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High-level talks between UN chief, Turkey's Erdogan and Ukraine's Zelenskyy yield little progress



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Donald Trump loyalist pleads guilty to tax fraud: What this means for the former US president

Allen Weisselberg, the Trump Organization's long-time chief financial officer, failed to pay taxes on more than \$1.7 million worth of compensation. He has pleaded guilty to fraud and tax evasion charges at a New York court

(SAI Bureau) New York: The numbers guy did the math: Allen Weisselberg - a long-time loyal lieutenant to Donald Trump - could have gotten years in prison if he went to trial and failed to beat tax evasion allegations. But if he agreed to testify in an upcoming trial of the former president's company, he would probably serve no more than 100 days.

Weisselberg, 75, took the deal Thursday, pleading guilty to 15 counts, including tax fraud and larceny.

Now he's potentially going to be the star witness against the Trump Organization in a trial over what prosecutors say was a "sweeping and audacious" scheme by the company



to help top executives, including Weisselberg, avoid taxes on perks like luxury cars and rent-free apartments.

Here are the basics of the case and

what Weisselberg's decision to plead guilty means for Donald Trump and his family business.

What were Allen Weisselberg and the

Trump Organization accused of doing? Federal authorities said Weisselberg, the Trump Organization's long-time chief financial officer, failed to pay taxes on more than \$1.7 million worth of compensation. Among those perks- The Trump Organization paid the rent on his Manhattan apartment, covered private school tuition for his grandchildren, leased Mercedes-Benz cars for him and his wife, gave him cash to hand out as holiday tips and paid for flat-screen TVs, carpeting, and furniture for his winter home in Florida. Weisselberg's son also didn't have to pay rent, or paid below-market rent, while living in Trump-owned apartments.

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The controversy around the video of Finland PM Sanna Marin partying

Sanna Marin, the 36-year-old Prime Minister of Finland, is under fire from the Opposition after a video of her partying and dancing with friends was leaked on social media.

What is the controversy?



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World Humanitarian Day: Significance and why the day is marked



**WORLD
HUMANITARIAN
DAY**

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Chinese research ship arrives in Sri Lanka despite India, US concerns

A Chinese research ship arrived at Sri Lanka's southern port of Hambantota on Tuesday amidst India's concern over the vessel's presence in its neighbourhood.

(SAI Bureau) - As scheduled, Yuan Wang 5, a tracking and satellite support vessel, reached Hambantota port in Sri Lanka despite India's objection to putting the ship in Lankan waters.

The Indian Government had earlier raised security

concerns based on input the Yuan Wang 5 was to assist Chinese spy satellites over the Indian Ocean from August to September. Similar concerns were raised by the US Government which delayed the Yuan Wang 5 arrival at

(Contd. on page 28)



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First-Ever India Day Parade In Boston; Massive India-US Flag Flies In Sky

Marked by bands of veterans, scores of floats reflecting the diversity of both India and the US, the Indian Day Parade in Boston was attended by thousands of people



Ka Amrit Mahotsav" across the world. "Boston is known for starting America's freedom struggle. So, we decided to celebrate this in a grand manner in this historic city," he said. During the parade on

Saturday that culminated at the Boston Harbor, an airplane carrying a 220-foot India-US Flag flew over the city. "India's tricolor flying high in the sky stole the heart of the public at large. It was not just an

ordinary flag, it was a 220-foot long Indian tricolor flying along with an American star spangle being flown by a small airplane in the blue sky scattered with white and grey clouds," Mr Singh said.

3 Of Indian Origin, Who Cheated In Singapore Law Exam, Drop Practice Plea

The three Indian origin trainee lawyers were among six found to have cheated in 2020 Bar examinations in Singapore, according to a media report

(SAI Bureau) Six trainee lawyers, including three of Indian origin, withdrew their applications on Monday to practise law in Singapore after they were found to have cheated in the 2020 Bar examinations, according to a media report. The six are Monisha Devaraj, Kushal Atul Shah, Sreeram Ravenderan, Matthew Chow Jun Feng, Lionel Wong Choong Yoong and Lynn Kuek Yi Ting. Five of them shared answers for six exam papers through WhatsApp, while Kuek was



found to have colluded with another candidate to cheat on three of the papers, Channel News Asia reported on Monday. A High Court judge gave all six permission on Monday to withdraw their Bar applications. To practise law in Singapore, law graduates must be admitted to the Bar by passing a set of exams known as Part B. The Bar refers to legal professionals who have satisfied all the requirements for legal education and vocational training to be admitted as advocates and solicitors of the Singapore Court. In April, Justice Choo Han Teck adjourned the Bar admission hearing of Kuek for a year and the hearings of the remaining five trainees for six months. This followed a proposal from the Attorney-General that a little more time for the trainee lawyers to reflect on their ways' errors would benefit them. The Attorney-General had objected to the Bar applications of the six, taking the view that they lacked honesty and integrity as they cheated in the Part B exams. Lawyer Sreenivasan Narayanan,

who represented Ms Devaraj, Mr Shah and Wong, told the court that his clients realised the six-month period was insufficient for them to "show that the circumstances of being a fit and proper person have changed". He said they needed time to address issues raised in Justice Choo's earlier judgment, as well as the guidance given by Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon in another withdrawal application by a trainee lawyer who cheated, Leon Tay Quan Li. Mr Narayanan told Justice Choo that the three would give "deep thought" to what they have done and consult the other stakeholders of the Bar admissions process before making any future applications. These stakeholders are the Attorney-General, the Law Society and the Singapore Institute of Legal Education (SILE). "There will be no half-baked attempts and any application will be made after deep and considered reflection," Mr Narayanan was quoted as saying. Lawyers representing the three other trainees echoed Mr Narayanan's submissions.

(SAI Bureau) A 220-foot US-India flag flying high in the sky over Boston attracted everyone's attention during the first-ever India Day Parade to mark the 75th anniversary of the country's independence in the historic American city. Marked by bands of veterans, scores of floats reflecting the diversity of both India and the United States, amidst a patriotic flavour and songs, the Indian Day Parade was attended by thousands of people from more than 30 countries. Led by former Indian cricket player R P Singh, it was addressed by several politicians from Massachusetts and New

England along with many eminent Indian-Americans from the region. "The first ever India Day Parade in Boston was a historic success. All credit goes to the Indian-Americans in the city and the volunteers who worked day and night to make this a grand success," said community leader Abhishek Singh, the president of the Federation of Indian Associations-New England which was the organiser of the parade. Mr Singh, the brain behind the India Day Parade in Boston, said that he was inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for celebrating 75 years of Independent India as "The Azadi

S Jaishankar, Son Went To A Restaurant In US. This Happened

Foreign minister S Jaishankar was talking about the difference in Covid vaccine certificates issued in India through Co-Win platform, and in the certificates issued in the US



"this is where they are". The audience started clapping and laughing after hearing the incident.

The small clip was shared by a Twitter user, Arun Pudur, with the caption, "Dr S Jaishankar Minister of External Affairs, India, went to a restaurant with his son in the US and what happened next is hilarious." The video has over 300,000 views on Twitter. The Co-Win platform is an online platform started by the Centre for Covid vaccine registrations. The platform is used for booking slots to get the vaccine and get the vaccination certificates. Over 200 crore Covid vaccine doses have been administered and over 1 billion beneficiaries have been registered via online and offline mode.

(SAI Bureau) A video of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is going viral on social media, where he can be seen sharing an incident related to Covid vaccine certificates he encountered with his son in the US.

Mr Jaishankar said he went to the US in 2021 when they started to open travel for people. He said his son, who lives in the US, told

him "that they are going to a restaurant and they wanted to see our Covid vaccine certificate." The foreign minister said, "I showed them my phone and my son produced a paper, which was folded, from his wallet, and said this is my certificate." Mr Jaishankar further said that he looked at his son's vaccine certificate and asked himself,

What about Indians living abroad without papers: Manish Tewari on BJP's 'Rohingya threat to nation' comment

Congress MP Manish Tewari, on Thursday, compared Rohingyas to the Indians who are living undocumented in the developed nations and asked if Rohingyas are a threat to India, then "what about thousands of undocumented Indians living in developed nations."

(SAI Bureau) Citing a media article that quoted a BJP leader saying "Rohingya are a threat to national security," Congress MP Manish Tewari asked, if Rohingyas are a threat to India, then "what about thousands of undocumented Indians floating around developed nations."

In a tweet, the Congress leader said, "If all illegal immigrants are a threat to any nation's security then what about thousands of undocumented Indians floating around US, Europe and other developed nations? Tragedy of

Rohingya people is heart-rendering. They are fleeing persecution, rape and genocide."

BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia, on Wednesday, described Rohingya as a "threat to national security" saying that Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal is doing "appeasement politics"

"Kejriwal's appeasement politics doesn't care for Delhi citizens but for Rohingya illegal migrants.

The Centre has had a clear policy that there will be no compromise with national security and our law says they will be deported," Bhatia said.

"On 29 July, a meeting was chaired by Delhi chief secretary. In haste, a decision was made to shift these illegal immigrants to EWS flats...When the

news came out in some media that Kejriwal was back to his appeasement politics, the MHA clarified," he added.

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) traded blame over the alleged proposal to shift Rohingya

refugees to flats with basic facilities in the national capital. On Wednesday morning, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri said that Rohingya refugees will be shifted to EWS flats in Bakkarwala area on the outskirts of Delhi and will also be provided basic amenities and security. However, the Centre later clarified that no such directions had been given.



'Bulldozer Baba' reaches US streets during Tiranga rally

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's 'bulldozer' known as 'Baba ka bulldozer' was seen during the Tiranga Yatra which was carried out by the Indian community in New Jersey, USA.



(SAI Bureau) As India completed 75 years of independence, the Indians in the USA took out a Tiranga Yatra on a bulldozer.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's 'bulldozer' known as 'Baba ka bulldozer' was seen during the tricolour rally which was carried out by

the Indian-origin people of Addition Township in New Jersey, USA. New Jersey in the US resonated with the slogans of 'CM Yogi Zindabad' and 'Bulldozer Baba Zindabad'. On August 15, Indians all over the world celebrated Independence Day with high-level enthusiasm and patriotism.



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Rajasthan intel agency warned administration of rising anger among Dalits in Jalore

Despite a warning by the Rajasthan state Intelligence Bureau (IB), the administration failed to control the gathering and clashes broke out between family members of the Dalit boy who died and police



(SAI Bureau) A nine-year-old Dalit boy died on August 13 after he was allegedly beaten up by a teacher for drinking water from a pot in a private school in the Jalore district of Rajasthan. Following his death, the state Intelligence Bureau (IB) had

issued an alert to the government that the members of the Dalit organisation were anguished over the incident and they might agitate in large numbers. "In reference to the incident, strong reactions are floating amongst Dalits on Whatsapp and other social media platforms. Dalits are angry over the thrashing and showing their reactions to the so-called inefficiency of the government. In reference to this, there might be a strong reaction/agitation by Dalits ahead," reads the alert. Even

after this alert, the situation worsened in Rajasthan's Jalore district and clashes broke out on Sunday between police and family members and supporters of the Dalit boy. The father of the deceased and other relatives sustained serious injuries after a police baton charged the angry locals, most of whom belong to the Dalit community. On Sunday, at around 4:15 pm, the clash turned violent after police served notice to the family

members to dispose of the body. When locals intervened and stopped the police, the fields of Surana village turned into a battlefield. On one hand, police were thrashing the locals, including family members of the Dalit boy, and on the other hand, locals started pelting stones at the police officers. In this incident, more than a dozen people were injured and members of the Bhim Army were detained. The internet connection in the area has been suspended.

Influencer Bobby Kataria in trouble for smoking on plane, now FIR in Delhi

Delhi Police has filed an FIR against influencer Bobby Kataria after a video emerged of him smoking a cigarette on a SpiceJet aircraft. The incident reportedly took place in January 2022 but the video went viral on social media on August 11

(News Agency) Social media influencer Bobby Kataria, who made headlines after a video of him smoking on a plane went viral, is in legal trouble as an FIR has been registered against him. The Delhi Police, on Tuesday, August 16, filed an FIR against Bobby Kataria for smoking on a SpiceJet flight. After the video went viral on social media with many demanding strict action and clarification, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia ordered an investigation into the

matter. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security confirmed to news agency ANI that the video was old and assured that appropriate action was taken against Bobby at that time. "Balvinder Kataria travelled from Dubai to New Delhi on a SpiceJet flight. He landed in Delhi on January 23, 2022. Video isn't available on his Facebook/Instagram page. Action was taken by aviation security earlier," the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security told news

agency ANI. A SpiceJet spokesperson said that the matter was investigated in January 2022 when the video was brought to their notice. The statement by a SpiceJet spokesperson claimed, "This is with reference to a video on social media of a passenger smoking onboard a SpiceJet aircraft. The matter was investigated thoroughly in January 2022 when the video was brought to our notice and a complaint had been filed by the airline with the Udyog Vihar police station in



Gurugram. The video, the investigation revealed, was shot on January 20, 2022, while passengers were boarding flight SG 706 scheduled to operate from Dubai to Delhi."

"The said passenger and his co-passengers shot the video on

the 21st row when the cabin crew were occupied with completing the on-boarding procedure. None of the passengers or crew were aware of the act. The matter came to the airline's notice on January 24, 2022, through social media posts," a SpiceJet spokesperson said. Taking to Twitter, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) said, "A misleading video alleging a security lapse is in circulation on social media wherein a passenger is seen smoking inside an aircraft. Said video is 7 months old. In fact, the passenger had boarded an international flight from Dubai for Delhi. On arrival, a police case was also registered by airlines."

BIOPIC ON KATARIA?

Meanwhile, Bobby Kataria, in his clarification, said, "Shooting of my biopic is ongoing. The same shooting video has been made viral on social media platforms. The shoot in which I was smoking was done in a demo plane in Dubai." "How can anyone carry a cigarette and lighter inside a plane? The Uttarakhand video is from 2019 and it is also a part of the biopic, he added in his clarification.

India's Security Establishment Keeping Eye on Visit of Chinese Ship to Sri Lanka

(News Agency) India is concerned over the visit of a Chinese satellite tracking ship to Sri Lanka's Hambantota port as it signals an attempt by China to expand its maritime influence in the region, sources in defence and security establishment said on Tuesday. The ship, Yuan Wang 5, arrived at the strategically located port on Tuesday morning for a replenishment stay for a week, Sri Lankan officials said in Colombo. However, sources in the Indian defence and security establishment said the aim of the ship's visit cannot be only replenishment and that it could be used to snoop on Indian installations. They said India has been conveying to Sri Lanka its opposition to such forays in the past as well and that India's concerns were not limited to just one visit. The ship was

originally scheduled to arrive at the Hambantota port on August 11 but it was



delayed in absence of permission by the Sri Lankan authorities. Sri Lanka had asked China to defer the visit amid India's concerns over it. On Saturday, Colombo granted the

port access to the vessel from August 16 to 22. There were apprehensions in New Delhi about the possibility of the vessel's tracking systems attempting to snoop on Indian installations while on its way to the Sri Lankan port. "We are closely watching the visit by the ship," said a source. A day before the ship docked in Hambantota port, India handed over to Sri Lanka a Dornier maritime surveillance aircraft. The aircraft would act as a force multiplier, enabling Sri Lanka to tackle challenges such as human and drug trafficking, smuggling and other organised forms of crime in its coastal waters more effectively, the Ministry of External Affairs said.

"Induction of the aircraft is timely in view of the current challenges to Sri Lanka's maritime security," it said.

Indian Army finds mortal remains of soldier who went missing during 'Meghdoot Operation' in 1984



on Monday (August 15). The Northern Command of the Indian Army stated in a tweet that the soldier went missing on May 29, 1984. The Indian Army stated that the late soldier was identified with the help of an identification disc, containing the soldier's army number and more details were recovered from the official records. As per the Army's records, a late soldier was sent for Operation Meghdoot at Gyongla Glacier in the year 1984. The Indian Army stated, "The Northern Army

Commander, Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi and all ranks salute LNK (Late) Chander Shekhar who made the supreme sacrifice while being deployed for Operation Meghdoot at Gyongla Glacier in 1984; mortal remains will be handed over to the family shortly," ANI reported. Operation Meghdoot was launched on April 13, 1984, 38 years ago when a military conflict was initiated to seize the Siachen Glacier in Jammu and Kashmir. This operation was distinctive as it was the first to be launched

from the highest battleground in the world. However, the Indian troops were able to take control of the entire Siachen Glacier. India and Pakistan have been at war with each other on and off since 1984, with Siachen serving as the highest battleground between the countries. Both nations keep a constant military presence in the area. More than 2,000 soldiers have lost their lives in this hostile environment, mostly due to weather extremes and natural hazards of mountain combat.

(News Agency) The mortal remains of a soldier who went missing in 1984 during an Army's Northern Command, army operation in Siachen which announced the finding

Opium, poppy husk served in govt school in Rajasthan after Independence Day event

Some men were seen doing drugs inside a government school in Rajasthan's Barmer following Independence Day celebrations

(News Agency) Restricted drugs such as opium and poppy husk were allegedly served in a government school in Rajasthan's Barmer district after the Independence Day event. According to Chief Block Education Officer (CBEO) Omprakash Vishnoi, the incident took place at a government school in the Gudamalani area of Barmer.

"Around a dozen people reached school after the Independence Day function.

According to four videos which went viral after the incident, the accused were serving opium and poppy husk to each other and were consuming it," Vishnoi said. The officer further said that when the authorities reached the school, nobody was present there. "We will record statements of students and teachers

tomorrow so that we can find out who the accused were," he added. Further investigation is underway.



Whoever doing good work is stopped: Arvind Kejriwal on CBI raid at Manish Sisodia's home

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal took to Twitter to support his deputy Manish Sisodia after a CBI team reached his residence on Friday

(SAI Bureau) Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal extended his support to his deputy Manish Sisodia after a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team reached his residence on Friday morning. Taking to Twitter, CM Kejriwal said, "The day when the Delhi education model was praised and Manish Sisodia's picture printed on the front page of America's largest newspaper NYT, on the same day, the Centre sent CBI to his home". Kejriwal added, "Welcome to CBI. Will

cooperate fully. There have been many tests/raids in the past as well. Nothing came out. Still nothing will come out". The Delhi CM, in another tweet, said that in the last 75 years, whoever has tried to do good work, has been stopped. The CBI has raided the residence of Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in connection with the excise policy row. Searches are also being conducted across 20 locations in the National Capital Region.

Meanwhile, Manish Sisodia has tweeted refuting all allegations and said that he will cooperate with the investigation. Sisodia said it was unfortunate that those who perform in the country are harassed like this. Meanwhile, the official Twitter handle of AAP shared the front page of The New York Times that had carried out an article on Delhi education policy. From September 1, Delhi will revert to the old excise regime for six months. In the wake of a massive controversy over its new liquor law, the AAP government in the national capital decided to bring back the old excise policy under which there are no private players in the segment.

The excise policy under which the private liquor vends are currently being run in the city comes to an end on August 31, nine months after it was implemented. Starting September 1, only Delhi government corporations will be allowed to run retail liquor shops.

'Medicine from the sky': Arunachal Pradesh launches its first drone-based healthcare services, CM shares video

(News Agency) On the occasion of celebrating India's independence on August 15, Arunachal Pradesh launched its first drone service, 'Medicine from the sky', from Seppa to Chayang Tajo. The project was in collaboration with the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Pema Khandu, the chief minister of the state, taking to Twitter, said that the project is inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India the world's drone hub.

The minister further stated that "based on the field assessment report, a pilot project 'Medicine from the Sky' is being rolled out on the occasion of Independence Day from Seppa, East Kameng district. As part of ongoing Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebrations,

happy to have virtually launched the pilot project," ANI reported.

The chief minister added that the

towards accepting this new form of technology. He also shared a video of

the drone's first flight on Twitter. Similarly, the minister of civil aviation, Jyotiraditya Scindia, in May predicted that with the PM's vision, India would soon witness new businesses adopting drone services, making the country the world's drone hub. The aviation minister, in his speech at the inaugural ceremony, said, "It is the resolve of PM Modi to make India the International Drone Hub leader by 2030. We have to lead the world

in this field. Our Ministry is working along with NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant," ANI reported. With the help of the government of India and efforts from drone stakeholders, the drone industry is expected to grow exponentially.



USAID-funded and Redwings Labs-executed pilot project would clearly illustrate technical challenges, financial viability, and regulatory problems so that the government can develop a policy and take action steps

12 Rajasthan Congress Councillors Resign After Dalit Boy's Killing

Congress leader and former state deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot on Tuesday reached the boy's home and said a strong message needs to be given to win the Dalit community's trust



(SAI Bureau) : Twelve Congress councillors in the Rajasthan's Baran Municipal Council on Tuesday sent their resignation letters to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, expressing anguish over atrocities against the Dalits and backing party MLA Pana Chand Meghwal. The Baran-Atru MLA on Monday had sent his resignation letter to Gehlot, two days after the death of a nine-year-old Dalit boy who was allegedly beaten up by his schoolteacher for touching a drinking water pot in Jalore. Meanwhile, political leaders made a beeline for the boy's home in Jalore's Surana village. Congress leader and former state deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot on Tuesday reached the boy's home and

said a strong message needs to be given to win the Dalit community's trust.

State Congress chief Govind Singh Dotasra visited the boy's home with Women and Child Welfare Minister Mamta Bhupesh, PWD Minister Bhajan Lal Jatav and Disaster Management and Relief Minister Govind Ram Meghwal. He announced financial assistance of ₹ 20 lakh to the family from the party fund and promise a speedy trial. Backing MLA Meghwal's move, 12 of the 25 Congress councillors in the Baran civic body expressed anguish over atrocities against the Dalits and deprived sections. Ward No.29 councillor Yogendra Mehta said they sent their resignation letters in support of

the MLA and against the government's failure to protect the Dalits. The other councillors who sent their resignation letters are Rohitashva Saxena, Rajaram Meena, Rekha Meena, Leeladhar Nagar, Hariraj Erwal, and Piyush Soni, Urvashi Meghwal, Yashwant Yadav, Anwar Ali, Jyoti Jatav and Mayank Mathodia, he said. They will submit copies of their resignation letters to the Kota divisional commissioner on Wednesday, Mehta added.

Meanwhile, the nominated councillor of the Kota's Itawa civic body Suresh Mahawar also sent his resignation letter to the chief minister.

Before heading to Jalore, Mr Pilot said, "Such incidents need to be strongly condemned. We need to put a check on such incidents. Only laws, speeches and actions are not enough. We will have to give them a strong message that we are with them in order to instil trust in them." The Congress leader condemned the politicisation of the issue, calling it inappropriate whether it is done by the BJP or his own party.

Rajasthan Congress chief Mr Dotasra said the state unit of the party will give financial

assistance of ₹ 20 lakh to the boy's family, in addition to ₹ 5 lakh announced by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot from the CM relief fund.

"Our party president Sonia Gandhi and leader Rahul Gandhi have directed the leaders and MLAs to visit the family and do whatever can be done to assist the family," he said.

Mr Dotasra said the matter will be investigated and a speedy trial will be held. He said the education department has already served a notice on the private school where the incident occurred, asking why should not the affiliation of the school be terminated.

The Congress leader said the boy's family members had resentment against the local police and they have been assured that action against the guilty will be taken. One police constable was suspended on Tuesday, he said.

MLA Pana Chand Meghwal and Chairman of the State Human Rights Commission, Justice G K Vyas, also visited the village and consoled the family.

On the other hand, BJP's Jalore MLA said it is doubtful that the boy was beaten by the teacher

for being from the Meghwal caste and touching the water pot. "I have talked to villagers and others, and as per them, there is doubt that the incident occurred because the boy was Meghwal and he touched the water pot," Garg said in a video statement. "There is no doubt that the boy was beaten up by the teacher and he died. The accused teacher has been arrested. Inquiries are being conducted. Whether he was beaten up for being a Meghwal and touching the water pot, let it be clear in the investigation. Only after the findings, statements should be given," he said. It was alleged in the FIR that Indra Kumar was beaten by his teacher Chhail Singh for touching the drinking water pot. In Jaipur, four members of the Bhim Army climbed on an overhead water tank demanding a compensation of ₹ 50 lakh to the family of the boy. Kota, Rajasthan: Twelve Congress councillors in the Rajasthan's Baran Municipal Council on Tuesday sent their resignation letters to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, expressing anguish over atrocities against the Dalits and backing party MLA Pana Chand Meghwal.

Scam alert for electricity bills: Watch out for WhatsApp messages that ask you to pay your bill

A new scheme by hackers to trick people has been developed, and this time it includes your electricity bill

(SAI Bureau) In most cities, the electricity board will send out a message to subscribers reminding them to pay their electricity bills on time. People have, however, recently reported receiving WhatsApp messages telling them to pay their electricity bill or their electricity connection will be suspended. Even a tech-savvy person could be persuaded by the message to pay right away without giving it a second thought. According to Twitter users, the notification informing customers to pay their electricity bill is typically issued via SMS or WhatsApp. A scammer-owned phone number can be found in the message. The con artist convinces the user, who is frantically dialling the number, that they must pay for the electricity or risk having their electricity cut off. Most incidences of electricity scams



have been recorded by con artists in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Odisha, among other cities. The message says, "Dear Consumer Your Electricity power will be disconnected. Tonight at 9.30 pm

from electricity office. because your previous month bill was not update. Please immediately contact with our electricity officer 8260303942 Thank you." It is sent from a random phone number which does not belong to any

of the electricity boards. Now if you notice clearly the message is not sent by an authorized source. When you get a message from say the BSES Delhi, the phone number is replaced by "BSES DL". The message's use of language should raise another warning sign. The sentences are incorrectly constructed. The writing is really chaotic throughout. It is obvious that the message does not adhere to correct syntax. There are erroneous full stops and a complete lack of understanding of capital letters and small-cap characters. People have been warned by the Maharashtra Cyber Cell to be aware of such mails that are delivered with the obvious goal of deceiving innocent people. Most people who have actually forgotten to pay their electricity bill are most likely to fall for the message since it is worrisome.

Seven killed, several injured as bus carrying ITBP soldiers falls into roadside riverbed in J&K



A civil bus carrying 39 personnel (37 from ITBP and 2 from Jammu and Kashmir Police) fell down to a roadside river bed after its breaks reportedly failed. 'In a road accident near Chandanwari Pahalgam in Anantnag district, 6 ITBP personnel got martyred while several others got injured, who are being airlifted to Army hospital, Srinagar for treatment. Further details shall follow,' said Jammu and Kashmir Police.

The critically Injured were airlifted from the site to Indian Army's 92 Base hospital in Srinagar while over 20 were shifted to the district hospital in Anantnag. District Hospital Anantnag had sent 19 ambulances to the spot. The LG

of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha announced that all possible help will be provided to the injured in the accident. "Deeply anguished by the bus accident near Chandanwari in which we have lost our brave ITBP personnel. My condolences to the bereaved families and prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured. All possible assistance is being provided to the injured personnel," said Manoj Sinha, LG Jammu and Kashmir.

The Former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Omar Abdullah also condoled the deaths of ITBP Jawans in the accident. "Terribly sad news

from South Kashmir today. An accident & a militant attack have left a trail of death & suffering. I condemn the militant attack in Shopian unequivocally in which Sunil Kumar was killed & Pinto Kumar injured. My condolences to the family. At the same time, I send my condolences to the families & colleagues of the brave ITBP jawans killed in an accident in Pahalgam today. A number of ITBP personnel have been injured. I send my best wishes for their speedy & complete recovery," said Omar Abdullah, Former CM of Jammu and Kashmir. The injured are being treated at both the hospitals in Anantnag and Srinagar.

(SAI Bureau) Seven soldiers were killed after a vehicle carrying Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel met with an accident near Chandanwari in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on Tuesday. Several soldiers have also been injured after their vehicle rolled down the road and fell into a riverbed. The soldiers were stationed in the area for the famous Indian pilgrimage known as the 'Amarnath Yatra.'

Heavy rainfall likely in Odisha as low pressure forms over Bay of Bengal, 5 districts on alert

The India Meteorological Department said a low pressure area is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal on August 19. A yellow alert has been issued for five districts in the state and heavy rainfall warning has been issued

(SAI Bureau) A fresh low pressure area is likely to form over the northwest Bay of Bengal around Friday, August 19, 2022, the India Meteorological Department (IMD)'s regional centre said on Monday. A yellow warning for heavy rainfall has been sounded for Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Balangir, Bargarh and Jharsuguda. No rain warning has been issued for August 16, Tuesday. Under the influence of a depression in North Chhattisgarh, squally surface wind speed reaching 40 to 50 kmph gusting 60kmph are very likely along and off Odisha coast and North adjoining West-central Bay of Bengal. Sea condition is likely to be rough to very rough during next 24 hours," IMD said in a statement. Fairly widespread/ widespread light/moderate rainfall is likely over Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and East Madhya Pradesh during 18th-19th August 2022. Isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely over Odisha on the 18th & 19th of August," the weather agency said. Sea



condition is likely to be rough to very rough over north and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal and along and off Odisha coast next 24 hours and gradually improve thereafter. Fishermen have been advised not to venture into sea along and off Odisha coast, north adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal during the next 24 hours. Meanwhile, the turbulent flow of water in Hati river due to incessant rainfall has caused a flood-like situation in Junagarh block in Kalahandi district.

FLOOD SITUATION

REVIEWED

Meanwhile, Odisha Chief Secretary Suresh Mahapatra today reviewed the flood situation in the state along with SRC P K Jena and other officials. Following the review meeting, the Chief Secretary directed to close eight sluice gates of Hirakud Dam reservoir. Chief Secretary Suresh Mahapatra said the state may witness a medium-level flood due to a rise in water level in Mahanadi. "We are regulating the water flow in the river and our officials have been put on

high alert to meet any eventuality," Mahapatra said. As many as 34 sluice gates of Hirakud dam were opened by Saturday night. Out of these, eight gates were closed on Monday afternoon to regulate the outflow of water from the reservoir and check flooding in the downstream of the Mahanadi river basin.

SECTION 144 IMPOSED AT MAA BHATTARIKA TEMPLE

Meanwhile, prohibitory orders under Section 144 were clamped at Maa Bhattarika temple by district administration,

which has been submerged by floodwaters in Cuttack after the Mahanadi river breached the danger mark near Naraj. The prohibitory orders were imposed after locals gathered to witness floodwaters in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. People have been restricted from entering the temple premises due to high water currents. The Mahanadi was flowing at 26.68 metres near Naraj against the danger mark of 26.41 metres. Around 10.50 lakh cusecs of floodwater is being released to Mahanadi through Khairamal while 8.58 lakh cusecs of water is flowing in the river at Mundali barrage, said an official. "We are expecting a flow of around 10 lakh cusecs of floodwater through Mundali barrage in the next few hours," added the official. Thuamul Rampur in Kalahandi district recorded a maximum rainfall of 368mm. Due to extremely heavy showers, seven places in Odisha recorded a rainfall of 200mm and above. 43 places recorded rainfall between 115mm and 200mm.

Free education, healthcare can eliminate poverty: Arvind Kejriwal counters PM Modi's 'Revdi' remark

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asserted that education and healthcare are significant for India's growth and are not 'free revdis'



metaphor for freebies being promised by some parties to woo voters and said the people, especially the youth, should guard against it.

At the event at the Chhatrasal Stadium on Monday, where thousands of children were invited, Kejriwal said the country's 130 crore people need to come together and resolve to make India the number one country in the world. "We came together and chased the Britishers out. Today, if we come together, we can make India the top country in the world," he said.

Lamenting that many nations that got independence after India has surpassed it, the Delhi chief minister reiterated that education and healthcare are key to becoming a rich country.

"How did countries like the US, Canada, Germany, and Denmark become rich? They arranged for good education and healthcare facilities for their citizens. We will also make

India the number one country in the world," he said.

"The tricolour will fly high only when every Indian has access to good healthcare and education," Kejriwal said. Congratulations to all on 75 years of Independence, he said, "There is great joy and enthusiasm in the country. The air is filled with patriotism and 'junoon'." Talking about the Aam Aadmi Party dispensation's achievements in Delhi, he said that the education system and health facilities in the city have been reformed by his government. "The government schools were in shambles earlier, with children sitting on carpets and getting no education. But we reformed the government schools and today, a poor child studying in a state-run school can also dream of becoming a lawyer or engineer," the Delhi chief minister said. The chief minister also said the government has ramped up healthcare infrastructure and,

irrespective of their financial status, people have access to free hospital care in Delhi. "On average, we are spending Rs 2,000 on the healthcare of every Delhiite. We can arrange for good healthcare facilities for Rs 2.5 lakh crore for 130 crore Indians. We can open world-class mohalla clinics and hospitals in five years," he added. Paying homage to all freedom fighters and those who struggled for the growth and progress of the country, he noted it is time to celebrate progress in various fields. "But we need to think over the challenges and our future course. Many are asking why many countries have gone past (us) in 75 years. "Singapore got independence 15 years after India and Japan that was destroyed in the Second World War, got ahead of us. We are no less than others. Indians are the most intelligent, hardworking people in the world but we still have lagged," he added.

(By Staff Reporter) Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday asserted that free education and healthcare are not freebies and access to these two can eliminate the country's poverty in one generation. At the Delhi government's Independence Day event at Chhatrasal Stadium here, he also emphasised that school education and healthcare in the whole country can be revamped in five years, as this has happened in the national capital. There has been political acrimony over the issue of freebies, with the BJP accusing Kejriwal of using it as a "bait" to trap people for power. Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after inaugurating the Bundelkhand Expressway in Uttar Pradesh, cautioned people against what he called the "revdi culture" of offering freebies for garnering votes and said it is "very dangerous" for the development of the country. Modi had used 'revdi' as a

Mumbai Police Bust Mephedrone Manufacturing Unit in Gujarat's Ankleshwar, Drugs Worth Rs 1,026 Crore Seized

(By Staff Reporter) The Anti Narcotics Cell (ANC) of Mumbai Police has busted a mephedrone manufacturing unit in Gujarat and seized drugs worth Rs 1,026 crore, an official said here on Tuesday. The owner of the unit, who holds a master's degree in chemistry, was also arrested, he said. It was one of the biggest drug seizures by the city police in recent times, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (ANC) Datta Nalawade.

Acting on a tip-off, the ANC's Worli branch raided a manufacturing unit at Ankleshwar in Gujarat on August 13 and nabbed its owner Giriraj Dixit while seizing 513 kg of mephedrone, he said.

Dixit holds an M.Sc (Master of Science) in chemistry, the official said. On August 3, the ANC had seized more than 700 kilograms of mephedrone, a banned synthetic drug, worth Rs 1,400 crore in a raid at a manufacturing unit at Nalasopara in Palghar district near Mumbai. Shamshullah



Obhedullah Khan (38), Ayub Izhar Ahmed Sheikh (33), Reshma Sanjaykumar Chandan (49), Riyaz Abdul Sattar Menon (43), Prem Prakash Parasnath Singh (52) and Kiran Pawar were arrested during the raid, the official said. Following their interrogation, the ANC zeroed in on Dixit, Nalawade added. The mephedrone manufactured in Dixit's factory was meant to be

supplied to drug peddlers in Mumbai and neighbouring areas, he said. Dixit and a co-accused perfected the formula for producing mephedrone through experiments, he said. The racket began to unravel after the ANC Worli team arrested a drug peddler in eastern Mumbai's Govandi area in March this year and seized 250 grams of the drug from him, the official said. It led to the arrest of two persons including a woman and seizure of 2.7 kg of mephedrone. The ANC subsequently arrested another accused which was followed by the raid in Nalasopara. "We have now made a seventh arrest in this case," DCP Nalawade said.

Rs 30,000 Crore Sanctioned to Clean Ganga, Its Tributaries: Jal Shakti Minister Shekhawat

(By Staff Reporter) More than Rs 30,000 crore has been sanctioned for projects aimed at cleaning Ganga and its tributaries, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said on Tuesday. Emphasizing on the importance of limited water resources, Shekhawat said the very beginning of economic development is "our water resource and energy".

The graph of requirement of our natural resources and economic development is identical. Given the demographic, geographic vastness of India, limited water resources and willingness to face environmental challenges, it is imperative that we ensure sustainable use of water and other natural resources, the minister added. He said a lot of infrastructure has been created to clean Ganga and its tributaries.

"Projects worth more than Rs 30,000 crore have been sanctioned, he added. Shekhawat also expressed satisfaction on 'Namami Gange' programme transforming into a 'Jan Andolan' (mass movement) with the support of various organisations, and said that in more than 100 districts along Ganga, proper discussions take place on issues related to the river and remedial actions are taken. The minister made the comments as he presided over an event Yamuna Par Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. The occasion marked the launch of new initiatives under Arth Ganga, including Jalaj, an MoU with Sahakar Bharati for natural farming and tourism-related portal ImAvatar. The winners of Ganga Quest 2022 were also felicitated at the event.

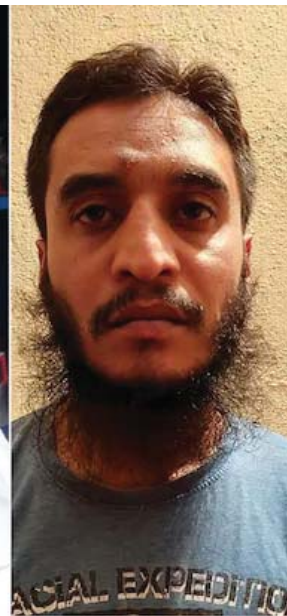
Row over Savarkar poster: 4 arrested for stabbing man in Karnataka's Shivamogga

Police arrested four men in connection with the stabbing incident in Karnataka's Shivamogga on Independence Day

(SAI Bureau) The Karnataka police on Tuesday arrested four men in connection with the stabbing that took place in the Shivamogga district on Monday. The four arrested have identified as Nadeem (25), Abdul Rehman (25), Tanveer and Jabiullah. Jabiullah was shot in the leg while he tried to escape from the police. The Additional Director General of Police, Alok Kumar, said Nadeem was involved in the communal clashes that took place in 2016 in Shivamogga during a Ganesha procession. "He was the one who hurled slippers," said Alok Kumar.

He added that the police are investigating whether the accused arrested have links with any organisation. Alok Kumar said the incident seemed like it was planned.

The arrest comes a day after a man, Prem Singh, was



stabbed in the Gandhi Bazar area of Shivamogga, hours after a row erupted over a poster of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar put up at Ameer Ahmed circle on Independence Day. Two groups clashed over installing a flex of Savarkar and 18th century Mysuru ruler Tipu

Sultan on Monday. A case under section 307 (attempt to murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered against the four arrested men. Following the incident, Shivamogga District Collector R Selvamani ordered schools and colleges to be closed in the

city and Bhadravathi town limits on Tuesday. He said the prohibitory orders at these two places will be on till August 18. The situation is under control, he stated.

LEADERS REACT

BJP MLA from Shivamogga, KS Eashwarappa commented

on the incident and appealed to the senior members of the Muslim community to "take action against youth of their community involved in such anti-national activities". He further warned that, "If Hindu society rises, then such activities won't survive." Opposition leader Siddaramaiah blamed the BJP for the incident and said, "This is a planned attempt by the BJP. They put a Savarkar photo and look where they chose to put it up. They did it particularly in a Muslim area and then they refused to put a poster of Tippu Sultan there." He further said, "The BJP made false allegations against the Congress and tried to put the blame on us." Meanwhile, police have been deployed and CCTV cameras are being monitored to make sure there are no untoward incidents.

Shrikant Tyagi case: Surajpur Court grants bail to 6 supporters arrested for entering Noida society

Surajpur Court granted bail to six of the self-proclaimed BJP worker Shrikant Tyagi's supporters who entered Noida society without a permit



(SAI Bureau) Surajpur Court has granted bail to the six supporters of self-proclaimed BJP worker Shrikant Tyagi who was arrested for abusing and assaulting a woman on the premises of Grand Omaxe in Noida Sector 93B. The six supporters, identified as Prince Tyagi, Nitin Tyagi, Ravi Pandit, Lokendra Tyagi, Churchill and Rahul, were in jail since they allegedly entered society without being permitted entry and asked about the address of the woman who was mishandled by Shrikant Tyagi.

The residents of the society refused to divulge the information and detained the men. Following the ruckus, the police team reached the spot and took charge of the detained men. All of them were booked under these sections IPC 147, 447, 504, 506, 323, 419, 34, 120 b, and 353.

For the uninitiated, the incident took place when the woman objected to the plantation of some trees by Tyagi, citing violation of rules even as he claimed he was within his rights to do so.

As many as 12 police teams and the Uttar Pradesh STF searched for Shrikant Tyagi across three states. He was traced to Meerut, where police arrested him and three of his associates.

Four Dalit leaders climb water tank, demand justice for family members of Jalore victim

(SAI Bureau) To express their anger towards the government's response against the rising atrocities against Dalits in Rajasthan and the government's ignorant attitude towards the demands of the family members of Indra Kumar Meghwal of Jalore district, four Dalit leaders from Bhim Army climbed up a government water tank located on Shakar Marg of Jaipur city on Tuesday morning.

The Dalit leaders are also demanding compensation of Rs 50 lakhs and government jobs for two family members of Meghwal. The water tank is located just 500 meters from Vidhan Sabha. The four leaders who have been claiming to be on the water tank since early

morning have been identified as Bagchand Berad, Laxmikant, Banwari Lal and Ravi Kumar.

"Why is the government discriminating? Why can't they give immediate relief to the family members of Indra Kumar? We will continue our revolution until the family members get relief," said Ravi, one of the protestors.

In a video shared by them, the protestors said, "If immediate relief can be given to the family members of Kanhaiya Lal, then why not Indra Kumar? Why is the government discriminating? We will continue to protest until or unless our demands are met. If their demands are not met, then they will take extreme steps."

Suspect brought for court hearing shot dead by unidentified assailants in UP's Hapur

The suspect died on the spot after the assailants fired 4 to 5 bullets, out of which one hit his neck

(SAI Bureau) A suspect who was brought for his hearing in the Hapur District Court was shot dead in broad daylight by unidentified assailants on Tuesday. The suspect was brought in police custody from Haryana.

Police said the suspect, Lakhan Singh, was arrested in Faridabad and had come to court for his hearing when the assailants surrounded him and fired 4 to 5 bullets. One bullet hit his neck and

he died on the spot. According to the police, there were at least three to four people who shot at Lakhan and then fled from the scene. Two constables, Om Prakash and Deepak, were also injured in the incident. The policemen,

including Lakhan, were admitted to Devanandani Hospital in Hapur, where the doctor declared him brought dead. Both the policemen are undergoing treatment and are safe. Inspector General Praveen Kumar is currently at the site of the incident and investigating the case.

WHO IS THE SUSPECT?

According to a statement by the Faridabad Police, Lakhan Singh (34) was lodged in Neemka jail and has several cases registered against him including sections of rape, illegal arms, fighting and illegal mining. Apart from this, a murder case was also registered against him in 2019.



PM Modi dials French PM Macron, a day after latter's heartfelt Independence Day message to India



nation continues to brave devastating wildfires.

PM Modi took to Twitter to inform about the phone call, "Spoke to my friend President @EmmanuelMacron today. Conveyed India's solidarity with France in dealing with the devastating wildfires. We discussed ongoing bilateral cooperation under the India-France Strategic Partnership, and other issues of global and regional significance," "President @EmmanuelMacron and I also agreed to cooperate closely in responding to global challenges of food and energy security," PM Modi added.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) also released a statement after the call and stated that the two leaders agreed to expand their relationship to new areas of

cooperation. "The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the depth and strength that the India-France Strategic Partnership has acquired in recent years and agreed to continue working closely together to expand the relationship to new areas of cooperation," read the statement. As reported by WION, France has been facing one of its worst summer seasons as deadly heatwaves parch the land across the region. Consequently, multiple wildfires, especially in southwestern France have torched more than 6,200 hectares alone. Overall, more than 57,200 hectares of area has been blazed in France since the fire began. The phone call to Macron comes a day after the French PM wished India on its Independence Day anniversary, both in English and Hindi, much

to the astonishment of Indians.

"Dear friend @NarendraModi, dear people of India, congratulations on your Independence Day! As you proudly celebrate India's stunning achievements in the past 75 years, you can count on France to always stand by your side," tweeted Macron. We have built a strategic partnership together that makes our country stronger. Together, we are able to find solutions to global challenges, make the world safer, and bring prosperity and progress to our people," the French PM added in Hindi as well. Macron and Modi have enjoyed a warm relationship, ever since both came to power. PM Modi visited France in May earlier this year, where the two countries held fruitful bilateral discussions.

(News Agency) A day after India's 75th Independence Day anniversary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dialled French President Emmanuel Macron and the two reviewed the ongoing bilateral initiatives including defence cooperation projects and cooperation in civil nuclear energy. PM Modi also conveyed solidarity to his French counterpart as the European

Malaysian naval admiral meets chief of Indian Navy during his 3-day visit to India

The chief of the Royal Malaysian Navy arrived in the country on a three-day official visit, at the invitation of the chief of the naval staff, Indian Navy Admiral R Hari



representatives facilitated by IDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence). Admiral Reza is an alumnus of INS Dronacharya's premier Gunnery Training Establishment of the Indian Navy, at Kochi, from where he graduated as a Gunnery Specialist back in 1990. Admiral Reza will visit his alma mater during the second

leg of his visit to Kochi. Bilateral cooperation between the Indian and Royal Malaysian Navies spans a wide canvas ranging from training to operations. Both navies have recently concluded the bilateral exercise Samudra Laksamana on May 22 and the Navy to Navy Staff Talks on June 22. The Malaysian naval ship KD Lekiu and a high-level delegation

had earlier participated in MILAN hosted by the Indian Navy at Visakhapatnam on February 22. The official visit of the Malaysian Chief of Navy signifies yet another growing collaboration between the two defence forces and their commitment to sustaining the positive trajectory of bilateral relations.

(News Agency) In a key development, on August 16, Admiral Tan Sri Mohd Reza Bin Mohd Sany, Chief of the Royal Malaysian Navy arrived in the country on a three-day official visit, at the invitation of the chief of the naval staff, Indian Navy Admiral R Hari Kumar. The official meeting commenced with a wreath-laying ceremony at the National War Memorial, where the Chief of Navy of the Malaysian Navy paid homage to the Indian bravehearts. He was accorded a guard of honour on the South Block lawns prior to the commencement of official engagements. Admiral Mohd Reza called on the Indian Navy chief of naval staff and discussed the progress of ongoing bilateral

engagements in the maritime domain. He was also briefed on the broad range of foreign cooperation activities pursued by the Indian Navy. The leaders identified several avenues for further strengthening naval cooperation. They tabled their commitment to support upholding the principle of collective responsibility for maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. During this visit between August 16 and 19, Admiral Reza is slated to interact with several higher functionaries of the Government of India, ranging from GoI officials from the MEA and NSCS. The Malaysian Admiral is slated to interact with a broad range of Indian Defence Industry

Anti-national forces behind attack on VD Savarkar's image, says grandson Ranjit

Amid the ongoing row over Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, his grandson Ranjit said the attack against the Hindutva ideologue was initiated by anti-national forces

(News Agency) In an interview with India Today, Ranjit Savarkar, grandson of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, alleged that anti-national forces had initiated the attack on the Hindutva ideologue. "The attack on Savarkar's image is purely for political purposes. What has happened in Shivamogga is very disturbing. A verbal attack has turned into physical assault and this is expanding. I condemn it and I believe the attack has been initiated by anti-national forces because Savarkar's ideology is most relevant in today's time," Ranjit Savarkar said. Recently, senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah sparked a controversy after he questioned putting up of Savarkar's photo in Muslim areas. The question evoked sharp reactions from the ruling BJP.

Talking about the recent row, Ranjit Savarkar said, "Savarkar opposed Pakistan, Jihadi forces, but he never opposed Muslim. Savarkar was never anti-Muslim. His only advice was to keep your religion at home, don't force conversion, and

respect others. What is wrong in that? This message of Savarkar goes to Indian Muslims, who I believe are patriotic. This message is not for Jihadi Muslims, who will always oppose Savarkar." When asked what Savarkar would think about politics being done in his name, Ranjit Savarkar said, "Veer Savarkar wrote Hindutva in 1923. He foresaw the Muslim League becoming separatist and demanding a separate nation based on religion. The conversion movement was going on strongly (at that time). So Savarkar's view was that everyone has a right to exercise their religion, but it should be confined to their personal lives."

"As far as Savarkar's Hindutva is concerned, it was nationalist. He never even believed in God or ritualistic religion," Ranjit Savarkar said. He also dismissed Congress's claim that Savarkar proposed the two-nation theory. "This is ridiculous. The theory was proposed before the birth of Savarkar," Ranjit Savarkar told India Today.

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Delhi kept in dark: Manish Sisodia accuses Centre of 'conspiring' to settle Rohingyas

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia alleged the Centre made a U-turn on providing flats to Rohingya refugees and then blamed it on the city government

(News Agency) Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday claimed the Central government has prepared a blueprint to permanently settle Rohingyas in EWS flats in Bakkarwala, Delhi. Manish Sisodia accused the Centre of making a U-turn on the issue and blaming it on the Delhi government.

Manish Sisodia said, "The Central government hatched a conspiracy with the Lieutenant Governor to permanently settle Rohingyas in Delhi by bypassing the elected Government of Delhi and the CM. The file on this issue clearly shows how officers were instructed to send the file to the LG, bypassing the elected Government of Delhi. Centre specifically instructed officers of Delhi government, Delhi Police to keep the CM and ministers in the dark and settle Rohingyas in Delhi behind their back." He alleged, "The Central Government made a u-turn on the issue and blamed it upon the Delhi Government after the hue-cry post Hardeep Puri's tweet." Manish Sisodia accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of

wanting to make a vote bank out of the refugee.

"PM Modi wants to make a vote bank out of Rohingyas just like Congress made a vote bank out of Bangladeshis. PM Modi says he has no money for free education and healthcare, but he is ready to spend crores on Rohingyas. Kashmiri Pandits get killed everyday, but PM Modi has adopted Rohingyas like 'ghar-jamais'. Minister Hardeep Puri claims Delhi Police will provide 24x7 security to Rohingyas; PM is even planning to give them permanent shops," Manish Sisodia said. He added, "If the Centre wants to settle Rohingyas, they should take them to a BJP-ruled state. Delhi government will oppose this move with all its might." "Since morning, many BJP people have been calling us expressing shock at the actions of their party. Today I want to appeal to all BJP leaders and workers to leave the party. BJP is the biggest traitor this country has ever seen. All Deshbhakt should leave the BJP and join the cause of the Aam Aadmi Party, if so be it," Manish Sisodia said.

Earlier today, Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri said that Rohingya refugees will be shifted to apartments in Bakkarwala in outer Delhi and will also be provided basic amenities and police protection. Later, the Union Home Ministry clarified that the Rohingya refugees are to be kept in detention centre till their deportation. The home ministry added the Delhi government had not declared the location where the Rohingya refugees have been shifted as "detention centre", and directed them to do so immediately.

Manish Sisodia, however, alleged that that Central government had "hatched a conspiracy" to permanently settle Rohingyas in Delhi without the knowledge of the city government.

"The Central Government intends to house thousands of Rohingyas in the EWS flats constructed by NDMC in Bakkarwala. The elected Government of Delhi was taken by sheer shock and surprise when they saw media reports confirming this today. What is

even more baffling is that a senior central government minister, Hardeep Puri, has gone on record about this and tweeted a series of information taking credit for the settlement of Rohingyas in these EWS flats of NDMC," Manish Sisodia said.

"It was found out that the elected Government of Delhi was deliberately kept in the dark by the favorite officers of the LG. It was even decided that the entire exercise will be undertaken by bypassing the concerned Home Minister of Delhi. File noting on this issue clearly shows how officers were instructed to send the file to the LG, bypassing the elected Government of Delhi," Sisodia added. The Delhi deputy CM claimed that following the backlash over the decision to give government flats to Rohingya refugee, the Central government and the Ministry of Home Affairs

made a total turn around and tried to blame the Delhi Government for this decision. "While the truth is that the Centre ordered the officers of the Delhi Government, Delhi Police officials, FRRO officials and forced the Chief Secretary to chair this meeting and take the decision, while ensuring that the elected government of Delhi and its Chief Minister or the Deputy CM in-charge of Home Department remain uninformed of the meeting and the decision," Manish Sisodia said. "The Delhi Government is clear that Rohingyas will not be allowed illegally settle in Delhi and the Delhi government will oppose this move with all its might. We will not compromise with the security of this nation and its people, no matter what," Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia said on Wednesday.

Why should state change policy? Tamil Nadu finance minister slams Centre over freebie debate

Hitting out at the Centre over the freebie debate, Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Dr P Thiaga Rajan questioned on what basis should the state government change their policy

(News Agency) Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Dr P Thiaga Rajan hit out at the Centre over its stance on freebies. Dr P Thiaga Rajan questioned why the Central government should determine what other state governments can do. "Either you must have a

constitutional basis for what you are saying or you must have some expertise that tells us that you know better than us. Or you must have some performance track that shows that you have grown the economy, brought down the debt, you have created jobs, and then we listen. When neither of this is true, why should we listen to somebody's view?," Dr P Thiaga Rajan asked. The Tamil Nadu finance minister claimed that he is outperforming the Union government

by a lot. The debate over the freebie culture has taken centre stage recently. Last week, Union

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asked the states doling out freebies to check the fiscal strength of the state government and make budgetary provision accordingly. Meanwhile, several top political leaders

have backed the freebies, claiming it is for the welfare of the people. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asserted that free education and healthcare are not freebies and said if people are given access to them, India can become the top country in the world. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao also hit out at the ruling BJP at the Centre over the freebies debate, alleging it was "insulting" to dub welfare schemes as freebies.



Covid Not Over Yet, Dr VK Paul Sounds Caution, Urges People to Take Precaution Dose

(News Agency) As COVID-19 cases rise in the country especially in Delhi and Mumbai, Dr VK Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog warned that the pandemic is still not over and emphasized the need for people to take precaution dose.

"We need to protect ourselves and need to take precaution dose. Those who have taken a second

dose and exceeded 6 months should take the precautionary dose soon. It was said there was slowness in the starting but in 75 days to Amrit Mahotsav, there has been an improvement in inoculation rate and it is satisfactory," Paul said, news agency ANI reported. The NITI Aayog member said there is no dearth of vaccines and eligible beneficiaries should go to the vaccination centre.

"It was 8 per cent of precaution dose vaccination rate and now it has reached 17 per cent at present within a month but this speed needs to increase," he added. Commenting on the surge in COVID infections,

Paul said, "Cases are around 16,000 and testing norms are there and we are only testing close contact when they have symptoms. We are also reporting



deaths and serious cases are also witnessed, although not as serious as they used to be in previous waves. Comorbidity patients could have a serious impact but the solution is precaution dose and when someone has taken precaution jab, then mortality and serious impact are reduced significantly. India recorded 9,062 new Covid infections recorded in the last 24 hours, taking the active caseload to 1,05,058. The daily positivity rate reached 2.49 per cent while weekly positivity rate escalated to 4.38 per cent, according to the Ministry of Health's data on Wednesday.

Great occasion greater pledge: Big vision of New India on I-Day

By Susmita Ghosh

Celebrating 75 years of India's freedom, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, will bring about a revolution at the grassroots level. In vision of a new India on 15th August, 2022. During his address from Lal Killa on the 76th anniversary of Indian Independence, he made his goal quite clear. His speech seemed to be the "vision document" of his government and its major initiatives for winning India the coveted tag of "developed nation" by 2047. Narendra Modi urged the nation to take five pledges termed as 'Panchpran' - Firstly to move forward with bigger resolves and resolve of developed India. Secondly, erase all traces of servitude, then be proud of our legacy; Fourthly, the strength of unity and finally, the duties of citizens which includes the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers. The resolve of his government was validated by the inauguration of path-breaking schemes like the National Digital Health Mission. According to the mission, every Indian will have a health ID. It is expected that this will revolutionize the Indian health sector. The National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) will ensure seamless healthcare services through the health card, he added. The vision of "Atma Nirvar Bharat" was also a key point in his speech. PM Modi especially mentioned the India-made Howitzer Guns delivering the ceremonial 21-gun salute on 15th August 2022 as one of many success stories of the 'Make in India' initiative. He added "Jai Anusandhan" to already existing "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisaan, Jai Vigyaan". He further stated that the only way forward is through education. Education is of utmost importance in building a self-reliant, modern, and new India. With this thinking, the country received the new National Education Policy. "Digital India" was another initiative mentioned by the prime minister. He said India's "Techade" (Tech-decade) is here as the government focuses on technologies like 5G, semiconductor

manufacturing, and optical fiber cables. These technologies, PM Modi said, will bring about a revolution at the grassroots level. In addition, Modi Govt has been hailed for programs like Ayushman Bharat. It is a health insurance scheme launched by PM Modi on September 23, 2018. Till April 2021, 75,532 Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres were made operational, and 44.24 crore people got treated there. By December 2022, the government is aiming to set up 1.5 lakh Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres in India. Similarly, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India campaign), which was launched on October 2, 2014, was hailed by PM Modi. Filth is considered one of the major problems in India and Modi gave the issue its due importance by launching a nationwide campaign. Many called it a masterstroke from Modi as it put him at par with Mahatma Gandhi in public perception and also gave people the message to act on hygiene and civic sense. Modi nominated notable personalities from the film industry, sports, media, business and other celebrities to promote the initiative. Lastly, he focused on Jan Dhan Yojana, which is now a successful scheme that was launched on 15 August 2014. Its main focus has been on reaching every household to provide credit facilities, pensions, and insurance to account holders. The present regime of the Indian government is trying its level best to turn India into a developed country and a global superpower within a fixed time frame. As per their determination, the steps taken by them are leading the country gradually towards the goal with a positive impact on the whole matter. Now, it will depend on the goodwill and maintaining the fundamental duties of the common Indian citizen if the dream of a new India will soon become a successful reality.

Narendra Modi urged the nation to take five pledges termed as 'Panchpran.' He added "Jai Anusandhan" to already existing "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisaan, Jai Vigyaan" "Digital India" was another initiative mentioned by the PM

The Digit Insurance IPO: promoters, performance and concerns

General insurance startup Digit Insurance, which is backed by Canadian billionaire Prem Watsa's Fairfax Group, has filed draft papers with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for an initial public offering (IPO) of Rs 1,250 crore via a fresh issue. The total size of the IPO, according to sources, could go much higher if the offer for sale (OFS) component — the shares that promoters of the company will offload — is accounted for.

Who are the promoters of Digit Insurance?

Digit Insurance's promoters are: Kamesh Goyal, who is the founder and chairman of the company; Go Digit Infoworks Services Private Limited, which is its holding company; Oben Ventures LLP; and FAL Corporation, which is part of Fairfax holdings. The promoters of the company will sell nearly 11 crore equity shares as part of the IPO. According to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP), Go Digit Infoworks Services Private Limited owns more than 83 per cent of Digit Insurance's total shares. A91 Partners, TVS Capital Funds, and Faering Capital each own 3.6 per cent of the company. Sequoia Capital holds a little more than 1 per cent in the company.

How has Digit Insurance performed in the private market?

Digit Insurance was the first startup to turn unicorn — businesses with a valuation of \$1 billion or more — in 2021, a year that saw more than 40 startups

achieve the coveted status. Last July, Digit Insurance had raised \$200 million at a valuation of \$3.5 billion. With the IPO, the company is aiming for a valuation of \$4.5 billion to \$5 billion.

What are the risks?

Analysts say that Digit Insurance's IPO would be an interesting one to come from the startup space because the market that it operates in, general insurance, is mostly dominated by older, and more established

corporations. This was not the case with some other new age companies like Zomato or Paytm, which do not have a direct competitor in the public markets. However, like many of the startups that have gone public so far, Digit Insurance is also not a profitable company. According to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP), Go Digit Infoworks Services Private Limited owns more than 83 per cent of Digit Insurance's total shares. A91 Partners, TVS Capital Funds, and Faering Capital each own 3.6 per cent of the company. Sequoia Capital holds a little more than 1 per cent in the company.

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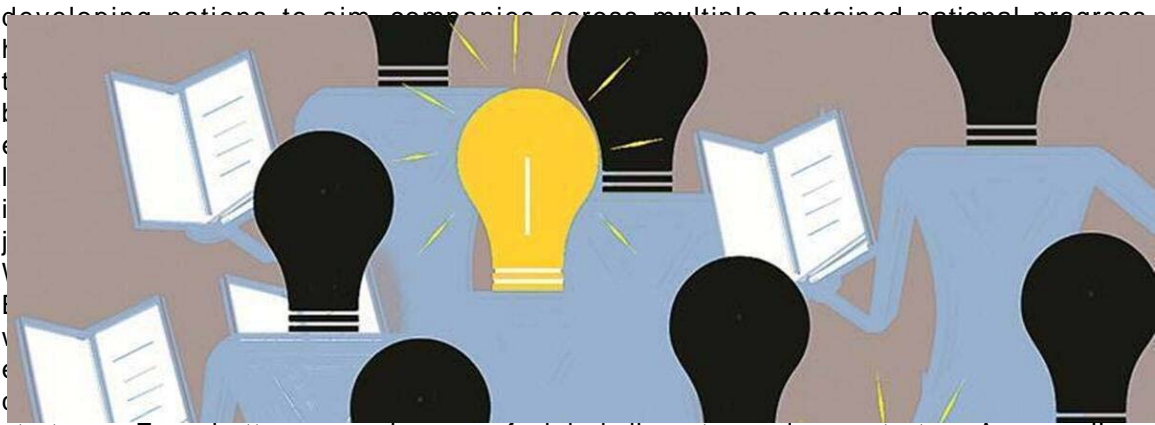
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An India where anyone can start a business is taking shape

Thanks to growing digitisation, the barrier to entry to becoming an entrepreneur is low and getting even lower

Two interesting events happened on the sidelines of a startup conference that I attended recently. I met a woman — a grandmother in her early sixties — who told me excitedly about the online food delivery business that she started a year ago. She had come from Meerut and could not wait to “scale” her “Awadhi chaat” across the world. I also met a 14-year-old girl from Mangalore who was building a “climate intelligence” app to enable farmers to better prepare for extreme weather events. The grandmother and the teenager, put together, captured the spirit of entrepreneurship that is sweeping India. From Meerut to Mangalore, we are building in India for the world. The relentless rise of entrepreneurial India is a spectacle that is not only astounding developed nations but also inspiring other



start-ups. Even better, more than half of these start-ups are now headquartered in non-metropolitan cities. The young Indian is learning and working today not with a job seeker’s mindset but with a job creator’s outlook. India at 75 is preparing for India forever. The largest democracy in the world is also the world’s fifth-largest economy with a median age below 30. India today has the perfect trifecta of ambition, skill and capital to create world-class

league of global disruptors. We have already created the greatest middle-class in the history of the world by lifting millions of people from poverty. Now we need to provide everyone with a fair chance to develop their talents. There are very few countries in the world whose history of advancement can parallel that of India. More so as it transitions from an agriculture and service-based economy to a knowledge-based and product economy. However,

demonstrates. An equaliser and uplifter, education is a component vital to nation-building, giving a billion-plus Indians a solid foundation to foster multi-year economic growth, upward social mobility, and autonomy. Today, India is a “can-do” nation. By making the right choices, anyone can succeed in India. We now need to work together with a full-potential mindset in this Amrit Kaal, which I see as 25 years of limitless possibilities

in this new land of opportunity. We must gather enough courage to take ownership of not just our own destiny but also improve other lives. It is by converting our many challenges into multiple opportunities that India will live up to its fullest potential. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “To believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest.”

I have no doubt that India will be the most powerful, happiest, and most generous country in the world before this century ends. You just have to meet one entrepreneurial grandmother and one entrepreneurial teenager to realise this yourself. Indeed, it was only in India that a teacher’s son who grew up in a village could live his dream of helping millions learn better.

Himachal Pradesh Assembly Polls: Free, Quality Education to Every Child in Govt Schools, Promises AAP

The Aam Aadmi Party on Wednesday announced “guaranteed free education” to every child in Himachal Pradesh if voted to power in the upcoming assembly elections. The party, which has popularised many such subsidised government schemes in Delhi, is looking to create a space for itself in the politics of the hill state. At a meeting of AAP workers and supporters in state capital



Shimla, Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia made the first of the electoral promises. It promised that every child in the state will be given free and quality education at government-run schools. Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann also attended the meeting. Giving other education-related guarantees, Sisodia said all schools will be made excellent on the lines of such schools Delhi, and that private schools will

not be allowed to illegally increase the fee. He further said temporary teachers will be made regular, teachers’ vacant posts will be filled up and they will not get any non-teaching work. The AAP is currently in power in neighbouring Punjab and Delhi. The party has already launched its campaign in the state with party convener and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal conducting some road shows. The party, among other issues, was targeting what it alleges “a failed education system” in the state so as to take on the Jai Ram Thakur-led government. The party also carried out a “video campaign” highlighting the “poor condition” of schools in the state.



FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE

BHADRESHKUMAR CHETANBHAI PATEL

Unlawful Flight to Avoid Prosecution - First Degree Murder, Second Degree Murder, First Degree Assault, Second Degree Assault, Dangerous Weapon with Intent to Injure



DESCRIPTION

Alias: Bhadreshkumar C. Patel	
Date(s) of Birth Used: May 15, 1990	Place of Birth: Kantrodi Ta Viramgam, Gujarat, India
Hair: Brown	Eyes: Brown
Height: 5'9"	Weight: 165 pounds
Sex: Male	Occupation: Employee of donut shop
Nationality: Indian	

REWARD

The FBI is offering a reward of up to \$100,000 for information leading to the arrest of Bhadreshkumar Chetanbhai Patel.

REMARKS

Patel was last known to be in the Newark, New Jersey, area.

CAUTION

Bhadreshkumar Chetanbhai Patel is wanted for allegedly killing his wife by striking her multiple times with an object while they were both working at a donut shop in Hanover, Maryland, on April 12, 2015. A local arrest warrant was issued in the District Court of Maryland for Anne Arundel County on April 13, 2015, and Patel was charged with first degree murder, second degree murder, first degree assault, second degree assault, and dangerous weapon with intent to injure. A federal arrest warrant was issued in the United States District Court, District of Maryland, Baltimore, Maryland, on April 20, 2015, after Patel was charged with unlawful flight to avoid prosecution.

SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

If you have any information concerning this person, please contact your local FBI office or the nearest American Embassy or Consulate.

Field Office: Baltimore

Salman Rushdie attack: Need to condemn, need to listen

To draw line between free speech and hate speech, you need to engage with inequalities of power-and inequality of access to free speech.

It is a surprisingly difficult call, writing about the stabbing of Salman Rushdie in western New York. What can one say beyond saying that it is simply wrong, wrong, wrong — despicable, barbaric, heartbreaking, tragic — but what is the point of multiplying adjectives? The world was a crappy place even before this happened. It is even crappier now. I am pretty much a free speech fundamentalist — almost, most of the time, and such an event merely reinforces that belief. Well, almost.

But it is impossible to finesse that “almost” in the context of the murderous attack that might well leave Rushdie with significant physical damage: One eye gone, liver compromised. Or, indeed, to seek to derive some ironic consolation from the fact that at least his voice is back — practically as soon as he got off the ventilator. As Aatish Taseer reported, Rushdie is back to talking, and joking. Free speech indeed — but at what cost!

But if I am forced to gloss that “almost”, I’d have to enter a few caveats — even as I recognise that now is not the time for caveats and reservations: Now is the time



for sorrow, for lamentation and deep, deep condemnation. There is nothing — repeat, nothing — to be said in favour or defence or even mitigation of this horrific act of violence. However, beyond the sorrow and the condemnation, there is a However. And if you hold a gun to my head, it is into that difficult terrain that I must now venture.

There is a complex negotiation — an uncertain and shifting border — between free speech and hate speech. Thus, what is free speech to one, may well appear like hate speech to another. And it is practically impossible to think about that ambiguous border without engaging with the inequalities of power in the world — and, indeed,

with the inequality of the access to free speech. After all, the “free speech” of the celebrity-with-a-megaphone is not quite comparable with the free speech of the forgotten millions who are free to whimper and to beg.

The right to free speech means nothing unless it includes the right to be heard, recognised, acknowledged. Then again, it is practically impossible, particularly in India, to think about the fraught possibility of free speech without engaging with the question of “hurt religious sentiments” and “hurt feelings”. And so, inevitably, one comes up against yet another opposition, that between the right not to be insulted and humiliated and mocked in one’s deeply held

beliefs, and the equally important right to blasphemy, to ridicule and to satire. After all, if one is forced always to be pussy-footing around people’s beliefs and pieties — surely infinite, particularly in diverse, hybrid, harsh societies which inevitably leave large numbers with hurt, and inflammable, sensitivities — one might as well say goodbye to free speech. Much more than free speech, it must be goodbye to the possibility of any culture that aspires to be more than merely cosmetic and decorative, goodbye to linguistic creativity and vivacity, because risk-taking is of the very nature of creative language and of culture.

My own preference in the matter must be clear enough by now, but I do not think that there is any directly philosophical resolution of this difficulty. One is forced to engage with the deep inequalities of power within particular societies and, surely, in the world as a whole. After all, the racist braying of the Western media in the context of the blonde and blue-eyed Ukrainian refugees in the early days of the conflict, was an eloquent demonstration of the fact that the vast majority of the world

that is not blonde and blue-eyed, and still washes up at the hostile borders of the West, had simply become invisible. And was certainly illiterate, certainly in no position to respond to what was being “said” in unmistakable terms. I fear that in such contexts of inequality, violence — horrific, “staged” violence — might well be the “free speech” of the powerless, of those who, having been s**t upon for centuries, must now be condemned to invisibility and silence. The undeniable suffering of the Jews of Europe was heard, and addressed, in the form of the creation of the state of Israel. The suffering of the people of Palestine, on the other hand, remains unaddressed and unheard, except in the form of random, and futile, acts of violence.

It is critical not to abandon nuance here. Thus, there is, always, the violence of the powerful — and if there is ever to be any global “reconciliation”, that is something that the colonising West, and the globalising West, the long history of gunboats and “sanctions”, so to speak, will have to acknowledge.

After Partha, Anubrata, Who’s Next?

Tension Palpable in WB as HC orders ED Check on 19 TMC Big Shots

The arrest of former Education Minister Partha Chatterjee in school jobs scam, followed by Birbhum Trinamool President Anubrata Mondal for alleged cattle smuggling has created an upheaval in West Bengal’s politics.

On August 8, a division bench of the Calcutta High Court ordered the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to be party in a public interest litigation concerning the assets and property details of 19 high-profile leaders of the ruling Trinamool Congress, including seven existing ministers of the Bengal Cabinet.

Since then, there’s tension among the TMC leaders. Amid whispers and hush-hush talks, there’s one question — Who will go next?

THE EFFECT

On August 12, Mayor Firhad Hakim, Ministers Arup Roy and



Jyotipriya Mullick filed an application in the Calcutta High Court, urging withdrawal of ED from a property-related case. The appeal was filed to the Division Bench of Chief Justice Prakash Srivastava and Justice Rajarshi Bhardwaj.

According to court sources, the case is likely to be heard on

September 12.

Hakim addressed a press conference last Saturday: “I have no fear of investigation. Everyone has social respect. Everyone is afraid to lose that social respect. There is no fear in going to jail. Many leaders of Bengal were in jail. But everyone is afraid of the way it plays out on the streets

and media’s kangaroo courts.”

THE ACCUSATION

While the TMC feels the Central Government is instigating the ED and CBI against them, on Monday, Bankura’s Bishupur MP Soumitra Khan gave an explosive statement.

Khan brought up TMC Spokesperson Kunal Ghosh’s meeting with Central Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. “Along with Kunal, many from the ruling party are giving information about their leaders outside.” However, Ghosh refuted the accusation, calling Soumitra ‘Lakshmichhara’.

ATTACK MODE

Since, the ED investigation began, the Opposition has not left any stone unturned to attack the ruling party. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) state president Sukanta Majumdar said, “Trinamool has gone haywire. Partha Chatterjee said many

things when Kunal Ghosh was in jail. Now Partha Chatterjee is in jail, so Kunal Ghosh is speaking. There is a fight within the party.”

TMC chief and CM Mamata Banerjee, at a pre-Independence Day event in Behala, said: “What to do if the ED and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) come to my house tomorrow? Do you come out on the streets? Can you move democratically? I will fight my battle alone, but you will have to fight it too.”

In this context, BJP All India Vice-President Dilip Ghosh remarked: “Earlier, Banerjee said that Kunal is a thief, Partha is a thief and Madan is a thief. She also named Mukul. All were arrested. Now she is saying her own name. I think there is a possibility that the ED will summon her.”

Arvind Kejriwal, Ahead Of The Others, Stakes A Claim To 2024

The battle for 2024 at the moment is not about Kaun Banega PM (who will be PM) but Kaun Banega Challenger (who will be challenger). The reason is pretty obvious. The Opposition space is getting hotter.



message and a model for how to implement what it's promising. Aam Aadmi Party and its political managers are convinced that the Delhi Chief Minister has all these qualities, and more, to challenge Mr. Narendra Modi come 2024. Aam Aadmi Party's game plan hinges on three factors that it believes will help its leader emerge ahead of other Opposition aspirants. The first is his image. The Delhi Chief Minister enjoys a clean image, there are no dynastic linkages or graft charges against him. The second is the delivery and track record of his government. He runs a reasonably popular government, largely on account of free electricity and water services, and his government has reinvented admirably the health care and education systems in the capital. He has promised to replicate this model of governance if given a chance at the Centre and it is why he has taken on the PM wholeheartedly on the issue of whether welfare schemes can be discounted as "revaris" or freebies.

It is by now crystal clear that no political party is in a position to take on and defeat the BJP on its own. The only chance lies in all Opposition parties combining ahead of 2024. In such a

situation, the one most likely to emerge as the challenger to the Prime Minister has to be someone who is acceptable to the rest of the Opposition. The Delhi Chief Minister's strategists believe that Mamata Banerjee, and whoever the Congress projects, will cancel each other out, and the revolving-door alliances of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar are likely to go against him, thereby giving Kejriwal the edge. The latter has tried to set himself apart from his colleagues in the Opposition with a careful positioning on issues like Hindutva, which don't pit him against the BJP's ideology. While Rahul Gandhi and Mamata Banerjee have at times stridently opposed Hindutva, Arvind Kejriwal has been careful not to annoy right-wing voters by soft-pedaling the issue. His strategy is to present himself as a right-wing alternative to Prime Minister Modi. He has also been careful in taking on both the national parties. The PM in his Independence Day speech attacked the Congress by focusing on nepotism and corruption; the Delhi Chief Minister has added own spin to it by adding 'dostwad', an undisguised allusion to the ruling dispensation's industrialist

friends.

He has also made his plans clear while Mamata Banerjee, Rahul Gandhi and Nitish Kumar are yet to get themselves organized. The West Bengal Chief Minister had generated a fair amount of momentum after emphatically beating the BJP in May this year but her impetuosity, and her decision to not support the Opposition's candidate for Vice President appeared churlish and severely diminished her acceptability in the Opposition ranks. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been widely spoken of as the likely challenger to Prime Minister Modi in 2024. Though he has tried to play down the speculation for now, he remains a serious contender. Nitish Kumar brings a lot to the table. His image is untainted and has done a fairly good job of governing a turbulent state like Bihar. He is articulate, has a vision and a governance model, and cannot be accused of being a beneficiary of dynastic politics. He commands a substantial following amongst the OBCs, women and minorities, and his presence in the Opposition camp can possibly make a huge dent in the BJP's fortunes not just in Bihar, but also, crucially, in Uttar Pradesh.

The latest to throw his hat in the ring is Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. He used the launch of the "Make India No.1" campaign to position himself as the principal challenger to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His speech made clear his national ambition. In recent days, Nitish Kumar has also indicated that running for PM is entirely within the realm of possibility for him. Mamata Banerjee will certainly want a shot at the same job. And the Congress will want to serve up Rahul Gandhi for it.

So to try and take "first mover advantage", Arvind Kejriwal is launching a nationwide tour to extend his party's footprint and also build a national profile for himself. In addition to Delhi, Aam Aadmi Party is banking on a good

showing in states like Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and Goa to help reinforce that it can and will soon replace the Congress as the main challenger to the BJP at the national level. Its strategy has been to provide real and tangible benefits through its populist schemes, successfully amplifying these achievements through effective communication, and strong organization skills that serve it well in elections. Prashant Kishor, arguably the leading political strategist in the country, is credited with the view that there are three qualities or attributes which are essential for anyone or any political party aspiring to challenge Prime Minister Narendra Modi: to have a messenger, a clear and appealing

BJP's Revamp Gives Away Its Nerves About Karnataka - And Yogi

Major purging in the BJP. Nitin Gadkari being dropped from the party's highest decision-making bodies - the BJP Parliamentary Board and Election Committee - has a very strong message for the party and also for the RSS's top leadership. That the BJP, under Modi, will not tolerate any kind of discordant note, be it in the government or in the party. Nitin Gadkari is no pushover and is probably the only leader of stature who has still not fallen in line with Modi. In the last eight years, he has emerged as one of the most efficient ministers in the Modi Cabinet but also as a leader who speaks his own mind. Now he is paying the price for being outspoken. Under Modi, the BJP has metamorphosed into a party which has forgotten that it used to profess the value of collective leadership and opinions of



senior members of the party. In the era of "Atal-Advani", their supremacy was never challenged, but in the Cabinet and within the organisation, differences of opinion and disagreements were welcome. And once the party had taken a decision, it was expected that everybody would fall in line and outspokenness outside the party forum was not permitted. But since Modi has taken command, no one is allowed to

differ with the top boss, neither in the Cabinet nor at party forums. To follow the leader verbatim is the only option. If Indian democracy has since 2014 moved towards one-party-rule at the Centre, after a gap of approximately 30 years, then the BJP has shrunk into a one-man-party. Modi is the leader and Modi is the party, nothing else matters.

The RSS is the BJP's mother organisation. The RSS is also the

source of the party's ideology. A large number of its cadre derive inspiration from the RSS. So for any BJP leader, it is very difficult to defy the RSS. Modi, who has been a pracharak, knows this well. Initially, he had to accommodate the wishes of the RSS but slowly, he took total control of the party and today, the BJP under Modi has freed itself from the moral and organisational grip of the RSS. When Atal Bihari Vajpayee was Prime Minister, the RSS dictated terms to the government. The verbal assault by then RSS chief K Sudarshan on the Vajpayee government is still vivid in my memory. Mohan Bhagwat has shown more maturity vis-a-vis the Modi government. He has been very subdued in criticism but with the appointment of Dattatreya Hosabale as second-in-command in the RSS, Bhagwat has been further weakened. Now Modi is

totally autonomous. Nitin Gadkari's sacking is a significant pointer in that direction.

Nitin Gadkari is a favourite of the RSS, especially of Mohan Bhagwat. He was chosen to lead the BJP after the BJP's loss in 2009 elections, ignoring the claims of big leaders like Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj, Anant Kumar and Venkaiah Naidu. The RSS also wanted to project him as Prime Ministerial candidate for 2014 elections but a major corruption scandal linked to his businesses cancelled that plan. Modi was the only option left and the RSS, led by Bhagwat, grudgingly accepted him the PM candidate.

In fact, Modi detractors had convinced themselves in 2019 that if the BJP were to fall short of a majority, Gadkari could emerge as its leader.

Srinagar: Century-old house, now an art museum

The downtown area of Kashmir Valley's Srinagar city has had a rich history of culture and art. In order to revive and make the younger generation aware of the art, craft and heritage of Kashmir, a century-old property in Srinagar's Aali Kadal area has been converted into an art centre and a museum.

An initiative by the Help foundation 'Bait Ul Meeras' is one of the biggest art centres and museums in the Kashmir Valley. The property is a four-storey heritage house completely showcasing the rich architecture of the Valley. It has hundreds of century old artefacts on display from traditional dresses to utensils, clothing, craft, jewellery and other artefacts. It took them more than a year to put together these artefacts for the display.

'To educate the youth about the rich heritage of Jammu and Kashmir, we started the Bait Ul Meeras art and culture centre. Under the guidance of Nighat Shafi, chairman of Help Foundation, we were able to create a space for the people to work on their creative sides. We not only



display the heritage artefacts here but also showcase artisans making Kashmiri craft products like carpets, shawls and pottery. The only motive for us coming here is to make children of the valley aware about the rich heritage we have had. Our kids hardly have any idea about the history of the valley, and to show them what we were and what we had is the main focus. From our costumes to our utensils to jewellery, we have put up everything," said Hakim Javid,

Coordinator.

Bait Ul Meeras has also opened doors to the locals to donate or showcase their valuable collections of old artefacts. Some of the heritage ornaments and utensils have been donated by the people, especially young students. The staff keeps looking for artefacts from across the valley that can be put on display.

"We are inviting school students to come and visit the centre and we have had a great response. Some children have donated stuff

towards the centre that belonged to their grandparents or had it in the family. And that shows how much these youngsters are interested in saving the history and preserving it for the next generation to see as well. We are also holding workshops for the children, from writing to painting to showing them how artisans work on Kashmir crafts.," said Hakim Javid, Coordinator.

The rare artefacts on display in the museum are centuries old and hold a great historical

value. Students come for workshops over the weekend and storytelling sessions are held in the centre too. When the foundation had approached the owner of the property to open such a space in this heritage house, he had shown keen interest too.

'I own the property and I took care of the infrastructure; the rest was done by the help foundation. I am very thankful to them and I am glad they took care of the heritage building and used it in the best way. They have showcased all our culture and heritage for the younger generation to see. It feels extremely nice when I see young kids visiting the place with their parents. It's a great effort and people should come forward and help them as well. The tourists should come here, and they are also inviting tourists to come and visit the place. Some tourists have started to come," said Farooq Ahmad Qasid, Owner Heritage Property.

Kashmir Valley has rich culture, heritage and crafts. The government along with the locals are trying not only to promote the crafts and arts of the valley but also revive it.

Who is Bilkis Bano, who was gangraped during 2002 Gujarat riots?

Bilkis Bano was brutally gangraped during the communal violence that followed the Godhra train-burning incident. She was 21 years old at the time, and five months pregnant. Seven members of her family were killed by rioters

Eleven men who were sentenced to life imprisonment in the Bilkis Bano gangrape case of 2002 were released from Godhra sub-jail on Monday (August 15) after a panel set up by the Gujarat government approved their application for remission of the sentence.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Raj Kumar said the remission application was considered because the convicts had completed 14 years in jail, and factors such as "age, nature of the crime, behaviour in prison and so on". Bilkis was brutally gangraped during the communal violence that followed the Godhra train-burning incident. She was 21 years old at the time, and five months pregnant. Seven members of her family were killed by rioters.



Who is Bilkis Bano, and what happened to her in 2002?

On February 28, 2002, Bilkis fled her village, Radhikpur in Dahod district, after violence erupted in the state in the aftermath of the previous day's incident at Godhra station, in which the Sabarmati Express was set on fire, resulting in the deaths of dozens of pilgrims and kar sewaks returning from Ayodhya.

Bilkis was accompanied by her

daughter Saleha, who was three and a half years old at the time, and 15 other members of her family. They fled fearing a re-run of the arson and looting that had taken place in their village on the occasion of Bakr-Id a few days previously.

On March 3, 2002, the family reached Chapparwad village. According to the chargesheet, they were attacked by about 20-30 people armed with sickles,

swords, and sticks. Among the attackers were the 11 accused men.

Bilkis, her mother, and three other women were raped and brutally assaulted. Of the 17-member group of Muslims from Radhikpur village, eight were found dead, six were missing. Only Bilkis, a man, and a three-year-old survived the attack.

Bilkis remained unconscious for at least three hours after the

attack. After she regained consciousness, she borrowed clothes from an Adivasi woman, and met a Home Guard who took her to the Limkheda police station. She registered a complaint with Head Constable Somabhai Gori who, according to the CBI, "suppressed material facts and wrote a distorted and truncated version" of her complaint.

Bilkis was taken to a public hospital for medical examination only after she reached the Godhra relief camp. Her case was taken up by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and Supreme Court, which ordered an investigation by the CBI. The CBI concluded that the post mortem examination was carried out shoddily in order to protect the accused.

(Contd. on page 29)

In BJP Overhaul, Modi Shows Nagpur - And Party - Who's In Charge

Yogi Adityanath, now in his second term as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, is a saffron heavyweight; in two years, he will play a key role in how many of the state's 80 Lok Sabha seats are won by his party. Yet the BJP's major overhaul of its top body today did not see him making an entry in the parliamentary board. Others who have been publicly rebuffed are Shivraj Singh Chauhan, the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, and RSS favourite, Nitin Gadkari, who is a Union Minister.

The parliamentary board adds BS Yediyurappa or "BSY", the Karnataka veteran, in an acknowledgement of the fact that the state votes later next year. The Karnataka government led by Basavaraj S Bommai, who is BSY's protégé, is shakier than the BJP would like and BSY's cooperation in stabilizing it and warding off in-fighting that is often on public display is essential to the party's strategy.

Another arrival to the parliamentary board is Sarbananda Sonowal, perhaps as compensation for being made to relinquish his post as Chief Minister of Assam to Himanta Biswa Sarma last year



in May.

The reconstitution of the parliamentary board and the Central Election Committee had been postponed for nearly two years. The only survivor from the Vajpayee era of the BJP who has been retained in the new parliamentary board is Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

For Shivraj Singh Chouhan, 63, the writing is on the wall. He has never been able to shake off his past as a one-time prime ministerial aspirant, propped up by Sushma Swaraj and LK Advani. "This term is a bonus for him because (Jyotiraditya) Scindia joined us and toppled the Kamal Nath govt. Shivraj Singh Chouhan wanted to promote his family in politics, and Modi does not approve. It will be a

governorship or the 'Margdarshak Mandal' (defunct advisory committee) for him next," warned a senior BJP leader, talking to me for this column. Nitin Gadkari being dropped is no surprise to BJP insiders or to any political observer. It's been the long kiss goodbye for him for a while now. Sources say his flaunting of the "Nagpur connection", the RSS headquarters which he visits every week, has not gone down well with the central leadership, read Modi. Modi now calls all the shots in the Sangh and the RSS can only look on as Nitin Gadkari is pushed out of power equations. The other Nagpur favourite, Devendra Fadnavis, has been publicly applauded for swallowing his pride and becoming Deputy Chief

Minister in the Maharashtra government which was formed only because of Fadnavis' pulling out the rug from under Uddhav Thackeray's feet. Fadnavis' reward - being named to the Central Election Committee. But it is the overlooking of Yogi Adityanath that is the boldface headline of the BJP's changes today. His rising stature as a Hindutva icon does not sit well with PM Modi and Amit Shah. The fact that other Chief Ministers including Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Basavaraj S Bommai have tried to emulate him or cited him as a governance mascot is unlikely to win Yogi Adityanath brownie points with his top bosses. The star campaigner and chief draw of the party must remain the PM, according to them, and Yogi Adityanath being promoted as the "natural heir" to Modi's legacy is not welcome. Much of this has to be carefully handled since Yogi Adityanath has proved his immense popularity, winning a spectacular re-election despite it taking place just after his mismanagement of the Delta wave which was captured in the unforgettable images of dead bodies floating down the Ganga. Yogi Adityanath is also a leader

tough to rein in and has to be handled delicately.

Five days ago, Sunil Bansal, a senior BJP official was moved from Uttar Pradesh where he had been deputed for seven years as the most trusted aide of Amit Shah. Sunil Bansal, an RSS pracharak (full-timer) from Rajasthan, has been a powerful organisational secretary of the RSS. But Yogi Adityanath did not get along with him and senior BJP sources told me, "Bansal-ji Yogi Sarkar ki shadow hain. Khushi aur gussa dono koh Delhi kei kaan mein rakhte the. MLAs unke paas jaate the (Bansal was the eyes and ears of Modi and Shah. All MLAs used to go to him.)"

Yogi Adityanath was happy when Sunil Bansal moved out of Lucknow and was made General Secretary in charge of West Bengal and poll-bound Telangana, both states that the BJP is keen to take over. Sources say that now Yogi Adityanath will realise that his victory was very short-term and Modi continues to call all the shots. That is in fact the unstated - and unnecessary, to some extent - message from the revamp. That Modi alone decides what goes. And the others must fall in line.

Will Amit Shah Intervene In Bilkis Bano Case?

August 15, 2022. Seventy-five years of India's independence. Har Ghar Tiranga. The country heard the Prime Minister wax eloquent in his address from the Red Fort about his inner feelings of distress when women are insulted, about the need to preserve the dignity of women, of "Nari Shakti" and so on. "Who can I share these thoughts of distress with, if not with you, my fellow citizens?" he asked.

On that very same day, 11 criminals, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment for the most heinous crimes of gang-rape and murder in the Bilkis Bano case, walked out of a jail in Gujarat, courtesy the government. Is this the way to develop "Nari Shakti" and protect the dignity of women? To understand the enormity of the injustice of this order, we need to go back twenty years.

March 3, 2002. Gujarat. Near Randhikpur village in Dohad district. A group of 17 men and women in a truck are fleeing for their lives. They are being hunted down by men in jeeps. The truck is stopped. A pregnant woman



carrying her 3-year-old daughter is trapped by the hunters. Her child is torn away from her arms and smashed to the ground. The child dies before her mother's eyes. The woman is gang-raped. Her sister and cousin are with her. One of them had given birth just a few days earlier. They too are gang-raped. The new-born baby is killed. Fourteen of the group are butchered. She is left for dead, but she survives. She is reunited with her husband who was elsewhere on that day. At first, she cannot speak. But with immense personal courage, she transforms from a victim to a survivor, and from a

survivor to a fighter. She knows and identifies the perpetrators of the crime.

But she finds that at every step of her fight for justice, the government is supporting the men who raped her, who had killed her family. The FIR is manipulated; the medical reports and post-mortem of the bodies omit important details of injuries; evidence is destroyed as all the dead are buried by the police themselves; the body of her 3-year-old disappears; the prosecution sides with the accused; the lower court hearing her case upholds all the falsehood and the lies. The case is closed.

She perseveres.

The National Human Rights Commission receives her petition and conducts its own inquiry and supports her case. She appeals to the Supreme Court. In 2004, the case is reopened and referred to the CBI. It is later transferred to the Mumbai High Court from Gujarat as the top court upholds her plea that justice could be subverted given the pressure of a hostile environment. 12 of the 20 accused are arrested. She is the only direct witness. She is constantly under threat. She has no fixed address, moving from one place to another. In 2008, the Special Court sentences 11 accused (one died during the trial) to life imprisonment, but exonerates the police and doctors who were accused of being complicit in fudging reports. In May 2017, on an appeal from the CBI, the Mumbai High Court upholds the sentencing and also finds the doctors and police guilty. She has mixed feelings.

In that same week, in another case of gang-rape, a case named as "Nirbhaya", a court sentences the gang-rapists to death. Why not in her case? Are these not double

standards? In 2019, the Supreme Court awards her compensation of 50 lakh rupees, a government job and a house. The Gujarat government gives her the money under court orders, but neither the job nor the house. Yet, she sees the possibility of rebuilding her life. Then, on August 15, 2022, she, Bilkis Bano, learns that the criminals are free men. She is back to the nightmare of 20 years ago.

A debate has started about the legality of the procedure adopted by the Gujarat government to release the convicts. The Supreme Court in May this year, hearing a petition from one of the accused, had held that granting remission lay with the Gujarat State government. It also said that it should go by the 1992 policy for remission which was in place when the conviction was made. According to the explanation of the Gujarat government, since these guidelines did not specify any exemptions to the remissions, such as against rapists or murderers, the release of the convicts is legal.

17 Chinese warplanes enter Taiwan's air defence zone as Beijing amps attack

China has been extending its military exercises over Taiwan, raising major concerns over the potential military conflict in the region

(SAI Bureau) A day after China said that it had carried out exercises near Taiwan, on August 16, Taiwan's defence ministry said that People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft and military movements were recorded in its region. Stating that Taiwan's forces monitored Beijing's activities, the ministry said that they retaliated against the drill via CAP (controlled air patrol), naval vessels and land-ballistic missile systems.

"5 PLAN vessels and 17 PLA aircraft around our surrounding region were detected today (August 16, 2022) until 1700(GMT+8). #ROCArmedForces have monitored the situation and responded to these activities with aircraft in CAP, naval vessels, and land-based missile systems," Taiwan's ministry of defence shared on Twitter.

Detailing the latest alleged Chinese encroachment, Taiwan's defence ministry shared graphics of the location of Chinese intruders and said that out of 17 PLA aircraft and five PLA vessels, 10 had flown past the 'east part of Taiwan strait'. It may be noted that the PLA's latest exercise surfaced after the Chinese



military announced that it would conduct fresh drills around President Tsai Ing-wen-led country. Against the backdrop of US lawmakers' visiting the country, an alert and seemingly provoked China issued a White Paper with regards to its intentions in Taiwan, as testimony that Taiwan belonged to China. China has claimed that American lawmakers' trip to Taiwan amounted to a gross violation of China's sovereignty with interference in its territory and internal matters. The US

lawmakers met with Taiwan's president during the early hours of Monday and experts viewed the meeting as less explicit than US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's. In fact, subsequent to Pelosi's visit, China issued a statement that it was terminating ties with the US on issues ranging from maritime security to climate change. On August 13, amid US legislators' visit to the east Asian country, Taiwan's defence ministry detailed that nearly 13 Chinese planes crossed Taiwan

and continued their military drills near the island. A fuming China, upon the arrival of US lawmakers, issued statements wherein it declared that any diplomatic support to Taiwan or 'external interference' in the feud would be 'inconsequential'. "We will not renounce the use of force, and we reserve the option of taking all necessary measures. This is to guard against external interference and all separatist activities," a statement by China read.

CHINA-TAIWAN DISPUTE

Taiwan, situated on the east of China's coast, is claimed by China after the two broke away in 1949, which was consequent to a civil uprising and war. The Communists held the reins over mainland China while rivals established their government in Taiwan. Reportedly, since 2019, China has been carrying out military drills and exercises over Taiwan's territory in a bid to establish Xi Jinping's government and realign with the breakaway island. The military advancements have kept pouring in despite being repeatedly snubbed by Taiwan's president.

Why docking of Chinese spy vessel Yuan Wang 5 at Sri Lanka port is dangerous for India

Here's why India should be concerned about the Chinese spy vessel Yuan Wang 5 docking at Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port



(SAI Bureau) China's 'dual use spy' vessel Yuan Wang 5 docked at Sri Lanka's Hambantota port on Tuesday despite objections raised by India. The tracking and satellite support vessel will stay in Sri Lankan waters from August 16-22. On July 12, Sri Lanka's foreign ministry had first cleared the arrival of Yuan Wang 5 at Hambantota Port. However, the Chinese vessel's visit to Hambantota Port, initially scheduled for August 11 and 17, was deferred after India raised objections with the Sri Lanka government. China refuted India's claim and stated that the visit by its ship was only for supplies and refuelling. The Sri Lankan government finally cleared the arrival of the Chinese vessel between August 16 and 22. It

must be noted that China has taken Hambantota Port for a 99-year lease as a debt swap with Sri Lanka. India is concerned about the possibility of Yuan Wang 5's tracking systems attempting to snoop on its installations in the peninsula. Here are the reasons why India is concerned about the presence of the Chinese vessel near its southern tip. The vessel has state-of-the-art technology, making it one of the newest generations of tracking ships in the Chinese Navy. It can be used for transoceanic aerospace observation using satellite pictures. Known for its excellent record in space and satellite tracking, it has been used for many months now. It can track the launch of satellites, rocket launchers, and also intercontinental ballistic missiles.

20 people killed in bus-oil tanker crash in Pakistan

As many as 20 people were killed in a bus-oil tanker crash in Pakistan's Punjab province on Tuesday

(SAI Bureau) At least 20 passengers who suffered burn injuries were shifted to Nishtar Hospital in Multan where their condition is stated to be critical. "Most bodies of the perished passengers are burnt completely and beyond recognition. These bodies will be handed over to the families after a DNA test," he said. He further said after the accident the fire engulfed both vehicles and the rescue operation was very difficult for the rescue and firefighter teams. Punjab Chief Minister Parvez Elahi has expressed grief over the loss of precious lives in the accident and directed the health authorities concerned to provide better treatment to the injured. He also directed the administration to cooperate with the families of the deceased to identify them.

'Start of cooperation': Sri Lanka President thanks India for Dornier aircraft

Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe said India gifting a Dornier aircraft is a start of cooperation between the Navys of both nations



(SAI Bureau) Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe thanked India for gifting a Dornier maritime surveillance aircraft to the island nation on Monday. The aircraft will enhance Sri Lankan Navy's maritime surveillance capabilities and bolster the India-Sri Lanka defence ties. "This is the start of cooperation between

our Air force, Navy and Indian Navy in maritime surveillance," Wickremesinghe said. President Wickremesinghe further said that history has brought both nations together like two sides of the same coin and the two countries must forge ahead together. Vice Chief of Indian Navy Vice Admiral S N Ghormade, who is on a two-day visit to the country, accompanied by Indian High Commissioner in Colombo Gopal Baglay, handed over the maritime surveillance aircraft to the Sri Lanka Navy at the Sri Lanka Air Force base in Katunayake, adjoining the Colombo international airport. The aircraft will be flown

and maintained only by 15 Sri Lanka Airforce crew who were specifically trained in India for four months. The team consists of pilots, observers, engineering officers and technicians. They will be supervised by the government of India technical team attached to the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF). The team would undertake comprehensive supervision of aircraft, airframe, aircraft support equipment, ground support equipment, and relevant documents and would ascertain the serviceability of all the assets. Dornier was handed over to Sri Lanka a day before a

high-tech Chinese missile and satellite tracking ship docks at the island nation's Hambantota port, despite India's concerns. The ship was originally scheduled to arrive at the port on August 11 but its arrival was delayed in absence of permission by the Sri Lankan authorities. Sri Lanka had asked China to defer the visit amid India's concerns over it. On Saturday, Colombo granted the port access to the vessel from August 16 to August 22. There were apprehensions in New Delhi about the possibility of the vessel's tracking systems attempting to snoop on Indian installations while being on its way to the Sri Lankan port.

Days after seeking help in securing IMF loan, Pakistan army chief Bajwa likely to visit US

Last month Bajwa reached out to Washington requesting help in early disbursement of funds from the IMF for cash-strapped Pakistan. Bajwa's intervention was criticised by various Pakistani leaders including former prime minister Imran Khan

(SAI Bureau) Islamabad/ Washington: The United States and Pakistani officials are considering various options for Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa's visit to Washington in late August or early September, according to a

media report on Tuesday. A date will soon be finalised, the Dawn newspaper reported, quoting a diplomatic source as saying General Bajwa is expected to retire in November. Since the visit has not yet been officially confirmed, neither side has

announced the agenda of the talks Bajwa is likely to hold in Washington, the report said.

But diplomatic circles and think-tank experts point out that both sides have been trying to arrange such a visit for more than a year now. They also refer to various recent events and statements that might be discussed if and when the general visits Washington. We remain engaged with a range of stakeholders in Pakistan, (including) those currently in the government and with a broad array of

others, the report quoted US State Department spokesperson Ned Price as saying. Last month, in an unusual move, Bajwa reached out to Washington to request help in securing an early disbursement of funds from the International Monetary Fund for cash-strapped Pakistan. He spoke with US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and later a State Department official rejected media speculation that the call was linked to the current political situation in Pakistan. Later, the general also spoke

with Commander US Centcom General Michael Erik Kurilla and, according to an official statement, the two discussed matters of mutual interests, regional stability as well as defence and security cooperation in detail. Bajwa's intervention was criticised by some Pakistani leaders, including former prime minister Imran Khan. Khan said that it is not the job of the head of the military to deal with economic matters and his intervention means the country is getting weaker.

Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi jailed for six more years

(SAI Bureau) Naypyidaw: Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been convicted of corruption charges on Monday, adding six more years to her prison sentence. Aung San Suu Kyi has been alleged to have used her position to rent public land at below-market prices. The ousted leader has been sentenced to three years for each of the four cases but the sentences for three of them will be served concurrently, giving her a total of six more years in prison, Al Jazeera reported citing a legal official. Suu Kyi, 77, had already been sentenced to 11 years in prison on sedition, corruption and other charges after the military detained her in February 2021 as it seized power in Myanmar. However, Aung San Suu Kyi denied all the charges and her lawyers are expected to appeal, reported Al Jazeera. Lambasting Myanmar's Junta, the foreign minister for Myanmar's National Unity Government, Zin Mar Aung, said the decision was "yet another act of (the) junta's

desperate attempts to discredit those democratically elected" and called for Aung San Suu Kyi's release. As per analysts, numerous charges against Aung San Suu Kyi and her allies are part of the military's attempt to remove the popular politician from politics ahead of an election it has said it will hold next year. Meanwhile, Malaysia's Foreign Minister Saifuddin Abdullah who has been pressing the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to discuss the issues of Myanmar, which is also a member of the 10-member group, also condemned the latest jail term, according to Al Jazeera. Myanmar later extended the state of emergency in the country for six more months, just ahead of the one-year anniversary of the military coup. Myanmar's military leader Senior General Min Aung Hlaing is the one who led a coup against an elected civilian government in 2021 and detained Aung San Suu Kyi over alleged election irregularities.

4 killed as BRT project girder falls on car in Bangladesh's Dhaka

Four people were killed when a girder fell on their car from a crane during Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project work in Dhaka

(SAI Bureau) Four people, including children, were killed when a girder fell on their car from a crane during Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project work on Dhaka-Mymensingh road at Uttara in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Monday. The deceased were identified as Rubel (50), Jharna (28), Jannat (6) and Zakaria (2). Two people, Hridoy and Riya, were injured in the accident. The accident took place at around 3:30 pm. Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohammad

any passengers left inside the private car after the girder is removed. Rescue operations are ongoing." Meanwhile, BRT Managing Director (MD) Shafiqul Islam claimed that the incident occurred due to a mechanical fault. He said, "While we were taking the girder from one place to another by crane, the crane probably tilted and the girder fell down." He further added, "At the



Mohsin of Uttara West police station confirmed the incident. Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohammad Mohsin of Uttara West police station said, "A girder fell on a private car while being lifted by a crane. It will be possible to tell if there are

moment, I cannot say anything without knowing the details. This is a mechanical problem. It is not related to security measures." Traffic movement was disrupted due to rescue operations.

Increased security but little hope as Taliban mark year in power in Afghanistan

As the Taliban celebrates the completion of one year since it took power in Afghanistan, here's a look at the state of affairs in the country

(SAI Bureau) The Taliban and their supporters waved the group's black and white flag on the streets of Afghanistan on Monday to celebrate a year since they marched into the capital and took power after a stunning series of battlefield victories.

In the 12 months since the United States' chaotic withdrawal, some Afghans have welcomed improved security but struggled with poverty, drought, malnutrition and the fading hope among women that they will have a decisive role in the country's future.

Some men fired into the air in Kabul and a few hundred people, including supporters, fighters, and officials gathered at the square in front of the U.S. Embassy to mark the day. They held banners including the slogan "death to the United States".

"This day is the day of the victory of truth over falsehood and the day of salvation and freedom of the Afghan nation," said Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid in a statement.

In a ceremony attended by Taliban government ministers, acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi said their rule had brought security where the United States had failed and said the group wanted positive relationships with the



world. "We want good relationship with all countries, we won't let Afghanistan's territory be used against anyone," he said, adding they wanted to address the ongoing challenges in the country.

The country is physically safer than it was when the hardline Islamist movement was fighting against U.S.-led foreign forces and their Afghan allies, although a local offshoot of Islamic State has carried out several attacks.

Yet that relative security cannot mask the scale of the challenge the Taliban face in setting Afghanistan on a path of economic growth and stability. There are

huge pressures on the economy, caused in large part by the country's isolation as foreign governments refuse to recognise its rulers. Development aid upon which the country relied so heavily has been cut as the international community demands that the Taliban respect the rights of Afghans, particularly girls and women whose access to work and education has been curtailed.

The Taliban is demanding that \$9 billion in central bank reserves held overseas be returned, but talks with the United States face hurdles, including the U.S. demands that a Taliban leader subject to sanctions

step down from his position as second in command at the bank.

The Taliban refuse to cede to these demands, saying that they respect all Afghans' rights within the framework of their interpretation of Islamic law.

And until there is a major shift in either side's position, there is no immediate fix in sight for spiralling prices, rising joblessness and hunger that would get worse as winter sets in.

"We are all heading to darkness and misfortune," said Amena Arezo, a doctor from southeastern Ghazni province. "People have no future, especially women."

OVER HALF IN POVERTY

Roughly 25 million Afghans are now living in poverty - well over half the population and the United Nations estimates that up to 900,000 jobs could be lost this year as the economy stalls. Fatima, who lives in Herat province in the west of the country, said she had noticed improved security during the past year, but noted with dismay that schools for girls had closed and there was a lack of job opportunities for women. Like many Afghans, she asked that only her first name be used for fear of reprisal.

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China: Yangtze river shrinks; factories shut as drought hits hydropower

(SAI Bureau) China's Yangtze river has dried up in parts, forcing the regions that are dependent on the longest river to deploy pumps and cloud-seeding rockets. Yangtze's water levels have been depleted due to a drought, which is also posing risks to the crops. Reports have mentioned that the heatwave is set to last another two weeks. As parts of the nation continue to struggle, the ministry of water resources said in a notice on Wednesday (August 17) that drought throughout the Yangtze river basin was "adversely affecting drinking water security of rural people and livestock, and the growth of crops." The Yangtze River Water Resources Commission said that rainfall in the Yangtze river drainage area fell about 30% in July and is 60% lower than normal in August. Drought hits hydropower Drought is also causing factories to shut down. As per media reports, factories in China's southwest



were closed. Also, one city imposed rolling blackouts. News agencies have mentioned that companies in Sichuan province including makers of solar panels, cement and urea were closed or had reduced production. This happened after they were ordered to ration power for up

to five days. More than five million people in southwest China were facing rolling power cuts as temperatures across Sichuan have surpassed 40 degrees Celsius in recent days. The hot weather led to a rise in the demand for air conditioning. A Shanghai-based online

media outlet, The Paper, reported that a local power company said Dazhou would receive only intermittent supply on Wednesday. It is a city of 5.4 million people in the northeast of the province. Dazhou Electric Power Group apparently said that residents would be hit with outages lasting up to three hours and the cuts could be extended if needed. The load on the lines is too heavy and would affect urban areas as well as townships and villages around Dazhou, The Paper said. Extreme heat in China The China Meteorological Administration said the country was going through its longest period of sustained high temperatures since records began in 1961. There were 64 days straight of heat warnings in various regions starting in June. More than a third of weather stations in China recorded extreme heat this summer, with 262 of them reaching or surpassing previous records, the administration said.

Pak lawyers thrash man who sexually assaulted medical student in Punjab province

A few Pakistani lawyers have thrashed a man who is accused of torturing and sexually assaulting a medical student in Punjab Province

A group of lawyers in a Pakistani court thrashed the prime suspect who was allegedly involved in the brutal torture and sexual harassment of a medical girl student in the Punjab province. On Thursday, when police presented Sheikh Danish with his accomplices at a sessions court in Faisalabad, a group of lawyers surrounded him and thrashed him. The angry lawyers also hurled shoes at him. The police, however, managed to rescue the suspect and presented him before the judge who allowed his two-day physical remand in police custody for interrogation. The attack on Khatija Mahmood took place in Faisalabad, some 150kms from Lahore, on August 8 when Danish, an industrialist and the prime suspect, tortured a dentistry student for refusing to marry him.

The police launched swung into action against the suspects when videos of the incident went viral last Tuesday in which the girl was seen being thrashed by the suspects, her head and eyebrows were shaved off and she was made to lick the sleepers of the daughter of the prime suspect. Police booked 15 suspects for abduction, torture, extortion and sexual assault the final year dentistry student under

various sections of the Pakistan Penal Code. "Police have arrested seven suspects, including Danish and his daughter, and raids are underway to arrest the remaining suspects," a spokesperson of Punjab police said. The victim lived with her elderly mother as his two brothers resided in the UK and Australia. She said she had family terms with her classmate Anna. "Anna's father Sheikh Danish proposed to me for marriage, but my family and I rejected the proposal. Danish was of my father's age and when I told this to Anna, she got furious at me," Khatija said, and added on August 8, when her brother returned from the UK, Danish and his 14 accomplices arrived at their house and forced her brother to accept the marriage proposal. When her brother rejected the proposal, the suspect and his accomplices tortured Khatija and her brother and forcibly took them to Danish's house where they again thrashed them. The suspects also forced Khatija to lick his shoes, shaved her head and an eyebrow and filmed the humiliating episode.

"The prime suspect (Danish) then took her to another room where he sexually humiliated her and recorded the act," the FIR said. Meanwhile, the

Punjab police have constituted a special committee to interrogate the suspects involved in the sexual harassment, humiliation and torture of the dentistry student. According to police, and the medical report of the victim,

torture marks were found on multiple parts of her body along with injuries on the face, eyes, elbows and hands. The report, however, did not confirm rape. Police said prime suspect Sheikh Danish is an industrialist and has

connections with a political party. "Justiceforkhatija" remained one of the top trends on Twitter in Pakistan for the last two days with people demanding stern action against Danish and all those involved in this ghastly incident.

Former Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to return on August 24

(News Agency) Former Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa will return to the island nation next week, a local media broadcaster Newsfirst reported on Wednesday (August 17) citing Udayanga Weeratunga, a former Lankan envoy to Russia. There's no official confirmation yet.

As quoted by the local media, Weeratunga, who is related to Rajapaksa, said that the former president will arrive in Sri Lanka on August 24. Amid nationwide protests over the country's worst



economic crisis, Gotabaya Rajapaksa flew out of the country last month in a military plane. He landed in the neighbouring Maldives and then spent weeks in Singapore before flying to Thailand. After fleeing the country, Rajapaksa has not made any public appearances or comments. Sri Lanka has suffered through months of food and fuel shortages, lengthy blackouts and galloping inflation as the nation

ran out of foreign currency to import vital goods. In a dramatic turn of events on July 9, hundreds

of thousands of people in Colombo stormed the presidential palace, demanding Rajapaksa take responsibility for shortages of medicines, food and fuel. Udayanga Weeratunga and the MiG deal probe As far as the probe of the MiG deal is concerned, Weeratunga arrived at the CID to provide a statement about the procurement of MiG-27 fighter jets to the Sri Lanka Air Force. Weeratunga was arrested in February 2022 and released on bail several months later. He is accused of unlawfully interfering with the purchase of seven MiG ground attack aircraft for the Air Force from Ukraine. He is also accused of embezzling millions of US dollars through the deal.

You have the same rights as I have, Bangladesh

PM Sheikh Hasina tells Hindu community

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged the Hindu community to not think of themselves as a minority in the country

(SAI Bureau) Urging members of the Hindu community to not think of themselves as a minority in the country, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, said all people irrespective of their religions enjoy equal rights in Bangladesh. The Prime Minister, who virtually attended an event at the Dhakeswari Mandir in Dhaka and JM Sen Hall in Chattogram from her official residence, Ganabhaban, said, "We want people of all faiths to live with equal rights. If you are a citizen of this country, you have equal rights here. You have the same rights as I have," she said. Hasina was quoted by the government news agency, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha, while exchanging greetings with the Hindu community leaders on the occasion of Krishna Janmashtami. "Please don't

undermine yourselves," she added. She said if all people could move with this confidence, then the evil quarter, from any religion, would never be able to harm the religious harmony of the country. "We have to keep that belief and unity among us. I want this from you all," she appealed. **ON ATROCITIES AGAINST HINDUS**

The Prime Minister, however, came down heavily on a section of the Hindu community, who tried to imply that Hindus were in a very bad situation in Bangladesh. She said, "I would like to say one thing with grave regret that whenever any incident occurs in the country, it is propagated at home and abroad massively in the way that the Hindu people don't have any right in this country." Sheikh Hasina said whenever any incident

happens, the government takes immediate action against it. "But, it is portrayed in a way that the Hindus have no rights here. And the actions of the government after the incidents don't get proper attention," she noted. She said while taking action, many Muslims were killed in police firing to protect mandirs (Hindu temples). "This kind of incident took place in the country," she said. She also mentioned the Cumilla incident. "But, those are not usually told, rather it is spread that the Hindus are living in trouble in the country." The PM said the number of puja mandaps in Dhaka was higher than the number in West Bengal or Kolkata, and all over Bangladesh the Durga Puja was celebrated massively. She said the government not only took initiatives to repair or



renovate mosques, but also renovate or repair mandirs, moths, and churches as well. "It is not right to say anything that hurts anyone's religious sentiment," she added. Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh was a different place in the world where all people from all religions celebrate any religious festival. "There are huge attempts to destroy this you that." congenial religious atmosphere of the country. A section of people in all religions are there who often try to create problems," she said. She mentioned that the government and Awami League did not believe in undermining people from any religion. "We can say it clearly. Our government is very cautious about it. I can assure you that."

Myanmar must take back Rohingyas: Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said that Myanmar has not denied that Rohingyas are its citizens and must take them back



(SAI Bureau) Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday demanded that Myanmar must take back Rohingyas. "Myanmar has not denied that Rohingyas are their nationals but they are yet to respond to repatriate their displaced citizens. Myanmar will have to bring their nationals back to their country," Hasina said. She said the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and former Chile President Michelle Bachelet proposed to increase opportunities for education and work for the Rohingya refugees sheltered in Bangladesh. Hasina, however, said that such initiatives would not be possible in Cox's Bazar where Rohingya refugees have been sheltered since 2017. Hasina, however, informed the visiting UN High Commissioner that such steps can be taken on Bhasan Char island where more than 20,000 Rohingyas have been shifted so far to provide them with better basic facilities. The two discussed various issues, including the Russia-Ukraine war, Rohingya crisis, climate change and women empowerment.

Pakistan PM Sharif Expresses Desire for Peaceful Ties with India, Kashmir Issue Resolution

(News Agency) Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed his desire for peaceful relations with India based on the principles of "equity, justice and mutual respect" and the resolution of the Kashmir issue, according to a media report on Friday. Sharif also urged the international community to play a "facilitative role" to ensure durable peace and stability in South Asia, it said, amidst a chill in bilateral ties over the Kashmir issue and cross border terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Sharif expressed these views during a meeting with the newly-appointed Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Neil Hawkins, on Thursday, the Dawn Newspaper quoted the Prime Minister's Office

(PMO) as saying. Pakistan desires peaceful ties with India, based on the principles of equity, justice and mutual respect. In this context, a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UNSC resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people, was indispensable, Sharif said. The international community has to play a facilitative role in this regard, as it was essential for durable peace and stability in South Asia, he said. India has repeatedly told Pakistan that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Islamabad in an environment free of terror, hostility, and violence. India has said the onus is on Pakistan to create an environment free of terror and hostility.

Want to export goods to India like Pakistan, says Taliban minister in Afghanistan

Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Amir Khan Muttaqi said that the Taliban government wants to export goods to India just like Pakistan

(News Agency) Amir Khan Muttaqi, who is the Foreign Minister of the Taliban government of Afghanistan, has sought to export goods to India. He said that the Taliban want good relations with all countries. Addressing an event in Kandahar, Muttaqi said: "The Islamic Emirate wants good relations with all countries. But relations after 20 years of war with some countries are not expected to be normalised quickly." Muttaqi was speaking to a gathering of tribal leaders in Kandahar. He said if Pakistan is



allowed to transport its goods to Asian countries, Afghanistan should also be able to transport its goods to India. "We were able to play a key role for India by helping India transport goods to Uzbekistan via the Pakistani transit routes," he said. He sought to woo the tribal leaders by expressing his gratitude towards them for convening "like brothers". "We have many important days of independence in history, which we honour. But it is a matter of gratitude that today we gather people of different tribes in this hall like brothers," he said.

US Justice Dept opposes revealing evidence that supports search of Donald Trump's house

The affidavit, if unsealed, would reveal the evidence that prosecutors showed to demonstrate they had probable cause to believe crimes were committed at Donald Trump's home



to secure the search warrant. On Friday, at the Justice Department's request, a federal court in south Florida unsealed the search warrant and several accompanying legal documents that showed that FBI agents carted away 11 sets of classified records from Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort. Some of the records seized were labeled as "top secret" - the highest level of classification reserved for the most closely held U.S. national security information. Such documents usually are typically kept in special government facilities because disclosure could damage national security. The Justice Department on Monday cited this as another reason to keep the affidavit sealed, saying the probe involves "highly classified materials." The agency said it would not oppose the release of other sealed documents tied to the

raid, such as cover sheets and the government's motion to seal.

The warrant released on Friday showed that the Justice Department is investigating violations of three laws, including a provision in the Espionage Act that prohibits the possession of national defense information and another statute that makes it a crime to knowingly destroy, conceal or falsify records with the intent to obstruct an investigation.

Trump has since claimed, without evidence, that he had a standing order to declassify all of the materials recovered at his home.

The decision by Garland to unseal the warrant was highly unusual, given the Justice Department's policy not to comment on pending investigations.

On the same day Garland

announced his decision to seek to unseal the warrant, an armed man with right-wing views tried to breach an FBI office in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was later shot dead by police following a car chase.

Prosecutors on Monday cited the recent violence and increasing threats against the FBI as another reason not to release the affidavit.

"Information about witnesses is particularly sensitive given the high-profile nature of this matter and the risk that the revelation of witness identities would impact their willingness to cooperate with the investigation," they wrote. Also on Monday the Justice Department said a Pennsylvania man was arrested on charges of making threats on the social media service Gab against FBI agents. Adam Bies, 46, was taken into custody on Friday in connection with the social media posts, the DOJ said.

(News Agency) The U.S. Justice Department on Monday said it opposes unsealing the affidavit that prosecutors used to obtain a federal judge's approval to search former President Donald Trump's Florida home, where they seized classified documents.

"If disclosed, the affidavit would serve as a roadmap to the government's ongoing investigation, providing specific details about its direction and

likely course, in a manner that is highly likely to compromise future investigative steps," prosecutors wrote in their filing. Trump's Republican allies in recent days have ramped up their calls for Attorney General Merrick Garland to unseal the document, which would reveal the evidence that prosecutors showed to demonstrate they had probable cause to believe crimes were committed at Trump's home -- the standard they had to meet

US, South Korea to begin expanded military drills next week

(News Agency) The United States and South Korea will begin their biggest combined military training in years next week in the face of an increasingly aggressive North Korea, which has been ramping up weapons tests and threats of nuclear conflict against Seoul and Washington, the South's military said Tuesday. The allies' summertime drills, which will take place from Aug. 22 to Sept. 1 in South Korea under the name of Ulchi Freedom Shield, will include field exercises involving aircraft, warships, tanks and potentially tens of thousands of troops. The drills underscore Washington and Seoul's commitment to restore large-scale training after they cancelled some of their regular drills and downsized others to computer simulations in recent years to create space for diplomacy with Pyongyang and because of COVID-19 concerns. The U.S. Department of Defense also said the U.S., South Korean and Japanese navies took part in missile warning and ballistic missile search and tracking exercises off the coast of Hawaii from Aug. 8 to 14, which it said was aimed at furthering trilateral cooperation in face of North Korean challenges.

While the United States and South Korea describe their exercises as defensive, Ulchi Freedom Shield will almost surely draw an angry reaction from North Korea, which describes all allied trainings as invasion rehearsals and has used them to justify its nuclear weapons and



missiles development. Before they were shelved or downsized, the U.S. and South Korea held major joint exercises every spring and summer in South Korea. The spring ones had been highlighted by live-fire drills involving a broad range of land, air and sea assets and usually involved around 10,000 American and 200,000 Korean troops. Tens of thousands of allied troops had participated in the summertime drills, which had mainly consisted of computer simulations to hone joint decision making and planning, although South Korea's military has emphasized the revival of large-scale field training this time. Officials at Seoul's Defense Ministry and its Joint Chiefs of Staff did not comment on the number of U.S. and South Korean troops that would be

participating in Ulchi Freedom Guardian Shield. The drills, which will kick off along with a four-day South Korean civil defense training program led by government employees, will reportedly include exercises simulating joint attacks, frontline reinforcements of arms and fuel, and removals of weapons of mass destruction. The allies will also train for drone attacks and other new warfare developments shown during Russia's war on Ukraine and practice joint military-civilian responses to attacks on seaports, airports and major industrial facilities like semiconductor factories. "The biggest meaning of (Ulchi Freedom Shield) is that it normalizes the South Korea-U.S. Combined exercises and field training, (contributing) to the rebuilding of the South Korea-U.S.

Alliance and the combined defense posture," Moon Hong-sik, a Defense Ministry spokesperson, said during a briefing. Some experts say North Korea may use the drills as an excuse to stir up tensions. The North has already warned of a "deadly" retaliation against South Korea over its COVID-19 outbreak it dubiously claims was caused by anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets and other objects flown across the border by balloons launched by southern activists. There are concerns that the North Korean threat, issued last week by the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un, portends a provocation, which may include a nuclear or major missile test or even border skirmishes. In an interview with Associated Press Television last month, Choe Jin, deputy director of a think tank run by Pyongyang's Foreign Ministry, said the United States and South Korea would face "unprecedented" security challenges if they don't drop their hostile military pressure campaign against the North, including joint military drills. Kim Jun-rak, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the South Korean and U.S. Militaries were maintaining a close watch on North Korean military activities and facilities. Animosity has built up on the Korean Peninsula since U.S.-North Korea nuclear negotiations derailed in early 2019 over exchanging the release of crippling U.S.-led sanctions against the North and the North's disarmament steps.

Why US lawmakers continue to visit Taiwan despite objections from China

Taiwan and mainland China split during a civil war in 1949, but Beijing claims the island as its own territory and has not ruled out using military force to take it back. The US maintains informal diplomatic, defence and trade ties with Taipei

(News Agency) : Taiwan is high on the summer travel list for US members of Congress on their August recess, as US lawmakers make a point of asserting American support for the self-governed island despite objections from China.

The payoff photos from this week's five-member congressional visit, like that of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi less than two weeks earlier, are meant as a pointed message to China: newly arrived lawmakers disembarking on the tarmac of Taipei's international airport, greeted by beaming Taiwanese officials glad for the American support. Senator Ed Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat, on Monday was wrapping up the second US congressional delegation there this month. Pelosi had been the most senior US official in a quarter-century to visit Taiwan, underscoring the longstanding US policy of solidarity with the island's democratically elected leaders. China claims Taiwan as part of its territory. It views any visit by US officials as a recognition of the island's sovereignty. So far, China's response to Markey's delegation has been more restrained than that of two weeks ago, when

Beijing launched days of intensive military manoeuvres around Taiwan and froze some ties with the US government over Pelosi's visit. Let's take a look at some key questions about US lawmakers' Taiwan trips, and why they matter:

Why did more lawmakers travel to Taiwan this month?

Partly, to show they can, and will. Pelosi framed her trip to Taiwan as part of an obligation by American leaders to stand up for the world's democratic movements against authoritarian governments. The mission itself is in many ways the message for lawmakers — demonstrating vividly that they will maintain US ties with Taiwan despite threats from China, which under President Xi Jinping is growing ever more confrontational in making broad territorial claims in the region.

The US recognises Beijing as the government of China but maintains informal diplomatic, defence and trade ties with democratic Taiwan. Markey, a congressional veteran of more than 40 years, was one of the signers of the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act. The law

pledged ongoing US relations with the Taiwanese.

Meeting with President Tsai Ing-wen on Sunday, Markey pledged "support for peace and stability in Taiwan as they face growing authoritarian pressure from Beijing," according to a statement from his office. But Markey also expressed the US desire to avoid unnecessary conflict in the region, and praised Taiwan for its restraint as tensions with China rose over Pelosi's trip.

How did China react?

China responded to news of Markey's five-member US congressional delegation by announcing new drills in the seas and skies surrounding Taiwan. It was not clear if the new drills had already started. Officials gave no details about where and when they would be conducted. When Pelosi visited, Beijing fired missiles over the island and into the Taiwan Strait and sent warplanes and navy ships across the waterway's midline, long a buffer between the sides. "China will take resolute and strong measures to defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin

said at a daily briefing Monday. "A handful of US politicians, in collusion with the separatist forces of Taiwan independence, are trying to challenge the one-China principle, which is out of their depth and doomed to failure."

How has Biden responded?

President Joe Biden called China's unusually aggressive response to Pelosi's visit unwarranted, saying that the US is sticking with its decades-old "one-China" policy. That includes no intention of recognising Taiwan as independent, but also no support for any effort by China to change the status quo between Taipei and Beijing. The latest congressional delegation travelled with far less attention than Pelosi's did, and the White House likewise has been quieter. It hasn't commented, but state department spokesman Ned Price was asked about it Monday. "Any response to a peaceful visit by members of Congress, any response that entails bellicose rhetoric or military manoeuvres or provocative actions is totally unnecessary, and an absolute overreaction," Price said.

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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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Joe Biden to sign Democrats' landmark climate change and health care bill today

The legislation includes the most substantial federal investment in history to fight climate change — some \$375 billion over the decade — and would cap prescription drug costs at \$2,000 out-of-pocket annually for Medicare recipients

(News Agency) Kiawah Island: President Joe Biden will sign Democrats' landmark climate change and health care bill on Tuesday, delivering what he has called the "final piece" of his pared-down domestic agenda, as he aims to boost his party's standing with voters less than three months before the midterm elections.

The legislation includes the most substantial federal investment in history to fight climate change — some \$375 billion over the decade — and would cap prescription drug costs at \$2,000 out-of-pocket annually for Medicare recipients. It also would help an estimated 13 million Americans pay for health care insurance by extending subsidies provided during the coronavirus pandemic.

The measure is paid for by new taxes on large companies and stepped-up IRS enforcement of wealthy individuals and entities, with additional funds going to reduce the federal deficit.

The House on Friday approved the measure on a party-line 220-207 vote. It passed the Senate days earlier with Vice President Kamala Harris breaking a 50-50 tie in that chamber.

Biden is set to sign the bill during a small ceremony in the State Dining Room of the White House, sandwiched between his return from a six-day beachside vacation in South Carolina and his departure for his home in Wilmington, Delaware. He plans to hold a larger "celebration" for the legislation on 6 September once lawmakers return to



Washington.

The signing caps a spurt of legislative productivity for Biden and Congress, who in three months have approved legislation on veterans' benefits, the semiconductor industry and gun checks for young buyers. The president and lawmakers have also responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and supported NATO membership for Sweden and Finland.

With Biden's approval rating lagging, Democrats are hoping that the string of successes will jump-start their chances of maintaining control in Washington in the November midterms. The 79-year-old president aims to restore his own standing with voters as he contemplates a reelection bid.

The White House announced Monday that it was going to deploy Biden and members of his Cabinet on a "Building a

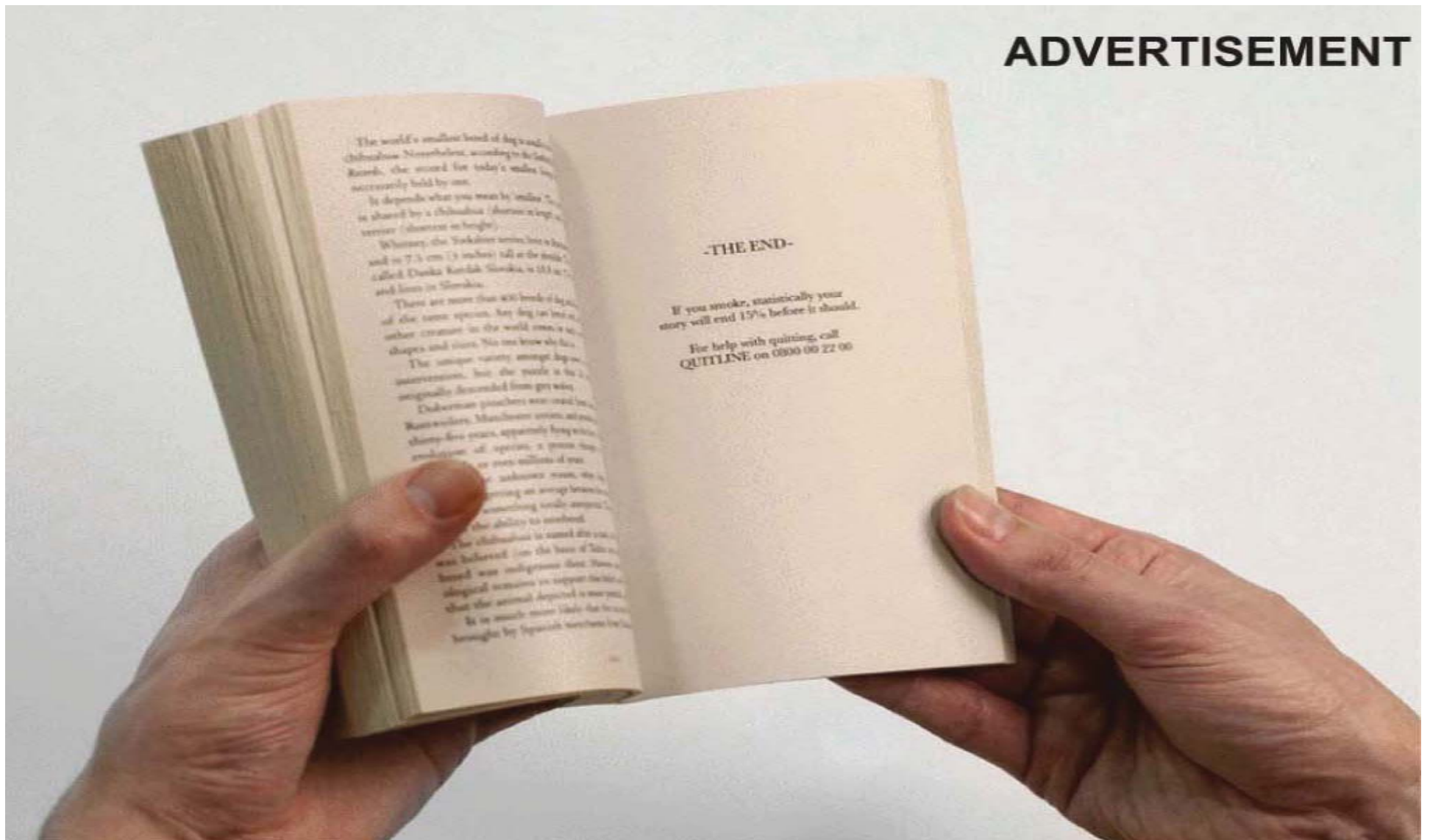
Better America Tour" to promote the recent victories, though the administration has yet to announce specific travel by the president.

"In the coming weeks, the President will host a Cabinet meeting focused on implementing the Inflation Reduction Act, will travel across the country to highlight how the bill will help the American people, and will host an event to celebrate the enactment of the bill at the White House on September 6th," the White House said in a statement. Republicans say the legislation's new business taxes will increase prices, worsening the nation's bout with its highest inflation since 1981. Though Democrats have labeled the measure the Inflation Reduction Act, nonpartisan analysts say it will have a barely perceptible impact on prices.

The measure is a slimmed-down version of the more ambitious plan to supercharge environment and social programs that Biden and his party unveiled early last year.

Biden's initial 10-year, \$3.5 trillion proposal also envisioned free prekindergarten, paid family and medical leave, expanded Medicare benefits and eased immigration restrictions. That crashed after centrist Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., said it was too costly, using the leverage every Democrat has in the evenly divided Senate. Still, Biden and Democrats are hailing the legislation as a once-in-a-generation investment in addressing the long-term effects of climate change, as well as drought in the nation's West. The bill will direct spending, tax credits and loans to bolster technology like solar panels, consumer efforts to improve home energy efficiency, emission-reducing equipment for coal- and gas-powered power plants, and air pollution controls for farms, ports and low-income communities. Another \$64 billion would help 13 million people pay premiums over the next three years for privately bought health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. Medicare would gain the power to negotiate its costs for pharmaceuticals, initially in 2026 for only 10 drugs. Medicare beneficiaries' out-of-pocket prescription costs would be limited to \$2,000 annually starting in 2025, and beginning next year would pay no more than \$35 monthly for insulin, the costly diabetes drug.

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Donald Trump loyalist pleads guilty to tax fraud: What this means for the former US president

So, after all that - Is **Allen Weisselberg still the chief financial officer of the Trump organisation?**

Weisselberg is still employed by the Trump Organization, but his title was changed to senior adviser after the July 2021 indictment.

Why did Allen Weisselberg decide to take a plea deal?

In the words of Weisselberg's lawyer, it was time to put an end

to the yearslong "legal and personal nightmares it has caused for him and his family." The Trump Organization seemed to have no hard feelings, calling Weisselberg a "fine and honourable man" who has been "harassed, persecuted and threatened by law enforcement."

Will the Trump Organization also take a plea deal?

In its statement, the company said it had done nothing wrong and would "look forward to having our day in court." Both Weisselberg



and the Trump Organization initially pleaded not guilty to the charges, maintaining that the perks were standard for companies and the investigation was politically motivated. Weisselberg's agreement to testify, though, could substantially harm the company's defence. That could increase pressure for it to resolve the case without a trial.

What are the terms of the Allen Weisselberg plea deal?

A judge has agreed to sentence Weisselberg to five months at New York's infamous Rikers Island jail complex. With good behaviour, he'll

What does the Trump Organization actually do?

It's a business entity through which Trump manages his many

entrepreneurial affairs, including his investments in office towers, hotels and golf courses, his many marketing deals and his television pursuits. It runs golf clubs and hotels, collects checks from companies renting offices, and charges licensing fees to buildings

and others for bearing the Trump name.

What does this mean for Donald Trump?

It isn't clear. The Republican isn't charged in the case. Prosecutors haven't alleged any personal misconduct by Trump. If his

company is convicted of a crime, though, it could lead to steep fines or complicate future business deals. A trial starting in October, right before the midterm elections, could also produce new revelations about the company's business practices - although Trump's

White House health official claims India and US did more than any other country in fighting against COVID-19

The top health official for the White House recently emphasised the enormous efforts made by India and the US to immunise their citizens as well as support other countries. The White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator, Dr. Ashish Jha, claimed that the two countries contributed more than any other country to fight against the global virus.

The health official stated that he spent a lot of time considering and working on the pandemic during the previous two and a half years. Jha, during India's 75th Independence celebration hosted by the country's ambassador to the US, said, "I can't think of two nations that have done more to vaccinate and protect their own populations, and to donate and support and vaccinate and protect the world than India and the United States," PTI reported. As per Jha,

India and the US are the most important democracies in the world. Ashish further added, "As a proud Indian-American, I am grateful for the words that our President Joe Biden used,



who reminded us that the three or three and a half million of us who are Indian Americans, the vibrant Indian American community, has made America more innovative, more inclusive, and

a stronger nation," PTI reported. He claimed that the two countries have been united by shared ideals of upholding human freedom and dignity, pluralism, and the rule of law. He further stated, "Those are values that people around the world yearn for." And when our two nations work to promote those values, we make the world a better place," PTI reported.



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Chinese research ship arrives in Sri Lanka despite India, US concerns

Hambantota port on 11th August. However, Sri Lankan government had provided permission allegedly as Chinese Government has termed 'security concerns' as baseless. As the Chinese research vessel Yuan Wang 5 reached the Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka this morning, the parliamentarians raised voices against the docking of the spy ship. Sri Lanka's Tamil Progressive Alliance (TPA) Leader and Colombo's Member of Parliament, Mano Ganesan in a statement said, "Chinese (spy) vessel coming to Lankan waters is simply wrong. China is far away. India is close to us here. Indian state considering this as a challenge to its national security is very reasonable. Besides, India is the country which has provided near USD 4 billion to us in our time of crisis."

Hambantota port is strategically

very important in Indian Ocean and also strategically significant for India. Experts believe the Chinese spy ship docked at this port can track the satellite and ballistic missile movement which make compromise India's satellite and missile program. India had expressed its concern over docking of the spy ship at Hambantota port. Now, the concern is also growing in the island as well. Praising the efforts by India during difficult time The TPA MP says, "We eat out of Indian money. And the fuel and medicines, we use today are out of Indian tax payer money. If not for India there is nobody to help

us. We can identify friends only during when we fall in crisis." For Sri Lanka's bad economic situation, Chinese loans have been found as a key reason of concern. While Island was battling with its internal crisis China had refused to restructure their loans despite several requests made from Sri Lankan government. The political executive In The Island now reminding Ranil Wickremesinghe's administration saying, "China did not even agree to restructure their loans." Several former ministers and MPs like Wimal Weeravansa and Udaya Gammanpila did support the presence of Chinese vessel in Sri Lankan waters. The TMP MP taking on those leaders asked them to go to Hambantota port and get onto the vessel and go to China. Of course, China will fall into trouble!"



World Humanitarian Day: Significance and why the day is marked

In a bid to promote human welfare across the globe, every year 19 August is celebrated as World Humanitarian Day. The special day is dedicated to honouring the sacrifices of all those who choose to serve humanity above all. Amidst the cutthroat challenges of life that take a toll on humanity, the United Nations aims that the day will serve as a reminder of all those sacrifices and works as fuel in reigniting the spirit of mankind. Coming into effect in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), World Humanitarian Day was a part of a resolution on the Coordination of Emergency Assistance of the United Nations.

World Humanitarian Day marks the death of Sergio Vieira de Mello, who was the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Iraq and was killed in 2003, in a terrorist bombing on Baghdad's United Nations Headquarters. Besides Sergio, the incident killed 21 humanitarian aid workers in the bombing. Therefore in 2008, the United Nations General assembly designated the day as World Humanitarian Day to

honour the death of all 22 humanitarian workers. As per the official site of World Humanitarian Day, this is a campaign initiated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and humanitarian partners. Reportedly, this year's campaign throws light on the thousands of volunteers, professionals, and crisis-affected people, who despite all odds deliver food, water, shelter, urgent healthcare, protection, and much more. This year, the authorities will use digital art to inform people about the stories of those who help them.

Every year the UN marks the day with various meaningful themes. The intention behind the theme is to bring everyone together from across the humanitarian ecosystem to improve and raise awareness for the well-being, survival, and dignity of those who are affected by crises and for the safety of humanitarian workers. Last year, the day was observed under the theme The Human Race, which urged all to prioritise the severe climate crisis that has gripped several nations.

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

ਬੰਦੀਗ੍ਰਸਤ: ਸ਼ਬਦ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਭੇਜੇ ਗਏ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 27,000 ਕਰੋੜ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਾਲ 1.25 ਲੱਖ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਯੂਰਪ, ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਖਰਚਾ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਿੱਖ ਕੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਖਰਚਾ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਖਰਚਾ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਨਵੇਂ ਸਾਲ ਮੌਕੇ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਨੇ ਬੰਬ ਦਾ ਟਵੀਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਗੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ

ਇਸ ਸਾਲ 1997 ਵਿੱਚ 19 ਮਈ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਨੇ ਇਰਾਕ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਹੇਜ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੰਬ ਦਾ ਟਵੀਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਗੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਨੇ ਇਰਾਕ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਹੇਜ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਬੰਬ ਦਾ ਟਵੀਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਗੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ।

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

ਨਵੀਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ: ਸਿੱਖ ਨਾਸਤਿਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੋਹਰੀ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਾਂਗੜਾ ਦੇ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਮੋਹਰੀ ਮੇਲੂ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਕੇਸੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੇਸੀ ਦੂਰ ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਖਾਨਸਰਾਨ ਲਿਥੇਜ਼ਨ ਫੌਜ ਦੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਲਾਗੂ

ਨਵੀਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ: ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਖਾਨਸਰਾਨ ਲਿਥੇਜ਼ਨ ਫੌਜ ਦੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਖਾਨਸਰਾਨ ਲਿਥੇਜ਼ਨ ਫੌਜ ਦੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ।

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APOLLO FARMS & RESORTS

High-level talks between UN chief, Turkey's Erdogan and Ukraine's Zelenskyy yield little progress

The meeting took place in the western city of Lviv, where the leaders discussed expanding exchanges of prisoners of war and arranging for UN atomic energy experts to visit and help secure Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is in the middle of fierce fighting. Turkey's leader and the UN chief met in Ukraine with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Thursday in a high-powered bid to ratchet down a war raging for nearly six months. But little immediate progress was reported.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he would follow up with Russian President Vladimir Putin, given that most of the matters discussed would require the Kremlin's agreement.

With the meetings held at such a high level - it was the first visit to Ukraine by Erdogan since the war began, and the second by UN Secretary-General António Guterres - some had hoped for breakthroughs, if not toward an overall peace, then at least on specific issues. But none was apparent.

Meeting in the western city of Lviv, far from the front lines, the leaders discussed expanding exchanges of prisoners of war and arranging for UN atomic energy experts to visit and help secure Europe's biggest nuclear power plant, which is in the middle of fierce fighting that has raised fears of catastrophe. Erdogan has positioned himself as a go-between in efforts to stop the fighting. While Turkey is a member of NATO, its wobbly economy is reliant on Russia for trade, and it has tried to steer a middle course between the two combatants.

The Turkish president urged the international community after the talks not to abandon diplomatic efforts to end the war that has killed tens of thousands and forced more than 10 million Ukrainians from their



homes.

He repeated that Turkey is willing to act as "mediator and facilitator" and added, "I remain convinced that the war will end at the negotiating table."

In March, Turkey hosted talks in Istanbul between Russian and Ukrainian negotiators that failed to end the hostilities.

On the battlefield, meanwhile, at least 17 people were killed overnight in heavy Russian missile strikes on Ukraine's Kharkiv region, Ukrainian authorities said Thursday.

Russia's military claimed that it struck a base for foreign mercenaries in Kharkiv, killing 90. There was no immediate comment from the Ukrainian side.

In the latest incident on Russian soil near the border with Ukraine, an ammunition dump caught fire in a

village in the Belgorod region, the regional governor said. No casualties were reported. Video posted online, whose authenticity couldn't be verified, showed orange flames and black smoke, with the sound of multiple explosions.

Elsewhere, Russian officials reported that anti-aircraft defenses shot down drones in the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula at Kerch and near the Belbek airfield in the Black Sea port of Sevastopol. Explosions in recent weeks on the peninsula have destroyed warplanes and caused other damage at military airfields.

Heightening international tensions, Russia deployed warplanes carrying state-of-the-art hypersonic missiles to its Kaliningrad region, an enclave surrounded by NATO members Lithuania and Poland.

One major topic at the talks in Lviv was the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in southern Ukraine. Moscow and Kyiv have accused each

other of shelling the complex.

Condemning the Kremlin for what he called "nuclear blackmail," Zelenskyy demanded that Russian troops leave the plant and that a team from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency be allowed in.

"The area needs to be demilitarized, and we must tell it as it is: Any potential damage in Zaporizhzhia is suicide," Guterres said at a news conference.

Erdogan likewise expressed concern over the fighting around the plant, saying, "We don't want to experience another Chernobyl" - a reference to the world's worst nuclear accident, in Ukraine in 1986.

Zelenskyy and the UN chief agreed Thursday on arrangements for an IAEA mission to the plant, according to the president's website.

The controversy around the video of Finland PM Sanna Marin partying



Finland's Prime Minister Sanna Marin found herself in trouble this week after a video of the 36-year-old leader partying and dancing with her friends was leaked on social media. Marin has since faced widespread criticism from members of the public and from opposition parties, with some leaders demanding that she take

a drug test.

Marin, who at 36 is one of the youngest prime ministers in the world, denied all allegations of drug consumption and said that she is willing to take a test if necessary. "I have nothing to hide. I have never taken drugs," she said in a press conference on Thursday.

This is not the first time the young

prime minister has faced flak for partying. Last year, she came under fire for going to a nightclub despite coming in contact with the country's foreign minister, Pekka Haavisto, who had contracted Covid-19.

Who is Sanna Marin?

In 2019, Marin, who has previously served as Finland's Transport Minister, was sworn in as the country's prime minister. At 34, she became the world's youngest prime minister, beating the earlier record set by New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern.

She was chosen by Finland's Social Democratic Party to succeed Prime Minister Antti Rinne, who on December 3 announced he was resigning in the face of criticism over the government's handling of a postal strike that lasted two weeks in November.

Marin's ascent in politics began when she was only 20 years old. Two years later, she was already

running for a council seat in Tampere, a city located north of Helsinki. In 2015, she became an MP. As prime minister, she has been hailed for her strong stance against Russia's war on Ukraine and for being at the forefront of Finland's efforts to join NATO.

In the past four years, PM Marin has faced criticism for a variety of reasons - ranging from her fondness for partying to the company she keeps. Following the nightclub controversy last year, she issued a lengthy apology on Facebook saying she was "really sorry" for her actions after photographs of her dancing with her friends early in the morning were published in a popular Finnish entertainment magazine. A photograph of her with former hitman Janne Raninen also sparked a storm. What is the latest video about?

In the video, which appears to have been shot at a private residence,

Marin is seen drinking and dancing with a group of friends. The video features several prominent Finnish public figures, including singer Alma, TV host Tinni Wikstrom and YouTuber Ilona Ylikorpi.

Marin appears to be hugging her friends and singing and dancing along to Finnish pop music. "I have danced, sung, celebrated, done legal things," Marin said at a recent press conference, according to Euro News. "I have a family life, a work life and also my free time, and I spend time with my friends."

Meanwhile, Opposition party leader, Riika Purra, has called for Marin to take a drug test, BBC reported. Other political leaders have criticised her for partying despite the domestic issues plaguing Finland. However, a section of the public has also come out in her support, saying there is nothing wrong in a leader spending their free time with friends or in having fun

Smoking, alcohol, high BMI responsible for 4.45 million global cancer deaths, say Lancet study



factors contributed to deaths and ill health due to 23 cancer types in 2019.

Changes in cancer burden between 2010 and 2019 due to risk factors were also assessed.

Estimates of cancer burden were based on mortality and disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs), a measure of years of life lost to death and years lived with disability.

In addition to 4.45 million cancer deaths which made up 44.4 per cent of all cancer deaths in 2019, risk factors included in the analysis accounted for 105 million cancer DALYs globally for both sexes in 2019 -- 42.0 per cent of all DALYs in that year, the researchers said.

Behavioural risk factors such as tobacco use, alcohol use, unsafe sex, and dietary risks were responsible for the vast majority of cancer burden globally, accounting for 3.7 million deaths and 87.8 million DALYs in 2019, they said.

The study shows that almost 2.88 million deaths in men (50.6 per cent of all male cancer deaths) could be attributed to the risk factors studied, compared to 1.58

million deaths in women (36.3 per cent of all female cancer deaths).

The leading risk factors globally for cancer deaths and ill health for both sexes were smoking, followed by alcohol use and high BMI, the researchers said.

The leading cause of risk-attributable cancer death for both men and women globally was tracheal, bronchus, and lung cancer, which accounted for 36.9 per cent of all cancer deaths attributable to risk factors, they said. This was followed by colon and rectum cancer (13.3 per cent), oesophageal cancer (9.7 per cent), and stomach cancer (6.6 per cent) in men, and cervical cancer (17.9 per cent), colon and rectum cancer (15.8 per cent), and breast cancer (11 per cent) in women.

Ill health attributed to environmental and occupational, behavioural, and metabolic risk factors increased with age, peaking in the 70s depending on countries' socio-demographic Index (SDI), with countries on the higher end of the spectrum tending to peak at later ages.

The five regions with the greatest cancer death rates due to risk factors were central Europe (82 deaths per 100,000 population), East Asia (69.8 per 100,000), high-income North America (66.0 per 100,000), Southern Latin America (64.2 per 100,000), and Western Europe (63.8 per 100,000).

Patterns of cancer deaths and ill health due to environmental and occupational, behavioural, and metabolic risks differed around the world, with unsafe sex a leading risk factor for ill health in locations at the lower end of the SDI spectrum.

Between 2010 and 2019, cancer deaths due to risk factors rose by 20.4 per cent globally, increasing from 3.7 million to 4.45 million, according to the researchers.

Ill health due to cancer increased by 16.8 per cent over the same period, rising from 89.9 million to 105 million DALYs, they said. Metabolic risks accounted for the greatest percentage increase in cancer deaths and ill health, with deaths increasing by 34.7 per cent and DALYs by 33.3 per cent.

Smoking, alcohol use, high body mass index (BMI), and other known risk factors were responsible for nearly 4.45 million global cancer deaths in 2019, according to study published in The Lancet journal on Friday.

The findings can help policymakers and researchers identify key risk factors that could be targeted in efforts to reduce deaths and ill health from cancer regionally, nationally, and globally. "This study illustrates that the burden of cancer remains an important public health challenge that is growing in magnitude

around the world," said Christopher Murray, Director of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, US.

"Smoking continues to be the leading risk factor for cancer globally, with other substantial contributors to cancer burden varying," said Murray, a co-senior author of the study.

Using results from the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors (GBD) 2019 study, the researchers investigated how 34 behavioural, metabolic, and environmental and occupational risk

Tamil Nadu's economy is in a mess, Mr Thiaga Rajan: Here's the hard truth about state's spiralling debt

On a television debate with a prominent news channel on 17 August 2022, the finance minister of Tamil Nadu, P Thiaga Rajan, made some baseless allegations about the Modi government and also indulged in false bravado based on vicious lies and conjectures. Thiaga Rajan claimed that the MK Stalin-led government of the DMK is doing a great job in terms of managing Tamil Nadu's fiscal health and the overall economy of the state. But that is far from the harsh truth.

Fiscal Deficit to GSDP Ratio
The lower this ratio, the better is the financial health of a state. Tamil Nadu, however, exceeds the limit set by the 15th Finance Commission in terms of gross fiscal deficit as a percentage of GSDP. The 15th Finance Commission suggested that states should consistently bring down fiscal deficit as per cent of their GSDP. It recommended the fiscal deficit limit (as per cent of GSDP) of: (i) 4 per cent in 2021-22, (ii) 3.5 per cent in 2022-23, and (iii) 3 per cent during 2023-26. But the graphic representation below clearly shows that in terms of fiscal prudence, Tamil Nadu is lagging behind, along with Chhattisgarh and Telangana. Thiaga Rajan claimed otherwise on a television

debate, showcasing his complete lack of knowledge on this subject. **IP-RR Ratio**

Interest payment to revenue receipts (IP-RR) ratio is a measure of the debt servicing burden on the state's revenues. Lower this ratio, the better is the financial health of a state. Tamil Nadu, however, has a very high IP-RR Ratio of 21 per cent which is the second highest in the country after Punjab. Similar figures for Gujarat and Karnataka are 14.2 per cent and 14.3 per cent respectively. This implies that the majority of the share of Tamil Nadu's revenues is actually being used to simply service the debt burden of the state, which is a very dangerous situation to be in. On what grounds, therefore, did Thiaga Rajan make the bombastic claim that Tamil Nadu's financial health is sound?

IP-RE Ratio (Interest Payments as a Per cent of Revenue Expenditure)

Interest payments as a per cent of revenue expenditure for 2019-20 for Tamil Nadu was 15.2 per cent, which implies that majority of the revenue expenditure went towards debt servicing, which is certainly not good news. In this regard, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka have, on the contrary, performed far better with a ratio of 11.6 per cent and 10.6 per cent

respectively. Needless to add that lower this ratio, the better are the finances of any given state. The graph below endorses how Tamil Nadu's spiralling debt burden is a serious cause of concern.

Capital Outlay to Total Expenditure
If we consider capital outlay to total expenditure (average between 2015 and 2020), states like Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka perform better, standing at 18.5 per cent, 17.8 per cent and 16.9 per cent respectively. It is to be noted here that higher this ratio, the better is the financial health of the state. For Tamil Nadu, the ratio is only 11.3 per cent which implies that new productive assets in Tamil Nadu are being created at a far slower pace, compared to say, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat or Karnataka. Hence, once again, Thiaga Rajan's claims of how Tamil Nadu is on a fast growth trajectory under the DMK are a hogwash, which is proved by this graph below. **Overdues of State DISCOMs**

Overdues of states to power generating companies (GENCOs) have increased which may require fresh liquidity injections to ensure uninterrupted power supply. Tamil Nadu is among the states which is the most vulnerable for a possible DISCOM bailout. Tamil Nadu has the second highest overdue of Rs 21,299 crore in the country. According to the RBI, the



cost of the bailout might be 5.2 per cent of its combined GSDP, which means the burden on the State exchequer of Tamil Nadu and honest taxpayers of Tamil Nadu, will be significant.

Overdues of States/Discoms towards Gencos (CPSE, IPP, RE) excluding State Owned Gencos as on 12.07.2022:

The top four states in terms of overdues, on this count are as given below:

Maharashtra -Rs.22,702 crore
Tamil Nadu -Rs.21,299 crore
Telangana -Rs.17,244 crore
Andhra Pradesh -Rs.9,945 crore

The graph below again debunks Mr P Thiaga Rajan's bombastic claims. Tamil Nadu could actually be hurtling towards a serious power crisis.

Revenue Deficit: A state with higher revenue deficit will need more debt to meet its expenditures and might go into a vicious circle of debt entrapment.

In 2019-20, Telangana, Punjab and Tamil Nadu had revenue deficits while Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh actually, had a revenue surplus, as shown by the graph below. Why did Tamil Nadu's finance minister lie about how Tamil Nadu is on a strong wicket? His claims are untrue, if this graph below is any indication to go by. The Stalin-led DMK government is spending taxes of hard working taxpayers on freebies, unproductive expenses, fat salaries to bureaucrats and the like.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa applies for Green Card to settle in US

Rajapaksa, who fled the country last month amidst massive anti-government protests calling for his resignation, is awaiting to obtain a US Green Card to return to America and settle there, according to a report.

Former Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who fled the country last month amidst massive anti-government protests calling for his resignation, is awaiting to obtain a US Green Card to return to America and settle there with his wife and son, a media report said on Thursday.

Sri Lankan newspaper Daily Mirror, citing highly-placed sources, claimed that Rajapaksa's lawyers in the United States had already begun the procedure last month for his application to obtain the Green Card as he was eligible to apply due to his wife Loma Rajapaksa being a US citizen.

In 2019, Rajapaksa renounced his US citizenship to contest the



2019 presidential polls.

Rajapaksa took early retirement from the Sri Lanka Army and moved into the field of information technology, before immigrating to the United States in 1998. He returned to Sri Lanka in 2005. The procedure will also now involve his lawyers in Colombo submitting the additional docu-

ments here in order to go ahead with the procedure, the daily said. The 73-year-old former President who is presently in a hotel in Bangkok along with his wife will return to Sri Lanka on August 25, cancelling his initial plan to remain in Thailand at least till November, the report said.

The daily said that two days ago,

Rajapaksa consulted his lawyers and decided to return to Sri Lanka later this month as he was not allowed the freedom to move in Thailand as initially expected, due to security concerns.

Upon his arrival in Bangkok, Thai police advised the ousted President to remain indoors for security reasons.

The Bangkok Post newspaper reported that at the hotel, the location of which has not been disclosed, plainclothes police officers from the Special Branch Bureau had been deployed to ensure the safety of Rajapaksa.

Officials had asked the former Sri Lankan president to remain within the hotel during his stay in the country.

Upon his return to Sri Lanka this month, the Cabinet will discuss

providing Rajapaksa a state house and security accorded to a former President, the report said.

Rajapaksa fled to the Maldives last month and thereafter to Singapore. He entered Singapore on a medical visa and had it extended twice to remain there as much as possible. As his visa could not be extended further, Rajapaksa and his wife left for Thailand and was assured he could remain there till he finalises his third destination.

At the same time, the Thai government had made it clear to Rajapaksa that he should not engage in political activities while staying in the country. However with his movements now restricted in Thailand, he will return to the country, the report said.

How US and Taiwan plan to boost ties through trade negotiations

The United States and Taiwan share a longstanding trade and investment relationship. There is wide bipartisan support for Taiwan in the US, especially in recent years as Beijing has become more assertive towards the democratic island under President Xi Jinping

The United States (US) and Taiwan announced on Wednesday objectives for trade negotiations set for the early autumn in another step to boost ties even as tensions soar with China over the self-ruled island. The negotiations would cover a variety of areas, including agriculture, digital trade, good regulatory practices and removing trade barriers, the Office of the US Trade Representative said in a statement.

The negotiations "will deepen our trade and investment relationship, advance mutual trade priorities based on shared values, and promote innovation and inclusive economic growth for our workers and businesses," said Deputy United States Trade Representative Sarah Bianchi. "We plan to pursue an ambitious schedule for achieving high-standard commitments and meaningful outcomes covering the eleven trade areas in the negotiating mandate that will help build a fairer, more



prosperous and resilient 21st-century economy."

The talks, dubbed the US-Taiwan Initiative on 21st-Century Trade, were unveiled on 1 June. In recent weeks, tensions in the Taiwan Strait have soared to their highest in decades following a trip to Taipei by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

The visit sparked a furious

response from Beijing, which launched its largest-ever military drills around the island.

China views Taiwan as its own territory to be seized one day, by force if necessary, and bristles at any perceived treatment of it as a sovereign nation-state.

There is wide bipartisan support for Taiwan in the US, especially

in recent years as Beijing has become more assertive towards the democratic island under President Xi Jinping.

Washington diplomatically recognises Beijing over Taipei, but it maintains de facto relations with Taiwan and supports the island's right to decide its future. It officially opposes both Taiwan declaring independence and

Beijing changing the island status by force and maintains a policy of "strategic ambiguity" about whether it would intervene if China invaded.

The United States and Taiwan share a longstanding trade and investment relationship. Taiwan is also a crucial global supplier of some of the most advanced semiconductors used in everything from mobile phones and laptops to cars and missiles.

"Excited that we are taking a big step forward in opening a new chapter in our trade partnership," Taiwan's representative in Washington, Hsiao Bi-Khim, tweeted Friday. "We welcome this announcement, and Taiwan's ready to start!"

Taiwan's largest trading partner by far remains China. Last year some 42 per cent of Taiwan's exports went to China and Hong Kong compared to 15 per cent for the US.

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Russia threatens to shut down Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, anticipates 'planned' disaster

According to Ukrainian military intelligence, Russia allegedly urged employees at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power facility not to report to work on Friday. This is in light of reports and rumours that a plant incident is being 'planned' for Friday in both Russia and Ukraine. Russia threatened to shut down the plant on Thursday, saying there was a chance of a man-made disaster because of what it claimed was Ukraine's ongoing shelling of the area. Andriy Yusov, a spokesman for the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry, claims that the situation in Ukraine is entirely different. Yusov told NBC News, "There is new information, it arrived about half an hour ago, that for tomorrow, August 19, there is an order for the majority of the staff not to go to work. This is what



the Russians told their people, primarily the employees of Rosatom," referring to the Russian nuclear agency. According to him, this could be proof that Russia is getting ready to stage "large-scale provocations" at the power

plant on Friday. "We do not rule out the possibility of massive Russian provocations on the territory of the ZNPP tomorrow. This is confirmed by their propaganda, information from our sources, and the behaviour of the Rus-

sians at the station," he added, referring to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Russia declined to confirm or deny the presence of Rosatom employees in Zaporizhzhia. The Ukrainian government and its "US handlers," are attempting to manufacture a "small accident" at the facility in southern Ukraine on Friday in order to place the blame on Russia, the Russian defence ministry claimed earlier on Thursday. According to the report, the "provocation" may have involved a radioactive leak and was timed to coincide with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' visit to Ukraine. The largest nuclear reactor facility in Europe, Zaporizhzhia, was repeatedly shelled by Russia after it invaded Ukraine almost six months ago, with Moscow and Kyiv trading accusations.

Mumbai's iconic double decker buses-why they were phased out, and why they have returned to the city's roads

Over the years, as the city then known as Bombay expanded, the number of these double decker buses increased — reaching as many as 900 in the 1960s, by when they had become one of the city's most identifiable features

BEST launched its first double decker e-bus on Thursday (August 18), rekindling with a new-age twist Mumbai's 70-year romance with these storied vehicles. What made BEST's double deck buses so iconic for Mumbaikars of a certain age — and why were they phased out?

When did the classic red double deckers first appear on Mumbai's streets?

The double deckers were introduced to Mumbai by the British in 1937. They were modelled around London's motorised double decker buses. Over the years, as the city then known as Bombay expanded, the number of these buses increased — reaching as many as 900 in the 1960s, by when they had become one of the city's most identifiable features. The double deckers were popular with both tourists and locals. They were capacious, and because of their height, allowed commuters to enjoy an unobstructed view of the city. The streets of South Mumbai especially were quieter, less crowded, and more scenic at the time. Older residents of the city continue to recall with fondness the memories of their childhood and youth, travelling on the top deck of the double decker buses, enjoying the city.

Where in Mumbai did these

double deckers ply?

In the 1960s, the buses plied on 26 routes across Mumbai. In South Mumbai, they were more popular among tourists and Mumbaikars looking for an evening outing, whereas in the suburbs, they played the role of last mile connectivity.

One of the most popular routes in the suburbs was Santacruz station to Juhu Church during the peak morning and evening hours, as auto-rickshaws came to the suburbs only in the 1970s.

The buses were initially named after letters of the English alphabet, but as the demand for them increased and the city itself expanded, they were renamed with numbers. The popular Route 'C' became route 123, which operated between RC Church in Colaba and Tardeo, going past Colaba Causeway, Regal Cinema, Flora Fountain, Marine Drive, and Girgaum Chowpatty.

Another popular route was 130, which covered areas of Fort Market, Crawford Market, Pydhonie, and showed a dif-

ferent side of the city, including some of its nightlife.

So why did BEST begin to phase them out?

BEST began to phase out these buses essentially because spare parts were not easily available, they were more



expensive to acquire, and difficult to transport due to their weight. It was also argued that the double deckers were fuel guzzlers, and were becoming financially unviable.

As they were introduced during British rule, the buses were all supplied by foreign manufacturers such as Daimler, AEC (Associated Equipment Company), and Leyland Motors. It was not until 1955 that an Indian company, Ashok Leyland, began manufacturing them. BEST also said that operating

double decker buses required more staff, with an extra conductor for the top-deck.

Now, only 48 double decker buses remain, which will be phased out by 2023.

What is different about the new AC double decker e-buses?

They are environment-friendly, airconditioned vehicles that BEST will take on wet lease. The drivers would be provided by the private operator of the vehicles, and the operator will also take care of the maintenance and the operational cost of the buses. BEST pay the operator Rs 56.40 per kilometre.

The buses will be modern vehicles, with automatic doors, will have CCTV cameras, and special arrangements for communication between the two conductors on board. According to transport expert Ashok Datar, the buses will be an asset because they will accommodate twice the number of commuters over the same road space. The first of these AC double decker e-buses was launched by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on August 18 evening, and the buses will start plying on the street within four weeks. BEST will acquire 900 such e-buses, and will introduce them in a phased manner until 2023.



The first case of a dog being infected with monkeypox via humans

Monkeypox cases have topped 35,000 globally, but limited information is known about the spread from humans to animals and pets

The first case of human-to-animal transmission of monkeypox has been reported in a dog, according to research published in the medical journal *The Lancet* on August 10. Following the news, the United States public health agency, the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention, has updated its prevention recommendations on infected persons having pets at home.

Detected in a Paris hospital, the infected dog showed symptoms such as lesions on the skin, specifically “mucocutaneous lesions, including abdomen pustules and a thin anal ulceration”. It is unclear right now if dogs can further spread the disease to other dogs or humans.

In India, eight cases of monkeypox have been reported so far. Globally, monkeypox cases have topped 35,000 since May this year, when the disease was first reported outside its endemic areas of a few countries of Central and West Africa. The WHO has said at present, a majority of the cases being reported are from Europe and the Americas.

How can dogs or other pets get monkeypox through humans?

According to *The Lancet*, the dog would sleep on the same bed as two men who were non-exclusive sexual partners and shared the household together. The men had been detected with monkeypox in late May this year after they showed symptoms of fever, headaches, and anal ulcerations.

Around 12 days later, the dog began showing symptoms, and was soon tested. The men said they had taken care to prevent their dog from contact with other pets or humans since the onset of their own symptoms. While it has not been understood yet how exactly the transmission happened in this case, among humans monkeypox spreads through close contact with anyone infected with the virus, through infectious rashes and bodily fluids. The vast majority of cases in the current outbreak have been concentrated among

men having sex with men (MSM). Advisories issued by governments and health agencies have cautioned against the sharing of bed linen or clothes with infected persons.

In endemic countries, only wild animals (rodents and primates) have been found to carry the monkeypox virus, *The Lancet* report said. Infection among domesticated animals, such as dogs and cats, had not been reported till now.

What precautions need to be taken for households with pets?

Given only one case has been reported so far, *The Lancet* has called for further investigation on secondary transmissions via pets. However, the CDC has suggested certain precautions, saying it is possible that people who are infected can spread the monkeypox virus to animals through close contact — petting, cuddling, hugging, kissing, licking, sharing sleeping areas, and sharing food. Those who have monkeypox symptoms or have recently tested positive need to avoid close contact. If the pet has not been in close proximity to the

owners, they can be shifted to another place until the recovery happens, or around 21 days.

“After the person with monkeypox is recovered, disinfect your home before bringing healthy animals back”, said the CDC, adding that sanitisers and other disinfectants should not be used on pets. Pets showing symptoms should be tested, and people around the pet need to wear personal protective equipment or long-sleeved clothing to avoid exposure. Frequent hand washing is also recommended when handling the pet.

Megalodon: A giant transoceanic predator that lived 23 million to 2.6 million years ago

According to the new study published in the journal *Science Advances*, the Megalodon could “completely ingest, and in as few as five bites,” a prey as big as the killer whale

Using fossil evidence to create a three-dimensional model, researchers have found new evidence about the life of one of the biggest predatory animals of all time — the Megalodon. According to the new study published in the journal *Science Advances*, the Megalodon could “completely ingest, and in as few as five bites,” a prey as big as the killer whale. According to the study, the Megalodon was bigger than a school bus at around 50 feet from nose to tail. In comparison, the great white sharks of the present can grow to a maximum length of around 15 feet. Using their digital model, the researchers have suggested that the giant transoceanic predator would have weighed around 70 tonnes — or as much as 10 elephants. Megalodons

roamed the oceans an estimated 23 mil-



lion the Megalodon had an average cruising speed faster than sharks today. According to the research team, the Megalodon had the ability to migrate across multiple oceans. The technique was used as the Megalodon’s skeleton is made of soft cartilage that doesn’t fossilize well. Using fossils that were available, including mainly teeth and a rare collection of vertebrae that has been with a Belgium museum since the 1860s, computer modelling was used to reconstruct the entire body of the extinct and largest known

macropredatory shark. “We completed the model by adding ‘flesh’ around the skeleton using a full-body scan of *C. carcharias* (great white shark),” the researchers said.

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Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav: Kashmir Rejects Power Brokers, Endorses Idea of India

The overwhelming participation of Kashmiri people in the 76th Independence Day celebrations has sent a clear message to the traditional leaders and politicians: that they have boarded the wagon of peace, prosperity, and development

By hoisting the Tricolour atop their homes to celebrate 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the people of Kashmir exhibited their commitment towards building a "Naya Jammu and Kashmir". The Tricolour flying high across Kashmir on the 76th Independence Day was a befitting reply to leaders like former J&K chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, who had predicted that if Article 370 was abrogated, no one would be left in the Valley to hold the National Flag. The huge participation of people in the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign made it clear that the people of Kashmir endorse the idea of India and the so-called leaders, who claimed to be their "messiahs", were nothing more than actors who staged dramas for 70 years to remain in power. They never allowed the common man in Kashmir to develop a personal relationship with the Tricolour. They kept him away from the National Flag as well as nationalism. The leaders, who ruled J&K for seven decades, never made an attempt to inculcate the feeling of nationalism and patriotism in the hearts of the people as they knew that once the masses become aware of their rights and duties the anti-India bogey would be rendered irrelevant. While participating in Independence and Republic Day

celebrations they used to pretend that they were doing it under compulsion, but in New Delhi, they used to claim that they were the only people who could represent the idea of India in Kashmir. In Kashmir, they would cleverly publicise the celebrations of occasions like July 13 as "Martyrs' Day" and used to make a beeline at the Naqashband Sahib graveyard. They used to ensure that they visited the graveyard and their presence got wide publicity. By doing so they kept the feeling of separatism and secessionism alive.

The death and birth anniversaries of National Conference founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were observed to make people remember the slogan of plebiscite that was raised by the late leader. In a nutshell, politics in Kashmir was all about theatrics. It revolved around hollow slogans and irrelevant issues. After Narendra Modi took over as the Prime Minister of India in 2014, he ensured that such dramas in Kashmir ended. Soon after taking over the reins of the country PM Modi and his team worked out a comprehensive plan to integrate J&K completely with the Union of India. The contours were worked out during the first five years of PM Modi's rule.

After the BJP returned to power in 2019 with a thumping majority, the job to integrate J&K with the Union of India was assigned to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who within a few months finalised the modalities to scrap Article 370. He put an end to the hegemony of the politicians, who had taken J&K hostage for 70 years.

The Home Minister was aware that the so-called leaders of Kashmir were nothing more than paper tigers, who had won elections due to boycott politics and they didn't enjoy any support. His calculations were proven correct as no one came out to seek the release of these leaders when they were arrested after the abrogation of Article 370 on August 5, 2019. On the 76th Independence Day this year, the Tiranga flew high across the Union Territory. People exhibited their love for the country by hoisting the National Flag atop their homes. They participated in the Tiranga rallies and related events that were organised to celebrate Azadi ka Mahotsav.

Three years after the

abrogation of Article 370, J&K stands completely integrated with the idea of India. Power brokers and political artists have lost their addresses. They are making desperate attempts to become relevant. They are trying to sell "old wine in a new bottle" by telling the people that they will get everything back but the fact of the matter is that no one in J&K wants anything back. People have endorsed the decision of the PM Modi-led dispensation to end the 70-year-long status quo. They have understood that they were misled and misguided by their leaders just for the sake of power. J&K has changed and has changed for good. The credit for the change goes to PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.



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Move over, kale: Mushrooms are the new grocery aisle celebrities



(By Staff Reporter) Move over, kale. There's a new celebrity in the produce aisle: mushrooms. People are scooping up mushrooms so quickly that producers are scrambling to keep pace with burgeoning demand. "We haven't run out as yet, but we're definitely trying hard to keep up," said Gale Ferranto, who helps run her family's third-generation business, Bella Mushroom Farms, in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Chester County, about a two-hour drive southwest from New York City, is the epicenter of mushroom production in the United States. "We call it the Mushroom Mecca," said Ferranto. The area accounts for more than 60% of all domestic mushroom production coming from more

than 50 local family-owned farms. Ferranto's farm produces five million pounds of mushrooms annually, packaged under its Buona Foods brand and other private labels for grocery store chains like Stop & Shop and Giant Food. "It's not going to be easy, but we are upping our game to grow more mushroom crops a year from now," she said.

Monthly US mushroom production has surged to an all-time high, according to industry trade group American Mushroom Institute. Store prices for mushrooms have also ticked up. The average selling price for a pound of fresh mushrooms increased to \$4.19 in December 2019, up from \$4.03 from a year ago, according to market research firm IRI. "The push by

consumers to eat healthier by pivoting to plant-based foods is a big part of mushroom's popularity," said Lori Harrison, spokeswoman for the American Mushroom Institute. Plant-based diets are in vogue, fueling demand for meat alternative items like the Impossible Burger and innovations such as cauliflower rice and cauliflower bread. "Growing recognition of the health and nutritional value of mushrooms along with their year-long availability and culinary versatility have contributed to increased customer demand," Walmart (WMT), the nation's largest grocer, said in a statement to CNN Business. Mushrooms are packed with vitamins and minerals. "They are fat-free, low calorie, low sodium, gluten free," said Harrison. "They

are versatile, you can eat them cooked or raw, and they fit any healthy eating plan you have for breakfast, lunch or dinner." Although button mushrooms remain the most commonly consumed variety, Harrison said demand is picking up for specialty varieties, such as shiitake, crimini and oyster mushrooms. Albertsons said shoppers seem to be doing just that. "What we're seeing with mushrooms is customers buying more mushroom varieties, beyond the traditional white and brown mushrooms," said Christine Wilcox, spokeswoman for the supermarket chain. Then there are some unconventional products with mushrooms as an ingredient: There's mushroom tea, mushroom jerky and

"shroom" crackers. Meanwhile, the mushroom "blended" burger continues to pop up on menus nationwide. Growing mushrooms on site Some grocery stores are keeping up with demand by growing mushrooms on site. Entrepreneurs Adam DeMartino and Andrew Carter are cofounders of Smallhold, a startup in Brooklyn, New York that's developed portable indoor mushrooms farming units for stores, restaurants and hotels. The average unit is six feet tall, four feet wide and three feet deep but the setup can be configured in different ways. Each unit can produce 40 to 60 pounds of mushrooms a week. "We've built the company around the growing demand for mushrooms," said DeMartino. The automated units are designed to grow organic specialty mushrooms like pink and blue oyster mushrooms and shiitake mushrooms in a highly-controlled and monitored environment. "Part of the appeal of these units is that mushrooms are delicate in nature. When you cram them into boxes for shipping, it affects their quality," said DeMartino.

Cutting salt likely to prevent future heart disease, even if you're not at risk now

(By Staff Reporter) Heart disease is the number one killer of people worldwide. What's the leading cause of heart disease? High blood pressure, which is often triggered by high sodium (salt) intake in the food we eat. Hypertension is also the leading cause of stroke, heart failure and kidney disease. Yet even if we never salted another dish again in our lives, we would likely still be eating too much sodium every day. That's because it's added to manufactured foods for flavor, texture and color as well as a preservative. A new meta-analysis of 133 clinically randomized trials on lowering salt intake, published Monday in the British journal BMJ, found strong evidence about what would happen if the salt in the foods we eat was cut back. Not only did cutting dietary sodium reduce blood pressure in those with existing hypertension, it also reduced blood pressure in people who were not yet at risk. The greater the reduction in salt intake, the greater the fall in blood



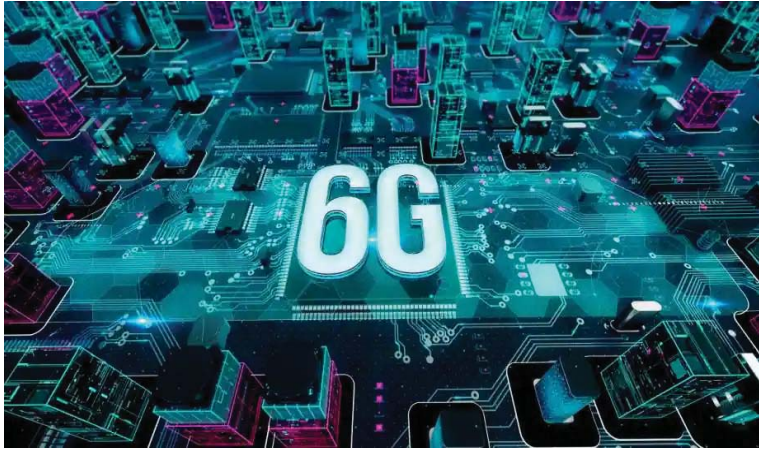
pressure, the research found. That's huge in the world of prevention, said cardiologist Dr. Icilma Fergus from New York's Mount Sinai Hospital, who was not involved in the research. "The importance of this study is that it shows that the reduction in sodium results in blood pressure reduction widely across multiple populations, not just in populations

who were initially deemed as salt sensitive, such as African Americans," Fergus said. That's especially significant considering the revised guidelines from the American Heart Association, Fergus said. Hypertension used to be diagnosed when the top number (systolic) was 140 and the bottom number (diastolic) was 90. Now you're considered

hypertensive if your blood pressure is 130/80. "At 130/90 you already begin to see changes in the vasculature (blood vessels) of the kidneys and some hardening of the arteries," Fergus said. "So having blood pressure in the lower range is beneficial." An even bigger benefit for at-risk populations In addition to the

finding that reducing salt in food brings down blood pressure across populations, the research discovered an even larger fall in blood pressure for those highest at risk, such as the elderly, those with existing high blood pressure and African Americans. In the United Kingdom, blacks are three to four times more likely to have high blood pressure and twice as likely to die from stroke, according to World Action on Salt, a UK advocacy group concerned with salt's effects on health. The American Heart Association says that in the US, more than 40% of African American men and women have high blood pressure. African Americans are also more likely to develop hypertension early in life, where prevention can make an impact. The new meta-analysis was done by international researchers from the Queen Mary University of London, the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, and Action on Salt.

6G radiation can increase the size of brain cells, new study shows



(By Staff Reporter) The world has been waiting for 6G technology but according to Chinese scientists, it can end up affecting our brain cells. The terahertz band of radio waves, which are

capable of boosting any smartphone's bandwidth to 1 terabit per second, resulted in accelerated growth of brain cells in lab rats. The neurons were found to increase by around 150 per cent when exposed to the radiation.

While the observation initially confused the researchers, it was concluded that although the brain cells were increased at a rapid speed, they were able to remain healthy. As a result, the scientists will be studying them further to develop "therapies in

order to treat brain diseases, the study said. "The safety of terahertz radiation protocol is a top concern," Li Xiaoli, the lead scientist of the study wrote in a paper published in the peer-reviewed journal Acta Physica Sinica. The study was supported by the State Key Laboratory of Cognitive Neuroscience and Learning at Beijing Normal University, and they have decided to continue it for better understanding. "Abnormal neuron development and the resulting abnormal neural network

structure can lead to the occurrence of various psychiatric and neurological diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, autism and Parkinson's disease," the institution told South China Morning Post. The paper stated that the exposed brain cells will stop growing after a point and at present, the time frame was believed to be two days. Professor Liu Jianxin with the Institute of Brain Science at Xian Jiaotong University, Shaanxi province, also found some positive effects of the 6G radio waves.

Nasa to roll out mega Artemis-I rocket. This time to launch to the Moon

Nasa is set to roll out its behemoth Space Launch System to the launch pad. This time it aims to launch to the Moon

(By Staff Reporter) Years after the idea was conceptualised to return to the Moon, the first uncrewed launch of the behemoth rocket is just around the corner. As engineers prepare the launch pad for the Space Launch System, the rocket will be rolled out on the pad on Wednesday. Nasa said that it is targetting as soon as 9 pm EDT (6.30 am IST) to begin the movement of the rocket. The spacecraft will be returning to the launch pad for the third time, this time with the intention of launching to the Moon and beyond on August 29. The rocket will hitch a ride on the unique crawler-transporter, which will roll inside the Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB) and under the Space Launch System rocket and Orion spacecraft later today.

"Teams are currently working to prepare the integrated stack for rollout. Over the weekend the team completed



testing of the flight termination," Nasa said in a blog update. The spacecraft will be rolled out to the Kennedy Space Center's Launch Pad 39B in Florida. The completion of the testing marked the final major activity prior to closing out the

rocket and retracting the final access platforms in the VAB. Artemis I is an uncrewed flight test, the first in a series of increasingly complex missions to the Moon. Through Artemis, NASA will land the first woman and the first person of

color on the Moon, paving the way for a long-term lunar presence and serving as a stepping stone to sending astronauts to Mars. NASA will attempt the more than month-long lunar test flight with three mannequins, but no astronauts, as early as Aug. 29. There are also two launch dates in early September before NASA would have to stand down for two weeks. The 30-story Space Launch System rocket and attached Orion capsule are currently in the hangar at Kennedy Space Center, following repairs stemming from last month's countdown test. Fuel leaks and other technical trouble cropped up during NASA's repeated launch rehearsals at the pad. At 98 meters, the rocket and Orion capsule are taller than the Statue of Liberty. If Orion's trip to the moon and back goes well, astronauts could climb aboard in 2023 for a lunar loop-around and actually land in 2025.

Europe drought: German industry at risk as Rhine falls

Water levels on the Rhine at Emmerich, near the Dutch border, dropped by a further four centimeters in 24 hours, hitting zero on the depth gauge

(By Staff Reporter) Germany's main industry lobby group warned Tuesday that factories may have to throttle production or halt it completely because plunging water levels on the Rhine River are making it harder to transport cargo. Water levels on the Rhine at Emmerich, near the Dutch border, dropped by a further four centimeters (1.6 inches) in 24 hours, hitting zero on the depth gauge.

Authorities say the shipping lane itself still has a depth of almost 200 centimeters (six feet, six inches), but the record low measurement Tuesday morning

highlights the extreme lack of water caused by months of drought affecting much of Europe. "The ongoing drought and the low water levels

threaten the supply security of industry," said Holger Loesch, deputy head of the business lobby group BDI. Loesch said shifting cargo from river to train or



transport was difficult because of limited rail capacity and a lack of drivers. "It's only a question of time before facilities in the chemical and steel industry have to be switched off, petroleum and

construction materials won't reach their destination, and high-capacity and heavy-goods transports can't be carried out anymore," he said, adding that this could lead to supply bottlenecks and short-time work might result. Loesch warned that energy supplies could also be further strained as ships carrying coal and gasoline along the Rhine are affected. He echoed concerns that climate change could make droughts more frequent in the future, and urged the government to help closely monitor water levels and react early to potential transportation problems on Germany's waterways.

Alien-like creature found in deep sea, scientists name it 'Darth Vader'

(By Staff Reporter) A new study has found giant isopods deep below the ocean surface in the Gulf of Mexico and it has been called 'Darth Vader of the seas' due to resemblance to the 'Star Wars' villain. The study showed that the new-found species called 'genus Bathynomus' is around 2500 per cent larger than the common varieties. According to the official statement, the discovery was made in the benthic zone - the deepest reaches of the ocean - and is a significant addition to the existing knowledge. "The ecological diversity of the Gulf of Mexico may be more complex than [previously] thought. I was skeptical. Since Enoshima Aquarium in Japan only purchased *B. giganteus*, I always thought it was *B. giganteus*," study lead author Huang Ming-Chih told Live Science. The discovery was made when Huang obtained the specimen from the Enoshima Aquarium in Japan under the assumption that it was *B. giganteus*. However, an analysis by the team showed that it was different on a cellular level and showed qualities which were not found earlier. The specimen was originally found by scientists near the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico in 2017. While the working theory is that they are related to crustaceans that includes woodlice, the size of the specimen found 2,000 feet to 2,600 feet below sea level is way bigger than the common species. The first recorded discovery of isopods dates back to 1879 when scientists found it in the ocean and over the years, around 20 varieties of the group has been found by researchers.

Jupiter's moon Europa could hold the answer to finding alien life



(By Staff Reporter) The hunt for alien life has been a strong pursuit for scientists over the years and it looks like Jupiter's second Galilean Moon - Europa - can hold some significant answers. According to studies conducted by NASA in the last few years, Europa was found to have an icy crust and an inner system of oceans which can be crucial in supporting life. The moon has been a subject of study since the 1970s and Alyssa Rhoden, a principal scientist at the Southwest Research Institute in Colorado, told The Independent that the ocean water can "somehow moves through the shell and reaches the surface". "I started researching Europa 22 years ago, and I've had the same images to work with the entire time. So, I would say I am EXTREMELY excited for the new data sets that will be delivered by Clipper. As for

habitability, there are probably many ways it will inform habitability, but what I am most interested to see is evidence of liquid water within the ice shell," he explained. As a result, there has been speculation that the moon of Jupiter can actually be a habitable place in the universe. Michael Manga, a geophysicist and professor in the Department of Earth and Planetary Science at UC Berkeley, also supported the theory as he said that Europa is quite similar to Earth. "Its evolution and dynamics are fascinating, some similarities but also fundamental differences from Earth," he told Universe Today while speaking about the possibility of alien life. The theories will be further put to test in the near future as NASA will be launching the Europa Clipper in 2024 and the data received can be crucial to expanding on the existing studies.

Scientists alter blood type of donor kidneys to increase supply of organs for transplant



(By Staff Reporter) In order to increase the supply of organs for transplant, scientists have successfully altered the blood type of the donor's kidneys. Highlighting the implications of the breakthrough, researchers said it will especially be beneficial for minority groups as they find it harder to find a match. In comparison to white patients, black and other ethnic minority groups often have to wait a year longer as they are more likely to have the rarer B-type blood group. Both organ donor and receiver need to have the same blood group for the transplant to take place successfully. While people from those communities make up 33 per cent of the kidney transplant waiting list, just over 9 per cent of total organ donations came from black and other minority ethnic donors during 2020-2021.

To allow more transplants to take place, researchers have changed the blood type to the

universal O as this can be used for people with any blood type. For flushing blood infused with an enzyme through the deceased donor's kidney, researchers at the University of Cambridge used a normothermic perfusion machine that connects with a human kidney to ensure that oxygenated blood passes through the organ to better preserve it for future use. Effectively changing its blood type to type O, the enzyme removes the blood-type markers that line the blood vessels of the organ. "Our confidence was really boosted after we applied the enzyme to a piece of human kidney tissue and saw very quickly that the antigens were removed," said Serena MacMillan, a PhD student at the University of Cambridge. The team will look at how the approach might be used in a clinical setting after testing the reintroduction of other blood types.

Roscosmos unveils model of new space station after announcing departure from International Space Station

(By Staff Reporter) Suggesting Moscow is serious about abandoning the International Space Station (ISS), Roscosmos unveiled for the first time a physical model of what a planned new Russian-built space station will look like. Rushing to reduce its dependency on Western nations, Russia is forging ahead on its own or cooperating with countries like China and Iran. In a military-industrial exhibition outside Moscow, Roscosmos presented a model dubbed "ROSS" by Russian state media. According to Roscosmos chief Yuri Borisov, the new space station would be launched in two phases. While the first phase would see a four-module space station start operating, the second phase would include two modules and a service platform. Russia is working to develop its own orbital station and will quit the ISS after 2024, Borisov added. Under the



partnership led by the US and Russia, the ISS has been continuously occupied since November 2000.

Saying it has not yet received official confirmation of Russia's planned withdrawal, NASA said it understood that Moscow would continue to participate until 2028. Highlighting that the new station would afford Russian cosmonauts a much wider view of the Earth, the Russian space agency said it would be

more beneficial for monitoring purposes than they enjoy in their current segment.

Accusing Russia of prosecuting an unprovoked imperial-style war of aggression against Ukraine, the West hit the Russian economy with sanctions designed to starve Moscow of technology and funds. In response, Russian President Vladimir Putin called his attack on Ukraine a "special military operation" to denazify its neighbour.

Google to Lay Off Employees? Exec Warns If Q3 Results Don't Improve There Will be 'Blood on Streets'



(By Staff Reporter) Amid a trend of layoffs and a freeze in hiring among major IT and software companies, Google executives have reportedly warned its employees to work harder or be prepared to leave as "there will be blood on the streets" if the next quarterly earnings are not as per expectations. As per a report by Insider, a company message sent by Google Cloud sales leadership said that there will be an "overall examination of sales productivity and productivity in general" and that if next quarter results "don't

look up, there will be blood on the streets." If third quarter results "don't look up, [then] there will be blood on the streets," according to a message conveyed to the sales team. The warning was first reported by Insider. The IT giant has now threatened its employees with layoffs if the profit expectations were not up fulfilled. Alphabet owned Google's CEO Sundar Pichai had told employees in July that they must improve productivity due to fierce economic headwinds. He said he wanted to get ideas from employees on to get "better results faster." "There are real concerns that our productivity as a whole is not where it needs to be for the head count we have," he was quoted as saying. In July, Google had put a cap on hiring

for two weeks to review its headcount needs and decide on future course of action. It had earlier announced that it would slow down its hiring process. According to Pichai, "it's clear we are facing a challenging macro environment with more uncertainty ahead". "Because of the hiring progress achieved so far this year, we'll be slowing the pace of hiring for the rest of the year, while still supporting our most important opportunities," Pichai had said in July. However, he had added that Google was not freezing its hiring process, and the company would "focus our hiring on engineering, technical and other critical roles, and make sure the great talent we do hire is aligned with our long-term

priorities." The Google CEO had also said at the time that the company was still trying to hire as many employees as possible to battle with the current scenario and help the society. "In Q2 alone, we added approximately 10,000 Googlers, and have a strong number of commitments for Q3 start dates which reflects, in part, the seasonal college recruiting calendar. These are extraordinary numbers, and they show our excitement about long-term opportunities, even in uncertain times," he said. Other tech companies that have either laid off employees or slowed hiring in the current economic downturn include LinkedIn, Meta, Oracle, Twitter, Nvidia, Snap, Uber, Spotify, Intel and Salesforce, among others.

Rakesh Jhunjhunwala Leaves Behind Rs 32,000-Cr Shareholding: Big Bull Portfolio Attracts Attention



(By Staff Reporter) Rakesh Jhunjhunwala held a networth of about Rs 32,000 crore with shareholding in about 32 companies. The death of the ace investor has put a spotlight on the shares he held. He passed away on Sunday (August 14). He was 62 and was suffering from kidney ailments. Jhunjhunwala made his first profit in 1986 in Tata Tea shares. He had bought it at Rs 43, which jumped to Rs 143 within three months. The Sensex was at 150 points at that time. Now, his biggest investment is in Titan, a Tata group company. It shows how bullish he has been on the Tata group. He has shareholdings in about 32 companies, with stakes ranging from below-1

telecommunications. At the end of June 2022, Jhunjhunwala had a significant 23.37 per cent stake in Aptech. He has 17.49 per cent shareholding in Star Health and Allied Insurance Company, 14.43 per cent in Metro Brands, 12.62 per cent in NCC, 10.03 per cent in Nazara Technologies, 9.81 per cent in Rallis India, 8.48 per cent in Bilcare, 8.22 per cent in Agro Tech Foods, 8.04 per cent Va Tech Wabag Ltd, and 7.54 per cent in Geojit Financial Services.

He also has investments in Titan, Fortis Healthcare, Crisil, Jubilant Pharmova, Jubilant Ingrevia, Autoline Industries, Anant Raj, Karur Vysya Bank, Dishtram Carbogem Amcis, Indian Hotels Company, Federal Bank, Wockhardt, Tata Communications, Tata Motors and Indiabulls, in the range of 6.76 per cent to 1.08 per cent. In the absolute terms, Jhunjhunwala invested the most Rs 11,086.94 crore in Titan Company till the end of June 2022, followed by Rs 7,017.51 crore in Star Health and Allied Insurance Company, Rs 3,348.81 crore in Metro Brands, Rs 1,731.12 crore in Tata Motors and Rs

1,301.86 in Crisil.

He also invested Rs 898.91 crore in Fortis Healthcare, Rs 838.99 crore in Federal Bank, Rs 822.48 crore in Canara Bank, Rs 816.31 in Indian Hotels Company Ltd and Rs 505.25 crore in NCC. Prime Minister Narendra Modi

in a tweet on Sunday said, "Rakesh Jhunjhunwala was indomitable. Full of life, witty and insightful, he leaves behind an indelible contribution to the financial world. He was also very passionate about India's progress. His passing away is saddening. My condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

Retail inflation eased to 6.71 per cent in July as food prices soften

Retail inflation softened to 6.71 per cent in July, mainly on account of moderation in food prices, government data showed on Friday



(By Staff Reporter) Retail inflation softened to 6.71 per cent in July, mainly on account of moderation in food prices, government data showed on Friday. In June, retail inflation was at 7.01 per cent and it stood at 5.59 per cent in July 2021. According to the data, food inflation in July 2022 moderated to 6.75 per cent as against 7.75

per cent in June. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation, however, remained above the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance level of 6 per cent. It has remained above the 6 per cent mark for the past seven months. In the first three months of the current fiscal, retail inflation remained above 7 per cent.

Housing Market Uptick: Prices Rise 5% On High Demand; Delhi, Ahmedabad See Most Jump



(By Staff Reporter) In another sign of recovery in the real estate sector, housing prices in the top-eight cities registered a 5 per cent jump during April-June 2022 amid a surge in residential property demand. Unsold inventory also recorded a marginal decline in the second quarter of 2022 (Q2 2022), according to a report.

"Residential prices, which have surpassed pre-pandemic levels, have been seeing an upward trend led by rising demand amidst rising prices of construction materials. Delhi-NCR saw the highest increase in residential prices at

10 per cent YoY, followed by Ahmedabad and Hyderabad with 9 per cent and 8 per cent year-on-year (YoY) increase, respectively," according to a joint report by Credai, Colliers and Lias Foras.

The report, titled 'Housing Price-Tracker Report 2022', also said the sales momentum that started in the latter part of last year continued in Q2 2022 as well, led by a pent-up demand and attractive pricing. Hence, despite rising prices and an increase in new launches in the last few quarters, unsold inventory saw a

dip in the majority of the cities. "Bengaluru witnessed the steepest decline of 21 per cent YoY in its inventory overhang, led by higher sales. Only Hyderabad, MMR and Ahmedabad saw an increase in unsold inventory, which was led by significant new launches. MMR still accounts for the highest share in unsold inventory at 36 per cent, followed by 14 per cent in Delhi-NCR and 13 per cent in Pune," it added. Harsh Vardhan Patodia, president of CREDAI National, said, "The central bank continues to increase repo rates to offset the impact of inflation and banks are expected to increase loan interest rates, including that of home loans. As captured in this report, the housing prices have increased in the range of 2-5 per cent across cities, as materials and labour costs continue to remain high. We may see a marginal dip in demand due to increasing interest rates, but I am confident that the sales will continue to grow across segments from September, as we enter the festive season."

Ramesh Nair, chief executive

officer (India) and managing director (market development-Asia) of Colliers, said, "The RBI has increased the repo rate amidst inflationary pressures and banks have already begun increasing the lending rates. However, the upcoming festive season is likely to keep the market sentiment high resulting in higher sales."

Pankaj Kapoor, managing director of Lias Foras, said, "The price is expected to remain range-bound. With discounted EMI (equated-monthly instalment) schemes, we see early signs of developers absorbing the impact of increasing interest rates. Sales volumes are likely to improve as we see growing new supply with festive offers."

The report said housing prices in Delhi-NCR have been rising for two years. The Delhi-NCR region saw the highest increase in prices across India at 10 per cent with an average carpet price of Rs 7,434 per sq ft in Q2 2022. Golf course road saw the highest price rise of 21 per cent YoY,

followed by Noida Expressway. "The entire region's inventory dropped 10 per cent YoY in Q2 2022, as developers focused on offloading older projects. While overall unsold inventory is the lowest in three years, the majority of the unsold inventory is concentrated in Noida extension and Greater Noida, followed by Ghaziabad," it added. The report said the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), which accounts for the highest unsold inventory at 36 per cent share, saw a 14 per cent rise in unsold inventory in the last year. The rise in unsold inventory was led by significant new launches in the city. Housing prices largely remained range-bound, with a slight rise of 1 per cent YoY. "However, Western suburbs (beyond Dahisar) saw the highest increase in prices at 12 per cent YoY. Unsold inventory in Central suburb extension accounts for 26 per cent, majority share in the price range of Rs 7,500-10,000 per sq ft. Bengaluru sees the steepest drop in unsold inventory at 21 per cent YoY."

Amul, Mother Dairy hike milk prices by Rs 2 per litre

(By Staff Reporter) Amul and Mother Dairy have hiked milk prices by Rs 2 per litre. This is the second hike by the companies this year. The new prices will be effective from August 17. The price of Amul Gold will be Rs 31 for 500 ml, Amul Taaza will be sold at Rs 25 for 500 ml, and Amul Shakti will be sold at Rs 28 for 500 ml. The increase of Rs 2 per litre amounts to a 4 per cent increase in MRP which is lower than average food inflation. Amul had hiked prices in February this year. After this, Amul Gold milk was priced at Rs 30 per 500 ml, Amul Taza was priced at Rs 24 per 500 ml, and Amul

Shakti at Rs 27 per 500 ml. This price hike is being done due to an increase in the overall cost of operation and production of milk. The cattle feeding cost alone has increased to approximately 20 per cent compared to last year, Amul said. "Considering the rise in input costs, our member unions have also increased farmers' prices in the range of 8-9 per cent over the previous year," Amul said in a

statement. In March, Mother Dairy increased milk prices by Rs 2 per litre in the Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region). Mother Dairy is one of the leading milk suppliers in the Delhi-NCR market and sells more than 30 lakh litres per day in poly packs and through vending machines. A



company official on Tuesday said it is "compelled" to raise its liquid milk prices by Rs 2 per litre with effect from August 17, 2022. The new prices will be applicable for all milk variants. Full cream milk will cost Rs 61 per litre from Wednesday, up from Rs 59 per litre. Prices of toned milk will increase to Rs 51 while double toned milk will rise to Rs 45 per litre. Cow milk price have been hiked to Rs 53 per litre.

SpiceJet enters settlement agreement with lessor Goshawk for 3 aircraft

SpiceJet has entered into a settlement agreement with aircraft lessor Goshawk Aviation Ltd for three aircraft



(By Staff Reporter) SpiceJet has signed a settlement agreement with aircraft lessor Goshawk Aviation Ltd and its affiliated leasing entities Wilmington Trust SP Services Ltd, Sabarmati Aviation Leasing Ltd and Falgu Aviation Leasing Ltd for two Boeing 737 MAX and one Boeing 737-800 NG aircraft. The airline said the agreement - the terms of which are confidential - ends all litigation

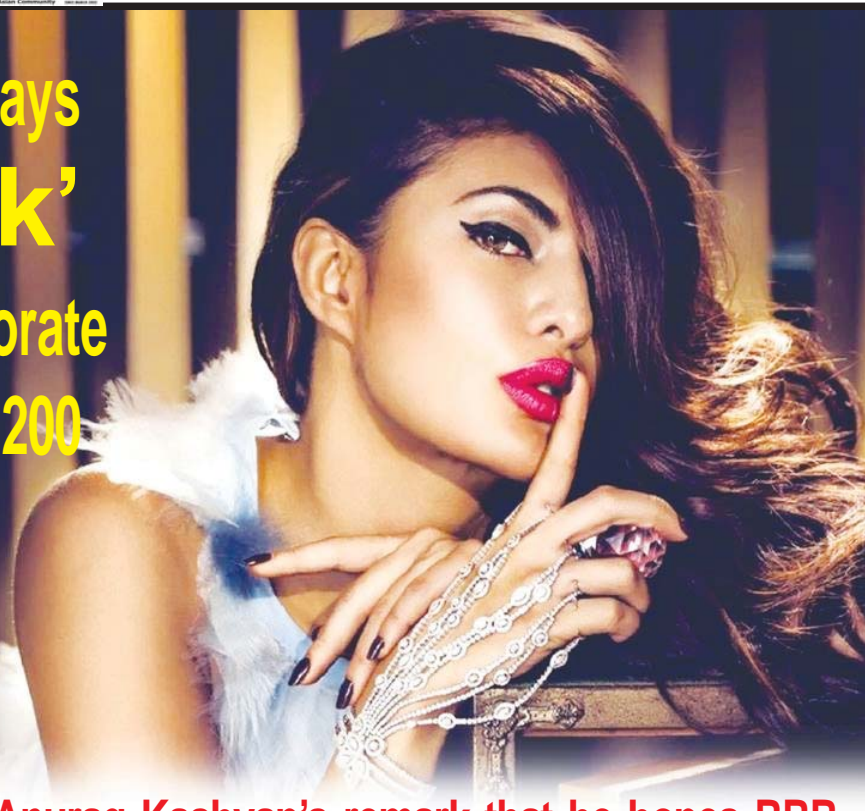
proceedings between the parties, adding that this will allow SpiceJet to add two more fuel-efficient Boeing 737 MAX aircraft and one Boeing 737-800 NG aircraft to its fleet. Recently, SpiceJet has been in trouble with its lessors, Ireland-based Alterna Aircraft Ltd and United Arab Emirates aeronautics firm AWAS, who asked the Indian aviation regulator to de-register their planes.

When Ranbir Kapoor kissed Robert de Niro's knee, Anil Kapoor sat at his feet like an attentive student



(By Staff Reporter) It's not everyday that you see some of Bollywood's biggest names fawning over a celebrity and seeking autographs and selfies with them. But then, such is the popularity and aura of Robert de Niro, who turns 79 on Wednesday, that even Bollywood biggies can't help but get starstruck. This is precisely what happened when the Hollywood actor visited India in 2013 and met several actors and filmmakers from the Hindi film industry in Mumbai, with most falling heads over heels for him. In 2013, Robert de Niro worked in the Hollywood film *Silver Linings Playbook*. The Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence film also had Anupam Kher in a supporting role. Later that year, Robert visited India on Anupam's invite and spent an evening at the latter's Actor Prepares Studio in Mumbai. This is where a number of Bollywood celebs, including Ranbir Kapoor, Varun Dhawan, Anil Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapur, and Dia Mirza met the legendary actor. An entourage of actors including Anil Kapoor, Ranbir Kapoor, Aditya Roy Kapoor, Varun Dhawan, directors Rakesh Om Prakash Mehra, Ayan Mukerji, and several others got a chance to spend an evening with Robert De Niro. In pictures from the meeting, Ranbir could be seen touching Robert's feet and later kissing his knee. In one particular picture, Ranbir even sought Robert's autograph, getting him to sign a copy of the DVD of his film *The Godfather Part II*.

Jacqueline Fernandez says 'it'll all be ok' after Enforcement Directorate names her accused in ₹ 200 crore extortion case



Vivek Agnihotri has responded to Anurag Kashyap's remark that he hopes RRR is selected as India's official entry to Oscars, not Vivek's *The Kashmir Files*.

(By Staff Reporter) Anurag Kashyap has expressed hopes that Vivek Agnihotri's *The Kashmir Files* is not selected as India's official entry to Oscars. Filmmaker Vivek Ranjan Agnihotri is angry after Anurag Kashyap expressed hopes that Vivek's film *The Kashmir Files* is not India's official entry for Oscars. Vivek has tweeted that "Bollywood's genocide-denier lobby" has started a campaign against his film that released earlier this year. Sharing a screenshot of a news article quoting Anurag, Vivek tweeted Wednesday afternoon, "Important: The vicious, genocide-denier lobby of Bollywood has started their campaign against #TheKashmirFiles for #Oscars, under the leadership of the maker of #Dobaaraa." In an interview with Galatta Plus, Anurag talked about India's Oscars

entry this year and said, "India might actually have a nomination in the final five if RRR is the film they pick. I don't know what film anybody is going to pick. I hope not *The Kashmir Files*."

The Kashmir Files, directed by Vivek Agnihotri, featured Anupam Kher, Pallavi Joshi, Mithun Chakraborty and Darshan Kumar in lead roles. The film opened to mixed reviews and emerged as one of the top grosser Hindi films this year. The film is based on the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in the late-1980s. While the film received critical acclaim for portrayal of a sensitive issue, many also criticised it for painting all Muslims as aggressors.

RRR, on the other hand, is directed by SS Rajamouli, and features Ram Charan and Jr NTR in the lead roles. The period action

drama is one of the most successful Indian films ever and has found a cult following in the West since its digital release on Netflix. Talking about why RRR is a better choice, Anurag added, "I am speaking from what people have been reaching out to me and talking about in the West. They have discovered a new filmmaker called Rajamouli with RRR. How *Everything Everywhere All At Once* worked for me, RRR has worked for them. And they find it better than any other Marvel movie. The West sees RRR differently than how we see it, and they've loved RRR. If RRR becomes the India selection, 99% might get nominated for the Academy Award. That is the impact that RRR has had in the world of Hollywood. India might have a nomination in the final five if RRR is the film that we pick."

Pregnant Bipasha Basu says 'I got a baby in my belly' as she shares cute video

(By Staff Reporter) Actor Bipasha Basu recently announced on Instagram that she and husband Karan Singh Grover are expecting their first kid together. Announcing the baby news she shared a photo of herself with Karan, flaunting her pregnant belly. On Wednesday, Bipasha shared a funny video in which she goes 'there's a baby in my belly'.

Sharing the video, Bipasha wrote, "Look" and added the hashtags, 'love my baby bump', 'pregnant and confident', 'love my body' and 'love yourself.' In the video, Bipasha recreated the 'I've got a baby in my belly' Instagram trend and says, "Look, I've got baby in my belly." Actor Karan Singh Grover commented on Bipasha's video, "Yeah look! My baby in your belly." Actor R Madhavan commented, "Wow.



Congratulations. I am so so so happy for both of us... YipEEEEEEEEEE... have a lovely pregnancy and a wonderful delivery." One fan commented, "You are glowing like anything. Congratulations Bipasha and Karan." Another one wrote, "You look so cute in this video."

On Tuesday, Bipasha and Karan shared pictures from her pregnancy photoshoot and wrote, "A new time, a new phase, a new light adds another unique shade to our prism of life. Making us a little more whole than we used to be. We began this life individually and then we met each other and from then we were two. Too much love for only two, seemed a little unfair for us to see... so soon, we who once were two will now become three." Bipasha and Karan married in 2016. They had met on the sets of the film *Alone in*

2015. She previously dated actor John Abraham for 10 years, but they parted ways in 2011. Bipasha was last seen in MX Player's web-series *Dangerous* in 2020. The show also starred Karan Singh Grover, Sonali Raut, Natasha Suri, Suyyash Rai and Nitin Arora.



When Aishwarya Rai shared Jaya and Amitabh Bachchan's reaction to her Padma Shri

In a 2009 interview, Aishwarya Rai praised Abhishek Bachchan for applauding her at every opportunity. She also shared how her in-laws Jaya Bachchan and Amitabh Bachchan welcomed her as 'the fifth Padma Shri into the family'

(By Staff Reporter) Aishwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan married in April 2007 in Mumbai. After working together in three films – Umrao Jaan, Guru and Dhoom 2 – Abhishek proposed to Aishwarya after the premiere of Guru in Toronto. The couple became formally engaged in January 2007, and sealed the deal in an intimate wedding three months later. In a 2009 interview, Aishwarya praised not only Abhishek, but also her in-laws, veteran actors Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan. She shared their reaction to her receiving the Padma Shri award. In 2009, Aishwarya was honoured with the Padma Shri by the government. At the peak of her acting career, Aishwarya, then 36, spoke about the honour and how the Bachchan family made it all the more special. The actor also shared her reaction to being told she was the youngest person from Bollywood to have received the Padma Shri, the country's fourth-highest civilian award given by the government. Sharing that the 'most precious thing' that happened in 2009 was her late father's recovery from cancer, Aishwarya had told Verve magazine, "Professionally what was wonderful was being

bestowed with the Padma Shri. People from the fraternity said you are the youngest from the industry to have received it thus far. I owe it to my parents and I devote it to them. It was very special when my in-laws said we welcome the fifth Padma Shri into the family."

Aishwarya also gave a shoutout to Abhishek Bachchan for standing by her on one public platform after the other, and applauding her. She had said, "I am blessed with the best husband in the world because it reflects on his strength that he can stand by his woman on a public platform at every given opportunity and applaud her."

Amitabh Bachchan was honoured with the Padma Shri in 1984, and Padma Bhushan in 2001. His father, the late poet Harivansh Rai Bachchan had received Padma Bhushan in 1976, while his wife, actor Jaya Bachchan, was honoured with Padma Shri in 1992. Since Aishwarya's Padma Shri in 2009, Amitabh has also been honoured with his third Padma award – Padma Vibhushan (2015), India's second-highest civilian honour. Abhishek is the only public figure with no Padma awards in the Bachchan family.

Vivek Agnihotri reacts to Kareena Kapoor's request to not boycott Laal Singh Chaddha: 'Nobody thinks of 250 people...'

Reacting to Kareena Kapoor's statement on Laal Singh Chaddha, The Kashmir Files director Vivek Agnihotri has asked why no one speaks up "when good content small films are sabotaged"

(By Staff Reporter) The Kashmir Files director Vivek Agnihotri seems to have taken a dig at Kareena Kapoor and her film Laal Singh Chaddha after she requested fans not to boycott the film for the sake of around 250 people, who worked on the film. Vivek took to Twitter to react to Kareena's statement in a similar tone.

Laal Singh Chaddha stars Aamir Khan in the titular role alongside Kareena. The film is an official Hindi remake of the 1994 Hollywood film Forrest Gump that starred Tom Hanks. Laal Singh Chaddha made headlines after the hashtag 'Boycott Laal Singh Chaddha' started trending on Twitter ahead of its release. Many called for boycott of the film, claiming that Aamir had hurt religious sentiments in his earlier film, PK. Kareena had recently said about



Laal Singh Chaddha, "The fact is that they shouldn't boycott this film, it's such a beautiful film. And I want people to see me and Aamir (Khan) on screen. It's been three years, we've waited so long. So, please don't boycott this film, because it's actually like boycotting good cinema. And people have worked so hard on it; we've had 250 people work on this film for two-and-a-half years." She made the request during an

interview with Siddharth Kannan. Pointing at how not many from the film industry supported his film, The Kashmir Files, after a section of people boycotted it, Vivek Agnihotri wrote on Twitter, "When good content small films are sabotaged, boycotted by the dons of Bollywood, when their shows are taken away by multiplexes, when critics gang up against small films... nobody thinks of 250 poor people who

worked hard on that film. #Bollywood." He further wrote, "Why nobody from Bollywood raises voice when the kings of Bollywood boycott, ban and destroy careers of so many outsider actors, directors, writers? The day common Indians get to know the arrogance, fascism and Hinduphobia of the dons of Bollywood, they'll drown them in hot coffee." Vivek Agnihotri tweeted in reaction to demand for boycott of Laal Singh Chaddha. He also reacted to a tweet about the low occupancy for Laal Singh Chaddha shows in theatres. Responding to one such tweet, Vivek wrote, "Who has single-handedly led Bollywood to such mess and humiliation? Fun fact is that his/it/their/them's kingdom is still growing while destroying everyone else in Bollywood. Time to smell coffee. Anyone wants to do an honest,

analytical, academic podcast on this subject?"

Vivek's film The Kashmir Files remains the highest grossing film this year with worldwide gross collection of ₹340 crore. It revolved around the killings of Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir. Laal Singh Chaddha opened at ₹11.70 crore and stands at a five-day total of around ₹45-46 crore. Post the release of The Kashmir Files, when Aamir Khan was asked about watching the film, he had said that every Indian should watch the film. He had said at an event in Hindi, "I will definitely watch the film. It is a part of our history which is heartbreaking. What happened with the Kashmiri Pandits is really very sad. Every Indian should watch the film made on this subject and should recall how it feels when a person goes through such trauma."



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