



The South Asian



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## As Droupadi Murmu Wins Presidential Election, BJP Hosts 'Abhinandan Yatra' In Delhi

An 'Abhinandan Yatra' was taken out from its Delhi unit office at 14, Pant Marg, as scores of men and women from the party cadres marched to the Rajpath

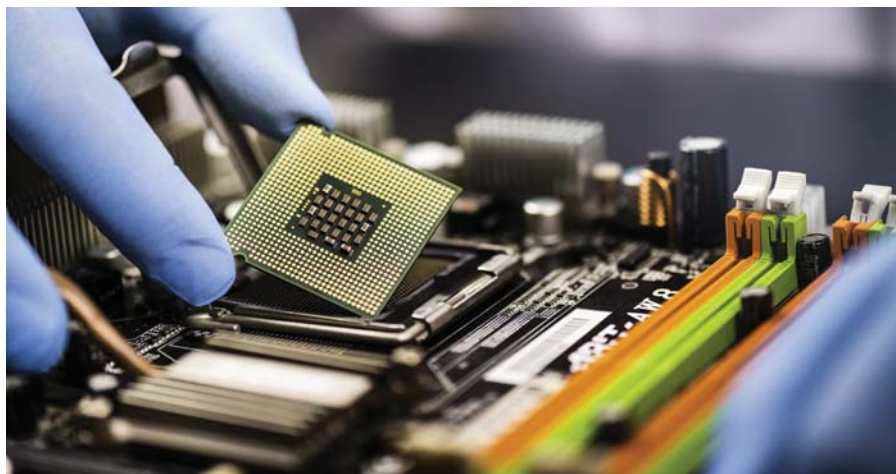


From Pakistan to Panama,  
countries which could go  
the Sri Lanka way



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## Senate advances more than \$50 billion bill to boost U.S. semiconductor production



interests of several committees, ranging from national security to economics. The Senate's procedural step forward on Tuesday paves the way for the chamber to hold a vote on final passage later this week or early next week. The bill would then travel to the House for passage before it would head to President Joe Biden's desk for signature into law. The broadest aim of the legislation is to incentivize semiconductor production within the U.S. to decrease dependence on Asia-based manufacturers. Biden administration officials say a larger domestic chip industry would help ease the supply chain disruptions that have hampered the economic recovery from Covid-19 and insulate the U.S. from supply routes dominated by political rival China. (Contd. on page 31)

(SAI Bureau) The Senate worked to finish various sections of the legislation. The bill, which would provide about \$50 billion in subsidies to bolster U.S. computer chip manufacturing, is a multifaceted bipartisan effort that combines the

## Heatwave: Ferocious European heat heads north

Sweltering temperatures hit much of  
Western Europe on Tuesday as a  
ferocious heatwave headed north



(SAI Bureau) The UK hit its highest ever temperature of 40.3C, according to provisional Met Office figures, and forecasters warned temperatures were still climbing. Extreme heat warnings were issued in France and record July temperatures were reported in the Netherlands. (Contd. on page 31)

## Bullet train to the moon and Mars? Here's how Japan's planning interplanetary travel

Researchers from Japan's Kyoto University, in collaboration with Kajima Construction, are working on a plan to introduce a Bullet Train to space that could shake up the space travel industry

(SAI Bureau) What seems like a sci-fi movie can be turned into reality if Japan's technology is to be believed. Humans can travel across different planets on a train in the near future! Yes, you read that right. Japan has laid out plans in a bid to send humans to

Mars and the Moon, according to The Weather Channel India. Japan has made plans to build a glass habitat structure that would copy Earth's gravity, atmosphere and topography to make us feel like home.

(Contd. on page 30)



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# Over 3.9 lakh Indians gave up citizenship in past 3 yrs to settle abroad: govt data

More than 1.63 lakh Indians relinquished their citizenship in 2021 alone, according to the data tabled by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. Of them, more than 78,000 took US citizenship, it added



(SAI Bureau) More than 3.9 lakh Indians have renounced their citizenship in the past three years, the government told the Parliament on Tuesday, with America emerging as the top choice among 103 countries where the emigrants settled. More than 1.63 lakh Indians relinquished their citizenship in 2021 alone, according to the data tabled by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. Of them, more than 78,000 took US citizenship, it added. While 1.44 lakh Indians gave up their citizenship in 2019, the data showed, the numbers fell in 2020 to 85,256 in 2020, before rising again last year. Responding to a question

by BSP MP Hazi Fazlur Rehman, Union MoS for Home Nityanand Rai told the Parliament that according to the Ministry of External Affairs the Indian citizens renounced their "for reasons personal to them". According to the data, apart from choosing countries such as Singapore (7,046) and Sweden (3,754), many have also renounced their citizenship for Bahrain (170), Angola (2), Iran (21), and Iraq (1) — one person took the citizenship of Burkina Faso in 2021. More than 1,400 persons took Chinese citizenship, the data showed, while 48 persons renounced their citizenship for Pakistan's.

## Sri Lanka Crisis: Indian Man Injured In Night Assault Near Colombo

The Indian High Commission in Colombo said its officials met "Vivek Varma, an Indian national and Director of Indian Visa Centre, who sustained grievous injuries in an unprovoked assault last night near Colombo"

(SAI Bureau) An Indian national in Sri Lanka sustained grievous injuries in an unprovoked assault, the Indian High Commission in Colombo said on Tuesday as it urged Indians to remain aware of the latest developments in the island nation and plan their movements and activities accordingly. Sri Lanka is witnessing a public unrest due to the unprecedented economic crisis followed by a political turmoil in the country. Acting President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Monday imposed an emergency ahead of the key election today to pick

a new President.

The Indian High Commission in a tweet said the relations between the people of India and Sri Lanka have always been cordial and friendly.

"In the current situation, #Indian nationals in #SriLanka are requested to remain aware of latest developments and accordingly plan their movements and activities. You may contact us when required," it said.

In another tweet, the High Commission said its officials in the morning met "Vivek Varma, an Indian national

and Director of Indian Visa Centre, who sustained grievous injuries in an unprovoked assault last night near Colombo".

Ranil Wickremesinghe, who was sworn-in as the acting President of Sri Lanka on Friday after former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled to the Maldives and then to Singapore from where he resigned in the face of public revolt against his government's mishandling of the country's economy, imposed the emergency as protests demanding his resignation continued in most



parts of the country. President Wickremesinghe, who is contesting the election, has defended imposing emergency, saying it was required in Sri Lanka in the interests of public security, the protection of public order and the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community. He has asked the security forces not to allow violent anti-government protests ahead of the presidential election today.

## Rishi Sunak: The Indian-origin leader who could become the next prime minister of UK

(SAI Bureau) The world is now focused on Rishi Sunak, a 42-year-old man of Indian descent who is currently a leading candidate for the position of UK prime minister. His ancestry, political ascent, and fortune have piqued interest among Indians as well as British people. Rishi Sunak has gained further attention as a result of claims that Boris Johnson's downfall was caused by his departure as British Chancellor of the Exchequer.

After his Conservative Party colleagues strongly supported him with 137 votes in the final round on Wednesday, he is now the closest anybody of Indian heritage has ever come to taking office as British Prime Minister. The former Chancellor is not guaranteed a similarly smooth ride because he must compete with a considerably more difficult electorate of the Tory membership base that has recently

shown favouritism for his competitor, Liz Truss, in polls.

There is still time for the MPs' favourite to attempt to duplicate that outcome at the conclusion of postal voting on September 5, though, as another head-to-head televised debate between the final two candidates is set on the BBC for Monday and a series of hustings will be held around the UK. Since the beginning of his campaign, when he told the tale of his Indian family's 1960s emigration from East Africa, he has made an effort to find a balance between the personal and the professional.

Rishi was born in Southampton in 1980 and went to Winchester College, a

prominent elite school. He worked part-time as a waiter at Southampton Curry House over the summer. Later, he went to

Oxford University to study politics, philosophy, and economics.

While completing his MBA at Stanford University in the US on a Fulbright scholarship, Sunak met his future wife, Akshata Murthy, a millionaire heiress. Akshata is the daughter of Narayana Murthy, the

CEO of the IT services behemoth Infosys. Two of Rishi and Akshata's daughters.

From 2001 through 2004, Rishi was employed by Goldman Sachs as an analyst. According to a UK government website, he eventually went on to become

a partner in two hedge funds, where he used his skills to aid the expansion of small and innovative British businesses. After serving as a Conservative MP for Richmond in Yorkshire since 2015, he was appointed as a junior minister in Theresa May's administration. Johnson appointed him chief secretary to the Treasury in 2019 and gave him a promotion to chancellor in February 2020. Rishi resigned this month despite always being an outspoken backer of Johnson's ideas, claiming that his own method of handling the economy was "fundamentally" different from that of the PM. Additionally, Rishi has openly identified as a "proud Hindu." He has claimed that, despite referring to himself as "thoroughly British," his religious and cultural ancestry is "Indian," just like that of his wife, and that "he is upfront about being a Hindu."





# Bengaluru Woman, Who Fell Critically Ill in US, Flown from Portland to Chennai within 26 Hours

(By Staff Reporter) A Bengaluru woman who was living in Portland, Oregon was flown from there to Chennai via an air ambulance flight as she was suffering from a critical cardiac condition. She started her journey from Portland on Sunday and landed in Chennai on Tuesday. The entire flight journey took 26 hours as the flight made stops at Iceland and Turkey, the Times of India reported.

The report said that airlift cost her a little over Rs 1 crore and two super-mid-sized private jets were used to bring her to Chennai where she is now being prepared for a heart surgery. The woman, a resident of Indiranagar,

was living in Oregon with her children for a few years and developed a heart condition for which she was being treated there. The ICATT air ambulance co-founder and director Dr Shalini Nalwad said the woman's family felt the treatment in the US was not sufficient. The woman's airlift began on Sunday from Portland, Oregon when she was moved from the Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center to the Portland International Airport. After arriving at the airport, she boarded a Challenger 605, a super-mid-sized private jet. The jet is customized to act as a flying intensive care unit (ICU).

Dr Rahul Singh, co-founder of

ICATT, an air ambulance service, said the ICU was readied onboard with a medical team which included three doctors and two paramedics who monitored the patient. She reached Iceland's capital Reykjavik after seven and a half hours. The halt was taken to refuel the aircraft. After six more hours of flying it landed in Istanbul, Turkey. There the medical and aviation crew were replaced, barring a doctor who accompanied her throughout the journey. It was in Istanbul that she was shifted to another Challenger 605. The flight flew to Diyarbakir airport in four hours. In its final leg, the air ambulance took off from Diyarbakir airport and

landed in Chennai in the wee hours of Tuesday morning. Following the completion of immigration procedures onboard on the airport tarmac the lady was rushed to the Apollo Hospital where she was admitted. Nalwad told the Times of India that the treatment period and the costs were more than airlifting her to India. People familiar with the developments told the Times of India the woman was facing issues related to health insurance as she was an Indian passport holder. She claimed that this 'probably was the longest-ever aeromedical retrieval in' India with the patient being flown in all the way from the US to India over a period of 48 hours.

## Consulate General of India, New York, DPIIT held One-District-One-Product (ODOP) Roadshow



(By Staff Reporter) The Consulate General of India in New York, in partnership with the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Invest India, held a Roadshow on One-District-One-Product (ODOP) on 12th of July, 2022. The show was attended by stakeholders from the food, hospitality, textiles and relevant business sectors. Consul General Shri Randhir Jaiwal gave the opening remarks, talking about the importance of the ODOP initiative and detailing the uniqueness of the products. From Araku coffee, with its distinctive texture, flavour and aroma, to the SIMFED turmeric from the organic state of Sikkim, he talked about the individuality and exclusivity of the items at display. Joint Secretary from DPIIT, Ms. Manmeet Nanda familiarised the audience with the ODOP initiative and its vision. She elaborated that the whole idea of the initiative is to showcase unique products from different district of India, and that this stems from the mandate of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, focusing on a resilient India that is recognised as a brand globally. Expanding on the same, she talked about the

vision of promoting sustainable trade along with creating a direct market link between the makers and buyers of these unique products. Explaining the progress that the initiative has made thus far, Ms. Nanda highlighted that more than 700 products with a

unique quality and a large export potential have been identified till date. Each product tells a story – a story of creation, craftsmanship, tradition, custom, and people. Today, India's unique products have ties all over the world. Farmers in Jammu and

Kashmir sell walnuts to distant countries like Europe, and international brands sell Indian Pashmina shawls. Representatives of Invest India took forward the discourse and emphasized the four pillars of the ODOP initiative – ecommerce, marketing, licencing, and selling and trade. Different products from different parts of the country were showcased, ranging from cardamom tea, millet pasta, saffron, ginger flakes and more. From the north, the range extended from walnut wood carvings to Basohli paintings. From the state of Rajasthan, items of blue pottery were displayed. From the North-

East, the variety consisted of coffee, jewellery, and special silks such as Eri Silk and some non-violent silk products. The non-violent silk items are so called as their production does not involve harming of silk worms. Members of the diaspora were urged to promote products from their districts and adopt the vision of the ODOP scheme. They were urged to promote ODOP products through gift giving, socially as well as officially. Earlier, the Consulate had organized a display of ODOP products at Times Square during International Day of Yoga celebrations on 21 June 2022.

## India Day Parade to be held in Hicksville of Long Island on August 7, 2022

(By Staff Reporter) Hicksville, NY: IDP USA has called a media briefing on Tuesday, July 26, 6 pm at Mint restaurant in Garden City to provide updates on the arrangements and highlights of the 11th India Day Parade of Long Island. IDP President Vimal Goyal and Adviser Mukesh Modi are all excited to share the news that famous Bollywood actress Prachi Tehlan, singing sensation Shibani Kashyap and Hollywood/Bollywood actor Prashantt Gupta have been signed on to raise the EQ, entertainment quotient, of the parade celebrating the landmark 75th anniversary of India's independence.

All the arrangements for holding a safe and successful parade in Hicksville on Sunday, August 7 are in place. The parade organizers are grateful to the full



Guest of Honor Shibani Kashyap, Bollywood Playback Singer and Performer



Guest of Honor Prashantt Gupta, Bollywood/Hollywood Actor, a native of Long Island, NY



Grand Marshal Prachi Tehlan, Bollywood Actress and Sports person

cooperation from the officials concerned of Nassau County and Town of Oyster Bay and the police department. At the parade curtain raiser held on June 21 President Vimal Goyal had announced that the parade this time will originate from Hicksville Community Center on Carl Street West, and culminate at 125 West John Street where the entertainment stage

and vendor stalls will be set up. Children's carnival and games area will be free. The raffle will have attractive prizes. The curtain raiser was held at the prestigious Nassau County Executive and Legislative Building in Mineola, NY. It was attended by IDP USA team members, past presidents, and community leaders, officials of

Nassau County as well as the Town of Oyster Bay, and press persons. The parade celebrates Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav with a focus on India's culture and heritage. The two themes IDP adopted this time are: 'Each One Plant One' to combat global warming, and 'Anekta Mein Ekta' (Unity in Diversity).



# Reema Rasool: Long Island Muslim American Woman runs for U.S. Congress on Democratic Ballot



(By Staff Reporter) : Reema Rasool, real-life Muslim American superhero, fights against inequality and advocates for justice on behalf of her almost 800,000 constituents on the Northern Shore of Long Island and Northeast Queens. Her attempt similarly defines as the first Muslim American female, Kamala Khan aka Ms Marvel, uses her super powers to take the world by storm in the Marvel Comic Universe on Disney+.

Rasool is a first generation American, the daughter of Drs. Shama and Ayaz Rasool, who emigrated to NY-3 from Srinagar,

Kashmir in 1974. A life-long NY-3 resident, Rasool is a serial entrepreneur and successful business woman who advocates for small business owners. A mother of two teenage boys, Rasool is the FIRST Muslim American woman on the ballot for the Nassau County Democrats on Long Island, where she ran for the Oyster Bay Town Board in 2021. "We are a people-powered campaign," asserts Rasool. "I'm representing the middle-class of this country and plan to advance our standing as the technological and business capital of the world.

Together, we will guarantee healthcare, a healthy environment, and financial stability for all,' she adds. Rasool is a graduate of New York University and the founder of South Asian Young Women Entrepreneurs (SAY WE), a national not-for-profit trade association that educates, supports and advocates for women in business. Rasool is also the founder and principal of LUXE Consulting Group, an international financial marketing firm that specializes in the niche field of U.S. infrastructure

investments by foreign nationals. LUXE has offices in India and the UAE. Rasool is running for Congress to lower taxes, support small business owners by redefining the tax code, fight for education equity for children, keep communities safe, and ensure healthcare for all. On July 16, 2022, Rasool invites members of the media to a summer celebration at Campaign Headquarters in New York. The Democratic Primary for New York's 3rd Congressional District is slated for August 23, 2022. Rasool is running against FIVE other candidates.

## Mayor Adams calls for Federal resources to assist with arriving asylum seekers

(By Staff Reporter) : New York City Mayor Eric Adams called for federal resources to assist with arriving asylum seekers in New York City, after over the last several weeks. New York has experienced a sharp increase in asylum seekers from Latin America and other regions, with more than 2,800 individuals entering New York City's shelter system. New York City is working with the federal government to ensure the city can provide comprehensive support and resources to these individuals. Mayor Adams released the following statement as the situation continues to evolve: "New York has been and will always be a city of immigrants that welcomes newcomers with open arms. This value has made our city a beacon of freedom for people around the world and the economic and cultural powerhouse that it is. These very same humanitarian values apply to



those who are experiencing homelessness. In New York City, we have both a moral and legal obligation to house anyone who is experiencing homelessness for any reason. Currently, New York City is experiencing a marked increase in the number of asylum seekers who are arriving from Latin America and other

regions. In some instances, families are arriving on buses sent by the Texas and Arizona governments, while in other cases, it appears that individuals are being sent by the federal government. In order to both meet the legal mandate as a right-to-shelter city and provide high-quality shelter and services for those

who enter our system, New York City needs additional federal resources immediately. If we do not get these urgently needed resources, we may struggle to provide the proper level of support our clients deserve, while also facing challenges as we serve both a rapidly growing shelter population and new clients who are seeking asylum. We are calling on the federal government to partner with New York City as we help asylum seekers navigate this process, and to provide financial and technical resources. "By law, asylum seekers have a right to be in the United States while they seek humanitarian protection. In New York City, we are responsible for the provision of services and infrastructure for newly arrived asylum seekers and currently residing populations alike. We've been in discussions with our federal partners on this matter and look forward to a quick resolution."



# Monkeypox in India: Centre Calls for Screening of all Foreign Travellers After 2 Confirmed Cases



called for effective coordination with other stakeholder agencies like Immigration at international ports and airports to streamline health screening processes besides ensuring suitable linkages with hospital facilities earmarked to each port of entry for timely referral and isolation. The meeting was attended by senior officials from International Health Division, and Disaster Management Cell.

The advisory comes on a day the country reported a second case of the zoonotic disease in Kerala — the same state that reported India's first monkeypox case. The second monkeypox case was confirmed in Kerala's Kannur district, with state Health Minister Veena George saying that the patient is a 31-year-old man, currently being treated at Pariyaram Medical College. "The patient's

health condition is reported to be satisfactory. Those in close contact with him have been put under surveillance," she said. The patient landed at the Mangalore airport in coastal Karnataka from Dubai on July 13. He was admitted to a hospital after he showed symptoms of the zoonotic disease. His samples were sent to NIV, Pune and they tested positive for monkeypox.

(By Staff Reporter) The Centre on Monday asked for a strict health screening of all foreign travellers at airports and ports amid an increasing risk of monkeypox in the country. The Union Health Ministry stated that it has asked all airports and ports to ensure the screening of all passengers. "Centre Reviews Points of Entry (PoEs) Health actions at international airports and ports. State, airport and port health officers advised ensuring health screening of all international travellers to

minimise the risk of importation of monkeypox disease," the ministry said in a statement after a meeting attended by airport and port health officers (APHOs and PHOs), regional directors from regional offices of health and family welfare, and senior officials from International Health Division, and Disaster Management Cell. They were advised and re-oriented in the clinical presentation of monkeypox disease as per the ministry of health's 'Guidelines for Management of Monkeypox disease'. The Centre has also

## MONKEYPOX: ITS TRANSMISSION & SYMPTOMS

According to WHO, monkeypox is a viral zoonosis (a virus transmitted to humans from animals) with symptoms similar to those seen in the past in smallpox patients, although it is clinically less severe. With the eradication of smallpox in 1980 and the subsequent cessation of smallpox vaccination, monkeypox has emerged as the most important orthopoxvirus for public health. In the 'Guidelines on Management of Monkeypox Disease' issued to states and UTs, the Centre stated that human-to-human transmission occurs primarily through large respiratory droplets generally requiring prolonged close contact. It can also be transmitted through direct contact with body fluids or lesion

material, and indirect contact with lesion material, such as through contaminated clothing or linens of an infected person. The symptoms include lesions that usually begin within 1-3 days of fever onset, lasting for around 2-4 weeks and are often described as painful until the healing phase when they become itchy (in the crust stage). A notable predilection for palm and soles is characteristic of monkeypox, the guidelines stated. It also said that contacts should be monitored at least daily for the onset of signs/symptoms for 21 days (as per case definition) from the last contact with a patient or their contaminated materials during the infectious period.



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# Home Ministry Issues Fresh Guidelines for Procurement by CAPFs from Defence PSUs, Strengthens Hands of DGs



procured swiftly. "CAPFs will categorize their requirement of Arms & Ammunition (A&A) and other items which they used to procure from erstwhile OFB, into two categories Critical items and Non-critical items. DG of the respective CAPF will be the authority to decide the categorization of critical and non-critical items. List of critical and non-critical items may be issued with the approval or DG of respective Force under intimation to PM Division (MHA)," the communication says. The ministry has said that in the financial year 2022-23, CAPFs may procure critical items (including arms and ammunition)

from DPSUs through a single tender enquiry under Rule 166 of OFR, 2017, and the procedure laid down in the Manual for Procurement of Goods, 2017. "Earlier, procurement of important items including arms and ammunition used to take time. There was no segregation of items required immediately and those that can be procured in the next few months. Every force has its own priority, needs some important items in time, mainly weapons and ammunition due to deployment in hypersensitive areas," a senior government official told News18. By giving powers to the DGs to decide

what are critical items for the forces that will be needed on priority and what are not, the process of procuring arms and ammunition along with other items can be done swiftly. Various procurements were stuck mainly of the CRPF and BSF due to no clarity on the new process after the government dissolved the OFB," a senior government official added. For non-critical items, the forces will adopt the old format of open tender and call everyone to get the cheapest price possible. The ministry is keen to procure made-in-India items and forces are trying to reduce dependency on foreign companies, an official said.

(News Agency) (News Agency) The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) can now procure various items, mainly arms and ammunition, more swiftly as the ministry of home affairs (MHA) has enhanced the powers of the director generals (DGs).

The ministry in a recent communication regarding procurement from Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) that were created from the erstwhile Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has finalised the guidelines and also asked DGs of forces to decide their priorities.

Central Armed Police Forces such as the CRPF, BSF, SSB,

ITBP, CISF, NSF, and Assam Rifles purchase arms and ammunition and other types of equipment and items from the Defence Public Sector Undertakings. These seven DPSUs offer machine guns, small arms, assault rifles, grenade launchers, LMG, etc, which CAPFs will acquire from them. According to the home ministry communication describing new guidelines, now procurements have been divided into two categories: critical and non-critical. The director generals have been empowered to decide the lists of both types of items as per their forces' requirements so that important items needed on priority can be

## Bombay HC seeks reply from Kalyan sessions court judge for 4-year delay in framing of charge in bride burning case

**Coming down heavily on the delay in the trial of the bride burning in Kalyan, Bombay High Court has asked the Kalyan sessions court judge to offer an explanation for the same**

(News Agency) Coming down heavily on the delay in the trial of the bride burning in Kalyan, Bombay High Court has asked the Kalyan sessions court judge to offer an explanation for the same. Justice Bharti Dangre of



## Greece Foreign Minister calls for strengthening ties with India

(News Agency) Greece's foreign minister Nikos Dendias has called for strengthening ties with India as the world faces a "maelstrom of international developments". In his address at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), he said, "we are trying to develop our relations with countries which, as I say, lie beyond the horizon: emerging powers that have similar or compatible positions with us",

explaining, "I am referring to India, which is poised to become the world's most populous country next year". Earlier this year, FM Nikos visited India and held talks with External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, a visit that came after India's foreign Minister's visit to his country last year. During talks in Delhi, they discussed many issues including the situation in the eastern Mediterranean where Turkish actions have been violating the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS. During the visit, the Greek



Foreign Minister handed over the Instrument of Ratification of Greece as a signatory to the Framework Agreement on International Solar Alliance. Trade between the 2 countries has crossed US\$ 1 billion despite the challenges posed by the covid pandemic. The Greek FM also hoped to develop ties with Japan, and Vietnam which share "positions similar to ours on

the Law of the Sea", Australia and Indonesia. On the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the foreign minister said that it has "changed the world" and is a violation of "principles of International Law". He said that the invasion has led to food and energy crises and they can have "devastating consequences for societies all over the world, resulting in social upheavals and migratory flows", adding, "We all, probably, watched the latest events in Sri Lanka on our television screens."

the Bombay High Court was hearing the bail plea of a 69-year-old man who was accused of killing his daughter-in-law in 2016. Advocate Pankaj Kavale, who represented the accused, pointed out the delay and also said that the accused had already lost sight in one of his eyes due to heavy diabetes and was suffering from various other ailments and had thus sought bail. The accused and a few others were arrested by MFC police station and the accused were presented before the Magistrate's court in Kalyan. After the police filed the chargesheet, the case was committed to the Kalyan sessions court. Justice Dangre, looking through the papers, angrily said, "You will take 20 years to conduct a trial? It is a pity. Which court is this? Even the charge is not framed. It is committed in 2017, my

goodness!" Details of the lower court proceedings are mentioned in the roznama which Justice Dangre went through and said, "Except giving dates the court has done nothing. The accused is either not produced in court and whenever he is produced after all that herculean task, then the court simplicator adjourns the case, sorry to say this. Then that lockdown happened." Justice Dangre observed that the case of the accused is being scheduled for framing of charge since Aug 8, 2018. "The roznama reflects a dismal picture for the last four years where the charge has not been framed on account of the pandemic and all other dates before and after as well. Let the Additional sessions judge, Kalyan, offer an exclamation for various adjournments in the case despite the accused being produced in court," ordered Justice Dangre.



# New breed of Yaks to be introduced in villages along LAC in Ladakh

**Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche, the Green Ambassador of UT of Ladakh, has undertaken an initiative to save the nomadic lives and to promote sustainable development in domestic Yak preservation**



(SAI Bureau) Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche, the Green Ambassador of UT of Ladakh, has undertaken an initiative to save the nomadic lives and to promote sustainable development in domestic Yak preservation by buying male

and female hybrid animals, wild Yak (*Bos mutus*) and domesticated Yak (*Bos grunniens*), from Pangong valley and distributing it to the different valleys of Lalok regions among the eight Gobas of the region. The primary objective of the initiative is to spread the stronger and healthier genetic breed of the Wild Yak in the valley. Yak is a very important animal in the high-altitude area and also plays a big role in the day-to-day life of people in Ladakh. Chetsang Rinpoche

also plans to spread this breed of Yak to the other side of the LAC in Ladakh, and even to other parts of the world like Sikkim and Bhutan in the coming years. Apart from that, life release or animal liberation is a traditional Buddhist practise of saving the lives of beings that were destined for slaughter, therefore he has also committed to life release of the mix-breed of Yak. A native, Tsering Dorjay, offered two calves to Chetsang Rinpoche and bought 8 calves

from different groups. The event was organised by Phobrang villagers under the leadership of Goba Konchok Stobgais and blessed by Nurbu Tsang Rinpoche, Venerable Droupon Stanzin, Gen Konchok Tsephel Councillor LAHDC, Leh (Sangha Community). Executive Councillor Shri Tashi Yakzee and Shri Konchok Stanzin, councillor Chushul constituency LAHDC, Leh also took part and assured the breeders of all kinds of help in the coming days.

## Ex-ACP RV Trivedi is on a witch-hunt against me, says CBI chief Subodh Jaiswal in reply in Bombay HC

**CBI Director Subodh Jaiswal said that the petition filed against him by former Assistant Commissioner of Maharashtra Police, RV Trivedi had been filed with a "personal grudge" against him and "out of sheer vendetta and vengeance"**

(News Agency) Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Subodh Jaiswal said that the petition filed against him by former Assistant Commissioner of Maharashtra Police, RV Trivedi had been filed with a "personal grudge" against him

and "out of sheer vendetta and vengeance." Subodh Jaiswal said that the petition should be dismissed over its maintainability alone and costs should be imposed on Trivedi. Jaiswal stated that his appointment as CBI chief

happened only because of merit.

RV Trivedi had approached the Bombay High Court with a plea for quashing the order by which IPS officer had been appointed as CBI director. Trivedi had also requested that the court should

also call for records and proceedings regarding the appointment of Jaiswal.

At the core of Trivedi's petition, filed through Talekar and Associates, is the issue revolving around Telgi scam which was worth crores in the 1990s. Telgi was accused of printing fake stamp papers in the government security press at Nashik and selling them at heavy discounts. He was arrested in 2001 and had been convicted in some cases and was acquitted in a few others. It was on November 2, 2002 that Jaiswal was appointed as the head the Special Investigating Team (SIT) which investigated the scam. During the course of various hearing in courts, strictures were passed against Jaiswal for the way the investigation was conducted in connection with the case. The case was finally transferred to the CBI on March 15, 2004. Referring to this, Jaiswal said that CBI had filed supplementary chargesheets on the basis of further investigation done by it and the findings of the SIT were not contradicted by any material found by the CBI or else the agency would have taken necessary legal action against the members of the SIT.

"Infact the then competent authority of the CBI had

found that the SIT had taken all appropriate legal action," said Jaiswal in his reply.

Jaiswal stated at the outset that he was restricting the scope of his affidavit to the "relevant issues for adjudication" and not dealing with the merits of the case, as far as his appointment is concerned.

The CBI chief submitted that the onus of bringing the correct factual position on record about his appointment was on the central government and the CBI.

"No case has been made out by the Petitioner to invoke the extra-ordinary jurisdiction of the High Court. The petitioner has filed the present petition with a personal grudge against the answering respondent and only out of sheer vendetta and vengeance," Jaiswal said in his reply. Jaiswal while raising the maintainability issue stated that before his retirement, Trivedi, the former Assistant Commissioner of Police, Maharashtra, had a grievance against him with respect to his postings. He also pointed out that allegedly subordinate officers of Trivedi had sent a default report against him to Jaiswal. Jaiswal after examination sent it across to the government for a departmental enquiry against Trivedi which was initiated by the government in 2019.

## Uddhav Thackeray sacks Ramdas Kadam and Anandrao Adsul for anti-party activities



(News Agency) Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray fired several party leaders on Monday for anti-party activities, including senior Shiv Sena leader Anandrao Vithoba Adsul and former Maharashtra minister Ramdas Kadam. This comes as the battle between the top leaders of the party continues to determine its direction. However, the current state chief minister, Eknath Shinde, who has asserted that his group is the "genuine" Shiv Sena, chose both of the leaders without

delay. Vijay Shivtare, a former state minister, was expelled from the party on Saturday, and Thackeray cited anti-party conduct as the reason. While CM Shinde has been re-appointing ousted MLAs and leaders to their previous positions, Thackeray has continued his recent wave of dismissals.

Notably, the Supreme Court will hear a number of applications from both sides on the disqualification of MLAs on Wednesday, July 20. Ramdas Kadam quit on Monday, saying

he had been "insulted" repeatedly when Thackeray was chief minister, dealing a blow to the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena.

Kadam submitted his resignation as "Shiv Sena leader" in a letter to Thackeray, the organization's leader. The 2019 post-election collaboration between the Shiv Sena, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and Congress, which Kadam claimed was a violation of the ideas of late Sena founder Bal Thackeray, caused Kadam great distress, he wrote in his letter. Eknath Shinde, a Shiv Sena MLA, and 39 other lawmakers rebelled against the party last month. On June 30, Shinde took the oath to serve as chief minister, and BJP member Devendra Fadnavis did the same to serve as his deputy. Several Shiv Sena leaders have defected to the Shinde side ever since he was chosen to be the new chief minister of Maharashtra.



# Mr Ballot Box: Election Commission buys separate air tickets for presidential poll ballot boxes

The Election Commission sent ballot boxes to 14 states and Union territories for the Presidential polls, which were booked with separate 'two way' air tickets under the name 'Mr Ballot box' for the journey



(SAI Bureau) As the voting for name 'Mr Ballot box', the presidential election accompanied by election concluded on Monday, the officers, for their return journey ballot boxes boarded flights on to Delhi from the states' separate air tickets under the capitals. The Election

Commission of India (ECI) sent ballot boxes to 14 states and Union territories for the Presidential polls. The ballot boxes were booked with separate 'two way' air tickets under the name 'Mr Ballot box' for the journey. Earlier, the boxes were sent as hand baggage by supervising officials. But this year, the commission has booked two-way tickets for the ballot boxes. Election officers occupy the seats adjacent to the ballot boxes. The officers are entrusted with transporting ballot papers and special pens

to mark votes.

When the votes are counted on 21 July, these boxes will play a major role in determining whether Droupadi Murmu or Yashwant Sinha will be the next occupant of Rashtrapati Bhavan. But why are these ballot boxes being transported on separate air tickets? In a press statement issued last week, the ECI said, "The Ballot Box has a prominent role in the process of presidential elections — being no ordinary box, as it is to hold the fate of the highest office of the largest democracy

on the planet. Thus, the mandated procedure specifies special caution during the transportation, storage, and use of these boxes. Particularly for the conduct of presidential elections, the process also involves a fascinating journey of the Ballot Box reaching every state capital." It further said, "During transportation, the Ballot Boxes fly on a separate air ticket booked in the name of 'Mr Ballot Box' seated in the front row of the aircraft beside the seat of the officer transporting the materials under personal supervision."

## CBI chief Subodh Jaiswal does not possess the necessary experience in investigation of anti-corruption cases ex-ACP tells Bombay HC

Former ACP of Maharashtra police RV Trivedi has approached the Bombay High Court claiming that CBI director Subodh Jaiswal does not have the necessary experience in investigating anti-corruption cases. He has sought revocation of the appointment order

(SAI Bureau) Former ACP of Maharashtra police RV Trivedi has claimed that CBI director Subodh Jaiswal does not have the necessary experience in investigating anti-corruption cases. He has approached the Bombay High Court seeking quashing of the order, by which IPS officer Jaiswal was appointed as director of CBI.

Trivedi has denied having any personal grudge against Jaiswal. In his affidavit, filed through his lawyer Satish Talekar, he stated that he had filed the rejoinder affidavit only because a "calculated attempt was being made to mislead this court by twisting the facts and presenting a highly distorted picture before this court".

Jaiswal in his reply stated that Trivedi had a personal grudge against him and that is why such a "malicious" petition had been filed by him. However, replying to it, Trivedi said, "As a matter of fact, Jaiswal had a personal grudge against me and, therefore, initiated false and frivolous disciplinary action against me. The government of Maharashtra had scrutinised the proposal to initiate disciplinary action against me submitted by Jaiswal and found that the charges were not supported by concrete evidence. The government, therefore, decided

to withdraw the charges against me and close the departmental inquiry." Trivedi has also denied that he had filed the petition to harass and tarnish the image and reputation of Jaiswal.

Trivedi claimed that he had made all disclosures about the legal proceedings initiated by him against Jaiswal, however in response, instead of specifically denying the pleadings, Jaiswal had proceeded to portray that his petition in Bombay high court was nothing but an attempt to settle past scores.

Trivedi submitted that the protonotary permitted registration of the writ petition seeking quo warranto (a writ or legal action requiring a person to show by what warrant an office or franchise is held, claimed, or exercised) as a Public Interest Litigation only because he was not seeking relief for himself.

Trivedi has said that it is a settled position "that while examining if a person holds a public office under valid authority or not, the court is not concerned with technical grounds of locus, delay, laches or motive behind the challenge". Presuming that Trivedi had a grudge against Jaiswal, the same cannot be a ground to scuttle the petition at its very inception.

Trivedi's contention is that an officer can become CBI

chief only if he has served a tenure with the anti-corruption bureau (ACB) of a police force. Trivedi said that Jaiswal has no such experience. However, he said that he did have the ACB under him while he was the Director General of Police in Maharashtra and accorded sanctions to various cases related to this

department. However, Trivedi pointed out that this contention was being made only to mislead the court. There is a sea difference between the terms "investigation" and "according sanction" and experience of investigation can in no manner be treated at par with the experience in according sanction to the prosecution in the capacity

of an appointing authority, said Trivedi.

Trivedi in his affidavit said: "I reiterate that Jaiswal does not possess the necessary experience in the investigation of cases of anti-corruption during his entire career and thus Jaiswal's appointment as CBI director is contrary to the statutory provisions."

## 1 dead, 18 labourers missing near Indo-China border in Arunachal Pradesh

One labourer died and 18 others went missing near the Indo-China border in Arunachal Pradesh's Kurung Kumey district

(SAI Bureau) One labourer died and 18 others are missing near the Indo-China border in Arunachal Pradesh's Kurung Kumey district. The labourers were involved in road



works in Damin, when they went missing a week ago. All 19 went missing last week from the project site and the Deputy Commissioner confirmed that the body of one labourer was found in a nearby river. The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has been constructing a vast network of infrastructural projects in northeastern states, and these labourers were brought in to complete road works in Damin circle, a remote area near the Indo-China border. As per Deputy Commissioner

Bengia Nighee, one dead body was found. But as per local reports, there is a buzz that all labourers have drowned in the Kumey river in Damin. The project site is inside Damin near the Indo-China border. The

labourers reportedly pleaded with the contractor, Bengia Bado, to give them leave to celebrate Eid festival but when the contractor refused to give permission, they fled on foot but went missing in deep jungles of Kurung Kumey district, the police official said. According to him, 18 labourers are still missing. A rescue team will be sent to the project side to find the missing labourers and to verify the reports that all labourers drowned in the Kumey river.



# BJP lashes out at TN govt over hike in power tariff, says 'You torment people to live a luxurious life'

**The Tamil Nadu government announced a hike in the power tariff and proposed an increase of Rs 27.50 (per month) for those using up to 200 units**

(SAI Bureau) Criticising the Tamil Nadu government for increasing the power tariff, the opposition accused the state electricity minister of tormenting people to live a luxurious life. Taking to Twitter, state BJP president, K Annamalai, tweeted, "Give various reasons, EB minister has increased tariff for every consumer. EB Ministry is under the clutches of corruption to make a few rich. You torment people to live a luxurious life?" On Monday, the Tamil Nadu government announced a hike in

the power tariff for TANGEDCO consumers, proposing an increase of Rs 27.50 (per month) for those using up to 200 units. The state government has also hiked the power tariff by 65 paise per unit for railways and educational institutions. There will be no change in electricity charges for 42 per cent of households.

State Electricity Minister V Senthil Balaji said there would be no change in the scheme of providing free electricity of up to 100 units. He

added that the increase in tariffs was inevitable to reduce the mounting debts of the state power utility. Accusing the Centre for the increase in the power tariff, Senthil Balaji said, "This is a difficult burden and the Tamil Nadu government is stuck in huge debt as the Centre has written a letter to the RBI. The Union Government has written to the Reserve Bank of India urging it not to provide any loan for the Tamil Nadu government until the EB tariffs are revised in the state". We have been pushed to



a state where we can't get loans from any bank. As there was no other way to protect the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board, we have been pushed to accept the Centre's demands. Hence, we have come up with this proposal,

making sure that there is no harm to the common man", added Senthil Balaji. The state government will also give an option to consumers to voluntarily give up 100 units subsidy.

## Amarnath Yatra becomes the first pilgrimage to be a zero waste yatra



(SAI Bureau) For the first time in the history of Amarnath Yatra, Jammu and Kashmir government has ensured that the Yatra will be a zero-waste pilgrimage. The Jammu and Kashmir government is making sure that the pilgrimage does not impact or affect the environment. More than 300 volunteers have been stationed to collect and process the waste produced around the various routes.

Around 10 tonnes of waste is produced every day along the Amarnath Yatra route from both the base camps. And this time, the government has made sure that the waste is processed on the spot. The Directorate of sanitation, the rural development department along with IIT Indore's 'SWAHA' start-up have started this initiative which could lead as an example for the rest of the country. "It is a very unique kind of programme, the first time in India that a particular religious event that too of a massive scale is being organised in such a way that it becomes a zero-landfill event and a sustainable one. So, because of

the help and steps taken by the rural development department of Kashmir, we have been given the responsibility as a start-up, we are from Indore, and it's called SWAHA that we make this yatra zero landfill and a sustainable one," said Sameer Sharma, Director SWAHA.

More than 12 processing units have been placed along the route. The organic waste is converted into compost and inorganic waste is further segregated and sent across to the recycling units. "Whatever waste is being generated in this yatra has to be taken care of very scientifically, we have been collecting the waste, we have to process it and dispose of it off. It will be a great benchmark for all such events across the nation," said Sameer. "There is a complete plan that we designed with the government. We have two axes from Pahalgam and Baltal. We have established 12 points where we have put up our waste management units, our responsibility is to take care of the waste process and all the waste that's collected.

## Students appearing for CUET exam must go to centres mentioned on admit cards, says central agency

**Students appearing for CUET exams on Tuesday must go to examination centres mentioned on admit cards, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said**

(SAI Bureau) The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Monday issued an advisory for Common University Entrance Test (CUET) candidates suggesting them to go to the centres mentioned on their admit cards. The advisory is for candidates appearing for the crucial exam on Tuesday. "Several queries have been received from candidates regarding change of centers for their examination scheduled on 19 July 2022. Candidates are hereby informed that they should go to the center mentioned on their Admit Card downloaded from the website <https://cuet.samarth.ac.in>," the notice read. A senior

NTA official said an automated message was sent to all candidates on Monday asking them to check their admit cards a day before the exam. "The candidates are advised to check their admit cards in case a day before the exam to avoid any inconvenience on the exam day," the official said. The debut edition of the CUET-UG kicked off on Friday. It is being conducted till August 20.

On the first day, many students missed the exams due to the last-minute change in the exam centre venue which hobbled the smooth conduct of the CUET for admission to undergraduate courses.

## Veteran singer Bhupinder Singh passes away in Mumbai

**Popular playback singer Bhupinder Singh has passed away in Mumbai. The 82-year-old singer tested positive for Covid and died due to suspected colon cancer and Covid-related complications, his wife Mitali Mukherjee said**

(SAI Bureau) Veteran playback singer Bhupinder Singh, who is famous for his Bollywood numbers, died on Monday due to suspected colon cancer and Covid-related complications at a Mumbai hospital, his wife and singer Mitali Mukherjee said. He was 82 years old. "He was admitted to the hospital eight to ten days ago as he had some infection in the urine. After tests were performed, he tested positive

for Covid. He passed away at around 7.45 pm due to suspected colon cancer and had Covid," Mitali Mukherjee told PTI. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to Twitter to convey his condolences on the demise of the renowned singer. The PM said that his thoughts are with 'the family and admirers' of

the deceased in this time of grief. "Anguished by the passing away of Shri Bhupinder Singh Ji, who has given memorable songs for decades. His works struck a chord with several people. In this sad hour, my thoughts are with his family and admirers. Om Shanti," PM Modi's tweet read. In his five-decade-long career, the singer, born in Punjab's Amritsar, worked with the biggest names of the music industry, such as



Mohammed Rafi, RD Burman, Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle and Bappi Lahiri, among others. Bhupinder Singh is known for songs like Dil Dhoondta Hai, Naam Gum Jaayega, Ek Akela Is Shaheer Mein, Kisi Nazar Ko Tera Intezar Aaj Bhi Hai, Duniya Chhute Yaar Na Chhute among others.



# Highways within 100 km of LoC, borders exempted from environmental clearance: Centre

**The Union Environment Ministry issued a notification saying that highway projects are exempted from meeting the requirement of environmental clearance**

(SAI Bureau) The Centre has notified amendments to environmental impact assessment rules, exempting highway projects related to defence and strategic importance within 100 km of the Line of Control or the border from the requirement of environmental clearance. The notification issued by the Union Environment Ministry also exempts projects pertaining to the expansion of terminal buildings at airports (without an increase in the existing area of the airport) from seeking green nod.

It also increases the exemption threshold of biomass-based power plants which also use auxiliary fuels such as coal, lignite or petroleum products up to 15 percent and fish handling capacity of ports and harbours which exclusively handle fish.

"Highway projects related to defence and strategic

importance in border states are sensitive in nature and in many cases need to be executed on priority keeping in view strategic, defence and security considerations.

"And in this regard, the central government deems it necessary to exempt such projects from the requirement of environmental clearance in the border areas subject to specified standard operating procedure along with standard environmental safeguards for self-compliance by the executing agency," the notification read. All highway projects are exempted up to 100 km from the LOC or the border, it said. Environmental activists had opposed the draft notification issued in April to exempt border projects from environmental clearance, saying it would cause environmental degradation in areas having a fragile ecology. With the

amended policy coming into force, certain stretches of the Char Dham project in Uttarakhand, several other projects in the Himalayas and the northeast which fall within 100 km of the border or the LoC will not require the green nod.

The project involves the widening of 899 km of roads in ecologically sensitive areas of Uttarakhand to improve connectivity to Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunothri, and Gangotri shrines.

After being challenged by an environmental non-profit organisation in Uttarakhand, Citizens for Green Doon, the Supreme Court had in September 2020 ordered that the carriageway width for the Char Dham project should not exceed 5.5m as prescribed in a 2018 circular of the Union Road Transport Ministry.

The Defence Ministry had then



sought a modification in the order to allow the width to be of 10m so that heavy machinery like missile launchers could be easily moved up to the Indo-China border in Uttarakhand.

The top court had then asked a high-powered committee to look into the issue which said the width should be allowed to be of 10m in view of the strategic importance of these highways.

The ministry said that biomass-based thermal power plants (TPP) using auxiliary fuel such as coal, lignite or petroleum products up to 15 percent are already exempted from the requirement of

environmental clearance.

"In view of the activity of using the aforesaid fuel mix being eco-friendly, and in order to encourage such activities, the central government deems it necessary to increase the threshold capacity for such TPPs for which environmental clearance shall not be required," the notification read.

Taking into account the issues of livelihood security of fishermen involved at fish handling ports and harbours and less pollution potential, the Centre also increased the exemption threshold in terms of fish handling capacity for ports and harbours which exclusively handle fish.

## Bill Gates Congratulates PM As India Crosses 200-Crore Covid Vaccinations

**Taking to Twitter, Bill Gates expressed gratitude for the continued partnership with Indian vaccine manufacturers and the government for mitigating the impact of COVID-19**

(SAI Bureau) : Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi on yet another milestone of administering 200 crore vaccinations in India.

Taking to Twitter, Bill Gates expressed gratitude for the continued partnership with Indian vaccine manufacturers and the government for mitigating the impact of COVID-19.

"Congratulations @narendramodi for yet another milestone of administering #200crorevaccinations. We are grateful for our continued partnership with Indian vaccine manufacturers and the Indian government for mitigating the impact of COVID19," Microsoft co-founder tweeted on Wednesday. Congratulations @narendramodi for yet another milestone of administering

#200crorevaccinations. We are grateful for our continued partnership with Indian vaccine manufacturers and the Indian government for mitigating the impact of COVID19. A year after the launch of the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination drive, the country crossed the milestone of administering 200 crore vaccination doses on Sunday.

India has "created history again", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday. "India creates history again! Congrats to all Indians on crossing the special figure of 200 crore vaccine doses. Proud of those who contributed to making India's vaccination drive unparalleled in scale and speed. This has strengthened the global fight against COVID-19," PM Modi tweeted.

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya tweeted: "Witness

the history in making! India under PM @NarendraModi Ji's leadership is all set to achieve the 200-crore COVID-19 vaccination mark! Countdown starts."

On Tuesday, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said that India's cumulative COVID-19 vaccination coverage exceeded a total of 200.33 crores.

Mr Mandaviya launched 'Covid Vaccination Amrit Mahotsav' at Covid Vaccination Camp in Nirman Bhawan on Friday and appealed to the masses to get the free dose so as to ensure protection against COVID-19.

"All Health Ministry employees initiated their inoculation of the free doses. My appeal to all citizens above the age of 18 years to get the free dose to ensure your protection



against COVID19," said Mr Mandaviya. "On 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', all eligible populations (18+) can get a free precaution dose for the next 75 days, starting today," he added.

The free vaccination drive has been launched with an aim to increase the uptake of the precautionary dose of the COVID vaccine among the eligible adult population.

This special vaccination drive is a part of the celebration of 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' and aims to provide free precaution doses for all adults (18 years and above) eligible

population at Government COVID Vaccination Centres (CVCs).

The Centre has announced a special drive 'COVID Vaccination Amrit Mahotsava' to be launched to provide free precaution doses at all Government Covid Vaccination Centres for persons aged 18 years and above for 75 days from July 15 to September 30, 2022. Those eligible for the precaution dose include all persons above 18 years who have completed 6 months (or 26 weeks) from the date of administration of the 2nd dose.



# Advanced lightning protection system to be installed at proposed world's longest electric vehicle highway

**Advanced lightning protection systems will be installed to protect the proposed Atal Harit Vidyut Rashtriya Mahamarg (AHVRM) electric vehicle highway from lightning strikes**

(SAI Bureau) Advanced technology will be used to save the proposed Atal Harit Vidyut Rashtriya Mahamarg (AHVRM) from lightning strikes. Lightning strikes can damage the solar grids and charging points for electric vehicles (EVs) and can start a fire that could jeopardize the operation of the proposed world's longest e-highway from Agra Delhi and Delhi to Jaipur. "The electric vehicles parked there, and the charging point itself are vulnerable to lightning strikes. The lightning gets attracted to the batteries that are stashed at the charging stations for replacement and the batteries that are being charged.

The charging stations are being constructed in open areas, making them more vulnerable to lightning strikes," said Abhijeet Sinha, project director of National Highway for Electric Vehicles (NHEV).

"Any lightning strike can trigger a fire that can last for hours at the charging stations. To protect such points, a private firm has been roped in to install proper equipment to save the area from lightning strikes," said Sinha. CIKIT Electricals & Technologies has been tasked with the job of preventing the highway from lightning strikes. "We would like to focus and highlight the importance of

lightning protection systems to EV charging stations. The charging stations will be located on highways surrounded by vacant land which are more prone to lightning strikes. Most of these charging stations could be part of existing petrol bunks which contain highly flammable materials. Lithium Ion Batteries used in these EVs are also extremely sensitive to high temperatures. If lightning strikes, the fire spreads, and the quenching of the fire becomes tedious, which leads to a big disaster. Hence, lightning protection systems must be empanelled with every charging station's fundamental protection



measures," said Kamlesh Sundar, managing director, CIKIT Electricals and Technologies Pvt Ltd. Currently, Germany has the longest e-highway with a total length of 109 kilometres in Berlin. However, once completed, the Delhi-Agra and Delhi Jaipur highways will merge as one e-highway and will be the world's longest e-highway, Atal Harit

Vidyut Rashtriya Mahamarg (AHVRM), named after former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The total length of AHVRM will be nearly 500 kilometres. Inauguration of the Delhi-Agra part was due before the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections, but it could not kick off due to Covid related delays in the completion of the work.

## Odisha Cabinet approves 17 proposals including IT policy 2022

**Odisha state cabinet led by chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday approved 17 proposals, including the IT policy 2022, that seeks to make the state a preferred IT outsourcing destination**



(SAI Bureau) The Odisha state cabinet headed by chief minister Naveen Patnaik approved 17 proposals, including the Odisha IT Policy 2022, on Tuesday. The government also approved to provide 9.68 acres of land to the Ministry of Culture for the construction of a Paika Bidroha Memorial in the memory of the Paika Rebellion at the foothills of Barunei Hill in Khurda district. The cabinet also approved to set up a Dharmashala in Puri at a cost of Rs 135 crore.

### WHAT IS THE 'IT POLICY 2022'?

As per the policy, the state government will provide 25 per cent of fixed capital investment for capital subsidy limited to Rs 20 crore to eligible IT firms. Another 15 percent of the cost of developing a solar power plant subject to a maximum of Rs 25 lakh will be reimbursed by the government. Greenfield IT parks

will be eligible for 100 per cent reimbursement of stamp duty, registration fee and conversion fee, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Niranjan Pujari told the Odisha Assembly on Tuesday. Similarly, 30 percent of fixed capital investment in buildings and infrastructure, excluding the cost of land, will be provided, subject to a maximum of Rs 3 crore to eligible IT units. The government also announced interest subsidies for IT firms. The eligible IT units will be entitled to get an interest subsidy at 5 per cent per annum on term loans availed from recognized financial institutions and banks, subject to a maximum of Rs 10 crore per year for a period of 5 years from the date of commencement of commercial operation. The policy also has provision for exemption of electricity duty and electrical inspection fees for 5 years. There will be reimbursement of

electricity tariff at 30 per cent for 3 years capped at Rs 35 lakh per unit.

### OTHER PROJECTS

The state cabinet also cleared a proposal for the construction of a Dharmashala in the Baselisahi area of Puri at a cost of Rs 135.60 crore. The Dharmashala project will be implemented under the

Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture (ABADHA) scheme and will be completed in two years by Sriji Krupa, which has been roped in through tender. Similarly, the Odisha government will provide 9.68 acres of land at Khurda to the Ministry of Culture for the construction of 'Paika Bidroha

Memorial' at the foothills of Barunei hills, the battleground of Paika Bidroha, free of premium, capitalised value and incidental charges. The cabinet also approved tenders for execution of mega water supply projects worth Rs 1165 crore in Koraput, Rayagada, Jagatsinghpur and Angul districts.

## Security forces hunt for four terrorists brought to Jammu's Pir Panjal by Lashkar-e-Taiba

(SAI Bureau) : A Lashkar-e-Taiba module has brought four of its terrorists to the Pir-Panjal belt of Jammu region from Kashmir, prompting the police and security agencies to send teams to hunt them down, officials said on Tuesday. The security forces unearthed this information while interrogating the members of the twin modules busted by the police in Rajouri recently. "Three to four terrorists have been brought to Pir Panjal belt (Rajouri-Poonch districts) from Kashmir (recently by a module). They have been kept there (in hideouts)", Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Jammu, Mukesh Singh said.

"We are hopeful to nab them soon," he added. The ADGP said according to records, only three terrorists are active in Jammu as most of those operating in the region have been arrested. The forces have also identified three other top terrorists belonging to Jammu region but are

operating from Pakistan as Qasim, Kubair and Bashir. The two modules busted in Rajouri were instrumental in bringing the four terrorists to Kashmir, he said.

Run by Pakistan-based LeT commander Qasim, the two modules operated in Rajouri-Reasi belts in the Pir Panjal belt during at least the last one year. They were instrumental in five terrorist attacks, collection of weapons dropped from drones from Pakistan in the Line of Control area and ferrying them to Kashmir, he said. "They were instrumental in bringing terrorists from Kashmir to this Pir Panjal side," the ADGP said. Talib alias Abu Ahmad Haider Shah of Draj-Kotranka was the commander for the Rajouri area and instrumental in almost all major terror activities and incidents in the Pir Panjal area over the past three years, he said. He was arrested along with his three associates.



# Noida Twin Towers To Be Loaded With Explosives By August 20, Razed Next Day

**According to Noida Authority, holes have been drilled in the pillars on various floors of the twin towers where explosives would be placed from August 2 till August 20**

(By Staff Reporter) Supertech's twin towers will be rigged with explosives from August 2 till August 20 and the near 100-metre tall structures will be razed to the ground at 2.30 pm on August 21, the Noida Authority was informed on Tuesday. During the period when explosives are placed in the buildings, no body except the staff of the demolition firm, Edifice Engineering, would be allowed inside the premises, according to officials. A detailed discussion on progress report of the demolition of the illegal twin towers was held on Tuesday with representatives of Supertech, Edifice Engineering, UP Pollution Control Board, the Fire

Department, and the local police in attendance. The meeting was chaired by Noida Authority CEO Ritu Maheshwari. The demolition of the twin towers located in Sector 93A comes following an order of the Supreme Court in which it declared the buildings illegal. A status report was submitted by Edifice Engineering regarding the demolition, the Noida Authority said in a statement after the meeting, also attended by the resident welfare associations of adjoining Emerald Court and ATS Village societies. "Along with this, Edifice Engineering said that the demolition proceedings would be done on August 21 at 2.30 pm,"

the Noida Authority said. "Holes have been drilled in the pillars on various floors of the twin towers where explosives would be placed from August 2 till August 20. During this period, only the personnel Edifice Engineering will be allowed entry into the premises," it stated. While the police will keep a watch on it, the engineering firm hired by Supertech for the demolition job has been asked to make sure that adequate number of CCTV cameras is installed on the premises by July 21, it said. The report provided by Edifice Engineering on the disposal of construction and demolition waste was jointly assessed by



the UP Pollution Control Board and the Noida Authority, which asked the private firm to submit a final working plan by July 31, according to the statement. The firm was also told to use plastic sheets to protect the shrubs and parks of Emerald Court and ATS Village from post-blast dust, and determine by July 30 the height of the iron sheet that would be placed

between the twin towers and the adjoining societies to control the dust from moving there, it added. The Supreme Court had on August 31 last year ordered the demolition of the two towers which had come up in violation of building by-laws inside Supertech's Emerald Court group housing society in Sector 93A.

## 2 Sidhu Moosewala killers shot in Amritsar encounter



(By Staff Reporter) In a five-hour-long operation at a village near Attari, the anti-gangster task force of the Punjab Police today gunned down two gangsters, wanted in the Sidhu Moosewala murder case. They have been identified as Jagroop Singh Rupa and Manpreet Singh, alias Mannu Kussa, who had been evading arrest since the incident on May 29. They were part of the Corolla module, who had chased Moosewala in a Corolla car before shooting him at Jawaharke village in Mansa, according to the police.

Three police personnel were injured in the encounter. They sustained bullet injuries in the chest, near the eye and on the thigh. They were rushed to a private hospital where their condition is stated to be out of danger. They have been identified as Sukhdev Singh, Surinderpal Singh and Baljinder Singh. A cameraman of an electronic channel was also injured. They were part of the Corolla module, who had chased Moosewala in a Corolla car before shooting him at Jawaharke village in Mansa, according to the police. Three police personnel were injured in the encounter. They sustained bullet injuries in the chest, near the eye and on the thigh. They were rushed to a private hospital where their condition is stated to be out of danger. They have been identified as Sukhdev Singh, Surinderpal Singh and Baljinder Singh. A cameraman of an electronic channel was also injured. The police recovered an AK-47 rifle and a pistol from the spot. According to eyewitnesses, the encounter started around 10.30 am and ended around 4 pm after ADGP Parmod Ban reached

the spot. The police cordoned off an area of around 1 km around the house where the duo was hiding. Residents were not allowed to come out of their houses during the operation. Ban said the police had been chasing them since the murder of Moosewala. Yesterday, the police noted their movements in the border belt. "The anti-gangster task force staff and the Punjab Police were chasing them

when they holed up in a house surrounded by open fields," said Ban, adding that the police asked them to surrender. However, they continued firing. The police remained patient for hours before launching a counter attack, leading to their death. Heavy ammunition was used by the gangsters during the shootout. Forensic teams have reached the spot. A bag was also found. According to the police, Jagroop

Rupa and Mannu Kosa were members of the Jaggu Bhagwanpuria gang. Bhagwanpuria provided the two gangsters to Lawrence Bishnoi for eliminating Sidhu Moosewala. The police had identified six shooters, who were part of two modules involved in his killing. Three of them — Priyavrat Fauji, Kashish and Ankit Sirsa — were held by the special cell of the Delhi Police.

## Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann admitted to hospital in Delhi

**Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was checked for a stomach ache following which the doctors diagnosed him with an infection**

(By Staff Reporter) Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was admitted to a hospital in Delhi on Wednesday early morning, said sources on Thursday. Mann was admitted for treatment in Delhi's Apollo Hospital after he felt unwell. The Chief Minister was checked for a stomach ache following which the doctors diagnosed him with an infection. On Wednesday, Mann had congratulated the Police and the anti-gangster task force for successfully executing an operation against gangsters in the state after two Sidhu Moose Wala killers were

gunned down after a heavy exchange of fire with Punjab Police near Amritsar on Wednesday, according to an official. The killed gangsters were identified as Jagroop Singh Roopa and Manpreet Singh from whom an AK47 and a pistol were recovered after the encounter. In a statement issued from Chief Minister's Office (CMO) here, the Chief Minister said that the state government has launched a decisive war against the gangsters and anti-social elements in the state, and as per the commitment, the Punjab Police has got major success in an anti-gangster operation in Amritsar.





## Indo-China Military talks: Fruitful or another time-waste technique?

By Susmita Ghosh

The 16th round of India-China military talks were held in eastern Ladakh to resolve issues relating to the borders. Even though India strongly pressed for early disengagement of troops from all the remaining friction points in Ladakh, the talks eventually ended in a stalemate.

The hidden motive of the Chinese zone comes to question if they really do want a resolution of the present condition or not. The Indian delegation also insisted on the restoration of

the status quo as of April 2020. The 15th round of the military dialogue, which took

place on March 22, also failed to yield any significant outcome.

In a joint statement, both India and China, reaffirmed that resolution would help restore peace and calmness in the region along with faithful progress in bilateral relations. The Indian delegation also sought resolution on pending issues in Depsang Bulge and Demchok.

India and China were talking all these days on the Line of Actual Control in the Eastern Ladakh area to resolve the stand-off. Before this meeting, 15 instances of conversation took place. Till now, it has resulted in the resolution of issues in the North and South banks of Pangong Tso, Galwan and Gogra Hot Spring area. As India has been eager to decide on the issues faster, they are bringing the Chinese counterpart on the table instead of an all-out war.

The main reason for the dispute lies in an ill-defined 3,440 km long border that divides both the countries. The Sino-Indian border is generally divided into Western, Middle and Eastern Sectors respectively. The aggressive activity of China, primarily in the Western and Eastern sectors, causes commotion along the border. As the Indian replies in kind, it results in a burning border dispute.

The incumbent Indian government has been strongly vocal relating to India-China border disputes as compared to the previous regime. Engagement efforts are made on several fronts. Presently, India and

China have established a high-level communication channel to tackle counter-terrorism and security purposes.

Led by the vice-chairman of NITI Aayog of India and the chairman of National Development and Reform Commission of China, strategic economic dialogues have taken place. As a unique solution to the communication problem, Indian version of Yoga is becoming increasingly popular in China. Even China had been one of the co-sponsors to the UN resolution designating June 21 as the International Yoga Day.

However managing a stable relationship with China has become the biggest trial for Indian foreign policy. Sudden Chinese events of aggression along the border doesn't make the challenge easier.

Yet, it is often seen in the International Diplomatic Forum that, unlike the past, the present Indian government has been successful to send strong message to Beijing regarding border disputes and protecting other strategic interests. India has emerged as a key ally to international stakeholders which are concerned at the ever-growing influence of China in South-East Asia.

A trust deficit is a critical issue in Sino-Indian bilateral relationship. To solve this problem, track-two diplomacy can play an active role. There is a need of gradually increasing multilateral meets at EAS, SCO, BRICS and G-20, while being vocal about the problem. Simultaneously, China cannot ignore the fact that India is one of the largest consumers to the Chinese products in the world. A mutually stable relationship along the border will benefit their economic interests. Through high-level political engagement, both the countries can act as an engine of growth for the entire subcontinent.

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## Europe heatwave: a number of reasons, climate change most worrying

An extraordinarily hot summer in Europe crossed another peak on Tuesday with some places in Britain recording temperatures above 40°C, the first time any place in the United Kingdom had breached this mark. Last month, a few places in France had recorded temperatures in excess of 45°C — this too an all-time high for that country. Other countries in Europe are also facing extreme heat, made all the more

unbearable because domestic air-conditioning is not very common in that part of the world. Temperatures have dropped a bit in some countries in the last two days, but are still higher than the normal that is expected during this time of the year. As is true of most such situations, the unusually high temperatures are a result of the combination of global and local factors. On the global scale, climate change has been driving the temperatures upwards, which, in general, is evident across the world. Considering the average annual temperature, the last eight years have been the hottest ever recorded through direct measurements since the 1880s, a NASA analysis showed. The temperature in 2021 was the sixth highest ever recorded. Most regions of the world have been reporting higher-than-usual temperatures year after year. In the United Kingdom, each month of this year has recorded substantially higher average temperatures compared to normal, or the average of the 30-year period between 1991 and 2020 (see chart). The current heatwave in UK and the rest of Europe, which began in the second week of July, is in keeping with this trend, and was forecast well in

advance. But climate change alone does not fully explain the record-breaking temperatures being seen in Europe. These kinds of unprecedented high temperatures are usually a result of some unusual combinations of local, short-term, warming phenomena which accentuate the already high baselines induced by climate change. In the present

case, a low pressure system over the European region has been found to

be attracting hot air from northern Africa. An unusual warming in the Arctic Ocean is also said to be playing a role. "A slow-moving high-pressure area has been, and is still, transporting hot air from North Africa over western and parts of central Europe. The hot air is moving northwards, first affecting Portugal, Spain, France, now the UK, and imminently reaching the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg), and western Germany, Switzerland, and northern Italy. It is expected that local/regional temperature records will be broken this week," the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (ECMWF) said in a bulletin on Monday a day before the record-breaking temperature was recorded in Britain. A similar air circulation phenomenon was seen in June as well, when not just France but Norway and many other countries witnessed record high temperatures. Such local events are often short-lived and their impacts dissipate over a few days. Britain had relief on Wednesday, with temperatures dropping down to an extent. Even in France, the day the 45°C mark was breached, temperature had dipped by as much as 15°C after a few hours.

**'A slow-moving high-pressure area has been, and is still, transporting hot air from North Africa over western and parts of central Europe'**

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# Sinhalese for 'struggle', now synonymous with the movement that led to the fall of the government in Sri Lanka

**Aragalaya is being used widely to describe the daily gathering of people at Colombo's Galle Face Green that began with the demand that Gotabaya resign as President**

It started with the farmers. They were the first to protest after an edict in April 2021 by Gotabaya Rajapaksa, then Sri Lanka's President, that they should switch over to organic farming. The sudden change came as the country's foreign exchange crisis had started to show, and by stopping the use of chemical fertilisers, Rajapaksa was trying to cut down on the import bill. Paddy farmers began to express their concerns as the yala season, the first in the cultivation calendar, came upon them in May. By the time of the second season or maha in September, farmers had begun coming out in the hinterland, trying to make their voice heard. Aragalaya, the Sinhalese word for "struggle", is being used widely to describe the daily gathering of people at Colombo's Galle Face Green that began with the demand that Gotabaya resign as President and make way for a new dispensation, even "a new system". That gathering marked



100 days on July 17, after forcing Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa to step down on May 9, and two months later, sending his brother Gotabaya fleeing. But it had begun months before in the hinterland, forcing a government U-turn on the ban on chemical fertilisers, and permit the import of ammonia-based fertilisers. In its essential meaning, aragalaya also captures the struggle of individual Sri Lankans to find food, fuel and medicines on a daily basis, bringing them all

together in a "janatha aragalaya" — a people's struggle. It has been mostly leaderless, though some individuals have spoken for the group on occasion. It also used social media to relay its messages. As Sri Lanka's Parliament votes for a new President on Wednesday, some sections of the aragalaya — which attracted the participation of a wide range of people from students to professionals, from trade unions to the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna — have sent out the signal that they will

not accept a leader who bats for the status quo. Ranil Wickremesinghe, the acting President, and a frontrunner in the election, is unacceptable to the aragalaya. In the eyes of these sections, he represents the ancient regime. A nominated member of Parliament, without a single elected parliamentarian from his party, Wickremesinghe is not just dependent on the votes of the parliamentarians of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna — the Rajapaksa party — but is also seen by the

protestors as someone who will protect the discredited and ousted former leaders, and may even enable Gotabaya's return to Sri Lanka.

In May, after Gotabaya appointed Ranil Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister, the aragalaya lost some momentum. But as the shortages worsened, and the anger spread, it got second wind, culminating in the July 9 protests that led to Gotabaya's resignation. By then, Wickremesinghe was being tagged as "Ranil Rajapaksa". The occupation of Temple Trees, the Prime Minister's official home, and the arson at his private residence were two signs that there would be no easy transition. The expectation that the people would go home after Gotabaya's resignation has not materialised. If Wickremesinghe is elected, the aragalaya may continue, perhaps in new and different ways, and with more involvement of political parties opposed to him.

## The demand for 'tribal' status for Himachal's Trans-Giri and its Hatti community

**Political promises have been made over the years; however, the government has cited technical hurdles in its fulfilment. With Assembly elections approaching, the issue is back on top of discussions**

The Centre is reported to be considering granting "tribal" status to the Trans-Giri region of Himachal Pradesh's Sirmour district. The reported proposal, if followed through, would mark a movement away from the government's earlier position on the matter.

On April 4 this year, responding to a question in Lok Sabha by the Congress member from Mandi Pratibha Singh on "whether the Trans Giri Area of Himachal Pradesh has been granted the status of Tribal Affairs", Minister of State for Tribal Affairs Bisheshwar Tudu said "the proposal... could not be considered due to want of requisite criteria".

The demand to declare Trans-Giri a tribal area is old — and is



tied up with the demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the Hatti community which lives in the area.

**The community and the land** The Hattis are a close-knit community who take their name from their traditional occupation

of selling home-grown crops, vegetables, meat, and wool at small-town markets known as 'haats'. Hatti men traditionally

don a distinctive white headgear on ceremonial occasions.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has previously said that the Hattis live in 154 panchayat areas, and that members of the community numbered 2.5 lakh in the 2011 Census. The present population of the Hattis is estimated at around 3 lakh.

The Hatti homeland straddles the Himachal-Uttarakhand border in the basin of the Giri and Tons rivers, both tributaries of the Yamuna. The Tons marks the border between the two states, and the Hattis living in the Trans-Giri area in today's Himachal Pradesh and Jaunsar Bawar in Uttarakhand were once part of the royal estate of Sirmour.

(Contd on page 28)



# SC has done well to draw a few red lines in the Mohammed Zubair case, but now has to ensure they aren't blurred

**The Supreme Court's intervention is welcome and hopeful — at a time when FIRs are being filed at the drop of a “hurt” hat, when arrests become the norm rather than the exception, the court's doors need to open wider than ever for it to fulfil its role as the custodian of individual rights**

A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court, led by Justice D Y Chandrachud, ordered Wednesday that Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair be released immediately on interim bail in all FIRs registered against him by the UP police and that these FIRs be clubbed and transferred to the Delhi Police's Special Cell. The apex court further said the interim bail will be applicable to all FIRs that may be registered in the future against Zubair's tweets and that the power of arrest be used sparingly — Delhi police had arrested Zubair on June 27 for a 2018 tweet, in which a Delhi court has granted him regular bail, whereas the UP police has lodged seven FIRs, alleging that his tweets cause communal disharmony. The court also said Zubair can't be stopped from tweeting, as the counsel for UP had demanded: “We cannot

anticipatorily interdict him from exercising his right of free speech. He will be answerable as per the law,” the bench said.

The Supreme Court's intervention is welcome and hopeful — at a time when FIRs are being filed at the drop of a “hurt” hat, when arrests become the norm rather than the exception, the court's doors need to open wider than ever for it to fulfil its role as the custodian of individual rights. The court has drawn some red lines that should henceforth force authorities to think before acting against individuals on the flimsiest of reasons for assumed hurt to sentiment, reputation and fame of individuals/organisations/faith or “national interest”. The bench had earlier observed that the practice of repeated charging and arresting was a “vicious cycle” and asked the UP

police not to take precipitative action against Zubair. On Wednesday, it said the SIT set up by UP police to investigate Zubair's tweets was “redundant” when it ordered the transfer of FIRs to Delhi. A year ago, in Vinod Dua vs Union of India, the Supreme Court had clarified that the spirit and intent of the 1962 Kedar Nath Singh verdict continued to prevail and held it as the guiding framework on matters concerning free speech while cautioning against state over-reach. The challenge before the judiciary is to ensure that its words are followed, in letter and spirit, by those who have the power to throw a citizen into jail.

That's the unfortunate trend — weaponising the IPC to curb voices critical of persons in power. Journalists, filmmakers, writers, activists, social media influencers

have all been subjected to intimidation and even imprisonment by governments cutting across parties and ideologies. State overreach has become epidemic with over-sensitive agencies penalising dissenters, presumably to please their political bosses — the detention of filmmaker Avinash Das, for sharing a 2017 photograph of Union Home Minister Amit Shah with a tainted IAS officer is the most recent example. In many such cases, regrettably, even the courts have either kicked the can down the justice road or given the state the benefit of many a doubt. That's why the Zubair order is special and significant. For, by ordering Zubair's release, the highest court has fortified the practice of free speech and fair comment. Its message needs to go right down.

## Making the Indian Ocean plastic free

**New campaign to clean up the coasts and beaches speaks of India's seriousness towards restoring marine health**

Last month, I had the privilege of representing India at the high-level UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, where India assured the world community that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is committed to protecting at least 30 per cent of “our” lands, waters and oceans, and thus adhere to its commitment of 30X30 by 2030 in a mission mode. The ministers, delegates and representatives from more than 130 countries were told that we are there at the UN forum to present before the world the PM's vision for the conservation and sustenance of oceans and their resources.

India is part of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, which was initiated at the “One Planet Summit” in Paris in January 2021, to promote an international agreement to protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and ocean by 2030. India also offered to provide science and innovation-based solutions for the implementation of SDG-Goal 14 through partnerships and environmentally-friendly solutions at the World Ocean Summit. Goal 14 calls for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources.

Now, after the declarations at the UN high-level meeting, it is time to walk the

talk. Therefore, barely a week after the UN Ocean Conference, India announced that it will undertake a massive coastal clean-up drive that will cover 75 beaches across the country — there will be 75 volunteers for every kilometre of the coastline. A 75-day-long awareness campaign, “Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar” has been launched on July 5. It will culminate on International Coastal Clean-up Day on September 17. It will be the first-of-its-kind and possibly the world's longest-running coastal cleanup campaign with the most number of people participating in it. The participation of the common people will convey the message of “Swachh Sagar, Surakshit Sagar” for the prosperity of not only coastal areas but other parts of the country as well. It is pertinent to mention that in March this year, I had said in the Lok Sabha that single-use plastics contribute to over 50 per cent of marine litter, as per the pan-India coastal monitoring and beach clean-up activities are undertaken by the National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Chennai, from 2018 to 2021. The ‘Beach Litter Survey’ has further revealed that the maximum litter accumulation occurs on the backshore than in the inter-tidal zone. Moreover, urban beaches have higher accumulation rates than rural

beaches. Samples from coastal water, sediment, beach, and biota were analysed for micro/meso/macro plastics pollution. An increase in the abundance of microplastics was observed along India's east coast during the monsoon. The stations closer to the river mouth in particular had higher numbers of microplastic concentrations. Several other studies have highlighted the harmful effects of litter, especially plastics, on marine biodiversity, ecosystems, fisheries, human health and the economy. Usually, waste from land-based sources makes up the major share of marine litter.

In his very first Independence Day address as prime minister, Narendra Modi gave India the “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan”, which made the country ODF (Open Defecation Free). Similarly, after starting his second term as PM in 2019, his first address from the ramparts of the Red Fort addressed another major Swachhata issue — single-use plastic. He said, “Remembering revered Bapu, we should move out of home collecting single-use plastic from homes, streets, chowks, and drains. Municipalities, Municipal corporations, Gram Panchayat should make arrangements to collect single-use plastic.” PM Modi then asked us: “Can we take the first

big step on October 2 towards making India free from single-use plastic”? He also requested start-ups, technicians and entrepreneurs to see what could be done to recycle this plastic and at the same time, he urged the people to promote jute and cloth bags.

In line with the clarion call given by PM Modi to phase out single-use plastic items by 2022, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, on August 12, 2021. On June 21, the Ministry announced that India will ban the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of identified single-use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential, across the country from July 1.

These domestic measures are part of international obligations as India, as a signatory of the UN “Coastal Clean Seas” campaign, has adopted and undertaken activities that have direct relevance to the “Swachh Bharat” vision to prevent pollution from both land-based and offshore activities, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14. Its target 14.1 seeks to “prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution” by 2025.



# Achuthan Kudallur: A master of abstraction

**His style moved from figurative to abstraction in the late 1960s and early '70s. His canvases were a robust mingling of forms, mirroring his memories of his beautiful and calm village on the banks of the Bharathapuzha**

Kerala's lush tropicana swam before his eyes every time he picked up the brush. His translucent forms created silent ripples as they floated within the skin of his colour fields. An abstractionist by tenor, a naturalist by belief and an author of short stories, the life of Achuthan Kudallur was one of devotion and dedication to creating canvases of myriad memories, born out of anubhavam (experience).

In the passing away of this master abstractionist, India has lost a voice of integrity and dignity. Achuthan was known for his views on the journey of abstraction. He believed it was a journey of deep rigour and intellectual intensity. "It is a yatra, an odyssey of reflection born out of one's own experience. I am seeing a mockery of abstraction amongst many Indian artists. Abstraction is not lines and circles aped from the West. Indian abstraction has a history that must be studied; after all, even those three lines of sandalwood paste on the forehead are born of ritual and deep meaning," he said to me on the phone last

year. Born in 1945 in the hamlet of Kudallur in Kerala, he joined evening classes at the Madras Art Club in the Government College of Fine Arts after doing a diploma in engineering. In the seventies, he became an integral part of abstractionism in the famous Madras Art Movement under the aegis of K C S Paniker. His style moved from figurative to abstraction in the late 1960s and early '70s. His canvases were a robust mingling of forms, mirroring his memories of his beautiful and calm village on the banks of the Bharathapuzha. Of his work at the time, the Paris-based artist Akkitham Narayanan said, "His colours danced with silent chanting. Except for a few artists, most of the others were doing figurative or narrative images. His works were pure, intense and deep in visual expressions."

Vikram Bachhawat of Aakriti Art Gallery in Kolkata, who represents him, says he used to make his own canvases with thick cloth, coats of glue, zinc oxide and white lead so that

he could paint. Bachhawat says, "The colours he worked with were primary but filled with a depth of vision and strength of compositional clarity. But he loved working with deep reds."

Achuthan was an intrepid illustrator of stories, published in magazines and on book covers. He was also a voracious reader and writer, with a number of short stories published in Malayalam magazines.

The year 2022 has been an important one for Achuthan in the auction scenario. The Pundole's Glenbarra Museum Sale had a brilliant wine-toned work that spoke of associations and annotations in human experience and memory. When I spoke to him at the time he stated, "Colour for me is a catalyst of my moods. It is a transporter and translator of memory and anubhavam. The colours of my past became the colours I carried. My childhood stories and incidents connected to the rivers and the hills of my hometown all coalesced into the series of canvases I painted."

In the reflective domain of solitude is

Achuthan's work that was sold at the Saffronart Arts of India Sale this May. His turquoise-blue work was a summation of his ceaseless and aesthetic exploration in the field of abstraction. You looked closer to find multiple layers as well as textural tones. Achuthan's canvases had an incandescent aura of rare timbre. His life as an artist was about his communion with colour.

Achuthan's work is also part of the NGMA Collection and his work was included in the show 'Dhvani se Shabd aur Chinh' curated by Adwaita Gadanayak two years ago. Achuthan has been part of several exhibitions worldwide — in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, France and Czechoslovakia. He was part of the Bhopal Biennale in 1991 and 1998, he participated in the VIIIth Triennial in Delhi in 1991 and the 3rd Asian Art show at Fukuoka, Japan and he has been part of a group show at Delfina Gallery, London. He has won multiple awards, including the Tamil Nadu Lalit Kala Akademi award in 1982 and the National Academy Award in 1988.

## Awaiting Sri Lanka's Narasimha Rao

**In attempting to tide over the economic crisis, the country's new government has much to learn from India's reforms**

Ranil Wickremesinghe has been elected Sri Lanka's new president, replacing Gotabaya Rajapaksa who fled the country and resigned in the aftermath of the public anger over the country's economic crisis.

During his election campaign in 2019, Gotabaya talked about vistas of prosperity and repeatedly said that Sri Lanka's per capita income will rise to \$ 6,500 by 2025. This did not materialise. Instead, the Sri Lankan economy, which was at the cusp of upper-middle-class income status, (above \$ 4,000) regressed, the country's GDP growth entered negative territory and per capita incomes declined. The economy is likely to contract by -4 per cent to -6 per cent in 2022 and per capita income in the year will fall below that of 2019. There are also 7,50,000 "new poor" — a result of the hit taken by the country due to the pandemic and economic mismanagement under the Rajapaksa administration. There is a serious risk of further backsliding if policy reforms aren't undertaken immediately by the new administration. Three key reforms are necessary. The first is concluding negotiations on a \$ 3.5 billion IMF programme implemented over, say, five years. This will increase taxes and



utility prices to raise much-needed government revenue and increase interest rates to control hyperinflation while preserving social welfare expenditure. An IMF programme will also enable Sri Lanka to avail of new bilateral and multilateral assistance. But it will take some time to conclude an IMF programme as Sri Lanka has to first demonstrate debt sustainability. In the interim, the country urgently needs bridging finance from friendly countries like India.

The second set of reforms is structural. The economy needs to be business-friendly. That means getting the government out of a lot of areas.

There is too much bureaucratic red tape and Sri Lanka is riddled with several loss-making state-owned enterprises like Sri Lankan Airlines, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation and the Bank of Ceylon.

The third is to reform the political system and governance. Gotabaya Rajapaksa used his two-thirds majority to greatly strengthen the power of the president. Mismanagement, political interference, cronyism and corruption have become rife. There are calls for the executive presidency to be abolished and replaced with a Westminster-style system. Anti-corruption should be strengthened with asset declarations by parliamentarians and a strong anti-

corruption office assisted by the UN. There are also calls for the recovery of looted national assets and funds obtained through rent-seeking behaviour.

The big question facing all Sri Lankans is this: Do they want a failed state model, something akin to Pakistan or Myanmar, or do they want to be a prosperous country like India or China? In terms of assistance, India coming in as a first responder to Sri Lanka has been greatly appreciated by Lankans. India has assisted with food, fuel, and most importantly, cash. The cash came with the RBI swap and then there was a bilateral swap to help shore up the country's reserves. There have also been Indian credit facilities for fuel imports and food and medicine aid.

The Chinese? They were happy to provide commercial loans at 6 per cent interest rates for infrastructure projects like the controversial Hambantota Port and Mattala Airport but seem less willing on debt moratorium or write-off of debt, as expected by the Rajapaksa brothers, particularly the pro-China Mahinda. There is growing interest in the kind of monitoring methods India is putting in place to evaluate how the aid provided by Delhi is being distributed in Sri Lanka.

(Contd on page 28)



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# How Twitter became the new medium for diplomacy

Using the platform yields political dividends. But it may not make statecraft transparent

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's Twitter handle has taken an interesting turn lately, both in terms of its messaging for a domestic audience as well as for those outside the country. In the past, he rarely tweeted so frequently in languages other than English. March, April and May 2022 saw a considerable increase in Hindi tweets (102 over the three months), even more than his tally in 2021 (72 Hindi tweets). In fact, the score for Hindi has been on the rise yearly from 18, 50, 72, and 133 (already) between 2019 and June 2022. In end-May 2022, for a change, there were 11 tweets in Gujarati, only two less than his 2020 total. This is significant, given the backdrop of the upcoming assembly elections in Gujarat. June saw him tweet in Telugu 13 times (for the first time). Since 2019, he has tweeted in at least 30 languages, including 24 tweets in Tamil in March 2022. What does this tell us about the current government's outlook on foreign policy?

First, it shows that the government sees foreign policy as a tool with domestic political implications. This has been the case with the BJP since 2014. The massive media coverage of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's foreign trips is a case in point. The image of him as a world leader that this extensive coverage has conveyed in India has been a major

factor in his popularity. However, it is the foreign affairs ministers who have been at the interface of international and domestic politics. Former External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj actively built an effective brand around her outreach that was appreciated domestically. But Jaishankar has taken this modus operandi to another level since June 2019 when he set up his Twitter account after being sworn in. His use of the platform since then has only increased, with an average of 67, 74, 124, 176 tweets each month for the years between 2019 to 2022.

Second, the increasing use of regional languages (or non-English vocabulary), especially Hindi, is telling of how the government hopes to connect foreign affairs with popular sentiments — both domestically and abroad. His tweets often speak of productive discussions with heads of other states and areas of collaboration, and sometimes have an anecdotal tone, as seen in a recent, warmly-worded tweet — “aap se baatcheet ke liye tatpar hoon” (“always at hand to have a conversation with you”). This is meant to give the sense of a personalised one-on-one connection with his Hindi-speaking Twitter audience at home. The same principle is at work when Jaishankar tweets in a similar tone in foreign languages to expand the scope

of bilateral dialogues. By doing so, the Indian state now speaks not only to other heads of state but also with the people of those countries, adding a new digital dimension to its traditional diplomacy. Third, a tool of outreach that can fit inside one's pocket (or is easily outsourced) allows flexibility to personalise one's way of doing business. It makes diplomacy politically relevant by making it less elitist and easily digestible. Adopting Prime Minister Modi's style, Jaishankar increasingly uses pictures-in-action attached to his tweets and the word “friend(s)” in different contexts, sometimes to address his counterparts. The count of such tweets has also gone up over the last three years. Placed in context, it flows from what he said in his speech at St Stephan's College in March 2022 about keeping aside the “learned analysis of the state of the world” and, instead, focusing on “what to an average person is a ‘good’ foreign policy”. Emerging communication tools make it convenient to break from traditional foreign affairs vocabulary and add dimensions of intimacy to it. This was not the case in the past and even now, these tools aren't accessed by most Opposition parliamentarians. It is especially advantageous for those in charge of the foreign office. It is yet another sign that we live in an era of populism.

In this context, it is worth noting that foreign policy is rarely a matter for discussion on Prime Minister Modi's Mann Ki Baat (on radio), which reaches the grass roots. On the other hand, the only beneficiaries of this emerging personalised communication are the 23.6 million Twitter users in India, perhaps largely scattered in urban areas with decent literacy levels, which also happen to be the BJP's political stronghold. Is foreign policy emerging as an effective political mobiliser? That remains to be seen.

The lessons we derive from the Indian case have universal implications. Many in the foreign office are adopting this personalised form of diplomacy. And why shouldn't they? The popular dividends they derive are tremendous, including internationally. Who in India wouldn't be pleased to know that the Australian prime minister cooked samosas (in 2020)? This addition of intimacy to foreign relations works both ways (but doesn't necessarily make the process less opaque). What remains to be seen is if the increased involvement of the populace in foreign affairs leads to its democratisation. Statecraft has traditionally been a specialised, elite job — and for good reasons. A potential politicisation of foreign policy might end up adding more ambiguity to the world order.

# The new agriculture panel raises questions

A committee has been constituted to promote zero budget-based farming, change crop patterns and make MSP more effective and transparent. Vested interests need to be eliminated

Like the monsoons, just when everyone was giving up hope, it poured with a vengeance. The government made a commitment last year when it repealed the farm laws to constitute a committee. This body has finally been constituted to promote zero budget-based farming, change crop patterns and make MSP more effective and transparent. It is an exhaustive body of 28 members with cross representation from the Central and state governments, farmers, agricultural scientists and economists.

The new committee was preceded by a Supreme Court-appointed panel that in its wisdom spoke against the withdrawal of the controversial farm laws, saying that the “majority” of the farm unions supported them and a repeal would be “unfair to this silent majority”. Parking this issue for the time being, questions need to be asked about the composition of the new committee and the crux of its agenda. Of the eight farmer members in the committee, five were nominated by the government and are known to be sympathetic to its views. Three were to

be nominated by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha. But SKM's boycott of the committee, citing under-representation, was a foregone conclusion.

Contrary to the expectations of those who supported the farmer agitation, many of the SKM members contested the Punjab elections and, predictably, lost spectacularly. Candidates identified with farmer protests met with the same fate in the UP elections. The SKM has lost much of its sheen and relevance. Unions should now strive to earn respect, not popularity.

Many will criticise the committee for having farmers who mirror the government stand, which in my opinion is unfair. Vested interests need to be eliminated from the committee.

It is also a little curious that the Former Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare Sanjay Agarwal has been

appointed the committee's chairman. He was at the vanguard of the misconceived



government campaign on the farm laws. Agarwal should recuse himself from the position for the sake of propriety and, more importantly, to allow space for building the trust of those sceptical of the exercise. It is quite out of order for a NITI Aayog member with a rank and status of a Union Minister of State to be asked to serve as a member under Agarwal. Again, the committee, by design, has no state representation from

Punjab, a major grain procurement state. This could be used to whip up divisive sentiments in the state. Like many who equate incomes with livelihoods, the committee's mandate obscures changing cropping patterns with diversification. It is, at best, a subset of diversification. The agriculture department may have an understanding of the problems but it now needs to comprehend that they cannot be solved by having discussions centred around cropping choices and practices. Solutions require a systems approach. This cannot happen when the mandate is limited to crops, with the Secretary, Ministry of Animal Husbandry not even a member of the committee, even though one-third of all agricultural GDP comes from rearing animals. It reminds one of John Maynard Keynes's perceptive comment: “The difficulty lies not in the new ideas, but in escaping from the old ones”. Given this state of affairs, it is not difficult to understand why things have gone so wrong and why there is a threat of them turning worse.

(Contd on page 28)



# Why India has cut windfall tax on diesel, aviation fuel exports

**The Indian government has removed the recently imposed cesses and levies on diesel and aviation turbine fuel, and the cess on exports of petrol. What was the reason for the extra levies, and why have they been cut now?**

With crude oil prices easing amid fears of a global recession, the Indian government has cut the recently imposed cesses and levies on diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) and removed the cess on exports of petrol, effective Wednesday.

## **What are the duty cuts?**

Additional excise duties equal to Rs 6 per litre on exports of petrol have been removed, while that on diesel exports has been cut to Rs 11 per litre from Rs 13 per litre earlier. Also, the cess by way of special additional excise duty (or windfall tax) on domestic crude being sold to domestic refineries at international parity prices has been cut to Rs 17,000 per tonne from Rs 23,250 per tonne, while the export duty on ATF has been lowered by Rs 2 to Rs 4 per litre.

The government has also exempted petrol, diesel and ATF from levy of duties when exported from refinery units located in Special Economic Zones.

## **What was the reason for the extra levies?**

With an aim to address the issue of fuel shortage in the country, the government had on July 1 imposed special additional excise duty on export of petrol and diesel. Cesses equal to Rs 6 per litre on petrol and Rs 13 per litre on diesel were imposed on their exports.

The government also imposed a cess of Rs 23,250 per tonne (by way of special additional excise duty) or windfall tax on domestic crude being sold to domestic refineries at international parity prices. Earlier, Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj had said the increase in the duty will also

be applicable to SEZs, but the export restriction will not be applicable.

The Finance Ministry did not give a timeline for continuation of the levy but had said it will assess the situation every 15 days to review the impact of these duty changes.

Starting June, fuel pumps across the country have been reporting fuel shortage, leading to their closure. The situation of fuel shortage at pumps peaked during the middle of June, resulting in the government issuing a statement on the matter. The statement assured of enough fuel available in the country and asked oil marketing companies to ensure their fuel pumps remain open.

## **Global prices**

Global crude prices had risen and

domestic crude producers were making windfall gains. Private oil marketing companies were exporting petrol and diesel to foreign countries like Australia for better realisation.

The shortage of fuel at retail outlets was because oil marketing companies were not willing to sell the commodity at a loss since prices had not increased despite rising crude and depreciating rupee – these two factors had led to oil marketing companies losing Rs 20-25 per litre on diesel and Rs 10-15 per litre on petrol.

Over the last fortnight, the benchmark contract of Brent on the Intercontinental Exchange has fallen by over 12 per cent on fears of a recession in the US and overall global recession, prompting the government to undertake the review.

# Why has the government opened opium production and processing to private players?

**India has opened up the highly regulated sector of producing and processing opium to private players. What is opium used for, and how is it grown and processed? How does the involvement of private players help?**

India has opened up the highly regulated sector of producing and processing opium to private players. Bajaj Healthcare has become the first company to win tenders for producing concentrated poppy straw that is used to derive alkaloids that are the active pharmaceutical ingredient in pain medication and cough syrups.

## **Since when has opium been grown in India?**

India has been growing poppy at least since the 15th century, as per historical records. The British East India Company assumed monopoly on the cultivation of poppy when the Mughal Empire was on the decline, and the entire trade was brought under government control by 1873. After India gained independence, the cultivation and trade of opium passed on to the Indian government, with the activity being controlled by The Opium Act, 1857, The Opium Act, 1878, and The Dangerous Drugs Act, 1930. At present, the cultivation and processing of poppy and opium is controlled by the provisions of The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and Rules.

## **What is the process of growing and processing opium in India?**

Due to the potential for illicit trade and risk of addiction, the cultivation of opium poppy is strictly regulated

in the country, with the crops being allowed to be sown only in tracts of land notified by the central government in 22 districts in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

The government announces the licensing policy for opium cultivation every year, providing details on minimum qualifying yield, the maximum area that can be cultivated by a single cultivator, and the maximum benefit that is allowed to cultivators for damage to the crop due to natural causes.

"The cultivation of opium poppy is strictly monitored — the government uses satellite images to check for illicit cultivation. Once the crop is ready, they have a formula on how much the yield should be. This entire quantity is then bought by the government and processed in its own factories," pharmaceutical expert C M Gulhati said.

The control mechanisms employed by the government prevents pilferage, Gulhati said — even though it has not been completely stopped. "Some years back there was news that cows ate poppy plants in the

middle of the night. Things like this will happen, but these measures reduce pilferage of the highly addictive substance," he said, adding that almost all of the illicit opium in India comes from Afghanistan.

The opium produced in the country is currently processed entirely at the Government Opium and Alkaloid



Factories in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur and Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch. Products such as morphine, codeine, thebaine, and oxycodone are produced. However, Gulhati said, "There is no reason for the government to not involve private players in the process if all the monitoring processes are followed." What is opium used for?

Opium is a natural substance obtained from poppy seeds and its derivatives are mainly used for pain management. "The extracts from

opium poppy such as morphine are potent painkillers and are mainly prescribed to cancer patients," Gulhati said. The opium product codeine is helpful in cough suppression. It is used illicitly for smoking, drinking, or even eating as pills. The addictive properties of opium is the reason that the cultivation of poppy is highly regulated around the world. Only 12 countries including India allow its cultivation legally for medicinal use.

**How does the involvement of private players help?** The private company will process 6,000 MT of unopened poppy capsules and opium gum to produce active pharmaceutical ingredients over the next five years. The involvement of the private sector might boost the domestic production of various alkaloids such as morphine and codeine, bring in modern technology, and reduce imports. Despite being one of the few global cultivators of poppy, India still imports these active pharmaceutical ingredients as well as poppy seeds, which is also consumed as a food item in the country. The move is also aimed at offsetting the declining area under cultivation of poppy in India. In 2017 and 2019, under a trial phase, two private companies were allowed to produce concentrated poppy straw.



# Civic group in Nepal submits memo to government against Chinese encroachment



"The encroachment in various areas of the Nepal-China border including in Ruila, Gurkha is violating international laws and values. It is not only an insult to the friendship between the two countries but also a direct challenge to the sovereignty of Nepal." "However, despite the diplomatic efforts made by the government, it is said that border encroachment continues," it added. The organisation sought 'decisive and strict action' by the Nepal government. "China has captured no man's land in the Gurkha district of Nepal. This is not the first time such an incident is taking place, China is continuously taking over Nepalese territory forcefully. In

Humla too, they built 12 buildings inside Nepal's territory and have captured the area," Vinay Yadav, chairperson of the organisation told WION. "We have been trying to draw attention but no heed was paid by the Nepal Government. So, today we ourselves have come to the Ministry, and requested to take measures to solve the border issue," he added. The organisation also claimed that China is trying to capture Mount Everest too. "China sees Nepal just like it used to see Tibet before taking over," he added. Earlier on July 15, Nepal and China on Thursday agreed to carry out a joint inspection of the border through mutual

authorities. The government had earlier formed a committee under the coordination of Home Ministry Joint Secretary Jaya Narayan Acharya to study the dispute over the Nepal-China border in the Humla district last year. The committee report noted that the Chinese side encroached on the border and suggested that the two sides work together to resolve the issue. The Nepal government has not made the report public yet. The report outlined a series of issues along the border by the Chinese side including a missing border pillar, wiring and fencing of the border pillar, and restrictions imposed on Nepalese locals by the Chinese

(SAI Bureau) Civic group Rashtriya Ekata Abhiyan on Tuesday submitted a memorandum to Nepal's Minister for Land Management, Cooperatives and Poverty Alleviation, Sashi Shrestha seeking its intervention in China's ongoing efforts to infringe on Nepali territory. The group members met Minister Shrestha to discuss the border issue with China and submitted the memorandum. Drawing the government's attention, the organisation in the memo said,

## Three-way fight will decide who will be Sri Lanka's next president



(SAI Bureau) The stage is set for a three way fight to be the next president of Sri Lanka. The country is facing an unprecedented economic crisis that has seen acute shortage of food, fuel, medicines and more. The country does have an acting President in Ranil Wickremesinghe but parliament needs to select a president who will serve remainder of former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa's term.

The winner will take charge of a bankrupt country that is in talks with the IMF for a bailout as its 22 million people endure severe shortages of food, fuel and medicines. Sri Lankan parliament on Tuesday (July 19), announced that acting President Ranil Wickremesinghe will face former education minister Dulas Alahapperuma and leftist leader Anura Dissanayake in a secret ballot. Alahapperuma enjoys support from the opposition parties in Sri Lanka. Voting to

elect the president is due to take place on July 20. The three were formally nominated by legislators in a session that lasted under 10 minutes at the tightly guarded parliament building.

It was expected that Opposition leader Sajith Premadasa would throw in hat in the fray but he declared on Tuesday morning that he was withdrawing his name from the race.

"For the greater good of my country that I love and the people I cherish, I hereby withdraw my candidacy for the position of President," Premadasa said on Twitter. AFP cited political sources to say that Premadasa and Alahapperuma had struck a deal overnight for one to be president and the other prime minister. But Wickremesinghe, 73, a veteran political operator and six times prime minister, has the formal backing of the leadership of the SLPP, which remains the largest party in the 225-member parliament.

## New Sri Lanka Leader Wickremesinghe Vows Tough Line Against Troublemakers

(SAI Bureau) Sri Lanka's president-elect vowed on Wednesday to take tough action against anyone resorting to what he called the undemocratic means that led to his predecessor's ouster. Six-time prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe said he will not bow to violence after winning a parliamentary vote to succeed Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who fled the country and resigned last week. "If you try to topple the government, occupy the president's office and the prime minister's office, that is not democracy, it is against the law," Wickremesinghe said after praying at a Buddhist temple in the capital Colombo.

"We will deal with them firmly according to the law. We will not allow a minority of protesters to suppress the aspirations of the silent majority clamoring for a change in the political system." Shortly after his election, he met with elite police



and army units guarding the national parliament to thank them for defending key state symbols, his office said. The overrunning of the presidential palace earlier this month by protesters against Rajapaksa's handling of the economy saw him flee the premises and then the country. He sent in his resignation from Singapore.

Wickremesinghe is widely seen as a proxy of the once powerful Rajapaksa family, but he denied that he was friends with them. "I am not a friend of the Rajapaksas," he told reporters at the Gangaramaya temple. "I am a friend of the people." The new leader earlier invited all political parties in parliament to join him in addressing the country's unprecedented economic crisis that has led to severe shortages of essentials such as food, fuel and medicines.

## Chinese youth mimic Shinzo Abe's killer, create 'trend' to hail assassination

(SAI Bureau) In what seems like a celebration of Shinzo Abe's death, several photos are doing the rounds on Chinese social media where the youths can be seen mimicking the killer of the Japanese leader and posting the pictures online to create a "trend". The youth reportedly consider it "fun to dress and strike pose the same way as the killer". According to ANI news agency, the youth in China are creating short videos and dressing like the shooter to hail the assassination of the former Japanese prime minister. The Chinese disdain for the Japanese leader is well known as this is not the first time that China was seen "celebrating" the assassination of Abe. On July 8, as soon as the news of Abe's death shocked the world, the Chinese were seen hailing the killer and

started sending death wishes to him on Weibo. Badiucan — a Chinese political cartoonist, artist and rights activist based in Australia — shared the post was shared on his Twitter handle, showing screenshots of various Chinese social media accounts celebrating the attack on the former PM. "I hope it is the current Japanese PM got shot)... and Korean one too," one of the user said. "Thank you anti-Japan hero (the attacker) "Can i laugh?" commented another. While one from WeChat said, "Party Time", adding that "hope the men have trouble, hope the gun is fine" and "f\*\*\* I am so happy". Abe died hours after he was shot while delivering a campaign speech in Nara city. The attacker was later identified as Tetsuya Yamagami, a 41-year-old resident of Nara City and an ex-marine.



## China tries to prevent the UN rights chief from releasing report on human rights violations in Xinjiang

(News Agency) According to a Chinese letter seen by Reuters and corroborated by diplomats from three different nations who received it, China is requesting that the UN human rights chief bury a highly anticipated report on human rights crimes in Xinjiang. After receiving harsh criticism from the general public for being too lenient toward China during a visit in May, UN High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet announced she will not run for re-election for personal reasons.

However, as reported by Reuters, she has promised to write a report on the western Chinese region of Xinjiang before she departs at the end of August. Rights organisations charge Beijing with mistreatment of the Uyghur people living in Xinjiang, including the widespread use of forced labour in internment camps. China has vehemently refuted the claims. According to four sources—three diplomats and a rights expert who all

spoke on the condition of anonymity—the letter written by China expressed "grave concern" about the Xinjiang report and seeks to prevent its distribution. They claimed that in late June, China circulated it among diplomatic missions in Geneva and requested other nations sign it to demonstrate their support. The "joint letter," which Liu used



to refer to China and the other signatories, and public statements made at the most recent UN Human Rights Council session, which ended on July 8, both expressed this support, according to Liu. Bachelet would have seen a "real Xinjiang with a safe and stable society" when she visited the area during her May trip to China, a representative for the Chinese foreign ministry told Reuters. The spokesperson predicted that efforts by other nations to "smear China's image" through the Xinjiang problem would fail.

## China Fuyan: Beijing's defence against near-earth asteroids

(News Agency) China Fuyan (faceted eye), a brand-new high-definition deep-space active observation station, is presently being built in the nation's Southwest Chongqing municipality. The facility will have scattered radars, each with a diameter of 25 to 30 metres and more than 20 antennas. These antennas will work together to conduct high-definition observations of asteroids within 150 million kilometres, according to the project's leading institution, the Beijing Institute of Technology.

Chinese experts anticipate that this facility will help them address their nation's needs for advanced space sensing, near-Earth defence, and studies on the habitability of Earth and asteroids. The Chinese researchers gave the device a catchy name, China Fuyan, since it contains many antennas, much like the faceted eyes of an insect, claims Long Teng, president of the Beijing Institute

of Technology and a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

### Civil-military integration

The National Astronomical Observatories of China, which are part of the China Academy of Sciences, Tsinghua University, and Peking University, are working together on the project under the direction of a team from the Beijing Institute of Technology (BTI). The BTI was listed as "one of the 'Seven Sons of National Defence'," "a leading centre of military research," and "one of only fourteen institutions accredited to award doctorates in weapons science" in the China's Defense Universities Tracker published by the International Cyber Policy Center at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute in 2019. It has 34 designated defence research fields, including missile technology, radar, and weapon systems, and is classified as "extremely high risk" and "top secret."

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# 'China Plans to Build New Highway Along LAC with India'



(News Agency) China plans to build a new highway along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India as part of Beijing's efforts to strengthen its strategic position and project its power, a media report said on Wednesday. The highway, spanning from Lhunze county in Tibet to Mazha in Kashgar, Xinjiang region, is among 345 construction plans proposed in the new national programme, which aims to build a total of 461,000 kms of highway and motorway by 2035, as China seeks to revive its faltering economy with infrastructure investment, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning

Post reported. Lhunze county, according to reports, formed part of Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims as part of South Tibet. Under the plan released last week, the highway known as G695 is expected to run through Cona county which lies immediately north of the LAC, Kamba county bordering Sikkim and Gyirong county near the border with Nepal, the report said. The planned road would also go through Burang county between Tibet, Nepal and India as well as Zanda county in Ngari prefecture, parts of which are held by India, it said. The details of the new construction

remain unclear, but the highway, when completed, may also go near the hotly contested areas such as the Depsang Plains, Galwan Valley and Hot Springs on the LAC, it said.

There was no official reaction here to the news report in the Hong Kong media. India has said previously that it keeps an eye on all the activities along its border.

The report of the new highway plan along the LAC comes at a time when India and China made efforts to resolve the over two-year eastern Ladakh standoff. The two countries have so far held 16 rounds of talks to disengage troops at different points. At Sunday's 16th round of talks between the top military commanders of the two countries, it was learnt that the Indian delegation sought resolution of pending issues in Depsang Bulge and Demchok. India has been consistently maintaining that peace and tranquillity along the LAC were key for the overall

development of the bilateral ties. Last month External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar asserted that India will not allow any unilateral attempt by China to change the status quo or the LAC. At his meeting with Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on the side-lines of recent G20 foreign ministers in Bali, Jaishankar conveyed to Wang the need for early resolution of all the outstanding issues in Eastern Ladakh. The eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas. Both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers as well as heavy weaponry. As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year on the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area. China has been ramping up infrastructure in Tibet. Last year it launched a high-speed bullet train connecting the provincial capital Lhasa with Nyingchi, the Tibetan border

town close to Arunachal Pradesh. On Tuesday, new satellite images emerged indicating the construction of a Chinese village east of the Doklam plateau on the Bhutanese side, a region that is considered important for India's strategic interest. Chinese President Xi Jinping travelled by bullet train during his rare visit to border areas in Tibet. The massive development of rail, road and airport development vastly improved the Chinese military's ability to move men, materials and weapons to the border areas at a faster pace. Tibet has five airports including at Nyingchi, Shigatse and Ngari located close to the Indian and Nepal borders. Authorities in Tibet accelerated 15 key construction projects last year, including the middle section of the highway from the regional capital Lhasa to Xigaze. Tibet completed an investment worth 20.1 billion yuan (about USD 3.2 billion) in fixed assets for road transport last year, according to an official media report.

## From record rainfall to scorching heatwave, extreme weather conditions grapple China

The extreme weather emergencies are being witnessed by China as the country experiences record rainfall and scorching heatwave conditions

(News Agency) Record rains in the southern part of China have forced millions of people to relocate even as the country's north is experiencing its worst heatwave in decades. The country is witnessing the dual impact of climate change.

China is experiencing devastation since summer began. Floods have wreaked havoc in China as towns and farmlands are inundated and roads are buried by landslides. On the other hand, Covid workers are collapsing from heatstroke.

Dozens of people have been killed, millions have been displaced and economy is suffering loss since the rainy season started in May, bringing severe flooding and landslides in south China. The rainfall broke historical records in coastal Fujian province, and parts of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces in June.

Meanwhile, northern China started

witnessing a heatwave and recorded temperatures over 40 degrees Celsius. About 64 per cent of the country's population has been affected. Scientists have time and again warned that the climate crisis would amplify extreme weather, and now, China is reeling under its impact. In recent weeks, a total of 71 national weather stations across China have logged temperatures that smashed records, reported CNN. Four cities -- three in the central province of Hebei and one in Yunnan in the southwest -- saw temperatures reaching 44 degrees Celsius, according to the National Climate Center.

The soaring heat coincided with a surge in Covid cases. The government mandated mass testing for residents, including senior citizens. Not only has it become difficult for people to stand in long queues under the scorching

sun, but it has also become a dangerous task for health workers who are required to spend long hours outdoors covered head to toe in PPE kit. Several videos of Covid workers collapsing on the ground from heatstroke have gone viral on social media.

The heatwave has also caused power shortages in some regions and hit the country's crop production, which might further push up the prices of food items.

According to Yao Wenguang, a Ministry of Water Resources official, it is predicted that from July to August, there will be more extreme weather events in China.

According to the China Meteorological Administration's Blue Book on Climate Change published last year, the country is witnessing a rise in temperature faster than the global average.

Between 1951 and 2020, China's annual average surface temperature was rising at a pace of 0.26 degrees Celsius per decade, the report said. Sea levels around China's coastlines rose faster than the global average from 1980 to 2020, according to the report.

The extreme weather conditions have cost China about \$238 billion annually, nearly three times the estimated loss suffered by India or Japan, according to a report released last year by the World Meteorological Organization. In 2019, researchers found that compared to other countries, public concerns over global warming and climate change in China were "relatively low." For many citizens, the dangers of extreme weather fueled by climate change hit home last summer, when devastating floods killed around 380 people in Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan province.



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# Joe Biden mulls declaring 'Climate Change Emergency' but can he fight off his colleagues?



(News Agency) Amid the worsening climatic conditions in all of Europe as well as America, US President Joe Biden is mulling declaring a national climate emergency. If an emergency, albeit for the climate is imposed, it could allow the Democrat leader to suspend the oil and petroleum sector (shale) including offshore drilling as well as shut down crude oil exports. Experts associated with the matter have informed that the President may be looking to announce additional measures that can be used to combat the issue. However, the extent of legislation in the emergency or the timeline of it has not yet been decided. Ever since Joe Biden gained keys to the White House, he has had to tackle a raging pandemic, which has now snowballed into sky-high inflation, sending the economy into a tailspin. It hasn't helped his cause that abortion laws have been changed for good by the Supreme Court, all under his nose. Now, climate change appears to be the only poll plank standing that brought Biden into power.

## Can Biden implement a climate emergency?

However, implementing a national climate emergency will require a steely resolve from the President facing pushback from his own senators, who are essentially lobbying for the non-renewable sector. Reportedly, West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin III single-handedly crashed Biden's 'Build Back Better' plan to eliminate all greenhouse gas emissions from the US electricity grid and raise money for new eco-friendly technologies. Manchin has essentially thrown a monkey wrench into Biden's climate plans and the Democrats cannot help but oversee the developments helplessly. In his presidential nomination, Biden had enlisted a \$2 trillion four-year plan to curb planet-warming emissions.

However, over a year into his tenure, the plan is yet to hit the ground running. Considering the Ukraine-Russia war situation and an economy that is not exactly in the best shape, it will be a monumental call if Biden decides to impose the emergency and stop the oil industry, one of the biggest contributors to the climate change problem. Moreover, the emergency will affect the livelihood of thousands of shale workers, most of which are in the swing states. Congress is not willing to brawl with this issue and thus, the onus falls on one man and that is Joe Biden. While the chatter is increasing regarding the emergency, it will take some effort to bring it into action.

# Russia is planning to annex additional Ukrainian territory, US claims



(News Agency) United States National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters on Tuesday (July 19) that the US has "ample evidence" to claim that Russia plans to annex additional Ukrainian territory. As said by Kirby, the areas targeted for annexation include Kherson,

Zaporizhzhia, and all of Donetsk and Luhansk. While speaking from the White House briefing room, Kirby said, "Russia is laying the groundwork to annex Ukrainian territory that it controls in direct violation of Ukraine's sovereignty. Russia is beginning to roll out a version of what you could call an annexation playbook, very similar to the one we saw in 2014." In 2014, Russia invaded and subsequently annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine. Crimea was formally incorporated into Russia on 18

March 2014. Kirby said, "Already, Russia is installing illegitimate proxy officials in the areas of Ukraine that are under its control." During his interaction with the reporters, Kirby said that Russia had plans to organize "sham referenda" in the areas it has seized. He claimed that this could happen as early as September. "Annexation by force will be a gross violation of the UN Charter and we will not allow it to go unchallenged or unpunished," Kirby said, adding that he was "exposing" the Russian plans "so the world

knows that any purported annexation is premeditated, illegal and illegitimate." "We're going to respond swiftly and severely and in lockstep with our allies and partners. We are sanctioning the Russian-installed puppets and proxies," he said. Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his military to launch the invasion of Ukraine, calling it a "special military operation". Putin said that the aim of the invasion was "to protect the people that are subjected to abuse, genocide from the Kyiv regime" and to "demilitarise and denazify Ukraine."

# US President Biden welcomes India-UAE Free Trade Agreement

(News Agency) United States President Joe Biden has welcomed the United Arab Emirates-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA), among other pacts Abu Dhabi has signed during his talks with President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The UAE and US President held talks in Jeddah on 16th July during the latter's Saudi Arabia visit. The Joint statement that was later released said, President Biden "welcomed the UAE's economic initiatives throughout the Middle East and beyond, including its recent Free Trade Agreements signed with Israel, India, and Indonesia as well as new investments in Jordan and Egypt."

Earlier this year, India and UAE signed the free trade agreement, hailed as the key to increased economic cooperation. The FTA is India's 1st comprehensive trade agreement in a decade and under the deal, duty gets eliminated on 80% of tariff lines. It is not only expected to add \$9 billion to UAE's GDP by 2030 but also a market for Indian products in the entire West Asian region. The comments come even as last week saw the first I2U2 summit involving leaders of India, Israel, UAE and the US. The summit, in a hybrid mode, saw key announcements for India like the establishment of food parks and renewable energy.





# Joe Biden Sets Up Sanctions in Ramped-up Effort on US Hostages, Wrongful Detainees



(News Agency) President Joe Biden on Tuesday opened the way for sanctions against governments that unjustly imprison Americans and ordered more detailed travel warnings after a series of high-profile detentions. Biden signed an executive order billed as expanding the set of tools for the US government in what Secretary of State Antony Blinken said was a "relentless" effort to free citizens overseas. "When Americans are taken captive abroad, we must do everything in our power to secure their release," Blinken said in a statement. The move comes after wide media

coverage of the detention in Russia on drug charges of basketball star Brittney Griner, whose wife initially said Biden was not doing enough. The executive order authorizes government agencies to impose financial sanctions or travel bans on foreign officials or non-state actors involved in unjust detentions of Americans. "Using sanctions may not always help secure someone's release, so we will therefore be judicious and strategic in our use of this authority," a US official told

reporters on condition of anonymity. "But the families of those held know their loved ones' case(s) best, and we intend to hear from them, hear their good ideas and listen to their recommendations," he said. The State Department, in its travel advisories for Americans, will also begin to highlight in which nations there is an elevated risk of unjust detention.

The initial group of nations that will bear a "D" mark for detention risk will be China, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea,

Russia and Venezuela, another official said.

Successive administrations have made the plight of prisoners and hostages a top priority. Despite soaring tensions over the Ukraine war, the Biden administration in April arranged with Russia to swap Trevor Reed, an ex-Marine jailed for allegedly attacking police while drunk, for a Russian pilot convicted of drug smuggling. In Iran, the Biden administration has insisted it cannot revive a languishing nuclear deal

without the release of jailed Americans. One of them, Siamak Namazi, a businessman convicted on charges he denies of seeking to topple the clerical state, recently spoke out from prison and urged Biden to secure his freedom regardless of nuclear diplomacy. At least 11 Americans are known to be held in Venezuela, although two others were freed in March after rare US contact with President Nicolas Maduro, a leftist leader considered illegitimate by Washington.

## Man dressed as elderly woman robs bank in US, police launch manhunt

(News Agency) The US police in Georgia are on a hunt for a man disguised himself as an old lady to rob a bank. Wearing a floral dress, white sneakers, orange latex gloves, a white wig and a dark face mask or neck "gator", the unidentified successfully pulled off the heist. According to CBS46 news TV, the suspect is described as a Black man, around 6 feet tall and slim.

According to the police, the incident took place in Henry County, southeast of Atlanta, on Monday. The man in disguise arrived at Chase Bank in the city of McDonough carrying a pink

bag and armed with a gun. He then reportedly gave a note to a member of staff demanding money. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported citing police. After taking the money, the man drove off in a small, white SUV that police believe could have been a recent Lexus model. A tag wasn't spotted.

Photos of the disguised accused were shared on Facebook by McDonough Police Department. "Based on CCTV recordings and photos taken inside the bank, the department was able to confirm that the suspect was wearing a floral dress, a wig, and a black

mask," the department wrote. The Facebook post, which has photos of the accused, as expected, drew a slew of reactions on social media, with some even praising him for single-handedly pulling off the heist. "The funny part in all of this is, no one saw his strange getup as 'ODD' in any way. Just normal for Atlanta," wrote another. Another user said, "Now you know... I would have already pushed the panic button before she/ he reached the counter." While the third user commented, "Hoping they find this man real soon. He's going to do it again and get aggressive."

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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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## Does Joe Biden Have Cancer? Buzz Over US President's Speech Prompts White House to Clarify

(News Agency) : US President Joe Biden's remarks that he 'has cancer' has set alarm bells ringing in several quarters. A video of the 79-year-old US President started doing the rounds on Twitter, where he talked about the damage caused by oil refinery emissions in his childhood hometown, Delaware, in Somerset, Massachusetts. "My



mother drove us rather than us being able to walk and guess what? The first frost, you know what was happening? You had to put on your windshield wipers to get literally the oil slick off the window. That's why I, and so damn many other people I grew up with, have cancer and why for the longest time, Delaware had the highest cancer rate in the nation," he said. The buzz over Biden's remark

prompted the White House to issue a clarification that he was referring to treatment for non-melanoma skin cancers he underwent last year before assuming the office. White House spokesman Andrew Bates referred The New York Post to a tweet from Washington Post columnist Glenn Kessler, who noted that Biden had "non-melanoma skin cancers" removed before he took office while clarifying the President's statement. Despite the clarification, the President was mocked by republican Twitter users, and the hashtag #BidenHasCancer started being used by many. "I don't know if #BidenHasCancer, but that man is clearly not stable mentally," one Twitter user wrote. His use of the present tense in his statement caused further speculation, with Greg Price of XStrategies LLC replying to Kessler's tweet by saying "He said 'I have cancer' in the present tense you absolute d-". The remark also caused further speculation about the President's frequent public gaffes. In the same speech, at a former coal-fired power plant in Somerset, where he was announcing steps to be taken to tackle global warming, Biden also referred to Glasgow as being part of England and referred to a male representative as "she", according to The Telegraph.

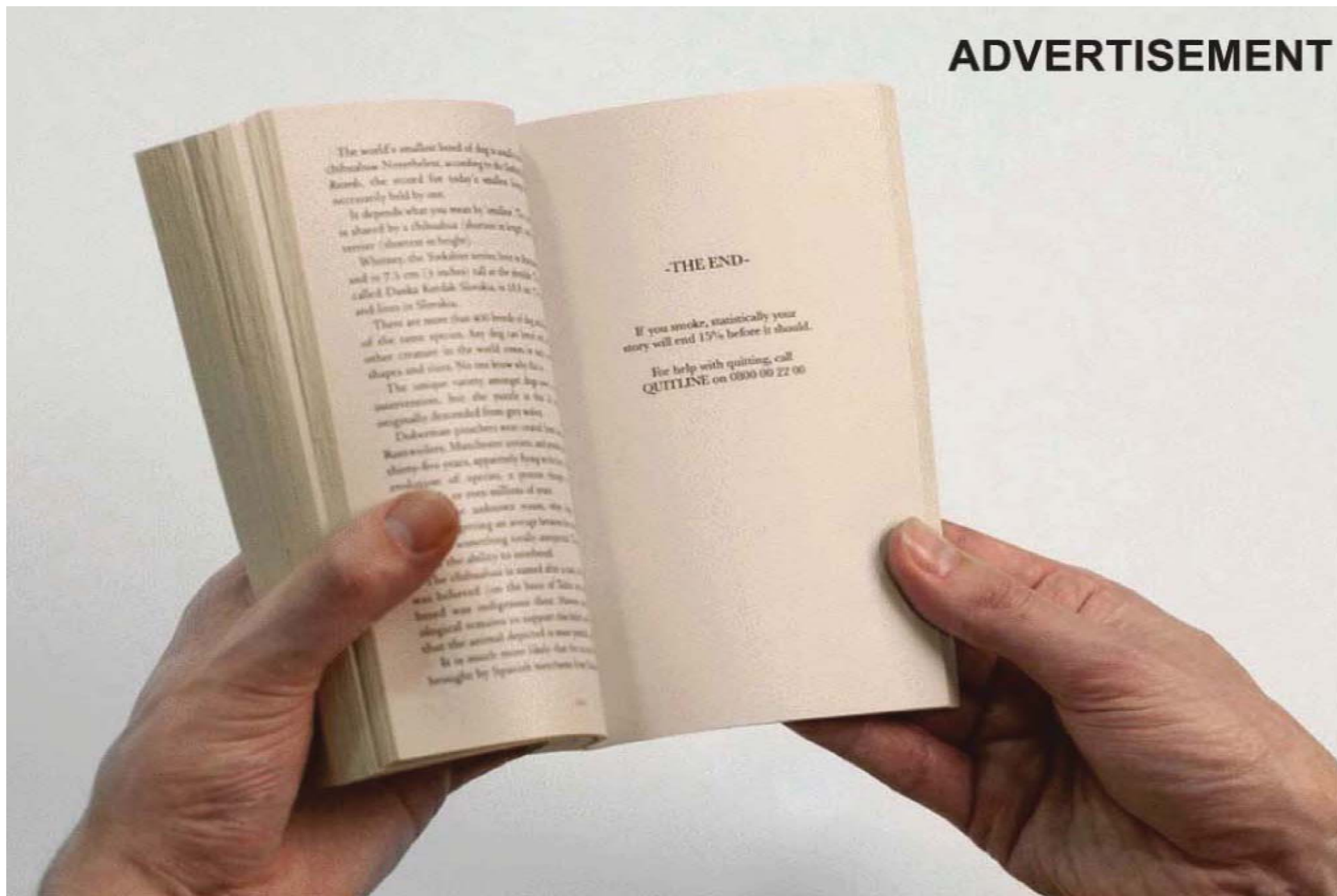
## Biden unveils \$2.3bn plan to fight climate change

(News Agency) US President Joe Biden has announced \$2.3bn (£1.9bn) to help build infrastructure that can withstand extreme weather and natural disasters. But he stopped short of formally declaring a climate emergency, which would grant him further powers. Mr Biden spoke in Massachusetts as a heatwave brings extreme weather to Europe and North America. Tens of millions of people in the US, across more than two dozen states, are living under heat warnings this week.

"Climate change is literally an existential threat to our nation and to the world," the president said in Wednesday's speech, which was delivered outside a former coal-fired power plant in the town of Somerset. "The health of our citizens and our communities is... at stake. So we have to act." He said the funding would go to expanding flood control, shoring up utilities, retrofitting buildings, and helping families pay for heating and cooling costs. The money comes from

an existing Federal Emergency Management Agency budget and will be prioritised for disadvantaged communities, said the White House. It includes \$385m to help states fund air conditioning units in homes and community cooling centres. The administration also plans to provide additional support for offshore wind and energy development in the Gulf of Mexico, and enforce new workplace standards to help protect workers from extreme weather. While Mr Biden said that he will treat extreme climate conditions as "an emergency", he stopped short of formally declaring a federal emergency. The president has been under mounting pressure from fellow Democrats and environmental groups to do so after West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin - a conservative Democrat - last week said that he would not support legislation aimed at addressing climate change, dealing a significant blow to Mr Biden's agenda. Mr Manchin raised concerns about inflation.

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## Awaiting Sri Lanka's Narasimha Rao

(From page 14....)

Hopefully, it should go to the poor and all over Sri Lanka, not just in certain parts of the country. It would be prudent to have appropriate controls in place to obviate leakages. This is a very good opportunity to build an India-Sri Lanka trade-investment nexus and not an aid dependency relationship. The Hong Kong-China model, South Africa's ties with its neighbours and the larger configurations in Latin America, Brazil and its neighbours, for instance, provide enough lessons for India-Sri Lanka ties. Sri Lanka-India is a natural configuration because of geography. And a trade agreement can add a rules-based order to this. The big question facing all Sri Lankans is this: Do they want a failed state model, something akin to Pakistan or Myanmar, or do they want to be a prosperous country like India or China? In terms of assistance, India coming in as a first responder to Sri Lanka has been greatly appreciated by Lankans. India has assisted with food, fuel, and most importantly, cash. The cash came with the RBI swap and then there was a bilateral swap to help

shore up the country's reserves. There have also been Indian credit facilities for fuel imports and food and medicine aid.

The Chinese? They were happy to provide commercial loans at 6 per cent interest rates for infrastructure projects like the controversial Hambantota Port and Mattala Airport but seem less willing on debt moratorium or write-off of debt, as expected by the Rajapaksa brothers, particularly the pro-China Mahinda. There is growing interest in the kind of monitoring methods India is putting in place to evaluate how the aid provided by Delhi is being distributed in Sri Lanka. Hopefully, it should go to the poor and all over Sri Lanka, not just in certain parts of the country. It would be prudent to have appropriate controls in place to obviate leakages.

This is a very good opportunity to build an India-Sri Lanka trade-investment nexus and not an aid dependency relationship. The Hong Kong-China model, South Africa's ties with its neighbours and the larger configurations in Latin America, Brazil and its neighbours, for instance, provide enough lessons

for India-Sri Lanka ties. Sri Lanka-India is a natural configuration because of geography. And a trade agreement can add a rules-based order to this. People in Colombo know the example of the ambulance service India built in Sri Lanka. The public health system in Sri Lanka comprises more than 1,000 plus hospitals and we had a problem in getting people to the hospitals. India came up with a \$20 million project for an ambulance service, with 400 plus Tata ambulances, which proved a game-changer. At a recent discussion between Mumbai think tank Gateway House and Colombo think tank Geopolitical Cartographer, a reference was made to 1991, to P V Narasimha Rao and his finance minister Manmohan Singh who pulled India out of a grave economic crisis, and whether Sri Lanka's new government can seize a similar opportunity. Rao and Singh will go down in history as leaders who opened up the sluggish inward-oriented Indian economy to foreign trade and investment with impressive results.

## The new agriculture panel raises questions

(From page 18....)

Like the lawyers in the US judicial system speculating on the ruling of a jury based on its composition, may I venture into unfamiliar territory, but confidently predict some of the major outcomes? The committee will propose to end the open-ended procurement of grains at MSP (wheat and paddy) while making MSP available to a larger number of farmers across India geographically. It will also end unlimited availability and access of subsidised fertilisers for all farmers by proposing to shift towards a mechanism of direct fertiliser subsidy transfer into farmer accounts. Lip service to natural farming will continue to be the norm. Lastly, the committee which has not been given a time frame to deliver the report and can be expected to circumambulate to eventually giving recommendations after the 2024 parliamentary elections. For the rest, we seem to be wasting time squabbling over small mandates. We are limited by imagination as we lose largely unimagined opportunities of a food systems approach that are now deemed to be utopian. It will, in a few years, become essential thinking, making us reinvent the way we do everything.

# The demand for 'tribal' status for Himachal's Trans-Giri and its Hatti community

(From page 14....)

Jaunsar Bawar was conquered by the British in 1814.

The two Hatti clans, in Trans-Giri and Jaunsar Bawar, have similar traditions, and inter-marriages are common. However, a fairly rigid caste system operates in the community — the Bhat and Khash are upper castes, and the Badhois are below them, and inter-caste marriages have traditionally been discouraged.

The Hattis are governed by a traditional council called 'khumbli' which, like the 'khaps' of Haryana, decide community matters. **Requirement of 'tribal' area** In its reply in Parliament, the government laid down the requirements for such designation, and the reason why Himachal Pradesh's claim could not be considered.

It said that the Constitution provides for two types of areas: "Scheduled Areas" in terms of the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, and "Tribal Areas" in terms of Sixth Schedule. "The 'Tribal Areas' are designated in terms of Article 244(2) of the Constitution...read with Sixth Schedule... Himachal Pradesh submitted a proposal for notifying entire Trans-Giri area of Sirmour district, Dodra Kwar Sub-Division of Shimla district, 15/20 areas of Shimla and Kullu districts as Scheduled Areas in Himachal Pradesh."

However, the government said, "for declaration of Scheduled Areas the

criteria followed are: preponderance of tribal population, compactness and reasonable size of the area, a viable administrative entity such as a district, block or taluk, and economic backwardness of the area as compared to neighbouring areas.

"The proposal was examined in the Ministry and could not be considered due to want of requisite criteria, as mentioned above. Accordingly, the State Government of Himachal Pradesh was intimated that the proposal in the current form for declaration of Scheduled Areas could not be considered."

**emand for tribal status**

The list of STs in Himachal Pradesh includes Gaddis, Gujjars, Kinnaras (Kinnauras), Lahaulas, Pangwalas, and some other smaller tribes. The bulk of the tribal population lives in remote, high altitude areas in the districts of Lahaul, Spiti, Kinnaur, and Chamba. The tribal population of the state was 3.92 lakh (about 6% of the total) in 2011.

The Hattis have been demanding ST status since 1967, when tribal status was accorded to people living in Jaunsar Bawar in Uttarakhand, which shares a border with Sirmour district. Over the years, various 'maha khumbli' passed resolutions pressing the demand.

"[Hattis of Jaunsar Bawar] share similar culture and socio-economic conditions with the Hattis residing in Sirmour," Chief Minister Thakur said. "In 1967, their family members who were in Jaunsar

were declared tribals but those who remained in Himachal were not given the same status or benefits."

Since getting the benefit of reservations, the Jaunsar Bawar area has produced a sizable number of civil servants. Due to topographical disadvantages, however, the Hattis living in the Kamrau, Sangrah, and Shillai areas of Himachal Pradesh have lagged behind in both education and employment.

**olitical promises**

In its Lok Sabha election manifesto in 2009, the BJP promised, for the first time, to give ST status to the Hattis. This led to the consolidation of the community behind the party, which has repeated the promise in its subsequent manifestos.

The BJP has gained from Hatti support in the parliamentary elections in Shimla, which was once a Congress stronghold. In 2014, Rajnath Singh, who was then national president of the BJP, promised the Hattis ST status at a rally in Nahan in Sirmour.

In 2016, then Congress Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh moved a file to the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs asking for tribal status to the trans-Giri region, and Dodra Kwar in Rohru on the basis of a study conducted by the Tribal Affairs Institute, Shimla. The Union Ministry, however, said that the ethnography report about the Hatti community was inadequate, and sought

a full-fledged ethnographic study.

In March this year, the Jai Ram Thakur government sent a detailed ethnographic proposal to the Centre, seeking the inclusion of the Hattis of the Trans-Giri area in the ST list of Himachal Pradesh. Thakur told the state Assembly that the required formalities had been completed, and the government was pressing its cases with the Centre.

At the end of April, Thakur met Union Home Minister Amit Shah and said he had been assured that the Centre would consider favourably the state government's request for inclusion of the Hatti community in the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the state.

With Himachal Pradesh headed to Assembly elections later this year, the ruling party's outreach to the estimated 3 lakh-strong community is politically significant. In April, the Hattis had threatened to boycott the elections if their demand for ST status was not met.

The Hattis have a sizable presence in about nine Assembly seats in the Sirmour and Shimla regions. Their population is concentrated in the four Assembly constituencies in Sirmour district — Shillai, Paonta Sahib, Sri Renukaji, and Pachhad (all part of the Shimla Lok Sabha seat). The BJP won 44 of the 68 Assembly seats in the 2017 elections, but the 2022 elections could be tougher, with the drag of incumbency and the presence of a third force in the Aam Aadmi Party.



# From Pakistan to Panama, countries which could go the Sri Lanka way

**Sri Lanka is not alone. Rising inflation has pushed a lot of other nations to the brink of an economic collapse. Pakistan and Nepal find themselves with low forex; the soaring cost of living has led to protests in Argentina, Ghana, Kenya**

(SAI Bureau) Sri Lanka's Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled the nation and was forced to resign as president amid the country's worsening economic crisis. But the island nation's troubles are far from over.

The country faces an acute shortage of fuel, medicine, and food. It has run out of money to purchase these essentials. Public transport has been hit and schools are forced to shut down time and again. The economic crisis in Sri Lanka has a lot to do with the mismanagement of its finances. The 2019 Easter bombings and the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the country's tourism economy, made matters worse.

The troubles of Sri Lanka came amid a time of instability across the world. The war in Ukraine and the fallout of it has had a ripple effect. The tiny South Asian nation is not the only one suffering. Several developing and underdeveloped nations are on the brink of an economic crisis with the rising dollar suppressing buying power of many currencies in international markets and depleting foreign exchange reserves. We take a look at nations that might just go the Sri Lanka way.

## Pakistan

Not all is well in the neighbouring nation of Pakistan. Last week, the country reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to resume its loan programme.

The country is facing a serious economic crisis since last year. Like Sri Lanka, Pakistan is indebted to heavy loans and investments from China. While Sri Lanka has defaulted on repayment and is already in a debt trap, the investments under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are a close second. Pakistan has leased some of its big industrial projects to Chinese firms, which has led them to incur more debts. This is the same vicious cycle that Lanka was caught in and then it became impossible to escape.

The rise in the cost of energy imports means the nation could face a balance of payments crisis. The country's foreign exchange reserves have dwindled to only \$9.8 billion, just enough for five weeks' worth of imports, according to a report in Reuters.

Petrol and diesel prices have skyrocketed and Pakistan is reeling under a severe electricity crisis. Poor policy decisions, political unrest in the country and external factors such as external debt, foreign exchange reserves, and inflation are responsible for the deepening economic crisis in Pakistan.

## Nepal

The Himalayan nation is seeing a rise in imports even as forex reserves deplete and there is a growing imbalance in the balance of payments.

Prices of essential prices – food and fuel – have risen. Its annual retail inflation accelerated to 8.56 per cent in June, the



highest in six years.

A rise in imports over the past few months has drained Nepal's foreign exchange reserves. According to Nepal's customs department, the country's total import bill ballooned to Rs 1.76 trillion in the first 11 months of the current fiscal year. The figure represents a staggering year-on-year jump of 27.5 per cent, according to a report in Katmandu Post.

Nepal is facing a liquidity crunch and as a result, banks and other financial institutions are struggling to extend loans to productive sectors like the agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and energy sectors.

## Egypt

With a debt-to-GDP ratio of about 95 per cent, Egypt has experienced one of the largest outflows of foreign funds this year, totalling \$11 billion, according to JP Morgan.

Egypt is expected to have to pay \$100 billion in hard currency debt over the next five years, including a sizable \$3.3 billion bond, in 2024, according to fund management company FIM Partners, reports Reuters.

On Sunday, the Egypt government denied rumours that the country was facing shortages of food commodities because of the ongoing global food crisis.

The nation has far exceeded its lending quota from the IMF but entered a new accord with the agency which disbursed loans of \$20 billion in May 2022.

## Argentina

With global inflation rising and the fear of recession looming large, Argentina's economy is headed for trouble.

In May, the country's inflation was at 58 per cent. Even in a world where prices are soaring almost everywhere, the South American nation remains an outlier. And things are not getting any better. Domestic inflation is heading towards 70 per cent by the end of the year.

Argentina is an important global supplier of soybeans, corn, and wheat. But grain exports are falling in the second half of the year. This will make it difficult for the country to meet targets linked to a \$44 billion deal agreed with the IMF.

Amid the growing economic worries, the country's Finance Minister Martín Guzmán quit in early July after a split within the ruling Peronist coalition. Silvina Batakis, who replaced Guzmán, vowed to stick to commitments made to the IMF. However, investors are worried about another sovereign debt default amid galloping inflation and poor public finances, according to The Financial Times.

Nicolás Dujovne, former finance minister for the centre-right opposition, told FT the Argentine economy's problems were deep-seated. "The government has far more problems than the {political} divide: a high deficit, excessive money printing and they've lost market confidence."

The country is also witnessing massive protests against the government over inflation, poverty, and unemployment.

## Nigeria

The World Bank recently listed Nigeria amongst the top 10 countries in the world with the worst inflation rate, based on 2021 figures. It ranked eighth on the list with an annual inflation rate of 16.95 per cent.

Inflation, debt, and food crisis are pushing the Nigerian economy to the brink of a collapse, Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the IMF, said. The prices of groceries, beverages, and provisions have more than doubled since last year.

Africa's largest economy had total outstanding debt of \$100 billion as of March 31, according to the latest figures from the country's Debt Management Office. External loans comprising concessional and commercial debt stood at \$40 billion, with the balance of \$60 billion owed to domestic issuers, reports Bloomberg. "The unexplained government preference of eurobonds at high-interest costs, with the associated exchange rate risk, may likely hurt Nigeria sooner than anticipated," said Robert Asogwa, a member of the Monetary Policy Committee of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

## Kenya

Kenya is among other African nations on the brink of an economic crisis, according to a report released by Moody's Investors Service.

A collapsing currency and depleted foreign

exchange remain a major concern. According to David Rogovic, vice president and senior analyst at Moody's, the quantity of debt owed compared to reserves and the fiscal difficulties Kenya is facing in managing debt loads make it vulnerable. Kenya was reported to be spending almost 30 per cent of its income on interest payments, according to media reports. Since the country now lacks access to financing markets and has bonds worth over half a billion dollars that mature in 2024, this situation is problematic, a Reuters report said.

## Ethiopia

African governments owe three times as much debt to private creditors in the West as they do to China, according to a report by UK-based Debt Justice.

Ethiopia faces a double burden of paying up and returning its economy to its pre-Covid GDP growth levels. Its latest budget shows debt reduction will be the priority if the country is to pull back its economic growth and recover from the Tigray conflict. After the civil war broke out in November 2020, it lost billions of dollars and left roads, factories, and airports destroyed. Foreign donors withdrew financial support and Washington ended Ethiopia's tariff free-access to the US market, threatening jobs, according to a report in the FT.

## Ghana

Ghana's annual inflation soared to 29.82 per cent in June 2022, for the first time in 18 years. From transportation to utilities like electricity, gas, and water, the prices of all essentials have escalated in the west African country as it faces worsening economic conditions.

The country's fiscal situation, which was affected by the pandemic, was worsened by the Russia-Ukraine war. Last December, unemployment was at 13.4 per cent, three times higher than ten years ago. The economy is facing a debt crisis because of excessive borrowing.

Ghanaians have protested for days in June against the rising cost of living. The government has been able to negotiate an IMF bailout.

## Panama

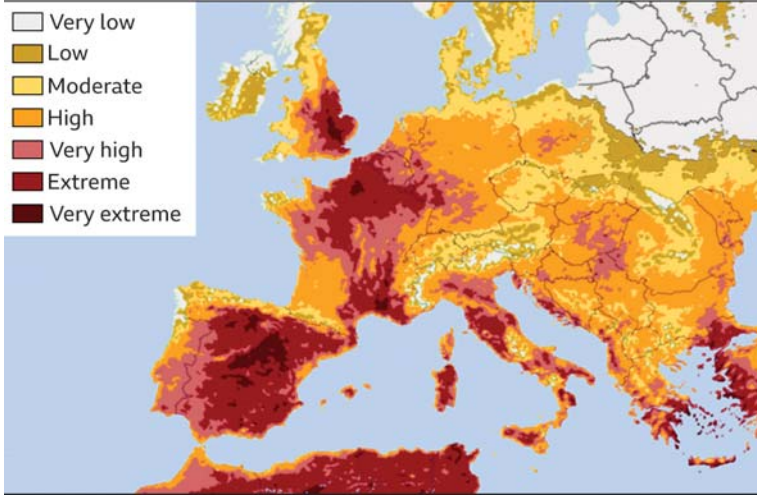
Year-on-year inflation in Panama of 4.2 per cent was recorded in May, along with an unemployment rate of about 10 per cent and fuel price hikes of nearly 50 per cent since January, reports AFP. Despite its dollarised economy and high growth figures, the country has a high rate of social inequality.

Economic woes have led to a shortage of fuel in some parts of the country, and stalls at food markets in the capital have run out of products to sell. Thousands have been protesting on the streets for the past two weeks and they have one demand: the government should contain the prices of basic food items. The protests have led to the closing of public schools, suspension of transportation and calls for strikes.



# Heatwave: Ferocious European heat heads north

Very low  
Low  
Moderate  
High  
Very high  
Extreme  
Very extreme



Deadly wildfires in France, Portugal, Spain and Greece have forced thousands of people to evacuate their homes. Two people were killed by forest fires in Spain's north-western Zamora region and trains in the area were halted because of fire near the tracks. An elderly couple died while trying to escape fires in northern Portugal. Heatwaves have become more frequent, more intense, and last longer because of human-induced climate change. German Environment Minister Steffi Lemke said the climate crisis meant the country had to rethink its preparations for very hot weather, drought and flooding. Wildfires were still burning a day after several French cities including Nantes

in the west saw their hottest-ever day. More than 30,000 people have had to flee, with several campsites destroyed and emergency shelters set up for evacuees. Gironde, a popular tourist region in the south-west, has been hit particularly badly, with firefighters from across France battling to control two blazes that have destroyed 19,300 hectares (47,700 acres) of land in the past week. The city of Bordeaux was blanketed by smoke early on Tuesday as the wind changed direction. "It's a monster like an octopus, and it's growing and growing and growing in the front, in the back, on both sides," said Jean-Luc Gleyze, Gironde's regional

president. The hottest temperatures have now moved to the north and east. Hundreds of people have had to leave their homes in the far north-west of Brittany, and fire has destroyed 1,400 hectares of vegetation.

A dozen animals at the zoo in La Teste-de-Buch died of stress and from the high temperatures, the government said. In a complex operation involving vets, zookeepers and others, 363 animals that could be moved were driven in convoys to Bordeaux-Pessac zoo 65km (40 miles) away. The UK's Met Office said 40.2°C was provisionally recorded at Heathrow Airport west of London on Tuesday, and forecasters warned temperatures were still climbing in many places. Extreme heat warnings have been issued covering central, northern and south-east England.

Forecasters say the heatwave is heading north, with the mercury expected to hit 40C in the far south of Belgium as well as western and southwestern Germany. A fire broke out in dunes at the Belgian resort of De Haan, setting several

vehicles alight.

Germany's DWD weather service recorded a national record temperature of 41.2C in the city of Duisburg in July 2019 and spokesman Andreas Friedrich said similar highs were possible on Tuesday in similar areas along the River Rhine.

The Netherlands saw one of its hottest days on record on Tuesday with 38.9C in Maastricht, forecasters said, warning that temperatures were continuing to rise.

In Spain and Portugal, more than 1,000 deaths have been attributed to the heat in recent days. A forest fire in Losacio in the north-west left one firefighter dead on Sunday and the body of a 69-year-old shepherd was found on Monday.

Temperatures in Portugal hit 47C on Thursday - a record for July. Most of the country has been placed under high fire danger by the national meteorological office IPMA. Several villages were evacuated as a fire spread in the Murça area of northern Portugal, and a man and a woman in their 70s died in their car while trying to flee the flames.

Firefighters were fighting the blaze on three fronts and a local mayor said more than 3,000 hectares had been burned. Authorities are anxious to avoid a repeat of 2017, when 66 people were killed in wildfires. In Spain, at least 20 fires are burning out of control. A passenger filmed the moment the train he was travelling on came to a temporary halt - as fires raged on both sides of the carriage near the northern border with Portugal.

Forecasters in Italy are warning of temperatures as high as 40 to 42C between Wednesday and Friday.

The effects of climate change in Europe were highlighted earlier this month when a melting glacier triggered an avalanche that killed 11 people. Now experts at Italy's IIMeteo warn that new crevasses are opening up on Alpine peaks and that ice is melting even on Western Europe's highest mountain, Mont Blanc. The world has already warmed by about 1.1C since the industrial era began and temperatures will keep rising unless governments around the world make steep cuts to emissions.

## Bullet train to the moon and Mars? Here's how Japan's planning interplanetary travel

Researchers from Japan's Kyoto University in collaboration with Kajima Construction are working on this plan that might shake up space travel, the Weather Channel reported. The researchers announced this last week in a press conference, the EurAsian Times reported.

### A CAPSULE WILL LINK EARTH TO MOON AND MARS

The interplanetary transportation system by Japanese researchers is called 'Hexatrack'. Hexatrack would maintain a gravity of 1G during long-distance travel to lessen the effects of extended exposure to low gravity. The trains will also have hexagonal-shaped capsules called the 'Hexacapsules' with a moving device in the middle. According to the proposal of the Japanese researchers, a mini-capsule with a 15-metre radius will link the

Earth and the Moon. For connecting moon and Mars, a 30-metre-radius capsule will be needed. Now, the capsule will employ the kind of electromagnetic technology used by the Maglev trains in Germany and China. While the station on the moon will use a gateway satellite and will be known as Lunar Station, the train station on Mars will be called Mars Station. It will be situated on the Martian satellite Phobos. According to the Human Spaceology Centre, the Earth station will be called Terra Station and will be the successor space station to the International Space Station (ISS). The space train, known as Space Express, would operate on standard gauge track, reported Mashable India.

### CHAMPAGNE FLUTE-LIKE SPACE HABITAT

Most of the space transportation

system overlooks the importance of terrestrial natural capital. However, researchers at the Kyoto University plan to build a habitat that would recreate the facilities on Earth. The researchers aim at building a narrowed living structure in the shape of a champagne flute with artificial gravity, green areas and water bodies, and complete with public transportation. The structure will be known as 'The Glass'. Low gravity is a major concern as it can affect reproduction. The researchers at the university aim at curbing this concern. The structure will create artificial gravity capable of generating gravity that would be equivalent to Earth's environment by utilising centrifugal force caused by the rotation of moon and Mars in space. According to Japan's The Asahi Shimbun, the plan might take a century to be a reality. However, researchers

are aiming to build a simplified prototype version of the Marsglass and Lunaglass by 2050. According to the Director of SIC Manned Cosmology Research Center and Graduate School of Advanced Integrated Studies at Kyoto University, Yosuke Yamashiki, what Japan has in store for Space habitation are crucial for ensuring the realisation of human space colonisation in the future. Yosuke Yamashiki, the Director of SIC Manned Cosmology Research Center and Graduate School of Advanced Integrated Studies at Kyoto University, says that "Through discussions over the past few years, these three pillars that we propose this time are core technologies that are not in the development plans of other countries and are indispensable for ensuring the realization of human space colonization in the future," he said.



# As Droupadi Murmu Wins Presidential Election, BJP Hosts 'Abhinandan Yatra' In Delhi

(SAI Bureau) : Waving Ms Murmu and the Rashtrapati tricolours and jubilating to the sound of 'dhol-nagadas', a large number of BJP supporters flooded the streets in the heart of Delhi, as the NDA's presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu on Thursday emerged victorious in the keenly-watched poll over her rival Yashwant Sinha.

An 'Abhinandan Yatra' was taken out from its Delhi unit office at 14, Pant Marg, as scores of men and women from the party cadres marched to the Rajpath, with some chanting slogans and raising placards bearing images of

Ms Murmu and the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Ms Murmu scripted history by becoming India's first tribal President in the one-sided contest, defeating Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha. Ms Murmu, 64, won by an overwhelming margin against Sinha after receiving over 64 per cent valid votes in a day-long counting of ballots of MPs and MLAs, comprising the electoral college, to succeed Ram Nath Kovind to become the country's 15th president. As the Yatra began from the Delhi BJP headquarters, many

party workers waving national flags and holding tricolour-themed balloons, walked with unbridled enthusiasm, while others celebrated by distributing ladoos. Senior BJP leader and Union minister Meenakshi Lekhi, Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta, other party leaders Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, Harsh Vardhan and others also took part in the 'Abhinandan Yatra' riding a vehicle and waving at the swarms of crowd to the beating of 'dhols' 'nagadas'. The road show was escorted by the police to ensure flow of traffic and proper law and order situation, officials said. BJP president J P Nadda was slated to attend the event, but he was not present on the occasion, they said. The marching crowd moved from Pant Marg to Ashoka Road, then to Patel Chowk, turning then to Rafi Marg and passing by the Constitution Club of India and the Rail Bhawan reached Vijay Chowk, a police official said, adding, the permission to hold the 'Yatra', was only till Vijay Chowk.

The historic public square

of the Raj-era faces the iconic Raisina Hill complex, seat of the Rashtrapati Bhavan -- the official residence of President of India -- flanked by the North Block and South Block. Many groups of supporters, representing various BJP-ruled states of Northeast, had members wearing their traditional tribal attire. Romeo, part of the group representing Manipur, who is currently pursuing his higher studies here, said, "We are here to welcome the leaders who are part of the roadshow. This is being done to express our gratitude towards the next President who will be the first from the tribal community." Another group represented Sikkim in their traditional attire. "This is our way to convey our sentiments as she will be the first tribal President of India," said Priyanka Chakma, member of BJP Northeast Morcha.

At times, the 'Yatra' stalled the traffic and many streets in Lutyens' Delhi were clogged as vehicular traffic crawled at a snail's pace.

## Senate advances more than \$50 billion bill to boost U.S. semiconductor production

A global shortage of chips over the past two years rippled through several industries, including automakers, mobile phone and consumer technology companies and defense systems manufacturers. Sen. John Cornyn, a Texas Republican and lead author of the Senate's original text, stressed the economic implications of the legislation in a pair of Twitter posts published Tuesday. "If the US lost access to advanced semiconductors (none made in US) in the first year, GDP could shrink by 3.2 percent and we could lose 2.4 million jobs," he wrote. "The GDP loss would 3X larger (\$718 B) than the estimated \$240 B of US GDP lost in 2021 due to the ongoing chip shortage." The centerpiece of the legislation is \$52 billion to rebuild domestic chip production and tax breaks to encourage the construction of plants based in the U.S. Chip stocks rallied on Tuesday ahead of the expected vote, with Intel up 3.9%, Nvidia 5.5% higher and Texas Instruments rising 3.1%, all ahead of the broader S&P 500's 2.8% gain.

The procedural step forward comes more than one year after the Senate in a bipartisan vote first approved a \$250 billion bill to reinforce U.S. chipmaking and invigorate American research and development. But the House never considered that legislation after the Senate cleared it in June 2021. House Democrats drafted their own version of a Chinese competition act, with a gentler national security tone and a greater emphasis on climate change funding.

Republicans opposed the bill. Democrats in both chambers have for months attempted to reconcile differences between the two versions. With annual inflation running above 9% and the party set for tough midterm elections, the Biden administration has suggested it would approve a simpler bill aimed at just magnifying chip production.

It's not certain whether Senate Democrats will be able to garner the 60 votes needed to circumvent a filibuster on final legislation. Doing so would require support from several Republicans, who have lamented that much of their work to craft provisions to compete with China will likely be tossed. Even top Democrats, including Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Menendez of New Jersey, have decried the diluted bill. "Now we're at a point where I don't think anybody really knows what the final bill might look like, or kind of where the votes are," Senate Republican Whip John Thune, R-S.D., told Politico last week. "We know where the votes were last time. But that was a different time and it was a different bill than what we're talking about today." But Democrats have also run into newer issues with Republicans, who have threatened to derail the semiconductor bill if Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., continues to pursue a separate plan to pass a party-line bill on taxes and climate policy. Other late-stage policy decisions could complicate matters further, including whether to drop tariffs on Chinese goods first imposed by former President Donald Trump.



## 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



Photograph taken April 2015

#### DESCRIPTION

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



# World's first bioplastic vinyl record, made from 'sugars and starches', launched in UK

The first vinyl records made of bioplastic will hopefully replace the need for the toxic PVC ones. A British company claims it produced the bioplastic records using materials other than oil or gas, like sugars and starches, and added that bioplastics don't generate any toxic waste during the manufacturing process.

The climate change advocacy NGO Music Declares Emergency, created in 2019 by musicians and other industry professionals, has endorsed the new bioplastic vinyl from the UK company Evolution Music.

"If Evolution can deliver an alternative to guilt-free vinyl, it could get rid of one of the key polluting elements of the music industry completely," the NGO's co-founder Lewis Jamieson said.

Toxic, chlorine-based compounds are released during the production of PVC, which



Greenpeace describes as the "most environmentally destructive material" and which is currently used to make all vinyl records. These chemicals are "building up in the water, air, and food chain."

The recent surge in vinyl sales, which exceeded \$1 billion

in only the United States last year, has brought the issue to light (a first since the mid-1980s).

Few predicted the mid-2000s vinyl rebirth, thus record labels were forced to scramble to obtain PVC, frequently depending on foreign producers with questionable safety records.

Kyle Devine, who wrote a book on the environmental impact of the music industry, "Decomposed", said the PVC for 90 percent of US vinyls in 2015 came from a Thai company that was "pouring pollution into the Bangkok river".

"PVC is an especially nasty

plastic to make. It's a difficult one to dispose of, to recycle or decompose," he said.

The current dominance of streaming and digital music, he continued, should not be interpreted as a solution to the climate impact of the music industry.

"Digital data still consumes energy and takes up space. In fact, considering the scale and scope of the music industry now, it probably has a greater environmental impact than ever before," Devine remarked. Through a prize draw, Evolution distributed the first 20 bioplastic records, which featured a collection of up-and-coming musicians like the electro duo Bicep and American singer Angel Olsen. Due to the Covid pandemic's delays, testing has taken over five years; nonetheless, the company claims they are almost at regular records.

## Threat of global extinction much higher than previously thought, study says



The threat of extinction is something that has bothered humans from time immemorial and scientists are continuously conducting research in order to understand the current situation of the planet. However, a new study believes that the threat of global extinction is way worse than previously thought by the experts. The new survey, which was published in the journal Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment, it involved a survey involving around 3300 scientists.

The participants were asked to focus on the species known to them and the conclusion showed that when

it comes to global biodiversity loss, the knowledge gap is still quite huge. "While considering the types of species and ecosystems they know best, experts estimated that about 30% of species have been globally threatened or driven extinct since the year 1500," the study's co-author Forest Isbell of the University of Minnesota in a press release.

"Experts also acknowledged substantial uncertainty around their estimates, with perhaps as few as 16% or as many as 50% of species threatened or driven extinct over this time," she added.

Co-author Akira Mori of the University of Tokyo in Japan

said that the studies conducted in 2019 showed that only 12.5 per cent of species were extinct but the numbers seem to be off. Mori also explained that "human land-use changes and overexploitation" were the top factors behind loss of land species while "overexploitation and climate change" ruined marine life. "Because biodiversity is highly

regional in nature, our study's attempt to bring together the perspectives of regional experts from around the world is unprecedented. From the standpoint of social and cultural diversity and inclusiveness, I believe we have presented some suggestions for future international policy discussions, even if they are not necessarily complete," Mori said according to The Hill.



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# 'Russia is blackmailing us': EU draws up energy plan in case of gas cutoff

The European Union's head office on Wednesday proposed that member states cut their gas use by 15 percent as the bloc braced for a possible full Russian cutoff of natural gas supplies

The European Union's head office on Wednesday proposed that member states cut their gas use by 15 percent over the coming months as the bloc braced for a possible full Russian cutoff of natural gas supplies that could add a big chill to the upcoming winter.

While the initial cuts would be voluntary, the Commission also asked for the power to impose mandatory reductions across the bloc in the event of an EU-wide emergency caused by what Commission President Ursula von der Leyen saw as a deliberate attempt by President Vladimir Putin to weaponize gas exports.

"Russia is blackmailing us. Russia is using energy as a weapon. And therefore, in any event, whether it's a partial major cutoff of Russian gas or total cutoff of Russian gas, Europe needs to be ready," von der Leyen said.

EU member states will discuss the measures at an emergency meeting of energy ministers next Tuesday. For them to be approved, national capitals would have to consider yielding some of their powers over energy policy to Brussels.

"We have to be proactive. We have

to prepare for a potential full disruption of Russian gas. And this is a likely scenario. That's what we've seen in the past," von der Leyen said, adding that Kremlin-controlled Gazprom showed scant interest in market forces and instead played a political game to choke off the EU. Saving 15 percent on gas use between August and next March will not come all that easy. The European Commission signaled its proposed target would require EU countries as a whole to triple the rationing achieved to date since the Russian invasion of Ukraine started 24 February.

"EU-level savings so far have been equal to 5%," EU Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson said. "This is clearly not enough."

Wednesday's proposal comes at a time when a blog post from the International Monetary Fund has warned about the weaknesses of the 27-nation bloc. "The partial shutoff of gas deliveries is already affecting European growth, and a full shutdown could be substantially more severe," the IMF blog warned. It added that gross domestic product in member nations like Hungary, Slovakia and

the Czech Republic could shrink by up to 6%.

Italy, a country already facing serious economic problems, "would also face significant impacts."

EU economic forecasts last week showed that Russia's war in Ukraine is expected to wreak havoc with economic recovery for the foreseeable future, with lower annual growth and record-high inflation. The disruptions in Russian energy trade threaten to trigger a recession in the bloc just as it is recovering from a pandemic-induced slump.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, the EU has approved bans on Russian coal and most oil to take effect later this year, but it did not include natural gas because the 27-nation bloc depends on gas to power factories, generate electricity and heat homes. Now, von der Leyen is convinced Putin will cut off gas anyway to try to wreak economic and political havoc in Europe this winter.

"Putin is trying to push us around this winter and this he will dramatically fail if we stick together," said von der Leyen.

There are fears that the energy crisis will get worse if Moscow does not restart the key Nord Stream pipeline to Germany after scheduled maintenance ends Thursday. And Putin left everyone second-guessing on Wednesday.

The Russian leader questioned the quality of the repair work done on the Nord Stream 1 turbine. "They say that they will return these machines — one, in any case — but in what capacity they will return, what are the technical parameters after leaving this scheduled repair? Maybe they will take it and turn it off at some point, and Nord Stream 1 will stop," he said. The aim of von der Leyen's plans is to ensure essential industries and services like hospitals can function, while others would have to cut back. That could include lowering heat in public buildings and enticing families to use less energy at home. EU nations and the Commission have gone on a buying spree to diversify its natural gas sources away from Russia, but they are still expected to fall far short of providing businesses and homes with enough energy in the cold months.



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## ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

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# Cheetahs to prowl India for first time in 70 years



Eight of them are set to arrive in August from Namibia, home to one of the world's largest populations of the wild cat. Their return comes decades after India's indigenous population was declared officially extinct in 1952. The world's fastest land

animal, the cheetah can reach speeds of 70 miles (113km) an hour. Classified as a vulnerable species under the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, only around 7,000 are left in the wild worldwide. Officials

announced the agreement after spending the past two years working on how to transport the animals after India's supreme court decided in 2020 that they could be reintroduced in a "carefully chosen location". The first arrivals will make their home in the state of Madhya Pradesh at Kuno-Palpur National Park, selected for its cheetah-friendly terrain.

The timing of the move is expected to occur as the nation celebrates 75 years of independence. "Completing 75 glorious years of independence with restoring the fastest terrestrial flagship species, the cheetah, in India, will rekindle the

ecological dynamics of the landscape," India's environment minister, Bhopinder Yadav, said in a social media post.

Despite the animal's lightning-quick speeds, a combination of hunting, habitat loss and food scarcity led to the cheetah's disappearance in India. It is the only large mammal to become extinct in the country since its independence from British rule. The Asiatic Cheetah could once be found in areas stretching from the Arabian Peninsula to Afghanistan. It is now known only to survive in Iran. In 2022 government officials there reported that they believed only 12 were still alive. Efforts have

been made to revive India's cheetah numbers since the 1950s. An attempt to bring them from Iran in the 1970s - when Iran had around 300 of the animals - failed after negotiations ended when the Shah was deposed in the Iranian Revolution. Indian officials are keen for this most recent attempt to succeed long term. "The main goal of the cheetah reintroduction project is to establish viable cheetah metapopulation in India that allows the cheetah to perform its functional role as a top predator," said the country's environment ministry.

# India's IT giants pay CEOs millions as turnover climbs among software talent

The chief executive officers of Indian information technology companies are being paid big bucks as attrition rates surge among employees. IT major Wipro's CEO Thierry Delaporte earned \$10.5 million in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022. Infosys CEO Salil Parekh began drawing \$10.2 million this year under the terms of a new five-year contract, almost doubling his pay from 2021. This means that Delaporte and Parekh will earn more in roughly three hours than the average employee would in an entire year, according to back-of-the-envelope calculations by Nascent Information Technology Employees Senate, an association of software employees in India. NITES President Harpreet Singh Saluja told CNBC that Indian IT CEOs are taking home "obscenely high salaries" despite pandemic layoffs.

"Those that skirted layoffs did so by announcing pay cuts," Saluja said. The CEO of India's largest software company Tata Consultancy Services Rajesh Gopinathan drew the lowest salary among his peers, with his pay totaling \$3.2 million. On Wednesday, Wipro reported quarterly revenue surged 17.9% from a year ago to \$2.7 billion, while net income dropped 20.9% to \$324.4 million. Wipro also reported that

23.3% of its employees left in the three months ending June 30, a marginal drop from the 23.8% rate reported for the January-March quarter. During Wipro's April earnings call, Delaporte said the company will "increase the frequency of promotion cycles for 70% of our colleagues in junior bands, to now a quarterly basis."

Wipro did not respond to CNBC's requests for comment.

Rising executive pay

Infosys, India's second-largest IT company, reported an annualized attrition rate of 27.7%, according to its most recent quarterly results. It also raised its CEO's compensation by 88%. In its report, the company said "the overall wages at leadership levels remained constant during fiscal 2022. However ... the higher remuneration [is] primarily on account of the increase in perquisite value of stock incentives granted in previous years but exercised during the year." The Infosys board said it aimed to make Parekh's salary comparable to that of his peers at other global software companies such as Accenture, Cognizant and IBM. His salary is still lower than that of those companies' CEOs. Accenture's Julie Sweet earns over \$23 million a year, Cognizant's CEO Brian Humphries is paid over \$19.6 million and IBM's Arvind Krishna pockets just

over \$17.5 million. Infosys did not comment when contacted by CNBC, citing its quiet period ahead of its upcoming earnings report, scheduled for July 24. Mohandas Pai, who served on Infosys' board in its early days as an outsourcing company, said the "absurdly high" CEO salaries showed the "Americanization" of the Indian software industry.

"These are offshore companies. They are not American companies. They grew, not because of a mercenary attitude towards people, but because of a people-centric attitude," he said. Pai said billable employee pay has remained almost flat since 2009, while that of senior executives has gone up many times over. Billable employees in the sector are typically those who write software code and whose time is directly billed to clients. They are generally programmers and software engineers who have up to five years experience in the industry. Surging labor demand

Pai, who also previously served as Infosys' CFO, said pay for new recruits in India is not keeping up with surging demand for software professionals globally. Between 600,000 and 650,000 people were hired in India's technology sector in 2021, according to Pai, who called it the largest hiring spree in the world. He

estimated between 1.4 million and 1.5 million people will be hired "over the next two years in India across IT services and start-ups." Pai attributed climbing attrition rates to low pay in the industry despite many software companies reporting record revenue during the pandemic. He estimated attrition costs companies \$5,000 per employee. Indian software companies can reduce

attrition rates by 30% to 35% by paying fair wages, Pai said. "Globally, India is the only country with surplus human capital in technology. There is a huge shortage in the United States, and an inadequate number of qualified people across Europe. And Southeast Asia does not have the kind of talent in place, making India the only country that serves global markets," Pai said.

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# Ukraine making China rethink when, not whether, to invade Taiwan: CIA chief

**China appears determined on using force in Taiwan, with Russia's experience in Ukraine affecting Beijing's calculations on when and how — not whether — to invade, the CIA chief said**



forces in Taiwan, where President Tsai Ing-wen has asserted the island's separate identity. "No conflict and no war is the biggest consensus between China and the United States," Qin said. But the United States is "hollowing out and blurring" its stated policy of only recognizing Beijing, he said. "Only by adhering strictly to the One-China policy, only by joining hands to constrain and oppose Taiwan independence,

can we have a peaceful reunification," he said. Under a law passed by Congress when Washington switched recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, the United States is required to provide weapons to Taiwan for its self-defense. President Joe Biden said in May that the United States was ready to use force to defend Taiwan from a Chinese attack, appearing to shed the long-held US ambiguity on

whether it would engage militarily, although the White House quickly walked his comments back. Biden told reporters Wednesday that he expected to speak to Xi "within the next 10 days." A number of US delegations have visited Taiwan, mostly of former officials, but Beijing recently warned against a reported trip plan by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who is third in line to the presidency.

China appears determined on using force in Taiwan, with Russia's experience in Ukraine affecting Beijing's calculations on when and how — not whether — to invade, the head of the CIA said Wednesday. Appearing at the Aspen Security Forum, Central Intelligence Agency Director Bill Burns said that China likely saw in Ukraine that "you don't achieve quick, decisive victories with overwhelming force." He played down speculation that Chinese President Xi Jinping could move on Taiwan after a key Communist Party meeting later this year but said the risks "become higher, it seems to us, the further into this decade that you get." "I wouldn't underestimate President Xi's determination to assert China's control" over self-ruling Taiwan, he said. Burns said that China was "unsettled" when looking at Russia's five-month-old war in Ukraine, which he characterized as a "strategic failure" for President Vladimir Putin as he had hoped to topple the Kyiv government within a week. "Our sense is that it probably affects less the question of whether the Chinese leadership might choose some years down the road to use force to control Taiwan, but how and when they would do it," Burns said.

"I suspect the lesson that the Chinese leadership and military are drawing is that you've got to amass overwhelming force if you're going to contemplate that in the future," he said. China also has likely learned that it has to "control the information space" and "do everything you can to shore up your economy against the potential for sanctions," he said in a live interview with NBC News correspondent Andrea Mitchell. Burns, in line with previous US assessments, said that the United States does not believe that Beijing is offering military support to Russia despite rhetorical backing. He said China has stepped up purchases of Russian energy but appears careful about not incurring Western sanctions. "Peaceful reunification" China's defeated nationalists fled to Taiwan in 1949 after losing the mainland's civil war. The island has since developed into a vibrant democracy and leading technological power, but China claims it as its territory. Speaking before Burns at the forum in the Rocky Mountains, China's ambassador to the United States, Qin Gang, said that Beijing still preferred "peaceful reunification." But he accused the United States of supporting "independence"



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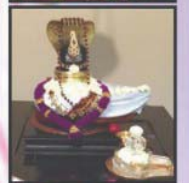
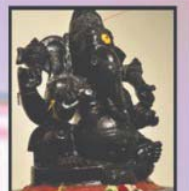
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# Sale of Codeine-Based Cough Syrups May Go Through Tough Regulatory Rules After MPs Raise Concerns



(News Agency) The government is reviewing the policy to ban manufacturing and sale of codeine-based cough syrups after several MPs raised concerns that they are being used as narcotic drugs than as medicine. Codeine is an opioid-based analgesic, mostly used to treat coughing, pain and diarrhoea, and it is one of the natural plant alkaloids found in

extracts of opium. Based on the request by several politicians to health minister Mansukh Mandaviya to ban cough syrups, a copy of which was accessed by News18.com, the health ministry had asked the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) in March to "conduct a review and submit recommendation". Recently, the DCGI has submitted its review to the health ministry. "The top selling brands

using codeine are Pfizer's Corex, Abbott's Phensedyl and Laborate Pharmaceuticals' Eskuf among a few others," the government official privy to the development said, adding that "the states where the consumption of these syrups is high include Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal and Karnataka." The official said discussions have been going on. "Tightening the regulatory noose on codeine-based medicines is becoming a need of an hour. However, a holistic approach will be adopted." While discussions to ban codeine-based cough syrups have taken place frequently in the last few years starting 2015, nothing concrete has been decided so far.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in 2017 had asked the DCGI to "substantially reduce" the availability of codeine-based cough syrups saying they are being used as narcotic drugs. It had said these formulations are

## WHAT DID MPS' COMPLAINT SAY?

According to the copy of complaint, several MPs including Ajay Pratap Singh (Rajya Sabha member from Madhya Pradesh), Dr Kanimozhi (Tamil Nadu), Dr V Sivadasan and Elamaram Kareem (from Kerala), Fauzia Khan (from Maharashtra) and Amar Patnaik (from Odisha) have demanded prohibition on the sale of codeine-based cough syrups. "These days, in markets, 'Corex syrup' has become one of the substances for drug abuse. Corex otherwise is a cough syrup but it is used more for recreational purpose than a medicine," Singh had told Rajya Sabha on March 15, and several other members concurred. "After its consumption, both brain and body go numb, body becomes loose, and nowadays, our youngsters are increasingly consuming it," he had warned. Corex, manufactured by US Pharma giant Pfizer, is a combination medicine used for treating dry cough. While not all variants of the medicine use codeine, Corex T cough syrup is a combination of two medicines – Codeine and Triprolidine. Here, codeine works as cough suppressant. It suppresses cough by reducing the activity of cough centre in the brain. Triprolidine is an anti-allergic.

being abused and their interference of NCB, several availability must be substantially reduced so that the bureau can identify their movement in the popular syrups. For instance, market. Concerned over the increasing noises to ban codeine from its popular cough codeine-based drugs and regular syrup brand, Glycodin.

## Delhi govt to conduct door-to-door survey for issuing e-health cards

**The Delhi government is expected to start a door-to-door survey this August for creating a health database for its e-health cards and health information management system (HIMS), health officials said**

(News Agency) The Delhi government is expected to start a door-to-door survey this August for creating a health database for its e-health cards and health information management system (HIMS), health officials said. The department aims to distribute the cards in November or December, they added. This information will help Delhi government hospitals to record and track each patient's medical history. This survey will help Delhi government hospitals to record and track each patient's medical history so that treatment can be uninterrupted. Officials from the Delhi government's health department said the door-to-door survey will be conducted across the city to collect each resident's basic details such as age, gender, history of major health ailments, progress on ongoing treatments, drug allergies, and history of surgeries, among others. Delhi government had earlier announced that the HIMS and health card scheme will "revolutionise health-care system in Delhi".

## How to tell Covid from common cold? Know differentiating symptoms

**The most common cold-like symptoms currently reported are runny nose, sore throat, headache, persistent cough, and mild and severe fatigue**

(News Agency) Amid the rising cases of Covid and the onset of monsoon season, many people are suffering with symptoms that look similar. The UK ZOE Covid Symptom study app shows how to spot the difference between Covid and common cold. According to Tim Spector, epidemiologist at King's College London and leader of the study app, fatigue and sore throat are common with both diseases.

However, people down with Covid are likely to witness severe fatigue and bad throat, more so in the early hours of the day. "Symptoms much the same except generally more fatigue and sore throat," Spector wrote on Twitter. "So best to assume it's Covid!" he said adding "hopefully this wave will be over soon". The current global wave of Covid infections are

majorly driven by Omicron sub-variants BA.4 and BA.5. These are known to evade both immunity induced from vaccines as well as

spot cold-like symptoms, Express.co.uk reported. "Try and get tested if you can. If you can't get tested, assume you've got a cold and



from prior Covid infection. Spector also noted that there are "twice as many Covid cases as common colds currently". "The ratio has never been so high". In his latest YouTube video, he advised people to get tested if you

stay away from other people until you feel better. "The most common cold-like symptoms currently reported are: runny nose, sore throat, headache, persistent cough, and mild and severe fatigue, the report said.



# Kala-azar aka black fever spreads in West Bengal; know what is it, symptoms and treatment

**Kala-azar aka black fever has been reported in 11 districts of West Bengal. Know its meaning, causes, treatment, symptoms and other details about the disease**



(News Agency) Kala-azar aka black fever is spreading at a massive scale in West Bengal districts. Almost 65 cases of black fever have been reported in districts including Kalimpong, Malda, Uttar Dinajpur, Darjeeling and Dakshin Dinajpur in the last couple of weeks. The officials have suggested that black fever or Kala Azar was practically eradicated from West Bengal, but recent surveillance led to the detection of 65 cases in 11 districts. Few cases were also reported

from Purulia, Murshidabad, Birbhum and Bankura districts. So far, no case has been detected in the capital of the state Kolkata.

## What is Kala-azar or Black Fever?

It should be noted that Kala-azar is a fatal disease if left untreated in over 95% of cases. It is mainly transmitted by the bites of sandflies infected with the parasite 'leishmania donovani' and that's why it is also known as Visceral leishmaniasis (VL). It is one of the top

parasitic diseases with a high outbreak and mortality rate.

## What are the causes of Kala-azar or Black Fever?

The disease is associated with malnutrition, poor housing, weak immune system, and affects some of the poorest people. Leishmaniasis is also associated environmental changes such as deforestation, building of dams, irrigation schemes and urbanization.

## What are the symptoms of Kala-azar

## or Black Fever?

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), people infected with black fever may experience irregular bouts of fever, weight loss, enlargement of the spleen, liver and anaemia.

## What is the treatment of Kala-azar or Black Fever?

Diagnosis of black fever is carried out by combining clinical signs with parasitological, or serological tests (such as rapid diagnostic tests), according to WHO.

# Hormone Replacement Therapy Won't Raise Recurrence Rate for Breast Cancer Survivors

(News Agency) Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for breast cancer survivors doesn't appear to increase the risk of cancer recurrence or death, Danish researchers report.

Although HRT has previously been linked to a raised risk of breast cancer's return, those earlier studies referred to oral HRT and not vaginal estrogen cream. The latest study, however, found no increase in the risk of recurrence or death for women getting either type of HRT.

"These findings should be reassuring that the use of HRT is not related to any major risks in the recurrence of breast cancer or risk of death for most women," said lead researcher Dr. Soren Cold, from the department of oncology at Odense University Hospital.

For women taking aromatase inhibitors to lower estrogen levels, there is a small risk of recurrence, but no increased risk of death, he noted.

Cold added that while the study indicates short-term use of HRT for breast cancer patients appears safe, long-term use may be problematic.

In any case, he advises patients to have

a detailed discussion with their doctor about using HRT.

"It's something that you'll have to discuss with your doctor because like all other treatments, there are pros and cons," Cold said. "You cannot say it's prohibited, but you have to discuss it strongly with your doctor."

For the study, Cold and his colleagues collected data on nearly 8,500 women diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer between 1997 and 2004. These women received either no hormone treatment or five years of hormone therapy.

Among the women who didn't receive vaginal estrogen therapy or menopausal hormone therapy before a breast cancer diagnosis, 1,957 used vaginal estrogen therapy and 133 used menopausal hormone therapy after their diagnosis.

Over a median of nearly 10 years of follow-up, 16% had a recurrence of breast cancer. In all, 111 patients who had a recurrence had received vaginal estrogen therapy, 16 had received menopausal hormone therapy, and about 1,200 women did not receive either treatment. The report was published July

20 in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute. Despite these findings, Dr. Brittany Zimmerman, a medical breast oncologist at Northwell Health Cancer Institute in Lake Success, N.Y., believes breast cancer survivors need to be cautious when using HRT.

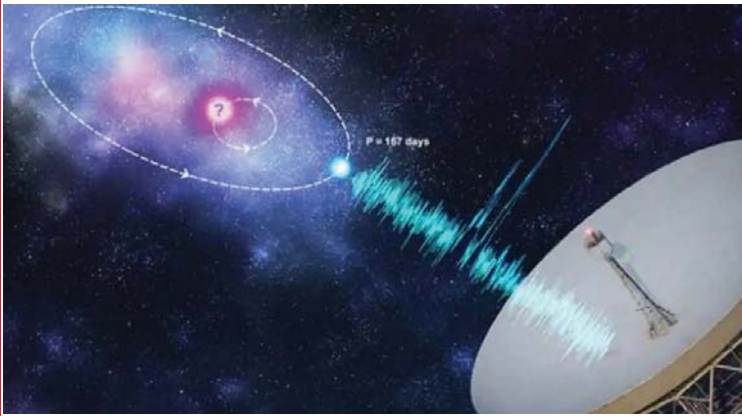
The side effects from estrogen deprivation after breast cancer affect many women and can be a major reason for discontinuing breast cancer treatments, such as tamoxifen and aromatase inhibitors, she said. "As a medical oncologist, one of my main roles is to help patients manage symptoms of these medications to improve quality of life, and help patients remain on their breast cancer-directed therapies," Zimmerman said. Many strategies are available to manage these side effects, including hormonal and non-hormonal treatments. "In general, we avoid estrogen-based hormonal therapies for patients with a prior history of breast cancer based on results of prior studies, which show an increased risk of breast cancer recurrence," Zimmerman said. This study provides an interesting new observation about the

use of vaginal estrogen therapy in patients with a history of breast cancer, she said. "The study found a slightly increased risk of breast cancer recurrence among patients who used vaginal estrogen therapy and were taking aromatase inhibitors," Zimmerman noted. Earlier studies have shown that vaginal estrogen is generally safe in breast cancer survivors and had very low estrogen absorption into the body, she said. "I would, however, recommend patients with vaginal symptoms such as vaginal dryness or burning try non-hormonal therapies before using vaginal estrogen therapy," Zimmerman said. But "this decision should be made after discussion with the patient's breast medical oncologist," she added. While the new study suggests there is no increased risk of breast cancer recurrence with oral hormonal therapy, several earlier studies have suggested an increased risk, Zimmerman noted.

"I would encourage all patients to discuss the use of hormonal therapy for hot flashes with their medical oncologist and to limit use while further studies are in process," she said.



# 'Heartbeat' in space: Mysterious radio signal from nothingness has been received



(News Agency) We do not know of life beyond Earth. There hasn't been any conclusive proof yet. We have

tried to contact alien civilizations (if they exist). But we have got no response till now. However, it is intriguing to

imagine that there is indeed an alien civilization out there that's trying to contact us and hasn't been successful. Till now at least. A 'heartbeat' like radio signal has been received by universities across US and Canada. This radio signal, coming from a distant galaxy is flashing with surprising regularity. Such signals are called Fast Radio Bursts or FRB. Generally, FRB's last for several milliseconds. But this FRB has lasted 1000 times longer. The scientists have

discovered that the bursts are taking place every 0.2 seconds. This is similar to a beating heart. The FRB has been designated FRB 20191221A by scientists. It is the longest-lasting FRB till date.

The radio signals are coming from a galaxy billions of light years away. The source of the radio bursts is unknown but it is being said by the scientists that it is a radio pulsar or a magnetar that is emitting this signal. There are not many things in the

universe that emit strictly periodic signals," says Daniele Michilli, a postdoc in MIT's Kavli Institute for Astrophysics and Space Research. "Examples that we know of in our own galaxy are radio pulsars and magnetars, which rotate and produce a beamed emission similar to a lighthouse. And we think this new signal could be a magnetar or pulsar on steroids." The discovery has been reported in the journal Nature.

## Scientists develop shapeshifting microbots that can brush and floss teeth

(News Agency) Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania have developed shapeshifting microbots that can brush, rinse, and floss teeth. The robotic system, which can form bristle-like structures along with form long string-like shapes, is magnetic and made from iron. Elderly people who have trouble using their hands and find it difficult to clean their teeth themselves may find the

prototype to be particularly helpful.

Hyun (Michel) Koo, a professor at Penn's School of Dental Medicine and a study co-author told PennToday "Routine oral care is cumbersome and can pose challenges for many people, especially those who have a hard time cleaning their teeth." Comparing the microbots to "a robotic arm

that might reach out and clean a surface" Edward Steager, a study co-author from Penn's School of Engineering and Applied Science believes that tiny machines can be programmed. "Nanoparticles can be shaped and controlled with magnetic fields in surprising ways," Steager said. "The big innovation here is that the robotics system can do all three in a single, hands-free, automated way," he added. From contrast agents that get injected into MRI patients to



delivery systems for some the use of iron oxide nanoparticles for use in other biotech products.

## Solar flare alert! This one may affect your GPS

(News Agency) Our Sun packs quite a punch. Not only did it literally form all the planets in the Solar System but is a source of all energy on Earth. It is indeed true that life-sustaining mode of our star is always on. But there are times when Sun 'sneezes' (well, kind of) and it means some major disruption on Earth. A solar flare is on its way to Earth and it is expected to spell trouble for us. USA's National National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has raised an alarm over this solar flare which erupted from the Sun on July 14. "A solar flare is an intense burst of radiation coming from the release of magnetic energy associated with sunspots. Flares are our solar system's largest explosive events. They are seen as bright areas on the sun and they can last from minutes to hours," says NASA.

This solar flare will not mean something as dramatic as end of humanity, but a sufficiently powerful solar flare can make our satellites defunct. This in turn may have major effect on many functions on Earth. We will be safe because Earth's magnetic field will shield us from harmful radiation. But disruption in communication on Earth is enough to disturb flow of modern life. "The long snake-like filament cartwheeled its way off the #Sun in a stunning ballet. The magnetic orientation of this Earth-directed #solarstorm is going to tough to predict. G2-level (possibly G3) conditions may occur if the magnetic field of this storm is oriented southward!" said Dr Tamitha Skov on Twitter. Her Twitter profile says that she is space weather expert. The solar flare which erupted from the Sun on July 14 is expected to hit Earth on July 19.

## NASA's Perseverance rover spots noodle-like object on Mars, leaves scientists intrigued

(News Agency) NASA's Perseverance rover has been a massive asset for the space agency as it has come up with brilliant pictures from Mars. The pictures have played a huge role in scientists determining the surroundings and terrains of the planet. Now, the Mars Rover has spotted an extremely fascinating piece of debris in the shape of a 'spaghetti'. The picture was



captured by the front-facing hazard avoidance cameras on the rover, but the scientists were unable to determine the exact nature of the object. Most experts believe that it can be yet another debris from a previous NASA mission. Last month, the rover took the picture of a shiny object which was found on the floor of Mars' Jezero Crater, but it turned out to be a piece of junk that actually originated from

the Mars Rover itself.

"My team has spotted something unexpected: It's a piece of a thermal blanket that they think may have come from my descent stage, the rocket-powered jet pack that set me down on landing day back in 2021," Perseverance team members tweeted after the picture of the shiny object went viral. Space junk is

a very common problem when it comes to space travel and when it comes to Mars, a lot of junk actually originates from the expedition rovers sent from earth. Earlier, Perseverance took aerial pictures which showed massive amounts of junk that originated from wrecks. The Mars Rover completed one year on the planet in February this year and the search for life is still on.



# Alien civilisations can use 'simple' method to find earth, new study suggests

(NewsAgency) It has been the mission for a number of scientists over the years to find some trace of alien life in the universe. From massive satellites searching distant galaxies to sending radio transmissions into the cosmos, a lot of methods have been implemented but to no avail. However, a group of scientists have tried to flip the situation and tried to find out how aliens can find us in the massive universe. A team of astronomers from Japan, Thailand, the United Kingdom and France looked at the number of ways that alien species can detect our presence and zeroed in on a process called



"microlensing".

"In theory, a long-range detection-method like microlensing could be employed by technological

civilizations to detect the Earth across galactic distance scales," the study explained.

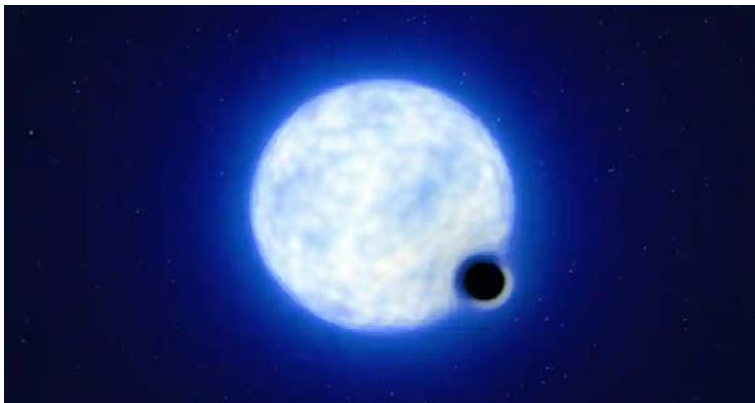
The process of microlensing

is used in order to detect distant planets or stars by studying the bodies through powerful microscopes. The study is conducted when the

star shines bright due to any reason and the atmosphere ends up acting like a lens for the people observing the phenomenon. A similar process is also being used by NASA's James Webb Space Telescope, according to the study that was accepted for publication in Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

The study explained that any alien civilisation will be able to spot our planet if they study the Milky Way and depending on the position of the stars, the earth will be shining brightly at a specific point of time. However, this scenario was imagined considering the aliens have the same level of technology.

## 'Needle in a haystack': Dormant stellar-mass black hole found outside the Milky Way



Way.

Tomer Shenar, an astrophysicist at the University of Amsterdam said that the international debunking team has found a "needle in a haystack." Shenar, who is the lead author of a new study, told news agency AFP, "We found a quite massive star, that weighs 25 times the mass of our Sun, that is orbiting around something that we do not see." Shenar added: "We've never really detected such systems before. There have been a few claims in the last years, but they have all more or less been

refuted." The study mentioned that the team was actually looking at the skies for something that could eventually become a binary black hole - which means two black holes orbit each other after swallowing their stars in a supernovae explosion. Scientists have noted that in the blue star, the Large Magellanic Cloud galaxy, a galaxy that neighbours our Milky Way, is locked in a death dance with a black hole that has nine times the mass of our Sun. Normally, X-ray radiation detects these kinds of black holes. But

this binary system is called dormant because it does not emit X-rays.

**Why is this discovery important?**

It is understood that these black holes are common throughout the universe, however, it has been difficult to find them. The discovery could also give an insight into how black holes are formed. The experts have said that there have been several possible candidates in recent years that have been rejected. The discovery could also give an insight into how black holes are formed.

(News Agency) A team of scientists on Monday (July 18) announced the discovery of the first "dormant" stellar-mass black hole, that is spotted orbiting a star in a nearby galaxy. The astrophysicists have said that the black hole in the Large Magellanic Cloud is the first to be confirmed outside of the Milky

## Dragon's eye': Scientist creates image of galaxy using James Webb Space Telescope

(News Agency) James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has revolutionised the way we 'look' at the Universe. While good ol' Hubble Space Telescope steadfastly sent ever-beautiful images of the Universe for decades, JWST is humanity's most powerful eye in the sky now. The telescope is going to let us peer into corners of the Universe never seen before. It has already started its work.

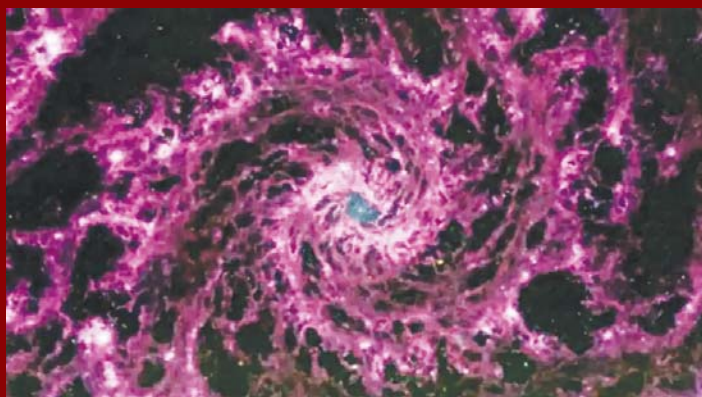
A scientist has used sets of data captured by JWST and made a brilliant image of a faraway galaxy. The purple swirls of the spiral galaxy are indeed a marvel to

behold.

Time for science speak. Gabriel Brammer of University of Copenhagen in Denmark downloaded the datasets captured by JWST. While Hubble focussed on capturing images of the

cosmos in visible spectrum, JWST primarily captures images in

infrared spectrum. Human eyes cannot naturally perceive infrared



visible light (Red-Green-Blue). He then combined the three images that produced the mesmerising swirl of purple that we can see in the picture. Brammer is not associated with JWST team. The galaxy captured in the pic is designated NGC 628. It appears purple in the image because of chemical composition of dust clouds in the galaxy. "If our eyes could see in these mid-infrared wavelengths, the night sky would look a lot more like this picture, which I think would be spectacular, maybe a little terrifying," says Brammer. The center of the galaxy appears as if a dragon has its green gaze over us.



# Headwinds from US inflation: Costly imports, flight of foreign investors among major risks

**With the United States recording a 40-year high inflation in June this year, India will also face the heat. India's costly imports and inflation in trade partner countries puts it at risk of facing imported inflation**

(News Agency) Consumer prices in many parts of the world are on the rise and India, too, is expected to face headwinds. Considering that India imports heavily, inflation in trade partner countries puts it at risk of facing imported inflation. The U.S. recorded 40-year high inflation in June 2022 and India is also set to feel the heat. India imported nearly eight per cent of its energy requirements from the U.S. last year.

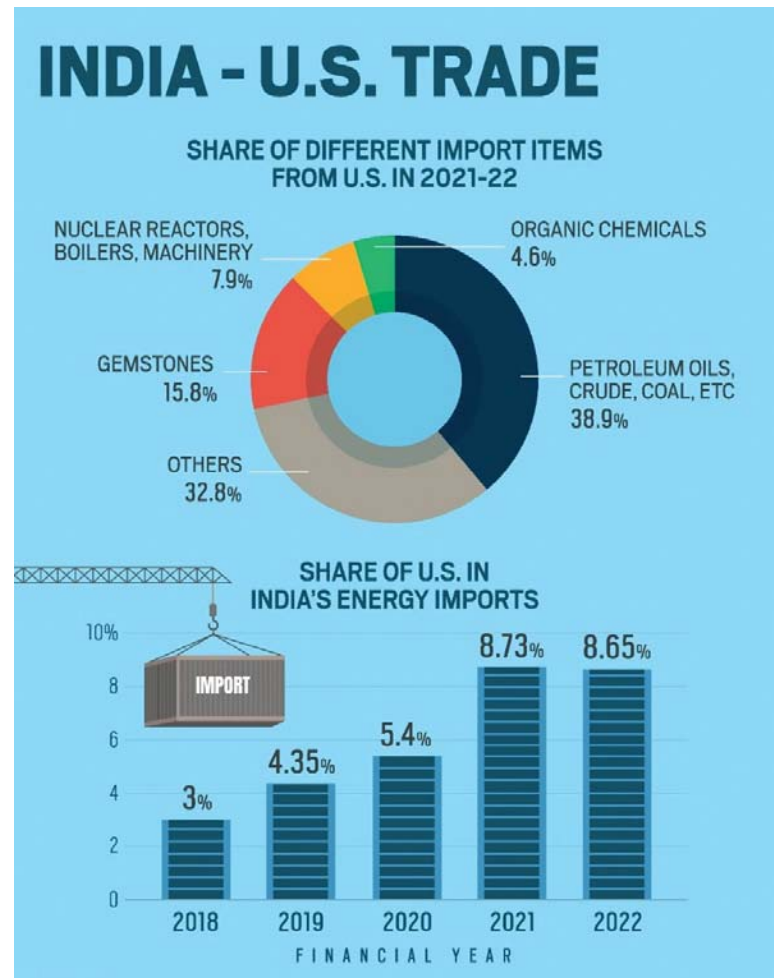


India's dependence on the U.S. for its energy needs has increased in the last five years. The U.S. accounted for only three per cent of India's energy imports in 2017-18. "India is being impacted by the global inflation crisis, reflecting the materialising of geopolitical risks. Although it is largely driven by food and fuel supply disruptions and bottlenecks, mending supply always takes time," The Reserve Bank of India said. The central bank added that the current situation of global inflation is one of the most severe food and energy crises in recent history that now threatens the most vulnerable across the globe.

Though the inflation in India is above the RBI's comfort band of two to six per cent in the last six months, the situation is less dire than in many other countries. In Belgium, the U.S., and the U.K., inflation is at a 40-year high. In the Eurozone, inflation is at a lifetime high, while it is at a 20-year high in Mexico. Another factor besides energy prices is the rise in food prices. The Food and Agriculture Organization's food index is at its highest level now. **CONCERN MOUNTING FROM FLIGHT OF FOREIGN INVESTORS**

Apart from the risk of imported inflation, the flight of foreign investors is also a major concern for India. Raising the

interest rates in the U.S. to curb inflation has caught the eyeballs of foreign investors. This, among other reasons, has led to the Indian share market witnessing a net FPI sell-off consecutively in the last nine months. To a certain extent, the quick sell-off has taken a toll on Indian stock markets. Altogether, the high level of inflation around the world, the rise in central bank rates to curb inflation, and supply constraints amid the Russia-Ukraine war among other geopolitical reasons, have taken a toll on many currencies, including the Indian rupee. While the U.S. dollar index rose 12.2 per cent year-to-date, the Japanese yen slipped 18.8 per cent, the euro



fell 12.3 per cent, the Indian rupee 6.8 per cent, the Chinese yuan 5.4 per cent, and the Canadian dollar plunged 2.1 per cent year-to-date against the U.S. dollar. This is another reason why imports may get expensive for India. "India does need to be wary of imported inflation, especially from elevated global energy prices," the Economic Survey 2022 noted.

## Aircraft Snags: DGCA Conducts Spot Checks, Finds Insufficient Engineering Staff Certifying Planes

(News Agency) With airlines reporting multiple technical malfunction incidents, aviation regulator DGCA on Monday said it conducted spot checks and found that there is an insufficient number of engineering personnel certifying planes of different carriers before their departure. Before each departure, an aircraft is checked and certified by an aircraft maintenance engineer (AME). The DGCA has now issued guidelines for airlines on the deployment of AME personnel and directed them to comply by July 28. The spot checks also found that the AME teams of airlines are improperly identifying the "cause of a reported defect", the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)'s order noted. They also found that there has been an "increasing trend of MEL (minimum equipment list) releases" of aircraft, it said. "MEL releases" means an aircraft

is allowed to fly with certain inoperative equipment or instruments for a specific period of time, until the repairs are done. "It is also seen that airlines are resorting to frequent one-off authorisation to Category A certifying staff at transit stations which is not in line with existing regulatory provisions," the DGCA said. The engineering head of one of the Indian airlines explained that a Category A engineer is called a 'limited scope engineer', and he or she is allowed to certify and release planes for departures only when the aircraft does not have any complex defect. The Category B1 engineer is one step above the Category A engineer and he or she is capable of handling mechanical defects.

Similarly, Category B2 engineering is capable of handling defects in the electronic equipment of planes. The DGCA said: "It has been decided that all aircraft at base and transit stations



shall be released by certifying staff holding AME Category B1/B2 license with appropriate authorisation by their organisation." The regulator told airlines to position Category B1 and Category B2 engineers at all base and transit stations and make sure that required tools and equipment are available.

"Alternatively, you may opt for sending the certifying staff on flight duties," the DGCA mentioned. The DGCA said its directions must be complied with by July 28.

The airline engineering head, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said it will be difficult for airlines to place Category B1 or Category B2 engineers on all transit stations. "If I operate one flight per day from Jorhat or Jharsuguda, how can I keep two Category B1 or B2 engineers — which are anyway in fewer numbers — just to certify and release that one flight?" the head explained.

There have been multiple technical malfunction incidents in Indian planes during the last one month. On Sunday, IndiGo's Sharjah-Hyderabad flight was diverted to Karachi as a precautionary measure after pilots observed a defect in one of the engines.



# It's an industry-wide issue: Oppo on Customs duty evasion charge

Responding to the allegation of evading Customs duty amounting to over Rs 4,000 crore, Chinese smartphone manufacturer Oppo said that it's an industry-wide issue many corporates are working on



industry-wide issue many corporates are working on. The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) had earlier alleged that during their investigation of Oppo Mobiles India Private Limited, a subsidiary of the China-based Guangdong Oppo

Mobile Telecommunications Corporation Ltd, they detected Customs duty evasion of around Rs 4,389 crore. "We have a different view on the charges mentioned in the SCN. We believe it's an industry-wide issue many corporates are

working on. OPPO India is reviewing the SCN received from DRI, and we are going to reply the notice, presenting our side, and will be working further with the related government departments. OPPO India is a responsible corporate and believes in prudent corporate governance framework. OPPO India will take appropriate steps as may be needed in this regard including any remedies provided under the law," Oppos said in a statement. According to DRI officials, during searches at the

official premises of Oppo India offices and residences of its key management employees, they recovered "incriminating evidence indicating wilful misdeclaration in the description of certain items imported by Oppo India for use in the manufacture of mobile phones". Senior management employees and domestic suppliers of Oppo India were questioned by the DRI. They purportedly admitted to having submitted wrongful descriptions to the Customs Authorities at the time of importing equipment.

(News Agency) Chinese evading Customs duty smartphone-maker Oppo has amounting to over Rs 4,000 responded to the allegation of crore saying that it's an

## Fortune Oil To Be Cheaper; Adani Wilmar Cuts Edible Oil Prices by Up to Rs 30 Per Litre

(News Agency) In a relief to consumers, edible oil company Adani Wilmar on Monday said it has reduced cooking oil prices by up to Rs 30 per litre amid fall in global prices. The company, which sells its products under Fortune brand, has slashed the prices the most in soyabean oil. The stocks with the reduced prices will reach market soon. The move comes after the government recently asked edible oil companies to cut prices on edible oils in order to pass on the benefits of a decline in international edible oil rates

to consumers. On February 7, Mother Dairy, which sells edible oils under the Dhara brand, had cut prices of soyabean and rice bran oils by up to Rs 14 per litre. "In continuation to the global price reduction and the government's effort to pass on the benefits of reduced edible oil prices to consumers, Adani Wilmar has further slashed edible oil prices from the last month's reduction effected by the company," Adani Wilmar said in a company. Fortune soyabean oil price has been revised to Rs 165 per litre from

Rs 195 per litre. The company has reduced Fortune rice bran oil price to Rs 210 per litre from Rs 225 per litre, while the MRP of groundnut oil has been cut to Rs 210 per litre from Rs 220 per litre. Raag vanaspati's rate has been revised downwards to Rs 185 per litre, from Rs 200 per litre and that of Raag palmolein oil to Rs 144 per litre from Rs 170 per litre.

The sunflower oil rate has been reduced to Rs 199 per litre from Rs 210 per litre. Mustard Oil MRP (maximum retail price) has been cut to Rs 190 per litre from Rs 195 per litre.

"We have passed on the benefits of global price reduction to our consumers and the stocks with new prices will reach market soon.. Our products ...will be available at reduced costs to our consumers. This step will certainly boost demand for the upcoming festive season," said Angshu Mallick, MD and CEO of Adani Wilmar. The steep reduction in oil prices comes in the wake of global prices falling sharply, the company said. Adani Wilmar is one of the fastest-growing FMCG companies in the country. Besides a range of edible oils,

its offerings include rice, atta, sugar, besan, ready-to-cook khichdi, soya chunks, and others. Edible oil makers had cut prices by up to Rs 10-15 per litre last month and prior to that had also reduced the MRP taking cues from the global market. Taking note of a further drop in global prices, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey called a meeting of all edible oil associations and major manufacturers to discuss the current trend and pass on the falling global prices to consumers by reducing the MRP.

## Scientists develop microrobots that surround a cancer cell and kill it

(News Agency) Researchers at the Physical Intelligence Department of Max Planck Institute in Germany have made a breakthrough that can help fight cancer. Reportedly, the scientists at the institute, combining elements of robotics and biology have developed magnetically-controlled microscopic robots that can reach tumour cells and battle cancer.

The scientists used E.coli bacteria, often dubbed 'superhero of the microbial world' for the process. The E.coli bacteria can easily traverse through material ranging from liquids to highly viscous tissues, making it the ideal choice for the experiment. The scientists

attached magnetic nanoparticles to this bacterium and when exposed to a magnetic field, managed to enhance its speed, allowing it to reach the desired spot quicker. Meanwhile, spherical-shaped carriers called liposomes that contain the medication were also attached. After reaching the tumour spot, the microrobots grow there and start their 'miracle' work. Birgül Akolpoglu, a PhD student and the first author of the research decoded the process by stating that these biohybrid microrobots can be used to awaken the immune system of the patients, which will help fight the tumour cells and simultaneously increase the effect of cancer drugs.

## Rupee hits all-time low of 80 against US dollar in early trade

The Indian Rupee has sunk to a record low of 80 per US Dollar in early trade

(News Agency) The Indian Rupee on Tuesday, July 19, sunk to a record low of 80 per US Dollar in early trade for the second day in a row, reported news agency ANI. On Monday, it crossed the 80-per-dollar-mark but recovered a little to close just below 80 at 79.97. The Union government on Monday admitted in Parliament

that the value of the Indian rupee against the dollar has fallen by Rs 16.08 (25.39 per cent) in the last eight years. The finance ministry informed Parliament that in 2014, as per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the exchange

rate was Rs 63.33 to a dollar. By July 11, 2022, it had fallen to Rs 79.41 per dollar.

Capital outflow has been a major worry for the Indian Rupee as capital markets showed foreign investors sold shares worth Rs 1,650 crore. Over the past few weeks, Rupee has been cascading to touch new lows nearly every other day. However, the initial gains on Monday on the hopes of the Reserve bank of India intervening to support the domestic currency fell flat when it settled at a new low of Rs 79.41 per dollar.





# Viral: Brahmastra Song Kesariya Prompts Meme-Fest On Twitter

**Twitter users shared a couple of memes on how the two words seemed out of place in the otherwise flawless track**

(News Agency) The first song from Ayan Mukerji's Brahmastra, titled Kesariya has been trending ever since it released on Sunday. The song, beautifully sung by Arijit Singh, has been picturised on Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor. The song, largely sung in Hindi, has two English words "Love Storiyan" in a line. Twitter users shared a couple of memes on how the two words seemed out of place in the otherwise flawless track. "Everything was going good in my life until I heard the word Love Storiyan in Kesariya song," wrote a Twitter user. Another Twitter user compared the bit to Arturo's character from the Netflix show Money Heist. The Tamil and Telugu versions of the film have been sung by Sid Sriram. Some Money Heist reference to some up the post. "The 'love storiya' in Kesariya is like 'Arturo' in Money Heist,"

wrote a Twitter user. Another Twitter user wrote: "Everything was going good in my life until I heard the word 'Love storiyan' in kesariya tera song." In the first leg of the Astra universe of films, Ranbir Kapoor's character Shiva is a part of the mighty Brahmastra. He is represented by the element fire. Amitabh Bachchan and Nagarjuna are the protectors of the Brahmastra, while Mouni Roy represents the dark forces that wish to attain the Brahmastra. Brahmastra, Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor's first project together, is slated to release in September and it includes a stellar cast that also includes Nagarjuna, Dimple Kapadia and Mouni Roy. The film is slated to release in theatres on September 9. Alia Bhatt and Ranbir Kapoor found love on the sets of the film. They got married in April this year.



## Amitabh Bachchan Wore These Sunglasses In The 70s. "Today's Stars" Wear Them Too

**Amitabh Bachchan has blessed his Instafam with a super stylish throwback photo**



(News Agency) Amitabh Bachchan is an icon in every sense of the term. His acting skills, gait, voice and dance moves have been emulated by performers across generations. Even today, Big B – as he is fondly called – has fans imitating him and his fashion sense. Now, the actor has begun the week with a throwback image from the 70s in which he is seen in a T-shirt

and a pair of oversized sunglasses. In the caption, Big B noted that fashion from decades ago continues to remain relevant even today. In the caption, he said, "Fashions repeat... glares of the 70's... perhaps at the mahurat of Trishul or Man ji film and I see today's stars wearing similar."

Acknowledging that Amitabh Bachchan will always be the megastar of Bollywood and inspiration for many, actor Ranveer Singh said, "OG" with a fire emoji.

Amitabh Bachchan's daughter Shweta Bachchan said, "May I have these please." Actor Ronit

Bose Roy said, "Omg," with fire emoticons. Amitabh Bachchan followed this throwback image with a more recent picture of himself. Sharing the post, the actor said, "A question: does this (hands up) emoji depict film framing as in my Insta pic... or prayers, hailing, excitement ... or what? I thought it was a film frame... like good enough to be framed on film." Replying to the post, Shweta Bachchan told her father: "Haha. No! But maybe you've found a whole new use for it." Recently, Amitabh Bachchan also uploaded a photo of himself with some of the biggest names of the Indian film industry. In the

picture are superstars Prabhas, Dulquer Salmaan, Nani as well as directors Prashanth Neel, Raghavendra Rao and Nag Ashwin. Currently Nag Ashwin is directing Amitabh Bachchan in Project K. In the caption, Amitabh Bachchan said, "An evening with the stalwarts of cinema... Prabhas - Bahubali; Prashant - director KGF2; a certain AB; Raghavendra Rao - producer director Legendary; Nani - star, film TV; Dulquer - star Malayalam Tamil Hindi; Nagi Ashwin, director Project K currently and the joy of discussing film cinema and work."

## Kiccha Sudeep on south films ending Bollywood's dominance in Hindi market: 'Everything has to come to an end'

**Kannada star Kiccha Sudeep opens up on his upcoming film Vikrant Rona, diminishing language barriers in Indian cinema, and his equation with 'brother' Salman Khan**

(News Agency) Kiccha Sudeep has worked in several languages across a career that has spanned over a quarter of a century. But later this month, he is coming up with a film he describes as among his most ambitious so far. Vikrant Rona, his upcoming Kannada film, boasts of a budget of ₹95 crore, large sets, VFX, and even a Bollywood star in Jacqueline Fernandez. In the run-up to the film's release, Sudeep sat down with Hindustan Times to chat about the film, the North-South divide,

and his 'brother' Salman Khan, who is presenting the film's Hindi version. Vikrant Rona has been billed as a pan-India film and is releasing in five languages. It is Sudeep's biggest film and the excitement around it is bigger than most of his previous releases. "The excitement is not because it is travelling in many languages. My excitement is because we had an idea, a vision for this film and we achieved it. Finally, when we get to see the film on screen, 3-4 years ago,

this is what we had visualized. Knowing we could achieve that gets me excited," he says. The film comes at a time when films from south—including the Kannada industry—have been ruling the roost, surpassing Bollywood films in collections in the Hindi-speaking belt. Sudeep says, "When the content starts speaking, it starts travelling. This hasn't been forced. It has been happening organically on its own. It's the victory of content."





# Sen-sational partners-in-crime: Why Sushmita Sen dating Lalit Modi is a bitter pill to swallow for her fans

**Several fans of Sushmita Sen, who have been following her since her Miss Universe days and look up to her for her brutally honest takes on feminism, marriage and women's rights, were shocked when they found out that she was dating Lalit Modi**

(News Agency) Let's face it. It is literally none of our business to comment or opine on anyone's dating choices, even if they are public figures. Who Sushmita Sen chooses as her life-partner is entirely her choice and as much as the netizens and the social media users outrage, it wouldn't really change. And why should it? At the end of the day, it is Sushmita who is investing her time, efforts and emotions into a relationship and we are mere bystanders who are passing judgements on her dating life and choice of men. Having said that,

as someone who has always looked up to Sushmita for a plethora of reasons, the announcement of her dating Lalit Modi, a fugitive and a man who has been accused of several scams and is currently being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate, not only shook me to the core but it also left a sour taste in my mouth. No, I did not judge her for her choice to date a fugitive. Several fans of Sushmita Sen, who have been following her since her Miss Universe days and look up to her for her brutally honest takes on feminism,

marriage and women's rights, were shocked when they heard the news. Perhaps, they struggled to believe that someone as bright, politically correct, morally upright and politically aware as Sushmita, would choose to date a man who is not just problematic on moral and ethical grounds, but also on the legal front. There were, of course, several social media reactions poking fun at the announcement that sent shockwaves through the country. An old tweet of Modi from 2013 which read '@Sushmita reply to my SMS' went viral. His



Instagram bio, which ironically reads 'partners-in-crime' also caused an uproar on social media. In came the puns - 'Sen-sational news of the day', 'Sushmita left me on Sen', and more. There were, of course, people who claimed that Sen chose to date Modi because of his fortune, a statement which isn't only sexist but also misinformed because Sen herself is quite well-to-do.

# Bombay HC extends relief to actor Suniel Shetty in case registered Mumbai police



**The Bombay High Court has extended the order in which it had earlier given relief to actor Suniel Shetty with regards to a case registered against him**

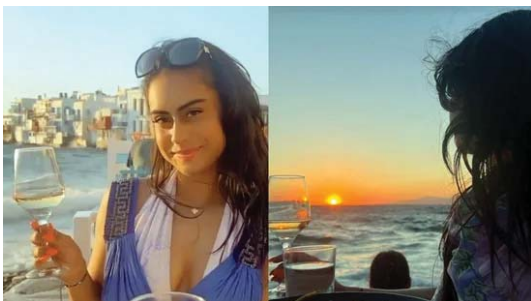
(News Agency) The court had earlier asked the lower court not to proceed with the case until the petition filed by Shetty in the Bombay HC is decided. In 2021, the Mumbai police's crime branch had chargesheeted Shetty and others before the Esplanade Metropolitan Magistrate court. The charges against Shetty and others are under sections 341 (wrongful restraint), 427 (mischief causing damage upward of Rs. 50,000), 448 (house trespassing), 201 (destruction of evidence) and 114 (abettor present when offence is committed) under the Indian Penal Code. This was in a case which took place in 2013 regarding a property in South Mumbai. The case was at first registered with the VP Road police station in

Mumbai and then later handed over to the crime branch. The complainant's case is that he had an agreement and was running a restaurant in Girgaum after investing a huge money in the renovation of the place. However, in 2013, Shetty and his people allegedly threw them out in spite of having a valid agreement and began using the premise for their own business because of which he is suffering huge losses. However, after the filing of chargesheet, Shetty then approached the Bombay high court seeking quashing of the proceedings before the Esplanade Magistrate Court. The complainant had also approached the high court seeking enhancement of the charges against Shetty and others.

## Ajay Devgn's daughter Nysa Devgan poses during sunset dinner in Mykonos

(News Agency) Ajay Devgn and Kajol's daughter Nysa Devgan is travelling across Europe with her friends and a recent video of her from Mykonos has surfaced on the internet. Nysa's close friend Orhan Awatramani took to his Instagram Stories and shared a glimpse of their recent dinner by the beach.

In the short video, Nysa posed while holding a wine glass. They had a sunset dinner at Little Venice in Mykonos. Sharing a candid picture of Nysa looking towards the sea view from their dinner table, Orhan wrote, "Spaghetti



dinner w/ my best @nysadevgan & the best view ever." The star kid also partied with her friends in Mykonos. Nysa's friend has also shared yet another picture with her from an eatery where she is dressed in a blue Versace outfit. Apart from this, he has also added a group photo of Nysa with her friends on the streets of Greece. Earlier this month, Nysa went to Amsterdam in the Netherlands, where she met Janhvi Kapoor and Varun Dhawan who were filming for Bawaal. They were also joined by Natasha Dalal.

## Tamannaah Bhatia-starrer Babli Bouncer to have a direct-on-OTT release



(News Agency) Tamannaah Bhatia's next film, titled Babli Bouncer, is set to have a direct-to-digital release. The coming-of-age story with a slice-of-life comedic tone is set in the real bouncer town of North India, Asola Fatepur. The film will premiere on Disney+ Hotstar on September 23





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