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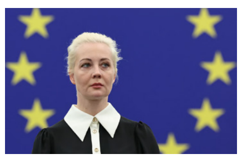
GOVT SHOULD WAIVE CROP loan & electricity bill arrears to help farmers: Maha LoP P 4

K'TAKA POLICE ISSUE NOTICE to BJP MLA for derogatory remarks against LoP Rahul P 4

RUSSIA ADDS NAVALNY'S widow Yulia Navalnaya to 'terrorists... P 6



I am a faithful follower of Christ, says Union Minister in Mizoram

George Kurian meets Mizoram BJP members

AGENCIES

AIZAWL: Union MoS for Minority Affairs George Kurian on Thursday visited Aizawl where he interacted with Mizoram BJP party members and the press at BJP's party office Atal Bhavan.

Speaking at the gathering of the party members, George Kurian said, "I am a faithful follower of Christ and firmly believe in prayers. We must all continue to pray for the development and prosperity of our nation." The Minister stated that he comes from a village in Kerala where 95% of the population are Christians, and when he joined the BJP party in 1980, no one from his village objected to it or said that BJP is an anti-Christian party.

Affirming that the BJP believes in integral humanism, Kurian stated that it is just a political game when people said that BJP is anti-Christian. He further stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi treats all communities as equals and that under various schemes, the party is willing t help to uplift every section of the country. He invited all who wanted the development of India to join the party. Pg 5

Union MoS for Minority Affairs George Kurian

HIGHLIGHTS

- AFFIRMING THAT THE BJP BELIEVES IN INTEGRAL HUMANISM, KURIAN STATED THAT IT IS JUST A POLITICAL GAME WHEN PEOPLE SAID THAT BJP IS ANTI-CHRISTIAN. HE FURTHER STATED THAT PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI TREATS ALL COMMUNITIES AS EQUALS AND THAT UNDER VARIOUS SCHEMES, THE PARTY IS WILLING T HELP TO UPLIFT EVERY SECTION OF THE COUNTRY. HE INVITED ALL WHO WANTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA TO JOIN THE PARTY.

Kurian denounces anti-Christian BJP attacks as political ploy

OUR REPORTER

AIZAWL: George Kurian, Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs, addressed accusations of anti-Christian sentiment within the BJP as baseless political strategies during his visit to Mizoram.

Kurian was accompanied by Devesh Kumar, MLC from Bihar State and Mizoram State Prabhari, along with district officials. During the meeting, Kurian shared his personal faith, asserting that he always prioritizes God and prayer in his life. Pg 5

Mizoram taxi association tells outsiders to leave business

OUR REPORTER

AIZAWL: The Mizoram Taxi Association (MTA) has issued a directive to non-locals operating taxis in

Mizoram, demanding they exit the business.

The association urged all non-resident taxi owners and drivers to sell their taxis and leave the business by the end of this month.

The Aizawl-based MTA stated that the number of taxi owners and drivers has surged in recent months, creating significant challenges for local taxi owners and drivers in earning their

livelihood.

"These non-local taxi owners, driving their own cabs, and drivers operating others' taxis, are unaware of the fares set by the state transport authority (STA) and often charge exorbitant rates. This practice has negatively impacted the reputation of all local taxi owners and drivers," the association said in a statement.

It added that luggage and other items left behind in the cabs have remained untraced in recent months, an unusual occurrence in the state, causing problems for passengers and casting a

negative impression on all cabbies, including locals.

Representational image

HIGHLIGHTS

- "THESE NON-LOCAL TAXI OWNERS, DRIVING THEIR OWN CABS, AND DRIVERS OPERATING OTHERS' TAXIS, ARE UNAWARE OF THE FARES SET BY THE STATE TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (STA) AND OFTEN CHARGE EXORBITANT RATES. THIS PRACTICE HAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED THE REPUTATION OF ALL LOCAL TAXI OWNERS AND DRIVERS," THE ASSOCIATION SAID IN A STATEMENT.

MTA leaders noted that many individuals from outside the state, particularly from Myanmar and Manipur, are buying local taxi permits and cabs at high prices. Additionally, many non-local drivers are being employed at lower rates.

Currently, there are 3,525 taxis operating in Aizawl according to STA records.

The STA has also issued 3,646 permits for two wheeler taxis within Aizawl's city limits

Union Minister Scindia on a visit to Meghalaya, Assam

OUR CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI: Union minister for development of northeastern region (MDoNER) and communications Jyotiraditya M Scindia will visit Shillong and Guwahati on July 12 and 13.

On July 12, Scindia will chair a review meeting at the NEC Secretariat, Nongrim Hills, Shillong, with officials from MDoNER, NEC, and the state government to discuss the progress of various projects and initiatives in the region.

The key highlight of the visit will be a presentation on NEC Vision 2047 and the launch of the NERACE App.

The NERACE is a unified digital platform... Pg 5

SPOTLIGHT

Manipur CM lauds Kuki community for its stand on NRC

AGENCIES

IMPHAL: Chief Minister N Biren Singh has lauded the Kuki Inpi Manipur's (KIM) recent decision to support the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Manipur, viewing it as a potential catalyst for lasting peace in the state. Pg 5

LS Speaker Birla pitches for reforms in UNSC, WTO

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday made a strong pitch for greater democratisation of global governance structures such as the UN Security Council and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Addressing the 10th BRICS Parliamentary Forum in St. Petersburg in Russia, Birla said India was committed to uniting emerging... Pg 5

Custody death: HC directs preservation of video-recording of autopsy

AGENCIES

KOLKATA: The Calcutta High Court on Thursday directed preservation of the video recording of the autopsy of Abu Siddik Ha lder, a youth from Dholahat who died in police custody on Monday night.

On Wednesday, the family members of the... Pg 5

School job: CBI seizes two servers from outsourced agency's office

AGENCIES

KOLKATA: The CBI officials investigating the cash-for-school job case in West Bengal have seized two servers from the office of S. Basu Roy & Company, the outsourced agency responsible for providing optical mark recognition (OMR) sheets for written examination for primary teachers'... Pg 5

CBI tracks multiple accounts used to divert proceeds

Full Story on Page 5

Centre to soon approve MoU to shift AR' base from Aizawl

OUR REPORTER

AIZAWL: The Centre will soon approve a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Mizoram government and Assam Rifles to shift the paramilitary force battalion headquarters from the heart of Aizawl to designated Zokhawsang on the eastern outskirts of the state capital, an official statement said on Thursday.

The draft MoU was prepared by the Assam Rifles and was referred to the Centre last year.

The Mizoram government has also given comment on the MoU , which is now pending with the Union Home Ministry.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah informed chief minister Lalduhoma over the phone on Thursday that the Home Ministry will clear the MoU within a week, the official statement said.

Shah also informed the chief minister that the Centre will provide financial assistance to people affected by the recent landslides and other calamities triggered by cyclone Reman and also relief to the... Pg 5

Assam Rifles headquarters in Aizawl.

ED arrests youth on charges of tender fraud in Health Dept

AGENCIES

KOLKATA: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has taken into custody a local youth in Kolkata for duping individuals and entities on the pretext of getting tenders from the West Bengal Health Department.

The arrested individual has been identified as Budhaditya Chattopadhyay, a resident of... Pg 5

Three minor boys held for rape and murder of girl

AGENCIES

KURNOOL: An eight-year-old girl, who went missing on Sunday, was allegedly raped and killed by three minors under the Muchhumarri police limits in Pagidyala mandal, Nandyal district. Based on the confession of the suspects, police have launched a search operation in the backwaters of the River Krishna near Muchumarri Lift Irrigation water pump house.

According to police, the girl went missing on Sunday morning. She had gone to a playground near her house but did not return even after a long time passed. Her parents then began searching for her, but in vain. Later, they filed... Pg 5

HIGHLIGHTS

- ACCORDING TO POLICE, THE GIRL WENT MISSING ON SUNDAY MORNING. SHE HAD GONE TO A PLAYGROUND NEAR HER HOUSE BUT DID NOT RETURN EVEN AFTER A LONG TIME PASSED. HER PARENTS THEN BEGAN SEARCHING FOR HER, BUT IN VAIN. LATER, THEY FILED A COMPLAINT WITH THE POLICE.

Guv summons Mizoram assembly session from Aug 20

OUR REPORTER

AIZAWL: Mizoram governor Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati on Thursday summoned the state assembly session to be commenced from August 20.

State assembly commissioner and secretary Vanlalthantlingi said that the detailed programme of the upcoming session is yet to be chalked out by the Business Advisory Committee (BAC).

The BAC meeting will be held soon, she said.

Proposal to introduce Manusmriti in LLB

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: A proposal to teach Manusmriti (Laws of Manu) to Delhi University's LLB students is slated to be discussed in a meeting of its Academic Council on Friday, a move which has drawn criticism from a section of teachers.

The Faculty of Law has sought approval from the highest decision-making body of Delhi University (DU) to revise the syllabus of its first and third-year students to teach them 'Manusmriti'.

The changes in the syllabus of the jurisprudence paper pertain to semesters one and six of LLB.

According to the revisions, two readings on Manusmriti -- Manusmriti with the Manubhasya of Medhatithi by G N Jha and Commentary of Manu Smriti - Smritichandrika by T Kristnasawmi Iyer... Pg 5

HIGHLIGHTS

- ACCORDING TO THE REVISIONS, TWO READINGS ON MANUSMRITI -- MANUSMRITI WITH THE MANUBHASYA OF MEDHATITHI BY G N JHA AND COMMENTARY OF MANU SMRITI - SMRITICHANDRIKA BY T KRISTNASAWMI IYER -- ARE PROPOSED TO BE INTRODUCED FOR THE STUDENTS.

CBI arrests alleged kingpin; conducts searches in Patna, Kolkata

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: The CBI on Thursday arrested one of the alleged kingpins in the NEET-UG paper leak case who was on the run ever since the crackdown on irregularities in the entrance exam began, officials said.

Rockey, alias Rakesh Ranjan, who hails from Nalanda, and is said to be a relative of mastermind Sanjeev Mukhia, was nabbed by the agency from outskirts of Patna, they said.

The CBI had been trailing him since the case came to the agency. His run came to an end Thursday morning when he was arrested by the agency, they said.

The agency produced him before a special court in Patna which has remanded him in 10 days of CBI custody, they said.

The CBI conducted searches at three locations in Patna and nearby areas and... Pg 5

Rockey, alias Rakesh Ranjan, nabbed by the CBI from outskirts of Patna.

NEET-UG pleas: SC defers hearing to July 18

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday deferred to July 18, Thursday, the batch of pleas seeking a slew of directions, including that to cancel the NEET-UG 24 exam held on May 5, as the CJI bench noted that some of the parties haven't received the affidavits filed by the Centre & NTA and also they need to go through the affidavits before arguing in the case.

Biden admin ruffled by PM Modi's Russia visit, hug with Putin

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: While Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Moscow for talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin expanded bilateral cooperation, the bonhomie has raised concerns in Washington amid the West's push to find solutions to the war in Ukraine.

Publicly, the Biden administration reiterated that India is the US' "strategic partner," with whom they hold "full and frank dialogue," with White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre further stating that New Delhi's ties to... Pg 5

PM Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin in Moscow

INDIA bloc will raise Manipur issue with full force: Rahul

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: The Congress and the INDIA bloc will raise the need for peace in Manipur with full force in Parliament to put pressure on the government to end this tragedy, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said on Thursday, days after his visit to the violence-hit state.

He also reiterated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should personally visit Manipur, listen to the problems of the people of the state and appeal for peace.

Gandhi made the remarks in a post in Hindi on X as he shared a video of his interactions with the people of Manipur during his day-long visit to the violence-hit state on Monday.

"I have visited Manipur three times since violence broke out there, but unfortunately there is no improvement in the situation -- even today the state... Pg 5

HIGHLIGHTS

- "I HAVE VISITED MANIPUR THREE TIMES SINCE VIOLENCE BROKE OUT THERE, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS NO IMPROVEMENT IN THE SITUATION -- EVEN TODAY THE STATE IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS. HOUSES ARE BURNING, INNOCENT LIVES ARE IN DANGER AND THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES ARE FORCED TO LIVE IN RELIEF CAMPS," THE FORMER CONGRESS CHIEF SAID.

Rahul Gandhi during his recent visit to Manipur.

MoS Defence Seth commends 'selfless' commitment of NCC

AGENCIES

KOLKATA: Lauding NCC cadets for their "selfless commitment" to nation-building and embodiment of unity in diversity, Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth on Thursday urged them to stay committed as future leaders of the country.

He expressed confidence in the future of the NCC and its pivotal role in shaping disciplined and patriotic citizens, a defence official said.

Visiting the NCC... Pg 5

Congress accuses Mizoram CM of undermining Lokayukta

OUR REPORTER

AIZAWL: The Congress Vigilance Cell has issued a strong appeal to Chief Minister Lalduhoma, urging him to remove the restrictions placed on the Mizoram Lokayukta and rectify recent amendments that have undermined its effectiveness. In a letter signed by Sanghrima Chawngthu, Secretary of the Vigilance Cell, the Congress raised concerns about the Lokayukta's operational capabilities, which they claim have not had a chance to function to its full capacity since its inception.

The letter highlighted the ZPM government's promises to strengthen the Lokayukta, which has the authority to investigate ministers and even the Chief Minister. However, instead of empowering the anti-corruption body, the recent changes have rendered it ineffective according to the Congress Vigilance Cell.

The Mizoram Lokayukta (Amendment) Act, 2024, passed by the ZPM government and notified in the Gazette on March 15, 2024, has been particularly contentious. The Congress Vigilance Cell pointed out several key amendments that have lowered the... Pg 5

HIGHLIGHTS

- THE LETTER HIGHLIGHTED THE ZPM GOVERNMENT'S PROMISES TO STRENGTHEN THE LOKAYUKTA, WHICH HAS THE AUTHORITY TO INVESTIGATE MINISTERS AND EVEN THE CHIEF MINISTER. HOWEVER, INSTEAD OF EMPOWERING THE ANTI-CORRUPTION BODY, THE RECENT CHANGES HAVE RENDERED IT INEFFECTIVE ACCORDING TO THE CONGRESS VIGILANCE CELL.

Floods batter Kaziranga, Pobitora; 10 rhinos among 174 animals dead

Kaziranga witnesses devastating floods in past 10 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI: The devastating flood in Assam's famed Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) has claimed the lives of 174 wild animals, including 10 endangered one-horned rhinos, while 135 others have been rescued till Thursday, a senior official of the KNPTR said.

50 per cent of the park area is still under floods even as the water level is receding gradually in the park, KNPTR director Sonali Ghosh said.

Apart from 10 rhinos, there are 144 hog deer and 2 sambar, she said. Altogether 135 animals were rescued by forest personnel from flood water, and 116 were released after treatment. Seven animals are still under treatment. 46 out of 233 forest camps are still under floodwater.

"We analysed data and this year has been the highest flood level (as per CWC data) in the last 10 years," Ghosh said.

"2018, 2021, 2022, 2023 were no or low flood years in the national park," she said.

Kaziranga witnessed high floods on July 1 with the water level of the Brahmaputra flowing 87.47 metres.

According to the... Pg 5

50 per cent of the park area is still under floods even as the water level is receding gradually in the park, KNPTR director Sonali Ghosh said.

Kumartuli gear up for overseas deliveries months before Durga Puja

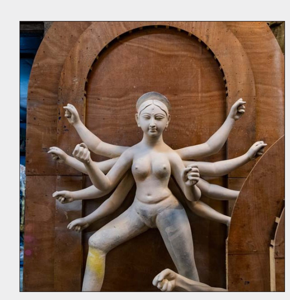
AGENCIES

KOLKATA: Durga Puja, West Bengal's biggest festival, is almost three months away but potters' hub Kumartuli in north Kolkata is already abuzz with activity, as artisans diligently sculpt idols to deliver overseas orders on time.

With meticulous attention, idols of the goddess are being crafted in different sizes to cater to orders from puja organisers abroad.

Durga Puja will be celebrated this year from October 9-13.

Renowned clay modeller Kaushik Ghosh is burning the midnight oil sculpting an over eight-foot fibreglass idol for the London Durgotsav Committee in Camden. "At least 36 idols will be sent to countries such as the UK, US, Japan, UAE, Russia, Pg 5



Durga Puja will be celebrated this year from October 9-13.

HIGHLIGHTS

- RENOWNED CLAY MODELLER KAUSHIK GHOSH IS BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL SCULPTING AN OVER EIGHT-FOOT FIBREGLASS IDOL FOR THE LONDON DURGOTSAV COMMITTEE IN CAMDEN. "AT LEAST 36 IDOLS WILL BE SENT TO COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE UK, US, JAPAN, UAE, RUSSIA, AND SINGAPORE THIS YEAR. HALF OF THIS CONSIGNMENT WILL BE DISPATCHED BY THIS MONTH, VIA SEA OR AIR, WHILE THE REMAINDER WILL FOLLOW BY AUGUST," GHOSH SAID.