

India has achieved tremendous progress across all environment-related sectors

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Modi stated that India has achieved tremendous progress across all environment-related sectors over the past 12 years. He launched the National Green Tribunal (NGT) mobile app, designed to enable lawyers and the general public to easily access information regarding the status of environmental cases and the Green Tribunal's caselist.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Speaking at the event, he said: India has banned single-use plastics. Over the last 12 years, India has made immense strides in all areas concerning the environment. We have placed significant emphasis on renewable energy, which has played a crucial role in environmental protection.

India is the only G20 nation to have fulfilled the pledges made at the Paris summit ahead of the stipulated deadline. Prior to 2014, only 3,000 electric vehicles were sold annually in India. Last year, 2.5 million (25 lakh) electric vehicles were sold—an incredible growth.

This benefits our environment. The FASTag system has significantly reduced waiting times at toll plazas and lowered fuel costs. Initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure have been established.

The Biofuel Alliance and similar initiatives reflect India's commitment to the environment. Before 2014, metro rail services existed in only five Indian cities, with a total network length of less than 250 kilometers. Today, metro rail services spanning over 1,000 kilometers are operational across

20 cities. Railway electrification efforts have helped us save crores of liters of diesel, which has also benefited the environment. Our growth is both rapid and sustainable. "Today, work on an unprecedented scale is being undertaken in the water conservation sector



as well. 1.5 crore water harvesting structures have been created across the country," said Prime Minister Modi.



Combined Operational Review and Evaluation (CORE) Programme 2026 concludes at Manekshaw Centre, in New Delhi.

Pakistan Suicide Attack Death Toll Rises to 31



LAHORE: The death toll from the suicide attack in Pakistan has risen to 31. The District Police Headquarters is located in the city of Kohat, in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. A

mosque—a place of Islamic worship—is situated within the same building complex. Yesterday (Friday), Muslims were performing religious prayers at the mosque when a vehicle packed with explosives

rammed into the building and detonated. Subsequently, terrorists who had been lying in wait stormed the mosque and the police headquarters, opening fire.

Initial reports indicated that 16 people had lost their lives in the attack. The death toll has since risen to 31, and more than 100 people have sustained severe injuries. Officials stated that 16 of the deceased were police personnel. Meanwhile, security forces have reported that some terrorists remain holed up inside the police headquarters building, and a confrontation is ongoing. Meanwhile, the terrorist group 'Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan'—a splinter group of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan—has claimed responsibility for this terrorist attack.

US President Trump signed an order imposing a 100% tariff on five countries, including India

WASHINGTON: US President Trump has signed a law authorizing the imposition of a 100% tariff on five countries, including India. The outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war led to a global shortage of crude oil. Subsequently, Russia has been supplying crude oil at discounted rates, prompting India to continue purchasing large quantities from Russia. The US has been taking various measures



targeting Russia's energy sector to inflict economic pressure on the country. In this context, a bill emp-

owering US President Trump to impose a 100% tariff on five nations—including India—was passed by the US House of Representatives with a vote of 262 to 159. This bill was introduced with two objectives: imposing direct sanctions on Russia and penalizing countries that indirectly fund the Ukraine war by continuing to trade with Russia and bolstering its economy.

Accordingly, the bill authorizes the imposition of a 100% customs duty on exports from the top five countries in the world that purchase large volumes of crude oil and natural gas from Russia. Following the House's approval, President Trump has now signed the bill into law. Consequently, the 100% tariff is expected to come into effect for the five countries, including India, within the next 30 days.

Chennai Airport: CM Vijay writes to PM Modi seeking transfer to private management

CHENNAI: Reports indicate that Chief Minister Vijay has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting that the management of Chennai Airport be handed over to a different entity. According to a report published by an English daily, the Tamil Nadu government has expressed dissatisfaction with certain shortcomings in the current operations of Chennai Airport and has taken the stance that a change in management is necessary. Chief Minister Joseph Vijay wrote



to Prime Minister Modi regarding this matter last August. The letter stated, "Tamil Nadu continues to be a leading state in attracting industrial investments. World-class airport inf-

rastructure and management are crucial for industrial and investment growth. Chennai Airport needs to improve across three key areas: passenger volume, aircraft movement, and cargo handling capacity.

As a state that attracts significant industrial investment, Tamil Nadu requires an airport that meets high standards; therefore, the current operator—the Airports Authority of India—should be replaced with a different operator." In essence, the Tamil Nadu government's move to change the airport's operator is fundamentally a step towards privatizing the facility. This action reportedly follows the state government's decision to abandon the proposed airport project at Parandur in Kancheepuram district.

No Pension Needed: High Court Judge Donates ₹1.01 Crore A Moving Gesture on Retirement Day

BHOPAL: Madhya Pradesh High Court Judge Avanindra Kumar Singh, who retired the day before yesterday, has made a touching gesture by announcing the donation of his entire retirement benefit of ₹1.01 crore to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. He also announced that both his and his wife's bodies would be donated to a medical college. Avanindra Kumar Singh served as a judge at the Madhya Pradesh High Court and retired the day before yesterday. A farewell ceremony was held, attended by Justice Singh, his wife Indira Singh, and their family. During the event, Justice Singh moved everyone present by announcing that he would donate his entire retirement benefit—amounting to ₹1.01 crore—to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. He further stated that both his body and that of his wife, Indira Singh, would be donated to a medical college. Speaking on the matter, Avanindra Kumar Singh said, "I believe that true service to God

lies not just in worship, but in caring for all the living beings and creations—great and small—that He

has placed on this earth. What is the point of living solely for oneself? Guided by this principle, we wish to contribute to society. Consequently, my wife and I have decided to donate our bodies to a medical college for students' studies after we pass away. We formally registered for this body donation two days ago. Furthermore, calculations indicate that I am entitled to ₹1.01 crore in retirement benefits (GPF or General Provident Fund). I am donating this entire sum

to the PM CARES Fund to aid in the nation's development." "My wife and I are pensioners. We decided to contribute our savings to the task of nation-building rather than leaving them to our heirs. This is crucial because the PM CARES Fund is utilized for emergency relief assistance across the country. This is just the beginning for me, not the end. I am set to start a new chapter after retirement and will be working on a new platform," he said. Retired Judge Avanindra Kumar Singh has announced that he is donating his retirement benefits to the PM CARES Fund. PM CARES stands for 'Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations.' This fund is used to provide assistance and relief to the public during emergencies, such as the coronavirus pandemic and natural disasters. Avanindra Kumar Singh, who hails from Uttar Pradesh, has donated not only his own body and his wife's body to a medical college but has also contributed his retirement benefits—amounting to ₹1.01 crore—to the cause. He was born on September 18, 1964, in Etah district. He completed his B.Sc. and LL.B. degrees and practiced as a lawyer. He became a judge at the age of 37, joining service as a Civil Judge (Class II) on May 31, 1990. It is noteworthy that he served in the judiciary for 37 years and has now retired as a judge of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.



Today horoscope



—You will accomplish tasks through clear communication. Ego clashes will be resolved, fostering greater harmony between spouses. You will settle outstanding bank loans. You will find peace of mind at work and achieve success in business by employing new strategies.



Be willing to compromise with family members. It is advisable to pay close attention to your health. You will receive special recognition at functions in your hometown. Maintain a co-operative relationship with business partners. Expect some running around or hectic activity at the workplace.



Meeting influential people may bring about changes in your life. Your interest in yoga and spirituality will grow. Maintaining composure at work will be beneficial. Business will flourish, and employees will be helpful.



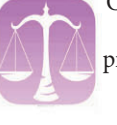
Tasks that had been stalled will reach completion today. You will benefit from your brothers. Your mind will be drawn towards spirituality. You will learn the nuances of your trade. Work-related travel is likely, and you will receive support from your superiors.



You will move past a state of uncertainty and make bold decisions. You will receive support from your maternal relatives. You will make efforts to sell ancestral property, such as a house, a plot of land, or agricultural land. You will undertake out-of-town trips for business purposes and meet key officials.



You will visit your family deity's temple with your family. Your children's health will improve. You will replace a vehicle that had been causing frequent trouble. You will find new business partners. You will receive support from your colleagues at the workplace.



You will find solutions to long-standing problems. Confusion will clear, and happiness will prevail in the family. Children will behave responsibly. You will have the opportunity to meet prominent figures in a professional context. You will receive support from employees in your business.



You will make important decisions after consulting trusted individuals. Harmony between husband and wife will increase. Friends will visit your home. You may change your vehicle. Business will pick up momentum. A superior at work will appreciate you.



Practice mutual accommodation between husband and wife. It is advisable to avoid outside food. Your ancestral home will be sold. You will preside over local events. You need to be attentive at work. Business will gain momentum, though competition will increase.



Hidden opposition will fade away. Others will marvel at your actions. Confusion will vanish, bringing peace to the family. You will relocate your business to a new premises. You will gain the upper hand at work, and a superior will appreciate you.



Auspicious events that were previously stalled will now be arranged. You will have a good flow of money. Pay attention to your mother's health. You will gain the friendship of people in positions of authority. You will overcome competition at work. Business will yield profits.



You will boldly make some important decisions. Maintain a cordial relationship with your neighbors. Your children's health will improve. Cash flow will increase. Siblings will offer their support. You will see progress in your business.

India's First Dengue Vaccine 'Qdenga' - Distribution Rights to Dr.Reddy's



NEW DELHI: Dr. Reddy's Laboratories and Takeda Pharmaceuticals have announced a partnership to market and distribute 'Qdenga', India's first dengue vaccine, within the country. Speaking on this development, Mahendar Nayak, Head of Emerging Markets at Takeda, said, "We received marketing authorization only last July.

Under the partnership with Dr. Reddy's, and in compliance with prevailing regulatory norms, both companies will collaborate on activities such as engaging with medical professionals and promoting and distributing the vaccine—intended for both children and adults—in the Indian private market. The long-term goal is to include the Qdenga dengue vaccine in India's public immunization program."

Companies have indicated that the 'Qdenga' vaccine is likely to go on sale in India's private health-care market during the first half of 2027. However, the price of the vaccine has not yet been determined. It is noteworthy that the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation had previously granted marketing approval for the use of this vaccine for individuals aged 4 to 60 years last July.

Trinamool Congress Name and Symbol Frozen Mamata Approaches Supreme Court

NEW DELHI: Mamata Banerjee has filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the Election Commission's decision to freeze the Trinamool Congress party's name and its 'twin flowers on grass' symbol. The petition, filed by the faction led by Mamata Banerjee, contests the Election Commission's order barring both the Mamata-led faction and the faction led by Arup Roy from using the name 'All India Trinamool Congress' and the party symbol, and mandating that both sides select separate names and symbols for the upcoming by-elections.

In her petition, Mamata Banerjee states that the Election Commission failed to consider the organizational structure of the Trinamool Congress party while evaluating the claims made by both factions. Furthermore, the petition questions why the Election Commission



placed undue reliance on documents submitted by dissident MPs and MLAs, noting that disqualification petitions against several of these legislators are still pending before the Speaker of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly. The Mamata-led faction has also filed a separate petition in the Supreme Court alleging a delay by the West Bengal Assembly Speaker in deciding on disqualification petitions against 10 dissident MLAs. Additionally, the petition challenges the recognition of Ritabrata Banerjee as the Leader of the Opposition in

the Assembly.

By-elections for the Nandigram and Rejinagar Assembly constituencies in West Bengal are scheduled for October 6. In this election, both the faction led by Mamata Banerjee and the faction led by Arup Roy staked a claim to the Trinamool Congress party's name and its 'twin flowers on grass' symbol. After both factions approached the Election Commission regarding this matter, the Commission granted permission for them to contest the by-election using separate names and symbols. Accordingly, the name "Mamata All India Trinamool Congress" and the "Footballer" symbol have been allotted to the faction led by Mamata Banerjee. The name "Democratic Trinamool Congress" and the "Envelope" symbol have been allotted to the faction led by Arup Roy. In the West Bengal Assembly

elections held last May, Suvendu Adhikari (associated with the BJP) contested and won in two constituencies. He subsequently resigned from his post as the MLA for the Nandigram constituency. Following this, the by-election for the Nandigram constituency is scheduled to take place on October 6. Sanchita Pradhan Dey was announced last Sunday as the candidate representing Mamata's camp for the Nandigram by-election. However, she suddenly announced her withdrawal from the contest. Following this, Mamata Banerjee announced her support for the Congress candidate.

Just hours after Mamata Banerjee extended her support to the Congress party, its candidate, Milan Pradhan, was arrested by the police yesterday in connection with an old murder case. A police official stated that he would be produced before the court today.

Student Brain Dead After Boxing Match at Private School Near Thiruverkadu

Parents Donate Organs

POONAMALLEE: A 15-year-old student was declared brain-dead following a state-level boxing match held at a private school in the Ayanambakkam area.

The decision by his parents to donate his organs has deeply moved everyone. Chandrababu (45), a native of Kerala, works as an engineer at a private software company in Perungalathur, Chengalpattu district. His wife is Reshmi (41). The couple resides in the Teachers' Quarters in Ambattur, Chennai. Their son, Harish (15), was a 10th-grade student at a private school in the Soorapattu area.

Harish had participated in a state-level boxing tournament held last week at a private school campus in Ayanambakkam, near Thiruverkadu, and had advanced to the finals. While competing in the final match held at the school campus on the 12th, Harish suddenly collapsed. Shocked teachers rescued Harish and

admitted him to a private hospital in Ayanambakkam for treatment. Harish, who was undergoing intensive care there, was declared brain-dead the night before last. Subsequently, Harish's parents informed the hospital administration of their wish to donate their son's organs. Following this, doctors at the private hospital harvested seven of Harish's organs—including his eyes, heart, pancreas, kidneys, and intestines—and proceeded to transplant them



into recipients.

Harish's body subsequently underwent a post-mortem examination and was handed over to his parents. The Thiruverkadu police have registered a case and are conducting an investigation.

Bangladesh says review of 101 India pacts aimed at making agreements 'win & win'

BANGLADESH: Bangladesh Chief Whip Nurul Islam Moni said that the review of 101 agreements and memorandums of understanding with India is aimed at identifying inconsistencies and resolving them to ensure the pacts serve the interests of both countries.

Speaking too over the phone late Friday, Moni said that there was no plan to cancel the agreements signed with India at different times, adding that provisions found to be against Bangladesh's interests would instead be removed after review. "We will review the agreements made with India to check whether there are any inconsistencies. If any such inconsistencies are found, we will try to resolve them," Moni said. "The relevant ministries and departments of Bangladesh will review the existing agreements to check for any inconsistencies. Only if such inconsistencies are found will discussions be held with India to address them," he added.

Moni had said last week that the government was reviewing 101 MoUs and agreements signed with India during the previous Awami League government and that the outcome of the exercise would be announced soon. "We are reviewing the agree-



ements that mean 101 MoUs, and you will get its (review) result soon," Moni had said. The review comes amid reports that Bangladesh is examining bilateral agreements, including those related to connectivity, infrastructure and other areas of cooperation, with the country's national interests in mind. New Delhi has taken note of the reports but said it has not received any official communication from Dhaka on the matter. "We also have seen some media reports on this matter, but nothing has been conveyed to us officially. Obviously, India will take all necessary actions to protect its interests," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said during a biweekly press briefing on Friday.

Among the areas covered by earlier India-Bangladesh arrangements is connectivity through Bangladesh, including India's use of Chattogram and

Mongla ports for transporting cargo to its northeastern states. The reported review includes scrutiny of existing terms and arrangements. Energy cooperation is another major area of bilateral engagement. Bangladesh depends on imported power as well as cross-border fuel arrangements. The material provided indicates that some power purchase arrangements have faced payment delays and requests for financial renegotiation amid foreign exchange constraints in Bangladesh. India has also extended more than USD 7 billion through multiple Lines of Credit for rail, road and port projects in Bangladesh.

Several Indian-funded projects have been subject to feasibility reviews by Bangladesh's planning authorities, with the review process potentially affecting the implementation of projects and deployment of funds. Security cooperation

along the shared border also remains an important component of bilateral ties.

During the previous Awami League government, Bangladesh cooperated with India in preventing anti-India insurgent groups from operating from its territory. Border cooperation has also covered issues including cross-border smuggling, illegal migration and militant activity.

The Bangladeshi side has maintained that the review does not amount to a blanket cancellation of existing agreements. Instead, relevant ministries and departments will examine the individual arrangements and engage with India only where inconsistencies are identified.

"Can't women lift cylinders?" IOC fined ₹12 lakh for denying job to a woman



Sumitra, a woman from Haryana, had applied for the position of 'Refilling Helper' at an Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) LPG bottling plant. However, she was denied the appointment on the grounds that women could not lift heavy LPG cylinders. The Supreme Court strongly condemned this decision by the Indian Oil Corporation and sharply questioned the erroneous assumption that women are incapable of lifting LPG cylinders. A bench comprising Justices Arvind Kumar and Vipul M. Pancholi remarked, "Do you think women cannot lift LPG cylinders? In households, when men are away, it is women who lift and replace LPG cylinders daily. Given this, denying her the job solely because she is a woman is a grave insult to womanhood."

By the time this long-standing legal battle—which began in 1988—reached the Supreme Court, Sumitra had already crossed the retirement age of 63. Since reinstating her in service was no longer feasible, the Court determined that monetary compensation was the appropriate remedy. Consequently, the Supreme Court ordered IOC to pay Sumitra a lump-sum compensation of ₹12 lakh.

California Governor Orders Action to Address AI Threats



CALIFORNIA: Amidst rising concerns regarding the security threats posed to humanity by Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, California Governor Gavin Newsom has issued an order to expedite measures addressing these risks. Newsom is viewed as a potential Democratic presidential candidate for the 2028 US election. He has taken this initiative at a time when the incumbent administration has not undertaken any significant action regarding AI safety. "CEOs of leading AI companies themselves are calling for AI regulation."

Yet, the US government under the current administration has not even stepped forward to provide minimal oversight. Consequently, I have ordered immediate action to address the threats posed by AI. This move will establish independent oversight of AI companies and safety testing—a first in the nation—and pave the way for new legislation. Furthermore, I have directed that work begin on developing an AI 'kill switch,' Newsom stated.

Technical experts define a 'kill switch' as a mechanism to control or halt an AI system if it goes out of human control or malfunctions; this feature allows for the immediate shutdown of the system's operations. Newsom issued this order against the backdrop of warnings from figures like Elon Musk, Dario Amodei (CEO of Anthropic), and Sam Altman (CEO of OpenAI) that AI could potentially destroy humanity. It is worth noting that Silicon Valley, California, is home to many of the world's leading technology and AI companies.



The Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Shri Chanchal Kumar administers the pledge on the occasion of National Voluntary Blood Donation Day, in New Delhi.



Alia Bhatt and Ranbir to Renovate 20 Schools in Mumbai to Mark PM Modi’s Birthday

MUMBAI: Actress Alia Bhatt has announced that she, along with her husband and fellow actor Ranbir Kapoor, will renovate 20 schools in Mumbai to mark Prime Minister Modi’s birthday. Prime Minister Modi celebrated his 76th birthday the day before yesterday.

In this context, popular Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt announced the initiative to renovate 20 schools in Mumbai alongside her husband, actor Ranbir Kapoor. In a post shared on X regarding this, she stated, “Happy Birthday to our Prime Minister Modi. To mark this occasion and support the noble cause of ‘Seva Sankalp Abhiyan’, Ranbir and I have pledged to renovate 20 schools based on the recommendations of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). Through this, we aim to help create bright, well-equipped spaces where our children can learn and excel.”

Bomb Laden Vehicle Rams into Mosque Area in Pakistan; 21 Dead

ISLAMABAD: Twenty-one people lost their lives in a bomb attack carried out by ramming a vehicle packed with explosives near a mosque in Pakistan. A police residential complex is located in the Kohat district of Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The attack took place yesterday afternoon near the mosque situated within this residential complex. Unidentified individuals carried out the devastating attack by ramming the explosive-laden vehicle near the mosque. As it was Friday, special prayers were being held at the mosque. Twenty-one people died in the attack, which occurred during the prayers. Additionally, 50 people have been admitted to the hospital with severe injuries.

It is feared that the death toll may rise, as many of the injured are in critical condition. Following the attack, which left a large crater near the mosque, additional security forces have been deployed to the area, and intensive surveillance operations are underway. Pakistani media reports indicate that army personnel are actively monitoring the region. No terrorist organization has claimed responsibility for the attack so far. Meanwhile, there has been a recent surge in terrorist attacks targeting Pakistani security forces; notably, 158 people lost their lives in 199 such attacks across various parts of Pakistan in August alone.



No Navodaya schools in Tamil Nadu

A special Assembly session must be convened to pass a resolution: Udhayanidhi

CHENNAI: Opposition Leader Udhayanidhi has stated that Navodaya schools are not needed in Tamil Nadu and that, if necessary, a special session of the Legislative Assembly should be convened to pass a resolution to this effect. In his statement, he noted that while hearing a case regarding the permission for Navodaya schools in Tamil Nadu, the Supreme Court remarked that the state should change its anti-Hindi

ning Hindi and patriotism. It is gratifying that the TVK government, adhering to the two-language policy, has stated that there is no need to permit Navodaya schools in Tamil Nadu. The TVK government must continue to put forward firm arguments regarding this stance.

If required, a special Assembly session should be convened to pass a specific resolution declaring that Navodaya schools cannot be permitted in the state.



Youth killed by lightning during football match

KOLKATA: A tragic incident has occurred in West Bengal where a young man lost his life after being struck by lightning during a football match. A local football tournament involving teams from the area had commenced yesterday in Kumarbandh village, located in the Jhargram district of West Bengal. While the matches were underway yesterday evening, it suddenly began

that moment, lightning struck unexpectedly. Deepan Murmu (19) died on the spot after being struck by the lightning. Additionally, 17 others sustained severe injuries. Upon learning of the incident, rescue teams rushed to the scene, rescued the injured, and admitted them to a nearby hospital. The police are currently investigating the matter.



US & Greenland pact a “huge win”, “completely addresses” national security concerns

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Friday (local time) hailed the newly announced security agreement reached between the United States, Denmark and Greenland as a “huge win”, saying the pact will permanently address Washington’s national security concerns in the Arctic and keep the territory within North America’s strategic defence area. In a post on X, Rubio said that the deal would permanently guarantee Washington’s security interests in Greenland without cost to US taxpayers.

“This historic deal is a huge win for the United States and the American people. Thanks to President Trump’s vision and leadership, this historic agreement permanently guarantees U.S. security interests in the Arctic at zero cost to the



U.S. taxpayer. Greenland will forever be part of the strategic defence area of North America and exclude any adversary from it and the surrounding area. This deal permanently and completely addresses our national security concerns in Greenland,” the post read.

This comes after US President Donald Trump, earlier in the day, announced the agreement with Denmark and Greenland, describing it as an “Infinite Life” agreement and saying it gives the United States permanent control over security and other security-related needs in Greenland.

Trump said the agreement would “completely” address

State Secy Rubio

a post on Truth Social. “There will be NO COST to the United States!” he added.

Trump said the agreement would allow the US to take measures it considers necessary to secure and defend Greenland and the United States. “At my direction, we worked with representatives of Denmark and Greenland to guarantee that the United States will FOREVER have the complete ability to do what is necessary in Greenland in order to secure and defend the security of Greenland, and the United States of America,” he said.

He also said the agreement would prevent US adversaries from establishing military bases or making sensitive investments in Greenland without Washington’s approval.

“Additionally, from now on, no US adversary can EVER have a base in Greenland, have a military presence in Greenland, or make sensitive investments in Greenland, without our express written approval,” Trump added.

Trump described the pact as an “Infinite Life” Agreement, saying there would be no expiry. He also announced plans to expand the US military presence in Greenland.

However, Denmark’s description of the agreement has focused on strengthened security cooperation in the Arctic and North Atlantic while reaffirming Greenland’s position within the Kingdom of Denmark.

India & NZ FTA opens wider study, work pathways; direct flights likely within a year

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Trade Minister Todd McClay on Saturday highlighted the expanded study and work opportunities for Indian students under the India & New Zealand Free Trade Agreement, saying master’s and PhD students will be able to work longer in the country, while predicting that direct flights between India and New Zealand could begin within about a year.

McClay, during an interview with ANI, said that Indian students coming to New Zealand for higher studies will have the right to work while studying, with master’s and PhD students also gaining longer work opportunities after arriving in the country.

Asked about what the FTA would mean for Indian students, professionals and skilled workers, McClay said New Zealand would continue to encourage Indian students to study in the country, while noting that many could eventually take the skills and experience gained there back to India. “We have a number

Trade Minister McClay

of people from India who choose to come and study in New Zealand and we will look to and continue to encourage that. Some of the things we’ve done are for students who want to come and study a master’s degree or a PhD; they’re able to work for longer when they come to New Zealand,” the New Zealand Trade Minister said.

“They also have the right to work while they’re here. In many cases, though, we can attract students who’ll come, get a good education, and they’ll take those skills and some of the experience they get in New Zealand back to India as that economy continues to grow. So it’s just the cooperation that I think will see us benefit the most,” he added.

The India & New Zealand FTA, signed on April 27, 2026, provides expanded services and mobility commitments, including dedicated pathways for Indian students and professionals.

Under the agreement, New Zealand has offered binding market access in 118 service sectors and Most Favoured-Nation treatment in 139 sectors. The agreement removes numerical caps on Indian students and guarantees a minimum of 20 hours of work per week during study.

It also provides post-study work opportunities of up to three years for STEM bachelor’s and master’s graduates and up to four years for doctoral holders. The FTA also establishes a Temporary Employment Entry visa pathway for Indian professionals in skilled occupations, with a quota of 5,000 visas at any given time and a stay of up to three years. The pathway covers professions including AYUSH practitioners, yoga instructors, Indian chefs and music teachers, besides high-demand sectors such as IT, engineering, healthcare, education and construction.

The agreement further provides for multiple-entry Working Holiday Visas for 1,000 young Indians annually, allowing



them to live and work in New Zealand for up to 12 months. McClay also pointed to greater opportunities for trade in food, services and investment between the two countries.

“In some areas, we have access to some of the food we produce when it’s not produced in India because, of course, there’s a different season of growing. So I think the Indian consumers will have good access to a lot of this high-quality, safe food that New Zealand produces, firstly. Secondly, I do think there are opportunities for both investment and the services trade. I predict within a year or so, we will have direct flights between India and New Zealand. We’ll see people-to-people travel for tourism or visiting friends and family, or business increase, and that will be a win-win for both of our economies,” he said.

On goods trade, the agreement eliminates duties on 100 per cent of Indian exports to New Zealand, while New Zealand has committed USD 20 billion in investment. The agreement also places emphasis on strengthening MSMEs and women-led enterprises, while India has protected its interests in dairy and agriculture. The agreement also provides opportunities for labour-intensive sectors such as textiles and leather.

New Zealand has also facilitated health and traditional medicine services under the agreement. The FTA’s mobility provisions, alongside expanded services access, are aimed at strengthening economic and people-to-people links between India and New Zealand while creating new pathways for students and skilled professionals.

Thanks to my mom and dad: Director Jason Sanjay at the ‘Sigma’ film event

CHENNAI: “Thanks to my mother; thanks to my father, who is the Chief Minister today,” said Director Jason Sanjay, son of Chief Minister Vijay. ‘Sigma’ is the debut film directed by Jason Sanjay, son of Chief Minister Vijay. It stars Sundeeep Kishan, Faria Abdullah, and Raju Sundaram, with music composed by Thaman and production by Lyca Productions. Promotional activities for the film are currently in full swing.

Speaking at the film’s



audio launch event in Chennai, Director Jason Sanjay said, “Everyone has a ‘Sigma’ moment in their lives—a pivotal point where

reflects such a moment. This is my debut film; it is incredibly special and unforgettable to me. Beyond that, everyone who journeyed with me made this experience truly memorable.

“I thank my friends, family, and my mother.

I also thank my father—who is the Chief Minister today—and my dear sister, Divya. ‘Sigma’ is set to release on October 2nd; I ask for everyone’s support.”

Earlier, speaking at an

event in Hyderabad, Jason said, “My father becoming the Chief Minister was a moment of joy for me and everyone around him. He is eagerly awaiting the release of ‘Sigma.’ Although he has immense responsibilities as the Chief Minister, he is keen to see the work I have done.

“‘Sigma’ is a commercial, fun-filled film. Right now, my focus is entirely on the release process. I will certainly consider acting after ‘Sigma’ is released. Thank you all for your support.”

Heavy Rains and Flooding in Tunisia Disrupt Daily Life

TUNIS: Daily life in Tunisia has been disrupted by flooding caused by ongoing heavy rains. Tunisia is a North African nation that has been experiencing heavy rainfall over the past few days. Torrential rains have lashed various areas, including the capital Tunis, Cité Ezzouhour, Sayada, El Mourouj, Greater Tunis, and Siliana.

The heavy rains have led to flooding in several parts of the city, and power supplies have been cut off in many areas. Consequently, the daily lives of thousands of residents have been disrupted, and holidays have been declared for schools and colleges. People are concerned as the meteorological department has warned that the heavy rains are expected to continue.



Rs. 23.95 lakh released for student Bharathidasan studying in Malaysia



CHENNAI: A sum of Rs 23.95 lakh has been released for Bharathidasan, a student from Tamil Nadu currently pursuing research in Tissue Engineering and Regeneration in Malaysia under the 'Annal Ambedkar Higher Education Scheme'.

A few months ago, he released a video stating that he had not received the funds due to him under the sch-

artment of Social Justice issued a further clarification on the day before yesterday (September 17) regarding the disbursement of the scholarship for Bharathidasan's second year of study.

Speaking to reporters regarding this matter, Minister Vanni Arasu said, "A comprehensive departmental report concerning the case of Bharathidasan, a student studying abroad, was submitted yesterday. The Tamil Nadu government will provide full support for his studies. He is the only person in Tamil Nadu conducting PhD research on brain tissue. It is our wish that he completes his studies and returns. The tuition fee of ₹6 lakh and the living allowance of

₹6 lakh for this year have already been sent. He has requested funds for research materials, and that amount will also reach him within a day or two. There is no need to politicize this issue.

During the previous DMK regime, under the Ayothidassas Overseas Education Assistance Scheme, 601 out of 609 applicants were found eligible, yet funds totaling ₹84.89 crore were disbursed to only 181 individuals. In contrast, this year we have allocated ₹131 crore to 365 out of 437 applicants.

After 15 years, we have increased the scholarship amount for undergraduates from ₹4,750 to ₹12,000, and for PhD students to ₹10,000."

"Waste to Energy Plant Project in Salem Spells Disaster" – Anbumani Warns

CHENNAI: PMK leader Anbumani has warned that the project to set up a waste-to-energy plant—spanning 92 acres in the Zakir Ammapalayam area of Salem city—will spell disaster for the local residents. In a statement regarding this, he noted that on September 2, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin announced—under Rule 110 of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly—plan to implement waste-to-energy projects: a 10-megawatt capacity plant in Salem Corporation at a cost of ₹291 crore, and a 9-megawatt capacity plant in Nellai (Tirunelveli) at a cost of ₹256 crore. Following this, the Municipal Administration Department announced that a solid waste incineration plant would be constructed on a 92.49-acre government-owned site in Vellakkalpatti (Zakir Ammapalayam area, Salem), opposite Kongu SRV School, and work has already commenced. This project will bring disaster to Salem city.

Waste incineration plants have proven to be failed projects globally; many developed nations have banned them. Since all types of waste—including plastics—are burned together in these plants, they release harmful substances such as dioxins, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, mercury, carbon dioxide, and furans. They also emit airborne toxic particles (PM 2.5 and PM 10) and volatile organic compounds. Many of these chemicals are highly toxic and persistent in the environment; they remain dangerous even after entering the human body,

causing lasting harm. Among electricity generation technologies, waste-to-energy incineration plants are the most polluting.

Compared to coal-fired thermal power plants, these incinerators emit 28 times more dioxin, 3 times more nitrogen oxides, 14 times more mercury, 6 times more sulfur dioxide, and two and a half times more carbon dioxide. These toxic chemicals cause ailments such as cancer, heart disease, respiratory disorders, and reduced male fertility. Waste incineration leads to various health issues, including skin diseases, liver damage, and asthma, with children and the elderly being the most vulnerable. Beyond air pollution, the ash produced by these incinerators also poses severe risks. The dangers posed by waste incinerators carry the potential for cumulative harm comparable to the immediate, devastating impact of the Bhopal gas leak.

Despite being fully aware of these facts, previous administrations initiated and pursued hazardous waste-to-energy projects in locations such as Kodungaiyur (North Chennai), Perungudi (South Chennai), Keerapakkam (Chengalpattu district), and Vellalur (Coimbatore) over the past decade. Now, the newly installed TVK government is also eager to establish similar waste-to-energy plants in Salem (Zakir Ammapalayam) and Tirunelveli. The waste-to-energy project at Zakir Ammapalayam, Salem, was actually conceived

during the previous administration's tenure; every stage—from initial planning to site identification and finalization—took place under the DMK government.

Why is the TVK government,



which cancelled various other projects announced by the DMK administration, so keen to implement this disastrous project? Solid waste from urban local bodies in the Salem, Namakkal, Erode, and Dharmapuri districts, as well as from the Karur Corporation in Karur district, will be transported by road to the Salem waste-to-energy plant for incineration. Since up to 60% of this waste consists of wet waste, its transportation along the route causes foul odors, environmental degradation, and the spread of diseases. Furthermore, the proposed plant requires 150,000 liters of water daily.

Although a portion of this can be obtained by treating wastewater, the majority must be drawn from groundwater sources, placing immense strain on the groundwater table. A project to establish a textile park spanning 119 acres in Salem's Jagirpalayam has already been announced,

and work has commenced. This textile park, being built at a cost of ₹800 crore, is set to house over 60 dye houses. Not only will this lead to massive extraction of groundwater, but the discharge of chemical and toxin-laden wastewater from these dye houses will contaminate the land, water, and air. Since the garbage incinerator is also planned for this same area, the air and drinking water consumed by residents within a 30-kilometer radius will cause a multitude

of ailments—ranging from cancer to heart disease. The PMK questions whether it is worth spending ₹291 crore of public tax money to invite such catastrophic consequences. During World War II, Jews captured by the Nazi forces of the German dictator Hitler were confined in extermination camps established in Germany and killed using poison gas. The waste incinerators being set up in areas such as Salem's Zakir Ammapalayam are no less problematic. Therefore, the plan to establish waste incinerators in various parts of Tamil Nadu, including Salem, must be abandoned. Instead, the Central Government's Solid Waste Management Rules (2026) must be immediately implemented; this entails collecting waste from households and establishments by segregating it into four categories—wet waste, dry waste, sanitary waste, and waste requiring special handling—as mandated by the Supreme Court.

"Farmers protesting in Trichy should give the Tamil Nadu government time"

Minister Vinoth



KUMBAKONAM: "We have held talks with the leaders of farmers' associations regarding the ongoing protest in Trichy.

Farmers should grant the Tamil Nadu government some time to address this issue," said Agriculture Minister Vinoth.

Members of the Federation of All Farmers' Associations have been staging a continuous sit-in protest at Samayapuram in Trichy, demanding a complete waiver of crop loans. Amidst this, Minister Vinoth has requested time. A cleanliness drive titled 'Masaru Thanjavur' (Spotless Thanjavur) was conducted at

the Kumbakonam New Bus Stand. Agriculture Minister Vinoth inaugurated the drive, participated in the cleaning work, and subsequently met with the press.

He stated, "Sanitation work was carried out at the new bus stand in Kumbakonam. We inspected whether all basic amenities required by passengers are being properly maintained and looked into the issue of most shops being positioned in a way that obstructs passengers. Regarding the protest being staged by farmers in Trichy, eight ministers held talks with the leaders of 40 farmers' associations. Today, three

ministers are scheduled to meet the protesting farmers. We intend to hold further discussions with the farmers regarding the next course of action after consulting with all officials.

However, the protesting farmers should allow the Tamil Nadu government sufficient time. With the Mahamaham festival scheduled for 2028, infrastructure at the Kumbakonam bus stand will be upgraded. Measures will be taken to control stray cattle roaming the roads of Kumbakonam.

The Health Department is undertaking various initiatives to preve-

nt the spread of Dengue. Cauvery water will be released if required for the Samba and Thaladi crop cultivation. In situations where water availability is low, district agriculture officials are advising farmers on suitable crops and high-yield varieties for their respective districts."

Subsequently, after administering a pledge for cleanliness, the Minister raised awareness about the use of cloth bags. District Collector Revathi, City Mayor Saravanan, Revenue Divisional Officer Thirumalai, City Commissioner Sudha, and other officials and staff participated in the event.

ABVP candidates lead in Delhi University Students' Union election

NEW DELHI: According to the latest trends in the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) election results, ABVP candidate Yash Dabas is leading in the race for the President's post. Elections for the posts of President,

Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, and Executive Committee members were held yesterday (September 18). All voting machines were transported under heavy police security to the multi-purpose hall of the sports complex at Delhi University's North Campus.

Vote counting began at 8:30 AM today (September 19). As per the current trends for the President's post, ABVP candidate Yash Dabas is in the



lead; following the fifth round of counting, he has secured 5,790 votes. NSUI candidate Vijay Shankar Meena is in second place with 5,737 votes. Similarly, in the contest for

the Vice-President's post, ABVP candidate Ishu Maurya has secured 3,965 votes.

However, independent candidate Deepanshu Shokeen is

currently leading the race with 7,655 votes. In the contest for the Secretary's post, ABVP candidate Riya Saoudi has secured 5,216 votes and is well-positioned for victory. In the race for the Joint Secretary's post, ABVP candidate Lakshya Raj Singh is leading with 3,857 votes. In last year's

election, the ABVP (Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad) won three key posts, including the presidency, while the NSUI (National Students' Union of India) won only the Vice-President's post.

Supply of Adulterated Ghee for Tirupati Laddu: Sukrithi Foods Owner Arrested



NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Kailash Chand Mangla, the owner of Sukrithi Foods, in connection with the supply of adulterated ghee used to make the Tirupati Laddu 'prasadam'.

A statement issued by the ED regarding this matter reads as follows: Kailash

Chand Mangla, the owner of Sukrithi Foods, was arrested on the 17th at his office in Hyderabad in connection with a fraud case involving the adulteration of ghee supplied for the preparation of Tirupati Laddu 'prasadam'.

Subsequently, he was produced before the Special Court for the Prevention

of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in Visakhapatnam. The court ordered him to be remanded to judicial custody. The ghee supplied for the Tirupati Laddu—marketed as high-quality 'Agmark' cow ghee—was actually manufactured using refined palm oil, palmolein, and chemicals such as monoglycerides, Myvacet Soft 400, and acetic acid esters. Between 2019 and 2024, Sukrithi Foods supplied ghee worth ₹230 crore to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), whereas its actual value was only ₹96 crore. Kailash Chand Mangla orchestrated the supply of

adulterated ghee through various shell companies, including Sri Vaishnavi Dairy Specialities, Malkanga Milk & Agro Products, and AR Dairy Foods. To conceal the use of adulterated ingredients and create the impression that genuine cow ghee was being produced and supplied, he fabricated false documents. Vipin Jain, the owner and director of Bole Baba Organic Dairy Milk, had previously been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on similar charges. Now, Kailash Chand Mangla has also been arrested and remanded to judicial custody, according to a statement issued by the Enforcement Directorate.

Horror in broad daylight

Mystery gang hacks rowdy to death in the middle of the road

PUDUCHERRY: Police have launched a manhunt for a mystery gang that chased down and hacked a rowdy to death in broad daylight. Anand (32) was a resident of the Gomatha Temple area in Karuvadikuppam, Puducherry. He had several cases registered against him, including two for murder. Yesterday, on his birthday, Anand was riding his motorcycle through the Karuvadikuppam Shivaji Statue and Krishna Nagar East Coast Road



lowed him, rammed into his bike, and knocked him down. The gang then surrounded the fallen Anand, brutally hacked him with weapons such as

knives and sickles, and fled the scene. Anand sustained severe injuries and died tragically on the spot. Upon receiving the information, the Lawspet police rushed to the location, recovered Anand's body, and sent it to the Kathirkamam Government Medical College Hospital. The murder, which occurred in broad daylight, was captured on surveillance cameras installed in the area; the police have seized the footage and are analyzing it.

Furthermore, it appears that Anand was a prime suspect in the murder of Vicky, a BJP functionary, which took place last year in the Naveena Garden area of Puducherry. Consequently, the police suspect that Anand may have been killed in retaliation for that murder. A case has been registered, and the police are actively searching for the absconding gang. This daylight murder has caused a major stir in the Karuvadikuppam area.