

# The Business Guardian

WWW.BUSINESSGUARDIAN.IN

WEDNESDAY | 25 SEPTEMBER 2024 | VOL. 3, ISSUE 267 | NEW DELHI

PRICE: Rs 5/-



**2**  
AP CM ORDERS  
PROBE INTO SRI  
RAMALAYAM  
CHARIOT FIRE



**3**  
ATLYS SECURES USD  
20 MILLION FUNDING  
CO-LED BY PEAK  
XV PARTNERS AND  
ELEVATION CAPITAL



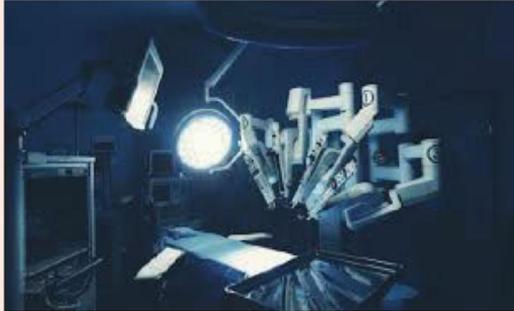
**4**  
DASSAULT BOOSTS  
INDIA'S DEFENSE  
WITH MRO HUB

## SAKRA WORLD HOSPITAL TOPS 250 ROBOTIC CARDIAC SURGERIES

Sakra World Hospital, a leading 100% FDI institution in Bengaluru, has achieved a groundbreaking milestone in robotic cardiac surgery under the leadership of Dr. Adil Sadiq.

TBG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Sakra World Hospital, a pioneering 100% FDI institution in Bengaluru, has achieved a significant milestone in cardiac care. Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Adil Sadiq, Director and Head of Cardio Thoracic & Vascular Surgery, the hospital has completed over 250 robotic cardiac surgeries, using the latest intuitive robotic system. This remarkable achievement places Sakra among the select few centers in India and Asia to reach such a notable feat. Most Robotic Cardiac Surgeries Performed on Patients Ranging from 19 to 82 Years Old, with an Average Age of 62 Years. Since the introduction of robotic cardiac surgery, Sakra



World Hospital has emerged as a leading center in this field. In 2023, it achieved the highest number of robotic surgeries in India and the second-highest in Asia. With an impressive survival rate

of 99%, Sakra demonstrates a commitment to delivering exceptional, life-saving care while advancing medical technology. The hospital's achievements have earned recognition from organi-

zations such as the Indian Association of Cardiovascular-Thoracic Surgeons (IACSTS) for its pioneering Robotic Cardiac Program. Equipped with advanced, high-precision diagnostic

facilities, Sakra World Hospital effectively manages a broad spectrum of cardiac conditions, including congenital heart defects, mitral valve disorders, and arterial blockages that may require robotic bypass surgery. Robotic-assisted bypass grafting has become increasingly prevalent, with many procedures now performed using this technique. Unlike the traditional method, which involves opening the chestbone and stopping the heart, robotic-assisted bypass grafting is performed through small keyhole incisions on the side, using robotic arms and a camera. Similarly, robotic mitral valve surgery and the robotic closure of heart defects, are carried out with minimal invasiveness.

■ P2

## Sensex hits 85,000, nifty reaches 26,000 on Global rate cuts

TBG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Stock indices in India continued to rally amid rate cuts globally, touching fresh highs on Tuesday. Sensex breached 85,000 and Nifty crossed 26,000. Sensex closed the day at 84,914.04 points, down 14.57 points or 0.017 per cent, while Nifty closed at 25,940.40 points, up just 1.35 points or 0.0052 per cent. Among the sectoral indices, Nifty metal was the top mover at 2.97 per cent. "...for the rally to continue, the Nifty must decisively break above the 26,000 level. Until then, we expect range-bound movement, with the index fluctuating between 25,800 and 26,000 over the next few hours to a few days," said Rupak De, Senior Technical Analyst, LKP Securities. US Federal Reserve's monetary policy committee loosening interest rate by step 50 basis points, in particular, lent fresh support to Indian stocks.



Loosening monetary policy in the US through rate cuts typically leads to flight of capital to markets where policy rates are high. The steeper the rate cut in the US, the more the tendency of flight of capitals to alternative investment destinations, including India. Continued buying by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) also somewhat supported the stock indices. Foreign portfolio investors upped their investments in India, hoping for a better return on investments due to the interest rate differentials. They have so far mopped up Rs 48,872 worth of stocks in India in September, data made available by NSDL showed. They have been net buyers for the fourth month now.

"Several factors contributed to this rally, including strong corporate earnings, resilient macroeconomic indicators, and increased foreign institutional investor (FII) inflows. The market momentum was further bolstered by a bullish outlook on India's economic growth, supported by expectations of structural reforms and Investor optimism around the Indian economy's ability to withstand global headwinds, such as inflationary pressures and geopolitical uncertainties, added to the positive sentiment," Vikram Kasat, Head - Advisory, PL Capital - Prabhudas Lilladher. In the absence of domestic cues, the markets are likely to mirror trends in the global indices going ahead. "We are of the view that, the short-term market texture is still in to the positive side but due to temporary overbought environments we could see range bound activity in the near future," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head Equity Research, Kotak Securities.

■ P2

### TOP OF THE DAY

#### MARKOENZ WINS RS 1,400 CR CONTRACTS

New Delhi: MarkoENZ Ventures Limited, a leading infrastructure development company, is proud to announce that it has secured multiple road construction contracts worth Rs 1,400 crore from the Government of India. These contracts are part of the government's continued efforts to expand and modernize the nation's road infrastructure under its flagship infrastructure development programs. The projects awarded to MarkoENZ Ventures Limited include the construction and upgrading of highways, national roads, and key rural access routes across various states. The scope of work involves cutting-edge engineering solutions, environmentally sustainable practices, and timely project execution, ensuring the highest standards of safety and quality.

#### S&P: PRIVATE SECTOR MUST

New Delhi: India's private sector will have to shoulder more investment responsibility for the country's growth because India's fiscal settings are constrained and the government might not be able to provide as much financial support as before, says global rating agency S&P. In an analysis titled "India's growing role in the global economy," the global rating agency further stated that India's net general government debt is elevated at about 84 per cent of GDP, and "the government may choose to shore up its balance sheet by build up fiscal buffers."

#### CULTURE OS TRANSFORMS EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Washington: In today's competitive landscape, employee well-being has become a critical factor in maintaining productivity and engagement. Organizations are increasingly realizing that traditional methods of engaging with employees and monitoring their well-being are no longer sufficient. To address these challenges, Culture OS has introduced AI-driven solutions that revolutionize how companies interact with their workforce, automate HR processes, and prioritize employee well-being. Culture OS has developed a powerful AI agent that automates key HR functions such as wellness check-ins, leadership feedback, exit interviews, and management evaluations.

● Agencies

## Festive offers on Two-Wheeler bookings with Bajaj Finance

TBG NETWORK  
PUNE

This festive season, Bajaj Finance is thrilled to announce special cashback of up to Rs. 5,000 for customers looking to purchase a new bike with the Bajaj Finserv Two-wheeler Loan. Be it for a first-time buyer or the ones looking to upgrade, these special festive offers provide the perfect opportunity to own a reliable and stylish bike. Festive cashbacks on new bike shopping During this festive season, Bajaj Finance is offering attractive cashback of up to Rs. 5,000. The offers are a great way to lower the overall cost of a new bike. To avail the offers, the new bike has to be booked online on EMI on Bajaj Mall i.e. with the assistance of a Bajaj Finserv Two-wheeler



Loan. The festive offers may vary depending on the two-wheeler model, colour, variants, and other factors. How to get the festive offers on two-wheeler bookings Getting a two-wheeler loan from Bajaj Finance is quick and hassle-free. Simply visit the Bajaj Mall website or the Bajaj Mall page through the Bajaj Finserv App. Select your favourite bike, confirm the EMI plan, and choose the online booking on Bajaj Mall. A Bajaj Finance representative will contact you to finalise the details of the two-wheeler loan for your

new bike. Then, visit the nearest partner showroom to close the paperwork and get the bike delivery details. Benefits of a two-wheeler loan For the purchase of a new bike, a Bajaj Finserv Two-wheeler Loan is a simple solution with several benefits: \* Get up to 100% on-road funding to purchase a new bike.

However, there is a basic eligibility criteria to be met for the two-wheeler loan. \* One of the best features of our two-wheeler loan is the flexible repayment tenure of up to 6 years. This gives the ability to choose a plan that as per the financial situation. \* Bajaj Finance offers a quick and efficient approval process. Once the eligibility requirements are fulfilled, the two-wheeler loan approval and disbursement is quick.

## India's working-age population to reach 64% in next census: SBI Research

TBG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The working-age population in India has witnessed an increasing trend since 1971 and is projected to reach 64.4 per cent in the soon-to-be exercised Census, as per a report by SBI Research. It will further increase to 65.2 per cent in 2031, the report asserted on Tuesday. The working-age population, people in the age bracket of 15-59, rose from 55.4 per cent in 1991, to 56.9 per cent in 2001, 60.7 per cent in 2021. The average annual growth is on a downward trajectory and is expected to decline from 2.20 per cent in 1971 to 1.00 per cent in 2024, putting the national population somewhere in the range of 138-142 crore in



2024, the SBI research said. State-wise incremental share in total population growth reveals the share of southern states, mainly Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana the growth to decline while northern states, led by UP and Bihar drive the growth. North and Eastern regions together are expected to have 52 per cent share in the entire population.

The administrative work to hold the long-delayed countrywide census is reportedly underway. The last decadal census was conducted in 2011 and the latest was due in 2021. The 2021 census exercise was delayed citing the then-COVID-19 pandemic and has been on hold since then. The Census provides key socio-economic

and demographic data to policymakers and plays a crucial role in governance. The first census exercise was conducted in 1872. The soon-to-be-exercised census is likely to begin soon providing a range of data of a digital-heavy India that has undergone rapid changes in the last decade or so. As per population census data, the share of children in the age group 0-14 years increased till 1971 and gradually declined thereafter. In 2024, according to the SBI Research report authored by Group Chief Economic Adviser Soumya Kanti Ghosh, the proportion of children in the age group 0-14 years is projected to be 24.3 per cent whereas it was 30.9 per cent in 2011.

■ P2

## Manipal Hospital Yeshwanthpur celebrates young cancer warriors

TBG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Manipal Hospital Yeshwanthpur hosted a special event that highlighted hope and inspiration. The event acknowledged the incredible courage of childhood cancer survivors and honoured the unwavering support of their families. The team of dedicated doctors, including Dr. Vinay Munikoty Venkatesh, Consultant - Paediatric Haematology Oncology and BMT, Dr. Satish Kumar A, Consultant - Hematologist and Hemato Oncologist, and Dr. Neellesh Reddy, Consultant Medical Oncologist, led the program and highlighted the challenges and triumphs about the journey of battling cancer. The event was



graced by several dignitaries, including Dr. Kshitija Kulkarni, Regional Head, Medical Services, Dr. Chaitanya Pathania, Hospital Director, Manipal Hospital Yeshwanthpur, and Arnab Mondal, Hospital Direc-

tor, Manipal Hospital Whitefield. Dr. Vinay Munikoty Venkatesh highlighted the importance of early diagnosis is crucial. "With advancements in cancer treatment, currently childhood cancer management is hope

beyond despair, around 80% of childhood cancer cases can now be cured," he said. Adding on the children's response and cooperation to treatment Dr. Venkatesh said, "Children bounce from illness to wellness

in miraculous time." His words resonated deeply with everyone present, igniting a sense of hope and determination. Dr. Satish Kumar A shared crucial insights on exciting new treatments and research while celebrating the strength of parents who bravely navigate their children's cancer journeys. He stated, "Every child's journey through cancer is a testament to the incredible resilience of their families. With groundbreaking research and treatments emerging, we are looking at real solutions and promised outcomes." Dr. Neellesh Reddy spoke about the concept of 'Invisible Hands', "For a child to get well it's a team work, several invisible hands contribute in their own way for the well-being of child, be it the

scientist who discovered the medicines, doctors who planned the treatment, nurses who took motherly care, house-keeping staff who kept the hospital clean. This is a day for all the survivors and their families to recount their gratitude. The families here must send out a positive message to all those who are still battling cancer. Positivity and gratitude will help everybody in the long run." The event also featured a gift distribution ceremony for the brave children who have triumphed over cancer, alongside a tribute to the dedicated nurses who provide exceptional care. Additionally, parents were given a platform to share their personal stories and experiences, inspiring others who may be on similar journeys.

# RAMALINGA REDDY RULES OUT CM SIDDARAMAIAH'S RESIGNATION AFTER HC VERDICT

Karnataka Minister Ramalinga Reddy confirmed Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will not resign despite the High Court's dismissal of his plea against the governor's sanction for prosecution.

TBG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Karnataka Minister Ramalinga Reddy on Tuesday ruled out the resignation of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah after the High Court dismissed his plea challenging the governor's sanction to prosecute him in the alleged MUDA land allotment scam. Ramalinga Reddy said that the entire cabinet and the Congress will stand by the Chief Minister. "He is a 'clean hand' Chief Minister. We don't find a Chief Minister like this. He is a 100% clean-handed man. BJP people are the most corrupt people in India, there is no value to their words. Now, the single judge bench has upheld the Governor's permission." Ramalinga Reddy told reporters here. "There is a double bench, full bench, Supreme Court. We will fight. BJP doesn't have the moral right to ask for Siddaramaiah's resignation. Not only Congress but the entire cabinet, MLAs



and High Command will stand by CM Siddaramaiah. Why should he resign? There is a denotification case regarding Yediyurappa and Kumaraswamy, let them resign first," he added. The BJP however has taken the fight to the Congress demanding the immediate resignation of Siddaramaiah on moral grounds. BJP leader CT Ravi said, "Law is same for everyone... After the Karnataka High Court's judgement,

CM Siddaramaiah should resign... Every corrupt leader says that he will not resign. CM Siddaramaiah is a corrupt leader." Karnataka High Court on Tuesday dismissed Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the approval given by Governor Thawarchand Gehlot for conducting investigation against him in the alleged illegalities in Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) allotting sites to his wife.

In his judgment the single judge bench of Justice Nagaprasanna said that the order of sanction for prosecution does not suffer from non-application of mind by the Governor. In his petition Siddaramaiah questioned the legality of the sanction granted by the Governor permitting investigation against him under Section 17 of the Prevention of Corruption Act and prosecution under Section 218 of Bharatiya Nagarik

# AP CM orders probe into Sri Ramalayam chariot fire

TBG NETWORK  
AMARAVATI

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu ordered a probe into the burning of the Sri Ramalayam chariot in Hanakanah village of Anantapur district. The Andhra CM arrived at the scene on Tuesday and spoke with the officials. According to sources, the chariot was set ablaze in the early hours of Tuesday. The Chief Minister condemned the incident and was briefed by officials on the details. District authorities confirmed that unidentified assailants burned the chariot, after which the CM ordered a comprehensive investigation to arrest the perpetrators immediately and requested timely updates on the investigation from the officials. In Hanakanah village, local residents noticed the fire and managed to extinguish the flames, but over half of the chariot was already destroyed, sources said. The state government, in its official statement, said, "Authorities are suspecting a conspiracy to hurt Hindu sentiments." The police have launched a



thorough investigation, and officers have been mobilised to the village to gather more details about the incident. Following the orders of Anantapur District SP Jagadeesh, Kalyandurg DSP Ravi Babu, and Rayadurg Circle Inspector Venkata Ramana visited the site to assess the situation. DSP Ravi Babu mentioned, "A dog squad and special teams from Anantapur are being deployed to track down the suspects." The incident came amid the Tirupati Prasadam row raging in the state, which started after Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu claimed that sub-standard ingredients, including animal fat, were used in the preparation of Tirupati laddus, the prasadam offered at

the Sri Venkateswara temple in Tirupati, during the previous YSRCP government. Earlier in the day, Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan held former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy responsible for the "contamination" of the Tirupati laddu prasadam. Kalyan said, "I am ready to die for Sanatana Dharma, and I will have no restrictions in the country if I must fight for it." He accused the previous YSRCP government, led by Reddy, of being accountable for the issue. Kalyan slammed Y.V. Subbareddy and Karunakar Reddy, former chairmen of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, stating, "Secularism is two-way and should come from all directions.

# IPEF Ministers welcome upcoming clean and fair agreements

TBG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, along with 13 other ministers, collectively welcomed the imminent entry into force of three landmark IPEF agreements - the Clean Economy Agreement (October 11, 2024), the Fair Economy Agreement (October 12, 2024), and the Overarching Agreement on IPEF (October 11, 2024). These agreements are set to deepen economic cooperation among the IPEF partners and drive tangible benefits through sustained collaboration. According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the ministers virtually attended the third Ministerial meeting of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), focusing on pillars II, III, and IV. During the meeting, the ministers reviewed



the significant progress made under the Supply Chain Agreement, aiming to bolster regional supply chain resilience. The discussions focused on improving preparedness for future disruptions, building competitive supply chains, and safeguarding labour rights. Minister Goyal highlighted India's election as Vice Chair of the IPEF Supply Chain Council, with the U.S. serving as Chair. He also noted Korea and Japan's leadership roles in the Crisis Response Net-

work, and the U.S. and Fiji in the Labour Rights Advisory Board (LRAB). India's role in advancing the action plans for three critical sectors - semiconductors, critical minerals, and chemicals - was particularly emphasised. Minister Goyal pointed out the global reliance on these sectors, especially in light of supply disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Securing the supply of essential minerals is paramount, given their importance in sectors

like clean energy, defence, and telecommunications. Goyal also stressed the importance of resilient agrochemical supply chains, citing the projection that the global agrochemicals market could grow from USD 235.2 billion in 2023 to USD 282.2 billion by 2028. Additionally, he addressed vulnerabilities in healthcare supply chains, particularly overreliance on a few countries for Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) and Key Starting Materials (KSMs). India's focus on logistics and movement of goods under IPEF aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Gati Shakti" initiative, which aims to enhance the country's transportation infrastructure and supply chain networks. The Clean Economy Agreement is seen as a critical step towards addressing global climate challenges.

# Amitabh Bachchan celebrates India's Chess Olympiad Triumph

TBG NETWORK  
MUMBAI

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan recently extended his heartfelt congratulations to Team India for their remarkable achievement at the Chess Olympiad, where both the men's and women's teams secured gold medals. This historic victory marked a significant milestone in Indian chess, as it was the first time both teams won gold in their respective categories during the same edition of the tournament. Bachchan took to Instagram to share his pride and joy over this momentous occasion, highlighting the national sentiment surrounding the players' accomplishments. In a touching video posted on Tuesday, Bachchan showcased images of India's men's and women's chess teams, celebrating



their victory and the pride they brought to the nation. Accompanying the video was a message in Hindi, in which he expressed his gratitude and admiration for the chess players, stating, "India's wonderful win in Chess Olympiad! The entire nation is grateful for chess players' achievements. Our chest is filled with pride as our tricolor is waved." This sentiment resonated deeply with fans and chess enthusiasts across the country, reinforcing the idea that

sports, especially at an international level, serve as a unifying force that fosters national pride. The recently concluded Chess Olympiad saw India's men and women's teams making history, achieving a unique double gold that few countries have managed. In the final round, the men's team, consisting of talented players D Gukesh, R Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi, Vidit Gujrathi, and Pentala Harikrishna, faced off against Slovenia.

The match was thrilling, with India quickly establishing dominance. Gukesh and Erigaisi secured victories, giving India a 2-0 lead, which was pivotal in clinching the gold medal. Praggnanandhaa added another win, while Vidit managed to draw his match, leading to an impressive final score of 3.5-0.5. On the women's side, the Indian team comprised Harika Dronavalli, R Vaishali, Divya Deshmukh, Vantika Agarwal, and Tania Sachdev. They faced Azerbaijan in their final match, where they also demonstrated exceptional skill and strategy. The women's team mirrored the men's success, winning by a score of 3.5-0.5. Harika, Divya, and Vantika each won their respective matches, while Vaishali's draw against Ul'viya Fatalyeva solidified their gold medal win.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## Sakra World Hospital

Dr. Adil Sadiq, Director and Head of Cardio-Thoracic & Vascular Surgery, Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru shared, "Our robotic program has successfully managed a variety of complex cases, including patients weighing up to 130 kilos, a 79-year-old woman with a small chest, fragile bones, and severe diabetes, as well as those with severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), severe left ventricular dysfunction, and left-main coronary artery disease. Despite initial challenges - such as convincing patients of the benefits, managing additional costs, and addressing marginally longer operative times - growing awareness of the advantages of robotic surgery has led to increased patient interest. We are now planning to expand the range of cases eligible for robotic cardiac surgery. By integrating the latest technology with our current robotic devices, we aim to enhance accuracy, reduce side effects, and improve overall patient satisfaction and outcomes." Robotic cardiac surgeries utilize the advanced Da Vinci system from Intuitive Technologies, which offers telemanipulation, 3D magnification, enhanced visualization, and greater dexterity of the robotic arms, along with improved coordination between the patient console and the surgical instruments. Unlike traditional open-heart surgery, which requires cutting and spreading the chest bone with large retractors to access the heart, the Da Vinci system's advancements make it particularly effective for performing com-

plex procedures, providing superior support and precision. Robotic cardiac surgery offers numerous benefits to patients, including faster recovery, reduced pain, minimal scarring, and lower antibiotic usage. This advanced technique also results in fewer blood transfusions and a reduction in the duration of mechanical ventilation. With the average hospital stay now down to just 3.6 days, patients experience a significantly improved recovery process. Despite a slight increase in procedure costs by 15-18%, the advantages of robotic cardiac surgery - such as enhanced patient outcomes and quicker returns to normal activities - highlight its transformative impact on cardiac care. Lovkesh Phasu, Group Chief Operating Officer, Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru quoted, "Sakra World Hospital's dedication to promoting medical innovation and enhancing patient outcomes is demonstrated by this accomplishment. We are committed to keeping up our efforts to advance the field of healthcare."

## Festive offers on Two-Wheeler

Also, minimal documents will be required to complete the paperwork. Special offers on Hero Splendor Plus Among the top choices this season is the Hero Splendor Plus and the Hero Splendor Plus Xtc. Here are five reasons why the Splendor Plus stands out, even when compared to popular models like the Honda Shine: 1. Exceptional fuel efficiency: The Splendor Plus boasts an impressive mileage of around 80.6 kmpl, making it perfect for daily commuters.

2. Reliable performance: Equipped with a robust 97cc engine, it delivers consistent performance for city rides and longer journeys. 3. Comfortable ride: Designed with rider comfort in mind, it features a well-cushioned seat and smooth suspension for a comfortable experience. 4. Stylish design: With a sleek, modern design and various colours, the Splendor Plus turns heads on the road. 5. Low maintenance cost: Known for durability, the Splendor Plus requires minimal upkeep, reducing overall ownership costs compared to competitors. Conclusion Experience the joy of owning one of India's best-selling bikes while taking advantage of the festive cashback of up to Rs. 5000 from Bajaj Finance. The festive season's incredible offers is an opportunity not to be missed. Owning a new bike such as the Hero Splendor Plus with the financial flexibility of a Bajaj Finserv Two-wheeler Loan makes the purchase process easier. \* Terms and conditions apply. Bajaj Finance Ltd. ('BFL', 'Bajaj Finance', or 'the Company'), a subsidiary of Bajaj Finserv Ltd., is a deposit taking Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC-D) registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and is classified as an NBFC- Investment and Credit Company (NBFC-ICC). BFL is engaged in the business of lending and acceptance of deposits. It has a diversified lending portfolio across retail, SMEs, and commercial customers with significant presence in both urban and rural India. It accepts public and corporate deposits and offers a variety of financial services products to its customers. BFL, a thirty-five-year-old enterprise, has now become a leading player in the NBFC sector in India and on a consolidated basis, it has a franchise of 80.41 million customers. BFL has the highest domestic credit rating of

AAA/Stable for long-term borrowing, A1+ for short-term borrowing, and CRISIL AAA/Stable & ICRA IAAA/Stable for its FD program. It has a long-term issuer credit rating of BB+/Positive and a short-term rating of B by S&P Global ratings.

## India's working-age

The proportion of elderly persons has been ever-increasing since 1951 and is projected to reach 10.7 per cent in 2024 and is likely to further increase to 13.1 per cent in 2031. Citing an OECD report, SBI Research said that approximately 25 per cent of the incremental global workforce over the next decade will come from India. By 2030, India's working-age population might exceed 100 crores. On the other hand, the population is rapidly ageing in the developed world. While the median age of India is expected to increase from 24 years in 2021 to 28.29 years in 2023-24, it is still one of the youngest nations in the world. "India fares quite well placed on this parameter with China whose median age now comes to 39.5 years against 34.5 years in 2011... The demographic dividends can be huge and a growth multiplier in coming decade for us thus," read the report. The population of elderly India has been increasing steadily since 1961. The growth in the elderly population became faster mainly due to a decline in the death rate because of various health interventions after the census in 1981. The share of 60+ population has been rising in India, from 7.3 per cent in 1991, to 7.7 per cent in 2001, 8.4 per cent in 2011, and an estimated 10.7 per cent in the upcoming census. India is urbanising rapidly.

## PARK+ RESEARCH LABS LAUNCHES TO PROVIDE DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS FOR INDIA'S AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY

TBG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

**A**nounced the launch of Park+ Research Labs, a data-driven service, aimed at empowering Indian automobile ecosystem stakeholders to identify actionable insights, to unlock business value.

New Delhi: Park+, India's SuperApp for car owners, today announced the launch of Park+ Research Labs, a data-driven service, aimed at empowering Indian automobile ecosystem stakeholders to identify actionable insights, to unlock business value. Park+ Research Labs will play a pivotal role in creating a direct channel between Indian car owners and stakeholders to understand ownership experiences, demands, trends and identify gaps, which can be addressed on priority.

**The Park+ Advantage:**  
Today, Park+ hosts India's largest community of verified car users - 2 Cr+ strong. In short, every third car on Indian roads is now on the Park+ App.

Additionally Park+ plays a pivotal role in the car ownership journey by providing daily car washing services,



digital car test drive bookings, FASTag purchase/recharge, sale/purchase of second hand cars, car loans, discover/book car parking spots, buy discounted petrol and much more.

Essentially Park+ is at the heart of the car ownership ecosystem and helps the core service providers including Auto OEMs, car insurers, after sales service providers, maintenance providers, car dealers and banks to serve the end user in a seamless manner.

Park+ Research Labs will capitalize on its robust community of car owners and provide a unique opportunity for OEMs/dealers/service centers/ancillary services, to delve further into the minds of Indian car buyers. Blending data, user insights and customer feedback Park+ Research Labs will be optimally poised to deliver data delight to all auto-stakeholders. Digital first

surveys will be at the center of Park+ Research Labs, offering clients a deep dive into car ownership patterns, real world feedback, buying decision funnels and authentic engagement.

Commenting on the launch of Park+ Research Labs, Amit Lakhota, Founder & CEO, Park+, said, "At Park+ we have always been committed to chasing and delivering both customer and business partner delight. We today host India's largest community of verified car users and want to ensure that the Indian automobile stakeholders receive authentic data driven insights from genuine car owners. As part of this strategy we have launched Park+ Research Labs a data driven, actionable insights platform to empower OEMs/dealers/service centers/ancillary services to unlock business value and understand their customer better. Equip-

ping the Indian automobile industry with this sophisticated tool to decode the complexities of car ownership and consumer behaviour in India, we believe this initiative will redefine how the Indian automobile industry approaches consumer research, setting a new benchmark for innovation and precision in understanding market dynamics."

As the automotive landscape evolves, Park+ Research Labs is set to become an indispensable resource for OEMs/dealers/service centers/ancillary services, to understand and meet the dynamic needs of Indian car owners. Leaning on Park+'s vast user base and advanced data analytics, Park+ Research Labs aims to become an indispensable partner to the Indian automobile industry.

Quote: "At Park+ we have always been committed to chasing and delivering both customer and business partner delight. We today host India's largest community of verified car users and want to ensure that the Indian automobile stakeholders receive authentic data driven insights from genuine car owners," said Amit Lakhota, Founder & CEO, Park+.

## Atlys Secures USD 20 Million funding co-led by Peak XV partners and Elevation capital

TBG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

**A**tlys, the leading visa processing platform, has raised USD 20 million in its Series B funding round, co-led by Peak XV Partners (formerly Sequoia Capital India) and Elevation Capital. The round saw strong participation from all existing investors, alongside new investors such as DST Global and Headline.

This new funding marks a pivotal milestone in Atlys' rapid ascent, with the company experiencing 20x growth over the past year. The platform has expanded its footprint in key global markets, including the US, UAE, and the UK, while strengthening its leadership team with top-tier hires in product, engineering, and marketing.

The fresh capital will fuel Atlys' aggressive expansion strategy, empowering the company to enhance its product and engineering capabilities, enter new markets, and scale operations globally. A core focus remains on meeting the growing needs of travellers, particularly in India,



where international tourism is booming.

"Atlys has seen extraordinary 20x growth over the last 12 months," said Mohak Nahta, Founder and CEO of Atlys. "This investment will enable us to continue scaling globally and ensure that travellers can obtain their visas on time, every time. As India's outbound tourism surges, the need for a seamless, on-time visa process is more critical than ever. We are one step closer to a world where borders no longer restrict exploration."

In 2023, global outbound international tourists totalled 1.3 billion, fueled by rising international tourism, expanding expatriate communities, and the increasing adoption of digi-

tal travel solutions. With these drivers, the market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 10.8% over the next decade. In India, 30 million travellers ventured abroad, marking a 20% year-on-year increase, largely propelled by a growing middle class and greater access to affordable travel options. A significant portion of this growth came from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, which contributed to 43% of the country's outbound travel, reflecting a broader shift beyond metro-driven demand. (as per a report by UNWTO)

Atlys is leading the way in this transformation by using advanced automation to simplify visa applications for over 150 destinations. The company has successfully reduced processing times to as fast as 55 seconds. With a user-friendly interface and robust data encryption, Atlys ensures both convenience and security for global travellers. Shreyansh Thakur, Principal at Peak XV, added, "Travel continues to see strong tailwinds globally and our thesis is that visas are just the starting point. We believe Atlys can go on to become a broader travel services platform for a range of use cases for travellers globally, and we are excited to deepen the partnership with Mohak and the Atlys team on this journey."

Mayank Khanduja, Partner at Elevation Capital, said, "Atlys is one of the most innovative products to emerge in the travel space in a long time - a space where many have focused on transaction revenue without addressing the real pain points of global travellers. We believe in their long-term vision and the value they are creating for global travellers in today's fast-paced world."

## India's Bank bond issuances may hit Rs 1.2-1.3 trn this fiscal: ICRA

TBG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

**B**anks in India are poised for a significant surge in bond issuances in FY2025, with estimates reaching Rs 1.2-1.3 trillion, surpassing the previous peak of Rs 1.1 trillion in FY2023, according to a recent report by ICRA.

The report highlights that this surge is being driven primarily by public sector banks (PSBs), which are expected to command an 82-85 per cent share of the total bond issuances, particularly through infrastructure bonds.

The increase in bond issuances comes as banks look to alternative funding sources amid deposit growth lagging behind credit expansion.

Tight liquidity conditions and strong credit growth, outpacing deposit accumulation, have prompted banks to turn to bond markets to meet their funding requirements. As of FY2025 year-to-date (YTD), banks have issued Rs. 767 billion in bonds, reflecting a 225 per cent year-on-year increase and already accounting for 75 per cent of the total bond issuances in FY2024. The dominance of PSBs in bond issuance is largely attributed to their substantial infrastructure loan portfolios and the ongoing

push from the Government of India for infrastructure development.

Sachin Sachdeva, Vice President & Sector Head - Financial Sector Ratings at ICRA, said, "During FY2015 to FY2022 public sector banks (PSBs) had a negligible share in infrastructure bond issuances. However, with an improved capital position, tight funding position, and a sizeable infrastructure loan book, the PSBs became dominant in the issuance of infrastructure bonds and accounted for 77 per cent of banks' infrastructure bond issuances in FY2023-FY2025 (YTD). The trend is expected to continue through FY2025 with the PSBs likely to account for 82-85 per cent of the bank bond issuances in FY2025 and infrastructure bonds are expected to account for more than 2/3rd share."

The availability of long-term funding for infrastructure projects, supported by strong demand from insurance companies and provident funds, has also played a crucial role in driving these bond issuances. These infrastructure bonds, typically issued for tenors of seven years or longer, are structured to meet the demand for long-term investments from institutional investors.

## NIFD Global's "Colors of India" Shines at NYFW 2024

TBG NETWORK  
NEW YORK

**N**IFD Global, in collaboration with the London School of Trends (LST), made a remarkable statement at New York Fashion Week with their captivating presentation, "COLORS OF INDIA," on September 7, 2024. This significant showcase highlighted student designers from pan India who combined traditional craftsmanship with innovative, sustainable fashion, making a notable impact on the global stage.

The rise of sustainable fabrics signifies a profound shift in fashion, moving beyond trends to become a movement that honors cultural heritage, supports local communities, and promotes sustainable livelihoods. India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has been a leader in this initiative, initially through the 'Khadi for Nation, Khadi for Fashion' campaign and now with a groundbreaking project to create eco-friendly fabric from the lotus stem, our national flower.

The "COLORS OF INDIA" collection, presented by NIFD Global and LST, exemplified their commitment to this shift, showcasing an ex-



traordinary array of designs crafted from sustainable fabrics. The collection beautifully integrated traditional Indian handicrafts with modern sustainable practices, featuring garments made from organic, recycled, and handwoven materials. This presentation highlighted the deep-rooted connection between India's craft traditions and the natural environment, celebrating principles such as upcycling, material optimization, and waste minimization that have been integral to India's craft heritage for centuries. Student designers from NIFD Global's pan-India centers collaborated in groups to bring this collection to life, blending traditional artistry with contemporary design and making a significant impact at the runway.

The runway event celebrated both heritage and moder-

-fashion world.

The "COLORS OF INDIA" collection, themed 'Roots to Runway,' honored India's rich cultural heritage and showcased the students' dedication and creativity. Drawing inspiration from ancient weaving techniques and intricate embroideries, each piece reflected a harmonious fusion of traditional elegance and modern design. The collection's success not only highlighted the transformative experience for the students but also reinforced NIFD Global's role in bridging traditional artistry with a forward-looking design vision.

NIFD Global continues to bridge the gap between traditional Indian artistry and modern design through its presence at prestigious global platforms, including London Fashion Week, Dubai Fashion Week, New York Fashion Week, and Lakme Fashion Week x FDCI. By participating in these high-profile events, NIFD Global solidifies its position as a leader in design education, providing students with unparalleled opportunities to showcase their talents and prepare for successful careers in the dynamic fashion industry.

## Hexaware Launches CDAaaS in Partnership with PointCross Life Sciences

TBG NETWORK  
ISLILN

**H**exaware Technologies, a provider of IT services and solutions, and PointCross Life Sciences, have partnered to introduce Clinical Data Automation as a Solution (CDAaaS) powered by PointCross' Xbiom™ platform. This solution is designed to enhance the clinical data lifecycle, from collection to submission, for improvements in efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Key Features of CDAaaS:  
- Automated Data Management: CDAaaS leverages the Xbiom™ platform to automate clinical data management, curation, and standardization, including generation of regulatorily compliant, traceable SDTM, ADaM, and TFLs.

- Advanced Automation: The solution features include metadata repositories (MDR) for automating standards, smart transformers for data curation, indexed repositories with AI augmentation, and onboard biostatistical tools.  
- Patient Insights: Onboard

visualization and highly configurable dashboards enable ongoing, integrated patient data streams from eCRF and biomarker data from central labs for rapid data QC and assistance to medical monitors in query resolution.

- Cost and Time Efficiency: CDAaaS helps reduce costs and time to view and identify data inconsistencies, relevant findings, exploratory analysis, and EDC and central lab queries for reconciliation. Hexaware's reach combined with PointCross' widely used Xbiom™ technology aims to provide a robust solution for BioPharma and BioTech companies, as well as regulatory agencies tasked with time-bound data review. This collaboration addresses the need for cost reduction and expedited data submission processes in the clinical trials industry.

Srinivas Maringanti, Head of Life Sciences & Healthcare, Hexaware Technologies stated, "We are pleased to partner with PointCross in delivering CDAaaS to our broad range of pharma sponsor customers."

## IYDF and Npoint Men's wear bring care and hope to underprivileged

TBG NETWORK  
HINDUPUR

**T**he International Youth Development Foundation (IYDF), in collaboration with Npoint Men's Wear, organised a heartfelt charity event in Bhagarete Circle, Aat Nagar, Hindupur. The event aimed to provide essential groceries to struggling families in the area. Led by Vaseeq Almas and his team of volunteers, the initiative brought care and support to the community's children and their families.

Essential Supplies to Improve Lives

On the day of the event, the volunteer team distributed essential supplies to 32 children and their families in the community. The

donated items included rice, flour, chickpeas, salt, sugar, powdered milk, biscuits, and other daily necessities. These provisions were aimed at helping financially struggling families meet their basic needs and providing short-term relief from food insecurity.

Chinnappa, the community leader, expressed deep gratitude for the assistance, emphasising that these supplies would go a long way in easing the daily challenges faced by impoverished families. The donated items not only addressed their immediate needs but also gave the community members renewed hope and confidence.

Dedicated Volunteer Efforts

The event was supported by a passionate team of volunteers, led by Vaseeq Almas and including Dadapeer, Parmeha, Farook, and Aejaiz. The volunteers worked tirelessly to distribute the supplies, handling over the grocery bags to each family and taking time to engage with the children, learning about their needs and daily lives.

The volunteers were more than just distributors of aid; they shared their time and energy, showing genuine care for the children and families, spreading warmth and kindness. Each smile and interaction left a lasting impression, reinforcing the bond between the community and those offering support.

Fun Activities and Chil-

dren's Laughter

In addition to the distribution of supplies, the event featured a volleyball match that brought joy and laughter to the children. Volunteers set up a simple volleyball court, and the children eagerly joined the game, displaying enthusiasm and energy. The match not only provided physical exercise but also helped the children build confidence and foster teamwork.

Throughout the match, the children ran, jumped, and laughed, filling the atmosphere with vitality. The volunteers also took part in the game, further strengthening their connection with the community in a fun and engaging way.

Organiser's Reflections and Future Vision

Reflecting on the event, Vaseeq Almas, the organiser, shared his thoughts: "Seeing the children's smiles and feeling the positive energy we brought them filled me with warmth and gratitude. Al-

though our donations were modest, every act of kindness can make a significant impact on someone's life. It's this belief that motivates us to continue helping those in need."

He added that organising such charitable events is not just about providing material aid but also about embodying a sense of social responsibility. Through this event, the volunteer team experienced the joy of helping others and expressed their hope to continue collaborating with

IYDF and Npoint Men's Wear to bring more assistance to struggling communities in the future.

Small Acts, Big Impact: Continuing to Spread Hope  
This event, through the donation of essential groceries and the organisation of fun sports activities, not only provided support to impoverished families but also brought joy and hope to the lives of children in the community. The partnership between IYDF and Npoint Men's Wear once again demonstrated the vital role that society can play in helping underprivileged groups and improving living conditions. Each event and every donation contributes to paving the way for a better future for those in need.

## Apple iPhone 16 Pro launched: Features, specs, and what to expect

TBG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

**A**t its much-awaited September Event this September, Apple officially launched its top-of-the-line variants from the iPhone 16 series—the iPhone 16 Pro and Pro Max. For customers looking for the flagship experience but do not want to pay a premium for the iPhone 16 Pro Max, the iPhone 16 Pro presents a lucrative choice—especially considering that it has been priced Rs15000 less than its predecessor, the iPhone 15 Pro.

For Indian customers, pre-orders will be avail-

able from September 20, with the iPhone 16 Pro's starting price marked at Rs1,19,900. As usual, this model brings a range of exciting features and powerful upgrades, making it a strong contender for those looking for a premium experience. Take a closer look at what the iPhone 16 Pro has to offer and how you can get your hands on the model on Easy EMIs using the Bajaj Finserv EMI Network Card without straining your finances.

iPhone 16 Pro: An overview  
The iPhone 16 Pro is an upgraded version of its predecessor, the iPhone 15 Pro.

# DASSAULT BOOSTS INDIA'S DEFENSE WITH MRO HUB

French firm Dassault Aviation informed India's Defence Ministry and Air Force about establishing Dassault Aviation Maintenance Repair and Overhaul India.

TG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a significant development, French aircraft maker Dassault Aviation is to set up a new Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility in Noida to provide support to the French-origin fighter jets in the Indian Air Force. The Indian Air Force operates around 50 Mirage-2000 aircraft inducted in the 1980s and 36 Rafale fighter aircraft inducted in the last few years.

"The French firm recently informed the Defence Ministry and the Indian Air Force about setting up a new Indian company Dassault Aviation Maintenance Repair and Overhaul India (DAMROI) to provide maintenance, repair and overhaul support for the French-origin fighter aircraft in India," defence



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with French Minister of Armed Forces, Florence Parly and Chief Executive Officer of Dassault Aviation, Eric Trappier during Rafale combat aircraft handover ceremony, in Merignac on Oct 9, 2023. ANI

officials said. Dassault informed the Defence Ministry that it is setting up the new MRO company in line with India's vision of Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance) and would be opening the facility in one of industrial sectors of NOIDA in UP, they said. The company has informed the Defence Min-

*The plan is to acquire 26 of these planes for the Indian Navy which will deploy them on board the aircraft carrier INS Vikrant.*

istry that the new Indian company would have Indian national and old Dassault representative in India, Posina Venkata Rao as its Chief Executive Officer.

Rao has been associated with Dassault Aviation in India for many decades and has been closely involved in their campaigns in India. He will have a work force of

both French and Indian nationals as part of the team. Dassault has informed that it plans to progressively scale up the MRO activities at DAMROI in cooperation with Indian aeronautical industrial ecosystem, thereby considerably enhancing the scope of support for fighter aircraft of French origin.

The Jaguar deep penetration fighter jets which are on their last legs of operations in India can also be supported by the MRO as they also have French connection.

Dassault is negotiating a deal with Indian Navy to sell its Rafale Marine jets.

The plan is to acquire 26 of these planes for the Indian Navy which will deploy them on board the aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. The Indian Air Force has also prepared two bases for the Rafale fighters in Ambala and Hashimara.

# Sensex surges past 85,000 amid global rate cuts

TG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Stock indices in India continued to rally amid rate cuts globally, touching fresh highs on Tuesday. Sensex breached 85,000 and Nifty crossed 26,000.

Sensex closed the day at 84,914.04 points, down 14.57 points or 0.017 per cent, while Nifty closed at 25,940.40 points, up just 1.35 points or 0.0052 per cent. Among the sectoral indices, Nifty metal was the top mover at 2.97 per cent.

"...for the rally to continue, the Nifty must decisively break above the 26,000 level. Until then, we expect range-bound movement, with the index fluctuating between 25,800 and 26,000 over the next few hours to a few days," said Rupak De, Senior Technical Analyst, LKP Securities.

US Federal Reserve's monetary policy committee loosening interest rate by step 50 basis points, in particular,

lent fresh support to Indian stocks.

Loosening monetary policy in the US through rate cuts typically leads to flight of capital to markets where policy rates are high. The steeper the rate cut in the US, the more the tendency of flight of capitals to alternative investment destinations, including India.

Continued buying by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) also somewhat supported the stock indices. Foreign portfolio investors upped their investments in India, hoping for a better return on investments due to the interest rate differentials.

They have so far mopped up Rs 48,872 worth of stocks in India in September, data made available by NSDL showed. They have netted buyers for the fourth month now.

"Several factors contributed to this rally, including strong corporate earnings,

resilient macroeconomic indicators, and increased foreign institutional investor (FII) inflows. The market momentum was further bolstered by a bullish outlook on India's economic growth, supported by expectations of structural reforms and investor optimism around the Indian economy's ability to withstand global headwinds, such as inflationary pressures and geopolitical uncertainties, added to the positive sentiment," Vikram Kasat, Head - Advisory, PL Capital - Prabudas Lalladher.

In the absence of domestic cues, the markets are likely to mirror trends in the global indices going ahead.

"We are of the view that, the short-term market texture is still in to the positive side, but due to temporary overbought environments we could see range bound activity in the near future," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head Equity Research, Kotak Securities.

# Cheap imports crush Himachal's apple farmers

TG NETWORK  
SHIMLA

Himachal Pradesh's apple industry is a critical driver of the state's economy, supporting thousands of families.

Farmers in Himachal Pradesh, renowned for their high-quality apples, are facing an unprecedented crisis as cheap and illegally imported apples from origins like Iran, Turkey and UAE are threatening their livelihoods.

Indian apple farmers are calling on Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan to raise the Minimum Import Price (MIP) for apples to Rs 90 per kilogram. They argue the current MIP of Rs 50 is too low and has led to a surge in the import of inexpensive apples from countries like Iran



Apple farmers stage a protest against the Central Government on the call of Sayunkti Kisan Morcha and All India Kisan Sabha, in Shimla in Jan 2024. ANI

and Turkey. Additionally, apples from China are illegally entering the Indian market through the United Arab Emirates (UAE), even though apples are not grown in the UAE. India had officially banned the import of Chinese apples in 2017 but they can be seen getting sold in every city. Similarly, a substantial quantity of Iranian apples

is entering India via Afghanistan under the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), where import duties are not applicable. The Progressive Growers Association in a letter dated September 5, 2024, addressed to Minister of Agriculture Chauhan, highlights the severe impact of these practices on domestic apple producers.

# Without green hydrogen India may miss interim net-zero emission target by a decade

TG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India's interim net-zero emission target of 2030 cannot be met without a significant acceleration in the green hydrogen economy, says a report by S&P Global.

Current projections for meeting the interim target of net-zero emissions by 2030, could be delayed by as much as a decade.

The green hydrogen sector stands as a critical pillar of India's energy transition strategy, necessitating urgent investment and policy support to unlock its potential. India must expedite the development of its green hydrogen economy.

India's energy transition



is characterised by four key investment themes: energy efficiency, renewable energy, low-emission fuels, and sustainable mobility.

The government has formulated a policy framework that combines subsidies, mandates, taxes, and incentives to stimulate these sectors. Historically, subsidies and incentives have dominated investment strategies—

with 37 per cent of average allocations directed towards fossil fuels and only 5 per cent towards green energy in the past five years.

Additionally, India is establishing a carbon market framework and climate finance taxonomy to facilitate financing for these green technologies.

One significant challenge facing India's energy transi-

tion is the disparity in returns between traditional fossil fuel companies and emerging green energy enterprises.

Despite a surge of interest and higher stock valuations in the green sector, traditional oil and gas companies have outperformed their renewable counterparts by an average of 8.3 per cent in capital returns over the past five years, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights.

Currently accounting for only 6 per cent of India's energy mix, gas must play a pivotal role in transitioning away from coal. The government aims to increase this share to 15 per cent by 2023, promoting flexibility in the energy sector along with re-

newable growth.

India recognises the need for 30 critical minerals essential for its energy transition. The establishment of Khanij Bidesh India aims to secure access to these minerals globally, but more emphasis is needed on domestic exploration to support this initiative. The report suggests that Indian government must prioritise reforms in the power sector to tackle legacy issues such as high transmission and distribution losses and inefficient operations. By fostering a competitive market environment and encouraging private participation, India can enhance grid reliability and accommodate increasing renewable energy integration.

# AltG eyes acquisition of 24Seven convenience retail chain

TG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

AltG, a leading financial R&D-focused investor specializing in distressed, turnaround and special situation assets, has indicated that it would be willing to make a potential acquisition offer to Godfrey Phillips India to acquire its grocery and convenience retail chain, 24Seven. AltG, known for identifying undervalued assets and driving accelerated and high returns turnarounds, sees significant opportunity in the 24Seven brand.

As per their website, AltG sees potential in 24Seven and describes it as a good business with an impaired



balance sheet. They plan to initiate financial restructuring to revitalize and expand the chain's operations. Currently, 24Seven operates around 90 full-format outlets and 40 kiosks, primarily in Delhi-NCR, Chandigarh, and Hyderabad.

The news comes at a moment of weakness for

24Seven, whose stores shut this month due to a shortage of cash. Earlier, Godfrey Phillips India had announced plans to exit the 24Seven retail business in an exchange filing on July 31, 2024. The retail division generated Rs. 403 crore in revenue for FY24, representing 7.6% of the

company's total revenue, but carried a negative net worth as of March 31, 2024. The sale process was initially delayed due to a legal injunction filed by Samir Modi, executive director of Godfrey Phillips.

Email queries sent to the 24Seven and AltG remained unanswered.

AltG had earlier recommended that Godfrey Phillips spin off 24Seven in an open letter to the board, recognizing the brand's untapped potential.

This acquisition is expected to leverage 24Seven's established metropolitan footprint and drive significant growth within India's expanding convenience retail market.

company's total revenue,

but carried a negative net worth as of March 31, 2024. The sale process was initially delayed due to a legal injunction filed by Samir Modi, executive director of Godfrey Phillips.

Email queries sent to the 24Seven and AltG remained unanswered.

AltG had earlier recommended that Godfrey Phillips spin off 24Seven in an open letter to the board, recognizing the brand's untapped potential.

This acquisition is expected to leverage 24Seven's established metropolitan footprint and drive significant growth within India's expanding convenience retail market.

# India must build strategic port network: S&P Global Ratings

TG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

India should develop a regional network of vital ports to fully capitalise on the opportunities for trade growth along its coastline, according to S&P Global Ratings.

Noting enhanced competition, the global agency stated that India should look beyond domestic ports and develop a regional network of strategically vital ports.

According to the official data, India has a coastline of 7,517 kilometres and India's strategic position in the Indian Ocean region plays a crucial role in shaping global maritime trade

routes.

On the other hand, India's trade is overwhelmingly seaborne, similar to mainland China, South Korea and Vietnam, which also conduct nearly 90 per cent of their trade via sea, as noted by S&P Global Market Intelligence's Global Trade Analytics Suite.

S&P also asserted that India must implement appropriate trade, investment, and geopolitical policies in order to fully benefit from its extensive coastline.

The global agency stated, "More than 90% of India's import trade is seaborne; a litmus test will be how it prepares its ports for increasing exports and man-

aging substantial bulk commodity imports."

If further adds that opportunities for India are growing with a new focus on its coastline and the Indian Ocean region, beyond its immediate borders.

India's efforts in this expanded area include regular Navy visits to ports in Djibouti and Singapore, developing maritime trade routes with Sri Lanka and Oman, and upgrading trade agreements with the United Arab Emirates and Bangladesh.

S&P in its analysis noted that the evolving dynamics in public and private sector port development are benefiting India's maritime ambition. "The Ministry

of Ports, Shipping and Waterways' Maritime India Vision 2030, released in 2021, is emblematic of the complexity of managing the improvement of 12 government-run and more than 200 privately run ports across India's vast coastline," it added.

"A litmus test will be how India prepares ports for increasing exports and to manage substantial bulk commodity imports. India's bulk commodity imports are primarily energy imports in crude oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG), liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and coal; metallurgical coal for steel making; and agriculture sector imports such as fertilisers.

Due to these revised limits, it is estimated that approximately 4,300 cases will be withdrawn from various judicial forums over time, the Finance Ministry said. Additionally, the ministry stated that steps have been taken to deploy more officers dedicated to hearing and deciding income tax appeals, particularly those involving substantial tax amounts.

# General Catalyst eyes \$1 bn Indian startup surge

TG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

General Catalyst, a prominent Silicon Valley-based venture capital firm, has set its sights on India's burgeoning startup ecosystem, earmarking up to \$1 billion for investment in the country over the next few years. This strategic move follows the firm's merger with Venture Highway, a local early-stage investment firm founded by Neeraj Arora, who is now overseeing General Catalyst's operations in India.

Neeraj Arora highlighted the significant shift in India's startup landscape, noting the success of high-profile IPOs such as Zomato, Paytm, and Mamaearth, which has demonstrated the potential for substantial returns for early investors.



Neeraj Arora

These successful exits have marked a turning point, sparking global venture capital interest in Indian startups. Arora stated that General Catalyst aims to be a significant player in this space, investing in sectors where India's unique market dynamics create opportunities that are not seen

elsewhere in the world.

The venture capital firm recently made its first major post-merger move by leading a \$340 million investment in quick-commerce startup Zepto, valuing the company at \$5 billion. This investment underscores General Cata-

lyst's localized strategy of focusing on businesses like Zepto, which have developed India-specific models of success in sectors that have not thrived as much in other regions.

Beyond quick commerce, General Catalyst is exploring sectors like artificial intelligence (AI), healthcare, and defense, areas in which India has yet to see substantial technological penetration.

According to Arora, India's growing focus on AI has the potential to transform these industries and allow the country to "leapfrog" global competitors by developing scalable, tech-driven solutions for billions of people.

# Supreme Court clears 573 small tax cases

TG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has disposed of 573 direct tax cases where the tax effect is less than Rs5 crore, following the revised monetary limit for filing appeals, the Ministry of Finance said in a statement on Tuesday.

This move aligns with the government's efforts to reduce tax litigation and promote the Ease of Doing Business.

The Union Budget 2024-25 provided for an enhanced monetary limit for filing appeals related to Direct Taxes, Excise, and Service Tax in the Tax Tribunals, High Courts, and Supreme Court. The limits

lakh, Rs2 crore, and Rs5 crore, respectively.

Following the Budget announcement, the CBDT and CBIC issued the necessary orders to raise the monetary limit for filing appeals in their respective domains.

"As a result, it is expected that the number of cases pending before various appellate forums will decrease, reducing tax litigation," the Finance Ministry stated. In line with the Union Budget 2024-25 announcements, the monetary thresholds for filing tax dispute appeals by the department were enhanced: for the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), it was raised from Rs50 lakh to Rs60 lakh; for High Courts,

and for the Supreme Court, from Rs2 crore to Rs5 crore.

Due to these revised limits, it is estimated that approximately 4,300 cases will be withdrawn from various judicial forums over time, the Finance Ministry said.

Additionally, the ministry stated that steps have been taken to deploy more officers dedicated to hearing and deciding income tax appeals, particularly those involving substantial tax amounts.

"These initiatives reflect the government's commitment to improving the 'Ease of Living' and 'Ease of Doing Business' across the country by reducing pend-

# DISSANAYAKE: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF HIS PRESIDENCY ON INDIA-SRI LANKA RELATIONS

## OPINION

SIDDHARTHA DAVE



revolutionary communist movement, has evolved over the years, but it has maintained a strong leftist orientation with a critical stance toward both Western and regional powers.

Historically, the JVP has criticized Sri Lanka's reliance on external actors, particularly its growing indebtedness to international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank. At the same time, Dissanayake and his party have been vocal critics of corruption and nepotism in Sri Lankan governance, aiming to position themselves as a force of moral and economic rectitude.

While Dissanayake himself has not shown overt allegiance to China, concerns arise due to his Marxist ideology, which often aligns with the policies of communist regimes. China, a leading global communist power, has significantly expanded its influence in Sri Lanka in recent years, particularly through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. As Sri Lanka has faced financial collapse, China has emerged as a key creditor and infrastructure developer, notably controlling the strategic Hambantota port. This economic dependence has raised questions about the autonomy

Anura Kumara Dis-  
sanayake has long been a figure in Sri Lankan politics, leading a party that traditionally advocated for socialist reforms, workers' rights, and the removal of foreign influence. The JVP, which originated as a

of any future Sri Lankan government, especially one led by a leader with Marxist leanings.

The notion of Anura Kumara Dis-  
sanayake being a Chinese proxy stems from the larger geopolitical chessboard where China is aggressively courting smaller nations, particularly those in South Asia, to enhance its influence. Sri Lanka, geographically situated at the heart of key maritime routes, is vital to China's strategic interests. China's growing control over key Sri Lankan infrastructure, including ports and highways, provides it with significant leverage over Colombo's economic and political decisions.

Dissanayake, with his anti-Western, anti-IMF stance, may naturally align with China's narrative of non-Western development, which promotes alternative financial and infrastructure models free from traditional Western conditions. However, it remains speculative to label Dissanayake as a Chinese proxy, as he has not publicly embraced China's Belt and Road Initiative or shown explicit favoritism toward Chinese investment.

Moreover, his political rhetoric emphasizes sovereignty, suggesting that he may resist overreliance on any foreign power, including China. But given Sri Lanka's dire financial situation and its economic dependence on China, any future government will have to navigate these geopolitical waters delicately.

Anura Kumara Dis-  
sanayake's election as



*While Dissanayake himself has not shown overt allegiance to China, concerns arise due to his Marxist ideology, which often aligns with the policies of communist regimes. China, a leading global communist power, has significantly expanded its influence in Sri Lanka in recent years, particularly through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects. As Sri Lanka has faced financial collapse, China has emerged as a key creditor and infrastructure developer, notably controlling the strategic Hambantota port.*

President of Sri Lanka poses both challenges and opportunities for India. Sri Lanka is a key player in India's neighborhood, and its political trajectory directly affects New Delhi's security and regional influence. The dynamics of India-Sri Lanka relations are shaped by history, culture, trade, and strategic interests, especially in the Indian Ocean.

India has been closely monitoring China's growing influence in Sri Lanka, particularly its control

over the Hambantota port and other strategic assets. If Dissanayake pursues a closer relationship with China, even if not as an explicit proxy, India may view his presidency as a potential threat to its regional dominance. A China-friendly Sri Lanka could increase China's naval presence in the Indian Ocean, a critical area for India's maritime security.

Additionally, any move by Sri Lanka to deepen its economic or military ties with China could strain India-

Sri Lanka relations. India has traditionally been sensitive to Chinese encroachments in its neighborhood, and Dissanayake's presidency could trigger heightened concerns about Chinese involvement in South Asia.

India and Sri Lanka share strong economic ties, with India being one of Sri Lanka's largest trading partners. If Dissanayake adopts a more protectionist, left-wing economic approach, it could impact bilateral trade and investment, par-

ticularly in sectors where Indian companies are involved. Moreover, if Sri Lanka pivots towards China for greater economic assistance, Indian businesses and investments might face challenges in the Sri Lankan market.

However, on the flip side, Dissanayake's anti-corruption platform could be a positive for India, as it may foster a more transparent and accountable environment for Indian investments in Sri Lanka.

India, particularly its southern state of Tamil Nadu, has always been invested in the political rights and well-being of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority. The treatment of Tamils has been a sensitive issue in bilateral relations, and successive Indian governments have pressed Sri Lanka to ensure justice, equality, and reconciliation.

While Dissanayake has been critical of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, his Marxist ideology suggests he could champion minority rights, which may align with India's interests in protecting Tamil communities. However, if he fails to address Tamil grievances, it could reignite tensions between Colombo and New Delhi, particularly with Tamil Nadu's political influence on Indian foreign policy toward Sri Lanka.

If Dissanayake proves to be an independent leader who avoids becoming overly reliant on China or the West, India could have an opportunity to reassert its influence in Sri Lanka. By offering alternative economic assistance, diplomatic support, and secu-

rity cooperation, India can leverage its historical ties and proximity to balance Chinese influence.

Moreover, India's diplomatic strategy will need to focus on ensuring that Sri Lanka remains neutral in its geopolitical alignment, allowing both China and India to have a presence without turning the island nation into a battleground for influence.

Anura Kumara Dis-  
sanayake's potential election as President of Sri Lanka will undeniably have a profound impact on both the internal dynamics of Sri Lanka and its external relationships. While it is premature to label him as a Chinese proxy, his Marxist ideology, combined with Sri Lanka's economic dependency on China, will naturally raise concerns in India.

India will need to adopt a cautious yet proactive approach in dealing with a Dissanayake-led government. Strengthening diplomatic channels, offering strategic investments, and addressing key regional issues, such as the Tamil question, will be essential for maintaining a balanced relationship. The challenge for India will be to safeguard its strategic interests while promoting stability and prosperity in its island neighbor, amid a shifting geopolitical landscape dominated by Chinese influence.

*Siddhartha Dave is an alumnus of United Nations University, Tokyo and a former Lok Sabha Research Fellow. He writes on Foreign Affairs and National Security*

## ANRF aims to bridge the gap between research and development

These social, developmental and human contexts need to be properly documented, archived and analysed.

It is believed that the 'Anusandhan-NRF initiatives' may also get proper attention in social science research in India.

## OPINION

BADRI NARAYAN



together. He also asserted the requirement for engaging research with development. In similar way we see state and academics as separate and sometime binary to each other. Such a perspective in fact weakens the prospect of development of the country. These both domains require to work together at least for developmental mission of the country.

'Anusandhan- National Research Foundation (ANRF) is working to bridge the gap between research and development and forging creative engagement with academics, state, private sectors, lok udyam (people initiative together). ANRF has also proposed to bring together scattered research initiatives and orient them towards development. As we know enormous research initiatives have been taken by institutions, public and other innovative agencies. These initia-

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the first meeting of 'Anusandhan-National Research Foundation (ANRF) governing body meeting'. In his deliberations in this meeting, the PM presented his vision of associating research with development of the nation. We usually see research and development as two separate domains. We have failed so far in forging productive interaction in these two domain. PM Narendra Modi gave a direction of how and why these two domains may work



*ANRF as a funding, idea-sharing and innovative platform may bring more than thousands of our research institutions, universities and public initiatives together for facilitating their innovativeness and using them for the development of the country. Prime Minister Modi has emphasised the need to identify and remove obstacles in the research ecosystem of the country.*

atives are yet unplanned and non-interactive with each other.

ANRF is aimed to bring them together and also plan them in direction to create cumulative research capital for the development

of the nation. It has proposed to bring science, technology, liberals' studies and social science at one forum to share their innovations and idea resources for the cause of 'Viksit Bharat' mission which

PM Narendra Modi has envisioned and conceptualised.

ANRF as a funding, idea-sharing and innovative platform may bring more than thousands of our research institutions, univer-

sities and public initiatives together for facilitating their innovativeness and using them for the development of the country.

During the meeting, Prime Minister said that today a new beginning has been made with the first meeting of the Governing Body of Anusandhan National Research Foundation. Prime Minister has emphasised the need to identify and remove obstacles in the research ecosystem of the country.

His appeal to researchers to set big targets and attain them for the cause of the development of the nation. He suggested to the academic and research community of the country to focus on finding new solutions to existing problems. He also reiterated on the need to find local solutions to the problems even of global problem.

In this meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the need for upgradation and standardisation of institutions to do innovative research. PM Narendra Modi during his deliberation gave a valuable advice to prepare a directory of domain experts on the ba-

sis of their expertise. In this process he reiterated the need for developing a dashboard where information related to research and development happening in the country can be easily tracked. These methods may certainly help us to plan and organise Indian researches for getting appropriate solutions for local as well as global problems. To organise and plan of research domain of the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also opined that there is the need for Scientific monitoring of utilisation of resources for research and innovation.

It is indeed an 'ambitious beginning' as rightly explained by PM Narendra Modi, said the scientific community of the country should have faith that there will be no dearth of resources for their endeavours.

Discussing the positive impacts of Atal Tinkering Labs, Prime Minister suggested that grading of these labs can be done. He also highlighted that the various local scientific researches also require support.

Bringing 'Anusandhan - NRF' in action may be documented as

one of the achievements in his 100 days of third term. In fact, 'Anusandhan-NRF' came into existence by a parliamentary act, 2023. But it an outcome of consistent efforts done by ministry, experts and other research administrators since many years.

By the beginning of Anusandhan-National Research foundation (NRF), there is a hope that Indian research communities and various kinds of people initiatives are going to get more sophisticated and resource support to make their research dream real. Only caution, we need to pose with this 'Anusandhan-NRF initiatives' that social science and liberal study research verticals may also get proper attention in this futuristic planning of India research.

Every mega and meta development of any society or country has its social as well human context. These social, developmental and human contexts need to be properly documented, archived and analysed. It is believed that the 'Anusandhan-NRF initiatives may also social science research in India.

# WHAT IS MUDA SCAM?

The BJP estimates a Rs 4,000 crore loss from land swaps, accusing Siddaramaiah of corruption and exploiting political influence.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The ongoing Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) scam has emerged as a significant political and financial controversy in Karnataka, shaking the state's political foundations and placing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his family under intense scrutiny. This scandal centers on alleged irregularities in land allocation under the MUDA compensatory land scheme, with accusations targeting Siddaramaiah's wife, BM Parvathi, for receiving disproportionate financial gains from a land swap. Activists and opposition figures, especially from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), estimate that the scam may have cost the state between Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,000 crore, further intensifying the political stakes.

## MUDA'S 50:50 COMPENSATORY LAND SCHEME

MUDA introduced the 50:50 compensatory land scheme in November 2020. The purpose of the scheme was to compensate individuals whose land was acquired for development by MUDA. Under this policy, landowners who lost their property to development would receive 50% of developed land in return, while MUDA retained the remaining 50% for public projects. The scheme was intended to create a balanced approach where landowners would not lose their assets entirely, receiving developed plots in exchange.

However, the scheme was abolished by Siddaramaiah's government in 2023 amidst allegations of financial mismanagement and favoritism. At the center of these allegations is a claim that Siddaramaiah's wife, BM Parvathi, received 14 premium plots in the affluent Vijayanagar area of Mysuru in ex-

change for a less valuable 3.16-acre parcel of land in Kesuru village, a much less developed part of the region. This substantial difference in the value of the properties has sparked accusations of corruption and favoritism, with claims that Parvathi's land exchange provided her with a significant financial windfall far exceeding the value of her original property.

## FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial impact of the alleged irregularities is staggering. Opposition leaders, particularly from the BJP, estimate the cost of the land swap and other unauthorized allocations of valuable land to be around Rs 4,000 crore. These figures suggest that the undervaluation of properties and their subsequent allocation to individuals close to power, including Parvathi, deprived the state of valuable revenue. As the investigation deepens, attention has also turned to other potential financial misconduct, including a Rs 387 crore worth of projects allegedly initiated under Siddaramaiah's "verbal instructions." The total financial loss to the state could increase as more details emerge from the investigation.

The BJP has seized upon the controversy, using it to position themselves as champions of clean governance. The opposition party is determined to highlight what it describes as systemic corruption within Siddaramaiah's government. BJP leaders have accused Siddaramaiah and his family of exploiting their political influence to gain undue financial advantages, framing the issue as one that goes beyond land allocations and speaks to broader concerns about governance in Karnataka. Siddaramaiah's response and legal battles



Mysore Urban Development Authority office at Jhansi Rani Lakshmi Bai Rd



Protesters climbing the barricades during their protest against Karnataka Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot granted permission to prosecute state CM Siddaramaiah in an alleged MUDA scam, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on 27 Aug, 2024. ANI



BJP leaders beat the drums during the flag off of BJP-Jd(S) 'Mysore Chalo' padayatra (foot march) to protest against the state government over MUDA and Valmiki Corps scam, at Kengeri in Bengaluru on 3 Aug 2024. ANI



Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah speaks at BJP and JD(S) MLCs protest in the well against alleged corruption in MUDA and Valmiki Corporation during the Karnataka Legislative Council session at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on July 25, 2024.



BJP leader NR Ramesh arrives at the Lokayukta office to file a complaint against Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah and others in the MUDA scam issue, in Bengaluru on 20 Jul, 2024. ANI



Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah speaks to the media on Karnataka Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot's letter on Arkavathy denotification, in Bengaluru on Monday. ANI

## TDG EXPLAINER

In response to these serious allegations, Siddaramaiah has categorically denied any wrongdoing. He maintains that the land transfer followed all legal procedures and has emphasized that the land swap occurred while the BJP was in power in 2021. According to Siddaramaiah, the BJP's accusations are politically motivated and part of a larger smear campaign designed to destabilize his government. He has sought to block the investigation, challenging the legitimacy

of Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot's sanction for prosecution. However, the Karnataka High Court rejected Siddaramaiah's petitions in September 2024, allowing the investigation to proceed. Supporters of Siddaramaiah, including Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, have described the allegations as a conspiracy aimed at undermining Congress' leadership in the state. They argue that the timing of the accusations, surfacing just before key legisla-

tive sessions, suggests a coordinated effort by the BJP to weaken Congress politically. Shivakumar has been particularly vocal, framing the issue as an attack not only on Siddaramaiah but on the entire Congress party.

## BROADER POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS

The MUDA scam's significance extends far beyond its legal and financial implications, as it threatens to reshape Karnataka's political landscape. Siddaramaiah is a senior Congress leader, and his administration has been pivotal in Congress' resurgence in Karnataka. If the investigation leads to an adverse court ruling, it could damage Siddaramaiah's political standing

and weaken Congress' position in the state. Such an outcome could also erode public trust in Congress, particularly in the run-up to future elections, where the party will face stiff competition from the BJP.

For the BJP, the scandal offers an opportunity to reinforce their anti-corruption narrative. By highlighting the alleged irregularities in MUDA land allocations, the BJP seeks to discredit Congress and position itself as a cleaner alternative. This strategy aligns with the BJP's broader electoral messaging, which has focused on rooting out corruption and promoting transparency in governance. The scandal allows the BJP to draw parallels between MUDA and previous Congress-led corruption cases,

such as the 2G spectrum scandal and the Commonwealth Games controversy, both of which tarnished the party's reputation.

## INVESTIGATION

In an effort to address the allegations, the Karnataka government has appointed retired High Court Justice PN Desai to lead a formal investigation into the MUDA land allotments. The inquiry commission has been tasked with reviewing the land transactions and reporting its findings within six months. The investigation will scrutinize not only the land swap involving Parvathi but also other potential irregularities within MUDA's operations.

As the investigation progresses, the political rhetoric is expected to intensify. Congress will likely continue to portray the probe as a politically motivated attack, while the BJP will double down on its calls for Siddaramaiah's resignation to ensure an impartial investigation. Siddaramaiah faces an uphill legal battle, with the court allowing the prosecution to move forward despite his efforts to block it. His legal team is expected to continue defending the land transfer as legitimate, but the stakes are high, and the outcome could have a lasting impact on his career.

## COURT'S SESSIONS AND EMERGING EVIDENCE

The Karnataka High Court's decision to dismiss Siddaramaiah's petition was a major victory for the BJP, validating their demand for a full investigation into the MUDA land allotments. The court's ruling is seen as a turning point in the scandal, ensuring that the investigation will proceed despite Siddaramaiah's objections. The BJP has used the court's decision to bolster its case, with leaders such as Tejasvi Surya and Rajeev Chandrasekhar making strong public statements about the need for accountability. By drawing attention

to the investigation, BJP leaders have presented evidence in the form of land records and valuation discrepancies that they claim point to clear violations of the compensatory land scheme's rules. These records show a significant difference between the value of Parvathi's original land and the premium plots she received in Mysuru's Vijayanagar area. According to the BJP, these discrepancies constitute proof of corruption within MUDA, and they have called on Congress leadership to take action against Siddaramaiah.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR CONGRESS AND KARNATAKA'S FUTURE

The MUDA scam has the potential to reshape Karnataka's political future. Siddaramaiah's leadership has been a stabilizing force for Congress in the state, especially following their success in the 2023 assembly elections. If Siddaramaiah and his family are cleared of any wrongdoing, it could strengthen Congress' narrative that they are the victims of a politically motivated witch hunt. Such an outcome could galvanize Congress' voter base, particularly among those who see the investigation as an unfair attack on their leadership.

However, if the investigation uncovers further evidence of corruption, the consequences could be dire for Siddaramaiah and Congress. A guilty verdict would severely damage Congress' credibility in Karnataka, a state that has long been a political battleground between Congress and the BJP.

It could also weaken Congress' position nationally, as the party prepares for future electoral battles.

For the BJP, the MUDA scandal is an opportunity to consolidate their position in Karnataka and strengthen their anti-corruption narrative. By drawing attention

## CBI arrests absconding accused in Rs 21 crore bank fraud case

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday arrested a proclaimed offender in connection with a bank fraud case involving over Rs 21 crore.

The arrested accused has been identified as Surender Kumar.

"The CBI has today arrested a Proclaimed Offender (PO) Surender Kumar who was absconding in a bank fraud case," the agency said in a release.

CBI had registered a case on March 23, 2021, on complaint of AGM, Stressed Asset Management Branch (SAMB), Bank of Baroda, alleging that directors/guarantors of a private company (borrower), the said private company and unknown public servants and private persons committed fraud during the period 2009-2017 to the tune of Rs 21.21.52 lakh (approx) in the loan accounts of Bank of Baroda and Standard Chartered Bank.

"Chargesheet was filed against eight accused, including absconding accused on December 29, 2022. Absconding accused was also involved in diversion of funds in conspiracy with promoters of borrower company. The said accused, Surender Kumar, submitted a forged Letter of Credit (LC) in the bank and transferred the fund to his two concerns/firms," the agency said in its release.

The accused, Surender Kumar, neither joined the investigation nor trial proceedings of the Court. Proceedings under sections 82 and 83 Cr.Pc were issued against him. He was declared Proclaimed Offender on August 25, 2023. Thereafter, a standing warrant was issued by the Ld. Court of Special Judicial Magistrate, CBI, Ghaziabad, against him.

"In compliance of standing warrant, the CBI team approached P.O. Surender Kumar today, i.e., September 24, 2024, at Kamla Nagar, Delhi.

## Venugopal Accuses BJP of Targeting Karnataka Govt, Defends Secularism

TDG NETWORK  
BENGALURU

Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal on Tuesday slammed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over Karnataka High Court's verdict against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the alleged MUDA scam and said that it is nothing but an attempt to make the state kneel before the "Delhi Durbar."

In a post on X, Venugopal said that the Modi-Shah regime's relentless misuse of the government's office is a matter of immense concern for our constitutional democracy.

"Governors are meretricious heads and cannot interfere in the day-to-day functioning of state governments, they must adhere to the letter and spirit of the Constitution. The Karnataka Governor is trying his best to destabilise a popular, pro-people government led by a leader who has risen from a humble background to the CM's office. Such attempts only show the BJP's instincts to control Karnataka



The Congress MP also slammed Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi over his recent remarks on secularism.

from Delhi and it is nothing but an attempt to make Karnataka kneel before the Delhi durbar," he said. He further asserted that the CM Siddaramaiah-led Congress government is a "strong government" that will only listen to the people—not to the bullies of Delhi. "Our party will fight this both legally and politically, against the Central Government's nefarious motives," he added. The Congress MP also slammed Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi over his re-

marks rejecting divisive politics and embracing inclusivity.

Meanwhile, the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday dismissed Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the approval given by Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot for conducting an investigation against him in the alleged illegalities in Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) allotting sites to his wife.

In his judgement, the single judge bench of Justice Nagaprasanna said that the order of sanction for prosecution does not suffer from non-application of mind by the Governor.

It is alleged that MUDA illegally allotted 14 sites to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife in the prime location of Mysuru city. The High Court, in its interim order passed on August 19, had granted a temporary relief to Siddaramaiah by directing a special court in Bengaluru to defer further proceedings and not to take any precipitative action pursuant to the sanction granted by the Governor.

## MP: Man held for molesting 7-year-old in Bhopal

TDG NETWORK  
BHOPAL

A man was arrested in connection with the molestation of a seven-year-old minor girl after around two months in Madhya Pradesh's capital, Bhopal, a police officer said on Tuesday.

The accused is a resident of Berasia, and he used to visit areas under the jurisdiction of the Teela Jamalpur police station every two months to collect donations for the madrasa. During the last visit in July, the accused had molested the girl, the officer said.

While returning from the school on Tuesday, the minor saw the accused and informed her family members. Thereafter, the kins approached the police station, and the accused was arrested, the police added.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (ADCP, Zone 3) Shalini Dikshit told ANI, "A case of molestation came to light with a seven-year-old girl under Teela Jamalpur police station where the accused com-

*The victim's family searched the accused at the time of incident but didn't find his whereabouts.*

mitted the crime in July. The victim's family searched the accused at the time of incident but didn't find his whereabouts. Today, while returning from school, the minor saw the accused and informed her family members."

"Thereafter, the family registered a complaint at the police station, the police began the search and nabbed the accused. The accused is a resident of Berasia. He collects donations for the madrasa and comes to the Teela Jamalpur area every two months for the same. During his last visit, he had committed the crime." Additional DCP Dikshit added.

Further investigation into the matter is underway, she added.

# SUPREME COURT SEEKS STATE BAR COUNCILS' AFFIDAVITS OVER NON-COMPLIANCE OF RULE TO PUBLISH LIST OF SENIOR LAWYERS WILLING TO MENTOR LAW STUDENTS

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Neeraj Salodkar v. Bar Council Of India and Ors., observed wherein the public interest litigation, PIL is filed calling on all State Bar Councils which have not complied with the rule requiring them to publish a list of seasoned lawyers willing to mentor law students during college vacations, to file affidavits explaining the reasons for non-compliance.

The bench comprising of Justice Sanjay Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar was hearing the present matter.

The bench in the case sought the sought the

explanation of Bar Council with regards to non-compliance of Rule 26 of Schedule III to the Rules of Legal Education, 2008.

The court in its order stated that, 'The State Bar Councils which have not complied with the Rule 26 of the Schedule III to the Rules of Legal Education, 2008 will file an affidavit setting out the reasons for non-compliance. In case the affiliated Bar Associations have not made compliance they must take steps in accordance with the law. The State Bar Councils will file affidavits within the period of twelve weeks from today.'

The Rule 26 of Schedule III to the Rules of Legal Education, 2008 man-



dates state bar councils to prepare a district-wise roster of senior counsels having minimum 10 years' experience at the Bar and amenable to guiding inter. Further, it obligates the Bar Council of India to publish and

circulate this list for the benefit of law students seeking internships.

In the present case, the Public Interest Litigation, PIL is filed in the year 2022 wherein seeking publication of a list of senior lawyers willing to

*The petition filed also points out that those students who do not have any such contacts are often left to fend for themselves. In October 2022, the Supreme Court in the case issued notice on the Public Interest Litigation, PIL and has sought response from the Bar Council of India, BCI and the state bar councils.*

mentor law students during college vacations, in an attempt to foster a more inclusive and egalitarian environment for legal education and internships. The concerns are flagged by the petitioner with regards to the challenges

faced by law students, particularly those lacking influential contacts, in securing meaningful internships. The court stated that the non-publication of the list of mentors, he argued, has 'caused immense loss to the legal

fraternity, especially the law students, who have to beg before lawyers to give them work so that they can learn'.

The petition filed also points out that those students who do not have any such contacts are often left to fend for themselves. In October 2022, the Supreme Court in the case issued notice on the Public Interest Litigation, PIL and has sought response from the Bar Council of India, BCI and the state bar councils.

Last Year, in March, the Court received assurances from the Bar Council Of India, BCI that the preparation of the said list was underway and would soon be made public.

The court in the case

was also informed that the Bar Council of India had submitted a letter, instructing state bar councils' secretaries to compile their respective lists within 15 days. The court, taking this information into account, recorded the undertaking.

In January, this year, the court in the case issued directives to state bar councils, compelling them to submit status reports regarding compliance with Rule 26. The court observed that it was indicated that if the non-compliance continues, the only option left with the court would be to impose costs. Accordingly, the court listed the matter for further consideration on January 2025.

## Kerala High Court Denies Anticipatory Bail To Actor Siddique In Rape Case

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Kerala High Court in the case Xxx v State of Kerala observed and has dismissed the anticipatory bail application filed by actor Siddique, booked for rape following release of Justice K. Hema Committee Report.

The bench headed by Justice C. S. Dias pronounced the order. The Senior Counsel Adv. B. Raman Pillai appeared for the actor.

The complaint claims that the actor called her to Muscot Hotel in Trivan-



drum in the pretext of discussing a film and he raped and assaulted her there.

Therefore, the complaint was made to the Special

Investigation Team constituted to investigate the incidents of sexual harassment in Malayalam film industry.

The First Information Re-

port, FIR was registered in the Museum Police Station, Trivandrum.

In the present case, the petition is filed by Actor Siddique wherein it is stated that complainant, who is an ardent supporter and member of Women's Cinema Collective, WCC, is making these allegations because he conducted the press meet along with other officer bearers of the Association of Malayalam Movie Actors, AMMA after the release of Justice Hema Committee report.

It has also been pointed out by the actor that the same complainant had

raised some allegations against him in 2019, but she changed the details now with the intention of getting him booked under non-bailable offences.

The counsel appearing for the State argued before the court that even though there may be some minor variations in the statements, the complainant had named the actor publicly for misbehaving with her since 2019.

The present petition was moved by Adv. Philip T. Varghese, Adv. Sujes H Menon V.B. Senior Counsel Adv. B. Raman Pillai is engaged for appearance.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Yogarani Versus State By The Inspector Of Police observed and has held that the court cannot convict one accused and acquit another when similar or identical evidence is pitted against two accused persons.

The court in the case acquitted the accused or appellant after finding that other co-accused who were charged for similar offences had been acquitted of all the charges and no appeal had been filed challenging their acquittal.

The court referred to the case Javed Shaukat Ali Qureshi v State of Gujarat, wherein the court observed that the court cannot convict one accused and acquit the other when there is similar or identical evidence pitted against two accused persons.

It being the case of prosecution that an appellant had illegally facilitated the issuance of a second passport in favor of accused No.1. Accused No.1 who held an Indian Passport had deposited the same with his employer in Dubai and in search of better employment opportunities had clandestinely applied for second passport through the appellant and other accused persons had connived with the ap-

pellant in procuring second passport to Accused No.1.

The court in the case acquitted other co-accused after the prosecution in the case failed to prove the allegation that they handed over the second passport to the instance of the appellant to him.

The court noted that the allegations against the appellant are the same as made against other co-accused, the bench comprising Justices Sanjay Kumar and Aravind Kumar observed that the Courts below could not have convicted the Appellant while acquitting the other.

The court gave the benefit of the doubt to the appellant since the prosecution was not able to prove the allegation that the appellant had knowingly furnished false information or suppressed known material information with the intent of securing a passport or travel document to a person and thereby had abetted in the commission of an offence punishable under Section 12(1) and thereby punishable under Section 12(2) of the Passports Act.

The court observed that the prosecution had failed to place on record any evidence to prove that appellant had any previous knowledge of accused No.1 was already possessing a

passport. In the absence of any cogent evidence placed in this regard and accused Nos. 1 and 3 to 5 (co-accused) having been acquitted of the offences alleged, the conviction and order of sentence imposed against the appellant alone cannot be sustained or in other words it has to be held that prosecution had failed to prove the guilt of the appellant beyond reasonable doubt.

The court while considering the facts and circumstances of the case set aside the impugned judgment convicting the appellant and the appellant was acquitted.

Accordingly, the court allowed the appeal.

The counsel, Mr. M.Yogesh Kanna, Adv. Mr. S. Prabu Ramasubramanian, Adv. Mr. Raghunatha Sethupathy B, AOR Mr. Manoj Kumar A, Adv. Mr. Vasu Kalra, Adv. Ms. Monica Saini, Adv. appeared for the Appellants).

The counsel, Mrs. Aishwarya Bhati, A.S.G. Mr. Mukesh Kumar Maroria, AOR Ms. Shradha Deshmukh, Adv. Mr. Rajnish Prasad, Adv. Mr. Uday Khanna, Adv. Mr. Nithin Choudhary Pavuruli, Adv. represented the Respondent(s).

## Delhi High Court Dismissed Plea Against Installation Of 'Jhansi Rani' Statue Inside Shahi Idgah Park

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court in the case Shahi Idgah Managing Committee v. Delhi Development Authority & Ors observed and has dismissed the petition filed against the installation of the statue of 'Maharani of Jhansi' inside the Shahi Idgah Park situated at city's Sadar Bazar area.

The bench headed by Justice Dharmesh Sharma in the case observed and has rejected the petition filed by Shahi Idgah Managing Committee seeking directions on the civic authorities to not encroach upon the Shahi Idgah, claiming it to be a waqf property. The Committee referred



to a gazette notification published in the year 1970 wherein it is stated that Shahi Idgah Park is an ancient property built during the Mughal period, which is being used for offering Namaz.

It was also submitted before the court that such a vast property could accommodate as many as 50,000 namazis at one time.

The court while reject-

ing the petition observed that the surrounding area inside the Idgah boundary, which are the parks or open ground, belonged to the Delhi Development Authority, DDA.

The court in the case noted that even the Delhi Waqf Board does not authorize the use of the park for any purpose other than religious activities.

The court stated that the bottom line is that, since the parks or open ground adjoining the Shahi Idgah and located within the Idgah walls are the property of respondent No.1 or DDA, it is solely the DDA's responsibility to allocate portions of the said land for public use as it deems fit.

Further, the court stated that even assuming that the petitioner Commit-

tee had the locus-standi to prefer the petition, it was not understandable as to how their right to offer prayers or to perform any religious rights was being endangered in any manner. It goes without saying that the status quo order passed by the Delhi Minority Commission was palpably without any jurisdiction.

Adding to it, the court stated that it being the case, the petitioner has no legal or fundamental right to oppose the maintenance and upkeep of the parks or open ground, surrounding the Shahi Idgah, by the respondent No.1 or DDA and thereby oppose the installation of the statue by respondent no.2 or MCD at its behest.

## Kerala High Court: Malayalam Film Director Akhil Marar Booked For Discouraging Contributions To CM Disaster Relief Fund Moves High Court For Anticipatory Bail

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Kerala High Court in the case Akhil Raj Alias Akhil Marar v State of Kerala observed and has sought State's stand in the anticipatory bail petition filed by Malayalam film director Akhil Marar, booked for discouraging contributions to the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund, CMDRF through his statements following the Wayanad landslides in July.

The bench headed by Justice C. S. Dias was hearing the present matter and has asked the Public Prosecutor to seek instructions. In the present case, Marar has been booked by the Kollam Rural Cybercrime Police Cell under Sections 45 (abetment) & 192 (provocation to cause riot) of Bharatiya Nyaya San-



(obstruction of officer or refusal to comply with direction) of Disaster Management Act, DMA. It has been alleged by him before the court that he had made some statements through his Facebook account, saying that the Chief Minister is not the person who rescued people from disasters, rather he misused the disasters to earn

It has also been stated by Marar that he would rather build 4 houses for people who had lost homes than contribute to CMDRF. Further, it has been contended by him in his bail petition that he is falsely implicated in this case by the political party workers to wreak vengeance and that he had only expressed his suggestion through the

## Supreme Court Seeks Response From States/UTs On Compliance Of Directions To Set Up Online RTI Portals

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court in the case Anuj Nakade Versus Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah Govt. Of Andhra Pradesh And Ors observed and has sought response from all the States and Union Territories in a contempt petition alleging non-compliance with the directions in the case Pravasi Legal Cell v Union of India & Ors, for having online RTI Portals across the states in the country.

The bench comprising of Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud, Justice JB Pardiwala was hearing

The bench in the case observed and has issued notice wherein the contempt petition filed by Anuj Nakade who alleged that 7 states and 4 Union Territories were yet to set up online RTI Portals while many of the other States either had Portals with incomplete boarding of Authorities or did not follow the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's "Guidelines for Indian Government Websites 3.0", which pertains to accessibility of the portals to the visually impaired.

The court in the case issued notice to the states

liberty to serve the standing counsels, personal presence is dispensed with at this stage.

The Supreme Court in the case Pravasi Legal Cell in March in the year 2023 directed all High Courts to set up of online RTI Portals within the period of three months, if High Court have not done so already.

The bench comprising of Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, Justice PS Narasimha, and Justice JB Pardiwala passed the said direction wherein the petition is filed seeking mechanism to set up an online portal for e-fil-

ing RTI applications and first appeals in High Courts. Further, the bench noted that while the Supreme Court had launched its online portal for filing RTI applications in relation to the Court, several High Courts had still not established online RTI portal.

The bench of CJI DY Chandrachud remarked- The section (I) of RTI, 2005 states that a person who desires to get information under the act shall do so via an application physically or through electronic means. Therefore, the said provision indicates

statutory right to move application by electronic means and though the RTI Act came in 2005, the online web portals are still to be operationalised by some of the High Courts after 17 years. High Court of MP, Delhi, and Orissa have set up web portals. Such portals shall be set up in all High Courts within 3 months. This court request the Registrar Generals to take administrative directions from the Chief Justices of High Courts. The NIC shall provide all logistical and technical assistance. Hence, Petition is disposed of. Accordingly, the court



# THE BUSINESS GUARDIAN

WEDNESDAY | 25 SEPTEMBER 2024 | NEW DELHI

## POLICE BUSTS INTERSTATE DRUG SMUGGLING GANG, SEIZES 116 KG OF GANJA

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In a successful anti-narcotics operation, Delhi Police Crime Branch arrested two interstate drug smugglers, seizing 116 kgs of marijuana (Ganja) worth approximately 58 lakhs.

The two accused, Nitesh and Rohit both resident of Bihar were engaged in supply of narcotic substance in Delhi & NCR after procuring it from the border areas of Orissa-Andhra Pradesh.

According to the information received by the Delhi police, it was found that the supply of this huge quantity of marijuana will be through courier/parcel near Meera Bagh.

"A trap was laid near Meera Bagh where parcel was supposed to be delivered but accused didn't come to take delivery of parcel. The parcel was checked in which Ganja weighing around 116 kg was found", the Delhi police said in a statement.

"The parcel was seized as per procedure and a case was registered and accused persons namely Nitesh and



Delhi Police Crime Branch with drug smugglers

*"A trap was laid near Meera Bagh where parcel was supposed to be delivered but accused didn't come to take delivery of parcel. The parcel was checked in which Ganja weighing around 116 kg was found", Delhi police*

### ARRESTS AND SEIZURE

- Delhi Police Crime Branch arrested two interstate drug smugglers, Nitesh and Rohit, residents of Bihar.
- 116 kgs of marijuana (Ganja) worth approximately 58 lakhs were seized.

#### Drug Supply Route

- The accused were involved in smuggling marijuana from the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border areas to Delhi and NCR.
- Marijuana was supplied through parcels/couriers, intercepted near Meera Bagh.

#### Operation Details

- A trap was laid near Meera Bagh, but the accused didn't show up for the parcel.
- Upon checking, the parcel was found to contain 116 kgs of Ganja.
- Nitesh and Rohit were later arrested in Yamuna

Rohit both resident of Bihar, were arrested from Yamuna Nagar, Haryana when they arrived to receive the alleged parcel", it added.

During the interrogation,

both accused disclosed that they were working in ply factories located in Yamuna Nagar, Haryana from the last 2-3 years. One day, the duo met with a boy from Bi-

harnamed Avinash Kumar in Yamuna Nagar who told him that a few years back, he also used to work like them in factories but later he started supplying Ganja to

Delhi and nearby areas and made huge profit.

Seeing this as a lucrative opportunity, they started worked with him to make huge profits.

## Cong slams Atishi Singh for ignoring capital's ongoing crisis

TIKAM SHARMA  
NEW DELHI



The Delhi Unit of Congress has criticized the Delhi government and new Chief Minister Atishi Singh for neglecting the pressing issues facing the national capital for months. Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav pointed out that a two-day session of the Delhi Assembly is scheduled for September 26 and 27 after a year-long hiatus. Instead of prioritizing the agenda to address the city's numerous challenges, Yadav accused Chief Minister Atishi of engaging in theatrics, calling his decision to leave Kejriwal's CM chair vacant a "drama" that has drawn ridicule from the public.

Yadav emphasized that Atishi must focus on Delhi's problems, noting the surge in dengue cases, which have reached 1,229, with 300 reported in the past week. He urged her to take immediate action to combat the spread of dengue and malaria, address waterlogging, ensure clean drinking water, repair broken roads, control dust pollution, illuminate streets, and improve the overall

deteriorating condition of the capital. He highlighted that she holds 13 portfolios, unlike her predecessor Kejriwal, who held none but enjoyed the full benefits of the CM role without any accountability. Yadav criticized Kejriwal for spending excessive time traveling to other states and engaging in corruption, ultimately leading to the fallout from the liquor scam.

Furthermore, Yadav stated that if Atishi truly prioritizes the welfare of the people and aims to resume stalled developments in Delhi, she should present the II pending CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General) reports in the Assembly, as directed by the LL.

Governor to the Delhi Assembly Speaker. He argued that these reports would

reveal the extent of corruption under the Kejriwal government over the past few years.

Similarly Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva also criticized Atishi Singh, stating that the people of Delhi are well aware of her track record as a minister who focuses more on making statements and announcements than on actual administrative work. He remarked that when she became Chief Minister, there was hope she might prioritize governance.

However, her performance over the last four days, amounting to roughly 100 hours, has shown that she is more focused on continuing Arvind Kejriwal's corruption-tainted agenda than on improving governance.

## LG instructs CP to ensure ample police visibility across national capital

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) VK Saxena on Tuesday issued instructions to the Police Commissioner to ensure ample police visibility in the city and to prepare a list of senior officers who will be responsible for compliance and ensuring such visibility.

According to an official press note from the LG Office, "A duty chart of senior officers with details of their deployment and their phone numbers will be sent to the LG Secretariat for regular monitoring," LG Saxena, who has been consistently stressing visible policing as the biggest deterrent against crime, has asked for police personnel on duty to be visibly present in all areas around police beats, chowkis.

As per the press note, ever since LG began reviewing the traffic situation



weekly along with senior police and transport officials, the visibility of traffic police personnel on roads has significantly increased. The Delhi LG has also advised the Police Commissioner to constitute teams of senior officers in plain clothes who can inspect and report on compliance with deployment and police presence in areas.

"Any laxity in the matter will be viewed seriously, the LG has underlined," read the press note. Earlier on Monday, LG VK Saxena asked the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Public Work Department (PWD), New

Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Irrigation and Command Area Development (I&CAD), and Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to take up a dust-free Delhi drive over the next one week or ten days and asked the same drive to be converted into a year-long campaign.

LG has advised MCD and PWD to clean the roads, and not leave dust accumulated on the road, transport it to designated dumping sites. Similarly, agencies responsible for cleaning drains and sewer lines, viz., MCD, I&F&CD, and DJB, have been asked to coordinate and get the silt or mud picked up and disposed of. Saxena emphasised that even if it rains, the exercise of removing the wet mud or silt from the roads should be continued to ensure that they do not flow into drains and sewer lines, in the process choking them.

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

In the fast-evolving world of emerging technology, Tagbin stands as a beacon of AI-driven innovation, transforming industries through groundbreaking solutions. Known for consistently pushing the boundaries of what is possible, the tech-experimental company has launched numerous revolutionary products, positioning itself at the forefront of the AI and emerging tech landscape. "Innovation isn't an option; it's our DNA, fueling every solution we create," emphasizes Tagbin, capturing the essence of the company's relentless pursuit of technological excellence. This ethos drives each project, enabling Tagbin to make continuous breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, holography, augmented reality (AR), and virtual reality (VR). Among its standout innovations is BoardRoomAI, a platform designed to revolutionize decision-making at the highest levels of business. Through advanced analytics and real-time data insights, Tagbin BoardRoomAI offers executives powerful, actionable



insights that elevate strategic decisions. Saurav Bhaik, Founder and CEO of Tagbin, explains the philosophy behind their AI solutions: "At Tagbin, we believe that technology's true purpose is to solve real-world challenges and serve as a tool to enhance human life. Our mission is to create solutions that simplify lives, boost efficiency, and unlock new possibilities. AI is not just about automation or processing data—it's about amplifying human potential. It should be a powerful catalyst that drives smarter decisions, solves critical problems, and fuels innovation across every sector." Tagbin's ambition to set new benchmarks of excellence is reflected in its broader portfolio. In addition to BoardRoomAI, the company has introduced futuristic solutions like the Inara Skin App, AI chatbots, AI digital avatars and AI Facial Recognition. By leveraging cutting-edge technologies like machine learning,

mixed reality, and holography, Tagbin consistently leads the charge in the emerging technology space. The unique approach—combining AI innovations with real-world applications—ensures the company delivers deeply resonating experiences that impact businesses and audiences. Whether transforming physical spaces or crafting immersive cultural experiences, Tagbin remains dedicated to pioneering tech solutions that shape the future. To maintain its position as an industry leader, Tagbin holds proprietary patent rights over more than five products and adheres to the highest standards of responsible development. With CMMI-5 and ISO certifications, the company ensures that its innovations not only meet but exceed global benchmarks, particularly in data privacy and security compliance. At the heart of this innovation is a simple yet powerful belief: technology should serve humanity. Saurav Bhaik's vision has been integral in building solutions that create a positive, lasting impact with broad applications across industries.

## Police Special Cell begins interrogation of notorious gangster Hashim Baba

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police special cell on Tuesday brought in gangster Hashim Babba for interrogation in connection to the killing of Nadir Shah. Hashim Babba was taken into custody by the special cell from Tihar jail on a production warrant. Sources say Hashim Babba and associates planned the killing of Nadir Shah from inside Th Tihar jail. Despite a crackdown on gangsters using mobile phones inside jail after the killing of Sidhu Moosewala the gangsters were able to use phones to plot the killing.

**EDITORIAL DIRECTOR**  
Prof. M.D. Nalapat  
**MANAGING EDITOR**  
Pankaj Vohra  
**EDITOR**  
Joyeeta Basu

## NAMTECH students put India on the global skills map, secure Bronze at WorldSkills 2024 in Industry 4.0

TDG NETWORK  
NEW DELHI

NAMTECH (New Age Makers' Institute of Technology), a pioneering institute for experiential, hands-on learning in Industry 4.0 technologies, is proud to share that Satyajith Balakrishnan and Dhrujithkumar Dhirendrakumar Gandhi, mechanical engineers from its inaugural batch, have won the bronze medal in the Industry 4.0 category at the prestigious WorldSkills Competition 2024. The event took place in Lyon, France, from 10th to 15th September 2024. The WorldSkills Competition, popularly known as the 'Olympics of Skills', is held biennially and is the gold standard of skills excellence, inspiring young people to achieve their ambition and help them turn their passion into a pro-



fession. This year's contest saw young professionals from 89 countries compete in various categories over five days in September. India achieved 13th position overall, securing 4 bronze medals and 12 medals of excellence along the way, reinforcing Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India the skill capital of the world through initiatives like the Skill India mission. Balakrishnan and Gandhi, both from NAMTECH's maiden International Professional Master's Program (IPMP 2024) cohort, represented India as champions of the India Skills competition, the national chapter of WorldSkills.

## Experts: Everything you should know about Mpox

ANJALI SINGH  
NEW DELHI

India has reported its first case with the new Mpox strain from Kerala. At least 32 Mpox cases and one death since 2022 when the infection was first detected in the country.

WHO declared monkeypox as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) in July 2022 and subsequently revoked the same in May 2023. Globally, since 2022, WHO has reported 99,176 cases and 208 deaths due to monkeypox from 116 countries

#### Spread

It spreads to humans primarily through close contact with infected animals, particularly rodents or primates. Here are the main modes of transmission: 1. Animal to Human: This can occur through bites, direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of infected animals, or handling raw meat from an infected animal.

2. Human to Human: The virus can spread through respiratory droplets during prolonged face-to-face contact, as well as through direct contact with bodily fluids or skin lesions of an infected person.

3. Contaminated Objects: Touching items contaminated with the virus, such as bedding or clothing, can also lead to infection.

Yes, mpox is considered a communicable disease. It can spread from person to person through close contact, respiratory droplets, and contact with bodily fluids or lesions of an infected individual. This means that it can be transmitted between people, making it important to take precautions to limit its spread, especially during outbreaks. Said Dr Vibhu Kawatra Pediatric pulmonologist & Allergy specialist, Vibhu Nursing Home and Rainbow Hospital

**Mpox and COVID-19 differ in their modes of**



*Mpox has been localized outbreaks, but it has not demonstrated the same level of widespread transmission as COVID-19.*

#### transmission Mpox

Primarily spreads through close contact with infected animals or humans.

Can be transmitted through respiratory droplets, but typically requires prolonged face-to-face contact.

Also spreads through direct contact with lesions, bodily fluids, or contaminated objects. **COVID-19**

Spreads mainly through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or breathes. Can also be transmitted via aerosols in enclosed spaces and through contact with contaminated surfaces. India's response to COVID-19 highlighted the importance of rapid mobilization, mass vaccination drives, and strengthening public health infrastruc-

ture. For Mpox, a similar but more focused approach is needed. Swift containment, widespread education on transmission, and vaccination for at-risk groups are critical. Early detection and clear communication are key to preventing escalation, as was seen with COVID-19. While Mpox doesn't pose the same widespread risk, preparedness and proactive strategies are essential to prevent outbreaks. Vaccine development is underway, with clinical trials in progress.

Unlike COVID-19, which spreads primarily through aerosol droplets, Mpox is mainly transmitted through direct contact. This highlights the importance of strict adherence to contact precautions, including maintaining isolation for suspected cases to prevent further transmission. Said Dr. Ankitia Baidya, Consultant Infectious Disease, Manipal Hospital, Dwarka, New Delhi.

Printed and Published by Rakesh Sharma for and on behalf of Good Morning India Media Pvt. Ltd. at 27/5, Piccadilly house, Floor - 7, Sector 17-E, Mang Srinivasapur, New Delhi-110065.  
Printed at: Good Morning India Media Pvt. Ltd., Kharsa No. 39, Village Basai Brahuiddin Nagar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, (U.P.-201301).  
The Editorial Offices: 275 Captain Gauri Marg Srinivasapur Okhla New Delhi - 110065  
Mumbai Office: Juhu Hotel, Juhu Tara Road, Santa Cruz-West, Mumbai-400049.  
Chandigarh Office: SCO-7, Sector 17-E, Chandigarh-160017  
**RNI REGISTRATION NO.** DELENG/2022/83224  
**TITLE CODE** DELENG19835  
For Subscriptions and Circulation Complaints Contact: DELHI Vinod Kumar Rana Mobile: +91-7011055010  
The views expressed by the columnists do not necessarily represent those of The Sunday Guardian.