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

## Uttarakhand cabinet clears Uniform Civil Code, House set to follow

**DEHRADUN:** The Uttarakhand government, in a cabinet meeting chaired by chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami at his residence on Sunday evening, approved the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) draft report. The approved draft, which a five-member UCC panel had submitted to the government on Friday, will now be tabled during a specially-convened assembly session scheduled for February 6. After the assembly passes it and it becomes an Act, Uttarakhand will become the first state post-independence to implement UCC. Governments of Assam and Gujarat have also shown interest in adopting the "Uttarakhand UCC model". Sunday evening's meeting came as a surprise to many since it was being surmised that the cabinet, which had convened on Saturday without tak-



ing up the UCC issue, would now pass the draft on Tuesday when the assembly session was called. Sources said the cabinet was convened on Sunday with a single agenda - to endorse the UCC draft report, adding that prior to the official nod, the entire cabinet was given a detailed presentation of the report. Notably, there was no official briefing following Sunday's cabinet huddle. Dehradun: Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai

submits final UCC report to Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami **STs exempted from purview of UCC bill** The UCC draft committee, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, had submitted a 740-page report -- divided in four volumes -- on Feb 2. The submission of the draft culminated an almost two-year process which started on May 27, 2022. Some of the key proposals put forth by the

committee include prohibition of polygamy, halala, iddat and child marriage, uniform age for girls' marriage across all religions, equal inheritance rights for both genders, and mandatory registration of live-in relationships. Also, scheduled tribes (STs) have been exempted from the purview of the bill. The tribal population in the state, which is around 3%, had been voicing its dissent against UCC in wake of the special status accorded to them.

## Swami Shri Yogi Satyam inaugurated the Kriya Yoga camp by lighting the lamp

**Prayagraj** Today, on February 04, 2024, Kriyayoga camp located on Akshayavat Marg at Magh Mela grounds was inaugurated by Gurudev Swami Shri Yogi Satyam by lighting the lamp. Swamiji started Kriyayoga program with a prayer: "The present time is ascending Dwapar Yuga. Now the door of destiny of the entire human race has opened. We are in the Kumbh Mela area of Prayag; the banks of the confluence of three holy rivers (Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati). We are sitting here, where the world's largest spiritual gathering takes place every year. Let us make India, the best spiritual nation, an ideal nation where no one experiences any fear. Let us create a complete environment of peace with spiritual strength on the sacred land of India,



where making, selling and buying weapons is a condemnable act and everyone is protected by God's love. Throwing light on Kriyayoga, Swamiji further said that Mrityunjay Mahavatar Babaji imparted 'Kriyayoga' to his very humble and highly spiritual disciple Yogvatar Lahiri Mahasaya. Now the door of knowledge has opened. Through the practice of Kriyayoga, in one birth, man becomes

free from ignorance and sees the Supreme Truth (Kaivalya state) and experiences that Parabrahman himself is being revealed in the form of the entire universe. In such a situation, it becomes clear that death and the underworld do not exist, only life, bliss and immortality exist. If a person practices Kriyayoga by keeping the above Kriyayoga principles in his heart, then he realizes that nothing

is impossible. On this occasion, Mr. Rajesh Kumar, retired judge of the world's largest High Court (Honourable High Court, Allahabad), in his message, highlighted the importance of Kriyayoga and said that Kriyayoga is a complete science, whose teachings can be learned by human beings, which can free one from all sufferings. He further said that I have full faith that in the company of Gurudev Swami Shri Yogi Satyam, Kriya Yoga will be expanded in the same way as was possible by Shri P a r a m a h a n s a Yogananda Ji. On this occasion, people from many states of India, as well as, countries like Canada, America, Switzerland, Brazil, Europe, Singapore, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, Nepal, Ukraine etc. participated.

## Fearing poaching, Bihar Congress takes its MLAs to Hyderabad

**PATNA:** Congress on Sunday shifted 16 of its 19 MLAs in Bihar to a resort in Hyderabad to keep its flock together ahead of the Feb 12 trust vote for the new NDA govt headed by Nitish Kumar. Sources said some MLAs were allegedly in touch with Nitish's JD(U) and shifting them to Congress-governed Telangana. The three other MLAs will join the rest in Hyderabad on Monday, the sources added. "Our Bihar MLAs have been shifted for obvious reasons," a senior Congress leader said. The MLAs will be flown to Patna on Feb 12 and taken to the assembly directly from the airport for the trust vote, the sources said. Nitish, who formed his new govt with BJP and allies on Jan 28 after dumping the RJD-Congress-Left Grand Alliance, claims the support of 128 MLAs, more than the majority mark of 122 in the 243-member assembly. But there are apprehensions that some could be absent during the floor test or cross-vote. Key figures of Bihar Congress, including state president Akhilesh Singh, are leading the delegation to Hyderabad, the sources said. The MLAs were said to have flown to Telangana from Delhi, where they reportedly met AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday. Deputy CM Vijay Kumar Sinha (BJP) claimed Congress was scared. "It's like holding the MLAs hostage. They don't have trust in them. They must not think the MLAs are bonded labourers," Sinha said. Congress MLA. Prem Chandra Mishra hit back: "NDA should not think about us. We are intact. Instead, JD(U) will face a split." In Jharkhand, the JMM-led governing coalition has also shifted legislators to "safe" Hyderabad ahead of a trust vote by new CM Champai Soren on Monday after the resignation and arrest of his predecessor Heman Soren by the ED in a land scam case last week. However, Left is not losing much sleep over its 16 Bihar MLAs. "We are confident no one can poach them since ideology is our capital.

## Just 4 days in, this February is already Delhi's wettest in 10 years

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi has logged 29.9 mm of rainfall in the first four days of this month, making it already the wettest February in the last 10 years. As light rain fell in the city on Sunday, Safdarjung recorded 2.6mm till 8.30 am and 0.2 mm from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm. India Meteorological Department's data shows that the last time, Safdarjung, the city's base station,



recorded a higher rainfall than this was in February 2014 at 48.8 mm rainfall. February 2023 did not witness a single rainy day, while in February 2022, Delhi saw 29.7 mm of rainfall. Though the city this February has recorded excess rainfall, an analysis of the Met

department's data of the past 10 years shows that most Feb's recorded deficit rainfall. The national capital received rain on Sunday under the influence of an active western disturbance. Palam, Lodhi Road, the Ridge and Ayanagar reported 2.7mm, 1.6mm, 1.2mm and 2.2mm rainfall, respectively, till 8.30 am. Between 8.30 am and 5.30 pm, very light rain was recorded.

## TMC slams CAG, calls fund-blocking 'fiscal terrorism'

**KOLKATA:** Trinamool Congress's Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien restated Sunday his party's accusation of repeated attempts by BJP-led NDA govt to block funds for Bengal, decrying it as "fiscal federal terrorism" targeting opposition-governed states and labelling it as a "watershed moment in Indian history". O'Brien highlighted He stressed that Centre should have disbursed the payments



within the stipulated 15 days of work, and urged BJP to release funds by Feb 21, failing which TMC protests would persist. "Loans amounting to more than Rs

1,200,000 crore have been written off by central govt. If they can write off these loans, why penalise the people of Bengal for Rs 6,913 crore?" O'Brien asked, along with MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar and party spokesperson Kunal Ghosh. Responding to CAG report queries cited by BJP to halt funds, He dismissed claims of non-submission of utilisation certificates.

## RBI may hold rates this week, a year after last hike

**MUMBAI:** RBI is expected to hold interest rates after its monetary policy committee's meet concludes on Feb 8. The status quo is expected even as the sharp reduction in fiscal deficit by govt in its interim Budget on Feb 1 improved the scope of a rate cut earlier than forecasted. Most



bankers and economists expect RBI to cut rates in the second half of 2024. In the run-up to the current MPC meeting, fresh uncertainty before the econo-

my is the possibility of a disruption in global supply chain amid escalation of hostilities after attacks on cargo ships by Yemen-based Houthis. The world's biggest shipping companies are diverting their vessels from the Red Sea, a crucial route for Indian sea imports.

## CBI charges Air India ex-CMD, IBM, SAP in software purchase case

**NEW DELHI:** The Central Bureau of Investigation has filed a chargesheet against the then CMD of Air India, Arvind Jadhav, SAP India and IBM India in connection with alleged irregularities in procurement of software worth Rs 225 crore by the national carrier in 2011, officials said on Sunday. CBI had registered the case on the recommendation of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), which had found prima facie procedural irregularities in the procurement of the software, according to sources in the investigation agency.

## Isro's woman robot astronaut 'Vyommitra' to fly into space in third quarter of this year



**NEW DELHI:** Isro's woman robot astronaut 'Vyommitra' will fly into space ahead of its ambitious "Gaganyaan" manned mission, and the humanoid mission launch is scheduled for the third quarter of this year, space minister Jitendra Singh said here on Sunday. The minister also clarified that the final manned mission, in which three astronauts will go to space for seven days to experience space effects and perform zero gravity experiments, is scheduled to be launched next year, in 2025. "Vyommitra" is a name derived from two Sanskrit words "Vyoma" (meaning

'space') and "Mitra" (meaning 'friend'). The Vyommitra, Jitendra Singh said, is equipped with the capability to monitor module parameters, will issue alerts and execute life support operations. It can also perform tasks such as operating six panels and responding to queries. Singh elaborated that 'Vyommitra' is designed in such a manner so as to simulate human functions in the space environment and interact with the life support system. Vyommitra made its debut during the opening session of the 2021 event titled 'Human Spaceflight'.

## India is importing red sanders from unexpected sources

**HYDERABAD:** Despite the redwood being an endemic species to Andhra Pradesh's Rayalaseema region, India is importing red sanders from unexpected sources like Malaysia, Myanmar, Slovak Republic and China. Malaysia and China also serve as smuggling destinations for this prized wood, said sources.

While exports of red sanders have been fluctuating over the past decade, the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a Delhi-based autonomous policy research institute, has thrown up interesting information on exports. Apart from Andhra Pradesh, other states like West Bengal, Telangana

and Tamil Nadu also export red sanders. According to the data between 2006-2019, India had imported 2,871 cubic metres of red sanders from Malaysia, 700 cubic metres from China, 493 cubic metres from Myanmar, and 17 cubic metres from the Slovak Republic. SK Mohanty, professor at RIS, said: "

## Lekhi chants 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'; Kerala crowd remains mum to repeated requests



**NEW DELHI:** Union minister Meenakshi Lekhi on Saturday criticized a section of the audience in Kerala for not chanting the slogan "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" despite repeated requests. Speaking at a youth conclave in Kozhikode, Kerala, the BJP leader concluded her speech by saying "Bharat Mata Ki Jai," further asking the audience to repeat it. As the request was met with silence from the crowd, Lekhi retorted, "Is Bharat

only my mother or your mother as well? Tell me... Tell me... Is there any doubt? No doubt?" Emphasizing the need to express 'enthusiasm' for the nation, Lekhi repeated the slogan, noting that the response from the left side was poor. Asking a woman from the audience 'in a yellow dress' to stand up, the minister said, "I am going to ask you a straight question. Is Bharat not your mother? Why this attitude?"

Lekhi chanted "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" once again, but the woman remained standing without participating. "I think you should leave the house," she said.

Expressing disappointment, the minister said that individuals who do not take pride in their nation or feel embarrassed to talk about India need not be part of the youth conclave. The youth enclave was organized by certain right-wing groups.

## 'One nation, one poll' will save cost, benefit economy: CII

**NEW DELHI:** The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) strongly backed the concept of 'one nation, one election' in its presentation given to the high-level committee, headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind, in Delhi on Saturday. A CII delegation, comprising its president R Dinesh, his successor Sanjiv Puri and director general Chandrajit Banerjee, during the presentation told President Kovind that though synchronised elections to local bodies, state and parliament may be a challenge, but it would lead to saving of cost and benefit to the economy.



It impressed upon the panel that a nation always in election mode affects infrastructure and capital expenditure related projects due to delays in project implementation for lack of approvals and clearances during the model code of conduct. Elections also put constraints on govt staff capacity during this period.

It further said that the

private sector is reluctant to invest months before and after the elections. "So is the case for public investment which affects economic activity, overall development and jobs and livelihoods," it added. Simultaneous elections will reduce the delays and we believe the costs of delay by about half of what it is currently, CII said.

## Bhujbal ups ante on quota, says quit Shinde govt on Nov 16

**NASHIK:** Upping the ante against state govt over Maratha reservation, cabinet minister and NCP (Ajit Pawar) MLA Chhagan Bhujbal on Saturday claimed he had resigned from the ministry on Nov 16 last year, a day before he started addressing OBC

rallies from Jalna district. Addressing a rally in Ahmednagar, the first one since state govt came out with the draft on Maratha quota, Bhujbal said, "For my detractors, both within and outside the govt, who are demanding my

resignation, I want to tell them that I handed over my resignation to CM Shinde last year." He claimed that deputy CMs Devendra Fadnis and Ajit Pawar knew about his decision, but he kept silent "since all suggested I don't speak about it".

## Delhi police reaches Atishi's residence to serve notice on AAP MLAs' 'poaching'

**NEW DELHI:** Crime branch officials visited the residence of Delhi minister Atishi on Sunday to deliver a notice related to accusations that the BJP was attempting to lure Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs. According to sources, Atishi was not at home during the visit. Nevertheless, the minister instructed her office staff to accept the notice, as per AAP sources. A senior officer from the Delhi police crime branch



stated, "The team will make another attempt to serve the notice to Atishi. She was not present at her residence this morning." This development follows a notice served by crime branch officials to Delhi chief

minister Arvind Kejriwal the previous day, asking for a response within three days regarding his claims that the BJP tried to attract seven AAP MLAs. Later in the day, Kejriwal and Atishi are scheduled to

lay the foundation stones of two schools in Rohini. On January 27, both Kejriwal and Atishi alleged that the BJP was attempting to lure AAP MLAs with offers of Rs 25 crore each and a ticket to contest in the upcoming assembly polls, aiming to overthrow the AAP government. The BJP dismissed these allegations as "false" and "baseless," challenging the chief minister to provide evidence supporting his claims.

## Law panel: Offenders must pay for public property damage to get bail

**NEW DELHI:** Law Commission on Friday recommended to the government amendments to existing laws that aim to prevent frequent blockades of national highways or public spaces and impose heavy penalties, equivalent to market value of damages caused to public/private properties, on any individual or organisation responsible for such acts. Compelling offenders to deposit the estimated value of the public property damaged by them as a condition for getting bail will work as



a deterrent against such acts, the Law Commission said. The law panel's report is significant, particularly in view of the repeated blockades in the national capital caused by opposition parties and rights groups calling for frequent

protests. Taking cognisance of such blockades at regular intervals, causing damages to public/private properties and putting the public at inconvenience, the law commission has recommended amendments in laws while holding responsible

office bearers of such organisation "deemed to be guilty of the offence of abetment of an offence" punishable with penalty. "Fine shall mean and include the amount which shall be equivalent to the market value of the public property damaged or where the value of the property damaged is not capable of being assessed in terms of money, such amount as the court may fix taking into account the facts and circumstances of the case," the law panel noted.

## How demand for Maratha quota took dramatic turn?

**MUMBAI:** Maharashtra is facing deepening social tensions between two key castes on the quota issue. On one side is the politically influential Maratha caste to which 12 of the state's 19 chief ministers belong. On the other is the more populous Other Backward Class (OBC), which encompasses 346 castes and was granted a quota by the Mandal commission. Both castes command large votebanks. While Marathas are said to comprise roughly 30% of the state's population, OBCs account for around 52%. Traditionally, OBCs have backed BJP. Marathas were once mainly with Congress-NCP but deprived sections later drifted towards Shiv Sena and BJP.



**Demand for quota** The Maratha quota issue took centre stage once again in Sept 2023, after a police lath-

charge on an agitation led by Manoj Jarange, a little-known activist from Marathwada who then became the face of the movement. But this is just the latest chapter in a longer history of the quota demand. The Maratha community traces its lineage to warrior king Shivaji. It is considered a "caste cluster", including both Kshatriya "warriors" and the agricultural peasantry. It is a dominant caste and has historically enjoyed political influence. The bulk of the state's legislators, sugar barons and education barons are Marathas. Initially, Marathas opposed reservation because

## This 26-year-old Delhi woman ensures final rites for kinless dead



**NEW DELHI:** "I was someone who ran away at the sight of a cockroach. If someone died nearby, I was afraid to pass by that house for days. Yet today, I spend almost my entire day around mortuaries and crematoriums performing the last rites for unclaimed bodies," says Pooja Sharma. Sharma, 26, does spend a lot of time now with the dead. Giving them a dignified farewell is an obsession with her. After she had to step in the absence of other males in the family at her murdered brother's last rites, the thought of what happened to those who had no family or kin for the final ritual gnawed at her. She took up the mission and claims that since 2022 she has provided 4,000 unclaimed bodies a proper goodbye. "Soon after my mother's death in 2022 due to illness, my elder brother was killed in a brawl in our area. My father could not bear the shock and went into a coma.

## 5-month-old branded with hot iron in Madhya Pradesh, dies

**BHOPAL:** In what could be a fifth such case within two months in Madhya Pradesh, a five-month-old infant who was allegedly branded with hot iron in a superstitious belief to cure pneumonia, died in Shahdol district. Health officials are however saying that it could not be conclusively said whether the infant was branded or not as there were three marks on the child's abdomen but were unlike in the other cases, the infant who was suffering with pneumonia also developed septicaemia. The deceased identified as Hrishabh Kol, son of Ramdas Kol resident of Pathra village was admitted to district hospital on Monday and later referred to medical college, where he died during treatment late on Wednesday. "Doctors are not able to conclude whether the kid was branded or not as the marks on abdomen are confusing. The toddler was suffering from pneumonia and had developed septicaemia. The malpractice of branding infants with hot iron is prevalent.

## BJP's Gaikwad vs Sena's Gaikwad: Festering conflict comes to a boil

**KALYAN:** A bitter political feud has been festering in Kalyan between BJP MLA Ganpat Gaikwad and Shiv Sena Kalyan unit chief Mahesh Gaikwad for the past few years. They have also been locked in a dispute over land in the village that both hail from, which is within the KDMC limits.



BJP sources said senior leaders of the Sena-BJP alliance had also given instructions to the two leaders not to target each other, but the attempt to control the situation failed. Local leaders of both BJP and Sena held senior leaders of the two parties responsible for Friday night's incident, saying they had not taken the matter seriously enough and failed to settle the dispute. Sources said BJP's Kalyan district president Nana Suryavanshi had once demanded intervention of CM Eknath Shinde and Dy CM Devendra Fadnis to stop the fight. Mahesh Gaikwad is known to be close to the CM's son Shrikant Shinde, who is Kalyan MP. Sources said Ganpat Gaikwad and other BJP leaders had on several occasions complained about Mahesh Gaikwad to senior leaders but in vain. According to those in the know of developments in Kalyan, both the Gaikwads were in the cable business before their entry into politics. So their fight pre-dates their jump into the political arena.

## Samvad Sahitya Manch organized a poetry symposium



**Chandigarh:** Samvad Sahitya Manch organized a poetry symposium in the honour of New York-bound poet Sushma Malhotra at the Community Centre, Sector 43. The chief guest in the program was Acharyakul President K.K. Sharda and the special guest was councilor Premlata.

The program was started by Somesh with Saraswati Vandana. The program was conducted by poetess Neeru Mittal 'Neer' and welcomed by poet Dr. Vinod Sharma. While introducing Sushma Malhotra, senior litterateur Prem Vij said that she is active in studies and writing. Has worked in poetry, short stories and story writing. Nirmal Roshan Sahitya Manch is running a

● Sushma said that her love for her motherland is everlasting. She engaged with Indian culture throughout her life. She cannot be different from this. Poet Dr. Sarita Mehta said in the poem – Together we promised to hoist the flag of Hindi language

literary platform from New York for the promotion and dissemination of Hindi literature in America. More than two dozen Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu poets participated in the poetry symposium.

Sushma Malhotra said that her love for her motherland is everlasting. She engaged with

Indian culture throughout her life. She cannot be different from this. Poet Dr. Sarita Mehta said in the poem – Together we promised to hoist the flag of Hindi language on foreign soil.

Ashok Nadir, Anu Rani Sharma, Pragna Sharda, Sarika Dhupar, Urmil Kaushik Sakhi, Daisy Bedi, Vimla Guglani, Neelam Trikhia, Balkrishan Gupta, Anurani Sharma, Sangeeta Sharma, Kundra, Lajpat Rai Garg, Rashi Srivastava, Sushma Malhotra, Dr. Vinod Sharma, Prem Vij, Neeru Mittal Neer, Gurdarshan Mavi, Dr. Anish Garg, Rajesh Ganesh, RK Bhagat, Usha Garg, Lalita Puri etc. presented poems, ghazals and songs and won a lot of applause.

## This budget is roadmap to achieve PM Modi's vision of a Developed Bharat: Shah

**Chandigarh:** The Union Interim Budget 2024 presented in the Parliament on Thursday, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduced new schemes for farmers, women, and the middle class. Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah emphasised that 'The Union Budget draws the roadmap to achieve PM Modi's vision of a Developed Bharat.' He believes that this interim budget for the second term of the Modi government in the Amrit Kaal will prove to be the budget of 'Sankalp se Siddhi'. The budget brings new hope for farmers, women, and

the middle class by highlighting the achievements of the Modi government in the last 10 years on the journey to make India a leading nation in every sector. Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah, the budget sets the goal of making India completely Aatma-Nirbhar and developed by the year 2047. It introduces new opportunities for prosperity for farmers, focusing on promoting self-reliance in oilseeds on one hand and emphasizing on nano DAP usage and dairy development on the other. The plan to start

the construction of two crore additional houses in the next 5 years will benefit the middle class. The people of the country have witnessed the efforts of the Ayushman Bharat scheme, which aims to provide free treatment of up to five lakh rupees to millions of people. An important decision to connect Anganwadi workers and helpers with the Ayushman Yojana allowtreatment, has been made in the interim budget of 2024. Additionally, a crucial decision has been taken in this budget to promote vaccination of 9 to 14-year-old girls for the prevention of cervical cancer.

## Busted a new modus operandi adopted by the fraudsters for transfer of the swindled amount

**Kolkata:** After arresting two traders from city in connection to a cyber fraud of Rs 1.2 crore, the bank fraud section of detective department busted a new modus operandi adopted by the fraudsters for transfer of the swindled amount. So far, six persons have been arrested in this case. The

fraudsters were depositing the swindled amounts in unconnected accounts belonging to the nabbed traders—Satish Patel of Madan Mohan Burman Street (Jorasanko) and Sekhar Balmiki of Asansol—and employees of trading and textile firms. Money was also transferred to a mobile

and a garment store in Chattisgarh. Later, the amount was being distributed among the swindlers through the hawala route, cops said. This made tracking the money trail difficult for cops. The traders were arrested with the help of the information shared by a bar dancer in Kolkata.



## The budget is for the benefit of the common man and the welfare of the poor: Garg

**Kaithal:** BJP Intellectual Cell Haryana Co-Coordinator and former Kaithal BJP District President Ravibhushan Garg termed the interim budget presented by the Union Finance Minister as a budget for the welfare of the common man and the welfare of the poor and said that this budget will provide complete relief to the entire society. The country and Haryana will benefit. Modi government is working on Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas. This is a budget to accelerate the development of the country and increase employment. Speaking in an interview here, Ravibhushan Garg said that the objective of the Finance Minister's budget is to strengthen India's economic sector in line with Narendra Modi's resolve to make India the third largest economy in the world. This is a budget to accelerate the development of the country and increase employment. Through this budget, it has become clear that India will become the most developed country in the world by 2047, because at every point there are indications of how India is moving rapidly on the development journey. This budget is very important for the development of the people of the country. BJP former district president Ravibhushan Garg said that this budget is an excellent summary of the qualitative and quantitative transformation of the Indian economy in the last 10 years.

## Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited 920 crore Initial Public Offering to open on February 5, 2024

**GURUGRAM:** Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels Limited ("The Park" or the "Company") shall open its Bid / Offer in relation to its initial public offer of Equity Shares on Monday, February 5th 2024. The total offer size of Equity Shares aggregating up to ₹ 9,200 million [₹ 920 crore] comprises of fresh issue aggregating up to ₹ 6,000 million [₹ 600 crore] and Offer for Sale aggregating up to ₹ 3,200 million [₹ 320 crore] by Selling Shareholders. ("The Total Offer Size"). The Anchor Investor

Bidding Date shall be Friday, February 2nd, 2024. The Bid/Offer will open on Monday, February 5th 2024 for subscription and will close on Wednesday, February 7th 2024. The Price Band of the Offer has been fixed at ₹ 147 to ₹ 155 per Equity Share. Bids can be made for a minimum of 96 Equity Shares and in multiples of 96 Equity Shares thereafter. The Company proposes to utilise net proceeds from fresh issue of Equity Shares towards repayment/prepayment, in full or in part of

certain outstanding borrowings availed by Company and balance amount towards general corporate purposes ("Object of Issue"). The offer for sale comprises of sale of Equity shares aggregating up to ₹ 2,960.00 million [₹ 296 crore] by Apeejay Private Limited (the "Promoter Group Selling Shareholder"), up to ₹ 230.00 million [₹ 23 crore] by RECP IV Park Hotel Investors Ltd and up to ₹ 10.00 million [₹ 1 crore] by RECP IV Park Hotel Co-Investors Ltd (the "Investor Selling

Shareholders"). JM Financial Limited, Axis Capital Limited and ICICI Securities Limited are the Book Running Lead Managers or BRLMs to the Issue. This Equity Shares are being offered through the red herring prospectus of the Company dated January 29, 2024 (the "RHP") filed with Registrar of Companies, West Bengal at Kolkata (the "RoC") and are proposed to be listed on the BSE Limited ("BSE") and the National Stock Exchange of India Limited ("NSE").

## The India tooling market is projected to exhibit a growth rate (CAGR) of 8.5% during 2024-2025

**Mr.Sheregar, President of TAGMA Sets the Stage for the Grandest Die Mould India Expo Yet!**  
**Gurugram:** Die Mould India, the event showcasing the latest advancements in the die and mould industry, is gearing up for its most monumental edition this year. Organized by the Tool and Gauge Manufacturers Association of India (TAGMA), the 2024 edition promises to be a groundbreaking event, setting new benchmarks in the industry. The India tooling market is prima-

rily driven by the robust expansion of the manufacturing sector in India. As industries such as automotive, aerospace and consumer electronics continue to grow, the demand for high-quality tools and dies also escalates, serving as a primary impetus for the tooling market. Moreover, government initiatives play a vital role in the market. Various incentives and policy reforms are encouraging both domestic and foreign investors to set up manufacturing units, which, in turn, amplifies the

demand for tooling solutions. Die Mould India 2024 scheduled to take place from February 14th to 17th, at Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai. The exhibition is poised to be the largest gathering of its kind, with over 300 exhibitors converging on a sprawling area exceeding 25,000 square meters. This impressive showcase will feature a diverse range of cutting-edge technologies, products, and solutions spanning various sectors of the die and mould industry. Commenting on this

year's edition, Devaraya Manjunath Sheregar, President of TAGMA said, "Die Mould India 2024 represents a pivotal moment for the industry, providing a unique opportunity for stakeholders to explore the latest trends, exchange insights, and forge meaningful partnerships. As we witness unprecedented advancements in technology and manufacturing processes, Die Mould India continues to play a crucial role in driving innovation and progress.

## Bombay High Court Affirms Music Licensing Authority: PPL Prevails in Historic Legal Battle

**HISAR :** In a groundbreaking judgment, the Bombay High Court has unequivocally upheld the authority of music licensing giants Phonographic Performance Ltd. (PPL) and Novex Communications Pvt. Ltd. (Novex) to issue licenses as copyright owners, transcending the need for registration as copyright societies. The landmark decision, rendered on January 24, 2024, settles a prolonged debate surrounding the scope of owner rights to license sound recordings. "PPL's victory in this legal battle is not just a win for us but a triumph for the entire music industry. The Bombay High Court's verdict firmly reinforces the rights of copyright owners and exclusive licensees, providing PPL with the tools to protect against the widespread infringement that undermines the hard-

earned investments of genuine music labels. This win underscores the importance of respecting and preserving the creative endeavours that drive the music industry, securing a future where investors in copyrights, artists and their creations are duly valued and protected," said G.B. Aayeer, MD & CEO at PPL. PPL, founded in 1941, has emerged victorious in multiple suits against over 200 establishments, including notable names such as Social, Farzi Café, and Olive Bar & Kitchen. The court's order, a paradigm shift in copyright dynamics, has far-reaching implications for the music industry. Key findings of the court include the affirmation of PPL's status as the owner and exclusive licensee, recognizing its power to grant licenses under Section 30, and validating assignment

deeds and exclusive license agreements. The judgment interprets Section 33(1) not as a restriction on the owner's rights but as a means to protect and facilitate them. This legal triumph empowers PPL to continue its licensing operations unhindered, preventing infringement and seeking remedies against unauthorized use of its vast catalog comprising more than 70 lakh songs from renowned labels like Aditya Music, Lahari Music, Sony Music, and T-Series. The verdict not only brings clarity to PPL's legitimate business operations but also sets a significant precedent in the Indian copyright landscape. It reinforces the notion that the Copyright Society provision was enacted to safeguard the owner's rights, not to curtail or diminish them.

## Government should give farmers the right to decide the price

**Kaithal:** The meeting of Bharatiya Kisan Union Samyukt Kisan Mochi was held in Dhand office. Which was presided over by farmer leader Suresh Kumar Sharma, state executive member. Mainly, BKU National Advisor Ajit Singh Habdi, State General Secretary Bhura Ram Pabnawa, Hoshiar Singh Gill, President Dhana Bhagat and Youth BKU State President Haryana Rajeev Arya Dhand participated in the meeting. Earlier today, the auspicious time was celebrated by performing Havan Yagya of BKU office Dhand. Whose ribbon was cut by farmer leader Ajit Singh Habari. Farmers and laborers from different places of Haryana participated in this program. In the program, all the farmer leaders discussed in

**In which mainly the problem was given to the Executive Engineer Poondri of the Electricity Department. In which a committee was formed and asked to solve the problem and the farmers gave time till 12th February to the department. Whatever protest demonstration takes place after this will be the responsibility of the department. Addressing the farmers in the meeting, farmer leaders Bhura Ram Pabnawa and Rajeev Arya Dhand said that reducing the weight of fertilizer bags is an anti-farmer step of the government.**

detail the problems related to their respective farmers. In the meeting, many farmers presented their problems to their farmer leaders, which were resolved on the spot by the farmer leaders. In which mainly the problem was given to the Executive Engineer Poondri of the Electricity Department. In which a committee was formed and asked to solve the problem

and the farmers gave time till 12th February to the department. Whatever protest demonstration takes place after this will be the responsibility of the department. Addressing the farmers in the meeting, farmer leaders Bhura Ram Pabnawa and Rajeev Arya Dhand said that reducing the weight of fertilizer bags is an anti-farmer step of the government.

The government should reduce the weight of the bags and also reduce the rates. Farmers should have the right to decide the price of their crops themselves. Exploitation of farmers will not be tolerated under any circumstances. BKU will not shy away from making any sacrifice and struggle for the interests of farmers. Farmer leader Rajiv Arya said that the government should fulfill the demands of the farmers and refrain from taking anti-farmer steps. Farmers should get the full price of their crops along with purchasing them at MSP and the government should make comprehensive arrangements in time to ensure that farmers do not face any problem during the season.

## Budget – Views of Shri Ashish Chauhan, MD & CEO, NSE

**GURUGRAM / PANIPAT:** I give the Interim Budget 10/10. The budget focuses on growth, welfarism and fiscal restraint, while ensuring continuity on policies and taxation. The focus on capacity building through higher spending on hard as well as soft infrastructure and consequently facilitating job creation has continued. At the same time, the budget provides enough for poor, farmers, women, and youth, which in turn bodes well for the overall economic growth, thereby keeping us in a good stead in an otherwise uncertain world. At 5.8%, the revised fiscal deficit for FY23-24 is an improvement from the budget estimate by 10bps. Fiscal consolidation continue.

## Editorial

### How Interim Budget 2024 provides an outlook for Viksit Bharat 2047

The interim budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is an important validation of the need for fiscal prudence and discipline, even as India gets increasingly ambitious with its developmental targets. It follows the same set of rules that have worked in the past: Enhanced Capex spending and an invigorated renewable energy push with focused impetus on youth, women, the poor, and farmers. The budget doesn't try too hard; rather, it tends to keep things consistent and balanced while exuding confidence and clarity. Each group in society has its own wishes and hopes for something specific out of the budget. The budget has stood up to the expectations of all groups and taken care not to disappoint anybody.

#### The Middle Class and Taxpayers

This budget shows the path to transform and make the Indian economy stronger, and the middle class and taxpayers are important pillars of the economy. In the Interim Budget 2024, the Indian government has made significant announcements across various sectors. For housing, the plans include the construction of 2 crore additional houses under the PM Awas Yojana (Gramin) in the next 5 years. In an effort to empower the middle class and provide them with housing security, a new scheme is set to be introduced to assist the middle-class people who are residing in rented houses, slums, chawls, and unauthorised colonies in fulfilling their dream of owning a home. This initiative aims to provide support and opportunities for individuals in these diverse living situations to either purchase or construct their own houses, fostering increased accessibility to homeownership within the middle-class demographic.

In a significant move to provide relief to taxpayers, the government announced the withdrawal of old, minor, non-verified, non-reconciled, or disputed outstanding Direct Tax demands. This initiative covers amounts up to ₹25,000 for the period up to FY 2009-10 and up to ₹10,000 for financial years 2010-11 to 2014-15. This decision is expected to benefit approximately 1 crore taxpayers, fostering both ease of living and ease of doing business. By alleviating the burden of these relatively small tax demands, the government aims to simplify the tax system, making it more convenient for individuals and businesses and promoting a conducive environment for economic activities.

**Empowerment of Annadata and Sabka Vikas**  
This government has always tried to focus on Yuva, Gareeb, Kisan, and Mahila. Promoting farmer interest, the budget talks about promoting private and public investment in post-harvest activities, including aggregation, modern storage, efficient supply chains, primary and secondary processing, and marketing and branding. Nano-DAP (fertiliser) on various crops will be expanded in all agroclimatic zones. A comprehensive programme for supporting dairy farmers will be formulated.

Apart from this, expanding on the initiative introduced in 2022, the government is planning a strategy to attain self-sufficiency (Atmanirbharta) in oil seeds like mustard, groundnut, sesame, soybean, and sunflower. This comprehensive plan involves conducting research to develop high-yielding seed varieties, promoting the widespread adoption of modern farming techniques, establishing strong market linkages, ensuring effective procurement, adding value to the products, and providing crop insurance. By addressing these key aspects, the government aims to strengthen the oilseed sector, promote sustainable farming practices, and enhance the overall self-reliance of the country in oilseed production.

the Babri Masjid case, claiming that the Commissioner's and ASI's reports previously confirmed the absence of any contents inside the cellar. While it requires nothing more than a pair of eyes to establish that a temple existed at the site where the structure of the mosque today stands, there is ample architectural and textual evidence to back up this claim as well. According to Yugeshwar Kaushal, a PhD scholar specialising in South Asian Studies, Maharaja Jayachandra erected an elaborate temple at the site following his coronation around 1170-89 AD.

During Maharaja Jai Singh I's reign, Aurangzeb, motivated by religious zealotry, demolished the Kashi Vishweshwar temple in 1669. He then constructed the present-day Gyanvapi mosque on the remains, as stated by Kaushal. Subsequently, control of Varanasi shifted to the Nawabs of Awadh, who ensured that the disputed structure was never reconstructed as a temple. "Later, control of Varanasi passed to the Nawabs of Awadh. Saadat Khan, the then Nawab of Awadh, appointed a Raja of Benaras and ensured that the disputed structure was never reconstructed as a temple. Subsequently, the British took control of Awadh from the

Nawabs and maintained the status quo of the contested structure," explained historian Professor (Retd) RS Khangarot. The Varanasi court's recent request for a "scientific investigation" by the ASI, involving ground-penetrating radar surveys and excavation, faced a temporary pause from the Supreme Court.

The ASI initiated the survey in August 2023, with several extensions granted for the final report. One needs to look no further than the texts as primary as Maasir-i-Alamgiri, a Persian-language chronicle written shortly after Aurangzeb's death in 1707. The ASI report refers to historian Jadunath Sarkar's 1947 translation of the text. According to the Maasir-i-Alamgiri, "His Majesty [Aurangzeb], eager to establish Islam, issued orders to the governors of all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels, and with the utmost urgency put down the teaching and the public practice of the religion of these disbelievers." The royal decree issued in Aurangzeb's twelfth regnal year on April 9, 1669, resulted in the destruction of both the Vishwanath temple in Kashi and the Keshavdev temple in Mathura. Historian Sarkar interpreted this as part of Aurangzeb's broader "attack on Hinduism".

# Gyanvapi: Truth, reconciliation and the way forward

Recently, the pristine land of Ayodhya saw the Pran Pratishtha ceremony and the returning of Ram Lalla to the temple built at the historical site. While the event was rightfully celebrated by all, irrespective of faith and politics, it also led to many sharing the Preamble to the Indian Constitution on social media as a mark of protest to the 'injustice' committed on the Indian soil. The possible connotations ranged from 'India subverting its Constitution' to 'a nation polarised by communalism' against a particular section of the society. This needs to be understood that neither the Preamble nor the Constitution exists in a vacuum, the progressive values embedded in the Constitution are themselves a culmination of thousands of years old tradition of learning and re-learning. The laws and the Constitution are meant for the people and not the vice versa. The truth and reconciliation within any society should always be supreme. The Gyanvapi Mosque-Kashi Vishwanath temple issue is another instance where we, as a society, need to move towards better sense and better communal harmony. In a pivotal development in the legal dispute over Varanasi's Gyanvapi Masjid, a district court has granted permission for members of a family of priests to offer prayers in one



of the cellars within the mosque complex. This particular cellar, known as Vyasji ka Tehkhana, was unsealed last night, and a puja ceremony took place around 3 am. The Gyanvapi mosque, constructed in the 17th century, features four cellars, with 'Vyas ji ka Tehkhana' being one of them. Situated in the southern area of the mosque's fortified complex, it stands opposite a statue of the Nandi bull within the adjacent Kashi Vishwanath temple premises. The cellar, measuring about 7 feet in height and covering an area of 40 square feet, allegedly contains idols that were worshipped before its sealing in 1993, as claimed by petitioner Shailendra Pathak Vyas. The Muslim side refuted this assertion in court, stating that the petitioner failed to provide evidence of prayers being conducted there and denying the presence of any idol in the cellar. Following the demolition of

the Babri Masjid in 1992, President's Rule was imposed in the state, and the following year, a government led by Mulayam Singh Yadav assumed office.

Citing concerns about law and order, Yadav prohibited prayers within the cellar temple. The petitioner contends that regular prayers were conducted by Somnath Vyas before the cellar was sealed. The mosque committee has expressed its intention to challenge the court's decision in the high court. Lawyer Akhlaq Ahmed asserted that the order overlooked the Advocate Commissioner's 2022 report, the ASI's report, and a 1937 decision favouring their stance. He argued that the Hindu side failed to provide evidence of prayers before 1993 and that there is no idol in the designated place. Advocate Merajuddin Siddiqui accused district officials of colluding with the district magistrate, suggesting a

## On election eve, it's advantage to Nawaz Sharif

Pakistan goes to the polls for the National and Provincial Assemblies on February 8. The country's Election Commission announced on February 1 that elections will go ahead despite a few terrorist incidents in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. The main feature of the pre-election scenario is the disqualification of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan-Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party candidates to contest on their party symbol—a cricket bat. They will therefore be contesting as independent candidates, even though the electorate will know that they are actually representatives of the PTI. Imran Khan continues to be in jail and was recently convicted in the Cypher and the Toshakhana cases. In the

former case, former Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi was also convicted. In the latter matter, Imran Khan's current wife, Bushra Bibi, was convicted too. She was sentenced to 14 years of imprisonment and barred from holding any office under the state. Toshakhana case: The army and the superior judiciary have put all their might against Khan. They are determined to ensure that the PTI does not have a chance of succeeding in these elections. Before elections, the prospects of different parties and their leaders are considered, and elections in Pakistan would not be out of place. The forthcoming election will be the 11th direct election on the basis of the universal adult franchise. It is acknowledged by almost all scholars that only the

first such election, which was held in December 1970 when Pakistan was still a united country, was free and fair, even though it was conducted under a military dictator, General Yahya Khan. In that election, the Sheikh Mujibur Rehman-led Awami Party, which was very popular in East Pakistan, won a majority and, by right, should have been invited to form the government. However, the army as well as West Pakistani politicians led by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, whose Pakistan's People's Party won the second-highest number of seats, rejected the idea of the Awami Party forming the government. A military crackdown and mass killings in East Pakistan followed in March 1971. That set into motion events that led to the breakup of Pakistan.

## Limits of coalition politics: Reasons I.N.D.I. Alliance is falling apart

Bharat has seen more than 60 coalition governments since 1967, when the first non-Congress government in Uttar Pradesh was formed by the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal alliance with Charan Singh as the chief minister. The first experiment lasted a little over 10 months. Coalitions emerged and have existed in India mainly to keep a strong party or formation out of power. They come up when a political force becomes very strong. Earlier, coalitions were formed against the Congress, now parties come together against the BJP. Quite often, complete ideological strangers have come together to pull the plate from under a bigger dog. In 1977, Bharatiya Jana Sangh and Leftist-socialist forces came together as part of the Morarji Desai government to defeat the Congress after the Emergency. In 1989, the Left and the BJP came together to support the VP Singh government to keep the Congress out. In 2019, the Shiv Sena betrayed the mandate it got going into the elections with the BJP as partner and formed the Maha Vikas Aghadi government with the party's bitter ideological opponents, the Congress and the NCP. FirstUp: Budget Session in Parliament, ED to question Hemant Soren... News today On an average, coalition governments in India have lasted for 26

months. West Bengal's Left Front regime was a glaring exception. It was the longest serving coalition government which ruled for 34 years between 1977 and 2011. The 9-10 parties were tethered by a convergent Communist-socialist line, and they ruled without the anxiety of having to keep a bigger enemy out. It ruled with such absolute power that for long, the enemy was almost non-existent. Now, let us look at what is happening to the Opposition I.N.D.I. Alliance. Nitish Kumar has ditched it and gone with the BJP, BRS has deserted it too, Mamata Banerjee has launched a vicious attack on Rahul Gandhi and Congress over the Bharat Jodo Yatra entering Bengal without her knowledge, Udhayanidhi tirade against Sanatan Dharma has made DMK's non-South partners squirm, Akhilesh Yadav is fuming at the slights from Congress leaders like Kamal Nath, more than half of NCP is with NDA while the patriarch Sharad Pawar and his daughter Supriya Sule are nominally with the Opposition, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren has been arrested for corruption, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal may follow him soon, and RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav reluctantly prepares to cool his heels for some more months in the slammer. The alliance is in royal disarray, if not dead already. There are broadly five reasons for

this. First, the Congress is the elephant in the room. It still thinks it is bigger than what it currently is, and certainly weightier than others. Both could be misplaced, and 2024 general election results might be the only, albeit unpleasant, way the party rightsizes itself in its own estimation. Second, the Congress's success could come at the cost of regional parties. Its allies are already alarmed by its success in Karnataka and Telangana feel their space is shrinking or could be cannibalised by the Congress later. Third, there are too many 'secular' parties scrambling for the '20 per cent' minority pie. Mamata has spelt it out in as many words, accusing the Congress of trying to steal her Muslim votes. Fourth, the Congress does not have enough heft to carry an ideological hotchpotch. The BJP may get away with breaking a section of the NCP because its otherwise robust Hindutva subsumes the odd minority-leaning ally. The Congress cannot afford either a Shiv Sena trying to ride the Ram wave or a DMK continuously humiliating Hindus. And fifth, the I.N.D.I. Alliance does not have a deft backroom organiser like Harkishan Singh Surjeet of the '80s and '90s who brought disparate forces together. Pawar could have played that kind of a role, but he is too old and unwell.

## Maldives, China and a challenge to India's soft power

The Maldives' overture towards China for a new identity seems like a miscalculated hara-kiri it has inflicted upon itself. The move, refusing support from India and seeking the same from China, undermines its double-fronted foreign policy concerning India. India needs to help the country correct its miscalculations in geopolitics. The world should consider two clear aspects in the Maldivian moves: First, it is possible that, like Pakistan, it will procure weapons from China for potential use against India, ostensibly to reduce the Indian "influence" it complains about. Second, it may evolve into a base for transnational terror-

ism, similar to Pakistan, potentially reinforcing Chinese anti-India rhetoric. Maldives has already obtained military drones from Turkiye, citing the need to monitor its coastal skies. The next destination for the Maldivian president is likely to be Pakistan. By behaving in this manner, Maldives aligns with the Chinese structural realist plan, which aims to encircle India in the Indian hinterland. Simultaneously, it boosts the morale of Pakistani terrorists, currently invisible on the scene. Although Pakistan is now off the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list, with India's consent, it may adopt a low-profile policy for some time, apart from occasional

anti-India rhetoric. **Aware of Chinese spy vessel** Will be extremely detrimental: Maldives opposition parties warn President Muizzu over his 'anti-India' stance. Historically, India has consistently supported Maldives in various aspects, from national development to security and economy. India has provided assistance ranging from daily necessities to education, security, and healthcare, including the supply of COVID-19 vaccines. Despite India's significant soft power contributions, the recent shift in Maldivian preferences towards communal alliances is evident. India has always nurtured a symbiotic relationship with the Maldives

for economic development and progress. India has never dominated but worked collaboratively, offering technological know-how and training personnel instead of imposing loans. India prioritises participatory exchanges over military-shadowed soft power tools, fostering neo-symbiotic relations. At a mid-January meeting on the sidelines of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) in Kampala, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar assured the Maldivian Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer of the continuation of development projects despite dissent. India's symbiosis with the Maldives, rooted deeply beyond soft power tools.

## Shopping for warm clothes in full swing amid chill weather at SARAS fair



**Chandigarh** With the return of cold weather, the SARAS fair being organised in Sector 34 once again witnessed a rush of locals buying warm and woolen clothes. With people feeling cold due to the dipping temperature, locals gathered at the stalls of warm clothes in the Fair. A wide range of woollen

clothes and hand-made products are being sold in the fair. Enterprising women from districts of Kullu, Lahaul and Spiti, Mandi, Kangra, Shimla and Sirmour have displayed and kept warm clothes for sale.

These are full of hand-woven shawls, pattus, socks, caps, gloves, blankets, mufflers etc. These

women sell the goods made by themselves through their own self-help groups. Under the Rural Livelihood Mission of the Rural Development Ministry of HP Govt, efforts are being made to empower these women entrepreneurs by providing them the best platforms in outstation markets.

## Announces plotted development under Hero Earth

**SONIPAT** : Real estate major Hero Realty Pvt Ltd (HRPL) has entered Sonipat real estate market with its flagship premium plotted development brand Hero Earth with a strategic tie-up with Spiti Group from Gurugram. This new tie-up will be the second project under Hero Earth after the astounding success it received for 'The Ark' in Gurugram Sector 85 where all the premium plots were sold out in a single day. Cushman & Wakefield was the transaction advisor for this deal. "Hero Realty's entry into the Sonipat real estate market will prove to be a game-changer. The company's commitment to excellence, inno-

vation, and community development set a new benchmark for the industry. HRPL not only builds premium homes but also creates a thriving community that fosters a sense of belonging and togetherness," said Dr Dharmesh Shah, CEO, Hero Realty Pvt. Ltd. This premium land on the outskirts of NCR surrounded by lush green fields and picturesque landscapes, Hero Earth offers a wide range of plots in Sector 33 Sonipat, with plot sizes ranging from 1115 sqft to 1615 sqft. The project boasts abundant common open spaces, creating a harmonious environment for residents. Hero Earth presents an enticing opportunity for

individuals seeking their dream homes or investment opportunities. This location was chosen meticulously to provide residents with a serene and peaceful environment away from the chaos of the city. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Rohit Dalal and Ashish Dalal, the Promoters of Spiti Group said "We are excited to partner with an iconic brand like Hero Realty. This venture would offer best in category plots to consumers in the Sonapat region." Gurugram based, Spiti Group has diversified interests in education, retail, farming and real estate development. Spiti has up coming projects of plotted development.,

### Gaurav Samman: Dr Ritu has been working for ISRO

**Kolkata**: After arresting two traders from city in connection to a cyber fraud of Rs 1.2 crore, the bank fraud section of detective department busted a new modus operandi adopted by the fraudsters for transfer of the swindled amount. So far, six persons have been arrested in this case. The fraudsters were depositing the

swindled amounts in unconnected accounts belonging to the nabbed traders—Satish Patel of Madan Mohan Burman Street (Jorasanko) and Sekhar Balmiki of Asansol—and employees of trading and textile firms. Money was also transferred to a mobile and a garment store in Chattisgarh. Later, the amount was being dis-

tributed among the swindlers through the hawala route, cops said. This made tracking the money trail difficult for cops. The traders were arrested with the help of the information shared by a bar dancer in Kolkata, who was also arrested in the case earlier. The mastermind was previously arrested from Bengaluru.

## Northern Arc Capital Limited files DRHP with SEBI for IPO

**GURUGRAM**: Northern Arc Capital Limited, a diversified financial services platform has filed Draft Red Herring prospectus with market regulator Security Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The company plans to raise funds via Initial Public Offerings through issue of equity share of face value Rs. 10 each comprising of fresh issue aggregating upto Rs. 500 crore (The "Fresh Issue"), and an Offer for Sale aggregating up to 21,052,629 equity shares (The "Offer for Sale"). Northern Arc is a diversified financial services platform set up primarily with the mission of catering to the diverse retail credit requirements of the under-served households and

● a domain expertise in enabling credit across the focused sectors in India, namely, micro, small and medium enterprises ("MSMEs")

businesses in India. Northern Arc has developed a domain expertise in enabling credit across the focused sectors in India, namely, micro, small and medium enterprises ("MSMEs") financing, microfinance ("MFI"), consumer finance, vehicle finance, affordable housing finance and agricultural finance. Northern Arc has been operating in the MSME, MFI and consumer finance sectors for over

13 years, 14 years and eight years, respectively. The Offer for Sale aggregating up to 21,052,629 equity shares, includes equity shares aggregating up to 4,922,949 by LeapFrog Financial Inclusion India (II) Ltd; equity shares aggregating up to 1,265,476 by Accion Africa-Asia Investment Company, equity shares aggregating up to 4,254,744 by Augusta Investments II Pte. Ltd; equity shares aggregating up to 2,237,030 by Eight Roads Investments Mauritius II Limited Investments (Mauritius) II Limited; equity shares aggregating up to 1,631,949 by Dvara rate trustee, Dvara Holdings (formerly known as Dvara Dvara Trusteeship Services Private Limited)).

## Youth deliberate upon World Cancer Day during a webinar organised by Nada India

### Shimla

The cancer growth rate in Himachal Pradesh is 2.2 percent while the national rate is 0.6 percent. The figures are alarming but with timely self-change and awareness, the situation can be controlled. These sentiments were expressed during the national webinar organized by Nada India Foundation to mark the World Cancer Day on Sunday. In the webinar, cancer experts from HP connected with the youth of the state and across the country and exchanged thoughts on the subject. According to



Sunil Vatsyayan, founder of Nada India Foundation and Karmaveer Award winner, youth power decides the fate of the nation and awareness programs on such occasions prove to be mean-

ingful. According to Dr. Naina Negi, Senior Resident, Department of Oncology, Indira Gandhi Medical College emphasized that it is very important for people to be aware about tobacco and

non-tobacco products which invite cancer in the near future. In his address, Prof Vinay Bhardwaj, Head, Department of Public Health Dentistry at the Government Dental College and Hospital, Shimla said that the Govt is committed to support the multi stakeholders working in this campaign. Vatsyayan believes that the loss suffered by the state and the country during the Covid pandemic can be compensated only by imposing additional tax on tobacco. Also, by making them expensive.

## CAPITAL SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED'S IPO OF EQUITY SHARES OPENS ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2024

**GURUGRAM** : Capital Small Finance Bank Limited (the "Bank" or "Capital SFB"), shall open the initial public offering of its Equity Shares of face value ? 10 on Wednesday, February 7, 2024. ("Offer") The Anchor Investor Bidding Date shall be Tuesday, February 6, 2024. The Offer will open on Wednesday, February 7, 2024 for subscription and will close on Friday, February 9, 2024. The Price Band of the Offer has been fixed at ? 445 to ? 468 per Equity Share. Bids can be made for a minimum

of 32 Equity Shares and in multiples of 32 Equity Shares thereafter. The initial public offering comprises a fresh issue of Equity Shares aggregating to 4,500 million [? 450 crore] ("Fresh Issue") and an offer of sale of up to 1,561,329 Equity Shares by the Selling Shareholders ("Offer for Sale" and together with the Fresh Issue, the "Offer"). The Bank proposes to utilize the Net Proceeds from the Fresh Issue towards augmenting the Bank's Tier - I capital base to meet its future capital

requirements. As the Bank continues to grow its loan portfolio and asset base, the Bank expects to require additional capital in order to continue to meet applicable capital adequacy ratios with respect to its business. The Bank intends to grow its loan advances which would require Tier - I capital to comply with the applicable capital adequacy requirements. Further, the proceeds from the Fresh Issue will also be used towards meeting the expenses in relation to the Offer. (the "Objects of the Issue").

## India has nearly 4.6% of its land as wetlands, covering an area over 15. million hectares

**Gurugram**: The need to conserve wetlands (Environment & Sustainability), Godrej & Boyce commented, "Wetlands serve as the lifeblood of communities, sustaining both livelihoods and biodiversity. At Godrej & Boyce, biodiversity and ecosystem conservation are not mere principles but an unwavering commitment. For decades we have been at the forefront of wetland conservation, in particular the Mangroves. We invite active participation from not only our teams, other corporates but also the local communities around these areas. This has resulted into improvement on the knowledge on mangroves conservation through research and spreading awareness on the

importance of these ecosystems which in turn has also benefited the community with livelihood protection, sustenance and increase in their income. Our dedication to wetland preservation extends far beyond ecological boundaries, positively impacting human lives." In addition to various industry collaborations with CII, MoEF, WWF India and others, the 125-year-old Indian conglomerate also conserves the expansive 'Lungs of Mumbai' in Vikhroli for close to 7 decades; along the western banks of Thane creek constituting an important part of the one of India's recognized wetlands under the Ramsar

Convention. Their commitment is celebrated through initiatives like 'Magical Mangroves.' a campaign launched in 2020 with WWF India for spreading the awareness on Mangroves conservation through volunteer participation. Focused on research, advocacy, and on-the-ground efforts, this partnership has successfully rallied about 30000 citizens in the past 4 years with over 300+ awareness programs. In 2021, the company launched the 'India Wetland Coalition' (IWC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, CII, WWF-India, GIs, and Wetlands International.

London: Climate activist Greta Thunberg joined a march in southern England on Saturday to protest the use of private jets and the expansion of an airport. Hundreds of local residents and activists holding banners and placards that read "Ban Private Jets" marched to Farnborough Airport, which mostly serves private aircraft. Some beat drums while others lit pink smoke flares. The airport, located in Hampshire County about 40 miles (64 kilometers) southwest of London, applied last year to increase its maximum number of flights from 50,000 to 70,000 a year. Groups working to fight climate change, including the organizer of Saturday's protest, Extinction Rebellion, say private jets are much more polluting than commercial passenger airliners. Flights to and from Farnborough Airport carried an average of 2½ passengers per flight in 2022, the group said.

## Thunberg joined a march in southern England

**LONDON**: Climate activist Greta Thunberg joined a march in southern England on Saturday to protest the use of private jets and the expansion of an airport. Hundreds of local residents and activists holding banners and placards that read "Ban Private Jets" marched to Farnborough Airport, which mostly serves private aircraft. Some beat drums while others lit pink smoke flares. The airport, located in Hampshire County about 40 miles (64 kilometers) southwest of London, applied last year to increase its maximum number of flights from 50,000 to 70,000 a year. Groups working to fight climate change, including the organizer of Saturday's protest, Extinction Rebellion, say private jets are much more polluting than commercial passenger airliners. Flights to and from Farnborough Airport carried an average of 2½ passengers per flight in 2022, the group said.

## GAIL and ADNOC sign a deal to ensure the supply of LNG



**Delhi:** The largest natural gas company in India, Limited, has successfully completed a long-term LNG purchase agreement with ADNOC Gas to purchase about 0.5 MMTPA of LNG. This is in accordance with an agreement between GAIL and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) P.J.S.C. dated October 30, 2022, wherein the parties agreed to investigate potential areas of collaboration, including the purchase of LNG by GAIL from ADNOC for a duration that can be short, medium, or long term. GAIL and ADNOC's noteworthy partnership will strengthen the strong cultural and commercial ties that exist between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). According to this arrangement, deliveries will start in India in 2026 and last for ten years. Sanjay Kumar, Director (Marketing), GAIL, highlighted the agreement's wider implications by saying that the long-term LNG transaction will assist India in achieving the goal of the Indian government to increase the country's natural gas consumption to 15% of its total energy consumption. Additionally, this agreement will assist GAIL in expanding its quite sizable LNG portfolio to better meet the needs of its wide range of customers. It is expected that the long-term LNG purchase deal between GAIL and ADNOC Gas will strengthen India's energy security, promote economic cooperation, and advance both companies into new areas of strategic partnership.

## Morgan Stanley buys 244 crore Paytm shares

**Delhi:** Morgan Stanley bought One97 Communications shares for Rs 244 crore on the open market. Through its affiliate Morgan Stanley Asia (Singapore) Pte ODI, Morgan Stanley bought One97 Communications shares on the NSE. Morgan Stanley Asia (Singapore) Pte bought 50 lakh Paytm shares, or 0.8%, according to NSE bulk deal data. At an average price of Rs 487.20 per share, the purchase was worth Rs 243.60 crore. No vendor information was available. One97 Communications Ltd., which owns Paytm, fell 20% on Friday after the RBI ordered Paytm Payments Bank Ltd.



(PPBL) to stop taking deposits or top-ups in client accounts, wallets, FASTags, and other instruments after February 29. One97 Communications Ltd. (OCL) owns 49% of Paytm Payments bank but considers it an associate. One97 Communications shares fell 20% to Rs 487.20 on the NSE. Another bulk deal on the NSE had Mauritius-based private equity fund 21 Capital PCC selling Swan Energy Ltd shares for Rs 164 crore. 21 Capital PCC sold 25 lakh Swan Energy shares on the NSE at Rs 657.27 each, according to data. The transaction totaled Rs 164.32 crore.

## Zee demands ₹700 crore from Sony for meeting merger requirements.

**Delhi:** Zee spent 700 crore to meet Sony's stipulations, according to legal documents acquired by the business line. Zee will argue at the National Company Law Tribunal that it has spent around ₹700 crores on divestment, frivolous claims, guarantees, tail insurance, and business discontinuation on Sony's instructions. Zee will contest Sony's termination notification asking \$90 million in damages for alleged breaches. Zee denies any meaningful detrimental effect on the merger agreement, per Sony's termination notification. Legal sources said Zee would establish that it had

many meetings with Sony, including on the joint business plan, where Sony received month-by-month profit and loss and cash flows. Zee and Sony discussed the combination for a long time. Sony repeatedly recommended Zee to take specific steps to finalize the deal quickly, and Zee did so.

Delhi: The Reserve Bank ordered Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) to suspend taking deposits or top-ups in user accounts, wallets, FASTags, and other instruments after February 29. Customers may receive interest, cashbacks, or refunds at any time. The central bank stated that chronic non-compliances and serious supervisory concerns prompted the direction. The RBI barred PPBL from enrolling new customers immediately on March 11, 2022. Paytm group firm PPBL did not comment on the RBI's bank-related direction. After February 29, 2024, customer accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets, FASTags, NCMC cards, etc. cannot be deposited or topped up, except for interest, cashbacks, or refunds, which can be credited whenever "RBI. Up to their available balance, users can withdraw or use balances from savings bank accounts, current accounts, prepaid instruments, FASTags, and National Common Mobility Cards without limits. "No other banking services, other than those ... like fund transfers (irrespective of name and nature of services like AEPS, IMPS, etc), BBPOU and UPI facility should be provided by the bank after February 29, 2024," said. RBI also ordered the termination of One97 Communications Ltd. and Paytm Payments Services' nodal accounts' by February 29, 2024. One97 Communications owns 49% of Paytm Payments Bank Limited but considers it as an affiliate rather than a subsidiary. RBI noted that any pipeline and nodal account transactions commenced on or before February 29, 2024 must be settled by March 15, 2024, and no further transactions will be allowed.

## CAPSULES

### RBI orders Paytm Payments Bank to suspend most services after Feb. 29.

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## RBI advises against KYC fraud, provides guidelines

**Delhi:** Scammers posing as customer updaters have been warned by the RBI. The central bank advised scam victims to report them to the cybercrime hotline (1930) or the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in). RBI also lists dos and don'ts. The central bank has warned twice. RBI published a note in 2021 after online KYC scams increased during the Covid lockdown, where users were misled into providing their banking information. Fraudsters took advantage of the pandemic when many banks warned consumers they may not be able to utilize their accounts until December 2021. RBI relaxed the deadline and KYC. RBI stated KYC fraudsters utilize calls, SMS, and emails to



get clients to reveal personal information, account/login information, card details, PIN, or OTP. Fraudsters use links in messages to get users to install unapproved KYC apps. These messages may threaten account freezing, blocking, or closure. RBI warned that crimi-

nals can access customers' accounts and commit fraud if they share information. "Such communications often employ tactics of creating a false urgency and threatening account freezing/blocking/closure if the customer fails to comply," said RBI.

## Vecros signs Rs 20 lakhs contract with Aman Gupta

**In the latest episode of 'Shark Tank India' season three, Delhi-based robotics business 'Vecros' signed a Rs 20 lakh agreement with BOAT co-founder and CMO Aman Gupta. 'Vecros' has developed a technologically improved solution to obtaining complex data in construction, oil and gas, and utilities, which previously needed human operators to enter dirty, dangerous, and hazardous regions. By costing money, time, and lives, Athera, India's first autonomous spatial AI drone, was created to**



build 2D-3D maps in difficult settings. Besta Prem Sai (CEO) and Rajeshree Deotolu (CTO) pitched their cutting-edge autonomous aircraft technology on the business reality show for

Rs one crore for a 2.5 percent ownership stake in their enterprise. They agreed to pay Aman Rs 20 lakh for 1% stock and Rs 80 lakh loan for three years at 10% interest (repayment can begin

after a year). Besta on 'Shark Tank India': "Vecros' Shark Tank appearance was a roller coaster of emotions and opportunity. As a small town kid, representing Vecros on Shark Tank is a dream.

I improved my pitch and storytelling skills."It has also helped me handle high-stakes situations. I'm ready for similar obstacles next time. Besta said the event taught him the value of coolness in high-stakes circumstances and made him a resilient and articulate entrepreneur.

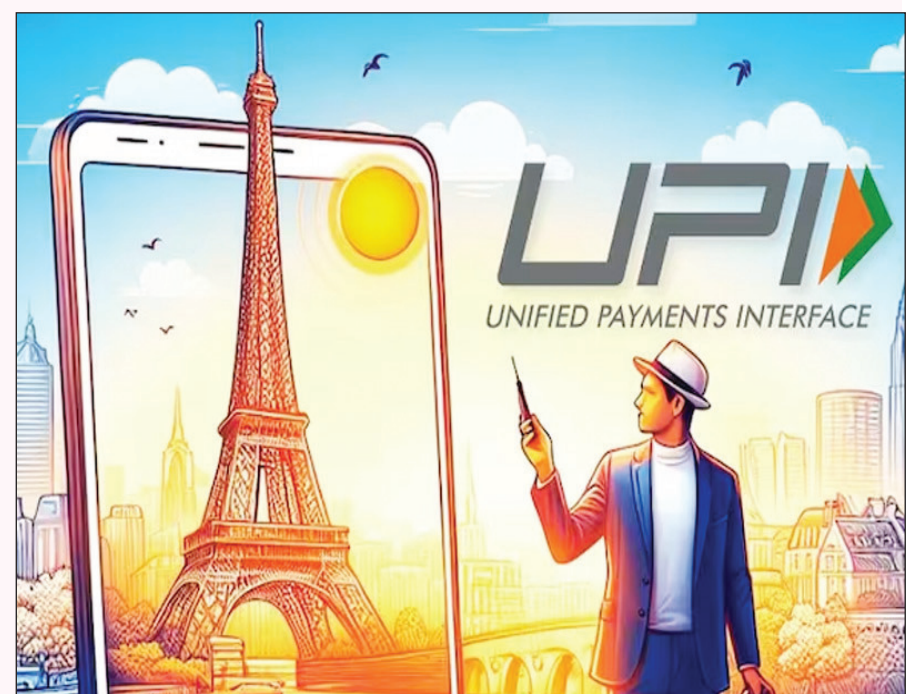
## The first month of 2024 saw over 30,000 tech jobs lost worldwide



**Delhi:** In January 2024, more than 122 IT companies and startups laid off more than 30,000 workers, and the job cutbacks continue. Layoffs.fyi reports that 122 tech companies have laid off 31,751 workers as of February 3. Tech businesses, including startups, fired over 425,000 employees worldwide between 2022 and 2023, including over 36,000 in India. Nearly 150 Zoom employees—less than 2% of the company—are being laid off. In addition to Zoom, cloud software vendor Okta announced 400 layoffs, or 7% of its workforce. PayPal (NASDAQ:PYPL) began layoffs last month, affecting at least 9% of its workforce, or 2,500 workers. Colin Angle, founder and CEO of consumer robot maker iRobot, will resign and lay off 350 employees (31% of the staff). Salesforce is the latest IT business to lay off 700 workers. Swiggy, an online food delivery service, is slashing 350-400 positions. eBay (NASDAQ:EBAY) is firing 1,000 full-time employees and an undefined number of contractors "over the coming months." YouTube owner Google laid off at least 100 creator management and operations staff. Google (NASDAQ:GOOGL) was apparently cutting "a few hundred" additional advertising sales roles as part of a restructure. Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google, has also warned employees of further job losses this year.

## Now you can book visit to Eiffel Tower through UPI

**Delhi:** UPI platform has entered France through a collaboration between NPCI's international arm NIPL and Lyra, a company specialising in online and proximity payments across 11 countries. The initial application for UPI involves booking visits to the Eiffel Tower. Indian tourists can securely conduct online transactions using UPI-powered apps to scan the QR code on the merchant website and initiate payment. While the Eiffel Tower is the first merchant to offer UPI payments in France, this service will soon extend to other merchants in tourism and retail, making it significantly easier for Indian tourists to remotely book hotels, museum visits, etc, during their stay in France, according to an NPCI statement.



According to NPCI, Indian tourists rank as the second-largest group of international visitors to the Eiffel Tower. In Jan 2024, UPI recorded over 1,220 crore transactions. We also published the following articles recently

UPI in France: Indians can now pay in rupees at Eiffel Tower Unified Payments Interface (UPI) was launched at the Eiffel Tower in Paris by NPCI International Payments (NIPL) in partnership with Lyra.

Indian tourists at the Eiffel Tower can now use UPI to purchase tickets online. NIPL aims to promote NPCI's payment solutions globally and collaborate with financial institutions worldwide. Union Budget.

## Maldives ties shaky, India doubles aid

**Delhi:** Despite strained relations with the Maldives, Delhi will prioritize Indian Ocean development projects. India increased its 2023-24 Maldives budget from Rs 400 crore to Rs 770 crore. Second only to Bhutan and Nepal, it has allocated Rs 600 crore for the Maldives in 2024-25. India has not let disputes with Male, particularly in defense and security cooperation, impede the \$500 million Greater Male Connectivity Project, its largest infrastructure project. Maldives allocations are grants, not loans. Bhutan retained its top budgeted allocation, with India allocating Rs 2,068 crore to Thimphu. Nepal gets Rs 700 crore. Including Bhutan's loan, India's 2024-25 estimate for grant and loan assistance to foreign governments is Rs 5,667 crore. This is 874 crore less than last year's revised projection. In 2024-25, India allocated Rs 250 crore for conflict-torn Myanmar, down from Rs 370 crore last year.

## Salman Khan's Production Company Issues Warning Against Fake Casting Calls

Salman Khan's production company, Salman Khan Films, has issued an official statement cautioning the public about fraudulent casting calls. Through a post on their official Instagram page the production house clarified that they have no affiliations with third parties for casting in films. The statement read, "This is to clarify that neither Mr Salman Khan nor Salman Khan Films are casting for any film currently. We have not hired any casting agents for any of our future films. Please do not trust any emails or messages received by you for this purpose. Legal action will be taken if any party is found falsely using Mr Khan's or SKF's name in any unauthorised manner." Sharing the screenshot, the production house wrote, "Official notice!"



## Ashok Saraf wins Maharashtra Bhushan 2023

Delhi: Chief minister Eknath Shinde announced that legendary Marathi cinema and stage actor Ashok Saraf received the Maharashtra Bhushan 2023, the state's highest civilian award, for his artistic contributions. The hits Gammat Jammata, Ashi Hi Banwa Banwi, Dhoom Dhadaka, Balache Baap Brahmachari, Bin Kamacha Navra, and Majha Pati Karodpati made Saraf (75) famous. Other heroes like Sachin Pilgaonkar and Laxmikant Berde appeared in his films. His Hindi film roles are also funny. The actor told reporters, "I am thrilled to join the ranks of P L Deshpande and other greats. It shows that the state recognizes my 50 years of industrial hard work." CM Shinde praised him for his success in comic, serious, and villainous parts and for ruling his followers. The award includes a medal, citation, and Rs 25 lakh. Awards were raised from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 25 lakh by the state government last year.

## Sandeep Reddy Vanga to team up with Salman Khan for a dark thriller?

Delhi: Sandeep Reddy Vanga, who is currently riding high on the mega success of the Ranbir Kapoor starrer 'Animal', might soon work with superstar Salman Khan for a dark thriller. The director is currently in talks with Salman Khan regarding the same. Vanga is presently collaborating with Allu Arjun and Prabhas on his other projects. However, there has been no confirmation on his project with Salman yet. Earlier, Vanga had revealed that Ranveer Singh called

him after the release of the movie and spoke to him for 40 long minutes on the phone. Vanga expressed his own surprise, mentioning that the actor spoke to him for almost 40 minutes over the phone. He found the lengthy message from Singh enjoyable, having read it multiple times. While the specific details of the message couldn't be disclosed, Vanga noted that Singh highlighted aspects of Animal that made him realize, "Oh, this is also in my film." In the interview, director

Sandeep Reddy Vanga discussed a media report that referred to a statement he made. He mentioned the context where the second ex-wife of a superstar criticized films like Baahubali 2 and Kabir Singh for allegedly promoting misogyny and endorsing stalking. Addressing the assertion, Sandeep conveyed his opinion that the individual making the claim might not grasp the distinction between pursuing someone and approaching them respectfully.

## Thalapathy Vijay may change Tamil Nadu politics

Delhi: Vijay, known as 'Thalapathy' (commander in Tamil), launched Tamizhaga Vetri Kazhagam, his political organization. Vijay is only the second superstar after M G Ramachandran (MGR) to enter politics in Tamil Nadu. Can he challenge

Tamil Nadu's political order? The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) groupings control 70-80% of Tamil Nadu's vote. The remaining 20-30% votes are up for grabs. Vijay will target

this space, as have many before him for 30 years. Veteran Congress politician G K Moopananar founded the Tamil Nadu Congress in 1996. Captain Vijayakanth founded Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam in 2005.



## Kriti-Shahid arrived in Delhi to Promote "Teri Baaton Mein Aisa Uljha Jiya"

Delhi: Recently actors Shahid Kapoor and Kriti Sanon came to Delhi to promote their upcoming movie "Teri Baaton, mein Aisa Uljha Jiya". The promotional event was held at the Imperial Hotel, New Delhi. The movies are all set to release on 9 February 2023 in theatres. The movie is based on the life of Aryan (Shahid Kapoor) who is not able to find a perfect life partner. He meets a perfect girl, Sifra (Kriti Sanon), during an official assignment in the US and falls in love with her only to discover later that it's an impossible love story. The movie is produced under Maddock films and Jio Studios. It is directed by Amit Joshi and Aradhana Shah.



Delhi: A cinema university would be built on 20 acres of the 230-acre International Film City in Sector 21 off the Yamuna Expressway, 6km from the future Noida International Airport. The institution plans editing suites, VR labs, and 15 acres for set, costume, and prop manufacturing. After competing with T-Series and consortiums led by Akshay Kumar and KC Bokadia, producer Boney Kapoor's Bayview Projects and real estate developer Bhutani Group won the first phase of the project.

## Film City in Noida, UP, to host cinema university

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## Disney+Hotstar streams "Miss Perfect"

Delhi: Hotstar has revolutionized online shows. Featuring the lovely Lavanya Tripathi, Miss Perfect has become the talk of the film industry due to its diverse story about society. Characters in the series appeal to everyday viewers. Miss Perfect follows the lives of Miss Lavanya (Lavanya Tripathi), Mr. Rohit, their close neighbors, society, and a maid with pleasant humor and thought-provoking issues. Young director Vishwak



Khande Rao directs. This comic series stars Telugu superstar Lavanya Tripathi, famed for Andala Raakshasi, Bhale Bhale Magadivoy, and others. Her character, Lavanya, is a clean freak who denies OCD and will break any rule if it's not flawless. The plot

revolves around how her drive for perfection gets her into humorous situations she tries to escape. Harshvardhan, Jhansi, Mahesh Vitta, Abhijeet, Abhigna, Harsh Roshan, Sunayana, Roopa Lakshmi, Keshav Deepak, Manik Reddy, and others star in the series Disney+Hotstar excels with this new comedy web series that might be enormous. New web series "Miss Perfect" is airing on Disney+Hotstar.

## Saregama Talent launches with Maahi, Pragati, and Arjun as its first three next-gen

Delhi: Saregama, an RPSG group company, is excited to unveil 'Saregama Talent,' a vertical for budding artists. After this thrilling move, the business introduced Maahi, Arjun, and Pragati, its first three next-gen performers. These three performers' creative music style captivates listeners of all ages. The launch introduces promising musicians and shows Saregama's commitment to nurturing, promoting, and showcasing new talent. Greeting Maahi,



Pragati, and Arjun, Saregama India Ltd. MD Vikram Mehra said, "The launch of Saregama Talent marks a strategic move to enhance our non-film content offering, a cru-

cial step toward delivering diverse and comprehensive entertainment experiences to our audience. Maahi, Pragati, and Arjun have exceptional talent and music passion. We will

work with them on many audio and video projects. Saregama Talent will soon include non-Hindi performers. We believe that with Saregama, this trio will make waves in the music industry and win over music fans worldwide." The year-long training, grooming, and mentoring Maahi, Arjun, and Pragati received from Saregama sets this launch differently. Instead of just singing, they study acting, stage presence, fashion, persona, and more.

## Pooja Gorgeous Red Arpita Mehta Mirror Lehenga Was Made To Set Valentine's Day

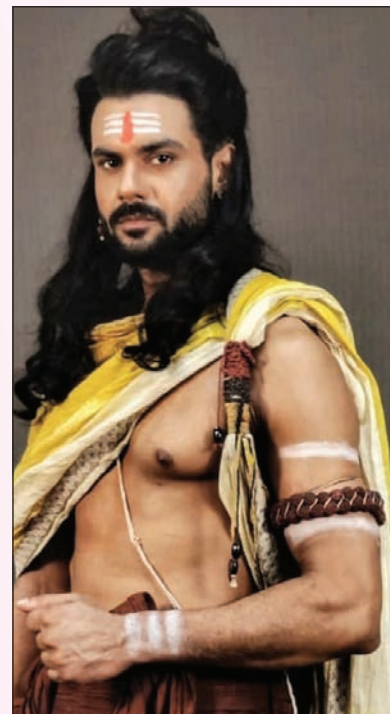
Delhi: With Valentine's Day 2024 just around the corner, inspiration is being searched for from everywhere. The usual dose of heart prints and Barbie pink silhouettes may be a fail-safe fashion choice on the day of love but if you're seeking something of the traditional variety, then Pooja Hegde is the one to look at. The Indian film actress is currently celebrating the #WeddingSeason in Mangalore and chose an ensemble that fit the ethnic bill while also sticking to the theme for the upcoming Valentine's Day.



Pooja Hegde donned a striking crimson lehenga from designer Arpita Mehta which came in a contemporary silhouette. The skirt featured heavy mirror embellishment in an embroidered floral and chevron pattern over its base. Matching it was a bralette-style blouse with narrow straps and a plunging neckline with a fringe trimming. Draped over her arms was a red dupatta to go with the look. Far from your usual traditional style, this one's a must-wear if you'd like to merge ethnic with Valentine vibes on the day of love.

## Vishal Aditya Singh Plays Lord Parashuraam

Delhi: Actor Vishal Aditya Singh, who will play the lead in 'Bhagwaan Parashuraam', shared that he is excited to delve into the unexplored, saying the show aims to bring viewers closer to Indian history and culture. 'Bhagwaan Parashuraam' starring Vishal, Ishita Ganguly, and Navina Bole, tells the unknown story of a God whose presence is recognised but not entirely explored. The devotional series will showcase the journey of Lord Parashuraam, the sixth avatar of Lord Vishnu. Talking about the show, Vishal, who plays the character of Bhagwaan Parashuraam shared: "India has deep roots in mythology, and the Indian entertainment industry has brought forth some amazing stories. While we are familiar with Lord Vishnu's tales, his avatars are less known." He further said: "As a spiritual person, when the opportunity to play 'Lord Parashuraam' came my way, I was excited to delve into the unexplored. The show will not only entertain viewers



but also takes them on a deep dive into the lesser-known backstory of this powerful entity. I am excited to be a part of this as it aims to bring viewers closer to Indian history and culture." 'Bhagwaan Parashuraam' will premiere on February 5 on Star Bharat.

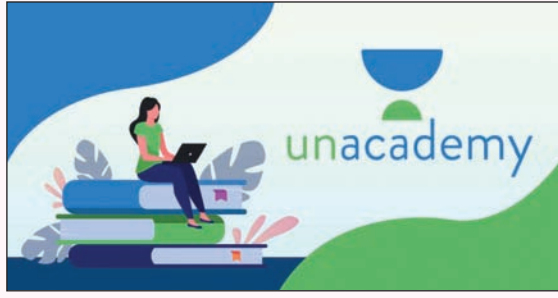
## Rahman's AI voice-generation of late singers raises discussion

Delhi: AR Rahman clarified on social media after the song's use of Bamba Bakya and Shahul Hameed's vocals polarized. The winner said, "We took permission from their families and sent deserving remuneration for using their voice algorithms. technology is not a threat and a nuisance if we use it right... (sic)" AR Rahman employed AI to replicate Bamba Bakya and Shahul Hameed's voices for Rajinikanth's upcoming film Lal Salaam's song Thimiri Ezh. Even though the composer disclosed that the singers' families were consulted and compensated, his action sparked a dispute. Music composer and lyricist Sean Roldan supports voice reconstruction, saying, "AI is not a threat. It is the inevitable next step."

## Sanjay Leela Bhansali's OTT Debut

Sanjay Leela Bhansali is coming up with an interesting web series for Netflix. Titled "Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar," the makers unveiled its first look. The project marks Bhansali's debut on OTT, and the series features a stellar cast, including Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Aditi Rao Hydari, Richa Chaddha, Sanjeeda Sheikh, and Sharmin Segal. The series depicts a story amid a power struggle in Heeramandi. "A young heir caught in the crossfire chooses love over succession, disrupting the status quo. Set in pre-independent India against a burgeoning freedom movement, the final thread holding the art of tawaif (courtesans) is put to the test" is the official synopsis of the series. Touted as an epic saga exploring themes of love, power, revenge, and freedom.

## Consumer disputes body fines Unacademy for deceptive UPSC 'success' commercial



**Delhi:** The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) stayed a Rs 1 lakh penalty on ed-tech firm Unacademy for manipulating UPSC advertisement numbers, pending further review. Unacademy appealed to the commission against a suo moto order by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) that penalized the platform and directed it to stop advertising that 26% of UPSC rankers were its pupils. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 established the CCPA to regulate consumer rights violations, unfair and misleading advertising, and consumer rights promotion. Coaching institutes deliberately hid essential information and portrayed students as having taken long-term courses with the platform instead of free or simulated courses, misleading potential candidates, the CCPA found. However,

Unacademy claimed that the authority had based the order on "factually incorrect observations" since it was "unable to comprehend" or record the data in interim orders despite submitting proper data. NCDRC president Justice A.P. Sahi suspended the sentence after hearing Unacademy's appeal by counsel Sumeer Sodhi, adding the Bench needed to review the matter. "At first glance, the matter needs consideration."

The consumer commission said last week that the impugned ruling penalizing the appellant [Unacademy] is suspended until further orders of the court.

Unacademy advertised in August 2022 that 3 of the top 5 UPSC rankers and 26% of all UPSC rankers were its students. Statistics underpinned its claims. Last September, the CCPA filed a suo moto action against Sorting Hat Technologies, the platform's corporate body, demanding it prove the claim's data. In many sessions, the platform provided data to the authority that it said was inaccurately recorded in CCPA rulings before the NCDRC.

The platform said its data was correct and that specifics like whether the training was free or paid should not be included in ads since they were "immaterial".

## DU to form committee to check teacher absenteeism

**Delhi:** As per an official circular Delhi University will constitute a committee to examine alleged teacher absenteeism. DU has notified the formation of a committee to address the issue of "classes not being taken by teachers". Principles of Daulat Ram College, Shyam Lal College, Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies, Delhi College of Arts & Commerce, and Shaheed Bhagat Singh College (Evening) will constitute the committee. A teacher's association said in a statement "Dilution of course-work through mean-



ingless and much diluted Value Addition Courses (VAC) and Skill Enhancement Courses (SEC) has left students uninterested in these classes. A university which has destroyed its human resource and diluted academic programmes is now questioning teachers." Demanding a with-

drawal of the circular, Maya John, Member, Academic Council, University of Delhi told TOI, "The DU administration has consistently diluted the University's teaching-learning process by enhancing the teacher-student ratios of tutorials, practicals and lectures. It has also drastically reduced lecture hours per week. She alleged that many teachers are increasingly being compelled, often by their college principals, to attend political programs that have no academic content and purpose; thereby affecting classes."

## The Delhi govt. will create a useful curriculum for special education schools

**Delhi:** The Delhi government has made the decision to give special education instructors access to a comprehensive digital resource library that is linked to the functional curriculum on an inclusive and accessible learning management system in state-run schools. This would enable teachers to

undertake continuing formative evaluations of children with special needs.

Officials say that the Delhi government's inclusive education section is developing a functioning curriculum that will allow students with special needs to get instruction and learning from the

same source in all of the school's locations. "The functional curriculum's goal is to meet the needs of students with special needs enrolled in state-run schools. It particularly includes the development of life skills outside of the classroom," a Delhi government official stated.

## Schools are allowed to carry over empty EWS seats

**Delhi:** The Delhi High Court ruled that it is "legal and valid" to transfer open seats in the Economically Weaker Section/Disadvantaged Group (EWS/DG) category from one class in a given year to another class in the following year at the same institution. Carrying over empty EWS/DG vacancies to the next class in the next year does not infringe the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act or any other legislative condition, according to a single-judge bench chaired by Justice C Hari Shankar. "Every school is required by law to admit EWS/DG children to the extent of at least 25% of the strength of its entry-level class, which comes under Section 2(n)(iv) of the RTE Act. The HC emphasized that if a school defaults, it is legal to force it to make up the difference in the next year's higher class. According to the HC, the majority of these instances involve the school's refusal to accept EWS applicants in lieu of "carry forward vacancies" from prior years that went unfilled. It then stated that the student will be enrolled in the school's First Class as an EWS student until the conclusion of the current academic year. It further stated that in accordance with the Act, the DoE would pay the students' fees."

## In a first, IIT-M introduces sports quota for UG admissions

**Delhi:** IIT-Madras has become the first IIT to introduce sports quota for its UG admissions and will create two supernumerary seats in each course from the 2024-25 academic session. One of the seats will be reserved for females, while the other one is gender neutral under the 'Sports Excellence Admission' initiative.

## In her honor, Dr. Jaspal Singh Sandhu was able to successfully unveil the Jai Hind

**Delhi:** Harbans Kaur, a resident of Amritsar, Punjab, was posthumously acclaimed as the most proud Indian mother and a dedicated warrior during a ceremony held in Amritsar. Dr. Ved Tandon, Dev Tyagi, and other dignitaries attended the unveiling ceremony. Prominent BJP leader Vijay Jolly was present to lend his grace to the event. The Mayors Parlour London's Darshan Grewal, a former mayor and vice president of the BJP abroad, praised and acknowledged Lord Rummy's parents' noteworthy contribution. Lady and Lord Ranger CBE have conveyed their happiness at their mother's statue's unveiling. Dr. Tandon voiced his concerns over the statue's unveiling and advised people to draw motivation and inspiration from Ms.



Kaur because she never gave up on life.

She sent her kids to police school while working nonstop. In the Indian Armed Forces, five of her sons were commissioned as officers. She battled in three

wars to protect India's sovereignty. She now has the distinction of being the most proud Indian mother. Everyone praises Ms. Kaur's efforts and commitment to making the nation proud!

## US visa appointment wait time 75% lower

**Delhi:** In 2023, the US processed a record number of visas in India, cutting wait times by 75%. Visa demand rose 60%, with 1 in 10 applicants from India. Indian students received almost 140,000 US student visas, making them the largest international graduate student group. The US consulate in Mumbai processed 31,000 Covid-19-delayed immigrant visa cases. US consular services in India will continue, with a new Hyderabad facility and new Ahmedabad

and Bangalore consulates. In 2023, the US processed more visas in India than ever before, reducing visitor visa appointment wait times by 75% due to staffing growth, innovations, and efficiency. The US embassy and consulates in India handled 1.4 million visas last year. Indians make up one in 10 US visa applicants worldwide, and demand for all sorts of visas was "unprecedented" in 2023, with a 60% increase over 2022, the US embassy stated. Visitor or B1 and B2

visas are the second most popular US visas with over 700,000 applications. The US missions satisfied this demand by adding permanent staff, staffing for three months in Mumbai early in 2023, and using innovative technical solutions, according to the statement. Visitor visa appointment wait times in India dropped from 1,000 days to 250 days due to process improvements and staffing investments.

"Wait times are minimal in all other categories," it

claimed. The statement claimed the US missions in India issued more than 140,000 student visas in 2023, marking a record for the third year in a row. Mumbai, New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Chennai are the top four student visa processing locations worldwide. These rising numbers have made Indian students the largest group of international graduate students in the US and more than a quarter of the over one million foreign students in the US, the statement said.

## Back-door routes allow low-grade international students to enter UK undergraduate degrees

A newspaper investigation found that international students are getting back-door undergraduate degrees at top British universities with much lower grades than domestic students because universities are cash-strapped and need the extra fees. The UK's department of educa-

tion has opened an investigation. Around 30% of Indian students in the UK are undergraduates. Domestic student costs are limited at £9,250, however overseas students can spend over £40,000. Two undercover reporters posed as parents of international students with low A-level marks applying to UK universities for the Times story. They discovered that international students can access undergraduate degree courses through "international foundation courses" without applying through UCAS. UK institutions are paying millions of pounds to recruitment firms in India and China to find low-grade students willing to pay to enroll at Russell Group universities.

These agencies operate mini-campuses on uni-

versity campuses to offer one-year pathway courses to international students and sometimes first-year courses. A "formality" end-of-year exam is all students need to pass. After reading the paper, universities minister Roger Halfon met with vice-chancellors and requested an urgent probe into agent misconduct from the department of education. MP Suella Braverman raged, calling for the graduate route to be abandoned and international students capped. This is big in China. Less than half of Indian students come here because of the cost of an extra year. This path attracts wealthy Indians with bad marks who cannot get into inferior Indian colleges and wish to attend a Russell Group university.

## IIMC becomes a 'deemed university' and can grant degrees

**Delhi:** India's leading journalism and mass communication school, IIMC, has been designated a 'deemed university' by the Ministry of Education. IIMC can now grant doctoral degrees. The new status applies to IIMC New Delhi and its five regional campuses in Jammu, Amravati, Aizawl, Kottayam, and Dhenkanal.

IIMC posted on X, formerly Twitter, "A big thanks to the Ministry of Education for declaring IIMC New Delhi and its five regional centres as Deemed to be University." "IIMC is committed to giving its best to promote education, training, and research in mass communication," it stated. On August 17, 1966, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting estab-



lished the institute. Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur called IIMC's university status a "special and historic day" and stated, "This Institute has a glorious history of imparting quality education in media subjects like Journalism, Advertising, and Public Relations." He continued, "The granting of University status marks a new

beginning, as more courses could be added to the curriculum along with research and doctoral programmes, giving youth new options and pathways to explore. The IIMC trains Indian Information Service officials. The Ministry of Education declared IIMC a deemed university on the UGC's recommendation. The Information and Broadcasting Ministry

approved deemed university status in 2016. The institute was proposed to join with Jawaharlal Nehru University's Centre for Media Studies or Jamia Millia Islamia's AJK Mass Communication Research Centre in 2018. However, the education and I and B ministries opposed this because it should keep its independent and prestigious status.

## Pistol shooter Anuradha Devi starts over at 33

**Delhi:** Anuradha Devi, 33, broke a barrier by winning a World Cup silver in Cairo while pistol shooting. Teens have joined the sport recently. They have dominated several tournaments so much that a 30-year-old could consider they are too old for the sport. Devi pondered about quitting the sport, but she persisted because of her tenacity. Devi, 33, earned silver behind Greece's Anna Korakakki in her international debut. It was perfect timing as India searched for a second air pistol shooter to qualify for the Paris Olympics. Devi is optimistic about another Paris Olympics qualification tournament. "I wanted a medal at my first international tournament, the World Cup. I want to go to the Paris Olympics, but first I want a quota spot," said.