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

## Om Birla vs K Suresh for Lok Sabha Speaker: What's so special about the contest

**NEW DELHI:** For the first time in nearly 50 years, elections for the Lok Sabha Speaker will see a spirited contest as the ruling BJP-led NDA alliance has been unable to strike a consensus with the now much stronger Congress-led opposition bloc INDIA. While the NDA has fielded former Speaker Om Birla, INDIA has picked Congress leader and senior-most Lok Sabha MP Kodikunnil Suresh. Only the third contest for Speaker since Independence. The Speaker for the 18th Lok Sabha will be elected on June 26. On June 27, President Droupadi Murmu is scheduled to address a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament. This is only the third time that elections will be held for the Lok Sabha Speaker post. As per the Lok Sabha Secretariat, the first such contest was in



1952 between GV Mavalankar and Shankar Shantaram. Mavalankar won with 394 votes whereas Shantaram got 55. The second such fight happened in 1976 between Baliram Bhagat and Jagannath Rao. Bhagat won with 344 votes while Jagannath Rao got 58. The latest contest is likely to see a much narrower victory margin. **Numbers game** In the just concluded 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the NDA secured 293 seats -- well above the halfway mark of 272 -- while INDIA bagged 234 seats. A total of 16

seats were won by Independents or other regional parties. Before Suresh filed his nomination for the post, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had said that INDIA bloc was ready to extend support to NDA's Speaker candidate, but the post of Deputy Speaker should be given to the opposition. "Rajnath Singh said that he would call Mallikarjun Kharge but he has not done that yet ... PM Modi is asking for cooperation from Opposition but our leader is getting insulted," said Rahul Gandhi, shortly after which K Suresh -- an 8-time MP -- filed his nomination for the Speaker seat. NDA candidate Birla was unanimously elected as the Speaker of the previous 17th Lok Sabha. Birla's name was proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and was supported by all major opposition parties, including Congress, TMC, DMK, and BJD. The YSRCP and TDP also supported Birla's candidature. **Article 93** Article 93 of Constitution that deals with the Speaker and deputy Speaker of the House of the People, states: "The House of the People shall, as soon as may be, choose two members of the House to be respectively Speaker and Deputy Speaker thereof and, so often as the office of Speaker or Deputy Speaker becomes vacant, the House shall choose another Speaker or Deputy Speaker, as the case may be."

## UP cabinet okays Tata Sons' Rs 650 crore proposal for 'museum of temples'

**NEW DELHI:** The Uttar Pradesh cabinet has given the green light to a proposal from Tata Sons to construct a 'museum of temples' in Ayodhya. The project, estimated to cost Rs 650 crore, will be funded through the company's corporate social responsibility fund. The tourism department will provide land for the museum on a 90-year lease for a token amount of Re 1, as stated by Tourism Minister Jaivir Singh. The idea of a 'museum of temples' in Ayodhya has been in discussion since last year, with chief minister Yogi Adityanath and senior officials presenting the concept to Prime Minister Modi in September. The museum aims to showcase the history and architecture of renowned temples across the country and may also feature a light-and-sound show. In addition to the museum, the state cabinet approved



2nd Maha teacher held in NEET leak case, hunt on for ITI instructor

**CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR:** Another zilla parishad (ZP) teacher was nabbed on Tuesday by Latur police in the NEET paper leak case, following the arrest of a ZP school headmaster on . The second arrested accused, a ZP teacher-Santosh Jadhav-was produced before the court and remanded in

police custody till July 2. ZP school headmaster, Jaleel Khan Pathan, was the first to be arrested in the paper leak case. Latur SP Somay Munde refused to comment on the developments related to the case. However, police sources said a search is on for an ITI instructor who too is wanted in the case. another proposal from Tata Sons for development works in Ayodhya at an additional cost of Rs 100 crore. The cabinet also gave the nod for the launch of helicopter services in Lucknow, Prayagraj, and Kapilvastu under the

## Pune Porsche crash: Accused teen released after Bombay HC order

**NEW DELHI:** The teenager involved in the Pune Porsche crash that killed two people was released from observation home on Tuesday following the Bombay high court's order. Earlier in the day, the HC had said the continuation of the minor accused in the fatal case is "illegal", directing his release from the home. The HC directed authorities to release the minor, on bail with his custody not to be with any grandparent as directed by a magistrate on May 19 while granting him bail. Continued detention of Pune Porsche case teen in Observation home is illegal says HC, directs his release "We are bound by law."

## Four people arrested for allegedly trespassing on grounds of British PM Rishi Sunak's home



**Four** individuals have been taken into custody at the constituency residence of UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in North Yorkshire. The police responded swiftly, apprehending the men within a minute of their unauthorized entry into the property grounds. The suspects are being held on allegations of aggravated trespass. Reports suggest that a youth activist wearing an 'Eat s\*\*\* Rishi' shirt staged a protest at the Prime Minister's mansion. A group called Youth Demand posted video showing a member it said defecated in the pond on Sunak's property. The incident comes just over a week before the UK's general election that will determine if Sunak remains in power. Polls and pundits have predicted the Labour Party to take control after 14 years of Conservative rule. Youth Demand said it is calling for a two-way arms embargo on Israel and for the next UK government to revoke oil and gas licenses granted since 2021. North Yorkshire Police released a statement, saying: "We have arrested four people in the grounds of the prime minister's constituency home this afternoon. Our officers were with the four men within one minute of them entering the grounds. "They were detained at around 12:40 pm before being escorted off the property and arrested on suspicion of aggravated trespass. The men aged 52 from London, 43 from Bolton, 21 from Manchester, and 20 from Chichester, remain in police custody for questioning .

## TMC says 'not consulted' as INDIA bloc fields K Suresh for Speaker post

**NEW DELHI:** As the INDIA bloc members united on Tuesday to field its candidate against the Modi government's candidate Om Birla, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) said it was not consulted on the nomination of Congress's Kodikunnil Suresh for the post. In only the third time contest, the INDIA bloc has fielded K Suresh against the BJP's Om



Birla for the Speaker election. TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee, however, said his party was not consulted on fielding Kodikunnil Suresh as the INDIA bloc's joint nominee adding the party chief Mamata Banerjee will take a decision on backing Suresh. "No one contacted us. There have been no talks, unfortunately this has been

a unilateral decision," Banerjee said. According to news agency PTI sources, the TMC has not signed the nomination papers of Suresh and may also skip the opposition meeting tonight. They INDIA bloc leaders are scheduled to meet at 8pm at Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge's residence to discuss its strategy.

## Congress showing 'old mentality' of 'dictating terms': NDA on opposition's fight for Speaker

**NEW DELHI:** NDA netas in one voice denounced INDIA bloc for fielding Congress's K Suresh against BJP's Om Birla for the post of Lok Sabha Speaker, necessitating an election for the constitutional post. Union minister Piyush Goyal said Congress has once again shown its 'old mentality' of 'dictating terms'. "In the morning, Rajnath Singh wanted to discuss this with Union minister and Lok Janshakti Party's (LJP) Chirag Paswan recalled several occasions when Congress fielded Dalit candidates, whose defeat was a certainty, a fait



will dictate the terms was shown again; that the condition is that first decide who will be the deputy speaker and then support will be given for the speaker. We condemn this type of politics," he said. Union minister and Lok Janshakti Party's (LJP) Chirag Paswan recalled several occasions when Congress fielded Dalit candidates, whose defeat was a certainty, a fait accompli even in case of Suresh, also a Dalit. "Whenever Congress-led opposition realises that their defeat is certain, they play the Dalit card. In 2002, when they knew they were losing the vice-presidential election, they nominated Sushil Kumar Shinde. In 2017, when they knew they were losing the presidential election, they nominated Meira Kumar.

Now, when they clearly do not have the numbers to elect the Lok Sabha Speaker, they are nominating Suresh," Paswan said. "Are Dalit leaders only symbolic candidates for Opposition?" he asked. Coming out in strong defence of NDA nominee, JD(U)'s Rajiv Ranjan Singh 'Lalan' said K C Venugopal and Baalu had come to discuss the speaker's issue with Rajnath, who told them about NDA candidate and sought support. "Venugopal said you accept right now to give deputy speaker's post.

## Govt likely to go for JEE-style online test format for exams

**NEW DELHI:** Govt indicated it is considering a move towards a more stress-free, multi-session, multiple-times-a-year computer-based test format for future exams, similar to the Joint Entrance Examination-Main (JEE-Main), which was successfully offered four times during the Covid pandemic. Sources suggested that National Testing Agency (NTA) can consider learning



from and collaborating with global bodies like the Educational Testing Service (ETS), which administer the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in the US. The seven-member panel constituted by the Centre for exam

reforms too briefly discussed the mode of exams - computer-based and pen-paper on Monday - and will deliberate on it in detail in subsequent meetings. Earlier on Sunday, Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan hinted at a potential overhaul of the exam process, "India needs a flexible and less stressful exam system like the SAT. (Scholastic Aptitude Test).

## Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party stung by loss of Toronto seat

**Toronto-Canada's** Conservative Party won a special election in a district in central Toronto, dealing a substantial blow to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party ahead of a national vote expected next year. Voters in Toronto-St Paul's elected Conservative candidate Don Stewart to the House of Commons, flipping a seat that has voted Liberal in every election since 1993. Stewart won 42% of the vote, according to preliminary Elections Canada data, defeating Liberal candidate Leslie Church, who had just over 40%. While the result doesn't change the balance of power in Ottawa, it was widely seen as an important litmus test..

## No justification to charge toll if roads are in disrepair: Gadkari

**NEW DELHI:** Echoing the sentiment of many highway commuters, Union road transport minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday said there is no justification for highway agencies charging toll, if roads are not in good condition and people continue to face problems. He was speaking at a global workshop on satellite-based tolling, which will be rolled out across 5,000 km during this financial year. Known for not mincing his words, Gadkari said, "If you don't provide good services, you should not charge toll ...We are in a hurry to start tolling to collect user fees and protect our interest. When the condition of any road is not good, I get numerous complaints. and there are social media posts all over...You should collect the user fee where you provide the best

quality road. If you collect toll on roads with potholes, mud, then there will be a backlash from people. We (political leaders) face people's ire." The minister said the field officers of NH agencies must be more sensitive towards the pain that people face waiting for long at toll plazas and there must be a mechanism for lodging grievances and their quick redressal. Though gov't made the use of FASTag for paying toll on highways mandatory in 2021 for seamless travel through toll lanes and presently around 98% transactions are through these smart tags fixed on vehicles, there have been numerous reports of queues at plazas across the country. In its bid to put an end to this, National Highways Authority .

# Industrial Development Minister Nandi met Prime Minister

Accompanied by Abhilasha Gupta Nandi, invited PM to their son's wedding

Prayagraj: Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi, Industrial Minister, Government of Uttar Pradesh, along with his wife Abhilasha Gupta Nandi, former Mayor of Prayagraj, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi today. During this, Minister Nandi and the former Mayor congratulated and congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the architect of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat, for taking over the reins of the country for the third consecutive time. Minister Nandi said that this mandate is the public's approval on the multidimensional leadership, unprecedented decisions and public welfare policies of the Honorable Prime Minister. During the meeting, Minister Nandi



received guidance from the Prime Minister on various political issues. He discussed various important topics. Minister Nandi and former mayor Abhilasha

Gupta Nandi invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for their son's wedding ceremony in the coming month.

Minister Nandi while

posting on X said, Had the privilege of meeting Narendra Modi ji along with his wife Abhilasha ji, former mayor of Prayagraj! Congratulations and best

wishes to the Honorable Prime Minister for taking over the reins of the country for the third consecutive time. This mandate is the public's seal of approval on the multidimensional leadership, unprecedented decisions and public welfare policies of the Honorable Prime Minister! During the meeting, valuable guidance was received from the Honorable Prime Minister on various political issues. They discussed various important topics! Respectfully invited the Honorable Prime Minister to the wedding ceremony of his son Abhishek Gupta to be held in the coming month! Expressed my heartfelt gratitude for giving time from your very busy schedule!

## Revenue inspector caught taking bribe

Prayagraj: The anti-corruption team on Tuesday arrested a revenue inspector for demanding bribe from a person in return for entering his name in property records. An FIR has been registered against the accused under Prevention of Corruption Act and he has been arrested, anti-corruption officials said.

Achal Kumar, a resident of Rajapur Chaubara village of Holagarh, approached the anti-corruption team and complained that revenue inspector Rajendra Kumar Sharma posted at Soraon tehsil was demanding a bribe of Rs. 6,000 from him in return for entering his name in property records. On Tuesday, Achal Kumar called the revenue inspector to an eatery in Holagarh. As soon as the revenue inspector accepted the bribe, the anti-corruption team reached the spot and caught him red-handed with the cash.

## Women Campus Drive organized: 25 women got employment

Lucknow: Women Campus Drive was organized by Hindustan Unilever Limited, Sumerpur, Hamirpur at Government ITI, Aliganj, Lucknow. Principal Raj Kumar Yadav informed that a total of 25 female candidates have been selected for regular jobs in this campus drive. MA. Khan, Training Counseling and Placement Officer, said the selected women have been offered jobs with a salary of RS. 12,500 per month and other facilities. This event has provided new employment opportunities to women.

## AI-based tech to be used for crowd management at Kumbh Mela 2025

Prayagraj: The artificial intelligence (AI) will play a key role in crowd management and security at Kumbh Mela 2025, which would be organised in an area of 4000 hectares. This year, the Uttar Pradesh government will use AI-based technologies and tools, apart from drones and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras for crowd management at the upcoming mega event in Prayagraj. According to state government sources, the scale of the event was expected to be unprecedented and therefore it was essential to create a benchmark in terms of security, cleanliness and convenience.

The AI-based equipment and techniques must be used to keep an eye on crowd density so that any possible clustering may be dispersed before the group upsets order in any pocket, said sources. The Urban Development Department said that over 1.5 lakh toilets will be made on the ground for the convenience of the pilgrims. They added that more than 10,000 sanitation workers will be engaged to ensure that these toilets remain functional. According to media sources, the police have also asked for special boats and safety equipment. Police officials said hi-tech equipment and drones will be purchased to avert any untoward situation.

## Joint B.Ed Entrance Exam

Lucknow/ Jhansi: Bundelkhand University, Jhansi was entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the state level Joint B.Ed Entrance Examination-2024 by the Uttar Pradesh Government. Joint B.Ed Entrance Examination-2024 was conducted on 09 June 2024 in a cheating-free, fair and peaceful manner at 470 examination centers located in 51 districts of the state. A total of 2,23,384 candidates had applied online for the entrance examination. State Higher Education Minister Yogendra Upadhyay said that a hi-tech command control room was established in Bundelkhand University for the B.Ed entrance examination 2024, in which modern surveillance system was used. Was done, through which live monitoring of all the examination centers of the state was done. For this, about 5500 state-of-the-art CCTV cameras equipped with high technology were installed at the centres. For biometric attendance of candidates during the examination, face recognition and finger print attendance of all the candidates was done using AI. Through modern surveillance system, strict monitoring of strong rooms, examination rooms and entry/exit points was done at 470 examination centers in the state. The Higher Education Minister said that the result was declared on June 25, 2024 even before the scheduled date of declaring the result, i.e. June 30, 2024. According to the declared examination results, among the candidates who got positions in the first 10, 06 are male and 04 are female candidates. Manoj Kumar of Aligarh district stood first in the arts class in the Uttar Pradesh Joint B.Ed Entrance Examination-2024, Shiv Mangal son of Prayagraj district stood second in the science class and Nazir Ahmed of Varanasi district stood third in the arts class in the state.

Vice Chancellor Bundelkhand University Prof. Mukesh Pandey said that among the candidates, there were 1746 candidates from Agriculture category, 12633 from Commerce category, 72342 from Science category and 136663 from Arts category. Of these, 1,08,656 candidates were from General Category, 69407 from Other Backward Classes, 44369 from Scheduled Caste and 952 from Scheduled Tribe. As per the application, a total of 1,93,352 candidates participated in the first shift and a total of 1,93,351 candidates participated in the second shift. Male candidates are 102011 and female candidates are 1,21,372. He said that ranks were issued to a total of 1,93,062 candidates in this examination, which includes 1,18,499 candidates from Arts stream, 62,774 from Science stream, 10,332 from Commerce stream, and 1,457 from Agriculture stream.

# E-rickshaws to ply only on specified routes now

Prayagraj: In a bid to control the problem of traffic jams in Sangam City, routes have been defined for plying of e-rickshaws. The e-rickshaws on different routes will have different colours and the drivers will be penalised if they violate the rules and venture on non-specified routes with their vehicles. In a bid to control the problem of traffic jams in Sangam City, routes have been defined for plying of e-rickshaws. The e-rickshaws on different routes will have different colours and the drivers will be penalised if they violate the rules and venture on non-specified routes

with their vehicles.

The proposal was presented in the meeting with office bearers of tempo, taxi auto and e-rickshaw union held on Thursday. As per the proposal, traffic cops have identified the main routes in the city under 20 police stations. For plying of e-rickshaws, the city has been divided into 17 zones. The proposal included restriction on entry of e-rickshaws from the direction of trans-Yamuna and trans-Ganga areas.

The traffic police officials have proposed that e-rickshaws will be restricted on Allahabad University Road, Laxmi Talkies Trise-

tion, Kutchery Road, Shastri Bridge, Noorullah Road, VIP Road and MG Marg. Under the new proposal, one-way arrangements will be in place for movement of e-rickshaws on Johnstonganj to Ghanatgarh, Shahganj police station to Loknath Crossing, AU Crossing to Kutchery, Allahpur Crossing to Alopibagh Temple. However, in case of heavy traffic, the plying of e-rickshaws will be restricted by traffic police. The decision on movement of e-rickshaw on main routes in Civil Lines is still pending.

Meanwhile, the office bearers of tempo, taxi, e-rick-

shaw union raised objections to some of the proposals. Union vice president Raghunath Dwivedi said that people will face problems if e-rickshaws will be restricted on several routes of the city. Moreover, passengers who must cover long distances on e-rickshaws will also face problems if routes are defined. The union said that they will study the new proposals and will take final decision after a meeting next week.

During the meeting, traffic cops said that 18000 e-rickshaws are registered in the city while thousands of them are moving unregis-

tered. As per an estimate, around 35,000 e-rickshaws are moving in the city among which 10,000 have no registration. Tempo, taxi, auto, e-rickshaw union office bearers said that all e-rickshaws should be registered, and verification of their drivers should be carried out.

Traffic inspector Amit Kumar said that on each defined route, 400 to 750 e-rickshaws will be allowed to ply. Brown colour e-rickshaws will move on routes in Dhumanganj and Puramufti area, green colour for Kareli, Khuldabad and Civil Lines, sky blue for routes in

Atarsuiya and Muthiganj, red for routes in Kotwali, Shahganj and Cantt, purple for Kydganj area, yellow for Daraganj and Georgetown, blue for Colonelganj and white for routes in Shivkuti area. DCP City Deepak Bhukar said police will also introduce coding system for e-rickshaws in the city. All e-rickshaws on each routes will have special code written on them. Police will have master data of each code. In case anyone approaches with complaint of any lost article or theft etc by e-rickshaw drivers, police will use the master data to identify the particular e-rickshaw and its driver.

## Motul Kicks Off Sehat Ki Samridhhi Initiative for Auto Mechanics

Varanasi: Motul India, a leading Manufacturer of premium, high-performance engine & industrial lubricants in India launches Motul Sehat Ki Samridhhi CSR initiative. The initiative aimed at enhancing primary healthcare access for auto mechanics, their dependents, and other community members, is set to launch its first camp in Varanasi on 25th June 2024. This is the first of an extensive series of health check-up camps across 20 cities in India. Spearheaded by Motul India, in collaboration with Smile Foundation, the initiative will run from June 2024 to March 2025, covering key regions in Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya

Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.

The initiative focuses on delivering essential healthcare services to communities with limited access to medical care while alleviating the strain on government health services. Over the next 9 months, approximately 16,000 beneficiaries will receive comprehensive medical attention through 80 health camps. This would significantly reduce their out-of-pocket expenses, enhance accessibility to doorstep healthcare services, and encourage overall healthier living behavior among community members.

Nagendra Pai, CEO of Motul India & South Asia, said, "With Sehat ki Samridhhi, our aim is to nurture the well-being of auto mechanics and their families across the nation.

## Wrong Side Driving on Shastri Bridge in Varanasi Poses Major Risks

Varanasi: The Shastri Bridge, which connects traffic across various areas of Varanasi, has not only been causing traffic jams but has also become a significant reason for accidents due to wrong-side driving. Despite all regulations and laws, people continue to indulge in wrong-side driving on the Shastri Bridge. The lack of traffic management is evident, and as a result, people are taking their lives lightly. According to traffic experts, this problem can only be controlled when traffic administration strictly enforces regulations, improves the condition of the bridge, fills potholes, develops new infrastructure, and provides NH-2 (NH-19) as an alternative route for vehicle drivers, and raises awareness among citizens about the dangers of wrong-side driving.

Throughout India, wrong-side driving has led to numerous fatalities, with over 43,000 lives lost between 2017 and 2021. In Delhi alone, 1500-2000 lives are lost each year due to wrong-side driving. One can imagine the dangerous consequences of wrong-side driving in a city like Varanasi, which is ancient and historic, where there is hustle and bustle throughout the year due to tourists and sometimes even exceeds limits.

Especially in the case of the Shastri Bridge, which has completed its 50 years, undergone several repairs, and has developed large potholes, leading people to resort to wrong-side driving. As a result, traffic often gets stuck on the Shastri Bridge. What should take minutes to clear often takes hours. During

this time, while accidents occur frequently, local residents are grappling with the serious problem of air and noise pollution caused by vehicles. This has a detrimental effect on people's health. It is also having a negative impact on law and order.

However, the government has made strict laws for wrong-side driving under the Motor Vehicle Act. Apart from a fine of Rs 500-1000, there are provisions for up to three months of imprisonment, but neither the traffic administration is strict here nor do people improve their ways. According to Section 279 of the Indian Penal Code, rash driving and wrong-side driving are punishable offenses. People have developed a belief that they can reach their destination quickly by driving on the

wrong side, whereas this is a misconception. Wrong-side driving leads to traffic congestion and delays for people crossing the Shastri Bridge, as there are no alternative routes available after getting stuck on the bridge.

The problem is that all kinds of vehicles are using wrong-side driving on the Shastri Bridge, from two-wheelers to garbage trucks. To control this, the administration should take at least two immediate steps. Firstly, there needs to be the presence of police on both sides of the bridge and the habit of strictly driving in one's lane will have to be increased. The second step is to create awareness among the people. It is important to explain to people that violating traffic rules takes more time but also poses a risk of death.

# JK Cement adds new grinding unit at Prayagraj

Prayagraj: JK Cement, a leading Indian manufacturer of grey cement and prominent global white cement producer, today announced the commissioning of a new grinding unit at its Prayagraj Plant in Uttar Pradesh. This significant milestone, achieved in a record time of under ten months, strengthens JK Cement's commitment to meet the growing demand for cement and solidify its position as a key industry leader.

Dr. Raghavpat Singhania, Managing Director, JK Cement Ltd., said, "We are thrilled to launch this new grinding unit at Prayagraj, which marks a significant mile-

stone in our expansion strategy. As India accelerates its infrastructure development to sustain robust economic growth, we are continually scaling our capacities to cater to escalating demands from the infrastructure, housing, and construction sectors. Our commitment to quality, innovation, and contributing to the socio-economic development remains unwavering. We anticipate that these endeavors will not only foster our growth but also actively contribute to the overall development of the region and the nation."

Madhavrishna Singhania, Deputy Managing Director and CEO, JK

Cement Ltd., added, "Our relentless pursuit of excellence has led us to this momentous occasion. Cementing our market foothold emerges as a paramount objective, seamlessly harmonizing with our overarching vision of achieving sustainable and profitable expansion. This strategic addition not only ensures our steadfast role in nation-building but also ushers in an array of employment opportunities within the state. We are committed to operational brilliance and innovative contributions, amplifying growth and progress on both regional and national horizons."

The Prayagraj Plant is a

2 MTPA Clinker Grinding unit project which will increase the overall capacity of the organization from the present 22MTPA to 24MTPA. This strategic move allows the company to efficiently cater to the burgeoning demand for cement across the Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

The Prayagraj grinding unit is equipped with cutting-edge German technology, ensuring high energy efficiency and reducing input and fixed costs. This strategic expansion positions JK Cement to cater to the evolving needs of a diverse customer base across key markets.

The Eastern Uttar Pradesh market for cement

is significant, driven by the region's rapid infrastructure development. The government's heavy investment in infrastructure projects, including roads, bridges, and buildings, is expected to continue fueling growth. JK Cement's strategic move into this market leverages its expertise and resources to meet the increasing demand, solidifying its position as a key player in the industry.

Presently, JK Cement operates two functional units in the state of Uttar Pradesh, situated in Aligarh and Hamirpur with the capacity of 1.5 MTPA and 2 MTPA respectively. Designed with cutting-edge technologies, the

project is expected to generate substantial direct and indirect employment opportunities, contributing significantly to the local economy and fostering regional growth. JK Cement's commitment to quality, innovation, and sustainability is evident in the design and operation of the new grinding unit. The facility is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and adheres to the highest environmental and safety standards. This strategic expansion reinforces JK Cement's position as a leading cement manufacturer in India, poised to meet the growing demands of the construction and infrastructure sectors.

## Kaushambi youth murdered over suspected illicit affair, accused held

Prayagraj: The Kaushambi police arrested a man on Tuesday who murdered a youth on suspicion of having an illicit relationship with his wife. Later, the accused dumped the body of the youth in Nawabganj area of Prayagraj, police said. The Kaushambi police arrested a man on Tuesday who murdered a youth on suspicion of having an illicit relationship with his wife. Later, the accused dumped the body of the youth in Nawabganj area of Prayagraj, police said.

On Tuesday, a body was found in a sack in Nawabganj area of Prayagraj. Shivam's kin

reached the mortuary and identified his body.

The family members raised suspicion that their neighbour Ranjeet Kumar killed Shivam and dumped his body. Police rounded up Ranjeet Kumar for questioning during which he confessed to having murdered Shivam. During questioning, Ranjeet Kumar claimed that he returned from Mumbai on June 16 but hid himself near his home to keep an eye on activities of Shivam and his wife. He claimed that he saw Shivam near his house at midnight and caught him. He strangled Shivam and then again fled to Mumbai before returning some days back.

## PM Kisan Samman Nidhi: Over Rs. 109 cr disbursed among 5.49 lakh farmers in Prayagraj

Prayagraj: Over 5.49 lakh marginal and small landholding farmers of Prayagraj have received financial assistance of Rs. 2000 each under the 17th instalment of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi (PMKSN) released recently. A total of over Rs. 109 crore has been disbursed among these farmers, said officials. Prayagraj deputy director (agriculture) Satya Prakash Srivastava said that more than 6 lakh farmers are registered in Prayagraj district. "In the second week of June, the 17th instalment of Kisan Samman Nidhi has been sent to 5.49 lakh 'Annadaatas' in the district. An amount of Rs. 109.40 crore has been sent directly to their accounts as Kisan

Samman Nidhi," he said.

Deputy Director (Agriculture) SP Srivastava says that the farmers of the district have received a total of 17 instalments of Kisan Samman Nidhi till now. Efforts are now on to cover those eligible farmers who have been deprived of it due to any reason, he added.

Another relief to those receiving Kisan Samman Nidhi is that now they can also get the amount through the Postal Department. Interested farmers will get this amount through DBT.

Postmaster General of Varanasi and Prayagraj region KK Yadav said that for this, farmers will not need to go to any bank branch or ATM. The amount can be withdrawn from the mobile

phone and Aadhaar linked account in any bank of the country through Aadhaar Enabled Payment System from home. The Postal Department will not charge any fee for this, he added.

Officials say that the number of marginal and small landholding farmers is the highest in the country. Due to limited income, many times these financially weak farmers had to face many financial difficulties in farming. The farmers were forced to take loans from the moneylenders and got in the debt trap. In view of these issues, the Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana on February 2, 2019.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 18,

2024 during his visit to Varanasi, his parliamentary constituency, for the first time after taking oath for the third consecutive term had released the 17th instalment of the PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi, amounting to over Rs. 20,000 crore, for 92.6 million beneficiary farmers across the country.

PMKSN is a central sector scheme under which income support of Rs. 6,000 per year, or Rs. 2,000 in three equal instalments is provided to the families of all registered small landholding farmers.

Agriculture department officials point out that till a few years ago, due to the increasing cost of farming, farmers were rapidly shunning the practice of farming.

But after the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana got introduced, the situation changed. With the financial help provided under the scheme, the inclination of farmers towards farming has increased, they say. Farmers who earlier used to take loans from moneylenders for fertilisers and seeds, now do not have to depend on moneylenders. Their work is done easily with the Kisan Samman Nidhi coming into their accounts. By getting Samman Nidhi, farmers buy fertilisers and seeds on time and have started planting crops early. Due to this, their crop production has started increasing and the income of the farmer has also greatly improved, the officials say.

## Martyr Nebu Lal Bind Memorial Competition organized

Naini: On the occasion of the memorial day of martyr Sub Inspector Nebulal Bind in Kanpur Bikaru case, Martyr Nebu Lal Bind Memorial Talent Search Competition was organized in Bhati Handia Prayagraj on Sunday. In which the students participated enthusiastically and showed interest. In this competition, free competition was organized for students from class 6 to 12. 1165 students participated in the competition. It was conducted in Shrimati Gombi Devi Chhotelal Bind Mahavidyalaya Bhati and Shri Tulsi Shiksha Sansthan Darwasi. On the initiative of Director Arvind Kumar, every year competitive examination is conducted to encourage rural

children, in which he told that competition is the key for the students. In which the students have to pave the way on their own path,

Bind, Om Prakash, Vijay Prakash, Anup Bind, Nandlal Bind, advocate Rakesh Bharti, Amar Sahni, Rahul Bind, Dharmendra Kumar,



in this examination Dr. JS Bind, Sarita Bind, Dr. Mithilesh Kumar, school management Rajendra Bind, acting principal Akhilesh

Vijay Bind, Sanjeev Rao, Vikas Bind, Prashant Saxena, Mukesh, Neeraj, Laxman Bind, Suresh Bind, Vishnu Bharti etc. were present.

## Nadda congratulated on being made Rajya Sabha leader of NDA in House

Prayagraj: Bharatiya Janata Party National President and Union Cabinet Minister JP Nadda BJP members congratulated NDA on being made the leader of Rajya Sabha in the House. On this occasion, BJP Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra and District Spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani said that under the leadership of Honorable JP Nadda, the achievements of the NDA government will be strongly maintained in the House and the Prime Minister Will fulfill Narendra Modi ji's resolve of a developed India. Among those who congratulated him were Kunj Bihari Mishra, Devesh Singh, Varun Kesarwani, Rajesh Kesarwani, Ramesh Pasi, Vivek Aggarwal, Vijay Vaishya, Pramod Modi, Raju Pathak, Girjesh Mishra, Raghavendra Singh, Prashant Shukla, Rakesh Bharti, Anand. Vaishya Sudarshan, Pawan Mishra, Ajay Agrahari Shatrughan Jaiswal etc.

BJP members congratulated MP Om Ji Birla on being made NDA candidate for the post of Lok Sabha Speaker. On this occasion, BJP Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra and District Spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani said that Om Ji Birla will win with majority in the Lok Sabha temple and He will once again grace the post of Speaker of the Lok Sabha of India, the world's largest democratic country. Those who congratulated him included Kunj Bihari Mishra, Devi Singh Kesarwani, Rajesh Kesarwani, Ramesh Pasi, Vivek Aggarwal, Vijay Vaishya, Pramod Modi, Raju Pathak, Girjesh Mishra, Raghavendra. Singh, Prashant Shukla, Rakesh Bharti, Anand Vaishya, Sudarshan Pawan Mishra, Ajay Agrahari, Shatrughan Jaiswal, etc. were officials and workers of the metropolis.

## Cong trampled democracy and Constitution by imposing emergency: Dayashankar Mishra Dayalu

Prayagraj: Bharatiya Janata Party, Prayagraj Metropolitan, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Emergency Day as Black Day, organized a seminar in the auditorium of the party office, Civil Line. The chief guest of this occasion program was State. Minister of State with Independent Charge Dayashankar Mishra Dayalu Guru said that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had strangled democracy by imposing emergency for her personal interest and power and had trampled the Constitution of the country. She had violated the Constitution to fulfill her political intentions. And by going against the judiciary and creating a black history of democracy, he imposed emergency in the country and when the defenders of democracy protested against his decision, he was lathicharged and thrown in jail, giving a punishment like black water. Even after this torture, he did not stop, did not bow down and kept fighting for

democracy and said that in the Lok Sabha elections, Rahul Gandhi spread false propaganda by defaming the Election Commission of the country on the pretext of hacking EVMs and said that Rahul Gandhi is a foreigner. They defame the country by calling for democracy and spread the false propaganda of giving Rs 8500 by knocking and deceived the public and embarrassed the democracy. He said that Congress amended the Constitution 75 times during its tenure just to get power and said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the democracy of the country got strengthened, everyone was given the benefit schemes of the government equally and said that even today the Indi Alliance of Congress is looting democracy in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and West Bengal by trampling the Constitution. is working on.

On this occasion, former Cabinet Minister Narendra Kumar Singh Gaur said that

even after 50 years of Emergency Day, the thinking of Congress has remained the same as that of 1975, it can go to any extent for its fam-

otions. On this occasion, democracy fighters and Former District President Narendra Dev Pandey said that the fight of Emergency

the post of national president by imposing emergency in his organization Samajwadi Party to become the national president of SP.

and Rajesh Kesarwani expressed their views. The program was organized and organized by Vikramjit Singh Bhadauria and co-convenor Natwarlal Bharti Kuldeep Mishra. District spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani said that on the occasion democracy fighters Narendra Pandey, Rakesh Srivastava, Dhanpat Pandey, Vijay Kumar Pandey, Rambabu Kesarwani, Dr. Shri Prakash Mishra, Krishna Pandey, Radhe Krishna Goswami, Sushil Kumar Shukla, Ashok Kumar Srivastava were felicitated. Board President Vijay Srivastava thanked Kunj Bihari Mishra Ramesh Pasi, Pramod Modi, Rajesh Kesarwani, Vivek Mishra, Sachin Jaiswal on this occasion. Hundreds of workers like Shiva Tripathi, Saroj Gupta, Shikha Rastogi, Rohit Jaiswal, Pawan Mishra, Rajesh Gond, Sumit Vaish, Bhola Tiwari, Rakesh Bharti, Ajay Agrahari, Prashant Shukla, Naveen Shukla etc. were present.



ily and for power and in this Lok Sabha elections, Misleading propaganda was carried out regarding changing the Constitution, whereas Congress has a history of tampering with the Constitution of the country for the sake of its vote bank during the tenure of its government and even today it is leaving no stone unturned in defaming the constitutional institu-

was like giving second independence to the country, we kept eating lathi, kept singing the song of Vande Mataram and said that Rahul Gandhi used the name of changing the Constitution to gain power in the Lok Sabha elections. Mised the democracy by spreading lies and said that SP chief Akhilesh Yadav had dismissed his father Mulayam Singh Yadav from

While presiding over the program, Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra welcomed the guests and said that Congress had destroyed the democratic constitution by imposing emergency in the country by adopting a dictatorial attitude. On this occasion, former Deputy Mayor Murari Lal Aggarwal, Shashi Varshney, Ranjit Singh, Ram Ji Kesarwani

## NUJ Prayagraj district unit expanded

Gen Sec, Organization Minister, seven vice-presidents, six ministers made

Prayagraj: The meeting of National Union of Journalists Prayagraj (NUJ) district unit was held today in Civil Lines under the chairmanship of District President Kundan Srivastava in the presence of District Convenor Kamal Srivastava. In the meeting, to strengthen the organization and expand the organization, responsibility has been given to the dedicated members of the organization on the vacant posts of the organization. District President Kundan Srivastava said that Pawan Dwivedi and Parvez Alam have been nominated as Patrons, Umesh Chandra Srivastava Senior Vice President, Dr. Sudhakar Pandey Vice President, Virendra Srivastava Vice President,

Dhamedra Kumar Srivastava Vice President, Abhay Pandey Vice President, Zia Siddiqui Vice



President, Santosh Singh Vice President. Similarly, Manish Srivastava has been nominated as Organization Minister, Rajeev

Singh as General Secretary, Akhilesh Shukla as Minister, Pankaj Sahu as Minister, Ranjit Nishad as Minis-

ter, Parveen Kumar as Minister, Saurabh Kumar as Adarsh Minister, Irrfan Khan as Minister. While presiding over the meeting, District President of the organization Kundan Srivastava congratulated all the selected officials and said that our team will do better work. He said that very soon we will make arrangements for health cards and health insurance for the health of our journalist and photographer friends. President Kundan Srivastava said that full attention will be given to the suggestions of all the members and officers. Convenor Kamal Srivastava congratulated all the selected officials and said that very soon a health camp will be organized for the health of the journalists and their families. He said that there will be meetings of the organization on the second Saturday.

Prayagraj: Revati has always fought the battle of the poor and the weak and will fight in future too. Former MP Kunwar Revati Raman Singh said that The Chief Minister should not just listen to the rich chiefs, he should also pay attention to the weak BDCs as to what is their problem and why is there so much anger among them. He said that he will talk to the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and make him aware of the situation and if possible, the poor and weak BDC members should also talk to the Chief Minister. Talks will be held so that they can know how many irregularities have been committed in the work of the block and their source of income should also be investigated.

Giving this information, SP State Secretary Vinay Kushwaha said that those who do caste politics can become MPs once or twice, MLAs who do eight times

MLAs can become MPs twice, Kunwar Revati Raman Singh does not do politics of caste but of the group, hence when the block chief in Jamunapur. When it came to making Brahmins, Thakurs, Bhumihars, Patels and Kols, they not only got SP tickets but also made them win the elections by encouraging the weak BDC against the ruling power, but due to their personal interest, all of them went with the ruling power and the poor BDCs. Due to which they are angry towards their chiefs. He said that there are some inflexible public representatives who do not have enough strength to win the no-confidence motion of their partner, while from CM to DM they are still complaining of harassment.

They are running to the Chief Minister to prevent the no-confidence motion. They know how much anger there is among the public and the BDC, which was reflected in the recently held Lok Sabha elections.

They are running to the Chief Minister to prevent the no-confidence motion. They know how much anger there is among the public and the BDC, which was reflected in the recently held Lok Sabha elections.



## SP's ex-District Panchayat Prez Anita Rakesh booked

Prayagraj: Complaint filed against SP's former District Panchayat President Anita Rakesh and her associates in Civil Line police station of Prayagraj. Aarti Rakesh, daughter-in-law of former MP Shri Ram Nihor Rakesh, has filed a complaint of assault and hooliganism against her sister-in-law and former District Panchayat President of SP Sonbhadra Anita Rakesh. Aarti Rakesh has alleged that the room in which she has been living for the last 25 years Today, Anita forcibly beat her up. It is known that even before this, Aarti Rakesh's husband Akhilesh Rakesh had sent a legal notice to Anita Rakesh's husband over allegedly grabbing of property.

## UP in semi-finals of PEFI Under-17 National Football Competition

Prayagraj: In its final league match in the Under-17 National Football Competition being played by the Physical Education Foundation of India (PEFI) in Vardaman West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh played a goalless draw with Bihar. The match ended.

According to the chief coach of the Uttar Pradesh team, Indranil Ghosh, the

Uttar Pradesh team played a draw (0-0) in its last league match and stood first in its pool, getting seven points from three matches with two wins and one draw. The top team ranked (Pool Top) and as per competition rules will enter the semi-finals.

Uttar Pradesh's midfielder Mayank Maurya got the Player of



the Match award in today's match. Uttar Pradesh will play its semi-final match against Haryana on June 27. The Uttar Pradesh team was as follows: Shivam Yadav, Prashant Pal, Ashwini Tomar, Tejaswa Tomar, Rudra Pratap Singh, Vaibhav Manishi (all Meerut), Alok Kumar Prajapati, Priyaansoo Verma (both Lucknow),

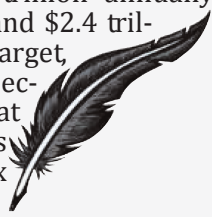
Rahul Chandna, Shivam Saroj, Vedant Tripathi, Mayank Maurya, Shrestha Maurya (all Prayagraj), Satyam (Ambedkar Nagar), Ankush Singh (Agra), Siddharth Singh (Basti), Shreyans Chowksey (Varanasi) Chief Trainer - Indranil Ghosh (Prayagraj) Team Manager - Dr. Dinesh Singh Yadav (Agra).

## Editorial

### West's moral high ground and its failure to deliver

As the countdown to the COP29 climate summit in Azerbaijan this November continues, the Bonn Climate Change Conference in Germany concluded in a stalemate last week. Nations disagreed on the size and scope of loss and damage financing, representing a significant setback in global climate negotiations. The Bonn talks did not achieve meaningful progress on climate financing, underscoring a persistent issue: industrialised nations, which bear the greatest responsibility for the current climate crisis, resisted calls from Global South countries to compensate those who suffer the most but have contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions. Over a decade ago, developed nations pledged to mobilise \$100 billion annually by 2020 to support climate action in developing countries. This commitment, formalised under the Copenhagen Accord in 2009 and reiterated in the Paris Agreement, has not been met. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reported that climate finance reached only \$79.6 billion in 2019. It was only in 2022 that developed countries provided and mobilised \$115.9 billion in climate finance for developing countries. By the end of COP29, all parties must agree on a "new collective quantified goal" (NCQG) to guide the provision of climate finance, intended to replace the \$100 billion target after 2025. Progress on negotiating the NCQG has been slow. Disagreements persist on almost every aspect of the new target, including the amount of money to be provided, the sources of these funds, the recipients, and the specific forms of financial assistance. Current climate finance is grossly inadequate for the scale of action required. The \$100 billion target for climate finance is laughably insufficient. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Adaptation Gap Report 2021 estimates that the costs of adapting to climate change in developing countries could reach \$140-300 billion per year by 2030, escalating to \$280-500 billion per year by 2050. Furthermore, the Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2021 report highlights that global climate finance flows reached a record \$632 billion in 2019/2020. Despite this record, the funding falls significantly short of the \$4.13 trillion annual investment required by 2030 to meet the Paris Agreement targets, as estimated by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in its Net Zero by 2050 report. Now even these estimates are seen as low. As highlighted by the Independent High-Level

Expert Group on Climate Finance in their November 2022 report, emerging markets and developing countries (excluding China) are staring at a financial chasm. These nations must mobilise approximately \$1 trillion annually by 2025, amounting to 4.1 per cent of their GDP—double the 2.2 per cent spent in 2019. Fast forward to 2030, and the figure balloons to a staggering \$2.4 trillion per year, or 6.5 per cent of GDP. This glaring disparity underscores the urgent need to recalibrate climate finance targets if we are to meet the colossal demands of climate adaptation and mitigation. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's AR6 Synthesis Report on Climate Change 2023, the 2018 UNFCCC biennial assessments and the IPCC 1.5°C report estimated that global financial needs for achieving a 2°C warming target are \$1.7 trillion annually from 2020 to 2030-2035, and \$2.4 trillion annually for the 1.5°C target, specifically for the energy sector. The report concludes that global climate finance flows must increase by three to six times the current levels to meet the average annual financial requirements until 2030.



# Space and Cyber Domains in War Fighting

Space and cyber domains are the major components of 'stand-off' wars, which is the new way of war fighting. Elements contributing to stand-off conflicts are also moving into the hands of private space operators. While 'space force' would have a mandate to provide space support to conventional forces, it would largely engage in providing a nation with a space shield. Direct threats from space, such as hypersonic or ballistic missiles carrying single or multiple re-entry warheads, are a major concern. These missiles are even capable of delivering conventional or Chemical-Biological-Radiological-Nuclear warheads. The payloads could also deliver multi-sensor drones and deploy ground-based probes. This force would therefore be mandated to develop space dominance capabilities. The best point of interception of a ballistic or hypersonic missile is in space, i.e., before it re-enters the atmosphere, where it can achieve gravity-based acceleration and atmosphere-assisted glide manoeuvres. Once such a missile enters the atmosphere, the skies are almost indefensible. Hypersonic weapons can be launched from airborne aircraft, ships at sea, and land-



based mobile launchers. Long-range air-launched hypersonic missiles with scramjet engines could also be launched by the enemy's bombers from under the cover of air defences in their own airspace. Such weapons could be deployed as part of a fractional orbital bombardment system. The variety of launch options means hypersonic weapons might not create an IR signature intense enough to be detected. Today, most of China's and Russia's deployed long-range missiles can carry one or more weapons that can manoeuvre in space, in the atmosphere, or both. Both China and Russia now consider US space-based assets as high-value targets that can be threatened to coerce the United States in a crisis or attacked to achieve space superiority in a conflict. They have developed kinetic ASATs and other

space weapons to hold these "difficult to defend, easy to attack" long-range ballistic missiles typically have flight trajectories that take them over 300 km into space before they re-enter the atmosphere. The highly predictable flight paths and high altitudes of non-maneuvring ballistic missiles make them much easier to detect and track. In contrast, hypersonic missiles can fly as little as 30 to 50 km above the Earth's surface or even lower, which means that, because of the curvature of the earth, they may be below areas that are effectively covered by today's radar warning architecture. Our northern neighbour China has developed and deployed what it refers to as a "multi-layered attack architecture" with weapons systems that span the counter-space threat continuum. Used in combination,

these weapons can degrade, deny, or destroy adversarial space systems in all orbital regimes. As a spacefaring nation, India must develop a wholesome space warfighting doctrine and an inter-service space force that would allow it a ready response mechanism to space threats and also support ground, maritime, and air operations. The mandate for the space force should be to: Develop SDA (Space Domain Awareness) to determine, mitigate, and respond to threats from and within space. Build sufficient resilient and military-grade capability, including the Line of Defence, for communications, ISR, and PNT to support and execute space-based integrated military operations. Specifications and capacities must be spelled out unambiguously to the industry with at least a 5-year lead time. Develop and deploy cross functional technologies (Information Technology, and cyber) to optimise the EM spectrum in space warfare. Maintain a high degree of operational readiness and generate meshed intelligence to enhance warning periods. Build secure international space collaboration for enhanced regional and global space cover and to respond to surge require-

ments during external exigencies. Train and equip a sufficient and dedicated skilled space force that would support higher leadership, military theatres, and tactical battle areas during war, and participate in R&D, collaborative manufacturing, and cross-training activities during peacetime. Own, lease, and maintain sufficient space assets and infrastructure that are necessary to discharge its functions. Undertake incremental space and technological development activities that enable achieving space dominance and space superiority. While building a space cadre, it must be ensured that personnel selected are on permanent secondment to the force and/or are drawn from space and scientific institutions. Building any non-permanent enlisted force would be counterproductive. Space is emerging as the forerunner in the era of technology-driven warfare. A country like India, with significant geopolitical heft and the potential to emerge as a power of relevance, would sooner or later face a threat from space—a threat that cannot be defended by conventional means. It is therefore important to analyse if India needs to build a space force.

## A story that has changed little over the years

Making just 13.63 per cent of the elected strength, the 18th Lok Sabha will comprise only 74 women compared to 469 men. This share is not only abysmally skewed but also lower than the 14.4 per cent share of female representation during the 2019 election, where 78 women were elected as MPs. The irony here is that just last year, India—during its G20 presidency—brought about a paradigm shift in gender-based policy-making by challenging the status quo and with the innovative idea of women-led development in order to ensure women's inclusion and representation at all levels of decision-making. Even at the domestic level, India—after many deliberations—

finally passed the historic Women's Reservation Bill in 2023, which seeks to reserve one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for women. While it is true that the bill has not yet come into effect, the journey from 13.63 per cent to 33 per cent (for the next elections) still seems rather long, especially given that, despite being the central agents of the 2024 elections and forming an important core of party manifestos as well as campaign speeches, only a handful of them were able to achieve the final victory.

It is, however, important to note here that the gender gap in elected representatives—in a lot of

ways—begins with the disparity among candidates. In the run-up to the 2024 polls, out of the total 8,337 candidates who filed their nominations, only 797 were women. And even though the total number of female candidates has increased by 10 per cent from 720 in 2019, their share among total candidates has climbed marginally from 9 per cent in 2019 to 9.5 per cent in 2024.

It would perhaps be fair to state that despite the rising number of female candidates over the past several years, the corresponding increase in the number of winners has remained modest. For instance, in 1962, 66 women contested elections, with 31.

## India's relations are not harmed, neither with Russia nor with the G7 countries!

Two years down the line, India's relations are not majorly harmed, neither with Russia nor with the G7 countries! Freshly re-elected, PM Modi's attendance at the G7 summit signals a robust continuation of his administration's foreign policy initiatives, particularly his advocacy for the Global South. In 2023, New Delhi organised the two Voice of Global South Summits, first in January and next in November, to understand the concerns of the developing countries. The words and advocacy of Modi in Apulia should be taken as a continuation of this. Modi exploited the opportunities provided to put forward these concerns. "India has considered it its responsibility to place the priorities and concerns of the countries of the Global South on the world stage," he said. At the same time, while putting forward his vision of a developed India in 2047, he emphasised that "no section of society should be left behind in the country's development journey," followed by applying this "in the context of international relations. The countries of the Global South are bearing the brunt of global uncertainties and tensions". Then, Modi put forward the

concern of ending monopolies in technology, one of the points of action at the end of the second Voice of the Global South Summit. On the sidelines of the G7 meeting, PM Modi also met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. However, Modi skipped the Ukraine Peace Summit, organised just after the G7 meeting, by sending a secretary-level delegation. The Indian delegation visited the summit but didn't sign the Joint Communiqué. This reflects a nuanced stance on the conflict, aligning with the broader Global South's cautious approach. India's significant presence at the G7 summit,

coupled with PM Modi's diplomacy, marks a pivotal moment in its global engagement. By advocating for the Global South in the G7, India continued efforts to emerge as a leader of developing nations in a China-fearing world. India took centre stage during the summit, and the family photograph taken post-summit is a testament to it. Image: Narendra Modi/X Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the 50th G7 summit on June 14, 2024, in the city of Fasano in Apulia, Italy. The region of Apulia, throughout its

history, has been inhabited by Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Normans, and Spanish. The region has also served as a bridge between the West and the East, thanks to its geography. Apulia's rich history as a cultural crossroads underscores the significance of this year's G7 summit, which brings together diverse global leaders. In this summit, along with the G7 countries, the other invitees were India, the African Union, Brazil, the UAE, Argentina, and others, making the location and the purpose of the summit significant. India took centre stage during the summit, and the family photograph taken post-summit is a testament to it. Two years ago, India was invited to the 48th G7 summit in 2022, after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The primary narrative at that time was to punish India for keeping the ties intact with Moscow. The Western 'experts', who are habituated to see things in binary, refused to believe that India can have ties with the G7 without harming relations with Russia. As per the Financial Times, the reason behind the invitation to India at the summit was "to woo New Delhi away from its longstanding alliance with Russia".

## North Korea needs to improve on sensor technologies

During the year 2023, North Korea made three attempts to launch a spy satellite in space. The attempts during May and August 2023 had failed, while the attempt during November 2023 was a success, with North Korea putting its first spy satellite, the Malligyong-1, on the back of its own Chollima-1 launch vehicle in space. Since during Kim Jong Un's September 2023 visit to Russia, there was a promise made for assistance in the space sector, there is a possibility that for the November 2023 launch, some Russian assistance was there. AdvertisementUnfortu

nately for North Korea, its recent launch (on May 27, 2024) to put up a military reconnaissance satellite (Malligyong-1-1) ended in failure. For a nuclear weapon state like North Korea, it is a necessity to have a mechanism for gathering real-time intelligence. Hence, it has interests in spy satellites. It is keen to establish a space-based architecture that offers intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. For this purpose, it wants to have increasing assistance from Russia in the space domain. The potency of North Korea's nuclear deterrence structure

would depend not only on the number of nuclear weapons in its kitty but also on various factors, like having capable missile systems to deliver the weapons correctly to the target. At the same time, it needs to guard its state from any attack by its adversaries. Hence, space-based ISR systems are important both for defence and offence purposes. There are reports indicating that North Korea has developed several types of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for ISR purposes. However, there are limitations in regards to the types of sensors in use. Also,

endurance and communications restraints limit its utility. North Korea is keen to expand its space program. It understands that there is a 'global' watch on its space and missile programs. The South Korean and US investigators have analysed the recently failed (2023) two launches by North Korea. In its estimation carried out by analysing the recovered parts from these launches (fallen in the ocean), the North Korea payloads had 'no military use'. This indicates that North Korea needs to improve on sensor technologies, satellite design and development.

## 1 killed, couple injured in separate terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir

**NEW DELHI:** A former sarpanch was killed while a tourist couple from Rajasthan sustained injuries in two separate terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday night. According to the officials, the first attack took place on an open tourist camp near Pahalgam while the second on the former sarpanch at Hirpora in south Kashmir. "Terrorists fired upon and injured a woman, Farha, a resident of Jaipur (in Rajasthan) and her spouse Tabrez at Yannar in Anantnag. The injured were evacuated to a hospital for treatment. The area has been cordoned off. Further details shall follow," the Kashmir Zone Police posted on X. In another attack, within half-an-hour, terrorists shot dead former sarpanch Aijaz Sheikh in Shopian's Hirpora around 10.30 pm, the officials said. Sheikh, who was associated with the BJP, was rushed to a hospital where he succumbed



to injuries, the officials added. The areas in Anantnag and Shopian have been cordoned off and search operations have been launched to nab the attackers, the officials said. The attacks came as the state is preparing to go for the polls for the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Polling in Baramulla will be held on May 20 in the fifth round of the seven-phase general elections. Political parties in Jammu and Kashmir, including the National Conference, PDP and the BJP, condemned the attacks. Former chief minister

and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, said on X, "While we condemn the attack in Pahalgam today that resulted in injuries to two tourists followed by another attack on a (former) sarpanch in Hirpora, Shopian - the timing of these attacks given that the south election was delayed without any reason is a cause of concern. Especially keeping in mind normalcy claims touted by GOI (Government of India)." National Conference president Farooq Abdullah and vice president Omar Abdullah also condemned the terror attacks.

## Poll promises unfulfilled, iron factory linked to Dalai Lama waits for revival

**KODERMA:** On the outskirts of Jharkhand's Koderma town, a defunct iron factory stands abandoned and corroded, greeting visitors at the entrance of Hirodih, a dusty and sleepy settlement of four villages next to a forgotten legacy. Thousands of residents of Hirodih swing between hope and despair every election, as their demand to revive the plant, once owned by Tibetan spiritual leader and Nobel Prize winner, the Dalai Lama, getting them promises and assurances from candidates seeking

votes every time, only to be forgotten after the polls. After the Buddhist monk crossed into India from Tibet in the 1950s, he set up this plant, spread over 350 acres of land bought from the villagers for Rs 4 crore in 1960, and named it Gayday Iron & Steel Company. The only venture owned by the Tibetan spiritual leader, the factory was a major avenue for employment in the region. But, more than four decades since its closure, hopes of its revival have only diminished due to half-baked attempts, failed promis-

es and administrative apathy, turning Koderma into a migration-prone region. Jung Bahadur Singh, who is now in his late 70s, was among the first employees of this factory. He continued to be on the rolls even when the factory's ownership kept changing hands, but the jobs continued to shrink owing to a lack of proper patronage to run the factory. The septuagenarian lives in Gamarwad village, one of the four villages where people voluntarily gave up their lands for the factory, hoping it would usher in prosperity.

## In jail since 2019, J&K candidates' assets up, liabilities dip

**BARAMULLA:** Independent candidate from Baramulla Lok Sabha seat Abdul Rashid Sheikh, who is lodged in Tihar for alleged terror-funding activities, has significantly reduced his liabilities and increased assets in the last five years, his poll affidavit

shows. Better known as 'Engineer Rashid', the former MLA's assets are now valued at Rs 1.5 crore compared to Rs 80 lakh in 2019. It includes a 41,072 sq ft non-agriculture land in his home town Lingate and a house in Srinagar

worth Rs 90 lakh. Rashid has declared Rs 11.3 lakh home loan and Rs 3.1 lakh Kissan Credit Card loan as liabilities. The former MLA has only Rs 1,424 in his sole bank account, his financial disclosures show. In the affidavit, he cited pension as his source.

## Acharyakul Chandigarh honoured Nalin Acharya

**Chandigarh:** Acharyakul Chandigarh honored its Senior Vice President and senior journalist Nalin Acharya on being elected President of Press Club Chandigarh. The program was organized at Chandigarh Press Club. Acharyakul President KK Sharda, Senior Vice President Prem Vij and other members honoured him by giving him a shawl, citation and flower bunch. Senior journalist and litterateur Prem Vij, while introducing Nalin Acharya on this occasion, said that many of



his generation are contributing in journalism. Acharyakul President KK Sharda shared his experiences with his father Santosh Acharya. Secretary Tajinder Thakur was also present. Dr. Rajiv Kapila, MM Juneja, Dr.

Vinod Sharma, Dr. Varinder Singh Yogi, Kanshi Ram, Varinder Kumar, Yogesh Sharma Gurdarshan Mavi expressed their views. Nalin Acharya gave information about his journey in journalism. Dr. Pragya Sharda, Dr. Anish Garg, Vimla Guglani, Annuarani Sharma, Sangeeta Sharma appreciated the works of Nalin Acharya through poems. The program was conducted by Annuarani Sharma. Famous bhajan singer Somesh Gupta presented bhajan.

## More than 40 Telangana IAS officers were transferred and given new assignments

**Delhi:** Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's Telangana State Government transferred and posted nearly 40 IAS officers in the first major upheaval. June 24, 2024 IAS officer reshuffle. The government has been discussing transferring IAS personnel for some time, but after the Lok Sabha election 2024 announcement, it did not act. The Chief Minister met with senior officials led by Chief Secretary A. Santhi

Kumari to finalize the transfer list. The Chief Secretary ordered Energy Department principal secretary Syed Ali Murtaza Rizvi to be transferred to the Commercial Taxes and Excise department and replaced by Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) commissioner D. Ronald Rose, who was also appointed chairman and managing director of TG Transco and Genco. Kata, HMDA metropolitan commis-

sioner, is now GHMC commissioner. Transport Commissioner Jyoti is now Registration, Stamps, and Housing secretary. He took over as Commissioner and Inspector General Registration and Stamps, Commission of Survey Settlements and Land Records, and Project Director of Bhubharathi, replacing veteran official Navin Mittal. Mr. Jyoti Buddha Prakash will remain

Transport Commissioner until Ilambarathi arrives. Sabyasachi Ghosh, currently Youth Services principal secretary, has been shifted to Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, while 1995 batch officer Sanjay Kumar, who was waiting, has been posted to Labour. After Shailaja Ramaiyer was promoted to Endowments department main secretary, A. Vani Prasad, principal secretary of Environment.

## Rename namesake disease hitting Ranikhet's fame: HC

**DEHRADUN:** Uttarakhand high court has directed the state to propose a new name for a disease that has Ranikhet, a picturesque tourist spot, in its name. After a PIL highlighted that the hill station's reputation suffers due to its association with an avian disease known as 'Ranikhet disease', the administration has now been told to file an affidavit suggesting an alternative name by June 27. During the hearing, Chief Justice Ritu Bahri and Justice Rakesh Thapliyal discussed the negative impact of the disease's name on Ranikhet's tourism. Ranikhet renowned for healthy air, Himalayan views The petitioner, Satish

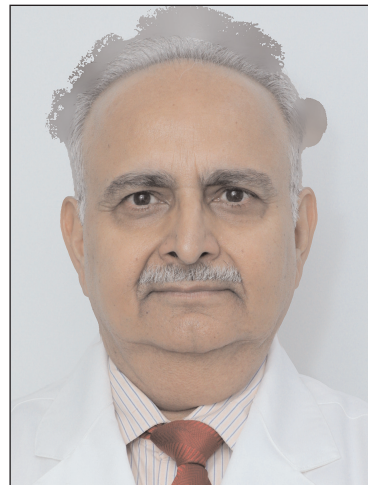


Joshi, of Ranikhet, said "the picturesque town's allure is overshadowed by this association". Ranikhet, about 50km from Almora, is renowned for its healthy climate, pleasant breeze, stunning Himalayan views, and pollution-free greenery with deodar and oak trees. The area's attractions, including Kumaon Regimental Centre, museum, & golf course, offer memorable experiences for visitors. Ranikhet disease,

also known as Newcastle disease, affects the birds and poultry, leading to severe respiratory issues, nervous system problems, and high mortality rates. This affliction has significant economic implications for poultry farmers and can affect the large local bird populations. The petitioner contended other celebrated hill stations like Mussoorie and Nainital are exalted. Ranikhet, therefore, should not be overshadowed.

## Sudden Anger Outbursts Can Spike BP: Experts at Paras Health Panchkula Raises Awareness on World Hypertension Day

**Panchkula:** In recognition of World Hypertension Day, experts at Paras Health Panchkula raises awareness about the dangers of sudden anger outbursts and their potential to significantly increase blood pressure. "Uncontrolled anger can have a very real and negative impact on your cardiovascular system," asserted Dr. H. K. Bali, Chairman, Cardiac Sciences, Paras Health Panchkula. "During anger, the body undergoes a physiological stress response. This hormonal cascade causes blood vessels to constrict, heart rate to escalate, and blood pressure to surge rapidly. These spikes in blood pressure put a tremendous strain on the heart. Over time, repeated episodes of uncontrolled anger can



damage the delicate lining of blood vessels, leading to chronic hypertension, a major risk factor for a multitude of life-threatening conditions." "Many people don't realize how intensely anger can affect their physical health," said Dr. Vinay Verma, Director, Internal Medicine, Paras Health Panchkula. "When we get



angry, our bodies go into fight-or-flight mode, releasing a flood of stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones act like a double whammy on our blood pressure. While occasional spikes are normal, frequent anger outbursts can lead to chronically high blood pressure, a silent killer that significantly

increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and even kidney failure. It's crucial to manage your anger for the sake of your overall health by identifying the triggers, embracing relaxing techniques like deep breathing, meditation, and yoga which are proven to lower stress hormones. "By managing anger and adopting healthy lifestyle practices, you can significantly reduce your risk of developing hypertension and its associated complications. If you find it challenging to manage anger on your own, consider seeking anger management therapy. A therapist can equip you with coping mechanisms and communication skills to address anger in a healthy way.

CAPSULES

## Ensure Sirsa-like victory for Congress in entire Haryana : Kumari Selja

**Chandigarh/Karnal:** All India Congress Committee General Secretary, former Union Minister and newly elected MP from Sirsa Lok Sabha constituency, Kumari Selja said that the people of Sirsa parliamentary constituency have given her a big victory, and Congress has to get the same big victory in entire Haryana. Your 4 months of hard work can make the life of 03 crore Haryanvis easier. Start working on the assembly elections without getting tired from now itself. After winning and forming the government in Chandigarh, celebrate double the celebrations at the same time. In a statement issued to the media, Kumari Selja has said that she wanted to contest the assembly elections, but on the demand of the people of Sirsa Lok Sabha constituency, the high command ordered her to contest the elections. Being a true soldier of the Congress, she followed the order and fought the elections wholeheartedly and all the workers and people considered themselves as Selja and fought the entire election and also got her victory with a huge margin. She said that all of you should start preparing for the assembly elections from now because one battle has been won and the other is yet to come. The people have defeated the always lying jumlabaaaz government in the Lok Sabha elections, the arrogance of the BJP has been shattered. Kumari Selja said that all of you want us to travel together to Chandigarh. This is possible only when all of you bring the BJP to its state before 2014. It is your job to get a big majority for the Congress, after that it is my and the Congress high command's job to form a government. of your choice in Chandigarh. If your government is formed in Chandigarh, you will be heard.

## Flagged high speed of goods train, gateman deposes before probe panel



Ten railway staffers - three gatemen of level crossings between West Bengal's Rangapani station and the accident site, two linesmen, two station managers, the pilot and the co-pilot of Kanchanjunga Express and another railway employee - deposed before the chief commissioner of railway safety, NFR, on the first day of the probe on Wednesday, with one of the gatemen confirming that he had raised an alarm about the goods train moving at more than the approved speed, report

"One of the gatemen said that he had seen the train passing at a speed higher than the allowed limit and had immediately called Rangapani station to alert them. We are checking the timing of the landline conversation and are questioning the station manager and other officials about what they had done

after receiving the information," said Surendra Kumar, divisional railway manager, Katihar Division, who is part of the investigation team.

Probe day 1\_ Level-crossing gateman had alerted about goods train speed.

So far around 30 people - including railway personnel, multiple witnesses and rescuers who reached the spot immediately after the accident - have been called to help the investigation being held at the

additional divisional railway manager's office in Siliguri.

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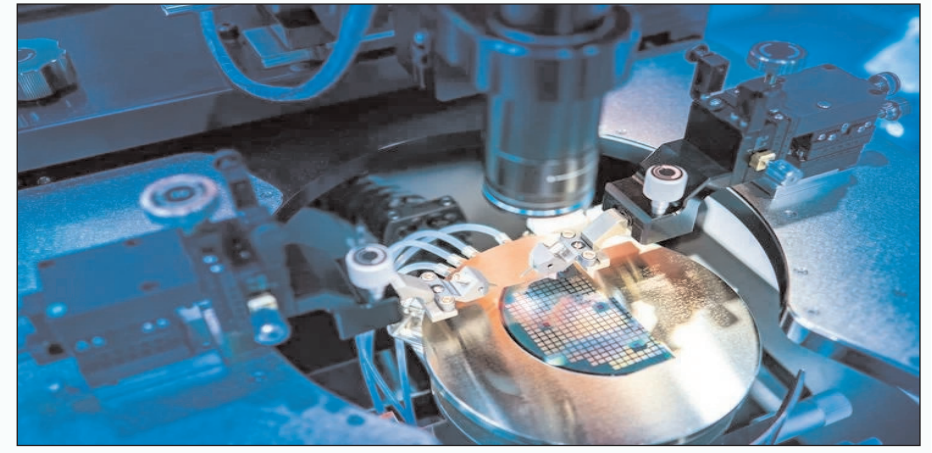
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## Beyond Rs 76k-crore: Government to scale up semiconductor package

NEW DELHI:

Government is looking at rolling out a fresh multi-billion-dollar incentive package for semiconductor companies after nearly exhausting the Rs 76,000-crore plan that was launched in Dec 2021 for supporting investing companies, top sources told TOI. Preliminary work on the new package, which is "in all likelihood be much bigger than the previous one", has already begun, even though announcements in this regard will be made only once the new govt takes charge post the national elections, they said. "The new package would be one of the key agendas for the new govt and will be taken up on a priority basis," one of the sources said, pointing out that new proposals that are coming in for semiconductors necessitate a fresh package. "The matter would be tabled before the new Cabinet as some of the proposals are at an advanced



stage and would require immediate assurances from the state in terms of incentives," the source said. Success of Dec 2021 package is prompting the govt to work out a new one, especially in view of the aggressive stance of countries such as the US and China, which have announced much bigger packages for companies that are investing in semiconductors. Under the current plan, govt extends fiscal support of up to 50% of a project's cost to eligible display and semiconductor fabricators. This has been almost exhausted after

the spate of investments that came in. India, which had previously failed to get any credible proposals for semiconductor manufacturing after trying for decades, finally managed to score big after American Micron emerged as the first major player to enter the space with a Rs 22,500-crore testing and packaging unit in Gujarat in June last year. This was followed up with approval to three proposals worth nearly Rs 1.3 lakh crore in Feb this year. These comprise: Rs 91,000-crore project of Tata to set up India's first semiconductor fab unit.

Modi praised me earlier but now wants my defeat: Sharad Pawar

PUNE/NASHIK: Sharad Pawar on Sunday said PM Narendra Modi is inconsistent with his views and his stand.

"When he spoke in Delhi, he said I have done historic work as Union agriculture minister.

In Baramati, the PM said he came into national politics by holding my finger. But now, he says that anything and everything should be done to defeat me in Baramati," Pawar said at a public rally on Sunday.

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

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

MCD plans to carpet or repair 50 km of interior roadways by Oct. to reduce dust. Between April 2023 and February 2024, 139 km of roads were resurfaced or repaired. A civic council wants to resurface 180km of roads by Oct. Road maintenance and resurfacing are ongoing. After winter, we started dense carpet work on damaged areas. Work is being done with MLA or Mukhyamantri Sadak Punarnirman Yojna non-plan head funding "said the official. Our 52 mechanical road sweepers are for PWD roads. He added that 195 water sprinklers, jet machines, and 30 mobile anti-smog guns are reducing dust pollution on roadways. PWD gave MCD 60 anti-smog weapons to reduce dust near construction sites. In highrises, 15 smog cannons are deployed. The official claimed these work as needed. In response to summer fires, MCD has limited unauthorised entry and the carrying of cigarettes, bidis, lighters, and matchboxes. "Supervisory staff must notify Delhi Fire Services immediately of fires.

Junior engineers and supervisors have SOPs for 24/7 landfill supervision. The official stated fresh solid garbage is unloaded, compacted, and coated with bio-cover to prevent fires.

## UPA govt. faltered on free ration, ours giving succour to 80 crore: BJP

NEW DELHI: BJP on Sunday claimed that Congress-led UPA had expressed inability to distribute free ration despite a Supreme Court order and contrasted the approach of the Manmohan Singh govt with free ration being given to over 80 crore people by the Modi govt under PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana since the pandemic. "On 6th Sept 2010,



Manmohan Singh said, 'govt will do all it can to provide affordable food to those below the poverty line but cannot implement Supreme Court's order to give free

foodgrain to the poor'. He further said 'Supreme Court should not go into the realm of policy formulation', BJP IT department head Amit Malviya said as he shared a media

report of 2010.

BJP functionary said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi provided free ration to over 80 crore people. "If Congress comes, it will kick the stomach of the poor," he added.

In Aug 2010, Supreme Court had said agriculture minister Sharad Pawar should figure out how to give away the excess foodgrain to poor families.

## EC publishes a "rate list" for enticing competitions

Delhi: you can get a buffet or a packed lunch that includes two curries, rice, achar, roti, and sweets for Rs 80. You can also get a mini meal of chhole bhature or poori aalu for Rs 37. You can also get a small cup of tea or coffee for Rs 6. These prices do not include the cost of a roadside eatery or canteen. Every cup of tea or coffee, packed lunch, or small meal provided to a political worker conducting a

campaign during the capital election will be tracked and contributed to the candidate's overall poll expenditure. Not only will food costs be important, but so will the price of the chairs and tables that will be used at candidate polling places or during election gatherings. The candidates' election expenses also include the cost of renting vehicles for campaigning, posting posters, banners, and

hoardings, hiring a man to beat a drum, hiring horses and elephants for a road show, and hiring videographers, photographers, and drones to record the events. Every penny spent by the candidates is tracked from the time of nomination filing to the casting of ballots, with the total amount not to exceed the Rs 75 lakh cap on election expenses set by the Election Commission of India.

## China continues LAC infrastructure build-up 4 years into face-off

NEW DELHI: Four years into the face-to-face military confrontation in eastern Ladakh, which also triggered tensions all along the Line of Actual Control, there has been no let-up in the way China continues to build border infrastructure and dual-use 'Xiaokang' villages, strengthen military positions and deploy additional aircraft at its air-bases facing India. Latest satellite imagery, intelligence reports and other inputs show this ongoing Chinese activity in all the three sectors of the 3,488-km LAC, stretching from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh, defence and security establishment sources told. "People's Liberation Army (PLA) is relentlessly consolidating its military positions and support infrastructure in various depth and staging areas along the LAC, including near the buffer zones created after troop disengagements in eastern Ladakh," a source said. China con-



tinues LAC infra build-up 4 yrs into face-off, shows latest sat imagery. Increased PLA activity is seen in the eastern sector near Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and Naku La in north Sikkim, a defence source said. India also continues to match PLA with 'mirror military deployments'. China, for instance, recently completed construction of a road from the north of Samzungling to the Galwan Valley, providing the PLA with a 15-km shorter alternate axis to rapidly build-up troops in the area. A no-patrol buffer zone was created around Patrolling Point-14 in Galwan Valley three weeks

after the violent clash in which 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese troops were killed there on June 15, 2020. Similarly, sources said, PLA has been progressively strengthening military and transport infrastructure to the rear of the other buffer zones on both banks of Pangong Tso, including the Kailash range, and Gogra-Hot Springs, all of which have largely come up in areas that India considers its own territory. PLA has also been focussing on last-mile connectivity through roads, bridges, tunnels and helpads to its forward positions.

, while also construct-

ing new bunkers, camps, underground shelters, artillery position.

s, radar sites and ammunition dumps in other stretches of the LAC. "This increased PLA activity is especially being seen in the eastern sector, across Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh

and Naku La in north Sikkim," another source said.

India, of course, continues to match the PLA with "mirror military deployments", while it has also majorly cranked up infrastructure and capability development along the frontier, as earlier reported by TOI.

China has also offset some of its air combat disadvantage due to high-altitude terrain constraints by deploying additional fighters, bombers, reconnaissance aircraft and drones after upgrading its airfields like Hotan, Kashgar, Gargunsa, Shigatse, Bangda, Nyingchi and Heping, among.

## Sahil Khan held in C'garh in 15k cr betting app case

MUMBAI: Actor Sahil Khan was arrested on Sunday in connection with his alleged role in the Rs 15,000 crore Mahadev betting app case. Khan (50) was produced in court and was sent to police custody till May 1. An SIT of crime branch nabbed him from a hotel in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh. Khan, who had been working as a fitness expert until recently, had fled the city on April 24 and had been dodging the police by constantly changing his location. After his anticipatory bail application was rejected by Bombay HC on April 24, police had been trying to nab him. To track down his whereabouts, police were tracking his location which showed he was constantly on the move at different points of time.

Gadchiroli in Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Telangana, and Chhattisgarh. A senior crime branch officer said Khan was a partner in a betting app firm. "He had been promoting the app through social media and had also forged some documents.

## One-year DDA flat maintenance with RWAs

Delhi: Delhi Development Authority would give residents' welfare societies maintenance work within a year of creation to ensure flat maintenance. This will also apply to Diwali Special Housing Scheme 2023 units. This conclusion followed Real Estate Regulatory Authority criteria. A maintenance fee is normally collected by DDA during allotment. It has maintained flats for 10-20 years, depending on the scheme. A DDA official stated that applicants must join the registered agency or RWA to maintain common services. Per pocket, one RWA will be registered. All new DDA plans require upfront monthly costs for one year, depending on flat type. "DDA shall do daily maintenance from maintenance charges for one year or until RWA is formed, whichever comes first. An RWA will get the balance

maintenance fund if it is founded before one year. If a RWA is not created within a year, it will be done on actuals "said the official. "For subsequent years, the necessary arrangement will be communicated to the residents," he said. Residents expect standard changes to speed up DDA flat maintenance, which had been delayed for a long period. The authority defined maintenance as green space maintenance, campus, colony, and housing pocket cleaning, light fitting replacement in common areas, lift maintenance and operation, and common area electrical bill payment. "After transfer, the urban authority will be responsible for common areas in many housing pockets. The authority indicated in a pamphlet that DDA will maintain the area until the urban body takes possession.

## SC stays all proceedings before high courts on pleas against NEET-UG paper leak

**NEW DELHI:** Supreme Court on Thursday issued notice on petition filed by National Testing Agency (NTA) seeking transfer of pleas relating to NEET-UG, 2024 from high court to the apex court and stayed all proceedings before different high courts on alleged leak of NEET-UG exam question paper.

The apex court also issued fresh notices to Centre and National Testing Agency seeking their responses on new petitions filed by students against NEET-UG and said that all petition so far filed would be taken up together on July 8.

'Memorised overnight': Arrested candidate confesses leaked NEET paper matched with exam paper

It refused to pass any interim order on the case. The announcement of the NEET-UG 2024 results on June 4 sparked significant



backlash from both students and their parents. The results were met with legal challenges, which focused on three primary concerns. Firstly, there were allegations that certain students were awarded grace marks. There were also assertions that the question paper had been leaked prior to the examination. Suspicions were raised about potential malpractices at particular exam centres.

No stay on NEET counselling SC once again declined to halt the counselling process for admissions based on the results of the NEET-UG examina-

tion. The court said that if the petitioning students were to succeed in their legal challenges, it would lead to the cancellation of the 2024 exam and the subsequent counselling process. This development follows the hearing on Tuesday, during which a petition seeking the cancellation of NEET UG 2024 was considered. During the proceedings, the court remarked that the 'sanctity of the exam has been affected' and requested a response from the National Testing Agency (NTA) regarding the matter.

## 'Not secure': Bengal governor says police at Raj Bhavan a 'safety threat'

**NEW DELHI:** West Bengal governor CV Ananda Bose on Thursday said he sees the current contingent of Kolkata Police posted at Raj Bhavan as a "threat" to his security.

"I have reasons to believe that the presence of the current officer-in-charge and his team is a threat to my personal security," Bose told news agency PTI. "I have informed Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee that I am insecure with Kolkata Police in Raj Bhavan, but there was no action," he said. The West Bengal governor's statement comes days after he called for the Kolkata Police team to leave Raj Bhavan campus. Police officers, however, remained at their posts as the Lalbazar official said no communication had been received from Raj Bhavan on the matter. According to a Raj Bhavan official, a letter was sent to the relevant state government authority. At a press meet on Friday, Bose had expressed his displeasure at victims of poll violence being denied entry to Raj



Bhavan despite being granted requisite permission. He had sought a reply from CM Mamata Banerjee, alleging that Kolkata Police had tried to prevent him from carrying out his duty as governor. On Monday morning, Raj Bhavan officials requested closure of the police outpost at the North Gate, but cops said they could not leave without a directive from Lalbazar. Additionally, Bose wanted to set up a Jana Manch near the gate, but the police team refused, citing that Raj Bhavan was in a high-security zone with prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPc permanently imposed around it. Sources said the gover-

nor wanted the team of over 100 Kolkata Police personnel to be removed, suspecting that they were keeping tabs on him. Bose already receives Z category security from CRPF; Kolkata Police is posted only in the outer ring. An official said since Raj Bhavan was a state-owned heritage property maintained by the PWD, it was the duty of Kolkata Police to guard the area, which it had been doing since 1866. Additionally, several cabinet ministers reside on the campus. The governor, therefore, could not give police marching orders at whim, the official said, hinting that the state may seek legal opinion on the matter if needed.

## CAPSULES

### Man with dyed hair, beard held at Delhi airport for impersonating 60-plus passenger

**NEW DELHI:** A 24-year-old man, disguised as a 67-year-old, was arrested by the CISF at Delhi's Indra Gandhi International (IGI) Airport while attempting to board an Air Canada flight to Canada on

Tuesday evening. The man, identified as Guru Sewak Singh, was detained after security personnel found his behavior suspicious, said a senior CISF officer on Wednesday.

The suspect presented a passport under the name Rashvinder Singh Sahota, claiming to be a sexagenarian. However, his youthful appearance, voice, and skin texture raised doubts among the CISF personnel, leading to a more thorough investigation. Closer scrutiny revealed that Singh had dyed his hair and beard white and was wearing glasses to appear older.

Upon further questioning, Singh admitted to his true identity and showed a digital copy of his authentic passport on his mobile phone. The real passport identified him as a 24-year-old named Guru Sewak Singh. The CISF handed Singh and his belongings over to the Delhi Police for further legal action.



## 'Memorised overnight': Arrested candidate confesses leaked paper matched with exam paper

**NEW DELHI:** Amid the ongoing controversy over the alleged National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) paper leak, one of the arrested candidates from Bihar, Anurag Yadav (22), has confessed to receiving the leaked exam papers through his uncle, a junior engineer. In his statement, Anurag Yadav said, "I returned from Kota and was taken to Amit Anand and Nitish Kumar by my uncle on the night of May 4, where I was given the NEET exam question paper and answer sheet, which I was made to study and memorise overnight." The confession from Anurag Yadav, report-



edly a student of Allen Institute Kota, highlights the extent of the leak. As per the report by Times Now, Yadav said that his uncle arranged the papers for him. Upon receiving the call from his

uncle, Anurag returned to Bihar, where he was given the question paper and answer sheet on the night of June 4. He confirmed that the questions provided to him matched those in the

actual exam held at DY Patil School. Despite the National Testing Agency (NTA) denying any paper leak, Anurag's confession, along with those of others, brings to light the serious breach in the examination process.

"I am conducting a thorough investigation in my department to identify officers or employees working at the behest of Tejashwi Yadav. The entire RJD system is based on crime and corruption," he said.

However, NHA has clarified that it does not operate any guest house facility in Patna.

## Army doctor turns saviour for ill man onboard flight

**MUMBAI:** An Army doctor saved the life of a 27-year-old critically ill man onboard a Pune-Chandigarh flight by resuscitating him, giving emergency medicines and also requested for an emergency landing in Mumbai. Major Simrat Rajdeep Singh, a medical officer with the Western Command Hospital, Chandimandir (Haryana), said while he was travelling from Pune to Chandigarh by an Indigo flight on Monday, a co-passenger, who boarded in Goa, started experiencing respiratory distress

mid-air at an altitude of 39,000 feet. "I asked about the previous medical history of the patient, who was from Belgaum, from his brother who was also travelling with him. The medical reports showed the patient has small kidneys with poor renal function," Singh told PTI over phone on Tuesday. Clinically, the patient was in "fluid overload" and was getting drowsy. He also had accelerated hypertension, tachycardia, tachypnoea and he gradually he started gasping, the medical officer said. The crew

had most of the necessary equipment and drugs available in their medical emergency kit, he said. Singh said he administered the required emergency drugs to the patient through intravenous line access and kept him on continuous oxygen support for an hour. He also requested the flight captain to lower the altitude and make an emergency landing at the nearest place, as Chandigarh was still two hours away. Since Mumbai was the nearest airport, the flight made an emer-

## NEET paper : RJD leader Tejashwi's aide booked room for arrested students, alleges Bihar deputy CM Vijay

**NEW DELHI:** The NEET paper leak controversy has taken a political turn with Bihar's deputy chief minister, Vijay Sinha, accusing the leader of the opposition in Bihar, Tejashwi Yadav, of involvement in the scandal.

During a press conference in Patna, deputy CM Vijay Sinha detailed phone calls made by Tejashwi Yadav's personal secretary, Pritam Kumar, to book accommodations for Sikander Kumar Yadavendu, the mastermind of the NEET question paper leak. "On May 1, Tejashwi Yadav's personal secretary

Pritam Kumar called guesthouse worker Pradip Kumar to book a room for Sikander Kumar Yadavendu... On May 4, Pritam Kumar called Pradip Kumar again for booking the room... The word 'mantri' was used for Tejashwi Yadav," Sinha said.

"Sikandar Yadavendu is a close relative of Tejashwi Yadav's PS Pritam Kumar. An NHA guest house was booked for Sikandar's sister Reena Yadav and son Anurag Yadav on May 4. A phone number and 'Mantri Ji' were mentioned in the NHA guest house's

diary. The investigating agency is trying to identify this 'Mantri Ji,'" Sinha added. Sinha, also the minister of road construction, ordered an inquiry into the booking of the NHA guest house.

"I am conducting a thorough investigation in my department to identify officers or employees working at the behest of Tejashwi Yadav. The entire RJD system is based on crime and corruption," he said. However, NHA has clarified that it does not operate any guest house facility in Patna.

## Highcourt strikes down Bihar govt's 65% reservation in jobs

**NEW DELHI:** Patna high court on Thursday struck down a 65 per cent reservation cap set by the state in government jobs and educational institutions.

The high court in March had reserved its judgment on a batch of writ petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the increase in quota for backward, extremely backward classes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes from 50 per cent to 65 per cent in government jobs and higher educational institutions in the state. A division bench of Chief Justice K Vinod Chandran and Justice Harish Kumar reserved the judgment while concluding a marathon hearing on 10 writ petitions filed by one Gaurav Kumar and others. The petitioners had challenged the constitutional validity of the amendments made in

reservation laws. On November 21, the state government had notified the amended reservation laws. The Bihar government in November last year had officially notified in the state gazette two bills, aiming to raise the quota for deprived castes from 50 per cent to 65 per cent in government jobs and educational institutions. With the enactments, Bihar held the highest reservation percentage among larger states, reaching a total of 75 per cent.

Reacting to the court's order, RJD leader and Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha urged Bihar CM Nitish Kumar to challenge the decision in the Supreme Court.

"We consider it as very unfortunate. I would like to say that we should see the social background of the petitioner. Who are those people trying to do this

from behind the curtains? We would urge Nitish Kumar to challenge this decision immediately in the upper court," Manoj Jha said.

The two bills that hiked quota The two bills, namely the Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes) Amendment Bill-2023 and the Bihar (in admission in educational institutions) Reservation Bill, 2023, had become law after the gazette notification.

Bihar, with the law, was the second only to Tamil Nadu to provide the highest percentage of reservation to backward classes.

While Tamil Nadu offers 50 per cent, Bihar provided 43 per cent reservations for them, followed by Sikkim and Kerala with 40 per cent

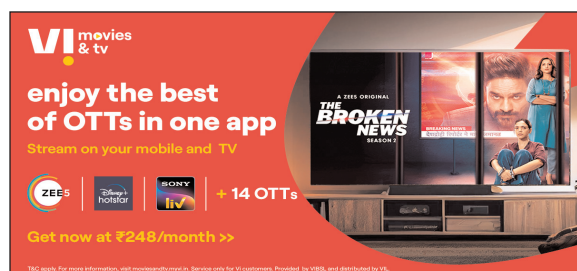
## 'Didn't know carrying copies of big brands is a serious offence'

**HYDERABAD:** Travelling to the United States with a Puma, Adidas, or Nike fake? Your bargain buys might just get confiscated - or even destroyed - by US customs officials. With US Customs and Border Protection (CPB) stepping up its surveillance of smuggling of counterfeit goods, many Indian students and travellers who flew into America in recent months had their fake luxury items seized at the port of entry. Some told they had to watch the staff run scissors through their clothes or ditch them in the trash can.

CPB rules say an individual can carry one counterfeit item of each type (like one shirt, handbag, or pair of shoes) provided it is for personal use and not for sale. Anything in "excess" of this is banned. travelled to the US to meet my son, who is pursuing a master's in supply chain management in Texas. I was carrying eight shirts, four trousers, some socks, and a pair of shoes. All the goods were still packed as I had just bought them, said a schoolteacher from Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. "At the port of entry officials checked my bags and bombarded me with questions about where I was travelling from, who the goods were for, if I was smuggling them, etc. Though I tried explaining to them that it was all for my son, they insisted that I could not take them as they were all counterfeit goods - copies of big brands - which I wasn't aware of. Since they threatened me with criminal charges, I had no choice but to let them seize everything immediately." The traveller said many of the clothing items were torn before being discarded. "I lost goods worth at least Rs 30,000," added the 43-year-old, appealing to authorities to mention these rules on relevant platforms for the benefit of travellers.

## Vi Movies & TV App Strengthens Entertainment Offering with Zee5; Introduces New Subscription Plans with Access to 17 OTT Apps

**GURUGRAM / HISAR:** In line with its continuous endeavour to cater to the growing consumer demands of bringing more entertainment at an affordable price, a leading telecom operator Vi, had launched their content aggregator App i.e Vi Movies & TV in its new avatar earlier this year. In addition to existing top players like Disney+ Hotstar, Vi today announced a new partnership with one of the leading OTT player - ZEE5. With this new addition, Vi Movies & TV App now offers access to 17 OTT Apps in one single subscription, at 248 per month. Vi users can binge on their favourite content on top OTT Apps such as Disney+ Hotstar, Sony LIV, ZEE5, and others all with a single subscription to Vi Movies and TV, on their Mobile & TV. Vi users will be able to enjoy a wide range of movies, shows, and popular titles such as



the Vidya Balan starrer - Do Aur Do Pyaar, the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, regional blockbusters such as Manjummel Boys, Aranmanai 4 and many more on the Disney+ Hotstar app; UEFA Euro Cup, 'Gulak Season 4, India Tour of Sri Lanka Scam 2003, Rocket Boys etc. from Sony LIV and shows like 'Sunflower', 'Broken News', TAJ and movies such as 'Sirf Ek Bandaa Kaafi Hai', 'Kadak Singh', 'Veer Sawarkar', 'Sam Bahadur', 'Hanuman', and more from ZEE5. Avneesh Khosla, Chief Marketing Officer, Vodafone Idea, said 'At Vi, we understand that convenience and great value are two critical factors influencing

buying decisions in India and we are committed to offering solutions that meet the needs of our customers. Our content aggregator platform, Vi Movies & TV App, offers access to 17 OTT platforms with a single plan. This not only reduces the cost of entertainment consumption but also eliminates the hassle of subscribing to multiple OTT apps separately." He further added, "We are confident that Vi Movies & TV App will strike a chord with our consumers for its cost-effectiveness and convenience, opting for a seamless entertainment experience over multiple independent subscriptions.

## Student Vidhi Miglani's commendable initiative in the interest of women created history

**Kaithal:** With the inspiration from her mother and a strong determination in her heart, at the age of just 16, Vidhi Miglani, daughter of Amit Miglani, accomplished such a task that every citizen is praising the daughter of Kaithal after hearing about it. With the zeal to spread the campaign across the state, Vidhi is working day and night to provide her education as well as a book called Dhansaarathi Guide to Financial Literacy, written by her, free of cost, in which she is making women aware of their rights along with providing them all kinds of financial assistance. Vidhi Miglani, a class 12 student of DPS Kaithal, has made a significant impact on the financial empowerment of women through her initiative Dhansaarathi, and the campaign to connect money with making women self-reliant has become an example today. The situation is such that by connecting hundreds of women to the campaign and depositing their savings in their bank accounts,



she is creating awareness among women about the importance of money. Vidhi has written a book called Dhansaarathi Guide to Financial Literacy, which is designed to educate women on various financial topics such as gold investment, stock market, real estate, insurance, property rights, etc. The book is written in simple, easy to understand language and is available in both Hindi and English. It can be downloaded for free from the Dhansaarathi website. Under this campaign, free books have been distributed to 5 thousand women and Vidhi is also playing an important role in opening accounts for women who lack the necessary documents to open bank accounts by getting them completed at her own level. **More than 75 financial literacy workshops were**

**organized in various villages** Founded two years ago by student Vidhi, Dhansaarathi aims to make women in her community financially aware. Apart from the book, Dhansaarathi has partnered with several banks to organise hundreds of bank account opening drives, helping over 2100 women in rural Haryana open their first independent bank account and enrol in various insurance schemes. She has also co-organised over 75 financial literacy workshops in various villages of Haryana, encouraging women to enrol in various government schemes including Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojana.

## CAPSULES

### A Japanese company is creating battery material with an energy density that is 100 times higher

**Delhi:** TDK, a multinational electronics business based in Japan, has revealed that it has created a material for solid-state batteries that has an energy density that is roughly 100 times higher than that of traditional ones. The Tokyo-based company claims that a variety of wearable gadgets, including smartwatches, wireless earbuds, hearing aids, and environmental sensors, may make use of their technology. Although the new material is intended to replace current coin cell batteries, it makes use of lithium alloy anodes and an oxide-based solid electrolyte. "Batteries are quite safe since they employ solid electrolyte based on oxides. It stated in a statement that "it is intended for use in wearable devices and other devices that come into direct contact with the human body." "The battery can be applied for replacing coin cell primary batteries in compliance with EU battery regulations, which require them to be replaced by rechargeable batteries, which is expected to contribute to the reduction of environmental impact," it stated. According to the company, the new technology also makes it possible for batteries to be smaller and have a longer operating life.

### Voda to sell 10% Indus share for \$1.1bn

**Delhi:** Vodafone Group will sell 10% of India's Indus Towers for up to \$1.1 billion to service debt, according to a term sheet obtained by Reuters. Last week, Reuters reported that Vodafone was considering selling its 21.5% holding in mobile-tower operator Indus Towers through several group businesses.

## Durex Global Sex Survey Reveals Greater Sexual Satisfaction And More Condoms For First Timers

**GURUGRAM:** The percentage of people in India using a condom during their first sexual experience has risen by 37% since 2006, to 59% in 2024, according to Durex's latest Global Sex Survey. Durex is now present at 2 billion sexual occasions globally each year[1] and, over the last two decades, more than 118,000 people across the world have participated in its Global Sex Survey. The latest 2024 edition\* was conducted in 36 countries. The fourth edition of the world's most comprehensive sexual health and wellbeing survey, in celebration of Durex's 95th anniversary, found that condoms remain the most popular



method of contraception, especially with first timers. Globally, 55% of respondents used condoms during their first sexual experiences, up 34% from 2006. This is especially important because those who use condoms during their first sexual experience are nearly three times more likely to continue using them in the future.

### Greater sexual satisfaction

The latest data has unveiled that levels of sexual satisfaction have increased across the world, as 57% of respondents stated they are emotionally satisfied and 56% said they were physically satisfied with their sex lives, marking a 12% rise in emotional satisfaction and a 21% rise in physical satisfaction since 2006. India recorded the highest rates of satisfaction globally, as 76%

stated they were satisfied physically and 73% reported being satisfied emotionally. However, Durex's latest results also show that men are 20% more likely than women to experience an orgasm 'almost always' or 'always' during sex. Globally, those who are sexually active and use Durex across the world are 25% more satisfied with their sex lives than those who don't. As the #1 condom and lube brand globally[2], Durex contributes to enhancing sexual pleasure and freedom - it will continue to do so through compelling and powerful communication and education.

## GST Council to change alcohol tax legislation, settle disputes

**Delhi:** The GST Council is considering amending GST legislation regarding extra neutral alcohol (ENA), a highly pure alcohol used in liquor manufacture but not for direct consumption. These revisions explain that ENA should not be GST-taxable, which could relieve the spirits industry by avoiding dual taxes. In addition to legislative changes, the Council is anticipated to propose a mechanism that would allow central and state tax agencies to stop recovering past tax dues,

helping the spirits industry. This action is part of a larger attempt to settle tax disputes and streamline taxation. The GST Council will discuss officer committee revisions at its meeting in the national capital. According to two Centre-state sources, this committee was charged with drafting legislative revisions to keep ENA outside the GST regime, a decision made at the GST Council's 52nd meeting on October 7 last year. The proposed revisions clarify tax implementa-

tion by excluding ENA from GST under section 9 of the Central and state GST statutes. GST is currently applicable to non-alcoholic goods and services, however ENA is not mentioned. The clarification should reduce the alcoholic beverage industry's tax burden by preventing the same commodity from being taxed under several streams. The Centre would submit CGST and IGST Act revisions in Parliament, while states will alter SGST laws. Since the 2017 indirect tax reform.

## HDFC Bank Launches 'Mega Auto Loan Mela' in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh

**Haryana / Himachal Pradesh / Chandigarh:** HDFC Bank, India's leading private sector Bank, is organizing a 'Mega Auto Loan Mela' at over 115 branches across Chandigarh, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh on 26th and 27th June



2024. The Bank has partnered with leading auto dealers to showcase their top models at the branches.

The 'Mega Auto Loan Mela' aims to increase the visibility and accessibility of auto loans in the targeted regions. The participating branches will showcase a select set of cars, along with inquiry desks to support visitors' queries. The 'Mega Car Loan Mela' will provide an end-to-end solution to process loan requests with a variety of repayment options. The initiative will enhance the customer experience of

buying a car and availing of a loan with minimum documentation. Customers visiting the branch can inspect, test-drive the vehicles, browse through auto loan options and even book a car on the spot. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Mr. Dinesh Luthra, Branch Banking Head - North 2, HDFC Bank said, "The Mega Auto Loan Mela offers a great opportunity for customers to avail finance with ease for their favourite car. We have invited leading carmakers and auto dealers to display their top models at our branches.

## Axis Mutual Fund Launches 'Axis Nifty 500 Index Fund'

**CHANDIGARH/LUDHIANA:** Axis Mutual Fund, one among the fastest growing fund houses in India, is pleased to announce the launch of its New Fund Offer - Axis Nifty 500 Index Fund. This open-ended index fund aims to replicate the performance of the Nifty 500 Total Return Index (TRI), offering investors broad exposure to India's top 500 companies listed on the National Stock Exchange (NSE). The New Fund Offer (NFO) opens on June 26, 2024, and will close on July 09, 2024. The fund will be managed by Mr. Karthik Kumar and Mr. Sachin Relekar. India is one of the fastest growing economies globally and could become the third largest economy by 2027. The Nifty 500 Index aims to capture



this growth story through the performance of a broad universe of companies, providing investors with diversified exposure to the Indian equity market. Accordingly, the Axis Nifty 500 Index Fund aims to provide returns before expenses that closely correspond to the total returns of the Nifty 500 Index, subject to tracking errors. Therefore, investors who wish to capitalize on this growth opportunity, can consider exposure to this fund Mr. B. Gopkumar, MD & CEO of Axis AMC, said "At Axis Mutual Fund, our objective has always been to provide investors with innovative and high-quality investment solutions.

The Axis Nifty 500 Index Fund is a simple passive fund designed to offer investors a simple yet effective way to participate in the growth story of a broad spectrum of Indian companies. We believe that the fund's broad-based approach, coupled with the potential for sustainable long-term returns, will serve as a robust vehicle for wealth creation over the long term, making it an attractive option for both new and experienced investors." Managed by Axis Mutual Fund's experienced team, the fund replicates the broad market exposure of the Nifty 500 Index, representing approximately 92% of India's listed market capitalization.

## Flipkart will challenge Zepto, Blinkit with fast commerce

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

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