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UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

## Muda case: Karnataka HC says no action against Siddaramaiah till CM's petition against governor is heard

**NEW DELHI:** The Karnataka high court on Monday provided relief to Siddaramaiah in the alleged Muda scam saying that no proceedings shall be conducted before the special court against Karnataka CM till his plea against the state governor is heard. The Congress leader had filed a plea challenging governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's order to prosecute him in the land allotment scam. The next date of hearing is scheduled for August 29. "Since matter is heard by this court and pleadings are to be completed till the next date of hearing the concerned court should defer its proceedings," the HC said, according to Live Law. Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing Siddaramaiah, argued that the petition claimed that the sanction order issued



**Modi to visit Ukraine on August 23, first visit by an Indian PM in over 30 years**

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Ukraine on August 23, his first visit since the country's war with Russia. Modi's visit to Kyiv will be the first by an Indian PM in 30 years. Tanmaya Lal, secretary west of ministry of external affairs (MEA), said, "PM Narendra Modi will undertake an official visit to Ukraine later this week on Friday, August 23, on the invitation of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. This is also a landmark

and a historic visit since this will be the first time an Indian PM will be visiting Ukraine in more than 30 years since we established our diplomatic relations. This visit will build upon the recent high-level interactions between the leaders." The MEA further said that India has always been advocating diplomacy and dialogue to resolve conflict in Ukraine. "India has maintained a very clear and consistent position that diplomacy and dialogue can resolve.

by the governor of Karnataka is flawed

and part of a deliberate attempt to desta-

bilize the legitimately elected government for political motives. The Karnataka CM had said earlier today, "We will wage a legal fight also, we will wage a political fight also. I get more 'josh' (enthusiasm, passion) during political fights. I have been doing it continuously. I have done it before, doing now and will do in future."

The Muda scam came to light after social activist Snehamayi Krishna filed a complaint against Siddaramaiah and nine others. The allegation centers on document forgery used to fraudulently claim compensation from Muda. Under a 50:50 ratio scheme, Muda allocated 14 sites to Parvathi, the wife of Karnataka's CM, in exchange for 3 acres and 16 guntas of her undeveloped land, which was then used to develop a residential layout.

## Kolkata horror: Ex-principal Sandip Ghosh's call records and WhatsApp chats under CBI scanner

**KOLKATA:** The CBI, probing the rape and murder of the R G Kar Medical College & Hospital doctor, questioned Sandip Ghosh - former principal of the institution - for the third consecutive day on Sunday and asked about his call records and WhatsApp messages. The agency has already found discrepancies in his statements, trying to shift focus of the investigators. Kolkata doctor death: Who is Sanjay Roy? Civic volunteer arrested in RG Kar Hospital rape-murder case. The agency also started a forensic psychological assessment of Sanjay Roy, the prime accused in the case. On Sunday morning, Ghosh entered the CBI office around 10.40 after a 13-hour interrogation a day ago. By then the CBI officials had quizzed him for more than 24 hours over two days and found that his statements were not adding up to his claims. Late on Saturday night, the CBI team, led by an addi-



**'Na seats the, na bathrooms': PCB chief admits poor condition of Pakistan stadium**

**NEW DELHI:** With preparations underway for the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi emphasized the urgent need for upgrading the country's cricket stadiums on Monday. In recent remarks, Naqvi acknowledged the significant gap

between venues and international standards, highlighting the inadequacies that need to be addressed to successfully host the forthcoming global event. Naqvi pointed out that none of current stadiums meet international requirements, noting that the existing facilities.

him near his home. CBI is now trying to untangle what made the assistant super call up the family to inform that their daughter has "died by suicide". Ghosh, who has claimed that he was not involved with what happened on Aug 9.

enough with, "Chillin, hbu [how about you], to which the officer responded. But things took a humorous twist when the individual asked, "Wanna smoke." The officer's response was both clever and professional: "I don't

**CRPF inspector killed in exchange of fire with terrorists in J&K's Udhampur**

**NEW DELHI:** An exchange of fire took place between terrorists and security forces in Dudu in Udhampur on Monday which claimed the life of a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) inspector, the Jammu and Kashmir police said. Officials said that the CRPF inspector belonged to the 187th battalion and was hit by a bullet during a patrolling operation. He later succumbed to his injuries while being taken to the hospital. The terrorists fled the scene in the face of strong retaliation by the joint patrolling party, the officials further said. Reinforcements have been rushed to the scene. A search operation has been launched to track down and neutralise the militants. J&K is set to witness assembly elections after a decade-long gap.

## 'Hell-bent on destroying the evidence': BJP



**NEW DELHI:** Bharatiya Janta Party on Monday launched a scathing attack on Trinamool Congress-led West Bengal government over alleged rape and murder case of a young trainee doctor in RG Kar Hospital and accused chief minister Mamata Banerjee of being 'hell-bent' on destroying the evidences of the incident. Addressing the media, BJP's national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia demanded Mamata's resignation and said, "Mamata Banerjee is the chief minister of West Bengal who also holds the Home Ministry and the Health Ministry. The main purpose of today's press conference is to demand her resignation and justice for our sister, who was brutally raped and murdered. Mamata Banerjee should resign." "A chief minister, through her deeds or inactions acts of commission or omission, destroyed the evidence which is vital to ensure that the accused get the punishment they deserve and as per the new criminal law. destroyer is hell-bent on destroying the evidence" he added. Bhatia also targeted the opposition parties for their silence over the incident and accused them.

## Rahul Gandhi takes a cab ride, highlights plight of gig workers

**NEW DELHI:** Congress MP and leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Monday highlighted the hardships faced by gig workers. He also asserted that states, where the Congress party is in power, would make concrete policies to solve their problems. The Raebareli MP posted a video of himself taking an



Uber ride and having a conversation with the cab driver named Sunil Upadhyay. In his post on X, Gandhi wrote in Hindi, "Aamdani kam aur mehngai se nikalta dum - ye hai Bharat ke gig wokers ki

vyatha". "Low income and inflation ruining lives -- this is the plight of India's gig workers! In discussion with Sunil Upadhyay ji during a Uber ride and then, after meeting his family, took stock of the

problems faced by gig workers such as cab drivers and delivery agents in the country," he said. Rahul Gandhi further said that Congress-led state governments would develop solid policies to address their issues, while the I N D I A "Janabandhan" would work towards implementing these policies nationwide.

## Mississippi police officer gets wrong number text: 'Bruh, we smoke all the time'

**A Gulfport, Mississippi,** police officer has become a social media sensation after a funny text exchange with a stranger took an unexpected turn. The Gulfport Police Department shared the amusing interaction, which unfolded on Friday night, and it quickly captured the internet's attention. The story began when a person accidentally texted the officer, who was mistaken for a friend. The message started innocently



enough with, "Chillin, hbu [how about you], to which the officer responded. But things took a humorous twist when the individual asked, "Wanna smoke." The officer's response was both clever and professional: "I don't

think I'm going to be able to smoke with you." Despite the hint, the texter was persistent, writing, "Bruh, we smoke all the time." Realizing the mistake, the officer gently pointed out the mix-up but didn't leave it at that.

## 'There were three bodies, but our daughter was cremated first': Victim's father

**KOLKATA :** The father of the junior doctor who was raped and murdered at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College on August 9 has spoken out against what he said was the Mamata Banerjee govt's "attempt to silence" those demanding justice for his daughter. Kolkata: Pages 'Missing' From Doctor's Diary; CBI Grills Ex-Principal Over 'Secrets Penned...' He expressed dissatisfaction with the chief minister's actions and refused to accept the compensation offered by the state government. The father also questioned the "immediate cremation" of his daughter after the autopsy, raising doubts about



the possibility of evidence destruction. "CM is talking about providing justice and even took to the streets in solidarity. But why send common people demanding justice to jail? We are not satisfied with what CM is doing. We have refused to accept the compensation that was offered to us by the state govt," he told reporters. "There were three bodies awaiting final rites at the crematorium, but our daughter

was cremated ahead of them. We were so upset and in a state of shock after losing our only child that we couldn't think or act at the time," he said. Kolkata rape-murder case: Timeline The victim's father also raised concerns about the police inquiry before the CBI took over the investigation on the orders of the Calcutta high court. He stated, "Nothing came out of the inquiry... Nobody

from the (chest medicine) department or the college cooperated with us. The entire department is responsible for my daughter's murder...we suspect some people in the department were involved in the crime." The victim's mother expressed gratitude towards those standing by the family during these difficult times, considering them as "our sons and daughters". She hopes that the CBI investigation will lead to a breakthrough in the case and that the accused will be arrested and given the strictest punishment. The police had arrested a civilian traffic police volunteer, Sanjay Roy, within 24 hours of the crime.

## EAM Jaishankar arrives in Kuwait on day-long visit

**KUWAIT CITY:** External affairs minister S Jaishankar arrived here on Sunday on a day-long visit during which he will hold talks with the Kuwaiti leadership on various aspects of India-Kuwait bilateral relations. Jaishankar was received by his Kuwaiti counterpart Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya on his arrival. "Namaste Kuwait. Thank FM Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya for the warm welcome. Looking forward to my engagements today with the Kuwaiti leadership," Jaishankar posted on X. His visit will enable both sides to review various aspects of India-Kuwait bilateral relations including political, trade, investment, energy, security, cultural, consular and people-to-people contacts, as well as exchange views on regional.

## Cognizant Americas EVP clarifies on Rs 2.5 lakh annual package: Our compensation

**IT giant Cognizant** has found itself in the crosshairs of social media criticism over its salary packages. The company has clarified that the much-discussed (or rather much-trolled) Rs 2.52 lakh annual salary offer is intended for non-engineering undergraduate degree holders, and not for engineering graduates. Contrary to the online uproar, Cognizant asserts that its starting salary for fresh engineering graduates ranges from Rs 4 lakh to Rs 12 lakh annually, depending on factors like specialization and certifications. The company has emphasized that its compensation for engineering graduates is competitive with industry standards and even surpasses those of some peers. "Our recent job

posting for talent from non-engineering backgrounds, with a 3-year undergraduate degree has been grossly misrepresented. This job posting, with compensation of Rs 2.52 lakhs annually, was only for candidates with a 3-year undergraduate degree and not for engineering graduates. "Our annual compensation for fresh engineering graduates ranges from Rs 4 lakhs to Rs 12 lakhs annually, depending on the category of hiring, skill set, and advanced industry accredited certifications," said Surya Gummadi, EVP and President, Cognizant Americas. "The compensation we offer for engineering graduates is highly competitive within the IT services peer group," he said.



## Medicos handed over memo to Dy CM

Over doctor rape-murder case

Prayagraj: Today members of Allahabad nursing home and private doctors welfare association met deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya and handed over



a memorandum in reference to Kolkata rape murder case demanding for timely bound inquiry and punishment to the culprits. Also ensuring safety at work place and doctors protection act. Issue to be raised in parliament. Members present were Dr VK Singh, Dr BB Agarwal, Dr Raj kishor Agarwal, Dr Piyush Dixit and Dr Vyanjana Pandey.

## Dr. Naz Fatma takes promise of safety and security from brothers

Prayagraj: On the occasion of Rakshabandhan, at Naz Multispeciality Hospital, Dr. Naz Fatma tied Rakhi on the wrists of the attendants and staff of the patients present after OPD and gave packets of sweets to everyone and asked everyone to visit their real sisters and



daughters. And like the mother, she also took the oath of protection for other sisters and daughters. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians all took the oath of protection by keeping the Rakhi tied on their wrists in front. Dr. Naz Fatma said that today women and daughters of our family or others are becoming victims of heinous crimes like rape and murder due to people with dirty thoughts. In such a situation, it is the responsibility of all of us to protect others like our sisters and daughters. Never tolerate or ignore the evil glances that fall on our sisters and daughters. Let us fight for the rights of our sisters and daughters and today we take an oath that we will be determined to provide every possible help and protection to our sisters and daughters.

## Samarth sale event 'Crafted by Bharat'

Varanasi: Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce marketplace, today announced the eighth edition of its flagship sale event, 'Crafted by Bharat', a Flipkart Samarth initiative to be held on August 15, 2024, marking India's 78th Independence Day. The event is dedicated to celebrating India's vibrant culture and rich heritage by featuring over 25000 handicraft products from culturally renowned brands across the country. In celebration of India's rich cultural heritage, the sale event will showcase over 100 traditional art forms such as wooden art, metal-casting art, and traditional furniture, offering a unique shopping experience that highlights the creativity and craftsmanship of Indian artisans.

Commenting on the 8th edition of Crafted by Bharat, Rajneesh Kumar - Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Flipkart Group, said "To celebrate India's 78th Independence Day, we at Flipkart are thrilled to launch the eighth edition of 'Crafted by Bharat,' a testament to our commitment to promoting local handicrafts and supporting MSMEs through the Samarth program. This Samarth Sale event not only enhances the visibility and reach of our sellers but also empowers them to thrive in the digital marketplace. By focusing on uplifting seller communities across India, especially MSMEs, we create meaningful opportunities for artisans, showcasing their unique crafts and ensuring they receive the recognition they deserve. Our initiatives have positively impacted over 1.8 million livelihoods of sellers, driving economic growth, and fostering a thriving e-commerce ecosystem throughout India

## Arisinfra Solutions Limited files DRHP with SEBI

Varanasi: Arisinfra Solutions Limited ("ASL" or "The Company") has filed its Draft Red Herring Prospectus ("DRHP") with market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI"). The Company is a business-to-business ("B2B") technology-enabled company focusing on simplifying and digitizing the entire procurement process for construction materials, delivering an efficient end-to-end procurement experience.

The Company plans to raise funds aggregating up to Rs. 6,000 million [Rs. 600 crore] through initial public offering of Equity Share Capital face value Rs. 2 each. (The "Total Issue Size"). The total issue size comprises of fresh issue of Equity Shares aggregating up to Rs. 6,000 million [Rs. 600 crore]. (The "Fresh Issue")

# Padyatra of Maa Vindhyavasini started with pomp

Prayagraj: Om Jai Maa Vindhyavasini Padyatra Committee Prayagraj in conjunction with Ghanshyam Gupta Padyatra of Maa Vindhyavasini ji with pomp Before the padyatra was taken out from Muthiganj small square, worship and aarti of Maa Vindhyavasini was done with full rituals and after that the padyatra was started. Rajesh Kesarwani, in-charge of the committee said that a three-day padyatra is taken out on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Maa Vindhyavasini, which is Starting from the full moon day of Sawan from the head office of the committee, Muthiganj Chhota Chauraha, passing through Muthiganj Bada Chauraha, Katghar, Arya Kanya Chauraha, Baiharana, Naini, the birth anniversary of Maa Vindhyavasini ji will end at Vindhychal Dham



on 21st August, the Dooj day of Bhado month. Attractive tableau of Maa Vindhyavasini ji, DJ band flag, tableau of Ganesh ji, Hanuman ji, Maa Kali were included in the padyatra. Naveen Kesari, Sumit

Jaiswal, Ghanshyam Gupta, Abhilash Kesarwani, Paras Kesarwani, Neeraj Kesarwani, Ramji Gupta of the occasion committee were included in the padyatra. Jagdish Kesarwani, Rajesh

Kesarwani, Councilor Neeraj Gupta, Sunil Jaiswal, Gyan Prakash, Ishu, Anshu Kanojia, Manjeet Gupta, Kishan Chandra Jaiswal, Manoj Sonkar Mannu Jaiswal and hundreds of pedestrians were involved.

## Uttar Pradesh football team felicitated

Prayagraj: Bharat Vikas Parishad Kalindi Branch honoured Uttar Pradesh football team which emerged as Runner Up in the recently concluded PEFI Under-17 National Football Championship. Uttar Pradesh finished runner-up in the Under-17 National Football Championship organized by Physical Education Foundation of India (PEFI) from 22 to 28 June in Vardaman, West Bengal.

This program started at Kalindipuram Durga Puja Park at 4 pm. The program was conducted by Rajesh Jaiswal, Regional Member, Indian Institute of Yoga. The cultural program was

presented by Sonali Mishra, Putul Banerjee, Mithilesh Jaiswal. Guests were welcomed by Ram Prakash Sharma, Secretary,

Durga Puja Committee. Rama Shankar Singh, Financial Secretary, Bharat Vikas Parishad, Prayag Province and Pradeep

by giving them silver medals, certificates and Bharat Ko Jano booklet of Bharat Vikas Parishad.

The honored Uttar Pradesh team was as follows: Shivam Yadav, Prashant Pal, Ashwini Tomar, Tejaswa Tomar, Rudra Pratap Singh, Vaibhav Manishi (all Meerut) Alok Kumar Prajapati, Priyaansu Verma (both Lucknow), Rahul Chandra, Shivam Saroj, Vedant Tripathi, Mayank Maurya, Shrestha Maurya (all Prayagraj), Satyam (Ambedkar Nagar), Ankush Singh (Agra), Siddharth Singh (Basti), Shreyans Chowksey (Varanasi) and Head Coach - Indranil Ghosh (Prayagraj).



Kalindi Branch, Bharat Vikas Parishad and vote of thanks was given by Ashwani Kumar Tripathi, Secretary, Kalindipuram

Kumar Chakraborty, President of Kalindi branch of Bharat Vikas Parishad, honored the players of the entire Uttar Pradesh state team

## Rakshabandhan is festival of resolve to protect everyone

### RSS volunteers tied Rakhi on wrists of deprived INTELLECTUALS TOOK PART IN FESTIVAL

Prayagraj: The festival of Rakshabandhan was celebrated with traditional joy under the aegis of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. On this occasion, celebrations were organized in all 40 towns of the city in which volunteers congratulated Rakshabandhan by tying Raksha Sutra on each other's wrists along with the saffron flag. Sangh officials highlighted the importance of Rakshabandhan in the intellectual gathering organized during the festivals. On this occasion, the volunteers reached the service settlements and tied Rakhi to the brothers and sisters of the deprived class and congratulated them on Rakshabandhan. Dayanand Seva Basti located in front of St. Mary's School, Dayanand Marg. Reaching door to door in Prajapati Kohrana colony located in Naya Katra, the volunteers tied Rakhi to all the sisters

and children living there and reiterated their commitment to protect them. In this program, provincial executive member Nagendra, city executive Vibhuti, Rajnarayan,

dressed the volunteers. He said that Rakshabandhan is a holy festival of resolve to protect everyone. Along with protecting brothers and sisters, it is everyone's re-

year to remind of this demand. Only that society which has love and respect for each other remains permanent. Hindu life values teach us to bond with each



service chief Arun, Dharma Jagran chief Chhavipal, system chief Sandeep, settlement chief Pradeep Singh branch executive and residents of Sujal, Basti were mainly present. Rakshabandhan festival of University Nagar of Prayag North part was organized at Jwala Devi Saraswati Shishu Mandir Subhash Nagar where State Publicity Head Dr. Murarji Tripathi ad-

responsibility to protect all the weaker sections of the society. This holy festival of Rakshabandhan reminds us of this responsibility.

He further said that this is a festival of affection and bonding. The need of the hour is for everyone to be fully committed to each other's safety by tying the entire society in bonds of intimacy. Rakshabandhan festival is organized every

other in a bond of mutual affection. A large number of workers and sisters including part Sangh driver Lalita Prasad, province co-family head Dr. Singh, part Karyawah Ramkumar, Yogendra, Vinay, Chhavipal, were present in the program. In the ceremony, all the workers first congratulated Rakshabandhan festival by tying saffron flag and then Rakhi on each other's wrists.

## Seminar of Ideal Homeopathic Welfare Org & AYUSH Doctors held

Prayagraj: A joint scientific seminar of Ideal Homeopathic Welfare Organization and AYUSH Doctors was organized in a hotel in the city. In which the city's senior homeopathic doctor Dr. Sudha Nidhi Mishra gave a lecture on the increasing cases of infertility. Due to modern changes in lifestyle, its cases are continuously increasing. According to WHO, one out of every six couples suffers from some form of infertili-

ty in their lifetime. He said that even after treatment using modern medical science and AYUSH treatment, if there is no resonating in the house then one should resort to IVF.

The IVF process is certainly complicated, but with patience and confidence, the chances of success increase. IVF i.e. test tube baby technology is no less than a boon in modern times. Even during the Mahabharata period, to

avoid the murder of Kansa, the seventh womb of Mother Devaki was transferred to the womb of Nand's second wife through Yoga Maya Vidya, as a result of which Sankarshana (Balramji) was born. Even during the Ramayana period, when Dasharatha did not have any son from his three queens, four sons were born to Dasharatha as a result of the son Kameshti Yagya under the leadership

of Maharishi Shringi Rishi. Other experienced doctors of the city shared their experiences. The seminar was presided over by National Executive Member Dr. Bhanwar Singh. Mainly Dr. Anand Prakash Singh, Dr. Pushpendra Sharma, Dr. Akhil Nigam, Dr. Sagar, Dr. Sanjay Singh, Dr. Sunil Patel, Dr. Santosh Yadav, Dr. Pankaj Vishwakarma, Dr. Shree Bhagwan, Dr. Mo. Ammam etc. participated in the seminar.

## Brothers go online, order gift delivery to sisters

Prayagraj: 'Ding-dong'. Don't be surprised? Doorbell rang across the city this Raksha Bandhan. Beloved brothers living away from their sisters have send gift using online shopping websites. Tech-savvy brothers don't delay gifting their sisters in lieu of the 'rakhis' couriered to them. "When my sister can send me a 'rakhi' through a courier service so that my wrist is not bare on the Raksha Bandhan day, why can't I also order a gift for her online?" asks Animesh, a final-year engineering student.

Animesh during his first two years at college would buy gift for his sister while vacationing at Allahabad and keep it with his mom who would give it to her daughter on Rakhi. "Since last Raksha Bandhan, I have started ordering gift delivery online," Animesh told Patrika over phone who had ordered a book and a box of chocolates for his sister this Rakhi.

Lukerganj resident Mrityunjay, who currently lives in Delhi, was in two minds whether to order a gift online or not "because the festival this year is on a Sunday". "However, when

I called up the customer care service of an online shop, they said Raksha Bandhan gifts would be delivered on Sunday itself. I've ordered a handbag and a perfume for my sister this year," Kumar, a media professional, said hoping his gift would reach its destination at least on Monday, if not on Sunday.

Brothers also use internet banking options to transfer cash to their sister's bank account so that they could buy a gift of their choice. For Ujjawal, a Class XII student, rakhi gift includes a refrigerator for his sister Trisha who recently shifted to Delhi for higher studies. "My elder brother and I have pooled in the money for her gift," he said.

Many brothers in the city also like to gift cash to their sisters so that they can use it according to their needs while some go for apparels or accessories. "Every year I ask my sister to tell me a colour of her choice and I buy a sari for her as Rakhi gift," said a PG student of Allahabad University, Chandan, who has left for his hometown, Fatehpur, on Sunday morning for the festival.

## Sanskrit Day celebration celebrated under Shrimad Aryavarta Vidvat Parishad and Prayag Vidvat Parishad

Prayagraj: Under the joint auspices of Shrimad Aryavarta Vidvat Parishad and Prayag Vidvat Parishad and in the holy presence of Jagadguru Ramanujacharya Prayag Peethadhishwar Swami Shridharacharya Maharaj, Vaikunth Dham Ashram, Alopibagh. Sanskrit Day celebration was celebrated in the auditorium of Prayagraj. A scholarly seminar was organized on this occasion. The seminar was presided over by Mahamahopadhyay Dr. Ramji Mishra, Chairman of the Academic Council. The chief guest of the seminar was Professor Bhagwat Sharan Shukla, Head of the Department of Grammar, Faculty of Sanskrit Studies, Religion Science, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. In the seminar, the great Sanskrit scholar Brahmarshi Radheshyam Pandey



Triphala was honored with a shawl, patuka and quince and a congratulatory letter was presented to him. Expressing his views in the seminar, Jagadguru Ramanujacharya Swami Shridharacharya Maharaj said that Sanskrit is the language of values. All knowledge and science is contained in it. He encouraged people to study Sanskrit. Prof. Bhagwat Sharan Shukla said that a person is incomplete without the study of Sanskrit. The knowledge of Sanskrit is immense. Swami Chakradharacharya highlighted the elegance of Sanskrit by referring to Sanskrit texts. In the presidential address, Dr. Ramji Mishra said that Sanskrit literature is so vast and immeasurable that one birth is not enough to study it. India's reputation lies with Indian culture and Sanskrit knowledge. Devi Prasad Pandey presented his poetry recital in the seminar. Brahmarshi Radheshyam Pandey Triphala expressed his gratitude to the Academic Council for the felicitation. The seminar was conducted by Jaya Mishra. Eminent scholars, litterateurs and distinguished citizens of the city were present in the seminar.

## Railways begins drive to inspect pantry cars after complaints against staff of boozing overcharging

Prayagraj: The Prayagraj Rail Division under North Central Railway zone has started a 10-day long inspection drive from August 15 in the pantry cars of the trains after it received several complaints against the service staff, a Railways circular said.

The circular dated August 14, 2024 issued by the Division and marked to all commercial inspectors and chief ticket examiners said there are often complaints against serving staff of the pantry cars that they overcharge, misbehave with the travellers and sell products to the passengers after consuming liquor.

It further directed the officials to conduct a drive from August 15 to August

24 in the pantry cars of all the trains crossing the division to take action against guilty catering service providers and to stop such incidents.

"Submit a report of the drive by 12:00 PM on 25.08.24 in this office," the circular said.

Railway sources from the division said that the ongoing drive has achieved fruitful results so far because the inspection team has found several irregularities and complaints against the pantry staff true. "A report will be submitted after the inspection and strict action will be taken against such employees, who are indulging in anti-passengers activities," an official from the division said.



## GREEN KUMBH 2025

### Preparations on in full swing for polythene-free Mela



On the fifth Monday, people gathered in large numbers since night to have the darshan of Lord Shri Mankameswar.

Prayagraj: Preparations are in full swing under the leadership of the Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath for the upcoming Prayagraj Mahakumbh in 2025. The grand event, to begin on January 13, 2025, promises to be a landmark occasion, called the 'Green Kumbh' for its environmentally conscious approach.

The government aims to make the Kumbh Mela polythene-free, planting 3 lakh saplings and committing to their preservation. The efforts are part of a broader Rs 5,154 crore plan that includes 327 approved projects and 75 ongoing departmental projects, with a completion target set for October 2024. The apex committee constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary has held 13

meetings so far. Key developments include an expanded fair area of 4,000 hectares, enhanced facilities, and improved infrastructure.

New parking lots will accommodate over 5 lakh vehicles, while additional circuit houses and pontoon bridges will be constructed. The Mahakumbh will also feature a concrete VIP ghat and a pucca ghat at Dashashwamedh. A 13-km riverfront and numerous flyovers are under construction to ease traffic congestion.

According to Mahakumbh Mela Officer Vijay Kiran Anand, "The fair will be set up in 25 sectors, while six parking lots are being constructed across 1,900 hectares, in which parking of more than 5 lakh vehicles will be arranged." "The number

of circuit houses in Mahakumbh has been increased from three to five. Along with this, the number of pontoon bridges is also being increased. Public accommodation, motorboats, changing rooms, places of worship and floating jetty will be built for 25,000 people in the Mahakumbh Mela," Anand added.

Special provisions include 10 digital lost and found centers, upgraded railway stations, and a world-class smart road connecting the new airport terminal to the Kumbh site. Artificial intelligence will enhance security, with drones and CCTV cameras monitoring the event.

Prayagraj Junction railway station and airport have also been expanded. Akshay Vat, Patal Puri,

Saraswati Kupe, Hanuman Mandir, Shringverpur Dham and Bhardwaj Corridor are also being constructed for the devotees coming to Mahakumbh. Twenty departments of the state government and four departments of the central government are engaged in preparations for Mahakumbh. According to the Kumbh Mela official, land facilities will be allotted to all institutions in the fair from October to December.

Special arrangements are being made for smooth travel of devotees and tourists coming from all over India. A world-class smart road is also being made. Green belt and Kumbh Kalash will be built on both sides of this road. Infrastructure facilities are also being increased at nine rail-

way stations in Prayagraj. Apart from this, attractive paintings will be done on the roadside. The Mahakumbh will run for 45 days, featuring three major holy dips on Paus Purnima, Makar Sankranti, Mauni Amavasya. The first festival will be on Paus Purnima on January 13, Makar Sankranti on January 14/15, Mauni Amavasya on January 29, and Basant Panchami on February 3, Achala Saptami on February 5, Kalpas on February 12 will conclude with the holy dip of Maghi Purnima. The Maha Kumbh Mela will conclude with Mahashivratri on February 26, 2025. Devotees can expect improved transportation and amenities, ensuring a smooth and spiritually enriching experience.

## Hundreds of sisters tied string of affection on Minister Nandi's wrist

Prayagraj: Industrial Development Minister of Uttar Pradesh Government and Prayagraj City South MLA Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi celebrated Rakshabandhan, the festival of mutual affection between brothers and sisters, in a very special way in Prayagraj. Rakshabandhan festival was organized by Minister Nandi at 8 Chatham Line, where more than 900 sisters from Prayagraj city, Southern Assembly and different areas gave their affectionate blessings by tying Rakhi on the hands of Cabinet Minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi. During this time, some sisters informed Minister Nandi about their problems. On which Minister Nandi assured as a brother that he will always stand with them in their problems. Minister Nandi promised to

protect the sisters. Minister Nandi met each sister personally. The premises were decorated to welcome and greet the sisters on Rakshabandhan, where Minister Nandi met each sister. The sisters applied

Uttar Pradesh government led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Where there is no place for goons and mafia. Today, sisters and daughters feel safe after leaving the house. Strict action is being taken against

Nandi reached the police line. The festival of Rakshabandhan was celebrated in a unique style in Prayagraj Police Lines. Minister Nandi was tied Rakhi by women police officers and constables at Police Lines Auditorium Prayagraj. To ensure that these women constables do not feel the absence of home and brothers on the festival of Rakshabandhan, Minister Nandi himself went to the Police Lines and got Rakhi tied. Women constables performed aarti of minister Nand Gopal on this occasion. He was given Tika and Akshat and after that they tied Rakhi and took blessings. In return, the Minister wished Rakshabandhan, wished for a bright future and gave a gift. During this, officers like DCP Protocol, ACM IV, SDM Handia Neelam Upadhyay etc. were present.

## Bond of love reaffirmed as Rakhi celebrated with gusto

Prayagraj: Raksha Bandhan, the festival that reaffirms the treasured bond of love and care between brothers and sisters, was celebrated on Monday across the city with great enthusiasm. Feasting, merry-making and exchange of gifts marked the day as women, dressed in their fineries, tied 'rakhis' on their brothers' wrists praying for their well being, while brothers, in turn, vowed to protect them.

Across the city, tens of thousands of young and older women tied rakhi on their brothers' wrists, receiving gifts in return. "My brother surprised me this time and came home for rakhi. I am super excited," Rashmi, a 25-year-old living in Meerapur, told Patrika. Her brother gifted her a new mobile phone.

In many instances, women used online web sites to send their love to their brothers. "There were lots of online portals with gift hampers. I am glad my rakhi has reached my brother in Patna on time," said Kavita, 30.

Even on Sunday, women and men thronged shops to do last minute purchases of sweets, gifts and rakhis. Markets were abuzz as shops selling colourful rakhis (sacred threads) of different shapes were thronged by hundreds. Sweet shops were doing brisk business as women bought sweets in large numbers.



Rakhi was tied to Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya by his sister Kamlesh Maurya on the occasion of Rakshabandhan at his personal residence Alkapuri in Prayagraj.

## No sibling? People still found happiness out of their houses

Prayagraj: On Raksha Bandhan all households with siblings were abuzz with activities throughout the day. But for many who do not have any siblings, Rakhi comes as a twinge in their life. However, after a round in the city, our reporter found there are many in this league who, on every Raksha Bandhan, find happiness out of their houses. His parents' lone child and a plus two student in the city, Vaibhav

Prakash, has spotted Surbhi and Shreya at his home every Raksha Bandhan since 2004, the year when the two sisters and their parents shifted to his neighbourhood in Kalindipuram locality here. Since his parents' brothers and sisters were scattered across the country and a few were abroad, he seldom heard from his cousins, let alone on Raksha Bandhan. "Since I had no com-

panion of my age in my locality, Surbhi and Shreya, who are two and four years younger to me, respectively, came as happiness and spark in my life. Except for school and study time, we used to be together all the time. Though as we grew up, our interaction got lessened due to pressure of study, they never failed to turn up every Raksha Bandhan," said Prakash and added even if he would go out for his higher studies, his two 'rakhi sisters'

would not forget to send him the pious strings.

City teenager Anamika's parents shifted to Allahabad from Gorakhpur when she was only two-and-a-half years old. Anamika confesses she realized she was lesser from her friends only when it came to having siblings. "I remember, during one summer vacation, I came home crying when my friend and her brother bullied me. I wept and asked my parents

to get me a brother or sister with whom I would gang up and roam around in the locality and teach the brother-sister duo a lesson," she said. Though not a stout brother, what they got her was a German shepherd's puppy which has turned stout and fierce now. Since the day I got him, I treat him as my brother and tie a thread on his right forelimb every Raksha Bandhan.

A young banker, Abhishek, who has been

staying in Allahabad for the past ten years, says he is very fond of his cousin Richa who used to tie rakhi on his wrist every year until she got married and settled in Los Angeles. "For the past three years, I buy rakhi on my own and ask a teenage girl in the neighbourhood to tie it on my wrist. When free from work, I make a video call to Richa and greet her." Besides, for the past three years, Abhishek has got

another 'rakhi sister' in Aditi, a teenager in his neighbourhood.

Though Anubha and Siril have no brother, none of their Raksha Bandhan has lacked lustre for at least a decade, as they have too many "mooch bola" brothers. They share, in 2003 they had bought 80 rakhis and at the end of the day, they ran short of them as too many of their 'brothers' turned up to get the pious string tied.

## Poonam Sant Mahila Evam Vikas Samiti held Rakhi event

Prayagraj: On the holy occasion of Rakhi, Poonam Sant Mahila Evam Vikas Samiti, President of the organization Poonam Sant Convenor Isabel Brandish, State President Madhya Pradesh Bhavna Kaithwas and Maya Devi performed Aarti by feeding sweets to all the officers and employees of Uttar Pradesh Police present at Bamrauli Airport Prayagraj. By tying the thread of love and affection



on his wrist, everyone prayed to God for his long life and continuous service to the country. All the police brothers present took a pledge to continuously protect their sisters and protect the country. Everyone celebrated this festival with love and also gave Shagun to the sisters as a gift and hoped that every year they will continue to celebrate this holy and holy festival in the same way.

## 3-day photography exhibition on Ram Temple drawing massive footfalls

Prayagraj: On the occasion of World Photography Day, a three-day photography exhibition based on Ayodhya Ram Temple was organized by senior photographer Jitendra Prakash at North Central Region Cultural Centre, Prayagraj under the aegis of Shri Parmeshwar Dayal Village Industries Development and Service Institute, Prayagraj. While speaking, during inauguration of the photography exhibition the chief guest of the program, Mr. Shiv Ram Gupta, senior social worker said that there has been a lot of change in the photography, when compared to earlier and now. In today's changing mood, photography will be

very easy. Seeing the consecration of Ram temple through photographs, the person became over-



whelmed with emotion. The special guest of the program, Shri Manoj Gautam Commandant, RAF, Phaphamau, Prayagraj said that earlier in the black and white era, the

life of the photograph was quite long. A live presentation of the inauguration of Ram Temple has been done

through photographs. Rajiv Mishra said over this occasion and said that I did not have the privilege of going there. But I felt very happy after seeing the photo exhibition. Now I don't feel like I couldn't participate. Chief guest Sir Shiv Ram Gupta and Commandant Manoj Kumar

Gautam honored senior photographer Vibhu Gupta, senior photographer Mr. Virendra Singh, Vishal Khare, Jaya Khare, Rajiv Kumar Mishra, ADJ Kanchan Gupta, Shikha Khanna by giving memento and shawl. Jitendra Prakash honored the guests by giving mementos. Virendra Singh conducted the program. CA Anil Gupta thanked the guests. Vikas Kumar Singh, Dilip Singh, Manoj Singh, Dr. Pankaj Gupta, Ashish Sharma, Mani Mohan Tripathi, Virendra Prakash, Rajat Sharma etc. were present on this occasion.

## Mudassar Jamal shines in All Zone Creative Writing Competition

Prayagraj: Prayagraj city of Uttar Pradesh has a tremendous storehouse of talent. The people here have raised the prestige of their city from time to time not only in the country but also abroad. The new generations have also continued the trend. Yesterday, on 17th August, Allahabad Zone Creative Writing Competition of ISC/ICSC Board students was held at Ramanujan School, Civil Lines, in which talented students from different schools took part. The competition was divided into three categories, sub-junior, junior and senior. In which Advit Rajaram of St. Joseph's College stood first in sub-junior category and Anushka Sen Gupta of IPM School stood first in the junior category. In the senior category, Mudassar Jamal of Bishop Johnson School has brought glory not only to the principal of the school but also to his district Prayagraj by securing first place in the tough competition. Parents, teachers and principals expressed happiness over the success of the students and congratulated him. And wished for a bright future for all the students.

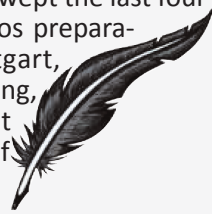




## Editorial

### The occasional uprisings

For nearly two decades, a champion other than Rafael Nadal at Roland-Garros has been as elusive as a shadow at high noon on solar equinox. Ever since he made his debut in 2005, the legendary Spaniard has won the event a record 14 times, losing just three of his 115 matches. The occasional uprisings against his ironclad rule, mainly from Novak Djokovic, were crushed with characteristic menace; Nadal leads the Serb 8-2 on Parisian clay. French Open 2023, however, is set to herald a shift, for Nadal will miss the event for the first time since 2004 because of the hip injury that has kept him out since January. There are signs that a change of guard is in the offing in men's tennis in general. With Roger Federer retired and Djokovic out of form, the once vice-like hold of the 'Big Three' is at its weakest. Djokovic is a two-time champion and will be motivated to break the tie with Nadal on 22 Majors. But Carlos Alcaraz, the reigning World No.1 and winner of the French Open tune-up events in Barcelona and Madrid, seems primed to occupy centre stage. The 20-year-old has already established his Slam-winning credentials (2022 US Open), and a follow-up act will only embellish his status as the game's chosen one. Challenging him will be the Scandinavian duo of No.4 Casper Ruud, who lost the 2022 summit clash to Nadal, and No.6 Holger Rune, finalist at both Monte Carlo and Rome recently. Daniil Medvedev has developed a newfound love for the red dirt following his success in Rome last week, but the Russian No.2 is at best a wild card, alongside Stefanos Tsitsipas, Andrey Rublev, Jannik Sinner, and Alexander Zverev. In contrast — and in a departure from the past — it is the women's field that wears a settled look, with Iga Swiatek, Aryna Sabalenka, and Elena Rybakina forming a dominant troika. They have swept the last four Majors and the Roland-Garros preparatory tournaments in Stuttgart, Madrid and Rome. If anything, Swiatek is just the first among equals, by virtue of being the World No.1.



### Studios claim ownership of rights

It was since foreign companies entered the Indian film market that filmmakers in the country, especially in the Hindi film industry, took huge strides. Films with budgets in lakhs suddenly started costing crores. With projects being underwritten by big-time backers, the films with stars started costing over Rs 100 crore. Actors wanted to be paid in crores and so did the director. Soon, the stars started asking for Rs 100 crore or more and the ones with just a single success wanted Rs 10-15 crore. Female artistes started demanding in crores, even though their films, at best, collected Rs 5 crore or less in lifetime business. Somewhere along the line, the filmmaking happened with no sense of the economics. The prices the stars demanded were artificial, much against their draw or potential to recoup. This continued for a long time because the companies which backed these films opened their purse strings generously. The producer had nothing to lose and stood only to gain. Nobody cared for what a star charged or a director did. Ridiculous budgets were presented and sanctioned by the new corporate entrants who were under the impression that they were producing films when, in fact, they were actually outsourcing the film production activities. They had neither the knowledge of filmmaking the way it happened in India, nor any control. Besides the budgets of the films, the manipulations extended to the media and on social media. A star is someone who assures an initial draw to his every new release. But when the star's prices became unviable, filmmakers resorted to giving out inflated collection figures. There was no way a film costing Rs 100 crore could recover the investment.

## Prioritising the road ahead for the Indian industry

Seventy-five years after independence, becoming the fifth largest economy in the world and poised to be the third largest economy by 2030, India has indeed surpassed many significant milestones. But the moot question here is what has fuelled India's growth, the services or the manufacturing sector, and what should be its future plan of action. The last nine years have proved to be a period of immense economic and commercial gains for India businesses, partly helped by the government's new policy initiatives and also the charged-up Indian businessmen ready

to take-up new challenges and claim their due place under the sun. Seventy-five years after independence, becoming the fifth largest economy in the world and poised to be the third largest economy by 2030, India has indeed surpassed many significant milestones. But the moot question here is what has fuelled India's growth, the services or the manufacturing sector, and what should be its future plan of action. The economic reforms ushered-in by the Narasimha Rao government in 1990s, and the subsequent unshackling of chains bound-

ing the private sector ill then, proved to be a boon for the Indian businessmen. But more or less these economic reforms ushered in the groundwork for future transformation of the Indian businesses, which were able to lead the growth curve with the services sector. Currently G-20 Sherpa and former head of the Niti Aayog, Amitabh Kant in his book, 'Made in India: 75 Years of Business and Enterprise', offers an insiders peep into the second-generation reforms which began in 2014 and delves deep into the policies and people behind the new age start-ups and their novel businesses versions that

are unleashing the entrepreneurial zeal among the Indian youth. Kant's ringside view as a top policy maker have added immensely to the book, besides highlighting his out of the box campaigns such as Make In India, Start-up India, God's Own Country, and policy changes like Performance-Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI), Aspirational Districts, e-Mobility, Green Hydrogen, and Ease of Doing Business reforms. However, the book has also given an opportunity to the top business leaders and policy makers to air their views about the future course to be taken.

## BJP voters are thrilled their party is back in power

Everyone benefits from the 2024 Lok Sabha election.



Though unhappy by its drop from 303 seats in 2019 to 240 this time, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is relieved to have won three consecutive terms for the first time in over 60 years. The Congress-led Opposition's 2024 numbers may be lower than the BJP's, but it seems to have found a weakness in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After three general elections in a succession of two-digit votes, the Congress under Rahul Gandhi had its third-worst Lok Sabha performance, but its supporters are celebrating keeping the BJP below 272. Same with their supporters: Hindu BJP voters are thrilled that their party is back in power, but Muslim voters believe they have returned their

'veto power' in Indian politics. The Congress-led Opposition may be celebrating, but the BJP should be relieved. After all, it realized the party is in trouble without losing power in Raisina Hill. The party has five years to clean up. A vote where everyone has something to be thrilled about makes it easier to misread the outcome, which is the BJP's problem. First, the BJP should view the Lok Sabha results with cautious optimism, as three consecutive terms are exceptional. The Modi government has defeated anti-incumbency and the post-pandemic tendency of Covid-19 being a graveyard for ruling dispensations globally. Most incumbents have failed to recover from the enormous coronavirus outbreak. Taking the wrong medication is more dangerous for the BJP than not taking any cor-

rective actions. Unfortunately, politicians' egoistic tendency to blame voters rather than party leadership for recent political defeats makes the latter more likely. One can understand how Uttar Pradesh voters, especially Ayodhya, were villainized after the poll. Dubious political commentators have already given their verdict, exposing Hindutva's declining returns in Indian politics! Such feel-good, part-dubious analysis should not be accepted by the BJP. The party may also view the results as localized and one-time. Localized because while losing approximately 50% of seats in Uttar Pradesh, the party swept Madhya Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh, unlike Madhya Pradesh, has a viable opposition with a strong M-Y vote-bank for anyone who can defeat the BJP. The

Opposition troubled the BJP wherever it had a party infrastructure, albeit a basic one, and vote-banks, whether in Uttar Pradesh or Maharashtra. Naturally, the Opposition distributed tickets smartly, notably in Uttar Pradesh, where Akhilesh Yadav generously offered SP tickets to Dalits and OBCs and less than 10 seats to M-Y candidates! In contrast, the BJP had ticket distribution troubles. Misfits, incompetent, and corrupt candidates were common, as were imports from other parties. This sparked party discontent and heartburn. The Ayodhya BJP candidate was unpopular before the election, and he was on sticky ground. Of course, his loose statements on reserves and the Constitution made matters worse for himself and the party. Ideological fluidity in the BJP compounded its

problems. A party that earns 18-20% of votes for being a Hindutva vehicle is bound to boomerang when its national president publicly distances itself from "bhagwa" during the election campaign. In an interview with a Delhi daily, JP Nadda said the "BJP and bhagwa (saffron) are not synonymous" and that the BJP might win the 2024 elections without the RSS! He overlooked that when a Hindu doesn't see himself as a Hindu, he's tempted to adopt caste identities. The BJP must realize that any ideological compromise has led to political hara-kiri. In 1984, the BJP, fresh from the Jana Sangh, burned its fingers by openly supporting Gandhian socialism and won only two Lok Sabha seats. When the Jinnah-fied BJP downplayed its Hindutva identity in 2004 and 2009, the party suffered similarly.

## On the Alwar lynching case verdict

The thin line between culpable homicide and murder under Indian penal law is a subject of endless analysis, but it is not easy to accept this nuanced distinction in a case of mob lynching. A Sessions Court in Alwar district of Rajasthan has sentenced four men to a prison term of seven years for the lynching of a Muslim dairy farmer in July 2018. However, it acquitted Naval Kishore, a Vishwa Hindu Parishad functionary, for want of sufficient evidence. If one recalls the acquittal of all those tried for the 2017 murder of Pehlu Khan,

who was also a victim of cow vigilantism, there is a semblance of justice for Rakbar Khan, 31, who was attacked by a mob while transporting two cows along with a friend near Lalawandi village in Alwar. The police had found Rakbar Khan with serious injuries, to which he succumbed later, presumably due to the delay in taking him for medical treatment. If one takes into account the number of attacks, some of them fatal, involving so-called cow protection gangs in various States in recent years, the record of the criminal justice system in

successfully prosecuting those involved in such incidents is quite dismal. In this backdrop, the fact that the police in Alwar managed to obtain a conviction is noteworthy. However, that the assailants were found guilty only of culpable homicide not amounting to murder and wrongful restraint does raise some concern. A conviction for murder would have entailed at least life imprisonment.

Rakbar Khan's family is justly aggrieved both over the acquittal of one suspect, who they believe was the main

accused, and the seven-year prison term. The police relied on some telephone conversations between the acquitted VHP leader and the assailants to rope him in as a key suspect.

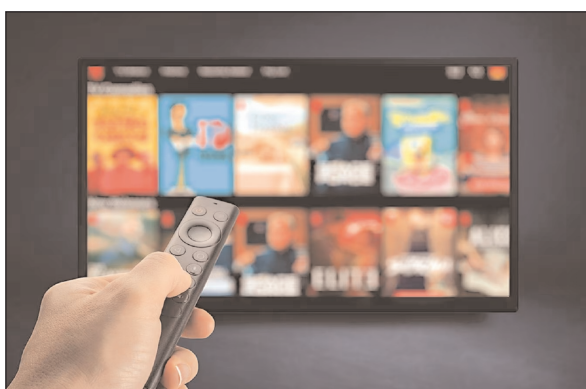
However, the court did not consider this adequate proof. While deciding that the fatal attack did not amount to murder, the trial court has concluded that the assailants neither intended to cause death nor knew that their assault may cause death. The prosecution is likely to take up both the "inadequate" sentence awarded

to the four and the acquittal of one on appeal. Organised cow vigilantism poses a major threat to the safety and security of minorities, as well as to the maintenance of the rule of law.

Despite the Supreme Court deprecating the bigotry and hate propaganda that underlie such activities, incidents of sectarian violence and vigilantism seem to go on. Both preventive and punitive measures are needed to arrest the trend, and one cannot emphasise enough the need for efficient investigation and prosecution.

## The OTT wars

Similarly, Shemaroo was in the video renting business initially, and later, acquired the video rights distribution business and always made sure it collected the best of the repertoire from top production houses. Zee and Shemaroo, when they entered the OTT business, possessed ample content. There were



some big business and media houses that entered the field because it was the thing to do in the name of expansion or, in some cases, not to be left out of the changing world. There are so many OTT platforms today, that one has lost count. But, talking of the Jio Cinema, it has adopted the same disruptive practice it did while launching the JioPhone: free talk time! To start with, Jio Cinema aired the Indian Premier League (IPL 2023) cricket matches free sans subscription charges while Star Sports held the telecast rights. This could very

well have affected the revenues of Star Sports, but what after IPL? An OTT platform is not something a viewer gets addicted to. It is the content that attracts a viewer, even if it is the paid kind. So what is the company promoting, Jio Cinema, or the JioPhone. Looks like, primarily, it is the phone. The Jio mobiles are priced at between Rs 1,500 and Rs 3,000, and, now, a smart phone comes for around Rs 4,000. But, then, there are dozens of phones that are available in the similar price range.

## A year of crucial importance

India's Presidency of G20, the challenge posed by the rise of minority politics at home and the concerted campaign of opposition parties including the regional entities against the ruling dispensation, all cumulatively add to the need for effective and firm governance in the country in the pre-election year. India presently is in the midst of efforts by the Narendra Modi government to reach a new high in building international relations, maintain domestic peace in the face of a planned attempt of hostile forces within and abroad to push the country towards a serious communal divide and establish once again - in the run-up to the next General Election - the image and strength of India as the world's largest democracy. India's Presidency of G20, the challenge posed by the rise of minority politics at home and the concerted campaign of opposition parties including the regional entities against the ruling dispensation, all cumulatively add to the need for effective and firm governance in the country in the pre-election year. Prime Minister Modi's foreign policy initiatives have enhanced India's image abroad and have also delivered on trade and economic relations, but the regime seems to be facing an increasing challenge in the area of internal security and stability because of divisive and disruptive politics at home and the organised attempts of anti-India forces within and outside of the country to build a narrative that India was moving towards an authoritarian, majoritarian and non-secular rule.

Since the Modi government's development agenda is in full swing and its schemes for the less privileged have also

made an impact, the opposition was taking to finding fault with the democratic content of the present dispensation at the Centre and alleging misuse of coercive instruments of the state by the regime to selectively run down the leaders of other parties.

India however, is used to the 'wisdom of the crowd' asserting itself in all critical situations and there is little doubt that in a national poll, people would make a sound judgement on the integrity of the Modi government, its political will in safeguarding national security and the sincerity of its efforts to develop the country economically. India has made its G20 Presidency an event with a difference - its motto 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or 'World is one family' setting the note for a global mission that India wished to pursue on this forum. On the initiative of Prime Minister Modi various international conferences in the run-up to the G20 Summit in September are being held at different locations across India to give the visitors a feel of the vastness, cultural richness and development, of this country and to spread the awareness among the people here, of the big strides India was taking to make its presence felt internationally.

The rise of India as a major power in the world with considerable influence on issues of global peace and development, the continuity of the policy of bilateral relations extended to a multilateral format that guaranteed mutually beneficial outcomes for both security and economic advancement and the designing of G20 events in a manner that would promote domestic growth.



## Tourists 'come in jeeps, drink alcohol, litter', so Goa's Calangute panchayat resolves to tax them



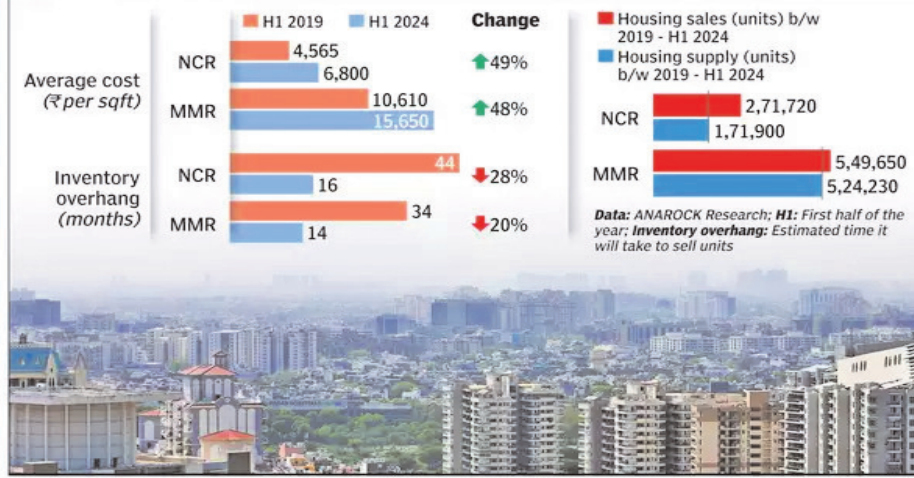
Goa Days after proposing that tourists would require hotel reservation before entering the jurisdiction of their village, the Calangute panchayat in North Goa has passed a resolution to impose a "tax" on these visitors. In a resolution that was adopted at a meeting on June 7, the panchayat of Calangute, a tourist hotspot, cited similar taxes being imposed in Maharashtra's Mahabaleshwar and resolved to write to the district collector, the police chief and the government to set-up check posts — with assistance from police personnel and panchayat staff — for verification of all tourists' vehicles at five entry roads to the village to "avoid and stop public nuisance". According to the panchayat, the decision has been taken after several complaints about tourists creat-

ing ruckus and "indulging in illegal activities which bring disrepute to the village". "Tourists come in groups in jeeps and buses, stroll around the beach area and drink alcohol and cook in their vehicles, before littering in the open in the village. They do not make any hotel reservations. Now, we have proposed to set up checkpoints for verification and to charge a road passer tax or an entry fee to deter such behaviour," Joseph Sequeira, sarpanch of Calangute village who

proposed the resolution, said. The modalities of the tax will be discussed later if it is approved, he said, adding: "If it can be done in Mahabaleshwar, it can also be done here". According to the panchayat, the resolution was adopted at a June 7 meeting held to discuss issues related to "public nuisance, garbage throwing, parking, cooking and eating in the open area on the roadside leading to different hotels and restaurants by tourists visiting the Calangute beach.

## NCR housing rates up 49% in 5 years, unsold inventory down 50%

### 2.7 LAKH UNITS SOLD IN NCR IN 5 YEARS



Delhi: Anarock, real estate consultants, report a 49% increase in average home prices in the NCR over the past five years. This sharp increase is due to rising building costs and robust sales, according to the research. "The five-yearly jump in average residential prices between H1 2019 and H1 2024 from Rs 4,565 per sq ft to Rs 6,800 per sq ft is a clear indicator of the market's strength," stated Anuj Puri, Anarock Group CEO. The survey also indicated that NCR residential property demand remained high despite the pandemic.

After attracting consumers with offers and incentives, developers raised average prices as demand grew. Sales have increased, reducing unsold inventories by 52% from 182,000 units in H1 2019 to 86,900 units in H1 2024. The inventory overhang dropped from 44 months in H1 2019 to 16 months in H1 2024. "Developers have launched around 172,000 units in NCR between H1 2019 and H1 2024, and 272,000 units were sold during this period," the study said. "The market's growth is supported by lower unsold inventory

and higher absorption. This rise shows the region's real estate potential and post-pandemic economic rebound and GDP growth." "Despite the higher costs, sales continue to surge, driven by a combination of improved infrastructure, robust economic growth, and a desire for modern living spaces". The survey noted that the NCR housing market revived before the pandemic after price stagnation from late 2016 to 2019. Covid-19 increased sales of larger homes. In prime real estate, the study shows strong demand.

## CAPSULES

### Ghaziabad Residents Drink Nearly Rs 400 Crore in Beer During Heatwave

Delhi: The excise agency reports that Ghaziabad residents have consumed approximately Rs 400 crore in beer due to the past three months' scorching. Officials credit high heat and consistent prices for this record sales result. People in Ghaziabad and the National Capital Region sought ways to cool themselves due to extreme heat. In addition to lemonade, lassi, and buttermilk, many Ghaziabad inhabitants chose alcoholic beverages, especially beer, which generated large excise money. Ghaziabad beer drinkers spent Rs 397.16 crore during April to June 2024, up 106% from the previous year. Even more, beer can sales rose 116%. Over 13.3 million cans were sold this year, up from 11.5 million last year. Beer helps many cope with soaring temperatures. Due to this tendency, the excise department saw significant income growth throughout these three months. District excise inspector Rakesh Kumar said the severe heat and stable beer pricing drove record sales. said, "The data clearly shows that the intense heat and no price hike were the primary reasons for the exceptional revenue of Rs 397 crore."

## Sonia-Nehru effect: PM museum won't accept private papers with secrecy terms

NEW DELHI: West Bengal governor CVWith Congress leader Sonia Gandhi reclaiming boxes of papers from Jawaharlal Nehru's private collection in 2008 (donated by the Gandhi family), and also barring access to several sets of these papers, the Prime Ministers Museum & Library (PMML) has now decided that it will not permit future donors of private papers of eminent personalities to impose indefinite conditions on the declassification of such material. Going forward, the PMML will permit a five-year embargo before accepting any new set of papers from



donors from the date of receipt, which at the most can go up to 10 years in some cases, The Indian Express has learnt. The PMML has also decided to go ahead and open up, on

its own, sets of private collections lying in its custody for several decades, pertaining to first Lok Sabha Speaker G D Mavalankar, Nehru's niece Nayantara Sahgal, and as many as 2.80

lakh pages pertaining to Nehru that were not claimed by

Sonia Gandhi in 2008, a source said. The Nehru papers are being digitised presently and the entire set will be available to researchers online in two months, in a searchable format, the source said. In the past, donors (like the Gandhi family did with Nehru's private papers) could impose an indefinite embargo on disclosing private papers, which meant that the PMML, despite having custodianship, could not make these public to researchers without the donor's permission.

## Kerala JD(S) gives in to LDF pressure, set to form new outfit

Kerala The Janata Dal (Secular)'s Kerala unit, which is an ally of the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the state, has decided to float a new outfit, saying that it cannot be part of a party that allies with the BJP. The JD(S)'s Kerala unit president and MLA Mathew T Thomas told the media Wednesday: "The party in Kerala does not want to be known as a fraction of a party that is an ally of BJP. After considering legal aspects, we will take a decision in such a

manner to allow all elected members of the party, including those in local bodies, to continue in their posts. A new party will be registered and the state unit of the JD (S) will get merged into that new party," he said. The JD(S) has two MLAs in Kerala — Thomas and K Krishnakutty. The latter is the power minister in the CPM-led LDF government. The JD(S) joined the BJP-led NDA in September 2023. Since then, the CPM has been putting pressure on the state JD(S) unit to either cut ties

with the JD(S) leadership or exit the LDF in the state. The JD(S)'s Kerala unit had then even announced that it had decided to snap ties with the parent party and that it would explore the option of forming a new party to remain with the LDF. But there was no movement on that front so far. The issue has now assumed urgency after the JD(S) joined the Narendra Modi-led NDA government 3.0 earlier this month, with senior JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy inducted.

## Electronic papers acceptable as court evidence

Delhi: Text, voice, and video messages contain what? Post July 1, "digital documents" are admissible as primary evidence, not simply emojis, PPTs, PDFs, group conversations, forwards, or tete-a-tete. The last one is a rewrite of the 1872 Indian Evidence Act and an acknowledgment of digital information's importance today. The 2023 Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam defines and interprets evidence. It states that "an electronic or digital record" can be "admissible" in a case under certain conditions, taking into account technical improvements and the widespread use of digital communication. Senior counsel Amit Manchanda said protections must be addressed first to prevent misuse given the uncharted field of artificial intelligence and new software to



manipulate words, photos, and digital content on a recipient's device. Advocate Mohit Bhardwaj called Section 57 BSA's "singularly significant" inclusion because it makes digital data, including messages, primary evidence "without much ado," until disputed. For disputed digital records, the new rule mandates a certificate proving authenticity from a specific computer or device. Thus, under Section 61 of BNS, the court cannot deny the acceptance of an electronic or digital docu-

ment given specified conditions under Section 63. Any print or copy of an electronic record is admissible "without further proof" or production of the original content if the device (say, a phone) was "used regularly" by the person with "lawful control" of its usage. Texts could be evidence under the old Indian Evidence Act with a Section 65B certificate. On July 2, Delhi High Court stated that "WhatsApp conversations cannot be read as evidence without a proper certificate as mandated.

## Toll rises to 38 in Tamil Nadu hooch tragedy, CM forms panel for inquiry

Kallakurichi Kallakurichi hooch tragedy, Tamil Nadu hooch tragedy, in Kallakurichi hooch deaths, Tamil Nadu hooch, Tamil Nadu news, Indian Express Tamil Nadu minister Udhayanidhi Stalin pays his last respects. ANI The death toll in the hooch tragedy in Tamil Nadu's Kallakurichi district rose on Thursday to 38, with 24 others in critical care. Over 100 people are still in hospitals across several districts. Most of the victims consumed the spurious liquor at Karunapuram in Kallakurichi on Tuesday night. By Wednesday, they were admitted at the Kallakurichi Government Medical College and Hospital, and hospitals in Salem, Villupuram, and the

Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research in Puducherry. Several of the victims succumbed on Wednesday night. The tragedy prompted the DMK-led state government to order the immediate suspension of Kallakurichi Superintendent of Police and the transfer of the District Collector. Three people have been arrested in connection with the tragedy. Officials said that according to a preliminary probe, the presence of methanol was found in the samples of arrack seized during the probe. Chief Minister M K Stalin constituted a commission headed by former High Court judge Justice B Gokuldas to conduct a thorough inquiry. He also announced that 10 lakh ex gratia would

given to the families of each of the deceased, and 50,000 to those undergoing treatment.

The 38 people who died included four women and one trans person, sources said. A total of 143 people were admitted to hospitals, and 105 of them are still undergoing treatment. Actor-politician Vijay condemned the recurrence of such incidents. "The recurrence of a hooch tragedy, even as we have not yet recovered from the loss of several lives last year, exposes the government's indifference," he said. Opposition AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, who visited the families of the victims, on Thursday demanded the resignation of Chief Minister M K Stalin. "Our Kallakurichi.

## Ignoring China's ire, PM Modi meets US team that called on Dalai Lama

NEW DELHI: PM Narendra Modi met a bipartisan group of US lawmakers that visited Dharamshala this week and called on the Dalai Lama. The lawmakers, led by House Foreign Affairs Committee chairman Michael McCaul and former House speaker Nancy Pelosi, were also hosted by foreign minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday night after their return from Dharamshala. Jaishankar acknowledged the "strong and continued" support from the lawmakers for the India-US strategic partnership. The delegation's visit to Dharamshala drew China's ire, with Beijing urging the Americans to fully recognise the "anti-China separatist nature of the Dalai group", honour commitments the US has

made to China on issues related to Tibet, and stop sending a wrong signal to the world. Their meetings with Indian leaders will likely raise China's hackles too. The delegation members congratulated Modi on his election for a historic third consecutive term. "They expressed deep appreciation for the scale, fairness and transparency of the recently concluded world's largest democratic electoral exercise in India," gov said in a statement. The delegation described India-US relations as the most consequential one and expressed their strong support for further deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Global Partnership in all areas, including trade, new.



## Industrial output grows 5.8% in FY24, slows a tad

**New Delhi:** The country's industrial output growth slowed marginally in March but manufacturing and electricity sectors remained robust, offsetting the slowdown in mining, while growth for the full fiscal year remained stable, data showed on Friday.

Numbers released by the National Statistical Office on Friday showed the index of industrial production (IIP) rose an annual 4.9% in March, slightly lower than the downwardly revised 5.6% in Feb but above the 1.9% posted in March last year.

For the 2023-24 fiscal year, industrial output growth rose to 5.8% from 5.2% in the previous year. Industrial output grows 5.8% in FY24, slows a tad in March. The manufacturing sector rose 5.2% in March, higher than the 1.5% posted in March last year, while the electricity sector grew 8.6% compared with a 1.6% contraction in the same month a year earlier.



The mining sector grew 1.2% in March, slower than the 6.8% recorded in March last year. The manufacturing sector expansion was consistent with other data such as the PMI for manufacturing, which had predicted stable expansion for the sector on the back of robust domestic demand. The consumer durables sector grew 9.5% in March compared with a contraction of 8% in the year earlier period, while consumer non-durables grew 4.9% during the month compared with a contraction of 1.9% in the year earlier period. The capital goods sector, which is seen as a gauge for investment

activity, rose 6.1% in March, slower than the 10% recorded in March last year, while the infrastructure/construction goods sector rose 6.9% during the month, slightly slower than the 7.2% in March last year. "On the consumption front, output of consumer durables grew by 9.5% whereas non-durables output growth turned positive, rising by 4.9% following two consecutive months of contraction. However, the sustenance of this trend remains to be monitored in the upcoming months," said Rajani Sinha, chief economist at ratings agency CareEdge.

## ED attaches 53cr assets of Navi Mum developer

**Mumbai:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached immovable properties worth Rs 53 crore located in Navi Mumbai in the case of Monarch Universal Group. The ED initiated an investigation based on multiple FIRs registered by the police under various sections against Monarch Universal Group, Gopal Amarlal Thakur, Hasmukh Amarlal Thakur, and others for allegedly cheating flat buyers by



collecting money from them for flats and not registering the same in their names. ED investigation showed that Gopal Amarlal Thakur diverted and siphoned off a huge amount of investors' money to various sister entities

and, through a complex web of money trails, parked substantial proceeds of crime with various builders in Navi Mumbai. Gopal Thakur of the group was arrested in July 2021. He is currently in judicial custody.

## Maoist IED blast kills woman in Bijapur district

**RAIPUR:** A 25-year-old woman was killed when a Maoist pressure IED exploded in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh's Bastar division on Saturday, just 20km from where 10 Maoists were killed in a gunfight a day before. The victim, Shanti Punem, was col-

lecting tendu leaves near Mallur village when she stepped on a camouflaged IED, police said. The explosion was heard in the village. Locals found Shanti's body and alerted police. The site is not far from the site of Friday's 11-hour gunfight. Locals

found Shanti's body and alerted police. The site is not far from the site of Friday's 11-hour gunfight. The victim, Shanti Punem, was collecting tendu leaves near Mallur village when she stepped on a camouflaged IED, police said. The explosion was heard

## No bail to DHFL promoters seeking relief for spending half of term in jail

**MUMBAI:** Refusing to grant bail to DHFL promoters Dheeraj and Rakesh Wadhawan, who sought the relief on the grounds that they had already spent more than half the maximum sentence of seven years in jail, a special PMLA court said the one year that the duo consumed in stalling their bail pleas had to be deducted from the computation of the time they had spent as undertrials. The brothers were arrested in 2020 in a money laundering



case in which Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor and others are also accused. In Dec last year, Kapoor was granted bail in the case after the judge pointed out

that he had spent more than the minimum punishment period of three years, without the framing of charges and a trial. In an 83-page order, the judge had cited a

table chronicling 207 dates in the case, emphasising that Kapoor was not responsible for the delays. Section 436A of the Criminal Procedure Code allows the release of undertrial prisoners upon completion of half of the maximum jail sentence. In the case of the Wadhawans, the judge, though, said the section does not provide an absolute right of bail and it may be denied where the trial is delayed because of the accused.

## Congress's Surat pick 'back', says party betrayed him first in 2017

**SURAT:** Suspended Congress leader Nilesh Kumbhani, whose nomination form was rejected over discrepancies leading to BJP winning the Surat Lok Sabha seat in Gujarat unopposed, resurfaced on Saturday after 20 days and alleged it was the grand old party that had betrayed him first in 2017. Kumbhani said he was silent all these days because of his respect for state party president Shaktisinh Gohil and the party's Rajkot Lok Sabha candidate Paresh Dhanani. "Congress



leaders are accusing me of betrayal. However, it was the Congress which betrayed me first in the 2017 assembly elections when my ticket for Kamrej Assembly seat in Surat was cancelled at the last moment. It was the Congress which made the first mistake, not me," Kumbhani told

reporters here. "I did not want to do this but my supporters, office staff and workers were upset because the party is being run by five self-proclaimed leaders in Surat and they neither work nor allow others to work. Though AAP and Congress are part of

INDIA alliance, these leaders raised objections when I used to campaign with AAP leaders here," he claimed. Asked if the turn of events in the ongoing Lok Sabha poll was his revenge on the Congress, Kumbhani refused to give a direct reply and reiterated his charge about cancellation of ticket in the 2017 state polls. Kumbhani, who had earlier served as a Congress corporator in the Surat Municipal Corporation, fought the 2022 assembly polls from Kamrej but lost to the BJP.

## TISS student moves HC against suspension for attending protest

**MUMBAI:** Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) research scholar, Ramadas KS, has moved the Bombay High Court against the institute's suspension order. He was suspended for two years from the institute and debarred from entering all the four campuses, in an order passed last month. In his petition, Ramadas has appealed to the court to set aside the inquiry report of the institute's empowered committee and the revocation of the suspension order and restore his entitlements as a student. He said that he was 'unlawfully, arbitrarily and unfairly suspended by the institute' Ramadas has also asked for the withdrawal of the public notice issued by the insti-



tute on April 20, two days after the suspension order was passed. The public notice, stated the petition, was 'malicious' and 'defamatory' in nature and 'puts his life and academic pursuits under grave threat'. He also pointed out that his legitimate participation in student life and exercise of his constitutional rights has been deemed as 'anti-national' by the institute. The petition also seeks directions to the union ministry

of social justice and empowerment to ensure the continuation and monthly disbursement of the national fellowship he was entitled to. In his petition, Ramadas mentioned that he did not receive the fellowship amount for April 2024, in pursuance of the suspension order. Ramadas has also set an interim stay on the suspension order and the continuation of the fellowship pending the hearing.

## With the help of silicone models and photoshop, ma comes to life again

**Glittering** lehengas, elaborate rituals, and sumptuous food. The wedding of Gujarat-based real estate developer Piyush Patel's twin daughters in February last year had it all. Yet, one absence loomed large: that of their mother Daxaben, who passed away months before the event due to a brain stroke. The void was hard to fill, but Patel was determined to plug it a little. He decided to commission an artist and give his daughters a surprise they'd remember the rest of their lives: a life-size hyper-realistic silicone model of their mother, adorned in a bright turquoise saree, real gold jewellery, and a warm smile. Seeing it, not just the daughters, but many



other guests present cried, he recalls. "It was like she was really there, blessing our daughters," he adds. From photographs to pooja rituals, Daxaben's model marked her presence at the wedding ceremony. It sits in their home even today, with fresh clothes and makeup, for occasions like birthdays, festivals, and more.

**MODEL MOM** Vadodara-based artist Vibha Patel, who made the statu-

ue, says she gets many requests to make silicone models for people who've lost near and dear ones, but they often back out after getting to know the cost. Such models typically cost around Rs 3-5 lakhs to make. While not everyone can afford a silicone model, people are finding different ways of keeping the memory of their late mothers alive. From rings made from strands of their hair that were preserved

## Punjab accepts IAS BJP pick's resignation, rejects VRS

**BATHINDA:** Punjab govt has reportedly accepted the resignation of IAS officer Parampal Kaur Sidhu — BJP candidate for Bathinda Lok Sabha seat — rejecting her plea for VRS and associated benefits, reports Neel Kamal. She will not get retirement benefits like pension, which according to her, would have been around Rs 1 lakh a month. Parampal alleged AAP govt was "harassing her" as it fears her candidacy. She said Punjab govt did not treat other officers opting for VRS in the same manner. "But contesting as a BJP candidate from Bathinda is a reward for me which is more than the pensionary benefits," Parampal Kaur told TOI. Earlier, the state govt had asked her to resume duty immediately or face action. Parampal was to retire on Oct 31, 2024, but sought VRS in April.

## CAPSULES

### Mumbai ex-cop Sharma gets SC bail in 2006 fake encounter case

**New Delhi:** Supreme Court on Friday granted bail to former Mumbai police officer Pradeep Sharma who was convicted and awarded life imprisonment in a 2006 fake encounter case. A bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy & Prashant Kumar Mishra passed the order after the counsel for Maharashtra govt said it had no objection to grant of bail to him. While convicting him Bombay HC directed Sharma to surrender to undergo sentence but the apex court had on April 8 permitted him not to do so till the next hearing and issued notice to the state on his appeal against HC order.

**The top court admitted Sharma's appeal against the March 19 Bombay HC verdict** Sharma challenged HC order in the 2006 fake encounter of Ramnarayan Gupta, an alleged close aide of gangster Chhota Rajan. HC had upheld the conviction and life sentence imposed on 13 other accused, 12 former policemen and a civilian, in the case. It quashed the 2013 judgement passed by a sessions court acquitting Sharma due to lack of evidence and termed it 'perverse and unsustainable'. On Nov 11, 2006, a police team had picked up Ramnarayan Gupta alias Lakkhan Bhaiya from Vashi, along with his friend Anil Bheda, and killed him in a staged encounter near Versova the same evening.



## Govt. limits tur, chana stock until Sept to curb hoarding

### The import of the current harvest of tur from East African countries starting in August 2024

**Delhi:** The Union Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs said wholesalers, retailers, huge chain shops, millers, and importers will be subject to stock limits. The Removal of Licensing Requirements, Stock Limits, and Movement Restrictions on Specified Foodstuffs Order went into effect. Stock limits for each pulse are 200

tonnes for wholesalers, 5 tonnes for retailers, 5 tonnes at each retail outlet, and 200 tonnes at the depot for big chain retailers; last 3 months of production or 25% of annual installed capacity, whichever is higher, for millers. The measures discourage stockpiling and boost market availability. Importers cannot keep imported merchandise after 45 days after customs clearance. Tur, urad, and chana prices have been constant yet high all year. India imports 15% of its pulses annually to meet demand. Legal companies are required to report stock positions on the

Department of Consumer Affairs portal. "In case the stocks held by them are higher than the prescribed limits then, they shall bring the same to the prescribed stock limits by 12th July 2024," the note added. As Kharif pulses like tur and urad are likely to rise, the government expects tur and chana dal prices to fall. The statement anticipates the import of the current harvest of tur from East African countries starting in August 2024. A new crop of chana in Australia and its import from October 2024 will help keep chana affordable for consumers.

## Google cancels Play Store online gaming trial due to lack of rules

**Delhi:** Google paused its pilot program to list fantasy sports and rummy games on the Google Play Store, but gave India a "grace period". This means Google will not increase Play Store open access for more real-money games as planned in January. Existing Play Store apps will stay there. Google suspended the pilot, which began in July 2018 and was extended in January in India, Brazil, and Mexico, due to a lack of a "central licensing framework" that governs game legality. "Expanding our support of real-money gaming apps in markets without a central licensing

framework has proven more difficult than expected, and we need additional time to get it right for our developer partners and the safety of our users," a spokesman for Google said. The move hurts India's online gaming industry, which is divided over whether games are 'games of skill' or 'games of chance'. Supreme Court cases challenging Tamil Nadu and Karnataka's internet gaming prohibition remain pending. Google said it is developing a framework for permitted applications in this field. "In the meantime, in India, we are extending the grace period of

the pilot program so existing apps offering fantasy sports and rummy games in India can remain on Play Store," the spokesman said. A senior Google executive said on condition of anonymity that the company intends to create a framework, but conversations are ongoing and there is no "specific timeline" for when these apps can be used again.

India's major online gaming companies by revenue — Sporta Technologies (Dream11), Gameskraft, and Games24x7—listed their fantasy and rummy apps on Play Store after Google's program.

## RBI changes priority sector lending rules

**Delhi:** RBI has amended its priority sector guidelines to encourage banks to provide modest loans in economically challenged districts with low loan amounts. New rules discourage lending in districts with large average loans. Fresh priority sector loans in districts with low credit availabil-

ity (less than Rs 9,000 per person) would receive 125% additional weight starting in FY25. In districts with substantial credit availability (above Rs 42,000 per person), loans weigh 90%. Except for outlier districts with poor credit availability and excessive loan sizes, all other dis-

tricts will remain 100% important. "RBI has decided to rank districts based on per capita credit flow to the priority sector, and to establish an incentive framework for districts with lower credit flow and a disincentive framework for districts with higher priority.

## CAPSULES

### 375 million subscribers' details are reportedly for sale, however Bharti Airtel disputes any data breach

**Delhi:** In the midst of accusations of a significant consumer data leak, telecom giant Bharti Airtel has denied any security system compromise. A claim has surfaced suggesting that there has been a compromise of Airtel customer data. This is nothing more than vested interests' desperate attempt to damage Airtel's brand. An Airtel representative clarified the rumors of a data breach that have been circulating since yesterday, telling Moneycontrol, "We have done a thorough investigation and can confirm that there has been no breach whatsoever from Airtel systems." Unverified claims claimed that the Aadhaar number, phone number, email address, and address of 375 million Airtel subscribers were out for grabs on the dark web. Moneycontrol was unable to confirm the veracity of the report on the data leak. A database was purportedly offered for sale on a dark web forum by a threat actor going by the handle "xenZen," who apparently demanded \$50,000 for the material.

### Ola leaves Google Maps and relocates to its own Maps Ola

**Delhi Divya:** The ride-hailing company Ola has replaced its Google Maps integration in its app with its own internal map system, Ola Maps, according to a statement made by CEO and founder Bhavish Aggarwal. Aggarwal claimed in a post on X that the action had allowed the business to save Rs 100 crore a year.

## Parliament group advises the government to suspend EU carbon tax for MSMEs for 3 years

### It also encouraged India to work with the EU on deforestation laws

**Delhi:** A parliamentary panel advises India to request a three-year delay on the EU's carbon tax on engineering MSMEs since domestic manufacturers may not be able to afford it. The report advised prioritizing the development of a comprehensive framework to support and equip MSMEs to combat CBAM (carbon border adjustment mechanism). The EU will impose



CBAM on seven carbon-intensive sectors, including steel, cement, and fertilizer, from January 1, 2026. Engineering goods are subject to this import duty. The department-related parliamentary standing committee on commerce's

report, Comprehensive Strategy to Map Major Products and Countries to Maximize Exports and Minimize Imports, advised the government to work at the highest level with the U.S. and EU to protect the domestic industry from additional tariffs and CBAM. "The Committee exhorts the government to seek the deferment on application of CBAM on MSME sector by at least three years," noted.

It also encouraged India to work with the EU on deforestation laws because domestic coffee companies worry it will hurt exports. About 55% of Indian coffee exports go to the EU.

## Google to face South Korean regulator over YouTube bundling allegations

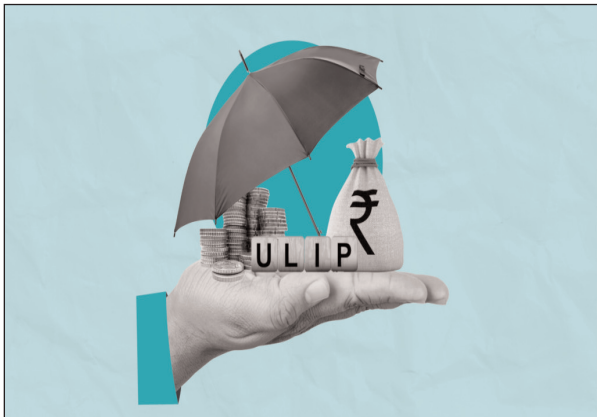
**Delhi:** To grow and provide drone manufacturing services to the agriculture, mapping, and allied industries, Optimus Unmanned Systems, a subsidiary of Optimus Infra, a contract maker of electronics, would invest Rs 140 crore. According to chairman Ashok Gupta, the company is localizing parts and components in order to reach 75% indigenization by the end



of the fiscal year. If interest rates were high right now, would you invest your money in a long-term fixed deposit? "We are set to leverage our expertise in drone technology to offer a cost-effective and efficient solution for agricultural and defence needs," Gupta stated.

## Avoid promoting 'Ulips' as investments: Irdai

**Delhi:** The insurance regulator prohibits promoting Ulips and index-linked plans as investment products. The Irdai mandated tight standards for fund performance ads in a circular. They should show compounded yearly returns for the past five years with a caveat that past success does not guarantee future results. If applicable, benchmark index performance must be stated with fund performance. The circular advised advertisers not to overestimate benefits, selectively offer benefits without constraints, or make derogatory comparisons to competitors or the industry. The laws compel insurers to form an advertisement committee and appoint compliance officers to ensure compli-



ance. These businesses strictly oversee advertisement material and enforce restrictions. The regulator also requires companies to let policyholders pay premiums online or hire a new agent or direct sales staff if the policyholder's agent leaves. A new policy from the allocated insurance agency or direct sales staff for the same policyholder if the assigned policy is not resurrected or abandoned.

### Oyo plans to raise \$125 million at a \$2.5 billion valuation

**Delhi:** Oyo, a key player in the hospitality industry, is reportedly receiving \$100-125 million in new capital, with a \$2.5 billion market valuation. The international chain of low-cost hotels is finalizing a "fresh fundraising of about \$100 million to \$125 million that slashes its valuation.

## Land and luxury commercial buildings may be sold by LIC

**Delhi:** LIC plans to sell some of its premium commercial buildings and land nationwide to raise \$6-7 billion (50,043-58,384 crore). LIC, India's third-largest landlord, has instructed an internal team to develop a selling plan for its real estate assets nationwide, according to two sources. The process may begin in Mumbai. The article listed LIC's premium assets as the Jeevan Bharti building in Delhi's Connaught Place, the LIC building in Kolkata's Chittaranjan Avenue, and Mumbai's Asiatic Society and Akbarally's buildings. Two sources informed that LIC's real estate assets were valued at a cautious 50,000-



60,000 crore during their latest valuation. "LIC-owned buildings may be revalued for the formal asset sale procedure. LIC buildings may have a market value of at least five times the conservative estimate of 2.5-3 lakh crore, as many have never been sold.

The first insider informed that LIC may incorporate a separate business to keep and monetize real estate assets due to the difficulty of valuing them. He added LIC

owns the State Bank of India building on Mall Road in Missouri, Uttarakhand, and two media house offices in New Delhi and Lucknow.

"The insurance company owns numerous marquee buildings. The valuation must be done properly. Only piece-by-piece auctions can determine prices. However, the LIC Act must be amended and laws changed," said the second.

## Flipkart will challenge Zepto, Blinkit with fast commerce

**Delhi:** As India's e-commerce power-house targets rapid commerce, the sector will heat up again. Three sources told Entracker that Flipkart has begun building infrastructure for its rapid commerce play. "In six to eight weeks, Flipkart will launch 10-15 minute delivery in at least a dozen cities," stated an anonymous insider. "It's building up a chain of dark stores across several cities including Bengaluru, Delhi (NCR) and Hyderabad among others." Flipkart's move into rapid commerce comes as experts expect it to cut into India's e-commerce pie soon. A 2022 Redseer analysis estimates the Indian fast commerce market at around \$45 billion. More crucially, Zomato's Blinkit, Swiggy's Instamart, and Zepto have shown that rapid

commerce has a future in India in recent years. Zepto received a unicorn round, but Blinkit (previously Grofers) and Swiggy Instamart have scaled up with improved profits for their owners. "Flipkart's latest launches indicate its move into fast commerce. It started same-day delivery in 20 cities a couple of weeks ago and delivered flowers and cakes around Valentine's Day (February 2024)," an e-commerce and rapid commerce analyst told Entracker, asking for anonymity. Flipkart will have a larger library than Zepto, Instamart, and Blinkit, according to sources. "The company will have a sharp focus on FMCG, grocery and daily essentials but it would also push categories such as electronics, fashion," said the aforementioned insider.



## Unveiling Hyundai India Couture Week 2024

**New Delhi :** Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) is thrilled to announce the highly anticipated edition of Hyundai India Couture Week in association with Reliance Brands, set to grace the heart of the capital from July 24 to July 31, 2024, at the iconic Taj Palace, New Delhi. This year marks the continuation of the exciting partnership with Hyundai Motor India Limited and Reliance Brands, promising a fusion of innovation and tradition as India's foremost designers come together to unveil their exclusive collections, celebrating the enchanting realm of artisanal finesse and enduring narratives, each piece lovingly crafted by hand. This year's Hyundai India Couture Week is a celebration of master artisans who bring Indian fashion to life. Through their unique collections, designers will share stories that pay homage to the rich cultural tapestry of our nation, while highlighting the traditional and handcrafted elements that make each piece truly special. With a lineup of 14 esteemed Indian couturiers - Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla, Amit



Aggarwal, Dolly J, Falguni Shane Peacock, Gaurav Gupta Couture, Jayanti Reddy, JJ Valaya, Kunal Rawal, Rahul Mishra, Rimzim Dadu, Roseroom by Isha Jajodia, Siddhartha Tyter, Suneet Varma, and Tarun Tahliani - this edition of Hyundai India Couture Week promises a mesmerizing display spread over 8 days. Commenting on the event, Mr. Tarun Garg, COO, Hyundai Motor India Limited, said, "We are thrilled to continue our association with the Indian Couture Week for the second year in a row. Aligned with our parent company, Hyundai Motor Company's vision of 'Progress for Humanity', we aim to create newer and unique experiences for our customers in India. This partnership with ICW is a testament to our commitment of supporting artisans and the

diverse cultural heritage of India. With ICW, we aim to integrate the essence of creativity and fashion and demonstrate the amalgamation of Hyundai's magnificent product design and outstanding engineering. We are excited to witness the collection of extraordinary designers at the show." Sunil Sethi, Chairman, FDCI commented "We are honored to partner once again with Hyundai and Reliance Brands for the 17th edition of Hyundai India Couture Week. This event is a testament to the rich heritage and extraordinary craftsmanship of Indian fashion. Through this edition of Couture Week, we aim to not only celebrate the visionary artistry of our designers but also spotlight the timeless beauty and cultural significance of handcrafted couture.

## Indkal Technologies to Launch Smartphones

**Hisar/Ambala: Indkal Technologies**, a leading technology company in India, today announced its foray into the smartphone market under a trademark licensing agreement with Acer Incorporated, a global ICT giant, known for its innovative technology and exceptional products. Under this agreement, Indkal will design, manufacture and distribute smartphones under the Acer brand in India. This strategic deal marks the introduction of Acer-branded smartphones into the Indian market, heralding a new era of innovation and expansion. Indkal Technologies will launch a wide range

of smartphone models under the Acer brand in mid-2024, expecting to quickly build strong momentum and a significant market share. This effort highlights Acer's brand strength and Indkal's commitment to delivering premium-quality products to Indian consumers, featuring robust specifications, cutting-edge hardware and advanced software technologies. Anand Dubey, CEO of Indkal Technologies, expressed his excitement, "Acer smartphones are something we have been working on for a couple of years and we are ecstatic to finally announce the foray. With Acer smartphones, we are certain that Indian consumers are in for a treat. Our customers will experience exceptionally well-designed smartphones with high end processors, top notch camera technology and a host of premium features across the range. The best part is that all Acer-branded smartphones will be designed and manufactured in India, which is also a unique achievement for Indkal". Jade Zhou, VP of Global Strategic Alliances at Acer Incorporated, added, "Since its establishment in 1987, the Acer brand mission.

## Bournvita and Other Drinks Will No Longer Be Listed as "Health Drinks"

**Delhi ; The Central Government** ordered all e-commerce sites to remove all so-called drinks and beverages, including the well-known milk supplement Bournvita, from the 'healthy drinks' category, dealing a severe blow to fitness drink businesses. The National Commission

for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) undertook an investigation and came to the conclusion that the FSS Act of 2006 did not specify a health drink, thus the Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued the order. "National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR), a

statutory body constituted under Section (3) of the Commission of Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005 after its inquiry under Section 14 of CRPC Act 2005 concluded that there is no 'health drink' defined under FSS Act 2006, rules and regulations submitted by FSSAI.

## Delhi plans to plant 2.3 lakh trees and 3.8 lakh bushes in parks

**Delhi:** To reduce dust pollution and increase green cover, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi plans to plant 2.3 lakh trees and 3.8 lakh bushes in parks, schools, open spaces, and roadsides this year. In 2023-24, the city planted two lakh trees and 3.25 lakh plants. The horticulture department requested zonal office requirements to complete the assignment. "We will plant when the details are acquired. An officer stated schools, hospitals, parks, and below flyovers are used for this. He stated that the



government will continue roadside tree planting in some colonies at homeowners' request. MCD plans to carpet or repair 50 km of interior roadways by Oct. to

reduce dust. Between April 2023 and February 2024, 139 km of roads were resurfaced or repaired. A civic council wants to resurface 180km of roads by Oct. Road

## One-year DDA flat maintenance with RWAs

**Delhi:** Delhi Development Authority would give residents' welfare societies maintenance work within a year of creation to ensure flat maintenance. This will also apply to Diwali Special Housing Scheme 2023 units. This conclusion followed Real Estate Regulatory Authority criteria. A maintenance fee is normally collected by DDA during allotment. It has maintained flats for 10-20 years, depending on the scheme. A DDA official stated that applicants must join the registered



agency or RWA to maintain common services. Per pocket, one RWA will be registered. All new DDA plans require upfront monthly costs for one year, depending on flat type. "DDA shall do daily maintenance from maintenance charges for one year or until

RWA is formed, whichever comes first. An RWA will get the balance maintenance fund if it is founded before one year. If a RWA is not created within a year, it will be done on actuals "said the official. "For subsequent years, the necessary arrangement will be communicated

to the residents," he said. Residents expect standard changes to speed up DDA flat maintenance, which had been delayed for a long period. The authority defined maintenance as green space maintenance, campus, colony, and housing pocket cleaning, light fitting replacement in common areas, lift maintenance and operation, and common area electrical bill payment. "After transfer, the urban authority will be responsible for common areas in many housing pockets.

## DPCC issues SOP to seize, dispose of plastic

**Delhi:** The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has a regular operating system for seizing and disposing of unlawful plastic items sold or used in the city. According to the amended plastic waste management laws, illegal plastic will be defined and DPCC staff will investigate various locations.



It said that only a waste-to-energy plant would dispose of seized plastic products including polyethylene, earphones, silverware, etc. The DPCC seizure procedure requires a team of authorities to take samples of plastic carry bags and sheets from the unit during inspection of all producers, importers, and brand owners and include them in the report. Teams must seize, transport, and store non-authorized

plastic objects at the DPCC lab until disposal. "The unit owner/occupier must pay for seizure, loading/unloading, transportation, storage, waste-to-energy plant disposal, etc. A recent DPCC portal document indicated that the team would take from the unit during inspection of all producers and the full seizure procedure of banned/non-permissible stuff. It said that "all the seized non-permissible.

## Leachate treatment facility, maintaining the green space

**Delhi:** A month after opening its first engineered landfill in Tehkhand, Municipal Corporation of Delhi assigned its operation and maintenance to an experienced agency. The civic authority noted that managing the leachate treatment facility, maintaining the green space, and most significantly, leveling ash from two waste-to-energy plants—Okhla and Tehkhand—requires competence. The site can hold 10 lakh tonnes of ash, and 12,000 tonnes have been dumped. "While the horticulture department has planted a 30-meter strip around the designed landfill, the weighing bridge, roads, and drains need a dedicated system for maintenance. Leachate treatment plant operation will



also be monitored by the agency "official. Three approach roads allow trucks to easily transfer rubbish to the landfill site. The peripheral boundary wall is 3.5 meters high. MCD will submit a maintenance plan for approval after the model code of conduct is lifted. MCD constructed a 7.5m-deep trench over 15.5 acres and covered it with 500 mm of soil and five

layers of geosynthetic material before dumping ash to prevent leachate percolation and groundwater contamination at the designated landfill. "We're dumping ash garbage in a corner and preventing vehicles from entering the pit. To prevent stacking damage, automobiles are driven carefully. Once a corner is filled, we gently scatter and layer ash "Source: official. The

landfill's operating terms require MCD to deploy a liner every time ash is added to reduce dust pollution. "An constructed landfill cost Rs 42.3 crore and was inaugurated last month. The urban local body contributes 53.3%, the Centre 35%, and the state 11.7% to this budget. MCD gets Rs 300 per tonne for ash dumping. Here, 400 tonnes of ash are deposited everyday.

## Currency circulation increases despite 2k note ban

**Delhi:** Despite the elimination of Rs 2,000 banknotes, the currency in circulation increased by Rs 1.3 lakh crore in FY24 from Rs 33.5 lakh crore at the end of March 2023 to Rs 34.8 lakh crore. Growth has slowed the most since 2018. In FY24, currency in circulation as a proportion of GDP fell since 4% is slower than GDP growth. CIC grew 7% last year and over 10% the year before due to a pandemic cash rush. Currency in circulation grew 0.5% to Rs 35.3 lakh crore in the week ended April 5. RBI data shows that the increased issue of Rs 500 notes has more than offset the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 notes. ON May 19, 2023, RBI announced their withdrawal. In March 2024, Rs 2,000 notes were worth Rs 8,202 crore, down from Rs 3.6 lakh crore a year earlier. The value of Rs 500 notes rose to Rs 30.1 lakh crore from 25.8 lakh crore a year before.