

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

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MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ Wednesday, 12 Febuary, 2025 UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

SC: Remarriage after spouse's death no bar to custody claim

NEW DELHI: Remarriage after the death of a spouse cannot be a stumbling block to claim custody of a child from the first marriage, Supreme Court has said while allowing a father to take back custody of his minor son who was taken away by in-laws after the death of his first wife. A bench of Justices B R Gavai and K Vinod Chandran said the welfare of the child could be better taken care of by the father who is the natural guardian and set aside the order of Allahabad high court which rejected his plea. Noting that the father had remarried and the child was comfortably residing and pursuing his education at his maternal grandfather's house, the HC had said that the welfare of the minor child, which is of paramount consideration, would be served by letting him continue with his grandfather and the father was granted visitation rights to meet the child regularly on the first day of every month. The father thereafter approached the apex court and his in-laws again highlighted his remarriage as a ground to deny him custody and told SC that his remarriage soon after the death of the first wife was rightly considered by the HC. The bench, however, did not agree with the findings of the Allahabad high court and set aside its order. "The father is an educated person and holding a responsible position having been appointed to the administrative services of the state. Though the father has re-married, it cannot stand against the claim for custody; especially since otherwise, there would have been a question raised as to how the child would be taken care.

At Paris meet, PM pitches open source global framework for AI

NEW DELHI
At the AI Action Summit in Paris, PM Modi emphasised the need for global efforts to establish AI governance, standards, and transparency. Highlighting AI's potential for societal benefits in health, education, and agriculture, Modi stressed inclusivity for the Global South and the importance of democratizing technology. India will host the next AI summit. At Paris meet, PM pitches open source global framework for AI As he underlined the positive potential of artificial intelligence and the unprecedented scale and speed of its development, PM Modi on Tuesday called for collective global efforts to establish governance and standards that uphold shared values, address risks, and build trust, given a deep inter-dependence across borders in the use of the technology. Addressing the AI Action Summit at the Grand Palais in Paris, which he co-chaired with French President Emmanuel Macron, Modi said governance is not just about managing risks and rivalries but also about promoting innovation, and deploying it for the global good.



He sought pooling together of resources and talent to develop open-source systems that enhance trust and transparency. "So, we must think deeply and discuss openly about innovation and governance," the PM said, adding that AI is very different from other technology milestones in human history. He announced that India will host the next AI summit. While India, Japan, China and Australia were among the 60-odd signatories, US and UK did not endorse the joint communiqué, again highlighting differences in approach. **PM bats for AI access to Global South** Vice-President J D Vance, who led the US delegation, said AI could be strangled by excessive regulation. In his address, the PM called for global AI partnership to be more inclusive of Global

South and its priorities, concerns and needs even as he welcomed the decision to set up an AI Foundation and endorsed a leaders' declaration that focused on promoting inclusivity, sustainability, accessibility and ethics in the technology's uses. "Governance is also about ensuring access to all, especially in Global South. It is where the capacities are most lacking - be it compute power, talent, data, or financial resources," said Modi, as he spoke about the need to address biases as AI reshapes society, economy and security and even writes the codes for humanity in this century. Modi said AI can help transform millions of lives by improving health, education and agriculture.

PM Modi's Marseille visit brings Savarkar's story to fore

NEW DELHI: When PM Narendra Modi visits Marseille, the second largest city in France and home to a famous port, he will be connecting not just with the valour of Indian soldiers who fought on the side of the British in World War I but also an important episode in the life of nationalist and Hindutva icon Veer Savarkar. Modi will hold diplomatic engagements in Marseille, including inaugurating

India's newest consulate general. He will also join French President Emmanuel Macron at the Mazargues War Cemetery to honour Indian soldiers who fought in World War I. Marseille, home of Napoleon Bonaparte and legendary footballer Zinedine Zidane, which lends its name to the inspiring battle hymn 'La Marseille', holds historical significance for Hindu nationalists as the site of

Savarkar's escape attempt on July 8, 1910. En route to India aboard the British ship Morea, he slipped through a porthole, swam ashore and briefly evaded capture before French authorities returned him to the British. His extradition sparked a diplomatic dispute, with France arguing the process violated international law. The controversy led to international legal debates over asylum.

PM Modi to stay at Blair House, edging closer to Trump White House

WASHINGTON: Amid wrinkles between India and the US on tariffs and immigration issues, PM Modi will land in a slick and slippery Washington DC on Wednesday, with snow and sleet forecast in the hours before his arrival.

Just as well he will be staying at Blair House, the US Presidential guest house right across the road from White House. Six bilateral

meetings have been pencilled in from the time Modi arrives in Washington DC on Wednesday evening, culminating in a Trump-Modi meeting in the White House at 4pm Thursday, followed by a private dinner with the US president later in the evening. The two leaders are also expected to talk to the media in the Oval Office either before or after the meeting.

Court rules teacher's arrest 'illegal' in 39 girls' sexual assault case

PUNE: A teacher (52) arrested in December last year on the charge of sexually assaulting/harassing 39 girls in a school walked out of the Yerawada central prison after a special court on Monday declared his detention and arrest illegal on the grounds that the Pune rural police did not follow the mandatory arrest procedure. "The applicant-teacher was arrested on December 24, 2024.

NDA team visits governor, sparks buzz of Biren successor pick

GUWAHATI: Manipur was buzzing Tuesday about the possibility of Raj Bhavan breaking the political status quo after an NDA delegation led by BJP's Northeast minder Sambit Patra trooped to governor AK Bhalla with what many hoped was a breakthrough in the search for a successor to caretaker CM N Biren Singh. BJP's state president A Sharda Devi, minister Th Basanta Kumar Singh, ally



NPF's Manipur chief Awangbou Newmai and JD(U) MLA MA Nasir were part of the delegation to the governor's residence after closed-door talks throughout the day. Congress said the state was hurtling towards a

constitutional crisis as the deadline for a constitutionally mandated assembly session at least once every six months had been breached. The party indicated possible legal intervention if the impasse continues. The assembly's budget session was scheduled from Monday, but Biren's resignation the previous day prompted governor Bhalla to declare his order convening the House "null and void".

No discontent in Punjab AAP, asserts Bhagwant Mann; all MLAs attend Delhi meet

NEW DELHI: Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday dismissed claims by Congress and BJP of unrest brewing among AAP MLAs, tamping down speculation that the ripples from AAP's Delhi debacle may pose a risk to his govt. Talking to reporters after the surprise move of party boss Arvind Kejriwal to summon Punjab CM, ministers, MPs and MLAs to Delhi, Mann took on Congress and said "switching sides is Congress's culture" and reminded Partap Singh Bajwa, the leader of opposition in Punjab, that his party drew a blank in Delhi. Ahead of the meeting, which AAP said was attended by all 92 Punjab MLAs, Bajwa had alleged that the party was preparing the ground to oust Mann from the CM's post. He had also claimed that

over 30 AAP MLAs were in touch with his party. Instead of counting out MLAs, he should see how many Congress candidates won in Delhi," Bhagwant Mann said. Kejriwal and other senior functionaries held a meeting with Punjab functionaries to ostensibly thank them for their involvement in Delhi campaign. According to AAP, the meeting at Kapurthala House saw all MLAs from Punjab and MPs from the state come together in what the party projected as a show of solidarity and normalcy amid the gloom of the Delhi loss. Besides Kejriwal and former deputy CM Manish Sisodia, national organisational secretary and Rajya Sabha MP Sandeep Pathak and RS MP Raghav Chadha were present.

NEW DELHI: Any foreigner who enters India without a valid passport or visa could invite a jail term of up to five years and a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh. In case entry and stay in or exit from India by a foreigner is with a forged passport or travel document, the imprisonment will not be less than two years, but may extend to seven years, and the fine, Rs 1 lakh, can go up to Rs 10 lakh. These are provisions of the Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, set to be introduced in Lok Sabha in this session, that seeks to repeal four Acts with overlapping provisions on the related subjects of immigration and foreigners, and consolidate them into a single, comprehensive legislation. The four

India-France strategic ties to get major boost

NEW DELHI: India's expansive strategic partnership with France is set to get a further boost with two mega deals being virtually finalised for direct acquisition of 26 Rafale-Marine fighters, as well as the construction of three additional Scorpene submarines, which will collectively be worth almost Rs 1 lakh crore (Euro 10.6 billion). As PM Narendra Modi left for Paris on Monday, government sources told TOI that the Rs 63,000 crore deal for 22 single-seat Rafale-M jets and four twin-seat trainers for Navy is now with the cabinet committee for security (CCS), awaiting the final nod. The Rs 33,500 crore deal for 3 additional diesel-electric Scorpene submarines, to be constructed by Mazagon Docks (MDL) in collaboration with French Naval Group, in turn will soon head for CCS after inter-ministerial consultations.



Acts are Foreigners Act, 1946; Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920; Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939; and Immigration (Carriers' Liability), 2000. As of now the maximum penalty for a foreigner entering the country without a valid passport or travel document, including visa, is five years in jail and fine. For those entering on a forged passport, the maximum penalty is eight years

in jail and up to Rs 50,000 fine. The bill also seeks to make all higher educational institutions and universities liable to share information on any foreigner admitted, with the registration officer specified for such category of foreigners. This provision will also apply to all hospitals, nursing homes and other medical institutions with lodging facilities on their premises.

It is proposed under the bill that any foreigner overstaying his/her visa or violating conditions of the visa, or accessing a prohibited or restricted area, will be punished with up to three years in jail or fine of up to Rs 3 lakh, or both. The bill also proposes to hold a carrier responsible for ferrying a foreigner found by the immigration officer here as not having a valid passport or travel document/visa. The immigration officer can impose a penalty of up to Rs 5 lakh on the carrier, though not without hearing its version. If the penalty is not paid, it may be recovered by seizing or detaining the carrier that may be an aircraft, ship or any other mode of transport.

Ahead of PM Modi's US trip, India eyes new military plane deal

NEW DELHI: India now seems to be reviving its case for the procurement of six more advanced P-8I long-range maritime patrol and submarine-hunting aircraft from the US, which was put on hold around three years ago. Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's summit with President Donald Trump in Washington on Thursday, government sources told TOI the case is being "re-



examined" due to the operational need to further expand surveillance in the Indian Ocean and beyond due to the ever-expanding Chinese footprint in the region. "The US has been asked to quote a reasonable price for the

six P-8I aircraft for the proposed government-to-government deal under its foreign military sales (FMS) programme. It will then be seen whether it is feasible or not," a source said. The Navy already has 12 P-8I aircraft, packed with multi-mode radars and advanced electro-optic sensors as well as Harpoon Block-II missiles, MK-54 lightweight torpedoes, rockets and depth charges.

Sanjay Kr Mishra 2nd d'anniv observed at IFFCO

Prayagraj: A homage was paid to former IFFCO Officer Association president late Sanjay Kumar Mishra on his second death anniversary at IFFCO Officers Association office. Members of IFFCO Officers Association and IFFCO Phulpur unit cricket team paid tribute to late Sanjay Kumar Mishra with grief. During this, IFFCO Officers Association President Anurag Tiwari and General Secretary Swayam Prakash, BP Singh (Munna), CB Singh, Gautam Kumar, Anil Kumar Yadav, S.K. Awasthi, PC Mishra, Vishnu Kant Tiwari, S.K. Srivastava, NK Mishra, cricket team captain Rabin Ranjan was present with his team.



25 Years of Driving Innovation in Woodworking & Furniture Manufacturing

Greater Noida, Delhi NCR: Marking a quarter-century of industry advancements & growth, INDIAWOOD 2025, the leading trade fair for wood-working and furniture manufacturing, will take place from March 6-9, 2025, at India Expo Mart & Centre (IEML), Greater Noida, Delhi NCR. As part of NuernbergMesse global woodworking portfolio, this milestone edition reflects India's emergence as a manufacturing powerhouse and a key global player in the furniture and wood-working industry.

INDIAWOOD's 25-Year Legacy: From Local Showcase to Global Influence: Since its inception, INDIAWOOD has shaped the industry's growth, bringing together manufacturers, suppliers, technology leaders, and professionals on a single platform. Over the past two and a half decades, it has played a pivotal role in fostering technological advancements,

sustainable practices, and global collaborations. Today, as India ranks among the top five global furniture producers and is set to grow its furniture exports by 20% annually, INDIAWOOD continues to be a catalyst for industry progress. "Valued at USD 25.75 billion in 2025, the Indian furniture market is projected to reach USD 37.18 billion by 2030. With wood accounting for 62% of furniture production, the industry is undergoing a transformation driven by innovation and sustainability - much of which has been fuelled by opportunities at INDIAWOOD," says Sonia Prashar, Managing Director, NuernbergMesse India. Speaking on the occasion, Frederik Meyer, President of Eumabois (the European Federation of Woodworking Machinery Manufacturers), expressed his excitement about the event and the thriving growth of India's woodworking and furniture industry.

Benefits of iodised salt go beyond taste

Varanasi: The benefits of iodised salt go beyond just enhancing the taste. Salt is an essential electrolyte that is essential for cellular function. Salt is also known as sodium chloride. Given the importance of salt, it is important to understand its effects and find a delicate balance between its benefits.

Public health initiatives related to iodisation of salt in India began in the 1950s with the aim of adding iodine to combat iodine deficiency disorders (IDD). However, the success of the Kangra Valley Project (Himachal Pradesh) in the 1960s laid the foundation for universal salt iodisation (USI) and its official launch in 1992. The project proved that goiter is caused by iodine deficiency. The project also revealed that iodised salt prepared using potassium iodate is the most effective and cost-effective solution. Subsequently, the USI initiative banned the sale of non-iodised salt and aimed to ensure that iodised salt is available across the

country.

The initiative has been in place for decades, with government bodies, NGOs and research institutions working together to reduce IDD across the country through iodisation of salt. One such significant partnership towards nation building has been Tata Salt which has been deeply involved in the country's fight against iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) since its inception in 1983 as the leading iodised salt brand. Micronutrients include small amounts of vitamins and minerals and play a vital role in maintaining good health and sadly, a large portion of the population in India struggles to obtain adequate amounts of these vitamins and minerals through diet due to dietary limitations or lack of awareness. This leads to a wide range of deficiencies. In such a situation, salt fortification can provide essential micronutrients like iodine and iron to increase nutrient intake across the country.

Name of journey from practice to habit is Yoga: Agarwal

Yoga and Health Awareness Day prog organized

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Mahakumbh Nagar: Yoga and Health Awareness Day was organized by Hindu Spiritual and Service Institute to promote unity, harmony and overall development in the society through awareness programs in Seva Mahakumbh going on in Sector 8 Beni Madhav Marg. Chief guest Jai Prakash Agarwal, State Head of Yoga Institute Delhi, said that the name of the journey from practice to nature is yoga. Yoga is a transformative practice. With this, any person can make life healthy, pleasant and beautiful. Yoga includes Yama Niyam Asana Pranayama Pratyahara Dharana Dhyana Kriya

Mudra etc. Only by adopting all of them can a person become a Yogi. He made various types of yoga practice aware of the various techniques and results of movement meditation dharana along with various methods of yoga.

Among these, Suryasana Vajrasana Supta Vajrasana Muktasana etc. were prominent. The president of the program, District Head of Yoga Institute Prayagraj Jai Prakash Srivastava said that yoga is a transformative practice which represents the harmony of mind and body, balance between thought and action and unity of restraint and fulfillment. Pro-



vides a holistic approach to health and wellness. Special guest Hoti Lal, Central Executive Member of Yoga Sansthan Delhi said that Yoga is the holistic way of life. It is a priceless gift given to the world by the sages of India. It guarantees

fitness and wellness without any expense. Yoga emphasizes our thinking, action, knowledge and dedication. Program coordinator Vandana Tiwari said that Yoga is a global celebration dedicated to promoting innumerable benefits for

spiritual well-being. Yoga programs bring together individuals from different backgrounds to participate in group yoga sessions, workshops and awareness programs. This promotes unity, harmony and holistic living in the society.

Hindu Spiritual and Service Institute's secretary Nagendra Jaiswal and the Sangh's senior pracharak Maheshwar Mishra appealed to the guests to be aware of environmental protection and love for the Gita by giving them tree patka and Gita. The program was conducted by coordinator Vandana Tiwari and the vote of thanks was given by Sarvesh Pandey. Office head Dr. Amit Kumar Dubey, Kiran Tiwari, Vijay Shankar Mishra, Umesh Vinod Vansh Raj, Rajesh Kesarwani, Sanjeev Singh, Kiran Tripathi, Sushma Pandey, JS Rathore, Rachna Gupta, Shyam Anoop, etc were present in the program.

Chairman Rajesh Verma heard public complaints, strict action against culprits

From providing wages to restoration of appointment, major decisions were taken in hearing of Backward Classes Commission

Commission chairman warned, action against absent officers in next hearing

Lucknow: Chairman of Uttar Pradesh Backward Class State Commission Rajesh Verma on Tuesday heard the complaints received from various districts in the Commission Office, Indra Bhawan, Lucknow. During this, decisions were taken on many important matters, which included matters related to getting wages, investigation of wrongly filed cases and restoration of appointment. Bahraich resident Radheshyam Vishwakarma had complained to the contractor of Shivshakti Enterprises about getting his wages. Superintendent of Police R.N. Singh attended the meeting and presented his side. An FIR was lodged against the contractor and

prompt action was taken. The Commission Chairman praised the working style of the Superintendent of Police and advised police officers



of other districts to be similarly sensitive towards the complaints of the poor and backward people.

In the case of Arvind Kumar Verma vs Commissioner of Police, Lucknow, the complainant com-

plained of wrong filing of a case under the Scheduled Castes and Tribes Atrocities Prevention Act at the instigation of land mafias. The

chairman expressed strong displeasure over the absence of the competent officer during the hearing and directed for a fair investigation. The next hearing of the case will be on 27 February 2025. In the case of

Deepshikha Saini vs Executive Engineer, Tubewell Section, Siddharth Nagar, it was informed by the Engineer that the dues of the complainant have been paid. In the case of Shalvi Verma vs. Director, NHM, Uttar Pradesh, the Commission was informed about restoring the appointment of the complainant and posting her in District Hospital, Saharanpur. In many cases, the concerned officers were absent during the hearing, on which the Commission Chairman expressed strong displeasure. He clarified that in future, if officers are found absent during the hearing, a letter will be sent to the government recommending action against them.

Shobha Yatra received grand welcome in Buddhist special camp

Kumbhnagar: The procession of Tathagata Gautam Buddha started from Tathagata Gautam Buddha Seva Camp Sector Number 12 and passed through Sangam Lower Road and concluded at the Buddhist Special Sangam Camp. Buddhist monks from different countries partici-



ated in this program and the procession was given a grand welcome at the Buddhist Special Camp. The main people who participated in the program were Lama Ji Sansthan's manager Umashankar Kushwaha, Sushil Kushwaha, Rajesh Kushwaha, Rakesh Maurya who had come from Ladakh, and many people from the area. After the conclusion of the program, a huge feast was organized at the Tathagata Gautam Buddha Seva Camp.

Jewellery shop burglar arrested, recovered jewellery worth lakhs

Prayagraj: A theft incident was reported in a jewellery shop located in Prayagraj Kareli police station area, in which gold and silver jewellery and cash worth lakhs of rupees were stolen. The police took action in this case and arrested an accused and recovered the stolen jewellery.

The incident happened on Saturday morning when the miscreants broke the shutter of the shop of bullion trader Om Prakash Verma in 16 market located in GTB Nagar and stole the safe. Apart from cash, gold and silver jewellery were also kept in the safe. This theft incident was captured in the CCTV camera. In the afternoon, this safe was found broken in an empty field about a kilometer away, but the jewellery and cash were missing from it.

As soon as the information about the incident was received, the police started investigating under the leadership of Kareli police station in-charge inspector Rajesh Maurya. The police started the investigation and identified the accused on the basis of CCTV footage. The police team arrested the accused Namrut Sheikh alias Pore from Murga Darbar Kachhar area of Kareli police station area late on Monday night. Stolen gold and silver jewellery has been recovered from the accused.

Stress reduces glycogen in brain, boosts craving for unhealthy food: Dr Ajai Kr Sonkar

Prayagraj: In today's lifestyle, unhealthy eating is considered responsible for diabetes, heart disease, cancer and many other serious diseases. Especially among the youth, bad habits of eating junk food and late night online food supply have become common. For which incontinence and bad habits in eating are considered responsible. But when this disaster is seen from the point of view of science, a completely different form of cause is seen. World-renowned scientist Padmashree Dr Ajai Sonkar said that this condition is caused by stress caused by many reasons like insecurity and fearful lifestyle.

He revealed that research indicates that stress can lead to a decrease in brain glycogen levels, mainly due to the increase in glucocorticoids like cortisol that stimulate glycogen breakdown in the brain, especially within astrocytes where most of the brain glycogen is stored; This decrease contributes to the negative effects of stress on cognitive function and mood regulation. When stressed, the body releases glucocorticoids that activate enzymes that break down glycogen into glucose, thereby depleting glycogen

stores in the brain. Dr. Ajai further told that brain glycogen is primarily stored in astrocytes, which are glial cells that innervate neurons. A drop in brain glycogen contributes to hypoglycemia, because glycogen serves as a storage for glucose, which the brain primarily uses for energy. So when brain glycogen levels drop, it causes a lack of readily available glucose, which causes blood sugar levels to drop. Low blood sugar levels, or hypoglycemia, cause cravings for sugary foods. This is because the body craves sugar to raise blood sugar levels.

Thus when blood sugar levels fall, the body induces to eat sugary foods to increase them. Thus, stress leads to craving for sugar and refined carbohydrates. Dr Ajai said that the growing unhealthy and untimely eating habit among the youth, especially late at night, cannot be changed by persuasion or pressure, rather these methods can make the situation even worse. The youth can be brought out of this serious situation only by engaging them in creative work and providing them a stress-free lifestyle.



Kumbhnagari resonated with 15k Shankhnaths simultaneously

HUMAN LIFE NOT POSSIBLE SANS RELIGION: JIYAR SWAMI

Prayagraj: The sound of 15000 conches resounded simultaneously in Jiyar Swami Maharaj's camp in Sector Number Eight of Maha Kumbh today. The occasion was an international religious conference. In which the millennium birth anniversary of commentator Shri Ramanuja Swami ji was celebrated. A large number of saints and Peethadheeshwars from all the states of India were gathered under the guidance of Shri Swami ji. The saints who came from South India addressed the gathering and said that the work that Ramanuja Swami had done thousands of years ago in South India, the same work is being done by Jiyar Swami Maharaj in North India. Shri Jiyar Swami Maharaj is working strongly for the promotion of Sanatan Dharma. It is the good fortune of all of us that we are all getting the blessings of such a monk on one platform. Swami ji



Maharaj said that human life is not possible without religion, we will live only if there is religion. There is a soul for religion, nation and culture, without a soul the body dies, similarly any culture without religion dies. He said that whatever problems man has and whatever problem of human life, its solution is possible only through Dharam Singh. Without religion and knowledge, there is no solution to human problems. Media in-charge Akhilesh Baba said that thousands of men and women had gathered in the grand discourse pandal. Saints and devotees had gathered from far and wide to take part in this program. When the sound of 15000 conches was resonating simultaneously, the whole area resonated. Swami Ji Maharaj said that problems keep coming in life, one should not panic. Whenever problems come in life, one should meditate on Shri Lakshmi Narayan Bhagwan and this solves the problems.

MahaKumbh Mela: Santoor Skincare & Hygiene for Over 10L Pilgrims

Varanasi: The MahaKumbh Mela 2025, one of the world's largest spiritual gatherings, is bringing millions of devotees to Prayagraj. As pilgrims embark on this sacred journey, Santoor, India's iconic beauty and skincare brand from Wipro Consumer Care and Lighting, is ensuring that hygiene and skincare remain an integral part of their experience. As part of its commitment to hygiene, Santoor is distributing over 10 lakh hygiene kits to devotees, ensuring they have access to essential cleanliness solutions throughout their journey. These kits, featuring Santoor soap and hand hygiene products, provide an easy and effective way for pilgrims to maintain personal hygiene amidst the vast crowds of the Kumbh.

Embracing the spirit of purity and devotion that defines the Kumbh, Santoor has introduced across key locations in Prayagraj, vibrant hoardings inspired by

the essence of the MahaKumbh highlighting the brand's timeless blend of Haldi and Chandan, reinforcing its deep-rooted connection to tradition and care. Beyond the sacred ghats, Santoor is also reaching pilgrims along their travel routes. By partnering with popular dhabas and eateries near Prayagraj, the brand is extending access to hand hygiene through on-site sampling, making cleanliness more accessible for those on the move. Sharing his sentiments on the initiative, Mr. S PrasannaRai, Senior Vice President, Marketing, Wipro Consumer Care & Lighting, commented, "The MahaKumbhMela is a testament to faith, tradition, and shared experiences. We are honoured to be part of this momentous occasion by offering skincare and personal care solutions that align with the sanctity of the gathering. Through our initiatives, we aim to ensure that every pilgrim's journey is filled with care, comfort, and well-being."

SRN Hospital gears up for Maha Kumbh Magh Purnima bath

KEEPING IN MIND SAFETY AND HEALTH OF DEVOTEES

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Prayagraj: As per the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital has completed extensive medical preparations for the Purnima Snan of Mahakumbh 2025. Keeping in mind the safety and health of the devotees, the hospital administration has made special arrangements. 40 beds Trauma Center, 50 beds Surgical ICU, 50 beds Medicine Ward, 50 beds PMSSY Ward and 40 beds Burn Unit have been kept reserved in the hospital. Apart from this, 10 beds Cardiology Ward and 10 beds ICU have been arranged.

To run the medical services smoothly, 30 senior doctors have been put on duty, while 180 resident

agency facilities, two ultrasound machines, two X-ray machines, two CT scan machines and one MRI ma-

pared in Trauma Center and PMSSY.

Keeping in mind the need for blood, more than 200 units of blood have been kept safe in the blood bank. The entire system is being monitored under the direction of Principal Dr. Vatsala Mishra, while Vice-Principal Dr. Mohit Jain and Chief Superintendent Dr. Ajay Saxena are specially monitoring. Service provider companies have been instructed to ensure the availability of their employees, while housekeeping agencies have been strictly instructed to ensure that there is no negligence in the cleanliness system.

Principal Dr. Vatsala Mishra said that Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital is fully prepared for Purnima Snan. She said that all the necessary resources, specialist doctors, nursing staff and state-of-the-art medical equipment are available in the hospital. Our entire team will work with commitment to provide the best health services to devotees and patients. Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital administration has appealed to the general public to immediately reach the hospital in case of any health problem, where free and high quality medical services will be available round the clock.



doctors will provide services round the clock. More than 500 nursing and paramedical staff will also be deployed. Under emer-

gency facilities, two ultrasound machines will be operational 24 hours. Pathology services will also be available round the clock, for which collection centers have been pre-

Debut Hindi verse adaptation of Mahashiv Puran "Shivayan"

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Prayagraj: A new chapter proposed in the spiritual history of Sanatan Dharma, the grand descent of the first Hindi verse adaptation of Mahashiv Puran "Shivayan"* took place in Mahakumbh's Shree Sarveshwar Nimbarka Sevadham Nagar. This historical text was given up by the most revered saint Shri Krishna Murari Sahay Saxena Ji (1915-2000) after his 40 years of rigorous penance. This Mahagranth has 11 sections, 411 chapters and 4011 couplets, which sing the divine glory of Shiva. This text has been published by Gyan Devi Prakashan, Bhopal. Acharyas, saints, Acharyas, religions and ashrams from the country and abroad participated in the Shivayan return ceremony. Chief Guest Acharya Mahamandleshwar Srimahant Swami Sripadmanabsharandevacharya,



Paramadhyaksha Shri Nimbarka Parishad, calling this Mahagranth a priceless heritage of Sanatan culture, said that "Shivaay is not just a book, but an ocean of spiritual sentiments of Shivatatva."

In the program, various Vedacharyas and saints expressed their views on Shiva's glory and called this poetic form of Mahashivpuran a unique religious achievement. It was emphasized that "Shivaay" will prove to be a unique source of sadhana, knowledge and devotion

for Shiva devotees. On this occasion, the head of the monastery took a pledge to recite this text and called it a resolution of the person from house to house. At the end of the program, the supporters liked the copies of "Shivaay".



Actor and martial artist Vidut meets Agni Akhada secretary Mahamandlewar Sampooranand during Maha Kumbh on Tuesday



Rushikesh Ganeshbhai Patel cabinet minister Gujarat Govt and Agni akhada secretary Mahamandlewar Sampooranand and other take holy dip in the Sangam during Maha Kumbh Mela on Tuesday

Tribute to ex-Prez Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed on d'anniv

Prayagraj: Congressmen paid tribute to Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed on his death anniversary.

Congress leader Irshad Ullah said he was the fifth President of India, he held this post from 24 August

dian National Congress and was a faithful follower of Mahatma Gandhi; he participated in the Individual Satyagraha and the Quit India Movement for which he was arrested in 1942. After independence, Ahmed



1974 till his death on 11 February 1977. Born on 13 May 1905 in Hauz Qazi area of Old Delhi, Ahmed left an indelible mark on Indian politics with his dedication and commitment to the nation. His political life began with his active participation in the Indian freedom struggle. He joined the In-

held several important political positions. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed died on February 11, 1977 due to cardiac arrest.

On this occasion Irshad Ullah, Rana Parveen, Habib, Rukhsana, Rana Begum, Mahmood, Sultan, Zehrinn, Hanna, Zaki Khan, Krishna & others were present.

BJP celebrated d'anniv of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya as Dedication Day

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Prayagraj: BJP Prayagraj Mahanagar celebrated the 57th death anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya as Samarpan Diwas. On this occasion,

nationalist, a great thinker, a skilled organizer and a confluence of the best thoughts, behavior and culture. His life is a unique example of service, dedica-

Kidganj, Mayor Ganesh Kesarwani and General Secretary Varun Kesarwani Ravi said that the life philosophy of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Ji



tributes were paid to him at the statue park of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya located at Bhardwaj square. On this occasion, the chief guest of the program, BJP Kashi region president Dilip Singh Patel, while paying tribute to the statue of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay ji, said that Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay was a strong

tion and patriotism.

While presiding over the program, Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra said that the thoughts and principles of Pandit Deendayal Ji, who established the principle of Antyodaya in Indian politics, will always inspire the countrymen for public service. Paying tribute at the Mayor Camp Office,

and his principles inspired by national interest and welfare of the people are invaluable for the creation of a developed India. On this occasion, a feast was organised for the devotees of Kumbh Mela at Indian Press Square under the leadership of outgoing divisional president Anil Bhatt.

BJP spokesperson Rajesh Kesarwani said that

seminars were organised on the life philosophy of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya at all 1216 booths of Prayagraj metropolis and tributes were paid to him. The coordinator of the program was General Secretary Ramesh Pasi. It was conducted by General Secretary Kunj Bihari Mishra. Among those who paid tribute on this occasion were Ranjeet Singh, Shashi Varshney, Kavita Patel, Gyaneshwar Shukla, Raghavendra Mishra, Anil Bhatt, Ajay Anand, Vijay Srivastava, Bhola Singh, Sandeep Goswami, Lokesh Mukherjee, Ganesh Verma, Bharat Nishad, Saroj Gupta, Rajesh Gond, Rakesh Bharti, Kuldeep Mishra, Pawan Mishra, Rohit Jaiswal, Vivek Mishra, Sandeep Yadav, Sujit, Gyanendra Gupta, Pradeep Pankaj Gupta, Anshul Goswami, Yashveer Pratap Singh, Yashasvi Shukla, Brijesh Verma, Ram Gopal Shukla, Priyanka Parashar, etc.

Swami Hariharanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj honoured sanitation workers

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Prayagraj: In the camp of Devi Sampad Mandal Shri Ekarsanand Ashram Mainpuri located in Kumbh Mela Sector 18, the head of the Mandal was present. At the end of the camp, under the guidance of Mahamandaleshwar Shree Swami Hariharanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj, all the sanitation workers of Sector 18, all the revenue workers



and saints were served food prasad. Presenting an incomparable example of harmony, Maharaj Ji served food to the sanitation workers with his own hands. And distributed proper dakshina and blankets. Maharaj Ji also praised the sanitation workers for the success of the camp which was being run for a month. Mahamandaleshwar Shri Swami Hariharanand Saraswati Ji Maharaj said that the sanitation workers have proved to be an important link in the success of Kumbh. The example set by the sanitation workers by keeping the fair premises clean despite the coming and going of crores of people is not seen anywhere else in the world. Along with this, the revenue workers were also praised a lot for the successful conduct of the fair, informed Secretary Manish Kapoor Swami Bhajanand Mrityunjay Dham Prayagraj.

Dream Sports Foundation roped in as Sports Partner for Khel Mahakumbh

Prayagraj: Dream Sports Foundation (DSF), the philanthropic arm of Dream Sports, is the 'Sports Partner' for Khel Mahakumbh being held from 7th February to 13th February, 2025 at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. The mega event has been organised by Kreedha Bharti. This partnership is a testament of Dream Sports' vision to make sports better. Through the week-long festival, Dream Sports Foundation will carry out various grassroots interventions for the benefit of the sporting community.

Footballer, Ex Team India captain and DSF partner, Baichung Bhutia attended the inaugural session of the Khel Mahakumbh. He participated in a panel discussion along with Awanish Kumar Singh, President, Kreedha Bharati, Uttar Pradesh and Anju Singh, Ex-Hockey

Player on the topic - The road to Olympic 2036. "We cannot expect the governments to do everything. Organizations such as DSF and Kreedha Bharti coming in to support sports will benefit India especially when the Honorable PM and the Govt of India are working towards the vision of India hosting the 2036 Olympics," Bhutia said.

As part of this partnership, DSF has also organised a five-day sports science camp free for 500 athletes. The camp aims to identify budding talent as well as will help them identify their strengths, weaknesses and recommend interventions to improve their performance. With a team of 20 experts, the program will provide sports science assessment, nutrition assessment, cognitive and mental abilities assessment, and injury prevention strategies to

those participating in the camp. BJP MP and former union minister of Sports and Youth Affairs, Anurag Thakur also visited the sports science camp on day 1.

As part of Dream Sports Foundation's Dream Again upskilling initiatives, a three-day workshop is being organised for 500 coaches attending the event. The workshop will cover sport skills & techniques, coaching tactics and strategy, and age-appropriate training to enhance coaching methodologies across India.

Dream Sports Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Dream Sports, India's leading sports technology company with brands like Dream11, FanCode, and DreamSetGo. At the heart of DSF's programs is a powerful vision: to make sports better by bridging gaps in the sports ecosystem. The

Foundation focuses on identifying and nurturing youth talent through data-driven programs, organising high-quality national-level competitions like the 'Dream Sports Championship', and providing education and upskilling opportunities for sports professionals-be it coaches, P.E. teachers, referees, or other sports professionals who contribute to the community. DSF supported athletes have represented India in major sports events like the Olympic Games, World Championships, Commonwealth & Asian Games, winning over 200 National and 107 international level medals. DSF also provides world-class youth coaching through its partner academies with the legends of Indian Sports like Mary Kom, Karnam Malleswari, Bhaichung Bhutia & Dilip Vengsarkar.

Actress Sonal Chauhan visits Mahamandaleshwar Kailashnand Giri Mesmerized with the grandeur, splendour and divinity of Kumbh

AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Mahakumbh Nagar: There is a lot of excitement about Prayagraj Mahakumbh not just among ordinary people throughout the world, but also in Bollywood. The great frenzy of attraction to Sanatan Dharma, Mahakumbh arriving after 144 years, is drawing everyone to it. In the same sequence, famous Bollywood actress and singer Sonal Chauhan, who had mesmerized people with her acting in hit Bollywood films such as "Jannat," and world-famous celebrity astrologer Acharya Vinod Kumar Ojha visited the Ashram of Param Pujya Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Kailash Nand Giri and sought his blessings. This year's Maha Kumbh has already attracted several Bollywood celebs, including Anupam Kher, Milind Soman, Kabir Khan, and Remo D'Souza.

Bollywood actress Sonal Chauhan is taking blessings of many saints by taking a dip in the Sangam at Maha Kumbh Prayagraj. Former Miss India, well-known actress, heroine of Imran Hashmi, who came into the limelight with



late Souza, she was seen roaming around in the fair area with Acharya Vinod, Lalu Mittal, Shweta Mittal and friends from Mumbai, Pune and Indore. Today noon she left for Mumbai.

the film "Jannat", is trying to understand Sanatan very closely. Businessman and social worker Lalu Mittal, on asking, told reporters that Sonal Chauhan is staying with world famous celebrity astrologer Acharya Vinod Ojha in Prayagraj for the last 2 days. Apart from taking a holy dip in Sangam, she met Kailashanand Giri and got his blessings and had food prasad there. In Sector 5 of Prayagraj Kumbh Mela, she met the famous Aghora Sanyasi Baba Ashish Ji Maharaj at his ashram and tried to know about her many questions and curiosities. In Kumbh area Acharya Mahamandaleshwar Kailashnand Ji, Aydheshanand Ji, Aghor Ashram, Divya Jyoti Jagriti Sansthan's camp is surprising everyone with the grandeur, splendor and divinity of Kumbh. Till

Editorial

Beijing might claim that packing the plateau

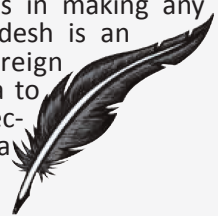
Therefore, the frontier highway will also be an economic asset, apart from being a strategic masterstroke. This will also develop a connectivity conduit by interlinking the East-West Industrial Corridor Highway and the Trans-Arunachal Highway. It will also discourage migration from the border space to urban areas. The development will become more distributive than concentric. Pressure on the urban space will be primarily eased. The volatilities of the border space and Chinese hegemonic gravity will be minimised because of India's fully prepared, vigilant presence in the region.

The Myanmar chapter is currently in the doldrums. The Chinese alleged involvement in derailing democratic government there disturbs the geopolitics in the region, which imposes a cloud of uncertainty around India's infrastructure projects in Myanmar. Given the geopolitical complexity in the region, India makes measured strategic progress and anchors its hold firmly and irreplaceably. Building tunnels, bridges, airports, railroads, highways, etc, has become part of the process that systematically ensures India's strength and resilience. On the contrary, China's determined efforts in building highways, tunnels, bridges, railways, etc, on the Tibetan Plateau explain its preparedness. The skirmishes it indulges in along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) indicate its ulterior motive. Though Beijing might claim that packing the plateau with high-tech infrastructure is mainly for the economic development of Tibet, the territorial desires embedded in this exercise cannot be ignored. The Nyingchi-Lhasa rail line and highway that Beijing has built, as well as some sections that remain under construction, come close to the McMahon Line. Its concept of reconstituting border villages and a host of other things are symptoms of the region's complex geopolitics. Chinese brinkmanship has been primarily responsible for the disturbed geopolitics of the region. Much of these crises is expected to be resolved by the frontier highway. Therefore, India puts the required effort in the right direction to ease these tensions in the region.

West Siang, Upper Siang, Dibang Valley, Lower Dibang Valley, Anjaw, and Changlang in Arunachal Pradesh adjoining

Tibet and Myanmar is a geostrategic milestone. It was conceived in 2016 and is expected to be completed in 2027. Work in this direction has started at a quick pace. This shows the urgency and importance India gives to its territorial integrity.

The infrastructural development that China has brought along the McMahon Line is quite extensive. The frontier highway is a precise and direct response to this and to curb China's irrationality. The highway will become an all-weather road to handle any geopolitical and geostrategic pressure likely to emanate from the other side of the border. From Tawang to Vijayanagar, which covers the entire border space in Arunachal Pradesh, the frontier highway is a milestone in India's robust preparedness in the eastern Himalayas. The dragon finds a fitting competitor. The scale with which China develops its infrastructural might, both at the border and in the hinterland, the frontier highway is a geostrategic imperative. The risk these complex infrastructures present leaves no scope for a second thought but to act urgently to protect the territorial integrity of India. The frontier highway manifests India's right intent and seriousness in addressing the possible dangers that the enemy constantly poses. The frontier highway will present the required checkmate to Chinese bullying attitudes in the region. Beijing's reaction to these infrastructural initiatives is not new. It always does this to keep itself relevant in the thick of things. However, it has no business in making any comment as Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of the sovereign India. China uses this drama to keep the issue alive and effectively uses its propaganda machinery to develop.



Well-functioning market requires a suitable regulatory role of the state

The Modi government's main move in the Union Budget 2025 has been to cut personal income tax. As finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her speech, it is meant to boost demand in the economy. However, the government doesn't expect a higher-than-usual increase in other non-debt receipts and has budgeted a decline in the deficit. The budgeted capital expenditure is the same as the revised estimates for 2024-25. The tax cut should be seen in the context of other fiscal policy moves the Modi government has made in the last decade to boost growth. Since 2016, the Indian economy has struggled to sustain rapid growth. From 2016 to 2019, it was in a relentless showdown, with GDP growth falling to 3.9 per cent in 2019-20. The GDP then fell sharply in 2020-21 due to the pandemic. After this sharp decline, high GDP growth numbers created a false sense of complacency, but the compound annual growth rate between 2019-20 and 2024-25 is only 4.8 per cent. The latest GDP estimates suggest that the economy is slowing down again—with growth clocking at 5.4 per cent in the July-September quarter of 2024. Even if we set aside the critiques of GDP estimation in India, growth remains a topic of concern in policy conversations. The government's response to an economic challenge depends on what it considers to be the root cause. The Modi government's actions over the past decade suggest that it seeks



to address India's economic growth pangs through fiscal policy. Consequently, fiscal policy has done much of the heavy lifting in the government's growth strategy over the past decade. In the economic slowdown from 2016-17 to 2019-20, the government sought to maintain its expenditure. To do so without increasing the reported fiscal deficit, from 2017-18 to 2019-20, it transformed a significant part of its on-budget expenditure into off-budget expenditure done by public enterprises. It also sharply raised cesses and surcharges on petroleum products, which are not shared with the states. These unusual tactics allowed the government to spend more, and expenditure continued to outpace GDP growth. These tactics also allowed the government to introduce new cash transfer schemes such as PM KISAN and increase allocations to existing schemes. In 2019, in an effort to stimulate investment, the government announced major tax breaks for corporates, especially in manufacturing. At the time, corporate tax collection had been growing rapidly while

other taxes were struggling to deliver the budgeted increase. The tax cut led to a sharp reduction in the corporate tax to GDP ratio in the subsequent years. As the pandemic hit, fiscal policy became even more central. The pandemic allowed the government to suspend its concern for deficits and bring the off-budget expenditure to the Budget in 2020-21. For a few years, revenue expenditure as a percentage of GDP was higher than its pre-pandemic levels. Among other things, this allowed the government to increase subsidies and cash transfers, and introduce production-linked incentives for manufacturing in India. Total subsidies as a percentage of GDP have now gone back to their pre-pandemic levels. The most important change in expenditure since the pandemic has been in its composition. Of the Union government's total expenditure, the share of capital expenditure has increased. Its share rose from 12.5 per cent of total expenditure in 2019-20 to 22.2 per cent in 2023-24. In 2019-20, capital expenditure was 1.67 per cent of GDP. It rose to 3.21 per cent.

in 2023-24, before moderating to 3.14 per cent in 2024-25 (revised estimates). It is again budgeted to be 3.14 per cent of GDP in 2025-26. At the same time, there was a reduction in capital expenditure by public enterprises in these years. If we consider the combined capital expenditure by the Union government and its public enterprises from the pre-pandemic years, there has been a decline. Between 2017-18 and 2019-20, the combined capital expenditure was 4.94 per cent of GDP, while it has been only 4.32 per cent of GDP between 2022-23 and 2024-25. This probably shows the limitations of implementation capacity that a capital expenditure strategy tends to run into. So, in the last decade, the government has tried a variety of fiscal tactics—from increasing expenditure by "creatively" easing the Budget constraints, to giving generous corporate tax cuts, to introducing new welfare schemes, to increasing on-budget capital expenditure. The cut in the personal income tax is the latest in this series of measures. If this does not work, there are other arrows in the fiscal quiver—cut in GST, for instance. The fiscal policy landscape in India is such that there are always some instruments at the government's disposal, especially because it borrows domestically for the most part, that too, through financial institutions it controls. All this tells us something about the government's explanation of how the economy works and

what the challenges are. The government probably does not see deeper problems in the political economy. Now that it has made so many fiscal policy interventions, perhaps it should consider whether these can truly address the growth pangs of the Indian economy. The fundamental challenge for the Indian economy for over a decade has been the lack of revival of private investment and the lackadaisical performance of merchandise exports. While the latter performed well for about six quarters in the post-pandemic period, this was due to temporary opportunities created at that time—the exports are now back to low growth. Similarly, there have been a few quarters of better private investment activity in recent years, but we are not yet in a period of revival. On the other hand, some high-productivity services sectors continue to be the silver lining. The IT services exports have continued to grow and export services such as business and management consultancy as well as public relations have doubled from the pre-pandemic years. The FM's Budget speech and Economic Survey 2024-25 hinted at actions beyond fiscal policy—deregulation and tax code simplification. Depending on what reforms will follow, these can be steps in the right direction. However, two points are worth considering.

First, mere deregulation is not enough—a well-functioning market requires a suitable regulatory role of the state.

India's GST system is now a mess. Those who designed it also are confused

While this may seem like a trivialisation of GST, it actually lays bare how the system has now rebounded on its initial promise of bringing ease of doing business in the country. The Finance Minister's four-minute explanation on the taxation of popcorn highlighted how complex the system has become. It shouldn't take anybody that much time to explain the applicable tax rates on a single product. Since then, GST has been ridiculed, derided, lamented about, and generally panned by laypeople and even former government officials who worked on its implementation. That is why India's Goods and Services Tax is ThePrint's Newsmaker of the Week. So, what is the issue behind GST on popcorn? You see, as per the taxman, depending on your taste preferences, popcorn can either be a namkeen (salty) or a mithai (sweet) — forget that those

two terms have never been used by anyone to refer to popcorn. Ready-to-eat popcorn, salted and spiced for taste, and sold loosely attracts a GST rate of 5 per cent. That same popcorn, if packaged and labelled, attracts a rate of 12 per cent. One wonders what happens if the vendor tears open the packet and sells loose popcorn to the customer. Perhaps the universe will explode, who knows? Things get even trickier when you talk about caramel popcorn. Those who prefer this flavour will have to shell out 18 per cent GST, regardless of whether it is packaged or sold loose. Then some head to the movie hall and ask for salted and caramel popcorn mixed together. What happens to them? Over the week, one particular meme stood out among the lot. It was a picture of salted caramel popcorn packets with questions along the lines of.

The fourth anniversary of the notorious fatwa of the late Imam Khomeini

To stand in this house is to be reminded of what is most beautiful about religious faith: its ability to give solace and to inspire, its aspiration to these great and lovely heights, in which strength and delicacy are so perfectly conjoined. In addition, to be asked to speak here on this day, the fourth anniversary of the notorious fatwa of the late Imam Khomeini, is a particular honour. When I was an undergraduate at this college, between 1965 and 1968, the years of flower-power and student power, I would have found the notion of delivering an address in King's Chapel pretty far-out, as we used to say; and yet, such are the journeys of one's life that here I stand. I am grateful to the Chapel and the college for extending this invitation, which I take as a gesture of solidarity and support, support not merely for one individual but, much more importantly, for the high moral principles of human rights and human freedoms that the Khomeini edict seeks so brutally to attack. For just as King's Chapel may be taken as a symbol of what is best about religion, so the fatwa has become a symbol of what is worst. It feels all the more appropriate to be speaking here because it was while in my final year of reading history at Cambridge that I came across the story of the so-called satanic verses or temptation of the Prophet Muhammad, and of his rejection of that temptation. That year, I had chosen as one of my special subjects a paper on Muhammad, the rise of Islam, and the caliphate. So few students chose this option that the lectures were cancelled. The other students switched to different special subjects. However, I was anxious to continue, and Arthur Hibbert, one of the King's history dons, agreed to supervise me. So as it happened I was, I think, the only student in Cambridge who took the paper. The next year, I'm told, it was not offered

again. This is the kind of thing that almost leads one to believe in the workings of a hidden hand. The story of the 'satanic verses' can be found, among other places, in the canonical writings of the classical writer al-Tabari. He tells us that on one occasion the Prophet was given verses which seemed to accept the divinity of the three most popular pagan goddesses of Mecca, thus compromising Islam's rigid monotheism. Later he rejected these verses as being a trick of the devil saying that Satan had appeared to him in the guise of the Archangel Gabriel and spoken 'satanic verses.' Historians have long speculated about this incident, wondering if perhaps the nascent religion had been offered a sort of deal by the pagan authorities of the city, which was flirted with and then refused. I felt the story humanized the Prophet, and, therefore made him more accessible, more easily comprehensible to a modern reader, for whom the presence of doubt in a human mind, and human imperfections in a great man's personality, can only make that mind, that personality, more attractive. Indeed, according to the traditions of the Prophet, even the Archangel Gabriel was understanding about the incident, assuring him that such things had befallen all the prophets, and that he need not worry about what had happened. It seems that the Archangel Gabriel, and the God in whose name he spoke, was rather more tolerant than some of those who presently affect to speak in the name of God. Khomeini's fatwa itself may be seen as a set of modern satanic verses. In the fatwa, once again, evil takes on the guise of virtue; and the faithful are deceived. It's important to remember what the fatwa is. One cannot properly call it a sentence, since it far exceeds its author's jurisdiction; since it contravenes fundamental principles of Islamic law.

A hundred and twenty years later, historians remain sceptical

Circa 1900: Rudyard Kipling wrote Kim, placing the eponymous hero at the centre of the Great Game of espionage between the British Empire and Russia in the 19th century. The book is set after the Second Anglo-Afghan War, which ended in 1881, but before the Third, likely in the period 1893–98. Kim, short for Kimball O'Hara, is an impoverished Irish orphan who lives on the streets of Lahore and works for Mahbub Ali, a Pashtun horse trader. He later befriends an aged Tibetan lama, accompanies him on his journey along the Grand Trunk Road, learns about the Great Game, and is

eventually recruited by Mahbub Ali, who works for the British Secret Service in their quest to extend influence in both Afghanistan and Tibet. Whether or not the Great Game—the expression used by British imperialists to describe the perceived expansion of Russian influence in Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Tibet—actually existed, the fact remains that surveys were undertaken, expeditions mounted, spymasters recruited, and novels written, even as soldiers lost their lives. Taking a cue from Viceroy George Curzon, all pro-establishment papers—from the Civil and Military Gazette of

Lahore to The Pioneer of Lucknow, The Statesman of Calcutta (now Kolkata), and The Times of India of Bombay (now Mumbai)—concurred that Tsarist Russia posed a real threat to the jewel in Britain's crown. A hundred and twenty years later, historians remain sceptical of Curzon's assertions. Is the hue and cry about the Deep State similar to the Great Game? Whether or not it exists, whether it operates in all countries, and whether the 'deep state' of one country is connected with others through the dark web or entrenched corporate interests remains unclear, as the

discourse is more ideological than empirical. Sometimes, those who claim to be part of the deep state ascribe to themselves a larger-than-life role in state affairs—for example, AS Dulat and Asad Durrani in their 2018 book The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace. Their claim to be arbiters of one of the most tense and difficult relationships in the region has been widely critiqued by reviewers. The term first gained wide currency in the context of Türkiye as derin devlet, which literally translates to "deep state" in English. In Türkiye, it refers to a non-elected military.

Kia India unveils the New EV6 at Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 & showcases World of “Inspiring Innovations”

New Delhi : Kia India, a leading mass premium carmaker, unveiled the new EV6 at Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025. Kia India also announced that bookings for the new Kia EV6 start today, marking another milestone in the brand's electric journey.

The new Kia EV6 continues to set the standard for safety, equipped with our ADAS 2.0 package, which includes 27 advanced safety and driver assistance features. As compared to previous EV6 we have added five additional ADAS 2.0 features – Front Collisions Avoidance assist (FCA) City/Pedestrian/Cyclist/Junction Turning, Forward Collision Avoidance (FCA) – Junction crossing, Forward Collision Avoidance– Lane Assist Change (FCA) – Oncoming & Side, Forward Collision Avoidance assist (FCA) –

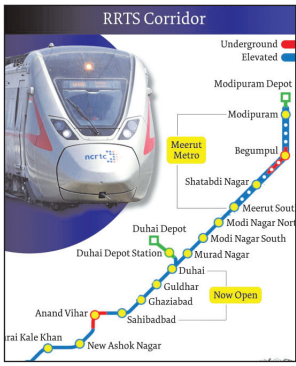


Evasive Steering and Lane Follow Assist (LFA). These features are derived from the cutting-edge technology from our flagship model, EV9 and include improvements to collision safety, structural rigidity, and enhanced occupant protection. With the added strength and enhanced ADAS package, you can drive with confidence, knowing that the EV6 is designed to protect. The EV9 stands as Kia's flagship electric SUV, setting new standards for technology and innovation in the automotive industry, globally. Having crowned as the prestigious WCOTY

2024, the vehicle is powered by a 99.8 kWh battery, the EV9 offers an impressive range of up to 561 km on a single charge, making it suitable for both city commutes and long-distance travel. Its ultra-fast charging capability allows the battery to recharge from 10% to 80% in just 24 minutes with a 350kW DC charger. Kia India is also showcasing its legacy of pushing boundaries by seamlessly harmonizing global technology, luxurious design, and sustainable engineering with its product range including the newly debuted Kia Syros.

India's First Namo Bharat Corridor Expands

Delhi: In a major step towards the full-scale implementation of India's first Namo Bharat corridor between Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut, the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) has commenced trial runs on an additional 6 km section from Meerut South to Shatabdi Nagar in Meerut from (9 January) ..Once fully operational, the Namo Bharat trains will reduce travel time between New Ashok Nagar and Shatabdi Nagar to under 45 minutes, considerably enhancing intercity and intra-city connectivity .Shatabdi Nagar, the



second Namo Bharat station in Meerut, will be a key transit point to Delhi and Modipuram. The Meerut Metro route has 13 stations, including 3 underground, and spans 23 km, with 18 km of elevated tracks and 5 km of subterranean. Namo Bharat and Meerut Metro will be at Meerut

South, Shatabdi Nagar, Begumpul, and Modipuram. All Meerut Metro stations are almost done, with work underway at underground stations Meerut Central, Bhaisali, and Begumpul. Platform Screen Doors (PSDs) have been installed up to Shatabdi Nagar, ensuring safety and efficiency. Namo Bharat train services run over 55 kilometers, linking New Ashok Nagar to Meerut South, encompassing 11 stations. With Shatabdi Nagar's addition, the operational portion will be 61 kilometers with 12 Namo Bharat stations.

Five Sikh candidates, including BJP's Sirsa and Marwah, qualify

Delhi : All three BJP Sikh candidates won the Delhi Assembly elections, one even beating AAP leader and ex-Deputy CM Manish Sisodia. BJP's Tarwinder Singh Marwah, a former Congress member,

beat Sisodia by 675 votes from Jangpura. This time, Sisodia moved from Patparganj to Jangpura. Conceding loss, Sisodia told reporters, "Party workers fought well, we all did hard work. We

have had public backing.

But I lost by 600 votes. I congratulate the candidate who won. I hope he serves the district. Marwah, a former Congress leader, was a three-time MLA.

VHP resolution: Hindu youth should marry by 25

Delhi: Population imbalance, drug addiction and live-in relationships also figure in Parishad's Central Board of Trustees meeting that began at Mahakumbh 7. Claiming delayed marriage among Hindus as one of the reasons for 'decreasing Hindu population', Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has launched a statewide demand that both young Hindu men and women should get married latest by the age of 25 as it was a requirement nowadays. A decision in this regard was passed in the second session on the first day of three-day VHP's Central Board of Trustees meeting at parishad's camp in Sector 18 of Mahakumbh Nagar. Said VHP joint general secretary Dr Surendra Jain. VHP national spokesperson Vinod Bansal



stated, "According to Vedic principles, 25 is the right age for entering 'Grihastha Ashram' (family life), so the resolution to appeal to the youth, be they males or females, to get married by that age was passed." The VHP also claimed that the young Hindu men and women should come out to check what it termed 'population imbalance' in the country by expanding Hindu population. Dr. Jain stated "population

imbalance" could kill Hindu society as a dwindling Hindu count could indicate doom. "The scenario would have a multifaceted impact. Hindus are this nation's identity. If the number of Hindus drops, the country's identity and existence will be in jeopardy. The conference also discussed Hindu family dissolution, live-in partnerships, and rising drug addiction among Hindu youth.

Big boost for small towns: 29 new airports

Delhi: India wants to build 29 greenfield airports in underdeveloped areas over the next two decades, a first of its type. Two sources informed that the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has completed feasibility studies for 10 such airports to connect smaller towns to global air routes. Gujarat has nine airports, followed by Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand. The plan allocates one airport to 13 more states. The plan anticipates passenger growth and builds infrastructure over the next 20 years to satisfy demand. A five-year plan to upgrade or build additional airports in small cities and second or third airports in metros .

300-km Traffic Jam To Maha Kumbh? Vehicles Reportedly Stuck 48 Hours

Thousands of pilgrims coming to the Maha Kumbh are stranded on highways due to enormous traffic bottlenecks, apparently stretching hundreds of kilometers, on routes leading to Prayagraj. Reports say the queue of stranded automobiles is 300 kilometers long. Days after Basant Panchmi's Amrit Snan, there were assumptions that the crowds may diminish. However, it currently looks like precisely the reverse, as thousands of people continue to



head to Prayagraj for the holy plunge. Due to traffic issues, authorities in certain districts of nearby Madhya Pradesh have halted vehicle travel on a road to Prayagraj. "It's impossible to go towards Prayagraj today as there is a traffic jam of 200-300 kilometres," media reported the police as saying.

Inspector General of Police (Rewa zone) Saket Prakash Pandey stated the weekend surge created the bottlenecks. He added the situation will likely lessen in a few days and vehicles are only allowed with Prayagraj's permission. "Cars are said to be stuck for two days." A man stopped in traffic commented, "It takes 10-12 hours to cover 50 km." Traffic jams of up to 25 km were recorded on highways to Prayagraj from Varanasi, Lucknow, and Kanpur.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor Reinforces its Commitment to Sustainable Mobility at India Energy Week 2025

HISSAR: Reiterating its commitment to India's vision for Energy Independence by 2047 and Net Zero by 2070, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) today marked its participation at the India Energy Week 2025, being held in Delhi during 11th – 14th Feb 2025. The India Energy Week 2025 (IEW) serves as an important platform to showcase practical and scalable clean energy solutions to realize energy self-reliance and reduce carbon emissions. This event brings together global political leaders, policy makers, thought leaders, experts, and end-users to deliberate on energy scenario, technologies, industry trends and policy outlook. With a strong focus on providing sustainable mobility solutions powered by indigenous green energy, TKM showcased various alternative powertrains in-line with its multi-pathway approach reflecting the



need of the hour for bringing the change at speed and scale. There are many green energy pathways that include electrification and alternate fuels that can help the transportation sector lower its dependence on fossil fuels along with reducing carbon footprint. Given India's energy mix, its diversified consumer profile and needs, infrastructure readiness, and the Government's vision of 'Atma Nirbhar', TKM is striving to develop various clean technologies relevant for the country with a focus on 'Make in India'. In the above perspective, Toyota exhibits at the IEW covers: Strong Hybrid Electric Vehicle (SHEV):

Innova Hycross (SHEV) showcasing phenomenally efficient hybrid electric system and E20 compliant Flex-Fuel Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle Prototype (FFV-PHEV): Featuring the Prius (FFV-PHEV) that combines the dual benefits of electrification and use of Ethanol (Biofuel) upto 100%, thereby delivering lowest carbon footprints on a well-to-wheel basis **Urban Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) Concept**: Showcasing an all-electric vehicle with a futuristic design and performance focus **Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV)**: Highlighting the Mirai (FCEV), powered by hydrogen-as fuel of future.

Kerala's Rs 500 crore half-price hoax swindles 40k people

KOCHI: Scooters, laptops, and home appliances at half the price - the offer seemed like a golden opportunity for thousands of middle-class families across Kerala. The scheme, marketed as a CSR initiative by large companies, claimed to empower women and support



low-income households. Women could own a brand-

new scooter priced at Rs 1.2 lakh for just Rs 60,000. Laptops, water tanks, fertilisers, and sewing machines were also promised at massive discounts. This generous offer was allegedly devised and executed by Ananthu Krishnan, 28, of Kudayathoor in Idukki

district, a self-styled social activist with an eye for deception. The scheme, police sources said, was nothing more than a sophisticated Ponzi operation, rechanneling funds from new investors to fulfil promises to earlier ones - until it all came crashing

Class 5 and 8 no-detention policy revoked by govt

Delhi: The Centre has eliminated the "no-detention" policy for Classes 5 and 8, allowing schools to fail kids who fail year-end exams. The Ministry of Education published the "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Rules, 2024" gazette notification, which stipulates that children who fail to meet promotion standards in Classes 5 or 8 in the regular examination can be held back.

Apply mind: SC to Gujarat government on Congress MP's poem recital

NEW DELHI: Observing that a poem recited by Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi did not seem to be against any religion, Supreme Court on Monday asked the Gujarat govt "to apply its mind" to the poem and take a stand on the politician's plea to quash criminal proceedings initiated against him in the state for hurting religious sentiments. The court granted two weeks to the state govt to take a decision while highlighting that it was just a poem and creativity was also important for society. The bench



said Gujarat high court did not appreciate the meaning of the poem while hearing a plea filed by Pratapgarhi. Appearing for the Congress MP, senior advocate Kapil Sibal said, "The judge (of Gujarat HC) has done violence to the law. That is my worry." What the

court said **It's a poem, not against any religion: SC backs Congress MP** Reading English translation of the poem, which was attached by Pratapgarhi in his petition, the bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said, "It is ultimately a poem. It is not against any religion. This poem indirectly says even if somebody indulges in violence, we will not indulge in violence. That's the message which this poem gives... that we will quietly suffer the violence but we

will not do anything. So that somebody who indulges in violence will be dethroned. It is not against any particular community." As the state govt sought time to file its reply and sought adjournment, the bench told its lawyer, "Please apply your mind to the poem. After all, creativity is also important." The court also extended its interim order by which the MP was protected in the case lodged against him for posting a video clip with the poem 'Ae khoon ke pyase baat suno'.

Rahul Gandhi on Delhi election results: 'Humbly accept the mandate'



NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday accepted the results of Delhi assembly elections and thanked the party workers and supporters. In a social media post on X, Rahul said that the party will continue to fight against pollution, inflation, and corruption in the capital. "We humbly accept the mandate of Delhi. A heartfelt thanks to all the Congress workers for their dedication and to all the voters for their support," Rahul said.

"The fight against pollution, inflation, and corruption, as well as for the progress of Delhi and the rights of its citizens, will continue," he added. The Congress has yet again failed to open its account in the Delhi assembly - earning the dubious distinction of scoring a hat trick of zeros. The grand-old-party, which ruled Delhi for 15 years on the trot from 1998 to 2013, has been rejected by the people of Delhi now in three consecutive assembly elections. Congress, which snapped its ties with AAP in the

assembly elections, led a very aggressive campaign in Delhi with former party chief Rahul Gandhi leading the charge against Arvind Kejriwal. However, the party failed to impress the voters of Delhi and could not win any seat. The only small consolation for the party is perhaps the nearly 2% increase in its vote share - which had gone down to under 5% in the 2020 assembly elections. Check out the latest news about Delhi Election Results and the full and final winner list

DU will discuss the Viksit Bharat curriculum and Gita-based courses

Delhi: According to officials, the standing committee of Delhi University (DU) will meet to evaluate suggestions for a number of value addition courses (VAC), including four that are centered on the Bhagavad Gita and one called An Introduction to Viksit Bharat. The committee's emphasis on incorporating modern applications of Indian philosophy and development topics into the curriculum is highlighted in the agenda, which was made public on Wednesday.

With themes like "Gita for Holistic Life," "Gita and Leadership Excellence,"



"Gita for Sustainable Universe," and "Gita for Navigating Life Challenges," four of the six VACs that are being considered are centered around the Bhagavad Gita. Based on Karmayoga, Jnanayoga, and Bhaktiyoga, the Gita for Holistic Life syllabus suggests teachings on self-management, resolving problems in modern life, and methods of action,

knowledge, and devotion. The course will also include practical components. The other courses will cover similar thematic applications of Gita's teachings to leadership, sustainability, and life's problems. Gita may undoubtedly be able to offer us some direction, but it seems ridiculous to introduce so many VACs on Gita. In addition to practical elements like field trips to communities, self-help groups, and farmers' organizations, the proposed chapters will address the role of technology, infrastructure, agriculture, and sustainability, he said.

Tamil Nadu should appeal SC ruling on domicile quota

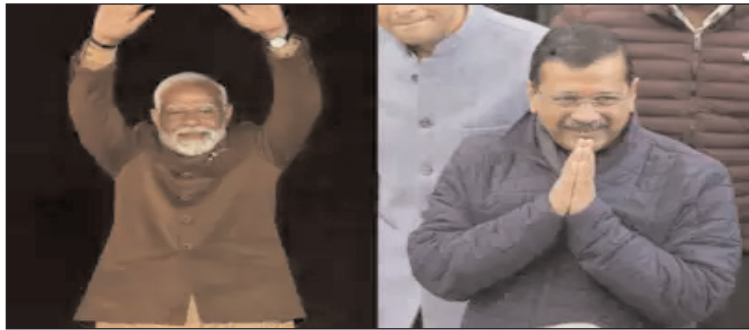
Delhi: A day after the Supreme Court banned domicile-based reservation in specialized and higher education including PG medical courses, MK Stalin's Tamil Nadu government declared it would file a review petition to vindicate its rights and uphold social justice. Health minister Ma

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 under-

graduate medical seats and 50% of postgraduate medical and super speciality seats through the state quota each year. "All super specialty seats were lost. "TN gave government doctors a quota for super specialty courses after a court battle," he told reporters. He stated the Centre

Ctrl+Alt+Delhi: Kejriwal loses own seat

Delhi's is among the smallest of many elections held in the world's largest democracy - but on Saturday, the national capital sent out some massive national political messages. First, BJP's post-Lok Sabha elections loss of lustre is now a firmly closed chapter. Modi is back again as a political super-force and the most saleable political brand. Second, following from the first, Rahul Gandhi is back to looking like he used to before Congress won 99 seats in Lok Sabha polls. Nothing he does or says seems to matter when it comes to elections. Third, Arvind Kejriwal's status as a big national opposition player has, for now at least, been severely diminished. Seldom has a political brand taken as big a hit as his took



after the Delhi results. Fourth, the opposition alliance is now in tatters. Fifth, at least in urban areas, freebies alone can't win elections, as became clear via Delhi voters punishing AAP for bad infrastructure. **Decoding the verdict** In Delhi, there was a sense of one era ending and another beginning in the city. BJP returned to office after 27 years, and AAP was voted out

after a decade. Kejriwal will not return as Delhi CM, nor will Atishi. All eyes are on who Modi-Shah pick as BJP's CM. The last time BJP was voted to office in Delhi, in 1993, Yamuna still had aquatic life, Appu Ghar was the biggest city attraction, Delhi Metro looked like a distant dream, and city air wasn't toxic. A city that has changed so radically, for good and bad, gave a verdict that was equally dramat-

ic. The sense of stunning change was heightened by Kejriwal losing the New Delhi seat. His 4,089-vote loss to Parvesh Verma, ex-BJP CM Sahib Singh Verma's son, in a seat he'd won by 21,000-plus votes in 2020, capped an awful day for AAP's brass. Lotus bloom vs pehle AAP: It was a matter of 2% points. How Delhi apportioned its votes was an interesting story by itself. BJP's 48-seat haul in the 70-seat assembly came on the back of a 45.6% vote share. AAP's 22-seat tally, less than half of BJP's, was coupled with a substantial 43.6% vote share. That a 2-percentage point difference in vote share could change fortunes so comprehensively said five things.

NTA returns to pre-Covid 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 difficulty 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.

'Sister had gone to US on tourist visa, no idea why she was deported': Brother

AHMEDABAD: A wave of despair spread across many parts of Gujarat as 33 illegal immigrants, including 13 women and eight children, landed in Ahmedabad early Thursday from Amritsar after they were deported from US. Faces covered by masks, without any luggage and a few with backpacks, they were taken to Gujarat Police vehicles stationed at the airport and whisked away to their homes. All of them were deported under the 'catch and release' policy of Trump administration and were part of a larger group of 104 Indians who were sent back from the US this week. "My sister was handcuffed during the deportation. She hasn't talked much with us. She had gone to US on a tourist visa. We have no idea why she was deported," said Varun, brother of



29-year-old Khushbu Patel of Luna village in Vadodara. Many deportees, including Khushbu, chose to go incommunicado to avoid the intense social scrutiny. Of the 33 deportees, 18 were caught just as Trump took oath as the US president. They stepped on US soil on Jan 19 and 20 and walked straight into the hands of American authorities, sources said. All 18 are from north Gujarat, a region known as a hub for human smuggling operations. "They were smuggled into US through Mexico border," said a source con-

nected with human smuggling network. "The smugglers pushed them to enter US way before Trump took the oath, fearing stricter immigration policies. But for some reason, they could not cross over in time. They were caught and marked for deportation almost immediately," the source added. Sources said the remaining 15 Gujaratis had been in US for periods ranging from one month to four years. They did not get permission to stay even though they sought asylum, citing political persecution. Some deportees.

Delhi CM likely to be an MLA; Parvesh Verma

NEW DELHI: After BJP's emphatic win, the spotlight has turned to the all-important question of who is going to be the next chief minister.

While many names, including those of party MPs from Delhi, were doing the rounds, there were indications that the party brass may pick someone from among the winning MLAs to avoid two byelections - one caused by the resignation of an Lok Sabha MP and another that would be necessitated if a sitting MLA is persuaded to quit his seat. Among the crowded field of contenders, Parvesh Verma



has pulled ahead after his giant-killing victory over Kejriwal in the latter's stronghold of New Delhi. Son of former CM Saheb Singh Verma, Parvesh, who twice won the West Delhi Lok Sabha seat, is seen as a

good Jat face and can help deepen the connect with the community, which appears to have supported BJP. Vijender Gupta, leader of BJP in the outgoing assembly, is also seen as a strong contender. He scored his

third consecutive victory from Rohini.

"It is too premature," a party source said. "The leadership is not going to be rushed into a decision and, in all likelihood, it will be taken after PM Modi's return from the US on Friday." BJP is known to spring surprises in state appointments, often opting for low-profile figures to bring an element of control and freshness. This suggests the party could look beyond Verma, Gupta and others to someone who can resonate with a broader demographic, or fulfil specific regional or community expectations.

While smaller departments struggle with faculty shortages, DU adds PhD seats

Delhi: Delhi University's executive council (EC) increased PhD admission slots by 20-25% from the previous round. The EC authorized a university representative on St Stephen's College's governing board to communicate with the DU. DU amended scholarship, prize, and capital asset giving guide-



lines. Under this, government bodies, trusts, corporate houses, PSUs, NGOs, and other national and international organizations, as well

as individuals, can establish scholarships. Scholarships must be funded by Rs 5 lakh for 10 years and Rs 10 lakh for 20 years. The EC authorized Anil Kumar Aneja, HOD-English and St Stephen's university representative, to communicate. The Indian National Teachers' Congress chairman, Pankaj Garg,

claimed teachers who requested for promotions after 2020 are still waiting. The second PhD admission round for 2024-25 will consider June and December 2024 UGC NET scores. NET + JRF passers are preferred. Additional seats for single girl child students in DU PG programs were also approved.

CAPSULES

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

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

Health and wealth benefit from flexible work hours.

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

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 speciality seats through the state quota each year. "All super spe-



cialty seats were lost. "TN gave government doctors a quota for super speciality 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 speciality 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.

This IIM Got Rs 54 Lakh Highest Salary, Rs 5 Lakh Summer

Delhi: IIMs and other premier management institutes are conducting their final placement drives. Final placement season at IIM Mumbai began on November 25 and ended. Microsoft offered the highest remuneration, Rs 54 lakh per year. Coca-Cola paid a record Rs 5 lakh for a two-month summer internship. This year, 78 firms offered 373 jobs at IIM Mumbai's final placement season. Popular brands include Amazon, Microsoft, and Coca-Cola. IIM Mumbai placements saw a 15% boost in average stipend, according to a report. Top 10% of the



cohort received an average pay of Rs 48 lakh in job placements. Additionally, the top 50% of the batch received an average remuneration of Rs 35 lakh. IIM Mumbai ranks sixth in NIRF 2024. After being known as NITIE

Mumbai and then NITIE, it became the Indian Institute of Management in 2023, becoming the 21st IIM in the country. MBA registration at IIM Mumbai began on November 4. Registration ends January 31, 2025.

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 web-casting of the annual High School Certificate (HSC) exam 2024. Pauses, violations of rules, such as logistical issues in storing or distributing ques-

tion papers, cheating, malpractice, invigilator incompetence, or cell phone use in HSC exam centers, can now be identified quickly. The board has strategically placed AI-supported CCTV cameras and web-casting for real-time test hall surveillance. Advanced features in

these cameras can detect strange behavior in the medical room. "The annual matric examination 2024 will be completely hi-tech and technology-enabled to make the process transparent and error-free," stated BSE secretary Nihar Ranjan Mohanty.

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 2023-2024, 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 Indianness". 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.

India's servers will host DeepSeek's AI models for security

Delhi: The Indian government said it will host Chinese start-up DeepSeek's AI models on its computers to monitor security and safety. The country increased its efforts to give computers to entrepreneurs and researchers to accelerate the development of localized AI 'foundational models' or tech solutions to offset US and Chinese AI developments. IT and electronics minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the government is buying 18,693 GPUs to provide "affordable compute" to large and growing IT enterprises and AI researchers. Foundation models are AI solutions educated on large datasets to fulfill several tasks. The models are adaptable and can be cus-



tomized for special uses. Vaishnaw noted that DeepSeek was constructed with 2,000 GPUs, therefore the Rs 10,372 crore IndiaAI mission's high-tech GPUs are enough to power India's AI quest. He dismissed concerns about India being late in its AI quest, saying it has US assis-

tance as a valued partner. We are punctual. Computer access is most vital. This is now accessible. We are fit. Getting the computer facility was crucial to the goal." He added India is optimistic Nvidia will provide GPUs regularly despite US government limitations on some countries.

"I'm reiterating that we are seen as a trusted country, we're seen as a country which respects IP rights, (and) we're seen as a country which understands the technological development prospects and all the points related to that." DeepSeek's recent popularity hasn't concerned the government. The good news is that DeepSeek is open source and we will soon host it on Indian servers like we did Llama. Everything open source can be hosted on our servers to ensure data privacy. He said we'll do that soon. Vaishnaw claimed preparations have begun. "The team has worked out the details on how many servers are required, how much capacity is required."

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.

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

Delhi: The opposition vehemently criticized the decision, as Maharashtra became the latest BJP-ruled state to ban eggs from midday meals for students in grades 1 through 8. The school education department changed the list of foods served during midday meals in a government resolution this week, eliminating the inclusion of sugar and eggs. Rather, it instructed schools to serve nachni sattu and "egg pulao" as optional meals. Nonetheless, it stated that these things, as well as sugar for desserts, had to be organized by the general public without the need for further government support. The state has changed the list to adhere to the meal items prescribed by the Center, accord-



ing to an official who defended the action. While some states use their own resources to offer eggs, the federal government, which provides 60% of the funding for midday meals, does not include them in its list. Goa and Madhya Pradesh recently banned eggs due to criticism from some groups. Aaditya Thackeray, a Sena (UBT) MLA, criticized the move and questioned why the government chose to substitute rice kheer and nachni sattu for eggs and sugar.

Adani cancels \$533mn US port loan in Sri Lanka

Delhi: After US securities and wire fraud allegations, Gautam Adani's Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone withdrew from a finance deal with a US agency for a Sri Lankan port terminal project and used its own resources. After the US indictment, American loans are harder to get. The US International Development Finance Corporation (IDFC) agreed to lend \$553 million to Sri Lanka. 's

Indian students in Canada panic as Ottawa requests docs again

Delhi: Indian students in Canada have reported receiving 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



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.

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. "

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 supporting the IITTA, worsening the situation. The IITTA said several of the 86 academic department heads were replaced. The administration also said people who answered or apologized would not be punished. After an unusual general body meeting the IITTA approached the board of governors. They worry the administration may act fast and deny office bearers a fair hearing, further undermining trust.



Half-siblings control Ratan Tata's interest in group firms

Delhi: The Ratan Tata Endowment (RTEF) and Ratan Tata Endowment Trust (RTET) boards, which received the late industrialist's stakes in Tata firms, are reforming. Ratan Tata's half-sisters Shireen and Deanne Jejeebhoy and half-brother Noel Tata are prepared to join as trustees, indicating that the family would continue to oversee his interest in Tata group enterprises.

Ratan Tata's financial investments were legally entrusted to RTEF and RTET a few years before his death in October 2024. Ratan Tata owned 0.83% of Tata Sons, the group's parent company. He also owned shares in Tata Digital, Tata Motors, and Tata Technologies. RTEF inherited these shares.

He also invested heavily in startups, which will either be sold and the money given to RTET or transferred to the trust. His estate is worth



approximately Rs 10,000 crore. RTEF is a section 8 corporation; RTET is under the Indian Trusts Act. Both groups encourage education and health-care and help marginalized communities. They reflect the causes dearest to the late businessman and the charity operations he directly financed. The two trusts will vote based on their holdings in Tata group firms.

RTEF will have six trustees and RTET will have seven. Tata Sons chairman Chandrasekaran is anticipated to become managing trustee for both firms, which makes him a guiding force. But the Tata

Sons' articles of association bar the chairman from chairing any Tata Trust, so he can't lead either. Raghavan Shastri, a former Tata Sons executive, and Burzis Shapur Taraporevala, a former Tata Realty and Infrastructure director, are RTEF's current trustees. Darius Khambata and Pramit Jhaveri of Tata Trusts are RTET's current trustees. Khambata and Jhaveri will likely resign due to their commitments to Tata Trusts.

Sidharth Sharma, Tata Sons' legal chief, will be an RTET trustee. These are the group's financial and legal experts.

Cabinet approves revised I-T bill for Parliament

Delhi: The Union Cabinet approved the new income tax bill, which will replace the six decades old I-T Act, sources said. The new bill aims to clarify tax law without adding new taxes. It will have no caveats, explanations, or extended phrases. The Cabinet, led by PM Modi, passed the New Income Tax Bill, sources said. Sources said the revised income tax measure will now be tabled in the Parliament next week and will be sent to Parliament's Standing Committee on Finance. The budget session's first leg ends Feb. 13. The session will resume on March 10 and end on



April 4. In Budget 2025-26, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the new tax bill will be submitted in Parliament. In the July 2024 Budget, pledged a full revision of the Income-tax Act, 1961. The CBDT has established an internal committee to oversee the review and make the Act succinct, clear, and easy to comprehend, which

will reduce conflicts, litigations, and provide greater tax certainty to taxpayers. Also, 22 expert sub-committees have been established to study the various parts of the Income Tax Act. Four categories were open to public input: language simplification, litigation reduction, compliance reduction, and redundant/obsolete provisions.

Ola Electric must sell 50,000 EVs monthly to profit

Delhi: Ola Electric's CEO Bhavish Aggarwal stated the homegrown electric two-wheeler producer must sell 50,000 units monthly to be profitable. Aggarwal stated on an investor call after the company's quarter reports that Ola Electric sold 25,000 units in

January, regaining its market leadership in quantities. Aggarwal told analysts, "To break even on Ebitda (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) from our auto sales, we need to sell 50,000 units a month." To address this, we are

diversifying our portfolio by simultaneously offering two versions of our EV scooters to boost profit and volume. We are also expecting the battery cell manufacturing sector to start reaping its benefits in terms of improving our operating margin.

S Korea holds a meeting on US steel tariffs

Delhi: The US's 25% tax on all steel and aluminum imports prompted an emergency meeting of South Korea's industry ministry to analyze its effect on local industries. According to ministry officials, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy met with representatives from major local steel companies, including POSCO Holdings Inc. and Hyundai Steel Co, to discuss the proposed US tariffs. Earlier, US President Donald Trump said he would impose a new 25% tariff on all steel and aluminum imports into the US on Monday. The declaration raised fears that the expected US tariffs will directly affect South Korean firms, unlike the Trump administration's duties on Canadian, Mexican, and Chinese



exports. South Korea contributes roughly 13% of US steel imports, according to figures from the Korea International Trade Association (KITA). In 2018, Trump placed a 25% tariff on all US steel imports for national security. The US abolished tariffs on South Korean steel products in

exchange for a yearly import quota of 2.63 million tons, or 70% of Seoul's average export volume from 2015 to 2017. In an emergency meeting, Deputy Trade Minister Park Jong-won said the government will "proactively" respond to the shift in US trade policy by leveraging "all available networks".

Edme eyes global insurance broking with Birla takeover.

Delhi: Samara Capital, along with investors comprising Norwest Venture Partners, Creador, and industry veteran Sanjay Radhakrishnan have purchased a 100% share in Aditya Birla Insurance Brokers for an enterprise valuation of Rs 455 crore. The new promoters of Edme Insurance Brokers want to make it India's first multinational insurance broker.

Edme's retail interface is online only, focusing on retail, corporate, and reinsurance. The corporation is adding AI to its tech stack to better organize data.

Delhi: Industry experts say Zomato Ltd's plan to create a separate identity for its parent business will let it pursue its goals without risking everything and give investors more detailed information about the company. Four years after Facebook changed to Meta Platforms Inc. and a decade after Google's parent became Alphabet Inc., Zomato announced that its board had approved the changing of its corporate identity as Eternal Ltd. The name change needs shareholder approval.



Zomato's renaming reflects a long-term growth ambition, focusing on Blinkit (rapid commerce), Hyperpure (restaurant supplies), and District (events platform), industry executives stated. Anupriya Saxena, a partner at JMJA & Associates LLP, a corporate consultancy, said, "The Zomato app and brand are

unchanged, but the new company name indicates diversification and possible future expansions beyond its core food business." Experts said Zomato can now experiment with its various companies without risking one brand's impact on another, and it can also manage IP and prospective acquisitions.

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Delhi : Reliance Jio's AirFiber tiers offer 100 and 200 Mbps. The 899 package includes free OTT services including Disney+ Hotstar, Zee5, and SonyLIV. For ₹1199, consumers get Netflix, Amazon Prime Lite, and other OTT perks. Annual plan sub-



The National Critical Mineral Mission gets 16,300 crore from the cabinet

Delhi : The Union Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, launched the National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM) with a 16,300 crore expenditure and a projected 18,000 crore investment from PSUs and other businesses. "Several crucial decisions have created new scientific and technology prospects for our children, future generations, and the economy. Minister told a Cabinet briefing that PM Modi the National Critical Minerals Mission today.

scribers get free setup. Reliance Jio has quickly created a good name for itself with AirFiber or 5G FWA

(Fixed Wireless Access) contracts, home connectivity can enhance. Plans with 100 Mbps speed.

Korea's 4 banks to close additional branches by March

Delhi: Korea's four major banks would close additional offline branches by March, despite their record interest income in 2024, amid a growing demand for mobile banking services, the lenders' data showed. The country's four largest lenders — KB Kookmin, Shinhan, Woori and NH Nonghyup — are predicted to operate a combined 3,160 brick-and-mortar branches at the end of March, down from 3,330 at the end of 2023, according to the statistics.

Shinhan will cut 57



branches to have 665 by March 31. Woori aims to shut down 52 offline bank branches over the specified period to run 659 outlets at end-March, with NH Nonghyup and KB Kookmin proposing to cut 36 and 25 outlets, respectively, to 1,064 and 772. Critics warn that closing physical branches may incon-

venience older consumers who prefer in-person banking. Last year, KB Kookmin, Shinhan, Woori, and Hana's interest income rose 3.1% to 41.8 trillion won (\$28.7 billion). But the trend of decreasing offline branches is unlikely to reverse, as more consumers bank online.

Next fiscal year, small savings schemes may have lower rates

Delhi: The government will reduce rates on small savings programs, such as the Public Provident Fund (PPF), next fiscal year after RBI dropped policy rates for the first time in five years. Tired of too many ads? While the next assessment, covering the April-June quarter, is due on March 31, the finance ministry may not go for an immediate cut as the transmission of the lower rate regime is expected to take a few months and banks normally mop up deposits

during the fourth quarter of the financial year. "Now is the best time to deposit." A source remarked, "Next year, even small savings rates will drop." Govt officials say PPF and similar plans are appealing because of tax benefits and compounding. The Centre's estimated net minor savings for next year is Rs 3.4 lakh crore, down from Rs 4.1 lakh crore this year. The Mahila Samman plan, ending in March, has a Rs 20,000 crore refund budget.