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MALVINDER SINGH KANG **SEEKS RELEASE OF SIKH PRISONERS IN LOK SABHA**



SBI, CITI UNVEIL \$295 MILLION **SOCIAL LOAN TO EMPOWER LOCAL SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN INDIA**



Punjab Excise Department earns ₹ 9,878 Crores in Online Auction: FM

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Finance, Planning, Excise and Taxation Minister Advocate Harpal Singh Cheema announced the successful completion of the allotment process for 207 Retail Excise Groups for the financial year 2025-26. The process, which commenced on March 5, 2025, and concluded on April 2, 2025, has yielded unprecedented revenue, generating an annual license fee of Rs. 9, 878 crores, surpassing the projected target of Rs. 9, 017 crores. This represents a 9.5% rise over the set Reserve price, marking a historic achievement for Punjab's Excise Department.

Revealing this in the press communiqué issued here, Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said that the Excise Department has allotted 207 retail groups successfully through online Auction and the whole process saw a very spirited re- tal Excise Revenue for the ment. He said that Punsponse from the stakeholders. The Finance Minister attributed this outstanding success to the progressive and stakeholder-centric consistent year-on-year approach embedded in



the Excise Policy 2025-26, of strategic policy formulawhich was designed to fos- tion, which defines revenue ter a transparent and wellregulated liquor trade.

Emphasizing that the toyear 25-26 is set to cross 11500 Crore, the Finance Minister said that the Pun- high-quality liquor at comjab Excise Department's success is a direct result balancing revenue growth transparent governance.

expectations, establishes market routes, and streamlines supply chain managejab's dynamic excise policy ensures the availability of

with consumer welfare.

The Finance Minister further commended the dedicated efforts of Excise officers and officials in combating the illicit li-quor trade and smuggling (both intra- and inter-state). "By leveraging cutting-edge technology for monitoring and enforcement, and maintaining seamless coordination with Civil and Police Authorities, the department has successfully strengthened trust among stakeholders and ensured a transparent and supportive ecosystem for the liquor trade", he added.

Reaffirming Punjab's position as a leader in Excise Management, the Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said that the Excise and Taxation Department remains steadfast in its mission to enhance revenue generation while upholding regulatory integrity and consumer welfare. He said this year's milestone achievement sets a new benchmark, further cementing Punjab's status petitive prices, reinforcing as a frontrunner in excise the state's commitment to sector modernization and

GST Collections Surge 9.9 % to Rs 1.96 Lakh Crore in March

NEWDELHI: India's goods and services tax collections surged by 9.9 per cent to Rs 1.96 lakh crore during March this year compared to the same month of the previous year, reflecting the higher level of economic activity and better compliance. Sequentially, the GST

collections were 6.8 per cent higher than the Rs 1.84 lakh crore revenue recorded in February this year. Gross GST revenue in March included Rs 38,100 crore from Central GST, Rs 49,900 crore from State GST, Rs 95,900 crore from Integrated GST, and Rs 12,300 crore from compensation cess. In comparison, February saw Central GST collections at Rs 35,204 crore, State GST at Rs 43,704 crore, Integrated GST at Rs 90,870 crore, and compensation cess at Rs 13,868 crore.

Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh were the top five contributors to GST collections in March. Maharashtra paid Rs 31,534 crore in March, a 14 per cent increase compared to March last year while Karnataka paid Rs 13,497 crore, a 4 per cent increase year-on-year. Gujarat contrib-



cent rise from March 2024. Tamil Nadu paid Rs 11,017 crore, reflecting a 7 per cent increase, while Uttar Pradesh collected Rs 9,956 crore, a 10 per cent year-on-year growth.

Delhi was the sixth-highest payer, contributing Rs 6,139 crore, which represents a 5 per cent increase from March 2024. Bihar recorded the lowest GST payment, with dues amounting to just Rs 2.6 crore in March 2025. Lakshadweep and Andhra Pradesh fared a shade better with Rs 3 crore and Rs 4.033 crore, respectively. However, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands recorded a 60 per cent rise in its GST

payments, at Rs 51 crore. Goods and services tax collections rose 9.1 per cent to Rs 183,646 crore during February after recording a double-digit rise of 12,5 per cent in January to Rs 1.96 lakh crore, compared to the same period last year.

Congress, AIMIM

leaders move Supreme

Court against Waqf

(Amendment) Bill

The Birth of **FW** and Its 25-Year Odyssey!



Kanwar Deep Singh Founder

change in India. The positive effects of liberalization were evident everywhere—pink papers dominated the media landscape, and the economy was thriving. Yet, despite the boom, there was a noticeable gap in the market: no newspaper offered a truly comprehensive experience. While numerous newspapers existed, some focused on political developments and others exclusively on economic, business, and financial news, none provided a holistic view. This presented a perfect opportunity to launch a complete newspaper, a one-stop destination for readers seeking in-depth knowledge and analysis. It is often said that the Law of Attraction works when our dreams align with our subconscious desires, setting us on a path to realize them. This was precisely what unfolded during this period.

he year 2000 marked a time of transformative

A journalist friend, who was with the Indian Express group and working for its business daily, Financial Express, came to interview me on my return from the US to announce a new tie-up. He shared some exciting news. The Express group was exploring the idea of launching a franchise edition—a ground-breaking experiment in the media industry. At the time, I was contemplating my venture to mark the new millennium with something fresh and innovative. Shekhar Gupta, the then Editor-in-Chief of *Indian Express*, helped shape this vision into reality, leading to an unprecedented media collaboration. This collaboration became the foundation for Chandigarh's first-ever business daily, which quickly expanded to launch an independent edition in Delhi. Over time, FE Newsline evolved into Financial World, or FW, capturing readers' attention as one of the fastest-growing newspapers in

FW soon made a name for itself, breaking exclusive stories with unmatched frequency. Business magnates, bankers, economists, and politicians sought a place in its pages. However, FW remained steadfast in its commitment to serving the public interest. It became known for covering stories that resonated with ordinary people, championing a type of journalism that was free, frank, and fearless. In doing so, FW also became a nurturing ground for young, aspiring journalists. Many who began their careers at FWhave gone on to hold prominent positions in leading media houses, both in print, TV, and online.

As we celebrate FW's 25th Silver Jubilee, I take immense pride in reflecting on its journey—a tumultuous yet rewarding path. From the sapling planted in 2000, FW has blossomed into a vibrant, 25-year-young entity. Its existence holds more significance for me than many other ventures in my life.

To conclude, I would like to leave you with the words of Robert Frost: "The woods are lovely, dark and deep, But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And

Centre Government's Wagf Amendment Bill is an interference in minority affairs – Dhami



JAGMOHAN SINGH

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President, Harjinder Singh Dhami, has reacted to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 passed in the Lok Sabha, stating that it is a direct interference by the Centre Government in minority-related matters In a statement issued herebt-

oday' he asserted that the bill has been introduced without consulting the concerned parties, which has led to significant controversy. Dhami remarked that it appears the government's intent is to curtail minority rights and administer matters according to its own agenda.

He emphasized that the SGPC has always been committed to protecting the rights of minorities and opposes any decision that goes against minority communities. He also pointed out that the Centre Government has previously attempted to suppress minorities through measures such as the introduction of the Uniform Civil Code, which directly interfered with the personal laws and religious beliefs of various communities.

Similarly, the Agniveer recruitment scheme instead of the direct recruitment in the Indian army is an attempt to take away the reservation rights of minorities. Another example is the government's imposition of mandatory helmet-wearing rules for Sikh soldiers, which faced widespread opposition.

The SGPC President stated that the government should refrain from interfering in minority affairs without consulting them. He stressed that minority communities have the full right to preserve their heritage and religious institutions, and laws like the Waqf (Amendment) Bill are an attempt to weaken these rights. Such legislation, he warned, would negatively impact the rights and concerns of minority communities.

PM Narendra Modi to flag off Rameswaram-Tambaram new train service on Ram Navami

CHENNAI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Tamil Nadu on April 6. On the occasion of Ram Navami, at around 12 noon, he will inaugurate the new Pamban Rail Bridge - India's first vertical lift sea bridge and flag off a train and a ship from the road bridge and witness the operation of the bridge. Thereafter at around 12.45

p.m., he will perform darshan and pooja at Ramanathaswamy temple at Rameswaram. 30 nm in B meswaram, he will lay the foundation stone and dedicate to the nation various rail and road projects worth over Rs 8, 300 crore in Tamil Nadu. He will also address the gathering on the occasion.

The Prime Minister will

1984 Sikh Genocide: Court records

DSGMC ex-Chief's statement

against Jagdish Tytler



inaugurate the New Pamban Rail Bridge and flag off the Rameswaram-Tambaram (Chennai) new train service. The bridge carries a deep cultural significance. According to the Ramayana, the construction of Ram Setu was initiated from Dhanushkodi near Ra-

The Bridge, linking Rameswaram to the mainland, stands as a remarkable feat of Indian engineering on the global stage. It was built at a cost of over Rs 550 crore. It is

2.08 km in length, features 99 spans and a 72.5-metre vertical lift span that rises up to a height of 17 metres, facilitating smooth movement of ships while ensuring seamless train operations.

Constructed with stainless steel reinforcement, highgrade protective paint, and fully welded joints, the bridge boasts increased durability and reduced maintenance needs. It is designed for dual rail tracks to **NEW DELHI:** Congress MP accommodate future demands. Mohammad Jawed and AIMIM protects it from corrosion, en- Friday challenged the validity suring longevity in the harsh marine environment.

PM Modi will lay the foundation stone and dedicate to the nation various rail and road projects worth over Rs 8,300 crore in Tamil Nadu.

Jawed's plea alleged the bill imposed "arbitrary restrictions" on Waqf properties and their management, undermining the religious autonomy of the Muslim community. The petition, filed through advocate Anas Tanwir, said the proposed law discriminated against the Muslim community by "imposing

provisions.

religious endowments". Owaisi's plea was filed by advocate Lzafeer Ahmad.

restrictions that are not pres-

ent in the governance of other

of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill,

2025, in the Supreme Court,

saying it violated constitutional

The bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha with 128 members voting in favour and 95 opposing it. It was passed in the Lok Sabha on April 3 with 288 members supporting it and 232 against it.

Jawed, a Lok Sabha MP from Kishanganj in Bihar, was a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the bill and alleged in his plea that it "introduces restrictions on the creation of Waqfs based on the duration of one's religious practice"

ed in Islamic law, custom or precedent and infringes upon the fundamental right to profess and practise religion under Article 25," it said.

Together for a quarter century



ABDUL WASEY Editor

s we celebrate the 25th anniversary of *The* Financial World's Chandigarh edition, we are filled with immense gratitude for your unwavering support and trust over the past quarter-century. Your engagement has been the cornerstone of our journey, inspiring us to deliver news that is both accurate and insightful.

Reflecting on the past 25 years, we have navigated a rapidly evolving media landscape — adapting to technological advancements and the shifting dynamics of news consumption. In 2010, we also expanded with a Delhi edition. Through all these changes, our commitment to journalistic integrity and excellence has remained unwavering.

Our dedicated team of editors, reporters, photographers, designers, and support staff have worked tirelessly to bring you comprehensive coverage

of the events that shape our world. From economic shifts to cultural milestones, from local developments to global affairs, we have endeavoured to keep you informed and engaged.

As we celebrate this significant milestone, we recognize that our achievements are deeply intertwined with your continued readership and feedback. Your insights and perspectives have enriched our content, fostering a community of informed individuals who value the essence of quality journalism.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to evolving with the times while upholding the principles that have defined The Financial World. We aim to enhance our offerings, embrace new storytelling formats, and continue providing content that resonates with your interests and needs. You, our readers, have been

an integral part of this journey. Your continued support and blessings are invaluable as we step into the next chapter of our story.

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Friday recorded the statement



judge Jitendra Singh, GK said he had received a pen drive allegedly containing the voice recording of Tytler confessing his role in the riots. He claimed having received an envelope at his house in 2018, containing a letter and the pen drive, which he later handed over to the CBI, which was investigating the matter. GK said Tytler, who was present in the court, had threatened

a witness in the case. GK will continue recording his statement on April 21. The case is linked to the killings of three persons at Gurdwara Pul Bangash in the national capital in 1984. The judge on

November 12, 2024 concluded recording the statement of Lakhvinder Kaur, the widow of Badal Singh, who was killed by a mob at Gurdwara Pul Bangash during the riots.

The court framed charges of murder and other offences against Tytler on September 13 last year. A witness claimed Tytler came out of a white car in front of the gurdwara on November 1, 1984, and instigated a mob against the community, leading to the killings.

A sessions court in 2023 granted anticipatory bail to Tytler in the case on a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh and a surety of like amount.

Tytler was directed not to tamper with the evidence in the case or leave the country without the court's permission. among other conditions.

The agency invoked charges under Sections 147 (rioting), 109 (abetment) read with 302 (murder) of the IPC, among others, against him.

Meeting between a Muslim community delegation and Jathedar of Akal Takht Sahib JAGMOHAN SINGH

Amritsar

A delegation from the Muslim organization Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind visited the Secretariat of Akal Takht Sahib on April 4 and met with Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajj, the officiating Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht

During the meeting, discussions took place between the Muslim delegation and Jathedar Gargajj regarding Sikh-Muslim unity, mutual harmony and the challenges faced by both communities. The Muslim delegation stated that their organization has maintained long-standing relations with the supreme Sikh authority, Akal Takht Sahib, in order to foster ongoing unity between the communities and to resolve any issues that may arise through mutual dialogue and peaceful means.

The delegation assured the Jathedar that if any issues con-



cerning the Sikh community are brought to their attention, the leaders of their organization will coordinate with Sikh representatives and take immediate and necessary action to resolve them in a way that maintains communal harmony. In return, the Jathedar also assured the Muslim delegation of similar cooperation from the Sikh side. Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajj stated that the beauty of this country lies in its communal harmony and shared values, which prevent divisive forces from succeeding. During the meeting, the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind delegation also discussed matters related to the Waqf Board and other religious

'Such a limitation is unfound-

Markets slump in early trade on global trade war fears

uity indices Sensex and Nifty slumped in initial trade on Friday due to heavy selling in metal, oil and gas shares as President Donald Trump's sweeping tariff salvo reignited the fears of global

Besides, foreign fund outflows also dented investor sentiment. The 30-share BSE Sensex slumped 591.05 points

MUMBAI: Benchmark eq- or 0.77 per cent to 75,704.31 in the morning trade. The broader NSE Nifty declined 202.55 points or 0.87 per cent to 23,047.55. Among the major laggards on

the Sensex were Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Larsen & Toubro, Reliance Industries, Maruti Suzuki, IndusInd Bank, Infosys, HCL Technologies, NTPC, Tech Mahindra, Sun Pharmaceutical



contrast, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance, Bharti Airtel, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank, Nestle India

and Hindustan Unilever were the gainers. "Markets are going through heightened uncertainty, likely to last some time. A trade war has been triggered by Trump, and retaliatory tariffs from China. EU, and others are on the cards. "This will only extend the period of uncertainty and confusion in the market," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

He further said, "It appears that a contraction in global trade and decline in global growth are inevitable, which would impact India's growth, too, even though we might do better than other large economies". "For the short term, investors should focus on domestic consumption-driven sectors and pharmaceuticals within the externally-linked segments," he advised.

Malvinder Singh Kang seeks release of Sikh prisoners in Lok Sabha

Party (AAP) Member of Parliament Malvinder Singh Kang on Thursday raised a human rights issue in the Lok Sabha. urging the Union government to fulfill its promise made in 2019 regarding the release of Bandi Singhs (Sikh prisoners).

Kang reminded the House that in 2019, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, the government had announced the release of these prisoners who had already been in jails for 25-30 years and served their sentences

A formal notification was

800 MW thermal

power plant to be

set up in Yamuna

Haryana Energy, Transport, and

Labour Minister, Anil Vij said that

a new 800 MW thermal power

plant will be set up in Yamunanagar.

Besides this, thermal power plants

will also be established in Hisar

Anil Vij said this while interacting

with the media here today. He said

that adequate arrangements have

have been upgraded, and if any

transformer gets damaged, arrange

ments have been made to replace

it immediately. He also directed

officers to update the information

about the availability of transformers

online. Responding to a question

regarding electricity rates, Anil Vij

said that there has been no increase

in electricity rates in Haryana for

the past eight years. The electricity

rates are determined by the Haryana

Electricity Regulatory Commission,

and at present, there is no proposal

to increase them. In response to

another question regarding illegal

vehicles, the Transport Minister

said that it is a serious problem

and he has personally inspected

the situation on the roads several

times. He directed departmental

officers to take appropriate action

against illegal vehicles under the

Nagar- Anil Vij

GULSHAN KUMAR

Chandigarh

and Panipat.

been made to en

sure an adequate

power supply dur-

ing the upcoming

summer season.

Transformers



also issued at that time, yet tarian aspect of the issue, even after six years, these prisoners remain incarcerated.

Kang emphasised that these individuals have already com-

and should no longer be kept behind bars. He stated that their prolonged imprisonment "is a violation of human rights and goes against the principles of justice". He further urged the government to consider the deteriorating health conditions of these prisoners and take a compassionate approach towards their release.

'The government of India had made a commitment to the people of Punjab through an official notification in 2019. It is now time to honor that promise and ensure the release Highlighting the humani- pleted their legal sentences of Bandi Singhs, "Kang added.

FIR to be lodged against 1609 fake families identified in the BPL list in Haryana



SATISH HANDA Chandigarh

The Haryana government has taken strict action against fake poor people and has removed 1609 fake families from the BPL list falsely availing the benefits of government schemes for families below poverty line. The government has warned such families to get their names removed from the BPL category by April 20, 2025, failing which legal action will be taken against them. However, the Harvana state Government has taken action against the fake poor in Haryana and 1609 families have been removed from the BPL list last month. Information reveals that there are 51, 96,000 families currently in BPL category in the state which include 36 in Ambala,

106 in Bhiwani, 12 in Dadri,

meeting held on Friday. Ac-

cording to the sentiment of

this resolution, the opinions

of all Sikh organizations, in-

stitutions and intellectuals are

crucial regarding the appoint-

ment, tenure, and retirement

of the Jathedar. Therefore,

suggestions should be sent to

the SGPC by April 20, 2025,

so that a collective consen-

sus of the community can be

formed for the formulation of

20 in Faridabad, 82 in Fatehabad, 84 in Gurugram, 73 in Jhajjar, 75 in Jind, 40 in Kaithal, 73 in Karnal, 175 in Kurukshetra, 38 in Mahendergarh, 17 in Nuh, 46 in Palwal, 3 in Panchkula, 49 in Panipat, 39 in Rewari, 73 in Sirsa, 294 in Sonipat, 90 in Yamumanagar and 145

in Hisar districts. According to information, number of families in the state had falsely sought their name registered as below poverty line (BPL) family to avail benefits applicable for poor families in the state. After a survey, the families who had become BPL through fraud were warned to get their name removed from BPL category by April 20, after this, the government can take legal action against such families and register an FIR. This issue was raised in the assembly during the recent

budget session also. At that time, the Chief Minister had issued orders for immediate action in the House itself. Now this action has started on the same ground. According to the state government report, currently 51, 96, 380 families in the state are in the BPL category. According to information, the benefit of BPL family is available only to hose families whose annual

income is less than 1.80 lakh

that despite having more in-

The government suspects

come than this, families have got BPL cards made by filling less income and the income of a large number of families in the state is more than this slab to avail benefits for BPL families. It was observed that most of the families had done fake division of the family, taking advantage by showing themselves as different on paper. The names of all such fake families have been deleted. State coordinator of Harvana Parivar Pehchan Pradhikaran, Satish Khola, said that people coming under BPL category are being deleted by giving wrong information in the family ID. If such people do not correct the information themselves. action will be taken against them filing an FIR against

Preserving mother tongue Punjabi – need of hour: Jathedar Kuldeep Singh Gargajj



JAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

The officiating Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib and Jathedar of Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajj, stated in a statement issued from the Secretariat of Sri Akal Takht Sahib that a person's mother tongue holds the same significance in life as their birth mother and native land.

He emphasized that the mother tongue is the soul of a thriving communities, making it our duty to preserve and promote the Punjabi language.

He pointed out that the concerns he raised about challenges to the Punjabi language during his address at Hola Mohalla are now proving true. He said with new school admissions underway in Punjab, reports indicate that many CBSE-affiliated schools have made English and Hindi mandatory while keeping Punjabi as an optional subject, which is unacceptable. This reflects the growing negligence towards Punjabi, contrary to the government's claims of

implementing it, he said. Jathedar Gargajj asserted that under such circumstances, t becomes imperative to ensure that Punjabi is taught from the nursery class in every school in Punjab. Currently, many schools start teaching Punjabi from the first grade, which distances children from their mother tongue. The Punjab government must ensure that Punjabi is made mandatory from the nursery class in all schools, regardless of the board they are affiliated

with, said the Jathedar. He also stressed that not just the government but parents, too, have a responsibility to encourage their children to learn Punjabi from the beginning. Many parents believe that early education in English will benefit their child, but scientific studies have shown that unless children have a strong grasp

While knowledge of multiple languages is beneficial, Jathedar Gargajj emphasized that in Punjab, priority should be given to Punjabi. Addressing parents, he questioned how their children would connect with Gurbani when the sacred Sri Guru Granth Sahib is written in Gurmukhi if they are not taught Punjabi. He called upon every Punjabi to come forward to safeguard the Punjabi language. He urged all language activists to take a pledge and inspect schools in their respective areas to identify those schools which are not teaching Punjabi from the nursery class. A list of such schools should be compiled and presented to Sri Akal Takht Sahib for further action. He stressed the need for every Punjabi son and daughter to stand firmly against attacks on the existence of Punjabi.

Dhami inaugurates new building of PNB Bank officials offer Rs 30 Lakh

cheque to SGPC President to purchase bus for Sri Darbar Sahib

JAGMOHAN SINGH

Harjinder Singh Dhami, President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), on April 4 inaugurated the newly renovated branch of Punjab National Bank (PNB) near Gurdwara Baba Atal Rai Sahib. On this occasion, officials from PNB presented a cheque of Rs 30 lakh to Advocate Harjinder Singh Dhami for the purchase of a bus for the convenience of



Dhami said that Punjab National Bank has consistently contributed to the services of gurdwaras. Continuing in this spirit, the bank has donated Rs 30 lakh for the purchase of a 32-seater bus for the service devotees visiting Sri Darbar of pilgrims visiting Sri Dar-

that the bank will continue to actively support such community-friendly initiatives.

During the event, SGPC President along with others honoured the bank officials with robes of honor (siropao) and a golden model of Sri Dar-

Preparations for wheat procurement are incomplete, BJP Government playing with the emotions of farmers' says Kumari Selja

SATISH HANDA

Chandigarh

The General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee former Union Minister, and Member of Parliament from Sirsa Kumari Selja said that while the BJP claims to be a farmer-friendly party they are at the forefront of ignoring farmers interests. Wheat procurement is scheduled to begin from April 1, but there has been no preparation yet. Tenders for gunny bags and wheat lifting have not been issued, and in the markets, there are no proper arrangements for drinking water, and the street lights are not working. The government has been making announcements, but nothing is government should take strict steps in this direction and focus on the convenience of farmers.

In a statement to released the media, Kumari Selja said that this time, the government is playing with farmers under the name of mustard procurement. Officers are acting arbitrarily, with no procurement happening in Ambala, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Yamunanagar, and Kaithal on Sunday. Where procurement has taken place, lifting has either not been done or is happening at a very slow pace, causing trouble for farmers. In the Hisar grain market, 12,149 quintals of mustard were procured, but only 3,000 quintals were lifted. There is widespread mismanagement in the market, with no proper arrangements for drinking water and street lights.

markets is similar, where mus-



tard lifting has not been done in most places. In Sirsa's market, half of the mustard purchased has not been lifted. While the traders are facing problems, the farmers are suffering even more. The situation is similarly poor in Charkhi Dadri and Panipat, with the facilities farmers should be receiving in the markets remaining confined Kumari Šelja said that the

for the procurement of wheat, mustard, barley, gram, lentils, and sunflower for the Rabi season 2025-26. This year, a bumper wheat harvest is expected. The procurement will be handled by the Food & Supply Consumer Affairs Department (30%), HAFED (40%), Haryana State Warehousing Corporation (20%), and the Food Corporation of India (10%). Wheat, barley, and gram procurement will start from April 1, while sunflower procurement will begin in June. Despite the government claiming full preparation for wheat procurement, tenders for gunny bags and wheat lifting have not been issued. The payment for mustard procurement is also delayed. Farmers bringing their crops to the market should receive basic facilities such as proper drinking water arrangements and atten-

of their mother tongue, they state government claims to cannot excel in other languages

SGPC seeks suggestions from Panth on forming rules for appointment and retirement of Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib

JAGMOHAN SINGH

The President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Harjinder Singh Dhami, has appealed to all Sikh organizations, including Damdami Taksal, Nihang Singh jathebandis, global Sikh institutions, Singh Sabhas, diwans, societies, scholars and intellectuals residing in India and abroad, to send their suggestions regarding the qualifications, appointment, jurisdiction, responsibilities, and retirement rules of the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht



He stated that the Sikh community has long demanded that service rules be established for the position of the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht

Sahib, considering the respect and significance of this role. In light of this, a resolution for its approval in principle was passed during the SGPC's budget related General House

service rules Dhami stated that these

suggestions can be sent to the SGPC either in person or through the official email

Demand for stern action against complainants of fast increasing false rape & sexual molesting cases Information reveals, police The Panchkula police had

Mohan Lal Badauli & Rocky Mittal got a clean chit, the girl came in front of the media and said- I want justice; I was raped.

SATISH HANDA Panchkula

The girl who accused Haryana BJP president Mohan Lal Badoli and a singer Rocky Mittal a resident of Panchkula, allegedly raped has appeared before the media first time. The woman said that the reason for filing the case after one and a half years was death threats. During the press conference, the police arrived at the spot and started the investigation. The woman narrated her story while crying and pleaded for justice, said that Mohan Lal Badauli and Rocky Mittal had raped her. On the question, why did she file a case

of the area expressed happi-

ness for the first successful

trial of Alliance Airlines took

place at Maharaja Agrasen Hisar Airport. A water salute

was given on landing of the

aircraft by Captain Krishna

Modi and Mohit Shukla ar-

rived with the aircraft who



after one and a half years', she said that she was being threatened with death. The woman said that she has appealed to the Sessions Judge.

When the woman was police reached the spot and time the police reached there whether it was really the same Badauli raped her.

woman or a fake woman holding a press conference there the same girl was found at the spot holding the press conference. After the police arrived, the woman wept and holding a press conference narrated her story saying she in Panchkula, suddenly the have come in front of the media for the first time and is stopped the press conference not being allowed to talk to in between. Then after some the media and want justice, demanding action against and started trying to find out Rocky Mittal and Mohanlal

did not find any concrete evidence when the police took the woman along and searched the hotel in Kasauli after the complaint. The victim was also taken for medical examination, but she refused to undergo medical examination. After that, the police went to Haryana and interrogated both the accused. However, the police suspected this case weak from the very beginning. Due to lack of evidence in the rape case registered against both alleged accused (BJP leader Mohan Lal Badoli and singer Rocky Mittal) in the at Police Station Kasauli against both, the police had submitted the Cancellation Report making sure that a false case of gang rape has been registered as part of a conspiracy to trap Badauli in a false honeytrap

registered a case against six people, including the victim girl who made the false allegation, her companions and three unidentified persons, of them Haryana police have arrested two people, including the complainant girl suspecting a plan was to trap senior BJP leader Mohan Lal Badauli in a rape false case and loot money and honevtrap case was registered against the complainant girl since victim could not even identify the crime scene in front of police; refused to undergo medical examination, could not identify the place (room) where the rape took place and the victim's friend has called the allegations of gang rape false. The Himachal police could not found any concrete evidence regarding the allegations made in the The situation in Fatehabad's complaint and filed the case.

Seven members of inter-state gang of cyber fraudsters arrested by Ambala police

SATISH HANDA Ambala

The Ambala police arrested seven members of an interstate gang of cyber fraudsters allegedly duping an Ambala resident Rs 26.57 lakh. The accused have been identified as Sumit, Narendra, Harshit, Shailendra, Gaurav, Hardik and Devesh belonging to Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and Gurugram operating a network from Gurugram. The accused Gaurav was an YES Bank employee and used to provide bank accounts for frauds. Among seven arrested Sumit, Narendra, Harshit and Shailendra were arrested on March 25 and on their disclosure the remaining three accused Gaurav, Hardik and Devesh were arrested on

March 27. Among arrested



Harshit, Gaurav and Shailendra were sent to jail on Friday and the remaining four were remanded to police custody on five-day police remand.

Addressing media persons Surinder Singh Bhoria, SP Ambala said there are 27 cases registered in different states, including Haryana, West Bengal, Telangana and Uttar

Pradesh against the accused. The gang had cheated a resident of Sector 8 in Ambala City who was duped of Rs 26.57 lakh on the pretext of investments in stock market and trading. The amount was taken over a period of one month and a case was registered at

the cyber crime police station

Ambala in June 2024 when

of this inter-state gang. SP Bhoria said that police

Ambala police after investiga-

tion arrested seven members

have seized Rs 13.74 lakh currency notes, 25 ATM cards, a money counting machine, seven mobile phones and six cheque books from the accused who used to open dummy accounts in the name of poor people and operate those accounts. After getting the amount in the accounts, they used to transfer the amount further into other accounts and then withdrew the money from ATMs they admitted during preliminary investigation.

The fraudsters using new techniques and methods to dupe people and even the welleducated people were being trapped in their net and duped by these cyber fraudsters.



described the landing of the plane as very smooth.

Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini informed about the successful trial in the Vidhan Sabha session and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will reach Hisar on April 14 and flag off the planes of five states

including Ayodhya of Uttar Pradesh from the airport. A public meeting will also be organised in the airport prem-

Hisar airport is being constructed on a 7,200 acres area, where an Industrial area will also be developed on 2,988

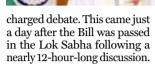
acres. After the first trial landing of a 72-seater aircraft, which stopped for a while and then went back. The trial ATR-72600 aircraft belongs to the company which is going to start the flight landing on the runway for the first time at Maharaja Agrasen Hisar Airport at around 1 pm. After the completion of the trial, the way for flying the aircraft was made clear when Captain Krishna Modi and Mohit Shukla arrived at Maharaja Agrasen Airport with the passenger plane of Alliance Air said now regular flights can be operated from Hisar to Ayodhya and other places. The first flight from Hisar Airport to fly to Ayodhya will be flag on April 14 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After the flight takes off, air services will be started for Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Jammu.

Waqf Bill ends era of years of injustice, corruption: Shah Rahul Gandhi Corners Modi Govt

NEWDELHI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday hailed the passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, calling it a historic step toward ending years of injustice and corruption in the management of Waqf

A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju made a strong case for the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in the lower house of the Parliament, Leader of Rajya Sabha and Union Minister J.P. Nadda led a passionate debate in the upper house on the bill while slamming the Opposition.

The Rajya Sabha approved the Bill in the early hours of Friday with a majority of 128 votes against 95, following a



Taking to X, Amit Shah posted, "Today is a historic day, when the Parliament has ap-

proved the 'Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025', ending the era of years of injustice and corruption and ushering in an era of justice and equality." He added, Through this Bill, the Waqf Board and Waqf properties are going to be more accountable, transparent and equitable. This will definitely benefit the poor, women and children of the Muslim community."

Congratulating the leadership behind the Bill, Shah said, "I congratulate Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju for this important Bill that gives justice to crores of people. Also, I express my heartfelt gratitude to all the parties and MPs who supported it."

The Rajya Sabha debate, which started on Thursday, concluded with the approval of the Bill early Friday morning.

The legislation will now be sent to President Droupadi

Murmu for her assent to be-

by 2030, with electrification of all Broad Gauge (BG) networks across the nation as its cornerstone. During the event, Prime

Minister Modi highlighted the wide-ranging advantages of this initiative. He mentioned that multiple rail projects worth Rs 40,000 crore are underway in Chhattisgarh

on Chinese Occupation, US tariffs



KAVITA SHAMRA New Delhi

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi today cornered the government on the issues of Chinese occupation of about 4,000 square kilometres of country's land and the US tariffs on Indian goods. "We would like an answer from the Government of India: what are you doing about our land, and what will you do about the tariff our ally has imposed on us?" he asked.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha today, Gandhi pointed out, "it is a known fact that China is occupying 4,000 square kilometres of our territory" and the Indian Foreign Secretary was cutting cake with the Chinese ambassador.

witnessed the whole journey

of the country so far, from the

time before Independence

when it was suffering from

widespread poverty to the time

now when it is among the top

economies in the world.

"I was shocked sometime back to see our Foreign Secretary cutting a cake with the Chinese Ambassador. The question is, what exactly is happening to this territory?" he asked, adding that the Congress was not against normalising relations with China, but before that the country must get its land back.

Rahul also expressed surprise that it was the Chinese ambassador who had revealed that the PM and the President had written to the Chinese. "It is the Chinese Ambassador who is informing us about this, not our own people", he noted, while adding, "foreign policy is about managing external relations; you have given China 4,000 square kilometres of

Strengthens Feeling of Brotherhood: Prez **Murmu Extends Greetings**



NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu on March 31 extended her heartfelt greetings on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, emphasising that Gandhi also referred to the the festival strengthens the spirit of brotherhood and promotes

the US on Indian goods. "Our Taking to social media platally has suddenly decided to impose a 26 percen tariff, which will devastate our economy. Our auto industry, pharmaceutical industry, and agriculture are all in line", he pointed out. Leader of Opposition cited the example of former Prime Minister Ms Indira Gandhi, who, when asked, does she lean left or right on foreign policy and she answered that she is an Indian and she stands "However, the BJP and the

RSS have a different philoso-Several prominent leaders phy; when asked to lean right or left, they say they bow their the occasion. heads to every foreigner that

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh shared his greetings, say-

Highways, Nitin Gadkari, also

Similarly, Minister of Par-

He wrote in a post on X, "Wishing everyone a joyous & blessed Eid-ul-Fitr! May this special day bring happiness, prosperity & new opportunities for all. Let's celebrate the spirit of togetherness & gratitude with

of the holy month of Ramadan, is celebrated with great fervor

The festival signifies a time of joy, generosity, and unity, as people come together to share meals, exchange gifts, and offer prayers for peace and harmony.

Prime Minister Modi dedicates 100 pc electrified rail network in Chhattisgarh

Narendra Modi dedicated 100 per cent electrification of the rail network of Indian Railways in Chhattisgarh on Sunday by pressing a remote button in Mohbhatta village of Bilaspur district of the state, where he dedicated several other projects in key sectors.

With a focus on improving connectivity in the region, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of seven railway projects with a total length of

nation the three railway projects with a total length of 111 km, worth over Rs 2, 690 crore.

The Prime Minister also flagged off the MEMU train service in the Abhanpur-Raipur section via Mandir Hasaud through remote control. These projects will re-

duce congestion, improve connectivity, and enhance social and economic growth across the region. With the inauguration of 108 km and dedicated to the these multiple railway projects

as part of this transformative iourney to attain Net Zero Carbon Emission by 2030, Chhattisgarh has successfully achieved the complete electrification of its Broad Gauge (BG) railways,

Indian Railways has set forth an ambitious vision to achieve Net Zero Carbon Emissions

Pak soldiers intruded into Indian Territory along LoC in Poonch district of J&K

straight.

JAMMU: Pakistani soldiers allegedly breached the ceasefire and crossed into Indian territory along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, a defence spokesperson said on Wednesday.

Reports indicate that the intrusion and ceasefire violation occurred at around 1:10 pm on Tuesday. In response, Indian troops carried out a "controlled and calibrated" retaliation. So far, the Indian Army has not reported any casualties on the Pakistani side.

According to media reports, 5 Pakistani soldiers were injured following an explosion and the subsequent exchange of gunfire.

Jammu-based defence PRO, Lt Col Suneel Bartwal, said that a landmine blast took place in the Krishna Ghati sector due to the Pakistani



comes. This is part of their cul-

ture and history", he taunted

the BJP and the RSS.

The BJP and the

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foreigner that comes.

This is part of their

culture and history"

26 percent tariff imposed by

left, they say they bow

philosophy; when

LoC, which was followed by unprovoked firing and a ceasefire violation. "Our troops responded ef-

fectively in a controlled and calibrated manner. The situation is under control and is being closely monitored," he The Indian Army has reiter-

ated the importance of maintaining the 2021 agreement between the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGs-MO), which was established to ensure peace along the LoC. Since its renewal on February 25, 2021, ceasefire violations have been relatively rare.

on Eid-Ul-Fitr



compassion and charity.

form X, President Murmu conveyed her wishes, stating, "Greetings to all countrymen, especially Muslim brothers and sisters on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. This festival strengthens the feeling of brotherhood and gives the message of adopting compassion and charity. I wish that this festival brings peace, prosperity, and happiness in everyone's life and strengthens the spirit of moving forward on the path of goodness in everyone's hearts.'

also extended their wishes on

ing, "Greetings on Eid-ul-Fitr. May this festival bring happiness, peace, and prosperity to all. Hope this day further strengthens the bonds of harmony and brotherhood all across society. Eid Mubarak!" Minister of Road Transport &

took to X to express his wishes, posting, "Warmest wishes for Eid-ul-Fitr. May this joyous occasion fill every heart with peace, love, and endless blessngs. Eid Mubarak!"

liamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju extended his greetings on Eid.

our loved ones.

Eid-ul-Fitr, marking the end across India and the world.

Gujarat to host AICC national convention after 64 years



is gearing up to host the 84th National Convention of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) on April 8-9, marking a historic return of the event to Gujarat after a gap of 64 years.

The high-profile gathering, set against the scenic backdrop of the Sabarmati Riverfront, will witness the presence of nearly 3, 000 Congress leaders, including party president Mallikarjun Kharge, senior leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, and KC Venugopal.

Gujarat last hosted an AICC convention in 1961 in litically significant event for the Congress party in the state.

With the Lok Sabha elections on the horizon, the gathering is expected to set the stage for key political discussions and strategic planning.

With top Congress leaders staying in the city for two days, the party has made extensive accommodation arrangements, booking around 2, 000 hotel rooms across Ahmedabad and nearby areas. Prominent hotels, including ITC Narmada and Courtyard Marriott, have been fully reserved.

At the same time, other high-end properties such as Hyatt, The Fern, Fortune Landmark, Lemon Tree, Rivera, and Radisson Blu have also been secured for delegates. To facilitate seamless transportation, the party has arranged a fleet of cars and buses, with additional vehicle support from party workers if required. Congress has also tied up with

private travel agencies and hotel transport services to accommodate any last-minute logistical needs. Such large-scale hotel reservations are typically seen during international cricket matches or high-profile concerts, but this time, political activity has driven the surge in demand. Given that the convention will be held at the Sabarmati Riverfront and the Sardar Patel Memorial, Congress has ensured that all nearby accommodations are exclusively booked for its attendees.

The Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) is currently navigating a complex political landscape, marked by internal challenges and external pressures. In the 2022 Gujarat Legislative Assembly elections, the Indian National Congress (INC) faced a significant defeat, securing only 17 out of 182 seats, while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) maintained its dominance in the state.

RBI Played Key Role in Making India Global Leader in Digital Payments: Prez Murmu MUMBAI: President Droupa at the very centre of India's incredible growth story. It has

di Murmu on Tuesday lauded the Reserve Bank for its key role in making India a global leader in digital payments with innovations like UPI revolutionising financial access. Addressing the closing cer-

emony of the commemoration of the RBI's 90th year, the President said, "By continuously modernising the counthe Reserve Bank has ensured that digital transactions are not only seamless and efficient but also secure. Innovations like the UPI have revolutionised financial access, enabling instant, low-cost transactions and deepening financial inclusion. Beyond payments, RBI has nurtured a vibrant fintech

She stated that in the nine decades, the biggest achievement of the RBI is the trust of the people. The RBI earned this trust by steadfastly



international trends The President said that the

increasingly globalising world,

it has also ensured that India's

financial system remains resil-

ient in the face of any adverse

the most critically important institutions in the nation. She currency notes in their pockets - but indirectly, all their banks and otherwise, are governed by the RBI. And they faith in the financial system overseen by it.

pointed out that a common interaction with RBI — except for its name printed on the financial dealings, through instinctively place their utmost

She further stated that the RBI, as the central bank, was

The President also observed that as India approaches the centenary of its Independence, the mission of 'Viksit Bharat 2047' calls for a financial ecosystem that is innovative, adaptive, and accessible to all. She stated that the path ahead would present new complexities and challenges.

She expressed confidence that with a steadfast commitment to stability, innovation and inclusivity, the RBI would continue to be a pillar of strength — reinforcing trust and steering India towards a future of prosperity and global leadership.

JIH strongly opposes Waqf Amendment Bill

Kavita Sharma New Delhi

Islami Hind (JIH), Syed Sadatullah Husaini has strongly opposed the waqf amendment bill terming it 'a highly condemnable move that paves the way for legislative discrimination against Muslims'. He pointed out that the provisions the bill seeks to revoke, are not exclusive to Muslims. Other religious communities also have similar rights. The endowment laws of various religious communities include provisions that restrict their management

The President of Jamaat-e-



of the Waqf Act, 1995, which boards to members of their respective faiths. They also allow for 'temples by users' similar to 'Waqf by user' and grant exemptions from laws such as the Limitation Act. However, Muslims alone are being singled out and deprived

legislative discrimination and a dangerous precedent..

He further said, "The bill introduces sweeping changes to the Waqf Act, 1995, increasing governmental interference in managing Waqf properties and fundamentally altering their religious character. This is a direct violation of Article 26 of the Constitution, which guarantees religious minorities the right to manage their religious institutions. Despite widespread opposition and millions of objections from the public, the government disregarded the feedback it received from the main stake-

of these rights, which is blatant holders of the bill. It appeared as if the consultative process was just a formality and the decision to pass the bill had been predetermined, rendering public opinion and stake-

holder concerns irrelevant..' He strongly criticized certain media outlets for misleading the public with false narratives. He emphasized that the bill does nothing to curb corruption, illegal occupation, or misuse of Waqf properties. The government cannot pinpoint a single provision that is helpful in this regard. Its provision only worsens the waqf adminis-

wife of former chief minister Naveen Patnaik's trusted aide and bureaucrat-turnedpolitician VK Pandian, has taken voluntary retirement from service (VRS). The Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pen-

ARABINDA MOHAPATRA

Bhubaneswar

sions on Friday approved her application for premature retirement under existing rules. A powerful and efficient officer who played a major role in

carrying out the Naveen Patnaik government's agenda of women empowerment Sujata was the brain behind not just the creation of Mission Shakti which had over 70 lakh women members earning through various activities organised as self help groups (SHGs) supported by Mission Shakti but also the chief architect of its enhanced stature which led the Naveen government to turn it into a full-fledged

department. She wielded considerable influence in the Naveen Patnaik government which was resented by the BJP which lodged a complaint against her with the Election Commission during the last elections. The commission ordered her transfer from the Mission Shakti department and she was posted as the special secretary of the Finance Department where she remained following the defeat of the BJD in the 2024

However, as soon as the BJP government assumed office in June last year, she went



ing childcare responsibilities. The government refused to extend her leave, and she was compelled to rejoin duty in November 2024.

Sujata's tenure in administration was marked by a rapid rise and she was responsible for implementing some of Naveen's flagship programmes, most notably the Mission Shakti movement. She had earlier served as collector in key districts such as Cuttack and Sundargarh with an excellent record. When Mission Shakti was officially designated as a government department, she was appointed as its secretary, overseeing the activities of lakhs of women self-help group members. These women constituted a loval and crucial vote bank for the Biju Janata Dal led by Naveen Patnaik. She was the one who recommended Ganjam's SHG leader Pramila Bisoi as a potential Lok Sabha candidate from Aska to then

had taken voluntary retirement from service in October 2023 while serving as the allpowerful private secretary to CM Naveen Patnaik. Following his retirement, he entered full-time politics, joining the

BJD and leading the party's campaign and election strategy. The party's defeat was a significant setback for him, and days after the results, he announced he was taking 'sanyas' from politics. Sujata's voluntary retire-

ment has now sparked speculation about her next move, with rumours suggesting she may join an international organisation. There is also talk of Pandian taking up an assignment with a global agency.

However, Sujata's legacy as a bureaucrat will endure. She was responsible for making lakhs of women coming from poor backgrounds empowered by making them financially independent. As the powerful secretary of Mission Shakti department she diversified the role of women self help groups by coordinating with various government departments which offered them new responsibilities which also helped them earn and stand on their feet. There was a time when women SHG members were only cooking mid-day meals in government schools but under Sujata-run Mission Shakti they also started collecting water bills and performing many new roles. The 49-year-old bureau-

crat hails from Baluria village in Odisha's Kendrapara district and spent some time in Jamshedpur, where her father worked as a doctor. She met VK Pandian at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration during their IAS training. Though Pandian was initially allotted the Punjab cadre,

EPFO empanels 15 more Banks for Direct Payment of Collections

NEW DELHI: The EPFO on Tuesday entered into agreements with 15 additional banks, both in the public and private sector, to enable direct payment of nearly Rs 12,000 crore in annual collections and provide direct access to employers who maintain their accounts with these banks, to pay their monthly contributions.

The EPFO has already empanelled 17 banks, and with the addition of these 15 banks, the total number has gone up to 32 banks. The agreements with the banks were signed in the presence of Union Labour & Employment Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, and Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment, and MSMEs Shobha Karandlaje

Mandaviya said that with nearly 8 crore active members and more than 78 lakh pension- ous year (2023-24). ers, the EPFO provides benefits $\,$ that ensure social security for

He expressed happiness that the EPFO is offering an interest rate of 8.25 per cent to its ben-



further enhance the efficiency of the EFPO and improve good

governance, he added. He further stated that in the Financial Year 2024-25, EPFO settled a record of over 6 crore claims, which is a 35 per cent increase compared to the 4.45 crore claims settled in the previ-

Mandaviya said that a significant milestone was also marked with the introduction of the Centralised Pension Payment System.

"This system will benefit over

them to receive their pensions in any bank account across the country. Previously, pensioners were required to have an account in a specific zonal bank; this compulsion has now been removed," the Minister said. Mandaviya also touched upon

the significant reforms introduced by the EPFO recently. "The auto claim settlement process is a major reform which has improved claim processing speed. With auto-processing, claims are now being settled in just three days. In FY 2024-25, we settled 2.34 crore claims

under this system, a 160 per cent increase from the 89.52 lakh claims in 2023-24," he said.

The EPFO, one of the largest social security organisations in the world and has ollected over Rs. 3.41 lakh crore in contributions remitted by employers through 1.25 crore electronic challan cum returns till 20th March 2025. The empanelment of new

non-empanelled banks.

banks will bring seamless integration of EPFO collections/ dues payments by employers, further reducing the need for an aggregator payment mechanism for employers, which will help both the EPFO & employers to reduce transactional delays and $the reby, strengthen\ operational$ efficiency. This will yield financial benefits for EPFO, as dues remitted through empanelled banks will be available for investment on T+1 day, compared to T+2 day through an aggregator. This will also significantly reduce the costs to the EPFO elections. payable for name validation of members' accounts held in

Putting an end to all speculation over her future senior IAS officer Sujata R Karthikeyan,

With her VRS Sujata Kartikeyan

IAS be left with enduring memories

on leave for six months cit-

chief minister Naveen Patnaik in 2019. Pramila won the election from Aska hands down.

Her husband, VK Pandian,

after marriage, he changed to the Odisha cadre.



PAC Report shall act as a catalyst for GST overhaul

he 19th report of Parliament's

Public Accounts Committee (PAC) delivers a critical assessment of India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, highlighting significant shortcomings that warrant immediate attention. Introduced in July 2017 to unify and streamline the indirect tax system, GST aimed to bolster compliance and enhance revenue collection. However, the PAC's findings reveal a nearly two-percentage-point decline in indirect tax revenue between FY18 and FY20, preceding the COVID-19 pandemic. This downturn raises concerns about the efficacy of the GST framework in achieving its foundational objectives. A particularly alarming revelation is the six-year delay in auditing and finalizing the States' Compensation Fund. This fund was established to reimburse states for revenue losses incurred due to the GST rollout. The Centre's failure to present the Compensation Fund Account to the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has impeded timely and transparent compensation to states, undermining the cooperative federalism that GST was supposed to strengthen. The PAC also underscores the centralizing tendencies of the GST regime, which have eroded the fiscal autonomy of major revenue-generating states. The destination-based nature of GST disproportionately affects manufacturingheavy states, leading to significant revenue shortfalls. Despite the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017, which assured states a 14% annual revenue growth for five years, many have reported delays or non-receipt of funds, adversely impacting governance and development initiatives. Furthermore, the PAC identifies 2,447 discrepancies amounting to Rs 32,577.73 crore out of a sample of 10,667 cases, criticizing the Finance Ministry's audit approach as "lackadaisical." To address these issues, the PAC recommends establishing a formal mechanism with the CAG for timely audits and proposes a comprehensive review to develop a "GST 2.0." This revamped framework should aim for a more equitable revenuesharing model, with states advocating for an increased share of 70%-80%, up from the

current 50%. **LETTERBOX**

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Message from Publisher



hearty congratulation on its 25th Anniversary of Chandigarh edition and 15th Anniversary of Delhi edition. Team's hard work and dedication has helped in to maintain its continuity even during bad phase of its journey. We had to change its periodicity from Daily to weekly for its existence

I hope this team would continue to work with same enthusiasm and professionalism to serve the society as fourth pillar of democracy in India. I once again congratulate & wish good luck to entire team to take The Financial World forward

Swinder Pal Singh Bajwa, Publisher

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ANIRUDH SHINGAL ADVISES INDIA TO CUT TRADE BARRIERS TO COUNTER RECIPROCAL US TARIFFS

Time to untangle reciprocal tariffs

nder the 'Fair and Reciprocal Plan,' the Donald Trump administration is countering "non-reciprocal trading arrangements with trading partners by determining the equivalent of a reciprocal tariff with respect to each foreign trading partner". The non-reciprocal trading relationship is assessed based on tariffs, discriminatory taxes, non-tariff barriers (including subsidies and restrictive regulations), exchange rate manipulations, and any other practice deemed to limit U.S.

market access or impede American firms

from competing In 2010, countries across the world sent 12 per cent of their total merchandise exports to American shores. By 2019, one year before the pandemic, the U.S. share of world exports had only risen to 13 per cent. The share stood at 13.4 per cent in 2022, the latest year for which internationally comparable data on merchandise exports are available for the largest sample of the world's trading economies. Thus, roughly 87 per cent of global merchandise exports are currently traded among countries that do not include the U.S.

Of course, there are variations around this average. For instance, the Cayman Islands and Bermuda in the Caribbean export almost 85 per cent of their goods to America. The U.S. also accounts for over 75 per cent of Canadian and Mexican merchandise exports. At the opposite end of the spectrum, 81 out of 160 countries, for which data were available from UN Comtrade for 2022, exported less than 5 per cent of their total goods to the U.S. For 26 of these 81 countries (many from Africa), the U.S. share was less than 1 per cent. The average U.S. share across the 160 countries was 11.4 per cent, while the



Less than a fifth of Indian, Chinese, and EU merchandise exports (18 per cent, 16 per cent, and 19 per cent, respectively, in 2022) were destined for the U.S.

Now, let us look at the tariff picture and compare U.S. tariffs on partner exports vis-à-vis partner tariffs on U.S. exports. The latest tariff data available for this comparison are from UNCTAD TRAINS for 157 trading partners of the U.S., mostly for the year 2022. The European Union is considered a single partner given its common external tariff

The average import-weighted tariffs on U.S. exports in 27 partner countries are lower than the corresponding U.S. tariffs. Technically, the concept of reciprocal tariffs works as a threat and a bargaining tool only when U.S. tariffs are lower than those in the partner country.

Considering only tariffs, this simple analysis thus rules out almost a fifth of all countries for which comparable tariff data are available from the 'Fair and Reciprocal Plan.' These countries include Canada, the EU, Japan, and the U.K. — among America's largest trading partners, which together accounted for half of total U.S. merchandise exports in 2022. In fact, U.S. commercial interests could be harmed if these countries imposed reciprocal tariffs on American merchandise exports instead.

Of the remaining 130 counries where the Trump administration perceives a tariff disadvantage, the magnitude of the tariff increase needed to nullify the disadvantage is less than 5per cent in 57 countries, includ-

ing China and India. Moreover, in 15 of these 57 countries, the U.S. needs to increase its import-weighted tariffs by less than 1 per cent to restore parity with partner tariffs. Thus, the threat of reciprocal tariffs may be more credible in the remaining 73 countries worldwide, where U.S. bilateral tariffs need to be raised by more than 5 per cent.

Interestingly, however, the magnitude of the tariff hikes in these cases is positively correlated with the U.S. export shares in the partner countries. Put simply, pursuing the policy of reciprocal tariffs against partners where there is a significant tariff differential results in raising average import duties on exports from countries for whom the U.S. is an important destination market. There is extensive commentary on how tariffs are a self-defeating policy. The correlation above only compounds the self-inflicted harm that a policy of reciprocal tariffs brings to the U.S.

This simple analysis is at the aggregate level, and more detailed product-level bilateral tariff and U.S. export share comparisons might be more revealing. However, based on

be tempted to divert their exports to other countries in response to large reciprocal tariffs? After all, even today, 87 per cent of global merchandise exports do not involve the U.S. While there are obvious costs to finding new export markets and trading partners, the experience during the pandemic has shown that firms adapt to external shocks quicker than governments.

Removing barriers

The best policy response to reciprocal tariffs is for impacted countries to remove barriers to doing business, both internally and with their non-U.S. trading partners. This is also the time to enhance regulatory cooperation and reduce regulatory bottlenecks to cross-border trade with the rest of the world, not just in goods but also

The World Bank and World Trade Organization reports show that exports of digitally delivered services have grown faster than those of all other services and goods during the last decade. My own research also shows that preferential trade agreements, which include provisions on regulatory behindthe-border issues, have the most positive effect on digital services trade. Instead of wasting scarce resources on retaliatory tariffs, countries will be much better served if policymakers focus on issues that matter.

Anirudh Shingal is a Professor in the Finance & Economics faculty at the S.P. Jain Institute of Management ಟ Research, Mumbai, and a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress, New Delhi .The views expressed are the writer's own and not those of the affiliated organisations. Views are personal.



KANIKA JAMWAL SAYS WATER POLICIES SHOULD FOCUS COMMUNITIES IN DECISION-MAKING

Communities play role in conserving water



n March 22, World Water Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the need to conserve water for present and future generations through collective action. On the same day, the Ministry of Jal Shakti launched the Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain 2025, emphasising the importance of community participation in water conservation.

In the context of this occasion, it is important to take a panoramic view of India's water policies, with a focus on rural areas. New environmental challenges and renewed understandings of ecosystems underscore the need to recalibrate rural water policies. The following issues must be considered by policymakers.

First, policies should ensure effective participation from communities and mainstream their ecological practices. Indigenous and local communities carry rich knowledge of their immediate ecosystems. Existing it is limited to the management of water sources; decision-making powers remain with state authorities. Further, policies have overlooked the need to identify and empower communities' own ecological practices on water management. Rather, they have formalised water governance by introducing uniform practices. This is counter-intuitive to the objective of encouraging effective participation from communities.

Take, for example, Water User Associations (WUAs), which are statutory bodies set up in different States since the 1990s to further participatory irrigation management. Water users (or farmers) are members of these bodies. While the responsibility to manage irrigation sources has been transferred to them, they have



little say in decision-making.

Second, water policies should consider the disproportionate vulnerability of certain groups to environmental crises. Subaltern social groups and economivulnerable to such crises than others. Within these groups, those located at the intersection of social and economic marginalisation are the most vulnerable. Therefore, it is crucial for policies to consider the interests of vulnerable groups. Concomitantly, policies must recognise their agency in managing water and ensure their participation in decision-making.

Third, policies must address the issue of fragmentation of water management. Here, fragmented management means that different parts of the ecosystem, such as forests, water, land, and biodiversity, are regulated by different policies and authorities. Such an approach fails to consider the interdependence of these constituents. While there have been some

efforts towards taking an integrated approach, they are limited and ineffective. Since policies adopt a fragmented approach, they do not always achieve the desired goals, and in fact, adversely affect each other's potential to do so. A good example of an inte-

grated approach comes from the ecological practices of rural communities in western India. For example, the practice of establishing orans. Orans are sacred forests which hold deep religious and cultural significance to local communities.

Some communities have been establishing orans to serve an additional purpose water conservation. By augmenting tree and grass cover, orans trap surface runoff and support in-situ rainwater harvesting. pendence of water with other constituents of the ecosystem is key to effective water management and conservation.

Fourth, globally, there has been a thrust on adopting a more-than-human perspective in environmental governance. This means considering the interests of the non-human environment in laws and policies that regulate the environment. This approach is based on the idea that the non-human environment has an intrinsic value, and so its interests must be considered in environmental policies. The judiciary has often subscribed to this approach and developed compelling jurisprudence recognising the rights of nature. However, water policies have overlooked this aspect. Their sole focus has been on

human needs for water. Contrastingly, water management practices of some of the local communities in western India take a more holistic perspective to water governance. For example, the amount of water available for irrigation is partly dependent on its sufficient availability for animals.

A final issue is the impact of climate change on water. A recent report published in the journal Nature concluded that as global temperatures rise, the water gap in India will widen. Both climate and water policies must address the impact of climate change on water. Water policies must focus on creating climate-resilient water systems and increasing the climate resilience of existing systems; climate policies, particularly adaptation policies, should focus on building the resilience of ecosystems to water gaps.

Beyond the rhetoric

A common theme across these suggestions is that local and indigenous communities and their practices can support effective water management. Therefore, rural water policies should facilitate active engagement with communities. This means moving beyond the existing rhetoric of engagement, and centering communities' voices in the decision-making process. While doing so, we must be mindful that communities' practices may come with their own limitations which should be addressed through sensitisation and capacity building where required.

Kanika Jamwal is a doctoral candidate, Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore. Views are personal.



BOOKS: REVIEW

New book traces the migrant's longing through centuries

evi Yesodharan's *The* of displacement, identity, and the universal quest for belonging. Through the intertwined narratives of Nita, a migrant worker in 1990s Dubai, and Darius, an ancient Egyptian sailor, Yesodharan delves into the complexities of being an outsider in unfamiliar territories.

Nita, a widowed teacher from Kerala, seeks better opportunities by moving to Dubai to work as an English tutor for a wealthy family. Her employer, Rouhi, an Egyptian woman trapped in an abusive marriage, becomes both a friend and a symbol of the complex social hierarchies that pervade their environment. As Nita becomes entwined in Rouhi's tumultuous life, the boundaries between employer and employee blur, leading to a profound relationship that

narrative sheds light on the fragility of migrant existence and the intricate dynamics of power, privilege, and vulner-

Interwoven with Nita's story is the tale of Darius, an Egyptian sailor who arrives at the bustling port of Muziris in 213 CE. His journey is one of self-discovery, as he navigates the vibrant and diverse marketplace teeming with traders from various cultures. Through Darius's eyes, Yesodharan vividly reconstructs the ancient harbor, immersing readers in its sights, sounds, and scents. Darius's experiences mirror Nita's, as both characters grapple with love, betrayal, and the ephemeral nature of human connections.

At its core, *The Outsiders* delves into the essence of "otherness." Both protagonists confront the challenges of being outsiders in foreign

challenges societal norms. This lands, highlighting the universal struggle for acceptance and understanding. Yesodharan masterfully captures the nuanced emotions associated with migration—the longing for home, the pain of isolation, and the resilience required to forge new identities. As noted in an interview with The Federal, the author reflects on how migration, while a journey of hope, often results in a hyphenated identity, perpetually positioning individuals between worlds.

Employing a "story within a story" technique reminiscent of One Thousand and One Nights, Yesodharan intertwines Nita's and Darius's narratives seamlessly. Nita's recounting of Darius's adventures to Rouhi serves as both a bonding mechanism and a means of expressing her own suppressed desires and fears. This layered storytelling not only enriches the narrative



The Outsiders Yesodharan Penguin;

but also emphasizes the timeless nature of migration and the continuous search for be-

longing. Yesodharan's prose is replete with sensory details that bring both ancient Muziris and modern Dubai to life. From the aromatic food tents and vibrant marketplaces of Muziris to the opulent yet soulless landscapes of Dubai, the author paints vivid tableaux that immerse readers fully. Such meticulous descriptions underscore the contrasts between the two settings, enhancing the thematic depth of the novel.

The emotional depth of the characters is another standout aspect of the novel. Nita's internal conflicts, stemming from her status as a migrant and her complex relationship with Rouhi, are portrayed with sensitivity and realism. Similarly, Darius's transformation from a naive sailor to a worldly individual is depicted with nuance, making his journey compelling and relatable.

Yesodharan also delves into the power dynamics inherent in employer-employee relationships and the societal structures that perpetuate them. Nita's position in Rouhi's household highlights the vulnerabilities faced by migrant workers, especially women, in foreign countries. This exploration adds a critical socio-political layer to the narrative, prompting readers to reflect on issues of privilege and exploitation.

The Outsiders is an evocative and thought-provoking novel that resonates deeply in today's globalized world. Devi Yesodharan's exploration of migration, identity, and human connection offers readers a profound understanding of the complexities of belonging. Through the intertwined lives of Nita and Darius the novel serves as a testament to the enduring human spirit and the universal quest for home.

SBI, Citi Unveil \$295 Million Social Loan to Empower Local Smallholder Farmers in India

(SBI) and Citi on Thursday announced a social loan facility of \$295 million to support smallholder farmers in India.

The financing is specifically directed towards smallholder farmers in India, to support them to improve their agricultural productivity, enhancing their financial well-being, the banks said in a statement.

The SBI will utilise the facility to finance its Kisan Credit Card loan portfolio, to help meet the credit requirements of the agricultural sector, and within this, smallholder farm-

Jayati Bansal, Dy Managing Director (International Banking Group), SBI, said that leveraging our extensive network, "we aim to reach small and marginal farmers who are at the core of India's agriculture sector but often lack access to essential credit



"This initiative will empower these farmers by enhancing their access to financing, helping them improve productivity and create sustainable livelihoods. At SBI, we believe that supporting the underserved farming community is key to strengthening rural economies and fostering long-term eco-

nomic inclusion," said Bansal. Smallholder farmers contribute a significant segment

economic difficulties. Limited income and restricted access to credit hinder their ability to plan for long-term needs, often restricting their productivity, growth, and excluding them from the wider

yet face pronounced social and

By enhancing access to credit, this facility aims to foster their agricultural production and income-generation, thereby contributing towards of India's agricultural sector, livelihood enhancements and for this underserved commu-

Mayank Gupta, Asia South Head of Trade and Working Capital Solutions, Citi said that this agreement with SBI will utilise "the depth of our trade and working capital loan solutions to unlock positive social impact and economic growth."

The SBI is actively driving positive change through various initiatives across its operations, products, and services that prioritise environmental and social causes. It supports its community by expanding access to banking services, promoting financial inclusion, and enhancing financial literacy.

Globally, Citi has committed USD\$1 trillion to sustainable finance by 2030 and expanding access to basic services for 15 million underserved and low-income households. including 10 million women.

Governor Malhotra: RBI Needs Fresh Thinking & Commitment to Excellence

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is committed to enhancing financial access, efficiency, and resilience in an evolving economic landscape, said Governor Sanjay Malhotra at the central bank's 90th commemoration ceremony on Tuesday.

'We at the Reserve Bank remain fully prepared to meet all challenges and seize all opportunities," Malhotra stated, emphasising the institution's expanding role beyond its initial mandate.

"The RBI's journey ahead demands continuous adaptation, fresh thinking, and unwavering commitment to excellence," Malhotra said, reaffirming that public trust remains the institution's great-

He highlighted the need to balance price stability, financial stability, and economic growth amid technological advancements, global uncer-



challenges.

Malhotra pointed out that financial inclusion is a key focus area, noting that over 551 million bank accounts have been opened under various schemes

The RBI's Financial Inclusion Index rose to 64.2 in March 2024 from 60.1 in March 2023 and 43.4 in 2017, reflecting significant progress in access, quality, and usage of financial services.

"It will be our endeavour

Poonam Gupta is new RBI Deputy Governor



has approved the appointment of NCAER Driector General Poonam Gupta as the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a period of three years, say sources. The post of the Deputy Governor of RBI fell vacant after MD Patra demitted the office in January. The sources said the Appointments Committee of Cabinetapproved Gupta's appointment for the post of Deputy Governor in the RBI for three years from the date of joining. Currently, Gupta is the Director General of National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) India's largest economic policy think tank. She is also a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and Convener of the Advisory Council to the 16th

Finance Commission.

India's External **Debt-too-GDP Ratio** Rise Over 10%



NEW DELHI: India's external debt reached USD 717.9 billion by the end of December 2024, marking a 10.7 per cent increase from USD 648.7 billion in December 2023, according to the latest data from the Finance Ministry. On a quarterly basis, the external debt rose by 0.7 per cent from USD 712.7 billion in September 2024. The external debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 19.1 per cent in December, compared to 19 per cent in the previous quarter. A significant portion of this increase is attributed to valuation effects arising from the appreciation of the US dollar against the rupee and other major currencies, including the ven, euro, and Special Drawing Rights (SDR). This valuation effect contributed an additional USD 12.7 billion to the external debt in the December quarter. Excluding this impact, the actual increase in external debt would have been USD 17.9 billion, a notable rise compared to the USD 5.2 billion increase recorded from September to 30 years (1990-91 to 2022-23). sition of India's external debt remained largely US dollardenominated, accounting for 54.8 per cent of the total debt by December 2024. Other currency components included Indian Rupees, Japanese Yen, SDR,

IDFC first Bank Authorized by the Central Pension Accounting Office

MUMBAI: IDFC FIRST Bank today announced that it has been authorised by Central Pension Accounting Office (CPAO), Government of India, to disburse pensions on its behalf.

disburse pensions to Central Government pensioners including - All India Service Officers, former Members of Parliament, retired Judges of High Courts and Supreme Court, former Presidents and Savings Account.



officials of Civil Ministries and Departments (other than Railways, Posts, Telecom and Defence). Pensioners can now receive their pension directly in their IDFC FIRST Bank

From a technical point of view, the integration between the CPAO, GOI and IDFC FIRST Bank is complete and is ready for such pension dis-Pensioners can also open

an IDFC FIRST Bank Savings Account jointly with their spouse to receive pension. In the event of the primary pensioner's demise, the spouse can continue receiving the family pension in the same

Axis Bank first to go live with a pioneering B2B Collections

Solution for a Fortune 500 company on NBBL's Bharat Connect (NBBL) said, "Bharat Con-MUMBAI: Axis Bank, one of tors, stockists. Retailers can the largest private sector Banks initiate invoice payments diin India, announced that it rectly from the application. As the Biller Operating Unit has partnered with a Fortune

500 company in India to provide B2B collections utilising NBBL's Bharat Connect (Erstwhile BBPS). With this, Axis Bank becomes the first Bank to go live in implementing this pioneering solution, leveraging its best-in-class, robust

The solution can integrate multiple ordering applications across sectors; FMCG, Pharma, Automotives, Healthcare facilitating collections for the company's wholesale distribu-

capable of offering this unique service, Axis Bank has developed this seamless, agile, scalable and customisable solution and with support from NBBL Bharat BillPay. Commenting on the launch,

Neeraj Gambhir, Group Executive & Head - Treasury, Markets & Wholesale Banking Products, Axis Bank said, "Axis Bank has been at the forefront in rolling out pioneering digital payments & collections for its clients. Our partnership

AXIS BANK with the corporate in com-

ing up with a first of its kind

B2B collections solution is a

testament to our best-in-class

Corporate API banking stack.

This initiative is an example

and innovation to strengthen

The RBI aims to remain vig-

ilant, adaptive, and forward-

looking, collaborating with

stakeholders, governments,

and financial regulators to en-

hance the banking ecosystem.

gears up for a crucial decade.

the central bank's focus will

be on striking the right bal-

ance between regulation and

growth, ensuring a robust and

inclusive financial system for

As the Indian economy

the financial sector.

of innovation in India's Digital journey that ensures high customer convenience and seamless payment experience." Noopur Chaturvedi, CEO,

NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd.

nect is expanding its horizon with the introduction of Business to Business (B2B) invoice payment and financing platform with an aim to streamline manual processes of large supply chain and distribution networks. We are happy to have Axis Bank as our key partner and the first bank to go live with the expanded solution. This further deepens our already strong relationship with the bank and reflects our shared commitment to democratizing the payments and collections

'NITI NCAER States Economic Forum' Portal to **Boost Research on Public Finances Launched**

NEW DELHI: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday launched the "NITI NCAER States Economic Forum" portal, that will help states make more meaningful interventions, raising revenues, managing debts and learning from peer experiences. The portal, developed by

NITI Aayog, in collaboration with the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), is a comprehensive repository of data on social, economic and fiscal parameters, research reports, papers, and expert commentary on state finances for a period of about

In her keynote address Sitharaman stated that NITI NCAER States Economic Forum will be beneficial in the availability of authentic data.

sised the importance of balance in public finances between revenue generation without burden-



forum is a much-needed step in present times which will help in greater engagement with states.

scal path of the states. She underlined the need for a portal which has comprehensive data of all states, thereby, providing an opportuof other states while making informed policy decisions.

NITI Aayog ČEO B.V.R. Sub- on public finances.

this forum will not only provide information for public knowledge but will also create aware-NCAER Director General, Dr ness and fiscal learning across Poonam Gupta, highlighted the states. He further stated that role in human service and be a permanent asset for the nation as a whole. According to NITI Aayog Vice Chairman, Suman The Union Minister emphanity to appreciate the position K Bery, the 'NITI NCAER State Economic Forum' is a key step in data-driven research, especially

NRI Remittances Soar to Record \$129.4 Billion in 2024, India Retains Top Rank

NEW DELHI: Indians working abroad sent home a record \$129.4 billion in 2024 with the highest-ever inflows of \$36 billion in the October-December quarter, according to the latest figures compiled by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

India tops the list of recipient countries for remittances in 2024 and is way ahead of second-placed Mexico with is at the third spot followed by the Philippines (\$40 billion), and Pakistan (\$33 billion), according to figures compiled by World Bank economists. The growth rate of remittances in 2024 is estimated to be 5.8 per cent, compared to 1.2 per cent



registered in 2023, accord- account for around half of the number of Indians working overseas has tripled from 6.6 million in 1990 to 18.5 million in 2024, with its share in global migrants rising from Development (OECD), follow-4.3 per cent to over 6 per cent ing the onset of the COVID-19 during the same period. Indian pandemic, has been the key migrants in the Gulf countries driver of remittances. This is gaps, and climate change.

world. The recovery of the job markets in the high-income countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

States where the employment of foreign-born workers has recovered steadily and is 11 per cent higher than the prepandemic level seen in February 2020. Officially recorded remittances to low-and middleincome countries (LMICs) are expected to reach \$685 billion

According to the World tinued to outpace other types of external financial flows, such as FDI, to low and middle-income countries and will continue to increase because of enormous migration pressures driven by demographic trends, income

The trust of the depositors of cooperative banks has to be saved



ecently, an

incident of ment of Rs. 122 crore was reported in the New India Cooperative Bank of Mumbai. As a result, to handle the situation, the Reserve Bank of India immediately banned withdrawals, new loans and deposits from the bank. Later, customers were given partial relief in the matter of withdrawals. Nev-

in the minds of customers. Due to the scam in Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank (PMC) a few years ago, customers had to face a lot of problems in withdrawing their money. Incidents of irregularities and bankruptcy in co-operative banks have become common, due to which the trust of small investors in the

ertheless, fear and doubt persist

banking system is decreasing. A major reason for irregularities or scams in cooperative banks is believed to be the dual control system of the Reserve Bank and the Registrar of Cooperatives. Societies Act. They are registered with the «Registrar of Cooperative interfere in the functioning of this banks is mainly done by the state ricultural cooperative institutions

government, whose directors are leaders of the ruling party. Due to these reasons, it is easy to carry out scams in cooperative banks.

A major reason behind Housing Cooperative Society or the public keeping money in cooperative banks is that they offer higher interest on deposits. Due to this, investors get tempted. New India Cooperative Bank and PMC Bank were also offering higher interest on deposits, which was even higher than some other cooperative banks. The formation and functioning

of cooperative banks are based on cooperation. Most countries of the world have cooperative banks, which take deposits and give loans. The main purpose of their establishment is to provide banking facilities in agricultural and rural areas and to realize the concept of financial inclusion. Generally, their branches are limited to one state, but there are exceptions to this.

There are 4 types of cooperative banks in India, namely, first, primary cooperative credit societies, second, central or district cooperative bank, third, state cooperative Cooperative banks are established bank and fourth, land developaccording to the State Cooperative ment bank. Cooperative bank is the apex institution of cooperative credit organization. Just as the Societies», which are regulated by central cooperative bank situated the state government. The Reserve in the district controls the credit Bank of India is the regulator, societies, in the same way, the state but its regulatory role is limited. cooperative bank organizes all the The central government does not central cooperative banks spread across the state. In this way, this bank. The task of monitoring such bank is the apex institution of ag-



spread across the state

So far, the Reserve Bank has taken control of 27 cooperative banks due to scams or irregularities in operations. According to the Reserve Bank of India>s report on the trend and progress of banking in India, the number of urban cooperative banks has decreased from 1,926 to 1,472 in the last 2 decades. Thus, from the financial year 2004-05 till now, 156 urban cooperative banks have been merged, out of which 6 urban cooperative banks have been merged in 2023. In the past years, the Reserve Bank of India has given licenses to many urban cooperative banks, which has increased their number. Although they were also merged later, their

number is low. It is not easy to stop irregularities in cooperative banks in the current system. Also, in the greed of higher interest, customers will not stop depositing their life savings in such banks. Therefore, to keep the confidence of investors intact, the Central Government is considering increasing the existing insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh under the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act

(DICGC). This is also necessary because banks are currently facing the problem of deposits. In such a situation, if investors lose faith in the banking system, then banks will face more difficulties in raising deposits. It is worth mentioning that only when bank deposits increase at a cheaper rate, banks will be able to give loans to the needy and businessmen, because investment in business can be done only when there is availability of capital and economic activities can increase when investment increases.

DICGC is an institution owned by the Reserve Bank of India that provides insurance cover on bank deposits. The premium for the insurance cover is paid by the banks to DICGC on behalf of the customer. All commercial banks including branches of foreign banks, local area banks and in India are insured by DICGC. In case of registration of banks, DICGC shares the details of insurance with them so that customers can be given proper information about the insurance

regional rural banks operating

At present, DICGC pays insurance amount of up to Rs 5 lakh

to the customers in case of bank collapse or bankruptcy. Customers are paid their deposited money within 90 days of the bank collapsing or closing. The affected bank has to give the details of the account holders to DICGC within 45 days. After that, it returns the money to the account holders in

the remaining 45 days. If a depositor has 10 lakh rupees deposited in a bank and the bank collapses, then the depositor will be paid only the insured amount of 5 lakh rupees and the customer>s 5 lakh rupees will be lost. Such a provision has created fear in the minds of investors. Therefore, it is believed that if the insurance amount is increased, investors will not hesitate to deposit money up to the insured amount in banks and this will increase the credibility of banks

The Indian banking system is still strong. It would be wrong to consider the entire banking system flawed based on the scam in New India Cooperative Bank or PMC or any other bank. The monitoring system in the context of cooperative banks is very weak, which needs to be strengthened. Also, there is a need to increase the insurance cover to ensure that the account holders> deposits in banks are safe. Therefore, the government and the Reserve Bank of India need to take further action in the matter to give

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

concrete shape to the corrective

measures as soon as possible.

IBC Emerges as Dominant Recovery Mechanism, Accounts for 48% of Bank Recoveries

NEW DELHI: The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC) has established itself as a consolidated framework for reorganisation, insolvency resolution, and liquidation of corporate persons, partnership firms, and individuals.

The primary objective of the code is to maximise the value of assets and it has significantly impacted the health of India's banking sector while redefining debtor-creditor relationships.

According to the Reserve Bank of India's Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India released in December 2024, the IBC has emerged as the dominant recovery route for banks, accounting for 48 per cent of all recoveries.

Other recovery mechanisms include the SARFAESI Act at 32 per cent, Debt Recovery Tribunals at 17 per cent, and Lok Adalats at 3 per cent during the Financial Year 2023-

A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad in August 2023 analysed the financial performance of firms that underwent resolution under

The findings revealed significant improvements in profitability, liquidity, and overall financial health of resolved





firms in the post-resolution period, highlighting the positive impact of IBC on business continuity and value preser-

As of December 31, 2024, a total of 8,175 Corporate Insolvency Resolution Processes have been initiated. Of these, 3,485 Corporate Debtors have been rescued, including 1,119 through resolution plans, 1,236 through appeal, review, or settlement, and 1,130 through

withdrawal under section 12A. Additionally, 2,707 Corporate Debtors have been referred for liquidation. The 1,119 cases that yielded resolution plans have realised a value of Rs 3.58 lakh crore for creditors, amounting to 162.79 per cent of liquidation value

and 87.58 per cent of fair value. To facilitate expeditious resolution processes and ensure proper implementation of the IBC, the Government has

made six amendments to the code and 122 amendments to regulations since its inception.

Regular training and capacity-building programs for insolvency professionals, adjudicating authorities, and other stakeholders are conducted to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the IBC ecosystem.

The government is also leveraging information technology through digital platforms to automate and streamline processes, making the system more efficient, accurate, and faster, ultimately leading to better outcomes for all stake-

This information was provided by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Minister of State in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Harsh Malhotra, in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today.

Market Cap of NSE-Listed Firms Sees Nearly 7 Pc Growth in FY25 with 11.3 Cr Investors

O NSE

companies reached Rs 410.87 lakh crore (\$4.81 trillion) in FY25 (till March 31), from Rs 384.2 lakh crore (\$4.61 trillion) in FY24 - a growth of 6.94 per cent year-on-year, according to the data released by the National Stock Exchange on Monday.

The total number of companies listed on the NSE stood at 2,720 (as on March 31, 2025).

Total unique registered investors reached 11.3 crore (till March 28), with total unique accounts at 21.94 crore (till March 27). New investor registrations in FY25 were 2.09 crore (till March 28), according to the NSE data. The financial year saw 242 initial public offerings (IPOs), and the total amount

SEBI Extends Deadline

MUMBAI: The Securities

and Exchange Board of India

(SEBI) on Tuesday said that

it has extended the deadline

for implementing new regulations governing retail inves-

tors' entry into algorithmic

The new rules, which were

initially set to take effect on

April 1, will now come into

This extension follows re-

quests from stock exchanges,

who asked for more time to

fully implement the new stan-

dards in consultation with the

Brokers' Industry Standards

The SEBI had first intro-

duced these guidelines on Feb-

ruary 4, aiming to regulate how

retail investors can access and

Under the new rules, there

will be a three-party relation-

ship involving stock exchanges,

brokers, and algo providers.

Brokers will act as the prin-

cipal, while algo providers will

function as their agents. Stock

exchanges will assign a unique

identifier to all orders placed

through these algos to track

investors using their own algos,

of orders. However, they will

only be permitted to let immedi-

ate family members use the algo-

will not be directly regulated

by the SEBI in this system, will

be responsible for registering

the algo providers. Once reg-

istered, these providers can be onboarded by brokers, who

will also be accountable for

handling any complaints re-

lated to algo trading.

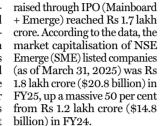
The stock exchanges, which

(algo) trading.

force on August 1.

Forum (ISF)

use algo trading.



Total cumulative volume in GIFT Nifty contracts for FY25 reached 23.99 million contracts, with a total turnover of \$1.111 trillion. Since the commencement of full-scale operations in July 2023, GIFT Nifty has achieved a total cumulative volume of 38.99 million contracts, with a total cumulative

The total cumulative traded value surged from \$611.95 billion to \$1111.14 billion, a growth of 82 per cent. Average monthly value rose from \$67.99 billion to \$92.60 billion, a growth of 36 per cent, as per the NSE data. Average daily traded value climbed from \$3.19 billion to \$4.26 billion, a growth of 34 per cent. On NSE IX (GIFT IFSC), the total notional turnover crossed the \$1 trillion mark in FY25. "Total Notional Turnover of the NSE IX across all the products for FY25 is \$1,144 billion vs \$735 billion for FY24," according to the NSE data. As many as 65,031 unique clients were registered in FY25 (till March 28) compared to 316



by UK-based energy think-tank Ember reveals that India's three key heavy industries-steel, cement, and aluminium-represent a 20 gigawatt (GW) solar open access market opportunity despite their current reliance on

captive coal generation. The report highlights how renewable procurement could significantly reduce both production costs and emissions, potentially cutting up to 29 million tonnes of carbon dioxide annually. The steel sector alone contributes 9.4 GW to this opportunity, driven by the high cost of grid power that can be

cost-effectively offset by solar. In some configurations, such as standalone arc furnaces used in secondary steelmaking, solar could reduce production costs

by up to 10 percent. sectors, despite their dependence on captive coal, contribute an additional 11 GW to the po-

tential market. Heavy industries

NEW DELHI: A new analysis in Chhattisgarh and Odisha account for approximately 40 percent of the assessed 20 GW open access solar market.

The high concentration of industrial activity, combined with favourable open access regulations, makes these states particularly attractive markets.

Policies offering discounts on cross-subsidy surcharges and various other charges strengthen the business case for renewable procurement across states.

"Odisha and Chhattisgarh have long been legacy industrial hubs, owing to their proximity to rich mineral reserves. By integrating renewable power, they are well-positioned to begin their transformation to green manufacturing hubs," said

The cement and aluminium already underway, with Odisha actively envisioning green industrial parks, setting the stage for an export-driven, low-carbon future in manufacturing.

from variable renewable energy is already cost-competitive for heavy industries.

However, pushing beyond this threshold requires more advanced strategies. "Cost-competitive, near-24x7 renewable energy will power the first wave of industrial decarbonisation and redefine the future of corporate power purchases," said Neshwin Rodrigues, Senior Energy Analyst, Ēmber.

Ember's modelling showed that reaching 80 percent renewable energy remains feasible with only a moderate cost increase-about 1.4 times higher than plain solar—due to the need for energy storage and managing surplus power.

Increasing to 90 percent renewable energy raises costs to approximately 1.6 times that of olain solar. Even at this level, the premium remains reasonable when weighed against decarbonisation commitments and growing international mandates for clean supply chains.

The report indicates that achieving 100 percent renewable energy is challenging at present. Full renewable power could cost Rs 8 to Rs 11 per unit in India, about 3.5 times the cost of solar. Batteries alone account

Achieving this level of reliability would require substantial oversizing of renewable energy capacity and a major scale-up in storage infrastructure.

India's Heavy Industries Hold 20 GW Solar Opportunity: Report **BEL Achieves Record** Turnover of Rs. 23,000 **Crore in FY 2024-25**



Navratna Defence PSU Bharat

Bangaluru

Electronics Limited (BEL) has achieved a turnover of around Rs.23,000 Cr (Provisional & Unaudited), during the Financial Year 2024-25, against the previous year's turnover of Rs.19,820 Cr registering a growth of 16%. This includes Export sales of around US\$ 106 Million during FY 2024-25, as against the previous year's export turnover of US\$ 92.98 Million, registering a growth of 14%. In the fiscal year 2024-25, BEL secured orders worth Rs.18,715 Cr. Some of the major orders received during the year are BMP II Upgrade, Ashwini Radar, Software Defined Radios, Data link, Multi-Function Radars, EON 51, Seekers, Anti Drone System, Airport Surveillance Radar, Sonar Upgradation, Flycatcher spares, Radar upgradation, Spares and Services, etc, and other projects in Non-defence sector. With this, the total Order Book of BEL as on April 1st, 2025, stands at around Rs.71,650 Cr including Export Order Book of USD 359

Sandeep Jain Re-elected FISME President

25. Speaking to KNN, Sandeep Jain was wax eloquent about his current tenure and thanked the

CEC colleagues for reposing in faith in him for next year as well.

The brief period of one year has enriched me immensely. It is a matter of great satisfaction that with amazing team at FISME- both present and past office bearers and officials in the secretariat, we have been able to make an inedible mark on long standing issues of MSMEs", he said. "The Agenda of the year is

Swift Execution: The first the supply of 156 Light Combat AL31FP engine was handed and I am eagerly looking forward to contributing to them

for Retail Investors' Algo **Company Claims Extra Safety Tools** Trading Norms to Aug 1 derabad, using the service," claimed the

nai and

The service comes with a set of strict safety protocols, including GPS tracking, realtime ride tracking, and an inapp emergency button. "This is to ensure that both teens and their parents feel secure while

company.

Teens' is that it allows parents to have oversight on the rides their children book.

detailed ride summaries after

Duttatreya Das, Asia analyst, He added that this shift is for 60 percent of this cost.

der book, HAL expanded its manufacturing capacity by adding additional production lines for the LCA and HTT-40 aircraft and augmenting aero engine capacity at its Koraput

HAL reached several milestones during the fiscal year:

Maharatna Status: HAL became the first Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) to achieve the prestigious 'Maharatna' status.

New Contracts: HAL secured contracts for the supply of 12 additional Su-30 MKI aircraft, Mid-Life Upgrade (MLU) of 40 Do-228 aircraft, supply of 240 AL31FP engines for the Su-30 MKI aircraft, and an avionics

NEW DELHI: The Central Executive Committee of Fed-

eration of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME) has reelected the incumbent President Sandeep K. Jain for the year 2025-26 An IIT-Kanpur alumnus, Jain was elected President in 2024-

Uber for Teens Aged 13-17 arrives in India,

major Uber on Wednesday announced the launch of a new service called 'Uber for Teens' in India, which, the company claimed, is designed to offer safe and reliable transportation options for teenagers aged

13 to 17 years in the country. This service has been rolled out across 37 cities in the country, including Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hy-



Kolkata,

A key feature of 'Uber for

Parents can create a Teens account, which lets them request rides on behalf of their teens, track the rides in real-time, and even receive

Adani Ports Clocks 7 Pc Cargo Handling Growth at 450 MMT in FY25, Aims at Global Expansion

AHMEDABAD: Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd (APSEZ) handled 450 million metric tonnes (MMT) of cargo in FY 2024-25, marking a 7 per cent year-on-year growth, it was announced on Wednesday.

Mundra, APSEZ's flagship port, achieved a historic feat by surpassing the 200 MMT cargo mark in a single fiscal, a first for any Indian port.

The country's largest port operator handled 420 MMT of cargo in the financial year 2023-24, surpassing the government's 410 MMT volume. This milestone was accompanied by a record 24 per cent revenue surge, a 50 per cent jump in crisis, geopolitical conflicts, and net profits, and a 24 per cent extreme weather events, APSEZ HAL accelerated deliveries of

Karan Adani, Managing Dithe new regulations will require rector of APSEZ, is steering the them to register their algorithms company toward global dominance, aiming to become the if they exceed a certain number world's largest port operator by 2030, achieve carbon neutrality by 2025, and attain net-zero emissions by 2040.

> "Aspiration is a promise we make to ourselves. Under our Chairman Gautam Adani's leadership, we will continue to them," said Karan Adani.

APSEZ's vision aligns with India's broader economic goals.



lion in merchandise exports by 2030 while aiming to cut logistics costs from 14 per cent to 8 per cent of GDP.

Karan Adani emphasised APSEZ's commitment to these national objectives, vowing to expand global trade connectivity and strengthen infrastructure.

Despite challenges such as global trade disruptions in the Red Sea, the Panama Canal

Its growth strategy focuses on infrastructure enhancement, cutting-edge technology adoption, operational excellence, and handling a diverse range of cargo efficiently.

Currently managing 27 per cent of India's cargo volumes, APSEZ has developed or acquired 14 ports and terminals since 1998

The company also operates aim for the stars – and achieve international ports in Haifa (Israel), Abbot Point (Australia), Colombo (Sri Lanka), and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), reinforc-The government targets \$1 triling its growing global footprint.

HAL Reports Steady Revenue Growth amid Challenges in FY 2024-25 **ARUN KUMAR RAO** the largest procurement by MoD from HAL to date. To support its growing or-Hindustan Aeronautics Limited

Bengaluru

(HAL) has recorded a revenue of Rs. 30,400 crores (provisional and unaudited) for the financial year ending March 31, 2025, marginally exceeding the previous year's revenue of Rs. 30,381 crores, Press release from HAL said.

Despite facing challenges in the delivery of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) and Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH), the company successfully maintained its revenue. The LCA deliveries were affected due to the non-availability of engines, while the ALH schedule suffered setbacks following an accident in January 2025, leading to the grounding of the fleet. However, ther products an helping sustain its financial

Dr. D K Sunil, Chairman and



strengthened its order book, which now stands at Rs. 1,84,000 crores, compared to

an opening order book position of Rs. 94,129 crores after adjusting for current-year liquidation. The company secured new manufacturing contracts worth Rs. 1,02,000 crores and Repair and Overhaul (ROH) contracts amounting to Rs. Strengthened Order Book 17,500 crores. A landmark and Capacity Expansion: Over contract was signed with the upgrade of one IL-78 aircraft. Helicopters (LCH) Prachand, over within just one month of

valued at Rs. 62,777 crores— contract signing.

JICA extends ODA loan of Rs. 4,649 cr for Delhi Mass Rapid **Transport System Project**

Enhancing Urban Mobility in Delhi by Expanding the Metro Network to Reduce Congestion, Pollution and Travel Time

TANVIR KAUR New Delhi

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has signed a loan agreement amounting to 79,726 million Japanese Yen (approximately INR 4,649 crores) (part of a total project cost of 298,358 million Japanese Yen) for the Delhi Mass Rapid Transport System Project (Phase 4 Additional Corridors) (I).

This project aims to enhance urban mobility in the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi by expanding the Delhi Metro network through the construction of additional corridors. With Delhi facing severe traffic congestion, high air pollution levels, and increasing travel demand, this initiative will help improve public transportation accessibility, reduce automobile dependency, and contribute to a sustainable urban environment. The ODA loan agreement was signed between Manisha Sinha, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry

Commenting on the occasion, TAKEUCHI Takuro, Chief Representative of JICA India, stated, "The rapid in-

of JICA India.

of Finance and TAKEUCHI

Takuro, Chief Representative



vehicle ownership in Delhi has led to severe traffic congestion and environmental challenges. The expansion of the Delhi Metro network is a critical step toward addressing these issues by providing a reliable, efficient, and ecofriendly mass transit solution. JICA remains committed to supporting India's efforts in developing sustainable urban infrastructure, and this project will contribute significantly to improving the quality of life for Delhi's residents.'

The project involves the expansion of the Delhi Metro network with the construction of approximately 47 km of new metro corridors, including extensions of Line 1 and Line 5, and the development of a new Line 11. It includes the construction of 39 new metro stations, comprising 9 underground, 1 at-grade, and 29 elevated stations, along with a new metro depot. The

crease in urbanization and initiative will also introduce advanced electrical, signalling, and communication systems, along with automatic fare collection systems to enhance passenger experience. Additionally, 178 new metro cars will be procured to support increased network capacity. To ensure efficient execution, the project will include consulting services for design review. construction supervision, and technology transfer, strengthening local expertise in metro operations and infrastructure management. The project is expected to

directly benefit approximately 400,000 daily commuters by 2031, while indirectly improving connectivity for over 17 million residents in the Delhi NCR region. By reducing traffic congestion, enhancing accessibility, and lowering vehicular emissions, the project will contribute to Delhi's long-term urban sustainability

Panipat has become a global hub in dealing with 'textile waste'





huge foreign exchange and has become a global hub in dealing The former Union Minister of with 'textile waste', where rugs Textiles has given the message coming from 90 countries, yarn of environmental protection by and cloth being made having anwearing jackets made of polyesnual turnover for amount worth ter yarn. Entrepreneurs are imrupees 3,650 thousand crores porting waste cloth from foreign from waste cloth (rugs). There countries including USA and are about 350-400 textile indus-European countries to produce tries in this textile city in North cloth and exporting it to the same where yarn and cloth are made countries to earn foreign curby recycling the rugs coming to rency, besides utilizing foreign Panipat from about 90 countries waste in manufacturing textile

products. There are eight units in textile town Panipat producing polyester yarn from PET bottles, which also include plastic bottles and broken cans. This is how the box is made from plastic thread. By recycling water, cold drink or any other bottle, white coloured plastic granules and chips are made first. According to information, in

past three years, nearly 70 new units have been set up in Panipat to produce yarn from waste. After that the grain is sent to different units and plastic sheet is made from the thread. The plastic sheet is put into the rag machine and fiber is prepared. Fiber strips prepared in automatic spinning mills is sent to the yarn mak-



ARUN KUMAR RAO

Bangalore

In a significant stride towards self-reliance in renewable energy technology, CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL) has signed a Transfer of Technology (ToT) agreement with M/s. Supreme Solar Pvt. Ltd. for the application of its groundbreaking NALSUN-NGTM coating technology. This eco-friendly, sprayable coating, designed for high-efficiency flat plate solar water heaters, marks a crucial step in reducing India's dependency on imported solar components while advancing sustainability goals.

A Breakthrough in Solar Absorber Coatings: NALSUN-NGTM is an advanced graphene oxide-based solar absorber coating that sets a new benchmark in solar thermal applications. Unlike conventional coatings, it uses water as a solvent, eliminating volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and hazardous chemicals. Fully compliant with RoHS and REACH regulations, the technology is a testament to CSIR-NAL's commitment to developing scalable, costeffective, and environmentally

Developed by Dr. N. Selvakumar, Principal Scientist, G. Srinivas, STO, and Dr. Harish Barshilia, Chief Scientist at CSIR-NAL, this innovative coating replaces expensive and complex physical vapor deposition processes. It also surpasses sprayable alternatives that often contain flammable and harmful

sustainable solutions.



VOCs, offering a safer, sustainable, and scalable solution for the solar industry

Transforming Solar Water Heating Efficiency: The integration of NALSUN-NGTM coating on aluminum and copper fins in flat plate solar water heaters enhances sunlight-to-heat conversion efficiency up to an impressive 70%. This efficiency translates into substantial energy savings, reducing household electricity consumption by 1,000-2,000 kWh per year and lowering CO2 emissions by 1-2 tons annually. This innovation directly supports global climate action initiatives and aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 7 -Affordable and Clean Energy and SDG 13 - Climate Action).

CSIR-NAL Director Dr. Abhay Pashilkar emphasized the transformative impact of this innovation, particularly in remote villages where access to conventional energy sources is limited. By replacing traditional electric or gas-powered water heating systems, these solar heaters offer a cost-effective and sustainable alternative.

Boosting India's Manufacturing and Clean Energy Goals: This initiative is a crucial step towards reducing India's reliance on imported solar components.

FY25: Deciphering Pharma Exports from India

n first eleven months of FY . 2024-25, i.e., from April 2024 to February 2025, export of pharmaceuticals touched \$26.72 Bn. In February 2025, India exported drugs & pharmaceuticals worth \$2.47 Bn. Exports of Drugs & Pharmaceuticals were marginally lower in February 2025 as compared to exports of \$2.58 Bn in January 2025 thereby registering a decline of 4.42 per cent. Exports for full FY25 are likely to cross \$29.0 Bn, up from \$27.85 Bn in FY24.

is in line with the trend observed in previous five years. India has remained a net exporter of pharmaceuticals. Export of Pharmaceuticals stood at Rs. 2,19,439 Crore due to increase in import of in FY24, up from Rs. 1,40,537 Crore in FY20

Overall, export of pharmaceuticals revealed a positive trend in previous five years. Growth rate in exports of pharmaceuticals was lowest in 2021-22. Import of pharmaceuticals including bulk drugs, drug intermediates, etc. remain a concern. In 2019-2020, India had import of ary 2025 period. pharmaceuticals worth Rs. 40,139 Crore, which went up in 2020-2021 to Rs. 46,808

DR. ANIL KUMAR Table 1: Export of Pharmaceuticals from India

| | Financial Year | Export of Pharmaceuticals (In Rs. Crore) | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| | 2019-20 | 1,40,537 | | | |
| | 2020-21 | 1,74,064 | | | |
| | 2021-22 | 1,74,955 | | | |
| | 2022-23 | 1,94,254 | | | |
| | 2023-24 | 2,19,439 | | | |
| - | Saures Compiled from Annual Deport 2027 25 Deportment of Dearmageuticals (n. / | | | | |

Source: Compiled from Annual Report 2024-25, Department of Pharmaceuticals (p.4)

| States | Pharma Exports (\$ Mn) | Percentage Share in Total Pharma Exports | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Gujarat | 5,597.59 | 20.90 | | | |
| Telangana | 5,071.13 | 18.93 | | | |
| Maharashtra | 4,482.37 | 16.73 | | | |
| Andhra Pradesh | 2,167.83 | 8.09 | | | |
| Himachal Pradesh | 1,5558.27 | 5.82 | | | |
| Course Compiled from National Import Disport Paged for Vendy Analysis of Trade | | | | | |

Growth in exports for FY25 Crore, the highest one in the period from 2020 to 2024. Import of pharmaceuticals declined to Rs. 56,391 Crore in FY 2022-23, but again in 2023-2024, trend got reversed pharmaceuticals. In 2023-24, import of pharmaceuticals stood at Rs. 58,440 Crore.

> Among commodities exported from India, Drugs & Pharmaceuticals figure among top 5 slots. Export of Drugs & Pharmaceuticals account for almost 7 per cent of India's total merchandise exports by value for April 2024 to Febru-

The USA market occupied the first place with exports worth \$8,953.37 Mn dur-

a new level of Rs. 60,060 of total export of drugs and pharmaceuticals from India as India exported drugs and pharmaceuticals worth \$26,724.16 Mn (or \$26.72 Bn) during this period. Because of this very reason, tariff in the USA remains a concern

> Other major markets for Drugs & Pharma from India are Netherlands (2.09%), Canada (2.05%), Germany (2.02%), Russian Federation (1.89%), Belgium (1.81%), Nigeria (1.79%), Australia (1.58%), Philippines (1.49%), Kenya (1.45%), United Arab Emirates (1.29%), Mexico (1.10%), and China (1.09%).

Top five countries have 43.95 per cent share of Drugs Crore. In 2021-22, the import ing first 11 months of FY25 & Pharmaceuticals' exports tries/Territories) with 5.89 per logicals form a major proportion of pharmaceuticals touched and formed about one-third from India. Top 10 markets cent share, are major Grouption of pharmaceutical exports

Table 2: Exports from India - Top Five Commodities % Share in selected (\$ Mn) criteria's total exports **Engineering Goods** 105,845.12 26.75 Petroleum Products 58,617.85 **Electronic Goods** 34,015.88 8.60

26,785.69 Source: Compiled from National Import-Export Record for Yearly Analysis of

26,917.63

Trade (Accessed on April 1, 2025)

Gems & Iewellerv

Drugs & Pharmaceuticals



collectively have 53.81 per cent ings forming major markets share. Major share of exports to highly regulated markets remain a strength of Indian Pharmaceutical Industry. North American Free Trade for Indian pharmaceutical Agreement (NAFTA comprising 3 countries) has 36.65 per cent share in total exports of Drugs & Pharmaceuticals followed by Europe (38 Countries/Territories) with 19.39 per cent share, Africa (48 Countries/Territories) with 13.15 per cent share, Latin American Countries (LAC) (43 Countries/Territories) with 6.79 per cent share, and Association of Southeast Asian

Nations (ASEAN) (10 Coun-

for Drugs & Pharmaceuticals from India.

Collectively, top five states had 70.47 per cent share in first 11 months' exports of Drugs &Pharmaceuticals from India Other States/Union Territories which have more than one per cent share in exports of Drugs & Pharmaceuticals include Madhya Pradesh (5.63%), Karnataka (5.28%), Goa (4.18%), Tamil Nadu (2.89%), Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli (2.67%), Punjab (1.76%), Rajasthan (1.35%), Haryana (1.32%), and Uttarakhand (1.24%).

Drug formulations and bio-

April 2024 – Feb 2025 Table 3: Export of Drugs & Pharmaceuticals - Top Five Destinations

| Country | Pharma Exports (\$ Mn) | % Snare in selected criteria's total pharma exports | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| USA | 8,953.37 | 33.50 | | | | |
| UK | 830.18 | 3.11 | | | | |
| Brazil | 692.46 | 2.59 | | | | |
| France | 644.98 | 2.41 | | | | |
| South Africa | 626.03 | 2.34 | | | | |
| Source Compiled from National Import Export Decord for Vearly Analysis of Trade | | | | | | |

from India. Growth in exports also decided to shut down the of AYUSH and Herbal products remains a positive sign. In its solid dosage formulation the beginning of FY 2024-25, India's pharmaceutical exports were expected to touch \$31 billion, due to various reasons. Shortage of drugs in the US market. This facility used U.S. market, which occupies top slot for India's export of pharmaceuticals, was cited as major reason in April 2024. most 1.5 billion doses.

Closure of certain pharma plants in the USA was also positive for exports from India. In February 2023, Wock-Grove, Illinois in the USA. Wockhardt did it as a part of its business restructuring in the USA, and opted for thirdparty contract manufacturing to save about \$12 million annually. In-house to Thirdparty contract manufacturing helped the company to lower fixed cost as the company was incurring a fixed cost of \$25 million annually to operate the plant.

Jubilant Cadista Pharmaceuticals Inc., USA, the sub-

manufacturing operations of facility at Salisbury, Maryland, USA in April 2024. Jubilant Cadista continued the sales and marketing operations for to manufacture tablets and capsules for the US market with the capacity to serve al-

Closure of plants by Wockhardt and Jubilant Cadista are just two examples to point out the potential shift towards hardt had shut down its manu- exports from India rather than facturing facility at Morton manufacturing in the USA. Akorn Pharma became bankrupt and closed all US sites. The company also laid off entire workforce. These examples also showed the impact on supply of pharma products in the US market due to closures of manufacturing plants.

March 2025 figures on export of pharmaceutical products are not yet available but exports for full FY25 are likely to cross \$29.0 Bn with an increase of just little more than \$1 Bn over FY24 exports. sidiary of Jubilant Pharmova Signals of decline in exports

April 2024 - February 2025 March 2025 due to the US reciprocal tariff threats. In February 2025, it was reported in media that the government was mulling incentives for exporters. Exporters anticipated announcement regarding allocation in the Export Promotion Mission which was announced in the recent Union Budget.

Exporters of pharmaceutical products expect that Trump administration will give preferential treatment to pharma exports as brandgenerics from India ultimately help the US consumers/patients to reduce their healthcare costs. Words of Commerce Minister Pivush Goyal convey the message in this context that councils (Pharmexcil with respect to pharmaceutical products) and industry associations need to come out of the protectionist mindset, and be bold and ready to deal with the world from a position of strength and self-confidence. Indian Pharmaceutical Industry is well-positioned to keep the momentum in exports of pharma products.

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.

needed for operations. This approach

requires proper training and regular

Evolution of Global Pharma GCCs in India: A Shift to Value Services VIRENDRA KUMAR Fig. 1: An example of GCC services: End-to-end support to create a launch building (ACE® framework used by AdametNext) Figure 2: Commercial Thought Process behind the pharmaceutical brand building (ACE® framework used by AdametNext) Rural Healthcare Sector of India



India has rap-

pharmaceutical Global Capability

Centers (GCCs). These centers,

which serve as critical exten-

companies, have transformed

the country by fostering innova-

contributing significantly to eco-

nomic growth. Along with areas

such as manufacturing and re-

search, Pharma business support

services have been accepted as a

key offering by pharma GCCs.

Over a period, customer expecta-

tions have shifted towards more

value-oriented services. India

has become the home of pharm:

experts who understand the criti-

cal aspects of decision-making

during drug development and

go-to-market (GTM) strategy

Pharma GCCs are offshore

units of Pharma MNCs. These

GCCs are set up to centralize

operations, research, and sup-

port services. These centers play

a crucial role in drug discovery,

regulatory compliance, pharma-

covigilance, data analytics, clini-

cal research, commercialization

(brand planning, marketing, and

sales), and digital transformation

in the pharmaceutical sector.

Pharma GCCs enable global

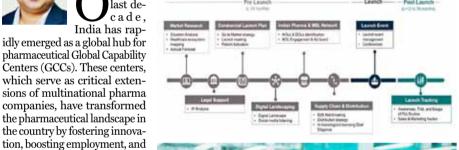
companies to streamline their

operations while leveraging their

planning.

ver the

Fig. 1: An example of GCC services: End-to-end support to create a launch excellence





Services, whereas Tech Operations Support, Legal Compliance & Intellectual Property (IP), and Lean Six Sigma are integral components of Operations Services. Certain services are part of Commercial Services as well as Scientific Services, e.g., Customer Campaigns & Market Development. There are services such as Training Design & Delivery, which cover the entire gamut of PLC Services covering Commercial, Scientific & Operations India is becoming a preferred

host country's technological exdestination for Pharmaceutical pertise and cost efficiency, such as the US, EU, and UK markets. GCCs due to multiple factors. The availability of a skilled The big pharma companies initially tested the water in collabpharmaceutical workforce is oration with various India-based a major factor due to the vast KPOs such as WNS, EvalueServe, pool of pharmaceutical gradu-ZS, Cognizant, etc. In the early ates and postgraduates, including highly skilled professionals 2000s, the less critical and timein MBA/M. Pharm. and other consuming business activities were shifted to India. With the specialized fields such as cliniknowledge transfer, more and cal research and healthcare sermore complex services were also vice management. With over 4 moved to India, such as com-Lakh pharmaceutical graduates annually, the country offers a mercial and medical integrated insights, competitive readiness young, talent-rich ecosystem leads, commercial analytics, for pharmaceutical GCCs who forecasting, and market access can easily be trained in global pharmaceutical operation man-India offers lower operational

blockbuster drug patient cliff.

frastructure have brought the

Strong IT and digital in-

solutions. With the passage of time, many Pharma MNCs initiated the establishment of these capcosts while maintaining hightives under their brands as done quality output compared to by companies like Novartis, Lilly, developed nations. Compa-BMS, Sandoz, Amgen, Sanofi, nies setting up GCCs in India and Takeda to name a few. Rebenefit from reduced labour garding location priority, Hyderand infrastructure expenses, abad was a clear winner among making it an attractive investother cities ment destination. The efficiency Product Life Cycle Services gain helps the global companies maintain their positive bottom line while their top line performance shrinks due to poor

typically include Commercial Services, Scientific Services, and Operations Services, Insights and Analytics, Field Force Operations, and Patient Access are integral components of Commercial Services. Medical Support, Pre-Launch Scientific Support, and global workforce close to each Post-Launch Scientific Support other, and now people in the

are integral parts of Scientific US and India can work like colleagues without many communication challenges. The acceptance of remote work has enabled work-from-anywhere

concepts across the globe. The Government of India has proactively promoted foreign investment through initiatives like Make in India, Start-up India, and production-linked incentives (PLI). Setting up Special Economic Zones (SEZs) helped provide a conducive environment for pharma GCCs.

Indian pharma professionals have traveled a long way in the last 20-25 years, thereby gaining recognition for their work and potential. Many Indian professionals have also successfully shifted to the US and EU to take bigger responsibilities in the pharma value chain. The confidence in the Indian workforce has led to the shift of more business-critical roles The rapid expansion of phar-

ma GCCs in India has significantly impacted the economy in multiple ways, be it job creation, strengthening of the Innovation Ecosystem, FDI, or boosting ancillary industries. Along with conventional job options, offshore GCCs (captive/vendors) have emerged as major high-value job-creating centers. Due to their global exposure and best employee-friendly practices, these centers have emerged as preferred employers in recent

The majority of professionals in the global GCC support global innovative drug development. It equipped them with the essential skills required for converting new launch performance or a new chemical entity into a pharmaceutical drug/brand. Unfortunately, these skills are not much appreciated by the local pharmaceutical industry, which revolves around low-cost

Figure 2: Commercial Thought Process behind the pharmaceutical brand



generic options. However, the exposure has inspired many young professionals to work in innovative drug development The expansion of GCCs

(now close to 1,700), including Pharma sector-specific GCCs, has attracted significant FDI ment. Besides attracting FDI, the presence of pharma GCCs fuels growth in associated industries such as biotechnology, software development, data security, and legal services, further expanding India's economic potential. To maximize the Pharma

GCC opportunity, continuous efforts are required from all stakeholders. The government should continue to refine its policies to attract more foreign investments in the pharma GCC sector. Streamlining regulatory approvals, offering tax incentives, and facilitating ease of business can further solidify India's position as a global hub. By increasing funding for R&D initiatives and fostering industry-academia collaboration, India can drive innovation in pharmaceuticals and biotech, strengthening the long-term sustainability of pharma GCCs. Investing in AI, big data analytics and automation technologies will help pharma GCCs optimize operations and develop novel drug discovery and patient care solutions. Expanding healthcare and IT infrastructure, particularly in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, can support the decentralization of pharma GCCs and in emerging regions.

create employment opportunities The most pertinent intervention is to align our education system with industry requirements to sustain and enhance India's attractiveness as a pharma GCC hub. Pharma institutes (national or regional) must understand and appreciate the requirements of pharma GCCs. Accordingly, these institutes must change their syllabus to make their students more relevant to pharma GCCs. Prominent institutes have already initiated these moves, e.g., in many such courses. students are now exposed to the global drug development and commercialization process rather than restricted to only

the Indian market focus. Pharma sector-specific pro-

grams such as MBA (Pharm.) at the Department of Pharmaceutical Management, NIPER Mohali, collaboration of pharma institutions with pharma GCCs and vendors/partners such as AdametNext, IQVIA, etc. can help in aligning curriculum in line with the changing demands inflows, strengthening India's of pharma industry including good number of Telemedicine startups economic resilience and foster- Pharma GCCs. New-age institutes must include the novel drug development and commercialization process in their syllabus to make their students industry-ready. A pertinent example in this regard is MBA students, while working with AdametNext on live projects, develop an understanding of the Commercial Thought Process (Refer to Figure 3) behind the

pharmaceutical brand building. Encouraging Multidisciplinary Learning, including new-age data analytics, use of new-age tools such as Chat-GPT, and understanding of various key stakeholders in the drug development and commercialization process can ensure 360-degree readiness of Indian talent for these global GCC opportunities. Along with technical expertise, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills are essential for roles in global pharma GCCs. Introducing leadership and business communication training at the academic level will help graduates integrate seamlessly into the industry. To conclude, India's rise

as a premier destination for pharma GCCs is a testament e-Sanjeevani Telemed system. to its robust talent pool, cost advantages, and technological capabilities. As the global pharmaceutical industry continues to evolve, India has the potential to emerge as a powerhouse for research, innovation, brand building, and commercialization of pharmaceutical brands. However, realizing this potential requires a concerted effort from policymakers, industry leaders, and educational institutions to foster a conducive environment for growth. By implementing strategic reforms and investing in future-ready perform sample collection. talent, India can not only strengthen its position as a Third Model is of Franchisee operglobal pharma GCC leader but also drive long-term economic and healthcare advancements

Virendra Kumar- CEO, AdametNext (Hyderabad)

on a global scale.



SIDDHARTH **ANGRISH** elemedicine re-

ing Covid times. The Government of India brought out Telemedicine practice guidelines in March 2020 to help patients seek healthcare from remotely located doctors and bring clarity on the regulations guiding this space. Many new startups rose quickly to capitalize upon the new opportunity. Most of these startups focussed on providing Telemedicine solutions for urban consumers. Consequently, most of Telemedicine use cases covered in popular media were also related to urban populations. Incidentally, a could not find traction beyond Covid

It is pertinent to look at Telemedi-

cine solutions working in rural healthcare, where there is a pressing need for effective Telemedicine solutions. There are 6.4 lakh villages in India with very sparse population and negligible presence of specialist doctors. Healthcare systems in India have struggled to find doctors willing for rural postings. The villages overall account for nearly 60% of India's population. Many studies have indicated that a rural patient has to travel 100 km on average to seek good quality healthcare. More than 80% of patients visiting city hospitals are from rural regions. While government run Primary Health Centers (PHCs) do operate in rural regions, they frequently do not have specialist doctors and frequently have quality issues. Over the past several years, many Telemedicine based models have emerged to tackle the problem of making specialist doctors available to the rural masses

Primarily, four different models are being deployed namely Purely app-based e-consultation, Companyoperated Brick-and-mortar based e-Clinics, Franchisee-operated Brickand-mortar based e-Clinics, and PHCs upgraded by the CDAC developed First model, i.e., Purely app-based e-consultation models have city-based

specialist doctors. Most of these solutions had the same look and feel for both urban and rural patients. These solutions were primarily designed for urban consumers. Second type is of Company Owned & Company Operated brick and mortar-based e-Clinics under which a telemedicine solutions provider company sets up and runs a new healthcare facility in a village region providing telemedicine services among others. The company also hires a couple of team members: pharmacist and a nursing staff to help manage the patients, dispense medicines and

ated brick and mortar-based e-Clinics. This model leverages the presence of existing pharmacies run by a village pharmacist by upgrading them with Telemedicine services among other value-added features. Fourth Model is where PHCs are upgraded



Telemed system. This refers to the government initiative which provide free telemedicine services to patients

All these 4 models have their own

strengths and weaknesses. The purely

app-based e-consultation systems are easy to develop and manage but are often deemed insufficient due to lack of timely availability of medicines and lab tests which are needed immediately after an e-consultation. It is also not understood clearly how many of the rural patients are able to use such systems on their own. Since Covid days, many hospitals also brought out their mobile based video e-consultation apps increasing competition and decreasing margins for Telemedicine companies. As a result, most such startups have complemented their offerings with multiple services like health insurance, lab test bookings and online medicine ordering. A company owned and company

to provide specialist access through Telemedicine and allied services in villages. It is an extensible model where many additional services can be added like medicines, disease screening programs, pathology setups, referrals to hospitals and even occasional presence of qualified doctors. This model also offers to capture interesting patient data which, after proper anonymization, can help in both drug and disease research. However, it is quite costly to maintain each such facility for a single village. Hiring and retaining manpower, managing the facility, and avoiding pilferages pose monthly liabilities. Given that rural regions have smaller population concentrations and relatively lower spending capacity, the pricing for offered services in the e-Clinic have to be quite aggressive putting strain on sustainability. Such a new e-Clinic would also face intense competition from local alternatives adding to the difficulties. More awareness campaigns must be run in the short to medium term to generate local trust. This further puts more strain on economics. Finding new locations where new e-Clinics can be set up, needs multiple onfield staff members adding to costs of running the business.

Franchisee operated e-Clinics where a local healthcare professional with an entrepreneurial mindset operates the e-Clinic is also a powerful and nimble approach. It is well documented that on an average, each India village has 3-4 healthcare professionals operating their own small pharmacy or a clinic. Thus, it is not difficult to find local collaborators. Having their skin in the game, by way of a small investment, ensures general seriousness

engagement of the e-Clinic operators. This can be achieved through regular online programs. This model though requires active management of a large number of such e-clinics. Building or nursing an existing comprehensive CRM software to manage multiple nuances of running remote e-clinics is very important. A great advantage of this approach is the nimbleness it provides which can help in fast scalability as this model does not incur any fixed monthly liabilities. A downside is that the person managing the e-Clinic is not on the company payroll but rather he/she is a local independent professional who has taken the company franchise. This may require more active work to ensure that standard operating procedures of the company e followed accurately. P based rewards can be employed to help local operators adhere to the prescribed protocols. Just like the company operated e-Clinics model, this model also enables important patient data capture which can help

newer drug and disease research. Lastly, the government's e-Sanjeevani initiative provides free e-consults at PHCs. This is also quite an effective approach since a PHC can easily provide most of the necessary medicines and lab tests. However, PHCs typically operated e-Clinic is a powerful method operate for about 6 hours a day. On other hand, private health facilities typically remain available for 10-12 hours each day, frequently available even on Sundays and other holidays. Addition of new technologies to a government-operated telemedicine system may have longer gestation periods. Additionally, the quality of operations of some remote PHCs may not be satisfactory. Several articles which have appeared in reputed journals including Lancet, over the years indicate less than satisfactory performance of government PHCs.

It is possible that different state governments may provide a telemedicine system other than e-Sanjeevani in their local Government health facilities. This may lead to lack of cohesiveness among multiple solutions making impact analyses a bit difficult. Indian rural healthcare presents a very attractive business and impact opportunity for the world's investors and Indian policy makers. Over the past few years, many Telemedicine solutions have been deployed in different parts of rural India indicating acceptance of the need. It is only a matter of a few years that rural healthcare in India will have a strong, sustainable and effective Telemedicine system catering to 100s of thousands of patients needing speciality care. Not only would this help reduce the healthcare burden of the country but also contribute to newer drug and disease research. The startups involved in this endeavour are quite likely to be rewarded handsomely.

> Siddharth Angrish-Founder and CEO, Jiyyo *Innovations*

Indian Agriculture Exports to US May attract higher Punjab Govt fully prepared duties due to 32.4 per cent Trade Imbalance: GTRI

by Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) highlights existing tariff differentials, noting that Indian farm exports to the US currently face a 5.3 per cent tariff, whereas US farm exports to India encounter a much higher 37.7 per cent, creating a 32.4 per cent gap.

Other sectors face similar imbalances, with pharmaceuticals facing an additional tariff of 10.9 per cent, diamonds and jewellery 13.3 per cent, and electronics 7.2 per cent.

"If the US implements a reciprocal tariff policy on India on April 2, India's exports of gems and jewellery-particularly studded gold jewellery and cut and polished diamonds—will be largely impacted," stated Kirit Bhansali, Chairman, Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion

AIC Anand Foundation

Sanctions Rs 1.12 Crore

NEW DELHI: Anand Agri-

cultural University (AAU),

through its Section 8 com-

pany AIC Anand Foundation,

has sanctioned Rs 1.12 crore

to ten agri-startups to drive

innovation in the agricultural

AAU has successfully incu-

bated over 201 agri-startups,

significantly contributing to

Gujarat's agricultural ecosys-

AIC Anand Foundation

operates the Rashtriya Kri-

shi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)

agribusiness incubator for

Gujarat under the Union ag-

riculture ministry's Innova-

tion & Agri-Entrepreneurship

During a recent startup seed

fund awarding ceremony at

AAU, successful startups from

AAU's incubation program

As part of this initiative, ten

AAU-incubated startups were

selected for funding, with a

total sanctioned amount of Rs

1.12 crore. The first installment

growth and innovation.

Programme.

were felicitated.

for Agri-Startups to

Boost Innovation in

Agriculture



that GJEPC is already engaged in discussions with the government to reach a mutually agreeable solution that protects India's gem and jewellery exports.

A government official working on an impact assessment report noted that Israel represents India's biggest competitor in the

ing trajectory of smartphone exports from India as currently the tariffs attracted stand at 0 per cent," according to a PwC report. Within the farm and processed food sector, fish, meat, and processed seafood ket, with the advantage of zeroindustries are expected to be tariff access to the US market. hardest hit, with USD 2.58 bil-

According to the same official,

approximately 44 per cent of In-

would face an additional tariff

of up to 2 per cent, while only

7-8 per cent of exports would

to GTRI data. dia's exports to the US by value be subject to additional tariffs

Shrimp exports, a major revenue generator, would become significantly less competitive in

lion in exports facing a 27.83 per

cent tariff differential, according

This could impede the grow-

for Wheat Procurement In the electronics sector, smartphone exports may face significant challenges. "If the reciprocal tariffs are imposed by the US, exports of smartphones from India will attract a tariff of 15 per cent.

Govt to provide all Facilities to Farmers in Mandis

CHANDIGARH: The Punjab government is fully prepared for the wheat procurement wef April 1. Punjab's Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs Minister Lal Chand Kataruchakk stated that all arrangements in the mandis have been completed, and now the government is just waiting for the arrival of wheat in mandis.

Kataruchakk said the Punjab government has secured a cash credit limit (CCL) of ₹28, 000 crore for wheat procurement. Therefore, farmers will face no difficulties in receiving payments for their crops.

He added that adequate arrangements for gunny bags have been made, and these have been delivered in sufficient quantities

NEW DELHI: A new report,

highlights that while women

emphasised the importance of

leadership development.

elv impacted

companies.

total of 1,864 mandis and procurement centers have been equipped with all necessary arrangements to ensure that farmers face no inconvenience. Facilities such as water and medical treatment have been ensured in the mandis, along with several other essential amenities. Additionally, around 700 temporary mandis have been prepared to be used if needed. Strict instructions have been issued to all departments involved in the procurement process. Kataruchakk emphasized that farmers are the backbone of Punjab, and the state's economy and rural development are

To ensure uninterrupted power supply, instructions

New Report Calls for Inclusive Reforms in Agriculture Sector

The report also reveals a stark

based on agriculture. Hence, the

Board, and the Punjab DGP has been tasked with maintaining law and order. All Deputy Commissioners have also been notified to ensure that farmers do not face any issues during the procurement process.

ing that the Chief Minister has should receive the full price for their crops, as per the MSP, within 24 hours. Kataruchakk mentioned that he has been visiting various mandis as a minister and holding meetings with relevant officials to review arrangements. This year, the government will ensure that

farmers face no difficulties at all. Kataruchakk assured that the Chief Minister's orders will be strictly followed and that the wheat procurement process will be made seamless and convenient for farmers. He warned that any department or official found negligent during the procurement process would face strict action from the government. Kataruchakk reiterated that the Aam Aadmi Party is fully committed to the Punjab's farmers, "Working under the guidance of AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, we will ensure that farmers face no challenges during this year's to all procurement centers. A have been issued to the Power procurement process, "he said.

With 2% Increase, Wheat **Production to Reach** Record 115 Mn Tons



production is expected to reach a record 115.3 million tonnes (MT) during the 2024-25 crop year (July-June), reflecting a 2 percent increase over the previous year, according to the second advance estimate of major crops released by the agriculture ministry in March

percent in January 2025 on a year-over-year basis, maintaining single-digit levels since August 2023.

try had recently estimated the current year's wheat output at 110 MT, compared to 105-106 MT in the previous year, indicating that the government's projection exceeds industry expectations.

harvesting has already comand Bihar.

ng states such as Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh are expected to begin by the end of the current month.

production estimates are based on average yields and remain subject to adjustment in subsequent estimates upon receipt of more accurate yield data

This season's wheat sowing has expanded to 32 million hectares (Mha), surpassing last year's 31.56 Mha and exceeding the average sown area of

The food ministry has projected wheat procurement by overnment agencies at 31 MT for the 2025-26 rabi marketing season (April-June), representing a 26 percent increase over the actual purchase of 26.6 MT in the 2024-25 mar-

Currently, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) maintains a wheat stock of 13.55

Punjab government is working with full dedication to ensure the prosperity of farmers.

Minister Kataruchakk referred to the directives of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, statclearly ordered that farmers

> The government's projection addresses concerns about the potential impact of abovenormal temperatures on rabi crop yields, particularly wheat, hana, and mustard. Wheat inflation stood at 8.8

The wheat processing indus-

Officials noted that wheat

menced in several states, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Market arrivals in key grow-

The agriculture ministry clarified that the rabi crop

from crop cutting experiments.

the past five years.

keting season.

Minister Jitendra Singh Launches India's First Nationwide e-Tractor Roadshow to Showcase Sustainable Farming Tech

JAMMU: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh flagged off a nationwide roadshow featuring the CSIR-developed e-Tractor from Jammu.

The initiative marks a significant advancement in India's pursuit of sustainable and technology-driven agricultural practices, with the roadshow set to traverse the entire country before concluding in Kanyakumari. The e-Tractor, which was initially unveiled in Delhi, will be showcased across various regions to raise awareness about eco-friendly and cost-effective farming solutions.

During the ceremony, the Minister also inaugurated an E-Tiller developed by CSIR-Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI),

Addressing attendees at the



flag-off ceremony, Dr. Singh emphasised the transformative potential of agricultural innovation, stating, "This e-Tractor is not just an advanced technological intervention but a step towards ensuring affordable and environment-friendly farming solutions. It reflects our commitment to integrating innovation with agriculture, benefiting both farmers and agri-startups."

The Minister highlighted that the e-Tractor aligns with the government's broader objectives of promoting green energy and self-reliance in agriculture. He noted that while conventional farming practices depend on costly fossil fuels, the electric tractor presents a viable alternative that substantially reduces both carbon emissions and operating expenses.

Rajasthan SKM horns up in Support of Punjab Farmers

JAG MOHAN THAKEN

Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) Rajasthan has come up in support of Punjab farmers and warned that the Bhagwant Mann led Punjab State Gov- upon all the farmers of the ernment and Modi led BJP-RSS Government at the Centre of Rajasthan to mobilize against who want to crush the farmers the police repression. protest are bound to be defeated at the event to support their eventually.



country including the farmers

that farmers will never surments, we will strengthen the The State SKM has called render to corporate forces and issue-based unity.

police repression and are committed to nationwide farmer agitations against NPFAM, MSP@C2+50%, loan waivers necessary to solve the agrarian crisis. In a statement shared with our representative, the SKM has declared that by building a broad unity of Kisan-Mazdoor Sangathan and Jan Sangathan and learning from

Women in Agribusiness Opportunities and Challenges,' released in March, sheds light on the gender disparity in India's agricultural sector. The study, launched by Godrej Agrovet Ltd in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) and Godrej DEI Lab,

constitute 64.4 per cent of Incontrast: although women acdia's agricultural workforce, only 6-10 per cent hold posicount for 30-40 per cent of totions in top agri and agri-related tal enrolment in agricultural studies, very few transition into Speaking at the second formal employment. Women in Agriculture Sum-IIMA Faculty Member Vidya mit, Godrej Agrovet Managing Vemireddy highlighted this is-Director Balram Singh Yadav sue, calling it a paradox where

empowering women in agridoes not translate into workbusiness through education, force participation. To address this gap, the reworkplace inclusivity, and port recommends measures such as equitable resource ac-"Last year, we pledged to support 100,000 women cess, gender-responsive train-

across the agri value chain, and ing, and inclusive workplace I'm proud to share that we've reforms. women in just one year," he

of Godrej Consumer Products

Ltd, and Balram Singh Yadav announced the launch of the Godrej Agrovet Women in Agriculture Scholarship to support five students pursuing agricultural studies. Godrej Agrovet's HR Head,

Mallika Mutreja, shared the company's commitment to women's presence in education increasing female representation, having already improved from 8 per cent to 12 per cent in FY25, with a target of 32 per cent by FY28.

The summit also featured panel discussions on overcoming barriers for women in agriculture and advancing Godrej, Executive Chairperson need for a more inclusive and requirement of 7.46 MT for equitable agricultural sector.



CHAUDHARY

ndia's

a key-role in reinforcing the worsened for the farmers due country's agriculture by stress- to the apathy of the governing upon the animal vaccines. ment towards the challenges In spite of the claim of India's the farmers and cattle suffer livestock population and her due to the systems failures. stating her being a global leader in milk production; multifaceted, spanning the however, she is being depen- entire vaccine value chain dent for importing milk powder to imports from abroad. The inability of the country's of offering assistance to the of the cattle and further the animals suffer losses, estimated at Rs. 50,000 crores.

The quality of the cattle needs to be improved as well as an immediate need for preventing them from comings. This article delves diseases. The government's ineffectiveness in introducing a vaccination for the cattle has weakened the rural economy of the farmers. During the urgent need for comprehenpast five years, it is estimated a huge loss or the wastage of nearly Rs. one lakh crore earmarked by the government. Being committed to the welfare of the cattle, this author is keen that the government should undertake thorough falo, sheep, goats, pigs). The investigation regarding the squandering of the government funds, the usage of sub- milk yield. The National standard vaccines, inefficient Animal Disease Control Pro- ml, subcutaneous, annual) administration, and a systemic gramme (NADCP), launched reluctance to acknowledge the extent of the problem.

Need for Efficacy of Animal Vaccines for Protecting Livestock for Protecting the Farmers financial haemorrhage is a direct consequence of "our legacy to hide the disease, due to substandard vaccines, livestock inefficient vaccination, illsector, the education of livestock farmbackbone of its ers and above all the political rural economy, which plays will."The situation has further The roots of this crisis are from production to field application. Environmental changes and

much-trumpeted rhetoric the emergence of new viral variants have further exacfarmers suffering the quality erbated the situation, overwhelming an already strained veterinary infrastructure. Farmers, often unaware of the intricate web of internal conflicts and systemic failures, bear the brunt of these shortinto the core issues plaguing India's animal vaccination landscape, examining expert opinions, policy gaps, and the sive reforms.

Major Livestock and Pet Diseases: Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) is a highly contagious viral disease affecting clovenhoofed animals (cattle, bufsymptoms include fever, blisters, lameness, and reduced in 2019, allocates Rs. 13,343 crores to vaccinate 53 crore



is administered biannually (2-4 ml for cattle/buffalo, 1-2 ml for sheep/goats. Its cost is approximately Rs. 20-30 per without any charges

According to studies conducted in 2016, if the programme fails the estimated annual loss could be 20.000 crores. However, a network of facilities is needed to reach each animal, while maintaining a cold chain for its storage at a low temperature 2-8 degrees C. It should be repeated every six months by injecting a booster dose

Hemorrhagic Septicemia

It is a bacterial disease (Pasteurella multocida) affecting cattle and buffalo, causing high fever, throat swelling, and sudden death. Its vaccine, Alum-precipitated or oil-adjuvanted bacterin (2-5 cost Rs.5-10 per dose. It is being made available free of cost at the government hospi-As highlighted by a 2019 animals by 2025, aiming for tals under the scheme of the ResearchGate study, this FMD eradication by 2030. The Livestock Health & Disease cular, annual boosters) costs

losses to the tune of Rs. 5,255 dose, but is also available at crores due to high mortality of the government-run centre cattle affected by the disease.

> A zoonotic bacterial disease (Brucella abortus/melitensis) causing abortions and infertility in cattle, buffalo, sheep, and goats. It costs Rs. 10-15 per dose. With an outlay of Rs. 13,343 crore budget, it targets bovine females.

(PPR)

It is a viral disease (Morbil-Rs. 2-5 per dose,

Brucellosis

Peste des Petits Ruminants

polyvalent inactivated vaccine Control (LH&DC) schemes. According to the 2014 estimates, if not controlled, it would lead to the cumulative

Feline Panleukopenia: A viral disease in cats caus-

livirus) affecting sheep and goats, with fever, diarrhoea, and may cause up to 90% mortality. It needs a vaccine, live attenuated (Sungri/96 strain, 1 ml, subcutaneous, lifelong immunity). It costs Classical Swine Fever (CSF): It is a viral disease (Pesti-

virus) in pigs, causing fever,

haemorrhages, and high mor-

tality. Its vaccine, live attenu-

ated C-strain (1 ml, intramus-

Rs. 2 per dose.

The Viruses Affect Pets

Canine Parvovirus (CPV): A viral disease in dogs causing severe vomiting, diarrhoea, and dehydration, often fatal in puppies. The vaccine

cost: Rs. 300-500 per dose. RABIES: A fatal zoonotic viral disease affecting dogs, cats, and humans, causing neurological symptoms. The vaccine costs Rs. 100-200 (private); free via government anti-rabies campaigns. The government budget is estimated between Rs. 100-200 crore annually for rabies control (human and animal combined).

Canine Distemper: A viral disease in dogs caus-

ing respiratory, gastrointestinal, and neurological issues. The vaccine costs Rs. 300-500 per dose.

ing fever, vomiting, and low

white blood cell counts. The vaccine costs Rs. 400-600 A Careless Approach There is a growing awareness among farmers and pet

lovers regarding the inability

of the government to save the

cattle and pets. Dr. R.S. Chauhan, a former Director of the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) and WHO Advisor, paints a grim picture, deeming the national program "worthless" due to pervasive issues in procurement, transportation, and manufacturing of vaccines. He even observed that "distilled water might be

as effective," underscores the

severity of the problem. This sentiment is echoed by the 2021 Parliamentary Committee, which identified vaccine quality as a "big issue."

Dr. Chandra Shekhar Sahukar, former Joint Commissioner of Animal Husbandry and Deputy Advisor at NITI Aayog (an apology to the Planning Commission replaced by the PM Narendra Modi calling it the National Institution of Transforming India or NITI), further elucidates the systemic failures, highlighting inadequate regulatory oversight, substandard manufacturing practices, cold chain failures, and a cost-driven procurement system. These observations of the advisor to the NITI Aayog could not influence the government's policy. It appeared to be just an observation made by an emasculated outfit.

The economic impact of ineffective vaccination programs is staggering. As detailed in the 2019 ResearchGate study, preventable diseases like Hemorrhagic Septicemia (HS), Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), Brucellosis, Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), and Classical Swine Fever (CSF) result in annual losses of approximately Rs. 50,000 crores. This financial burden falls squarely on farmers, who are often ill-equipped to cope with the devastating consequences of disease out-

Author is an eminent scientist known for his contribution towards the key role of livestock in the country's $agricultural\ sector$

Converting Agriculture in Gold



A Bold Initiative Finally **Materialises under Coop**erative Umbrella.

A.N. Tiwari, a well-known journalist known for his insight in the country's cooperative movement, interviews Ram Iqbal Singh, founder and Working Chairman of the National Federation of Farmers' Procurement, Processing and Retailing Cooperatives of India (NACOF) that how this organization has triggered off the transformation of the rural economy. Excerpts:

Is it not a little intriguing that you seldom come before the media platforms to talk about your organization's successes and its future plans? **SINGH**: Let us skip this

issue for a while, the job of seeking presence in the media should be left to the active politicians. Our agenda transcends political fault lines; for the past more than decade, we have been trying to establish and provide the adequate linkages between the producers and the markets, more specifically the small and medium farmers. the work forces from the remote areas to the industrial hubs; thus, making the cottage industries unsus- came necessary.

SINGH: It cannot be de-

nied that each geography has its own challenges and issues, but being affiliated to the cooperative movement since 1975, almost for halfa-century, we have come to realize that each producer needs a market, whether it is an agriculture produce or anything manufactured by machine. The industries have assured access to technology, capital and the market. On the other hand, we farmers have been exposed to the apathy of the colonial power. The transformation really began during the post sixties, when the country's leadership continued to be humiliated for begging for food grains from the USA and Australia, and it decided to augment the process of the green revolution. Is it not true that the impact

farmers across the country? **SINGH**: With the key issue to tackle the issue of hunger more or less tackled for a while, but the quality of food, especially the nourishing food for the lactating mothers, growing-up children and the rest of the younger generations could not be accessed only by focusing on the food grain production. The mechanization of agriculture also adversely affected the keyrole of the cattle in the farming sector. In other words, How do your organization the country has to undertake really prevent exodus of a massive policy correction in the context of farming. For this, the concept of the cooperatives in catering the local agriculture and even needs of this vital sector be-

of the green revolution did

not cover the millions of

On the Prowl: The Gangs, Criminal Syndicates of Punjab

FW Special

n Sunday, March 23, 2025, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) transferred notorious gangster and drug trafficker, Jagdeep Singh (also known as Jaggu Bhagwanpuria), from the high-security Bathinda prison to the Central Jail in Silchar, Assam. This move is part of a larger crackdown on criminal syndicates operating from within prisons. Bhagwanpuria is a prime accused in the murder of Punjabi singer-rapper Sidhu Moosewala on May 29, 2022.

The NCB stated that his "established linkages with international operatives" in Canada, the United States, and Pakistan made this relocation necessary to disrupt his ongoing criminal activities. He has been detained under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (PITNDPS), a measure that prevents individuals involved in drug trafficking from engaging in such activities.

violence.

becoming hotspots for

academic growth.

than places of political and

The "Deadly Cocktail" of Crime and

An alarming aspect of

the current gang situation

in Punjab is the growing

synergy between criminal

gangs and Khalistani Activ-

ists. The fusion of organized

crime with militant activities

has led to a rise in violence

and terror-related incidents.

Punjab Police Intelligence

hali in May 2024, allegedly

masterminded by gangster

Lakhbir Landa under the

of this dangerous conver-

instructions of a terrorist in Pakistan, is a prime example

In some instances, even

to wield influence. The sec-

ond-in-command members

abroad, further complicating

the law enforcement's efforts

The Power Play of Punjab's Gangs

There are currently eight

main gangs operating in Pun-

jab, each with a vast network

of associates. These gangs

have connections to other

states, including Haryana,

Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and

Delhi, making their reach in-

Notable gangsters like

and Jaipal Singh Bhullar have

been killed in encounters with

the police, but their successors

continue to drive the criminal

Gangs and the Music Industry: A

A disturbing trend has

investing heavily in the Pun-

jabi music industry and film

emerged where gangs are

sector. This involvement

often leads to threats and

extortion, as gang members

demand money in exchange for "protection." The con-

operations in the state

Sinister Connection

of these gangs are running

operations from jails or

to contain the situation

The RPG attack on the

Headquarters in Mo-

A Career Steeped in Crime

Jaggu Bhagwanpuria, a native of Gurdaspur district, has an extensive criminal record. He has over 128



FIRs registered against him across multiple states and is implicated in several high-profile cases, including extortion, arms smuggling, and narcotics trafficking. Bhagwanpuria is widely considered one of Punjab's most dangerous gangsters, ranking just behind Lawrence Bishnoi in terms of notoriety. His criminal network has been responsible for facilitating the smuggling of heroin, opium, psychotropic substances.

The NCB confirmed that Bhagwanpuria's influence extends beyond Indian borders, with links to criminal groups in Canada, the US. and Pakistan. His detention and relocation to Assam are part of a broader effort to dismantle the ecosystem that supports his criminal activities.

The Murder of Sidhu Moosewala

The killing of Sidhu Moosewala has remained one of the most shocking events in Punjab's recent history.



On May 29, 2022, the young star was shot dead by eight assailants who intercepted his vehicle in Mansa district. According to police reports, the attackers fired 30 rounds, ensuring that Moosewala had no escape. This tragic murder is believed to have been orchestrated by Bhagwanpuria and Lawrence Bishnoi, although their relationship

Moosewala's death was death of Middukhera.

meet Singh Chauhan, Assistant Inspector General of Police at the Anti-Gangster Task Force (AGTF becoming a breeding ground nections between the music industry and these criminal for criminal gangs, many of which are headed by youths networks are so deep that with no clear direction or gang members are now discipline. Gurmeet Singh actively involved in manag-Chauhan, Assistant Inspecing the careers of aspiring singers and actors. tor General of Police at the Anti-Gangster Task Force

Moreover, the ongo-(AGTF), notes that the curing feud among gangs has rent generation of Punjabi resulted in violent incidents, youth are lured by the allure including the murder of Sandeep Singh Sandhu of fast money, luxury lifestyles, and a glorification of (Sandeep Nagal Ambian) a famous kabaddi player, Chauhan highlights the in March 2022. The police troubling trend in student have linked this murder to politics, where university gang rivalries, with one of the suspects identified as a and college campuses are gangster based abroad. gangster recruitment, rather

The Growing Threat of Cross-Border Smuggling

Police sources reveal that many Punjab-based gangs are involved in cross-border smuggling, including the illegal transportation of weapons and narcotics. The rise of these international links has made Punjab's criminal underworld more powerful and dangerous. Moreover, the involvement of foreign nationals, particularly from countries ike Canada and Malaysia, is indicative of the growing global reach of these criminal syndicates

This detailed account sheds light on the notorious gang wars in Punjab, involving multiple criminal organizations, each led by influential and feared gangsters. These gangs have deep roots in extortion, murder, robbery, and other forms of violent crime, with significant connections both within India and interna-

Here's a brief overview of the key gangs and figures mentioned:

1. The Lawrence Bishnoi Gang:



Headed by Lawrence Bishnoi, a 30-year-old gangster from Punjab, currently imprisoned in Delhi's Tihar Jail. His gang operates across Punjab, Harvana, Delhi. and Rajasthan.

 Known for a variety of criminal activities, including murder, extortion, carjacking, and more. Key members like Sachin Tapan, Anmol Bishnoi, and Goldy Brar

are absconding. His gang has an understanding with the Bhagwanpuria Gang despite being rivals initially. They are also linked to the murder of Congress leader Gurlal Pehalwan.

2.The Bambiha Gang:



• Initially led by Davinder Bambiha, who was killed in an encounter in 2016, the gang is now headed by Gaurav Patial (Lucky) from Armenia

 Known for extortion, investing in music companies, and issuing threats to Punjabi singers like Mankirt Aulakh.

Historically in rivalry with the Lawrence Bishnoi Gang but now shares ties with Harvinder Singh Rinda, a terrorist in Pakistan.



3. The Vicky Gounder Gang:



• Originally led by Vicky Gounder, who was killed in 2018, this gang is now managed by close aides Gurpreet Singh Sekhon and Neta Deol.

• The gang is linked to a range of crimes, including the murder of gangster-turned-politician Jaswinder Singh Rocky.

4. The Jaipal Singh Bhullar Gang:



• Led by Jaipal Singh Bhullar, who was killed in an encounter in 2021. the gang was involved in highway robberies, extortion, and other violent crimes.

Bhullar's death led to further criminal activities involving his associates, particularly Gurjant Singh, based in Australia.

5. The Jaggu Bhagwanpuria



Jaggu Bhagwanpuria Gang

 Led by gangster Jaggu Bhagwanpuria, whose real name is Jasdeep Singh, this gang operates in Punjab and neighboring regions, known for murder, robbery, and extortion.

 Jaggu was once involved in kabaddi and used his network to expand criminal activities. He's currently imprisoned in Tihar Jail

6. The Lakhbir Landa



 Headed by Canada-based gangster Lakhbir Landa, known for extortion and running a racket in Punjab. Landa is believed to have

links with international drug cartels and has faced numerous criminal 7. The Arsh Dalla Gang: Arshdeep Singh, known

as Arsh Dalla, is a fugitive gangster-turned-terrorist based in Canada, with ties to organized crime and terror activities. 8. The Harry Chattha

Gang: • Led by Supreet Singh, alias Harry Chattha, believed to be operating from abroad and linked to radicals in the US, Canada, and the UK



Key Issues and Impacts:

• Inter-gang Rivalries: There have been multiple shootouts and killings due to turf wars, with famous incidents like the murders of prominent individuals such as Gurlal Brar, Vikramjit Singh, and Sidhu Moose Wala.

• Extortion and Threats: Several Punjabi singers and actors have been threatened and extorted by these gangs, leading to significant fear within the entertainment industry.

 International Connections: Many gang leaders operate from abroad (Canada, Armenia, Australia) and have established international criminal networks.

Arsh Dalla Gang

These gangs, despite their rivalries, often collaborate or turn a blind eye to each other's operations. The situation is further complicated by political ties, terrorism, and links with international drug cartels, making it a significant law enforcement challenge for the region.

A comprehensive look into the lives of families connected to gangsters in Punjab and the broader impact of gang culture in the region provides a serious picture. The experiences shared by family members reflect the complex, often tragic, realities of living with the consequences of criminal activity, while experts and officials highlight the social, political, and technological factors that contribute to the rise of gangsters and youth

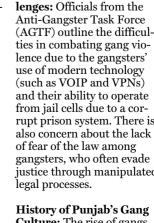
Here are some key takeaways:

Family Struggles: The families of slain gangsters, such as Jarnail Singh, the father of Shera-Khuban (Gurshaheed Singh), share the emotional toll of their children's criminal activities. Despite being harassed by the police, they often feel marginalized by their communities due to the misdeeds of their sons. Jarnail Singh expresses frustration with the lack of support and understanding from both the police and the villagers.

The Role of Social Media: Gangsters are increasingly using social media to claim responsibility for crimes, which is adding a new dimension to law enforcement's challenge. This also allows them to project a flashy, glamorous lifestyle that attracts young people, especially those from lowerincome families, to join gangs for the promise of easy money and power.

Youth Recruitment: Young people, particularly in rural areas, are being drawn into gang culture due to the influence of social media and the allure of a flashy





Culture: The rise of gangs in Punjab is rooted in the 1980s, when student politics became intertwined with violence and militancy. Over time, student rivalries led to

later evolved into organized criminal enterprises, especially in the realm of extortion and contract killing.

What Officials Say

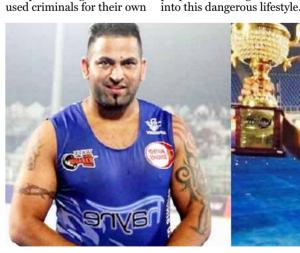
Assistant Inspector General of Police of Anti Gangster Task Force (AGTF) of Punjab Police Gurmeet Singh Chauhan says that the student politics especially in universities and colleges which should be producing leaders for future roles in political parties has become more of a breeding ground for gangsters as the students indulge in personal ego clashes with rivals and try to browbeat each other with the use of guns and muscle power eventually pushing them into the world of crime rather than having professional careers in academics, public service or even sports. These gangsters flaunt their flamboyant lifestyle on social media which attracts and encourages youth from relatively poorer backgrounds to emulate and make them as their role models not realising that the money that these so called role models are flashing around is easy money earned through corruption, drugs and through mining mafias.

"The present culture in which the Punjabi youth are growing up is creating a new breed of directionless young men who lack discipline who have the lust for earning fast money in order to have a flamboyant lifestyle, luxury cars, branded clothes, late night parties with drugs and alcohol. This culture has become a challenge for modern day policing and that is why AGTF was created in Punjab. The state police has faced many such challenges in the past and is capable of handling this challenge," he says. Chauhan says that now the people of Punjab have come out in the open to change this.

Conclusion : A State in Crisis

The gang wars in Punjab are at an all-time high, and the state's law enforcement is struggling to contain the violence. With gang members having connections ooth domestically and in ternationally, they continue to operate with impunity, striking fear in the hearts of the public. The situation is further exacerbated by the infiltration of terrorist elements, creating a complex and dangerous criminal ecosystem.

As the state grapples with this growing crisis, the question remains: will the law enforcement agencies be able to rein in the gangs, or



Law Enforcement Chal-

Expert Views: Sociologists

Rajesh Gill and Prof. Kuldip

Singh emphasize the role of

a violent, corrupt society in

fostering gang culture. The connection between gangs

and politics is particularly

troubling, as it leads to the

normalization of criminal

portance of early interven-

tion to prevent more young

people from being drawn

behavior among youth. These experts stress the im-

rupt prison system. There is also concern about the lack justice through manipulated

will Punjab continue to be plagued by this deadly cocktail of crime and terrorism? The investigation ultimately calls for a multi-faceted approach to tackling the gang problem, emphasizing the need for societal, political, and law enforcement efforts to address the root causes of gang recruitment and activity. It also stresses the importance of creating awareness among parents and communities to prevent further deterioration of youth values and societal norms. This grim picture of Puniab's criminal landscape highlights the complex relationships and operations of these criminal groups, which continue to wreak havoc across the state and beyond.



Gurmeet Singh Chauhan, IPS AIG, AGTF

lifestyle. Cases like Jimmy

from Sonipat highlight how

lured into criminal activities

through connections made

easy it is for youth to be

online with gangsters.

Political Influence: The

article mentions how politi-

cal patronage has played a

significant role in the rise

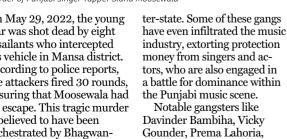
of gangsters. Former police

officials and experts argue

that political figures have

control over gang activities. This has created an environ-

Vicky Gounder and Prema Lahoria



preceded by the murder of Vikramjit "Vicky" Middukhera, a student leader who had entered politics. Police suspect that both killings are linked to gang rivalries, with some suggesting that Moosewala's murder was an act of revenge for the

A New Breed of Criminals Punjab is increasingly

PM Modi unveils 21-point action plan at 6th BIMSTEC Summit

BANGKOK: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday presented a comprehensive 21-point action plan during the sixth BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok, laying out an ambitious road map for cooperation across diverse sectors.

His proposals reflect India's leadership in revitalising BIM-STEC, aligning with the 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies, and dovetailing into India's broader Indo-Pacific vision. Sharing his vision on X, PM Modi stated, "BIMSTEC is an important forum to further global good. It is imperative we strengthen it and deepen our engagement. In this context, I proposed a 21-point action plan covering different aspects of our cooperation.

Emphasising the need for economic integration, PM Modi proposed the establishment of a BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce, an annual BIMSTEC Business Summit, and a feasibility study on conducting trade in local currencies. "It's time to boost business across BIMSTEC

YANGON: Mandalay in central

Myanmar has been the hard-

est hit region after a power-

ful 7.7-magnitude earthquake

struck the country, with 2,053

people killed, 2,691 others in-

jured and 210 people still miss-

ing, state-run daily Myanma

Meanwhile, the country's cap-

ital Nay Pyi Taw recorded 511

deaths, 842 injuries, and nine

missing, followed by Sagaing

region with 471 deaths, 688

injuries and 2 missing, it added.

As of Thursday, the death

toll across the country from the

earthquake has risen to 3,145,

with 4,589 others injured and

221 missing, Xinhua news

agency reported quoting the

Myanmar Radio and Television.

Australia, India, Japan, and

the United States collectively

committed over \$20 million

in humanitarian assistance to

support the relief efforts for

the earthquake-devastated

aboard Air Force One that

Ukrainian President Volodymyr

Zelensky is looking to back out of a critical minerals agreement

Trump told reporters on Sun-

day that he believes Zelensky no

longer wants to sign the agree-

ment and warned that his re-

fusal would carry consequences.

rare earth deal and if he does

that he's got some problems, big, big problems, "Trump said,

according to a media news por-

"He wants to be a member

of NATO, but he's never going

to be a member of NATO. He

Ukrainian officials are cur-

rently reviewing the latest version of a minerals deal, which

reportedly grants the US

NEW DELHI: Quad members

Australia, India, Japan, and

the United States on Friday

collectively committed over

\$20 million in humanitarian

assistance to support the re-

lief efforts for the earthquake-

eral efforts, the Quad group-

ing is facilitating the delivery

of relief supplies, deploying

emergency medical teams and

supporting humanitarian part-

ners working in Myanmar to

provide care for those affected

In a joint statement issued

by the earthquake.

With its funding and bilat-

devastated Myanmar.

to Earthquake-Ravaged Myanmar

"He's trying to back out of the

with the US.

tal report.

understands that.

Ukrainian President Zelensky wants

to back out of minerals deal: Trump

WASHINGTON: US President 🕌 🛓 🏺 🧏 🍦 🌞 🦐

Meanwhile, Quad members

Alinn reported on Friday.

Mandalay Hit Hardest In Powerful Myanmar

Earthquake with Over 2000 Killed



nations!" he wrote. Focussing on digital transformation, he urged the group to harness the potential of the IT sector and promote technological strength.

He called for a pilot study to assess the needs of BIMSTEC nations for sharing India's Digital Public Infrastructure experience, along with the integration of India's UPI with regional payment systems. Referring to the recent earthquake that impacted Myanmar and Thailand, PM Modi highlighted the importance of regional cooperation

With its funding and bilat-

eral efforts, the Quad grouping

is facilitating the delivery of relief

supplies, deploying emergency

medical teams and supporting

humanitarian partners working

in Myanmar to provide care for

those affected by the earthquake.

In a joint statement issued by

Quad partners on the Myanmar

earthquake response, the govern-

ments of Australia, India, Japan,

and the United States extended

their deepest sympathies and con-

dolences to the people of Myan-

significant loss of life, injuries,

unprecedented control over

Ukraine's natural resources

through a joint investment fund.

can be accepted, "he added.

rent proposal, including greater

fund would operate.

ropean Union.

Zelensky said on March 28

in disaster preparedness and response. He announced the establishment of a BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence for Disaster Management in India and informed that the fourth joint disaster management exercise will be hosted by India later this year. He also stressed upon the

Proposals included the first Home Ministers' meeting to be held in India, training through ground stations, manufacturing and launching of nano-satellites,

need to strengthen cooperation

in the space and security sectors.

for regional planning and development. In the realm of training and capacity building, PM Modi said, "BIMSTEC has the potential to be a shining example of capacity building frameworks. We will all learn from each other and grow!" He announced the BODHI (BIMSTEC for Organised Development of Human Resource Infrastructure) initiative, under which 300 youths from BIMSTEC nations would be trained annually in India. Scholarships for BIMSTEC

students at Forest Research Institute and Nalanda University were also announced. Further, India will conduct annual training programmes for young diplomats from BIMSTEC countries, and the Tata Memorial Centre will support training in cancer care. PM Modi also declared the creation of a Centre of Excellence for research in traditional medicine and another to facilitate knowledge exchange, research, and capacity building

from 2.9% in 2024 to 1.3% in 2025-26: Report

NEW DELHI: The imposition of reciprocal tariffs by the US President Donald Trump is set to slow down global trade significantly, according to a report

The report projects a decline in world export volume from 2.9 per cent in 2024 to 1.3 per cent in 2025-26, mainly due to weaker demand in US and uncertainty affecting global investment and confidence.

t said "As for world trade, our

tive impact of uncertainty on and global

such a large-scale disruption to global trade has no historical precedent. The closest comparison is the trade tensions and tariffs imposed during Trump's first term, which reduced global GDP by around 1 per cent over two years. However, the newly announced tariffs are broader and more significant than those

BIMSTEC Summit: PM Modi and Yunus meet amid strained ties

Paetongtarn Shinawatra for

the visiting Heads of State and

Government at the BIMSTEC

Summit. The official X handle

of the Chief Advisor of Ban-

gladesh posted images of PM

Modi and Yunus seated next

Bangladeshi media quoted

Deputy Press Secretary to the

Chief Advisor, Abul Kalam

leaders "met each other" dur-

on Friday. The interim gov-

been keen to initiate direct

on the sidelines of the BIM-

first opportunity for both sides

is also set to take over the BIM-

adding to the significance of

Delhi and Dhaka have nose-

exit. The new interim govern-

The Bangladeshi adminis-

tration has acknowledged

the incidents but maintains

they are politically motivated

and not religious in nature.

Amid the tense political at-

mosphere, Prime Minister

Modi recently reached out

the bilateral exchange.

to each other at the dinner.



BANGKOK: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday held a bilateral meeting with Muhammad Yunus, Chief Advisor of Bangladeshi interim government, on the sidelines of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok

This marks their first official engagement since the Yunus-led interim government assumed charge in Dhaka in August last year following the ouster of former Bangladeshi

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The meeting between the two leaders comes at a critical juncture in India-Bangladesh relations, which have witnessed turbulence since the change in leadership in Dhaka. Following the meeting, Yunus' office posted on X: "Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi join a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of sixth BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok, Thailand on Friday." The timing of this meeting is significant, as it follows Yunus' recent visit to China and his remarks during a meeting with

Chinese President Xi Jinping. Yunus had described Bangladesh as "the only guardian of the ocean" in the region and suggested that the landlocked northeastern states of India -- known as the "seven sisters" - could benefit by extending their economic linkages through Bangladesh as part of China's economic sphere. On Thursday, the two leaders had an informal interaction during the official dinner "

We remain committed to advancing this partnership, driven by our common aspirations for peace, stability, and prosperity, and based on mutual sensitivity to each other's interests and concerns"

the letter, PM Modi recalled the shared legacy of the Bangladesh Liberation War and underscored the importance of mutual sensitivity in maintaining the India-Bangladesh partnership. "I extend my felicitations

Azad, as saying that the two to you and the people of Banladesh on the occasion of the ing the dinner event, ahead of National Day of Bangladesh, their formal bilateral meeting the Prime Minister wrote. This day stands as a testament to our shared history ernment in Bangladesh had and sacrifices that have laid diplomatic engagement with the foundation of our bilateral India, and Friday's meeting partnership. The spirit of the Liberation War of Bangladesh STEC Summit provided the continues to remain a guiding light for our relationship, to recalibrate ties. Bangladesh which has flourished across multiple domains, bringing tangible benefits to our people, STEC chairmanship, further ' he added. "We remain committed to advancing this part-Relations between New nership, driven by our common aspirations for peace, stabildived since Sheikh Hasina's ity, and prosperity, and based on mutual sensitivity to each ment's tenure has seen a rise in other's interests and concerns. attacks on the Hindu minority Please accept, Excellency, the population in Bangladesh, assurances of my highest consideration, "the letter further causing concern in India.

With the BIMSTEC chairmanship officially transferring to Bangladesh during the Summit, the direction of future India-Bangladesh relations could hinge significantly on how both sides navigate curto Yunus in a letter marking rent challenges and diplomatic Bangladesh's National Day. In overtures in the months ahead.

Indian pharmaceutical exports get reprieve from Trump's reciprocal tariffs



NEW DELHI: Because of the importance of India's pharmaceuticals to US healthcare, those exports will get a reprieve from President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariffs, according to the White House.

The US is the largest importer of pharmaceuticals from India, bringing in products in the category worth \$8.73 billion during the 2024 fiscal year, according to statistics cited by the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF)

IBEF said 31.5 per cent of India's pharmaceutical exports went to the US.

The White House factsheet issued on Wednesday after Trump's announcement of 26 per cent reciprocal tariffs on imports from India said that pharmaceuticals were exempt.

Indian drugs, especially the generics, help hold down the costs of the US healthcare system, which is already one of the most expensive in the world.

Previewing the likely outcomes of the tariffs, ING Bank had warned that "in the absence of a deal with India, we think Trump's tariffs will mostly drive up drug prices for US consumers" because of the wide use of generics for which India is the major supplier.

Given the importance of Indian pharmaceuticals, President Trump has exempted that category even without a deal.

IQVIA, a healthcare data and analytics company, said that four out of ten prescriptions filled in the US in 2022 were from Indian companies.

"Out of the top 10 therapy ar-

eas by prescription volume, Indian companies supplied more than half of the prescriptions for five: hypertension, mental health, lipid regulators, nervous system disorders, and antiulcerants", it said. IQVIA estimated that by using generics from India, rather than highpriced branded products, the US nealthcare system saved \$219 billion in 2022 and a total of \$1.3 trillion between 2013 and 2022. These savings dwarf the dollar values of the pharmaceutical imports from India, and 26 per cent tariffs on them would have had a domino effect across the healthcare system, espe cially Medicare, the government healthcare insurance system for seniors, that is already facing

The White House factsheet said that copper, semiconductors, lumber, bullion, energy and certain minerals that are not available in the US are also exempt from the reciprocal tariffs.

challengee to long-rage viability.

Trump's tariff to slow down global export growth

by HSBC Research.

current projection of a marked slowdown in world export volume growth from 2.9 pc in 2024 to 1.3 pc in 2025-26 reflects slower US import demand and



spending". It also noted that seen previously.

PM Modi holds bilateral talks with Senior General of Myanmar the earthquake a few days ago. India's 'Act East' and Thailand's

mar and Thailand following the massive temblor, which caused ter Narendra Modi on Friday held a meeting with Senior and widespread destruction of General of Myanmar, Aung Hlaing where they discussed bilateral relations between the two countries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed his condolences on the loss of lives

stated, "Met Senior General Min Aung Hlaing of Myanmar on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok. Once again expressed condolences on the loss of lives and damage of property in the wake of the recent earthquake. India is doing whatever is possible to assist our sisters and broth-

ers of Myanmar in this critical time. We also discussed bilateral relations between India and Myanmar, particularly in sectors like connectivity, capacity building, infrastructure development and more. Prime Minister Modi and his

Thailand counterpart Paetongtarn Shinawatra held bilateral and property in the wake of talks on Thursday and discussed the earthquake on March 28. ways to further strengthen posecurity partnership and strategic engagement between the

They also underlined the need to enhance connectivity, health, science and technology, start-up, innovation, digital, education, culture and tourism

collaborations. On arrival at the Government

Minister.

"Had a very fruitful meeting with Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra in Bangkok a

House, the Prime Minister was

received by the Thailand Prime

short while ago. Expressed gratitude to the people and Government of Thailand for the warm welcome and also expressed solidarity with the people of Thailand in the aftermath of

'Act West Policies' complement each other extremely well and open several possibilities for bilateral cooperation," PM Modi stated in a post on X.

Meanwhile, India's Nation-

al Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is actively leading the efforts as part of Operation Brahma, with rescue and Myanmar. The country is currently

recovering from the devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake that hit on March 28, following which India, being the first responder in times of crisis in the neighbourhood, had been providing vital assistance to the

that he would not sign a minerals deal that interferes with Elevating Relations to Strategic Ukraine's plans to join the Eu-Nothing that could threaten Partnership, India-Thailand Sign Ukraine's accession to the EU Bloomberg reported on agreements in Key Sectors March 29 that Kyiv was requesting changes to the cur-

investment from the US and BANGKOK: India and Thaimore clarity on how the joint land on Thursday agreed to elevate bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership during extensive discussions held **Quad to Send \$20 Million Relief Support** between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Thailand PM Paetongtarn Shinawatra at the Government House in Bangkok. Both leaders held talks on

various areas of bilateral cooperation and later witnessed the signing of several key agreements that add new vigour and dynamism to the longstanding friendship between the two nations. Besides the Joint Declaration on the establishment of India-Thailand Strategic Partnership, a MoU was also signed between the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of India on cooperation in the

A MoU between Sagarmala Division of India's Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and Thailand's Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture was signed for development of National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat.

field of digital technologies.

Another MoU between In-



dia's National Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (NSIC) and Thailand's Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) was signed on cooperation in the field of micro, small and medium enterprises

Two other key MoUs signed included between the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) and Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and between North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Limited (NEHHDC) of India and Creative Economy Agency (CEA) of the Government of Thailand.

In his remarks, PM Modi highlighted that India's 'Act East' policy and Thailand's 'Act West' complement each other very well and open up opportunities for bilateral cooperation in many fields. 'We have emphasised on cooperation in the fields of tourism, culture and educa-

tion between Thailand and the North-Eastern states of India. We discussed growing mutual trade, investment, and business exchanges. Agreements have also been made to foster cooperation in the areas of MSME, handloom and handicrafts," PM Modi said during the joint press statement with the Prime Minister of Thailand. We have decided to

strengthen cooperation in renewable energy, digital technology, e-vehicles, robotics, space, bio-technology and start-ups. In addition to enhancing physical connectivity, both the countries will work to boost FinTech connectivity," he added.

Pakistan Set to Intensify Deportation of Afghan Refugees Post Eid Holidays

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to intensify the deportation of Afghan refugees post Eid holidays as the March 31 deadline for refugees, including Afghan Citizen Card holders, to voluntarily return to their home country, has ended, local media reported on Thursday.

Reports suggest that the repatriation process could not formally begin due to the Eid holidays. The two-day relaxation for Eid holidays led to some confusion among official circles, with some sources suggesting that the deadline for repatriation had been extended.

But Pakistan's interior ministry official denied the claims, maintaining that there has been no extension. "Although the deadline was March 31, the provincial government exte-nded it till April 2, keeping in view Eid. Now, phase 2 will begin from [Thursday] and we have established camps, one each at Landi Kotal and Nasir Bagh Road," Pakistan's leading newspaper Dawn quoted a senior official from Afghan Commi¬ssionerate in Peshawar as saying.

The Pakistan government had signalled the start of forcible removals of Afghan refugees and warned of strict legal action against those who failed to leave by the deadline. Meanwhile, a total of 886,242 undocumented Afghan nationals have left Paki-



stan as of April 1, with repatriations continuing, another Pakistani daily, The Express Tribune, reported, quoting official data. Pakistan authorities refused to budge despite calls from the international community to extend the deadline. The government had also dismissed concerns raised by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other agencies regarding the mass repatriation of Afghan refugees and asylum-seekers.

UNHCR spokesperson Qaiser Khan Afridi has stated that the UN agency is concerned regarding the government's directive, as there might be individuals among the Afghan Citizen Card holders who may require international protection.

"In that light, we are urging the government [view] their situation through a humani-

tarian lens. We also call for engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan so that the returns can be dignified and voluntary,' Afridi said. The Afghan Taliban government had on Tuesday called upon Islamabad not to start the deportation of Afghan nationals. Mawlavi Abdul Kabir, Afghanistan's Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, urged neighbouring countries, Pakistan and Iran, to halt these deportations and allow Afghans to return home voluntarily. "He emphasised the impor-

tance of humane treatment for refugees, especially in light of reports of mistreatment of Afghans by border nations, including instances where individuals holding legal visas were also deported," Afghan government-run Bakhtar News Agency reported.

by Quad partners on the Myanmar earthquake response, the governments of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States extended their deepest sympathies and condolences to the peoples of Myanmar and Thailand following the massive earthquake, which caused

significant loss of life, injuries,

and widespread destruction of infrastructure.

 $The grouping \ also \ welcomed$

Myanmar.

"We welcome the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' statements statement added.



recent commitments to temporary, partial ceasefires and called on all parties to implement, extend and broaden these measures, to provide a safe and conducive environment to facilitate a timely delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance throughout

of March 29 and 30, and the support provided by ASEAN and countries in the region to the communities affected," the

Trump's Tariff Challenge & Opportunity for India



FW EDITORIAL BOARD

Niti Aayog views US President Donald Trump's plan to impose reciprocal tariffs as an opportunity for India, particularly in sectors like manufacturing. India's position is stronger than trade partners like China, Mexico, and Canada, which face higher

Trump's Tariff Plans: Limited Impact on India

According to Pravakar Sahoo, Niti Aayog's Programme Director, the US president's proposed reciprocal tariffs are unlikely to negatively impact India significantly. While countries like Mexico, China, and Canada—who account for about 50% of the US's total imports—are facing tariffs ranging from 20% to 25%, India is relatively wellpositioned. Sahoo emphasized that, aside from a few sectors, most industries in India stand to benefit if these tariffs are applied universally to all exporters to the US market. "It's a very dynamic situation, but overall, the impact on India will not be severe," he said after the release of Niti Aayog's quarterly trade watch report.

Opportunities in US Trade Policies

Niti Aayog member Arvind Virmani highlighted significant opportunities for India in light of the US's trade policies. He noted that global supply chains are highly concentrated in China, and with the new tariff structure, countries like India could

global network. Expanding India's Global Trade

India's textile sector continues to make a significant contribution to industrial output, employment, and export earnings. However, despite being one of the top 10 global exporters, India holds only a modest 4% share in global trade. To increase this share, a concerted effort is needed to enhance India's global pres-

India's trade growth be-tween April and September 2024 showed a 5.67% increase compared to the same period in 2023, with exports rising by 5.23% and imports by 6.07%. The USA, UAE, and the Netherlands remain India's leading export markets, accounting for 33% of total exports. The Netherlands' growth has been driven by exports of smartphones and petroleum products.



Impact of Recent Tariffs

The US has recently imposed a 25% import duty on steel and aluminum products, effective from March 12. Additionally, a 25% tariff on completely built vehicles (CBUs) and auto parts will be enforced starting April 3. India and the US are aiming to conclude the first phase of their trade agreement by fall 2025 (September-October).

ing exports. Virmani pointed

out that, compared to China,

Mexico, and Canada, India is

in a much stronger position

to capitalize on this shift. He

emphasized the importance

of diversifying supply chains,

especially with a global reli-

ance on a single country for

manufactured goods.

Sahoo observed that, following the 2018 imposition of duties, five countries, including India, gained market share as China's presence in US imports declined. Future Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and Bilateral Trade Agreements (BTAs) should focus on creating competitive supply chains with low or zero tariffs,

Global Trade Shifts: India's Competitive Advantage

Former Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar noted that the 26% tariff imposed by the US on certain imports is still lower than the 52% effective protection that India applies to US exports. India's exports to the US will face much lower tariffs compared to China (34%), Taiwan (36%), and Vietnam (46%). Despite the challenges, India is in a better position than many other countries, including Cambodia, which faces even

higher tariffs. However, Trump's tariff plan raises questions about the future of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The "Most Favored Nation" (MFN) principle, which mandates equal especially for products like tariff rates for all countries, better business conditions.

appears to be undermined by these differential tariffs. This development raises concerns about the potential collapse of the WTO and its longstanding rules-based global trading system.

Challenges for Other Nations

The tariff hike could have severe consequences for countries like Mexico, which exports 80% of its goods to the US, and Canada, where cross-border trade in autos and components is significant. These countries may need to explore new markets to absorb the volume of exports that were once destined for the US. The EU, also affected by tariffs, may retaliate, leading

to a potentially destabilizing

global trade environment. For the US, imposing tariffs while striving for economic growth raises difficult questions. The country's high wages compared to trading partners, especially in manufacturing, could lead to challenges in reviving domestic manufacturing. While automation and AI-driven robotization might help, it's unclear whether these strategies will offset the impact of higher tariffs.

Opportunities for India in a Fragmented Trade World

The current fragmented global trading environment presents a potential opportunity for India. The higher tariffs faced by the EU and Canada could open up markets for India's exports. While the impact on India's US exports, which totaled \$77.5 billion in 2023, might be limited, India could take advantage of these higher tariffs imposed on its competitors.

A clear opportunity lies in the 10% tariff concession on Brazilian exports. Indian firms should consider setting up joint ventures in Brazil and shifting high-end garment exports there. The diamond industry, with relatively low capital costs, could also benefit from this shift. Additionally, with Bangladesh losing its import duty-free status, India should welcome garment exporters back and offer them

on All US Imports Starting April 10 **BEIJING:** Triggering a full-blown trade war, China will impose additional 34 per cent

tariffs on all products imported

from the United States start-

ing from April 10, the Customs

Tariff Commission of the State

Council announced on Friday. The announcement follows the U.S. decision to impose "reciprocal tariffs" on Chinese exports to the United States, a move that the commission said does not conform to international trade rules, seriously undermines China's legitimate rights and interests, and represents a typical act of unilateral bullying, reports Xinhua news agency. China's Ministry of Commerce said it was adding 11 American companies to its list of "unreliable entities,"

business in China or with Chi-



China Slaps Additional 34 Pc Tariffs

US President Donald Trump which bars them from doing has announced 54 per cent reciprocal tariffs on China, which

tric cars to smart bombs

include previous duties already in place. That makes China one of the hardest-hit countries on the tariff list. Global investment bank JP Morgan has said it now sees a 60 per cent chance of the global economy entering recession by 2025 end, up from 40 per cent previously.

According to analysts, the reciprocal tariffs imposed by

countries but Indian exporters may emerge stronger as rivals, mainly, China faces steeper duties as high as 65 per cent and even beyond. For India, the additional 27 per cent tariff places it in the lower half of targeted countries, creating opportunities beyond traditional export sectors like engineering goods, electronics, gems and jewellery, textiles, and apparel. The tariffs could also shift

competitiveness in India's favour in sectors where other regional exporters are more severely impacted. To maximise this advantage, India must not only negotiate with the US to maintain market access but also collaborate with FTA partners in Asia to restructure supply chains and seize new opportunities," according to experts.

Direct Impact of US Tariffs on Indian Sectors Will Largely Be Neutral: Report

NEW DELHI: The expected direct impact of US reciprocal tariffs would vary in nature for the sectors in India, with no impact on pharmaceuticals since they are exempt from reciprocal tariffs for now, a report said on Friday.

The impact is expected to be largely neutral for electronics, textiles, agricultural products, chemicals, and automobiles and parts. At the same time, it would be negative for gems and jewellery, according to the report by CareEdge Ratings. During FY24, India's aggregate merchandise exports to the US stood at \$77.5 billion compared to imports from the US at \$42.2 billion. Till now, the US had been charging an average tariff of 3.50 per cent on imports of goods from India, which is now being increased uniformly to 27 per cent in the form of reciprocal tariff.

Reciprocal tariff imposed by US on other nations who are India's major competitors in most of the above sectors is higher than us — Vietnam at 46 per cent, Bangladesh at 37 per cent, China at 34 per cent, Taiwan at 32 per cent, Indonesia at 32 per cent and Pakistan at 29 per cent, which requirements of the US.



sectors of India," the report said. In electronics, higher reciprocal tariffs on China would mean a neutral impact for India's electronics exports, it said. Apart from India, the other major textile exporters to the US are China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Turkey. Except for Turkey, which has a 10 per cent reciprocal tariff, other nations face reciprocal tariffs higher than 26 per cent, which means the impact of reciprocal tariffs on India's textile sector would be limited.

Additionally, the majority of India's exports are cottonbased garments and home textile products. India's self-sufficiency in cotton production should enable it to largely pass on higher reciprocal tariffs, said the report. India has one of the highest numbers of US FDA-approved manufacturing facilities, which primarily caters to the generic medicine

"This is crucial for meeting the healthcare needs of its population cost-effectively. Although the pharmaceutical sector is currently exempted from the purview of reciprocal tariffs by the US, with no immediate impact, even if tariffs are imposed, the sector should be well-positioned to pass them on significantly due to its inherent competitive strengths," said the report. India's overall exports of ag-

to the US are not very high.

Although, reciprocal tariff of 26 per cent is imposed vis-a-vis prevailing weighted average tariff of 5.3 per cent, the reciprocal tariff on the other major competing nations (Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Pakistan) on some key agri-exports (sea food, basmati rice) is on the higher side which is expected to negate the impact of tariff imposed by US broadly. "However, Ecuador, being the second-largest exporter of shrimp to the US, it could result in competitive pricing pressure for Indian shrimp exporters, as the tariff imposed on Ecuador is lower at 10 per cent," the report

Our ties with US will never be the same: Canada's Foreign Minister



Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly said on Friday the relationship between the United States and Canada would never be the same again after President Donald Trump announced a sweeping new tariff regime on Wednesday. At her arrival for a NATO

meeting of foreign affairs ministers in Brussels, Joly added that Canada was putting maximum pressure on the Trump administration.

industry, science and technol-

Offers a Unique Perspective Converging Play of *Economic Forces in Context of the Geopolitics*



China in the World Trade hope that the country's authoritarian communist regime would finally open up. Instead, it has accessed the evolved backed by scientific inventions to finally become the new center of modernization, now a formidable economic power. The FW's second phase i.e.

after attaining a maturity of 25 years has begun with a holistic approach towards the macro issues related to the international trade and the play of the forces. without ignoring the micro issues weakening the country's robust economy attained during four decades of the planned developments. It cannot be denied that even after having more than two decades of political stability, first, under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, and now under the 11 years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's regime, India appears to have been hit by an unprecedented stalemate in the key areas of her economy; hitting hard her cottage, small and medium industries.

As a publication to serve the vital issues related to the Indian economy, the FW has been offering a unique platform to understand the close relations and impacts shutter down. The ruling elite try using media selectively. political rhetoric such as the so-called campaign against corruption leading to the demonetization of the Indian the country's small business stroying their yearning to currency in 2016. Instead of under the banner of 'make become an economic pow- the country. In New Delhi, developed world led by the US

reaucracy serving under the elected law makers, about 40 per cent of them accused to the crimes like murders and rape. In the present Lok Sabha, of the 241-srong ruling BJP members, 100 members are facing rape and murder Organization (WTO) with a charges in different courts across the country. It may be noted that it goes

to the credit of the FW that it raised the legitimate issues state-of-the art technologies related to the survival of the most vulnerable section of the country's rural and agriculture-based industry. With the demonetization, these sectors were denied access to investments, thus, this sector has collapsed, giving full access to the cheaper imports from China. In 2014, when the Narendra Modi government ing easy financial assistance. took power, the trade deficit government has allowed to peaked in 2022 to 101.28 2018, it rose to USD 57.38 was 69.56 USD billion 85.1 USD billion respectively.

Rhetoric and Reality

The government's rhetoric in helping start-ups is much noisier than its actual help to the entrepreneurs serving the small and medium sectors. During the past 10 years, these sectors have been dwarfed, made dysfunctional, if not deliberately forced to powers-that-be in the councomprising political leaders, It has adversely affected the ministers and bureaucrats people immediately as well talked about strengthening of as on a long-term basis de-



starved these sectors by deny-

Therefore, it actually rebetween India and China was sulted in the massive imports USD 45 billion, which his of the Chinese products, which were earlier manuincrease each year. It had factured in the small and medium sectors. Even under USD billion. The trade deficit the MRTP Act, the country's with China has recently been big business was not allowed increasing, except in 2020, to compete with them. They it was USD 39.76 billion. In were also providing market access to them. It is yet to billion, in 2021 and 2024, it be explained, says an expert of India's trade, why New Delhi allowed the exodus of hundreds of billions of the USD to sustain and augment the Chinese economy.

Under the Shadows of Fatigue and Seize

In spite of its meagre resources, the FW prepares to pick up the gauntlet exposing irrelevant rhetoric of the

talks, the country's focus towards acquiring stateof-technologies has been blurred amidst this useless rhetoric.

India, thus again finds herself relegated when China is being empowered by unprecedented scientific breakthroughs. Both academia and policy makers, especially the political executive, during this tumultuous period could not redefine India's strategy. The reasons that perhaps dominated the Indian systems could be traced to the inbuilt apathy of the country's political leadership comprising the right-wing parties like the BJP and the left outfits, the Communists, towards computers and information technology.

This confusion in the country's political leadership has adversely affected India's highly qualified trained manpower estimated to be 34 billion to tackle these challenges are being denied jobs and business opportunities in ending the rampant corrup- in India', but they actually erhouse. Amidst these tall graduate engineers are work-

ing as electricians serving households, and pharmacists are being forced to become Many science graduates are working as security guards.

There is a sense of a strong amiss among the people in contemporary India, especially, when the country has already succeeded in setting up strong fundamentals needed for a quantum jump to join the developed world, even to match the economies of the Asian tigers such as South Korea, Taiwan and now Vietnam. During the past three decades, China appears to have surpassed as the manufacturing hub for the West's economy. With a specific vision and strategy, it has become an economic superpower supported by its new technologies, inventions and patents. China has not only overtaken India, despite having an edge against her northern neighbor in some of the key areas in the field of science and technology till sixties, it now appears

to be poised to overtake the

and Europe.

country's one of the most admired and respected space scientists, that human aspirations go beyond the space or cosmos. The FW is representing these ideas in the

The FW is keen could to establish live linkages with

the academia, the corporate world, the regulators and the

policy makers. Indeed, it may appear too ambitious, but

being inspired by our former President, Abdul Kalam,

who used to tell the country's youth "unless you dream,

you cannot fix a target to achieve the cherished goal". It

also reminds us of the famous quote of Satish Dhawan,

In Quest of Renaissance

second quarter of its existence is to invent and identify the solution to reinvigorate the Indian economy. It may for a new renaissance by country. Our generation may delivery boys of Amazon. not be blessed by the physical existence of the scholars and monks like Raja Rammohun Roy, Swami Vivekanand and Aurobindo Ghose who initiated widespread reforms. Later, these efforts were invigorated by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders committed to the socialist and Marxist philosophies. In China, Sana-yat-Sen, who is respected as the founder of modern China, had joined the Roman Catholic stream of Christianity to modernize

These tall figures of our country of the recent past, who had reinvented the genius of India, continue to inspire us as a lighthouse even today, asserts a media professor to the FW.

On the face of it, the roots of this problem could be traced to the over indulgence of the Indian politicians in false narratives or trumpeting non-existent successes. It is not for the

During the fifties and sixties, The FW's focus during the the country had embarked upon a centralized model of economic development under the socialist agenda. In a bid to earmark state funds and spearhead its commitment also to obtain technologies from the USSR, India had supporting the hopefuls, adopted the Indian Indusmostly the young people, trial Policy Resolution (IPR) who comprise a majority in of 1956. It enabled the state this 150-strong billion of this to monopolize the capital goods industry accompanied by stiff government regulations. The stiff governmental controls ushered in the system of unnecessary licensing systems, also in the name of restraining monopolies in the private sector, the Monopolies Restrict Trade Practices (MRTP) Act 1969 was enacted. It dwarfed the Indian companies, when the Indian economy was opened for international investments during the nineties. These regulations had dwarfed the Indian economy, but the process of reforms could begin only during the tenure of the Prime Minister, P.V. Narsimha Rao, 1991-96. Rao was assisted by Dr. Manmohan Singh, who was inducted in the cabinet as the Finance Minister.

Admittedly. It was a belated attempt to reform the Indian economy. Earlier, in 1978, Deng Xiaoping, paramount leader of China, had first time that such a stalemate allowed modernization of gitimacy to the contemporary has been witnessed in India. four key areas, agriculture, men in power.

ogy. During his month-long visit to the US during January-February 1979, he offered a unique opportunity to the American capital to use China as a manufacturing hub without the hassle of trade union demands and tax regulations of their home country. During this historical visit, he had met as many as 17 state governors, members of the Congress, the then secretaries to the key departments such as agriculture and energy in Washington. With signing agreements of cooperation in the sensitive fields of science and technology, he, thus, laid a strong foundation of China as a formidable economic

On the other hand, the Indian initiative under Rao, which had begun 10 years later after Deng's new economic model, remains unfinished. Instead, the monopoly of the public sector has been replaced by crony capitalism. The basic principle of level playing ground for a fair competition, neutral system of the regulations and transparency in the governance considered essential for a free economy are being compromised.

The current stalemate in the Indian economy could be understood in the context of these half-hearted attempts. The Chinese could reorient their Communist ideology for the fresh infusion of ideas, investments and transforming economy; India on the other hand continues to struggle whether she is committed to a free economy or the worshipper of the holy cow of the socialist ideology of the Nehruvian era. The past wounds of the partition of 1947 are also being opened to give le-

Talking Points

Narvijay Yadav

The most significant risk isn't AI itself but the speed at which it transforms the job market. If India fails to upskill its workforce in time, the job gap will widen, and the unskilled workforce may struggle with underemployment.

rtificial Intelligence relevant skills. (AI) is reshaping industries worldwide, and India is no exception. As automation and manufacturing, concerns about mass job displacement are growing. Studies suggest that AI could replace millions essential. Soft skills - creative of jobs globally, including in thinking, problem-solving, India. However, history shows that tech-driven disruptions remain valuable because AI also bring new opportunities. The challenge is not just job loss but how quickly the workforce can adapt to new roles in India's diversity presents an AI-driven economy.

Routine jobs are the first to go. AI-powered chatbots and automation tools replace human roles in customer service, economies. Smart farming finance, and administrative sectors. Factories are increasingly using robotics, reducing the need for low-skill labor. AI is also impacting traditional jobs like accounting, legal research, and journalism.

But there's another side to this story. AI isn't just eliminating jobs; it's also creating offer freelance work opporthem. Data science, AI programming, machine learning, and cybersecurity are in high demand. Digital marketing, AI-driven healthcare, and remote tech support are booming. India's IT industry is expanding its AI-based services, generating new employment than competing with it. For enhances rather than replac-

For professionals, the lesson is clear - adapt or risk redundancy. Upskilling is the key to surviving this shift. takes over repetitive tasks in Learning AI-related skills data entry, customer support, like Python, data analytics, or cloud computing can open doors. Even in non-tech sectors, AI literacy is becoming and emotional intelligence, cannot replicate human insight and empathy.

New Opportunities: unique job opportunities. AI applications in agriculture, healthcare, and education can transform rural and urban using AI-powered drones, telemedicine platforms, and AI-driven e-learning are growing fields where human involvement remains crucial. The gig economy is another

Platforms like Upwork, Fiverr, and Indian startups tunities in content creation, AI consulting, and remote services. Indian youth, known for their adaptability, can leverage these platforms while transitioning into AIintegrated careers. The key is staying ahead of AI rather opportunities for those with instance, rather than fighting es. Renewable energy, smart

Automation Threat or AI Boom?



automation in finance, professionals can learn AI-driven financial modeling.

Government's Role: While individuals must take charge of their learning, the government has a critical role in smoothing this transition. Large-scale AI-focused skill development programs are needed. Expanding the Skill India initiative to include AI training in tier-2 and tier-3 cities can prevent a digital divide. Public-private part-nerships with tech giants like Google, Microsoft, and Infosys can ensure AI boot camps reach rural areas.

Education reforms are also urgent. Schools must introduce AI and coding from an early stage, replacing outdated rote-learning models with hands-on problem-solving approaches. Job creation should focus on industries where AI

agriculture, and AI-driven healthcare need skilled professionals. The government can incentivize startups that generate employment in these

Time to Act: A proactive approach is the only way forward. Indian professionals must embrace lifelong learning, diversify their skill sets, and stay updated with industry trends. With strategic adaptation, India can turn AI's disruption into a launchpad for innovation and job creation. The AI revolution is here. Whether it leads to crisis or opportunity depends on how quickly India acts. The future of work is not about man versus machine it's about man with machine. The choice is clear: evolve or

> The author is a senior journalist and columnist, views are personal.

J&K Police book actor Shreyas Talpade in financial fraud case

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Police have registered a financial fraud case against 15 individuals, including Bollywood actor Shreyas Talpade, for allegedly deceiving people through a chit fund scheme.

According to reports, the accused were associated with The Loni Urban Multistate Credit and Thrift

Cooperative Society Limited, which promised villagers high returns on their investments. Agents of the company allegedly convinced hundreds of people to invest, claiming their money would double in a short period. However, after collecting crores of rupees, the company reportedly ceased operations and disappeared. The scheme had been running in Mahoba for a decade before coming under legal scrutiny.

Authorities have filed a case at Srinagar police station, and an investigation is underway to determine the full extent of the fraud. Legal action will follow based on

the findings. This is not the first time Shreyas Talpade has faced allegations of financial misconduct. Last month, an FIR was lodged against him and actor Alok Nath in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly defrauding investors of over 9 crores. They were also implicated in a similar case in Sonipat, Haryana, linked to a multi-level marketing scheme. Reports suggest that both actors endorsed the cooperative society's investment plans, adding credibility to the operation.

Annual Budget of Rs 16.20 Crore passed for Gurdwara Sri Paonta Sahib management



IAGMOHAN SINGH Amritsar

The annual budget of Rs 16.20 crore of the Gurdwara Sri Pa-

onta Sahib Management Committee was passed under the leadership of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhami. The gathering for this occasion was attended by prominent personalities, including Jathedar Baba Nihal Singh Harian Velan, Baba Nagar Singh, Joga Singh, Harbhajan Singh, Harpreet Singh Rattan and Karamveer Singh.

Providing details about the budget, SGPC President Ad-

unanimously elected Harbhajan Singh as the Vice-President and Harpreet Singh Rattan as the General Secretary of the Gurdwara Sri Paonta Sahib Management Committee. stated that the approved budget for 2025-26 includes allocations for the construction of new buildings within the gurdwara premises, maintenance of old

On this occasion, SGPC President inaugurated and dedicated the newly constructed Sri Guru Teg Bahadar NRI Yatri Niwas to the Sikh community. This modern facility, built in collaboration with the gurdwara management by the Kar Sewa structures, the ongoing free organisation led by Baba Amrik Singh of Patiala, and the support of devotees, features 56 air-conditioned rooms with atfor celebrating and marking tached bathrooms. For the convenience of visitors, basement parking has been provided. The irst floor of the building houses shops and a bank, while the made for the purchase of land upper two floors serve as the accommodation area for pilgrims. and for the procurement of es-Devotees can book rooms online as per their requirements.

kitchen (Langar) in accordance

with regulations. During the

gathering, the committee also



dispensary, management-run

schools and other associated

institutions. He also confirmed

that funds have been earmarked

religious days, including festi-

vals, Gurpurbs and other events,

ensuring their continuation. Ad-

ditionally, provisions have been

for accommodation facilities

Akal Takht jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj and SGPC members pay their respects during the Bhog of Akhand Path, kept in the memory of wanted Bhai Mehal Singh Babbar, general secretary of Babbar Khalsa outfit, who died at Sri Nankana Sahib in Pakistan recently, at Sri Shaheed Ganj Baba Gurbaksh Singh Gurdwara located at the rear side of Sri Akal Takht on April 04, 2025. A Sikh activist prevented him from presenting a 'siropa' (robe of honour), lodging his dissent over accepting him as 'Jathedar'.

Star of Patriotic films Manoj Kumar passes away at 87



MUMBAI: Veteran actor and filmmaker Manoj Kumar breathed his last on Friday at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital. He was 87.

Reportedly, the medical reports reveal that Manoj Kumar's death was caused by cardiogenic shock resulting from an acute myocardial inbeen struggling with decompensated liver cirrhosis in recent months, which had worsened his health.

The legendary actor was ad-

mitted to the hospital on February 21, 2025, when his health deteriorated. Dr Santosh Shetty CEO and Executive Director at Kokilaben Ambani Hospital, said in a official statement, "Veteran actor Shri Manoj Kumarji passed away peacefully at the Kokilaben Ambani Hospital early this morning at around 3:30 AM, due to age-related health issues. He had been hospitalized for the past few weeks." Following the news of his passing, tributes quickly flooded in from celebrities, politicians, and fans alike. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed his sorrow, mourning the loss of the legendary actordirector. Taking to his X handle, he tweeted, "Deeply saddened by the passing of legendary actor and filmmaker Shri Manoj Kumar Ji. He was an icon of Indian cinema, who was particularly remembered for his patriotic zeal, which was also reflected in his films. Manoj Ji's works ignited a spirit of national pride and will continue to inspire generations. My thoughts are with his family and admirers in this hour of grief. Om Shanti." Manoj Kumar, widely recognized for his patriotic films, was affectionately known by the moniker 'Bharat Kumar. Born as Harikrishan Goswami on July 24, 1937, in Amritsar, Punjab, Manoj made a lasting impact on Hindi cinema. His memorable performances in films such as "Shaheed", "Upkar," and "Rang De Basanti" struck a deep chord with the patriotic spirit of the Indian audience. Manoj Kumar, one of the most successful actors of the 60s and 70s, worked in multiple iconic films like "Shor," "Do Badan", "Roti Kapda Aur Makaan," "Purab Aur Paschim," and many others. Apart from his acting career, he was also a director and producer. He directed

several hit films like "Upkar,"

"Kranti," "Clerk," and others.

Akshay Kumar fights against British Empire Post Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 'Kesari Chapter 2' Trailer

MUMBAI: The highly anticipated trailer for "Kesari Chapter 2" is finally out, and it showcases Akshay Kumar in a powerful role as Sir C. Sankaran Nair.

Set against the backdrop of the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the trailer depicts Nair's courageous battle against the British Empire, promising an intense and gripping narrative filled with historical significance and emotional depth. The makers took to social media to unveil the trailer and captioned it, "This is a wound. This is a

in bio. In cinemas 18th April worldwide." The trailer begins with a

compelling dialogue from Ak-General Dyer: "How did you humans! Babies as young as warn the crowd at Jallianwala



Bagh to disperse? Did you fire farction, a severe heart attack. roar. This... is #KesariChap- tear gas? Did you shoot in the What weapons did they have?" The reports also indicated that ter2! Trailer out now. Link air? Or did you just open fire ing?" General Dyer responds, "They weren't just a crowd; they were terrorists." Akshay shay Kumar as he questions retorts, "But they were still

with bullets in their tiny chests.

Based on true events, the of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the relentless fight for justice spearheaded by C. Sankaran Nair, a prominent lawyer and former President of eight or nine months were shot the Indian National Congress.

Akshay Kumar stars as C. Sankaran Nair, capturing his un-wavering resolve as he takes on Colonel Reginald Dyer, the British officer responsible for the horrific Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919.

The trailer also introduces Ananya Panday as Dilreet Gill, a determined female barrister who partners with Nair in his pursuit of justice. R. Madhavan plays Neville McKinley, a brilliant mind referred to as 'a genius' in the film. Directed by Karan Singh Tyagi, the film is produced by Hiroo Yash Johar, Karan Johar, Aruna Bhatia,

With a screenplay by Tyagi and Amritpal Singh Bindra, the film promises to deliver a powerful courtroom drama that blends history, bravery, and resilience.



Muslims offer prayers during Eid al-Fitr, that marks the end of the Islamic holy fasting month of Ramadan, at Jama Masjid Khairuddin in Amritsar on Monday

Haryana CM seeks blessings at Shri Mata Mansa Devi Temple on Chaitra Navratri

CM extends Chaitra Navratri greetings to the people **GULSHAN KUMAR**

Chandigarh

Haryana Chief Minister, Nayab Singh Saini along with his family, visited Shri Mata Mansa Devi Temple on the second day of Chaitra Navratri. He offered prayers and sought blessings from the Mata. After this, the Chief Minister reached Yagnyashala and performed Havan.

His wife, Suman Saini, and son, Vinay Saini, also participated in the rituals and received blessings.



greetings and best wishes to of the state and hoped that the people of Haryana on the the people would continue occasion of Chaitra Navratri. to contribute to the state's He prayed for the well-be- development.

Chief Minister extended his ing, peace, and prosperity

KCVAS organized Livestock Judging Competition

JAGMOHAN SINGH

Amritsar

Khalsa College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (KCVAS), Amritsar organized one day Livestock Judging Competition under 'Catch Cow Cues' Programme for the first time in the college at the premises of Livestock Farm Complex (LFC). The competition was inaugurated by Dr. S. K. Nagpal, Managing Director, KCVAS and Dr. Harish Kumar Verma, Principal of the college.

The judging events were conducted by the outgoing interns on the different categories of cows, Buffalos, Sheep & Goat. The interns were divided into six groups as Judging teams



and they judged the animals on in undertaking various Livethe basis of body capacity, gait, stock Championships being udder, breed and other signs & submitted their scores. Two jury teams comprising of senior faculty members lead by Dr. V.K. Gandotra and Dr. T. A. S.

ners for the various categories. Dr. Verma revealed that such competitions prepare

Ganai judged the scores of the

students and declared the win-

the budding veterinarians for learning the practical skills about the judging of the animals on the basis of various body parameters that will help them

organized by Punjab Animal Husbandry department.

Further, in his remarks, the Principal emphasized the importance of such competitions in dairy animals which can play a crucial role in improving breeding standards, promoting quality livestock, milk yield and reproductivity.

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