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Public employment must be given to eligible candidates as per prescribed qualifications: sc

NEW DELHI, Jun 4 (GNS): Observing that public employment must be made available to eligible candidates in accordance with the prescribed qualifications, the Supreme Court has held that allowing a person with higher qualifications to secure a job intended for those with lower qualifications deprives a genuinely eligible and deserving candidate. A bench of Justices Ahsanuddin Amanullah and R Mahadevan made the observation while setting aside a Madras High Court order that had reinstated a temporary bank attendant.

The top court said the high court had overlooked



that the employee had secured an appointment to a post earmarked exclusively for candidates with qualifications up to Class 10 by concealing the fact that he was a graduate. "Public employment must be made available to all eligible candidates in accordance with the prescribed qualifications..."

"When the post was specifically intended for candidates possessing lower educational qualifications, permitting a person with higher qualifications to secure such employment would necessarily result in

depriving a genuinely eligible and deserving candidate of the opportunity," the bench said. The top court said the rationale behind prescribing an upper limit of qualification is both reasonable and equitable, namely, to provide employment opportunities to persons who, owing to circumstances of life, could not pursue higher education.

"The State, as a model employer, is justified in reserving certain categories of posts for such persons so that they are not compelled to compete with more highly-qualified candidates against whom they would ordinarily stand little

chance of selection. Such a policy has consistently been upheld by the courts," the bench said while upholding the bank's decision to dismiss the employee.

The Supreme Court further observed that suppression of material facts during the recruitment process strikes at the very foundation of fairness and transparency in public employment. It noted that a candidate who obtains appointment by concealing higher educational qualifications cannot later claim equity or protection from the courts, as such appointments are vitiated by misrepresentation from the outset.

Rahul Slams PM over NEET aspirant suicide

NEW DELHI, Jun 4 (GNS): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi after an alleged suicide by a NEET aspirant came to light, saying an entire generation of youth is paying the price for the extent to which the PM has "ruined" the education system over the past 12 years.

Gandhi's attack on the Modi government came after media reports said Akanksha Chaturvedi, a NEET aspirant from Madhya Pradesh's Maunjanj district, allegedly died by suicide in Nagpur after reportedly falling into depression following reports of irregularities in the NEET-UG examination.

"Akanksha aspired to become a doctor and serve her country and society. Akanksha's father is a farmer. To support his daughter's dream of becoming a



doctor, he took out a loan of Rs 3 lakh against his Kisan Credit Card. He even took up a job as a cook in Nagpur himself, so that his daughter could attend coaching classes there," Gandhi said in his post in Hindi on X.

"A father did everything humanly possible. Then, the NEET paper leaked. The examination was cancelled. Amidst that uncertainty, Akanksha left us forever," the Leader of Opposition said. Akanksha's death was not a suicide - it is the tragic outcome of a corrupt and broken system under Prime

Minister Modi, Gandhi alleged. "And Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan? He remains firmly seated in his position even today. The same old committees. The same old transfers. The same old inquiries. No reform; no justice," Gandhi said.

"Mr. Modi, power is not permanent - it comes and goes. But the entire generation of India's youth is now paying the price for the extent to which you have ruined the education system over the past 12 years," the Congress leader said.

India-UK ties unlock unprecedented growth: PM Modi

NEW DELHI, Jun 4 (GNS): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that the partnership between India and the United Kingdom has unlocked "unprecedented" growth opportunities for both countries. "Pleased to meet UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper. Appreciated the deepening of the India-UK partnership in recent times that has unlocked unprecedented growth opportunities for both our countries," PM Modi wrote on X after meeting the visiting UK minister.

"India-UK Vision 2035 will continue to guide our



partnership and strengthen our joint efforts for the global good," he added.

Earlier in the day, Cooper met External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar.

"The India-UK partnership is now a forward-looking highway of shared eco-

nomics and high technology! Delighted to welcome UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper on her first visit to India," Jaishankar wrote on X after their meeting. "We reviewed ongoing progress in our cooperation, focusing on trade, technology, supply chains, defence, climate, education and people-to-people ties. Also spoke about new opportunities in clean energy, AI and critical minerals," he added.

Both leaders exchanged views on global developments, including in Ukraine, West Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Centre plans delimitation before 2029 polls

NEW DELHI, Jun 4 (GNS): The Centre is actively exploring the revival of the Delimitation Bill and is considering completing the long-pending constituency redrawing exercise ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Sources said the government has initiated consultations with several regional political parties and is continuing efforts to build a broad political consensus on the issue. Among the parties engaged in discussions are the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the Trinamool Congress (TMC),

and other regional stakeholders. The consultations are focused on addressing concerns over the potential impact of delimitation on parliamentary representation and ensuring wider political acceptance before any formal legislative initiative is undertaken.

Govt sources indicated that while the Centre is keen to move forward with the exercise, it is mindful of the political sensitivities involved and is seeking to avoid a confrontational approach. Efforts are therefore being directed towards evolving a framework that can secure support across party lines.

Venezuela VP pays tribute at Rajghat

NEW DELHI, Jun 4 (GNS): Venezuela's Acting President Delcy Rodriguez paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat in New Delhi on Thursday afternoon, underscoring the continuing relevance of Gandhi's principles in shaping the India-Venezuela relationship. Taking to X, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) posted: "A tribute to the lasting legacy of Babu. Acting President Delcy

Rodriguez of Venezuela paid homage to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat this afternoon. Babu's ideals continue to inspire India-Venezuela partnership."

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting with Rodriguez in New Delhi, with discussions focused on bilateral ties and regional and global issues of mutual interest. During their talks, PM Modi and Rodriguez

also reaffirmed their commitment to deepen bilateral ties and advancing interests of the Global South.

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and other officials were also present during the meeting.

"PM Narendra Modi held wide-ranging discussions with Acting President Delcy Rodriguez of Venezuela today.

Jaishankar, cooper to review India-UK roadmap



New Delhi, June 4 (GNS): British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will hold wide-ranging talks on Thursday, focusing on minimising economic shocks from the ongoing conflict in West Asia and reviewing the implementation of the UK-India 10-year roadmap to boost overall ties.

Cooper landed in New Delhi this evening amid a renewed momentum in the bilateral ties including in trade and defence sectors.

Both the ministers will discuss closer collaboration between the UK and India to minimise economic shocks from ongoing conflicts, preserve global stability, and ensure freedom of navigation, a Brit-

ish readout said. The foreign secretary's trip sets an ambitious path for engagement with India, a top priority partner for the UK, it said, adding the visit builds on the trip by Business and Trade Secretary Peter Kyle earlier this week to bring the landmark UK-India Free Trade Agreement into force as soon as possible.

Together with Jaishankar, the foreign secretary will undertake a formal review of delivery under the UK-India Vision 2035 to date, highlighting the UK's priorities for the year ahead across economic growth, technology and innovation, defence and security, climate and education, the readout noted.

The 10-year UK-India Vision 2035 roadmap sets

strategic goals for sustained collaboration and innovation across sectors.

The annual review ensures our partnership remains dynamic, aligned, and responsive to rapid global change, the readout said. Lindy Cameron, British High Commissioner to India, said: "The UK-India partnership is a bulwark against rising global uncertainty. Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper's visit this week, her first visit in the role, is another important opportunity to build on that partnership." "Since our Prime Ministers unveiled their shared vision for a modern UK-India partnership last year, the UK has been driving forward collaboration with India as a priority," she said.

US proposes 12.5% tariffs on India



New Delhi, June 4 (GNS): The US has proposed to impose 12.5 per cent tariffs on 54 countries, including India, for allegedly failing to prohibit the import of goods produced with forced labour, even as officials from New Delhi and Washington are currently holding three-day talks to finalise the first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement. The talks that started on Tuesday are being held in New Delhi.

Reacting to the proposed 12.5 per cent tariff, the Indian commerce ministry said New Delhi is engaged with the US on the two Section 301 investigations - over concerns related to forced labour and excess industrial capacity. The country is

also "parallelly" engaged with the US for finalisation of an interim trade agreement, a framework for which was announced through a joint statement on February 7.

The US Trade Representative (USTR) has proposed the additional duty following investigations launched in March against 60 countries under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 over concerns related to forced labour. The measure remains a proposal and has not yet been finalised, the USTR said, adding that interested parties can submit requests to appear at hearings and summaries of testimony by June 22. The USTR is scheduled to hold hearings on July 7.

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Shah chairs NEC plenary in Shillong, leaders discuss North East Vision Plan 2047

SHILLONG, Jun 4 (GNS): Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday chaired the 73rd plenary session of the North Eastern Council, where leaders from the eight northeastern states resolved to work towards a stronger and more prosperous region and deliberated on the North East Vision Plan 2047. The session brought together governors, chief ministers, deputy chief ministers and senior officials from across the Northeast. "Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Minister for DoNER Jyotiraditya M Scindia, governors, chief ministers, deputy chief ministers, and senior officials assembled ahead of the plenary deliberations," the NEC said in a post on X.

All the leaders reaffirmed their collective commitment to the growth, connectivity and prosperity of the region, it added. Union Minister of the Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Scindia said all the leaders are united in their resolve to create a "stronger and more prosperous" Northeast.

According to an official communique, stakeholders from all eight northeastern states discussed the North East Vision Plan 2047 and key regional development priorities. "The plenary session discussed and deliberated on progress made by the CM High-Level Task Forces constituted for critical sectors of regional development," the DoNER Ministry said on X. The session also reviewed important initiatives of the DoNER ministry, including updates on major schemes and programmes, outcomes of the North East Investment Summit and Bankers' Con-



clave, it added. The ministry said leaders analysed youth-focused initiatives, efforts related to tourism and logistics, and the region's unique selling proposition (USP) projects. Presentations were made

on tourism, agriculture and horticulture, investment promotion, self-reliance in milk, eggs, fish and meat production, sports promotion, economic corridor development, infrastructure and connectivity, and hand-

loom and handicrafts. "The deliberations are expected to facilitate coordinated action among states and stakeholders for achieving shared development goals," an official said. The North East Vision

Plan 2047 seeks to provide a long-term roadmap for transforming the region into a vibrant hub of economic growth, connectivity, innovation, sustainability and cultural prosperity by the centenary year of India's independence. Earlier in the day, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma welcomed Shah to Shillong for the meeting. "Glad to welcome Hon'ble Union Home Minister and Chairman of the North Eastern Council, Shri @AmitShah ji to Shillong for the 73rd NEC Plenary Session," he said. Ahead of the main session, a pre-Plenary meeting was held, bringing together senior officials from the government of India and all eight Northeast-

ern states on Wednesday. The meeting was attended by chief secretaries, state planning secretaries, senior officers of DoNER ministry, NEC officials and other key stakeholders. The North Eastern Council, established under the North Eastern Council Act, 1971, serves as the apex regional planning body for the Northeastern region and plays a pivotal role in fostering coordinated development and strengthening cooperative federalism in the region.

It is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the region, which consists of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

Haryana voter verification drive from June 15



CHANDIGARH, June 4 (GNS): Haryana's Chief Electoral Officer, A Sreenivas, on Wednesday reviewed the preparations for the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in the state and expressed concern over the slow progress of electoral roll mapping. According to an official statement, during the virtual meeting with all the deputy commissioners-cum-district election officers, Sreenivas informed that only 64.26 per cent of the mapping work has been completed so far, while districts such as Faridabad, Gurugram, Sonapat, Panipat and Panchkula have achieved less than 60 per cent progress. Calling it a matter of concern, he directed the concerned districts to hold meetings with representatives of resident welfare associations (RWAs) to ensure maximum public participation, the statement said. Sreenivas said he would personally visit these districts next week to review the situation. According to the directions of the Election Commission of India, a comprehensive Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise will be conducted in Haryana

from June 15 to July 14, during which door-to-door verification of voters will be carried out at the booth level across the state. The final electoral roll will be published on September 22. At the meeting, Sreenivas directed that electoral registration officers (EROs), Assistant EROs, booth level officers (BLOs) and supervisors be provided timely training to ensure the successful implementation of the exercise. He said for the convenience of voters, enumeration forms will be made available in Hindi, which can be downloaded from the poll panel's official website from June 5. In cases where forms are not returned, the BLOs will collect information from neighbours to identify the absent, shifted, deceased or duplicate voters. It will be mandatory for the BLOs to visit every such household at least three times. If a voter is not at home, any adult member of the family may sign the enumeration form and submit it to the BLO. Even in cases where voters submit forms online, the BLOs will conduct physical verification through house visits, Sreenivas said.

Absolute incompetence of BJP unmasked by NFHS-6 data: Mallikarjun Kharge

NEW DELHI, June 4 (GNS): Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday claimed that "absolute incompetence" of the BJP has been "unmasked" by the NFHS-6 data and alleged that the Modi government has betrayed India's women and children on healthcare and nutrition.

Kharge said the BJP has a five-step formula to hide its "sins". He accused the BJP of burying selected data, abandoning the vulnerable, advertising "Sabka Saath" and "Amrit Kaal", manipulating the narrative and protecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's PR at all costs. "Not only does the Modi government



betray India's women and children on healthcare and nutrition, but it also deliberately hides crucial data which exposes its failures!" Kharge said on X. "Absolute incompetence of the BJP has been unmasked by the NFHS-6 data! 1 in 5 children suffer from acute malnutrition. One-third of Indian children are un-

derweight. More than 84% of children aged 6 to 23 months do not receive adequate nutrition. 57% of women between 15 and 49 years are anaemic as per NFHS-5. 1 in 5 women is undernourished," Kharge said, citing NFHS data. The NFHS-6 was conducted during 2023-24 by the Ministry of Health and Fam-

ily Welfare with the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai as the nodal agency. Covering nearly 6.79 lakh households across 715 districts, the survey provides evidence on population, health, nutrition and family welfare indicators and supports programme implementation up to the district level. According to the sixth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6) released by the Union Health Ministry on Friday, India has registered significant improvements in child health indicators, including immunisation coverage and nutritional outcomes.

SC Forms expert panel on Aravalli definition

NEW DELHI, June 4 (GNS): The Supreme Court has constituted a high-powered committee to conduct an independent review of the Centre's report on the definition and delineation of the Aravalli hill range and directed the panel to address what it described as "critical ambiguities" in the findings. The committee headed by Kanchan Devi, Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) has been directed to submit a comprehensive report by August 31, 2026.

The move comes months after the apex court, on December 29, stayed the implementation of an October 2025 report prepared by a commit-

tee chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

The court had then emphasised the need for an independent body of domain experts to undertake a fresh scientific and ecological assessment. In its order, the court observed that a "fair, impartial and independent expert opinion" was necessary after consulting all relevant stakeholders to provide definitive guidance on several contentious issues relating to the protection of the Aravalli ecosystem. The newly constituted high-powered committee (HPC) will be chaired ex-officio by Kanchan Devi, a 1991-batch Indian Forest Service officer.

Delhi Hotel Fire: Owner Faces Interrogation As Hunt For Manager Intensifies

NEW DELHI, June 4 (GNS): The investigation into the massive fire at a bed-and-breakfast establishment in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar, which claimed 21 lives, intensified on Thursday even as a court sent owner Lavkesh Bajaj to four days' police custody. While police teams continue their search for the absconding manager, Jai Mishra, forensic experts are examining evidence from the site to assess alleged violations that may have contributed to the tragedy. Delhi Police have launched a manhunt for Mishra, the manager of the property, who has been missing since the fire broke out on Wednesday morning. Police have registered a case against Bajaj under several provisions of the



Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including culpable homicide not amounting to murder, mischief by fire, negligence endangering human life, causing grievous hurt through negligence, dam-

age to property, and negligent conduct related to fire safety. Police reconstructed the sequence of events that resulted in the blaze. Forensic examination of everything pertaining to the incident is

being carried out, officials told the media.

A team of forensic experts has collected samples and evidence from the site to determine the origin of the fire and assess whether safety

lapses contributed to the scale of the disaster. Authorities are also reviewing the establishment's compliance with fire safety regulations and licensing requirements.

The investigation has increasingly focused on Mishra, the hotel's manager, who allegedly oversaw the day-to-day functioning of the property, say police officials. According to police, Bajaj informed investigators that Mishra was responsible for managing operations at the establishment.

Mishra is reported to have been absconding since the incident occurred around 8.45 a.m. on Wednesday. Police teams are trying to trace and nab him, officials said.

The fire erupted on Wednesday morning, trap-

ping numerous guests inside the building and triggering a large-scale rescue operation. Among the deceased were 12 foreign nationals who were reportedly staying at the facility while accompanying relatives receiving treatment at nearby hospitals. The tragedy claimed a total of 21 lives and left several others injured, making it one of the most severe fire disasters reported in the city in recent years. Medical authorities at Max Super Speciality Hospital in Saket reported that 15 injured victims are currently undergoing treatment. Hospital officials stated that all admitted patients remain stable. Six patients continue to be on ventilator support. However, their condition is stable, say doctors.

Dr Jitendra chairs joint meeting of union secretaries, announces portal for 'patent' training

NEW DELHI, Jun 4 (GNS): In a major step towards strengthening India's research ecosystem, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh today announced an ANRF-supported digital portal aimed at facilitating training in patent filing and research paper writing for researchers, students and innovators across the country. The announcement was made while chairing a Joint Review Meeting of the Secretaries of Department of Science & Technology (DST), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space during which the Minister reviewed progress on key scientific initiatives, institutional coordination mechanisms, science administration reforms, outreach activities and preparations for upcoming national science programmes. The review meeting was attended by Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India, Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood; Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Dr. Rajesh S. Gokhale; Chief Executive Officer of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), Dr. Shivkumar Kalyanaraman; and senior officials from the Department of

Science & Technology (DST), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES). Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the newly announced portal will serve as an important capacity-building resource for



researchers and young innovators by providing structured support in scientific writing, publication processes, intellectual property protection and patent-related procedures. He noted that improving access to such resources would strengthen the quality of research output, enhance

innovation outcomes and help researchers translate scientific work into publications and intellectual property assets. Emphasising the need for greater coordination among scientific departments and institutions, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that scientific organisations working under different

departments must function in a collaborative and integrated manner to maximise national outcomes from research, innovation and public investments in science and technology. Observing that several scientific institutions often undertake complementary work without adequate

awareness of developments across departments, Dr. Jitendra Singh stressed the need for regular interaction among laboratories and institutions. He directed that structured mechanisms be established for sharing information on major projects, technological achievements and institutional capabilities so that expertise available within one department can be effectively leveraged by others. The Minister particularly emphasised the importance of showcasing institutional achievements and success stories. He suggested that every review mechanism should include presentations on notable scientific achievements from laboratories and institutions on a rotational basis. Such an approach, he

said, would not only enhance visibility of scientific accomplishments but also promote cross-learning and collaboration among institutions working in similar domains. Reiterating the growing importance of science communication, Dr. Jitendra Singh called for a more coordinated outreach strategy across scientific departments. He stressed the need to utilise digital platforms, social media and emerging communication tools to present scientific achievements in a manner that is accessible to citizens, students, startups and researchers. He also suggested exploring common communication platforms to improve dissemination of scientific success stories and innovation outcomes across the scientific ecosystem.

India poised to become 3rd-largest economy by 2030, overtaking Germany: Hardeep Puri

New Delhi, June 4 (GNS) India has recently overtaken Japan and is poised to become the third-largest economy by 2030, overtaking Germany, Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said.

In the past 11 years, India has risen from the eleventh to the fourth largest economy in the world.

"Our GDP has more than doubled — from \$2.1 trillion in 2014 to \$4.3 trillion in 2025" said Puri while addressing the 77th Foundation Day of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) here. The minister highlighted the nation's resilience during global headwinds and the critical role played by bold policy reforms, extensive social welfare schemes, and sound financial management.

Under the flagship social initiatives, Puri noted, over 27 crore citizens have been lifted out of multidimensional poverty, nearly four crore houses have been



sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, and 15.4 crore rural households now enjoy piped water through the Jal Jeevan Mission.

"Ayushman Bharat has expanded health coverage to over 70 crore individuals with a Rs 5 lakh insurance benefit, reinforcing India's commitment to inclusive development," the minister added. He emphasised India's success in attracting global investment, with \$748 billion of foreign direct investment inflows between

2014 and 2025 an increase of 143 per cent over the previous decade and the expansion of source countries from 89 to 112.

"Landmarks in policy reform, including the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, Production-Linked Incentive schemes, the Goods and Services Tax, Direct Benefit Transfers, and the elimination of over 25,000 compliances and 1,400 obsolete laws, have strengthened the nation's business landscape," the minister emphasised. The

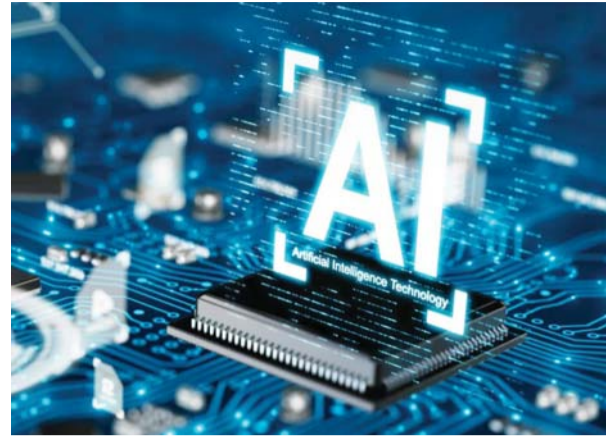
transformation in tax administration underscores India's evolving financial culture. Annual Income Tax returns filed grew from 3.6 crore in FY 2013-14 to 8.5 crore in FY 2024-25, with 95 per cent processed within 30 days. "Each return, each rupee of tax collected, translates into tangible benefits—LPG connections for mothers, medicines for the poor, electricity for rural homes, pensions for the elderly, and employment opportunities for youth," Puri highlighted.

Looking ahead, the minister called on chartered accountants to embrace artificial intelligence and advanced analytics, automating routine tasks to focus on strategic advisory roles and harnessing data-driven insights for more effective decision-making. "Embracing AI is no longer optional — it is essential for staying competitive and innovative in today's evolving financial world," he noted.

India's digital identity adoption surges amid rising trust, AI integration

New Delhi, June 4 (GNS) As India's digital ecosystem expands at an unprecedented pace, Indian consumers are rapidly embracing new-age identity technologies while balancing convenience with security concerns, a new report said. The data compiled by Okta highlights that more than 30 per cent of Indian users log into ten or more personal online accounts every month -- showcasing the country's accelerating digital footprint.

Amid this growth, Indian consumers are also displaying a greater readiness to adopt biometrics and AI-driven services compared to global peers. Despite the growing array of authentication methods, passwords remain the most convenient option for 82 per cent of Indians. However, biometrics are steadily gaining traction, with 55 per cent using fingerprint authentication and 35 per cent relying on Face ID for smoother logins. "Despite the new op-



tions, 82 per cent of Indians still find passwords to be the most convenient way to verify their identity," the report said. "More than half of the population (54 per cent) find it convenient to use a government ID like Aadhaar for verification purposes, followed by SMS/voice calls (44 per cent)," it added.

Security perceptions remain high for passwords (79 per cent), SMS authentication (74 per cent), and fingerprints. However, risky practices persist -- 1 in 5 Indians reuse the same password across all personal accounts.

India's growing trust in digital platforms is also noteworthy. As many as 67 per cent of Indian respondents trust businesses to protect their data, well above the global average of 50 per cent. This trust extends to key sectors -- banks (79 per cent), tech firms (73 per cent), government agencies (70 per cent), and online retailers (69 per cent).

However, digital vigilance is rising too, with 81 per cent of Indians expressing concern about identity fraud -- significantly higher than the global average of 63 per cent. The report, based on a

global survey of 6,750 consumers (including 750 from India), also found that Indians are more open to engaging with enterprise AI agents. While 65 per cent appreciate the speed and 24/7 support of AI, as many as 76 per cent still prefer human interaction. Interestingly, 64 per cent of Indians are willing to share health data with AI agents, compared to 32 per cent globally, and 49 per cent are comfortable sharing financial data, compared to 27 per cent globally.

"AI is no longer a future concept -- it is embedded in the way we live, work, and connect," said Shakeel Khan, Regional Vice President and Country Manager, Okta India. Ben Goodman, SVP & GM, Asia Pacific & Japan at Okta, added, "In Asia Pacific, trust has become the true currency of digital engagement. From logins to AI agents, consumers want experiences that are seamless, secure, and respectful of their data."

Indian pharma exports strong at \$4.9 billion in April-May: Pharmexcil

New Delhi, June 4 (GNS) Pharmaceutical exports in India stood strong at \$4.9 billion in April-May FY26, according to the latest update by the Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil). Pharmexcil is an authorised export promotion agency under the Commerce and Industry Ministry. The data showed that the sector has made a 7.38 per cent expansion compared with the same period last year. This indicates that the industry is continuing with its upward trajectory and marking a significant presence globally.

This growth is due to "strategic initiatives focused on sustainable manufacturing, expanded global market presence, and digital innovation," Pharmexcil said, adding that the efforts may bolster India's ambitious goal of achieving a trillion-dollar trade target for its pharma industry. "India's pharmaceutical exports continue to demonstrate



a steady year-over-year growth, with drug formulations and biologicals continuing to dominate the export category," Namit Joshi, chairman of Pharmexcil, was quoted as saying in a media report. "We attribute this growth to rising global demand, streamlined regulatory approvals, technological innovations, strategic partnerships, and economic stability," Joshi added.

Notably, formulations and biologicals accounted for 75.74 per cent of the total of the pharma exports. Bulk

drugs and drug intermediates also expanded by 4.40 per cent in May.

Vaccine exports saw a 13.64 per cent increase and reached \$190.13 million, while surgical items (up 8.58 per cent) and Ayush and herbal products (up 7.36 per cent) also saw healthy growth. According to Pharmexcil, about 76 per cent of India's pharmaceutical export destinations include the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) region, as well as Europe, Africa, and Latin America.

India's M&A activity hits \$61.3 bn in H1 2025, highest since 2022

New Delhi, June 4 (GNS) India's mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity remained strong in the first half of 2025, with total deal value touching \$61.3 billion, a new report said on Wednesday. This marks a 50 per cent jump compared to the same period the previous year and is the highest first-half total since 2022, according to the latest India Investment Banking Review by LSEG. The report also showed that the number of M&A transactions rose by 9 per cent, signalling continued market momentum.

This growth was driven by domestic consolidation, energy transition efforts, and strategic portfolio realignments. Financial sponsors played a key role, particularly in sectors like insurance, technology, and healthcare. Elaine Tan, Senior Manager at LSEG Deals Intelligence, said India's M&A growth is being powered by a mix



of factors, including the country's push for renewables and structural changes in key sectors.

"Energy & Power led the way with \$20.5 billion in deals -- a more than 16-fold jump from last year," she said. Investment banking fees from Indian operations reached \$653.8 million in the first half of 2025, up 21 per cent from a year ago. Fees from equity capital market (ECM) underwriting stood at \$272.7 million, while debt capital

market (DCM) underwriting earned \$131.7 million.

Syndicated lending fees surged 66 per cent to \$90.1 million, and M&A advisory fees increased 56 per cent to \$159.3 million. Domestic M&A was particularly strong, rising 138 per cent year-on-year (YoY) to \$44.8 billion -- the highest since 2022. Meanwhile, inbound M&A fell to a nine-year low at \$10.1 billion, while outbound M&A grew 74 per cent to \$5.8 billion.

Coal production from India's commercial mines jumps 16.4 pc in April-June quarter

New Delhi, June 4 (GNS) Coal production from the country's captive and commercial mines shot up by a robust 16.4 per cent to 46.01 million tonnes during the first quarter (April-June) of the financial year 2025-26 from 39.53 million tonnes in the same quarter of the previous year, according to official figures released on Wednesday.

The dispatches of coal from these mines rose by 13 per cent to 51.63 million tonnes in the April-June quarter of the current financial year compared to 45.68 million tonnes in the same period of the previous year.

The quarterly increase in production and dispatches of coal for the third year in a row reflects improved efficiency and better utilisation of mining capacity.

During June, coal production has been recorded at 15.57 million tonnes, and dispatches at 17.31 million tonnes. In other develop-

ments during June, which are expected to boost the production of coal further, mine opening permission was granted for Utkal A Mine, having a peak rated capacity of 25 million tonnes. Vesting orders were also issued for three coal blocks, raising the total number of coal blocks allocated by the Ministry of Coal to more than 200, the statement said.

The increase in coal production ensures a reliable supply of coal to key industries such as power generation, steel manufacturing, and cement production, thereby reinforcing the backbone of India's industrial infrastructure, the statement added.

Meanwhile, the Nominated Authority of the Coal Ministry, last month, opened the bids for the 12th round of commercial coal blocks' auction, in which as many as 41 bids have been received online as well as in physical form for 11 coal blocks.

Retail vehicle sales in India surpass wholesales in June, driven by discounts, EV push

New Delhi, June 4 (GNS) Retail registrations in the Indian automobile market outpaced wholesale dispatches across key segments in June 2025, a new report said. While two-wheeler (2W) retail demand continued at a slow pace, commercial vehicles (CVs) and passenger vehicles (PVs) saw a jump in retail sales -- mainly driven by deep discounts, according to HSBC Global Research.

The report also highlighted strong tractor sales, supported by early and widespread monsoons, and noted a rising adoption of electric vehicles, especially battery electric four-wheelers (e4Ws). In PVs, despite muted demand, retail sales were better than wholesales, thanks to high discounts. However, overall wholesale volumes remained low as manufacturers preferred inventory rationalisation. Maruti Suzuki reported a 6

per cent year-on-year (YoY) decline in total volumes, even as exports rose 22 per cent. Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M), however, bucked the trend with an 18 per cent rise in SUV wholesales, clocking 47,300 units. The report further noted that the upcoming festive season may provide a boost to PV demand, but discounts are expected to remain elevated until then.

In the 2W segment, the impact of the new ABS rule for entry-level bikes is likely to prompt some advance stocking by manufacturers toward the end of 2025, according to the report.

TVS emerged as the top performer with a 20 per cent jump in overall 2W volumes, including a 10 per cent rise in domestic sales and a 54 per cent spike in exports.

Bajaj Auto saw its domestic volumes dip by exports grew by about 18 per cent.

India's ETF AUM grows over 5 times in 5 years, retail investor folios jump 11-fold

Mumbai, June 4 (GNS) India's Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs) have seen tremendous growth over the last five years, with total Assets Under Management (AUM) rising more than five times and retail investor folios increasing eleven-fold, a new report said on Wednesday.

The total AUM of ETFs in India grew nearly 5.5 times between March 2020 and March 2025, according to a new report released by Zerodha Fund House.

By the end of this period, ETFs accounted for Rs 8.38 lakh crore, making up around 13 per cent of the overall Rs 65.74 lakh crore mutual fund industry.

In comparison, ETFs held only a 7 per cent share in 2020. This shows the growing popularity of ETFs as an investment option in the country. The number of retail folios in ETF schemes also saw massive growth -- from just over 23 lakh in



March 2020 to about 2.63 crore in March 2025. Retail investors now make up more than 97 per cent of all ETF folios -- reflecting a sharp rise in awareness and trust in ETFs among common investors. "This study highlights the new era for Indian ETFs, marked by surging retail participation and expanding product diversity reflected in higher resultant volumes," Vishal Jain, CEO, Zerodha Fund House said.

The retail AUM itself has more than tripled in this

five-year period, growing from Rs 5,335 crore to over Rs 17,800 crore. The total number of ETF offerings has also increased nearly threefold during this time. New products, including commodity ETFs like silver-backed funds introduced in 2022, have expanded the choices available to investors. Equity ETFs continue to dominate, with nearly 80 per cent of the total ETF AUM consistently coming from equity-linked instruments since 2020.

Govt issues clarification on Quality Control Order for steel products

New Delhi, June 4 (GNS) The Ministry of Steel clarified on Wednesday that it has issued Quality Control Orders for the enforcement of 151 BIS Standards. The last Quality Control Order was issued in August 2024, and no new Quality Control Order has been issued since then. The ministry made it clear that its order dated June 13 is merely to clarify that in the case of intermediate material for manufacturing of final products under BIS Standards, steel products will also have to follow BIS Standards prescribed for such intermediate products.

The Ministry made it clear that no new Quality Control Orders have been issued, and the order on June 13 was necessary to bring parity between importers and domestic producers of steel. Presently, the import of finished steel products is not at par with Indian manufacturers of



finished steel products, as Indian steel products manufacturers have to use only BIS Standard-compliant intermediate material, while no such requirement was felt by importers for the import of steel products. It will be wrong to put domestic steel products manufacturers at a comparative disadvantage vis-à-vis imported products in terms of non-BIS-compliant intermediate input products.

The order will also help to ensure compliance with BIS Standards for intermediate products is required to ensure that the finished product is as per the qual-

ity requirement given by BIS Standards. If this is not done, a final product may be sub-standard. For example, a large quantity of coated steel is imported into India. Coated steel uses HR/CR Coil as base material, which is the main product in this case. If HR/CR Coil is not BIS compliant, coated steel cannot be BIS compliant, even if the coating process is itself BIS compliant, according to the statement.

Besides, the order is also aimed at checking the possibility of the import of sub-standard steel. Because of excess capacity and declining consumption.

MNKLIS to irrigate one lakh acres: CM Revanth Reddy



Hyderabad, June 4 (GNS) Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday said the Makthal-Narayanpet-Kodangal Lift Irrigation Scheme (MNKLIS) would provide irrigation facilities to one lakh acres in drought-prone areas of Narayanpet and Vikarabad districts.

Hyderabad, June 4 (GNS) Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Thursday said the Makthal-Narayanpet-Kodangal Lift Irrigation Scheme (MNKLIS) would provide irrigation facilities to one lakh acres in drought-prone areas of Narayanpet and Vikarabad districts.

of the Makthal-Narayanpet-Kodangal Lift Irrigation Scheme and the proposed barrage works across the Bhima and Krishna rivers.

The government had accorded administrative sanction for the project at an estimated cost of Rs 2,945.50 crore in February 2024.

M/s Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd. So far, geological investigations have been completed and excavation works at all three pump house locations commenced in February 2026.

Governor urges PSUs to support Salar Jung museum modernisation ahead of Platinum Jubilee



Hyderabad, June 4 (GNS) Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla on Thursday called upon Central and State Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) to extend support for the modernisation and expansion of the Salar Jung Museum as it prepares to celebrate its Platinum Jubilee year.

Shiv Pratap Shukla said the Museum was preparing a comprehensive five-year development plan aimed at transforming it into a modern institution of international standards.

Rs 25 crore and Rs 35 crore for upgrading galleries, storage facilities and conservation infrastructure over the next five years.

DGP calls for strengthening police training institutions

Hyderabad, June 4 (GNS) Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) C V Anand on Thursday stressed the need for strengthening police training institutions and directed officials to focus on emerging challenges such as NDPS enforcement, cybercrime investigation, road safety and implementation of the Motor Vehicles Act.



training programmes and mandatory courses for police personnel.

He also announced that the Telangana Police Officers' Retreat would be institutionalised annually during the first week of November or the first week of December.

gana Conference for Women in Police should be organised every year to strengthen inclusivity and support systems for women personnel.

Academy Director Abhilasha Bisht briefed the DGP on induction and in-service training programmes, infrastructure, welfare activities and challenges faced by the institution.

Telangana Govt begins process to identify and honour statehood movement activists

Hyderabad, June 4 (GNS) Telangana Government Advisor and Chairman of the Committee for the Recognition of Telangana Movement Activists K Keshavarao on Thursday said the state government has initiated the process of identifying and recognising activists who participated in the Telangana statehood movement.

tions had been received from various parties regarding the recognition process and the expectations of movement activists.



ing justice and recognition to Telangana movement activists. He said representatives from all political parties were invited to participate in the consultations.

veerula Dweepam (Martyrs' Island). Applications from activists would be accepted both online and offline, he said.

BRS, Congress betrayed aspirations of Telangana people: BJP chief Ramchander Rao

Hyderabad, June 4 (GNS) Telangana BJP president N Ramchander Rao on Thursday alleged that both the BRS and Congress governments had deceived the people of Telangana by failing to fulfil the aspirations behind the statehood movement, particularly in the areas of water, funds and employment.

was not the achievement of any single political party but a collective struggle led by Joint Action Committees (JACs), students, lawyers, employees and the general public.



promises relating to jobs and employment opportunities remained unfulfilled even after a decade of statehood.

while student fee reimbursement arrears had crossed Rs 10,000 crore.

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