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## Sunak Unveils Plan to Tackle Islamist Extremism, Proposes Reforms in UK's Prevent Strategy



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## German Chancellor Scholz Opens Door to Extend Nuclear As Russia Squeezes Gas Supply



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## Who is Nancy Pelosi, the most powerful woman in US politics

US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, arguably the most powerful US woman politician, landed in Taiwan on Tuesday, much to the anger of China. Here's all you need to know about her



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## India to host UNSC special meeting on counter-terrorism in October

The meeting will focus on where emerging technologies are experiencing rapid development, growing use by member states, and the increasing threat of abuse for terrorism purposes, namely Internet and social media, terrorism financing, and unmanned aerial systems



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## Decoding Mamata's cabinet reshuffle: Post Partha's arrest, an intergenerational power adjustment

The subtext of the new look cabinet reflects the space that Mamata has vacated so that her nephew can occupy it. And the old guard which, till now, openly challenged Abhishek Banerjee as the crown prince, has read it without rebelling

(SAI Bureau) It is Mamata Banerjee's biggest cabinet shake-up since she became chief minister, with new appointments and departmental changes. The immediate and compelling cause is the dismissal of now former education minister, Partha

Chatterjee, who remains in Enforcement Directorate custody after Rs 50 crore cash, jewellery and property and other assets were unearthed from two flats belonging to his friend and associate Arpita Mukherjee.

(Contd. on page 31)



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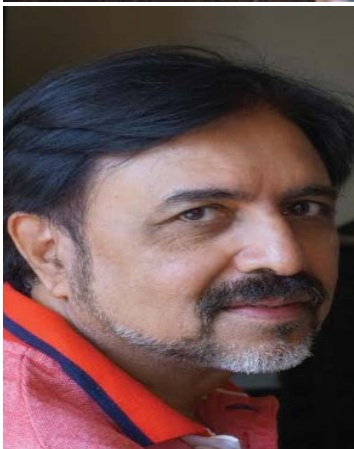
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# 'Bless You': World Premiere, Asian American International Film Festival 2022, NY



(By SAI News Bureau)

The Hindi Feature Film 'Bless You', by Director, Sanjay Sure will have World Premiere at Asian American International Film Festival 2022 on August 6 at Asia Society in New York.

The story connects well in the last frame. It revolves around a government clerk and his family, struggling to cope up with today's new normal. On one weekend, the family goes out for shopping and treat themselves with ice candies at a roadside vendor. While slurping the ice candy, the head of the

family accidentally sneezes. Thereafter whole world comes to a grinding halt for him and a new drama begins.

This hilarious story of real people in real times, demands a peculiar treatment. No makeup, no glamour and real locations. "To achieve a candid and realistic look we chose to go non glamorous look. This was a challenge for the camera work but it required this no makeup look. This is how we wanted to make the story believable," asserts Director, writer, Sanjay Sure.

The story required a capital city where

top government offices are located, hence set against Mumbai city backdrop. More over these Mumbai suburbs have a very colourful aesthetic and diverse textures.

"Our team has beautifully captured the suburbs of Mumbai to create a unique texture. Anyone can relate to this realistic approach and of course, the subtle use of music, song and dance are so signatures of Indian storytelling which made some scenes more dramatic. The story has sweet innocence which is captured very artistically," confides Director Sure.

## Indian-American Sentenced To Jail For Defrauding Senior Citizens

**Hirenkumar P Chaudhari, 29, of Illinois pleaded guilty last year to a federal money laundering charge, said John R Lausch, US Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, as he announced the sentencing on Thursday**



(SAI Bureau) An Indian-American has been sentenced to three years of imprisonment in the US for laundering cash proceeds from a telemarketing scheme that defrauded senior citizens. Hirenkumar P Chaudhari, 29, of Illinois pleaded guilty last year to a federal money laundering charge, said John R Lausch, US Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, as he announced the sentencing on Thursday. Hirenkumar P Chaudhari played a pivotal role in a telemarketing scheme by laundering money received directly from elderly

victims, he said. According to federal prosecutors, Hirenkumar P Chaudhari used a phony Indian passport, false name, and false address to open multiple bank accounts in the US to receive money from victims of the telemarketing scheme. The scam involved phone calls from people falsely claiming to be associated with, among other agencies, the Social Security Administration and US Department of Justice, stating that a victim's identity had been stolen and that it was necessary to transfer money to various bank accounts,

including the accounts opened by Chaudhari. "One of the victims was a retired nurse from Massachusetts who transferred a total of more than USD 900,000 from her bank and retirement accounts to transfer from accounts controlled by Hirenkumar P Chaudhari or others," the Department of Justice said. "On April 19, 2018, one day after Hirenkumar P Chaudhari opened an account and received a USD 7,000 transaction knowing that the money represented proceeds of unlawful activity," it said.

## Indian-origin man charged under Britain's Treason Act over crossbow threat to Queen Elizabeth II

(SAI Bureau) After getting arrested with a crossbow at Windsor Castle, the UK police charged a 20-year-old Indian-origin man with an offence under Britain's 1842 Treason Act. Following the incident at the castle, Jaswant Singh Chail has also been charged with making threats to kill and possession of an offensive weapon. London's Metropolitan Police said that Chail is currently in custody and will appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court in the British capital on August 17. After pleading guilty to firing blank shots at the monarch when she was on parade, Briton Marcus Sarjeant was sentenced to five years imprisonment in

1981. The last person to be convicted under the separate and more serious 1351 Treason Act was William Joyce who collaborated with Germany during World War II. The Met said that security processes were triggered within moments of the breach and that the individual did not enter any buildings following the Windsor Castle incident. Prince Charles and his wife Camilla were spending Christmas Day at the castle with Queen Elizabeth II as a precautionary measure amid resurgent Covid-19 cases. In 1982, while the queen was in bed, a man in his 30s entered her private chambers at Buckingham Palace.



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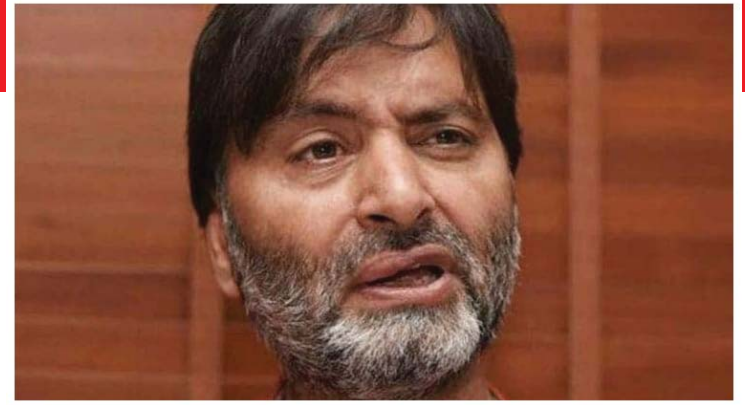


# Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik ends hunger strike: Jail officials

**Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik ended his hunger strike after 10 days on Monday (August 1), jail officials said**

(SAI Bureau) Kashmiri separatist leader Yasin Malik who was on hunger strike in Tihar Jail for the last 10 days discontinued his fasting on Monday evening after he was informed that his demands have been conveyed to the authorities concerned, prison officials said. Malik began an indefinite hunger strike on July 22 after the Centre did not respond to his plea that he be allowed to physically appear in a Jammu court hearing the Rubaiya Sayeed abduction case in which he is an accused. The 56-year-old chief of the banned Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) is serving a life sentence in a terror-funding case. He has deferred his hunger strike for two months at the request of the Director General (DG) of Delhi Prisons Sandeep Goel, the officials said.

The DG has conveyed to Malik that the demands raised by him have been sent to the authorities concerned and he will be informed of the decision on the same, said a senior jail official. "On my request, convict Yasin Malik, who was on hunger strike in Tihar Jail since July 22 has today (Monday) evening, discontinued his fasting," Goel said. The separatist leader, who is kept in solitary confinement in a



high-risk cell in Tihar's prison number 7, was shifted to the prison's Medical Investigation (MI) room where he was being given IV fluids, the officials said. Malik had submitted a letter to the doctors at the hospital, saying he did not want to be treated.

## CM Bhupendra Patel launches 'Gujarat Tak' digital platform in Ahmedabad

**Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Monday launched the website of the digital platform 'Gujarat Tak' of national news channel Aaj Tak**

(News Agency) Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Monday launched the website of the digital platform 'Gujarat Tak' of national news channel Aaj Tak in Ahmedabad. During the launch event, Patel said, "Gujarat has maintained the pace of development even during the pandemic by manifesting the slogan of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas. Recently, the state retained its first rank in the National Report on Financial Affairs." He further added, "For 20 years, Gujarat was led and guided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and he laid the foundation of development. As a result, today, the state has achieved development in all sectors including water, health, roads, girl child protection and agricultural

industrial development." CM Bhupendra Patel noted, "Gujarat's share in the country's economy is 8.36 per cent, the government is moving forward with a road map to increase it to 10 per cent."

While presenting the development statistics of the state of Gujarat, he added, "In 2002, there were 2.74 lakh MSMEs, today it has increased to 8.66 lakh. Industrial output has increased from 1.27 lakh crore to 16.19 lakh crore. Gujarat's contribution to the country in exports is 30 per cent. The area under cereal crops has reached 31.82 lakh hectares. As far

as primary education is concerned, the dropout ratio has come down from 37 per cent to three per cent. The state



government is conscious of the fact that every child should study. 20 years ago medical seats were 1,375, which has reached 7,700 today." Furthermore, the Chief Minister called upon the entire

nation to participate in Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan and to celebrate August 15 with patriotism, keeping aside all the disparities. "Gujarat will also be the spearhead in the Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan. Let us all participate in this campaign and hoist the tricolor at home and strengthen the national spirit," he added. He will be informed of the decision on the same, said a senior jail official. "On my request, convict Yasin Malik, who was on hunger strike in Tihar Jail since July 22 has today (Monday) evening, discontinued his fasting," Goel said. The separatist leader, who is kept in solitary confinement in a high-risk

## No objection in transferring probe from SIT to ATS, Maha govt tells Bombay HC

**The Maharashtra government on Monday told the Bombay High Court that it has no objection in transferring the investigation into the death of activist and CPI leader Govind Pansare to the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS)**

(News Agency) The Maharashtra government on Monday told the Bombay High Court that it has no objection in transferring the investigation into the death of activist and CPI leader Govind Pansare from the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS).

This was disclosed by special public prosecutor Ashok Mundargi before the bench of Justices Revati Mohite-Dere and Sharmila Deshmukh on Monday. The bench, however, said that transferring the case would mean starting from scratch. "We believe that if a new team of the CID is appointed or even if the probe is transferred to the ATS, it would mean starting from point zero. Thus, we would suggest a few officers of the ATS could be made

part of the existing SIT to probe the case further," Justice Dere suggested. This was, however, opposed by Mundargi, who said that usually such a course is not allowed as the ATS and CID are two different agencies. The bench sought to know what the state will achieve now with the new team. It further reiterated that the CID must consider its suggestion to include some ATS officers in the existing SIT to further probe the case. Justice Dere said, "Mr



officers from the ATS, especially those who probed the Nalasopara arms haul case in 2018, could be made part of the present SIT." Advocate Abhay Nevagi appearing for Pansare's family at this

Mundargi, this would serve the purpose. Please take instructions if

juncture said, "The crime took place in 2013 yet the trial in this case has not commenced. It may be noted that in similar crimes wherein the accused shot down rationalist Narendra Dabholkar, MM Kalburgi and journalist Gauri Lankesh, the trial has started." Nevagi further said that in 2018, the state ATS had cracked a case wherein a huge quantity of arms and ammunition was seized from some men who were located in Nalasopara. "They got a breakthrough from that case. Some accused arrested in that case were named as accused and identified as sharp shooters in the cases of Kalburgi and Dabholkar. The sharpshooters who shot Pansare are yet to be brought to the book," Nevagi said.

The court will continue the hearing of the issue on Wednesday.



# Delhi BJP chief takes a dig at AAP govt over extension of excise policy for 2 months

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta took a dig at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and said that it stands exposed



(News Agency) After the excise policy was extended for two months in the national capital, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta took a dig at the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and said that it stands exposed. He cited the Cabinet note in a press conference and claimed that the AAP's new excise policy had failed, forcing the Kejriwal government to withdraw it. He further said that

the excise revenue has gone down by a whopping Rs 3,000 crore. He said that the move to extend the excise policy for two months is to benefit the liquor mafia. On the other hand, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia stated that to curb the surge of any liquor mafia, it has decided to extend this policy for the next two months. Adesh Gupta was addressing a joint press conference with the

Leader of Opposition in Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri. Bidhuri said, "The CBI probe in this matter will bring the truth out before all. It is now clear from the data of the cabinet note of July 31, 2022, that there has been considerable decline in the government's excise revenue."

Bidhuri claimed that the estimated excise revenue by the state government in 2019-20 was Rs 8,911 crore, but the same period saw only revenue of Rs 7,039 crore being realised. Not only this, after the new policy came into being there was an estimation of excise revenue going up but in 2021-22 the revenue came down to Rs 6,720 crore, which was a whopping 37 per cent decline as compared to the estimated revenue. The new Excise Policy 2021-22 of the Delhi government was unable to meet its target of boosting revenue due to various reasons including the surrender of licenses by retailers and wholesalers.

## Congress's Adhir Ranjan slams Bengal government over bifurcation of Murshidabad district

(SAI Bureau) Slamming the West Bengal CM, the Congress leader said, "If there can be North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas, what is the problem in making North Murshidabad or South Murshidabad? I will go to any extent to stop the name of Murshidabad from being changed." West Bengal is set to get seven new districts with the cabinet giving its nod to the proposal, Mamata Banerjee said on Monday. "Lord Clive compared Murshidabad to London. Murshidabad has a lot of history associated with it. Murshidabad was the capital of combined Bengal, Bihar and Odisha at one point. Mamata Banerjee cannot erase the name

of Murshidabad through her whim and fancies," Congress MP from Behrampur said. "She cannot get done with the name of Murshidabad. I have no problem with smaller districts for better administration, but why does she want to change the name of Murshidabad?," the Congress leader questioned.

The Bengal government has announced the bifurcation of Murshidabad into two districts- Jangipur and Behrampur. Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury is the MP of Behrampur in Murshidabad.

**BENGAL TO CARVE NEW DISTRICTS**  
"We have decided to carve out seven more districts in West Bengal. The cabinet

okayed the proposal today. We will complete the process within the next six months," Mamata Banerjee told reporters. Sundarbans will be carved out of South 24 Parganas. Ichamati and Bashirhat districts will be carved out of North 24 Parganas," she said.

"Ranaghat district will be carved out of Nadia, Bishnupur from Bankura and Baharampur and Kandi from Murshidabad," the chief minister said.

On Monday, Mamata Banerjee announced the creation of seven new districts: Sunderban, Ichhemati, Ranaghat, Bishnupur, Jangipur, Behrampur and one more.



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# Chhattisgarh government to rename 3 villages: CM Bhupesh Baghel

**The Chhattisgarh government has decided to rename three villages in the state and Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has given instructions to implement the same at the earliest**

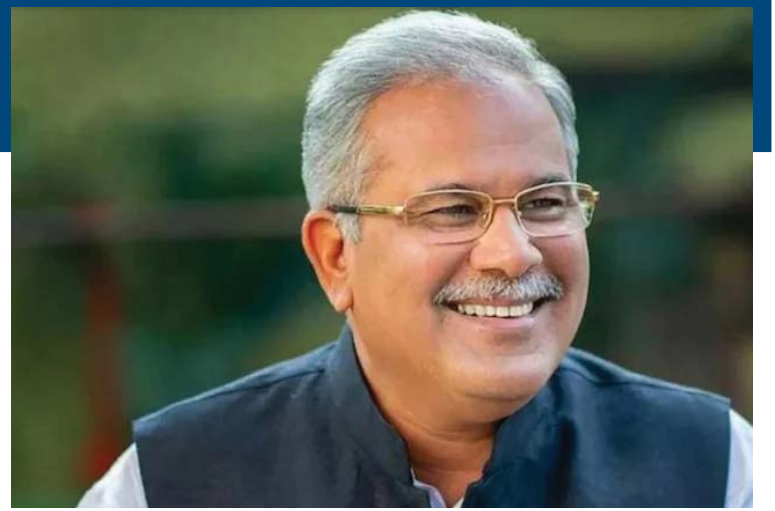
(News Agency) The Chhattisgarh government has decided to rename three villages in the state, which are of historical and spiritual significance and Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has given instructions to implement the same at the earliest. Honouring the sentiments of local people, CM Baghel has instructed officials to rename Chandkhuri village in the Raipur district and Giroudpuri and Sonakhan in the Balodabazar-Bhatapara district. Chandkhuri,

considered the birthplace of Lord Ram's mother Kaushalya, will be renamed as Mata Kaushalya Dham Chandkhuri, while Giroudpuri, the popular pilgrimage site of Satnam Panth, will be called Baba Guru Ghasidas Dham Giroudpuri. Sonakhan will be renamed as Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Dham Sonakhan after a freedom fighter. These places are being renamed after great personalities and spiritual figures for whom they are famous for.

## ABOUT THESE VILLAGES

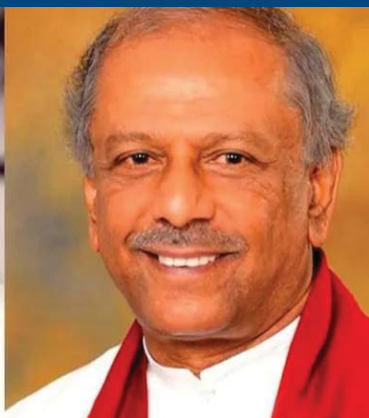
There is only one Kaushalya temple in the world which is in Chandkhuri, adjacent to Raipur. Lord Shri Ram is seated in the temple along with Mata Kaushalya.

Meanwhile, located in the Balodabazar-Bhatapara district, Giroudpuri is the center of faith of lakhs of followers of Satnam Panth. This is the birthplace of Baba Guru Ghasidas. The Satnam Samaj and the local people have been



demanding for a long time to itself, Sonakhan is known for rename Giroudpuri as Baba Guru Virnarayan Singh, the first martyr of Chhattisgarh in the first addition to this, situated in the freedom struggle of 1857. Balodabazar-Bhatapara district

# PM Modi congratulates newly-appointed Sri Lankan counterpart Gunawardena



**Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday congratulated his newly-appointed Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena and assured India's support to the people of the island nation**

(By Staff Reporter) Prime Minister Narendra Modi has sent a congratulatory letter to his newly-appointed Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena and assured India's support to the people of the island nation, which is facing its worst economic crisis in decades, the High Commission of India here

said on Monday.

Gunawardena, a veteran politician and a close ally of the Rajapaksa family, was appointed Sri Lanka's prime minister by President Ranil Wickremesinghe on July 22.

"PM @narendramodi sent a congratulatory letter to PM H.E @DCRGunawardena. PM assured

that as a dependable friend and close neighbour, India shall continue to support the people of Sri Lanka," the Indian mission said in a tweet. Prime Minister Modi also expressed hope that Sri Lanka will witness quick economic recovery, ensuring the prosperity and well-being of its people, it added. A stalwart of Sri Lankan politics, Gunawardena, 73, earlier served as the foreign minister and education minister. He was appointed as Home Minister in April by then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. The prime minister's

post fell vacant after Wickremesinghe, 73, was sworn in as the country's eighth president after Rajapaksa fled the country and then resigned as president last month. Last week, Modi congratulated President Wickremesinghe and said that India will continue to be supportive of the quest of the people of the island nation for stability and economic recovery, through established democratic means. The new Sri Lankan government faces the task of leading the country out of its economic collapse and restoring

order after months of mass protests that forced President Rajapaksa to flee the country and resign. The Indian government assistance to Sri Lanka has reached almost USD 4 billion since January this year. Sri Lanka needs about USD 5 billion in the next six months to cover basic necessities for its 22 million people, who have been struggling with long queues, worsening shortages and power cuts. The country is currently holding talks with the IMF and other foreign countries on financial aid to tide over the current economic crisis.

## India's first-ever auction for 5G spectrum concluded today

(By Staff Reporter) Today marked the conclusion of India's first-ever 5G spectrum auction, in which spectrum valued at \$19 billion was sold. As the world's second-largest mobile market prepares for the high-speed wireless network, Reliance Industries' Jio emerged as the top spender, claiming \$11 billion in airwaves.

By October of this year, the Indian government hopes to start rolling out 5G, which it claims can deliver internet rates that are around ten times faster than 4G. The next-generation network is regarded as essential for developing technologies like self-driving cars and artificial intelligence on a

global scale. The country's telecoms minister reported that businesses purchased 71% of the total 72 GHz spectrum that was made available in the auction, which ended on Monday and included Jio rivals Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, as well as a division of Adani Enterprises Ltd. Spectrum worth \$5.4 billion and \$2.4 billion, respectively, was awarded to Airtel and Vodafone. Adani, the most recent bidder in the auction, bought airwaves for close to \$27 million. The company wants to get into the private 5G network market rather than provide consumer services.

## Rajasthan reports first suspected case of monkeypox

**Rajasthan has reported its first suspected case of monkeypox. The patient has been admitted to a government hospital and his samples have been collected**

(By Staff Reporter) Rajasthan has reported its first suspected case of monkeypox. A 20-year-old, exhibiting symptoms of the disease, has been admitted to a government hospital here and his samples have been sent to the National Institute of Virology in Pune, Dr. Ajit Singh, Superintendent of Rajasthan University of Health Sciences, said on Monday. The youth was referred from Kishangarh late on Sunday. He has been kept



under observation in the special ward created for monkeypox cases, he said. The youth is

suffering from fever for the last four days and has rashes on his body, Dr Singh added.



# After 4 men with high IELTS score fail to speak in English in US court, Gujarat police begins probe

**At the request of American authorities, Gujarat police has launched a probe to unearth an alleged racket in which ineligible students are getting help to acquire high IELTS score to obtain admission to colleges in Canada and then get smuggled into US**



attempt to get them unauthorised entry into the country from Canada.

"These six Indian nationals from Gujarat, in the 19-21 age group, were apprehended from a sinking boat in the Saint Regis river in Akwesasne, US, close to the Canadian border. Four are from Mehsana, and two are from Gandhinagar and Patan," said Rathod.

"When they were produced before a court in the US, they failed to answer in English the questions asked by the judge. The court had to take the help of a Hindi translator. The court was baffled as these students had scored 6.5 to 7 bands in IELTS, an English proficiency test," Rathod said.

Later, citing a news report on the incident, the criminal fraud investigation unit of the U.S.

Consulate General in Mumbai sent a mail to Mehsana police to conduct an inquiry to find out how these four students from Mehsana received very high scores and which agency or agents were involved, Rathod informed.

The IELTS is an international standardized test of English language proficiency for non-native English language speakers, with a good score being necessary for admission in good colleges in several countries.

"Even brilliant students need to work hard to get 5 or 6 bands in the IELTS. These four students, residents of different villages of Mehsana, managed to score between 6.5 and 7, and yet could not communicate in English," Rathod said.

Primary probe has revealed the four students, identified as Dhruv

Patel, Neel Patel, Urvish Patel and Savan Patel, appeared for the IELTS exam at a centre in south Gujarat's Navsari town on September 25, 2021, and went to Canada on student visa on March 19, nearly two weeks before they were caught at the US-Canada border.

"The manager of the banquet hall in Navsari, which was hired for the exam, said the exam supervisors had turned off CCTV cameras before the exam. This proves there was no transparency and something was definitely suspicious. The agency which was authorised to conduct the exam is based in Ahmedabad," said Rathod.

Owners of the agency, located in Sabarmati area of Ahmedabad, have been directed to appear before Mehsana SOG within 48 hours with related documents as part of the probe.

(By Staff Reporter) At the request of American authorities, police in Mehsana district in Gujarat have launched a probe to unearth an alleged racket in which ineligible students are getting help to acquire high International English Language Testing System (IELTS) score to obtain admission to colleges in Canada so that they can be then smuggled into the US, an official said on Monday.

The probe so far has revealed no transparency was maintained by the agency which took the exam, as CCTVs of the hall were turned off during the exam held in September last year, said Inspector Bhavesh Rathod of the Mehsana police's Special Operations Group (SOG), who is leading the probe here.

In March this year, US border authorities arrested six youths from Gujarat during a failed

## Congress pays tribute to Sidhu Moose Wala, launches talent hunt to raise public issues through budding artists

**The Punjab Youth Congress on Monday launched 'India's Rizing Talent', a talent hunt to raise public issues through budding artists**

(News Agency) Congress pays tribute to Sidhu Moose Wala, launches talent hunt to raise public issues through budding artists. The Punjab Youth Congress on Monday launched 'India's Rizing Talent', a talent hunt to raise public issues through budding artists. Punjab Youth Congress chief said people don't want to listen to a politician, but listens to songs and understand the message. The Congress leader said that the artists will get a chance to showcase their talent in the show. The Punjab Youth Congress on Monday launched 'India's Rizing Talent', a talent hunt to raise public issues through budding artists.

Speaking to India Today, Punjab Youth Congress chief Barinder Singh Dhillon said "At times people don't want to listen to a politician. There is a segment of the audience that listens to the song writers, singers and understands their message." The Congress leader said the artists, while at one hand using this platform, will get a chance to show their talent and will also be

serving the nation by raising issues of public interest on the other. The Congress leaders and artists from various parts of Punjab also paid rich tributes to the singer Sidhu Moose Wala, who was killed on May 29.

"Sidhu Moose Wala is a big name. Talent like his lies in many places. We will be providing a neutral platform for these artists which will help them hone their talent," Barinder Singh Dhillon said. When asked how the budding artist will showcase their talent, the Congress leader said they were creating a competition through this platform. The competition will be first held in Punjab, then will be organised pan India. The competition will be held in every state," Dhillon said. The Congress leader further said that there would also be prize money and the competition would be live on the social media accounts owned by the Congress. On being asked how the Congress will keep the talent hunt apolitical and unbiased, Dhillon said the platform will be open to all Indian citizens irrespective of their political



associations. "Politics is incomplete without art. Art has always played a big role in any revolution. The chief minister of Punjab is an artist. If an artist can become a chief minister, politics can also provide a stage for the artists," said the Congress leader.

On being asked whether Congress was trying to get Moose Wala's fan base or making an attempt to attract the youngsters, the Congress leader said, "Yes", adding that "Sidhu Moosewala's death was an irreparable loss. His talent and fans are also valuable. It is our duty

to keep that talent alive. He might have been killed but his art has to stay. We have to create platforms for talents like him". Barinder Singh Dhillon confirmed to India Today that the tribute and talent hunt has been launched with the consent of his parents, who in the past, had appealed to people not to misuse Sidhu Moose Wala's name. Popular Punjabi singer Afsana Khan, Saaj Superboy, Laddi khangarh and comedians Sanjeev Attri and Ashish besides others lauded the efforts being made by the youth Congress to promote the talent.



# 2020 Riots: Essence of Speeches of Accused to Create Fear Among Muslims, Delhi Police to HC



and the CAA and NRC.

The submissions were made before a bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Rajnish Bhatnagar which was hearing a plea by Khalid, who has challenged a trial court's March 24 order dismissing his bail application in the case. Special Public Prosecutor Amit Prasad submitted when Khalid's counsel had said there was nothing wrong in his speech, even I say there was nothing wrong. It is a very calculated speech. It brings various points. One – Babri Masjid, two triple talaq, three Kashmir, four Muslims are suppressed and five CAA and NRC. He said the speeches made by several accused had one common factor which is in the entire speech, that is, the essence is to create a sense of fear in Muslim population. He read

out the speeches of accused Sharjeel Imam, Khalid Saifi and Umar Khalid and said, When you talk about Babri Masjid or triple talaq, they relate to a religion. But when you talk about Kashmir, it is not an issue of religion, it is an issue of national integration. Appearing for the Delhi Police, Prasad contended these accused were connected with each other at the relevant time as a part of conspiracy for rioting in 2020. The prosecutor said the case was registered on March 6, 2020, and the first arrest was made on March 8, 2020. The moment the arrest came into public domain, the entire WhatsApp group, on which various individuals used to chat, was deleted and the participants moved to another application called 'Signal'. He said he will show how these people took step by step instructions on the group

that police was coming, it was asking for names and what they should do now. Prasad said the riots happened in two phases, first in 2019 and then in February 2020. He claimed misinformation was spread during the riots, roads blocked, police and paramilitary personnel attacked, violence perpetrated in non-Muslim areas and damage caused to public property. Petrol bombs and other means of violence were used, he said. The point which comes out is that your grievance was not against CAA and NRC, it was against Babri Masjid and Kashmir. This was the pattern, he argued. Prasad also submitted that none of the protest sites were organic in nature and they were created through WhatsApp groups with the help of mobilisation of people from various places.

(SAI Bureau) The Delhi Police told the Delhi High Court on Monday that the speeches delivered by various accused in a UAPA case related to the alleged conspiracy behind the communal riots here in February 2020 had a common factor— "the essence was to create a sense of fear in the Muslim population.

Opposing the bail plea of former JNU student Umar Khalid, one of the arrested accused in the case, the prosecution said the speech delivered by him in Amravati in February 2020 was a very calculated speech which brought various points including the Babri Masjid, instant triple talaq, Kashmir, suppression of Muslims

## As Bangladeshi Terror Module Busted in Assam, Police Reveal Arrested Madrasa Teacher Trained Students in Jihad

(News Agency) The Morigaon module of Bangladesh-based Ansar UI Bangla Team (ABT) operations in Assam is emerging as one of the most vital and dangerous terror modules busted by the Assam police and central investigating agencies so far. After 19 students from the Jamiul Huda Madarsa were questioned by the National Investigation Team (NIA) team probing the ABT module in Morigaon on July 31, the Assam

Police and the central agencies have interrogated the head of the madrasa, Mufti Mustafa, who along with another suspect, is in police custody.

"The investigation so far has been satisfactory. There is a common link with the Bhopal ABT, Tripura and Barpeta operations of Ansar UI Bangla. Financial links have been established. Jihadi training material have been viewed in the

electronic device of Mufti Mustafa. We are now looking as to how many students were shown these videos by Mufti and what influence does these have on the students. Mustafa has been sharing these videos, which have operation and training content of Taliban to motivate students at his madrasa. We are examining other madrasas of the state too, however, it will be difficult to divulge further," said GP Singh,

Special Director General of Assam Police. Singh also said the police have other madrasas on radar and once evidence against them are found, action will be taken. The Jamiul Madrasa has been sealed along with another one in Dhing in Nagaon district of Assam for indulging in anti-national activities. One Hananul Islam was picked up by the Barpeta police on July 31 on the suspicion of having links with the ABT. With this, there have been nine arrests in Barpeta district alone in the last four days.

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had clarified that two madrasas have already been sealed and more will likely be under the scanner. "Wherever we have got complaints against madrasas and its teacher, we have taken an in-principle decision that we will close them down and will ask the students to go to a nearby school. In Assam, we do not have government madrasas." Sarma stressed that the government has already shut down 750 madrasas but religious madrasas will continue to operate. The police raided Jihadi linkman Mufti Mustafa Ahmed's maternal uncle's house at Bherbhaeri in Nagaon district on Saturday. Later, they raided another madrasa in the vicinity.

## NIA Strikes Against Terror: How Bhatkal Islamic State Operative Led to their 48 Digital Warriors

(News Agency) In a major crackdown against terror, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) raided 13 spots across seven states, including Maharashtra, and detained 48 people – 13 on Sunday and 35 on Saturday – with links to the Islamic State (IS), foiling their plan for "something big" against India.

According to the exclusive details from top intelligence sources, the detentions were a result of the interrogation of Zufri Johar Damodi, who was arrested from Bhatkal in Karnataka in August 2021 for his alleged link to the IS.

With leads from Damodi, the agency was keeping an eye on Voice of Hind, an India-centric IS magazine, for the past one year, the source told CNN-News18 exclusively. The agency noticed that the magazine had very minute details of the on-ground situation in India, which could not have been possible without local

resources, said the source. This led them to the 48 men linked to the IS, he said. They were all linked to the Islamic State – Khorasan Province (ISKP), he added. The detentions and interrogation have also led the agency to Voice of Hind network of Kashmir run by Umar Nisar.

### DIGITAL CONTENT FOR IS

Sources said the security agencies have been concerned about the threats from ISKP and other networks. The 48 men, the agency source said, were creating content for the Voice of Hind and other ISKP-related groups. After the recent insult of the Prophet, it was found that these groups were planning "something big in India", said the source. They were instigating Indian Muslims and Muslim community across the globe. Hence, this major crackdown was planned. They have confessed to their links to Damodi and Voice of Hind," said the source.

## India's sixth monkeypox case in Delhi; no recent travel history

(News Agency) The sixth case of monkeypox in the country has been confirmed in Delhi—importantly, in an individual who has no recent history of travel. A 35-year-old Delhi resident from Nigeria who has never travelled recently tested positive for monkeypox. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared monkeypox a "public health emergency of international concern", a description that it uses for only two other diseases, Covid-19 and polio.

We have an outbreak that has spread around the world rapidly through new modes of transmission, about which we understand too little, and which meets the criteria (for the designation)," WHO director general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus had said. There have been more than 16,000 instances of monkeypox infection recorded from 75 different nations. The majority of infections outside of Africa have been found in men who have sex with other men globally (MSM). On July 14, a 35-year-old Kerala resident who had just returned from the UAE was found to have the country's first case of monkeypox.



# Drained due to Lowest-ever July Rains since 1903, There's More Bad News for Bihar, UP, Jharkhand

(News Agency) Sapped because of the lowest-ever rains recorded in July in the last 122 years, there is bad news for the rice-sowing farmers of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Gangetic West Bengal. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the rainfall is likely to be normal to below normal for the region over the next two months.

"As far as the IMD forecast is concerned, below normal rainfall is likely over many parts of the west coast, and some parts of east central, east and north-east India. East UP, Jharkhand, and West Bengal may still see near normal rains in August, but the projections do not look very encouraging for Bihar, which is likely to be most affected," said IMD's director general of meteorology M Mohapatra.

While the monsoon rainfall across the country has so far been 8 per cent above normal, east and north-east India has

been facing a dry monsoon season, with a deficiency of up to 16 per cent so far.

The rainfall in July was particularly low at nearly 44 per cent below normal, which is the lowest in the last 122 years. The last time the region faced such poor July rains was in 1903. The long dry spells have pushed the region into a

drought-like situation which could have a serious impact on the paddy-sowing farmers. Until July 28, Bihar had received only 278 mm rainfall against the normal of 474 mm, with a staggering deficit of 41 per cent. In Jharkhand, the deficiency is close to 50 per cent, with largely scanty rains in ten districts.

According to meteorologists, the subpar monsoon season is in sync with the long-

term trends, which indicate a decreasing rainfall scenario for the east and north-eastern states.

"We have analysed the data and found that eastern states are getting less rain. There is a negative trend, especially for certain pockets. It is not very high,

but it is significant," said Mohapatra.

## SECOND-HIGHEST JULY RAINS FOR COUNTRY AS A WHOLE

On the other hand, the rainfall over the country as a whole was the second highest after 2005 since 1998, with the monsoon rainfall at 8 per cent above normal on July 31. The forecast also predicts that the country is likely to witness normal to above-normal rains over

the next two months. The rainfall is likely to be good over most parts of southeast India, northwest, and west-central India in August, stated the IMD.

"We normally witness three low-pressure systems in July and roughly 14 days when these low-pressure systems remain active. However, this time, we saw as many as four low-pressure systems, out of which the last two lasted much longer. Overall there were 21 low-pressure-system days in the whole month, which explains the above-normal rains," said Mohapatra.

## NORMAL RAINS FOR INDIA

Except for the east-central and eastern states, the country as a whole is likely to see normal rains – 94-106 per cent of the long period average (LPA). The prevailing La Nina conditions (sea surface temperatures over equatorial Pacific) which are expected to last till year-end will favour good rains, as per the IMD.



# BJP readies plan to include new voters in 2024 polls as training camp in UP's Chitrakoot concludes

## BJP came up with an action plan to connect to new voters as its three-day training camp in Uttar Pradesh's Chitrakoot concluded on Monday

(SAI Bureau) The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came up with an action plan to connect to new voters ahead of the 2024 polls as its three-day training camp in Uttar Pradesh's Chitrakoot concluded on Monday.

The final session was addressed by UP Chief Minister Yogi

Adiyanath. Along with the heads of various departments of the organisation, all cabinet ministers of the government attended the training classes.

Among them were people who joined the party just before the last elections and bagged an important role. By explaining the

Sangh-BJP's thoughts and journey struggle, management, and methodology, the distinction between the newcomers and veterans was reduced. During the training class, the Parikrama of Kamadgiri, the prayer of Kamtanath, and the journey from Mandakini's Aarti to the Ram



Vithika enriched the symbols that facilitate the election route. Efforts were also made by all officials to give the message of unity. Discussions were also held about strengthening the party. During the last session, CM Yogi spoke about the changing face of Uttar Pradesh through governance, collectivism and reciprocity. He said, "Yesterday was ours, today is ours and the future will also be ours. If people start appreciating our job, understand that the government is going in the right direction. The government and organisation need to work hand in hand for a better result," he added.

Organisation Secretary Bansal said the decision-making process should be consultation-based, not self-centered.

"There can be agreement and disagreement, but everyone must have the feeling of participation in

the decision. It is also necessary for the stability of power," he said. A 'training booklet' was given to the representatives of the government and organization.

The methodology section of the booklet mentions, "Do not view individual questions or allegations as an attack on the organisation. This issue often clashes when tightening the government-organisation on the test of expectation and neglect."

The BJP is eyeing the 2024 polls. Therefore, in more than half a dozen sessions, the Modi government's policies ranging from poor welfare, agriculture, foreign and defence were explained in detail. Deputy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya also put a picture of the future agenda by saying that along with the Yaduvanshis, and Ravidasvanshis, the Pasmada Muslims will also be brought with the BJP.

## Andhra's former chief minister's youngest daughter Uma Maheshwari found dead at her residence

(SAI Bureau) Kanthamaneni Uma Maheshwari, daughter of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself at her upscale Jubilee Hills home on Monday (July 31). Rao's other daughter, Deekshita, reportedly found her hanging in her bedroom in the afternoon and

informed police shortly after. Maheshwari's death was initially attributed to poor health. The cause of the death is still unknown. Police moved the body to a government hospital for an autopsy after filing a case under Section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The investigation is still going



on, IANS reported. She was the youngest child of Rao's. Her well-known sisters include former

Union Minister and BJP leader Baggubati Purandeswari, as well as TDP President and former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's spouse, Nara Bhuwaneswar. Balakrishna, a well-known Tollywood actor and TDP lawmaker,

Chandrababu Naidu and his son, and other family members flocked Uma's home. NTR, the actor turned politician, was referred to as one of the tallest politicians. He founded the TDP in 1982 under the banner of Telugu pride and brought the party to power in nine months.



# Babri Demolition: HC Allows UP Govt, CBI to File Objections to Plea Against Acquittal of Accused

(News Agency) The Allahabad High Court on Monday allowed the Uttar Pradesh government and the CBI to file their objections to the maintainability of a criminal appeal against the acquittal of all 32 accused, including BJP stalwarts L K Advani and M M Joshi, in the Babri mosque demolition case, and fixed September 5 as the next date of hearing.

A bench of Justices Ramesh Sinha and Saroj Yadav passed the order. During the hearing in the Lucknow bench of the high court on Monday, CBI counsel S P Shukla and government advocate Vimal Kumar Srivastava raised a preliminary objection regarding the maintainability of the appeal on the ground that the appellants were not victims of the case, hence, they did not have any right to challenge the acquittal



of the accused persons. Ayodhya residents Haji Mahmood Ahmad and Syed Akhlaq Ahmad had filed a revision petition against the acquittal, but Justice Dinesh Kumar Singh had held last month that it was not maintainable and directed that it be treated as a criminal

appeal. Accordingly, the revision petition was converted into a criminal appeal and listed before the appropriate division bench. The two petitioners have alleged that they were witnesses in the trial against the accused and that they were also the victims of the violence. The Babri

mosque was demolished by karsevaks on December 6, 1992. After a long legal battle, a special CBI court on September 30, 2020 pronounced the judgment in the criminal trial and acquitted all the accused, including Advani, Joshi, former UP chief minister Kalyan Singh, senior BJP

leaders Uma Bharti and Vinay Katiyar, Sadhvi Ritambhara and Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The trial judge had refused to believe newspaper cuttings, video clips as evidence as the originals of the same were not produced, while the entire edifice of the case rested on these pieces of documentary evidence. The trial judge also had held that the CBI could not produce any evidence that the accused had a meeting of mind with karsevaks who demolished the structure. Assailing the findings of the trial court, the petitioners had pleaded that the court committed error in not convicting the accused as ample evidence was on record. "The trial judge did not appreciate the evidence of conspiracy in the right perspective," the petitioners claimed. The petition sought setting aside of the judgment of September 30, 2020.

## 'Flight risk': ED opposes AugustaWestland case accused Christian Michel's bail plea

**The Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed a counter affidavit before the Supreme Court opposing the grant of bail to AugustaWestland case accused Christian Michel James**

(SAI Bureau) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed a counter affidavit before the Supreme Court opposing the grant of bail to AugustaWestland case accused Christian Michel James saying that he is a flight risk and his extradition had been obtained with extreme difficulties and procedural impediments.

The affidavit has been filed against Michel's appeal challenging Delhi High Court's order dismissing his bail pleas. The ED has said that during custodial interrogation, Christian James Michel tried to pass confidential papers to his counsel at the time of legal access. According to the ED, Michel not being a citizen of India is a flight risk and his extradition has been obtained with extreme difficulties and procedural impediments. The Enforcement Directorate apprehends that if he is enlarged on bail, he might flee to avoid the investigation.

"Michel has committed a grave economic offence of huge magnitude and has thereafter laundered the proceeds of crime," as per the ED.



It added that it is settled law that economic offences constitute a class apart and need to be visited with a different approach in the matter of bail. "The classification of economic

offences in a different class itself is a clear jurisprudential recognition of the gravity of the offence being judicially recognised as an extremely relevant factor while considering matters

regarding bail. The categorisation of any offence as an "economic offence" is an exercise which depicts the gravity of such an offence," ED noted. The ED has also submitted that money laundering, in this case, has primarily been

affected by the accused persons through two channels. The kingpin of one channel is the applicant.

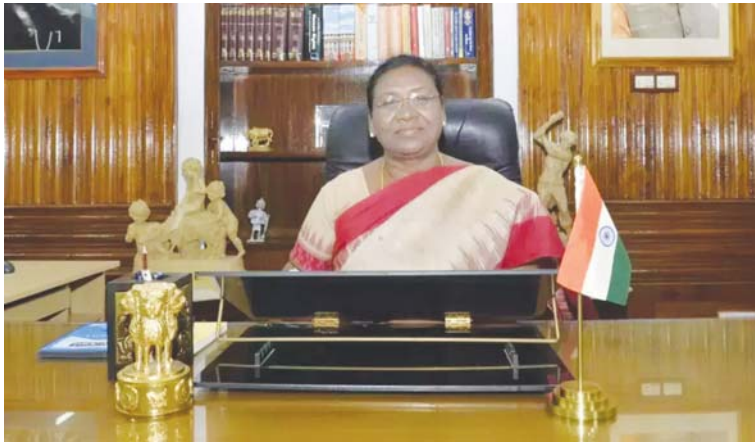
### **AUGUSTAWESTLAND CHOPPER CASE**

Christian James Michel, one of the three middlemen being probed in the case besides Guido Haschke and Carlo Gerosa, is facing investigation by both the CBI and the ED in connection with the AugustaWestland case. He was arrested in 2018 after he was extradited from Dubai. Michel, the alleged middleman arrested in the AugustaWestland VVIP chopper case, is a key link to unearthing the modus operandi behind the payment of kickbacks in the Rs 3,700 crore deal. A Supreme Court bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud had in May this year issued a notice in his petition.



# Maldives has special place in India's neighbourhood first policy: President Murmu

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday said Maldives has a special place in India's neighbourhood first policy



leader under whose leadership Maldives has emerged as a stable and prosperous nation. Solih, who arrived here on Monday on a four-day visit, called on President Murmu. She said Maldives is a major partner and close friend of India in the Indian Ocean region.

"The peoples of the two countries have enjoyed strong cultural, economic and trade ties for centuries. Maldives has a special place in India's 'neighbourhood first policy'," Murmu was quoted as having said in a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan. The President said the

rapid expansion of India-Maldives development cooperation, defence and security initiatives, economic ties and people-to-people contact augurs well for India's relationship with the government and people of Maldives. She said she was happy to note that India's need-based financial and development assistance is supporting the Maldives government's development priorities, it said. President Murmu appreciated the courage and perseverance of the government and people of Maldives during the COVID-19 outbreak. "She was happy to note that the strong India-Maldives

cooperation during the pandemic has been lauded as a model for the entire region," the statement said. President Murmu noted that capacity building has emerged as a major pillar in the India-Maldives partnership. She expressed confidence that MoUs signed during this visit will further strengthen capacity building initiatives in Maldives, it added. India and Maldives on Tuesday inked six agreements to expand cooperation in a range of areas including cyber security, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi announcing a USD 100 million financial aid to help the island nation complete certain infrastructure projects.

## Sanjay Raut paid Rs 3 crores in cash to buy 10 plots in Maharashtra's Alibag, says ED

The ED, while investigating the Patra chawl land scam case, claimed that Sanjay Raut paid Rs three crores in cash to buy 10 land parcels in Alibag

(SAI Bureau) The Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigating the Patra chawl land scam on Tuesday said that Rs three crores was paid in cash to the sellers by Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut as payment for the 10 land parcels. The agency had earlier conducted searches at two locations in Mumbai in connection with its money laundering probe into alleged irregularities in the redevelopment of a local 'chawl' in which Raut was arrested recently.

The ED on Monday had told a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Mumbai that Raut and his family received "proceeds of crime" worth over Rs one crore generated out of alleged irregularities in the Patra chawl redevelopment project in suburban Goregaon. These proceeds were then allegedly utilised for the purchase of the 10 land parcels located in Kihim beach, Alibag and the cash was provided by the director of Guruashish Constructions and prime accused in the case, Pravin Raut, ED said.

According to sources, the two premises included the residence of a person who handled cash transactions for

the firm Housing Development Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL) and another premises belonging to the company.

The said person was also brought to the ED office and his statement was recorded. A source said that the person who had been brought in by the ED officials handled cash transactions for the firm and its

subsidiaries and also handled accounts for the companies. Some documents were also seized from another premises of HDIL where a search was conducted on Tuesday.

### ALLEGATIONS BY ED

ED officials in their remand report stated that the money generated from the Patra chawl redevelopment scam was

diverted through various companies and also diverted in cash by Pravin Raut to Sanjay Raut. Raut was allegedly receiving huge amounts of money every month from Pravin Raut. A trail of Rs1.06 crores diverted by Pravin Raut to Raut and his family members was found by ED officials, the report stated. ED officials also

claimed that Pravin Raut was the 'frontman' for Sanjay Raut. The probe agency also said that during their investigation they found that Sanjay Raut, Pravin Raut and HDIL promoters Rakesh Wadhawan and his son Sarang Wadhawan allegedly conspired together and hatched a conspiracy to siphon off money from the project.

## Rahul Gandhi arrives in Karnataka, holds key party meeting

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday arrived in Karnataka on a two-day visit. In the evening, he attended the party's Karnataka unit's political affairs committee meeting

(SAI Bureau) Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday arrived in Karnataka on a two-day visit. In the evening, he attended the party's Karnataka unit's political affairs committee meeting. This 35-member committee met for the first time after it was constituted by Congress President Sonia Gandhi. According to sources, discussion about preparations for upcoming assembly elections were to be held at length in this meeting between Rahul Gandhi and top Karnataka Congress leaders.

Speaking about the meeting ahead of Rahul Gandhi's arrival, a senior Karnataka Congress leader said, "Rahul Gandhiji will be addressing the issue of groupism in the Karnataka Congress. The camps of two top state leaders -

Siddaramaiah and DK Shivkumar- may



hurt the party's prospects in upcoming polls. Though after meeting Gandhi scion in Delhi, both Siddaramaiah and DK Shivkumar have maintained that there are no differences between them and the party will fight the election in a united manner." Gandhi scion will also take part in the 75th birthday bash of

former Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah in Davanagere on Wednesday.

According to official sources, Rahul Gandhi is on a two-day tour of Karnataka wherein he is scheduled to visit Sri Muruga Rajendra Mutt, Chitradurga on Wednesday morning. Murugarajendra Mutt is a prominent religious place of the Lingayat community. This visit will be followed by a public meeting at Shamanur, Davanagere which former Congress president will

address along with all the top brass of the Karnataka Congress. The event at Davanagere is being shown as a show of strength by Siddaramaiah's camp. Meanwhile, Congress has already decided to fight assembly elections without getting into alliance-in "solo mode" and has kept a target to win 150 seats.



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# Corruption in India: the new neo-normal?

By Susmita Ghosh

It seems pictures of hugemasses of cash recovered by agencies donning the pages of newspapers are no more sensational nowadays. What seems alarming? Besides usual incidents of small table officers' involvement and more powerful bureaucrats, it is the big ticket scams involving politicians cutting across the party line that is getting exposed every day.

Recently, we have seen a major scam unfolded by ED in West Bengal related to teacher recruitment and recovery of a whooping amount of cash and valuables. Three Jharkhand MLAs with a huge pile of cash were arrested by West Bengal police as well. In yet another incident Shiv Sena Leader has been arrested for his involvement in the Patra Chawl land scam case.

Background and status of corruption in India

Even in yesteryears the issue of corruption among bureaucrats was a concern and was contemplated seriously by scholars like Kautilya. Unfortunately, India continues to be among the most corrupted countries in the world. The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) which ranks 180 countries awards India a score of 40. The underdeveloped nations like Ghana and Morocco have also achieved the same score

What leads to the dark?

Inquiry into the causes of corruption presents a detailed picture of a socio-political-economic-administrative scenario that breeds corruption on a daily basis.

Legacy issues

The rampant poverty and empty coffers of the government at the dawn of independence led to chronic low salaries of the government officials. Simultaneously, pre-liberalization license permit raj was catered by monopolies and restrictive trade practices facilitated corruption.

Political system

The use of black money in elections to win at any cost creates the need for the recovery of that cost through malpractices. It leads to crony capitalism and the criminalization of politics.

Economic structure

Low levels of the economy formalization breed black money and stringent compliance rules for entry and exit for businesses result in bribery.

Legal and administrative gaps

Lack of resources, funding, infrastructure and manpower in the vigilance institutions, incorporation of organizations' standard practices like

Banks and sports groups result in multi-billion-rupee scams.

Social problems

The mind-set of the community that doesn't look at the problems seriously. Besides, illiteracy, poverty and the inability to understand complex procedures, along with the failure of social morality to inculcate the values lead to corruption.

There is economic loss, as wrong allocation policies result in undervaluation of resources like Coal blocks, Hydrocarbon projects and Spectrum allocation.

The government of India, in pursuance of its commitment to "Zero Tolerance against Corruption," has

**The government of India, in pursuance of its commitment to "Zero Tolerance against Corruption," has taken several measures to fight it out. To achieve the goal, systemic improvements to provide transparent citizen-friendly services are given preference**

taken several measures to fight it out. To achieve the goal, systemic improvements to provide transparent citizen-friendly services are given preference. Hence, the

disbursement of welfare benefits is done directly to the citizens under various Government schemes evidently through the Direct Benefit Transfer initiative. Besides, implementation of E-tendering in public procurements, the introduction of e-Governance and simplification of procedure and systems, are active.

The government has induced various rules for retiring officials from service in public interest whose performance has been reviewed and found unsatisfactory. The Prevention of the Corruption Act, 1988 has been amended to clearly criminalize the act of giving bribe. The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), through various orders recommended the adoption of the Integrity Pact to all the organizations in major procurement activities and ensure effective investigation wherever any irregularity is noticed.

The institution of Lokpal has been operational by appointment of Chairperson and Members. Lokpal is statutorily mandated to directly receive and process complaints as regards alleged offenses against public servants. In addition, the CVC as an apex integrity institution has adopted a multi-pronged strategy, which encompasses punitive, preventive and participative vigilance.

The present Government is trying its level best to combat corruption. However, eventually, it comes down to the common people. If they have a strong backbone to stand up against corruption, only then the vile disease can be eradicated from the country, else, all the efforts to counter corruption seems useless.

# World Can't Afford Another Crisis' Pakistan Backs China in Faceoff With US Over Pelosi's Taiwan Visit

The Taiwan visit of US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi — which has seen an angry China respond with a flurry of military exercises, summoning the US ambassador in Beijing, and announcing the suspension of several agricultural imports from Taiwan — has also not gone down well with Beijing's all-weather ally Pakistan.

After Russia, Pakistan has put its weight behind the One China policy, issuing a statement on Tuesday night that it supported "China's sovereignty and territorial integrity".

"Pakistan is deeply concerned over the evolving situation in the Taiwan Strait, which has serious implications for regional peace and stability. The world is already reeling through a critical security situation due to the Ukraine conflict, with destabilising implications for international food and energy security. The world cannot afford another crisis that has negative consequences for global peace, security and economy," the country said. It added that inter-state relations should be based on mutual respect, non-interference in internal affairs, and peaceful resolution of issues by upholding of principles of UN charter, international law and bilateral agreements. While Pelosi is not the first House Speaker to go to

Taiwan - Newt Gingrich visited in 1997 - her visit comes as relations between Beijing and Washington have deteriorated sharply, and with China a much more powerful economic, military and geopolitical force than it was a quarter century ago.

China considers Taiwan part of its territory and has never renounced using force to bring it under its control. The United States warned China against using the visit as a pretext for military action against Taiwan.

A long-time China critic, especially on human rights, Pelosi was set to meet later on Wednesday with a former Tiananmen activist, a Hong Kong bookseller who had been detained by China and a Taiwanese activist recently released by China, people familiar with the matter said.

Shortly after Pelosi's arrival, China's military announced joint air and sea drills near Taiwan and test launches of conventional missiles in the sea east of Taiwan, with Chinese state news agency Xinhua describing live-fire drills and other exercises around Taiwan from Thursday to Sunday. China's foreign ministry said Pelosi's visit seriously damages peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, "has a severe impact on the political foundation of China-U.S. relations, and seriously infringes upon China's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

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# UN chief Antonio Guterres criticises oil and gas companies for making profits 'while destroying our only home'

The United Nations chief sharply criticized the "grotesque greed" of oil and gas companies on Wednesday for making record profits from the energy crisis on the back of the world's poorest people, "while destroying our only home."

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said it was "immoral" that the largest energy companies in the first quarter of the year made combined profits of close to \$100 billion.

He urged all governments to tax these excessive profits "and use the funds to support the most vulnerable people through these difficult times."

Guterres urged people everywhere to send a message to the fossil fuel industry and their financiers that "this grotesque greed is punishing the poorest and most vulnerable people, while destroying our only common home, the planet."

The secretary-general spoke at the news conference launching a report by the Global Crisis Response Group he set up to tackle the triple interconnected crises of food, energy and finance which have especially hit countries trying to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and deal with the devastating impact of the war in Ukraine.

Guterres told reporters that "we are seeing excessive, scandalous profits of the oil and gas industry in a moment in which all of us are losing money" because of inflation around 7-8 per cent. And "nothing will be more popular than to tax the excessive profits ... and to distribute that money to the most vulnerable families," he said.

The crisis group has already presented recommendations on food and finance and Guterres said he believes "we are making some progress" in those areas, especially on food.

The report released Wednesday focuses on the energy crisis, and the secretary-general said it aims to achieve the equivalent of the grain deal he first proposed to the Russian and Ukrainian presidents to enable Ukrainian grain to be shipped from Russian-blockaded ports on the Black Sea to world markets in desperate need of food supplies. The first ship to leave Ukraine was headed to Lebanon Wednesday after a three-hour inspection in Turkish waters.

Guterres said speculators and obstacles to getting grain and fertilizers to global markets during the

Ukraine war sent food prices soaring. But since negotiations on the grain deal "gained traction," he said, there has been "a significant fall" and today prices of most foodstuffs and fertilizers are more or less at their pre-war prices.

"But that doesn't mean that bread in the bakery is at the same price before the war, because these are quotations in wholesale markets, some of them related to futures," he said, and there are a lot of other factors contributing to rising prices including transportation and insurance costs and supply chain disruptions.

UN trade chief Rebeca Grynspan, who coordinated the crisis group, said wheat prices are down almost 50 per cent from their peak, corn and fertilizer prices have dropped almost 25 per cent in the past month and crude oil is now around \$93 a barrel compared to \$120 dollars a barrel in June. "Only natural gas has bucked the trend and is still higher than a month ago," she told reporters by video from Geneva.

Falling prices are "good news," Grynspan said, but they have been high for too long and since June forecasts for

extreme poverty have risen by 71 million people and forecasts for food insecurity by 47 million.

In another key recommendation, the crisis group urges richer developed countries, especially, to conserve energy including by reducing air conditioning and heating use and by promoting public transport "and nature-based solutions."

Guterres said new technologies including storage for batteries "should become public goods," and governments must scale up and diversify supply chains for raw materials and renewable energy technologies.

The group also recommends scaling up private and multilateral finance for "the green energy transition." And it backed the International Energy Agency's goal of increasing investments in renewable energy by a factor of seven to meet the goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to "net zero" by 2050 to help curb man-made climate change.

"Today, developing countries are spending around \$150 billion on clean energy," said Grynspan, the secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. "They need to spend \$1 trillion in investments."

## 'Slam-dunk for national security': US Senate backs Finland, Sweden for NATO with 95-1 vote, rebuking Russia

The 95-1 vote, for the candidacy of Finland and Sweden, took a crucial step toward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and its 73-year-old pact of mutual defence among the United States and democratic allies in Europe. US Senators delivered overwhelming bipartisan approval to NATO membership for Finland and Sweden Wednesday, calling expansion of the Western defensive bloc a "slam-dunk" for US national security and a day of reckoning for Russian President Vladimir Putin over his invasion of Ukraine.

Wednesday's 95-1 vote — for the candidacy of two Western European nations that, until Russia's war against Ukraine, had long avoided military alliances — took a crucial step toward expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and its 73-year-old pact of mutual defense among the United States and democratic allies in Europe. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer invited ambassadors of the two nations to the chamber gallery to witness the vote. President Joe Biden, who has been the principal player rallying global economic and material support for Ukraine, has sought quick entry for the two previously non-militarily aligned northern European nations.

"This historic vote sends an important



signal of the sustained, bipartisan US commitment to NATO, and to ensuring our Alliance is prepared to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow," Biden said in a statement Wednesday evening. "I look forward to signing the accession protocols and welcoming Sweden and Finland, two strong democracies with highly capable militaries, into the greatest defensive alliance in history," the president added. Approval from all member nations — currently, 30 — is required. The candidacies of the two prosperous Northern European nations have won ratification from more than half of the NATO member nations in the roughly three months since the two applied. It's a purposely rapid pace meant

to send a message to Russia over its six-month-old war against Ukraine's West-looking government. "It sends a warning shot to tyrants around the world who believe free democracies are just up for grabs," Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., said in the Senate debate ahead of the vote.

"Russia's unprovoked invasion has changed the way we think about world security," she added. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, who visited Kyiv earlier this year, urged unanimous approval. Speaking to the Senate, McConnell cited Finland's and Sweden's well-funded, modernizing militaries and their experience working with US forces and weapons systems, calling it a "slam-

dunk for national security" of the United States. "Their accession will make NATO stronger and America more secure. If any senator is looking for a defensible excuse to vote no, I wish them good luck," McConnell said. Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican who often aligns his positions with those of the most ardent supporters of former President Donald Trump, cast the only no vote. Hawley took the Senate floor to call European security alliances a distraction from what he called the United States' chief rival — China, not Russia. "We can do more in Europe ... devote more resources, more firepower ... or do what we need to do to deter Asia and China. We cannot do both," Hawley said, calling his a "classic nationalist approach" to foreign policy. Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas, like Hawley a potential 2024 presidential contender, rebutted his points without naming his potential Republican rival. That included arguing against Hawley's contention a bigger NATO would mean more obligations for the US military, the world's largest. Cotton was one of many citing the two nations' military strengths — including Finland's experience securing its hundreds of miles of border with Russia and its well-trained ground forces, and Sweden's well-equipped navy and air force.

(Contd. on page 28)



# Who failed West Bengal's students?

**Education scam uncovered by ED raids is a result of years of public corruption nurtured by public indifference, with those in power assuming the right to monetise and profit from what is funded by taxpayers**

In September 2021, K V Mohandas, chairman of the Eleventh Kerala Pay Revision Commission (PRC), took official note of the practice of collecting money from teachers for appointment in state-aided schools and colleges by comparing it to dowry. "Like dowry, demanding money for appointments in aided schools and colleges is considered evil by everyone and still the practice is allowed to continue," he said. While the PRC Report recommended some measures to end this evil, given that teachers' salaries in aided institutions were paid by the



government from the public exchequer, there was also an undercurrent of hopelessness about the situation, even sympathy for managements that needed funds for infrastructure and maintenance. Nevertheless, the practice was corrupt and illegal, and it was suggested that handing over recruitment to the Public Service Commission (PSC) or constituting a statutory Kerala Recruitment Board for Private Schools and Colleges might help to end it.

Soon after the publication of the Kerala PRC report, I attended a meeting with members of the Commission for Reforms in the

Higher Education System of Kerala, who were looking for pointers from our own experience in West Bengal with special reference to the research and teaching excellence of Jadavpur University, where I taught for most of my working life. When the discussion touched upon payment for teaching posts in higher education in West Bengal, I said that while influence and politics obviously played a part, I was not aware of money changing hands for appointments under either the state PSC or the College Service Commission (CSC). For school teachers, I admitted, it had long been a

different story, despite the existence of a state School Service Commission (SSC). As it turns out, I could not have been more wrong on the first head. The discovery of over Rs 50 crore in cash and gold jewellery in flats belonging to an associate of West Bengal's former industries minister (and former education minister), Partha Chatterjee, as well as numberless properties allegedly jointly owned by them or their families, has unplugged a flood of disclosures at every level, from the serious to the salacious. The Enforcement Directorate's (ED) investigation of Chatterjee and his associates

followed successive high court judgments regarding recruitment scams during his tenure as education minister. From 2016, the appointment of school teachers qualifying the SSC's State Level Selection Test (SLST) had flagrantly violated the merit list, for reasons of nepotism, money or political clout. Second, there were irregularities in the recruitment by SSC of Group D staff in state-aided schools, after the tenure of the original panel of appointees for 13,000 posts had expired. Third, at least 269 primary school teachers in government-aided

schools were ineligible for appointment. The clear implication was that during Chatterjee's term as education minister, a system had been put in place such that all school posts, of teaching and non-teaching staff, were sold for money. Additional Solicitor General Suryaprakash V Raju, appearing for the ED, declared that they were looking for at least Rs 120 crore in the SSC recruitment scam, more than twice the sum they had found in cash.

Moreover, despite the Trinamool Congress Party (TMC)'s panic-stricken distancing of itself from their tainted ex-cabinet minister and former secretary-general, it is obvious that this massive exercise in monetising posts in the education system (and in other services too) was carried out by a vast number of functionaries who set prices and collected the loot. Chatterjee has already said that the money is not his, and this is true in more than one sense — he was allegedly a collector as well as an individual profiteer. In fact, for all the shock and horror about the SSC scam being expressed by the left parties in Bengal, it was they who started the process.

(Contd. on page 28)

## Anti-Corruption Missile: PM Modi Fires One of His Most Potent Weapons for 2024 Election

**They say two crucial activities in India do not necessarily run on fundamentals but on emotions: the stock market and elections**

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India may have administered over two billion Covid-19 vaccine doses, got aatmanirbhar or self-reliant by developing two globally admired vaccines, built enormous stretches of infrastructure, or freed women by banning instant triple talaq and amending the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, or extended tap water to millions of homes. But it would take something that connects much stronger emotionally with the electorate for him to get the kind of mandate that he seeks.

Even abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A in Kashmir, a tectonic civilisational change, will be five years in the past to stir up raw cadre and voter enthusiasm. The BJP's formidable election machine under Modi usually operates like an onion. As crucial elections draw close, peels come off layers and layers of dramatic decisions and events, creating a calibrated impact. Before 2024, one can expect the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya

to be opened, parts of India's education syllabi to be rid of Left and colonial bias, and big foreign policy or internal security wins.

But perhaps we are already witnessing a very potent poll weapon being put in motion. The anti-corruption missile.

The CBI and ED have become extraordinarily active, and instead of the small-fish hunting of yesteryear, it is going about highly visible or effective middle- and top-rung political leadership. Satyendar Jain, the financial fulcrum of the AAP, is in custody. So is Sanjay Raut, the publicly hated rabble-rouser of the Shiv Sena. The TMC's corruption and scandals are unfolding with the arrest of minister Partha Chatterjee and his girlfriend Arpita Mukherjee in an ugly but captivating television spectacle. The party's heir apparent after Abhishek Banerjee and his wife Rujira are quietly doing the rounds of CBI offices.

Modi's arch rivals, Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, are losing the dregs of their

political capital by facing court appearances and ED interrogations and throwing a mighty, monarchy-size fuss about it. Other parties and other leaders are nervously waiting their turn.

The government seems to be putting the emphasis back on black money. It recently said in Parliament that it had raised a tax demand of Rs 14,820 crore after analysing 368 cases under the black money law dealing with clandestine overseas income. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in the Lok Sabha that on deposits made in unreported foreign HSBC accounts, undisclosed income of Rs 8,468 crore have been taxed and penalties of over Rs 1,294 crore levied. The minister said that 648 disclosures involving foreign assets worth Rs 4,164 crore were made in the three-month compliance window under the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015. But black money continues to rile up India's hardworking and

struggling middle and lower economic classes. Because Modi may have brought big-ticket corruption down, but it definitely is not out. During the UPA regime in 2011, India had ranked 95 in the Transparency International's globally recognised Corruption Perceptions Index. Ten years later in 2021, India was at a slightly better 85th spot, along with Maldives and behind nations like China, Ghana, South Africa, Rwanda, Mauritius and Cuba. It is admirable but not very impressive, given the massive hope people have on Modi. There is a fair bit of bloodlust left in the public to see big names dragged to dust for corruption, for stealing the exchequer and citizenry of lakes of crores. This thirst for a public justice over ill-gotten wealth could be a very strong election plank. It will win over the poor and the middle classes. As a bonus, it helps break up parties which are held together solely by the glue of corruption, nepotism and opportunism instead of grassroots cadre work and deep ideological focus.



# The Gujarati and Marathi identities in cosmopolitan Mumbai

**The controversy triggered by Governor B S Koshiyari's statement has rekindled an old debate on a sensitive issue that is rooted in the origin story and political cross-currents of Maharashtra**

It is because Mumbai's cosmopolitanism is such a visible and inalienable part of the legend of India's greatest city that Governor B S Koshiyari's recent observation about the contribution of Gujaratis and Rajasthanis to the building of the financial capital raised eyebrows even among people with whom the politics of Marathi pride does not normally resonate. Those who live in the city see themselves as Mumbaikars — partners in the joys and struggles that are typical of Mumbai, with the divisions of caste, community, region, or gender often blurring in shared public spaces. And yet, the Marathi-Gujarati controversy that the Governor triggered is familiar to the city — a cultural and social argument that has bubbled to the surface repeatedly.

Appended to the core question — “to whom does Mumbai belong?” — have been other issues, such as, “Should Mumbai remain with Maharashtra or get an independent identity as a Union Territory?”

Maharashtra was created on May 1, 1960 by cleaving the bilingual Bombay State into the unilingual states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, dominated linguistically

by Marathi and Gujarati speakers respectively. The leadership of the Congress party was forced to retain Mumbai in the new state of Maharashtra. Other suggestions — including handing over Mumbai to Gujarat or making it a Union Territory — were categorically rejected by stalwarts from Maharashtra.

The birth of the new state was preceded by a period of intense turmoil. In 1956, police fired on a peaceful demonstration by the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti demanding a separate state of Maharashtra, killing 106 people. The stone statue of patriots holding a torch at Hutatma Chowk in the heart of Mumbai is a stark reminder of the blood and sweat that was shed during the agitation for Mumbai (then Bombay).

The firing incident gave impetus to the movement for Maharashtra. Between 1956 and 1960, the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement, which was then led by veteran communist and socialist leaders, played a significant role in ensuring Mumbai (then Bombay) remained with Maharashtra instead of going to Gujarat.

Among the prominent leaders of the Samyukta Maharashtra

Movement were Shripad Amrit Dange, Shreedhar Mahadev Joshi, Narayan Gore, Uddhavrao Patil, Annabhau Sathe, Prahlad Keshav Atre, Keshav Sitaram Thackeray, Pandurang Mahadev Bapat, Bhausahab Raut, Amar Shaikh, G T Madholkar, Madhuri Dandavate, Y K Saini, and Keshavrao Jedhe.

In the decades after Maharashtra was created, however, many complained that its capital did not quite represent the nerve centre of the Marathi identity, and was instead dominated financially and culturally by others, led by Gujaratis.

CPI leader Prakash Reddy said, “The capitalists always favoured a separate Mumbai. If Mumbai has remained in Maharashtra, the credit goes to the city's common people, the struggling classes, who took to the streets during the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement under the able leadership of communist and socialists leaders.”

He added: “Unfortunately, even today, a handful of capitalists control the city. And they are still working to separate Mumbai from Maharashtra with the patronage of politicians.”

Issue of political polarisation What is notable is that the Gujarati versus Marathi polarisation has often come into play during successive elections, albeit with changing characteristics.

Broadly, while the Shiv Sena is identified as the custodian of the Marathi interest, the BJP has been seen as the party of Gujaratis. The protection and advancement of the Marathi manooos was indeed a foundational principle of the Shiv Sena.

But in as much of a nod to the innate cosmopolitanism of Mumbai as to the electoral logic of numbers, political parties have reached out to all sections of society. Last year, the Shiv Sena under former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray coined the slogan “Khao jalebi, fafda; Uddhav Thackeray aapda (Eat jalebi, fafda, Uddhav Thackeray is ours)”. Jalebi and fafda are snacks popular with Gujaratis.

This is also why Governor Koshiyari's statement — that Mumbai and Thane would be left with no money if Gujaratis and Rajasthanis were taken away — struck a discordant note. While the Governor

issued a clarification, Thackeray was quick to issue a condemnation of his statements.

Congress leader Husain Dalwai, who has long had a close association with socialist leaders, said, “Mumbai has always embraced people across classes, communities and religions. But it is the hidden agenda of some segments to break it. The state Governor's remark is an attempt to instigate one community against another. The politics of dividing has always been detrimental for Mumbai.”

Politicians cutting across party lines distanced themselves from Koshiyari's remarks. The Marathi vote bank amounts to 26-30 per cent of the total, while Gujaratis account for up to 17 per cent. A senior Sena leader said, “Although Mumbai was the bone of contention in the creation of Maharashtra and Gujarat, the two communities have learnt to coexist.”

And a senior BJP functionary said, “Whether it is the common Marathi manooos or the Gujarati, their basic concern is livelihood and happiness. In Mumbai they seek opportunities to fulfill their aspirations.”

# Taiwan and Ukraine: How two crises, 5,000 miles apart, are linked

**With no end in sight to the bloody war in Ukraine and with tensions significantly rising in the Taiwan Strait, the two geopolitical challenges are intersecting in complex and unpredictable ways**

Hours before Russia began its invasion of Ukraine in late February, the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued a statement that was clear, stern and not really about Russia or Ukraine at all.

“Taiwan is not Ukraine,” Hua Chunying, the ministry's spokesperson, told reporters in Beijing. “Taiwan has always been an inalienable part of China. This is an indisputable legal and historical fact.” But with no end in sight to the bloody war in Ukraine and with tensions significantly rising in the Taiwan Strait, the two geopolitical challenges are intersecting in complex and unpredictable ways. Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, on Wednesday wasted no time in linking the two, saying that Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit this week to Taiwan was a “manifestation of the same course” that the United States has taken in Ukraine. Even though it was Russia that invaded



Ukraine, he blamed the West for the conflict.

The fear since the outset of the war in Ukraine has been that Moscow and Beijing will be driven closer together as the United States casts both issues as a struggle between authoritarianism and democracy — as

Pelosi did in the spring during her visit to Ukraine and Wednesday while in Taipei, Taiwan's capital.

There are a multitude of differences between Ukraine and Taiwan, including history and geography. But both embattled democracies sit next to much larger, nuclear-armed military powers

ruled by authoritarian leaders who have made it clear that they do not see their neighbors as sovereign states.

One major difference, of course, is that the United States and its allies support an independent Ukraine, but America's “One China” policy does not support Taiwan's independence, while remaining purposely unclear about whether Washington would defend Taiwan if Beijing attacks it.

As the nervousness, rhetoric and military posturing surrounding Pelosi's visit to Taiwan demonstrated, many are asking what path China will choose and when.

The White House urged Pelosi not to visit Taiwan, reflecting Washington's delicate balancing act as it plays a central role in both dramas, seeking to strengthen the international order around Western values while avoiding a wider conflagration.

(Contd. on page 27)



# What lowering of e-invoicing turnover threshold under GST to 10 crore from Oct 1 seeks to achieve

The turnover threshold for e-invoicing has been halved to Rs 10 crore effective October 1 this year under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime. What does this signify?

In a step to ensure better flow of data on taxpayers to the authorities and higher compliance, the turnover threshold for e-invoicing has been halved to Rs 10 crore effective October 1 this year under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime.

## What is the decision on the threshold for e-invoice?

Businesses with annual turnover of Rs 10 crore or more will have to generate e-invoices for business-to-business (B2B) transactions from October 1 this year. The existing threshold for this is Rs 20 crore. Pursuant to the GST Council's decision to introduce e-invoicing in a phased manner, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on August 1 notified lowering the e-invoice threshold to Rs 10 crore. The GST Council approved the standard of e-invoice in its 37th meeting held on September 20, 2019. E-invoicing for B2B transactions was made mandatory for companies with turnover of over Rs 500 crore from October 1, 2020, which was then extended to those with turnover of over Rs 100 crore effective January 1, 2021.

From April 1, 2021, companies with turnover of over Rs 50 crore were generating B2B e-invoices. The threshold was brought down to Rs 20 crore beginning April 1,

2022. The CBIC now plans to further lower the threshold for e-invoice generation to Rs 5 crore.

## What is e-invoice generation under GST?

The e-invoice system is for GST registered persons to upload all B2B invoices to the Invoice Registration Portal (IRP). The IRP generates and returns a unique Invoice Reference Number (IRN), digitally signed e-invoice, and QR code to the user.

After following the e-invoicing process, the invoice copy (with QR Code containing inter alia, IRN) issued by the notified supplier to the buyer is commonly referred to as the 'e-invoice'. SEZ units, insurance, banking (including NBFCs), goods transport agencies (transporting goods by road in goods carriages), passenger transport services, and multiplex cinema admissions are exempt from the e-invoice system. A GST invoice is valid only with a valid IRN. E-invoice does not mean generation of invoices from a central portal of the tax department — rather, it is the generation of invoice in a standard format so that an invoice generated on one system can be read by another system, and then reporting of e-invoice to a central system.

## What does the lowering of

## thresholds for e-invoice signify?

Officials said the e-invoice system will help to curb the actions of unscrupulous taxpayers and reduce cases of fraud as the tax authorities will have access to data in real time. The aim behind adoption of the e-invoice system by tax departments is to acquire the ability to pre-populate the return and to reduce reconciliation problems.

Tax experts said the lowering of the threshold will help curb tax evasion.

"The move to reduce the turnover threshold and increase the ambit of e-invoicing is mainly aimed at resolving mismatch errors and checking tax evasion. Considering the timelines, concerned businesses will have to ramp up their IT systems to comply with the e-invoicing norms," EY said.

M S Mani, Partner, Deloitte India, said the reduction of the e-invoicing threshold will further expand the GST tax base and provide more data to tax authorities, enabling better compliance. "The progressive reduction of the e-invoicing threshold indicates that over a period of time, e-invoicing will become mandatory for all categories of GST taxpayers," he said.

Businesses would now need to tweak their systems to incorporate the changes, else

they may run the risk of their invoices not being accepted by other businesses and hence, lead to issues in availing input tax credit.

Vivek Jalan, Partner, Tax Connect Advisory, a multi-disciplinary tax consultancy firm, said, "As of now e-invoicing compliance amidst already liable taxpayers is only 40%, which means that on average only 4 out of 10 liable invoices are e-invoicing-compliant. This change has a big impact on the recipients of goods or services also."

"In case their suppliers are liable to generate e-invoices and have not provided them with one, then the GST-Input Tax Credit on such invoices shall be denied to the recipients. Hence it is important for the recipients to check whether their suppliers are e-invoicing complaints also."

Abhishek Jain, Partner, Indirect Tax, KPMG in India, said "This means any registered person with aggregate turnover exceeding Rs 10 crore in any FY 2017-18 onwards has to issue e-invoice from October 1, 2022. This has been done to widen the net of GST digitisation and to capture transaction details at the invoicing stage itself, which will help further prevent GST evasion."

# Who could succeed Al Qaeda's leader Ayman al-Zawahiri?

The United States killed al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri with a drone missile in Kabul last weekend. Here are some top contenders to take over the militant organisation, according to experts.

The United States killed al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri with a drone missile while he stood on a balcony at his home in downtown Kabul, Afghanistan, officials in Washington said, the biggest blow to the militants since Osama bin Laden was shot dead in 2011. Here are some top contenders to take over the militant organisation, according to experts. The United States is offering a reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to his arrest.

Al-Adel was suspected of involvement in the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, and left the country in 1988 to join the mujahideen fighting Soviet occupation in Afghanistan.

One of al Qaeda's leading military chiefs, and often called the third-ranking al Qaeda official, al-Adel helped to plan the bomb attacks against the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar as Salaam in 1998 and set up training camps for the organisation in Sudan, Pakistan and Afghanistan in the 1990s.

In 2004, al-Adel's diary was recovered during a raid in Saudi Arabia. His role in the organisation has been as a trainer, military leader and member of bin Laden's security detail.

Before joining Al Qaeda he was a member of Egypt's Islamic Jihad organisation, which was bent on toppling the state.

Al-Adel was linked to the killing of US journalist Daniel Pearl in Pakistan in 2002, US investigators said in a report. The findings by investigators of the Pearl Project revealed al-Adel had discussed Pearl's abduction with Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, also known as KSM, the accused mastermind behind the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

Al-Adel was appointed caretaker leader after the death of bin Laden.

## YEZID MEBAREK

Yezid Mebarek, known as Abu Ubaydah Yusuf al-Anabi, succeeded as emir of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in 2020, when a French raid killed his

predecessor, after running one of the group's leadership councils and sitting on another.

An Algerian citizen, Mebarek ran media operations for AQIM, using a 2013 video to call for global attacks against French interests after Paris sent troops to help quash a militant insurgency in Mali.

Mebarek, 53, pictured in one photograph with a full grey beard and green turban, is a veteran of Algeria's 1990s civil war between the government and Islamist forces, rising through the ranks of a militant splinter group, the GSPC.

AQIM took advantage of chaos across the Sahel region to become one of the global network's most active and valued branches, kidnapping Westerners and staging attacks across swathes of territory. As a mark of AQIM's importance to Al Qaeda, Mebarek's predecessor as its chief Abdelmalek Droukdel, served a role in the global movement's leadership team under

Zawahiri, before being killed by French forces in 2020.

However, analysts believe AQIM has lost sway to newer militant groups in the Sahel, one of the world's most important arenas of jihadist activity, while Mebarek is reported to suffer from old injuries and to lack the charismatic pull of Droukdel.

## ABD AL RAHMAN AL-MAGHREBI

Moroccan-born national Abd al-Rahman al-Maghrebi is wanted for questioning by the FBI in connection with his membership in Al-Qaeda. He studied software programming in Germany before moving to Afghanistan where he was selected to manage al Qaeda's main media wing, said the FBI. The son-in-law of Zawahiri, he is a senior Al Qaeda leader.

Documents recovered in the operation that killed Bin Laden indicated al-Maghrebi had been a rising star in the group for many years. He served as Al Qaeda's general manager in Afghanistan and Pakistan.



# Why Comparing Kashmir With Ukraine is Delusional and Dangerous



ranges from being outright stupid and ludicrous to innately dangerous.

First thing first: Unlike what Guha would like us to believe, it was a tough decision for India not to bend backwards to please the West and instead pursue an independent foreign policy of criticising the Russian invasion of Ukraine and yet stopping short of the dubious Western design to corner Russia. Thanks to the proactive and assertive diplomacy led with aplomb by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, India could turn a crisis into an opportunity. Foreign policy, after all, is all about promoting national interest and not looking for high moral ground. But then one can understand why it's so difficult for a 'Nehruphile' to understand and appreciate it.

Guha begins the article by saying how bloody the Ukraine war has become, "with perhaps 20,000 Russian soldiers killed in the fighting and probably twice as many Ukrainian men in uniform". He then informs the reader that the "economy of Ukraine has been ravaged; once the conflict ends, it shall take decades to restore it to its past position".

No one in his sane mind would deny these facts. Where one

would disagree with him is on his analysis of the war and India's role in all this. So, Guha, as he claims, is "horrified by the barbarism of the Russian military, its obliteration of the physical infrastructure of entire cities, its bombings of hospitals and civilian shelters, its assaults on Ukrainian women". But then, which war is fought with human rights intact, Mr Guha? (I think the last such war was fought in 1191 AD and for that Prithviraj Chauhan came out looking horribly stupid a year later!) If anything, the Russians can be accused of going a bit soft on Ukraine. How else can one explain the recent Vogue photo shoot of the Zelenkys at their palatial house and not in some heavily guarded bunker, even if one ignores the visits of several European Heads of States to Kyiv in the last two months? Guha then blames Vladimir Putin for the war, showcasing either his strategic naivety or ideological obscenity. He writes, "Anyone with any sense could now see that the war was being conducted by Putin not to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO, but to teach the Ukrainians a lesson for not bending to his will. The Russian president was possessed of a

maniacal delusion that he was a modern-day incarnation of a medieval emperor, unifying Russia and all its neighbours into one nation beholden to one all-powerful Leader."

The Ukraine war, in reality, was seen to be coming for more than a decade now. Without being apologetic about Putin, who is without doubt an authoritarian leader, it can be said that Russia this time was actually pushed into the action by the US-led NATO's eastward movement. Russia had protested in 1999 when Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic moved away from the Russian orbit to join NATO. Again, it showed its unhappiness in 2004 when seven Central and Eastern European nations such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia entered the Western military club. But Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 was a clear indicator that Putin would go to any length to prevent Georgia and Ukraine from joining NATO. Ukraine joining NATO would have brought the Western guns and missiles to the Russian borders. No country would want an enemy nation in its immediate neighbourhood.

(Contd. on page 30)

# Why is heavy rainfall battering Kerala?

**Kerala rains: The state is presently under the influence of at least three rainfall triggering weather conditions**

After experiencing poor rainfall in June and July, almost three-fourth of Kerala is experiencing heavy showers this month, with several areas on the brink of flooding. With the state government declaring closure of all schools Tuesday, there is a fear among locals of a 2018 redux when the state had witnessed its worst deluge in almost a century.

**Why is Kerala witnessing heavy rains?** Kerala is presently under the influence of at least three rainfall triggering weather conditions. There are strong Westerly winds flowing-in from the Arabian Sea, and bringing moisture over Kerala. Another major cause for an increase in rainfall is the presence of an east-west shear zone located 10 degrees north over the southern peninsula. This vertical zone — that can prevail either in the lower, middle or upper atmospheric



levels — allows active winds of high speeds to interact. This zone also allows monsoon winds to remain active, thus causing intense rainfall over the area under its influence. The IMD further stated that the presence of a

north-south trough running between Chhattisgarh and Comorin areas, which is located closer to south Kerala is causing widespread rainfall. "These three factors are causing heavy spells over Kerala. The monsoon will

remain active over the state during the next three to four days," said an official from the Meteorological Centre, Thiruvananthapuram. On Tuesday morning, the Central Water Commission (CWC) issued an alert to downstream

areas of Manimala river in Kottayam district. The river was flowing above the danger mark of 97.915 metres.

**Kerala rains: How much has it rained in the state?**

The southwest monsoon hit Kerala three days ahead of schedule on May 29. In June, Kerala received 308.6 mm rain (a deficit of 52 per cent) followed by 961.2mm (26 per cent deficit) in July. The current spell is likely to bring isolated heavy rainfall over most of the 14 districts during the next four to six days and it could help reduce the existing rainfall deficiency by small margins. Since August 1, extremely heavy spells of rain have been recorded over Thrissur district with the 24-hour rainfall in Enamakkal being 225.6 mm, followed by Kodungallur (210 mm), and Chalakudy (213 mm).

(Contd. on page 28)



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# Former Pakistan PM Imran Khan's Instagram account briefly hacked

The Instagram account of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan was briefly hacked on Monday by crypto scammers who also shared a post from his account



Founder Elon Musk for screenshot of a tweet from boss in the story posted by the "donating" three bitcoins, Tesla chief executive Elon hackers. The same story was according to media reports. Musk. The billionaire is often also posted as an Instagram The Instagram account of the impersonated by scammers to post which has now been Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief cash in on his interest in deleted. The alleged tweet from was recovered soon with the help of Meta Facebook and cryptocurrencies. The former Musk's account could not be of Instagram's parent company, premier's Instagram account found on his official handle. Khan PTI social media head Arslan Motors Founder Elon Musk is not the only PTI member whose account was hacked this Khalid told the Dawn newspaper. for "donating" three bitcoins. year, according to the Pakistan Khan's Instagram profile also shared a story with a Observer newspaper. Last week, the Twitter account of PTI Secretary General and former where the hackers shared a screenshot of Musk's tweet Federal Planning Minister, Asad about winning USD 100,000. Umar, was hacked. The account The PTI chairman's verified account thanked the Space X was recovered after several hours.

(SAI Bureau) The Instagram account of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan was briefly hacked on Monday by crypto scammers who shared a post lauding Tesla Motors

## China warns of 'resolute response' if US Senator Nancy Pelosi visits Taiwan

China on Monday said it is keeping a close watch on reports of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's planned visit to Taiwan and warned of a "resolute response" by its military if she went ahead

(News Agency) China on Monday said it is keeping a close watch on reports of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's planned visit to Taiwan and warned of a "resolute response" by its military and "strong countermeasures" if she went ahead with the trip to Taipei.

Pelosi is expected to visit Taiwan, CNN quoted senior Taiwanese and US officials as saying despite warnings from the Biden administration officials, who are worried about China's response to such a high-profile visit. China views Taiwan as a breakaway province that must become a part of the country. Beijing has not ruled out the possible use of force to achieve the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland in the future.

Pelosi, 82, confirmed on Sunday she will lead a congressional delegation to Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and Japan but was conspicuously silent about a possible stopover at Taiwan, the self-governing island that China claims as part of its mainland. While there have been no official announcements, local media in Taiwan reported that Pelosi will arrive on Tuesday night, becoming the highest-ranking elected US official to visit in more than 25 years. Taiwanese media quoted officials as saying that Pelosi would arrive in Taipei after visiting Malaysia and spend the night. Chinese

President Xi Jinping spoke of a fiery response to the visit in his phone call with his US counterpart Joe Biden last Thursday, stating that "those who play with fire will perish by it." Reacting to the reports of her visit to Taiwan, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here "we are closely following the itinerary of Speaker Pelosi" and (we would) give a resolute response if she went ahead with the visit.

"As for what those measures will be, let's see what happens if she actually goes," he said.

"We want to once again make it clear to the US side that the Chinese side is fully prepared for any eventuality and that the People's Liberation Army of China will never sit idly by, and we will make a resolute response and take strong countermeasures to uphold China's sovereignty and territorial integrity." The Chinese side has repeatedly made clear to the US side China's serious concern over Speaker Pelosi's potential visit to Taiwan and its firm opposition to the visit, he said. "We have been stressing that such a visit would lead to serious consequences. As President Xi Jinping stressed to US President Joe Biden in their phone call, the position of the Chinese government and people on the Taiwan question is consistent, and resolutely safeguarding China's national

sovereignty and territorial integrity is the firm will of the more than 1.4 billion Chinese people," he said.

"The public opinion cannot be defied. Those who play with fire will perish by it. We believe that the US side is fully aware of China's strong and clear message," he said. "What the US should do is to abide by the 'One China' principle and the stipulations of the three Sino-US joint communiques, fulfill President Biden's commitment of not supporting Taiwan's



independence and not arrange about her Taiwan visit. CNN for a visit by Speaker Pelosi to quoted a US official as saying Taiwan," he said. Pelosi that Defence Department heading a US Congressional officials are working around the delegation on Monday held clock on monitoring any talks with officials in Singapore Chinese movements in the at the start of her Asian tour region and securing a plan to while speculation remained rife keep her safe.

## Taiwan 'prepares for war' with China, puts military on alert ahead of US official's visit

Taiwan has reportedly put its armed forces on high alert as it 'prepares for war' with China over US senator Nancy Pelosi's visit

(News Agency) Taiwan has reportedly put its military on high alert and has cancelled the leave of some officials and soldiers as it 'prepares for war' with China over US senator Nancy Pelosi's reported visit. According to Taiwan news outlets, the military has mobilised the air defence forces to "immediately prepare for war" after a high-level briefing. This comes amid US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's tour of four Asian countries, which began on Monday. Local media in Taiwan reported that Pelosi will arrive on Tuesday night, becoming the highest-ranking elected US official to visit in more than 25 years. A US official's visit will spark fury in China, which regards Taiwan as its own territory and has repeatedly warned of "serious consequences" if the reported trip goes ahead. "Those who play with fire will perish by it. We would like to once again admonish the US that we are fully prepared for any eventuality and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) will never sit

idly by," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian was quoted as saying by AP. China sees official American contact with Taiwan as encouragement to make the island's decades-old de facto independence permanent, a step US leaders say they don't support. The US administration had tried to assure Beijing there was no reason to "come to blows" and that if such a visit occurred, it would signal no change in US policy on Taiwan. Taiwan and China split in 1949 after the Communists won a civil war on the mainland. Both sides say they are one country but disagree over which government is entitled to national leadership. They have no official relations but are linked by billions of dollars of trade and investment. Meanwhile, another US airforce passenger jet is flying from Alaska towards east Asia. Interestingly, it's call sign is SPAR20. Nancy Pelosi's call sign was SPAR19. Both jets are Boeing C-40C.



# Chopper with 6 Pak army officials crashes in Balochistan

A chopper of the Pakistan Army Aviation Corps with senior military officers onboard reportedly crashed between Windar and Sassi Punnu Shrine in Balochistan



(SAI Bureau) A chopper of the Pakistan Army Aviation Corps, tasked with providing close aerial combat support for the Pakistan Army, carrying senior military officials reportedly crashed between Windar and Sassi Punnu Shrine in Balochistan. According to The Balochistan Post, the missing helicopter crashed between Windar and Sassi Punnu Shrine. Rescuers are yet to reach the crash site. Lt General Sarfaraz Ali, the commander of 12 military corps, was on board the missing helicopter. The Pak Army is yet to confirm the crash. They have so far confirmed the news of the

chopper going missing. As per the Pakistan Army, the chopper was on flood relief operations in Lasbela when it went missing more than five hours ago. Six officials were onboard, including Corps Commander 12 (Quetta), who was supervising the flood relief operations. "A Pakistan army aviation helicopter which was on flood relief operations in Lasbela, Balochistan lost contact with ATC. Six individuals were on board, including Commander 12 Corps who was supervising flood relief operations in Balochistan. Search operation is underway," Pakistan armed forces said in a tweet.

## Imran Khan's PTI Received Illegal Funds from 34 Foreign Nationals, Rules Pakistan's Election Commission

(SAI Bureau) In a setback to Imran Khan, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) unanimously said on Tuesday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) received illegal funding from 34 foreign individuals and businesses from the US, Canada, Australia and UAE.

In a 3-0 verdict, the ECP said the PTI "willfully" received prohibited funding from Bristol Services – an UAE-based company and Wootton Cricket Club belonging to Abraaj Group founder Arif Naqvi, according to a GeoTV report.

The ECP's decision came after a Financial Times exposé that revealed that funds were generated from a charity match and an Arab "personality also pitched a large sum of money". The ECP has found 13 unknown accounts linked to the PTI, and has declared Imran Khan's affidavit in the foreign funding case "false" and issued a show-cause notice to his party. The EC also said hiding accounts is a "violation" of Article 17 of Pakistan's Constitution. Article 17 (2) of the Constitution

states: "...law shall provide that where the Federal Government declares that any political party has been formed or is operating in a manner prejudicial to the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan, the Federal Government shall, within fifteen days of such declaration, refer the matter to the Supreme Court whose decision on such reference shall be final."

The Election Commission of Pakistan began investigation into PTI's funding sources in 2014 when Akbar S Babar, who helped establishing PTI, filed a complaint.

In January, the ECP issued a report which said the PTI had received funding from foreign nationals and companies and accused it of underreporting funds and hiding dozens of bank accounts. The report also pointed out that Naqvi transferred three instalments directly to PTI in 2013, adding up to a total of \$2.12 million. Naqvi reportedly organised charity fundraiser matches in the UK whose money directly went to the PTI, news agency ANI quoted The Nation.

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# Al Qaeda leader Zawahiri killed in US drone strike in Afghanistan

**Al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed in a CIA drone strike in Afghanistan on Monday**



to have been in poor health.

His death raises questions about whether Zawahiri received sanctuary from the Taliban following their takeover of Kabul in August 2021. The official said senior Taliban officials were aware of his presence in the city and said the United States expected the Taliban to abide by an agreement not to allow al Qaeda fighters to re-establish themselves in the country.

The drone attack is the first known U.S. strike inside Afghanistan since U.S. troops and diplomats left the country in August 2021. The move may bolster the credibility of Washington's assurances that the United States can still address threats from Afghanistan without a military presence in the country. In a statement, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed that a strike took place and strongly condemned it, calling it a violation of "international principles."

Zawahiri succeeded bin Laden as al Qaeda leader after years as its main organizer and strategist, but his lack of charisma and competition from rival militants Islamic State hobbled his ability to inspire spectacular attacks on the West.

Republican and Democratic lawmakers lauded the operation. "The world is safer

without him in it and this strike demonstrates our ongoing commitment to hunt down all terrorists responsible for 9/11 and those who continue to pose a threat to U.S. interests," said Republican U.S. Senator Marco Rubio. Until the U.S. announcement, Zawahiri had been rumored variously to be in Pakistan's tribal area or inside Afghanistan.

A video released in April in which he praised an Indian Muslim woman for defying a ban on wearing an Islamic head scarf dispelled rumors that he had died. The senior U.S. official said finding Zawahiri was the result of persistent counterterrorism work. The United States identified this year that Zawahiri's wife, daughter and her children had relocated to a safe house in Kabul, then identified that Zawahiri was there as well, the official said.

"Once Zawahiri arrived at the location, we are not aware of him ever leaving the safe house," the official said. He was identified multiple times on the balcony, where he was ultimately struck. He continued to produce videos from the house and some may be released after his death, the official said.

In the last few weeks, Biden convened officials to scrutinize the intelligence. He was updated

throughout May and June and was briefed on July 1 on a proposed operation by intelligence leaders. On July 25 he received an updated report and authorized the strike once an opportunity was available, the administration official said. A loud explosion echoed through Kabul early Sunday morning.

"A house was hit by a rocket in Sherpoor. There were no casualties as the house was empty," Abdul Nafi Takor, spokesman of the interior ministry, said earlier.

One Taliban source, requesting anonymity, said there had been reports of at least one drone flying over Kabul that morning.

With other senior al Qaeda members, Zawahiri is believed to have plotted the October 12, 2000, attack on the USS Cole naval vessel in Yemen which killed 17 U.S. sailors and injured more than 30 others, the Rewards for Justice website said. He was indicted in the United States for his role in the August 7, 1998, bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 224 people and wounded more than 5,000 others. Both bin Laden and Zawahiri eluded capture when U.S.-led forces toppled Afghanistan's Taliban government in late 2001 following the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

(News Agency) The United States killed al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in a strike in Afghanistan over the weekend, President Joe Biden said on Monday, the biggest blow to the militant group since its founder Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011. Zawahiri, an Egyptian surgeon who had a \$25 million bounty on his head, helped coordinate the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

U.S. officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said Zawahiri died after a U.S. drone strike in the Afghan capital Kabul at 6:18 a.m. (0148 GMT) on Sunday.

"Now justice has been delivered, and this terrorist leader is no more," Biden, who is recovering from COVID-19, said in remarks from the White House. "No matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide, if you are a threat to

our people, the United States will find you and take you out." U.S. intelligence determined with "high confidence" through multiple intelligence streams that the man killed was Zawahiri, one senior administration official told reporters. He was killed on the balcony of a "safe house" in Kabul that he shared with other members of his family. No other casualties occurred.

Biden said Zawahiri had been the mastermind behind or played a key role in attacks on the USS Cole and U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. "Zawahiri continued to pose an active threat to U.S. persons, interests and national security," the official said on a conference call. "His death deals a significant blow to al Qaeda and will degrade the group's ability to operate."

There were rumors of Zawahiri's death several times in recent years, and he was long reported

## Afghan Girls Have Education Rights Though There Are Some Issues, Taliban Minister Haqqani Tells Media

(SAI Bureau) Taliban closed down schools and colleges for girls in Afghanistan hours after their reopening during the retreat of US troops last August. Although the Taliban government has hinted at the "mechanism" was in the works to allow girls to attend secondary school, Afghanistan interior minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, in an exclusive interview to CNN-News18, said girls have been given rights which were long overdue, and the government is working on some issues in education.

He told CNN-News18, "For women's education, people can come to Afghanistan and see themselves that the Islamic Emirate has bestowed on women their rights which were due. Some issues are pending and we are working hard to overcome them." The Taliban had banned girls from continuing secondary education in March and

blamed lack of teachers for closing down of schools. The Taliban leaders also said they first needed to create an appropriate environment for girl students, and



also ensure they have the right uniforms. The Taliban's education ministry had said school opening will be postponed "until further notice when a comprehensive plan, in accordance with Sharia and Afghan culture, is developed". According to UNESCO report in 2021, "The number of girls

in higher education increased from around 5,000 in 2001 to around 90,000 in 2018." The conversation.com media outlet, around 16% of schools took girls but there were few women teachers, especially in rural areas. Haqqani had earlier said "there is no one who opposes education for women". He argued girls could already go to primary school. "Above that grade, the work is continuing on a mechanism" to allow girls to attend secondary school, he said in his first televised interview. After they seized power, the Taliban demanded that women wear at least a hijab, a scarf covering the head but revealing the face. But since the beginning of May, they have instead forced them to wear a full veil in public and preferably a burqa, which had been compulsory when they first ran the country between 1996 and 2001.

## Pelosi's Taiwan visit angers China into threatening 'targeted' military actions

(SAI Bureau) China on Tuesday (August 2) responded angrily after Speaker of US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi landed in Taiwan. Chinese military vowed to launch "targeted military actions" in response to Pelosi's visit. China considers Taiwan as its own territory and was fiercely opposed to a visit by Nancy Pelosi, a high-ranking US Congress member. "The Chinese People's Liberation Army is on high alert and will launch a series of targeted military operations to counter this, resolutely defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and resolutely thwart external interference and 'Taiwan independence' separatist attempts," said Wu Qian, spokesman of China's defence ministry as he condemned Pelosi's visit. During recent phone call between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping, the latter had used strong words to indicate displeasure over the then-unconfirmed Taiwan visit. Pelosi is constitutionally second in line to US presidency. She is the highest-profile elected US official to visit Taiwan in 25 years. "Our delegation's visit to Taiwan honors America's unwavering commitment to supporting Taiwan's vibrant Democracy.



# Pakistan to hold general elections by October, a year ahead of schedule

## Pakistan's poll panel is preparing to hold general elections by October, one year ahead of schedule

(SAI Bureau) Pakistan's election commission is preparing to hold general elections by October, one year ahead of schedule, according to a media report on Thursday. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has completed the work of delimitation of constituencies and eliminated any objections regarding them, The Express Tribune newspaper quoted sources as saying. "Work has been completed in all constituencies for all national and provincial seats," it quoted the source as saying. The commission had earlier assured the country's Supreme Court that it would complete the

delimitation of constituencies by August 4. The ECP will publish the list of voters and constituencies by the end of August, said the source.

The last general election was held in July 2018 and the term of Pakistan's current National Assembly is till October 2023. The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) -- which mostly comprises political parties in the ruling coalition, including the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) -- last week declared that the next general elections will be held at its scheduled time next year. "The general elections will be held on time and the current government will complete its

term," said PDM President Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan, however, emphasised that the only way to end the current political crisis in the country was to hold immediate clean, and transparent elections. "There is only one way [to rid the country of political instability] free and fair elections. When they were removing me, I had announced general elections, but the courts overturned my decision. I still believe it was the right call," the ousted premier had said. Pakistan Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rasheed last week said that Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)



co-founder Asif Ali Zardari has agreed to hold general elections in October. The AML tweeted that the date for general elections has been decided rather than the by-elections. Elections will be held in October under a new election commission, while an interim government will be set up soon, Pakistan Today reported. Hinting at Asif Ali Zardari, Rasheed added

that people in "quarantine" have also agreed to hold general elections, and only Fazlur Rehman is yet to be engaged. The cricketer-turned-politician had called for general elections, a proposal which was then overruled when a no-confidence motion against the former prime minister ousted him from power in April this year.

# China's military drills off Taiwan prompt airlines to cancel, reroute flights

## As China holds its largest-ever military drills in the Taiwan Strait, several airlines have cancelled flights to Taipei and rerouted others using nearby airspace



Friday, according to its website. Taiwan, along with mainland China and Hong Kong, is one of the few places in the world that still requires quarantine for arrivals because of Covid-19, triggering reduced demand for travel to the island that means there are far fewer flights than before the pandemic. OPSGROUP, an aviation industry cooperative that shares information on flight risks,

said the Chinese military exercises would affect major routes between Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia, leading to reroutings that could take longer and burn extra fuel. The airspace involved, however, is minor in its impact on the global aviation industry compared to the decision by most airlines to bypass overflight of other places like Russia, Ukraine, Afghanistan,

North Korea, Iraq and Syria. The avoidance of Russian airspace, for example, has led to a near four-hour increase in flight times between Finland and Japan. Taiwan said on Wednesday it was negotiating with neighbouring Japan and the Philippines to find alternative aviation routes, the official Central News Agency (CNA) reported.

(News Agency) Some airlines have cancelled flights to Taipei and rerouted others using nearby airspace that has been closed to civilian traffic during Chinese military exercises sparked by US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.

China deployed scores of planes and fired live missiles near Taiwan on Thursday in its biggest-ever drills in the Taiwan Strait, set to run until noon local time (0400 GMT) on Sunday in six zones encircling much of the island. The airspace involved is comparatively small, but the disruption is hampering travel between Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia.

Korean Air Lines Co Ltd said it had cancelled flights between Seoul and Taipei on Friday and Saturday, and would delay a flight on Sunday due to the exercises. Singapore Airlines Ltd said it had cancelled its Friday flights between Singapore and Taipei

due to "evolving airspace restrictions" and would continue to monitor the situation in case more adjustments were needed. Japan's ANA Holdings Inc and Japan Airlines Co Ltd are still operating flights to Taipei as normal, spokespeople for the airlines said, but are avoiding the affected airspace on those flights, as well as on routes to Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd said on Thursday its flights were avoiding designated airspace zones around Taiwan, in a move that could lead to more flying time for some flights.

Flight tracking service FlightRadar24 showed Taiwanese carriers China Airlines Ltd and EVA Airways Corp were still flying to and from the island as of Friday morning, as was Philippine Airlines and cargo carriers FedEx Corp and United Parcel Service Inc, though avoiding the areas affected by the military drills. Emirates was still scheduled to fly to Taipei on

## Sri Lanka committed to 'one-China' policy: President Wickremesinghe says after Pelosi's Taiwan visit

### Hours after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit, Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremesinghe said the country was committed to 'one-China' policy

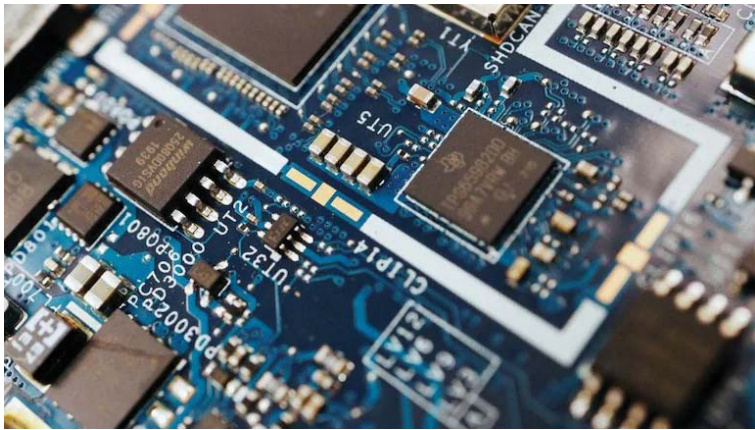
(News Agency) Sri Lanka is firmly committed to the one-China policy, President Ranil Wickremesinghe reaffirmed on Thursday, a day after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan despite vociferous protests from Beijing. Pelosi held talks with Taiwan's top leadership, including President Tsai Ing-wen, on Wednesday and reaffirmed America's ironclad support for the self-ruling island. Pelosi became the highest-ranking American official in 25 years to visit the island claimed by China, which quickly announced that it would conduct military drills close to Taiwan in retaliation for her presence in Taipei. "During a meeting with H.E. Qi Zhenhong, China's Ambassador to Sri Lanka, he reiterated Sri Lanka's firm commitment to the One China policy as well as to the UN charter principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations," the president of the crisis-hit country said in a tweet on Thursday. Countries must refrain from provocations that further escalate the current global tensions, Wickremesinghe said during his

meeting with Qi on Wednesday. He also said that "mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries were important foundations for peaceful cooperation and non-confrontation". China's foreign ministry has reiterated that there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of the country's territory. Sri Lanka, which is facing the worst economic crisis in the history of its independence since 1948, has a huge debt to repay to China, whose high-cost infrastructure projects are widely blamed for the island nation's bankrupt condition. The Chinese unwillingness to restructure Sri Lanka's debt has placed obstacles to the IMF bail out package much needed by the debt-ridden country in its hour of crisis. China has denied that Sri Lanka had been clamped in a Chinese debt trap by funding the high end infrastructure projects on the southern district of Hambantota -- its sea port and the airport dubbed the world's quietest with hardly any flight movements.



# Why Taiwan's chips could be at the centre of rising US-China tension

**While many reasons are being attributed to the rising US-China tension amid Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit, logic chips seem to be at the centre of it**



chips that are crucial to the global economy. TSMC has plans to build foundries in Japan and the US. But that may not suffice. America's posturing through Pelosi's visit has a lot to do with this worry. On Wednesday, the US said it wouldn't abandon Taiwan. As part of her Taiwan visit, Pelosi was also to meet TSMC officials.

## TAIWAN POWERS TECH WORLD

This is primarily because Taiwan is, by virtue of TSMC, one of the key manufacturers of logic chips. All processors that power Apple iPhone and MacBooks are fabricated in Taiwan by TSMC. -TSMC-made chips are used in almost 60 per cent of smartphones. -TSMC fabricates almost all of the graphics and general-purpose computer processors made by AMD (a US company) plus almost half of what Nvidia makes. -TSMC also fabricates most of the chips made by Qualcomm (a US

## SCRAMBLE FOR CHIPS

The US is increasingly looking to reduce its dependence on Taiwan for silicon chips. It is encouraging TSMC to set up foundries in the US, as well as is pushing Intel to invest more in chip manufacturing. At the same time, China is trying to prop up SMIC as a key foundry that may help China avoid the worst in case TSMC stops supplying chips to Chinese companies. However, the key technologies that power a foundry are in the hands of Western companies -- ASML of Netherlands, for example -- and Japanese firms like Nikon. The silicon chip designing is almost entirely in the hands of US and British companies like Intel, AMD, Nvidia, Apple and ARM. The US recently banned ASML from selling equipment to Chinese companies. In other words, China relies on TSMC and Taiwan as much for its silicon chip supply as the US.

(SAI Bureau) Despite open threats from China, US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi became the highest-profile elected American official to visit Taiwan in 25 years, triggering a diplomatic showdown and prompting China to announce military exercises around the island and warn that "those who play with fire will perish by it." China considers Taiwan its territory and has not ruled out the possible use of force for a "reunification." China has been putting diplomatic pressure on other countries not to recognise Taiwan. Or to do anything that may imply recognition. For China, Pelosi's visit does that. While many reasons are being attributed to the rising US-China tension, logic chips made in Taiwan seem to be at the centre of it. These chips power much of the world's daily-use electronic equipment, such as laptops, watches and games consoles. The US, other western nations and the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp (TSMC) have been worried about the eventualities if China goes for an invasion and cuts off supplies of

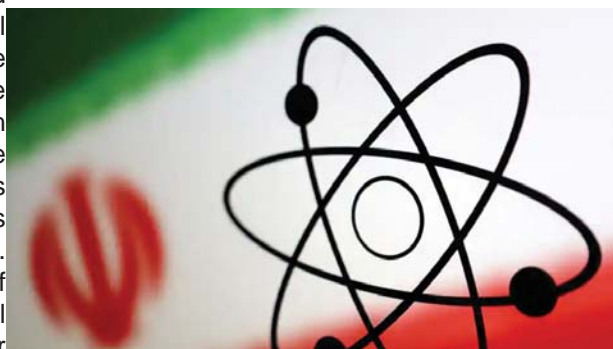
company) and MediaTek (a Taiwanese company). Almost 100 per cent of Android smartphones use chips made by Qualcomm and MediaTek. Global Foundries -- possess cutting-edge silicon chip manufacturing processes. -United Microelectronics Corporation is another Taiwanese foundry making silicon chips. However, along with SMIC (which is China-based), UMC is more into manufacturing silicon chips that are not cutting-edge and are meant to be used in smart appliances, cameras, printers, cars and vehicles, or in components like storage disks.

## IMPACT OF CONFLICT

-If there is a disruption in TSMC's operations, the world may end up losing supply of around 60 to 70 per cent of phone and computer chips. - Apart from TSMC, only Intel, Samsung -- and up to an extent

## Top Iran and US negotiators to resume frayed nuclear talks in Vienna

(SAI Bureau) Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanani said on Wednesday (August 3) that in a statement that it was sending a delegation to Vienna to resume talks to revive the 2015 agreement on its nuclear programme. A top nuclear negotiator and a senior US envoy will travel this week. The plan was notified by the officials from both governments as the process that was stalled in June appears to have been rekindled. Kanani said, "As part of the policy of lifting cruel sanctions against our



the deal was signed in 2015, Iran agreed to a pact with six major powers to limit its nuclear program. After the pact, it was harder for Iran to obtain a weapon in return for relief from economic sanctions. In a turn of events, then US President Donald Trump reneged on the deal in 2018 and reimposed harsh sanctions on Iran. The decision by the former US president led Tehran to start violating the agreement's nuclear limits about a year later.

## What's the progress of negotiations?

At the end of June, Qatar hosted indirect talks between the US and Iran. Last week, the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell submitted a new draft text and urged all sides to accept it or "risk a dangerous nuclear crisis". Borrell is also the coordinator of the nuclear talks between Iran and world powers. Expressing "optimism", Kanani added: In this round of talks, which will take place as before with the coordination of the EU, discussions will be held regarding the ideas presented by the parties including those presented this week by Iran to the other party." The statement added that Iran hoped "the opposing parties will resolve the situation by taking the necessary decisions and seriously focusing on resolving the remaining issues".

## Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan trip provokes China: A win for her, but a headache for the region

(SAI Bureau) The United States House Speaker Nancy Pelosi departed from Taiwan on Wednesday (August 3) evening, ending a historic as well as a controversial tour. The vital trip has angered China, which believed that Pelosi's visit to the island nation would "lead to egregious political impact". This was the highest-level US visit to Taiwan in 25 years. Calling the visit a provocation, furious Beijing even geared up for military exercises dangerously close to Taiwan's shores in retaliation for the visit. The United States warned China against using the visit as a pretext for military action against Taiwan. Leading a congressional delegation to Taiwan is a win for Pelosi but it certainly has caused a headache for the already politically tensed region. With a pledge of solidarity to Taiwan, she is also leaving a trail of Chinese anger. Pelosi, who is second in line to the US presidency, told Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, "Our delegation came to Taiwan to make unequivocally clear that we will not abandon Taiwan. Now, more than ever, America's solidarity with Taiwan is crucial, and that's the message we are bringing here, today," she said during her roughly 19-hour visit. "Facing deliberately heightened military threats, Taiwan will not back down. We will... continue to hold the line of defence for democracy," Tsai said at an event with Pelosi in Taipei. Tsai also thanked the 82-year-old US lawmaker for "taking concrete actions to show your staunch support for Taiwan at this critical moment". On Wednesday evening, Pelosi's delegation left Taiwan. Her next stop is the ongoing Asia tour in South Korea and after that, she will head to Japan. China has claimed Taiwan as its own territory since the Chinese civil war of the 1940s and claims that Tsai Ing-wen will defy China's one-nation policy by pushing for formal independence - a red line for the nation.



## Biden to sign second executive order to safeguard abortion rights

(SAI Bureau) US President Joe Biden will sign a second executive order on Wednesday to protect abortion rights, The Guardian reported. Notably, the US Supreme Court had struck down the constitutional right to abortion in June. After Roe vs Wade was overturned, abortion stands banned in around 10 states, while four others have a partial ban. Many patients travel to other states to get an abortion, but aren't reimbursed in any way. The order will direct the Health and Human Services department to try and expand coverage for such patients who leave their state for the procedure, The Guardian stated. Government-subsidized Medicaid health insurance plans currently only cover medically necessary abortions in 16 states. Although the order doesn't clearly state how the Biden administration plans to achieve the same, the idea is to provide monetary assistance to such

women who travel out of state for reproductive care. It also directs the department to ensure health-care providers comply with federal non-discrimination laws when offering such services, Reuters reported. Besides, the order aims to make it easy for healthcare workers to get a grasp of the rules surrounding abortion care. It further orders collection of data to help know the true impact of the court order on maternal health. Meanwhile, Cabinet members will also brief Biden regarding the steps taken by their respective agencies "to defend reproductive rights." Biden had signed an order in July as well that directed the HHS to ensure that access to abortion medication and emergency care aren't affected in any way by the court order. Notably, women in states where abortion is either banned or restricted often end up staring at dangerous situations. Even the doctors are confused over providing medical care to patients.

## United States to send \$550 million worth of new weapons to Ukraine amid ongoing crisis

(SAI Bureau) The crisis in Ukraine has been waging on with Russian forces trying to gain advantage in the Donbas region but there is some good news for the resistance army. The United States announced on Monday that they will sending a new weapons package to help the war efforts in Ukraine. The new package will comprise of rocket launchers and ammunition along with the HIMARS which has gained a lot of popularity in the past few months. National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said that the latest weapons package from the United States will "include more ammunition for the high mobility advanced rocket systems otherwise known as HIMARS, as well as ammunition" for artillery. According to the official statement, the package is worth around \$550 million, and it will include around 75,000 rounds of 155 mm artillery ammunition along with other weapons. "To meet its evolving battlefield requirements, the United States will continue to work with its allies and partners to provide Ukraine with key

capabilities," the statement said.

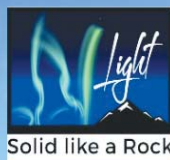
Thanks to the latest weapons package, the total assistance provided by the US to Ukraine currently stands at \$8.8 billion since the Russian



invasion started back in February 2022. The United States also expressed their happiness at the agreement reached between Russia and Ukraine to allow ships carrying food grains to pass through the conflict zones.

"We obviously welcome this important step and we hope to see more ships depart in the coming days to travel onward to world markets with agricultural products such as grain, wheat, sunflower oil, and corn," Kirby told reporters according to AFP.

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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.



wwf.be



# Monkeypox outbreak: US cases top 6,600, Biden calls it public health emergency



New York state. Health and Human Services secretary Xavier Becerra said in a call "We're prepared to take our response to the next level in addressing this virus." Welcoming the emergency declaration over monkeypox, Biden's medical advisor Anthony Fauci said "Hopefully it'll stay at a very, very low level that you can contain." Since symptoms in the current global outbreak have included subtle signs observers believe the real number of cases could be much higher than official figures suggest. As the presentation is similar to common sexually transmitted infections

this can lead to cases being missed or misdiagnosed. Out of 1.6 million people considered at the highest risk, the US has so far delivered only 600,000 JYNNEOS vaccines which were originally developed for smallpox. According to Dawn O'Connell, a senior HHS official, the US will receive its next shipment of 150,000 JYNNEOS vaccines by September due to supply chain constraints. Under the national vaccination strategy, men who have sex with men are being targeted for vaccination as they comprise of 99 per cent cases in the US.

Suggesting to reduce their number of sexual partners until vaccinated, authorities are carrying out specific outreach efforts to the MSM community. Adopting an approach that would allow five times as many people to be vaccinated based on the same supply, US Food and Drug Administration commissioner Robert Califf said his agency was considering changing the way the vaccine is injected. The new technique would involve administering it within the skin, at a more shallow angle as the vaccine is currently administered underneath the skin.

(SAI Bureau) In order to free up new funds and assist in data gathering, US President Joe Biden declared monkeypox a public health emergency. Warning of the need for swift action to contain the outbreak, experts pointed out that nationwide cases topped 6,600 with around a quarter of them from

## Mall of America Under Lockdown: Shots Fired But Cops Find No Victims, Search On for Suspect

(SAI Bureau) Someone fired shots Thursday at the Mall of America in suburban Minneapolis, sending shoppers running for cover, but police said they did not immediately find a victim. Bloomington police also said they were still searching for a suspect after securing the scene shortly before 6 pm. They said a lockdown that had forced some shoppers to shelter in place, while others fled, was in the process of being lifted, but that the mall would not reopen Thursday. Video posted to social media showed what appeared to be a man shouting as he walked near the complex's Nike store, with at least three apparent gunshots. The mall, which opened in 1992, is the largest in

the US and is a tourist destination and community gathering spot.

Video posted online showed shoppers fleeing from the amusement park at the interior on the giant mall's ground level, holding their children's hands and clutching their bags. Still other video showed a pair of police officers, including one with a rifle, moving through the mall, and people walking quickly away from the mall's large interior atrium area. Trent Turner, a salesman at a DSW shoe store one level below the Nike store, said he was near the back when he heard gunshots. "Then I saw everyone stampeding toward the back," he said. One woman tweeted that she was shopping for clothes for high school senior

pictures with her 17-year-old daughter when the store manager told them to "move as far back as possible." The woman said she was in a fitting room with her daughter. Another person posted video of dozens of people said to be gathered in the basement as warnings to "please shelter immediately" repeated over mall speakers. A woman who gave her name only as Tara told The Associated Press that she and a friend were among dozens of people who ran down a hallway to get out of the mall. "We were in the Lululemon store and I just saw people running and he was in the dressing room and I started banging on the door to get him to come out and he didn't have a shirt on so we just ran out of



there," she said. The Mall of America bans guns on its premises, according to its website. The mall does not have metal detectors and shoppers

are not searched upon entry. It was the scene of a shooting on New Year's Eve, when two people were wounded during an apparent altercation.

## Japan, US to cooperate on maintaining peace, stability in Taiwan Strait

As US Senator Nancy Pelosi's Asian trip comes on the last stage, Japan and the United States agreed on Friday to work together on maintaining peace in the increasingly tense Taiwan Strait

(SAI Bureau) Japan and the United States agreed on Friday to work together on maintaining peace in the increasingly tense Taiwan Strait, amid unprecedented military drills by China including five missiles that landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone.

US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi is in Japan on the last stage of an Asian trip that included a brief and unannounced stop in Taiwan, the self-ruled island Beijing considers its own, in the highest-level visit by a US official in 25 years.

Her visit, during which she lauded

Taiwan's democracy and pledged solidarity, infuriated China and touched off military exercises that a state broadcaster said would be the largest by China in the Taiwan Strait, including live firing on the waters and in the airspace around the island.

Five missiles landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), prompting Tokyo to lodge a strong protest through diplomatic channels.

One of Washington's closest allies, Tokyo has been increasingly alarmed about China's growing might in the Indo-Pacific and the possibility that Beijing could take

military action against Taiwan. Pelosi met with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at his official residence, where Kishida said the two allies would work together to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, a key shipping route.

Japan, whose southernmost islands are closer to Taiwan than Tokyo, has warned that Chinese intimidation of Taiwan is an escalating national security threat.

"I have informed speaker Pelosi that the fact China's ballistic missiles had landed near Japanese water including EEZ threaten our national safety and

security and that Japan had strongly condemned such actions," Kishida said. "We also confirmed a continued close cooperation to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan strait."

Tensions between Japan and China ramped up another notch on Thursday when China announced that a meeting between the two nations' foreign ministers, set to take place on the sidelines of an ASEAN meeting in Cambodia, had been called off due to its displeasure with a G7 statement urging Beijing to resolve Taiwan tension peacefully.



# India to host UNSC special meeting on counter-terrorism in October

India will host diplomats of the 15-nation UN Security Council in October for a special meeting on counter-terrorism. India is halfway through the second year of its two-year term as an elected non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

India's tenure at the Council will end in December this year, when the country will also preside as President of the powerful UN organ for the month.

India chairs the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee for 2022 and will in October host diplomats of the 15-nation Security Council, including US, China and Russia, for the counter-terrorism committee's special meeting.

Current members of the Security Council are Albania, Brazil, Gabon, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway and the UAE, along with five permanent members China, France, Russia, the UK and the US.

Mindful of the increasing threat posed by the misuse of new and emerging technologies, the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) has decided to hold a special meeting on this theme, with the support of its Executive Directorate (CTED), in India on 29 October, 2022, according to information on the Committee's website.

It said the special meeting will specifically focus on three significant areas where emerging technologies are experiencing rapid development, growing use by member states (including for security and counter-terrorism purposes), and the increasing threat of abuse for terrorism purposes, namely Internet and social media, terrorism financing, and unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

It is not very frequent that the Counter-Terrorism Committee meets outside of New York, but the meeting in India will be the seventh time that this is happening. The most recent special meeting of the CTC outside of United Nations headquarters took place in Madrid, Spain, in July 2015, focusing on foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs).

The Committee said further that with the prevalence of technology and rapid rise in digitisation, the use of new and emerging technologies to counter-terrorism is a topic of growing interest among the member states, policymakers and researchers, particularly in the context of the increasing role played by technology in terrorism and counter-terrorism.

This is addressed by the Security Council in a number of counter-terrorism-related resolutions, most recently resolution 2617 (2021), which explicitly

cited emerging technologies.

The special meeting would be conducted in the six official languages of the United Nations and be open to the wider United Nations membership and other relevant stakeholders.

India's then Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T S Tirumurti had in January this year assumed the Chair of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee for 2022. Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj, the country's new envoy to the UN, now assumes that role.

Tirumurti had told the UN Security Council briefing on 'The Use of Digital Technologies in Maintaining International Peace and Security' in May that there is a need for addressing the abuse of digital technologies by terrorist groups to disseminate terrorist ideologies, radicalise, incite violence, and recruit the next generation of terrorist actors taking advantage of the enhanced online presence of young people.

He had informed the Security Council that India has proposed holding a special meeting of the Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee in India soon.

The need for member states to comprehensively address and tackle the implications of terrorist exploitation of the digital technologies more strategically has never been more dire," he said.

"I am happy to inform this Council that India has proposed holding a special meeting of the Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee in India soon, which will exclusively focus on this issue and attempt to provide the way forward," Tirumurti had said.

The Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) was established in 2001 in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001) had established the Counter-Terrorism Committee as a subsidiary body of the Council.

On the eve of assuming Chair of the CTC in December last year, India had voted in favour of a resolution to renew the mandate of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED).

The UN Security Council, through its written silence procedure, renewed the mandate of the Executive Directorate until 31 December, 2025.

As the Chair of the CTC for 2022, India will make determined efforts to further enhance the role of the CTC in strengthening the multilateral response to counter-terrorism, and more importantly, ensuring that global response to the threat of terrorism remains unambiguous, undivided and effective, India had said in its explanation of vote to renew the CTED mandate.

# Taiwan and Ukraine: How two crises, 5,000 miles apart, are linked

While Washington has now offered Ukraine more than \$8 billion in direct military support — part of more than \$54 billion in assistance that has proved a vital lifeline to Ukraine — President Joe Biden has repeatedly said that he does not want to take any action that could set off a direct confrontation with Russia. So far, despite the mutual bluster, Moscow has been careful not to draw NATO into its war. The Biden administration has also worked to help maintain solidarity with and among European allies. But a conflict with China over Taiwan would most likely divide the US' allies, especially in Europe.

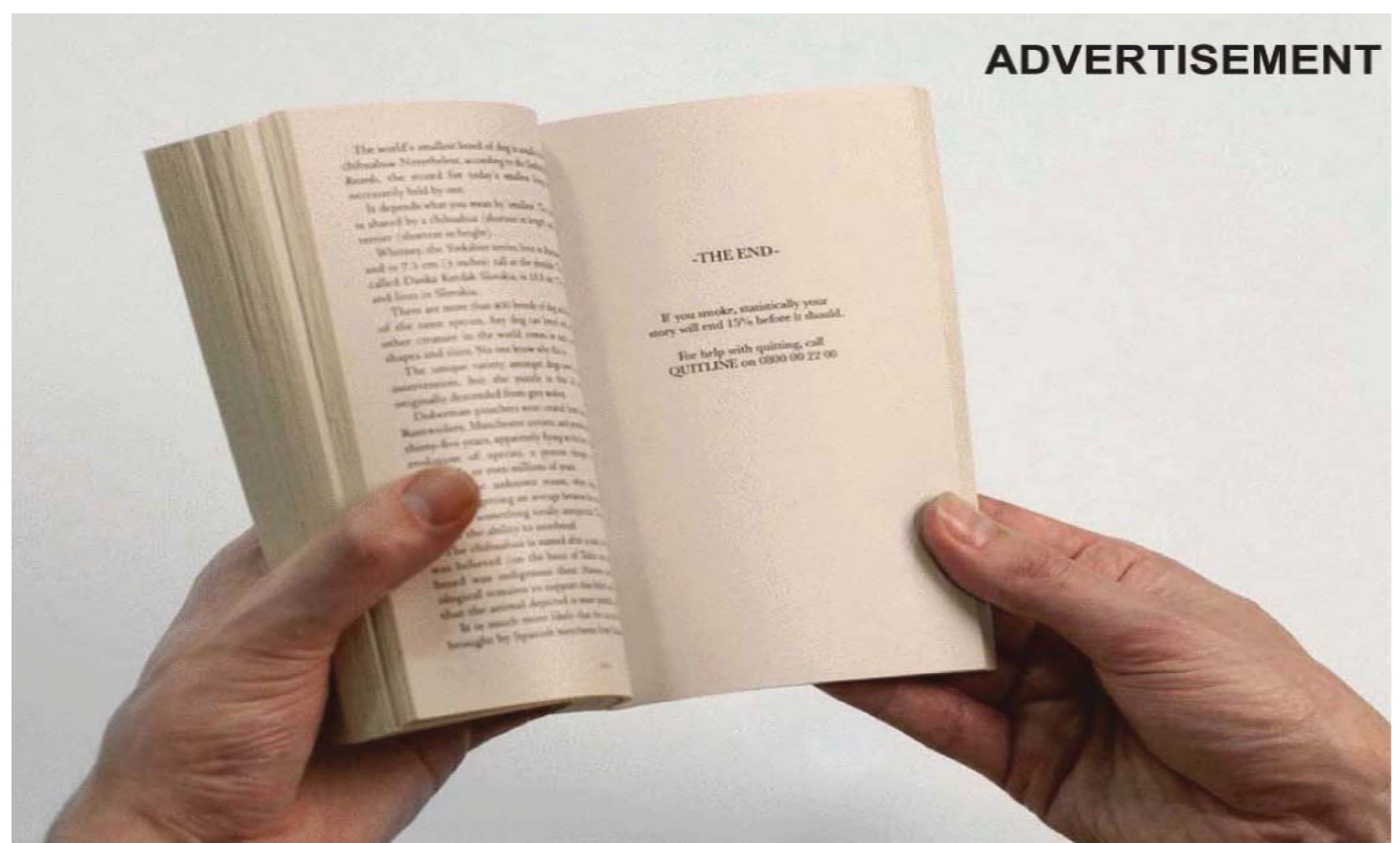
"No one knows at this stage what the outcome of the Ukrainian conflict will be, but relations between Europe and Russia will never be the same again," Philippe Le Corre, a French scholar of China and a senior fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School, wrote in the *Ouest-France* newspaper. "With Asia, the remoteness — reinforced by the absence of human contact and international travel for two years — does not favor a possible European involvement in a conflict in Taiwan or in the China Sea."

And while China has offered rhetorical support for Moscow, it has avoided becoming directly embroiled in the conflict. Beijing has not offered the Kremlin military assistance, and it has

been careful not to visibly undermine Western sanctions. Both Russia and China are united in opposing what they consider American hegemony and assertion of global leadership. But China, mindful that it is not ready for a major war and needs open global trade, has always been careful not to push its

confrontation with Washington or its allies in the Pacific too far. "I don't think that provoking the U.S. over the Ukraine issue would be a response they would take," said Steven Goldstein, an associate at the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies and the director of the Taiwan Studies Workshop at Harvard University. "When

China gets angry with the U.S. over Taiwan, they punish Taiwan." "The biggest danger," he said in an interview, "is we stumble into something." The deeper the United States and China spiral into a cycle of provocation, the greater the chances for a false move that could turn an abstract threat into war.





# Who failed West Bengal's students?

From page 15

Those of us who were in the teaching profession during the Left Front rule in Bengal know how many of our own students were asked to pay substantial sums before they could join as teachers in schools to which they had been appointed through the SSC (set up in 1997). The same was true of lower-level jobs in government and public-sector industries. All one might say is that the scale of demand was not as high, and so far as I knew, college and university posts, or those of vice-chancellors, were not sold, though most appointments were politically influenced. Under the TMC, this system appears to have been developed to a point where it could serve to fill, not just party coffers, but the pockets of every greedy profiteer. It was extended into the higher education system, with the minister, as soon as he assumed office, dismissing out of hand a proposal for a centralised online undergraduate admission process. Soon

after this, I recall a young second-year student sitting next to me in the bus, busy on his phone working out the rates at which seats in several of Kolkata's colleges were to be sold. When I expressed amazement, he said that with the exception of some leading institutions and "first-list candidates," the lower half of the admission table was decided by payment, with political parties, students' unions, teachers' associations and other functionaries either raking in a handsome profit, or looking the other way. Unsurprisingly, it is now alleged that lakhs were extorted for college appointments and, so the rumour goes, for vice-chancellorships. As one commentator put it, education, like the construction industry, was rapidly passing into the hands of powerful "syndicates" functioning at the ruling party's behest. Should one be surprised? After all, such practices, together with the "leaking" of examination papers

and forging of marksheets, are common all over India. Stories of the huge sums paid for vice-chancellorships in states from Punjab to Tamil Nadu circulated freely when, many years ago, I was an active member of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council's exercises. What is remarkable, instead, is the shock expressed by many as the scale of Chatterjee's alleged depredations unfolds. After all, such a system required collaborators and participants at every level. On TV today, reporters have no problems finding, and interviewing, ordinary people who paid money for jobs to local functionaries, and operators whose task was to collect it. Most appallingly, the public has witnessed with apparent indifference the eight-year-long struggle of the cheated SSC candidates who had qualified in the merit list, protesting illegal appointments to posts that were rightfully theirs. No one

— least of all the state government — can say that they did not know what was going on. The problem with corruption, like disease, or the coronavirus by which we were recently struck, is that it infects society as a whole. India is placed at 85 out of 180 countries in the global corruption perceptions index reported by Transparency International. Most of us experience corrupt practices daily, often in helpless acquiescence. The buying and selling of jobs in the education sector in West Bengal is just another instance of the breakdown of the civil contract, with those in power assuming the right to monetise and profit from what is actually funded by taxpayers. For a state that prides itself on the high rankings of its educational institutions, as well as the public benefits of welfare programmes like Kanyashree and Swasthya Sathi, that have drawn so much popular support, this is an uncomfortable admission. Whether the rot can be checked is another question.

## 'Slam-dunk for national security': US Senate backs Finland, Sweden for NATO with 95-1 vote, rebuking Russia

From page 14

They're "two of the strongest members of the alliance the minute they join," Cotton said. US State and Defense officials consider the two countries net "security providers," strengthening NATO's defense posture in the Baltics in particular. Finland is expected to exceed NATO's 2 per cent GDP defense spending target in 2022, and Sweden has committed to meet the 2 per cent goal.

That's in contrast to many of NATO's newcomers formerly from the orbit of the Soviet Union, many with smaller militaries and economies. North Macedonia, NATO's most recent newcomer nation, brought an active military of just 8,000 personnel when it joined in 2020.

Senators' votes approving NATO candidacies often are lopsided — the one for North Macedonia was 91-2. But Wednesday's approval from nearly all

senators present carried added foreign policy weight in light of Russia's war. Schumer, D-N.Y., said he and McConnell had committed to the country's leaders that the Senate would approve the ratification resolution "as fast as we could" to bolster the alliance "in light of recent Russian aggression." Sweden and Finland applied in May, setting aside their longstanding stance of military nonalignment. It was a major shift of security arrangements for the two countries after neighboring Russia launched its war on Ukraine in late February. Biden encouraged their joining and welcomed the two countries' government heads to the White House in May, standing side by side with them in a display of US backing. The US and its European allies have rallied with newfound partnership in the face of

Putin's military invasion, as well as the Russian leader's sweeping statements this year condemning NATO, issuing veiled reminders of Russia's nuclear arsenal and asserting Russia's historical claims to territory of many of its neighbors. "Enlarging NATO is exactly the opposite of what Putin envisioned when he ordered his tanks to invade Ukraine," Sen. Bob Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat and chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Wednesday, adding that the West could not allow Russia to "launch invasions of countries." Wednesday's vote by Republicans and Democrats stood out for the normally slow-moving and divided chamber. Senators voted down a proposed amendment by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., intended to ensure that NATO's guarantee to defend its members does not replace a formal role for Congress in

authorizing the use of military force. Paul, a longtime advocate of keeping the US out of most military action abroad, voted "present" on the ratification of Sweden and Finland's membership bid.

Senators approved another amendment from Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, declaring that all NATO members should spend a minimum of 2 per cent of their gross domestic product on defense and 20 per cent of their defense budgets on major equipment, including research and development.

Each member government in NATO must give its approval for any new member to join. The process ran into unexpected trouble when Turkey raised concerns over adding Sweden and Finland, accusing the two of being soft on banned Turkish Kurdish exile groups. Turkey's objections still threaten the two countries' membership.

# Why is heavy rainfall battering Kerala?

From page 16

Other high-rainfall areas across the state were located in Idukki, Ernakulam, Kottayam and Kollam districts. These include Aluva (184 mm), Peerumedu (154.4 mm), Piravom (146 mm), Kochi (138.2 mm), Thodupuzha (113.2 mm), Aryankavu (95 mm), Kanjirapally (85.4 mm) and Munnar (70.6 mm).

**What are the rainfall trends emerging from Kerala?**

Kerala is among India's high rainfall receiving states and records an annual rainfall of 2855 mm.

Of the rainfall received during monsoon season, July and June rainfall accounts for 32.9 per cent (642.7mm) and 32.6 (637.2mm) per cent, respectively. In comparison, only 21 per cent (414 mm) of

the seasonal rainfall of the state occurs in August.

Scientists have noted a declining trend in the annual rainfall quantum over Kerala, but not so during the monsoon season. Kerala receives nearly 70 per cent of its annual rainfall during June to September. "But there has been a significant variation in the rainfall distribution within the monsoon season," said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General, IMD.

This was corroborated in a study on rainfall variability over Kerala, undertaken by Climate Research and Services of IMD, Pune.

The study found a declining rainfall trend during June and July as compared to an increase in rainfall during August and September over the past three decades.

"But long-term rainfall trends indicate a significant increase in the heavy rainfall (64.5mm to 115.4 mm in 24 hours) during August. Likewise, there has been a rise in extremely heavy rainfall (more than 204.4 mm in 24-hours) events during the four-month monsoon season," said VK Mini, senior forecaster at IMD, Thiruvananthapuram.

Locally, Thiruvananthapuram, Idukki, Pathanamthitta, Kasargod and Wayanad districts showed the largest rainfall variability during 1989 – 2018. It ranged between 47 – 69 per cent depending on the month.

**Kerala weather: What is the forecast for the coming few days?**

Officials from the India Meteorological Department say that monsoon will be "vigorous" over Kerala till August 5. The rainfall

activity will gradually shift from the southern to northern districts, they add. "There has been a swift northward movement of this shear zone. The heavy rainfall activity will move towards northern districts during the next two to three days," said D Sivananda Pai, Director, Institute of Climate Change Studies, Kottayam. In view of these multiple weather conditions, IMD has placed Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam and Idukki districts on red alert (warning) till Wednesday. Thereafter, the rainfall will shift towards central and northern districts with the same alert over Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode and Wayanad districts. For August 5, Kannur, Kasargod and Wayanad districts join the list of existing red alert districts.



# German Chancellor Scholz Opens Door to Extend Nuclear As Russia Squeezes Gas Supply

From page 1

German Chancellor Scholz Opens Door to Extend Nuclear As Russia Squeezes Gas Supply German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Wednesday raised the possibility of keeping nuclear plants going as he accused Russia of blocking the delivery of a key turbine to throttle gas supplies to Europe. The continent's biggest economy has been scrambling for energy sources to fill a gap left by a reduction in gas supplies from Moscow. Standing next to the turbine, Scholz said that extending the lifetime of Germany's three remaining nuclear power plants "can make sense". The power stations, which are set to be taken off the grid at the end of the year, were "relevant exclusively for electricity production, and only for a small part of it," Scholz said. In total, the nuclear fleet accounts for six percent of Germany's electricity output.

The government has said it will await the outcome of a new "stress test" of the national electric grid before determining whether to stick with the long-planned phaseout. Former Chancellor Angela Merkel

spectacularly decided to ditch atomic energy in 2011 following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan. Extending the lifetime of the plants has set off a heated debate in Germany, where nuclear power has been a source of controversy stretching back before Merkel's move. The question has split the governing coalition, with Scholz's Social Democrats and the Greens hitherto sceptical, and the FDP favouring an extension.

Germany has already moved to restart mothballed coal power plants to guard against an energy shortfall.

The first of these was already "supplying electricity to the network", Scholz said Wednesday, adding that Germany had to prepare for a "difficult time".

The squeeze comes as Russia dwindles supplies of gas, which Germany has long relied on to power industry and heat homes. Russian energy giant Gazprom has chalked up limited supplies to technical issues. The delayed return of a turbine from Canada, where the unit was being serviced, was behind the initial reduction in deliveries via the Nord

Stream 1 gas pipeline in June, Scholz said. But Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov insisted that Gazprom was still waiting for documents confirming the unit was "not affected by sanctions". It was however "technologically possible" in the opinion of Russian President Vladimir Putin to continue deliveries via the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, Peskov said. The second pipeline, which runs parallel to Nord Stream 1, stands completed but was blocked by the German government in the run up to the invasion of Ukraine. Former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who signed off on the pipeline while in office, told German magazine Stern it was "the easiest solution" to use Nord Stream 2 instead. But Scholz has rejected the call, saying Nord Stream 1 provided sufficient capacity for gas flows. Moscow's move to limit supplies sent a "difficult message" to the world by creating doubt over Russia's commitment to its agreements, he added.

## TURBINE TROUBLE

Berlin has dismissed Gazprom's justifications for the reduction to supply, seeing instead a "political" move in response to the West's support for Ukraine. The turbine which was transferred from Canada to Germany was "available and working", Scholz said Wednesday. "There is no reason why this delivery cannot happen," he said, adding that it had received "all the approvals" needed for export from Germany to Russia. Pipeline operators only had to say "they want to have the turbine and provide the necessary customs information for transport to Russia",

to its agreements, he added.

## Why Comparing Kashmir With Ukraine is Delusional and Dangerous

From page 18

Remember, how India reacts every time China sets up a military base in its neighbourhood. Or, how the US reacted to the Soviet missiles stationed in Cuba in the early 1960s, bringing the world almost on the cusp of a nuclear war. If the US could have the luxury of the 1823 Monroe Doctrine, which prohibited European powers from interfering in the Americas and which was invoked as recently as in 2008 by then President Barack Obama, the others, including Russia, expected similar courtesy. As John J Mearsheimer writes in his recent essay, 'Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault': "Imagine the outrage in Washington if China built an impressive military alliance and tried to include Canada and Mexico in it." One could still have ignored Guha's article as a work of misplaced naivety and ideological obsession, but then he compared Kashmir and Nagaland with Ukraine and made an outright dangerous comment. "Perhaps the ruling party's ideologues fear that if we stress the fact that Ukrainians have the right to be a free nation, then some people

might make the same sort of case for the Kashmiris or the Nagas," he writes. Guha, deliberately or otherwise, got his facts completely wrong. Ukraine is an independent country, while Kashmir and Nagaland are an integral part of India. One wonders how the support for Ukraine would have made "the same sort of case for the Kashmiris or the Nagas". It's an argument of a delusional mind, pretending to be a liberal but innately seeking the break-up of India — the only democracy that can claim to be the home of all religions and ethnicities; the land that has history of giving refuge to religious minorities from across the world. He, in that way, is no different from several communist intellectuals in the 1940s who provided cover fire to the idea of Pakistan, which was fundamentally an Islamist project. It's an age-old toolkit aimed at disintegrating India. Such dubious minds play both ways: First, they would invoke India to be the land of diversities, and then they would push for the separation of those very diverse elements from India. The underlying emotion is nothing but hatred for the very idea of civilisational India.



## BHADRESHKUMAR CHETANBHAI PATEL

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



Photograph taken April 2015

### DESCRIPTION

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

### REWARD

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

### REMARKS

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

### CAUTION

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

### SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

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

Field Office: Baltimore



# Who is Nancy Pelosi, the most powerful woman in US politics

**US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, arguably the most powerful US woman politician, landed in Taiwan on Tuesday, much to the anger of China. Here's all you need to know about her**

It took a 110-feet-long US Air Force Boeing C-40 C aircraft to land at Taipei to remind the world that there is still only one superpower left and that's clearly not China. And driving that message all the way from Washington DC was not the president or the vice-president of the United States, but arguably the most powerful US woman politician—Nancy Pelosi.

The leader of the Democratic Party and the Speaker of the House of Representatives has a long political career packed with important milestones. From the war in Iraq to playing a critical role in combating the 2008 economic crisis, to handholding Barack Obama during passage of Obamacare bill, and through becoming the face of the Democrat's resistance against Donald Trump, Pelosi has been her party's bedrock.

## **POLITICAL HERITAGE**

While Pelosi often maintains that she never intended to run for public office, she comes from a family of significant political footing. Her father, Thomas D'Alesandro Jr, served as Mayor of Baltimore and represented the city for five terms in Congress. Her brother, Thomas D'Alesandro III, also served as Mayor of Baltimore.

Pelosi used to participate in her father's campaigns and has always been known to be the best at one thing — counting votes. David Azelrod, the former chief strategist of Obama campaign, once asked her about what she would learn from her father. "I learnt how to count. I was trained at the ward level about how to count votes, how to get votes and how to produce results," Azelrod had told Frontline PBS, quoting Pelosi.

## **THE WOMAN AMONG MEN**

When Pelosi was first elected to the House in 1987, there were only 23 women representatives in the 435-member House. In January 2007, Pelosi became the first woman Speaker of the house.

"I have been waiting over 200 years for this," she famously told reporters during a press conference back then. Unlike India, the House Speaker usually plays an active partisan role in the US, tasked with holding

together party votes and even taking on the White House when it comes to legislation. By this time, the Democrats had lost six consecutive congressional elections. Pelosi was up for the fight and used her fire-for-fire style to bring the Democratic votes together and ensured that the representatives voted as one block. Lawmakers who visited her office would see two things right in front of them — a table with chocolates and a stack of baseball bats. The message from the whip office could not have been clearer.

Once asked about being accused of calling her opponent Republicans "immoral, corrupt and running a criminal enterprise", she responded, "Actually I was being gentle; there are much worse things I could have said about them."

Pelosi took the bold step of taking a position against the war in Iraq. "The president has dug us into a deep hole in Iraq, it is time for him to stop digging," Pelosi said as she took on George W Bush directly on the issue of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Soon she became the main target of non-stop personal attacks from the right-wing opposition.

Over the decades, she has been at the receiving end of some of the most aggressive Republican advertisements.

## **HANDHOLDING OBAMA**

Several Democrat presidents, including Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, Johnson and Clinton, despite their positive intentions, could not implement a comprehensive national healthcare program. It was one issue close to Pelosi personally as well. When Barack Obama assumed office and tried to push the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, the White House strategists, including the President, tried to make a bipartisan effort to pass the bill, as it faced opposition from many party insiders. It was Pelosi who told Obama to his face that the President should not make concessions to the Republicans as he would not be able to secure even the minimum Republican support in the house.

"Does the president not understand the way this game

works?" she once asked Rahm Emanuel, the White House chief of staff, according to Time magazine. "He wants to get it done and be beloved, and you can't have both—which does he want", she reportedly asked about Obama.

During that period, legislation was stalled in the house that she believed was made as Republican allowance for Obamacare. As the final days approached, it became evident that the bill was not going to get any support from the Republican representatives, despite Obama's bipartisan approach. At that time, the White House was even prepared to dilute the bill, but it was Pelosi who convinced Obama that it could be done without Republican support.

"We will go through the gate, if the gates are closed, we'll go over the fence, if the fence is too high, we will pole-vault in, if that doesn't work, we'll parachute in. But we are going to get healthcare reforms for the American people," she told reporters. And eventually she matched every word by making sure that the bill was passed, 219-212, with no Republican votes.

## **THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS**

When the financial crisis hit the US economy in 2008, driving a global recession, the majority view in the Democratic party was not in favour of helping the Bush government that had only two months left before the next elections. Cynical political wisdom suggested that rather than helping the government with a bailout to rescue the economy, the party should have let the

economy crash and blame everything on the Bush administration. Pelosi called the US treasury secretary, inviting him to meet the next morning to explain what was going on with the economy. Hank Paulson, the secretary, famously told him, "Madam Secretary, tomorrow will be too late."

Putting aside the political priorities, Pelosi backed the biggest corporate bailout in history that faced opposition from both Republican factions and general Democrats. She used her power to see the bill through the House. "It is our responsibility today, to help avert that catastrophic outcome. Let us be clear: This is a crisis caused on Wall Street. But it is a crisis that reaches to Main Street in every city and town of the United States" she said in her speech.

## **THREE PRIORITIES**

Pelosi has always had three priorities; the children, the children, the children. "For these children, our children and for all of America's children, the house will come to order," she once famously said while trying to run the business in the House. She took an oath with a group of her grandchildren and other kids who stood beside the Speaker in the US House of Representatives in 2019.

## **TAKING ON TRUMP**

Pelosi was the last person standing against a forceful Donald Trump as he swept to power in the general elections. At first, her interaction with the new Republican President during the congressional leaders meet, in which Pelosi was the only woman, got under the skin of the

President. On the first business day of Trump's presidency, she told the President in front of the delegation that his claims of five million illegal votes were not true as there was no evidence to support that claim. Soon after the general elections in which her party lost, Pelosi swung into action to retake the House.

According to PBS, for the first time in the history, under Pelosi's leadership, Democrats managed to outperform the Republicans in fundraising in an off-year election. And her determination to win the House following the loss in the battle of the White House for the party ensured that Democrats won more than two dozen seats, taking control of the House. Trump continued to get back at Pelosi and the Speaker was up for the challenge.

When Trump tried to embarrass her by questioning her strength inside the oval office in front of TV cameras, she turned the tables with her famous response "Mr President, please don't characterize the strength that I bring to this meeting as the leader of House Democrats who just won a big victory". Pelosi made sure that Trump became the only US President to be impeached twice. The second one happened only seven days prior to the expiration of his term.

While her fiery attitude has always kept her in the line of fire from her opposition, making her the favorite Republican villain, it has also made her a meme-maker's favorite. Her sarcastic clap-back at Trump stole President's State of Union address broke the internet.



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# Sunak Unveils Plan to Tackle Islamist Extremism, Proposes Reforms in UK's Prevent Strategy

UK PM contender and Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak on Wednesday said he will crack down on Islamist extremism if voted to power

Sunak on Wednesday said he would bring necessary reforms to the Prevent programme. The Prevent programme is a UK government strategy aimed at reducing the threat to the UK from terrorism, by stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The MP from Richmond (Yorks) said he will refocus the 'failing' Prevent strategy onto Islamic extremism, which he said is the UK's most significant terror threat. "I will crack down on Islamist extremism. Whether redoubling our efforts to tackle Islamist extremism or rooting out those who are vocal in their hatred of our country, I will do whatever it takes to fulfil that duty," Sunak said. Widening the UK government's definition of extremism, cutting off organisations which fund and promote extremism in the UK and strengthening the terrorism legislation to crack down on extremism in prisons are the key steps Sunak said he will take to address the issue. The former chancellor to the exchequer pointed out that Islamist extremists make up roughly 80% of live counter terrorism investigations and 68% of all extremists in prison. He highlighted that only 22% cases of Prevent referrals and Channel cases are related to Islamist extremism. Channel is another aspect of the Prevent Strategy that is dedicated to safeguarding, supporting and protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from radicalization.

## PREVENTING YOUTH FROM EXTREMISM AND AUDIT OF CHARITIES

Rishi Sunak said he will also add vilification of the UK to the definition of extremism. He will ensure that those who carry an extreme hatred towards the UK - which also leads them to become a threat to national security - will be identified and diverted from the path they have chosen.

However, Sunak said it is not a legally binding definition and criticism of the government or the government's policies will not come under the ambit of this plan.

He also highlighted the rise in publicly funded charities and organisations accused of promoting extremist ideology in the UK. Sunak said, if elected, he will conduct an audit of publicly funded third-party organisations to make sure no extremist organisation receives taxpayer money.

"Britain is a beacon of freedom, tolerance and diversity. We must never let those who seek to undermine and destroy our way of life succeed," Sunak said.

He pointed out that the government under him will also audit third-party organisations linked to the UK government's anti-radicalisation work.

## CURBING EXTREMISM INSIDE PRISON

Rishi Sunak also said his plans would prevent the spread of extremist ideology inside UK's prisons.

If elected prime minister, Sunak said his government would criminalize the support of a proscribed organisation and the encouragement of terrorism in a prison cell, even if it involves only two prisoners, by amending the Terrorism Act.

He said the prisons should be a tool for developing good behaviour, rehabilitation into wider society, tolerance and dignity among those who are incarcerated. He said he will also ensure that the Bill of Rights is passed so that extremists inside the prison can be differentiated from the rest of the general prison population. Steps will be taken to see that the human rights framework of the UK is not used to spread the poisonous ideology of the extremists.

Sunak said his plans to crack down on radical Islam will also focus on mental health and steps will be taken to differentiate between those with mental health problems and those with extreme world views by reforming the Prevent programme and checking if it can be linked more effectively with mental health services. Sunak said that it is not enough to think that jailing a terrorist is the final step, highlighting the 2022 Jonathan Hall QC Report. The Jonathan Hall QC report pointed out that the UK prison service failed to recognise the dangers Islamist gangs and convicted terrorists posed to the UK even from inside jails.

# Decoding Mamata's cabinet reshuffle: Post Partha's arrest, an intergenerational power adjustment

Partha Chatterjee's arrest was like a massive earthquake that shook the Trinamool Congress down to the grassroots. Containing the damage and limiting the destruction that followed was necessary for Mamata Banerjee to protect her image and the popular perception that she is untainted by corruption and has zero tolerance for those who make money from being in power.

## Testing the mood

The time lag between the arrest and the dismissal is as interesting as the time Mamata Banerjee took to put together a new team, which is effectively what the reshuffle is, with the induction of nine ministers and the change of portfolios. In the week between the arrest and Partha Chatterjee's sacking, Mamata Banerjee tested the mood within the party; it included checking perceptions about Partha Chatterjee and the reactions to his arrest and perceptions on what she ought to do for limiting the damage.

The reshuffle and portfolio redistribution says it all. As does the reshuffle within the Trinamool Congress in the districts, where most of the party bosses have been replaced. This is a deep cleaning exercise within the state government and in the party. The biggest shakeout is in the education department, which was inevitable after Partha Chatterjee's dismissal and the ED's interrogation of the junior minister Paresch Adhikari, implicated in the School Service Commission scandal, after the Calcutta High Court found that his daughter had been appointed as a teacher out of turn.

The new crack team

Eight new ministers have been added, including Babul Supriyo who defected from

the Bharatiya Janata Party after his downgrade from Member of Parliament to a candidate in the 2021 state assembly election, which he lost. Four ministers have been dropped. Ministers who had done the heavy lifting like Firhad Hakim, Kolkata's mayor and Urban Development and Municipal Affairs were stripped off crucial departments like Transport and Housing. After the redistribution of portfolios, three people are in the new crack team of senior ministers Sashi Panja, Arup Biswas and Sovandeb Chatterjee.

The elevation of Birbaha Hansda to minister of state with independent charge of self-help groups and self-employment is Mamata Banerjee's assurance to the tribal communities in West Bengal that she respects and supports the communities and is committed to their inclusion. This was a necessary message, given that the Trinamool Congress did not vote for India's first President from the tribal communities. With six per cent of the population in West Bengal and 16 reserved constituencies in the state assembly and two in the Lok Sabha for the tribal communities, Mamata Banerjee cannot afford alienating them.

Growing influence of Abhishek Banerjee The appointment of newbies in the cabinet, Partha Bhowmick as irrigation and Waterways minister and Snehasis Chakraborty as Transport minister are key to figuring out what the reshuffle signals to the party and party watchers. The induction and cabinet rank of ministers Baul Supriyo, Partha Bhowmick, Snehasis Chakraborty point to the growing role of Abhishek Banerjee within the party and his influence on government matters.

The subtext of the new look cabinet reflects

the space that Mamata Banerjee has vacated so that her nephew can occupy it. As a message, it is loud and clear. And the old guard which, till now, openly challenged Abhishek Banerjee as the crown prince, has read it without rebelling. This is not quite a tectonic shift within the Trinamool Congress, but it is a big change from February this year. The power struggle between the old guard and the new generation led by Abhishek Banerjee erupted over candidates and nominations for the municipal elections.

Old guard versus the new generation

Mamata Banerjee was forced into a corner by the intensity of the fight in February, when she took the extreme measure of asking all senior office bearers of the Trinamool Congress to resign. It meant that she was the only office bearer, as party chairperson. In the face off between the old guard and the new generation, six months ago Mamata Banerjee chose to appease the old and win them over to accepting the inevitability of an intergenerational transfer of power. The new working committee she then appointed included Abhishek and Partha Chatterjee both as national general secretaries. The exit of one makes Abhishek's position singular and powerful. Evidently in the six months since, Abhishek has succeeded in changing Mamata Banerjee's mind. The twin reshuffles, of the cabinet and district leadership of the Trinamool Congress is an announcement that the intergenerational transfer of power has gained momentum.

Weeding out the corrupt

It is a risky but bold move and very characteristic of Mamata Banerjee. Partha Chatterjee's arrest and the wealth amassed

by his friend, Arpita, reek of corruption. As did the sacking of Paresch Adhikari's daughter following an order of the Calcutta High Court. The stench of corruption in the Trinamool Congress has grown stronger over the years since the first Ponzi scam, Saradha Chit Fund, was exposed in 2013 and the arrest and incarceration of several Trinamool Congress big wigs. In all this time, Mamata Banerjee has been able to distance herself from the allegations of corruption. So has Abhishek Banerjee, who has been summoned and interrogated by the Central Bureau of Investigation in connection with the alleged coal smuggling case. In the past several years, Mamata Banerjee has appealed to her party leaders to stay clean and away from obvious corruption that is visible in the flaunting of wealth disproportionate to known sources of income. The clash between the old guard and Abhishek was over weeding out the corrupt and widely known abusers of power. The cabinet reshuffle points to a new equilibrium, with some of the old guard getting more power like Arup Biswas and Sovandeb Chatterjee and new entrants into the cabinet, whose allegiance to Abhishek is known. Snatching victory from potential disaster Partha Chatterjee's arrest was seriously disruptive of the equilibrium within the party. He has been very close to Mamata Banerjee and worked alongside to establish the Trinamool Congress. Using his exit to signal a power shift and a succession plan is a classic move to try and snatch victory from what is a potential disaster. By offsetting one disruption by triggering another, Mamata Banerjee is trying to retain control as well as delegate power to her nephew.



# The Uniform Civil Code: If not by 2024, then when?

**As we celebrate India's 75th year of Independence, it is time to depoliticise the century-old status quoism that has persisted around the viability and enactment of the Uniform Civil Code**

The Uniform Civil Code (UCC) has been one of the three long-standing campaign promises of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) along with the construction of the Ram Mandir at the erstwhile disputed site in Ayodhya, as also the revocation of Article 370 that granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Now that the last two goals have been met, the spotlight will move sooner than later, much before the 2024 general elections, to the UCC. However, the most recent stand of the government as conveyed to the parliamentary committee is confusing, as it states that a review of personal laws will only be looked into if "a sizeable majority of the population seeks amendments to existing laws, in order to enact new laws through Parliament." The government has now asked the 21st Law Commission to examine and make fresh recommendations to the UCC.

Till such time a consensus does not emerge on the passage of a pan-India law, the state governments are free to bring in a state law, as family and succession laws come under the concurrent jurisdiction of Centre and states. Already, BJP-ruled states like Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have

been independently talking up the UCC as they are free to undertake judicial reforms. It already exists in Goa, as the state inherited the Portuguese Civil Code in 1867, which is still applicable after that state joined the Indian Union



in 1961.

In other states, different personal laws apply to different communities, with the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 being applicable to Hindus, Jain and Sikhs; the Christian Marriage Act to Christians, while the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat Application) applies to Muslims in personal matters. The UCC resonates with 'one country one rule', and once passed, would be applicable uniformly across all religious communities. The term, 'Uniform Civil Code is explicitly mentioned in Part 4 of the Indian Constitution, wherein Article 44

proclaims: "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India." The UCC is based on the premise that there is no connection between religion and the temporal in a modern civilisation, and therefore all sections of society, irrespective of personal faith, shall be treated equally in accordance with a national civil code. Such a universal code shall be applicable uniformly on matters related to marriage, divorce, alimony, maintenance, inheritance, adoption and succession of property rights.

## Historical background

The debate for a UCC dates back to the colonial era, when criminal laws were codified and were universalised for the entire country, but personal laws continued to be governed by separate codes of different castes, religions and communities, as 'The Queen's 1859 Proclamation' promised absolute abstinence and non-interference in religious matters. In 1840, on the basis of the Lex Loci report, the British government established uniform laws for crimes, evidence and contracts, but personal laws of Hindus and Muslims were intentionally left to their discretion.

## India, US to hold wargames in October in Uttarakhand

The exercise planned many months in advance would see the two armies practice counter-terrorist operations along with many drills during the exercise, Army officials said. Further strengthening their military ties, India and US would be holding their regular Yudhabhyas series of wargames in the Auli area in Uttarakhand near the China border. The exercise planned many months in advance would see the two armies practice counter-terrorist operations along with many drills during the exercise, Army officials said. The exercise would be held from October 18 to 31 in the mountainous terrain in the area which has seen the additional deployment of assets and troops in the last two years, they said. The Americans are in a tense relationship with the Chinese due to the Taiwan issue while the Indian military has been in a standoff with them since May 2020 timeframe. This would be the 18th of the Yudhabhyas wargames between India and the US to help enhance interoperability between the two sides. The two armies had last held the wargames in Alaska where they carried out drills in extremely cold conditions.



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# US used Pakistan airspace to carry out drone strike that killed Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahri

The United States used Pakistan airspace for the drone which killed Al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahri in the heart of the Afghanistan capital Kabul, South China Morning Post (SCMP) reported citing security analysts. US President Joe Biden said on Monday (August 1) that Zawahiri was killed in a "precision" strike. His death comes as the biggest blow to the militant group since its founder Osama bin Laden was killed in 2011. The report further added that Pakistan gave permission to the US to use its airspace. The security analysts also believed that Islamabad could have provided human intelligence to confirm the whereabouts of Zawahri. As quoted by SCMP, Abdul Basit, a research fellow at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore said, "The drone definitely



entered Pakistani airspace over Balochistan and entered Afghanistan." Basit mentioned the 2003 agreement and suggested that the operation was probably conducted on the terms of that

Basit said, when the United States pulled out from Afghanistan in August last year, "The 2003 agreement expired" but, "it was kept intact to keep the airspace open for the US." Zawahiri succeeded bin Laden and including the deadly 9/11 attacks, he was believed to be the mastermind who steered Al-Qaeda's other operations. He was also bin Laden's personal doctor. As quoted by the website, Jonathan Schroden, who is a military operations analyst, also agreed that the drone did cross Pakistani airspace. While announcing the operation, Biden said that "justice had been delivered". He also added that the warning "no matter how long it takes, no matter where you hide, if you are a threat to our people, the United States will find you and take you out."

## Chinese missiles believed to have landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone: Minister

**This comes at a time when China is conducting elaborate military drills in response to US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit**

Ballistic missiles fired by China are believed to have landed in Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) for the first time, Japanese Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi said Thursday. This comes at a time when China is conducting elaborate military drills in response to US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit. Parts of Japan's southernmost island region, Okinawa, are close to Taiwan. "Five of the nine ballistic missiles launched by China are believed to have landed within

extends up to 200 nautical miles from Japan's coastline, beyond the limits of its territorial waters. Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan visit caused China to send in war planes for combat take-offs from different airports and conduct missions in different air spaces in blatant display of their might. The increased military activity



Japan's EEZ," Kishi told reporters as China holds massive military drills in the waters around Taiwan. The figure of nine missiles fired was an assessment by the Japanese side, Kishi said.

Japan had "lodged a protest with China through diplomatic channels", Kishi said, calling the matter "a serious problem that affects our national security and the safety of our citizens". Japan's foreign minister has also called for an 'immediate stop' to China's military drills around Taiwan. The EEZ

around Taiwan is also being seen as a tactic to intimidate the island nation. Earlier, when Washington announced Pelosi's Taiwan trip, China put its military on high alert and vowed a series of 'targeted military actions' as countermeasures to Pelosi's visit. "The United States constantly distorts, obscures and hollows out the 'One China' principle. These moves, like playing with fire, are extremely dangerous. Those who play with fire will perish by it," the Chinese foreign ministry had warned the US in a statement.

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## Partha Chatterjee's aide Arpita Mukherjee confesses to ED: 'Illegal money kept in my flats without...'

**Arpita Mukherjee's big confession to ED: Arpita Mukherjee has earlier confessed to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) that she was forced by West Bengal Minister Partha Chatterjee to allow her houses to be used to store the illegal cash.**

Arpita Mukherjee has earlier confessed to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) that she was forced by West Bengal Minister Partha Chatterjee to allow her houses to be used to store the illegal cash.

Kolkata: Arrested TMC leader Partha Chatterjee's close aide Arpita Mukherjee, who has also been held by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with its ongoing probe into the West Bengal school recruitment scam, has confessed before the central agency that crores of illegal money recovered during the raids were slipped into her residences without her knowledge.

It may be recalled that the ED sleuths have recovered around Rs 50 crore in cash, along with jewellery, from her two flats in southwest Kolkata and Belghoria. Both Chatterjee and Mukherjee were taken to ESI Joka, on the southern outskirts of the city, for medical check-ups, during the day. Mukherjee, after debarking a vehicle, told the waiting reporters, "Money was kept in my residences in my absence and without my knowledge", sparking speculation as to who was she pointing fingers at. Arpita Mukherjee has earlier confessed before the Enforcement Directorate (ED)



that she was forced by West Bengal Minister Partha Chatterjee to allow her houses to be used to store the illegal cash.

She also reportedly claimed that whenever Chatterjee visited her residences, the suspended TMC Minister had closed-door meetings with the unknown person which she was not allowed to attend. She also claimed that she did not have permission to open the cupboards where the cash was stocked and was not allowed to enter the rooms.

"While making these confessions, Mukherjee burst into tears a number of times and was constantly claiming that she was exploited. Now

we have to get access to that unknown person referred by her. It is only Partha Chatterjee who can answer this," an ED official said.

Partha Chatterjee, who has been relieved of his ministerial duties, has earlier said that he was a "victim of a conspiracy" and expressed displeasure over the TM's decision to suspend him. The senior TMC leader had also said that only time would tell if the action against him was justified. Both Chatterjee and Mukherjee have said that the money recovered did not belong to them. They will be produced before PMLA court on Wednesday, with the 10-day ED custody of the duo coming to an end.

## Battle of minerals: Experts predict India can overtake China as bigger buyer in next decade



Global investor and economist Dambisa Moyo has said that India can surpass China as the world's most important buyer of minerals in a decade.

Warning that China's debt and demographic challenges would become "incredibly problematic over the next 10 years", Moyo was speaking at the Diggers & Dealers mining conference in Kalgoorlie in Western Australia.

Highlighting that these structural challenges would intensify China's "struggle to manage a lot of their policy initiatives from the centre in terms of their political approach", Moyo said they could have wider implications not only for the world's mineral and resources companies but also for the Chinese economy as well.

Moyo, who is a board member of Chevron, 3M, and Condé Nast, also added that "The real story of the emergence and product mix, thinking about the energy stack and about minerals, does become India." Following the UN report which showed that India's population is set to surpass China's next year, Moyo said this would have "material consequences" for how global mineral resources are allocated.

China, which has faced criticism for wasteful spending to stem its economic slowdown and reverting to debt-fuelled, is the world's second-largest economy after the United States.

"Indian demand for coal and renewable energy will mean a lot for Australia," the Financial Times quoted Roland Rajah, an economist with the Lowy Institute think-tank, as saying. "India will probably grow much faster than China but China is still pretty big," he added. In order to kick-start slowing growth China will adopt "a more aggressive agenda" this year that would stimulate greater investment in resources, according to Moyo.

## Can Chinese ship snoop on India from Sri Lanka port? India raises concerns



As Chinese naval vessel Yuan Wang 5 continues its journey to Sri Lanka's Hambantota port. India has raised its concerns with Sri Lanka. The Chinese ship is expected to reach the Sri Lankan port in mid-August and has New Delhi worrying that it may snoop on Indian ports and nuclear plants in southern India. "Government carefully monitors any development having a bearing on India's security and economic infrastructure and takes all necessary measures to safeguard them. I think that

should be a clear message," said Arindam Bagchi, Spokesperson for Ministry of External Affairs. Northern reaches of Indian Ocean are traditionally considered within the influence zone of India and Indian Navy has a regular presence in these waters where some of the important global trade sea lanes are present. Chinese foray here is hence a topic of concern for India. Yuan Wang 5, the Chinese vessel is said to have lethal capabilities. It can track satellites and

military installations. It is a 3rd generation tracking ship of Yuan Wang series and has aerial range of 750 kilometres. This means that about six southern Indian ports and several nuclear plants are within observational range of the ship even if it is docked in the port. The port of Hambantota has been handed by Sri Lanka to China on a 99-year lease for commercial activities. The Chinese ship is expected to be docked at Hambantota between August 11 and 17.



# Ukraine N-plant is 'out of control', says UN nuclear chief

**'There is a paradoxical situation in which the Zaporizhzhya plant is controlled by Russia, but its Ukrainian staff continues to run its nuclear operations, leading to inevitable moments of friction and alleged violence,' he said**

The UN nuclear chief warned that Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Ukraine is completely out of control and issued an urgent plea to Russia and Ukraine to quickly allow experts to visit the sprawling complex to stabilise the situation and avoid a nuclear accident. Rafael Grossi, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said in an interview Tuesday with The Associated Press that the situation is getting more perilous every day at the Zaporizhzhya plant in the southeastern city of Enerhodar, which Russian troops seized in early March, soon after their Feb 24 invasion of Ukraine. Every principle of nuclear safety has been violated at the plant, he said. What is at stake is extremely serious and extremely grave and dangerous. Grossi cited many violations of the plant's safety, adding that it is in a place where active war is ongoing, near Russian-controlled territory. The physical integrity of the plant hasn't been respected, he said, citing shelling at the beginning of the war when it was taken over and continuing information from Ukraine and Russia accusing each other of attacks at Zaporizhzhya. There is a paradoxical situation in which the plant is controlled by Russia, but its Ukrainian staff continues to run its nuclear operations, leading to inevitable moments of friction and alleged violence, he said. While the IAEA has some contacts with staff, they are faulty and patchy, he said. Grossi said the supply chain of equipment and spare parts has been

interrupted, so we are not sure the plant is getting all it needs. The IAEA also needs to perform very important inspections to ensure that nuclear material is being safeguarded, and there is a lot of nuclear material there to be inspected, he said. When you put this together, you have a catalog of things that should never be happening in any nuclear facility, Grossi said. And this is why I have been insisting from day one that we have to be able to go there to perform this safety and security evaluation, to do the repairs and to assist as we already did in Chernobyl. The Russian capture of Zaporizhzhya renewed fears that the largest of Ukraine's 15 nuclear reactors could be damaged, setting off another emergency like the 1986 Chernobyl accident, the world's worst nuclear disaster, which happened about 110 km (65 miles) north of the capital Kyiv. Russian forces occupied the heavily contaminated site soon after the invasion but handed control back to the Ukrainians at the end of March. Grossi visited Chernobyl on April 27 and tweeted that the level of safety was like a 'red light' blinking. But he said Tuesday that the IAEA set up an assistance mission at Chernobyl at that time that has been very, very successful so far. The IAEA needs to go to Zaporizhzhya, as it did to Chernobyl, to ascertain the facts of what is actually happening there, to carry out repairs and inspections, and to prevent a nuclear accident from happening, Grossi said. The IAEA chief said he and his team

need protection to get to the plant and the urgent cooperation of Russia and Ukraine. Each side wants this international mission to go from different sites, which is understandable in light of territorial integrity and political considerations, he said, but there's something more urgent and that is getting the IAEA team to Zaporizhzhya.

The IAEA, by its presence, will be a deterrent to any act of violence against this nuclear power plant, Grossi said. So I'm pleading as an international civil servant, as the head of an international organisation, I'm pleading to both sides to let this mission proceed. Grossi was in New York to deliver a keynote speech at Monday's opening of the long-delayed high-level meeting to review the landmark 50-year-old Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and eventually achieving a nuclear-free world. In the interview, the IAEA chief also spoke about efforts to revive the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and major powers that the Trump administration abandoned in 2018 and the Biden administration has been working to renew. Grossi said there is an ongoing effort to try to go for yet another meeting or round to explore possibilities to come to an agreement. He said he heard the meeting could be soon.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told the NPT review conference on Monday that Iran has either been unwilling or unable to accept a deal to

return to the 2015 agreement aimed at reining in its nuclear programme. Grossi said there are important differences among the negotiating parties and important verification issues related to past activities that Iran needs to address. It's not impossible, it's complex, he said. If the nuclear agreement, known as the JCPOA, is not extended, he said some IAEA inspections will continue. But the JCPOA provides for additional transparency and inspections which I deem as extremely important, very necessary, because of the breadth and depth of the nuclear programme in Iran, he said. Grossi stressed that cooperating with the IAEA, answering its questions, allowing its inspectors to go wherever they need to be, is essential for Iran to build trust and confidence. Promises and good words will not do, he said. On another issue, Grossi said last September's deal in which the United States and Britain will provide Australia with nuclear reactors to power its submarines requires an agreement with the IAEA to ensure that the amount of nuclear material in the vessel when it leaves port is there when it returns. He said Australia hasn't decided what type of vessel it will be getting, so while there have been preparatory talks, substantive talks can't begin. Because it's a military vessel, Grossi said, there are lots of confidential and protection of information measures that need to be embedded into any such agreement, so it's very complex technologically."

## Why being on a plane with an infected person cannot usually give you monkeypox

**The infection spreads mainly through skin-to-skin, mouth-to-mouth, or sexual contact with someone who has the monkeypox rashes. People can also contract the infection from direct contact with the lesions or the fluid in it, or indirect contact with contaminated material such as linens**

A 22-year-old man from Kerala took a flight back home from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after testing positive for monkeypox. After reaching Kerala, he did not report to any health facility for five days and even played football at a local ground. He died on Saturday (July 30) with encephalitis (swelling of the brain). The Centre has reached out to the UAE authorities to determine how he was able to board the flight despite testing positive for the viral infection. In a case such as this, who is at risk of contracting the disease and how can it be prevented? It is unlikely. This is because of the way the monkeypox infection is transmitted. The infection spreads mainly through skin-to-skin, mouth-to-mouth, or sexual contact with someone who has the monkeypox rashes. People can also contract the infection from direct contact with the lesions or the fluid in it, or indirect contact with contaminated material such as linens. In case of the 22-year-old from

Kerala, the state Health Minister said that he had "no symptoms of monkeypox."

The infection does not spread among people who are merely gathered together in a public place.

While it can in theory be transmitted through large respiratory droplets, that sort of transmission would require prolonged and close contact with the infected person. And if you are wearing a mask as part of Covid-19-appropriate behaviour, you will be protected against monkeypox transmission. In the current global outbreak, sexual contact appears to be the most efficient way of transmission, with most cases occurring in men who have sex with men (MSM).

"We're seeing cases that are largely focused on men. And when we look at those cases, we're noticing that actually its men who have sex with men... There have been some cases reported in women and children, but these have been very limited," said Andy Seale, an advisor on

sexually transmitted infections at the World Health Organisation (WHO) in a video put out by the organisation.

### How can we protect ourselves?

Dr R Gangakhedkar, former Head of the Department of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), told The Indian Express in an interview that sexual activities should be avoided with partners who are unknown or not regular. As a safety measure, condoms must be used during such sexual activity. However, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) cautions that while "condoms may help; however, condoms alone are likely not enough to prevent monkeypox". Kissing, the CDC advises, should be avoided, and skin-to-skin contact should be reduced to the extent possible.

In case a close contact has the infection, use appropriate personal protective measures while caring for them, avoid

contact with infected material such as linens, and wash hands regularly. The patient must remain in isolation.

Those who get pox-like rashes should consult their doctor.

### Who needs to go to a doctor?

Anyone with unexplained pox-like rashes, coupled with fever, headache, body ache, profound weakness, or swollen lymph nodes must seek care. If there is a history of international travel in the last 21 days, it is more likely to be monkeypox.

India has reported six cases so far — all the four cases from Kerala have a history of travel to UAE whereas the two cases from Delhi do not.

### Is there a need for vaccination?

No — not at this moment at least.

Dr Gangakhedkar told The Indian Express: "There is a very low risk of death — less than 1%. And this estimate is based on data from Africa (where the vast majority of deaths have occurred so far). Statistically, the case fatality ratio is very, very low."



# Former Conservative health minister Sajid Javid announces his support for Liz Truss



(SAI Bureau) Adding to the Conservative health minister roster of senior Tories backing Sajid Javid announced her leadership bid, former Wednesday his support for Liz

Truss as the UK's next Conservative prime minister.

Leading to a wave of resignations, Javid resigned as Health Secretary in Boris Johnson's government in early July at the same time as former Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak. Javid said in an article published in The Times on Wednesday "After careful consideration, it is clear to me that Liz Truss is best placed to pass these tests." Praising Truss' "sharp focus and willingness to challenge the status quo", Javid

said that the new prime minister would need to swiftly reunite the party. Slamming Sunak for not cutting taxes, Javid challenged his approach to the economy and said we need to show "we are rising to the challenges of our times". Other than Javid, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, Chancellor of the Exchequer Nadhim Zahawi, international trade minister Penny Mordaunt, Tory centrist Tom Tugendhat, and Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis have backed Truss. Citing a series of scandals and missteps over the

last 12 months, the ruling Conservative Party is choosing a new leader after Johnson was forced to announce his resignation when ministers resigned en masse from his government. With a winner to be announced on September 5, the party's members will vote by postal ballot or online over the next few weeks. Truss has extended her lead in the race to be Britain's next leader, with 58 per cent of participants showing support for Truss in a survey of 1,003 party members.

## Bone and Joint Day 2022: Essential tips to keep in mind before your next trek

This Bone and Joint Day, annually observed by the Indian Orthopedic Association on August 4, here's what one should keep in mind

(SAI Bureau) During monsoon, many people go on trekking trips to enjoy the rain, and the beauty of nature. Trekking or hiking is considered one of the best exercises, which also helps improve bone health. Along with physical health benefits, trekking also improves emotional and mental wellbeing.

For beginners, however, there is always a risk of bone and joint injuries, especially when trekking in the rainy season. Such injuries may range from sprains/ligament tears around the foot, ankle, knee, shoulders or other joints to fractures to even

grievous injuries to the chest or head in case of a fall. "As some of these injuries may lead to lifelong pain or disability, it is better to take utmost precautions to avoid them," said Dr Anup Khatri, consultant orthopaedic surgeon at Global Hospital, Parel Mumbai.

This Bone and Joint Day, annually observed by the Indian Orthopedic Association on August 4, here's what one should keep in mind.

**How is trekking beneficial?** "Trekking strengthens the muscles, especially those of the legs — gluteal muscles,

quadriceps, hamstrings, calves, and hips. It also works on the abdomen, back, and shoulder muscles, helps improve bone density, and slows down osteoporosis," said Dr Khatri. Trekking regularly and frequently also reduces blood pressure, and cholesterol and is also known to reduce diabetes. It also increases lung and heart capacity, reduces stress levels and helps in elevating mood and getting relief from anxiety. If trekking involves rock climbing, rappelling or rope climbing, proper equipment along with safety



gears like helmets, elbow and knee guards, etc should be used. Good core strength and balance also helps to reduce falls.

During the expedition,

for minor sprains, crepe bandage and ice packs can be applied. For any major injury, some form of rigid immobilisation must be applied. To deal with these injuries on emergency basis, a person must be trained in first-aid. "If done properly, trekking helps to increase bone strength. We build bone mass throughout our early years in childhood and adolescent life, whereas in old age, we tend to lose it. This leads to osteoporosis and even fractures even with minor falls," said Dr Khatri. "Dietary minerals such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, and vitamins such as vitamin D are necessary for good bone health. For muscle wellbeing — vitamin E, essential amino acids, levocarnitine, etc are helpful. People participating in long or frequent treks should visit a trained nutritionist. \*Working out for at least 30 minutes every day helps to keep muscles and bones strong. Swimming, cycling, weight training, endurance exercises, walking uphill with a light backpack are few good routines for good bone strength.

## Strawberries may help fight Alzheimer's: Study

**A bioactive compound found in strawberries called pelargonidin may be associated with fewer neurofibrillary tau tangles in the brain. Tau tangles are one of the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease**

(SAI Bureau) Adding strawberries to your cereal, salad or smoothie can likely help protect your brain from Alzheimer's disease, suggests a study. The researchers from RUSH University in the US found that a bioactive compound found in strawberries called pelargonidin may be associated with fewer neurofibrillary tau tangles in the brain. Tau tangles are one of the hallmarks of Alzheimer's disease, which is caused by abnormal changes with tau proteins that accumulate in the brain. "We suspect the anti-inflammatory properties of pelargonidin may decrease overall neuroinflammation, which may reduce cytokine production," said study author Julie Schneider, Associate Professor and neuropathologist with the RUSH Alzheimer's Disease Centre.

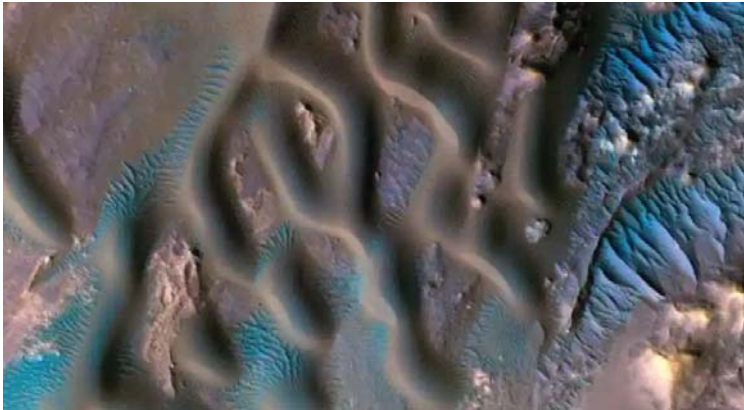
Cytokines are proteins produced

by cells, and they can regulate various inflammatory responses. Inflammation in the brain has been linked to Alzheimer's pathology such as plaques and tangles. The data suggests that pelargonidin may protect the ageing brain from developing Alzheimer's pathology. Among berries, strawberries are the most abundant source of pelargonidin. "While pelargonidin should be examined further for their role in maintaining brain health in older adults, this gives a simple change that anyone can make in their diet," said RADC nutritional epidemiologist Puja Agarwal, Assistant Professor of internal medicine at RUSH. The study was published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease. The team looked at data of a total of 575 deceased participants with complete dietary information during the

follow-up and brain autopsies whose average age of death was 91.3 years. A total of 452 people were non-carriers of the APOE 4 gene and a total of 120 participants with APOE 4, which is the strongest genetic risk factor gene for Alzheimer's disease. "We did not observe the same effect in people with the APOE 4 gene that is associated with Alzheimer's disease, but that may be due to the smaller sample size of individuals in this study who had the gene," said Agarwal. "The study was an observational study and does not prove a direct causal relationship. Further research is needed to understand the role of nutrition in Alzheimer's Disease, but this study gives us hope on how specific dietary components such as berries may help brain health."



# NASA posts beautiful martian image showing 'blue' region of the red planet



(SAI Bureau) When we say Mars, the first thing that crosses our minds is a red wasteland. Mars is almost always associated with the colour red. It's quite natural as the red colour of the planet is perceptible in the night sky

even with naked eyes. If someone says Mars is blue, we are sure to dismiss the opinion almost instantly. But now NASA, the space agency which has multiple rovers on the red planet and an orbiter around it has released some images in which clear blue streaks are visible on the planet's surface. The image has been captured by Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) so it has captured an area on the martian surface that spans

hundreds of metres. Each pixel in this image is equal to 25 feet on martian surface. The blue streaks on the martian surface are a beautiful sight. The martian region visible in these images is called Gamboa Crater. It is located in the northern hemisphere of the planet. **So why is the red planet so blue?**

The answer lies in the way this image was processed. This is what is called a 'false colour'. The blue region is actually as red

as the planet is but has been coloured blue due to slight variations in the frequency of the reflected light. The region is NOT actually blue. So is it just a way to make an image more beautiful and nothing else? No. The regions streaked in blue colour indicate presence of geologic structures. When an analyst studies this image it will be helpful for him or her to quickly know where are these geologic structures located. This may help us to understand martian geology in greater detail.

# Artificial Intelligence reveals shape of every protein known to science

Google's AI has predicted the shape of all 200 million proteins known to science, including that of plants, animals and microorganisms

(SAI Bureau) In what is being touted as a groundbreaking achievement, AlphaFold, an Artificial Intelligence system has predicted structures for nearly all catalogued proteins known to science. The development comes a year after the Deep Mind project revealed the structure of nearly all human proteins.

Proteins are microscopic mechanisms that control and drive the behaviour of the human body. The human genome has instructions of over 20,000

proteins that have long eluded scientists and understanding their shapes and mechanism could be key to the treatment of diseases like cancers and devising effective health strategies.

The AI has now predicted structures of nearly 200 million proteins that have been released openly and can be accessed by the public. The new data includes protein structures of plants, bacteria, animals, and other organisms, opening up many new opportunities for researchers to

use AlphaFold to advance their work on important issues, including sustainability, food insecurity, and neglected diseases. "AlphaFold is the singular and momentous advance in life science that demonstrates the power of AI. Determining the 3D structure of a protein used to take many months or years, it now takes seconds. AlphaFold has already accelerated and enabled massive discoveries, including cracking the structure of the nuclear pore complex. And with this new addition of structures, we can expect more biological mysteries to be solved each day," Eric Topol, Founder and Director of the Scripps Research

Translational Institute said in a statement.

According to the US National Library of Medicine, proteins do most of the work in cells and are required for the structure, function, and regulation of the body's tissues and organs. They are made from smaller structures known as amino acid, attached to each other like chains and the sequence of amino acids determines their unique 3D structures. These proteins provide structure and support for cells.

DeepMind said that the newly predicted structures are already aiding medical research across the world by providing a better understanding of newly identified

proteins that could be drug targets, and helping scientists to more quickly find potential medicines that bind to them.

The AI in July last year made headlines for predicting the structures of nearly all human proteins by gathering a massive database of genomic instructions. Apart from providing data about human protein structures, the company also made public proteomes of 20 other biologically significant organisms, totaling over 3,50,000 protein structures. The Google-led project, in 2020, made headlines across the world after it determined a protein's 3D shape from its amino-acid sequence.

## How was Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile maintained? Secret revealed

(SAI Bureau) The Mona Lisa may maintain her famously enigmatic smile because she benefits from one of Paris' best-kept secrets: An underground cooling system that's helped the Louvre cope with the sweltering heat that has broken temperature records across Europe. The little-known "urban cold" network snakes unsuspecting beneath Parisians' feet at a depth of up to 30 meters (98 feet), pumping out icy water through 89 kilometers (55 miles) of labyrinthine pipes, which is used to chill the air in over 700 sites. The system, which uses electricity generated by renewable sources, is the largest in Europe — and chugs on around the clock with a deafening noise totally inaudible above ground. Paris City Hall has now signed an ambitious contract to triple the size of the network by 2042 to 252 kilometers (157 miles). It would make it the largest urban cooling system in the world. The new contract intends to

help the city to both adapt to and combat the threat of global warming. Many parts of Europe hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in July. The city is extending the cooling network to hospitals, schools and metro stations over the next two decades. It's unclear how much of the system will be operational by the time of the Paris Olympics in 2024, but it's possible the systems will be used in several Olympic sites. Unbeknown to millions of tourists, the piping currently cools the City of Light's most emblematic sites, such as the Louvre and the Quai Branly Museum. It might even help cool the tempers of agitated lawmakers as it is used to drop temperatures in the National Assembly. The scheme is operated by the joint-venture company Fraicheur de Paris — 85% owned by the state's French energy company EDF and the rest by public transport operator RATP. The company's officials tout its benefits for the entire French capital.

## Ancient rocks can show how Earth was able to sustain life

(SAI Bureau) A new study, published in Nature Communications, states that life on earth was only possible due to the "rejuvenation" of the planet's core. The study also says that around 565 million years ago, the magnetic field of earth was down to almost ten percent of its strength right now and the planet was on its way to



have the same fate as Mars where life has not been found till now. The magnetic field was bolstered by the phenomenon known as the Cambrian explosion or the "biological big bang". "The inner core is tremendously important. Right before the inner core started to grow, the magnetic field was at the point of collapse, but as soon as the inner core started to grow, the field was regenerated," John Tarduno, corresponding author of the paper, said in a press statement. The study takes into

account rocks near the centre of the earth which were experimented on with the help of carbon dioxide laser and a superconducting quantum interference device (SQUID) magnetometer. The goal was to find out the changes in the earth's core over time. According to the study, the rocks on the outer core of the

earth's surface showed that electric currents generated by the magma present result in the magnetic field gaining strength.

"Because we constrained the inner core's age more accurately, we could explore the fact that the present-day inner core is actually composed of two parts. Plate tectonic movements on Earth's surface indirectly affected the inner core, and the history of these movements is imprinted deep within Earth in the inner core's structure," added Tarduno, in the press statement.



# Boeing to establish R&D facility on sustainable aviation fuel

The global airline industry's target of net zero emissions by 2050 is heavily reliant on its ability to produce more sustainable aviation fuel



(SAI Bureau) Boeing Co said on Monday it plans to establish a research and development (R&D) facility in Japan to further development in sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and to advance electric and hydrogen aircraft technology.

The facility will also focus on further development in robotics, digitalisation, automation and carbon fibre

composite materials for the aircraft manufacturer said in a news release. The global airline industry's target of net zero emissions by 2050 is heavily reliant on its ability to produce more SAF, though electric and hydrogen-powered planes could play a smaller part in emissions reductions. The industry requires huge investment in SAF, which uses feedstock such as animal fat and cooking oil and which is

currently in short supply and far more expensive than conventional jet fuel. The industry aims for SAF production to account for 65% of fuel needs by 2050, up from less than 0.5% in 2021. Japan lacks SAF production at present, though local airline operators ANA Holdings Inc (9202.T) and Japan Airlines Co Ltd (9201.T) have both committed to using SAF to meet 10% of their fuel needs by 2030 in line with a government

target. In April, French oil and gas company TotalEnergies SE (TTEF.PA) and Japanese peer ENEOS Holdings Inc (5020.T) announced a feasibility study to assess production of SAF at ENEOS's Negishi refinery in the eastern Japanese city of Yokohama. It could potentially begin production in 2025, targeting capacity of 300,000 tons a year. Boeing has committed to its planes being certified to fly on 100% SAF by 2030.

## Teeth that were 'gathering dust for 40 years', lead to the discovery of Europe's last Panda

(SAI Bureau) Researchers have discovered a never-seen-before species of European Panda that according to estimates roamed the continent some six million years ago. The discovery of this species—likely the last panda of Europe—began with the finding of a pair of fossil teeth that had been lying in a storage facility undiscovered for 40 years. As per a Live Science report the fossil, which consists of an upper canine and an upper molar, was discovered in northwest Bulgaria in the late 1970s, but they were eventually left in storage at the Bulgarian National Museum of

Natural History in Sofia. It's astonishing that this discovery remained undiscovered for forty years because it wasn't properly catalogued and was thus left untouched for forty long years. Recently, museum staff stumbled onto the peculiar-looking teeth and decided to investigate further.

An analysis of the teeth soon revealed that they were unlike any of the previously identified species of European pandas or the discovered fossils. The species which has been named Agriarctos Nikolovi had much larger teeth than the majority of

European panda species. The giant pandas we know today have large teeth, and the newly discovered Agriarctos Nikolovi's teeth come close. In addition, the teeth are significantly more recent than other panda fossils found in Europe, some of which are over 10 million years old, indicating that A. Nikolovi was probably the final panda species to inhabit the continent. However, despite the similarities the modern pandas are not a direct descendent of this species, but "is a close relative" says study co-author Nikolai Spassov, a palaeontologist at the Bulgarian



National Museum of Natural History. "This discovery shows how little we still know about ancient nature," he remarked. The authors of the study speculate that A. Nikolovi's habitat and diet may have been impacted by climate change, which may have ultimately led to its extinction.

## Something exploded behind the Sun. Its intensity remains unknown

Scientists are expected to get a view of the active region later this week as it comes to sight

(SAI Bureau) As the Sun inches closer to its peak activity in its solar cycle, an explosion has been picked up behind the northeastern limb of the star in our solar system. Solar observatories saw bits and pieces of the explosion, which remain obscured in view from Earth's orbit.

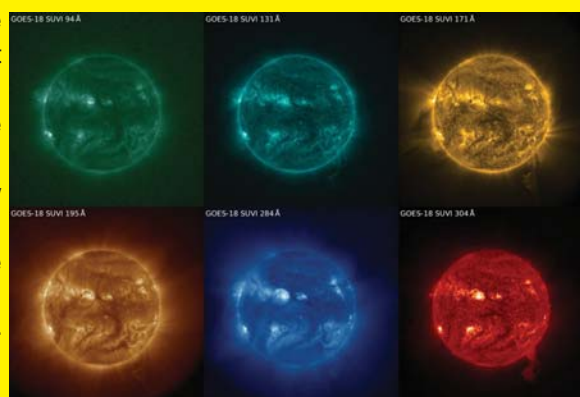
The explosion was spotted on July 31 at around 2309 UT and Earth-orbiting satellites registered a long-lasting C9.3-class solar flare. "The intensity is probably an underestimate because it was partially eclipsed by the edge of the sun. Nasa's Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) saw hot debris flying away from the blast site," spaceweather, which tracks the solar activity, reported.

While the explosion was powerful, experts have predicted that Earth is not

in the line of fire from the Sun. Scientists are expected to get a view of the active region later this week as it comes to sight. Earth is not in the line of fire. The explosion is significant because it may herald an active region set to emerge over the sun's northeastern limb later this week. A new sunspot group could bring an end to weeks of relative quiet," spaceweather said in its report. Meanwhile, the US-based National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

(NOAA) has predicted that there is a chance of a minor G-1 class geomagnetic storm hitting Earth. The event is due to an explosion on a southern hole in the sun's atmosphere,

which has released a high-speed stream of solar wind and gaseous material toward the inner planets



including Earth. Geomagnetic storms are a major disturbance of Earth's magnetosphere that occurs when there is a very efficient exchange of energy from the solar wind into the space

environment surrounding Earth.

With the sun's 11-year activity cycle ramping up, phenomena such as CMEs and solar flares are increasing in frequency. The Solar Ultraviolet Imager onboard the GOES-18 satellite, which launched on March 1 has also captured a massive eruption from the Sun. The Coronal Mass Ejection was captured on July 10 in the bottom right quadrant of the sun.

"Depending on the size and the trajectory of solar eruptions, the possible effects to near-Earth space and Earth's magnetosphere can cause geomagnetic storms, which can disrupt power utilities and communication and navigation systems. These storms may also cause radiation damage to orbiting satellites and the International Space Station," NOAA said in a statement.



# This Large Cap Footwear Player To Pay 1090% Dividend Soon; Details Investors Must Know



Regulations, the Share Transfer Books and Register of the Members will remain closed from Saturday, August 6, 2022 to Friday, August 12, 2022 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of the 89th AGM and payment of Dividend. Dividend on Equity Shares, if declared, at the 89th AGM will be paid from Tuesday, August 23, 2022 onwards to those Members who are entitled thereto. As per the data available on BSE, the ex-date for the dividend is 04 Aug 2022. The ex-date for corporate actions like dividends falls 2 days prior to the record date and it indicates that in the instance of Bata India, the record date is August 6, and in order for shareholders to receive the dividend, they must be listed in the company's record book on that day. The shares of Bata India closed today at Rs 1,985.95 on the NSE, up by 1.24 per cent from the previous close of ?1961.65. In the last 1 year, the

stock has gained 18.09 per cent and on a YTD basis, the stock has gained 6.82 per cent so far in 2022. With a market cap of Rs 25,460.66 crore, Bata India Ltd. is a large cap company that serves the nation's consumer discretionary industry. As a division of the Bata Shoe Organization, Bata India is the largest footwear retailer and producer in India. According to Value Research, Bata India is a debt-free organisation.

## Should you Invest?

Short-term traders can look to buy the stock now or on dips for a possible target of Rs 2,262 in the next 1-3 months which will surpass its 16 November 2021 high of Rs 2261.65 on the BSE, suggest experts.

International brokerage firm Phillip Capital said that "On the retail front, Bata will continue to expand through an asset-light franchise route (net added 75 stores in FY22), which will

account for approximately 80 per cent of new store additions (20-30 store additions on a quarterly basis). Our analysis of store data from the official website's store locator suggests that there is further room to strengthen its footprint in smaller towns. On the distribution front, Bata has been gradually increasing its town coverage (1,047 in FY22 vs. 687 in FY19) coupled with strong growth in the distributor base (500 in FY22 vs. 325 in FY19). Management is targeting higher sales contribution from the MBO channel. "We maintain Buy, with a revised target of Rs 2,222 (55x FY24). Footfalls coming back to pre-covid level coupled with steep price hikes, increasing focus on its casual portfolio (which could account for 50 per cent of revenues in medium term led by channel expansion – MBO, franchise EBO and SIS should drive topline growth and margin expansion," mentioned in its report.

(News Agency) Bata India has declared an equity dividend of 1090.00 per cent at a face value of Rs 5 or a dividend of Rs 54.5 per share for the fiscal year ended in March 2022. Bata generates a dividend yield of 2.73 per cent at the current share price of Rs 1,985.95. The company has said in a regulatory filing that "The Board at the Meeting recommended a Dividend of Rs. 54.5 (1090 per cent) per equity

share of Rs. 5/- each fully paid-up of the Company, which includes onetime Special Dividend of Rs. 50.5 (1010 per cent) per equity share of Rs. 5/- each fully paid-up of the Company, for the year ended March 31, 2022, for approval of the Members at the AGM. The payment of dividend, is subject to approval of the shareholders, at the AGM. Pursuant to Regulation 42 of the SEBI Listing

# Missed deadline to file Income Tax Return? Here's what you need to do

What should you do if you have missed the deadline to file your Income Tax Return? Read on to find out



income of the person does not exceed Rs 5 lakh, the work can be completed by paying a penalty of only Rs 1,000. On the other hand, if the total income of a person does not exceed the basic exemption limit under the tax regime chosen by him, he will be exempted from any penalty while filing a belated ITR.

## E-VERIFICATION MUST

Verification of the ITR within 30 days of filing is mandatory. The time limit has been brought down from the previous 120 days. Electronic verification or e-verification can be done by logging on to your account on the Income Tax department's website. Failing to do the same will invite a penalty under tax

laws. You may also download the ITR-V (acknowledgement of ITR filing) from the Income Tax Department's website and send it to the Centralized Processing Centre after signing the paper. The ITR-V, a one-page document, will have to be signed in blue ink and sent via ordinary post or speed post. You cannot courier the ITR-V.

(News Agency) The deadline to file the Income Tax Returns ended on Sunday, July 31. For the assessment year 2022-23, as many as 5,82,88,962 people have filed Income Tax Returns so far. According to the Income Tax Department, 67,97,067 ITRs were filed in a day till 11 pm on Sunday. As many as 4,50,013 returns were filed in just one hour between 10 pm and 11 pm. According to tax laws, a Rs 5,000 late fee would be payable by people having an annual income of over Rs 5 lakh, if they file their ITR by December 31 of the assessment year. Individuals with an annual income below Rs 5 lakh will be liable for a late fee of Rs 1,000 for delayed return filing.

## HOW TO FILE ITR NOW?

If you have missed filing your Income Tax returns, here's what you need to do. First, you will have to file an appeal for condonation with the commissioner of income tax of your ward for refunds and losses carried forward.

Next, you will have to fill in the 'ITR U' form for the updated return and mention the reasons for updating your income. It could be: return previously not filed, income not reported correctly, reduction of carried forward loss, wrong rate of tax and others.

## LAW FOR PENALTY

According to Section 234F of Income Tax, Rs 5,000 will have to be paid as a penalty for filing the ITR after the last date of filing the return. However, if the total

# Rupee rises by 22 paise to close at 79.02 against US dollar

(News Agency) The rupee appreciated 22 paise to close at 79.69 against the US dollar on Thursday, as a rally in the domestic equities and less hawkish signals from the US Fed triggered risk-on sentiments in the markets. Fresh foreign capital inflows also supported the domestic unit, forex traders said. However, elevated global crude prices and a strong greenback overseas capped the rupee's gain, they added. At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened sharply up at 79.80 against the greenback. During the session, the local unit witnessed an intra-day high of 79.64 and a low of 79.85 against the American currency. The rupee finally settled at 79.69, registering a rise of 22 paise over its previous close. On Wednesday, the rupee declined 13 paise to close at 79.91 against the US dollar.

The US Federal Reserve on Wednesday raised key interest rates by 75

basis points for the second straight month. According to Sugandha Sachdeva, Vice President Commodity and Currency Research, Religare Broking, the Indian rupee has managed to clinch gains of around 0.30 per cent as the slide in the US dollar on the back of less hawkish US Fed rhetoric has boosted "risk on" sentiments in the markets and supported the local unit. "The US Fed has delivered a second consecutive 0.75 percentage point rate hike on expected lines to stamp out scorching inflation, but has stopped short of providing any clear guidance about the pace and quantum of future rate hikes," Sachdeva said.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 1,041.47 points or 1.87 per cent higher at 56,857.79, while the broader NSE Nifty jumped 287.80 points or 1.73 per cent to 16,929.60.



# CPI Inflation Expected To Reach 6.8% in FY23 On High Food Prices: Crisil

(News Agency) The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation, which stood at 7.01 per cent in June, is expected to be at 6.8 per cent during the current financial year, and the food inflation might come in at 7 per cent for 2022-23, according to a report by analytics firm Crisil. The RBI has a target to keep it under 2-6 per cent.

This is a notch higher than the RBI's projection of 6.7 per cent CPI inflation during the current financial year. "On the assumption of a normal monsoon in 2022 and average crude oil price (Indian basket) of \$105 per barrel, inflation is now projected at 6.7 per cent in 2022-23, with Q1 at 7.5 per cent; Q2 at 7.4 per cent; Q3 at 6.2 per cent; and Q4 at 5.8 per cent, with risks evenly balanced," the RBI had said in its policy statement in June. Crisil in its report said, "Our

forecast of CPI inflation at 6.8 per cent is premised on food inflation at 7 per cent, which is double last fiscal's. While we assume a normal monsoon for this forecast (based on the India Meteorological Department's predictions) which can cap the upside to inflation this fiscal, the intensity and distribution will need monitoring." It added that the recent inflation data shows some softening in food prices but most of that was on account of some commodities benefitting from easing international prices, government interventions, and receding heatwave effects. "CRISIL believes that food prices could continue to stay firm this fiscal, keeping overall inflation elevated, as factors driving food prices high remain broadly unfavourable." CRISIL said the role of monsoon remains important but has somewhat diminished in the context of bringing down food inflation this

year. To be sure, while truant rains can cause food prices to flare up further, healthy rains may not be able to materially bring overall food inflation down. The Food and Agriculture Organization expects global supplies to remain tight for wheat, dairy, and poultry products this year. This is partly attributable to disruptions around Russia-Ukraine trade and weather factors. Wheat yields have been hit globally due to unusually higher temperatures. This, coupled with disruption in supplies originating from Russia-Ukraine region will maintain pressure on wheat prices this year. As Europe sizzles under a heatwave this year, some key crops are reportedly withering. At risk are crops such as rice, corn, animal fodder, in addition to vegetables output. The past two months saw prices of some agri commodities such as cereals, edible oils and sugar ease from postwar highs, yet they remain



higher than last year. The sequential easing was driven by seasonal improvement in production and weakening demand. The impact of high global prices could continue to be felt in items where India is highly import-dependent, such as edible oils and fertilisers. Here, the impact might be blunted to some extent by government interventions of easing import duties and providing subsidies.

On the flipside, export curbs would hinder farm profits, especially in an environment of surging costs of production, it said. The retail inflation, which the central bank takes as the reference for its policy review, stands at 7.01 per cent. Though the CPI inflation in June at 7.01 per cent is slightly lower than 7.04 per cent in May, it is still above the RBI's tolerance limit of 2-6 per cent.

## LPG 19-Kg Commercial Cylinder Price Cut Today; Know Rates In your City



(News Agency) The prices of a 19-kg LPG cylinder in Delhi has been slashed by Rs 36 with effect from Monday, August 1, state-owned retailers said in a notification on the day. From today, the price of a 19 kg commercial cylinder will now be Rs 1976, while in Kolkata it will be priced at Rs 2095.50, Rs 1936.50 in Mumbai and Rs 2141 in Chennai. However, as mentioned earlier, the price of a 14.2-kg domestic cooking cylinder has remained unchanged.

According to the new rate released by Indian Oil today i.e. on August 1, the price of LPG cylinder has been cut by Rs 36.

This is the second reduction in rates in a month's time. On 6 July, the price was cut by Rs 8.50 per 19-kg bottle. Rates differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT. Prices are higher in states with higher taxes. In July, the price of a 19-kg LPG cylinder in Delhi has been slashed by Rs 198. Earlier, the price was slashed by Rs 135 with effect from June 1. However, the price of a 14.2-kg domestic cooking cylinder has remained unchanged. Consumers of domestic LPG cylinders, on the other hand, were hit by a hike in July. The prices of domestic cooking cylinders were hiked on

July 6. As per state-owned oil marketing companies, Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders used in a domestic household went through a price hike of Rs 50. After the latest hike, domestic LPG cylinders cost Rs 1,053 in Delhi, up by Rs 50, from the earlier Rs 1,003 per cylinder. Earlier, in May, the price of domestic cylinders was hiked by Rs 50 per liter for the first time on May 7. On May 19, the price

of domestic LPG cylinders had gone up.

Meanwhile, oil prices dropped early on Monday as investors braced for this week's meeting of officials from OPEC and other top producers on supply adjustments. Brent crude futures dropped 63 cents, or 0.6 per cent, to \$103.34 a barrel by 0000 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$97.87 a barrel, down 75 cents,

or 0.7 per cent, after hitting a session low of \$97.55 when trading commenced in Asia. Both contracts rebounded more than \$2 a barrel on Friday as risk appetite improved among investors. However, both Brent and WTI ended July with their second straight monthly losses for the first time since 2020, as soaring inflation and higher interest rates raise fears of a recession that would erode fuel demand.

## Absolute rubbish': Bhavish Aggarwal quashes reports of Ola's merger talks with Uber

**Bhavish Aggarwal, the CEO of Ola Electric, has quashed reports about Ola's merger talks with Uber**

(News Agency) Bhavish Aggarwal, the CEO of Ola Electric, has quashed reports of merger talks with Uber and called the rumours "absolute rubbish". We're very profitable and growing well, he said. Taking to Twitter, Aggarwal said, "Absolute rubbish. We're very



profitable and growing well. If some other companies want to exit their business from India, they are welcome to! We will never merge." According to Reuters, Uber has also denied reports of a merger. That report is

inaccurate. We are not, nor have we been, in merger talks with Ola, Uber said in a statement. The two Indian cab aggregators have been slugging it out in an intensely competitive Indian market and have spent billions in incentives and discounts to passengers. Uber sold its local food delivery business Uber Eats to Zomato Ltd (ZOMT.NS) in January 2020, while Ola shut down its grocery delivery business and has of late invested billions of dollars in its electric vehicle venture, Ola Electric Mobility.



# Aamir Khan's look and character in Laal Singh Chaddha gets Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee's approval

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee has given its nod to Laal Singh Chaddha, the Hindi film in which Aamir Khan plays a Sikh character



(News Agency) Aamir Khan's Sikh character for the first time in his career. While Aamir's Laal Singh Chaddha is all set for release. The film, an official adaptation of Forrest Gump, sees Aamir essay a

won the approval of Sikh religious body Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). The film, particularly Laal's life growing up, is set in Punjab. Recently, the producers held a special screening of the film for the SGPC. Talking about how they received the film, Aamir Khan, who is also producing the film, says, "I was very touched with the reaction of the members of the SGPC. I am so glad that our film touched their hearts so deeply."

As per sources from the

production, "As the film is based in Punjab and Aamir Khan is playing the character of a Sikh, the makers wanted to get every single detail right and now that the film is ready, they screened it for the members of SGPC who loved the film." The producers inform that they had already showed the film's script to the members of the SGPC before beginning the shoot as "they wanted to get every single nuance correct". Laal Singh Chaddha, like the Hollywood

journey of the protagonist during the major historical events that shaped India. Laal Singh Chaddha is directed by Advait Chandan and also stars Kareena Kapoor, Mona Singh, and Naga Chaitanya in his Bollywood debut. The film, produced by Aamir Khan Productions, Kiran Rao, and Viacom18 Studios, will be released on 11 August 2022. The film's script has been adapted by actor-screenwriter Atul Kulkarni, who makes his debut as a screenwriter.

# Shah Rukh Khan doesn't hide from paps as he returns to Mumbai from Dunki shoot, fans react

Shah Rukh Khan arrived at Mumbai airport after wrapping up Dunki shoot in London. He was filming with Taapsee Pannu for the Rajkumar Hirani directorial

(News Agency) On Thursday, actor Shah Rukh Khan was spotted arriving at the Mumbai airport. The actor returned from London, where he was filming his upcoming film Dunki with Taapsee Pannu. The actor, who had hid from the media on several occasions recently, didn't shy away from the cameras this time though. In a

video shared by a paparazzi account, Shah Rukh was seen in a long camouflaged jacket with a white t-shirt. He paired them with blue denim and silver sneakers and sunglasses. He also wore a cap to hide his messy hair as he walked out of the terminal while carrying a water bottle. His manager Pooja Dadlani was with in the

video. Reacting to the clear glimpse of Shah Rukh after a while, a fan wrote in the comments, "King is back." "Bollywood ka Badshah," added another fan. Many have also dropped heart emojis to celebrate the actor's homecoming. Directed by Rajkumar Hirani, Dunki marks the first collaboration between



Shah Rukh and Taapsee. The actors had already wrapped up the first schedule of the film after it went on floors in April this year. Several BTS pictures featuring Shah Rukh Khan, Taapsee and Rajkumar had surfaced online from London and some of them even leaked the actor's first look.

Talking about working with Shah Rukh, Taapsee Pannu told Pinkvilla, "I've told him (Shah Rukh Khan) that he is the benchmark or the person that every outsider especially coming from Delhi looks up to. I'm not a superstar but he is the superstar. I don't really feel like when you work with people like him or superstars like him you realise that's what the stakes of the word stardom or star." Directed by Rajkumar

Hirani, Dunki marks the first collaboration between Shah Rukh and Taapsee. The actors had already wrapped up the first schedule of the film after it went on floors in April this year. Several BTS pictures featuring Shah Rukh Khan, Taapsee and Rajkumar had surfaced online from London and some of them even leaked the actor's first look. Talking about working with Shah Rukh, Taapsee Pannu told Pinkvilla, "I've told him (Shah Rukh Khan) that he is the benchmark or the person that every outsider especially coming from Delhi looks up to. I'm not a superstar but he is the superstar. I don't really feel like when you work with people like him or superstars like him you realise that's what the stakes of the word stardom or star."

# Hrithik Roshan pays tribute to his Koi Mil Gaya co-star Mithilesh Chaturvedi: 'You will be missed'

(News Agency) Actor Hrithik Roshan paid a tribute to his Koi mil Gaya co-star Mithilesh Chaturvedi, who died on Thursday morning. Taking to Twitter, Hrithik Roshan wrote, "Thoughts and prayers for Mithilesh Chaturvedi Sir, a veteran actor, who I've had the pleasure of working with multiple times. You will be missed. RIP (folded hands emoji)." Mithilesh is best known for starring in films such as Gadar: Ek Prem Katha, Ready, and Asoka, among others. The 67-year-old actor suffered a cardiac arrest 10 days ago, and was admitted to Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani hospital in Mumbai. Hrithik Roshan paid tribute to Mithilesh Chaturvedi.

"He was admitted to the hospital for 8-10 days as he suffered cardiac arrest. He had breathing



issues and was undergoing treatment. He passed away today morning at 4.00 am due to cardiac arrest," his son-in-law Ashish Chaturvedi told news agency PTI. The late actor delivered memorable performances in Hindi films such as Taal, Fiza, Bunty Aur Babli, Krrish, Gulabo Sitabo and the web series Scam 1992: The Harshad Mehta Story.

Filmmaker Hansal Mehta was one of the first ones from the film industry to pay a tribute to the late actor. "RIP Mithilesh ji", the filmmaker, who collaborated with him on Scam 1992, posted on Instagram. The actor played the memorable role of veteran jurist and former union minister Ram Jethmalani in the 2020 hit SonyLIV series, headlined by Pratik Gandhi.



# Piyush Mishra's next: A fact-fiction autobiography!



(News Agency) Actor, singer, writer, lyricist — Piyush Mishra dons many hats. Now, he is set to give fans a peek into more facets of his life through his autobiography. Titled *Hamlet Kabhi Bombay Nahi Gaya* urf *Tumhari Aukaat Kya Hai* Piyush Mishra, the book has been weaved into a novel, replete with facts and fictional tales. "People have a lot of interest in the lives of those working in the film industry. Strangely, there are a lot of questions people have about me, which will be answered in my book," he tells us. Mishra goes on to explain

why he chose this format of writing: "People mostly write only the goody-goody parts [in their autobiographies]. I find it very strange when people come up with superficial things. So, I balanced my autobiography with facts and fiction. It will have slices from my life, and some fiction. What's the point of just writing about oneself? It will get very boring." The 59-year-old, who has written songs and dialogues for several films, including the recently-released *Shamshera*, says despite changing times and technology, he prefers the pen and paper method of writing. "I still write longhand. My entire 250-sheet draft has been handwritten. Until and unless I write, cut and re-write, I don't enjoy the process, though it takes times,"

he adds.

On the work front, Mishra has shot for the OTT series *Anarchy* and will next shoot for the third season of *Illegal*. "I will be touring Europe with my band, *Ballimaaraan*, and will restart my plays *Wo Ab Bhi Pukarta Hai* and *Gagan Damama Bajyo* on *Bhagat Singh*," he says. Mishra adds, "I am doing very less films nowadays. Cinema gives me occupation, so I do that, but it was never my passion. Still, it gives you lot of money! So if you ask me what I am doing now — I am travelling to small places, will go on a Europe tour with my band, am writing an autobiography-novel, restart theatre, do some OTT series, meet people and interact with

youngsters." He admits once it was his curiosity that brought him to cinema with *Dil Se* (1998). "I was doing theatre (since 1979) so there was curiosity about the glamour, girls taking autographs and all that. But, been there and done that! Now, I intend to do things of my choice." The dialogue writer for films like *Ghajini* and *Agneepath* (2012) feels youngsters need to be shown direction. "When I wrote *Arambh hai prachanda* (*Gulaal*) I thought it will bounce over the heads of the students but it was loved and today it's played on campus. For them everything is available on a click of a button so we better give them good content else there are high chances of them losing their path."

## Neena Gupta says male actors don't want to work with her: Most want younger actresses, although I look younger than them

**Neena Gupta said that finding male co-stars opposite her in projects is the 'most difficult thing.' She said that none wants to work with her due to the age difference**

(News Agency) From time to time, Neena Gupta has proved that age is just a number. However, she recently talked about her struggle to find co-stars opposite her. Talking about sexism and ageism, she said that many male actors want to work with 'younger actresses' and not her. Neena Gupta made her Bollywood debut in 1982 with *Saath Saath*. After a long career in films and TV, she recently began her 'second inning' with the success of *Badhaai Ho* in 2018. She recently appeared in Netflix's *Masaba Masaba*

Season 2, featuring her daughter, Masaba Gupta playing a fictionalised version of herself. It is based on the highs and lows of their personal and professional life. In the new season, she is seen opposite Ram Kapoor. When asked about her thoughts of ageism and sexism, the 63-year-old act told GOODTIMES, "There are 2-3 projects where I asked the director who is opposite me, but he said 'you suggest someday.' I said, 'This is the most difficult thing' because mere sath koi milta hi nahi hain (It's difficult to find

anyone to work with me)." She added that she wants to thank Ram Kapoor for taking up the role opposite her despite being younger than her. "Koi kaam nahi karne ko ready hai (No one wants to work with me). Most of them want to work with younger actresses, although I might look younger than them. Our society is not changed. You and I are a minority. We live in a patriarchal society and it will remain like this," she added referring to women in the society. Back in 2017, Neena Gupta left everyone surprised when she took to Twitter and shared that "she



is a good actor, living in Mumbai and looking for good parts to play." Her post was met with a lot of appreciation and support for putting

herself out for work. Masaba Gupta, who is also a celebrity designer, reposted the post with a long message.

## Kriti Sanon compliments Adipurush co-star Prabhas, says 'he has some weird purity in his eyes'

**Actor Kriti Sanon, who is all set to star in the film Adipurush, complimented her co-star Prabhas' eyes in a recent interview**

(News Agency) Kriti Sanon will be seen opposite Prabhas in Om Raut's film *Adipurush*. The upcoming mythological film is reportedly based on the epic *Ramayana*. Recently, Kriti expressed her admiration for Prabhas, complimenting the *Baahubali* star's eyes, calling them pure. Kriti has been cast opposite Prabhas for the first time in her career and fans are quite curious and excited about this fresh pairing. A lot has been said and written

about their on-screen chemistry. It certainly raised the excitement amongst the audience for the film. In a recent interview with *Bollywood Hungama*, a fan asked the actor what qualities of Prabhas set him apart from others. The fan asked Kriti to reveal "something unknown about him that she can share with fans". The actor replied, "I would love to work with him again, I had a great time working with him...apart from food

something unique about him... I think he has some weird purity in his eyes. Sometimes, I've seen his shots like, when the camera is really close there is so little that he does with his eyes & you can really feel everything that he is feeling. I think he is one of those people whose eyes are really expressive and very deep & there is something very pure, which I also feel is one of the reasons why he really suits the part

because he has that sense of niceness and purity in his eyes." *Adipurush*, directed by Om Raut and produced by T-Series Films and Retrophiles, has been shot simultaneously in Hindi and Telugu. Apart from Prabhas and Kriti Sanon, it also stars Saif Ali Khan. Made on a budget of ₹500 crore, it is one of the most expensive Indian films ever made. *Adipurush* is scheduled to be released on January 12, 2023.





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