

# Chief Minister Stalin meets Ford Motors, ITServe officials, urges to invest in TN

Chennai Sep 11 2024: Chief Minister M.K. Stalin met senior officials from Ford Motor Company and ITServe consortium, urging them to invest in new projects in Tamil Nadu.

On September 10, Chief Minister Stalin, during his official visit to Chicago, USA, met top executives from Ford, one of the world's leading automobile manufacturers. He invited them to resume car manufacturing

operations in Tamil Nadu and expand their global capability center.

Additionally, Stalin met officials from ITServe Alliance, the largest consortium of IT service companies catering to small and medium businesses in the U.S., and extended an invitation for new investments in Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu is one of the fastest-growing economies globally and ranks as a leading

state in India for industrialization. The state boasts world-class infrastructure, sector-specific industrial parks, research and development initiatives, and policies focused on innovation and skill development.

These measures are designed to attract large-scale industrial investments.

The Tamil Nadu government, led by Chief Minister Stalin, has undertaken several



initiatives to enhance industrial growth and create numerous job opportunities for the state's youth. As part of this effort, the Chief Minister is on an official visit to the U.S. to attract industrial

investments. During this visit, Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth ₹7,016 crore have been signed with 16 global companies in San

Francisco and Chicago. The Chief Minister is also meeting with senior officials from leading global corporations to encourage new industrial investments in Tamil Nadu.

Continuing this mission, Stalin met with Ford and ITServe executives in Chicago yesterday, seeking their commitment to invest in the state.

Ford Motor Company

Ford is the second-largest U.S.-based automobile manufacturer globally, headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan. Ford already has a global technology and business solutions center in Chennai.

Chief Minister Stalin urged Ford's senior officials to resume car manufacturing in Tamil Nadu and further expand their global capability center in the state.

Present at the meeting were Ford's Chairman K. Hart, Vice President (International Government Affairs) Matthew Godlewski, Ford India Director Dr. Shripad Bhat, and other senior executives.

# CBDT rolls out e-DRS Scheme, 2022

Chennai Sep 11 2024: In pursuance of section 245MA of the Income-tax Act, 1961 (here in after referred to as "the Act"), the Central Board of Direct Taxes (here in after referred to as "CBDT") had notified the e-Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2022 (here in after referred to as "e-DRS") with the aim to reduce litigation and provide relief to eligible taxpayers. Section 245MA of the Act also provides for the constitution of

Dispute Resolution Committees (hereinafter referred to as "DRC").

The e-DRS enables the taxpayer, who fulfils certain specified conditions as stipulated in section 245MA of the Act, to file an application electronically for dispute resolution to the DRC designated for the region of Principal Chief Commissioner of Income-tax having jurisdiction over the taxpayer. To this end, DRCs have been constituted in all 18

jurisdictional Pr. CCIT regions across the country. The list of such DRCs along with their e-mail addresses is available on <https://www.incometax.gov.in/iec/foportal/help/all-topics/statutory-forms/file>

statutory-form/popular-form/form-34-BC.

As per e-DRS, a taxpayer can opt for e-Dispute Resolution against the 'specified order' as defined in clause (b) of the

Explanation to section 245MA of the Act, which includes an order in which the aggregate sum of variations proposed or made does not exceed Rs.10 lakh and returned income for the relevant assessment year does not exceed Rs. 50 lakh. Further, such order should not be based on search/surveys or information received under an agreement referred to under section 90 or 90A of the Act.

According to e-

DRS, a DRC may make modification to the variations in the specified order and decide to grant reduction/waiver of penalty and prosecution in accordance with the provision of rule 44DAC of the Income-tax Rules, 1962 (here in after referred to as "the Rules"). The DRC is mandated to pass its order within six months from the end of month in which application for dispute resolution is admitted by it.

The application for e-DRS is to be filed in Form No. 34BC referred in rule 44DAB of the Rules, on the e-filing portal of the Income Tax Department, within one month from the date of receipt of specified order. In cases where appeal has already

been filed and is pending before the Commissioner of Income-tax (Appeals), the application for e-DRS, is to be filed on or before 30.09.2024. In cases where the

specified order has been passed on or before 31.08.2024 and the time for filing appeal against such order before CIT (Appeals) has not lapsed, the application for dispute resolution can be filed on or before 30.09.2024.

The Tax Payer can access e-DRS module by login on income tax portal <https://eportal.incometax.gov.in>. Login to your account using PAN / TAN as user ID ->Go to Dashboard ->e-File ->Income Tax

Forms ->File Income Tax Forms -> under tab 'Persons not dependent on any source of Income (Source of Income not relevant)'> Dispute Resolution Committee in Certain Cases (Form 34BC) -> Fill Form No. 34BC -> Review the details -> E-Verify the Form No. 34BC using Aadhar OTP, EVC or DSC.

This is another initiative by the Government towards minimizing litigation.

# India-US working together in areas like critical minerals, supply chains and advanced technologies: Piyush Goyal

Chennai Sep 11 2024: Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal said India and the

United States of America (USA) are working together towards becoming self-reliant in critical

minerals, strengthening supply chains and adopting cutting-edge technologies. The Minister stated this



while delivering the keynote address at the US-India Business Council's (USIBC) 49th Annual General Meeting held today in New Delhi.

While paying homage to the victims on the anniversary of 9/11 attack on World Trade Center, New York, Shri Goyal said that the attack reminds the world of dangers posed by terrorism. The Minister pointed out that India has been suffering from terrorism promoted from across our borders since decades. He noted that acts like 9/11 attack, divisive tendencies, inflammatory and fake propagandas should be denounced.

He added that the 9/11 attack showed the tremendous resilience of the people of United States of America and demonstrated the need for solidarity amongst like-minded nations. Shri Goyal said that such dastardly acts of

terrorism emphasize the importance of global coalition against terrorism. He added that India and US should reinforce and recommit to a better world.

The Minister said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's government works on the principle of 'Reform-Perform-Transform'. He emphasized that reforms in the government will help the country perform and transform the lives of the countrymen.

Stressing on the importance of spreading information about reforms in India, he urged the participants present to propagate to the world about the experience they have working with India.

He said that India and US share one of the most strategic and consequential relationship with shared interests in bilateral and geopolitical issues.

Shri Goyal, evoking Swami Vivekananda's speech delivered in Chicago on this day in

1893, said that the iconic address resonates deeply with the theme of the USIBC Summit of partnership and prosperity in the era of AI and critical technologies. He stated that partnership and prosperity among nations will enable this world to be a better place and continued that Swami Vivekananda's teachings on universal tolerance, harmony amongst nations and the importance of respecting each other's culture and history.

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## Bayer launches ForwardFarm in India to demonstrate positive effects of regenerative agriculture

Chennai, Sep 11 2024: Bayer has launched its global initiative, 'Bayer ForwardFarming', in India. This is the newest of 29 ForwardFarms worldwide. Each ForwardFarm serves as a beacon of sustainable agricultural practices, providing a platform for farmers, researchers, and stakeholders to collaborate and share knowledge. The Bayer ForwardFarm in India will demonstrate innovative farming techniques tailored to the needs of 150~million smallholder farmers in the country, with a particular focus on sustainable rice cultivation, thus promoting the transition towards regenerative agriculture.

Natasha Santos, Head of Sustainability & Strategic Engagements at Bayer, stated, "Creating value for farmers is at the heart of what we do. We are excited to bring Bayer ForwardFarming to India, a country that is pivotal to global food security. By supporting and empowering local farmers, we aim to enhance agricultural productivity and sustainability, increasing food security for all."

**Direct Seeded Rice: A Comprehensive Approach to Regenerative Agriculture**

For Bayer, regenerative agriculture is an outcome-based crop production model with improving soil health at its core. Strengthening resilience is a key objective, alongside mitigating



climate change, maintaining or restoring biodiversity, conserving water, and increasing yields. Ultimately, the combination of regenerative practices aims to improve the economic and social well-being of farmers and their communities.

The potential of regenerative agriculture in India is particularly high in rice cultivation given its role as the world's second largest producer of rice. The need to shape an economically viable and sustainable rice cultivation system has never been more pressing. Rice production is not only impacted by climate change but also contributes to it. Bayer's Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) system is the most comprehensive and tangible example of regenerative agriculture in action. DSR touches on almost every outcome of regenerative agriculture that Bayer is focusing on, including improving soil health, reducing water usage, and enhancing resilience to climate change.

Moving from transplanted puddled rice cultivation to DSR can help farmers to reduce water use by up to 30-40 percent, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by up to 45 percent and reduce farmers' dependence on

Tailored Solutions for Indian Agriculture

Ved Prakash Saini, the first Bayer ForwardFarm partner in India, expressed his optimism about the partnership: "I am hopeful that the regenerative agricultural practices introduced through Bayer ForwardFarming will lead to significant improvements in my yield and livelihood while making farming more sustainable. Techniques like Direct Seeded Rice and advanced technologies have the potential to enhance crop health, reduce water usage, and increase efficiency. I look forward to witnessing these benefits firsthand as we work together to build a resilient and prosperous future for farming."

Simon Wiebusch, President, Bayer South Asia mentioned, "At Bayer, we envision a regenerative farming future that restores and enhances the environment. The launch of Bayer ForwardFarming in India is a part of it. By providing farmers with tailored solutions, modern tools and practices, proactive stewardship measures, and strategic partnerships, we aim to boost productivity, improve quality and yields, all while preserving the environment. We are dedicated to empowering farmers to adopt sustainable practices that build a resilient and thriving agricultural sector in India."

scarce and costly manual labor by up to 40-50 percent. For India alone this could add up to a potential reduction of GHG emission by up to 82 million mt CO<sub>2</sub> per year and water consumption by up to 167 billion m<sup>3</sup> by 2040. The introduction of the DSR system is fully in line with Bayer's approach to regenerative agriculture which will enable farmers to produce more while restoring more.

Through Bayer's DirectAcres flagship project, Bayer is providing farmers with a tailored crop system that includes best-in-class seed, crop protection, digital tools, mechanization services, and agronomic solutions. These efforts are driven by public-private partnerships, ensuring that farmers can harvest a profitable rice crop with a regenerative focus.

Last year, 5,000 Indian farmers have successfully planted Direct Seeded Rice across 8,600 hectares through the DirectAcres program. Bayer would endeavor to support over 1 million smallholder farmers in India through its DirectAcres program by 2030. There are also plans to introduce DirectAcres in other rice growing countries in Asia, starting with the Philippines.

## India Takes Major Steps in Green Hydrogen; CIAL, IOCL, and GAIL Lead with New Initiatives: Minister Puri

Chennai, Sep 11 2024: Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, addressed the inaugural session of the 2nd International Conference on Green Hydrogen (ICGH) today, highlighting India's commitment to becoming a global leader in green hydrogen production and export. The conference, which is taking place from September 11-13, 2024, at Bharat Mandapam, is being organized by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, the Office of Principal Scientific Advisor, the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Department of Science and Technology, and the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural

Gas. In his address, Minister Shri Hardeep Singh Puri expressed his strong belief in green hydrogen's potential as the "fuel of the future" and emphasized India's capacity to lead in both production and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives. He outlined several initiatives by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) to boost hydrogen production in India. Currently, he said that around 54% of the country's annual hydrogen consumption is used in the petroleum refining sector. The Ministry is ensuring uptake of Green Hydrogen into refineries and City Gas Distribution (CGD) systems through public



and private sectors, he said. Minister further informed that the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) under MoPNG have set a target to produce over 1 million metric tons (MMT) of green hydrogen by 2030 and are in the process of floating tenders for its procurement on a Build-Own-Operate (BOO) basis, with an initial capacity of ~42 kilo tons per annum (KTPA), expected to rise to 165 KTPA.

Additionally, the Minister said that Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) to develop the first Green Hydrogen plant in the aviation sector. Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has also handed over a state-of-the-art green hydrogen fuel cell bus to the Indian Navy, and Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) has established a plant in Vijaipur, Madhya Pradesh, capable of producing 4.3 tons per day (TPD) of hydrogen using a 10 MW Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) Electrolyser, he said.

## Toyota Kirloskar Motor Partners with Union Bank of India to Offer Comprehensive Vehicle Financing Options

Trichy, Sep 11 2024: In its continuous effort to enhance customer experience and streamline car ownership experience through innovative solutions, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) today announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Union Bank of India to enable comprehensive and accessible vehicle financing solutions. The partnership aims to offer innovative and attractive solutions curated to meet the evolving needs of the customers and making Toyota vehicles more accessible than ever.

Key highlights of the partnership:

□ **Enhanced affordability and accessibility:** The partnership will allow customers to enjoy up to 90% financing on the on-road price of any Toyota vehicles purchased for private use, exempting them from any foreclosure, or part-payment charges.

□ **Flexible Financing under Union Vehicle Scheme:** The financing options under the Union Vehicle Scheme for private vehicle will aid customers to opt for flexible tenures up to 84 months with competitive interest rates starting from 8.80% per annum at present.

□ **Flexible Financing under Union Parivahan Scheme:** The financing option under the Union Parivahan Scheme for commercial vehicle will aid customers to opt for flexible tenures



up to 60 months with competitive rates.

□ **Broad Reach and Accessibility:** Union Bank's extensive network will provide all Toyota customers with easy access to financing options nationwide

Speaking about the new customer initiative, Mr. Sabari Manohar, Vice President, Sales-Service-Used Car Business of Toyota Kirloskar Motor, said, "We are delighted to partner with Union Bank of India for enhancing vehicle financing options across the nation. This collaboration signifies our dedication to providing exceptional customer experiences by simplifying and making vehicle financing more accessible. Our goal is to streamline financing options, offer seamless experiences, and provide timely support to make the vehicle purchase process enjoyable.

As an organization dedicated to customer satisfaction, our primary focus is on meeting the dynamic needs of the market. We achieve this by continually introducing innovative products and services that enhance the ownership experience. Through the latest partnership, our aim is to broaden reach and extend support to more customers nationwide, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas,

in their pursuit of owning a Toyota vehicle."

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Arun Kumar, General Manager, Union Bank of India, said, "As one of the largest Public Sector Banks, we are delighted to partner with Toyota Kirloskar Motor. The MoU is surely a big step towards providing financing solutions to a vast array of customers, nationwide. Union Bank of India's robust presence across India complements this partnership and we are confident that our digitized loan procedures will enable customers aspiring to purchase a new Toyota vehicle with utmost ease and convenience. Our commitment is to streamline the auto finance process, thereby enriching the customer experience in terms of both product and service."

The newly launched schemes are applicable to TKM's entire product line, including the Innova Hycross, Innova Crysta, Urban Cruiser Hyryder, Fortuner, Legender, Camry Hybrid, Vellfire, LC 300, Glanza, and Rumion. Additionally, the benefits extend to the newly launched Urban Cruiser Taisor. As the latest addition to TKM's robust SUV lineup, the All-New Urban Cruiser Taisor upholds Toyota's rich SUV legacy, offering a perfect blend of style, high performance, and fuel efficiency with a

striking exterior design. The Urban Cruiser Taisor is available with three engine options: 1.0L Turbo, 1.2L Petrol, and E-CNG.

Over the years, TKM has strived to improve customer experience throughout the purchase & ownership cycle by implementing timely and relevant schemes such as easy financing options. In addition to the latest tie-up and a plethora of in-house financing solutions through Toyota Financial Services (TFS), Toyota over the years has also launched several other tailor-made services with several other financing institutes to offer customers choices and convenience of financial solutions to meet their diverse needs. The offers go beyond purchase of just new vehicles to cover used cars as well as service packages thus creating overall positive buying and ownership experience of Toyota cars.

Additionally, in pursuit of its customer centric approach, the company recently launched its second Company Owned Toyota Used Car Outlet (TUCO). Operating under the brand name of "Toyota U-Trust" in New Delhi. These outlets aim at offering customers high-quality and safe used cars whilst ensuring convenience, transparency, and peace of mind during the process of buying as well as selling Toyota cars. In addition, TKM also has a reach of 683 customer touchpoints nationwide.

## Work Done by Ministry of Culture under SCDPM during the period November 2023 to August 2024

Chennai, Sep 11 2024: Subsequent to the Special Campaign 3.0, Ministry of Culture has regularly been uploading monthly reports on SCDPM portal from November 2023 to August 2024.

As a part of the Campaign, Ministry has successfully reduced the pendency of various issues by way of disposal of 183 PMO references, 43 State Govt. references, 143 MP references and 1775



Public Grievances. During the period, 562 physical files were reviewed and 209 physical files were also weeded out.

To give further boost

to this exercise, Ministry has instructed all its Attached/Subordinate/Autonomous Organizations to actively participate in the upcoming Special

Campaign 4.0 for disposal of pending references and institutionalization of Swachhata from 2nd October to 31st October, 2024.

## Toyota Kirloskar Motor Introduces T CARE: A New Initiative to Elevate Customers' Ownership Experience

Pondicherry, Sep 11 2024: In its constant endeavour to exceed customer expectations by delivering exceptional experiences, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) today announced the introduction of "T CARE", an innovative initiative aimed at delivering a holistic ownership experience to their esteemed customers. T CARE integrates a range of supports with value-added proposition under a single brand, ensuring that every engagement with the customer reflects Toyota's core values of reliability, quality, and exceptional care.

Driven by a customer-centric approach, "T CARE" provides a comprehensive range of services that demonstrates the company's dedication to enriching customer delight and fostering long-term relationships. Covering everything from presales to aftersales and repurchases, T CARE integrates these offerings under one unified brand that includes, to name a few,

T DELIVER brings unique last mile logistics of new car delivery via flatbed trucks, ensuring the vehicles reach their final Toyota touch point in brand new condition.

T GLOSS offers end-to-end car detailing services, keeping the customers' cars in top condition always

T WEB provides a user-friendly online



platform for purchasing Toyota vehicles, providing customer convenience

T ASSIST offers 24/7 roadside assistance for 5 years, ensuring timely support to the customers

T SECURE provides peace of mind with an extended warranty for an additional 2 years

T SMILE offers customizable, hassle free and cost-effective pre-paid maintenance package

T SAATH ensures timely delivery of service parts and reaching closer to customer, thereby providing convenience

T CHOICE provides multiple service parts choice to the valued customer

T INSPECT provides vehicle inspection services under various used car related activities such as during the sale of used cars, used car financing, break in insurance renewal, etc.

T SPARSH facilitates as a one-stop solution, focusing on rural areas, that offers expert guidance on vehicle selection, facilitate test drives, and provide comprehensive

information about Toyota's diverse range of models

T SERV provides convenience of multibrand car service network, offering quality affordable services with a focus on customer satisfaction and enhanced vehicle reliability

T CARE focuses on streamlining the customer experiences, ensuring effortless access to top-tier assistance and best support throughout their ownership journey with Toyota.

Commenting on this new initiative, Mr. Sabari Manohar, Vice President of Sales, Service, and Used Car Business at Toyota Kirloskar Motor, stated, "At Toyota, our customers are at the heart of everything we do. Our focus always remains on elevating the customer experience at every touchpoint before, during, and after the sale. We strive not only to deliver exceptional products and services, but also to foster a deep, lasting connection with our customers throughout their entire ownership experience with Toyota. The newly introduced T CARE

initiative incorporates a wide array of offerings such as T DELIVER, T GLOSS, T ASSIST, T SAATH, T SECURE, T CHOICE and more, under a single brand allowing us to deliver seamless and personalized support that addresses the diverse needs of our valued customers across the rural and urban areas.

We believe that T CARE will further strengthen our customer connect and fortify their immense trust placed in us over the years, thereby support Toyota's purpose of becoming a mobility company. Our aim is to ensure a truly satisfying experience for our discerning customers and continue to be the most trusted partner that caters to their ever-evolving mobility needs."

Notably, TKM currently has 685 customer touch points plus 360 T Sparsh outlets, which cumulatively stands at a total of 1045 touch points across India, ensuring easy accessibility to Toyota's varied products and services, and thereby making it convenient for their esteemed customers.

## Suzlon Announces India's Largest Wind Energy Order of 1,166 MW from NTPC Green Energy Limited, the Renewables Arm of NTPC

Chennai, Sep 11 2024: After reporting strong FY 25 Q1 results, Suzlon Group, India's largest renewable energy solutions provider, today announced bagging India's largest wind energy order from NTPC Green Energy Limited (the renewables arm of India's largest energy conglomerate NTPC Limited) for 1166 MW. Suzlon will install a total of 370 wind turbine generators (WTGs) of \$144 equipped with a Hybrid Lattice Tubular (HLT) tower and a rated capacity of 3.15 MW each at two projects of NTPC Renewable Energy Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of NGEL) and one project of IndianOil NTPC Green Energy Pvt. Ltd. (A group company of NGEL) in the state of Gujarat. This win takes Suzlon's largest-ever cumulative order book close to 5 GW as of 03rd September 2024.



Girish Tanti, Vice Chairman, Suzlon Group, said, "We are delighted to partner with NTPC Green Energy Limited, the renewables arm of India largest utility NTPC Limited, in our capacity as the nation's premier Wind Energy OEM. This landmark collaboration reaffirms our commitment to accelerating India's renewable energy transition. Notably, this marks our first direct wind energy order from NGEL, signaling Suzlon's triumphant return to the PSU customer segment."

"This project will emerge as the largest wind energy initiative by a PSU in Gujarat, cementing the state's leadership in

renewable energy. Upon completion, it will set a new benchmark for future projects, substantially contributing to India's energy self-sufficiency, economic prosperity, and NGEL's ambitious target of adding 60 GW renewable energy capacity by 2032."

JP Chalasani, Chief Executive Officer, Suzlon Group, said, "Both NGEL and Suzlon are stalwarts in their domains and will play a fundamental role in enabling India's energy transition. Achieving India's energy transition targets hinges on participation from utilities of the scale and expertise of NGEL. While it is India's

largest wind energy order, this project is also the first of many more such transformative projects between the two in the future. We are committed to delivering this project with exceptional quality and within the stipulated timelines. This strategic collaboration, featuring our flagship product - the \$144.3.15 MW wind turbine, is set to become a landmark case study in the sector, showcasing the success of the 'Make in India' initiative by advancing local manufacturing and sustainable energy solutions."

As part of the agreement, Suzlon will supply the wind turbines (equipment supply) and execute the project, including erection and commissioning, in Gujarat as well as undertake operations and maintenance services post-commissioning.

## Walmart Foundation expands support for innovative technological solutions to enable livelihoods for over 300,000 farmers

Chennai, Sep 11 2024: The Walmart Foundation today announced three new grants totaling \$2.78 million to advance technological innovation in India's agriculture sector. With the Walmart Foundation funding, the National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN), Cornell University in support of the Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition (TCI) and Precision Development (PxD) collectively aim to reach over 3,00,000 farmers in India.

Together, NEN and PxD will support farming communities in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

Through tech-powered interventions, these grants aim to enhance farmer livelihoods, increase market access and promote sustainable agricultural practices, thereby contributing to the Walmart and Walmart Foundation goal of reaching 1 million smallholder farmers by 2028, with at least 50% women, across India's agriculture sector.

"Smallholder farmers are a crucial link to advancing India's agriculture ecosystem. Our grantees are investing in FPOs to promote sustainable agricultural practices, enable more opportunities for smallholder farmers and enhance access to tech-driven solutions- all of which help farming communities that lack financial resources add to their incomes in a scalable way," said Julie Gehrki, Vice President for the Walmart Foundation. "We are excited about the tech-based solutions that Cornell University, NEN and PxD will bring to build a more inclusive value chain that bolsters a resilient ecosystem and empowers

farmers."

NEN: Advancing Agri-Tech with AI Solutions in Grain Assessment  
This grant of more than \$1,500,000 to National Entrepreneurship Network (NEN) aims to develop innovative AI-based solutions for grain assessment. NEN will accelerate the usage of its AI-driven app, to address food security, as well as help farmers in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra assess the quality of soybean grains to gain better market access. In addition, NEN's project will aim to integrate the AI model into other agri-tech platforms, serving as a Digital Public Good (DPG) for agriculture, which is proposed to enable future training and quality assessment for grain varieties.

Shekar Sivasubramian, CEO - Wadhvani AI (a program of the AI unit of NEN), says, "With support from the Walmart Foundation, we are focused on empowering smallholder farmers with enhanced knowledge and awareness of grain analysis and quality pricing. Through the new grant, we will provide customized advisory support to 200,000 farmers through 330+ FPOs in the two states, enabling real-time quality assessment before their products reach markets."

Cornell University: Enhancing FPO Visibility through 'My FPO Connect' Database

The Walmart Foundation has awarded a grant of \$990,000 to Cornell University in support of the Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition (TCI). This grant to Cornell University aims to further develop its FPO platform, which was launched as a hub at its Center of Excellence (CoE) in Delhi in August 2021. New projects include

accelerating the web-based 'My FPO Connect' platform, a single-point source for data on over 33,000 FPOs. The platform supports Producer Organizations by building their online presence and making them easily discoverable for relevant stakeholders. It allows FPOs, researchers, and stakeholders to access comprehensive information through an interactive dashboard, offering insights on crops produced, sponsoring agencies and financial data, among others. The database will also be available in regional languages to increase access and understanding of FPO success models.

Prabhu Pingali, TCI Director, said "Accelerating the growth of FPO models is vital to enable India's smallholder farmers to leverage opportunities, increase market access, and improve farmers' incomes. The new funding made possible by the Walmart Foundation will further support the understanding, development and promotion of effective farm-aggregation models. It will also help in preparing comprehensive databases, such as 'My FPO Connect', which will serve as an invaluable resource for all stakeholders interested in supporting FPOs."

PxD: Harnessing Technology to Boost Customized Digital Advisory

Precision Development (PxD) will continue working with smallholder coffee farmers in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to offer customized advisories. This \$260,000 grant is the second PxD has received from the Walmart Foundation. The new grant will institutionalize PxD's digital advisory service, Coffee Krishi Taranga (CKT), with the Coffee Board of India to provide

farmers with ongoing access to cultivation information, price updates and coffee industry developments. It will also support the integration of a voice-based, provider-agnostic weather forecast service into CKT, and develop videos on key agricultural practices for the Coffee Board.

PxD's digital agricultural services have previously led to consistent engagements, with regular polling results indicating considerable knowledge adoption. With 90,000 farmers onboard, CKT continues to adapt its offering to meet farmers' evolving needs. The new grant further aims to reach over 130,000 smallholder farmers.

"We appreciate the continued support from the Walmart Foundation. This grant will be instrumental in empowering farmers, 50% of whom will be women, by providing them with the tools and resources needed to adopt sustainable practices, strengthen coffee-producing communities across Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, and have the effect of building their incomes," said Gagandeep Kaur, Head of Programs, PxD.

"CKT has reached over 125,000 farmers across the South Indian states of Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. The regular broadcasting of information on priority practices has been highly beneficial. Additionally, the option to record questions and receive expert answers, along with access to daily price information, has been a hit among the farmers!" said, Shri B. Shivakumaraswamy, Deputy Director (Extension), Planning & Coordination Cell, Head Office, Bengaluru, Coffee Board of India.

## Suicide prevention workshop at AM Jain College

**"Agurchand Manmull Jain College, in collaboration with TTK Hospital, organised a workshop on the theme "Prevention of Suicide among People with Substance Abuse" in observance of World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, 2024. The initiative aims to empower college students to create drug-free and suicide-free environments by implementing this educational program on their campuses. It also supports efforts to prevent suicides related to substance abuse in society."**



## Jiraaf bags ISO 27001 certification for information security management

Chennai, Sep 11 2024: Jiraaf, a Sebi registered online bond platform, powered by AI Growth, recently bagged the prestigious ISO 27001 certification.



With this announcement, the brand continues to demonstrate its commitment towards implementing best practices in information security management. ISO/IEC 27001 is the global standard for information security management systems (ISMS). This certification is of high significance in the world of finance as security and data

protection is the top priority for any bond investor.

Jiraaf won the certification for its vigilant risk management system, compliance with legal and regulatory information security requirements, and adherence to globally recognized best practices.

Vineet Agrawal,

co-founder of Jiraaf says: "We recommend all investors take into consideration information security standards adopted by online bond platforms and whether they are ISO-certified when choosing an investment platform."

"Achieving ISO 27001 demonstrates our dedication to safeguarding the confidentiality,

integrity, and availability of our data, as well as the data entrusted to us by our clients, partners, and stakeholders," says Saurav Ghosh, co-founder of Jiraaf.

"At Jiraaf, security is at the core of everything we do. This certification not only validates our efforts but also underscores our commitment to continuous improvement and operational excellence in information security. As we continue to grow and innovate, our priority remains the same: providing a secure and reliable platform for our clients."

## IBC organized 2nd International Buddhist Media Conclave on the theme "Mindful Communication for Conflict Avoidance and Sustainable Development"

Chennai Sep 11 2024: The International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) and the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) commenced the 2nd International Buddhist Media Conclave on the theme "Mindful Communication for Conflict Avoidance and Sustainable Development". Shri Baichung Bhutia, former captain of the Indian Football Team graced the event as the Guest of Honour. The event commenced with the lighting of lamp by Mr. Gurumurthy, Chairman VIF, Ven Jangchuk Choeden, Secretary General, IBC, Dr Arvind Gupta, Director VIF who were

joined by three time Grammy awardee Shri Ricky Kej.

Guest of Honour Shri Baichung Bhutia emphasized that Buddhism is a way of life. "Buddha's teachings have the message of peace and sacrifice", he stated. Shri Bhutia concluded that Buddhism has a major role in ensuring peace and brotherhood and media will have crucial role in spreading the message of Buddhism across the world.

Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director VIF highlighted that thought and action was important to restore civilizational values. Over the years, Hindu and Buddhist scholars have had the

opportunity to discuss these issues.

It was imperative that Buddhism's focus on ethical conduct and enlightenment was imbibed by the media for balanced and ethical reporting.

IBC Secretary General Shartse Khensur Rinpoche Jangchup Choeden called for a world driven by truthfulness, compassion and altruism, the key attributes of Buddha's teachings. At a time when greed and conflicts are rising, the guidance of Buddha is crucially needed, he stated.

Chairman, VIF, Shri Gurumurthy, stated that great damage had been done

to the world in the last few hundred years. India, on the other hand gave birth to the greatest philosophical traditions, he highlighted and had significant relevance for modern communication.

Interacting with the media, IBC DG Shri Abhijit Halder pointed out that the event witnessed enthusiastic response from the media and that the IBC will organise its next conclave on a larger scale. It was high time the teachings of Buddha in the area of conflict avoidance and sustainable development were imbibed by the world, he said. The fact that India is the land of the Buddha is an attraction for all of us.

## Toyota Kirloskar Motor Registers Strong Performance with Steady Growth of 35% in August 2024

Chennai Sep 11 2024: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) continues to demonstrate its robust performance, reporting a wholesale of 30,879 units in August 2024. This marks a 35% month-on-month growth compared to the previous year further solidifying the brand's strong presence in the Indian automobile industry. In August 2023, TKM had sold 22,910 units.

delivering high-quality vehicles both within India and internationally.

Additionally, the performance from the first eight months of the Calendar Year (CY) continues to surpass expectations with a 45% growth over the same period last year. From January- August 2024 company sold 2,12,785 units while CY 2023 recorded sales of 1,47,192 units.

Commenting on the strong sales performance, Mr. Sabari Manohar Vice President, Sales-Service-Used Car Business, Toyota

Kirloskar Motor said, "As we approach the festive season, demand for our products remain buoyant, and we are already witnessing increased consumer interest and higher footfall across all our dealerships. SUVs and MPVs continue to significantly contribute to our sales numbers, reflecting a growing preference for these segment vehicles. Interestingly, this trend is not limited to major urban centres but extends to tier 2 and tier 3 markets as well, demonstrating widespread customer acceptance for our offerings.

As a response to the market needs, we reopened the bookings in August for the Innova Hycross ZX & ZX (O) models, available in both self-charging strong hybrid electric (SHEV) and gasoline variants. With streamlined production and an enhanced supply chain, we've successfully reduced the waiting period, allowing us to commence bookings for the top-end grades. Additionally, increased supply of Urban Cruiser Hyryder has also enabled us to meet the market demand leading to reduced waiting period".

## A Culinary Odyssey: Kotak Private collaborates with Celebrity Chef Marco Pierre White to redefine luxury dining for UHNI & HNI clientele

Chennai Sep 11 2024: Kotak Private, renowned for curating luxury and bespoke experiences recently hosted an exclusive gastronomic soiree for its distinguished UHNI & HNI clientele. The illustrious British Chef, Restaurateur, and global Icon, Marco Pierre White, 'known as the Godfather of modern cooking' led this extraordinary series featuring intimate dinner and masterclass across three cities.

Building on the successful culmination of last year's collaboration with the MasterChef Australia judges, Kotak Private once again elevated the art of fine dining with an even grander extravaganza this year in collaboration with World On A Plate. Guests had the



extraordinary opportunity to indulge in the culinary brilliance of Marco Pierre White. The meticulously curated events took place in Mumbai on August 30th, Bangalore on September 1st and Delhi on September 6th, 2024. Each by-invitation-only affair included a live cooking demonstration, curated tasting sessions, an insightful Q&A and a personal meet-and-greet with the chef himself.

The first-ever interactive culinary masterclass for Kotak

every aspect of its clients' lives. The present association is a testament to this commitment.

Oisharya Das, CEO Kotak Private Banking, said, "At Kotak Private, we are dedicated to curating extraordinary experiences that create lasting memories. Partnering with a culinary legend like Marco Pierre White aligns perfectly with our mission to deliver unparalleled moments and foster lasting relationships with our clientele."

To further commemorate this exclusive dining and learning experience, participants received bespoke memorabilia, by Kotak Private, ensuring that this experience remains a truly immersive and memorable one for its clients.

## Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff Conducts the Second Joint Doctrine Review Conference - 2024

Chennai Sep 11 2024: The second edition of "Joint Doctrine Review Conference (JDRC-2024)" was conducted at the Manekshaw Centre on 11 Sep 24. The conference was chaired by Lt Gen Vipul Shinghal AVSM, SM the Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Doctrine,

Organisation and Training). In his Keynote Address he highlighted the importance of developing robust and adaptive Joint Doctrines, utilising collective insight and collaborative approach.

This second edition of the conference was attended by senior

military leaders, Doctrine Development Agencies of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff and the three Services and members from reputed Think-Tanks. JDRC-2024 aimed at synergising the efforts towards Doctrine formulation between HQ

IDS and the three Services.

The Conference, an annual event organised by HQ IDS, serves as a common platform for all stakeholders of Doctrine formulation, to brainstorm, share best practices and undertake professional discussions on doctrinal issues.

## Allocation to gold can be enhanced to 10% of portfolio: Angel One

Chennai Sep 11 2024: Angel One Ltd.'s research shows that Gold would continue to shine as a preferred asset class in 2024 and advises investors to increase exposure to 10% in their portfolio. The leading player in the fintech sector provides an exclusive outlook on the precious metal, thereby fortifying its position as a partner of choice in investors' wealth building journey.

Prathamesh Mallya, Deputy Vice President, Research, Non-Agri Commodities and Currencies, Angel One Ltd, commented "We, at Angel One, are committed to sharing advanced research for our investors to make informed decisions and stay ahead of the curve. Gold has always had a sentimental value to our Indian society. In times of global economic uncertainty, gold

would provide the perfect hedging solution against both currency fluctuations as well as inflation. We firmly believe that this study would aid as a tool to the investors in their wealth creation journey, particularly in times of economic uncertainty."

Some additional study findings which affirm the golden era for the yellow metal:

- YTD as on 23rd August 2024, Spot Gold prices have moved up by around 22 percent and MCX gold futures have moved up by around 14 percent. The double-digit gains in gold prices in 2024 is a clear indication that precious metal as an asset class is in flavour for the investors across the globe.

- Historically, it has been observed that the key guiding principle behind allocation of gold as a part of central bank portfolio is constructed

according to three guiding principles of safety, liquidity and return.

- Global official gold reserves rose by a net 290t in the first quarter of 2024, the highest Q1 total in data series back to 2000; 1% higher than the previous Q1 record set in 2023 (286t) and 69% more than the five-year quarterly average (171t). The chart above clearly shows the interest of global central banks for their accumulation of gold in 2024.

- The investment demand as seen in the net additions of ETF holdings also signals that gold will shine for much longer time even if the pandemic is under control

With double digit gains already in the year 2024, the important event that will drive gold prices further higher will come out of a combination of events

starting from interest rate cuts in the US and further interest rates trajectory in Japan along with the outcome of the US elections. Angel One has been at the forefront of research backed advisory for its clients. In alignment with that vision, Angel One presents the outlook for gold for 2024. The chart structure of gold prices indicates further moves higher towards the \$2800/ounce mark. Accumulation zones for gold stands at around \$2300/ounce mark for long term investors. Prices on the MCX, can be accumulated at around Rs.68000/10 gms mark for a target higher towards Rs. 78000/10 gms mark by the end of 2024. With the global output to contract and the economies in a deeper recession than most anticipate, gold as an asset class is a safe bet for investors across the globe.