

NEWS LETTER



Indore Bans Almsgiving to Address Begging Issue, Effective January 2025

In a significant move under the Union government's SMILE initiative, Indore has announced a ban on giving alms to beggars starting January 1, 2025. The initiative, part of the Bhiksha Vriti Mukta Bharat program, aims to rehabilitate marginalized individuals and end the cycle of dependency associated with begging. Efforts began in February 2024 with a counseling campaign for over 300 beggars, who were sent to Ujjain's Sevadham Ashram for rehabilitation. The program also included de-addiction camps and awareness campaigns urging residents not to give alms.



Supreme Court Advises Centre to Prioritize Employment Over Free Ration Distribution

The Supreme Court has urged the Centre to shift its focus from providing free rations to generating employment, citing concerns over the fiscal burden and potential misuse of ration card distribution for political appeasement. The observation came during a hearing on the implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the court that 80 crore citizens receive free grains under the NFSA, yet petitioner Prashant Bhushan argued that 2-3 crore eligible individuals remain excluded.



Jaipur Gas Tanker Explosion: 14 Dead in Devastating Highway Accident

A tragic collision between a chemical-laden truck, an LPG tanker, and multiple vehicles on the Jaipur-Ajmer highway triggered a massive fire, claiming 14 lives and leaving several injured. The crash occurred around 5:30 am on Bhankrota Ajmer Road in Jaipur. The blaze spread rapidly due to a gas leak caused by a damaged nozzle on the LPG tanker. Vehicles caught in the fire had little chance for escape as flames engulfed them instantly. Eyewitnesses described horrific scenes of people fleeing and shedding burning clothes. One haunting video showed 32-year-old Radheyshyam Choudhary, severely burnt, pleading for help while bystanders recorded videos instead of aiding him. He walked 600 meters before receiving assistance. Jaipur Police Commissioner Biju George Joseph confirmed the gas leak was responsible for the inferno. The incident highlights the urgent need for stricter safety protocols and a more empathetic public response during emergencies.



UK Security Minister Denounces Intimidation of British Sikhs

UK Minister of State for Security, Dan Jarvis, has assured that any attempts by foreign powers to intimidate or harass British citizens will not be tolerated. His remarks follow complaints by Sikhs in the UK alleging targeting by Indian officials, a claim similarly raised by Sikh groups in Canada and the US, often linked to Khalistani causes. In a letter to the Sikh Federation, a Khalistani-affiliated group, Jarvis condemned such actions, emphasizing the UK's commitment to safety through intelligence agencies and police forces. The letter, dated December 10, addressed concerns about Sikhs reportedly being questioned at UK airports by individuals associated with the Indian government.

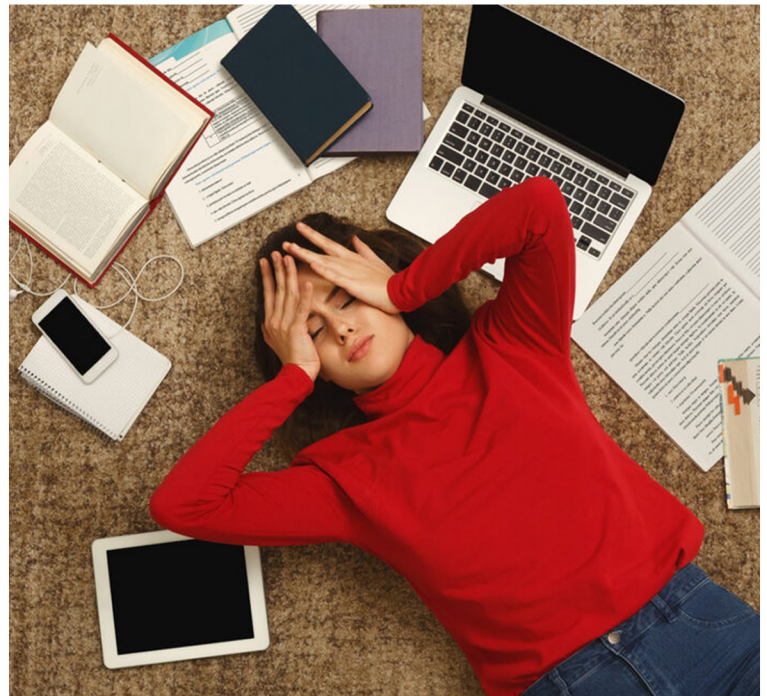


Kejriwal Announces Ambedkar Scholarship for Dalit Students' Foreign Education

In a move aimed at empowering Dalit students in Delhi, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal announced the **Dr. Ambedkar Samman Scholarship**. Under this scheme, Dalit students from Delhi will have the opportunity to pursue higher education at foreign universities, with the Delhi government covering the full costs, including tuition, travel, and accommodation. The announcement comes in the wake of Kejriwal's criticism of the BJP, accusing Union Home Minister Amit Shah of disrespecting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during a parliamentary discussion. "Crores of Ambedkar's followers were hurt by the insult," Kejriwal stated at the AAP headquarters. Highlighting Dr. Ambedkar's belief in education as a pathway to upliftment, Kejriwal underscored the historic leader's struggle to earn a PhD from the US. "This scholarship is our tribute to Babasaheb's legacy and a response to the insult meted out to him," he added.

WHO Highlights Decline in Family and Peer Support for Youths in Europe, Canada, and Central Asia

The WHO has raised concerns about the deteriorating social support and increasing academic pressure faced by adolescents in Europe, Canada, and Central Asia. Family support for teens fell from 73% in 2018 to 67% in 2022, with girls experiencing a sharper drop from 72% to 64%. Similarly, peer support declined from 61% to 58%, particularly among girls, where it fell from 67% to 62%. Academic pressure has surged, with 63% of 15-year-old girls and 43% of boys reporting stress from schoolwork, up from 54% and 40% in 2018, respectively. The WHO emphasized significant gender disparities and noted that teens from more affluent families generally receive better family support, benefiting their mental health. These trends pose long-term risks to adolescents' mental well-being and life prospects. The organization urged countries to act promptly to improve teens' social environments and mitigate disparities to support their development and mental health.



BLOG

The Importance of Financial Literacy for Gen Z

In today's fast-paced world, financial literacy is more important than ever, especially for Gen Z, the first generation to grow up fully immersed in the digital age. Understanding money management, budgeting, saving, and investing is crucial to ensuring financial stability and independence. With the rise of online shopping, cryptocurrencies, and digital banking, young people must navigate a complex financial landscape. Gen Z often faces pressures from social media trends, influencing their spending habits, such as the desire for expensive items or experiences. Financial literacy helps counter these pressures by promoting smart decision-making, helping individuals prioritize needs over wants and teaching the value of delayed gratification.

By gaining financial knowledge, Gen Z can avoid debt, invest wisely, and plan for long-term financial goals like buying a home or retirement. Financial education equips them to take control of their economic futures and make informed choices that will impact their financial well-being for years to come.





Garry Kasparov Hails D Gukesh's Historic World Chess Championship Win

India's chess prodigy D Gukesh made history by clinching the World Chess Championship in Singapore on December 12, 2024, defeating China's Ding Liren. At just 18 years old, Gukesh became the youngest world champion in chess history. His remarkable victory earned him Rs 11.45 crore in prize money, with the Tamil Nadu government adding Rs 5 crore as a reward, totaling Rs 16.45 crore. Initially, Gukesh faced a hefty tax liability of Rs 6.23 crore due to India's 42.5% tax on prize earnings. However, recognizing his extraordinary achievement, the Finance Ministry announced a tax exemption for his prize money, allowing him to retain the full amount. This gesture underscores the government's support for exceptional talent and ensures that Gukesh's victory inspires young athletes across the nation while celebrating India's growing prominence in global chess.

Arrest Warrant Issued Against Robin Uthappa in PF Fraud Case

Former Indian cricketer Robin Uthappa faces legal trouble as an arrest warrant has been issued against him in connection with allegations of provident fund (PF) fraud amounting to ₹23 lakh. The order was passed by PF Regional Commissioner Shadakshari Gopal Reddy, directing Pulakeshinagar police to take action. The allegations stem from Uthappa's management of Centuries Lifestyle Brand Private Limited, where PF contributions were reportedly deducted from employees' salaries but allegedly not deposited into their respective accounts. On December 4, Commissioner Reddy instructed the police to execute the warrant. However, the warrant was returned to the PF office after police cited Uthappa's untraceable relocation. The case is being investigated under Section 405 of the Indian Penal Code, which pertains to "criminal breach of trust." Employers are legally obligated to deposit deducted PF contributions, and failure to do so constitutes a misuse of funds, punishable under the law. As of now, authorities continue to investigate, and Uthappa's whereabouts remain uncertain.



Uttarakhand Gears Up for 38th National Games 2025

Uttarakhand reached a historic moment in sports by unveiling the mascot, logo, jersey, anthem, and tagline for the 38th National Games 2025 at Maharana Pratap Sports College, Dehradun. Scheduled from January 28 to February 14, 2025, the Games promise a vibrant mix of athletic excellence, cultural heritage, and state pride.

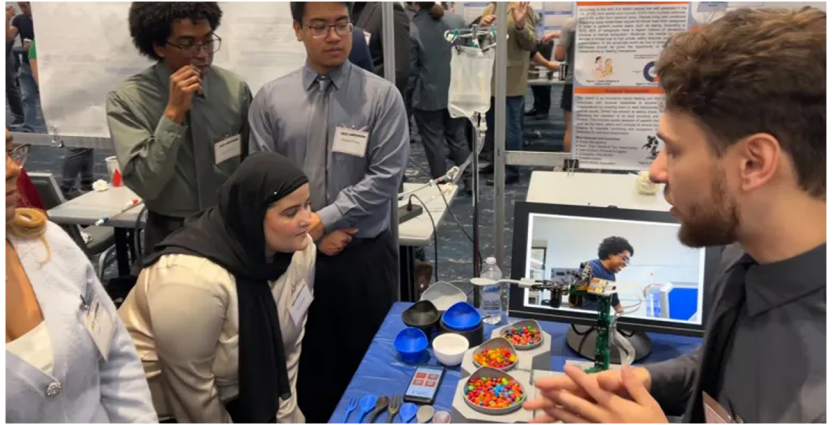
Significance of the Event

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama hailed the Games as a historic milestone for Uttarakhand. He expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for entrusting the state with hosting the prestigious event and emphasized the state's preparedness to deliver a memorable Games. Indian Olympic Association President PT Usha highlighted the integration of traditional sports like yoga and mallakhamb, underscoring the cultural ethos of Uttarakhand. The event also serves to promote sports culture, showcasing Uttarakhand's commitment to athletic development and national pride.



Apple Collaborates with Broadcom to Develop AI-Focused Server Chip

Apple is reportedly working with Broadcom to create its first server chip designed for artificial intelligence (AI) processing, internally code-named Baltra. The chip is expected to enter mass production by 2026 and will be manufactured using Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co's (TSMC) advanced N3P fabrication technology. This initiative aligns Apple with tech giants like Google, which have developed proprietary chips for AI services. It also aims to reduce Apple's dependence on Nvidia's costly and limited-availability processors. The announcement positively impacted Broadcom, whose shares rose 5% following the news. Broadcom has already experienced significant growth from the generative AI boom, with its share value increasing 54% in 2024. Apple's strategic shift underscores its focus on advancing AI capabilities across its ecosystem.



UTSA Student Creates Robotic Prototype Inspired by Late Uncle's Struggles

Sara Mustafa, a UTSA engineering senior, has developed a prototype robot, the Optimized Meal Assistance Robot (OMAR), designed to help disabled or paralyzed individuals regain independence by feeding themselves with minimal caregiver assistance. Inspired by her late uncle Omar's struggles with paralysis during his battle with cancer, Mustafa channeled her grief and determination into this innovative senior design project. With the support of her classmate Josie Torres, Mustafa transformed her idea into a reality. OMAR was showcased at UTSA's Fall 2023 Tech Symposium, where engineering students present their projects to compete for funding. Mustafa's heartfelt motivation and technical ingenuity underline the transformative power of engineering in improving lives.



Jeet Adani Champions Purpose-Driven Technology at IIT Bombay Techfest 2024

Delivering the keynote address at IIT Bombay's Techfest 2024, Jeet Adani posed a thought-provoking question: "How would you define technology?" He emphasized that technology is not an end in itself but a means to serve societal and national goals. "The end we define for ourselves must meet the needs of our society and our nation," the 27-year-old leader remarked. Adani highlighted the transformative power of purpose-driven technology, lauding innovations like Google's quantum computing chip, Willow, for its potential to address global challenges in drug discovery, renewable energy, and climate change. However, he warned of the ethical responsibility accompanying such advancements: "What you do with that kind of power is a choice – whether to solve the world's problems or create new ones." He underscored India's leadership in leveraging technology for inclusivity, citing the success of UPI and Digital India. With 180 billion cashless transactions annually, India outpaces advanced economies in adopting financial and digital solutions, exemplifying how technology can bridge gaps in healthcare, education, and governance.



Mumbai Senior Citizen Loses Rs 1.94 Crore in Cyber Fraud

In a disturbing case of cyber fraud, a 68-year-old senior citizen from Mumbai was duped of Rs 1.94 crore from his fixed deposit. The scam began on November 30 when the victim received a WhatsApp video call from a fraudster impersonating a Mumbai crime branch officer. The caller used a realistic police station backdrop and accused the victim of involvement in a high-profile money laundering case linked to businessman Naresh Goyal. Intimidated by the accusations and convinced by the caller's uniform and setting, the victim fell prey to the scam. This incident highlights the growing menace of digital fraud in India, emphasizing the need for public awareness and stringent measures to tackle such crimes.



Bengaluru's Growth Pains: Language, Infrastructure, and Controversy

Bengaluru, celebrated as India's tech hub, continues to attract talent from across the country with its thriving startup ecosystem and robust IT sector. However, this rapid influx of migrants has brought significant challenges, including traffic congestion, deteriorating infrastructure, rising rents, and a contentious language debate. The push to promote Kannada has sparked tensions, with reports of non-Kannadigas facing discrimination, such as being overcharged by shopkeepers or denied rides by auto drivers. Amid this backdrop, Vikram Chopra, CEO of Cars24, fueled controversy with a hiring post targeting engineers in Bengaluru. Taking a humorous jab at the city's language issues, Chopra invited professionals to return to Delhi NCR, quipping, "Still can't speak Kannada after years in Bengaluru? It's okay. Aa jao Dilli." His remarks, accompanied by claims that Delhi NCR might be a better place to work, highlight the broader challenges Bengaluru faces as it balances its status as a cosmopolitan tech hub with preserving local culture and addressing urban strains.

Christopher Nolan and Emma Thomas Knighted for Contributions to Cinema

Christopher Nolan and Emma Thomas, Hollywood's iconic power couple, were recently honored by King Charles III for their outstanding contributions to cinema. In a prestigious ceremony, Nolan was knighted, becoming "Sir Christopher Nolan," while Thomas was bestowed the title of "Dame Emma Thomas." The Royal Family's official X page celebrated the occasion, stating, "Arise, Sir Christopher Nolan and Dame Emma Thomas!" The duo's collaboration has resulted in cinematic masterpieces, including The Dark Knight trilogy and Oppenheimer. Their 2023 blockbuster, Oppenheimer, swept major Oscars, winning Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, and Best Supporting Actor. Reports suggest that Nolan is already at work on new projects, with rumors hinting at a star-studded cast featuring Tom Holland, Zendaya, and Anne Hathaway. Fans eagerly anticipate the next chapter in the visionary director-producer partnership that has defined modern cinema.



Vikrant Massey Opens Up About Taking a Break from Acting

Actor Vikrant Massey recently spoke at Agenda AajTak about his decision to announce a break from work, citing "social media pressure" as a significant factor behind his post. Reflecting on his life, Vikrant shared that he had achieved the life he always dreamed of and decided it was time to fully embrace and enjoy it. The actor, known for his introspective nature, revealed his plan to scale down his work commitments, with only one film scheduled for the next year. Addressing his complex relationship with social media, he admitted feeling compelled to share updates due to his public life but expressed a preference for using it selectively.

India's New Luxury Real Estate Capital

Gurugram has firmly established itself as India's new hub for ultra-luxury real estate, surpassing traditional hotspots like Mumbai and Delhi. The record-breaking ₹190 crore penthouse deal at DLF Camellias by Rishi Parti, CEO of Info-x Software Technology, underscores this shift. This ₹1,80,000 per square foot transaction marks Camellias as India's most expensive high-rise condominium. The city's growing appeal among affluent startup founders and industrialists, who value proximity to workplaces, has elevated Gurugram as the preferred choice for high-end living. This momentum has outshone even notable transactions in Mumbai, such as multi-crore deals at Oberoi Three Sixty West and Lodha Malabar, redefining luxury real estate trends in India.



NTPC Green Energy Partners with Bihar to Boost Renewable Energy

NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL), the renewable energy arm of NTPC Ltd, has signed an MoU with the Department of Industries, Government of Bihar, to advance renewable energy projects in the state. The agreement was formalized during the "Bihar Business Connect 2024" Global Investors' Summit in Patna on December 20, 2024. This collaboration, represented by Alok Ranjan Ghosh from Bihar's Industries Department and Bimal Gopalachari from NGEL, focuses on developing ground-mounted and floating solar installations, battery energy storage systems, and green hydrogen mobility initiatives. Bihar's state government will support the partnership by facilitating necessary approvals and clearances to ensure smooth execution.

Director's Desk

SUMIT BHRIYA

Founder & CEO (Goboundary)

Understanding the Influences Shaping Gen Z

As we navigate the evolving cultural landscape, it's crucial to understand the forces shaping the choices of Generation Z. This generation, characterized by its digital fluency, is influenced by a cocktail of trends perpetuated by social media, popular culture, and peer networks.

Take smoking, for instance. Despite years of anti-smoking campaigns, we observe a resurgence, largely fueled by glamorized depictions in media and influencer endorsements. Similarly, the obsession with expensive shopping and attending high-profile concerts often stems from curated online lifestyles that glorify indulgence and exclusivity.

It's essential for us—whether as educators, parents, or mentors—to create a counter-narrative. Let us foster critical thinking, encourage meaningful engagements, and instill values of authenticity and financial prudence. By doing so, we can guide them to prioritize self-growth over fleeting trends and invest in experiences that truly enrich their lives.

As the year draws to a close, I extend my heartfelt wishes for a joyous Christmas filled with love and warmth. May the New Year bring new opportunities, success, and happiness for you and your loved ones.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year