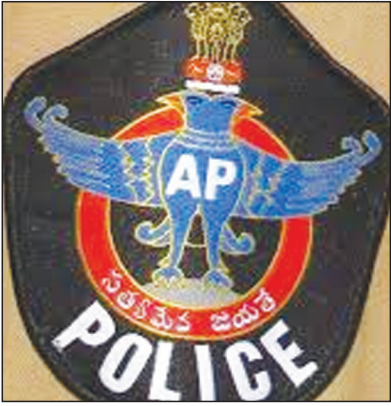


Arrested terror suspect a ‘big fish’ bomb maker, influenced by Zakir Naik: Andhra Police

Nirav Modi’s brother Nehal held in US on CBI, ED extradition requests; Justice Dept to oppose bail

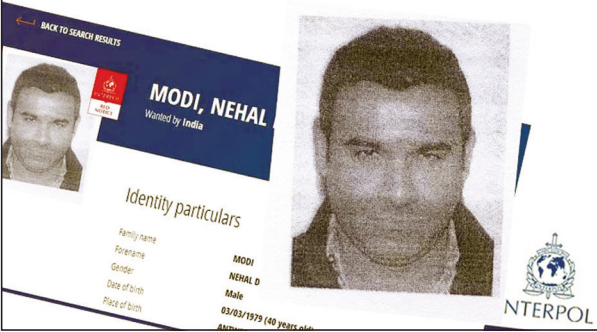
RAYACHOTI: The Andhra Pradesh police on Saturday identified one of the two terror suspects arrested here recently by Tamil Nadu police as a “big fish”, with advanced bomb making skills. Kurnool Range Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Koya Praveen said Abubacker Siddique operated as a lone wolf, providing his terror expertise to those who shared his radical ideology and was influenced by radical fugitive preacher Zakir Naik. “This fellow (Siddique) whom we caught is too big a fish than what we had thought... This fellow is too big a fellow, who had travelled all across the length and breadth of this country. Who frequently travelled to the Gulf also, Abubacker Siddique,” Praveen told PTI. Recently, Tamil Nadu’s Anti-Terrorism Squad arrested Siddique and his accomplice Mohammed Ali in Rayachoti in Annamayya district. “Zakir Naik school of thought. He is more of a lone wolf. Ideologically motivated



and an expert in making IEDs and electronic devices, timer explosive devices,” said Praveen. According to police, Siddique is an expert maker of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), timer explosive devices and other highly lethal materials. Police conducted a fresh round of searches today at the duo’s premises, but did

not find any explosives. They managed to confiscate some documents and pen drives. Earlier, police recovered daggers, sickles, digital timers, clock switches, speed controllers, ball bearings, nuts and bolts, binoculars, walkie-talkies, mobile phones, and hacking software. They also seized maps of major Indian cities, coding manuals, ISIS-inspired literature, property documents, digital storage devices, cheque books, and financial records linked to suspicious transactions. On July 3, police disposed of a parcel bomb seized from them. After settling in Rayachoti, the DIG noted that Siddique, who is in his mid-50s, had carried out the bomb blast at BJP’s Malleshwaram office in Bengaluru. Siddique was allegedly involved in the 2011 pipe-bomb planting attempt during BJP veteran and former Deputy Prime Minister L K Advani’s rath yatra in Tamil Nadu’s Madurai, among other terror activities.

NEW DELHI: Authorities in the United States Friday arrested Nehal Modi, brother and alleged co-conspirator of fugitive diamond businessman Nirav Modi, on the request for extradition submitted by India’s agencies, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which have been probing the 2018 PNB loan fraud case. The Indian agencies have been informed by their American counterparts about the arrest, as well as given assurances from the US Justice Department that his bail plea will be opposed during the next date of hearing in the extradition proceedings. The next hearing is scheduled



for 7 July, sources privy to the developments told The Print. Nehal, a Belgian national, has been named as an accused in charge sheets filed by both CBI and ED in the bank loan fraud, amounting to an excess of Rs 13,000 crore, which was borrowed fraudulently from the Pun-

jab National Bank. His elder brother Nirav Modi and uncle Mehul Choksi have been named as the prime accused in the case. Notably, Nirav Modi has been in custody in the United Kingdom since March 2019, on account of pending extradition proceedings, while Mehul Choksi

was detained by authorities in Belgium, where his extradition is also pending. Indian agencies managed to obtain a Red Corner Notice against Nehal in July 2019, based on which Interpol requested all its 192 member states to arrest or detain him upon spotting him in their countries, after which extradition or deportation proceedings could begin. In its charge sheet, the CBI has alleged that Nehal Modi attended a meeting with senior managers of the Punjab National Bank on 26 January, 2018, days before the CBI booked Nirav Modi, his family, Choksi, and retired deputy manager of the bank Gokulnath Shetty.

Antarctica is the new tourist hotspot. Stop it from being loved to death

There is a global teacher shortage. How fintech can help tackle it

NEW DELHI: The number of tourists heading to Antarctica has been skyrocketing. From fewer than 8,000 a year about three decades ago, nearly 125,000 tourists flocked to the icy continent in 2023-24. The trend is likely to continue in the long term. Unchecked tourism growth in Antarctica risks undermining the very environment that draws visitors. This would be bad for operators and tourists. It would also be bad for Antarctica – and the planet. Over the past two weeks, the nations that decide what human activities are permitted in Antarctica have convened in Italy. The meeting incorporates discussions by a special working group that aims to address tourism issues. It’s not easy to manage tourist visitors to a continent beyond any one country’s control. So, how do we stop Antarctica being loved



to death? The answer may lie in economics. We recently modelled future visitor trends in Antarctica. A conservative scenario shows by 2033-34, visitor numbers could reach around 285,000. Under the least conservative scenario, numbers could reach 450,000 – however, this figure incorporates pent-up demand from COVID shutdowns that will likely diminish. The vast majority of the Antarctic tourism industry comprises cruise-ship tourism in the Ant-

arctic Peninsula. A small percentage of visitors travel to the Ross Sea region and parts of the continent’s interior. Antarctic tourism is managed by an international set of agreements together known as the Antarctic Treaty System, as well as the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO). The Treaty System is notoriously slow-moving and riven by geopolitics, and IAATO does not have the power to cap visitor numbers.

NEW DELHI: Demand for teachers is expected to rise in the coming years but many educators are leaving the industry due to stress – both in the classroom and in relation to their finances. This could increase class sizes and amplify teacher burnout, not to mention adding to recruitment and training costs for schools. Technology could help teachers live a better financial life and stay longer on the job, while also supporting their financial wellbeing. A global teacher shortage is looming, which would affect students for years to come. Teaching shortages could lead to larger class sizes and increased teacher burnout, ultimately placing a long-term strain on education systems worldwide. A recent UNESCO projects report found that 44 million additional teachers are needed worldwide to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030. The report highlights a demand for 70% of these additional teachers at the secondary level and a need to replace over half of the existing teachers leaving the profession. The World Economic Forum’s Future of Jobs Report 2025 notes that teachers will be among the occupations expected to experience high growth in the years to come.



But teachers are leaving the profession for a myriad of reasons, including high stress levels, burnout, lack of support, heavy workloads and challenging working conditions. Financial strain is also often cited as one of the top reasons teachers leave the field. Teaching is stressful enough but struggling to make ends meet at the same time can be too much for some to handle. An exodus of teachers would have wider effects. One of the most pressing issues relating to a teacher shortage is “recruiting, preparing and retaining sufficient numbers of qualified teachers,” according to the

Brookings Institute. Hiring and training teachers is no easy task. Larger school districts in the US, for example, spend nearly \$25,000 on average to replace a departing teacher. No wonder then that 86% of US public schools are struggling to hire educators. Helping teachers, schools and pupils survive and thrive during these challenging economic times requires the right tools. Advances in financial technology (fintech) can play a role in helping to curb an exodus from the teaching profession. Fintech and financial literacy teachers by improving their financial literacy and education can also help

them in the classroom, both by relieving money worries and providing them with financial knowledge to pass on to students. Advances in fintech can provide teachers with relevant, useful and actionable information at the click of a button on mobile devices. Accessible and relevant financial education is a great start for teachers, but having the ability to apply that information in the workplace is also critical in paving a path to financial wellness and stability. Fintech solutions that support teachers’ financial journeys such as personal finance and budgeting apps, investment and savings apps and digital retirement planning tools, can all help teachers make their money work harder and smarter. The percentage of people who say budgeting has “helped them get out or stay out of debt” has increased from 73% in 2018 to 89% in 2024. In the UK, over 18 million people used budgeting apps in 2024, while another report indicates that 40% of Germans also use digital budgeting apps. Investment apps are widely regarded as having democratised investing, making it more accessible to a broader range of individuals. Mobile brokerage apps often offer resources to help users learn about the basics of investing, develop a good financial strategy and other crucial concepts.

Delhi govt to launch 4-tier mental health programme for children, workers and seniors

Himachal becomes first state to launch Aadhaar-based face authentication for ration distribution

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government is set to launch a dedicated mental health programme focused on children, the working class and senior citizens, through a four-tier model offering teleconsultation, counselling, OPD care and a referral system. In a bid to tackle the rising cases of stress and anxiety across age groups, a comprehensive mental health programme under the AYUSH intervention will help people of all ages, Delhi Health Minister Pankaj Singh said. He said that the initiative – aimed at promoting holistic well-being – will focus on three key population groups: children, the working class and senior citizens. The service will be anonymous, accessible and rooted in traditional systems of medicine including Ayurveda, Homoeopathy, and Unani, he said, adding that



this will be the first focused mental health initiative under Ayush and it will support people at every stage – from a phone call to a consultation, and even hospital-level care if needed. Many people hesitate to speak about mental stress. Through this platform, they can reach out anonymously and seek help without fear or stigma, the minister said. The programme will operate through a four-level structure starting from telephonic consultations, moving to

mental health counselling, followed by OPD services at Ayush hospitals and a final referral stage in case specialised psychiatric intervention is needed. The programme is especially significant at a time when stress is increasingly being reported among school children, with some showing early signs of aggression and anxiety. Also, working professionals are burdened with high-pressure targets and a lack of work-life balance. Women who juggle home

and workplace responsibilities will also be covered within this group. The elderly, too, face isolation and other age-related mental health challenges. Under the plan, people can call a dedicated helpline and book a time slot to speak with a counsellor. If the counsellor feels that in-person help is required, the case will be referred to OPDs at Ayush hospitals. There are currently four such teaching hospitals in Delhi – Karol Bagh, Defence Colony, Najafgarh and Nanak Pura. If further care is necessary, the final level will involve referral to allopathic or psychiatric facilities based on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Functioning under the Delhi government’s health framework, the AYUSH systems comprise Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy.

SHIMLA: Himachal Pradesh became the first state in the country to introduce Aadhaar-based face authentication (FaceAuth) for the distribution of ration to eligible beneficiaries under the Public Distribution System (PDS), officials said on Saturday. Until now, authentication was carried out using either OTP-based or biometric methods. However, frequent challenges such as SMS delivery failures and biometric mismatches at the UIDAI end were causing inconvenience to the beneficiaries, Gokul Butail, Principal Advisor to the Chief Minister, said in a statement. With the launch of the FaceAuth mechanism, the process has now been streamlined and made more accessible, Butail noted, adding that, unlike traditional methods, this new facility uses a mobile camera via an app installed on the fair price shop (FPS) owner’s smartphone, enabling direct facial authentication of beneficiaries. “In a significant technological advancement, the department of Digital Technologies and Governance (DDTG), Himachal Pradesh, has introduced Aadhaar-based face authentication (FaceAuth) for the distribution of ration to eligible beneficiaries under the Public Distribution System (PDS),” Butail said. He emphasised that this pioneering initiative underscores the state’s commitment to leveraging digital technology for enhancing public service de-



livery and promoting inclusive access to essential services. The new system is expected to improve the authentication success rate and reduce verification time, ensuring a faster and more efficient ration distribution process, the statement added.

Delhi University UG admissions: Phase 2 of CSAS from July 8; first allocation list on July 19

Vijay too welcome to strengthen hands to dislodge DMK, says Palaniswami

NEW DELHI: The University of Delhi announced on Saturday that the second phase of its undergraduate admission process under the Common Seat Allocation System (UG)-2025 (CSAS-UG) will commence from July 8. According to a press release issued by the university, candidates who have completed the first phase must log in to their dashboard at ugadmission.uod.ac.in to fill in their preferences for programme and college combinations. The preference-filling window will remain open till 11:59 pm on July 14. Once the deadline ends, the preferences will be auto-locked. Candidates who are yet to register will also be able to apply as the university has decided to keep both Phase-I and Phase-II open until the same deadline of July 14. The university has emphasised that due care must be exercised while ordering preferences. Additionally, a correction window has been announced for candidates who have already completed Phase-I. This one-time correction facility will



be open from Sunday to 11:59 pm on Friday (July 11), allowing students to edit their application forms. However, the forms must be submitted in a single attempt and once submitted, they cannot be reopened. The university will declare simulated ranks at 5 pm on July 15, followed by a preference-change window until 11:59 pm on July 16. The first CSAS allocation list will be announced at 5 pm on July 19. Candidates must “Accept” the allot-

ted seat by 4:59 pm on July 21, after which colleges will verify and approve applications until July 22. The last date for fee payment in the first round is July 23. Vacant seats will be displayed on July 24 and a preference-reordering window will be open until July 25. The second CSAS allocation list will be released at 5 pm on July 28 and candidates can accept their seats till 4:59 pm on July 30, followed by college approval by July 31 and fee payment

by August 1. The university has advised candidates to regularly check the admission website – admission.uod.ac.in – for further announcements and updates. More rounds may be announced based on seat availability. The academic session at the Delhi University is set to begin on August 1. This year, the university is offering 71,624 undergraduate seats across 79 courses in 69 colleges. To enhance flexibility, the university has modified subject combination rules. Now, students can qualify with either one language and three subjects or two languages and two subjects, and whichever combination yields the best Common University Entrance Test (CUET) score will be considered. Additionally, the requirement of at least 30 per cent marks in the CUET language paper for BSc (Honours) programmes has been removed. A new auto-accept feature has also been introduced to ensure that students do not lose their allotted seats due to delays in accepting them on the portal.

CHENNAI: The AIADMK was open to forging electoral ties with parties opposed to the ruling DMK, and even TVK founder actor Vijay was welcome to join hands to dislodge that party, its general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said here on Saturday. Launching the party’s election campaign logo of a raised fist with two leaves, and AIADMK flag in the background, Palaniswami said all political parties with a unanimous view of dislodging the DMK should strengthen the combine and contest together. “This is our objective. We will be happy to have in our alliance such parties keen on sending the DMK packing home. They should also support us,” Palaniswami told reporters when asked if he would invite actor Vijay to join

the AIADMK camp, since the TVK had on July 4 announced not to align with both the DMK and BJP. “In my view, all like-minded parties should unite to defeat the anti-people DMK. We would be happy to forge an alliance with those parties that want to defeat the DMK. Their co-operation is required,” the former Chief Minister said. Asked about TVK’s announcement on projecting Vijay as its chief ministerial candidate, Palaniswami replied, “its that party’s decision.” The AIADMK’s objective was to remove the ‘evil government,’ he said. Recalling BJP leader and Union Home Minister Amit Shah’s earlier announcement, Palaniswami said as Shah had already mentioned, the AIADMK would lead the NDA in Tamil Nadu, and he would be the chief ministerial

candidate. At the AIADMK state headquarters, Palaniswami launched the new logo with a slogan for the 2026 election that read: Makkalai kaapom, Tham-izhagathai meetpom (let’s protect the people, let’s redeem Tamil Nadu). He would commence his tour of the state on July 7 from Mettupalayam in Coimbatore and cover all the 234 assembly constituencies gradually. Addressing the event, he exuded confidence that AIADMK would return to power in the 2026 Assembly election. “This campaign journey has a big goal – a goal to defeat the Stalin model DMK government. This journey reflects the flaws and failures of the DMK government and the need to remove the DMK,” the AIADMK general secretary said.