

Headlines at a Glance - 25th August 2020

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Lawyer Prashant Bhushan refuses to apologise in SC for tweets against judiciary

Supreme Court lawyer Prashant Bhushan has declined to apologise for his tweets wherein he criticised the top court and Chief Justice of India, SA Bobde. The tweets represent his bona fide belief and retracting his statements would be an insincere apology, Bhushan said in a statement submitted before the Supreme Court on Monday.

“An apology has to be sincerely made. If I retract a statement that I otherwise believe to be true or offer an insincere apology that in my eyes would amount to contempt of my conscience and of an institution (Supreme Court) that I hold in highest esteem,” the statement said. On August 20, the Supreme Court had asked Bhushan to reconsider his stance and offer an apology by Monday (August 24) while hearing on the sentence to be awarded to him. Earlier, on August 14, the court had ruled that Bhushan was guilty of contempt of court and kept the matter for deciding on punishment for August 20.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*

IAF launches mobile app to provide career-related information to

aspirants

Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria on Monday launched a mobile application, "MY IAF", that will provide career-related information to those who want to join the Indian Air Force, an official statement said. The app was launched by the chief of the Air Staff at Vayu Bhawan as part of the 'Digital India' initiative, it said. "The user-friendly format of the app serves as a single digital platform interfacing the users with the details of selection procedure, training curriculum, pay and perks etc for both officers and airmen in the IAF," the statement said. "The application, developed in association with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), provides career-related information and details for those desirous of joining the IAF," it said. It is available on Google Play store for android phones and is linked to the IAF's social media platforms. It also provides glimpses into the history and stories of valour in the IAF, it said.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Driving licenses, vehicle documents to stay valid till Dec 31: Govt

In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the validity of expiring driving licences and motor vehicle documents has been extended till 31 December, the government said on Monday. The earlier extension was made till 30 September. This is the third such extension after the earlier advisories on 30 March and 9 June. MoRTH said the decision was taken because of the existing conditions in the country to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This step of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is likely to help out the citizens in availing transport related services, the ministry said. The ministry also urged all states and union territories to implement the letter in spirit so that the "citizens, transporters, various other organizations which are operating under this difficult time may not get harassed and face difficulties".

SOURCE: *Livemint*

AIIB to provide \$500 million loan for Mumbai Urban Transport Project-III

Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) Monday signed a loan agreement for a \$500 million Mumbai Urban Transport Project-III to improve the network capacity, service quality and safety of the suburban railway system in Mumbai. The project is expected to increase network capacity in the region with the reduction in journey time and fatal accidents of commuters. It is estimated that among primary beneficiaries of the project, 22% are female passengers who will benefit from improved safety and quality of service. The project will assist in improved mobility, service quality and safety of passengers of the suburban railway system of Mumbai, by providing faster, more reliable and higher quality transport services compared to road-based transport. There will be direct safety benefits to passengers and the public through the introduction of trespass control measures.

SOURCE: *Times of India*

Businesses with an annual turnover of up to Rs 40 lakh are GST exempt, says Finance Ministry

The Ministry of Finance yesterday said that businesses with an annual turnover of up to Rs 40 lakh

are GST exempt. Initially, this limit was Rs 20 lakh. In a tweet, the Finance Ministry said, additionally those with a turnover up to Rs 1.5 crore can opt for the Composition Scheme and pay only 1 per cent tax. It said, once GST was implemented, the tax rate on a large number of items was brought down. As of now, the 28 per cent rate is almost solely restricted to sin and luxury items. Out of a total of about 230 items in the 28 per cent slab, about 200 items have been shifted to lower slabs. The Ministry also informed that significant reliefs have been extended to the construction sector, particularly the housing sector which has been placed at the 5 per cent tax rate. GST on affordable housing has been reduced to 1 percent. It said that the taxpayer base has almost doubled since the rollout of GST. The numbers of assessee covered by the GST at the time of its inception were about 65 lakh and now the assessee base exceeds 1.24 crore.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*