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

RBI's MPC meeting between 4 to 6 August, repo rate likely to remain unchanged

New Delhi: The three-day review meeting of the bi-monthly Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is going to be held between 4-6 August. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra will announce the decisions taken in the meeting on 6 August. Economists have expressed the possibility of the repo rate remaining unchanged at 5.50 percent in the meeting. Economists believe that despite the US's announcement of 25 percent new tariff, the Reserve Bank will not make any change in the policy rates in the August Monetary Policy Committee review meeting.

Trump calls India a dead economy

New Delhi: Even after the announcement of a 25 percent duty and penalty on Indian imports from August 1, 2025, President Donald Trump has not remained silent, but in the last 24 hours, he has not only made very objectionable comments about the Indian economy and the relations between India and Russia, but has also indicated playing the Pakistan card against India.

Naveen Patnaik hospitalised for dehydration

BHUBANESWAR : Former Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik was admitted to a private hospital Sunday evening after suffering from dehydration. "His condition is stable and he is responding well to treatment," the hospital said in a bulletin. CM Mohan Charan Majhi expressed concern and prayed for Naveen's good health. "I am praying to Lord Jagannath for his speedy recovery and good health," he posted on X. Naveen had undergone a spine surgery for cervical arthritis in Mumbai in June. He returned to Odisha last month.

BJP announces Radhakrishnan as its candidate

A seasoned BJP leader from Tamil Nadu with an RSS background

Candidate

Radhakrishnan thanks Modi, says 'will work hard for nation till last breath'

NEW DELHI: Maharashtra governor CP Radhakrishnan on Sunday thanked Prime Minister Modi for nominating him as NDA candidate for vice presidential elections. "My heartfelt thanks to our beloved People's leader, our most respected Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji for nominating me as the NDA Vice Presidential candidate and giving me the opportunity to serve the Nation," he



said in a post on X. Also read: Vice-President polls: NDA announces candidate, picks Maharashtra governor CP Radhakrishnan, a seasoned BJP leader from Tamil Nadu with an RSS background, has been named the vice-presidential candidate of the ruling National Democratic Alliance.

BJP president J P Nadda made the announcement following a meeting of the party's parliamentary board, which included Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and consulting the party's allies. Nadda appealed for unanimous election of Radhakrishnan (67), an OBC leader and two-

INDIA bloc likely to discuss its VP candidate today

NEW DELHI: The INDIA bloc may kick-start discussions on its common candidate for the Vice-Presidential election at a meeting on Monday morning, when the alliance would also decide on the Parliamentary proceedings after a clash with the govt over SIR has virtually washed away the business in monsoon session.

time former member of Lok Sabha, to the constitutional position, saying the BJP leaders had spoken to the opposition parties last week and will continue to do so.

BJP team at temple, alleges Karnataka CM behind 'smear campaign'



MANGALURU/ BENGALURU: A BJP delegation visited Dharmasthala temple in Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada district Sunday and expressed solidarity with the temple authorities amid what it called a "smear campaign" against Shri Manjunatha Swamy temple following claims by an anonymous person that he was forced to bury thousands of bodies in the Dharmasthala area.

BJP's R Ashoka alleged that Siddaramaiah was instigating unrest against Dharmasthala and claimed that "urban naxals" and the "anti-Hindu Tipu gang" were behind the conspiracy. The delegation, led by BJP state unit chief B Y Vijayendra, met Dharmadhikari D Veerendra Heggade and slammed the Congress govt for failing to nip the smear campaign in the bud.

SC takes up problems of cadets incurring disabilities during training

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has taken suo motu cognizance of problems faced by cadets who incurred disabilities during military training, and scheduled to examine the issue on Monday. A bench of Justices B V

Nagarathna and R Mahadevan will hear the suo motu case titled "In Re: Cadets Disabled During Military Training Struggle". The case has been listed after a media report highlighted the plight of cadets

who are medically discharged after suffering disabilities during training at premier institutions such as National Defence Academy and Indian Military Academy. As the injuries suffered by them are

prior to commissioning, they are denied ex-servicemen benefits like disability pension or treatment under the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme, leaving them without any institutional support.

Rahul hits back at EC, says it's helping BJP steal votes

Reacting

Rahul on Sunday alleged that a law was brought in 2023 by BJP govt



SASARAM: Reacting sharply to Election Commission's press conference on a day he along with INDIA bloc parties launched 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' in Bihar against the SIR exercise, leader of opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress functionary Rahul Gandhi on Sunday alleged that a law was brought in 2023 by BJP govt to ensure that no court can take action against election commissioners as the poll body is "helping them and is indulging in vote theft in

collusion with them". Amid loud sloganeering against "vote chori" and in the presence of RID chief Lalu Prasad and leader of opposition in Bihar assembly Tejashwi Yadav, Rahul asked the crowd "apka mood kaisa hai" and after the audience settled to listen, he launched a scathing attack on BJP and RSS, accusing them of trying to "wipe-out" the Constitution by stealing elections. Addressing a public meeting in

Aurangabad after launching the yatra in Sasaram, Rahul said, "I want to ask them why did govt change the law on CCTV footage of election process? Do you know that no case can be initiated against election commissioners. In no court in India can there be a case against them. This law was made in 2023. Why was this law made at this time?" Rahul alleged this law was made as PM Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah "want to ensure that no one can take any action against EC as it is helping them and is indulging in 'vote chori' along with them". "EC is asking an affidavit from me but does not ask Anurag for an affidavit when he says the same.

Uttarakhand to repeal madrassa Act, new law to cover all

DEHRADUN: In a significant move claimed to be the "first in the country", Uttarakhand cabinet on Sunday approved Uttarakhand Minority Educational Institutions Bill, 2025, set to be introduced in the legislative session starting Aug 19, paving way for educational institutions of Sikhs, Jains, Christians, Buddhists and Parsis to



get minority status benefits in the state. Previously, minority educational status under

state law applied only to Muslim institutions. The legislation will replace Uttarakhand Madrassa

Recognition

Mandatory recognition for minority institutions, protection from interference

Education Board Act, 2016, and Uttarakhand Non-Governmental Arabic and Persian

Madrassa Recognition Rules, 2019 - which are to be now repealed, effective July 1, 2026. Key provisions of the new law include establishing Uttarakhand State Minority Education Authority (USMEA), mandatory recognition for minority institutions, protection from interference and registration.

Send Punjab plea on bills to 5-judge bench: Govt urges SC

Reference

Presidential Reference or keep it pending for adjudication after the five-judge



NEW DELHI: The Centre has requested the Supreme Court to refer a petition filed by the Punjab govt seeking the court's intervention in two bills - one amending the Sikh Gurdwaras Act and the

other Punjab Police Act - to the five-judge bench which is scheduled to hear Presidential Reference on SC's jurisdiction to fix timelines for the President and governors in granting, refusing or withholding assent to bills. For the

Centre, advocate Kanu Agrawal requested a bench led by CJI B R Gavai to either tag the Punjab petition with the Presidential Reference or keep it pending for adjudication after the five-judge bench gives its opinion on the 14 questions raised by President Droupadi Murmu in her reference under Article 143 following SC's Apr 8 judgment. The bench posted the Centre's application for hearing on Monday.

Safeguard duty on steel imports fixed, starting at 12%

NEW DELHI: The Directorate General of Trade Remedies has finalised a three-year safeguard duty on steel imports, starting at 12%, citing a sharp surge in shipments, especially from China, and a 76% decline in domestic profits. The safeguard duty was confirmed on Thursday, months after preliminary duty was imposed. Over 250 stakeholders, including automakers and electronics giants.

President, not SC, decides when to seek court's opinion: Centre

NEW DELHI: Objecting to the judgment mandating the President to seek Supreme Court's opinion on constitutionality of bills, Union govt has said the judiciary cannot dictate to the President how and when to exercise her unfettered discretion to seek the apex court's opinion and on which issues. Faulting the April 8 judgment of a bench of justices J B



Pardiwala and R Mahadevan, the Centre, through solicitor general Tushar Mehta, said a plain reading of the

President's powers under Article 143 "shows that an absolute discretion lies with the President to seek

advice. The term 'consult' means the act of asking for advice and indicates that the President is not bound to do so". The judgment had advised the President that whenever a governor reserves a bill for her consideration on the ground that it is patently unconstitutional, the President ought to make a reference to SC under Article 143 "as a measure of prudence".

India gets its first privately funded institute for maths research

MUMBAI: India, said Fields medalist Manjul Bhargava, must fall in love with mathematics again. Not as a "drudgery of formulae" but as an act of "exploration". Bhargava, Canadian by nationality but of Indian origin, believes class-

rooms need an overhaul-"experimental, playful," he said, with teachers "trained" to spark curiosity. Speaking to the sidelines of the launch of the Lodha Mathematical Sciences Institute



(LMSI), he added: "I'm

happy with the new textbooks and the changes brought in them. But they will only show impact in a few years." On the scientific advisory council of LMSI, Bhargava will lead sessions on arithmetic statistics, its new develop-

ments, and future directions. State cabinet minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha called it a school "not for an individual, not for a business, but for the nation that always prioritised knowledge over all and for India that gave so much math to the world."

Bihar man dies in attack by 20 monkeys

MADHUBANI: Over 20 monkeys attacked a 67-year-old man while he was collecting fodder for his livestock at Shahpur village of the district in Bihar on Sunday morning. By the time people gath-

ered to rescue him, Ramnath Chaudhary, a retired clerk of the now-closed Lohat Sugar Mill, was badly injured. He was taken to Madhubani Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him brought

dead. The incident triggered panic in the area. On being informed by local mukhiya Ramkumar Yadav, Pandaul circle officer Purushottam Kumar and police station in-charge Md Nadeem visited.

EC plans house-to-house survey for electoral roll

Delhi: The Election Commission of India is planning to conduct an "intensive house-to-house verification" of the voters' list in Bihar ahead of the assembly polls due in the state later this year, officials said. Concerns have been raised by various civil society organisations, political parties and others persistently over the inclusion or deletion of names in the electoral rolls, the officials said. To ensure the system is completely robust and error-free, the ECI is considering an intensive house-to-house verification during the upcoming electoral roll revision before the Bihar Assembly polls," an EC official familiar with the matter said, requesting anonymity. Such an intensive and rigorous revision of the electoral rolls has been done in the past as well with the last such exercise undertaken in 2004, the official said. The regular exercise of revision of electoral rolls is undertaken annually throughout the coun-



Muslim women can divorce alone

Delhi: The Telangana high court ruled that a Muslim wife has an absolute and unconditional right to dissolve her marriage through khula, without the husband's consent. This ruling highlights Muslim women's autonomy in personal law. In Islamic kula, a woman gives up her right to maintenance (mehr) to end her marriage. A bench of justices

try by the EC and also before the holding of elections or bypolls. The provisions regarding eligibility to be registered as a voter and disqualification are

M o u s h u m i Bhattacharya and BR Madhusudhan Rao ruled that khula is a no-fault, non-confrontational divorce initiated exclusively by the woman and takes immediate effect in the private sphere. "Since the wife's right to demand khula is absolute and does not require a cause or the husband's acceptance, a court's only.

clearly laid down in Article 326 of the Constitution and Section 16 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

Delhi: The central government has approved the setting up of a 417-crore Electronics Manufacturing Cluster (EMC 2.0) in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Budh Nagar district, at Sector 10 of the Yamuna Expressway, to boost local electronics production and innovation. The project is expected to attract investments to the tune of 2,500 crore and lead to the creation of around 15,000 jobs. "It is fully in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of promoting manufacturing in India. It reflects the government's sharp focus on job creation



and building a Viksit (developed) Bharat," said IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. The EMC 2.0 will be developed by the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (Yeida) on 206.4 acres.

The 417-crore project cost excludes the cost of land, but includes 144 crore in central financial assis-

tance from the IT ministry, with the remaining amount to be funded by Yeida.

The project is expected to be completed by January 2028 and will feature facilities such as a skill development centre, a convention centre, and a three-storey hostel block, among others.

Parag Jain, IPS officer who led Op Sindoor, is new R&AW chief.

Delhi: Modi appointed senior IPS officer Parag Jain as the next RAW chief. On July 1, 1989-batch Punjab IPS officer Jain replaced Ravi Sinha, who will leave on June 30. A 'super detective' in intelligence circles, Jain brings to the top post a reputation for mixing

HUMINT and TECHINT, which officials say has been critical to several high-stakes operations. Contributions was during Operation Sindoor, when his intelligence inputs enabled precision missile strikes against terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan -occupied

Kashmir. Insiders underlined that years of groundwork and allowed precision missile hits in minutes. As India navigates an increasingly turbulent global security climate, Jain's significant experience in Jammu and Kashmir, one of its most difficult

Google pulls offline map app from Play Store per government requests

Delhi: Google and Apple removed MAPS.Me offline navigation app from Play and App Store. The app misrepresented India's border. To Google's nodal officer, Priyadarshi Banerjee, the Survey of India (SoI) submitted MAPS.Me a notice under Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act, 2000, in December 2024. The software misrepresents Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, according to the notice. The app's Google Play Store homepage now displays "We're sorry, the requested URL was not found on this server". SoI reportedly provided notice to Google, but since the app is unavailable on Apple's App Store for Indian

consumers, it's unclear if Apple was notified. The publisher accessed the letter using Lumen Database. It says: "The maps.me app on Google PlayStore portrays an Indian map with an incorrect external boundary, endangering India's sovereignty and integrity. The Survey of India (SoI) was appointed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in 2020 to "disable access to incorrect maps of India."

Nitin Gadkari said that the roads ministry is developing annual and 'life-time' passes for private cars to allow unlimited travel across the NH network for a single toll payment. Private cars

account for 60% of NH traffic, but only 20-26% of toll income. Gadkari remarked during a 'Barrierless Tolling in India' workshop, "Private automobiles generate less money. The majority of toll revenue comes from commercial vehicles. To avoid problems, we're exploring yearly passes. People will be relieved but we will not lose." They stated that the government is developing a plan to private toll high pass user counts on certain stretches. Primus Partners and Think Infra's thinking paper, released by Gadkari, claimed that GNSS-based tolling will enhance traffic flow by eliminating delays, lowering travel time by 20-30%, and saving 8-10 minutes each toll station.

Supreme Court verdict will simplify government land acquisition

Delhi: Out of frustration with land acquisition litigation that delays projects for decades, the Supreme Court declared that a government cannot be hindered by third-party rights after acquiring land for public use. A bench of CJI Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar ruled that only the government can rescind acquisition for the full land or a portion of it, hence even a public organization that acquired land cannot surrender it to someone privately. Litigation over purchased land, mostly due to third-party rights, has delayed numerous projects.

21 MLAs from Manipur ask Modi, Shah to restore democracy

Delhi: In separate letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, 21 Manipur MLAs have called for a popular government to restore peace and normality. Since February 13, Manipur has been under President's Rule since former Chief Minister N Biren Singh resigned on February 9. The majority of signatories include BJP, NPP, NPF, and two independent members, according to a legislator who requested anonymity. The suspended



Manipur Legislative Assembly has 60 members and a term till 2027. The MLAs' letter claimed that while the people first welcomed President's Rule with hope, no tangible peace restoration had occurred. "There is a strong apprehension among the public that violence may return," said. Civil society

groups are organizing rallies against President's Rule and criticizing elected officials for not establishing a government. Lack of an elected administration fuels instability and public resentment, MLAs warned. Lack of a consensus CM candidate by the BJP has delayed government formation.

830 flats sold in just a month under Apna Ghar scheme

Delhi: Within a month of launching Apna Ghar Awaas Yojana 2025, Delhi Development Authority has managed to sell 830 flats, with 630 or 75% of the units in Narela alone. According to officials, 150 flats were sold in Loknayakpuram and 50 in Siraspur. "The positive momentum of the scheme is particularly evident in Narela, where all 115 EWS flats in Sector A1 A4 were fully booked. Additionally, MIG flats in We Loknayakpuram are almost sold out," said an official. The scheme offered ready-to-move-in flats at discounted rates across various categories, including economically weaker sections, low-income group (LIG), middle-income group (MIG) and high-income group (HIG). "It is an entirely online scheme, for which registration opened on



Voter list update suggests EC may announce a schedule on...

Delhi: The Bihar Election 2025 countdown has begun. The Election Commission released a crucial assembly poll update that suggests a Bihar election timeframe. The poll body announced "Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls" in Bihar and "house-to-house verification" to enroll all eligible citizens. June 25, according to the Commission. It said a draft electoral roll will be released on August 1 and the final one on September 30. The Bihar assembly elections schedule can be revealed in the first week of October.

May 27. Its key features include a first-come, first-serve approach, the availability of ready-to-move-in flats and the option for prospective

buyers to visit sample flats at sites," said the official. Prospective buyers can also check the official DDA website, <https://eservices.dda.org.in>.

High Court upholds influencers' fact-based criticism

Delhi: The Delhi High Court allowed social media influencers to criticize consumer goods with scientific facts. The Court denied San Nutrition Private Limited's request for an interim order to stop four influencers from criticizing its whey protein products. The judge, Justice Amit Bansal, ruled that restricting speech before a trial would be unreasonable. "Reasonable criticism, comment and parody is largely protected within the right to free speech under the Constitution.

Surat dog registration requires 10 neighbors' NOC

Delhi: Diamond City's pet-loving population is bewildered by Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC)'s contentious rule requiring pet owners to get 10 neighbours' and the society president's signatures to register their dog and get a pet ownership licence. SMC officials defend



the 2008 law established by

its governing body as a preventive step against legal problems, but dog lovers are shocked that neighbours can decide whether to retain a pet. In addition to neighbors' assent, owners must submit a copy of their Aadhaar card, municipal tax bill or rent agreement, notarized under-

taking, dog's image and immunization records, and other documentation. After a rottweiler killed a four-month-old in Ahmedabad, the prohibition is being strictly enforced. Surat's dog lovers are holding awareness events and submitting memorandums.

Uddhav, Raj slam Hindi 'imposition'

Delhi: Cousins Raj and Uddhav Thackeray reiterated their opposition to the Maharashtra government's recent decision to make Hindi the default third language in primary education, with their parties set to take part in separate protests against the move on July 6 and July 7, adding fuel to growing speculation that they're set to reunite after nearly two decades ahead of local body polls across the state.

A week after the Bharatiya Janata



Party-led Mahayuti government issued an order stating that Hindi will "in general" be the third language for classes 1-5 in Marathi- and English-medium schools unless at

least 20 students in a class opt for an alternative, the Thackeray cousins held separate press conferences in which they opposed the three-language formula and the "impo-

sition of Hindi" in Maharashtra. Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said the Mahayuti government's decision was akin to declaring a "language emergency" in the state. The former chief minister said his party was not opposed to Hindi as a language, but was against its imposition in Maharashtra. He added that by doing so, the Mahayuti wants to "poison the harmony" between Marathi- and Hindi-speaking people for its politics.

Independence Day Flag Hoisting and Cultural Program at Samdariya School

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Prayagraj : August 15 – On the occasion of Independence Day, a grand celebration was held today at Samdariya School. The chief guest, senior BJP leader Yogesh Shukla, hoisted the national flag and saluted it. He paid tribute to the great martyrs of the freedom struggle and delivered an inspiring address to the children on the importance of patriotism, discipline, and education. Mr. Yogesh Shukla emphasized that education and values play a vital role in shaping the nation's future, and children should move forward with a spirit of love for the country and social responsibility. The special guest, Dinesh Tiwari, discussed various aspects of the national movement in detail, while Advocate Vinay Shukla shed light on the current



challenges faced by India. On this occasion, the students presented patriotic songs, dances, and stage plays, filling the atmosphere with a spirit of nationalism. Principal Kadambari Dwivedi welcomed the guests, and HUDSA's patron, Dr. Babli Dwivedi, expressed her gratitude. The event was coordinated by

HUDSA Secretary Dr. Mani Shanker Dwivedi and compered by Karan Singh. Those present included Rupa Chaturvedi, Prabhu Singh, Pankaj Singh, Nancy Yadav, Shubham Singh, Gunja Singh, Vinodini Srivastava, Levin, Sharaf, Vinod Yadav, Rajesh, Dilip, Dharmendra Yadav, and many others.

The children of ML Public School, Bagaha celebrated Janmashtami with great pomp and show

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Meja

A beautiful tableau of Radha Krishna was taken out amidst colourful cultural events, the pot was broken by forming a pyramid in the Dahi Handi competition - Meja. The children of the school celebrated the festival of Shri Krishna Janmashtami with great pomp and show in ML Public School located at Bagaha Chowki Sirsa in the area. In the program, the children also took out a tableau

Cultural

During this, the children also broke the pot by forming a human pyramid

related to the life of Radha Krishna and presented a colourful program on the songs of Radha Krishna and also danced on the song Nand ke ghar Nand Lal hue Jai Kanhaiya Lal ki Hathi Ghoda Palki. During this, the children also broke the pot by forming a human pyramid while participating in

the Dahi Handi competition. On this occasion, school manager Ved Prakash Gupta, Principal Satish Upadhyay, Chairman Durga Prasad Gupta, Director Babita Gupta, teachers Neha Gupta, Savita Shukla, Pooja Tripathi, Meenakshi Yadav, Reena Yadav, Iti Singh, Manoj, Abhiranjan, Vijay, Vipin, Kuldeep, Vipul, Gaurav, Girijesh, Avinash, Navdeep, Rishu Sharma, Kamlesh and Madan Mohan etc. Apart from this, many other people were prominently present.

Caught in traffic jam in city, pregnant woman, 32, dies

Kanpur: A pregnant woman died night after her car was stuck in a traffic jam due to which she failed to receive timely medical treatment in Kanpur. Barkha Gupta (32), wife of property dealer Sonu Gupta from Dabauli, suffered a heart attack. She was rushed to

hospital in their car but couldn't make it in time due to a massive jam. The DCP (traffic) said that he will investigate the incident. According to her family members, Barkha experienced a severe chest pain on the night of August 14. Her husband Sonu Gupta

rushed her to hospital by car. However, their journey was delayed for 45 minutes at Shastri Chowk due to metro construction along the Vijaynagar route. As Barkha's condition deteriorated, the car remained stationary in traffic, her husband said.

Mistaken as buffalo thieves, 2 assaulted by mob in Etah

AGRA: Two men were thrashed by locals in Aghat village, Etah, after being mistaken for buffalo thieves, police said on Saturday. When policemen intervened to rescue the victims, the mob manhandled them and pelted stones, damaging a vehicle.

The incident occurred around 9 pm on Friday, when Mohammed Faem (23) and Mohammed Firoz (20) were returning from a Chehlum procession. Firoz, a resident of Kanpur visiting relatives in Etah, said, "While returning near Sarai Aghat, a mob attacked us with sticks and rods, shouting 'thieves'. They accused us of coming to steal buffalo. A PRV vehicle on night patrol saved us



and took us to Nayagaon police station." The mob followed the PRV, pelted stones, and damaged its windscreen. Additional police force, led by ASP Raj Kumar Singh, reached the spot to control the situation. The crowd of about 40-50

people also gathered near the police station, but was dispersed after persuasion by senior officials. Both victims were treated for minor injuries at CHC Aliganj. Police confirmed that a case has been registered under sections related to rioting,

Supreme Court verdict will simplify government land acquisition

Delhi: Out of frustration with land acquisition litigation that delays projects for decades, the Supreme Court declared that a government cannot be hindered by third-party rights after acquiring land for public use. A bench of CJI Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar ruled that only the government can rescind acquisition for the full land or a portion of it, hence even a public organization that acquired land cannot surrender it to someone privately. Litigation over purchased land, mostly due to third-party rights, has delayed numerous projects.

Isro chief announces India's lunar mission by 2035

Prayagraj: Isro chairman and secretary, department of space, Dr V Narayanan announced that India will land astronauts on the Moon through an indigenous mission by 2035 and achieve a completely indigenous human space mission by 2040. He was addressing the students at the 22nd Convocation ceremony of Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology (MNNIT) in Prayagraj. Dr Narayanan, the chief guest on the occasion, highlighted that India's space programme has



set benchmarks for the world through achievements like Chandrayaan, Mangalyaan, 100 successful launches, and mastery of cryogenic engine technology over the past six decades. He urged the students to look beyond degrees and dedicate their knowledge and skills to society and the nation. He shared nine guiding

principles for success, including lifelong learning, hard work with happiness, character building, aiming for big dreams, imagination, self-confidence, leadership development, placing organisation and nation above self, and serving society with knowledge and skills. "Organisation and nation are always above the individual.

1.9 lakh refunded to six cyber fraud victims

Pratapgarh: Sleuths of the cybercrime police have successfully refunded Rs 1.94 lakh to six victims who fell prey to UPI fraud, phishing calls, and fake messages within 24 hours of the fraud. All the victims were allegedly duped by cyber conmen who approached them on the pretext of helping with stock trading, UPI payments, and phishing calls.

SP (Pratapgarh) Anil Kumar told TOI, "Cops have issued a 10-point charter of guidelines to save people from cyber frauds, appealing to them to strictly follow them." He added, "We have asked users to update their operating systems and apps from time to time with the motto to install the latest safety features. Besides, customers have been asked to follow secure payment gateways while carrying out online pay-



Tiger kills farmer in Dudhwa reserve, 3rd death by big cat in a month

Bareilly: A 45-year-old farmer was killed by a tiger near the Palia range of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in UP's Lakhimpur Kheri, the third human fatality in a big cat attack in the district within a month, officials said on Saturday. Harishchandra Lal was cutting grass on Friday evening when the tiger dragged him into a sugarcane field. His partially eaten body was found on Saturday morning during a joint search by villagers, police and forest officials. One of his legs was recovered some distance away. The incident triggered protests by local farmers who blocked the Sampoorananagar road and demanded action.

ments. Users have also been asked not to share personal details on social accounts and refrain from logging in at public computers." After witnessing a rise

in the cases of cyber fraud, Pratapgarh police have also taken up a special awareness campaign among digital users at colleges and schools, appealing

Ghaziabad's bungalow of lies: Morphed Modi photos, high-end cars

GHAZIABAD: A man who plucked out from obscurity names of micronations like Westarctica and Ladonia and declared himself their ambassador was arrested on by the Noida unit of UP's special task force from his 'embassy' in Ghaziabad. Harshvardhan Jain's portfolio



of gobbledygook included

calling himself a diplomat from Seborga and Paulovia. He apparently found takers for this tripe, enabling the 47-year-old to perpetuate a fraud that went on for nine years. He bestowed on himself the titles of 'Honorary Consul Baron Westarctica', engraved on the number plate of a Merc

found parked on the premises, and 'Honorary Consigliere Principato Di Seborga', which adorned the blue diplomatic plate of a Hyundai Sonata. Fake country stamps, passports, four cars with diplomatic registration plates, and foreign currency were recovered from the lavish Kavi Nagar.

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve introduces new method to count tigers by gender



PILIBHIT: The Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (PTR) has carried out a sex-based estimation of tigers in its core forest area, finding 14 males and 53 females. The gender of 12 tigers could not be determined due to unclear stripe patterns in images captured by camera traps, the officials said on Thursday. The internal estimation began in Nov last year, with the 602 sq km core forest divided into 316 grids of 2x2 km each. A total of 632 camera traps were installed in two phas-

es, and the data was downloaded in March by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) experts. Over four months, the images were analysed and matched to identify individual tigers. The exercise showed

an increase of eight tigers compared to the 71 counted in the National Tiger Conservation Authority's 2022 national estimation. As per protocol, the internal survey excluded around 30-40% of

PTR's tigers, which often stay in agricultural fields in nearby villages due to the reserve's overpopulation.

"If we include these stray tigers, the total population in Pilibhit could be close to 100," said divisional forest officer Manish Singh. Singh added that the survey confirmed an ideal male-to-female ratio of 1:3-4. "The salient finding was that some male tigers travelled over 70-80 km, which is unusual for this reserve," he said.

Editorial

Emphasising India's reliance on imported technology

It delivered two Ming-class submarines to Bangladesh in 2017, gifted a P625 frigate to Sri Lanka in 2019, and committed to exporting Yuan-class submarines to Thailand. Although the Thai deal encountered difficulties when Germany refused to supply key propulsion components.

Thailand decided to proceed with the acquisition, underscoring China's persistence in maintaining its naval export commitments. Additionally, Pakistan is set to acquire at least eight Hangor-class submarines and other naval equipment from Beijing, further enhancing China's presence in the region. India has increasingly aligned itself with Western naval powers to address maritime challenges through collaborative efforts. France was among its earliest Western partners, and the countries' cooperation has grown stronger over time. India also participates in joint maritime missions with European nations and European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) initiatives such as Operation Atlanta and Aspidex. Furthermore, India contributes to significant maritime security dialogues such as the Coordinated Maritime Presence (CMP) and Enhancing Security Cooperation In And With Asia (ESIWA). India's 2023 inclusion in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), led by the US Central Command, underscores its dedication to enhancing collaborative security in the western Indian Ocean. The IFC-IOR exemplifies India's commitment to collective security, even though it remains a preliminary step toward a more robust maritime security framework. Advancing to the next level will require India to engage in the technically complex task of real-time information sharing through secure legal frameworks beyond Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT). The Quad's Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) initiative highlights the challenges in achieving seamless data-sharing capabilities. To counter hybrid threats and protect critical infrastructure, India must prioritise sharing vital intelligence and deploying unmanned systems for coordinated surveillance. Strengthening such partnerships will bolster India's naval capabilities and contribute to broader maritime security across the Indian Ocean Region. The commissioning of new naval platforms marks a significant milestone for India but also highlights persistent challenges, particularly in achieving technological self-reliance in engine manufacturing. Although the INS Surat, INS Nilgiri, and INS Vagsheer were designed by India's Warship Design Bureau and built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, their engines were procured from foreign manufacturers, exposing a critical dependence on external sources. INS Surat, the fourth and final ship of the P15B Guided Missile Destroyer Project, employs a Combined Gas Turbine and Gas Turbine (COGAG) propulsion system. This system uses Me6E and DT-59 reversible engines sourced from Ukraine's Zorya Mashproekt, a key supplier for India's frontline warships. Despite the ongoing war in Ukraine, India has continued to rely on Zorya, underscoring the critical nature of this dependence. To secure the supply chain, Bharat Forge acquired a 51 per cent stake in Zorya's India arm in 2023. Similarly, INS Nilgiri, the first ship of the P17A Stealth Frigate Project, launched in 2019, uses a Combined Diesel and Gas (CODAG) propulsion system. This system incorporates LM2500 engines from General Electric in the US and MAN diesel engines from Germany, further emphasising India's reliance on imported technology despite its strong indigenous design capabilities.



Bangladesh is on the brink of political upheaval

Lipi Sharma

Bangladesh is on the brink of significant political upheaval. The escalating tension between Muhammad Yunus's interim government and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) signals a turbulent period ahead. With stakes high for domestic power dynamics and regional stability, the developments in Bangladesh demand scrutiny, particularly from neighbouring India. At the heart of Bangladesh's political discord lies the clash between the interim government, led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, and the BNP, the dominant political force in the country. Following the ousting of Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, Yunus assumed leadership of an interim government tasked with implementing electoral reforms and facilitating free and fair elections. However, his reluctance to outline a concrete timeline for elections has drawn sharp criticism from the BNP. The BNP, emboldened by its strong grassroots support and organisational strength, has been pressing for elections by the end of 2025 at the latest. Any delay, the BNP fears, could undermine its momentum and strengthen the newly emerging political entities being nurtured by Yunus and his allies. This includes the Anti-Discrimination Students' Movement (ADSM), whose leaders are reportedly in the process of forming a political party with Yunus's backing. Yunus's proposal to delay elections until reforms are complete, potentially into 2026, has further fuelled suspicions. BNP leaders view this as a calculated move to consolidate power and allow the nascent "king's party" to establish itself. This manoeuvring has



triggered accusations of bias and unethical behaviour, as the interim government's primary mandate was to ensure a swift transition to democratic governance, not to reshape the political landscape. Compounding the tension is the involvement of Bangladesh's Islamist factions. The Islamists, including the Jamaat-e-Islami, have thrown their support behind Yunus, seeking opportunities to further their agenda under his leadership.

In exchange, they have reportedly received tacit approval to intensify efforts to Islamise the country and target religious minorities. The BNP's confrontational stance toward the Jamaat highlights the growing rift between the former allies. By invoking the Jamaat's controversial role during Bangladesh's 1971 Liberation War, the BNP has sought to delegitimise the Islamist party. However, this strategy risks escalating street-level violence, as the Jamaat is known for mobilising its supporters in aggressive displays of force. With the interim government's apparent alignment with the Islamists, the stage is set for widespread unrest. The current crisis draws parallels

with the political turmoil of 2007-2009 when an army-backed caretaker government attempted to implement a 'minus two' formula—banning both the BNP and the Awami League from politics. Yunus's government appears to be reviving elements of this approach, potentially sidelining the BNP and fostering the rise of alternative political entities. The BNP's leadership, including acting chairman Tarique Rahman, has categorically rejected such moves. The party insists that only an elected government can undertake major constitutional and institutional reforms. This principled stance underscores the BNP's commitment to restoring democratic norms but it also sets the stage for a protracted power struggle. As the BNP ramps up its demands for immediate elections, the likelihood of mass protests looms large. Any attempt by Yunus to suppress dissent through state machinery could further erode his credibility and exacerbate public discontent. Simultaneously, the emergence of a new political party under the aegis of the ADSM risks fragmenting the opposition landscape, complicating the BNP's path to power. The

role of external actors, particularly Western powers, cannot be overlooked. While Yunus enjoys considerable international support, his inability to stabilise the political situation and hold timely elections.

could prompt a re-evaluation of this backing. Western stakeholders, wary of Bangladesh's descent into chaos, may pressure Yunus to expedite the electoral process. For India, the unfolding crisis in Bangladesh presents both challenges and opportunities. The political landscape in Bangladesh is marked by heightened tensions, particularly between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus, and Islamist factions. Historically, India's relations with the BNP have been strained due to ideological differences and the BNP's association with anti-India sentiments. However, recent diplomatic overtures have paved the way for improved ties. The BNP's assurances to safeguard India's interests and curb anti-India forces signal a significant shift in the bilateral equation. In contrast, Yunus's administration has been viewed with suspicion in New Delhi. The interim government's alignment with Islamist factions raises concerns about the potential for increased radicalisation and instability along India's eastern border. Furthermore, Yunus's reluctance to engage meaningfully with India on key issues, coupled with his perceived bias against Indian interests, has strained relations further. This lack of cooperation has heightened India's apprehensions about the broader implications for regional security and economic integration. India

stands to benefit from a BNP-led government, which promises greater stability and cooperation on key bilateral issues, including border management, trade, and counterterrorism. Supporting the BNP's call for timely elections aligns with India's strategic goals of fostering a democratic and secular Bangladesh. Such a government could also strengthen India's Act East Policy, by providing a stable and cooperative neighbour that supports regional connectivity and trade initiatives. However, overt interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs risks backlash and could jeopardise India's long-term relationship with other political stakeholders in the country. Maintaining a balanced and nuanced approach will be essential for New Delhi.

In conclusion, the unfolding crisis in Bangladesh presents a complex mix of challenges and opportunities for India. By adopting a balanced and proactive approach, India can navigate this delicate situation, strengthen its bilateral ties with Bangladesh, and contribute to the broader goal of regional stability and development. Bangladesh's political trajectory remains uncertain, with heightened confrontations expected between the BNP, Yunus's interim government, and Islamist factions. This three-way struggle will shape the country's democratic future and determine the balance of power in South Asia. For the BNP, mobilising public support and maintaining organisational discipline will be crucial. The party must navigate the complex interplay of domestic and international pressures to secure its position as the principal political force.

The deal will also enable the return of displaced people

Suman

The deal will also enable the return of displaced people in Gaza to return to whatever is left of their homes, and daily delivery of food and other supplies by hundreds of trucks. But things can still go wrong. There can be accidents or attacks from either side, which could break the truce. But even if the guns in Gaza do go silent on Sunday and the ceasefire holds for its intended period, the real challenge will come in the second stage of the agreement, when negotiations for ending the war and return of all remaining hostages would begin. Is Israel ready for a permanent end to the war? And what will stop a Palestinian activist from firing at Israel, given the bitterness in the community after Israel's campaign? There is not a single Palestinian left in Gaza who has not lost a friend or relative at the hands of Israel in this war. The third and final phase will involve the reconstruction of Gaza, whose infrastructure has been destroyed by

the Israeli bombardments. The Arab countries that funded reconstruction in the past will be reluctant to do it this time unless they are sure that Israel will not destroy it again. It is also not clear who will govern Gaza now, as Hamas, even in its much-weakened form, will be unacceptable to both Israel and the United States. How Trump will react in the second and third phases is not possible to predict given his nature. In office, he may act differently. But both Israel and Hamas know that things have dramatically changed over the past 15 months when the current war began with the attack on Israel by the militant group on October 7, 2023. Israel's military response was swift and massive. One by one, it eliminated all the top leaders of Hamas and its ally Hezbollah and destroyed their military infrastructure. This also led to a regime change in Syria, where Bashar Assad was forced to flee the country and seek refuge in Russia. Hezbollah's primary backer.

Decisive increase in funding to accelerate the green energy transition

Abhinav

that there may be some rationalisation of duties on capital goods required for solar upstream manufacturing could be seen so that overall that industry can really take off. "We expect continuation and maybe broadening of the PLI support towards the solar module value chain. We already have a few interventions there, which are likely to be extended deeper," Dwivedi said. Similarly, on the battery manufacturing front, the industry expects localization of the value chain given competing countries have already advanced beyond India. In the green hydrogen segment, the industry believes the government may bring in hydrogen purchase for specific sectors like (green) steel. On the EV front, the industry seeks more support towards building public charging infrastructure given the anticipated increase in the EV penetration. "Under the PM E-drive, we already have an allocation of about Rs 1,100 crores for FY26. Given that the final guidelines have not been released until now, I think even the allocation under FY25 may get added and FY26 budget may be increased as the country expects an acceleration in EV adoption in FY26," Dwivedi said. While the government has already launched a rooftop solar scheme and announced viability gap funding for offshore wind projects, industry players expect increased allocations, particularly towards solar and wind, along with higher budgetary capital expenditure in green hydrogen and battery storage infrastructure. Along with this, the sector also expects the government to increase its coverage of households under PM Suryaghar. "Under the Atmannirbhar Bharat scheme, there should be a scheme for the home grown EPCM companies to create indigenous technical capabilities in the country and reduce the foreign exchange outflow.

We would also like to see a reduction on GST for engineering equipment and a reduction in import duties on chemicals in India," said Umesh Sood, CEO Simon India Ltd. Sunil Singhvi, President, Indian Electrical and Electronics Manufacturers Association noted that there is a need for strong policy support to foster growth, drive innovation, and enhance sustainability in the power sector. "One of the main requests is to expand the PLI scheme, which aims to increase domestic production of crucial electrical components necessary for large and essential power projects, such as the advanced High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) systems," he said.

Extension of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for solar energy value chain, increased allocation towards PM Suryaghar Muft Bijlee Yojana, and greater thrust to distribution and transmission infrastructure are likely to be the key features of the upcoming Budget, as far as the energy sector is concerned. Sources said these proposals figured not only in the budget wish lists of the industry, but also in the respective recommendations from the ministries of power and renewable energy to the finance ministry, ahead of the Budget. "Given the success of PM Suryaghar scheme with almost 600,000 installations in just nine months since its launch, one could probably see additional allocation to target more households," said Ashwin Jacob, partner at Deloitte India. "As far as evacuation of power from offshore wind projects is concerned, we would want to see the VGF or budgetary support to continue or get enhanced," he added. "We hope to see a decisive increase in funding to accelerate the green energy transition. Priorities must include scaling renewable energy by addressing grid and transmission challenges, advancing Battery Energy.

The tragedy for the daughter of Bangladesh's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Radhika Singh

But some of the mud will stick. That's the tragedy for the daughter of Bangladesh's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman—even her staunchest supporters admit her chances of ever returning to her motherland look very slim. Not just her niece, several other members of Sheikh Hasina's family are also under investigation for corruption that, some estimates say, totals a mind-boggling \$5 billion. The corruption case is linked to an alleged land grab in Dhaka and, more infamous-

ly, to a Russian-funded nuclear power plant. In 2013, Sheikh Hasina travelled to Moscow to seal the deal and was photographed standing beside President Vladimir Putin, Siddiq, and other members of her family. When questioned about her presence in Moscow, Siddiq tried to explain it as a family event, but the photo was impossible to dismiss. Apart from family, powerful ministers and industry leaders—allegedly with Sheikh Hasina's blessings or blind eye—also cost Bangladesh billions. A white

paper on the economy, presented in Dhaka by a specially appointed finance committee in December, put the cost of corruption across public and private sectors at a staggering sum. Perhaps the most striking was the claim that "illicit financial outflows averaged \$16 billion annually from 2009 to 2023—more than double the combined foreign aid and FDI inflows."

Whether investigations into this immense corruption have yielded documentary evidence or not is open to debate. But for now,

Chief Adviser Mohammed Yunus has made his administration's objective clear. "The theft of billions of dollars in public funds has left Bangladesh with a significant financial deficit," Yunus said in a statement this week. "The funds stolen from Bangladesh belong to its people. We will continue to work with our international partners to ensure that justice is done." Bangladesh's current dispensation has also moved court against Sheikh Hasina on charges of "crimes against humanity."

Demolition drive at Sarojini Nagar market angers vendors

Delhi: An anti-encroachment sweep at the Sarojini Nagar market saw the Municipal Council (NDMC) remove shop extensions, awnings, signage, and permanent constructions from the places. Traders complained that the drive harmed 150 shops due to a lack of notification. Ashok Randhawa, head of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market vendors' association, said civic body bulldozers and enforcement teams arrived at the market at 11pm after traders departed. They demolished awnings, signage, and shop facades for around 150 shops between 11.30pm and 1am. Without our intervention, the damage could have been greater. All Delhi markets have awnings to shield against sun and rain, Randhawa said. NDMC stated, "We are consistently conducting anti-encroachment drives to maintain encroachment-free urban spaces and ensure unhindered



ONLY 45% OF CAPITAL BWG COMPOST WET WASTE

Delhi: The MCD has identified Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs), which include large establishments like hospitals, hotels, and commercial buildings, as crucial in managing wet waste. A significant portion of Delhi's solid waste is wet waste, which, if properly managed through composting, can reduce the volume of landfill waste. The MCD has a responsi-

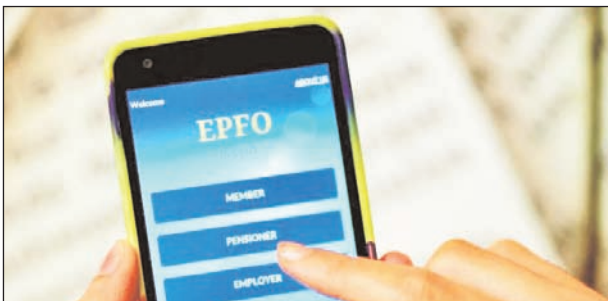
access to markets, footpaths, and public areas for visitors. NDMC launched a night-time anti-encroachment opera-

bility to ensure the proper disposal of solid waste, including wet waste. The city generates a substantial amount of solid waste daily (around 11,000 tonnes), but only a portion of it is processed. The Supreme Court has criticized the MCD for its failure to implement the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016,

and for not ade- tion as part of its enhanced anti- enforcement push to recover public areas and improve urban accessibility.

Women and young people are the main drivers of EPFO's 1.46 million

Delhi : According to an official statement, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), which oversees the retirement savings of salaried employees, recorded a net addition of 1.46 million subscribers in March. Slightly more than half of these subscribers enrolled for the first time. 754,000 new members joined EPFO in March. Net subscriber additions grew by 1.15 percent from March 2024 to the current month, according to preliminary data. This is due to more job opportunities and a greater understanding of employee



benefits, both of which have been bolstered by EPFO's outreach initiatives. March saw a sequential increase of 2.03% and an annual increase of 0.98% in new subscribers. Female employees and young workers' participation rose, according to the report. A total of 445,000 new members were added in March, with 58.94% of those

users falling into the 18-25 age bracket. The additions of this age group increased by 4.21% on a monthly basis and by 4.73% on an annual basis.

After taking outgoing employees into consideration, the net payroll addition for this category was 668,000, representing a rise of 6.49% on an annualized basis.

Assembly in Delhi lifts the gallery glass shield to promote openness and media freedom

Delhi: The glass shield encircling Delhi has been lowered, as stated by Speaker Vijender Gupta, enabling the media to cover the proceedings unimpeded. The decision was hailed by Gupta as a "significant step" towards "greater democratic accountability"

and the restoration of the assembly as an open and people-focused institution during a press conference. He declared, "This step reaffirms the Delhi legislative assembly's commitment to empowering the media and making democratic processes more visible

to the public," stressing the importance of openness in the assembly's activities. To deter people from throwing objects from the first-floor gallery into the hall, the glass panels were put in 2022 by then-Speaker. Ram Niwas Goel under



Jal Board receives Rs 1,400 crore from Delhi govt. for summer action plan and important projects

Delhi: Officials announced that the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has been granted Rs 1,400 crore by the Delhi govern-

ment to accelerate ongoing projects and put its Summer Action Plan into action. The Summer Action Plan, which includes



initiatives like installing water ATMs and GPS monitoring of water trucks to guarantee efficient water distribution during the busy summer months, has been allocated 500 crore rupees out of the entire budget. Water shortages may be avoided and supplies can run smoothly throughout the summer if the funds are released on schedule, according to an official. To handle long-term water management needs, the remaining amount will be used to extend the city's sewer network and create new sewage treatment plants. The aforementioned sums, along with those that were unable to be distributed in March of this year, were allegedly allotted as part of the annual budget. A thorough Rs 9,000-crore strategy concentrating on cleanliness, increasing access to potable water, and modernizing the water distribution system was earlier unveiled by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta in an effort to fortify Delhi's water infrastructure.

Delhi govt reshuffles 42 IAS and DANICS officers shifted or given extra charge

Delhi: Delhi govt effected a major bureaucratic reshuffle in the capital evening, transferring or giving additional charge to 42 IAS and DANICS officers. The reshuffle was prompted by the Union home ministry's order earlier in the day in which it moved 12 Delhi bureaucrats of UT cadre to other states and transferred the equal number of officers to the capital. Following the order of LG VK Saxena, the services department of Delhi govt issued an order giving additional charge of environment and forest department of additional chief secretary (industries) Bipul Pathak, a 1992-batch IAS officer and the senior most bureaucrat in the



city. Pathak replaced Anil Kumar Singh, who was moved to Jammu and Kashmir by MHA. Prashant Goyal was transferred to the urban development department as additional chief secretary from the transport department while Navin Kumar Chaudhary, the additional

chief secretary of irrigation and flood control department, was given the additional charge of public works department. A Anbarasu was moved from PWD to the services department, while he will remain the principal secretary of home department.

Advertising on FOBS should be authorized by the government

Delhi: In order to raise more money for their maintenance, the Delhi government has chosen to allow advertising on approximately 120 pedestrian bridges, according to In order to better maintain the foot overbridges, PWD minister Parvesh Verma said that he instructed the department's engineers to develop a thorough proposal. A lot of these bridges need to have their escalators and lifts fixed because they're in bad shape.

Support for Savarkar and other figures' portraits in the Assembly

Delhi: The Delhi Assembly premises will soon be graced with the paintings of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj, independence hero Veer Savarkar, and educational reformer Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. This matter was resolved by the assembly's general purpose committee during a meeting presided over by Speaker Vijender Gupta. "Recognising their enduring contributions to India's freedom struggle, social reform and educational renaiss-



sance, the committee resolved to install their statues...This decision reflects the assembly's commitment to preserving and celebrating the legacy of these visionary leaders who played roles in shaping the nation's moral, cultural, and intellectual foundations," according to the assembly. According to BJP MLA

Abhay Verma, who put forward the idea, these notable people were instrumental in the national movement, social change, and educational advancement of India. According to opposition leader Atishi, AAP MLAs had also wanted to put Savitribai Phule's photograph up, but the BJP had stopped them.

Tihar, which is overflowing, wants to build a new facility

Delhi: According to sources, the Tihar administration has written to the Delhi government to request the identification and allocation of 400 acres of land for a new complex in response to chief minister Rekha Gupta's budget announcement. It is anticipated that the new jail will be able to accommodate 8,000 prisoners. A few days ago, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and the Delhi government's department of land and construction received an official communication in this respect. The Tihar administration reportedly emphasized in their letter the urgent need for land to build new prisons that could house 5,000-8,000 prisoners. Since existing prison facilities are already functioning much above capacity,



this action is considered necessary to relieve the extreme strain on them. The letter also emphasized how improbable it is that the initiative to build a high-security prison at Narela will address the overcrowding problem because the facility's approved capacity of 256 is far too little to accommodate the increasing needs of the inmate population. Given that Tihar is one of the biggest prisons in the nation, the new facility is viewed as a vital remedy.

Govt allocates 12,952 crore for public transport system

The BJP government, led by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, presented its maiden budget on Tuesday, March 25. Gupta presented 1 lakh crore budget for 2025-26, a 31.56% increase from last year. In the budget for the financial year 2025-26, the government has allocated 12,952 crore to improve Delhi's public transport system. It has allocated 1,000 crore to improve the connectivity of Delhi with the NCR region.

Delhi CM promises jobs for Mohalla Clinic staff in Arogya Mandirs

Delhi: Chief minister Rekha Gupta assured protesting Mohalla Clinic staff that they will be absorbed into the upcoming Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, even as the government begins phasing out clinics in areas where the new centres are being established. Her assurance came after scores of doctors, paramedics, and other clinic workers gathered outside her office demanding clarity on their future and protesting delays in salary disbursement. The protest, held during the CM's Janata Darbar, was



triggered by the government's recent decision to withdraw Mohalla Clinics that overlap with the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. "We will engage you on a priority basis in the new system that the government is creating," Gupta told the staff, adding that preference will be given

to existing personnel once the transition begins. Delhi government intends to wind down existing Mohalla Clinics in areas where Ayushman Arogya Mandirs are coming up, since both facilities provide primary healthcare. According to minutes from a meeting on

2 weeks since blaze, Dilli Haat reopens

Delhi: Around 130 traders returned to their place of work to start from scratch, unpacking goods and setting up their shops as the iconic Dilli Haat in INA reopened. Two weeks after a major fire destroyed at least 30 stalls and damaged stock worth lakhs. Though their number was lower than usual, visitors and tourists too flocked to the huge market complex, a part of which was still under renovation due to the blaze. Process is also underway to upgrade electrical connections at the market for safety purposes. But while traders said they are relieved that work has resumed, there are still apprehensions about the safety measures introduced after the April 30 fire incident.

the operationalisation and staff may be of Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, only for a year. Mohalla Clinic doctors —or until new person-

Campaign to Reclaim Campus Space Launched by AAP Student Wing

Delhi: Reclaim student politics" is the goal of the Association of Students for Alternative Politics (ASAP), the student arm of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), according to Delhi. A movement that "rejects muscle power and bias, and backs merit" has been launched by Arvind



Kejriwal, the national convenor of the AAP, and is appealing to students all around the nation to become involved. Advertisement Forget Ads Right now In the upcoming DUSU elections, ASAP will run a strong campaign, continuing its objective of spreading Kejriwal's vision of alternative

politics to other universities. The student wing's members—Yash Phogat, Deepak Bansal, and Yuvraj Tanwar—discussed their plans for the future. The influence that Kejriwal has on Delhi's politics is being acknowledged on a global scale.

Over 1,000 crypto heists have netted hackers \$12.7 billion.

Delhi: Data indicated that cyber thieves have stolen over \$1.71 billion this year, bringing total losses to \$12.7 billion spanning more than 1,000 heists. Cryptocurrencies' great value and anonymity attract criminals, driving the value of criminal crypto transactions to alarming highs, according to CryptoPresales.com. According to Comparitech data, hackers stole over \$1 billion in five of the past 10 years, including 2024, demonstrating the continued battle for law enforcement and regulators to manage these crimes. Crypto heists increased 15 times in the past decade, from 12 in 2014 to 176 this year. The disparity is even greater than the 283 crypto heists reported in 2023, the most ever. A decade of crypto heists is disturbing, even though the annual number has fallen. Research has found 1,008 crypto heists since 2014, costing the sector over \$12.7 bil-



lion. Data shows that almost 75% of these losses occurred in the last four years, with 2022 and 2023 leading the way. Exploits, hacks, and flash loan attacks account for approximately 65% of crypto heists, according to statistics. "So far, there have been 395 exploits, 271 hacks targeting systems or networks, and 220 flash loan attacks, which exploit smart contract bugs or manipulate crypto prices," the research stated. Despite fears about North Korea-linked hackers stealing bitcoin, South Korea and the US are researching ways to protect against them. Bitcoin's price rose to \$100,000.

Honda and Nissan merge to form auto powerhouse

Delhi: Honda, Nissan, and Mitsubishi Motors plan to unite, producing the world's third-largest carmaker by sales. The merger addresses industrial difficulties caused by increased electrification and developing technology. Smaller alliance member Mitsubishi Motors joined discussions on a strategic cooperation after signing an MOU. Mitsubishi plans to decide on its integration role by January 2025. The

Delhi: The powerful GST Council may have to delay a decision on the middle class-focused issue of waiving goods and services tax (GST) on term insurance and lowering health insurance rates from 18% to 5% due to opposition from numerous states. However, it may raise the second-hand vehicle charge from 12% to 18%, rejecting demands to cut it to 5% for electric vehicles. Due to concerns from states like West Bengal, Kerala, and Karnataka, insurance has not received the backing expected while there is no consensus on



adjusting pricing. Bihar deputy chief minister Samrat Chaudhary led a GoM to modify prices. The Centre will need to work hard on Saturday to convince states to agree to Chaudhary's GoM's insurance tax adjustments. States worry that lower rates may reduce revenue, especially since the compensating cess was removed to compen-

sate for gaps. The Centre and states collected Rs 16,400 crore from GST on life and health insurance in 2023-24, down somewhat from the year before. Revenue loss could reach Rs 2,500 crore yearly. Since the anti-profiteering clause has been removed, it is unclear how the GST Council can ensure that consumers benefit from lower taxes.

Adani Defence & Aerospace buys Air Works for Rs 400 crore

Delhi: Adani Defence & Aerospace said that it had reached a formal agreement to acquire Air Works, India's largest private-sector MRO provider, for Rs 400 crore. "Adani Defence Systems & Technologies Ltd (ADSTL) has signed a

share purchase agreement to acquire 85.8 per cent shareholding in Air Works India (Engineering) Private Ltd," a press release said. Air Works maintains narrow-body, turboprop, and rotary aircraft in Hosur, Mumbai, and Kochi

with regulatory permits from over 20 countries. The statement stated Air Works, a civil aviation industry leader, has deep defence MRO capabilities, executing projects for major Indian Navy and Air Force aircraft.

The GST panel postpones calling for reduced insurance costs

Delhi: The GST Council voted to exempt gene therapy used to cure cancer from taxes, and postponed a proposal for lower rates while lowering the tariff on fortified rice kernels used in PDS to 5%. The council determined that 18% GST would be applied to the margin of suppliers for all used cars, including electric vehicles. Even though there won't be any tax transactions involving private citizens, businesses or used car sellers would be subject to the fee. According to Sitharaman, states desired a greater fee, but the Center had suggested a 5% tax on EVs. The GST Council issued a number of clarifications, one of which was that ready-to-eat popcorn would be subject to a 12% tax, similar to the namkeen tax, if it were pre-packaged with salt



" The 'penal costs' that banks and NBFCs impose and collect from borrowers for failure to comply with loan terms do not need the payment of GST "

and spices. Caramelized sugar will be subject to an 18% tax. In a similar vein, the council stated that as voucher transactions were neither a delivery of commodities nor services, they

would not be subject to taxes. It also made it clear that small enterprises that pay rent to unregistered landlords and are covered by the reverse charge system will not be required.

NCLAT accepts Sapphire Media's Big 92.7 FM purchase

Delhi: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) affirmed Sapphire Media's resolution plan to acquire Big 92.7 FM, owned by Reliance Broadcast Network Limited, dismissing Radio Mirchi, Orange FM, and others' petitions.

NCLAT Bench Chair Justice Ashok Bhushan and Technical Member Barun Mitra said, "After considering the submissions, we find no grounds to interfere with the NCLT's order dated May 6, 2024, and consequently, the appeals are dismissed."

Canon targets chip companies opening India operations

Delhi: Japanese image and optical products giant Canon India President and CEO Toshiaki Nomura feels its semiconductor lithography equipment for chip production has a bright promise in India and is in negotiations with firms putting up facilities here. Canon did not identify names but said there is huge potential since several chip manufacturers are considering India for semiconductor manufacturing. Many chipmakers are considering India as a new manufacturing location.



Nomura informed us that they are discussing our product and service with all chip manufacturers. He said this is a "good opportunity for us" for the Tokyo-based business to contribute its technology, goods, and services to this Indian market area. "We install equipment to make chips using our technology and goods.

We help chipmakers create strong India facilities. Once the chip manufacturer builds the facility in India, we will install our equipment and contribute to the Indian semiconductor industry with our good product and service," Nomura stated. Negotiations are underway.

Indian gold demand is dampened by price fluctuations

Delhi: This week, unpredictable pricing in India delayed gold purchases, while rising rates in China may balance seasonal demand. A Chennai jeweller claimed buyers are waiting for gold prices to fall after two weeks of volatility. After climbing to Rs 79,120 last week, Indian 10 grams prices dipped to Rs 75,459 (\$887.28) this week. Indian dealers offered a discount of up to \$8 an ounce over official domestic pricing, including 6% import and 3% sales levies, down from \$9 last week. "This week, jewellers awaited the Fed's interest rate cut. "The rupee's record low surprised them," said a Mumbai-based private bullion importing bank trader. India's gold imports are expected to drop sharply in December



as gold prices rise and families choose lighter, lower-carat jewelry. Swiss gold exports surged in November due to increased supplies to India and China and Hong Kong compared to October. According to an independent analyst, high gold prices also lowered demand in other Asian countries, notably top customer China, which gave \$5 per ounce reductions to the international price. A trader said gold was sold at a \$2.00 premium in Hong Kong.

Honda proposes CAFE compliant EVs and hybrids

Delhi: A top Honda Cars India executive said the next stage-3 of the Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) regulations will tighten pollution standards, therefore the company will sell hybrid and electric cars in the future years. It wants to launch three new electric vehicles by 2026-27 to align its India portfolio with its global electrification aspirations. "We are currently

Indian steel imports from China reached record high

Delhi: Provisional government statistics revealed that India's completed steel imports from China reached an all-time high in the first eight months of the fiscal year to March 2025, raising fears among domestic mills over cheap Chinese supplies. With India, the world's second-largest crude steel producer, a net importer, finished steel imports reached an eight-year high. Data revealed India shipped 6.5 million metric tons of completed steel, up 26.6% year-over-year. Data indicated China shipped 1.96 million metric tons of steel to India in April–November, rising 22.8% year-over-year. Beijing exported mostly stainless steel, hot-rolled coil, plates, electrical sheets, galvanized plain or corrugated sheets, pipes, bars,



" New Delhi is investigating whether to levy a 25% safeguard duty to control unbridled steel imports. India began importing steel in the financial year ending March 2024 "

and rods. The report showed that Japanese finished steel imports more than doubled to 1.4 million metric tons in April–November, a six-year high. India imported 79% of finished steel from China, Japan, and South Korea. After hot-rolled coils, bars and rods were the most imported non-flat steel products.

New Delhi is investigating whether

to levy a 25% safeguard duty to control unbridled steel imports. India began importing steel in the financial year ending March 2024, and imports have gradually climbed. New Delhi joins a growing list of countries considering import restrictions as cheap Chinese steel has forced India's smaller factories to reduce operations and jobs.

Over 1.6 crore Jio subscribers leave in four months

Delhi: At Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd., India's largest telecom operator, approximately 1.65 crore subscribers have dropped in the past four months. Reliance Jio lost 37.6 lakh mobile users in October, 79 lakh in September, 40 lakh in August, and 7.58 lakh in July. Airtel, India's second-largest telecom carrier, gained roughly 24 lakh members in October after losing 14.3 lakh in September, according to TRAI data. In August and July 2024, Airtel lost 24 lakh and 16 lakh users. In October, Vodafone Idea lost 19 lakh mobile subscribers, up from 15.5 lakh in September.

Redeveloping railway stations opens Rs 30,000 cr in business opportunities

Delhi: EPC companies are expecting Rs 30,000 crore in business from contracts to redevelop/revamp railway stations in the next two years. The Railways have sanctioned 1,318 station redevelopment/revamps, which Icra Ratings estimates will provide Rs 30,000 crore in commercial potential for EPC firms over the next two years. The government previously planned most station renovation projects as public-private partnerships, accounting for 12% of the national asset monetisation pipeline target. However, due to pricing restrictions, real estate development market risks, and a lack of PPP experience in railways, the government reallocated station redevelopment work to the EPC mode in December 2022 and increased the budgetary allocation by more than seven times from Rs 2,159 crore in FY23 to Rs 15,511 crore in FY25. Railway station rehabilitation offers EPC businesses Rs 30,000 crore in business potential due to intense competition in traditional segments like roads and buildings, according to Vinay Kumar G of the agency. In the past two years, station redevelopment project awards have seen modest competition, with maximum discounts of up to 18% and a median discount of up to 4%, similar to other railway EPC projects with a median discount of up to 5%.

NHPC invests 25,500 cr in Bihar 1,000 MW solar project

Delhi: NHPC Ltd.'s chairman and managing director Raj Kumar Chaudhary announced that the country's largest hydropower company will invest Rs 5,500 crore in a 1,000-megawatt solar power project in Bihar. At the Bihar Business Connect 2024 investor forum, the business and state government

signed an investment MoU. "We have proposed to invest Rs 5,500 crore in setting up a 1,000 MW solar power project," stated. The project might be launched in 1.5–2 years after land purchase. Land is essential for solar

projects. He urged the state government to help acquire land so we could finish the project on schedule. The company's website says it has roughly 7 gigawatts of active hydropower projects and 9.3 under construction. Chaudhary said NHPC plans to build a modest solar plant to create green hydrogen. "The green hydrogen produced will be used to power passenger buses," stated.

When burned, green hydrogen creates no carbon and just water, making it the cleanest energy source. He stated NHPC will fund the green hydrogen bus. The state government will administer it as part of the government's sustainable energy plan.



CBSE helps pupils cope with test stress

Delhi : Sanyam Bhardwaj, CBSE's examination controller, says pupils often encounter academic stress, peer pressure, substance abuse, mental health issues, career worries, digital addiction, and life skills. Collaborations like "Say No to Drugs and Yes to Life" with NCB, IHBAS, and others boost students' mental health and life skills. Campaigns teach pupils drug dangers, coping methods, and early intervention. Through expert-led conversations and interactive activities, CBSE encourages awareness, pushing students towards a mindful and holistic life. "Through such seminars, programmes and summits for students, parents, counsellors and principals in schools, CBSE continues to increase its outreach, benefiting thousands annually. The 2025 CBSE board exam format modification was made to eliminate rote learning. Board



exams vary from other competitive exams in that they have extended responses and objective questions. Some problems don't require direct solutions; they can be solved in steps that earn points. Competency-based questions need steps to answer and are based on the application, thus they can't be answered by cramming. He thinks that the amount of competency-based questions from 40% in 2023-24 to 50% in 2024-25 will eliminate rote memorization. Bhardwaj says that pupils who attend class consistently tend to solve the huge, complex

questions and answer appropriately on tests. Students who just prepare for objective-type questions and don't attend school will miss the steps and write answers immediately in the Board exams, losing scores. "In fact, it has been seen many times that a student is able to perform well in competitive examinations and fails to perform well in the Board examinations," says Bhardwaj. To protect pupils, CBSE has cut ties with 21 "dummy" schools and degraded six. To avoid disruption, fake school students in classes X and XII were allowed to take the Boards.

Budget boost for 5 youngest IITs with 6,500 new seats

Delhi: The third-generation Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) will get a boost from Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's announcement of new facilities to accommodate 6,500 more undergrads over five years. The finance minister said in her Union Budget speech Saturday that IIT Patna's dormitories and infrastructure would be increased. "The total number of students in 23 IITs has increased by 100 percent from 65,000 to 1.35 lakh in the past 10 years. Sitharaman remarked, "New infrastructure will be built in the five IITs founded after 2014 to educate 6,500 more stu-

dents." In 2024, the 23 IITs offered 17,740 seats across various courses and categories. The five IITs founded after the Modi government took office in 2014 were in Tirupati, Palakkad, Bhilai, Jammu, and Goa, plus ISM Dhanbad become IIT (ISM) Dhanbad.

Five IITs, barring IIT Goa, will add seats, officials said. IIT Goa lacks a permanent campus, though many fledgling IITs have grown steadily. Since 2016, it has been in temporary facilities at Goa Engineering College in Farmagudi. A senior official in the Ministry of Education remarked, "IIT-Goa has not been

included at this moment since it does not have a permanent campus." Additionally, the government announced to grant 10,000 fellowships for tech research at IITs and Indian Institute of Science (IISc) for the next five years under the PM Research Fellowship Scheme.. The government has raised IIT funding to Rs 11,349 crore, 10% more than last year's Rs 10,324.5 crore estimate and 8.4% more than the revised Rs 10,467.13 crore estimate. The higher education budget has risen by 5% to Rs 50,077.95 crore from Rs 47,619.77 crore and by 7.7% from Rs 46,482.35 crore previous year.



The government of Maharashtra says it would not pay for eggs for the midday meal.

Delhi: The opposition vehemently criticized the decision, as Maharashtra became the latest BJP-ruled state to ban eggs from midday meals for students in grades 1 through 8. The school education department changed the list of foods served during midday meals in a government resolution this week, eliminating the inclusion of sugar and eggs. Rather, it instructed schools to serve nachni sattu and "egg pulao" as optional meals. Nonetheless, it stated that these things, as well as sugar for desserts, had to be organized by the general public without the need for further government support. The state has changed the list to adhere to the meal items prescribed by the Center, according to an official who defended the action. While some states use their own resources to offer eggs, the federal government, which provides 60% of the funding for midday meals, does not include them in its list. Goa and Madhya Pradesh recently banned eggs due to criticism from some groups.

Health and wealth benefit from flexible work hours.

Delhi: The Economic Survey supports allowing manufacturers to average legally capped working hours over three weeks or longer rather than week-by-week. Industry captains want larger hours. It claims that agile regulations will assist management satisfy production demands and grow. "New Labour Laws are an improvement. With flexible legislation and competent implementation, firms may develop and create more jobs.

Ground planes to fly again in 2 years

Delhi: Business Standard sources reported that SpiceJet informed the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) that it will spend Rs 400 crore in two years to restore 36 grounded planes. The regulator met with the carrier last Friday to discuss restoring grounded jets. Sources said this followed the airline's Rs 3,000 crore qualifying institutional placement from global investors and mutual funds. The airline did not respond to Business Standard's request for comment. At the QIP, the airline identified 36 grounded aircraft out of 58. This was mostly due to lesser payment defaults, aircraft maintenance financial issues, and component shortages.



The airline informed the regulator that seven of the 36 grounded planes would return by year's end, sources added. The remaining 29 aircraft should be reactivated in 15-21 months. "Overall, the airline anticipates it will take 18-24 months to bring all grounded planes back to service," source said. SpiceJet announced that it will lease seven planes to improve fly-

ing operations immediately while repairing grounded planes. It said the seven leased planes will join the fleet by November 15. Sources say the carrier's grounded jets will undergo Airbus and Boeing-mandated return-to-service (RTS) procedures. The DGCA will allow commercial passenger flights after the RTS process.

RTS is the procedure of

DU to expand PhD admission slots by 20-25 pc

Delhi: Delhi University's executive council (EC) resolved to boost PhD admission seats by 20-25% from the last round of admission. The EC also allowed a university representation on St. Stephen's College's governing body to connect DU and the college. DU also updated donation rules to fund scholarships, honors, and capital assets. Under this, the government, trusts, and corporations may set up scholarships. Under this, the establishment of scholarships will be allowed by government entities, trusts, business houses.

Pradhan unveils 41 PM YUVA 2.0 volumes

Delhi : Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan, introduced 41 new books under the PM YUVA 2.0 initiative at the New Delhi World Book Fair 2025. The Governor of Tripura, Indrasena Reddy Nallu, attended the ceremony as the guest of honour. In his remarks, Dharmendra Pradhan complimented the 41 young authors whose books were launched, expressing faith in their abilities to enrich the literary landscape and impact intellectual conversation through their unique writings. The



Minister stressed the program's value in mentoring young writers and developing ambassadors of Indian culture, history, languages, and literature. He also stressed the need to promote the unsung heroes of India's liberation movement. Pradhan said that promoting Indian-

language novels is now a national goal. He cited PM YUVA and the new 'Bharatiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme' from this year's budget as crucial milestones to this goal. He commended the National Book Trust (NBT) for making literature more accessible in Indian languages.

New UPSC PwBD guidelines avoid misconduct and fraudulent certifications

Delhi: The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)'s CSE 2025 requires online submission of certificates and documents at the preliminary stage of the exam, which includes submitting the necessary information and supporting documents for various claims, such as date of birth, category (SC/ST/OBC/EWS/PwBD/Ex-Servicemen), educational qualification, and Service preferences, with the Online A. Examination candidature will be canceled if the registration and online application form lack the relevant information/documents. "All of these changes should be explicitly stated in the notification, or the exam-conducting authority can create an educational video for specially abled candidates," he says. They appear puzzled and



unable to complete the Prelims application form (due February 11, 2025). Candidates must also write about their interests, hobbies, achievements, and NCC Scout participation in the Prelims, which were previously announced after the Mains. "The goal is to get the best candidate profile information before the Prelims," Kottaram explains (IRS) officers were recruited under PwBD reservation advantages. UPSC must examine claims and papers if aspirants submit fraudulent documents. Kottaram notes that mental illness is a grey area in

the notification's five impairment categories, making it easy to misuse. After the Puja Khedkar controversy, aspirants who took the Personality Test/Interview this year reported rigorous medical tests over 2-3 days at top medical institutions like AIIMS, SafdarJung Hospital, etc. to eliminate assessment irregularities. "DoPT is coordinating disability claim verification for aspirants. While there may be malpractices, procuring medical certificates from district authorities and hospitals can be laborious, making falsifying.

NAAC adopts e-inspections for new accreditation

Delhi: To eradicate corruption and speed up accreditation, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has stopped physical college inspections. Accreditation teams will now perform evaluations exclusively online, replacing on-cams visits with virtual examinations. But for colleges, the changeover will be hybrid; most inspections will be remote, but some reviewers will still visit campuses to retain some monitoring. The decision follows the CBI's recent arrests in the case involving Andhra Pradesh's Koneru Lakshmaiah Education Foundation (KLEF), where management reportedly



bribed NAAC peer visit inspectors for good ratings. "We chose to do whatever it takes to eliminate corruption. "Stopping in-person visits will greatly reduce the issue," stated NAAC executive committee head Prof Anil Sahasrabudhe.

"With so many weekly inspection visits, it was hard to track what happened. Now, all this is recorded." NAAC head Ganesan Kannabiran hailed the switch to online inspection a "surgical strike" against corruption. The latest CBI law-

suit challenged NAAC's peer review system. He remarked, "These are unwelcome in higher education, and NAAC, a quality assurance agency, is committed to eradicating them." The K Radhakrishnan Committee's basic (binary) accreditation scheme was to begin in July 2024, but it didn't. It's currently April-May 2025. The new schedule will also introduce maturity-based graded levels (MBGL) to encourage institutions to improve their academic and research capacities. Special committees are completing its framework. 650 schools are in line for the old grading system.

India's first high-speed 280 kmph trains soon! ICF awards contract for new trainsets to BEML

Delhi: India is set to launch its first indigenous high-speed trains, built by BEML with a test speed of 280 kmph. Featuring modern amenities, these trainsets will consist of 8 cars each, costing Rs 27.86 crores per car, and to be delivered by the end of 2026. The rainsets will be the first indigenously designed and

manufactured in India, with a test speed of 280 kmph. (AI image) India's first indigenous high-speed train soon! In a big boost for Indian Railways' dreams of offering high-speed rail connectivity, the national transporter has awarded the contract for manufacturing high-speed trainsets to

BEML. These trainsets will be the first indigenously designed and manufactured in India, with a test speed of 280 kmph, marking a significant step forward in the country's high-speed rail journey. The trains will feature a fully air-conditioned, Chair Car configuration, offering modern passenger amenities such as

reclining and rotatable seats, special provisions for passengers with restricted mobility, and onboard infotainment systems, ensuring a comfortable and enjoyable travel experience. BEML Limited has secured a contract from Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai, for the design.

Low affordability hits car demand: Kia India MD

NEW DELHI: With car prices going up between 35-50% over the past 3-4 years, owing to safety and emissions mandates, affording a vehicle has become difficult for mass consumers and sales are likely to see a moderate growth of 3-4% in the coming year, Kia India MD Gwanggu Lee said on Thursday. To generate demand, Lee suggests, govt can look at reducing taxes on cars from the current levels where mid-sized cars and bigger ones have a GST rate of over 45%, while smaller ones (under 4-meters) are taxed at over 28%. As the company prepares to launch affordable EVs as well as other mainstream cars, Lee said that the increase in car prices came at a time when incomes for many middle-class users did not go up at the same pace. As part of its strategy to perk up demand in the volume-laden entry SUV market, Kia drove in the all-new Syros mini offroader, which will stand besides its Sonet



model, also an under 4-meter car. Lee said that the boxy Syros, which will come with a 1-litre petrol engine and a 1.5-litre diesel, will also be offered with an electric version over the next one year. The company has developed the new vehicle after taking into account the customer preferences here, something it also did during the development of the Seltos and Sonet SUVs and the Carens MPV. But while the company expects to generate healthy volumes from the new model, whose price will be revealed at a later date, the Syros also comes in a segment that is crowded.

Amazon's cloud unit bets on new models

LAS VEGAS: Amazon's cloud unit AWS unveiled new AI models and chips to take on rivals like Microsoft, which has had an edge due to its ties with ChatGPT-maker OpenAI. Exactly two years ago, the launch of ChatGPT forced tech giants to redraw plans, wiping out billions from market caps of companies that were slow to adapt pioneered renting out data infrastructure, was seen to be losing grip on its cloud dominance over the past two years.

Government plans law to ban unregulated lending

NEW DELHI: The Centre has circulated a draft legislation to ban lending by unregulated entities, including by platforms, with violators facing imprisonment of up to seven years. Lenders, who harass and use unlawful means for recovery, face up to 10 years in jail, with those promoting such lending facing a term of up to five years. The move comes amid several complaints of borrowers taking loans from digital lending platforms, including those operated by Chinese entities, at exorbitant rates. And these platforms often harass cus-



tomers by blackmailing them in case of defaults. There have been instances of borrowers committing suicides due to harassment, prompting the Centre and the regulator to step in. The plan is to notify certain activities as "unregulated lending" with a

"competent authority" tasked with regulating the segment and also maintain a database on lenders. The authority headed by a secretary-rank officer will have powers to provisionally attach the accounts of the lender and call for data.

Private Equity and Venture Capital investments surge 156% year-on-year

NEW DELHI: Private Equity and Venture Capitalist funds invested \$4 billion in November, according to a joint report by IVCA and EY released on Wednesday. This shows a 156 per cent year-on-year increase while a 15 per cent decline from the

previous month. The month recorded 87 transactions, up 47 per cent from 59 deals in November 2023. "While 2024 had started off on a strong note, geopolitical tensions, uncertainty over US elections outcome, and inflation weighed on the markets,

as did the bid-ask spread between seller expectations and buyer valuations," EY's Vivek Soni said. He further said that pure-play PE/VC investments showed significant growth, reaching \$3.5 billion in November, representing a 297 per cent rise.

Sensex tanks nearly 1,000 pts on US Fed's cautious stance

MUMBAI: Hawkish statements from the US central bank chief on Wednesday night led to a global sell-off in stocks that also weighed on investor sentiment on Dalal Street. Sensex opened weak, remained in the red through the session and closed 964 points down at 79,218 points.

This was the first time since Nov 29 that the index closed below the psychologically important 80K mark, BSE data showed.



In the last four sessions the sensex has lost a little over 2,900 points, translating to 3.6%. On the NSE, the nifty too followed a similar path and closed 247 points lower at 23,952 points. This was nifty's first close below the 24K mark since Nov 28, NSE data showed. In Thursday's session selling was across the board with foreign funds again leading. At close, net selling by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) was Rs 4,225 crore. In comparison, domestic funds were net buyers at Rs 3,943 crore, data from BSE showed. According to Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities, domestic markets tanked tracking negative global cues as benchmark indices slipped below their psychological levels. There was broad-based selling as the US Fed's hawkish stance raised concerns over further rate cuts next year. "Rising US bond yields have pushed global currencies, including the rupee to new lows while renewed foreign fund outflows from domestic equities could prompt investors to turn risk averse," he said. So far in the month, foreign funds are still a net buyer. But this came mainly on the back of their investments in IPOs, market players said. Combined data from NSDL and BSE showed that in Dec.

SME IPO mania: Infrastructure company's Rs 10cr offer gets Rs 14k crore bids

MUMBAI: The IPO mania in the SME space reached a new high on Thursday. NACDAC Infrastructure, a Ghaziabad-based construction company eyeing to raise Rs 10 crore from the market, got bids totalling Rs 14,386 crore, a subscription of 1,976 times (excluding the Rs 2.7 crore anchor part). This made the IPO the most subscribed one in India's capital market history, data from primary market analytics company Chittorgarh showed. Bidding data on BSE showed that the non-institutional (high net worth investors') part of the offer was subscribed 2,635 times while the retail part was subscribed 2,504 times. In comparison, the portion reserved



"Cardholders will enjoy welcome privileges of complimentary doorstep visa services, lounge access, and concierge support through OneVasco with visa fee waivers via Atlys, a luxury stay gift card via EaseMyTrip, discounts and event access through The Quorum Club"

for institutional investors like mutual funds, insurance companies, foreign funds etc, was subscribed a decent 236 times. The company is set to list on BSE's SME platform.

KKR invests in Behrouz Biryani parent

MUMBAI: Private equity giant KKR has invested in cloud kitchen startup Rebel Foods, which owns brands like Behrouz Biryani and Faasos.

The deal amount was not disclosed but it is understood to be a secondary transaction conducted at a lower valuation of around \$800 million. KKR said it will back the firm's expansion.

Nuvama recommends holding Ambuja Cements, anticipating growth after its merger with Shanghai Industries and Panna Cement. Kotak advises reducing Indiamart Intermesh holdings due to high churn. Yes Securities initiates coverage on Hyundai Motor India with a buy rating, citing the company's evolving tech landscape. JP Morgan gives Swiggy an overweight rating, expecting growth in food delivery and quick commerce. Stocks on brokerages' radar for 20 Nuvama has a 'hold' recommendation on



Ambuja Cements with a target price of Rs 667 (+19%). The company is merging Shanghai Industries and Panna Cement with itself for operational efficiencies and to improve efficiencies. Analysts feel this decision to streamline the structure of the company is a welcome move. Kotak Institutional Equities has given a 'reduce'

reco on Indiamart Intermesh with a target price of Rs 2,350 (-0.5%). Analysts believe that there is no easy fix for the high churn that the company is facing that is leading to lower collection. Yes Securities has initiated coverage of Hyundai Motor India with a 'buy' rating and a target price of Rs 2,194 (+23%).

The timeless taste of tradition: Mattanchere spice

As the festive season draws near, one name resonates with connoisseurs of fine cakes – Mattanchere Spice Matured Plum Cake. A true embodiment of time-honoured tradition and meticulous craftsmanship, this cake is more than a treat; it is a rich legacy passed down through generations.



The Mattanchere Spice Matured Plum Cake is available globally. Customers in India can order through Amazon, while those in the UAE can find it via Fresh to Home, in Singapore available in Dolly aunty. With worldwide shipping, cake lovers in Europe and North America, New Zealand can also enjoy this traditional holiday delight. The Mattanchere Spice Matured Plum Cake has its roots in centuries-old recipes, perfected with care and expertise. Its distinctive flavor comes from the thoughtful matura-

'No impact of suspension of MFN status'

NEW DELHI: Swiss major Nestle said suspension of MFN (most favoured nation) status given to India by Switzerland will have no impact on the company. Switzerland recently suspended MFN status under the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement. A Nestle India spokesperson said: "The matter is not a Nestle specific issue."

tion process, where an abundance .

'Indian tech sector to grow to \$350 billion from \$254 billion by 2030'

BENGALURU: India's tech industry is poised to expand to \$350 billion by 2030, up from \$254 billion in the 2023-24 financial year, Nasscom's president Rajesh Nambiar told. The sector's expansion reflects a CAGR of 6.4%. "We will work towards getting to about a \$350-billion mark by 2030. Of course, the growth rate came down significantly in the last two years. But even with all of that, we are seeing a lot of green shoots. I believe that we are in a pivotal moment. The emergence of GenAI has transformed the global landscape. Our focus must transition from AI PoCs to achieving measurable return on investments that we can put together on the board," said Nambiar. He succeeds his predecessor Debjani Ghosh, who completed her term in Nov. Prior to that,



"Nasscom initially forecasted the tech sector's revenues of \$350 billion for FY26, driven by demand for advanced technologies such as cloud computing and analytics. However, the IT industry body had to reset these growth "

Nambiar was chairman and MD of Cognizant India. Nasscom initially forecasted the tech sector's revenues of \$350 billion for FY26, driven by demand for advanced technologies such as cloud computing and analytics. However, the IT industry body had to reset these growth estimates, extending the timeline by five years to achieve the targeted figures. The Indian IT

services sector faces a significant slowdown in the last fiscal, with minimal expansion in both revenue and employment. IT exports grew a modest 3.3% in constant currency, reaching \$199 billion in FY24. This represents a substantial decline from the previous year's 11.4% growth, marking one of the sector's lowest growth rates.

\$11.3 billion: Startup funding sees marginal rise in 2024

MUMBAI: After two years of funding slump, investments into India's startups are seeing some revival. Investors infused about \$11.3 billion into startups this year, a slight improvement from funding worth \$10.7 billion recorded last year, data sourced from market research firm Tracxn showed. In the coming year, companies are expected to see a sizeable amount of funding cheques but the deployment of capital will be cautious, keeping in line with the trend seen for quite sometime now and late-stage deals (over \$100 million) will take time to close, venture capital (VC) firms said. Not to say that there's a lack of capital-VC firms raised an estimated \$2.5 billion in funding in 2024 alone compared to less than \$2 billion in 2023 and some of them plan to raise new funds in 2025; but investors want to ensure they make the right bets. "As investors, we are very clear that we need to see a company's path to profitability, we need to see good governance structures, assess firms' go-to market strategies deeply and figure out founders' ability to deliver. When you diligence all of these, it takes some time and investing capital takes longer," Padmaja Ruparel, co-founder at IAN (Indian Angel Network) Group told. Quick commerce player Zepto led startup funding this year having bagged \$1.4 billion in investments alone amid a surge in investor appetite for rapid deliveries. A clutch of companies including PhysicsWallah, Rebel Foods, Eruditus and Purple also managed to raise fund.

