

### NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

The Supreme Court set aside a Punjab and Haryana High Court order staying a controversial State law which provides 75% reservation for local youth in private sector jobs paying less than ₹30,000 a month. Industry associations have said the law “affects the idea of India as an economic unit”.

India’s first water taxi service was inaugurated in Maharashtra connecting the Navi Mumbai area to mainland Mumbai.

India and the United Arab Emirates will sign the first ever bilateral Free Trade Agreement between the two countries. India-UAE trade was expected to revert to prepandemic level this year and touch \$60 billion in this financial year, an official said.

Taking a stern view of a speech by Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in the island nation’s Parliament, criticising the decline of “Nehru’s India” to a state where almost half the Indian MPs face “criminal charges”, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) summoned Singapore’s High Commissioner to India Simon Wong. Officials told Mr. Wong that Mr. Lee’s comments were “uncalled for” and “unacceptable”, according to government sources.

India’s oil imports from Iraq surged to a 29month high of 1.3 million barrels per day in January, data showed.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday made a strong pitch for a multilateral initiative to support low income and middle income nations in meeting pandemic and climate change risks, backed by an independent and transparent governance structure. Speaking at the first G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank governors’ meeting this year, Ms. Sitharaman said a common pool of funds, with increased funding from multilateral development banks, must be made available for global public goods.

China’s Ministry of Commerce on Thursday asked India “to improve its business environment” and to ensure “non-discriminatory” treatment of its firms, in the wake of a new ban on Chinese apps and recent tax probes on Chinese firms.

### INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING

1. An Initial Public Offering (IPO) refers to the process of offering shares of a private corporation, or a company owned by the government such as LIC, to the public or to new investors in a new stock issuance. These IPOs are used by the company to raise capital and other funds by offering shares through the primary market. Following the IPO, the company is listed on the stock exchange. While coming with an IPO, the company has to file its offer document with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

2. **Conditions - In order to protect investors, the SEBI has laid down rules that require companies to meet certain criteria before the issue IPO. Among other conditions, the company must have Net tangible assets of at least Rs 3 crore, and net worth of Rs 1 crore in each of the preceding 3 full years, and A minimum average pre-tax profit of Rs 15 crore in at least 3 of the immediately preceding 5 years.** Proceeds - If the issue raises fresh capital, the proceeds of the IPO go to the company, and can be utilised for future growth, debt reduction, etc. If the issue involves offer for sale by promoters or existing investors, the money goes to them and not to the company. In the case of LIC, the issue is an offer for sale by the government, and the IPO proceeds will go to the Government of India.

3. Fixing the price in an IPO issue - The market regulator, SEBI, does not play a role in price fixation of securities. The per-share price of the public issue is fixed by the issuer in consultation with the merchant banker. They arrive at the total valuation of the company based on parameters such as assets, revenues, profits, and future cash flow projections. Then, the total value of the company is then divided by the post-offer shares outstanding to arrive at the price of each share.

4. Investors - There are various categories of investors who can invest in an IPO. This includes, Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) like foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), mutual funds, commercial banks, insurance companies, pension funds, etc. All individuals who invest up to Rs 2 lakh in an issue are classified as retail investors. Retail investors investing above Rs 2 lakh are classified as high net worth individuals. An investor has to be 18 years of age.

5. A brokerage account is needed to invest, and you have to be at least 18 years old to have one. Factors to be looked for before investing - The credibility of the promoter should be the top consideration. But investors must also do a financial analysis of the company, and compare it with peers in the same sector before investing in the IPO. Investors must follow QIBs, who are perceived to have the expertise for assessment and evaluation, and a greater ability to do due diligence.

6. **Advantages of listing a company While listing on the stock exchange calls for additional disclosures by companies on a regular basis, leading thereby to more stringent compliance requirements.** It may help a company raise capital, and diversify and broaden its shareholder base. Listing provides an exit to existing investors of the company. A listed company can raise share capital for growth and expansion in the future through a Follow-on Public Offering (FPO).

### ATTUKAL PONGALA FESTIVAL

1. The Attukal Pongala festival in Kerala will be a muted affair this year with strict Covid-19 protocols limiting rituals to the temple and homes. The Attukal Pongala of Kerala is the world’s largest congregation of women for a festival.

2. It is a famous festival celebrated annually at Attukal Bhagavathy Temple, Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. It is a 10 days event commencing on the Karthigai star of the Malayalam month of Makaram or Kumbham and closing with the sacrificial offering known as Kuruthiharpanam at night. On the 9th day of the festival the Attukal Pongala Mahotsavam takes place.

3. Pongala, which means ‘to boil over’, is the ritual in which women prepare sweet payasam (a pudding made from rice, jaggery, coconut and plantains cooked together) and offer it to

**Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Thursday said Kiev had little chance of joining NATO despite its ambition to do so, citing resistance within the alliance.**

**Australia said it had added the U.S.-based far right extremist group National Socialist Order and planned to add the entirety of the Palestinian group Hamas to its list of outlawed terrorist organisations as concerns rise about radicalised children.**

**Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed as "absurd" claims his country wants to acquire atomic weapons, in remarks on Thursday amid signs of a breakthrough in nuclear talks.**

**Russia announced on Thursday it could respond militarily if Washington does not meet its security demands and said it wanted all U.S. troops out of Eastern and Central Europe**

**France announced on Thursday that it would withdraw its troops from Mali over a breakdown in relations with the country's ruling junta, after nearly 10 years of fighting a jihadist insurgency that still poses a major threat to the West African nation and beyond.**

**Model laws on asylum and refugees that were drafted by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) decades ago but not implemented by the government could be revised by an expert committee, according to Commission member Justice M.M. Kumar's suggestion at a recent meeting. The NHRC held a discussion on "protection of the basic human rights of refugees and asylum seekers in India" on January 20 and many participants raised the issue of India not having a specific law for refugees and asylum seekers.**

**At a meeting at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) called by Russia to discuss the Ukraine crisis, on the seventh anniversary of the Minsk II ceasefire agreement, India called for a diplomatic solution to the tensions. "India has been in touch with all concerned parties. It is our considered view that the issue can only be resolved through diplomatic dialogue," India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, T.S. Tirumurti, told the Security Council.**

**Amid new flashpoints between Russia and the United States over Ukraine, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will leave for Germany and France, where he will meet counterparts from Europe and the U.S. for a number of meetings including an EU ministerial on the IndoPacific.**

the Goddess or 'Bhagavathy'. This ritual can only be performed by women. Attukal Bhagavathi is believed to be an incarnation of Kannaki, the central character of the Tamil epic 'Silappathikaaram'.

### **NEW INDIA LITERACY PROGRAMME**

**1.**Ministry of Education (MoE) has approved the 'New India Literacy Programme' for the period FYs 2022-2027, to cover all the aspects of Adult Education to align with the National Education Policy (NEP). Instead of 'Adult Education,' the ministry has decided to use 'Education for All' as the previous term did not represent all non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above across all state and union territories.

**2.**The 'New India Literacy Programme' will cover non-literates of the age of 15 years and above in all state/UTs in the country. Objectives of the scheme is to impart not only foundational literacy and numeracy but also to cover other components such as Critical life skills like financial & digital literacy, commercial skills, health care, child care & education, and family welfare; Vocational skills development with a view towards obtaining local employment; Basic education including preparatory, middle, and secondary stage equivalency; Continuing education including engaging holistic adult education courses, as well as other topics of interest or use to local learners, such as more advanced material on critical life skills.

**3.Implementation - The scheme will be implemented via online mode through volunteerism. The students of the schools registered under Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) and around 50 lakh teachers of government,** aided and private schools will participate as volunteers. Training, orientation, workshops of volunteers might be organized through face-to-face mode. All the resources and materials shall be provided through digital modes like TV, radio, cell phone-based free, open-source apps, portals, etc. Salient features - School will be Unit for implementing the scheme.

**4.**Schools to be used for conducting survey of beneficiaries and Voluntary Teachers (VTs) Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will be imparted through Critical Life Skills to all non-literates in the age group of 15 years and above Performance Grading Index (PGI) for State/UT at district level CSR/Philanthropic Support may be received by hosting ICT support, providing volunteer support Target - For FY 2022-27, the target for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy is 5 crore learners using Online Teaching, Learning and Assessment System (OTLAS) in collaboration with NIC, NCERT, NIOS.

### **EMPLOYEE STOCK OPTION PLAN**

**1.**Udaan, a B2B e-commerce platform, has announced an employee stock option plan (ESOP) policy covering all its employees with significant changes including the removal of 'cliff' vesting period for all ESOPs. The one year 'cliff' period is a widely prevalent industry practice that requires employees to wait for one year for their ESOPs to start vesting.

**2.Employee stock option plans are offered by companies to their employees as equity compensation plans.** These grants come in the form of regular call options and give an employee the right to buy the company's stock at a specified price for a finite period of time. ESOPs can have vesting schedules that limit the ability to exercise.

**3.**ESOs are taxed at exercise and stockholders will be taxed if they sell their shares in the open market. They can have significant time value even if they have zero or little intrinsic value.

### **HELMET MUST FOR CHILDREN UNDER FOU**

**1.**The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways issued a notification on February 15 to amend the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, making the two safety equipment mandatory for children between the age of nine months and four years.

**2.**The new rule comes into force one year after the notification. The rules already provide for every person above the age of four to wear a protective headgear while on a two-wheeler. While travelling in a car, a child under 14 has to be secured by a seatbelt or a child restraint system. **3.**The notification says the safety harness will have a vest worn by a child, and a strap worn by the driver. The latest amendment also restricts the speed of two wheelers carrying such children to 40 kmph.

### **CHENNAVEER KANAVI**

**Giving an assurance to Andhra Pradesh that the Central government would extend full support for its development, especially in the infrastructure sector, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said his Ministry would be spending about ₹3 lakh crore on road construction in A.P. in three years.**

**An inter ministerial Central team has assessed the damage caused by drought to kharif crops in western Rajasthan as part of an exercise for releasing financial assistance for mitigating the impact of drought.**

**1.**Celebrated Kannada poet, critic and professor Channaveera Kanavi, **whose poems spoke of simplicities of life and betrayed a yearning for rural idyll, recently passed away. Kanavi has published more than 55 books,** including collections of essays and on literary criticism. **2.**Besides awards from central and state sahitya academies, he was conferred Pampa and Nadoja awards in recognition of his contribution to literature.