

PROBATIONERS OF INDIAN DEFENCE ACCOUNTS SERVICE AND INDIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE CALL ON THE PRESIDENT



Chennai, 23 January 2025: A group of probationers of Indian Defence Accounts Service and Indian Telecommunications Service called on the President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan on January 22, 2025.

Addressing the probationers, the President said that they are joining their services at a transformative moment in India's developmental journey. The convergence of emerging technologies, rapid information dissemination, and shifting global landscapes present a complex yet exciting environment. She told officers that their role

would be vital in inclusive development of India and in making it globally more competitive. She advised them always to adopt and promote the citizen-centric approach while performing their duties. They must keep in mind the needs and aspirations of the deprived and underprivileged sections of the society while taking decisions. Their thoughts, decisions, and actions would significantly influence the future trajectory of the nation.

Addressing the Indian Defence Accounts Service officers, the President said that they would be playing a pivotal role in overseeing the financial aspects of our

nation's armed forces. Their responsibilities would encompass ensuring seamless financial management, fostering a culture of accountability, and upholding the highest standards of transparency. She urged them to leverage cutting-edge technologies and innovative methods to streamline auditing and accounting processes. She said that by performing their job with utmost dedication, they would not only strengthen the financial management of our armed forces but also contribute significantly to the nation's security and prosperity.

Addressing the Indian Telecommunication Service officers, the

President said that over the past two decades, India has witnessed a transformative telecom revolution, driven by the advent of mobile telephony and high-speed internet networks. This revolution has unlocked India's vast digital potential. By enhancing digital connectivity through telecom infrastructure, ITS officers can help in the inclusive development of the nation by using technology to empower citizens and enhance the overall quality of life. She urged them to focus on research and development in telecom sector to ensure the safety and security of the telecommunication network.

CM INAUGURATES 46 PROJECTS, LAYS FOUNDATION FOR 33 NEW PROJECTS, DISBURSES RS. 161 CR TO BENEFICIARIES



Chennai, 23 January 2025: Chief Minister M.K. Stalin inaugurated 46 completed projects worth Rs.376.49 crore, laid the foundation for 33 new projects worth Rs.164.01 crore, and distributed welfare benefits amounting to Rs.161.11 crore to 53,039 beneficiaries.

During the event in Sivagangai, the Chief Minister opened projects such as anganwadi centers, classrooms, healthcare buildings, bridges, and irrigation facilities

worth Rs.51.37 crore. He also laid the foundation for new projects, including primary health centers, union office buildings, and integrated agricultural extension centers, totaling Rs.164.01 crore.

Welfare measures distributed included free house site pattas, financial assistance for various social and agricultural schemes, and self-employment loans, benefiting 53,039 people across multiple sectors.

The event was

attended by ministers, MPs, MLAs, district officials, and local representatives.

The Chief Minister arrived at Karaikudi in Sivagangai district to participate in the event.

At the Alagappa University campus, he inaugurated the Lakshmi Valarthamizh Library, built at a cost of Rs.12 crore with funds from former Union Minister and MP P. Chidambaram, and unveiled a statue of Thiruvalluvar funded by university

alumni at a cost of Rs.5 lakh.

Later that evening, the Chief Minister visited the Adi Dravidar Welfare Hostel for girls in Karaikudi, inspected its facilities, and inquired about the quality of food and the students' needs.

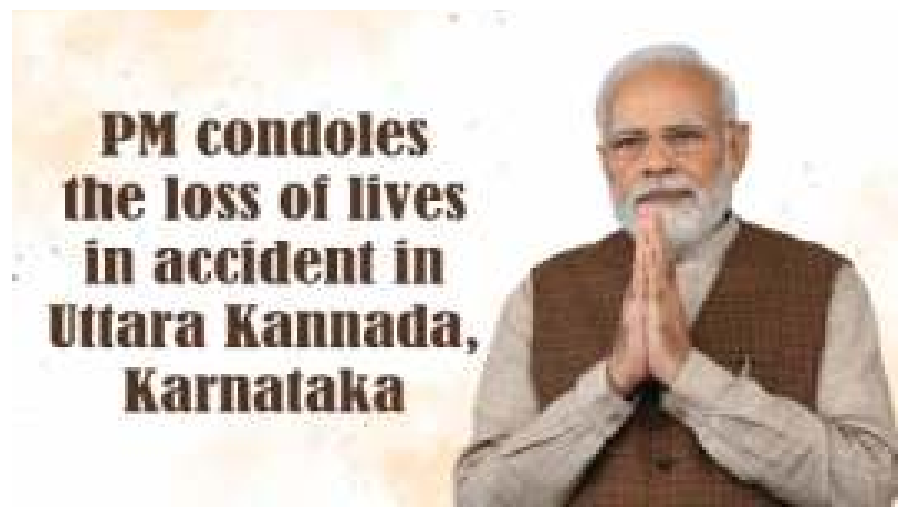
The following day, January 22, he visited the Sri Lankan Tamil rehabilitation camp in Okkur, Sivagangai taluk, to assess the facilities and understand the needs of the residents.

PRIME MINISTER CONDOLES THE LOSS OF LIVES IN ACCIDENT IN UTTARA KANNADA, KARNATAKA

Chennai, 23 January 2025: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today condoled the loss of lives in the bus accident in Uttara Kannada, Karnataka. He announced an ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakh from PMNRF for the next of kin of each deceased and Rs. 50,000 to the injured.

The Prime Minister's Office handle in post on X said:

"Deeply saddened by the loss of lives in the accident in the Uttara Kannada district of



Karnataka. Condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon. The local administration

is assisting those affected.

An ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the

next of kin of each deceased.

The injured would be given Rs. 50,000: PM @narendramodi"

DRDO CONDUCTS SCRAMJET ENGINE GROUND TEST

Chennai, 23 January 2025: Defence Research & Development Laboratory (DRDL), a Hyderabad-based laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has taken the initiative in developing a long-duration Supersonic Combustion Ramjet or Scramjet powered Hypersonic technology.

DRDL recently developed these technologies and demonstrated a cutting-edge Active Cooled Scramjet Combustor ground test for 120 seconds for the first time in India. The successful ground test marks a crucial milestone in developing next-generation hypersonic missiles.

Hypersonic missiles are a class of advanced weaponry that travel at speeds greater than Mach 5 i.e., five times the speed of sound or more than 5,400 km/hr. These advanced weapons

have the potential to bypass existing Air Defence Systems and deliver rapid and high-impact strikes. Several nations including USA, Russia, India and China are actively pursuing Hypersonic technology. The key to hypersonic vehicles is Scramjets, which are air breathing engines capable of sustaining combustion at supersonic speeds without using any moving parts.

The ground test of scramjet combustor showcased several notable achievements, demonstrating its potential for operational use in Hypersonic vehicles, like successful ignition and stable combustion.

Ignition in a scramjet engine is like 'keeping a candle lit in a hurricane'. Scramjet combustor incorporates an innovative flame stabilisation technique that holds continuous flame inside the combustor with air speed in excess of 1.5 km/s. Many novel and

promising ignition & flame holding techniques were studied through many ground tests in arriving at Scramjet Engine configuration.

Advanced Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) simulation tools were used for their evaluation & performance prediction.

The indigenous development of endothermic scramjet fuel, the first time in India, jointly by DRDL and Industry is central to this breakthrough.

The fuel offers dual benefits of significant cooling improvement and ease of ignition. The team developed a special manufacturing process to achieve stringent fuel requirements of DRDL at Industrial scale.

Another key achievement is the development of state-of-art Thermal Barrier Coating (TBC) which is designed to withstand extreme

temperatures encountered during hypersonic flight. A new advanced ceramic TBC having high thermal resistance & capable of operating beyond melting point of steel has been jointly developed by DRDL and Department of Science & Technology (DST) Laboratory. The coating is applied inside the Scramjet engine using special deposition methods that enhance their performance and longevity.

With demonstrated capabilities in stable combustion, enhanced performance and advanced thermal management, this breakthrough sets the stage for next generation Hypersonic missiles.

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has complimented DRDO and the Industry for the successful Scramjet Engine Ground Test.

"The achievement marks a crucial milestone in the development of next-generation hypersonic missiles," he said.

Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr Samir V Kamat congratulated DRDL team and industry for demonstrating capabilities in stable combustion, enhanced performance, and advanced thermal management test.



TATA AIA LIFE LAUNCHES 'SHUBH MUHURAT' TO MAKE DREAM WEDDINGS A REALITY FOR INDIAN FAMILIES

Chennai, 23 January 2025: Weddings in India are more than just ceremonies—they are grand celebrations of culture, love, and sharing happiness, marking one of the most significant milestones in a family's life. At the same time, weddings have become a matter of social status, leading to the emergence of themes and destinations spreading over days and even weeks. As a result, ensuring adequate funds for the occasion requires meticulous financial planning, not just over a few months but over many years.

Historically, Indians have relied on gold, fixed deposits, and other community saving methods to prepare for wedding expenses. Investments in real estate and traditional savings schemes have also been common, offering stability and long-term value. However, these options often lack flexibility or the ability to grow wealth significantly over time.

Here is why life insurance solutions can provide a disciplined approach to goal-based savings. They combine wealth creation with financial security, ensuring the child's wedding aspirations are fulfilled even in unforeseen circumstances.

A report by investment banking and capital market firm Jefferies highlights that India hosted over 80 lakh weddings in 2024, making the Indian wedding system the second largest globally, with an estimated spend of INR 10.7 lakh crore. On average, Indian weddings cost around INR 12.5 lakh—twice as much as the expenditure on education from preschool to graduation. Luxury weddings dominate the market, with expenses often rising above INR 1 crore.

Recognising the significance of weddings and their monetary impact on consumers, Tata AIA Life Insurance (Tata AIA), one of India's leading life insurers, has introduced 'Shubh Muhurat,' an innovative life insurance solution. It

features capital guarantee with equity exposure, certainty of benefits to the desired beneficiary, life cover, immediate death benefit, and more to help parents save for their child's dream wedding and ensure the occasion becomes memorable for a lifetime.

Commenting on the launch, Venky Iyer, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Tata AIA, said: "At Tata AIA Life, we endeavour to understand and address the unique needs of our consumers based on their life stages. Further, we understand the significance of weddings for parents. A marriage is not only a celebration of love and togetherness but also a testament to familial emotion and aspirations. Shubh Muhurat is intended to help families plan well in advance."

"Also, we wanted to provide a solution that in the unforeseen event of the loss of life of the parent, the goal is protected. With Shubh Muhurat, we aim to help families confidently plan these joyous moments and ensure that they are taiyaar (prepared) to celebrate one of the most important milestones in their life."

This solution is best suited for parents aged between 31 and 50 years, having children in the age group of 1 to 20 years. Investing in this solution early can give the parent long enough to accumulate the desired corpus for the child's grand wedding.

Tailored Benefits of Shubh Muhurat : Shubh Muhurat is designed to make wedding planning a joyous, stress-free experience with the following unique benefits:

Planning for the various wedding-related expenses: A wedding involves significant expenses spread across multiple stages—from booking venues, hosting ceremonies, expenditures on food and drinks, buying jewellery and wedding outfits, arranging accommodation for the guests, etc. Shubh Muhurta's planned payouts ensure funds are available precisely when



needed, allowing parents to focus on celebrating rather than arranging for money at the last minute.

Capital Guarantee with Equity Exposure: The assurance that the premium paid will be protected provides parents financial security and peace of mind. Even if markets fluctuate, the guaranteed lump sum ensures that wedding plans remain on track, unaffected by market uncertainties.

Long-Term Wealth Growth: Weddings often come with grand aspirations. Shubh Muhurat helps build a substantial corpus over time through market-linked investments. This ensures that the financial resources are adequate to meet even extravagant wedding dreams, such as destination venues or high-end arrangements, without compromising other life goals.

Exclusive Protection under MWPA: By safeguarding the policy proceeds under the Married Women's Property Act (MWPA), Shubh Muhurat ensures that the funds intended for the child's marriage are legally protected and will only be available to the nominee regardless of external financial claims.

Benefit Protection Rider: This rider provides unparalleled security:

- Immediate Death Benefit: In the unfortunate event of the insured's demise, the family receives financial assistance to continue their life's aspirations without disruption.

- Premium Waiver: Future premiums are waived, ensuring policy continuity without financial strain on the family.

- Maturity Benefit for Nominees: Even in the insured's absence, the intended maturity benefit is paid, ensuring the child's marriage goals are fulfilled.

Shubh Muhurat is* part of the broader Shubh Solutions suite being introduced by Tata AIA, offering tailor-made life insurance products for every stage of life—from wealth creation in the early years to funding for child's education to marriage, fulfilling aspirations and legacy planning during the golden years. It aligns beautifully with Tata AIA's brand promise of empowering its consumers to be 'Har Waqt Ke Liye Taiyaar.'

Recognising that every family's aspirations are diverse and may be different from child's wedding at a particular time, Tata AIA is simultaneously introducing the second offering in this series - Shubh Fortune : Shubh Fortune is a comprehensive financial solution created to address diverse life milestones. Whether it is wealth creation in the early part of your career, planning for child's education or fulfilling aspirations like buying a house, Shubh Fortune is designed to help individuals seamlessly navigate life's major events.

Empowering Indian Families to Celebrate Without Compromise : With these innovative offerings, Tata AIA Life reinforces its dedication to helping Indian families plan and celebrate life's most meaningful milestones. It reflects Tata AIA's mission to create solutions that blend financial stability with cultural values, enabling families to cherish life's special moments without financial strain.

* The solution is a combination of Tata AIA Life Insurance Fortune Guarantee Secure (UIN:110N206V02), an Individual, Non-Linked, Non-Participating, Life Insurance Savings Plan, and Tata AIA Life Insurance Smart Fortune Plus (UIN:110L177V01), a Unit-Linked, Individual Life Insurance Savings Plan.

MANAGING THE TWIN CHALLENGES OF HYPOTHYROIDISM AND ANAEMIA IN INDIA

Chennai, 23 January 2025: In India, 42 million people are affected by thyroid diseases, with hypothyroidism being the most prevalent impacting 1 in 10 adults. Anaemia, often the first sign of hypothyroidism, affects 41.8% of those with hypothyroidism. This World Thyroid Awareness month, its important to remind people about this dual challenge that may significantly affect overall productivity and quality of life, if left untreated.

Anaemia, a condition characterised by a lower-than-normal count of red blood cells, often coexists with hypothyroidism. In hypothyroidism, the butterfly-shaped thyroid gland located in your neck doesn't produce enough thyroid hormones. These hormones are crucial because they regulate your body's metabolism, which affects how your body uses energy. The symptoms of these conditions can overlap, particularly during winter, when pale skin can mask the signs of anaemia. Despite this connection, it is often overlooked.

In winter, the body's heightened demand for thyroid hormones to generate heat and regulate temperature can worsen common

symptoms, including weight gain, fatigue, depression, dry and coarse skin and hair, difficulty dealing with the cold, and a tingling sensation in the hands, amongst others. Women are three times more likely to be affected by hypothyroidism than men and the elderly are another group typically affected by it as well.

How are they linked? : Low thyroid levels slow down the production of red blood cells, a process further complicated by the effects of thyroid diseases like hypothyroidism or Hashimoto's thyroiditis. These conditions often lead to vitamin B12 deficiency, which can also affect red blood cell production. Additionally, low thyroid levels can interfere with iron absorption, disrupting various metabolic processes. If either is not treated, these issues can amplify the problem and make management of the condition harder. Raising awareness about this connection is necessary, not only for timely and accurate diagnosis, but also to ensure patients receive the appropriate care and treatment.

Dr. Rohita Shetty, Medical Affairs Head, Abbott India said, "Hypothyroidism and anaemia are significant health concerns in India,



but they can be effectively managed with timely diagnosis and consistent treatment.

Educating more people about the linkage between these two conditions and encouraging those with symptoms to seek medical advice promptly is key. For example, if you notice a family member feels cold even in the summer or a friend often complains about never-ending fatigue, encourage them to see a doctor and get tested."

Dr. S Sridhar, Consultant Endocrinologist, MIOT Hospital, Chennai added, "Today, the burden of both hypothyroidism and anaemia is on the rise. For instance, anaemia amongst women between 15 and 49 years increased from 53% in 2015-16 to 57% in 2019-2021. It's extremely important for people to understand the connection between these two conditions, as it will aid in diagnosis and ensure appropriate advice and treatment."

People in high-risk groups who should

routinely screen for these conditions: Women (especially pregnant women), The elderly People with autoimmune diseases (like Celiac or Crohn's disease), Those with nutritional deficiencies (including of various vitamins from B12 to D, iron, and more), People with chronic illness (such as diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and liver disease), Those with chronic acidity and digestive disorders.

Diagnosis is key for better management of both conditions: What's important is staying vigilant about your health. It's good to remember that early detection and treatment can make a significant difference. Individuals experiencing these symptoms should consult their doctor for next steps on screening.

This may include a thyroid function test or checking their complete blood count and markers like ferritin, vitamin B12, and folate levels for anaemia. Take charge of your health to lead a better quality of life every day!

DMK MP APPEARS AT ED OFFICE

Chennai, 23 January 2025: DMK MP Kathir Anand appeared at the Enforcement Directorate (ED) office on Grems Road, Chennai, on Wednesday, following extensive raids by the agency at multiple locations, including his private college in Vellore.

During the operation at Kingston Engineering College, the ED reportedly discovered Rs 13.7 crore in cash, along with documents and a computer hard disk, as per a report by Thanthi TV.

The raids, conducted on January 3 by a team of over 15 officials, lasted

44 hours. Investigators scrutinized CCTV footage, financial records, and other data. The ED confiscated Rs 2.74 crore in cash and sealed the college's server room as part of the operation.

This investigation is connected to a 2019 Income Tax case against

Kathir Anand, stemming from alleged cash-for-votes charges during the Lok Sabha elections. At the time, over Rs 10 crore was seized from premises linked to Anand's associates, which led to the cancellation of the Vellore constituency elections.

CABINET APPROVES MINIMUM SUPPORT PRICES (MSP) FOR RAW JUTE FOR 2025-26 SEASON

Chennai, 23 January 2025: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) of Raw Jute for Marketing season 2025-26.

The MSP of Raw Jute (TD-3 grade) has been fixed at Rs.5,650/- per quintal for 2025-26 season. This would ensure a return of 66.8 percent over the all India weighted average cost of production.

The approved MSP of raw jute for Marketing season 2025-26 is in line with the principle of fixing MSP

at a level of at least 1.5 times all India weighted average cost of production as announced by the Government in the Budget 2018-19.

The MSP of Raw Jute for Marketing season 2025-26 is an increase of Rs.315/- per quintal over the previous Marketing season 2024-25. Government of India has increased MSP of Raw jute from Rs.2400/- per quintal in 2014-15 to Rs.5,650/- per quintal in 2025-26, registering an increase of Rs.3250/- per quintal (2.35 times).

The MSP amount paid to Jute growing famers during the



period 2014-15 to 2024-25 was Rs. 1300 Crore while during the period 2004-05 to 2013-14, amount paid was Rs. 441 Crore.

Livelihood of 40 Lakh farm families directly or indirectly depends on Jute Industry. About 4 Lakh workers get direct employment in Jute mills and trade in Jute. Last year jute was procured from 1 Lakh 70 thousand farmers.

82% of Jute farmers belong to West Bengal while rest Assam and Bihar have 9% each jute production share.

The Jute Corporation of India (JCI) will continue as Central Government Nodal Agency to undertake Price Support Operations and the losses incurred, if any, in such operations, will be fully reimbursed by the Central Government.

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ICICI PRUDENTIAL LIFE INSURANCE REPORTS STRONG PERFORMANCE FOR 9M-FY2025

Chennai, 23 January 2025: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has reported a growth of 18.3% year-on-year in its Profit After Tax (PAT) to 803 crore for 9M-FY2025. For the same period, the Value of New Business (VNB) registered a growth of 8.5% to 1,575 crore and the VNB margin stood at 22.8%.

The total Annualised Premium Equivalent (APE) grew by 27.2% year-on-year in 9M-FY2025. This was supported by 14.4% year-on-year increase in number of policies sold in 9M-FY2025 and 18.3% year-on-year in Q3-FY2025.

Annuity business APE grew by 81.7% year-on-year to 616 crore in 9M-FY2025. Retail protection business APE grew by 24.2% year-on-year to 426 crore in 9M-FY2025. Notably, the retail protection segment grew by 40.0% year-on-year in Q3-FY2025.

The Company's retail New Business Sum Assured (NBSA) grew by 39.2% year-on-year to 2.28 lakh crore in 9M-FY2025. The total In-force sum assured, which is the quantum of life cover taken by customers of the Company, grew by 17.0% year-on-year to 37.78 lakh crore.

The Company has a well-diversified distribution network, ensuring its presence across platforms and touch points preferred by different customer segments. In 9M-FY2025, APE contribution from agency, direct, bancassurance, partnership distribution, and group channels stood at 30.2%, 15.3%, 27.7%, 10.1% and 16.7% respectively.

The assets under management of the Company stood at 3.10 lakh crore as on December 31, 2024. The Company acts as custodian and trustee of customers' funds enabling it to deliver superior risk-adjusted returns while maintaining its track record of zero Non-performing Assets since inception.

The solvency ratio was 211.8% as on December 31, 2024, against the regulatory requirement of 150%. During the quarter, the Company successfully raised additional capital by issuance of non-convertible debentures of 1,400 crore thereby further strengthening its solvency.

The Company's commitment to sustainability is central to its vision of building an enduring institution that serves the



protection and long-term saving needs of customers with sensitivity. The Company continues to be the highest rated Indian insurer as per two leading ES Grating agencies. It has successfully retained the ESG rating of 'AA' ascribed by MSC I making it one of the top-rated life insurers in India.

Commenting on the results, Mr. Anup Bagchi, MD & CEO, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance said, "Our focus on aligning with the customer demand has helped us outperform the industry's premium growth for five consecutive quarters. We have delivered a 31.4% year-on-year Retail Weighted Received Premium (RWRP) growth in 9M-FY2025, on the back of an increase of 14.4% in the number of policies old. Our VNB grew by 8.5% year-on-year to ₹1,575 crore in the same period, reflecting the growing profitability of our business.

We continue to innovate our product suite to meet the

evolving needs of our customers. We recently launched 'ICICI Pru Wish', the life insurance industry's first health plan designed exclusively for women. Another industry-first product proposition we offered in the regular pay annuity segment was 'ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan Flexi' with the 'Increasing Income' feature enabling customers to manage inflation.

Our customer focused approach has enabled us to build simplified processes across the policy life cycle. Our 13th month persistency ratio of ~90% at 9M-FY2025, underscores the customers' trust in the Company.

Our claim settlement ratio of 99.3% in 9M-FY2025, with an average turn around time of just 1.2 days for non-investigated individual claims reflects our commitment to fulfilling the promise made to our customers and their families.

It is our endeavour to deliver sustainable VNB growth by balancing business growth, profitability and risk & prudence."

WALMART UNVEILS NEW INNOVATION PILOTS WITH INDIAN STARTUPS TO HELP ENHANCE SUPPLY CHAIN RESILIENCE

Chennai Jan 23, 2025: Walmart, the world's largest omnichannel retailer, today announced strategic pilots with India-based startups to provide solutions for the company's U.S. supply chain and sourcing operations.



materials and jersey cotton.

The three startups selected for pilot programs include Pune-based KBCols Sciences, Chennai-based GreenPod Labs, and Bengaluru-based Cropin. These companies participated in the Walmart Growth Summit last year.

Solutions from each will help drive innovation at scale across Walmart's supply chains. The pilot programs will test solutions that augment the availability of better and more fresh products for Walmart's consumers in the U.S. and around the world, reduce product waste, and create sustainable alternatives for intermediate products used in manufacturing processes such as synthetic textile dyes to reduce environmental impact.

Here are innovative solutions piloted by each startup:

[Textile dyes made from agricultural waste] KBCols Sciences, manufactures non-GMO natural dyes by fermenting microbes from agricultural waste across India. These natural dyes can be used for various textiles, promoting more efficient manufacturing by reducing water and energy usage in the dyeing process. As a more sustainable alternative to synthetic dyes, this innovation paves the way for more regenerative methods in mass-produced clothing. The pilot will evaluate KBCol's dyes and their properties, testing them on woven

[Extending freshness for natural produce] GreenPod Labs, company, produces small sachets filled with plant extracts that activate the natural defense mechanisms of fruits and vegetables, slowing down ripening and mimicking the state when it is still on the vine. This extends travel times in the supply chain, enabling produce to stay fresh longer. This innovation has the potential to unlock new sourcing geographies for Walmart, enable cost-effective shipping, and improve quality & freshness for customers. In collaboration with UC Davis, Walmart will pilot GreenPod sachets to evaluate their effectiveness.

[AI-driven crop yield insight platform] Cropin, driven AgTech platform that provides valuable insights into crop yields, enhancing productivity, optimizing resource use, and ensuring consistent harvest quality. The pilot will test this technology on the produce supply chains to gain a deeper understanding of yield estimations, crop health, and seasonal timing. Improved data accuracy can help Walmart source perishable commodities more effectively, potentially improving quality and availability for customers while reducing waste. This pilot launches in collaboration with Walmart Global Tech's Sparkubate program,

empowering start-up innovators to scale their ideas and tackle the most pressing challenges in retail.

What drives real-world solutions to move forward a globally resilient supply chain. By collaborating with global innovators, we're leveraging fresh ideas to build a more resilient supply network. said Kyle Carlyle, Vice President, Sourcing Innovation & Surety of Supply, Walmart. "As a people-led, tech-powered company, we are always looking for new ways to innovate. These three brands demonstrate our innovation goals across both the food and textile industry.

The Walmart Growth Summit in India is part of a global series designed to connect entrepreneurs, suppliers, and innovators with Walmart's extensive supply chain network. Held in countries like India, Mexico, and Chile, these summits provide a platform for participants to present technologies and solutions that align with Walmart's focus on sustainability, efficiency, and innovation. Through one-on-one pitch sessions and educational discussions, entrepreneurs can showcase their products and explore opportunities to scale within Walmart's global supply chain.

The collaboration between KBCols Sciences and Walmart marks a pivotal step towards transforming the textile industry with more sustainable dyeing solutions. says Dr. Vaishali Kulkarni, CEO, KBCols Sciences. "This project reflects our shared commitment to addressing global supply

environmental challenges while delivering high-quality, more responsibly-produced products, supporting a future where fashion and sustainability coexist harmoniously.

Deepak Rajmohan, CEO, GreenPod Labs shares, "Engaging with Walmart during the Summit India and progressing towards a product pilot has been a great experience for our team. Working with a global player like Walmart revalidates the importance of our work in reducing fruits and vegetables post-harvest losses/ quality degradation. It's been a great learning experience to interact with the sourcing and innovation team to understand the current challenges."

"At Cropin, we leverage next-generation technologies, from climate models to AI-driven solutions, to tackle these challenges head-on," says Krishna Kumar, CEO of Cropin. "By working with Walmart, a leader in tech-driven transformation, we aim to build resilient and sustainable food systems. Together, we are committed to redefining sourcing strategies amidst evolving climate scenarios, ensuring a more reliable and secure future for the agri-food industry."

These latest pilot programs build upon a portfolio of innovation work including collaborations with Agritask, unspun, and Rubi Laboratories. Sourcing innovation pilots are designed to help Walmart make more informed sourcing decisions, enhance resource efficiency, and drive measurable progress toward a more resilient addressing global supply

DAREDEVILS OF INDIAN ARMY SET WORLD RECORD WITH TALLEST MOTORCYCLE HUMAN PYRAMID

Chennai, 23 January 2025: In an awe-inspiring display of precision, courage, and teamwork, the Motorcycle Rider Display Team "Daredevils" of the Indian Army achieved a breathtaking World Record for the highest human pyramid formed on moving motorcycles. The record-breaking feat unfolded along Kartavya Path, where 40 riders balanced atop seven motorcycles to form a pyramid towering at 20.4 feet.

The Daredevils covered a distance of 2 kilometers, riding from Vijay Chowk to India Gate, leaving spectators stunned and cementing their name in the annals of history.

This remarkable achievement marks the team's 33rd World Record, adding to their accolades in the Guinness Book of World Records, Asia Book of

Records, and Limca Book of Records.

Established in 1935, the Daredevils belong to the Corps of Signals and are renowned for their high-octane performances at events like the Republic Day Parade, Army Day celebrations, and Military Tattoos. Their jaw-dropping stunts have always been a symbol of the Indian Army's exceptional skill and discipline, captivating audiences across the nation.

The human pyramid, a marvel of balance and synchronization, stood as a testament to rigorous training and unyielding team spirit. The stunt required each rider to perform their role flawlessly while maintaining stability on moving motorcycles an extraordinary feat of both physical and mental prowess. Spectators lining Kartavya Path erupted in



applause as the team completed the 2-kilometer stretch with unmatched finesse. Witnessing the spectacle was not just an exhilarating experience but also a moment of pride for the nation, showcasing the Indian Army's relentless pursuit of excellence.

With 33 World Records now under their belt, the Daredevils continue to push the boundaries of what is possible, inspiring generations and representing the indomitable spirit of the

Indian Army. Their achievements underscore the importance of discipline, teamwork, and courage qualities that define the men and women in uniform.

As the roar of their motorcycles faded into the distance, one thing became clear: the Daredevils are more than just performers they are the embodiment of adventure and patriotism, reminding us all of the heights that can be reached through unity and determination.

Chief Minister Stalin presided over three events to mark silver jubilee of Natakapriya, 100th birth anniversary of S.V. Venkataraman, Natakapriya's 7000th drama at Narada Gana Sabha. CM honoured S.V. Shekar and his group in the presence of



Minister name a street in Shekher's father Duraimurugan. Mylapore after S. V. Stalin promised to actor S. Ve. Venkataraman.

KALPAVRIKSHA TO THE GOLDEN BIRD: A GLIMPSE OF INDIA'S CREATIVITY

Chennai Jan 23, 2025: The grand tableau presented by the Ministry of Culture on Republic Day is a magnificent celebration of India's cultural diversity and creativity. Inspired by the Prime Minister's mantra of 'Virasat Bhi, Vikas Bhi,' this tableau beautifully showcases the nation's rich cultural heritage and the vast possibilities of sustainable development.

Secretary of Culture, Shri Arunesh Chawla, remarked on the significance of the tableau:

"The tableau presented by the Ministry of Culture on Republic Day is a celebration of our country's diversity, creativity, and development. Inspired by the Prime Minister's core mantra 'Virasat Bhi, Vikas Bhi,' this tableau conveys the



message of realizing the vision of a developed India by 2047.

The ancient Tamil musical instrument 'Yaadh,' beautifully placed on the potter's wheel, represents the depth and continuity of our musical tradition. Meanwhile, the kinetic Kalpavriksha, which transforms into the 'Golden Bird,' symbolizes creativity and progress.

The digital screens showcase the diversity of performing arts, literature, architecture, design, and tourism.

This tableau invites every Indian to take pride in their heritage and step towards a bright future."

Key Highlights of the Tableau:

Yaadh on the Potter's Wheel: An ancient Tamil musical instrument, symbolizing the depth and continuity of India's musical traditions.

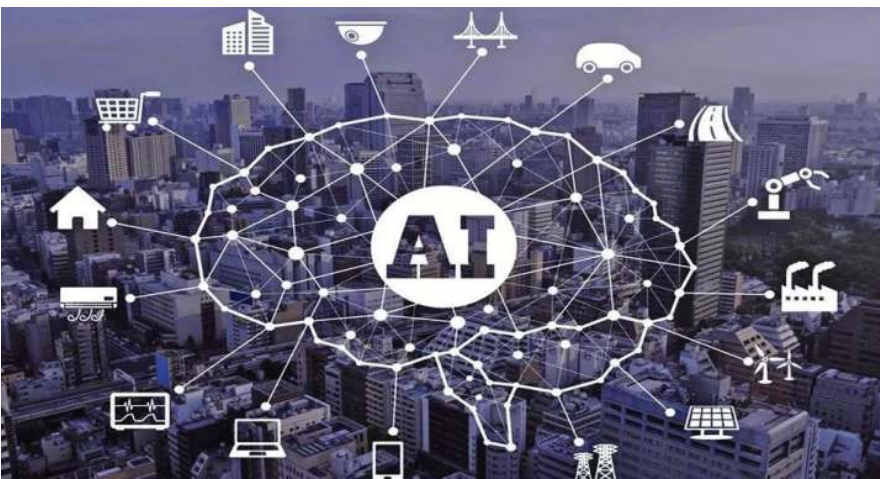
Kinetic Kalpavriksha: A vibrant structure full of creativity that transforms into the 'Golden Bird,' symbolizing India's cultural heritage and

economic progress.

Digital Screens: Ten digital screens representing the diversity of creative fields such as performing arts, literature, architecture, design, and tourism.

This tableau not only reflects India's glorious past but also envisions a powerful and creative future. It invites every Indian to take pride in their cultural heritage and step forward on the path of development, paving the way for a brighter, more inclusive future.

NEW RESEARCH ON INDIGENISING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Chennai Jan 23, 2025 A new initiative steered by Concordia researchers is challenging the conversation around the direction of artificial intelligence (AI). It charges that the current trajectory is inherently biased against non-Western modes of thinking about intelligence - especially those originating from Indigenous cultures.

As a way of decolonising the future of AI, they have created the Abundant Intelligences research program: an international, multi-institutional and interdisciplinary program that seeks to rethink how we conceive of AI. The driving concept behind it is the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge systems to create an inclusive, robust concept of intelligence and intelligent action, and how that can be embedded into existing and future technologies.

"Artificial intelligence has inherited conceptual and intellectual ideas from past formulations of intelligence that took on certain colonial pathways to establish itself, such as emphasizing a kind of

industrial or production focus," says Ceyda Yolgormez, a postdoctoral fellow with Abundant Intelligences and one of the paper's authors.

They write that this scarcity mindset contributed to resource exploitation and extraction that has extended a legacy of Indigenous erasure that influences discussion around AI to this day, adds lead author Jason Edward Lewis. The professor in the Department of Design and Computation Arts is also the University Research Chair in Computational Media and the Indigenous Future Imaginary.

"The Abundant Intelligences research programme is about deconstructing the scarcity mindset and making room for many kinds of intelligence and ways we might think about it."

The researchers believe this alternative approach can create an AI that is oriented toward human thriving, that preserves and supports Indigenous languages, addresses pressing environmental and

sustainability issues, reimagines public health solutions and more.

The community-based research program is directed from Concordia in Montreal but much of the local work will be done by individual research clusters (called pods) across Canada, in the United States and in New Zealand.

The pods will be anchored to Indigenous-centred research and media labs at Western University in Ontario, the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, the University of Hawai'i -- West Oahu, Bard College in New York and Massey University in New Zealand.

They bring together Indigenous knowledge-holders, cultural practitioners, language keepers, educational institutions and community organizations with research scientists, engineers, artists and social scientists to develop new computational practices fitted to an Indigenous-centred perspective.

The researchers are also partnering with AI professionals and industry researchers, believing that the

program will open new avenues of research and propose new research questions for mainstream AI research.

"For example, how do you build a rigorous system out of a small amount of resource data like different Indigenous languages?" asks Yolgormez. "How do you make multi-agent systems that are robust, recognize and support non-human actors and integrate different sorts of activities within the body of a single system?"

Lewis asserts that their approach is both complementary and alternative to mainstream AI research, particularly regarding data sets like Indigenous languages that are much smaller than the ones currently being used by industry leaders.

"There is a commitment to working with data from Indigenous communities in an ethical way, compared to simply scraping the internet," he says. "This yields minuscule amounts of data compared to what the larger companies are working with, but it presents the potential to innovate different approaches when working with small languages. That can be useful to researchers who want to take a different approach than the mainstream."

"This is one of the strengths of the decolonial approach: it's one way to get out of this tunnel vision belief that there is only one way of doing things."

INDIA POISED TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL VOTERS' DAY, A DAY BEFORE REPUBLIC DAY

Chennai Jan 23, 2025 : The 15th National Voters' Day (NVD) will be celebrated across the country on 25th January. This year's celebration comes soon after the historic and successful conduct of the 2024 Lok Sabha Elections, the largest democratic exercise in the world. The Election Commission also celebrates 75 years of its dedicated service to the nation.

The event, celebrating the voters of the country again assumes a grand scale this year in light of the fact that India's total electorate is approaching 100 crore mark. The electoral database now stands at 99.1 crore and counting. The electoral rolls bear a youthful and gender balanced look with 21.7 crores young electors, in the 18-29 age group and a 6-point increase in Electoral Gender Ratio from 948 in 2024 to 954 in 2025.

The Hon'ble President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu will grace the national function in New Delhi as the Chief Guest. Union Minister of State for Law and Justice (Independent Charge), Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal will grace the occasion as the Guest of Honour, besides the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioners leading the event.

The event will also



be attended by Heads and representatives of Election Management bodies who will deliberate on major issues faced in election management around the world at a 2-day conference on Jan 23-24, 2025, hosted by ECI.

This Year's Theme "Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure" is a continuation of last year's theme emphasizing the importance of participation in the electoral process, and encouraging voters to take pride in exercising their franchise.

During the event, the Hon'ble President will present the Best Electoral Practices Awards to state and district officials who demonstrated exemplary performance in ensuring the smooth conduct of elections. Special recognition will be given to initiatives that enhanced voter participation, such as innovative outreach campaigns, the use of technology for seamless election management, and efforts that made elections accessible to all.

The first copy of the ECI Coffee Table Book titled "India Votes 2024: A saga of

democracy" will be presented to the Hon'ble President by Chief Election Commissioner Shri Rajiv Kumar. The publication is a tribute to every voter, election personnel and all the stakeholders who contributed to the success of the 18th Lok Sabha elections. It will offer the readers a glimpse into India's democratic journey of the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 through vivid visuals and compelling narratives.

A short clip of the upcoming docu-drama series "India Decides" produced by Warner Bros Discovery will also be released at the event. The three-part series dives deep into the history and making of the largest elections in the world. The docu-drama series will be released on the discovery channel and its OTT platforms.

An ECI publication "Belief in the Ballot: Human stories shaping India's 2024 elections" will also be presented to the Hon'ble President by the Commission. The book is a curated set of human interest stories that set these elections apart.

A multimedia exhibition highlighting key

aspects of Lok Sabha Elections 2024 will also be showcased. It will have interactive and immersive spaces for the attendees to experience.

Since 2011, National Voters' Day has been observed annually on January 25 to commemorate the foundation day of the Election Commission of India, established on January 25, 1950, a day before India became a Republic.

This event aims to underline the centrality of the voter and raise electoral awareness among citizens and inspire their active participation in the democratic process. Dedicated to the voters of the nation, National Voters' Day also promotes the enrolment of new voters, particularly young individuals who have recently become eligible. Across the country, new voters are honored and presented with their Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC) during NVD ceremonies.

Celebrated at the level of national, state, district, constituency, and polling booth NVD stands as one of the country's most widespread and significant celebrations.

INDIA POISED TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL VOTERS' DAY, A DAY BEFORE REPUBLIC DAY

Chennai Jan 23, 2025 : There has been a stupendous rise in inbound travel for spiritual purposes in India, primarily driven by Maha Kumbh 2025, a report showed on Wednesday. Visa processing platform Atlys has witnessed a 21.4 per cent increase in inbound travel to the country for spiritual purposes.

The surge in applications is largely driven by travellers from the UK and the US, underscoring the global interest in India's

spiritual offerings. The data revealed that nearly 48 per cent of all spiritual travel visa applications are linked to major events and pilgrimages like the Maha Kumbh.

As per data, group inbound travel applications have surged 35 per cent, reflecting a growing preference for communal spiritual experiences. The sacred trinity of Varanasi, Rishikesh and Haridwar continues to dominate destination preferences.

While spiritual travel

was once predominantly associated with older generations, millennials now lead the trend, with 66 per cent of this segment being women, indicating a broader move toward female-led spiritual exploration, said the report.

Over the past decade, global interest in spiritual tourism has steadily risen, positioning India at the forefront with its rich spiritual heritage and diverse cultural tapestry. "India's spiritual legacy has always captured global attention, but

we're now seeing an embrace of these sacred journeys by travellers seeking both adventure and self-discovery," said Mohak Nahta, Founder and CEO of Atlys. The Maha Kumbh and similar festivals are no longer just for traditional pilgrims; they're appealing to a broader audience looking for meaningful experiences. The Maha Kumbh, one of the world's largest religious gatherings, is currently underway and is set to attract more than 40 crore million pilgrims.