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

'Kolkata rape-murder scene altered, attempt to cover up': CBI to SC

NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation on Thursday told the Supreme Court that there was an attempt to cover up the Kolkata doctor rape and murder by the police alleging that the crime scene was altered. The Bengal government denied these allegations saying that the whole procedure was taped. "We entered the probe on the fifth day. Before that, whatever was collected by the local police was given to us. 1x1 polls The investigation itself was a challenge because the scene of offence was altered. The FIR was registered only after the (victim's) cremation at 11.45pm," solicitor general Tushar Mehta who was appearing for the CBI told the apex court. Kapil Sibal, representing the West Bengal government, countered Mehta's



Why is rumour-mongering going on even now?

This came after West Bengal police commissioner Vineet Goyal denied informing the victim's family that she had committed suicide. "Why is rumour-mongering going on even now? It is wrong that we informed the victim's family that she had committed suicide. It is wrong that 150mg of semen were found in her body," he had said. The commissioner had also said that the postmortem was claims, saying that everything at the

The doctors informed the police that the victim was unconscious

The solicitor general also said that when a call was placed to the Tala police station on the morning of August 9, the doctors informed the police that the victim was unconscious, even though she had already died. "First, the parents of the victim were informed by the deputy superintendent (of the hospital) that she was not well. When they reached the hospital, they were told that she had committed suicide.... and that nothing had been tampered with. He further questioned if CBI had made any progress in the case given that only one arrest has been made so far, that too by Kolkata police.

'Somebody has lost their life, don't at least laugh': SG Tushar Mehta during Kolkata doctor case hearing in SC

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court hearing on the Kolkata doctor rape-murder case on Thursday took a tense turn when Solicitor General Tushar sternly remarked: "Somebody has lost their life. Don't at least laugh." Mehta, who was representing the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the case, presented details during the proceedings highlighting the timeline of when the police were notified and the apparent negligence in handling the case. As Kapil Sibal, who was representing the West Bengal government in this case, interjected, Mehta gave a strong reaction with the 'don't laugh' remark. Sharing the video clip from Supreme Court hearing, BJP's Amit Malviya wrote on X: "Complete insensitivity on display. Like Mamata Banerjee, the legal team representing WB Govt, led by former Congressman Kapil Sibal, showed no remorse, whatsoever, for having killed the young doctor twice ...



Liquor flows into 'dry' Gujarat through Maharashtra's hilly terrain

State Excise Personnel of Nashik checking a suspicious vehicle on Mumbai Agra Highway NASHIK: For bootleggers who would not mind making an arduous journey for a quick buck in 'dry' Gujarat, the hilly and dense forest terrain in northern Maharashtra offers the perfect cover from the watch-

ful eyes of law-enforcement agencies. The transport of illegal liquor happens over a 400km to 500km route that traverses the coastal line from the Union Territory of Daman to Palghar in Maharashtra, then veers through the hills of Palghar to reach Nashik city or its outskirts.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta had to remind Kapil Sibal 'not to laugh'. "Supreme Court during the hearing came down heavily on the West Bengal Police over the probe into the rape and death of trainee female doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar

Medical College and Hospital. The apex court also instructed the police to refrain from interfering with peaceful demonstrations. "We categorically reaffirm that peaceful protests shall not be disturbed.

China's promotion of disgraced Covid official sparks backlash

The promotion of a Chinese official disgraced for abusing Covid controls has sparked a fresh firestorm, prompting claims online that her elevation underscores ingrained institutional injustice. Zhang Linlin was demoted in 2022 for manipulating pandemic health codes to clip the movements of rural investors, who were trying to return to the central Chinese city of Zhengzhou to vent claims of being swindled out of billions of dollars. That misuse of apps designed to stop the spread of Covid was met with nationwide outrage. Despite that, Chinese media reported this month that Zhang was now serving as party chief of the manufacturing hub's culture and tourism bureau. That post matches her old rank and likely paves the way.

Coach Class: Tim Walz and a teachable moment in US politics

WASHINGTON: Presented as a regular guy, a workaday dad, a teacher and a coach from the time he came into national limelight, Minnesota governor Tim Walz accepted the Democratic vice-presidential nomination on Wednesday at the party convention with an address highlighted by a memorable teachable moment. Walz was speaking about reproductive rights being infringed on by Republicans and the difficulties infertile couples face when attention turned to his family as he expressed love for his wife Gwen, and children Hope and Gus, both born through fertility treatments. At this point, Gus, a neurodivergent teen with a nonverbal learning disorder and ADHD, jumped up to emotionally shout "That's my dad," while his daughter signaled a heart shape. It was a rare and unfiltered moment of love in a public arena -- where politicians typically stage togetherness -- that sent the gathering into raptures, and occasioned thousands of laudatory comments and commentaries for hours after. It also underlined a fundamental difference with Republicans, who despite their emphasis on raising families, want intrusive oversight and control of women's reproductive freedom and gender rights, whereas Democrats want choice in the matter.

Computer operator to Haryana CM: Can Saini beat anti-incumbency?

The saffron party's decision to appoint the 54-year-old leader as the 11th CM of Haryana had surprised everyone in March this year. Overcoming strong anti-incumbency sentiment against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), stemming from Khattar's nine-and-a-half-year tenure, remains a significant challenge for Saini. The upcoming



assembly election would test the leadership skills of Saini, who has been trying to change the image of the BJP CM by interacting with people till late evening and making the CMO accessible to the public. Saini's efforts, Khattar is still perceived as the real power in Haryana, as evidenced by the CM's inability to change any senior officials in the CMO, all of whom were appointed by Khattar, even after

more than 160 days as the CM. However, during his nearly five-month tenure from March 12, when he was appointed the CM, till Aug 16, Saini could effectively work only for around two-and-a-half months because of imposition of model code of conduct in March for the parliamentary polls.

Sri Lanka top court finds president guilty of 'unlawful conduct' over election delay

Wor court criticized his conduct and ordered immediate local polls. Wickremesinghe defended the delay, citing economic challenges. This ruling places focus on the upcoming presidential election next month. Sri Lanka top court finds president Wickremesinghe guilty of 'unlawful conduct' over election delay. Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremesinghe (Photo: Reuters) Sri Lanka's top court has found President



Ranil Wickremesinghe guilty of "unlawful conduct" for delaying local elections, which were seen as an unofficial referendum on his economic policies. According to AFP news agency, the verdict was delivered by a five-judge bench led by Chief Justice Jayantha

Jayasuriya. It does not carry immediate legal consequences due to Wickremesinghe's immunity while in office. However, it places a spotlight on the state of the economy ahead of next month's presidential election. The March 2023 local polls were postponed, making the September 21 presidential election the first opportunity for voters to weigh in on Wickremesinghe's administration.

Indians in Ukraine wait for PM Modi, hope he will play peacemaker

KYIV: When the full-scale war began in Feb 2022, it came as a bolt from the blue for the Indian community in Ukraine. While back home in India people were transfixed by the massive evacuation of Indian medical students from Ukraine, choices for long-term Indian residents of the country were tough. Having dedicated decades to businesses and connections here, they simply couldn't pack up and leave. 1x1 polls "I had to shift my factory from Kyiv to Marshyntsya in Chernivtsi Oblast near the border with Romania. So many of my workers and their family members depended on me. I couldn't abandon



them," says Nagender Parashar whose prosthetics manufacturing business and prosthetics centres have become a crucial source of hope for hundreds of Ukrainian amputees maimed by the war. "Slowly, I had to bring my staff to Marshyntsya and continue my work." Ram Dange, another long-term Indian resident and businessman, elaborates on the challenges faced by the Indian community in Kyiv. "There were around 2,500 long-term Indian residents in Ukraine before 2022. Many of us got married and have families here. The outbreak of full-fledged war divided our families because we had to relocate our loved ones to safer locations and countries. But we had to stay behind for the sake of our businesses. We are now looking forward to PM Modi's visit and have even made a joint appeal to him. We fully support his rejection of force in any dispute, and he should intervene to bring about a resolution to this heinous war."

Modi's visit is the first by a sitting Indian PM to independent Ukraine. Mridula Ghosh, professor of international relations at National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, senses a possible shift in India's position. "Many see the visit as a balancing act of damage control after Modi's visit to Russia last month, during which Moscow rained missiles over Ukraine. But this visit could also indicate some Russian sphere of influence. Modi coming here will certainly open a new chapter in ties between India and Ukraine.

'Pilot baba', former Wing Commander who turned seer, laid to rest in Haridwar

HARIDWAR: 'Pilot baba', mahaman-daleshwar of Juna akhara of Naga sadhus, was laid to rest in an elaborate ceremony of 'bhu samadhi' (ground burial) at his ashram in Kankhal in Haridwar on Thursday in the presence of thousands of followers from across the globe. He had passed away on Tuesday in Mumbai following a prolonged illness. The seer, a former Wing Commander of Indian Air force, is believed to have served during the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars before taking 'sanyas' in 1974, thereby getting the title 'Pilot baba'. The seer, whose birth name was Kapil Singh, is alleged to have left the defence services after a "mid-career crisis", leading him to spend seven years in the Himalayas.

Thailand reports Asia's first case of new Mpox strain

Vatika Times Thailand Thailand has confirmed its first case of the Mpox Clade 1b variant, marking the second time this strain has been identified outside Africa and the first one in Asia. According to Reuters, the patient is a 66-year-old European man who arrived in Thailand last week from an unspecified African country where the disease was prevalent. "The test results confirm that he is infected with the Clade 1b strain of monkeypox, which is the first case diagnosed in Thailand, but this man is likely infected from an endemic country," said Thongchai Keeratihattayakorn, Director-general of the Department of Disease Control. He added that no other local infections had been detected through

contact tracing. The Clade 1b variant has raised global concern due to its potential for rapid spread through close contact. Sweden reported a case of this variant last week, linking it to an ongoing outbreak in Africa, making it the first evidence of the strain's spread outside the continent. The World Health Organization has declared the recent outbreak a public health emergency of international concern after the identification of this new variant. Thailand reported that the man had travelled through a Middle Eastern country before arriving in Thailand, but did not specify the location. Since 2022, Thailand has detected 800 cases of Mpox Clade 2 but has not previously identified Clade 1 or Clade 1b variants.

TTK crackdown heavily on Counterfeit sellers operating in Prayagraj

UP police conduct raids and seize fake 'Prestige' branded Electric Irons

Prayagraj: TTK Prestige Ltd, India's leading kitchen appliances brand brings down sellers of counterfeit 'Prestige' products. The team observed the sale of counterfeit Mixers under the brand name, Prestige and took legal action against the owner of Supplier & Warehouse Bela, Mr. Ramesh Maurya. The UP police conducted a raid in areas of Bela, Saraymamrej, Prayagraj and seized 68 pieces of duplicate Electric Irons under the brand name M/S TTK Prestige Limited. An FIR (Number 0162) under Section 63, 65 of the Copyright Act 1957 has been lodged at the Prayagraj, UP Police Station and Mr. Ramesh Maurya, owner of Supplies & Warehouses Bela, has been arrested.

Consumers are advised to be aware when purchasing products under the "Prestige" brand. The sale and distribution of counterfeit products is likely to mislead consumers. Consumers should only buy from reliable platforms, authorized dealers, or any of the official Prestige Exclusive stores. In response to the incident, a spokesperson from TTK Prestige said, "Counterfeiting is a significant issue that can mislead customers and harm a business's reputation. The company is committed to taking the necessary precautions. Customers should only buy TTK Prestige products from authorized dealers, and they should always ask for a receipt. Ensuring that customers receive genuine items and that the company will take appropriate action against individuals involved in counterfeiting can be achieved through this measure."

HC adjourns hearing in hate speech case of Azam Khan

Prayagraj: The Allahabad High Court Thursday adjourned until September 4 hearing in a criminal revision filed by senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan challenging the two-year jail awarded to him by a Rampur court in a hate speech case. Khan had allegedly delivered the hate speech in Rampur district during the Lok Sabha election of 2019 on April 8 against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and District Magistrate, Rampur.

A criminal case against him was registered at Shahjadnagar police station in Rampur. Hearing the criminal revision filed by Azam Khan, Justice Samit Gopal granted a week's time to the counsel for the revisionist to file a rejoinder affidavit in the matter and fixed September 4 as the next date of hearing.

In the aforesaid hate speech case, the police submitted a charge sheet against Azam Khan. Thereafter, the trial court of Rampur on July 15, 2023 awarded two years' imprisonment to Khan, a former UP minister. Khan filed an appeal challenging the sentence awarded by trial court before the MP-MLA court of Rampur. However, the MP-MLA court rejected his appeal on January 23, 2024. He filed the present criminal revision before the high court against the rejection of his appeal by the MP-MLA court.

Beauty parlour operator burnt in fire

Prayagraj: Beauty parlour operator burnt in fire, father accused a young man from the same village who used to clean the village of burning his daughter, case registered in Naini police station on father's complaint.

OPPO F27 5G: The Ultimate Party Smartphone

Varanasi: OPPO India announced the launch of the F27 5G-a smartphone that boasts OPPO's new Halo Light-a circle of LEDs at the rear of the smartphone that pulsates to the beat of the music you play, as well as advanced AI camera features that let you capture fun party pictures that you can share with friends and post on social media. The OPPO F27 5G will be available in two colours- Amber Orange and Emerald Green -and retails at INR 22,999 with 128GB storage and INR 24,999 for the 256GB variant. Party-Ready Design and Features: The OPPO F27 5G sports an upgraded Cosmos Ring design from the OPPO F27 Pro+ that runs around its camera module but now comes with a dynamic Halo Light that syncs with music beats to enhance your party atmosphere. This Halo Light can be configured to silently notify you of messages and updates when the phone is placed face-down on your desk.

The smartphone is available in two colours: Amber Orange with a flickering flame texture and Emerald Green with a curved light column effect. Its sleek profile, just 7.69mm in Emerald Green and 7.76mm in Amber Orange, with its lightweight 187g build, ensures it's comfortable to carry no matter where the night takes you. The 120Hz Smart Adaptive Screen delivers vibrant visuals and smooth interactions, perfect for capturing and viewing those epic party moments. And with advanced eye protection features, you can enjoy the night without straining your eyes. As an extra, the Music Party app on the OPPO F27 lets you connect with friends who also use the OPPO F27 to play the same music in sync. Multiple users can join "parties" by scanning a code from any device to enable collaborative song selection and simultaneous playback across devices - perfect for silent discos when paired with earbuds, or intimate house parties.

AI-Powered Fun with Photos and Videos: Now what's a party without fun photographs? The OPPO F27 packs advanced Gen AI features that make it the ultimate fun camera. Its AI Studio feature transforms portraits into unique digital avatars that you can share as party invites or print to decorate and liven up your party space. OPPO has introduced a unique Disco party theme in the AI studio of the OPPO F27 5G. This addition complements the device's party-centric features, allowing users to transform their photos with retro-inspired effect that capture the essence of a classic disco atmosphere. With AI Eraser 2.0, you can easily remove unwanted objects and photobombers for that perfect capture. AI Smart Image Matting 2.0 lets you create precise multi-subject cutouts that can be saved as stickers to add a playful touch to your photo collection or to create memes.

CM Yogi inaugurated mega employment fair organized in Muzaffarnagar

DISTRIBUTED APPOINTMENT LETTERS TO YOUTH

Prayagraj: State Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Vocational Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Kapil Dev Aggarwal, while addressing the mega employment fair organized in Muzaffarnagar district, said that the Yogi government is giving new dimensions to the employment mission and giving it momentum. After the massive employment fairs organized in Ambedkar Nagar on 17 August and Ayodhya on 18 August, a similar event has now been organized in Muzaffarnagar. While more than 12,000 appointment letters were distributed in Ambedkar Nagar and Ayodhya, more than 15,000 employment opportunities have been provided in

Muzaffarnagar. Kapil Dev Aggarwal said that the youth receiving training under the Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission will be provided employment. The state government is continuously organizing various activities to connect. The objective of the state government is not only to provide employment to the youth, but also to prepare them to compete at the national and international level. He said that under Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission, free training is being provided to lakhs of youth through Deen Dayal Upadhyay Rural Skill Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Skill Development Scheme and other schemes. More than 16.50 lakh youth have been trained under



this mission in the last seven years, out of which more than 6.70 lakh have got employment.

Referring to "Project

Praveen", Kapil Dev Aggarwal said that under this scheme, free skill training has been provided to about 65,000 students in the

last two years. By expanding this scheme from the year 2024, skills training will be arranged in major schools of every district of

the state. More than 5.50 lakh seats have been made available for the youth through 305 government and 2932 private ITIs in the state. More than 90 new state ITIs have been established in the last six years, some of which are operating on the PPP model. In line with the demand of Industry 4.0, 150 state ITIs are being upgraded in collaboration with Tata Technologies, so that advanced technical training can be provided to the youth. Kapil Dev Aggarwal said that the resolution of the Yogi government is to provide employment and skill development to the youth. To provide new opportunities in the area, so that they can shape their future and contribute to the progress of the state.

Ila Arun's new play 'Peechha Karti Parchhaiyaan' urges women to question outdated traditions

Prayagraj: A few years back, when Ila Arun was invited by theatre exponent and lighting designer Nissar Allana to adapt a Henrik Ibsen play, she immersed herself in the Norwegian playwright's writing. Realising how timeless relevant his stories were, she began to reimagine them in the Indian context. In 2016, 'Peechha Karti Parchhaiyaan', her adaptation of Ibsen's 1882 play 'Ghosts' was staged for the first time and now its teleplay version will be available on the small screen courtesy Zee Theatre. The play was directed for stage by director and actor K.K.Raina and after more than 50+ successful performances across India, it will premiere at Tata Play Theatre on 25th August.

Ila has written Ibsen's story about intergenerational trauma in a feudal Rajasthani household and also plays the cen-

tral role of Rani Yashodhara (Baisaheb). Forced by tradition and notions of family honour to conceal the secrets of her late husband Maharaja Kunwar Viraj Bhanu Pratap Singh, she is



however unable to prevent the past from revealing itself. The toxic revelation then goes on to have a devastating impact on her young son played by television star Param Singh. KK Raina plays a patriarchal priest while Priyamvada Kant and Vijay Kashyap also play pivotal parts. Saurabh Shrivastava is the filming director of the tele-

play. Talking about her role, Ila says, "I am from Rajasthan and my understanding of its milieu enabled me to etch the layered character of this conflicted matriarch. Rajasthani women appear to be very soft but they are warriors at heart. Baisaheb is also a very traditional woman but in a crisis, she fights with everything she has to protect her son"

Talking about the feminism inherent in the play, Ila says, "No matter which era a woman belongs to, she is still a woman and expected to conform to tradition. The era Yashodhara belongs to did not give her the freedom to speak up but as a writer and a woman of today, I raised my voice for her and other women like her. My hope is that every woman who watches this teleplay will feel inspired to voice what is on her mind and find the strength within to question outdated traditions."

Kamdhenu Ltd to boost branded Colour Coated Sheets

Varanasi: In a strategic move to re-strengthen the market share and presence of its brands 'Kamdhenu Colour Max Sheet' & 'Kamdhenu Shresth GC Sheet' in Uttar Pradesh, Kamdhenu Limited, India's largest manufacturer and seller of branded TMT Bars in retail, today announced that it will boost their manufacturing capacity by 20%. The new business strategy is developed inline to the heightened demand of the products received in the state in the recent times. Kamdhenu limited intends to serve this demand and increase the capacity from 10,500 MT to 12,500 MT in one year.

Elaborating on the company's business plans, Mr. Sunil Agarwal, Director, Kamdhenu Ltd. said, "Today, Kamdhenu Colour Coated Sheets are being used in many governments as well as non-government projects. With seeing the increased demand of our products, primarily driven by the ever-growing hous-

ing and infrastructure sector in the state, we are committed to increase the production capacity of our high quality colour coated sheets. We are observing a consistent economic growth in Uttar Pradesh, with the housing and infrastructure sector experiencing a surge in demand for premium steel products. We are focused towards catering to this growth and have aligned our business strategies accordingly."

"Conforming to international standards, 'Kamdhenu Colour Max' provides aesthetic solutions for roofing and cladding in residential and industrial projects. These lightweight sheets are easy to install, speeding up the construction work at any project. To ensure customization as per customers requirement, 'Kamdhenu Colour Max' range also offers allied accessories such as rain water system, rain gutter, crimping curve, self-drilling screw, etc", he further added. Kamdhenu Colour

Max' is a pre-painted product offering wide spectrum of appealing colors for selection. A unique coating on the multiple layers of high-quality steel alloy enables 'Kamdhenu Colour Max' to resist cracking and peeling, even during extreme weather conditions and heavy construction operations. This not only makes these sheets completely rust-free and waterproof but also keeps the interior cool in summer and warm in winter creating an insulating effect.

This eco-friendly product befits the green building concept minimizing the carbon foot print of the building. Kamdhenu has utilized its strong expertise and strong technical know-how of steel manufacturing from choosing the finest raw material to deploy the best technology and processes to deliver best-in-class quality product. The product has under gone stringent quality checks and ensures high performance in all-weather conditions.

Nationwide AI Internship Prog "SHIVA 2024" kicks off

Prayagraj: The much-anticipated SHIVA 2024, a nationwide online internship program focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Deep Learning, officially commenced today with an inspiring opening ceremony held at 4:00 PM. The event, hosted by the LDC Institute of Technical Studies in collaboration with NCCode Sutram, IIT BHU, and IIT Allahabad's SPOKE programs, marks a significant step forward in hands-on technical education across the country.

The ceremony was graced by several distinguished guests, including the Chief Guest, Dr. Jai

Prakash Pandey, Vice-Chancellor of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow. Dr. Pandey, a prominent figure in technical education, delivered an insightful address, emphasizing the importance of AI and ML in shaping the future of technology and its potential to solve real-world challenges.

A highlight of the event was the keynote speech delivered by Dr. Bharti from the Department of Computer Science, University of Delhi. Speaking on the topic "Artificial Intelligence: Scope and Application," Dr. Bharti explored the vast potential of AI across various industries. She under-

scored how AI is revolutionizing sectors such as healthcare, finance, and education, and highlighted the critical role of AI in addressing complex global challenges.

Dr. Bharti emphasized that AI is no longer a futuristic concept but an integral part of everyday life. She spoke about the ethical considerations and responsibilities that come with the development and deployment of AI technologies, urging students to approach their work with a sense of purpose and awareness. Her address was both enlightening and motivating, inspiring the audience to harness AI's power

to create a positive impact on society.

Chairman Sanjay Gupta of the LDC Institute of Technical Studies also addressed the gathering, highlighting the institute's commitment to advancing technical education.

He spoke about the vision behind SHIVA 2024 and its mission to empower students with cutting-edge skills that align with industry demands. In his address, Mr. Gupta invited students nationwide to register for the internship program and announced that the first lecture, scheduled for 7 PM, would be open to all participants, regardless of registration status.

The opening ceremony also featured speeches from key organizers and academic leaders, who expressed their enthusiasm for the program's potential to foster innovation and collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds.

They praised the collaborative efforts of the participating institutions and the role of SHIVA 2024 in providing a platform for students to gain practical experience in AI and related fields.

As the ceremony concluded, the energy and excitement among attendees were palpable, setting a positive tone for the ses-

sions to come. SHIVA 2024 promises to be a transformative experience for students, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in an increasingly AI-driven world.

The program is expected to attract thousands of participants from across the country, all eager to engage in a comprehensive learning experience that bridges the gap between academic theory and practical application. With a diverse range of lectures, workshops, and projects lined up, SHIVA 2024 is set to be a milestone in the evolution of technical education in India.

NSDC Int'l & Talent Corp sign Tech Advisory MoU

Varanasi: NSDC International, a wholly owned subsidiary of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), is to provide robust digital skilling solutions to Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp), to empower Malaysian youth with new age skills. The collaboration is set to bolster the bilateral ties between India and Malaysia, advancing the skill development framework in both countries.

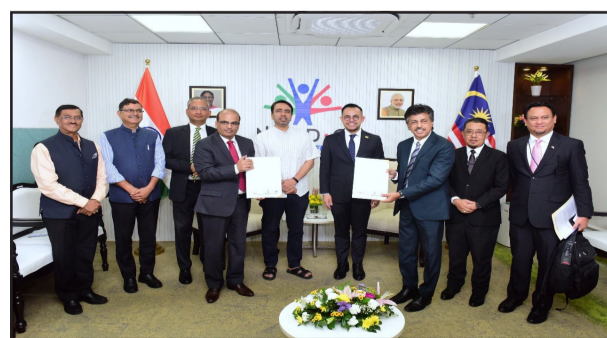
NSDC International, MD and CEO, Shri Ved Mani Tiwari and Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp), Group CEO Mr. Thomas Mathew signed a Memorandum of Under-

standing (MoU) on Wednesday at Kaushal Bhawan in the esteemed presence of Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), Government of India and YB Steven Sim Chee Keong, Minister of Human Resources, Government of Malaysia.

Speaking during the occasion Shri Jayant Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State (Independent Charge) and Minister of State for Education, Govt of India said, "Our skill development program is designed with a strong focus

on industry needs. By conducting extensive grassroots surveys, we have identified critical skill

solutions provided by NSDC International. This partnership offers valuable opportunities for mutual



gaps, and the Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) plays a pivotal role in bridging them. I am confident that TalentCorp will greatly benefit from the tech advisory

learning and growth for both the countries."

The partnership will focus on two primary areas of cooperation: the digitalization of Malaysia's talent

ecosystem and the implementation of digitally verifiable credentials. Through a comprehensive skilling digital platform, this initiative will explore curriculum development, content creation, training design and delivery, and best practices for enhancing assessment and certification frameworks. NSDC digital platform will be studied for potential implementation in Malaysia.

Along with this, the collaboration will also focus on implementing NSDC Trust initiative of providing digitally verifiable credentials which will streamline and enhance the verification

process for credentials of Indian citizens travelling to Malaysia for higher studies, work, or other purposes. It will ensure the authenticity and reliability of identity, academic, skill, financial, and professional qualifications, facilitating smoother verification procedures and strengthening bilateral ties between India and Malaysia in workforce development. Speaking at the event, YB Steven Sim Chee Keong, Minister of Human Resources, Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad said that the discussion with India has led to this partnership to enhance the skills of Malaysian youth.

Hindu organizations burnt effigy of terrorism & raised loud slogans of Hindu protection

Prayagraj: Angered by the cycle of mass targeted violence and repression being carried out on Hindus in Bangladesh, thousands of Hindus took to the streets and took out a protest rally under the aegis of Hindu Raksha Samiti. The speakers made a strong demand to stop the violence immediately and provide complete security to Hindus. An effigy of terrorism was burnt at Subhash intersection and loud slogans of Hindu protection were raised. Vishva Hindu Parishad's state president Kavindra Pratap Singh demanded from the Indian government that apart from diplomatic measures, it should use the army if necessary to protect Hindus. While some saints demanded that the borders should be opened, saints and Hindu society should work together to protect their Hindus.

The Akrosh rally started on Thursday from KP Ground amid light drizzle. VHP's Kashi Province President KP Singh, Vice President Vinod Kumar Aggarwal, under the leadership of Organization Minister Nitin etc., thousands

of Hindus carrying tricolor and saffron flags in their hands and moving forward from MG Road towards Civil Line with loud slogans of 'Hindustan will not tolerate atrocities on Bangladeshi Hindus'. Grow up. Holding



placards with slogans like We Want Justice, Hindus also have the right to live, etc., this group of Hindus reached Hanuman Mandir intersection in front of CAV College. Moving ahead from there, they reached Subhash intersection. An effigy of terrorism was burnt in front of the statue at the intersection and slogans of Murdabad were

raised. A large number of advocates, teachers, businessmen, students and women participated in the protest rally. At the intersection, angry youth expressed their anger by participating in the rally raising loud slo-

co-province executive Dr. Raj Bihari, service chief Satya Vijay, harmony chief Alok Malviya, publicity chief Murarji Tripathi, contact chief Ghanshyam. Workers of various organizations including Agrahari

live peacefully in India. He said that we will no longer silently tolerate the atrocities being perpetrated against Bangladeshi Hindus. The struggle of Hindus against it will continue. All Hindus are brothers and no power can divide us on the basis of caste and creed. From the stage, he announced that struggle against oppression is our slogan. On this, everyone clapped and expressed their support.

He said in strong words that If anyone shows eyes to Hindus, we will take out his eyes. Sharply criticizing the silence of some political parties of India against the atrocities on Hindus in Bangladesh, he said that such parties feel that a snake has smelled them. Giving a befitting reply to the leaders who expressed fear of a repeat of the Bangladesh incident in India, he said that the people of India are worshipers of peace but if anyone disturbs our peace, we will give a befitting reply. He demanded the Indian government to use military force if necessary along with diplomatic measures to stop the atrocities being commit-

ted against Bangladeshi Hindus and urged the United Nations to intervene. The entire Hindu society is with the government in this campaign.

Before this, Yogiraj Rajkumar said from the stage that Hindus will wake up only then they will run for protection. Parashuram Maharaj challenged from the stage with an ax in his hands and said that what will be the situation if we start doing in India what the Bangladeshi Jihadis are doing to the Hindus. Imagine, they demanded from the government that the government should open the border of saints and Hindus; we will reach Bangladesh with them and protect the Hindus. For this day, 13 Akharas of saints have been established. No saint is lagging behind in saving the lives of Hindus. Chandra Dev Maharaj of Rahega Sacha Ashram said that the youth will have to come forward to protect the Hindus. We will understand the pain of the neighborhood only then the Hindus will be protected in India too. The public meeting ended with collective singing of Vande Mataram.

NC Railway achieves its best punctuality performance

Prayagraj: The North Central Railway Administration is striving to provide best services to its esteemed passengers under the leadership of General Manager North Central Railway Upendra Chandra Joshi. In this sequence, North Central Railway achieved the best punctuality performance of 89.97% on 21.08.2024, achieving 89.97% punctuality, which was ranked 5th in Indian Railways. The previous best performance was on 15 July 2024, which was 88.47%. On 21.08.2024, out of 390 trains passing through North Central, only 43 trains were delayed.



In this achievement of North Central Railway, Prayagraj Division contributed 88.26%, Jhansi Division 89.54% and Agra Division 90.64%. This achievement has been achieved through the coordinated efforts of all the departments in coordination with the operating department of North Central Railway. For this, efficient operations planning and excellent control at the divisional level and the implementation of the plan with full dedication were done. General Manager congratulated the officers and employees of the operating department for this success and asked the divisions to further improve this performance and maintain it in the future as well.

Cong demands SEBI head must resign

Prayagraj: On the call of AICC, the Congressmen of Prayagraj zone have organized a massive demonstration at ED office here in the Thursday afternoon, demanding the resignation of SEBI chairperson Madhabi Buch with alleged relations with Gautam Adani. The party members taken out a march from pathar girja to ED office raising the slogans against the NDA Government and said that Buch must resign and a full Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) investigation must be con-



ducted into the Adani mega scam. They blamed the Buch's alleged conflicts of interest have already made a mockery of the Apex court-mandated SEBI investigations into the violations of securities laws by the Adani Group. Blaming the shelter of PM Modi to Adani Group who has termed Hindenburg Research's latest allegations as malicious and manipulative of select public information. Ex.MLAs Vijay Prakash, Anugrah Narayan Singh, Bhagwati Chaudhry, Maqsood Khan, Raghendra Singh, Mukund Tiwari, Vivekaand, Suresh Yadav, Pradeep Anshuman, Arun Tiwari, Kishore Varshney, Fuzail Hashimi, Harikesh Tripathi, Talat Azim, Gaurav Pandey, Haseeb Ahmed including hundreds others were present.

Youth killed over old rivalry

Prayagraj: Sensation spread when the dead body of a 22-year-old youth was found in the morning in Rani Mandi of Atarsuiya police station area. At 4 pm, the deceased youth was identified as Abhishek Kushwaha. Family members filed a complaint in the police station accusing a young man of murder due to old rivalry; police registered a case and started searching for the accused.



If JPC not formed, offices of ED and CBI will be locked out: Pradeep Mishra

Prayagraj: Congress party organized a strong protest at ED offices across the country demanding the resignation of SEBI Chief and JPC investigation after the Hindenburg report. In this sequence, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, under the leadership of city president Pradeep Mishra Anshuman ji. More than 1000 Congress workers from Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Kaushambi, Pratapgarh, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Sultanpur, Amethi staged a vigorous protest in which there were many heated confrontations with the police force, but the Congress workers did not step back. Talking to the



media, city president Pradeep Mishra Anshuman ji said that by making Madhavi Buch the chief of SEBI through lateral entry, BJP government chief Narendra Modi and Gautam Adani illegally earned money which was public money. We demand a fair investigation by forming JPC. If JPC is not formed, then in further strong protest, the offices of ED and CBI will be locked out, the entire responsibility of which will be on the Modi government. Maqsood Khan is prominent in this protest. Raghavendra Singh, Imran Khan, Arun Tiwari, Raghunath Dwivedi, Subhash Pandey, Praveen Singh Bhole, Istiaq Ahmed, Vivek Pandey, Ashish Pandey, Ujjwal Shukla, Nishant Rastogi, Vinay Pandey, Saurabh Chaudhary, Ramesh Yadav, Dinesh Sonkar, Rakesh Pathak, Manas Shukla, Mohammad Altamash, Nafees Qureshi, Manju Maurya, Rachna Pandey, Shyam Ji Shukla, Madhavi Rai, Saurabh Chaudhary etc. were prominently present.

Improve your health via utilization of coarse grains: Dr. Praveen Charan

Prayagraj: A five-day farmer training program for the farmers of Bhadohi district was started under the Sub Mission on Agriculture Extension (ATMA) scheme to be conducted from August 20-24, 2024 at the Directorate of Extension, Sam Higginbottom University of Agricultural Technology and Sciences, Prayagraj. In the above training program, while addressing the farmers at the inauguration ceremony of the program, Director of Extension Dr. Praveen Charan said that in the present context, the main basis of food security is scientific production and consumption of agriculture as well as allied crops. Providing information about scientific production techniques to farmers through training programs is one of the main objectives of the Extension Directorate, where the motto of the university is 'do and learn' which is conveyed not only to the students of the university but also to the trainee farmers.

As the chief guest in the training program, Director Development Dr. Ritu Prakash Dubey told the farmers that this university has been working in the service of farmers for the



last century and has established its own identity among the farmers through research, teaching and dissemination. This university is the oldest agricultural institute not only in India but also in the Asian continent in which practical education in agriculture is being provided to the farmers. After the establishment of this institute as a university,

with the help of Uttar Pradesh Government, the training program of farmers in agriculture and related fields is being continuously conducted through the Directorate of Extension,

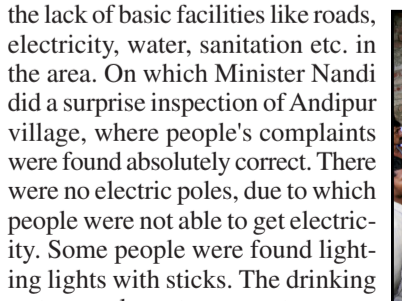
Dr. Shishir Kumar welcomed the participating farmers and introduced them to the brief outline of the training program. Scientist Dr. Shailendra Kumar Singh gave information to the

farmers on organic farming and told the method of preparing vermicompost. Scientist Dr. Sarvendra Kumar gave detailed information on improved cultivation of Kharif oilseed crops soybean, groundnut and sesame. All the scientists of the Directorate of Extension were present at the inauguration of the training program.

Training Coordinator

Minister Nandi became enraged after noticing lack of basic services in Andipur village

Prayagraj: Industrial Development Minister of Uttar Pradesh Government and Prayagraj City South MLA Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi visited Kareli area on Thursday and met the booth presidents at their homes. He discussed issues over tea with Panna chiefs. Met people there and listened to their problems. During the visit itself, the people of Andipur village adjacent to Madaripur complained about the lack of basic facilities like roads, electricity, water, sanitation etc. in the area. On which Minister Nandi did a surprise inspection of Andipur village, where people's complaints were found absolutely correct. There were no electric poles, due to which people were not able to get electricity. Some people were found lighting lights with sticks. The drinking water supply system came to a complete halt. In the village with a population of about 1000 people, people complained that drinking water was supplied only through one or two hand pumps.



On which Minister Nandi instructed the Jalkal officials to immediately work on arranging drinking water supply. In the absence of drainage system and bad condition of roads and streets, instructions were given to get it repaired. Minister Nandi gave strict instructions to the officers present on the spot and ordered them to immediately solve the basic problems in the village. Seeing the

strict attitude and instructions of Minister Nandi, officials of Municipal Corporation, Electricity, Water Works as well as other related departments immediately reached the spot and started the work of making Steemit and solving the basic problems. On Thursday itself, zonal officers of the Municipal Corporation, XEN, SDO, JE etc. officers of the Water and Electricity Department got busy in making steam

for the repair of electric poles, transformers, drinking water supply system as well as roads. Minister Nandi visited the Kareli area on Thursday and visited the house of booth president Arun Kumar Srivastava, Ramashankar Srivastava, Praveen Kumar Srivastava, Rajneesh Gupta, Akhilesh Singh, Rajesh Kushwaha, Ajay Kushwaha, Vinod Chaurasia, Ram Bhawan and Meerapur Division General Secretary Rajendra Kushwaha. Met the presidents as well as the family members and listened to everyone's problems. There, a meeting was held with the Panna chiefs and discussed over tea. On this occasion, Mandal President Ranvijay Singh, Raghavendra Mishra, Dilip Kesarwani, Sumit Vaish, BJP Metropolitan Vice President Anil Kesarwani Jhallar, Mahila Morcha officer Rekha Kanojia, BJP Yuva Morcha officer Saurabh Mehta, Manoj Gupta etc. officials were present.

Indian Bank holds customer seminar

Prayagraj: A customer seminar was organized on the occasion of Customer Day at Kalyani Devi branch of Indian Bank. Manager Kanti Prasad Chaturvedi conducted the seminar. Manager Sapna Ravi encouraged customers for digital banking services. Among the customers, Abhay Srivastava, Triveni Singh, Javed Urfi etc. shared their experiences and suggestions. Branch Manager Saurabh thanked all the customers participating in the seminar. Ashish Mehrotra, Yogendra Kumar, Santosh Kumar, Kavita Kaur, Rama Khanna, Shyam Mehrotra, Vishal, Naman, Dharmendra, Kanhaiya, Dinesh etc. were present on this occasion.

Inter house football tournament inaugurates at SHUATS



Prayagraj: Inter house football tournament 2024-25 was inaugurated at football ground of Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS), Prayagraj. Dr. C John Wesley, Chairman Athletics Committee and Joint Registrar was the chief guest of the opening ceremony. Dr. (Mrs.) Sunita B. John, Head of Physical Education welcomed the chief guest with plant-pots. She also welcomed Ajay Kumar with

plant -pots. The Chief Guest encouraged the players to play the game with true spirit of sportsmanship; he also congratulated everybody on the occasion of inauguration. The opening match was played between Red house and Blue house. Blue house won the match by 3-1 against Red house. Tournament was organized under supervision of Football Game In charge Mr. Ajai Kumar, Match Refereewas Mr.Tanveer

Ahmed. The final of the tournament will be played on 29th August 2024. This information was given by Mr. Rakesh Sahu. On this occasion Dr. Vikram Singh, Mr.Viju John, Satyam Kesari, Dr.Gourav Yadav, Mr. R K Singh, Mr. Jacob, Mr. Gaurav Suman, Mr. Ashish Massey, Dr.Achint Terrance, Dr.Asheok Kumar Singh, Dr.Dheep Joshi, Mr.Praveen Rai, Mr.Bipin Kumar Singh, Mr.Naresh Kanojia etc were present.

Editorial

Why Celebrities Are Seeking Legal Protection For Their Personality Rights

The Delhi High Court recently issued an order safeguarding the personality and publicity rights of film actor Jackie Shroff, restraining several social media accounts, AI Chatbots, and e-commerce websites from exploiting the actor's name, voice, or image for commercial purposes without his consent. Shroff petitioned the court against the unauthorised use of his name and persona, seeking protection against various individuals and entities utilising and misusing his identity without permission. The proliferation of AI-generated deep-fake videos has exacerbated concerns for celebrities. Jackie Shroff's isn't the first instance of a film star resorting to legal action to protect their personality rights. Over the past two years, the Delhi High Court has issued interim orders to prevent the unauthorised use of Amitabh Bachchan and Anil Kapoor's name, image, and voice. The question arises: why are some celebrities turning to courts for the protection of their personality rights, while others refrain? "Where there is demonstrable misuse, people are approaching. Personality right is a facet of publicity right," says advocate Ameet Naik, who has represented Bachchan, Kapoor and now Shroff in their respective personality rights suits. In India, laws regarding personality rights are still evolving, with courts deriving principles from Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression), Article 21 (protection of life and personal liberty), and intellectual property rights laws. "A few celebrities may choose not to pursue legal action due to various reasons such as the perceived insignificance of unauthorised use, the costs involved in litigation, or a desire to avoid negative publicity," says Shoeb Masodi, Partner, M&P IP PROTECTORS. Personality rights, as the name implies, pertain to the rights associated with the personality of a well-known individual, primarily applicable to celebrities whose names, images or voices are prone to misuse for profit. The concept dictates that only the owner or creator of these attributes has the right to derive monetary benefits from them. Personality rights have gained importance alongside the right to privacy given the kind of fame celebrities enjoy today. In 1995, the Supreme Court recognised a person's right to control the commercial use of one's identity in the R Rajagopal vs. State of Tamil Nadu case, commonly known as the Auto Shankar case. In 2015, the Madras High Court intervened to protect actor Rajinikanth's personality rights, halting the release of the movie Main Hoon Rajinikanth. The filmmakers had utilised the actor's name and style without his express permission, with the title itself serving as a clear indication of its connection to Rajinikanth. In yet another case involving actor Amitabh Bachchan, the Delhi High Court in November 2022 restrained the use of the actor's name, image, voice, or any of his characteristics without his consent. It is crucial to note that in intellectual property right cases, it's often impractical to name all infringing parties, leading affected parties to seek blanket injunctions or ban orders, known as 'John Doe' orders. Originating from the UK, John Doe orders are passed by a court against unknown defendants and the world at large. In September 2023, the Delhi High Court ruled in favour of actor Anil Kapoor in a case filed by him to protect his image and personality from misuse by third parties. Kapoor had petitioned the court, stating that several parties were using aspects of his personality, including popular terms from his dialogues.

Beyond Politics: Protecting Sanatana Dharma from Misguided Extremism

One of the primary issues of the 2024 national election campaign has become Sanatana Dharma. The BJP accuses the Opposition of insulting Sanatana Dharma. The Opposition rebuts this by saying that the BJP is deliberately politicising the issue, and misleading ordinary voters. Elections will come and go. Political parties will win and lose. But in a country where the overwhelming majority is Hindu, the debate is one of pivotal importance, transcending transient political dividends. It has a bearing on the very nature of Sanatana Dharma, its evolution, its philosophical wisdom, its inherently eclectic and inclusive character, and all the factors which make it different from Abrahamic faiths. Let me clarify at the outset that I am a proud Hindu. The number of books I have written on the Hindu faith, and the sheer profundity of its thought as well as the remarkable achievements of Hindu civilization which forms the foundational period of our history, bears testimony to this. My real worry, however, is that this acrimonious political wrangling on Sanatana Dharma could reduce this great religion to a new level of fundamentalist illiteracy. And such a consequence goes far beyond the immediate political fortunes of expedient politicians. The crux of the matter is: what is Sanatana Dharma? Is it an



unchanging monolith? Is it compiled in a single text, like the Bible or Koran, which cannot be transgressed by believers? Is it written in stone, to be interpreted by one Pope or Ayatollah? Or, has it evolved to be what it is precisely because it is none of the above? It is exceptionally significant that in its entire history, not a single Hindu has been burnt on the stake or killed for blasphemy, as is not uncommon in some other faiths.

What this means is that Sanatana Dharma has allowed for differences of opinion within its fold, including trenchant criticism of some aspects of it, by its own followers. The Hindu faith had not one but six systems of philosophy attempting to understand the truth behind the vast and bewildering plurality of the cosmos. Each of them had a different interpretation. In addition, there is the Lokayita Charvaka school,

which cogently argued the materialist school of thought, denied the existence of God, and considered the Vedas, regarded as Shruti or revealed texts by many Hindus, as devoid of all sanctity. But the Charvakas were not ostracised, or worse, beheaded for blasphemy. Instead, they enriched the dialogic debate within Hinduism and were countered in a civilised manner by those opposed to them. In the 8th century CE, Adi Shankaracharya, who is considered the 'reviver' of Hinduism, could say without fear: na mantra na teertham na veda na yajnah: neither mantras, nor pilgrimages, nor the Vedas or yajna (rituals), matter. What matters is: Chidananda roopam, Shivo hum, Shivo hum: bliss and awareness, I am Shiva, I am Shiva. In many religions, the declaration of equating oneself with God would be considered blasphemy. For instance, in Persia, a Sufi

mystic, Al Hallaj (858-922 CE), almost contemporaneous with Shankaracharya, was put to death for having the temerity to say: 'Ana'l Haq: I am the Truth'. But not so in Sanatana Dharma. The basic point is Sanatana Dharma is eternal for the grandeur of its philosophical vision, and not only for its religious practice; it is eternal for in thought, and not necessarily its rituals. Therefore, narrowing the interpretation of Sanatana Dharma to exclude all differences of opinion is distorting its greatness and, indeed, the very reason for survival. Unfortunately, this is precisely what we see happening today. Anybody and everybody is 'hurt' by anyone who does not blindly endorse everything that is deemed by the 'hurt' to be a part of Sanatana Dharma, including those ills that urgently need reform, such as the pernicious caste system and gender disparity. If this is the criteria, then Veer Savarkar, the icon of Hindutva, would be hounded today, because he wrote extensively and consistently about what is wrong in the Hindu faith and practice. He called these the 'seven fetters, including the misinformed religious sanction given to the caste system, inter-dining between castes, inter-caste marriage, gender disparity (beti-bandi) and untouchability'. So would Dr Ambedkar,

Mahatma Gandhi, Vivekananda and Jotibhai Phule. The language used by Udhayanidhi Stalin against Sanatana Dharma—as I have written strongly about before—is abominable and unpardonable. But the original inspiration for the revolt against the social evils that were sanctioned by the upper castes against 'inferior castes', as part of Hindu religious practice, in Tamil Nadu came from E.V. Periyar, who is the ideological inspiration for both the DMK and the AIADMK. The language of Udhayanidhi was emphatically wrong, but the idea behind it of attacking the discrimination, oppression and exploitation of Dalits and the backward classes, is still valid, especially in Tamil Nadu where 70 per cent of Hindus are of the backward classes and 20 per cent are Dalits. Tamil Nadu is the very citadel of the Hindu faith. The people of the state have consistently voted for the DMK or the Anna DMK. Are they lesser Hindus for that? This attempt to foist a northern India-centric definition of Sanatana Dharma on the South, is treading on very dangerous grounds. The big looming challenge before us is to ensure that Sanatana Dharma does not acquire, due to the misguided extremism of some Hindus, the very inflexible features of Abrahamic faiths. —for which otherwise I have great respect.

Snatching Mamata's OBC Pie for Muslims, Starving Vote-Bank Politics

By cancelling all Other Backward Classes (OBC) certificates issued by the West Bengal government after 2010, the Calcutta High Court has struck at the darkest instincts of appeasement of not just the Mamata Banerjee government but of Indian polity in general. Remember, the Left was still in power in 2010 in Bengal, when the legislation was created. Nakedly soliciting Muslim votes by misusing the OBC quota is not unique to West Bengal. Karnataka and many other states have been brazenly doing it. Taking advantage of the ambiguity in the Constitution in defining 'Backward Classes' and bending the guarantee under Article 15.1 that the State

shall not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, caste, or gender, Muslims were brought under the OBC quota by the PV Narasimha Rao government. The Sachar Committee report was used as groundwork for the abomination. The Rao government was in overcompensation mode since the fall of the Babri masjid, bringing in a slew of constitutional blunders like the Places of Worship Act, the suicidal new Waqf Act, and the OBC lollipop for Muslims. All this not only robbed the share of the genuinely backward, but also brazenly incentivised conversions to Islam and demographic change, placing Bharat's destiny on a doomed path. Why should Muslims, the 200-million strong sec-

ond largest religious group in India with a global Ummah of nearly two billion, eat into the share of OBCs? That is precisely what the Calcutta High Court ruling questions by cancelling all OBC certificates issued during the tenure of the Trinamool Congress administration led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee since 2011. The Bench struck down many parts of the West Bengal Backward Classes (Other than Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Posts) Act, 2012. But the most remarkable part of the judgment by the division bench of Justice Tapabrata Chakraborty and Justice Rajasekhara Mantha was the blunt wording.

Punjab to Andhra to Telangana—state govts' spending on freebies harming India's growth story

The heat of the 2024 Lok Sabha election is at its peak. Every vote is important, and, therefore, political parties are trying to woo every section of society. Earlier, political parties used to make announcements about their proposed policies in their election manifestos. But for the last one and a half to two decades, they have started making announcements for free schemes to woo voters. It's beyond doubt that providing free electricity, water, or travel to everyone could ruin government budgets and increase debt too. Today, there is an ongoing competition between political parties about freebies, and in an effort to woo voters and gain power by hook or by crook, many Indian states are already getting burdened with debt. As a result, on the one hand, they are failing to fulfil their promises completely, and on the other, the development work and essential government activities in those states are getting affected. During the 2022 assembly election in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) made many promises, including free electricity. After the formation of the AAP government, some of these were implemented, but today, the situation is such that the debt burden on the government is continuously increasing and the state

is trying to take more loans. The central government is also being accused of not giving money to the state, whereas the reality is that the state government is irresponsibly spending on freebies to garner votes. The situation is the same in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Bihar, and Jharkhand. Meanwhile, the central government is not in favour of states taking more loans because it is against the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act 2003. The states in debt due to expenditure on freebie schemes are unable to spend on the necessary responsibilities. Industries in Punjab are incurring high electricity bills because the AAP government is giving free electricity to nearly 60 lakh people. Infrastructure development in the state is getting badly affected too. Punjab, once the state with the highest per capita income in the country, has slipped to the 19th position. Other debt-ridden states are suffering a similar fate. In its 2024 election manifesto, Congress has announced Rs 1 lakh as an unconditional cash transfer to the poor every year as part of its Mahalaxmi Scheme. If the party comes to power, the implementation of such a scheme can be frightening. It's

notable that as of 31 March 2023, the total debt on the governments (central and state) in India (including the guarantees given by them) was Rs 231.7 lakh crores, which was 85.1 per cent of GDP at current prices. Out of this, the total debt of the central government is equal to 57.1 per cent of the GDP and the rest is of the state governments (nearly 28 per cent of GDP). According to the FRBM Act, the target debt-GSDP (gross state domestic product) ratio, in any state, should not exceed 20 per cent. But as per the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), in many of the states of the country, this ratio is much more than the targeted one. It reached 48.98 per cent in Punjab, 42.37 per cent in Rajasthan, 37.39 per cent in West Bengal, 36.73 per cent in Bihar, 35.30 per cent in Andhra Pradesh, 31.53 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 27.80 per cent in Telangana, 27.27 per cent in Tamil Nadu, and 26.47 per cent in Chhattisgarh in 2020-21. If the debt on state government enterprises and the guarantees given by the state governments are also added, then by 2020-21, the debt to GSDP ratio in Rajasthan would be 54.94 per cent and in Punjab, it would be 58.21 per cent. In Andhra Pradesh also it has been estimated.

A changing Kashmir votes and vents about education, aspiration, and 3 de-hyphenations

The metaphor Writings On TheWall came from 30 years of travel, especially in poll-bound India. This installment comes from Kashmir. It's my first time witnessing an election in such a sensitive, important, and fascinating location. What is Writings On The Wall? It involves literally gazing at the walls to see what's changing, what's not, and what people want and don't want. The walls reveal what people are buying (branded underwear, Nitish's Bihar, 2010) or if they're too broke to buy anything (Lalu's Bihar, 2005). That shows an

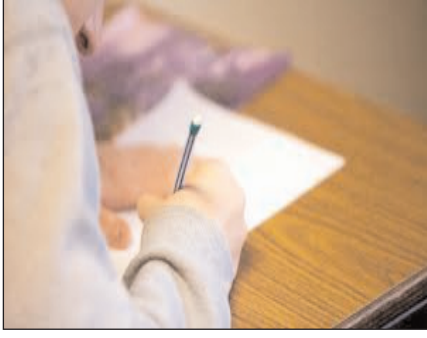
economy's state and change. For improvement in Kashmir. Read all the previous reports in this series here. Three things stand out in the Kashmir Valley, where Srinagar and Baramulla have already voted and Anantnag-Rajouri votes on Saturday. Say three de-hyphenations stand out, but only one can be read from the walls. The other two require entry. Three de-hyphenations: First, a large portion of Kashmiri youth have distanced themselves from radicalism, separatism, resentment, and grievance. Don't think it's over. It waits until young people

trust you enough to talk. Education, competitiveness, jobs, and careers are priorities. Pakistan's de-hyphenation is noteworthy. Political instability, Imran Khan's detention despite his popularity, and economic collapse are hot topics. It also stems from Pakistan's tragic decline and India's ascent. Third, security agencies' tactical and ground-level achievements in de-hyphenating weapons and people. Everyone knows there are lots of weapons in the Valley and many trained and motivated users. For now, that cord is cut, or de-hyphenated. The like-

ly users can't get the weapons and vice versa. Coaching academy hoardings and posters are common in most of India, except in the north, especially Punjab, where immigration/visas/IELTS dominate. I don't think they're as prominent anywhere as in Kashmir. Allen Career Institute, Chanakya IAS Academy, Elite IAS, Emerge Institute of Coaching, The Commercians, Vedantu, Nucleus Institute of Excellence—hundreds of brands line walls, trees, unipoles, and anywhere else you can hang something.

Tech-savvy 'handlers' manage exam chaos from paper leak to student training

Delhi: Port cargo, the police dog squad, political campaigns, and even spy rings are no longer the only jobs for a "handler". The NEET-UG paper leak conspiracy investigators know how "handlers" function in the shadowy nationwide test business based in Bihar and Jharkhand. "The nine handlers arrested in the NEET-UG case so far - six in Jharkhand and three in Bihar are tech-savvy individuals who played a crucial role in orchestrating the leak of question papers, training examinees who paid for these to memorise the answers, and even escorting them to their respective centres," a top cop said. The six suspects from Jharkhand's Deoghar lived in rented housing as laborers. The task was to provide leaked papers while retaining secrecy and identity. "Once a particular exam got over, they would get to work on identifying the chinks in the system for the next one," he claimed. These handlers sought pretextual connections with coaching centers, schools, and colleges to grow their clientele. They sought out exam officials to bribe for useful information. On the morning of the NEET-UG exam, Bihar Police raided a safe house on a tip-off and found evidence of these



handlers herding roughly 30 applicants into Ram Krishna Nagar on Patna's outskirts. "Examinees memorized leaked question papers all night. Personal automobiles were used to bring them to their exam centers, with all necessary safety precautions." "Officer noted. Around 2010, online entrance exam form submission replaced mail-in applications nationwide. Fraudsters and dishonest authorities exploited old system weaknesses." "Before online forms, exam centers assigned roll numbers based on application envelope receipt. A Bihar-based IPS officer said criminals sent many application forms in one envelope using codes like 'bogie' and 'engine' to allude to candidates and their proxies. "This strategy ensured that all these candidates were allocated roll numbers for the same examination centre and hall, facilitating cheating."

NTA held UGC NET June 2024, with almost 9 lakh students

Delhi: The NTA administered the University Grants Commission's National Eligibility Test (UGC NET) 2024 June session. The national autonomous testing agency reported that 11 lakh 21 thousand students registered for the UGC NET 2024 June session, and 9.08 lakh took the exam. The NTA's next big national exam is the UGC NET June 2024 exam after the NEET UG Result fiasco. In its recent notice on successful conduct of UGC NET June 2024, the NTA noted that 11,21,225 candidates took the exam at 1205 Exam Centres in 317 locations nationwide. The National Testing Agency (NTA) administered the UGC-NET June 2024 test to 83 topics in OMR (Pen and Paper) format in two shifts. The announcement further noted that 11,21,225 individuals enrolled for the UGC-NET June 2024 Examination, including



Bihar High Court reverses 65% job, college quota boost

Delhi: The Patna high court struck down Bihar's decision last year to raise caste-based quotas to 65%, ruling that merit could not be sacrificed for reparations. The ruling will have major political and social repercussions. After a caste survey showed that these groups made up 84% of Bihar's population, the state raised the quota for SCs, STs, EBCs, and OBCs in educational institutions and government jobs

from 50% to 65% last year. The court recognized that backward communities were properly represented in public employment and that the government had done no in-depth investigation or analysis before increasing reservation above the Supreme Court's 1992 Indira Sawhney limit. "We set aside the Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes.

from 9,45,872 UGC-NET Exam registrations in December 2023.

CAPSULES

European Space Agency shares high-resolution 'Ram Setu' image

Between Rameswaram Island on India's southeast coast and Mannar Island on Sri Lanka's northwest coast, the Ram Setu runs 48 kilometers. The Ram Setu, or Adam's Bridge, a network of shoals connecting India and Sri Lanka, was recently photographed by the European



Space Agency in great detail. Copernicus Sentinel-2 satellites captured the image. Satellites with an innovative wide-swath high-resolution multispectral imager with 13 spectral bands offer a unique view of land and vegetation. Between Rameswaram Island on India's southeast coast and Mannar Island on Sri Lanka's northwest coast, the Ram Setu runs 48 kilometers. It divides the Indian Ocean's Gulf of Mannar from the Bay of Bengal's Palk Strait. One bridge end is on Mannar Island.

The 130-square-kilometer island is connected to mainland Sri Lanka by a road and railway bridge at its southern end. Pamban Island (Rameswaram Island) is the bridge's other end. The 2-km Pamban Bridge connects India to the island. Pamban on the western tip and Rameswaram 10 kilometers east are the island's principal settlements.

MEA is reducing passport police verification time

Delhi: External affairs minister S Jaishankar said that the ministry is working with state and Union territory police forces to speed up passport applicant police verification to strengthen the passport delivery ecosystem. On Passport Seva Divas, Jaishankar said his ministry is committed to ensuring that passports facilitate international trade and investment and improve worldwide mobility to boost the country's growth. The government opened 440 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras to improve passport services. This complements the 93 Passport Seva Kendras, 533 passport processing centers, and 37 regional passport offices nationwide.



The ministry integrated passport issuance systems in 187 Indian missions abroad. Jaishankar said the government is working with States/UTs police to reduce police verification time to facilitate passport delivery. He added that 9,000 police stations in 25 states and Union territories have implemented the "mPassport Police App,"

which streamlines police verification. "The Passport Seva System has also been integrated successfully with DigiLocker to facilitate paperless documentation," he said. Jaishankar told the Lok Sabha in December 2023 that police verification takes 14 days nationwide. He claimed states and Union territories that have implemented the

mPassport Police App have reduced police verification time to less than five days. A standard passport, without police verification, takes seven to 10 days to issue, whereas a Tatkaal passport takes one to three days, Jaishankar said. "Police verification of applicants' particulars plays an important role in timely passport dispatch," he stated.

In his message, Jaishankar said the government is committed to ensuring that passports facilitate international trade and investment, tourism, global mobility, education and skills development, diplomatic ties, security and regulation, and legal identity.

A warning against bogus syllabuses and sample question papers is released by CBSE

Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued a warning alert informing parents and students to be wary of false information pertaining to the curriculum, study guides, and practice exams for the 2024-25 school year. The Board has issued a warning to pupils about the dangers of falling for online scams that spread false information. We've noticed that some websites and online portals are disseminating stale information and unreli-

able updates about curriculum, sample question papers, CBSE resources, and activities. The alert said, "These links and news erroneously assert to offer up-to-date information for the session 2024-25. "In the interest of the public, we wish to emphasize that information from unauthorized sources can be misleading and may cause unnecessary confusion among schools, students, parents, and other stakeholders," it continued. Due to significant discrepancies

between theory and practical scores in a few courses, CBSE has recently instructed schools to assess practical exams appropriately.

In a notification, the CBSE said that, based on data from prior years' results, it had used sophisticated AI techniques to identify significant disparities between theory and practical grades in specific courses among 50% or more students in about 500 CBSE-affiliated schools.

48% of 1,563 grace-marked candidates skip NEET-UG retest

Delhi: The National Testing Agency (NTA) reported that only 813 or 52% of the 1,563 candidates who were initially awarded grace marks in the National Eligibility Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) before they were withdrawn last week took a retest. Affected students who did not retake were allowed to keep their scores without grace marks. Two candidates from Chandigarh did not take the exam, but 219 from 602 in Chhattisgarh, one from Gujarat, 287 from 494 in Haryana, and 234 from 464 in Meghalaya took the retest. NTA released the data after the exam was held at seven centers in five states and one union territory. The 1,563 students' retest was held days after the Centre scrapped their grace marks, taking



the first step toward solving India's premier medical entrance exam's paper leak crisis, which threatens hundreds of thousands of children's futures. Candidates received grace marks for time lost on the May 5 exam. The Centre informed the Supreme Court that 1,563 students' scorecards will be withdrawn and they could take a new exam or keep their scores without grace marks. Thousands of students have protested this year's medical exam, and opposition parties have called for its scrapping and a

Supreme Court-monitored probe into paper leaks. Last week, Union education minister Dharmendra Prasad and reaffirmed the government's commitment to student interests. The Centre replaced Subodh Kumar Singh as NTA director general with IAS officer .

Pradeep Singh Kharola. It also organized a seven-member committee to investigate the authority's structure, protocols, and operations after a series of key national exams involving millions of candidates were mishandled.

In sweeping election-year move, Biden offers citizenship to American spouses

Delhi: In an election year move that contrasts with Republican competitor Donald Trump's promise for mass deportations, President Joe Biden unveiled a broad endeavor to provide hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants married to U.S. citizens a path to citizenship. At a White House event, Biden attacked Trump for splitting migrant families at the U.S.-Mexico border and calling illegal immigrants "poisoning the blood of our country." He's speaking these things out loud, which is hard to believe. Totally absurd, "Biden said. "I'm not into border or immigration politics. I want to fix things." The new Biden program will be open to an estimated 500,000 wives who have lived in the U.S. for at least 10 years as of June 17, officials announced. The program will also include 50,000 U.S.-citi-



zen children under 21. Biden, a Democrat seeking a second term in the Nov. 5 election, promised to reverse Trump's stringent immigration policies. In response to unprecedented migrant arrests at the U.S.-has intensified his approach. The president stopped most migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border from requesting asylum earlier this month, echoing a Trump-era asylum restriction and drawing outrage from immigration advocates and Democrats. Biden's planned legalization program for spouses of U.S. citizens might bolster his campaign narrative that he supports a more humanitarian immigration system and

contrast him with Trump, who has long opposed both legal and illegal immigration. "The Statue of Liberty is not some relic of American history," he remarked. "It still stands for who we are." The scheme may be challenged in court and ended by a future administration. Texas Governor Greg Abbott, a Republican, who has sued Biden over immigration policies, called the new effort "blatantly illegal" and "pandering for votes." The U.S. allows married immigrants who entered legally on visas to become citizens. Illegal immigrants usually had to leave the U.S.

At Paavo Nurmi Games, Neeraj Chopra beats Max Dehning easily, easing fitness concerns

Delhi: It's impressive when Neeraj Chopra combines speed, strength, and technique. As India saw at night, his prowess was elegantly displayed at Turku's Paavo Nurmi Stadium. On his third attempt at the Paavo Nurmi Games 2024, Neeraj felt that perfect synergy of speed,



strength, and technique before anyone else as the reigning Olympic and world champions celebrated with a loud cheer and the index finger pointing skyward before the javelin landed. After landing, the LCD indicated 85.97m. That was enough for the Indian athlete to win the World Athletics Continental Tour Gold event. Neeraj led the field with his first javelin throw of 83.63m on his first competitive effort since 15 May. Soon after, local boy Oliver Helander threw 83.96m to lead. Only for Neeraj to repeat. Neeraj shines in huge tournaments and key times, and he answered quickly to the Turku challenge with the largest throw of the day. He failed to exceed that distance in his next two efforts, but it wasn't necessary. Toni Keranen of Finland placed second with an 84.19m throw, while Helander placed third. Neeraj may have thrown harder if challenged, but most of the contestants battled with rhythm that evening. Two-time world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada threw 82.58m, while 2012 London Olympics winner Keshorn.

Servotech Power Systems Ltd. to Build 12 EV Charging Stations for ANERT, Kerala Govt.

CHANDIGARH:

Servotech Power Systems Ltd. (NSE: SERVOTECH), India's largest EV Charger manufacturer, has secured a substantial contract for installing 12 EV charging stations from the Agency for New and Renewable Energy Research and Technology (ANERT), Department of Power, Govt. of Kerala. Under this contract Servotech has to build 12 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations with 30KW Fast DC EV Chargers at the various locations of Kerala Motor Vehicle Department. This contract involves Servotech supplying, commissioning, and construction of EV charging stations. This pilot project whose execution has already begun will be executed in phases with the 1st phase involving the installation of 4 EV charging stations and the 2nd phase will

involve the installation of 8 EV charging stations. This initiative will prove to be beneficial in facilitating Kerala's shift towards sustainable transportation solutions by substantially improving the state's EV charging network. As the demand for EV mobility grows, there is a corresponding requirement for convenient and accessible charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. These charging stations will enable EV owners to recharge their vehicles conveniently while on the move. Sarika Bhatia, Director of Servotech Power Systems Ltd. said, "We are elated to be working on this pilot project for ANERT.

As a leading EV Charging player who is very actively working towards making India transition towards green transportation, this step brings us closer to achieving our

collective dream of seeing India as an EV-powered nation. We are creating our green footprints, starting from Kerala, we plan to increase our footprints to other states as well. Our efficient hardware and software solutions will ensure dependable EV charging stations, catering to the growing demand for sustainable travel options. This initiative will prove to be essential for facilitating infrastructure development to support the expanding EV customer base and enable its strategic expansion in EV charging infrastructure at places with high charging demand. Servotech Power Systems is an NSE-listed organization that develops tech-enabled EV Charging solutions leveraging their over two decades of experience and expertise in the electronics space.

Mahindra Launches 'THE' SUV: Thar ROXX

HISAR/KAITHAL:

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., India's leading SUV manufacturer, proudly presents Thar ROXX – 'THE' SUV, a category disruptor set to break norms and redefine the SUV landscape in the country. With a starting price of ₹ 12.99 Lakh, the Thar ROXX embodies the Mahindra boldness and unconventional spirit. Designed and engineered to turn heads and deliver a refined drive and powerful yet safe performance, the Thar ROXX conquers all terrains while offering an array of luxurious features. Built on Mahindra's All-New M_GLYDE platform, the Thar ROXX delivers an exceptionally smooth ride with crisp handling and class leading dynamics. It effortlessly blends Thar's outdoor DNA with modern sophistication, offering a premium SUV experience that caters to those who demand the finest in every aspect of their lives. The Thar ROXX has been rigorously tested in extreme conditions across diverse terrains and altitudes, including the scorching



sand dunes of the Thar desert at +50°C, the high altitudes of Umling La, tricky muddy surfaces in Coorg and the freezing cold of -20°C in Kaza. This extensive testing guarantees that the Thar ROXX is a robust and reliable choice for the Global Indian – people who are Indian at heart but have a global mindset. Mr. Veejay Nakra, President – Automotive Division, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., said, "The Thar brand has always been a cultural phenomenon, symbolizing freedom and a strong sense of community. Building on this legacy, the Thar ROXX is 'THE' SUV, seamlessly combining head-turning design, a refined drive,

powerful performance, superior off-roading capability, ultimate safety, luxurious space, and advanced technology. With Thar ROXX, we're not just elevating the SUV experience—we're setting our sights on making the Thar brand the No. 1 SUV (>12.5 Lakh segment) by volume within the next 3 to 5 years." Mr. R Velusamy, President, Automotive Technology and Product Development, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., said, "Thar ROXX represents a new era of refined body-on-frame SUVs, built on our all-new M_GLYDE platform. This cutting-edge platform, enables us to deliver the best of both worlds – blending refined urban.

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.

GRM Overseas Ltd. Signs Salman Khan as Brand Ambassador

Chandigarh: GRM Overseas Ltd. (BSE: 531449, NSE: GRMVER), a renowned Indian exporter of basmati rice and a key player in the FMCG sector, is thrilled to announce the signing of Bollywood superstar Salman Khan as its brand ambassador for It's Basmati Rice and Wheat Flour (Atta). Salman Khan's popularity, among people across GRM's target market geographies and demographics fit perfectly with 10X. Salman Khan is not just a beloved actor; he is a cultural icon with a massive fan base spanning across India and beyond. His unparalleled popularity, coupled with his relatable and down-to-earth persona, makes him an ideal ambassador

for GRM. His influence extends beyond the silver screen, resonating with audiences across various demographics, from urban centers to rural heartlands in India, and in key export markets like the Middle East. Salman Khan's personality as a fighter and challenger reflects the very essence of GRM's 10X brand. Just as Salman on the screen, is seen facing and overcoming numerous challenges, 10X is a brand that embodies resilience, strength, and the pursuit of excellence. By partnering with Salman Khan, GRM is set to leverage his iconic status to further strengthen its brand presence and connect with millions of consumers globally. His association with

GRM underscores the brand's commitment to quality and excellence, making him the perfect face to represent their mission of delivering the finest products to households everywhere. The company further added, "We are incredibly excited to have Salman Khan join the GRM family," said Atul Garg, Managing Director of GRM. "We found Salman's mass appeal and fanbase to be a perfect match for our 10X brand range of Basmati Rice and 10x Shakti range of Wheat Flour(Atta)" Salman Khan's unparalleled fame and widespread appeal make him a household name across India and beyond. Revered by millions for his charisma and

authenticity, Salman's influence reaches every demographic, creating a deep connection with audiences of all ages. His dedication to health and fitness is widely recognized, further solidifying his status as a role model for those aspiring to lead a healthier lifestyle. By associating with Salman Khan, GRM not only taps into his immense popularity but also reinforces its commitment to delivering premium, nutritious products that resonate with consumers. Salman's iconic status ensures that GRM's message of quality and well-being will reach and inspire a vast audience, making him an ideal ambassador to elevate the brand's presence.

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.

Tata AIA introduces Sampoorna Raksha Promise

CHANDIGARH: For many years. However, over time consumers have started to seek more from their insurance plan, beyond efficient claim payment. At Tata AIA, we earnestly strive to address the evolving needs of our consumers. Our new term insurance plan, Sampoorna Raksha Promise caters to specific needs of consumers with innovative features such as instant payment upon claim intimation, inbuilt terminal illness benefits with acceleration of 50% of the base sum assured on the diagnosis and waiver of future premiums. This new solution is an endeavor to help our consumers live a fikar-free (worry free) life, and be taiyaar (prepared) in all situations" Tata AIA Life Insurance, a leading insurer in

India has announced a new term insurance 'Sampoorna Raksha Promise' that comes with innovative features and benefits. Keeping in mind that the family may have to incur urgent expenses on the demise of the key member, it offers instant payout of Rs. 3 lakhs on death claim intimation*. There are times when a consumer may face difficulty in paying the annual premium. Sampoorna Raksha Promise allows the policyholder to defer months in such circumstances. When diagnosed with a terminal illness e.g. cancer, the consumer is paid 50% of the sum assured, even as the future premiums are waived, and policy benefits continue to accrue.

many years. However, over time consumers have started to seek more from their insurance plan, beyond efficient claim payment. At Tata AIA, we earnestly strive to address the evolving needs of our consumers. Our new term insurance plan, Sampoorna Raksha Promise caters to specific needs of consumers with innovative features such as instant payment upon claim intimation, inbuilt terminal illness benefits with acceleration of 50% of the base sum assured on the diagnosis and waiver of future premiums. This new solution is an endeavor to help our consumers live a fikar-free (worry free) life, and be taiyaar (prepared) in all situations" Tata AIA Life Insurance, a leading insurer in

Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon 2024 #RunForZeroHunger kicked off in style by actor and fitness advocate, Milind Soman

New Delhi: Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon (VDHM) 2024 was kicked off for Vedanta employees and its business partners to support the movement of #RunForZeroHunger at a power packed event, by Vedanta's senior leadership led by Priya Agarwal Hebbbar, Chairperson, Hindustan Zinc Ltd. & Non-Executive Director, Vedanta Ltd. Celebrated actor and fitness advocate Milind Soman joined the launch to support Vedanta's steadfast dedication to addressing hunger and advancing social development across India, through its umbrella entity for social impact initiatives, Anil



Agarwal Foundation (AAF). The #RunForZeroHunger movement is a commitment to ensure a healthier tomorrow for India. Encouraging employees to participate in the marathon, Priya Agarwal Hebbbar, Chairperson, Hindustan Zinc Ltd, and Non-Executive Director, Vedanta Ltd. said, "Vedanta Delhi

Half Marathon is testament to the commitment and power of communities, and the collective effort of Vedanta employees to nourish the country. In the last two years, for every kilometer run by the team, we have facilitated meals for children - and I am proud to say that till date 7 million meals have been given.

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 afore-said insider.

Government should start new rules to combat fraudulent e-commerce reviews



Delhi: Consumer affairs secretary Nidhi Khare said the Union government will use an Indian Standards code to combat fake customer reviews and inflated ratings on e-commerce platforms, a global issue, as online shoppers complain more on the national consumer helpline. Online shoppers are heavily influenced by customer reviews and ratings. E-commerce sellers manipulate ratings and add paid reviews to encourage sales. "The presence of fake reviews online jeopardizes the trust-

worthiness and credibility of shopping platforms and can cause consumers to make wrong purchase decisions," said Khare, who led a stakeholders' meeting with Amazon and Flipkart executives. Mordor Intelligence estimates that India's e-commerce market would expand from \$112.93 billion in 2024 to \$299.01 billion in 2029, a 21.5% CAGR. The new standard (IS 19000:2022) assigns reviewers and administrators particular duties. New regulations compel organizations to identify

review authors in certain ways. E-commerce grievances on the national consumer helpline increased from 95,270 in 2018 (22% of all grievances) to 4,44,034 in 2023 (43% of total grievances). E-commerce platforms in India must create a documented code of practice and share it with management and workers. Khare said they must show how they will follow this constitution and the guiding principles. Amazon and other platforms have acknowledged the issue globally.

Sebi proposes tighter SME listing requirements over misuse worries

Delhi: Sebi and stock exchanges aim to tighten standards for SMEs seeking public listings, according to Reuters. Concerns over exploitation of a 2012 platform to help small firms access financing markets prompted this change. According to sources in the report, the planned modifications might boost the minimum amount of public offerings to Rs 30 crore to Rs 50 crore (\$3.59 million to \$5.99 million).

In response to stakeholder engagements, these new regulations are due later this year. There's no minimum issue size, but corporations listing on this



market must have Rs 25 crore in post-issue capital. One source told Reuters that a minimum offer size will ensure that genuine enterprises can access financial markets, protecting investor interests. During the fiscal year ending March 2024, more SMEs went public due to India's

strong equities markets. On PRIME Database, 205 companies raised Rs 60 billion through public offerings, up from 125 firms raising Rs 2200 crore the year before. Companies with yearly turnovers between Rs 5 crore and Rs 250 crore are Indian SMEs.

Air India, Vistara try to resolve staff issues before merger

Delhi: As the Vistara merger process begins, Air India hopes to resolve employee fitment difficulties. The Vistara-Air India integration committee has identified certain occupations that will be duplicated following the merger. Vistara has 6,500

employees and Air India 17,000. At a recent town hall meeting, employees were notified that the merger may eliminate some positions. The Tata Group will upskill some employees and place others in other group entities to avoid job losses. Prior to the

merger, Air India employed consultants to design the new structure. Some Air India staff would be kept, while others may join Air India Express. Some employees worry about their career advancement and seniority in the new framework.

Order mandating SpiceJet to pay Sun Group's Kalanithi Maran 270 crore overturned by Court

Delhi: Judge ordered SpiceJet to refund over 1270 crore to Sun Group promoter Kalanithi Maran, but a Division Bench of the Delhi High Court overturned it. SpiceJet and CMD Ajay Singh appealed the single-judge's ruling to a Division Bench of Justices Yashwant Varma and Ravinder Dubeja. Appeals are allowed. The July 31, 2023 order is vacated "By the Court. The Division Bench denied SpiceJet's request to postpone the single-judge ruling upholding an arbitral tribunal award ordering the airline to reimburse over 270 cases. The issue between Maran and SpiceJet began in



January 2015 when Ajay Singh bought SpiceJet from him. Maran reportedly gave Singh his 58.46% airline ownership. According to the contract,

Maran would receive redeemable warrants for his airline promotion investments. Maran was entitled to 18 crore warrants and 26% SpiceJet shares. No con-

vertible warrants or preference shares were issued to Maran, and he received no money. Maran sought roughly 1,323 crore in damages. Arbitration was ordered by the Delhi High Court. The arbitral tribunal ordered SpiceJet to return Maran 1270 crore in July 2018. The tribunal also ordered the airline to pay 12% interest on warrant payments and 18% on Maran awards if they are late. The tribunal also found no breach of Maran, SpiceJet, and Ajay Singh's share sale and purchase agreement. Thus, Maran's shareholding return and damages claims were denied.

Government e-commerce platform accepting unicorns

Delhi: Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), a UPI-like alternative to e-commerce heavyweights, is onboarding unicorns like Makemytrip, Policybazaar, Cars24, and Zerodha to build traction. While ONDC was created to support small businesses like kirana stores and democratize online shopping, the government believes large players will give consumers more choice and boost demand in smaller towns and cities. The goal is to assist consumers and



businesses without platform fees."It gained popularity in the last two years. Five lakh sellers—70% small and medium—have joined. ONDC processed 72 million transactions in April "Rajesh Kumar Singh, industry and internal trade secretary, told reporters. Singh

expects all types of players to join, when asked if big startups would overwhelm smaller ones. "The intent is noble, let us see how it works and to what extent we can actually crack some of the issues you raised in terms of market concentration," said.

Microsoft, I4C remove 1,000 cybercriminal Skype accounts



Delhi: The Indian Cyber Coordination Centre (I4C) and Microsoft have blocked over 1,000 Skype accounts linked to intimidation, blackmail, extortion, and 'digital arrests' of citizens by cyber criminals posing as police, CBI, narcotics, RBI, or ED personnel. A MHA statement stated I4C helps prevent SIM cards, mobile devices, and mule accounts used by criminals. Many complaints are being reported on the National Cyber Crime

Reporting Portal (NCRP) about how these fraudsters call potential victims and claim they have sent or are the intended recipient of a parcel containing illegal goods, drugs, fake passports, or other contraband. They may also claim that a loved one is in their custody for a crime or accident. Money is demanded to compromise the "case". Some victims face 'digital arrest' until their demands are granted. Many victims have

lost a lot of money to such thieves. The home ministry stated cross-border crime syndicates run this online economic crime. MHA said it is collaborating with other ministries, agencies, RBI, and other organizations to combat these frauds. I4C assists police in all states and Union Territories in identifying and investigating cases. Citizens should be aware of these frauds and disseminate knowledge. image

Airtel partners with Google Cloud to provide Indian businesses cloud and gen-AI solutions

Delhi: Bharti Airtel and Google Cloud are partnering to offer Indian businesses cloud and generative-AI solutions. The telecom company will use Google Cloud products to accelerate cloud adoption and modernization through the agreement. Airtel will offer cloud-managed services to its corporate customers, including over 2,000 large organizations and a million developing businesses. This partnership targets India's big and rising public cloud services industry, which IDC predicts will be worth \$17.8 billion by 2027.

Bharti Airtel managing director and CEO Gopal Vittal said, "Cloud and AI solutions will drive India's digital transformation. We're excited to collaborate with Google



Cloud to provide safe and scalable cloud solutions for government, companies, and startups. Our collaboration will speed the implementation of generative AI in the country and uncover its potential to solve challenges. Airtel will also use Google Cloud's generative AI to improve its mobile, broadband, and digital TV consumer experiences and internal processes. Airtel will also offer similar services to its Indian and global B2B customers.

According to Google Cloud CEO Thomas Kurian, "Our strategic partnership with Airtel is a major step for accelerating cloud and AI adoption in India. We want to develop disruptive solutions to improve Airtel's customer experience through our relationship." Airtel will train artificial-intelligence and machine-learning solutions on its enormous dataset using the two businesses' strengths—connectivity and AI technology.

IFC provides \$500 million to HDFC Bank so that it can offer microloans to female clients



Delhi: HDFC Bank said that it has received \$500 million from the IFC to support low-income women borrowers through onlending. According to an official release, the largest private sector lender in the nation would provide financing for income production, promoting financial inclusion and socio-economic growth. The microloans will be extended to women registered in the lender's

Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative (SLI) as well as self-help and joint liability groups. Arup

Rakshit, group head of Treasury at HDFC firm, stated that the firm has opted for a longer-term loan facility that will support the bank's endeavors to empower women. According to the statement, banks' wide distribution and cheaper funding costs can be used to provide microloans to women, despite the fact that non-banks now service two thirds of the microfinance market. "Having access to financial services is essential for enhancing the economy and empowering women.

HMD, Makers of Nokia Phones, Launches 'Bharosa Wohi, Shuruat Nayi' Campaign; debuts first feature phone HMD 105 in India

GURUGRAM / KARNAL : HMD today announced the launch of its highly anticipated HMD 105 device. Building upon the company's legacy of groundbreaking products, the HMD 105 represents a major technological leap forward, combining exceptional performance, sleek design, and industry-leading specifications. The phone comes with an inbuilt UPI application, combining the trusted reliability of phones with the convenience and accessibility of UPI, enabling users to securely and seamlessly perform UPI payment transactions even without a smartphone.

HMD 105 phone comes with advanced industry leading attributes including excellent multimedia features, voice assis-



tance and large display with immersive clarity and enhanced visibility.

The phone also comes with an assured one year replacement guarantee making it a reliable option for the users. Ravi Kunwar, VP-India

& APAC, HMD Global, commented on the launch "The HMD 105 and HMD 110 are our first feature phones to be launched in India with stylish new

designs and UPI capabilities. These devices underscore our commitment to providing accessible technology. The feature-packed HMD 105 and HMD 110 aim to bridge the digital divide and enhance financial access for all within our feature phone category.

These phones embody our 'more for less' philosophy as we continue our multi-brand journey."

Paytm acquires five UPI addresses

Delhi: The parent firm of Paytm, One97 Communications, a prominent fintech business, has partnered with four banks to acquire five UPI handles. State Bank of India (SBI), Yes Bank, Axis Bank, and HDFC Bank are these four banks. An update to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) website earlier this week indicated that this calculated step guarantees the continuation of UPI transactions for Paytm users. Of these, the well-known and currently in use @paytm is still up and running, so users can carry on with their transactions as usual. In addition, in collaboration with Yes Bank, NPCI has approved the



creation of the closed user group UPI handle @ptyes. The NPCI has also approved two additional handles: @ptsbi (in conjunction with State Bank of India) and @pthdfe (in association with HDFC Bank). These handles won't become active right away, though. Users can utilize the @paytm handle

without any issues, according to a Paytm representative. This event follows the clearance of Paytm's third-party application (TPAP) provider permit by NPCI. SBI, Axis Bank, Yes Bank, and HDFC Bank are collaborating to provide continuous UPI services for Paytm's user base.

Maharashtra specifies role of govt nominees in autonomous colleges' board

MUMBAI: In a govt resolution issued on, for the first time, the state has enlisted the role of government nominees in autonomous colleges in the state. While govt nominees were always there on the board of autonomous colleges, their roles were never explicitly defined. From

attending every meeting of the governing body to ensuring their budget comprehensively reflects all aspects, the nominee is now expected to be the eyes and ears of the government in the truest sense. There are over 70 autonomous colleges affiliated to Mumbai

University alone. A govt nominee is usually an educationist, not below the rank of a professor or a govt officer in the directorate of higher education or the state council of higher education. They are expected to be the link between the institutions and the govt.

Nandan Denim Ltd. Reports Solid Earnings for Q4FY24, PAT Jumps 880% YoY

CHANDIGARH: Nandan Denim Ltd. (BSE: 532641, NSE: NDL), a leader in the denim industry, has reported solid earnings for the quarter and year ended 31 March 2024. For the quarter ended 31 March 2024, the company reported Revenue from operations at Rs. 579.12 Cr, a growth of 26.68% YoY. The EBITDA jumped 68.69% YoY, from Rs. 23.12 Cr (Q4FY23) to Rs. 39 Cr (Q4FY24). EBITDA margin improved by 168 bps, from 5.06% to

6.73% (Q4FY24). PAT grew a staggering 881.88% YoY, from Rs. 2.76 Cr (Q4FY23), to Rs. 27.10 Cr (Q4FY24). For the year ended 31 March 2024, the company saw a 0.82% decline in its revenue from operations, declining marginally from Rs. 2026.76 Cr (FY23) to Rs. 2010.08 Cr (FY24). EBITDA grew 40.67% YoY, from Rs. 84.1 Cr (FY23), to Rs. 118.30 Cr (FY24). EBITDA margin recorded an improvement of 174 bps, and stood at 5.89%.

PAT grew by a staggering 8384.91% YoY, from Rs. 0.53 Cr (FY23), to Rs. 44.97 Cr (FY24). A global leading denim manufacturer, Nandan Denim Limited is redefining the denim industry for more than 27 years. With a passion for fashion and design, it produces more than 2000 denim products every year. The company manufactures and supplies denim fabric, yarn/dyed yarn, cotton fabric and shirting fabric to renowned clients

across the globe. Along with an extensive range of products, the company reaps the benefits of economies of scale and continue to sustain its market leadership across key products, even in the most challenging circumstances. The Chiripal Group, incorporated in 1972, has an extensive presence across diverse business segments including petrochemicals, spinning, weaving, knitting, fabric processing, chemicals.

Switched to 'patriot' to save democracy: Uddhav

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar: Amid criticism from opponents, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray defended his opening remarks of "patriot" at the Mumbai rally. "Since we have to save democracy and the country, I switched to 'deshbhakt (patriot) and deshpremi (country-loving) brothers and sisters'. As soon as I said this, the BJP got rattled. Modi-bhakts are claiming that my language has changed.

I want to ask these bhakts whether they are patriots or not," he said, while addressing a public rally at Basmat in Hingoli district. Thackeray usually starts his addresses with the phrase: "Hindu brothers and sisters". However, on Tuesday, Thackeray had started his speech with "brothers and sisters of my family". Chief minister Eknath Shinde is among those

who have criticized Thackeray over his opening remarks during the Mumbai rally. Terming it a "black day", Shinde questioned why Thackeray omitted the 'Hindu' reference. Targeting BJP over the electoral bond issue, Thackeray said a "big hammer" has dealt a blow to the party, but it is shameless. "The BJP has become a gang that officially uses govt machinery to extort money.

Instead of using the photo of my father (during campaigns), it should use the photos of ED, income-tax and CBI," he said. He also dared BJP to fight elections by removing the "support" of all govt agencies, and then see how people react. "They order inquiries against opponents and claim to be the largest party in the world," he said.

Dee Development Engineers Limited IPO to open on June 19, 2024

GURUGRAM : Dee Development Engineers Limited ("Dee Piping" or "The Company"), shall open its Bid / Offer in relation to its initial public offer of Equity Shares on Wednesday, June 19, 2024. The total offer size of Equity Shares (face value ? 10 each) comprises of fresh issue aggregating up to ? 3,250 million (The "Fresh Issue") and offer



for sale of up to 45,82,000 Equity Shares. (The "Offer for Sale"). This offer includes a reservation of up to aggregating up to ? 10.00 million (? 1 crore) for subscription by eligible employees. (The "Employee Reservation Portion") The Anchor Investor Bidding Date shall be Tuesday, June 18, 2024. The Bid/Offer will open on Wednesday, June 19, 2024 for subscription and close on Friday, June 21, 2024. ("Bid Details") The Price Band of the Offer has been fixed at 193 to ? 203 per Equity Share. Bids can be made for a minimum of 73 Equity Shares and in multiples of 73 Equity Shares thereafter. (The

"Price Band"). The Company proposes to utilise net proceeds from fresh issue of Equity Shares towards (i) Funding working capital requirements of our Company estimated to 750 million in Fiscal 2025; (ii) Prepayment or repayment of all or a portion of certain outstanding borrowings availed by our Company estimated to 1,750 million in Fiscal 2025; and balance to General corporate purposes (the "Objects of Issue"). The offer for sale of up to 45,82,000 Equity Shares ("Offered Shares") comprising up to 45,82,000 Equity Shares by Krishan Lalit Bansal. (collectively, the

Bahamas Launches the Spring-Summer Collection for 2024

HISAR : Bahamas, the free spirited footwear brand under the leading footwear manufacturer, Relaxo Footwears Ltd., is thrilled to announce the launch of its highly anticipated Spring-Summer 2024 (SS '24) Collection. Infused with the spirit of fun, joy, and carefree living, this collection embodies the essence of the youth, captivating the hearts of Gen Z and millennials across the nation. The SS '24 Collection is tailor-made for individuals who enjoy the high-energy, high output work ethic and style with gusto. With a range of contemporary and fashionable articles, Bahamas invites customers to immerse themselves in the fun & youthful aesthetic and uplift their person-



al style quotient. Mr. Gaurav Dua, Executive Director, Relaxo Footwear Ltd., shared his insights on the SS '24 Collection, stating, "At Bahamas, we are dedicated to capturing the essence of youth through our dynamic and spirited designs. Our Spring-Summer 2024 Collection is all about embracing a lifestyle filled with joy, freedom, and unbounded energy. We prioritize providing the best in style and comfort, ensuring that

every step our customers take exudes confidence and flair. With the new range, we believe our valued customers will celebrate a season of exuberance and youthful vitality with Bahamas." Bahamas, known for its vibrant and carefree brand image, has strategically tapped into the larger-than-life persona of Bollywood superstar Salman Khan to further enhance its ethos of positivity and resilience.

After British, it's fight against 'desi Angrez': Amit Shah in Bundelkhand

LUCKNOW: Union home minister Amit Shah said that there was a time when Uttar Pradesh was known for "producing country-made pistols (kattas)" but, after PM Narendra Modi built a defence corridor in Bundelkhand, "cannonballs are made" Shah said, "If Pakistan makes any mistake", shells made in Bundelkhand will be used to "destroy" that country. In an apparent reference to Congress functionaries, he asked Bundelkhand voters to fight the "desi Angrez" just like they fought against the Mughals and the British. In Amethi, Shah attempted to give a last-minute push to BJP's campaign with a roadshow. Addressing a crowd in Amethi, Shah attacked Congress for referring to Amethi and Rae Bareilly as their "family seats". "Did Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, or Priyanka turn up in Amethi or Rae Bareilly when the Covid pandemic struck," Shah asked as people shouted "No". Shah also asked the people to choose between Modi and Rahul. He said that after losing from Amethi, Rahul fled to Wayanad and is now back in Rae Bareilly. "I have been in Rae Bareilly for three days and can say with confidence that he (Rahul) is losing from there also," he said. In Jhansi, he told voters they have a choice to make between two categories of leaders: one, a person behind a Rs 12 lakh crore scam who was born with the proverbial silver spoon and holidays in Thailand; and two, Modi, whose tenures as CM and PM have been unblemished, and who was born in a poor house, and never took a holiday. Shah described Samajwadi Party as one that ordered firing on Ram bhakts in Ayodhya (in 1990). "Then we have Modi, who got the Ramjanmabhoomi case pursued, won it, and eventually got a temple constructed.