



The South Asian



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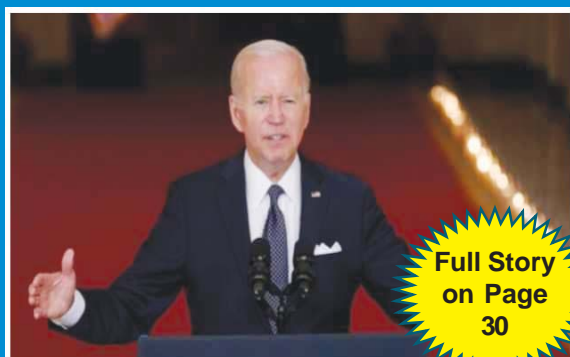
Issue 21

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**Joe Biden heads to  
West Bank, with little  
beyond money to offer  
Palestinians**



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**As World Mourns Shinzo Abe's  
Assassination, Chinese Social  
Media Erupts into Celebrations**



Full Story  
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**India in 2023: The challenge and opportunity  
of being the most populous country**

**The size of our labour force is constrained by the absence of women from the workforce. Only about 30% of women aged 15 and above are employed either in wage work on family farms and businesses**

(SAI Bureau) The United Nations Population Division released a new set of population projections on July 11, World Population Day. These projections show that India will become the most populous country in 2023, earlier than the year 2027, as expected. However, this is not because India has not successfully implemented its population policy but because China's fertility is lower than anticipated. Following years of stringent population control, restricting most couples to a single child, in 2016, China relaxed its one-child policy to allow two children. Then, in 2021, it was further relaxed to allow a third child. Nonetheless, Chinese couples seem to have adjusted to life with a single child, and the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in China is barely 1.16. **(Contd on. page 29)**



**NASA James Webb  
Space Telescope detects  
water on distant planet**



(SAI Bureau) NASA stunned everyone by releasing images taken by James Webb Space Telescope which has swung into action after its successful deployment. The most advanced telescope constructed by humankind is ready to unravel mysteries of the Universe from farthest corner previously invisible to human eyes, or lenses. **(Contd on page 29)**

**Dutch police open fire at teenage  
tractor driver during farmer protest**

**Sri Lanka PM Ranil Wickremesinghe has acknowledged that negotiations with the global lender were "more difficult and complicated" than in the past as the country is now "bankrupt."**

(SAI Bureau) During farm protests against the government proposal to slash emissions of pollutants like nitrogen oxide, the Dutch police opened fire at a 16-year-old boy in a tractor and detained three demonstrators in the

northern Netherlands. During a heated day of farm protests, the Dutch police opened fire at a 16-year-old boy in a tractor and detained three demonstrators in the northern Netherlands. **(Contd. on page 30)**



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# Indian-Origin Cop In UK Dismissed Over Racist Remarks On Meghan Markle

**Police Constable (PC) Sukhdev Jeer and PC Paul Hefford, both attached to Forensic Services in the Metropolitan Police, faced a misconduct hearing which concluded this week that allegations against them of exchanging vile messages was proven**



(SAI Bureau) London: An Indian-origin officer is among two dismissed from Scotland Yard without notice for their highly offensive and discriminatory behaviour following a professional standards investigation examining a year's worth of social media messages, including a racist jibe about Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex.

Police Constable (PC) Sukhdev Jeer and PC Paul Hefford, both attached to Forensic Services in the Metropolitan Police, faced a misconduct hearing which concluded this week that allegations against them of exchanging vile messages was proven.

The tribunal heard details of several racist posts, including reportedly one containing a racist slur about Markle, shortly before her marriage to Prince Harry in 2018. "These vile messages were shared in 2018 within a closed WhatsApp group between a small group

of officers. I hardly need to say it is completely unacceptable for anyone, let alone a police officer, to behave in such a manner. The actions of these three are inexcusable," said Commander Jon Savell, Professional Standards.

"The whole of the Met is focused on rooting out anyone who displays this type of behaviour and lets down the Met and the public we serve. Behaviour like this will absolutely not be tolerated and we are driving that message home to our officers and staff at every opportunity," he said.

The officers faced an allegation at the level of gross misconduct that between December 2017 and December 2018, while working at Central East Command Unit, they were part of a WhatsApp group on their private phones.

They used the group to exchange messages, memes and other content which was inappropriate, highly

offensive and discriminatory. The content was discriminatory on the grounds of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation and disability. "This repulsive behaviour understandably damages that trust and I want to apologise to every single member of the public we serve in this area," said Chief Superintendent Marcus Barnett, who leads the Central East division of the Met Police. "These officers have, rightly, been sacked. I do not want any officer who would engage in this sort of behaviour anywhere near your community. I will be personally emailing everyone who works at Central East to reinforce the message that words matter, respect matters, and every time someone sends this sort of message they cause real hurt," he said.

PCs Jeer and Hefford will now be added to the Barred List held by the College of Policing. Those appearing on the list cannot be employed by police,

local policing bodies (PCCs), the Independent Office for Police Conduct or Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. The officers also faced an allegation at the level of misconduct that they each failed to challenge or report the other members of the group for their behaviour. The messages came to light when another former officer, Richard Hammond's phone was examined as part of an unrelated criminal investigation. He was dismissed without notice in October 2021 following his conviction for perverting the course of justice. The Met Police said it was "working hard to rebuild trust in the country's largest police force and recognise we have a lot to do." Every Met employee has been spoken to about responsible use of social media, absolute adherence to professional boundaries and actively intervening and challenging wrongdoing.

## Indian-Led Team In Singapore To Send Machine Learning Software To Space

**The NTU team, led by Archit Gupta, got an opportunity to achieve the feat after winning a competition, earlier this month, on developing innovative ways to use artificial intelligence for space applications**

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: An Indian is among five students from Singapore's prestigious Nanyang Technological University (NTU) whose machine learning software will be going up on the International Space Station. The NTU team, led by Archit Gupta, is getting an opportunity to test its project in the ISS after winning a competition on developing innovative ways to use artificial intelligence for space applications earlier this.



In the course of next three months, the team will install the software into an Artificial Intelligence box, a tiny supercomputer. Once that's done, it will be physically transported to the space station. "The purpose of the ISS is to collect experimental data, and if (single event upsets) happen, then the sanctity of the data gets compromised, and the experiment is wasted," Mr Gupta, a second-year student from the School of Computer Science and Engineering told The Straits Time.

The disruptions are called single event upsets, which tend to afflict sensitive electrical components in space. The 20-year-old's software - Cremer - will play a key role in predicting hardware disruptions on the ISS or satellites which can cause such space vehicles to go off course or crash, in the worst outcomes. Cremer was named after an existing software called Creme, which also addresses single event upsets.

"We wanted to build a better version of it, and hence we named it Cremer," said Mr Gupta. The project of Archit Gupta, who completed his schooling from the Delhi Public School, is said to be a game changer in space technology. The other members of the NTU team are third-year business student Sim See Min, 22, third-year mechanical engineering student Deon Lim, 24, and second-year electrical and electronic engineering student Rashna Ahmed, 21.

## Singapore Court Reduces Sentence Of Indian-Origin Man Convicted Of Rape

**The Court of Appeal on Wednesday reduced his jail term to 16 years and six months**



(SAI Bureau) Singapore: Singapore's top court on Wednesday reduced the jail term of an Indian-origin man who was convicted of raping a stranger's blindfolded girlfriend in a "threesome" planned without the woman's knowledge in 2016. Srihari Mahendran, 26, was convicted after a High Court trial in 2020 and initially sentenced to 17 years and 10 months' jail and 14 strokes of the cane.

The Court of Appeal on Wednesday reduced his jail term to 16 years and six months, citing the need for parity with his co-accused. His caning sentence was untouched, according to a Channel News Asia report. Parity refers to the principle that people who commit the same

offences should generally receive the same penalty, all other factors being equal.

In this case, Srihari's lawyer Edmond Pereira asked the Court of Appeal to reduce his client's jail term to 14 to 16 years to reflect his lower culpability and other mitigating factors compared to the co-accused. Srihari's co-accused, the victim's then boyfriend, was sentenced to 19 years and 11 months' jail and 24 strokes of the cane on appeal. The victim's boyfriend cannot be named to protect the identity of the victim. Srihari can be named as there is no gag order on his identity and he was a stranger to the couple, according to the Channel report. Srihari and the victim's boyfriend had met online in 2015 on a pornographic blog. In April and August 2016, without the victim's knowledge, Srihari snuck into two hotels where the couple were, and raped and sexually assaulted the woman with her boyfriend's help.



# Event Held In Honour Of Indian Defence Force Veterans In US

**India has been designated as a Major Defence Partner' by US, and conducts more military exercises with the US, than with any other country**

(News Agency) Washington DC: Recognising the importance of Indian armed forces' veterans, the Indian Embassy in Washington on Monday organised 'Varishtha Yoddha', an event to honour the ex-servicemen who are now living in the United States. More than 140 people, including some distinguished veterans who had fought in various wars and their families, attended the event here. "Friends, you have served and sacrificed for mother India, with utmost sense of duty and selflessness. You and your family members as a part of 4 million-strong Indian community are instrumental in strengthening India-US ties across a diversity of sectors," Taranjit Singh Sandhu, India's Ambassador to the US, said. "While no recognition and award can do justice to your contributions, today's event in a small way expresses our respect and gratitude and tells you that we are here for you,"

he said in his admiration to the veterans. "It's a matter of pride, privilege and honour for me to be a part of this special gathering." There are people in this room, who have fought for India in 1948, 1962, 1965 or 1971, 1985, the Kargil war in 1999 and in numerous other operations, he said. "Today's Varishtha Yoddha event is our humble effort to recognise the sacrifice and service of our veterans and honour them for the patriotism, dedication and willingness to serve and sacrifice all for the nation. "We remain committed to taking care of our veterans in the same way as they have

taken care of the security of our country," he said. Mr Sandhu said Indians



veterans, wherever they go, carry the highest standards of duty, discipline and professionalism for which Indian armed forces are known. "Our veterans living in

USA remain the flag-bearers of the traditions of our armed forces and continue to inspire the Indian community," he said. India-US strategic partnership is enriched by their wisdom, hard work and high moral values, he added. In his address, Mr Sandhu said the defence partnership between the US and India has been instrumental in intensifying a variety of pacts between them, including those related to sharing of defence technology and cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy. India has been designated as a 'Major Defence Partner' by US, and conducts more military exercises with the US, than with any other country. Currently, an Indian naval contingent, including a naval ship, is in Hawaii for participation, in RIMPAC naval exercise, Sandhu told the veterans. Over the last decade, he said, India has procured defence-related acquisitions from the US worth over \$20 billion.

# Indian Restaurant Owner In UK Found To Have Spent Covid Aid On Drinking



**Rathudi Mahesh Manglanand, 47, was a sole trader who ran the Chutney Roti Indian Restaurant in Cardiff**

(News Agency) London: The owner of an Indian restaurant in Wales has been placed under nine-year bankruptcy restrictions after reportedly spending most of the taxpayer support from a COVID fund on drinking and

gambling. Rathudi Mahesh Manglanand, 47, was a sole trader who ran the Chutney Roti Indian Restaurant in Cardiff. According to the UK's Insolvency Service, the restaurant had already ceased trading prior to

the beginning of the pandemic and was therefore not eligible for COVID-19 financial assistance schemes. However, in April 2020 Manglanand applied for a GBP 25,000 grant from his local council and the following month he applied for a GBP 18,000 Bounce Back Loan. The restaurateur subsequently applied for his own bankruptcy in July 2021 at which point the Insolvency Service began investigating and uncovered "misuse" of the COVID-19 financial support schemes. "The COVID-19 support schemes

generously provided taxpayer money to support genuine businesses and anyone who abused those schemes should expect to be caught and punished," said Gavin Seymour, Deputy Official Receiver at the Insolvency Service. Manglanand accepted that his business had already ceased trading and told investigators that he had been drinking heavily and "was not thinking straight". He estimated he had lost around GBP 30,000 though gambling in the space of a year. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial

Strategy, Kwasi Kwarteng, accepted a nine-year bankruptcy restrictions undertaking from the businessman, which commences on 20 June 2022. The Insolvency Service said in their capacity as Rathudi Manglanand's trustee in bankruptcy, the Official Receiver is assessing assets available in order to recover the COVID-19 support funding. Bankruptcy restrictions in the UK are wide ranging, with similar effects to an undertaking which impose limits on the business activities of an individual for the duration of the restrictions.

# Indian-Origin Woman Jailed For Driving Test Fraud in United Kingdom

**Inderjeet Kaur admitted to having concluded approximately 150 theory and practical driving tests on behalf of candidates between 2018 and 2020**

(News Agency) London: A 29-year-old Indian-origin woman has been sentenced to eight months in prison after admitting impersonating at least 150 people to appear for driving tests on their behalf across different parts of the United Kingdom. Inderjeet Kaur admitted to having concluded approximately 150 theory and practical driving tests on behalf of candidates between 2018 and 2020.

She committed the offences throughout England and Wales, including Swansea, Carmarthen, Birmingham and around

London, and pleaded guilty at Swansea Crown Court on Thursday when she was sentenced. "The crimes Inderjeet Kaur committed circumvent the driving test process and in turn puts innocent road users at risk, by allowing unskilled and dangerous motorists to have seemingly legitimate licences," said Detective Chief Inspector Steven Maloney of South Wales Police. "Safety on our roads has always been a priority and arresting those that flaunt the law ensures that we can keep unqualified drivers off the road. By working with the DVSA (Driver

and Vehicle Standards Agency), this complex criminal investigation highlighted the extent of Inderjeet Kaur's offending which was purely out of greed. Inderjeet Kaur's offending has now been halted, and she has now been brought to justice, and we today welcome the sentence imposed by the courts," he said. "Frauds such as these pose significant risks to the general public and I urge any members of the public with information on such crimes to report them to the police or even anonymously via crime stoppers," he added. Inderjeet

Kaur is reported to have charged around 800 pounds from each of those she impersonated. She came under the scanner as suspicion grew among staff at the test centres that she was impersonating genuine candidates while taking the test. Following a referral from the DVSA, an investigation was launched by Tarian, the regional organised crime team for southern Wales. The investigation uncovered Inderjeet Kaur was offering services to test applicants who had difficulty with the English language.



# Jharkhand: PM Modi to Inaugurate Deoghar Airport, AIIMS on Tuesday; Security Beefed Up



140 airports, including heliports and water domes, as of April 2022. Under the UDAN scheme, more than 420 routes are operationalised as of June 2022. More than 1.79 lakh flights have flown under this scheme and have benefited several sectors pan-India including hilly states, north-eastern region, and islands.

## 11.5-KM-LONG ROAD SHOW

Modi will also lay foundation stones for fresh projects and take part in an 11.5-km-long road show, a senior police officer said, adding that security has been tightened in the district. BJP workers have been working to ensure a smooth programme, with some of the saffron party leaders, including Lok Sabha MP Nishikant Dubey, calling the 11.5-km-long road show a historic event. Senior police officer told PTI, lakhs of people are expected to witness or take part in the road show on Tuesday, and measures are being taken in the region to ensure that the programme passes off smoothly. Drones will be deployed to monitor the entire roadshow,

he stated. He also said that people from far and wide had been arriving in Deoghar to participate in the Shravani mela, which is set to commence on July 14, and arrangements have been made for their safety, too. Chief Minister Hemant Soren had on Sunday held a high-level meeting with senior officials and police officers to take stock of the preparations and security arrangements ahead of the PM's visit.

**AIIMS** Of the projects that are set to get inaugurated on Tuesday include an in-patient Department (IPD) and operation theatre services at AIIMS, Deoghar. "AIIMS in Deoghar is a boon for the healthcare sector of the entire region. The services at AIIMS Deoghar will get a further boost as the Prime Minister will dedicate to the nation the In-Patient Department (IPD) and Operation Theatre services at AIIMS, Deoghar. This is in accordance with the Prime Minister's vision to develop excellent health care facilities in

all parts of the country," an official release said. Prime Minister Modi laid the foundation of AIIMS Deoghar on May 25, 2018. The setting up of new AIIMS at Deoghar will help in achieving the dual purpose of providing super speciality health care to the population while also helping to create a large pool of doctors and other health workers in this region. There were only 7 AIIMS before 2014. During the last eight years, 16 AIIMS have been approved out of which MBBS classes and OPD services have begun in 10 hospitals. Limited IPD services have also been operationalized in 6 AIIMS. Medical seats across the country thereby substantially increasing the number of doctors in the country. The number of UG seats have increased from around 51,000 before 2014 to around 90,000 seats in 2022 which is an increase of almost 80 per cent. The number of PG seats have increased by 93 per cent from around 31,000 seats before 2014 to around 60,000 seats.

(SAI Bureau) Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Deoghar Airport in Jharkhand and laid foundation stones for several fresh projects including the setting up of a new AIIMS in the district on Tuesday. An official release stated that the prime minister will lay foundation and inaugurate projects worth Rs 16,000 crore in Jharkhand.

The Deoghar Airport will be the second international airport in Jharkhand after Ranchi. PM Modi laid the foundation stone of the airport project on May 25, 2018. The 657-acre airport, dedicated to the people of the region on the

occasion, has been built at a cost of Rs 401 crore.

The first flight from Deoghar to Kolkata will depart tomorrow, an official statement said. Low-cost carrier IndiGo had last week announced that it would launch the Kolkata-Deoghar flight service on July 12. The Deoghar airport will reduce the distance between Kolkata to Deoghar from 7.5 hours to 75 minutes and will be the second international airport in Jharkhand after Ranchi.

Prior to 2014, India had 74 airports in India but in 7 years, 66 new airports have been established taking the total to

# Huawei transferred huge amount of money abroad, claim income tax department sources



mentioned in its petition that the I-T department didn't give them any notice and took the action which affected their business. The I-T department has said that they have recovered incriminating evidence against the firm

and on the basis of these documents they took the action. The department had also alleged that the firm was hiding its account books. It said that the firm had given them dump transactions which did not

account books and they were unable to identify the veracity of their income. The I-T officials also wanted to access the email of Yang Yi, the Chief Financial Officer of the firm, but the request was denied by the company.

(By Staff Reporter) In India, Chinese technology company Huawei has been accused by the Income Tax Department of transferring Rs 750 crore to its foreign-based parent firms sources in the department have said. The I-T had in February accused the firm of huge tax evasion and frozen its bank accounts. The I-T department has reportedly found discrepancies in its income tax declaration. "The I-T declaration of the last two years has discrepancies. The revenue of the company was

decreasing, but we have found that even in this crisis they repatriated Rs 750 crore abroad," the I-T sources claimed. Huawei had said that they were following all the norms and laws of the land.

The company had also said that due to the action of I-T department they suffered huge losses and it badly affected their business. Huawei had moved to the Delhi High Court seeking relief. The court in April stayed the attachment of the accounts of the firm. Huawei had also

## Rape case: Ex-Punjab MLA Bains surrenders in court, sent to 3-day police custody

**Lok Insaaf Party chief Simarjeet Singh Bains has surrendered before a court in connection with a rape case. The two-time MLA is the main accused in the rape case of a 44-year-old woman**

(News Agency) Lok Insaaf Party chief and former MLA Simarjeet Singh Bains and five others, including his two brothers, on Monday July 16, 2021 on the directions of a local court.

surrendered before a court here in connection with a rape case. The 52-year-old Bains surrendered in the court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Harsimranjit Singh. The court sent the former legislator to the three-day police custody. The two-time MLA is the main accused in the rape case of a 44-year-old woman. The case was registered against Bains



and his personal assistant in the same case. The court had declared Bains and the other accused as proclaimed offenders as they were not participating in the proceedings. The woman had alleged in her complaint that the former MLA had raped her multiple times after she approached him for help in a property dispute case. Earlier, police had arrested his brother



## With focus on China, Indian army seeks personnel with Mandarin expertise



(SAI Bureau) The Indian Army has issued a notification inviting applications from personnel who are fluent in Mandarin who will be able properly communicate with the Chinese military along the Line of Actual Control. According to the notification issued on Sunday, the army requires Mandarin experts for understanding the version of events presented by the People Liberation Army (PLA) at "Corps Commander level talks, Flag meetings, Joint Exercises, Border Personnel Meetings and others". The communication with the Chinese counterparts has become extremely important for the Indian Army in the current situation and as a result, it has taken steps to improve its in-house Mandarin expertise. While there has a significant boost in

the Chinese language training programs, the army has also started training a number of junior and senior military commanders in the language. With improved Mandarin skills, the Indian Army personnel will be better empowered to convey their points in a much more cogent manner," a source told PTI. According to ANI, the army has already signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU), Central University of Gujarat (CUG), Shiv Nadar University (SNU) for Mandarin courses. Tests are also being conducted at Langma School of Languages, New Delhi. When it comes to the in-house measures, the School of Foreign Languages, Delhi and Army's Training School at Pachamari have more vacancies for personnel to join the courses.

## Indian Union Minister says Petrol will be banned in India after five years

Union minister Nitin Gadkari has expressed confidence that green fuel will end the need for the use of petrol in vehicles in the country after five years

(SAI Bureau) Union minister Nitin Gadkari has expressed confidence that green fuel will end the need for the use of petrol in vehicles in the country after five years. He made the statement in Maharashtra's Akola on Thursday, where he was conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Science by Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth. The degree was awarded to him by the Governor and Chancellor of public universities Bhagat Singh Koshyari. Former Vice-Chancellor Dr. Motilal Madan, VC Dr. Vilas Bhale, professors, faculty deans, teachers, registrar, and graduating students were also present. During his speech, the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways made a strong pitch for the use of green hydrogen, ethanol, and other green fuels. Green hydrogen can be sold for Rs 70 per kg and can be made from deep well



water. With full faith, I want to say that petrol will vanish from the country after five years. Your cars and scooters will either be on green hydrogen, ethanol flex-fuel, CNG, or LNG," he said. Chattisgarh government has also recently approved its EV Policy for 2022 and electric vehicles can be manufactured in the state. All these goals if achieved will not only cut the spending on driving vehicles but also help protecting the environment, which is one of the most important needs. Gadkari also appealed to agriculture researchers and experts to

work on increasing agricultural growth from 12 per cent to 20 per cent in the next five years. The farmers in Maharashtra are very talented, he said while emphasizing the need to guide and train them with new research and technology. He also talked about the need for farmers to become energy providers as well and not just food providers. He also said that farmers cannot change their futures by merely planting crops, but should also learn other useful techniques as well, which would not only help them earn but also in their existing agricultural work.



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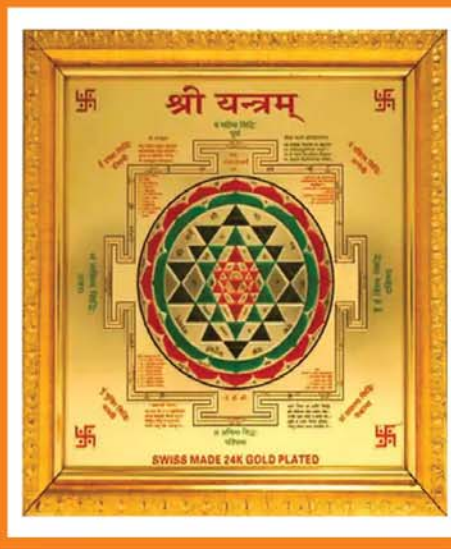
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# India: SC holds fugitive businessman Vijay Mallya guilty of contempt, sentences him

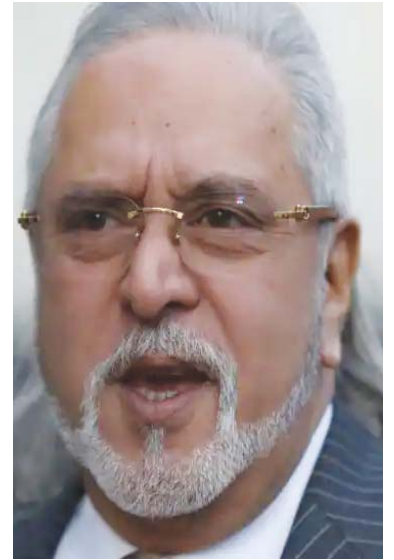
(SAI Bureau) Fugitive business tycoon Vijay Mallya, who lives in UK, has been given a four-month prison sentence by the Indian Supreme Court on Monday for failing to disclose his assets after defaulting on a loan for 90 billion rupees (\$1.13 billion) following the demise of his defunct Kingfisher Airlines. He was fined 2,000 INR by the court after it declared him in contempt of court for disobeying its directives. The bench stated that in order to "uphold the majesty of law," an

appropriate sentence must be given to him. He has shown "no remorse" for his actions, said the bench of Justices UU Lalit, Ravindra S. Bhat, and PS Narasimha, and he did not show up for the sentencing hearing. Mallya allegedly moved \$40 million to members of his family, even though the bank loan is still due.

The court has also given Mallya and his family four weeks to deposit \$40 million and the 8 per cent interest; if they fail to do so,

attachment proceedings will be started against his properties. The industrialist, whose interests include everything from alcohol to aircraft, is currently in Britain, but India is attempting to extradite him. Despite receiving multiple summonses, Mallya has neglected to show up in court. In 2017, the Supreme Court found Mallya in contempt of court for hiding information from the court about sending USD 40 million to his children in violation of the court's order. The court has

summoned him on several instances. He was also found guilty of contempt of court, in a lawsuit brought by a group of banks led by the State Bank of India. When the contempt case was being heard, the top court made note that Mallya acted like "a free person" in the UK and that no information has been provided about the proceedings against Mallya there. Mallya has previously claimed that the lawsuit against him is politically driven and has denied all wrongdoing.



## Assam flood situation continues to improve, over 3.7 lakh still affected

**Even as the flood situation in Assam continued to improve on Monday, over 3.7 lakh people across districts still remained affected**

(SAI Bureau) Even as the flood situation in Assam continued to improve on Monday, over 3.79 lakh people across 10 districts still remained affected, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) daily flood report stated.

As many as 3,79,238 people of 416 villages in 10 districts are now affected, while 5.39 lakh people in 10 districts were hit by the calamity on Sunday.

With no fresh report of any deaths, the total number of persons losing lives in both the wave of floods across the state this year stands at 192, including 19 in landslides. Cachar is the worst-hit district with 2.08 lakh

people reeling under the floods, followed by Morigaon (1,41,712) and Nagaon (24,525), the report stated.

The authorities are running 95 relief camps in Bajali, Biswanath, Cachar, Chirang, Dima Hasao, Kamrup, Morigaon and Tamulpur districts, where 20,964 people, including 5,515 children, have taken shelter. Crops on 5,431.2 hectares and 99,654 domesticated animals have also been affected, the ASDMA report stated.

Houses, embankments, roads and other infrastructure have been damaged by flood waters in Cachar, Hailakandi, Karbi Anglong West, Udalguri,

Dhemaji, Dhubri, Baksa, Barpeta, Kamrup, Morigaon and Tamulpur districts, the report stated. The 12 flood-affected districts are Bajali, Biswanath, Cachar, Chirang, Dima Hasao, Golaghat, Hailakandi, Kamrup, Morigaon, Nagaon, Sivasagar and Tamulpur. Meanwhile, Assam fisheries minister Parimal Suklabaidya on Monday said the government will grant aid to the fish farmers of the state, who have incurred losses to the tune of over Rs 1,000 crore due to the devastating floods this year.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday visited the flood and erosion hit areas of



Hojai district and took stock of relief measures taken by the district administration. The CM inspected the erosion hit areas of the district and assessed the damages caused by the flood waters. The Chief Minister also interacted with the local people and assured them of all necessary steps to check erosion and construction of an embankment to protect the area from floods. Sarma also visited a flood relief

camp in the district and inspected facilities provided to inmates of the camp. The Chief Minister later took part in a meeting with senior officials of the district and reviewed measures that have been taken to deal with the floods by the administration. Sarma instructed the concerned officials to submit report on the damaged caused by the floods so that repair work can be taken up early.

## Either withdraw Agnipath scheme or send it to parliamentary committee, Opposition tells Centre

**Opposition MPs in the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Defence told the Centre to withdraw the Agnipath scheme or sent for standing committee scrutiny**

(SAI Bureau) Before the start of Monsoon Session of Parliament, the Centre and Opposition were in a huddle to discuss the Agnipath scheme on Monday. However, the Opposition camp - which plans to seek a detailed discussion on Agnipath scheme in the upcoming session - clearly kept its demand on this issue before the central government. According to sources, in the one-and-a-half-hour long meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Opposition MPs demanded that Agnipath scheme be either withdrawn or sent to parliamentary panel for further detailed scrutiny. As many as 12 MPs from various political parties, including four from the BJP, attended this

meeting which took place in the Parliament, sources said. According to Opposition camp, they "strongly expressed their reservations" about Agnipath - the new military recruitment scheme. According to sources, Rajya Sabha MP Shaktisinh Gohil said at the meeting, "If there is any big change/policy that a government introduces in a democracy, it is not done on a trial or experiment basis. Wide range consultations are held. This decision to roll out Agnipath wasn't taken by the armed forces. There is a huge uproar against Agnipath in the country. We demand that this scheme should be withdrawn." According to sources, a detailed presentation was given before the committee

members by Ministry of Defence officials. Apart from the defence minister and the Army chief, top officials from the Ministry of Defence and tri-services were present. "The government wasn't able to respond to any of our questions so six members of Opposition have written to Rajnath Singh asking him to hold wider consultations and also refer the Agnipath Scheme to Parliament's Standing Committee for Defence," TMC MP Saugata Roy told media persons after the meeting. Those who signed an Opposition memorandum include Shaktisinh Gohil and Rajni Patil of Congress; Professor Saugata Roy and Sudip Bandopadhyay from TMC, Supriya Sule

from NCP and AD Singh from RJD. Interestingly, the seventh Opposition MP Manish Tewari did not sign this letter. According to sources close to Tewari, during the question-answer session, the Congress MP from Punjab asked the maximum number of questions about the scheme. The Tewari camp source maintained, "It was a consultative meeting. Tewari didn't sign the Opposition letter, but he articulated his concerns and did counter question the government on issues like - operational readiness, downsizing of Army, scheme's impact on core structure of Army etc. It was substantial deliberation on the Agnipath scheme."



# 'Some people are greedy, BJP trying to bargain with them': Goa Congress in-charge on mutiny buzz

**Goa Congress-in charge Dinesh Gundu Rao hit out at Michael Lobo and Digambar Kamat amid the mutiny buzz. Dinesh Gundu Rao said some people are greedy and the BJP is trying to bargain with them**



BJP is playing a big game and offering huge money to them to switch parties." The Congress leader said that the plan of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and his own party leaders to engineer a two-third split in the party has failed. Dinesh Gundu Rao claimed that party MLAs were offered Rs 25 crore to join the BJP. Hitting out at Kamat and Lobo, Congress' Goa in-charge said, "BJP was trying to engineer a 2/3 split in Congress and their own party leaders Micheal Lobo and former Goa Chief Minister Digambar Kamat were also involved in this." On Sunday, out of the total 11 Congress MLAs in the state, five -- Michael Lobo,

Digambar Kamat, Kedar Naik, Rajesh Faldesai and Delialah Lobo -- had gone intocommunicado, fueling buzz about defection. When asked about half of Congress leaders are out on their way to join the BJP within six months of elections, Dinesh Gundu Rao said, "We have sacked Michael Lobo as the Leader of the Opposition in the Goa Assembly. The party has also filed a disqualification plea against Congress MLAs Michael Lobo and Digambar Kamat for trying to engineer a split in the party. At present, we have seven Congress MLAs." Ahead of the state elections in Goa, Congress candidates had sworn in a temple, church and dargah that they would not defect. When asked why would BJP offer money to opposition leaders when it is already in power in Goa, the leader replied, "You should ask BJP about this. The mining and coal lobby is involved in this. The BJP is doing this because they do not want any opposition in the country. They want to silence opposition, especially the Congress, who can challenge them." "BJP has incredible money. They are using this money, institutional

mechanism, central agencies like the ED to silence people who speak against them," Dinesh Gundu Rao said when asked why the Congress is so vulnerable when it comes to poaching of MLAs. The Congress leader also claimed that the mutiny in Goa Congress was done by national leaders of the BJP and senior chief ministers were also involved in this. Rao said that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma is also involved in whatever is happening in Goa. Michael Lobo had left Congress to join the saffron camp ahead of the Goa elections.

Replying to why the party did not introspect Lobo before offering him a ticket, Dinesh Gundu Rao said, "In politics, people switch parties. He joined the Congress party and contested on that ticket and it cannot be termed as defection. What the BJP is doing is a systematic attempt to silence the opposition. Not only Goa, the entire country is facing this problem." He further said, "Things are not well in the Congress party and efforts are being made to correct them. I also thank my first-time MLAs who did not succumb to this."

(SAI Bureau) Amid mutiny in Goa Congress, Dinesh Gundu Rao, Congress' Goa in-charge, slammed his own party leaders Digambar Kamat and Michael Lobo on Monday. Dinesh Gundu Rao said some people are greedy and ambitious and the BJP is trying to bargain with them. In an exclusive interview with India Today TV, Dinesh Rao, said, "Congress gave big positions to Digambar Kamat and Michael Lobo. But some people are greedy and ambitious and the BJP is trying to bargain with them. The

## Man held for threatening to kill 15-year-old who condemned Udaipur murder

**A Kashmir native has been held for threatening to kill a 15-year-old over a post condemning the Udaipur murder**

(SAI Bureau) The Mumbai Police has arrested a 30-year-old Kashmir native for threatening to kill a 15-year-old over a post condemning Udaipur murder. On July 1, she received threat messages from three different numbers on her WhatsApp.

The messages contained sexual assault and murder threats after posting a video on Facebook condemning and expressing her views on the killing of Kanhaiya Lal in Udaipur.

Following this incident, a case was registered against the accused at VP road police station under sections 509 and 506 (2) of the Indian Penal Code on July 2. DCP Nilotpal of Mumbai Police said, "Acting on technical analysis and other details, a team of VP Road Police station was sent to Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. With the help of local police, a 30-year-old was traced using the number he used to send the threat messages."

The accused was identified as Faiyaz Gulam Mohammad Butt, a resident of Budgam. He was then placed under arrest and brought to Mumbai on July 11. "The accused was brought back to Mumbai yesterday evening and produced before court today in which the

accused has been remanded to three days in police custody. Further investigation into this matter is on," said DCP Nilotpal. Kanhaiya Lal was killed with a cleaver inside his tailoring shop on June 28. The gruesome attack by Riaz Akhtari, who is also referred to as Riyaz Attari, on the tailor was recorded on a phone

by Ghouse Mohammad, and the video was posted online. They said in a video later that they hacked Lal to death to avenge an alleged insult to Islam.

The duo were arrested within hours of the killing. The NIA, which took over the case, has so far arrested seven people in connection with the case.

## BJP offered Rs 15-30 crore to MLAs, readied charter plane to ferry them out of Goa, claims Congress

**The Congress has claimed that the BJP had offered Rs 15-30 crore to MLAs and kept a charter plane ready to ferry them out**

(SAI Bureau) The Congress has claimed that the BJP had offered Rs 15-30 crore to MLAs and kept a charter plane ready to ferry them out of Goa. "We have information that even a charter plane was readied. Permission for it to fly out of an airfield in Maharashtra was taken for the time slot of 4 pm to 4:30 pm. But in the nick of time, a few loyal Congress MLAs informed us and our leadership foiled the plans. Once the rebel group knew that they didn't make 8 MLAs in all, the plan failed," said Goa Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) President Amit Patkar. The Goa Congress leader maintained that the charter plane was to fly out of the Kolhapur airfield and permission for the same had been taken for July 10. However, the GPCC couldn't confirm if the charter landed



in Goa or not. The GPCC President said, "These few stayed with us for ideology and party loyalty. We don't have anything to offer. It's the trust for which they stayed back," said Patkar. Refuting the claims of Amit Patkar, state BJP chief Sadanand Tanavade said if

such an action was indeed happening, then everyone would have known. "Tell the Congress leader to keep the Congress MLAs in control. No one from Congress has come to me indicating joining the BJP. These are just talks. Why would BJP need any MLAs when they have a stable government," said the BJP state chief. The GPCC President stressed that the game plan of BJP failed as they couldn't get to the magic figure of eight to make a clean split. "We ensured that the split didn't happen. But for now, defection won't happen. If anybody has to go then they will have to resign and seek approval from voters again. This time Congress is serious and based on the information that we had we have taken a pro-active decision," said Patkar.



# ED attaches assets worth Rs 14 crore in Morris Coin Crypto Currency case

**The Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth Rs 14 crore in the Morris Coin Crypto Currency cheating case**

(SAI Bureau) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth Rs 14 crore in the Morris Coin Crypto Currency cheating case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), officials said on Monday.

The attached assets include a balance in bank accounts of Flywithme Mobile LLP (a firm owned by Nishad and Hasif K) and immovable properties of Nishad K's associates allegedly purchased out of the proceeds of crime. Along with the bank balance, the attached assets also include a hospital in Kochi and 52 acres of Agricultural Land in Tamil Nadu.

The ED had initiated a money laundering investigation on the basis of various FIR's registered in various police stations against Nishad K and others persons for

cheating people on the pretext of giving high returns of 2-3% per day to the investors.

"During the course of the investigation conducted under PMLA, it has been ascertained that Nishad K via his various firms such as Long Rich Global, Long R i c h Technologies and Morris Trading S o l u t i o n s collected deposits from the investors in the guise of Initial Coin Offer for the launch of Morris Coin Crypto Currency. By

conducting promotional events in the presence of celebrities, introducing the investors to flashy websites and by provision of e wallets to each investor



via web-based applications, Nishad K has collected deposits from the investors via various pin stockist," said

the ED in a statement. The collected amount was then allegedly transferred into the bank accounts of Nishad K and his firm. Subsequently, according to ED, the collected amounts were layered into the shell companies. "From the bank statement analysis of the accounts pertaining to the Nishad K and his firms, it was found that numerous firms/companies were used to launder the proceeds of crime into multiple bank accounts," added the statement.

Earlier, movable and immovable properties to the tune of Rs 36.72 Crore were attached by ED. In March, 2022, the ED had arrested Abdul Gafoor, Managing Director of Stoxglobal Brokers Pvt. Ltd. in connection with this case.

## Use of military force outdated, says Dalai Lama as India stares down China in Ladakh

**Amid the ongoing stand-off between Indian and Chinese troops at multiple friction points in eastern Ladakh, spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has said, "Use of military force is outdated"**



(SAI Bureau) Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has once again advocated a peaceful resolution to the ongoing tensions between India and China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. Urging both countries to persist with dialogue to disengage troops and resolve the high-altitude stalemate, the Dalai Lama said, "India and China, the two populated neighbours should resolve this problem through talks and peaceful means. Use of military force is outdated." The spiritual leader's remarks came ahead of his visit to Ladakh, where he is likely to spend over a month. His stay is expected to rile China further as it comes amid the lingering military standoff between Indian and Chinese troops at several friction points in eastern

Ladakh. China accuses the Dalai Lama of indulging in "separatist" activities, however, the Tibetan spiritual leader insists that he is not seeking independence but "genuine autonomy for all Tibetans living in the three traditional provinces of Tibet" under the "Middle-Way approach".

"Some Chinese hardliners consider me a separatist and a reactionary and always criticize me. But now, more Chinese are realising that the Dalai Lama is not seeking independence and only wishing China (to give) meaningful autonomy (to Tibet) and (ensure) preservation of Tibetan Buddhist culture," the 87-year-old spiritual leader told reporters in Jammu. Asked about China's objection to his visit, the Dalai Lama said, "This is usual. The Chinese people are

not objecting... more and more Buddhism is very scientific. Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 and Chinese are showing interest in Things are changing." The Dalai is feted worldwide for his Tibetan Buddhism. Some of their Lama, whose real name is advocacy of independence for scholars are realising that Tibetan Tenzin Gyatso, received the Tibet and other causes.

## No dharna in Parliament, states order ahead of Monsoon session

**Ahead of the monsoon session, a latest order has stated that no dharna will be allowed in Parliament**



(SAI Bureau) Ahead of the monsoon session, a latest order has stated that no dharna will be allowed in Parliament. AICC General Secretary Jairam Ramesh shared the latest order by the Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha PC Mody on Twitter. He captioned the image as "Vishguru's latest salvo —

D(h)arna Mana Hai!" According to the latest order by the Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha, members of Parliament cannot use its precincts for any dharna or strike. The order by PC Mody read, "Members cannot use the precincts of Parliament House for any demonstration, dharna, strike, fast, or for the purpose of

performing any religious ceremony." Mody ended the letter by asking "kind cooperation of members." Meanwhile, Lok Sabha secretariat on Wednesday released a booklet ahead of the monsoon session of Parliament, listing words which will now be considered 'unparliamentary' in the two Houses. According to the booklet, using words like 'jumla jeevi', 'baal buddhi', 'Covid spreader' and 'Snoopgate' and even commonly used words like 'ashamed', 'abused', 'betrayed', 'corrupt', 'drama', 'hypocrisy', and 'incompetent' is "unparliamentary" in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. As soon as the booklet was out, some opposition leaders attacked the Centre, calling the restrictions needless. Some even threatened to use them even at the risk of suspension.



# CBI books Lakshadweep MP Mohammed Faizal in tuna fish export to Sri Lanka scam

**Lok Sabha MP from Lakshadweep Mohammed Faizal was booked by the CBI in connection with a case relating to alleged irregularities in the export of tuna fish to Sri Lanka**



with a case pertaining to alleged irregularities in the export of tuna fish to Sri Lanka. The central agency has also named Faizal's nephew Abdul Razzak and a Sri Lanka-based company, SRT General Merchants Importer and Exporter as accused in the case. The case came to light during a joint surprise check conducted by the CBI and vigilance officials of Lakshadweep on June 25, 2022, in the office of Lakshadweep Khadi and Village Industries Board (LKVIB) at Kavaratti Island

of the Union Territory. During the probe, the CBI found that some influential people, including Mohammed Faizal and other persons in connivance with a few others, were involved in defrauding the local fishermen and public departments. The CBI also conducted searches on Tuesday at six premises in Delhi, Calicut and Lakshadweep linked to the MP.

According to sources, Mohammed Faizal was instrumental in facilitating the export of tuna fish to the Sri

Lanka-based firm from Lakshadweep. The average international price of tuna fish is Rs 400 per kg. The fish supplied was allegedly procured from local fishermen through Lakshadweep Cooperative Marketing Federation (LCMF) and later exported to Sri Lankan firm SRT General Merchants. However, no payments were made to the Lakshadweep Cooperative Marketing Federation by SRT General Merchants due to the federation and local fishermen suffered huge losses.

(SAI Bureau) The Central Bureau Party (NCP) leader and Lok of Investigation (CBI) has filed an Sabha MP from Lakshadweep FIR against Nationalist Congress Mohammed Faizal in connection

## Buddhism outreach: Indian President, PM to address Ashadha Purnima celebrations at Sarnath



leader Dalai Lama 11-day exposition. The discovered in 1898 which is participating. India also sent Buddha Relics are also believed to be the ancient city four Holy Kapilvastu Relics of known as the 'Kapilvastu of Kapilvastu. You can now Lord Buddha to Mongolian Relics' since they are from write for wionews.com and be capital Ulaanbaatar for an a site in Bihar first a part of the community.

## India's first and world's tenth unique blood group found in Gujarat man

**A 65-year-old man from Gujarat who is a heart patient has been identified with EMM negative blood group, making it India's first and world's tenth case of unique blood group which cannot be categorized into the existing groups of 'A', 'B', 'O' or 'AB'**

(News Agency) Indian President Buddha Relics with senior Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address Ashadha Purnima celebrations in Uttar Pradesh via video message on Wednesday. The celebrations will take place at Mulagandha Kuti Vihara in Sarnath in the north Indian state. For Buddhists, Ashadha Purnima is the second most sacred day after Buddha Purnima or the Vaishakha Purnima. The celebrations take place at the Mulagandha Kuti Vihara which houses the holy relics of Lord Buddha.

The event will also see presence of Governor of Uttar Pradesh Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Minister of Law and Justice Kiren Rijiju, Minister of Culture Gangapuram Kishan Reddy and Minister of State for Culture Arjun Ram Meghwal. Governor Anandiben Patel will seek blessing from the Holy

Buddha Relics with senior Venerable Monks before the commencement of the programme.

The event is being organised by International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) and high-level representation shows India's continues outreach on Buddhism. Remember, PM Modi visited Lumbini in Nepal on Buddha Purnima, emphasising on the shared cultural linkages between the two countries. Prime minister participated in the "Shilanyas" ceremony for the construction of a centre for Buddhist culture and heritage at Lumbini which is the birthplace of Lord Buddha and a key pilgrimage site.

Not just visits but engagement has continued in other ways, including Indian govt co-hosting an event on Buddha Purnima which saw 24 Buddhist spiritual leaders, including Tibetan Spiritual

(News Agency) In a first, a new blood group has been found in India, which is also the rarest in the world. A 65-year-old man from Gujarat who is a heart patient has been identified with EMM negative blood group, a unique blood type which cannot be categorized into the existing groups of 'A', 'B', 'O' or 'AB'. In general, there are four types of blood groups in the human body, which further consist of 42 types of systems, like A, B, O, Rh and Duffy. There are also 375 types of antigens in which EMM is high.

However, there are only 10 such people in the world who do not have EMM high-frequency antigen in their blood, which makes them different from normal humans. People with such rarest blood groups can neither donate their blood to anyone, nor can they acquire it from anyone. So far, there were only 9 people in the world with such rarest blood group, but now, a 65-year-old man from Gujarat's Rajkot has been

identified with the said blood group. Sanmukh Joshi, doctor at Samarpan Blood Donation Center, Surat, said that the 65-year-old patient who had been undergoing treatment in Ahmedabad after suffering a



heart attack was in need of blood for heart surgery. However, it was when his blood type was not found in the Prathama Laboratory of Ahmedabad, that the samples were sent to the blood donation centre in Surat. After examination, the sample did not match with any

group, following which blood samples of the elderly man along with his relatives' were sent to America for investigation. Subsequently, it was found that the elderly man's blood type was India's first and world's tenth such case of the rarest blood group.

Due to the lack of EMM in the blood, the International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) has named it EMM negative.



# Are Parsis and Sikhs not Indians? Smriti Irani hits back at TMC's Jawhar Sircar

In a reply to TMC MP Jawhar Sircar's 'brand of secularism' jibe, Union Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Irani asked if Parsis and Sikhs were Indians



Union Minority Affairs minister five days ago after Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi resigned from the cabinet. Referring to this, Sircar took to Twitter and wrote, "Smriti Irani assigned charge of Ministry of Minority Affairs after Naqvi resigns. Hardcore Hindu, married to a Parsi given charge of Muslims, Christians. Is this BJP's brand of secularism?" Smriti Irani assigned charge of Ministry of Minority Affairs after Naqvi resigns. Hardcore Hindu, married to a Parsi given charge of Muslims, Christians. Is this BJP's brand of secularism? Earlier in the day,

Irani, who is on a two-day Bengal visit, participated in a rally in Howrah district as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and visited a temple of Goddess Kali. On the criticism of the BJP-led Centre over the national emblem cast atop the new Parliament building, Irani said such remarks were not unexpected from the ones who can't respect Maa Kali.

"Nothing on the Ashok Lion emblem was changed," the Union minister said. On Mamata Banerjee calling out for "jihad" against the saffron party at a public gathering in Asansol a few days ago, the Union minister said,

"Ones who played with blood after elections and killed our karyakartas, call for Jihad against BJP workers?" "It's shameful that it is being done by the elected head of a state," she said. "Jihad from her mouth and Goddess Kali being insulted by her MP tells you what Mamata Banerjee believes in," she added. In a video of her public address at Asansol a few days ago, Mamata Banerjee, could be heard saying in Bangla, "July 21 is near and you know it is Shaheed Dibas. It is a day to declare 'jihad' against the BJP."

(SAI Bureau) In a reply to Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Jawhar Sircar's 'brand of secularism' jibe, Union Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Irani asked if Parsis and Sikhs were Indians. "We serve all, appease none. When I sit in the ministry, I serve India, not communities," said Irani. Irani took charge as the

## Opposition slams 'aggressive' makeover to national emblem, BJP hits back

The Opposition accused the government of giving a 'ferocious' look to the national emblem atop the new Parliament building and the BJP claimed the national emblem cast and the ancient sculpture at Sarnath are alike

(SAI Bureau) A fresh row erupted over the national emblem cast atop the new Parliament building that was unveiled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday. The Opposition took offence to the "muscular, aggressive" Ashokan lions and accused the Centre of distorting the national emblem and sought immediate change. The BJP hit back claiming the emblem was an exact replica of the one in Sarnath and accused the Opposition of deliberately trying to create one controversy after another for political reasons.

As parties traded barbs at each other, the sculptor of the 9.5-tonne cast, Sunil Deore, said photos that were widely shared on social media were taken from below, and hence, the expressions looked aggressive. Here's what political parties and the sculptor had to say.

**'DISTORTED, AGGRESSIVE, AVOIDABLE'**

A day after the unveiling of the national emblem cast, TMC MPs Jawhar Sircar and Mahua Moitra attacked the Centre over the expressions and proportions of the lions in the national emblem cast.

"Insult to our national symbol, the majestic Ashokan Lions. Original is on the left, graceful, regally confident. The one on



the right is Modi's version, put above new Parliament building — snarling, unnecessarily aggressive and disproportionate," said Sircar, sharing two images on Twitter. Lok Sabha MP Mahua Moitra tweeted a side-by-side image of the Lion Capital of Ashoka -- comparing a past sculpture with the bronze and burnished cast installed on the roof of the new Parliament building, without any comment. Meanwhile, Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury wondered whether the national emblem cast is a "distorted version" of the lions found in the Gir forest of Gujarat, PM Modi's home state.

"The AAP believes that no body has permission to tamper with



any constitutional heritage in any manner. Such kind of tampering should be avoided as it hurts the constitutional tradition of the country," the party's chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said.

"Meddling with our national emblem was totally unnecessary and avoidable. Why should our lions look ferocious and full of angst? These are Ashoka's lions adapted by independent India in 1950," Historian S Irfan Habib told PTI.

**'ADAPTATION OF SARNATH EMBLEM'**

Responding to the criticism, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said one needs to appreciate the impact of angle,



height and scale when comparing the two structures. "If one looks at the Sarnath emblem from below, it would appear as calm or angry as the one being discussed," Puri said. "Sense of proportion and perspective. Beauty is famously regarded as lying in the eyes of the beholder. So is the case with calm and anger. The original Sarnath emblem is 1.6 metres high whereas the emblem on the top of the new Parliament building is huge at 6.5 metres height," he added, sharing an image of the Sarnath emblem.

BJP's IT cell head, Amit Malviya, said the emblem atop the new Parliament building is an adaptation from

Sarnath Lion Capital of Ashoka. "There is just no change. The opposition is comparing 2D images in print to an imposing 3D structure. They have lost it," he said in a tweet.

"Those leaders who have either disregarded or discarded the Constitution over the years are expected to oppose the national emblem. Today they are afraid of the national emblem, which is the pride of our country. It is not unexpected from the party and its leaders who insult Goddess Kali to insult the national emblem," said Union minister Smriti Irani, hitting out at TMC. EMBLEM AN EXACT REPLICA'

Sunil Deore, the sculptor, said there is no difference between the new statue and the ancient sculpture Lion Capital of Ashoka at Sarnath. "The original structure is 3 to 3.5 feet high, but the new one is 21.3 feet tall. My brief was to create an exact replica of the lions. It took nine months to complete the project," he said.

The artist added that the structure had to be completed in parts as it weighed almost 9,500 kg and the final touches were finished on the spot. The steel structure that would support the emblem weighs nearly 6,500 kg.



# TDP will support Draupadi Murmu as presidential candidate, says party chief Chandrababu Naidu

**Chandrababu Naidu, the president of the Telugu Desam Party, the opposition in Andhra Pradesh, said that the party had decided to extend its support to Draupadi Murmu for the post of President of India**

(By Staff Reporter) The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in Andhra Pradesh decided to extend its support to the candidature of former Jharkhand Governor, Draupadi Murmu, for the post of the President of India. Stating that the TDP has always been committed to social justice, the party's national president, N Chandrababu Naidu, said that during the TDP's strategic committee meeting on Monday, July 11, they decided to back Draupadi Murmu for the post of President of India. Recalling that the party had also supported KR Narayanan and APJ Abdul Kalam for the post of President of India, the TDP chief said that these were classic examples of the party's commitment to social justice. "The TDP is behind GMC Balayogi becoming the Lok Sabha speaker and Prathibha Bharathi as Speaker of the Assembly," said Naidu, adding that Kinjarapu Yerran Naidu became union minister only with the party's support. "Similarly, beyond political considerations, the TDP wholeheartedly extended support to PV Narasimha Rao at Nandyal to ensure that he became the Prime Minister of India. Thus, the TDP has always stood by the Telugu people and was committed to social justice," said



the party chief, Chandrababu Naidu. Earlier today, presidential candidate Draupadi Murmu met Andhra Pradesh CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy at his residence. Meanwhile, the Election Commission is gearing up for the upcoming presidential elections, which will be held on July 18.

## Rupee settlement will help India trade with Russia, Iran and S Asian neighbours

(By Staff Reporter) The Indian central bank's decision to let importers pay with rupees and exporters be paid in rupees is likely to make trade easier with Russia and South Asian neighbours, and will help a long term goal to internationalise the currency, experts said. On Monday, the Reserve Bank of India said it had put in place a mechanism for international trade settlements in Indian rupees (INR) with immediate effect. The RBI said that "in order to promote growth of global trade with emphasis on exports from India and to support the increasing interest of global trading community in INR, it has been decided to put in place an

additional arrangement for invoicing, payment, and settlement of exports/imports in INR." "This step can be particularly useful for neighbouring countries, and also those countries willing to use the rupee as a base currency for trade diversification in their settlement rules," said Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist at Barclays. Engineering Export Promotion Council chairman Mahesh Desai noted the new mechanism "would facilitate trade with countries under sanctions, like Iran and Russia." Trade between India and Russia has come to a virtual standstill due to sanctions imposed on Russia over the war in Ukraine.

## Punjab Advocate General claims he was attacked near Haryana's Panipat

**Anmol Ratan Sidhu, the Advocate General of Punjab, claimed that he was attacked by miscreants near Haryana's Panipat**

(SAI Bureau) Anmol Ratan Sidhu, Supreme Court. Following the the Advocate General of Punjab, claimed that he was attacked by unknown assailants near Haryana's Panipat on Tuesday. The AG was travelling on a train from Delhi to Chandigarh when miscreants allegedly pelted stones and broke the windowpane. On Monday, AG Sidhu appeared in the Chandigarh. More details are awaited.



## J&K cop killed, 2 others injured in terrorist attack at Srinagar's Lal Chowk

**An assistant sub-inspector was killed and two other police personnel were injured in a terrorist attack at Lal Bazar area of Srinagar**



(SAI Bureau) A police officer was killed and two other police personnel were injured after terrorists attacked a police team at Lal Bazar area of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir. The incident took place on Tuesday at around 7:15 pm. While assistant sub-inspector Mushtaq Ahmad died on the spot, head constable Fayaz Ahmad and special police officer Abu Baker got injured in the attack. The injured police personnel were rushed to a hospital. "ASI Mushtaq Ahmad #succumbed to his injuries & attained #martyrdom. We pay

rich #tribute to the #martyr for his supreme #sacrifice made in the line of duty. Other two injured personnel are being treated. Further details shall follow," Kashmir Zone Police wrote on Twitter. Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah tweeted, "Deeply saddened to hear about the militant attack on @JmuKmrPolice personnel deployed in Srinagar in which ASI Mushtaq Ahmed lost his life in the line of duty & two others were injured. My condolences to the family of ASI Mushtaq & prayers for the swift recovery of the injured."

## ED attaches assets worth Rs 23 crore in Bengal coal smuggling case

**Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth Rs 23 crore in the West Bengal coal smuggling case**

(SAI Bureau) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached Rs 23-crore assets of the prime accused, businessman Anup Majee's, associates in the West Bengal coal smuggling case, officials said. The ED attached immovable assets including property worth Rs 15.5 crore of Joydeb Mondal and Rs 7.90 crore property of Gurupada Maji, who are close associates and business partners of Majee. According to the ED, Gurupada Maji delivered proceeds of crime (POC) to the tune of Rs 89.11 crore and Joydeb Mondal delivered Rs 58.05 crore between 2017 and 2020. Gurupada Maji, through six Kolkata-based shell companies, laundered his proceeds

of crime amounting to Rs 104 crore. As regards Joydeb Mondal, assets created through proceeds of crime have been attached," said the ED in a statement. Earlier in this case, the ED had conducted searches at 56 premises and attached assets to the tune of Rs 181.24 crore, vide 5 attachment orders of Anup Majee and other associated persons under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Three accused, Vikas Mishra, Ashok Kumar Mishra, and Gurupada Maji, were arrested by the CBI in this case. Several top politicians in West Bengal linked to Trinamool Congress are also under the scanner of the ED in this case.





# Sri Lanka: President leaves, the country in intense calamity

By Susmita Ghosh

The crisis in Sri Lanka deepens as the top brass of the island country are gradually trying to brash off their duty to the nation. The Sri Lankan President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa ran away from the country to Male, the capital of Maldives. On the other hand, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has also offered to resign from his post. The country is in complete disarray, with no apparent solution soon. Sources reveal, that even though President Rajapaksa has agreed to step down under pressure, Sri Lanka's Parliamentary Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena is yet to receive the President's resignation letter. According to Sri Lankan constitution, if the president does step down, the prime minister would be the acting president. However, if he resigns, the speaker will be the acting president till a new president is elected. The president promises to resign on July 13, which will prompt a presidential election in the parliament on July 20.

The Sri Lankan crisis has been brewing for the last few months, disrupting the life of the common people to a large extent. The rising prices of day-to-day items, insistent power blackouts and the absence of basic necessities has led the mass to the street. It has resulted in spontaneous clashes with the government forces and riots throughout the island nation. The protest against the economic crisis went to such levels that the protestors stormed the president's official residence and set fire to the prime minister's home in Colombo.

There have been several reasons behind the all-out crisis in every sector in Sri Lanka, which began as an easily manageable economic crisis. However, the Covid pandemic, coupled with the consistent economic mismanagement by the government, has led to the downfall of the country. Gradually, the production of tradable goods

and services came down to inadequate levels. As a result, the national expenditure grew up to become more than the national income.

It all began when the Rajapaksa government came to power in 2019 and allowed deep tax cuts. As the Covid pandemic stuck, it weakened a major source of revenue from tourism industry for Sri Lanka. The earnings of the nationals were dropped too, which was further affected by the foreign

**The economic crisis that followed has crippled Sri Lanka completely, with the rate of inflation touching 54.6 percent, which can go up to 70 percent even**

exchange rate. All at once, the government had to dig into the foreign

exchange reserves to keep the economy afloat, resulting in a loss of more than 70 percent reserve in two years.

The economic crisis that followed has crippled Sri Lanka completely, with the rate of inflation touching 54.6 percent, which can go up to 70 percent even. It was followed by long queues at gas stations, frequent blackouts and hospitals with acute shortage of life-saving drugs. Even with the behest of the opposition and the economic pundits, the government did not want to come to the table with IMF for a bailout.

They hoped that tourism industry will revive, dragging up the economic status. However, that plan failed miserably and now, even an IMF rescue plan seems out of immediate picture with the political disability in the country. Even though India has extended the hand of support with a reported 3.5 billion USD in aids, yet that was not enough though.

The Sri Lankan opposition parties are trying to install a new government, or a field a new presidential candidate of their own in the midst of the turmoil. It is quite clear with the ongoing protests that the support of the mass has moved away from the present government. Until someone sits in Sri Lanka's presidential throne and rules with a steady hand, uncertainty will loom over the financial and political future of the country.

# Why National Emblem On New Parliament Looks Different? Makers Explain

The controversy over the massive bronze national emblem to be put atop the new parliament could be because of the angle at which the lions are being viewed, the artistes who built it told NDTV in an exclusive interview today. Also, the perspective is changing because of the enlargement, which is bringing every minor detail into focus, they added.

The 9500-odd kg bronze -- to be mounted atop the new parliament at the heart of Delhi -- has been the focus of strong criticism. A section of opposition leaders have called it a menacing, snarling version of the majestic and graceful Ashokan lion capital that has completely distorted its message of peace. Giving it a political spin, many have demanded that it be pulled down. Others have called for legal action for the distortion. Admitting that there may be minor changes, mostly because of the damages in the original, sculptor Sunil Deore who was in charge of the project said, "The maximum, 99 per cent, is as per the Ashokan symbol". Then he added, "The photograph is out of zoom. The lower angle is changing the expression". "As an artist, we have conducted researches going to the museum. We have only enlarged on the original, which is 2.5 feet. In such cases, everything gets magnified. You have to think of that. And this sculpture we will see from parliament, at least a 100 meters away. So we had to have

to emphasise the details, so that they look similar even from a distance," he added.

"Like we said, you are going to view it from a very, very great distance. So all of that have been kept in mind and

as such there is no deviation in the piece that you see.... At eye level, the

**The 9500-odd kg bronze -- to be mounted atop the new parliament at the heart of Delhi - has been the focus of strong criticism**

outline will match the emblem," added his colleague Romel Moses. Asked what they will say to the people who say this is a deliberate attempt to make the lions look angry, Mr Moses said, "It is a message of peace given by a very powerful character, that is a lion. A message of peace can never be given in anger". There has been a flood of criticism from opposition leaders since the unveiling of the bronze yesterday. "The original emblem has a mild expression, but those built during Amrit Kaal show a man-eater's tendency to consume everything in the country," tweeted Lalu Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal from its official handle. Jawhar Sircar, a Rajya Sabha MP of Trinamool Congress and a former CEO of the government-run Prasar Bharati, termed it an "insult to our national symbol, the majestic Ashokan Lions". "Insult to our national symbol, the majestic Ashokan Lions. Original is on the left, graceful, regally confident. The one on the right is Modi's version, put above new Parliament building -- snarling, unnecessarily aggressive and disproportionate. Shame! Change it immediately!" read his tweet.


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# Change in 'religious demography' of India is not hyperbole, it is a real threat

**Dr JK Bajaj of the Centre for Policy Studies did some path-breaking work by breaking down the Census 2011 data and the results clearly indicate the need to ponder upon the issue of 'religious demography' of India**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath recently expressed concern over an adverse fall out of an imbalance in the religious demography of Bharat. There is enough evidence to back these concerns.

The last Census of India was conducted in 2011. The results of this Census are an eye-opener as far as the changing religious demography of Bharat is concerned. Dr JK Bajaj of the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) did some path-breaking work by breaking down the Census 2011 data and the results clearly indicate the need to ponder upon the issue of 'religious demography' of India.

According to Dr Bajaj, "At the national aggregate level the most significant piece of information that emerges from the religion data of census of 2011 is the increase in the share of Muslims in the population of India from 13.43 percent in 2001 to 14.23 percent now. They have thus added 0.8 percentage points to their share in the population."

This level of increase in the share of Muslims was significant as it was the third decade in a row when their share had increased



by or above 0.8 percentage points. Another significant aspect is that the share of Muslims has been rising every decade since Independence and Partition.

"The quantum of rise, however, became rather large after 1981. That process of considerable increase in the share of Muslims from decade to decade has continued unabated during 2001-2011," says Dr Bajaj.

Let us take a look the share of Muslim population from 1951 onwards as depicted by

successive Census. During 1951-1961, the decadal increase in the growth of Muslim population was 0.24 per cent and it has jumped to almost four times at 0.80 per cent in 2001-2011 decade.

Now let us take a look at the growth of Muslim population in absolute numbers. In 1951 the population of Muslims in India was 3.47 crore whereas it grew to 17.11 crore by 2011. This implies a multiplication factor of 4.6. The population of Indian religionists in the same period

has multiplied only 3.2 times, according to Dr Bajaj.

Gap in the growth rate of Muslims and Indian religionists The most important factors in this regard is the gap in the growth rate of Muslims and the Indian Religionists (IRs) among whom we include the Hindus, Sikhs, Jains according to the Census guidelines.

Dr Bajaj points out, "The gap between the growth rates of Muslims and IRs, normalised to the absolute growth of IRs, widened to as much as 49

percent during 1981-91; it became marginally narrower in 1991-2001 and has widened again in the last decade. The commentators, who have been pointing out the decline of the Muslim growth rate from 29.69 to 24.65 percent as an indication of the halting of the religious imbalance, are wrong; because, the normalised gap between the growth rates of Muslims and IRs has only widened."

Thus if one goes by the Census data of 1981, 1991 and 2011, it is clear that the Muslims in the country have grown by nearly 50 percent more than the Indian Religionists for the third decade in a row. Such wide difference in the growth rates should be a cause of concern as it can have a very significant socio-cultural impact in the long run.

**Decline in the Share of Indian Religionists**

According to the studies conducted by Centre for Policy Studies on Census 2011, the share of Indian religionists is declining. In 2001 their overall share in population was 84.21 per cent, it came down to 83.48 per cent. **(Contd. on page 31)**

## Time to reclaim India's history for a New India

**India so far has not adequately reclaimed its history in the post-Independence era in a way that shows the true stature, duration and influence**

There remains a crucial need to correct the history of India from distorted accounts that have prevailed since the British era. As a New India arises with confidence in its own civilisation and global stature, this reductionist view of India as primitive, divided, politically incorrect and lacking in continuity is suspect and appears as India seen through the shadow of foreign rule and hostile ideologies.

India so far has not adequately reclaimed its history in the post-Independence era in a way that shows the true stature, duration and influence. Even after 75 years of Independence, the main history of India taught is coloured by derogatory interpretations of those with little respect for India's



great traditions, though a new movement to counter it is steadily rising.

The history of India as commonly given in textbooks and media accounts worldwide is the view of scholars who have little direct knowledge of India's way of thought and view of culture, who prefer to interpret India according to their own cultural biases as if these were unquestioned truths. Such a view of India's history reduces India's profound 5,000-year dharmic civilisation and its vast cultural, yogic and intellectual traditions to a mere footnote to Western culture and politics of the last few centuries, in which India has little relevance, and is often a subject of abuse and hoped for reformation.

**(Contd. on page 31)**



# Beating the heat: On hot summers and hotter monsoons

The steady rise in the planet's temperature as a consequence of humanity's unfettered use of fossil fuel forms the backdrop to altered weather patterns everywhere. India too has been registering instances of anomalous weather with alarming frequency with an erratic monsoon and coastal erosion. However, some recent changes are seemingly paradoxical. An analysis of public weather data over the last half a century by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), suggests that the all-India average temperature during the monsoon months (June-September) is higher than the summer months (March-May). Monsoon

temperatures are 0.3°C higher than average summer temperatures when compared from 1951-80. In 2012-2021, this anomaly rose to 0.4°C. The India Meteorological Department has said that India's average temperature has risen 0.62°C from 1901-2020 but the CSE analysis says — supporting similar studies on these lines — that this has not meant a uniform rise in temperatures across seasons. It is the winter (January and February) and post-monsoon (October-December) average all-India temperatures that have risen faster than even the monsoon and summer temperatures. Average daily maximum temperature for north-western States in March was 30.7°C, whereas the all-India average was 33.1°C or 2.4°C hotter. The average daily minimum temperature showed an even larger (4.9°C) difference. Central India's normal maximum was 2°-7°C higher, while south peninsular India's normal minimum was 4°-10°C higher than temperatures in northwest India.

The shattering of temperature records is only one part of the changes; there is also evidence of the toll on lives. From 2015-2020, 2,137 people had reportedly died due to heat stroke in northwest India but southern India had reported 2,444 deaths due to excess environmental heat, with Andhra Pradesh accounting for over half the reported casualties. The urban heat island effect — whereby cities because of concrete surfaces and dense populations tend to on average

be hotter than rural habitations — also contributed to heat stress. Indian authorities are cognisant of these trends with some States, led by Gujarat, having Heat Action Plans (HAP). The National Disaster Management Authority is working with 23 out of 28 heat-prone States to develop HAPs that stress changes in the built environment: using material that keeps the indoors cooler, having an early warning system about heatwaves and improving health infrastructure to treat heat stroke patients. However, much remains in terms of reaching out to rural India as well as governments taking steps to plan infrastructure and housing in ways that recognise the dangers from a warming environment. It is time that India includes financial incentives, preferably via Budget outlays, for effective cooling plans. Adapting to and mitigating this most visceral challenge is the need of the hour. **India must include financial incentives for adoption of effective cooling plans**

The steady rise in the planet's

temperature as a consequence of humanity's unfettered use of fossil fuel forms the backdrop to altered weather patterns everywhere. India too has been registering instances of anomalous weather with alarming frequency with an erratic monsoon and coastal erosion. However, some recent changes are seemingly paradoxical. An analysis of public weather data over the last half a century by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), suggests that the all-India average temperature during the monsoon months (June-September) is higher than the summer months (March-May). Monsoon temperatures are 0.3°C higher than average summer temperatures when compared from 1951-80. In 2012-2021, this anomaly rose to 0.4°C. The India Meteorological Department has said that India's average temperature has risen 0.62°C from 1901-2020 but the CSE analysis says — supporting similar studies on these lines — that this has not meant a uniform rise in temperatures across

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## In battle between big tech and state, more clarity is needed, both sides have much to uncover and declare

**The clash between big tech and the state is not unique to India. Across the world, governments are grappling with this issue, struggling to arrive at a new equilibrium. Regulation of social media platforms is a contentious issue**

There is a growing push and pull between Big Tech and the state over the governance of global public platforms. A few days ago, social media platform, Twitter, moved the Karnataka High Court over the government's orders to block certain tweets and handles under Section 69 of the Information Technology Act 2000. Twitter's move came after the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) had asked it to comply with its orders or risk losing the safe harbour protection afforded to such platforms. This clash between big tech and the state is, however, not unique to India. Across the world, governments are grappling with this issue, struggling to arrive at a new equilibrium. Regulation of social media platforms — public forums but owned by corporations — is a contentious issue. Twitter has alleged that the blocking orders are "procedurally and substantially non-compliant with Section 69A, are manifestly arbitrary, fail to provide the originators prior notice and are disproportionate in several

cases". In its petition, the social media giant has also argued that some of the URLs contain "political and journalistic content", blocking which would be a violation of the

interest. Considering the power of such platforms in shaping public opinion, these are matters of concern. Elon Musk's takeover attempt — he has now pulled out of buying Twitter — would have compounded the problem. A privately owned company is under lesser public scrutiny as compared to a publicly listed one. Yet, by asking Twitter to block tweets and handles, governments may be seeking to suppress views critical of them. According to Twitter's global transparency report, the fourth highest number of content takedown requests came from India between



January and June 2021. As reported in this paper, between February 2021 and 2022, MeitY issued 10 blocking orders, asking Twitter to take down 1,400 accounts and 175 tweets. Governments need to be more transparent in their decision-making. Since the issue has reached the courts, there is hope that, at the very least, the judiciary will help clarify the terms of engagement.

right to free speech. However, Twitter's past actions — the manner, for instance, in which it "suddenly cut the mic" of Donald Trump — lend credence to the charge that it is unaccountable. Its content moderation decisions can be accused of being shrouded in opacity, and/or taken by executives in Silicon Valley whose incentives are not aligned with what may be deemed as public



# Don't blame the middle class for political apathy

**In India, the political class has never attempted to make political participation enjoyable and rewarding**

The castigation of the middle class by Congress leader P Chidambaram ('How much do people care?', IE, July 10) as selfish, myopic and lacking social consciousness and empathy for the relatively deprived belongs to a thread of criticism that's common to radicals, professional revolutionaries, politicians and those entrenched in the power structure and enjoying all the privileges but suddenly finding loss of power. Chidambaram's outburst falls in the last category: He makes no attempt to analyse the deep causes that are behind such insulated behaviour.

What Chidambaram considers as the middle class is a small number of highly urbanised, well-off, income-taxpayers with a minimum per capita income of rupees one lakh a month. This is in a situation when the average monthly income of an overwhelming number of Indians in the self-employment and unorganised sector is approximately Rs 10,000 or less a month. In his seminal work, The



Social Background of Indian Nationalism, sociologist A R Desai had pointed out that the social base of the Indian nationalist movement was narrow with very limited mass mobilisation. The overwhelming popular support and participation in the nationalist movement is a myth and the fact remains that the passivity of the average Indian surprised leaders as diverse as Bipin Chandra Pal and Mahatma

Gandhi. Pal wondered how the British could rule so effectively while maintaining only 32,000 soldiers in India. The widespread, repressive apparatus of a brutal, colonial administration was effectively and obediently manned by Indians themselves. Mahatma Gandhi wondered at the lack of protest from the average citizens of Punjab even when faced with several instances of

police brutalities. One of the charges that the Mahatma levelled against the British was that it had made Indians "unmanly". The British never used conscription in India. Recruitment during the Second World War was conducted on a slogan of economic betterment. And it was a great success, though soldiers were to be disillusioned later. In comparison, during the Quit India movement, 60,000 people went to

jail — not a large number in a mass movement of a country of India's size. The nationalist movement was led by wealthy lawyers, and non-lawyers like Subhas Chandra Bose and MN Roy were eased out. This is not to discredit the nationalist movement or the subsequent political evolution but only to remind of the restricted nature of our political space before and after Independence. The political class has never really attempted to expand the base of the middle class, make political participation enjoyable and rewarding, thereby enriching the political process itself. People of different categories who make a modern nation adjust, by and large, to the social, economic and political reality. Incorporation of the middle class in the political process demands its quantitative expansion and developing a political process not guided by dynastic ambitions and the sway of powerful interest groups, leading to the emergence of a reformed state that rewards just meritocracy.

## Inflation is likely to remain elevated, even as commodity prices soften. RBI must continue to prioritise inflation management

**MPC members are yet to elaborate on what their expectations of the terminal rate is, considering the long lags, the committee must front-load the rate hikes**

In line with expectations, retail inflation, as measured by the consumer price index, dipped marginally to 7.01 per cent in June, down from 7.04 per cent the month before, as per data from the National Statistical Office released on Tuesday. This latest data implies that inflation has averaged 7.3 per cent in the first quarter (April-June) of the ongoing financial year, marginally lower than the Reserve Bank of India's June forecast of 7.5 per cent. However, this is the sixth straight month in which inflation has come in above the upper threshold of the central bank's inflation targeting framework. The disaggregated data shows that the consumer food price index fell to 7.75 per cent, down from 7.97 per cent in the previous month. This decline in food inflation was driven by eggs, pulses, and moderation in prices of other items. While in the weeks thereafter, the fall in edible oil prices will impart a moderating

influence, a lot depends on how the monsoon plays out. The kharif sowing has been slow. However, since June 30, there has been a pick-up in the monsoon which should spur sowing — till the first week of July, the area sown under kharif was around 9 per cent lower than last year. Equally worrying, core inflation, which strips away the volatile food and energy components, continues to remain elevated. Almost all components, from clothing and footwear to household goods and services, recreation and amusement and personal care, witnessed price pressures, suggesting that the firming up of demand for services will continue to exert pressure on prices. A few days ago, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, speaking at an economic conclave, said that price pressures will gradually ease in the second half of the current financial year. Prior to that, RBI Deputy Governor

Michael Patra noted that there are signs of inflation peaking, and harsh policy may not be needed to contain price pressures. While global commodity prices (fuel and base metals) have eased considerably due to fears of a recession, inflation is likely to continue to remain higher than the central bank's target in the near term. To tackle price pressures in the economy, the Monetary Policy Committee has over the course of the last two meetings raised the policy repo rate by 90 basis points to 4.9 per cent. Considering that the pre-pandemic rate stood at 5.15 per cent, this implies another hike of 25 basis points to simply revert to the pre-pandemic level. While the MPC members are yet to elaborate on what their expectations of the terminal rate is, considering the long lags, the committee must front-load the rate hikes. The central bank must continue to prioritise inflation management as price stability is central to macroeconomic stability.

## Saudi to open airspace to all including Israel, US hails decision as result of Biden's 'persistent diplomacy'

Saudi Arabia has declared that it will ease restrictions on "all carriers" operating in its airspace. US President Joe Biden who will be visiting the Kingdom soon welcomed the "historic" decision as an attempt at defusing tensions with Israel. In a statement released by the White House, US hailed this as a result of Biden's "persistent diplomacy". US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said that the decision was the outcome of the President's "persistent and principled diplomacy with Saudi Arabia over many months, culminating in his visit today," adding that Biden "commends" it.

He added that the US president, who is travelling to the Middle East and will arrive in Saudi Arabia later on Friday, "will have more to say on this breakthrough later today." Taking to Twitter Saudi's General Authority of Civil Aviation said that it "announces the decision to open the Kingdom's airspace for all air carriers that meet the requirements of the authority for overflying". As per the statement, the decision was made to "complement the Kingdom's efforts aimed at consolidating the Kingdom's position as a global hub connecting three continents".

As per an AFP report, in the past, despite Israel's best attempts to forge relationships with Arab nations, Riyadh has refused to recognise the Jewish state. Shortly after the Abraham Accords were announced in 2020, Saudi Arabia declared that UAE planes to "all countries" could overfly the country and even permitted an Israeli plane to fly over while travelling to Abu Dhabi. Following Friday's announcement, aeroplanes flying to and from Israel are no longer subject to overflight restrictions. Israel has pushed for the right to use overflights to reduce connections to Asian destinations. The Israeli government also wants direct flights from Israel to Saudi Arabia for Muslim pilgrims who currently have to pay for costly layover costs in other countries.



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# Indonesia's new visa policy, which allows travellers to live tax-free

**Who are digital nomads? What are these visas? And what are some other countries offering such visas?**



remotely, anywhere in the Internet-connected world. Unlike regular remote workers, who tend to stay in one geographic area, digital nomads travel and explore while working."

The study also found that 10.9 million American workers described themselves as digital nomads in 2020, which was an increase of 49 per cent from 2019.

**What is the "Digital Nomad Visa" Indonesia has proposed?**

The Digital Nomad Visa would allow remote workers to stay in Indonesia, including Bali, tax-free. Announced by Indonesia's Tourism Minister Sandiaga Uno to boost tourism in the country, the visa will be applicable for five years. This would make Indonesia's visa one of the longest digital nomad visas compared to other countries.

Through the visa, Indonesia aims to bring in over 3.6 million overseas travellers into the country over the next year to explore spiritual retreats as well as the eco-tourism of Indonesia. As reported by Bloomberg, Uno said that eco-tourism along with

sporting events and the five-year visa should bring in millions of travellers and create over a million jobs for Indonesians as the borders have now opened for foreign tourists. "In the past, the three S was: sun, sea and sand. We're moving it to serenity, spirituality and sustainability. This way we're getting better quality and better impact to the local economy," Uno told Bloomberg.

Under the visa, as long as the remote workers earn from companies outside Indonesia, they can live tax-free inside the country, including on islands like Bali. In May this year, Indonesia removed most of its Covid-19 mandates for overseas travellers in order to attract more tourists. Through easy processing of visas and frequent flights, Indonesia aims to attract employees of organisations like Airbnb, Twitter and others who have allowed remote working for all. Uno also told Bloomberg that in a survey, 95 per cent of digital nomads responded that Indonesia, especially Bali, was the remote working destination

that was at the top of their minds. In 2021 too, Indonesia had thought of granting a special visa to remote workers or those businessmen who travel for leisure but with the rising cases, the plans got cancelled. "Now with the pandemic handled and all the ministries getting involved and cooperating from the health side to the immigrations office, we believe that this is an opportune time to relaunch this idea," Uno added.

**What are some other countries that provide nomad visas?**

Italy in March, released a new permit for non-EU nationals, or digital nomads, who can stay in the country for up to 90 days without a visa. Antigua and Barbuda offer a digital nomad visa for two years where the travellers will be required to maintain their own health insurance. Barbados offers a year-long remote working visa which can be extended further. Other countries offering nomad visas are Croatia, Costa Rica, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Mauritius, Norway, and Spain among many others.

As Indonesia deals with the economic impacts of Covid-19, the country has announced "Digital Nomad Visas" for travellers, to attract more foreign tourists.

While Bali is one of the most famous locations in the country for beaches and bars, Indonesia is looking to promote another element through these visas — the spiritual element.

So, who are digital nomads? What are these visas? And what are some other countries offering such visas? We explain.

**Who are digital nomads?**

Digital Nomads are people who work remotely while travelling to different places and spending their earned income in the

country they are travelling to.

As the pandemic took place most of the workspaces were shifted online, while some offices have begun to open, most organisations have declared remote work.

Now as the world has moved towards getting vaccinated and international borders have opened up, people can continue doing their regular jobs remotely from anywhere in the world.

According to the 2020 State of Independence in America Report by MBO Partners, "Digital nomads are defined as people who choose to embrace a location-independent, technology-enabled lifestyle that allows them to travel and work

## Assam's Muslims: why some have been declared 'indigenous' and some left out

**The state Cabinet has approved the identification of five sub-groups as 'indigenous' Assamese Muslim communities. What is the history of these groups, what led to the decision, and which Muslim groups have been left out of the definition of 'indigenous'?**

Last week, the Assam Cabinet approved the identification of five Assamese Muslim sub-groups — Goriya, Moriya, Julha, Deshi, and Syed — as "indigenous" Assamese Muslim communities. This effectively sets them apart from Bengali-speaking Muslims, who — or whose ancestors — had migrated at various points of time the region that was once East Bengal, and later became East Pakistan and now Bangladesh.

**How many Muslim groups live in Assam?**

While many sub-groups exist, this aspect of population dynamics is best understood by looking at Muslims of Assam as belonging to two broad categories. Muslims outside these two categories would account for very small numbers relative to Assam's large Muslim population. The larger of these two categories comprises Muslims who speak Bengali, or



whose roots lie in Bengal, and who settled in Assam at various times after undivided Assam was annexed to British India in 1826. These Muslims are often referred to as Miyas. The numerically smaller broad category comprises the "Assamese Muslims", who speak Assamese as their mother tongue, and who

trace their ancestries in Assam back to the Ahom kingdom (1228-1826). By and large, they see themselves as part of the larger Assamese-speaking community, together with Assamese Hindus, and many of them are very conscious about being distinct from Bengal-origin Muslims. "Assam has a

significant Muslim population. Within that, there is a section that has migrated to Assam at different points of time. However, there are certain Muslim groups, too, who are native to the state, and have long agitated to safeguard their cultural identity. We have recognised their struggle, and identified these

groups as 'indigenous' or khilonjiya Assamese Muslims," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said following the Cabinet decision.

**And what are these groups?**

These are described in the report of a sub-committee on 'Cultural identity of indigenous Assamese Muslims' constituted by the state government in July last year. It was on the basis of the report of this committee, headed by journalist and commentator Wasbir Hussain, that the Cabinet took its decision on the five sub-groups.

**DESHI:** Believed to be among the first batch of people in Assam to have embraced Islam, Deshis trace their lineage to Ali Mech, a Koch-Rajbongshi chieftain who converted to Islam during the invasion of Bakhtiyar Khilji around 1205 AD.

(Contd. on page 28)



# What was the 'Lavender Scare', how is it linked to NASA's James Webb?

The Lavender Scare was the marginalisation of LGBTQ employees working in the US government's offices during the 1950s and 1960s

NASA's James Webb Space Telescope, which will show the clearest-ever images of the universe, is set to bring about a change in the way we perceive space. However, the telescope's name has come under intense criticism from the LGBTQ community. The telescope has been named after James Webb, who ran the US space agency from 1961 to 1968, and allegedly had a role to play in the "Lavender Scare" at NASA.

## What was the Lavender Scare?

The Lavender Scare was the marginalisation of LGBTQ employees working in the US government's offices during the 1950s and 1960s. It is often described as a "witch-hunt", where those suspected of being from the LGBTQ community were fired from their jobs. One such case was of NASA's Clifford Norton, reported the Guardian. Norton was fired in 1963 for "immoral, indecent, and disgraceful conduct" after being interrogated for allegedly being a homosexual man. The common perception at the time of those in the US

administration, and in society at large, was that homosexuality and queerness were linked to a lack of morals or perversion.

## Who was James Webb and what was his role?

James Webb, as the head of NASA during that period, is alleged to have played a role in the dismissal of LGBTQ employees for their identity. In 2021, four astronomers in the US wrote about the demand for renaming the telescope in 'Scientific American'. They cited historian David K Johnson's 2004 book The Lavender Scare, which "discusses archival evidence indicating that Webb, along with others in State Department leadership, was involved in Senate discussions that ultimately kicked off a devastating series of federal policies". There is also an argument that Webb did not personally seek to remove the employees, but was merely following a

government directive at the time. However, others say that whatever his role may have been, the sackings undoubtedly happened under his watch. The Guardian



report quoted American astronomer Phil Plait, who spoke about the difficulties faced by LGBTQ employees working at NASA, as saying: "A lot of astronomers are very unhappy the observatory is named after him... It's difficult to want to use an instrument when you know you'll have to write about it using the name of someone who worked to negate your very

existence."

## What are the arguments being put forth to seek a name change?

Astronomers are demanding a change of name, arguing that the legacy of Webb should reflect what he oversaw as the head of NASA. Speaking of Webb's role in the subsequent Apollo missions that helped land American astronauts on the moon, the four astronomers wrote: "Webb might have played a positive role at NASA, but his greater legacy beyond the agency is also relevant. Now that we know of Webb's silence... and his actions at NASA, we think it is time to rename JWST." They added: "The name of such an important mission, which promises to live in the popular and scientific psyche for decades, should be a reflection of our highest values." NASA, on its part, has not indicated a change in the name is on the cards. NASA's current administrator Bill Nelson had said in September: "We have found no evidence at this time that warrants changing the name of the James Webb Space Telescope."

# What is FCRA, the law related to NGO funding?

**The MHA has deleted some data from the FCRA website after which the list of those whose licences have been cancelled is no longer available**

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has removed some crucial data from the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) website. The information removed includes the annual returns of NGOs and a list of NGOs whose licences have been cancelled. The FCRA website used to maintain detailed data on NGOs granted licences; NGOs granted prior permission for receiving foreign contribution; NGOs whose licences have been cancelled, and the ones whose licences are deemed to have expired. It also had the annual returns of NGOs. The list identifying these NGOs is no longer there and their annual returns can no longer be accessed. While the MHA has not commented on the move, officials say that the removed data was considered "unnecessary" for public viewing. For several years, FCRA clearances have been a fraught issue, and the government has often been accused of targeting NGOs for political or ideological reasons by cancelling or not renewing their clearances. Earlier this year, in a petition filed by the NGO Global Peace Initiative, the Supreme Court had asked thousands of NGOs to go back to the government for redressal of their grievances on non-renewal of their FCRA registrations. The registrations of about 5,900 NGOs had ceased to be active after December 31, 2021, owing to



either the NGOs not applying for renewal before the due date, or the MHA refusing their renewal for alleged violation of the FCRA.

On December 25 last year, the MHA had refused to renew the FCRA registration of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, based on "adverse inputs". The registration was, however, restored on January 6, and Missionaries of Charity's FCRA certificate was made valid until the end of 2026.

## What is the FCRA?

The FCRA was enacted during the Emergency in 1976 amid apprehensions that foreign powers were interfering in India's affairs by pumping money into the

country through independent organisations. These concerns were, in fact, even older — they had been expressed in Parliament as early as in 1969.

The law sought to regulate foreign donations to individuals and associations so that they functioned "in a manner consistent with the values of a sovereign democratic republic".

An amended FCRA was enacted under the UPA government in 2010 to "consolidate the law" on utilisation of foreign funds, and "to prohibit" their use for "any activities detrimental to national interest". The law was amended again by the current government in 2020, giving the

government tighter control and scrutiny over the receipt and utilisation of foreign funds by NGOs. Broadly, the FCRA requires every person or NGO seeking to receive foreign donations to be (i) registered under the Act, (ii) to open a bank account for the receipt of the foreign funds in State Bank of India, Delhi, and (iii) to utilise those funds only for the purpose for which they have been received and as stipulated in the Act. They are also required to file annual returns, and they must not transfer the funds to another NGO. The Act prohibits the receipt of foreign funds by candidates for elections, journalists or newspaper and media broadcast companies, judges and government servants, members of legislature and political parties or their office-bearers, and organisations of a political nature. In the first week of July this year, the MHA effected changes to FCRA rules through two gazette notifications and increased the number of compoundable offences under the Act from 7 to 12. The other key changes were exemption from intimation to the government for contributions less than Rs 10 lakh — the earlier limit was Rs 1 lakh — received from relatives abroad, and increase in time limit for intimation of opening of bank accounts.

(Contd on page 28)



# Sri Lankan president's brother attempts to flee country, thwarted by airport officials, passengers

**Former finance minister Basil Rajapaksa's attempt to flee crisis-hit Sri Lanka was thwarted by airport officials and passengers who prevented him from leaving**



(SAI Bureau) Sri Lanka's former finance minister on Monday night, but was Basil Rajapaksa attempted to flee the crisis-hit nation

## Lanka president puts condition ahead of resignation, seeks safe exit for family: Sources

**In an unexpected turn of events, Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has said he will not resign till his family gets a safe exit from the country**



(SAI Bureau) In an unexpected turn of events, Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has hinted he will not resign till his family gets a safe exit from the country, said sources. According to sources, negotiation is going on with the Opposition, but no party is willing to accept this suggestion so far. Three days ago, the president spoke to the speaker and informed him that he would resign on Wednesday. However, in the last 40 hours, he has not mentioned anything about his possible resignation on Wednesday. Rajapaksa wants safe passage for him and his family to leave the country before sending his resignation. The President's brother, Basil Rajapaksa, was stopped at the airport's international VIP departure by the immigration department and the airport staff. All staffers at the silk

route VIP corridor have called off services to prevent the exit of the Rajapaksas. If the President doesn't resign tomorrow, the situation in Colombo is likely to escalate further, said sources.

Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had fled his official residence in Colombo on Saturday moments before thousands of protesters broke through police barricades and stormed the compound seeking his resignation over the government's failure to save the country's economy. Sri Lanka Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena held an all-party meeting and Sri Lanka PM Ranil Wickremesinghe met with his cabinet ministers.

Following this, Ranil Wickremesinghe announced his resignation from the post of Sri Lanka Prime Minister on Saturday.

and passengers who recognized him and blocked his way.

The island has nearly exhausted its already scarce supplies of petrol. The government has ordered the closure of non-essential offices and schools to reduce commuting and save fuel.

Basil, who also happens to be the younger brother of embattled President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, missed his flight to Dubai after passengers protested against him when he tried to board the plane departing from the international airport in Colombo.

Videos shared on social media, whose veracity India Today could not independently verify, showed passengers objecting to Basil Rajapaksa's presence at

the airport and demanding that he not be allowed to leave the country. The Sri Lanka Immigration and Emigration Officers Association said its members declined to serve the former minister at the VIP departure lounge.

Images shared widely on Twitter showed Basil Rajapaksa waiting in the lounge after immigration officials left their posts and refused to clear him for departure. Speculations are rife that Rajapaksa was attempting to make his way to the United States, as he holds an American passport also. Top sources in the ruling party

told Reuters that he is still in Sri Lanka after his bid to flee was foiled early on Tuesday. Basil Rajapaksa, 71, resigned as finance minister in early April as street protests surged against shortages of

fuel, food and other necessities. He quit his seat in parliament in June. Public anger is high against Sri Lanka's powerful ruling family due to their alleged poor handling of the economic meltdown. The Rajapaksa clan, including former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and outgoing President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, has dominated the politics of the island nation for years and most Sri Lankans have blamed them for their current misery.

The economic woes triggered nationwide protests in March this year, which reached a climax last weekend as protesters stormed the presidential palace and Prime Minister's home, Wickremesinghe's, vowing to occupy both places till the two leaders step down.

## 68 killed as torrential rain batters Pakistan's Sindh and Balochistan provinces

**Incessant rains in Pakistan's Sindh and Balochistan provinces have claimed at least 68 lives so far**

(SAI Bureau) At least 68 people have died in Pakistan's Karachi city in Sindh province and neighbouring Balochistan province as torrential rains and flash floods battered the area, officials said on Monday.

As many as 63 deaths were reported in Quetta, Barkhan, Pishin, Kohlu, Bolan,



Lorelai and Zhob areas in Balochistan province, while five people died in Karachi, the capital of Sindh province, as relentless rainfall battered the city submerging several areas and leaving many without power on the second day of Eidul Azha. At least 68 people have died in Pakistan's Karachi city in Sindh province and neighbouring Balochistan province as torrential rains and flash floods battered the area, officials said on Monday. As many as 63 deaths were reported in Quetta, Barkhan, Pishin, Kohlu, Bolan, Lorelai and Zhob areas in Balochistan province, while five people died in Karachi, the capital of Sindh province,

as relentless rainfall battered the city submerging several areas and leaving many without power on the second day of Eidul Azha. An official in the Balochistan Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said besides the casualties, the flood and rain-related incidents have also left over 50 people injured in the province. Flash

floods unleashed by torrential rains also swept away check dams and bridges in different parts of the province. There is also fear of breaching of the Kadani dam near the Afghan border. Meanwhile, the Met department predicted heavy rainfall and thunderstorms to continue in Karachi and other parts of Sindh, including Thatta, Badin, Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan, Umerkot and Mirpurkhas till July 18-19. Every year, cities across Pakistan struggle with the annual monsoon deluge, drawing criticism about poor government planning.



# Nepal's Parliament Passes First Citizenship Amendment Bill

(SAI Bureau) Nepal's Parliament on Wednesday passed the country's first Citizenship Amendment Bill, which was under discussion for more than two years as it could not forge a consensus among political parties. The bill has been under discussion in the House of Representatives since 2020, but it failed to be endorsed due to differences among the political parties over certain provisions, namely the seven-year



waiting period for obtaining naturalised citizenship for foreign women married to Nepali men. In the meeting of the lower house of Parliament or the House of Representatives on Wednesday, Home Minister Bal Krishna Khand presented Nepal's first Citizenship Amendment Bill 2022 before the lawmakers, and said that the bill has been tabled in parliament to amend the Nepal Citizenship Act 2006 and make provisions for providing citizenship as directed

by the Constitution. There are thousands of people who are deprived of citizenship certificates although their parents are citizens of Nepal. The lack of citizenship certificates was further depriving them of education and other facilities. I appeal to help create an environment to endorse the new bill and for headway to implement the law by formulating new laws, the Home Minister

said. Khand exuded confidence that the new bill would be taken forward in the Upper House of Parliament or the National Assembly on Thursday during which clause-wise deliberations would begin. Last week, the Nepal government had withdrawn the Citizenship Bill from the House of Representatives after the main opposition CPN-UML lawmakers protested against its proposals. In 2018, the then KP Sharma Oli government had registered the bill at the Parliament Secretariat.

## Heavy security presence at Maldives airport as Sri Lankan President set to fly to Singapore

**The Velana International Airport in Maldives was heavily guarded on Wednesday night as Gotabaya Rajapaksa is expected to depart for Singapore soon**

(SAI Bureau) The Velana International Airport in Maldives was heavily guarded on Wednesday night as his resignation to the speaker of Sri Lankan parliament after he was heavily guarded on landing in Singapore, Reuters

Wednesday night as the Sri Lankan President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, is set to depart from Maldives to Singapore soon, reports said. The embattled President flew out of his country to Maldives early



Wednesday, in a probable prelude to his resignation after months of widespread protests against the island nation's worst-ever economic crisis. The source, who declined to be identified given the sensitivity of the subject, said Rajapaksa could send

reported. Meanwhile, according to reports, journalists waiting near the VIP terminal of Velana International Airport were removed by security officials. A state of emergency was imposed on Wednesday across Sri Lanka after Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the island nation.

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# IAC Vikrant to help secure India's maritime interests amidst rising Chinese presence

**The 40,000-tonne indigenous aircraft carrier, which successfully completed its fourth phase of sea trials on July 10, is all set for commissioning**

(SAI Bureau) At a time when India is close to commissioning its 40,000-tonne indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) Vikrant, which successfully completed its fourth phase of sea trials on July 10, the Chinese navy is speeding up sea trials of its 80,000-tonne aircraft carrier Fujian, launched on June 17.

Fujian, launched from the Jiangnan shipyard, is heading for multiple sea voyages and is scheduled to join the PLA Navy in early 2024. China had commissioned its first aircraft carrier, Liaoning, in 2012; the second carrier, Shandong, was commissioned in 2019. Shandong is the first Chinese-made carrier as Liaoning was rebuilt on an unfinished Ukrainian aircraft carrier. The PLA Navy aims to have a fleet of over 10 aircraft carriers by 2050. Currently, a total of 41 aircraft carriers are in operation by 13 navies across the world. In 1961, India became the first Asian country to acquire an aircraft



strip with capability to operate STOBAR (short take-off but arrested delivery) aircraft and a range of helicopters. Navy authorities are in the process of finalising fighter jets to operate from the carrier. The Dassault Rafale-M (French) and Boeing F/A-18 (US) are considered to be the main contenders. The navy is expected to get 26 such fighter jets through an inter-governmental agreement.

carrier when it got HMS Hercules from the UK. Yet, it is currently operating only a single aircraft carrier, the 45,000-tonne INS Vikramaditya bought from Russia. The fourth phase of sea trials of IAC Vikrant on July 10 saw most of its equipment and systems onboard being put to test. Built by the Cochin Shipyard, Vikrant will be delivered to the Indian Navy by the end of this month. The deadline for delivery of the warship was 2018, but there were delays due to problems in procuring aviation equipment from Russia. Indian Navy officials say the maiden sea

trials of Vikrant were completed in August last year, followed by the second and third phases of trials in October 2021 and January this year, respectively. "During the three phases of sea trials, endurance testing of propulsion machinery, electrical and electronic suites, deck machinery, lifesaving appliances, and the ship's navigation and communication systems was undertaken," said an Indian Navy official. About 76 per cent of the aircraft carrier has indigenous content. This has given a boost to indigenous design and

construction capabilities besides the development of a large number of ancillary industries, with employment opportunities for over 2,000 personnel at the Cochin Shipyard and about 12,000 people in ancillary units. With Vikrant, India enters the elite group of countries with indigenous aircraft carriers. The US, UK, Russia, China and France are the only other countries with capacity to design and build aircraft carriers weighing 40,000 tonnes and above. Given its length of 260 metres, the warship will have two take-off runways and a landing

At the same time, India's Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) is building a twin engine deck based fighter for aircraft carriers. The first test flight is expected by 2026 and induction by 2031. Navy authorities are working out a date for the commissioning of IAC Vikrant, factoring in delays due to the monsoon and rough sea conditions. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to be the chief guest at the event, which is being targeted around August 15 to coincide with celebrations marking 75 years of India's independence.

## Eastern Ladakh row: India, China likely to hold 16th round of military talks on 17 July

**The last round of talks between the Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army took place on 11 March**

(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: India and China are likely to hold the 16th round of high-level military talks on 17 July to resolve the issues in remaining friction points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, people familiar with the development said on Wednesday.

The last round of talks between the Indian Army and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) took place on 11 March.

In the fresh round of talks, the Indian side is expected to press for disengagement of troops as soon as possible in all the remaining friction points besides seeking resolution of issues in Depsang Bulge and Demchok. "The 16th round of Corps Commander-level talks are likely to take place on 17 July," said a source. The situation in eastern Ladakh figured prominently in last week's talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Bali. At the one-hour meeting in Bali on the sidelines of a conclave of foreign ministers of the G20 nations, Jaishankar conveyed to Wang the need for early resolution of



all the outstanding issues in eastern Ladakh. He also said that the relationship between the two countries should be based on "three mutuals" -- mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests.

"Recalling the disengagement achieved in some friction areas, the external affairs

minister reiterated the need to sustain the momentum to complete disengagement from all the remaining areas to restore peace and tranquillity in the border areas," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

The MEA further said that Jaishankar "reaffirmed the importance of fully abiding

by bilateral agreements and protocols, and the understandings reached between the two ministers during their previous conversations".

In May, India and China held diplomatic talks on the border row and agreed to hold the next round of the Senior Commanders' meeting at an early date to achieve complete disengagement from all friction points in eastern Ladakh.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on 5 May, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas. Both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry.

As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year in the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area.

Each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the sensitive sector.



# Maldives' Ex-Prez Nasheed Faces Flak From Own Citizens For Allowing Rajapaksas In Male

(SAI Bureau) Maldivian citizens are angered over the government's move to grant refuge to embattled former Sri Lanka president Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his kin. There are reports that Rajapaksa will soon leave Male as Maldivian people and the political establishment remains in awe over the Rajapaksas being allowed to land despite the charges against them. Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned from his position on Wednesday appointing Ranil Wickremesinghe as the acting president of the nation whose economy has collapsed and people have come out onto the streets. He had announced last week that he is stepping down. Speaking to CNN-News18, Dunya Maumoon, former Maldivian foreign minister said,



"We are unhappy with the developments in Sri Lanka, we are concerned and we feel for the Sri Lankan people but we find it unacceptable that Maldives gave a platform to Gotabaya Rajapaksa," Maumoon said. It was reported that Maldives' Majlis and

former president Mohamed Nasheed forced the government-led by Ibrahim Solih to give clearance to the AN-23 military plane carrying the Rajapaksa clan. The close relationship between Nasheed and the Rajapaksas can be traced back

to the days of the Yameen-led government. When Ranil Wickremesinghe was appointed prime minister, he coordinated with Nasheed to seek international support for Sri Lanka. Nasheed has close contacts within the Sri Lankan political parties which Rajapaksas used to seek shelter in Male.

## PROTESTS IN SRI LANKA

Meanwhile protests in Sri Lanka continue as the people are unhappy over the appointment of Ranil Wickremesinghe as the acting president of the nation which is facing an economic collapse. Protesters used ladders and other items to break into the residence of the prime minister. The acting president Ranil Wickremesinghe announced a nationwide emergency and imposed a curfew in Western Province but the pictures on social media and as well as those by news outlets signal that these orders are not being followed as people throng Galle Face and rest of Colombo demanding that Wickremesinghe give up his role as the acting President.

# China Claims US Destroyer Sailed Near Its Territory



(SAI Bureau) A US destroyer sailed near the disputed Paracel Islands in the South China Sea on Wednesday, drawing an angry reaction from Beijing, which said its military had "driven away" the ship after it illegally entering territorial waters. The United States regularly carries out what it calls Freedom of Navigation Operations in the South China Sea challenging what it says are restrictions on innocent passage imposed by China and other claimants. The US Navy said the USS Benfold "asserted navigational rights and freedoms in the South China Sea near the Paracel Islands, consistent with international law". China says it does not impede freedom of navigation or overflight, accusing the United States of deliberately

provoking tensions. The People's Liberation Army's Southern Theatre Command said the US ship's actions seriously violated China's sovereignty and security by illegally entering China's territorial waters around the Paracels, which are also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan.

"The PLA's Southern Theatre Command organised sea and air forces to follow, monitor, warn and drive away" the ship, it added, showing pictures of the Benfold taken from the deck of the Chinese frigate the Xianning. "The facts once again show that the United States is nothing short of a 'security risk maker in the South China Sea' and a 'destroyer of regional peace and stability.'" The US Navy said the Chinese statement on the mission was

"false" and the latest in a long string of Chinese actions to "misrepresent lawful US maritime operations and assert its excessive and illegitimate maritime claims at the expense of its Southeastern Asian neighbours in the South China Sea". The United States is defending every country's right to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows,

and nothing China "says otherwise will deter us", it added. China seized control of the Paracel Islands from the then-South Vietnamese government in 1974. Monday marked the sixth anniversary of a ruling by an international tribunal that invalidated China's sweeping claims to the South China Sea, a conduit for about \$3 trillion worth of ship-borne

trade each year. China has never accepted the ruling. China claims almost the entire South China Sea. Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei all have competing and often overlapping claims. China has built artificial islands on some of its South China Sea holdings, including airports, raising regional concerns about Beijing's intentions.

## Sri Lanka: 'Fascists trying to take over government,' says Ranil Wickremesinghe

**Restoring order, preventing destruction of government property and ending the 'fascist threat to democracy' are on Acting President Wickremesinghe's current agenda**

(SAI Bureau) Colombo: Acting President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe on Wednesday said there was a fascist threat to democracy in the country and vowed to restore normalcy as well as stop the destruction of state property, hours after anti-government protesters stormed his office. In his first televised address since being appointed to the post after embattled President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled to the Maldives, Wickremesinghe said he had ordered military commanders and the police chief to do what is necessary to restore order. "We must end this fascist threat to democracy. We can't allow the destruction of state property. The President's office, the President's Secretariat and the Prime Minister's official residence must be returned to proper custody," he said. "Those who are in my office want to stop me

from discharging my responsibilities as acting president. We can't let them tear up our Constitution. We can't allow fascists to take over. Some mainstream politicians too seem to be supporting these extremists. That is why I declared a nation-wide emergency and a curfew," Wickremesinghe said. Wickremesinghe said he has ordered military commanders and the police chief to do what is necessary to restore order. He said as acting President he is declaring a state of emergency and a curfew in the Western province after his office was stormed by protesters. He said according to intelligence inputs, protesters were to capture his office and Parliament which prompted the action to impose an emergency. Protesters have been demanding the resignation of both Rajapaksa and Wickremesinghe to restore normalcy in the country.



# US carries out Freedom of Navigation exercise in South China Sea

(SAI Bureau) A US Navy destroyer ship carried out what US calls Freedom of Navigation exercise in the South China Sea on Wednesday. An angry China said that its military had 'driven away' the US warship which had sailed near the disputed Paracel Islands. China claims the entirety of South China Sea based on ancient claims. US regularly carries out Freedom of Navigation exercises in the sea to challenge Chinese assertions. Monday (July 11) was the sixth

anniversary of a ruling given by international tribunal that had invalidated China's sweeping claims in the South China Sea. China had rejected the ruling. The US Navy said the destroyer USS Benfold "asserted navigational rights and freedoms in the South China Sea near the Paracel Islands, consistent with international law". China maintains that it does not impede freedom of navigation. It has accused the US of provoking tensions deliberately. Southern Theatre Command

of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) said that action of US destroyer seriously violated China's sovereignty and security. It said that the ship illegally entered China's territorial waters around Paracel islands. These islands are also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam. "The PLA's Southern Theatre Command organised sea and air forces to follow, monitor, warn and drive away" the ship, it added, showing pictures of the Benfold taken from the deck of the Chinese frigate the Xianning. "The facts once

again show that the United States is nothing short of a 'security risk maker in the South China Sea' and a 'destroyer of regional peace and stability.'"US Navy, in turn, has said that Chinese statement on its mission was "false". It said that this was latest Chinese act to "misrepresent lawful U.S. maritime operations and assert its excessive and illegitimate maritime claims at the expense of its Southeastern Asian neighbours in the South China Sea".

## Greenhouse gas emissions from US inflicted damage worth almost \$2 trillion on other countries

(SAI Bureau) A new study has revealed that greenhouse gas emissions from the United States have inflicted damage worth over \$1.9 trillion on other countries across the globe. The analysis, which provides the first measurement of nations' liability in stoking the climate crisis, highlights the huge volume of planet-heating gases pumped out by the US. In terms of global damage, the research places the United States ahead of China, Russia, India, and Brazil which were deemed as one of the highest emitters.

But since 1990, these five countries have caused a total of \$6tn in losses worldwide by fueling climate breakdown. According to Chris Callahan, the lead author of the study and a researcher at Dartmouth College, "It's not surprising that the US and China are at the top of that list but the numbers really are very stark. For the first time, we can show that a country's emissions can be traced to specific harm." "In places that are already hot you are seeing it becoming harder to work outside, mortality from the heat is on the rise, it's harder to grow crops," said Justin Mankin, a geographer at Dartmouth and co-author of the paper. "If you layer that on top of which countries have emitted the most you get an almost perfect storm." "There is this huge inequity. Countries like the US have disproportionately damaged low-income countries in the global south

and disproportionately benefited cooler, higher-income countries in the global north." "The chief impediment to claims by one country against another for climate damages isn't their scientific basis, it's their legal basis," said Michael Gerrard, director of the Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School.

"Countries enjoy sovereign immunity against most kinds of lawsuits unless they have waived it." "The costs of climate damages are mounting and ultimately someone will have to pay that cost. The question is who will that be and how it will be done," said Carroll Muffett, chief executive of the Center for International Environmental Law.

## Fined for driving solo in carpool lane, pregnant US woman says unborn baby counts as passenger

**A pregnant woman in Texas who was fined for driving solo in a carpool lane said her fetus must be counted as a passenger after last month's abortion reversal in the US**

(SAI Bureau) A pregnant woman in Texas who was fined for driving solo in a carpool lane said her fetus must be counted as a passenger in the wake of strict new abortion laws. Brandy Bottone, 32 years old and 34 weeks pregnant, has vowed to go to court after she was pulled over in Dallas and handed a penalty by a police officer last month. She was driving in a lane reserved for vehicles carrying at least two people -- a fact she did not dispute. But Bottone told a police officer that her unborn child was a person in the eyes of the law, as the United States Supreme Court had days earlier reversed decades-standing federal law guaranteeing women access to abortion. "He said, 'Is

there somebody else in the car?'" Bottone told CNN on Sunday. "I pointed at my stomach and I was like, 'Right here,'" she recalled. When the policeman said that being pregnant "doesn't count" as the two persons must be "outside the body," Bottone insisted that "this is a baby." The Texas criminal code, like that of many conservative states, recognizes a fetus as a "person," but this does not appear to apply for laws regulating transportation. Even before Roe v Wade was overturned last month, a new Texas law had banned almost all abortions after six weeks -- before many women even know they are pregnant.



## US showers incentives on Pacific island nations

(SAI Bureau) USA on Tuesday (July 12) stepped forward and announced incentives for Pacific Island nations in a move widely seen to be aimed at countering Chinese influence. This has come after Kiribati, one of Pacific Island nations chose to stay away from the Pacific Island Forum meeting in Suva, Fiji. Kiribati has also withdrawn itself from the 18-member group. On Tuesday, Kiribati islanders celebrated their Independence Day, however, President Taneti Maamau skipped the region's first face-to-face meeting in three years as a matter of principle over a dispute involving its leadership, reported CNN. There were speculations of Chinese hand compelling Maamau to leave the alliance. China has denied this and its foreign ministry has rejected these claims as 'completely

groundless'. The region has attracted attention of western powers after China's recent aggressive push to enhance ties with



Pacific Island Nations. A senior official of US administration official told reporters in a call that the US was "significantly stepping up (its) game in the Pacific Islands." "The incentives included more funding for fisheries, extra aid, and offers of new US embassies in the Pacific --

including one in Kiribati, which along with the Solomon Islands appears to be moving closer to China, reported CNN. Other US commitments include tripling funding to USD 60 million a year for 10 years to secure US fishing rights in the Pacific, the release of America's strategy on the Pacific Islands and the appointment of the first US envoy to the Pacific Islands Forum. To achieve the US's soft power goals, the Peace Corps will return to four countries including Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, and Vanuatu and the US will increase aid funding to the region. The measures will be personally presented to Pacific leaders on Wednesday in a virtual address by US Vice President Kamala Harris -- underscoring Washington's efforts to stress the Pacific's importance to US strategy.



## US House committee to focus on Trump, Proud Boys and Oath Keepers at Capitol riot hearing

(SAI Bureau) The House committee probing the 2021 assault on the US Capitol will examine connections between associates of former president Donald Trump and far right-wing extremist groups at its seventh hearing on Tuesday, as reported by AFP. Democratic Representative Zoe Lofgren said, "We are going to be connecting the dots during these hearings between these groups and those who were trying -- in government circles -- to overturn the election."

The lawmaker from California told CNN the session would focus on ties between members of Trump's inner circle and the Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers. Members of the two militia groups stormed the Capitol on January 6, 2021, along with thousands of Trump supporters in a bid to prevent certification of Democrat Joe Biden's election victory.

Jason Van Tatenhove, a former member of the Oath Keepers, is expected to testify at Tuesday's televised hearing, which begins at 1:00 pm (1700 GMT) and is expected to last at least two hours. Five members of the Proud Boys were indicted on seditious conspiracy charges in June in connection with the assault on the Capitol. Eleven members of

the Oath Keepers have also been charged with seditious conspiracy and three of them have pleaded guilty. A select committee aide said Tuesday's hearing will focus on a tweet Trump sent on December 19 telling his supporters to come to Washington on January 6 and promising it will be 'wild'. The aide said, "They immediately started answering his call by zeroing in on that date. We'll talk about how that was a pivotal moment that spurred a chain of events." The tweet was sent a little more than an hour after Trump met at the White House with his lawyer Rudy Giuliani, former general Mike Flynn, and Sidney Powell, another attorney.

More than 850 people have been arrested in connection with the storming of Congress by Trump supporters. Still, only those 16 face seditious conspiracy charges, which carry a sentence of up to 20 years in prison. The committee is trying to determine whether Trump or his associates had a role in planning or encouraging the violent attack on Congress, and has subpoenaed numerous advisors and aides to the former president. Excerpts may be played on Tuesday from an eight-hour interview the committee held on Friday with former Trump White House counsel Pat Cipollone.

## Ivana Trump, Former US President Donald Trump's First Wife, Dies At 73

(SAI Bureau) Ivana Trump, the ex-wife of former US president Donald Trump, died at the age of 73 on Thursday (local time). Donald Trump told news outlets that Ivana died at her home in New York City. Paramedics in Manhattan were the first to respond to a call reporting cardiac arrest shortly after midday and found her in her Upper East Side apartment. She was pronounced dead at the scene. The police said the

children, Donald Jr., Ivanka, and Eric. She was so proud of them, as we were all so proud of her," Trump said while describing his former wife as a 'wonderful, beautiful, and amazing woman, who led a



paramedics said they found her at the bottom of a set of stairs in her apartment. The police are investigating if and how she fell and if she did, how did it contribute to her death. A medical examiner will determine the cause of her death, news agency ABC reported. Donald Trump in his social media platform Truth Social issued a statement. "Her pride and joy were her three

great and inspirational life.' Ivana Trump was a survivor. She fled from communism and embraced this country. She taught her children about grit and toughness, compassion and determination," the family said in a statement. "Our mother was an incredible woman — a force in business, a world-class athlete, a radiant beauty, and caring mother and friend," it further added.

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The first signs of global warming are now clearly visible. We urgently need to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Nothing and no-one will be spared from climate change. This warning is therefore to all people, all countries and, in particular, to the Belgian Council of Ministers who, on the weekend of March 20 and 21, will have to decide what action to take regarding essential measures linked to the Kyoto Protocol.



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# Biden Set To Begin His West Asia Trip With An Eye On Iran

(SAI Bureau) U S President Joe Biden lands in the Middle East on Wednesday for a trip that will see Israeli leaders urge tougher action against Iran, before a delicate stop in Saudi Arabia. The 79-year-old president's visit to Jeddah on Friday will be the focus of the tour, after Biden branded Saudi Arabia a "pariah" over the 2018 murder of dissident Saudi journalist and US resident Jamal Khashoggi. Air Force One will also make an unprecedented direct flight between the Jewish state and the conservative Gulf kingdom that does not recognise its existence. Before that, Biden will meet Israeli leaders seeking to broaden cooperation against Iran, and Palestinian leaders frustrated by what they describe as Washington's failure to curb Israeli aggression. The persistent frustrations of Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy are nothing new for Biden, who first visited the region in 1973 after being elected to the Senate. Iran and Israel were allies then, but the Jewish state now considers Tehran its top threat. Israel's caretaker Prime Minister Yair Lapid, who took office less than two weeks ago, has said talks "will focus first and foremost on the issue of Iran."

## JERUSALEM TO BETHLEHEM

Moments after Biden touches down, Israel's military will show him its new Iron Beam system, an anti-drone laser it claims is crucial to countering Iran's UAV fleet. Israel insists it will do whatever is necessary to thwart Iran's nuclear ambitions, and is staunchly opposed to a restoration of the 2015 deal that gave Tehran sanctions relief. Israel says it is raising 1,000 flags across Jerusalem to

welcome the US leader, who has not reversed former president Donald Trump's controversial decision to recognise the city as the capital of the Jewish state. Palestinians claim Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem as their capital and, ahead of the visit, have accused Biden of failing to make good on his pledge to restore the United States as an honest broker in the conflict. "We only hear empty words and no results," said Jibril Rajoub, a leader of the secular

Fatah movement of Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas. Biden will meet Abbas in the occupied West Bank city of Bethlehem on Friday, but there is no



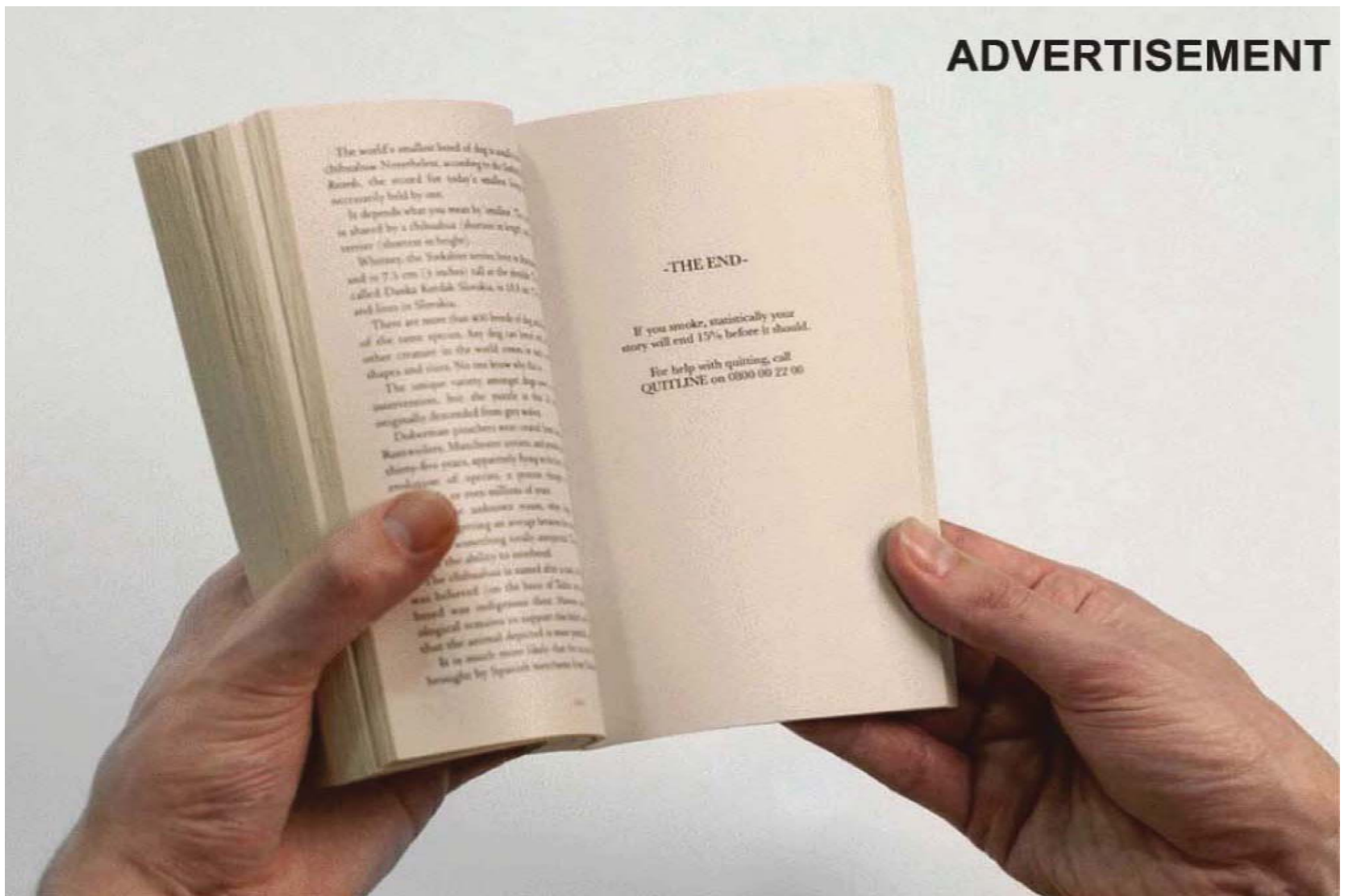
expectation of bold announcements towards a fresh peace process, meaning the visit may merely deepen Palestinian frustration. Israel is also mired in political gridlock ahead of elections on November 1, the fifth vote in less than four years.

## NORMALISATION STEPS?

US-Palestinian ties have recently been strained by the May killing of prominent Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh while she was covering an Israeli army raid in the occupied West Bank. The

United Nations has concluded the Palestinian-American national was killed by Israeli fire, something Washington found was likely but said there was no evidence the killing was intentional. Abu Akleh's family has voiced "outrage" over the Biden administration's "abject response" to her death, and the White House has not commented on their request to meet the president in Jerusalem. Biden's trip to Saudi Arabia is seen as part of efforts to stabilise oil markets rattled by the war in Ukraine, by re-engaging with a country that has been a key strategic ally of the United States for decades and a major supplier of oil. But Israel hopes the visit will also signal the start of diplomatic ties between the country and Riyadh. Israel expanded its regional reach with US backing in 2020, when it formalised ties with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco — breakthroughs that came after its peace accord with Jordan, in 1994, and Egypt in 1979. While there is no expectation of Saudi Arabia recognising the Jewish state in the immediate future, a senior Israeli official said Tuesday that Biden's visit marked an important step

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# What is FCRA, the law related to NGO funding?

(From page 19....)

Under the new rules, political parties, legislature members, election candidates, judges, government servants, journalists and media houses among others – all barred from receiving foreign contribution – will no longer be prosecuted if they receive foreign contribution from relatives abroad and fail to intimate the government within 90 days. However, the recipient will be required to pay 5% of the foreign contribution received.

**How is FCRA registration granted?**

NGOs that want to receive foreign funds must apply online in a prescribed format with the required documentation. FCRA registrations are granted to individuals or associations that have definite cultural, economic, educational, religious, and social programmes.

Following the application by the NGO, the MHA makes inquiries through the Intelligence Bureau into the antecedents of the applicant, and accordingly processes the application.

Under the FCRA, the applicant should not be fictitious or benami; and should not have been prosecuted or convicted for indulging in activities aimed at conversion through inducement or force, either directly or indirectly, from one religious faith to another.

The applicant should also not have been prosecuted for or convicted of creating communal tension or disharmony; should

not have been found guilty of diversion or misutilisation of funds; and should not be engaged or likely to be engaged in the propagation of sedition.

The MHA is required to approve or reject the application within 90 days. In case of failure to process the application in the given time, the MHA is expected to inform the NGO of the reasons for the same.

**For how long is approval granted?**

Once granted, FCRA registration is valid for five years. NGOs are expected to apply for renewal within six months of the date of expiry of registration. In case of failure to apply for renewal, the registration is deemed to have expired, and the NGO is no longer entitled to receive foreign funds or utilise its existing funds without permission from the ministry. The FCRA registration of close to 5,900 NGOs, including Oxfam India Trust and Indian Medical Association, lapsed on December 31 last year. According to sources, the registration of as many as 5,789 NGOs had lapsed after they failed to apply for renewal before the due date. The rest, who had applied for renewal, were refused as the MHA found their operations or accounts to be in violation of the FCRA, sources had said at the time. According to the MHA, NGOs failing to apply before the due date can petition the ministry with cogent reasons within four months of the expiry of registration, following which their

applications can be reconsidered.

Many NGOs do not apply for renewal for a variety of reasons, which include either completion of the project for which the FCRA registration had been taken or the NGO itself folding up.

**On what basis is approval cancelled?**

The government reserves the right to cancel the FCRA registration of any NGO if it finds it to be in violation of the Act. Registration can be cancelled if an inquiry finds a false statement in the application; if the NGO is found to have violated any of the terms and conditions of the certificate or renewal; if it has not been engaged in any reasonable activity in its chosen field for the benefit of society for two consecutive years; or if it has become defunct. It can also be cancelled if "in the opinion of the Central Government, it is necessary in the public interest to cancel the certificate," the FCRA says. Registrations are also cancelled when an audit finds irregularities in the finances of an NGO in terms of misutilisation of foreign funds. According to FCRA, no order of cancellation of certificate can be made unless the person or NGO concerned has been given a reasonable opportunity of being heard. Once the registration of an NGO is cancelled, it is not eligible for re-registration for three years. The ministry also has powers to suspend an NGO's registration for 180 days pending inquiry, and can freeze its funds. All orders of the

government can be challenged in the High Court.

**Which NGOs have been accused of violating FCRA provisions?**

Several international and well-known NGOs such as Compassion International, Greenpeace India, Sabrang Trust, Lawyers' Collective, Amnesty International, and Ford Foundation have come under the government's scanner for alleged violations of FCRA. Most have been accused of financial irregularities or "political activity" for cancellation of their registration. Amnesty was forced to shut its operation in India in 2020 following investigations launched by the Enforcement Directorate in 2018 into its financial dealings. Amnesty called the government action "witch-hunt of human-right activists...and a crackdown on dissent". Greenpeace India has scaled down its operations after its FCRA registration was cancelled in 2015 on grounds of opening multiple bank accounts, and movement of funds. Lawyer Indira Jaising's NGO Lawyers' Collective is facing a CBI probe. In 2016, the MHA had cancelled the FCRA licence of the NGO for allegedly using foreign contributions for "political purposes". Activist Teesta Setalvad's NGO Sabrang Trust had its FCRA registration cancelled in 2016 for allegedly mixing foreign and domestic funds, and for spending funds on publishing the Communalism Combat magazine.

## Assam's Muslims: why some have been declared 'indigenous' and some left out

(From page 18.....)

Sufi preachers settled in Assam at various times, the earliest by some accounts being Syed Badiuddin Shah Mada (Madan Pir) in 1497, and the best known being Syed Moinuddin Baghdadi (Azaan Pir or Azaan Fakir) around 1630. The Syed community comprises descendants of their followers.

**GORIYA:** In a series of attempted invasions by the Mughals between 1615 and 1682, the Ahom regime took several soldiers prisoner. Many of these belonged to Gaur in ancient Bengal, and hence got the name Goriya. "These people settled in Assam and married local women and gradually became a part of the Assamese society," the report says. It also mentions tribals/Hindus who converted to Islam during Azaan Pir's time; they too became subsequently known as Goriya.

**MORIYA:** These too are descendants of prisoners of war, captured by the Ahoms after an attempted invasion by Turbak Khan in the 16th century. They "took to working in brass, an occupation which their descendants, who are known as Moriyas, carry on to this day", the British historian Edward Gait wrote in 1933 (A History of Assam).

**JULHA:** A small community, originally from undivided Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal, and believed to be converts from Adivasis. They migrated to Assam in two phases: as weavers during the Ahom

regime, and as tea garden workers brought by British tea planters in the 19th century. Julha is listed as an MOBC community in Assam.

Prominent Assamese Muslims through history include the navy general Bagh Hazarika who fought under the Ahom general Lachit Borphukan against Mughal invaders in 1671; Sir Syed Muhammad Saadulla, Assam's first prime minister during colonial rule; the 20th-century poet Syed Abdul Malik; and India's late President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed.

**What are their numbers?**

The census of 2011 counted 1.06 crore Muslims (34%) in Assam out of a population of 3.12 crore, but does not record a break-up by ethnicity. The sub-committee report to the Assam government puts the current Muslim population at 1.18 crore, out of which it estimates the five "indigenous" groups at 42 lakh. That implies that out of every 3 Muslims in Assam, 1 is "indigenous". Of these 42 lakh, the report estimates the Deshis at 20 lakh, and the Moriyas at 2 lakh.

**So, who are not "indigenous" as per the report?**

The omission of the Bengali-origin Muslims, or Miyas, is apparent. But the definition also leaves out at least one Muslim group with a long history in Assam. In south Assam's Barak Valley, dominated by Bengali-speaking Hindus

and Muslims, there is also a group called Kachari Muslims, who trace their origins to the Kachari kingdom (13th century to 1832). They consider themselves distinct from the Muslims who migrated from East Bengal.

Atiqur Rahman Barbhuyan, president, Society for Indigenous Muslims of Barak Valley, called the Cabinet decision a "great injustice" to the Muslims of Barak Valley. "Our ancestry is not of migrant origin. Our history goes back to the 1600s," he said, adding that he had made a presentation to the committee before it filed its report.

**What is the point of this exercise?**

The demand came from within the community itself. In a state whose history and politics have been shaped by migration, some Assamese-speaking groups and individuals have long sought to be identified as distinct from the Bengali-speaking Muslims.

Assamese Muslims "are bracketed as Muslims, along with the Bengali-speaking Muslims", the report says, citing "...the lack of a separate identity bestowed upon the Assamese Muslims".

Apart from recognition as indigenous, the report recommends greater political representation including reservation of a Rajya Sabha seat, reservation in jobs, and

various measures for preservation of Assam Muslim culture.

**How do Muslim groups feel about it?**

The All Assam Goriya-Moriya Deshi Parishad welcomed the move. Its president Hafizul Ahmed said Assamese Muslims were "losing their identity" because they were often clubbed with the "Bengali Muslim migrant community". "Since we have similar sounding names, it is easy to confuse us but our culture and history is very different," he said.

Others are concerned that the move would lead to further marginalisation of Bengali-origin Muslims. AIUDF MLA Aminul Islam earlier told The Indian Express that the panel's proposals were part of a "political rhetoric" to "isolate Bengali Muslims further".

Yasmin Saikia, professor of history and endowed chair in peace studies at Arizona State University described the move as "shortsighted". "To me, as an Assamese humanist, it is very sad. The labels given to various Muslims are a strategy to divide the Muslim community," she said. "If the aim of this move was to improve the socio-economic status of Muslims in Assam, why neglect a chunk of them? Identifying a tiny group within a group, giving them identity cards and certificates is unlikely to serve any purpose. In fact, it will lead to more vulnerability, greater socio-economic problems, and more antisocial elements," she said.



# As World Mourns Shinzo Abe's Assassination, Chinese Social Media Erupts into Celebrations

(SAI Bureau) Shinzo Abe has been assassinated. A towering personality who redefined the Asia-Pacific as the "Indo-Pacific" was shot during a campaign address ahead of the elections to the upper house of Japan's parliament. Shinzo Abe was a statesman par excellence, and no less than a legend in the world of geopolitics. Today, China is facing challenges in the Indo-Pacific, and is not being allowed a free run across the region thanks to the concerted efforts of Shinzo Abe, who became the longest-serving Prime Minister of Japan.

Here's some context. Shinzo Abe, during his tenure as Prime Minister, strengthened the Japanese military and diluted the infamous Article 9 of Japan's constitution by allowing the overseas deployment of troops to aid the country's allies. He also strengthened Japanese assets, military infrastructure and troop presence in the Okinawa prefecture, of which the disputed Senkaku islands – which China stakes claim on – are a part. In recent times, he emerged as a strong advocate for the freedom of Taiwan, saying that any threat to Taiwan must be treated as a threat to Japan. As a proud nationalist who worked tirelessly to make Japan an activist nation rather than a pacifist one, Shinzo Abe singlehandedly built the democratic world's policy for the Indo Pacific, coining the phrase "Free and Open Indo Pacific", which has today become a thorn in the eyes of China.

Therefore, it was natural for the Chinese Communist Party to revel in a sense of glee at any pain caused to Shinzo Abe. However, supporters of the Chinese regime seem to have launched an all-out campaign not just against now-deceased Shinzo Abe, but also against anybody condoling his demise, condemning the

brutal attack on him or merely expressing shock over all that has happened. On Twitter, Indians are being bombarded with tweets that appear to be of Chinese origin, and are written in Mandarin. These tweets are seen mocking Shinzo Abe, celebrating the attack on him and his subsequent demise, apart from also engaging in a wolf-warrior style of confrontation. While Chinese diplomats seem to have paused wolf-warrior diplomacy, ordinary Chinese social media users are enthusiastically filling in. Check out responses to this tweet of mine to see how Chinese users have spread all over the place.

## THE WEIBO STORY

On Weibo, which is the Chinese equivalent of Twitter, there was no stopping the Chinese from celebrating Shinzo Abe being shot and subsequently him succumbing to the fatal injuries. On Weibo, the hashtag "Abe Shows No Vital Signs" received over a billion views. Chinese users began referring to July 8 as a historic day en masse, almost as if they were celebrating the death of an enemy. Users' comments ranged from them congratulating each other, to even suggesting that they eat an extra bowl of rice in celebration. Others asked who Abe's attacker was, and how they could donate money to him. Meanwhile, some users even began drawing parallels between the assassination of Shinzo Abe and that of former US President John F Kennedy.

Shinzo Abe was a great friend of Taiwan, and called on for the island nation to be allowed entry into global organisations and multilateral forums. That really made the Chinese hate the man. According to WhatsOnWeibo, some of the comments called the shooter a 'hero', saying he would not just also

go into Japanese history, but would be remembered in Chinese history books too. It is important to point that Shinzo Abe was merely what Chinese nationalists were projecting their hate on. The root cause of all their hatred is a memory of Japanese atrocities over Chinese people during the Great Wars in the 20th century. Definitely, for the stooges of the Chinese regime and for its most avid supporters, Shinzo Abe was a man whose sight could not be stood. However, hatred

for anything Japanese has come to form an instinctive part of life for Chinese Communists aligned with the CCP. Across the world, China is earning a bad name for allowing such comments to be made on a social media platform whose entire control rests with the Communist regime. In more ways than one, the free pass given to toxic Chinese commentators by the CCP is being seen as a glowing validation of their views, and that should disturb the world a lot.

## India in 2023: The challenge and opportunity of being the most populous country

China's population by age and sex: 2047 The size of the population is intimately connected to the power dynamics shaping the relationship between nations, regions and generations. It is, however, a double-edged sword that needs to be skillfully wielded. So what do population transformations around the globe and within India herald for challenges facing Indian public policy? The following 25 years will bring three different changes in the centre of population gravity: Between nations, between states and between generations. Each will require a finely calibrated response.

First, over the next 25 years, as India approaches a century, we will be blessed with a massive workforce that will cast a long shadow. Globally, one in five working-age persons will live in India. The challenge is that a sizeable working-age population does not mean many workers. The size of our labour force is constrained by the absence of women from the workforce. Only about 30 per cent of women aged 15 and above are employed either in wage work on family farms and businesses. With sharply declining fertility and rising education, many Indian women would like to work if they can find suitable jobs. Unless they can be welcomed into gainful employment, we will not be able to reap the hoped-for demographic dividend. Women are shut out of many sectors of the Indian economy. The absence of women in factories, the transportation sector and skilled blue-collar work is striking. Making these occupations female-friendly is essential if we are to reap a gender dividend.

India's population by age and sex: 2047

The second aspect of the demographic centre of gravity relates to population distribution between states. With fertility transition beginning in southern states and slowly spreading to central India, future workers will come from the central part of the country, precisely the states that have lagged behind in fertility transition so far. As Professor P M Kulkarni projects, the southern states, already facing the burden of caring for a larger

proportion of the population aged 65 and above, will be even more stressed in years to come.

Thus, the future of India rests in the hands of children growing up in UP, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh today. We will need to ensure that the education system in these states is prepared to meet this challenge. With industrial growth concentrated in coastal regions and the bulk of our workers coming from central areas, we will also need to figure out how to deal with interstate migration. Already, Tamil workers are working in Chennai auto factories, while workers from Odisha and Uttar Pradesh are working in tea and cardamom plantations of Tamil Nadu. As trains of interstate migrants during the pandemic highlight, we will need better policies to integrate and support migrant workers in their new homes if we are to adjust to changing demographic realities. The changing centre of demographic gravity is also reflected in changing inter-generational relations. UN median projections show Indian fertility stabilising slightly below the replacement level of Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2. However, they have a broad band of uncertainty around this estimate, with some estimates falling substantially below 2. A comparison of India's population pyramid in 2047 with the projected population pyramid for China provides a stark picture of the different challenges the two countries will face. China must cope with an enormous old-age dependency burden with no relief from successively smaller child cohorts. However, in 2047, a large proportion of the Indian population will be of working ages. This large cohort will be succeeded by somewhat smaller cohorts but not as small as those of China.

However, after 2050, the older population will rise sharply; by 2100, about 30 per cent of the Indian population will be 65 and above. With small families, these older parents will have two or fewer children to support them, making it difficult for Indian parents to rely on their traditional mode of survival, living with one or more sons. This suggests that we must develop more robust systems of old-age support.

## NASA James Webb Space Telescope detects water on distant planet

But another discovery justifies the promise shown by the telescope. The telescope has discovered water on a distant planet. It is a gas giant and presence of water has been detected in its atmosphere.

"WASP-96 b is one of more than 5,000 confirmed exoplanets in the Milky Way. Located roughly 1,150 light-years away in the southern-sky constellation Phoenix, it represents a type of gas giant that has no direct analog in our solar system. With a mass less than half that of Jupiter and a diameter 1.2 times greater, WASP-96 b is much puffier than any planet orbiting our Sun. And with a temperature greater than 1000°F, it is significantly hotter. WASP-96 b orbits extremely close to its Sun-like star, just one-ninth of the distance between

Mercury and the Sun, completing one circuit every 3½ Earth-days," says NASA.

While searching for life, scientists often search for presence of water. Even on Earth, life began in water.

When it comes to alien life, it is not necessary that the extra-terrestrials should be tentacles-wielding creatures popularised by movies and books. Detection of even a microscopic life is a huge step in our search for life beyond Earth. And where there is water, there is high likelihood of there being microscopic life. So have we found aliens? Let's wait for James Webb Space telescope to scan the skies a bit more to be absolutely certain. You can now write for wionews.com and be a part of the community.



# Joe Biden heads to West Bank, with little beyond money to offer Palestinians

**The US president is expected to announce \$316 million in financial assistance - about a third of which will require Congressional approval - and a commitment from Israel to modernise wireless access for Palestinians**

(SAI Bureau) When President Joe Biden heads to the occupied West Bank on Friday for talks with Palestinian leaders, he will have little to offer beyond US money aimed at buying calm. He's expected to announce \$316 million in financial assistance — about a third of which will require congressional approval — and a commitment from Israel to modernize wireless access for Palestinians. But although Biden will reiterate his support for an independent Palestinian state, there's no clear path to one. The last round of serious peace talks broke down more than a decade ago, leaving millions of Palestinians living under Israeli military rule.

Israel's outgoing government has taken steps to improve economic conditions in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. But Yair Lapid, the caretaker prime minister, does not have a mandate to hold peace negotiations, and Nov. 1 elections could bring to power a right-wing government that is opposed to Palestinian statehood. Meanwhile, the 86-year-old President Mahmoud Abbas, whose Palestinian Authority administers parts of the occupied West Bank and cooperates with Israel on security, is more representative of the status quo than Palestinian aspirations. His Fatah party lost an election, and control of Gaza, to the Islamic militant group Hamas more than 15 years ago. He called off the first national elections since then last year — blaming Israel — when Fatah appeared to be heading for another crushing defeat. Polls over the past year have consistently found that nearly 80 per cent of Palestinians want him to resign. Biden acknowledged this week that while he supports a two-state solution, it won't happen "in the near-term." The US also appears to have accepted defeat in its more modest push to reopen a Jerusalem consulate serving the Palestinians that was closed when President Donald Trump recognized the contested city as Israel's capital. Palestinian leaders also fear being further undermined by the Abraham Accords, a diplomatic vehicle for Arab

nations to normalize relations with Israel despite the continuing occupation. Biden, who heads next to Saudi Arabia to attend a summit of Arab leaders, hopes to broaden that process, which began under Trump. Hours before Biden was set to become the first US leader to fly directly from Israel to the kingdom, Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation announced early Friday "the decision to open the Kingdom's airspace for all air carriers that meet the requirements of the Authority for overflying." It signaled the end of its longstanding ban on Israeli flights overflying its territory — an incremental step toward the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel that builds on the strong, but informal ties the erstwhile foes have developed in recent years over their shared concerns about Iran's growing influence in the region.

"President Biden welcomes and commends the historic decision by the leadership of Saudi Arabia to open Saudi airspace to all civilian carriers without discrimination, a decision that includes flights to and from Israel," said US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan in a statement early Friday. There's been hardly any mention of the Palestinians over the past two days, as Biden has showered Israel with praise, holding it up as a democracy that shares American values. At a press conference with Biden, Lapid evoked the US civil rights movement to portray Israel as a bastion of freedom. It all reeked of hypocrisy to Palestinians, who have endured 55 years of military occupation with no end in sight.

"The idea of shared values actually makes me sick to my stomach," said Diana Buttu, a Palestinian lawyer and political analyst. "I don't think Israeli values are anything that people should be striving towards." Both Biden and Lapid said they supported an eventual two-state solution in order to ensure that Israel remains a Jewish-majority state. But Biden is expected to announce little beyond financial assistance, including \$201

million for the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees. Biden proposed \$100 million, subject to congressional approval, for hospitals in east Jerusalem that serve Palestinians. Another \$15 million is for humanitarian assistance, plus \$7.2 million for programs to promote cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians. His approach, often referred to as "economic peace," has limitations.

"You can't buy a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," said Aaron David Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and former US State Department official. "It doesn't work, because that's not what drives this conflict."

That sentiment was on display in the West Bank on Thursday, where dozens of Palestinians gathered to protest Biden. More protests were expected Friday.

"Mr. Biden is trying to marginalize the Palestinian issue," said Mustafa Barghouti, a veteran Palestinian activist. "If he does not allow Palestinians to have their rights, then he is helping Israel kill and end the very last possibility of peace." At this point, the Palestinian goal of an independent state in east Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza — territories Israel seized in the 1967 Mideast war — appears more distant than

ever.

Israel is expanding settlements in annexed east Jerusalem and the West Bank, which are now home to some 700,000 Jewish settlers. The Palestinian view the settlements — many of which resemble sprawling suburbs — as the main obstacle to peace, because they carve up the land on which a Palestinian state would be established. Most of the world considers them illegal. Military rule in the West Bank has sown widespread despair, contributing to a recent wave of violence. A 15-year blockade of Gaza, which Israel says is needed to contain Hamas, has helped fuel four devastating wars. Jerusalem, home to famed holy sites and the emotional heart of the conflict, is as volatile as ever.

Israel has its own grievances — including Palestinian Authority payments to the families of prisoners and slain attackers, which Israel says incentivize violence. The PA defends the payments as a form of welfare for those it sees as victims of the conflict. It's unclear if eliminating the "martyrs' fund" would advance the goal of statehood. Israel is dominated by nationalist and religious parties that are opposed to a Palestinian state and view the West Bank as the biblical and historical heartland of the Jewish people.

Well-known human rights groups have concluded that Israel's seemingly permanent control over millions of Palestinians amounts to apartheid. One of those groups, Israel's own B'Tselem, hung banners in the West Bank ahead of Biden's visit. Israel rejects that label as an attack on its very existence, even though two former Israeli prime ministers warned years ago that their country would be seen that way if it did not reach a two-state agreement with the Palestinians. The US also rejects the apartheid allegations. Biden will also likely see banners calling for justice for Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was killed during an Israeli military raid in the West Bank in May. Israel says she might have been struck by Palestinian gunfire, while investigations by The Associated Press and other media outlets support Palestinian witnesses who say she was shot by Israeli forces.

The US says she was likely killed by Israeli troops but that it appeared to be unintentional, without saying how it reached those conclusions. That angered many Palestinians, including Abu Akleh's family, who accused the US of trying to help Israel evade responsibility for her death.

## Dutch police open fire at teenage tractor driver during farmer protest

Police in northern Friesland said on Wednesday that no one was hurt in the incident that involved warning shots and direct targeting of a tractor that broke free from a line. They claimed that he tried to drive his tractor into police cars. The National Criminal Investigation Service (Rijksrecherche) said that an investigation into the incident will be conducted as a result of officers discharging their weapons. Farmers are protesting against the new government plans to cut nitrogen emissions as they fear it would hurt their livelihoods.

### FARMERS' UNREST

The unrest among Dutch farmers was triggered by a government proposal to slash emissions of pollutants like nitrogen oxide and ammonia by 50 per cent by 2030. Provincial governments have been given a year to formulate plans to achieve the goal. The reforms are expected to include reducing livestock and buying up some farms whose animals produce large amounts of

ammonia. Farmers argue they are being unfairly targeted and are being given no perspective for their future. The plans have sparked immense rage from farmers and their allies throughout the country. Dutch farmers have blocked supermarkets, distribution centers and roads in protests in the past week. A dozen tractors protested on the famous Dam Square in Amsterdam, carrying banners saying, "The war has begun and we will win." Others took to highways to express frustration, with tractors driving at a walking pace causing large traffic jams. In Arnhem, a city in the east, farmers and their tractors gathered in front of a provincial governmental building. Another target was distribution centres, which were not accessible in more than 15 locations. With farmers blocking access, supermarkets were left with empty shelves and consumers with empty shopping trolleys.



# Change in 'religious demography' of India is not hyperbole, it is a real threat

(From page 14.....)

'The process of decline in the share of Indian religionists, like the increase in the share of Muslims, has continued since Independence and Partition and has become considerably faster after 1981. Between 1951 and 2011, the share of Indian religionists in the population of India has contracted by nearly 4 percentage points, and the Muslim share has expanded by about that amount. Census 2011 shows that this spurt in the Muslim growth and consequent decline of others has not subsided yet.' Decline in Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and others While the

Muslims share in population is consistently on rise, the share of Hindus in population has come down below 80 percent for the first time since independence. According to 2011 Census, the share of Hindus in the population stood at 79.80 percent. In 2001, this share stood at 80.46 percent.

During the decade (2001-2011), the share of Sikhs has declined from 1.87 to 1.72 percent, of Buddhists from 0.77 to 0.70 and of Jains from 0.41 to 0.37 percent.

According to Dr Bajaj, "This decline in the share of Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists is a significant

phenomenon, which would have important sociological and political consequences."

Arunachal facing the evangelical tide One of the most significant stories of the Census 2011 data is the onslaught of evangelical tide in strategically located Arunachal Pradesh. Unfortunately, we have overlooked this data so far.

From 2001-11, the proportion of Christians in the population of the state has risen from less than 19 to more than 30 percent. According to the CPS study, Christians now form a majority or near majority of the population in several districts. The

share of Christians in the Scheduled Tribes population of the state and the districts is even higher.

"Arunachal Pradesh, unlike other hill States of the northeast, had escaped widespread Christianisation until 1981 and, to a large extent, even until 1991. Christian presence in the State began to acquire serious proportions in 2001; the Religion Data of Census 2011 indicates that the State is now well on its way towards nearly complete Christianisation of the Schedule Tribes population as it happened within the first decade or two of Independence in Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur and, to a significant extent, in Meghalaya," concludes Dr Bajaj.

## Time to reclaim India's history for a New India

(From page 14.....)

The New Reduction of India to South Asia Recent views of India's history add a new negationism. For them there was no India, but only a few temporary, disjointed cultures and kingdoms, with outside dominated empires like the Mughals or the British, and no enduring or characteristic Indic civilisation behind these.

Such scholars see only a nebulous South Asia region, without much cohesion or contribution to world civilisation, so no separate or unique place in history is required for India apart from the diverse groups and cultures of the region. This is a contrary position as compared to China, which is given its historical identity and cultural continuity, even though China borrowed much of its philosophy and spirituality from India through Buddhism.

The Greek author Megasthenes at the time of Alexander over two thousand years ago wrote a book called Indika about India, which the Greeks honoured. There was extensive trade between Rome, the Middle East and China with a land called India for many centuries. Note terms like Hindusthan for the region, or Bharat Varsha and its sixteen regions or Janapadas found in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain texts. Geographical terms like Indian Ocean, Indo-Pacific, Indochina and Indonesia have long been used and show the importance of India but are similarly now being rejected.

India's contribution to science, medicine and philosophy, for example, though India gave much more than just decimal

mathematics to the world, is similarly seldom highlighted. Rather the British view of Macaulay, who tried to destroy India's extensive educational system, or the communist views of Karl Marx, are given precedence, as if India's contribution to world civilization was minimal in all respects.

Contrary to such views, India in its Sanskrit and regional dialects has produced the largest and oldest literature in the world, replete with historical references, names of kings, kingdoms, peoples, geographical regions, sages and cultural practices. Note the many Vedas, Agamas, Puranas, Jatakas, Sutras, and local accounts for such literature.

The Influence of Modern India

In addition to this negation of ancient India is an attempt to negate modern India and its influence. Since Swami Vivekananda, Indic-based traditions of Yoga, Vedanta, Ayurveda, Tantra, Sanskrit, Indian music and dance have spread globally and gained a dedicated following in almost every major country and region of the world. Great yogis and gurus from India have travelled and gained followers globally

Yet in accounts of modern India the role of Indic civilisation in spiritualising the world, is hardly mentioned. Nor is the fact that Indian immigrants to the US or UK have wonderful temples and a thriving community contributing to the peace and welfare of the countries where they now arise. The youth in the West after their studies of history can scarcely name any figures of civilisational

importance from ancient or modern India.

The contrary idea is given that India as a nation was created by the British and only gained its identity with India's Independence in 1947, which can be attributed largely to Jawaharlal Nehru who was an Anglophile. Meanwhile India's history books have largely been written by Marxists and reflect their political agenda. The idea of a superior Socialist/Nehruvian India arose to counter or even erase ancient Bharat Varsha.

The effort to reclaim India's history

Yet sadly today, when Indian thinkers try to correct this slanted history, they are accused of political, nationalistic and religious biases, as if they had no credibility. The fact is that existing historical accounts of India starting with the Aryan Invasion Theory, reflect political and religious biases, but coming from outside of India, by groups who have sought to politically control or convert India, exploit it commercially, or divide India into smaller countries they can more easily dominate.

Certainly, independent India, for its 75th anniversary, needs to reclaim its history, just as many countries free of colonial influence are doing. An Indic criticism of Western civilisational influences should also have its place in the discussion. There should be no monopoly on history by one group or another, though efforts to control history have long occurred among colonial, communist, leftist and fascist regimes. The fact is that a history of India without an Indian voice or point of view, given

India as one the cradles of civilisation, remains incomplete and presents a distorted view not only of India but also of the history of humanity, which has an inner yogic dimension, not simply an outer political expression.

India's textbooks need major changes providing an Indic/Bharatiya view of its place of respect. This is part of an open pursuit of truth, in which all sides must be heard. Today there seems to be an apartheid in academia and the media in which an Indic view, particularly a Hindu view, will not be given a voice.

India's view of civilisation as the pursuit of dharma and higher consciousness, cannot be reduced to materialist concerns or to those of exclusivist beliefs. Indology has perhaps been the worst aspect of Orientalism. Time for it to be put in the dustbin of history. India's civilisation has the most in depth cosmic dimension to its view of world and Self, which transcends all such outer historical theories, and must be examined accordingly.

Howsoever we view history, it is clear that the human race remains an unevolved species in terms of consciousness, still caught in massive violence and prejudices, which we find throughout the world.

Honouring the sages of India can help all humanity. But to truly appreciate these great yogis, rishis and gurus, we must recognise their enduring role in India's civilisation and history, and their influence on the whole of Asia and beyond that is spreading globally today to the entire planet.



# The Abu Salem extradition case, its background, and what SC has said

The Supreme Court has said the Centre is bound to release gangster Abu Salem after he has served 25 years in prison, in keeping with the sovereign assurance given by the Government of India to Portugal from where he was extradited. A look at the ruling, and its background



## allowed the extradition?

His extradition was granted for the offences of Criminal conspiracy (Section 120-B IPC), murder (Section 302 IPC), attempt to murder (Section 307 IPC), mischief (Section 435 IPC), mischief by fire or explosive (Section 436 IPC), offence punishable under Sections 3(2) and 3(3) of TADA Act, Section 3 of Explosive Substances Act, and Section 4 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

## What happened after that?

Salem was extradited to India from Portugal on November 11, 2005, placed under arrest on November 24, 2005, and tried for the offences that he had been charged with.

Salem approached the SC with a writ petition alleging violation of conditions of extradition. He also moved the Lisbon Court of Appeal which, however, deferred proceedings until the SC gave its decision on his plea.

The SC, by its order dated September 10, 2010, said that Portugal had not included certain offences for which charges had been framed against the appellant by the designated court in Mumbai. It added Salem could still be tried for lesser offences, in addition to the offences for which he was extradited. The SC concluded there was no violation of the sovereign assurance.

On the basis of the SC's finding, the Lisbon court held that there was violation, and that the authorisation granted

for the extradition ought to be terminated. The GOI appealed, but the appeal was rejected by the Supreme Court of Portugal as well as its Constitutional Court, and thus, the termination of Salem's extradition attained finality.

CBI then approached the SC of India seeking modification of the September 10, 2010 order and prayed for permission to withdraw certain charges levelled against Salem.

The agency submitted that in the interest of comity of courts and united fight at international level against global terrorism, GOI was making further efforts through diplomatic talks and the additional charges framed against Salem might come as an impediment in furthering such diplomatic talks. The CBI application was allowed by the SC and the additional charges stood withdrawn.

## What were the cases before the SC of India on which the July 11 decision came?

The court was dealing with two appeals by Salem, one emanating from the case in which he was charged with the murder of Pradeep Jain and the other against the life sentence imposed on him following his conviction in the Bombay blasts case.

## What did the GOI say in response to Salem's appeal?

The GOI said that that honouring the period of 25 years mentioned in the assurance will arise only

when the 25 years were to expire, i.e., on 10.11.2030 and that the government would abide by the period of 25 years at an appropriate time subject to remedies, which may be available and that such a plea cannot be raised as an argument before the period elapses.

## What did the SC say in its July 11 ruling?

A Bench of Justices S K Kaul and M M Sundresh said that looking into the grievousness of the offence in which Salem was involved, there is no question for this Court exercising any special privileges to commute or restrict the period of sentence imposed on him.

It however added that keeping with the assurances given to Portugal, "on the appellant completing 25 years of sentence, the Central Government is bound to advise the President of India for exercise of his powers under Article 72 of the Constitution, and to release the appellant in terms of the national commitment as well as the principle based on comity of courts". The court also rejected his prayer that the period spent in jail in Portugal from September 18, 2002 — when Salem who entered he was arrested following a Red Corner Notice — to December 10, 2005 when he was handed over to Indian authorities, be set off from the remainder of his sentence in India.

The Supreme Court on Monday (July 11) said the central government is bound to advise the President to exercise his powers of remission to release gangster and 1993 Bombay serial blasts convict Abu Salem Abdul Kayyum Ansari after he has served 25 years in prison, in keeping with the sovereign assurance given by the Government of India to Portugal from where he was extradited.

## What were the charges against Abu Salem?

The first case related to the murder of one Pradeep Jain over the non-payment of some money in a civil dispute, on March 7, 1995. He was charged under various sections of IPC, Arms Act, and Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA).

The second case related to Salem's role in the Bombay blasts. Salem allegedly stored, distributed, and transported illegally smuggled AK-56 rifles, hand grenades, as well as boxes of magazines from a godown in Gujarat to Mumbai in a Maruti van which had specially crafted secret cavities. All this was allegedly done after conspiratorial meetings related to the blasts. Subsequently, he left Mumbai and entered Portugal under an assumed name on a Pakistani passport.

A designated TADA court in Mumbai declared him a proclaimed offender on October 15, 1993. Later, a non-bailable warrant was issued against him. The Interpol also issued a Red Corner notice for his arrest on September 18, 2002.

## When was the extradition request made and what was the sovereign assurance given?

On December 13, 2002, the

Government of India through the then Minister of State for External Affairs Omar Abdullah, submitted a requisition for Salem's extradition to Portugal in nine criminal cases relying on the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and on an assurance of reciprocity as applicable in international law.

The government gave a solemn sovereign assurance on December 17, 2002 through the then Deputy Prime Minister, L K Advani, that it will exercise powers conferred by Indian laws to ensure that if extradited by Portugal for trial in India, Salem would not be visited by death penalty or imprisonment for a term beyond 25 years.

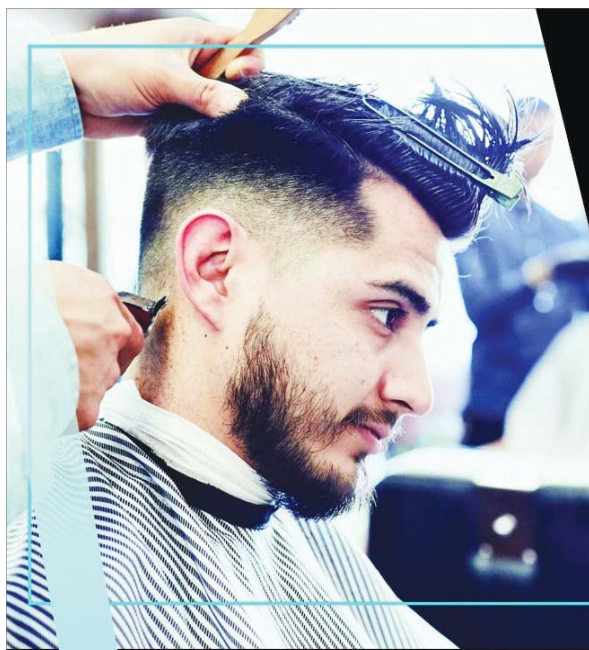
The Ambassador of India in Lisbon gave another solemn assurance on May 25, 2003 that if Salem is extradited, then he would not be prosecuted for offences other than those for which the extradition was sought, and he would not be extradited to any third country.

## What happened in Portugal?

The Ministry of Justice of Portugal by an order dated March 28, 2003, allowed his extradition, but only for some of the offences in the GOI request. Salem challenged this before the Court of Appeal, Lisbon, which allowed his extradition for all offences in the request except those punishable with death or life imprisonment.

The Supreme Court of Portugal confirmed the order of the Court of Appeal, Lisbon on January 27, in view of the assurance given by GOI that Salem would not be visited with death penalty or imprisonment for a term beyond 25 years.

## What were the offences for which Portugal courts



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# Singapore's rise, and falter, as Asia's crypto hub

Investment in Singapore's crypto and blockchain companies surged to \$1.48 billion in 2021, according to KPMG, ten times the previous year and nearly half the Asia Pacific total for 2021



## crypto business?

The scale and range of Singapore's crypto companies and service providers attracted digital asset companies fleeing regulatory crackdowns elsewhere. These include Huobi, a crypto exchange initially focused on China that now has a major presence in Singapore. US firms like crypto exchange Gemini have set up regional Asia headquarters in Singapore. The citystate was also a forerunner in developing a licencing regime for crypto companies, which attracted many companies hoping the endorsement of a leading regulator would help them to win business. Other industry leaders such as crypto exchange Coinbase have applied for licences in Singapore. DBS, Singapore's largest bank, has launched its own crypto exchange.

## Why did 3AC collapse?

Digital currencies have been on

the backfoot for months, with Bitcoin losing roughly half its value since the start of May. The sell-off was triggered by the collapse of stablecoin TerraUSD and its paired token Luna, resulting in large losses for holders such as 3AC. The company lost about \$200 million of its investment in Luna, an executive told the Wall Street Journal last month, adding that the company was still trying to quantify its losses.

According to US court filings, several of 3AC's lenders have issued notices of default.

## What is Singapore's regulatory stance?

The Monetary Authority of Singapore's statements have indicated a welcoming approach, encouraging crypto-related services. At the same time, some companies say the authorities' soothing rhetoric belies an occasionally harsh regulatory stance. Only a handful of approvals have been granted

so far among well over 100 applicants for new crypto payments licences. Chia Hock Lai, co-chairman, Blockchain Association Singapore, said there were currently well over 200 crypto businesses in Singapore, but several had shut down or moved out after the licencing regime came in. The most high-profile of these is Binance, the world's largest crypto exchange, which left Singapore last year as it came under close scrutiny around the world. Like regulators elsewhere, MAS has also indicated that it would take a tough stance on money laundering, consumer protection, and other risks that may be associated with the digital currency sector. Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Senior Minister and chairman of the MAS, told parliament last week that the regulator was considering additional consumer safeguards for cryptocurrency trading, although he did not mention 3AC.

Singapore's burgeoning cryptocurrency sector has been shaken by the recent collapse of Three Arrows Capital (3AC), a cryptocurrency hedge fund, and signs of tighter scrutiny by regulators at the Monetary Authority of Singapore. What led to the rise of Singapore as an Asian cryptocurrency hub, and what has been the fallout from the Three Arrows collapse? How important is Singapore to Asia's crypto sector?

Investment in Singapore's crypto and blockchain companies surged to \$1.48 billion in 2021, according to KPMG, ten times the previous year and nearly half the Asia Pacific total for 2021. Singapore, one of Asia's main investment banking and asset management centres alongside Hong Kong, is keen to establish a leading role in financial technology, including blockchain and crypto. Why has Singapore attracted

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## ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

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# ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

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ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖੇਗਾ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ

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# Bonn meet shows slim chance of action on climate change

**If there was any hope that discussions would provide an acceptable draft, which could be taken forward during COP27, it was misplaced. The developed and developing countries were speaking from the ends of the spectrum with no meeting ground**

Representatives from more than 100 countries from June 6-16 descended on Bonn to hold preliminary discussions on what could be the final communiqué at the conclusion of COP27, to be held at Sharm-el-Sheikh later this year. Discussions were centred around climate finance and it was evident, not surprisingly though, that there was hardly any convergence of issues. The developed and developing countries or for that matter, big polluters and small polluters, were speaking from the ends of the spectrum with no meeting ground. The focus on climate issues, in any case, has been relegated to the background somewhat because of the Ukraine crisis, leading to a fuel and food shortage. The deliberations at Bonn were also disrupted when delegates walked out after a Russian official used the platform to criticise Ukraine. It would be useful to have an overview of some of the major issues that were discussed to gauge what lies ahead at COP27.

Much of the discussion was around "loss and damage", which was being experienced by many of the smaller countries, especially with big coastlines, due to rising river levels, loss of agricultural productivity, loss of livelihoods, etc. It was argued that one needs to look into this issue right now and provide financial assistance to cope with it. Countries that are adversely affected can't wait till 2030 or 2050 since, by that time, they would be in absolute peril. This brings into focus the debate between adaptation and mitigation. While mitigation would mean, for example, setting up solar generation units to avoid carbon footprints, possible examples of adaptation include rolling out new varieties of drought-resistant crops. It is generally felt that whatever funding has come for climate change issues has



mostly been directed towards mitigation. This is primarily because mitigation projects have a cost-benefit analysis and, therefore, it is easy to lend money because you can get it back through interest payments. The same is difficult for adaptation projects, which would be in the form of grants. The idea to provide assistance for "loss and damage" was opposed by the US and the EU. Unfortunately, discussions on the subject were more in terms of workshops rather than a dialogue, which is considered more formal and likely to result in tangible gains. The Green Climate Fund is considered too cumbersome and the process too lengthy. Hence, the need for an alternate funding route was imperative.

The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as on date, are good enough to limit temperature rise to 2.4 degrees centigrade, provided all the targets are met. In addition, if countries also meet their net-zero commitments by 2050, the temperature rise will still be around 1.8 degrees centigrade. It is important to realise that to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees centigrade, emissions will have to be cut down by half by 2030. As of now, there is hardly any activity on the ground that gives confidence that the

world community is on track. During the Bonn conference, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) expressed the view that to be more meaningful, the aim should be to reduce emissions by 20 per cent by 2025 itself. The logic is that the next round of NDCs is due only in 2025 and by that time, it would be too late to formulate a plan that is achievable by 2030. There has been a call from some quarters that countries should revisit their NDCs by the end of 2022, to strengthen them. The only two countries to respond to this are Egypt and Australia, where the latter has enhanced its emissions reduction target to 43 per cent by 2030 compared to the 2005 level.

The use of the remaining carbon space available to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees centigrade, a highly contentious issue, was also discussed in Bonn. The US resisted being labelled as a "big emitter" and was not willing to take responsibility for its historical emissions. What the US wanted instead is that other big emitters like China and India take on greater responsibilities for cutting down emissions. However, the like-minded group of developing countries (LMDCs) — which included China, India, Saudi Arabia and the Arab countries — were opposed to this. There is no single estimate of how

much carbon space is really available as on date, but broad indications are that at the given emissions rate, it would be roughly 10 years. The raging debate is how to distribute this available space equitably amongst countries, which would mean that someone has to take the burden of

stiffer targets.

If there was any hope that discussions at Bonn would provide an acceptable draft, which could be taken forward during COP27, it was misplaced. The demand of the developing countries for a provision of climate finance at a scale much higher than \$100 billion a year fell on deaf ears. Incidentally, the figure of \$100 billion was arrived at arbitrarily and that too way back in 2009. Developing countries are of the view that the actual funding requirement for climate change issues runs into trillions of dollars and not the billions being spoken of — and not being disbursed. It can be safely concluded that the Egyptian presidency will have its hands full when they sit down for negotiations during COP27. One will have to invoke the blessings of the pharaohs to work out a miracle.

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# Why are bank runs rising in China?

**Depositors of four rural banks in Henan province have not been able to withdraw their funds since April. Sporadic protests have been going on since May.**



In a rare large protest in China, over one thousand angry bank depositors, who have been protesting for access to their frozen funds, faced off with the police in Henan province leading to a violent clampdown Sunday. Depositors of four rural banks in this central province have not been able to withdraw their funds since April. Sporadic protests have been going on since May. After Sunday's protest, China's banking regulator announced that customers – with deposits up to 50,000 yuan – will start getting their money back beginning Friday. The arrangement to repay others is yet to be announced. What led to the cash crisis at these rural banks, and what it indicates about the Chinese economy? **What are bank runs, and why is China witnessing them?**

A bank run occurs when a large number of depositors rush to simultaneously withdraw their money as they no longer consider it safe with the financial institution. Bank runs among China's small lenders have been rising over the last few years. While Henan protests are the latest to hit the headlines, at least two small lenders had witnessed a rush for withdrawals in 2019, and five lenders were hit by bank runs in 2020, according to Reuters. In most of these cases, police had to step in

to calm depositors. China has around 4,000 rural lenders, and economists blame shrinking of economic activity amid stringent Covid curbs, opaque ownership and poor corporate governance at these institutions to have exacerbated the crisis of customer trust in Chinese financial institutions. The China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission (CBIRC) has been calling for consolidating assets of small lenders to defuse risks.

**Why are depositors in Henan protesting?**

The protests began soon after four rural banks in Henan froze withdrawals on April 18. The frozen deposits add up to \$1.5 billion, according to Chinese media reports. Initially, these banks — Yuzhou Xin Min Sheng Village Bank, Shangcai Huimin County Bank, New Oriental Country Bank of Kaifeng and Zhecheng Huanghuai Community Bank – told their customers that withdrawals had been stopped due to internal maintenance. Later, it emerged that the banks were at the centre of a financial fraud probe. The customers of two other rural banks in neighbouring Anhui province were also impacted by the freeze.

**That led to the cash crisis at rural banks in Henan?**

The CBIRC has accused Henan New Fortune – a

major shareholder in these rural banks – of illegally attracting money from citizens using third-party platforms. China does not allow local banks to take deposits from customers

outside their home base. In May, the banking regulator told state-run Xinhua news agency that "Henan New Fortune Group, a shareholder of the four village banks, has illegally absorbed the public's funds through internal and external collusion, the use of third-party platforms, and fund brokers". In the present case it is being alleged that these banks attracted deposits by offering attractive terms and high interest rates. A report in the South China Morning Post in May said that while Bank of China offers 2.75% a year interest on five-year deposits, the found banks in question were giving around 4.5% a year on their deposit products through third-party platforms.

Also, a statement by the

Henan police on July 10 said that a criminal group had gradually taken control of several rural banks and was moving out funds.

**What does this crisis mean for China?**

Anger triggered by rising bank runs could become an irritant for the government. A Bloomberg report said that a spillover into the broader Chinese banking sector was an unlikely possibility as rural banks make up a small part of the industry's total assets. However, instability stemming from the financial system could turn into a spot of bother. President Xi Jinping only recently underlined the importance of maintaining economic and social stability, and making citizens feel reassured on China's road to pandemic recovery.



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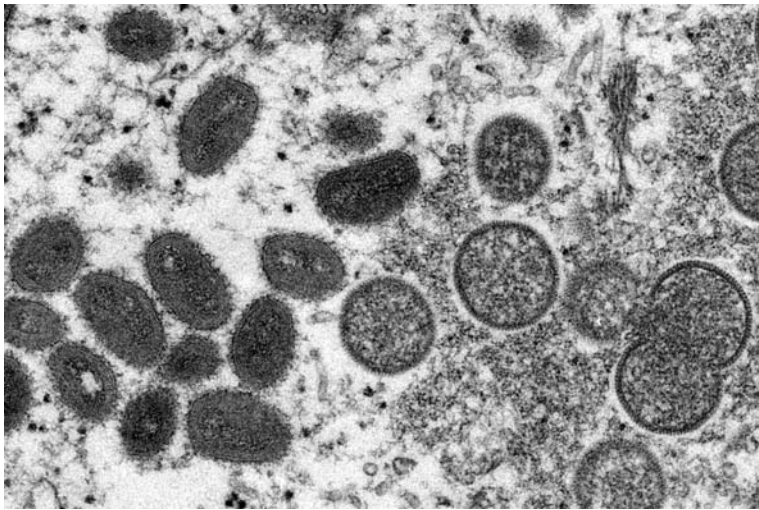
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# WHO to consider again whether monkeypox outbreak is public health emergency of international concern



(News Agency) As monkeypox cases continue to rise globally, the World Health Organization plans to reassess whether the outbreak constitutes a public health emergency of international concern. In late June, WHO's Emergency Committee determined that the outbreak did not meet the criteria for such a declaration. But as the virus continues to spread, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus wants the committee to take up the issue again, based on the latest data around the epidemiology and evolution of the outbreak. Tedros said Wednesday that he will convene the committee during the week of July 18, or sooner if needed. WHO defines a public health emergency of international concern, or PHEIC, as "an extraordinary event" that constitutes a "public health risk to other States through the

international spread of disease" and that may "potentially require a coordinated international response." "On monkeypox, I continue to be concerned by the scale and spread of the virus. Across the world, there has now been more than 6,000 cases recorded in 58 countries," Tedros said. "Testing remains a challenge, and it's highly probable that there are a significant number of cases not being picked up," he added. "Europe is the current epicenter of the outbreak, recording more than 80% of cases globally."

Monkeypox, a viral disease, occurs mostly in central and western Africa, where the virus is endemic -- but as part of the latest outbreak, the virus has spread to many regions of the world where it is not typically seen. Cases are also being reported in African countries that previously were not affected by the virus, and in those places where the virus is

endemic, record numbers are being recorded, Tedros said Wednesday. WHO teams are following the data closely, he said. WHO is working with countries and vaccine manufacturers to coordinate sharing of vaccines for monkeypox, which are scarce. The organization is also working with groups to break the stigma around the virus and spread information to help protect people. "I want to particularly commend those that are sharing videos online via social media channels, talking about their symptoms and experiences with monkeypox," he said. "This is a positive way to break down the stigma about a virus that can affect anyone." Early data on the outbreak has suggested that gay and bisexual men and other men who have sex with men make up a high number of reported cases, leading to concern about stigmatizing the disease and the LGBTQ

community. However, anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has the virus can be at risk. The monkeypox virus can spread from person to person through direct contact with infectious body fluids or with the rash, scabs and sores that the disease can cause. Spread can also happen through indirect contact, such as through clothing or bedding contaminated with the virus. It can also spread through respiratory secretions during prolonged face-to-face contact or during intimate physical contact, such as kissing, cuddling or sex.

Symptoms of monkeypox can include fever, headache, muscle aches, swollen lymph nodes, chills, exhaustion and a rash on the skin that can look like pimples or blisters. The rash goes through different stages, developing into pustules before healing.

## "Proper Nutrition And Sleep" Most Likely Will Fix Postpartum Hair Loss

**Nutritionist Anjali Mukerjee explains the major reason behind postpartum hair fall is declining hormone levels in the body**

(News Agency) Many new moms experience postpartum baby blues after childbirth, commonly including mood swings, crying spells, anxiety, and postpartum weight gain. One of the postpartum blues, which is often ignored is hair loss. Postpartum hair fall is a serious health concern for every young mother. Hair loss not only makes women conscious but can also cause stress, which further

may have prescribed," Anjali Mukerjee advises, further adding to also in-cooperate B-vitamins, and magnesium supplements. The nutritionist suggests that new moms should include adequate protein in their diet. However, they



invites an array of diseases. Though the market is flooded with enormous chemical-loaded hair care products, let us tell you experimenting with shampoos and serums will be of no use. Instead, all you have to do is keep a tab on your iron and calcium intake. Nutritionist Anjali Mukerjee, in her recent Instagram post, explains that the major reason behind postpartum hair fall is declining hormone levels in the body. "Do not forget or stop to take the iron and calcium which your gynaecologists

shouldn't put a load on ghee and carbohydrates. "Get adequate sleep and don't stress," she adds. According to the expert, if women follow these tips, they are unlikely to face postpartum hair loss. Now, look at Anjali Mukherjee's tips to fix hair fall, not specific to new mothers. Stating that there are no quick fixes to hair loss, the nutritionist urges people to take care of sleep, nutrition, as well as their stress. "You need to give yourself between 6 to 12 months of consistent correction in nutrition," Anjali says.

## Can Eating Avocados Help Lower Cholesterol Levels? What Researchers Found

(News Agency) Nearly 40 percent of Americans live with high cholesterol levels, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Trusted Source (CDC). This puts them at risk for heart disease and stroke, two leading causes of death in the U.S. New research published Trusted Source this month in the Journal of the American Heart Association looked at whether or not eating one avocado per day could impact these levels. Researchers found a small but noticeable reduction in key cholesterol levels. "While one avocado a day did not lead to clinically significant improvements in abdominal fat and other cardiometabolic risk factors, consuming one avocado a day did not result in body weight gain," study author Joan Sabate, MD, professor at Loma Linda University School of Public Health, said in a statement. Called the Habitual Diet and Avocado Trial (HAT), the study was designed to test whether consuming one large avocado per day for 6 months in a diverse group of about 1,000 people with an elevated waist

circumference would decrease belly fat compared with those who ate their habitual diet. The study received funding from the Avocado Nutrition Center, which supports research on avocado nutrition health. Researchers provided participants with written instructions describing how to ripen, cut, remove the pit of, and peel avocados and serving ideas and recipes containing avocados. No additional dietary counseling or guidance was provided. The group given a daily avocado was called the Avocado Supplemented Diet Group; the other group who continued their usual diet was called the Habitual Diet Group. Sabate and team found the group that avocado eaters experienced "modest but nominally significant" reductions in total and LDL cholesterol compared to the habitual diet group. They pointed out that fiber in avocados may contribute to lower cholesterol levels. "The between-group differences in total cholesterol and LDL-C align with the observed dietary fiber differences between groups," the authors wrote, pointing out that a single avocado can have about 3.3 g of soluble fiber.



# Boosting Immunity to Healing Infections; Check Out Some Impressive Health Benefits of White Onions

(SAI Bureau) Though all vegetables and fruits are important for one's health, there are certain kinds that have impressive health benefits. Onions are a powerhouse of vitamins, minerals, and fibre and the medicinal properties that it offers is recognised since ancient times. It helps in curing headaches, mouth sores and infections. While there are many types of onions, the most popular ones include white and red onions. White onions are extremely healthy, and usually have a more pungent flavour than yellow or red onions. Whereas, red ones have a balance of astringency and sweetness in their taste. Talking about the health benefits white onions offer, a

nutritionist Dr Rachna Agarwal told Indian Express that they have anti-inflammatory and antibiotic properties, and are highly rated in Ayurveda.

She further informed her readers that anti-inflammatory properties in white onions help in healing infections quickly. Dr Rachna further shared it balances the acidity as several food items can be highly acidic in nature which in turn can make our bodies more prone to infections. "White onions are alkaline in nature and hence, when added to

food, can balance out the acidic nature of the refined carbs," she said. Moving



on, the health expert stated that white onions can help in curing respiratory diseases. A mixture of white onion juice along with honey can act as a good cough syrup and can be stored in the

refrigerator for up to five hours. "This syrup is applied to one's chest and covered with a cotton cloth to heal respiratory diseases," she told adding that it is also good for hair growth if applied on one's scalp. Earlier, famous chef Sanjeev Kapoor listed several benefits of white onions in one of his social media uploads. In his Wellness Wednesday post, Sanjeev had written "Lo batao, kya aap jaante the pyaaz, our everyday kitchen essential can also help against sunstroke and sunburn?" and had added benefits of white onions like- "cools the body, excellent source of fibre, boosts immunity, promotes heart health, has anti-bacterial properties, rich in antioxidants."

## Nutritionist Suggests 3 Eating Habits To Look Lean



**Nutritionist Pooja Makhija explains the size of meal intake should be a "big breakfast, small lunch, smallest dinner."**

(SAI Bureau) There is no what if you don't want to hit shortage of fitness advice the gym rigorously? Though and health tips today. While physical exercise plays an we all know that getting a equally important role in lean physique takes months making you look a certain of training and dedication, way, a check on the diet can

simply aid the process. In order to look leaner and fitter body, according to nutritionist Pooja Makhija, you have to follow three eating habits. The expert says that the size of the meals "should wean from sunrise to sunset", meaning "big breakfast, small lunch, and smallest dinner." If you are looking for a reason behind it, let us tell you that the body's metabolic rate also goes the same way. Second, the nutritionist

advises to never drink liquids after meals. According to Pooja, one should either consume a drink before the meal or 45 minutes after eating their meal. What is the impact of drinking liquids right after a meal you ask? The expert explains that drinking liquids immediately dilutes the digestive enzymes as well as the juices. It not only delays digestion but also causes nutrition loss. The third eating habit is to be mindful of the order in which we put food into

our mouths from the plate. She suggests making carbs wear some clothes. "Start with raw veggies then the cooked, your proteins and fats, lastly the carbs with a little bit of dal or protein and your veggies," Pooja says. Being mindful of the order will cut down the sugar spikes, as well as the fat storage in the body. With these three eating habits, you are not only able to eat everything, but you are also intelligently nurturing the body without any fat storage.

## New Covid Sub-Variant BA 2.75 Detected In India, Says WHO

**COVID-19 Variants: "In Europe and America, BA.4 and BA.5 are driving waves. In countries like India a new sub-lineage of BA.2.75 has also been detected, which we're following," he said**

(SAI Bureau) A new sub-lineage BA.2.75 of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus has been detected in countries like India and the World Health Organisation is following this, Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

"On COVID-19, globally reported cases have increased nearly 30 per cent over the past two weeks. Four out of six of the WHO sub-regions saw cases increase in the last week," Mr Ghebreyesus said at a press briefing on Wednesday.

"In Europe and America, BA.4 and BA.5 are driving waves. In countries like India a new sub-lineage of BA.2.75 has also been detected, which we're following," he said.

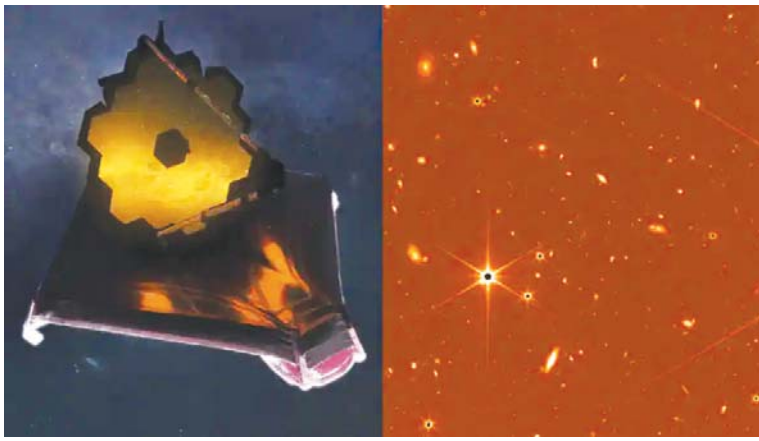
On the emergence of the potential Omicron sub-variant BA.2.75, WHO Chief Scientist Soumya Swaminathan said in a video posted on Twitter that there has been an emergence of a sub-variant that is being called the BA.2.75 "first reported from India and then from about 10 other countries." She said there are still limited sequences available of the sub-variant to analyse, "but this sub-variant seems to have a few mutations on the receptor-binding domain of the spike protein. So obviously, that's a key part of the virus that attaches itself to the human receptor. So we have to watch that. It's still too early to know if this sub-variant has properties of additional immune evasion or indeed

of being more clinically severe. We don't know that." So we have to wait and see," she said, adding that WHO is tracking it and the WHO Technical Advisory Group on SARS-CoV-2 Virus Evolution (TAG-VE) is constantly looking at the data from around the world. "And at any time if there is an emergence of a virus that looks very different from a previous one, enough to be called a separate variant of concern, then the committee will do that." The WHO weekly epidemiological update on COVID-19, released July 6, said that globally, the number of new weekly cases increased for the fourth consecutive week after a declining trend since the last peak in March 2022. During the

week of June 27 to July 3, over 4.6 million cases were reported, a figure similar to that of the previous week. The number of new weekly deaths declined by 12% as compared to the previous week, with over 8100 fatalities reported. As of July 3, 2022, over 546 million confirmed COVID19 cases and over 6.3 million deaths had been reported globally. The COVID update said that among Omicron lineages, the proportions of BA.5 and BA.4 continue to increase. BA.5 has been detected in 83 countries. Although BA.4, which has been detected in 73 countries, is also rising globally, the rate of increase is not as high as that of BA.5.



# On this day, NASA will reveal 'secret' images taken by the most powerful telescope ever launched into space



(News Agency) NASA is gearing up to unveil the first cosmic images from the most powerful telescope ever launched into space: the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). The space agency announced on Friday that the telescope's initial cosmic photographs will offer previously unattainable perspectives of far-off galaxies, brilliant nebulae, and a massive gas planet. A big reveal of the early observations by the \$10

billion observatory which replaced the Hubble telescope, will be done in just a few days on July 12. The US, European, and Canadian space agencies are preparing to reveal the telescope's fresh insights into the universe's beginnings. In an interview with AFP last week, Klaus Pontoppidan, an astronomer at the STSI Space Telescope Science Institute (STSI), which is in charge of Webb, said: "I'm looking very much forward to not having to keep these secrets anymore. That will be a great relief." The Carina Nebula, a massive cloud of gas and dust located 7,600 light-years away, as well as the

Southern Ring Nebula, which encircles a fading star 2,000 light-years away, were selected as part of the first batch of full-colour scientific photos by an international committee. Webb has also performed spectroscopy, which is the precise examination of light, on the distant gas giant WASP-96 b, which was found in 2014 and is located almost 1,150 light-years from Earth. Then comes Stephan's Quintet, a small galaxy 290 million light-years away. And possibly the most fascinating of all...using a process, called "gravitational lensing," Webb has assembled an image of

incredibly far away and faint galaxies. For this, it used foreground galaxy clusters named SMACS 0723 as a type of cosmic magnifying glass for galaxies behind it. To entice us all the space agencies have even dropped a small teaser: Dan Coe, an astronomer at STSI, told AFP on Friday that the telescope has made scientific breakthroughs even in its maiden photographs. "When I first saw the images... of this deep field of this galaxy cluster lensing, I looked at the images, and I suddenly learned three things about the universe that I didn't know before," he said. "It's totally blown my mind."

## Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon hits record, area 2.5 times the size of Delhi destroyed

**Deforestation is creeping deeper into the forest. In the first six months of the year, Amazonas state in the heart of the rainforest recorded more destruction than any other state for the first time**

(News Agency) Deforestation in Brazil's Amazon rainforest reached a record high for the first six months of the year, as an area five times the size of New York City was destroyed, preliminary government data showed on Friday. From January to June, 3,988 square km (1,540 square miles) were cleared in the region, according to national space research agency Inpe. That's an increase of 10.6% from the same months last year and the highest level for that period since the agency began compiling its current DETER-B data series in mid-2015. Destruction rose 5.5% in June to 1,120 square km, also a record for that month of the year. The Amazon, the world's largest rainforest, contains vast amounts of carbon, which is released as trees are destroyed, warming the atmosphere and driving climate change. Deforestation is creeping deeper into the forest. In the first six months of the year, Amazonas state in the heart of the rainforest recorded more destruction than any other state for the first time. A Reuters witness on Friday saw several recently deforested areas near the roadway west of Amazonas state capital Manaus, where lush jungle had been turned into expanses strewn with fallen, dried trees. This year's rising deforestation is also feeding

unusually high levels of fire, which are likely to worsen in the months ahead, said Manoela Machado, a wildfire and deforestation researcher at Woodwell Climate Research Center and University of Oxford. Brazil recorded the highest number of fires in the Amazon for the month of June in 15 years, although those blazes are a small fraction of what is usually seen when fires peak in August and September, according to Inpe data. Generally, after loggers extract valuable wood, ranchers and land grabbers set fires to clear the land for agriculture. "If we have high deforestation numbers, it's inevitable that we're going to have high fire numbers as well," Machado said. "This is extremely bad news." Experts in Brazil blame right-wing President Jair Bolsonaro for rolling back environmental protections and emboldening loggers, ranchers and land speculators who clear public land for profit. Bolsonaro's office directed request for comment to the Environment Ministry, which said the government has been "extremely forceful" in fighting environmental crimes.

The ministry said that considering the 12 months through June, Inpe's data showed deforestation declined 3.8% from

the same period a year earlier. Environmentalists are banking on leftist former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who presided over a steep decline in deforestation during his presidency from 2003 to 2010, winning in October's election for a turnaround in Brazil's

environmental policy. A poll released this week showed Bolsonaro losing to Lula by 19 percentage points in an expected run-off. read more Regardless, this year is likely to have high levels of deforestation and fires as loggers and land grabbers seek

to capitalize on the weak enforcement ahead of a potential change in government, experts say. "It's very difficult to be optimistic for the next few months in the Amazon," said Romulo Batista, a forest campaigner for Greenpeace Brasil.

## Great White Shark is king of the deep, but it is scared of this predator

(News Agency) Great White Shark is the mean killing machine of the deep oceans. It is not often that you see in nature, a creature whose every fibre has evolved over millions of years for one purpose, to hunt. The great white has a nose that can detect a drop of blood in gallons of seawater, it has a superb submarine-like body that lets it swim vast distances efficiently. And finally, it has its feared jaws, immortalised by many



movies as it was shown to (rather unfairly) chase and enjoy eating humans. But the formidable lurker of the deep has been found to rather quickly run away from another predator. Can apex predator like the great white be actually scared of anything? It appears so. Dyer Island in South Africa is considered to be Great White Shark capital of the world. Since 2017, researchers have recorded eight Great White Shark carcasses washed ashore. The number of great white sharks

has dropped and they seem to be avoiding the waters in this area. Initially, it was thought that overfishing and other human activities were driving the sharks away. But a research team led by marine biologist Alison Towner of the Dyer Island Conservation Trust found something else. The wounds on these shark carcasses were distinctive. And almost all of them were missing liver or heart. Using

tracking data and information from local fisherfolk, the researchers zeroed in on what it was that was scaring Great White Sharks away. It was a pair of Orca or Killer Whales. This pair was hunting the apex predator of the ocean and munching on the nutritious livers of their captured prey. The duo was so efficient in their hunting that remaining great whites scurried away, not to be seen for months an end. The team's findings have been published in African Journal of Marine Science.



# Is there life on Venus? Here's what Cambridge University researchers say

(News Agency) Search for extraterrestrial life is a fascinating endeavour. While popular image of aliens has them having tentacles and big eyes etc, even microbes on another planet can be called aliens. While our search for aliens has us focussing our lenses towards distant reaches of space, we are keen on finding proof in our Solar System as well. Mars and Venus, our neighbours are among prime candidates in this regard. But now, Cambridge University researchers have said that unusual behaviour of Sulphur in the atmosphere of Venus can't be explained by 'aerial' form of extra-terrestrial life. There has been a speculation for decades that Venus harbours microbial life among its Sulphurous clouds. Any life form in sufficient abundance is expected to leave

chemical fingerprints on a planet's atmosphere as it consumes food and expels waste. However, the Cambridge researchers found no evidence of these fingerprints on Venus. Even if Venus is devoid of life, the researchers say their results, reported in the journal *Nature Communications*, could be useful for studying the atmospheres of similar planets throughout the galaxy, and the eventual detection of life outside our Solar System. "We've spent the past two years trying to explain the weird sulphur chemistry we see in the clouds of Venus," said co-author



Dr Paul Rimmer from Cambridge's Department of Earth Sciences. "Life is pretty good at weird chemistry, so we've been studying whether there's a way to make life a potential explanation for what we see." To arrive at their conclusion, researchers used atmospheric and biochemical models to study chemical reactions that are expected to occur on Venus. "We looked at the sulphur-based 'food' available in the Venusian atmosphere — it's not anything you or I would want to eat, but it is the main available energy source," said Sean Jordan from

Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy, the paper's first author. "If that food is being consumed by life, we should see evidence of that through specific chemicals being lost and gained in the atmosphere." "If life is present, it must be affecting the atmospheric chemistry," said co-author Dr Oliver Shorttle from Cambridge's Department of Earth Sciences and Institute of Astronomy. "Could life be the reason that SO<sub>2</sub> levels on Venus get reduced so much?" "We wanted life to be a potential explanation, but when we ran the models, it isn't a viable solution. But if life isn't responsible for what we see on Venus, it's still a problem to be solved — there's lots of strange chemistry to follow up on," said Sean Jordan

# Researchers detect microplastics in meat, milk and blood of farm animals



reported microplastics in human blood for the first time. They followed the same process to conduct the study on animal products. The report mentioned that the discovery of the particles in blood shows "they can travel around the body and may lodge in organs". The researchers have to analyse whether or not the particles impact human or farm animal health.

As quoted by the report, Dr Heather Leslie at VUA said: "When you're measuring blood, you're finding out the absorbed dose from all the different exposure

routes: air, water, food, et cetera. So it's very interesting because it immediately tells you what's penetrating into the river of life."

## Microplastics in oceans, air and human body

Recently, the news agency AFP reported that from ocean depths to mountain peaks, humans have littered the planet with tiny shards of plastic. The report claimed that We have even absorbed these microplastics into our bodies - with uncertain implications. Images of plastic pollution have become familiar: a turtle suffocated by a shopping bag, water bottles

washed up on beaches, or the monstrous "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" of floating detritus. Millions of tonnes of plastic produced every year, largely from fossil fuels, make their way into the environment and degrade into smaller and smaller pieces. Jean-Francois Ghiglione, a researcher at the Laboratory of Microbial Oceanography in France said, "We did not imagine 10 years ago that there could be so many small microplastics, invisible to the naked eye, and that they were everywhere around us. And we could not yet envisage finding them in the human body".

(News Agency) In the Netherlands, scientists at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VUA) have found microplastic particles in beef and pork for the first time. They also found particles in the blood of cows and pigs on farms, UK-based media outlet, The Guardian, reporting referring to a study. The contamination has been detected in three-quarters of meat

and milk products tested and every blood sample in their pilot study. During the study, the particles were also found in every sample of animal pellet feed tested. It indicates the potential route of the alarming contamination. Another possible route can be the packaging as the food products were wrapped in plastic.

In March, VUA researchers

## A galactic gem: Hubble Space Telescope captures an unusual multi-armed galaxy merger

(News Agency) The Hubble Space Telescope has captured a stunning galaxy CGCG 396-2. NASA shared details about the unusual multi-armed galaxy merger. The official website of the American space agency said that the galaxy captured by Hubble is located at a distance of 520 million light-years from Earth in the direction of the constellation Orion. NASA revealed that the observation is a gem from the Galaxy Zoo project, which is a

citizen science project. In this unique project, hundreds of thousands of volunteers classified galaxies to help scientists solve a problem of astronomical proportions. A way to sort through the vast amounts of data generated by robotic telescopes. It is understood that the most astronomically intriguing objects from the Galaxy Zoo were selected for follow-up for the observations with Hubble after a public vote.

## Meraxes gigas: Scientists discover new giant dinosaur predator with tiny arms

(News Agency) Scientists in Argentina have discovered a new giant carnivorous dinosaur species that had a massive head and tiny arms.

The dinosaur, which resembles Tyrannosaurus rex, has been named *Meraxes gigas* after a fictional dragon in the Game of Thrones book series. Starting with the skull, paleontologists dug up its remains over the course of four years during field expeditions in the northern



Patagonia region of Argentina. Peter Makovicky from the University of Minnesota, who is the study's senior author, told the news agency AFP that "We won the lottery and found it literally on the first morning." Small forelimbs gave apex predators of the time certain survival advantages

according to the findings of the study which have been published in the journal *Current Biology*. While the entire dinosaur weighed four metric

tonnes and was 36 feet long, its skull is just over four feet long (127 centimeters). Makovicky said its arms were two feet long, "so it's literally half the length of the skull and the animal would not have been able to reach its mouth." Although *Meraxes gigas* resembles T-rex it, the latter did not have tiny arms from the former as the two species were far apart on the evolutionary tree. Taking on the function that forelimbs would have had in smaller species, Makovicky believes that as their heads grew larger, it became the dominant tool of their predatory arsenal.



# IndiGo hikes pilots, crew salary by 8% days after suspected mass sick leave delayed 900 flights

**Overall, IndiGo's pilots and crew members' salaries will go up by 16 per cent in just four months**

(SAI Bureau) IndiGo has hiked the salaries of pilots and crew by eight per cent. The new salary will be effective from August 1. This comes after more than 900 IndiGo flights were delayed on Saturday as a significant number of cabin crew members took sick leave. The delays happened on the same day when Air India conducted a recruitment drive.

Earlier in April this year, IndiGo had given an eight per cent hike. Overall, the airline's pilots and crew members' salaries will go up by 16 per cent in just four months. However, there has been a disappointment among pilots and crew that IndiGo had cut salaries during covid pandemic and had not reinstated them even as travel norms were relaxed. Last



week's mass sick leave of pilots and crew was likely the reason for disruption of flight schedule. "More than half of IndiGo flights were delayed on Saturday after a large number of inflight crew were reported sick. As a result, around 55 per cent of the total flights operated by the country's

largest airline were impacted on July 2," data from the Ministry of Civil Aviation revealed. The delays happened after a large number of IndiGo crew members played truant to appear for job interviews being conducted by Air India for similar roles across different centres, sources claimed to Business Today. More than 900 IndiGo flights were delayed as the day ended. The low-cost carrier (LCC) operates 1600 flights daily. Flight operations at the airline returned to normal on Sunday.

## What is Sri Lanka doing to fix economic mess? Top points

**Inflation, though, touched a record 54.6 per cent year-on-year in June while food inflation accelerated to 80.1 per cent**

(SAI Bureau) Sri Lanka's central bank raised key interest rates to the highest in two decades on Thursday to bring down record inflation, despite the country wilting under a devastating economic crisis. With foreign exchange reserves at a record low, the island nation is struggling to pay for essentials like food, medicine and fuel. Growth has been stifled - the economy contracted an annual 1.6 percent in the January to March period and is expected to have shrunk more in the second quarter. **INFLATION** Inflation, though, touched a record 54.6 per cent year-on-year in June while food inflation accelerated to 80.1 per cent, prompting the central bank to raise rates to address the rise in prices as a priority.

### CENTRAL BANK'S MAJOR STEP

The bank increased the standing lending facility rate by 100 basis points to 15.50 per cent while the standing deposit facility rate was similarly raised to 14.50 per cent, the highest since August, 2001. "The Board was of the view that a further monetary policy tightening would be necessary to contain any build-up of

adverse inflation expectations," the central bank said in a statement. There has been significant progress made in negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a credit facility while negotiations are on with bilateral and multilateral partners to secure bridge financing and ease the shortfall in reserves, the central bank said. There has been a change in stance from the central bank, perhaps following discussions with the IMF," said Dimantha Mathew, Head of Research at First Capital. "I don't think they are concerned about growth at all and have shifted focus to easing currency pressure and money printing to stabilise the economy," he added.

### SRI LANKA'S GROWTH

The central bank estimates a contraction in growth of 4 per cent to 5 per cent this year, with inflation to hit 60 per cent by year-end, Prime Minister Ranil



Wickremesinghe told parliament on Tuesday, though the government targets a smaller contraction of 1 per cent in growth next year. The central bank also said ensuring external sector stability and overall macroeconomic stability would require commitment from all stakeholders in the economy and it called for coherent and consistent action, including from the government.

"Faster implementation of the expected fiscal reforms aimed at strengthening government revenue and expenditure rationalisation is needed," it said, adding that improvements in the financial position of state-owned enterprises were also key. It said these measures would over time would lead to a decline in government financing needs and help scale down monetary financing at a faster pace.

### INTERIM BUDGET

Sri Lanka is scheduled to present an interim budget to parliament in August, which will include new revenue measures and cut expenditure, Wickremesinghe told parliament last month.

The IMF indicated the need for stronger fiscal measures to put public finances back on track and boost debt sustainability following a ten-day visit to the country late last month.

### ROLE OF INDIA, CHINA

Sri Lanka is pushing for a possible \$3 billion extended financing programme from the IMF which would help it unlock other bridge financing options to pay for essential imports.

## SpiceJet shares bounce back after hitting record low

**SpiceJet shares, which tanked 7 per cent to hit its 52-week low of Rs 35 during the day on the BSE, later recovered all the lost ground and climbed 2.12 per cent to settle at Rs 38.45 apiece**

(SAI Bureau) Shares of SpiceJet bounced back on Wednesday, rising more than 2 per cent amid value-buying at lower levels in tandem with a positive trend in the equity market. Since Monday, the scrip has been on a downward trend amid multiple instances of its planes suffering technical glitches in recent weeks. The scrip, which tanked 7 per cent to hit its 52-week low of Rs 35 during the day on the BSE, later

recovered all the lost ground and climbed 2.12 per cent to settle at Rs 38.45 apiece. It jumped 6.24 per cent to Rs 40 during the trade on Wednesday after opening at Rs 37.10 apiece. The broader market was in the positive territory and the benchmark Sensex jumped 616.62 points or 1.16 per cent to settle at 53,750.97. On Tuesday, the company's stock fell by 2.33 per cent to close at Rs 37.65 on a day when its Dubai-bound

plane was diverted to Karachi due to malfunctioning of the fuel indicator. SpiceJet has failed to "establish safe, efficient and reliable air services" under the terms of Rule 134 and Schedule XI of the Aircraft Rules, 1937, the notice issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) stated. On Tuesday, a SpiceJet freighter aircraft, which was heading to Chongqing in China, returned to Kolkata



as the pilots realised after the take-off that its weather radar was not working.



# Adani enters 5G spectrum race, says won't be in consumer mobility space

**The Adani Group confirmed its participation in the upcoming 5G spectrum auctions but clarified that it is not aiming to launch services in consumer mobility**



(News Agency) Billionaire Gautam Adani's group on Saturday confirmed its entry into the race to acquire telecom spectrum, which it said will be used to create a private network to support its businesses from airports to power as well as data centres. "As India prepares to roll out the next generation of 5G services through this auction, we are one of the

many applications participating in the open bidding process," the group said in a statement. PTI on Friday reported Adani group making a surprise entry which will pitch it directly against Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Jio and telecom czar Sunil Bharti Mittal's Airtel. "We are participating in the 5G spectrum auction to provide private network solutions along

with enhanced cyber security in the airport, ports and logistics, power generation, transmission, distribution, and various manufacturing operations," the statement said. Adani Group plans to use the airwaves for its data centre as well as the super app it is building to support businesses from electricity distribution to airports, gas retailing to ports.

"As we build our own digital platform encompassing super apps, edge data centres, and industry command and control centres, we will need ultra high quality data streaming capabilities through a high frequency and low latency 5G network across all our businesses," it said. Applications for participating in the July 26 auction of airwaves, including those capable of providing fifth-generation or 5G telecom services such as ultra-high-speed internet connectivity, closed on Friday with at least four applications. Jio, Airtel and Vodafone Idea — the three private players in the telecom sector — applied. The fourth applicant is Adani Group, which had recently obtained

National Long Distance (NLD) and International Long Distance (ILD) licences. "If we are awarded 5G spectrum in the open bidding, it will also align with our recent announcement of significantly increasing the Adani Foundation's investments in education, healthcare and skill development in rural areas, each of which stands to benefit from 5G technology,"

Adani group said. "All of this is aligned with our nation building philosophy and supporting Atmanirbhar Bharat." As per the auction timelines, ownership details of applicants are to be published on July 12 and the bidders should be known then. A total of 72,097.85 MHz of spectrum worth at least Rs 4.3 lakh crore will be put on the block during the auction, set to commence on July 26, 2022. The auction will be held for spectrum in various low (600 MHz, 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz), mid (3300 MHz) and high (26 GHz) frequency bands. Ambani and

went on to build mega business groups, had till recently not had a direct face-off. While the former expanded from the oil and petrochemicals business into telecom and retail, the latter diversified from the ports segment to coal, energy distribution and aviation.

But increasingly, their interests are overlapping, setting what some say is the stage for a clash. Adani has in recent months set up a subsidiary for a foray into petrochemicals — a business that Ambani's father Dhirubhai began with before its downstream and upstream operations. Ambani too has announced multi-billion-dollar plans for new energy business, including Giga factories for solar panels, batteries, green hydrogen and fuel cells. Adani, who had previously announced plans to be the world's largest renewable energy producer by 2030, too has unveiled hydrogen ambitions. And now, if the Adani group participates in the 5G auction on July 26, it will be the first direct competition with Ambani.

## TCS share price hits three-week low

On the BSE, TCS share price was down by 4.44 per cent. On the NSE, TCS shares fell 4.40 per cent



(News Agency) Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) share price on Monday dropped more than four per cent to hit a three-week low. The shares dropped after the IT major missed estimates for quarterly profit on rising employee-related expenses, according to a Reuters report. On the BSE, TCS share price was down by 4.44 per cent or 144.90 points to Rs 3119.95. On the NSE, TCS share price fell 4.40 per cent or 143.65 points to Rs 3,121.80. Analysts flagged signs of a slowdown in demand after the IT services exporter on Friday said first-quarter profit came in at 94.78 billion rupees (\$1.19

billion), well below estimates of 98.51 billion rupees, according to Refinitiv data. "Although management expects tech spends to be resilient, we see clear signs of moderation in demand," ICICI Securities said in a note, citing slowing hiring, muted deal growth and weak momentum in Europe, Reuters reported. Operating margin for the quarter fell to 23.1 per cent from 25.5 per cent a year earlier, the Reuters report said. TCS shares, which are down 12.7 per cent up to Friday's close this year, are also set for their biggest intraday percentage fall in four weeks, as per the Reuters report.

## Cooking oil prices to go down by Rs 15? All you need to know

**The government directed trade bodies to quickly pass on the reduction in global prices of edible oil to end-consumers**



(News Agency) The centre has asked trade bodies to reduce edible oil prices by Rs 15 per litre immediately because prices in the world market have fallen sharply, the government said in a statement, as per a Reuters report. The government directed trade bodies to quickly pass on the reduction

in global prices to end-consumers, the Reuters report said. India buys palm oil mainly from Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, while soyoil is mainly sourced from Argentina, Brazil and the United States. India imports sunflower oil from Ukraine and Russia. Last week, the food ministry called a meeting of

cooking oil industry bodies and manufacturers to deliberate on reduction in the retail prices of cooking oils as there has been a fall in global prices. Solvent Extractors' Association of India's (SEA) Executive Director B V Mehta said the global prices have fallen by \$300-\$450 per tonnes of different edible oils in the last one month, but it takes time to reflect in the retail markets. He said retail prices were expected to come down in the coming days, according to a PTI report. Meanwhile, India's palm oil imports in July are set to jump to the highest in 10 months because of a hefty correction in prices and as Indonesia allows more exports of the tropical oil, four dealers told Reuters.



## Aakarshika Goyal: I am very satisfied working in the regional industry

After eight years in the industry, Prayagraj-girl Aakarshika Goyal is now more comfortable working in the regional industry



(SAI Bureau) After eight years in the industry, Prayagraj-girl Aakarshika Goyal is now more comfortable working in the regional industry. She has done two Kannada films, is working on her next flick and has featured in 40 Punjabi albums and several TV shows too. "I have done several daily soaps and reality shows but the satisfaction that I got working in the industry down south and in Punjab has been great. In terms of professionalism, remuneration and work-satisfaction, I am very content working in the regional industry," the actor says.

The Ajab Gajab Ghar Jamai actor adds, "I am keen on doing more work in south (industry) as compared to Hindi. I have done TV here and experienced that largely if you have good contact, then thing work smoothly for you. Also, I have faced remuneration issues. In the regional industry, all they want is work as per their satisfaction but payments, working hours, terms and conditions are much sorted out there. Now, good thing is that the regional films are getting good pan-India viewership," she says. Aakarshika is not in a hurry to do Hindi projects. "For the time being I am not keen on TV. I am getting offers for Hindi web-series but they are in the 'bold and exposing' zone. I am not comfortable if the idea is just to make adult content and not be guided by the demand of the story. So, I want to keep doing regional projects and focus only on good Hindi projects. It has become a new short-cut now and we have multiple examples," she says. Her pre-lockdown debut Kannada film My Name is Raja (2020), will now be released as Na Peru Raja in Tamil and in Telugu and Malayalam too.

## Exclusive! 'It didn't work out for me,' says Kajol on letting Aarya go; talks about her 30-years in Bollywood

The actor completes three decades in the Hindi film industry this July and is inevitably overwhelmed. Kajol in an exclusive conversation with us, talks about her 30 years in Bollywood, getting an invitation to be a part of the Oscar's committee and also making her debut on OTT

(SAI Bureau) It was 30 years ago, when the then 17-year-old Kajol, who was still in school, was all set for her debut film Bekhudi. The actor completes three decades in the Hindi film industry this July and is inevitably overwhelmed. "That's a shocker," she admits when asked about her 30-year-long journey. She adds, "I didn't even realise that I'm completing 30 years. Pata bhi chala aur 30 saal guzaar gaye. I'm overwhelmed with it. It feels like I started yesterday. Then I look at my kids and I'm like bacche bhi bade ho gaye toh time toh paas hua hoga zarur. I feel grateful that there have been so many people who have given me such wonderful scripts and characters - from Abbas -Mustan to Karan (Johar, director) Adi (Aditya Chopra, filmmaker) to my husband (Ajay Devgn) who was not my husband at that time." With a decade, the actor is also going to dabble into a new space - streaming platforms. Kajol will be seen in

a digital series and while she confirms with a "I'm coming on OTT", she can't really speak much about it. Talking about the digital space, she elaborates, "OTT gives you a platform to be a little freer. I think jab aap picture karte ho screen ke liye toh itni saari pabandiyen hoti hain, itni saari cheezein hoti hain jo aap nahi kar sakte screen pe. Writing mein change karna padta hain. You cannot do this, say this and such. That in itself has a lot of restrictions on it. And then you worry about morcha lagega, political pressure, kuch aur hoga." Having said that, Kajol nonchalantly confesses that she doesn't fear much, however, "the writers and producers worry about it." She adds, "More than me, unko darne ki zaroorat hai, unke paise lage huye hain." Interestingly not many are aware that her OTT debut could have happened years ago as filmmaker Ram Madhavani had Kajol in his mind when he was remaking the Dutch thriller Penozo.



## Sushmita Sen says 'you're the love of my life' in video from Maldives. Is it for BF Lalit Modi?

In a throwback video from the Maldives, Sushmita Sen says 'you are the love of my life.' We have reasons to believe that she said this to her boyfriend Lalit Modi

(SAI Bureau) Fans were in for a surprise on July 14 when Lalit Modi announced that he is dating Sushmita Sen. He also shared a slew of intimate pictures with the actress from their vacation together, as well as some throwback photos. He also announced that he is happy about the new beginning with his 'better looking partner' Sushmita, and that they plan to get married soon. Amid this, we chanced upon an old video of Sushmita from her Maldives trip where she says, "You are the love of my life."

We have many reasons to believe that this was directed towards her boyfriend, Lalit Modi.

### SUSHMITA SEN, LALIT MODI TOOK MALDIVES TRIP TOGETHER?

Three weeks ago, on June 22, Sushmita Sen had shared a video of herself from her Maldives hotel. The video started with a glimpse of her luxurious hotel room with an attached pool which faced the Maldivian sea. The video then pans towards Sushmita

chilling in the sea, wearing a skimpy bikini. She has her back faced towards the camera. The actress captioned the video, "I want YOU to know you're the



media and wrote, "Just landed in beautiful paradise in #maldives for 4 beautiful nights for a short get away after a hectic wedding schedule of my daughter to complete seclusion and sunshine just loved this #aircraft @dassaultfalcon 7X. Flew first time on it. Excellent must say (sic)."

### NEW BEGINNINGS WITH LALIT MODI

"Just back in London after a whirling global tour #maldives #sardinia with the families - not to mention my #better looking

partner @sushmitasen47 - a new beginning a new life finally. Over the moon (sic)," Lalit Modi tweeted while announcing his relationship with Sushmita Sen. However, the ex-IPL boss soon clarified that the two are 'just dating'. "Just for clarity. Not married - just dating each other. That too it will happen one day (sic)," he said. Lalit Modi left India in 2010 when an investigation regarding tax evasion and money-laundering began.



# Sara Ali Khan says she's same girl who visits temples, wears bikinis at the beach

**Sara Ali Khan has talked about how she is surprising herself. The actor said that the version of her who visits a temple and one that wears a bikini on holidays are the same**

(News Agency) Actor Sara Ali Khan has spoken about how she is 'constantly evolving' and 'surprising herself' in life. In a new interview, Sara said that she is the same person who visits a temple and also wears bikinis. She also revealed that she 'hates living away from' her mother-actor Amrita Singh for over a month while shooting. The actor also recalled her summer vacations with her parents--mother Amrita and father Saif Ali Khan, when they would 'watch The Broadway' Sara also said how she discussed books with Saif. While he recommended her Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, she had also 'read a lot of classics' from Homer's The Odyssey to Dante's

Inferno when studying at Columbia University. Sara also revealed that when she told Saif about the books, he was intrigued and started reading them. In an interview with Elle India, Sara said, "Sara Ali Khan is constantly evolving. The girl going to a temple is the same girl wearing bikinis at the beach is the same girl who hates living away from her mother for 45 days while shooting. She will keep surprising you, because she is still surprising herself." She also recalled the time she spent with her parents, "Every summer, I used to go with my parents to watch The Broadway and the London Theatre versions of The Lion King. Some might consider me crazy for watching the

same play over and over again, but I might go again this week. Growing up, I realised that my father was extremely interested in history. We visited Rome and Florence together and went to every museum in the city. We are both always curious and that's really all it takes—you should want to know." Sara will be next seen in producer Dinesh Vijan and director Laxman Utekar's next yet-to-be-titled film alongside Vicky Kaushal. Apart from that she also has Pawan Kriplani's Gaslight with Vikrant Massey and Chitrangada Singh. Sara was last seen in the film Atrangi Re opposite Akshay Kumar and Dhanush.



## Kareena Kapoor shares pic from India vs England ODI as Taimur Ali Khan watches his first cricket match



**Kareena Kapoor's elder son Taimur Ali Khan watched his first-ever cricket match in London. She shared his photo from India vs England game at The Oval**

(News Agency) Actor Kareena Kapoor on Tuesday gave a glimpse of her elder son Taimur Ali Khan as the family went to watch the India vs England ODI cricket match in London. Taking to her Instagram Stories, Kareena posted a photo as Taimur Ali Khan posed for the camera at The Oval. In the photo, Taimur

wore a checked white and red shirt and paired it with blue denims and sneakers. Taimur stood behind a chair as a person sat next to him. The field with players was seen in the background. Sharing the photo, Kareena wrote, "My first match (red heart emoji) India vs England (red heart emoji)." The game was part of

the Indian cricket team's ongoing tour of England. India defeated England by 10 wickets in the game on Tuesday.

In another photo, Taimur sat next to his father-actor Saif Ali Khan. The actor wore a pink shirt, brown blazer, denims and dark sunglasses. While Saif smiled looking towards

the field, Taimur made a face. Sharing the photo, Kareena wrote, "What are you doing Tim? (laughing and red heart emojis)."

The Test series between India and England, when contested in England, is called the Pataudi Trophy. It is named after Taimur's great-grandfather and Saif's grandfather Nawab of Pataudi Iftikhar Ali Khan, who played for both England and India.

The Pataudi Trophy recently concluded with the fifth and final Test played at Edgbaston earlier this month. Kareena and Saif have been in the UK for almost a month now. They have been travelling across the country and also spending time with family and friends. Recently, their close friend Alexandra Galligan shared

pictures of the couple. Alexandra also shared a selfie of Kareena with her younger son Jehangir Ali Khan. She captioned the photo, "Sunday vibes ... chilling whilst chef Ali Khan is hard at work in the kitchen!" Over the weekend, Kareena was in Winchester with Saif, Taimur and Jehangir also called Jeh. Kareena shared a photo of Saif, Taimur and his godfather on Instagram. Kareena will next be seen in Laal Singh Chadha opposite Aamir Khan. The film is slated to release on August 11. She also recently wrapped up shooting her OTT debut project helmed by Sujoy Ghosh. The film is based on the Japanese novel The Devotion of Suspect X, which also stars Jaideep Ahlawat and Vijay Varma in the lead roles.



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