

WORLD 5NORWAY TERROR
ALERT RAISED**MONEY 6**GST COMPENSATION CESS LEVY
EXTENDED TILL MARCH'26**SPORT 8**CHENNAI OPEN CHESS:
NITIN REMAINS ON TOPDELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL
BHUBANESWAR RANCHI
RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD
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BHUBANESWAR, SUNDAY JUNE 26, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹4



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Axe on 16 MLAs! Dy Speaker sets June 27 for show-cause

Rebels say they are part of Sena, name self 'Shiv Sena Balasaheb'

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Five days after they rebelled against Shiv Sena president and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's leadership, the Sena rebel faction, led by senior minister Eknath Shinde, began to face the heat on Saturday as Deputy Speaker Narhari Zhirwal issued notices to 16 Sena rebel MLAs, including Shinde.

The Deputy Speaker has sought explanations from them by the evening of June 27 on the representation made by the parent party seeking their disqualification for violating the party discipline.

Acting on the basis of a letter written by Shiv Sena's chief whip Sunil Prabhu seeking their disqualification under The Members of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly (Disqualification on Ground of Defection) Rules, 1986, principal secretary of the Maharashtra Rajendra Bhagwat issued notices to 16 Sena rebel MLAs asked them to submit written response before 5.30 pm on June 27 (Monday) supported by all the necessary documents.

"If the written response to the summons is not submitted in a given period, it would be considered as you have no say over it. The office will initiate necessary action based on the complaint filed by Shiv Sena's chip whip against you," the notice stated.

On a day when the parent outfit Shiv Sena passed five resolutions, including the ones reaffirming confidence in the leadership of Uddhav Thackeray and asking the rebel MLAs not to use the name of late Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray, the rebel Sena group — which claims to have the support of 37 Sena MLAs out of the total 55 Sena MLAs in the State Assembly — floated a parallel Sena group named



Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut interacts with the media outside Sena Bhavan after Shiv Sena's meeting at Dadar in Mumbai on Saturday

PTI

as "Shiv Sena Balasaheb".

Apart from their leader Eknath Shinde, 15 other rebel Sena MLAs who have been issued show-cause notices by the office of Deputy Speaker are: Abdul Satar, Sandeep Bomre, Prakash Surve, Tanaji Sawant, Mahesh Shinde, Anil Babar, Yamini Jadhav, Sanjay Shirsat, Bharat Gogavale, Balaji Kinikaer, Lata Sonawane, Sadasarvankar, Prakash Ambedkar, Sanjay Raimulkar and Ramesh Bornare.

These 16 MLAs are among the 37 rebel Sena MLAs who have given a letter to the Deputy Speaker, Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, and secretary to the Maharashtra Legislature, re-affirming their confidence in the leadership of Eknath Shinde and saying that he would continue as the leader of the Shiv Sena Legislature Party till 2024.

The 37 Sena rebel MLAs (who account for more than the requisite two-third strength i.e., 36 MLAs out of total 55 Sena MLAs in the State Assembly) if they move out of the Shiv Sena en block will attract penal action under the anti-defection law.

However, if the Deputy

Speaker disqualifies 16 Sena rebel MLAs, including Eknath Shinde, the development will result in the rebel Sena camp — the strength of which will be reduced to 21 MLAs against the earlier 37 MLAs, attracting action under the anti-defection law.

On its part, the rebel Sena camp played down the import of the notices issued to 16 rebel Sena MLAs.

"Yes, we have received notices from the office of Deputy Speaker. There is nothing to worry about. We will not be disqualified. We will respond to the notices. If need be, we will move the court against the notices issued by the Deputy Speaker," rebel Sena MLA Bharat Gogavale said.

Rebel Sena MLA Deepak Kesarkar, speaking on behalf of the Shinde camp, said that the rebel Sena MLAs were very much part of the Shiv Sena and that they would set up a separate block of the party in the State Assembly.

"We are not going to merge with any political party. We will be setting up a separate block of the Shiv Sena in the State Assembly," Kesarkar said.

My fight is to rescue Sena from clutches of 'python' MVA: Shinde

Mumbai: Rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde late on Saturday evening said Shiv Sena workers should understand that he was fighting to save the party from the clutches of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

Shinde's appeal came after Sena workers loyal to party president and Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray staged protests against the rebel MLAs led by him by defacing their banners, hurling stones in some places and vandalising the office of an MLA in Pune. In a tweet in Marathi, Shinde, who is camping in Guwahati with his group of MLAs, said, "My dear Shiv Sena workers, try to understand the machinations of the MVA. I am fighting for rescuing the Shiv Sena and Sena workers from the clutches of



the python of the MVA." "I dedicate this fight to the interest of Shiv Sena workers," he added.

Shinde and his supporters have said earlier that they want the Sena to pull out of the "unnatural" Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition with the Congress and NCP, and revive the alliance with BJP. **PTI**

Like Shiva, Modi swallowed poison of riot charge: Shah

HM cites SC verdict, says charges were 'politically motivated'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Supreme Court upheld the Special Investigation Team's (SIT) clean chit to 64 people, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the 2002 Gujarat riot case, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said Modi endured pain for the last so many years without speaking a word and followed Lord Shiva, who swallowed poison and held it in his throat.

Shah said that allegations against the PM were "politically motivated" and that the truth had come out, "shining more than the gold".

He said "a trio of Opposition parties, ideologically-driven certain journalists, and an NGO was behind false allegations" against the Prime Minister aimed to "tarnish his image" and keep the case going as long as it is possible.

"They had a strong ecosystem so everyone started believing lies to be truth," he said.

Speaking at length in an interview with ANI, Shah said the Supreme Court verdict described the charges as "politically motivated" and "cleared a blot on BJP".

He said the court said the then Chief Minister "did best efforts to control riots" in 2002.

Asked how does it feel, Home Minister said "*Satyajab itni lambi ladayi ke baad bahar ata hai, uski chamak sone se bhi zyada hoti hain, bahut achha lagta hain.*," he said.

He named civil rights activist and journalist Teesta Setalvad as a person fuelling charges against Modi. Shah said the NGO being run by her had given baseless information about the riots to the police.

"I have read the judgment very carefully. The judgment clearly mentions the name of Teesta Setalvad. The NGO that was being run by her — I don't remember the name of the NGO — had given baseless information about the riots to the police," he was quoted as saying in the interview.



Union Minister for Home Affairs Amit Shah chairs the meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of Ministry of Home Affairs in New Delhi

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Gujarat ATS arrests Teesta, ex-DGP RB Sreekumar

Setalvad taken to Ahmedabad day after SC dismissed plea against SIT clean chit to Modi in Guj riots

PTI ■ MUMBAI/ AHMEDABAD

Activist Teesta Setalvad was on Saturday detained by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) from Mumbai, and taken to Ahmedabad in connection with an FIR registered against her at the Ahmedabad city crime branch, Gujarat former DGP RB Sreekumar too was arrested.

Setalvad, on her part, lodged a complaint with Santacruz police station in Mumbai claiming that the "arrest" was illegal and she apprehended a threat to her life. "Teesta Setalvad has been picked up by the Gujarat ATS from Mumbai," a source in the Gujarat ATS said.

A day earlier, the Supreme Court had dismissed a petition challenging the clean chit given by the SIT to then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi and others in the 2002 post-Godhra riots cases.

Bringing the curtains down on the bid to reopen the probe into the 2002 riots, a bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar on Friday had also



Activist Teesta Setalvad at Santacruz police station after being arrested by Gujarat Police ATS, in Mumbai, on Saturday

PTI

spoken of "the devious stratagem to keep the pot boiling, obviously, for ulterior design", and said disgruntled officers of the Gujarat Government need to be in the dock and proceeded with in accordance with law for creating a sensation by making false revelations.

Setalvad's NGO had supported Zakia Jafri, who had filed the petition alleging a larger conspiracy behind the riots, throughout her legal battle. Jafri's husband and former Congress MP Ehsan Jafri was killed during the riots.

In State Less rainfall in June despite monsoon

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State has witnessed 37 per cent less rainfall than the normal range between June 1 and 24 despite the onset of monsoon, the Regional Office of the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Regional Centre here informed on Saturday.

IMD Director HR Biswas said the State received 97.8 mm rainfall between June 1 and 24 against the normal rainfall of

156.1 mm. During this period, Boudh district recorded 206.4 mm of rainfall, an excess of 40 per cent.

Angul, Dhenkanal, Nayagarh and Nuapada districts experienced normal rainfall so far. Similarly, the State recorded 76.7 mm of rainfall between June 16 and June 24 against the normal range of 76.8 mm.

There is a possibility of an increase in rainfall activities in several parts of the State

from June 24 till June 29.

Yellow warning for thunderstorms and heavy rainfall has also been issued for several districts till the period.

Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Subarnapur Balangir, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Jajpur in 24 hours. The warning will remain valid till June 26.

Naveen gets emotional about boy's struggle

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik got emotional in Rome, Italy, on Friday and tears rolled down his eyes after hearing the life struggle of a Sambalpur boy, Seshadev Kisan, who is pursuing higher studies and engaged in research in Germany.

On Sheshadev's request, Patnaik had helped him pursue his higher study with both financial and moral support in 2018.



Seshadev was narrating his story to Patnaik on stage when the latter was interacting with Odias of different parts of Eu-

rope.

Seshadev hailing from a poor family struggled hard to get his present position.

Min, MLA pay fine for not wearing helmet

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Ensuring that 'law is equal for all', the Traffic police here on Saturday imposed a fine on School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash and Baleswar Sadar MLA Swarup Das for violating traffic rules.

The police imposed a penalty of Rs 1,000 on the Minister and the MLA for driving a motorcycle without wearing helmets. The MLA was driving the two-wheeler with the Minister sitting on pillion. None of them was wearing a helmet.

Later, MLA Das turned up at the Traffic police station and deposited the fine amount.

Earlier in the morning, Minister Samir Ranjan Dash made surprise visits to different schools in Baleswar town. Along with MLA Das, he vis-



ited the Balasore Town High School and the Barabati Girls' High School. He held discussions with teachers and students regarding their requirements and reviewed the facilities available in the schools.

The Minister informed that over two lakh students have migrated to Government-run schools from private ones. Around 11,000 new teachers would be appointed in the State, hoping that the Orissa

High Court would give permission for the same. The appointment process would begin once Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik returns to the State from his foreign trip, he added.

Biden signs landmark gun bill, says 'lives will be saved'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden on Saturday signed the most sweeping gun violence bill in decades, a bipartisan compromise that seemed unimaginable until a recent series of mass shootings, including the massacre of 19 students and two teachers at a Texas elementary school.

"Lives will be saved," he said at the White House. Citing the families of shooting victims, the President said, "Their message to us was to do something. Well today, we did."

The House gave final approval on Friday, following Senate passage on Thursday, and Biden acted just before leaving Washington for two summits in Europe. The legislation will toughen background checks for the youngest gun buyers, keep firearms from more domestic violence offenders and help states put in place red flag laws that make it easier for authorities to take weapons from people adjudged to be dangerous.

Most of its \$13 billion cost will help bolster mental health programs and aid schools targeted in mass shootings.

Detailed report on Page 5

GRP traces WB girl by tracking mobile phone

Love affair suspected behind incident
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ BHUBANESWAR

The Government Railway Police (GRP) has got clues in the mysterious disappearance of a girl student of West Bengal from the Bhubaneswar railway station.

The GRP with the help of electronic surveillance has ascertained Sweety's presence to Chitpur in West Bengal. They have sought assistance from Chitpur the police in locating the girl based on the location of her mobile phone.



A love affair was suspected to be the reason behind the girl's disappearance from Bhubaneswar Railway Station. From CCTV camera, it has

been ascertained that a male friend was seen with Sweety. Notably, the 20-year-old girl had allegedly gone missing soon after deboarding at

Bhubaneswar railway station on June 23.

Sweety had reportedly reached Bhubaneswar from Howrah in Jansatbdi Express. She reportedly had called her mother after deboarding at Bhubaneswar railway station. However, the family could not contact her subsequently as her mobile phone was switched off. Later, the girl's local guardian lodged a missing complaint with the GRP Bhubaneswar.

Sweety, who hails from North 24 Parganas (West Bengal), was a second year student of Utkal Aerospace and Engineering College in the Khandagiri area in Bhubaneswar.

Let people raise voice against rights breach'

CHRC holds symposium
PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Citizen's Human Rights Clinic, Odisha, held its second National Symposium entitled "Stand up for someone's right today" here.

Former Judge of Orissa High Court and Chairman of National Green Tribunal Justice AS Naidu and MLA Soumya Ranjan Patnaik graced the occasion as inaugurator and chief guest, respectively. Both stated that when human rights are violated by anybody or organisation, the citizens must raise their voice against such violation.

Eminent litterateur, Chair-



But now-a-days citizens are displaying callous attitude, which is not a good sign for the society. In such a scenario Citizen's Human Rights Clinic is working for the protection and promotion of human rights; their efforts in this regard is laudable, they said.

man of CHRC, Odisha Gopabandhu Mallick presided over the meeting whereas Dr Ramakanta Mohanta, Dr Parash Chandra Mohanty, Narahari Sial and poetess Monalisa Parida conducted the symposium.

Prof JK Mohanta read the annual performance report of the organisation. Five law stu-

dents of Fakir Mohan University, Baleswar, namely Dibyarchana Das, Sangita Mishra, Kanwar Kisku, Dibyadarshan Panigrahi and Suwendu Guru, who were doing internship with CHRC were awarded certificates and mementos.

PRONOMONALISA Parida coordinated.

BJP State executive meet on Jun 29

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A meeting of the BJP State executive would be held at Meera Courtyard at Kurang in Phulnakhara on June 29 to discuss the prevailing political and social issues in the State.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, party in-charge for Odisha Vijay Pal Singh Tomar, all MPs and MLAs of the State, State-level

office-bearers and executive members would attend the meeting to be held under the chairmanship of party State president Samir Mohanty, said party State general secretary Golak Mohapatra in a Press release on Saturday.

He also said that earlier on June 28, a meeting of the party's State unit office-bearers would be held at the party State headquarters here.

In Puri Rs 28L seized from passenger's luggage

PNS ■ PURI

Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel on Friday seized over Rs 28 lakh from a passenger's luggage at the Puri railway station. The cash was recovered from one Uday Kumar, who was scheduled to board a train to Visakhapatnam from the pilgrim town.

The cash was recovered during routine luggage scanning at the railway station. Kumar hails from Visakhapatnam.

Though Kumar claims to have received the cash following a land deal, the RPF is con-

ducting further investigation in connection with the recovery of the cash.

Notably, ina similar incident, a joint team of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP), Cuttack had detected cash over Rs 24 lakh from the luggage of a passenger in December 2021.

The passenger, who was travelling in New Delhi bound Rajdhani Express, had stashed the cash in his baggage. The bundles of cash in the denomination of Rs 10 and Rs 20 were seized from the possession of passenger Arun Kumar Swain.

Matric results in July 1st week

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The results of the annual High School Certificate (Matriculation) Examination-2022 conducted by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) would be declared in the first week of July, informed School & Mass Education Minister

Samir Ranjan Dash on Saturday. "The evaluation of the examination answer sheets has been completed and the results will be published in July first week," he told reporters.

The examination had been conducted between April 29 and May 7 and the evaluation process started from May 21.

Aparajita presents 3rd annual report card

Also highlights future projects
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Bhubaneswar BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi on Saturday released her third annual report card on her performance in the constituency highlighting achievements and progress of different projects.

The report included development works, grievance redressal, community outreach and future course of action.

Sarangi also spoke about her raising issues pertaining to Bhubaneswar and beyond in the Lok Sabha, active participation in the Parliamentary Standing Committees and discharging duties as national spokesperson of the BJP.

She said that during the third year as MP, she has taken up 43 NH projects estimated at Rs 6,473.62 crore including the ambitious Capital Region Ring



Road of 111 km.

Out of the MPLAD projects, 1,000 solar lights have been installed. Of the 1,143 sanctioned projects under MPLAD so far, 1,036 are completed and 107 ongoing.

Effort has been to see that all who are eligible would get a Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

(PMAY) house. As many as 3,909 houses have been sanctioned and 3,574 completed.

Sarangi also said nine megapiped water supply projects worth Rs 1,380.25 crore are currently at various stages of progress under the Jal Jeevan Mission. She said she is pursuing different projects with vari-

ous Union Ministries which include up-gradation of Bolagarh passenger halt and Lingaraj passenger halt, modernisation of Bhubaneswar railway station, renovation in Chilika lake with an allocation of Rs 20.79 crore to benefit 25,000 fishermen, construction of a 150-bed ESIC Medical College Hospital at Andharua near Bhubaneswar, inclusion of Durua, Kandha Kumbhara and Sahara tribes in ST list, rejuvenation of Prachi river and proposals for direct flights from Bhubaneswar to Jammu and from Bhubaneswar to Shiridi.

However, in his reaction, Bhubaneswar Central BJD MLA Ananta Narayan Jena said all that Sarangi claimed is humbug as she has achieved nothing tangible at least in his Assembly constituency.

Jatni Congress MLA Suresh Routry remarked that Sarangi claimed much more than she has done.

Coast Guard bike rally flagged off in city

For interaction with fishers at Chandrabhaga, Puri
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Coast Guard is commemorating Azadika Amrut Mahotsav in Odisha by organising a motorcycle rally consisting of 75 participants.

Apart from Coast Guard personnel, representatives of IOCL, CRPE, CISE, Marine Fisheries, Marine Police, NCB also participated in the event.

The rally was flagged off by Development Commissioner and MD, State Disaster Management Pradeep KumarJena at Bhubaneswar. The aim is to



spread awareness on Union Government's flagship programmes in coastal areas of the State and expand camaraderie with people staying in fishing hamlets.

The rally will cover approximately 140 km. The bikers will conduct community interaction programme at Puri and

Chandrabhaga. They will interact with the members of the fishing community and conduct awareness programmes, such as sensitising them to carry life jackets, essential documents of boat/crew etc vis-à-vis basic seaman practices.

The effort was aimed at

sensitising the coastal population and fishermen on safety, security, and environmental issues at sea. In addition, these efforts will aim at integrating the fisher folks and coastal population with maritime security mechanism and strengthen coastal security network.

NCSCDA holds job fair for PwDs



35 shortlisted
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The National Career Service Centre for Differently Aabled (NCSCDA), Directorate General of Employment (DGE), Union Ministry of Labour and Employment organised a free job fair for both PwDs and non PwDs on Friday in its office campus at Pokhariput.

The event was made successful with the active support of Assistant Director Sujit Kumar Sahoo, Sonalika Suman, Psychologist and other staff of the centre.

In the job fair vacancies of different profile were there such as field credit officer, sales executive, tele caller and de-livery executive etc. A total of 65 PwDs/non PwDs job seek-

ers participated in the event belonging to different districts to fill 250 vacancies from which 35 jobseekers got shortlisted. Nine job seekers participated through www.ncs.gov.in job portal.

Assistant Director Sahoo thanked all the employers for making the event successful. Sahoo also congratulated all the shortlisted jobseekers and urged them to popularise such kind of job fair among other job seekers of the State so that more and more jobseekers could take the benefit.

Sahoo requested all the employers to participate in future job fairs to be organised by the centre and recruit both PwDs and non-PwDs to ensure inclusive workplace at every organisation.

'No single-use plastic in Rath Yatra please'

Dharmendra makes public appeal
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Ahead of the Rath Yatra, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday appealed to social organisations and the public at large to reduce use of single-use plastic during the festival and also called for its recycling.

Issuing a video message, Pradhan advised people not to

use single-use plastic during the Rath Yatra period. It has been seen that for flowers, food items, water and food offerings to gods, people largely use plastic carry bags and covers, he pointed out.

He said excessive use of plastic during the Rath Yatra heavily impacts environment and hygiene and even pollutes water bodies.

Pradhan urged the public to make non-use of plastics a social movement as millions of people would congregate during the Rath Yatra.

CSM Tech wins IMC Awards

For transformation at JSW mines
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

CSM Technologies, a Bhubaneswar-headquartered IT consulting firm with business footprint in USA, Dubai and Africa, has won the prestigious IMC Digital Technology Awards 2022 for Digital Logistics Management Solution (DLMS) in Category 1D-Established IT and Technology Service companies transforming other businesses digitally across sectors.'

The DLMS has been implemented at JSW Steel's Jajang, Gonua, Narayanposhi and Nuagaon mines. The multi-modal digital logistics management solution designed in



sync with the Prime Minister's Gati Shakti initiative, covers 13 railways sidings, four mines and three ports. The solution has enabled better production planning and pit-to-port optimisation, bringing in

gains like higher efficiency, enhanced transparency, lower Turnaround Time (TAT) and cost optimization with minimal human intervention.

COO of JSW Steel Odisha Ranjan Nayak said, "In a quick

changing mining landscape, automation of processes has become critical for seamless operations and transformative outcomes. IT in logistics is one such ground breaking solution that has enabled our mines to balance process automation with higher productivity. The outcomes that we have achieved on ground after onboarding DLMS are a testimony to its efficacy".

"The award is a testimony to the transformative impact of logistics in tackling the multi-modal transportation challenge in the mining value chain. CSM Tech got the opportunity to implement this seamless solution at JSW's mines and script a transformation on key mining parameters on the ground", said founder and CEO of CSM Technologies Priyadarshi Nanu Pany.

OESA demands removal of pay anomalies

Also seeks uniform transfer policy
PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The 53rd council and biennial general body meeting of the Odisha Engineers' Service Association (OESA) was held here on Friday.

Addressing the gathering, chief guest Works, Steel & Mines Minister Prafulla Kumar Mallick praised the contribution of engineers in the making of modern Odisha and stressed upon improved connectivity in the State through road, air, rail and water works.

He said that in Germany only 10% thermal power stations are in use and the rest 90% energy requirement is



being met through green energy. Odisha engineers should take a cue of it.

Rural Development Minister Priti Ranjan Gharai said that in the present technology-driven society, everything goes with the tagline of engineering. He praised the efforts of engineers during the Covid pandemic.

In his welcome address,

OESA president Tara Prasad Mishra thanked the Chief Minister for the restructuring of the OES cadre and highlighted demands of the association like removal of pay anomalies in the cadres of OES, enhancement of direct recruitment quota to 75%, regular recruitment every year and a uniform transfer policy for engineers. While OESA

general secretary Abinash Roul placed the annual report, joint secretary-cum-treasurer Debabrata Mohanty extended a vote of thanks. The meeting also elected the new body for the year 2022-2023 as Rabinranath Mallick president, Amiya Ranjan Nayak general secretary and Prafulla Kumar Behera joint secretary-cum-treasurer.

In Baleswar Gang looting bank customers busted; 5 held

9 arrested for gambling

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ BALESWAR

The Sahadevkhunta police have apprehended five miscreants, who were allegedly involved in at least five loots. They were targeting the people who were returning after withdrawing cash from banks.

The arrested accused were identified as Sk Jafar, Abdul Hamid Khan, Zahid Khan, Sk Arbaz Khan and Manas

Nayak.

Manas, a resident of Renupada under Basta police station limits, used to sit in different banks posing as a customer and kept watch on the persons withdrawing money from the counter.

Further he was sharing the information, including their photos in Whatsapp to others who were executing the crimes, said BaleswarSP SS Mishra.

The police have seized two swords, a chopper, a toy pistol and cash of Rs 57,000,

police said.

Meanwhile, the Soro police following a raid on a lodge arrested nine persons, including a teacher, Government servant and elected representative on charges of gambling.

The cops seized cash of over Rs 1 lakh, three bikes and mobile phones from their possession.

The police on a tipoff carried out a raid on the lodge at Uttareswar Chhak of Soro. Later, all the accused were forwarded to court.

3 criminals held in R'kela encounter

AK 47, 9mm pistol, ammo seized

PNS ■ ROURKELA

A notorious criminal was injured and two others were also nabbed following an encounter under the Chandiposh police station in Rourkela on Saturday.

The police seized an AK-47 rifle, a 9 mm pistol and 20 bullets from the possession of the criminals.

Reports said the criminal who sustained injury in the encounter was admitted to the Rourkela Government Hospi-



tal (RGH) here.

The identity of the nabbed gangsters was yet to be ascertained. Sources said that trio hail from neighbouring

Jharkhand and further investigation was ongoing.

"The injured criminal has sustained bullet injury and two others have been arrested. We have recovered sophisticated weapons including AK47 and live ammunition," said Rourkela SP Mukesh Bhamo.

The SP further said that the police had some inputs regarding the criminals and patrolling was intensified in the region, where the encounter took place.

"Only after a detailed interrogation of the criminals, we can further divulge information," the SP added.

In Kendrapada Woman hacked to death by hubby

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The Patkura police arrested one Manan Ali of Miramohalla under Tendakuda's Muslim Basti and produced him before the SDJM Court for hacking his wife to death with an axe.

Patkura PS IIC Saroj Sahu said Manan is an alcoholic person and used to spend most of his earnings in consuming liquor; so, most of the time quarrel erupted between the couple. Manan used to assault his wife several times.

Ali in an inebriated condition, on Thursday late night attacked his wife, Parul Bibi,

with an axe while the latter was in deep sleep. In a fit of rage Manan killed his wife, after an altercation erupted between them a few hours earlier.

Acting on the information, the police rushed to the spot, seized the weapon used for the crime and sent the body for autopsy to the District Headquarters Hospital. Police too arrested Manan, while he was hiding at the roof top of his building.

Manan was on Friday produced before the SDJM court where he was remanded in jail custody after his bail plea was rejected by the court, informed police sources.

In Jajpur

Fake cement unit busted; 4 held

PNS ■ JAJPUR

Police on Saturday conducted a raid and unearthed a fake cement manufacturing unit operating from a godown at Golagaon village under the Kalinganagar police station in Jajpur district.

Four persons, including the supervisor of the factory, were arrested in this connection. The police seized 200 cement bags of the Ultratech brand loaded in a truck near the spot.

Acting on a tipoff, police conducted a raid on the unit when the workers were loading the cement bags in a truck



to deliver the consignment, said Kalinganagar PS IIC Priyabrat Rout.

Cement of many reputed brands was being mixed with damaged cement, other raw

materials and repackaged with logos of reputed cement companies and sold in the market at cheap prices.

Police have also seized the machines used for the mixing of the cement and packaging of bags. The buyers were happy to get the cement at lesser rates, said Rout.

"During investigation, we came to know that the godown was previously used as a rice mill. But the rice mill has been closed for the last two years. We are interrogating the accused. More persons will be arrested in this case soon," added the IIC.

Gopalpur Port holds mobile health camp



PNS ■ CHHATRAPUR

The Gopalpur Ports Ltd (GPL) on Saturday launched a mobile health check-up camp under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative at Haripur village under Kalipali panchayat to provide quality healthcare to people living in the port periphery.

GPL vice-president Ajay Kumar Mishra, assistant vice-president (HR/IR) Chittaranjan Bahinipati, six doctors with specialisation in gynaecology, medicine and paediatric, Sarpanch B

Laxmi Patra and Samiti Member Bikash Kumar Behera of Kalipali panchayat were present.

Over 300 people from different villages in the panchayat participated in the camp and discussed with the doctors about various health issues free of cost. Villagers, elected representatives and intellectuals hailed the efforts of the port authorities.

Recently, the port authorities had inaugurated a health check-up lab for benefit of the people in the area.

In Baleswar

Rs 32 lakh looted from SBI ATM

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Miscreants allegedly looted cash from an unmanned Automated Teller Machine (ATM) of the State Bank of India (SBI) at Padmapur Haat under the Haldipada outpost in Baleswar

district on Friday night.

As per the initial reports, three masked miscreants entered the ATM kiosk and decamped with the cash after cutting the machine with a gas cutter. They also damaged the CCTV installed in the kiosk to avoid detection

by police.

Sources said cash around Rs 32 lakh has been stolen from the ATM. However, the bank authorities are yet to make any statement.

Soon after the matter came to light, senior police officials reached the spot and started

further investigation in this connection. Forensic and other technical experts were also roped in to investigate the incident and get clues. The cops are also scrutinising the footage from other CCTV installed near the ATM to identify the miscreants.

B'swar people's representatives miffed at ZP meet

Over vacant teacher, doc posts

UBACHAK MOHANTY
■ BALESWAR

The elected representatives, while expressing severe displeasure over performance of various departments, pulled up officials for tabling incorrect information during a meeting of the Zilla Parishad here.

They pointed out various deficiencies including services and vacant posts mainly in the Education and Health departments.

In the district, 632 teacher posts are lying vacant including 400 posts of 211 5T-transformed schools. It was

pointed out that in several schools teacher posts remained vacant; while in some schools there are more teachers than the sanctioned strength, in some cases the situation was reversed (less teachers than the sanctioned strength).

The newly opened Model Schools in nine blocks are also facing a crisis on several fronts. Their seats couldn't be filled due to want of adequate publicity and in some cases the students are attending classes without adequate furniture, they alleged.

It was alleged that a lot of irregularities have been committed during the 5T transformation works of schools. The members, while made a volley of questions, were pacified

after the district Collector assured them of a review and inquiry into the allegations.

As many as 166 doctor posts are lying vacant with the result that many CHCs and PHCs don't have doctors. In several cases, the doctors are on leave and doctors are performing private practice during working hours hampering the services at the Government hospitals, they said.

Besides, surgery works in many hospitals and healthcare centres face a difficulty due to absence of anaesthesia specialists, they alleged.

Discussions were also made on the progress of various schemes and works under PWD, RD and Agricul-

ture departments.

A demand was also made for the establishment of an Agriculture college and research centre in Baleswar.

The meeting while was presided by the President ZP Narayan Pradhan, Tourism, Culture and Excise Minister Aswani Patra, Bhograi MLA Ananta Das, Baleswar MP Pratap Sarangi, Bhadrak MP Manjulata Mandal, MLAs JP Panigrahi, Swarup Das, Nityananda Sahu, Sudhanshu Praidia, Sukanta Nayak, district Collector DB Shinde, CDMO Dulalsen Jagdeb, PD DRDA Rabindra Sahu, Nilgiri Sub Collector Diptiranjana Sethi and officers of various departments were present.

Muddy approach road

Brahmapur apartment residents rue apathy

KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA
■ BRAHMAPUR

The General Body meeting of Nataraj Niwas Apartment Owners' Association (NNAOA) was held in the apartment premises here on Sunday morning. The members of the association unanimously expressed their deep anguish over inordinate delay in concretising 20 feet approach road from Dura-Pathara junction main road up to the apartment gate, causing serious inconveniences to the residents.

Mention may be made that, there are nearly 100 family members staying in the apartment and since last about 10 years, the residents have represented to the district administration and the local BDO (Kanisi Block) several times



through the local elected representatives and the media for relief, but in vain. Notably, the apartment comes under the territorial jurisdiction of Dura GP (Gopalpur Assembly constituency), located on the outskirts of the city and hardly 1km from the town.

"It is unfortunate that after 75 years of our independence, the residents have to repeat-

edly remind the local administration and the elected representatives including the local Panchayat of concretising the approach road which is hardly 200 feet length for which the Government is duty bound," said an office bearer of the association, who did not wish to be identified.

Surprisingly, neither the district administration nor the

local BDO has ever visited the road site and discussed the matter with the inmates of the apartment/local residents in order to understand and address the problems of the residents.

More particularly, during rainy season it becomes difficult for the senior citizens and the school-going children for a safe walk in the road as the road becomes muddy with potholes.

According to information available, several times the local Panchayat/Block received huge funds for construction/concretising and renovation of different roads under the Dura GP which reportedly remain unutilised. The local residents, therefore, have demanded that the small approach road of hardly 300 meters be renovated.

Cuttack DM feted by alma mater



PNS ■ ATHAGARH

District Magistrate of Cuttack Bhabani Shankar Chayani was felicitated by the Alumni Association of Biswanath Bidyapitha, Athagarh. Chayani was an alumnus of the school and had achieved sixth rank in all Odisha matriculation examination.

In the last two years, he has made some remarkable changes both in infrastructure and manpower of the school. He was felicitated with a ci-

tation, shawl and bouquet. Alumni Ramnarayan Mohanty coordinated the felicitation function where association vice president Brahma Mishra, retired Professor Pramod Kumar Das, Servants of the People Society Odisha chief Niranjan Rath and others adorned the dais in presence of students and alumni.

Association VP Mishra presented a cheque of Rs 3 lakh from the alumni funds to DM Chayani for the development of the school

IN BRIEF

LOAN BURDEN: SEXAGENARIAN ENDS LIFE IN K'PADA

Kendrapada: Sexagenarian Nrusingha Barik of Adakhanda-Mathasahi under the Pattamundai police limits committed suicide on Friday by consuming poison as he allegedly failed to repay loans, informed police sources. Barik had got loans from banks and private sources. He was first rushed to the Pattamundai CHC and subsequently to the District Headquarters Hospital in a critical condition. He died in the hospital while undergoing treatment.

SOCIAL WORKER MOHAPATRA TO GET GANDHI GAURAV SAMMAN

Bhubaneswar: The second Gandhi Gaurav Samman in memory of eminent freedom fighter and former Minister late Dolagovinda Pradhan will be conferred on social worker, educationist, long-time promoter of cooperation movement and founder of Baripada B.ED College Nanda Kumar Mohapatra. Mahatma Gandhi Ahimsa Aitihya Trust chairman Dr Aryakumar Jnanendra announced this on Friday. Mohapatra will be felicitated on June 28 in Bhubaneswar on the 97th birth anniversary of trust founder Pradhan. The award had earlier been given to Padma Shri Baba Balia.



500-SEAT THEATRE TO COME UP AT BARGARH

Bargarh: There was a long-standing demand for a theatre in Bargarh and it is soon going to come up as the Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) has sanctioned Rs 10 crore for construction of a 500-seat facility. A survey was conducted on Thursday for construction of the theatre and the proposed site was visited by WODC Chief Executive Officer Ajit Mishra, MLA Debesh Acharya, technical advisers and District Planning Board officials. The construction works would begin soon, MLA Acharya informed.



9 A'GARH ATHLETES, 4 COACHES FOR SPL OLYMPICS

Athagarh: Nine Divyaangajan athletes and four coaches of Athagarh block have been selected for badminton and volleyball at the national coaching camp of Special Olympics Bharat. Seven athletes will join volleyball at the Rajeev Gandhi Indoor stadium, Puducherry on July 1 to 6 while two will join badminton at Bokaro Steel City on June 26 to July 1. The Dr Braja Vihari Mohanty Memorial Mentally Retarded Benefit Trust has selected the athletes and coaches. Trust manager Bibekananda Mohanty arranged a meeting of the athletes with Sub-Collector Hemant Kumar Swain, who wished their success in the national camp and then selection for Special Olympics.



GANJAM BJP HAILS MURMU AS NDA PREZ CANDIDATE

Brahmapur: The BJP Ganjam district unit has welcomed the decision to nominate prominent tribal leader Draupadi Murmu as the NDA Presidential candidate. Addressing party workers at the Gandhi statue, former BJP district president Kanhu Charan Pati spoke on how Murmu rose from a grassroots activist to be the candidate for the top office of the country. He thanked PM Modi and BJP president Nadda for selecting the Presidential candidate from Odisha. The meeting was also addressed by Mahanta Chinmayanda Das Maharaj, Pravat Kiran Sadangi, Sunil Kumar Sahu and Rama Kumar Patro.



BJD LEADER SANTOSH ELECTED AS DAKSHINPUR COOP CHIEF

Brahmapur: Senior Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader Santosh Kumar Choudhury has been unanimously elected as the president of the Dakshinpur Service Cooperative Society. Santosh had started his career as a student leader and was first elected as Athletic Secretary of the Binayak Acharya College in 1991 and as president of College Students' Union in 1992 and 1993 and. During 2002-07, he was elected as Samiti member of Dakshinpur gram panchayat. Since 2009, he has been working as the representative of Digapahandi MLA Surjya Narayan Patro and as BJD Kukudakhandi block president.



TWO MISSING KUJANG GIRLS TRACED

Jagatsinghpur: The two girls of the Kujang area who had been missing from their school for three days ago were rescued by police on Thursday in a restaurant near Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar. The Kujang had and started a search for the girls after registering a missing case. Cops tracked both girls' mobile phones and their whereabouts and spotted them wandering in Bhubaneswar.

YOUTH MISSING IN RIVER DEVI IN JSPUR

Jagatsinghpur: Three youths were rescued while one went missing while they were bathing in river Devi near Garey under Naugaon block on Friday. The missing youth was identified as Biswajit Biswal of Garey village. Fire personnel, police and locals have launched a search drive, but the youth was yet to be spotted.

Paradip Port breaks own record

1,46,565 MT iron ore loaded in one ship

PNS ■ PARADIP

The Paradip Port got 1,46,565 metric tonnes of iron ore fines loaded in the ship MV Cape Ray having a length of 292 meters, beam of 45 meters and sailing draught of 16 meters at the New Iron Ore Berth of JSW terminal, which is the highest-ever loading at

the port surpassing the previous best of 1,43,853 MT.

The cargo belonged to the JSW Steel which the company loaded at its terminal for its Jaigarh steel plant in Maharashtra for discharge at its captive port Jaigarh. The shippers expressed their gratitude to the Paradip Port Authority, especially the Marine Department which berthed the vessel after day light hours on June 21 and sailed on June 24 after completion of loading.

Cong announces ‘Agnipath Ki Baat, Yuvaon Ke Saath Vishwasghath’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday announced a mega public outreach initiative coinciding with Prime Minister's monthly radio programme, Mann Ki Baat, scheduled for Sunday. The party had dubbed its imitative as ‘Agnipath Ki Baat, Yuvaon Ke Saath Vishwasghath’.

The party would hold simultaneous Press conferences at 20 top cities. The pressers would be addressed by party spokespersons, including former Union Ministers Ajay Maken, MM Pallam Raju, Manvendra Singh amongst others like Pawan Khera and Kanhaiya Kumar.

The party had earlier said it will be doing a satyagraha on June 27 over the same issue. It said the Agnipath scheme will create two categories of soldiers, which will impact the cohesion of combat units and

accused the Narendra Modi government of playing around with national security.

Former Lok Sabha member Lt. Col. (Retd) Manvendra Singh said, having soldiers with different privileges fighting in the same unit could be a potentially “dangerous” situation.

“When there is difference of status, difference in pay, perks, allowances between two soldiers doing the same duties, it is a very dangerous situation and sure shot disaster,” Manvendra said at AICC press conference.

Congress has alleged the biggest impact would be on the scale of recruitment in terms of sheer numbers and the principle of regional balance that was usually followed by the armed forces in national interest.

The grand old party also questioned the effectiveness as well as motivation of a combat soldier with just a six-month training.



“Has the government given any thought to the risks of releasing a large number of trained military personnel into an environment of scarce jobs and temptations from criminal quarters, or worse?” asked the Congress.

The party has also strongly countered the government's assertion that Agniveers would be absorbed in Central armed police forces (CAPF), Coast Guards, public sector undertakings (PSUs) and Assam Rifles, among others, with current data on re-employment.

The party said that according to 2021 Ministry of Defence data, ex-servicemen were entitled to 10% of Group C and 20% of Group D jobs in the Central government, but the actual numbers were 1.29% and 1.66%. The CAPF had a 10% quota, but ex-servicemen accounted for 0.47% in Group C, 0.87% in Group B and 2.20% in Group A posts, said a Congress statement and pointed to an identical situation for Central PSUs.

NIA raids 5 locations in Mizoram in recent explosives seizure case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has conducted searches at five locations in Mizoram's Aizawl, Champai and Kolasib districts in a recent case of explosives seizures allegedly for destabilizing the cross-border Government in Myanmar.

The case relates to the recovery of a massive 2,421.12 kg of explosives including 1,000 detonators, 4,500 metres of detonating fuse, and Indian and Myanmar currency from a vehicle in the Zawnling area under Tipa police station in Saiha district.

“This consignment was meant for a Myanmar-based outfit Chin National Front (CNF) which is in the process of accumulating arms and ammunition for resisting the government of Myanmar,” the NIA said in a statement.

The case was initially registered as FIR No. 1/2022 on January 21, at Tipa police station, Saiha which was re-registered by NIA on March 21.

During the searches, digital devices and incriminating documents were seized and further investigation in the case is continuing.

The probe in the seizures assumes significance in the wake of the bilateral cooperation between India and Myanmar against anti-India insurgents operating out of that country, officials said.

Myanmar government has in the past assisted Indian agencies in checking the activities of the anti-India insurgent groups which is a key for maintaining the security posture in the entire Northeast region. A number of insurgent outfits active in the Northeast seek to find safe haven in Myanmar for carrying out the nefarious activities from there, they added.

DGCA halts operations of 2 flying schools citing serious safety concerns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has stopped operations of two flying training schools in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra-Chimes and Shirpur from flying for three weeks because of serious safety concerns.

According to a statement issued on Saturday, the DGCA said that in one case, it has been stopped till such time the runway is suitable for flying operations. During the inspection, it was observed that it had loose gravel and an uneven surface and was unsafe for flying.

In the second case, it was observed that three aircraft of a flying school had dysfunctional fuel gauge indicators and they were still being operated, it said. “The flying operations at this school (the second case) have been stopped

for three weeks. It will be allowed to operate only when things are in order,” it noted.

The DGCA said it has stopped “flying operations” at these two schools, which are located in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, respectively, due to the aforementioned “serious safety concerns”. The regulator's statement did not mention the names of the two training schools.

Sources said reworking the runway has already started in the case of Madhya Pradesh. “For two years operations were on halt due to which state government didn't carry out maintenance work of strip. The airstrip is owned by the MP government,” said the sources.

The DGCA had on June 26 had said it has audited 30 out of the total 32 flying training organisations (FTOs) in India since March 21 and found them violating multiple safety regulations.

India’s Covid surge dips 8% in 24 hrs, logs15,940 cases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India's tally of Covid infections dipped by 8 per cent on Saturday from a day ago to touch 15,940. The active case-load increased to 91,779, according to the updated Union health ministry data. The death toll climbed to 5,24,974 with 20 more fatalities.

Active cases rose by 3,495 in a day and now comprise 0.21 percent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate was recorded at 98.58 percent, the health ministry said.

The daily positivity rate was recorded at 4.39 percent while the weekly positivity rate was 3.30 percent, according to the health ministry.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,27,61,481, while the case fatality rate was 1.21 percent.

According to an official



from the Ministry, as states register a spike in Covid-19 cases, the rise and fall in infections from time to time is a common phenomenon when an infectious disease transitions from pandemic to endemic phase. Underlining the current rise in coronavirus cases is so far limited to certain districts of the country, they attributed it to people not wearing masks, increased travel and social interactions and low uptake of booster doses of Covid vaccine.

According to official sources, 51 districts in India, including 12 from Kerala, seven

from Mizoram, and five each from Maharashtra and Assam, are reporting a weekly Covid positivity rate of over 10 percent. In 53 districts, including 10 from Rajasthan and five from Delhi, the weekly positivity is between five and 10 percent.

According to the ministry, 196.94 crore doses of the Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far. India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 2020, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5, and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20, and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19.

The country crossed the grim milestone of two crores on May 4, three crore on June 23 and four crores on January 25 this year.

Climate change likely to impact omega 3 fatty acids production

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Climate change is likely to impact the production of omega-3 fatty acids produced by plankton at the base of the food web in the ocean bed, according to a study.

This means less omega-3 fatty acids available for fish and for people. Omega-3 fatty acid is an essential fat that the human body cannot produce on its own, and is widely regarded as a "good" fat that links seafood consumption to heart health.

The first-ever survey of planktonic lipids in the global ocean predicts a temperature-linked decrease in the production of essential omega-3 fatty acids, an important subset of lipid molecules.

The survey analyzed 930 lipid samples across the global ocean using a uniform high-resolution accurate mass spectrometry analytical workflow, "revealing heretofore unknown characteristics of ocean planktonic lipidomes," which is the

Survey of planktonic lipids in the global ocean predicts a temperature-linked decrease in the production of essential omega-3 fatty acids, an important subset of lipid molecules

entirety of hundreds to thousands of lipid species in a sample, according to a new paper led by authors from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI).

"Focusing on ten molecularly diverse glycerolipid classes we identified 1,151 distinct lipid species, finding that fatty acid unsaturation (i.e., number of carbon to carbon double bonds) is fundamentally constrained by temperature. We predict significant declines in the essential fatty acid eicosapentaenoic acid [EPA] over the next century, which are likely to have serious deleterious effects on economically critical fisheries," states the paper; Global ocean lipidomes show a universal relationship between temperature and lipid unsaturation, published in Science.

EPA is one of the most nutritious omega-3 fatty acids, has been linked to numerous health benefits, and is widely available as a dietary supplement. "The lipids in the ocean affect your life," says journal article co-author Benjamin Van Mooy, senior scientist in WHOI's Marine Chemistry and Geochemistry Department. "We found that the composition of lipids in the ocean is going to change as the ocean warms. That is a cause for concern. We need those lipids that are in the ocean because they influence the quality of the food that the ocean produces for humanity."

"All organisms in the ocean have to contend with water temperatures. With this study, we have revealed one of



the important biochemical ways cells are doing that," says journal article lead author Henry C. Holm, a doctoral student in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) -- WHOI Joint Program in Oceanography/Applied Ocean Science and Engineering.

"These findings about EPA were made possible by using a method that gives us a very complete picture of the glycerolipids in each sample. We saw that temperature was linked with the saturation of cell membranes everywhere we looked in the ocean."

"These trends are also evident in all the other glycerolipid classes as well as the total aggregated lipidomes of all glycerolipid classes," the paper states. "Indeed, it is striking that the relationship between temperature and unsaturation emerges from our dataset despite spanning such diverse and disparate planktonic communities, from the nutrient-depleted subtropical gyres to the highly-productive Antarctic coastal shelf," says the study.

DGCA orders probe after fuselage door warnings light up on SpiceJet planes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered a probe in which fuselage door warnings lit up on two separate SpiceJet planes while taking off on Friday and Saturday, forcing the aircraft to abandon their journeys and return. There have been a total of four incidents -- including the aforementioned two -- on SpiceJet flights during the last week. According to DGCA officials, the regulator is probing all four incidents.

The fuselage is the central body of the aircraft where passengers and crew members sit. On June 19, an engine on SpiceJet's Delhi-bound aircraft carrying 185 passengers caught fire soon after taking off from the Patna airport and the plane made an emergency landing minutes later. The engine malfunctioned because of a bird hit.

In another incident on

June 19, a SpiceJet flight for Jabalpur had to return to Delhi due to cabin pressurization issues.

Officials said on Friday (June 24), the fuselage warning light on a SpiceJet Q400 plane illuminated when it was on 'rotation' -- when pilots pitched the nose of the aircraft up to climb in the air during take-off.

The pilots of the Q400 aircraft, which was heading from Guwahati to Kolkata, found that the warning was coming from the baggage door at the rear end of the plane, the officials said.

The Q400 plane was leveled off at 5,000 feet and the pilots decided to return to Guwahati, the officials noted.

An incident similar to the Friday one took place on SpiceJet's Patna-Guwahati flight on Saturday (June 25). A SpiceJet Q400 aircraft stopped its take-off roll at the Patna airport on Saturday after the plane's fuselage door warning light lit up, officials noted.



In this case, too, it was found that the warning had come from the baggage door at the rear end of the aircraft, they said. The Q400 plane returned to the parking bay of the Patna airport after canceling its take-off, officials noted.

Regarding the Friday incident, SpiceJet said that "Q400 aircraft was operating flight SG-3724, SG-4126, sector Guwahati-Kolkata." At rotation, the fuselage door warning light was illuminated and take-off was continued. Subsequently, aircraft was leveled off at 5,000

Mantri Developers’ director held in ₹1K crore money-laundering case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Sushil P Mantri, Director of Bangalore-based real estate entity, Mantri Developers Private Limited, in connection with a Rs 1,000 crore money-laundering probe.

The ED started the probe in March on the basis of an FIR registered in Subramanyapura police station, Bengaluru in 2020 against the company and its directors as well as other employees.

"Many home buyers have filed complaints with the police as well as with the ED alleging that accused entities/persons are involved in money laundering and have induced the prospective buyers with rosiy painted schemes, showing misleading brochures, falsification of delivery timelines and window dressing and collected more than Rs.1,000 crore as advance money from thou-

sands of buyers," the ED said in a statement.

However, they have not been given possession of their flats even after the passage of seven to 10 years after the booking. During the investigation, it was also noticed that the company offered various Ponzi-like schemes which were styled as buy-back plans and advance money was collected for the flats/homes, it said.

In some cases, the company has not refunded the amount to the buyers even after a clear direction from the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA).

The ED probe further revealed that the company diverted for personal use the amount it collected from the buyers leading to stalling of the project.

Currently, the group has total outstanding loans to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore from various financial institutions, out of which about Rs 1,000 crore



It was also revealed during the investigation that the company has cross-collateralized its assets to different financial institutions for taking multiple loans on the same assets

is overdue and some of the loan has been termed as non-performing asset (NPA).

It was also revealed during the investigation that the company has cross-collateralized its assets to different financial

institutions for taking multiple loans on the same assets.

Following his arrest, Sushil P Mantri was produced before the court which granted his custody to the ED for 10 days, it added.

Powers under preventive detention law ‘exceptional’, can’t be exercised in routine manner: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has said that powers under the preventive detention law are "exceptional" and cannot be exercised in a routine manner as it strikes hard on the freedom and liberty of an individual.

The apex court observation came as it set aside the October last year order of detention of two persons in Telangana.

The detention order was passed by the Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda Commissionerate, on the grounds that these two persons were involved in gold chain snatching offences, wherein the victims were mostly

women.

A vacation bench of Justices C T Ravikumar and Sudhanshu Dhulia noted that although according to the authority, the detenues were involved in more than 30 cases but only four cases of chain snatching were considered as ground for detention, as the other cases were reported to be behind the proximity period and out of the jurisdiction of the commissionerate.

The top court also noted that offences in these four cases were allegedly committed within a span of two months between May 6 and July 26 last year and both the detenues were granted bail by the magistrate in these cases.

"The powers to be exercised under the preventive detention law are exceptional powers which have been given to the government for its exercise in an exceptional situation as it strikes hard on the freedom and liberty of an individual, and thus cannot be exercised in a routine manner," the bench said.

The apex court passed the orders on June 22 on two separate petitions filed by the wives of the detenues.

The petitioners had challenged the Telangana High Court's order on March 25 this year dismissing their pleas against the preventive detention.

In its order, the top court

noted that one of reasons assigned by the authority justifying the invocation of the provisions of detention law was that the detenues were granted bail in all the four cases and were likely to indulge in similar crime.

"The reason why bail was granted in all four cases, however, has not been given. Bail was granted in all the four cases due to the inability of the prosecution, which did not complete its investigation in time. The bail had to be given as the charge sheet was not filed by the police in all the cases within the stipulated period of 60 days. The fault thus lies with the prosecution," the bench said.

It observed that the facts and circumstances of the case, as alleged in the detention order, does reflect a law and order situation which can be dealt with under the ordinary law of land and there was absolutely no occasion for invoking the extraordinary powers under the law of preventive detention.

The apex court said invocation of the preventive detention law in this case against the two persons was "not justified".

It said the distinction between law and order situation and a public order situation has been dealt with by the apex court in a catena of decisions.

"In fact, in a recent decision

of this court, the court had to make an observation regarding the routine and unjustified use of the preventive detention law in the state of Telangana," the bench noted.

It said the state is not without a remedy, as in case the detenu is so much a menace to the society as is being alleged, then the prosecution should seek cancellation of bail or move an appeal to the higher court.

"But definitely seeking shelter under the preventive detention law is not the proper remedy under the facts and circumstances of the case," it said.

The bench noted that the detention order said that



crimes were committed in broad daylight and have thus resulted in creation of fear and panic in the minds of public, especially women, and hence, the government had to interfere in order to "maintain public order".

While allowing the appeals, the bench set aside the order of detention as well as the order of the high court and said the detenues shall be released forthwith in case they are not required in any other case.

Russia pushes to block 2nd city in eastern Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

Russian forces are trying to block a city in eastern Ukraine, the region's governor said Saturday, after their relentless assault on a nearby city forced Ukrainian troops to begin withdrawal after weeks of intense fighting. Russia also launched missile attacks on areas far from the heart of the eastern battles.

Serhiy Haidai, governor of the Luhansk region, said on Facebook that Russian forces are attempting to blockade the city of Lysychansk from the south. That city lies next to Sievierodonetsk, which has endured relentless assault and house-to-house fighting for weeks. After Haidai said Friday that Ukrainian forces had begun retreating from Sievierodonetsk, military analyst Oleg Zhdanov said some of the troops were heading for Lysychansk. But Russian moves to cut off Lysychansk will give those retreating troops little respite.

Russian bombardment has reduced most of Sievierodonetsk to rubble and cut its population from 100,000 to 10,000. Some Ukrainian troops are holed up in the huge Azot chemical factory on the city's edge, along with about 500 civilians.

Sieverodonetsk and Lysychansk have been the focal point of the Russian offensive



aimed at capturing all of eastern Ukraine's Donbas region and destroying the Ukrainian military defending it - the most capable and battle-hardened segment of the country's armed forces.

The two cities and surrounding areas are the last major pockets of Ukrainian resistance in the Luhansk region - 95% of which is under Russian and local separatist forces' control. The Russians and separatists also control about

half of the Donetsk region, the second province in the Donbas.

Some 1,000 kilometers (600 miles) to the west, four Russian rockets hit a "military object" in Yaroviv, Lviv regional governor Maksym Kozyskytsky said. He did not give further details of the target, but Yaroviv has a sizable military base used for training fighters, including foreigners who have volunteered to fight for Ukraine. That base was hit by Russian

rockets in March, killing 35 people. The Lviv region, although far from the front lines, has been hit by other rockets during the war, destroying fuel storage areas.

About 30 Russian rockets were fired on the Zhytomyr region in central Ukraine on Saturday morning, killing one Ukrainian soldier, regional governor Vitaliy Buchenko said.

In the north, about 20 rockets were fired from Belarus into the

Chernihiv region, the Ukrainian military said.

A senior U.S. defense official, speaking in Washington on condition of anonymity, on Friday called the Ukrainians' move out of Sievierodonetsk a "tactical retrograde" to consolidate forces into positions where they can better defend themselves.

This will add to Ukraine's effort to keep Russian forces pinned down longer in a small area, the official said.

Following a botched attempt to capture Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, in the early stage of the invasion that started Feb. 24, Russian forces have shifted their focus to the Donbas, where the Ukrainian forces have fought Moscow-backed separatists since 2014.

After repeated Ukrainian requests to its Western allies for heavier weaponry to counter Russia's edge in firepower, four medium-range American rocket launchers have arrived, with four more on the way.

The senior U.S. defense official said Friday that more Ukrainian forces are training outside Ukraine to use the High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems, or HIMARS, and are expected back in their country with the weapons by mid-July.

The rockets can travel about 45 miles (70 kilometers). Also to be sent are 18 U.S. coastal and river patrol boats.



Biden signs landmark gun bill, says 'lives will be saved'

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden on Saturday signed the most sweeping gun violence bill in decades, a bipartisan compromise that seemed unimaginable until a recent series of mass shootings, including the massacre of 19 students and two teachers at a Texas elementary school. "Lives will be saved," he said at the White House. Citing the families of shooting victims, the president said, "Their message to us was to do something. Well today, we did."

The House gave final approval Friday, following Senate passage Thursday, and Biden acted just before leaving Washington for two summits in Europe. The legislation will toughen background checks for the youngest gun buyers, keep firearms from more domestic violence offenders and help states put in place red flag laws that make it easier for authorities to take weapons from people adjudged to be dangerous.

Most of its \$13 billion cost will help bolster mental health programs and aid schools, which have been targeted in

Newtown, Connecticut, and Parkland, Florida, and elsewhere in mass shootings. Biden said the compromise hammered out by a bipartisan group of senators "doesn't do everything I want" but "it does include actions I've long called for that are going to save lives."

"I know there's much more work to do, and I'm never going to give up, but this is a monumental day," said the president, who was joined by his wife, Jill, a teacher, for the signing.

He said they will host an event on July 11 for lawmakers and families affected by gun violence.

Biden signed the measure two days after the Supreme Court's ruling Thursday striking down a New York law that restricted peoples' ability to carry concealed weapons.

While the new law does not include tougher restrictions long championed by Democrats, such as a ban on assault-style weapons and background checks for all gun transactions, it is the most impactful firearms violence measure produced by Congress since enactment a long-expired assault weapons ban in 1993.

Iraqi PM to head to Saudi Arabia, Iran for new dialogue

AP ■ BAGHDAD

Iraq's caretaker prime minister is set to fly to Saudi Arabia, followed by Iran, carrying a new initiative aimed at renewing talks between the two regional arch foes, an official said Saturday.

The official said Mustafa al-Kadhimi was scheduled to travel to Riyadh later in the day for meetings with Saudi officials. He will then travel to Tehran on Sunday.

Al-Kadhimi's visit seeks to open new avenues that would reactivate Baghdad-mediated dialogue between Saudi Arabia and Iran, according to the official, who is privy to the Iran-Saudi dialogue track. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to divulge the information to the press.

The talks aimed at defusing years-long tensions between the regional foes began quietly in Iraq's capital in 2021 as Saudi Arabia sought a way to end its disastrous war against Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. The

conflict has spawned one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters and brought bombs from rebel drones and missiles raining down on Saudi airports and oil facilities.

A fifth and last round of talks was held in Baghdad in April before they were suspended again amid soaring Middle East tensions.

Iran, the largest Shiite Muslim country in the world, and Sunni powerhouse Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic ties in 2016 after Saudi Arabia executed prominent Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr. Angry Iranians protesting the execution stormed two Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran, fueling years of animosity between the nations.

Iraq borders both Iran and Saudi Arabia and is often caught in the middle of the two nations' proxy wars.

Al-Kadhimi has stressed he wants balanced relations with the two neighbors. Improving relations with Saudi Arabia was a key policy of his administration when he took office in May 2020.

US Army Guard troops risk dismissal as vax deadline looms

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Up to 40,000 Army National Guard soldiers across the country - or about 13% of the force - have not yet gotten the mandated COVID-19 vaccine, and as the deadline for shots looms, at least 14,000 of them have flatly refused and could be forced out of the service.

Guard soldiers have

until Thursday to get the vaccine. According to data obtained by The Associated Press, between 20% to 30% of the Guard soldiers in six states are not vaccinated, and more than 10% in 43 other states still need shots.

Guard leaders say states are doing all they can to encourage soldiers to get vaccinated by the time limit. And they said they will

work with the roughly 7,000 who have sought exemptions, which are almost all for religious reasons.

"We're going to give every soldier every opportunity to get vaccinated and continue their military career. Every soldier that is pending an exemption, we will continue to support them through their process," said Lt. Gen. Jon Jensen,

director of the Army National Guard, in an Associated Press interview.

"We're not giving up on anybody until the separation paperwork is signed and completed. There's still time."

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin last year ordered all service members - active-duty, National Guard and Reserves - to get the vaccine,

saying it is critical to maintaining the health and readiness of the force.

The military services had varying deadlines for their forces, and the Army National Guard was given the longest amount of time to get the shots, mainly because it's a large force of about 330,000 soldiers who are widely scattered around the country, many in remote

locations.

The Army Guard's vaccine percentage is the lowest among the U.S. Military - with all the active-duty Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps at 97% or greater and the Air Guard at about 94%.

The Army reported Friday that 90% of Army Reserve forces were partially or completely vaccinated.

New plot to oust British PM Boris Johnson after by-election defeats

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Saturday is facing another brewing rebellion against his leadership of the Conservative Party after the governing party faced two crushing by-election defeats.

In a triple blow, Johnson not only lost a Tory stronghold in the southern England constituency of

Tiverton & Honiton and an important seat in Wakefield in northern England but was also hit with the resignation of his ally and Tory chairman Oliver Dowden.

Now, according to UK media reports, two Tory MPs who have been critical of Boris Johnson say they may stand for election to the committee which runs the party's leadership elections to trigger another leadership challenge.

Johnson, 58, survived a vote of no confidence in his leadership earlier this month even though 148 of his MPs voted to oust him and under the rules of the powerful 1922 Committee of backbench Conservative MPs, Johnson should be safe from a further challenge for a year.

But Andrew Bridgen, a Tory MP for North West Leicestershire, has said he is minded to throw his

hat into the ring and stand for election to the committee's executive, telling the BBC he would "be in favour of rule change and effectively that would be another vote of confidence".

Steve Baker, MP for Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, also said he hoped colleagues would "consider allowing him to serve" although he would not comment on changing the rules.

From the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Rwanda, Johnson said he expects people will "beat me up" after two by-election defeats, but insisted he was not worried about Conservative MPs plotting to replace him while he is abroad.

"I'm not going to pretend these are brilliant results. We've got to listen; we've got to learn," he told reporters in Kigali.

Norway terror alert raised after deadly mass shooting

AP ■ OSLO

A gunman opened fire in Oslo's night-life district early Saturday, killing two people and leaving more than 20 wounded in what Norwegian security service called an "Islamist terror act" during the capital's annual Pride festival.

Investigators said the suspect, identified as a 42-year-old Norwegian citizen originally from Iran, was arrested after opening fire at three locations in downtown Oslo.

The PST security service raised its terror alert level from "moderate" to "extraordinary" - the highest level - after the attack, which sent panicked revelers fleeing into the streets or trying to hide from the gunman.

PST acting chief Roger Berg called the attack an "extreme Islamist terror act" and said the suspect had a "long history of violence and threats" as well as mental health issues.

Upon the advice of police, organizers canceled a Pride parade that was set for Saturday as the highlight of a weeklong festival. One of the shootings happened outside the London Pub, a bar popular with the city's LGBTQ community, just hours before the parade was set to begin.

Police attorney Christian Hatlo said the suspect was being held on suspicion of murder, attempted murder and terrorism, based on the number of people targeted at multiple locations.

"Our overall assessment is that there are grounds to believe that he wanted to cause grave fear in the population," Hatlo said.

Police said two of the shooting victims died and 10 people were being treated



for serious injuries, but none of them was believed to be in life-threatening condition. Eleven other people had minor injuries.

Olav Roenneberg, a journalist from Norwegian public broadcaster NRK, said he witnessed the shooting.

"I saw a man arrive at the site with a bag. He picked up a weapon and started shooting," Roenneberg told NRK. "First I thought it was an air gun. Then the glass of the bar next door was shattered and I understood I had to run for cover."

Another witness, Marcus Nybakken, 46, said he saw a lot of people running and screaming and thought it was a fist fight.

"But then I heard that it was a shooting and that there was someone shooting with a submachine gun," Nybakken told Norwegian broadcaster TV2.

Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere said in a Facebook post that "the shooting outside London Pub in Oslo tonight was a cruel and deeply shocking attack on innocent people."

He said that while the motive was unclear, the shooting had caused fear and grief in the LGBTQ commu-

nity.

"We all stand by you," Gahr Stoere wrote.

Christian Bredeli, who was at the bar, told Norwegian newspaper VG that he hid on the fourth floor with a group of about 10 people until he was told it was safe to come out.

"Many were fearing for their lives," he said. "On our way out we saw several injured people, so we understood that something serious had happened."

TV2 showed footage of people running down Oslo streets in panic as shots rang out in the background.

Investigators said the suspect was known to police, as well as to PST, but not for any major violent crimes. His criminal record included a narcotics offense and a weapons offense for carrying a knife, Hatlo said.

Hatlo said police seized two weapons after the attack: a handgun and an automatic weapon, both of which he described as "not modern" without giving details.

He said the suspect had not made any statement to the police and was in contact with a defense lawyer.

Hatlo said it was too early to say whether the gunman

specifically targeted members of the LGBTQ community.

"We have to look closer at that, we don't know yet," he said.

Still, police advised organizers of the Pride festival to cancel the parade Saturday.

"Oslo Pride therefore urges everyone who planned to participate or watch the parade to not show up. All events in connection with Oslo Prides are canceled," organizers said on the official Facebook page of the event.

Inge Alexander Gjestvang, leader of FRI, the Norwegian organization for sexual and gender diversity, said the shooting has shaken the Nordic country's LGBTQ community.

"We encourage everyone to stand together, take care of each other. We'll be back later, proud, visible but right now it's not the time for that," he told TV2.

King Harald V offered condolences to the relatives of victims and said the royal family was "horrified" by the attack.

"We must stand together to defend our values: freedom, diversity and respect for each other. We must continue to stand up for all people to feel safe," the monarch said.

Norway has a relatively low crime rate but has experienced violent attacks by right-wing extremists, including one of the worst mass shootings in Europe in 2011, when a gunman killed 69 people on the island of Utøya after setting off a bomb in Oslo that left eight dead.

In 2019, another right-wing extremist killed his step-sister and then opened fire in a mosque but was overpowered before anyone there was injured.

French lawmakers want abortion rights in Constitution

AP ■ PARIS

A group of lawmakers belonging to French President Emmanuel Macron's party will propose a bill to inscribe abortion rights into the country's constitution, according to the statement by two members of parliament on Saturday. The move comes after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a 50-year-old ruling and stripped women's constitutional protec-

tions for abortion.

The right to abortion in France is already inscribed in a 1975 law relating to the voluntary termination of pregnancy within the legal framework that decriminalized abortion. A constitutional law will cement abortion rights for future generations, said Marie-Pierre Rixain, a member of Par and of Macron's The Republic on the Move party.

"What happened elsewhere must not happen in France,"

Rixain said. The bill will include a provision that would make it "impossible to deprive a person of the right to voluntarily terminate a pregnancy," according to the statement, released by two members of the National Assembly, France's most powerful house of parliament.

Aurore Berge, the leader of Macron's party group in the parliament, said the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to revoke abortion rights is "catastrophic for

women around the world."

"We must take steps in France today so we do not have any reversal of existing laws tomorrow," Berge said in an interview with the public radio station France Inter on Saturday.

Macron's party and his centrist alliance have the most seats in the National Assembly, although it lost its majority in Sunday's legislative election as voters opted for parties on the far right and the far left.

Hasina opens B'desh's longest bridge, calls it symbol of country's pride

PTI ■ DHAKA

The landmark Padma Bridge is not a pile of brick and cement but a symbol of Bangladesh's pride, capacity and dignity, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Saturday as she inaugurated the country's longest bridge entirely built with domestic funding.

The 6.15-km-long road-rail four-lane bridge is built over the Padma river connecting southwestern Bangladesh with the capital and other parts of the country.

The multipurpose road-rail bridge, which is fully funded by the Bangladesh government, has been constructed at a cost of USD 3.6 billion.

The inauguration of the Padma bridge carries a lot of significance as the structure was built entirely with domestic financing, defying skepticism from some financial analysts if Bangladesh, which will only graduate from the UN's Least Developed Countries (LDC) list in 2026, could mobilise the fund depending on domestic resources.

Hasina expressed deep gratitude to the people involved with the construction of the Padma bridge.

"I have no complaints against anyone, but I reckon those who opposed the Padma Bridge construction plan and called it a 'pipe



dream", lack self-confidence. I hope this bridge will boost their confidence," the prime minister said. "This bridge is not just bricks, cement, iron, and concrete... This bridge is our pride, a symbol of our capacity, our strength and our dignity."

This bridge belongs to the people of Bangladesh," she said.

"The bridge belongs to the people of Bangladesh. It encapsulates our passion, creativity, courage, endurance and perseverance," she said.

She said the much-cherished bridge stands on the turbulent Padma River overcoming many obstacles and breaking the web of conspiracy.

"Today, I am happy, proud, and overwhelmed along with millions of people of the country," said Hasina.

The Padma Bridge project witnessed several engineering wonders as well as technological

challenges. It emerged as the wonder structure for Bangladesh and saw the use of state-of-the-art machinery and know-how.

The project was initially expected to be funded by a consortium led by the World Bank.

In 2012, it cancelled the proposed credit saying it had "credible evidence" of high-level corruption among Bangladeshi officials.

Bangladesh has all through denied these allegations and preferred not to approach the international global lender for funding.

Meanwhile, India has congratulated the Bangladesh government on the completion of the massive project.

"Felicitations to Government and people of Bangladesh on completion of the landmark Padma Bridge project, from India!" the Indian High tweeted ahead of the inauguration.

Protesters gather as G-7 leaders set to arrive in Germany

AP ■ MUNICH

About 3,500 protesters gathered in Munich on Saturday as the Group of Seven leading economic powers prepared to hold their annual gathering in the Bavarian Alps in Germany, which holds the G-7's rotating presidency this year.

Police said earlier they were expecting some 20,000 protesters in the Bavarian city, but initially fewer people showed up for the main protest which started at noon, the German news agency dpa reported. Fifteen groups critical of globalisation, from Attac to the environmental organisation WWF, will participate in the demonstrations. Their various demands include a phase-out of fossil fuels, the preservation of animal and plant diversity, social justice on the planet and a stepped-up fight against hunger.

"My demands for the G-7 are, that they have a clear commitment to energy transition, that is the exit from fossil fuels, all forms of fossil fuels, by 2035 at the latest, so we can stop financing wars and conflicts," said Kilian Wolter from the environmental group Greenpeace who participated in the protest.

GST compensation cess levy extended till March 2026

New Delhi: The Government has extended the time for levy of GST compensation cess by nearly 4 years till March 31, 2026.

As per the Goods and Services Tax (Period of Levy and Collection of Cess) Rules, 2022, notified by the finance ministry, the compensation cess will continue to be levied from July 1, 2022 to March 31, 2026.

The levy of cess was to end on June 30 but the GST Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising state FMs, decided to extend it till March 2026 to repay the loans taken in the last two fiscal years to make up for the shortfall in their revenue collection.

After the 45th GST Council meeting in Lucknow in September last year, Sitharaman had said the regime of paying compensation to states for revenue shortfall resulting from subsuming their taxes such as VAT in the uniform national tax GST, will end in June 2022.

However, the compensation cess, levied on luxury and demerit goods, will continue to



be collected till March 2026 to repay the borrowings that were done in 2020-21 and 2021-22 to compensate states for GST revenue loss.

In order to meet the resource gap of states due to short release of compensation, the Centre has borrowed and released Rs 1.1 lakh crore in 2020-21 and Rs 1.59 lakh crore in 2021-22 as back-to-back loan to meet a part of the shortfall in cess collection.

The Centre has repaid Rs 7,500 crore as interest cost for the borrowing in 2021-22 and Rs 14,000 crore is to be paid this fiscal year. From 2023-24, the repayment of principal

amount will start which will continue till March 2026.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) was introduced in the country with effect from July 1, 2017 and states were assured of compensation for the loss of any revenue arising on account of implementation of GST for a period of five years.

Though states' protected revenue has been growing at 14 per cent compounded growth rate, the cess collection did not increase in the same proportion and COVID-19 further increased the gap between protected revenue and the actual revenue receipt including reduction in cess collection.

Inflation sparks global wave of protests for higher pay, aid

Washington: Rising food costs. Soaring fuel bills. Wages that are not keeping pace. Inflation is plundering people's wallets, sparking a wave of protests and workers' strikes around the world.

This week alone saw protests by the political opposition in Pakistan, nurses in Zimbabwe, unionised workers in Belgium, railway workers in Britain, Indigenous people in Ecuador, hundreds of U.S. Pilots and some European airline workers. Sri Lanka's prime minister declared an economic collapse Wednesday after weeks of political turmoil.

Economists say Russia's war in Ukraine amplified inflation by further pushing up the cost of energy and prices of fertilizer, grains and cooking oils as farmers struggle to grow and export crops in one of the world's key agricultural regions.

As prices rise, inflation threatens to exacerbate inequalities and widen the gap between billions of people struggling to cover their costs and those who are able to keep spending. "We are not all in this together," said Matt Grainger, head of inequality policy at antipoverty organisation



Oxfam. "How many of the richest even know what a loaf of bread costs? They don't really, they just absorb the prices."

Oxfam is calling on the Group of 7 leading industrialised nations, which are holding their annual summit this weekend in Germany, to provide debt relief to developing economies and to tax corporations on excess profits.

"This isn't just a stand-alone crisis. It's coming off the back of an appalling pandemic that fuelled increased inequality worldwide," Grainger said. "I think we will see more and more protests."

The demonstrations have caught the attention of governments, which have responded to soaring consumer prices with support measures like

expanded subsidies for utility bills and cuts to fuel taxes. Often, that offers little relief because energy markets are volatile. Central banks are trying to ease inflation by raising interest rates.

Meanwhile, striking workers have pressured employers to engage in talks on raising wages to keep up with rising prices.

Eddie Dempsey, a senior official with Britain's Rail, Maritime and Transport Union, which brought U.K. Train services to a near standstill with strikes this week, said there are going to be more demands for pay increases across other sectors.

"It's about time Britain had a pay rise. Wages have been falling for 30 years and corporate profits have been going through roof," Dempsey said.

Raw coking coal production likley to be 140 MT by 2030

New Delhi: The Government on Saturday said the country's domestic raw coking coal output may touch 140 million tonnes (MT) by 2030 from the present 51.7 MT. Coking coal is an essential raw material for the production of iron and steel.

"With...Transformative measures taken by Ministry of Coal under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' initiative of PM, domestic raw coking coal production is likely to reach 140 MT by 2030," the coal ministry said in a statement.

To further increase the output of raw coking coal, the Centre has auctioned 10 coking coal blocks to the private sector, with a peak rated capacity (PRC) of 22.5 MT during the last two years. Most of these blocks are expected to start production by 2025.

The ministry has also identified four coking coal blocks and the Central Mine Planning and Design Institute (CMPDI) will also finalise geological reserves (GR) for 4 to 6 new coking coal blocks in the next two months, the statement said. These blocks may be

offered in subsequent rounds of sale for the private sector to further step up domestic raw coking coal supply in the country.

Coal India Ltd (CIL), which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output, has planned to increase raw coking coal production from existing mines up to 26 MT and identified nine new mines with peak rated capacity of about 20 MT by FY25.

Also, CIL has offered six discontinued coking coal mines, out of the total 20 such mines, on an innovative model of revenue sharing to the private sector with an expected PRC of about 2 MT, according to the statement. The country produced 51.7 MT of raw coking coal during 2021-22, which is 15 per cent more compared to 44.8 MT during FY21.

Domestic raw coking coal production continues to witness an increasing trend in current fiscal as well with production of 8.3 MT, as per figures up to last month, which is 20 per cent more compared to 6.9 MT during the same period of the previous year. **PTI**

Future Enterprises defaults on ₹4.10 crore interest payment for NCDs

New Delhi: Debt-ridden Future Enterprises Ltd (FEL) has defaulted on interest payment of ₹4.10 crore for its non-convertible debentures.

The due date for payment was June 24, 2022, FEL said in a regulatory filing. "The Company is unable to service its obligations in respect of the interest on Non-Convertible Debentures was due on June 24, 2022," it said. This is the fourth default in June by the Kishore Biyani-led Future group firm.

Earlier this week, FEL defaulted twice on interest payments of ₹85.71 lakh and ₹6.07 crore for its non-convertible debentures. FEL had made another default on the payment of interest of ₹1.41 crore, earlier this month. The latest default is on the interest of securities issued for a sum of



₹40 crore. FEL has defaulted on interest payment for the period between June 24, 2021, to June 23, 2022, it said. The debentures are secured and have a coupon rate of 10.25 per cent per annum.

In April, FEL had informed the exchanges about a default of ₹2,835.65 crore towards its consortium of banks. Its due date was March 31, 2022.

FEL was a part of the 19 group companies operating in retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing segments, which were supposed to be transferred to Reliance Retail as part of a ₹24,713 crore deal announced in August 2020.

Boxory Logistics, Cargonix Xpress: NTC Group's two new businesses

Chennai: Diversified business conglomerate NTC Group under its flagship company NTC Logistics has unveiled two new verticals — Boxory Logistics Pvt Ltd and Cargonix Xpress Pvt Ltd — as part of consolidating its operations in the country, an official said on Saturday.

Boxory Logistics would focus on freight services like air freight, multi-city transportation, warehousing, while Cargonix Xpress would be focused on same day delivery, milk run among others.

At an event here, the company unveiled a 70 metre truck trailer for the first time in the country which would be used for transporting windmill blades. NTC Group company MAHA Auto Components has manufactured the truck trailer to serve the renewable energy logistics space, a company statement said here.

Equipped with advanced features like load sensing valves, anti-lock braking systems among many others, the trailer ensures safety and reliability by providing more thrust to logistics of windmill blades, company chairman K Chandramohan said in a company statement. Tamil Nadu Industries Minister Thangam Thennarasu formally unveiled the truck at an



event held here in the presence of Chandramohan among senior officials. According to Chandramohan, the company has been taking up projects in the renewable energy sector under its entity— Everrenew Energy — which offers logistics to site construction activities for wind and solar projects.

Besides serving the domestic market, the NTC Group has presence overseas including Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and has entered into partnerships with companies in Asia, Australia, the Middle East among others. The company has strengthened its presence abroad with the opening of a new office in Malaysia recently, the statement added. **PTI**

Flipkart inks MoU with Telangana's SERP to enable market access for FPOs, SHGs

Hyderabad: Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce marketplace, on Saturday said it signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), Telangana to enable market access for Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the state.

The MoU was exchanged between Sandeep Kumar Sultanania, Secretary, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development, Telangana and Smrithi Ravichandran, Vice President and Head of Grocery, Flipkart, at an event held here, a press release from the e-commerce giant said.

Through this partnership, Flipkart aims to empower local farming communities and SHGs of Telangana by providing pan-India market access to more than 400 million customers on its platform. As part of this collaboration, Flipkart will directly



source premium quality pulses, millets, staples, and spices from the local farmers, contributing to improve income and business growth. Flipkart will further engage with these communities through virtual and on-ground training and capacity-building initiatives to provide them with an understanding of quality, pricing, and licenses required to be a part of FPO ecosystem.

SERP will extend support with infrastructure and necessary approvals to take this partnership forward. Speaking on the occasion, Errabelli Dayakar Rao, Panchayat Raj, Rural

Development and Rural Water Supply Minister said, SHGs and women from Telangana will now be able to sell their products to a pan India consumer base for an improved livelihood and gaining more visibility.

"There are 4,36,000 SHGs consisting of 46 lakh members in the state. We wish to support all of them, especially women, for whom we have a target to provide loans of Rs 500 crore this year. We believe that SHGs will work hard and use these initiatives to accelerate their development and to grow their businesses," Dayakar Rao said.

NOTICE

It is for general information that I, Lokesh Kumari w/o Om Prakash Singh R/o SK 414 A, Sector-122, Noida, U.P.-201301, declare that name of mine and my minor son Anshuman Singh aged 11 years has been wrongly written as Lokesh Devi and Anshuman in his School Records. The actual name of mine and my minor son are Lokesh Kumari and Anshuman Singh respectively, which may be amended accordingly. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

- Lokesh Kumari

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is For Notice of The General Public that A Political Party is Proposed To Be Registered By The Name Of "Bharatiya Pravasi Janata Party" The Office of The Party is Located at 407, DLF Centre Point, Main Mathura Road, Metro Pillar No. 945, Sector-11, Faricabad(DELHI NCR) 121008 This Party Has Submitted Application To The Election Commission Of India, New Delhi Under Section 29 A Of The Representation Of People Act, 1951 Name Of The Office Bearers Of The Party Are As follows:

1. National President: DR. AJAY TIWARI
2. General Secretary: SAPNA TIWARI
3. Treasurer: SANTOSH TIWARI
Add:- J-86, DLF, sec-10, Faridabad-121006

If anyone has any objection to the registration of "Bharatiya Pravasi Janata Party" they may send their objection to the reason there of, to the secretary (Political Party). The Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi- 110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of **Mr. Rajesh S/o Mr. Maha Singh** who is owner of Property bearing No.81 (Property ID No.05/81 as per Technical Report), area measuring 117 Sq. Yds., Ward No.05, Waka Siwana Mayiha Andar Abadi Lal Dora Farukh Nagar, Tehsil Farukh Nagar, District Gurgaon (Haryana), vide Transfer Deed (Bulge Relation) dated 22.11.2016 (vide Document No.2275) and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from **Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd.** To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within **7 days** at below address.

Lucem Legal LLP
269, Rama House, Ground Floor, Masjid Mohd, Opp. Uday Park, South Ext.-II, New Delhi-110049
Contact # 011-40046316

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of **Swati Pachauri & Mr. Saurabh Pachauri** who are intend to purchase the Residential area measuring 100 Sq. Yds., part of Khewat No.764, Kharsa No.3(2-17), Kita I, out of area measuring 2 Bigha 17 Biswas, part 2/17/1, situated at Mauga Sahadargah, already known as Patel Nagar, within Municipal Limits of Bahadurgarh, District Jhajjar, Haryana; from **Mrs. Praveen** who is owner of the aforesaid property by virtue of Sale Deed dated 21.12.2018, which is registered as Doc. No.8011 in the office of Sub Registrar-Bahadurgarh and intend to mortgage the same against the financial assistance from **Unmeed Housing Finance Private Limited**. That, Original Sale Deed dated 11.08.2008 vide Doc. No.4168 & Sale Deed dated 17.10.2011 Doc. No.9852 are/is lost/misplaced. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within **7 days** at below address.

Lucem Legal LLP
269, Rama House, Ground Floor, Masjid Mohd, Opp. Uday Park, South Ext.-II, New Delhi-110049
Contact # 011-40046316

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that my client, **Gulshan Thukral W/o Late J.C. Thukral R/o C-10/166, Yamuna Vihar, Delhi-110053, A/lottee/ Purchaser/Owner of Plot No.166, Block-C-10, Yamuna Vihar, Delhi-110053 vide DDA File No.F.12(2366)/76(LAB/Resd.)**. The original documents i.e. Demand cum-allotment Letter, Possession Letter, site Possession Slip & Other Relevant Documents, of the above said plot has been lost. An F.I.R./NCR/LP NO.527680/2022 dated 24/06/2022 to this effect has been lodged in P.S.Crime Branch, any person (s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above Address / Phone No. 9711134852 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to **Deputy Director (LAB) Resd. or Director (LAB) Resd., DDA, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-75**

AD REM LEGAL SOLUTION
Ch. No. 762, Dwarka Court, Sector 10, Dwarka, New Delhi-75
M:- 9899013918

NBFCs should diversify risks across sectors: Ex SBI chief

Kolkata: Non-banking financial companies need to diversify risks across sectors and geographies, as well as maintain capital adequacy norms and introduce core banking solutions going ahead, former State Bank of India chairman Rajnish Kumar said.

Kumar also said the risk-taking abilities of NBFCs are higher than banks, and that the regulatory stance will become tougher, with the regulation arbitrage between lenders and non-banking entities ceasing to exist.

"Regarding asset quality review (AQR) of lenders, as pointed out by former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan, the NPA problem started with the NBFCs. The whole issue boils down to risk management and governance."

"There is a need for NBFCs to take a diversified approach across sectors and geographies and also be mindful about risk matrix," he



said during an event organised by micro-finance institution VFS Capital here on Friday evening.

Kumar said the NBFCs will have to maintain capital adequacy norms, introduce core banking solutions and make adequate disclosures by 2025. Nearly 23 per cent of lending in the financial sector happens through the NBFCs, he said.

Regarding NPA in banking sector, the former SBI chief said lenders cannot escape their share of blame, adding that "faulty" government policies in "power, coal, telecom and road sectors" are also responsible for bad loans. **PTI**

VFS Capital plans to expand portfolio to ₹1500 crore, expand branch network

Kolkata: VFS Capital (formerly Village Financial Services Limited) plans to increase its assets under management from Rs 803 crore to Rs 1,500 crore within a few years and also plans to expand the number of branches across the country, an official said.

MD & CEO of VFS Capital Kuldip Maity said at an event here on Friday night that the NBFC-MFI has 247 branches at present, and added that plans are there to add 35 more this fiscal and also to enter the state of Rajasthan.

Maity said during the last two years of the pandemic, the focus was not on increasing business, adding that VFS plans to provide loans for affordable housing and MSME loans. He also said the new RBI regulations on MFIs will help the sector to grow, particularly the deregulation of interest rates across the entities. **PTI**

US delegation to visit economic crisis-hit Lanka

Colombo: A high-level US delegation will visit Sri Lanka to hold talks with the country's top leadership to help it resolve the current economic crisis as the island nation, which is on the brink of bankruptcy, is struggling to pay for the import of essentials, including food and fuel.

Sri Lanka is facing a severe forex crisis which forced the island nation to declare a default of its international debt in April, becoming the first Asia-Pacific country in decades to default on foreign debt.

The delegation representing the US Department of

the Treasury and the Department of State is due to engage in a visit to Sri Lanka from June 26 to 29, the News First newspaper reported.

The delegation will include Robert Kaproth, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Treasury for Asia, and Ambassador Kelly Keiderling, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, it said.

The visitors will meet with a wide range of political representatives, economists and international organisations, and will explore the most effective ways for the US to support Sri Lankans in

need, Sri Lankans working to resolve the current economic crisis, and Sri Lankans planning for a sustainable and inclusive economy for the future, the report said.

"This visit underscores our ongoing commitment to the security and prosperity of the Sri Lankan people," US Ambassador to Sri Lanka Julie Chung said.

"As Sri Lankans endure some of the greatest economic challenges in their history, our efforts to support economic growth and strengthen democratic institutions have never been more critical," the envoy said. **PTI**

🕒

talktime

ATIF AFZAL AKA A-ZAL

The singer, who is also a New York-based songwriter and composer is known for his compositions for American TV series Loki, NCIS: Los Angeles and The Twilight Zone and for the films Resort to Love, Prague, Pune 52, among others. He speaks with SUPRIYA RAMESH about his association with Marvel, his journey and more

‘BOLLYWOOD INDUSTRY HAS AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF TALENT’



■ Tell us about your composition for Ms Marvel?
I have composed two songs for Ms Marvel. These are full-fledged tracks as opposed to the more dreamy track I did for Loki last year. Both of them are romantic and appear in the montage where the chemistry is building between Kamala Khan and Kamran. These tracks are very unique.
I was in talks with Marvel for a Bollywood style song since last year just after we finished Loki. So, when they approached me for it in April 2022, I initially thought it was for the same project. However, this turned out to be a new one. What's interesting is that we wrapped up the entire process from the brief till the actual release was just two months.
■ How did your association with Marvel first begin?
It first started when they reached out to me last year for Loki. However, what's interesting is that I was never told that it was for Loki since the project is kept confidential. But, I was amazed to know that I am going to be a part of the Marvel universe. It is Hollywood at its best.
■ Tell us about your journey into music. How did you make it

from composing music for Marathi films to Bollywood and Hollywood?
The first film that I signed was Prague. It so happened that the Marathi film Pune 52 released before Prague. Interestingly, I was approached by the producers of Pune 52 after they saw the trailer of my film Prague. I knew the journey would be tough. I knew I was a crazy guy with a crazy dream and I knew I had to take one step at a time. I had no one in the industry at all. Not a single soul who would help me navigate this journey.
When I started in Bollywood in 2013, I did films like Prague and Monsoon Shootout which had western music and an international style score. Further, it had official selections at multiple global film festivals which gave traction to my career and recognition at the global level. Monsoon Shootout was at Cannes, which was a big deal.
Soon, I was approached for a German film called Gift for ARD Degeto Network in Germany. Then I did a thesis film at the New York University called The Alternative. That was my first independent American film. I worked on several advertising commercials in the USA. And finally, the big breakthrough came when I did NCIS: Los Angeles and The Twilight Zone. This really propelled me to the giant projects which I did for Marvel.
So, it was one step at a time!
■ How did the pandemic take a toll on you professionally?
I'm going to give you an answer that you probably wouldn't expect. I got my biggest breakthrough in Hollywood during the pan-

demic. The pandemic struck New York, and after a couple of months, CBS reached out to me for NCIS: Los Angeles. And, soon after I finished it, they roped me in for The Twilight Zone
■ What's your take on India's music scene when you compare it globally?
When I compare it globally, I know one thing. Indian music is one of the oldest music forms existing in the world today, and we need to retain that and stop copying the West. I feel we need to stop following what is trending and adopting a formula-based approach, but create what is unique and different. The Bollywood industry has an incredible amount of talent for sure!
■ What's your personal style as a music artist? Who do you take inspiration from?
When it comes to film scoring, my personal style is very experimental. I take inspiration from composers such as Clint Mansell who has composed iconic scores and gave the world a new sound. As a pop singer, I take inspiration from Ed Sheeran. I love British singers. My singing style and songwriting style is very similar to that of Ed Sheeran.
■ What's next?
I am in talks for another song for Marvel. There is also an interesting project going on with Netflix. What I'm most excited about is my American pop album called 17 & 11 Nights; Phonebook, Ride, Autopilot are a few songs from the album. The singles will be released later this year and that will, for the first time, bring the artist side of me to the world. I am currently shooting the music videos for my album.

MORE THAN A BODY

Body positivity is about knowing and accepting your body type as it is. Unlearn and challenge the unreal beauty standards that the popular culture and society have been claiming to be ideal

We all have doubted the shape of our bodies at some point in our lives; how our curves are reflected in the mirror has led to a drop in confidence and paved the path for disbeliefs and doubts in our minds. The unsolicited comments that we encounter throughout our lives plant the seed of uncertainties and doubts that may lead to eating disorders, feeling belittled and social anxiety.
We can't stop people from expressing their minds in words but we can work on ourselves. When we make an effort to understand that we don't have to pay attention to their words; opinions don't shape us and shouldn't become the ideologies we have to live our lives by. We need to understand the importance of living an abundant life and working towards bringing body positivity and self-confidence into our lives.

Body positivity is about knowing and accepting your body type as it is irrespective of sizes, shapes, physical abilities and colours. Loving yourself in all of its forms and living with confidence and fortitude. It is about unlearning and challenging the unreal beauty standards that the popular culture and society have been claiming to be ideal.

We have often heard the term body positivity and let's take three steps in inculcating it in our lives and embodying it.

Know your body
It's not easy to defeat darkness without even knowing what it is and how it's affecting your life. Take time to reflect on your daily routine and you'll find tiny changes that you can add to your lifestyle to be more mindful of your body confidence. Sit back and think about what are the things that encourage you to be authentically you without adulteration from the world. Put effort into knowing what makes you feel good about your body. Is it the new dress



hanging in your cupboard or a new exercise routine or even a new way you like to be touched? Know that there are no bad or good body types. Try to learn about your body type and take time out from your usual schedule to get to know your body and what makes it tick.

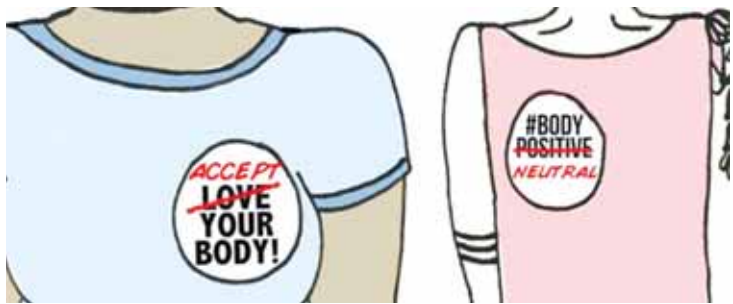
Accept yourself
I was told throughout my childhood that I was too fat to the point in my later years that I developed an eating disorder. Things became even more difficult for me because I'm an emotional eater. I like to eat when I'm overwhelmed or happy or sad and it is always followed by guilt. It took me years and a lot of professional help to accept myself and my body as it is.

Before we can move onto the path of pride, we will have to accept ourselves and accept our bodies. For ours, we've spent our time wishing about how we should've looked

rather than accepting and loving our bodies as we are. Accepting can become challenging because you'll have to tune out all the negativities and mean comments and thoughts you've been unconsciously entertaining.

My advice would be to remind yourself of your divinity and sexy, brilliant self. Once you start saying it to yourself every day, it won't be long before you start believing in it. When you accept that you are sexy and brilliant as you are, you will feel a surge of confidence and pride in yourself and your body.

Unlearn for authentic living
We all have heard what a beautiful person should look and dress like, what are the foolproof methods to get 'that' body and what you should and shouldn't eat to get the definitive body type that people admire. Say no to them. It's your turn



Devina Kaur
Founder, Sexy Brilliant Non-Profit Foundation



to unlearn those definitions, remarks, and beliefs and make rules for yourself as you like them. The notions that have been idealised for years now are deemed to be toxic and should be unlearned and unheard of now. Learn what works for you, the clothes that make you shine and feel comfortable on your skin and your body and from there it will be easier to live authentically.

Do what makes you happy and feel healthy, go out on walks, exercise regularly, surround yourself with positive people and add meditative sessions so you spend enough time with yourself to know what your body actually wants. Remind yourself that you are your top priority and self-care is the most important kind of love that you can show yourself. Listen to your inner calling, challenge the negative thoughts and follow that path. It will be a challenging path but it'll be worth your efforts and time. Practice radical self-acceptance, embrace your inner self and let it shine in front of the world.

Plan Your Day

CELEBRATE LOVE



ingle with, peruse and shop from queer entrepreneurs and small business owners at a dedicated space for all things queer made.

And if that wasn't enough, there will be music, food and drinks. All brought to you with pride and love by queer performers and caterers.

Sip on Bira's new summer collection or some amazing

cocktails from Roku, Toki, Oaksmith and many more.

Fashion, art, merch, home decor, zines — if you can think of it, you can probably find it at Queer Made Weekend!

What: Fun fair
Where: DLF Promenade, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi
When: June 26, 2022
Time: 5 pm to 10 pm



Village Square in partnership with The National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) celebrated World Localisation Day at NCUI Auditorium, New Delhi with prominent rural changemakers, urban youth, development professionals and artisans from across India.
The event was designed to raise awareness of local goods and artisan products and to promote eco-friendly living. It is a platform to learn about local influencers, opportunities, and products.
The storytelling session was the highlight, where five young rural changemakers gave an insight into their endeavors and challenges.

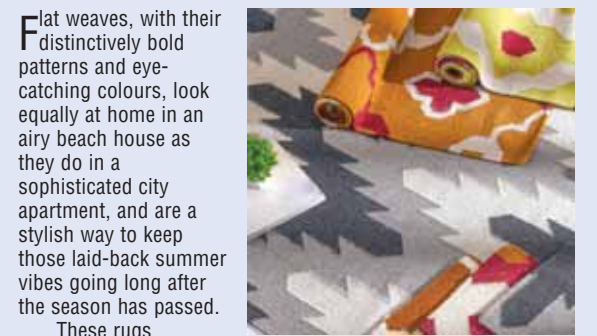
Masterstroke

Flat weaves, with their distinctively bold patterns and eye-catching colours, look equally at home in an airy beach house as they do in a sophisticated city apartment, and are a stylish way to keep those laid-back summer vibes going long after the season has passed.

These rugs basically come in rich colours and intricate patterns and are known for their flexibility. Lacking the pile or a backing, they are quite light in nature. The other quality of these rugs is that they are reversible and are easily used from both sides. Flat weave rugs are available in different variations despite following the basic technique, adopting different patterns and styles in different regions around the world. A few such styles include Kilims, Dhurries and Navajo rugs.


The flat-woven kilim has been a staple of the rug world for centuries, and has regained some of its former glory in recent years. Saraswati's Zara collection is a nod to the current trend in the home decor market, but with fun colors and updated patterns make its collection unique. Also, the Zara collection is thicker than a typical kilim, making it more stable and durable over time, and thus, a better overall rug.

Loveable from the outset, the Zara collection will win hearts without breaking the bank. These wool Rugs are Natural/Reversible/Durable and come in different colours like Green, Mushroom, Gold, Dusty Orange, Blue, Charcoal, Grey & Jade.



QUIRKY TALE


“Determination, hard work and passion have helped me reach this place” says Rahul Gangwani



Everyone dreams to attain big status at some point in time but very few work hard and reach their destination. Similarly, entrepreneurship is a journey that requires diligence and unmatched motivation to achieve success. The whole strata of success is based on how much you are investing in your journey of entrepreneurship. When we see people with exponential growth have reached an acumen, they have the unmatched potential.

Entrepreneurship also requires a fair amount of investment, by investing one has better leverage over the startup or the business. As we all know in the Middle East, luxury cars are in demand and luxury car rentals are the future of Dubai. In this, Rahul Gangwani is investing large amounts of money to buy the latest fleet of luxury cars. His determination, passion and hard work have helped the company to reach greater heights in the recent past. We have seen in recent times that the luxury car rental segment is increasing at a rapid pace and will attain a huge market share by the end of 2025 in the Middle East. After understanding the opportunities and the progress of the luxury car rental world, Gangwani decided to invest in the RG Rental Business. Also, categorising luxury cars from normal cars will help them to create a separate sector. It is a promising name in India and is now expanding its footprint in Dubai. Also, renting a prestige car is far more economical as most people think that it would be very expensive. In this wake, RG Rent A Car is making a big leap.

Iman Zaidi bags the Bhartiya Kala Ratna Award



Iman Zaidi's phenomenal art of beautifying brides has captured the attention of young women throughout India. Wedding wish lists are incomplete without 'bridal makeup by Iman Zaidi'. She is not only admired by brides but also by many makeup enthusiasts. She is regarded as a great influence and inspiration for budding makeup artists.

Zaidi's work and talent was recognised by Global Scholars Foundation and she qualified as a nominee for *Bhartiya Ratna Awards* (Jewel of India). Dr VijayKumar Swarupchand Shah, *Padmashri* title holder was the chief guest and presenter of the Noble Award.

She was the only nominee from the Indian bridal and beauty industry. Her effort in bringing forth recognition for the Indian makeup styles was highly appreciated by Dr Shah and the organisers.

"While many makeup artists are appreciated in the glamour industry, very few artists are working towards recognising the art of traditional bridal makeup styles of India. Makeup artists, especially those who work closely with Indian cultures must be recognised for their efforts as they use their talent in justifying a makeover for modern day women into a traditional one." says Zaidi.

She has worked with more than thousand brides throughout India and takes personal interest in different cultures and heritage of Indian aesthetic art.

Through her art she wishes to preserve the different traditional and cultural aspects of bridal makeup in the modern age. Her aim is to bring honourable recognition to Indian bridal makeup artists.

This plan is here to save your child's future financial needs

Life is filled with uncertainty and worries about the future. While many things are not under our control, as a parent, the emotional, physical, mental and financial security of your child is of utmost importance. In this ever-changing world, when you don't know what's going to happen next and how it will affect your child's future, it's essential that as parents, it is your responsibility to protect their financial future and ensure that their needs are not compromised and timely fulfilled.


The simplest and smartest way to do so to help your child be independent and financially secure is to have an insurance plan that specifically focuses on building a robust future for your child.

While there are various types of child insurance plan available, SBI Life- Smart Champ Insurance Plan is one such individual, non-linked, participating, life insurance savings product, which takes care of the child's future educational needs as soon as they turn 18 years of age. It is carefully crafted to meet the objectives and concerns of a parent. It is a life insurance cum savings plan that secures their bright future against the uncertainties of life.

Key features:

- ◆ Guaranteed smart benefits in four equal annual installments starting from age 18 till age 21
- ◆ Financial help in case of unfortunate or accidental death of a family member
- ◆ Ensures the child's higher education needs

Therefore, it is crucial to secure the child's future.



Failure is a great teacher and, if you are open to it, every mistake has a lesson to offer
—Oprah Winfrey



Thousand Pillar Temple, Warangal

RELIGIOUS INTERACTIONS — A REAPPRAISAL

As Indians, we must take pride in being a Secular nation and as citizens promote an environment devoid of religious antagonism for the greater good of humanity, writes SUSAN MISHRA

As we stand in the 21st century and witness bitter inter-religion intolerance, a peek into the past is imperative to understand the present. There are numerous instances from the medieval to the modern era in the south, north, and eastern India where Hindu and Muslim communities lived side by side without a feeling of animosity and antagonism. In Malabar, Islam probably arrived in the 7th century CE along with the Arab traders, and by the 12th century CE, a strong Muslim community existed here. The Zamorins were Hindu rulers of the Kingdom of Calicut (now Kozhikode). They maintained elaborate trade relations with the Muslim Middle-Eastern sailors in the Indian Ocean as Calicut was then an important trading entrepôt on the western seaboard of India. Under the Zamorins, the Muslims enjoyed many commercial, political and religious privileges. The very fact that Zamorin rejected Vasco da Gama's request to banish all Muslims from his kingdom clearly speaks of the significance accorded to Muslims in a Hindu kingdom. In fact, it is the Portuguese who became the common enemy of the Muslims and the Zamorin. The latter received full support from their Muslim populace in terms of mobilization of manpower, resources, and funding of wars against the Portuguese. The Muchundi and Mishkal mosques in Kozhikode are living examples of assistance provided by the Hindu Zamorin rulers to their Muslim community. The 13th century CE inscription in Muchundi mosque in Kuttichira, Kozhikode records the establishment of the mosque by certain Shahab al-din Raihan, and the Zamorin ruler granted some land to it for certain daily expenses incurred at the mosque. The Mishkal mosque is also located in Kuttichira, Kozhikode, and was built by a merchant ship owner in the 14th century CE. This mosque was attacked, destroyed and burnt in 1510 by the Portuguese. The Zamorin was furious at seeing the devastation of the city and the destruction of the mosque. The combined efforts and firm determination by the Nairs and Muslims shattered the dreams of the early colonizers in Malabar. Post the victory of the Zamorin in the battle of Chaliyam, the ruler supported the restoration and reconstruction of the Mishkal mosque. It is believed that the stones and the wood from the Chaliyam fort were carried and placed in the yard at Mishkal to be used in the reconstruction of the mosque. The Khasi Foundation of Kuttichira commemorated 500 years of the grand gesture of the religious harmony of the times by honoring the Zamorin. In remembrance of the great harmony between the two communities and for thanking the 'Zamorin King' for his solidarity with the Muslims, the representatives of the Khasi Foundation visited the residence of the current descendants of the erstwhile Zamorin kings and presented him a painting of the Mishkal Mosque. Turning the focus on 21st century Kerala, at Ponnani a 16th century CE mosque, known as

Misri Palli preserves its original structure due to the efforts of a non-Muslim speaker and legislator. When the work of its demolition began for the purposes of constructing a new mosque, some people contacted P. Sreeramakrishnan, who rushed to the site and stopped the work. He called a meeting of the mosque committee and convinced its members not to dismantle it so that it is preserved under the Muziris- Ponnani heritage conservation project. Erumeli/ Erumeli in the Kottayam district of Kerala is a living example of how myths and legends can bind two religious communities and assimilate a mosque within an important Hindu religious pilgrimage. The Mosque here is dedicated to Vavar who is considered a companion of Lord Ayyappa. Every year multitudes of Hindu pilgrims worship at this mosque before they embark on the arduous trek to the holy shrine of Sabarimala Ayappa Swami. There are many legends about Vavar and according to one, Vavar was an Arab commander who was defeated by Lord Ayyappa. Impressed by Vavar's valor, he became Ayappa's close associate and aided him in the wars in the mountainous region. According to belief, Vavar protects devotees who make the difficult trek through the forests to the main temple at the top of the hill that houses the Sabarimala Temple. The Hindu Vijayanagara Empire's 14th century CE capital of Hampi and its monuments is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Legends and inscriptions speak of Hindu support to the Muslim populace of the kingdom. At Sindhaghatta in Mandya district of Karnataka, the Muslim community did not have a mosque and Babu setti, a local merchant, built a mosque to which the local officer Rangayya Nayaka gifted a village. What is of interest is that the mosque was not built at a site away from a Hindu settlement, but was located amidst villages granted as gifts to learned Brahmins. Legend has it that Babbaya, a Muslim Fakir, established himself at Penukonda and had a strong following. After the death of the fakir, a dargah was erected, and the grant of Venkata II records the restoration of certain villages originally granted by Vira Narasingha Raya, Sadashiva, and Venkata I, to the dargah of Babayya in Penukonda. Mangammal, a Hindu Nayaka queen made a gift of some villages in 1701-02 CE in Tiruchirappalli to the dargah of Babanatta. The other contemporaneous dynasty ruling at Deccan was the Muslim Adil Shahis of Bijapur (1489 to 1686). A Farman of Muhammad Adil Shah dated to 1653 CE records a grant made by the ruler to Namdev Vithal, a Brahmin from Mubarakabad. Namdev was the head of Joshis and had approached the ruler for royal favours and the Sultan obliged by granting land at various localities. He also received a tanka (gold coin) from highway and food grains and was also exempt from payment of taxes. Ibrahim Adil Shah II (1580 CE to 1627 CE) was a great patron of music and is credited with the composition of the book Kitab i Nauras is a book of couplets and verses dedicated to Hindu

“IBRAHIM ADIL SHAH II (1580 CE TO 1627 CE) WAS A GREAT PATRON OF MUSIC AND IS CREDITED WITH THE COMPOSITION OF KITAB I NAURAS, A BOOK OF COUPLETS AND VERSES DEDICATED TO HINDU DEITIES AND MUSLIM SAINTS. WHAT IS OF INTEREST IS THAT MOST ARE DEDICATED TO SARASWATI, GANESH, AND OTHER HINDU DEITIES. THE TEXT BEGINS WITH AN INVOCATION TO GODDESS SARASWATI FOR HER BLESSINGS AND FAVOURS. DESCRIPTIONS OF LORD GANESH AND LORD SHIVA HAVE BEEN BEAUTIFULLY DESCRIBED BY THE SULTAN IN HIS COMPOSITIONS”



Hanumangarhi Temple, Ayodhya

deities and Muslim saints. What is of interest is that most are dedicated to Saraswati, Ganesh and other Hindu deities. The text begins with an invocation to Goddess Saraswati for her blessings and favors. Descriptions of Lord Ganesh and Lord Shiva have been beautifully described by the Sultan in his compositions. In the modern epoch of South India, the seventh Nizam of Hyderabad- Mir Osman Ali Khan (ruled from 1911-1948) deserves special mention. He had a liberal outlook toward religion and provided financial assistance and donations to temples and Brahmins in his kingdom. Mir Osman Ali Khan tended to the repair, and maintenance of the conservation of the Thousand Pillar Temple at Warangal. The Nizam also donated liberally to various temples in his dominions. Turning towards the region of eastern India, in Orissa Salabega occupies a permanent position among the devotional poets of Odisha. He lived in the first half of the 17th century and was the son of the Mughal Subedar. According to folklore, he was held up on his way while returning from Vrindavan to Jagannatha and he prayed earnestly to the Lord to wait for him on the Nandighosha chariot so that he could see his Lord. The Lord waited there and gave darshan to Salabega, his dear devotee on the Bada Danda, near Balagandi. An ardent devotee of Shri Krishna and Jagannath, Salabega devoted his life to composing bhajans, hymns, and devotional songs in praise of the Shri Jagannath and Radha Krishna. In Ahom kingdom, the Muslim populace was well assimilated into the Assamese society and the army included many Muslim soldiers and officers who fought against the Mughals. Ismail Siddique, popularly known as Bagh

Hazarika played a significant role in the Battle of Saraighat in 1671. An inscription of Ahom king Lakshmi Singha issued around 1780 CE records a grant in favour of Hazi Anwar Fakir. Ahom king Kamaleswar Singha reconfirmed all earlier grants made by the Mughal and Ahom rulers in favour of Khadim of Hajo Dargah. In the context of north India, in the erstwhile region of Awadh, in 1855 at the Hanumangarhi temple at Ayodhya conflict arose between the Hindus and the Muslims. Wajid Ali Shah is said to have appointed a Committee to investigate the matter, and the decision went in favour of the Hindus. On learning about an imminent attack on the temple, Wajid Ali Shah ordered a regiment to guard the temple. Other instances include the 250-year-old Hanuman temple of Lucknow which is believed to have been constructed by Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula's mother Alia Begum. The mosque, popularly called as Padain Masjid in Aminabad was built by Rani Jai Kunwar Pandey, a Brahmin as a gift to her close friend - the Begum of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan. When we try to look at the past from a 21st-century lens, we will inevitably see Hindus and Muslims as polar opposites. While there are challenges in Hindu-Muslim relations, it would be naive to dismiss the relative social harmony in which the two communities have coexisted in India. As Indians, we must take pride in being a Secular nation and as citizens promote an environment devoid of religious antagonism for the greater good of humanity.

(The writer is a research scholar and recipient of the Devangana Desai senior Fellowship CSMVS Mumbai. She is also the author of two books

A SEARCH FOR SELF-FULFILLMENT

Review by
NAVIN UPADHYAY

Kashmir has been a favourite destination for moviemakers, writers, and poets. Before the militancy set in and Kashmir became a graveyard of artistic aspirations and dreams, the pristine valley with its sentinels of age-old chinar and fragrant saffron-inspired celluloid fantasy and small screens blockbusters. Its landscaped charms also wooed poets and writers from far and wide.

After the place turned into a theatre of prey and predators, where guns and grenades. death and decay, grief and torture dominated every aspect of living, the valley provided different types of ingredients to fuel artistic aspirations. The stories that came out of Kashmir were now laced with grief, sadness, nostalgia, and longings. Tarannum Riyaz's BIRDS OF THE SNOW is a similar yarn.

Originally published in Urdu as Barf Aashna Parindey, the book explores the transformative aspect of Kashmir, the rapid urbanization of the valley, and its impact on the people who have grown up hearing: ar Firdaus bar-rue zamin ast, hami asto, hamin asto, hamin astnot (If there is a heaven on earth, it's here, it's here.)

The book deals with the struggle of a sensitive college student Sheba to strike a compromise between her inner yearnings for freedom and the values and norms her family and society expected her to embrace. It's the story of a girl's poignant struggle to overcome the burden of conditioning and traditionality. The story explores our deepest emotions--love, fear, insecurity, and longing in a way that is both evocative and original.

Sheba wishes to be free, just like the birds that she likes observing, but understands the need to live within social conventions and accept life's responsibilities.

When Sheba returns to the valley after years spent studying outside, she is struck by a pang of sadness. Tarannum has captured Sheba's feeling in a poignant passage:



The journey to the village has been her favourite journey but today, waves of sadness washed over her mind time and again. She occasionally looked at the reflection of Amki, Baaji, and Farkhanda in the rear-

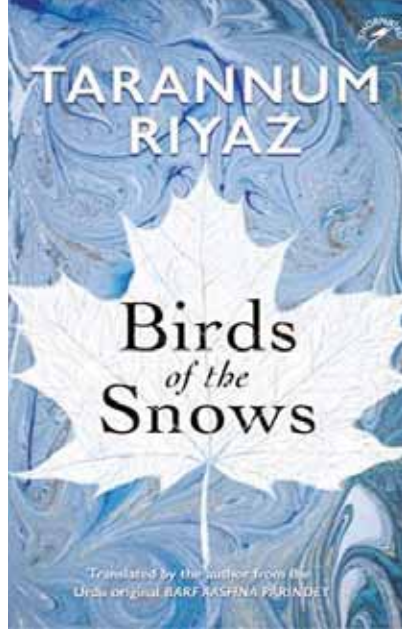
view mirror. Baaji's husband was driving and no one to talk to anyone."

Passages like this dominate the book, in which the author makes a genuine effort to bring alive the life and time of the

Kashmir valley in her own inimitable style. After reading the book, it'll be easy to understand that Tarannum wrote this story not just to fulfill some personal dreams, but to give voice to tens of thousands of

Shebas who are struggling to discover the meaning of their lives in a fast-changing society.

In the word of the publisher the Niyogi Books, This deftly translated novel



depicts the changing times in Kashmir, from a rural to more urban life, the impact of modern thinking, and through its portrayal of female characters explore their compassion and resolves, as well as their search for self-fulfillment."

The editing part of the book is fine as far as grammar is concerned. But errors on the craft side disrupt the smooth flow of the story. The writing is full of unwanted adverbs, (She walked quickly. ... Abbu smiled pleasantly), avoidable exclamations marks, and stilted dialogues. Paragraphs after paragraphs are littered with "hads" and "ing", the two nemeses of literary writings.

These flaws apart, which are the bane of most English books published in India, BIRDS OF THE SNOW is a poignant story that delves into the human relationship and social and moral values of a strife-torn landscape.

The Reviewer is the Executive Editor of The Pioneer

The Trail of Buddha is like a fascinating train journey

Review by
RAJ KANWAR

A senior officer in the Indian Revenue Service, Deepankar Aron was posted in Hong Kong as a Consul way back in 2012. It was just a happenstance that he noticed a 35-meter high Tian Tan Buddha statue standing right next to the Hong Kong Airport that put him "On the Trail of Buddha: A Journey to the East". However, his initial inspiration had come three years before when he was on a Kailash Mansarovar Yatra in Tibet in 2009.

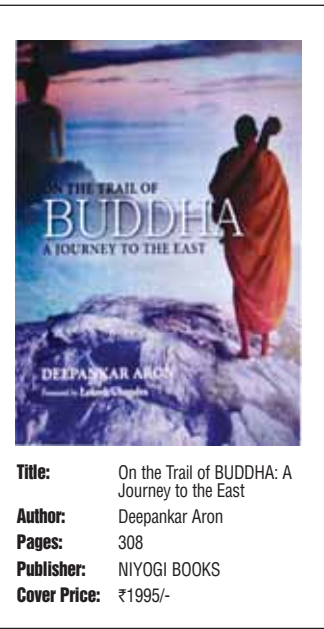
Deepankar writes about two octogenarian Japanese pilgrims who had stood with folded hands before an old and dilapidated structure that seemed to be 'sanctum sanctorum of a temple'. It was somewhat surprising that they should have travelled thousands of miles as pilgrims to a non-descript corner of China called Karakhoja. Even more surprising was the fact that one was a Buddhist priest and the other a worshipper of Lord Krishna - the Hindu Lord whose sacred message forms the essence of Bhagavad Gita.

"It is the story of these two unlikely Japanese pilgrims that epitomizes the theme of this Book - exploring the richness, depth and breadth of the spiritual, philosophical and cultural linkages that bind India to the East Asian civilizations of China, Japan, Korea and Mongolia," writes Deepankar.

The Book straddles between the various regions of East Asia, from Kashgar in Xinjiang in the West to Koyasan in Japan in the East; from Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia in the North and to Kaohsiung in Taiwan in the South. It is as much about the discovery of a tremendous unity in diversity, as it is about hopping between different time zones separated by 2000 years of history.

SIX CHAPTERS IN THE BOOK

THE BOOK is divided into six chapters for ease of navigation. The first covers the ancient cities along the Silk Road in China that were significantly responsible for the spread of Buddhism from India not only into China but also in much of the East Asia. The second covers the North-South trade axis that connects China with Mongolia. The third one moves from Sichuan in South-Western China to the primordial Kailash Parvat or Kang Rinpoche and the lake, Mansarovar or Mapham Yumtso in Tibet. The fourth moves to the South-Eastern coastal China and Taiwan from Hong Kong to



Title: On the Trail of BUDDHA: A Journey to the East
Author: Deepankar Aron
Pages: 308
Publisher: NIYOGI BOOKS
Cover Price: ₹1995/-

Shanghai touching Hangzhou, Suzhou and Nanjing. It then moves from Taipei to Kaohsiung passing through the city of Tainan, dotted with temples. It is possibly one of the most prosperous regions of China with many modern cities. It is thus not a surprise that most of the grandest and tallest statues of Buddha have come up there in the recent past. The fifth one meanders inside the calmness of Korea, and last but not the least comes the land

of the Rising Sun - a place where history, tradition, religion and culture are seen most beautifully preserved. The author also highlights five to 10 representative cities in each of these regions.

Writing a book of such magnitude was not an easy task. Initially the author did not undertake all those journeys with the object of writing a book. However, "a propitious chain of circumstances, made the way from one place to another starting with the longest pilgrimage in the world - KAILASH." He faced numerous challenges such as language, distances, permissions, paucity of time, and resources of course, but luckily all those were sorted out. Interestingly, these journeys were undertaken in all modes of transportation - both animal and mechanized - riding camels, mules and horses; walking and trekking, especially in Tibet. The most exciting of the travelling modes for Deepankar was the high speed trains in Japan, China and Taiwan.

JOURNEY ON SLOW MOVING TRAIN RATHER A BULLET TRAIN

EMINENT Indian Vedic scholar Prof. Lokesh Chandra is all ecstatic about Deepankar Aron's book "On the Trail of BUDDHA: A Journey to the East". "The Book is fascinating in its flowing diction and minimum of technical details. It celebrates the last two millennia when

the Asian Nations together made the journey of the Mind, serene depths of thought, art, piety confluence in the rapture of the roots," Chandra writes in his Foreword. "The living monasteries in East Asia and the desolation of the ruins in Central Asia due to theistic violence become the fascination of eyes in the evocative narrative of Deepankar. He opens up the immensity of our lost heritage, like the grandeur of Colossi in the Yun-Kang caves that are vistic symbols of the majesty of the Avatamsaka tradition, reminiscent of the Bamiyan Buddhas," Prof. Chandra adds.

On the Trail of BUDDHA: A Journey to the East takes the reader on a slow-moving train journey rather a Bullet train. The author has chronicled the spread of Buddhism, as preserved in the traditions of these countries, binding them with India. Though somewhat smaller in size than the standard Coffee Table Book, On the Trail of BUDDHA with its 308 pages illustrated with bountiful photographs indicative of Deepankar's expertise with camera and printed on art paper provides an easy read.

The reviewer is the Commissioner, Goods & Services Tax in Uttarakhand. He is an intrepid traveller, ace photographer and a prolific writer. He has also received the Presidential Award for his distinguished contributions as an Indian Revenue Service officer.



The art of job-hunting

"JOB SEARCH SECRETS – Master the art of getting the job" co-authored by SUBIR VERMA and SAGARIKA SAHU VERMA has come at the right time as the issue of unemployment has begun to make headlines in the country. Subir works as Chief Human Resource at Tata Power DDL, and Sagarika Sahu Verma is a CEO of an edutech company.

Review by
DEEPAK KUMAR JHA

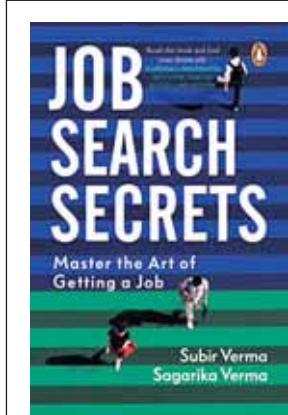
This book is an effort to bring all aspects of job search to one place with various supporting tools to provide complete theory and practice to master the art of searching for a job. Free tools shared in the book can give results in the shortest possible time.

Starting from how to choose the right career, the book covers how to find a hidden job, how to find people who can help in finding job and build long-time relationships with them, what to do to crack campus, virtual and other interviews, salary negotiation, and using social media for the job hunt.

Each chapter has practical tips with examples of real students and job aspirants for each one to relate to and use. For each of the areas, free tools exercise has been recommended which anyone can use without any cost seating at home. There is a general perception that you need to relocate to bigger cities to get a job. What about those who cannot relocate themselves? The book has the answer to many such issues faced by candidates and offers solutions.

"Use of social media and job portal to find a job and also use them in such way that one can easily get a job of his/her choice has been lucidly explained in the book," says Dr Sagarika.

"Not only what one needs to do, but how to do it, sample script, how to practice and implement are



Title: Job Search Secrets – Master the art of getting the job
Authors: Subir Verma and Sagarika Sahu Verma
Publisher: PENGUIN INDIA
Price: ₹250/-

what has been shared in details in very simple and easy to understand language", adds Dr Sagarika.

Job seekers have qualifications, skill but they are not effectively use them during their job search and interview, she said.

The book talks about the problem of largescale unemployment. India has over five crores of educated unemployed youth. Every year more than 50 lacs of educated youth gets added into the list. Educated youth is frustrated, dejected, and is losing hope. Even professionally qualified youth who have engineering, management, and graduate

degrees are not getting job. The situation is so grim that highly educated people are taking up odd jobs.

On the other hand, companies always complain that they are not getting the "right talent". They have vacancies but are not able to hire. When there are crores of educated youth are available, why companies are not able to hire them? Where is the gap? Companies have the resources to hire talent. But crores of youth need help to find employment. The biggest gap is that job seekers search jobs based on what they need rather than what companies want.

"I feel sad when I read in the newspaper that for one vacancy for the post of peon, thousands of people, including highly educated with MBA and Ph.D. degrees as well as engineers, apply. We thought to find a way to help such youth to make them know how they can find a job. This book is an effort to help these educated unemployed youth", Subir told the Pioneer.

Not all jobs are advertised. In fact, more than 50% of jobs are not advertised by companies and they recruit through other channels. Now, students or job seekers are missing half of the available job if they do not know how to reach them.

The book has received excellent responses from not only students, job seekers, and working professionals but also industry senior professionals.

The Reviewer is Special Correspondent of The Pioneer

Indo-Pacific Eco Framework: Concept to strategy

The genesis of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework can be traced to October 2021, during the East Asia Summit held virtually. At the East Asia Summit, the US President enunciated his plans to unveil a US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

Following the initial announcement, the Biden administration released an Indo-Pacific Strategy in February 2022, which saw a formal iteration of the IPEF. As such, it bears no surprise to see US President Joe Biden officially launched the IPEF on May 23, 2022, in Tokyo before the QUAD leaders' Summit.

In addition to the four Quad members, leaders from 9 other nations namely Brunei, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam participated virtually. These countries became the founding members of the IPEF initiative making a "baker's dozen". Out of the thirteen participating countries in the IPEF, seven are also part of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, three ASEAN countries — Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar — have refrained from participating in the IPEF.

The partial overlap of the IPEF with ASEAN reflects that the economic strategy has factored in China. The seven countries in IPEF which have overlapping membership with the ASEAN will help the US and its Quad partners to further consolidate the "ASEAN centrality" principle of the Indo-Pacific strategy.

Both Laos and Cambodia have perhaps been left out due to their proximity to Beijing, while Myanmar has paid the price for a non-democratic political functioning that continues in the country since the military junta grabbed power. That creating competitive structures against China lies at the heart of the IPEF has become clearer with the engagement of Taiwan in a similar bilateral engagement, albeit outside the IPEF.

In many ways, the IPEF is an offshoot of the re-invigorated America's "Pivot to Asia"



strategy launched in 2011 during the Obama administration. The strategy aimed to relocate the strategic focus of the US from West Asia to the Pacific theatre, primarily because of the competition and threats it faces from China. Besides, it also sought to advance the US' economic and geopolitical interests through wider engagements with the Asia-Pacific region.

The two important constituents of this strategy were the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Indo-Pacific Economic Corridor. However, the US' withdrawal from the

TPP during the presidency of Donald Trump in 2017 deteriorated the progress made in terms of coalition-building and intensification of geopolitical and geo-economic ties with allies in the Indo-Pacific region.

The "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" strategy released in 2019 during the Trump administration gathered inimical reactions from the allies and partners in the region. It was perceived as a confrontational narrative rather than a regional strategy.

Therefore, the return of a new collective strategy by the US to collectively compete

with China, at a time when the US dominance on the trade and investment is facing intense competition from Beijing in the region, may be a timely and well-calibrated step to instil fair and principled regional competition which is consistent with climate goals and predictable supply chains. China is the leading trade partner of almost all the IPEF member countries. As such, the IPEF initiative outlines the underlying thrust in building partner coalitions, developing a collective response and preventing the growing Chinese influence in the region.

Broadly, the evolving predicament within the IPEF countries is China using its economic heavyweight for achieving its security and diplomatic goals. The IPEF could present an opportunity for like-minded countries of the Quad to find new and reliable alternatives to their current dependencies on China, especially in trade related infrastructure and supply chains. In particular, for India, which is not part of the China-led Regional Comprehensive Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement, the IPEF might emerge as a more reliable and

credible alternative in creating new mechanisms in the Indo-Pacific. India's own FTA being negotiated with ASEAN could be consistent with some of the objectives of the IPEF.

Much of how the IPEF will unravel remains to be seen. The IPEF countries that are already part of some sort of Free Trade Agreements such as CPTPP and RCEP would require "substantial incentives" from the US to diversify their ties from any such already existing arrangements in the region.

Also, the four focus areas of the IPEF: trade, supply chains, clean energy, decar-

bonisation and infrastructure; tax and anti-corruption need to be implemented and assessed. While executing these focus areas, climate, labour and data localisation standards in the IPEF countries (which are not as per the US standards) might turn out to be prominent irritants.

(Vivek Mishra is fellow, Strategic Studies Program, ORF, New Delhi. Mrityunjaya Dubey is a researcher and Senior Assistant member with The Consortium of Indo-Pacific Researchers affiliated with the Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs)

For India, which is not part of the China-led Regional Comprehensive Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement, the IPEF might emerge as a more reliable and credible alternative in creating new mechanisms in the Indo-Pacific



VIVEK MISHRA



MRITYUNJAYA DUBEY

PERSPECTIVE

Hate speeches malign the idea of India

It is high time the Government cracked down on all fringe elements and renewed its focus on 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'

The contemptuous and abominable remarks of the BJP leaders on Prophet Muhammad unleashed strong reactions not only in India but also in the Islamic countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait and Iran, etc, resulting in calls to ban Indian products.

Though the BJP has strongly denounced the remarks and said that insult to any religious personalities is not permissible, and immediately suspended its leaders from the party's membership for not toeing the official line on sensitive matters, it has become an international issue in no time. However, for consolation, the action taken by the BJP has been welcomed by many Muslim countries.

Provocative speeches are not a new phenomenon in India, irrespective of whether it is Congress regimes or the BJP's. However, the intensity of such communal sledging from both sides has increased during the BJP's regime.

Why did it happen?

The role of the mainstream and social media has been questionable over the last few years as they have often been found adding fuel to the fire. India's splendid past is full of glory and wonders. History develops the ability to avoid mistakes and create better paths for societies. Nevertheless, some of the media houses delve into the history and spoil all its might to prove that rottenness is actually producing high quality of fragrance. The uproar on TV channels on religious lines has mostly been provocative and derogatory. Allowing fringe elements to dis-

respect religions and make controversial statements on TV shows with impunity put the anchor's role in question.

The 200 million Indian Muslims who have been living here have opted to live in India in the hope that this country will give them more respect and freedom than the neighbouring Muslim countries. Then the moot point is what purpose the provocative speeches serve.

Although there are some differences between the Muslim aspira-

tions and the BJP's ideology, but these are ideological which is permissible in a healthy democracy. The nation is already facing numerous problems, people themselves are fighting against poverty, environmental degradation, joblessness and various health problems, but some media houses for their vested interest, instead of raising the genuine issues, have deliberately been dividing and creating gulf in society in the name of religion, and this is the greatest obstacle in the way of development.

Possible trade threats

India's overall economy during Mughals was several times more than many European countries which attracted many Europeans to India. It is believed that the only reason of this richness and prosperity was peace and tranquility. However, economic destruction began during the British rule. They divided people along religious lines in order to loot India's resources. People were dying in starvation but the British were busy draining the wealth of India.



An artisan prepares eco-friendly idols of god Ganesha for Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Hyderabad on Saturday

History is evident that peace, brotherhood and justice bring prosperity and development, and on the contrary hatred ruins and destroys nations. Therefore, it is required that the Government crack down on fringe elements and renew its focus on "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas".

The recent reactions from Muslim countries will further damage the Indian economy if no quick remedial action is taken. As per media reports, the Gulf countries account for almost one fifth of India's total trade. For instance, in the year 2020-21 the total value of the goods imported from the GCC countries was worth \$110.73 billion. India imports 40 per cent of crude oil, 18 per cent of petroleum gas and 8 per cent of diamond from the Gulf countries, while it exports 14 per cent of refined petroleum, 8 per cent of jewellery and 7 per cent of rice. In other words, India imports 72 per cent worth \$111 billion and exports 28 per cent worth \$44 billion.

It is noteworthy that the UAE and Saudi Arabia are the third and fourth biggest trade partners of India. The UAE alone is accounted for 6.6 per cent of India's total export, and 7.3 per cent of imports last year touched about \$73 billion. Saudi Arabia on the other hand is accounted for almost 80 per cent of import worth \$34.1 billion and 20 per cent of export worth \$8.75 billion. Other GCC countries trade volumes are: Iraq 34.3 per cent, Qatar 15 per cent, Kuwait 12.2 per cent, Oman 10 per cent and Bahrain 1.7 per cent.

Gulf countries are well known to

be the second home of almost 10 million Indians making it the largest Indian diaspora across the globe and contributing immensely in the foreign reserves of India.

As a matter of fact, India is the largest recipient of the foreign remittances. As per last year's World Bank report, India received \$87 billion foreign remittances in 2021, half of these foreign remittances was sent from just five Gulf countries i.e., UAE 26.9 per cent, Saudi 11.6 per cent, Qatar 6.5 per cent, Kuwait 5.5 per cent and Oman 3 per cent. In view of the emerging trade and cultural ties between India and the Arab world, it shall be disastrous if the differences aggravate further and no remedial and timely actions taken.

It's a well-known fact that India and Arab world have very strong trade and cultural relations for centuries. They believe in coexistence and mutual cooperation. It is the responsibility of the Government of the day to be accountable for both the successes and failures. Hence it is high time for India to work on the immediate corrective measures both internally and externally to fight the true evil of the society i.e. hatred, poverty, unemployment, etc, and have proper control on the fringe elements and the media houses that are trying to divide and damage the true spirit of India.

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