

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

## Discounts dip but Economics keep Russian oil flowing to India

**NEW DELHI:** The flow of Russian crude to India remains unabated in spite of discounts shrinking to \$1.5-2 per barrel as market factors and input requirement continue to drive refiners' choice in the absence of any govt directive for or against those imports amid US and European Union (EU)

### Refiner

□ India's largest state-run refiner and a major buyer of Russian crude

pressure. "We are buying crude as per the economics. We are not making any extra effort for either



increasing or decreasing Russian crude (purchase)," IndianOil chairman Arvinder

Singh Sahney said on Thursday. Coming from the head of India's largest state-run refiner and a major buyer of Russian crude, the statement can be construed as an indication the govt remains undaunted by western pressure against purchase of those barrels. Govt sources said a team of officials from

the external and commerce ministries is set to visit Russia for further discussion on a Rupee-Rouble trade, something both countries have been pursuing for years. Several cargoes of Russian crude was delivered to western ports last week, contrary to foreign media reports of India.

## 46 dead, 100-odd injured



### 'My thoughts and prayers are with all those affected'

"I just spoke to the Union home minister @AmitShah to brief him about the developing situation in Kishtwar region of Jammu," CM Omar Abdullah wrote on X, also announcing the cancellation of his scheduled "At Home" tea party on Independence Day. "My thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by the cloudburst and flooding in Kishtwar, Jammu and Kashmir. The situation is being monitored closely. Rescue and relief operations are underway. Every possible assistance will be provided to those in need," PM Narendra Modi wrote on X.



BJP's Kishtwar MLA Shagun Parihar as saying from Chishot.

At Paddar, the town closest to the disaster zone, leader of the opposition Sunil Sharma told reporters that 100-odd people were missing. "There are mud-caked

bodies and critically injured people all around. The death toll could rise," he said. The cloudburst occurred between noon and 1pm, causing rapidly filling rivulets to swamp a swathe of the valley. The camp set up for pilgrims bore the brunt of the damage, leaving a mud-filled gorge where the langar stood. Floodwaters washed away several other structures, including a security post. Dozens of vehicles were damaged.

"Two CISF personnel were among the victims. Many of the pilgrims who died were having lunch in the langar when disaster struck," an official said.

Chishot is about 90km from Kishtwar town and the last stop before pilgrims trek 8.5km to the ancient Machail Mata shrine. The 43-day Shri Machail Mata Yatra, which commenced on July 25 and was to continue till Sept 5, has been suspended.

### Cloudburst

□ Many missing as cloudburst wipes out pilgrims' camp in J&K's Kishtwar

**JAMMU/SRINAGAR:** Flash flooding within moments of a cloudburst Thursday wrought tragic devastation on a pilgrimage pit stop at Chishot in J&K's Kishtwar district, killing at least 46 people – most of them pilgrims on the return leg of the Shri Machail Mata Yatra – and injuring over 100. Scores of pilgrims were reported missing as Army, police, NDRF and other agencies mounted a search operation and rescued around 160 people in the few hours before dusk set in. Most of the reported casualties were found around a langar (community kitchen) set up for pilgrims, officials said.

"I am unable to hold back my tears. The situation is bad," PTI quoted

### Samajwadi Party rebel MLA Pooja Pal praises Yogi Adityanath, gets expelled



LUCKNOW: Samajwadi Party on Thursday expelled rebel MLA Pooja Pal hours after she showered praise on chief minister Yogi Adityanath in Uttar Pradesh assembly during a marathon discussion on Vision-2047. In her speech, Pooja, who had earlier voted against the party line in the 2024 Rajya Sabha election, lauded the CM for zero tolerance against crime and credited him with getting justice for her in the case involving gangster

### PM to hoist tricolour, address nation from Red Fort

#### The Prime Minister will speak from the iconic ramparts

##### Vision

□ This year's celebrations carry the theme 'Naya Bharat,' reflecting the vision

**NEW DELHI:** With just hours remaining before India marks its 79th Independence Day, preparations are in full swing at the Red Fort in New Delhi, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hoist the national flag

and deliver his 12th consecutive address to the nation. The Prime Minister will speak from the iconic ramparts of the monument. Tricolours are already visible across the country—in shops, streets, and markets—dominating clothing and everyday items. This year's celebrations carry the theme 'Naya Bharat,' reflecting the government's vision of achieving 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047.

Upon arrival at the Red Fort, PM Modi will be



great saint. An amount of Rs 8.11 crore will be spent in the first phase,

he said. Choudhary said

the purpose of the park construction is to promote eco-tourism, ensure environmental protection and provide employment opportunities to people at the local level. The deputy CM said Maharsi Vishwamitra Park will be developed on the con-

cept (theme) of Gayatri mantra. "Meditation centres, Vedic style paths, green structures symbolising peace and natural places decorated with religious verses will be built there. This will enable people visiting the park to connect with nature and have a spiritual experience," he said.

### Bengali migrants illegally held, says West Bengal

**NEW DELHI:** Rajasthan, Haryana, Chhattisgarh and Delhi of arbitrarily detaining migrant labourers from Bengal and alleged that some were deported despite sufficient documents to prove Indian nationality. Bhushan said the board had no objection to inquiries to establish nationality of Bengali-speaking Muslims, but detention should be only of non-Indians. Seeking a restraint on such detentions, he was told by a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi.

## Samudrayaan in sight, India takes a 5,002m plunge

Oil companies' earnings increased by 25 times, government is also collecting 46% tax



**NEW DELHI:** In a first-of-its-kind expedition, India sent an aquanaut 5,002m deep into the ocean as part of the country's Deep Ocean Mission, which involves development of crewed and uncrewed submersibles

and deep-sea mining technologies, aimed at harnessing resources from the Exclusive Economic Zone and continental shelf. As part of Indo-French research collaborations, two Indian aquanauts – Jatinder Pal Singh and Raju Ramesh – successfully completed one deep dive each in the North Atlantic Ocean in the French submersible "Nautilus" on August 5 and 6. Happening as it did around a month after Shubhanshu Shukla became the first Indian to reach International Space

Station, Union earth sciences minister Jitendra Singh Thursday called it India's quest for a double conquest. "We have an Indian going into space and an Indian going into the deep ocean almost simultaneously," he said. Ramesh, a scientist at National Institute of Ocean Technology, went 4,025m down on August 5, followed by a dive of 5,002m by Navy commander (retd) Singh on August 6.

### Kumaraswamy

unveiled the official logo of 'Bharat Steel'

**New Delhi:** Union Steel and Heavy Industries Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Wednesday unveiled the official logo of the flagship 'Bharat Steel' conference to be held in April next year at Vigyan Bhavan. Along with this, he also inaugurated the brochure and website of the event, taking an important step towards strengthening India's steel industry on the global platform.



much rather take off, take over all of Ukraine. But I am President, he is not going to mess around with me. He also proposed that European leaders could be invited to participate in a second meeting, which would include Volodymyr Zelensky. Trump told Fox News Radio that the main aim of tomorrow's meeting is to set up talks between Putin and the Ukrainian president, adding that he has three locations in mind for such a meeting. The US President, who is preparing to meet,

insists that won't happen with him as US president. I think President Putin would like to see a deal. I think if I weren't President, he would take over all of Ukraine. It's a war that should never have happened. In my opinion, if I weren't President, he would

### 'Can't ignore Pahalgam while deciding on J&K statehood'



### Hearing

□ After more than one and half years, statehood had not been restored

**NEW DELHI:** Supreme Court on Thursday sought the Centre's response to a petition seeking restoration of statehood to Jammu & Kashmir, but said such a decision could not be taken without considering prevailing ground situation and incidents like Pahalgam, where terrorists had killed 26 people in cold blood on April 22. Senior advocate Gopal, appearing for Zahoor Ahmed

had been held, as was promised in 2023.

## NC is unlikely to revoke J&K Pahari 10% ST quota

**Delhi:** National Conference insiders warned taking back the 10% ST reservation for Paharis in J&K could cause agitations that would hurt the future party-led government. The quota issue still bothers youth and non-reserved classes in J&K, where total reservation has climbed to 70%, reducing open merit space. Protesters asked that the incoming government rescind the policy, arguing that the 10% quota is disproportionate to the recipients' population. BJP won only Kalakot out of eight Poonch and Rajouri seats, while NC won four, Independents two, and Congress one. BJP wanted to expand in these areas. Before



the elections, the UT administration proposed a 10% reservation for Paharis and three additional communities in addition to the 10% ST reservation for Gujjars/Bakarwals. NC sources said quota is a delicate topic and revoking it could spark riots that would hurt the next leadership. Their biggest concern was that it would assist BJP win Muslim Poonch and Rajouri at the expense of "secular" parties. BJP was limited

to 29 MLAs. We were worried. Only Budhal in Rajouri has a Gujjar majority, while the other seven seats have Paharis in large numbers. "The NC functionary suggested that BJP could have won up to seven seats in Nowshera, Poonch, Mendar, Rajouri, Thanamandi, and Surankote if Paharis voted for it in large numbers. People on social media are criticizing the BJP's blunder, saying it was duped by its thirst.

**Delhi :** elections in Jammu and Kashmir saw the National Conference and Congress team win 49 of the 90 seats in the union territory, surpassing the projections of the exit polls. The BJP finished with 29 seats this time, four more than it did in 2014, the previous time the elections were held in the former state, making for an intriguing subplot. Conversely, the Congress managed to secure a pitiful six seats. BJP candidate Shagun Parihar, who is pursuing a doctorate in philosophy in electron-



ics, is one of the winners. The 29-year-old is one of the three female candidates that became victorious in the Jammu and Kashmir elections. The only female candidate for the BJP in the polls, Ms. Parihar, defeated former minister and veteran leader of the National Conference Sajad Ahmed Kitchloo by a margin of 521 votes to win the Kishtwar seat.

## RSS door-to-door campaign helped BJP win large

**Delhi:** BJP members said large-scale door-to-door campaigning over the previous month helped them fight anti-incumbency in south Haryana. They said this, along with strong cooperation between BJP and RSS volunteers, helped the party win its third straight election. BJP leader and former chief minister A Gurugram-based RSS official stated his organization and the BJP plotted their electoral campaign. "We hold five-day door-to-door meetings to encourage people to vote for the nation. This time, the



greater support. We shared information and backed the BJP locally. BJP leaders shared input at regular samiksha baithaks. The RSS also distributed tickets before the polls, he added. The Haryana BJP social media team leader, Arun Yadav, said RSS and BJP activists mobilized and educated voters. We convinced voters that only the BJP could create a clean, merit-based administration without caste or group discrimination. Combined efforts by party and sangh karyakartas were crucial, he said.

**Delhi:** The Supreme Court reviewed the CBI's progress in the rape and murder case of a doctor in Kolkata. It instructed the CBI to submit a further status report within three weeks. The court also criticized the West Bengal government for delays in installing CCTVs and other security measures in medical colleges. Supreme Court on Tuesday, during a hearing on the suo motu case related to the rape and murder of a doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, stated that the fifth status report of the probe filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) indicates agency's probe into the role of "others" in the case.

Taking cognizance of the chargesheet filed on October 7 against accused Sanjay Roy and a Sealdah court, the court directed the CBI to file further status report on probe in the case within three weeks. On September 30, the Supreme Court expressed dissatisfaction regarding the slow progress made by the West Bengal government in installing CCTVs and constructing toilets and separate resting rooms in government medical colleges. The court set a dead-

line for the CBI to file the fifth status report by October 7.

## Mumbai Cars Enter Without Toll

**Delhi Mumbai:** Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde declared that cars entering Mumbai will no longer pay tolls. The opposition immediately denounced the toll waiver as an election sop that would worsen traffic in India's financial capital, effective midnight today. According to Eknath Shinde, all light motor vehicles entering Mumbai at the five toll booths will be toll-free.



The state government cabinet meeting in Mumbai announced the measure weeks before the Maharashtra election. This will cut traffic, pollution, and commuter time. The decision is historic. "Mr.

Shinde told reporters. CM Ekanth Shinde states "The toll plaza at Mumbai's entry point used to delay traffic. People have demanded this for years. I'm also pleased that lakhs of light motor vehicles have been released during my term as CM. Maharashtra minister Dadaji Dagadu Bhuse said light cars could enter freely from 2002-commissioned tolls at Dahisar, Anand Nagar, Vaishali, Airoli.

## Fortified rice plan for marine heritage complex approved by cabinet

**"The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) fortified rice scheme will cost 17,082 crore"**

**Delhi:** The Union cabinet approved extending the free fortified rice policy from July 2024 to December 2028, building the National Maritime Heritage Complex in Lothal, Gujarat, and building 2,280 km of highways in Rajasthan and Punjab border districts. After the meeting, which was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union minister for information and broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnav briefed reporters that the

## The GST Council voted to exempt gene therapy used to cure cancer from taxes

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



namkeen tax, if it were pre-packaged with salt and spices. Caramelized sugar will be subject to an 18% tax. In a similar vein, the council stated that as voucher transactions were neither a delivery of commodities nor services, they would not be subject to taxes. It also made it clear that small enterprises that pay rent to unregistered landlords and are covered by the reverse charge system will not be required. The council determined that 18% GST would be applied to the margin of suppliers for all used cars, including electric vehicles. Even though there won't be any tax transactions involving private citizens, businesses or used car sellers would be subject to the fee. According to Sitharaman, states desired a greater fee, but the Center had suggested a 5% tax on EVs. The GST Council issued a number of clarifications, one of which was that ready-to-eat popcorn would be subject to a 12% tax, similar to the

**GGM forbids the use of firecrackers; only "green" ones are permitted**

**Delhi:** According to officials, the Chief Minister's Flying Squad raided two godowns in Gurgaon's Daboda that were holding non-green firecrackers. Three people were taken into custody after two warehouses with almost three tonnes of non-green crackers were found. In an effort to reduce pollution, the Gurgaon Deputy Commissioner banned the sale and usage of firecrackers prior to the festival season. DC Green firecrackers would only be permitted on specified occasions throughout a specific time period, according to Nishant Kumar Yadav. Inspector Dharamvir Singh of the Gurgaon Police has stated that two males are the subject of formal complaints under Section 9B of the Explosive Act 1884 and IPC section 188. Additionally, samples



## Congress MLA Hiraman Bhika Khoskar Joins Ajit Pawar



### Faction Before Polls

**Delhi :** Mumbai: Igatpuri Congress MLA Hiraman Bhika Khoskar joined the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) before Maharashtra Assembly elections. Mr. Khoskar and his followers joined the NCP in Ajit Pawar's Mumbai home. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and State NCP President Sunil Tatkare welcomed Khoskar. The NCP announced that Hiraman Bhika Khoskar and scores of his supporters, including former Zila Parishad member Sampatnana Sakale, joined the party in Pune in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and Maharashtra NCP President Sunil Tatkare. The party said it was the "second biggest" NCP member and that veteran actor Sayaji Shinde joined in Mumbai. The party further said Mr. Khoskar's participation will boost its Nashik and nearby areas presence before the Assembly elections. "Nashik tribal community supports Khoskar," the message said.

## 4 Independents Back Omar Abdullah, Party Wins J&K Majority

**Delhi :** Four independent MLAs supported the National Conference, the 'big brother' of the alliance that won this week's poll, demoting the Congress from a junior partner to a relative non-entity in the new Jammu and Kashmir government. Inderwal, Chhamb, Surankote, and Bani winners Pyare Lal Sharma, Satish Sharma, Choudhary Mohammed Akram, and Dr. Rameshwar Singh support the NC. Even without Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's five nominees, the party has 46 legislators, the majority in the 90-member House. The Kashmiri organization no longer needs the Congress' backing to govern, adding to the party's existential problem, fueled by too many leadership disputes and election defeats, including Haryana, over the previous decade. Yes, a narrow margin. Losing even one MLA brings the NC below the threshold, putting the Congress' six seats back in play (if the party can hang on to all six). Congress is not a priority for Omar Abdullah right now.

**"The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) recommended phased rice fortification in India in April 2022"**

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) fortified rice scheme will cost 17,082 crore. The initiative will remain a central sector scheme, completely sponsored by the Indian government under

PMGKAY's food subsidy program, Vaishnav said. The extension supports the government's Anaemia Mukt Bharat campaign to tackle anaemia and nutritional deficiencies in India.

Fortified rice will be distributed through the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS), and PM POSHAN plan (previously mid-day meal) in all states and union territories. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) recommended phased rice fortification in India in April 2022.

## Congress's appeasement policy has ruined the country since partition: CM

**Lucknow:** On August 14, 1947, the partition marked one of the darkest days in Indian history, uprooting millions and leaving deep scars on countless lives, said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Speaking at a seminar held at Bhagidari Bhawan to mark Partition Horrors Remembrance Day on Thursday, CM said that approximately 1.5 to 2 crore people were displaced and nearly 20

### Remembrance

□ CM Yogi attends seminar to mark Partition Horrors Remembrance Day



lakh were massacred, and millions of Indians were rendered homeless, forced to wander in search for settlement during the tragedy. The horror of the tragedy left wounds so deep

that they remain etched in Indian society and will never fade from their memory, he added. Before speaking at the event, Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath held a silent foot march. Chief minister Yogi Adityanath said that what happened on August 14, 1947, was a national tragedy that can never be forgotten.

Millions were displaced from their homes, families were torn apart, and at that time the ruling powers deceived the public by portraying the partition as merely an administrative decision. The partition was a moral and human crime, which Congress carried out under its policy of appeasement. Remembering the massacres carried out in 1947, the Chief Minister said that it was

not merely an administrative decision, but the result of barbarity, in which millions of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains were evicted from their roots. During this period, women faced extreme brutality, with no chance to protect their dignity. "Partition gave birth to a monster like Pakistan, which even today is involved in various conspiracies to harm Hindustan," he asserted. The CM said

remarked. CM Yogi directly attacked Congress, saying that the party presented India's partition as if it were the division of property between two brothers. Since the 1947 partition, Congress's appeasement policy has ruined the country, and even today the same Congress is trying to push the nation towards division, he asserted. The CM said

that Congress is the same party that strangled the country's Constitution and murdered democracy under the cover of Emergency. It is the same party that orchestrated the massacre of Sikhs in 1984, and even today, instead of taking the responsibility for its leaders' wrong decisions, it is trying to mislead the public. The Chief Minister thanked Prime Minister.

## Various programs were organized on Partition Horror Memorial Day

A record exhibition related to Partition Horror was organized in Amar Shaheed Chandrashekhar Azad Park

### Exhibition

□ The DM Magistrate honored the divided and displaced families, poets



decided to celebrate 14th August as "Partition Horror Memorial Day". In this exhibition, pictures bringing alive the Partition Horror have been displayed. An exhibition of books related to Partition Horror was organized by Hindustani Academy, Vani Prakashan, Rajkamal Group Publication and Sahitya Bhandar. A documentary film based on Partition Horror was screened. Renowned poets of Prayagraj district Jitendra Mishra, Abha Madhur Srivastava, Shailendra Madhur, Shahid Safar, Manmohan Singh Tanha, Dinesh Pandey Nazar Allahabadi recited poems based on the tragedy of Partition, full of patriotism. On this occasion, prominent representatives of the affected displaced families such as Sindhi community, Punjabi community, Sikh community

presented a touching description of the tortures suffered by their ancestors at the time of Partition. Umashankar Adani of Sindhi community who came from displaced families said that we are not refugees in India, Inder Madhyan Sahib said that while bearing the pain of the horror of partition, we patiently developed ourselves and our society. Mr. Rana Chawla from Sikh community said that we should remember the pain of the horror of partition and consider it a political event and move forward. District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma said that we are celebrating today's day because we should never forget our history. He emphasized that unity in diversity and Indianness is our identity.

On this occasion, the District Magistrate honored the divided and displaced

families, poets, officials by presenting them with mementoes and Angavastram. Chief Development Officer Mrs. Harshika Singh was also present on this occasion. At the end of the program, two minutes of silence was observed by all the people present in memory of Partition Horror Memorial Day. Assistant Nodal Officer/Manuscript Officer Ghulam Sarwar expressed gratitude to all the people present in the program. The program was conducted by Dr. Prabhakar Tripathi. On this occasion Manoj Kushwaha Ji, Ashwini Patel Ji, R.P. Singh Baghel Ji, Project Director, DC MNREGA Sir, District Development Officer Sir, Civil Defence's Anil Kumar Gupta Annu Bhatiya, Rakesh Tiwari Neeraj Mishra, Dr. Subhash Chandra Yadav, Rakesh Kumar Verma, Harishchandra Dubey Ajay Kumar Maurya, Program Officer Dinesh Singh, Sangeeta Singh, Government Inter College Kesari Bansraj Ji, Nivedita Ji, Poonam Ji, Gautam Ji, Ajay Singh Ji along with children from major schools of the district, teachers and principals etc. were present.

### Solver was made to sit in his place in the police recruitment exam

**Firozabad.** On Thursday, the police team of Thana Uttar has arrested the wanted accused who got the exam conducted by making a solver sit in his place in the Uttar Pradesh Police Constable Recruitment Examination 2024. On the instructions of Senior Superintendent of Police Saurabh Dixit, a campaign is being run to arrest the wanted accused in the district.



Address of Honorable Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in the Legislative Council.

## MUNPL Meja Celebrates 'Har Ghar Tiranga' with a Patriotic Tiranga Rally



**Meja.** In celebration of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' Campaign 2025, launched under the aegis of the Ministry of Power, MUNPL Meja organised a vibrant rally to encourage awareness and pride in the National Flag. The rally was ceremoniously flagged off by Shri Asesh Kumar Chattopadhyay, CEO, MUNPL, accompanied by dignitaries Shri Avijit Chatterjee, CGM (Technical Services), Shri Pankaj Kumar Gupta,

Joseph's School situated in Srijan Vihar Township. The event saw wholehearted participation from employees across departments and CISF personnel. Marching through the township with the Tricolour held high,

participants chanted patriotic slogans, echoing a deep sense of national unity and devotion. The initiative is part of a nationwide call to action from 13th to 15th August 2025, involving activities like Prabhat Pheris, Tiranga rallies, and the popular 'Selfie with Tiranga' campaign. MUNPL Meja remains dedicated to upholding and promoting the spirit of patriotism, unity, and respect for the national symbols.

## Scan the QR code and share your suggestions for UP Vision Document 2047

### Contribute

□ The CM urged that every family should contribute at least one suggestion

**Lucknow:** Addressing the House on the fourth day of the Monsoon session of the Assembly on Thursday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced the preparation of the UP Vision Document 2047. Describing it as a mirror of the hopes and aspirations of the state's 25 crore people, he called it a roadmap to realise the vision of a "Viksit Uttar Pradesh of Viksit Bharat." The Chief Minister urged that every family should contribute at least one suggestion for the document. He added, "To facilitate this, QR codes will be placed in public spaces, schools, and colleges, alongside the launch of an online

portal for easy submission of ideas." Highlighting the inclusive and comprehensive nature of the process, he informed that a panel of over 500 subject experts has been formed to ensure broad participation. He said, "This panel comprises retired IAS and IPS officers, domain specialists, agricultural scientists, university vice-chancellors,

professors, social scientists, doctors, and other professionals. Over the next month, these experts will visit every district, block, gram panchayat, school, college, technical institute, and university in the state, engaging with traders, students, intellectuals, and the general public to incorporate their perspectives into the vision document." An incentive plan has also been devised to recognise and reward impactful suggestions at both district and state levels. The Chief Minister stated that once the suggestion drive is complete, the UP Vision Document 2047 will be prepared in collaboration.

## Varanasi: Lanka police caught a vicious criminal in an encounter, his partner escaped from the spot

**Varanasi:** Lanka police caught a vicious criminal in an encounter, his partner escaped from the spot. DCP Crime Sarvanan T said that the arrested criminal has been identified as Vikas Patel, a resident of Bhabua in Bihar. More than six criminal cases are against him in various police stations of Varanasi. He said that on Thursday evening, the police arrested a vicious chain snatcher in an injured condition. At the same time, his partner took advantage of

the darkness and escaped from the spot. DCP Crime Sarvanan T said that the arrested criminal has been identified as Vikas Patel, a resident of Bhabua in Bihar. More than six criminal cases are against him in various police stations of Varanasi. He said that on Thursday evening, the police arrested a vicious chain snatcher in an injured condition. At the same time, his partner took advantage of



(NEP) 2020, Balvatikas in Uttar Pradesh's government schools are now ready to become a vibrant world of learning.

## People did not get water even on the festival

### Akhand Bharat Sandesh

**Jhunsi.** People are crying for water due to the water corporation's motor being out of order for a week in ward 52 Haveli. People are very angry with the Jal Nigam due to non-availability of water during the festive season. Half a dozen mohallas of Haveli with a population of ten thousand have not received water for a week. Due to which people have to wander around others' submersible and hand pumps for water. There is also a discussion that due to non-availability of water, some people have locked their houses and

gone to the village. Jyoti Kala, a resident of Sangam Vihar Haveli, said that Lalahi Chhath was on Thursday, Janmashtami is after 15 August, in such a situation, leave aside cleaning the houses, there is a problem in bathing and doing puja due to water. Kaifi, a resident of Purani Basti, said that people are somehow managing by buying water.

Councillor Gulfoiroz,

who was busy getting the motor repaired the whole day, has expressed hope that water will come by Friday morning. He said that the motor will be installed by night.

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## Editorial

## India's naval advancements will fuel its Indian Ocean ambitions

As India approaches its 75th Republic Day, the nation has achieved a significant milestone in strengthening its naval capabilities. In an exceptional move reflecting strategic foresight, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently commissioned three advanced naval platforms in a single day: a destroyer, a frigate, and a submarine. However, in a fast-changing security environment in the Indo-Pacific, the developments in naval capabilities must be measured in a relative context—capabilities of arch rivals and a swiftly evolving security domain, that is. Now, five points need to be underscored in this context. The commissioning of advanced naval platforms highlights India's aspiration to establish itself as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Over the years, India's maritime security strategy has significantly evolved. The 2015 Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) vision reflects India's dedication to fostering regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. This vision is supported by initiatives such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Indian Ocean Island Countries (IOIC), which emphasise coastal connectivity and sustainable development. PM Modi's address at the 2018 Shangri-La Dialogue further reinforced India's strategic perspective for the Indo-Pacific. The SAGAR vision has gained traction through frameworks such as the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and the Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), aiming to tackle regional security issues and counter China's expanding influence. While China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has grown to become the world's largest by fleet size, it still lacks the operational capabilities and combat experience of the United States. India's navy, although the smallest of its armed forces, has consistently demonstrated efficiency and timely acquisitions. Compared to the Indian Air Force, which faces critical squadron shortages, the navy pragmatically acknowledges domestic limitations in engine development. It relies on foreign collaborations to fill gaps, ensuring progress. However, I'll turn to that later. To establish itself as a net security provider, the Indian Navy must sustain the momentum it has recently achieved in naval defence exports. Although this initiative began in earnest only in 2011, it gained significant traction after 2016. India has transitioned from being a cautious supplier of naval equipment, primarily targeting countries such as Mauritius, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines, to a more prominent player in defence exports. For many years, India's exports to nations such as Seychelles, the Maldives, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka were limited to refurbished ex-navy and coast guard vessels. However, this trend has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years. Naval ships, as of 2024, account for over 61 per cent of India's total defence exports. This shift highlights India's growing capability to manufacture advanced platforms and its determination to emerge as a dependable supplier of defence equipment to neighbouring countries. This development is a critical component of India's regional and maritime strategy, especially given China's rapid ascent in modernising PLAN and expanding its influence in the Indian Ocean by providing naval assets to smaller nations. China has already established itself as the leading defence exporter to both Pakistan and Bangladesh.

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

## Tulip's resignation in the UK is troublesome

## for Hasina. Spotlight on daughter Saima

The sins of fathers shall be visited upon the sons—this ominous pronouncement in the Bible has now come true for Tulip Siddiq, a 42-year-old minister in the British government, but with a twist. In her case, it wasn't her father's sins that visited upon her but those allegedly committed by her aunt, the deposed prime minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina Wazed. And it cost Siddiq her job. Slapped with a range of corruption charges by Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Committee (ACC), which forced an internal gov-

ernment inquiry, Siddiq has strenuously denied any wrongdoing—except that of ignorance about benefiting from dubious transactions. But she has paid the price and resigned as UK treasury minister on Tuesday, though she stressed that an independent review found she had "not breached the ministerial code". If the sins of aunts can impact nieces, then can daughters escape their mothers'? Ever since Siddiq's case hit the headlines, the spotlight has slowly but surely turned to Sheikh Hasina's daughter,

Saima Wazed, also known as Putul, who was elected regional director of the World Health Organisation's Southeast Asia branch amid considerable controversy in February 2024. An editorial in the eminent medical journal The Lancet had earlier questioned if she was fit for the job, as she only held a master's degree in psychology while rival aspirants were doctors with years of public health experience. The ACC has now initiated a probe into how she got the job: on her own merit or her mother's

intervention as prime minister. All eyes are now on Putul and whether she'll be forced to follow in her cousin's footsteps. What does it all mean for 77-year-old Sheikh Hasina, who has been sheltering in New Delhi since fleeing Dhaka on 5 August after a violent student uprising against her 15-year continuous tenure as Bangladesh's prime minister? There is no doubt that the charges being hurled at her, her family, and her friends are coloured by political prejudice from those now in power in Bangladesh.

## Slowing capital expenditure is good. Don't invest in BSNL, save for shortfall instead



ture. At the end of June 2024, the growth was just about 2 per cent, but it has been rising since then, reaching 4.2 per cent by the end of the first six months of 2024-25 and climbing even higher to 7.8 per cent during April-November 2024-25. So, if revenue expenditure has gained momentum, why has capex failed to follow suit? A close analysis of the government's capex numbers presents an interesting picture. Over 90 per cent of the Centre's total capex during 2024-25 was accounted for by just six sectors—roads, railways, defence, telecom, transfer to states and new schemes. Their share in total capex in 2023-24 was a little less at 87 per cent. But the 12 per cent decline in the first eight months of 2024-25 is primarily the result of a marked slowdown in only two of these six areas—roads and defence, which accounted for over 40 per cent of the total capex outlay for 2024-25. Capex on the construction of roads and highways fell by 16 per cent, while defence saw a decline of 15 per cent. This is serious and has worrying implications

for both infrastructure and defence. The problem of slowing expenditure in these two areas should not have been difficult to fix. Either effective monitoring of spending is lacking, or there are serious problems with project execution, reflecting the poor expenditure-absorbing capacity of these two sectors. This is borne out by a relatively good performance of the Indian Railways, which accounts for over 22 per cent of this year's capex. At ~1.68 trillion, the Indian Railways' capex is just about 1 per cent lower than its spending during April-November 2023. With regard to the transfer of special assistance as loans to states for their capex and additional central assistance for their externally aided projects, the Union government's performance was slightly better. In the April-November 2024-25 period, these transfers rose by about 5 per cent, although much lower than the budgeted increase of 41 per cent.

In contrast, such transfers during the entire 2023-24 had risen sharply

by about 24 per cent to ~1.15 trillion. It appears that these transfers will take a hit in the current year and for the first time since this initiative to help states boost their capex was undertaken a couple of years ago. Significantly, this has not yet adversely impacted the states in a big way. The capex of 25 states (accounting for 95 per cent of all the states' and Union territories' total capex budget) has risen by just about 1 per cent in the April-November 2024-25 period, although states like Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Mizoram, Odisha, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal saw their capex fall by varying margins. Eventually, however, this will have an adverse impact on the states' capex programme and its growth-enhancing effect. There are two more sectors that account for another 13 per cent of the Centre's capital expenditure budget. But they bring out an intriguing aspect of why the government's capex has been slowing. They suffer from a peculiar problem, which has nothing to do with either the relevant sectors' expenditure-absorbing capacity or the absence of effective expenditure monitoring. The bulk of the capex under telecommunications was meant for infusing equity into state-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd, or BSNL. Of the total capex of ~0.84 trillion, the proposed amount for BSNL's equity infusion accounted for as

much as ~0.83 trillion. But the total expenditure under this head in the first eight months of 2024-25 is only 6 percent of what has been budgeted. In other words, a decision to transfer the equity amount promised to BSNL would increase the government's capex by a significant margin. Why this money has not been transferred is puzzling. Last year, against a budgeted BSNL equity infusion of ~0.53 trillion, the actual infusion was higher at ~0.65 trillion. This year, no action on this front even after eight months is a puzzle as this failure also contributes significantly to the decline in the Centre's capex. More importantly, the Budget for 2024-25 had allocated a significant amount of ~0.66 trillion for capex on central sector schemes and projects. Of this, a large chunk, estimated at ~0.62 trillion, was earmarked for new schemes that the government would announce during the year. However, in the first eight months of the current year, only 4 percent of that total outlay has been used up, leaving ~0.63 trillion yet to be spent. It is likely that the government may not need this amount or it may have kept its powder dry to meet any new schemes that it might announce later in the year, for which such capital allocations will be useful. For the Union finance ministry, currently busy preparing the Budget for 2025-26, such a state of play with regard to slowing capital expenditure could well be an opportunity.

## Investors line-up for Excitel's \$200-million equity deal

Extension of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for solar energy value chain, increased allocation towards PM Suryaghar Muft Bijlee Yojana, and greater thrust to distribution and transmission infrastructure are likely to be the key features of the upcoming Budget, as far as the energy sector is concerned. Sources said these proposals figured not only in the budget wish lists of the industry, but also in the respective recommendations from the ministries of power and renewable energy to the finance ministry, ahead of the Budget. "Given the success of PM Suryaghar scheme with almost 600,000 installations in just nine months since its launch, one could probably see additional allocation to target more households," said Ashwin Jacob, partner at Deloitte India. "As far as evacuation of power from offshore wind projects is concerned, we would want to see the VGF or budgetary support to continue or get enhanced," he added. "We hope to see a decisive increase in funding to accelerate the green energy transition. Priorities must include scaling renewable energy by addressing grid and transmission challenges, advancing Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) for grid stability and reliable power, doubling energy efficiency and digitalizing the energy sector through AI, smart meters, and data-driven solutions. Streamlining rooftop solar programs with simplified approvals, financing, and monitoring is equally vital," said Saurabh Kumar, Vice President – India, Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP). Sharat Goyal, CEO of Impact Infracap also expects the government to remove restrictions on state wise caps on roof top capacity for net-metering for industrial establishments. "Further, adoption of batteries to substitute use of diesel generators for back-up power should receive incentives and policy support

given their role in reducing dependence on imports," he said. While the government is increasingly working towards enhancing the country's RE capacity, the distribution and transmission infrastructure for its evacuation still needs to be strengthened. With the peak demand for power growing at a rate of 8-9% annually, the industry is looking forward to strengthening of climate resilient infrastructure augmentation. "One can expect new allocations towards augmentation of power distribution infrastructure, especially in high density/ urban load centres, in view of the sharp rise in peak demand over the last few years," said Anujesh Dwivedi, Partner at Deloitte India. He noted that there may be some allocation towards supporting the preparatory work especially on the listing of power utilities, or some incentive mechanism for promoting initiatives on private sector participation or listing of utilities at the state level because they are increasingly being seen as the much needed structural reforms the sector needs. The industry is optimistic of a wider coverage of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme by including smart metering in infrastructure definition.

"This would direct more financing for a sector which seeks to bring down India's transmission and distribution losses to 12% and improve recovery for state utilities," Goyal said. Goyal also noted that power transmission despite significant potential has not seen any notable monetisation events which could address the latent investor demand. "Government should announce a time-bound privatisation programme for assets owned by PGCL," he said. The sector also sees the PLI scheme for solar value chain to continue with possible reduction in the duty structures for solar equipment. Jacob highlighted.

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



**Delhi:** The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued a warning alert informing parents and students to be wary of false information pertaining to the curriculum, study guides, and practice exams for the 2024-25 school year. The Board has issued a warning to pupils about the dangers of falling for online scams that spread false information. We've noticed that some websites and online portals are disseminating stale information and unreliable updates about curriculum, sample question papers, CBSE resources, and activities. The alert said, "These links and news erroneously assert to offer up-to-date information for the session 2024-25. "In the interest of the public, we wish to emphasize that information from unauthorized sources can be misleading and may

cause unnecessary confusion among schools, students, parents, and other stakeholders," it continued. Due to significant discrepancies between theory and practical scores in a few courses, CBSE has recently instructed schools to assess practical exams appropriately. In a notification, the CBSE said that, based on data from prior years' results, it had used sophisticated AI techniques to identify significant disparities between theory and practical grades in specific courses among 50% or more students in about 500 CBSE-affiliated schools. In the meantime, the 15th date of the CBSE supplementary examinations for Classes 10 and 12 has been set. The Class 12 supplementary test will take place on a single day, while the Class 10 CBSE supplemental exam.

## DGCA directs airlines to send link to flyer rights with ticket

**NEW DELHI:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has directed Indian carriers to send a link to passenger rights along with air tickets. With the massive rise in number of air travellers, with many being first time flyers, DGCA chief Faiz Ahmed Kidwai wanted passengers to be made aware of what they are entitled to in case of deficiency in service; delayed flights (due to factors that are not beyond airlines' control), cancellations, denied boarding and baggage issues. IndiGo is learnt to have told the regulator it will start doing so by Tuesday (March 25).

"The DGCA has directed all airlines to disseminate and emphasise the provisions of passenger-centric regulations and passenger rights. All airlines have to send the online link of passenger charter available on the aviation ministry website in message to passenger (SMS / WhatsApp) once a ticket is booked and on airline tickets and on airlines website. Like their duties



## Bihar High Court reverses 65% job, college quota boost

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

process of updating their systems to have proper communication to passengers on their rights in

## MEA is reducing passport police verification time



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

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

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

mPassport Police App have reduced police verification time to less than five days. A standard passport, without police verification, takes seven to 10 days to issue, whereas a Tatkal passport takes one to three days, Jaishankar said. "Police verification of applicants' particulars plays an important role in timely passport dispatch," he stated. In his message, Jaishankar said the government is committed to ensuring that passports facilitate international trade and investment, tourism, global mobility, education and skills development, diplomatic ties, security and regulation, and legal identity.

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## India mulls ranking flying schools on parameters like average time



**NEW DELHI:** India may soon rank flying training organisations (FTOs) here on various parameters like the average time taken by students there to get a commercial pilot licence (CPL) -- which requires flying training aircraft for 200 hours and clearing several subject exams that are conducted by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). As of now, there are no timelines in which this process can be completed and this process often takes upto two years or even more. For this reason, a large number of Indian students go abroad every year to quickly get their CPL at a higher cost. DGCA chief Faiz Ahmed Kidwai is learnt to be planning to ensure "competition, transparency and fairness" among FTOs through the proposed ranking system. "Our

primary objective is to ensure safety for which spot checks are frequently carried out on and quality of training. But it is time to also look at the issue of ease of becoming a pilot while ensuring the first two things. "Enough is enough. We want a portal for Indian flying schools that gives all their details like their fleet size for single & multi-engine planes; record of incidents & accidents; number of trainers & students and average time taken by their students to complete CPL. Based on these things, different schools will

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

**KOLKATA:** West Bengal governor CV Ananda Bose, facing molestation charges from a former employee of Raj Bhavan, announced Wednesday that he would present Raj Bhavan's CCTV footage to 100 private citizens of Bengal, excluding "Mamata Banerjee and her police". "Under the Sach Ke Samne programme, anyone who wants to see the CCTV footage can send an email to [adcrabj-havankolkata@gmail.com](mailto:adcrabj-havankolkata@gmail.com) or call the Raj Bhavan to register their names at 033-22001641. The first hundred would be allowed to see

the footage inside Raj Bhavan at 11.30am on May 9," Raj Bhavan said in a statement. The programme is aimed at addressing what was described as "mischievous and fabricated allegations" by police regarding the handling of CCTV footage related to the case. In response, state finance minister C. H. Banerjee and Trinamool have been going after the governor since the former Raj Bhavan employee filed a police complaint against Bose last Thursday. "He is now trying to show it (footage) to his own henchmen and get a certificate from them. When our state has

an honest and innocent person. But here he is playing with the dignity of women, so he wants to shield it from police and is even unwilling to show it to the CM. Why can't the CM see it, if there is no foul play" CM Banerjee and Trinamool have been going after the governor since the former Raj Bhavan employee filed a police complaint against Bose last Thursday. "He is now trying to show it (footage) to his own henchmen and get a certificate from them. When our state has

## 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 Clerc, 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 UDAN (Unacademy) scheme," Clerc 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, Clerc 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."

## CAPSULES

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

Between Rameswaram Island on India's southeast coast and Mannar Island on Sri Lanka's northwest coast, the Ram Setu runs 48 kilometers. Copernicus Sentinel-2 satellites captured the image. Satellites with an innovative wide-swath high-resolution multispectral imager with 13 spectral bands offer a unique view of land and vegetation.

### Lawrence School, Sanawar shines at State Swimming C'ship

**Chandigarh:** The 2nd HP State Swimming Championship concluded at The Lawrence School, Sanawar on Wednesday wherein over 178 swimmers from 12 districts, including five school teams competed in the two-day event. Chief Guest Praveen Bhardwaj, BDO Kasauli praised the spirit of the participants and highlighted the role of sports in character building. The Lawrence School, Sanawar lifted the Overall State Championship Trophy with Pinegrove School finishing as Runners-Up. Samaira Dhankar (LS, Sanawar) and Bhushan Thakur (Solan) were declared Best Swimmers in the Open categories while Adhiraj Singh (LS, Sanawar) and Bhagverdikma Verma (Solan) won top honours in the Under-17 category. Headmaster Himmat Singh Dhillon expressed gratitude to all involved and reaffirmed the school's commitment to nurturing sporting talent across Himachal Pradesh.

## TN should appeal SC ruling on domicile quota

**Delhi:** A day after the Supreme Court banned domicile-based reservation in specialized and higher education including PG medical courses, MK Stalin's Tamil Nadu government declared it would file a review petition to vindicate its rights and uphold social justice. Health minister Ma Subramanian said the SC order would affect the state's 69% reservation and quotas for in-service applicants in government medical colleges and minorities in self-financing medical colleges. He said that the order would violate state rights. The Union government receives 15% of undergraduate medical seats and 50% of postgraduate medical and super specialty seats through the state quota each year. "All super spe-



cialty seats were lost. "TN gave government doctors a quota for super specialty courses after a court battle," he told reporters. He stated the Centre takes seats unfilled due to a lack of candidates. He said states invest fully in PG and super specialty medical education but share 50% of all-India quota seats. "Now, the judgment deprives us of all seats," Subramanian told reporters.

According to him, the verdict will have a major impact on 2025-26 admissions but not 2024.

### BBL: Melbourne Stars sign Adam Milne

**Melbourne:** The Melbourne Stars have signed New Zealand fast bowler Adam Milne to play in the Big Bash League (BBL) before Christmas. He will replace Pakistan leg-spinner Osama Mir, who will not be able to play in the first three matches of this season. The Stars are set to announce a new captain this week after Glenn Maxwell became captain at the end of last season. Maxwell is unlikely to be fit for the first match against the Perth Scorchers on December 15.

## Hartek Foundation and Narayan Seva Sansthan join hands to empower 50 disabled with prosthetic limbs

**Chandigarh:** In a meaningful step towards fostering an inclusive society, Hartek Foundation under the leadership of CEO Harkirat Kaur has partnered with Narayan Seva Sansthan (NSS) to provide prosthetic limbs to 50 differently-abled individuals. The collaboration marks a shared commitment to empower and uplift those with physical disabilities, enabling them to regain mobility, self-reliance and dignity. On this occasion, Palak Agarwal, Director, Narayan Seva Sansthan met Harkirat Kaur in Mohali and discussed the organisation's four-decade-long journey of humanitarian service which includes free surgeries, dis-



tribution of prosthetic limbs, assistive devices and skill development programs for lakhs of people across India. Inspired by NSS's impactful work, Hartek Foundation extended its support to help

50 individuals receive prosthetic limbs, giving them a new lease on life. Speaking on the occasion, Harkirat Kaur said that Narayan Seva Sansthan is not only working to uplift the differently abled

but also those overlooked by society. Thanking her counterpart, Palak Agarwal said this partnership goes beyond assistance as it brings hope and confidence to those who need it most.

## Indian students in Canada panic as Ottawa requests docus again

**Delhi:** Indian students in Canada have reportedly received emails to resubmit study permits, visas, and educational records, including marks and attendance. IRCC, a federal department that handles foreign students, issued a request that panicked international students, many of whom have two-year visas. In response to the inflow of overseas students, IRCC is tightening its financial criteria and considering limitations on admissions. I was surprised by the email. My visa is valid till 2026, however I was requested to resubmit all my documentation. "Avinash Kaushik, "They even want proof of attendance, marks, where we are working part-time, etc.," he said. Punjabi students reported a similar increase in emails last week. Some were

required to verify their credentials at IRCC headquarters in person. "Many students are confused and worried," Indian students have made up a large portion of Canada's rising international student enrollment. The ministry of external affairs reports that Canada has 4.2 lakh Indian students, followed by the US with 3.3 lakh.

The sudden email flood left pupils unsure about their future. "We chose Canada for its welcoming environment, but this unfair," said Adilabad-based business management student in British Columbia. Students want IRCC to clarify and resolve their concerns. For now, urge students to submit documents quickly to avoid difficulties."



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## Fewer dropouts, but school retention issues

**Delhi:** The Economic Survey 2024-25 released in Parliament shows that less than half of Indian students complete higher secondary education, despite declining dropout rates across all levels. Dropout rates were 1.9% for primary (Classes I to V), 5.2% for upper primary (Classes VI to VIII), and 14.1% for secondary. Retention rates—the percentage of children who stayed enrolled since first grade—were 85.4% for primary, 78% for elementary, 63.8% for secondary, and 45.6% for higher secondary.



According to the education ministry's Unified District Information System for Education-Plus (UDISE+ 2023-24) report, India's enormous educational system serves 248 million students in 1.5 million schools with 9.8 million instructors. Government schools make up 69% of schools, enroll 50% of pupils, and employ 51% of teachers. The research showed 22.5% private schools, 32.6% student enrollment, and 38% teachers. Digital infrastructure has improved. Computers in schools rose from 38.5% in 2019-20 to 57.2% in 2023-24, while internet connectivity rose from 22.3% to 53.9%. The poll said the NEP 2020 is based on the idea that "education and human capital development are among the foundational pillars of development." The union government introduced NEP on July 29, 2020, to modernize the education system from school to higher education while maintaining it "rooted in Indianess". Higher education enrollment rose 26.5% to 43.3 million in 2021-22 from 3.42 crore in 2014-15, according to the poll. The poll found that tripling educational infrastructure would be needed to meet the government's 2035 goal of 50% GER in higher education.

## Kerala cuts minority scholarships due to financial difficulties

**Delhi:** Kerala's government has cut minority community scholarships by 50%, putting thousands of students' education at risk, citing the financial crisis. Nine of the 11 minority welfare scholarship programs originally allotted Rs 13.6 crore are affected by the decision.

The Government says the plan size reduction is a priority, but the disproportionate cut to minority student educational support raises questions about governmental priorities and social justice.

Twitter shares The Prof Joseph Mundassery Scholarship, which received Rs 5.2 crore this

year, suffered most. It has saved Muslim, Sikh, Jain, and Parsi high-achieving children by paying Rs 10,000 to those who scored A-Plus in all SSLC subjects and Rs 15,000 to those who scored 80% in upper secondary or 75% in vocational higher secondary. It ensured that bright students from underprivileged backgrounds were not forced to drop out due to financial constraints by prioritizing BPL students and providing provisions to economically weaker APL students. The crucial APJ Abdul Kalam Scholarship for minority students has also been cut in half. Those admitted to government-approved colleges on merit, with priority for BPL families, receive the Rs 6,000 grant.

## IIT Kharagpur teachers petition governors. Restore HoD positions

**Delhi:** The IIT Kharagpur Teachers' Association (IITTA) urged the institute's board of governors to expunge show-cause notices issued to 86 faculty members, restore their administrative positions, and protect the association's office bearers from arbitrary or retaliatory actions amid the faculty-administration dispute. In September, the IIT Kharagpur teachers' association accused director Virendra Kumar Tewari of "nepotism" and "arbitrary faculty recruitment" in a letter to the Union Ministry of Education, sparking a confrontation. They wanted an academically qualified, inclusive governance-experienced successor. When the administration sent show-cause notices to IITTA office bearers and disciplined them for not answering within seven days, tensions rose. Show cause notices were sent to 86 academic members who signed a petition. Some also said people who answered or apologized for the board of governors. They worry the administration may act fast and deny office bearers a fair hearing, further undermining trust.

## Tiranga Yatra Pays Tribute to Armed Forces

**Chandigarh:** Nearly 500 people especially from the Sikh community participated in the Tiranga Yatra organised by Dr. Jagmohan Singh Raju (Retd. IAS) with blessings from Sant Baba Pritpal Singh Ji. Beginning at Gurdwara GurSagar Sahib near Sukhna Lake and ending at Gurudwara Sahib, Sector 7, the procession celebrated patriotism and communal harmony. Participants carried the Indian Flag and Nishan Sahib, accompanied by a live band playing patriotic tunes. Leaders from Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities joined in. Dr. Raju called the Yatra a tribute to the Armed Forces and a symbol of India's strength and unity.

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



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

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

### Honda and Nissan merge to form auto powerhouse

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

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

adjusting pricing. Bihar deputy chief minister Samrat Chaudhary led a GoM to modify prices. The Centre will need to work hard on Saturday to convince states to agree to Chaudhary's GoM's insurance tax adjustments. States worry that lower rates may reduce revenue, especially since the compensating cess was removed to compensate for gaps. The Centre and states collected Rs 16,400 crore from GST on life and health insurance in 2023-24, down somewhat from the year before. Revenue loss could reach Rs 2,500 crore yearly. Since the anti-profiteering clause has been removed, it is unclear how the GST Council can ensure that consumers benefit from lower taxes.



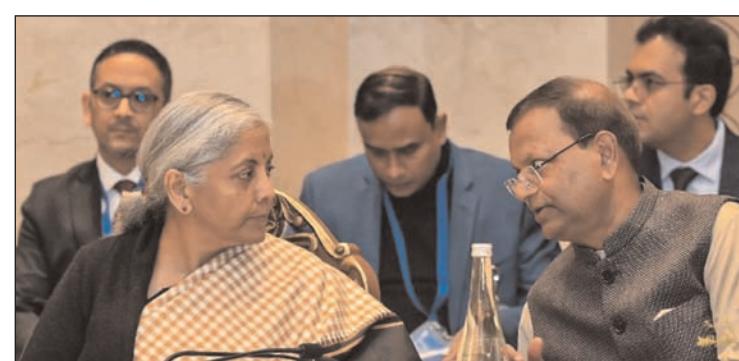
## Adani Defence & Aerospace buys Air Works for Rs 400 crore

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

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

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

## The GST panel postpones calling for reduced insurance costs



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

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

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

### NCLAT accepts Sapphire Media's Big 92.7 FM purchase

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

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

## Canon targets chip companies opening India operations



Nomura informed us that they are discussing our product and service with all chip manufacturers. He said this is a "good opportunity for us" for the Tokyo-based business to contribute to the Indian semiconductor industry with our good product and service, "Nomura stated. Negotiations are underway.

## Indian gold demand is dampened by price fluctuations



### Honda proposes CAFE compliant EVs and hybrids

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

"We are currently

## Indian steel imports from China reached record high

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



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

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

New Delhi is investigating whether

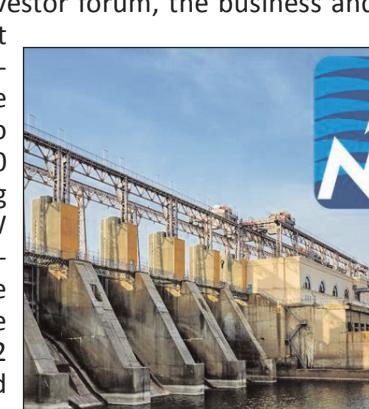
to levy a 25% safeguard duty to control unbridled steel imports. India began importing steel in the financial year ending March 2024, and imports have gradually climbed. New Delhi joins a growing list of countries considering import restrictions as cheap Chinese steel has forced India's smaller factories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

## Over 1.6 crore Jio subscribers leave in four months

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

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

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



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

**Delhi:** NHPC Ltd.'s chairman and managing director Raj Kumar Chaudhary announced that the country's largest hydropower company will invest Rs 5,500 crore in a 1,000-megawatt solar power project in Bihar. At the Bihar Business Connect 2024 investor forum, the business and state government signed an investment MoU. "We have proposed to invest Rs 5,500 crore in setting up a 1,000 MW solar power project," stated. The project might be launched in 1.5–2 years after land purchase. Land is essential for solar

projects. He urged the state government to help acquire land so we could finish the project on schedule. The company's website says it has roughly 7 gigawatts of active hydropower projects and 9.3 under construction. Chaudhary said NHPC plans to build a modest solar plant to create green hydrogen. "The green hydrogen produced will be used to power passenger buses," stated. When burned, green hydrogen creates no carbon and just water, making it the cleanest energy source. He stated NHPC will fund the green hydrogen bus. The state government will administer it as part of the government's sustainable energy plan.

## 'Physical, technical external interference': Azerbaijan Airlines

Azerbaijan Airlines on Friday revealed that initial investigation into the crash of its aircraft in Kazakhstan that killed 38 was likely due to "external interference of a physical and technical nature", fuelling discussions about potential involvement of Russian air defence systems. The airline has also halted operations to 10 airports in Russia, stating their decision was "based on the preliminary results of the investigation into the crash of the Embraer 190 aircraft operating the Baku-Grozny flight J2-8243 of Azerbaijan Airlines due to physical and technical external interference". This comes after, Russia, earlier in the day, put the blame on Ukraine, claiming that Ukrainian drones were attacking the city of Grozny as the Azerbaijan Airlines plane attempted to land, before its subsequent crash in Kazakhstan.

"Ukrainian military



drones were carrying out terrorist attacks on civilian infrastructure... at the time," Chief of Russia's civil aviation authority Dmitry Yadrov said, adding that the plane made two unsuccessful attempts to land. "The pilot was offered alternative airports. He took the decision to go to Aktau airport" in Kazakhstan, he said. Also read: 'Ukrainian military was carrying out terrorist attacks when Azerbaijani flight tried to land,' claims Russia. However, Ukraine has put the blame on Russia and said, "Russia must be held responsible for the downing of the Azerbaijan Airlines.

"Ukrainian military

### Balaji's mother opens up on his death: 'It doesn't look normal'

Balaji, who played a key role in organising data for OpenAI's models, resigned in August, calling its practices unfair. By November, The New York Times' lawyers named him as a key figure in their copyright case against OpenAI. However, on November 26, shortly after his 26th birthday, Balaji was found dead in his San apartment. Authorities ruled his death a suicide, yet his family remains unconvinced, pushing for a deeper investigation.

Tech mogul Elon Musk described the philanthropic efforts of Mackenzie Scott, the ex-wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, as "concerning." His comment came in response to a social media post scrutinising Scott's extensive donations, alleging that her initiatives primarily fund non-profits promoting divisive ideologies rather than addressing pressing global issues. The post highlighted Scott's "trust-based philanthropy," which involves providing no-strings-attached grants to over 2,500 non-profits. It alleged that her focus on causes such as racial



equity, immigrant rights, and LGBTQ justice feeds what the post described as an "NGO/non-profit complex," creating jobs for individuals seeking to validate their expensive degrees. The post further detailed Scott's \$16 billion in donations over

five years, noting her wealth remains substantial at \$36 billion, boosted by Amazon's rising stock price. Scott, the ex-wife of Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, has become one of the most prolific philanthropists in recent years.

## MAGA Civil War: Why Indian-Americans, the new Jews, are irking Donald Trump supporters

There's a theory out there—wild, audacious, but surprisingly hard to dismiss—that just about everything worth celebrating in Western civilization was dreamed up, built, or perfected by Jews. From splitting the atom to decoding life itself, from rewriting the

rules of music to redefining what it means to be human, Jewish brilliance turned the world into their intellectual playground. Let's take a stroll down the hall of fame: J. Robert Oppenheimer, the "father of the atomic bomb," quite literally blew the lid off 20th-

century science. Albert Einstein, the cosmic poet, bent time and space to his will. Jonas Salk saved millions from polio, and Rosalind Franklin cracked the code of life itself with her DNA discoveries. And that's just the lab coats.

## Shark Tank's Kevin says half of Canadians are interested in becoming 51st state

Shark Tank's Kevin O'Leary said most of the Canadians are interested in merging with the US.



Shark Tank's Kevin O'Leary, a Canadian, said he is very much enthusiastic about the idea of Canada being merged with the United States and half of the Canadians are but they don't want Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to do the deal with President-elect Donald Trump. The Canadian businessman said he would go to Mar-a-Lago to talk about a US-Canada merger. "There are 41 million Canadians, basically the population of California, sitting on the world's largest amount of all resources, including the most important: energy and water. Canadians, over the holidays, the last two days, have been talking about this. They want to hear more. Obviously, there are a lot of issues, more details of what could be the beginning of an economic union. Think about the power of combining two economies erasing the border between Canada and the United States and putting all that resource up to the northern borders where China and Russia are knocking on the door. So secure that, give a common currency, figure out taxes across the board...I like this idea and at least half of the Canadians are interested," Kevin O'Leary said. But the problem is, Kevin O'Leary continued, that most of the Canadians don't trust Trudeau to carry out the negotiation with his government collapsing and hence he said he would go to Mar-a-Lago to talk to Trump about this. He said he believed that Canadians would trust him with the negotiation. The issue started as a joke at a Mar-a-Lago dinner where Justin Trudeau and his government officials joined Donald Trump. It was a courtesy visit from Trudeau after Trump said he would impose a 25 per cent tax on Canada.

## CNN's Scott Jennings mocks Vivek for 'prom queen' dig: 'Someone got stuffed in a locker'



Republican primaries but got a very poor electoral support in Iowa which prompted him to end his campaign following which he endorsed Trump. After Trump's win in the election, Trump made Vivek Ramaswamy the co-chief of the Department of Government Efficiency along with Elon Musk. The row goes back to Sriram Krishnan's advocacy

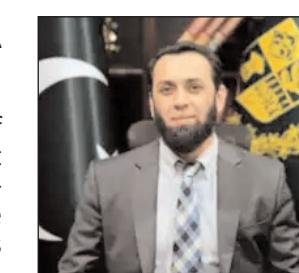
for removing the visa cap for countries. Sriram Krishnan will work for artificial intelligence at the White House but the Indian-American's lobbying for more Indians in America by removing the cap on H-1B visas ruffled many feathers of Make America Great Again activists. But Elon Musk, Vivek Ramaswamy supported Sriram Krishnan's idea.

### 'Settle issues' of 1971, Yunus urges Pakistan PM, but mum on apology

Bangladesh's chief adviser, Muhammad Yunus, urged Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif to resolve outstanding issues from 1971 to improve bilateral relations. While Sharif highlighted the 1974 tripartite agreement, Yunus emphasized the importance of a SAARC summit. Both leaders agreed to strengthen ties through trade, cultural exchanges, and cooperation in areas like sugar industry and dengue management.

**ISLAMABAD:** A Pakistani minister on Wednesday defended the military trial of civilians, saying that such courts were competent to deal with the cases related to attacks on army facilities.

Information minister Attaullah Tarar also urged the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led by Imran to refrain from politicising or disputing the issue of military trials. "When an attack is carried out on a defence institution or its property is set ablaze, it becomes the responsibility of the relevant authorities to



apprehend the culprits. Just as railway police handle crimes on railway premises, military courts address offences targeting assets. So, when attacks on military assets occur, the Military Act is enforced," he said while addressing a press conference. Tarar criticised Khan's party for using military courts as a political

## Rice shipment from India, first for Yunus government, to arrive today



coming from Karachi twice in recent days. On Nov 13, for the first time since independence, a container-carrying ship sailing directly from Karachi had docked at Chittagong (Chittagong). This time the ship "MV Tanais Dream", carrying 24,690 metric tonnes of parboiled rice imported from India under the open tender agreement, will arrive at Chittagong port at 5.30am on Thursday. This is also the first consignment of parboiled rice imported from India under the Nov 11

agreement. The unloading of the rice will start soon after samples of the rice are collected and after physical examination, said a senior Bangladesh food ministry official. Talking to diplomatic correspondents in Dhaka recently, Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma had said he was optimistic about Dhaka-Delhi relationship despite changes happening around. "This we look at the relationship. We have so many things to offer each other with our growing.

## Pak military court sentence 60 more civilians, including Imran's nephew

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan's military courts sentenced another 60 civilians on Thursday to prison terms ranging from two to 10 years for their alleged involvement in violent attacks on military installations during the nationwide protests on May 9, 2023 following the brief arrest of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan on graft charges. The latest sentences were announced just days after the same courts handed prison terms ranging from two to 10 years to 25 civilians on similar allegations.

Imran's nephew Hassan Khan Niazi, who was taken into military custody in Aug 2023, was one of two people sentenced to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment. The convictions followed a Supreme Court constitution bench order that had



**Imran's nephew Hassan Khan Niazi, who was taken into military custody in Aug 2023, was one of two people sentenced to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment**

conditionally allowed military courts to pronounce verdicts on 85 under-custody civilians in cases related to the May 9 riots. The Field General Court Martial has promulgated the punishments to the following remaining 60 culprits after examining all evidence, ensuring the provision of all legal rights to the convicts, completion of due process and the

appropriate legal proceedings," Inter-Services Public Relations, the army's media wing, said. "All convicts retain the right to appeal and other legal recourses, as guaranteed by the constitution and law."

"it stated. "The nation, govt, and the armed forces remain steadfast in their commitment to upholding justice and

## Vietnam's restrictive internet law comes into force

A new internet law in Vietnam, Decree 147, gives the government increased control over internet access and content in the name of national security and social order. It mandates tech companies to store user data, verify accounts, and remove deemed illegal content within 24 hours. Critics argue this suppresses free speech and impacts livelihoods. A new internet law that gives the Vietnamese government expanded powers over internet services and people using them is set to officially take effect Wednesday. Decree 147 expands government control over access to information on the internet for reasons of "national security" and "social order." The law requires social media platforms providing services to users in Vietnam to store user data and provide it to authorities on demand. The government issued the decree this November, and it requires organizations to take down anything the authorities consider "illegal content" within 24 hours. Decree 147 has sparked concerns, with researchers and experts tracking the country saying that the law is part of a growing crackdown on civil society. "Because the Vietnamese police treat any criticism of the Communist Party of Vietnam as a national security matter, this decree will provide them with yet another tool to suppress dissent," said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch. The decree requires tech giants like Facebook and TikTok among other organizations,

