RNI No.-HARENG/2022/85403



Loharu

Case lodged against unknown person for issuing threats to Sambhal MP Vatika Times

SAMBHAL: A man allegedly entered Samajwadi Party MP Zia Ur Rehman's house and threatened him, police said on Saturday. A case was lodged in the matter on Friday against an unidentified youth at the Nakhasa police station, circle officer Asmoli Alok Kumar Sidhu told PTI.Kamil, who works at Zia ur Rehman's Deepa Sarai residence, told reporters that a youth came to the Sambhal MP's house on Thursday and threatened him using abusive language, and when people started gathering, he ran away. Based on Kamil's complaint, police filed an FIR under sections 333 (house trespass after preparation for hurt, assault or wrongful reason), 351 (criminal intimidation), 352 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace) of BNS. The matter is being investigated, the CO said. Zia ur Rehman is among those booked in connection with the November 24 violence in which four locals died in a clash with security personnel during a court-ordered survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid. The Lok Sabha MP has said he has been wrongly implicated and that he was not present at the place of the incident.

Earlier this month, the electricity department imposed a fine of Rs 1.91 crore on the SP leader for alleged power theft at his residence. Steps leading up to his house have also been removed as part of an anti-encroachment drive.

India's icy nerves, fiery spirit: Men in Blue lift ICC Champions Trophy



Dubai India emerged victorious in

the 2025 Champions Trophy final, defeating New Zealand by successfully chasing 252 runs with an over to spare at the Dubai International Stadium. Captain Rohit Sharma's initial aggressive performance, backed by crucial contributions from Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul, sealed the memorable win. TimesofIndia.com in Dubai: The moment Ravindra Jadeja made connection he knew it was done. The left-hander was so excited after hitting the winning runs that he ran into New Zealand seamer William O'Rourke. But nobody was complaining.KL Rahul, with another ice-cool hand under pressure, raised his arms and started the celebration. Harshit Rana and Arshdeep Singh were the first ones to sprint to the middle and were followed by

Chakravarthy, Varun Washington Sundar as the senior players celebrated with head coach Gautam Gambhir right outside the change room.The fireworks began, players draped in the tri-colour, the crowd grooved to the tunes of "Lehra do" and "Chak de India" as unbeaten India finished the job with an over to spare in the final of the 2025 Champions Trophy at the Dubai International Stadium. It wasn't a stiff target, 252 runs, but the sluggish surface meant there were just and enough ups downs.There was drama in store during the half-way stage of the chase as after two tight overs, Rohit Sharma decided to jump out of his crease against Rachin Ravindra in the 27th over but made a huge mess and was stumped for a 83-ball 76. The crowd, which had found its voice thanks to the opener's

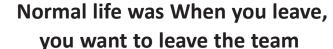
blazing start, was reduced to pin-drop silence as he dragged himself back to the change room.For most of that walk, his head remained down and the thousands in the stands couldn't believe what they just saw. India were reduced to 122/3, from a comfortable 105/0 and the quick wickets brought New Zealand back in the game, thanks to familiar approach the spin choke.India were blazing away during their pursuit of the 252-run target and Rohit walked the intent talk as he went after everything from word go. There hops out of the crease to manufacture strokes, a neat pickup, exquisite cover-drive and some delightful strokes during the half-century which set the tone for the chase. His partner Shubman Gill was happy to play the waiting game from the other end as Rohit continued to farm most of the strike.

Stalin to enlist support of 7 states in delimitation fighta

Vatika Times

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin Sunday decided to send senior DMK functionaries to meet chief ministers and senior politicians from seven states, including BJP-governed Odisha, to rally support for his campaign against Centre's proposed delimitation exercise.

At a meeting with DMK MPs, Stalin assigned responsibility for each of the seven states. Tamal



Vatika Times NEW DELHI: India ended their 12-year ICC ODI title drought in style, defeating New Zealand by four wickets to claim their recordbreaking third ICC Champions Trophy title on Sunday at the Dubai International Stadium. Star batter Virat Kohli, reflecting on the victory, praised the team's depth and asserted that this squad has the potential to dominate world cricket for the next eight years.

"When you leave, you want to leave the team in a better place," Kohli said. "I feel we've got a squad



Nadu IT minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan will engage with Kerala politicians, while DMK MP will head a delegation to West Bengal. State PWD minister E V Velu has been tasked

that's ready to take on the

governed Punjab and Congress-run Telangana and Karnataka.Stalin had last week written to the CMs and other key politicians of these seven states, explaining TN govt's position against population-based delimitation. Calling it "an unfair exercise.

with meeting politicians

of Andhra Pradesh while

industries minister TRB

Rajaa will head for

Odisha.Similar delega-

tions will be sent to AAP-

-

Cold wave to grip North India from Sunday; Delhi sees wettest December

Himachal

also

on

world for the next eight NEW DELHI: The India years. Shubman has been Meteorological outstanding, Shreyas has Department on Sunday played some top knocks, forecasts cold wave KL has finished games, conditions across North and Hardik has been India starting from superb with the bat." Sunday, December 29, India, unbeaten throughas per a statement released by the agency. out the eight-nation tournament held in Pakistan From December 29 to January 1, isolated cold and the United Arab wave conditions will Emirates, chased down affect New Zealand's 252-run Pradesh, while Punjab and Haryana will face target with an over to spare. Skipper Rohit similar conditions until January 3. Jammu and Sharma led from the front, Kashmir, Ladakh, and scoring a crucial 76 off 83 Rajasthan may balls, and forming a steady experience cold wave 105-run opening partnerconditions ship with Shubman December 30 and 31.

Impersonation in govt job exam serious crime, says SC; nixes bail

Vatika Times

NEW DELHI: In a rare step, a pro-liberty Supreme Court cancelled the bail granted by Rajasthan high court to two individuals — a candidate and the person who impersonated for him in an examination for selection to a govt job — terming the offence a crime that undermines public faith in the administration and the executive.During the Assistant Engineer Civil (Autonomous Governance Department) Competitive Examination-2022, a dummy candidate,



completed.Allowing the Rajasthan govt's appeal, a bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said it is aware that once bail is granted by the high court, it is not to be

ordinarily set aside. But the

bail is being cancelled keep-

ing in mind the overall

impact of the alleged acts of

the accused on society, the

bench said.Writing the

judgement, Justice Karol

said there is fierce competi-

tion among candidates to

secure public employment

shut down over protester's death Vatika Times

GUWAHTI: Manipur's restive hills resonated with disquiet on Sunday amid the silence of an indefinite shutdown called by the



Uneasy calm in Manipur as tribal areas

Singsit, who sacrificed his life, as well as to everyone who suffered injuries. We respect everyone who came out to protest for the cause of our people yesterday," ITLF said. "Govt may take our lives, but they can never take away our freedom and rights," the forum said, urging the Kuki-Zo community to remain united.Protesters allowed only emergency traffic through the hill districts. Additional security forces were deployed at Gamgiphai, the gateway to Kangpokpi, and other locations in the district where clashes broke out Saturday. Forces also patrolled NH-2 to ensure unrestricted vehicle movement. Manipur Police wrote on X that 27 security personnel were injured in Saturday's clashes, with two of them in a critical condition.

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

CHANDIGARH: Punjab and Haryana HC has ordered that a disability pension be granted to the legal heirs of a soldier who was discharged on medical grounds for neurosis which manifested as recurrent nightmares after his lover killed herself, reports Ajay Sura.

A division bench comprising Justice Sureshwar Thakur and Justice Sudeepti Sharma passed these orders recently while allowing a plea filed by a former Indian Army gunner from Punjab's Hoshiarpur. The petitioner, who had moved HC in 2020, died on May 14, 2021, during the pendency of the case, which was represented by his legal heirs after his death. The soldier was enrolled in the Indian Army on July 30, 1971., in a fit state of health and was invalided out of service from March 3, 1979

Salman , took the test for the real candidate, Indraj Singh. Police registered a case against both and the trial court rejected their bail plea. However, the HC granted them bail considering that the real candidate did not get selected, both had no criminal antecedent, and the investigation had been

Afghan forces hit back after deadly Pakistani airstrikes

in India.

Vatika Times

Afghanistan's defence ministry reported launching retaliatory strikes on Pakistani positions after Pakistan's recent airstrikes in Paktika province caused significant casualties, including women and children. The Taliban claimed their response targeted militant hideouts used to plan attacks in Afghanistan, while Pakistan insisted the Taliban are not sufficiently curbing cross-border militant activities. A Pakistani paramilitary soldier died and seven others sustained injuries during cross-border fire exchanges with Afghan forces, according to a security source on Saturday. Meanwhile, hundreds of Afghans demonstrated against the deadly Pakistani air strikes carried out last

Tuesday that sparked the clashes. Officials from both nations reported sporadic fighting, including the use of heavy armaments, occurring overnight between border forces along the frontier sep-

arating Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and Afghanistan's Khost province. These exchanges of fire followed accusations by Afghanistan's Taliban authorities that Pakistan had caused 46 fatalities, mostly

women, i n air strikes near the border in Paktika province this week.A senior Pakistani security source indicated they had targeted "terrorist hideouts", although Islamabad has not formally acknowledged.

conducting the bombardment.."One frontier corps (FC) soldier has been reported dead, and seven others have been injured," a senior security source at the border informed AFP, noting that clashes occurred in at least two locations in Pakistan's Kurram border district. The Afghan defence ministry said on X that "several

points" across the Pakistani border "where the attacks in Afghanistan were organised were targeted in retaliation".

Council Kuki-Zo in Kangpokpi,

Churachandpur, Tengnoupal, Pherzawl and tribal-dominant other areas after weekend clashes with security personnel left a Kuki protester dead and over 20 injured.

shutdown since The Saturday night, supported by the Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF), was called in protest against the crackdown on Kuki tribals opposed to the resumption of civilian traffic between the hills and the valley after more than 18 months. The Kuki-Zo Council and ITLF are also sticking to their demand for a separate administra-

Who is Mark Carney? Canada's new Liberal leader and next PM amid rising Trump trade war

Vatika Times

Canada Mark Carney was appointed as the new leader of Canada's Liberal Party and the

country's next prime minister, replacing Justin Trudeau amid rising public dissatisfaction. The former central banker will now lead the party in the upcoming general elections and handle Ottawa's response to challenges from US President Donald Trump.Carney secured a decisive victory in the Liberal Party leadership race, winning 85.9 percent of the votes cast. The leadership contest within the Liberal Party began after Trudeau declared his resignation in early January, following internal party opposition and Freeland's departure from the cabinet.Carney has previously positioned himself as the ideal counter to Trump's disruptions.



tion for the hill districts. Uneasy calm in Manipur as tribal areas shut down over protester's death **Traffic suspended**

The clashes occurred in Kangpokpi when protesters tried to block vehicular movement between the valley and hills, defying home minister Amit Shah's recent directive to restore free movement.

Traffic between Manipur hills & vallev remains suspended

While no violence was

reported on Sunday, traffic between the hills and valley remained suspended. Protesters burned tyres and blocked roads with boulders and makeshift barricades, all of which were cleared by security forces."The Centre's decision to allow free movement of Meiteis through the Kuki-Zo area led to the agitation in Kangpokpi. Security forces used excessive force on the protesters... ITLF extends its deepest respects to Lalgouthang

Elon Musk on Starlink turning off terminals in Ukraine: To be extremely clear ...

Vatika Times Ukraine

Elon Musk has strongly refuted claims that Starlink turning off terminals in Ukraine. In a post on Twitter, Elon Musk said that that no matter how much he disagreed on Ukraine policy, Starlink would never turn off its terminals. "Exactly! To be extremely clear, no matter how much I disagree with the Ukraine policy, Starlink will never turn off its termi-

nals. I am simply stating that, without Starlink, the Ukrainian lines would collapse, as the Russians can jam all other communications! We would never do such a thing or use it as a bargaining chip," wrote Musk. Elon Musk made the statement responding to a post that claimed that Elon Musk has threatened to shut down Starlink for Ukraine. "The US's betrayal is becoming more and more cata-

strophic. His hypocrisy about stopping the meat grinder is pure lies. Why has he NEVER put pressure on the attacker, russia? ask him," wrote Jurgen Nauditt. As per his Twitter bio, Nauditt is Managing Director, Franchisor international education company. Elon Musk: I literally challenged user who claimed that Elon did not criticise Russian President Vladimir Putin.



EDITORIAL

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Editorial

The Myanmar chapter is currently in the doldrums

Ritu Walia

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

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

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

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

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

How the answer to limiting climate change might lie in farms?

Deepesh Sharma

"The biggest challenge to limiting climate change to 2 degrees Celsius, the upper target of the 2015 Paris agreement, is this: methane emissions are rising very fast," says Euan Nisbet, a professor of earth sciences at Royal Holloway University.

If each CO2 molecule is like a candle that patiently warms the atmosphere, methane is like an exploding bomb: responsible for much more heat, but over a much shorter timescale. Satellites are identifying the methane that's leaking from oil wells and gas pipelines, and most countries have at least promised to reduce these emissions by a third by 2030. But if humanity is to throw the brakes on runaway climate change, something

has to be done about the biggest human source of methane there is: agriculture.

This roundup of The Conversation's climate coverage comes from our award-winning weekly climate action newsletter. Every Wednesday, The Conversation's environeditor ment writes Imagine, a short email that goes a little deeper into just one climate issue. Join 40,000+ readers the who've subscribed.

Controlling methane emissions

Earth's atmosphere is warmer and wetter than it otherwise be, would thanks to fossil fuel burning. This is inducing wetlands, once a reliable car-

bon store, to emit more pinch methane to the atmossources. phere, and so speed up climate change, Nisbet says. This makes it even more urgent to tamp down the methane sources under our immediate control. Nisbet has calculated that roughly 210 million to 250 million tonnes of methane come from agriculture and its products. Most of this is in the breath of livestock animals and their manure, and food rotting in landfills. "Cutting agricultural methane emissions involves a wide range of relatively cheap measures that need good design and management, but could cut food-related emissions substantially over the next decade," Nisbet says. Adding a layer of soil to a landfill provides habitat for methane-munching bacteria. Covering manure storage tanks, banning the burning of crop waste and only flooding rice paddies when necessary could

other methane

Reducing food waste would also cut methane emissions. Reuters

These aren't expensive or difficult changes, Nisbet says. It might cost more to vaccinate cattle or breed them to produce more female calves, however. The point with both measures is to have smaller herds for the same quantity of beef and milk.Lower consumer demand would also shrink these methane mobs (here's where you come in, dear reader). If more of our essential nutrients like protein came from beans instead of meat, our health would benefit along with the climate. While nutritionists and environmental scientists urge us to eat more fruit and vegetables, the global food system is stacked against this outcome.Globally, every fifth dollar of public farming

ing meat. In the intensively farmed UK where I live, 85 per cent of farmland is devoted to livestock and the crops that feed them. Yet these captive animals are the source of less than one third of our calories. "The longer the livestockintensive system prevails, the greater the environmental, economic and social costs," savs Benjamin Selwyn, a professor of international development at the University of Sussex.

A green new deal

Selwyn favours a "green new deal" that would make farming "complement rather than undermine the environment".What does that look like? Fewer cows, more woodland and more crops grown for human consumption, Selwyn says. This is essentially what government advisers recently proposed to keep the UK on track for net zero emissions.To nudge subsidy goes towards rear- the food system in this

direction, researchers like Yi Li, a senior lecturer in marketing at Macquarie University, are testing the effect of labels on meal choices. In Australia, where Li is based, meat accounts for half of all greenhouse gas emissions from products consumed at home. Producing 1kg of beef may emit 60kg of greenhouse gas, while the same quantity of peas yields just 1kg of emissions. But Li found consumers weren't always savvy to the gulf in emisbetween sions the two."Our label creates a mental link between a food source and its carbon impact," she says."When a consumer sees high carbon scores and red traffic lights appearing more frequently on meat and other animal products, they begin to make the connection between those products and higher emissions." While better informed consumers are important, the food system needs deeper reform.

"Many conceptions of the protein transition from animal sources to more plant products ignore the necessity of improving farmers' and agricultural workers' incomes. But this will be crucial," Selwyn says.

Just as oil and gas workers will need financial support and training opportunities to ply their skills in a lowcarbon energy sector, farm workers will need security and guidance to adapt to new forms of food production, says Alex Heffron.

How a gas pipeline helped Russia mount a rear strike against Ukrainian troops in Kursk

Who was St. Francis of Assisi, whom the Pope has named himself after?

Abhimanyu Sharma Pope Francis has been in hospital to dedicate himself entirely to God by ince February 14, making it the embracing a life of simplicity. The longest hospitalisation of his 12-year papacy. ving treatment for pneumonia. Initially, he was treated for bronchitis before being diagnosed with pneumonia in both lungs. The 88year-old pontiff, who has a chronic lung condition and had part of one lung removed in his youth, suffered two respiratory crises on Monday, slowing his recovery. By Tuesday, he was breathing with the assistance of supplemental oxygen after experiencing breathing difficulties the previous day, but he resumed using a ventilation mask at night, according to the Vatican.In an update on Wednesday, the Vatican said that the pope had slept well and remained in a stable condition As Pope Francis entered another week in hospital, hundreds of pilgrims travelled to a hilltop town to pray at the tomb of St. Francis, the medieval saint after whom the pontiff is named. Groups from the United States, Ukraine, and various parts of Italy made their way through the town, where the grey and brown stone buildings have changed little since the saint's birth over 840 years ago. They said they were inspired by St. Francis' dedication to the poor, peace, and nature - values that also shape the priorities of the pope and the Franciscans, one of the largest religious orders in the Catholic Church. "The life of St. Francis teaches that holiness comes from letting go of oneself, freeing ourselves from attachments in this world, and offering everything to the Lord," Rev. Paul Vu, who was in early March with a group of 50 Vietnamese-American parishioners from Santa Ana, California, told The Associated Press. Francis was born in 1182 into a wealthy family in Assisi, a town above a fertile valley in central Italy. While praying before a crucifix, he heard a

call to reform the church and sought Santuario della Spogliazione, meaning "stripping," is a modest stone church on the hillside. It stands on the site where Francis renounced all his possessions, even his clothing, in front of his father, who then disowned him

Swati

A gas worker walks between pipes in a compressor and distribution station of the Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhgorod gas pipeline, some 30 km (19 miles) from the south western Russian city of Kursk, January 4, 2006. File Image/Reuters Russian special forces used an underground gas pipeline to infiltrate Ukrainian positions and launch a rear assault vided a concealed passage for in the Kursk region, a key battleground in Moscow's efforts to reclaim territory lost to Ukraine's surprise cross-border offensive. According to Ukraine's military and Russian war bloggers, Russian operatives walked approximately 15 kilometres (9

miles) inside the pipeline, navigating through narrow tunnels before emerging behind Ukrainian lines near the strategic border town of Sudzha. The covert manoeuvre,

which allowed them to bypass Ukrainian defences undetected, highlights Russia's evolving battlefield tactics in a conflict that has increasingly relied on unconventional warfare.

Pipeline as a stealth route

The gas pipeline, once a major route for Russian natural gas exports to Europe via Ukraine, pro-Russian special forces. War blogger Yuri Podolyaka, who is pro-Kremlin and Ukrainian-born, claimed on Telegram that some Russian troops had spent several days inside the pipeline before launching their assault. Another war blogger, known as Two Majors, described intense battles around Sudzha, saying Russian forces had entered the town through the pipeline. Russian Telegram channels circulated photos purporting to show special.

A hundred and twenty years later, historians remain sceptical

Suman Singh

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

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

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

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

Accepted into the church by the bishop, he became a champion of the poor and later founded the Franciscan order, which remains active worldwide. For Assisi's current bishop, Rev. Domenico Sorrentino, Francis' rejection of material wealth also reflected his deep appreciation for creation and peace. ing himself, came back to nature in some sense. So we must receive nature as a gift of God, and respect thDuring the Crusades, Francis developed a friendship with a Muslim sultan, and their conversations are still regarded as a model of interfaith dialogue. Decades later, St. John Paul II promoted this spirit by bringing religious leaders from around the world to Assisi to promote unity. "Assisi is the place to pray for peace in the world and inside of ourselves," said Elizabeth Nuñez, a Passionist sister from Colombia, who was visiting on a recent pilgrimage. After being elected, a pope chooses a name to adopt for his papacy. Jorge Mario Bergoglio picked Francis in 2013. "He explained it in a very simple way, that he chose Francis' name because he's the man of peace, of the poor, of brotherhood. The man who loves and respects creation," said the Rev. Enzo Fortunato, who spent 30 years in Assisi and now leads the Vatican's committee on World Children's Day. "It's a name that contains a life programme." Several of the pope's encyclicals - teaching documents for the church - pulled from Franciscan themes and quotes, including one about building a more inclusive church.

STATE

Will provide relief to the citizens of Sector 6 from their problems: Ajmer Lathar

Praveen Walia

Karnal: A meeting of Citizen Welfare Association Sector 6, Urban Estate Executive was concluded in Sector 6 Main Market. The meeting was chaired by President Ajmer Singh Lathar. Mr. Lathar welcomed all the members present in the meeting and mentioned the problems of the sector and said that the hanging electricity wires are inviting accidents, while on the other hand, while paying electricity bills in the electricity board office and while getting duplicate electricity bills, the citizens are forced to stand in the sun and rain. There is no shed here. No competent officer is present to solve the ble. Stray dogs and mon- causing trouble to the peo- engaged in cleaning the



problem, due to which the keys roaming in every ple. citizens face a lot of trou-street of the sector are The cleaning workers not come regularly for

cleaning. Apart from this, the meeting discussed about solving the problems like employees demanding money in case of sewerage blockage. Giving information, Lathar said that two members of the executive have been assigned the responsibility to solve these problems. Mr. Lathar said that he will try to get all the problems solved. Apart from this, the outline of the programs to be conducted in future was also discussed. On this occasion, Ajmer Singh Lathar, Jitendra Kumar Baliyan, Vijay Sharma, Harish Chandra Gulati, Rajbir Singh, Awadhesh Gupta, Mahesh Kumar Gupta, Pala

Ram, Janak Singh, OP Garg, Miss Ranju Singh, Suresh Kumar Tuteja, and Suresh Kamboj were present.



Hundreds of empty bullet shells found in Bhakra Canal

Jasbir Singh Duggal Kurukshetra: Hundreds of empty bullet shells have been recovered from the Bhakra Canal near Mirzapur village. Police reached the spot after receiving the information and recovered the empty bullet shells, starting further



investigation. Diver Pragat Singh said that he was conducting a search operation in the canal when he suddenly saw hundreds of empty bullet shells near Mirzapur. He immediately informed the police, who recovered the shells from the canal. Police officials present at the spot said that it is a matter of investigation as to where such a large number of empty bullet shells came from. Only after the investigation will the truth be revealed.

Ashwini Vaishnaw on met **OpenAl CEO**

NEW DELHI: Union minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on met OpenAI CEO Sam Altman to discuss India's strategy for developing a comprehensive artificial intelligence (AI) ecosystem.Following the meeting, Vaishnaw posted on X: "Had super cool discussion with Sam Altman on our strategy of creating the entire AI stack – GPUs, model, and apps. Willing to collaborate with India on all three." A Positive Move for Innovation and StartupsA Great Step for Technological Growth.

Army conducts firepower exercise of units deployed

NEW DELHI: The Army has conducted a major firepower exercise of its 33 Corps, which defends the frontier with China in Sikkim and the strategically-vulnerable Siliguri Corridor in the eastern sector.

"The Trishakti (33) Corps successfully conducted the live fire exercise validating its battle readiness, rapid deployment, and precision strike tional environments. Through the capabilities," an Army officer said on Tuesday. The units under the 33 Corps, which has its headquarters at Sukna in West Bengal, have been specifically preparing for battle in the high-altitude mountains of Sikkim, showcasing their adaptabili-

coordinated firepower and precision engagement exercise, which was held in training areas where a wide array of weapons can be fired to their full strike range, the units demonstrated their preparedness for a variety of challenges, including ty and readiness for diverse opera- those posed by high-altitude war-

fare, the officer said."The exercise underscores the Army's commitment to maintaining high standards of efficiency, agility, and mission readiness, regardless of the terrain," he added. The weapons used in the exercise ranged from the indigenous Pinaka multi-launch artillery rocket systems.

International Sarv Sanjha Sahit Manch Canada organized a Trilingual Poet Darbar

Vatika Times Chandigarh: International Sarv Sanjha Sahit Manch Canada today organized an International Trilingual Poet Darbar at the auditorium of Government Museum, and Art Gallery, Picture Gallery, Sector 10. The chief guest of program was the Sahitkar Shiromani Manjit Indira, poet renowned Gurdeep Professor Gul, senior writer Prem Vij were present as special guests. The program started with Surjit Singh Dhir's Gurbani singing. The



program was conduct- present on this occa- Dr. ed by Dr. Harmeet sion. Renowned writer Sukhwinder Kaur Meet and Surjit Prem Vij, Dr. Vinod Shayar Bhatti Kaur Bhogpur. Daljit Sharma, Singh Gaidu, Jarnail 'Gul', Manjit Indira, Singh Matharu and Prem Vij, Dr. Gurvinder Kaur Sidhu, Deepak Kulwant Kaur Gaidu Sharma Chanarthal, International from Sarv Sanjha Sahit Rajender Manch, Canada were Paramjit Kaur Param,

Anish Garg, Ahi. Rekha Gurdeep Mittal, Jaswinder Kaur Jassi, Deep Ludhianvi, Parminder Kaur and Rajvinder Kaur received great appre-Kaur, ciation for their poems.

Inadequate stretching and warm-up can lead to muscle strain: Dr. Jain

Jasbir Singh Duggal Kurukshetra: Dr. Himanshu Jain, Brain and Spine Neurosurgeon at D.R. Jain Neurocare and Multispecialty Hospital, Kurukshetra, said that muscle strain can occur due to lifting heavy weights or overexertion, sudden running, bending, or twisting, prolonged periods of inactivity, inadequate stretching and warm-up,



prevent muscle explained that symp- To toms of muscle strain strain, Dr. Jain advised: may include pain and Warm up properly swelling in the affected before exercise or heavy area, difficulty moving, activity, Eat a balanced weakness and stiffness diet rich in protein, minin the muscles, and mild erals, and adequate water, Maintain good or severe pain that can worsen over time. posture while sitting,

standing, and sleeping, Avoid sudden jerks and perform heavy activities gradually, Apply cold compresses for immediate relief from pain. Dr. Jain emphasized that if pain persists or swelling increases, one should consult a specialist immediately. The 1986th free medical camp was organized under the leadership of Ayurveda expert Dr. Sanjay Sharma, where 137 patients received consultation, check-ups, blood sugar tests, pulse rate hemoglobin checks, tests, and free medication.

dehydration, and nutritional deficiencies. Dr. Jain was speaking at a free medical camp at B.R. organized Ambedkar Bhawan in Ramgarh village. He

Brahma Kumaris organization is doing excellent work in establishing moral values globally : Distt. Session Judge

Jasbir Singh Duggal Kurukshetra: On the occasion of International Women's Day, a program was organized at the Brahma Kumaris Vishwa Ishwariya Vidyalaya,

Kurukshetra, on the topic "Contribution of Women in Building a Value-Based Society". District Session Judge Dr. Neelima Sangla was the chief guest, while Zila Parishad Chairperson Kawaljeet Kaur, Professor Anita Dua from Kurukshetra University, and social worker Nishi Gupta were special guests. Dr. Neelima Sangla said that the Brahma Kumaris organization is doing excellent work in establishing moral values globally.

cess.

selves.

She emphasized the importance of moral values in society, saying that today's



society has become transforming society. valueless in pursuit of She said that when material comforts. Zila women change them-Parishad Chairperson selves, the entire world changes auto-Kawaljeet Kaur said that women have matically. The program made significant conincluded a film presentributions in every tation showcasing the field and have reached history and activities the pinnacle of sucof the Brahma Kumaris organization, medita-She emphasized the tion sessions, and perneed for women to sonal experiences shared by Professor recognize their strengths and not Anita Dua and Brahma underestimate them-Kumari Dr. Parveen Rajyogini Mahajan. The event

Brahma Kumari Saroj, concluded with a medthe center in-charge, itation session and a highlighted the imporvote of thanks by tance of women in Brahma Kumari Reena.

LIVA Miss Diva 2024 Announces **Its Winners**

Vatika Times **NEW DELHI : The LIVA** Miss Diva 2024 Grand Finale was an unforgettable night of fashion, glamour, talent, and empowerment, spotlighting India's most promising stars in beauty, fashion design, and content creation. LIVA, the 100% naturalorigin fabric brand from the house of Birla Cellulose, renowned for its unmatched fluidity, softness, and breathability, proudly joined Miss Diva as the title sponsor for the fifth consecutive year. This collaboration has been effortless, as both brands champion independent women who are unrestricted, spontaneous, and versatile. The showpiece witnessed the crowning Ayushree Malik as Miss LIVA Diva Supranational 2024 and Vipra Mehta as LIVA Miss Diva Cosmo 2024. These exception-

al women will proudly represent India on the global stage at Miss Supranational 2025 and Miss Cosmo 2025, respectively, carrying forward the nation's illustrious legacy in international pageantry. The evening also marked a historic milestone, unveiling the first-ever winners in two brand-new categories. Sudhruti Padhiary from Odisha was declared LIVA Miss Diva Fashion Designer 2024, while Ananya Praveen from Bihar won the title of LIVA Miss Diva Content

Creator 2024. Their victories underscore the evolution of LIVA Miss Diva, celebrating not just runway excellence but also creativity, craftsmanship, and digital influence in the ever-expanding fashion industry.

star-studded The evening was hosted by the stunning Nehal Chudasama and the charismatic Tanuj Virwani, who kept the audience engaged with their wit and charm. 24 finalists, comprising the Top 8 from each category, took center stage in a breathtaking

display of style, confidence, and ingenuity. The show opened with a mesmerizing fashion round, where finalists graced the ramp in an exclusive collection by celebrated designer Mandira Wirk. The showcase, a blend of confidence, elegance, and effortless luxury, set the tone for a night of unparalleled sophistication. The esteemed jury panel featured an

ensemble of industry stalwarts, including mentors Ritika Khatnani (LIVA Miss Diva Beauty Queen 2024), Sonaakshi Raaj (LIVA Miss Diva Fashion Designer 2024), and Bhavana Singh (LIVA Miss Diva Content Creator 2024), alongside celebrity designer

Mandira Wirk, actor Fardeen Khan, Miss Cosmo 2024 Ketut Permata Juliastrid, and Miss Supranational 2023 Andrea Aguilera. It marks a continuatio.

Met museum head talks art of repatriation and relevance

Vatika Times

It's not easy running one of the world's largest museums with more than 1.5 million works spanning 5,000 years. And certainly not easy amidst heightened scrutiny over looted objects and mounting pressure for repatriation. Max Hollein-who took charge of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met), New York as director in 2018 and CEO last July-knows this all too well. Fresh from signing an MoU with India's Ministry of Culture, being "blown away" by the Sanchi Stupa, Jantar Mantar and the Kanheri Caves and ahead of delivering a lecture at the CSMVS on Friday, Hollein remained composed as he sat down for a chat about policing its art and artefacts with a problematic past recent restitutions and keeping the museum relevant in an age of sensory overload. What kind of collaborations do you foresee with the signing of the MoU with India's culture ministry

NEWSPOINT

CM Naib Singh Saini honoured DC Neha Singh and PO Baljit Kaur by giving them a letter of appreciation

Jasbir Singh Duggal Kurukshetra: Deputy Commissioner Neha Singh said that the Women and Child Development

Department in Kurukshetra district has done commendable work in improving the upbringing of children below 6 years of age. Due to this achievement, Kurukshetra has got the second position in the state. For this, Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini himself honoured them by giving a letter of appreciation and a cheque of one lakh rupees. For this, the District Program Officer of Women and Child Development Department Baljit Kaur and her team have been congratulated and wished by the government and the administration. The important aspect is that Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini honoured the three best districts with the



bringing program International

Panchkula yesterday. this program, Deputy Commissioner Neha Singh was honored with one lakh rupees and a letter of appreciation for securing second position in the state. District Program Officer of Women and Child Department Baljeet Kaur was also present during this felicitation ceremony. Not only this, PO Baljeet Kaur has done a good job in improving the sex ratio by working for 3 years

Nutrition Award for and 6 months in maximum Yamuna Nagar. Due to improvement in the which Yamunanagar nutritional status of has been awarded the children below 6 years first of age in the state level improving the sex ratio. The Deputy on Women's Day in that in the age group of

0 to 6 years, there are a total of 67640 children including 4871 in Babain of Kurukshetra, 8435 in Ladwa, 13435 in Pehowa, 15115 in Shahbad. 18229 in Thanesar rural and 6955 Thanesar urban. All these children are being provided all facilities as per the rules of the government. Work is being done with special focus on the health check-up, food and other activities of these children.

'Body stuck in machine, only hand visible': Rescue team recovers one body inside collapsed tunnel

NEW DELHI: The rescue team on Sunday recovered one body from the Srisailam Left Bank Canal (SLBC) tunnel which collapsed on February 22, trapping eight workers. The body was found stuck in a machine with only hand visible, the officials said.

"We found one dead body stuck in the machine, with only the hand visible. The rescue teams are currently cutting the machine to retrieve the stuck body,' an official informed. PollWhat Should Be the Top Priority in Tunnel Construction Safety? Advanced Rescue PreparednessStricter Safety Regulations Meanwhile, the Kerala cadaver dog squad, brought in to aid the rescue efforts, has discovered human remains inside the tunnel. Here are top developments in the story: Cadaver dogs detect foul



smell As the rescue operation reached 17th day, the cadaver dogs were deployed inside the partially collapsed SLBC tunnel. Telangana irrigation and civil supplies minister Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the dogs detected a strong odour at a specific location, suggesting the presence of three individuals. He assured that the government would extend

full support to the families of the missing workers. The minister also assessed the ongoing dewatering and desilting efforts, confirming that

further updates would follow after a review on March 11.

Robotic technology deployed

Reddy on Saturday announced that robotic technology had been brought in to speed up the rescue operations to locate the trapped workers.

Describing the incident as a national disaster, he stressed that the state government was leveraging

advanced global technology to tackle challenges in the final stretch of the 14-kilometre tunnel.

Over 1.6 crore Jio subscribers leave in four months

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

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

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

Four labourers suffocate to death while cleaning water tank

position

children

Commissioner

for

said

in

Mumbai: Four labourers lost their lives due to suffocation while cleaning a water tank at an under-construction building in Mumbai's Nagpada area on Sunday, officials said. The fifth worker survived and is currently undergoing treatment at JJ Hospital."Five persons entered the tank and fell unconscious. They were rescued by fire brigade personnel and rushed to JJ Hospital, where doctors declared four dead on arrival," a civic official told PTI. The deceased were identified as Hasipal Shaikh (19), Raja Shaikh (20), Jiaulla Shaikh (36), and



on Dimtimkar Road.The police have registered an accidental death report (ADR) and launched an investigation to determine whether safety protocols were followed."A probe has begun to find out lapses, if investigation. any, on the part of those who hired the five and whether safety protocols were adhered to. Action will follow as per the findings.

NCLAT accepts Sapphire Media's Big 92.7 FM purchase Delhi:

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

NCLAT Bench Chair Justice Ashok Bhushan and Technical Member Barun

Yet another IndiGo A321 suffers tail strike during landing

NEW DELHI: An IndiGo Airbus A321 (VT-IBI) suffered a tail strike while landing in Chennai on Saturday, and the aircraft was now grounded there for checks. The airline which has seen multiple tail strikes on this longer version of A320 family of planes reported the latest one to authorities and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board (AAIB) is probing the same.The aircraft was operating on the Mumbai-Chennai route on Saturday when it suffered the tail strike on Saturday.



In a statement, IndiGo craft is our top priority. said: "On March 8, 2025, an IndiGo Airbus A321 aircraft tail touched the runway during landing at Chennai airport. The aircraft is grounded and will be back in operations post necessary repairs and clearance. At IndiGo, the strike last Sept and was safety of our cus- grounded since then till tomers, crew, and air- about a month.

We operate with the highest standards of safety. We regret any inconvenience caused to our customers due to subsequent cancellations due to this grounding."Incidentally , the same aircraft VT-IBI had suffered a tail

Imandu Shaikh (38), while the survivor, Purhan Shaikh (31), is being treated at Ward No 4 of the hospital.

According to officials, the incident occurred around 12.30pm at the Bismillah Space building

of the probe," an official from JJ

on-site as part of the ongoing Friends and families of the victims gathered at JJ Hospital's casualty ward, expressing grief and anger. Some family members alleged that the tank had not been cleaned for two years.

Marg police station told PTI.

Corporation (BMC) officials,

along with Mumbai Fire Brigade

personnel and local police, are

Municipal

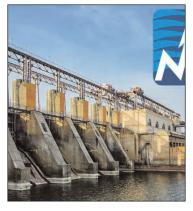
Brihanmumbai

Mitra said, "After considering the submissions, we find no grounds to interfere with the NCLT's order dated May 6, 2024, and consequently, the appeals are dismissed."

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

Delhi: NHPC Ltd.'s chairman and managing director Raj Kumar Chaudhary announced that the country's largest hydropower company will invest Rs 5,500 crore in a 1,000-megawatt solar power project in Bihar. At the Bihar Business Connect 2024 investor forum, the business and

state government signed an investment MoU. "We have proposed to invest Rs 5,500 crore in setting up a 1,000 MW solar power project," stated. The project might be launched in 1.5-2 years after land purchase. Land is essential for solar



projects. He urged the state government to help acquire land so we could finish the project on schedule. The company's website says it has roughly 7 gigawatts of active hydropower projects and 9.3 under construction. Chaudhary said NHPC plans to build a modest solar plant to create green hydrogen. "The green hydrogen produced will be used to power passenger buses," stated.

When burned, green hydrogen creates no carbon and just water, making it the cleanest energy source. He stated NHPC will fund the green hydrogen bus. The state government will administer it as part of the government's sustainable energy plan.

Calm but tensed: Indefinite strike brings Manipur to standstill on day 2

NEW DELHI: Dav-today life came to a standstill in the Kukidominated areas in Manipur on Sunday after a retaliatory indefinite strike was enforced against the "crackdown by security forces." Although no fresh violence has been reported, the situation in the state's Kangpokpi district remained calm but tense.

This comes a day after at least one person died while 40 were injured in clashes between Kuki demonstrators and security forces protesting free movement along all roads in the ethnic strife-torn state. Here are the top developments in the recent crisis of the northeast-

ern state **Businesses** closed; locals asked to stay put In Manipur's Kukidominated areas in Churachandpur and



Tengnoupal, protestors burnt tyres and blocked roads with boulders. The roads were, however, cleared later by the security forces. Meanwhile, shops and

other business establishments remained closed and few vehicles were seen plying the roads in Kuki-dominated areas in the state. Protestors also asked locals to remain indoors.Additional security forces have been deployed in Gamghiphai and other parts of the district along the NH-2 (Imphal-Dimapur

Road) and vehicular patrolling was being conducted to ensure law and order, a disseized

trict official said. Large cache of arms The state police recovered weapons, ammunition, explosives, and

various military-grade equipment during security force operations on March 7. Manipur Police in a press release shared the details, "Search operations and area domination were conducted by security forces in the fringe and vulnerable areas of hill and valley

'Tough challenges in safeguarding territorial integrity'

NEW DELHI: China on Sunday justified it increasing defence expenditure citing the tough challenges on the borders in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Defence spokesperson Sr. Co. Wu Qian claimed that the increased amount will be used to develop new-domain forces with the latest combat capabilities and joint strikes by its armed forces amid the ongoing standoffs with India and in South China sea. "The Chinese military faces tough challenges in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity," Wu said during the ongoing annual parliament session.Wu further added that the increased expenditure will be used to develop new-domain forces with new combat capabilities and to enhance systems and capacity for reconnaissance and

early warning, joint strikes, battlefield support and integrated logistics support. The spending will also be put into improving military training under combat conditions and deepening national defence and military Accoring to Wu, when reform. Earlier on Wednesday, Chinese Premier Li Qiang announced that China's planned defense expenditure for this year is 1.784665 trillion yuan (approximately USD 249 billion). China has the world's second-largest military budget, following the US, whose latest defense spending pro-

posal stood at over USD 890 billion, as put former forward by President Donald Trump.Last year, China increased its defense budget by 7.2 percent, bringing it to about USD 232 billion (1.67 trillion yuan).

compared to major military powers like the US, China's defense spending remains relatively low in terms of GDP share, national fiscal expenditures, per capita defense spending, and expenditure per service member. Tuesday, Lou On Qinjian, spokesperson for the National People's Congres.



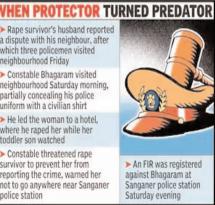
STATE

Constable had it all planned, says rape survivor's husband

Jaipur: The husband of the 27-year-old pregnant woman who was allegedly raped by a police constable in a hotel room in the city Saturday has said Bhagaram, the 48year-old accused, have seemed to meticulously planned the assault.

Speaking to Sunday about the events leading up to the crime, the woman's husband, a daily-wage labourer, said her ordeal started from a dispute the couple had with a neighbour Friday and reported the matter to police. "The neighbour hit me with an iron rod Friday. After we

reported the matter to police, three policeincluding men, Bhagaram, arrived in our neighbourhood to investigate. They left after making inquiries, but the next morning (Saturday), Bhagaram called me and asked me to leave for work. He said police would arrest the neighbour that day, and I might be taken into custody if I was around. So I



left," said the hus-

band. After he left for work, Bhagaram allegedly visited their home, partially concealing his police uniform with a civilian shirt. "He apparently wanted to confirm that I had left and that my wife was alone. He stayed only for a few minutes before leaving but called my wife soon after, asking her to come with him to the police station to record her statement," said the husband.The woman took her young son along as she sat on the bike Bhagaram rode, and she got suspicious when he took a different route, said her husband. "When she

objected, he reassured her that he had some police-related work and would take her to the police station soon afterward. So she kept quiet," he added.A police officer investigating the case said Bhagaram checked in at the hotel on Shyopur Road showing his police identification and telling the staff there he brought a witness who was unwell and needed to change clothes. Once inside the hotel room, he

allegedly turned violent, slapped the woman, gagged her with a towel and raped her while her toddler son watched. He left with her after about 20 minutes.

Janitor at SMS Hospital sexually assaults minor girl

Jaipur: A janitor at Sawai Singh (SMS) Man Hospital has been accused of sexually assaulting a minor girl who was accompanying her elder sister in the hospital's neurology ward. According to the FIR registered Saturday, the alleged incident took place on March 6 when girl's sister and other family members went for a laboratory test, leaving her alone with the 30year-old janitor.

The complaint was lodged by the 15-yearold girl's mother at SMS police station. She alleged that Jacky Valmiki, employed as a sanitation worker in the hospital's neurology

ward, engaged in indeprompting her to lodge cent acts and made lewd an FIR under the Protection of Children remarks towards her from Sexual Offences daughter.

"The mother said in her complaint the accused, Jacky Valmiki, performed obscene acts and spoke inappropriately to her daughter," said SMS police station SHO Dharmendra Kumar. "The mother said her daughter confided in her about the incidents,

Ola Electric must sell 50,000 EVs monthly to profit

January, regaining its Delhi: Ola Electric's CEO Bhavish Aggarwal stated market leadership in quantities. Aggarwal told the homegrown electric analysts, "To break even two-wheeler producer on Ebitda (earnings must sell 50,000 units monthly to be profitable. before interest, taxes, Aggarwal stated on an depreciation, and amorinvestor call after the tization) from our auto company's quarter sales, we need to sell reports that Ola Electric 50,000 units a month." sold 25,000 units in To address this, we are

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

Act," he added.

An FIR has been regis-

tered under the POCSO

Act based on the moth-

er's complaint. "We are

verifying the allegations

and also the girl's age

from her school records.

The girl's statement will

be recorded before a

magistrate in court.



Monday, 10 March, 2025

Centre plans pension scheme for gig workers, employers to contribute



Delhi: The labor and employment ministry is creating a transaction-based pension strategy to improve gig workers' social security, requiring aggregators to contribute 1-2% of their yearly turnover.The effort is targeted at almost one crore platform workers across India, a govt source statedEach gig worker will get a global account number, allowing deductions based on wage transactions across platforms. Employers will pay per bill. The insider said, "State governments are being consulted, and the plan will soon go to the cabinet.

"The effort tackles the issue of employer accountability owing to gig workers' use of numerous platforms. This policy matches the e-Shram platform, which was introduced in Aug 2021 to register unorganised sector workers. As of January 27, 30.6 crore workers have signed up for the platform, which has 12 social security plans.India had 77 lakh gig workers in 2020-21, and today has over 1 crore, says a 2022 NITI Aayog report. Currently, 47% of gig jobs are medium-skilled, 22% high-skilled, and 31% low-skilled.

Surge in Guillain-Barré syndrome cases at SMS Hospital

Jaipur: Over the past two months, SMS Hospital documented 29 cases of Guillain-Barré syndrome, with two fatalities. The sudden increase in GBS cases during this period prompted the health department to issue alerts for monitoring potential disease outbreaks.

According to SMS Hospital authorities, all patients received appropriate medical care, including intensive care treatment for those who required it. The hospital confirmed that 27 out of the 29 affected individuals success-



officer for seasonal diseases. Dr Mahawar added, "The initial symptoms of BGS are vomiting and diarrhoea, but after

and vomiting could be related to GBS. So people should not worry if they have diarrhoea or vomiting, but there are rare

unpasteurised milk, known as Campylobacter jejuni bacteria, is discovered as a cause of GBS in patients admitted to SMS Hospital. The patients with GBS report symptoms including nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, and meningitis-related signs such as fever, headache, and disorientation. An SMS Hospital doctor said GBS causes muscle weakness and paralysis. The patients brought to the SMS Hospital complained of weakness in legs.SMS Hospital officials said patients admitted for treatment of GBS responded

Delhi: Industry experts say Zomato Ltd's plan to create a separate identity for its parent business will let it pursue its goals without risking everything and give investors more detailed information about the company. Four years after Facebook changed to Meta Platforms Inc. and a decade after Google's parent became Alphabet Inc., Zomato





are

Zomato's reflects a long-term growth ambition, focusing on Blinkit (rapid commerce), Hyperpure (restaurant (events platform),

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

fully recovered.

"Of 29 patients we received in Jan and Feb this year, four were admitted to ICU. Two of the patients admitted to ICU recovered while two died," said Dr Sunil Mahawar, nodal

10 to 15 days, when symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting subside, the patient reports symptoms of GBS. Not all cases of vomiting and diar-

chances of GBS as vomiting and diarrhoea are initial symptoms of GBS."SMS Hospital severe symptoms. According has found that a specific bac- to medical experts, heat treatteria commonly found in ment, such as cooking or pasrhoea are related to GBS, but undercooked poultry, unhy- teurisation, and drinking clean sporadic cases of diarrhoea gienic water contamination, water remain the sole.

well to treatment and recovered, but two died who had announced that its board had approved the changing of its corporate identity as Eternal Ltd. The name change needs shareholder approval.

industry executives stated. Anupriya Saxena, a partner at JMJA & Associates Llp, a and brand

Stamp duty evasion recovery fine after 5 yrs, not 10 yrs: HC

cannot issue showcause notices to recover stamp duty -- either not levied or underlevied – five years after the registration of the document, Karnataka high court ruled in a recent judgement. The court, however, said there could be an exception from the five-year limit in cases of short payment on account of fraud, collusion or wilful misstatement.Under Section 46A of Karnataka Stamp Act, 1957, proceedings by way of show-cause notice cannot be initiated after 10 years, Justice Suraj Govindaraj said in his order, allowing a petition filed by BC Prasad and his son Guru Prasad, residents of Whitefield. In 1995, BR Srinivas Murthy and others, owners of about 9

ers as their attorneys, and a GPA document was registered. On Dec 30, 2010, the deputy commissioner of stamps, Gandhinagar registration district, sent a notice saying there is a shortfall in the stamp duty of Rs 98,500 vis-a-vis the GPA document registered in 1995. The petitioners challenged the notice

Appellate Tribunal, Bengaluru, and the same was dismissed on Feb 28, 2017. The duo then approached the high court.Their main argument was the notice was issued to the power of attorney and not to the person who executed same. "The stamp duty, if any, would be liable to be paid by persons who executed the power of attorney," they added. They further claimed

that under Section 46A,

Bengaluru: The govt appointed the petition- any such action has to be taken within five years, and in their case, the notice was issued 15 years and one month after the registration of the document.

before the Karnataka

The govt advocate defended the action and added the period of five years has been substituted by a period of 10 years in Section 46A, and therefore, the notice issued is proper and correct. After perusing the materials on record, Justice Suraj Govindaraj pointed out that the period of 15 years is "hopelessly barred" under Section 46A of the Act."In the no allegation of fraud, collusion, or wilful misstatement. What has been stated is that the adequate stamp duty has not been paid on the GPA," the judge noted and added that the extended 10-year period is also not applicable to the petition.

Air India updates its fleet of planes to operate on US-Canada routes

Delhi: Under this interim solution, the airline will install new seat covers, cushions, curtains, and carpets, all aligned with Air India's new logoAir India has begun updating its Boeing 777s that fly to the US and Canada, while global supply chain concerns have delayed the upgrade, authori-



ties said. The airline has 13 legacy B777 aircraft operating

authorities and routes, claimed that all these are scheduled to be refreshed under this temporary configuration , "The cabin's heavy refresh will include basic repairs and sprucing up lavatories, cabin walls, meal tables, armrests, and galleys."

on these ultra-long-haul But they won't cover the IFE (in-flight entertainment) or livery change.Air India is boosting its premium services and flight times to lure more US travelers. Once the refurbishment starts, it will take around two years to bring the widebody fleet to international standards, he said.

Cong MLA questions govt's plantation claims for 2024

Jaipur: Congress MLA Manish Yadav has challenged state govt's claims that 7.2 crore saplings were planted in the state in 2024-25 as announced in last year's Budget.

Citing an official response from assembly, which indicated that the forest department planted 2.5 crore saplings while various govt departments and NGOs were responsible for the remaining 4.72 crore, Yadav asserted that the claim lacked proper auditing, especially regarding the saplings planted by NGOs, for which he said no documented



evidence was present-

ed. In the 2025-26 Budget, closed govt departstate govt increased its ments and NGOs. statewide plantation Many NGOs have been target from 7 crore last conducting plantation year to 10 crore. "In drives for years. the response given last Including their numweek in assembly, they bers in govt's tally is admitted that almost misleading,"

65% of the saplings were planted by undis-Yadav

said Sunday. The Congress MLA also pointed out the absence of an audit nel were assigned to report on the plantation drive. "If 7.22 drive, but they are crore saplings were working without remuplanted since the monsoon, it should have tion drive is genuine, visibly increased the forest cover in the state. I demanded satellite images as proof of this green cover expansion. Moreover, govt has not disclosed the total

expenditure incurred on this massive drive," he added. Govt's response in assembly also said 3,406 Van Mitras were appointed to maintain he said.

the plantations. But Yadav said, "Over 3,000 retired personmonitor the plantation neration. If this plantathen relying on voluntary monitoring is not justified." Yadav noted that

42,000 saplings were reportedly planted in his Shahpura constituency. "Most of these plantations were carried out by teachers as the initiative was incentivised. This exercise was not part of the original plan of govt,'

acres of

Yelahanka

land in

area.

STATE

vatikatimes@gmail.com

Panel readies 23-point best Will Nifty50 cross 23,000 next practices for states week? Key market factors

small

NEW DELHI: The Centre is readying a 23-point template for reforms and deregulation, including some related to land, labour, utilities and permits at the state level, as it seeks to make life easier for businesses to operate across the country.

The moves are being piloted by a taskforce on deregulation and compliance reduction led by cabinet secretary TV Somanathan, following PΜ Narendra Modi's call for reforms at the state level, which he flagged during a meeting of chief secretaries, and was subsequently flagged in the Economic Survey. The panel is in addition to Deregulation the Commission, which is in the pipeline.

While seeking to usher in a single window clearance mechanism for companies, the committee, which met on Friday, is also looking at areas where inspections can be reduced and how noobjection certificates can be issued without which inspection,



often delays and complicates matters. The committee of secretaries is looking at procedural changes and greater use of technology to reduce the need to visit govt offices.Panel readies 23-point best practices for states

The validity of permits and licences is proposed to be made longer so that time is not wasted. "The idea is to provide for selfcertification and thirdparty certification so that it is simpler for businesses," said an officer.When it comes to land, which has been a major area of concern for investors, the proposals being looked at include ways to deregulate land use changes and allowing

for changes in floor area ratio in a more transparent manner. The panel is also trying to look at land use patterns for industrial projects and represent them on GIS. In the case of labour regulations, the task force is examining how greater flexibility can be provided in working

hours and over-time within the current legal parameters. For instance, while allowing workers to work a maximum 48 hours a week, businesses may be allowed to flexibility in daily working hours. Similarly, a key issue that is sought to be addressed is making it easier for women to work by making it flexible and ensuring that working .



NEW DELHI: After a

week, the Indian equity

market is brimming with

anticipation as it looks to

sustain its upward

recovery last

(RBI).As investors prepare for a shortened trading week due to the Holi festival holiday, several key factors could influence whether the Nifty 50 can break through the crucial 23,000 mark. With global market dynamics in play-from foreign institutional investor activity to crude oil prices and bond yields-next week could be pivotal for the index.

Sectors such as metals, capital goods, and energy outperformed, supported by optimism around China's stimulus

measures and lower crude oil prices. The fall in the dollar index also provided a boost to investor sentiment towards emerging markets, while US equity markets have been facing declines due to uncertainty surrounding Trump's economic policies, according to Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.This week is likely to be a truncated one as markets will remain closed on Friday for the Holi festival holiday. The shorter week could lead to increased volatility as traders adjust their positions ahead of the break, as per ET report. Investors will be keeping an eye on several key factors that may influence the

FII activity Foreign investors have sold equities worth nearly Rs 25,000 crore so far in March, taking the total equity selling in 2025 to Rs 137,354 crore. There's also significant buying in Chinese stocks, driven by attractive valuations and expectations from recent positive government initiatives in China. The rally in Chinese stocks has propelled the Hang Seng Index to a YTD return of 23.48%, compared to the Nifty's -5% return. However, experts, including VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, believe this is likely a short-term cyclical trade as Chinese corporate earnings have been disdirection of the market: appointing for years.

India forex reserves tumble to \$639 billion, reaching 11 month low

India's foreign exchange reserves fell by \$1.781 billion in the week ending February 28, bringing the total to \$638.698 billion, latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) revealed. The country's forex

reserves have been on volatile trajectory, touching an 11-month low after nearly four continuous months of declines. While some weeks



have seen gains, others have recorded fresh dips. Reserves have been falling since reaching an all-time high of \$704.89 billion in September, marking a nearly 10 per cent drop from their peak. Analysts suggested that the recent decline is likely due to the RBI's intervention to stabilise the Rupee, which remained near its all-time low against the US dollar.

India's foreign currency assets (FCA) stood at \$543.350 billion, while gold reserves amounted to \$73.272 billion, as per data by the apex bank. Estimates also indicated that the reserves are sufficient to cover about 10-11 months of projected imports. In 2023, India added approximately \$58 billion to its forex reserves, reversing the \$71 billion decline seen in 2022. So far in 2024, the reserves have grown by just over \$20 billion.

The RBI manages forex reserves to stabilise the Rupee, often selling dollars to curb depreciation and buying when the Rupee strengthens. The reserves, majorly held in US dollars, also include smaller holdings in the Euro, Japanese Yen, and Pound Sterling.

DLF to invest Rs 6,000 crore in 75 lakh sq ft office and retail spaces in Gurugram

NEW DELHI: Realty giant DLF's rental arm, DLF Cyber City Developers Ltd (DCCDL), is set to invest approximately Rs 6,000 crore in the development of 75 lakh square feet of premium office and retail spaces in Gurugram. This move is aimed at capitalizing on the rising demand for highquality, green commercial properties. DCCDL is a joint venture between DLF and Singapore's sovereign wealth fund, GIC, with DLF holding a 67% stake in the venture. In its latest investor presentation for the third quarter of the fiscal year, DLF revealed that DCCDL has begun construction on 5.5 million square feet of Grade A++ office



high-end commercial project, and shopping mall develop-'DLF Downtown, Gurugram.'

portfolio includes 36.4 million square feet of office space and 4 million square feet of retail space.

Commenting on the Indian office market trends, DLF Vice Chairman and MD of Rental Business, Sriram Khattar, stated, "Global companies, particularly those in the technology sector, are attracted by highquality talent and world-class commercial spaces. These companies demand Grade A++ office spaces that are highly rated for sustainability, green initiatives, social infrastructure, and scalability." Khattar emphasized that Global Capability Centers (GCCs) are a major driver of office space demand in key

FM: RBI's gold buying not to replace \$ for settlements

DELHI: FM NEW Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday clarified in the Lok Sabha that India's rising gold reserves, including those held by RBI, is not intended to replace any international currency.

She responded to Congress MP Manish Tiwari's concerns about whether the global shift towards gold signalled a move away from the US dollar as a beyond that, as regards an international currency or potential currency, there is not much for me to comment at this stage." Congress MP Tiwari stated that since the US abandoned the gold standard in 1971, gold had lost its significance

as a major financial

asset. However, in

recent years, central

banks worldwide have

have been among the most aggressive buyers, and domestic gold prices in India have surged as well.

He asked "this shift away from the dollar to gold, does it indicate a renewed search for an alternative international settlement mechanism being cost the dollar?"Responding to this, She acknowledged that gold demand in India remains strong and has even grown. She attributed this to the traditional preference of Indian households, small businesses, and women for gold as a secure.

Additionally, DCCDL has started work on the DLF Mall of India in Gurugram, with a total area of 20 lakh square feet. To date, 3.7 million square feet of this space has already been completed.The total invest-

ment is expected to be around Rs 6,000 crore, as reported by news agency PTI.DCCDL, which owns the majority of the rental assets under the DLF Group, currently has an operational rental portfolio of 40.4 million square feet. This cities across India.

dominant settlement mechanism. Sitharaman said, "Gold is also kept in the Reserve Bank and gold is also being bought by

increased their gold holdings. From constituting only 6% of global reserves in 2006, gold now makes up about 11% in 2024. Countries India, like China, the Reserve Bank. But Poland, and Turkey

Women remain underrepresented in VC industry

BENGALURU: Women remain significantly under-represented in India's venture capital (VC) industry, especially in decision-making roles, despite growing conversations about diversity and inclusion. An analysis of the investment teams at India's most active VC firms, in terms of volume across years 2023 to 2025 so far, reveals how stark the gender gap remains.Among the 20 most active VC investors that TOI analysed, several firms have no women at all in their investment teams, including Z47, Stellaris Venture Partners, and Nexus Venture Partners. Peak XV Partners has the highest absolute numof women ber investors, with 13 out of 44, while firms such as Blume Ventures (6 out of 23) and Accel India (5 out of 25) have

Ankita



relatively better repre- referral. Investment sentation. However, committees and genfirms like Lightspeed eral partners are pre-Ventures (4 out of 16) dominantly male, and and Elevation Capital unconscious biases can (7 out of 33) still shape whom they hire reflect the broader and fund. This has a industry-wide chaldirect impact on the lenge – women are startup ecosystem, as outnumbered at nearly male-dominated VC every major firm.This firms are often less lack of diversity in VC likely to back womenteams has conseled startups." quences beyond repre-Kanika Mayar, partner sentation. "Peer netat Vertex Ventures, works play a huge role echoed this sentiment. in hiring and decision-"The problem isn't just making in VC," said at the top. We need Vashistha, more women entering founder and managing the investment space partner at Arise at all levels, so there is Ventures. "Most senior a strong pipeline for hiring is based on leadership roles.

Brokers bet on March revival in sensex, Nifty

MUMBAI: Is a revival in the stock market expected this month? Historical data shows there's a strong chance of the same happening in March.

Past data going back a decade shows that excluding the Covid year of 2020, March is typically the best time for Indian equities, with Nifty 50, Nifty midcap 100 and Nifty smallcap 100 indices posting average returns of 2.3%, 2.9%, and 2.6%, respectively, a report by Yes Securities showed. Another report by Samco Securities said that most of the bad news relating to the ongoing tariff wars between the US, China, Mexico, Canada and some other countries and blocks have already been priced in. The best Nifty return in March of any year in the past 10 years was 11% in 2016 and the worst was 4.5% in



2015. "Analyzing data from the last 10 years (excluding the Covid year), a clear revival trend emerges across key indices. Most sectoral indices also post positive returns, except Auto and IT, which typically remain flat," the report by Yes Securities said. the However, during the Jan-March quarter of every year, Indian indices typically underperform, the study warned.So far this year, the Nifty is down 5%, while the Nifty midcap 100 index is down 14% and the nifty smallcap 100 has lost 17.4%. On the BSE, the sensex has lost 5.3% so far in

2025. On Friday, Nifty closed at 22,553 points, while the sensex closed at 74,333 points."While seasonality provides a strong directional cue, we do not rely on it blindly. Additional supporting factors strengthen the case for a turnaround," report said. Analysts at Yes Securities pointed out that market breadth, the ratio of the number of stocks that are closing higher to the ones closing lower, is of late improving across broader indices. They also said that financial stocks, one of the key sectors, is showing sustained.

Biocon's growth formula: **Generics & biosimilars**

BENGALURU: Biocon is betting big on new product launches in its generics and biosimilars portfolios, which are expected to fuel its expansion in the next 2-3 years. The company is leveraging the Viatris acquisition to provide a significant boost towards an integrated biosimilars enterprise model.

This integrated approach encompasses complete oversight of value-generation through development and production, alongside value-realisation through distribution and market deployment. "We have an experienced and committed team in the US which is focused strongly on biosimilars. And the fact that we are now a fully integrated biosimilars company has enabled us to position ourselves in a strong position with the payers, the PBMs (pharmacy benefit managers) and HMO (health maintenance organisation) sectors. We are India's premier biosimilars company and we are making a brand presence in the global markets. We are building Brand Biocon and getting a 20% plus market share in the US for some products is significant," said Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, chairperson of the Biocon Group. Its subsidiary Biocon Biologics completed the acquisition of the global biosimilars business of its partner Viatris. As a part of the transaction, Biocon Biologics issued compulsorily convertible preference shares. (CCPS) in the company valued at \$1 billion, equivalent to an equity stake of at least 12.9% on a fully diluted basis. It made an upfront cash payment of \$2 billion to Viatris. Biocon Biologics crossed \$1 billion revenue in FY24.Biocon Group's Dec quarter revenue rose Rs 3,821 crore, with performance driven by a double-digit growth of 14% on a year-on-year basis in biosimilars and a return to growth in research services.

NEWSPOINT

Walking dead: Pedestrians were 54% of hit-&-run victims

Mumbai: More than a ago, Sadiq vear Sayyed, a 38-year-old pedestrian, was fatally struck by a dumper in a hit-and-run incident on the Ghatkopar-Mankhurd Link Road at Govandi. Savved, like many others, had to walk through a stretch unsafe for pedestrians as he had no other alternative. The road crash, which occurred on Jan 3, 2024, is not an isolated case.

Pedestrians re disproportionately affected in hit-and-run incidents, data with the Mumbai Traffic Police shows. Between 2021 and 2023, pedestrians were the most impacted in hit-and-runs compared to any other road user. The figure was a staggering 54% in 2023 alone, up from 48% the previous year (see graphic). Forty per cent of all fatal road crash victims in the same year were pedestrians, with men aged 35-39 being most vulnerable.

For Sayyed's family, the pain was compounded by the slow progress in the investigation. "We had to keep following up with the police to access CCTV footage of the area. I had dashed off a complaint to senior officers," recounted brother, Sadiq's Imtiyaz. He added that Sadiq was looking after their aged mother and his untimely death has left her shattered. Beyond fatalities,

countless pedestrians endure life-altering injuries and disabilities from road accidents. These individuals face immense burdens, including exorbitant medical expenses and the struggle to get back to normal life. In Dec 2024, senior citizen Mangilal Kothari was left paralysed after being hit by a speeding motorcycle in Koldongri, Andheri East. "My grandfather had safely used the zebra crossing at Koldongri for decades. But for the past few

able," said Kothari's grandson, Mehul. These incidents highlight the urgent need for better pedestrian facilities. "There has been no focus on pedestrian infrastructure in Mumbai's suburbs," said activist Rishi Aggarwal, of the founder Walking Project, an initiative advocating pedestrians. for Aggarwal cites the stretch between IIT-Powai and Larsen & Toubro on Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road (JVLR) as a prime example of a busy urban thoroughfare

lacking basic facilities for those on foot. activists' While engagement with the BMC has led to improvements on parts of Andheri-Kurla Road, much remains

to be done in the rest of the city.The Walking Project is now urging the BMC to prioritise pedestrian safety on SV Road, a vital connecting artery months, excavation major railway stations, has rendered the educational instituzebra crossing unustions.

Undercover, undeterred: The women outsmarting city's child traffickers

New Delhi: Rescuing children from exploitation isn't child's playit's a high-stakes game of deception, courage and grit. For rescue workers like Firdous, Rekha, Pooja and Rita, aligned with different NGOs, the mission isn't just about saving lives, it's about outsmarting traffickers and employers who thrive in the shadows. Armed with disguises, hidden cameras and an iron will, they gather evidence, cases file against exploitative employers, and collaborate with law enforcement to execute daring raids to rescue child labourers. TOI spoke to several such women to know about how they go about carrying out their own little spy operations.

Firdous was only 14 when she entered a dimly lit medical ointment factory in Delhi, her hands blistered from long hours of labour. Her mother was battling depression, and there was no money for treatment. School was not an option-survival was. Now 37, Firdaus no longer toils in facto-



ries-she infiltrates them alongside Rekha and Pooja.

These women operate like spies, using disguises, deception, and careful reconnaissance to track and extract children.

"By 7am, we're already out scouting," said Pooja. "We divide ourselves — one woman in one lane, another in another. We share our locations with each other on WhatsApp, wait and watch." Their job is to blend in. "We dress like locals, keep our heads covered, avoid anything that could identify us. Sometimes, I take off my spectacles or wear dark goggles, just to throw people off,' Rekha explained.

Their eyes scan the streets, watching for patterns. "We look for adults entering factories-and then we see if any children follow. Sometimes, they go in and out carrying boxes or are sitting hunched over machines inside. That's when we know. We discreetly click photos and record videos, but we keep our phone brightness at the lowest setting so no one notices," she adds. "If they see us, they start asking questions. And if we stay too long in one area, people begin recognising us. And to avoid suspicion we change our clothes, carry different bags, and even swap our dupattas."



In 2024, the Indian Real **Estate Sector Expects Equity** Investments of Rs 74,815 Crore

Delhi : According to a survey by CBRE South Asia, the real estate sector registered equity investments of \$8.9 billion (Rs 74,815 crore) in the first nine months of 2024, surpassing the increase of \$7.4 billion (Rs 62,210 crore) in 2023 and demonstrating a year-over-year rise of 46%.The Indian real estate market has experienced a massive boom, reaching its highest point since 2018. A significant quarterly equity investment totaling \$2.6 billion (Rs 21,857 crore) between July and September 2024 is highlighted in the report.

Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Chennai drove this expansion, contributing 66 percent of equity inflows in Q3 2024 with their respective subscriptions of \$0.96 billion (Rs 8,070 crore), \$0.40 billion (Rs 3,362 crore), and \$0.34 billion (Rs 2,858 crore).With capital inflows of \$0.31 billion (Rs 2,605 crore), \$0.27 billion (Rs 2,269 crore), and \$0.02 billion (Rs 1,681 crore), respectively, Delhi-NCR, Pune, and Hyderabad also saw a sizable portion of investments. Domestic investors, especially construction businesses, who accounted for roughly 79% of equity inflows during the July-September quarter, were the main drivers of the increase in investment momentum.

Of the overall inflows of foreign investments, 73% came from Singapore and 22% from the US.

NAAC looks to shift to new systems to grade colleges

Bengaluru: Under CBI scanner for alleged bribe-for-grades scam, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is looking to change the current accreditation system to binary system and maturity-based system with different metrics, while keeping at least 400 academicians away from campus visits in the past one year over fears of corruption. The binary system involves grading a college 'accredited or not', without A+, A++ grades. The maturity-based system is an evolving accreditation process which improves a college's rating over the previous level based on its improvement in performance. The current process – which is likely to be shelved -- involves a 70:30 metrics formula: 70% quantitative and 30% qualitative metrics. The latter consists



physical inspection of higher educational institutions by a peer-review team. The NAAC's plan to shift to the new twin systems follows recommendations from the Dr Radhakrishnan committee, which has suggested reforms in the accreditation process. Anil Sahasrabudhe, chairman of NAAC executive committee, said they will expedite the rollout of reforms soon. "The committee has debarred offline, physical visits and will do everything online through validation of the documents. We plan to launch both binary system and multigrade system in March. Now that this (scam) has come to light, we will expedite the process, finalise recommendation of the committee, and then adopt them soon." The premier grading agency has come under the central

probe agency's lens for alleged corruption while assessing a college in Andhra Pradesh's Guntur. A NAAC source clarified, "There is no proof against these 400 teachers. We received feedback from trustworthy sources on their conduct. Since we have no evidence against them, we could not take any action. Instead, we prevented them from making any more physical visits." The peer team is randomly selected by the system. Sahasrabudhe said if there is no grading (like A+ or A++), institutions will not try to engage in unethical activ-

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

Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) issued a warning alert informing parents and students to be wary of false information pertaining to the curriculum, study guides, and practice exams for the 2024–25 school year. The Board has issued a warning to pupils about the dangers of

mation and unreliable updates about curriculum, sample question CBSE papers, resources, and activities. The alert said, "These links and news erroneously assert to offer up-to-date information for the session 2024–25. "In the interest of the public, we wish to emphasize that information from unaunificant discrepancies between theory and practical scores in a few courses, CBSE has recently instructed schools to assess practical exams appropriately.

In a notification, the CBSE said that, based on data from prior years' results, it had used sophisticated AI techniques to identify significant disparities between theory and practical grades in specific courses among 50% or more students iated schools.

ities. "The committee is currently working on a maturitybased grading level," he added. The chairman said when they stopped accepting applications in the old format, they had to give colleges transition time.

falling for online scams that spread false information. We've noticed that

some websites and online portals are disseminating stale inforthorized sources can be misleading and may cause unnecessary confusion among schools, students, parents, and other stakeholders," it in about 500 CBSE-affilcontinued. Due to sig-

The National Critical Mineral Mission gets 16,300 crore from

Delhi : The Union announced NCMM's abroad and strength-Cabinet, led by Prime creation in the 2024-Minister Narendra 25 Union Budget on National Mineral (NCMM) with a ?16,300 crore expenditure and a projected ?18,000 crore investment from PSUs and other businesses."Several crucial decisions have will created new scientific and technology prospects for our children, future generations, and the economy. Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw told a Cabinet briefing that PM Modi approved the National Critical Mission Minerals today.Finance Minister Nirmala enterprises to buy Sitharaman vital mineral assets

en economic ties with resource-rich Modi, launched the July 23, 2024. The nations. The plan Critical Atmanirbhar Bharat also calls for a Mission mission seeks to national stockpile of assure India's crucial essential minerals to mineral sector selfsecure supply.The reliance, recognizing Mission will promote mineral processing its importance in high-tech industry, parks and crucial lean energy, and mineral recycling.A defence.The Mission Centre of Excellence encompass on Critical Minerals exploration, mining, will encourage critiiation, ssing, and cal mineral technoloend-of-life product gy research.India has recovery in the 24 critical minerals: essential admium, mineral Beryl, value chain. It aims Cobalt, Gallium, to speed up mining Glauconite, project approvals, Graphite, Indium, incentivize explo-Lithium, ration, and recover Molybdenum, minerals from over-Nickel, Niobium, burdens and tail-Phosphate (without uranium), Platinum ings.The mission group of elements, encourages Indian PSUs and private Potash, Rare earth minerals (excluding Uranium,

Khar Linking Road divider in rainbow hues, locals see red

Mumbai: On Sunday, residents were shocked to find a 20-30m stretch on a divider at Linking Road in Khar painted in "bright and jarring" rainbow colours. Many demanded that the divider on the busy thoroughfare be repainted.

complaints Their reached the BMC chief, who directed the ward officials concerned for the paint removal. "The divider at Khar does not comply with traffic rules. Only black and white (with yellow as an exception) colors should be used," the ward office was directed. BMC officials gave an assurance that the paintwork on the divider, which was part of a corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative, will be removed by Monday. Anandini Thakoor, activist and managing trustee of the Khar Residents' Association,

said: "The divider looks garish and distracting. We were startled to see such loud colours." She said several residents reached out to her over the "bad paint job". When TOI reached out to the local ward office, they said that the divider was painted as part of a corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative. "We have directed the agency concerned for immediate removal of paint," the said Vinayak Vispute, assistant municipal commissioner of H-West Ward. The BMC has a policy wherein it allows corporates to beautify and maintain road dividers under CSR. For instance, Tata Sons Ltd and affiliates will beautify dividers on Mumbai Coastal Road from Priyadarshini Park to Worli over a 4.4km stretch. Mumbai: On Sunday,

residents were shocked to find a 20-30m stretch on a divider at Linking Road in Khar painted in "bright and jarring" rainbow colours. Many demanded that the divider on the busy thoroughfare be repainted.

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Scrap mop-up allotment of PG med seats to ineligible: HC

Bengaluru: The Karnataka high court Tuesday ordered Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) to scrap the PG medicine seats allotted in the mop-up round to "ineligible" candidates and make them available in the next round of counselling. National Medical Commission (NMC) and Counselling Medical Committee (MCC) should permit the candidates who were allotted all-India quota seats in the MCC-conducted third round counselling to join the allotted seats till 5pm, Feb 9, a division bench comprising Justices Anu Sivaraman and Vijayakumar A Patil said in its order on a petition filed by Dr Akshay V Thuppad and others, who were aspirants in the mop-up round conducted by the KEA. The KEA was directed not to enforce the penalty clause against the students who were wrongly permitted to participate in the mop-up round in violation of the conditions stipulated it its

brochure. The KEA was told to ensure the original documents are returned to the candidates to enable them to join the all-India quota seats at the earliest.

The petitioners -- and similarly situated candidates who were eligible to participate in the mop-up round -- should be permitted to participate in the stray vacancy round where the seats that fall vacant should be made available and seats should be allotted to them on the basis of merit, the bench said. The KEA was directed to take steps to ensure fees -- paid by ineligible candidates who had joined the allotted colleges pursuant to the mop-up round -- are refunded to them at the earliest. The MCC and KEA were told to inform the candidates who had been allotted seats in the third round of all-India quota counselling but were permitted to participate in the counselling of the KEA without eligibility that they have to join the all-India quota seats.

MISCELLANOUS

Monday, 10 March, 2025

Udhaya says fishers living gods, urges them to campaign for DMK



Chennai: **De**puty minister chief Udhayanidhi Stalin sought to woo the fishermen community on Sunday calling them 'living gods' who save the people of Chennai during frequent floods. After flagging off a

boat race organized as part of chief minister M K Stalin's birthday celebrations off Injambakkam in Chennai, he also appealed to fishermen to campaign for DMK in 2026. Udhayanidhi said barely a year was left for the 2026 assembly election and fisherthemselves men should take forward

the campaign in support of DMK. Lauding the fisherfolk, he said it was fishermen who were first to respond to distress situations. Fishermen from 13 fishing hamlets participated in the race. Udhayanidhi himself travelled in a boat to witness the race along with health

minister Ma Subramanian. "Whenever there is a flood in Chennai, fishermen are the first to enter the field to save the people. I don't believe in god. But I always say to people that fishermen are the living gods,"

Udhayanidhi said at

the function to give away the prizes and distribute welfare measures to fishermen."I like fishermen because of their character. You speak from your heart whether it is right or wrong," he said.

Recalling the welfare measures for fishermen under the DMK govt, Udhayanidhi said the ex gratia for the natural death of fishermen was hiked from 15,000 to 25,000 per person. The period of renewal of licence for fishing boats was increased from one year to three years to make the process easier for you.

19-year-old arrested for sexual assault bid

Chennai: A 19-year-old man was arrested on charges of attempting to sexually assault a 40year-old woman in Kilpauk on Friday. The accused, identified as S Prem, was remanded in judicial custody the next day.

Police said the incident occurred when the victim was walking along Barakka Road in Kilpauk. The accused allegedly approached woman the and attempted to sexually assault her. However, when the woman raised an alarm, the perpetrator pushed her away and fled the scene. Following the incident,

the victim filed a com-

New Delhi: Various student organisations united under the banner of India Alliance the Student Organisation to voice their concerns over the govt's education policies.

Members of NSUI, AISA, SFI, AISF, MSF, Samajwadi



plaint with the Secretariat Colony police station. Acting swiftly on the complaint, the police launched an investigation and managed to apprehend the accused based on the details provided by the woman.The police are currently investigating whether the accused has any prior criminal record. Police are also

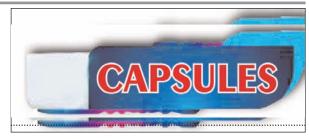
reviewing CCTV footage from the area to gather additional evidence. The accused was produced before a local magistrate on Saturday and subsequently remanded in judicial custody. The police have registered a case under relevant sections of the BNS.This incident has raised concerns about women's safety in the area.

compromised

ments.

door to political appoint-

trans-



Google pulls offline map app from Play Store per government requests



Delhi: Google and Apple removed MAPS.Me offline navigation app from Play and App Store. The app misrepresented India's border. To Google's nodal officer, Priyadarshi Banerjee, the Survey of India (SoI) submitted MAPS.Me a notice under Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act, 2000, in December 2024. The software misrepresents Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, according to the notice. The app's Google Play Store homepage now displays "We're sorry, the requested URL was not found on this server". Sol reportedly provided notice to Google, but since the app is unavailable on Apple's App Store for Indian consumers, it's unclear if Apple was notified. The publisher accessed the letter using Lumen Database. It says: "The maps.me app on Google PlayStore portrays an Indian map with an incorrect external boundary, endangering India's sovereignty and integrity. The Survey of India (SoI) was appointed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity) in 2020 to "disable access to incorrect maps of India."

Student Outfits To Organise Protests From March 17-24

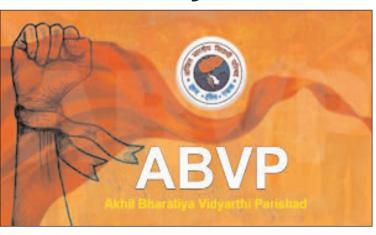
Chhatrasabha and CRJD the education sector was facing unprecedentcame together this weekend to oppose ed challenges. Among the issues in what they saw as a threat to the future of focus was the rejection the youth and erosion of of the new UGC draft. the education system's Critics argued that it integrity. parency and opened the

The members condemned the govt's actions, asserting that

ABVP starts three-day student Parliament

New Delhi: The three-day student Parliament organised by Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) NDMC started at the Centre Convention on Sunday. The inaugural day was dedicated to the tribal student Parliament, which saw over 300 tribal students representing various regions across the country. The session was attended by Durgadas Uikey, the minister of state for tribal affairs, who was the chief guest.

The event is likely to be attended by chief minister



in areas such as education, social guage, culture and traditions.

harmony, where health, employment, lan- knowledge transcends mere information, guiding us from

legacy."

Virendra Singh Solanki, the national general secretary of ABVP, reiterated the organisation's commitment to empowering all segments of society. The session saw representation from over 124 tribes across India, including groups such as the Baiga, Sahariya, Maria and Modia, who voiced their unique challenges and needs. Students from diverse tribal regions, from Jammu to Tamil Nadu, including areas like Rajouri, Chota Nagpur, Baswara, Bastar, Gadchiroli

Lagarpuriya gang member held for murder attempt

New Delhi: Delhi ciate. Acting on this Police has arrested a 32-year-old member of Vikas the Lagarpuriya gang for allegedly shooting at a person in Chhawla in Oct 2023. The accused, Amit alias Mitta, had been evading arrest by frequently changing his hideouts, police said. Mitta was appre-

information, a police team laid a trap near Dhulsiras Road in Sector 23, Dwarka. A country-made .32 bore pistol with three live cartridges was recovered from his possession," said deputy commissioner of police (Crime Branch) Kumar.

hended near Sector Investigation he and his associates 23 in Dwarka during a revealed that Amit allegedly stole cash has been involved in and valuables from crimes across Delhi-NCR, including robbery, attempted murder, and violations of and apprehend other

"His criminal record dates back to 2016 when he was arrested for vehicle snatching in Gurugram. Over the years, he has been linked to gang-related shootings, organized robberies, and other illegal activities. In 2021, he was impli-Satish cated in a major heist in Gurugram, where

Rekha Gupta and home minister Amit Shah in the coming that a tribal society is not days. The tribal student Parliament focused on critipreservation and empower-

merely a demographic group but a vital custodian of

Minister Uikey emphasised the micro to the macro. We must take pride in our languages, cuisines, customs and the effective implemenand traditions as our culture tation of govt initiatives.In cal issues concerning the Indian culture and tradition. is deeply rooted in nature, one of the sessions, IAS offi-He said, "Our ancient guru- and tribal communities conment of tribal communities shishya tradition exemplifies tinue to uphold this enduring lecture titled.

tional

Sunday.

sion, police said on

The accused, identified

as Abdush, a 24-year-

old from Murshidabad,

West Bengal,

apprehended

and Nandurbar, shared their perspectives on education cer Saroj Kumar delivered a

police operation on has been March 4. "We multiple received intelligence that

he was planning another criminal activity with an asso- the Arms Act.

In FY25, gross direct tax collection increased by 20%

violent residential flats," a police officer said. Police are making efforts to identify gang members.

82-yr-old's fall at IGI: DGCA seeks report from Air India

New Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has sought a detailed report from Air India after an 82-year-old woman suffered a fall at Delhi Airport, near an Air India allegedly due to the airline's failure to provide a pre-booked wheelchair. DGCA officials met the woman's family members in Bengaluru on Sunday. Air India has been asked to submit a report with evidence by Monday, according passenger, traveling to sources. had reported that the elderly woman, the widow of a decorated Lt General, was undergoing treatment in the intensive care unit of a hospital in Bangalore.

Delhi: The ter, Parul Kanwar, a wheelchair could claimed on X that, with no other option, the octogenarian tried to walk with the support of a family member but collapsed counter. The incident occurred on March 4 when the woman and her family members were to board a flight Delhi from to Bangalore. Her family lodged a complaint with DGCA. However, an Air India spokesperson said the

with her family members, arrived at the departure terminal much later than the recommended two hours before departure. "Due to the

The unprecedented peak woman's granddaugh- demand at that hour,

not be made available within the 15 minutes that the passenger's relatives spent waiting for it, and on their own accord, the passenger decided to walk with those accompanying her," said Air India. "With no other

option, this elderly woman slowly made her way across three parking lanes at T3 on foot with assistance from a family member. She managed to enter the airport on

foot, yet no wheelchair or assistance was provided

. Ultimately, her legs gave way, and she fell in front of the Air

India premium economy counter," said Kanwar in her post.

Delhi: According to official data released, net direct tax collection rose 15.88% year over year to approximately 16.90 lakh crore as of January 12 of this fiscal year. Since April 2024, the mop-up from net non-corporate taxes-which primarily consists of personal income tax—has exceeded 8.74 lakh crore.



Approximately 7.68 lakh crore was collected in net corporation

tax between April 1, 2024, and report, gross direct tax mop-up January 12 of current year. As of January 12 of this fiscal year, the net amount collected from securities transaction taxes was 44,538 crore. Approximately 3.74 lakh crore in refunds were crore is collected from corporate given out during that time, a 42.49% rise over the same period last year. According to the

rose 20% to 20.64 lakh crore during that time. In the current fiscal year, the government has allocated 22.07 lakh crore from direct taxes, of which 10.20 lakh taxes and 11.87 lakh crore from personal income tax and other taxes.

Cops bust phone smuggling syndicate, arrest one

New Delhi: Delhi Police's Crime Branch has busted an internasyndicate involved in smuggling stolen mobile phones from Delhi/NCR to Bangladesh, arresting a 24-year-old man in the process. The operation led to the recovery of 48 high-end mobile phones, valued at approximately Rs 20 lakhs, from his posses-Salimgarh Bypass,

Kotwali, while attempting to flee to West Bengal with a consignment of stolen mobile phones. "This syndicate has been operating across Delhi-NCR, tar-

geting commuters at metro stations, bus stops, and crowded markets before smuggling the stolen phones into Bangladesh," said DCP (Crime Branch) Aditya Kumar Gautam.

"Following intelligence inputs, a police team was formed. After tracking movements and gathering evidence, we set up a trap near Salimgarh Bypass. When Abdush sensed the police presence and tried to escape, he was quickly overpowered. A search of his backpack revealed 48 stolen mobile phones, which were seized under relevant legal provisions," DCP Gautam added. During the investigation, police learned that Abdush was a courier agent who

phones from Delhi to West Bengal, where they were modified before being smuggled into Bangladesh.

The gang operated by quickly moving stolen mobile phones out of Delhi-NCR to avoid detection. Local thieves sold the devices to smugglers for Rs 2,000-3,000 per phone, after which they were transported in bulk to West Bengal, where they were

modified before being smuggled into Bangladesh and resold for Rs 8,000-10,000 per transported the stolen device, police said.

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