



Hon'ble Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal Flags Off the First Consignment Under India-Australia ECTA from Mumbai

Pune (Voice news service):- Marking the beginning of yet another successful FTA, Hon'ble Union Minister Shri Piyush Goyal flagged off the first consignment under the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) on 29 th December at Mumbai. Dispatchment of consignments under India-Australia ECTA was held simultaneously from Mumbai, Surat and Chennai. Along with Shri Piyush Goyal, the flag off ceremony at Mumbai was held in the presence of Mr. Rajesh Agrawal, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce; Ms. Monideepa Mukerjee, Director General, PIB, Mumbai; Mr. Shyam Jagannathan, Zonal Development Commissioner, SEEPZ, Mumbai; Mr. R.K Mishra, Additional DGFT, Mumbai, Mr. Tapan Mazumder, Addl DGFT, Mr. Vipul Shah, Chairman, GJPEC, Chairman of several EPCS, other Govt. officials and Media Mr. Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry said, "With this agreement with Australia entering into force, that makes it two agreements within a calendar year. It's a matter of great joy and celebration for all of us. There is a lot of potential for exporting finished products to Australia as they're largely a raw material and intermediate producing country. So, it's a complete win-win. Many of the products being manufactured in India, are



providing huge amount of work and job opportunities for businesses both in merchandise and in services." Mr. Rajesh Agrawal, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, "ECTA brings together two largest economies of the world. Two countries are hugely complimentary to each other in nature. Import of raw materials on Nil duty will boost our manufacturing sector immensely." Mr. Shyam Jagannathan, (I.A.S) Zonal Development Commissioner, SEEPZ, Mumbai said, "The signing of the Indo-Australia ECTA is an opportune moment for accelerating growth in G&J exports from SEZs. It will be instrumental in harnessing the idle capacity in export zones and realising the untapped export potential of G&J from India." Mr. Vipul Shah, Chairman, GJPEC said, "This is yet an-

other commendable achievement by the Government of India that will be instrumental in accelerating growth for Gem & Jewellery sector. The India-Australia ECTA will boost the bilateral gem & jewellery trade to double from the present value of US\$ 1.27 billion to US\$ 2.5 billion over the next 3 years. 0% duty on jewellery products made up of gold, silver and imitation jewellery exported to Australia will provide a fillip to these products. An additional trade of US\$ 1 billion is likely to generate employment for 88,000 workers in India. While the gem & jewellery products have got free access to Australia, the Govt. has protected the domestic industry by not decreasing import duty on gold/silver/platinum jewellery." Mr. R K Mishra, Additional Director, Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said, "The swift pace of

change in the regulatory environment for international trade is providing a strong tailwind to the export sectors in India. It is incumbent on the trade to now draw maximum value from the Govt.'s supportive foreign policy framework." First Jewellery consignment Exporter under Ind-Aus ECTA Mr. Ashish Kothari, Director Jewelex India Pvt Ltd said, "We're honoured to be the first company from SEEPZ to export under the Indo-Australia ECTA. I'm sure there will be many more to follow and benefit from this game-changing policy that gives Indian gems and jewellery zero duty market access and creates vast opportunities for our exporters." First Jewellery consignment Exporter Mr. Ramniklal Shah, Partner & founder, Venus Jewel said, "FTAs would really bring a boost to the exports from the country

as it will give a competitive edge to India exporters catering to Australia and for that matter to UAE. I do hope we have similar FTAs with other leading countries soon which have large gem & jewellery trade with India." The India-Australia ECTA aims to significantly enhance bilateral trade in goods and services, create new employment opportunities, raise living standards, and improve the general welfare of the people of the two countries. Indian exports will benefit from preferential zero duty market access in Australia for 100% of its tariff lines, which will benefit India's labour-intensive sectors such as gems and jewellery, textiles, leather, footwear, furniture, food, and agricultural products, engineering products, medical devices, and automobiles. On the other hand, India has provided preferential access to Australia on over 70% of its tariff lines, which are primarily raw materials and intermediaries such as coal, mineral ores etc., which are required for our domestic manufacturing industry. The negotiation with Australia for an FTA was based on the suggestions and recommendations taken from every stakeholder across the industries. It is expected that it will yield similar result as we get to see from India-UAE CEPA, which helped India achieve overall exports growth of 20% growth to UAE. Gem & jewellery exports to UAE has seen a growth of 25% till date.

MAHABALESHWAR & PANCHGANI TO BE THE NEXT INTERNATIONAL DESTINATION ACOHI CLEARS FIRST ACCREDITATION OF RESORT BELLA VISTA



ACOHI TO PROMOTE LOCAL TOURISM AND BOOST "Athithi Devo Bhava"

Pune (Voice news service):- In an extreme heart-warming move, ACOHI announces Mahabaleshwar & Panchgani of Maharashtra to be the next International Destination for Tourism, Leisure Destination & Medical Tourism with the presence of many National & International Dignitaries at a National Press Conference positioned here at the National Secretariat of ACOHI Asia in Pune. Mahabaleshwar & Panchgani is blessed with rich heritage of History, Nature, and Colonial Era and has not been given the status it deserves. Many Indians go to International destinations in the search of Nature, Flora & Fauna, Leisure along with value for money destinations all across Asia & World but they are unaware of our own rich supreme heritage of destinations available in the form of Mahabaleshwar & Panchgani. "We will be developing the areas in terms of Destination Tourism, Destination Weddings and Heritage Tourism along with National - International Medical Tourism, Education Tourism looking at its proximity to Pune, Mumbai & Kolhapur. All the major and selected Hotels will be trained and certified to handle International Clients in terms of International Food, Hygiene, Safety, Tourism, Language, Etiquettes, Nature and many other aspects along with classifying Hotels as per their standards and linking them with various International Embassies of various countries by giving International Tourists the opportunity to visit and stay at Mahabaleshwar & Panchgani

along with Local & State Tourists of India." "India itself is blessed with heavenly destinations and there will be much less need to travel to other countries if we develop our own tourism spots which are equipped with all major amenities to handle any National & International clients. We only lack in promoting it and positioning it on the National & International map along with hand holding with State & Local Tourism Ministries & Departments to the Hospitality Industry sectors of all cadres of that particular State & City which will be done exclusively now by ACOHI," said Chairman & BOG Chief Dr. Saneew Awasarmmel addressing the Media. We are extremely happy to announce the Accreditation & Certification of the first property named Bella Vista which is classified & certified as ACOHI 4 Star Grade Luxury Property which has fulfilled all the criteria's and has found its place in the premium segment of ACOHI Grading & Accreditation after the rigorous checks of BOG formats which was scheduled in all the departments of the Hotel on satisfying level as per the mandate of ACOHI Accreditation & Star Grading Procedure & Mandate. "Accreditations will also help the brand & property along with others here in Mahabaleshwar & Panchgani as it will also help Government agencies along with our Industry in creating Trust, Uniformity, Secure Atmosphere for Customers, Controlling the Crime, Safety and Security via

ACOHI Protocols," said Dr. Awasarmmel. We are fortunate to be the first in the segment in entire India and feels it's all the hard work of all these years by our entire staff and management who has been playing a key role in making sure all our guests get best of the service & luxury in terms of Food, Stay, Value for Money, Hygiene, Safety, Nature and our warmth via our service. We are fully gearing up to handle any International Clients or for their any immediate need which they could see seeking Mahabaleshwar & Panchgani as an International destination for Tourism and Leisure. Bella Vista is blessed with unique heavenly location which is its USP beating other hotels due to its strategic location in the midst of heavenly nature along with rewarding food of various cuisines adopting the major hygiene & safety standards which has been laid by the ACOHI SAFETY PARAMETERS FOR HOTELS for the safety of our customers which are very supreme in nature and in the interest of customers and their safety. "We are preparing ourselves for the function which is raised by ACOHI in the coming days where luminaries from the Hospitality Industry of India along with Consulate Generals of various Countries to Stars of Bollywood and Government Officials of various States are slated to visit Bella Vista property to announce and stamp the much awaited announcement for Mahabaleshwar & Panchgani marking it as International Destination," said Ramesh Gaur the CEO of Bella Vista. "Apart from the ACOHI Accreditation & Star Grading Procedure & Mandate's important points we will also be marching ahead on using the parameters of ACOHI which are in the interest of our customers, it will make our property absolutely worthwhile as it will give value for money for our customers which are based on Alkaline Water, Pure Oil, Pure Organic Salt, Chemical Free Sugar, Organic Vegetables, A2 Milk, Pure & Best Graded Masala to name the few parameters which we will be acting upon for the safety of our customers giving them premium service, hygiene and safety in food & beverages. These parameters will be used for the first ever time in Mahabaleshwar & Panchgani as per the norms of ACOHI," added Mr. Gaur.

Make the most of 2022 before it ends with Vijay Sales' #ALMOSTGONE year-end sale



Pune (Voice news service):- As the countdown to 2023 begins, let's welcome the New Year with happy hearts and extra happy pockets. Vijay Sales, India's leading consumer retail company, is here with its much-awaited and biggest sale of 2022, the #ALMOSTGONE year-end sale. So whether you are planning for a full home refresh in 2023, or have been eyeing on some gadget for a while, now is the time to indulge guilt-free as the sale goes live with up to 70% discounts. Some of the top picks during this sale are the Samsung A13 at INR 14,499, Sansui 70-inch 4K Android LED TV at INR 59,990, Lenovo Ideapad 1 Laptop at INR 36,100, LG 8kg 5-star washing machine at INR 23,600, the Therabody Theragun G4 Prime at INR 24,999 and more. Homebodies cannot miss the

irresistible deals of up to 47% discount on air conditioners, up to 60% off on bestselling televisions, refrigerators starting from INR 13,490 and washing machines starting from INR 7,990. Those planning to elevate their home entertainment space can purchase soundbars starting from INR 3,499 and portable party speakers starting from INR 999, perfect to bring your house parties to life. The sale also features up to 46% discount on geysers & steamers and up to 50% discount on irons & garment steamers. If you are looking to remodel your kitchen and turn it into your dream space, make the smart move with incredible discounts on our best-selling home appliances. The year-end sale offers up to 50% off on chimneys and cook-tops, kettles and coffee makers, as well as sandwich makers and toasters. Consumers can also

bring home their favourite air fryers and microwave ovens starting from INR 5,990. For Gadget lovers, the sale is no less than a joy land. They can avail of steller discounts on smart watches with prices starting from INR 1,499, headphones at up to 70% off, TWS buds starting from INR 799, entry-level laptops starting from Rs. 22,490, the premium & convertible ones starting from Rs. 37,690, gaming laptops at up to 45% discount, tablets at up to 47% off, storage devices at up to 70% off and Playstation codes starting from INR 500. Fitness enthusiasts can keep track of their daily activities and lifestyle with some of the coolest smartwatches, with prices starting just at Rs. 1,499. There are additional benefits of shopping with Vijay Sales through the MyVS Rewards Loyalty program. Customers can earn 0.75% points on their purchase value every time they shop and can redeem the points at Re. 1 at offline stores. So you can now be a member of the cardless loyalty program and start reaping its benefits at "Zero membership cost".

New Homes sales grew by 50%, new supply by 101% in 2022 on the back of positive buyers' sentiment: PropTiger.com report

Pune (Voice news service):- Residential real estate sales in India have breached 2021 levels by far, witnessing a 50 per cent YoY growth. New launches further strengthened during 2022 and registered a growth of 101% YoY with a total of 4,31,510 new homes launched during the calendar year 2022, said the latest report by PropTiger.com, the country's leading online real estate brokerage company. According to the report titled Real Insight Residential - Annual Round-up 2022 (January - December), a total of 3,08,940 units were sold in 2022 as compared to 2,05,940 units sold in 2021. The figures include the sales numbers for all four quarters in both calendar years for the top eight cities including Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Delhi-NCR (Gurgaon, Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad and Faridabad), MMR (Mumbai, Navi Mumbai & Thane) and Pune. A total of 4,31,510 units were launched in 2022 registering a sharp growth of 101 per cent YoY as against 2021. New launches witnessed a multi-year high, registering a 6 per cent increase as compared to 2015 levels. Mumbai has been the frontrunner in terms of new supply in 2022, taking a share of 39 per cent in the overall launches, followed by Pune and Hyderabad which took a share of 18 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. This improvement in key growth metrics for the sector, the sec-

ond-largest employment generator in India after agriculture, could largely be attributed to improved consumer sentiment on the back of renewed importance of home ownership during the pandemic, and sustained economic recovery post-pandemic. **Mumbai, Pune lead property demand in 2022** The data and insights for 2022 suggest that demand has grown both sequentially and yearly in all four quarters of the year. The western markets Mumbai and Pune continued to show maximum traction, taking a combined share of 56 per cent in overall sales in 2022. A large chunk (26 per cent) of the sales were concentrated in INR 45-75 lakh price range. Notably, the share of units in the more than INR 1 crore price bracket has been growing continuously. This price bracket took a share of 22 per cent in 2022, the highest in a decade. In 2022, 21 per cent of the units sold were ready to move in while the remaining 79 per cent were under construction. In Q4 2022, residential demand was at par with the pre-pandemic levels of 2019. With 80,770 units sold in the final quarter of 2022, the demand registered 19 per cent growth over Q4 2021. While the hike in property prices and interest rates have slowly begun to outweigh positive homebuyer sentiment to an extent and are expected to have a short-term impact, the overall consumer outlook continues to remain positive.

SAPPHIRE FOODS INDIA LTD OPENS 22ND PIZZA HUT STORE AT BAVDHAN



INAUGURATED AT THE HANDS OF Shri Vijay Mohol

Pune (Voice news service):- Pizza Hut, a subsidiary of Yum! Brands, Inc. (NYSE: YUM) and Sapphire Foods is one of the largest franchisees of Yum! Brands Inc. with a track record of successfully operating more than 650 KFC, Pizza

Hut restaurants across India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Pizza Hut is expanding rapidly in the western part of India and today inaugurated its 22nd Pizza Hut store owned by Sapphire foods India ltd under the leadership of Vikrant Vohra, CEO - Pizza

Hut, in Pune which resides at Pune's western outskirts, Bavdhan. The inauguration was done at the hands of Shri Vijay Mohol - Director of Mohol Construction and owner of this heritage property. Also present at the occasion were Kiran Dagde Patil, Dilip Anna Vedepatil, Alpna Varpe and John Chelliah Regional Head - Pizza Hut (West & Central). Pizza Hut has become the most-recognized pizza restaurant in the world, operating more than 18000 restaurants in more than 100 countries. Pizza Hut is the most preferred pizza brand in India, given its freshest, tastiest & affordable Pizzas. Pizza Hut India has been recognized by ET Brand Equity as the 'Most Trusted Food Service Brand' for 13 years.

Bridgestone India partners with Blume Ventures

Pune (Voice news service):- Bridgestone India, part of Bridgestone Group a global leader in tyres and rubber providing solutions for safe and sustainable mobility, has partnered with Blume Ventures, India's leading home-grown venture, to leverage the start-up eco-system of India in the mobility solutions space. The partnership with Blume Ventures is aimed at joining the "Start-up India" initiative of the Government and partnering with the eco-system for nurturing innovation and start-ups in the mobility space. Bridgestone India decided to partner with Blume Ventures which backs entrepreneurs who

are either building to solve large impactful problems in India or taking the best of Indian innovation to global markets. The diverse mandate extends from EdTech, FinTech, Health, Commerce and Consumer internet in the former to DeepTech, AI to SaaS and enterprise software in the latter category. Blume focuses on early-stage, innovative technology-led start-ups. This fits into Bridgestone's interest in creating a vibrant mobility solutions space in India. "Bridgestone India's partnership with Blume Ventures will deepen and widen our innovation strategy and will nurture our leadership role in the

introduction of new mobility services. The corporate venture partnership will allow us to accelerate our strategy of exploring new and disruptive models in the mobility eco-system. As a partner, Bridgestone brings its global leadership position to the Indian market and to India's growing start-up space," said Mr. Parag Satpute, Managing Director Bridgestone India Sanjay Nath, Co-Founder and Managing Partner at Blume Ventures said "We are grateful to our anchor supporters who have emphatically backed Blume. Whether building domestically or for global markets, the best

founders and LPs would like to work with a Fund that can be considered world-class, which has spurred us to keep institutionalizing and bolstering our platform, team and capabilities. Thanks to an increasing reality of IPO and M&A exits, there is a huge resurgence of founders and operators. We're excited for Blume to become the preferred seed partner of choice for both these categories." Bridgestone India has constantly contributed towards enhancing mobility solutions. In 2020 the company invested in Fleeca India Pvt. Ltd. a start-up that provides solutions to Fleet Operators to increase efficiencies of their tyre usage. In April

2022, the company inaugurated a first-of-its-kind Mobility Solutions Institute in India that will enable stakeholders to enhance their knowledge of tyre technology and related mobility solutions. Over the last few years Bridgestone globally has emerged as a leading mobility solutions provider. These solutions include smart sensing tyres that capture and transmit critical data on the health of the tyre. In the last few years, Bridgestone has invested in its Digital Garage, an open innovation platform, where it has built new capabilities in data collection from sensors and RFID, platforms and analytics.



LoanTap Care Community organised a toy donation drive this Christmas for children of Purnkuti Foundation an NGO they are closely connected with. With educational and creative gifts, LoanTap Care Community made the children's Christmas spirit shine brighter.

Designer Anjali Phogat designing looks for Miss Universe Chilli Sofia Depassier



Pune (Voice news service):- Fashion designer and an inspiration for young fashion designers Anjali Phogat, was the recipient of the Emerging Women Entrepreneurs in Fashion Award at the Times 40 Under 40 Achievers Award 2022 ceremony. Anjali Phogat is the founder and creative director of the fashion brand 'Designer Dream Collection'. In today's world, having young, innovative minds is more important than ever. Anjali Phogat is one of the 2022 recipients of the Times 40 Under 40 Achievers Award. Anjali Phogat is

a fashion designer who has done a lot from winning first place in an Indian beauty pageant to establishing a high-end clothing line in the US and around the world. It is important to acknowledge how the world of fashion is very unwelcoming to various body sizes. But, at Designer Dream Collection, her business makes great efforts to bring fashionable and one-of-a-kind outfits for all body types. For them, all bodies are worthy, and all bodies should be celebrated. Anjali dressed reigning Miss Universe Harnaaz Kaur Sandhu and many other Bollywood celebrities

in her couture and excited to dress Miss Universe Sofia Depassier in her couture during & 71st Miss Universe beauty Pageant. Sofia is 24 years of age, 5'8.5" tall and represented the Comunidad Extranjera in the national competition. Sofia Depassier will represent Chile at the 71st edition of Miss Universe. Not a stranger in the world of beauty pageants (she participated at Miss Teen South Florida 2004 where she was awarded Miss Photogenic), she will try her best and follow in the footsteps of Cecilia Bolocco who was crowned Miss Universe in 1987.

Born in the capital city of Santiago, Sofia migrated to the United States at a young age. She's a professional model, a beautician and an actress. Having been honed in the pageants early and with her striking looks, pageant watchers are already tagging Sofia as a frontrunner. Chile is currently ranked 40th at the Big5 Ranking which is two places higher than in 2020. At Miss Universe pageant, its last placement was in 2004 when Gabriela Barros Tapia made it to the Top 10. From 2007-2010, Chile did not participate at the Miss Universe pageant.

Tata Open Maharashtra: Local boy Kadhe gets wildcard along with Nagal as tennis carnival kicks off in Pune on Saturday



Pune (Voice news service):- Indian players Arjun Kadhe and Sumit Nagal were on Friday awarded wildcards in the doubles and singles main draw respectively in South Asia's only ATP 250 event as Pune is all set for tennis carnival with the fifth edition of Tata Open Maharashtra kickstarting at the Balewadi Stadium on Saturday. The announcement was made at the press conference held at the PYC Hindu Gymkhana Club which was also attended by Saurabh Rao, IAS, Divisional Commissioner of Pune, Vikram Kumar, IAS, Commissioner, PMC, Suhas Diwase, IAS, Commissioner, Sports, Govt of Maharashtra, Prashant Sutar, Tournament Director and Chairman of MSLTA and Sunder Iyer, Secretary of MSLTA and Joint Secretary of All India Tennis Association along with Nagal and Mukund Sasikumar. Pune has been at the forefront of all major sports revolutions; it has been a cradle to tennis' growth and popularity in India too. Right from nurturing young talents to inspiring the next gen-

eration of champions, the city has played a defining role every time. The tournament will be organised by the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association in association with the Government of Maharashtra for the fifth year in Pune. "It's proud moment for all of us that we are hosting the fifth edition of Tata Open Maharashtra. We have been successfully doing it for the last four years and this year as well the state government is very keen about successful execution of the tournament. Honourable Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister are all part of the organising exercises which are going on for the last two to three months. The basic objective is to bring tennis at the forefront," Mr Saurabh Rao, Divisional Commissioner of Pune commented while addressing the media. "This tournament has put Pune on the international tennis map and it's a proud moment for us. We welcome all the players to Pune, it's a beautiful city. I give my best wishes to this tournament. We are also getting school children to see the tournament.

They will get motivation by watching top players playing and maybe one of them can go on to win Tata Open Maharashtra in future," Mr Vikram Kumar, Commissioner of PMC said. "All the preparations are in full swing. The new year will begin with this beautiful sports event in Pune. We have the best sporting facilities in the country at Balewadi [Stadium]. Pune is definitely the sports capital also. The organising committee has been working hard and the Maharashtra government has also been very supportive wholeheartedly. More than 250 young tennis players are volunteering at this tournament. We are very excited [for this tournament]," Mr Suhas Diwase, Commissioner, Sports, Govt of Maharashtra further added. Pune-born Kadhe will play alongside Brazil's Fernando Romboli in the doubles. Nagal, on the other hand, is the second wild card entrant in the singles main draw after Sasikumar. The singles field will witness 17 top-100 players including the World No. 17 Marin Cilic. "I strongly feel a tournament of this magnitude is simply not possible without strong government support and we are fortunate enough to get that support. Last year's tournament was well appreciated by the ATP as we conducted it without any issues despite Covid challenges. We have

one of the best fields this year and many players have decided to come again and again to Pune and it's becoming their favourite destination. We keep growing this tournament every year," said Mr Prashant Sutar, Tournament Director of Tata Open Maharashtra and Chairman of MSLTA. "It's always pleasing to see Indians getting wildcards as one of the goals of hosting this tournament is to encourage Indian participation because that contributes to the growth of tennis in the country. Watching our local players fight against top players from across the world motivates many youngsters to take up the sport. I am sure both Nagal and Sasikumar will take advantage of this and produce good performances," said Mr Sunder Iyer, Joint Secretary of All India Tennis Association and Secretary of Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association. Three-time Grand Slam champions Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury, and two-time champion Bopanna will be among the key attractions in doubles. The Tata Open Maharashtra is owned by IMG and managed by RISE Worldwide and sponsored by Tata Motors. Entry will be free for the qualifying rounds. The qualifiers will take place on Saturday and Sunday while the main draw will be played from January 2-7. Where to watch: (Main Draw) Sports18 - 1 SD, Sports18 - 1 HD and JioCinema.

Pt Hariprasad Chaurasiya, Usha Mangeshkar, Hridaynath Mangeshkar to release Dr Vaze's song VishwaSwaraMaui on Lata Mangeshkar on Dec 29



Pune (Voice news service):- To mark the 122nd birth anniversary of Bhavagandharva Pt Master

Deenanath Mangeshkar, a song VishwaSwaraMaui on Swarkokila Lata Mangeshkar, composed with the blessings and guidance of Hridaynath Mangeshkar, penned by poet Dr Deepak Vaze, will be released at the hands of Pt Hariprasad Chaurasiya and Usha Mangeshkar at Dinanath Mangeshkar Auditorium in Vile Parle on Thursday 29th December 8pm onwards. cinematography is by Tushar Panke and the label is Times Music. The programme will be compered

by Smita Gavankar. Apart from the above, the programme brings to you a unique musical extravaganza of Lata didi's popular songs rendered by Ketki Mategaonkar, Savani Ravindra, Priyanka Barve and Vibhavari Apte Joshi with composition by Ajay Madan. The event is presented by Aryan Institute of Chess and Art Excellence, with special support from MIT-ADT University and is coordinated by Avinash Prabhavalkar of Hridayesh Arts.

15-year-old tennis prodigy Manas Dhamne gets wildcard at 5th Tata Open Maharashtra; draws announced



Pune (Voice news service):- Rising India star Manas Dhamne will be competing alongside the World No. 17 Marin Cilic and other global stars at the fifth edition of Tata Open Maharashtra as the 15-year-old tennis prodigy has been given a wildcard in the singles main draw of South Asia's only ATP 250 event, taking place at the Balewadi Stadium in Pune from December 31 to January 7. The Pune-born teenager is the current Asian Junior champion and one of the youngest to clinch that title. Dhamne has also been selected for the Grand Slam Player Grant Programme 2023. Meanwhile, the draws were also revealed on Saturday as the top-seeded Cilic will kickstart his campaign in the second round along with the last

edition's finalist Emil Ruusuvuori, World No. 35 Botich van de Zandschulp and World No. 43 Sebastian Baez, who all have received byes in the opening round. The draw ceremony took place in the presence of Tata Open Maharashtra Treasurer Sanjay Khandare, IAS, along with Prashant Sutar, Tournament Director of Tata Open Maharashtra and Chairman of Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association, Sunder Iyer, Joint Secretary of All India Tennis Association and Secretary of Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association. Dhamne and Ruusuvuori were also present on the occasion. "I welcome all the players to Tata Open Maharashtra. It's a commendable job on part of the organisers to host the fifth edition.

We are set to have a fantastic tournament and I am sure that it will be a treat for the spectators," said Sanjay Khandare, Treasurer of Tata Open Maharashtra. The wildcard also came as a birthday present for Dhamne, who turned 15 on Thursday. He will be making his maiden appearance at the ATP Tour in front of the home fans in India's biggest tennis tournament, which is being conducted by the Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association (MSLTA) in association with the Government of Maharashtra for the fifth year in Pune. "We are delighted to announce Manas Dhamne as the third wildcard. He's a very talented player and I'm sure this tournament will help him greatly in his career. It's not usual for Indian players to play alongside world's top players at such a young age but that is what this tournament is known for, building India's future and providing opportunities for Indian players. I am sure Dhamne will impress the crowd with a good show," Prashant Sutar, Tournament Director of Tata Open Maharashtra and Chairman of Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association, commented. "Manas Dhamne has been making rapid strides. He has a potential to be the next Indian star

and we are committed to give a world-class platform to players like him, helping them bolster their growth at the international level. We have strong names this year and to play against them is going to be an exciting experience for Dhamne. I wish him the best," said Sunder Iyer, Joint Secretary of All India Tennis Association and Secretary of Maharashtra State Lawn Tennis Association. In May, Dhamne appeared in the Challenger event in Italy and he also played two ITF events in Tunisia earlier this month. He will face the World No. 113 American Michael Mmoh in the opening round match on Monday. Besides the 2014 US Open champion Cilic, the singles field also includes 17 Top-100 players. In the doubles, defending champions Rohan Bopanna and Ramkumar Ramanathan will play against each other in the opening round. Bopanna will play along with van de Zandschulp while Ramanathan has partnered with Mexican Miguel Angel Reyes-Varela. Top-seeded pair of Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury will be up against Baez and Luis David Martinez. The prestigious tournament, owned by IMG and managed by RISE Worldwide, is sponsored by Tata Motors.

Digital Kong bags digital communication mandate for MMI Diplomatic, a subsidiary of Emirates Group



Pune (Voice news service):- Delhi NCR based Digital Marketing Agency 'Digital Kong' has won the digital communication mandate for Dubai based MMI Diplomatic. A subsidiary of the Emirates Group, Maritime and Mercantile

International (MMI) holds a 100 year long legacy in supplying premium and super premium spirits, the largest wine portfolio and quality beers in over 40 countries across 4 key geographical regions- the Gulf & Middle East,

East Africa, Indian Ocean and SouthEast Asia. Digital Kong's team will be taking the charge of MMI Diplomatic's official communication across social media channels like LinkedIn and Email Marketing. Karan Dhingra, Key Account Manager, Maritime and Mercantile International, said, "I'd heard tremendously well about Sanjana and her team at Digital Kong through associates in the industry. The team is creative and adapts quickly to the tonality of brands. MMI has always had an innovative approach in retail and marketing and I am sure that the experts at Digital Kong will continue to reflect the same through their analytical and

contemporary approach. Sanjana Nischal, COO, Digital Kong, said, "I'm excited to once again serve the hospitality industry. My team and I equally share MMI's vision and are elated with this partnership. Our focus will be on maintaining the legacy that MMI carries and further using our distinct marketing propositions in delivering an enhanced brand and consumer experience across funnels." Digital Kong through this partnership with MMI Diplomatic is headed towards implementing measurable strategies, focusing on retaining a century-long legacy and keeping global ambassadors and diplomats connected.

Sumit Rai, MD & CEO, Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance

Pune (Voice news service):- "Progressive policy reforms, strong macroeconomic fundamentals, and an aggressive digital push has allowed the Indian economy to show remarkable resilience amid a challenging few years. Not only has the Indian economy demonstrated a strong recovery following the Covid 19 pandemic, but also maintained its growth momentum despite the global headwinds. This display of economic strength has prompted financial pundits to estimate that India will become the 3rd largest economy by 2030. As India sprints towards this aspiration, the insurance sector will play a vital role in fueling its global ambitions. The year 2022 has been

perhaps the most vital one for insurance industry. Not only did it regain growth momentum, but also benefited from a fundamental reorientation brought about by the pandemic. The industry has embraced digital solutions in a big way in recent years to bring operational efficiency and transformation. Strengthening its risk management practices, innovating products & services, and bolstering Customer Experience were among the key priorities for the industry in the year gone by. Riding high on its increasing relevance, the industry also prioritized digital enablement to improve its distribution network and found newer capabilities to strengthen its advisory models. As we look to

the next decade, here are 2 key trends that shaped the industry this year and will have a long-lasting impact. **1. The growing role of technology in bolstering CX:** Coupled with government's aggressive push on Digital Bharat, the digital explosion during Covid years has brought about a new era of reorientation in the insurance industry. There has been an unwavering focus on process automation and optimization thereby making customer life cycle management more seamless. The last year, especially, saw a heavy push on redefining of CX strategies and aligning them with the fast-evolving external environment as well as customer expectations. Going ahead, dematerialization

will play a big role in alleviating CX and could have an effect comparable to that on the stock market. **2. Regulatory reforms:** With its latest reforms, IRDAI has underscored its agenda of sustained growth for the industry and insurance for all. Over the long term, these changes will make financial protection pervasive in the country and improve insurance penetration. More critically, the focus on creating ease of business will bring a structural transformation and elevate the Indian insurance sector at par with its global peers. Not only do we see capital inflows into the sector, but also estimate it becoming among the fastest growing insurance markets in the world."

FOOD & RESTURANT

Three years of McDonald's India's 'EatQual' initiative

Pune (Voice news service):- In its constant endeavour to drive inclusivity through its marquee EatQual initiative, McDonald's India - owned and operated by Westlife Foodworld Ltd has launched a new brand film. This third film from the EatQual franchise has a unique take on inclusivity and aims to shine a light on how specially-abled individuals lead normal lives in their own ways proving how we all are different and yet the same. The film is about a young girl with limited upper limb mobility and it showcases the girl going about her day finishing everyday tasks independently and with ease. She brushes her teeth, gets ready for the day, ties her shoelaces, and so on. She lets nothing stand in



her way of living life just like any other individual. Instead, she simply finds unique ways to accomplish everyday tasks. The film ends with her enjoying her favourite McDonald's burger in the specially created EatQual packaging, as joyfully as her other friends. Arvind RP, Senior Director - Marketing & Communications, McDonald's India (West and South)

said, "EatQual will always remain the key inclusivity platform of McDonald's India. With this new brand film, we wanted to emphasize that each individual has their own unique way of living life, irrespective of their special abilities. McDonald's has always been a feel-good brand wherein we continue to spread happiness and promote inclusivity. With

EatQual, we are constantly working towards strengthening our commitment to making McDonald's India a brand that is truly inclusive." Yogendra Shetty, Director General, National Society for Equal Opportunities for the Handicapped (NASEOH), India said, "We must recognize that people with upper limb disabilities are more than capable of leading regular lives. However, making life simpler for them is a cause that deserves attention. The EatQual initiative by McDonald's India puts into sharp focus the kind of thoughtful changes that can be made to help people with disabilities feel included. It's time for all of us to come together to advance the cause of individuality over disability."

Experience the Sunday bliss at We Idliwale

Pune (Voice news service):- Whether you might be in a mood for a brunch or just a simple meal, comfort food

goes a long way. We Idliwale brings to you an array of Sunday specials with a warm cup of your favourite filter coffee. Dosse with

Srilankan Prawn Curry or a Parotta with Kundapur style chicken curry, they get your taste buds covered. End it with a delectable Co-

conut Jaggery Ice Cream and you are set for the day. Available across the NIBM, Baner and Viman Nagar outlets.

“Bharat Bhushan Award” awarded to Dilip Abnave



Pune (Voice news service):- The national level “Bharat Bhushan” award given by the Niti Aayog of the Government of India was

presented to social activist Dilip Abnave from Pune. The award was distributed by Chief Guest Major General Tejpal Singh Rawat in a program held in Bhopal. This award was given for continuous social service for the last fifty years. At the same time, he did his work through the organizations he founded such as women empowerment, help for poor needy students. Dilip Nave's work has been mainly in educational, social and economic fields. He expressed his satisfaction on receiving the award.

Lexicon Rainbow, a therapy and a child development centre hosted a series of fun filled activities for Christmas

Pune (Voice news service):- The Christmas celebrations at Lexicon Rainbow Therapy and Child Development Centre were full of laughter and happiness. Students participated in exciting activities such as making a Snowman with rice filled socks, and beautifully decorated greeting cards. With Santa Claus making a special appearance, the celebrations were nothing short of fantastic. The students and teachers both had an amazing time exploring their creativity. The students were extremely delighted and were seen making secret

wishes to Santa. The whole environment at Lexicon Rainbow was very overwhelming with festive cheer all around. “The last festival of the year, Christmas brings on lot of cheer and joy as we celebrate it with our students. That smile of amazement on their face on looking at Santa Claus gives us pure delight”, Dr Isha Soni, Centre Head, Senior Occupational Therapist, Lexicon Rainbow Therapy and Child Development Centre, Pune. Children had the most amazing time and went back home with their hands and heart full with so much excitement and joy

Swara Raut first winner in kids category

Pune (Voice news service):- Mayura Event organized by Manini Manav Seva Trust, Manav Seva Charitable Trust, Digital Punekar in association with Game of Crowns - A Cultural Fashion Show for Mr. Miss Mrs. & Kids was organized on 22nd December 2022 at Anna Bhau Sathe Auditorium, Satara Road, Pune.



The fashion show was organized with the aim of promoting, seeing and informing about the Indian culture, as well as giving scope to the talents of the young girls and

bringing them to the society. On this occasion, Dilip Abnave was felicitated for receiving the Jeevan Gaurav

Award and the Pune Samaj Bhusan Award of the Global Scholars Foundation. Swara Raut, the first winner in the kids category, was honored with a trophy by the working president Dilip Abnave. All India Film Corporation Chairman Meghraj Rajee Bhosle, Manini Manavaseva Trust Executive Chairman Dilip Abnave, Vastu Visharad expert Anand Pimpalkar, Sameer Desai were present at the program.

Contribution of many revolutionaries to Indian independence - Nandu alias Sadanand Phadke



Pune (Voice news service):- Gathering is the basic core of the Literary Conference which was held for nationalism. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the nation, and the gathering of the tools for its creation is the Literature gathering. The word literature should not be limited. If we want to look forward to the future, we cannot forget the past. Many revolutionaries have contributed to Indian

independence. Nandu alias Sadanand Phadke, president of the conference, expressed the need to consider the period when we got independence. Karnala Charitable Trust Pune by patriotic lexicographer Chandrakant Shahas, dedicated to the theme of contribution of Marathi literature in Indian Freedom Struggle on the occasion of Amrit Mahotsava year of Indian Independence.

one-day Literature conference was organized at the Anna Bhau Sathe Auditorium, in association with the Marathi Language Preservation Committee, Pune Municipal Corporation, Champion Academy Pune.

On this occasion, Kedar Takalkar who has achieved great achievements in the field of literature, education and culture was felicitated by Mr. The first Jeevan Gaurav Award was given to Urmilatai Karad (Literature and Poet) while Rajkumar Singh Solanki who has performed brilliantly in the field of education was given an honorary degree. President Akhil Bharatiya Sahitya Sammelan Pune Shyam Bhurke, founder Rajkumar Singh Solanki, senior thinker Shital Patil, joint com-

missioner Shivaji Daundkar, working president Nandini Shahasane and other dignitaries were present on this occasion. In the inaugural session of the conference 16 books and souvenirs were released on the subjects of martyrs of the Indian freedom struggle, environment. At 8:45 in the morning, children, students and women in various costumes of the revolutionaries participated in the Granth dindi by hanging 120 photographs of the martyrs of Maharashtra around their necks. This overwhelmed the atmosphere of Granth Dindi. The program was moderated by Madhuri Joshi while introduction was given by Nandini Shahas and vote of thanks by Chandrakant Shahasane.

The ICSI-Registered Valuers Organization inks MOU with the Institution of Valuers



Pune (Voice news service):- The ICSI-Registered Valuers Organization (ICSI-RVO) signed an MOU with the Institution of Valuers (IOV). The objective of this MOU is to facilitate a comprehensive partnership in imparting knowledge and honing the skills of students, registered valuers, and professionals of both Institutes. It would inter alia promote excellence in Academics, Research and Training. On behalf of ICSI-RVO, CS Devendra V Deshpande, President, The ICSI, signed the MoU while Shri Vinay Goel, MD & CEO, IOV

signed the MoU on behalf of IOV, in the presence of Dr. Navrang Saini, Former Chairman, IBBI and Chairman, ICSI-RVO; Shri Tanuj Kumar Bhatnagar, Director, IOV and CS Manish Gupta, Vice President, The ICSI. Emphasizing the need for such collaborations CS Devendra V Deshpande, President, The ICSI said that “The Institute is committed towards the holistic development of all its stakeholders. This association would play a pivotal role in bringing together excellence from across the country for research and capacity-building programs”.

Mr. Sahil Chopra, Founder & CEO- iCubesWire, India's leading digital marketing platform

Pune (Voice news service):- Now is the time to exercise caution if you are a social media influencer. You must abide by the regulations put forth by the government. Reels being shared on social media? What are the rules if you break them and get fined 50 lakhs for it? And how will restrictions affect influencer marketing or social media influencers? Requesting you to please let me know if we can provide a Quote. Thanks for your valuable time and I look forward to your positive response.

Special programme to mark 50 years of the Blood Bank at KEM Hospital, Pune



Pune (Voice news service):- KEM Hospital, Pune organised a special programme to mark 50 years of its blood bank recently. Around 20 regular donors and 45 camp organizers were felicitated for their selfless deeds. The KEM Pune blood bank is one of the oldest in Pune and has grown and flourished under the determined and able leadership of Dr. Jeroo Coyaji, Hon. Administrator of the Blood Bank since March 1972. Dr. J Coyaji was felicitated for her enormous contribution to the blood bank. Dr.Kurus Coyaji, President KEM Hospital Society, Dr. Jeroo Coyaji, Dr.FF Wadia, Trustee and Director of the Department of Nephrology, Dr. Xerses Coyaji, Medical Director, Dr. Vishwanath

Yemul Medical Administrator, Dr. Madhur Rao, Senior Deputy Medical Administrator, Dr. Anand Chaphekar, Chief BTO (Blood Transfusion Officer) in charge of the Blood Bank at KEM Hospital were present on the occasion. Dr.FF Wadia, Dr.Yemul and Dr.Anand Chandekar spoke on the occasion. The citation for Dr. Jeroo Coyaji was read out by Dr. Madhur Rao. On behalf of blood donors and camp organisers Ram Bangad, President of Raktache Nate, Dinesh Shah, Dr.Sachin Jathar, Narendra Rane also spoke on the occasion. Dr. Anand Chaphekar, Chief BTO (blood transfusion officer) and In charge of Blood Bank at KEM Hospital has witnessed the evolution of this unit since 1984. He said that the blood bank has been

helping patients during surgeries, trauma and all types of treatment which may need the back up of blood and blood products. Today the blood bank has a team of 27 skilled members including doctors, technicians, nurses and support staff. Dr. Chaphekar added that the blood bank has been a witness to all the changes that happened in the last five decades in the field of transfusion medicine. The seventies had glass bottles for blood collection and use, which were later replaced by plastic bags followed by integrated plastic bags. Till about four decades ago blood was considered as a whole and single factor. In 1988 KEM Pune was amongst the first blood banks in the city to introduce component separation which included red cells, plasma and platelets. Today component separation is an essential part and a norm of every blood bank which has amplified its use for more patients in need. In the early 2000s this was followed by Leukocyte Reduction to remove WBCs from platelets. Our Blood Bank has been at

the forefront of pioneering and adopting new techniques and technologies which have helped the blood bank transform into a state-of-the-art facility. The blood bank has been one of the first to adopt new technologies like Phenotyping, three cell panel antibody screening for every donor and patient, identification of antibodies and issue of antigen negative blood, Nucleic Acid Amplification Test, or NAAT, a type of viral diagnostic test which adds another safety layer etc., he added. Dr. Madhur Rao, Senior Deputy Medical Administrator KEM Hospital Pune said “bound by our vision of Quality and Ethics in patient care, our blood bank is a center of excellence. Stringent protocols, modern technologies, skilled manpower and safety have been the main pillars of blood bank operations throughout the five decades of its existence. The blood bank has been a part of every procedure and multidisciplinary effort thus proving lifesaving for many. We will continue to drive down this path to deliver quality care to all”.

Master's programme in Expressive Movement Therapy at Sancheti Healthcare Academy

Pune (Voice news service):- Sancheti Healthcare Academy (SHA), a renowned institute in Pune for the past 13 years, has a new feather in its hat. After the successful pilot project of Asia's first Master's programme in Expressive Movement Therapy (MA-EMT), the Academy now announces admissions for the second batch. This Master's programme runs with a Memorandum of Understanding with Savitribai Phule Pune University. Although there are diploma and certification programmes in Dance Movement Therapy offered across India, including at SHA, this is the first Master's degree focusing entirely on Dance/Expressive Movement Therapy. Expressive Movement Therapy, also known international-

ly as Dance Movement Therapy is a creative art therapy that is getting increasingly established in mainstream healthcare in India. Rooted in psychology, this approach aims at the body-mind connection and offers physical and mental well-being to the individual and to the community. With the vision to establish and provide the best possible education in EMT, The MA-EMT course at SHA is academically at par with the equivalent course offered in Western Universities. This meticulously designed programme offers an education otherwise availed abroad at a much lower cost. Additionally, being entirely curated in India, this course addresses the cultural dimension of working in an Indian context.

The MA-EMT curriculum covers the fundamental theories of Dance Movement Therapy while also offering an in-depth understanding of psychology and the application of EMT in various clinical and non-clinical settings. The MA-EMT is a two years hybrid programme with 4 semesters, involving internationally trained faculties from various disciplines, working extensively in the field of psychiatry, mental health and community welfare. Through theoretical and practical studies, internships and clinical supervision, students will gain the self-awareness required to integrate this unique skill set in their therapeutic practice. Students with this Master's degree will be qualified to work with clinical populations in psychiatric

hospitals with patients suffering from schizophrenia or personality disorders, rehabilitation centres for people with addiction or psychological illnesses, cancer hospitals and old age homes. They can also work in educational settings with mainstream children along with children with special needs. In order to apply, the candidates must hold a graduate degree in any field. Application forms are available on the Savitribai Phule Pune University Website. For further details, candidates can get in touch with Sancheti Healthcare Academy on 9112202212 or 8888893944. They can alternatively email at dmtentq.sha@gmail.com. The last date of filling the online admission form is 10th January, 2023.

75,000 Saplings Donated To Mark 75th Independence Day - This Pune Organization Is Promoting Sustainable Lifestyle



Pune (Voice news service):-The Eco Factory Foundation (TEFF), a Section 8 non-profit organization founded by Anand Chordia in 2016, is working relentlessly towards achieving sustainability in the Rural, Urban and Industrial Sectors. To mark India's 75th Independence Day celebrations, Anand Chordia pledged to donate 75,000 saplings. TEFF has grown and donated 37 varieties of Indian native tree saplings which were donated to corporates, schools / colleges and responsible citizen groups to conserve biodiversity and convert barren land to fertile. The

initiative started on 15th August last year and was completed by November 2022. “I completely believe that our nation's health lies in health of the soil, and also concept of waste to wealth and waste to health, I believe we can make our country cleaner, greener, healthier and prosperous if we continue to work in this direction and empower everyone to live sustainably. I feel great that we could do our bit for the 75th independence year for our nation. It makes me feel happy and content and am looking forward to contributing a lot more”, smiles Anand Chordia. The foundation has also



undertaken plant distribution and plantation drives at multiple locations and institutions and private farms. Describing his initiative, Chordia said, To carry out our numerous projects in an organized manner, we have divided our methodology into four S, namely - SEVA, SETU, SATVA and SANVARDHAN. Our purpose is to enable all to embrace sustainable lifestyles and practices. The foundation has four fundamental focus areas - Rural, Urban, Industrial and Individual sustainability with a mission: a) To promote sustainable way of living in multidisciplinary way in urban and industrial sectors.

b) Support and promote eco-entrepreneurship (India's first waste management park). c) Create business opportunities for at the rural level (Shashwat Bharat Krishi Rath).d) Achieve NET ZERO India. Chordia's vision is to make everyone a pioneer in enabling and empowering sustainable living to inculcate healthy lifestyle and foster traditional yet innovative procedures for people, planet and prosperity. “Greening the Earth, improving, enhancing conservation of biodiversity and conservation of Indian Native Trees is what we are working relentlessly towards”, he sums up.

Professor Dr Sanjay B. Chordiya, Founder President & Chairman of Suryadatta Group of Institutes appointed as ‘Chair of the University-Industry Partnership program’ of USA based Global Chamber



Pune (Voice news service):- Global Chamber is a growing, global community of CEOs, executives and leaders in 525 metro regions around the world, everywhere... focused on helping companies grow within and across metropolitan areas. It is the organiza-

tion in the world with hundreds of locations that helps executives grow sustainable business through warm connections and virtual services. Its mission is to grow business from anywhere to anywhere while collaborating with select few organizations. It helps companies, investors and business service providers around the world succeed. Doug Bruhnke the Founder & CEO of Global Chamber established the organization headquartered in USA in the year 2014 and since then its offices / Chapters are spread across 5 continents, 195 countries & 525 metro cities including offices in India at select few metros. We are proud to inform that Suryadatta Group of Institutes is a member of Global Chamber since June 2021. This membership is offered to select few leading institutions

/ companies across the globe based on their credibility & objectives. This membership helps Suryadatta students connect with companies in India & abroad - for instance through business consulting projects, and to connect companies to the institution for support in student projects, internships, and much more. Also, Suryadatta's Founder President Chairman, Prof Dr Sanjay B.Chordiya is Advisory Board member for the Global Chamber since July 2021. Global Chamber's Advisory Board consists of insightful business leaders advising helping companies to increase cross metro and cross border trade, & institutions to connect with companies for multiple opportunities for the benefit of the student fraternity. As Advisory Board member of

Global Chamber, Dr Sanjay B. Chordiya has immensely contributed to the Global Chamber community by mentoring, providing guidance, knowledge sharing through various online conferences summits in the field of education, industry, innovation research, Start-ups, etc. Now, looking at his vast contribution, the top management of Global chamber have appointed Dr Sanjay Chordiya as Chair of the University-Industry Partnership program of USA based Global Chamber. Dr Chordiya is the first Indian to get this prestigious opportunity. On behalf of Mr Doug Bruhnke, Founder CEO of Global Chamber, Mr Cesar Trabanco, Vice President has confirmed the appointment through official letter.

Delhi Transport Corporation signs a definitive agreement with Tata Motors' subsidiary for operating 1500 electric buses

Pune (Voice news service):- Tata Motors, India's largest commercial vehicle manufacturer, today announced that Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) has signed a definitive agreement with its fully owned subsidiary, TML CV Mobility Solutions Ltd. for operation of 1500 electric buses in the city of New Delhi. As part of the agreement, TML CV Mobility Solutions Ltd. will supply, operate and maintain 1500 units of 12-metre low-floor air-conditioned electric buses for a period of 12 years. Tata Starbus EV is an indigenously developed vehicle with

superior design and best-in-class features for sustainable and comfortable commute. Commenting on the announcement, Ms. Shilpa Shinde, IAS, Managing Director, Delhi Transport Corporation said, "We are pleased to have signed an agreement for the largest order of 1500 electric buses in Delhi. This is a significant step towards embracing electric mobility in the capital city. The induction of zero-emission, noise-free buses will greatly help in improving the city's air quality. The new buses will also immensely benefit the com-

muters with its ultra-modern features and comfortable seating." Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Asim Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Chairman, TML CV Mobility Solutions Limited said, "It is indeed a historic occasion for us as we sign a definitive agreement for the country's largest electric bus order. Our relationship with DTC, which stands strong for over a decade, is based on the foundation of mutual trust and cooperation and this order will further strengthen it. We are confident that the electric buses will provide sustain-

able, safe and comfortable public transportation to the commuters of Delhi." Tata Motors' state-of-the-art research and development facilities have steadily worked to engineer innovative mobility solutions powered by alternate fuel technology, including battery-electric, hybrid, CNG, LNG and Hydrogen Fuel Cell technology. Till date, Tata Motors has supplied more than 730 electric buses across multiple cities in India, which have cumulatively clocked more than 55 million kilometres, with an uptime of over 95%.

Kotak Mahindra Bank taps Gen-Next @ premier B-Schools to envision The Future of Banking

Pune (Voice news service):- Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited ("KMBL"/Kotak) today announced that it has collaborated with India's premier B-Schools to launch the inaugural edition of a case study competition titled "EXpLORE - Experience Learning Opportunities in Retail Lending". With this program, Kotak Mahindra Bank intends to tap into Gen-Next for innovative solutions to real business challenges in Retail Lend-

ing products such as Credit Cards, Personal Loans, Consumer Finance, and Housing Finance, among others. Kotak Mahindra Bank has partnered with 9 premier B-schools for this initiative - IIM Lucknow, IIM Indore, IIM Kozhikode, XLRI Jamshedpur, JAMNAL Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, National Institute of Industrial Engineering, Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies, Management Development Institute Gurugram

and Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Delhi. The competition follows a case studies based approach. These case studies have been designed with focus on technology-first approach to solve customer problems. "We are delighted to launch 'EXpLORE' - an initiative to not only explore bright young minds at B-schools in the country but also tap them. This initiative is part of Kotak's Technology first approach to solving custom-

er problems," says Mr Ambuj Chandna, President - Consumer Assets, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited. "With this unique Industry-Academia collaboration, we are commencing a long-term engagement with the Gen-Next at premier B-Schools." The entries will be evaluated by the leadership team of Kotak Mahindra Bank. The winning entries will receive cash prizes from a pool of Rs. 2 lakh, in addition to certificates and exciting goodies.

Globally Renowned Multi-Talented Anu Vaidyanathan Announces 14 Cities Comedy World Tour Dates in 2023



Pune (Voice news service):- Globally Renowned Multi-Talented Anu Vaidyanathan has announced a run of comedy show dates for her standup tour in 2023. Fourteen cities worldwide will get to see the Filmmaker, Author, Standup-Comedian, Triathlete, and Parent - Anu Vaidyanathan - from January

2023 to August 2023. The new run of shows will kick off in the United States on Tuesday 10 January 2023 at New York, with stops scheduled in Calgary and Seattle. She would then be going live in cities globally including Australia, India, UK, and New Zealand culminating with Edinburgh. See a

full list of tour dates and venues below. Anu Vaidyanathan is among very few women of Indian Origin to host an hourlong standup comedy show in English at the Fringe in 2022. In addition, last year, Anu performed to packed houses in Berlin, Amsterdam, Paris, and London, and some other smaller clubs in (Budapest, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Barcelona, and Madrid). She has shared the stage with renowned names such as Michelle Wolf, Janine Harouni, Erika Ehler, and Lucy Pohl with TV/stage/film credits in London, USA.

On the appeal of live comedy, Anu says: "I believe in structure and understanding how much you can push your material. It frees me - I can play and explore how I'm going to say it. Last year the experience of the Edinburgh Fringe was a really wonderful way to directly communicate with an audience. The audience came from all parts of the world, and I was very surprised that both men and women related to different parts of the same hour." Tickets for the Indian tour will go on sale in the first fortnight of January. Stand-up comic Anu Vaidyanathan used to be an engineer and international triathlete, who became a mum and then a comic and filmmaker. Anu Vaidyanathan in her shows regales audiences with her insights from being a comedian, filmmaker and sometime engineer who loves endurance sports, including parenting.

Launch of digital rupee is a historic milestone in the evaluation of currency- Shri Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India

Pune (Voice news service):- Digital currency would bring in a lot of operational efficiency in the system and will foster financial inclusion stated Shri Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India at an interactive session on "Digital Rupee: A Way Forward" organised by the PHD Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI).

Shri Ajay Kumar Choudhary, Executive Director, Reserve Bank of India stated that as of 2021, as per the central bank digital currency (CBDC) tracker almost 105 countries representing 95 percent of the world GDP have taken steps to inculcate digital currency in their ecosystem. He further added that around 50 countries are at the advanced phase of exploration to launch the digital currency, while 10 countries have fully launched the digital currency. According to Shri Choudhary, digital rupee will add the resilience associated with innovation in the way payments are made. It will

also boost innovation in the cross-border payment space, he said. The markets will develop more huge cases in time to come as per their specific requirement. CBDC will give the public the desired experience while ensuring consumer protection but avoiding the damaging social and economic consequences, he added. Shri Choudhary explained that digital currency is going to fill the strategic space needed at this point of time. He said that digital currency is expected to complement rather than to replace the current forms of currency. It would provide an additional avenue to the users as a payment instrument. He stated that the Reserve Bank of India would be taking all steps to ensure that the issuance of CBDC follows a calibrated and nuanced approach with adequate safeguards to tackle any potential difficulties and risks so as to build a system which is inclusive, competitive, and responsive to innovation and tech changes.

Explaining the difference between digital currency and UPI, Shri Choudhary mentioned that like physical currency, digital currency issued by the central bank is the RBI's liability whereas UPI is a means of payment. Any transaction through UPI is the respective bank's liability, he pointed out. Shri Anuj Kumar, General Manager, RBI stated that the digital currency has nothing to do with payments and this is a physical currency getting converted into a digital one. He explained that just like we hold physical currency in our physical wallet, this would be a digital currency in our digital wallet. The form is only changing, and no other thing is changing. He stated that the cost involved in printing the physical currency would be eliminated in the long term. Other than the printing cost, there would be other costs like setting up a press, getting the manpower, importing high-quality paper from foreign locations and the ink used, all this would be saved.

Shri Hemant Jain, Vice President, PHDCCI in his welcome address stated that the Central Bank's digital currency is based on the principals of trust, safety, liquidity, and integrity. He informed that the switch over to digital currency will plug the loopholes and eventually wipe out all the black money in the system. Shri Jain informed that the PHD Chamber of Commerce has been working as a catalyst of promoting Indian industry and trade for the past 117 years. He said that PHDCCI is a forward-looking dynamic apex organization and a voice of industry and trade. He further informed that almost 70 percent of the members fall under the MSME category which is the focus of the government today. Shri Saurabh Sanyal, CEO & Secretary General, PHDCCI gave the concluding remarks and Vote of thanks for the interactive session. Dr S P Sharma, Chief Economist | DSG, PHDCCI gave Opening Remarks and Moderated the session.

PM flags off Vande Bharat Express connecting Howrah to New Jalpaiguri via video conferencing

Pune (Voice news service):- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi flagged off the Vande Bharat Express, connecting Howrah to New Jalpaiguri via video conferencing today. The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Joka-Taratata Stretch of the Joka-Esplanade Metro Project (Purple Line). He also dedicated four railway projects to the nation including Boinchi - Shaktigarh 3rd Line, Dankuni - Chandanpur 4th Line Project, Nimtita - New Farakka Double Line and Ambari Falakata - New Maynaguri - Gumanihat Doubling Project. The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for the redevelopment of the New Jalpaiguri Railway Station. Addressing the gathering, the Prime Minister apologised for not being physically present today, as for him, this is the day to bow to the land of Bengal as the history of the freedom struggle is infused in every particle of Bengal. "Land from where the call of Vande Matram originated, saw the flagging off of Vande Bharat today", the Prime Minister said. The Prime Minister recalled that on Dec 30, 1943, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose hoisted the Tricolour in the Andaman and Nicobar

Islands and set the wheels in motion for the independence of India. On the 75th year anniversary of this historic day, the Prime Minister informed that he got the opportunity to visit Andaman to name an island in honour of Netaji. He further added that India had taken a resolve to start 475 Vande Bharat trains during the celebrations of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and the train being flagged off today from Howrah to New Jalpaiguri is one of them. Mentioning the multiple projects whose foundation stones are being laid and inaugurated today, the Prime Minister said that the government is spending approximately 5000 crores for the completion of these projects. The Prime Minister also informed that he will get the opportunity to dedicate many projects pertaining to the cleanliness of the Ganga and drinking water to West Bengal later in the day. He informed that more than 25 sewage projects have been approved in West Bengal under the Namami Gange Scheme. Out of which 11 projects are already complete and seven are being completed today. Work on 5 new schemes with an outlay of Rs 1500 crore is starting today. The

Prime Minister mentioned one of the key projects i.e. Adi Ganga project for cleaning of which infrastructure worth 600 Cr rupees is being established. The Prime Minister said that along with cleaning rivers, the central government has focussed on prevention which revolves around creating a large number of modern sewage treatment plants. This is being done keeping in mind the requirements of the next 10-15 years. The Prime Minister linked reforms and development of Indian Railways with the development of the country. That is why, he said, the central government is making record investments in the modern railway infrastructure. A nationwide campaign is going on to transform the Indian Railway, he said. He listed modern trains like Vande Bharat, Tejas Hum Safer and VistaDome coaches and the modernisation of Railway Stations including New Jalpaiguri, doubling and electrification of Railway lines as examples of this modernization. He also mentioned eastern and Western dedicated freight corridors as projects that will bring revolutionary changes in the logistics sector. The Prime Minister high-

lighted strides made in the fields of Railway safety, cleanliness, coordination, capability, punctuality and facilities. The Prime Minister emphasised that in the last 8 years, Indian Railways worked on the foundation of modernity and the coming years will see Indian Railway embarking on a new journey of modernization. The Prime Minister informed that while 20 thousand route kilometre rail lines were electrified in the first 70 years of Independence, more than 32 thousand route kilometres have been electrified since 2014. The Prime Minister said that the Metro Rail system is an example of India's speed and scale today. "Metro network which was less than 250 km before 2014 had the highest share in Delhi-NCR. In the last 7-8 years Metro has expanded to more than 2 dozen cities. Today Metro is running on an approximately 800 km long Metro track in different cities of the country. Work is going on Metro routes of more than 1000 km", he informed. Referring to the challenges posed to India in the yesteryears, the Prime Minister remarked that it had a very negative effect on the development of India.



Pune (Voice news service):- India's first Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) fueled green trucks by Blue Energy Motors, have begun commercial operations for JK Lakshmi Cement, one of India's leading cement companies. In a flag off ceremony, held at JK Lakshmi Cement's Sirohi plant in Rajasthan, the first fleet of LNG trucks left for their clinker grinding unit at Surat. The flag-off ceremony was attended by the senior management representatives of both the companies and other important stakeholders. With this JK Lakshmi Cement becomes the first cement company to deploy LNG trucks for long haul transportation of raw materials in the country. Speaking on this occasion, Mr. Anirudh Bhuwalka, Chief Executive Officer, Blue Energy Motors commented "Sustainability should not be a choice anymore, but a compulsory way of life. We are delighted to share our vision of revolutionizing In-

dia's green trucking industry with JK Lakshmi Cement. The infra industry is very closely connected to trucks, and such adoptions institute trust and instill confidence that will eventually pave the way towards a carbon-neutral environment. Our trucks have been designed and conceptualized, keeping in mind the Indian conditions and climate requirements. It's the best immediate solution to pollution caused by the heavy duty-vehicle sector. With the cement industry giant joining hands with us, we are confident that more players in the industry will begin their journey of sustainable mobility and become part of our green trucking revolution". Elaborating on the initiative, Mr Arun Shukla, President & Director, JK Lakshmi Cement Limited, said, "Our country is aiming to reduce the carbon intensity of the nation's economy by less than 45% by the end of the decade, and achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. JK



Lakshmi Cement fully supports this vision and believe in sustainable & responsible growth that encompasses our society and the environment. We have taken multiple steps to reduce both direct and indirect carbon emissions. Deploying LNG trucks of Blue Energy Motors is our first step towards sustainable transportation as LNG is an excellent green alternative for fossil fuel. This initiative will act as a game-changer for the country's cement transportation industry and help facilitate the eventual transition towards a more circular economy". The market entry of Blue Energy Motor's LNG-fueled trucks started with the introduction of BE5528 tractor as the first model. The trucks have been designed to deliver best in class TCO with unmatched reliability and next generation telematics system for safe and comfortable long-haul drives. BE5528 uses FPT Industrial multipoint stoichiometric

combustion engine to ensure best-in-class fuel consumption and lower noise than diesel engines. With 280hp power and 1000Nm torque, it is one of the most powerful natural gas trucks on the Indian market. The BE5528 truck has the industry's first 990-lit fuel tank which provides the range of up to 1400 km in a single fill. Given this long range, issues pertaining to range anxiety are well taken care of and with the upcoming LNG dispensing network, sufficient coverage across key routes in the country will be available without need of frequent refilling. The company has installed capacity to produce 10,000 trucks / annum which can be augmented further as the eco system mature and demand ramps up. It launched the first manufacturing plant at Chakan, Pune in September this year. The facility was inaugurated by Shri Nitin Gadkari, Hon'ble Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways.

Price reduction paves the way for expanded access to highly effective multidrug-resistant tuberculosis treatment

Pune (Voice news service):- Viatrix, a global healthcare company, MedAccess, and TB Alliance have announced a new agreement to reduce the price of pretomanid, a drug used to treat multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, by 34%. Pretomanid is part of two new treatment regimens with high efficacy and shorter treatment durations recently recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the preferred regimens for most drug-resistant tuberculosis patients. Pretomanid (Pa) is used in combination with bedaquiline (B), linezolid (L), and sometimes moxifloxacin (M) to form BPaL and BPaLM - six-month, all-oral treatment regimens, found to be effective at curing 89-91% of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) patients treated. Globally, less than two-thirds of drug-resistant TB patients are successfully treated. Previously recommended treatment options have been limited, expensive, toxic, and lengthy - requiring patients to take more than 20 pills per day for 9-20 months. With the new WHO guidance on TB treatment, almost all drug-resistant TB patients will now be eligible for the shorter BPaL/BPaLM regimens. In July 2020, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) had approved the TB drug pretomanid (developed specifically for certain drug-resistant forms of the disease) for conditional access under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Program (NTEP), making India the second country in the world to provide regulatory approval for this product. TB is on track to regain its dubious distinction as the world's deadliest infectious disease,

killing more than three times as many people as COVID-19 every day. In 2021, an estimated 1.6 million people lost their lives to TB, including 187,000 people living with HIV. The WHO estimates that 10.6 million people fell ill with TB in 2021, an increase of 4.5% from 2020. Of the new cases, an estimated 450,000 were drug resistant. The COVID-19 pandemic also hampered access to MDR-TB treatment. In 2021, 162,000 MDR-TB patients were on treatment, compared to 182,000 in 2019. Bold investments are required to reverse recent increases and get on track to meet global goals to end TB. Better treatments, vaccines and diagnostics are required alongside more trained healthcare workers and stronger health systems. Civil society organisations have long called for greater access to short-course treatment regimens like BPaL and BPaLM. Today's announcement will help to expand access to a critical new treatment in more than 140 countries, including those with the highest TB burden. A volume guarantee to be provided by MedAccess to Viatrix will see the ceiling price of pretomanid reduced to \$240 Ex Works per six-month treatment course. It will help to bring both BPaL and BPaLM substantially closer to \$500 per patient course. MedAccess projects that its guarantee will enable an additional 36,000 patients to be treated successfully and help avert 31,000 adverse events that require hospitalisation or cause disability as patients switch from the current standard-of-care. "We welcome this news and commend Viatrix, MedAccess, and TB Alliance for the announcement

of a new agreement to reduce the price of pretomanid, a drug used to treat multidrug-resistant tuberculosis, by 34%", said Blessi Kumar, CEO, Global Coalition of TB Activists. "Coming on the heels of the WHO consolidated guidelines for DR-TB treatment, we hope this will be the game changer in ensuring access for people with DR-TB and reaching better treatment outcomes. The challenge, however, continues to be the uptake at country level and we urge National Treatment Programmes to make this shorter regimen available for people with DR-TB at the earliest. Ensuring early and easy access is key to a people-centred, rights-based TB response." Governments and global procurers are expected to make direct savings of \$15.6 million thanks to the guarantee, with additional savings for national healthcare budgets as they care for fewer patients with long-term MDR-TB. "Drug-resistant TB is a global health threat impacting the lives of hundreds of thousands of people every year," said Michael Anderson, CEO of MedAccess. "Working in partnership, we can accelerate access to shorter-course DR-TB treatment to protect lives, help end TB, and curb antimicrobial resistance. A volume guarantee will provide Viatrix with confidence to significantly reduce the price of pretomanid, making this highly-effective drug more widely accessible for people who need it." Viatrix President Rajiv Malik said: "We are proud of our innovative partnership with MedAccess and TB Alliance in setting new standards for accelerating the pace of access and delivering breakthrough treatments to patients in the greatest need. At

Viatrix, a key way we deliver on our mission to empower people worldwide to live healthier at every stage of life, regardless of geography or circumstance, is to provide access to medicines. The partnership is a step forward in the global fight against TB to enable greater access and affordability for those affected by multidrug-resistant TB." Six-month drug-resistant TB treatment regimens were first developed by TB Alliance, a not-for-profit product development partnership committed to developing and delivering ground-breaking TB therapies. Its drug pretomanid received its first regulatory approval from the US Food and Drug Administration in 2019 as part of a six-month, all-oral regimen. For high-burden countries, TB Alliance has granted non-exclusive licenses for pretomanid to multiple high-quality drug manufacturers, including Viatrix. "Whether it's the United States at the height of the COVID-19 emergency, or Ukraine in a time of war, six-month DR-TB therapy has already proven itself to be an invaluable tool in the fight against TB," said Mel Spiegelman, MD, President and CEO, TB Alliance. "No medical innovation is complete until it's able to reach every patient who needs it. This new access partnership will accelerate the pace of progress and move us closer to a world in which no one dies of TB." Pretomanid, used within the BPaL and BPaLM regimens, is already being piloted and implemented in operational research programs run by government agencies and civil society organisations, and supported by USAID, KOICA and the STOP TB Partnership.