea of the widow of the greatgrandson of Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar-II, seeking possession of the Red Fort on account of being the legal heir.

A Bench of Acting Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela dismissed the appeal by Sultana Begum against the December 2021 decision of a HC single judge, noting the challenge was filed after a delay of over two and a half years, which could not be condoned. Begum said she could not file the appeal earlier owing to her bad health and the passing of her daughter.

"We find the said explanation inadequate, considering that the delay is of more than two and a half years. The petition was also dismissed (by the single judge) for being inordinately delayed by several decades. The application for condonation of delay is dismissed. Consequently, the appeal is also dismissed. It is barred by limitation," the Bench said. On December 20, 2021, the single judge dismissed Begum's petition seeking possession of the Red Fort taken illegally by the British East India Company, saying there was no justification for the inordinate delay in approaching the court after over 150 years

The petition, filed through advocate Vivek More, claimed the family was deprived of their property by the British, following the first war of Independence in 1857, following which the emperor was exiled from the country and possession of the Red Fort was forcefully taken away from the Mughals.

### India's Retail Inflation Declines to 5.48 % in November cash reserve ratio (CRR) for

NEW DELHI: India's retail Consumer Price Index (CPI) declined to 5.48 per cent in November as the increase in prices of food items eased during the month bringing relief to household budgets, said the Ministry of Statistics on Thursday. The slowing inflation marks

a reversal of the increasing trend in the previous two months when the inflation rate touched 6.21 per cent in "During the month of No-

vember, a significant decline in inflation is observed in vegetables, pulses, sugar and confectionery, fruits, eggs, milk and products, spices, transport and communication and personal care and effects subgroups," according to the official statement.

the highest year on year Infla- and dry chillies (-9.73).

martvrs.

speech, Priyanka Gandhi

Vadra blasted the Bharatiya

Janata Party government

of the Constitution by trying

to undermine it. She asserted

that the foundations of this

country have been laid with

love, harmony, and hope, and



tion at the all-India level in November are garlic (85.14), potato (66.65), cauliflower (47.70), cabbage (43.58) and coconut oil (42.13), according

to the official figures. The key items having the lowest year-on-year inflation in November 2024 are zeera (-35.04), ginger (-16.96), LPG The top five items showing used as cooking gas (-10.24)

The easing in inflation is a welcome sign as it was the first time that the rate of retail inflation crossed the RBI's upper limit of 6 per cent in October. The RBI is waiting for retail inflation to come down to 4 per cent on a durable basis before it can go in for an inter-

est rate cut to propel growth. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday slashed the

more funds available for lending to spur economic growth but kept the key policy repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent with an eye on inflation. The CRR has been reduced from 4.5 per cent to 4 per cent which will infuse Rs 1.16 lakh

crore into the banking system

and bring down market inter-

est rates. The monetary policy decision maintains a delicate balance between controlling inflation and pushing up the growth rate in a slowing

economy. In his last monetary policy view, former RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said, "India's growth story is still intact. In flation is on the declining path, but we cannot overlook the

significant risks in the outlook. This risk cannot be underes-

### **Government Calls for Competitiveness in Domestic Industry** amid Tariff Debate

**NEW DELHI:** The government

has urged the domestic industry to reflect on its competitiveness

### **Women-Owned MSMEs record over** 2.2 Crore Registrations since 2020

**NEW DELHI**: The revised definition of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). adopted on July 1, 2020, has catalysed a surge in womenowned enterprises across India. By November 30, 2024, a

total of 2,20,73,675 womenowned MSMEs had registered on the Udyam Registration Portal (URP) and Udyam Assist Platform (UAP), showcasing the significant strides made in fostering female entrepreneurship.

Gujarat and Rajasthan have emerged as key contributors. In Gujarat, 9,12,052 womenowned MSMEs have registered, while Rajasthan accounts for 8,15,207 registrations.

District-level data underscores these trends, with 11,942 registrations in Gujarat's Valsad District, constituting 18.24 per cent of the total MSMEs there, and 7,803 registrations in Rajasthan's Tonk and Sawai Madhopur Districts, comprising 13 per cent of their respective totals.

Since the revision of MSME guidelines, annual growth has been robust. In the first year alone, 4,87,287 women-owned enterprises registered. The government's focus on supporting women entrepreneurs has driven this progress.



cial drives to promote registration of women-owned MSMEs through URP and UAP. This effort has simplified

To boost participation, the

government has launched spe-

the process and brought more women entrepreneurs into the formal economic fold.

The Public Procurement Policy was amended in 2018 to ensure that at least 3 per cent of annual procurement by Central Ministries, Departments, and Undertakings is sourced from women entrepreneurs. This has opened up significant market opportunities for women-led businesses.

Scheme for Micro and Small Enterprises, women entrepreneurs receive a 10 per cent concession in annual guarantee fees, with 90 per cent guarantee coverage provided, compared to 75 per cent for other entrepreneurs. This support encourages women to secure credit for their ventures.

Under the Credit Guarantee

### Priyanka Gandhi delivers an impressive speech in Lok Sabha, emphasized the importance of Constitution New Delhi Congress General Secretary and Member of Parliament from Wayanad, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, today delivered her maiden speech in the Lok Sabha amidst cheers from party members. She started her speech by paying tributes to the December 13 Parliament attack

this country cannot be run In her 30-minute-long, highly impressive, and forcewith fear.

Maintaining that our country has a tradition of dialogue, debate, and discussion for for its repeated attempts to thousands of years, Priyanka said this tradition is seen in breach the "protective shield" every religion, philosophical texts, the Vedas, and the Upanishads. "Debate has been a

how today's government was scared of debate and running away from it.

She said that from this tradition came our freedom struggle, which was based on non-violence and truth, and it was a very democratic fight. "All the farmers, labourers, and intellectuals of the part of our culture," she re- country were involved in this marked, while pointing out movement. Everyone fought

In a jibe at the treasury

benches, she, while pointing towards the opposition, said that those who believed in hope and courage fought against the British, while those (pointing towards the treasury benches) who were scared cooperated with the British.

Referring to the strength of the Constitution, she said it was not only a protective shield but also an instrument of hope and courage for people across the country. "Our Constitution is the flame of justice, hope, expression, and aspiration, which is burning in the heart of every Indian," Priyanka said, adding, "This flame has empowered every Indian with the right to get justice and the ability to raise their voice for their rights."

as calls for higher import tariffs persist, despite India's tariff rates aligning with global averages. Addressing the issue, Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, for freedom together," she expressed concern over repeated industry demands for tariff hikes. "The weighted tariff has come down substantially and is at the world average level, yet pressures for increases persist. We need to examine why these demands arise and why the industry has not become competitive," Bhatia stated at the CII Global Economic Policy Forum. India's average tariffs on non-agriculture imports dropped to 13.5 per cent in 2023 from 14.7 per cent in 2022. Similarly, agricultural tariffs fell marginally to 39 per cent from 39.6 per cent. However, on a tradeweighted basis, agricultural tariffs rose significantly to 65 per cent from 48.5 per cent, while nonagriculture tariffs edged down to 9 per cent from 9.2 per cent. Comparatively, the global average tariff on non-agriculture products hovers around 2.5 per cent, with agricultural tariffs being higher.

# Delhi CM Atishi blames BJP for sheltering Rohingyas

New Delhi : AAP leader and Delhi Chief Minister Atishi hit out at the BJP for levelling false charges on her party over sheltering Rohingyas and getting their names included in the voters' list, claiming that it was the ruling party which brought

In a social media message, brought and settled them in

which said, "India has always

government is being praised

The Prime Minister, Narendra

Modi on Monday launched the

nationwide Bima Sakhi Yojana

from Panipat, Haryana, mark-

ing a significant milestone in

the empowerment of women.

Reflecting on the success of the

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao cam-

paign, which began in Panipat

in 2015, the Prime Minister

across the country. He said that

BJP crosses 1 lakh

membership mark

in Kashmir Valley

BJP is making a determined bid

to expand in Kashmir Valley

of Jammu and Kashmir with

Sharma intensifying member-

ship drive. On Wednesday, for-

mer BJP MP Rekha Verma and

BJP Primary Membership Drive

Incharge J&K Munish Kĥajuria

The meeting was chaired by Verma, who is also BJP National

Vice President, along with Kha-

juria. Verma praised the BJP

Kashmir unit for successfully

crossing 1 lakh memberships

The meeting also saw active

participation from the north

Kashmir district units of Baram-

ulla, Bandipora, and Kupwara,

as well as the Mahila Morcha

Earlier at a function in Sri-

nagar on December 3, the J&K

BJP chief Sat Sharma, urged the

leaders to prioritize and inten-

sify the BJP membership drive

in Kashmir valley. He called on

them to bring more people into

BJP's mission is to include and

empower every section of society. "Membership is the founda-

tion of our strength. We must

connect with people at every

level and make them part of

our vision for a progressive and

united Jammu and Kashmir,"

mir town of Baramulla.

in the Kashmir region..

**FW DESK** 

Srinagar

across the country says PM

Work of Nayab Saini

**GULSHAN KUMAR** 

Chandigarh



basic amenities, UNHCR IDs &

The Delhi Chief Minister said the truth has come before Delhiites. "Truth cannot be suppressed, it comes to light one day. Today, Hardeep Puriji's tweet has brought the truth before Delhi residents."

A BJP leader countered CM Atishi's social media post saying it was Kejriwal who, in a letter dated June 23, 2021, had written to civic agencies to provide 240 EWS flats and a community centre to Rohingyas in Bakkarwala area.

The Delhi CM's social media post in Hindi comes at a time when the BJP has alleged that

round-the-clock @DelhiPolice protection." the AAP government got names of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis added to voters' lists.

> Delhi BJP chief Virender Sachdeva attacked the AAP over "bogus voters" in Assembly election rolls and reminded illegal voters that they may get jailed for one year if they impersonate or indulge in illegal voting.

> While AAP National Convenor Arvind Keiriwal accused the BJP, along with the Election Commission, of getting the names of its voters removed from rolls, the Delhi BJP vowed not to allow even a single Rohingya or Bangladeshi or any bogus voter to cast a vote in the upcoming Assembly elections.

# Bomb threat in 6 Delhi schools triggers panic, second incident this week

**NEW DELHI:** Six schools in seen taking them back from Delhi received bomb threats early on Friday, leading to panic and chaos as parents rushed to pick their children ru Dattatraya, Haryana Chief up from the schools.

This latest wave of threats follows a similar incident on December 9, when at least 44 schools received bomb threats by email. Police had later declared those threats to be hoaxes

A Delhi Fire Services official said the first call regarding the threats came in at 4:21 am, with subsequent calls received throughout the morning.

The fire department, police and bomb detection teams, along with dog squads, have reached the schools and are conducting checks, he said.

Many parents arriving to drop off their children were

the AAP conducted its own

verification by visiting 500

the school gates, while those whose children were already on campus returned to pick

The school authorities, meanwhile, shifted to online

them up

asses for the day. Rajiv Solanki, chairman of Venkateshwar Global School in Rohini, said, "When we received the email, the first thing we did was inform the police. However, by that time, the students had already started arriving. We immediately dispersed them, informed their parents, and shifted today's classes online from 11 am." "The school had previously received a similar threat, which not only created a sense of fear among parents and students but also disrupted their stud-

ies," he added

The schools targeted in Friday's threats are Bhatnagar International School in Paschim Vihar, Cambridge School in Srinivaspuri, DPS Amar Colony in East of Kailash, South Delhi Public School in Defence Colony, Delhi Police Public School in Safdarjung, and Venkateshwar Global School

A police source said the emails were received at 12:54 am, with the sender mentioning "parent-teachers' meeting" and "sports day" activities in the schools.

The sender also mentioned that the "schools will face bomb blasts" on Friday and Saturday, the source said.

Madhavi Goswami, principal of Cambridge School, said she discovered the email during a routine check and alerted the police around 5:50 am. "They responded promptly, assuring us of a thorough investigation. We informed parents about the situation and shifted all classes online for the day." Karmveer, a guard at South Delhi Public School, said he received a message at 7:20 am, following which they started to ask the parents coming to school with their children to return.

"Only a few students were already on campus, and they were also sent back home,"

### Delhi has decided to elect BJP CM, oust AAP govt: Harsh Malhotra



Delhi and Union Minister of fidence that the people of the to oust the Aam Aadmi Party

Speaking to media, Harsh

"AAP's ship seems to be sinking. Out of the 31 candi-

The BJP leader alleged that the AAP government has failed

"Even after 10 years, they haven't delivered clean drinking water. People in slum areas who were promised free electricity are getting bills of Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000. The public has seen through their tall claims and decided to elect a BJP chief minister this time.

On Tuesday, the AAP's Seelampur MLA Abdul Rehman became the first sitting MLA to quit the party after being denied a ticket. He

has since joined the Congress. Reacting to this, Malhotra remarked, "Opportunists are leaving AAP to join parties they think might help them win. But this doesn't affect the BJP. Our focus is on serving the people and continuing the development work that the

Malhotra highlighted the

"Our governments in NDAled states have consistently worked for public welfare. This dedication has led to repeated victories in state elections, and Delhi will be no different. The people have realised that the BJP is the only party committed to de-

The Delĥi Assembly elections are shaping up to be a crucial battle, with the BJP aiming to unseat the AAP, which currently holds 62 out of 70 Assembly seats. The AAP has so far announced 31 candidates, dropping 16 sitting MLAs, a move seen by critics as an attempt to counter anti-

# Kejriwal to contest from New Delhi constituency, confirms AAP Strategy



by BLAs, insisting they be made **OUR CORRESPONDENT** 

Former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has put an end to speculation about his candidature, confirming on Friday that he will contest the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections from his New Delhi constituency. Kejriwal described the race in New Delhi as a "battle between the sons of former CMs and the common man.

The Congress has fielded Sandeep Dikshit, son of three-time Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, while the BJP is expected to nominate Parvesh Verma, son of former Chief Minister Sahib Singh

Addressing the Agenda Aaj Tak programme, Kejriwal also announced that current Chief Minister Atishi would contest from her Kalkaji constituency. "There will be no changes. I will contest from the New Delhi seat, and Atishi will contest from Kalkaji,"

Verma, to challenge Kejriwal.

There will be no changes. I will contest from the New Delhi seat, and Atishi will contest from Kalkaji"

Expressing confidence in his party's prospects, Kejriwal reaffirmed that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is contesting the elections under his leadership. "This election is being fought in Kejriwal's name, and I will return as the Chief Minister of Delhi," he declared.

Kejriwal also addressed Atishi's temporary tenure as Chief Minister, attributing it to his arrest in the excise policy case. He assured voters of AAP's resolve to secure a fourth term in office and continue its governance

State (MoS), Harsh Malhotra, on Wednesday expressed connational Capital have decided (AAP) government and elect a BJP chief minister in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections.

Malhotra dismissed the impact of candidates switching parties, asserting that such developments would not affect the BJP's prospects. He also slammed the AAP's candidate selection strategy, calling it a sign of the party's declining credibility.

dates announced so far, they've cut tickets for 15 sitting MLAs, including veterans like Manish Sisodia, who once touted his so-called 'education model', which is nothing but a thirdclass model. Sisodia has abandoned his constituency and moved to another seat. Even Rakhi Birla has run away from her seat. This clearly indicates that they know their MLAs have failed to deliver on the ground, "Malhotra claimed.

Delhi over the past decade.

" he added.

taken.

BJP's track record under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, stressing the party's repeated successes in states like Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, and Chhattisgarh.

velopment and governance, the MoS professed.

incumbency.

partnership will help achieve

India's infrastructure objec-

tives and create new employ-

ment opportunities in Haryana.

these refugees to the Capital.

CM Atishi tagged a 2022 tweet by Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and said, "In their rush to blame Arvind Kejriwal, the BJP leaders even forgot who Delhi and where.

welcomed those who have

She attached Puri's old tweet of Delhi. They will be provided

sought refuge in the country. In a landmark decision all #Rohingya #Refugees will be shifted to EWS flats in Bakkarwala area

Prime Minister launches nationwide Bima Sakhi Yojana from Panipat

Panipat has become a symbol of women empowerment and

On this occasion, the Prime Minister also virtually laid the foundation stone for the main acknowledged its positive imcampus of Maharana Pratap pact not just in Haryana but Horticultural University in Karnal. On this occasion, the

Prime Minister symbolically handed over the Bima Sakhi Niyukti Patras to 5 women from Haryana, Karnataka, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. These Patras were handed over to about 25,000

Bima Sakhis across the country.

Haryana Governor, Banda-

Minister, Nayab Singh Saini, Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of Power and Housing & Urban Affairs, Manohar Lal, Union Minister of State, Rao Inderjit Singh, Haryana Cabinet Ministers, Shruti Choudhry and Kumari Arti Singh Rao also remained present on this

The Prime Minister expressed his deep connection with Haryana, highlighting the state's role in promoting world peace and religious teachings, especially through the International Gita Mahotsav being held in Kurukshetra

# Gave 3,000 pages of proof on voters' deletions, EC assured due diligence, says Kejriwal

**NEW DELHI:** A delegation of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led by its National Convener Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday met the Election Commission and presented a 3,000-page document as evidence on the alleged deletion of voters' names from the electoral rolls ahead of the forthcoming Assembly elections in the national Capital. He raised concerns over a "conspiracy" to forcibly delete voters' names in Delhi Assembly constituen-

diligence by the poll panel. We have presented documents of 3,000 pages before its new regional president Sat the Election Commission and raised our concerns on voters' name deletion from the electoral rolls. These voters are conducted a BJP Membership slum dwellers whose names BJP submitted applications tions and the transparency of peing deleted presented the complete data the grounds of relocation or

cies and was assured of due



before the Election Commission, "Kejriwal said. He also wrote to Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Rajiv Kumar, alleging large-scale irregularities in applications for voter deletion. Citing an example from the Shahdara Assembly constituency, Kejriwal stated, "It has come to our knowledge mostly poor people, Dalits and that in the past six weeks, the about the remaining applicato delete 11

death. However, these lists are being modified without being uploaded on the Election Commission's website.'

According to Kejriwal, as of December 5, only 487 deletion applications from Shahdara were displayed on the Commission's website. This discrepancy raises questions

Kejriwal further alleged that those violating election rules.

deterio-

situation.

pointed

out that

the Delhi

Police,

which

# BJP targets Kejriwal over 'Sheeshmahal,' AAP hits back over Law and Order crisis

**OUR CORRESPONDENT** New Delhi

With the Delhi Assembly polls approaching, the BJP has escalated its attack on AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal, releasing a video of his former residence at 6 Flagstaff Road. The BJP termed the property a "Sheeshmahal" and alleged it symbolizes corruption and extravagance, sparking a war of words between the two parties.

The video, released by Delhi BJP president Virendra Sathe party fold, emphasizing that chdeva, showcases the lavish interiors of the Civil Lines bungalow, including a gym, sauna, jacuzzi, and high-end fittings. Sachdeva claimed that crores of rupees were spent on the residence, which Kejriwal occupied for over nine years before vacating it.



"Money spent on Kejriwal's Sheeshmahal could have built 34 EWS flats, 15 LIG flats, 150 CNG autos, or 326 e-rickshaws to generate employment," said Sachdeva. He also criticized Kejriwal for previously claiming he would not accept official bungalows, vehicles, or security. AAP responded swiftly, accusing the BJP of orchestrating a "smear campaign" to di-



reports to the Union Home Ministry, is failing in its duty to ensure public safety. "Arvind Kejriwal does not live in that house anymore. It has been more than three months since he vacated it. It is now the official residence of the Delhi chief minister," AAP clarified in a statement.

The party further alleged that the BJP is using these at-

vert atten- tacks to distract from pressing issues. "While Delhi residents are living in fear due to brazen daylight crimes, the BJP remains fixated on its 'Kejriwal Hatao' agenda. Meanwhile, Keiriwal continues to focus on 'Delhi Bachao," the statement read. AAP accused the BJP-led central government of failing to maintain public safety in the national capital, calling Delhi "one of the world's most dangerous cities" under Union Home Minister Amit Shah's leadership.

> The controversy over Keiriwal's former residence is the latest flashpoint in the increasingly bitter battle between the two parties. As the AAP government vies for another term, both parties seem set to intensify their campaigns in the run-up to the elections.

# Monthly ₹1,000 assistance scheme to women rolled out within the next 7-10 days: CM

**OUR CORRESPONDENT** New Delhi

Sharma stated

Chief Minister Atishi announced on Friday that the much-awaited Mukhya Mantri Mahila Samman Yojana will be rolled out within the next 7-10 days, marking a significant step towards women's empowerment in the city. Under this scheme, eligible women will receive Rs 1,000 monthly assistance, with the first installment expected before the end of the current financial year on

March 31, 2025. The scheme, which aims to provide financial independence to women, was unveiled by AAP leader and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday. Kejriwal assured that if his party is re-elected,



the amount would be increased to Rs 2,100.

Atishi emphasized that the scheme fulfills the govopposition attempts to ob- notification and aims to inistruct the initiative. "We have kept our promise of providing Rs 1,000 assistance to women. Despite challenges, we have successfully ensured its rollout," Atishi stated during a noted the significant improve-

press conference.

The Chief Minister outlined the eligibility criteria for the scheme. Women currently or formerly employed in permanent government positions, those who have served as MPs, MLAs, or Councillors, women who paid income tax in the last financial year, and those already receiving any form of pension will not be eligible.

"All other women aged 18 and above will qualify for the Rs 1,000 honorarium," she ernment's commitment to said, adding that the governempowering women, despite ment has already issued the tiate registrations within the next week. Atishi also highlighted the

government's broader efforts

to uplift women in Delhi. She

ments in the quality of education in government schools, predominantly attended by girls. "Earlier, families who could afford private schools prioritized their sons. Todav. with high-quality education in government schools, girls are equally benefiting," she said.

The Chief Minister further mentioned free healthcare services provided through Mohalla Clinics, enabling women to access treatments without financial constraints. Additionally, free bus travel for women facilitates their education, job pursuits, and daily commutes.

The announcement comes as the AAP government seeks a third consecutive term, following its landslide victory in the previous Delhi Assembly

### MoU between USTDA & HADC to develop Integrated Manufacturing Cluster near Hisar aviation hub **SATISH HANDA**

New Delhi/ Hisar

Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini present at the occasion of signing of memoran $dum\ of\ understanding\ (MoU)$ between United States Trade Development Agency (USTDA) and Haryana Airport Development Corporation (HADC) of the state government at Haryana Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday. Speaking at the signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) Haryana chief minister Saini said the agreement will propel Haryana's aviation sector to new heights, since the state is the top choice for foreign investors due to the robust infrastructure and progressive vision of the Haryana state government.He



said, the Haryana government is taking meaningful steps to secure financial arrangements for technical assistance, aimed at completing development projects of the integrated aviation hub at Maharaja Agrasen irport in Hisar.

The MoU was signed by S ambassador Eric Garcetti on behalf of the USTDA and Narhari Singh Bangar, advi-

sor to the department of civil aviation, representing HADC. This agreement focuses on providing technical assistance for projects, such as airport operations at Hisar, an integrated manufacturing cluster, a global cargo logistics hub, and a maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) facility. Highlighting the strategic importance of the agreement, Saini said, "This

The government is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities under this MoU with utmost seriousness. He further added the government's vision is to position Haryana as a leading hub in the manufacturing and logistics sectors. This agreement also includes creating different projects for the development and operation of the airport and attracting investors under public-private partnership. According to information,

two phases of Hisar Airport project have been completed and work on the third phase for the construction of a new terminal has yet to be com-

# Committed to providing every facility to devotees at Maha Kumbh: PM Modi

Narendra Modi has said the government is committed to providing every facility to the devotees visiting Prayagraj for Maha Kumbh.

Ahead of his visit to Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, on Friday, PM Modi said that he will take stock of the works related to the Maha Kumbh and also inaugurate and launch multiple development projects.

"Along with making the Maha Kumbh of faith divine and grand, we are committed to providing every facility to the devotees. In this connection, today after darshan and puja in Prayagraj, I will take stock of the development work related to the Maha Kumbh. During this time I will also get the opportunity to inaugurate many projects, "(translated) PM Modi wrote on his X handle in Hindi.

As per the official state-



ment, the PM will at around 12.15 p.m. perform 'puja' and 'darshan' at Sangam Nose in Prayagraj. Thereafter at around 12.40 p.m., the Prime Minister will perform puja at Akshay Vata Vriksh followed by darshan and puja at Hanuman Mandir and Saraswati

At around 1.30 p.m., he will undertake a walkthrough of the Mahakumbh exhibition site. Thereafter, at around 2 p.m., he will inaugurate and

launch multiple development projects worth around Rs 5.500 crore at Prayagraj.

Prime Minister Modi will inaugurate various projects for Maha Kumbh 2025. It will include rail and road projects like 10 new Road Over Bridges (RoBs) or flyovers, permanent Ghats and riverfront roads, among others, to boost infrastructure and provide seamless connectivity in the city.

### **Union Cabinet clears 'One Nation, One Election'** Bill to streamline electoral process Ganga, the Prime Minister will also inaugurate projects of in-



**NEW DELHI:** The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved the 'One Nation, One Election' Bill, aimed at improving electoral processes. The Bill is likely to be tabled in this Winter Session of Parliament.

According to the Centre this legislation will not only streamline the electoral process, but will also foster greater efficiency, and reduce the financial and administrative burden associated with conducting multiple elections at different times.

The Centre has stressed that

the concept of 'One Nation, One Election' envisions to synchronise the electoral cycles of the Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies, allowing voters to cast their ballots for both polls simultaneously.

By doing so, the government aims to address several challenges posed by the current system of staggered elections, which often lead to prolonged periods of electioneering, disruption in governance, and heightened expenditure.

Earlier in September, the Union Cabinet had approved

the proposal for the 'One Nation, One Election' Bill.

Congress leader Tariq Anwar, while speaking to IANS, said, "This is a controversial issue. Ours is a federal structure in which it is not possible to implement 'One Nation, One Election'. The Opposition has not been taken into confidence on the issue. All stakeholders must be taken into confidence before taking such a big decision."

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had hailed the proposal, saying that the Cabinet has accepted the recommendations of the High-Level Committee on Simultaneous

The High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind had recommended holding concurrent elections for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies followed by synchronised local body polls

### Former Karnataka CM & Maharashtra Governor **SM Krishna** Passes away at 92 in Bengaluru



BENGALURU: S. M. Krishna, former Karnataka Chief minister and External Affairs Minister, passed away on Tuesday in Bengaluru after a prolonged illness. He was 93.

The Karnataka government has declared a holiday on Wednesday as a mark of respect to the leader.

The mortal remains of Krishna will be kept at his residence in Sadashivanagar on Tuesday for the public and will be taken to Somanahalli in Maddur, Mandya district, his birthplace at 8 a.m. on Wednesday for last rites.

Krishna was suffering from age-related ailments. He was admitted to the Vydehi Hospi-tal and later shifted to the Manipal Hospital following a lung infection. He was treated at the ICU recently. He breathed his last at his residence in Sadashivanagar.

He was survived by his wife Prema and two daughters. Expressing condolences, President Droupadi Murmu said: "Sad to learn about the demise of S. M. Krishna who served people in various capacities from a member of the state Assembly and of Parliament to a union minister and governor. As chief minister of Karnataka, he earned people's affection for his commitment to the development of the state. My heartfelt condolences to his family and admirers." Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that he was deeply saddened by Krishna's demise. PM Modi said he had many opportunities to interact with the leader over the years, and will always cherish those interactions. PM Modi further wrote on X handle, "SM Krishna was a remarkable leader, admired by people from all walks of life. He always worked tirelessly to improve the lives of others. He is fondly remembered for his tenure as Karnataka's Chief Minister, particularly for his focus on infrastructural development. SM Krishna was also

### **Jammu and Kashmir:** Bomb disposal squad neutralizes IED on Srinagar-Baramulla



A major tragedy was averted on Monday when security forces detected and defused an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in the Palhallan area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

The IED was discovered

during routine surveillance on the Baramulla-Srinagar highway by a joint team of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Army, CRPF, and SSB Battalion. Upon detection, authorities immediately stopped traffic and restricted public movement in the area to ensure safety. A Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) was deployed, successfully neutralizing the device without causing harm to residents or security personnel.

# In line with his commitment on Maha Kumbh Mela 2025. President Murmu pays tribute to martyrs of Parliament attack on 13th anniversary

**NEW DELHI:** President Droupadi Murmu, on Friday morning, paid heartfelt tribute to the personnel who laid down their lives to safeguard the Parliament, as the day marks 13 years since it was attacked by terrorists.

Taking to X, the President expressed, "I pay my humble tribute to the bravehearts who sacrificed their lives defending our Parliament on this day in 2001. Their courage and selfless service continue to inspire us.'

In a gesture of gratitude to sol-



constant source of support in challenging circumstances, she said, "The nation remains deeply grateful to them and their families."

"On this day, I reiterate India's

stands united against the forces of terror," the President concluded. On December 13.

terception, tapping, diversion

and treatment of minor drains

leading to river Ganga which

will ensure zero discharge of

untreated water into the river. He will also inaugurate

various infrastructure proj-

ects related to drinking water

major temple corridors which

will include the Bharadwaj

Ashram Corridor, Shringver-

pur Dham Corridor, Akshayvat

Corridor, and Hanuman Man-

dir Corridor among others.

These projects will ensure ease

of access to devotees and also

The Prime Minister will also

launch the Kumbh Sah'AI'yak

chatbot that will provide de-

tails to give guidance and up-

dates on the events to devotees

boost spiritual tourism.

PM Modi will inaugurate

2001, five terrorists, along with their set of arms, drove into the Parliament in a car that bore fake labels of the

Home Ministry and Parliament. The terrorists carried AK-47 rifles, grenade launchers, pistols and grenades.

This act resulted in the deaths diers and their families, who are a unwavering resolve to combat of six Delhi Police personnel,

two Parliament Security Service personnel, and a gardener. The security forces had gunned down all five terrorists.

About 40 minutes prior to the incident, both Houses of Parliament had been adjourned. More than 100 people, including major politicians and officials, were inside the parliament building at the time of the attack. Home Minister L. K. Advani and Minister of State for Defence Harin Pathak were also believed to have still been inside the building during the attack.

### Union Government cuts wheat stock limit for traders in move to ease prices **NEW DELHI:** As part of its

continuous efforts to moderate prices of wheat, the Central government has decided to reduce the Wheat Stock limit for wholesale and retail traders, which will be applicable until March 31, 2025.

The limit for wheat stocks has been reduced from 2,000 metric tonnes to 1,000 metric tonnes for wholesale traders, while it has been slashed to 50 metric tonnes from 100 metric tonnes for retail traders, according to a statement issued by the



The lower stock limits are aimed at preventing hoarding, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, which tends to drive up prices violates the stock limits will be Food and Public Distribution despite adequate stocks being subject to suitable punitive ac-

Entity which is found to have not registered on the portal or

tion under Section 6 and 7 of Essential Commodities Act, 1955, the official statement said.

In case the stocks held by the bove entities are higher than the above prescribed limit, they shall have to bring the same to the prescribed stock limits within 15 days of issue of the notification, the state-

"The Department of Food and Public Distribution is maintaining a close watch over the stock position of Wheat to control prices and ensure easy availability in the country, "it explained.

### **Jal Jeevan Mission empowering** women in rural areas: PM Modi NEW DELHI: Jal Jeevan Mis-

sion is facilitating the empowerment of more women in India, especially in the rural areas, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday

Launched in August 2019, the Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide functional tap water connections to every rural household.

PM Modi said that women can now easily focus on skill development and self-reliance as they need not go long distances to fetch clean water, and can get water at their

"A good perspective on how the Jal Jeevan Mission is furthering women empowerment, especially in our rural areas, "PM Modi said in a post on X.

'With clean water at their doorstep, women can now focus on skill development and self-reliance," he added.

From just 3.23 crore (17 per cent) rural households with tap water connections in 2019, the initiative has successfully added 11.96 crore new connections by October 2024.

Currently, more than 15.35 crore or 79.31 per cent of households have tap water connections, as per the government data.



Puducherry, Telangana, Gujarat, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram -- have had 100 per cent coverage of tap water connection, it showed. According to a recent research report by the State

Bank of India, rural households across the country have seen an 8.3 percentage point decline in fetching water from outside premises. It has led to a 7.4 percentage point increase in women's participation in agriculture and other productive activities.

The report noted exceptional progress made by states such as Bihar and Assam. The female workforce in these states has risen by over 28 percentage points.

# Vice President's Concern for Farmers: Voice of the Heart or the Hurt Voice?

the banner of Kisan Majdoor Morcha (KMM) and Samvukta Kisan Morcha (SKM. non-political) are agitating pending demands, including guarantee for MSP for more than ten months, but not to Chalo' march by using teargas

ing cold of December.

Bharatiya Kisan Union Ekta for the overall well-being of Dakoanda, in a statement issued to media, strongly condemning the Haryana Police's repression of farmers who Vice-President warns, "We started marching peace- are not practical, our policy fully from Sambhu border making is not on the right to Delhi with a group of 101 track. Farmers need a law that farmers, referred that earlier guarantees MSP. Look with an many ministers and leaders open mind, think with an open of Bharatiya Janata Party mind, and evaluate. And it had said that farmers can go to Delhi if they do not bring of the farmers are silent today, tractors, but now they are not being allowed to go to Delhi even on foot. The organization stifle the voice of the farmsaid that this has exposed the ers. A nation will pay a huge fascist and anti-farmer face of price, if it tries the patience the Bharatiya Janata Party.

The General Secretary of the All-India Congress Comis condemnable to forcibly stop farmers marching peacefully to Delhi demanding a law ernment are not the solution farmer policy of his own gov-

government genuinely wants to resolve the issues faced by The farmers of farmers, it should engage in dialogue with them."

Here the noteworthy thing is that the India's Vice-President, Jagdeep Dhankhar himself is also expressing his for fulfilment of their long rage over the inaction of the government for neglecting the demands of the farmers.

The Vice-President comtalk about the acceptance of ments with a disheartened their demands, the farmers voice – "There was a moveare being stopped even to en- ment last year, there is a ter Haryana for their 'Delhi movement this year too, the wheel of time is turning, we and water cannon in the chill- are not doing anything. Farmers in distress and farmers in The State Committee of agitation do not augur well the Nation.'

Supporting the MSP demand of the farmers, The pains me that the well-wishers they shy away from speaking. No power in the country can of a farmer.

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar's address on Demittee, former Union Min- cember 3,2024, at the Cenister, and MP from Sirsa, tenary Foundation Day of Kumari Selja has also con- Indian Council of Agriculdemned the police action, "It tural Research -Central Institute for Research on Cotton Technology (ICAR-CIRCOT), Mumbai has not only astonguaranteeing MSP (Minimum ished the political analysts, Support Price), by resorting but also perplexed them. How to lathi-charge and firing tear and why the Vice-President gas shells. The oppressive expressed his voice of heart policies adopted by the gov- which ripped to pieces the



ernment even in the presence an impact on the country, in of Union Agriculture Minister, Shiv Raj Chauhan? Why did he changed his tune and tone irrespective of his staunch faithfulness in the govern-ment, which throned him to the present chair? Whether his heart really has lineage towards the aggrieved farmers or he has some other specific agenda? Shocking thing was that he raised some conscience piercing questions.

Indicating towards the Agricultural Research Institutes, the Vice-President said that in a country of 1.4 billion people, a network of such institutions, dotting every nook and corner of the country, covering every activity of agronomy, 'What is happening? Has the farmer's scenario changed? What is reaching the farmer?

"If the institutions were alive and contributing, this situation would never have arisen. These are the questions before you and us.'

He asked, "We need to look inside as to why we have not been able to do this till now.

Is agriculture not developing in the world? Is technology not coming? This is a matter to think about. Mr Dhankhar asserted, "Whatever is done for the

a positive way. When I look at the institutions and see where their impact is?'

Showing his concern towards the aggrieved farmers, Vice-President said, "If farmers are protesting today, it would be a big misunderstanding and mistake to assess that movement in a limited way. The farmers who are not on the road are also worried and troubled today.

Mr. Dhankhar warned the government for its lethargic attitude towards farmers, "We cannot fight with our own people, we cannot put our own people in a situation where they are wondering how long they will fight. We cannot have the mindset that their stay will be limited and they will get tired on their own.'

Quoting farmer leader, Jagjit Singh Dallewal's message, the Vice-President asked the

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, "Honourable Agriculture Minister, what did he say, what is his message for me? His message is - why was the promise made to the farmers not fulfilled?" Mr. Dhankhar further asked, "We all should know,

was any promise made to the

farmers? Honourable Agri-

farmers is less. Whatever you culture Minister, did the ag-

do for the farmers will have riculture minister who was

before you make any promise in writing? If he did make a promise, then what happened The Vice-President advised

the agriculture minister, "The challenge for you is that when any government makes a promise and that promise is linked to the farmer, then we should never leave any stone unturned. The farmer is respectable for us, he is worth remembering in the dawn, he is always revered. I myself am a farmer's son. I know what all the farmer does not bear,

and he is our provider of food.' Commenting on ignoring the farmers' demands, Mr. Dhankhar said, "Hey, instead of giving reward, we are not paying what is due. We are being stingy even in giving what was promised, and I don't understand why talks are not being held with the farmers?'

"Can we create a boundary between the farmer and the government? Why is this happening, why is my farmer worried? Why is he suffering? Why is the farmer stressed?" These lines seem to show that the Vice-President is heartedly worried about the plight of the farmers, but will the central government listen to the voice of his hurted heart?

The Vice-President's heart seems to burst, when he says, "The farmer is alone and helpless. He doesn't decide what he can decide. Agriculture Minister, every moment of yours is important. I request you and the person in the second position under the Indian Constitution is requesting you to please tell me what was promised to the farmer and what was promised, why was it not fulfilled and what should

we do to fulfil the promise?"

Now the question arises, whether the central government will heed towards the painful voice of the second highest throned person or will it remain unheard like a cry in the wilderness (Nakkarkhaane Mein Tuti Ki Aawaaz)?

What a surprise! Why and

how the hardcore stand of the Vice-President suddenly softened? Hardly the morning wet dried, the Vice-President changed his tone. Though Mr. Dhankhar roared like a wounded lion in his address at ICAR, but just within three days, he praised Shiv Raj Chauhan stating him 'Kisan Ladala' (farmers' dear) in Rajya Sabha, but what made him to change his tone, is perplexing the people. K P Malik, a Delhi based senior journalist raises his doubts, "The barrage of questions that His Excellency Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar had hurled at Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Chauhan three days ago turned out to be just a farce. According to Dhankhar ji, perhaps all the problems of the farmers on which His Excellency had raised questions were resolved in three days. That is why he has taken a U-turn! Now what is the reason for taking a U-turn? Has he received some dose or has Shivraj Singh solved all the problems of the farmers? That is why His Excellency has given Shivraj Singh a new name 'Kisanon ka Laadla'."

What the reality is? Will it come out with the passage of time or remain buried under the dark blanket of political helplessness?

Jag Mohan Thaken is a Senior Journalist, Columnist & Political Analyst, views are personal

# MCA's e-adjudication & e-consultation platform to streamline legal proceedings and improve stakeholders' experience, says Anita Shah Akella

**FW DESK** New Delhi

Government frameworks have been aligning the interest of the shareholders says Anita Shah Akella, (IA&AS) Chief Executive Officer, Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA); and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, GoI at the ASSOCHAM-ACCA Global Summit Responsible Corporate Governance & Sustainability Reporting. We've been helping to manage the risk, enhance operational efficiency and also secure long-term financial viability. The government is more into regulating the corporate integrity for market confidence. And we look at balancing that without stripping the dynamism that underlies a very strong economy, giving a nudge towards more sustainable functioning that help the stakeholders. We have introduced an e-adjudication and an e-consultation framework which is for streamlining the legal proceedings and consultations. We are moving more towards an ease of doing business era, and an ease of exit of business doing era. We have decriminalized the offences under the Company Act 2013 marking a significant shift towards a more business-friendly regulatory environment in the country. The amendments to the Competition Act have been providing a robust mechanism and

will deter any anti-competitive

practices. We aim to ensure that

India is a ground for the world

to come and invest, play here, do

the business and make the prof-



a prolific reader and thinker."

its grow sustainably. However, we do aim to prioritise that our local industry and specially the MSME sectors receives handholding support as a value chain partner thus fair play would remain a business norm.

She further spoke about how this is an era where the businesses are now continuously, increasingly held responsible and accountable for what they give back to the environment, to the social and the governance practices. And the role of accounting and assurance in ensuring this kind of a transparency has never been more important than what it is today.

Adhering to the legal regulatory requirement and going way beyond the compliance to embrace the ethical standard is crucial. There are issues in accounting and assurance where is a complexity of the ESG metrics that are being formed. There is a lack of standardization of these metrics, she added. Different countries have different standards. It becomes a little difficult to operate in those lines sometimes. The data quality and reliability, the assurance cannot come much from that to integrity of the data and the reliability of data has to be assured.



# RBI keeps rates stable amid shift in priorities

he Reserve Bank of India's

(RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has once again held the benchmark interest rate steady at 6.50 per cent, marking the eleventh consecutive pause. While this decision underscores caution, it comes amid an increasingly challenging economic backdrop. Inflation has resurged, driven by volatile food prices, while growth momentum has weakened, with secondquarter GDP expanding at just 5.4 per cent-a stark drop from the RBI's earlier projection of 7 per cent. Governor Shaktikanta Das aptly highlighted the delicate balance between inflation control and growth stimulation. Persistently high inflation erodes household spending power, dampening consumption, and indirectly impacting growth. The central bank is bound by its inflation-targeting mandate, which prioritises headline inflation, making it clear that food price shocks cannot be ignored. Yet, the narrow 4:2 vote within the MPC signals growing debate over the path forward, with some members advocating rate adjustments to rekindle growth. The government, on its part, insists the growth blip is temporary. However, economic indicators suggest that more decisive action may be required to restore confidence. Rolling back import duties on essential commodities, such as edible oils, could offer immediate relief to consumers. Simultaneously, targeted measures to boost consumption and investments might accelerate the recovery. While the RBI remains cautiously optimistic, revising its growth forecast for 2024-25 to 6.6 per cent from 7.2 per cent, this optimism may hinge on external factors and proactive fiscal measures. The current status quo on interest rates underscores the MPC's careful navigation of economic uncertainties. However, both inflation and growth trajectories demand closer scrutiny and adaptive policy responses. The government and the apex bank must work in concert to ensure economic stability while paving the way for sustainable growth. This is

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RAJESH RANJAN ON HOW RIGHT TO DISCONNECT BOOSTS PRODUCTIVITY AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

# Indians need right to disconnect

oon after death of an EY employee in September, allegedly due to work pressure, MP Shashi Tharoor had said that he would raise the issue in Parliament. He said that "inhumanity at the workplace must be legislated out of existence." A recent media report revealed that Indian women in professional jobs, such as auditing, Information Technology, and media, work more than 55 hours a week. The working hours vary for those who belong to the marginalised sections of society and work in the unorganised sector. According to a study by ADP Research Institute, 49% of Indian workers said workplace stress negatively impacts their mental health. As French politician Benoit Hamon said, "Employees

physically leave the office, but they do not

leave their work. They remain attached by

a kind of electronic leash like a dog. The

text, the messages, the emails colonise the

life of the individual to the point where he

or she eventually breaks down".

### Right to disconnect laws

Such tragic incidents, research, and statements highlight how the right to disconnect is an important right. It allows employees to disconnect from their employer outside of working hours. The Labour Chamber of the French Supreme Court ruled in 2001 that an employee is under no obligation to work from home or take home files and working tools. This decision was subsequently confirmed by the Cour de Cassation (the highest court in the French judiciary), which said, "The fact that [the employee] was not reachable on his cell phone outside working hours cannot be considered as a misconduct". Portugal has a Right to Disconnect law,



which makes it illegal for employers to contact employees outside working hours, except in emergencies. Similarly, according to Article 88 of the Organic Law 3/2018 on the Protection of Personal Data and Guarantee of Digital Rights in Spain, "Public workers and employees shall have the right to switch off devices in order to guarantee that, outside of legal or conventionally established working hours, their time off, leave and holidays are respected, in addition to their personal and family privacy, with the aim of promoting a good work-life balance". This year, the Australian Parliament passed the Fair Work Legislation Amendment, which gave employees the right to disconnect from work outside of working hours. Ireland has also recognised the right to disconnect

### Where does India stand?

India does not have specific laws recognising the right to disconnect from work. However, the Constitution, the Directive judicial pronouncements have spoken of the right to work healthy environment. Article 38 of the Constitution mandates that "the State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people". Article 39(e) of the Directive Principles of State Policy directs the state to di-

rect its policy towards securing the strength and health of its workers. The Supreme Court, in Vishakha v State of Rajasthan (1997), ruled that sexual harassment at the workplace violates fundamental rights, recognised the right to dignity at the workplace, and issued guidelines to ensure that there is a safe working environment for women and gender equality. In Ravindra Kumar Dhariwal and Ors v. Union of India (2021), the Court read Article 14 to include ideas of inclusive equality to reasonably accommodate persons with disabilities. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said that an employer must consider an employee's individual differences and capabilities. In Praveen Pradhan v. State of Uttaranchal (2012), the High Court of Uttarakhand held that "under the pretext of administrative control and discipline, a superior officer cannot be left to enjoy extreme liberty to make the intense humiliation and scolding inhumanly in front of all the subordinate staff members for a little lapse." Despite the clear recognition of the right to dignity at the workplace and

towards mental health concerns, and also laws that fix accountability in the case of breaching working hours, violating dignity is unfortunately common in Indian workplaces.

### **Prolonged working hours**

In 2018, MP Supriya Sule introduced a Private Member Bill in the Lok Sabha, which delineated the right to disconnect from work after working hours. The bill included the provision of a penalty of 1% of the total renumeration of all employees to be paid by companies for noncompliance with its provisions.

However, in recent years, there has been no significant legislative effort to recognise employees' right to disconnect from work outside working hours or to impose a duty on employers to be mindful of employee well-being and avoid overworking them. Research by Harvard Business Review shows that working prolonged hours causes stress, coronary heart diseases, and impacts overall health. Contrary to the widespread belief that overworked human beings bring in productivity, research by the University of Oxford in collaboration with British multinational telecoms firm BT found a conclusive link between happiness and productivity. Therefore, employers need to take into account psychological factors while dealing with employees. In its march towards becoming the third largest economy by 2030, India must recognise that the right to disconnect will increase productivity and ensure the growth and well-being of both employees and employers.

Rajesh Ranjan, Lawyer and researcher and former coconvenor, Constitutional Law Society, National Law University, Jodhpur. Views are personal.



# $India \'s\ growing\ footprint\ in\ space\ exploration$

programme in the next two decades. These goals hinge on powerful, reusable rockets such as the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s upcoming Next Generation Launch Vehicle (NGLV). In addition to the NGLV, India must tap into its private sector to develop more such rockets in order to secure strategic autonomy

in its access to outer space.

From an infant space programme in the 1960s, India has grown into a powerful space-faring nation. Preparations for the Gaganyaan mission are underway. Gaganvaan will take an Indian crew to space for the first time, demonstrating Indian human-spaceflight capability. By the end of the next decade, India aims to have a more sustained presence in space by having its own space station in orbit around earth. It also aims to expand its human-spaceflight

Realising these objectives effects a road map that consists of multiple uncrewed missions to the moon, mastering humancentric technologies for space travel and developing powerful new rockets. These rockets have to carry heavier payloads to support humans in space. They should also be financially viable as it will take many test flights to reach the safety and the reliability standards for human-spaceflight to the moon. ISRO is fulfilling these requirements with its upcoming NGLV, which has been recently approved for development by the Union Cabinet.

The significance of the NGLV lies in its heavy lift capability and reusability. The NGLV will triple the payload capacity of the LVM3 (Geosynchronous Satellite



Launch Vehicle Mk III), which is India's most powerful rocket. This comes with numerous benefits. Heavy lift rockets ease restrictions related to weight and and scientists that would otherwise have to be spent on miniaturisation or weight reduction. It greatly increases the potential of space-related missions. The possibilities increase exponentially.

In contrast to all of India's existing rockets which are expendable as they are built for one-time use, a major part of the NGLV will be reusable. Reusability requires that the rocket keep some of its fuel for controlled descent back to the earth's surface. This reduces the capacity of the rocket to carry heavier loads but offers massive cost savings. Reusability has become necessary for rockets to remain competitive.

### The immediate need

meantime, the need for heavy lift capability is already felt. India's next uncrewed moon mission is slated to use not one, but two rockets. Two LVM3s will carry the requisite modules. They will then be assembled in space to form one composite vehicle that will go to the moon.

In another instance, GSAT-N2, a communication satellite built by ISRO, was launched on SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket. It weighed 4,700 kg while the maximum weight that an LVM3 can carry to the

Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO) is 4,000 kg. A reusable Falcon 9 from SpaceX, a U.S. company, can carry up to 5,500 kg to the Geostationary Transfer Foregoing reus expendable Falcon 9's capacity increases to 8,300 kg. Even this figure is dwarfed in comparison to SpaceX's Falcon Heavy and Starship rockets.

The Starship, which completed its sixth test flight recently, has already achieved significant milestones surrounding heavy lift and reusability. Its mind-boggling capacity to lift over 21,000 kg to the GTO (1,00,000 kg to the Low Earth Orbit) while remaining reusable, shows that the Starship is already past the level of advancement that the NGLV hopes to achieve at the end of its eight-year development phase.

### Leveraging the private industrial base

he immediate need
This is no surprise given ISRO's wider scope, capability and focus. However, it

exploring more paths to produce multiple reusable, heavy lift rockets.

In parallel to developing the NGLV, the Department of Space can give out contracts to the private industry in India to design and develop reusable, heavy lift rockets of their own. Space is an emergent sector with massive potential for commercialisation.

There is likely to be strong private sector interest in India to take up these contracts with the right incentives. Even with a lack of existing faculty in rocket technology among Indian corporations, they can explore foreign collaboration. For instance, various rocket engines are already sold commercially.

A milestone-based funding mechanism where the Department of Space pays private players after they meet certain objectives at every stage is a great way to ensure accountability and reduce cost overruns. In the NGLV-like rockets alongside the NGLV, resulting in much-needed redundancy and greater launch frequency. In the worst case, here may be delays but that is accompanied by positive spillovers of innovation, technical capability and infrastructure which will ultimately yield positive outcomes.

The entire gamut of space activities, which ranges from using satellite data for development to extending Indian presence to the moon and Mars, hinges on a resilient supply of space transportation services. India must foster a strong ecosystem for the growth of a specialised industrial base that can cater to India's needs and ambitions in outer space.

> Ashwin Prasad is a Research Analyst at The Takshashila Institution. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

# New book chronicles India's environmental heritage

'n *Speaking With Nature*, historian Ramachandra Guha reminds us that environmentalism is not merely an intellectual idea but an active pursuit deeply rooted in social and political thought. Through portraits of ten individuals, Guha explores the foundation of environmentalism in India, offering an unexpected and compelling narrative that bridges disciplines and time

At first glance, one might anticipate a focus on tribal leaders, professional conservationists. or activists spearheading environmental movements. Instead, Guha presents a diverse group, including iconic figures like writer Rabindranath Tagore, sociologist Radhakamal Mukherjee, Gandhi disciple Mira Behn, Hindutva thinker K.M. Munshi, and anthropologist Verrier Elwin. These individuals, each a scholar in their own right, linked their understanding of

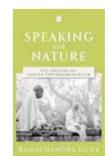
nature to broader socio-political frameworks. By drawing from a variety of sources such as letters, talks, and papers, Guha crafts a narrative that is both scholarly and accessible.

A notable chapter focuses on Mira Behn, one of only two women highlighted in the book. Mira's concerns, particularly about the ecological imbalance caused by the introduction of pine trees in Himalayan oak forests and the disappearance of the Haldu tree, remain strikingly relevant today. Her critiques of an unthinking forest department underline the systemic challenges that persist in modern India. Guha's account transforms these historical appraisals into reflections on contemporary environmental issues, making the book both timely and timeless.

The chapter on Tagore is equally illuminating, with Guha recounting the poet's view of cities as "parasites" on nature-a perspective that resonates in today's discussions on urban sustainability. Similarly, Verrier Elwin's observations on the Gond people's nuanced relationship with nature, characterized as both beautiful and savage, feel particularly poignant in an era narked by climate crises.

Guha's narrative is enriched by his insightful framing of environmentalism as a discipline deeply intertwined with economics, agriculture, and public welfare. His portrayal of M. Krishnan, a naturalist who celebrated the uniqueness of Indian wildlife, exemplifies this interdisciplinary approach. Guha humorously labels Krishnan as India's John Muir," highlighting his advocacy for untrammelled nature and his disdain for the use of Western labels for Indian species—a critique that underscores the colonial underpinnings of conservation discourse.

What sets Speaking With Nature apart is its ability to ground



Speaking With Nature Fourth Estate; 440 pages; Rs 799.

environmentalism in practical and political realities, rather than treating it as an abstract or aesthetic ideal. Guha's argument for an ecological approach to development, as opposed to the crumbs offered by industrial growth, feels prescient. His ability to synthesize ideas from diverse sources and weave them into richly detailed narratives lends the book a refreshing and authoritative tone.

 $Importantly, Speaking\ With$ Nature also challenges readers to think about their personal relationship with the environment. By presenting environmentalism through the lives and ideas of these diverse individuals, Guha inspires reflection on the role of culture, values, and community in shaping ecological consciousness. His work serves as a re-

not confined to specific regions or professions but is a shared responsibility that cuts across societal boundaries. The book also invites the reader to engage with broader

minder that environmentalism is

questions. As a conservation biologist, one might wonder how Guha's approach could be applied to contemporary movements like the Rights of Nature or the political and environmental history of India's iconic banyan tree, which he references repeatedly. These avenues could serve as a natural extension of his work, connecting historical insights with emerging environmental philosophies. Speaking With Nature is a masterful exploration of envi-

ronmentalism's roots and relevance. Guha's interdisciplinary approach and keen insights make it essential reading for anyone interested in understanding how ecological thought can inform broader socio-political frameworks. At Rs 799, the book is an investment in both knowledge and inspiration—a call to action for a more sustainable and thoughtful engagement with nature.

# Corporate India Must Strengthen Ties with MSMEs to Drive Economic Growth: FM Sitharaman

ister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday emphasized the critical role of small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in shaping India's economic priorities for the coming decade.

Speaking at the CII Global Economic Policy Forum, she urged corporate India to collaborate with MSMEs to bolster large-scale industries, generate employment, and address evolving global challenges

The minister underlined the pressing global issue of inflation, which has surged to 6.21 per cent in India for October, marking a 14-month high.

Highlighting its global nature, Sitharaman stated, "Inflation is a challenge that no country can tackle in isolation. Restoring global normalcy should be the priority for this decade."

Sitharaman stressed that MSMEs, long the backbone of India's economy, must integrate

with large industries to achieve a balance of scale, spread, and iob creation. "Economic success must blend large, medium, and

The government, in this regard, has invited private partnerships for 20 MSME technol-

ogy centers to spur innovation

table distribution of benefits,

Additionally, Sitharaman encouraged industries to invest in workforce training in colsmall industries to ensure equilaboration with the government. "Without specific skill training, industries will struggle to secure the manpower they need," she cautioned

 $Addressing \, global \, economic$ disruptions, the finance minister

called for a collective effort to restore stability. "Commercial considerations must align with political and strategic priorities. The lessons of the past decade urge us to realign policies accordingly," she stated, urging industries to adapt to new chal-

India's advances in digital infrastructure, including the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), and Agri Stack, were highlighted as transformative tools democratising market access

Farmers, for instance, are now able to tap into global markets due to technological innovations, with Agri Stack poised to revolutionize agriculture.

Concluding her address, Sitharaman reaffirmed India's commitment to fostering collaboration across sectors to achieve sustainable growth and job creation in the decade

# **EEPC India Proposes Tax Relief, Financial Incentives** for MSMEs in Pre-Budget Recommendations



**NEW DELHI:** The Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC India) has submitted a comprehensive pre-Budget memorandum to the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, recommending significant tax and financial incentives to bolster the manufacturing sector.

The proposals aim to provide strategic support to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and enhance their contribution to India's economic

growth. At the core of EEPC India's recommendations is a proposal to introduce a uniform 25 per cent income tax slab for MSME manufacturing units structured as partnerships, limited liability partnerships (LLPs), or sole proprietorships.

Currently, private limited companies benefit from a 25 per cent tax rate, while other business entities face approximately 35 per cent taxation after surcharges

The organisation suggests

### to purchase 100 more Airbus planes, Eyes **Global Expansion** that the additional 10 per cent tax savings should be mandatorily reinvested into the business.



Air India places order

increasing MSMEs' share in **NEW DELHI:** Air India on India's GDP and export land-Monday confirmed it has placed scape, ultimately creating more an order to purchase 100 more Airbus aircraft, comprising 10 The proposal reflects a strawidebody A350 and 90 narrowtegic approach to supporting body A320 aircraft, including the country's manufacturing A321neo.

These 100 new aircraft are ecosystem and addressing youth in addition to the firm orders Beyond the taxation proposal, of 470 aircraft that Air India EEPC India has also recomhad placed with Airbus and mended expanding the Inter-Boeing last year. The latest orest Equalisation Scheme (IES) der takes the total number of benefits from Rs 50 lakh to Rs aircraft that Air India ordered 10 crores. Additionally, the orwith Airbus in 2023 from 250 ganisation advocates for 100 aircraft, comprising 40 A350 per cent depreciation on solar and 210 A320 Family aircraft, power generation investments to 350, the airline said.

by MSME units, signalling sup-Air India also announced it port for sustainable manufacturhas selected Airbus' Flight Hour Services-Component (FHS-C) to support the maintenance requirements of its growing **Auto parts industry in Haryana** A350 fleet. The new materials & amp; maintenance contract will help Air India to optimise the reliability and performance of its A350 fleet, with comprehensive engineering services and integrated component services including on-site stock at Delhi provided by Airbus.

Tata Sona and Air India Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran said: "With India's passenger growth outpacing the rest of the world...These additional 100 Airbus aircraft will help to position Air India on the path to greater growth and contribute to building Air India into a world-class airline that connects India to every corner of the world." Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury said: "Having personally witnessed the formidable growth of the Indian aviation sector in recent months, I am glad to see Air India renew its trust in Airbus with this additional order for both our A320 Family and A350 aircraft." With the order for 100 additional aircraft, Air India currently has a total of 344 new aircraft incoming from Airbus, having received six A350s so far. Air India, in 2023, had also placed orders for 220 widebody and narrowbody aircraft with Boeing, of which 185 aircraft remain to be delivered. Air India is the first Indian airline to operate the Airbus A350, powered by Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engines. Delivering exceptional fuel efficiency, passenger comfort, and long-range capabilities, the A350s now offer an all-new Air India flying experience to travellers flying non-stop from Delhi to London and New York, the

airline said.

Schedule-I of DPCO, 2013

### Retail vehicle sales rise 11.2 pc in Nov



vehicles across categories in India grew by 11.21 per cent to as compared to 28, 85, 317 units in the same month last year riding on surging twowheeler demand, according to figures compiled by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations.

Retail sales of two-wheelers rose to 26, 15, 953 units in November from 22, 58, 970 units in the same month last year, which represents a robust 15.8 per cent growth.

However, passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales fell 13.72 per cent at 3, 21, 943 units, as against 3, 73, 140 units in the year-ago month. The PV segment faced notable headwinds, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said in a statement.

"While November was initially expected to build on its prior momentum, particularly due to the marriage season, this segment underperformed overall expectations, "FADA president, C.S. Vigneshwar said in a statement.

### Mamata Machinery Limited coming out with Rs 178.39 crore IPO

DOMINICK RODRIGUES

Mamata Machinery Limited (MML) is opening its Initial Public Offering (IPO) priced at Rs 230 to Rs 243 per equity share - aggregating Rs 178.39 crores which will open on December 19

and close on December 23, 2024.

The total Offer Size of equity shares comprises of Offer for Sale up to 7,382,340 shares by the Promoter Selling Shareholders. Describing the 35-year-old Company as the "first in Gujarat to get ISO certification", he said here recently that it is the third largest exporter of plasticsrelated machinery in India, with financially this year," he said.

its machinery global footprint in 75 countries, and sales agents in Europe, South Africa and Asia.

"Our Revenue is well-diversified and we are not dependent on a single geography as they all generate equal amount of sales," he said. "We have taken to technological integration with the ability to process recyclable films," he said while highlighting one product - Extrusion Blown Film - that uses nine layers of plastic for protection of the film from oxygen and moisture. "The share-selling Promoters are unlocking value while holding substantial shares in the Company, which is set to grow robustly

### **Wardwizard Innovations & Mobility** Ltd launches e-vehicles

**DOMINICK RODRIGUES** Mumbai

Wardwizard Innovations & Mobility Limited (WIML) has introduced a new range of "Made in India" passenger and commercial electric three-wheelers under the brand 'Joy e-rik', and also a new high-speed electric scooter 'Nemo' under the brand 'Joy e-bike.

The Joy e-rik V1 (L5) is priced at Rs 3.85 lakhs; Joy Bandhu (L3) Rs 1.34 lakhs; Joy Sahayak +Rs 4.24 lakhs; Joy Eco Loader (L3) Rs 1.30 lakhs; and Electric 2-wheeler 'Nemo' Rs 99,000 - all show-

Yatin Gupte, Chairman and Managing Director, WIML, said here recently that these new models, under business verticals, marked a significant 'milestone' in the company's commitment to advancing India's transition to green and eco-friendly mobility.

He said the Company would be collaborating closely with fleet operators in India to provide sustainable and costeffective transportation solutions for electrified 'last-mile delivery,' shared mobility and logistics sectors, thus accelerating the adoption of electric

### & Punjab facing crisis due to increasing cost of production Tough competition, higher taxes need immediate

support-Industry

**SATISH HANDA** Chandigarh

Auto parts manufacturing industry in Haryana and Punjab having over 4000 units prooviding employment to nearly 50 lakh persons facing severe crisis due to increasing cost of production, tough competition among manufacturers, higher rate of GST now looking for government support for their survival. According to information, there are more than 4000 auto parts manufacturing units in Haryana and Punjab manufacturing auto parts and nut bolts used in automobiles doing business worth crores of rupees in the country as well as exports, in-spite of the fact more than 25% auto parts are being imported from China and nearly 60% automobile accessories being imported from abroad.

According to Guru Pargat Singh Kahlo, President Auto Parts Manufacturing Association of India, the government has proposed to impose raw material used in manufacbasic raw material for manufacturing auto parts, which will be extremely harmful for steel will adversely affect the the auto parts industry in the auto parts industry.



employment opportunities.

employment challenges.

ing practices

country already facing a crisis. Meanwhile, President of Apex Chamber of Commerce & Industry Ludhiana, Rajnish Ahula while talking to media persons said the replacement market of auto parts has witnessed 60% decline in demand at present with the arrival of modern range of automobiles introduced by the automobile manufacturers in the country. He demanded immediate reduction in GST on auto parts from 28% at present to 12% to keep auto parts industry alive, made available loans at lesser rate of interest, ease of doing business should be encouraged and GST refunds should be made at an early to this industry by the government providing employment to lakhs of people, besides having 7.1% share in country's GDP.

Auto Parts manufacturers said that steel being the basic turing auto parts, the Unior Government's decision to impose 25% safeguard duty on

### IKS highlighting U.S. healthcare Industry with Rs 2,498 crore IPO **DOMINICK RODRIGUES** conference here recently that the Company's focus is on the

Inventurus Knowledge Solutions Limited is highlighting its initial public offering (IPO) of Equity Shares priced at between Rs 1,265 and Rs 1,329 aggregating to Rs 2,498 crore - which will open on December

12, 2024 and close on December

Inventurus Knowledge Soluenabled healthcare solutions outpatient and inpatient care, provider that offers a care en- while also enabling healthcare ablement platform assisting organizations to deliver su- Knowledge Solutions Limited) enabled globalised delivery layer physician enterprises in the US, perior clinical care, improve told media at the IPO press to the care delivery pyramid.



Canada and Australia, with a focus on the US markets.

population health outcomes, and transition to the "fee for The Company offers a com-value" model alongside optimizprehensive platform to enable ing their revenue and reducing Whole-Time Director and Chief Executive Officer, Inventurus

U.S. healthcare industry, presently valued at \$4.8 trillion and growing between 7%-8% annually due to population ageing or sick due to sedentary lifestyles. With the U.S. economy at

20% GDP, the U.S. is spending more than any economy on healthcare even as macro changes are pushing its healthcare needs to continuous growth, he ence is the differentiator, beside also the addition of technology-

# A Brief History of Drug Price Control in India

larity of the this article to 'A Brief History of Time' by Stephen W. Hawking is intentional as it attempts to present the history of drug price control in India but not in non-technical terms as Hawking's work presented the structure, origin, development, and eventual fate of the

DR. ANIL

KUMAR

In India, the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 regulates the import, manufacture, distribution and sale of drugs and cosmetics. Section 3(b) of the Act defines the drug that includes (i) all medicines for internal or external use be used for or in the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of any disease or disorder in human beings or animals, including preparations applied on human body insects like mosquitoes; (ii) such substances (other than food) intended to affect the structure or any function of the human body or intended to be used for the destruction of vermin or insects which cause disease in human beby notification in the Official

nents of a drug including empty gelatin capsules; and (iv) such devices intended for internal or external use in the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation or prevention of title used in disease or disorder in human beings or animals, as may be specified from time to time by the Central Government by notification in the Official Gazette, after consultation with the Board. This background is neces-

sary as this forms the sphere lists as on June 30, 1966. In 1979 under which bulk drugs of influence under Drug Price Control. In the wake of the Indo-Chinese War, the Drugs (Control of Prices) Order, 1963 was issued to cap drug costs. This Order was issued under the provisions of the Defence of India Act of 1915. Main aim of this Order was to make pharmaceutiof human beings or animals cals affordable and available. and all substances intended to Pharmaceutical industry was critical of the freeze order on the ground that the prices of relevant APIs were not frozen. In 1966, a system was put in place that permitted selective increases thereby replacing for the purpose of repelling total freeze. Additionally, 18 essential drugs were identified and referred to the Tariff Commission for examining the 'cost structure' and recommending 'fair selling prices.' The Drugs Prices (Display & Control) Order was notified in 1966 (NPPA full book, p.31). ings or animals, as may be Manufacturers of pharmaspecified from time to time ceutical products were undrugs were listed. by the Central Government der obligation to obtain prior approval of the Government dia was formulated in March Gazette; (iii) all substances before increasing the prices



August 1968, generic drugs were exempted from price approval.

The Drug (Prices Control) Order 1970 was issued under Section 3 of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. This was aimed at lowering the prices of essential pharmaceuticals by limiting excessive profits. The Government of India constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Sh. Jaisukhlal Hathi, Member of Parliament, in 1974 which submitted its report titled. 'Report of the Committee on Drugs and Pharmaceutical Industry' (popularly known as Hathi Committee Report) in 1975. Out of 224 recommendations, a key recommendation was about introduction of a list of essential medicines. 44 drugs derived from synthetic sources were identified as essential drugs by the Committee, and overall 116 essential

The first Drug Policy of In-

as well as formulations were classified as scheduled and non-scheduled. For scheduled formulations (about 4,000 in number), retail price was to be determined by using 'mark-ups' over material and other costs. In contrast to this, maximum selling prices of regulated bulk drugs (347 in number) was to be determined by taking into consideration stipulated rates of return on net worth/capital employed. Due to different mark-ups,

pharmaceutical business entities curtailed production in those categories which offered lower allowable mark-ups. In this background, a committee - Kelkar Committee (named after Sh. Vijay Kelkar) was constituted in 1984 which recommended the reduction in the number of drugs under price control. This was followed by the Drug Policy, 1986 and DPCO, 1987. Under DPCO, 1987 the number of regulated bulk drugs came down to 142. Two key argu-



early 1980s, and the rate of increase of drug prices being lower than general price level, formed the basis for reduction in the number of drugs under price control. Economic reforms of 1991

resulted into modification of the Drug Policy of 1986. In 1995, new DPCO was announced under which just 74 bulk drugs remained under price control. The criteria applied included market competition and annual turnover. In 1997, the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) was formed and the task of price fixation, revision and other related matters for bulk drugs and formulations were transferred to NPPA which used to be dealt by the Bureau of Industrial Costs & Prices (BICP) earlier.

In March, 1999 the Government constituted a Drug Price Control Review Committee (DPCRC) to review the existing drug price control mechanism and to suggest 1978. This was followed by the ments, i.e., India becoming alternate models, if any, with a under TRIPS. intended for use as compo- of all formulations in their Drugs (Price Control) Order, one of the cheapest drug view to reducing the rigours of

price control where they had ecome counter-productive. On December 7, 2012

the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy (NPPP, 2012) was announced. The National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) – 2011 and the Report of Task Force headed by Dr. Pronab Sen formed the basis of NPPP, 2012. Task Force headed by Dr. Sen had the mandate to "Explore Options other than the Objectives of Making Available Life-saving Drugs

at Reasonable Prices. By 2005, the number of bulk drugs under price control came down to 74. It was realized that the DPCO, 1995 overly focused on the bulk drugs and affected the bulk drug manufacturers so several bulk drugs went out of controls. Another major development during this period was related to shift from process patent regime to product patent regime due to obligations

Post NPPP, 2012 the DPCO, months.

2013 was issued which adopted 'market-based approach' as against 'cost-based approach' followed earlier. It should be to upstream products (e.g., bulk drugs). Further, it was recommended that the ceiling prices of regulated drugs should normally not be based on cost of production, but on readily monitorable marketbased benchmarks. Recommendation to the government was to announce the ceiling price of all formulations based on 354 drugs (APIs and fixeddose combinations) contained in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), 2003. Formulations listed in

Schedule-I of the DPCO, 2013 were defined as scheduled formulations (Section 2(1)(zb) of Price Control for Achieving the DPCO, 2013) and those not included in Schedule-I were termed non-scheduled formulations. Ceiling prices of scheduled medicines are revised annually on the basis of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) (all commodities for preceding calendar year by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), on or before April 1 of every production due to such price year. For non-scheduled formulation whether branded or generic, as per para 20 of the DPCO, 2013, no manufacturers can increase Maximum Retail Price by more than 10% of MRP during preceding 12

was amended through adoption of NLEM, 2015 that consisted 377 medicines. By seen in the light of the Task July 2021 the NPPA had fixed Force headed by Dr. Sen which ceiling prices of 355 medihad recommended that price cines and 882 formulations regulations should be applied for medicines under NLEM, only to formulations and not 2015 and the number went up to 890 scheduled formulations of medicines by June 30, 2022. Additionally, the NPPA had fixed retail price (applicable only to the applicant manufacturing/marketing companies) of 2,023 new drugs under DPCO, 2013 by June 30, 2022 and this number went up to 2,607 by December 29, 2023. The NPPA had also fixed ceiling prices of Stents (February 2017), Knee Implants (August, 2017), and capped trade margin on selected 42 anti-cancer drugs (February, 2019). By December 29, 2023 the NPPA had fixed the ceiling prices of 915 formulations comprising 700 formulations under NLEM 2022 and 215 formulations under NLEM 2015 and ceiling prices of 131 anti-cancer formulations were effective. Due to the fixation of ceiling prices of scheduled formulations listed in NLEM 2022 alone, the consumers saved Rs. 3,588 crore.

> 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.

# RBI Governor Optimistic About Unified Lending ADB lowers India's GDP forecast to Interface Revolutionising Lending Practices ADB lowers India's GDP forecast to 6.5%, cites low private investment to inflation cent from 7.2 per cent earlier

conference as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor on Tuesday, Shaktikanta Das addressed key challenges facing the Indian economy and the central bank, highlighting the need for restoring the balance between growth and inflation, tackling cybersecurity risks, and adapting to the rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape.

Das, who has served as RBI Governor for six years, noted that the coordination between the finance ministry and the central bank has been 'at its best' during his tenure. The Indian government had appointed Sanjay Malhotra, a 1990-batch Indian Administrative Service officer and the current Revenue Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, as the new RBI Governor on Monday.

Addressing the challenges ahead, Das emphasised that restoring the inflation-growth balance remains a top priority

69 pc of \$1 trillion FDI

inflow into India came

**NEW DELHI:** Total FDI inflows

into India over the last decade

(April 2014 to September 2024)

amounted to \$709.84 billion, ac-

counting for 68.69 per cent of the

overall FDI inflow in the past 24

years which crossed the \$1 trillion

mark, according to the Commerce

and Industry Ministry's year-end

review released on Thursday. "This

landmark achievement was bol-

stered by a nearly 26 per cent rise

in FDI to \$42.1 billion during the

first half of the current fiscal year,

"the review stated. Such growth

reflects India's increasing appeal

as a global investment destina-

tion, driven by a proactive policy

framework, a dynamic business

environment, and increasing in-

ternational competitiveness, the

statement said. FDI has played a

transformative role in India's de-

velopment by providing substan-

tial non-debt financial resources,

fostering technology transfers,

and creating employment oppor-

tunities. Initiatives like 'Make in

India. 'liberalised sectoral policies.

and the Goods and Services Tax

(GST) have enhanced investor

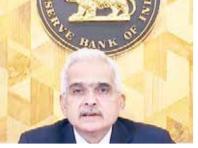
confidence, while competitive la-

bour costs and strategic incentives

continue to attract multinational

SINGH

in last 10 years: Govt



for the RBI. He expressed confidence that the new leadership would continue to guide the central bank effectively in this task. India's GDP growth slowed to a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent in the second quarter of FY25, while retail inflation surged to a 14-month high of 6.21 per cent in October 2024.

In light of these developments, Das acknowledged the rapidly changing geopolitical and geoeconomic dynamics, stressing the need for the RBI to remain alert rity, Das pointed out, is another significant challenge facing central banks globally, including the RBI. Over the past six years, the RBI has prioritised cybersecurity, dealing with various threats and challenges.

As new cyber risks continue to emerge, Das underscored the importance of ongoing vigilance in this area. The Governor also reflected on the RBI's efforts to leverage new technologies, highlighting initiatives such as the RBI Innovation Hub (RBIH) in Bengaluru and the regulatory sandbox, which fosters innovative ideas. Das praised the RBI's pioneering role in the development of central bank digital currency (CBDC), or e-rupee, calling it 'the future of currency' with immense potential. He also expressed op-

Unified Lending Interface (ULI), which he believes will revolutionise lending practices.

On the subject of financial inclusion, Das acknowledged that while significant progress has been made, this remains an ongoing priority for the central bank. He emphasised the positive working relationship between the government and the RBI, particularly during challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic fallout from the war in Ukraine.

Responding to questions about concerns regarding the central bank's independence, particularly when the RBI Governor has a background in the finance ministry, Das reassured that, despite occasional differences in perspectives between the finance ministry and the RBI, the broader interests of the economy have always guided decisions.

ing Asia and

the Pacific,

according to

the latest edi-

tion of Asian

Development

The report

(ADO).



**NEW DELHI:** The Asian Dealso said Asia and the Pacifvelopment Bank (ADB) on ic's economies are projected Wednesday lowered India's to grow 4.9 per cent in 2024, economic growth forecast to slightly below ADB's Septem-6.5 per cent for the current ber forecast of 5 per cent. "India's outlook is adjusted financial year from its earlier estimate of 7 per cent due to downward from 7 per cent lower-than-expected growth in to 6.5 per cent for this year, private investment and housand from 7.2 per cent to 7

The multilateral development bank has also lowered India's growth forecast for 2025-26 financial year.

ing demand.

Changes in US trade, fiscal and immigration policies could dent growth and add

Bank also significantly lowered the growth projection for current fiscal year to 6.6 per

per cent next year, due to

lower-than-expected growth

in private investment and

housing demand," ADB said.

Last week, the Reserve

to inflation cent from 7.2 per cent earlier and hiked the inflation forecast to 4.8 per cent in view of slowdown in economic activity as well as stubborn food prices. India's GDP growth fell to a

7-quarter low of 5.4 per cent in July-September period of current financial year 2024-25 as against RBI's own projection of 7 per cent.

India's growth will remain robust, with the economy supported by higher agriculture output resulting from the kharif crop season (which will also put downward pressure on food prices); continued resilience of the services sector; and lower-than-expected Brent crude prices in 2024 and 2025, ADB added. It further said strong forward-looking and labour market indicators suggest that economic momentum will recover in the coming quarters.

### **Zomato Gets GST Tax Demand Notice** of Rs 803 Crore



MUMBAI: Food delivery and quick commerce services provider Zomato has received a tax demand notice of Rs 803 crore from the Goods and Serrices Tax (GST) department.

In a stock exchange filing, the company said this notice has been given by the Joint Commissioner of CGST and Central Excise in Thane. This tax notice includes GST demand and interest and penalty.

"This tax demand notice is for not paying GST on delivery charges. The total amount of Rs 803 crore includes GST demand of Rs 401.7 crore and interest/penalty of the same amount," according to the exchange filling.

The company further said, "We believe that we have a strong case on merits, supported by the opinion of our external legal and tax advisors. The company will file an appeal against the order before the appropriate authority."

Earlier, in January and June this year, Zomato received Rs 4.2 crore and Rs 9.45 crore GST demand notices, respectively. Zomato in 2023 received

a GST demand notice of Rs 400 crore on delivery charges.

Delivery charges are levied by Zomato, Swiggy and other food and quick commerce companies on their services. These companies claim that

gig workers work as delivery partners. They are paid on an order basis. This delivery charge collected from the users is given directly to the gig worker," according to reports. The delivery charge has

been considered a service in GST laws, as the platforms are collecting it. Due to this, 18 per cent GST can be levied on delivery. Zomato recently raised over

\$1 billion through qualified institutions placement (QIP) of equity shares. The company's stock was trading flat at Rs 285 apiece on Friday. In Q2 FY 25, Zomato's total income grew 68.5 per cent year-on-year to Rs 4,799 crore, from Rs 2,848 crore in the same period of the previous financial year. The company's net profit increased

# **European Central Bank Cuts Key Interest Rates by 25 basis Points**

Central Bank (ECB) decided on Thursday to cut its key interest rates by 25 basis points at its rate-setting meeting.

With this adjustment, the interest rates for the deposit facility, the main refinancing operation, and the marginal lending facility are now set at 3 per cent, 3.15 per cent and 3.4 per cent respectively, the bank said in a statement.

The decision to lower interest rates was "based on its updated assessment of the inflation outlook, the dynamics of underlying inflation and the strength of monetary policy transmission," the statement said. This marks



news agency reported. In a notable shift, the ECB abandoned its previous rhetoric about keeping policy rates

as necessary, while reiterating its commitment to a data-dependent approach for determining future monetary policy. "The Governing Council

is determined to ensure that inflation stabilises sustainably at its 2 percent medium-term target," the bank said in its statement. Earlier this year, for the first tained basis," citing measures of underlying inflation, Xinhua

time since 2004, the ECB had announced an annual loss for 2023 following almost two decades of substantial profits. The bank reported a loss of nearly 1.3 billion euros (1.4 billion US dollars) last year after the release of 6.6 billion euros from provision for financial risks.

The ECB had said that the loss reflected the "necessary monetary policy actions of the Eurosystem" in the fight against high inflation with the many consecutive interest rate hikes since July 2022. The rise in key interest rates increased the interest expenses for the ECB's variable-rate liabilities, but the income from the assets did not rise to the same extent or at the same pace, as many had fixed interest rates and long maturities, ultimately resulting in a loss, according to the central bank.

# Sensex closes at 82,133 after 2,000 points rally from day low

**MUMBAI:** The Indian stock market closed in the green on Friday, with sharp gains in heavyweights like Bharti Airtel, ITC, HUL, and Kotak Mahindra Bank.

At Closing, Sensex was up 843.16 points or 1.04 per cent, at 82,133.12 and Nifty was up 219.89 points or 0.89 per cent, at 24,768.30. During the session, BSE's benchmark made an intra-day high of 82,213 after recovering from a low of 80,082. According to the experts,

'Currently, the market is anticipating a revival in consumer spending, driven by the festive



adding to the sentiments. Ad- Kotak Mahindra Bank, HUL, ditionally, an expectation of an Titan Company, UltraTech Ceincrease in the US spending is propelling the IT sector.'

Midcap and smallcap stocks underperformed compared to Steel, and Bajaj Finserv were largeaps. Nifty midcap 100 the top losers.

0.05 per cent. and the Nifty smallcap 100 index closed at 19,407, down 59 points or 0.30 per cent. In the Sensex

pack, Bharti

ment, HCL Tech, Power Grid, and Nestle were top gainers. Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, JSW

Auto, IT, financial service, FMCG, energy and Infra were top contributors. PSU Bank, pharma, metal, realty and media were top laggards. Rupak De, Senior Technical

Analyst, LKP Securities said, "The equity market in India witnessed a roller-coaster session on the day of the Sensex weekly expiry. On the lower end, the Nifty found support around the neckline of the inverse head-and-shoulders pattern, completing a retest before rallying towards higher levels. Today's low also coincides with the 38.2 per cent retracement

ie previous rally

### **UPI** provided credit access to poor, fuelled equitable growth: Study NEW DELHI: India's

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has succeeded in increasing financial inclusion and promoting equitable economic growth by enabling underserved groups, including subprime and new-to-credit borrowers to access formal credit for the first time, according to a new study by IIM and ISB professors. The authors said that the

success of UPI can be replicated in other countries as well and India can play a leading role in helping them adopt the fintech system.

"Within a short span, UPI led to exponential penetration of digital payments across India and is used at all levels from street vendors to large shopping malls, "said the paper prepared by IIM and ISB professors. Since its launch in 2016,

the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has transformed financial access in India, enabling 300 million individuals and 50 million merchants to perform seamless digital transactions, the study states.

By October 2023, 75 per cent of all retail digital payments in India were through UPI. The rapid adoption of UPI was possible due to affordable internet across the



technology played a critical role, enabling widespread UPI adoption in rural and urban areas alike, "according to the study. According to the paper, a

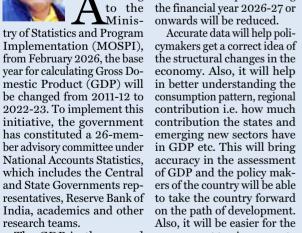
10 per cent increase in UPI transactions led to a 7 per cent rise in credit availability, reflecting how digital financial histories enabled lenders to assess borrowers better. "Between 2015 and 2019.

fintech loans to subprime borrowers grew to match those of banks, with fintechs thriving in high UPI-usage areas, " according to the study. The authors said that fintech lenders scaled rapidly, increasing their loan volumes 77 times, far outpacing traditional banks in catering to smaller, underserved borrowers.

The study also highlights that despite the credit surge, default rates did not rise, showing that UPI-enabled digital transaction data helped nders expand responsi

# 4.8 times to Rs 176 crore in the entember auartei

### New GDP Base Year will Strengthen the Economy **SATISH**



quarter of the current finan- shape to welfare schemes in cial year was 5.4 percent, the country, ensure inclusive which is the lowest level in development etc. the last 7 quarters. The main reason for the decline is the a long time the government significant decrease in the was in discussions with the growth rate in the manufac- states, central bank, academturing and mining sectors. ics etc. to change the base year The GDP growth rate in the of GDP calculation. Earlier, first quarter was 6.7 percent, the government had made while the GDP growth rate 2011-12 the base year for in the second quarter of the GDP calculation. The first financial year 2023-24 was estimate of national income 8.1 percent. It is believed in India was published by the that after changing the base Central Statistical Organizayear for GDP calculation, tion in the year 1956, the base the GDP figures will become year of which was 1948-49. more accurate, because after Over time, along with the imthe change, the figures will provement in the availability be compared based on the of data, changes were also values of the proposed base year 2022-23. This will give calculation. statisticians an opportunity made at present.

The proposed change will

data for GDP calculation, as the difference between the prices of various products during the proposed base year 2022-23 and the prices during to the the financial year 2026-27 or Minis- onwards will be reduced. Accurate data will help poli-

cymakers get a correct idea of the structural changes in the economy. Also, it will help emerging new sectors have Also, it will be easier for the The GDP in the second government to give concrete

It is worth noting that for made in the methodology of

The base year is used for to correct the mistakes being comparison in the measureeconomic or financial index. move the base year 10 years For example, 2016 is the base ahead, which will provide year to find out the inflation duction of various products



economy. Under this, the price of finished products and services is calculated duris usually 1 year, which also includes foreign companies that produce within the country's borders.

GDP. Real GDP and Nominal GDP. In real GDP, the price of products and services is calculated at the base year price or constant price, while nominal GDP is calculated at the current price. The formula used to calculate GDP is GDP=C+G+I+NX, here C means private consumption and G means government consumption. At the same time, I mean investment and NX means net import.

There are 4 factors that cause fluctuations in GDP rate. First, expenditure by the common man. This expenditure strengthens the economy. Second, growth in private sector business. Currently, the private sector contributes 32 percent to GDP. Third is the expenditure made by ment of business activity or the government. Today, the government is spending 11 percent of GDP on the pro-

GDP is the most reliable is net demand in context of measure of the health of the difference between export & import. For this, India's total exports are subtracted from total imports. At presing a certain period, which ent, India imports more than exports, which has a negative impact on GDP figures as trade deficit can result in the loss of jobs and industries There are two types of in sectors where the country is less competitive compared to foreign producers. This can lead to unemployment and structural economic challenges, especially if there are few alternative industries to

> absorb displaced workers. Despite calculating GDP figures on the prices of base year 2011-12, the Indian economy is currently one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Not only this, in the eyes of global rating agencies, the Indian economy is continuously getting stronger despite facing the negative effects of the Corona pandemic.

The International Monetary Fund has maintained India's GDP growth forecast for the financial year 2024-25 at 7.00 percent, while it has projected GDP to remain at 6.5 percent during the financial year 2025-26. At the same time, the World Bank has increased India's GDP growth more updated and accurate rate between 2016 and 2024. and service sector and fourth forecast for the financial year

2024-25 from 6.6 percent to 7.00 percent, while the Reserve Bank has reduced the GDP growth forecast for the financial year 2024-25 from 7.2 percent to 6.6 percent. To understand the health of

the economy, it is important to analyse Gross Value Added (GVA) along with GDP. GVA figures are more accurate than GDP figures and help to present the real picture of the economy. Unlike GDP, GVA is the value obtained by subtracting intermediate consumption from the country's production, which is the difference between gross production and net production. GDP is an important eco-

nomic indicator and its calculation finalizes the GDP figures according to private and public consumption, investment, government expenditure, purchase of raw materials, construction cost and trade deficit caused by the difference between exports and imports. GDP is also a mirror of the country's economic performance. With its help, economic development is compared between countries. Therefore, it is necessary for the GDP figures to be correct and accurate. From this point of view, changing the base year of GDP calculation will bring the real picture of the country's economy in front of us, so that the government can pay special attention to strengthen the weak sectors as well as make a concrete

Satish Singh, Ahmedabad Based Senior Columnist, views are personal

policy to ensure inclusive de-

velopment in the country and

implement it.

# **CII Recommends Prudent Fiscal Path in Union Budget 2024-25 to Sustain Economic Growth**

**NEW DELHI:** The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has proposed a cautious fiscal strategy for the upcoming Union Budget, recommending that the government maintain a fiscal deficit target of 4.9 per cent of GDP for 2024-25 and 4.5 per cent for 2025-26.

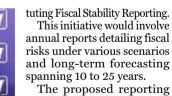
The industry body warns that excessively aggressive fiscal targets could potentially hinder India's economic growth. Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII, emphasised the critical role of prudent fiscal management in sustaining India's robust economic performance amid a global economic slowdown. The organisation has outlined a comprehensive approach to fiscal planning that extends beyond immediate budgetary considerations.



The CII suggests a strategic glide path for reducing the Central government's debt, proposing to bring it below 50 per cent of GDP by 2030-31 and further down to under 40 per cent in the long term.

This approach is expected to have a positive impact on India's sovereign credit rating and potentially influence interest rates in the economy.

To enhance fiscal transparency and forward-looking planning, the CII recommends insti-



would account for critical factors such as economic growth, technological advancements, climate change, and demographic shifts. The industry body has also proposed three key interventions to promote fiscal discipline among state governments. These include encouraging state-level fiscal stability reporting, creating an independent credit rating system for states, and using these ratings as a parameter for determining government transfers and financial au-

## ASSOCHAM welcomes CRR cut by RBI; says liquidity infusion of Rs 1.16 lakh crore a big positive

**NEW DELHI:** ASSOCHAM today described the decision by the RBI to cut the cash reserve ratio by 50 basis points, releasing Rs 1.16 lakh crore into the banking system as a pragmatic measure to maintain the inflation-growth balance in the face of evolving macro-economic situation.

The chamber also welcomed the measures to boost India's foreign exchange inflows by revision in the FCNR(B) rates, thereby providing stability in the forex market.

The decision by the RBI Monetary Policy Committee to keep the policy rate unchanged the CRR by 50 basis points



has to be seen as a holistic approach towards keeping a good balance between keeping inflation under check for a sustainable economic growth, ' ASSOCHAM President Sanjay Nayar said.

The Chamber Secretary General Deepak Sood said, releasing Rs 1.16 lakh crore through CRR cut should be a major relief for the banks and the industry as the incipient at 6.50 per cent while slashing signs of liquidity tightening were seen".

the downward GDP growth projections at 6.6 per cent for the current fiscal were realistic. the growth trajectory would normalise above 7 per cent from the fourth quarter of 2024-25 into the next financial vear. "We would agree with RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das assessment that the slowdown in economic activity has bot-

As for inflation, as the RBI Governor has said, the situation should ease in the next couple of quarters because of good prospects of winter Rabi crop and normalisation in prices of food and vegetable prices from January onward.

# 'Maverick diplomacy': Trump invites Xi Jinping to inauguration for 'open dialogue'

with his maverick diplomacy. U.S. President-Elect Donald Trump has invited China's President Xi Jinping to his inauguration next month for "open dialogue" with adversaries, his spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said on Thursday.

The invitation to the leader of China which had been his target during the campaign and after is in keeping with the unconventional diplomacy that Trump practiced in his first term reaching out to North Korea's dictator Kim Jong Un.

Without being specific about Xi, Trump said of the invitations that are being sent out, "Some people said, 'Wow, that's a little risky, isn't it'? And I said, 'Maybe it is. We'll see. We'll see what happens'. But we like to take little chances".

**United Nations stands** 

against any violation



with Fox News, "This is an example of President Trump creating an open dialogue with leaders of countries that are not just our allies but our adversaries and our competitors

She added: "He had done this in his first term and he got a lot of criticism for it, but it cised China for its predatory

Leavitt said in an interview led to peace around the world. He is willing to talk to anyone. He will always put America's interest first.'

Beijing had not reacted to the invitation as of Thursday

Throughout his campaign for presidentship and after his election, Trump had criti-

the narcotics network that is behind the deaths of tens of thousands of Americans.

He has threatened to increase tariffs on China's imports if it did not end the export of materials used to make synthetic narcotics.

He has also complained about China continuing to have "developing country" status at the World Trade Organization giving it favourable export status. Trump has named David

Perdue as his Beijing Ambassador, who is considered to be a hawk on China. Earlier, David Perdue,

warned in a newspaper article, "Americans first have to realise the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) actually

# Israel Says Destroyed over 90 Pc of Syria's Surface-to-Air Missile Systems



JERUSALEM: The Israel Deof Bashar al-Assad, Xinhua news agency reported. "In preparation fense Forces (IDF) announced that it has "severely damaged" for such a scenario, the Air Force Syria's air defences, destroying has developed an extensive strike over 90 per cent of identified plan aimed at neutralising Syria's military capabilities, including strategic surface-to-air missile strategic weaponry," the state-In a statement, the IDF rement read.

Over the past several days, vealed that it had been conducting a comprehensive assessment hundreds of Israeli fighter jets of Syria's situation, taking into and aircraft have launched cooraccount the potential downfall dinated strikes, delivering signifi-

cant blows to Syria's most strategic weapons, including fighter jets, helicopters, missiles, UAVs, radars, and rockets.

The strikes also targeted several key Syrian air bases. The T4 Airport, near northern Damascus, was significantly damaged, with the complete destruction of the SU-22 and SU-24 fighter squadrons stationed there. The "Ble" Airport, housing three additional fighter squadrons, and a nearby weapons storage site were also hit in the Israeli strikes. "In 48 hours, the IDF struck most of the strategic weapons stockpiles in Syria to prevent them from falling into the hands of terrorist elements," IDF said in a post on X. In addition, manufacturing and storage facilities, including a critical one in Syria's Homs area, which was identified as a pivotal component of Syria's Scud missile program, were targeted.

# Syrians to determine their country's future: United Nation Chief



**UNITED NATIONS: UN** Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that the future of Syria is a matter for the Syrians to determine and that there is much work to be done to ensure an orderly political transition to renewed institutions.

The UN chief on Sunday reiterated his call "for calm and avoiding violence at this sensitive time, while protecting the rights of all Syrians, without distinction.

The inviolability of diplomatic and consular premises and personnel must be respected in all cases in accordance with international law, Xinhua news agency reported, quoting the UN Secretary-General.

"We will need the support of the international community to ensure that any political transition is inclusive and comprehensive and that it meets the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria, in all their diversity. Syria's sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity must be restored, " said Guterres.

# 'Joy Bangla' no **longer Bangladesh**





Court verdict that declared Joy Bangla — popularised by Bangbandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — as the country's national slogan. Following the

### Former Pak PM Imran Khan and Wife Bushra Bibi Indicted in Toshakhana Case ISLAMABAD: Trouble con-



United Nations stands against any violation of the territorial integrity of Syria, a UN spokesperson said, after Israel seized a buffer zone in the Golan Heights following the collapse of Bashar al-Assad government.

When asked about media reports that recently the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) targeted 320 Syrian military targets, Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN secretary-general, said at a daily press briefing, "It is very clear that we stand against any violation of the territorial integrity of Syria. We are against these types of attacks."

In the wake of the fall of al-Assad's government, Israel ramped up its military operation in Syria, launching airstrikes against military weaponry and seizing control of a demilitarised buffer zone in the Golan Heights, Xinhua news agency reported. Dujarric said that the United Nations continues to the occupied territory of Syria. "I think we were very clear about the violation of the disengagement agreement following the IDF occupation of the buffer zone, "he added.

"I think this is a turning point for Syria. It should not be used by its neighbours to encroach on the territory of Syria, "the spokesperson said.

It should be used by all those in the region and beyond to support the Syrian people, so they can choose their own path, so they can work on a transition that is Syrian-led, Syrianowned, and inclusive, he said.

tinues to mount for former Pakistan premier and founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party as he and his wife Bushra Bibi were indicted in the Toshakhana 2.0 case, on Thursday.Pakistan's National Account-ability Bureau (NAB) had alleged that the Saudi royal family gifted a Bulgari jewellery set – including a ring, bracelet, necklace and earrings - to Imran Khan's wife during her visit to the kingdom in May 2021 that was illegally retained by the

It was the country's Deputy Military Secretary at that time who had informed the special investigation court that the jewellery was retained by Imran Khan's wife.

submitting it to the govern-

all such gifts to government

officials are kept.

On Thursday, a special court read the charges to Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi - both were present during the hearing - initiating legal proceedings into the case.



ng jail term in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail. However, his wife Bushra Bibi was granted bail in the infamous Iddat case and

NAB maintained that Khan ment's Toshakhana where and Bushra Bibi had deliberately undervalued the actual price of the jewelry set. NAB revealed that Bulgari

> sold the necklace to a Saudi Arabian franchise on May 25, 2018 for 300,000 Euros and earrings for 80,000 Euros. The total value of the jewelry set was valued in Pakistani currency at Rs 75,661,600. However, according to the investigating agency, the necklace and earrings were valued by Imran Khan and Bushra could lead to more hearings,



The indictment of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana 2.0 case comes at a time when the PTI founder is facing multiple cases, including fresh ones filed against him for ordering and orchestrating the recent violent protest in Islamabad.

Khan faces a tough road ahead as any confession by former ISI chief Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Faiz Hamed, who has been accused of supporting former PM and even being the mastermind behind the targeted attacks by PTI workers on military installations across the country on May 9 last year, Khan is currently facing Bibi, thus incurring a loss of this time in military courts.

### Pak court indicts Imran, wife Bushra Bibi in 2nd Toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani court indicted imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife on fresh charges of illegally selling state gifts on Thursday, local broadcaster Geo reported. The indictment was the latest in dozens of cases against the 72-year-old former cricket star, who has been in jail since late last year. Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have already been granted bail in the case, which is one of a series of state treasury charges known as Toshakhana. These charges revolve around allegations that Khan and his wife illegally procured and then sold gifts worth more than 140 million rupees (\$5,01,000) in state possession, which he received during his 2018-22 premiership. They have denied committing an of-

# Trump Revives '51st State' Joke, Calls Justin Trudeau "Governor of Canada"

NEW YORK: President-elect Donald Trump caused a stir by referring to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as the "Governor of the Great State of Canada" on his social media platform. Truth after a dinner meeting.

Trump wrote: "It was a pleasure to have dinner the other night with Governor Justin State' Remark Trudeau of the Great State of Canada. I look forward to seeing the Governor again soon so that we may continue our in-depth talks on Tariffs and Trade, the results of which will be truly spectacular for all!" The comment quickly went viral, with reactions ranging from amusement to confusion. Some saw it as a deliberate dig, while others debated whether it reflected a genuine geopolitical jest.



Trump's comment echoes his longstanding proposal suggesting Canada could join the US as its 51st state, especially if economic pressures like proposed 25% tariffs were to destabilize the Canadian economy. The quip reportedly resurfaced during an unscheduled dinner at Mar-a-Lago, where Trudeau sought to address the tariffs. Trump used the occasion to reiterate his Background: The '51st criticisms of Canada's han-

Oman Oil Marketing Company Highlights

Safety Excellence During HSEQ Week

dling of illegal migration and drug trafficking, arguing that these issues negatively impact the US

"Subsidies and States"

Trump has previously claimed that the US "subsidises" Canada by over \$100 billion annually and Mexico by nearly \$300 billion. During a recent interview, he suggested these countries should consider joining the US if they continue to benefit disproportionately.

Trudeau's Response

Prime Minister Trudeau dismissed the "Governor" remarks lightly but firmly stated that Canada would defend its economic interests. He warned service, is legally required to that US tariffs would lead to ensure seamless handling and ly hurting American consumers through higher prices.

**Diplomatic Implications** The meeting at Mar-a-Lago was seen as a precursor to potentially contentious negotiations between the US and Canada after Trump's inauguration on January 20. While Trump's remarks appear lighthearted, they highlight deeper tensions around trade, security, and border issues.

The lighthearted jab has reignited discussions about US-Canada relations, setting the stage for a challenging diplomatic landscape in 2025.

# **Over Emergency Service Disruption**

Australia's Largest Telco, Telstra, Fined



SYDNEY: Telstra, Australia's largest telecommunications provider, has been fined 3 million Australian dollars (\$1.9 million) by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) for failing to comply with emergency call protocols during a March 1 outage of the country's Triple Zero (000) emergency net-**Details of the Incident** 

During the 90-minute outage, Telstra's Triple Zero call

centre faced operational challenges, resulting in: 127 emergency calls failing to connect to the relevant

outdated backup phone data. 346 emergency calls being transferred successfully but without essential digital location information, critical for

emergency services due to

swift emergency responses. Telstra, as the national operator of the Triple Zero

transfer of emergency calls **ACMA's Statement** ACMA member Samantha "As the emergency call pro-

vider, Telstra is at the centre of this critical public safety service. Its systems and contingency plans failed people in real need." She acknowledged Tel-

stra's apology and efforts to improve its contingency measures to avoid future disruptions.

**Broader Context** 

This **fine** follows a 12 million AUD (\$7.6 million) penalty imposed on Telstra's competitor Optus in November 2023, when thousands of customers were unable to reach Triple Zero during a significant outage.

These incidents highlight ongoing vulnerabilities in Australia's telecommunications infrastructure and its impact on public safety.

**Future Measures** Telstra has pledged to implement robust safeguards public safety and maintaining trust in its role as the national Yorke criticized Telstra's fail- emergency call provider.

change of government, the state moved to suspend the High Court's ruling and on December 2 filed the leave to appeal petition with the SC seeking stay on the High Court verdict of March 10. 2020. A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed on Tuesday passed the to prevent a recurrence, em- order on the ground that the the government's policy deci-

sion and the judiciary cannot

### Corporate Bankruptcies in Japan Continue to Rise

TOKYO: Japan witnessed 834 corporate bankruptcies in November 2024, marking a 7.9% increase from the same month in 2023, according to data released by Teikoku Databank. This is the highest number of November bankruptcies since 2013 and represents the 31st consecutive month of year-onyear increases, signaling ongoing challenges in the business environment.

**Year-to-Date Trends** 

From January to November 2024, 9, 053 bankruptcies were recorded, the highest annual total since 2015, with December still to be accounted for.

Total liabilities surged by



The largest bankruptcy was that of Nippon Denkai Co., a Tokyo Stock Exchange Growth-listed manufacturer of electrolytic copper foil, with yen. Additionally, two cases exceeding 10 billion yen significantly drove the increase in total liabilities. **Economic Implications** 

The data highlights the pressures on businesses across various sectors, reflecting Japan's challenging economic environment. Factors such as rising operational costs, slowing demand, and economic uncertainties are exacerbating financial difficulties for companies. With this sustained trend.

analysts and policymakers are closely monitoring the situation

to mitigate further economic

# India Supports UNGA Resolution for Ceasefire in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS: India joined 157 nations in voting for a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution demanding an "immediate, unconditional, and permanent" ceasefire in Gaza.

**Key Points of the Resolution:** Ceasefire in Gaza: The resolu-

13 abstained.

tion was passed with 158 votes in favour, including India. Nine countries, including the US and Israel, opposed it, while

UNRWA Support: A second resolution backing the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) was approved by 159 votes in favour, with nine opposing and 11 abstentions.

UNRWA faces criticism from Israel, alleging ties between some staff members

and Hamas militants. Global Opinion: The resolutions reflect overwhelming



global support for a ceasefire and humanitarian aid in Gaza.

The General Assembly resolutions, though non-binding, highlight the urgent need for

India's Stance: Condemnation of Terrorism: India has strongly condemned the October 7 Hamas attacks on

**Support for Peace:** India

calls for a ceasefire, adherence to international law, and dialogueased resolution.

**Humanitarian Concerns:** 

New Delhi emphasised the importance of unhindered aid delivery in Gaza.

This move underscores India's commitment to a balanced approach, supporting peace while condemning acts of terrorism.

showcased best practices, and

Muscat (Oman) The Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) commenced its Annual Health, Safety, Environment, and Quality (HSEQ) Week from December 8 to December 12, 2024. The five-day event highlighted OOMCO's dedication to promoting a culture of health and safety by involving employees, stakeholders, and the wider community through significant initiatives, awareness workshops, and stra-

tegic partnerships. The week began with a distinguished Kick-Off Ceremony, presided over by Brigadier General Engineer Ali bin Saif Al Maqbali, Chief of the Civil Defense and Ambulance Authority (CDAA), and included the HSEQ Contractor Forum, attended by notable stakeholders, such as representatives from the Ministry of Labor, Oman Energy Association (OPAL), and Civil Defense. This event facilitated the sharing of ideas,



encouraged collaboration in health and safety management. During HSEQ Week, OOM-

CO's leadership team will visit important partners to align health and safety objectives, collect vital feedback, and en-

hance partnerships. OOMCO employees participated in an array of activities designed to enhance awareness and encourage healthy habits. These included a Daily Safety Quiz, blood donation drives, medical checkups, and

topics such as breast cancer and diabetes prevention. One of the standout initiatives was the session titled "No to Amputation for Diabetic Foot Patients," which addressed the importance of early intervention and preventive care for diabetic patients. Reinforcing its commitment

to the community, OOMCO col-

laborated with leading organiza-

tions such as the Blood Bank,

Oman International Hospital,

awareness sessions on critical

and the Cancer Association to extend the impact of its health and safety efforts beyond the workplace. These partnerships exemplify OOMCO's dedication to promoting well-being across all sectors of society.

In reference to the importance of HSEQ Week, Tarik Mohammed Al Junaidi, CEO of OOMCO, remarked: "Our Annual Health and Safety Week exemplifies our unwavering dedication to safeguarding the health and welfare of our employees, partners, and the community." We strive to exemplify health and safety as essential elements of our operations through such programs, while cultivating a culture that emphasizes the well-being of all those we serve. OOMCO's Annual HSEQ

Week underscores the company's leadership in health and safety, demonstrating its comprehensive commitment to workplace and community welfare. These initiatives correspond with OOMCO's overarching objective to establish new standards in operational excellence and community involvement.

Oman Oil Marketing Company, a pioneer in fuel marketing, has been at the forefront of industry innovation for over two decades. Its modern service stations, strategic partnerships, and high-quality petroleum products cater to the evolving needs of customers across Oman, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and United Republic of Tanzania

### 72.7%, reaching 152.244 billion yen (approximately \$1 billion), compared to 88.15 billion yen in November 2023. **Key Contributors**

# Single endoscopic procedure used to treat dual obstruction at food pipe with advanced liver cirrhosis

New Delhi

A patient with advanced liver cirrhosis from Himachal Pradesh, who suffered from a complex dual obstruction in the food pipe (two separate esophageal), was treated while using a single endoscopic procedure to address the conditions at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

Dr. Shivam Khare, Consultant at the Department of Gastroenterology, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, explained the difficulties of treating such a case. "There were two main options for treatment: surgery, which is extremely risky in such cases, or endoscopy. However, swollen dilated veins at gastroesophageal junction made endoscopic treatment even more challenging. This case was particularly complicated because we needed to treat both achalasia cardia



and the diverticulum while four key steps: mucosal entry, also ensuring that we avoided creation of a submucosal tunbleeding from the prominent nel, myotomy (cutting of the dilated veins at gastro oesophagus junction,'

The medical team, in collaboration with interventional radiologists Dr. Arun Gupta, Dr. Ajit Yadav, and Dr. Raghav Seth, devised a meticulous treatment plan. They first embolised the varices to reduce the risk of bleeding and then proceeded with endoscopic evaluation, confirming that the varices had been obliterated. The next complexity but also for the novel step was a combined peroral endoscopic myotomy (POEM) procedure, which addressed struggled with swallowing, is

both achalasia cardia and the diverticulum simultaneously.

Dr. Anil Arora explained that the POEM procedure is a minimally invasive endoscopic treatment that involves

esophageal muscle ) of the diverticulum, and myotomy of the lower oesophageal sphincter (LES) for achalasia cardia. During the procedure, special care was taken to coagulate and fulgurate any varices that were encountered, preventing bleedng during the treatment.

Dr remarked, "This successful treatment is a remarkable achievement, not only for its approach we employed. The patient, who had previously diet and has a new lease on life within a span of week after our innovative treatment

Dr. Shivam Khare added, This is the world's first case where two oesophageal diseases — achalasia cardia and oesophageal diverticulum – were treated in a patient with advanced cirrhosis and varices using a single endoscopic procedure." The patient, who had previously visited several major medical centers without success. was discharged within three days after the procedure, and is now able to swallow seamlessly without any difficulty. Dr. Ajay Swaroop, Chairman of Sir Ganga Ram shared "I congratulate Dr. Anil Arora and his team for this Pathbreaking medical feat. Sir Gangaram Hospital is committed to have the finest technology to use it for innovative procedure to benefit such patients.



### Comedy film "Martbaan" will tickle Punjabis settled across the world at OTT Chaupal

**KULBIR SINGH KALSI** Chandigarh

Punjabi comedy film "Martbaan" Press Club today. The entire shared interesting information directed by renowned director team of the film was present about their roles.

A Monk for Wealth: Guru Vinod Swaran Presents a

**Spiritual Blueprint for Prosperity Before the Nation** 

Bobby Bajwa caught the atten- on the occasion, including lead tion of the audience and media at an event held at Chandigarh

PRESS CLUB OF INDIA

actors Gurchet Chitrakar, Malkit Malanga, and Rajinder Rozi who

cautioned that there are a few

international elements hav-

ing proxies in India and her

neighborhood, undermining

the path of each individual's

quest for the self fulfilment.

Ĥe, however, does not suggest

solution by looking towards

powerment of individuals and

and spiritual challenges. Ac-

each individual is necessary

for maintaining competitive-

ness, but not for asserting in-

dividual or collective power

respectively; these efforts are

for complementing each other

for better living conditions

for the common people. He,

however, further explains that

new innovations could be pos-

sible only in a plural society.

There will be a bleak future

our own soul.

### Bengaluru Real Estate Boom: Magicbricks **Revolutionizes Property Buying with Scaled Site Visit Product**



Bengaluru

In response to Bengaluru's rising demand for residential properties, Magicbricks, India's leading real estate platform, has significantly expanded its Site Visit Product in the city, forging partnerships with over 100 developers, including prominent names such as Sumadhura Developers, Provident Group, and Epitome Builders. This strategic move has transformed property exploration into a seamless experience for homebuyers while driving sales for developers. Launched just a year ago, Magicbricks' Site Visit Product has made an impressive impact, facilitating more than 7,500 site visits across 150+ residential projects in Bengaluru. These efforts have translated into 400+ confirmed home bookings, with an average ticket size of Rs 1.25 crore—underscoring the effectiveness of this customer-centric approach.

any confrontation with such The growing housing demand notorious forces, but asks that in Bengaluru is driven by a mix of each individual to fortify his urbanization, increasing dispossoul against such aggressions able incomes, and evolving aspiraand may seek the cherished tions for homeownership. Sudhir Pai, CEO of Magicbricks, emphasized the program's success, saying: Girijanand ji's route to "Traditionally, residential demand would taper off in December folpeace and prosperity is intertwined with an academic lowing the festive season. Howagenda for learning about our ever, over the past 2-3 years, the aspiration for homeownership own soul and the energy stored in each individual. He further has remained robust, with prospective buyers actively seeking stated that it is necessary for achieving prosperity and emtheir dream homes year-round. With India's first Property Visit their respective social groups Fest, we are poised to harness this by understanding their social sustained demand, connecting builders with a highly relevant cording to him, in the contemand intent-driven audience while simplifying the decision-making porary world, the creativity of

journey for homebuyers.

# Tata Mumbai Marathon 2025 highlights "Queens Necklace" merchandise



DOMINICK RODRIGUES Mumbai

The Tata Mumbai Marathon 2025 preparations highlighted celebrating the spirit of endurance and performance with

panna (tennis), Saurav Ghosal (Squash) and Actor/Triathlete Saiyami Kher unveiling the 20th edition of the Marathon's official merchandise here re-

Anil Singh, Managing Di-

which organizes the Marathon, said the ASICS merchandise reflected raising the bar as marathoners' treasured col-

Recalling that this marathon had witnessed participation of over 65,000 runners, he said they were the ones who 'walked the talk' and 'ran the race' in their belief in this sport.

Rajat Khurana, MD, ASICS India and South Asia, said that besides echoing the vibrant spirit of Mumbai and resilience of every participant, the limited 20th edition merchandise drew inspiration from "The Queens Necklace" (the iconic 'Marine Drive' of Mumbai), and the 'Tetrapods' lining the

Swaran also known as Swami Girijanand ji, is a spiritual teacher with a difference. He does not wear the traditional attire in saffron

mostly worn by monks in India. It is a symbol of sacrifice, sanctity and detachment from material things, but this unassuming spiritual leader has huge followings within India and abroad. He is also lovingly called guruji by his followers. Girijanand ji could easily

**GOPAL MISRA** 

be mistaken as a professional corporate executive or an academic in a gathering, but he represents India's ancient tradition of having a life committed to live in its fullness and grandeur. During his brief sojourn in New Delhi during the first week of December, his impact was visible. He drew attention as well as curiosity among Delhi's high-profile audience, when his sudden presence redefining the traditional perception of a religious

At one of such gatherings on Saturday, December 7, 2024, in New Delhi, Girijanand ji, offered a convergence model of an ideal family life committed to resolve the challenges of the day-today existences being faced by each of us. Unlike other spiritual leaders or the holy water that people congurus, he does not advocate sume and will consume in the a detached life for attaining faith contains fecal matter and leashes a process of bringing all the elements contributing to the individual and as well as social development. is based on an all-inclusive

to fragment ourselves in the

name of religious persuasions. His concept of a meaningful accomplished life is based on a spiritualism, irrespective of faiths, indeed, a formidable driving force. Girijanand ji, an accomplished academics, is having

a doctorate in spiritualism from Paris. He is convinced that all the faiths, Christianity, Islam or traditional way of life being practiced in India popularly called Hinduism, unleash the energy of the soul for achieving material successes accompanied by the mission for the welfare of each human being. According to him, each individual is blessed with this celestial energy, which has to be tapped individually for our emancipation from the negative energies often crowd us.

Born to a tribal mother and having been nurtured in a socially backward family, Girijanand ji, symbolizes New Delhi, he bemoaned that up communal, caste, or ethnic ocial order emerging in contemporary India. He has setup an organization, Spiritual Souls, which offers relief to the

nal conflicts in the country. He is expanding his reach to help people to reinvent themselves, especially his own countrymen. According to him, India is poised to attain her legitimate role in the geo-politics in the coming years, but he also cautions us to be wary of distractions by the negative forces, especially communal and other divisive elements. India may be inching towards a powerful global economy, but with this the threats to her plural society is also becoming much more pronounced undermining her march towards a symbol of peace, prosperity and the evolution of a plural society without any discriminations.

Emboldened by the support of nearly 3.2 million followers in India and abroad, Girijanand ji, was quite assertive for the evolution of for a society or country, if it a plural society. During his allows a section of its people informal talks with media in to indulge in invoking cooked some irresponsible elements are fanning communal agenda for their narrow political gains in Sambhal (UP) and Ajmer (Rajasthan) and it could be

and financial gains. Gopal Misra has been associated with national and international media. His books on

journalism and geo-politics

The initiative is not just about simplifying the homebuying process for consumers; it also delivers tangible benefits to developers. By connecting them with high-intent buyers, the Site Visit Product ensures a more focused and effective sales funnel. Interestingly, repeat visits have become a key indicator of buyer interest, with some homebuyers exploring 4-5 properties in a single day—cutting decision-making time by nearly half. Developers have praised the initiative for ers directly to their doorsteps enabling quicker closures and better engagement. This partnership-centric approach has created a strong synergy between

# Congress flags pollution in Ganga ahead of Maha Kumbh

water is being poured into the

holy river. He asked whether

country and take immediate

steps required to maintain the

per UP government's compli-

ance report submitted to NGT,

in the Prayagraj Municipal

Corporation, there are sewage

treatment plants only for 340

MLD (Million Litres per Day)

out of 468.2 MLD of sewage.

This means that about 128 MLD

of untreated sewage water is

being directly discharged into

Ganga River. He said, this is a

grave sin, especially because the

Kumbh Mela is going to be held

Quoting the official reports

that sample surveys of the Holy

Water of Ganga had revealed

that it contained huge quanti-

ties of human and animal fecal

in Prayagraj.



**KAVITA SHARMA** New Delhi

The Congress party has raised the issue of severe pollution in the Holy River of Ganga in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand ahead of the Maha Kumbh scheduled early next year.

Congress leader and Media Coordinator Abhay Dubey disclosed how casual and careless callousness of the BJP governments in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand had polluted the sacred waters of Holy Ganga.

He has asked the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi whether he can guarantee that the sanctity of the Holy Water of Ganga will be restored before Maha Kumbh.

Abhay Dubey said that though PM Modi had stated that he had been called by Maa Ganga, but even in his constituency Varanasi, gutter samples of Ganga water were mark.

collected from 41 locations in Uttar Pradesh. In 16 places, it was found that there were more than 500 MPN Fecal Coliform bacteria per 100 ml of water, while at 17 places there were more than 2500 MPN Dubey expressed shock that

held the Uttar Pradesh government responsible for it. He revealed that the fecal

matter was found even in the PM will seek apology from the Ganga water collected from Gangotri, the source of river purity of Ganga. He said that as

Holding the BJP governments at the centre and partyruled states of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand responsible for polluting the holy Ganga, Dubey asked whether the UP CM will give an assurance to the devotees that Ganga water will be made suitable for drinking and bathing before the Kumbh.

The Congress leader said, the reason for this much pollution was inefficiency of the governments as they had not enforced the pollution control norms nor had they followed the NGT guidelines. He said, most of the sewage treatment plants in both the states were matter, Dubey disclosed that non-functional or not up to the

### His concept of development people facing issues related a part of some international to mental health, addiction, have been well-appreciated. Magicbricks and Bengaluru's real agenda to destabilize India. approach against any effort and the social and commu-Without naming China and Views are personal. estate developers.

Apricots recipe shared and served from Ladakh, First time, Several Traders arrived in PITEX from UT, Ladakh **JAGMOHAN SINGH** 

Amritsar

Ladakh after getting UT status by the central government, has now started spreading its trade to other parts of the country. Women from Ladakh are becoming independent and have started doing trade in neighbouring states as well.

The Punjab International Trade Expo, which formally started in Amritsar, is prov-



ing to be a boon for exhibitors from Ladakh. Last year, only three exhibitors from Ladakh attended PITEX. This time

the number has increased to eleven. "Brand Ladakh Emporium "is giving a new identity to its Ladakh Local traders.

Assistant Handicraft Training Officer Liaqat Ali said that Ladakh after getting the status of UT, several changes have been seen in the living of the people. Now with a new identity, Local traders mark their presence across the country. This year, four women from Ladakh arrived at PITEX with their products, Moreover, He said that Ladakh is one of the coolest regions in the country. That's why they bring winter clothes such as sweaters, shawls and other products made from yak wool.

mina wool of goat is found only in the upper region of Ladakh. Due to this they bring handmade Pashmina shawls here. A women from Ladakh lobzing wangmo showcase their handmade toys made up from wool. She is still knitting toys while sitting at her stall. Sadiq Ali, who set up his stall here, said that apricots are usually eaten as a dry fruit, but in Ladakh people like to eat after boiling it. This is the new way of serving apricots recipes at their stalls in PITEX.

Apart from this, the Pash-

# A tale of development of Hindi Language

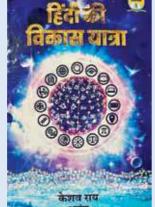
SATISH SINGH anv Hindi lovcommon people are still not period, medieval period and familiar with the development modern period, discussion journey of Hindi language. about the changes coming in Hence, for a long time, the Hindi language, discussion need of such a book was be- of the obstacles in the path ing felt, which contains the horoscope of the development language, history of Indian of Hindi. From this point of education etc. view, the creation of the two

tions of the people. has been made to know and dominance of English re- of English. As a result, Hindi

ant, "Hindi Ki Vikas Yatra"

understand the appropriate description of other Indian languages, analysis of Hindi literature according to its Lers and chronology such as ancient of development of Hindi

The authors believe that authors Keshav Rai and An- the efforts to make Hindi the national language gained seems to fulfil the expecta- momentum after independence. However, even after There is a total of 36 chap- independence, Hindi was not mained intact in the country ters in this book, in which the made the national language account of the development as per the expectations of of Hindi has been presented. the public and it remained In this sequence, an attempt only a state language. The could not get out of the spell



and it continued to be the language of employment. The so-called intellectuals remained a folk language i.e. the language of the poor and deprived sections.

The book also discusses the English Hatao Andolan, means of communication opposition to Hindi in the southern states, Hindi Prachar Sabha in the south, emi- national and global level. At nent personalities promoting Hindi in the south, Indian Hindi Parishad, Indian Language Council, Central Hindi Directorate etc. It also throws light on the positive role of theatre and films in the development of Hindi. Many people in non-Hindi states have learned to speak Hindi by watching Hindi films. Khichdi language or Hinglish has also helped in expanding the opportunities of Hindi. Social media is also

enriching it.

Being flexible and easy, Hindi is being used easily in the fields of computers, internet, mobile, various etc. The acceptance of Hindi has increased rapidly at the present, it is a major language of many countries. Hindi is progressing and its future is very bright. I opine, there is no exaggeration in the arguments of both the authors.

Book- "Hindi Ki Vikas Yatra" Author-Keshav Rai and An-

Publisher-Story Mirror Infotech Pvt. Ltd. **Publication Year-**September

Price (Hardbound)- Rs.499/-Reviewer-Satish Singh,

# **Knowledge of Gita is important for the young** generation says Shivraj Singh Chouhan

youth should aim to set ambi-

**GULSHAN KUMAR** Chandigarh

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that 5161 years ago, Lord Krishna delivered the message of the Bhagavad Gita to the entire world through Arjuna. He emphasized that the message of performing one's duties without attachment to the results, as taught in the Bhagavad Gita, is not only spiritually profound but also aligns with scientific principles.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan was speaking at the ongoing International Gita Mahotsav in Gita in today's context. By embracing its wisdom, the

Kurukshetra, today. He said that a person who works with a desire for the



bled, whereas one who works selflessly reaches the heights of success. The future generation of the country must read. understand, and adopt the teachings of the Bhagavad

achieve them. While praising the efforts

of Gita Manishi Swami Shri Gyananand Ji Maharaj in spreading the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, Union Minister Sh Shivraj Singh Chouhan highlighted that India has been a sacred land of sages and tious goals in their lives and saints for thousands of years.