



Inspiration: Late. Dr. L.C. Walla

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'India is a winner on and off the battlefield': Harbhajan Singh lauds ceasefire, slams terrorism

Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: Following the agreement between India and Pakistan on a full and immediate ceasefire — effectively ending three days of intense cross-border firing — former India spinner Harbhajan Singh welcomed the move. Harbhajan, who represented India in 103 Tests, 236 ODIs, and 28 T20Is, shared his thoughts in a message posted on X (formerly Twitter). "War has never ever been good for humanity," Harbhajan said. "India is a peace loving country and has never been the aggressor. But as nation, we would never ever take enemy's aggression lying down. Our biggest endeavour is to end terrorism on our soil. Salute to our defence forces for ensuring that every citizen feels safe," he added. "A big shout out to our political leadership for showing diplomatic prudence which is the need of the hour. On the battlefield or off it, India is winner all the way. #JaiHind #JaiBharat," Harbhajan concluded. The ceasefire agreement was announced by U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday, who claimed the breakthrough came after American mediation. "Congratulations to both Countries on using Common Sense and Great Intelligence. Thank you for your attention to this matter!" he added. The announcement came just hours after both countries' militaries had carried out strikes on each other's installations, escalating the already tense situation.

Test cricket needs Virat Kohli': Brian Lara urges Indian star not to retire

Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: Cricket legend Brian Lara has come out strongly in support of Virat Kohli, amid reports suggesting the Indian superstar may be contemplating retirement from Test cricket. On Saturday, the West Indian great expressed firm confidence that Kohli will continue to play the longest format, insisting that his presence is vital for the game's future. He is going to be persuaded. He is NOT going to retire from



Test cricket," Lara wrote in a passionate Instagram post, accompanied by a picture of him with Kohli. "@virat.kohli is going to average above 60 for the remainder of his Test career," he added, expressing faith in the 36-year-

old's enduring class and motivation. The comments came in the wake of a report revealing that Kohli has privately expressed his intention to step away from Tests — a potential decision that has stirred strong reactions from fans and cricketing voices alike. Since his debut in 2011, Kohli has amassed 9230 runs at an average of 46.85 in 123 Test matches, including 30 centuries. His influence on Indian red-ball cricket.

'Repatriate Kerala man's mortal remains killed in Jordan':Tharoor

Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and BJP leader V Muraleedharan have sought ministry of external affairs' intervention in the repatriation of the mortal remains of the Kerala man shot dead at the Israel-Jordan border last month. Tharoor said that he had written to MEA and the embassy "requesting urgent action to expedite the return the mortal remains to the family in Thiruvananthapuram." "This is the most unfortunate and tragic situation, Thomas Gabriel from my constituency, was shot dead by apparently by Jordanian security forces in Jordan at the border with Israel, we are not fully aware of the circumstances.

'Armed forces remain operationally ready': India after ceasefire announcement

Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: India on Saturday said its "armed forces remain fully prepared and ready," after it reached an agreement with Pakistan to halt all military action across land, air, and sea. Speaking at a joint press conference with Wing Commander Vyomika Singh and Colonel Sofia Qureshi following the ceasefire deal, Commodore Raghu R Nair said, "While we will be adhering to the understanding that is the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, we remain fully prepared and vigilant and committed to defending the sovereignty and integrity of the motherland. "Every misadventure by Pakistan has been met with strength. Every future escalation will invite a decisive response. We remain fully operationally ready to launch whatever operations may be required in



defence of the nation" he added. Nair further stated that an agreement has been reached to halt all military operations across land, air, and sea. "There has been understanding that has been reached to stop all military activities at sea, on the air and on land. Indian army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Forces have been instructed to adhere to this understanding," he noted. Earlier, at a press briefing, foreign secretary Vikram Misri said that Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) made a call at 3.35 pm (IST), during which both sides agreed to stop all military activity starting from 5.00 pm.

Pak has violated ceasefire over last few hours, India giving befitting reply



alties among Indian personnel and that India needed to take counter-terrorism actions. War was not India's choice and was not in the interests of any party. India and Pakistan would be committed to a ceasefire and look forward to restoring regional peace and stability as soon as possible." Wang Yi said that China condemns the Pahalgam terrorist attack and opposes all forms of terrorism. The current international situation is turbulent and intertwined. Peace and stability in the Asian region is hard-won and deserves to be cherished. India and Pakistan are neighbours that cannot be moved away, and both are neighbours of China. China appreciates your statement that war is not India's choice, and sincerely hopes that India and Pakistan will remain calm and

restrained, properly handle differences through dialogue and consultation, and avoid escalation of the situation. China supports and expects India and Pakistan to achieve a comprehensive and lasting ceasefire through consultations. This is in the fundamental interests of India and Pakistan and is also the common wish of the international community: Ministry of foreign affairs of the People's Republic of China Maharashtra BJP state chief Chandrashekhar Bawankule on Saturday said his party-led Mahayuti will hold more than 3,000 'Tiranga' rallies across the state in the next five days to boost the morale of the armed forces. Union minister Nitin Gadkari and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis will take part in the Tiranga rally in Nagpur, he said.

Will continue to have firm stance on terrorism': EAM Jaishankar

Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: External affairs minister Jaishankar said on Saturday that India and Pakistan had reached an understanding to stop "firing and military action." He further reiterated New Delhi's "uncompromising stance" against terrorism in all its forms. "India and Pakistan have today worked out an understanding on stoppage of firing and military action. India has consis-



tently maintained a firm and uncompromising stance against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. 'Pakistan initiated call; both nations agreed to stop military action after direct talks', says IndiaCeasefire took effect at 5pm; top India, Pak military officials to

India, Pakistan agree to ceasefire: How US stepped in to defuse cross-border tensions

Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan on Saturday agreed to an immediate ceasefire following a sharp escalation in cross-border tensions that began after the deadly April 22 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam. The agreement came after what the United States described as intense diplomatic engagement over the past two days. The initial escalation began when terrorists

killed 26 civilians in Pahalgam on April 22. In response, India launched 'Operation Sindoor' on May 7, targeting nine terror launchpads with 'precision strikes' in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Pakistan attempted to escalate the issue with drone attacks on regions of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Rajasthan and Gujarat -- which were intercepted by Indian defence systems -- increasing fears.

talk again on May 12 According to Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, Pakistan's DGMO initiated the call at 15:35 IST, during which both sides agreed to halt all military activity from 17:00 IST. Misri added that instructions had been issued on both sides to enforce the agreement, and further talks were scheduled for 12 May at noon. "Pakistan's DGMO called Indian DGMO at 15:35 hours earlier this afternoon.

'War was not India's choice and was not in the interests of any party': Doval

NEW DELHI: National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Saturday spoke with Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi on a phone call amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. While referring to India's response to Pahalgam terror attack, Doval said, "War was not India's choice and was not in the interests of any party." The conversation came just hours after Pakistan launched .

After Pakistan dials India, both sides agree to cease firing; top military officials to talk on May 12

Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: India on Saturday confirmed that it has reached an agreement with Pakistan to halt all military action across land, air, and sea. The understanding was reached during a call between the Directors General of Military Operations (DGMOs) of both countries earlier in the day. Foreign secretary Vikram Misri said that Pakistan's DGMO called his Indian counterpart at 15:35 hours, following which both sides agreed to cease all firing and military activities starting from 17:00 hours IST. "Instructions have been given on both sides to give effect to this understanding. They will talk again on the 12th of May at 1200 hours," Misri



said. The announcement comes amid heightened tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours. Until Saturday morning, India had effectively responded to Pakistan's drone and missile attacks on its border states. The Indian defence systems had intercepted and destroyed most of the threats, preventing any loss of life or damage to

property. On May 7, India launched a major counterterror operation, codenamed 'Operation Sindoor', in response to a Pakistan-backed terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on April 22, which killed 26 people. **'What the hell happened to ceasefire?' J&K CM Omar Abdullah after explosions heard across Srinagar**

Srinagar was jolted by loud explosions on Saturday evening, just hours after India and Pakistan formally agreed to a ceasefire. The sudden blasts prompted Jammu and Kashmir's chief minister Omar Abdullah to question the truce. "What the hell just happened to the ceasefire? Explosions heard across Srinagar!!!" Abdullah posted on X (formerly Twitter), expressing concern over the violation of the agreement. "This is no ceasefire. The air defence units in the middle of Srinagar just opened up," Abdullah added. Earlier in the day, Abdullah had welcomed the ceasefire and urged the current state administration to move quickly with relief.

India terms US religious freedom report biased, calls panel 'entity of concern'

Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: India on Wednesday sharply rejected the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) report, calling the panel an "entity of concern". Calling the report biased and politically motivated, the ministry of external affairs said the USCIRF's report "continues its pattern of issuing biased and politically motivated assessments". "We have seen the recently released 2025 Annual Report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), which once again continues its pattern of issuing biased and politically motivated assessments," said external affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. The ministry further said: "The USCIRF's persistent attempts to misrepresent isolated incidents and cast aspersions on India's vibrant multicultural society reflect.

Any act of terror will ...': How India has changed rules of engagement with Pakistan

Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: In a significant toughening of its counter-terrorism doctrine, the government on Saturday declared that any future "act of terror" on its soil will be treated as an "act of war" and will be responded to accordingly. A top government official said, "Any future act of terror in India will be considered an act of war against the country and will be responded to accordingly." The statement marks a formal shift in India's rules of engagement, draw-



ing a clear red line for Pakistan-based terror groups. Under international law, an "act of war" implies a hostile action by one state that could justify retaliatory use of force. India's new stance signals a readiness to invoke self-defence provisions under Article 51 of the

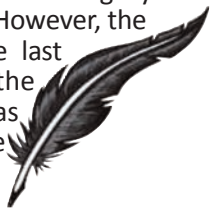
UN Charter. In response to the April 22 Pahalgam attack, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting nine terror camps inside Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Pakistan retaliated with artillery shelling and drone attacks, which India claimed caused no significant damage. Indian Army Colonel Sofiya Qureshi dismissed Islamabad's claims of damage to Indian military installations, calling them "completely wrong".

Editorial

Civil servants are running India’s regulatory bodies

Ritu Walia

Looking back at India’s reform story of more than three decades, it is worthwhile to recall that economic liberalisation of the 1990s had a few implicit assumptions of how an economy should function and grow on a sustainable basis. One of those assumptions followed from the government decision to allow the private sector to operate in areas that were hitherto monopolised by state-owned enterprises. Under such liberalisation, it was assumed that while the government would continue to frame policies for areas opened up to the private sector, the regulation or enforcement of those policies would be undertaken by independent regulators through rules framed by them. A classic example of this thinking was India’s telecommunications sector that was opened up to the private sector in the early 1990s. This was followed by the setting up of the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of India or Trai a few years later. Subsequently, the business of basic telephone services, run in large parts of the country by a government department, was hived off to a newly created state-owned enterprise. Something similar, in varying degrees, happened in other areas such as the insurance, airports, and power sectors. In addition, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) was set up to regulate and adjudicate upon issues of market dominance and practices that undermined competition in various sectors. The principle was clear: Let the government frame the policy (and not run a business), while independent regulatory bodies could enforce the policy by framing necessary rules. Another implicit assumption behind such a separation of responsibilities between the government and the regulators was about who should steer those regulatory bodies. To impart autonomy and independence to these institutions and insulate them from government interference, the pool of talent for hiring key personnel was widened. Experts and private-sector professionals in related fields, along with even retired members of the judiciary (though under some pressure as was seen when the legislation for setting up the CCI was framed), were among those the government believed could be hired to head these regulatory institutions. Thus, the first chairperson of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission was an economist. Trai was set up under the chairmanship of a retired judge and its next chairperson was a former banker. Even the first capital market regulator was a banker in the late 1980s, and the first chairperson of the insurance sector regulator was a former chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes. The first full-fledged chairperson of the CCI was a retired Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer. So, there was a mix of regulatory heads chosen from a pool of experts from both the government and the private sector. In spite of a few civil servants heading these institutions, the idea that continued to be pursued was to insulate regulation from the stranglehold or influence of the political executive. The third significant aspect of regulation in the early days of economic reforms was the framing of rules for appointing heads of regulatory bodies in a way that effectively ruled out conflicts of interest. Thus, a regulator would usually not be considered for another job in the government system after the completion of his or her term. The idea was that the regulator should be able to act freely and fairly without any expectation of future assignments from the government or the private sector. Indeed, one of the regulators under the law was, until recently, barred from accepting any government job after having served in that regulatory post. These were guardrails to preserve the integrity and independence of regulators. However, the situation with regard to the last two assumptions behind the regulatory framework has changed. significantly in the last few decades.



Trump believes Zelenskyy will have to give access to critipcal minerals

Mahesh Singh

Despite Ukraine’s resistance, Trump believes Zelenskyy will have to give access to critical minerals in return for any future US support. Some in the Trump administration suggest Kyiv should provide Americans with those minerals in return for the US military and financial aid already received by Ukraine. Trump has blamed European leaders for not doing enough to end the Ukraine war. He has also complained for a long time that Europe has lived off the US for too long and it must pay for its security. Europeans have increased their defence budgets but not enough to survive without US support. In the face of changing US policy under Trump, European leaders are working on a plan to guard against a Russian attack. This involves a proposal to deploy tens of thousands of peacekeeping troops in Ukraine. The proposal has the support of Britain and France and is in response to Zelenskyy’s request of 100,000 troops. But the idea doesn’t have wider support in Europe. Germany, another big power in the continent. Donald Trump has spent only a month in his second term as the US President. However, he has disrupted the international order, weakened the Western alliance and created a sense of insecurity and uncertainty among its members, surprising even some of his supporters. There has been a paradigm shift in US foreign policy under Trump. He is now closer to Moscow than Washington’s traditional allies. He has embraced the Kremlin’s narrative on

Ukraine and has sidelined US allies. Although senior members of the Trump administration have denied that the US has abandoned Kyiv and ignored its European allies, Trump himself has not made any serious attempts to pacify Ukrainians and Europeans. His closeness to Russia has been on display since he talked for 90 minutes on the phone with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, in which they agreed to start negotiations to end the Ukraine war, which will mark its third anniversary on Monday. Trump did speak to Zelenskyy soon after that call with Putin, but a nervous Ukrainian President warned that excluding his country from the talks would be “very dangerous”. Events after that only made Ukrainians feels sidelined. Trump’s Vice President, JD Vance, met European leaders in Munich two days later. But his comment that Europe will not be included in the peace talks only helped fuelled the speculation that they were being left out of the future of Ukraine, which is closer to their homes and in which they have invested a lot of money and effort since the Russian invasion. Vance’s meeting with Zelenskyy did not go well either as the Ukrainian leader refused to give access to the country’s vast reserves of critical minerals unless he was given security guarantees. That angered Washington. Ending the Russia-Ukraine war was Trump’s major campaign promise. But hardly anyone expected him to brazenly take Russia’s side and even blame Ukraine for the conflict, which he did. Last Tuesday, a

US delegation led by Secretary of State. Marco Rubio met the Russian delegation headed by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Saudi Arabia, to discuss peace. Ukraine was not invited. Putin—who had been shunned by the US and its allies since the invasion of Ukraine—was delighted. A frustrated Zelenskyy dismissed the Riyadh talks as worthless. Trump did not like those comments and called the Ukraine President a dictator, even accusing him of starting the war. Zelenskyy said the US President was living in a Russian-made “disinformation space”. This infuriated Trump, who does not take kindly to any criticism. The proposal has been dismissed by Russia, which currently has about 600,000 troops in Ukraine. But even Britain and France, with much smaller armies than Russia, can’t send troops to Ukraine without some backup from the United States. And that looks unlikely, for now. Trump’s Ukraine envoy, General Keith Kellogg, who visited Kyiv and met Zelenskyy on Thursday, said all options must be open to deal with the outcome of peace talks. But he knows that any decision to provide any US military cover will be made by Trump who looks less inclined to do that. He described Zelenskyy as “a modestly successful comedian” who “talked the United States of America into spending \$350 Billion, to go into a War that couldn’t be won, that never had to start, but a War that he, without the U.S. and ‘TRUMP,’ will never be able to settle.” Trump’s

behaviour towards Zelenskyy is in stark contrast to Biden’s, who had backed Ukraine against Russia with all the possible military and financial aid. President Biden travelled to Ukraine many times since the Russian invasion in February 2022 to display his administration’s full support. He also promised NATO membership to Ukraine at a future date. Russia was severely punished for invading Ukraine. The US joined hands with its allies to isolate Moscow. Russia faced tough sanctions and its assets in the West were seized. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Putin for alleged war crimes in Ukraine. There were even plans to put Putin and his close allies on Nuremberg-style trials. Until a year ago, Ukraine’s leader was talking about even liberating all its territory, including Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, with the help of Western military equipment. Ukraine even succeeded in occupying the Russian territory of Kursk, which it had thought would be used as a bargaining chip during negotiations with Moscow. But all that now looks like a distant dream. With Trump back in the White House, Ukraine fears that Russia will be allowed to keep all the occupied territory as part of the deal to end the war. Kyiv is now likely to be denied NATO membership. That could be a promise to Russia to end the war. The US under Trump has now even opposed calling Russia an aggressor in a G-7 statement being prepared to mark the third anniversary of the war. The US team

removed the phrase from the first draft, which was prepared by Canada, the current holder of the group’s presidency. It is not just Ukraine, America’s European allies are also now nervous about the intent of Trump. Since the Second World War, they enjoyed the US security umbrella under NATO. But now they are unsure if the US under Trump will honour Article 5 of the NATO, which is triggered when a member state comes under attack. It implies that an attack on one member is an attack on all. There is even fear in Europe that Donald Trump may sign a deal with the Russian leader Vladimir Putin that will lead to the withdrawal of US forces from Baltic states and effectively kill the NATO alliance. That could be similar to the non-aggression treaty signed by the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany on August 23, 1939, sending shockwaves to other European countries and prompting Hitler and Stalin to annex neighbouring countries. It is another matter that Hitler invaded the Soviet Union two years later, putting an end to the treaty. European members of NATO may call themselves major powers, but they can’t match Russia’s military might without US support. Even after losing more than a hundred thousand men and lots of military equipment in the Ukraine conflict.

Moscow remains a strong power, mainly because of its nuclear arsenal. So Why Has Trump Changed The Narrative? Trump has always been an admirer of strongmen like Putin. Even during his first term.

China isn’t panicking about the US. It’s looking at new EV markets for world dominance

Rashi Singh

In China, tariffs on electric vehicles by the United States are not considered mere trade restrictions but a direct challenge to the country’s growing dominance in the global EV market. Far from dwelling on short-term disruptions, these tariffs are framed as catalysts for strategic shifts-igniting a new era of self-reliance, technological innovation, and market expansion. New regions beyond the US are now part of China’s EV strategy. Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and parts of Africa now present more favourable opportunities, with fewer regulatory hurdles and growing demand. The tightening of tariffs by the West has only pushed China further into these regions. Chinese data shows that BYD’s market share in Singapore reached 14.4 per cent of all new car registrations in 2024, marking a historic achievement for a Chinese brand. EVs are central to China’s long-term economic, technological, and environmental leadership

vision. The strategy focuses on bolstering domestic innovation, ramping up investment in battery technology, and shifting toward regions with fewer trade barriers. For China, Western tariffs present an opportunity to refine policies, enhance industrial competitiveness, and reduce reliance on foreign markets. It seems China’s push to accelerate its EV sector is unrelenting. The upcoming China EV 100 Forum (28-30 March) in Beijing, featuring key players from China’s EV and tech giants, underscores this drive. As one Chinese vlogger observed, the goal is clear: China wants to foster scientific and technological innovation that will elevate its global standing and position it as a leader in the automotive industry. A major theme in Chinese discourse is the push for greater self-reliance in EV technology. In response to the imposition of Western tariffs, China has redoubled efforts to develop homegrown solutions that will succeed both domestically and globally.

UGC's Latest Caste Rules: When The Cure Worsens A Disease

Abhianv

The malaise of casteism took the lives of Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadv. Their parents have pleaded with the Supreme Court of India to treat this malaise on campuses. If they needed medical advice on the inefficacy of an existing treatment for a physical malaise, then the physician may have mistakenly recommended something less effective to them. This is the case with the University Grants Commission’s (UGC) response to the parents of Rohith Vemula and Payal Tadv by proposing the 2025 draft regulations on equity. The draft tapers down the existing regulations of 2012 as it narrows the definition of caste-based discrimination, adopting a non-intersectional approach, and dispensing with commonly recurring situations of discrimination and the effects thereof. The 2025 regulations define discrimination as “unfair, differential, or biased treatment or any such act against any stakeholder on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, or any of them”. The isolated definition of caste-based discrimination as “only against the members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes” excludes the broader ways in which it operates. For example, a dairy caste Gujar student may be denied entry into a sponsorships and accounts-keeping committee on the assumption of being unreliable and unworthy of trust. In contrast, a trader caste Vaish student may be preferred on the assumption that Vaish people are good with money. A priestly caste Brahmin student may be placed in a supervisory role on the assumption that Brahmins are morally upright and trustworthy. As much as this is caste-based discrimination, it would not be addressed in the 2025 draft regulations despite Gujar being a protected legal category of Backward Classes. The 2025 draft wording “on the grounds only of” has

served as the rationale for non-intersectional interpretations. In 1981, the Supreme Court of India ruled that the alleged discrimination against air hostesses was not “on grounds only of” sex because of other factors that also constituted the category of air hostesses. This court ruling has established a non-intersectional approach to reading the given categories—of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth—in Article 15 of the Constitution. “Or” places a mutual exclusivity in the given categories. It can be caste or sex, it cannot be both. The 2012 regulations facilitate the possibility of intersectional reading by replacing or with and: “based on caste, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, gender and disabilities.” The prospects of the words “or any of them” in the 2025 draft could be interpreted as the intersectional operation of given categories.

It’s a distant possibility contingent on the courts making this kind of interpretation. Until then, women and LGBT queer students in the SC and the ST categories will struggle to prove that the discrimination against them is on grounds only of caste, because it could well be because of their gender identity and sexual orientation along with caste. Discrimination can be better understood in the context of its commonly recurring situations. In addition to naming the specificity of students in the SC and the ST categories, the third clause of the 2012 regulation lists eight situations of discrimination that operate squarely within the framework of admissions. Other sub-clauses further list 17 situations that operate more broadly “on the basis of caste, creed, religion, language, ethnicity, gender and disability”. Doing away with all these situations in the 2025 draft regulations shows that the contexts integral to applying anti-discrimination frameworks.

Centre might need to do business with J&K’s mainstream parties. Even if it’s painful for Modi

Saariq

For fifty-two hours one summer in 1893, rain fell across Kashmir. A bear and a panther were found drowned side by side, their ancient hatred forgotten; ponies and cattle climbed into the verandahs of the elegant homes on the right bank of the Jhelum river. Faced with the wall of water, colonial civil servant Walter Roper Lawrence writes, the villagers of Tullamulla ripped the holy flags from their shrines and planted them along the flood plain to warn the waters away. Even nature, they reasoned,

would not dare insult the ancient saints. Everyone wasn’t pleased with this deep popular faith—or charlatanism, if one so wished to call it. Kashmir was entering a new period of religious ferment amid messianic claims that the flood had been retribution for the sins of its people, like the Flood of Nuh, which destroyed the idolaters. Armed with ideas from Aligarh and Lahore, Mirwaiz Rasul Shah, the head of Srinagar’s Jamia mosque, set about eradicating bid’a, the syncretic folk practices woven through folk Islam. In 1889,

Rasul Shah established a seminary, the Nusratul Islam, at Rajouri Kadal, the first formal school offering both secular and religious education to Kashmir’s Muslims. The seminary, today known as the Islamia School, flowered into an educational organisation, the Anjuman-i-Nusratul Islam. “Islam is a sick child that needs its mother’s care and sympathy,” one student at the Islamia School declaimed. In his public speeches, Mirwaiz Rasul Shah left little doubt about what that was: The deification of saints and veneration of holy

relics were Hindu practices which had corroded Islam from within. Late in the 19th century, scholar Yoginder Sikand writes, the neo-conservative Ahl-e-Hadith began to preach an even more austere new faith based on the laws of Sharia. The kernels of an Islamist movement had been planted in Kashmir’s flood-ravaged soil. This month, almost unnoticed outside Kashmir, the Home Ministry banned the Awami Action Committee, the political platform that emerged from the Anjuman-i-Nusratul Islam.



Nationalism Cornerstone of Unity & Integrity in Our Nation: Dr. Sachdeva

KU Honours the Legacy of the 1857 Revolution with Special Tribute Programme



Jasbir Singh Duggal Kurukshetra: A heartfelt tribute was paid to the Indian brave men, women and brave martyrs of Haryana and freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives in the 1857 revolution at the 1857 Revolution Museum located on Kurukshetra University campus on Saturday. On this occasion, the Chief Guest, Dr. Mamta Sachdeva, First Lady of Kurukshetra University, said that the spirit of nationalism is the cornerstone of unity and integrity of our country. The revolution of 1857 taught us that if we are united in national interest, no power can suppress us. The museum of

the 1857 revolution in the university is a powerful medium to connect the new generation with its history. Dr. Mamta Sachdeva said that this museum is a source of inspiration for all of us. Paying tribute to the sacrifice of the brave martyrs, she said that this journey of freedom has been possible only due to the sacrifice of millions of brave soldiers, which can never be forgotten. On this occasion, the Registrar of the University, Dr. Virender Pal said that it is our duty to not only remember the sacrifice of our martyrs, but also to imbibe their ideals in our lives. Organizing such programmes by the university further strengthens

the feeling of patriotism among the youth. The curator of the museum, Dr. Kuldeep Singh Arya, said that this revolution, which started on 10 May 1857, was a decisive turning point in Indian history, in which the heroes of Haryana also fought courageously against the British. On this occasion, the Chairperson of the Governing Body of Haryana Museum, Prof. Neelam Dhandra, Chief Security Officer Dr. Anil Gupta, Women Chief Warden Dr. Kusum Lata, Retired Principal Dr. Ramesh Dhandra, Deputy Director Dr. Saloni Pawan Diwan, Dr. Meenakshi, Dr. Kuldeep Singh Arya and Surendra also paid tribute to the martyrs.

Every Citizen Proud of the Army Today, Operation Sindoor a Strong Blow to Terrorism: Subhash Kalsana

Jasbir Singh Duggal Shahabad (Kurukshetra): In view of the current national circumstances, BJP leader Subhash Kalsana held a special meeting at the PWD Rest House in Shahabad. The meeting was attended by a large number of village heads (sarpanches) from the constituency, party workers, and prominent citizens of the town. The objective of the meeting was to raise awareness about national security and discuss necessary preparedness measures. Subhash Kalsana stated that the entire nation today feels immense pride in the valor and courage of the Indian Army. Through Operation Sindoor, the army has taken strong action against terrorism and sent a stern message to Pakistan. This operation has become a milestone in safeguarding the country's sovereignty and security. He added that under the leadership of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, the Haryana government is in full alert mode. Efforts are underway to strength-



en not just border security but also internal systems. All leaves of Health Department officials and staff have been cancelled with immediate effect to ensure uninterrupted medical services during any emergency. During the meeting, Kalsana instructed all village heads to install siren systems in their respective villages. He emphasized the importance of having an alert mechanism in every village to quickly warn residents in the event of any crisis. He urged the sarpanches to guide villagers to avoid rumors, follow administrative instructions, and maintain composure. Through the media, he also appealed to the citizens of Shahabad to treat the warlike situation seriously, stay

alert, and prioritize national interest. He noted that the Chief Minister has directed all district hospitals to ensure availability of essential medicines, ambulance services, medical staff, and equipment. The state government is fully capable of handling any challenge. Present at the meeting were BJP Shahabad Mandal President Suparshv Jain, General Secretary Nirmal Singh Virk, Advocate Mandeep Rawa, Gurpreet Bachel, Jatin Popli, Ashok Khurana, Gulshan Nimma, Deepak Anand, Sarpanch Vikram Atwan, Kulwinder Dhakala, Satish Sambhalkhi, Om Prakash Kalsana, Rinku Jandheri, Rakesh Rawa, Kulbir Landi, and several other sarpanches, party workers, and distinguished citizens.

Top court orders CBI probe into Manipur woman's 2013 murder that's still unsolved

Supreme Court on said unresolved crimes tend to erode public trust in institutions, which have been established for maintaining law and order, and ordered a CBI probe into the death of a 25-year-old Manipuri woman that has remained unsolved till date, reported. Delhi Police have failed to bring to light the circumstances that led to the death of the woman in her rented house in south Delhi in 2013. She was working in a call centre at Delhi. A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and Sudhanshu Dhulia passed the order on a plea filed by the family of the deceased seeking probe by CBI as Delhi Police failed to catch the killer and accused the cops of shielding the accused. The bench said, "...Criminal investigation must be both fair and effective. We say nothing on the fairness of the investigation... but the fact that it has been ineffective is self-evident. The kith and kin of the deceased who live far away in Manipur have a logistical problem while approaching authorities in Delhi, yet they have their hope alive, and have shown trust and confidence in this system. We are therefore of the considered view that this case needs to be handed over to CBI for a proper investigation and also to remove any doubts in the minds of the appellants, and to bring the real culprits to justice." The court noted that the woman's death was not a case of suicide as the crime scene had blood spattered on the floor and the bed sheet was completely drenched in blood. "It appears to be a homicidal death and therefore the culprits must be apprehended," the bench added. The family had first approached Delhi HC for a CBI probe.

Indian Army Showed Indomitable Courage During Operation Sindoor: Sahil Goyal

Jasbir Singh Duggal Kurukshetra: Senior BJP leader and National Secretary of Bajrang Sena Bharat, Sahil Goyal, paid tribute to the nation's first on-duty martyred woman officer, Kiran Shekhawat (27), describing her martyrdom as an irreparable loss. Prayers were offered by the leaders of Bajrang Sena Bharat at the feet of Lord Shri Ram for the protection and success of the brave soldiers of the Indian Army. They prayed that the sindoor (vermilion) of every Sanatani woman, daughter-in-law, and daughter



everlasting. During the event, under the leadership of Bajrang Sena's National General Secretary and senior BJP leader Sahil Goyal, lamps were lit in honor of the martyrs, and prayers were offered for the peace of their souls. Additionally, prayers were held for the destruction of Pakistani terrorists and for the

success and well-being of Varanasi MP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Everyone also prayed to Lord Shri Ram for the prosperity and well-being of the nation. Sahil Goyal prayed for the success of Operation Sindoor and the elimination of terrorism. He stated that the Indian armed forces have taken

to the battlefield to defend the nation and eradicate terrorism, and therefore special prayers should be offered for their safety and victory. He added that the Indian Army displayed unmatched courage during Operation Sindoor, which is truly commendable. The army's operations against terrorism are ongoing. He emphasized that through special worship rituals, blessings of the deities are being sought for the soldiers of the Indian Army so they may continue to confront terrorism at the borders and emerge victorious.

Vice-president JD Vance to advance US dogfight over Greenland

Washington: Clearly unwelcome in Greenland for its effort to grab the world's largest island, the US is doubling down on its undiplomatic offensive. The Trump White House on Tuesday intensified the push to take over the Danish territory, asking vice-president JD Vance to accompany his wife Usha on a trip that Copenhagen has said is unwarranted and aggressive. Vance jovially announced that he did not want his wife to "have all that fun by herself" on what was

to be a cultural visit and he would join her for the trip. But in a clear signal beyond the faux mirth about the strategic intent behind the sortie, Usha Vance's proposed visit with their son to Greenland's national dogsled race was ditched -- after the organisers said she would have to attend as an ordinary spectator. Instead, the Second Couple will visit the US' Pituffik Space Base on Greenland's northwest coast for the vice-president to receive a briefing on Arctic security

issues and meet with US service members. Also read: Greenland sees red as Trump sends Usha to advance US interests Trump has taken a hardball approach to seizing the island "one way or the other," as he put it. "We NEED Greenland for international safety and security. We need it. We have to have it... we're gonna HAVE to have it," he said on Tuesday, insisting, against all indications and reports, that locals are welcoming US overtures. "We are dealing

with a lot of people from Greenland that would like to see something happen with respect to being properly protected and properly taken care of. They're calling us, we're not calling them," he maintained. But aside from a few MAGA allies sporting "Make Greenland Great Again" caps agitating against Danish overlordship, majority sentiment in Greenland and Denmark, and indeed all of Europe, appears to be "Make America Go Away".

Voluntary blood donation camp dedicated to Maharana Pratap organized

Jasbir Singh Duggal Kurukshetra: Dr. Ashok Kumar Verma, who has donated blood 175 times and platelets 85 times, National Gold Medalist Diamond Blood Donor and awarded with President's Police Medal, organized a voluntary blood donation camp in the blood bank of Loknayak Jaiprakash Hospital Kurukshetra. This camp was dedicated to Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap, the brave son of Bharat Mata. Senior Deputy Chief and social worker of Roti Bank Bhartendu Harish and Principal of Government Senior Secondary School Ram Pal Saroha came as chief guests in the camp, while the camp was completed under the chairmanship of Prayas Foundation's head and Roti Bank's treasurer Naresh Saini. Chief guest Bhartendu Harish said that the vol-



untary blood donation camp dedicated to Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap is an incomparable and commendable work. Maharana Pratap was the brave son of Mother India and a true patriot who worked for the unity and integrity of the country throughout his life and increased the pride of India. Naresh Saini, head of Prayas Foundation, who was presiding over the camp, said that donating blood has a positive effect on health and every person should donate blood regularly. Camp coordinator Dr. Verma thanked all the guests and blood donors

and said that there is no other alternative to blood and it cannot be manufactured in any factory. Paying tribute to Maharana Pratap, he said that he is always revered and worshipful for us. His sacrifice and martyrdom will always remain immortal in the history of India. Those who donated blood in the camp - Shailli Sharma, Rameshwar Pal, Satish Kumar, Anil Kumar, Raghuvanshi Singh, Davinder Kumar, Jitendra Panchal, Satpal Singh, Rampal Saroha, Sushil Kumar, Rajesh Kumar, Sanjeev Batan, Mahesh Sharma, Rahul, Manish and Kuldeep.

HMSI Launches 2025 CB650R and CBR650R

Vatika Times KARNAL: Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) has taken a bold stride into the future of motorcycling with the launch of the 2025 CB650R and CBR650R. These middle-weight 650cc motorcycles are the first ones in India to feature Honda's state-of-the-art E-Clutch technology. The company has commenced bookings across all BigWing dealerships, with deliveries slated to commence by the last week of May 2025. The new E-Clutch equipped 2025 Honda CB650R has been priced at Rs. 9.60 lakh while the CBR650R has been priced at Rs. 10.40 lakh, ex-showroom Delhi. Announcing the launch, Mr. Tsutsumu Otani, Managing Director, President & CEO, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, said, "We



are delighted to introduce the latest additions to our premium motorcycle line-up - the CB650R and CBR650R - now equipped with Honda's revolutionary E-Clutch technology. The premium motorcycling space has been experiencing remarkable growth in India, and with world-class products like the CB650R and CBR650R, we are confident they will set new benchmarks for performance and riding innovation. The introduction of E-

Clutch is a step into the future, giving riders a unique blend of control and comfort, reinforcing Honda's leadership in technological advancement." Commenting on this announcement, Mr. Yogesh Mathur, Director, Sales and Marketing, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, said, "We are excited to bring the new CB650R and CBR650R for our Indian riders, with the revolutionary E-Clutch technology. The standard

variants of both these models were introduced earlier this year & they received a phenomenal response. With the introduction of the E-Clutch equipped variants, we believe this will further elevate the customer's riding experience while strengthening Honda's position in the premium motorcycle space. These motorcycles perfectly balance performance, ease, and innovation - qualities that today's riders value more than ever."

Indian Current Account Surplus After Last Quarter Deficit

According to CRISIL, India's current account surplus improved to \$5.7 billion in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2024, or 0.6% of GDP. This is a considerable improvement from the \$8.7 billion deficit (1.0%) in the third quarter and the \$1.3 billion deficit (0.2%) in the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal year. The current account balance improved due to a shrinking merchandise trade deficit, an enhanced services trade surplus, and rising remittances. Financial flows improved quarterly and annually, resulting in a \$30.8 billion foreign exchange reserve accretion in the fourth quarter, the biggest in ten quarters. India's foreign reserves reached \$652.9 billion on June 14. From the third quarter's 1.0% deficit, India's current account surplus rose to 0.6% of GDP in the fourth quarter.

Delhi govt intends to deploy 900 electric buses

Delhi: transit minister Dr. Pankaj Singh stated thousands of new buses have been purchased for public transit. We met with merchants who assured me there would be no shortage. He said depot charging infrastructure is being updated. As of busses will be plentiful. 900 new electric buses will increase weekly based on demand "Singh said. The minister said 2,000 cluster and 3,000 DTC buses will be phased off this year. Electric buses would replace them. The DTC fleet has 1,231 AC CNG, 1,878 non-AC CNG, and 1,250 electric low-floor buses. Cluster bus service has 750 AC CNG, 1,997 non-AC CNG, and 379 electric buses. Some new buses are 12- and 9-meter long. The government informed the top court in 2018 the city needs 11,000 buses. Since then, population has grown. The government will struggle to replace CNG buses with electric ones since they



Transport department fined 95L for 2019 tree felling

Delhi: In 2019, the National Green Tribunal NGT order Delhi's transport department to pay ₹95.05 lakh for cutting 495 trees for bus depots in Burari without afforestation. The tribunal ruled that the forest department's license to transplant 168 trees

take time to build and must pass various tests, according to transport department insiders. He added the companies want to sell buses but are afraid to sign annual maintenance con-

tract and plant 4,950 saplings was violated, making the practice "illegal." A panel of judge and expert Dr. Afroz Ahmed computed environmental compensation using Uttarakhand Pollution Control Board (UKPCB) rules and asked all states, including Delhi.

tracts because government buses are used in harsh conditions and wear out faster. Singh claimed he talked with manufacturers and operators and ordered buses ASAP.

At Vatika Park, DDA proposes a former CNG bus mobile kitchen

Delhi: Development Authority visited a solution to employ an out-of-service CNG bus. It wants to turn the 2010 model bus into a mobile kitchen for catering at Vatika Park on the Yamuna floodplain opposite Rajghat power station. DDA will turn the decommissioned bus into a mobile kitchen, like Delhi's food trucks. Recently, it published an expression of interest, seeking private organizations and entrepreneurs to submit a feasibility analysis, layout drawings, and creatives on how to convert CNG-powered, air-conditioned low-floor buses into working kitchens. It



also requested transformation cost and material information. Submit the application by the deadline to demonstrate how end-of-life vehicles can be reused to build a mobile kitchen at Vatika Park. Officials said the conversion concept might be reproduced at other locations or future recreational areas if it works. Baansera. The project bus is obsolete. The 2010-built DTC bus

is 12 meters long, 2.7 meters wide, and seats 36 people. Officials said DDA lacked expertise in this field and had asked agencies to provide detailed information about the conversion process, structural changes needed for the flooring, walls, ceiling, exterior, and installation of professional kitchen equipment like stoves, refrigerators, storage units, sinks.

Take helmet violations more seriously

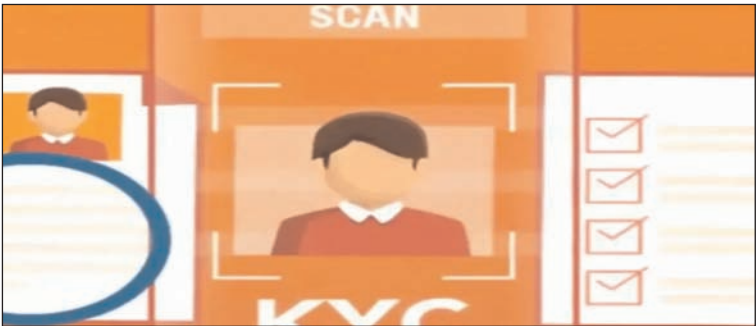
Delhi: Senior officers informed that the Delhi Traffic Police have been directed to take harsher action against helmet-related offenses, including disqualification and revocation of driving licenses and challans. Late last month, assistant commissioner of police traffic headquarters Satya Vir Katara sent a circular to all traffic

prosecuting staff directing them to enhance action against two-wheeler riders. Officers reported 611 two-wheeler riders killed and 2,233 injured in crashes around the national capital last year, roughly 40% of road crash deaths. According to Delhi Traffic Police, 1,551 individuals died in road crashes last year.

An investigation of two-wheeler rider deaths found that many were either without helmets or had not correctly attached their headgear, causing severe head injuries. The deaths were also caused by poor helmets. Riding against traffic, high-speed, and red light jumping also killed and injured such riders.

1.3 crore mutual fund accounts on hold owing to insufficient KYC

Delhi: KYC registration entities report 1.3 crore mutual accounts 'in hold' due to incomplete KYC. This is because people gave non-Aadhaar and non-OVDs during KYC registration. From April 1, 2024, SEBI will prohibit mutual fund transactions for investors having 'on hold' KYC status. This involves buying or redeeming mutual fund units. "After many investors' KYCs were still unupdated with PAN and Aadhar and the linkages were missing, KYCs had to be reclassified. Several of these KYCs used utility bills (electricity, telephone), bank account statements, etc., which Sebi no longer



accepts." The report added, "7.9 crore investors (73%), have valid KYC. About 1.6 crore registered investors have limited investment access, and 12% can't manage their demat accounts and MF folios." KYC-verified status:

It signifies the issuing source

verifies investment documentation. Mutual fund investors can invest in any plan if the paperwork remains unchanged. CAMS FAQs state that only PAN and Aadhaar can be confirmed from the issuing source. PAN and Aadhaar KYC holders will likely have their status verified.

MPs Get 24% Salary, Pension Increase; New Allowances

Delhi: MPs' wages would rise 24%, along with pensions and allowances for former MPs, according to the Indian government. The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs notified these adjustments, matching them with the 1961 Income Tax Act Cost Inflation Index. This national revision follows the Karnataka government's large wage boost for the Chief Minister, ministers, and MLAs.

Old cars without pollution certificates will be banned

Delhi: Old cars without pollution certificates will be banned from Delhi roadways. Officials stated fuel outlets won't fill such autos. Several fuel stations in the national capital feature government-authorized testing chambers that give PUC certificates. Car owners must have their vehicles inspected annually to renew PUC certificates. A new technology at every Delhi fuel station will identify automobiles with expired PUC certifications to make this system foolproof. Any vehicle with an expired PUC certificate



will be denied gasoline. The new approach is being introduced at all 500 Delhi fuel stations. If a car that violates emission laws is refueled, the system will flag it as a defaulter and the fuel station workers will not serve it. A central database retrieves registration numbers from the government database to check for violators. Environment Minister

Manjinder Singh Sirsa said a team will identify such vehicles. "We are installing gadgets at petrol pumps which will identify vehicles older than 15 years and no fuel will be provided to them," Mr Sirsa said after meeting with officials to discuss air pollution in Delhi and the NCR, which bans diesel and petrol vehicles older than 10 and 15 years, respectively.

No maintenance for educated wife

Delhi: A well-educated, working wife must not stay idle to get husband support. The court denied relief to an estranged wife who earned a master's in international business from Australia and worked in Dubai but preferred not to work, saying legislation doesn't encourage idleness. A well-educated lady with experience in a good lucrative work should not stay inactive to receive maintenance from her husband. Thus, interim support is discouraged because the petitioner has the opportunity to earn and benefit from her schooling "Justice CD Singh noted. The court stated wives with earning capacity and qualification but idle should not demand interim maintenance. "Section 125 of CrPC carries the legislative intent to maintain equality among the



spouses, provide protection to wives, children, and parents, and not promote idleness... A well-educated wife, with experience in a suitable gainful job, ought not to remain idle solely to gain maintenance from her husband," it said, dismissing the woman's plea against a trial court order denying her interim HC explained that courts must be satisfied if the wife is genuinely in need of maintenance and the factors leading to it. and encouraged the

Govt allocates 12,952 crore for public transport system

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

Air pollution may increase Type 2 diabetes risk

Delhi: Air pollution may increase Type 2 diabetes risk. Air pollution, especially PM2.5, is known to cause chronic lung ailments, heart attack, stroke, and cancer, but the diabetes argument is gaining ground. Several research from the US, Europe, and China have shown the association, but a new two-city study from India found that even a 10 g/m3 increase in PM2.5 exposure raises blood sugar. Mumbai-based JAPI (Journal of Association of Physicians of India) published an editorial headlined, 'Air Pollution: A New Cause of Type 2 Diabetes?' this



month. Diabetes specialist Dr. V Mohan from Chennai wrote, "We now know that PM2.5 is an endocrine disruptor that affects insulin secretion and also leads to insulin resistant." Due

to summer, the air quality index has been low in recent weeks, but air pollution is becoming one of urban India's largest problems, killing 20,000 in Mumbai and 50,000 in Delhi annually.

Dr. Mohan and Public Health Foundation of India researchers published the first PM2.5-diabetes study a few months ago. 'BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care' found links

between short-, medium-, and long-term PM2.5 exposure. "A 10 g/m3 increase in monthly average exposure to PM2.5 was associated with a 0.4 mg/dL increase in finger prick blood test and a 0.021 unit increase in HbA1c test," claimed the study. The HbA1c blood test measures blood sugar over three months. The study followed 12,064 Delhi and Chennai people for seven years. A hybrid satellite-based exposure model and ground data were used to track PM2.5 concentrations daily. At follow-up visits, participants' blood sugar was measured.

Nap and go! In-transit pod hotel at New Delhi metro station

Delhi: A new pod hotel at New Delhi metro station gives travelers a space to rest while waiting for their trains. This service serves transit travelers who require a place to stay near New Delhi Railway Station. To generate non-fare revenue, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is devel-

oping retail, entertainment, and office spaces at metro stations. At New Delhi metro station, which connects the Yellow and Airport Express Lines, the vendor has built a pod hotel for overnight passengers. The Pod hotel is open. The hotel occupies part of the 3,000-square-metre

space, while the rest is used for business purposes "DMRC official. DMRC recently built retail, dining, and office spaces at Malviya Nagar, Punjabi Bagh, Azadpur, and Faridabad Sector 20B metro stations, in addition to the pod hotel. A banquet facility is also at Noida Electronic City

metro station. According to DMRC, these property development activities are similar to worldwide metro systems, which are capital-intensive and rely on non-operational revenue sources like retail, real estate, and advertising to survive without government subsidies.

Birla stated the company "pioneered" a 100-MW energy solution

Delhi: Kumar Mangalam Birla, chairman of Aditya Birla Group, said that Hindalco will spend Rs 45,000 crore in India's metal business. "We are committing Rs 45,000 crore across the aluminium, copper and specialty alumina businesses," Birla told Hindalco. Birla stated the company "pioneered" a 100-MW renewable energy solution for aluminium smelting in Odisha using wind, solar, and pumped hydro storage for 24/7 energy. Birla stated that the company is developing solutions in EV mobility, renewable energy, energy storage, semiconductors, and high-end electronics. He said Hindalco has designed and manufactured lightweight battery enclosures for two-wheelers and cars, making them lighter, more fuel-efficient, and EV-ready. Birla said the company is building India's first Copper Foil EV factory and



looking at high-speed transportation. The first hyperloop test track uses Hindalco's high-precision aluminium extrusions. It is also producing defense hard alloys and working with ISRO on unique Chandrayaan and Mangalyaan components. The head of Birla Copper said the company is building India's first e-waste recycling factory to extract metals from old electronics. metals flagship firm of Aditya Birla Group. Hindalco, the world's largest aluminum firm by revenue and second-largest copper rod maker outside China, with 26 billion dollars in revenues.

Amazon reduces vendor fees

Delhi: Amazon is lowering seller fees, which may cut goods prices. Since the company is eliminating referral fees or compensation from sellers for products under Rs 300, shoppers with smaller budgets will benefit most. E-commerce sites like Amazon and Flipkart charge commissions for each sale. Amit Nanda, director, selling partner services at Amazon India, said households buy a lot of Rs 300 products. Some price cuts can help the middle class, which has been hit hard by high inflation, spend more.

The government will do away with fees for using telecom spectrum

Spectrum Usage Charges (SUC) for airwaves purchased in auctions would be eliminated, saving telecom corporations thousands of crores. The decision will help Reliance Jio, Vodafone Idea, and Airtel save money while improving telecom networks and introducing 5G services, according to an official source. The government removed SUC for bandwidth auctioned across frequencies in June 2022. Spectrum's purchase auctions were controversial before this time. It may soon be possible to authorize the SUC waiver for the spectrum. "The



policy provides telecom companies with relief so they can expand their networks," the individual said. Since the exchequer had secured the highest airwave pricing through a competitive, often aggressive bidding process, spectrum taxes were considered unnecessary. Telecom businesses pay the gov-

ernment an 8% license fee, which includes 5% for the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), in addition to SUC payments of 3-4% of adjusted gross revenue (AGR). The source claims that DoT and pertinent ministries have discussed the waiver and that an announcement may be made soon.

Free journalism has no copyright, OpenAI says Delhi HC

Delhi: OpenAI told the Delhi high court in November that it had blocked ANI's domain in October to prevent its AI chatbot from using its content. Open AI denied news agency ANI's claims that it was violating its agreement by using the latter's content

to train its ChatGPT software, saying it was being utilized for search. Open AI's senior attorney Amit Sibal argued before justice Amit Bansal that using ANI's content for search did not constitute infringement. Since there is no copyright in freely available news,

the lawyer contended that his client's use of publicly available data for non-expressive objectives to train its program did not constitute infringement. The November filing to the high court indicates the content is blocklisted for training.

Zepto targets 'planned' mass grocery orders

Delhi: This change targets household bulk purchases. HSBC notes that the change has trade-offs, particularly in profitability. New value-focused programs like Zepto's Super-Saver provide huge discounts but need minimum order numbers that are typically double the average order value. This method increases basket sizes but lowers ebitda margins from 6% to 3%, according to HSBC analysts. Market leader Blinkit avoids heavy discounts to extend categories and geographical reach, it noted. Swiggy Instamart offers competitive prices without bulk purchases. Zepto Pass and Swiggy One have loyalty



programs, while Blinkit does not. High-frequency, low-ticket orders drive quick commerce, which supplants modern retail. Expanding into value retail could change this. "BigBasket started like this. Even rapid trade looks this

way. They're targeting DMart's target audience to dispel the idea that speedy commerce is expensive. Satish Meena, Datum Intelligence adviser, said Amazon India's early grocery bid followed this strategy.

Concerns about missing out on customers' 5G experiences

Delhi : Although it has launched its 5G cellular broadband network, Vodafone Idea Ltd, is still thinking about strategies to overtake Airtel Ltd. and Reliance Jio, its bigger competitors in the Indian satellite internet race. Airtel and Jio have joined together with Starlink Services to bring Musk's planned satellite internet service to India, subject to regulatory clearance. In areas far from fixed-line broadband fiber connections, Vodafone Idea's chief technologist has hinted that the country's third-largest telecom operator may supply high-speed internet via satellite.

Promoters of Prudential, HCL to form health insurer

Delhi: Prudential and HCL Group promoters announced a separate health insurance joint venture. Prudential Group Holdings, Prudential's UK affiliate, would own 70% of the joint venture, while HCL Group promoter Vama Sundari Investments will own 30%. HCL founder Shiv Nadar gave his daughter Roshni Nadar Malhotra large shares in Vama Sundari Investments, giving her power. Prudential had its first branch in Kolkata in



1923, making India a critical market, according to CEO Anil Wadhvani. "Today, we have a significant presence with life insurance and asset management businesses providing a comprehensive offering of insurance and wealth products," Wadhvani. ICICI Bank has partnered with Prudential, a FTSE 100

company, for over two decades in life insurance and asset management. The Prudential cooperation intends to provide quality health insurance in India, according to Vama executive director Shikhar Malhotra. "Through this collaboration, we aim to advance our common mission to enhance access to quality health insurance and drive greater penetration across the country," stated. If approved by regulators, Amar Joshi will lead the joint venture.

Forever Living Products Recognized for Excellence at Direct Selling Growth Summit 2025

New Delhi: Forever Living Products India was honored at the Direct Selling Growth Summit 2025, held at the NDMC Convention Centre, New Delhi. Hosted by the Indian Direct Selling Association (IDSA), the event celebrated industry leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs shaping the future of direct selling in India. The summit featured key discussions on the evolving direct selling landscape, including the unveiling of the IDSA Annual Survey FY 2023-24 and the prestigious Aadya Award Ceremony (Season 6), which recognizes outstanding contributions to women's entrepreneurship in the sector. As a testament to its mission of empowering individuals, Forever Living Products India

proudly celebrated the achievements of two exceptional women entrepreneurs, Ms. Anjana Thakur and Ms. Navjot Kaur, who were honored with Aadya Awards for their outstanding contributions to the direct selling industry. Their inspiring journeys exemplify the impact of direct selling in creating financial independence and professional success for women across India. Speaking on this recognition, Mr. Harish Singla, CSM, Forever Living Products India, stated, "We are honored to be recognized at the Direct Selling Growth Summit 2025. This award is a testament to our unwavering commitment to empowering entrepreneurs and delivering high-quality wellness products.

As the direct selling industry evolves, Forever Living remains dedicated to innovation, ethical business practices, and creating opportunities for individuals to achieve financial independence." The event also featured a special address by Shri Chirag Paswan, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, who emphasized the role of direct selling in fostering self-reliance and entrepreneurship across India. Also present on the occasion was Mr. Vishal Tibrewal, Head of Operations, Forever Living Products. Forever Living Products continues to lead the way in the health and wellness sector, offering natural and scientifically backed products while fostering.

India's restrictions on five Chinese imports

Delhi: In an effort to stop unfair trade practices, India recently levied anti-dumping tariffs on five Chinese products, including PVC paste resin and aluminum foil. The action, which complies with WTO regulations, attempts to shield home busi-



nesses from low-cost imports. India is taking action to guarantee fair competition and

economic stability in the face of a widening \$85 billion trade deficit. Did you know that five Chinese products were recently subject to anti-dumping duties from India. This action is intended to counteract the impact of lower-priced imports that might displace

domestic producers. Aluminum foil, Poly Vinyl Chloride Paste Resin, Trichloroisocyanuric Acid, Soft Ferrite Cores, and specific vacuum-insulated flask thicknesses are among the goods that are being targeted.

US investor Bain to buy 18% of Manappuram Finance for Rs 4.4k crore

Delhi: Bain Capital has agreed to buy joint control of Kerala-based Manappuram Finance, India's second-largest gold loan company. Bain Capital would invest Rs 4,385 crore for an 18% interest in a preferential equity and warrant issue at Rs 236 per share, a 30% premium over the six-month average trading price. The largest private equity NBFC deal will trigger a mandated open offer for 26% more ownership. Bain Capital might reach



41.7% depending on open offer subscription. Bain Capital bought 25% of 360 One (previously IIFL Wealth Management) for Rs 3,680 crore. TPG bought a controlling share in Poonawalla Housing Finance for Rs 3,004 crore the same year. Shriram Finance

sold Shriram Housing Finance to Warburg Pincus for Rs 4,630 crore last year. Blackstone invested Rs 800 crore to buy out the majority owners of Aadhar Housing Finance. BC Asia Investments XXV and XIV, private equity affiliates, acquired the company

For 525cr, Hero Moto will acquire 33% of EV Co

Delhi: Hero MotoCorp has acquired a 32.5% share in Euler Motors for Rs 525 crore, allowing them to enter the electric three-wheeler category. "Our strategic investment in Euler is a bold step towards realising our vision to be the future of mobility,"

with existing promoters, who will stay fully invested. Partners stated, "The investment is expected to strengthen operational efficiency, leadership, and market

stated Pawan Munjal, executive chairman of Hero MotoCorp, in a regulatory filing. The importance of and adaptation in a constantly changing industry is underscored by this investment, which further solidifies the company's will.

presence". The Nandkumar family will retain 28.9% after the acquisition, subject to regulatory approvals and closing conditions.

80 German institutions visit India to improve Education Collaboration

Delhi: The German academic exchange program, announced that India is hosting more than 80 German universities and research organizations to strengthen academic and scientific collaborations. The APAIE Conference 2025, the Indo-German Forum on Research, Innovation, and Transfer in New Delhi, high-level visits to Indian universities, and the opening of the German School of Technology at PSG College of Technology in Coimbatore are major events. The 65th anniversary in India and 100th year of promoting international academic partnership are also celebrated. Indo-German science and education cooperation is a cornerstone of our relations. In the press release, German Ambassador to India and Bhutan Dr. Philipp Ackermann said he was pleased to see this exchange increase year after year. Nearly



50,000 Indian students study in Germany, the greatest group of any country, according to Ackermann. The 16–22 March Higher Education Policy Information tour will bring together 20 heads of top German universities and academic leaders in Hyderabad and New Delhi. This visit seeks academic and institutional interactions. Also in Coimbatore, delegates from German Universities of Applied Sciences will inaugurate the German School of Technology. Both nations' higher education and research institutes will send 250 representatives to the Indo-German Forum on Research.

Telangana govt resolute in raising reservation

HYDERABAD: Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao announced on Monday that the Congress government is determined to increase reservation for backward classes in education, employment, and political representation from 23% to 42%. In a post on the social media platform 'X,' he highlighted that the population of backward classes in the state stands at 56.36%, based on the recent caste survey conducted in Telangana.

Physics Wallah raises 4,600 cr with a confidential IPO

Delhi: Physics Wallah (PW), a domestic edtech business, sent its draft red herring prospectus DRHP to SEBI confidentially in a new primary market development. This is the ninth business to list its shares on public exchanges via secret pre-filing, after Tata Play, Oyo, Swiggy, Vishal Mega Mart, Credila Financial Services, and Indira IVF. The creator and CEO Alakh Pandey-led edtech unicorn hopes to raise 4,600 crore through an IPO that will blend new equity shares and an OFS by current shareholders. The newest tracxn data values it at \$3.7 billion. PW secured \$210 million



in Series B fundraising in September 2024 from Hornbill Capital, Lightspeed Venture Partners, GSV Ventures, and WestBridge Capital at a valuation of \$2.8 billion. It raised \$312 million in two stages, starting with \$102 million in June 2022. WestBridge Capital, Hornbill Capital, and Lightspeed Venture Partners are among 8 institutional Physics

investors. WestBridge Capital is Physics Wallah's largest institutional investor. Tracxn shows Rajat Pandey is Physics Wallah's single Angel Investor. According to the latest shareholding pattern, Physics Wallah founders Alakh Pandey and Prateek Maheshwari own 77.40%, funds own 20.47%, and ESOP pool is 8.60%.

NTA returns to pre-Covid NEET UG format

Delhi: To do well on the NEET UG 2025 exam, candidates must answer 180 questions in 180 minutes. The NTA has reverted to its pre-Covid exam design, which is expected to increase competition in the May 2025 exam. As per the modified pattern, section B which consisted of optional questions have been removed which has

decreased the exam time from 200 minutes to 180 minutes. The NTA declaration made candidates and experts anxious, as it may reduce the overall competition. Health Ministry officials say question paper difficulty will determine competition levels. The NTA cut the extra 20 minutes and optional questions to restore reg-

ularity in the exam schedule. Because the pandemic is finished, candidates must return to the original exam format. The adjustment isn't frightening as the syllabus is unchanged. Additionally, we need to enhance our time management abilities to complete the exam within 180 minutes. , which is already chal-

61.6% of Indian schools provide 3-language clubs. TN and Arunachal are lowest, Gujarat and Punjab lead

Delhi: The Union Education Ministry presented data in Parliament showing that 61.6 percent of Indian schools offer three languages to 74.7 percent of students, despite the ongoing dispute between Tamil Nadu and the Centre over the three-language formula. The research shows that Gujarat and Punjab have the most three-language schools, while Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Tamil Nadu have the fewest. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Lok Sabha member Kanimozhi Karunanidhi of Tamil Nadu requested a state-by-state breakdown of the three-language formula languages and the number of students studying each language. DMK-led



Tamil Nadu has fought the Centre over the three-language formula in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, calling it "Hindi imposition". This method requires pupils to learn three languages, at least two of which are Indian, up to Class 8 or 10, preferably Class 10. After presenting the data, Union Minister of State in the

Ministry of Education Jayant Chaudhary wrote. Demand from students is pushing private schools to offer foreign languages as a third option. The Ministry reports that 906,225 (61.6%) of 1,471,891 Indian schools offer the three-language strategy. Compared to 149,065 schools (10.1%)/, 416,601 schools (28.3%)

Irish education minister invites Indians for education, research

NEW DELHI: James Lawless, Ireland's Education Minister, on Monday said his country is "very welcoming" for students and has a supportive post-study employment visa arrangement. "Ireland is a very welcoming country. We have a very cosmopolitan culture. We have many nationalities now in Ireland, and many people have made their home, including many, many Indians," the Irish minister said, when asked whether his government is considering any changes in post-study work or immigration policies to retain skilled talents.

TN should appeal SC ruling on domicile quota

Delhi: A day after the Supreme Court banned domicile-based reservation in specialized and higher education including PG medical courses, MK Stalin's Tamil Nadu government declared it would file a review petition to vindicate its rights and uphold social justice. Health minister Ma Subramanian said the SC order would affect the state's 69% reservation and quotas for in-service applicants in government medical colleges and minorities in self-financing medical colleges. He



said that the order would violate state rights. The Union government receives 15% of undergraduate medical seats and 50% of postgraduate medical and super specialty seats through the state quota each year. "All super specialty seats were lost. "TN

gave government doctors a quota for super specialty courses after a court battle," he told reporters. He stated the Centre takes seats unfilled due to a lack of candidates. He said states invest fully in PG and super specialty medical education but share 50% of all-India quota seats. "Now, the judgment deprives us of all seats," Subramanian told reporters. According to him, the verdict will have a major impact on 2025-26 admissions but not 2024.

The House panel says Centre withholding funding for states not implementing PM

Delhi: A parliamentary panel report tabled called withholding funds over non-adoption of the flagship PM Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme "unjustifiable" and recommended that Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal receive pending funds immediately.



Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal have declined to sign an MoU with the Centre to implement the PM-SHRI project, which intends to modernize 14,500 schools and make them NEP 2020 model institutions. The Centre withheld funds from these states under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan scheme (SSA), a flagship Indian government initiative to ensure universal elementary education (UEE) for children aged 6 to 14,

making free and compulsory education a fundamental right. In its 2025-26 demand for grants report for the Department of School Education & Literacy, chaired by Congress Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports expressed serious concern over the non-release of SSA funds to states that have not signed MoUs for PM SHRI implementation. The audit states that West Bengal, Kerala,

Hospital visits decreased, learning metrics improved. Meal program passes test

Delhi: The State Planning Commission SPC found that Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's breakfast policy had improved health and education in government schools, which shows that hospital visits among government primary school pupils reduced by 68.4% in rural areas and 29.4% in urban areas throughout this period, illustrating the program's impact on nutritionally challenged regions. In addition to health metrics, the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission reported to Stalin on 13 March that the plan has increased student involvement in class. Nearly 5,300 urban and rural children showed improvements in attention and comprehension. Students' attention without urging grew from 85.8



"The ability to learn new content increased from 88.1 percent to 92.5 percent, while lesson recall increased from 71.4 percent to 77 percent. Nearly 5,300 urban and rural children showed improvements in attention and comprehension. Students' attention without urging grew from 85.8 percent to 93.7 percent"

percent to 93.7 percent, and their ability to follow teachers' instructions increased from 91.3 percent to 95.5 percent. Students are also completing more written work, rising from 89.6% to 95.4%. The ability to learn new content increased from 88.1 percent to 92.5 percent, while lesson recall increased from 71.4 percent to

77 percent. Nearly 5,300 urban and rural children showed improvements in attention and comprehension. Students' attention without urging grew from 85.8 percent to 93.7 percent, and their ability to follow teachers' instructions increased from 91.3 percent to 95.5 percent. Students are also completing more written work.

Government wants to cut 6% of online ad tax, so US giants may benefit

Delhi: Go recommends eliminating the 6% equalisation fee or digital tax on online ads in April, benefiting Google and Meta advertisers. The adjustments recommended by FM Nirmala Sitharaman come as India and the US work to strengthen relations. Last year, the government eliminated the 2% e-commerce equalisation charge. The US criticized the 2% levy, but the government is trying to appear more accommodative in anticipation of more tariff retaliation, and removing the 6% equalisation levy on online advertising is a step in that direction "Amit Maheshwari, tax partner at AKM Global. Sumit Singhania of Deloitte India said the action supports legal simplification. "From an international tax policy perspective, most of the unilateral measures taken by governments around the world in recent years to deal with tax challenges of digitalization of economies must be gradually wound back to make way for OECD's two-pillar tax rules. Given the setting before the equalisation levy, this would be a progressive policy measure to give taxpayers more assurance "said. Government has also suggested tax cuts for offshore fund investments and sought Parliamentary approval for tax assessments under search and seizure rules and I-T return reconciliation. "The key change is replacing 'total revenue' with 'total undeclared income'.

Rural income growth to drive demand: RBI report



MUMBAI: According to RBI's State of the Economy Report, aggregate demand conditions are gathering momentum with revival in rural consumption on the back of growing incomes and are expected to reinvigorate the hitherto subdued participation of the private sector in total investment. According to the report, persistent geopolitical tensions, fears of a potential recession in key economies, and financial market volatility driven by divergent monetary policies are casting a shadow on global economic prospects. Despite these challenges, inflation has moderated, albeit grudgingly, across countries. "Headline inflation moderated from its spike in June to 3.5% in July, but this was primarily due to the downward statistical pull of base effects," the report said. The outlook for private capital expenditure is positive according to the report. In the first quarter of 2024-25, the total cost of projects sanctioned or assisted was Rs 1,01,433 crore — higher than the quarterly average of Rs 97,745 crore during 2023-24. Additionally, funds raised through IPOs for capex purposes also increased compared to the previous quarter. Noting that India was the world's largest economy with the highest share of global GDP from 1 to 1,000 AD, the report added that after intermittently falling to second position in the subsequent centuries, India had regained the top

UGC proposed V-C recruitment norms: Political consequences and academic resistance

Delhi: The University Grants Commission (UGC) proposed a major overhaul of vice-chancellor recruitment, allowing industry experts and public sector veterans from non-academic backgrounds to be appointed and giving chancellors more authority in the selection process. The 2025 UGC for Appointment & Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations would supersede the 2018 standards. They now follow NEP 2020. The commission issued the draft for a month to get feedback before releasing the final guidelines. If approved, chancellors might form the vice-chancellor appointment committee, which could affect state politics. The governors of each state serve as chancellors at state universities, while the Vice President of India heads central universities. Current vice-chancellor appointment standards do not define who should serve on the committee. In opposition-ruled states like West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, where governors and state governments have often clashed over vice-chancellor appointments, the new idea might have major ramifications. Some teachers oppose it. A.K. Bhagi, president of Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA), stated the 2018 guidelines proposed by industry experts. However, teacher associations and educators opposed it, therefore it was dropped. Our position is unchanged.

National Eligibility Test No Longer Required for Assistant Professor

Delhi: The University Grants Commission (UGC) has produced a draft of minimum criteria for hiring and promoting teachers and academic staff in universities and colleges and steps to maintain higher education standards. According to regulations, the UGC recommends eliminating the National Eligibility Test (NET) for assistant professor and promotion positions in higher education. The proposal requires assistant professors to have a post-graduate degree in ME or MTech with at least 55% grades. The UGC-NET test is required for assistant professor eligibility. Additional qualifications for assistant professor include an undergraduate degree (NCrF Level 6) with at least 75% marks, a PG degree (NCrF Level 6.5) with at least 55% marks.

2 BSc papers delayed at DU, one test rescheduled

Delhi: Officials stated a Delhi University Bachelor of Science (BSc) paper was postponed and another was delayed for several hours due to late question paper delivery from the department. Officials say the disruptions affected 170 students at Ramjas, Zakir Husain, Deshbandhu, and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya institutions. A new announcement rescheduled the postponed exam for Sunday, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. Two 9:30 am papers, "Electronics Instrumentation" and "Mathematical Physics-I," were affected. Question papers weren't provided till 11:30 am. "The Electronics Instrumentation exam started late, but students had three hours to finish. The pupils had enough time to finish their papers, an official stated. Students protested the delay, therefore the "Mathematical Physics-I" paper was postponed. "Due to their concerns, the paper was rescheduled for January 5 at the same time," the spokesperson said. The official blamed "confusion" and "lack of coordination" between the department and universities for the interruption. He declined additional comment.

Domain experts without teaching experience can become V-Cs under UGC's new draft norms.

Delhi: The University Grants Commission announced draft guidelines for recruiting Vice Chancellors for on, proposing direct appointment of industry experts and senior public sector workers. The current guidelines allow academicians with at least 10 years of experience as a professor or in a prominent research or academic administrative role to be V-Cs, but the draft norms propose that those with 10 years of senior-level experience in industry.

CII paper highlights India's education 'underinvestment' and compares Sweden to China

Delhi: A recent comparative assessment of eight countries' school education systems exposes India's "significant underinvestment" in education. For six years, India's education spending has stuck at 2.7% and 2.9% of GDP, with little increase. To reach global standards, the research recommends raising this to 6%. The Confederation of Indian Industry issued the report last week, titled 'Comparative report of School Education Systems: India, Australia, China, Indonesia, Sweden, Thailand, UK, and USA'. This study examines the education systems of eight developed and rising nations. From 2018 to 2023, the research shows varied education spending



patterns per country. India's allocation remained stagnant at 2.7-2.9 percent of GDP, while developed nations like Sweden (6.7-6.9 percent) and the UK (5.3-5.6 percent) and developing nations like Indonesia (3.7-4.3 percent) and Thailand (4.0-4.3 percent) allocated higher shares to education. Australia had an 8% increase and China 2.4%, while India's spending didn't grow over six years. Indonesia fell 2.8% and Sweden returned to baseline. India's low allocation highlights the need to increase spending to 6% of GDP, the research said. "India's education spending

trajectory shows the need for strategic national investment. The continuous 2.7-2.9% GDP allocation is a major underinvestment compared to worldwide benchmarks, especially in affluent economies paying 5-7% of GDP on education, it stated. The study uses secondary data from government reports, international organizations like the OECD and UNESCO, and academic publications using a strategic sampling approach. The study compares educational structure, funding, curriculum, equity, and vocational training to identify trends, best practices, and lessons India may learn from other nations.

EWS Students at Private Schools Receive SOPs



Delhi: For the 2025-26 academic year, the Delhi Directorate of Education (DoE) has published standard operating procedures (SOPs) to streamline private school admissions for Economically Weaker Section, Disadvantaged Group, and Children with Special Needs. According to a circular, the annual collection of school sanctioned strength data has been posted to the DoE website. The DoE will update its portal with seat openings within seven working days. DDE district-led com-

mittees will hear school seat allocation requests. DoE stated final seat counts will be released and applications invited through a thorough circular. The circular stated that successful applicants will be notified by text, email, or phone after a computerized draw of lots. Instead of schools, zonal authorities will verify documents. The circular stated that 29 RTE-trained zonal teams will review the documents within 10 working days of the draw. Candidates have 15 working days to rectify document inconsistencies. The DoE said non-reported candidates have five further working days to submit paperwork.

4,200 cases, 25cr reimbursements: PVT Univs fee complaints increase

Delhi: Private institutions have become the most frequently complained-about group when it comes to fee-related practices, which emphasizes the need for a more thorough review of their pricing structures. In the last five academic years, 4,257 complaints were settled, leading to refunds of more than Rs 25.5 crore, according to data from the University Grants Commission's (UGC) Fee Nivaran Cell. Given that almost 50% of complaints were submitted in the academic year 2023-2024 alone, this trend indicates a rise in fee-related anomalies across all HEIs. Uttar Pradesh received the most complaints out of all the states, followed by Delhi and Rajasthan. The UGC's e-Samadhaan portal powers the Fee Nivaran Cell, which allows students to lodge complaints and look for solutions. The success of the cell was emphasized by UGC chairperson M Jagadesh Kumar, who mentioned a 97% repayment rate. "It has handled complaints from 32 states and Union Territories, and more than 1,386 female students have received refunds totaling Rs 8.71 crore," he stated. All forms of HEIs—central, state, private, design-

DoE has established guidelines and admission procedures for private school entry-level classes

The Delhi Directorate of Education (DoE) has established guidelines and admission procedures for private school entry-level classes for EWS, underprivileged, and special needs students. Admissions applications will open online on February 3, 2025. The application date is February 19, 2025. Shortlisted applicants' first lot draw is March 3, 2025. EWS/disadvantaged groups (DG) and children with special needs (CWSN) will be admitted to the city's private unaided rec-



ognized schools for nursery, kindergarten (KG), and Class 1. The directorate's rules for EWS and DG pupils' age limits for admission as of March 31

family incomes under Rs 5 lakh are eligible for EWS admission. These families should show their Delhi Revenue Department income proof. Families with BPL or Antyodaya Anna Yojana ration cards can also apply. SC, ST, OBC (Non-Creamy Layer), orphans, transgender, and HIV-positive youngsters are disadvantaged. Students will be chosen by computer lot. Candidates selected for admission will be notified via text, email, or phone.

are 3-5 years for Nursery, 4-6 years for KG, and 5-7 years for Class 1. EWS, DG, and disabled students receive 25% of admissions. Students with

Government school enrollment fell 87 lakh in 2023-24

Delhi: Bihar had the largest dip at 28.9 lakh kids in government schools in 2023-24, according to government data. Private schools are seeing a surge in enrollment, reflecting a reverse movement of pupils who went to public schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall enrollment fell 1.6 crore in 2023-24 from 26.45 crore in 2019-20. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), which assesses the percentage of school-age chil-



dren enrolled at a certain education level, also fell from 94.2 percent to 91 percent. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks 100% GER by 2030.

The data shows a major change in school enrollment. During the same year, private school enrollment climbed from 8.4 crore to 9 crore while government school enrollment declined from 13.62 crore to 12.74 crore. This is the first post-pandemic fall in government school enrollment and a rise in private school enrollment. The pandemic drove approximately 40 lakh pupils from private to government

schools in 2020-21, a trend that continues now. Private schools report lower enrollments. The reduction was attributed to "reverse migration" post-pandemic, with pupils who had attended government schools owing to budgetary restrictions returning to private schools. Some states tried to delete "ghost students" from their records. Enrollment across academic levels has dropped.

Apply now for Bachelor of Science degrees online at IIT Madras; JEE score not necessary

Delhi: Online Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree Programs in Electronic Systems and Data Science and Applications are now accepting applications from interested students at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras). These undergraduate programs offer an alternative to the standard Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), while others are required to complete a four-week online preparatory program and pass an in-person qualifier exam. According to the news release, there are currently more than 38,000 students enrolled in these programs. These students come from a variety of academic backgrounds and include working professionals, career changers, and others. This cohort deviates significantly from the norm for engineering students in that 25% of its members are female and 20% are older than 30.



No Kashmir, Palestine in DU psychology syllabus

Delhi: The Standing Committee on Academic Matters reportedly eliminated the Israel-Palestine conflict, Kashmir crisis, and dating app suicides from DU's psychology syllabus proposal. The study discussed Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, and Israel-Palestine and Kashmir wars. He claimed "Kashmir is resolved" and "we don't need to teach Israel-Palestine". The committee head rejected another proposal to integrate dating app psychology.

NCH eases homoeopathy college teachers' rules

Delhi: The National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH) recently amended MD Homoeopathy rules. NCH tightened post-graduate faculty rules in March 2024. However, these requirements were altered again. Colleges might have one assistant professor, an associate professor, and a professor for each PG specialization. Delhi: provided by the institute after last week's reforms. Since March last year, specialized departments need two associate professors and a professor, according to Careers360. The regulator has also relaxed the guide or



examiner qualification, allowing assistant professors to do so again. Only associate professors or professors might guide in 2024. Entry-level teachers have a student-guide ratio of 11, while associate professors and professors have 2.1 and 3:1, respectively, following

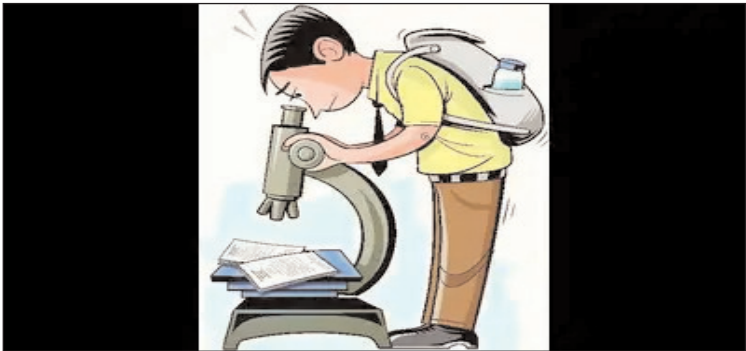
1989 guidelines. A National Medical Commission (NMC) proposal to ease medical college instructor qualifications precedes the reforms. Diploma holders and non-teaching consultants and specialists can become institute faculty under the new draft regulations.

Pete Hegseth or Mike Waltz? Who's to be blamed for the viral Signal war plan leak?

New York Democrats were up in arms against the Donald Trump administration, demanding an investigation into the leak of the government's war plan on a Signal group, which had Atlantic editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg. Goldberg reported his experience of silently watching the group 'exploding' -- in what is being touted as a major security breach. Demands for the resignations of Pete Hegseth and Mike Waltz have been raised, though the White House asserted that the administration does not see it as any breach. New York Times columnist David French called on Hegseth to resign following the breach, accusing him of potentially criminal charges. "I don't know how Pete Hegseth can look service members in the eye. He's just blown his credibility as a military leader," French commented. Pete Hegseth defiantly said no war plan was discussed though Goldberg insisted that there's much that he did not report on. Mike Waltz created the group and added journalist by mistake. While Pete Hegseth stands guilty of sharing the war plan on a Signal group probably being oblivious of who all were added to the group, it was Trump's National Security Advisor Mike Waltz who created the group and 'by mistake' added Goldberg, the Atlantic report confirmed. No one. The Trump administration has made sure that no one faces any heat publicly over the episode, which the White House dismissed as a minor one. "Michael Waltz has learned a lesson, and he's a good man," Trump said Tuesday in a phone interview with NBC News. Trump said one of Michael's people must have added Goldberg to the chat though it had no impact on the military operation at all. Trump said it was the only glitch in two months and that too not a serious one. White House's 3-point statement on chat leak. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Jeffrey Goldberg is well-known for his sensational spin.

Students have the opportunity to check their answer sheets prior to requesting a re-evaluation

Delhi: The CBSE has updated its procedure for communicating with students following the release of exam results in Grades 10 and 12 in an effort to be more open and honest. Before students can request a verification or re-evaluation of their marks, they will be able to acquire photocopies of their graded answer sheets under the new method. This is a change from the previous procedure, which stated that students needed to submit an application for mark verification, then seek photocopies of their answer sheets, and then



submit an application for re-evaluation. "After getting a copy of their graded answers in the first step, candidates have the option to either re-evaluate a question or questions or verify their marks, which involves posting or totaling their marks or any

questions that were not graded. The board stated in a written notice that after acquiring a photocopy of the answer book, a candidate can ask for either a re-evaluation or a verification of marks, or both, according to the proper procedure.

Irish education minister invites Indians for education, research

NEW DELHI: James Lawless, Ireland's Education Minister, on Monday said his country is "very welcoming" for students and has a supportive post-study employment visa arrangement. "Ireland is a very welcoming country. We have a very cosmopolitan culture. We have many nationalities now in Ireland, and many people have made their home, including many, many Indians," the Irish minister said, when asked whether his government is considering any changes in post-study work or immigration policies to retain skilled talents.

A draft measure to monitor budgets, ensure accountability

Delhi: A draft bill to establish rules governing school fees for all public and private schools in the city has been approved by the Delhi government. In order to prevent capricious increases and guarantee equity for parents, the bill, which was adopted by the Delhi cabinet, aims to create a clear and transparent process for school fee structures. According to the draft, schools that raise fees without authorization risk fines of up to Rs 10 lakh and the possibility of having their sta-



tus revoked once the bill becomes law. According to Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, each school will establish a fee regulation committee that will provide parents direct decision-making authority. Committees will be established at the school, district,

and state levels as part of a three-tiered committee structure for appeals pertaining to fee disputes. During talks with Gupta, a number of parents brought up the subject of capricious fee increases by schools, which led to the decision.

Centre withholding funding for states not implementing PM SHRI is unjustified

Delhi: A parliamentary panel report tabled called withholding funds over non-adoption of the flagship PM Schools for Rising India (PM-SHRI) scheme "unjustifiable" and recommended that Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal receive pending funds immediately.



Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal have declined to sign an MoU with the Centre to implement the PM-SHRI project, which intends to modernize 14,500 schools and make them NEP 2020 model institutions. The Centre withheld funds from these states under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan scheme (SSA), a flagship Indian government

initiative to ensure universal elementary education (UEE) for children aged 6 to 14, making free and compulsory education a fundamental right. In its 2025-26 demand for grants report for the Department of School Education & Literacy, chaired by Congress Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children,

A group of educators is against UGC's plan to hold admissions twice a year

Delhi: A group representing educators has spoken out against the University Grants Commission's plan to hold undergraduate and graduate admissions twice a year. The idea was criticized as "impractical and destabilising" in a lengthy letter sent to the UGC chairperson by the Indian National Teachers' Congress (INTEC). "No serious consultation was held with universities or colleges," the letter adds. "What looks like flexibility on paper will, in practice, deeply disrupt the academic framework of higher education institutions," according to



"What looks like flexibility on paper will, in practice, deeply disrupt the academic framework of higher education institutions," according to it. A single admission cycle is already a significant challenge for many institutions. Classes did not begin in July as usual due to the Common University Entrance Test's implementation, which notably pushed back the

start of the academic year to September or October. Professor Pankaj Garg, chair of the INTEC, stated that adding a cycle will further complicate existing delays and disrupt the entire academic year.

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The Anti-Corruption Branch charges AAP's Sisodia and Jain with Rs 2,000 cr corruption

Delhi: The Delhi government's Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) has charged top Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Jain with irregularities in the construction of over 12,000 government school classrooms. The scandal allegedly cost the exchequer Rs 2,000 crore. In the Prevention of Corruption Act case, BJP leaders Harish Khurana, Kapil Mishra, and Neelkanth Bakshi filed complaints. The trio claimed that 12,748 classrooms were built at 24.86 lakh each room, when they should have been built for Rs 5 lakh. A preliminary investigation by ACB chief Madhur Verma found that the project, which had a set cost and a deadline of June 2016, had major cost overruns and delays. "Not a single work was completed within the prescribed period, and significant deviations and cost escalations were observed," Verma. He added that 34 contractors, most of whom were supposedly AAP-affiliated, won project tenders. Initially awarded for Rs 860.63 crore, contract values climbed 17% to 90%.

