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AATO Urges AirAsia to Reconsider Suspension of Kuala Lumpur-Sri Vijaya Puram Flights





The Andaman Association of Tour Operators (AATO) has formally urged AirAsia to reconsider its decision to suspend flights between Kuala Lumpur and Sri Vijaya Puram, scheduled to take effect from April 12, 2025.

A delegation led by AATO President M. Vinod met with the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Admiral D.K. Joshi (Retd.), on March 13 to discuss the issue. The Andaman & Nicobar Administration has already submitted a proposal to the Government of India, requesting waivers on landing charges and airport fees to ease operational costs for AirAsia and encourage the airline to continue servicing the route.

According to AATO, passenger demand on the Kuala Lumpur-Sri Vijaya Puram sector has been steadily increasing, particularly with the approaching peak travel season. The association pointed to ongoing promotional efforts, such as trade fairs and roadshows in Kuala Lumpur, as further boosting travel interest. Additionally, AATO highlighted the potential for AirAsia to tap into new revenue streams through cargo operations, making the route financially viable.

In its appeal, AATO suggested that instead of a full suspension, AirAsia could consider reducing the frequency of flights to maintain vital connectivity between Southeast Asia and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The association stressed that the route plays a crucial role in promoting tourism, facilitating business ties, and enhancing regional connectivity.

AirAsia has yet to respond to the appeal. The tourism sector, stakeholders, and travellers are now awaiting the airline's decision, hoping for a positive outcome that supports the region's growing travel and trade links.



Turtle Festival Celebrated at B-Quarry Beach in Campbell Bay





The Nicobar Forest Division organized the firstever Turtle Festival at B-Quarry Beach, Campbell Bay, on Thursday, with the theme "An Initiative Towards Conservation of Sea Turtles with People's Participation from All Walks of Life." The event aimed to raise awareness about the conservation of endangered sea turtles, particularly the Leatherback turtle.

The festival was attended by approximately 20 school students from GPS, Campbell Bay, accompanied by their teachers. Mr. E.S. Rajesh, Pramukh, Panchayat Samiti, graced the occasion as the chief guest. Other notable attendees included Mr. Venkat Rao, Pradhan, GP Govind Nagar, and Mr. Vishnu, a researcher from the Wildlife Institute of India. The significance of the festival and its objectives were outlined by officials from the Nicobar Forest Division, including the Divisional Forest Officer and the Assistant Conservator of Forests.

Addressing the gathering, the chief guest emphasised the need to protect the Leatherback turtle, a species that nests only on a few select beaches in Great Nicobar and Little Andaman within Indian territory. He assured full cooperation

from the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members and the local community in supporting the conservation efforts initiated by the Nicobar Forest Division.

A key highlight of the festival was the release of newly hatched sea turtles into the ocean. The attendees, especially the students, actively participated in releasing a total of 40 Leatherback turtle hatchlings and 200 Olive Ridley turtle hatchlings into the sea. Their enthusiasm and involvement reflected the success of the event in fostering environmental awareness.

The efforts of the Forest Department were widely appreciated by the participants. According to the Divisional Forest Office, Campbell Bay, similar Turtle Festivals will be organized at various other beaches across Great Nicobar Island to further promote sea turtle conservation and encourage greater community participation in wildlife protection initiatives. (Story Based on PR)



Chief Secretary Inaugurates Mobile Library Van at Marina Park





The Chief Secretary of Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Dr. Chandra Bhushan Kumar, IAS, inaugurated the Mobile Library Van at the scenic Marina Park on Thursday. The event was attended by Secretary (Education) Mr. L. Kumar, IAS, Secretary (Vigilance) Mr. Neeraj Bharthi, IAS, Secretary (APWD) Ms. Purva Garg, IAS, along with officials from the Education Department and school children.

In his address, Dr. Kumar lauded the Education Department's efforts in expanding the concept of the Mobile Library and emphasized the administration's commitment to fostering reading habits across all age groups. He described the initiative as a step towards making books more accessible to children and senior citizens alike. "One of the best habits we can cultivate in our children is a love for reading, and it is our collective duty to encourage this," he remarked.

The Chief Secretary also urged students to explore books on diverse subjects, highlighting their role in self-discovery and personal growth. He further expressed his desire for the Mobile Library service to be extended to other islands, ensuring wider reach beyond the South Andaman District.

Welcoming the dignitaries, Director of Education Mr. Vikram Singh emphasized the Mobile Library's role as an extension of the State Library, particularly in promoting reading habits in rural areas. He announced the addition of a new halting station for the Mobile Library Van at Marina Park, providing access to visitors, students, and the general public.

The Mobile Library boasts a collection of approximately 1,008 books, including materials for competitive exams, sports-related literature, children's comics and short stories, biographies, English fiction, regional language books, religious texts, newspapers, and periodicals. A dedicated corner for senior citizens has also been established, along with books covering the historical aspects of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

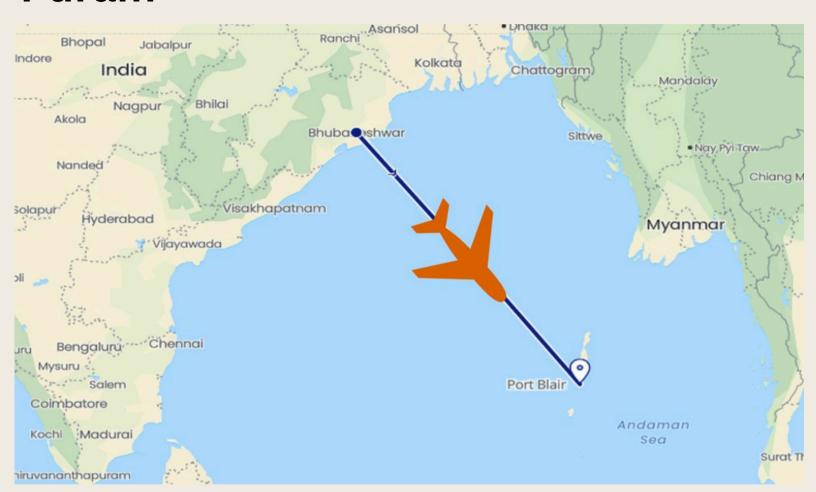
The inauguration of the Mobile Library Service at Marina Park marks a significant milestone in the administration's literacy drive. The initiative aims to bring books and educational resources directly to the people, promoting knowledge and fostering a culture of reading and learning. Additionally, it

seeks to enlighten tourists about the sacrifices of India's freedom fighters and the rich cultural heritage of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. (Story Based on PR)





Fishermen Welfare Association Welcomes Direct Flight Service Between Bhubaneswar & Sri Vijaya Puram





The Fishermen Welfare Association of Andaman & Nicobar Islands has expressed its heartfelt gratitude to the central and state governments for introducing a direct flight between Bhubaneswar & Sri Vijaya Puram, set to commence operations on March 30, 2025.

In a letter addressed to Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, Civil Aviation Minister, Mr. Ram Mohan Naidu, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, Odisha Chief Minister, Mohan Charan Majhi, and Lt. Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the association lauded the initiative, calling it a significant step towards strengthening connectivity between the islands and mainland India.

B. Hema Raju, General Secretary of the Fishermen Welfare Association, highlighted that the new air route will greatly benefit residents of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Visakhapatnam by providing them with a direct and convenient travel option to their hometowns. Additionally, he emphasised that the move is expected to boost tourism, trade, and overall economic growth in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The association extended its appreciation to the authorities for their continued efforts in enhancing infrastructure and connectivity in the region and expressed hope for further improvements in the future.





ANCO FEST-SPARDHA 2.0 Kicks Off with Enthusiasm and Competition





The much-anticipated ANCO FEST-SPARDHA 2.0 began with grandeur, marking the start of ten days filled with sports, culture, and creativity. The festival was inaugurated by Mr. Chandra Bhusan IAS, Chief Secretary of A&N Administration, who attended as the chief guest. Also present at the vibrant opening ceremony were Mr. L. Kumar, IAS, Secretary of Education, Mr. Vikram Singh, Director of Higher Education, and Principals of various Higher Education Institutions. The event officially commenced with the chief guest declaring the festival open. This was followed by the Students' Council President administering the oath to the ten contingents, symbolizing sportsmanship and unity among participants.

The festival's sporting events kicked off with an electrifying football match between ANCOL and DBRAIT, where ANCOL emerged victorious. Teams from TGCE and Pondicherry University also put up remarkable performances, setting the stage for fierce competition in the coming days. Alongside the sports events, cultural competitions unfolded at Andaman Law College, where students displayed remarkable creativity. Events such as

Technical Poster Making and Sculpture Making from Waste attracted enthusiastic participation.

In the Technical Poster Making contest, DBRAIT secured the first and third positions, while DIET Garacharma claimed second place. The Sculpture Making from Waste competition, themed 'Beauty from Waste', celebrated sustainability and artistic innovation. Pondicherry University, Brookshahbad, claimed the top spot, followed by TGCE in second place and DIET Garacharma in third. Students transformed discarded materials into stunning works of art, showcasing their ingenuity and environmental consciousness.

As the first day concluded, the energy and enthusiasm of the participants set the tone for an eventful festival ahead. With ANCOL's football triumph and the awe-inspiring artistic displays, ANCO FEST-SPARDHA 2.0 is poised to be an unforgettable celebration of sportsmanship, creativity, and camaraderie. (Story Based on PR)



Awareness-Cum-Screening Programme on TB Held at Mohanpur





As part of the ongoing 100 Days Intensified TB Campaign, an Awareness-cum-Screening Programme on tuberculosis (TB) was organized at Ayushman Arogya Mandir, Mohanpur, on 15th March 2025. The event aimed to educate the public and health officials about TB prevention, early detection, and treatment options.

The programme was conducted in the presence of Dr. Alice Bwa, Medical Officer, Dr. R.P. Hospital, Mayabunder. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Bwa provided an insightful overview of tuberculosis, explaining its transmission, symptoms, and the difference between latent and active TB. She also debunked common myths associated with the disease, stressing the importance of timely diagnosis and adherence to treatment.

Mr. Madhava Rao, District Programme Coordinator for North & Middle Andaman, elaborated on Nikshay Poshan Yojana and the Nikshay Mitra initiative, highlighting the government's support for TB patients. He informed participants about the nutritional and financial assistance available under these schemes.

The session also emphasized preventive measures

such as vaccination, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and ensuring proper ventilation in homes to curb the spread of TB. Attendees were encouraged to take advantage of free screening and testing services available under the campaign.

The 100 Days Intensified TB Campaign is a crucial initiative aimed at eliminating tuberculosis by enhancing awareness, improving access to medical care, and ensuring that those affected receive timely treatment and support. (Story Based on PR)



A&N Islands Observes Animal Husbandry & Animal Welfare Awareness Month





The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD), Government of India, dedicated the period from February 14 to March 13, 2025, as Animal Husbandry & Animal Welfare Awareness Month. This initiative aims to promote good animal husbandry practices and enhance the welfare of livestock across the country.

In line with this national initiative, the Department of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services, Sri Vijaya Puram, organised a series of activities across the Andaman & Nicobar Islands to raise awareness and encourage responsible animal care.

One of the key events was a series of college-level workshops titled 'Compassion in Action – Empowering Youth for Animal Welfare'. These workshops, conducted in five different colleges, sensitized 441 students on various aspects of animal welfare, including animal protection laws and veterinary first aid techniques. Short informative videos on animal welfare were screened, and students actively engaged in interactive sessions. They were also introduced to life-saving CPR techniques for pet animals, and informative leaflets were distributed to reinforce their learning.

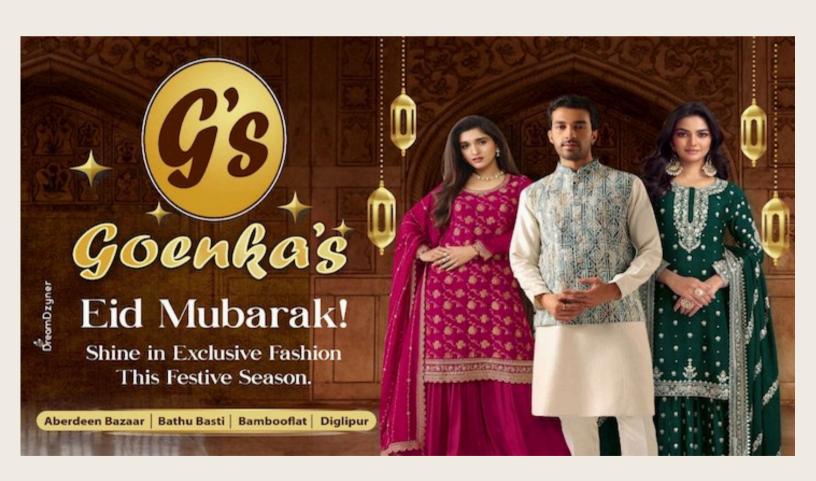
Demonstrating their commitment to the cause, 44 students volunteered to serve as Animal Welfare Ambassadors under the title 'Guardians of the Voiceless'. These ambassadors will undergo specialized training and receive certification to effectively advocate for animal welfare. Their role will be instrumental in bridging the gap between the community and animal welfare organizations, ensuring broader participation and sustained impact.

Additionally, house-to-house visits were conducted by the Department of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services, in collaboration with local ward members. During these visits, livestock farmers were educated on good animal husbandry practices, with an emphasis on safe garbage disposal. Officials highlighted the dangers of livestock scavenging through waste, particularly the risks associated with ingesting polythene bags. Nutritious fodder cuttings were distributed, and farmers were encouraged to adopt hygienic milk production practices.

Special attention was given to tribal farmers, who were motivated to construct low-cost shelters for

their livestock. They were advised to gradually transition from traditional livestock rearing methods to scientific, enclosure-based systems, ensuring better care and productivity.

The month-long campaign successfully fostered awareness and encouraged community participation in animal welfare, reinforcing the importance of responsible animal husbandry across the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. (Story Based on PR)



Training Program on Scientific Beekeeping Held in Ferrargunj





To emphasize the importance of honeybee conservation, promote bee-derived products, and enhance scientific beekeeping skills, the Department of Agriculture, A&N Administration, in collaboration with the National Bee Board, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW), New Delhi, organized a two-day district-level training program on "Scientific Beekeeping – Role of Bees in Agricultural Production and Its Economics" on March 10 and 11, 2025.

The program was inaugurated by Ms. Lalita Tigga, Block Development Officer, as the chief guest, in the presence of Mr. Abdul Basheer, Zilla Parishad Member, Ferrargunj, and Mr. Ramesh Kumar, Joint Director (Agriculture) at the Community Hall, Ferrargunj, South Andaman.

In her inaugural address, Ms. Tigga encouraged Self-Help Groups (SHGs) to adopt beekeeping as a profitable self-employment venture and a vital support activity for agriculture. She emphasized the economic and ecological benefits of beekeeping in enhancing agricultural productivity.

Welcoming the participants, Mr. Ramesh Kumar

highlighted the critical role of bees as pollinators in maintaining biodiversity, improving crop yields, and ensuring environmental health. Mr. Abdul Basheer also urged farmers and SHGs to embrace beekeeping, citing its potential to generate additional income while supporting sustainable farming practices.

During the technical sessions, experts from the Agriculture Department provided in-depth insights into beekeeping, including hive management, colony maintenance, and honey extraction techniques. The participants were also briefed on government schemes and institutional support available for beekeeping ventures under HVADA.

On the second day, a field visit was conducted at the beekeeping unit of Ms. Sumati Joydhar in Chouldari village. Participants observed live demonstrations on honeybee rearing, colony maintenance, and honey extraction techniques. They also engaged in hands-on training, gaining practical experience in beekeeping operations.

The training program concluded with an interactive session, where participants shared

their experiences and discussed potential challenges in beekeeping. The initiative is expected to empower local farmers and SHGs with the knowledge and skills required to adopt beekeeping as a sustainable livelihood option. (Story Based on PR)





Virtual Workshop Conducted on Inland Vessel Registration Under New Rules





In a significant step toward streamlining inland vessel operations, a virtual workshop was conducted on Wednesday to familiarize vessel owners and crew members with the mandatory registration process on the Central Database Application Portal developed by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).

With the introduction of the Inland Vessel Rules, 2022, all inland vessel owners and crew members are required to register on the centralized platform. The Port Management Board (PMB), as per the directive of the Chief Secretary of the Andaman & Nicobar Administration, was tasked with coordinating this initiative and organizing a sensitization program for stakeholders.

The workshop, held in the presence of Secretary (Shipping). Cdr. Sanjay Verma, Senior Consultant (M), IWAI, and his team, featured a detailed presentation on the functionalities of the online registration system. Participants were guided through the platform's features, ensuring a smooth transition to the new digital system.

Officials from PMB, the Directorate of Shipping Services, and representatives of inland vessel

owners from Sri Vijaya Puram, Diglipur, Mayabunder, Swaraj Dweep, and Shaheed Dweep attended the program. Stakeholders were also given access to a demo staging portal to practice the registration process firsthand.

The PMB assured vessel operators of its full support in implementing the new system, emphasizing that this initiative would facilitate the sustainable development of inland waterways and boost the tourism sector in the region. (Story Based on PR)



Training Programme on Seaweed Cultivation Held at NIOT Campus





The Department of Fisheries, Andaman and Nicobar Administration, in collaboration with the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) - ACOSTI, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, organised a one-day Training-cum-Orientation Programme on Seaweed Cultivation at the NIOT Campus, Dollygunj. The initiative aimed to promote livelihood opportunities for coastal communities, particularly women from Self-Help Groups (SHGs), through seaweed farming.

A total of 24 SHG women, identified by the Rural Development Department, participated in the programme. The event was attended by key dignitaries, including Ms. Jagtap Kalyani Rajendra, Director of Fisheries; Dr. K. Gopal, Joint Director (Fisheries); Dr. Anbu Rajan Lawrence, Scientist (E), NIOT-ACOSTI; and Ms. Gurjeet Kaur, Block Development Officer, Prothrapur.

In her address, the Director of Fisheries welcomed the attendees and lauded the enthusiasm of SHG members. She highlighted the economic potential of seaweed cultivation and its viability as a sustainable livelihood for coastal communities. Dr. Anbu Rajan Lawrence emphasized that such training sessions would be conducted periodically to encourage seaweed farming across the Islands. He introduced the NIOT technical team and assured continuous technical assistance for seaweed cultivation.

Ms. Gurjeet Kaur expressed her gratitude to the Department of Fisheries and NIOT-ACOSTI for organizing the programme. She assured the support of the Rural Development Department in promoting commercial seaweed farming through SHGs.

Dr. K. Gopal provided insights into the various applications of seaweed in daily life, including its use in textiles, chocolates, confectionery, and fertilisers. He encouraged participants to take up seaweed cultivation as a viable source of income, highlighting the potential market demand in Mainland India once production scales up.

The training programme featured both theoretical and practical sessions. NIOT scientists covered fundamental concepts and cultivation techniques, focusing on Gracilaria edulis. Participants were taken to the in-house NIOT laboratory for a

demonstration on post-harvest processing and product development. Additionally, a field visit to Chidiyatapu was organized, where NIOT experts demonstrated the fabrication of seaweed rafts using the tube-net method and seed inoculation techniques.

The initiative marked a significant step in empowering coastal communities and fostering sustainable aquaculture practices in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. (Story Based on PR)





Training-cum-Orientation Session on 'Prevention and Control of Tobacco Use' Conducted at CHC Bambooflat





A training-cum-orientation session on the 'Prevention and Control of Tobacco Use' was conducted at the Conference Hall of CHC Bambooflat. The session was organised by the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) in coordination with the National Oral Health Programme (NOHP) under the State Health Society, Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The event commenced with a welcome address by Mr. Abdul Salam, Health Educator at CHC Bambooflat. The programme featured three technical sessions, each addressing crucial aspects of tobacco control and its impact on health.

Dr. Satayjit Halder, State Nodal Officer (NTCP), delivered a session on 'Tobacco Control - An Overview,' where he emphasised the significance of tobacco control and the pivotal role of healthcare professionals in curbing tobacco use.

Dr. Sanjeev Jaichand, Nodal Officer (NOHP), spoke on 'Tobacco and Oral Health,' highlighting the adverse effects of tobacco on oral health. Additionally, he conducted a special session on 'World Oral Health Day,' observed annually on March 20, underscoring the importance of oral hygiene.

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Dr. Rajiv Ghosh, District Public Health Officer, South Andaman, elaborated on 'Tobacco Control Law,' stressing the need for stringent enforcement of tobacco control regulations to mitigate its usage.

The session was attended by a wide range of healthcare professionals, including Medical Officers, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), Staff Nurses, Public Health Nurses (PHNs), Health Educators (HEs), Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), and Anganwadi Workers. The training aimed to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide tobacco cessation services and support tobacco control initiatives across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The National Tobacco Control Programme, under the State Health Society, remains committed to organizing such training sessions and awareness campaigns to combat tobacco use and promote a healthier community in the region. (Story Based on PR)



Tourism Department's 12-Day Tour Guide Training Program Empowers Local Youth





The Tourism Department, in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management (IITTM), Bhubaneswar, has launched a 12-day skill development training program on tour guiding, aimed at empowering unemployed local youth. The program, running from March 12 to March 24, 2025, including weekends, is designed to equip participants with the necessary skills to pursue a career in the thriving tourism sector.

One of the key features of this training program is its focus on French language instruction, catering to the increasing influx of French tourists to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The language sessions will help participants bridge communication gaps and offer a more immersive experience for French-speaking travellers, fostering greater cultural understanding and enhancing visitor satisfaction.

In addition to language training, the program includes modules on cultural sensitivity, guiding techniques, history, heritage, conservation, hospitality, and communication skills. These elements are aimed at providing a comprehensive skill set to local youth, preparing them to meet the diverse needs of the tourism industry. The training

is led by experts from IITTM Bhubaneswar, who have tailored the curriculum to address both practical and theoretical aspects of tour guiding.

This initiative is in line with the Andaman and Nicobar Administration's broader vision of improving the quality of tourist services and boosting the local tourism economy. The program's emphasis on French language skills is particularly relevant, given the growing number of French visitors to the region, ensuring that local guides are better equipped to cater to this market.

The initiative has received a positive response from the local youth, with many showing enthusiasm to join and professionalize the tourism sector. Upon successful completion of the program, participants will be awarded a certification, significantly enhancing their employability and career prospects in the expanding tourism industry. (Story Based on PR)







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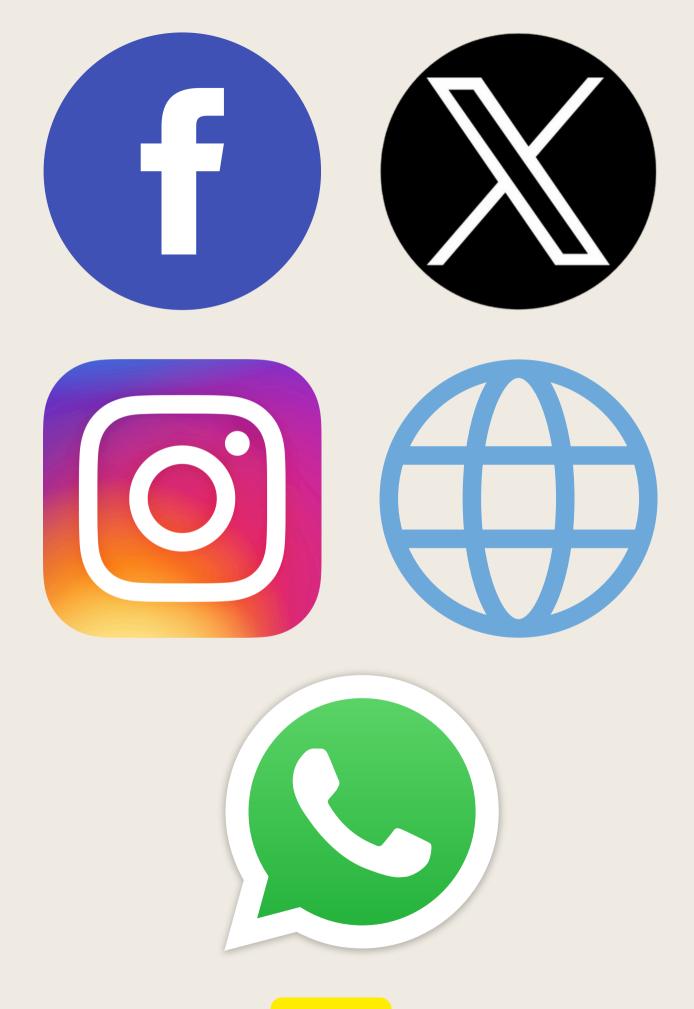
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