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Boris Johnson Tops List Of Bad UK Prime Ministers In Poll Of UK Public As His Term Comes To End

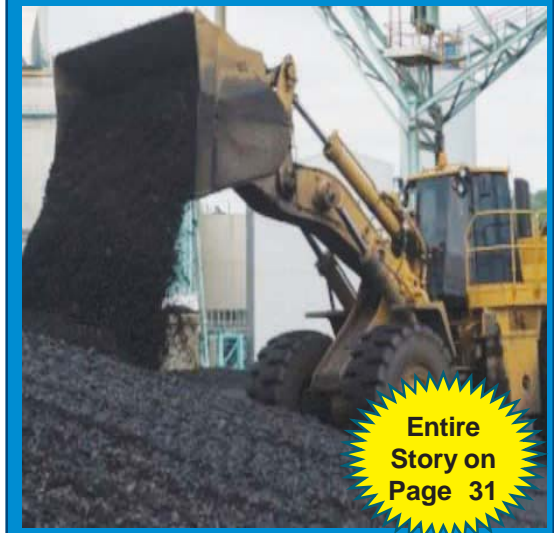


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'Social Cost' of Carbon Pollution Four Times Higher than Recently Estimated, Shows Study



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Afghanistan: After Taliban Takeover, US Relying on Drones to Battle Resurgent Al-Qaeda, IS

(SAI Bureau) One year after US forces retreated from Afghanistan, Washington now counts only on its drones to continue the fight against the Islamic extremist groups that drew it to invade the country 21 years ago. But experts say that is not going to be enough to counter the resurgence of Al-Qaeda, or its jihadist rival Islamic State, inside the country

now back under the rule of the Islamist Taliban. US forces entered Afghanistan on October 7, 2011, to remove the Taliban government from power over its protection of Al-Qaeda and its founder Osama bin Laden, responsible for the September 11 attacks on the United States.

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"This Ain't India": One Indian-American's Racist Attack On Another In US

Krishnan Jayaraman was verbally attacked by 37-year-old Tejinder Singh in the Taco Bell at Grimmer Boulevard in Fremont, California on August 21, NBC News reported on Wednesday



(SAI Bureau) New York: An Indian-American man has been racially abused by a compatriot in the US state of California who hurled racist slurs that he is a "dirty Hindu" and a "disgusting dog," days after another hate crime was reported against four women from the community in Texas. Krishnan Jayaraman was verbally attacked by 37-year-old Tejinder Singh in the Taco Bell at Grimmer Boulevard in

Fremont, California on August 21, NBC News reported on Wednesday. Tejinder Singh, of Union City, was charged on Monday with a hate crime in violation of civil rights, assault and disturbing the peace by offensive language, the Fremont Police Department said. Tejinder Singh was listed in charging documents as "Asian/Indian," the report said. Krishnan Jayaraman recorded the tirade, which lasted over eight minutes, on his phone, capturing the moment Tejinder Singh told him: "You're disgusting, dog. You look nasty. Don't come out in public like this again." In the foul-mouthed rant, Tejinder called him a "dirty Hindu," repeatedly used the N-word, insinuated that Krishnan Jayaraman didn't eat meat and yelled "beef!" in his face. He appeared to spit at Krishnan Jayaraman twice in the

video. At one point Tejinder Singh was seen saying: "...this ain't India! You...India up, and now you're...America up," the report said. Krishnan Jayaraman said he was frightened by the incident and was even more upset to learn later that the perpetrator was also Indian.

"I was scared, to be honest with you. I was infuriated on the one hand, but I was scared that what if this guy becomes too belligerent and then comes after me?" he told NBC Bay Area. "I'm not here to pick a fight with you," Krishnan Jayaraman said. "What do you want? He said you know you Hindus are a shame, disgusting. Then he spat on me," KTLA.com website reported. Krishnan Jayaraman says that's when he and a restaurant employee called Fremont police. He says the

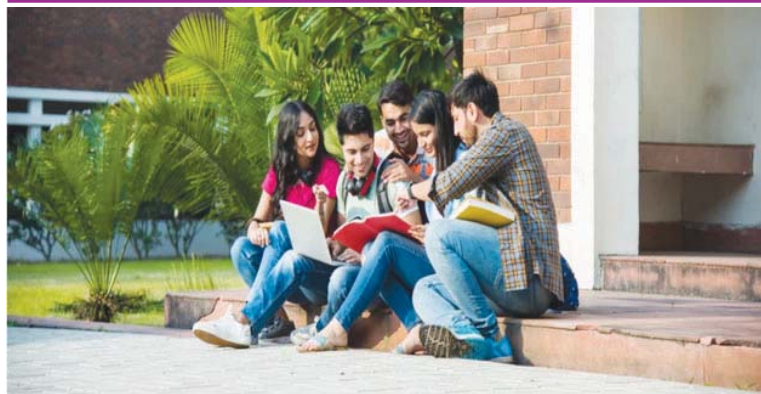
man continued yelling for more than eight minutes. Fremont police are still investigating the incident. Krishnan Jayaraman's video ended with Fremont police officers arriving, abc7news.com reported. The police chief later addressed the community on social media.

Police Chief Sean Washington wrote: "We take hate incidents and hate crimes seriously, and understand the significant impact they have on our community. These incidents are despicable. We are here to protect all community members, regardless of their gender, race, nationality, religion, and other differences." "We would like to urge the community to be respectful of each other and to immediately report any circumstances such as this that, upon investigation, may rise to

the level of a crime. In the event of a hate crime, we will devote all available resources to follow up and investigate. Fremont is one of the nation's most diverse communities, and we are thankful for the contributions of community members from different cultures and backgrounds," the statement said. On Friday, four Indian-American women were racially abused and smacked by a Mexican-American woman in the US state of Texas who hurled racist slurs at them that they are "ruining" America and should "go back to India". The incident took place on Wednesday night in a parking lot in Dallas, Texas. The woman, identified as Esmeralda Upton, has been arrested. The incident has shocked the Indian-American community across the country.

IITs Abroad May Be Called 'Indian International Institute Of Technology'

While IIT Delhi is considering setting up a campus in UAE, IIT Madras is exploring options in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Tanzania. The Centre had earlier this year set up a 17-member committee headed by IIT Council standing committee chairperson Dr K Radhakrishnan



(SAI Bureau) New Delhi: The offshore campuses of IITs may be named as "India International Institute of Technology" and faculty members from the prestigious technology institutes here may be sent on deputation abroad, according to sources. While the IITs abroad may be free to decide the student strength, the percentage of Indian students in those institutes will have to be less than 20 per cent, they said. A committee set up by the Centre for the global expansion of IITs has submitted its recommendations. It has been suggested that the ownership of starting an IIT abroad should rest with the particular higher educational institute (HEI). The new institutes could be called 'Indian International Institute of

Technology at xxxx (location)," the sources told PTI. "There should be a provision to depute faculty from an existing IIT to an institute abroad. This is particularly important in formative years of the new institute as it may gain substantially from experience of the faculty here," they added. Several IITs have been receiving requests from the Middle East and South Asian countries to set up their campuses. While IIT Delhi is considering setting up a campus in UAE, IIT Madras is exploring options in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Tanzania. The Centre had earlier this year set up a 17-member committee headed by IIT Council standing committee chairperson Dr K Radhakrishnan. The panel has recommended creating a generic system like IIT,

NIT or IISER, under which a series of institutes can be established as the current IIT Act does not provision for setting up an IIT outside the country. Explaining the rationale behind the suggested name, the source said, the suggested name is sufficiently close to IIT with "international" added to clarify

that the institute is located outside India. "The difference in name with sufficient similarity will allow the newly established IITs to evolve their own identity and ethos, while drawing up the strength of existing IITs. The offshore campus should be a distinct legal entity mentored by an Indian institute having its own

identity and ethos," the sources said. "The panel has recommended that there could be more than one model of establishing the institute depending on the specific location such as campuses by individual IITs, a group of IITs and HEIs, individual or group of IITs in collaboration with a reputed host university.

Woman Seeks PM Modi's Help To Bring Back Husband's Body From South Africa

Sangeeta Sharma, who lives in UP's Bhayla village, has written to them that she does not have enough money to bring back the body of her husband Manoj Kumar, Superintendent of Police (Dehat) Suraj Rai told Press Trust of India

(SAI Bureau) Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh: A woman from Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district has urged the Prime Minister and the External Affairs Minister to help bring home the body of her husband who died of illness in South Africa. Sangeeta Sharma, who lives in UP's Bhayla village, has written to them that she does not have enough money to bring back the body of her husband Manoj Kumar, Superintendent of Police

(Dehat) Suraj Rai told Press Trust of India. He said Manoj Kumar was working in a company in South Africa and died there on August 27 due to illness. District Magistrate Akhilesh Singh has directed Sub-divisional Magistrate Deoband Deepak Kumar to take up the matter of helping the woman, Mr Rai said. He said that Sangeeta Sharma is an Anganwadi worker and her children are young.



IIT Alums Became Friends On Wall Street. Then One Turned On The Other

Goel has pleaded not guilty to securities fraud, conspiracy and obstruction of justice, and his lawyer has taken square aim at Niranjn's credibility

(SAI Bureau) They were business school buddies who landed at top Wall Street firms -- Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Barclays Plc -- lived for a time in the same Manhattan high-rise, played squash regularly and partied overseas together.

And then one of them wore a wire and recorded his friend allegedly asking him to delete incriminating text messages.

Former Goldman banker Brijesh Goel was arrested last month for insider trading. His friend, ex-Barclays trader Akshay Niranjn, is "co-conspirator 1" in the criminal complaint against Goel, and the man who turned on his buddy, according to people familiar with the matter.

"F---... This we need to delete," Goel, 37, allegedly said in a conversation Niranjn, 33, recorded. "Did we put on any trade?... It has to be deleted. I don't even have this chat."

While betrayals are far from uncommon in the world of high finance or crime, details about the two men show how even the closest ties can rip under FBI scrutiny. Court documents paint a portrait of two young men establishing themselves on Wall Street, sharing good times and allegedly trading on details about pending mergers, until one of them turned on his pal. Goel has pleaded not guilty to securities fraud, conspiracy and obstruction of justice, and his lawyer has taken square aim at Niranjn's credibility.

"Sadly, the government rushed to charge Brijesh on the apparent say-so of one person," defense lawyer Reed Brodsky said in a statement shortly after the charges were announced on July 25, adding that "the judge and jury will not make that mistake." Niranjn's lawyer, Robert Anello, declined to comment.

Low-Stakes Poker

The two men had a great deal in common from the start. Both are from India, where they earned degrees from different campuses of the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology. They met in 2012 at University of California, Berkeley's Haas School of Business, where they both pursued quant-oriented financial engineering master's degrees.

Two Haas classmates who said they were friends with the two men recalled that they all belonged to the same social circle of about a dozen MFE students from India. But Goel and Niranjn also cultivated relationships outside that group, particularly among other students pursuing careers on Wall Street, said the classmates, who asked not to be identified.

Both men were very bright, but Goel, who was older than many of the other students, managed to stand out, one

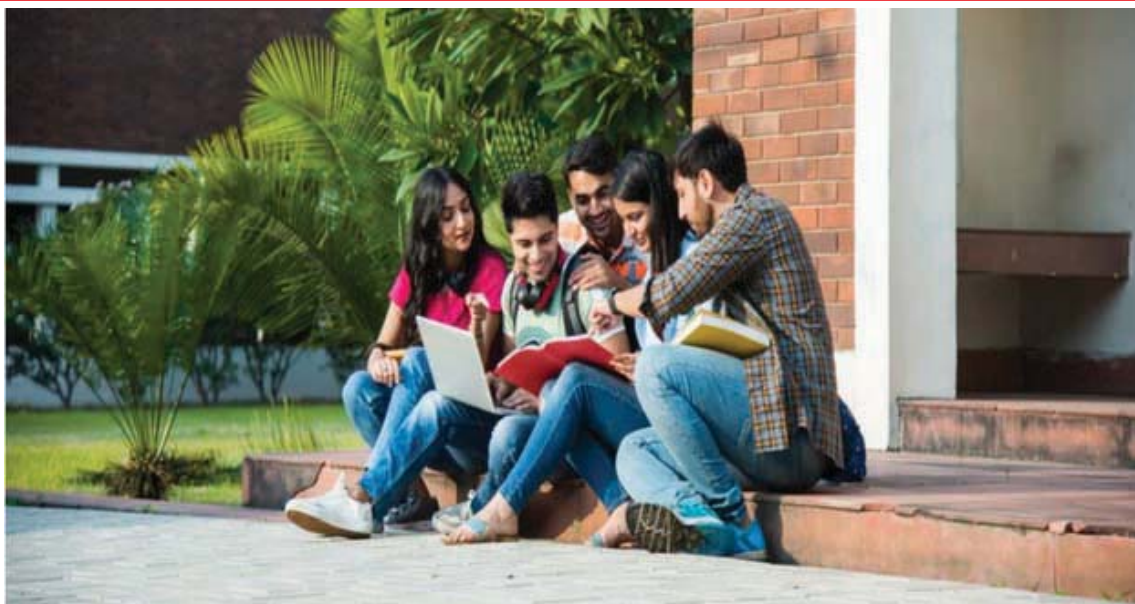
of the classmates said. On the very first day of classes, when a professor asked if someone could name the assumptions behind the Black-Scholes model for pricing options, it was Goel who raised his hand and correctly answered the question.

Goel and Niranjn were also avid poker players, though that was hardly unusual among MFE students, the classmates said. Instructors at Haas encouraged poker games because they forced students to measure risk and evaluate outcomes quickly, with money on the line. The stakes were low, with antes ranging from \$5 to \$20, because the students were on tight budgets.

According to federal prosecutors in Manhattan, Goel and Niranjn would start taking much bigger risks with money on the line less than four years after their 2013 graduation from Haas.

Study Abroad: Preferred Colleges For UG, PG Admissions; Checklist For Students

Before taking the leap toward studying abroad, it is necessary for candidates to plan it well. The number of Indian students enrolling in universities abroad to pursue degrees at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels has been steadily increasing



(News Agency) With the 2022-23 academic year about to start, many might want to do their undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from abroad. A study that surveyed over 800 people, including students, parents, grandparents and career counsellors across 12 cities between January and June last year found that at least 52 per cent students intending to study abroad now prefer specialised courses over reputation of a university when making a choice. Before taking

the leap toward studying abroad, it is necessary for candidates to plan it well. The number of Indian students enrolling in universities abroad to pursue degrees at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels has been steadily increasing.

The top three destinations for Indian students studying abroad continue to be the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, with Australia now regaining its place and Europe catching up too, as per the IC3 Institute's Student Quest

report of 2021 and other popular surveys. The most sought-after institutions include the Ivy League universities in the US, Russell group in the UK, and Go8 (Group of Eight) in Australia. Though these universities are most attractive, Amrita Ghulati, Director-Academics, IC3 Institute, said, they may not have the highest enrollments from India for multiple reasons, including a low selection ratio (less than 10 per cent), stiff competition from across the globe, and

high fees. Depending on the family budget and other factors, there are students from India across all categories of universities in different countries going beyond the popular ones other than the ones mentioned earlier, Ms Ghulati added.

Two more interesting trends, Ms Ghulati noted: "Firstly, student mobility is no longer restricted to English-speaking countries only; students are willing to learn a foreign language to add to their skill set and truly prepare for success in an international environment; secondly, the courses for which students are going abroad has gone past the traditional engineering and business, expanding into designing and creative fields, humanities, and niche programs like sports management, healthcare, public policy and data analytics too." Sharing a checklist a study abroad aspirant might need before packing the bags and move overseas, Mayank Maheshwari, Co-Founder and COO at University Living said:

"Moving overseas for a considerable period to pursue higher education is a critical and exciting juncture for everyone. If someone has no experience of leaving the country and moving to a foreign land, several things can be left for the last

moment. Hence, preparing a list of things that should be ticked off before packing the bags and starting the migration process is always advisable." Documentation should be well in place: Whilst travelling in a foreign country for a long-term period, it is critical that one should have all the documentation, including visa approvals, university's LOA (Letter of Approval), passport, funding details and other common documents. It is advised to have an electronic copy of all the bundle of records in the smartphone and physical copies in a file.

Financial factors should be sorted: It is advised that one must open a local bank account (which can be done online). Such a bank account will be critical as a student can transact freely once reaching foreign land.

Indian-American Leader Seeks Action Against Woman In Texas Racist Attack

In a separate statement, representatives of Indian-American organisations in New England on Sunday strongly condemn the recent act of anti-Asian violence in Plano, Texas

(News Agency) : Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi has urged the Dallas police to prosecute to the full extent of law a woman seen harassing and assaulting four Indian descent women in Texas last week.

"Such bigoted attacks motivated by racism, xenophobia, and other forms of hate victimise not only those directly targeted by them, but also broader communities through creating an atmosphere of fear and danger," Mr Krishnamoorthi said. Esmeralda Upton from Plano in Texas was arrested for the racially-motivated physical and verbal assault of the four women at a parking lot last Wednesday. Upton identifies herself in the video as a Mexican-American. "I hate you Indian. All these Indians come to America because they want a better life," she is seen saying in the video. The video shows her telling the group of women to "go back to India".

"You... people are ruining this country," she says in the video which has now gone viral, sending

shockwaves among the Indian-American community across the



United States. I'm appalled by the footage of the hate-motivated harassment and assault on four women of Indian descent and urge police to prosecute the woman responsible to the full extent of the law," the Indian-American Congressman said in a statement. "As our country continues to combat the surge in anti-Asian hate since the beginning of the pandemic, I urge all Americans to

come together and prove that our country and our people are better

than this," he said. In a separate statement, representatives of Indian-American organisations in New England on Sunday strongly condemn the recent act of anti-Asian violence in Plano, Texas. "We are very disturbed by this and recently increased acts of violence and hate crimes against Indians, South Asians, and Asian Americans in general. We do commend the Plano Police

department for responding to the incident with urgency and understanding," they said. Asian-Americans, like all other immigrants, have made significant contributions to this great land despite facing ongoing prejudice based on accents, colour, religion, or perceptions of leadership or other abilities, they said. "We believe in the fair treatment of all human beings regardless of age, education level, race, ethnicity, gender expression and identity, nationality, national origin, creed, accent, physical and mental ability, political and religious stance, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, socioeconomic status, veteran status, profession, or any other human differences," the organisations said. "We unequivocally and unapologetically condemn the divisive forces of hate, inequity, and injustice. We stand united in love and peace and stand against racist, discriminatory, violent acts against any community," they said. PTI LKJ TIR TIR



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Talaq-e-hasan: Supreme Court says its key focus is to provide right of maintenance to women

The Supreme Court on Monday said that the court's primary focus is to provide basic rights of maintenance and other things for the women

(By Staff Reporter) Taking a humanitarian approach, the Supreme Court on Monday assured petitioners, who claimed to be victims of talaq-e-hasan, by saying that the court's primary focus is to provide basic right of maintenance and other things for the women. The court was hearing separate pleas filed by Benazeer Heena and Nazreen Nisha challenging the constitutional validity of the practice of talaq-e-hasan.

Appearing before a bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Benazeer explained how she was deserted by her husband who is a practicing lawyer and she doesn't have all means to raise her almost one-year-old son. After hearing her, Justice Kaul assured her that, they have for now allowed impleadment of husband so that

he can be bought on talking terms and settlement can be done. Senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for Benazeer, told the court, "For now please allow us amendment of the memo of parties and issue notice to the husband."

The bench agreed and said though the larger issue needs to be addressed in these cases, but priority is that the women before us should get their basic right of maintenance and other things. Senior advocate Ranjeet Kumar also told the court that his client is similarly placed, and permission should be granted to her also for impleading of husband. The court allowed both

petitioner and slated the hearing for October 11. The plea stated that talaq-



e-hasan and all other forms of Unilateral Extra-Judicial talaq under Muslim law be declared void and unconstitutional, stating that this inequality is abominable in 21st century. The petition has sought to quash of talaq-e-hasan and other

proceedings as illegal.

The plea has been filed by Benazir Heena through advocate Ashwani Upadhyay seeking a divorce. At the same time, the petition said that in the triple talaq law, only talaq-ul-biddat has been declared an offence. The petitioner contended that apart from talaq-ul-biddat, talaq-e-hasan have not been declared unconstitutional, illegal or criminal offences in the triple talaq law. In talaq-e-hasan, the husband divorces his wife at an interval of one month each, in the meantime, if the relationship between the two is not formed or reconciliation is not reached, then their relationship ends when they divorce for the third time in the third month. In this, divorce is called at intervals per month.

Indian SC says unmarried partnerships, queer relationships can also be considered as family

(By Staff Reporter) Keeping up with the changing times and battling for inclusivity, the Supreme Court of India on Monday made significant observations that expands the definition of traditional family units to include queer and unmarried relationships.

"Familial relationships may take the form of domestic, unmarried partnerships or queer relationships," said the court.

In most societies, the concept of 'family' is usually narrowed down to a structure where a

the guardians and caretakers (who traditionally occupy the roles of the "mother" and the "father") of children may change with remarriage, adoption, or fostering." "These manifestations of love and of families may not be typical but they are as real as their traditional counterparts. Such atypical manifestations of the family unit are equally deserving not only of protection under law but also of the benefits available under social welfare legislation." Stating that the black letter of the law must not

be followed which puts the non-conventional family structures at a disadvantage, the court observed:

"The black letter of the law must not be relied upon to disadvantage families which are different from traditional ones. The same undoubtedly holds true for women who take on the role



mother, father and their children are present. The court took on this pre-conceived notion and added: "This assumption ignores both, the many circumstances which may lead to a change in one's familial structure, and the fact that many families do not conform to this expectation, to begin with." Further building upon its statement, the bench comprising of Justices DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna asserted that atypical family units are also entitled to equal protection of the law. "A household may be a single parent household for any number of reasons, including the death of a spouse, separation, or divorce. Similarly,

of motherhood in ways that may not find a place in the popular imagination." The apex court was hearing a case titled 'Deepika Singh versus Central Administrative Tribunal' where it made the aforementioned observations. Reportedly, the complainant was denied maternity leave by her employer for her biological child stating she had already availed one for taking care of her spouse's child from an earlier marriage.

"The fact that the appellant's spouse had two biological children from his first marriage would not impinge upon the entitlement of the appellant to avail maternity leave for her sole biological child," said the bench in its judgement.

A Mandal in Mumbai takes insurance cover of Rs. 316.40 crore for Ganesh Chaturthi



(By Staff Reporter) Goud Saraswat Brahmin (GSB) Seva Mandal has set up Mumbai's richest Ganesh pandal in the King's Circle area of Mumbai and has taken an insurance cover of a record Rs. 316.40 crore or US\$39.6 million. Traditionally, Lord Ganesh of GSB Seva Mandal is decorated with ornaments of gold and other precious materials for Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations which will begin on August 31. The Mandal has taken insurance from New India Assurance. Of the total amount, Rs. 31.97 crore or US\$4 million risk insurance cover includes precious metals like gold, silver and other jewellery. Meanwhile, accident insurance that covers priests, volunteers, cooks, footwear stall workers, valet parking personnel, and security guards is worth Rs. 263 crore or US\$32.92 million.

Standard fire and peril policy with earthquake risk worth Rs. one crore or US\$125K covers items like furniture, fixtures and fittings. It also covers installations like CCTV cameras, scanners, computers, utensils, groceries, fruits and vegetables.

The venue premise's standard fire and peril policy provides insurance worth Rs. 77.5 lakh or US\$97K. In addition, public liability, which covers pandals, stadiums and devotees, is secured with Rs. 20 crore or US\$2.5 million.

The GSB Seva Mandal's Maha Ganpathi idol is made of "shadu mati" and is carved on site. It is decorated with more than 66kg of gold ornaments, more than 295 kg of silver ornaments and other precious metals. The Mandal will reveal the first look of Lord Ganesh at the "Virat Darshan" ceremony on 29th August.

Goa Police Team in Haryana to Investigate Sonali Phogat Case, Family Wants CBI Probe

(By Staff Reporter) A Goa Police team arrived here Wednesday to investigate the alleged murder of BJP leader Sonali Phogat, amid renewed demands from her relatives and the local community that the case should be handed over to the CBI. The Goa team went to the Sadar police station and also visited Phogat's farmhouse in Dhandhoor, about 10 km from Hisar on the road to Sirsa.

A gathering of the local Dhaka 'khap' was held outside the farmhouse. Khap members shouted slogans against the Goa Police and carried placards demanding a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation. "We are not satisfied with the investigations being conducted into the Sonali Phogat case. If the family's demand for a CBI probe is not met, we will not hesitate to launch an agitation," said a khap member.

Phogat, 43, a former TikTok star and a contestant on the reality TV show "Big Boss", was brought dead to a hospital in North Goa on August 23, a day after she arrived in the coastal state

with two other people. The Goa Police have said Phogat was administered methamphetamine drugs at a restaurant hours before her death. So far, they have arrested five people.

Haryana police said full cooperation is being extended to Goa police in the case. In another development on Wednesday, Hisar police took a man into custody and were questioning him in connection with the alleged theft of a laptop, video recording equipment for CCTV cameras and some documents from the farmhouse. The Haryana government has already written to the Goa government to recommend a CBI probe in the case, state Home Minister Anil Vij recently said. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar had earlier assured this to the family. Phogat's nephew Maninder told reporters that the visiting Goa team has recorded the statements of the family members.

Haryana BJP chief O P Dhankar also met the Phogat family and assured them that he will again ask the state government to urge Goa to

recommend a CBI probe. Both states are BJP-run. "We reiterated our demand for a CBI probe," Kuldeep Phogat, a relative, said after Dhankar met the family.

"We demand a CBI inquiry for a fair probe. So many days have passed. The Goa police should have been able to establish the reason for her murder by now. Only a CBI probe can bring out the truth," he said. The family members plan to meet CM Khattar again on Thursday to demand a CBI probe. If the inquiry is not ordered, family members will go to Delhi and raise their demand with the Centre, a relative said.

Some relatives have alleged



that Phogat's associate recording equipment, a Sudhir Sangwan was eyeing laptop and some documents her property. The family had from the farmhouse after her alleged that Sangwan's aide death. The Haryana police have Shivam had taken CCTV taken the man into custody.

Gujarat: Valued at Rs 500 Cr, Surat Family Brings Out Ganpati-shaped Diamond Every Ganesh Chaturthi

(News Agency) A diamond shaped like Ganpati is a big draw on Ganesh Chaturthi at Surat's Katargam area every year. Valued at Rs 500 crore, the 27-carat diamond was found by the Pandav family 16 years ago and is brought out for worship during the 10 days of festival every year. This year, too, the idol-like diamond is the centre of attraction. According to the family, they found the Ganesha idol while they were working for a diamond broker in Surat, also known to be the 'diamond city' of the country. The

family decided to keep it and never sold it. After finding the rock all those years ago, the family has brought it out on Ganesh Chaturthi every year and worshipped it. They got it tested by Diamonds of India, which found it to be naturally occurring. The family also has proof to establish that this is the only such diamond available. The family said the 27-carat diamond is valued at Rs 500 crore. After the 10 days of Ganesh Chaturthi are over, the family washes the diamond in milk and puts it back inside a locker.

Delhi man arrested for duping Britannia of Rs 5.17 crore

The Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police has arrested a 62-year-old man for cheating Britannia Industries Private Limited to the tune of Rs 5.17 crore



The Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police has arrested a 62-year-old man for cheating Britannia Industries Private Limited to the tune of Rs 5.17 crore. The accused Anil Sethi is a resident of Rajouri Garden,

New Delhi. He ran a logistics agency, the services of which were rendered by Britannia. The agency was entrusted with goods manufactured by Britannia for onward sale to various distributors and wholesalers. In 2018-2019, complaints from different distributors were received regarding the unsatisfactory service of the agency. Due to these complaints, Britannia decided to engage a different agency. For this, Sethi's agency was asked to prepare a handover, which was audited. In the audit, it was found that there was a deficit of 62,419 boxes of Britannia's products worth over Rs 5 crore. Following this revelation, Britannia lodged a complaint with the Delhi Police.

Congress President Sonia Gandhi's Mother Dies in Italy; PM Modi Condoles Death

(News Agency) Congress president Sonia Gandhi's mother, Paola Maino, died on August 27 and her funeral was held on Tuesday. Sonia Gandhi had left last week to meet her mother. This was part of her trip abroad for medical check-ups, where her son Rahul Gandhi and daughter Priyanka Gandhi Vadra went with her. The Congress president had left on August 23 to visit her ailing mother, who was in her 90s. Jairam Ramesh, Congress general

secretary of communications, has tweeted the news of the death of Sonia Gandhi's mother. Rahul and Priyanka have visited their grandmother a number of times over the past few years. In 2020, when Rahul Gandhi faced some criticism over his frequent trips abroad, the party had said he was



on a personal visit to Italy to meet "an ailing relative". Meanwhile, condolences poured in from across the political spectrum. Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to Twitter to offer his condolences and wrote, "Condolences to Sonia Gandhi Ji on the passing away of her mother, Mrs. Paola Maino. May her soul rest in peace. In this hour of grief, my thoughts are with the entire family." West Bengal Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee and former J&K chief minister Omar Abdullah also tweeted to express their condolences. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and former J&K chief minister Omar Abdullah also tweeted to express their condolences.

PM Modi to unveil new ensign of the Indian Navy at aircraft carrier INS Vikrant commissioning

(News Agency) Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be unveiling a new ensign of the Indian Navy at the aircraft carrier Vikrant Commissioning event on September 2, officials said on Tuesday. "Prime Minister will commission the first indigenously designed and built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. The Prime Minister will also unveil the new Naval Ensign (Nishaan), doing away with the colonial past and befitting the rich Indian maritime heritage," read a statement by PMO. "The Indian Navy would get a new insignia without the Saint George's cross which has been there on its flag ever since the British put it on it during the pre-independence era," Navy



officials said here. It was removed from the flag during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government between 2001 to 2004 but soon after Sonia Gandhi-led UPA came back to power, they brought it back citing certain issues raised by

the then Navy officials. The officials said the government is choosing from around 10 different designs that have been given to them by the naval headquarters. The suggestions range from depicting 11 waves on the flag representing 11

different coastal states to showcasing the different commands of the force. There was also a suggestion about including a sign from the times of the ancient navies of India which included the Cholas and later the Marathas. Sources

said the design is expected to be unveiled on the day of commissioning itself. After the Prime Minister's approval, the President will give her final approval as the supreme commander of the armed forces. PM Modi will visit Karnataka and Kerala on September 1-2. The Prime Minister will visit Sri Adi Shankara Janma Bhoomi Kshetram, the holy birthplace of Adi Shankaracharya, on September 1. On 2nd September, Prime Minister will commission the first indigenously aircraft carrier as INS Vikrant at Cochin Shipyard Limited in Kochi. Thereafter at 1:30 PM, Prime Minister will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of projects worth around Rs 3800 crores in Mangaluru.

Customs officials seize gold worth Rs 86 lakh at Lucknow airport

The customs officials seized gold worth Rs 86 lakh from a passenger at Lucknow airport on Wednesday

(News Agency) The officials of the customs department have recovered gold worth Rs 86 lakh 70 thousand from a passenger at Lucknow's Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Uttar Pradesh. The accused had brought this gold by hiding it behind a belt. After confirming through the scanner, the passenger was searched and the gold was recovered. The passengers of Saudi Airlines flight number SV

894, which came from Riyadh on Wednesday, were being screened at the airport. Meanwhile, a passenger tried to leave the green channel. The scanner indicated the presence of metal. On this, the customs officers stopped him and conducted a thorough search and recovered the gold. The accused has been arrested and further investigation is underway.



To Jacqueline Fernandez, with love: Homes in Sri Lanka, Bahrain, Mumbai from conman

The actor was allegedly gifted jewellery worth over Rs 7 crore by Suresh Chandrashekar, the ED said. He also gave several things to her family

(News Agency) Conman never been there. "When asked about her WhatsApp chat with accused Pinky Irani about Suresh having bought a new house for her in Sri Lanka, the actor admitted that Suresh had bought a property at Weligama in Sri Lanka for her. However, she never visited the said property," the chargesheet read.

According to the probe agency, the conman had told his associate Pinky Irani about his plans to buy the houses. Pinky Irani was tasked by Suresh to introduce Jacqueline Fernandez to him and was allegedly paid in crores of rupees for the job. "Suresh Chandrasekar also conveyed to Pinky Irani that he had given some token money to buy a house for Jacqueline in Mumbai's Juhu beach area and that he had already gifted a house to the actor's parents in Bahrain. Further, he was negotiating to buy a house in Sri Lanka for the actor," the chargesheet revealed. The ED is investigating whether Suresh actually bought any of these properties. When officials questioned Jacqueline about them, she admitted that Suresh had told her about a house for her in Sri Lanka but she had

never been there. "When asked about her WhatsApp chat with accused Pinky Irani about Suresh having bought a new house for her in Sri Lanka, the actor admitted that Suresh had bought a property at Weligama in Sri Lanka for her. However, she never visited the said property," the chargesheet said. Weligama is a popular tourist destination in Sri Lanka and is known for its beaches. The financial probe agency is yet to ascertain if the property was indeed bought by the conman or he was lying to her. "Jacqueline also mentioned Suresh's plans to buy a few more properties for her or her relatives. It is yet to be ascertained whether Suresh used the proceeds of crime on any other properties for Jacqueline Fernandez or her relatives," the chargesheet added. The actor was allegedly gifted jewellery worth over Rs 7 crore by Suresh Chandrashekar. He had also allegedly gifted several high end cars, expensive bags, clothes, shoes and costly watches to the actor and her family members.

Indian teenager murder: Anger over death of girl set ablaze in Jharkhand

In a nation where violence against women is pervasive, Indian police on Tuesday established a special investigating unit to look into the death of a girl who said she had been set on fire by a stalker whose marriage proposal she had rejected. In the Dumka area of the eastern state of Jharkhand, where police reported that the accused, Shahrukh Hussain, resided in the same neighbourhood as the victim, citizen



organisations have demanded harsh punishment for him. Ankita, the victim, was set on fire last Tuesday, according to the police, who claimed the man poured kerosene on her via her window while she slept. On Sunday, she passed away in

the hospital from severe burn wounds. Two senior officials have been deployed in the town and they will coordinate with the district police chief in the probe, said Amol V. Homkar, a spokesperson for Jharkhand police, adding that the accused and a co-accused have been arrested. According to reports, if adequate action was not done, the majority of the community would take to the streets in protest. To avoid any negative effects from the

incident, district officials have restricted people's freedom of movement. Numerous prominent figures and well-known individuals have denounced the horrible conduct and demanded severe punishment.

Tainted' Bihar minister Kartik Kumar resigns hours after being handed new portfolio

Kartik Kumar's resignation comes hours after he was removed from his position in the law ministry and allocated the sugarcane industries ministry this morning



(News Agency) Bihar minister and RJD leader Kartik Kumar, who was named as an accused in a kidnapping case, has stepped down from his new position in the sugarcane industries department. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has accepted his resignation and forwarded it to the Governor. Kumar's resignation comes hours after he was removed from his position in the law ministry and allocated the

Sugarcane Industries ministry this morning. The transfer came amid growing outrage over his alleged involvement in criminal cases. The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation (CPIML), a key ally in Bihar's Mahagathbandhan government, wanted Nitish Kumar and his deputy, Tejashwi Yadav, to review the decision to appoint Kartik Kumar as a law minister in the cabinet. The Congress, another constituent of the ruling Grand Alliance, had also asked the Nitish Kumar government to reconsider the decision of inducting Kumar into the cabinet. Minutes after Kumar sent in his resignation, BJP's Sushil Modi - one of the first to react to

the development - tweeted: "The first wicket has just fallen. Many more wickets will fall now." The BJP and Nitish Kumar have been at loggerheads since the JD(U) chief walked out on the alliance earlier this month, reuniting with Lalu Yadav's RJD mid-term. Earlier in the day, the BJP, which was extremely vocal in criticising the RJD leader over his alleged criminal antecedents, slammed Nitish Kumar for just changing the department of the controversial minister. BJP spokesperson Arvind Kumar Singh claimed that Nitish Kumar could not muster courage to remove the tainted minister from his cabinet and that the entire exercise was nothing but an

eyewash. The BJP had demanded Kartik Kumar's removal from the cabinet, alleging that an arrest warrant is pending against him in a 2014 kidnapping case. The Congress had also urged Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav to take necessary steps to ensure the controversy over Kartik Kumar's appointment as law minister is arrested. Kartik Kumar, who was elected to Bihar's Legislative Council in April, is considered close to don-turned-politician Anant Singh. He won the election from Patna on an RJD ticket. Soon after he took the oath as Bihar's law minister, a court issued an arrest warrant against him over his alleged involvement in a kidnapping case.

'Durga Puja is Celebrated by All': Mamata Thanks UNESCO for Recognising Festival at Kolkata Rally



(News Agency) West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee took out a rally on Thursday to express gratitude to UNESCO for putting Kolkata's Durga Puja on the intangible cultural heritage representative list. Secretary of UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Tim Curtis and UNESCO representative for New Delhi office Eric Falt were in the city to attend the event.

Not just Kolkata, each district of West Bengal organised a grand rally to thank UNESCO. From women drummers of South 24 Parganas to religious and cultural groups (Bauls) of Birbhum, all were present during the event showcasing the culture of West Bengal. Both Mamata and Sourav Ganguly greeted the UNESCO representatives. The rally started from Jorasanko Thakur Bari (House of Rabindranath Tagore) in Kolkata and

culminated at Red Road where the felicitation took place. UNESCO's Eric Falt said, "I did not expect anything

so big. We will report back to our headquarters in Paris... I have never seen such enthusiasm. We will come for pre-puja celebration and during Durga Puja. We are already working with Bengal MSME." While thanking the UNESCO representatives, Mamata said, "This stage has become a united world stage. I believe the world is one country. There is only one thing that is humanity. About Rs 40 crore business takes place during the Durga Puja, and this support from UNESCO will give a big boost to us. The beauty of Durga Puja is

people from all religions celebrate it together." Sourav Ganguly too expressed happiness and said Durga Puja is "beyond imagination". "I have travelled in all parts of the world but have never seen such festivity anywhere. I thank UNESCO that this festival got due recognition." Meanwhile, BJP's Dilip Ghosh took a jibe at Mamata, and said the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government had made several arguments to stop the Durga Puja Visarjan, but it was the saffron party who had gone to the high court for permission to

celebrate the festival. "Today, the Mamata government is marching for the UNESCO recognition." BJP's IT in charge Amit Malviya tweeted on Thursday, "Mamata Banerjee is organising a rally to take credit for the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage tag for Durga Puja. The truth, however, is that she had no role whatsoever in getting the award. It was because of efforts of Sangeet Natak Akademi, an institution under the Modi Govt." The TMC government also felicitated professor Professor Tapati Guha Thakurtha for putting Bengal's Durga Puja in the UNESCO list.

Motorists seeking shelter at underpasses in Bengaluru to be fined Rs 500, repeat offenders to pay Rs 1,000

Motorists in Bengaluru who seek shelter at underpasses or below bridges during rain will now be fined Rs 500. Repeat offenders will be penalised Rs 1,000

(News Agency) Motorists in Bengaluru will now be fined Rs 500 for seeking shelter at underpasses. Traffic police officials, on Thursday, announced that those halting below underpasses or bridges while trying to avoid rains will be penalised for 'obstructing public roads' and putting other road users in danger. According to BR Ravikante Gowda, Joint commissioner of police (traffic), the decision was taken after four motorists sustained serious injuries after other vehicles rammed them in separate incidents across the city. Although nobody died in the incidents, two victims were badly injured.



He further added that first-time offenders would be fined Rs 500 while repeat offenders would be penalised Rs 1,000. "Most

underpasses do not have proper lighting. When it rains, people can't see anything until they reach the underpass. This is how the accidents happened," explained Gowda. He advised the public to halt at BMTC bus shelters or any other such coverings, which are off the road. "Keeping in mind the risk of parking below underpasses during rain, we deploy traffic police at some places, requesting the public not to take shelter. But, we cannot monitor all the underpasses at a given point in time," he added.

What challenges affect education in India?



(News Agency) Education is a significant and intrinsic part of our lives. Parents begin to worry about their children's education and careers when they are three years old. Education empowers a child with knowledge and learning skills. It also develops a child's capabilities and helps in bringing out a flourishing personality. It adds value to his/her morale and cultural ethics. It assists them in concentrating and focusing on better avenues of life. An opportunity to become educated strengthened the setup of a dynamic world.

It not only generates a sense of accomplishment but also infuses a feeling of encouragement and motivation to spread awareness about its surroundings. The development of an infant to an adult turns out to be the most syndicated and comprehensive idea to propagate literacy in this world of chaos. A phenomenon of learning new ways for subject-oriented projects is a concept of defining your idea of existence on this earthly plane. Moreover, with the ongoing policies and government schemes for imparting training in knowledge to young minds, it can be asserted that the present scenario is moving towards progression and modernism. The adaption of historically Thomas Macaulay's education system has turned out to be a blessing, and Gandhi's talim system largely contributed towards the upliftment of good accessibility of understanding among the educated yet liberal approaches.

Without a doubt, learning literacy scholarships is the only way to achieve the ultimate awakening of understanding the rational logic around you. It can tutor you in becoming a self-trainer so that a guiding light can show you a rightly chosen path. Nonetheless, a disciplined attitude to prove your worth in a specific setting of this multicultural and diverse world is a source of cultivating

personality development and drilling improvement.

In the present scenario, according to the National Statistical Commission of India, the literacy rate stood at 77 per cent in 2017-18. Males make up 84.7 per cent of the population, while females make up 70 per cent. Ignorance of learning and schooling can lead to frustration and low self-esteem. As per a report, India has the largest proportion of illiterate adults, which is 287 million, or 37 per cent.

If we go by the latest reports, Human Resource Development's new schemes regarding the education sector are appalling as they show no coherent approach. It shows that the basic requirements of an education system are decided based on capabilities that necessitate the

allocation of the right attitude in the mind of a child. Indeed, it's a well-thought plan to encourage the suitable idea of propagating a unified approach through individual efforts.

Be it five-year plans or seven-year plan, an improvement in the education sector is a powerful weapon to move toward self-fulfillment and self-sufficiency. Furthermore, the plan to curtail the adversaries is an assertive idea, but at the same time, the uncertainties should be kept in mind while dreaming of a new world of unified educated Indians.

The basic challenges are as follows:

School dropouts: Generally, the 2020-21 report by the Unified District Information System for Education, showed the annual dropout rate of secondary school students was 14.6 per cent. On the other hand, at the primary level, the dropout rate was 0.8 per cent. So, overall, this is a commendable effort made by the government.

But at the same time, the rate also stated in the report a depressive thought of not attending school. As per an economic survey, the pandemic has also hit schools in rural and urban areas, which has resulted

in high dropout rates in the schools. The dropout rate has increased due to the massive digital divide. The enrolment dropped from 135 million in 2012-13 to 122 million in 2019-20 at the primary level because of a lower enrolment of children in the 6-10 age group. This is one of the challenges that are present in front of the government. Pandemic: Believe it or not, the fear of a pandemic is still not over. No matter how many booster doses and vaccines are administered, there is still hope of living a balanced life. But still, the latest statistics haven't shown a good picture of the world. A kind of uncertainty is still looming over the minds of many people, and that has become a hindrance to proving themselves as physically secure people. Indeed, they've resumed their work, but again, it seems a momentary development that is questioning the relevance of education while fighting the odds.

According to the latest Union Health Ministry report, India's active caseload of COVID-19 cases stands at 101K. The active cases comprise 0.23 per cent of the total infections, while the national recovery rate stands at 98.58 per cent. India so far

has reported 13,272 new cases and 36 deaths in the last 24 hours. Therefore, it shows that the pandemic has created havoc in terms of human extinction. Epidemic: The sudden outbreak of the epidemic of MonkeyPox has again questioned the community population. Already, the coronavirus caused havoc in society, calling into question the relevance of the current global system, which includes education. Furthermore, the question of living on Earth has suddenly become a farce, as it only instills a sense of insecurity and uncertainty. No matter whether a person is heading to school or at a workplace, a mental imbalance has been created which is only questionable. Health & Hygiene: According to UNICEF India, nearly 22 per cent of Indian schools lacked appropriate toilets for girls, and 58 per cent of preschools lacked all toilets. Nearly 56 per cent of preschools had no water available on the premises. Even though the benchmark achievement through Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar is commendable in some places, efforts should be proactively diverted towards this issue within the stipulated time.

Haridwar Dharma Sansad Case: SC Directs Hate Speech Accused to Surrender by Sept 2

(News Agency) The Supreme Court on Monday directed Jitendra Narayan Tyagi, an accused in the Haridwar Dharma Sansad case related to alleged inflammatory speeches made against Muslims, to surrender by September 2. Tyagi, formerly known as Wasim Rizvi, is currently out on medical bail. A bench of Justices Ajay Rastogi and B V Nagarathna refused to extend the bail granted earlier on medical grounds, and said it will consider the regular bail plea filed by Tyagi on September 9. "There is no reason to give him relief. So many cases are

pending against him. Ask him to surrender," the bench told Tyagi's lawyer. The apex court on May 17 granted three months of interim bail to Tyagi on medical grounds and directed him to give an undertaking that he would not indulge in hate speech and not give any statement on electronic or digital or social media.

Tyagi had approached the top court after the Uttarakhand High Court dismissed his bail plea in March this year. The case



against him and others had been lodged on the complaint of Nadeem Ali, a resident of Jwalapur Haridwar at Haridwar Kotwali on January 2 this year.

He had alleged in his complaint that Dharma Sansad or religious Parliament was organised in Haridwar by Hindu sages from December 17 to 19 last year

and in the garb of this event, the participants were instigated to wage a war against Muslims. Objectionable words were allegedly used against the Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammad, Ali had said in his complaint, adding these provocative statements had later gone viral on social media. These videos were circulated by Tyagi, Yati Narsinghanand, and others, he had alleged. The FIR also alleged that an attempt was made by Prabodhanand Giri to spread violence against the people living in Haridwar's mosques. On Ali's complaint, Narsindhanand Giri, Sagar Sindhu Maharaj, Dharamdas Maharaj, Parmanand Maharaj, Sadhvi Annapurna, Swami Anand Swaroop, Ashwani Upadhyay, Suresh Chavan along with Swami Prabodhanand Giri, Jitendra Narayan were booked under various sections of the IPC for allegedly delivering hate speeches in the name of religion at the conclave.

'Elephant Corridor' Project in Bengal to Reduce Elephant-Human Conflict



(News Agency) Whether in North or South Bengal, elephant-human conflict is on the upsurge. Houses are destroyed, crops are damaged and lives are lost. The forest department has come up with a solution to create an elephant corridor. According to the West Bengal Forest Minister Jyotipriya Mallick, this corridor will be created soon in Jangalmahal and North Bengal. The state has also tied up with the Japanese government agency 'JICA'. The Minister said that JICA is giving Rs 620 crore for the construction of the corridor. He said that the work will start in two months. If the corridor is made, the elephants will go back and forth in a single line. According to a former forest official, it is never possible to make the elephants walk in a single line. However, the forest minister said, "Why

is it not possible?" When the elephant starts moving, it continues on the same path. The direction does not change. "There will be a corridor between the two districts of Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri in North Bengal. Elephants pass through the back of the Bagdogra area into Nepal. So, Bagdogra will also have a corridor. Apart from this, elephant corridors will also be made in Bankura, Purulia and Jhargram in the jungles of South Bengal. According to data from the Union Ministry of Forests and Environment, West Bengal recorded the highest number of elephant-human conflict deaths in 2020-21 alone. Two days ago, 3 people were killed by elephants in Jhargram city. However, various plans have been made repeatedly to prevent elephant attacks. A few years ago, Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee expressed her concern about the death of an elephant in Jhargram district. In 2000, the then state government issued a notification for the creation of an 'Elephant Reserve' in Mayurjharna covering a total area of 414 square kilometres with Bankura, Purulia and undivided West Midnapore.

Although not progressed during the Left term, after the Trinamool came to power in February 2015 it was decided to create a Wildlife Wing (South Division) in Jhargram to implement the Mayurjharna project. But that work has not progressed yet. In this context, a former forest official says, If the Mayurjharna project was implemented, the elephant-human

conflict could have been avoided. The situation is the same in North Bengal. An elephant expert in North Bengal says that there are many obstacles in the way of elephant movement. So the elephants themselves have found a 'bypass' road. However, in this context, the Forest Minister says, "The new corridor will have reservoirs and food facilities."

Justice Uday Umesh Lalit sworn in as 49th Chief Justice of India

(News Agency) Justice Uday Umesh Lalit was sworn in as the new Chief Justice of India on Saturday.

President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath to India's 49th chief justice at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Saturday. The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Union ministers, and other dignitaries. Justice Lalit, 64, is set to have a brief tenure of less than three months as the CJI as he will retire on November 8. The retirement age of judges of the Supreme Court is 65.

India's new CJI was born on November 9, 1957, and enrolled as an advocate in 1983. CJI Lalit practised in the Bombay High Court till December 1985 and then shifted his practice to Delhi

in 1986. In 2004, he was designated as a senior



advocate by the Supreme

Court. CJI Lalit was appointed as a special public prosecutor for the CBI to conduct the trial in the 2G spectrum allocation case and was part of several important verdicts. He was part of the five-judge constitution bench which held the practice of divorce through instant 'triple talaq' among Muslims as "illegal" and "unconstitutional"

UP: Amethi Lekhpal, Who Failed to Recognise Smriti Irani Over Phone, Faces Probe



Aprobe has been ordered against a lekhpal, who failed to recognise Amethi MP and Union minister Smriti Irani over phone, for not discharging his duties, officials said on Monday. A resident of Poore Pahalwan village under Musafirkhana tehsil had on August 27 given a complaint letter to Irani saying that after the death of his father, who was

a teacher, his mother Savitri Devi is entitled for pension, whose verification has not been done by lekhpal Deepak. The complainant, Karunesh (27), further said due to which his mother is not able to get the pension. On this, Irani, Union Minister of Women and Child Development, phoned the lekhpal, but he could not recognise her.

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Meghalaya: Police Registers Case After Church Vandalized in North Garo Hills; No Arrests Made

(News Agency) Police have registered a case after one of the oldest churches in Garo Hills in the village of Daram in North Garo Hills (NGH) was vandalized. However, no arrests have been made so far. The miscreants also desecrated the statues of Jesus, Mother Mary, and St Joseph as well as the statue of a baby Jesus. Talking to this reporter, Shailendra Bamaniya, IPS,

Superintendent of Police North Garo Hills, said, "The incident happened around 24th August, however, they gave us a complaint on 26th August and the case has been registered." FIR was filed on August 26th in Resubelpara police station, North Garo Hills, and the investigation is currently being undertaken. Asked about the investigation,

the SP said, "We are currently investigating the matter, so far there is no clue and no arrest has been made." "A case has been registered,"

Bamaniya clarified. The attackers also tried to damage the holy crucifix placed on the upper portion of the Church wall above the altar where the holy Eucharistic is celebrated, but ended up destroying the leg of



the idol. The church in Daram is one of the oldest catholic communities of North Garo Hills. The incident has raised an alarm in local circles though with an earlier incident being perpetrated by a mentally challenged person, the situation was kept in control. However, police said there is no clue as the investigation is still on.

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Telangana minister responds after racism allegations at Hyderabad Ikea store

Telangana Minister KT Rama Rao described the alleged racism incident at the Ikea store in Hyderabad as appalling



(News Agency) The Ikea showroom here has landed in an alleged racial controversy after senior journalist Nitin Sethi tweeted that his wife, hailing from Manipur, was frisked while others before were not, with senior Telangana Minister KT Rama Rao on Monday describing the incident as "appalling." Sethi further alleged that the person who checked his wife's shopping bags, even sniggered at the fact that she had bought everything and didn't even care to reply why she was singled out. "Racist treatment at @IKEAIndia store in Hyderabad. Only my wife, from Manipur got frisked for goods she bought. No one else before us. And then all supervisory staff came to defend the racism. Great show from an 'international store'. Cheers to another usual day," Sethi tweeted on Sunday. "And the

supervisors said, yeah call police if you want, we will deal. And it didn't end there. Daily racism that our people face," he said in another tweet. Responding to Sethi's allegation, Ikea India in a tweet said it believes that equality is a human right and condemns all forms of racism. At IKEA, we believe that equality is a human right, and we condemn all forms of racism and prejudice. We regret the inconvenience caused to you while following the mandatory billing protocol," the Swedish furniture maker said.

As a process, customers who self-checkout are requested for a final check before leaving the store to ensure the billing is correct and customers do not face any problems regarding double charging, repeat scanning of products etc, Ikea further said in another tweet.

Who was Ankita Singh, 19-year-old burnt alive by stalker in Jharkhand

Ankita Singh, a 19-year-old, was burnt alive by an alleged stalker in Jharkhand's Dumka on August 23. She died on August 28



(News Agency) Ankita Singh, a Class 12 student from Jharkhand's Dumka, was aiming to become a police officer. Her hopes were dashed on an ill-fated night when she was set ablaze by her alleged stalker, identified as Shahrukh, on August 23. She succumbed to her burn injuries in the early hours of Sunday, August 28.

ANKITA'S LAST WORDS

Ankita said that the accused had called her on her mobile around 10 days ago, pestering her to become his friend. "He called me again around 8 pm on Monday

(August 22) and told me that he would kill me if I did not talk to him. I informed my father about the threat, after which he assured me that he would talk to the man's family on Tuesday," said Ankita. "After having our dinner, we went to sleep. I was sleeping in another room. On Tuesday morning, I experienced a sensation of pain in my back and could smell something burning. I found him running away when I opened my eyes. I started screaming in pain and went to my father's room. My parents doused the fire and took me to the hospital," she informed the police hours before her death.

WHO WAS ANKITA SINGH?

Nineteen-year-old Ankita was a student at a girls' school and she aspired to become a police officer. Having lost her mother to cancer in her childhood, Ankita's family faced a financial crunch as they were compelled to sell their land and property to avail of her mother's treatment. Sources confirmed that her father's income was Rs 200 per day and, owing to the situation, Ankita gave tuition to students and managed to earn Rs 1,000 every month. Ankita's father, her younger sibling, who is a Class 6 student, and Ankita lived in a two-room house in Dumka. Ankita was burnt alive on August 23 after the accused allegedly poured petrol on her while she was asleep in her bedroom. Shahrukh allegedly poured the inflammable fuel on her from the window of her room. She was taken to the hospital shortly after the incident and on August 28, she succumbed to her burn injuries. In her statement to the police after the horrifying incident, she said that the accused had threatened to kill her if she did not speak to him. Shahrukh has been taken into Jharkhand Police custody and reportedly, an image of the accused was heavily criticised.

Anand Sharma raises questions over electoral rolls in Congress presidential elections

Congress senior leader Anand Sharma stated that even as he endorsed the election schedule, he was concerned about the process being adopted to prepare the electoral college

(By Staff Reporter) Congress senior leader Anand Sharma raised concerns over electoral rolls in the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting that was held on Sunday (August 28). The meeting was crisp and brief but announced the schedule for electing the party's new president, capping rumours that the elections would see another long extension. After the schedule was read out by Madhusudan Mistry, several leaders seemed to be eager to speak out. Many leaders raised hands in the virtual meet, but significantly, only Anand Sharma got a chance. According to sources, the senior leader stated that even as he endorsed the election schedule, he was concerned about the process being adopted to prepare the electoral college. Sharma went on to red flag an issue that was mentioned in great detail in the resignation letter of his former party colleague. The leader said that there was ambiguity over the process of electing AICC delegates, which is a violation of rules laid out in the party's constitution.

He went on to add that due process was not being followed. He said committee members at various levels were unaware of what was happening, confirmed a source to India Today.



"Anand said that the block, district committees and BCC's were kept in the dark about who were on the list. He said he had cross checked on the ground and found the concerns raised to be correct," the source added. When contacted, Anand Sharma confirmed to India Today that he indeed raised the issue and appreciated that the Congress president heard him and asked Mistry to clear the air. Sonia Gandhi

responded by saying the issue should be addressed. However, the Chairman of the CEA, Madhusudan Mistry, replied that the delegate list was overseen by a returning officer. It would be made available to the state presidents and also to candidates contesting the polls. This comes amidst Azad slamming the party for fudging of the electoral rolls and leaders being coerced to sign. Reeling under a barrage of allegations of nepotism and the exit of the top leader, the congress issued a rebuttal with Jairam Ramesh tweeting that 'There is some dubious "source-based" plantation going on that questions were raised in the CWC meeting today on the Congress President's election process & schedule. This is to make absolutely clear that NOBODY raised any question or any doubt'. However, Mistry was more direct in his reply. In a presser post to the CWC, he replied that those who are raising questions themselves have come via the same process, apparently in a veiled dig at Anand Sharma.

Is Pakistan planning to resume trade with India?

By Susmita Ghosh
The Shehbaz Sharif-led government in Pakistan has recently announced to resume trade with India in a major development that is seen as a compromise by the political experts. It seems that the recent flood in Indus which is termed as the worst in the decade is the primary reason behind

The decision to resume trade with India is a difficult decision that Shehbaz Sharif has taken. The former Prime Minister Imran Khan had halted trade with India in 2019, after the Modi government reversed Article 370 of its constitution and changed the special status of Jammu and Kashmir

this. As the flood affected about 33 million people, it dealt a grievous blow to the already cash-strapped and reeling Pakistan's economy. According to Sherry Rehman, the climate change minister, one-third of the country is underwater. It has created crises of unimaginable proportion in Pakistan. With millions of acres of rich farmland being inundated, food prices have started to shoot up putting more pressure on the Government to resume trade ties with India. Finance Minister Mitah Ismail has confirmed that flood and the food price are the major factors that have brought about this changed stand of the Government. Earlier in a federal cabinet meeting, chaired by Shehbaz Sharif, it was decided that Pakistan would be working towards reopening trade with India. Appointing Pakistan People Party's Qamar Zaman Kaira as Minister of Trade, in the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi for the task is the first step towards it. Moreover, similar trade officers and ministers are being designated in at least 15 countries, to enhance trade relations and agreements with their respective countries. The decision to resume trade with India is a difficult decision that Shehbaz Sharif has taken. The former Prime Minister Imran Khan had halted trade with India in August, 2019, after the Modi government reversed Article 370 of its constitution and changed the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

The current decision has come under severe criticism by analysts and the people of Pakistan at large, who accuse the Shehbaz Sharif government of compromising Pakistan's interest and damaging

the hopes of the people of Kashmir as well. The decision is also not expected to be of any help to Shehbaz Sharif politically. However, it has certainly given a new point for the former premier Imran Khan, who has slammed Shehbaz Sharif for what he called bowing down to India and backtracking on the country's policy, agreed upon after August 5, 2019.

Pakistan's economic condition is moving towards a meltdown, which is coupled with the strict demands from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the revival of its loan facility of US\$6 billion. A day after Pakistan expressed its willingness to resume bilateral trade with India, New Delhi has made it clear that it will not take such a step in terms of "normalization of trade" right at this very moment. However, India is ready to extend humanitarian aid and assistance for the flood-hit areas of the neighbouring country, "based on the kind of request" that comes from Islamabad.

India has said it is open in sending vegetables and other food items, as well as medicines and essential items to Pakistan, on a "case-to-case" basis depending on the "kind of request" that gets communicated from Islamabad to New Delhi. The Narendra Modi government had stepped up cooperation during the peak of the Covid pandemic even as it hosted a virtual meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), it is willing to help Pakistan which is facing a enormous crisis owing to flash floods.

As Pakistan is facing a tough time following the flood and food price hike across the nation, resuming the trade route with India may seem like the most logical and prominent solution right now. India is skyrocketing as a global economic power even amidst the pandemic slowdown. As a result, India-Pakistan partnership, with increased stability, can be quite beneficial to the economy of both the countries in the long run, with the opening of new markets and horizons.

India's Vision for the Next 25 Years

On the occasion of 75 years of India's Independence, some growth tips from industry doyens for the road to 100 years. Very few countries globally are as fascinatingly poised as India is when it comes to being at the intersection of a growth story. With this being the 75th year since we gained our Independence, the next step is 2047. The best voices across professional spheres attempt to unravel what India@100 might look like.

Digital, the New Driver

The building blocks of achieving sustained high growth are very clear. There has to be a mind set to drive infrastructure at a pace and, at the same time, get your equation in terms of water and agriculture right. You should have an industrial sector that should be able to build on its own in terms of positive cash flows and margins.

A Global Growth Engine

India will realise its true potential in the next 25 years. It stands apart from its emerging market peers as it is not a one-trick pony. Further, a stable government committed to sustainable policy measures to facilitate strong growth, create jobs and improve living standards augurs well for the economy.

Redefining the Contours of Growth

India@100 must attempt to redefine the traditional contours of development. Infrastructure must be sustainable. Skill development must be broad-based, and requirement-driven, technology and IT-enabled services must be human-intensive, automation should eliminate hazards and aid

precision, mobility must be non-polluting, and growth must be even.

India to Lead the World

India will be a \$12-trillion economy and a healthy middle-income country [by 2047]. The country will use its young demographic, engineering and IT prowess to 'make in India for the world'.

Banking To be Transformed

Banking is going through a transformative phase in which contextualisation, personalisation and democratisation will be the key drivers. Contextualisation means that banking services will increasingly be embedded in the contextual journeys of customers. For example, rather than going to a bank for mortgage, customers will get instant funding while

A Global Growth Engine a stable government committed to sustainable policy measures to facilitate strong growth, create jobs and improve living standards augurs well for the economy.

selecting their dream home on a real estate search site!

India to be Among the

World's Top Three Economies

With a rich history going back centuries, India has always charted its own path. Owing to its immense potential, expansive resources and strong talent pool, the country is today on the path of transformation as a leading global player across the fields of business, infrastructure development, innovation and socio-economic growth.

Balanced Growth Path

In 30 years, at the current long-term, currency-adjusted nominal growth rate of 5 per cent, India's GDP would rise to \$15 trillion; at a reform-led 8 per cent rate, it would double to \$30 trillion.

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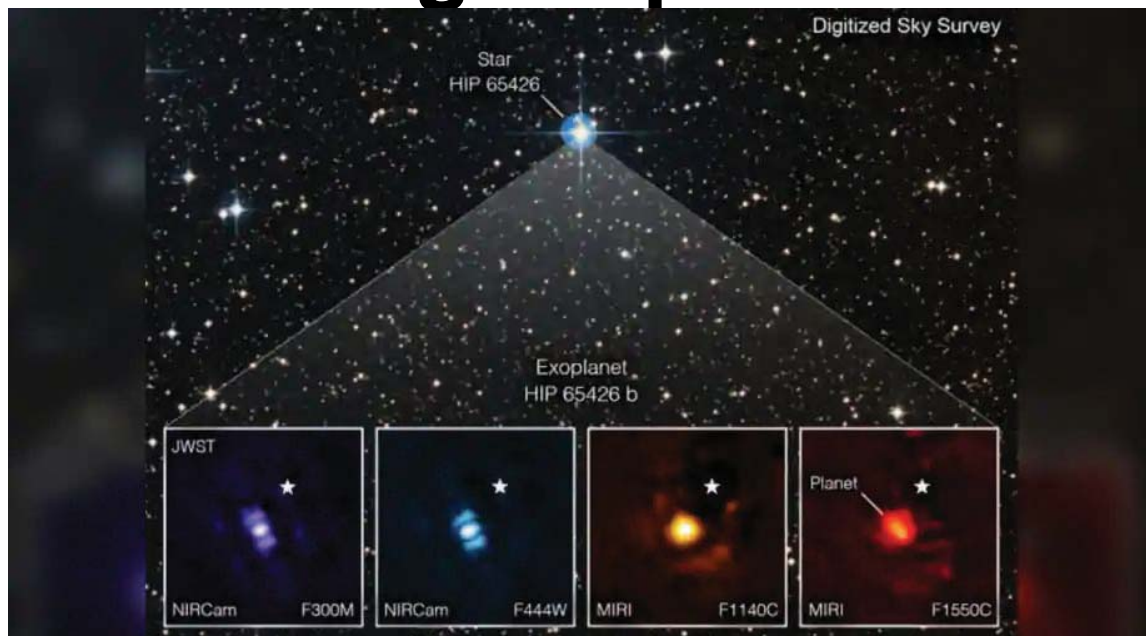
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'Transformative moment': James Webb takes direct image of planet outside our solar system



In a historic sighting, James Webb Space Telescope captured the first direct image of a planet outside of our solar system. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said that it is roughly six to 12 times the mass of Jupiter. The American space agency noted that the images from Webb are in progress, and have not yet been through the peer-

review process.

NASA said that the image, which is seen through four different light filters, shows how worlds beyond our solar system can easily be captured by James Webb's

powerful infrared gaze.

It paves the way forward in space exploration and gives a peek into future observations that will reveal more information than ever before about exoplanets. Sasha Hinkley, who is an associate professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom, said, "This is a transformative moment, not only for Webb but also for astronomy generally." Hinkley led these international collaboration. James Webb, the world's largest and most complex space science telescope ever built, has captured an exoplanet called HIP 65426 b. The exoplanet is about six to 12 times the mass of Jupiter, and NASA said that these observations could help narrow

that down even further. In the blog, NASA said that the exoplanet is young as planets go, about 15 to 20 million years old, compared to 4.5-billion-year-old Earth.

NASA's article mentioned that HIP 65426 b is about 100 times farther from its host star than Earth is from the Sun.

HIP 65426 b was discovered by astronomers in 2017 using the SPHERE instrument on the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile. They took images of it using short infrared wavelengths of light.

As the name suggests, an exoplanet or extrasolar planet is a planet outside the solar system. Experts have noted that the exoplanet is a gas giant, which means it has no rocky surface and could not be habitable.

Bodies found in a UK well of Jews killed in medieval anti-Semitic massacre: Study

Seventeen bodies found at the bottom of a medieval English well were most likely Jews who were murdered in an anti-Semitic massacre more than 800 years ago, scientists have revealed in a new study. The massacre took place in 1190 AD in the eastern city of Norwich. Notably, just decades prior to the incident, seeds had been planted for an "anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that persists up to the present day," they said in a new study.

The scientists used a host of techniques to solve the mystery, including analysing the oldest known Jewish genomes. The entire episode started in 2004, when construction workers were digging up land for a future shopping centre in Norwich. That is when they stumbled upon the remains of at least 17 people, six adults and 11 children, including three sisters, in the old well.

The bodies were buried at strange angles, some head-first, suggesting the possibility of violent death.

Ian Barnes, a geneticist at London's Natural History Museum, first started looking into the remains while working on the BBC documentary series "History Cold Case" in 2011. "We first thought it more likely that they were the victims of some sort



of plague, epidemic, famine, something like that," Barnes, one of the authors of the study published in the journal *Current Biology* this week, told AFP.

Using radiocarbon dating, the team narrowed down the date of the deaths to between 1161-1216 AD. DNA analysis of six of the victims found they were predisposed to certain genetic diseases.

A common ancestry was established after computer simulations showed that the frequency of these diseases was roughly the same for the Norwich victims as for modern Ashkenazi Jews. This would make them the

oldest Jewish genomes ever analysed.

It also sheds light on a known historical event when the number of Ashkenazi Jews suddenly dwindled, called a population bottleneck, which causes such genetic variants to occur. The bottleneck was previously believed to have taken place between 500 to 800 years ago.

But Mark Thomas, a study co-author and geneticist at University College London, told AFP the new research "strongly suggests" that the bottleneck must have predated the Norwich victims, meaning it could

have occurred hundreds of years earlier than thought.

Meanwhile, scientists also found that a young boy in the well had blue eyes and red hair and it is important to note here that anti-Semitic stereotypes at the time often involved red hair. "As we did more and more analysis, everything just kept getting more and more convincing," Barnes said. Their analysis pointed to a single event, violence during anti-Semitic riots recorded in Norwich on February 6, 1190 AD. Barnes said that "anti-Semitic feelings were riding high because plans were in place to conduct the Third Crusade". Less than 50 years earlier, a local boy had been brutally murdered. The family of the boy, who was later dubbed William of Norwich, blamed his murder on local Jews. It became the first known version of the anti-Semitic "blood libel" myth, in which Jews are falsely accused of killing Christian boys to use their blood in rituals. "This antisemitic conspiracy theory persists today, its origins lie within the soil of Norwich," tweeted Adam Rutherford, a geneticist at University College London. "The bodies in the well present a unique opportunity to assess the roots of this contemporary racism."

India's long road to Olympics 2024

Commonwealth Games successes are merely halfway markers to the big event, the Olympic Games

One of India's top Commonwealth Games weightlifters won a gold in Birmingham, but finished a whole 29 kg behind what would have earned him a bronze at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021. The snatch and clean and jerk total for gold at Tokyo was a staggering 50 kg away from his reach. When a fast food chain offered to indulge the lifter's post-Games craving for deep-fried chicken wings — to honour his gold with a well-deserved cheat day treat — one wondered if it was two years too early to, well, count the chickens.

Paris 2024 will be upon India's freshly minted medalists in no time — although it was champion lifter Mirabai Chanu, who tugged at the timeline, bringing it even closer and signalling that the Tashkent World Championships this December would be the quickest reality check for lifters who raked in medals at Birmingham.

As seen in JRR Tolkien's Lord of the Rings — which drew on Birmingham's landscape for inspiration — it's one thing to bear the precious ring, and quite another to carry it on the arduous journey to its culmination. Ask any of India's Olympic medal-winning incumbents and they'll tell you that the CWG and Asiad are only pit stops to the biggest Games medal. The climb to the peak of Mount Doom, where Olympic medals are forged out of countless struggles, begins where the CWG celebratory parades end. Indian sport can put the happy



headlines into any meaningful perspective only by firmly stating that the CWG successes are merely halfway markers to Paris. A necessary reboot from quietened ambitions for the likes of pugilist Amit Panghal or wrestler Vinesh Phogat after their Tokyo disappointments, the CWG gold was second wind for someone like Sakshi Malik, who had battled debilitating self-doubt post her bronze medal in Rio six years ago. For India's jumpers — gold-winning Eldhose Paul, silver medallists Abdulla Aboobacker and Murali Sreeshankar and bronze winner Tejaswin Shankar — Birmingham reignited the flaming hope for a medal 20 years after Anju Bobby George had lit one twilight evening in Athens.

His CWG success extends the surreal

journey of paddler Sharath Kamal. The limits of longevity and peak performance will be tested by the TT legend who will be an eye-popping 42 should he qualify for Paris. Birmingham scripted the tale of the indefatigable legend, who you hope desperately will succeed in his unreal pursuit of an Olympic medal. The CWG dented the invincibility of Kenyan dominance in steeplechase, and Avinash Sable's silver will give India the crazy-sounding hope of a Paris encore. The Kenyan running trio were properly spooked by the track-chomping Indian; now he's tasted blood, he wants a bite of the gold in two years' time.

Srihari Nataraj thrice raced the biggies of backstroke for the swimming finals in the outer, unfancied lanes of the Sandwell Aquatics centre. There was no medal to show, but India is finally taking the holy

dip into the mother sport of aquatics, with a serious push expected in Paris, following the breakthroughs for gymnastics in Rio, and track and field in Tokyo. Olympics medals in swimming are not even vaguely visible on the horizon. But the realisation that the sport is a mine of medals and India ought to get a move on in it should suffice as Paris starts to creep up.

Nikhat Zareen's gold was another reassuring medal, not for the quality of competition she came up against, but because it's important for fighters like her to make good their pre-Games claims, to walk the talk, to add wattage to the World Championship halo. Nikhat counts as one of India's earliest medal hopes for Paris, though she knows she has miles to go and many tricks to internalise, before nailing down the big one. India's women's hockey team continue to save their best for the best, Australia, and the loss notwithstanding, the bronze medal makes them the most exciting bunch of athletes to follow into Paris. The 7-0 drubbing suffered by the men in the final best signifies the wicked, weltering wizardry of the CWG: With two years to go for Paris, it is a fine reality check for what lies ahead. The bronze from Tokyo is the precious ring that'll feel burdensome with each step towards 2024. Birmingham was where the joyless wretch Gollum crept up to them and stole their Tokyo cheer. It is now two years to Paris.

Attack On Salman Rushdie Revives 'Freedom Of Expression' Debate

On August 12, Salman Rushdie was stabbed at a function in New York. He suffered grievous injuries. According to his literary agent, Andrew Wylie, the renowned author will likely lose an eye, the nerves of his arm were severed, and his liver was stabbed and damaged. Fortunately, he is said to be recovering. His attacker, 24-year-old Hadi Matar, of Lebanese descent from New Jersey, is in custody. He reportedly expressed surprise that Rushdie had survived.

The world was shocked at this attempt to assassinate Rushdie 34 years after his controversial book, The Satanic Verses, was published in 1988. In 1989, Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa offering a reward to anyone who killed Rushdie. Rushdie went into hiding for years. In 1991, the Norwegian and Japanese translators of his book were murdered. Following the fatwa, and the decision to ban the book by several nations (India was inexplicably the first to do

so in 1988), there has been a robust and widespread debate on the democratic right to freedom of expression, and the legitimate - or otherwise - restrictions in matters of religious faith.

Ostensibly, the debate seems simplistic. The votaries of freedom of expression are emphatic that this right cannot be curtailed and is the essence of democracy, while there are others who believe that no right can be unfettered. Article 19 of the Constitution gives all citizens the fundamental right to the freedom of speech and expression. But sub-clause (a) of the same article also says the state shall have the right to impose "reasonable restrictions... in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence".

Obviously, the key word here is

'reasonable'. There is no doubt that, on many occasions in the past, the restrictions imposed have been arbitrary, without application of mind, and anti-democratic. For instance, to cite just one example, VS Naipaul's book, An Area of Darkness, was banned simply because the government then thought it was too critical of the State. This is directly violative of the right to freedom of expression because mere criticism cannot be construed as a 'reasonable' reason to ban a book. After all, we are not a banana republic, where criticism, however trenchant, can be interpreted as a threat to the sovereignty and integrity of India.

Rushdie has said: "What is freedom of expression? Without the right to offend it ceases to exist." But the right to offend where religion is concerned is a far more complex issue. Religious belief is very sensitive, visceral and emotional, and can incite passions which are based

on faith - often blind faith. Of course, there cannot be restrictions on the right to question, interrogate, even challenge religious practice. That is how religions evolve, and usher in reforms. But some religions, especially the Abrahamic faiths, are guided by the letter and injunctions of their holy book, and are violently hostile to any comment that they interpret to be derogatory.

Fanatics in Islam are particularly intolerant. Any assumed slur on the sanctity of the Prophet is considered blasphemy, and must be punished by the death of the offender, verbalized in the slogan sar tan se juda. This proclivity to violence is completely unacceptable. But it is interesting that many of those who support Rushdie in the name of freedom of expression, are far less progressive where their own religions are concerned. Martin Scorsese's film, The Last Temptation of Christ, was irreverent but not abusive or mocking.

(Contd on page 30)

Yogi Adityanath's New Focus Includes A Brand Makeover



Yogi Adityanath, the Chief minister of Uttar Pradesh is a "Hindutva" icon but, for his next big move in his second term, he is apparently going to focus much more on pushing strong governance as an invite for large corporate shops.

So far, his machismo and "bulldozer" tough guy approach have held him in good stead within the state. And the saffron-wearing monk is incredibly proud of his rep as the "hard man" of law and order, but wants a brand

extension that will seem more appealing to investors for UP, where jobs are desperately needed. Take the case of the LuLu Mall in Lucknow, inaugurated by him on July 10. The mall is owned by an Abu Dhabi group and turned into the epicentre of controversy when, in July, a group of about eight men were seen offering namaz there. Hindu groups then wanted to perform a puja at the same spot. Much to the surprise of Hindutva hard-liners, Yogi Adityanath

cracked down hard saying "Some are making unnecessary remarks, staging demonstrations to obstruct movement of people. Miscreants attempting to create nuisance should be dealt with strictly," he asserted, ordering local officials to ensure peace. Unsurprisingly, no other disturbance was reported. Sources in the Yogi camp see a conspiracy by rivals to tarnish Yogi Adityanath's image and drive away investment from UP. "Some leaders sitting in Lucknow and Delhi and are not able to digest Maharaja's popularity and want to create bawal (drama) to attack him. He is fully aware of these leaders and will not stop his investment drive. Positions do not matter to him (on Yogi being kept out of the BJP parliamentary board)," said a senior Yogi aide from the Gorakhnath Mutt.

Team Yogi wants to next-level Noida Film City, where most news channels now have large, swanky headquarters. The idea is to turn it into a production hub

as a Bollywood magnet.

Under consideration are tax incentives and subsidised land for state-of-the art studios and other facilities for film shoots. "From sound recording to shoots, we want to have the best facilities to offer the Hindi film industry and film producers from the South. Yogi-ji the only Chief Minister who is not superstitious about visiting Noida (there's a long-running superstition that a Chief Minister who visits Noida loses the job pretty quickly). Yogi-ji asks every star who calls on him to shoot in Noida," said a senior official. Yogi Adityanath wants all the glamour of Bollywood to spread some stardust in Noida. From film stars to honeymooners. The draft tourism policy for the next ten years which will be implemented from next year wants big-bang promotions for the Taj Mahal to UP's culinary excellence with food tours. Hot air balloons, religious circuit tourism including lavish introductions to the new

Ayodhya temple and upgrading facilities for the Kumbh Mela are in the works.

All these plans intend to add up to a kinder, gentler Brand Yogi, a 180-degree turn from the curiously-named "Romeo Squads" and "Love Jihad" evangelism that benchmarked his earlier reputation. Even Yogi's private vigilante army - the Hindu Yuva Vahini - which definitely had an image problem of being a squad of angry young men out to attack minorities and use Yogi's name for their "enterprises" (euphemism for arm-twisting), is undergoing a makeover to match the new image of their "Maharaja". From "UP mein rehna hoga toh Yogi Yogi kehna hoga (if you want to live in UP, chant Yogi's name)" and driving with number plates which just said "Yogi", the outfit today claims to do relief work. Effectively, Yogi Adityanath is following in the footsteps of another BJP Chief Minister who had his eye on the PM's office.

"Serial Killer" Remark Makes It Clear Kejriwal Will Bait Modi

Arvind Kejriwal has come up with a new term to describe the demolition drives of the Modi government against opposition governments. The term is 'serial killer'. While speaking in the special session of Delhi assembly, he said, "There is a new serial killer on the loose. Others form governments, but these people bring them down. They have trampled on democracy." Taking potshots at the media, he had tweeted earlier in Hindi - "There is a serial killer. He committed six murders. Now, there is another murder attempt. Same pattern. But this time, he has failed. The victim is saying, I have seen him, it is the same killer. But the media is asking for proof."

It's a terribly catchy phrase, one that the average person has no trouble understanding. This is Arvind Kejriwal - his brilliance lies in his communication skill. His style is simple. His articulation is bereft of complicated sentences. As a matter of rule, he never uses complex intellectual jargon. After conquering Delhi and Punjab, he is focusing on Gujarat and he knows that since the BJP has been in charge for three of the last 26 years, if he has to succeed in Gujarat, he has to constantly engage with Modi. In Gujarat, there is no BJP. It's only Modi. When Modi was appointed Chief Minister of the state, the BJP was in bad shape. Gujarat is considered to be the original laboratory of Hindutva,

but also of 'Moditva'. The Congress has failed to break the political hegemony of Moditva in Gujarat. The BJP under Modi has been consistently getting more than 48 per cent votes there. The Congress has failed to produce a single leader in the state who can take Modi head on. Rahul Gandhi has been viciously attacking Modi nationally, but he does not possess the communication skills needed to connect with the masses.

Kejriwal knows that it is the opportune moment to create space for his party in Gujarat, especially after the results of the municipal elections in 2021. No wonder, he attacks Modi upfront; the CBI inquiry against his party over Delhi's liquor policy has made him more aggressive. During his speech in the Assembly yesterday, he said, "Yeh kisi ek admi ki satta ki havas ko pura karne ke like kiya ja raha hai (this is being done to satisfy one man's lust for power). While ridiculing Modi's assertion that he is fighting against corruption, he further says, "This is one man's fight of selfishness." He does not stop there. To buttress his earlier claim that the BJP was willing

to spend 800 crores to buy 40 AAP MLAs, he says that so far, the BJP has bought 277 MLAs from other parties with more than 5,500 crores. Then he tells people that this money



was tax payers' money, public money. GST, he said, is being used to buy MLAs.

Since Modi became central point of the BJP, the party has taken a sharp turn towards nationalism and Hindutva. Modi tried to marry this with his "Gujarat model of development". And in this exercise, with the help of his friends in the media, he has been successful in portraying India as having taken giant steps to become a global leader. Kejriwal not only lampoons his claims but presents himself as an alternative. Like the "Gujarat model", he sells the "Delhi model of governance" and speaks highly about his initiatives in health and

education. He promises that this is the way to make India a global leader. But like Modi, he does not explain if his brand of nationalism has any place for Muslims. Under Modi's regime, the BJP has successfully marginalised Muslims. Their electoral value has been reduced to almost zero, and their civil rights are willfully curtailed. This is the main reason that no Opposition party wants to openly side with them, but AAP, in its pursuit for power, has emerged as the most stark in this regard. Therefore, in his campaign for Gujarat, he has been intriguingly keeping quiet on the issue of Bilkis Bano. His party has not uttered a word on the remission and release of 11 convicts by the Gujarat government. The Delhi Assembly session was a golden opportunity for him to raise the issue, but it wasn't. Nothing could be more tragic than this because this is the party which, at the time of its inception, fought a pitched battle with the Delhi Police over the rapes of a young girl called "Gudiya", and of Nirbhaya. This was the party which used to claim that AAP was born to change politics. I know that politics is no easy game, and it's tougher when the opponent is a super-power like Modi, but if Kejriwal forgets that there are certain universal values without which politics has no meaning, is he really a viable alternative to what already exists?

From Inflation, Jobs to Deepening Religious Fault Lines: Red Flags for Modi Govt

Right-of-centre political analysts like this columnist are often accused of glossing over the faults and failures of the Modi government. Not that one has reached the day of atonement, but for independent commentators, periodic hygiene checks are recommended to rule out blind spots and unconscious biases. With the euphoria of Independence Day and Amrit Kaal celebrations over, and the whiff of autumn in the air, it is a good time to sit down with some freshly brewed coffee. In mid-2021, Modi's approval ratings had taken a sharp beating in the aftermath of the Covid second wave — even though it was still way ahead of his challengers in the country and peers around the world. It was this time last year that his stock began to climb again as the impact of vaccination began to kick in and the economy also began to show its new green shoots. Defying sceptics and detractors, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) sailed home in four of the five state assembly elections earlier this year. Though there were macroeconomic concerns in the wake of the Ukraine-Russia war with rising oil prices, supply-chain disruptions, falling rupee vis-à-vis the dollar, and worries of inflation, India managed to keep its head above water and performed better than most large economies of the world. Attempts by the Opposition to cobble up a

semblance of unity before the elections of the President and Vice President were brushed aside with Draupadi Murmu and Jagdeep Dhankhar breezing into office with resounding victories. Though these elections have no direct correlation with people's mood, the outcomes do have a bearing on affecting public sentiments.

Thus, it came as no surprise to find in recent national surveys that the Prime Minister's popularity remains undiminished. However, opinion polls do not always tell the full story. Statistics, as they say, often hide more than they reveal. So, are there undercurrents that observers are failing to detect or not picking up murmurs distracted by the surround sound of propaganda? One would think that Narendra Modi and Amit Shah with their exceptional political instincts and feedback mechanism will not ignore the cues from the ground. But even the sharpest of politicians have been blindsided and misled by pliant intelligence agencies. So, are there any red flags they are missing?

First, as always, is the subject of inflation that bugs all governments. When prices pinch pockets or hurt household budgets, statistics and global benchmarks are of little consolation. One tends to believe prices of items like petrol, diesel, and cooking gas primarily affect the urban middle class. However, the definition

of middle class has changed over the years. Besides, thanks to television, travel, and an increase in general awareness, the aspiration levels of people at the bottom of the pyramid have undergone a major shift. So, rising prices of consumer goods make a difference even to the rural population who, having become used to branded products, are loath to downgrade.

Schemes like Ujjwala, which was a runaway success, can start biting once the number of subsidised and free cylinders is reduced. Many villagers are returning to wood fire. Diesel prices hurt agriculture, increasing the operation cost of tractors and pumps. Also, with more rural homes owning two-wheelers, the cost of commuting has gone up. To cushion the rural BPL (Below Poverty Line) segment, the central government had introduced the ambitious PM Garib Kalyan Yojana during the pandemic. Though extended till the end of September, the coverage has been pared down to target the weakest section of society. This is seen as a loss of benefit by those excluded now. All this makes the talk of "Revadi Economics" and reducing "freebies" problematic at this juncture. In a country as populous as India, jobs are a perennial issue. In the absence of a national jobs database, there is no universally accepted methodology for tracking changes in unemployment levels and job creation.

Active enrolment numbers in Employees' Provident Fund leave the vast informal sector unaccounted for. So estimates vary widely between government sources and independent bodies monitoring the economy. Much reliance is placed on anecdotal evidence. However, going beyond numbers, there is also a qualitative issue.

Manish Sabharwal, the co-founder of staffing solutions firm Team Lease, had once made a controversial statement. He said that there was no dearth of jobs in India but the only problem is meeting the pay grade expectations of job seekers. To this, he added another dimension, namely that of the type of jobs.

This is becoming a serious issue in the post-Covid world where the nature of work is fast changing. Going forward with increasing automation, conventional jobs in factories, offices, and even in service sectors like Railways and airports are going to diminish. Instead, there will be a growing demand for skilled manpower, and opportunities will open up for small and micro-entrepreneurship. The challenge for the government would be how to harness the workforce and redirect them towards new horizons. Creating employment through "sarkari naukri" may not be either feasible or desirable.

(Contd on page 29)

Congress' Shrinking Political Map Shows It Needs Restructuring of Its Internal Democracy

During the 2014 Lok Sabha election, Congress and its allies had governments in 13 states, out of which nine states were ruled by a Congress-led government — Karnataka, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur and Mizoram in the northeast.

In state-wise alliance governments, Congress was not a junior partner but a leading or equal partner, be in Maharashtra, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir or Jharkhand.

Cut to August 2022, Congress, on its own, has government in just two states — Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, and is a junior partner in Bihar and Jharkhand. In Tamil Nadu, it is part of the DMK led alliance that won the last assembly election but is not part of the government. The downfall that began with the 2014 Parliamentary election has continued unabated so far with many senior and junior leaders quitting the party.

Congress is facing a survival crisis. The party has restricted itself to the leadership of the Nehru-Gandhi family even if its electoral performance has nosedived election after election. Those who raise any voice for leadership change are either humiliated or suspended or expelled as alleged by the party dissenters. Some prominent leaders from G-23, a group of senior Congress leaders, have quit the party alleging so.

The matter is worsened by the heightened crisis between the old guard of political leaders in the party and the new guard. The party has failed to strike a balance between the two genres resulting in many young and promising leaders, who are now either CMs — Assam's Himanta Biswa Sarma — or civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, quitting and joining the rival camp. Both were promising leaders who joined the BJP alleging their disappointment with the Congress, its management and work culture.

The Congress fundamentally needed to reform itself to go back on the path that it once was, ruling almost the entire country, but it was an aspect totally ignored by the party's top management. The party needed restructuring of its internal democracy that it failed to address.

The poor state of affairs within the party has reflected its detonating electoral performance.

HISTORICALLY LOW LOK SABHA NUMBERS

Congress saw its historical low in 2014 where it won only 44 seats from 206 seats it had secured in the 2009 Lok Sabha election. In the 2014 Parliamentary polls, the Congress was virtually wiped out from many states, and failed to bag even the post of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. This was the first time when Rahul Gandhi's leadership was questioned. Being party's vice-president then, Rahul was Congress' central figure and worked as a de facto president.

The 2019 Lok Sabha election was no better. The party could win eight more Lok Sabha seats but its vote share remained the same. The party had received 19.5% votes in 2014 while it bagged 52 seats with 19.6% vote share in 2019.

JUST 9 WINS IN 50 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

The decimation of the party reflects in its performance in the assembly polls.

From 2014 to 2022, India has seen 50 assembly elections and Congress could win just in nine. What should be more worrying for the party is that most of these wins are from smaller states that are electorally insignificant for a party's pan-country survival.

The party continued its winning run in the Arunachal Pradesh assembly election in 2014 where it won 42 of the 60 seats in the assembly but lost the state in just two years with rival camps within the party pulling the plug.

(Contd on page 29)

Your Cheque, Your Responsibility, Even If Someone Else Fills Details, Observes Supreme Court

The Supreme Court noted that the drawer who signs the cheque and gives in to the payee is presumed to be liable



liable unless it is proved that the cheque was issued for the payment of a debt or discharge of liability. For such a determination, the fact that the details in the cheque have been filled up not by the drawer but by some other person would be immaterial," the court observed. It added that the handwriting expert's report on whether the details were filled by the drawer or had no role to the defence towards the payment of a debt or liability. The Supreme Court, in May this year, directed the constitution of special courts with a retired judge in five states for speedy disposal of cheque bounce cases. Under the Negotiable Instruments Act (NI), the special courts were set up in the states of

Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan in view of a high number of pending cases in these states. In light of the numerous cases that are pending in these states, a three-judge panel comprised of Justices L Nageswara Rao, BR Gavai, and S Ravindra Bhat announced that the states of Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan would establish special courts under the Negotiable Instruments Act (NI). "We have incorporated the suggestions of the amicus with respect to the setting up of the pilot courts and we have given the timelines also. It is to begin on September 1, 2022 onwards. The secretary general of this court shall ensure that a copy of the present order

is directly communicated to the registrar general of the said five high courts, which should put it before the chief justices for immediate action," the bench said. The top court adopted the amicus curiae's recommendation that one court be established in each of the five districts where the number of cases brought under the NI Act is substantial. The Supreme Court had previously issued a number of directives to ensure the swift resolution of cheque bounce cases across the nation. The top court also requested that the Centre amend the law to ensure that trials in such cases are joined if they are brought against the same person within a year and are connected to the same transaction.

The Supreme Court has observed that a cheque drawer is liable even when another person fills in the details. The observation of a two-judge bench of Justice DY Chandrachud and AS Bopanna came while allowing an appeal in a cheque bounce case, reported LiveLaw. The court observed that the signing of a cheque could not be discredited by a handwriting

expert's report that the drawer did not fill the cheque. The accused in the case admitted to giving a blank signed cheque to a payee and was granted permission by the Delhi High Court to engage a handwriting expert to determine whether the details were in his hand. The top court noted that the drawer who signs the cheque and gives in to the payee is presumed

What's the origin of the Naagin dance, and how did it become a symbol of rivalry between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh?

Chamika Karunaratne's Naagin dance after Sri Lanka beat Bangladesh in the Asia Cup has gone viral. What's its origin?

What's the origin of the Naagin dance in Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka context? What's the role of Nazmul Islam Apu and Darren Sammy in it?

The story goes that it all started sometime in 2016 with Bangladesh left arm spinner Nazmul Islam Apu who was playing for Rajshahi Kings in the BPL, the T20 league. Nazmul went for the snake dance celebration, raising his hand above his head like a hooded cobra when his captain Darren Sammy got into the act.

"During play, when I tried to do this snake celebration, Sammy pretended to be afraid. From then it all started. It's a funny thing. After that it continued, and thus it became a trademark celebration for me," Nazmul would say in 2017. Little would he know what was in store for his creation. **How did the Naagin celebration become a Bangladesh-Sri Lanka thing?**

Nazmul is a popular character in most of the teams he has played, as can be evidenced in the dressing room videos of the BPL teams he has featured in. So, when he makes his T20 debut for Bangladesh in February 2018 and as it happens, against Sri Lanka, he continued his merry ways, pulling out his Naagin dance celebration when he picked up four wickets, including that of Danushka Gunathilaka, who was stumped by Mushfiqur Rahim. His team-mates joined him in the huddle, and mimicked the

hooded snake.

Did a Sri Lankan player then do it too?

Yes, next match, Sri Lanka wrapped up the T20 series win in Sylhet and Gunathilaka took two wickets in the 18th over to finish the game. When he took the series' last wicket, getting Abu Sayed stumped, Gunathilaka pulled off the Naagin dance. Mushfiqur Rahim, the feisty veteran wicketkeeper batsman, notices it, one presumes.

When did the Naagin dance become a symbol of taunt?

A month later in March 2018, Bangladesh toured Sri Lanka for the Nidahas triangular competition, involving India. And when they won their first game against Sri Lanka, an epic chase of 215 starring Rahim, who blasted a 35-ball unbeaten 72, Rahim pulled out the Naagin dance.

Tamil Iqbal would explain it later in a chat on Russell Arnold's YouTube channel. "You can't actually blame Mushfiqur Rahim. Sri Lanka was touring Bangladesh and they won a T20I series. After the final

game in Sylhet. I think it was Danushka Gunathilaka, who started doing it when they won that series. After he did it, Rahim saw that and it was on his mind."

Was that 2018 Nidahas Trophy moment the kickstarter, in some ways?



It would boil over in the next game on March 16 at the Premadesa stadium, the second match between the two teams in the tournament, which also acted as a qualifier of sorts for the final.

It was a very bad-tempered game. Players from both teams kept having a go at each other during the game. Bangladesh's dressing room door was broken by someone inside the room during their frenetic celebrations and it led to an inquiry and punishments from the match referee. During the tense chase, with 12 needed from the final five balls, Bangladesh's

substitute Nurul Hasan and Sri Lanka's Thisara Perera were involved in heated exchange. Hasan had run on to the field with drinks after there was a break in play when the umpires refused to rule the second short ball of Isuru Udana's over as a no ball. It had also led to a run-out of Muztafizur Rehman. The batsman Mahmudullah was debating the call with the umpires when Hasan went in. It led to shoving and arguing with a few Sri Lankan players, in particular with Perera. Hasan would be fined by the match referee.

In Nurul Hasan's telling, this is what transpired: "I entered the field of play and was talking to Riyad bhai [Mahmudullah] before I asked the leg-umpire whether the first delivery was a bouncer," he was quoted as saying by Daily Star. "At that time Thisara came and told me 'who are you to talk? Go from here, you don't have to talk'. 'I told him that I wasn't talking to him. It was at that point that he verbally abused me. I told him that it was none of his business 'Maybe I should have kept quiet. In the heat of the moment, I replied to him.'"

Watching all this was the Bangladesh captain Shakib al Hasan. The refusal to call no-ball and the shoving had him in a fury. He charged to the sidelines, along with a few team-mates, and got into an angry debate with the reserve umpire, Lyndon Hannibal.

China may have committed crimes against humanity in Uyghur Muslim territory: UN report

The UN human rights chief raised concern over the conditions of Uyghurs Muslims in China's Xinjiang region. Michelle Bachelet highlighted China's treatment of Uyghurs as "arbitrary and discriminatory"



predominantly Muslim groups ... the western region of Xinjiang, including the mass use of forced labour in internment camps. The United States has accused China of genocide. China has vigorously denied the allegations. Speaking ahead of the report's release, China's ambassador to the United Nations in New York, Zhang Jun, said Beijing had repeatedly voiced opposition to it. He said the UN human rights chief should not interfere in China's internal affairs. "We all know, so well, that the so-called Xinjiang issue is a completely fabricated lie out of political motivations and its purpose definitely is to undermine China's stability and to obstruct China's development," Zhang told reporters on Wednesday. "We do not think it will produce any good to anyone, it simply undermines the

cooperation between the United Nations and a member state," he said. Reuters reported last month that China had asked Bachelet to bury the report, according to a Chinese letter that was confirmed by diplomats. Bachelet confirmed last week having received the letter which she said was signed by about 40 other states, adding her office would not respond to such pressure. Bachelet, 70, plans to return to Chile to retire. Many candidates have applied for the job but no successor has yet been named by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres whose choice must then be approved by the General Assembly in New York. "Frankly to issue the report as she's walking out the door minimizes the report," Kenneth Roth at Human Rights Watch told Reuters.

the report just minutes before her four-year term ended on Wednesday. She visited China in May. The lengthy report said "serious human rights violations have been committed" in Xinjiang "in the context of the Government's application of counter-terrorism and counter-'extremism' strategies." "The extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur and other

(By Staff Reporter) China's "arbitrary and discriminatory detention" of Uyghurs and other Muslims in the country's Xinjiang region may constitute crimes against humanity, the outgoing UN human rights chief said in a long-awaited report on Wednesday. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet, who has faced criticism from some diplomats and rights groups for being too soft on China, released

the report just minutes before her four-year term ended on Wednesday. She visited China in May. The lengthy report said "serious human rights violations have been committed" in Xinjiang "in the context of the Government's application of counter-terrorism and counter-'extremism' strategies." "The extent of arbitrary and discriminatory detention of members of Uyghur and other

The reversible lane technology used by China to ease traffic woes

Machines are used to switch lanes and direct the flow of traffic in Beijing, easing vehicular congestion. This technology was first used in 1963 on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco

(By Staff Reporter) In China, robots separate packages, serve people in restaurants and even teach students in schools. They are now also managing the country's notorious traffic.

On Wednesday, Twitter lit up when the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying shared a video showing the working of reversible lanes that help improve traffic flow in China. "Here's how they do it. The traffic authority selects a lane to go one direction in the morning and the opposite direction in the evening to release peak pressure," Chunying explained in the caption. Since being shared, the short clip has racked up more than 95,000 views, with several internet users applauding the idea. How does this technology work? Is China the first to use it? Here are the answers to these questions and much more. Reversible lanes and zipper trucks Reversible lanes allow traffic on multi-lane roads to be changed to accommodate heavy traffic moving in one direction at certain times and the opposite direction at others. Typically, they are used at regularly scheduled times for helping to manage traffic



near and within metropolitan areas. Reversible lanes also allow traffic authorities to close or reverse lanes for unusual circumstances (road construction, an accident, sporting events, concerts, etc) that require more or fewer lanes to help improve traffic flows. This is considered as a simple, yet effective, method of managing traffic and improving its flows. In this method, either a robot or a truck as seen in the Chinese video move the meridian barriers on one side of the road to accommodate more cars during certain times of the day like rush hour. The zipper truck contains an S-shaped, inverted

conveyor channel in its undercarriage which lifts the barrier segments off the road surface and transfers them over to the other side of the lane, reallocating traffic lanes to accommodate traffic for the dominant (peak) direction.

Not only China

This technology is not specific to China. In fact, the first time that this technology was used was back in 1963 on the famous San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge. In China itself, similar technology has been used in 2016 in Shenzhen in Guangdong province. Other cities such as Beijing, Changsa, Nanjing and Jinan have also

adopted this technology to adjust rush-hour traffic. Florida in the United States and Mexico are a few other places which have adopted this innovation to tackle the problem of traffic.

China's traffic woes

China has a chronic problem of traffic jams, and it continues to be an issue for authorities. China has been struggling with high congestion levels in the last decade, resulting from population growth in the cities and rising car ownership rates. Another reason that could attribute to the traffic snarls in China is rampant corruption; many car drivers are not trained by professionals and therefore, the country has a large number of accidents. Experts also note that like older cities around the world, many of China's cities are not designed for cars. They are also not designed to support the massive populations they now boast. As a result, in many cities, the roads are simply not big enough. In 2010, China made international headlines when a traffic snarl lasted for nine days near Beijing. Reports had stated that vehicles, mostly lorries bound for Beijing, were in a queue for about 100 km because of heavy traffic, road works and breakdowns.

Chinese FM Spokesperson's Shares Video of Beijing Using Reversible Lanes to Decongest Traffic

(By Staff Reporter) Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying released a video on Twitter on Wednesday where she showed how Beijing handles its traffic jams. Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and many other Chinese cities often face long traffic jams and authorities have come up with innovative ways to tackle the issue.

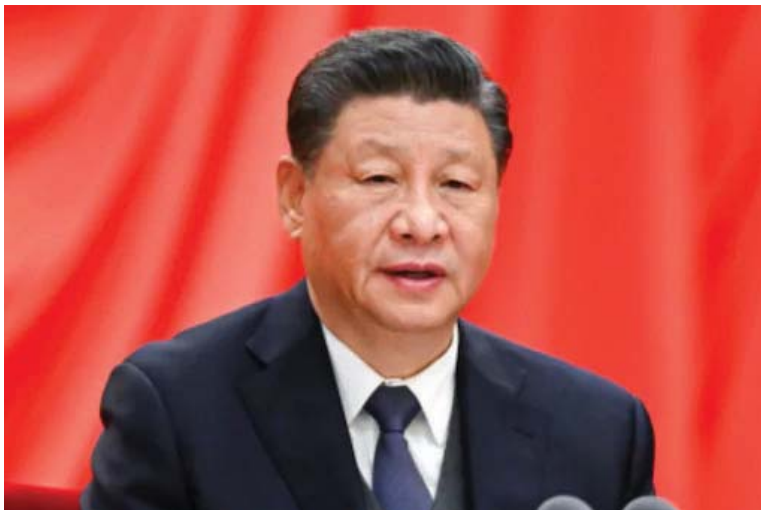
"How does Beijing relieve traffic jams? By changing the direction of traffic. Here's how they do it. The traffic authority selects a lane to go one direction in the morning and the opposite direction in the evening to release peak pressure," Hua Chunying said in a tweet. Soon after the tweet was made, many pro-China Twitter accounts started retweeting the tweet. In the video, two vehicles are seen folding a reversible lane or a zipper lane which was set up to ease traffic congestion. It is unclear if it is a dated video. Also no cars were seen using the temporary reversible lane that



the two vehicles were seen folding. However, this is not a new technology for Beijing as videos on YouTube show reversible lanes being set up in a South China city to help ease the traffic during rush hour from five years ago. Chunying also used the hashtag #ChineseInfrastructure but the same technology or infrastructure innovation was first introduced by the United States in 1963 to reduce the traffic congestion on the Golden Gate

Bridge roadway. On YouTube, several videos from three to four years ago showed states like California and Florida boasted reversible lanes introduced to reduce traffic congestion on their important highways. However, traffic jams in Chinese cities are a persistent issue that continues to bother the authorities of those cities. China has a major traffic problem. The traffic jam which lasted for 10 days in 2010 in the China National Highway 110 in Hebei and Inner Mongolia is an example of how woeful traffic jams can get in China. The traffic problem is partly due to the government failing to keep up with the pace of Chinese people buying cars and partly due to its failure in developing roads and infrastructure which could accommodate the growing number of car owners. Corruption is also to blame since many car drivers are not trained by professionals and therefore the country has a large number of accidents. The traffic fatality rate per 100,000 cars is 36 in China, which is double than what it is in the United States.

China's 'Wolf Warrior Diplomacy' Hits The Giant Indian Wall in Sri Lanka



Jinping's 'wolf warrior', said that China and Sri Lanka "jointly safeguard each other's sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity". What this means is simple: China is placing itself in the Indian Ocean as an 'ally' of Sri Lanka. For India, that is very problematic for several reasons. First, the biggest threat the Indian Ocean,

and the larger Indo-Pacific face is from China itself. Second, Sri Lanka is in no position to counter China's claims. The oceanic country has a lot more on its plate right now, and countering China's deceptive narrative formations hardly tops the list. The responsibility to shatter Chinese claims, therefore, falls on India.

And shatter India did. New Delhi, in response to the brazen remarks of the Chinese diplomat, told Beijing that what Colombo needs now is "support, not unwanted pressure or unnecessary controversies" to serve another country's agenda. The statement by India was perhaps the most hard-hitting against China in a very long time.

Taiwan passes China-centric defence budget, replaces howitzers with rockets

The defence proposal also said that the US will supply 11 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) and 64 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) to Taiwan

(By Staff Reporter) : Taiwan has revamped its defence budget amid growing Chinese aggression. In a proposal submitted to the Parliament for the 2023 annual budget, the Taiwanese Defence Ministry said that the military has decided not to purchase M109 self-propelled howitzer and replace it with 18 M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, journalist William Yang wrote on Twitter. According to the new budget, Taiwan's army will allocate more than 15.4 billion New Taiwan dollars for long-range precision fires, the journalist added. The proposal also said that



the US will supply 11 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) and 64 Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) to Taiwan. The defence proposal comes days after tensions escalated between Taiwan and China over US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan earlier this month. Pelosi became the highest-ranking American official to visit the self-ruled island in 25 years. China which claimed sovereignty over Taiwan opposed the visit. Following the visit, China conducted large-scale military drills near Taiwan.

(By Staff Reporter) With Xi Jinping's rise to power, an indecent, undiplomatic, and uncouth era of foreign policy was unveiled in China. For 10 years now, China has engaged in the filthiest of official commentary — fielding its senior-most diplomats to say things that Beijing cannot muster the courage to put to words itself. These individuals have the total and unwavering backing of the Chinese President. Therefore, the ludicrous statements made by the Chinese ambassador to Sri Lanka regarding India must be seen in the context of them having the complete sanction of the Chinese President himself. India's Ministry of External Affairs understood this, which is why the response to the ambassador's assertions was ferocious. The fact that the Chinese ambassador to Sri Lanka, Qi Zhenhong, was putting to work China's 'Wolf Warrior' diplomacy, necessitated a stern response from India. The ambassador hurled quite a number of unfounded and borderline hilarious accusations against India. He said that Sri Lanka had faced outright "aggression" from its "northern neighbour" — meaning India was using hard power of sorts to intimidate Colombo. China, owing to the symbol of moral uprightness, diplomatic etiquette, and international bonhomie that it thinks it is, called India out pretty hard. Unfortunately for Beijing, it got slammed back into its place even harder. Next, the Chinese ambassador, or a man who can also be called Xi

Sri Lanka and IMF reach staff-level agreement for \$2.9 billion bailout loan

(By Staff Reporter) The International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced a \$2.9 billion bailout for Sri Lanka on Thursday as the country suffers from its worst economic crisis since gaining independence in 1948. Earlier, Sri Lanka had

and Masahiro Nozaki, said that the bailout loan is aimed at improving Sri Lanka's debt sustainability and unlocking the country's growth potential. "The Sri Lankan authorities and the IMF team have reached a staff-level agreement

to support the authorities' economic adjustment and reform policies with a new 48-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with a requested access of about SDR 2.2 billion (equivalent to US\$2.9 billion)." "The new EFF arrangement will support Sri Lanka's programme to restore macroeconomic stability and debt

sustainability, while safeguarding financial stability, reducing corruption vulnerabilities and unlocking Sri Lanka's growth potential," the IMF statement read. Sri Lanka, which is currently facing the worst inflation in its history, also went through a lot of political turmoil due to the crisis. The food and fuel shortages caused a massive uproar among the public and constant protests resulted in the resignation of former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa.



sought up to \$3 billion from the IMF, according to Reuters. The decision was taken after prolonged talks between an IMF team and the Sri Lankan government headed by Ranil Wickremesinghe and treasury secretary Mahinda Siriwardana. The official statement released by the IMF said that they have reached a staff-level agreement to support the Sri Lankan economy and the bailout will be spread over four years. The IMF team, comprising Peter Breuer

Two killed, three injured in Kabul after car bomb blast on US withdrawal anniversary



(By Staff Reporter) Two people were killed while three others were injured in a car blast at the Police District 17 of Afghanistan's capital Kabul on Wednesday, according to interior ministry spokesman Abdul Nafi Takor. "A Toyota Corolla car, carrying an explosive device, exploded in Police District 17 today afternoon, killing two countrymen and injuring three others," Nafi posted on his Twitter account. The blast happened just days after the first anniversary of the United States military leaving

Afghanistan. According to reports by the Xinhua news agency, the authorities have launched an investigation into the blast and although no more information was provided, it said that security personnel rushed to the area. The blast dampened the celebrations in Afghanistan as the Taliban regime marked one year of them gaining control of the country once again. With the US forces leaving the country, the Taliban took over and formed a new government in the country plagued by natural disasters and economic crises.

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Taliban celebrates 1st anniversary of US troops withdrawal

Celebratory fireworks lit up the Kabul sky on the first anniversary of the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, which the Taliban are marking as 'Freedom Day'



(By Staff Reporter) The Taliban declared on Wednesday a national holiday and lit up the capital with coloured lights to celebrate the first anniversary of the withdrawal of US-led troops from Afghanistan after a brutal 20-year war. The country's new rulers -- not formally recognised by any other nation -- have reimposed their harsh version of Islamic law on the impoverished country, with women squeezed out of public life.

But despite the restrictions, and a deepening humanitarian crisis, many Afghans say they are glad the foreign force that prompted the Taliban insurgency has gone. "We are happy that Allah got rid of the infidels from our country, and the Islamic Emirate has been established," said Zalmai, a resident of Kabul.

The withdrawal of troops at midnight on August 31 began last year ended

America's longest war -- a military intervention that began in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks in New York. Some 66,000 Afghan troops and 48,000 civilians were killed in the conflict, but it was the deaths of US service members -- 2,461 in total -- that became too much for the American public to bear. More than 3,500 troops from other NATO countries were also killed. "The burden of the war in Afghanistan, however, went beyond Americans," the US military said Tuesday. Two weeks before the end of last year's withdrawal, the Taliban seized power following a lightning offensive against government forces. Banners celebrating victories against three empires -- the former Soviet Union and Britain also lost wars in Afghanistan -- were flying in Kabul on Wednesday. Hundreds of white Taliban flags

bearing the Islamic proclamation of faith flew from lampposts and government buildings. Late Tuesday, the skies above Kabul were lit up with fireworks and celebratory gunfire from crowds of Taliban fighters. In Massoud Square, near the former US embassy, armed fighters carrying Taliban flags chanted "Death to America". Others drove across the city honking their horns. Taliban social media accounts posted scores of videos and pictures of newly trained troops -- many flaunting the US military equipment left behind in the haste of Washington's chaotic withdrawal. "This is how you troll a superpower after humiliating them and forcing them to withdraw from your country," read the caption of one post on Twitter featuring a photo of a giant Taliban flag now painted on the wall of the former US embassy. Despite

the Taliban's pride in taking over, Afghanistan's 38 million people now face a desperate humanitarian crisis -- aggravated after billions of dollars in assets were frozen and foreign aid dried up. Hardships for ordinary Afghans, especially women, have increased. The Taliban have shut secondary girls' schools in many provinces and barred women from many government jobs. They have also ordered women to fully cover up in public -- ideally with an all-encompassing burqa. "Now I'm sitting at home without a job," said Oranoos Omerzai, a resident of Kandahar, the de facto power centre of the Taliban. Government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid insisted "major achievements" had been recorded in the past year. "Afghans are no more being killed in war, foreign forces have withdrawn, and security has improved," he told reporters last week.

Sri Lanka: President Ranil Wickremesinghe to present maiden budget in hopes of IMF loan

(By Staff Reporter) 30 August, 2022 will mark the presentation of Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe's first budget as head of his crisis-ridden nation. He will cut defence and other spending in an effort to secure help from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The staff-level agreement on extending crucial IMF assistance for Sri Lanka to address its greatest economic crisis since gaining independence from Britain in 1948 is expected to follow the interim budget for the remainder of the year, according to officials. The island's tourism-based economy suffered from COVID-19, which also reduced remittances sent home by foreign workers. Rising oil costs, populist tax cuts, and a seven-month import restriction on chemical fertilisers last year, which ruined agriculture, all contributed to the damage.

As a result, there are ongoing shortages of essential goods, exorbitant prices, and widespread protests. As a result,



President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was forced to leave the country, leaving Wickremesinghe in charge of restructuring the nation's massive debt to China and other nations while requesting an IMF bailout. The finance ministry is held by six-time Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, who told Reuters this month that the budget he will deliver to parliament will cut

spending by "a few hundred billion" rupees, including on defence. In its most recent budget, which was unveiled in November, Sri Lanka sought to spend 3.9 trillion rupees (\$11 billion). In addition, Wickremesinghe is anticipated to lay out plans to aid low-income areas that have been hardest hit by the crisis and propose new taxes to reduce the country's budget deficit. The interim

budget is expected to lower the deficit objective from roughly 12% of GDP to 9.9%, but analysts caution that this is an ambitious goal because the economy is expected to fall by nearly 8% this year. "A long-standing problem is budgets don't meet revenue and deficit targets so this budget will have to really focus on proper revenue-based fiscal consolidation," said Shehan Cooray, head of research at Acuity Stockbrokers. "The key things will be the budget deficit and primary deficit targets, which will be in line with an IMF plan."

According to rating agency S&P Global, the country skipped 22 million interest payments due on June 3, June 28, and July 18, as well as a principle payment due on July 25. Wednesday marks the end of a visit by an IMF team that came last week, and Sri Lankan officials are hoping to push discussions for an emergency loan of approximately \$3 billion by then.

Taliban accuses Pakistan of allowing US drones to fly into Afghanistan territory



Sunday that American drones were entering Afghanistan through Pakistan. "They [the US aircraft] are using Pakistani airspace to reach us. We demand Pakistan not to allow use of its airspace against us," he said. Yaqoob is the son of late Taliban founder Mullah Omar and is regarded as the Taliban's second most powerful military leader, according to the DPA news agency. He claimed that when the Americans left Afghanistan last year, the country's radar system was destroyed, but intelligence

sources indicate that US drones were entering through Pakistan, which Yaqoob described as a "clear violation" of sovereignty. The Taliban comments have elicited no response from Washington or Islamabad. Earlier this month, US President Joe Biden announced that al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed in Kabul's diplomatic enclave by a US drone strike. The Taliban condemned the drone attack and claimed that their leaders were unaware of his presence. Yaqoob told

reporters on Sunday that the Taliban was still looking into the death of al-Zawahiri. The drone attack in July that killed Osama bin Laden's successor Zawahiri was the first known strike by the US in Afghanistan since Washington withdrew its forces from the country last year. The Taliban, who are accused of maintaining ties with al-Qaeda, recaptured power in August 2021, during the chaotic withdrawal of US-led NATO forces. No country has officially recognized their de facto government since then.

(By Staff Reporter) The Taliban urged the neighbouring defence minister Mullah Yaqoob Mujahid, accused Pakistan has recently denied Pakistan of allowing US to use its airspace for drone operations in Afghanistan and a news conference in Kabul on

Officials raise concerns over outbreak of waterborne diseases as floods recede

Pakistan is reeling as relentless monsoon rains have flooded a third of the country. More than 1,100 people are confirmed killed and thousands have been displaced



(By Staff Reporter) Amid the ongoing crisis, officials have raised concerns over the spread of waterborne diseases. Thousands of people are impacted as the waters from rains began to recede in many parts of the country. There is an urgent need for shelter, food and clean water, and other basic amenities. News agency The Associated Press reported that doctors in the country's flood-hit areas are treating people suffering from diarrhoea, skin infections and other waterborne ailments. As quoted by AP, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, the health minister in the country's worst-affected province of Sindh, said that over 4,210 medical camps have been set up in the flood-hit areas of the province.

Pechuho also mentioned that doctors are treating people who are suffering from skin and waterborne diseases, which are common during floods. AP quoted Farhad Khan, a doctor, as saying, "Initially we received injured people, but now diarrhoea is common." Khan is a physician in charge of a medical camp set up in the northwestern town of Charsadda. Farhad mentioned that it is one of the worst flood-hit districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where floods killed 257 people since mid-June. This comes after the United Nations formally issued an appeal for \$160 million in emergency funding to the country. UN chief Antonio Guterres will visit Pakistan next week in "solidarity" with victims,

his spokesman said on Tuesday. Stephane Dujarric told a news briefing, "With the tragic situation facing millions of men, women and children impacted by historic

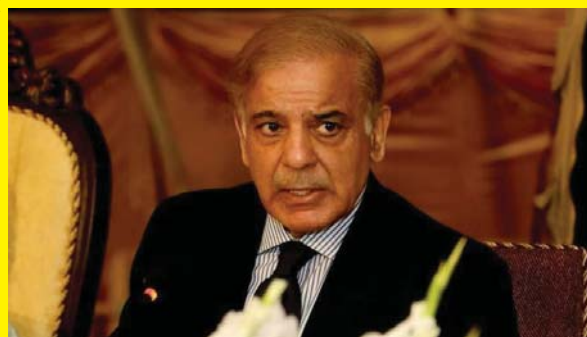
floods in Pakistan, the Secretary-General will travel to the country next week for a solidarity visit." Dujarric said that Guterres plans to arrive in

the capital Islamabad on September 9, before travelling to "the areas most impacted by this unprecedented climate catastrophe."

After PM Modi's tweet on Pakistan floods, Pak counterpart responds

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday thanked PM Modi for his concern over the human and material losses caused by the floods in the country

(By Staff Reporter) Pakistan Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his concern over the human and material losses caused by the devastating floods in the country. Taking to Twitter, Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan will overcome the adverse effects of the natural calamity. "I thank Indian PM Narendra Modi for condolences over the human & material losses caused by floods. With their characteristic resilience the people of Pakistan shall, InshaAllah, overcome the adverse effects of this natural calamity and rebuild their lives and communities," Shehbaz Sharif tweeted. Prime Minister Modi on Monday said he was saddened to see the devastation caused by the floods in Pakistan. "Saddened to see the devastation caused by the floods in Pakistan. We extend our heartfelt



condolences to the families of the victims, the injured and all those affected by this natural calamity and hope for an early restoration of normalcy," PM Modi had tweeted. Pakistan is grappling with unprecedented floods that has displaced over 33 million people in the country. The torrential rain since mid-June has affected the normal life of people in the country. According to health experts, around five million people in flood-hit Pakistan, including children, may fall sick due to the outbreak of water-borne and vector-borne diseases such as typhoid and diarrhea in the next four to 12 weeks. Due to the floods, 1,100 people have been killed so far. The cash-strapped Pakistan government has teamed up with the United Nations to issue an urgent appeal for \$160 million to deal with the disaster.

US Army grounds entire Chinook chopper fleet over engine fires

The US Army has grounded its entire fleet of CH-47 Chinook helicopters due to a risk of engine fires, US officials said

(By Staff Reporter) The US Army has grounded its entire fleet of Chinook helicopters, a battlefield workhorse since the 1960s, over the risk of engine fires, a media report said Tuesday. The Wall Street Journal, which broke the story, said such an extreme step was taken out of abundance of caution. India has about 15 CH-47 Chinook helicopters. Over the past few years, they have emerged as one of the major military tools for airlift operations in places like Ladakh and Siachen glaciers to assist Indian forces deployed in these regions. India received the first batch of Chinook helicopters in February 2019. Boeing completed the delivery of 15 Chinook helicopters to the Indian Air Force in 2020. Officials told the Wall Street Journal the US Army was aware of a small number of engine fires in the helicopters, and the incidents didn't result in any injuries or deaths. "One of the officials said the fires occurred in recent days," the Journal said. "The US Army Materiel Command grounded the fleet of hundreds of helicopters out of an abundance of caution." However, officials were looking at more than 70



aircraft that contained a part suspected to be connected to the problem, officials told the Journal said. The US Army has heavy-lift Chinook helicopters could pose logistical challenges for American soldiers, depending on how long the order lasts, the Journal said. The US Army has about 400 such helicopters in its fleet.

US approves Moderna and Pfizer shots targeting omicron variant of Covid



(By Staff Reporter) In an effort to stop a new wave of dreaded illnesses this winter, US officials on Wednesday approved enhanced Covid-19 immunizations made by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech that specifically target the most recent strains of the Omicron form. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced in a statement that the two new booster shots are acceptable for anyone 12 and older for the Pfizer shot and 18 and older for Moderna. The BA.4 and BA.5 lineages, the subvariants of Omicron that makeup nearly 90% of all new cases in the United States, are also protected against by this new generation of so-called "bivalent" vaccines. According to FDA Commissioner Robert Califf, "although the current Covid-19 surge is waning overall, it's predicated that we'll enter yet another surge as we spend

more time indoors later this fall and winter." These update boosters provide us with a chance to go in front of the curve, he claimed. Even though Americans no longer pay much attention to coronavirus in their daily lives, the country still sees about 80,000 new instances of the disease each day, along with 400 fatalities. The US health department said earlier this summer that it had ordered 105 million pills from Pfizer and 66 million from Moderna for use in the next fall and winter. Before injections may start, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the country's health protection body, must still recommend the vaccines. The CDC will hold a meeting with an impartial team of specialists on Thursday to go over the changes.

US Man Out Of Coma After Being Stung 20,000 Times By African Killer Bees

(By Staff Reporter) A 20-year-old man in the United States nearly lost his life after getting stung 20,000 times by African killer bees. Austin Bellamy was trimming a tree last week in Ohio when he unknowingly cut open a bee hive. He accidentally released thousands of African killer bees that quickly swarmed around his head, neck and shoulders, his mother Shawna Carter told Fox19. "It looked like he had a black blanket on his head down to his neck, down to his arms," she said. According to the outlet, Mr Bellamy was trimming branches of an overgrown tree while his grandmother Phyllis Edwards and his uncle watched from the ground. Suddenly, he cut into a nest following which bees flew out. As his uncle and his grandmother were also under attack, they were unable to help the 20-year-old. But he was rushed to the hospital after a firefighter helped him down from the tree. Mr Bellamy was airlifted to the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, while Ms Phyllis was taken to an area hospital in an ambulance. He was put on a ventilator and placed in a medically-induced coma. The 20-year-old woke up almost after a week on Wednesday. Doctors expect him to make a full recovery, his family said. Ms Bellamy's mother, Shawna Carter, said that her son had been stung more than 20,000 times and had swallowed about 30 bees. She added that the hospital staff had to "suction" bees out of him. "It was just too much for me to take," she said. According to Newsweek, an African killer bee is no more dangerous than a regular honey bee.

US concerned about any country exercising with Russia, says White House

It said this in response to a question on a multinational military exercise called 'Vostok 2022' from 1-7 September in Russia, which among others would be attended by India and China

(By Staff Reporter) : The United States has concerns about any country conducting an exercise with Russia which has waged an unprovoked and brutal war against Ukraine, the White House said Tuesday. It said this in response to a question on a multinational military exercise called "Vostok 2022" from 1-7 September in Russia, which among others would be attended by India and China. This will be the first large-scale multinational military exercise in Russia since the beginning of its offensive in Ukraine. "The United States has concerns about any country exercising with Russia while Russia wages an unprovoked, brutal war against Ukraine. But, of course, every participating country will make its own decisions. And I'll leave it at that," White House Press Secretary Karen Jean-Pierre told reporters aboard Air Force One. When she was specifically asked why "not put any pressure on India", Jean-Pierre said, "My first sentence there is saying that we have concerns over any country exercising with Russia while Russia is waging this unprovoked war." When the reporter further asked if the US planned to take any action or do anything about it, the press secretary said, "I don't have anything else to share." "But we have – we have been pretty public – I've been asked this question with other countries as well, and we've been pretty consistent in our – in our statements."

Californians Told Not To Charge Electric Cars As Heatwave Singes State



California's power companies routinely ask households to limit their usage during the so-called "shoulder hours," when rooftop solar panels stop producing electricity but demand remains high because of still-elevated temperatures.

The call to limit electric vehicle charging comes a week after state regulators banned the sale of new petrol- and diesel-powered vehicles from 2035.

All but a handful of SUVs, cars and light trucks will have to produce zero tailpipe emissions, with only highly efficient plug-in hybrids permitted to burn fossil fuels. The move was hailed as a game-changer for the EV industry because of the size of California's auto market and the potential it has to set national, and even international, standards. 'Dangerously hot' Wednesday's plea to conserve power was greeted with derision on Twitter, where some said it was proof the state had not thought through its green agenda. "Perhaps we should figure out how to fix our electric grid before we outlaw gas cars...just a thought," tweeted

@AerysGG "So.....this is what they want. Walking? Hitchin' A Ride?? Moving to a more reasonable state??" tweeted @cinda_scheef In response to soaring power demands, California Governor Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency that temporarily removes pollution controls on fossil fuel power plants to allow them to generate more electricity.

He pointed to the punishing drought in the US West that has crippled hydroelectric plants, and noted the direct effect that climate change is having on day-to-day lives.

"Energy reliability becomes more and more challenging... because demand increases at the same time supply decreases," he said.

He also called on households to do their part "to help us get through the next week or so, to turn up a little bit the thermostat at home to 78 degrees, try to pre-cool earlier in the day; try not to use too much electricity... between 4:00 pm and 9:00 pm." The National Weather Service

has issued an "excessive heat warning" for most of California, as well as parts of Arizona and Nevada. "Dangerously hot conditions expected... until Sunday evening," the NWS said. "A prolonged period of excessive heat will significantly increase the potential for heat related illnesses, particularly for those working or participating in outdoor activities."

"Those without access to adequate or reliable cooling or hydration will be at most risk, but much of the population could be susceptible to impacts as well," the NWS warned.

Nighttime temperatures are not expected to offer much relief, with lows struggling to get below 80 degrees Fahrenheit in many places. It is not unusual for southern California to experience heat waves in September, but temperatures above 100 degrees Fahrenheit are considered hot even for a place almost perpetually baked by sunshine. The heat wave comes after swathes of the southwest were lashed with torrential rains over recent weeks.

(SAI Bureau) : Californians were told Wednesday not to charge their electric vehicles during peak hours, just days after the state said it would stop selling gas-powered cars, as the aging electricity grid struggles with a fearsome heatwave. Temperatures as high as 112 degrees Fahrenheit (44 degrees Celsius) were forecast in some Los Angeles suburbs as a huge heat dome bakes a swathe of the western United States. The sweltering weather will put huge demands on the already-stretched power grid, especially when people crank up the air conditioners during the broiling

hours after work and school. "Consumers are urged to conserve power by setting thermostats to 78 degrees or higher, if health permits, avoiding use of major appliances and turning off unnecessary lights," said the California Independent System Operator, which runs the state's power grid. Between 4:00 pm and 9:00 pm, "they should also avoid charging electric vehicles." "Reducing energy use during a Flex Alert can help stabilize the power grid during tight supply conditions and prevent further emergency measures, including rotating power outages."

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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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Donald Trump and his supporters are 'threat to American democracy', says Joe Biden

(SAI Bureau) United States President Joe Biden launched a scathing attack on Donald Trump and his supporters by calling them "extremists" and "enemies of American democracy" during a prime-time address on Thursday. The address was aimed at rallying the voters ahead of major midterm elections. During his speech the Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Biden criticised Republicans for backing Trump's "Make America Great Again" ideology and asked his supporters to fight back. "Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans represent an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our republic," Biden said in the address, according to AFP. "There is no place for political violence in America. Period. None. Ever," he added.



President went on to say that "MAGA forces" were "determined to take this country backwards" and that democracy is "under assault" at the moment. "For a long time, we've reassured ourselves that American democracy is guaranteed. But it is not. We have to defend it. Protect it. Stand up for it. I'm asking our nation to come together, unite behind the single purpose of defending our democracy — regardless of your ideology," Biden said. The midterm elections hold extreme significance for the Democrats as they will be looking to hold on to their majority in the House despite Biden losing his popularity drastically in the past year. According to a poll published by the Wall Street Journal on Thursday, if the midterm elections were held right now, Democrats will get 47 percent of votes while Republicans were projected to get 44 per cent.

Biden referred to the US Capitol Hill riots that shocked the country last year and even the historic Roe v Wade judgement on abortion rights. The US

High-stakes standoff between Trump and FBI in court over seized secrets

(News Agency) Following days of news-grabbing revelations regarding highly sensitive information the FBI took from the former president's Florida home, a high-stakes confrontation between Donald Trump and US federal investigators ended up in court on Thursday.

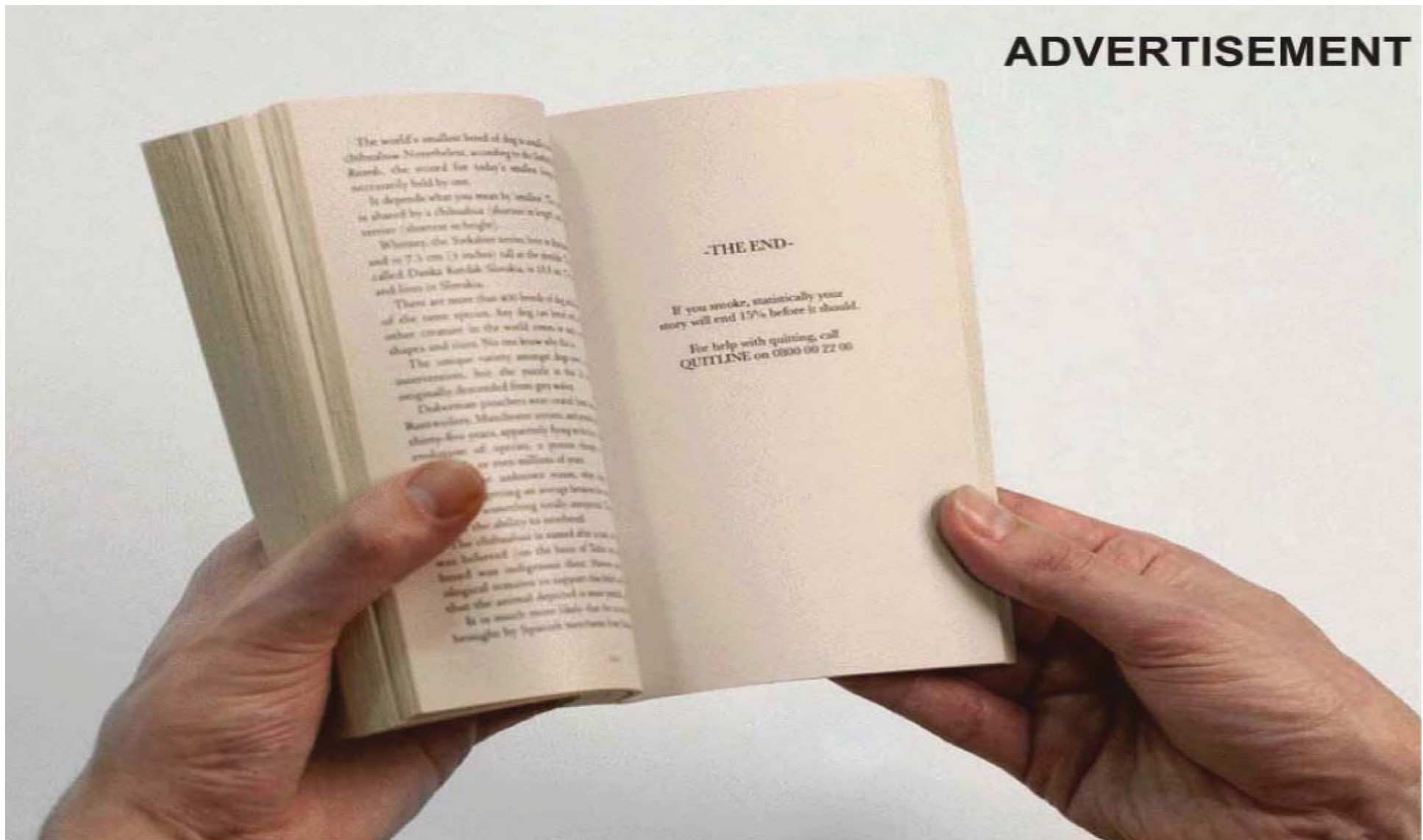
Trump is requesting that a third party be appointed to review the government's screening of the sensitive documents to see if any contained "very personal material" that needed to be returned or were protected by official secrecy procedures.

The motion has considerably increased the stakes in the lawsuit, and a federal court in Florida indicated on Thursday that it would make a decision at an undisclosed later time. This announcement sparked a sharp retort from the Justice Department. The majority of the evidence against the Republican former president found during the search of his Mar-a-Lago home in south Florida last month was made public by the prosecution on Tuesday. Despite a grand jury's demand that Trump produces materials that were removed from the White House in January 2021 in May, the officials

claimed they had proof of attempts to conceal secret documents. They added that some of the documents were so secret that federal agents and employees of the Justice Department need higher security clearances



just to view the information. Trump's desk drawers contained passports and secret documents, according to the federal complaint. According to the department, "the location of the passports is relevant evidence in an investigation of unauthorized retention and mishandling of national defence information." The document is the most thorough account to date of an 18-month attempt to retrieve hundreds of secret documents that were wrongfully removed to Mar-a-Lago after Trump left office. Additional legal pressure is placed on the former president, who maintains his innocence, by the allegation that he obstructed the FBI's investigation.



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17 Indian Citizens Among Group of 100 Migrants Apprehended While Illegally Crossing into US



Diego Sector for the 2022 Fiscal Year, 44,444 consisted of migrants coming from countries other than Mexico.

(News Agency) Seventeen Indian citizens were among a group of 100 migrants apprehended while illegally climbing over a fence into the US at a border post in California, authorities said. The San Diego Sector Border Patrol agents from the Imperial Beach Station apprehended at around 2 am on Tuesday morning the group of 100 migrants, consisting of citizens from Africa, Asia, and South America. The agents encountered a large group of migrants illegally climbing over the fence a half mile east of Border Field State Park, the US Customs and Border Protection agency said, adding that the group comprised mostly of non-Spanish speaking migrants, requiring Border Patrol agents to resource out for translation support. All individuals were transported to a nearby station where they were medically evaluated and cleared by medical personnel. The group, consisting of 79 single adults, 18 family unit members, and three unaccompanied juveniles, were determined to be citizens of 12 countries, including Somalia (37), India (17), Afghanistan (6), Pakistan (4), and Brazil (3). Of the 145,618 migrants apprehended in San

US woman shoots, kills man who attacked her in Houston

A US woman shot a man on Wednesday outside a Houston-area business after he attacked her. The man was taken to a hospital where he died

(News Agency) A US woman shot and killed a man who attacked her co-worker and rammed into several cars in Houston, Texas. The incident began just after midnight Wednesday on South Houston Road outside of Univar Solutions' laboratory. Investigators said a man was standing outside of the business when he started yelling at a woman and hitting the side window of her car. The woman was able to eventually get in her car and drive out of the gated parking lot. According to investigators, that's when the man got into a car and drove through the closed electric gate of the parking lot, hitting several cars. Another woman grabbed her handgun and confronted the man before shooting him twice after he attacked her. The man later died at the hospital, and neither woman was injured.



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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

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ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

ਦਿੱਲੀ: ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਵੱਡੇ ਖਰਚੇ ਦਾ ਖਾਫ਼ਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਵੱਡੇ ਖਰਚੇ ਦਾ ਖਾਫ਼ਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਵੱਡੇ ਖਰਚੇ ਦਾ ਖਾਫ਼ਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ।

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From Inflation, Jobs to Deepening Religious Fault Lines: Red Flags for Modi Govt

From page 17

The third chronic malaise afflicting India is the ubiquitous phenomenon of corruption. Arguably, there has been abatement in big-ticket corruption, especially at higher levels of government. However, at the grassroots, corruption is still a major problem even in BJP-ruled states. Raids and investigations by ED and CBI can deflect attention towards the rich and the mighty (as demonetisation did), but unless the problem of daily

corruption in the lives of the ordinary citizen is alleviated it will not cut ice. Finally, comes the sensitive issue of deepening religious fault lines. Apart from social costs, the economic impact of communal disharmony can be heavy — which will ultimately hurt the common man. In the short run, religious tension can disrupt the economy, causing financial hardships and demographic displacements. In the long term, it hurts investments. But unless controlled, this can turn into a

monster with the potential of destabilising the country. There is enough evidence to indicate the infiltration of fundamentalist terror outfits in many states. These pose grave risks to internal security that outweigh even some of our external security concerns. India is at the cusp of breaking into the big league of nations. Many inimical forces will try to derail the India story. A sure-shot way of doing it is by creating political instability — a model frequently used

in other parts of the world. In their anxiety to dethrone Narendra Modi, some of our Opposition parties and leaders may be unwittingly co-opted by these anti-India elements. That will be the end of the India story. This is rightfully India's century and we cannot let it slip out of our hands. Governments will come and go but we cannot allow the country to plunge into anarchy even for a short period. That is the biggest challenge for the Modi government in the near term.

Congress' Shrinking Political Map Shows It Needs Restructuring of Its Internal Democracy

From page 17

Arunachal Pradesh's political crisis began in 2015 with a senior Congress leader and minister revolting and pulling down the government. Though after the Supreme Court's verdict, the previous Congress government was reinstated, 41 MLAs of the party's state unit soon decided first to join a regional party, the People's Party of Arunachal, and then the BJP on December 31, 2016. In the 2019 assembly election in the state, the grand old party of India could not even find candidates for all the 60 assembly seats in the state and fought on 46 seats winning only four seats.

Next was Puducherry in 2016, a small Union Territory, but lost the government just

before the next election, in February 2021 with five Congress MLAs resigning. The CM lost the trust vote and saw a massive decline in the next election, winning just two out of 30 seats in the assembly. It won the Bihar assembly election in 2015 but was a junior alliance partner only. The party's first big win came in 2017 in the Punjab assembly polls. But the culture of factionalism and internal leadership led to a string of resignations in the party with CM Amarinder Singh, who was behind the 2017 win, quitting. The Congress saw a massive loss in the polls that took place earlier this year winning just 18 of the 117 assembly seats in the state. In Goa assembly polls in 2017, the Congress was the largest party but fell short of the majority mark. In the 40-member

assembly, the party won 17 seats but could not stitch an alliance in time and the BJP with 13 seats formed the government, taking other parties on board. In the 2022 state assembly polls, the Congress failed to make a comeback while the BJP increased its seats from 13 to 20. It retained the Chief Minister's Office by forming an alliance again while the Congress slipped to 11 seats. Manipur saw the similar fate. The party that ruled Manipur from 2002 to 2017 was also the largest party in the 2017 assembly polls winning 28 of the 60 seats in the assembly. But like Goa, the party failed to stitch up an alliance before the BJP, which bagged 21 seats. The BJP allied with regional parties to form the government. In the 2022 assembly election

in the state, the Congress was almost wiped out with just 5 seats while the BJP retained government winning a majority this time. The party won 32 seats.

The year 2018 was electorally good for Congress. The party won a majority mark in three Hindi heartland states — Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh — but its internal leadership tussle ultimately proved an image disaster. Chhattisgarh was a massive Congress victory where it won 68 out of 90 seats in the assembly. The party had leadership tussle between Bhupesh Baghel and TS Singh Deo but the Congress high command preferred to go with Baghel to appeal to the OBC voters of the state. With numbers on its side, the government have survived well so far. In Rajasthan, it won 100 out of 200 seats in the assembly. The ruling BJP government was slipped to second spot with 73 seats. Also, independents were big gainers winning 13 seats while the BSP bagged six seats and CPM two seats. So, in spite of the leadership tussle between Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot, with Pilot being the electoral face of the party in the elections, the Congress government could survive in the state as BJP, with 27 seats less than the Congress mark, had not much to gain on the number's front. Madhya Pradesh was a difficult option for the Congress as Jyotiraditya Scindia's was the party's electoral face but Kamal Nath was later chosen for the top post. Out of the 230 seats in the assembly, the Congress won 114 seats, two seats short of majority, but just five seats more than the BJP, the party that ruled the state since December 2003. Independent MLAs won 4 seats while the SP won one seat. Result? The government could survive just for 15 months, from December 2018 to March 2020 after Scindia, miffed with the Congress high command, moved out of the party along with 22 rebel Congress MLAs and joined the BJP later.

Attack On Salman Rushdie Revives 'Freedom Of Expression' Debate

From page 15

But, as Lord Bhiku Parekh points out in an insightful essay, the film "provoked a public outcry unprecedented in the history of religious films. Militant Christians launched a media campaign condemning Universal Pictures, and so intimidated cinema owners that several movie chains refused to show the film". Similarly, evangelical Christians "took to the barricades when Jesus was portrayed as a charlatan in The Passover Plot. The film was picketed out of existence after only a few weeks and never heard of again". In September 2005, the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published a dozen cartoons caricaturing Prophet Muhammad; one of the caricatures showed the Prophet wearing a bomb-shaped turban. When Muslims protested, the Danish newspaper defended its decision on grounds of freedom of expression. But significantly, it was reported that its editor had earlier turned down cartoons of Jesus as too offensive. Even non-Abrahamic religions, like Sikhism, can be deeply hostile to any insult to their Gurus or their religion. Hinduism does not have a word for blasphemy. No Hindu has ever been killed or burnt on a stake for heresy. It is a religion which is eclectic and welcoming to diversity, even criticism. But extremist Hindus today show a militant aggressiveness to any perceived slight to Hindu gods and goddesses. Almost anything can "hurt their religious

sentiments", and their threats to violence often seem to have the support of sympathetic governments, at the centre and in the states. It is for this reason that when stand-up comedian, Munawar Faruqi, cracks jokes about Ram and Sita, militant Hindus are up in arms and ensure that most of his performances are cancelled.

This being said, the degree of atavistic violence that Muslim fanatics believe their religion sanctions has to be confronted. It is a distortion of Islam itself, and an unacceptable infringement of law and order. No democratic society can accept the violence and bigotry that is the norm in some Islamic countries. When in January 2015, two gunmen in Paris shouting 'Allahu Akbar' killed 12 people and injured another 11 in the office of the satirical French publication, Charlie Hebdo, all right-thinking people were outraged. Even those who believe that ridiculing another's religion is wrong, were aghast at the brutality of the avenging action. In India, while nobody can condone Nupur Sharma's remarks, we need to condemn the threat of death given to her, and the murders of those who supported her. The short point is this: gratuitously insulting somebody's religious beliefs is not particularly civilized. Equally, if not more, violence in the name of religion, highlighted again in the attack on Rushdie, is positively uncivilized. All right-thinking people, including Muslims, need to take a public stand against this kind of mindless violence.

India's GDP jumped 13.5% in June quarter on pandemic rebound: Official figures

(SAI Bureau) The National Statistical Office (NSO) on Wednesday revealed data showing that India's GDP expanded at its quickest rate in a year during the April-June quarter. During the three months that ended on June 30, 2022, India's GDP increased by 13.5%. On the other hand, this is less than the Reserve Bank of India's predicted 16.2% GDP growth for Q1FY23. Q1FY22 saw a 20.1% increase in India's GDP. The GDP increased 4.1%

from January to March compared to the same period last year.

In April through June of 2021, when it was 20.1% higher than the pandemic-depressed level of the previous year, India's GDP had its last greater annual growth. However, economists predict that as increased interest rates have a negative impact on economic activity, India's economic development will abruptly drop down in the coming quarters.

Issuing a caution over the effects of a global downturn on local development prospects, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) increased its benchmark repo rate by 140 basis points since May, including 50 basis points this month. Numerous economists predict that rates will rise again by around 50 basis points the following month, then by another 25 basis points. The increase in the cost of food and fuel has had a significant impact on consumer spending,

which makes up nearly 55% of economic activity, even if monthly inflation has subsided over the past three months. Due to the base effect, many analysts predicted that the Indian economy would grow at a double-digit rate. Icria, a ratings organisation, predicted that the gross domestic product will expand by 13% between April and June 2022, whereas State Bank of India had predicted a growth rate of 15.7%.

Afghanistan: After Taliban Takeover, US Relying on Drones to Battle Resurgent Al-Qaeda, IS

Criticised for the decision to end the US military presence in the country, President Joe Biden promised that the American military and intelligence agencies will be able to keep up the war on the two jihadist groups via "over-the-horizon" operations.

That was a reference to the ability of the US military and CIA to surveil the country via high-flying unmanned aircraft operated from distant locations and, when necessary, to use drones to strike targets, as the US did on July 31 when it fired two rockets that killed Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in his home in Kabul. But besides that, there are few signs that the over-the-horizon approach can prevent the jihadists from reestablishing Afghanistan as a base from which to carry out attacks around the globe, as Al-Qaeda did up to 2001.

For retired general Frank McKenzie, who as commander of the US Central Command oversaw the operations in Afghanistan through last year's pullout, the presence of Zawahiri in Taliban-controlled Kabul illustrates how hard it is to fight the Islamic extremists without a US presence on the ground there.

"I've said publicly in testimony that counterterrorism operations from over the horizon in Afghanistan would be very hard but not impossible," McKenzie told the BBC in a recent interview. "We are going to have to continue to apply pressure, and that's going to be very difficult," he said.

NOT SAFER AFTER WITHDRAWAL

McKenzie's predecessor at Central Command, retired general Joseph Votel, said the Zawahiri strike shows that the US does have the capability to pressure Qaeda and Islamic State from outside Afghanistan. Nevertheless, he told the Voice of America, "I think that we're not in a safer place." "Whether we find ourselves back in Afghanistan, like we found ourselves back in Iraq just literally three-plus years after we left, I don't know. I hope not," he said. "But I think we have to be prepared for that." The Pentagon maintains that it does not share those worries. "At this stage, it would be our assessment that in terms of external planning, operations external to Afghanistan, I think we are in a safe situation," said the Pentagon spokesman Brigadier General Pat Ryder. "We absolutely have the means to

respond wherever and whenever we need, around the world, to any counterterrorism threat," he said. Without forces inside Afghanistan, Ryder said, it is "more of a challenge," but it is "not something that is insurmountable," he said. Under Secretary of Defense Colin Kahl said that US intelligence believes both Al-Qaeda and Islamic State's Afghanistan arm intend to undertake external attacks, including against the United States, but currently lack the capacity to do so.

However, he told Congress, Islamic State could developed that capability "in somewhere between 6 or 12 months."

Doug London, a former official at the CIA, which is believed to have executed the Zawahiri strike, "America neglects Afghanistan at its peril." London, now a professor at Georgetown University, wrote on the Just Security website that instead of relying wholly on the over-the-horizon drone strategy, Washington needs to communicate more directly with the Taliban.

"There is always something to gain being on the ground and talking to your adversaries, regardless of their intentions," he said.

Boris Johnson Tops List Of Bad UK Prime Ministers In Poll Of UK Public As His Term Comes To End

(SAI Bureau) Boris Johnson has topped a public poll to pick leaders who are seen as having done a bad job as prime minister, pollster Ipsos found in a new survey just days before his term comes to an end next week. The outgoing prime minister was given a poor performance rating by around 49 per cent of the British public polled to judge the performance of post-war British leaders since 1945.

The figure was worse than those for his immediate predecessors, with around 41 per cent saying Theresa May had done a bad job and 38 per cent picking David Cameron. Johnson's declared political hero, Winston Churchill, topped the survey of post-war PMs with 62 per cent saying the war-time leader had done a good job. Winston Churchill continues to top our list of Prime Ministers the public think did a good job in office, followed by Margaret Thatcher, said Keiran Pedley, director of political research at Ipsos. Boris Johnson will be reasonably content with finishing fourth on that list but less happy about topping the list for having done a bad job, he said. In the 1,100 people surveyed by Ipsos, Johnson had the fourth-highest number of people saying he had

done well, with around 33 per cent saying the partygate scandal-hit outgoing leader had done a good job in office, behind Tony Blair on 36 per cent, and Margaret Thatcher on 43 per cent.

His net rating in the Ipsos poll, which was carried out between August 19 and 22, was minus 16, compared with Theresa May's minus 13 and Cameron's minus 8. However, Ipsos pointed out that there is a certain degree of recency bias in who tops the bad job list. Time will tell how Johnson's legacy is judged, as we see by improved scores for [former Labour Prime Minister] Gordon Brown over time, negative perceptions today may soften in the future, added Pedley. Ipsos found that people polling to say Brown did a good job rose from 24 per cent in February 2021 to 31 per cent in August 2022, while the number saying he did a bad job fell from 37 per cent to 31 per cent. Meanwhile, Johnson is on a farewell tour of the UK before he officially leaves office after his successor is named either former Chancellor Rishi Sunak or Foreign Secretary Liz Truss at the end of the Conservative Party leadership election on Monday.

He used a key speech on the final stop of the tour in Suffolk, eastern England, on Thursday to confirm a government pledge to invest GBP 700 million for a deal to buy a significant stake, thought to be around 20 per cent, of a new nuclear power station. The Sizewell plant is planned in the area and is expected to create enough energy to power 6 million homes, or a fifth of all homes in the UK. Johnson has used his last days to push for nuclear energy as "cheap, clean, reliable and plentiful" to tackle the crisis unleashed by the war in Ukraine and spiralling global oil and gas costs. For 13 wasted years the Labour government did absolutely nothing to develop the country's nuclear industry they said it didn't make economic sense. Tell that to the British business and industries that are short of affordable electricity, tell that to the families struggling with the cost of heat and light this winter, said Johnson, blaming the Opposition. It marks the conclusion of his final week as British prime minister on the so-called valedictory tour, taking part in a police raid in south London and launching a new submarine in Barrow-on-Furness, north-west England.

California advances a flurry of climate legislation, including drilling restrictions and clean energy goals

(SAI Bureau) SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Tougher clean energy goals, a ban on new oil and gas wells near homes and schools, and establishing guidelines for capturing carbon and storing it underground are among the climate proposals California Democrats advanced in the final days of the legislative session. Taken together, along with tens of billions in budget money for climate proposals, the policies marked one of the state's most groundbreaking years for climate action, some advocates said. "This was a watershed year on climate action," said Mary Creasman, chief executive officer for California Environmental Voters. Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom in August delivered to lawmakers a slate of climate proposals, some of which lawmakers had been pushing unsuccessfully for years. All but one, a proposal that would have required deeper greenhouse gas emissions cuts by 2030, will now head to his desk.

Broadly, legislative Republicans argued the bills would destroy in-state jobs and require the state to turn to foreign countries to import oil to maintain an economy that still relies heavily on fossil fuels. Democrats, meanwhile, said the urgency of climate change requires swifter, more aggressive action. Neighborhood oil drilling Oil and gas companies would no longer be able to drill wells within 3,200 feet of homes, schools

and other community sites. About 2.7 million Californians live within that distance of a well already, according to state Sen. Lena Gonzalez, one of the bill's authors. Studies show living near a drilling site can elevate the risk of birth defects, respiratory issues and health problems.

Neighborhood oil wells are common across parts of Los Angeles County and Kern County. The legislation wouldn't shut down the more than 28,000 existing wells in that zone, but would require them to meet strict pollution controls. Those wells would also be barred from most permits to deepen or rework the wells. State oil regulators announced a similar policy in 2021, though it has not yet been finalized. Supporters of the policy believed passing the law was the quickest path forward. "This is a victory for every single family and every single frontline community in California that has been fighting Big Oil's drilling in our backyards for decades and pushing for setbacks for years," Kobi Naseck, coalition coordinator, for Voices in Solidarity Against Oil in Neighborhoods said in a statement.

California is the seventh largest oil-producing state and ranks fourteenth for natural gas production. Republican state Sen. Shannon Grove of Bakersfield, one of the state's oil hubs, said the proposal would affect thousands of wells in her

district and do nothing to reduce a need for oil.

California advances a flurry of climate legislation, including drilling restrictions and clean energy goals "It doesn't change the fact that Californians are still using oil every single day to make their lives more convenient and better," she said.

Renewable energy

California has already mandated that 100% of retail electricity sales will come from non-carbon energy sources like solar and wind power by 2045. Current law sets an interim goal of 60% by 2030. Lawmakers have now boosted that to 90% by 2030 and 95% by 2035. The action comes as California is struggling to keep its power grid stable as the state transitions away from fossil fuels and record temperatures blanket the state. The more aggressive 2030 targets will put even more pressure on the state to build more solar panels, wind turbines and batteries that can store that power for use at night. At the same time, electricity demand is expected to sore as California tries to get more people to swap out gas-powered cars and home appliances for electric ones. Lawmakers also agreed to a policy aimed at extending the life of Diablo Canyon, the state's last nuclear power plant, to help stabilize the energy grid. But nuclear power does not count as an eligible non-carbon source to meet the state's clean electricity goals. Solar,

wind, geothermal, biomass, small hydropower and fuel cells count. Newsom, speaking Wednesday, acknowledged the challenges of having enough energy to meet demand during heat waves made worse by climate change. But he said that will only accelerate California's push to build a cleaner energy grid. "Don't think for a second ... that we're going to de-escalate our commitment to that transition," he said.

Carbon neutrality

Former California Gov. Jerry Brown signed an executive order in 2018 calling for the state to be carbon neutral by 2045, meaning any carbon that it emits is offset by removing a similar amount from the atmosphere. Legislators on Wednesday voted to turn that goal into a law and require an 85% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions along with it. The second part is designed to ensure that the carbon neutrality is mostly achieved by lowering emissions, not taking carbon out of the air. Some environmental groups are skeptical that carbon capture is a reliable and safe technology and worry it will be used to let oil companies keep emitting fossil fuels. Another bill passed by the Legislature requires the state air board to create a permitting process for for such projects. It bans the technology from being used to extract more oil.

Social Cost' of Carbon Pollution Four Times Higher than Recently Estimated, Shows Study

(SAI Bureau) The cost inflicted on the world by carbon pollution may be nearly four times higher than recent estimates, a study said Thursday, highlighting how much climate action could save this and future generations.

The "social cost of carbon" is a way of evaluating the negative economic, labour and health consequences of CO2 emissions, calculated as the difference between the cost of reducing those emissions and the damages prevented by the reductions. Arriving at an accurate cost price per tonne of CO2 is vital to the viability of a carbon tax, which is widely seen as one of the easiest ways to fund decarbonisation efforts.

In the US, the figure has for years formed part of cost-benefit analyses for everything from power plant regulations to efficiency standards for cars and household appliances. Lead author Kevin Rennert, from the Washington-based research centre Resources for the Future, said the study represented a "complete overhaul" of the US government's current carbon cost calculations. He said the cost had been underestimated in previous methodologies in a variety of ways, but none more so than in the excess mortality carbon pollution causes, and on crop losses. "The most substantial damages from climate change are driven by greater

rates of mortality from increased temperatures and impacts on the agriculture sector," Rennert told AFP.

Last year a working group of experts under the Biden administration came up with a place-holding figure for the social cost of carbon of \$51 per metric tonne. But they stressed their estimates — which include separate metrics for methane and nitrous oxide — "likely underestimate societal damages", leading to speculation that the final figure could be substantially higher. Writing in the journal Nature, Rennert and colleagues — climate and economic experts — argued that the \$51 figure was nearly four times lower than the true social cost of carbon. They created a tool to estimate the true cost of carbon pollution using the latest research on socioeconomic projections, climate modelling, climate impact assessments, and economic discounting — which determines how much the value of future climate damages are marked down due to expected growth. They calculated that society was footing a bill of \$185 for every metric tonne of CO2 emitted. The International Energy Agency says carbon emissions from the power sector alone were some 36.3 billion tonnes in 2021. Rennert said he hoped the research would inform policymakers when it comes to setting carbon taxes at an appropriate level.

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

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

REWARD

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

REMARKS

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

CAUTION

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

SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

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

Field Office: Baltimore

Behind AAP claims on L-G: Vigilance report, witness statements

Raising allegations of corruption against L-G V K Saxena, and that he issued verbal directions to exchange demonetised Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes when he was chairperson of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, the Aam Aadmi Party has cited statements of two cashiers who used to work with the Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan. In 2017, allegations emerged that two cashiers working in Delhi had accepted demonetised currency worth Rs 22 lakh in 2016, in contravention of rules. This was brought to the notice of the KVIC's Department of Vigilance, which launched an enquiry. The matter was also referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation. During the vigilance enquiry, the two cashiers — Sanjeev Kumar, and Pradeep Yadav — claimed in their statements that the manager and the sales in-charge at the Connaught Place branch of Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan had handed over the cash to them, and when they expressed apprehension about accepting it, they were told the chairperson had asked them to accept and exchange the money. In their statements, the cashiers claimed they were scared of repercussions and agreed to exchange the notes. "I accepted Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes after they were demonetised on the instructions of the manager. He said if I was accepting cash, I should deposit these notes as well and that the chairperson had ordered this. I had refused but the manager said there was pressure from the chairperson. I was very scared because five days before the note ban, two people had been transferred to Goa and Jaipur... the Bhavan sales in-charge would call me to the manager's room and give me old Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes to exchange and told me to give them to him. I committed the wrongdoing under pressure," Kumar claimed in his statement. Yadav, in his statement, claimed, "The manager called me to his cabin and asked me to exchange old notes. I said, 'sir, there might be a problem', but he said this belongs to the chairman and there was no need to worry."

US-Russia nuclear weapons inspection must as per New START Treaty, says US

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden stated on Thursday that unless the two countries' nuclear weapons installations are inspected again, talks on a treaty to replace the previous agreement restricting strategic nuclear forces between the two countries cannot proceed. The White House National Security Council spokesperson stated in an email that "the first step is to resume inspections under the existing New START Treaty and we have been trying to work with the Russians toward that end." She was referring to the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that the two nations signed in 2010. In another email, a spokeswoman for the State Department echoed this assertion. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the parties decided to suspend inspections of one other's strategic nuclear weapons installations in March 2020. As tensions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine have brought ties to their iciest point since the Cold War, discussions on restarting inspections have been going on for the past year without producing an agreement. The U.S. spokespeople were responding to reports this week from state-run Russian news agencies, which cited Russian officials as stating that the parties were debating the possibility of holding a meeting of a consultative panel to discuss New START-related matters. The NSC spokeswoman stated that the United States is ready to cooperate with Russia within the commission "to overcome

implementation concerns" and that there is "no reason that these issues cannot be properly resolved." The largest nuclear-armed nations in the world have declared themselves open to negotiations on a "framework" that would replace



New START, the last agreement that placed restrictions on the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons and the missiles, aircraft, and submarines that carry them. The deal, which was set to expire on February 5, 2021, was extended by Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin shortly after Biden took office last year. According to the agreement, the US and Russia agreed to limit the number of long-range missiles and bombers they might deploy to 700 and 1,550 strategic nuclear weapons, respectively. By the deadline of 2018, both parties fulfilled those obligations. Up to 18 inspections of strategic nuclear weapons facilities can be carried out annually by either side to verify if the other is complying with the treaty's limits.

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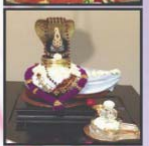


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Putin Brings India And China To Russia For War Games Defying US

India has also shelved moves to jointly produce helicopters and put on hold another plan to buy about 30 fighters from Russia



Russia is holding major military exercises involving China and India as President Vladimir Putin pushes back against attempts by the US and its allies to isolate him over his invasion of Ukraine. More than 50,000 troops and 5,000 pieces of military equipment, including more than 140 aircraft and 60 warships, are due to take

part in the week-long Vostok-2022 war games that start Thursday in Russia's far east, including naval drills in the Sea of Japan. The regular exercises bring together member states and partners of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization of former

Soviet republics. Even as the US is wooing India as a defense partner and urging it not to undermine international sanctions on Russia over the war in Ukraine, the New Delhi government is sending a small 75-strong military detachment to the army drills. They include Gurkha troops and representatives from the navy and air force, though India isn't dispatching naval or air assets to Russia. India, which has previously attended the exercises, has avoided taking sides over Russia's war in Ukraine, partly because of its reliance on Moscow as its main weapons supplier amid persistent border tensions with neighboring China and Pakistan. Still, the south Asian nation voted against Russia on the issue for the first time in a procedural vote

last week at the United Nations Security Council that allowed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to address the body via video link. India has also shelved moves to jointly produce helicopters and put on hold another plan to buy about 30 fighters from Russia. The Defense Ministry in Beijing said China's army, air and naval forces are taking part in the drills, which aim to strengthen military coordination. The Chinese Communist Party-backed Global Times said the exercises this year will focus on possible threats, especially from the US in the Pacific region. China has refused to criticize Russia for its six-month-long invasion of Ukraine

and condemned US and European sanctions against Moscow. But it has steered clear of siding with Putin by providing technology and military supplies for Russia's war effort because of the risk of US secondary sanctions. The Chinese role in the drills "cannot be seen as support" for Russia over the conflict, said Vasily Kashin, a Russian military expert at Moscow's Higher School of Economics. "It just shows us that the military-to-military ties are going on as usual." Russia's ally Belarus is also taking part in Vostok-2022 along with the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan and other states including Syria, Algeria, Mongolia, Laos and Nicaragua.

Experience of playing music in childhood and adolescence linked to better cognitive ability in old age: Study



People say music is therapy. Now, the latest study shows that music is also linked to the sharpness of the mind. According to a paper from the University of Edinburgh, playing music in childhood is linked to a sharper mind in old age, The Guardian reported. Published in the journal Psychological Science, the study was funded by Age UK and the Economic and Social Research Council. Researchers have attempted to establish a link between youth and better (or improved) thinking skills in old age. The paper mentioned that those people with more experience in playing a musical instrument showed better results on a test of cognitive ability as compared to those with less or no experience. The paper also mentioned that

the music experience is responsible for their socio-economic status, years of education, childhood cognitive ability and health in older age. Meanwhile, emeritus Professor Ian Deary, said: "We have to emphasise that the association we found between instrument-playing and lifetime cognitive improvement was small and that we cannot prove that the former caused the latter." "However, as we and others search for the many small effects that might contribute toward some people's brains ageing more healthily than others, these results are worth following up," added Deary, who is a former director of the Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology at the university. The candidates who took part

in the study were tested on a number of physical and mental functions as they grow older. The study even included retaking the standardised cognitive ability test each of the participants took as an 11-year-old. The questions were about verbal reasoning, spatial

awareness and numerical analysis. The Guardian mentioned that out of the 366 study participants, 117 reported some experience of playing a musical instrument. They gained experience mostly during childhood and

adolescence.

The report also noted that the participants were part of the "Lothian Birth Cohort 1936". It is a group of individuals from Edinburgh and the Lothians, born in 1936 and they took part in the Scottish Mental Survey of 1947.

On Ratan Tata's Plea Linked To Radia Tapes, Supreme Court Hearing Today

Radia tapes in Supreme Court: Ratan Tata has said the leak infringed on his right to privacy

New Delhi: Industrialist Ratan Tata's petition seeking an investigation into the leak of audio tapes in 2010 involving former corporate lobbyist Niira Radia will come up for hearing in the Supreme Court today - after a gap of eight years. Ratan Tata has said the leak infringed on his right to privacy. He filed the petition in 2011. It was last heard by the Supreme Court in 2014. Niira Radia's phone conversations with industrialists, journalists, government officers and other people holding key posts were tapped as part of a tax investigation over a decade ago. Her public relations firm, Vaishnavi Corporate Communications, which no longer exists, also counted industrialist Mukesh Ambani among its clients when her phones were tapped first in 2008 and then in 2009. In August 2012, Ratan Tata had asked the Supreme Court for a copy of the report submitted

by the government explaining how the tapes - the controversy which later came to be known as the "Radia tapes" - were leaked.



Ratan Tata's conversations with Niira Radia were among those carried by the media in 2010. He then took the government to court arguing that the release of the tapes amounted to infringement on his right to privacy. In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court in August 2017 had said that privacy is a constitutional right. Nine judges were unanimous in their finding, though they cited different reasons for their conclusion. The verdict on the right to privacy was also a major setback for the government, which had argued that the Constitution does not guarantee individual privacy as an inalienable fundamental right. The then Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had claimed that judges have agreed that "privacy as a fundamental right is subject to reasonable restrictions."

The political crisis plaguing the Hemant Soren government in Jharkhand

The MLAs of the ruling JMM-Congress-RJD coalition government met the Jharkhand governor to 'clear the air' on the Election Commission's recommendation seeking Chief Minister Hemant Soren's disqualification

With this declaration, Jharkhand Congress working president Bandhu Tirkey has brought short-term relief for the Hemant Soren-led Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and grand old party's coalition government in the state. Tirkey's statement came after a 10-member delegation of the Jharkhand government met Governor Ramesh Bais in Raj Bhavan at 4 pm today amid a looming threat to Hemant Soren's chair.

As per ANI, the Jharkhand Congress working president denied that Soren will resign, adding that governor Bais has sought legal opinion and will clear the matter in two days.

What prompted the ruling Jharkhand government's MLAs to meet the Governor? Let's understand the political crisis emanating in the state in detail:

JMM-Congress MLAs meet Governor

The Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from the ruling Jharkhand coalition government reportedly submitted a memorandum to Governor Bais amid reports of Hemant Soren's uncertain future as the chief minister.

"The purported selective leaks from Your Excellency's office are creating a state of chaos, confusion and uncertainty which vitiates the administration and governance of the state. This also encourages political brinkmanship to destabilise the democratically elected government headed by Hemant Soren by illegal means," PTI cited the letter by the MLAs as saying. The letter also stated that Soren's disqualification as an MLA will not affect the Jharkhand government which has the required numbers in the Assembly. The delegation urged Governor Bais to "clear the air" and "declare the opinion (if any) received from the Election Commission", the letter added.

After the meeting, Bandhu Tirkey told reporters that the governor has denied that the source of the "selective leaks" is in his office. Soren was not among the group of leaders that met Bais as he was holding a Cabinet meeting in Ranchi's Project Bhawan.

Sources told Indian Express that the Cabinet meeting chaired by

Hemant Soren is likely to take decisions on issues ranging from drought-like situation in the state to increase in amount given to people with incurable illnesses to the appointment of panchayat secretaries.

Why is Hemant Soren's future as chief minister uncertain?

Hemant Soren's future as chief minister hangs in the balance following multiple reports that the Election Commission (EC) has recommended his disqualification in an alleged office of profit case. Soren has been accused of violating electoral norms by extending a mining lease to himself. As per PTI, the EC sent its opinion to Governor Bais on 25 August. However, Raj Bhavan has not taken a decision yet.

The BJP, the petitioner in the office of profit case, had sought Soren's disqualification for violating Section 9 (A) of the Representation of the People Act.

The law disqualifies a government member for awarding contracts in conflict of interests.

The saffron party has asked Soren to quit on "moral grounds" and demanded a mid-term election in the state.

UPA MLAs shifted to Chhattisgarh

On 30 August, around 32 Jharkhand UPA MLAs constituting JMM, Congress and RJD, were shifted to the Mayfair Golf Resort in Chhattisgarh's Nava Raipur.

However, four Jharkhand ministers – Alamgir Alam, Banna Gupta, Rameshwar Oraon, and Badal Patralekh – were flown back to Ranchi on 31 August evening to attend Thursday's Cabinet meeting.

The ruling coalition has alleged that the opposition BJP will make attempts to poach MLAs to form a new government in Jharkhand. The Soren-led alliance has 49 of



the 81 MLAs in the House, out of which JMM has 30 legislators, the Congress has 18 and the RJD one. The BJP, which is the main opposition, has 26 MLAs in the Jharkhand Assembly.

The BJP was earlier accused of trying to topple the Soren government after three Congress MLAs were caught with Rs 50 lakh cash in West Bengal in July. The saffron party has denied these allegations.

What happens if Soren is disqualified?

If the governor, acting on EC's suggestion, disqualifies Hemant Soren as an MLA then he will no

longer be a part of the Jharkhand Assembly. He along with his Cabinet will have to tender their resignation.

Soren will have the option to retake the oath as chief minister and contest bypoll during the next six months to get re-elected as an MLA in the Jharkhand Assembly.

Jharkhand High Court advocate Hemant Kumar Shikarwar told PTI that the JMM-Congress alliance will also have the choice to elect someone else to the office of the chief minister if Soren cannot assume the top post immediately.

A new era of partnerships: Fostering inter-sectoral and collaborative philanthropy

In India, collaborative philanthropy is at a very nascent stage, but given how closely-knitted communities are in different cultures, the social conditions are ripe for collaborative efforts

Helen Keller's statement, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much," holds truer than ever when it comes to the development sector in India. Very often, multiple corporations and non-profit organisations are working on interventions in a particular area, where one organisation might be working towards ensuring infrastructural access for persons with disabilities, while another one might be working towards ensuring their education and livelihoods. This context poses an opportunity for both organisations to serve the same beneficiary, and therefore, coordinate and solve the issue that is interconnected. In the absence of this approach, their work becomes siloed, leading to a gap in the overall development of such communities across the country.

The siloed approach is usually funded by individual organisations. For instance, if in a community, a team working towards children's education receives more funding than the one ensuring water supply; children might still continue to fall sick from consumption of the contaminated water and fail to attend school. This will hinder the holistic progress of the community, and the impact of one team's work might reduce. In recent times, there is a serious need to shift perspectives on philanthropy and focus on the interconnectedness of social issues, enabling NGOs to plan long-term solutions. Collective action, where the efforts of various organisations are streamlined, is

essential for holistically addressing challenges faced by underserved communities. This is why collaborative philanthropy is the call of the hour. Even though collaborative philanthropy has commonly existed as a mode of partnership, it has not been utilised to its maximum in recent times. Philanthropy is known to bring investors, non-profit organisations, and corporates under one umbrella for a common cause, and collaborations are a great way for different organisations to work in tandem, investing their resources, and leveraging collective strengths to drive large-scale impact. A collaborative model brings different philanthropic organisations together, and through a collective financial model, has the potential to build a conducive ecosystem for the strengthening of grassroots organisations. Recently, the Bridgespan Group surveyed collaborative philanthropic efforts during the pandemic. The survey displayed that 70 per cent of the participants gave positive responses about the impact they could make collectively. For example, Covid Action Collaborative (CAC) brought in a collaboration of 150 organisations that offered a complete package of services from ensuring timely testing to providing clean water and sanitation.

Around two million people from 15 states could get access to their services because of the collaborative efforts. Similarly, Swasth Alliance joined forces with public, non-profit, and private organisations to channelise digital health

technologies during different waves of the pandemic. Along with OxygenForIndia (OFI), they ensured timely delivery of oxygen to not just COVID patients, but also those in trauma care or recovering from emergency surgeries. Insights and data from Swasth Alliance's existing work helped the other organisation to mobilise services in times of critical need, thereby creating an ecosystem conducive to cross-learning where organisations can leverage each other's knowledge and experience to craft better interventions. Such collaborative efforts are instrumental in addressing varied aspects of an issue and making a much larger impact. Not only can collaborative philanthropy help in mobilising greater amounts of funding, but it also brings a host of benefits. In many cases, the sharing of knowledge and insights have helped in better preparedness in terms of the future needs of a community. In India, various collaboratives have been instrumental in addressing distinct social issues. For example, the Collaborators for Transforming Education supported access to quality education in Maharashtra, National Faecal Sludge and Septage Management Alliance has addressed issues related to sanitation value chain in India, India Climate Collaborative has mobilised support to accelerate climate action in India, and the GROW Fund has supported grassroots organisations to build resilience and ease COVID-related distress faced by them.

Why has the US grounded its Chinook helicopters, and what it means for India



The US Army has grounded its fleet of CH-47 Chinook helicopters, which are also operated by the Indian Air Force. What are the problems with the helicopter and what are the implications of this development for the IAF?

The US Army has grounded its fleet of CH-47 Chinook helicopters after finding the helicopter to be at risk of engine fires. The Indian Air Force (IAF) also operates a fleet of Chinook Helicopters. What are the problems with

the helicopter and what are the implications of this development for the IAF?

Why has the US Army grounded Chinooks?

The US Army operates around 400 Chinook helicopters which are medium-lift, multi-role

helicopters manufactured by Boeing who perform a variety of tasks in support of Army operations. As per the news broken by The Wall Street Journal, the Chinook fleet has been grounded by the US Army as it is suspected that some

engine fires broke out on an unspecified number of helicopters. The same report said that while there have been no casualties because of these fires, yet a decision was taken to ground the helicopters as a precautionary

measure.

What has been the reaction of the manufacturers to this development?

While Boeing has not commented on the matter as yet, The Wall Street Journal states that the issue is with the engine manufactured by Honeywell International Inc. A spokesperson of the company was quoted as saying that some components of the engine, known as O-rings, were not as per the design specifications.

What implications does this development have for IAF?

The IAF operates a fleet of 15 Chinook helicopters and it has not grounded them as it awaits more word on the US development.

The IAF is learnt to have sought more information from the US about the grounding of the helicopters done by the US Army. The Chinooks were inducted into the IAF in 2019 in a ceremony at Chandigarh. One Helicopter Unit of Chinooks is based in Chandigarh while the other is based at Mohanbari airbase in Assam.

In Ratan Tata vs Radia Tapes, Supreme Court Hearing After 8 Years

Radia tapes in Supreme Court: Ratan Tata has said the leak infringed on his right to privacy

Industrialist Ratan Tata's petition seeking an investigation into the leak of audio tapes in 2010 involving former corporate lobbyist Niira Radia will come up for hearing in the Supreme Court today - after a gap of eight years.

Ratan Tata has said the leak infringed on his right to privacy.

He filed the petition in 2011. It was last heard by the Supreme Court in 2014.

Niira Radia's phone conversations with industrialists, journalists, government officers and other people holding key posts were tapped as part of a tax investigation over a decade ago. Her public relations firm, Vaishnavi Corporate Communications, which no longer exists, also counted



industrialist Mukesh Ambani among its clients when her phones were tapped first in 2008 and then in 2009.

In August 2012, Ratan Tata

had asked the Supreme Court for a copy of the report submitted by the government explaining how the tapes - the controversy which later came

to be known as the "Radia tapes" - were leaked.

Ratan Tata's conversations with Niira Radia were among those carried by the media in

2010. He then took the government to court arguing that the release of the tapes amounted to infringement on his right to privacy.

In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court in August 2017 had said that privacy is a constitutional right. Nine judges were unanimous in their finding, though they cited different reasons for their conclusion. The verdict on the right to privacy was also a major setback for the government, which had argued that the Constitution does not guarantee individual privacy as an inalienable fundamental right. The then Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had claimed that judges have agreed that "privacy as a fundamental right is subject to reasonable restrictions."

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Study Says Excessive Screen Time On Devices Linked To Obesity And Psychological Problems

(News Agency) Obesity and psychological issues have been linked to excessive screen time. A new study in fruit flies has discovered a new problem: the blue light emitted by these devices may have an effect on our basic biological functions. The findings of the study were published in *Frontiers in Aging*.

"Excessive exposure to blue light from everyday devices, such as TVs, laptops, and phones, may have detrimental effects on a wide range of cells in our body, from skin and fat cells, to sensory neurons,"

said Dr Jadwiga Giebultowicz, a professor at the Department of Integrative Biology at Oregon State University and senior author of this study. "We are the first to show that the levels of specific metabolites – chemicals that are essential for cells to function correctly – are altered in fruit flies exposed to blue light."

"Our study suggests that avoidance of excessive blue light exposure may be a good anti-aging strategy," advised Giebultowicz. The changes recorded by the researchers suggest that the cells are operating at suboptimal level, and this may cause their premature death, and further, explain their previous findings that blue light accelerates aging.

"LEDs have become the main illumination in display screens such as phones, desktops and TVs, as well

as ambient lighting, so humans in advanced societies are exposed to blue light through LED lighting during most of their waking hours. The signaling chemicals in the cells of flies and humans are the same, so there is potential for negative effects of blue light on humans," explains Giebultowicz.

Future work hopes to study the effects directly on human cells.

"We used a fairly strong blue light on the flies – humans are exposed to less intense light, so cellular damage may be less dramatic. The results from this study suggests that future research involving human cells is needed to establish the extent to which human cells may show similar changes in metabolites involved in energy production in response to excessive exposure to blue light," concluded Giebultowicz.

Indian scientists find how black fever causing parasite spreads

Visceral Leishmaniasis, also known as Kala-Azar or black fever, is spread by sandfly bites

(News Agency) In a major medical breakthrough, Indian scientists have discovered how the *Leishmania* parasite, which causes black fever, targets and spreads faster in the body. The *Leishmania* parasite hijacks SUMOylation, a key regulator of various cellular, nuclear, metabolic, and immunological processes, to spread in the body.

Visceral Leishmaniasis, also known as Kala-Azar or black fever, is spread by sandfly bites, which carry 'Leishmania donovani' a parasite in their hair. The vector flies live in muddy areas and scientists have long been looking at understanding the mechanism of the parasite to devise

better treatment strategies. "For the discovery of a drug-like candidate with higher efficacy and less toxicity, a better understanding of the interactions between host and parasite is essential. Leishmaniasis infects humans and replicates intracellular within macrophages, the cells that normally engaged in protecting the host from pathogens," researchers said in a statement.

Led by a team of researchers from the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), they discovered that *Leishmania* parasites modulate the host signaling mechanisms to suppress the host's protective immune responses. "This discovery will open avenues for the

development of novel drugs with a targeted approach for the control of this neglected disease," Dr. Shailja Singh, who is part of the study said. The study published in the journal *Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology* revealed the involvement of the SUMOylation pathway in the modulation of protective immune responses and thus favoring parasite survival and that targeting of SUMOylation pathway can provide a starting point for the design and development of novel therapeutic interventions to combat leishmaniasis. "With increasing resistance to antileishmanial drugs, it seems promising to target host-

directed approaches for therapeutic interventions and drug development. We are focusing on various aspects of the development of drug-like molecules to combat this disease," Professor Anand Ranganathan, another corresponding author of the paper said. In 2020, ten countries like Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Eritrea, India, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen, accounted for more than 90 per cent of all new kala-azar cases reported to the WHO. The symptoms of kala-azar include anemia, weight loss, spleen and liver enlargement, and irregular fever episodes lasting several days.

Tea drinkers enjoy possible health benefits: Study

(News Agency) According to a significant study, tea can be a healthy part of one's diet and those who drink it may even have a slight edge in terms of longevity over those who don't.

A cup of tea just got a bit more relaxing. Tea can be part of a healthy diet and people who drink tea may even be a little more likely to live longer than those who don't, according to a large study. Tea contains helpful substances known to reduce inflammation. Past studies in China and Japan, where green tea is popular, suggested health benefits. The new study extends the good news to the U.K.'s favorite drink: black tea.

Scientists from the U.S. National Cancer Institute used a large database project that asked about

the tea habits of nearly a half million adults in the United Kingdom, then followed them for up to 14 years. They adjusted for risk factors such as health, socioeconomic, smoking, alcohol intake, diet, age, race and gender. Higher tea intake — two or more cups daily — was linked to a modest benefit: a 9% to 13% lower risk of death from any cause vs non-tea drinkers. Tea temperature, or adding milk or sugar, didn't change the results.

The study, published Monday in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, found the association held up for heart disease deaths, but there was no clear trend

for cancer deaths. Researchers weren't sure why, but it's possible there weren't enough cancer deaths for any effect to show up, said Maki Inoue-Choi, who led the study.



A study like this, based on observing people's habits and health, can't prove cause and effect. "Observational studies like this always raise the question: Is there

something else about tea drinkers that makes them healthier?" said Marion Nestle, a professor of food studies at New York University. "I like tea. It's great to drink. But a cautious interpretation seems like a good idea."

There's not enough evidence to advise changing tea habits, said Inoue-Choi. "If you drink one cup a day already, I think that is good," she said. "And please enjoy your cup of tea." The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content. This story was first published on Aug. 29, 2022. It was updated on Aug. 30, 2022, to correct how U.S. National Cancer Institute scientists gathered data.

Zombie ice threatens global sea level rise, 10-inch jump unavoidable

Even if the whole world stopped burning fossil fuels today, the Greenland Ice Sheet would still lose about 110 quadrillion tonnes of ice



(News Agency) As climate change continues to wreak havoc across the world with extreme droughts in China to heavy floods in parts of India and Pakistan, another major concern is brewing in an isolated corner of the planet. Greenland is on course to raise global sea levels by at least 27 centimeters or 10.6 inches.

The latest forecast is nearly twice as much as the previous predictions and it is being attributed to something

called zombie ice. This dead ice, while still attached to thicker areas of ice, is no longer getting replenished by parent glaciers now receiving less snow and, without any replenishment, is melting from climate change unchecked.

Researchers from the Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland have noted that even if the whole world stopped burning fossil fuels today, the Greenland Ice Sheet would still lose

about 110 quadrillion tonnes of ice leading to an average global sea level rise of at least 27 centimeters.

"It is a very conservative rock-bottom minimum. Realistically, we will see this figure more than double within this century. In the foreseeable scenario that global warming will only continue, the contribution of the Greenland Ice Sheet to sea level rise will only continue increasing," Professor Jason Box, who led the study, said in a statement. The study published in the journal *Nature Climate Change* states that the sea level could rise as much as 30 centimeters. Scientists looked at the climate in the Arctic from 2000 to 2019 and the imbalance it has created in the Greenland Ice Sheet and calculated the shape of the ice is set in motion to correct this imbalance. "When we take the extreme melt year 2012 and take it as a hypothetical average constant climate later this century, the committed mass loss from the Greenland Ice Sheet more than doubles to 78 cm,"

Professor Jason Box added.

In perfect equilibrium, snowfall in the mountains in Greenland flows down and recharges and thickens the sides of glaciers, balancing out what's melting on the edges. But in the last few decades, there's less replenishment and more melting, creating imbalance. Study authors looked at the ratio of what's being added to what's being lost and calculated that 3.3% of Greenland's total ice volume will melt no matter what happens with the world cutting carbon pollution. Using a rigorous glaciological theory abiding the physics of ice flow based on measurements from satellites and other observations, they calculated the average snow line needed to bring the ice sheet back into balance. This is the first time scientists calculated a minimum ice loss — and accompanying sea level rise — for Greenland, one of Earth's two massive ice sheets that are slowly shrinking because of climate change from burning coal, oil, and natural gas.

WMO forecasts first 'triple-dip' La Nina of the century

The WMO's El Nino/La Nina Update foresaw the current La Nina - which started in September 2020 - continuing over the next six months

(News Agency) The La Nina weather pattern will last until at least the end of the year, becoming the first time this century it will

and decreasing to 55% in December-February 2022-2023.

La Nina refers to the cooling of ocean surface temperatures coupled with winds and rainfall. It usually has the opposite impact on weather and climate as El Nino, which is the warm phase of the so-called El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO). "It is exceptional to have three consecutive years with a La Nina



have spanned three consecutive northern winters, the World Meteorological Organization predicted on Wednesday. La Nina conditions in the tropical Pacific strengthened as trade winds intensified from mid-July to mid-August, affecting temperatures and precipitation patterns and exacerbating drought and flooding in different parts of the world. The WMO's El Nino/La Nina Update foresaw the current La Nina - which started in September 2020 - continuing over the next six months, with a 70% chance in September-November 2022

event. Its cooling influence is temporarily slowing the rise in global temperatures but it will not halt or reverse the long-term warming trend," WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a statement. He said the worsening drought in the Horn of Africa and southern South America bore the hallmarks of La Nina, as did above-average rainfall in southeast Asia and Australasia. "The new La Nina Update, unfortunately, confirms regional climate projections that the devastating drought in the Horn of Africa will worsen and affect millions of people," he added.

Nasa to re-attempt launching world's most powerful rocket to Moon on Saturday

(News Agency) Days after it scrubbed the launch, just minutes before liftoff, Nasa will re-attempt launching the Space Launch System (SLS) to the Moon on Saturday. The spacecraft is being targeted to lift off at 2:17 pm EDT (11:47 pm IST) on September 3.

The Orion spacecraft on top of the world's most powerful rocket will lift off on a maiden voyage to the Moon and back from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The decision was taken after mission managers met on Tuesday to discuss the issues with the engine that appeared on Monday.

Nasa said that during that launch attempt, teams were not able to chill down the four RS-25 engines to approximately -251 degrees Celsius, with engine 3 showing higher temperatures than the others. "The updated procedures would perform the chill down test of the engines, also called the kick start bleed test, about 30 to 45 minutes earlier in the countdown during the liquid hydrogen fast fill liquid phase for the core stage," Nasa said in a blog update. Meanwhile, launchpad 39B is also being

configured to enable engineers to access to the purge can on the tail service mast umbilical and once the access is established, technicians will perform assessments and torque connection points where necessary. While there are predictions of rain on launch day, the mission management team will reconvene on Thursday to review data and overall readiness. The 322-foot (98-meter) rocket — the most powerful ever built by NASA — remains on its pad at Kennedy Space Center with an empty crew capsule on top. The Space Launch System rocket will attempt to send the capsule around the moon and back. No one will be aboard, just three test dummies. If successful, it will be the first capsule to fly to the moon since NASA's Apollo program 50 years ago. Already years behind schedule, the \$4.1 billion test flight is the opening shot in NASA's Artemis moon-exploration program, named after the twin sister of Apollo in Greek mythology. Astronauts could strap in as soon as 2024 for a lap around the moon and actually attempt a lunar landing in 2025.

Something is making Oxygen on Mars

(News Agency) Mars is Earth's neighbour and favourite candidate of scientists to search for extra-terrestrial life. The planet is roughly the same size of Earth. It has an atmosphere and a large section of the scientific community thinks that millions of years ago, it had liquid water on its surface and even had life.

Mars surely does have an atmosphere. But it is very thin. It is 100 times thinner than Earth's atmosphere. And it is abundant in Carbon Dioxide. So a human trying to breathe-in Martian air would soon stop breathing.

But there is something that is making Oxtgen on the red planet. No, it is not some secret jungle but a briefcase-sized

machine attached to NASA's Perseverance rover. The machine is called MOXIE (Mars Oxygen In-Situ Resource Utilization (ISRU) Experiment).

MOXIE uses Carbon Dioxide in Martian and splits it into Carbon Monoxide and Oxygen. In the year 2021, when Perseverance landed on the surface of Mars, MOXIE made Oxygen seven times.

"This is the first demonstration of actually using resources on the surface of another planetary body, and transforming them chemically into something that would be useful for a human mission," says former NASA astronaut and MOXIE deputy principal investigator Jeffrey Hoffman of MIT, as quoted by EurekaAlert.



Europe plan for floating gas terminals raises climate fears

Some scientists say they worry that the floating terminals will end up becoming a long-term supplier of Europe's vast energy needs that could last years, if not decades

(News Agency) As winter nears, European nations, desperate to replace the natural gas they once bought from Russia, have embraced a short-term fix: A series of roughly 20 floating terminals that would receive liquefied natural gas from other countries and convert it into heating fuel.

Yet the plan, with the first floating terminals set to deliver natural gas by year's end, has raised alarms among scientists who fear the long-term consequences for the environment. They warn that these terminals would perpetuate Europe's reliance on natural gas, which releases climate-warming methane and carbon dioxide when it's produced, transported and burned.

Some scientists say they worry that the floating terminals will end up becoming a long-term supplier of Europe's vast energy needs that could last years, if not decades. Such a trend could set back emission-reduction efforts that experts say haven't moved fast enough to slow the damage being done to the global environment.

Much of the liquefied natural gas, or LNG, that Europe hopes to receive is expected to come from the United States. The need arose after Russia's invasion of Ukraine shattered its ties with Europe and led to a cutoff of most of the natural gas that Moscow had long provided. Along the U.S. Gulf Coast, export terminals are expanding, and many residents there are alarmed about the rise in drilling for gas and the resulting loss of land as well as extreme weather changes associated with burning fossil fuels. "Building this immense LNG infrastructure will lock the world into continued reliance on fossil fuels and continued climate damage for decades to come," said John Sterman, a climate



scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Natural gas contributes significantly to climate change — both when it's burned, becoming carbon dioxide, and through leakages of methane, an even more potent greenhouse gas. Yet European nations, which for years have been leaders in shifting to cleaner energy, have proposed bringing more than 20 floating LNG terminals into their ports to help compensate for the loss of Russia's natural gas. The terminals, which tower over homes and stretch nearly 1,000 feet (304 meters), can store roughly 6 billion cubic feet (170,000 cubic meters) of LNG and convert it into gas for homes and businesses. They can be built faster and more cheaply than onshore import terminals, though they're costlier to operate, according to the International Gas Union.

"Every country needs to prepare for a scenario where there may be a cut in Russian supplies," said Nikoline Bromander, an analyst with Rystad Energy. "If you are dependent, you need to have a backup plan."

Many environmental scientists argue that

the money being earmarked for the ships — which cost about \$500 million each to build, according to Rystad — would be better spent on rapidly adopting clean-energy or efficiency upgrades that could reduce energy consumption.

Constructing more solar or wind farms, which takes years, wouldn't immediately replace Russian gas. But with adequate funding, Sterman suggested, greater energy efficiencies — in homes, buildings and factories, along with the deployment of wind, solar and other technologies — could vastly reduce Europe's need to replace all the gas it's lost. Germany, among Europe's strongest advocates for the floating LNG terminals, is expecting five of the ships and has committed roughly 3 billion euros to the effort, according to Global Energy Monitor. Germany has also approved a law to fast-track the terminals' development, suspending the requirement for environmental assessments. It's a move that troubles environmental groups.

"It's totally obvious," asserted Sascha Müller-Kraenner, CEO of Environmental

Action Germany, that "the provisions of the law were developed in close dialogue with the gas industry." Germany's government and energy industry have defended their embrace of the LNG terminals as an urgent response to the loss of most of the Russian gas they had long received, which they fear Moscow will shut off completely.

"In an exceptional situation such as this, where it's a matter of Germany's gas supply security, it is justified to accelerate the approval process," Germany's energy industry association, BDEW, said in a statement.

Susanne Ungrad, a spokeswoman for Germany's Economy and Energy Ministry, noted that efforts are being made to lower methane emissions in exporting countries like the United States. And she said that in pursuing the construction of LNG terminals, Europe authorities will conduct comprehensive assessments.

Greig Aitken, an analyst at Global Energy Monitor, noted that a terminal that's set to open near Gdansk, Poland, has signed contracts with American LNG suppliers that extend well past 2030. That could make it problematic for the European Union to meet its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

Italy, Greece, France, the Netherlands, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Slovenia and the U.K. all have one or more floating LNG terminals planned, according to Rystad Energy. In some cases, proponents argue, the ships could aid the environmental cause. They note, for example, that as Russian gas supplies have dwindled, communities in Germany and elsewhere have been burning coal, which typically produces more emissions than natural gas.

Indigo, Virgin Atlantic enter into codeshare agreement

(News Agency) : India's largest airline IndiGo has entered into a codeshare agreement with UK carrier Virgin Atlantic. This is the seventh codeshare partnership for IndiGo. IndiGo currently has codeshare partnerships with Turkish Airlines, Qatar Airways, Qantas, KLM, American Airlines, and Air France. Under a codeshare agreement, airlines agree to sell seats in each other's flights in order to provide their respective customers a wider network. This codeshare partnership will mean customers booking a Virgin Atlantic ticket for Delhi or Mumbai will be able to avail a connecting flight to seven additional cities in India via IndiGo. Virgin Atlantic currently operates three daily



flights to India, two to Delhi and one to Mumbai. The airline will be able to provide its customers the connectivity to Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Amritsar, and Goa via the initial codeshare partnership. "We see India as the fastest growing aviation

market. We have partnered with IndiGo and we see this relationship growing. IndiGo is the largest airline in India and we will be able to tap the domestic traffic from India. We would like to expand in Delhi and Mumbai but currently we are restricted by air service agreement. We

would also like to explore new destinations. An announcement on expansion is possible over the next few years," said Juha Jarvinen, Chief Commercial Officer at Virgin Atlantic. The agreement will be expanded to 16 destinations throughout India by the end of the year. The additional destinations will include Kochi, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Pune, Coimbatore, Nagpur, Vadodara, Indore and Visakhapatnam. In addition, outbound IndiGo customers will be able to opt for Virgin Atlantic's extensive US network operated via London Heathrow. The agreement will also allow Virgin Atlantic's Flying Club members to earn both Virgin Points and Tier Points on every codeshare with IndiGo.

Centre may regulate cryptocurrency over terror funding fears: Sources

In view of the risks posed by the digital currency, the finance ministry is mulling imposing regulations on cryptocurrency, sources said



partners and international organisations on global regulation of private cryptocurrencies, sources said. The dialogue over regulation on cryptocurrency is likely to intensify in the coming months. "Cryptocurrencies are, by definition, borderless and require international collaboration to prevent regulatory arbitrage. Therefore, any legislation for regulation or for banning can be effective only after significant international collaboration on evaluation of the risks and benefits and evolution of common taxonomy and standards," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said earlier.

(News Agency) The finance ministry is considering regulations on cryptocurrency, sources told India Today. The development comes amid continued questions over financial instability and the risks of digital assets. Sources said that most countries see cryptocurrency as a source of terror funding and money laundering. On the sidelines of G20 meeting, India held discussions with other bilateral

India to become 6th largest insurance market in the next ten years

(SAI Bureau With regard to Indian life insurance industry, the report said it will grow at an exceptional rate of 6.6 per cent (in real terms) in 2022 and further grow at 7.1 per cent in 2023. With regard to Indian life insurance industry, the report said it will grow at an exceptional rate of 6.6 per cent (in real terms) in 2022 and further grow at 7.1 per cent in 2023. Total insurance premiums in India will grow by an average 14 per cent per annum in nominal local currency terms over the next decade, making India the 6th largest in terms of total premium volume by 2032 from 10th largest in 2021, Swiss Re Institute said in its report. With regard to Indian life insurance industry, the report said it will grow at an exceptional rate of 6.6 per cent (in real terms) in 2022 and further grow at 7.1 per cent in

2023. Considering the projected growth rate, the life insurance premiums in India are set to cross USD 100 billion for the first time in 2022, it said. As far as non-life insurance market is concerned, the report said it has returned to a growth of 5.8 per cent (in real terms) in 2021 after a slight contraction in 2020. Total insurance premiums in India will grow by an average 14 per cent per annum in nominal local currency terms over the next decade, making India the 6th largest in terms of total premium volume by 2032 from 10th largest in 2021, Swiss Re Institute said in its report. With regard to Indian life insurance industry, the report said it will grow at an exceptional rate of 6.6 per cent (in real terms) in 2022 and further grow at 7.1 per cent in 2023.

Reliance Group ushers in Isha Ambani as leader of retail business

Mukesh Ambani, at the company's annual general meeting, announced his daughter's new position as leader of the group's retail business

(News Agency) Making the transition of the company's leadership to the next generation more inevitable, the chairman of Reliance Industries, Mukesh Ambani, handed his daughter Isha Ambani the reins of Reliance Group's retail business. His son, Akash Ambani, was made the group's new energy business in the succession plan. Mukesh Ambani made the announcement at the company's 45th AGM (Annual General Meeting) on Monday. Akash and Isha had made appearances multiple times at the company's general meetings in the past. However, they took centre stage as Reliance Jio and Reliance Retail

leaders this time.

The Ambani twins (Isha and Akash) made some significant announcements at the meeting. Taking centre stage, the billionaire's eldest son Akash Ambani spoke about Reliance Jio 5G and said it would be a breakthrough in broadband speed while drastically lowering latency. "We don't get one Gbps even on many of the fixed broadband networks in our country," he said. Revealing the name of the 5G plan, Akash said that it would be named Jio Air Fiber. He said that Jio 5G would potentially improve the lives of millions of Indians in agriculture, healthcare and education. "With 5G being rolled out in

India, the current 800 million connected internet devices will double to 1.5 billion connected internet devices in just a year," said Akash. Isha Ambani, speaking about Reliance Retail, said they served over 200 million registered customers at Reliance retail's physical stores and digital platforms, equivalent to the collective population of the UK, France and Italy. Reliance Retail's digital commerce platforms continued their growth with nearly six lakh orders delivered every day, an increase of 2.5 times over last year. JioMart is delivering in 260 towns, she said. Isha Ambani, disclosing the company's plans, said their brand's presence was

strengthened after they launched new products across staples, home, personal care, and general merchandise categories. They also launched the WhatsApp-JioMart partnership, she said. She said the AJIO business gives merchant partners across 3,500 towns access to over 8,000 brands and a wide portfolio of their own brands. "Last year, we sold over 43 crore garments, enough to clothe the population of US and Canada," said Isha Ambani. Isha Ambani further stated that they are working on a 10-year blueprint to make the foundation bigger and more impactful. Akash Ambani was made the chairman of Reliance Jio in June this year.

Now, GST on cancellation of confirmed train tickets, hotel bookings

The Finance Ministry has said that since cancellation is related to services, the cancellation charge will now attract GST

(News Agency) The cancellation of confirmed train tickets would now be costlier as it would attract Goods and Services Tax (GST), according to a circular issued by the Ministry of Finance on August 3. As per the circular issued by the Finance Ministry's Tax Research Unit, booking of tickets is a 'contract', under which the service provider (IRCTC/Indian Railways) promises to provide services to the customer. As per the notification, the cancellation charged for a first class or AC coach ticket would attract 5 per cent GST, which is the rate levied on the ticket. The same logic would be applicable to cancellation of air travel or hotel accommodation, where the cancellation charges would be taxed at the same GST rate as applicable to the principal service.



According to the Ministry, the cancellation charge is a payment instead of a breach of contract, so GST has to be paid. Cancellation of a ticket in any such situation would now attract GST at 5 per cent on the cancellation charges.

"When the contract is breached by the passenger, the service provider is

compensated with a small amount, collected as a cancellation charge. Since the cancellation charge is a payment, and not breach of contract, it will attract GST," the notification read. For example, cancellation charges of railway tickets for a class would attract GST at the same rate as applicable to the class of travel (i.e. 5%

GST on first class or air-conditioned coach ticket and nil for other classes such as second sleeper class). Same is the case for air travel. If one cancels the bookings of a particular class, then the same GST rate applicable for booking seats and berths for that class will be applied. For instance, the rate is 5 per cent for first-class or AC coaches and the cancellation fee for this category is Rs 240, then the total cancellation free will be Rs 252. No GST is applicable on other categories and second sleeper class. Indian Railways charges Rs 240 for cancellation when the ticket is cancelled 48 hours or more before the scheduled departure of the train. If the confirmed ticket is cancelled before 48 hours to 12 hours from the scheduled departure of the train, 25 per cent of the ticket amount is charged as a cancellation fee.

Noida Twin Towers razed, but what next for Supertech Group that built them?

In an interview with India Today, Supertech Group Chairman RK Arora spoke about what will be the impact of Twin Towers demolition on the firm



(News Agency) A decade-long legal battle finally ended on Sunday with the demolition of the Supertech Twin Towers in Noida's Sector 93A. The 100-metre-tall structures were brought down nearly a year after the Supreme Court found them in violation of building norms and ordered them to be razed.

The fall of these iconic towers has sent a strong message to builders and officials colluding in corruption. But the razing of the Twin Towers has also posed some tough questions to Supertech Group. How will the demolition of the Twin Towers affect the financial position of Supertech Group? And will the company be able to complete its remaining unfinished projects? India Today spoke to Supertech Group Chairman RK Arora to get answers to the above questions. Supertech Group chairman RK Arora has expressed confidence that the demolition of the Twin Towers will not affect other projects.

Even before the Twin Towers were reduced to rubble, the company had issued a statement saying that it has delivered more than 70,000 flats and the demolition of these two towers with 952 flats will not affect the rest of the company's projects. Notably, Twin Towers held only about 1 per cent of the total under-construction and delivered flats of the company. According to RK Arora, the company has already made 70,000 flats and about 20,000 flats are under construction. In total, the firm has been involved in the construction of 90,000 flats, of which the Twin Towers' 952 flats make up just 1 per cent. RK Arora pointed out that the Supertech Group is valued at over Rs 10,000 crore. However, the firm had to suffer a loss of 500 crore due to the Twin Towers, including construction and refund, which would make it 5 per cent of the total valuation.

This amount cannot be considered a small amount, nor can a loss of 5 per cent be considered a minor loss. Supertech Group faces cash crunch. According to RK Arora, the Supertech Group is facing a cash crunch. In such a situation, to complete the remaining 20,000 apartments, which have been built up to 60 to 80 per cent, the firm is trying to arrange funding. Presently, as the real estate market faces troubles of its own, the Supertech Group is finding it difficult to arrange funding, RK Arora said. He, however, assured that the construction of the remaining apartments would be finished in the next two years. Only 1 project facing insolvency, says RK Arora. Supertech Group chairman RK Arora claims that

only one project of Supertech Group has gone into the insolvency process. This project is Ecovillage-2, located in Greater Noida West i.e. Noida Extension. According to Arora, except for 3009 flats of this project, no other project of the company is in disputed condition. He said the firm is trying to arrange for last-mile funding to finish other projects soon.

4.5% of Supertech's flats in the disputed category. During the inauguration of the two towers of Supernova in 2018, the Supertech Group's Managing Director, Mohit Arora, had said that only 2 per cent of the firm's flats are in dispute. The remaining 98 per cent part is clear and there is no dispute on that, he said. The Twin towers

were also included in this 2 per cent at that time. The company said that 3009 flats in Eco Village-2 had come under insolvency. In total, 4000 flats of Supertech Group- 952 flats of the now demolished Twin Towers and 3009 flats of Eco Village-2 are disputed. This means that 4.5 per cent of the company's total flats fall under the disputed category. However, the homebuyers of Twin Towers flats have been given refunds. And so, excluding the Twin Towers, only 3 per cent of the Supertech Group's projects are disputed. But, from 2018 to 2022, the company's disputed project has seen a rise of 1 per cent. In such a situation, any negative windfall would mean that the company will not be able to deliver on its promises.

Pakistan inflation hits 47-year high before full impact of flood

(SAI Bureau) Pakistan's inflation accelerated for a sixth straight month to hit a fresh record in August, with the deadly floods risk jolting prices further. Consumer prices rose 27.26% last month from a year earlier, according to data released by the government Thursday. That compares with a median estimate for a 26.6% rise in a Bloomberg survey of economists and a 24.93% jump in July. Pakistan's inflation is the highest since May 1975, according to Zeeshan Azhar, analyst at Foundation Securities Pvt. citing central bank data. The inflation print comes as the nation faces a looming food crisis after the catastrophic flooding in the latter part of August that would require more imports,

adding pressure to its fragile finances. Rice and cotton crops were damaged along with vegetables like onions and tomatoes. Deadly Floods Inundate Farms in Pakistan, Flushing Away Crops Earlier this week, the South Asian nation secured \$1.1 billion in loan from the International Monetary Fund to avert a default and pave the way for more funding. Food inflation quickened to 29.5% year-on-year while transport surged 63%, according to data. Meanwhile, further hikes in the fuel tax, as well as rise in power tariffs will continue to drive prices higher, according to Bloomberg Economics. Pakistan's central bank kept rates steady last month after raising borrowing cost by 525 basis points this year.

Raveena Tandon's daughter Rasha celebrates Ganesh Chaturthi with her, fans call her 'Tara Sutaria 2.0'

Raveena Tandon, daughter Rasha Thadani celebrated Ganesh Chaturthi and also posed for pictures. Reacting to a video, fans called Rasha 'Tara Sutaria 2.0'. Watch video.



(NewsAgency) Actor Raveena Tandon and her daughter Rasha Thadani posed for the paparazzi as they stepped out on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi. Taking to Instagram, a paparazzo account posted a video on Wednesday as the mother-daughter duo smiled for the camera and also thanked the camera persons. (Also Read | Raveena Tandon shares pics with daughter Rasha from wildlife safari trip) In the clip, Raveena and Rasha were also seen folding hands at the paparazzi. For the

occasion, Raveena wore a long pink and white dress and had a small basket in her hand. Rasha opted for mustard ethnic wear and heels.

Reacting to the video, fans compared Rasha to actor Tara Sutaria. A person wrote, "Tara Sutaria jaise lagti hai kisi ne notice kiya ho to (She looks like Tara Sutaria if anyone has noticed)," read another comment. "I thought it was Tara Sutaria," said an Instagram user. "Mini Tara Sutaria?" asked a fan.

A person also commented, "Pretty just like her mom." "Raveena's daughter looks next Alia Bhatt," wrote a fan. "Next upcoming actress," read a comment. "Mumma miniature," said another person.

Raveena also shared glimpses on Instagram from Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations with her family members. In the first picture, Raveena was seen doing puja in front of a Ganesha idol. She also featured with her husband Anil Thadani, and their children Ranbirvardhan and

Rasha in another picture as they took blessing from the deity.

The actor also posted photos of other family members as they gathered around in front of an idol. Sharing the photos, Raveena captioned the post, "All about today!" She added the hashtags -festivities, Ganesh Chaturthi, Om Ganeshay Namah and Ganpatibappam Morya. Rasha posted her pictures on Instagram wearing the mustard outfit. Sharing the pictures, she didn't heart and folded hands emojis.

Anil and Raveena tied the knot in 2004. They are parents to two children--Rasha and Ranbirvardhan. Raveena, in 1995, adopted two daughters Pooja and Chaya when she was just 21 years old. Both of them are married and also have children of their own. Raveena was last seen in KGF: Chapter 2 alongside Yash, Sanjay Dutt, Prakash Raj, Malavika Avinash, and Srinidhi Shetty, among others. The second part released on April 14 this year. The first film came out in 2018.

Argument that 'boycott Bollywood' would affect poor technicians is wrong, says 'The Kashmir Files' Pallavi Joshi

(NewsAgency) The year 2022 has seen a number of trends in the entertainment world. South films have had a greater success rate than Hindi films, smaller, unheralded films have worked wonders while bigger ones have failed, and most big films have faced calls of boycott for one reason or the other. The hashtag 'boycott Bollywood' has trended almost nonstop on Twitter over the past few months with merely the target changing each week. While actors

and filmmakers have urged people not to boycott their films without watching, some have even argued that such boycott affects the thousands of poor technicians and crew members too. Also read: Vijay Deverakonda says boycott trends don't just affect Aamir Khan 'but also

the economy' Whether the boycott Bollywood trend has had any impact on films' performance or not is arguable. But many have said that boycotting films affects the poor technicians and crew members more than the stars and producers, most of whom are quite rich already. Vijay Deverakonda, who made his Bollywood debut with Liger last week, went on to argue that the boycott hurts the whole economy. However, not everyone agrees. Pallavi Joshi, whose film The Kashmir Files is the highest-grossing Hindi film this year, says the argument is incorrect. Speaking with Hindustan Times,

Pallavi Joshi, who starred in and produced The Kashmir Files, talks about the 'boycott Bollywood' trend and the arguments against

Pallavi Joshi reacts to the arguments against the boycott trend and says, "Let me tell you one thing--no matter what happens, there won't be a scenario where films will not be made. As long as films are made, people will get paid unless, of course, there is a pandemic again where everything comes to a standstill. But that is nature. But the film industry won't be put under a lock and key. That's a very Utopian thought. It hasn't happened and will never

happen." Talking about the argument that non-performance of films affects the technicians and crew members, Pallavi says, "To actually say that think about those 250 people who work on our films and what about their livelihood is a wrong argument. They have already been paid. After the release, it's only the producer, the distributor, and the exhibitor that get stuck. Actors, technicians, all the daily wage workers have been paid by then."

Pallavi starred in and co-produced The Kashmir Files, which was directed by her husband Vivek Agnihotri. The film, which also starred Mithun Chakraborty, Anupam Kher, Darshan Kumar, and Bhasha Sumbli, emerged as one of the most unexpected hits of 2022. The film grossed over ₹300 crore on just a ₹15-crore budget with no 'big stars' in the cast. And now, it has also found itself among the contenders for India's pick for the Oscars this year as well.





Aamir Khan travels to San Francisco post Laal Singh Chaddha box office crash, gets clicked with fan

Aamir Khan flew to San Francisco for a break after his film Laal Singh Chaddha crashed at the box office. He posed for a picture with his fan, who shared it on social media.

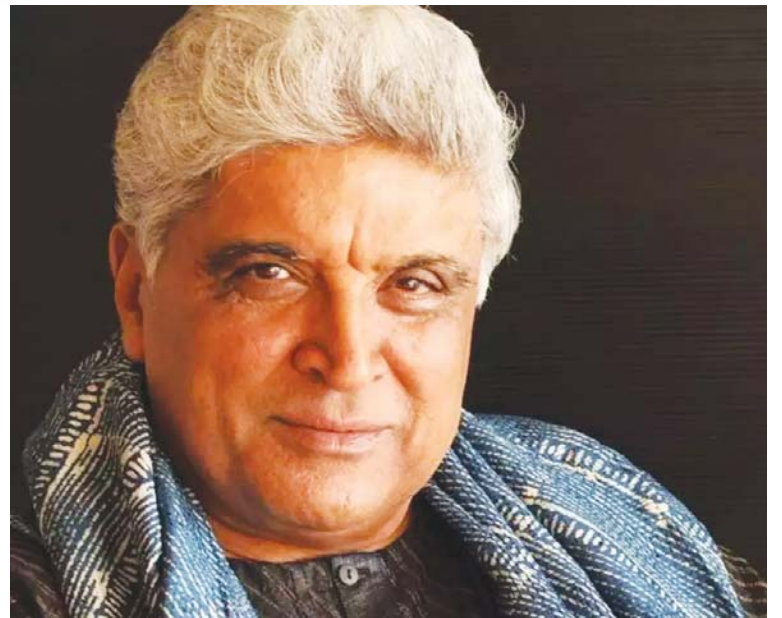
(News Agency) Days after his comeback film Laal Singh Chaddha crashed at the box office, actor Aamir Khan travelled to San Francisco in the US. Taking to Twitter, a fan posted a selfie with the actor 'walking around' in the city. In the photo, Aamir Khan wore a navy blue full-sleeve T-shirt and tied a sweater around his waist. He also carried a mustard bag and wore glasses. (Also Read | Apology clip appears on Aamir Khan Productions' Twitter page after Laal Singh Chaddha row)

Sharing the photo, the fan named Natasha wrote, "Yesterday in unexpected unbelievable I'm still unwell twists." In another tweet she added, "I asked him what's he up to in sf and he said 'just walking around', consistent!!!!" When a person asked her where she met Aamir, she replied, "In the marina! I have a theory that he went there on purpose so no one would recognize him." After Laal Singh Chaddha didn't perform well at the box office, several reports claimed that Aamir took a two-month break to

travel to the US. Laal Singh Chaddha, helmed by Advait Chandan, earned only ₹127 crore in the first 20 days of its release. It had a reported budget of ₹180 crore.

The film is the official Hindi remake of the 1994 Hollywood classic, Forrest Gump and is Aamir's first in four years. Laal Singh Chaddha also stars Kareena Kapoor, Mona Singh and Naga Chaitanya. Ahead of the film's release, it faced boycott calls on social media. Reacting to it Aamir Khan had said, as quoted by news agency ANI, that he felt 'sad'. He had said, "That Boycott Bollywood... Boycott Aamir Khan... Boycott Laal Singh Chaddha... I feel sad also because a lot of people who are saying this in their hearts believe I am someone who doesn't like India... In their hearts they believe that... And that's quite untrue. I really love the country... That's how I am. It is rather unfortunate if some people feel that way. I want to assure everyone that it's not the case so please don't boycott my films, please watch my films."

Javed Akhtar calls cancel culture 'a passing phase' as films fail at box office



(News Agency) Veteran lyricist, writer Javed Akhtar in a new interview talked about the effects of cancel culture in the film industry and called it a 'phase.' The recent big productions like Laal Singh Chaddha, Shamshera and Raksha Bandhan among others failed at the box office after many social media users called for a boycott citing varied reasons. Talking about it, Javed said he doubts if such calls actually work at all. Also read: Vijay Deverakonda meets theatre owner who called the actor 'arrogant' While many celebrities have admitted that Bollywood is going through a strange time, many pan-India films are performing better in the Hindi belt. The latest example is actor Nikhil's Karthikeya 2, which has recorded much better business than Vijay Deverakonda's Bollywood debut Liger. Days after Liger faced calls for a boycott, the film crashed after the first weekend, as per

boxofficeindia.com. When asked about the ongoing cancel culture, Javed Akhtar told ETimes, "It is a passing phase. It is very evident that it doesn't work. If the film is good and is appreciated by the audience, it will work. If it is not good and not appreciated by the audience, it won't work. I don't think this kind of announcement of cancel culture and boycott works at all." The latest film to not work at the ticket window is Liger. The south India distributor of the movie, Warangal Srinu said that there 'seems to be a concerted campaign' against the team. Speaking with Times of India, he added, "Sabotage is the word." He also clarified about losing ₹100 crore in the last 12 months. Refuting the claims, he said that he lost 'a lot of money, no doubt' and shared, "As on Liger, I have lost something to the tune of 65 per cent of my investment."

Amitabh Bachchan returns to work after testing negative for Covid-19

(News Agency) Amitabh Bachchan has finally returned to work after spending nine days in isolation. The 79-year-old actor had tested positive for the novel coronavirus for the second time. He shared the latest update about returning to work Thursday morning. Also read: Kaun Banega Crorepati 14: Amitabh Bachchan is overwhelmed as Nikhat Zareen honours her father Amitabh wrote on his blog at around 8:40 am on Thursday, "Back at work .. your prayers (folded hands emojis) gratitude .. negative last night .. and 9 days

isolation over .. mandatory is 7 days .. My love as ever to all .. you are kind and concerned throughout .. the family Efsos full of care have only my folded hands for you." The actor currently hosts the 14th season of the quiz reality TV show Kaun Banega Crorepati. Showing concern for his work commitments, he had said in one of his social media posts, "The sudden issues of the work front and their adjustments if at all they can be, of how to catch up with lost time, especially in the matter of the TV programme which as we

are well aware, takes an immense amount of time and energy to coordinate and set up." The actor



had announced his diagnosis via social media late night on August 23. He was under home isolation. In one of his tweets soon after, he said that he is "disappointed" about testing positive for the virus once again. He had tested positive for coronavirus in July 2020 as well, along with son Abhishek Bachchan, daughter-in-law Aishwarya Rai and granddaughter Aaradhya Bachchan. He wrote, "Yes despite all the precautions and the dosage for its

prevention .. the injection one and two and the booster thereafter .. the care to not be in the presence of the public realm .. covid did win and come out victorious. To say that I am disappointed would be an understatement .. it is the concern I bring on those that are near and dear. Amitabh Bachchan is also looking forward to the release of Brahmastra Part One: Shiva, in which he plays a prominent role. He also already shot for Sooraj Barjatya's Uunchai and also has a film titled Goodbye in pipeline.



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