



## CM Dhami marks three years in office with key announcements

**Vatika Times**

**NEW DELHI** On the occasion of completing three years in office, Uttarakhand chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami made several major announcements on Sunday, with a focus on students, youth, UPNAL, and contractual employees. The state government will offer financial assistance to students preparing for competitive exams and graduates. A dedicated platform will also be created to provide employment-oriented training. To oversee this initiative, a high-level committee will be formed. Additionally, a policy for the regular appointment of UPNAL and contractual employees will be introduced soon. Furthermore, government projects worth up to Rs 10 crore will be exclusively awarded to local contractors. Celebrating three years of governance The announcements were made during a event at Parade Ground, marking three years of service, good governance, and development. The event witnessed a large gathering of enthusiastic supporters. In his address, CM Dhami paid tribute to the martyrs of Uttarakhand, as well as to Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev on Shaheed Diwas. He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for guiding Uttarakhand through challenges, enabling the state to achieve remarkable milestones over the past three years. Dhami also addressed concerns over regionalism and caste-based divisions, stating that such narratives.

## 'Nitish Kumar mentally unfit, impossible PM Modi unaware': Prashant



**Vatika Times**

**NEW DELHI: Political activist Prashant Kishor** has intensified his criticism of Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar, raising questions about his mental capacity and demanding his stepping down. Kishor asserted that Kumar is physically exhausted and mentally incapable of governance, suggesting he has lost administrative control. "The first person to comment on Nitish Kumar's health was his ally, Sushil Kumar Modi... Since then, many Bihar ministers have spoken about his condition. I never commented on it until January. But during the BPSC protests, I realized that Nitish Kumar's mental condition has deteriorated so much that he has no clue about what's happening in the state," Prashant Kishor told ANI. Kishor's comments

come in the backdrop of a viral video depicting Nitish Kumar speaking with his chief secretary during the national anthem. The footage sparked widespread criticism for disrespecting the anthem, with opposition leaders reinforcing their calls for the chief minister's resignation. Kishor questioned Kumar's mental faculties, noting, "If you want evidence for this, just ask him to name the ministers in his council... Nitish Kumar should resign. But the BJP deserves equal blame because it's not possible that the Prime Minister or Home Minister are unaware that Nitish Kumar is mentally unfit." RJD leader Lalu Prasad condemned Kumar's behaviour, stating, "India will not stand the insult of the national anthem." He questioned whether additional proof

was needed to demonstrate Kumar's declining leadership. Kishor has been vocal against Kumar's leadership for weeks. Urging voters to defeat JD(U) in the upcoming elections, he said, "To break this cycle, and to ensure that the arrow (JD(U)'s poll symbol) does not float with the lotus (BJP) nor burn bright with the lantern (RJD), I appeal to the people to vote in a manner that JD(U) does not win even one seat." He also accused the BJP of using Kumar as a "mask" to hold power and criticized the recent cabinet expansion as an attempt to misuse public funds before the government's term ends. Despite mounting criticism, Kumar's son Nishant and JD(U) leaders have dismissed speculation about the chief minister's health.

## Apples from Thar: Rajasthan farmers cultivate a taste of Himalayas

**Vatika Times**

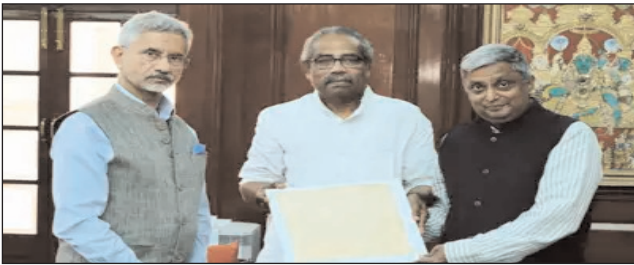
**JAIPUR:** The Thar in Rajasthan stretches dune and dry. Summer temperatures climb to a blistering 49°C. But the desert is changing. A fruit synonymous with the Himalayas has found an unexpected home in this sea of sand and scorching sun. Apples - red and ripe. What seemed impossible is now a flourishing reality for farmers in Sikar and Jhunjhunu districts, defying conventional wisdom about the fruit's need for

cool climates.

Santosh Khedar, a farmer from Beri village in Sikar, never imagined her small experiment would turn into a successful apple orchard. A single sapling given to her in 2015 by National Innovation Foundation in Gujarat has multiplied into a thriving apple farm yielding more than 6,000kg of fruit each season. "Since we have a certificate of organic farming from Rajasthan Organic Certification Agency, if the market

price for apples from Himachal and Kashmir is Rs 100 a kg, we are selling it at Rs 150/kg," said Santosh's son Rahul, who studied agriculture, determined to ensure the family farm continued to thrive. The family had long grown lemon, guava, and sweet lime on their 1.25-acre farm, but an apple tree seemed like a fantasy. "We were initially sceptical," Santosh said. "We watered the plant and used organic fertilisers as needed.

## India receives Gandhi-related artefacts from South Africa



**Vatika Times**

**NEW DELHI:** External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Sunday received historical artefacts and documents related to Mahatma Gandhi from the Phoenix Settlement Trust-Gandhi Development Trust (PST-GDT) in South Africa. The materials will now be

housed at the National Gandhi Museum in New Delhi. Mahatma Gandhi founded the Phoenix Settlement in 1904 near Durban, South Africa, as his first ashram-like community. It became a crucial site in the development of his philosophy of Satyagraha (non-violent resistance).

## High court comes to aid of ex-soldier's kin, grants disability pension

**CHANDIGARH:**

Punjab and Haryana HC has ordered that a disability pension be granted to the legal heirs of a soldier who was discharged on medical grounds for neurosis which manifested as recurrent nightmares after his lover killed herself, reports Ajay Sura. A division bench comprising Justice Sureshwar Thakur and Justice Sudeepti Sharma passed these orders recently.

## Worse than the British': Kejriwal targets BJP, Congress in first major speech

**Vatika Times**

**NEW DELHI:** Making his first major public appearance since AAP's defeat in the Delhi elections, Arvind Kejriwal has once again taken aim at INDIA blocally, Congress. Speaking at AAP's 'Ek Shaam Shaheedon Ke Naam' event on Sunday, Kejriwal accused both the BJP and Congress of colluding, alleging that neither party values the contributions of national icons Bhagat Singh



and BR Ambedkar. "We consider Bhagat Singh and Baba Saheb Ambedkar our ideals. There are pictures of both of them in our house and in every office of the Delhi and Punjab governments. The first thing the new government in

Delhi did was to remove the pictures of both. We were waiting for them (BJP) to announce Rs 2,500 to women. But they removed the pictures of Bhagat Singh and Baba Saheb and put up pictures of their leaders first," Kejriwal said. He added, "When we put up the pictures of these two, Congress protested that Gandhiji's picture was not put up. However, when the BJP removed the photos of these two.

## Idol of Lord Shani Dev vandalised in UP, second incident in Etah in a week; sparks outrage

**Vatika Times**

**NEW DELHI: Unidentified people damaged** an idol of Lord Shani Dev in the Mirhachi area, marking the second occurrence within a week and causing sparked tension in Etah, police reported on Sunday. The incident occurred on Saturday evening at Datei village, where vandals damaged the idol's head, hands, and mace, PTI reported. The village head, Pankaj Singh, filed a complaint against unknown perpetrators and requested prompt action, whilst police authorities called for peace amongst villagers. Circle Officer Sanjay Singh conducted a site inspection alongside station house officer (SHO) Neeta Maheshwari and substantial police presence. "This



is a serious incident. We are investigating the matter from all angles and will arrest the culprits soon," Singh stated. The SHO requested the local residents to maintain composure and confirmed that police personnel had been stationed in the village to ensure law and order. Earlier, in Etah, a 'shivling'

and an idol were discovered damaged on Tuesday, leading to demonstrations by Hindu organisations. Circle Officer (Jalesar) Nitish Garg confirmed that authorities are reviewing CCTV footage from the temple vicinity to apprehend the culprits. Police reports indicate that early morning worshippers

at the ancient Radha Krishna temple noticed nothing unusual. However, around 8 am, it was discovered that unknown individuals had vandalised the Shivling and the Nandi idol. The incident prompted hundreds of people to gather at the temple site to voice their protest. Members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and other Hindu groups staged a blockade at the Bada Bazar intersection. The demonstrators chanted slogans criticising the tehsil administration and police force. The protesters expressed their dissatisfaction that the sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) and other administrative officials had not visited the site despite five hours passing since the incident.

## NEW DELHI: Kuki referendum draft eyes state split

**Vatika Times**

**NEW DELHI:** The draft of a 'Kuki-Zo People's Referendum Ballot' to decide whether the tribe wants a Union Territory carved out of Manipur's hill districts has set the stage for potentially the second such exercise by any North-East community since the May 16, 1951, so-called plebiscite involving the region's Naga people. "Do you, as a Kuki-Zo person residing in Manipur, support creation of a UT comprising all Kuki-Zo villages, to be governed directly by Centre, ensuring safety, justice, and equitable development?" states the draft. Meanwhile, Manipur's Kuki-Zo Council withdrew on Thursday evening the indefinite shutdown in parts of the restive state after ayouth's death in a March 8 clash.

## J&K encounter: Fierce gunfight underway after security personnel spot terrorists



**Vatika Times**

**NEW DELHI:** An encounter between security forces and suspected terrorists erupted in Jammu & Kashmir's Kathua district on Sunday evening during a search operation launched by security personnel in Sanyal village, located near the International Border in the Hiranagar sector. The operation was initiated following credible intelligence regarding the presence of armed militants in the area. Officials reported that security forces spotted three to five terrorists dur-

ing their operation, prompting an immediate response that led to a fierce exchange of gunfire. As the situation unfolded, reinforcements were dispatched to support the initial team engaged in the encounter. The Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police, Nalin Prabhat, is closely monitoring the situation, coordinating efforts with local officials to ensure a comprehensive response. Senior officers have been instructed to reach the encounter site promptly to oversee operations.

## Police arrest Shahi Jama Masjid committee chief Zafar Ali for criminal conspiracy

**Vatika Times**

**NEW DELHI:** Shahi Jama Masjid committee president Zafar Ali was arrested on Sunday in connection with the violence that erupted in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal on November 24 last year over a court-ordered survey of the mosque. Sambhal Superintendent of Police Krishan Kumar Bishnoi confirmed that Ali had been arrested. "We had gathered evidence that he played an incendiary role during the violence last year. He was picked up by the police from his house in Sambhal Sunday morning and was interrogated at Kotwali police station by senior cops before being finally arrested," said Kumar. "Ali has been arrested after questioning him ... He was questioned on Sunday, also ... He has been arrested under several sections of BNS and has been sent to jail ...

## India imposes anti-dumping duties on five Chinese products to protect local industries

**Vatika Times**

**NEW DELHI:** India has imposed anti-dumping duties on five products from China, including vacuum flasks and aluminium foil, to protect local industries. These duties, based on recommendations from the DGTR, will be in effect for up to five years and also apply to imports from other countries like Japan, Korea, and Malaysia. India imposes anti-dumping duties on five Chinese products to protect local industries. India has imposed anti-



dumping duties on five products imported from China, including vacuum flasks and aluminium foil, to protect local industries from unfairly low-priced imports. These goods — Soft Ferrite Cores, vacuum insulated flasks,

aluminium foil, Trichloro Isocyanuric Acid, and Poly Vinyl Chloride Paste Resin — were found to be sold in India at prices below normal market value. According to notifications from the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, the duties will be applicable for five years on imports of Soft Ferrite Cores, vacuum insulated flasks, and Trichloro Isocyanuric Acid. A provisional anti-dumping duty, up to USD 873 per tonne, has been levied on aluminium.

Editorial

Russia’s growing dependence on China

Ritu Walia

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was expected to visit Russia in for the annual summit, a practice that got interrupted by Covid-19 and the Ukraine conflict. The annual summits have been a feature of India-Russia ties since the year 2000 when Putin assumed power. If in 2024, too, the practice of annual summits had not been resumed, it would have sent a political signal that the two countries were indeed drifting apart. It would have given rise to speculation that India might be yielding to Western pressure to reduce the visibility of its ties with Russia at the highest level, or that India was conveying its own concerns about the strengthening of Russia-China strategic ties which had cast doubt in its mind on Russia’s reliability as a special and privileged strategic partner, now that after the Galwan episode India’s ties with China have foundered, with the armed forces of the two countries confronting each other on the border in Ladakh. The question has arisen whether Russia’s growing dependence on China would leave it open to pressure from the latter to withhold arms supplies and spares to India in the event of a wider India-China conflict in the future. Some commentators in India have argued that Russia is a declining power with an uncertain future and that India should therefore strengthen its ties with the West where its true interests lie in terms of economic growth, foreign investment, access to advanced technologies, defence modernisation, democracy links, educational opportunities, diasporic connections, and so on. In this view, India should give up fence-sitting and choose sides more openly. Our media and think tanks generally promote this thinking. Our business community, which is obviously much more linked to the West than to Russia, is not active enough in promoting stronger economic ties with Russia. The reality is that Russia is important to us bilaterally, regionally and internationally. It has stood by us since the mid-1950s when we were under great pressure by the West politically and economically, and indeed, strategically. It provided us with real defence muscle, participated in laying the foundations of our heavy industry, and engaged in space and nuclear cooperation with us. Russia has shared sensitive technologies with us, unlike the West which has imposed technology denial sanctions on us for decades. Russia has never sanctioned us, unlike the Western countries. Russia is the only country which is collaborating with us currently in setting up nuclear power plants. Expanding our nuclear power sector is becoming more pressing in light of climate change issues. Cooperation in the area of nuclear modular reactors could well be considered. Russia, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, remains the world’s biggest country, with enormous natural resources, self-sufficient in hydrocarbons and food, a formidable nuclear power with powerful delivery systems, a permanent member of the Security Council, with a great tradition of diplomacy, and so on. How many countries in the world have such assets? Should we distance ourselves from such a country? What is our gain in doing that? Russia may have been weakened after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it still is a formidable international player. As part of broadening the base of our diplomacy to increase our global profile and influence, we are reaching out to a whole host of countries which individually do not play any significant international role, do not possess an array of resources, are not a source of technologies or major investments. What would be the logic then to draw away from Russia? It is wrong to describe our ties with Russia as “legacy” ties. The sense in which this word is used is equivocal.



Why does he start cursing his previous govt?

K.P Malik

But on the other hand, he did not rebuke even a single MP from the government for their misbehavior, neither did he scold them nor did his mike get switched off. It went to such an extent that Om Birla kept smiling even during the indecent speech of Prime Minister Modi. But Prime Minister Modi has never cared about the dignity of the post of Prime Minister, and the way he tried to prove Rahul Gandhi as a childish fool in the Parliament, not only through gestures, but also abused his mother Sonia Gandhi and the biggest limit was that Modi called himself a teacher through gestures, while called Rahul Gandhi a spoilt child. Does he also think of jokes and jumlabaaazi in the Parliament, in which he is an expert? Why does he start cursing his previous governments instead of answering the questions? And why is no attention paid to the language he uses? Don't those who laugh at his useless statements understand the dignity of the Parliament? But still these same people never get tired of invoking the Parliament. Apart from this, the way he tried to mislead the people with his flowery words was clearly showing that he was trying to find a way to save himself. Actually, the way many opposition MPs raised many issues in the Parliament, Prime Minister Modi should have spoken on those issues and also answered the questions of the opposition. For example, Rahul Gandhi raised



the issue of the NEET paper leak, which is an issue related to the future of the youth. Similarly, many MPs raised questions about the misuse of ED, CBI, while SP chief Akhilesh Yadav raised questions about EVM machines. Although I am not saying that the opposition MPs took care of the dignity of the Parliament, but the government should have pacified them by giving them a polite reply, and not said anything to prove them corrupt and outright wrong. The way Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried to prove in his statement that he is the only one capable of ruling the country in every way and that he is supreme, his arrogance was clearly visible. That is why MP Gaurav Gogoi said that Modi has two weapons - fear and confusion. He shows the fear of ED, CBI and IT and has spread confusion in the country. Former Army Chief General Naravane surrounded the govern-

ment on One Rank, One Pension and said that the government brought No Rank No Pension. Here in Rajya Sabha too, when Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge raised many important issues ranging from Hathras Satsang incident in Rajya Sabha, the Vice President of the country and Speaker of Rajya Sabha Jagdeep Dhankhar was seen clashing with him. Jagdeep Dhankhar was also unable to tolerate the attacks on the government by the opposition and kept trying to defend the government. But the most important Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha also questioned the credibility of the Election Commission and clearly said that only 28 percent people trust the credibility of the Election Commission. He said that the public has more trust in the village head regarding suspicious deaths than this. Along with this, he asked many questions to the government. The first

session of the 18th Lok Sabha, which began on June 24, was adjourned on July 16 due to the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha, and a day before that, on July 2, the proceedings of the Lok Sabha were adjourned. After the Lok Sabha elections were over and the formation of the NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this first session of Parliament in the year began with the new Parliament. But the sad thing is that in this Parliament session, very few MPs took care of the dignity of the Parliament. The way the MPs of the government and the opposition taunted each other in Parliament and tried to humiliate each other, it became clear that no one is behind anyone in lowering the dignity of the Parliament. Many big political experts believe that the government must tolerate criticism, because if there is any flaw in many of the works of the govern-

ment and it can know about its shortcomings better from the opposition, it will not be able to see it itself, because the government sees its shortcomings as good. The government must tolerate criticism. However, the way the Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi and many other MPs surrounded the government on many issues and raised questions in the Lok Sabha session of Parliament, not only the government was agitated, but Speaker Om Birla also appeared angry, which should not have happened in reality. While addressing Om Birla during his re-appointment to the post of Speaker, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi had said that you have to look at all the MPs equally without looking at the ruling party and the opposition, on the contrary, Om Birla, without caring about the dignity of the Speaker's post in Parliament, showed his biased attitude just like last time. The Prime Minister should answer the public and now when he himself is saying that the public has expressed trust in him for the third time, he should honestly call a big press conference and answer the questions of the country's combative and capable journalists. And it was seen that on one hand he not only constantly scolded Rahul Gandhi and all the opposition MPs, but also treated them in such a way as if the elected MPs were ignorant, apart from this the mikes of the opposition MPs were also switched off.

Hhistorians remain sceptical of Curzon’s assertions

Abhimanyu Sharma

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 sur-

veys 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.

Hizb ut-Tahrir has been accused of radicalising young Muslims

Suman Singh

Prior to the UK general elections, a media investigation revealed that five of the six major British political parties had taken illicit foreign funds. To minimise excessive foreign influence, British legislation compels parties to refund unlawful donations within 30 days and disclose any failures to the Electoral Commission. Only people on the electoral roll can make donations, with a minimum limit of £500. However, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism discovered that the Conservative Party, Reform UK, Liberal Democrats, Green Party, and Scottish National Party failed to prevent or identify these donations, which were made through an assortment of modest payments totalling more than £500 from a foreign source. As per the report, only the Labour Party successfully blocked such unlawful donations. Election law expert Gavin Millar criticised the self-policing method as ineffective and illogical because it relies on beneficiaries to enforce the law. Concerns had grown in the run-up to the 2024 UK general election about foreign players funding political non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Despite precise laws deliberate to prevent excessive foreign influence, some NGOs with significant influence in UK politics have evidently received large amounts of funding from international sources. These contributions, which are frequently routed through intricate channels to avoid detection, undermine the integrity of the democratic process and threaten to influence election results in favour of foreign interests. The current legal system, which relies mainly on self-policing, is

deeply inadequate, allowing foreign funders to have hidden power over British politics. Several controversial groups in the British community receive funding from ambiguous sources, which they utilise to spread their propaganda and operations throughout the country. One prominent example is the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), an umbrella group that represents over 500 interconnected mosques and Muslim organisations. MCB has a notorious history of sponsoring and supporting extremist actions, prompting consecutive British administrations to adopt a “non-engagement” stance with the organisation since 2009. Notably, the MCB backed a declaration in Istanbul calling for jihad in reaction to Israel’s activities in Gaza and backing Hamas attacks on foreign forces, possibly involving British troops. Another outfit of concern is the Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is secretly operational in the UK despite being banned in many countries due to its disruptive ideology and links to terrorist acts. Hizb ut-Tahrir has been accused of radicalising young Muslims and pushing for the formation of a global caliphate through non-democratic means. Its financing roots are opaque, leading to suspicions of foreign financial aid intended to destabilise communities. Islamic Relief Worldwide, headquartered in the United Kingdom, has been accused of supporting terrorist entities, especially Hamas. The organisation denies these allegations. However, both Israel and the United Arab Emirates have blacklisted Islamic Relief Worldwide over concerns about the misuse of charitable donations to fund terrorist activities.

Why Modi-Shah can’t decide Nadda’s successor

Saariq

There are two ways of looking at Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s response to the 2024 Lok Sabha election outcome. The first is that he is truly convinced that the people have shown faith in him and his government by giving a mandate to the National Democratic Alliance for a third term. He is looking to rule for the next five years with the same authority as he did for the past 10 years. The PM has given many indications to this effect: Largely the same Cabinet, with some token representation of allies; the same old ex-bureaucrats in his core team; the same self-proclaimed non-partisan presiding

officer of the Lok Sabha; and, the same aggression against the Opposition. Another way of looking at his response is to treat it as bravado—an attempt to hide the vulnerabilities of a coalition government. Any show of weakness at this point would embolden the Opposition, the allies, the ambitious BJP colleagues, the ideological patron and even the otherwise obedient bureaucracy. Things will start falling apart. That should explain the unnecessary belligerence against the Opposition in the very first session of the new Lok Sabha. A small, though significant, indicator of how the government is actually reading the 2024 man-

date came from the finance ministry discontinuing the practice of officially releasing monthly data with state-wise break up of Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections. That’s because of the assessment. As my colleague TCA Sharad Raghavan reported, it was creating resentment among the people who were thinking that the government was sucking them dry by collecting too much tax. That’s as hilarious as it can get but it gives us an inkling of how the ‘system’ is responding to the poll results. Be that as it may, Modi would have us believe the first scenario—that he is convinced that the 2024

election results were not a reflection on his governance and so he has retained the same old team. The Bharatiya Janata Party, therefore, needs to explain the loss of 63 seats—from 303 in 2019 to 240 in 2024. The PM hasn’t said it in as many words, though. Signals from the ruling party are on the contrary—that it sees the 2024 mandate as a vindication of its politics and organisational prowess. If at all, blame the individuals for the party’s performances in some states – say, Yogi Adityanath in Uttar Pradesh and Devendra Fadnavis in Maharashtra. Or, for that matter, blame the Opposition’s ‘propaganda’ for a

Five-year Data Analytics and AI Integrated BBA-MBA to generate tech-savvy managers

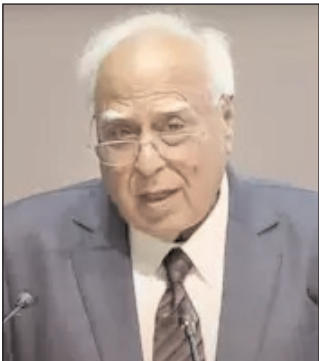
Delhi HEIs, including IITs, are offering five-year integrated BBA/BTech-MBA programs with Data Analytics and AI specializations. These programs prepare business graduates with AI and analytics abilities to make data-driven decisions. According to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, students seeking shorter postgraduate degrees are increasingly interested in these programmes. MEES is supported in integrated courses to promote learning flexibility. The first IIT to offer a five-year Integrated MBA (IMBA) program in 2024-25 was IIT Mandi. Students will learn management, analytics, data science, mathematics, and statistics. Future corporate leaders with a passion for technology and cross-functional management are sought by the institute. IMBA courses encompass pure management, Analytics, Data Science & AI, Mathematics and Statistics, Data Structures, Economics, Computer Programming, and Allied Science. The program's first three years lay the groundwork for students to attend AI and Data Science-based management courses in the future. The program covers Operations, Finance, Marketing, Organizational Behavior, Human Resource Management, Strategy, and Entrepreneurship. It also offers generic courses on Personality &



Skill Development, Creative Thinking and Problem Solving, and Leadership, says Dr. Anjan Kumar Swain, IMBA, IIT Mandi admissions chair. Swain said the five-year program centers on a six-month industrial internship and a year-long project to keep students current with industry demands. MEES offers the following exit options: The student would receive a BBA Analytics degree after three years and a BBA Analytics (Honours) degree after four years. Transition smoothly Karnataka's TAPMI IPM IT and Analytics are among the possibilities in the 5-year BBA-MBA integrated curriculum. If academically qualified, IPM students can graduate with a BBA in three years. "Students can expect a junior to middle management position in leading MNCs in India or abroad after five years. Most roles are in IT and analytics, consulting, BFSI, and retail, says Prof. Vishnu Chandar Venkatesh, assistant professor – Strategy, IPM chairperson, TAPMI, Manipal.

INDIA must appear to be a 'bloc and not un-bloc' itself in public domain: Kapil Sibal

NEW DELHI: Rajya Sabha MP and senior lawyer Kapil Sibal on Sunday urged the opposition INDIA bloc to present itself as a united front rather than appearing disjointed to the public. In an interview with news agency PTI, Sibal highlighted the importance of establishing a formal framework with designated spokespersons, along with a unified policy direction and ideological foundation. Speaking to PTI, Sibal said, "I think INDIA should appear to be a bloc and not un-bloc itself in the manner that it does in the public domain." He stressed that the alliance must establish a unified stance on key national issues, stating, "Unless there are spokespersons of the bloc who represent its views, I don't think this can move forward very effectively." On the need for a formal political structure, Sibal said he had long supported the idea but suggested that some alliance members may



not find it agreeable or consider the timing inappropriate. "Obviously, either it is not something that is palatable to somebody or the other, or they feel this is not the appropriate time," he noted. Despite challenges, Sibal expressed optimism about the opposition's future. "I see a future for the opposition. What form it takes, what structure it takes, we'll see," news agency PTI quoted him saying. The INDIA alliance was formed to counter the BJP-led NDA ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. However, internal rifts—especially between the Congress and AAP—became evident during state polls, leading political com-

mentators to argue that a lack of unity contributed to BJP's recent electoral gains in Haryana, Maharashtra, and Delhi. Asked about the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, which may be introduced in the Budget session, Sibal pointed to the NDA's lack of a majority and the possible political implications. "Let us see what their position is. There are elections coming in Bihar, and if they introduce the bill, they may worry about its impact on the election process," he observed, adding that legal options remain open if the bill is passed. On the contentious delimitation issue, Sibal pointed out its serious implications for India's political landscape. He noted Tamil Nadu chief minister MK Stalin's recent meeting on the matter, attended by several opposition representatives, including Congress leaders. However, he pointed out that delimitation cannot proceed without a new census. "First the census and then delimitation."



US Woman's Resignation Letter Goes Viral on Reddit: What Every Boss Should Learn From It

Delhi: A resignation letter from a US housekeeper has recently gained significant attention on Reddit, sparking widespread discussion about workplace management and employee treatment. The letter, which was posted by the employee herself, outlines serious concerns regarding micromanagement, poor communication, and safety issues, leading to an outpouring of support and empathy from the online community. The employee, who had been working as a housekeeper, detailed her frustrations in a candid and poignant email addressed to her manager. In her letter, she expressed her growing dissatisfaction with the work environment, citing the manager's micromanagement as a primary reason for her decision to leave. The letter highlights how the manager's excessive control and lack of regard for employee well-being created a toxic work atmosphere, ultimately affecting the employee's job satisfaction and mental health. Here's what every boss can learn from this viral resignation letter. **Don't Micromanage** Micromanagement can severely impact employee morale and productivity. The resignation letter highlights how excessive control stifles creativity and increases anxiety. Micromanagement often leads to burnout and a decrease in job satisfaction, undermining overall team performance. Bosses should trust their employees and provide autonomy, allowing them to take ownership of their tasks and contribute effectively without undue interference.

Why are just 2% of Indian colleges autonomous?

Delhi: Academic autonomy is threatened. In several Indian states, the public university and its colleges seem to be fighting for freedom. India has about 45,000 colleges, yet just 995 are independent. The UGC has promoted autonomy for decades. The road to self-rule has been lengthy. Jharkhand, Manipur, Rajasthan, and Goa have the fewest autonomous colleges, while Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh have the most. Academic autonomy in its real sense is rare, even though it has been shown to improve higher education achievement. It should let universities



do what they do best—offer courses, change curricula, innovate in teaching-learning, and evaluate smartly—without meddling. Few people want it. Colleges nationwide are reluctant or delayed to go

autonomous for a number of reasons, from political intervention and universities unwilling to relinquish power to a lack of desire and confidence. This despite UGC's continuous urging of states to

foster college independence. A recent message reveals ground realities. As per laws, some universities do not give autonomous colleges entire autonomy in establishing syllabus, introducing new courses, and evolving methods of assessing student performance. "Some universities require colleges to sign an MoU/agreement with terms and conditions that violate UGC regulations," it stated. Some Kerala principals said universities "don't want a high performing college to move out from their ambit" and discourage associated colleges from becoming autonomous.

Two security personnel injured as Naxalites trigger IED blast

NEW DELHI: Two Special Task Force (STF) personnel were injured after Naxalites triggered an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said. The explosion occurred amid ongoing anti-Naxal operations in the region. Bijapur SP Jitendra Yadav said that the explosion occurred in the Madded police station limits, targeting vehicles transporting security personnel, according to Bijapur Superintendent of Police Jitendra Yadav.



Security forces have been on high alert following an increase in IED attacks. Recent intelligence suggests that Maoists are relying more on explosives due to a decline in arms and ammunition, as reported by PTI. The

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and specialised units like the CoBRA commandos have been intensifying their operations, uncovering Maoist hideouts and seizing weapons and explosives.

35-year-old private hospital director shot dead in Patna



NEW DELHI: A 35-year-old woman, Surabhi Raj, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at a private hospital in Patna on Saturday, police said. Surabhi Raj was the hospital's director located in the Agamkuan area, said Atulesh Jha, Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of Patna City-1. He clarified that she

was not a doctor at the hospital, according to news agency PTI. "The Agamkuan police station received a call that a woman was shot inside the hospital at around 3.30 pm. When the police team reached the spot, she was found in a pool of blood with multiple bullet injuries. She was immediately admitted to the ICU of the hospital. Later, she

was shifted to Patna AIIMS where she died in the evening," the SDPO said. The body has been sent for post-mortem examination, the official said. The police are still working to determine the motive behind the incident. "The police team is collecting evidence from all angles. Investigation is underway," he added.

His tutor should be changed': BJP's Ravi takes a dig at Rahul over 'merit' remark

NEW DELHI: BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad on Sunday targeted Lok Sabha's leader of opposition Rahul Gandhi, accusing him of "disregarding" the merit system and questioning his qualifications for the role. His remarks come in the wake of Gandhi's statement calling India's merit system a "flawed" concept during a discussion with professor Sukhadeo Thorat, a member of Telangana's caste survey panel. At a press conference, Prasad took a swipe at the Congress leader, saying, "Rahul Gandhi has again made a wise statement. He has said that there is no such thing as a merit system in this country... My first question to Rahul Gandhi is, by what qualification has he become the leader of the opposition?... Where the rules of the merit system have been



disregarded, it has been in his appointment." Continuing his criticism, Prasad added, "Rahul Gandhi does not do his homework. His tutor should be changed who will give him the correct information about India." In his interview with Professor Thorat, Gandhi argued that India's education and bureaucratic systems are biased against Dalits, OBCs, and tribals. "There is a completely flawed concept of merit where I confuse my social position with my capability. For anybody to say that our education system or our bureaucratic entry systems are fair to Dalits, OBCs, and tribals

- that's just a complete fallacy," he said. "The entire narrative is an upper caste narrative. This notion of merit is, actually, itself an unfair idea," he added. Sharing the interview on X, Congress MP linked the issue to historical struggles for equality, referencing Dr B R Ambedkar's 1927 Mahad Satyagraha. "The fight for share that began 98 years ago continues. On 20 March 1927, Babasaheb Ambedkar directly challenged caste discrimination through the Mahad Satyagraha. This was not just a fight for the right to water, but also for equality and respect," he wrote.

'No evidence of forced entry': Key details from Delhi HC CJ's report on Justice Varma cash row

Delhi: The Supreme Court released an inquiry report by Delhi high court chief justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyay regarding Justice Yashwant Varma's case, which involved the discovery of burnt currency notes by firefighters at his official residence. A video shared by Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora with Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Delhi high court chief justice Upadhyay purportedly shows the burnt cash, adding to the scrutiny. According to the report, on March 15, workers cleared some debris and partially burnt items from the storeroom. Subsequently, the Supreme Court instructed Justice Varma to maintain all phone data and communications. Additionally, the court requested records of security staff deployed

at his residence over the previous six months. Justice Varma has been temporarily removed from his judicial responsibilities whilst the investigation continues. Also read: SC uploads video of burnt currency given by police, HC CJ suggests deeper probe; judge Yashwant Varma cries conspiracy Key findings from the inquiry report The fire broke out on the night of March 14 in a storeroom at Justice Varma's official residence in Tughlak Crescent, New Delhi. The fire was initially reported by Justice Varma's personal secretary via a PCR call. Firefighters allegedly found burnt cash at the scene, raising concerns about its origin. The storeroom was used to store household items and was accessible to domestic staff, gardeners, and CPWD workers.

The government is constantly making efforts to increase the income of farmers: CM Saini

**DILPREET WALIA**  
**Karnal: Haryana** Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini has said that the Haryana government is serious about increasing the income of farmers. Many schemes have been started in the interest of farmers. This year the agriculture budget has been increased by 19.2 percent. He said that the youth working in the agriculture sector will be sent to Israel so that they can become aware of new agricultural techniques. He announced the construction of hostel and seminar hall in the Indo-Israel Vegetable Excellence Center in Gharaunda and honored 74 progressive farmers. The Chief Minister paid tribute to the revolutionary Veer Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru on their martyrdom on Shaheed Diwas. He also released the 'Haryana Horticulture' magazine and visited the exhibition organ-



ized by the farmers. The Chief Minister was speaking as the chief guest at the closing ceremony of the three-day 11th Mega Vegetable Expo 2025 organized at the Indo-Israel Vegetable Excellence Center in Gharaunda today. He said that farmers are the pride of Haryana. Farmers have set an example by moving away from the traditional crop cycle and increasing production through innovation and modern techniques in fruit and vegetable cultivation and beekeeping. Mega Vegetable Expo-2025 is an important platform for our farmers to get information about agricultural techniques. In this three-day expo, farmers have got informa-

tion about new techniques, improved varieties and modern agricultural equipment related to horticulture, vegetable production and beekeeping, as well as solutions to many problems and have also come to know about new possibilities. Special preference has been given to agriculture, animal husbandry and horticulture in the budget Chief Minister Mr. Naib Singh said that the state government is farmer friendly. Many welfare schemes have been started for the farmers. Keeping in mind the interests of the farmers, the agriculture budget has been increased by 19.2 percent in the Haryana budget 2025-26.

CM Saini launches One Time Settlement Scheme-2025 for traders from Kurukshetra

Under new scheme, taxpayers with dues up to Rs 10 lakh will get a rebate of up to Rs 1 lakh

**Jasbir Singh Duggal**  
**Kurukshetra:** Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said a transparent and equitable taxation system is essential for economic prosperity and good governance in the state. If the tax system is simple and effective, then traders, entrepreneurs and investors benefit and economic activities grow rapidly. The Chief Minister was speaking as the chief guest at a function organized on the occasion of the launch of 'One Time Settlement Scheme-2025' in Kurukshetra today. The Chief Minister said the One Time Settlement Scheme-2025 will provide great relief to thousands of taxpayers, especially small shopkeepers, entrepreneurs and traders. This scheme will give an opportunity to taxpayers to make a new beginning by freeing them from the old financial burden. He said the One Time Settlement Scheme-2025 is for those taxpayers of Haryana who could not pay the out-



standing amount of their taxes due to various reasons. Under this scheme, taxpayers with dues up to Rs 10 lakh will get a rebate of up to Rs 1 lakh. This scheme will remain open for the coming 180 days i.e. 6 months. He appealed to the taxpayers to pay their dues as soon as possible. He said the state government had started a dispute resolution programme to solve the problems of people of all sections, under which various departments started schemes with different names. The One Time Settlement Scheme-2025 is also a part of the same series. He said the Excise and Taxation Department of Haryana was facing great difficulty in recovering the outstanding taxes due to various reasons. Therefore, we implemented the 'One Time Settlement Scheme' to reduce the outstanding taxes and litigation and expedite the recovery of outstanding

amounts. While implementing this scheme will provide relief to taxpayers, it will also increase revenue collection. He said earlier also a one-time settlement scheme was introduced in 2023, but there were some obstacles in that scheme. Now, those obstacles have been removed in the new scheme. There is no classification of outstanding tax in One-time Settlement Scheme-2025. This scheme will be based on the cumulative assessed outstanding amount. Under it, there will be complete exemption from penalty amount and interest amount. He said in this scheme, the government has created three slabs for the payment of outstanding taxes for the convenience of taxpayers. For payment of cumulative assessed outstanding tax up to Rs 10 lakh, the taxpayer will have to pay 40 per cent amount after deducting the exemption of up to Rs 1 lakh from Rs 10 lakh.

For cumulative assessed outstanding tax liabilities of more than Rs 10 lakh and up to Rs 10 crore, the taxpayer will have to pay 50 per cent of the amount. Similarly, the taxpayer will have to pay 100 per cent of the cumulative assessed outstanding tax liabilities of more than Rs 10 crore. Not only this, taxpayers with settlement amount of more than Rs 10 lakh outstanding tax have been given the option to make payment in two installments. Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that whoever opts for this scheme will not have to face any kind of amendment in the outstanding tax liability. Under this scheme, the government has given concessions to small as well as big traders. Due to this, there is a safe and favorable environment for traders in the state to do their business honestly. The Chief Minister said some new initiatives have been taken in the GST rules. Now, for the convenience of taxpayers, the audits of the last three to four years to be done under Section 65 of Haryana GST Act, 2017 will be done in one go. Due to this, traders will not have to visit the department again and again. Similarly, to increase transparency, the government has decided to install CCTV cameras in every ETO and DETC office rooms.

Will Carve Out Punjab As Dreamt By Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev: CM Mann

**JAG MOHAN THAKEN**  
**Chandigarh,** March 23: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann on Sunday said that the state government is making strenuous efforts for fulfilling the dreams of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Shaheed Rajguru and Shaheed Sukhdev adding that no stone will be left unturned for this noble cause. Addressing the gathering during a state level function to mark martyrdom of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Shaheed Rajguru and Shaheed Sukhdev at Khatkar Kalan (SBS Nagar), Sunday, the Chief Minister said that this is not a political function but this is a solemn occasion to pay tributes to the great martyrs, who had sacrificed their lives for sake of



motherland. He said that the state government is making concerted efforts to perpetuate the legacy of these legendary martyrs for our coming generations. Bhagwant Singh Mann said that the state government has decided to construct Shaheed Bhagat Singh Medical College at a cost of Rs 300 crore as a tribute to these martyrs. The Chief Minister

reminded that due to strenuous efforts of the state government, the Mohali airport has been named after Shaheed Bhagat Singh. He said that none of the previous government had bothered about naming this airport after the great martyr but after assuming the charge of office his government accorded top priority to it. Bhagwant Singh Mann further said that naming

the airports, universities and other institutions in the name of these iconic martyrs is important to perpetuate their glorious legacy. The Chief Minister also said that his government has dedicated the Nishan-e-Inquilaab Plaza to people which houses a 30 feet high bronze statue of the iconic martyr on Airport Road, Mohali. He said that the statue has been installed so that the iconic martyr is remembered every moment anyone travels on that road. Bhagwant Singh Mann expressed hope that such efforts will act as a lighthouse for the visitors coming from within the country and abroad by apprising them about the role of this legendary martyr.

**Jasbir Singh Duggal**  
**Kurukshetra:** On the occasion of World Water Day, Akshara International School Pehowa organized a program to raise awareness about the importance of water conservation. The school's chairperson, Poonam Kahara, emphasized the value of water in our lives, stating that it is essential to preserve this precious resource. Kahara highlighted that while 70% of the Earth is covered in water, only 3% of it is freshwater suitable for drinking. The increasing global population, urbanization, and industrial development



are threatening water sources, leading to a surge in demand for clean water and disrupting water supply. Principal Shobhe Mathew stated that World Water Day is observed annually to raise awareness about the importance of water conservation, prevent water pollution, and pro-

mote sustainable water management practices. During this event, people are encouraged to adopt measures to conserve water and mitigate related problems. Mathew emphasized the need for families to be aware of the importance of water conservation and to take steps to reduce water waste.

KU VC pays tribute to Shaheed Bhagat Singh



**Jasbir Singh Duggal**  
**Kurukshetra:** On the occasion of Martyrdom Day, Vice Chancellor of Kurukshetra University Prof. Som Nath Sachdeva, Registrar Dr. Virender Pal and other officials paid tribute to Shaheed Bhagat Singh by garlanding the statue of Shaheed Bhagat Singh on Kurukshetra University campus. On this occasion, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Som

Nath Sachdeva expressed his views that the way the martyrs sacrificed themselves in the freedom movement, the future generations of this country will always remember their martyrdom. Today, the youth need to take inspiration from the lives of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev and all the martyrs and inculcate their ideals in

our lives. India will always be indebted to these great sons. On this occasion, Dean, Academic Affairs Prof. Dinesh Kumar, Prof. Neelam Dhandra, Prof. Vivek Chawla, Prof. Parmesh Kumar, Prof. Kusum Lata, Dr. Ankeshwar Prakash, Dr. Anand Kumar, Dr. Saloni Diwan, Dr. Harvinder Singh Longowal, Dr. Kuldeep Arya were present.

Raj Kumari Panwar dedicated to social service, honored with lifetime service award

**Jasbir Singh Duggal**  
**Kurukshetra:** Raj Kumari Panwar, dedicated to social service, honored with lifetime service award Kurukshetra. Purna Samiti Haryana today on March 23 paid tribute to Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev on their martyrdom day. On the day filled with patriotism, Rajkumari Panwar, dedicated to social service, was honored with lifetime service award. This award was given to Rajkumari Panwar by Dr. Ashok Kumar Verma, founder and provincial president of Purna Samiti Haryana. While giving lifetime service award to Rajkumari Panwar, founder and provincial president of Purna Samiti Haryana, Dr. Ashok Kumar Verma said that Rajkumari Panwar was selected



for this award in view of her lifelong service. Rajkumari Panwar has been serving as a teacher. Along with being a yoga teacher, she has been working as an environmental guard. Along with Purna Samiti Haryana, she has played an important role in making people aware about plantation and adopting the means of bicycle. Along with this,

she also actively participates in the de-addiction campaign. Her contribution in helping needy children, elderly and disabled through Roti Bank is commendable. After retirement, she is running Maa Yashoda Gopal Vatika. Social workers Naresh Saini, Ajaib Singh and Lakshbir were present on this occasion. Everyone congratulated Rajkumari Panwar.

Gurukul Jyotisar Achieves Top Spot in Haryana in Just 4 Years : Acharya Devvrat



**Jasbir Singh Duggal**  
**Kurukshetra:** Gurukul Jyotisar has become the number one school in Haryana in just four years, a feat achieved under the guidance of Acharya Devvrat, Governor of Gujarat. Acharya Devvrat, who was the principal of Gurukul Kurukshetra for 40 years, said that the institution's focus on imparting moral values and traditional knowledge has made it a sought-after destination for parents seeking quality education for their children. He emphasized that Gurukul's emphasis on a natural and healthy lifestyle, coupled with a rigorous academic regimen, has enabled students to excel in various fields. The institution's ban on mobile phones and television has also helped students focus on their studies. Dr. Rajender Vidyalanakar, OSD to the Governor, highlighted Gurukul's achievements, including its students' success in competitive exams like NDA, IIT, and NEET. He also mentioned that four students from Gurukul Jyotisar have cleared the SSB exam, with one student becoming a pilot in the Indian Air Force.

## Aakash Educational Services Limited Launches Aakash Invictus

**Vatika Times Gurugram:** Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), the national leader in test preparatory services, proudly announces the launch of Aakash Invictus Campus, a groundbreaking and first-of-its-kind advanced program campus for JEE preparation, specifically designed for the best and brightest engineering aspirants. This elite, high-intensity, personalized, AI-driven, and result-oriented initiative is tailored to support students preparing for IITs or reputed universities abroad. The Aakash Invictus Campus building spans 2 floors, each covering an area of 4400 sqft, offering ample space for an advanced learning experience. The campus is equipped with 12 modern classrooms, designed to provide a conducive environment for



focused and personalized JEE preparation. With its spacious layout and state-of-the-art infrastructure, Invictus Campus ensures students have access to the best resources for success. Mr. Deepak Mehrotra, MD & CEO of Aakash Educational Services Limited, emphasized the program's significance, stating, "Aakash Invictus is not just a coaching program; it is a transformational journey for students aiming to secure top IIT ranks. This program brings together top-notch faculty with decades

of experience, cutting-edge teaching methodologies and personalized, AI and tech-driven learning. Over the years, our educators have successfully mentored millions of students to secure admissions in top IITs. The study material has been completely revamped, covering the entire curriculum and developed by some of the best experts in the industry. We firmly believe this is the best—if you can create better material, we will award you and welcome you to our team."

## Will invest if EV GST stays 5% for 10 years: Mercedes-Benz

**Delhi:** Mercedes-Benz, one of the first major carmakers to show interest in the government's new EV policy, said it would invest \$500 million "provided it gets an assurance that the current 5% GST regime for electrics will continue for a decade." "We must determine its logic. The tax advantage of 5% GST on EVs must last ten years for investments to be made "Mercedes India MD & CEO Santosh Iyer. "We'll start with a business case.

No commercial case exists today." Mercedes was one of the first multinational automakers to invest in electric



mobility in India and is developing six green automobiles. The company's electric lineup comprises the EQS limousine, EQB MPV, and EQE SUV. Cars are made in its plant outside Pune. The company is introducing its smallest electric SUV, the EQA, and planning the EQS Maybach and electric G Class green SUVs. Iyer said the company

hopes the government would use tax incentives to promote green mobility in India. "On our part, we will do everything possible to accelerate the transition to EVs through our six models." Iyer said firms and service providers must work together to build a dense EV charging network. In addition, like the telecom industry and cell tower sharing, electric charger infrastructure may be common and pooled. "Iyer said the government should encourage EVs as India goes toward carbon neutrality.

## Small business payment rules to change by centre

**Delhi:** An exporter in Chennai with multiple units was forced to deregister one of its entities on Udyam, the portal for micro, small, and medium enterprises, because some large buyers did not want to be caught in a government mandate requiring actual payment of

all dues to MSMEs within 45 days to claim tax deduction for expenditure. Several small businesses across the country are protesting that the government's well-intentioned attempt to ensure prompt payments is being used against them since they have little leverage in

negotiating with large enterprises that set pricing and payment terms. Others argued the standards were against business practices in particular sectors or in specific parts of the country where 60-90-day payments are common.



## 375 million subscribers' details are reportedly for sale, however Bharti Airtel disputes any data breach

**Delhi:** In the midst of accusations of a significant consumer data leak, telecom giant Bharti Airtel has denied any security system compromise. A claim has surfaced suggesting that there has been a compromise of Airtel customer data. This is nothing more than vested interests' desperate attempt to damage Airtel's brand. An Airtel representative clarified the rumors of a data breach that have been circulating since yesterday, telling Moneycontrol, "We have done a thorough investigation and can confirm that there has been no breach whatsoever from Airtel systems." Unverified claims claimed that the Aadhaar number, phone number, email address, and address of 375 million Airtel subscribers were out for grabs on the dark web. Moneycontrol was unable to confirm the veracity of the report on the data leak. A database was purportedly offered for sale on a dark web forum by a threat actor going by the handle "xenZen," who apparently demanded \$50,000 for the material.

## Ola leaves Google Maps and relocates to its own Maps Ola

**Delhi Divya:** The ride-hailing company Ola has replaced its Google Maps integration in its app with its own internal map system, Ola Maps, according to a statement made by CEO and founder Bhavish Aggarwal. Aggarwal claimed in a post on X that the action had allowed the business to save Rs 100 crore a year.

## KU Law Fest showcases socio-legal skills and basic acumen: VC

**Jasbir Singh Duggal**

**Kurukshetra:** Institute of Law, Kurukshetra University organised two-day Law Fest "Juris Fiesta 2025" at Dr R.K. Sadan. In the presidential address, Vice Chancellor, Kurukshetra University, Prof. Som Nath Sachdeva said that this annual Law Fest showcases socio-legal skills and basic acumen of the law students. Underlining the impact of this event on intellectual development, Prof. Sachdeva emphasized the importance of such forums in resolving contemporary legal issues and encouraging critical thinking among students. The Chief Guest, Hon'ble Justice, Punjab and Haryana High Court,



Chandigarh, Mr Sandeep Moudgil shared his experiences of judicial life and advocacy, bail petitions filed in the court, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and explained how addiction and drugs have a devastating effect on the future of a common man in this country.

Justice Moudgil said,

"Abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs can be a major obstacle to personal and academic success and can affect the entire campus environment." Director, Institute of Law, Prof Sushila Devi Chauhan said that the institute is committed to hone various skills of the students by organising such events frequently.

Dr. Sant Lal, Convener, gave detailed information about the Law Fest. Dr. Ramesh Sirohi, Deputy Director, Institute of Law, presented a vote of thanks. Deputy Director, Public Relations, Dr Jimmy Sharma informed that about 350 students participated in various competitions like skit, dance, fashion show, singing in which Priyanshu Yadav, Yashpal, Yash Verma, Rishabh Rana, Preeti, Himanshu, Sweetie, Prerna, Bharti, Sakshi, Tanuj, Yakshit, Chayak, Bhanu, Siddhi Sharma, Devanshi Mudagil, Himanshi Saini, Shivani, Shweta, Bhuv, Arzoo, Shweta Muste, Jai Shri, Pratiksha, Monu Malik were the winners.

## Optiemus plans to invest Rs 140 crore to expand drone manufacturing

**Delhi:** To grow and provide drone manufacturing services to the agriculture, mapping, and allied industries, Optiemus Unmanned Systems, a subsidiary of Optiemus Infra, a contract maker of electronics, would invest Rs 140 crore. According to chairman Ashok Gupta, the company is localizing parts and components in order to reach 75% indigenization by the end of the fiscal year. If interest rates



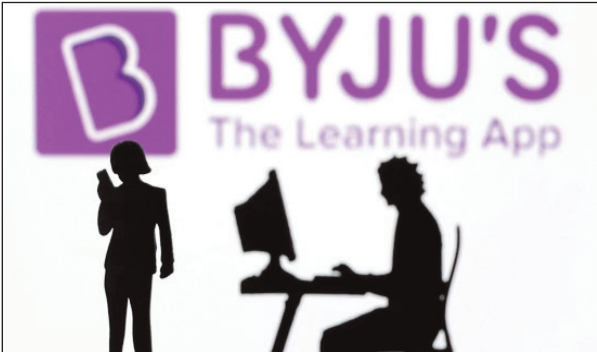
were high right now, would you invest your money in a long-term fixed deposit?

"We are set to leverage our

expertise in drone technology to offer a cost-effective and efficient solution for agricultural and defence needs," Gupta stated.

## NCLT tells Byju's: Show lack of funds or face audit

**Delhi:** The National Company Law Tribunal advised Byju's to have its finances reviewed to determine if it can pay its employees. The court ruled that Byju's is still operating and must generate revenue to pay salaries while hearing a group of employees' request for unpaid wages. The court ordered the firm to establish its incapacity to pay or face an audit. The remarks were part of the arguments, and no decision has been made. Byju's didn't comment. Several Byju employees haven't been paid for February and March. In an earlier letter to staff, founder and CEO Byju Raveendran stated a few investors' deci-



sion to prevent the company from using rights issue funds had delayed salary payments. Byju's laid off 500 workers and closed most of its offices in April.

In an interim order in late February, the NCLT ordered the company to keep all \$200 million rights issue funds in a separate escrow account and not withdraw them until the mismanagement and oppression suit filed by a section of

investors against the company's management was resolved. Since the start, Byju's investors Prosus, Peak XV Partners, Sofina, and General Atlantic have opposed the rights offer and are believed to have appealed the Karnataka high court's recent decision to lift the NCLT stay on its second rights sale. Discover how frozen accounts affect employee compensation at Byjus in Karnataka.

## Air cargo from India increases amid Red Sea crisis, aiming for 10 mn tonnes by 2030



**Delhi:** Air freight from India has more than doubled since the Red Sea crisis, allowing the country to reach its 2030-31 goal of transporting 10 million tonnes (MT) of air cargo. India's air freight peaked at above 3.5 MT in 2017-18 and has recovered from COVID-19. President of the Air Cargo Forum of India (ACFI) Yashpal Sharma stressed the significance of minimizing trans-shipment carriage times and allowing foreign freighter

aircraft to reach numerous Indian destinations. Air transport accounts for less than 2% of worldwide freight. A half-percent adjustment will improve aviation cargo volumes after the Red Sea crisis. India has a huge chance but must address the hurdles, especially speeding up trans-shipment, which takes 2-2.5 days "Sharma stated Thursday at the ACFI Annual Conclave 2024 in New Delhi. India's air freight sector is unique, with foreign

imports, exports, and domestic cargo each accounting for one-third of volume. Less than 15% of aviation cargo is carried by freighters; most is in passenger planes' bellies. Freight aircraft numbers fluctuated, according to aviation ministry senior economic advisor Piyush Srivastava. Before COVID, India had six freighters. This number grew to 28 during the pandemic as airlines shifted passenger planes to cargo.

## Google to face South Korean regulator over YouTube bundling allegations



**Delhi:** South Korea's antitrust regulator is poised to punish Google (NASDAQ:GOOGL) for improperly bundling YouTube's music service with its premium membership program, authorities. Since February last year, the Fair Trade Commission (FTC) has conducted an on-site investigation into whether the tech giant violated fair transaction rules by offering YouTube Music to Ad-free YouTube premium members without further charges. After a

months-long inquiry, the FTC presented a review report calling for Google's punishment before a plenary meeting, Yonhap News Agency reports. Officials said the examination focused on whether Google abused its market dominance by deploying such a technique and limited fair competition in the industry. Some argue that bundling has increased YouTube subscribers but limited consumers' choices and unfairly hurt other music streamers.

Govt. limits tur, chana stock until Sept to curb hoarding

The import of the current harvest of tur from East African countries starting in ugust



Delhi: The Union Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs said wholesalers, retailers, huge chain shops, millers, and importers will be subject to stock limits. The Removal of Licensing Requirements, Stock Limits, and Movement Restrictions on Specified Foodstuffs Order went into effect. Stock limits for each pulse are 200 tonnes for wholesalers, 5 tonnes for retailers, 5 tonnes at each retail outlet, and 200 tonnes at the depot for big chain retailers; last 3 months of produc-

tion or 25% of annual installed capacity, whichever is higher, for millers. The measures discourage stockpiling and boost market availability. Importers cannot keep imported merchandise after 45 days after customs clearance. Tur, urad, and chana prices have been constant yet high all year. India imports 15% of its pulses annually to meet demand. Legal companies are required to report stock positions on the Department of Consumer Affairs portal. "In case the stocks held by them

are higher than the prescribed limits then, they shall bring the same to the prescribed stock limits by," the note added. As Kharif pulses like tur and urad are likely to rise, the government expects tur and chana dal prices to fall. The statement anticipates the import of the current harvest of tur from East African countries starting in August 2024. A new crop of chana in Australia and its import from October 2024 will help keep chana affordable for consumers.

Google cancels Play Store online gaming trial due to lack of rules

Delhi: Google paused its pilot program to list fantasy sports and rummy games on the Google Play Store, but gave India a "grace period". This means Google will not increase Play Store open access for more real-money games as planned in January. Existing Play Store apps will stay there. Google suspended the pilot, which began in July 2018 and was extended in January in India, Brazil, and Mexico, due to a lack of a "central licensing framework" that governs game legality. "Expanding our support of real-money gaming apps in markets without a central licensing

framework has proven more difficult than expected, and we need additional time to get it right for our developer partners and the safety of our users," a spokesman for Google said. The move hurts India's online gaming industry, which is divided over whether games are 'games of skill' or 'games of chance'. Supreme Court cases challenging Tamil Nadu and Karnataka's internet gaming prohibition remain pending. Google said it is developing a framework for permitted applications in this field. "In the meantime, in India, we are extending the grace period of

the pilot program so existing apps offering fantasy sports and rummy games in India can remain on Play Store," the spokesman said.

A senior Google executive said on condition of anonymity that the company intends to create a framework, but conversations are ongoing and there is no "specific timeline" for when these apps can be used again.

India's major online gaming companies by revenue — Sports Technologies (Dream11), Gameskraft, and Games24x7—listed their fantasy and rummy apps on Play Store after

RBI changes priority sector lending rules

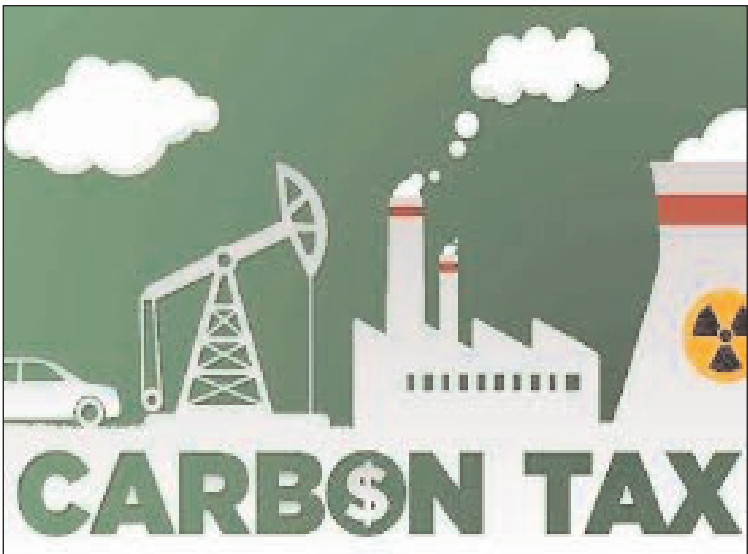
Delhi: RBI has amended its priority sector guidelines to encourage banks to provide modest loans in economically challenged districts with low loan amounts. New rules discourage lending in districts with large average loans. Fresh priority sector loans in districts with low credit availabil-

ity (less than Rs 9,000 per person) would receive 125% additional weight starting in FY25. In districts with substantial credit availability (above Rs 42,000 per person), loans weigh 90%. Except for outlier districts with poor credit availability and excessive loan sizes, all other dis-

tricts will remain 100% important. "RBI has decided to rank districts based on per capita credit flow to the priority sector, and to establish an incentive framework for districts with lower credit flow and a disincentive framework for districts with higher priority.

Parliament group advises the government to suspend EU carbon tax for MSMEs for 3 years

It also encouraged India to work with the EU on deforestation laws



Delhi: A parliamentary panel advises India to request a three-year delay on the EU's carbon tax on engineering MSMEs since domestic manufacturers may not be able to afford it. The report advised prioritizing the development of a comprehensive framework to support and equip MSMEs to combat CBAM (carbon border adjustment mechanism). The EU will impose

CBAM on seven carbon-intensive sectors, including steel, cement, and fertilizer, from January 1, 2026. Engineering

goods are subject to this import duty. The department-related parliamentary standing committee on commerce's

report, Comprehensive Strategy to Map Major Products and Countries to Maximize Exports and Minimise Imports, advised the government to work at the highest level with the U.S. and EU to protect the domestic industry from additional tariffs and CBAM. "The Committee exhorts the government to seek the deferment on application of CBAM on MSME sector by at least three years," noted.

It also encouraged India to work with the EU on deforestation laws because domestic coffee companies worry it will hurt exports. About 55% of Indian coffee exports go to the EU.

GST Council to change alcohol tax legislation, settle disputes

Delhi: The GST Council is considering amending GST legislation regarding extra neutral alcohol (ENA), a highly pure alcohol used in liquor manufacture but not for direct consumption. These revisions explain that ENA should not be GST-taxable, which could relieve the spirits industry by avoiding dual taxes. In addition to legislative changes, the Council is anticipated to propose a mechanism that would allow central and state tax agencies to stop recovering past tax dues,

helping the spirits industry. This action is part of a larger attempt to settle tax disputes and streamline taxation. The GST Council will discuss officer committee revisions at its meeting in the national capital. According to two Centre-state sources, this committee was charged with drafting legislative revisions to keep ENA outside the GST regime, a decision made at the GST Council's 52nd meeting on October 7 last year. The proposed revisions clarify tax implementa-

tion by excluding ENA from GST under section 9 of the Central and state GST statutes. GST is currently applicable to non-alcoholic goods and services, however ENA is not mentioned. The clarification should reduce the alcoholic beverage industry's tax burden by preventing the same commodity from being taxed under several streams. The Centre would submit CGST and IGST Act revisions in Parliament, while states will alter SGST laws. Since the 2017 indirect tax reform.

Avoid promoting 'Ulips' as investments: Irdai



Delhi: The insurance regulator prohibits promoting Ulips and index-linked plans as investment products. The Irdai mandated tight standards for fund performance ads in a circular. They should show compounded yearly returns for the past five years with a caveat that past success does not guarantee future results. If applicable, benchmark index performance must be stated

with fund performance. The circular advised advertisers not to overestimate benefits, selectively offer benefits without constraints, or make derogatory comparisons to competitors or the industry. The laws compel insurers to form an advertisement committee and appoint distribution channel compliance officers to ensure compliance. These businesses strictly oversee

advertisement material and enforce restrictions. The regulator also requires companies to let policyholders pay premiums online or hire a new agent or direct sales staff if the policyholder's agent leaves. A any new policy from the allocated insurance agency or direct sales staff for the same policyholder if the assigned policy is not resurrected or abandoned.

Land and luxury commercial buildings may be sold by LIC

Delhi: LIC plans to sell some of its premium commercial buildings and land nationwide to raise \$6-7 billion (50,043-58,384 crore). LIC, India's third-largest landlord, has instructed an internal team to develop a selling plan for its real estate assets nationwide, according to two sources. The process may begin in Mumbai. The article listed LIC's premium assets as the Jeevan Bharti building in Delhi's Connaught Place, the LIC building in Kolkata's Chittaranjan Avenue, and Mumbai's Asiatic Society and Akbarally's buildings. Two sources informed that LIC's real estate assets were valued at a cautious 50,000-



60,000 crore during their latest valuation. "LIC-owned buildings may be revalued for the formal asset sale procedure. LIC buildings may have a market value of at least five times the conservative estimate of 2.5-3 lakh crore, as many have never been sold.

The first insider informed that LIC may incorporate a separate business to keep and monetize real estate assets due to the difficulty of valuing them. He added LIC

owns the State Bank of India building on Mall Road in M u s s o u r i e , Uttarakhand, and two media house offices in New Delhi and Lucknow.

"The insurance company owns numerous marquee buildings. The valuation must be done properly. Only piece-by-piece auctions can determine prices. However, the LIC Act must be amended and laws changed "said the second.

Flipkart will challenge Zepto, Blinkit with fast commerce

Delhi: As India's e-commerce powerhouse targets rapid commerce, the sector will heat up again. Three sources told Entracker that Flipkart has begun building infrastructure for its rapid commerce play. "In six to eight weeks, Flipkart will launch 10-15 minute delivery in at least a dozen cities," stated an anonymous insider. "It's building up a chain of dark stores across several cities including Bengaluru, Delhi (NCR) and Hyderabad among others." Flipkart's move into rapid commerce comes as experts expect it to cut into India's e-commerce pie soon. A 2022 Redseer analysis estimates the Indian fast commerce market at around \$45 billion. More crucially, Zomato's Blinkit, Swiggy's Instamart, and Zepto have shown investors that rapid

commerce has a future in India in recent years. Zepto received a unicorn round, but Blinkit (previously Grofers) and Swiggy Instamart have scaled up with improved profits for their owners. "Flipkart's latest launches indicate its move into fast commerce. It started same-day delivery in 20 cities a couple of weeks ago and delivered flowers and cakes around Valentine's Day (February 2024)," an e-commerce analyst told Entracker, asking for anonymity. Flipkart will have a larger library than Zepto, Instamart, and Blinkit, according to sources. "The company will have a sharp focus on FMCG, grocery and daily essentials but it would also push categories such as electronics, fashion," said the afore-said insider.

Heavy rush at New Delhi Railway Station; crowd-control measures avert tragedy



**NEW DELHI:** A 'stampede-like atmosphere' prevailed at New Delhi railway station on Sunday but prompt implementation of crowd-control measures averted any tragedy and no injuries were reported, the Delhi Police said. The railways ministry, however, said there was a heavy rush at the station but that there was "no stampede or stampede-like situation". "The protocol of taking unserved passengers through the holding area is being used," the ministry added. "A large number of passengers had gathered at platform numbers 12 and 13 of New Delhi Railway Station due to a delay in the departure of Shiv Ganga Express, Swatantrata Senani Express, Jammu Rajdhani Express, Lucknow Mail and Magadh Express. Due to the cumulative effect of these delays, heavy passenger congestion was observed at the platforms. The situation turned chaotic and led to a stampede-like atmosphere,

resembling the crowd management challenges witnessed during the Mahakumbh arrangements in the past. Necessary crowd control measures had to be promptly taken to avoid any untoward incident. No injuries reported," the Delhi Police said. Eyewitnesses reported that the overcrowding led to panic among travelers, prompting necessary crowd control measures by the Delhi Police to prevent any injuries. This incident follows a tragic event that occurred just over a month earlier on February 15 when a crowd crush at the same station resulted in the deaths of at least 18 people and injuries to 15 others. That incident was attributed to similar factors: overwhelming passenger numbers due to train delays and miscommunication regarding train schedules. The chaos was exacerbated by infrastructure bottlenecks and inadequate crowd management measures, which ultimately

DGCA directs airlines to send link to flyer rights with ticket

**NEW DELHI:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has directed Indian carriers to send a link to passenger rights along with air tickets. With the massive rise in number of air travellers, with many being first time flyers, DGCA chief Faiz Ahmed Kidwai wanted passengers to be made aware of what they are entitled to in case of deficiency in service; delayed flights (due to factors that are not beyond airlines' control), cancellations, denied boarding and baggage issues. IndiGo is learnt to have told the regulator it will start doing so by Tuesday (March 25). "The DGCA has directed all airlines to disseminate and emphasise the provisions of passenger-centric regulations and passenger rights. All airlines have to send the online link of passenger charter available on the aviation ministry website in message to passenger (SMS / WhatsApp) once a ticket is booked and on airline tickets and on airlines website. Like their duties



Bihar High Court reverses 65% job, college quota boost

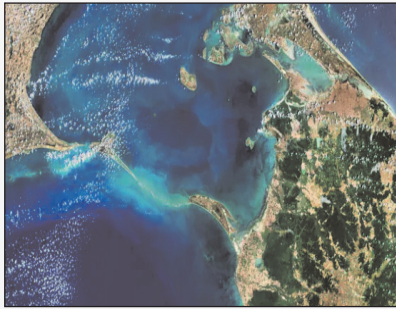
**Delhi:** The Patna high court struck down Bihar's decision last year to raise caste-based quotas to 65%, ruling that merit could not be sacrificed for reparations. The ruling will have major political and social repercussions. After a caste survey showed that these groups made up 84% of Bihar's population, the state raised the quota for SCs, STs, EBCs, and OBCs in educational institutions and government jobs from 50% to 65% last year. The court recognized that backward communities were properly represented in public employment and that the government had done no in-depth investigation or analysis before increasing reservation above the Supreme Court's 1992 Indira Sawhney limit. "We set aside the Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes.

as a traveller, passengers should also know their rights," said an official. Airlines are in the process of updating their systems to have proper communication to passengers on their rights in

CAPSULES

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

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



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

MEA is reducing passport police verification time

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

India mulls ranking flying schools on parameters like average time

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



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

be ranked and then students can make an informed choice on which FTO should opt for," said multiple officials who attended a recent meeting where Kidwai spoke of his plan. The regulator is now working to make this a reality. Most student pilots come from middle-class families who have taken big loans to give wings to their children's dreams. The high costs of flying schools—Rs 20,000-25,000 per hour for single-engine and Rs 50,000-60,000 for multi-engine—add to their financial strain. Even while waiting for flying slots, families still face monthly hostel fees of Rs 20,000-30,000. Barring a few exceptions, flying training schools in India have a patchy record in several areas like safety and time taken.

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

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

the footage inside Raj Bhavan at 11.30am on May 9," Raj Bhavan said in a statement. The programme is aimed at addressing what was described as "mischievous and fabricated allegations" by police regarding the handling of CCTV footage related to the case. In response, state finance minister Chandrima Bhattacharya questioned governor Bose's decision, asking why he was withholding the CCTV footage from police if he was innocent. She said: "The CCTV footage should be on public display if he is such

an honest and innocent person. But here he is playing with the dignity of women, so he wants to shield it from police and is even unwilling to show it to the CM. Why can't the CM see it, if there is no foul play" CM Banerjee and Trinamool have been going after the governor since the former Raj Bhavan employee filed a police complaint against Bose last Thursday. "He is now trying to show it (footage) to his own henchmen and get a certificate from them. When our state has 11 crore people.

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

**NEW DELHI:** Franco-Italian regional aircraft major ATR sees India emerge as its biggest market in the next five years. And as that happens, the turbo-prop-maker says "it will be foolish not to increase our footprint here" in terms of sourcing of components, pilot training and others. "India currently has 65 ATRs - 45 with IndiGo and 20 with Alliance Air. IndiGo is to get five more. Startup carrier Fly91 (which is being launched by aviation industry veteran Manoj Chacko) will get its first leased ATR anytime now and the second in a week or so," Jean-Pierre Clercin, ATR's head of commercial for Asia Pacific, said. "Indonesia has about 100 ATRs and is currently our biggest market. India and Brazil come after that. But the way Indian economy and air travel in the country is booming, within five years India will have the maximum ATRs given the government's focus on regional air transport through ude desh ka aam naagrik (UDAN) scheme," Clercin said. ATR feels India will need 50-150 such planes in the next decade. "That is the official estimation. But given the way India is developing, the actual number could be even higher. Much higher," he said. The turboprop major is in talks with several Indian airlines for more orders. "The focus here is on regional and ATR is for that. So we are talking to all the airlines in India," he said. Asked if ATR plans to make in India, Clercin said: "We do already have a presence in India. There are some simulators (for pilot training) operated by third parties in India. The footprint depends a lot on the size of the markets, and India is one of the most promising aviation markets globally.

Free education, healthcare, jobs: Chhattisgarh unveils new ‘surrender’ policy for maoists

NEW DELHI: The Chhattisgarh cabinet has approved a new 'Chhattisgarh Naxal Surrender/Victim Relief and Rehabilitation Policy-2025' for Maoist violence victims and to facilitate reintegration into the society of surrendered Maoists, according to an official. The policy extends rehabilitation and legal assistance to surrendered Maoists to begin afresh, the official said. Under the policy, land will be provided to civilian victims of Maoist violence, while there will be an enhanced compensation for families of those killed whilst supporting anti-Maoist operations. For instance, compensation for the death of an informer specifically aiding police in anti-Maoist operations, will be doubled from Rs 5 lakh to Rs



10 lakh, supplementing central scheme benefits, news agency PTI reported. In case of permanent disability, informers' compensation will be hiked to Rs 5 lakh from Rs 3 lakh, according to the policy draft. **Civilians** Civilian victims or families affected by murder/serious injury/permanent disability will receive 1.5 hectares of agricultural land or 4 decimal urban residential land. If land allocation is unfeasible, rural and urban victims will receive

financial support of Rs 4 lakh and Rs 8 lakh respectively. Additionally, there will be a complete exemption from stamp duty and registration fees for up to two acres for victim families purchasing agricultural land within three years of the incident. For civilian deaths, if government employment is unavailable for a family member, the state government will provide a compensation of Rs 15 lakh (Rs 10 lakh for spouse-children, Rs 5 lakh for parents).

Ghat cleaning drive spreads awareness on water conservation and cleanliness

LUCKNOW: On World Water Day 2025, the State Clean Ganga Mission-Uttar Pradesh and the District Ganga Committee, Lucknow, organised a day-long program to promote water conservation and cleanliness. The event, held in two sessions—morning and evening—aimed to raise awareness about protecting water resources and maintaining the purity of the Gomti River. The morning session at Mankameshwar Ghat saw participation from officials, volunteers, NGOs, and local residents. Additional project director Prabhas Kumar, the chief guest, spoke about the importance of sustainable water use and the challenges of pollution. Following this, a cleanliness drive was conducted by Namostute Maa Gomti, Gomti Task Force, volunteers, and local citizens. The ghat and nearby areas were thoroughly cleaned, plastic waste was collected and disposed of, and participants pledged to keep the river clean. A special oath-taking



ceremony was also organised, where attendees committed to responsible water use and cleanliness. The session concluded with a vote of thanks and a mass tree plantation drive. In the evening, a Gomti Aarti was held under the guidance of Mahant Divya Giri. Cultural performances highlighted the significance of water conservation and the river's historical and cultural importance. The event featured a presentation of Ganesh Vandana, a storytelling session titled Gomti Katha by Jaldoot Nand Kishore Verma, and Jal Ki Kahani, Nadiyon Ki Jubani, which explored the role of rivers in Indian tradition. A 'Reuse and revive' workshop provided practical insights into

water recycling, management, and sustainable development. Participants discussed conservation techniques and shared their experiences. The evening also included a Jal Kalash Samaroh, symbolising the importance of water in Indian traditions. A dance drama, Bhavishya-Shakti, depicted the effects of water pollution and possible solutions. Winners of the Gomti Samman and a painting competition were recognised for their contributions to spreading awareness about water conservation. DFO Lucknow Sitashu Pandey, a special guest at the event, praised the efforts made towards water conservation and emphasized the role of society in keeping rivers clean.

There are schools where students enroll solely for bunking and attend coaching classes

Delhi : Entrance exam candidates in Kota sometimes say, “hum to dummy hai (we are dummy students)” with pride. This is not a reference to a dimwit, but to “dummy schooling,” a popular method of education in Kota and across India in which students who want to study for difficult entrance exams enroll in regular schools for Class 11 and 12 but are exempt from classes and internal assessments. Dummy schooling, which has grown for 10 years, violates education board laws that require 75% student attendance. Dinesh selected “dummy schooling” because severe Kota coaching would disrupt regular school classes. He attends JEE coaching programs in Kota while attending a Jaipur school. Dummy schools unofficially cooperate with coaching centers to accept pupils and exempt them from classes. Such students attend lectures at their entrance exam coaching center, take the board exam at the school, and complete final practicals with external invigilators. Finding institutes that allow dummy schooling is difficult.

Delhi government funds 12 DU colleges with 100cr.

Delhi: The AAP administration allocated 400 crore for colleges in the 2024-25 financial year, with the latest allocation for the third quarter. The party stated that since the AAP took office in Delhi, the budget for these colleges has tripled, demonstrating the government's dedication to education. Chief Minister Atishi remarked, “Under Arvind Kejriwal, education has always been the AAP government's top priority.

To discuss education collaboration and interests.

Delhi: Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that he will meet with Singaporean politicians to discuss education collaboration and interests. Pradhan is in Singapore on the first leg of his seven-day two-nation tour to Singapore collaboration, participation, and synergy and Australia from Oct. 20 to 26 to promote education cooperation. After addressing 500 Indian diaspora members over lunch, “I am here to explore more possibilities of mutual interest in education, such as PhD programs among others and futuristic areas like Artificial Intelligence and biotechnology.” Singapore is similar to India, and “we will engage with the city state in a big way in the future”, the minister stated. He will meet



"Academicians and IIT and IIM alumni will meet with the minister to discuss the education ecosystems of both countries"

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Deputy Prime Minister Gan, Education Minister Chan, and Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan during his two-day Singapore tour. He will also visit the National University of

Singapore and a local secondary school to discuss syllabus integration and AI. Academicians and IIT and IIM alumni will meet with the minister to discuss the education ecosystems of both countries.

'Good to get some overs under the belt' says Bumrah

Delhi: Jasprit Bumrah is gradually increasing his workload at home as the India pace spearhead knows he would be required to bowl a lot more overs during the five Test series in Australia. After the two Test series against Bangladesh, India will host New Zealand for three games before departing for Australia. “You have to be smart (to stay fit for Australia) and it's good to get some overs under the belt here although the number of overs to be bowled will be a lot more in Australia”.

Uttarakhand Madrasa Board to Teach Sanskrit

Delhi: The Uttarakhand Madrasa Board is considering offering Sanskrit as an optional course in over 400 madrasas. The move is part of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami's goal to integrate madrasa students into mainstream schooling. Madrasa Board chairman Mufti Shamoon Qasmi “We've been planning for a while. A plan will be executed provided the state government approves.” He also noted that the NCERT syllabus in state madrasas led to high student scores this



year. The pass rate improved to nearly 96%, indicating that madrasa students are talented. If given the chance, these students may flourish in Sanskrit. Mr. Qasmi also noted that Arabic and Sanskrit are ancient languages and that madrasa students should learn both. Uttarakhand Waqf

Board chairman Shadab Shams supported Sanskrit teaching in madrasas but asked why the board wasn't doing it. Shams further stated that the Waqf Board considered introducing modern madrasas' to liberate traditional madrasa students from theological study under his leadership.

Why did Naidu urge 77k Class 10 pupils to switch from CBSE to SSC?



Delhi : Hyderabad Andhra Pradesh government school pupils have alternated between state board and Central Board of Secondary Education exam patterns. The Chandrababu Naidu government has stalled their move from the state board to the CBSE and returned them to

state board assessment. The mid-year development impacts 76,990 Class 10 pupils in 1,000 state-run government schools studying for the 2024-2025 CBSE exams. Jagan Mohan Reddy's Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party administration chose these 1,000 schools from 6,845 govern-

ment-run schools for CBSE assessment in 2024-25. They now face the Andhra Pradesh Board of Secondary Education's Certificate exam. The new Telugu Desam Party-led administration made the decision after completing an online formative assessment.

GenAI smartphones to ship over 730 million by 2028

Delhi: A recent estimate predicts 730 million GenAI cell-phones will ship by 2028. Counterpoint Research expects GenAI smartphone shipments to reach 19% this year and 54% by 2028. This growth more than triples 2024 projections. Due to their dominance in premium segments and developed markets, Samsung and Apple will account for over 75% of the worldwide GenAI smartphone market this year. “Both brands are leveraging their premium positioning to capture early adopters, particularly in developed regions where high disposable income



and interest in new technologies drive demand for top-tier smartphones,” the report added. We predict GenAI to dominate premium smartphones in the short term and grow beyond mid-range devices in the long future. On-device GenAI will boost semiconductor growth to \$339 billion by 2030. By 2030, the technology will raise semicon-

ductor BoM costs to 45%. CPUs, memory, connection, power, sensors, and audio all affect smartphone semiconductor costs, with GenAI weighing the most on CPUs. The report stated that GenAI is transforming the smartphone market from hardware like bigger screens, faster processors, and more cameras to a more intelligent, adaptive.

Assam BJP orders MLA Rupjyoti Kurmi to apologise for assembly chaos

NEW DELHI: Assam BJP has directed its MLA Rupjyoti Kurmi to apologise to the public after he was seen lunging at opposition members and hurling abuses in the state assembly on Friday. Party president Dilip Saikia called



his actions undemocratic and against party values. Kurmi, a former Congress leader, has already apologised in the assembly. Kurmi was seen lunging at opposition members and shouting expletives during a discussion. Marshals had to intervene to prevent the situation from escalating further. The offensive words were later removed from the official records. State BJP president Dilip Saikia, in a letter to Kurmi, expressed disappointment over the incident, reported PTI. He said that his actions went against the democratic traditions of the assembly and the values of the BJP. “As a member of BJP, we are shocked to see the kind of behaviour from a senior politician like you,” Saikia wrote. He reminded Kurmi that the BJP follows discipline and tolerance and warned him against repeating such actions.