



Curry Club at SaGhar in Suffolk County inspected by State Liquor Authority for being Overcrowded, Four Charged

(SAI Bureau) A total of 15 people are now facing charges after an overnight New York State Liquor Authority inspection at a Long Island bar that was overcrowded, police said. The raid happened around 12:15 a.m. Saturday, March 26 in Port Jefferson, at Curry Club at SaGhar, located at 111 W. Broadway, Suffolk County Police said.

The person in charge of the bar, Indu Kaur, age 47, of East Setauket, was charged with



employing unlicensed security guards, an unclassified misdemeanor. The following security guards were charged with NYS General Business Law: Unlicensed Security Guard, an unclassified misdemeanor: Eight underage people were issued a summons for violating NYS ABC Law: Using Fraudulent Identification, for gaining entry by using a fake ID, said police. There were 454 people in the bar, which was over its capacity of 146 people, and the establishment was closed for the night.

Four Deutsche Bank execs are fired for 'charging strip club visit to the company



**Full Story
on Page
28**

Germany: G7 rejects Russia's demand to pay for gas in rubles



**Full
Story on
Page 28**

Can Vladimir Putin be removed as Russian president over Ukraine war?

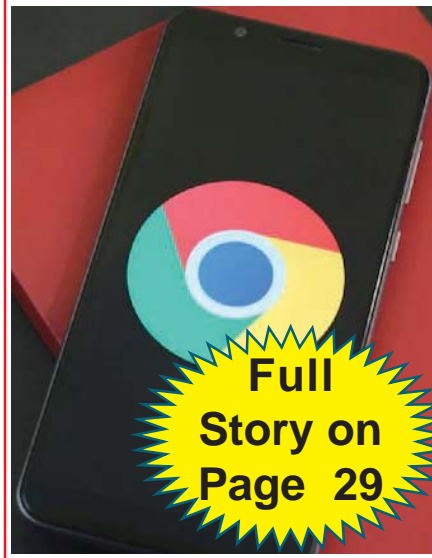
Is it possible to remove Vladimir Putin from office by force or protest? Joe Biden made a remark that saw a hasty retreat from his office, his secretary and himself. Let's examine if removing Putin is possible, and how, if at all



(SAI Bureau) Days after Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy taunted the US and its European allies, asking them to admit that they "are scared of Russia", US President Joe Biden responded with a call to remove Russia's President Vladimir Putin from office.

(Contd. on page 29)

Google Chrome releases an urgent update, users must download it immediately



**Full
Story on
Page 29**

"Best Lending Solution for your Business"

WORKING CAPITAL R US

646 897 3016

info@workingcapitalrus.com
www.workingcapitalrus.com

**Full page
Advt.
on page 44**

Indian-origin entrepreneur Harpreet Kaur wins popular UK TV show

Harpreet Kaur, 30, went head-to-head with other budding entrepreneurs from different parts of Britain, including another Indian-origin candidate Akshay Thakrar, for the 16th edition of the BBC show helmed by business tycoon Lord Alan Sugar

(News agency) The Indian-origin owner of a dessert parlour in northern England beat 16 rival candidates to win GBP 250,000 investment in one of UK's popular reality television shows 'The Apprentice'. Harpreet Kaur, 30, went head-to-head with other budding entrepreneurs from different parts of Britain, including another Indian-origin candidate Akshay Thakrar, for the 16th edition of the BBC show helmed by business tycoon Lord Alan Sugar. In the end, Kaur was able to convince the business leader to back her idea to scale up her Oh So Yum! range of dessert parlours. "I'm really overwhelmed," said Kaur, as she was pronounced the winner of the pre-recorded show over the weekend. "Lost for words that I've

won the BBC Apprentice. But I'm so excited for this new chapter with Oh So Yum! Thank you to everyone who showed their support," she said.

Describing herself as a "born leader, fearless and funny", Kaur entered the show to expand her already successful coffee and cakes business in West Yorkshire, with the aim of becoming a leading brand in the UK. "I'm definitely not in business to make friends. I'm here to make money, and I'm pretty sure Lord Sugar isn't looking for a new mate," she declared, at the start of the show earlier this year. "I love turning my dreams into goals, and then achieving them. But life is also about enjoying the small moments and pleasures, such as really good dessert of

course," said Kaur, a British Punjabi, who grew up in Birmingham. Her working-class family runs a convenience store in Huddersfield, where Kaur helped out while juggling work and studies before eventually setting up her first dessert shop in partnership with her sister Gurminder. She applied for 'The Apprentice' convinced that the business was ready to be scaled up with the right amount of investment. Over the course of 12 tough tasks broadcast weekly, 16 candidates were whittled down with the words "you're fired" by Sugar until the final four remained to fight it out for his GBP 250,000 investment. As part of the show's format, each week the wannabe entrepreneurs are divided into two



teams, led by designated Project Managers, that lock horns under the watchful eyes of Sugar's advisors well-known businesswoman Baroness Karren Brady and past winner Tim Campbell. After completing each task, both teams return to the boardroom to discuss their inspirational or calamitous experiences and discover which side has triumphed. The winning team is rewarded with a luxury

treat while the losing team's Project Manager must select two colleagues to accompany them back into the boardroom. Sugar then gives them a chance to argue their case before deciding who deserves to be fired from the process. This year marked the first time that 'The Apprentice' had an all-female final, eventually won by Kaur as Sugar's newest business partner.

Nepal PM Deuba to visit Kashi Vishwanath, Nepali Temple while in Varanasi



(News agency) Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba is due to visit Varanasi next week. During his visit Deuba will pay a visit to the famous Kashi Vishwanath temple and Nepali Temple which is also known as Shri Samrajeswar Pashupatinath Mahadev Mandir. The Nepali Temple, dedicated to Hindu God Shiva is located on Lalita Ghat in Varanasi. The temple was envisaged by Nepali King Rana Bahadur Shah who was exiled from the city from 1800 to 1804. It was during his exile that he decided

to build replica of Kathmandu's famous Pashupatinath temple in the city. The construction of the temple was taken forward by his son King of Nepal, Girvan Yuddha Bikram Shah. The temple belongs to Nepal government and is one of the most famous temples of the holy city. Gopal PD Adhikari, general secretary of the committee that takes care of the Nepali temple told WION, "We will welcome (PM Deuba) with great enthusiasm and he will meet Nepali community. We are eager to welcome

him". The temple is also known as Kanthwala Mandir since its made of wood. Kanthwala means wood. It is built in Nepali architectural style and is also known as Mini Khajuraho. Nepal PM will be visiting the Kashi Vishwanath using the newly inaugurated corridor. The corridor was inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi in December 2021. In fact, PM Deuba is the first world leader to visit the corridor. The corridor connects the iconic temple to the ghats along river Ganga. Phase-1 of the corridor has been completed at a cost of around Rs 339 crores. Nepal PM is on India visit from 1st to 3rd April. He will hold meetings with PM Modi in Delhi on 2nd April. This is his first bilateral visit outside of the country since assuming office in July 2021. He has been to Glasgow Climate Summit, which was a multilateral event. He had met PM Modi on the sidelines of the summit. Sources said Nepal PM's visit will, "give an opportunity to both sides to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations including development and economic partnership, trade, cooperation in health sector, power, connectivity, people to people links and other issues of mutual interest." PM Deuba has previously been to India in his capacity as PM in 2017.

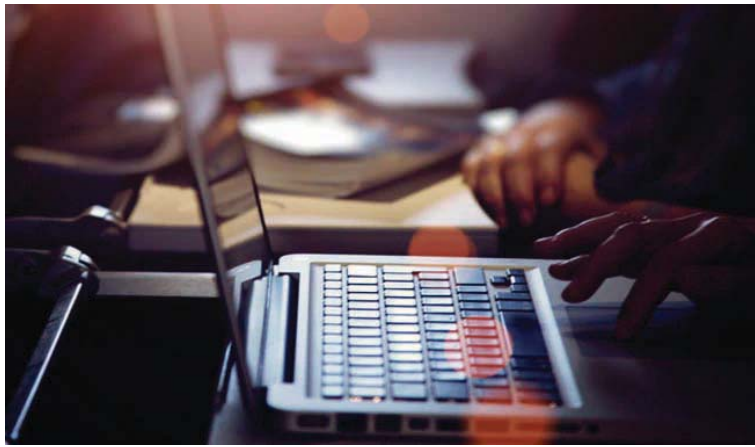
UK National Arrested In Delhi For Forging Document To Stay Legal Proceedings

The UK national allegedly forged a document to stay proceedings against his firm under a law to recover non-performing asset loans, police said

(News agency) New Delhi: A British national has been arrested for allegedly forging a document in the name of the finance ministry to stay proceedings against his company under a law to recover non-performing asset loans, police said on Tuesday. London resident Bharat Amritlal Parikh's Gujarat-based GPT Steel industries Ltd was facing proceedings under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002, they said. The Act empowers banks and financial institutions of India to take over assets and properties of a borrower to recover an unpaid debt. Parikh is a chartered accountant and is also engaged in the business of import and export of steel products. He is a British national with an Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) passport, police said. Investigation started in the case following a complaint from the finance ministry that a forged notification document had been used to stay SARFAESI proceedings against the company, M/s GPT Steel industries Ltd, Ahmedabad, a senior police officer said.

The company had raised a loan from a public sector bank and it turned into a non-performing asset (NPA) in 2008, having an exposure of ₹ 518 crore, the officer said. Later on, SARFAESI proceedings were initiated by the bank, the officer said. On the basis of the forged notification, the Bhuj district magistrate had put the possession of a mortgaged property and SARFAESI action against the company on hold, police said.

7 Indian-Origin Techies Charged In US For Insider Trading Worth Million Dollars



March 2020, they learned through the databases that Twilio's customers had increased their usage of the company's products and services in response to health measures taken in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and concluded in a joint chat that Twilio's stock price would "rise for sure." The SEC's complaint alleges that despite receiving a company policy that prohibited them from insider trading, Mr Sure, Mr Lagudu and Mr Chotu Pulagam knowingly tipped off, or used the brokerage accounts of Mr Kamujula, Ms Nekkalapudi, Mr Dharmapurikar and Chetan Pulagam to trade Twilio options and stock in advance of its May 6, 2020 earnings announcement while in possession of the confidential information concerning customer usage. According to the complaint, the scheme generated more than USD 1 million in illegal trading profits. The SEC complaint said that Mr Sure, Mr Lagudu and Mr Chotu Pulagam "communicated at times in Telugu, a language used frequently in parts of India." From late March to early May 2020, they engaged in discussions

about the upcoming earnings announcement within a private chat channel they created at Twilio." On several occasions between late March and early May 2020, before Twilio's public earnings announcement, Mr Sure, Mr Lagudu and Mr Chotu Pulagam used internal chat channels to discuss in Telugu whether Twilio might exceed market expectations in its quarterly report of earnings, due in May 2020." The complaint said that "armed with valuable inside information", they had obtained from Twilio, Mr Sure, Mr Lagudu and Mr Chotu Pulagam began passing tips to their family and friends through phone calls and in-person visits in advance of Twilio's earnings announcement on May 6, 2020. "We allege that this insider trading ring took advantage of valuable revenue information related to the pandemic at a San Francisco tech company," said Monique C. Winkler, Acting Regional Director of the SEC's San Francisco Regional Office. "We are holding these alleged tippers and tippees

accountable for their roles in the scheme." The SEC complaint added that Mr Kamujula, Ms Nekkalapudi, Mr Dharmapurikar, and Chetan Pulagam were themselves employees of other publicly traded companies, and they understood it was improper for the insiders to tip another person to trade securities on the basis of material, nonpublic information. Mr Sure, Mr Lagudu and Mr Chotu Pulagam used their friends and family to profit personally from their insider trading scheme and to avoid detection. On May 4, 2020 (just two days before the scheduled Twilio earnings announcement), Mr Sure, Mr Pulagam, and Mr Chotu Pulagam discussed in the chat channel their anticipation that Twilio's stock price, which was then trading around USD 110 per share, would dramatically increase following the earnings announcement and readied themselves to sell their own company restricted stock units post-announcement. "Sure noted '[l]ooks like [the stock price] is going to be \$150,' to which Chotu Pulagam responded 'Miillionaireeeeeee'," the complaint said.

(News agency) New York: Seven Indian-origin persons have been charged by US federal authorities with insider trading in a scheme through which they made over a million dollars in illegal profits. Hari Prasad Sure, 34, Lokesh Lagudu, 31 and Chotu Prabhu Tej Pulagam, 29, are friends and worked as software engineers at Twilio, a San Francisco-based cloud computing communications company, the Securities and Exchange Commission said Monday. The complaint said Mr Sure tipped his close friend Dileep Kumar Reddy Kamujula, 35, who successfully traded in Twilio's options. Mr Lagudu similarly tipped his girlfriend Sai Nekkalapudi, 30 with whom he lived, and he also tipped his former roommate and close friend Abhishek Dharmapurikar, 33. Mr Pulagam tipped his brother Chetan Prabhu Pulagam, 31. All the seven defendants live in California. The SEC announced insider trading charges against the seven individuals for allegedly generating more than USD 1 million in collective profits by insider trading ahead of Twilio's positive first quarter 2020 earnings announcement on May 6, 2020. According to the SEC's complaint, Mr Sure, Mr Lagudu and Mr Chotu Pulagam had access to various databases relevant to Twilio's reporting of revenue. As alleged, around

Singapore Dismisses Indian-Origin Man's Death Sentence Appeal In Drug Trafficking Case

"In our judgment, these proceedings constitute a blatant and egregious abuse of the court's processes," said the Court of Appeal

(Staff Reporter) Singapore: The Singapore Court of Appeal on Tuesday dismissed a bid for leniency by an Indian-origin Malaysian drug trafficker who was sentenced to death in 2010, according to a media report. Nagaenthran Dharmalingam, 34, had appealed against a High Court decision that dismissed his application to commence judicial review proceedings on the basis that he purportedly possessed the mental age of someone below 18. The Malaysian national had also mounted a criminal motion to be assessed by an independent panel of psychiatrists, with a stay of execution in the meantime. Delivering the verdict on behalf of a five-judge panel, Chief Justice Sundaresh Menon dismissed the appellant's case as "baseless and without merit, both as a matter of fact and of law", Channel News Asia reported. "In our judgment, these proceedings constitute a blatant and egregious abuse of the court's processes," said the Court of Appeal.

"They have been conducted with the seeming aim of unjustifiably delaying the carrying into effect of the sentence imposed on the appellant." Nagaenthran Dharmalingam was sentenced to death in 2010 for importing 42.72g of heroin into Singapore in 2009 in a bundle strapped to his thigh. He previously failed in his appeals to the High Court in 2011, to the Apex Court in 2019, and in his petition to the president for clemency. Nagaenthran Dharmalingam was represented by Violet Netto. His former lawyer Ravi Madasamy, better known as M Ravi, was also in attendance. Earlier this month, Netto had argued for him to receive an "independent" psychiatric assessment and "up-to-date full neuro-cognitive test" to evaluate his competence to be executed and prescribe the necessary treatment. The prosecution had

responded that there was no reliable evidence that Nagaenthran's mental condition had deteriorated and that he



was not competent for execution, and no basis to grant the application for him to be assessed by a panel of psychiatrists. The Court of Appeal said the appellant's central argument was that "because of an alleged deterioration in the appellant's mental faculties since the time of his offence, the sentence of death cannot be allowed to be carried out". However, there

was no admissible evidence to show such a decline in Nagaenthran's mental condition. The only evidence provided for the application was an affidavit of Ravi in which he made a "bare assertion" about the appellant's mental age. Concluding its judgment, the Court of Appeal said the imposition and carrying out of the death penalty were always "difficult matters". "Counsel may well have passionate views that run counter to imposition of the death penalty. At a societal level, the proper recourse for them and indeed for anyone similarly situated is to seek legislative change if they are minded to do so," it said. "But as long as the law validly provides for the imposition of capital punishment in the specified circumstances, it is improper for counsel to abuse the process of the court and thereby bring the administration of criminal justice into disrepute by filing one hopeless application after another and by drip-feeding the supposed evidence," the ruling concluded.

Mukhtar Ansari booked under Gangster Act, taken from Banda jail to Lucknow for court hearing

After don-politician Mukhtar Ansari was booked under the Gangster Act on Sunday, he was shifted from UP's Banda jail to Lucknow for a court hearing on Monday morning

(Staff Reporter) The Uttar Pradesh police registered a case under the Gangster Act against jailed don-politician Mukhtar Ansari on Sunday. On Monday morning, he was taken out of Banda jail and shifted to Lucknow in an ambulance for a court hearing.

The convoy left with heavy security arrangements. However, on the way, a police vehicle that was part of the convoy broke down and a mechanic had to be called to resolve the problem.

THE CASE

The Uttar Pradesh police have registered a case under the Gangster Act against former BSP MLA Mukhtar Ansari and twelve of his associates. The case pertains to the alleged use of fake documents to register an ambulance that was used to ferry Mukhtar Ansari from Ropar jail to a court in Mohali. The police began



its inquiry in March 2021 Mukhtar Ansari has more than 50 criminal cases against him in Uttar Pradesh and other states.

THE SHIFT

When preparations were being made to bring Mukhtar Ansari to Lucknow on Sunday, his lawyer Qazu Shabiur Rahman wrote a letter to the jail superintendent in Banda requesting that his client not be produced in court on account of ill health. However, he

has been shifted to Lucknow nonetheless. A medical check-up was done at Banda jail late on Sunday night.

THE ALARM

On Sunday, Mukhtar Ansari's son and MLA from Mau Abbas Ansari raised concerns over the shifting of his father from Banda to Lucknow. He tweeted visuals of an unnumbered vehicle entering the Banda jail premises and expressed concerns over Mukhtar Ansari's safety. Abbas Ansari had contested the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election from the Mau Sadar seat on an SBSP ticket and won. Mukhtar Ansari left for Banda jail after court hearing was over. The next hearing has been scheduled for April 8 and Mukhtar Ansari will be produced through video conferencing.

CM Bhagwant Mann announces doorstep delivery of ration in Punjab

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann announced on Monday that doorstep delivery of ration would be implemented in the state



(Staff Reporter) CM Bhagwant Mann announces doorstep delivery of ration in Punjab Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann announced on Monday that doorstep delivery of ration would be implemented in the state. He said that government officials will call Punjab's residents and ask them for their preferred time slot. Accordingly, ration will be delivered from door to door as per the convenience of the people. "It is an optional scheme," Bhagwant Mann of the Aam Aadmi Party added. Earlier, Delhi Chief Minister and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal had tried to implement the same scheme in

Delhi. However, it was stalled over differences between the Centre and the Delhi government. On the move, Arvind Kejriwal said, "Today, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann has announced doorstep delivery of ration. It'll be implemented soon. We've been struggling to implement it in Delhi for the last 4 years. We planned out everything but the Centre's BJP government stopped it." Bhagwant Mann took oath as the Chief Minister of Punjab earlier this month after the AAP swept the recently concluded Assembly election in the state.

Temple chairman in Hyderabad booked for selling cow for slaughter

The Hyderabad police booked two members of a temple management for allegedly selling a cow for slaughter

(Staff Reporter) The Hyderabad police booked two people for allegedly selling a cow for slaughter. An FIR was filed against two members of a temple management for allegedly selling the cows for slaughter. An FIR has been filed against chairman D Prem Kumar and committee member Edla Mahender of Sri Ammavari Devalayam (Pochamma Gudi) temple near Hyderabad's Dabeerpura area. The police acted on a complaint filed by

Akhila Bharatha Gau Seva Foundation. The representative of Gau Seva Foundation, A Bala Krishna, alleged that the temple chairman and committee member sold the cow to the slaughterhouse.

Based on the complaint, police booked both the men under IPC 44/2022 U/S 5 and 10 of the Telangana Prohibition of Cow Slaughter and Animal Preservation Act, 1977 and launched further investigation.

CBI arrests absconding accused in over Rs 20 crore bank fraud case

(Staff Reporter) The Central Bureau of Investigation has arrested a director of a Gujarat-based shipping company who was wanted in a bank fraud case of Rs 20.68 crore. The absconding accused was arrested on Sunday after his arrival from Nairobi, Kenya. The arrested accused has been identified as Sanjay Gupta (56).

COMPLAINT FILED

Based on a complaint from Canara Bank, Circle Office, Ahmedabad, an instant case was registered against a private company based in Gujarat including its directors on June 27, 2012. The complainant has alleged

cheating to the tune of Rs 20.68 crore.

After investigation, a charge sheet was filed in the Court of Special Judge, Mirzapur, Ahmedabad on December 24, 2013, against 8 people including the private company, its director, proprietor and bank officials.

ABSCONDING ACCUSED ARRESTED

A look-out notice (LOC) and a Red Corner notice were issued against the accused who was absconding for a long time. He was arrested on Sunday and now will be produced before the Competent Court at Ahmedabad.

BJP is scared of AAP, says Sisodia after Chandigarh UT employees brought under central govt rules

After Amit Shah announced that the service conditions of employees of the Chandigarh Union Territory administration would now be aligned to that of the central civil services, AAP leader Manish Sisodia said, "BJP is scared of AAP's rising footprint"

(Staff Reporter) Delhi Deputy Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party leader Manish Sisodia said on Sunday that the BJP is scared of the AAP's 'rising footprint'. This comes after Union home minister Amit Shah announced that the employees of the administration in the union territory of Chandigarh would now be governed as per central government rules. In his tweet, Manish Sisodia wrote, "From 2017 to 2022, Congress ruled Punjab. Amit Shah didn't take away Chandigarh powers then. As soon as AAP formed government in Punjab, Amit Shah took away Chandigarh's services. BJP is scared of AAP rising footprint." The AAP is not the only party that has objected to Amit Shah's announcement. On Sunday, the Shiromani Akali Dal termed the decision 'anti-Punjab'. Akali Dal spokesperson and senior general secretary Dr



Daljit Singh Cheema said, "The decision to impose central government rules on employees of Chandigarh is in violation of the spirit of the Punjab Reorganisation Act and must be considered. The decision means denial of the right of capital to Punjab forever."

Tamil Nadu youth collects Re 1 coins for 3 years to buy dream bike. It took 10 hours to count them

A youth in Tamil Nadu's Salem paid the sum of Rs 2.6 lakh in Re 1 coins to buy his dream bike. The staff at the motorcycle showroom took 10 hours to count the coins



(Staff Reporter) A youth in Tamil Nadu's Salem bought his dream bike worth Rs 2.6 lakh by paying the entire amount in Re 1 coins on Saturday. V Boobathi had saved Rs 1 coin over three years. He later collected his savings and took the coins to a showroom and bought a new Bajaj Dominar. "The staff at the motorcycle showroom took 10 hours to count Boobathi's three years of savings," said Mahavikranth, the manager at Bharat

Agency. Boobathi is a BCA graduate and had worked as a computer operator with a private company before he started a YouTube channel four years ago. He dreamt of buying a bike three years ago but didn't have the money as the bike cost Rs 2 lakh back then.

But, as the saying goes -- many a little makes a mickle -- Boobathi managed to fill his piggy bank with Re 1 coins daily and years later, he purchased the bike he always wanted to have.

Muslim man murdered for celebrating BJP's win in UP, CM Yogi orders probe

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered an inquiry into the murder of a Muslim man who was killed allegedly by his neighbours for celebrating the BJP's win in the UP assembly election

(Staff Reporter) Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has ordered an inquiry into the murder of a Muslim man in Kushinagar, for purportedly promoting the Bharatiya Janata Party. The state has also announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh to the man's family. Babar Ali, a 25-year-old Muslim man, died on Sunday after being beaten up allegedly by his neighbours in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district for participating in the BJP's election campaign and celebrating its victory in the recently-held state polls, police said. He was thrashed on March 20 in Kathargarhi and succumbed to his injuries during treatment at a hospital in Lucknow. When his body was taken to his village on Sunday, his family refused to perform the last rites and demanded the arrest of the perpetrators, they said. According to Babur's family, their

neighbours were miffed over the fact that Babur used to promote the BJP. After the results to the UP Assembly polls were



declared on March 10 in which the BJP registered a landslide victory, Babur had distributed sweets in the locality, his family claimed. His neighbours had repeatedly warned him about not supporting the BJP, the family claimed. Expressing grief over the incident, CM Yogi Adityanath has now ordered a probe into the incident.



Geeta Sexena
Bureau Chief (Punjab))

Gagandeep Singh
Deputy News Editor

Sharanjit Singh Thind
Editor in Chief

Susmita Ghosh
Managing Editor



Kashmir hosts its first ever 'Fashion Week' near Dal lake

For the first time ever, Kashmir hosted a Fashion Week on the banks of the famous Dal Lake. India Cult Men's Fashion Week is showcasing 10 fashion designers from across the country. Various models from Delhi and Mumbai have been flown in for the show as well

(SAI Bureau) On the lawns of SKICC overlooking Dal Lake, the ramp has been set up in such a way that it looks like fashion is meeting nature. The organisers have been wanting to do a fashion week in Srinagar for a long time. "We have been in conversation with Adnan for a long time, as we did a show earlier too. We had been planning it for a long time and finally thought the time was right to execute it. We are glad to do fashion week on the banks of Dal Lake as it adds so much to the collection being showcased," said Gaurav Gupta, the organiser.

The organisers also believe that having fashion week in Kashmir will be a learning platform for the



youngsters of Kashmir, who want to take up modelling and designing as their profession. "I was a model earlier and shifted back to Kashmir to create a platform for the local youth to

take up modelling as their career. This is my way of giving back to society. We are using more than 25 local models in the fashion week, and it's a platform where designers can showcase

their work," Adnan Shah, the organizer, stated. Some of the most popular Bollywood actors and models are walking in the shows as well. Young Kashmiri models are excited about

fashion week taking place for the first time as it means they don't have to move out of Kashmir to take up modelling as their career. "We are extremely happy about Fashion Week being held here. This is a platform that is available to us in our hometown and makes a lot of difference. This is a learning experience for all the Kashmiri models. We get to be a part of such an amazing team. We learn from the models from other places. This also gives us hope that we can take up modelling and designing as our careers," says Salik Ahmad, a local model. The fashion week has been sponsored by Jammu and Kashmir Tourism department and Srinagar Smart City.

Kashmiri Pandits find hope for justice as The Kashmir Files brings their plight into focus

The families of Kashmiri Pandits who fled the Valley in the 1990s to escape torture at the hands of terrorists are still awaiting justice. With 'The Kashmir Files' garnering global attention, their hope to secure justice is now rekindled



(SAI Bureau) The Kashmir Files, a Vivek Agnihotri film based on the violence faced by the Kashmiri Pandits in the 1990s that eventually led to the exodus of lakhs of Hindus from the Valley, has the world focused on the issue now. It is been more than 32 years that the Kashmiri Pandits were tortured, slaughtered, and forced to leave the Valley. The families of the Kashmiri Hindus were driven out of their homes and they have been fighting relentlessly for justice. But the wait for justice is only growing longer. Bitta Karate, the man who terrorised Kashmir for years, admitted on

camera that his first victim was Kashmiri Hindu Satish Tikku. Thirty-two years later, the surviving family of prominent trader Satish Tikku, who was shot dead by Bitta Karate, narrated their ordeal to India Today.

FIRST VICTIM OF BITTA KARATE Satish Tikku's brother-in-law Pradip Kaul said, "Bitta Karate himself admitted that the first person he shot was Satish. He killed him on February 2, 1990. That day changed my life and the lives of many other people. We were not allowed to go out even to collect his ashes, but somehow we managed..."

Prices of over 800 essential medicines, including paracetamol set to rise

(SAI Bureau) According to the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) of India, the prices of essential medicines including painkillers and antibiotics is set to increase from April. "Based on the WPI data provided by the office of the Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the annual change in WPI works out as 10.76607 per cent during the calendar year 2021 over the corresponding period in 2020," the NPPA said. The list involves over 800 medicines which will witness a rise in prices from next month. The rise in prices is set to be in the range of over 10 per cent. The National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) includes medicines like paracetamol, antibiotics like azithromycin. The list also reportedly includes drugs linked to treating COVID-19 patients.



The NPPA said the increase in prices is in line with the Wholesale Price Index (WPI). Reports claim prices of drugs used to treat heart disease, high blood pressure and fever is also set to increase. Apart from paracetamol, the prices of metronidazole, ciprofloxacin hydrochloride, azithromycin will also increase among others.

CM Nitish Kumar recommends Governor to sack Mukesh Sahani from Bihar Cabinet

CM Nitish Kumar has recommended Governor Phagu Chauhan to dismiss Mukesh Sahani from Bihar cabinet

(SAI Bureau) Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has recommended Governor Phagu Chauhan to sack Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP) chief and state Animal Husbandry and Fisheries minister Mukesh Sahani from his cabinet. The Bihar Governor is expected to take a decision soon. This comes soon after Mukesh Sahani claimed that he would not resign from the post of cabinet minister, adding that the final decision will be the chief minister's.

WHY IS MUKESH SAHNI BEING SACKED? In the 2020 Bihar polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party had allotted 11 seats to the VIP from its National Democratic Alliance (NDA) quota. The

VIP contested from these seats and won 4. Earlier this week, in a major setback for Mukesh Sahani, all three MLAs of VIP Raju Kumar Singh (Sahebganj), Misri Lal Yadav (Alinagar) and Swarna Singh (Gaura Bouram) quit the party and joined the BJP. Now, Mukesh Sahani is the only representative from his party as an MLC. Mukesh Sahani had earlier angered the BJP after he fielded candidates on 53 seats against the saffron party in the recently concluded UP Assembly polls. Later, he again fielded candidates against the BJP in 7 out of 13 seats in the upcoming MLC elections in Bihar.

States too can declare religious or linguistic community including Hindus as minority: Centre to SC

The Centre told the Supreme Court that state governments can declare any religious or linguistic community, including Hindus, as a minority within the said state

(SAI Bureau) State governments can declare any religious or linguistic community, including Hindus, as a minority within the said state, the Centre has told the Supreme Court. The submission was made in response to a plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay that sought directions for framing of guidelines identifying minorities at the state level contending that Hindus are in a minority in 10 states and are not able to avail the benefits of schemes meant for minorities. The Ministry of Minority Affairs submitted that matters concerning whether followers of Hinduism, Judaism, Bahaism can establish and administer educational institutions of their choice in the said states and those related to their identification as minority within the state may be considered at state level.

Upadhyay had challenged the validity of section 2(f) of the National Commission for Minority Education Institution Act, 2004 alleging that it gives unbridled power to the Centre and termed it "manifestly arbitrary, irrational, and offending". Section 2(f) of NCMEI Act empowers the Centre to identify and notify minority communities in India. The Ministry of Minority Affairs in its response said: "It is submitted that the State governments can also declare a religious or linguistic community as a minority community within the said state." "For instance, the Maharashtra government has notified 'Jews' as a minority community within the state. Moreover, the Karnataka government has notified Urdu, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Tulu, Lamani, Hindi, Konkani and Gujarati languages as minority languages within the state of Karnataka," it said. "Therefore in view of the states also notifying minority communities, the petitioners' allegation that the followers of Judaism, Bahaism, and Hinduism, who are real minorities in Ladakh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Kashmir, Nagaland, Meghalaya,



Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Manipur cannot establish and administer educational institutions of their choice is not correct." The affidavit said that the Parliament has enacted the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, under Article 246 of the Constitution read with Entry 20 in the Concurrent List in Schedule 7. "If the view that the States alone has the power to enact law on the subject of a minority is accepted, then in such a case, Parliament will be denuded of its power to enact law on the said subject and this would be contrary to the constitutional scheme," it said. "The National Commission for Minorities Act,

1992 is not arbitrary or irrational and does not violate any of the provisions of the Constitution," it said. The ministry also denied that section 2(f) of the said act confers unbridled power to the Centre. It further told the apex court that minority welfare schemes are meant for underprivileged students and economically weaker sections of the minority community and are not for everyone belonging to the minority community. "These schemes are only enabling provisions so as to achieve inclusiveness and therefore cannot be held to suffer from any infirmity. The support given, under these schemes, to

the disadvantaged/ underprivileged children/ candidates of minority communities cannot be faulted with", the affidavit stated. The plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, said that denial of benefits to the "real" minorities and "arbitrary and unreasonable" disbursements under schemes meant for them to the absolute majority infringes upon their fundamental right. "In alternative, direct and declare that followers of Judaism, Bahaism & Hinduism, who are minorities in Ladakh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Kashmir, Nagaland, Meghalaya,

Arunachal Pradesh, Punjab and Manipur, can establish & administer educational institutions of their choice in spirit of the TMA Pai Ruling," the plea said. The apex court in the TMA Pai Foundation case had held that the state is well within its rights to introduce a regulatory regime in the national interest to provide minority educational institutions with well-qualified teachers in order for them to achieve excellence in education. Quoting Article 30 of the Constitution, the plea said that minorities whether based on religion or language shall have the right to establish-administer educational institutions of their choice. The petition said that denial of minority rights to actual religious and linguistic minorities is a violation of the rights of minority enshrined under Articles 14 and 21 (no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law) of the Constitution.

The apex court had earlier allowed a plea seeking transfer of cases from several high courts to it against the Centre's notification to declare five communities — Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Parsis — as minorities and tagged the matter with the main petition.

Birbhum violence: TMC leader Anarul Hussain, nine others at CBI camp for questioning

Local TMC leader Anarul Hossain, who was arrested by the police on Thursday, was taken to the CBI camp office from Rampurhat police station on Sunday and was interrogated by the agency's officers

(SAI Bureau) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) brought 10 more accused in the Birbhum Rampurhat violence case, including local Trinamool Congress leader Anarul Hossain, to the CBI camp for questioning on Sunday. Experts of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Delhi, who arrived here on Friday, collected samples from the place of occurrence in Bogtui village, which is almost deserted following the gruesome incident on the night of March 21.

CBI officers also visited the

village near here, where eight people were charred to death after their houses were set on fire, in a suspected fallout of a local TMC panchayat leader's murder. Earlier, a state government formed SIT was conducting an enquiry. Anarul Hossain, who was arrested by the police within hours of a directive by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday to hunt down all accused including her party workers and leaders, was taken to the CBI camp office from Rampurhat police station on Sunday morning and was interrogated by the agency's officers. Hossain, a

former TMC president of Rampurhat block-I, was questioned along with two others accused, a CBI officer said. The Calcutta High Court had directed the state police to hand over custody of all arrested persons in connection with the case to the CBI. Another team of CBI officials visited the Rampurhat hospital on Sunday and recorded the statement of the four injured persons. "They spoke to the patients; I was there," Superintendent of the government hospital, Dr Palash Das, told reporters. The high court has directed the CBI to submit a progress report before it by April 7.

India test-fires two MRSAMs off Odisha coast

India on Sunday successfully test-fired two Indian Army-version Medium Range Surface to Air Missiles from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha



(SAI Bureau) Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted successful flight tests of the Indian Army version of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) at Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha on Sunday. The flight

tests were carried out as part of the live firing trials against high-speed aerial targets. The missiles intercepted the aerial targets and destroyed them completely, registering direct hits at both ranges. The first launch was to intercept a medium-altitude long-range target and the second launch was for proving the capability of a low-altitude short-range target. This MRSAM version is a Surface-to-Air Missile developed jointly by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), Israel, for use by the Indian Army. The MRSAM Army weapon system comprises multi-function radar, mobile launcher system and other vehicles. The flight tests were

carried out with the weapon system in deliverable configuration. The performance of the weapon system was validated through the flight data captured by range instruments like radars, electro-optical tracking systems and telemetry deployed by ITR, Chandipur. The flight tests were carried out in the presence of senior officials from DRDO and the Indian Army. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated DRDO, the Indian Army and the Industry for the successful flight tests of MRSAM-Army. "Both successful tests establish the capability of the weapon system in intercepting targets at critical ranges," he said.

Jyotiraditya Scindia touches feet of woman sweeper to seek blessings in Gwalior

Jyotiraditya Scindia was attending a Swachhta Samman ceremony organised by the municipal corporation in Gwalior. He honoured the woman sweeper with a shawl and touched her feet to seek blessings

(SAI Bureau) A video of Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia touching the feet of a woman sweeper to take her blessings, in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, has been doing rounds on social media. Gwalior city has been consistently behind in the ranking for cleanliness. This year, the municipal corporation has been constantly encouraging the sanitation workers to improve the ranking of the city in the Swachh Survekshan. Jyotiraditya Scindia was attending a Swachhta Samman ceremony organised by the municipal

corporation in Gwalior. During the event, Scindia got down from the stage and brought a woman sweeper named Babita on the stage with him. He honoured the woman by giving her a shawl, and touched her feet to seek her blessing. This video of Scindia went viral on social media. However, this is not the first time that a BJP leader has done this. Before this, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, both leaders had publicly touched the feet of the sweepers.

Police arrests woman who hurled petrol bomb at CRPF camp in J&K's Sopore

Hasina Akhtar, a resident of Baramulla, was arrested for hurling a petrol bomb at a CRPF in Sopore. The woman, covered in a burqa, was captured in CCTV footage hurling a petrol bomb at a security

(SAI Bureau) Police on Thursday arrested a woman accused of hurling a petrol bomb at a CRPF camp in Sopore town of Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district on March 29. The act was caught on CCTV cameras. The accused was identified as Haseena Akhtar. Vijay Kumar IGP Kashmir told India today that there are three FIRs registered against her under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. "She is an Over Ground Worker (OGW) of LeT," IGP Kumar said. The 28-year-old Hasina Akhtar from Baramulla area of north Kashmir, allegedly came in contact with pro-Pakistan separatist Asiya Andrabi, already in jail for terror funding case registered

by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), during 2008. In the year 2019, a case was registered in Handwara against her for posting posters of terrorist outfit LeT. A class 10 passout from Hanafia school, Akhtar was arrested by Jammu and Kashmir Police in 2021. She is out on bail since December last year. Besides, her husband, Mohammed Yousuf Bhat was an alleged stone peltor and he was booked under PSA for 17 months in the year 2016. Akhtar, covered in a burqa, was captured in CCTV footage hurling the petrol bomb at the security bunker in Sopore on Tuesday evening. There was no injury in the incident and she managed to escape.

Maha invokes MESMA barring employees of state-run power companies from joining strike

Maharashtra Power Minister Nitin Raut confirmed the invocation of MESMA



(SAI Bureau) Ahead of the two-day nationwide strike called by trade unions on March 28-29, the Maharashtra government on Sunday invoked the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act (MESMA) barring employees of state-run electricity companies from joining the protest. Maharashtra Power Minister Nitin Raut confirmed the invocation of MESMA. According to government sources, electricity consumption in Maharashtra has already gone up at present and there is also a coal shortage in the state. Staging a strike at this juncture will cause inconvenience to farmers, industries and the people in general, the sources said. "The government has so far ensured that there is no load shedding in Maharashtra despite the coal shortage and financial

concerns. However, if the strike happens at this juncture, it will result in load shedding. "The government does not want this to happen. People should not be inconvenienced and hence, MESMA has been invoked in the state today," the minister said. Sources also said that the government is open to talking with representatives of unions of employees attached to the state's power companies like Maharashtra State Power Generation Company, Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company and Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company over their concerns. The employees are against the alleged privatisation of power companies in the state and, therefore, want to join the nationwide strike called by the trade unions.

EAM Jaishankar formally hands over Coastal Radar System to Maldives

The Coastal Radar System, which is already operational and comprises 10 radar stations, will contribute in enhancing maritime security for the Maldives and for the entire region



Abdulla Shamaal as he described it as a fine example of India's SAGAR and Neighbourhood First policies. The Coastal Radar System, which is already operational and comprises 10 radar stations, will contribute in enhancing maritime security for the Maldives and for the entire region. "Handed over the expanded Coastal Radar System in Maldives to Chief of Defence Force,

@CDFofMNDF. Product of MEA-Navy partnership for regional security. A fine

example of our SAGAR and Neighbourhood First policies. A strong statement of our Special Partnership," Jaishankar tweeted. SAGAR or "Security and Growth for all in the Region" is aimed at cooperative measures for sustainable use of the oceans in the region. The Maldives is one of India's key maritime neighbours in the Indian Ocean region and the bilateral defence and security ties have been on an upward trajectory in the last few years. Later in the evening, Jaishankar also

inaugurated the Meedhoo eco-tourism zone one of the 20 projects being implemented by India in the Maldives in diverse areas of health, education, fisheries, tourism, sports, gender empowerment and culture. "Thank FM @abdulla_shahid and Mayor Ali Nazir from Addu city for joining me at the Meedhoo eco-tourism zone inauguration. A practical example of working together on promoting tourism and reviving the economy," he tweeted.

Sanjay Raut targets BJP over Mehbooba Mufti's comments on Kashmir

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut replied to Mehbooba Mufti's statement that peace would be elusive in Kashmir until the Centre holds dialogue with Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir

(News Agency) A day after Mehbooba Mufti remarked that peace would be elusive in Kashmir until the Centre holds dialogue with Pakistan and people of Jammu and Kashmir, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said the PDP chief could make such comments as the BJP had given people like her strength by forming government with her party in the erstwhile state. Talking to reporters, Sanjay Raut said the Mufti-led People's Democratic Party (PDP) was a "friend" of the BJP at some point of time. The PDP has been "pro-Pakistan and sympathises with terrorists" right from the beginning, he claimed.

Notably, the PDP and BJP had come together to form a government in Jammu and Kashmir in 2015. The alliance broke in June 2018. Mehbooba Mufti on Saturday reiterated her call to the BJP-led government at the Centre for a dialogue with Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Sanjay Raut said Mehbooba Mufti had supported Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru and still, the BJP had formed a government by forming an alliance with her party in Jammu and Kashmir. "Now, the same Mehbooba Mufti wants

dialogue with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue. This is a sin of the BJP," Sanjay Raut alleged.

"The BJP gave strength to such people by sharing power with them...Hence, the BJP is responsible for what Mehbooba Mufti is saying," he said. The Rajya Sabha member further said whatever is the BJP's view on the issue now, the Shiv Sena had and will always oppose the PDP's ideology. Referring to Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrakant Patil's recent comment that Prime Minister

Narendra Modi sleeps for only two hours and works for 22 hours everyday, Sanjay Raut claimed it was "height of sycophancy," "The prime minister has lost even his two-hour sleep hearing Patil's comments," he quipped. Sanjay Raut sarcastically said that according to BJP leaders like Patil, only PM Modi works hard and no other leader in the world, including US President Joe Biden, his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky. "Sycophants had been there previously too. Even Mahatma



Gandhi had sycophants. Shiv Sena leader said. Sanjay Sardar Patel too had Raut made similar comments sycophants. But we never saw in his weekly column such sycophants earlier this is 'Rokhtok' in the Shiv Sena's mouthpiece 'Saamana'.

Sexual abuse crimes increased in Tamil Nadu after MK Stalin came to power: Edapadi K Palanisamy

Former CM EPS claimed that there had been a rise in sexual abuse cases in Tamil Nadu since DMK chief MK Stalin came to power

(News Agency) Former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edapadi K Palanisamy demanded severe punishment for the perpetrators involved in Virudhunagar sexual assault and hoped that the government would take stringent action. "I hope the government takes severe action, which I also asked for while speaking in the Assembly. If not, we will hold a protest and seek a CBI

probe," stated EPS. The former CM claimed that cases of sexual abuse had increased after Stalin came to power. "Along with murder and robbery, sexual abuse crimes have increased unlike in any other government. Stalin also called himself the Prime CM of Tamil Nadu. What has he brought? After he became the CM of Tamil Nadu, sexual abuse crimes have increased and law and order has completely degraded while

people are living with fear," he said. Earlier, Chief Minister MK Stalin stated in the Assembly that unlike the Pollachi sexual abuse case, the Virudhunagar sexual assault case will be handled properly and justice will be served swiftly. In response, EPS said it was AIADMK's Pollachi Jayaraman who exposed the Pollachi crime, sought legal action and filed a petition in the case but DMK deliberately spread lies against him.

I-T dept uncovers irregularities to the tune of Rs 800 crore after raids on Hero Motocorp

The I-T department unearthed multiple irregularities, including illegal business expenses, unaccounted cash and transactions conducted through shell companies during raids on Hero Motocorp and linked firms

(News Agency) The Income Tax Department conducted search and seizure operation at 35 premises connected to leading two-wheeler manufacturer Hero Motocorp, along with a company operating chartered flights and a real estate group based in Delhi-NCR on March 23.

During the course of the raids, tax officials unearthed multiple irregularities, including illegal business expenses, unaccounted cash and transactions conducted through shell companies.

"Various incriminating documents and digital evidence have been found and

seized, indicating that the expenses ostensibly shown to have been claimed towards business purposes are not fully supported by evidences," the I-T department said. Expenditure aggregating to more than Rs 800 crore has been booked in the guise of purchase of services from a specific event management entity. This entity has allegedly siphoned off the money by way of layering.

In the search, it was also found that 10 acres of farm land in Delhi was purchased through few paper companies. In such transactions, cash amounting to over Rs 60 crore was

purportedly involved.

"The ultimate/ real beneficiary of the land deal is a prominent person of the automobile manufacturer group. The intermediary who facilitated the said deal has admitted in his statement that major part of the sale consideration was paid in cash," the I-T department said.

Apart from this, several incriminating documents have been unearthed from the premises of persons involved in the real estate business. These contain records of on-money transactions where cash was being received in lieu of sale of units in their various real

estate projects across Delhi. In the case of the company operating chartered flights, evidence related to booking of bogus expenses and non-recognition of income totalling to over Rs 50 crore, rotation of funds and suspicious loans through a dubious NBFC floated by a key person, layering and re-routing of funds through paper companies and claiming bogus interest expenses have also been unearthed. Undisclosed cash exceeding Rs 1.35 crore has been seized and jewellery over Rs 3 crore has been kept provisionally under restraint.

Intend to remain engaged with China on issue of trans-border rivers to safeguard our interests: Govt

In a written response to a question in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan on Thursday said that it was carefully monitoring all developments related to the Brahmaputra river and has been in constant talks with China regarding it

(Staff Reporter) The government on Thursday said it carefully monitors all developments relating to the Brahmaputra river, including plans by China to develop hydropower projects, and has consistently conveyed its concerns to Chinese authorities, urging them to ensure that interests of downstream states are not harmed by any activities in upstream areas.

In a written response to a question in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said the government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's interests and takes all necessary measures to protect them.

On whether China has constructed many big dams at the source of Brahmaputra, he said the government carefully monitors all developments relating to the river, including plans by China to develop hydropower projects.

"A hydropower project at Zangmu was declared fully operational in October 2015. In its 12th Five Year Plan for the period 2011-2015, China

planned to develop three more hydropower projects (Jiacha, Dagou and Jiexu) on the main stream of Brahmaputra River in Tibet Autonomous Region. Of the three, the first unit of the hydropower project at Jiacha was operationalised in August 2020," Muraleedharan said in his written reply.

"It is understood that the Dagou Hydropower project is partly operationalised. In March 2021, China adopted its 14th Five Year Plan which mentions plans for hydropower development on the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra river," he said. As a lower riparian state, with considerable established user rights to the waters of the trans-border rivers, the government has consistently conveyed its views and concerns to the Chinese authorities, Muraleedharan said. "Government has urged them to ensure that the interests of downstream states are not harmed by any activities in upstream areas," he said.

India and China have established an Expert-Level Mechanism on trans-border

rivers in 2006, Muraleedharan noted. "Various issues relating to trans-border rivers are discussed with China under the

ambit of this institutionalized Expert-Level Mechanism as well as through diplomatic channels. We intend to remain

engaged with China on the issue of trans-border rivers to safeguard our interests," he said.

FIR against ministers for brandishing swords: Maharashtra chief secretary to look into matter

Maharashtra cabinet ministers have raised concerns over FIRs being registered against ministers. Two Congress ministers were recently booked for brandishing swords at a public event

(Staff Reporter) Cabinet ministers on Thursday expressed concern to Maharashtra Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil, over FIR being registered against ministers Aslam Shaikh and Varsha Gaikwad.

An FIR was registered on Monday against Shaikh and Gaikwad for brandishing swords at a public event to welcome the chairman of Congress' Minority Department Imran Pratapgarhi. Pratapgarhi was in Mumbai last Sunday to participate in a review meeting of the Maharashtra Congress' minority cell. Sources said that ministers expressed concerns that the police was registering cases against its



own ministers. Following this, the chief secretary was asked to investigate and report on under what circumstances the case was registered. The case has been registered under Arms Act at Bandra Police Station in Mumbai. Gaikwad is the MLA

from the Dharavi Assembly constituency while Shaikh represents Malad (West). Both the ministers belong to Congress. Gaikwad is the education minister while Shaikh holds textiles and fisheries portfolios

Mission End TB: NARI-ICMR moves ahead with phase 3 trials for world's first TB vaccine

If ready, the tuberculosis vaccine could pave the way for India's mission to eradicate TB by 2025



(Staff Reporter) In a breakthrough for eradication of tuberculosis, the Pune-based National AIDS Research Institute (NARI) under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is moving forward with phase 3 trials for a vaccine for TB in healthy household contacts or newly diagnosed positive pulmonary TB

patients. Two vaccines are being looked as potential vaccines for TB; VPM1002 and Immuvac. The trials are being done in 18 sites in six Indian states, of which two sites are in Pune-based NARI. If these vaccines prove to be effective, then, India will be the first in the world to create a vaccine for TB. The 1593 participants were

enrolled through a randomised procedure and they will be followed for 38 months. Children above six years are also part of these clinical trials. "We are working as one of the sites for the ICMR initiative TB vaccine trials. The TB trial for vaccines will have two different vaccines and there will also be a placebo. We have already completed enrollments. It is being given to high-risk contacts of diagnosed TB patients, particularly those who have been diagnosed recently with their family members living in close proximity," said Dr Sheela Godbole, scientist and nodal officer for communications at NARI-ICMR, Pune. With this, NARI is also evaluating shorter oral regimens for multi-drug resistant TB with medicines sans frontiers as collaborators. In one of the trials to evaluate Metformin when given along with regular TB treatment

among adults with newly diagnosed sputum positive pulmonary TB, it was found that Metformin did not reduce the time required for sputum culture to become negative and hence was ineffective in the treatment of TB. Dr Godbole said there are a few studies that are being planned to identify cases in the community as well.

HIV TREATMENT AND TB

Since NARI is predominantly an AIDS research institute, studies are being done to assess treatment of HIV to the occurrence of TB. In an ongoing study, factors associated with adherence among HIV infected patients attending ART centres are being studied. It has been found that there is deterrence of the development of TB among people living with HIV on anti-HIV medications at ART Center. NARI also plans to begin studies on viral load monitoring of people with HIV as well

Malegaon blast case: Bombay HC rejects Lt Col Purohit's appeal seeking a stay on the trial

The Bombay High Court refused to grant any interim stay on the ongoing 2008 Malegaon blast case trial while hearing a petition filed by Purohit who is an accused in the case



Activities Prevention Act in the Maharashtra, about 200 people were killed and over 100 injured after an explosive kilometres from Mumbai, on merits on June 21, 2022," the bench said. In the 2008 motorcycle went off near a seven accused in the case are Malegaon blast case, six mosque at Malegaon in north currently out on bail.

Nearly 17,000 Indian pilgrims visited Pakistan in last 5 years: Centre

(Staff Reporter) NEW DELHI: Over the past five years, 16,831 Indian pilgrims have visited Pakistan, while 2,119 Pakistani pilgrims visited India, minister of state for external affairs V. Muraleedharan informed the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. Responding to Bharatiya Janata Party MP Mahesh Poddar's query, Muraleedharan cited government

data and said, "Visits of pilgrims between India and Pakistan are covered under the 'Bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines, 1974'. Pilgrimages to 15 shrines in Pakistan and 6 shrines in India are facilitated by the government under the protocol." As per the data presented in the Upper House, the highest number of Indian pilgrims who travelled to the neighbouring country was in 2021 (5,425), followed by 4,273 in 2019. The highest number of Pakistani pilgrims who came to India was recorded in 2017 (984), as of

March 25 this year. However, no pilgrims have travelled to either country so far in 2022.

Muraleedharan added that "some" Pakistani nationals belonging to minority communities, mainly Hindus and Sikhs, visited India on 'Group Pilgrim Visa', but they have not returned. The minister of state also mentioned that the



Indian government regularly liaises with Pakistan to facilitate pilgrimages, including medical facilities, transportation, security and accommodation among other things. Apart from this, he informed the Parliament about the agreement signed with Pakistan in 2019 to facilitate the travel of Indians to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan. Under this, free visa travel is provided to Indian pilgrims as well as Overseas Citizens of India cardholders from India to the gurdwara on a daily basis, all year round.

(Staff Reporter) The Bombay High Court has refused to grant any interim stay on the ongoing trial in the 2008 Malegaon blast case while hearing a petition filed by Lt Col Prasad Purohit, an accused in the case. Advocates MR Venkatesh and Viral, appearing for Purohit, sought a stay on the trial. "I am seeking a stay on the trial," Venkatesh said. But the bench of Justices PB Varale and SM Modak stopped him and said that they were not inclined to stay the trial. "The trial is already mid way with many witnesses already produced. We are not at all inclined towards passing any order which will block the trial," the bench said. In the trial, 245 witnesses have been produced in court by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) till now, where 20 of them have turned hostile. This is not the first time that Purohit has been seeking a stay on the trial before the Bombay High Court. His request for the same was rejected earlier as well. Venkatesh was arguing on Purohit's behalf on a plea challenging the validity of the sanction granted by the government to prosecute him under the stringent Unlawful

How Sri Lanka headed towards economic annihilation?

By Susmita Ghosh

Sri Lankan economy is having tough times now for quite a few years. While the pandemic effect is to blame the most, poor fiscal management from the government and untimely tax cuts to please the mass that backfired, the reasons pile up in the present-day scenario of complete chaos.

There are several drastic steps taken by the government, which are aggravating the general population. The street lights are going to be turned off, as the longest-ever blackout in the country goes on. The economic crisis is comparatively worse than even during the country's independence. Till the diesel shipment from India's credit line arrives, the fuel pumps and factories will remain non-functional too.

Why Sri Lankan crisis has reached its present peak level? Together, their effect has resulted in a seemingly irreparable condition, which is affecting the socio-economic and political stability on the whole. The people are annoyed and army deployment on road without addressing the issues is only adding fuel to the fire.

Sri Lanka is profoundly dependent on the import of food, medicine and fuel. It was facing troubles as its dollar reserve was running low. There is an ultimate trade deficit with a higher input bill, compared to the export earnings.

The pillars of the Sri Lankan economy are quite dependent on the exports of tea, spices, garments and many others, which were worst hit during the Covid period. Another major source of revenue is tourism, which came to a complete standstill during the same time. It resulted in a severe lack of US Dollar earning in-flow. The forex reserve of the country took a tumble, to a downfall of almost 70percent. Hence, the country struggled to pay for the essential imports, which resulted in massive inflation.

Another key factor that pushed the country's economy to the brim was the law passed in 2019, which resulted in low tax revenue. The people-pleasure law resulted in about 30percent reduction in the Sri Lankan tax revenue, which paved the path for this crisis. This shock to the economic equilibrium was followed by

Covid from where it failed to recover.

Sri Lanka was initially reluctant to take help from international financial organizations. However, with no way out, they are now seeking assistance from IMF, the World Bank and others. They also seek help from India and China.

Besides providing \$1 billion credit line, India has also provided financial assistance to Sri Lanka up to \$2.4 billion since the beginning of 2022 to buy food and oil. Contrarily, the status is not quite same as the Chinese counterpart is concerned. The Chinese debt trap is offering no break to Sri Lanka even in these tough times.

Presently, Sri Lanka's public debt amounts to 110 percent of its GDP. More so, the Sri Lankan currency is undergoing a constant depreciation. Hence, the cost of imports is piling up, affecting the forex reserve and the economic turmoil is caught up in a feedback loop, which is deteriorating

endlessly.

The present rulers at the helm, the Rajapaksa family cannot shift the blame to its predecessors for the poor state of the country. While the major ruling parties are often charged with allegations of corruption, the present

ruling family is closely associated with the Chinese top brass. Recently, the strategic southern port of Hambantota was transferred to China on a 99-year lease, a classic case of the Chinese debt trap. It started the snowball effect of the economic downfall, which increased manifold during the pandemic. The Chinese have absolute control in the Colombo Port City area, a strategic position though, with vast military importance. The Chinese integration is also affecting the lifestyle and the livelihood of the local people.

Sri Lanka is going through an uncontrolled situation right now. The present perilous condition across the country is threatening to give rise to a refugee situation. This dangerous living condition gives rise to terrorism and drug problems, from which the island nation suffered in the past. With the help of good-wishing neighbor countries and international organizations, there is still time to turn the tide. However, will the ruling party show the political backbone and decisive strength to do the same? Only time can tell.

Don't lose focus on climate crisis

Experts in Australia attribute the unusual hot conditions to strong winds blowing from the continent towards the southern tip

The poles are seething with unprecedented heat. Deep down south, as the region is set to go into the long annual winters, weather stations have clocked 40 degrees Celsius above normal; at the other end of the globe—just out of the cold—scientists have reported temperatures 30 degrees C higher than the average. In completely opposite seasons but temperature records being smashed,

both Arctic and Antarctica are in the midst of a heat wave that has baffled climate scientists.

Experts in Australia attribute the unusual hot conditions to strong winds blowing from the continent towards the southern tip. However, weather analysts across the globe are unanimous in their view that the simultaneous heat wave at both the poles is historic and no less alarming. The ramifications of heating of the poles are widespread—low heat absorption, faster pace of ice melting over the land, gradual rise in sea level and coastal inundation across the continents. There is, yet, very little clarity behind the twin incidents

though scientists believe the events are signs of rapid changes in earth's climate. Such climate extremities come a year after several parts of the globe reported massive spells of heat wave. The United States as well as Canada had witnessed record-breaking heat

waves in 2021. Australia, not long ago, struggled with flooding while wildfires ravaged South American countries like Argentina and Chile. There is a section that believes that El Nino-La Nina cycles in the

Pacific Ocean may have a bearing on these occurrences that come as no surprise.

The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had pointed out that much of the global warming footprints will emerge by 2050 but the current signs are ominous. India, too, is facing its share of unexpected heat waves and extreme weather events. Even as much of the world stands together to fight the crisis arising out of the Russia-Ukraine war, it should not be lost on the global leadership to keep a close watch on the drastic changes in the climate front that can exacerbate the economic as well as social fabric of the countries that are most vulnerable to the climate crisis.

The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had pointed out that much of the global warming footprints will emerge by 2050 but the current signs are ominous. India, too, is facing its share of unexpected heat waves and extreme weather events

INSIDER

ISSN No. 1554 06X

Editor in Chief & Publisher :

Sharanjit Singh Thind

Managing Editor :

Susmita Ghosh

Editor (Political Affairs-India) :

Aruna Singh

(Legal Columnist) Anusha Syed

Special Correspondents:

Gagandeep Singh (India)

(Insider Show Host) Geeta Saxena

Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah

Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind

Web Coordinator : Harpreet Singh

A Publication of Media Partners Capital, Inc.

REGD & MAILING OFFICE :

P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

Phone: 917 612 3158

editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Disclaimer The South Asian Insider is a weekly newspaper published every week by The South Asian Insider. It's available in community & religious centers, ethnic grocery stores and also available by mail, email & online to subscribers. The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various writers, authors and forum participants in The South Asian Insider do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editor. All advertisers advertising in The South Asian Insider assume responsibility for accuracy of their advertisements. The South Asian Insider and/or people associated with it are not responsible for any claims made by the advertisers and don't endorse any product or services advertised in The South Asian Insider. We strongly urge consulting your lawyer before buying/contracting/hiring through the ads published in the newspaper. We are in the business of selling space and claims made by the advertisers are not authenticated or confirmed by an independent source

Punjab govt's doorstep ration delivery scheme: how, why, and the numbers that matter

The Punjab government has announced a new scheme, Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna, under which beneficiaries will get home delivery of foodgrains. What is this scheme, and how does it work? Who funds it?



Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Monday announced home delivery of foodgrains to beneficiaries. Under the Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna, the state government would deliver wheat, packed in bags, at the doorstep of the beneficiaries. The Indian Express explains the how and if the scheme will work out:

What is the new scheme?

Under the new Ghar Ghar Ration Yojna, as announced by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, the beneficiaries of the Atta-Dal Scheme of the state government, which is a tweaked version of the Centre's Food Security Act, will get ration at their doorsteps. The

scheme will be optional and all those who do not want to queue up outside the fair price shops or the ration depots can opt for it.

How many beneficiaries are there of Atta-Dal Scheme?

There are 1.54 crore individual beneficiaries (in 43 lakh families) of the Atta-Dal scheme in Punjab. The government gives 5 kg wheat to every individual beneficiary per month at Rs 2 per kg. While the scheme is named after wheat flour and pulses, the state has not been able to give pulses (ground black grams preferred in Punjab over lentils), due to lack of funds. Various political parties have also been promising tea leaves and

sugar, but it could never materialise due to lack of funds.

Who funds the scheme?

The Centre funds the scheme under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013 for 1.43 lakh beneficiaries (comprising 36 lakh families). These are Centre's identified BPL families. Punjab has added its own list of beneficiaries by giving them Blue Cards. These beneficiaries' annual income is below Rs 30,000 per annum, which is more than the limit set by the Centre for BPL category. Punjab argues that the living standard of Punjabis is better than the rest of the country. Now, Centre pays for the subsidy bill of 36 lakh families worth Rs 1700 crore every year. It also pays half of the transportation charge. The bill for the remaining 7 lakh families is borne by the state government.

How is it distributed?

The state earlier used to supply wheat flour to the beneficiaries. However, following complaints of flour turning bad or being found infested, a decision was taken to give wheat instead. Now, wheat is provided by the ration

depots in cities and villages once in three months.

How many ration depots handle the operation?

There are 26,000 ration depots in the state. They use Electronic Point of Sale (e-POS) machines for biometric verification of every beneficiary. The quarterly delivery takes about a month as about 16 depots use a single EPOS machine that delays the process of delivery. Every depot has about 300 registered beneficiaries. The machine is transported to different depots. This also results in queues.

Is the scheme a replica of a similar one announced by the Delhi government?

Punjab is working out the logistics amidst certain concerns. The government functionaries feel that the Centre, which shot down the scheme in Delhi, will not pay for the transportation incurred upon home delivery. The state also does not have so many employees who can be assigned to deliver ration at beneficiaries' homes. In Delhi, the Centre and the UT government have been at loggerheads over the implementation of the scheme,

with the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution writing to the AAP-led regime on several occasions, saying that a provision for delivery of ration to homes does not exist in the NFSA. It has also told the Delhi government that it had no objection to the scheme if the government buys ration from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and distributes it, but using grain given to the state under NFSA would be illegal.

How does the government plan to deliver the foodgrains at doorstep?

In Delhi, the millers empanelled with Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd (DSCSC) were to be tasked with lifting wheat and rice from six godowns of the Food Corporation of India (FCI) before processing and cleaning. These were then to be sent to ration depots and the Delhi Consumer's Co-operative Wholesale Store Ltd (DCCWS), had to rope in private agencies to deliver foodgrains. In Punjab, however, the wheat is supplied by the Department of Food and Civil Supplies to the ration depots, who hand it physically to the beneficiaries.

Hijab verdict will only push Muslim women further to the margins

The ongoing hijab controversy — with the state and its institutions as equal participants — is another manufactured event that indicates the deepening of cultural tensions between the Hindu majority and the Muslim national minority. Stridently embracing a masculinist approach of “rescuing” Muslim women, the Karnataka High Court's judgment pronounced that the hijab is not an “essential religious practice in Islam”. In doing so, the court seemed to ignore two interrelated ideas: Firstly, the primary human impulse of seeking freedom (guaranteed in and safeguarded by the Constitution), and secondly, that this freedom can be realised from the fluidity that lies in the practice of Islam, a point implicit in its own verdict. If the religion doesn't sanction punishment for not wearing the veil, why is the state determined to deprive a whole generation of young hijab-wearing Muslim girls from pursuing education?

If the state continues to exercise prejudice against the hijab-wearing girls, depriving them of their fundamental rights, it will be the beginning of a new chapter of “historical disadvantage” in the political history of modern India. What is ironic is the glaring dissonance between India's global aspirations and pursuit of collaborations, internationally, and a steady slide into inequality, domestically. In this sweep of insidious currents of hostility towards the largest minority of the country, the state and its institutions seem to be on a path to systematically disempowering the community. This is, arguably, a fallout of the failure of liberal feminist politics and its longstanding view of the hijab as a sign of “increasing Arabisation” and an “instrument of oppression”. This biased and ill-informed view of liberal secular feminists led to the creation of a figure of an undesirable “other”, which rigidified the liberal and the conservative binaries within the mosaic

of Islam and its followers. It is these mythical categories of the liberal and the conservative that has made the latter an easy target of Hindu authoritarianism in successive years of its ascendancy.

The retreat of the secular in India lies in the liberal gaze on the undesirable “other” — the hijab-clad Muslim woman — inescapably imbued with hostile perception and a “saviour complex”. In fact, the hijab has lived out its literal meaning (a “separation”) in Indian society, acting as a wall, or a medium to disengage, distance, and, subsequently, alienate. As a “central axis of difference between Muslim and non-Muslim societies” (Leila Ahmad, 1992), hijab has been made to function as a universal signifier of “backwardness”. However, in critiquing the Hindu right's brazen violation and criminalisation of fundamental rights of Muslim women and holding accountable the liberal politics of policing [Muslim] bodies to impose their conception of

“modernity”, I do not want to overlook the structures of patriarchy that exist and operate within Muslim societies that have over decades imposed “modesty” either through conformity or coercion.

What is lost in this contestation between “modernity” and “modesty” that embody two forms of patriarchies is the history of the changing meaning of the veil in different times and contexts — as a symbol of power, ideology, and identity, a commodity reinforcing capitalist production of desire, and a metaphor for the visible/invisible female body. Moreover, the polarising politics over clothing and mundane sartorial dilemmas — to change or continue with the practice — denies the existence of an assortment of Muslim bodies, negates Muslim women's agency, and absolves the state of its responsibility to protect and empower its minorities — both national and immigrant.

Australia could go in for fiscal repair while its rate policy lags



Australia is set to begin winding back its massive pandemic-era stimulus, even as its central bank remains an outlier among peers in sticking with near-zero interest rates. Prime Minister Scott Morrison's administration funnelled cash to households and firms to cushion the blow of covid, wracking up record budget deficits and government debt in the process. Combined with the central bank's 0.1% cash rate, that has spurred consumer spending, hiring and house prices, and now, inflation. The government's budget is expected to announce a deficit of A\$76.9 billion (\$57.9 billion) for fiscal 2023, narrowing to A\$50 billion by fiscal 2025. Economists expect that the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) will keep its policy rates unchanged. Of the seven biggest pandemic spenders, only Australia and Japan are yet to raise rates. In percentage terms, economists estimate that Australia's budget deficit will be 3.3% of gross domestic product (GDP) in fiscal 2023, narrowing to 2% by 2025. That compares with a Group of 20 nations

average of 4% in calendar year 2023 and 3.5% by 2025, according to the International Monetary Fund's fiscal monitor.

Surging prices of some of Australia's top exports (iron ore, coal and liquefied natural gas) are already delivering a windfall to the fiscal coffers. That will improve the budget outlook even before Treasurer Josh Frydenberg tightens fiscal settings, which he is expected to do cautiously, given an election is due in less than eight weeks and the government trails in opinion polls.

The Australian labour market's recovery has also been much stronger than initially predicted, with unemployment now at a 13-year low of 4%, compared with a forecast in the government's December budget update of 4.5% by mid-2022. More people in jobs means less spending on welfare and more revenue from additional taxpayers, also helping narrow the deficit. Economists expect the jobless rate will fall to 3.7% later this year, a level unseen since the early 1970s. Yet, RBA Governor Philip Lowe remains dovish, willing to run the

economy hot to overcome the "inertia" in a wage-setting process that sees pay gains lag well behind the economy's strength. His stance contrasts with counterparts from Wellington to Washington who have embarked on rate hikes as they race to rein in inflation.

Australia's wages growth is still in the low-2s, and the most recent round of job contracts were restrained. Lowe wants to return average annual growth to 3% or more, a level last seen at the start of 2013. Treasurer Frydenberg is on board too, perhaps eyeing political gains from low unemployment and eventually higher pay.

According to Bloomberg Economics, "While RBA will commence raising rates this year, the pace of normalization is likely to be slower than other central banks." In the words of James McIntyre, an economist, "Wages for around 60% of employees are on multi-year agreements, or have pay rises linked to the annual minimum wage review, making the upcoming June decision a key catalyst for Australian wages,

inflation, and rates."

Against a backdrop of higher global inflation, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and surging oil prices, Lowe says inflation is likely to rise above 4%. That implies cuts in real wages for Australian households.

Lowe argues that current inflation is driven by global supply shocks and soaring energy costs that will prove transitory. But he acknowledges that the war in Ukraine could prolong the episode. As a result, he's on the lookout for signs of a shift in "inflation psychology" that may need a policy response. The government, which must hold an election by 21 May, is aware of the pressures facing Australian households. It also understands that there's a risk that they will take their frustrations out on incumbents at the ballot box. Frydenberg thus is expected to announce measures to help ease the burden of rising prices, potentially including one-off cash payments, a cut to fuel excise tax and a possible extension of a tax break for low- and middle-income households. The treasurer, in a speech 10 days ago, had highlighted the strength of Australia's A\$2.2 trillion (\$1.7 trillion) economy. He said this allowed the government to shift to repairing the budget and start making inroads into more than A\$600 billion of debt. Frydenberg predicted that gross debt as a proportion of GDP would peak lower and earlier than forecast in December's budget update. That chimes with Lowe's message that stronger productivity growth is needed to boost economic growth and wages. "We have to make sure that future incomes are strong and that's the best way of dealing with the debt situation," the RBA governor said last week.

French Interior Minister: Probe underway into recent violent unrest in Paris suburb

A probe has been launched into recent violent unrest in the Paris suburb of Sevran, said French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin on Tuesday, during which police came under attack from youths.

The trouble in Sevran comes with the French presidential election less than two weeks

away, in which fears over violent crime, racial tensions and terrorism will feature high among voters' concerns. "An inquiry is underway concerning the intervention of police last Saturday afternoon in Sevran.

Following violence and acts of vandalism, 16 arrests were made during the weekend and

police apprehended 13 people yesterday evening," said Darmanin on his Twitter account. Stephane Blanchet, who is the mayor for Sevran which lies to the north-east of Paris, wrote on his Twitter account that trouble had first broken out during the weekend after a local man, aged 33, died

after being shot by this week.

French media reports said the police had opened fire on him after chasing him on suspicion of having stolen a vehicle.

Images posted on social media showed youths clashing with police during the weekend and into the start of

France's 'banlieues' - high-rise housing estates on the outskirts of major cities - have long been flashpoints of anger over social and economic grievances. In 2005, unrest lasted three weeks after two youths died fleeing police in another northern Paris suburb.



PANACHE ENTERTAINMENT



- ◆ Miss PreTeen New York 2022 (10-13)
- ◆ Miss Teen New York 2022 (Age 13-17)
- ◆ Miss India New York 2022 (Age 18-30)
- ◆ Mrs India New York 2022

Sunday, May 1st, 2022, 5pm Sharp

Antuns by Minar, Long Island 244W
Old Country RD, Hicksville, NY 11801

REGISTRATION OPEN

For Participation & Sponsorship

Contact

Nishi Bahl : 917-992-0076
Shipa Jurani : 631-356-3655
Nika Joseph : 917-622-5215
Taran Bir Kaur : 917-293-5177

www.facebook.com/PanacheEntertainment2014/
www.worldwidepageants.com



Birbhum Massacre: Like a Debt Trap, Bengal is Caught in a Cycle of Perpetual Violence

Media reports suggest two factions of the same party settled scores against each other. The deputy chief of a panchayat was killed on Monday evening. Within hours, eight people – including women and children – from the families of the foot soldiers of the opposite camp were charred to death. The police station was not far. But no one stopped the carnage.

If you think this is the beginning and end of a crime, you are mistaken. Violence and rivalry are neither new nor specific to any party or state. But West Bengal is unique in creating a social, political and economic ecosystem based on crime and corruption.

Like a debt trap, the state has entered a phase of perpetual violence, which will end with either destruction or forceful imposition of law and order, ignoring collateral or political damages. The steady decline in economic fortune and cultural equity of the state for five decades is inversely proportional to the strengthening of this ecosystem. The relationship is complex. To get a feel of it, let us deconstruct the sequence of events of the Birbhum massacre.

The area is dominated by Muslims, all more or less aligned to the Trinamool Congress. Before 2011, they were divided between the Congress and the



CPI(M). The prime accused (of the mass murder), block president of the ruling party, was at large for over two days till the chief minister ordered his arrest on Thursday afternoon. Within hours, he was nabbed from a nearby location.

There is no official clue to the rivalry. The deceased deputy chief, Bhadu Sheikh, was once a driver and the prime accused Anarul Hussain was a mason. Both amassed huge wealth over the last decade or so. Overnight, their modest village homes were replaced by palatial houses. Both wielded huge power. Bhadu used to roam around with a dozen

bodyguards. There is no official clue to their prosperity either. Birbhum is a backward district – a prime source of cheap migratory labour in the country – in an economically laggard state. Media reports suggest they were local kingpins of a racket collecting extortion tax from trucks, mostly laden with sand and stone chips sourced from quarries in Birbhum and neighbouring state Jharkhand. The question is: Will the racket cease to exist with Bhadu and Anarul? The answer is a strict 'No'. They will be replaced by some others. There may not be another massacre for some time,

but muscle power will rule the roost and crime will continue unabated in some form or the other.

The clue to this conjecture lies in the puzzling inaction of police on that fateful night. Didn't the police know that the next morning they might face the flak? Or did they have extra faith in the ability of their bosses to manage the crisis? Why was there no media report of the carnage for roughly 12 hours? Why did the all-powerful district president of the party blame the fire on a silly accident ('bursting of a TV set') on Tuesday morning? Questions abound and silence is the only

answer.

The Birbhum massacre will be forgotten soon. But crime will not stop. Over the last week or so nearly two dozen people have been killed in the state. Bullets did fly in Kolkata. On Thursday, local newspapers reported the rape of a tribal woman in South 24-Parganas district before her children. Violence has been an integral part of West Bengal. The state witnessed the gravest of grave crimes, including mass murders, over the decades. All were normalised, trivialised, forgotten. Great minds in and outside West Bengal worked overtime to brush many atrocities under the carpet. There is limited proof of the Marichjhapi or Bijon Setu (Kolkata)

massacres. Bengali literature has plenty of references to the state domination of Naxalite 'revolution' in the 1960s and early 1970s. Rarely a reader will come across condemnation of the severe violation of human rights by the Naxalites and the long-term harm it did to the Bengali society. Siddhartha Shankar Ray saved the state by suppressing it. He was made a political villain. The latest carnage at Birbhum is just a drop in that ocean. The only problem is: the violence that was once ideologised to bring peace and equality, has now become a mainstay of society and its politics. (Contd on page 30)

Demonising India over Ukraine Won't Help, West Needs Delhi by its Side in Indo-Pacific Contest

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is now in its second month, and India's position has come under greater scrutiny. And, for more reasons than one, expounded India's Russia dilemma which has been growing over the last few years.

We must, first of all, understand India's position clearly, considering how it has reacted to various situations throughout the decades, especially when it comes to condemnation. India has repeatedly abstained from UNSC and UNGA resolutions condemning Russia. This has been wrongly interpreted as tacit approval of Russia and India standing on the wrong side of history.

It has been India's position since the 1950s that condemnation does not lead to a solution. When the United States

invaded Iraq in 2003, India's then defence minister George Fernandes said – "There is, in New Delhi's understanding, no need to antagonise the US by using words like condemn to describe the American military action." In the current situation, India's position before the war was for "all parties" to use the Minsk Agreements as a basis for finding a negotiated settlement that considered the "legitimate security interests" of all parties. India's position evolved after the Russian invasion, calling for all member states to obey the UN Charter, international law, and respect sovereignty and territorial integrity. India's diplomatic language was a clear disapproval of Russia's invasion. India's statement on China's

invasion of Ladakh in 2020 is also relevant as context. Beijing was not condemned by India. Post Galwan clash in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed, India's foreign minister conveyed "protest in the strongest terms of the violent face-off". The MEA statement read – "We remain firmly convinced of the need for maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas and the resolution of differences through dialogue. At the same time ... we are also strongly committed to ensuring India's sovereignty and territorial integrity." India's statement regarding China's invasion of its own territory and its statement regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine are similar. Even if they ignore their hypocrisy and selective

amnesia regarding their own past actions, people in the West would benefit from understanding this, before harshly judging India's commitment to democracy, international regulation, sovereignty or territorial integrity.

DEMONISING INDIA WON'T HELP

There was a lot of backlash on social media about India buying only 3 million barrels of oil from Russia – less than its daily oil requirements. Europe continued to import billions of dollars of oil and gas even as Russia was razing cities in Ukraine, and refused to embargo that, keeping SWIFT transactions open. Most Western analysts are unaware of how things are on the other side. Demonising India will not help.

(Contd on page 30)

**Some Call us a Media House
Others call us an Institution to learn from**



**Delivering News,
uncompromised
& Unbiased for the
Last **20** years**

**Email: editor@thesouthasianinsider.com
www.thesouthasianinsider.com**

What is happening in Pakistan, where Imran Khan's fate hangs in balance

Imran Khan's strategy appears to be to buy time, either in the hope of hanging on through a last-minute deal with the Pakistan Army and ISI - only they can bring back the supporters who have deserted him over the last few weeks — or just to postpone the inevitable

Pakistan's National Assembly is sitting on Monday (March 28), but it remains unclear if the Speaker will allow the opposition motion of no confidence against Prime Minister Imran Khan to be tabled. The session, which began on Friday, was adjourned for two days after an obituary notice, which drew criticism of the Speaker Asad Qaiser from the opposition. Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid has said that even if the motion is tabled in Monday's sitting, it may not be voted upon until April 4. Procedures demand that after tabling, the motion should be voted upon no earlier than the expiry of three days, and no later than seven.

What is the Prime Minister trying to do?

Imran Khan's strategy appears to be to buy time, either in the



hope of hanging on through a last-minute deal with the Pakistan Army and ISI — only they can bring back the supporters who have deserted him over the last few weeks — or just to postpone the inevitable. Some in his government are urging him to call

a snap election, a year ahead from when it is due in 2023. any PTI dissidents are from South Punjab, and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who is also a notable from the same region, has submitted a bill for the creation

of a separate province of South Punjab, in the hope that this might bring them back to the party.

The creation of such a province, carved out of Pakistan's Punjab province, has been a long-standing

regional demand, but it has never been seriously discussed by the Punjabi dominated political and security elite, as it would undermine their own powerful and pre-eminent position. The PTI coalition has been bleeding supporters daily. The National Assembly has 342 members, and Imran's ruling coalition had 179. On Sunday, that came down to 178 after the Jamhoori Watan Party withdrew from the alliance. Imran and PTI managers have been trying to get the other three allies, the PML-Q, the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, who have between them 17 MNAs, to declare their opposition to the no-confidence motion.

(Contd on page 30)

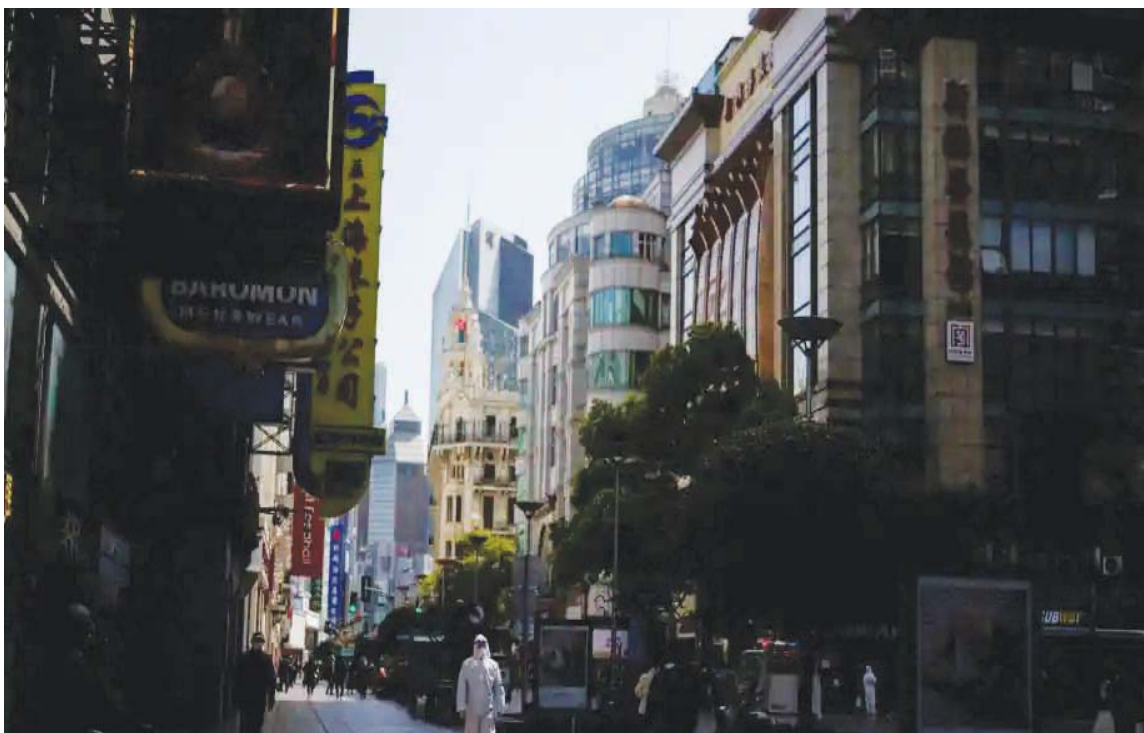
Panic buying, camping in offices: Shanghai under strict lockdown as people brace for fresh Covid outbreak

Shanghai is in the midst of a COVID-19 outbreak. Residents have locked themselves in their homes, while officegoers are camping on the premises as the financial hub enters second day of a strict lockdown.

On Tuesday, China reported 6,886 domestic Covid cases, with more than 4,400 of them detected in Shanghai, now the centre of the country's worst COVID-19 outbreak since the early days of the pandemic. The city's airports, railway stations and international shipping ports remain open, while key manufacturers are allowed to resume production after a brief halt, state media reported.

In a bid to keep Shanghai's economy running, authorities replaced the hard lockdowns regularly deployed in other Chinese cities with rolling, localised restrictions.

For example, in Lujiazui district, China's Wall Street, office



premises have been allowed to open.

According to Reuters news agency, brokerages, asset managers and financial exchanges called in their important staff to the offices for overnight

stays ahead of lockdown in Shanghai on Monday.

Some also adopted two-team rotation shifts, and initiated disaster recovery centres in a financial hub that reportedly processed more than 2,500 trillion

yuan (\$292 trillion) of financial transactions last year. While in the Pudong District, residents have been barred from walking in the hallways, garages or open areas of their residential compounds in order to reduce the

risk of infection.

Ahead of the lockdown, panic buying gripped Shanghai as images showed some supermarket shelves in the city emptied of all goods. "After being unable to grab any groceries this morning, I went back to sleep, and all I dreamt about was buying food at the supermarket," one user wrote on China's Twitter-like Weibo platform, reported AFP. "I'd never have thought that society today would be worried over buying groceries." Shanghai, home to 26 million people, started a lockdown on Monday by dividing the city roughly along the Huangpu River, to allow for staggered testing. Shanghai houses China's biggest markets for stock, bond, foreign exchange and derivatives trading. The lockdown will last until Friday, then switch to the city's more populated western Puxi section, home to the historic Bund riverfront.

Why prices of some drugs could see the steepest increase in years?

The announcement of the national drug pricing body could impact the prices of paracetamol, azithromycin, ORS, contraceptives like IUDs and condoms, insulin shots, and multivitamins



annual change in the WPI works out as 10.76607% during the calendar year 2021 over the corresponding period of 2020". Every year, the authority announces the WPI change in accordance with The Drugs (Price Control) Order, 2013, or DPCO, 2013.

What does the DPCO, 2013 say?

As per the price control order, the NPPA is empowered to fix the ceiling price of essential medicines and medical devices — 886 in number currently. The order also provides for a WPI-based price change every year that pharmaceutical companies are allowed to implement. As per this provision, the NPPA declares the WPI change every year.

Which medicines and devices are included in the

NLEM?

Some of the most common drugs and medical devices, including paracetamol tablets, azithromycin tablets, oral rehydration salts, glucose injections, contraceptives like copper IUDs, condoms, insulin injections, Vitamin C tablets, and multivitamin tablets, are in the NLEM.

These drugs constitute around 18% of India's aggregate domestic pharmaceutical retail market of approximately Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

Has the NPPA announced such increases earlier as well?

Yes, last year, the NPPA had announced an increase in WPI of 0.53%. In 2020, it was 1.88%, while in 2019 and 2018 it was 4.26% and 3.43%, respectively. In 2017, the

effective increase in WPI was set at 1.97% but in 2016, it was set at (-) 2.71%.

Does the latest order mean prices of medicines will increase sharply?

While the NPPA sets the ceiling prices for the over 800 essential drugs, for several competitive drugs, companies tend to price them lower than the ceiling. The sharp raising of the ceiling may not necessarily translate into actual prices of all brands of formulations in the essential list going up by the same quantum. However, drugmakers and chemists have acknowledged that the increase in prices of raw materials and transportation, as well as production costs over the last year, could cause the prices of some drugs to rise sharply.

The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has announced an annual change of 10.76% in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), which could translate into the steepest price increases in years for over 800 scheduled drugs and medical devices in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM).

Why has the NPPA announced the WPI increase?

In an order dated March 25, the NPPA said: "Based on the Wholesale Price Index data provided by the Office of the Economic Advisor, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the

Why Indian Armed Forces don't use the term 'martyr' for personnel who die in the line of duty ?

The Ministry of Defence has stated in Parliament that the Indian Armed Forces do not use the term 'martyr' for personnel who die in the line of duty. What is the objection to this word?

The Ministry of Defence clarified in Parliament on March 28 that the Indian Armed Forces do not use the term "martyr" for personnel who sacrifice their lives in the line of duty.

Why and how has the issue been coming up in public debate for the past several years?

What is the latest statement of the Ministry of Defence on the term 'martyr'? On March 28, during the ongoing session of Parliament, the Minister of State for Defence answered a question put up by Dr Santanu Sen of the Trinamool Congress in Rajya Sabha on the term 'martyr'. Dr Sen had asked whether the government has stopped using the term 'martyr' for those who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

The Minister of State for Defence informed the House that "the term 'martyr' is not used in the Indian Armed Forces".

What has been the stance of the government in this regard in the past?

For almost a decade now, the government has maintained that the word 'martyr' does not have any official recognition.

Back in 2013 and 2014, the Ministry of Home Affairs clarified in answers to RTI applications that the words 'martyr' and 'shaheed' are not defined anywhere by the Government of India.

In December 2015, then Minister of State for Home Affairs Kirren Rijju stated in Lok Sabha that the Ministry of Defence has informed that the word 'martyr' is not used in reference to any of the casualties in the Indian Armed Forces. He added that such terms are not used for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and Assam Rifles personnel also.

In December 2021, the Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai again informed Rajya Sabha that there was no official nomenclature such as 'martyr'.

What is the objection to the word 'martyr'? The word 'martyr' has religious connotations and has been used in history

to refer to the sacrifices made by people for their religious beliefs, particularly in Christianity. The word 'shaheed', which is used as a Hindustani alternative to the word 'martyr', also has religious connotations and is linked to the concept of Shahadat in Islam.

The word 'martyr' is said to have its roots in the Greek word 'martur'. Various dictionaries define 'martyr' as a person who voluntarily suffers death as penalty of refusing to renounce religion.

Since the armed forces of India are not associated with any one religion and do not lay down their lives for religious principles, the use of such words for their sacrifice has been found wrong in several quarters, including the top brass of the Army. Many retired senior officers and legal experts have pointed out that using the term 'martyr' or 'shaheed' for a soldier who dies for his country is incorrect in the Indian perspective.

What steps have been taken to prevent

the use of the word 'martyr'?

Despite the repeated assertions of the government about the word 'martyr' having no official recognition, it was used liberally in government statements issued by various Public Relations Officers for the defence services and the CAPFs. Many senior serving and retired officers also used it frequently to describe the death of soldiers in action. Thus, the word remained in common use.

In February 2022, the Army issued a letter to all its commands asking them to desist from using the word 'martyr' as it may not be appropriate for soldiers who die in the line of duty. They have been, instead, asked to use phrases such as 'laid down their lives', 'killed in action', 'supreme sacrifice for the nation', 'fallen heroes', 'Indian Army braves and fallen soldiers', 'battle casualty', 'bravehearts', 'braves whom we lost', and veergati/veergati prapt/veer.

Sri Lanka's oldest airport sees first international flight in 54 years

A flight from the Maldives landed at the Ratmalana International Airport in Colombo for the first time in 54 years



(Staff Reporter) Sri Lanka's oldest and first international airport was relaunched on Sunday with its first international flight landing in 54 years, aviation officials said. A flight from the Maldives landed at the Ratmalana International Airport in Colombo. The 50-seater Maldivian flight would operate three flights a week to Colombo which would be later expanded to five per weeks, the aviation officials said. The Ratmalana airport was turned into a domestic airport after the Bandaranaike International Airport at Katunayake was commissioned in the late 60s. The Bandaranaike airport is the main international airport for flights to and from the Sri Lankan capital. Established in 1938, the Ratmalana airport is Sri Lanka's oldest airport and at one point was the only international airport in the country.

Pakistan Punjab CM Usman Buzdar, federal minister resign ahead of trust vote against PM Imran Khan

The Speaker of the Punjab Assembly in Pakistan and PML-Q leader Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi met Prime Minister Imran Khan after the CM resigned

(Staff Reporter) Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, facing a trust vote in Pakistan's parliament, has been hit by resignations today after the motion of no confidence was tabled in the Pakistan National Assembly against him. The first to give notice was Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, a member of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf. Following Buzdar's resignation, Housing Minister and leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) Tariq Bashir Cheema quit the federal cabinet, Pakistan news outlet ARY News reported. "I have tendered my resignation from the cabinet," Tariq Bashir Cheema was quoted as saying by ARY News. PML-Q is a key ally of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) in the Centre and in Punjab. Following Buzdar's resignation, the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly in Pakistan and PML-Q leader Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi met Prime Minister Imran Khan to express his confidence in Khan's government and announce his support for Imran Khan, facing a trust vote in Pakistan's parliament. Imran Khan's party, in an attempt to placate allies of the ruling coalition ahead of the trust vote, tweeted that the prime minister has decided to nominate Elahi as its candidate for the next Punjab Chief Minister and added that all

issues have been settled in the meeting. The motion of no confidence against embattled Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was tabled in the Pakistan National Assembly for debate before the House adjourned for the day today. The National Assembly met today after a two-day recess when the motion was formally tabled amid a volatile political situation in the country.

Introducing the no-trust motion in the Pakistan parliament, the Leader of the Opposition Shahbaz Sharif said: "I am presenting a no-confidence motion against the Prime Minister." 161 members of the Assembly voted in favour of the motion against PM Khan. The next session will be held on March 31 from 4:30pm (India time), the local media in Pakistan reported. Imran Khan came to power in 2018 with the promise of a "Naya Pakistan" but failed miserably as the prices of essential commodities skyrocketed in the country, allowing the opposition to wage a war on his government. 69-year-old Imran Khan is heading a coalition government and could be removed if any of the partners decide to switch sides. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, with 155 members, needs at least 172 lawmakers on its side to remain in power.

**TEXT AND
WHATEVER
JUST
DON'T
TEXT
AND**



STOPTEXTSSTOPWRECKS.ORG



WE THANK OUR CUSTOMERS FOR THEIR TRUST & LOYALTY

28 YEARS OF EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE



INDO US EXPRESS, INC.

HICKSVILLE, NEW YORK

WORLDWIDE COURIER  FREIGHT-FORWARDER

DOMESTIC & LOCAL DELIVERY

CALL US AT: 212-447-5720 or FAX 516-932-3750

ALTERNATE NUMBER: 347-538-7041

OR EMAIL US: INDOUSEXPRESS@GMAIL.COM

www.indousexpress.com

GREAT SERVICE, 7 DAYS A WEEK, 365 DAYS A YEAR!

AUTHORIZED AGENT FOR:

UPS - FedEx - DHL - USPS - Amazon

CALL ABOUT OUR SPECIAL RATES

TO & FROM INDIA/WORLDWIDE



Taliban ban women in Afghanistan from flying without male chaperone

The move comes after the Taliban backtracked on their previous commitment to open high schools to girls, a u-turn that shocked many Afghans and drew condemnation from humanitarian agencies and foreign governments



sources, who are not being named for security reasons, said that the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice sent airlines a letter on Saturday informing of them of the new restrictions. They added that unaccompanied women who had already booked tickets would be allowed to travel on Sunday and Monday. Some women with tickets had been turned away at Kabul's airport on Saturday, they said. Spokespeople for the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice and the Ministry of Culture and Information did not immediately respond to request for comment. A

Taliban administration spokesman had previously said that women travelling abroad for study should be accompanied by a male relative.

The Taliban say they have changed since their previous rule from 1996 to 2001 in which they barred women from education, work or leaving the house without a male relative. They say they are allowing women their rights in accordance with Islamic law and Afghan culture. However, the closure of high schools along with some restrictions on women in work and the requirement that women have a chaperone for long-distance

travel has drawn criticism from many Afghan women and rights groups. It was not immediately clear whether the restrictions on air travel would allow any exemptions, for example in emergencies or for women with no living male relatives in the country and whether it applied to foreigners or women with dual citizenship. The international community has so far not officially recognised the Taliban administration and enforcement of sanctions has crippled the country's banking sector which combined with slashed development funding has plunged the country into a humanitarian crisis.

(Staff Reporter) The United States on Friday cancelled economic issues due to its planned meetings with decision on Wednesday. The

Shanghai locked down as China's biggest city sees over 3,400 asymptomatic Covid cases

Shanghai reported over 3,500 Covid-19 cases on Sunday. Most of them were asymptomatic cases. Now, China's largest city has decided to impose a two-phase lockdown to curb the virus spread



achieve the dynamic zero-Covid target as soon as possible," Shanghai launched a planned two-stage lockdown of the city of 26 million people on Monday. It is believed to be the biggest Covid-related disruption to hit the city so far, news agency Reuters reported. Shanghai's Pudong financial district and nearby areas will be locked down from Monday to Friday as citywide mass testing begins, the local government said. In the second phase of the lockdown, the vast downtown area west of the Huangpu River that divides the city will then start its own five-day lockdown on Friday. As per the new norms, bridges and tunnels will remain closed, while there will be restrictions on highway traffic. In a statement, the bureau said traffic controls would be implemented on highways into and out of the city, requiring people leaving Shanghai to show proof of negative results from nucleic acid tests taken within 48 hours. The city government also said that it would suspend public transport, including ride-hailing services, in

locked down areas. It also ordered the suspension of work at firms and factories, with the exception of those offering public services or supplying food. Also, offices and all businesses not considered essential will be closed and public transport suspended. Moreover, residents will be required to stay home and deliveries will be left at checkpoints. Shanghai's Disneyland theme park is

among the businesses that closed earlier. Automaker Tesla is also suspending production at its Shanghai plant, according to media reports. Panic buying was reported on Sunday, with supermarket shelves cleared of food, beverages and household items. Additional barriers were being erected in neighborhoods Monday, with workers in hazmat suits staffing checkpoints.

(Staff Reporter) China's financial hub of Shanghai witnessed an exponential surge in Covid-19 cases with over 3,500 new infections on Sunday. The threat in the region mounted as most of these cases turned out to be asymptomatic -- meaning, people who tested positive for the coronavirus were not showing symptoms of Covid-19. According to reports, a record 3,450 asymptomatic Covid cases were reported in Shanghai on Sunday, accounting for nearly 70 per cent of the nationwide total. There were as many as 50 symptomatic cases, the city government was quoted as saying on Monday. Meanwhile, China has reported more than 56,000 confirmed cases nationwide this month, with the surge in Jilin accounting for most of them.

MASS TESTING

The city government in Shanghai has decided to lock down the region in a phased manner for testing beginning Monday morning and ending April 1. Shanghai's latest citywide Covid-19 testing is aimed at completely eliminating potential hidden risks and clearing all cases as soon as possible, said Wu Fan, a local epidemic expert, at a news conference on Monday.

LOCKDOWNS

To "curb the virus spread, protect people's life and health, and



Myanmar's Suu Kyi misses court hearings due to quarantine

Ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi is being tried in several cases involving charges of corruption, election fraud and violating a state secrets law. She did not attend recent court hearings as she has been quarantined

(Staff Reporter) Ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi did not attend recent court hearings in which she is a defendant because she has been quarantined due to possible exposure to the coronavirus, a legal official said Monday. Suu Kyi is being tried in the capital, Naypyitaw, in several cases involving charges of corruption, election fraud and violating a state secrets law.

She has been detained since February 1 last year when the army seized power and prevented her and her party

from starting a second five-year term in office after a landslide victory in a 2020 general election.

The legal official, who is familiar with the cases involving Suu Kyi, said the 76-year-old deposed leader missed a hearing on Monday in a case involving corruption charges because she was quarantined after some of the people helping with her care were found to be infected with the coronavirus. Suu Kyi, who has been vaccinated, has not tested positive, he said. She is being held at an undisclosed

location in Naypyitaw where she has stayed following convictions on lesser charges for which she has been sentenced to six years' imprisonment. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid retaliation from the military government, which seeks to keep the proceedings secret. All of Suu Kyi's court hearings have been closed to the media, diplomats and other spectators. She has not been seen or allowed to speak in public since she was arrested. She also missed hearings on the secrets charge last Thursday and election fraud trial on Friday, and will be absent from court again on Tuesday, the legal official said. The Health Ministry announced on Sunday 130 new COVID-19



cases and one related death, last year with high numbers of bringing the country's total to deaths. like other countries in 6,108,858 confirmed cases the region, Myanmar is and 19,430 deaths. Poor public currently in the process of health services and disruptions restoring activities that had caused by the military takeover been suspended to combat the spread of the virus.

10 killed as vehicle falls into ditch in Pakistan

(Staff Reporter) At least 10 people were killed and 16 injured after a van fell into a ditch in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan on Monday, police said. The injured persons, said to be in critical condition, were taken to the district hospital in Dir Kohistan where the vehicle en route to Kalakot from Mardan met with the accident. The Express

Tribune newspaper quoted the police as saying. According to the hospital administration, the dead included three women and two children. Expressing sorrow over the incident, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mehmood Khan directed the hospital management to provide the best medical aid to those injured in the road accident.

Taliban bars government employees without beards from work

According to sources, Afghanistan's Taliban has ordered that all government employees wear beards and follow a dress code or risk being fired



(Staff Reporter) The Taliban administration's public morality ministry on Monday patrolled the entrances to all government offices, checking that employees had grown beards and adhered to a dress code, sources told Reuters. Three sources said that representatives from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice

were instructing all government employees not to shave their beards, to wear local clothing consisting of a long, loose top and trousers, and a hat or turban. The sources added that workers were told they would from now on be unable to enter offices and would eventually be fired if they did not meet the dress codes.



The ONLY temple in the world outside India dedicated to Shri Shani Maharaj

Shri SHANI DEV Mandir, New York
Sarvamangala Shri SANEESWARA Temple, New York

Regular Poojas' and Homas' are conducted on daily basis:

Special Poojas:

+ Sri Saneeswara homam

+ Sri Saneeswara - parikara pooja

+ Sri Saneeswara harati

+ Sri Navagraha Homa

+ Poornima: vrata Pooja

+ Pradosham Pooja

+ Sri Sankatahara chaturthi Pooja

+ Sri Satyanarayana Vratha

+ Birthdays / Weddings / Upanayanam & More



1616 Hillside Avenue, Temple Suites
New Hyde Park NY 11040
Ph: 718 740 9400 / 516 358 9400
Email: temple.navagraha@gmail.com

Temple Hours: 8.00 am to 9.00 pm

The Temple entrance is in the western side parking lot behind Hot Breads & Maharajas in New Hyde Park NY

Functions of the space:

Temple / Community Events / Senior Social Day Care Center / Art & Music School / Library / Spiritual Lounge / Gift Shop

www.NavagrahaUSA.com

Pak legislators to debate no trust vote against Imran Khan on March 31

Nearly four years and several scandals later, Prime Minister Imran Khan, facing a no-trust vote in parliament, must gather at least 172 members to save his coalition government from collapsing

(Staff Reporter) A motion of no confidence was tabled by the Opposition against beleaguered Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan in the National Assembly today before parliament was adjourned for the day. The motion will now be debated in parliament on March 31, according to procedure. The former captain of the Pakistan cricket team came to power in 2018 with the promise of 'Naya Pakistan'. However, as the government failed to arrest the skyrocketing prices of essential items and the party leaders faced charges of corruption, the tide of support turned against Khan and his government. Nearly four years and several scandals later, the prime minister, facing a no-trust vote in parliament, must gather at least 172 members to save his coalition government from collapsing.

In an attempt to placate allies and get their votes, Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf on Monday said that it will support Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, a leader of its ally PML-Q, as its Punjab chief minister candidate after the sitting chief minister, Usman Buzdar, resigned. The PML-Q has assured the PM of its support in the National Assembly.

"Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf will support Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi as a candidate for the chief minister and the PML-Q has announced to support the PM amid a no-confidence motion," the prime minister's aide on political communication, Shahbaz Gill, made the announcement on Twitter in Urdu. Following the settlement between the PML-Q and the PTI, Tariq Bashir Cheema resigned as federal minister for housing. "I have tendered my resignation from the cabinet," Tariq Bashir Cheema was quoted as saying by ARY news.

5 TOP DEVELOPMENTS

1. Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif, who brought the no trust motion in the Assembly, said that he will throw his support behind the Imran Khan government if the prime minister presents the letter of threats that he has allegedly received from "foreign elements" in parliament.

Sharif, who is also the president of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), reportedly said, "Khan sahab, I will support you if foreign intervention to topple the incumbent government is proved." He was addressing a press conference.

2. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday

at his party's rally in Islamabad, a show of strength ahead of the trust vote, had claimed that the opposition's no-trust move is part of an alleged "foreign-funded conspiracy" hatched against his government over his refusal to have the country's foreign policy be influenced by foreign powers.

"Attempts are being made to influence our foreign policy from abroad. We have been aware of this conspiracy for months. We also know about those who have assembled these people (the opposition parties) but times have changed. This is not the era of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto," Khan said, reported ARY news.

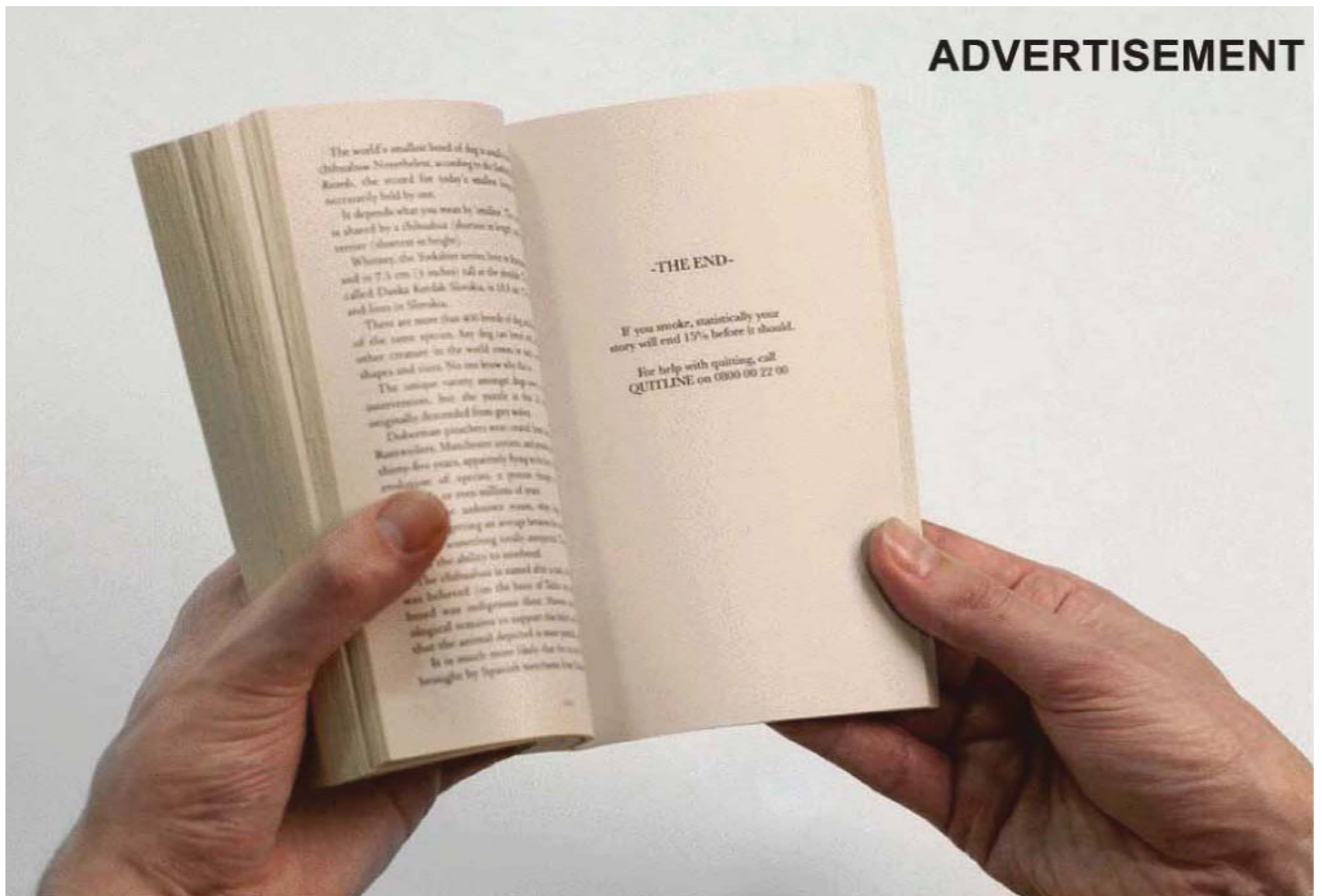
3. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) has reached a political settlement with the PTI, ARY News reported, citing sources on Monday. The federal government has decided to give the maritime ministry to MQM-P, sources told ARY news.

Sindh Governor Imran Ismail told ARY that the PTI government will make all-out efforts to get the support of its coalition partners and that they will also continue the efforts to bring back the dissident PTI lawmakers.

4. Absconding Pakistan People's Party (PPP) parliamentarian Jam Abdul Karim, charged in a murder case, plans to return to Pakistan on Tuesday to cast his vote on the no-trust motion against Imran Khan. According to reports, Karim has booked his air ticket to Pakistan despite his name being on the no-fly list. Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed has announced that Abdul Karim will be arrested on arrival.

5. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz on Monday said that she will reveal the contents of a secret letter that was waved by Imran Khan in the Islamabad rally, calling it evidence of an international conspiracy against his government. Speaking to the media, Maryam Nawaz said that instead of focusing on the betterment of the country, Imran Khan focused his entire tenure on criticizing Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif. "Now it is time for him to tremble as no trust moves against Imran Khan and Usman Buzdar will succeed with a huge majority vote," she said.

ADVERTISEMENT



PASRICHA & PATEL^{LLC}

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

NOW REPRESENTING LONG ISLAND & QUEENS



SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT,

Pasricha & Patel has always strived to provide superior legal representation to its clients in a vast array of fields such as:

Business
Closings

Technology
Law

Commercial
Litigation

Commercial
Transactions

25+

Years of
Excellence

- ✓ **Real Estate**
- ✓ **Immigration**
- ✓ **Trust & Estates**



55 NORTH BROADWAY, SUITE 201, HICKSVILLE NY 11801

Visit www.pasricha.com | Call 516-530-1596 | Write to us at law@pasricha.com

1794 Oak Tree Road
Edison, NJ 08820
T: (732) 593-6200

381 Park Avenue South, Suite 1220
New York, New York 10016
T: (646) 741-9399

US govt extends environmental review of Musk's ambitious Starship

SpaceX founder Elon Musk said last month he was "highly confident" his new SpaceX Starship, designed for voyages to the moon and Mars, will reach Earth orbit for the first time this year



review does not guarantee a vehicle operator license will be issued, which must also meet FAA safety, risk and financial responsibility requirements. The FAA said it "is currently reviewing the Final (Programmatic Environmental Assessment) and completing consultation and coordination with agencies at the local, state, and federal level." SpaceX founder Elon Musk said last month he was "highly confident" his new SpaceX Starship, designed for voyages to the moon and Mars, will

reach Earth orbit for the first time this year. The FAA is deciding whether the planned build-out in Texas poses a significant environmental impact to the area - including an adjacent wildlife reserve - and must therefore undergo a far more extensive study before expanded operations at SpaceX's rocket production facility and spaceport in Boca Chica can be licensed. Even in a "worst-case" scenario, in which a full environmental impact statement were required or legal wrangling over the issue threatened to drag

on, Musk said SpaceX has a fallback plan. The company would shift its entire Starship program to the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, where SpaceX already has received the environmental approval it needs, Musk said. Such a move would cause a setback of six to eight months, he added. In any case, SpaceX is still shooting for a 2023 launch of what it calls the world's first private lunar mission, flying aboard a Starship to loop around the moon and return to Earth.

(SAI Bureau) The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said on Friday it was again extending its target date to complete an environmental review of the proposed SpaceX Starship spacecraft and Super Heavy rocket program in Boca Chica, Texas, to April 29. The FAA's previous target date was March 28. The FAA noted that completing the environmental

China, Russia cool to US aim for more North Korea sanctions

After North Korea tested an intercontinental ballistic missile, the US aimed to impose more UN sanctions. However, China and Russia showed little interest in tightening restrictions

(SAI Bureau) North Korea's test of a big new intercontinental ballistic missile prompted the United States to press Friday for stiffer UN sanctions, but China and Russia showed little appetite for tightening restrictions that they have been trying to ease. A day after North Korea's first long-range test since 2017, US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield urged the council to condemn the launch and encourage North Korea to return to negotiations. "It was an egregious and unprovoked escalation" that threatens the world, said Thomas-Greenfield, whose country joined Albania, France, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom in calling for the meeting. Thomas-Greenfield added that the US would propose a measure "to update and strengthen" sanctions. She declined after the meeting to give specifics.

The Security Council originally imposed sanctions after the North's first nuclear test explosion in 2006 and has tightened them over the years, in response to further nuclear tests and increasingly sophisticated nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Britain agreed Friday more sanctions should be

considered, and several other members urged action of some kind. But veto-wielding China and Russia proposed last fall to lift sanctions that bar their neighbor from exporting seafood and textiles, limit its imports of refined petroleum products and prohibit its citizens from working overseas and sending home their earnings. Russian Deputy Ambassador Anna Evstigneeva said Friday that further sanctions would "threaten North Korean citizens with unacceptable socioeconomic and humanitarian problems," while Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun urged



the council "to consider how to accommodate the DPRK's justified security concerns." He suggested that the US didn't do enough to respond to the North's 2018 self-imposed

moratorium on long-range missile and nuclear tests. "It is right and proper for the US side to show its good will, take actions that have practical relevance and work hard

to stabilize the situation, build mutual trust, and relaunch dialogue," Zhang said. "Are they going to come up with concrete actions that can actually solve problems, or are they going to continue to use the (Korean) Peninsula as a bargaining chip in their geopolitical strategy?" Many council members expressed alarm at the launch and appealed to North Korea to stop. "The world can ill afford to have multiple crises at this time," said Ghanian Ambassador Harold Adlai Agyeman, pointing to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

After Biden's fiery speech, nine unscripted words reverberate

(SAI Bureau) President Joe Biden's high-stakes speech in Warsaw, Poland, on Saturday was crafted with the intent of throwing the full weight of the United States behind its European allies, while framing the Russian invasion of Ukraine as part of a global "battle between democracy and autocracy." And although the forceful denunciation of Russian President Vladimir Putin's war resonated with some leaders, it was an unprompted ad-lib that captured the attention of foreign policy experts, members of Congress and NATO allies. "For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power," Biden declared, a comment that two White House officials said was not included in his prepared speech. Even as top administration officials spent Sunday walking back Biden's remarks,

the statement had already sent ripple effects throughout the world, highlighting just how powerful nine unprompted words from Biden can be, particularly during a foreign policy crisis. "I wouldn't use this kind of words," French President Emmanuel Macron said in a television interview Sunday, when asked to comment on Biden's speech. He said he hoped to obtain a cease-fire and the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine through diplomacy. Until Biden's unscripted moment, the speech had largely achieved its intended goals, lawmakers, allies and foreign policy experts said. But immediately afterwards Biden's aides worried that his surprising remark might roil some of those allies the president was determined to keep unified. Taken literally, the remark meant the United

States would be reversing a policy of not pushing for regime change. Biden's staff felt as if it had little choice but to play down the off-the-cuff comment. "We do not have a strategy of regime change in Russia or anywhere else, for that matter," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in Jerusalem after meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid. "In this case, as in any case, it's up to the people of the country in question." Michal Baranowski, a senior fellow and director of the Warsaw office of the German Marshall Fund who attended Biden's speech, acknowledged that Biden's comment could be perceived as "a call for regime change." But he said it was unlikely to lead to further escalation with Russia.

Biden's budget focuses on fighting inflation, but that's mainly a fed project

(SAI Bureau) Soaring consumer prices are undermining President Joe Biden's economic approval ratings, making inflation a critical topic for the White House headed into midterm elections — and making fighting it a focus of the administration's budget, even though the Federal Reserve plays the primary role in countering rapid price increases. Biden's administration, in its budget proposal released Monday, emphasized that some of the investments it is making or proposing could lower costs for families. The budget document — which mentions the word "costs" 47 times and "inflation" six — earmarks funding for port infrastructure development, money to improve the passenger and freight railway system, and funds to help with financing the construction and rehabilitation of inexpensive housing stock, among other measures that might help to improve supply in the economy over time.

Presidential budgets are an outline of an administration's priorities

rather than policies that are actually enacted in full. By repeatedly referencing plans to cut costs for families, Biden is making it clear that the concern ranks high on his list. But there is not much the White House can do quickly to ease rapid price increases, which have been running at the fastest pace in 40 years. Supply chain fixes could take years to pay off. In the meantime, fighting inflation is primarily the job of the Fed.

The central bank raised interest rates for the first time since late 2018 earlier this month, and officials have forecast that they will continue to increase borrowing costs over the course of this year and next. Doing so will make financing big purchases more expensive in a bid to cool off demand, slow down the economy and temper price increases.

The Fed's preferred inflation measure

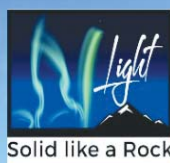
is expected to show that prices climbed by 6.4% in the year through February, based on estimates from a Bloomberg survey, when it is



released later this week. Central bankers aim for 2% inflation, so that is more than three times their goal. Fed policymakers are hoping that their policy changes, paired with further supply chain and labor market healing, will help them to return annual inflation to 4.3% by the end of the year. As inflation has accelerated over the past year, it has become a big part of the nation's consciousness. Biden's economic approval ratings have fallen sharply, based on the results of an NBC News

poll this month, and cost of living is voters' top concern. Angst over high prices is also becoming palpable in daily life. A cryptocurrency advertisement that leads with the line "Frustrated by high inflation?" hangs over a security checkpoint at Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey. "Saturday Night Live" included a joke about rising fuel costs earlier this month ("Girl, I know Biden better do something about these gas prices," Ego Nwodim commiserated with Zoë Kravitz at the start of a skit). That creates a challenge for the White House, which can do only so much in the face of higher prices. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has sent fuel prices sharply higher, something neither the administration nor the Fed can immediately or fully counteract. When it comes to broader, economy wide pressures, curbing demand is most likely to be the faster way to slow down price increases — but the Fed's policy changes work by slowing down the job market, which is unlikely to make voters feel much better.

Insurance



Are you paying too much for Auto, Home, Business, Workman Compensation, Contractors, General Liability, E&O ?

Call us today for complimentary analysis of your policy.



Sharanjit Singh Thind
Licensed P&C Insurance Broker, Notary Public
(Service with Integrity & Smiles Since 2012)

Tel: 516-654-4488

insure@nlightfin.com www.nlightfin.com



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.



US FCC adds Russia's Kaspersky, China telecom firms to national security threat list



(SAI Bureau) The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on Friday added Russia's Kaspersky Lab, China Telecom (Americas) Corp and China Mobile International USA to its list of communications equipment and service providers deemed threats to U.S. national security. The regulator last year designated five long Chinese companies including Huawei Technologies Co and ZTE Corp as the first firms on the list, which was mandated under a 2019 law. Kaspersky is

federal networks in 2017. Moscow-based Kaspersky has consistently denied being a tool of the Russian government. In naming Kaspersky, the FCC announcement did not cite Russia's invasion of Ukraine or recent warnings by President Joe Biden of potential cyberattacks by Russia in response to U.S. sanctions and support of Ukraine. Kaspersky said in a statement that it was disappointed in the FCC decision, arguing it was "made on political grounds." The move was "unsubstantiated and is a response to the geopolitical climate rather than a comprehensive evaluation of the integrity of Kaspersky's products and services," the company said.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington said Friday that

the FCC "abused state power and maliciously attacked Chinese telecom operators again without factual basis. The U.S. should immediately stop its unreasonable suppression of Chinese companies." "China will take necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies," it added. The Chinese companies did not immediately comment. In October, the FCC revoked the U.S. authorization for China Telecom (Americas), saying it "is subject to exploitation, influence and control by the Chinese government." The FCC cited its prior decisions to deny or revoke the Chinese telecom companies' ability to operate in United States in its decision to add them to the threat list. The FCC also

of China Unicom and Pacific Networks and its wholly owned subsidiary ComNet. In 2019, the FCC rejected China Mobile's bid to provide U.S. telecommunications services, citing national security risks. Inclusion on the "covered list" means money from the FCC's \$8 billion annual Universal Service Fund may not be used to purchase or maintain products from the companies. The fund supports telecommunications for rural areas, low-income consumers, and facilities such as schools, libraries and hospitals. The FCC last year also named Hytera Communications, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology and Dahua Technology as security threats. FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel said the agency worked closely with U.S. national security agencies to update the list and will add additional companies if warranted.

Looking to Buy/Sell?

We know the difference between Home & House

Honesty, Integrity & Experience

Specializing in Investment & Income Producing Real Estate

Night Real Estate

Tel: 516 NLIGHT4

Since 2007

Sharanjit Singh Thind
Real Estate Broker/Notary Public

180 Broadway, PH 3A, Hicksville NY 11801
Email: homes@nlightrealestate.com
www.nlightrealestate.com

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ

Since April 2005 Editor: Sharnjit Singh Thind PUNJABI DUNIYA Weekly

Vol. 14 Issue 15 Wednesday 02 Jan to 08 Jan, 2019 www.PUNJABIDUNIYA.com Published Weekly from New York

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ

ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਨੌਜਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਉਡਾਰੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਲਈ ਖਰਚੇ 27000 ਕਰੋੜ... (Article text continues)

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

ਸੱਜਣ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਬਚਾ-ਬਚਾ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ... (Article text continues)

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

ਨਵੇਂ ਸਾਲ ਮੌਕੇ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਫੌਜ ਨੇ ਬੰਬ ਦਾ ਟਵੀਟ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਮੰਗੀ ਮੁਆਫ਼ੀ... (Article text continues)

ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਖਾਲਿਸਤਾਨ ਲਿਬਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਫੋਰਸ ਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਲਾਈ

ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਖਾਲਿਸਤਾਨ ਲਿਬਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਫੋਰਸ ਤੇ ਪਾਬੰਦੀ ਲਾਈ... (Article text continues)

Insurance

Business, Liability, Disability, Workers Comp, E & O, Auto, Home, Property & Casualty

917-612-3158
www.whitestonecorp.com

Four Deutsche Bank execs are fired for 'charging strip club visit to the company

Four New York-based employees and without bias.'

of the financial powerhouse Deutsche Bank have been fired after they allegedly tried to expense a night out at a strip club in violation of company policy.

Ben Darsney, former Americas head of equity capital markets, was fired alongside Ravi Raghunathan, Brandon Sun and Daniel Gaona, after attempting to expense the night out as a legitimate restaurant visit, according to Bloomberg. Darsney, 40, had worked for Deutsche Bank since 2010. He did not immediately respond to an inquiry from DailyMail.com on Sunday.

A Deutsche Bank spokesman told DailyMail.com in a statement: 'Deutsche Bank thoroughly investigates allegations of possible misconduct comprehensively

'We do not condone violations of our Code of Conduct or Company Policy,' the statement added. 'When required by the facts and circumstances, we take appropriate remedial action.' The bank declined to comment further on the circumstances of the incident, but an insider told DailyMail.com that there were no allegations of harassment involved and the incident was not related to business activity. Even going to a strip club with colleagues is a violation of Deutsche Bank's company policy, and the error was allegedly compounded by attempting to expense the trip, and then by efforts to cover up the incident. According to the New York Post, Darsney and Raghunathan, the managing director who ran most of the bank's SPAC business, took

colleagues and a client to an unidentified strip club in February.

Others who were fired in the incident may have been accused of trying to cover up the expense Bloomberg and the Post.

The bank declined to comment further on the incident, but an insider said that there were no allegations of harassment involved and the incident was not related to business activity.

report. 'People got fired who weren't at said event but lied and participated in coverup,' an insider told The Post. 'Everyone was very well-regarded, which made it hard,' the person added of Deutsche's decision to fire the men. Raghunathan, Sun, and Gaona could not be reached for comment by DailyMail.com and

club, but was allegedly involved in the expense report. According to the Post, the charges involved in the incident amounted to less than \$1,000. The strip-club incident comes as Deutsche Bank pushes to put a greater emphasis on company culture and compliance.

Deutsche Bank said on Friday it had promoted its finance

chief James von Moltke to the role of deputy chief executive officer. Von Moltke will be the second of two deputies, serving along with Karl von Rohr, who has been in the role since 2018. He will also remain CFO. Von Moltke joined Deutsche as CFO five years ago and has played a key role in the bank's overhaul by keeping a tight lid on costs and communicating with investors and the public. 'This gives us the right governance structure to succeed in the long term in this time of increasing complexity and volatility,' Chief Executive Officer Christian Sewing said. In 2019, Deutsche Bank embarked on a major restructuring that involved cutting 18,000 staff and exiting some businesses. Last year, the bank delivered its most profitable year in a decade, its second consecutive annual profit following years of losses.

Germany: G7 rejects Russia's demand to pay for gas in rubles

Energy ministers from the Group of Seven industrialized nations reject demands by President Vladimir Putin that "unfriendly" countries pay for Russian gas with roubles, Germany's Robert Habeck said after talks with his counterparts on Monday. The Group of Seven major economies have agreed to reject Moscow's demand to pay for Russian natural gas exports in rubles, the German energy minister said Monday.

Robert Habeck told reporters that "all G-7 ministers agreed completely that this (would be) a one-sided and clear breach of the existing contracts" for natural gas, which is used to heat homes, generate electricity and power industry. He said officials from France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada met Friday to coordinate natural and that European Union representatives also were present. Habeck said that "payment in ruble is not acceptable and we will urge the companies affected not to follow (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's demand." Putin announced last week that Russia will demand "unfriendly" countries pay for natural gas only in Russian currency from now on, instructing the central bank to work out a procedure for buyers to acquire

roubles in Russia. The demand sent already high gas prices even higher amid fears it could be a prelude to a natural gas shutoff, which could disrupt Europe's economy and hurt Russia's finances.

Economists said the move appeared designed to try to support the ruble, which has collapsed against other currencies since Putin invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24 and Western countries responded with far-reaching

sanctions against Moscow. But some analysts expressed doubt that it would work. Asked by reporters earlier Monday if Russia could cut natural gas supplies to European customers if they reject the demand to pay in rubles, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in a conference call that "we clearly aren't going to supply gas for free." "In our situation, it's hardly possible and feasible to engage in charity for Europe," Peskov said. Asked what happens if Russia turns off the taps now, Germany's energy minister said, "We are prepared for all scenarios." "Putin's demand to convert the

Economists said that the move appeared designed to try to support the ruble, which has collapsed against other currencies since Putin invaded Ukraine and Western countries responded with far-reaching sanctions against Moscow

contracts to ruble (means) he is standing with his back to the wall in that regard, otherwise he wouldn't have made that demand," Habeck said, adding that Russia needs rubles to finance its war at home, such as payments to troops. European governments have shied away from imposing a ban on energy

imports from Russia over fears of the impact it would have on the economy. Europe gets 40% of its gas and 25% of its oil from Russia, and since the war, has scrambled to set out proposals to reduce its dependency. Russia is just as reliant on Europe, with oil and gas its dominant sector and paying for government.

Estimates of the impact of a gas boycott or embargo on Europe vary but most involve a substantial loss of economic output, especially since the war and the resulting surge in energy and raw material prices is already weighing on Europe's

economy. U.S. sanctions permit exceptions for payments for oil and gas, though it has banned Russian energy imports itself. Putin's rubles payment proposal led Germany's utilities association, the BDEW, to call on the government to declare an "early warning" of an energy emergency. A spokeswoman said Monday that the government does not see the need for an early warning declaration at this time.

When pressed by reporters on making the declaration, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said "the contracts we know lay down the euro as payment currency and the companies will pay according to the contracts they have signed." What currency is used to buy Russian energy "doesn't really matter," said Robin Brooks, chief economist at the Institute of International Finance, a trade group for the world's banks. "What matters is that energy exports give Russia purchasing power, which it can convert into goods from abroad," she said. Putin's demand for payment in rubles "is mostly window dressing. It doesn't change the underlying transactions," Brooks said. "At the margin, I would call this another own goal' by Putin, since it increases the focus on gas purchases by Western Europe and could potentially raise the odds of an import stop."

Can Vladimir Putin be removed as Russian president over Ukraine war?

The US government, however, promptly walked back. It denied that Biden was planning a regime change in Russia even though his speech was welcome and termed "historic". Russia came back at the US saying a change of regime "is not for Biden to decide the president of Russia is elected by Russians".

The US's ally, France, in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato), too, sounded uncomfortable with Biden's speech. France's President Emmanuel Macron warned that a verbal escalation could scuttle peace talks attempting to broker a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine is being cannibalised by Russia, which has blamed the West for its invasion. Russia has pegged the invasion of Ukraine at securing a guarantee against Nato expansion in its neighbourhood. The US has been directly involved in regime changes in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a military attempt at the same in Syria, where Russia came to the rescue of President Bashar al-Asad in recent times. This makes Biden's speech in Poland's Warsaw which is best known in history for the communist pact of 1955 that formalised the Cold War whose ghost is being seen in Russia's invasion of Ukraine significant.

WHAT BIDEN SAID

Biden directly addressed Putin's compatriots from Warsaw, "You, the Russian people, are not our enemy."

"For God's sake, this man [Putin] cannot remain in power."

In a prompt response, an official from Biden's office, the White House, was quoted as saying, "The president's point was that Putin cannot be allowed to exercise power over his neighbours or the region. He was not discussing Putin's power in Russia, or regime change."

This was the beginning of a retreat from Biden's off-the-cuff statement. His Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, "I think the president, the White House, made the point last night that, quite simply, President Putin cannot be empowered to wage war or engage in aggression against Ukraine or anyone else."

Biden himself said, "No", when reporters asked if he was calling for regime change in Russia.

CALL FOR REMOVAL NOT NEW

Before Biden's statement, a US Senator, Lindsey Graham, recently said the only way Russia's invasion of Ukraine would end was "for somebody in

Russia to take this guy out".

Graham posted a tweet saying, "You would be doing your country and the world a great service."

"Is there a Brutus in Russia? Is there a more successful Colonel Stauffenberg in the Russian military?"

Brutus was a Roman politician who assassinated warrior emperor Julius Caesar and was made famous for posterity by dramatist William Shakespeare through his play, The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, first performed in 1599.

Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg was a German army officer, best-known for attempting to assassinate Nazi leader Adolf Hitler in 1944 during the Second World War. Graham's call for assassination of Putin did not evoke shock responses that could possibly have in other times. White House press secretary Jen Psaki played down the remarks saying his stance was "not the position of the United States government and certainly not a statement you would hear come from the mouth of anybody working in this administration". Russia's ambassador to the US, Anatoly Antonov, called the statement as "unacceptable and outrageous" arising out of "Russophobia and hatred" in the US towards Russia.

Antonio said, "It is unbelievable that a country's senator preaching his moral values as a

'guiding star' to all mankind could afford a call on terrorism as a way to achieve Washington's goals on the international arena."

BUT CAN PUTIN BE REMOVED?

Sudden appearance of a Brutus in Russia with the required degree of access to invade Putin's inner cordon looks extremely unlikely if not improbable. Putin has been ruling Russia in one capacity or the other for 23 years. Having worked with the Soviet spy agency KGB, and its post-Soviet Russian successor, FSB, Putin is said to have mastery over his country's security apparatus.

Given that Putin controls the Russian state with iron fist, his involuntary removal as its president could happen if the Russian forces are humiliated in Ukraine, or, the economic sanctions imposed by the West breaks the Russian economy to the extent that it makes the general life in Russia miserable. A retreat of the Russian forces inside the country's borders will demolish Putin's image beyond redemption. The economic hardships of the masses, not just the oligarchs, might trigger a popular uprising against Putin something similar to what brought an end to the reign of Nicholas II, the last tsar of Russia more than a century ago.

IS RUSSIA LOSING THE UKRAINE WAR?

The answer to this question depends on whom a reader follows and believes. Media reports from the West particularly the US, the UK and Ukraine speak a lot about the reverses the Russian forces have 'suffered'. The Russian media reports paint a contrastingly different picture of the nation's military operation in Ukraine.

What is clearly known is that Russia has captured large territories in the eastern, northern and southern parts of Ukraine. Invasion pressure is mounting on Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital.

Fighting for the crucial Mariupol port has been intense for over a week. Russia is said to have shifted thousands of residents from Mariupol to areas it controls. Reports suggest that Russia wants this port city to secure a land route to Crimea it annexed in 2014. Zelenskyy, on the other hand, is dropping hints that his government may be inching towards accepting Putin's demands. He gave an interview to a Russian media house saying that he was ready to agree to accommodate the "neutral status" demand made by Putin. He is demanding a security guarantee in return. This might not actually be a demand for every agreement ending war is worded to that effect in a legal sense. The next round of peace

talks, in-person, are set to resume this week in Turkey.

NUCLEAR QUESTION

Despite the signs of slow progress, a Russian humiliation in the Ukraine war doesn't look to be happening any time soon even if reports of the Russian retreat are true. Russia, anyway, has the fifth biggest standing army. Reports that his spy and security agency officials are unhappy and getting restless over the protracting war in Ukraine remain unverified. The Russia-Ukraine war is in its fifth week longer than Putin reportedly anticipated. Biden and the rest of the West appear to take it as their success.

But the longer the war goes on, the greater is the risk of alienation of Putin, crumbling of Russia's economy, escalating cost of war, and also Putin tempting to press the nuclear button. The question of removing Putin from the office of Russia's president may no longer be valid then. In April 2021, Putin signed a law that allowed him to run for the presidency twice more in his lifetime. This potentially can keep him in office until 2036. If Putin remains in power until 2036, his tenure will surpass that of Russian dictator Joseph Stalin, who ruled the Soviet Union for 29 years. This will make Putin the longest-serving Russian leader.

Google Chrome releases an urgent update, users must download it immediately

If you use Google Chrome, you should update your app immediately. Google has confirmed that its browser has a high-risk zero-day vulnerability that hackers are already exploiting. That means that your data and device on which the Chrome browser is installed may remain prone to hacking as long as the new update is not installed. The fact that Google released the new version as an emergency update hints that this security issue in the browser is serious. Google has rolled out Chrome version 99.0.4844.84 for Windows, Mac, and Linux, urging users to update their browser as soon as possible. In a Chrome Releases Blog Post, Google has explained that this version has just one security update focused on the zero-day exploit CVE-2022-1096, which was first reported by an anonymous researcher earlier this month. As explained by Google, this zero-day vulnerability resides in Chrome's JavaScript engine and exploits are already underway by

hackers to inject malicious code into the browser. Google said it will not reveal any more information about this vulnerability until a large chunk of Chrome users have downloaded the fix. Since the vulnerability exists in the Chromium engine, it also affects the Microsoft Edge browser. Microsoft has confirmed that the vulnerability exists in Edge and that it has already rolled out a fix to ensure protection against any potential exploits. The Microsoft Edge browser running version 99.0.1150.55 or higher is no longer vulnerable to the CVE-2022-1096 vulnerability, but if you have a version lower than this, you need to take this matter with a little seriousness and update your browser. What is CVE-2022-1096 vulnerability? While not much is known about this vulnerability, some research papers have hinted that CVE-2022-1096 is a "Type Confusion in V8." This simply refers to the JavaScript engine in Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge, both of which are

Chromium-based browsers. Since the anonymous researcher shared details of the vulnerability privately with Google, it is up to Google now when and if it wants to publicise the details. Its current decision not to do that may be based on the assumption that doing so would create panic and people would resort to uninstalling Chrome instead of updating it.

How to update Google Chrome?

It is very simple. Go to the Chrome menu by clicking on the three dots in the top right corner. Now head to Help. Click on "About Google Chrome". Your browser will automatically begin checking for a new update and when it finds one, the download will also start automatically. After the update is downloaded and installed, Chrome will ask you to relaunch the browser for the changes to come into effect. While restarting your system is not a mandatory step in the process, I would recommend you do that.

What is happening in Pakistan, where Imran Khan's fate hangs in balance?

At least two of these parties are creations of the military over the years — BAP came into existence shortly before the 2018 election, the PML(Q) was hacked out of the PML(N) by Musharraf. The MQM has sided with the military most times.

These parties have yet to convey their decision to Imran Khan. But even if all three stay with him, he will still need to bring back between a dozen to two dozen members from within the PTI, who have rebelled against his leadership, and will likely vote against him.

Who is this “man in London” that Imran is accusing of acting against Pakistan?

On Sunday, the Pakistan Prime Minister held a huge rally in Islamabad, close to the National Assembly, as a show of strength against the opposition. Borrowing from a Quranic exhortation, he called the rally Amr bil Mar'uf (encourage the good). According to Dawn, a large number of people, supporters of Imran and his Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, attended the rally.

Like many embattled leaders in South Asia before him fighting to survive in office, Imran lashed out at a “foreign hand”, and at the opposition PML(N) leader Nawaz Sharif, alleging that “a man sitting in London” was working against the interests of Pakistan. He alleged that

attempts were being made to influence the foreign policy of Pakistan against the nation's interests. “Attempts are being made through foreign money to change the government in Pakistan. Our people are being used. Mostly inadvertently, but some people are using money against us. We know from what places attempts are being made to pressure us. We have been threatened in writing but we will not compromise on national interest,” he said. Imran said he was presenting “a case for Pakistan's independence” and would share details of the “foreign conspiracy” very soon with the people. He claimed to have incontrovertible proof of this alleged conspiracy in the form of a letter.

“The nation wants to know who the man sitting in London is meeting with and whose directions the characters based in Pakistan are following? I am revealing the proof we have. I cannot talk more in detail because I have to protect the interest of my country. I cannot talk about anything that harms my country. I could have told you about it. I do not fear anyone but I care about Pakistan's interest,” he said.

What are the Opposition doing outside parliament?

The Pakistan Muslim League (N), the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (F) are scheduled to hold their own rally in Islamabad on Monday.

Birbhum Massacre: Like a Debt Trap, Bengal is Caught in a Cycle of Perpetual Violence

Ask any transporter, every truck pays a hefty extortion tax for both inter-state and intra-state movement in West Bengal. The rate varies from Rs 2000 to Rs 7000 per truck. Even movement of essentials comes at a cost. The relationship between money and politics is old and global. All political parties collect their pound of flesh from the business to run the establishment. The bigger the party, the more is the collection. In a thriving state, these collections are done in bulk. As the share of large businesses receded and the state became more and more isolated from the national economy, politics in West Bengal became

increasingly dependent on retail collections. Such an ecosystem needs huge manpower and that ensures wider social recognition. That also explains why the great Bengali intellectualism, which is critical about everything under the sun, goes on silent mode about atrocities at home, under their noses. Since political power is crucial for the survival of the ecosystem, everyone willy-nilly sides with the ruling party. This explains the great resistance or hesitancy of the electorate in West Bengal to change. As politics became increasingly transactional and elections became an existential issue and violence became

normal. In the past, such violence used to take place between supporters of opposing parties. As the hegemony of the ruling party grew, inner-party struggles became more commonplace. Conflicts between factions of the ruling Trinamool rocked the entire state in the run-up to the recently concluded municipal election. How the inner-party conflicts spill over in the post-poll scenario can be a subject of deep research. The sorry fact is: such ills have become a mainstay of the political economy of West Bengal. Only a forceful intervention can stop it. But considering the political risks involved, that's a tall expectation.

Demonising India over Ukraine Won't Help, West Needs Delhi by its Side in Indo-Pacific Contest

Eighty-five per cent of India's oil requirements are imported, which makes up 32 per cent of all its imports, the highest among major economies. Every dollar of price increases hurts. Sixty per cent of cooking oil is imported. Half of all Indians are farmers and need fertiliser, cheap fuel, etc. COVID-19 has hurt the economy and millions have fallen into poverty. The West may be able to withstand high oil prices, but India cannot. India will therefore strive for the best deals. For context, even as India has been in a border dispute with China for nearly two years now, its import and trade deficit with Beijing has grown, since banning imports will only hurt the Indian economy. Judging India through the lens of the First World is fallacious.

The international community must not only understand India's diplomatic language, but also see its actions. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spoken on two occasions with the presidents of Russia and Ukraine, urging a ceasefire and dialogue. India declared humanitarian support for Ukraine as soon as the conflict broke out, and the first shipment of aid arrived in the first week, and more followed. However, India abstained from the recent vote on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine. India and China cannot be grouped together either. While China abstained from UN voting, it repeated Russia's

talking points. At the recent meeting between Indian and Chinese foreign ministers, it was apparent that India and China had divergent views on Ukraine.

INDIA'S RUSSIAN DEPENDENCE

The same way India did not condemn the Iraq invasion of the United States, it has very good reasons to avoid antagonising Russia. Over the past five decades, India has relied heavily on Russian weapons. According to the latest SIPRI reports, despite attempts to diversify, nearly half of India's weapons requirements are still fulfilled by Russia. Apart from weapons dependency, India is continuously in need of spare parts, maintenance and upgrades for all the systems it has imported from Russia. While India has imported military hardware worth \$20 billion from the US in the last 15 years, most of it is transport and surveillance aircraft. All of India's war fighting equipment is Russian — tanks, multi-barrel rocket launchers, infantry fighting vehicles, air defence systems, fighter aircraft, attack and transport helicopters, its lone aircraft carrier along with its fighter aircraft and helicopters, submarines, warships etc.

According to a study, 86 per cent of the equipment, weapons and platforms currently in military service in India is of Russian origin. For the Navy, it is more than 41 per cent while two-thirds of the IAF's equipment is of Russian

origin. The figure for the Army is a whopping 90 per cent, by assigning country of origin to around 10,000 pieces of military hardware. To reduce this dependency, which limits India's strategic autonomy, it will take decades of effort, largely indigenous. Up until then, India will remain heavily dependent on Russia for its spare parts, despite American efforts to provide alternative sources.

The reality is that India is currently embroiled in a conflict with China on the Himalayan front, a conflict with explosive potential. Russian supplies are vital to India's large deployment along its border, which forced Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to rush to Moscow after the Galwan clash.

INDIA'S RUSSIAN DILEMMA

However, this is where India's dilemmas over Russia mount. In recent years, Russia has grown increasingly dependent on China which is of serious concern for India. After annexing Crimea, trade between Russia and China more than doubled between 2015 and 2021, growing from \$64 billion to \$146 billion. In comparison, trade between India and Russia amounts to about \$8 billion, mainly in weapons. Security cooperation has also increased, with regular complex military exercises including joint strategic bomber patrols and naval exercises,

which include exercises in the Indian Ocean, which is India's backyard.

The Russian president has praised China and China-Russia relations on several occasions. He said Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination can be called a model of efficient cooperation between countries in the 21st century. That Russia is China's number one partner and that they are even developing certain high-tech weapons together. In 2019, Putin announced helping China develop missile early warning systems. This undermines India's nuclear deterrence against China, which is completely based on ballistic missiles. In August 2021, the two countries' armies held a military drill in China during which they used a joint command and control system for the first time, echoing Nato's approach. Before Putin went to war in Ukraine, he went to Beijing, where he effectively accepted Russia as a junior partner of China. Russia and China declared — relations between Russia and China are superior to political and military alliances of the Cold War era. Friendship between the two States has no limits, there are no “forbidden” areas of cooperation. Prior to this, the Russian ambassador to the UK said that the West is pushing Russia closer to China. It is not the way great powers speak. For India to tell that China's policies are driving it to the West is inconceivable.

Why Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal stake claim to Chandigarh?

After Home Minister Amit Shah's announcement of bringing Chandigarh administration employees under the ambit of the central government, the debate over whether the Union Territory is a part of Punjab, Haryana or Himachal has come to the fore again



The Punjab Reorganisation Act is again in the news after Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday announced that the government staffers in the Union Territory of Chandigarh will be considered as Central Government employees from Monday, March 28. After the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) appointment controversy, the latest announcement has seemingly stirred up discontent in Punjab, with political parties alleging that the Union government is trying to infringe

on the rights of the people of Punjab.

PUNJAB CITES RAJIV LONGOWAL ACCORD

Successive Punjab governments have been claiming that Chandigarh was an integral part of Punjab. The claim, according to politicians in Punjab, was justified by the Rajiv Longowal Accord of 1985. Akali Dal feels that the move was an attempt to 'dilute' Punjab's right to the capital as till Sunday, the UT's employees were being governed by the

Punjab Civil Services Rules. The Punjab Reorganisation Act was passed on September 18, 1966, to provide for the reorganisation of the existing state of Punjab. This act came into existence after the formation of the states of Punjab and Haryana and the Union Territory of Chandigarh and the subsequent transfer of the hill areas to Himachal Pradesh. According to senior Akali Dal leader Daljit Singh Cheema, the Punjab Reorganisation Act stipulates that 60% of Chandigarh employees will be from Punjab and the remaining 40% will be from Haryana. Chandigarh, as per Congress leader Sukhpal Singh Khaira, is a "disputed territory".

'CHANDIGARH PART OF AMBALA'

Besides Punjab, Haryana has also been staking claim to Chandigarh on the basis of the same Act. "Chandigarh belonged to Haryana and will always be a part of Haryana," former Haryana Chief Minister

Bhupinder Singh Hooda said. Haryana politicians say that Chandigarh was part of the Ambala district and is an inseparable part of Haryana.

HIMACHAL CITES SC JUDGMENT

Interestingly, it is not just Punjab and Haryana but Himachal Pradesh as well that has been claiming its share of Chandigarh on the basis of a Supreme Court judgment delivered on September 27, 2011. The order stated that Himachal Pradesh was entitled to get 7.19% of Chandigarh's land on the basis of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966. Himachal Chief Minister Jay Ram Thakur has also been claiming that the state was entitled to get 7.19% of the power being generated from Bhakra Nangal Power Project with effect from November 1996. "The state should get its legitimate share in Chandigarh" Jai Ram Thakur said.

India resumes regular international flights: Here are new guidelines



Regular international flights resumed from Sunday (March 27) with airports and airlines getting ready for normal overseas operations, after a coronavirus pandemic-induced hiatus of over two years.

The airline industry has been making a comeback after it was impacted immensely due to the Covid. The government has revised the COVID-19 guidelines for international flight operations.

Here are the rules:

Cabin crew members will no longer be needed to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) kits. Authorities have said that airlines will no longer be needed to keep three seats vacant for medical emergencies. Wherever needed, security personnel at airports are allowed to resume pat-down searches of passengers. They also said that Airlines may carry a few additional PPE protective gears, sanitiser and N-95 masks, to

handle any respiratory infections related to cases on air. Wearing face masks and following basic restrictions for coronavirus (COVID-19) such as wearing of masks, using sanitiser, etc still mandatory at airports and on flights. Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), the operator of IGIA, expects to connect to over 60 international destinations after the resumption of regular overseas flights.

While mentioning the resumption of regular international flights, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, on March 8, had said that with this step, I am confident the sector will reach new heights". On November 26 last year, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had announced the resumption of scheduled international passenger flights from December 15, 2021. However, a few days later, the decision was revoked following a surge in coronavirus cases due to the Omicron variant.



FBI TEN MOST WANTED FUGITIVE

BHADRESHKUMAR CHETANBHAI PATEL

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



Photograph taken April 2015

DESCRIPTION

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

REWARD

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

REMARKS

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

CAUTION

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

SHOULD BE CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS

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

Field Office: Baltimore

From right technology to lay offs, key lessons from Covid-19 for offices

When the global pandemic upended work nearly overnight, organisations quickly transitioned to work from home or remote work to ensure business continuity

When the pandemic Covid-19 first struck the world two years ago, it ushered in a wave of upheaval followed by another and another. From upending countless businesses, jobs and lives, the pandemic has transformed all facets of work once and for all.

There is no going back but to keep finding one new normal after next. HR leaders across the globe were thrust to the frontline and tasked with training employees on remote work, helping them navigate challenges as everyone worked from home, managing company-wide lay-offs and adopting never-before-seen tech.

CRISIS SITUATION

Even in the crucible of crisis, HR teams steered their organisations through uncertainties, disruptions and cruxes. The practices adopted and the lessons learnt during the pandemic are sure to be carried to the post-pandemic world and enlighten the obscure path ahead.

As the dust settles and we continue to forge new paths in an ever-changing world, here are some key lessons HR teams have learnt over the course of two pandemic-afflicted years.

REMOTE WORK IS POSSIBLE, PROFITABLE

When the global pandemic upended work nearly overnight, organisations quickly transitioned to work from home or remote work to ensure business continuity. The early apprehensions and hesitations gave way to faith and confidence in employees and, eventually, productivity gains. With nearly 95 per cent of the workforce working remotely, organisations developed policies for employees to work remotely



and familiarize themselves with virtual meetings and communication tools. Now, two years later, employees and employers are profiting from remote and flexible working models with elevated productivity, performance and work-life balance. Employees no longer want to be tethered to offices and want to work with autonomy and flexibility.

CONTINUITY, CONTINGENCY PLAN

After having barely braved the pandemic, several organisations are putting in place contingency plans to insulate their business against any future Black Swan events. Millions of businesses across the globe had to shut down operations due to the pandemic.

To prevent any future business closure, organisations are not just focusing on growth strategies but also planning for business continuity and contingency. By investing in risk analysis and management, companies can devise strategies to respond to unexpected crises

that may threaten business survival in the future.

RIGHT TECHNOLOGY

Perhaps the biggest lesson learnt from the pandemic is embracing the right technology to cushion against sudden catastrophes. The pandemic accelerated the adoption of technology and digitalisation as businesses realised their transforming effects.

With the right investments in technology, many businesses were able to scale business operations and innovate in a time when others were struggling to survive. AI and automation helped organisations streamline complex business functions and eliminate redundant tasks. And cloud-based tech tools helped employees collaborate, reduce paperwork and improve performance.

LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

Business leaders across the globe learnt how crucial it was to build a leadership pipeline to ensure business continuity and improve

organisational resilience. Fostering resilience in employees and preparing them for future roles and responsibilities suddenly became the need of the hour. Mere leadership training is no longer sufficient by future leaders must be scouted, groomed, prepared and tested over time. By identifying linchpin positions, integrating succession planning with leadership development and measuring progress regularly, organisations can prepare an army of leaders of tomorrow who are ready to take on responsibilities and challenges.

TALENT ACQUISITION STRATEGIES

While in the first year of the pandemic, employees held onto their jobs for dear life lest they might lose them, the second year reversed the roles. With surging demand for tech talent across the globe, employees began to leave existing jobs for better roles in droves.

The 'Great Resignation' taught employers how hard

retaining employees can be and why they must build robust talent acquisition strategies. To win the war for talent, many organisations have partnered with online hiring platforms to leverage their abundant resources, advanced technologies, fast hiring velocity and vast geographical footprint.

The Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered how we work, hire and live. HR teams across the globe have learnt innumerable lessons no playbook could have taught them. Organisations have hatched innovative and novel strategies no business could have foreseen two years ago.

Many of the past strategies have been abandoned and organisations have accepted constant and continuous learning and changing is the only way forward. What the next year brings cannot be ascertained, but the two years of the Covid-19 pandemic have taught every business countless valuable lessons that can help them brave future crises.

United States still doubts that Russia is serious in talks with Ukraine: Blinken



The United States still doubts that Russia is serious in talks with Ukraine, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday, adding that Moscow should end its aggression now and pull its forces back.

"I've not seen anything to suggest that this is moving forward in an effective way because we have not seen signs of real seriousness" from Russia, Blinken said at a press conference in Morocco. "There is what Russia says and there

is what Russia does. We're focussed on the latter," he said. "What Russia is doing is the continued brutalisation of Ukraine and its people, and that continues as we speak." He added, "If they somehow believe that an effort to subjugate only the eastern part of Ukraine or the southern part of Ukraine ... can succeed, then once again they are profoundly fooling themselves." Reiterating Blinken's scepticism, UK PM Boris Johnson said, "The prime

minister underscored that we must judge Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime by their actions not their words. "Putin is twisting the knife in the open wound of Ukraine in an attempt to force the country and its allies to capitulate," the read-out stated. "The prime minister stressed to his fellow leaders that we should be unrelenting in our response."

Russia's military announced Tuesday it will "fundamentally" scale back operations near Ukraine's capital and a northern city, as talks brought the outlines of a possible deal to end the grinding war into view. Deputy Defence Minister Alexander Fomin said the move was meant to increase trust in the talks after several rounds of negotiations failed to halt what has devolved into a bloody campaign of

attrition. While Russia portrayed it as a goodwill gesture, it comes as the Kremlin's troops have become bogged down in the face of stiff Ukrainian resistance that has thwarted Putin's hopes for a quick military victory.

Fomin said Moscow has decided to "fundamentally ... cut back military activity in the direction of Kyiv and Chernihiv" to "increase mutual trust and create conditions for further negotiations." Russia's chief negotiator, Vladimir Medinsky, said this was one of two steps Moscow was taking to de-escalate the 34-day-old conflict. He said the other was that Russia would agree to a meeting between presidents Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky to take place simultaneously if and when a peace treaty was initialed by

their foreign ministers. Ukrainian negotiators said they had proposed at the latest round of talks with Russia that Ukraine adopt neutral status in exchange for security guarantees, meaning Kyiv would not join military alliances or host military bases. Medinsky said: "These proposals will be considered in the near future, reported to the president (Putin), and our response will be given." Fomin said Russia had also called on Ukraine to eliminate what he called torture of captured Russian prisoners. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told CNN "we haven't seen anything to corroborate" reports of Russia withdrawing significant forces from around Kyiv. "But what we have seen over the last couple of days is they have stopped trying to advance on Kyiv."

Order to send Dheeraj Wadhawan to jail from hospital passed by 'egotist' judge: Lawyers

The DHFL scam accused, Dheeraj Wadhawan, sought a stay on a March 24 order that sent him back to the Taloja jail from the private hospital where he was being treated for over a year now

Dheeraj Wadhawan, an accused in the DHFL scam, has been shifted to Navi Mumbai's Taloja Central Prison in line with the order passed by the special CBI Court. The bench of Justice PD Naik has granted a week's time to the central agency CBI to file its reply to Wadhawan's petition.

Advocates Amit Desai, Abaad Ponda and Kushal Mor, appearing for Dheeraj Wadhawan, sought a stay on the order passed by a special CBI judge on March 24 that sent their client back to the Taloja jail from the private hospital where he was being treated for over a year.

Advocate Hiten Venegaonkar, appearing for the agency, asked for two weeks' time and said, "If Amit Desai wants to argue on which sessions court special judge has more power, then I would need time to file an affidavit as the entire investigation is being done in Delhi and the affidavit has to be vetted by them." Justice Naik, without indulging Wadhawan's lawyers, said, "Two weeks is too long considering the important

issues involved."

The court has kept the case for hearing on April 4. Amit Desai told the court that the entire issue revolved around two special judges of the Mumbai sessions court. The special PMLA judge had permitted that Wadhawan be shifted to a civic-run hospital from jail with respect to the ED case only. Later, the court gave permission for Wadhawan to be shifted to a private hospital. He was lodged at the hospital for more than a year. Meanwhile, the CBI court, after receiving an application from the agency, noted that since the accused was initially arrested by the CBI and was produced before a CBI court, the CBI court becomes the "parent court" and that it should have been informed about the PMLA court order.

The special CBI court then ordered officials to constitute a medical board to check on Wadhawan's health after he is shifted from the private hospital to the Taloja prison.

"If an accused is in multiple courts'

custody, then it is not necessary for the accused to take permission from each and every court. This is judicial impropriety. If it was a superior court, then it would be a different matter. But if two sessions court judges act like this, then where will the accused go for justice? If you are sitting and passing orders against each other, then the system of justice collapses," Desai argued.

"Behind our backs, the CBI made an application before the CBI court and passed this order. Till date, we have not been notified in this case and we have no idea what is happening. Without giving us an opportunity, the CBI judge passes the order, without even considering the order of the PMLA judge who is monitoring the health; and the CBI judge does not even feel the need to ask for a report from the co-ordinate court asking why this order (transferring him to a private hospital) was passed," he added.

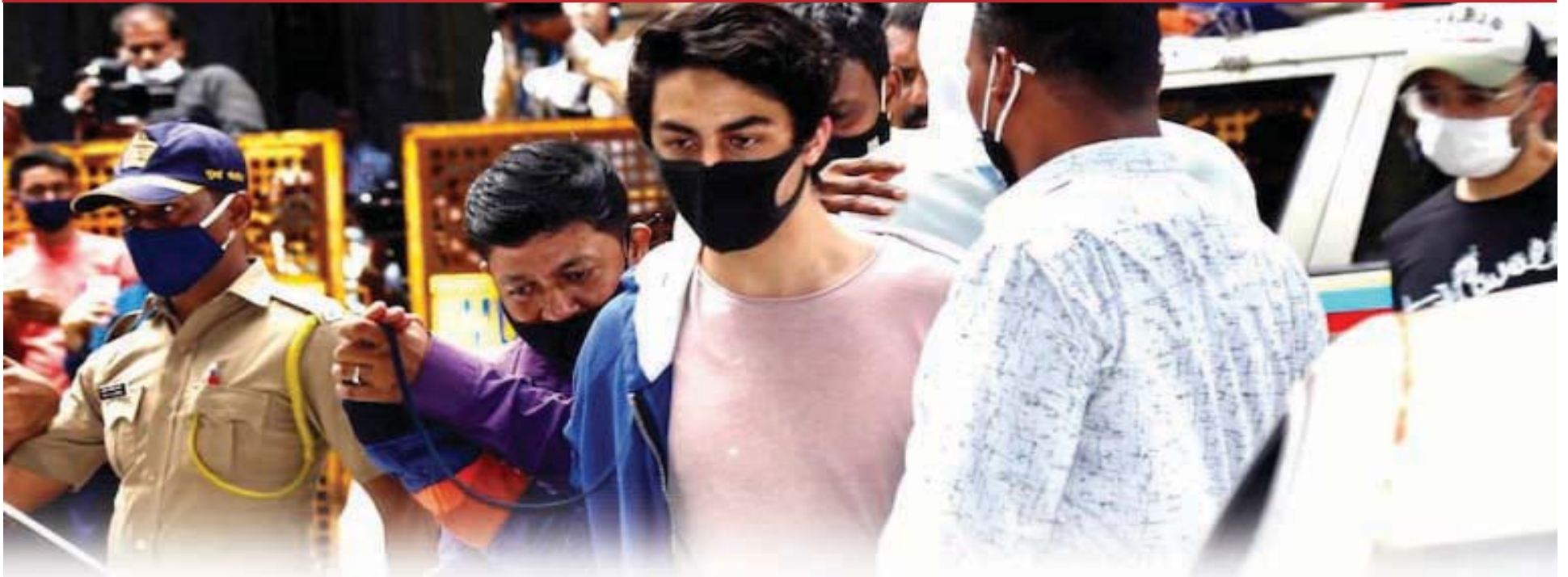
Abad Ponda pointed out, "This is an

order passed by an egotist. The PMLA judge was so hurt that he said someone should do something. He cannot do anything as he does not want to go through the mudslinging with his brother judge." However, Hiten Venegaonkar intervened and said, "Let us not go by emotions. If there is an order, then show that."

Ponda and Desai pointed to Wadhawan's medical condition and said, "He needs a sleep apnea machine as he cannot sleep. This is not available in Taloja jail. At least shift him to KEM." While praying for a stay of the CBI court order, Desai further said, "The agency is not affected by this. But the health of the petitioner is. He was in the middle of surgery when they took him out of the hospital." Venegaonkar, however, argued that the medical board to evaluate Wadhawan's health conditions had been constituted and the report would be given to the CBI court by March 31. He said he would inform the High Court accordingly on April 4.

Here's why NCB seeks extra time to file chargesheet in Mumbai cruise drugs case involving Aryan Khan

The NCB has listed a number of reasons as to why it needs 90 more days to file chargesheet in the Mumbai cruise drug bust case involving Aryan Khan



The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has sought an extension to file a chargesheet in the Mumbai Cordelia cruise drug bust case involving Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son, Aryan Khan. Filing a plea for extension in a Mumbai Sessions court, the NCB has cited the requirement for more time to investigate the case. The drug enforcement agency had seized 13 grams of cocaine, 5 grams of mephedrone, 21 grams of charas and 22 MDMA/Ecstasy pills during the raid on the Cordelia cruise from Mumbai to Goa on October 3 last year. A total of 20 individuals were arrested in connection with the case. Out of these, 18 are now out on bail, including Aryan Khan. The NCB SIT has reportedly received the chemical examination reports from Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Pune of the 17 samples that were sent for analysis. The agency claims that all the reports states that those samples were Narcotics or Psychotropic drugs within the ambit of the NDPS act. Till date, 69 statements have been recorded and 10 independent witnesses examined by the agency. The NCB has recorded statements of 19 suspects till date.

1) In the case, following various allegations levelled by Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik, the role of independent panch witness KP Gosavi had come under the limelight. The agency states, "Examination and recording of the voluntary statement of Gosavi is not complete. He is under judicial custody under orders of JMFC-II, Pune in other cases. SIT has prayed thrice before the court for permitting it to interrogate this key witness." However, the court has not granted the request to the

central agency, and even now the NCB is waiting to record Gosavi's statement.

Gosavi is the main panch witness during the two recoveries made under panchnamas for some of the first few accused arrested in the case, including Aryan Khan.

2) NCB says that another panch witness Prabhakar Sail has turned hostile as he has filed a purported affidavit with an application to take such purported affidavit on record which is still pending before the special Court. NCB said that in such a situation, "Examination of

KP Gosavi becomes necessary and pivotal to unearth the true and correct facts of this case."

3) The 20 accused arrested in the case are from different fields and walks of life. These accused persons are residents of different parts of the country, like Maharashtra, Odisha, Goa, Rajasthan Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi etc. The NCB SIT is still in the process of recording their statements as they live in different parts of the country and because of restricted public movement during the third wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

The NCB says that many of the accused did not turn up for investigation on time, which has resulted in an unintentional delay. Thus, their investigation to ascertain their role/evidence is still underway.

4) The amount of digital data and evidence in this case is voluminous in nature, NCB

claims, adding that some social media conversations between accused and suspect are running into thousands of pages.

"Each chat includes voice notes which must be thoroughly examined and transcripts of the same must be prepared. CDR's must be analyzed in depth so as to unearth the actual role played and linkages by accused/suspects can be reflected in

The agency claims that all the reports states that those samples were Narcotics or Psychotropic drugs within the ambit of the NDPS act. Till date, 69 statements have been recorded and 10 independent witnesses examined by the agency and the NCB has recorded statements of 19 suspects

the final complaint before the Court," says the NCB SIT, adding that this is in progress.

5) The allegation that the agency had first levelled against Aryan Khan is also mentioned again.

NCB SIT says, "Some of the accused are highly influential persons and have incriminating chats with foreign nationals who are located outside India also. Examination/analysis of such chats is in progress as foreign nationals are involved. Due to severe Covid-19 pandemic situation over the country during Nov, 2021 to Feb 2022, response has been delayed from the foreign agencies."

6) The agency states that some accused have given wrong passwords of mobile, laptop, tablets which are in the custody of NCB, which is causing hurdles in extraction and forensic examination of the same is being delayed.

7) The agency is also trying to find out details of contacts and addresses of the two Nigerian nationals arrested in the case.

8) The agency says that most of the accused, during their examination before SIT, are exercising their right to remain silent and not cooperating, which is delaying the progress of the investigation. The SIT has to analyze voluminous digital data to proceed with the investigation, which is a time-consuming process, says the agency.

9) Certified hard copies of Call Detail Record (CDR), consumer application form (CAF) are still pending from the telecom service providers and examination of the same for proving inter-linkages between the accused/suspects is in progress and has to be ascertained before filing the final complaint, says NCB SIT.

10) The NCB mentions that money trail and consideration paid for purchasing drugs is also underway to unearth the financial angle. The agency added that tracing out drug trail to foreign nationals is in progress.

11) The agency states that during their investigation till date, it has felt that to take the investigation to a fair and logical conclusion, more suspects whose names have surfaced are required to be examined, for which the extension is prayed.

12) Statements of 15 key suspects (till date) are still to be recorded, NCB mentions. The agency states that they have completed their investigation against accused Mohak Jaswal, Gomit Chopra, Nupur Satija, Abdul Kadar Shaikh, Chinedu Igwe and Okoro Uzeoma, while investigation against others is still underway.

Farmers seeking relief hold govt officials hostage in Punjab's Lambi

A group of farmers demanding relief for crop damage allegedly held 12 government officials hostage for several hours inside a sub-tehsil office in Punjab's Lambi



A group of farmers demanding relief for crop damage allegedly held 12 government officials hostage for several hours inside a sub-tehsil office in Muktsar district's Lambi. The officials, including a naib-tehsildar and patwaris, were freed by police late in the night on Monday as the protesters refused to let them go, according to an official. The farmers have been demanding relief for damage to their cotton crop by pink bollworm. Revenue officials on Tuesday went on strike against the incident in the state. A leader of the BKU (Ekta-Ugrahan), the outfit backing the group of farmers, on Tuesday claimed that seven protesters were injured as police used "force" to disperse them, a charge denied by the authorities. Farmers also staged a protest on Tuesday outside the sub-tehsil office and

blocked a road for a few hours. Police said a group of over 100 farmers under the banner of the farm union held a protest outside the sub-tehsil in Lambi on Monday.

The protesters entered the office building in the evening and held the officials hostage till midnight, police added. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Sandeep Kumar Malik said 12 government officials were held hostage. The SSP said senior police officers and the subdivisional magistrate there tried to placate them and assured a meeting with higher officials to address their concerns. "But they were adamant and the officials were held hostage until late in the night," Malik told PTI over the phone. He said keeping in view the safety of those taken hostage, the administration directed police to take them out safely. Malik

denied reports that police used force against farmers to free the officials. "We freed the officials in a restrained and peaceful manner. No force was used. Before moving to free the officials, we requested them (farmers)

many times that they can hold their dharna but the government officials performing their duty cannot be taken captive," he said.

He said later an FIR was registered on the basis of a written complaint from the officials. The FIR has been lodged against eight to nine people and some unknown persons, Malik said. Meanwhile, BKU (Ekta-Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokri claimed seven farmers were injured when police used "force" to disperse them on Monday night. "The injured have been hospitalised," he said. He said this is not the first time that farmers have staged a protest demanding relief for damage to their cotton crop. They have been protesting for months but yet to get compensation, he said. "If the AAP government too resorts to suppressing the rightful voice of farmers, it cannot be tolerated," he said. He demanded that the FIR registered against the farmers in Lambi should be quashed.

Let's go to explore a magical place

*Come into the lap of Nature, Explore Hiking, Day Camping, *fishing & *Hunting on 100 Acres of Unexplored & Beautiful land backing to thousands of acres of state land.*



Email: whitestone1979@gmail.com

Catskill, New York

* Limited spots available,
Terms & Conditions apply.

APOLLO
FARMS & RESORTS



FINE BARBER SHOP

Specializing in Men's Haircut,
Color & More

Haircut, Facial, Highlights,
Color, Skin Fades & More

Harshad Kumar Valand

217 Bethpage Rd, Hicksville,
HY 11801 (Above Mithaas)

'Historic moment': Ontario strikes long-awaited deal with Canadian federal govt for \$10-a-day childcare

A long-awaited deal has been signed between Ontario and federal government for subsidised childcare. It has also paved the way for a nationwide plan. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has hailed the deal as a "historic moment". On Monday, the prime minister, while unveiling the plan, pledged fees will eventually drop to C\$10 a day by 2026. The experts have also cautioned that the plan must be reckoned with the reality of staff shortages, huge demand for limited spaces and funding agreements. Trudeau and Doug Ford, premier, Ontario, which is most populous province of Canada, announced



billions in funding for the province. It is part of a broader multibillion-dollar package. "Childcare is becoming a reality for all Canadians," said Trudeau. Ford is the last leader to sign the national childcare plan. Ontario has one of the highest childcare costs in the country. Sarah Kaplan, director, Institute for Gender and the Economy at the University of Toronto, told the Guardian, "It's unfortunate that it took this long, because the longer it takes to make the agreements, the longer it's going to take to implement. Families in Ontario have been missing out on the progress that could have been made."

Altering code can reduce bitcoin energy consumption by 99%, say climate groups

Climate groups have claimed that altering codes can reduce bitcoin energy consumption by 99 per cent as a campaign called Change the Code Not the Climate. The campaign is coordinated by the Environmental Working Group, Greenpeace USA, and several groups battling bitcoin mining facilities in their communities. An obstacle to large-scale bitcoin mining is finding enough cheap energy to run the huge, power-gobbling computer arrays that create and transact cryptocurrency.

Bitcoin mining, in simple terms, is the process by which a network of computers checks and validates a block of transactions that then get added to the blockchain. Miners get rewarded for completing a block. Bitcoin miners unlock bitcoins by solving complex, unique puzzles. As the value of Bitcoin goes up, the puzzles become increasingly more difficult, and it requires more computer power to solve them. Estimates on how much energy Bitcoin uses vary.

It's an expensive business, though, requiring not just sophisticated and fast "rigs" costing upwards of \$10,000, but also a huge amount of power. And it's getting pricier.

The seven-day average of total mining cost per transaction



validated has fallen to \$176.8 from a record \$235.57 hit in May last year, data from blockchain.com shows.

"As more miners join the network, each individually earns fewer bitcoin. This is because network difficulty increases in order to slow the issuance of new bitcoin," said Joe Burnett, analyst at infrastructure and mining firm Blockware Solutions. Waning mining profitability is also hitting the broader market because some institutional investors, who are unable or unwilling to invest

directly in cryptocurrencies, instead buy shares of listed miners or ETFs that track miners as an alternative way of gaining access to the young industry. Some of the pressures on miners flow from bitcoin's inherent structure. The decentralised blockchain was created anonymously with a final limit of 21 million coins, of which nearly 19 million has already been mined.

It takes around 10 minutes to mine one block and the reward for miners, who currently get 6.25 bitcoin per

block, is halved about every four years. "There could be one miner or a million, it doesn't change anything. There's only one block and a set number of bitcoins issued," said d'Anethan at Amber Group.

"This is a big problem. In part because of where the industry stands now but also because of our concerns about its growth," said Michael Brune, campaign director and former executive director of Sierra Club. "Coal plants which were dormant or slated to be closed are now being revived

and solely dedicated to bitcoin mining. Gas plants, which in many cases were increasingly economically uncompetitive, are also now being dedicated to bitcoin mining. We are seeing this all across the country," said Brune. Brune added: "It's particularly painful to see this in the electric sector because that is precisely the place where the US has made most of its progress in the last decade," he said. "There's no way we can reach our climate goals if we are reviving fossil fuel plants."

After Ghazipur blaze: Why landfill fires are easy to ignite and difficult to put out, explained

The fire at Ghazipur landfill in New Delhi could be put out after almost 48 hours. What makes such sites prone to frequent fires?



A fire broke out at Ghazipur landfill in New Delhi on March 28 and could be put out nearly 48 hours later, while plumes of smoke arose from the mounds of garbage. Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Wednesday that the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) had been directed to impose a fine of Rs50 lakh on the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC), which manages the landfill.

Why do landfills burn repeatedly?

The Ghazipur dumpsite, which covers around 70 acres in East Delhi, is not a scientifically planned sanitary landfill. The Solid Waste Management Rules issued by the MoEFCC in 2016 state that only non-recyclable, non-biodegradable and non-combustible waste should go to a sanitary landfill. "These landfill sites are not scientifically designed. We are not segregating the waste and these landfills receive mixed waste, including organic waste as well as ignitable material and plastics," said Richa Singh, programme officer, Waste Management Programme at the Centre for Science and Environment.

The biodegradable or food waste decomposes over time. The anaerobic decomposition (breakdown of organic waste in the absence of oxygen) of organic waste generates methane gas and heat. "Methane is present in air only in traces. But at dumpsites, methane can range between 3.5% and 13%. If there is anything combustible at the dumpsite, it can catch fire quickly. Natural fires are very common at dumpsites," Singh said. At sanitary landfills, waste should be compacted and

a thick soil cover should be placed over it. "Soil acts as a fire suppressant and restricts the passage of oxygen that is required for combustion," Singh said. "At Ghazipur, since there is legacy waste from many years, there is a lot of formation of methane and the temperatures are very high. This can lead to fires," said a senior EDMC official.

Why is it difficult to douse fires that break out at landfills?

Scientifically designed landfills are expected to have leachate collection systems and gas collection systems, while the waste is to be compacted properly and pathways are to be provided through the dumpsite. At uncontrolled landfills, access can be difficult. "A lot of methane is already trapped at the dumpsite. Using water to douse fires at these sites means that it will generate leachate and heat. The best fire suppressant is soil or construction debris. Wind speed can also hinder attempts to douse it," Singh said.

How much waste is generated and treated?

According to a progress report for January submitted by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee to the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the city generates around 11,119 TPD (tonnes per day) of municipal solid waste. The total capacity of existing municipal solid waste processing facilities is only 5530 TPD, around 49.7% of the total generation. This existing capacity is also underutilised – only around 4,646 TPD of waste was being processed in January, mostly at the city's waste-to-energy (WTE) plants. Small quantities are also being treated at compost plants and bio-methanation

plants. The EDMC area, comprising 64 wards, generates 2,700 TPD of municipal solid waste, of which only 0.6% or 15 TPD was being processed in January, since work was under way at the 1,300-TPD waste-to-energy plant at Ghazipur. The reports from August, September and October last year state that only around 600 TPD of waste was being processed at the Ghazipur WTE plant. The plant is still being renovated, the EDMC official said. Consequently, around 2,685 TPD was being disposed at the landfill at Ghazipur in January. While 100% of the waste is being collected, as per the DPCC report, only 50% was being segregated in 61 wards, and 80% to 100% was being segregated in the remaining three wards. The EDMC had proposed to set up a 2,000-TPD solid waste processing plant at Ghonda Gujran – a proposal that was recently

rejected since the site was on the floodplains of the Yamuna. The EDMC has placed a request with the Delhi Development Authority for an alternative site. On the orders of the NGT, biomining of waste is to be undertaken at the three non-engineered landfills at Ghazipur, Bhalswa and Okhla. The action plan submitted by the EDMC to the NGT set December 2024 as the deadline to remediate all of the waste lying at the landfill. Of the 140 lakh tonnes of legacy (or old) waste dumped at the site in 2019, 8.74 lakh tonnes or only 6.4% of the total was processed by Jan 31 this year. And, the landfill receives more waste every day. As per a 2019 assessment, the Ghazipur landfill had the highest quantity of legacy waste – 140 lakh tonnes – as opposed to the Okhla landfill which had 60 lakh tonnes, and the Bhalswa landfill that had 80 lakh tonnes.





What effects does alcohol have on health?

Alcohol is the intoxicating ingredient that is present in wine, beer, and spirits. It is a depressant, which means that when it reaches the brain, it slows down the body's systems. It can also be difficult for the body to process, putting extra pressure on the liver, the digestive system, the cardiovascular system, and other functions.

Alcohol is a legal recreational substance for adults and one of the most commonly used drugs in the United States. People consume alcohol to socialize, to

relax, and to celebrate.

It is commonly misused among individuals of all ages, resulting in significant health, legal, and socio-economic damage.

In 2017, around half of all Americans aged over 18 years had consumed alcohol in the last month. Just over 9 percent of those aged 12 to 17 years had done so.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 15.1 million people aged 18 years and over in the U.S. had alcohol use disorder (AUD), or 6.2 percent of this age

group.

Short-term effects

Within minutes of consuming alcohol, it is absorbed into the bloodstream by blood vessels in the stomach lining and small intestine.

It then travels to the brain, where it quickly produces its effects.

The short-term effects of alcohol depend on:

- " how much is consumed
- " how quickly
- " the weight, sex, and body fat percentage of the individual
- " whether or not they



have eaten

Drinking with a meal slows the rate of absorption, resulting in fewer side effects and less intoxication.

Signs of intoxication

At first, the person may feel relaxed, uninhibited, or giddy. As they consume more alcohol, intoxication may result.

Other signs of intoxication include:

- " slurred speech
- " clumsiness and unsteady gait
- " drowsiness
- " vomiting
- " headache
- " distortion of senses and perception
- " loss of consciousness
- " lapses in memory

How much alcohol?

One drink is the equivalent of:

- " 12 ounces of beer that is around 5 percent alcohol, depending on the type
- " 5 ounces of wine that is around 12 percent alcohol
- " 1.5-ounces of spirits, or

a "shot," at about 40 percent alcohol

" 8 ounces of malt liquor, at around 7 percent alcohol

In other words, these servings all contain the same amount of alcohol: 0.6 ounces.

Blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is the amount of alcohol in the bloodstream. It is expressed as the weight of ethanol in grams per 100 milliliter (ml) of blood.

The University of West Virginia suggests that a person may experience the following, depending on individual factors:

The body absorbs alcohol relatively quickly, but it takes longer to get the alcohol out of the body. The liver needs about 1 hour to process one drink. Consuming several drinks in a short time causes the alcohol builds up in the body. This puts the body's systems under pressure. It can lead to illness and, in severe cases, death. It also increases the risk of blackouts, especially on an empty stomach.

Study reveals how much fiber we should eat to prevent disease

A new meta-analysis examines 40 years' worth of research in an attempt to find out the ideal amount of fiber that we should consume to prevent chronic disease and premature mortality.

Researchers and public health organizations have long hailed the benefits of eating fiber, but how much fiber should we consume, exactly?

This question has prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to commission a new study. The results appear in the journal *The Lancet*.

The new research aimed to help develop new guidelines for dietary fiber consumption, as well as reveal which carbs protect the most against noncommunicable diseases and can stave off weight gain.

Noncommunicable diseases are also called chronic diseases. They typically last for a long time and progress slowly. According

to WHO, there are "four main types of noncommunicable diseases:" cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes.

Professor Jim Mann, of the University of Otago, in New Zealand, is the corresponding author of the study, and Andrew Reynolds, a postdoctoral research fellow at Otago's Dunedin School of Medicine, is the first author of the paper.

Prof. Mann explains the motivation for the study, saying, "Previous reviews and meta-analyses have usually examined a single indicator of carbohydrate quality and a limited number of diseases, so it has not been

possible to establish which foods to recommend for protecting against a range of conditions."

To find out, the researchers performed a meta-analysis of observational studies and clinical trials.

Daily intake of 25-29 grams of fiber is ideal

Reynolds and colleagues examined the data included in 185 observational studies - amounting to 135 million person-years - and 58 clinical trials which recruited over 4,600 people in total. The studies analyzed took place over almost 40 years.

The scientists investigated the incidence of certain chronic



diseases, as well as the rate of premature deaths resulting from them.

These conditions were: coronary heart disease, cardiovascular disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, and a range of obesity-related cancers, such as breast cancer, endometrial

cancer, esophageal cancer, and prostate cancer.

Overall, the research found that people who consume the most fiber in their diet are 15-30 percent less likely to die prematurely from any cause or a cardiovascular condition, compared with those who eat the least fiber.

Researchers offer new treatment protocol for advanced head and neck cancer

(SAI Bureau) The current treatment of patients diagnosed with advanced or metastatic head and neck cancer (HNC) is ineffective. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev researchers, along with their international colleagues, have investigated and validated a potential treatment combination against the aggressive disease driven by hyper-activation of a specific signaling pathway, which is found in over 40% of HNC patients. Their findings were just published in the Journal for ImmunoTherapy of Cancer. Specifically, the authors showed in pre-clinical HNC models that treating tumor-bearing mice

with a therapy that blocks this signaling pathway, sensitizes tumors to the immunotherapy of anti-PD1, resulting in the disappearance of tumors after the therapy combination. This effective treatment was validated in four HNC cancer models, and most mice were cured with no recurrent disease. Together with Dr. Pierre Saintygn from Lyon the authors also validated some of the findings in HNC patients. The research was led by PhD student Manu Prasad in the laboratory of Prof. Moshe Elkabets in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. "Our unique ability to generate pre-clinical

HNC models and to investigate new treatment and treatment combinations provides hope for HNC patients. We sincerely hope that oncologists will test this treatment combination in HNC patients, as improving immunotherapy efficacy is crucial for prolonging the survival of cancer patients," says Prof. Elkabets. The authors also showed for the first time in mice bearing HNC that the treatment should be given sequentially. They found that a short treatment with trametinib is sufficient to sensitize anti-PD-1 resistant tumors. This sensitization happens because trametinib treatment, on the one hand,

inhibits tumor cell proliferation and, on the other hand, down-regulates the expression of an immunosuppressive factor that determines the propagation of immunosuppressive cells in the tumor site. This effect enables cytotoxic white blood cells to reach the tumor site, and together with anti-PD1, can kill the tumor cells efficiently. However, when mice were treated with prolonged trametinib treatment, tumors failed to respond to immunotherapy. The study was conducted by national and international groups from Soroka University Medical Center and Barzilai Medical Centers, Memorial Sloan Kettering, and Heidelberg Hospital.

Is drinking ice-cold water bad for overall health?

It is pertinent to consume enough water every day to support bodily functions, including digestion and metabolism, maintain a normal body temperature, and keep the organs and tissues healthy



So, is warm water a better option?

A study published in 2003, Water consumption increases weight loss during a hypocaloric diet intervention in middle-aged and older adults, found that switching from drinking cold water to hot water could increase weight loss. Researchers found that drinking 500 ml of water before a meal increased metabolism by 30 per cent. Drinking cold water while a person has a cold or flu, or if they have any chronic condition that results in slower digestion, is probably not a great idea, said Mahadik.

"While warm water does have

considerable benefits, there are no risks associated with cold water as it has the same benefits as drinking regular room-temperature water, namely keeping a person hydrated and feeling refreshed. If you think it messes up your digestive system and health, we recommend you seek advice from a doctor," she mentioned. According to ayurvedic practitioner Dr Dixa Bhavsar, however, it is best to avoid icy cold water and instead pick room temperature or tepid lukewarm water.

What is the best way to drink water?

Sip by sip.

She also suggested in an Instagram post that the quantity of water should just be enough and not more. "I was also under the impression that we need to drink plenty of water for better skin, immunity, and digestion. But that's not correct. If you drink lot of water, you might feel bloated, also it could dampen your digestive fire and increase kapha dosha. So, water is important and you need to drink that enough but not more. Try to listen to your body. You'll know when your body needs water and when it needs food. Just needs a little bit of practice and you'll ace listening to your body and feeding it accordingly," she said.

(News Agency) Consuming chilled drinks, ice-cold water during the summer months to beat the sweltering heat is extremely common. Though it helps quench thirst and make one feel refreshed with an instant cooling sensation, many people believe it is not the best practise. Is it so? We reached out to experts to understand more. It is pertinent to consume enough water every day to support bodily functions, including digestion and metabolism, maintain a normal body temperature, and keep the organs and tissues healthy. It also helps avoid dehydration which can cause other health issues.

Should cold water be avoided?

Usually, the temperature of our body is 37 degree C, so if you consume chilled water, the body gets directed towards regulating this temperature by shelling out energy, said Dr Sonam Solanki, consultant pulmonologist, Masina Hospital. In simple terms, cold water can cause an imbalance in

the body and slow down the digestive process. "Also, if chilled water is consumed during meals, then our body starts utilising the energy regulating the body temperature, which otherwise would have been used for digestion and absorbing nutrients. Another reason to avoid drinking chilled water, especially during or after meals, is that it increases the chances of developing irritant mucosa, sore throat, and stuffy nose," said Dr Solanki. But there are no significant health risks associated with the same, even if a person drinks cold water on a hot day, stressed Shweta Mahadik, clinical nutritionist, Fortis Hospital Kalyan. "In fact, according to a 2012 study, drinking cold water during exercise can help keep the body from overheating and thereby, render a workout session more successful. This is probably because drinking cold water makes it easier for the human body to maintain a lower core temperature," she informed.

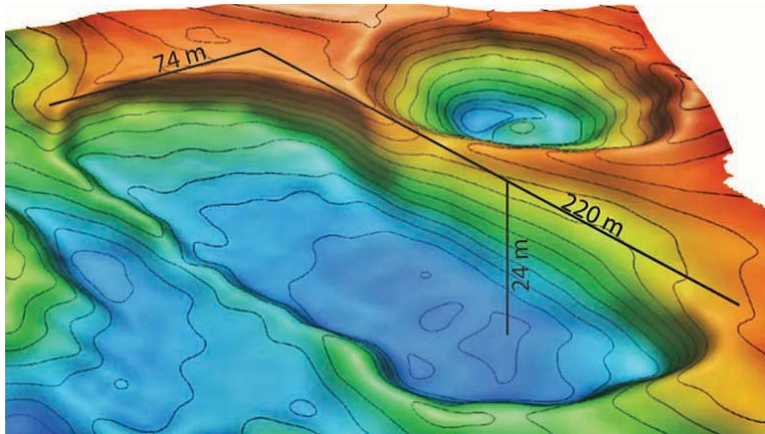
Artificial Sweeteners and Potential Cancer Risks: What to Know

(News Agency) Millions of Americans use artificial sweeteners as an alternative to sugar. In fact, according to data analysis by statista, 141.18 million Americans used sugar substitutes in the year 2020 alone. Artificial sweeteners contain no or very low calories so they are often added to foods and drinks with the idea that they will aid in weight loss. They are also used in toothpaste, candy, and gum to add sweetness without the risk of contributing to tooth decay. While people are generally looking to become more healthy when they consume artificial sweeteners, a large cohort study of more than 100,000 French adults suggests that they may actually not be as good for us as we would hope. This study, which was

authored by Charlotte Debras, Mathilde Touvier, and their colleagues at the French National Institute for Health and Medical Research (Inserm) and Sorbonne Paris Nord University, found a link between some artificial sweeteners and an increased risk for cancer. Assessing the link between artificial sweeteners and cancer Because the safety of artificial sweeteners has long been a topic of debate, the researchers decided to look into their potential link to cause cancer. They analyzed 102,865 French adults who were participating in the NutriNet-Santé study. This study is an ongoing, web-based cohort that was begun in 2009 by the Nutritional Epidemiology Research Team.

Scientists find Arctic sinkholes big enough to swallow city blocks with six-storied buildings

Researchers mapping the permanently frozen regions of the Arctic have found sinkholes being formed that can engulf skyscrapers



technology to see that changes are happening offshore too," Charlie Paull, a geologist at MBARI who led the study, said in a statement. They conducted repeated mapping of the seafloor with ship-based sonar and an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) to a resolution of a one-meter (about three-feet) square grid, or roughly the size of a dinner table.

WHAT DID THEY FIND?

Researchers in 2010 found a band of unusually rough seafloor terrain along a 95-kilometer stretch of the shelf roughly 180 kilometers offshore, along what was once the seaward limit of Pleistocene permafrost. Repeated surveys allowed researchers to begin to understand the processes creating the distinctively rugged seafloor terrain in the Canadian Beaufort Sea. Researchers documented the formation of new, irregularly shaped, steep-sided depressions. The largest was an oval-shaped depression 28 meters deep, 225 meters

long, and 95 meters wide. These new terrains were attributed to intermittent seafloor collapse due to the gradual warming of the permafrost sediment frozen beneath the Arctic Shelf. "While the underwater sinkholes we have discovered are the result of longer-term, glacial-interglacial climate cycles, we know the Arctic is warming faster than any region on Earth. As climate change continues to reshape the Arctic, it's critical that we also understand changes in the submerged permafrost offshore," Charlie Paull added.

IS IT DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE?

The continuous thawing of these permanently frozen regions in the Arctic is not completely being attributed to climate change and rising mean sea temperatures from human actions. Researchers said that the changes being seen in the Arctic derive from much older, slower climatic shifts related to our emergence from the last ice age, and similar changes

appear to have been happening along the seaward edge of the former permafrost for thousands of years. "We don't have a lot of long-term data for the seafloor temperature in the Canadian Beaufort Sea, but the available data do not show a warming trend, which ruled out anthropogenic climate change driving the dramatic changes in the seafloor terrain. Instead, heat carried in slowly moving groundwater systems is driving these changes," explained Paull. The team has also documented other seafloor features created by water from thawing permafrost. Researchers believe that a similar process must be going on in other permafrost regions of the world. "These rapid changes to the seafloor demand our attention. We need to understand how the decay of relict submarine permafrost will impact the vast areas underlying the Arctic continental shelves," Paull added.

(News Agency) Climate change has largely remained inaccessible to humans. Nearly one-quarter of the land in the Northern Hemisphere is permafrost or frozen ground. Researchers from Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute have documented these dramatic changes indicating how the thawing of permafrost submerged underwater at the edge of the Arctic Ocean is affecting the seafloor. The study has been published in the National Academy of Sciences. "We know that big changes are happening across the Arctic landscape, but this is the first time we've been able to deploy

Gates Foundation, Qatar to spend \$200 million on climate-adaptive agriculture

The partnership aims to introduce dual-use chickens, raised for both food and egg production, to low-income women farmers in parts of Africa

(News Agency) Major gas producer Qatar and the Gates Foundation will jointly invest up to \$200 million over the next two years to help prepare farmers in developing countries to adapt to climate change. The new partnership, announced on Sunday at a conference in the Gulf Arab state, focuses on introducing climate-adaptive farming methods and technology to communities that depend on agriculture for both food and income, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa, said Mark Suzman, chief executive officer of the Gates Foundation. "We are trying to help those communities grapple with the reality of climate change now and, in a way, help insulate them from the

future damages of climate change," which can pull them deeper into poverty, he told Reuters. For example, the partnership aims to introduce dual-use chickens, raised for both food and egg production, to low-income women farmers in parts of Africa. The chickens are bred to be productive in a variety of climate conditions. "Climate change is already happening. We are already seeing more frequent droughts, more frequent floods, less predictable weather," Suzman said. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is a major nonprofit that tackles poverty and inequity. It will fund the partnership on a 50-50 basis with Qatar's state Fund for Development, Suzman said.



SpaceX ending production of flagship Crew Dragon spacecraft that transports astronauts

SpaceX has flown four crews of astronauts to the space station under its Nasa contract at roughly \$255 million per flight



(SAI Bureau) SpaceX has ended production of new Crew Dragon astronaut capsules, a company executive told Reuters, as Elon Musk's space transportation company heaps resources on its next-generation spaceship program.

Capping the fleet at four Crew Dragons adds more urgency to the development of the astronaut capsule's eventual successor, Starship, SpaceX's moon and Mars rocket. Starship's debut launch has been delayed for months by engine development hurdles and regulatory reviews. It also poses new challenges as the company learns how to maintain a fleet and quickly fix unexpected problems without holding up a busy schedule of astronaut missions.

"We are finishing our final (capsule), but we still are manufacturing components, because we'll be refurbishing,"

SpaceX President Gwynne Shotwell told Reuters, confirming the plan to end Crew Dragon manufacturing.

She added that SpaceX would retain the capability to build more capsules if a need arises in the future, but contended that "fleet management is key."

Musk's business model is underpinned by reusable spacecraft, so it was inevitable the company would cease production at some point. But the timing was not known, nor was his strategy of using the existing fleet for its full backlog of missions.

Crew Dragon has flown five crews of government and private astronauts to space since 2020, when it flew its first pair of NASA astronauts and became the U.S. space agency's primary ride for getting humans to and from the

International Space Station. After each flight, the capsules undergo refurbishment at SpaceX facilities in Florida, which the company calls "Dragonland."

"There's lifetime cycle issues, where once you start using it the third, fourth, fifth time, you start finding different things," said retired NASA astronaut and former SpaceX executive Garrett Reisman, who now consults for the company on human spaceflight matters.

"SpaceX is really good about identifying these issues quickly and then acting quickly to fix them," Reisman added, pointing to an investigation in 2021 in which SpaceX discovered and fixed within months a toilet leak aboard a Crew Dragon capsule that had flown humans twice.

NASA has given SpaceX some \$3.5 billion to help develop

and subsequently use Crew Dragon for six flights to the space station. It added three more missions to fill in for delays with Boeing Co's BA.N Starliner capsule. Read full story

SpaceX has flown four crews of astronauts to the space station under its NASA contract at roughly \$255 million per flight. The company carried out a fully private mission last year with four passengers, including a billionaire entrepreneur who funded the flight, for a three-day trip in Earth orbit.

At least four more private astronaut missions on Crew Dragon are planned with Houston-based space station builder and spaceflight manager Axiom Space, with the first so-called Ax-1 mission scheduled for April carrying four entrepreneurs to the space station to conduct scientific

research. Musk, SpaceX's founder and chief executive, has focused intensely in recent years on the company's hasty development of a re-usable Starship, the centerpiece of Musk's aim to eventually colonize Mars.

Like Crew Dragon, SpaceX's workhorse reusable rocket, the Falcon 9, and its more powerful variant Falcon Heavy are also refurbished after each flight, and not every component is able to fly to space more than once.

"The goal is to get more and more like aircraft operations, where you can take the vehicle after it lands, fill it back up with gas and oxygen, and go again very rapidly," Reisman said. "Starship, if it achieves its design objectives, would be able to affordably replace everything that Falcon 9, Falcon Heavy and Dragon can do."

Fully paralysed man successfully communicates using computer interface implanted in brain

The new technology could be a gamechanger for people affected by ALS and could enable speech decoding directly from the brain

(SAI Bureau) Researchers in Germany have successfully enabled a person with complete paralysis, who could not speak, to communicate through a brain implanted computer. The team at Wyss Center for Bio and Neuroengineering, in collaboration with the University of Tübingen in Germany, have achieved the feat of showcasing a collaboration between medicine and technology.

The study, which has been underway for over two years, shows that communication is possible with people who are completely locked in because of ALS. The participant in the study had advanced Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) a progressive neurodegenerative disease in which people lose the ability

to move and talk. Published in the journal Nature Communications, the experiment demonstrated that the patient modulated neural firing rates based on auditory feedback and he used this strategy to select letters one at a time to form words and phrases to communicate his needs and experiences. "This case study provides evidence that brain-based volitional communication is possible even in a completely locked-in state," the paper said.

UNLOCKING THE BRAIN

The participant in the study was a man in his 30s who had been diagnosed with a fast-progressing form of ALS. Researchers said that patients with ALS

can lose all muscle-based routes of communication as motor neuron degeneration progresses, and ultimately, they may be left without any means of communication. The team implanted 64 microelectrode arrays in the supplementary and primary motor cortex of the patient, which picked up brain signals that the participant had learned to generate by attempting different movements. The model maps the signals to mean either 'yes' or 'no'. To reveal what the participant wants to communicate, a speller program reads the letters of the alphabet aloud. Using auditory neurofeedback, the participant is able to choose 'yes' or 'no' to confirm or reject the letter, ultimately forming

whole words and sentences. Jonas Zimmermann, PhD, Senior Neuroscientist at the Wyss Center in Geneva said, "Successful communication has previously been demonstrated with BCIs in individuals with paralysis. But, to our knowledge, ours is the first study to achieve communication by someone who has no remaining voluntary movement and hence for whom the BCI is now the sole means of communication." Globally, the number of people with ALS is increasing and more than 300 000 people are projected to be living with the disease by 2040, with many of them reaching a state where speech is no longer possible.

Bharat Bandh: What SBI, other bank customers need to know about bank strike



strike called by central trade unions, according to a PTI report. The bank strike is scheduled to continue tomorrow.

Transactions at many public sector banks have been impacted as employees have not reported for duty. Besides, there might be a delay in cheque clearances and government treasury operation might also be affected by the strike.

The impact of the strike is prominent in eastern India as many branches of public sector banks there are closed, All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA) General Secretary C H

Venkatachalam said. In the other regions, branches are open as officers are present but services are being impacted due to many employees participating in the strike, he said. However, there was hardly any impact on the functioning of private sector banks such as HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and others, according to the PTI report. Most of the banks, including State Bank of India (SBI), had informed their customers about the proposed strike and the likely impact on the services in advance. We have been advised by the Indian

Banks' Association (IBA) that All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA), Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) and All India Bank Officers' Association (AIBOA) have served a Notice, informing their decision to go on a nationwide Bank Strike on 28th & 29th March, 2022," SBI said in a BSE filing. "We advise that while the Bank has made necessary arrangements to ensure normal functioning in its branches and offices on the days of Strike, it is likely that work in our Bank may be impacted to a limited extent, by the Strike," SBI said in a statement.

(SAI Bureau) State Bank of India (SBI), and other banks had informed their customers about the bank strike and the likely impact on services due to Bharat bandh

Multiplex giants PVR, INOX announce merger; combined entity to run over 1500 screens across India

(SAI Bureau) PVR PVRL.NS and INOX Leisure INOL.NS said the merger, which announced their merger on Sunday, subject to regulatory approvals, would help both companies improve efficiency, reach newer markets and optimise cost. "The film exhibition sector has been one of the worst impacted sectors on account of the pandemic and creating scale to achieve efficiencies is critical for the long-term survival of the business and fight the onslaught of digital

OTT platforms," PVR Chairman Ajay Bijli said in a press release. Over-the-top, or OTT, platforms such as Netflix NFLX.O, Amazon's Prime Video AMZN.O and Disney DIS.N have made deep inroads in India, where the pandemic ravaged a film industry known for song-and-dance spectacles watched by millions. Read full story PVR is India's largest multiplex chain with more than 850 screens, followed by INOX Leisure with about 650



screens. The merger follows a two-year period when most theatres were shut due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Cryptocurrency tax, bill in India: What we know so far

While there is clarity on crypto tax in India, investors and stakeholders are waiting for the government's legislation regarding the regulation of cryptocurrencies

(SAI Bureau) The cryptocurrency tax and proposed regulation bill have been a topic of discussion among investors and stakeholders in India for sometime. While Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman did provide clarity on crypto taxation, the government is yet to bring legislation to regulate cryptocurrencies.

The government on Thursday proposed to tighten the norms for taxation of cryptocurrencies by disallowing the set off of any losses with gains from other virtual digital assets, according to a PTI report.

FINANCE BILL, 2022

As per the amendments to the Finance Bill, 2022, circulated among the Lok Sabha members, the ministry

proposes to remove the word 'other' from the section relating to the set off of losses from gains in virtual digital assets, the PTI report says. This would mean that loss from the transfer of virtual digital assets (VDA) will not be allowed to be set off against the income arising from the transfer of another VDA.

VIRTUAL DIGITAL ASSETS

The VDAs will include prevailing cryptocurrencies and non-fungible tokens (NFTs) which has gained a fad over the past couple of years.

According to the Finance Bill, 2022, a VDA could be a code or number or token which can be transferred, stored or traded electronically, PTI reported.



The Kashmir Files' Darshan Kumar recalls struggles: 'Walked seven km barefoot with broken shoes in hands, slept hungry'

Darshan Kumar debuted with a small role in the 2001 movie Mujhe Kucch Kehna Hai, and later worked with Priyanka Chopra in the 2014 film Mary Kom



(News Agency) Darshan Kumar, who has been appreciated for his performance in the recent release The Kashmir Files, has recalled his struggling days in a recent interview. The actor says he has come a long way since

he debuted with a small role in the 2001 movie Mujhe Kucch Kehna Hai, which starred Tusshar Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor. He also played a minor supporting role in the 2003 Salman Khan-starrer Tere Naam. Darshan's career took off when he starred as Onler Kom, husband of Mary Kom in the 2014 Priyanka Chopra-starrer biopic. Darshan has now gained further recognition after playing Krishna Pandit in Anupam Kher's starrer The

Kashmir Files. He got emotional as he looked back at his days of struggle, and called it a roller-coaster ride.

When asked if he had to face a lot of struggles during the last two decades of his career, Darshan told Siddharth Kannan, "Yes, many. It's been a roller coaster ride. I get emotional thinking about it, it was a tough time right from the beginning. We have to travel very far across Mumbai for auditions. This one time we had

to go in formal clothes, and I couldn't afford good shoes so I bought one worth ₹200-300 from Andheri and had been using them for quite some time. I would walk to auditions since I didn't use to have money for bus fares. I would walk and use the bus fare to buy a packet of Parle G. If I find a cup of tea then okay, but otherwise I would have the biscuits with water because I had to survive the entire day."

Harsh Vardhan Kapoor spotted holding hands with mystery girl, fans call her 'Anil Kapoor ki hone wali bahu'

Harsh Vardhan Kapoor and a girl, whose identity is not known yet, were spotted hanging out together in Khar on Sunday afternoon



(News Agency) Actor Harsh Vardhan Kapoor has sparked several questions about his dating life after he was spotted holding hands with a mystery woman in Mumbai. Harsh Vardhan and the woman, whose identity is not known yet, were hanging out together in Khar on Sunday afternoon. Fans have been wondering about the woman's identity in comments across videos and pictures of the spotting on social media. In the video, Harsh Vardhan could be seen wearing a floral black and white shirt along with tie-dye white shorts, while his mystery friend wore a multicoloured crop top along with white trousers, white sneakers, and black shades. They were seen holding

hands as they walked before they entered a building. She was also seen smoking a cigarette. Fans are convinced that the girl is Harsh Vardhan's girlfriend and have been asking several questions about her identity. One commented, "Who is his girlfriend?" Several asked, "Who is this girl." One Instagram user wrote, "Waah Anil Kapoor ki hone waali bahu (Wow, Anil Kapoor's future daughter-in-law)." Another wrote, "Both of you are looking fabulous," while others commented, "Kamaal (amazing)," "Mast (nice)." Harsh

Vardhan had previously told ETimes in an interview that he would like to be private about his love life. He had said last year, "I need my privacy. The way that I see it--and maybe it's a bit naive and idealistic--but I like to do a film, talk about it, and then disappear. I'm a very boring guy, which is why I don't have a girlfriend (chuckles)." On the work front, Harsh Vardhan will appear alongside his father Anil Kapoor in the Netflix film Thar, which will mark their first project together.

Stills from the film, which also stars Fatima Sana Shaikh, were released by Netflix last month. In the photographs, Anil was seen as a policeman in khaki uniform, standing with a fellow policeman (played by Satish Kaushik) in the Thar desert. Harsh Vardhan was in a rugged look and appeared to be on the run from the police. Fatima was seen as a rural woman. Thar is set in the 1980s and follows the story of a man who moves to a big town to seek a job and avenge his past.

Kim Sharma celebrates one year anniversary with Leander Paes, shares sweet memories: 'Thank you for being mine'

Kim Sharma shared memories of her relationship with tennis player Leander Paes as the couple celebrated one year together. Kim also penned a note for her boyfriend

(News Agency) Actor Kim Sharma shared several pictures of herself with beau tennis player Leander Paes on social media on Monday. The actor did this to mark their one year anniversary together. Kim and Leander began dating in March last year but only made their relationship official six months later. The pictures Kim posted

on Monday featured some of the moments the couple shared over the last one year. The post saw fans and celeb friends wishing them for the milestone. Kim shared a carousel of pictures and videos on her Instagram feed and captioned them, "Happy anniversary Charles (heart emoji) 365 days ! Endless moments of happiness and learnings .Thank

you for being mine. Love you to bits - Mich." The pictures included the two of them standing on a beach, a selfie from a bike ride they took together, as well as others. There was also a video from their vacation to a Disney theme park in the US last month as well as a sweet video of them dancing at a wedding a few weeks ago.





The South Asian

INSIDER

Voice of South Asian Community

Since March 2002



The Home of
Solid Games
www.greystonegames.com

Vol. 21

Issue 06

Friday 01 April to 07 April 2022

\$1

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

WORKING CAPITAL R US



Working Capital r Us

At Working Capital r Us we guide you to find the best lending options for you and your business. Working Capital r Us brings decades of experience and expertise to get businesses the best fit in financing solutions. The Financial lending industry can have many traps and turns; hence we and our team are here to guide you to your best lending options.

SOLUTIONS

SBA FINANCING

ASSET BASED LOANS

EQUIPMENT FINANCING

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLES

BUSINESS LINES OF CREDIT

We look forward to your valued inquiry
for our Business Solutions.



646 897 3016

info@workingcapitalrus.com
www.workingcapitalrus.com