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

**Om Birla will lead the Indian delegation in the 68th Parliamentary Conference**

**New Delhi:** Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will lead the Indian Parliamentary Delegation in the upcoming 68th Conference (CPC). This conference will be held in Bridgetown, Barbados from 5 to 12 October. Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh, Presiding Officers and Secretaries of the Legislatures of 29 States and Union Territories of the country will also participate in this conference. The Indian delegation will represent the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region. Birla will address the General Assembly of the conference on the topic Commonwealth: Global Partner. Apart from this, members of the Indian delegation will participate in seven workshops which will include topics like strengthening democratic institutions, technology and digital transformation, climate change and health crisis, financial transparency, good governance and international relations.

**Parliamentary**

**Institutions will establish blood bank in honor of soldiers: Minister**

**New Delhi:** Delhi Government's

Cooperation Minister Ravindra Indraj Singh said on Sunday that every Indian is proud of the valor of the Indian Army in Operation Sindoor. He said that in honor of the soldiers, the cooperative institutions of Delhi will also establish a blood bank. This will also benefit the people of Delhi and there will be availability of blood in any emergency. The Cooperative Minister participated as the chief guest on the occasion of the program organized on the occasion of the Cooperative Year.

## House is the engine of democracy: Amit Shah

All India Speakers Conference inaugurated in Delhi Assembly

**Conference**

**Citing the example of the assembly at Hastinapur, he said that, since**

**New Delhi:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the two-day All India Speakers Conference at the Delhi Assembly on Sunday. On this occasion, he said that the House is the engine of democracy, so the tendency of the opposition to disrupt the proceedings of Parliament and Legislative Assemblies is worrying. Shah said that in a democratic system, the role of both the ruling and the opposition is important, but not



allowing the House to function for several days is against the spirit of democracy. He said that the House is a symbol of the aspirations of the people and public welfare laws are made only through meaningful debate. He said that the Assembly and Parliament are not just a platform for debate, but a confluence of wisdom

and thought. Both the ruling and opposition parties should together become the voice of the people in the proceedings of the House. Shah called upon all the Speakers and Deputy Speakers present to try to make the discussion meaningful and result-oriented while maintaining the dignity of the House. The Home

**'It is wrong to not allow debate in Parliament for political interests'**

Shah said that it is wrong to not allow debates in Parliament for one's own political interests. We will have to think about not allowing the session to run for the whole day. Whenever the assemblies have lost their dignity, we have had to suffer very bad consequences. On this occasion, I would like to give you the example of the Hastinapur assemblies.;

Minister also recalled in detail the contribution of Vitthalbhai Patel, who was the first Indian Central Assembly Speaker of independent India. He said that Patel raised the dignity.

**'India is constantly moving towards new frontiers of space beyond'**



**New Delhi:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday felicitated the four Air Force Group Captains who were part of ISRO's first space flight mission 'Gaganyaan' during an event in New Delhi. The Defence Minister described the four Gaganyans as the gems of the country and the harbingers of national aspirations. He said that India sees space not only as a field of research but as the future of tomorrow's economy, security,

energy and humanity. After felicitating Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, Group Captain PB Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan and Group Captain Angad Pratap, the Defence Minister highlighted India's growing presence in space and said that we are constantly moving towards new frontiers of space beyond the surface of the Earth. We have registered our presence from the Moon to Mars and today our country is fully prepared.

## Anish Dayal Singh appointed as Deputy NSA

**New Delhi:** Former CRPF and ITBP Director General Anish Dayal Singh has been appointed as the new Deputy National Security Advisor (NSA). He has been entrusted with the responsibility of internal affairs. According to official sources, Anish Dayal Singh, a 1988 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Manipur cadre, retired in December 2024. He has served in the Intelligence Bureau (IB)



for nearly 30 years before heading the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and recently the Central Reserve Police Force

(CRPF). He has extensive experience in this role. As Deputy National Security Advisor, Anish will be in charge of the country's internal affairs, including Jammu and Kashmir, Naxalism and Northeast insurgency. Retired IPS officer TV Ravichandran and former IFS officer Pawan Kapoor are the two serving Deputy National Security Advisors. Played a key role in several key initiatives.

## India will buy 6 submarines from Germany for Rs 70 thousand crores

**Deal**

**The first deal is for the Defense Ministry and Mazagon Dockyards**

**New Delhi:** The Indian government is ready to make two big deals to increase the strength of the Air Force and Navy. The first deal is for the Defense Ministry and Mazagon Dockyards Limited to buy 6 submarines from Germany. The government has approved the start of negotiations for the purchase of these submarines to be made in India under 'Project 75 India'. This deal can be done for 70 thousand crores. At the



same time, the Indian government is going to buy a large consignment of Israeli Rampage air-to-ground missiles. According to sources, this order will soon be given under the fast-track process. Rampage missiles were used in precision attacks on terrorist headquarters in Muridke and Bahawalpur in

Pakistan. **I n d e p e n d e n t** Propulsion System Wal Submarines to be made in Mazagon Dockyard. The Defense Ministry had chosen its partner in January to build six submarines with Air **I n d e p e n d e n t** Propulsion System along with German company Thyssen Krupp Marine Systems.

## Dharali: Affected families will be given ration for six months

**Dehradun:** Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said, the affected families in the disaster-hit Dharali, Saanji, Bankura villages will be provided ration for the next six months. The priority of the government is to bring people from disaster-affected areas to safe places. Giving information about the rescue and



relief operations in Dharali, the Chief Minister said, despite bad weather, more than

1000 people have been rescued safely so far. This includes local people as well as pilgrims

**Affected**

**The injured have been admitted to the District Hospital, AIIMS: CM**

from all over the country. The injured have been admitted to the District Hospital,

AIIMS. Arrangements have been made to ensure that everyone gets good treatment. Adequate amount of medicines, milk, ration, clothes have been delivered to Harshil and Dharali areas. UREDA's power house has been started for power supply in Harshil area. UPCL is getting the damaged.

## Bihar SIR: Election Commission's affidavit in Supreme Court

**Hearing**

**That the name of any eligible voter will not be removed from the list**

**New Delhi:** Amid the protests over the special revision campaign of the voter list in Bihar, the Election Commission has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court. Rejecting the allega-



tions of removing the names of voters from the voter list, the Election Commission said that the name of any eligible voter will not be removed from the list.

In a petition filed in the Supreme Court regard-

ing the special intensive revision campaign of the voter list in Bihar, the Election Commission was accused that the names of 65 lakh voters have been removed from the voter list of the state during the SIR.

**Bihar: Amount transferred to bank accounts of 1 crore 12 lakh pensioners**

**Patna:** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar transferred an amount of Rs 1247.34 crore to the accounts of more than 1 crore 12 lakh pensioners under the Social Security Pension Scheme through DBT during a program organized at his residence on Sunday. The pension amount of Rs 1100 for the month of July has been transferred to the accounts of the beneficiaries of the Social Pension.

## Gaganyaan: Parachute based deceleration system demonstrated

**New Delhi:** ISRO has intensified the preparations for the Gaganyaan mission. ISRO demonstrated the parachute-based deceleration system on Sunday. Under this, the air drop system was successfully tested. The armed forces also helped the Indian Space Research Institute (ISRO) in this. ISRO wrote on X that the first integrated air drop test for the complete demonstration of the



parachute-based deceleration system for the Gaganyaan mission was successfully completed. This test was conducted

with the joint efforts of ISRO, Indian Air Force, DRDO, Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard. Gaganyaan is

the country's first human space flight mission under which four astronauts will be taken on a space trip. The spacecraft is planned to be launched this year. First there will be an unmanned test flight, in which a Vyommitra robot will be sent. The Gaganyaan mission is a three-day one. Humans will be sent into space at a low orbit of 400 km and then brought back safely to Earth.

## 'Vote theft': 'If there is proof, Rahul should go to court: Shinde

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde on Sunday attacked the opposition Congress and its leader Rahul Gandhi over their allegations of 'vote theft'. The Shiv Sena chief said



that if they have proof, they should approach the court or the Election Commission. Shiv Sena leader Shinde told reporters during an event in Thane that by making such baseless claims, they

have insulted the people of Maharashtra. Rahul Gandhi on Thursday claimed large-scale criminal fraud in elections through collusion between the BJP and the Election Commission.

## Gram Pradhan, area and district Panchayat members will get training: CM Dhami

**Dehradun.** Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has directed to provide training to the newly elected village heads, area panchayat and district panchayat

members on modern technology, financial management and governance system. Chief Minister said that everyone will have to make integrated efforts

towards fulfilling the resolve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make India a developed nation by 2047. Development of the state and the country.



## Fadnavis warns against fake SC certificates

**Delhi :** Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said a Scheduled Caste certificate obtained falsely by a non-Hindu, Buddhist, or Sikhish individual will be revoked. If they have government jobs or other reservation advantages, they will be punished. Fadnavis warned in the legislative council that a false SC certificate will nullify an election. He also said the state administration will introduce robust rules to combat religious conversion through compulsion and cheating in response to a calling attention motion.

Amit Gorkhe (BJP) said that "crypto Christians" were abusing religious freedom and taking advantage of SC reservations. "Crypto Christians" were people who secretly practice Christianity but identify with another religion. They appear to be SC and receive reservation advan-



tages like government jobs, he added. Fadnavis stated that the Supreme Court ruled on November 26, 2024, that only Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs can claim Scheduled Castes category reservation.

"Validity and caste certificates would be terminated properly for non-Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikhism religious SC certificate holders. He stated government job recipients will be punished."Recovery (of monetary benefits) will be recommended from those who have availed benefits using fraudulently obtained caste

certificates," stated. Amit Gorkhe (BJP) said that "crypto Christians" were abusing religious freedom and taking advantage of SC reservations. "Crypto Christians" were people who secretly practice Christianity but identify with another religion. They appear to be SC and receive reservation advantages like government jobs, he added. Fadnavis stated that the Supreme Court ruled on November 26, 2024, that only Hindus, Buddhists, and Sikhs can claim Scheduled Caste category reservation.

**Delhi:** The newly implemented Uniform Civil Code in Uttarakhand lists 37 "prohibited relationships" for men and women. The relationships under Schedule 1 of the Act are mostly blood relatives, extended family, and three-generation links, many of which are unattainable owing to age gaps. Some strange men's forbidden partnerships. Historically, young people married young. Such cases may still occur, therefore we included them."The Act requires religious authorities to certify that these relationships are allowed under their conventions before

## Uttarakhand has 37 UCC 'prohibited' relationships



marrying or living together.

UCC sees clergy as "any person who conducts marriage ceremonies in accordance with customs and practices of the community concerned." Gaur said the registrar may refuse petitions that contravene public policy and morality even with a

religious certificate. He said UCC rules explicitly state that a registrar can refuse to register a relationship if the applicants are closely related by blood or family ties and their marriage is either not permitted by their customs or, even if allowed, contradicts public policy and moral standards.

## CCTVs compulsory at pharmacies

**Delhi :** End of July is the deadline that the Delhi administration has set for the installation of closed-circuit television cameras around the nation's capital. In an effort to reduce the availability of illicitly obtained Schedule H, H1, and X narcotics, a resolution was reached following a conference

held under the 11th National Narcotics Coordination portal (NCORD). Reducing the likelihood of dual-use medication abuse is a major goal. The authorities made the decision after receiving complaints over the intoxicating effects of these substances on both humans

and animals, as well as their use in textiles, chemicals, and food products. By working together with the Narcotics Control Bureau and the Delhi government, this action is anticipated to improve surveillance and reduce the distribution of illegal drugs. The letter that was sent .

## Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena to form Sanatana Dharma protection wing

**Delhi:** Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party (JSP) president Pawan Kalyan announced the formation of the Narasimha Varahi Brigade to safeguard Sanatana Dharma in Telugu states Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. I speak for the Jana Sena Party, not the NDA. "Several people have asked us to keep a youth wing, cultural wing, etc., but with Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy's blessing, we will set up a wing to protect Sanatana Dharma," Pawan Kalyan added. Pawan Kalyan stressed the significance of respecting religion, especial-



ly when visiting Hindu temples and practicing Sanatana Dharma.

Sanatana Dharma guides India and the world, he said. Visiting Hindu temples and adopting Sanatana Dharma requires some ideals. The country can not survive without Sanatana Dharma, a guiding light for the globe,

he said. The JanaSena president stressed religious tolerance but defended Sanatana Dharma. "We respect churches and mosques, but we will punish any act that hurts Hindus. He stated social media posts mocking Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma are prohibited. Kalyan added that the

## Karnataka govt pressured to restore 4% Muslim quota

**Delhi:** Since last year's assembly elections and this month's bypolls to three assembly seats showed the Muslim community had consolidated behind the Congress party, they are pressuring the government to restore their 4% reservation. The previous BJP government eliminated the quota, but the Supreme Court delayed the decision. In 2023, the Supreme Court deemed the quota abolishment "prima facie shaky and flawed", making it a difficult matter. It is unclear whether and

**Delhi:** According to Election Commission audited reports, political parties spent 2023-24 on ads, helicopter flights, and media consultants. Offering insights into their spending during a year of many state elections. The reports may only cover part of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections' spending patterns, announced on March 16. Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, and Mizoram had assembly elections during this time. With a budget of



1,754 crore, the BJP prioritized media presence, spending roughly 58% on commercials and electronic media. Party advertising and publicity costs were 591.39 crore and electronic media 434.84 crore. Press conference expenses increased to 90.99 lakh from 71.60

lakh last year. From April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, the party won three state assembly elections and lost Karnataka. With 240 Lok Sabha seats, it returned to power as part of the National Democratic Alliance coalition without a majority.

## Consumer initiatives launched by telecom minister Scindia

**Delhi:** Telecom minister Jyotiraditya Scindia introduced three projects, including the National Broadband Mission 2.0 and Sanchar Saathi mobile app, to improve connection and consumer convenience. The Sanchar Saathi software lets users report suspicious calls and SMS from phone logs. To prevent unauthorized use, users can identify and manage all mobile connections granted in their name. Other functions include blocking, tracing, and recovering lost or stolen mobile phones and verifying their legitimacy to ensure users buy legitimate gadgets. As an extension of the DoT's 2023 Sanchar Saathi platform, the app has disconnected 2.75 crore fraudulent mobile connections and secured over 25 lakh lost or stolen



devices. The National internet Mission (NBM) 2.0 seeks to position India at the forefront of digital transformation with high-speed internet and meaningful connectivity for everybody. The plan extends operational optical fibre cable (OFC) connectivity to 270,000 villages by 2030 with 95% uptime from 50,000, improves fixed broadband download speeds, and provides broadband connectivity to 90% of anchor institutions (such as schools and Panchayat offices). Other goals

include providing 100 Mbps download speed nationwide, reducing Right of Way application average disposal time to 30 days by 2030 from 60 days, increasing rural internet subscribers per 100 people to 60 from 45, and powering 30% of mobile towers with sustainable energy by 2030. We want 60 out of 100 rural households to have broadband. To strengthen rural India's digital infrastructure, we aim for a minimum fixed broadband download speed of 100 mbps "Scindia remarked.

## UGC bans 3 private universities from PhD admissions for 5

**Due to** academic misconduct and UGC PhD regulations, OPJS University (Churu), Sunrise University (Alwar), and Singhania University (Jhunjhunu) have been forbidden from accepting PhD students for five years (2025-26 to 2029-30). Admissions at

three Rajasthan universities were suspended immediately. Following admission exam protocols, Research Advisory Committee (RAC) creation, and thesis evaluation criteria, the UGC found their practices inadequate. Another 30 are being examined. The UGC

said, "After analysing/ examining/ evaluating the information/ data submitted by the universities, the Standing Committee has found that three universities did not follow the provisions of the UGC PhD regulations and also the

academic norms for the award of PhD degrees... the responses received from these universities were not found satisfactory." UGC chair M Jagadesh Kumar stressed PhD program integrity and said additional Indian universities are being reviewed.

## 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.

**Delhi:** The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (Yeida) approved the layout design for the projected Film City in Sector 21, allowing filmmaker Boney Kapoor-led Bayview Bhutani Film City Private Limited to begin building. On December 24, 2024, Bayview Bhutani submitted the layout plan for clearance because work cannot begin without it. Yeida officials approved the layout plan following a thorough planning and high-level committee assessment. The concessionaire must get authorization for spe-

## Yeida approves Film City layout



cific parking, landscaping, and horticulture work and phase the project, according to the authorities. Officials said the developer must establish a film institute and get GRIHA 4-Star/IGBC Gold accreditation for green buildings to minimize environmental damage and carbon footprint during construction.

"We authorized the layout plan, allowing site building. The concessionaire will now schedule site work. The concessionaire must build according to the terms and conditions "Yeida CEO Arun Vir Singh remarked. Construction of the 1,000-acre Film City project, with the first

phase encompassing 230 acres, is estimated to cost 1,510 crore over eight years. The project also builds a film institute with excellent technology to teach filmmaking, acting, music, and cinematography. According to officials, Kapoor said centralizing such facilities will save production costs by giving filmmakers access to crucial equipment and services. Film City will have air-conditioned indoor shooting locations for harsh weather. The new studio floors will be 40,000-60,000 square feet to accommodate huge setups and various backdrops.



## Ladki Bahin plan: The monthly amount cannot be increased

Delhi : Maharashtra's Social Justice Minister, Sanjay Shirsat, defended the Mahayuti government's Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin initiative against the opposition. Although election promises were made to expand support to acknowledge that financial constraints prevent this at now. "The monthly amount of 1,500 cannot be increased to 2,100," he said, acknowledging the discrepancy between political pledges and budgetary realities. According to Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, the Ladki Bahin plan has been lowered to 500 instead of the promised 1,500. The Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana offers 1,500 monthly to qualified women. "For the time being, 1,500 will be disbursed for sure," said he. Shirsat also accused Ajit Pawar's Finance Department of secretly redirecting funds. He wants to stop social justice and tribal affairs budget cuts through legal



### BJP claimed that Stalin is spreading falsehoods regarding the three-language policy

Delhi: The BJP has accused the Tamil Nadu government, led by Chief Minister MK Stalin, of a Rs 1,000-crore liquor fraud through the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation. The ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam DMK denies the BJP's assertions that Enforcement Directorate raids

means.

According to Shirsat, his department was eligible for 11.8% of the state's 2.5 lakh crore budget (29,500 crore) but only

have revealed massive financial irregularities. The BJP further claimed that CM Stalin is spreading falsehoods regarding the three-language policy and other national problems to distract from the fraud. DMK presented the Tamil Nadu Budget 2025-26 in the state Assembly on the same day as the claims.

received 22,658 crore. The minister said, "I'll ask him for my department's money. I asked the Chief Minister to sympathize with my department."

## Plumber dies after getting hit by electric current

Akhand Bharat Sandesh

Jhansi. A plumber working in a house under construction at Yadav Square of the police station area died after coming in contact with the current flowing in the pole outside. On receiving the information of the case, the police reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. Sushil Kumar Kushwaha 32, son of Awadhesh Kumar, a resident of Kaithwal village of Utrav police station, works as a plumber. These days Sushil was working in a house under construction near Yadav Square of Jhansi.



According to the family members, Sushil got hit by the current flowing in the electric pole outside the house while working on Sunday.

The people working with him rushed him to SRN Hospital where the doctors declared Sushil dead. After Sushil's death, his friends who took him to

the hospital ran away from there. Someone informed the family about the incident and the weeping family members reached the hospital and the deceased's brother made a written complaint to the police and the police took the body into custody and sent it for post-mortem.

## DDA to promote events and projects online using influencers

Delhi: The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has hired a digital marketing agency to promote its projects. It issued a request for proposal. The agency will promote all DDA projects using social media influencers and professionals. Campaign goals include

branding DDA by increasing awareness and sharing information about its work. "If we are organizing a kite festival, we will promote it through all media and invite influencers. The selected agency must invite five Instagram or X influencers with at least 100K

followers to events or campaigns annually (as needed). Selected agency will also submit a list of relevant influencers to promote DDA events or initiatives "said the authority. Social media reels will be created by the firm in addition to event photos videos.

## Are RLD MLAs politically future-conscious?

Delhi : Two RLD MLAs Rajpal Baliyan and Madan Bhैया, Muzaffarnagar MP Harendra Malik, SP MP from Kairana Iqra Hasan, SP MLA from Sardhana Atul Pradhan, and others attended the panchayat protesting Rakesh Tikait's misbehavior. But are RLD MLAs not confident in their party's future? To ensure their future and handle caste politics in the region, the MLAs joined the Kisan Union without party consent? Although in the government, RLD MLAs feel uneasy and neglected because they ignored Muslim votes and farmers. They feel we may lose political ground if the party's 2027 assembly election performance regarding



the BJP coalition and the Wakf Amendment Bill is poor. Two other party MLAs are also afraid about losing their tickets. Siwalkhas MLA Ghulam Mohammad is concerned that the party may run a Jat candidate this time.

However, Thana Bhawan MLA Ashraf Ali worries that BJP's strong leader and former minister Suresh

Rana may be the nominee if they create an alliance.

After joining the power with BJP, the RLD chief's remoteness from his MLAs, ministers, and workers is also blamed. Even after taking power, his lack of status forces him and his workers to sleep someplace. This uncertainty makes RLD MLAs uncomfortable in the party.

### 62 locations in Gurugram's Sadar Bazar to have CCTVs installed by GMDA

Delhi: A plan to install 62 CCTV cameras in the "congested" Sadar Bazar region, which witnesses hundreds of visits every day, has been finalized by the Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA). They also mentioned that the authority's control center in Sector 44 will be accessible from all of the CCTVs. The goal of the surveillance project, according to GMDA authorities, is to reduce encroachments, improve traffic management, and prevent crime in one of the city's busiest market locations.

## Congress criticizes US role in India-Pak ceasefire, recalls Indira's 1971 war role.

Delhi : The Congress called US President Donald Trump's news that India and Pakistan have agreed to a "full and immediate" ceasefire after US-mediated negotiations "unprecedented" with some opposition leaders accusing the Centre of "succumbing" to American pressure. After Washington's statement, several Congress leaders compared the dispute between the two neighbors to Indira Gandhi's 1971 war, in which India defeated Pakistan. Gandhi never permitted the US to intervene. The Congress requested a special



Parliament session to discuss the 22 April Pahalgam terror assault. "In light of the unprecedented announcements from Washington DC, there is now a need, more than ever, for the PM to chair an all-party meeting and take political parties into confidence and a special session of Parliament to discuss the last eighteen days, beginning with the

brutal Pahalgam terror attacks and the way forward, and to demonstrate a collective resolve," Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh posted on X Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera agreed with Ramesh that a special Parliament session was needed to determine what the country has gained and lost.

## No sustainable peace if Pakistan utilizes its land for terrorism against India

Delhi : AIMIM head Asaduddin Owaisi queried why "the President of a foreign country" announced the ceasefire hours after India and Pakistan decided to terminate military action, as India has historically resisted outside intervention. He referenced Trump's Truth Social announcement. Pakistan and India confirmed subsequently. Owaisi wrote on X, "As long as Pakistan uses its territory for terrorism against India, there can be no permanent peace. We must find the Pahalgam terrorists regardless of the ceasefire." After the ceasefire, drones and explosives were seen and heard in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Gujarat. In a press conference, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri confirmed the "extremely con-



### Politics Heat Up Over 107 'Missing' Pakistanis As DyCM Shinde, CM Contradict

Delhi: The ruling Mahayuti alliance in Maharashtra has failed to coordinate on Pakistani nationals. Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde told a Buldhana rally that 107 Pakistanis were missing in Maharashtra. Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis denied the claim, saying no Pakistani citizen is missing. Shinde told the audience, "Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have instructed Pakistani nationals to leave our country.

demnable" intrusions. Owaisi posted questions for Modi in English, Hindi, and Urdu. First, he said he wished "our PM Narendra Modi had

announced the ceasefire rather than the President of a foreign country" and asked why Trump announced the ceasefire without naming him.

## No Pakistani movies, TV, or music on Indian OTTs

Delhi : The government advised OTT, streaming, and digital intermediaries to stop offering Pakistani content "with immediate effect". The MIB warning, which does not name companies, requires the discontinuation of web series, films, songs, podcasts, and



other streaming media. The

advisory advised all OTT platforms, media streaming platforms, and intermediaries in India to immediately stop streaming web-series, films, songs, podcasts, and other streaming media content from Pakistan in the interest of national security. The advice,

published under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, reminds platforms to obey the Code of Ethics and ensure content does not compromise India's sovereignty, security, foreign relations.

### 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.

## New Sikkim Rail Line From Melli To Dentam Gets Final Location Survey Approval From Railway Ministry

Delhi : Railway Ministry approved the final location survey for a proposed railway line from Melli to Dentam via Jorethang and Legship in Sikkim. Rs 2.25 crore has been authorized for the Northeast Frontier Railway survey. This endeavor is vital to connecting southern and western Sikkim to national railway infrastructure. The preliminary feasibility assessment estimates the proposed line to be 75 km long, a strategic continuation of the



Sivok-Rangpo railway project, which is scheduled for completion in 2027. Melli, the gateway to southern and western Sikkim, would be a crucial

junction for this project, ensuring seamless integration into the national railway network. The final location survey will provide the technical

foundation needed to define project alignment, engineering specifications, and cost structure, according to the ministry.

The statement said this is a key step toward rail connection in southern and western Sikkim. The project is expected to have major economic impacts on Gyalshing and adjacent areas. It strives to improve access, tourism, trade, and employment. Tenders for survey work are expected soon.



## Editorial

### Has Britain been taken over by Islamists?

British MPs have been forced to hire personal bodyguards following threats by Islamist groups over Britain's support of Israel in the Gaza war. Three unnamed women MPs have been given additional security. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak issued a statement following the direct threats to British MPs: "Legitimate protests (have been) hijacked by extremists to promote and glorify terrorism, elected representatives verbally threatened and physically, violently targeted and antisemitic tropes beamed onto our own Parliament building." Threats of physical violence against British MPs have increased further since the killing by the Israeli army last week of over 100 Palestinian civilians seeking food aid in north Gaza. London has become a safe haven for Islamist extremists. Pakistan-origin mayor Sadiq Khan, in office since 2016, is accused of being soft on Islamists because he relies on Muslim votes in mayoral elections. As in India, Muslims in Britain vote in blocs. This was highlighted by the victory of controversial politician George Galloway last week in a by-election in Rochdale, a town in Greater Manchester. The by-election showed how deeply the Gaza war is influencing British politics. Labour party leader Keir Starmer is widely expected to be the next British prime minister given Labour's lead in opinion polls of more than 15 per cent over the Conservative party. In the Rochdale by-election, Starmer, a staunch supporter of Israel, suspended Labour's official candidate Azhar Ali for making antisemitic comments on Israel's war in Gaza. In the absence of party support for a Labour candidate, Galloway romped home to victory. A strong backer of Palestine, Galloway, who leads the small Workers Party of Britain, said after his win: "Labour will pay a high price for the catastrophe in the Gaza war." This alarmed Starmer enough to apologise to Rochdale voters after Galloway's win: "I regret we had to withdraw our candidate (Ali) and apologise to the voters of Rochdale." Galloway has promised to make life difficult for both Starmer and Sunak as campaigning gets under way for the UK general election later this year. Putting aside their parties' differences, Starmer and Sunak have come together to support Israel which could alienate young Britons, both white and ethnic minorities. It could make the result of the general election less predictable. It's not only British politicians who are under threat of violence. Crime in London has soared. Young knife-carrying gangs on mopeds snatch expensive watches, mobile phones and other personal effects. Several Indian tourists speak of being robbed in broad daylight in central London. According to a Sky News report: "India's business elite feel they have to look over their shoulder while visiting areas such as Mayfair in London due to the risk of being mugged. The theft of high-value timepieces sold on the black market has become a criminal enterprise in the UK capital in recent years with one former watch dealer telling Sky News it is 'more lucrative than drugs'." High-profile targets include former world boxing champion Amir Khan, who was forced to hand over his £70,000 Franck Muller watch in a gunpoint robbery in east London. The man blamed for the descent of London into a crime-laden metropolis is mayor Sadiq Khan. On his watch crime in London has soared. British tourism authorities have issued a warning to London police that foreign holiday-makers have safer cities to visit in Europe other than London and more action is needed to make the city safer for tourists. The demographics of London are changing rapidly. According to the latest census, British whites now comprise only 30 per cent of London's population. Other European whites permanently resident in London account for another 20 per cent. The balance 50 per cent are ethnic minorities from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China and the Caribbean.



Despite favourable tailwinds and a visibly rudderless political opposition it is to the credit of the Prime Minister that he has neither taken the electorate for granted, nor left room for overconfidence to creep in within his party. Image: PTI

The battle for the general elections 2024 in India has started well before the formal announcement of the poll schedule by the Election Commission. With the Narendra Modi-led BJP releasing its first list of candidates, the race to control the Lok Sabha is off to an early start for the ruling dispensation while the Opposition continues to flounder from blunder to blunder. The deft manner in which key regional alliances have been struck by the BJP even as the Congress witnesses an exodus of leaders points to the stark divergence in confidence levels between the two political formations. By now it ought to be clear that the I.N.D.I. alliance is a non-starter in most states with the failure to coordinate seat sharing. Barring the deep south, the opposition alliance is not much of a factor in most states. A key leading indicator of the direction in which the political winds are blowing is the steady flow of talent towards the BJP. If the first list of candidates released by the BJP is anything to go by, a generational shift is underway with several veterans bowing out of the electoral race.

### 62 years since Indo-China War

The year 2024 could mark the proverbial "anniversary" of the fateful 1962 China's aggression on India. Sixty-two years will have passed since our northern neighbour sought territories that history, and even later-day detente, had proclaimed as rightfully India's. Deliberation and debate can continue until 2062 about how a conference in Simla in 1914 determined a line, and the huff with which Ivan Chen, the Chinese plenipotentiary, left was otherwise a tripartite cordial. History, at this point, must be revisited. The two most important aspects of the meeting in the then British India retreat were that Tibet was free. The roof of the world had an emissary in Lonchen Shatra. Indeed, Shatra signed the Simla (readers must note that I am using the spelling of the hill sta-



tion as it was in 1914!) Conference document, which not only outlined inner and outer Tibet in unambiguous terms but also endorsed Sir Henry McMahon's Line, which determined the border between India and Tibet. Much of historiography will also ponder aspects such as why Major Bob Khathing and his posse of the noble Assam Riflemen "liberated" Tawang only in 1951, decades after McMahon drew a thick-nibbed terrain line that today subtly corresponds to the Thagla Ridge as well as the "Watershed," which determines borders, boundaries and frontiers in the sense by

which the Westphalian concept came to be enacted. The fact that a newly-cast Peoples Republic of China, post its communist innards, invaded Tibet several years later cannot change the iron-clad nature of the border agreement between two sovereign entities: the fact that India achieved independence in 1947 and Tibet was conquered in 1951. The McMahon Line, although a soldier-diplomat drew it, will continue to confuse people worldwide, especially India and China. A 1914 quill continues to contest ground in terms of simple grazing expanse. But it is as inviolable as the 14th Parallel. Therefore, even as two powers exchange knights, rooks, and bishops, it must not behave sacrifices that incorporate destinies.

## Why India is the best bet for big cats

Numbers tell an astonishing tale. India is one of the most densely populated nations in the world, with 481 people per sq km. China, with only marginally less people has less than one-third of India's density at 152 per sq km. The first five countries on the list are just city-states: Macau, Monaco, Singapore, Hong Kong and Gaza. Ranked 30th, India is the first really large country in that list with a high density; those above and below it (Tuvalu and Curacao) are tiny. The purpose of this peroration? To put in context, India's feat in safeguarding and increasing its complement of critical wildlife in the face of increasing pres-

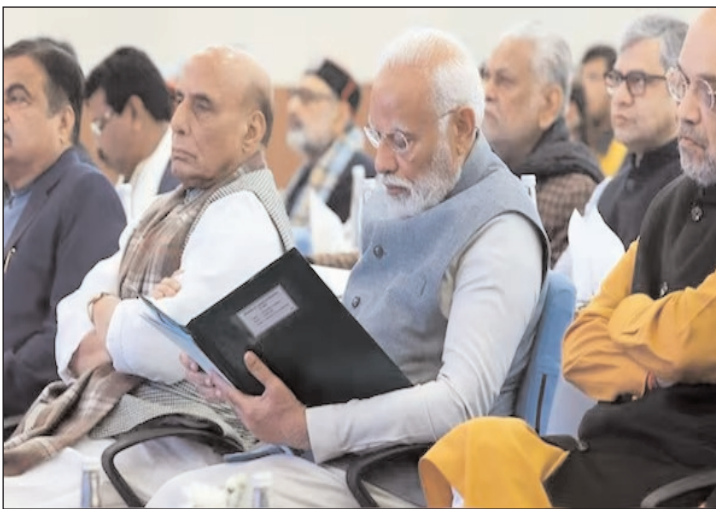


sure on land due to population. This week India revealed that the numbers of another iconic 'big cat'—the leopard—have risen by 8 per cent overall, from 12,852 in 2018 to 13,874 in 2022, although several states have reported a decline. The actual number would be higher as the survey did not cover all

habitats. Also from 2018 to 2022 India's tiger population rose by nearly 24 per cent from 2,967 to around 3,682 though the figure is probably closer to 4,000 as not all tiger areas were included in that survey. India has 75 per cent of the world's population, most of them in 54 tiger reserves. India is also the last habitat of the Asiatic lion with around 600, all of them in Gujarat as well as 718 snow leopards—around 1/6 of the world's total number. And all four felines' numbers are rising here. A valid comparison would be the state of another big cat, the jaguar, in the Americas, whose population is currently estimated to be around

170,000. Their habitat once stretched from Texas, through central America down to Argentina but is now half that area. Brazil, with a population density of only 26 per sq km, has nearly half the world's jaguars, mostly in the Amazon jungle and the Pantanal bordering Bolivia and Paraguay. But jaguar numbers are falling. The US has around 30,000 pumas (also called cougars or mountain lions) and the species can be found across the Americas from Canada to Chile. So far they are not close to extinction as their numbers hover around the 60,000 figure but their habitat has shrunk by over 30 per cent.

# Opposition continues to make blunder



by Taboola Sponsored Links The minutiae of electoral arithmetic notwithstanding, the battle for 2024 is in many ways a battle over the next decades to realise a developed India by 2047. Recording a stunning 8.4% GDP growth during the third quarter of 2023-24, the economic tailwinds and geopolitical undercurrents seem to be working in concert to propel the country towards the goal. Recognising the significance of the moment, PM Modi's government has bet big on sunrise technology sectors that will fuel the Indian economy in the decades to come. In the last few weeks a slew of decisions by the government underscore the central role technology has come to occupy in Modi's vision for a Viksit Bharat by 2047. From announcing to the nation, the final shortlist of astronauts for India's first manned space mission Gaganyaan to approving the first semicon-

ductor fab to come up in the country, Modi's technonationalism is emerging as the crucial mantra in this race to 2047 with 2024 as an important stopover. Semiconductor investments spanning from the east in Assam to the west in Gujarat, underscore how Modi's thrust on a technology-driven economy has become a political priority. With the decision to completely liberalise the space sector opening up to a hundred percent in foreign direct investment (FDI), sunrise sectors are poised to play a crucial role in sustaining and further accelerating the economic momentum. Casting a wide social safety net has been a hallmark of Modi's technonationalism over the past decade. The results from this laser focus on keeping the socio-economic fabric intact is most visible in the declining levels of extreme poverty across India. For the first time the World Poverty

Clock, a monitoring tool of the World Data Lab based in Vienna, has estimated extreme poverty in India to be below three percent. Writing for the Brookings Institute, an American think tank, noted economist Surjit Bhalla alongside Karan Bhasin, observed that extreme poverty stands eliminated in India as commonly defined in international benchmarks. This important socio-economic milestone on the road to a developed India by 2047 comes on the eve of general elections with a confident PM Modi making his case to the voters for what he believes to be an imminent third term. It also comes at a time when the aspirational middle class in India is experiencing accelerating growth as witnessed in the rising levels of automotive ownership, mobile phone penetration and exponential growth in digital payments. In stark contrast to the decadal growth vision of the Modi led-BJP rooted in technonationalism, the narrative from the opposition continues to be regressive and lacking in a vision. Far from laying out a roadmap for a developed India, the political opposition's messaging has been a mish-mash of unsustainable entitlement programs bordering on fiscal irresponsibility and scorched earth politics of caste that is seeking to inflame social faultlines. The sullen petulance of the political opposi-

tion was most visible in its boycott of the pran pratishtha ceremony of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on specious grounds, having completely misread the mood of the nation. Despite favourable tailwinds and a visibly rudderless political opposition it is to the credit of the Prime Minister that he has neither taken the electorate for granted, nor left room for overconfidence to creep in within his party. Borrowing a leaf from best practices in business management of setting wildly impossible goals, Prime Ministers' Modi exhortation of a stretch target of 370+ seats for the BJP in the Lok Sabha, not only challenges the rank and file with a clear and unambiguous goal but it also forces his electoral machinery to think out of the box in breaking new ground in states that have remained beyond the BJP's grasp. Underlying the push to engage first time voters is the realpolitik of this not only being one of the largest cohorts of first-time voters but also a group that practically has no memory of the lost decade during the UPA era. By locating the central narrative for the battle of 2024 within the decadal vision for a Viksit Bharat by 2047, Prime Minister Modi has made the election as much about the future of India's first-time voters as about "India being the Future" in a world divided by geo-political conflicts.

## How failure of Nehru-Liaquat pact served as a starter for CAA



Even as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is set to be implemented, did the failure of the Nehru-Liaquat pact of 1950 play a key role as a starter of a 'benign and narrowly tailored legislation' aimed to protect the minorities in 'non secular' countries within our neighbourhood? The CAA provides that persons belonging to six minority communities, namely Hindus, Sikhs, Parsis, Buddhists, and Christians in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, who were compelled to seek shelter in India on grounds of religious persecution would no longer be treated as illegal migrants. Liaquat Ali Khan was the prime minister of Pakistan when he and Indian premier Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru signed an agreement in Delhi in 1950, commonly called the Nehru-Liaquat pact. The accord was signed to protect religious minorities in each other's territories. Under the Nehru-Liaquat pact, forced conversions were unrecognised, and minority rights were confirmed. Pakistan had solemnly agreed to accord complete equality of citizenship and a full sense of security with respect to life, culture, freedom of speech, and worship. However, Pakistan quickly went back on its promise. Liyaqat Ali was assassinated in October 1951. When the holy relic in

Hazratbal, Srinagar, was stolen on January 3, 1964, there were large-scale disturbances in East Pakistan [now Bangladesh], leading to the loss of lives, arson, and looting targeted at the minority community. Even though the holy relic was recovered the next day, communal disturbances went on. In fact, responding to a calling attention motion in the Lok Sabha, the then Union Home Minister Gulzari Lal Nanda said that while India was implementing the Nehru-Liyaqat pact, Pakistan was not doing its part.

Regarding minorities in Pakistan, Nanda [who twice served as caretaker prime minister of India after the deaths of Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri] said India cannot shut its eyes to those "who were part of ourselves, with whom we have ties of blood and who are our relations and friends and that we can not turn our face against sufferings, the torture of their bodies and spirit and all that they are undergoing there." This was the time Nehru was prime minister and sitting in parliament when his home minister stated,

"If they [the Hindu minority in Pakistan] find it impossible to breathe the air of security in their country and they feel they must leave it, then we can not bar their way. We have no heart to tell them, 'You go on staying there and be butchered.' Three days later, Nehru suffered a paralytic stroke on his left side in Bhubaneswar, prompting Nanda to temporarily assume the executive responsibilities of ailing Prime Minister Nehru. A ministry of home affairs document on CAA quotes Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' speech delivered at midnight of the country's independence as saying, "We think also of our brothers and sisters who have been cut off from us by political boundaries and who unhappily can not share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us and will remain of us whatever may happen, and we shall be sharers of their good and ill fortune alike..." The CAA has excluded Ahmadias, Shias, Bahaiis, Hazaras, Jews, Baloch, and Atheist communities on the grounds that persecution.



## Entire stretch from DND Flyway to Delhi-Mumbai Expressway to be opened by year-end: Gadkari

**NEW DELHI:** Come December, commuters from Delhi, Noida and Ghaziabad will not have to take the congested Mathura Road to head towards Agra or the newly-built stretch of Mumbai Expressway. The entire 59 km stretch, from DND Flyway (near Maharani Bagh) to Delhi-Mumbai Expressway (at Sohna), will be opened for traffic by the end of this year, road transport minister Nitin Gadkari said on Wednesday. Gadkari conducted a physical inspection of the 33 km stretch between DND Flyway and Ballabgarh Bypass on Wednesday with top officials and local leaders. The 26-km road from Ballabgarh to Sohna on Delhi-Mumbai Expressway was opened for traffic in March 2023. The three packages are being built with an investment of Rs 7,000 crore, including land value and civil construction. "Besides providing direct connectivity to Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, this link



● "The company has fallen roughly 70% since a \$2.5 billion 2021 IPO as investors fret about persistent losses

from DND Flyway can be used by commuters to reach Palwal in just 25-30 minutes. Mathura Road, which is currently the only major road for vehicles heading towards Faridabad, Palwal, Agra and beyond, will be decongested as well," said a senior NHAI official. Moreover, completion of this link will mean that people trav-

elling from Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand can drive non-stop to Mumbai taking the Delhi-Dehradun and Delhi-Meerut expressways. But this will be a reality next year, sources said. Delhi-Dehradun and Delhi-Mumbai stretch- es are set to be fully operational in 2025. Speaking to reporters after inspection of ongoing work, Gadkari said Delhi is facing problems of both air pollution and congestion. "This is not good for the capital city of our country. That's why we have undertaken massive road development work to improve traffic flow and air pollution.

## Farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' march enters fifth day, BKU (Ugrahan) to protest outside BJP leaders' homes

**CHANDIGARH:** The Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) will on Saturday hold dharnas outside the residences of three senior BJP leaders in Punjab on the fifth day of the farmers' protest over their various demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP. Apart from holding dharnas outside the homes of former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh, the BJP's Punjab unit chief Sunil Jakhar and senior leader Kewal Singh Dhillon, the union will also hold protests at toll plazas in the state, extending support to the



farmers' "Delhi Chalo" call. On the fifth day of their "Delhi Chalo" march -- called by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha - the farmers stayed put at the two border points of Punjab and Haryana as they press the Centre to accept their demands, including a legal guarantee of a

Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops.

The farmers from Punjab began their march to Delhi on Tuesday but were stopped by security personnel at the Shambhu and the Khanauri points of Punjab's border with Haryana.

The protesters have stayed put at the two border points since then. The Gurnam Singh Charuni-led Bhartiya Kisan Union (Charuni), which is based in Haryana, will on Saturday take out a tractor rally in solidarity with the protesting farmers.

## Heart attacks claim lives of protesting farmer, cop

**AMBALA/PATIALA:** A 78-year-old farmer from Punjab and a cop on duty in the ongoing farmer protests at Shambhu on the Punjab-Haryana border died Friday even as appeals went out to "bring JCB machines to uproot" police barricades."Gian Singh (78) of

Gurdaspur complained of breathlessness and low blood pressure. He died at Rajindra Hospital (Patiala). It seems to be a case of heart attack. Post-mortem report is awaited," said Dr HS Rekhi, medical superintendent of the hospital. Gian's nephew Kashmir

Singh alleged that tear-gas shells fired by Haryana police led to his death. The deceased cop was identified as SI Hira Lal. "Hira Lal suffered a heart attack on Feb 13. He was taken to civil hospital, Ambala Cantonment, where he died .

## Franco-Italian regional aircraft major ATR sees India emerge as its biggest market

**NEW DELHI:** Franco-Italian regional aircraft major ATR sees India emerge as its biggest market in the next five years. And as that happens, the turboprop-maker says "it will be foolish not to increase our footprint here" in terms of sourcing of components, pilot training and others. "India currently has 65 ATRs - 45 with IndiGo and 20 with Alliance Air. IndiGo is to get five more. Startup carrier Fly91 (which is being launched by aviation industry veteran Manoj Chacko) will get its first leased ATR anytime now and the second in a week or so," Jean-Pierre Clercin, ATR's

head of commercial for Asia Pacific, said. "Indonesia has about 100 ATRs and is currently our biggest market. India and Brazil come after that. But the way Indian economy and air travel in the country is booming, within five years India will have the maximum ATRs given the government's focus on regional air transport through ude desh ka aam naagrik (UDAN) scheme," Clercin said. ATR feels India will need 50-150 such planes in the next decade. "That is the official estimation. But given the way India is developing, the actual number could be even higher. Much higher," he

said. The turboprop major is in talks with several Indian airlines for more orders. "The focus here is on regional and ATR is for that. So we are talking to all the airlines in India," he said. Asked if ATR plans to make in India, Clercin said: "We do already have a presence in India. There are some simulators (for pilot training) operated by third parties in India. The footprint depends a lot on the size of the markets, and India is one of the most promising aviation markets globally. We've seen the amazing resilience of the country. As the market is so big, we need to look at all options."

## PM Modi to flag off first electric train in Kashmir

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the first electric train in Kashmir on Tuesday and will also inaugurate the 48-km recently completed rail link from Banihal to Sangaldan (a town near district headquarter of Ramban) section in the Valley. This will be PM's first public engagement in the region after nullification of Article 370 in 2019. Officials said the railways will script a new history of trains running on clean fuel in the Valley and also host



the biggest ever programme in its history next week for inauguration and foundation stone laying of nearly 2,000 projects in one go. These include

revamp of over 500 stations and construction of rail over bridges and under bridges. These two will be major programmes before the poll code is announced.

Though the railway officials were hopeful of train operations beginning from Srinagar to Jammu before the Lok Sabha election—a long standing promise to connect the Valley by train—it may take another six months due to delay in the completion of two tunnels between Sangaldan and Katra. Officials said though the 18-km stretch between Dugga and Reasi is complete, trains can't be operated unless the two stretches on both sides are complete.

## Digvijaya, Kamal Nath manage to get their Rajya Sabha pick nominated over Rahul Gandhi's choice

**NEW DELHI:** Congress's nomination of Ashok Singh from Madhya Pradesh for Rajya Sabha marked a climbdown for Rahul Gandhi who was pushing for former MP and confidante Meenakshi Natarajan for the upper House. The advantage for Singh was that he became a sort of joint candidate of veterans Digvijaya Singh and Kamal Nath, while the central leadership is learnt to have stuck to Natarajan for elevation. Singh's profile is intriguing as he has lost four consecutive Lok Sabha elections from Gwalior, even though it is argued in his defence that he came second by close margins in a tough constituency. But what became his calling card was that he has been "pathologically" opposed to former



party insider Jyotiraditya Scindia. This testimonial seems to have clinched his case, since the party is looking to rebuild in the Gwalior-Chambal region after Scindia's exit and defeat of key leaders in the recent assembly polls. That he is an OBC only boosted his claim. But sources said Singh's camp credentials became mysteriously bipartisan this time around. While he has been known as a loyalist of Digvijaya Singh, and Nath was said to have lobbied for himself for RS, sources

close to Nath said he had indeed put forward Singh's name. The surmise now is that once Nath was turned down by the party brass, he suggested Singh for RS. "Ashok Singh is a Digvijaya man, but Nath made him the treasurer of the state Congress," a leader said. In contrast, Rahul preferred Natarajan in the upper House. She had won the Mandsaur LS seat in 2009, but has since lost the polls. A close aide, she has overseen projects close to Rahul's heart in Congress.

## BJP's Sadhvi Pragya Thakur accuses Akasa Air of causing 'huge loss'; airline

● "I came to Delhi from Mumbai to Delhi Akasa Air flight number QP1120, duty manager Imran and his associates conspired and tried to cause huge loss"

**NEW DELHI:** BJP leader and MP Sadhavi Pragya Thakur on Friday alleged that Asaka Air staff attempted to create a "huge loss" for her at the Delhi Airport.

The Bhopal MP accused the Akasa Airline staff of hurting her during disembarking at Delhi Airport while flying from Mumbai to Delhi on Thursday. The MP from Bhopal today in a post on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), addressed Union civil aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and sought action into the matter. "Union Minister Scindia, when I came to Delhi from Mumbai to Delhi Akasa Air flight number



QP1120, duty manager Imran and his associates conspired and tried to cause huge loss to me. I hope you will definitely take action into the issue," the BJP MP posted on X. After the MP posted the incident on X, Akasa Air expressed regret and assured that it would probe the matter in detail. In a statement, Akasa Air

spokesperson said, "We regret the de-boarding experience that Member of Parliament Pragya Thakur had on our flight QP1120 on February 15, 2024. We apologise for any inconvenience caused to her.

While we will investigate the incident in detail, we take this as an opportunity to learn and to continue improving on our services."

## NHAI drops Paytm from FASTag list

**NEW DELHI:** National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has issued a fresh alert urging people to buy FASTags from authorised banks and the name of Paytm has been omitted from the list. In a social media post, NHAI has put out a list of 32 banks from where commuters can buy FASTags for vehicles. Sources said people who have got Paytm tags need to surrender them and buy new ones from authorised banks for hassle-free travel on NH network.

## Indian Naval Warship reaches Chennai after rescuing hijacked Bulk Carrier MV Lila Norfolk

**CHENNAI:** Indian Naval Warship INS Chennai which rescued the hijacked Bulk Carrier MV Lila Norfolk on January 5, successfully reached Chennai, Tamil Nadu on. Indian naval warship INS Chennai on January 5 reached the hijacked vessel MV Lila Norfolk off Somalia coast and issued a warning to the pirates on board to abandon the vessel, military officials told ANI. The Indian warship has also launched its helicopter and the Marine Commandos (MARCOS) are ready for operations. All the Indian crew on board are safe, the officials added. Earlier, the officials had informed that Merchant vessel MV Lila Norfolk was hijacked by pirates 300 nautical miles east of Somalia, while it was sailing from Port Du Aco in Brazil and was bound for Khalifa Bin Salman in Bahrain. The Indian Navy's Mission Deployed Platforms responded swiftly to the hijacking attempt on board a Liberian-flagged bulk carrier after it received a message on the UKMTO.



## Apple will source and manufacture all of its mobile devices in India

**Delhi :** While stating that Apple "has decided to source and produce all its mobile phones in India in the years to come," telecom minister Jyotiraditya Scindia made the claim that India has become a dependable and cost-effective manufacturing partner for smartphone manufacturers worldwide. At the Bharat Telecom event, Scindia stated that investing in India right now is not only a gesture of goodwill but also economically prudent for all original equipment manufacturers. Thanks to the government's production-linked incentive program, the minister noted, the telecom equipment industry has grown multiple times.

Sales of Rs 80,000 crore, exports of Rs 16,000 crore, and the creation of 25,000 jobs were all outcomes of an investment of Rs 4,000 crore—half a billion dollars in and of



itself.

With that in mind, he went on to say that India's telecom equipment business has also expanded tremendously. According to him, India is currently at the forefront of technological innovation and has not only caught up to the rest of the world in areas such as 4G and 5G, but is also forging its own future through massive reforms. A recent announcement by Apple CEO Tim Cook stated that for the June quarter, the bulk of iPhones sold in the US will be sourced from India, while the majority of smartphones for other markets will be produced in China.

### Bank to buy 20% stake

**Delhi :** The Japanese Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp. (SMBC) will buy a 20% share in Yes Bank for 13,482 crore, marking the highest cross-border investment in the Indian banking sector. SMBC will buy Yes Bank shares from State Bank of India and other shareholders for ₹21.50, valuing the Mumbai-based lender at \$7.9 billion. "SMBC has entered into a definitive agreement on 9 May 2025 to acquire 20% stake in YES Bank through a secondary stake purchase of 13.19% from SBI and 6.81% aggregate stake from other bank shareholders.

## Indian Department of Telecom Approves Starlink to Roll Out Satellite Internet

**Delhi :** A major milestone in India's developing satellite broadband scene has been reached: Elon Musk's Starlink has received crucial regulatory approval to operate in the country. After Starlink agreed to meet India's updated security standards, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) granted the business licenses for GMPCS, VSAT, and Internet service provider (ISP) operations. To corroborate the news, a government official informed MoneyControl, "Yes, Starlink has been issued a LoI by the DoT... the LoI came after it gave an



undertaking to meet license conditions and security protocols under the new revised security guidelines." Once the company has fulfilled all license responsibilities, final approval is anticipated. A greater crackdown on satellite internet companies in India followed the licensing process of Starlink. The

government revised the standards for lawful interception, data localization, gateway security clearance, and local manufacturing compliance the day before the LoI was announced. Starlink will soon receive In-SPACE authorization, according to a source.

## Govt is considering expanding US fertiliser imports to address US President concerns

**Delhi:** After LNG, the government is considering expanding US fertiliser imports to address US President Donald Trump's concerns over India's trade surplus. India will also become less dependent on China and Russia, its key shipping partners.

After the Ukraine war, sanctions on Moscow increased Russian fertiliser imports, like oil. India's trade deficit with Russia grew. Indian fertiliser imports totaled \$8.3 billion in the past financial year, with the US contributing \$300,000. India import-

ed \$86.5 billion in commodities from the US last year and had a \$41 billion trade surplus. The planned bilateral trade agreement with the US will cut tariffs to close the trade gap, but the government also wants to buy more American defense .

## BluSmart hoping to acquire Ja's stake and seize control

**Delhi :** Sources familiar with the matter have revealed that BluSmart investors are attempting to resurrect the ride-hailing company by discussing the possibility of buying out promoter Anmol Singh Jaggi. According to those in the know, the appraisal and due diligence processes are almost finished, and the legal issues surrounding the Jaggi's share transfer are being resolved. The deal, if finalized, would safeguard investors' funds, save drivers' jobs, and reintroduce BluSmart's electric taxis to the roads. The departure of Jaggi, who established the firm six years ago,



would also be a consequence of this. Investors were spearheaded by Jaggi's other company, BP Ventures Engineering Ltd. As of February 2025, investors such as Softbank Mayfield India Fund, 100 Unicorns, Responsibility

Investments, and celebrities like Deepika Padukone and M.S. Dhoni owned the remaining 70.9 percent of BluSmart, according to Tracxn. The promoters held 23.98% of the company.

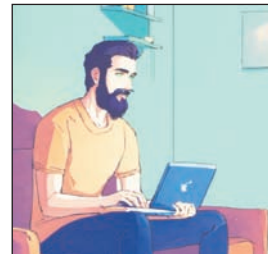
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### Another setback causes Oyo to postpone IPO plans

**Delhi:** Due to pushback from SoftBank and the unpredictable stock market this year, Oyo Hotels has decided to postpone its October IPO. Sources close to the situation say that SoftBank has expressed concerns about the planned timeframe and has asked Oyo to delay an IPO until its earnings are more stable. With investor appetite for risk dwindling due to Trump's trade policies, Oyo encounters a bleak market in its third attempt to go public since 2021. While Oyo founder Ritesh Agarwal indeed owns more than 30% of the company.

## HR issues Some work from home during travel advisories

**Delhi:** Many organizations have adopted safety protocols, business continuity plans, and flexible work regulations amid escalating border tensions. EY Global Delivery Services (EYGDS) informed staff that their crisis response unit and management are monitoring the situation. American Express reportedly banned employee transportation this week and asked them to work from home. American Express



and EY GDS didn't respond to an email until press time. Panasonic India has encouraged border-state employees to work from home, and AXA Global Business Services has enabled remote working. "We have issued travel advisory to border states in line

with the government directive," said Panasonic Life Solutions India CHRO Adarsh Mishra. Travel recommendations from HDFC Life advise employees to be vigilant, especially near borders. The company has told its teams to postpone or cancel off-site meetings until the situation improves.

"Our administration team and travel desk have been instructed to prioritize cancellations," said HDFC Life CHRO Vibhash Naik.

## The UK and India close key trade deal in 'new age' of Trump tariffs

**Delhi :** Britain and India signed a long-awaited free trade agreement as tariff upheaval caused by U.S. President Donald Trump accelerated commerce in whisky, cars, and food. After three years of stop-start negotiations, the world's fifth and sixth largest economies reached a deal to boost bilateral commerce by 25.5 billion pounds (\$34 billion) by 2040. The Reuters Tariff Watch newsletter provides daily global trade and tariff updates. Join here. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called the trade accord "ambitious and mutually beneficial". British PM Keir Starmer said the enhanced partnership would lower trade obstacles in a "new era for trade". Nations are



seeking new trade partners and UK-savvy individuals because of Trump's tariffs. India discussions claimed the turbulence had heightened the desire to reach an agreement. The accord will decrease whisky tariffs, allow British enterprises to compete for Indian contracts, and make it easier for Indian workers to work in Britain, benefiting both economies. It shows India opening its long-guarded markets, notably automobiles,

providing an early model for its anticipated approach to major Western countries like the U.S. and the EU. It is Britain's biggest trade deal since leaving the EU in 2020, but its predicted economic production rise of 4.8 billion pounds a year by 2040 is tiny compared to its 2.6 trillion pounds GDP in 2024. The pact will reduce tariffs on 90% of Britain's tariff lines and zero charge on 99% of Indian goods, including textiles.

## For 2025-26, I-T Department notifies ITR forms 1, 4

**Delhi:** Individuals and companies with income up to Rs 50 lakh must file ITR forms 1 and 4 for assessment year (AY) 2025-26 with the income tax department. Anyone with long-term capital gains up to Rs 1.25 lakh in a fiscal year can submit ITR-1. Previously, they had to file ITR-



2. With the notification, individuals, HUFs, corporations with income up to Rs 50 lakh, and

those with business and professional incomes in 2024-25 (April-March) can file I-T returns. ITR Form 1 (Sahaj) and ITR Form 4 (Sugam) are easier forms for many small and medium taxpayers. Sahaj can be filed by a resident with an annual income of up to Rs 50 lakh from

salary, one residential property, other sources (interest), and agricultural income up to Rs 5,000. Individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), and firms (other than LLPs) with yearly income up to Rs 50 lakh and business and profession revenue can file sugam.

## PM Narendra Modi's resolve made India a digital leader: Jyotiraditya Scindia

**Delhi :** Union Minister of Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bold vision and unrelenting resolve had changed India from a digital follower to a global digital leader, converting dreams into infrastructure and policy into progress. The minister told more than 130 foreign delegates from 35 countries at the launch of 'Bharat Telecom 2025' in the national capital that the conference is a declaration of India's intent to shape



global connectivity through innovation, collaboration, and inclusive growth. "When ideas, innovation, and intent come together in harmony, they create not a cacophony but a symphony, and 'Bharat Telecom' is that symphony of global collaboration and opportunity," the minister told the

audience, underlining India's export potential. The Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC) and the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) organize the event, which helps India become a global telecom manufacturing, services, and export

### Get ready to travel the world with Indian Ports Global!

**Delhi:** The consortium plans to buy and run twenty ports in various parts of the world, including India, Africa, and Asia. The Indian government-owned Indian Ports Global Ltd is spearheading a consortium that plans to buy and administer

twenty ports across Asia, Africa, and India, according to two sources familiar with the situation. The Iranian firm that runs the famous Chabahar terminal is looking to expand into other ports in the Indian subcontinent.

hub. This is about connecting futures, not just villages. Every tower we build, every byte we send, provides 1.4 billion people opportunity, said

Scindia. We deployed 470,000 towers to connect 99 percent of our villages and 82% of our population to 5G in 22 months.



## Ola Electric's 'consumer rights infractions' to ARAI

**Delhi:** The Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI) instructed vehicle testing agency ARAI to investigate whether Ola Electric violated consumer rights as a recipient of the government's EV incentive scheme. After the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) issued Ola Electric a show cause notice for consumer rights violations, misleading advertising, and unfair trade practices, MHI took action. Charges during free service period or warranty, car delivery delays, and service/repair delays are additional cited infractions. Old Electric is a FAME-II and PM E-DRIVE beneficiary under ARAI's eligibility requirements. Thus, MHI must get your opinions on the issue promptly "The ministry's letter to the testing centre stated. It further stated that under two EV incentive schemes, all OEMs, including Ola Electric, must maintain service centres to address con-



### Govt. cancels employee leaves amid India-Pak tensions

**Delhi :** Delhi administration cancelled employee leave due to escalating tensions between India and Pakistan and emergency readiness. Punjab closed all schools, colleges, and institutions for three days, as did Panchkula in Haryana. Gurugram's

sumer issues and provide warranties. Earlier, Union consumer affairs secretary and CCPA chief commissioner Nidhi Khare confirmed that the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) has been receiv-

ing complaints for about a year. The company didn't answer problems effectively." CCPA can open a "class action" under the Consumer Protection Act if comparable complaints affect a 'class' of

school shutdown was expected but not yet notified. The Services Department issued an order late tonight stating that no Delhi government officer will be granted leave until further orders due to the current scenario and emergency preparedness.

## Install sprinklers and smog guns: Govt. to departments

**Delhi :** All departments in Delhi have been ordered to deploy mist or water sprinklers on power poles and anti-smog cannons along central verges and roads in pollution hotspots. Environment minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said DDA and NDMC have piloted such pollution control methods, and duplicating them on a large scale would help control particle pollutants, especially in winter. The government recommends micro or mist-type jets with 50-100 micron droplets and 0.45-0.65 units of operating pressure. "Electric



poles in the central verge of roadways could provide structurally suitable and geographically distributed places for mist spraying systems without extra roadside infrastructure. Sirsa said the move aims to reduce road dust, a major contributor to Delhi's PM2.5 and PM10 levels. Delhi's air pollu-

tion campaign requires daily strategy and execution. We use science and accountability. We intend to reduce particulate matter emissions at the source using equipment and enforcement "said the minister. Delhi has 13 air pollution hotspots. "In view of the deteriorating air quality levels and high levels of particulate matter in the ambient air in Delhi, there is an urgent need to take innovative control measures," it said. The departments must submit a 15-day action plan to install such sprays or comparable systems on power poles outside the hotspots

## Delhi authorities target unlawful encroachments on highways to improve public areas

**Delhi :** The authorities have found illegal encroachments on over 100 major highways, including Outer Ring Road, Mathura Road, Mehrauli-Badarpur Road, and Okhla Estate. PWD minister Parvesh Verma, district magistrates, and civic body officials

assessed the problem and identified some of these portions as persistently problematic. Rao Tularam Marg, Ring Road between Hyatt Regency and Moti Bagh, Bhikaji Cama Place-Ber Sarai intersection, and Vasant Vihar metro station area are also affected. Many

of these encroachment lawsuits include illegal car parking and street vendors. Temporary flower and fruit shops have appeared on footpaths, open spaces, even over sewers. Furniture businesses, tyre repair shops, and mechanics have too.

## Over 5,600 Delhi government employees on ration subsidy list

**Delhi :** The Delhi government's Information Technology (IT) department has written to the services department recommending action against over 5,600 employees who received subsidised food under the National Food Security Act. After reviewing ration card records, the IT department uncovered more than 3,000 cases where beneficiaries received heavily subsidized rations despite receiving revenue department income certifications stating yearly incomes of over Rs 1 lakh. The revenue department has been asked to investigate these data by IT. The discrepancies were found following a preliminary study of food and supply, Delhi



PAO, and revenue data. Officials said the IT department is creating a Unified Data Hub to centralize data across divisions. Data analytics, cross-referencing, real-time updates, and better governance will result. For this project, Delhi government departments like food and supplies,

PAO, and revenue have exchanged records with IT. Preliminary research showed that 5,621 food and supply beneficiaries match Delhi government employee PAO data. According to an official, 395 recipients were placed as family heads in ration cards. The food and supply, services,

### DTC will launch e buses connecting three Delhi ISBTs with Noida

**Delhi ;** Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) have announced that electric bus services will begin connecting the capital to the soon-to-be-built Noida International Airport (NIA) in Jewar. Despite the airport's probable failure to meet the May operational deadline, buses will depart from three Inter State Bus Terminals (ISBTs) in Delhi: Maharana Pratap ISBT at Kashmere Gate, Swami Vivekanand ISBT at Anand Vihar, and Veer Hakikat Rai ISBT at Sarai Kale Khan.

## Hospitals in Delhi must be prepared for emergencies

**Delhi :** The Delhi government has ordered all government hospitals and health facilities to increase emergency preparedness, including painting a Red Cross sign on hospital rooftops to signal medical facilities from the air amid the growing military tension with Pakistan. In light of recent events, the guidelines require immediate action to ensure patient care and emergency readiness. require immediate action to maintain patient care and emergency preparation. Government officials



have ordered hospitals to hold another disaster readiness mock practice. They must also stockpile important drugs and consumables, maintain generator sets with fuel backup, and test emergency services including ICUS, oxygen delivery systems, and ventilators.

To enable 24-hour trauma care, hospitals must cancel surgeon, orthopaedic, and burn care specialist leaves. In addition, institutions must update ICU bed and equipment data on the ICU portal, secure hospital websites, and keep canteens and mess services stocked with food.

## IGIA raises app-based cab pickup cost

**Delhi :** According to sources, Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) has raised pick-up prices by 40% for app-based cab aggregator passengers from Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport. The increased fees apply to Ola and Uber rides from all three airport terminals. The amended collection fee is Rs 245 + 18% GST = Rs 289. Previous fees were Rs 173, excluding GST. From Delhi airport capital, Ola and Uber make four lakh monthly journeys. "Airport pick-up cost in Delhi is already among the highest in India and comes to roughly 25% of the rider's total average ticket," a source said. "With the new increase, riders will pay around 40%. The substantial increase does not provide new rider facilities." Pick-up fees are revised. The insider stated the pick-up will be



among the most expensive in the country after the increase. Rider airport charge includes airport pick-up fee, toll tax, driver profits, and commission. Riders will pay more due to the airport fee hike. The toll tax and airport pick-up fee will average 50% of the entire fare and go to the airport, not the driver or aggregator. DIAL did not respond immediately. Uber said that all airport trips on the cab aggregator include a pick-up cost as part of our commercial agreements with airports. This cost goes to the airport.

### 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's new EV policy aims to create 20,000 jobs; targets 95% electric vehicle registrations

**Delhi :** Manjinder Singh Sirsa, the environment minister of Delhi, stated that the new electric vehicle policy might generate 20,000 employment through the construction of a citywide network of charging and interchangeable battery stations.

To lessen environmental damage, this strategy promotes the use of electric vehicles. The goal is to convert mass categories to electric vehicles, which includes two-wheelers, buses, three-wheelers, and cargo carriers. He



announced that during the policy time, the Delhi government will strive to create 20,000 jobs related to electric vehicles. To drastically cut down on pollution, the government has set a goal of having 95% of new car registrations

be electric by 2027. It is our intention to make charging and battery changing infrastructure widely available to the public. Our goal is to have charging stations available at all times by the year 2030," he added.

### During India-Pakistan tensions, Delhi tests air sirens

**Delhi :** The national capital heard air raid sirens as part of a simulated practice amid rising tensions between India and Pakistan and two rounds of missile and drone attacks from across the border. The Delhi government warned that the Directorate of Civil Defence would test air raid sirens at the Public Works Department (PWD) headquarters in ITO before the rehearsal and not to panic. Testing will begin at 3 PM and last 15-20 minutes. The statement demanded significant social and electronic media publicity to advise the people to be calm and not panic throughout the exercise. District Magistrate (Central) G Sudhakar advised people to stay calm when sirens sound.

In addition, the policy calls for the construction of charging and swappable battery sta-

## Delhi golfers seek DGC practice rights, threaten Jantar Mantar protest

**Delhi:** Two-time Asian Tour winner Rashid Khan and numerous Delhi caddie-professional golfers will sit-in at Jantar Mantar on May 5 to win the right to practice at the Delhi Golf Club (DGC). Delhi caddie-pros and the DGC have been at odds for years. Long-running conflict has prompted



many pros to go to other courses or quit the sport, damaging their livelihoods. The affected golfers are seeking DGC practice authorization in the Delhi High Court. The case has been listed 30 times since February 4, 2020, without a hearing. Eight years before the contract expired,

the government renewed the DGC lease until 2050 in September 2012. DGC stopped allowing caddie-pros to practice in 2012. The protesting golfers argue that the club is on government land and serves to promote and advance golf, thus they should be allowed to practice there.



## Teachers improve their skills with an app to engage students

**Delhi:** Union Minister for Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launched the TeacherApp in New Delhi today to improve education in India by empowering educators with 21st-century classroom abilities. Bharti Airtel Foundation, Bharti Enterprises' philanthropy arm, created the Platform. Vice Chairman of Bharti Enterprises Shri Rakesh Bharti Mittal, CEO of Bharti Airtel Foundation Smt. Mamta Saikia, education luminaries, school principals, teachers, and B.Ed. students attended. In his speech on "Elevating Teachers, Elevating India," Shri Dharmendra Pradhan said this app will empower teachers through continual capacity building using creative course content, technology, and community-building elements.

This user-centric, free app designed with teacher input is available on the Web, iOS, and Android, enabling smooth



access for educators nationwide. Over 260 hours of high-quality courses, learning bytes, short videos, podcasts, and interactive webinar formats like thematic fests, webinars, competitions, and quizzes are available on the platform to improve future readiness, pedagogy, and student engagement. Live expert sessions provide practical teaching ideas, and the app highlights instructors' remarkable impact stories to develop a community of teachers. The app transforms education with tech and 12 state partnerships. Teaching Kits, 900 hours of content, is unique to this platform.

### Key DU committee to discuss Gita, Viksit Bharat courses

**Delhi:** Officials said Delhi University's (DU) standing committee will review proposals for numerous value addition courses (VAC), including four Bhagavad Gita-based and one An Introduction to Viksit Bharat. The committee's agenda emphasizes incorporating contemporary Indian philosophy and development issues into the curriculum. The Bhagavad Gita is featured in four of the six VACs, including "Gita for Holistic Life.

## Find unlawful Bangladeshis: MCD

**Delhi:** Delhi schools must detect unlawful Bangladeshi migrant children and deny birth certificates. All zones were ordered by the MCD to remove illegal Bangladeshi encroachments.

The extra commissioner and deputy commissioner represented the MCD Commissioner at a December 12 virtual meeting led by the senior secretary (Home), GNCTD, to discuss these directions. As decided in the VC meeting, MCD department heads and zonal officials were asked to take precautionary steps. If illegal Bangladeshi migrants are admitted to munic-



ipal schools, the education administration must take precautions. The undocumented Bangladeshi migrant children in schools should also be identified and verified "B P Bhardwaj deputy commissioner MCD stated. "Public health department should take all precautions while reg-

istering and issuing birth certificates and ensure no unlawful Bangladeshi migrants are awarded birth certificates. They would also identify/verify Birth Certificate registrants issued to unlawful Bangladeshi migrants "MCD added.

## UGC creates RPL to enable candidates to use informal learning

**Delhi:** The University Grants Commission (UGC) announced draft guidelines for prior learning recognition, a critical component of the NEP 2020. RPL recognizes informal, non-formal, and experiential learning abilities and competencies. Students can earn up

to 30% of their degree credits using RPL. RPL for university admissions and job placements is planned by UGC for 2026. A BCom graduate with work experience can join in a one-year PG study with exemptions in a few areas after being examined for skills. "RPL

connects real-world experience to formal education. UGC chairperson M Jagadesh Kumar said it boosts career chances. Portfolio assessment—work samples, projects, coursework, certificates, standardised tests, interviews, , skill demonstrations,

## Philippine Medical Act amendment bill gives Indian medical students hope

**Delhi:** The Philippines government has amended the Medical Act to allow foreign doctors to practice. International students, including Indians, can now practice medicine in the Philippines. The amendment also establishes the Medical Education Council and the Professional Regulatory Board of Medicine to improve academic standards, promote ethics, and keep the island country competitive in medical education.

The Ministry of External Affairs reported 9665 Indians studying in the Philippines in 2024. English-based instruction, US-aligned curriculum, and inexpensive tuition attract thousands of students annually. Study abroad consultants say low tuition, quality education, US-recognized syllabus and degree, extensive clinical practice, English as the teaching language, and climatic factors are attracting international students, particularly Indians, to the Philippines. "Allowing foreign nationals to practice medicine in the country, the Philippines is strengthening its appeal as a destination for aspiring medical professionals," The Philippines, along with Russia, Ukraine, and China, may attract Indian medical students. Some medical students told The Indian Express why they chose the island nation over the big four for medical school. A Telangana student selected the Philippines for its affordability and great education. Aditya and other students said the number of Indian students is rising, from 380 in 2019-19 to 1200 today. The Philippine MBBS program takes six years, with the last year dedicated to internships. Before taking the NMAT and enrolling in the MD program, international students must complete a three-semester BS.



## The PhD program at IIT-D is launched in Abu Dhabi

**Delhi :** At its new international campus in Abu Dhabi, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has begun offering a PhD program in energy and sustainability. Interviews will take place following the deadline of December 31, 2024, for online applications. It is anticipated that chosen applicants would begin work by the final week of January 2025. "The energy and sustainability program will concentrate on tackling innovative issues associated with achieving net-zero goals. According to an official, this includes studies on renewable energy, decarbonization, process intensification, sustainable process engineering, micro-



" For their doctoral dissertations, students will work on cutting-edge subjects that tackle global issues in environmental sustainability, energy transition management, and technology "

grids and power distribution in the changing energy landscape, and the application of

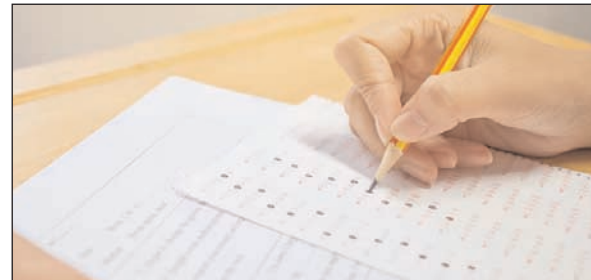
artificial intelligence and data science to support the energy transition.

### IIT-D has 1,200 open positions, with more than 50 of them being international

**Delhi:** With over 1,200 job offers (including PPOs), the placement season at IIT Delhi for the academic year 2024-25 has started off on a strong note. According to IIT Delhi, approximately 1,150 students have been chosen at random. Recruiters from all walks of life have shown up on campus, and they're offering tens of thousands of dollars in scholarships. The following companies are among the most prominent in their respective industries.

## NTA returns to NEET UG format

**Delhi:** To do well on the NEET UG 2025 exam, candidates must answer 180 questions in 180 minutes. The NTA has reverted to its pre-Covid exam design, which is expected to increase competition in the May 2025 exam. As per the modified pattern, section B which consisted of optional questions have been removed which has decreased the exam time from 200 minutes to 180 minutes. The NTA declaration made candidates and experts anxious, as it may reduce the overall competition. Health Ministry officials say question paper difficul-



ty will determine competition levels. The NTA cut the extra 20 minutes and optional questions to restore regularity in the exam schedule.

Because the pandemic is finished, candidates must return to the original exam format. The adjustment isn't frightening as the syllabus is unchanged. Additionally, we need to enhance our time

management abilities to complete the exam within 180 minutes, which is already challenging," says a NEET UG 2025 aspirant from Delhi on the condition of anonymity.

## Credit courses from AICTE drone labs

**Delhi:** AICTE and AVPL have signed an MoU to create AVPL AeroVision Drone Labs in AICTE-approved colleges nationwide. This strategic alliance will first establish 50 AVPL AeroVision Labs to improve technical education and give students and faculty hands-on experience with innovative drone



technology. In the announcement, AICTE Chairman T.G. Sitharam stressed the importance of this endeavor. "AVPL AeroVision Drone Labs transforms drone technology education for students. Our goal is to improve technical education and industry-relevant training to prepare our kids for the global employment market. Sitharam hopes this relationship will motivate other business leaders to support similar programs, generating an industry-ready workforce and providing hands-on training for

### Exam centers to get CCTVs from NIOS to reduce malpractices

**Delhi:** To ensure transparent and seamless assessments, the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) will use AI-powered CCTV cameras and webcasting of the annual High School Certificate (HSC) exam 2024. Pauses, violations of rules, such as logistical issues in storing or distributing question papers, cheating, malpractice, invigilator incompetence, or cell phone use in HSC exam centers, can now be identified quickly.

## DU students may soon finish a semester of international university finals

**Delhi:** Delhi University (DU) seniors may soon be able to study abroad for a semester. Twinning programs will be discussed at the December 27 academic council (AC) meeting. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and UGC regulations for twinning programmes with international universities support this approach. The plan would have students spend the semester abroad and earn 12-26 credits. They'd graduate from DU when they returned. A committee determining the twinning degree arrangement will offer its suggestions during the council meeting. Students can study abroad for a semester under this program. Some educators say this proposal benefits pupils. Students who studied abroad while doing their primary course could not merge their credits. Students will choose a university



" Despite its appeal, the idea lacks details. To complement the twinning concept, DU will launch a one-year postgraduate (PG) program in 2026. A draft proposal will be discussed during the academic council meeting"

and field depending on DU's MoUs with international institutions. After picking a university, students can apply to DU, where a committee will assess their applications and determine feasibility. Economically disadvantaged meritorious students can also join the twinning program. "This does not limit it to EWS pupils. Other students who match eco-

nom criteria will be considered. We will encourage low-income students to accept full scholarships from overseas universities. Just one example. The dean noted the approach is flexible. However, several academic council members have called the initiative "disastrous" and criticized its unclear execution.

## IIT to teach Gen AI

**Delhi:** The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi offers a diploma in generative AI to meet the growing demand for AI competence. Through the institute's Continuing Education Programme (CEP), this six-month advanced AI course teaches professionals broad AI skills. Today's IT, entertainment, healthcare, and finance industries want this expertise. Developing generative AI skills boosts career opportunities. The programme also gives students hands-on exposure with practical tools and algorithms to stay competitive and meet the growing demand for AI-driven innovation "an official added. The new project examines advanced AI techniques, focusing on Large Language Models (LLMs) including GPT, BERT, and T5. Modern issues including Reinforcement Learning with Human Feedback (RLHF), Vision-Language Models (VLMs), and responsible AI deployment are covered. The curriculum offers six specialized modules: mathematical foundations for machine learning, machine learning, natural language processing, generative AI for text, vision, and responsible AI. Students will also use industry-leading Python, NumPy, Pandas, PyTorch, and TensorFlow. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi has launched a certificate program in generative AI to meet the growing need for AI expertise. This six-month advanced AI course from the institute's Continuing Education Programme (CEP) prepares professionals.

The new project examines advanced AI tech-

