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Rewari saw first Modi ki guarantee, ab ki baar 400 par: PM Modi

Rewari: PM Modi on Friday invoked the 2014 LS polls to make his 2024 re-election pitch at a public event in this south Haryana district, saying Rewari was "the first witness to Modi ki guarantee". "People of Rewari blessed me with 272 seats... this time that I'm here, the chorus of people is 'ab ki baar, NDA sarkar, 400 paar'," Modi told a gathering.

The slogan is widely used by BJP to highlight its administrative performance.

People are my suraksha kavach: Modi in Rewari

Modi ki guarantee was a prominent campaign note during assembly polls in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh last year and will be a headline feature of upcoming Lok Sabha campaign for a third term for PM.

PM Modi said he held his first public meeting in Rewari after BJP declared him party's



PM candidate ahead of 2014 Lok Sabha polls. "Rewari was first to witness Modi Ki guarantee as promises we made over here were implemented soon after coming to power in 2014," PM said at the programme at Majra Bhalkhi village. CM Manohar Lal Khattar, governor Bandaru Dattatreya and Union minister and Gurgaon MP Rao Inderjit Singh attended the event. Haryana, PM said, needs modern roads, railway net-

work and state-of-the-art hospitals. PM tore into Congress, saying "it has been conspiring against me, but with people's blessings, I have come out stronger... people are my suraksha kavach (shield)". "For decades, Congress put hurdles in removal of Article 370 (in J&K), but I gave guarantee to remove it and have done it. Now Dalits, backward classes, tribes in J&K are getting their rights and they say 'jisne 370 hataya, us BJP ka teeka

370 seaton se hoga' (BJP will get 370 seats) and NDA will cross 400," Modi said. One rank, one pension (OROP) was implemented, and in Rewari, Rs 600 crore has been given under this, he said. Rewari has a large population of ex-servicemen and a long history of sending youths into Army. Congress leaders, Modi said, used to call Lord Ram "imaginary". "They did not want Ayodhya temple to come up.

Foreign seekers immersed in Indian culture did Kriya Yoga meditation

Prayagraj: Kalpavasis along with foreign seekers from many countries of the world participated in the Kriyayoga camp located on Akshayvat Marg in the Magh Mela area. I am taking the teachings of Kriya Yoga meditation with great enthusiasm every day. Let us tell you that to introduce Indian culture, a Kriyayoga camp has been set up on Akshayvat Marg, in which Kriyayoga is being practiced every



morning and evening by the seekers from many countries and the devotees who have come to Magh Mela. While talking to Akhand Bharat Sandesh, Kriyayoga Guru explained in detail about Indian culture and said that

by adopting Indian culture in life, man becomes free from ignorance. As soon as man becomes free from ignorance, he realizes that man has been created in the form of God.

Swamiji also told that through the

practice of Kriyayoga, the power of understanding in a person develops. And man himself starts walking on the path of truth and non-violence. In such a situation, the anger and hatred within a person gets transformed into true love and mutual fights stop. By the practice of Kriya Yoga, the power of man's mind and intellect develops to such an extent that man automatically becomes free from all types of poverty.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on driver's seat steals Rahul Gandhi's show, takes dig at Nitish Kumar

PATNA:

After failing to attend the first leg of Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra which entered Bihar last month, RJD leader and former Deputy CM Tejashwi Prasad Yadav on Friday finally gave company to the



Congress leader in Sasaram, giving a boost

to the INDIA bloc. None from his family had attended the first leg of Rahul rally since both he and his father Lalu Prasad were asked to appear before the ED office in Patna for questioning in land-for-job scam right at the same time.

Eviction would leave us without office space, says AAP in Supreme Court

NEW DELHI: Faced with Supreme Court-ordered eviction from its office space, Aam Aadmi Party on Friday said this would cause grave prejudice to it ahead of general elections and pleaded its willingness to move out as soon as alternative space is made available in the New Delhi municipal area.

On Feb 13, the SC had ordered concerned authorities to specify a timeline for eviction of encroachment by AAP on a plot allotted for expansion of Rouse Avenue trial court complex. Seeking to intervene in the proceedings, the AAP said if it was forced to vacate the space allotted to it since 2015, the party would be left with none of its two legally entitled offices - one each for the national and state units.

"This will severely prejudice the AAP as well as the fairness of the electoral process, given the impending general elections and the fact that the other five national parties are operating out of their allotted offices in New Delhi," it said. The governing party of Delhi and Punjab said it was willing to vacate the premises in question only after a suitable office space is allotted to it as a national party in the New Delhi municipal area. The party said that it would not stand in the way of expansion of the Rouse Avenue court complex to meet judiciary's growing infrastructural needs, but it should not happen at the cost of AAP's legal entitlements. nlt said as a state party, it was allotted the premises in question in 2015. After it became a national party in April last year, it was entitled to two office spaces in the capital city, but request to that effect has not been acceded to by the land-owning authority for more than a year. "Allotment of office space for official party work is an essential element of public funding of elections in India and is designed to level the electoral playing field, it said. Repudiating the insinuation of 'encroachment', AAP said the premises were allotted to it much prior to the subsequent earmarking.

RBI gives Paytm 15 days more before curbs kick in

MUMBAI: In a relief to customers, RBI on Monday relaxed the deadline on most of the restrictions imposed on Paytm Payments Bank to March 15 from Feb 29, including accepting fresh deposits. It also clarified that QR codes and soundboxes that are not linked to PPBL will continue to work after mid-March. However, RBI made it clear that there is no coming



back for the payments bank to these services. RBI unambiguously advised customers to apply for new Fastags and National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) cards used in metros and buses if they are cur-

rently Paytm customers. It also said that those who are using PPBL savings accounts to receive subsidies, salaries or government benefits should open new bank accounts. Paytm shares, which have

been hammered for weeks after RBI action, were up 5% as the market looked for life beyond PPBL for the parent company. While RBI appears to have taken a tough stance on PPBL and ensured that there is no disruption in the UPI payment space, there will be challenges going ahead. PPBL has issued close to 45 lakh Fastags which will have to be replaced by others.

Stopped from Sandeshkhali visit, Congress, BJP attack TMC

KOLKATA: Bengal PCC president Adhir Chowdhury accused CM Mamata Banerjee of playing a "dangerous game" over Sandeshkhali issue even as state police stopped his entourage as well as a six-member central fact-finding team of BJP, including two Union ministers, from visiting the vio-



lence-hit villages in North 24 Parganas district on Friday. Addressing a gathering after being stopped from visiting Sandeshkhali,

Chowdhury termed the violence as "a tale of heinous torture by the mighty on weaker sections" and accused Banerjee of polarising the situation. "She is trying to divert attention from crux of the matter and giving it a Hindu-Muslim dimension." "Sandeshkhali is a part of North 24 Parganas, a part of

West Bengal and very much a part of the country. But it is out of bounds now. Why is this effort to sweep things under the carpet?" he said. Sandeshkhali has been seeing protests since Feb 7, mainly by women over alleged sexual harassment and high-handedness by aides of TMC.

He has hurt us: Fadnavis rules out tie-up with Uddhav

MUMBAI: While Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde and deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis preferred to be brief in their reactions to Speaker's order in NCP MLAs' case on Thursday, Fadnavis categorically stated that going forward, will be no alliance with Uddhav. "He has hurt us. The manner in which they criticise, the abuses they heap on Prime Minister... Political differences. can be ironed out but when minds and feelings are hurt, it is difficult to work out things," Fadnavis said. Shinde said he had acted in keeping with the Constitution. "The result is out, no tension," he said. Fadnavis, on the other hand, said that he was yet to read the verdict. "I have heard that they (Sharad Pawar faction) got neither the party name nor the symbol," he said. Fadnavis said that the next Maharashtra CM will be from the Mahayuti (comprising BJP, Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar-led NCP) as it is guaranteed.

Donald Trump hit with \$354.9 million penalty for inflating net worth

NEW DELHI: Former US President Donald Trump, was ordered to pay \$354.9 million in penalties for fraudulent overstatements of his net worth by a New York judge on Friday. Trump responded to the ruling in a post on his Truth Social platform saying, "The 'decision' is a Complete and Total SHAM." One of his lawyers, Alina Habba also slammed the ruling, "This verdict is a manifest injustice - plain and simple. It is the culmination of a multi-year, politically fueled witch hunt that was designed to 'take down Donald Trump.'" before Letitia James ever stepped foot into the Attorney General's office," in a post on X (formerly Twitter).

The ruling stems from a civil case initiated by New York Attorney General Letitia James, accusing Trump and his family businesses of inflating his net worth by as much as \$3.6 billion annually over a decade to deceive lenders for better loan terms. Justice Arthur Engoron's ruling not only demands the hefty penalty but also imposes a three-year ban on Trump from serving as an officer or director of any New York corporation. This decision marks yet another setback for Trump's real estate empire. Engoron had initially ordered the 'dissolution' of companies controlling Trump's real estate assets in September.

IT minister's 'urgent letter' to finance minister on 'made-in-India' smartphones

India risks losing smartphone manufacturing to China and Vietnam due to high tariffs. The country must act now to prevent supply chain shifts and attract global supply chains by matching China's low tariffs. India's goal of \$100 billion annual mobile phone production with 50% export needs a new strategy.

India reportedly risks losing out to China and Vietnam as it seeks to become a major smartphone export hub. According to an exclusive report by news agency Reuters, quoting government documents seen, IT minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar has sent a confidential presentation to the Finance Minister

Nirmala Sitharaman where he has raised concerns about losing the country out in smartphone manufacturing due to uncompetitive tariffs. The letter is said to be dated January 3. "India has high production costs due to highest tariffs amongst key manufacturing destinations," Chandrasekhar.

Ignorance is the cause of our sorrows - Saint Pravar Ongoing rituals on the 70th Param Nirvana Day of Shri Sadhguru Sadaphal Dev Ji Maharaj

Prayagraj :

On the occasion of the 70th Param Nirvana Day of Shri Sadhguru Sadaphal Dev Ji Maharaj, at the camp located in Sector 3 of Magh Mela, on the second day of the five-day Jai Swarveda Katha and 2100 Kundiya Vedic Yagyanushthan, on Thursday, Saint Pravara Swar Ved Katha said that our ignorance is the cause of our sorrows. Is. No person is ineligible. Good and bad are within everyone. We do not have to be afraid of weaknesses and difficulties. A seeker definitely gets the inspiration, strength and capability to overcome those difficulties from the light of spirituality, from the voice of the Swarveda. Maharaj Ji told that today due to lack of control over the mind, discrepancies are increasing in the society. A UNESCO preface says



that the walls of war rise from the evil mind. Therefore control of mind is necessary. He said that there is immense power in our mind. God has given us a conscience with great powers. There is unrest in the human mind and as long as there is unrest, peace cannot be imagined in the world. Before this, in the morning,

for physical health, a session of asana, pranayam and meditation was conducted by the skilled yoga instructors of the ashram. After which the 2100 Kundiya Vishwashanti Vedic Yagyan ceremony was started with the hoisting of the white flag inscribed by Saint Pravar Vigyan Dev Maharaj and lighting of the lamp.

BJP received the highest donations amounting to 719.858 crore

Delhi : The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) received the highest donations amounting to 719.858 crore from 7,945 donors in the 2022-23 fiscal year (FY), a report released by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said. With this, BJP saw an increase of 17.12% as compared to the last financial year (2021-22) when it received 614.626 crore. The total declared by the national parties for FY 2022-23 was 850.438 crore from 12,167 donations. "The Indian National Congress (INC) stood second in comparison after it received 79.924 crore which is a decrease from the previous FY 2021-22 (-16.27%). Similarly, the decrease in donations declared by CPI(M) was 39.56% (3.978 crore), and by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was 2.99% (1.143 crore).

For the 17th year in a row, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) declared that the party did not



receive any donations above 20,000 during FY 2022-23. State-wise donation segregation made by ADR, highlights a total of 276.202 crore was donated to the national political parties from Delhi, followed by 160.509 crore from Gujarat and 96.273 crore from Maharashtra. Of the total, as many as 3,318 donations to these parties were made by corporate/business sectors amounting to 680.495 crore (80.017% of total donations) while 8,567 individual donors donated 166.621 crore (19.592%

of total donations) to the parties during FY 2022-23. "BJP (610.491 crore) received more than eight times the total amount (70.004 crore) of corporate donations declared by all other national parties for the FY 2022-23. Prudent Electoral Trust being the top donor to parties, donated a total of 257.15 crore to BJP (256.25 crore) and AAP (90 lakh) together," the report added. The total donations of the national parties during FY 2022-23 increased by 91.701 crore, a rise of 12.09% from the previous financial year 2021-22.

Mamata may visit Punjab on Feb 21, to meet Kejriwal

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee may visit Punjab on February 21 and meet her Delhi and Punjab counterparts, Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann respectively, an official source said on Thursday. The Trinamool Congress supremo is expected to offer prayers at the Golden Temple also, he said. "The chief minister is likely to visit Punjab on February 21. During her visit, she will offer prayers at the Golden Temple in Amritsar. There is a high possibility of her meeting, Delhi Chief Minister and Punjab Chief Minister during this visit," the senior official, told PTI. Banerjee's meeting with the top leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is considered crucial in the backdrop of the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections and the formation of an opposition coalition.

Kamal Kant Batra, contested the Lok Sabha elections from Hamipur

Shimla: Himachal Pradesh chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu offered condolences. "Sad news was received about the demise of Mrs. Kamalkant Batra, mother of martyr Captain Vikram Batra. We pray to God to grant Mata Ji a place at His feet and give strength to the bereaved family to bear the immense sorrow," Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu posted on X (formerly Twitter). Kamal Kant Batra contested the Lok Sabha elections from Hamipur, Himachal Pradesh, in 2014 - representing the AAP. However, she resigned from the party after a few months citing "dissatisfaction" with the organisational structure of the party. Her son, Captain Vikram Batra - known as 'Sher Shah' - died at the age of 24 fighting the Pakistani forces during the Kargil war on July 7, 1999. His courageous actions earned him the highest wartime gallantry award 'Param Vir Chakra'. Due to his exemplary feat, Captain Vikram was awarded with several other titles such as 'Tiger of Drass', the 'Lion of Kargil', and the 'Kargil Hero'.

Students of Medieval History Department, CMP learned the history of Khusro Bagh

Prayagraj:

On 16/02/2024, post-graduate students were taken on a tour of the famous Khusro Bagh, one of the major sites of medieval history and architecture in Prayagraj, by the Department of Medieval History of C.M.P. College. Dr. Neeraj Kumar Singh, coordinator of the department, shared with the students the biography of Prince Khusro, the



importance of the tombs built in the

garden, and the characteristics of its architecture. He said that the educational tour further improves the students' understanding of the information obtained from the book.

In this program, members of the department, Dr. Shashibala, Dr. Munidra Shukla, Dr. Akhilesh Yadav along with research scholars and 40 students were present.

Teacher was removed from her post for her alleged anti-Hindu remarks

Mangaluru

The diocese of Mangalore has requested the departments of minority welfare, child welfare and the women's commission to hold a fair inquiry into the recent incidents at a school in the city where a teacher was removed from her post for her alleged anti-Hindu remarks. In a statement issued late Wednesday night, the diocese of Mangalore said false allegations were raised against the woman teacher by BJP MLA Vedavyas Kamath, who led a protest at St Gerosa school demanding an immediate apology from her. Narrating the events that led to the issue, the diocese said it started with the circulation of two audio messages via social media accusing English teacher, Sister Prabha, of making disparaging remarks against Hindu religious practices and



political leaders during a class. As the social media messages spread, four parents approached the headmistress who assured them a thorough investigation to bring out the truth. However, a group of people gathered around the school

headmistress assured them also that proper inquiry would be conducted to address the matter. The situation escalated on February 12 when officials from the education department visited the school. Local MLA Vedavyas Kamath led a protest at the school, 'exhibiting disregard' for the constitutional process of a fair inquiry. He insisted on an immediate apology and suspension of the English teacher and started harassing women staff, creating an atmosphere of hostility.

It has become fashionable to demolish houses without complying with natural justice

The house was demolished days after the Madhya Pradesh high court said it has become fashionable to demolish houses without complying with the principle of natural justice. The authorities have demolished the house of a man accused of thrashing a tribal person and hanging him upside down in Madhya Pradesh's Betul three months back. The assault came to light after a video of it went viral on social media. Sohrab Hussain's house was demolished a day after tea seller Ashish Parte, 24, complained to the police that six people stripped, thrashed, and hung him upside down. The demolition is the latest in a series of such actions in Madhya Pradesh. It came days after the Madhya Pradesh high court on February 1 granted compensation to two people after their



homes were demolished in Ujjain without any notice. The court said it has become fashionable to demolish houses without complying with the principle of natural justice. It said it appears that a criminal case was registered against one of the family members of the petitioners before the demolitions were carried out. "It is not the case of the respondent that in the entire area under the Municipal Corporation Ujjain, these are the only two houses that are constructed without permission to be demolished." In his complaint in the Betul case, Parte

said one Rinkesh Chauhan took him to Hussain's residence on November 15 and tried to extort money. Parte said they later asked him to pay money weekly. He added when he refused, they stripped him, tied his hands and feet, hung him from the ceiling, and beat him with a belt and a shovel. The accused also filmed the assault. Betul police superintendent Siddharth Chaudhary said that they acted immediately after the video went viral and registered a case under Indian Penal Code's sections 294 (using obscene language).

Electoral bonds are money instruments that act as promissory notes

Delhi

Supreme Court set to pronounce its verdict on a batch of petitions challenging the validity of the electoral bond scheme. Supreme Court on Thursday is set to pronounce its verdict on a batch of petitions challenging the validity of the electoral bond scheme.

What are electoral bonds?

Electoral bonds are money instruments that act as promissory notes or bearer bonds that can be purchased by individuals or companies in India. The bonds are issued specifically for the contribution of funds to political parties. These bonds are issued by the State Bank of India (SBI) and are sold in multiples of 1,000, 10,000, 1 lakh, 10 lakh, and ₹1 crore. The donations made under this scheme by corporate and even foreign entities enjoyed 100% tax exemption while the identities of



the donors are kept confidential - both by the bank as well as the recipient political parties.

How are the donations made?

The bonds can be purchased through a KYC-complaint account to make donations to a political party. Once the money is transferred, the political parties will have to encash the donations within a given amount of time. Notably, there is no limit on the number of electoral bonds that a person or company can purchase.

Who can receive funds

via electoral bonds?

According to the provisions of the scheme, only the political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and which secured not less than 1 per cent of the votes polled in the last elections to the Lok Sabha or a state legislative assembly are eligible to receive electoral bonds.

Electoral bonds scheme and the case

The electoral bonds scheme was first announced by former finance minister Arun

Jaitley during the 2017 Budget Session. Later, it was notified in January 2018 as a source of political funding by way of money bills introducing amendments to the Finance Act and the Representation of the People Act.

In order to implement the scheme, the Centre carried out certain amendments to the Companies Act, Income Tax Act, Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), and the Reserve Bank of India Act. However, several petitions were filed in the Supreme Court, including those filed by CPI(M), Congress, and some NGOs, against the constitutional validity of the electoral bonds scheme. The hearing into this matter began on October 31 last year. Several arguments were made by the petitioners on the scheme including its legality.

and the possible threat it may impose to the country.

Sandeshkhali row:

TMC MP Nusrat

Jahan posts

Valentine's Day pics on Instagram, BJP reacts

The Bharatiya Janata Party in West Bengal has hit out at returned-politician Nusrat Jahan, a Trinamool Congress MP from Basirhat, even as tension simmered in the Sandeshkhali area of North 24 Parganas district's Basirhat subdivision on Tuesday during a protest by BJP workers led by state party president Sukanta Majumder against the alleged sexual harassment of women. As clashes broke out between the police and BJP members in Sandeshkhali, Nusrat Jahan was seen celebrating Valentine's Day with her husband and actor Yash Dasgupta. Wearing an elegant crimson gown fit for royalty, she was seen in a Valentine's Day-themed photo session.

'The Karnataka unit must capitalise on Prime Minister Modi's popularity'

Mysuru

The Karnataka unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party must capitalise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity and translate it into increased vote share, Union home minister Amit Shah said in a strategy meeting in Mysuru on Sunday ahead of the 2024 parliamentary elections. There is a favourable political environment for the BJP across the country, Shah said at the meeting attended by BJP core committee leaders and cluster leaders of Mysuru-Kodagu, Mandya, Hassan and Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha seats. Shah also issued a stern warning to members against making any loose statements regarding the alliance between the BJP and the Janata Dal (Secular), said a party leader who declining being named. It was important to maintain unity and refrain from airing opinions, Shah is



understood to have said, aimed at curbing discord within the party ranks. He underscored the significance of a cohesive approach towards alliance matters. During the meeting, Shah presented a comprehensive plan ahead of Lok Sabha polls, said state party chief BY Vijayendra. State leaders have assured Shah that the allies will fight the elections unitedly in all 28 constituencies and make efforts to win. "There has been no discussion on the seat sharing. It will take place in Delhi between the senior leaders of both parties. But it has

Twenty-five more people have arrested in connection with the February 8 riots

Haldwani

Twenty-five more people have arrested in connection with the February 8 riots after the demolition of an "illegal" madrasa in Haldwani in Uttarakhand, police said on Sunday, as a delegation of two Muslim bodies visited the area and alleged that protesters are treated differently on the basis of religion. Senior Superintendent of Police Prahad Meena said the fresh arrests took the total number of people arrested so far to 30, and added that key accused Abdul Malik would be nabbed On Thursday,

violence broke out over the demolition of an illegally built madrasa in the Banbhoolpura area, with locals hurling stones and petrol bombs at municipal workers and police, forcing many police personnel to seek refuge at a police station, which the mob then set on fire. In the violence, six rioters were killed and more than a hundred, including police personnel and mediapersons, were injured, according to the police. Curfew remained in force in Banbhoolpura but was lifted from the outer areas of the town. Shops were still shut and roads deserted in Banbhoolpura. Internet services also remained suspended in the area to prevent rumour-mongering through social media platforms. Nearly 1,100 security personnel are already deployed in the town. And, the state government has sought four companies -- containing about 100 personnel each -- of central paramilitary forces from the Home Ministry to maintain law and order in Banbhoolpura. During the day, a delegation of the Uttarakhand Congress met Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami.

Gujarat CM stays overnight at village, urges youth to stay away from addiction

With the strong leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, everyone should work to strengthen the party so that the slogan of a 'developed Gujarat with a developed India' can be realised, Patel said. He had dinner with the family members of local

leader Dineshbhai Bhatola, said a government release. Through the initiative, the BJP aims to strengthen all the booths in Gujarat ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. A total 56,700 party workers, including ministers and MLAs, were assigned different booths across the state under the 'Gaon Chalo Abhiyan. On morning, CM Patel met farmers, youth, women, and leaders of different communities and discussed various government schemes, said the release.

Bihar-Delhi bus carrying 40 collides with car in Mathura; 5 dead

Five people were killed after a passenger bus with 40 people onboard and a car collided in Mathura on the Yamuna Expressway on Monday morning, senior superintendent of police Mathura Shailesh Dubey said. According to the police, While all the passengers in the bus jumped out safely, all persons traveling in the car were burnt alive inside the car. Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath condoled the deaths in the incident and directed officials in Mathura to make suitable arrangements for the kin of the victims. The incident took place at Mile Stone 110 near Village Kishanpur, under the Mahavan police station area in Mathura. According to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Shailesh Pandey, "Five people have died in the road accident that took place on the Yamuna Expressway. The incident took place when a bus enroute to Noida from Agra hit a divider, lost control and collided with a car." After the collision, both vehicles caught fire, the official said. While the passengers on the bus managed to escape, those in the car were charred, the police official said. According to eyewitnesses, the fire brigade did not arrive at the scene of the incident, even after half an hour. Fire officials later reached the spot and efforts are on to douse the blaze. Police are investigating the matter and further details are awaited. Last month, at least 40 people sustained injuries after two buses collided with each other on the Yamuna Expressway. The incident occurred at the Mile Stone 110 Raya Cut in Mathura.

BJP seeks CBI probe into 40% commission charges

Bengaluru: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has demanded an investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into allegations made by the president of Karnataka State Contractors Association, D Kempanna, regarding a 40% commission charge.

The leader of the opposition in the Karnataka assembly R Ashok said, considering the gravity of Kempanna's allegations, Siddaramaiah doesn't have the moral authority to remain in office and should resign.

"What are they (Congress) going to do now... 750 crore each was seized when the I-T department had conducted raids on the residences of two Congress leaders... What mask will the CM wear now? He has no moral authority to remain in the office for a moment longer," he said while addressing the press on Sunday. Ashok reminded that the Congress party vehemently protested similar allegations during the tenure of the BJP government. He asked whether Siddaramaiah would

ATM Siddaramaiah posters now as he had done with former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai by pasting PayCM posters. He said the developers and builders are claiming that a commission of 75/sq feet is being collected by them and challenged Siddaramaiah to take action against corrupt practices within his administration. He suggested that failure to do so would warrant public condemnation akin to what the BJP faced in the past. The opposition leader highlighted that

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has released a White Paper assessing both the 10-year tenure of the Modi government and the 10-year governance of the Congress-led United Provinces Alliance (UPA) regime. "If the White Paper is wrong, let the Congress move a privilege motion against Sitharaman in parliament," he challenged. The statement comes after the controversy surrounding the alleged 40% commission demanded for processing government contracts.

India may get cluster of servers mirroring internet root servers

If the efforts are successful, this will be the first time India will get a cluster mirroring all 13 root servers that underpin the internet. India could potentially get a cluster of servers that mirrors the thirteen root servers in the world after "major negotiations" with ICANN, the organisation that carries out key functions of the internet, the director general of Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) informed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External



Affairs in March 2023. If the efforts are successful, this will be the first time India will get a cluster mirroring all 13 root servers that underpin the internet. The submission was mentioned in a report on countering global terrorism at regional and international levels

tabled in the Lok Sabha on February 5 by the committee, which had asked about the outcome of negotiations with ICANN for having internet root servers in India. According to it, Sanjay Bahl, the director general of CERT-In, had replied: "We had a major negotiation on

the root server. They have agreed for putting up a cluster. We are negotiating with them... Probably, we will get a cluster of 18 servers which will be now based somewhere in India. That is a good beginning."

Assigned Names and Numbers, is a US-based non-profit that plays a crucial role in the management and coordination of the global internet's domain name system (DNS) and the allocation of IP addresses. An ICANN executive confirmed the discussions.

Another instance of his confrontation with the DMK dispensation in Tamil Nadu

Chennai The House was convened on by the Tamil Nadu government for the customary Governor RN Ravi's address to the Assembly.

In yet another instance of his confrontation with the DMK dispensation in Tamil Nadu, Governor RN Ravi on Monday concluded his customary address to the House within a few minutes, asserting he disagreed with the government over the content of the address and played the regime for 'not respecting' the national anthem.

In his inaugural address for the year to the House, Ravi said his repeated requests and advice (to the state government) to show due respect to the national anthem and play it at the



beginning and the end of the address has been ignored. The House was convened on February 12 by the government for the customary Governor's Address to the Assembly. The Governor said the address has numerous messages with which 'I convincingly disagree, on factual and moral grounds.' Hence, Ravi said 'lending his voice' to such aspects that he disagreed with the government, would

constitute 'Constitutional travesty.'

"Hence with respect to the House, I conclude my address. Wish this House a productive and healthy discussion for the people's good." Ravi, after offering his greetings in Tamil to Speaker M Appavu, Chief Minister M K Stalin and Legislators ended his speech within a few minutes after conveying his disagreement with the government.

Ayodhya to get mega tourism push, 5-star hotel near Ram temple

Ayodhya

Ayodhya has been witnessing a massive influx of devotees, who are arriving at the city daily to offer prayers at the Ram temple. Online travel company EaseMyTrip has announced a five-star luxury hotel project in the temple town of Ayodhya, eyeing a 10x growth in wake of the 'Pran Pratishtha' ceremony of the Ram temple. Rikant Pitti, the co-founder of EaseMyTrip said that the hotel will be situated less than a kilometre from the Ram Lalla temple. "This venture represents a significant investment of up to 100 crore through Jeewani Hospitality Private Limited, leading this visionary project," he was quoted by ANI as saying. EaseMyTrip aims to 'redefine' the hospitality experience for pilgrims and tourists in Ayodhya, the holy town situated on the banks of



Saryu river in Uttar Pradesh. "This project, a collaborative effort between EaseMyTrip's extensive know-how in travel and Jeewani Hospitality's hospitality excellence, aims to elevate the standard of luxury lodging in Ayodhya. It signifies EaseMyTrip's strategic expansion and its commitment to enhancing India's tourism sector," Pitti added. The company is dedicated to delivering 'unparalleled travel experiences' and improving the country's tourism

infrastructure, Pitti added. "Our upcoming 5-star hotel in Ayodhya is a reflection of our commitment to offering a blend of opulence, comfort, and cultural engagement to those visiting this historical city," the co-founder added. 'Ayodhya to play key role in making UP a trillion dollar economy': UP gov't On January 22, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had presided over the 'pran pratishtha' or the consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir. Ayodhya has been

witnessing a massive influx of devotees from various parts of India and the world. Chief minister Yogi Adityanath has set a target of making UP a trillion-dollar economy in the next five years. According to a government spokesperson, the state government has projected tax collections at 25,000 crore in the upcoming financial year. The state government in its latest budget announced 100 crore for the all-round development of Ayodhya.

Supreme Court refuses to interfere with HC's orders in Indiabulls case

NEW DELHI: Supreme Court on Monday turned down Enforcement Directorate's plea challenging Delhi and Bombay HC orders quashing police and ED investigation against Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd (IHFL) and asked the agency to resort to alternative remedies, including seeking review of the orders. Bombay HC had in May last year allowed a plea by IHFL seeking to quash an FIR, filed in Wada in Palghar district, for cheating, criminal breach of trust, and other charges levelled by a shareholder. As ED had also initiated a probe against the company and its officials on the basis of predicate offence after registration of FIR, IHFL had moved Delhi HC for quashing of ED proceedings and HC had allowed its plea in Sept last year.

Editorial

Gyanvapi: Truth, reconciliation

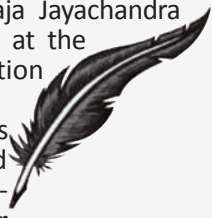
Recently, the pristine land of Ayodhya saw the Pran Pratishtha ceremony and the returning of Ram Lalla to the temple built at the historical site. While the event was rightfully celebrated by all, irrespective of faith and politics, it also led to many sharing the Preamble to the Indian Constitution on social media as a mark of protest to the 'injustice' committed on the Indian soil. The possible connotations ranged from 'India subverting its Constitution' to 'a nation polarised by communalism' against a particular section of the society. This needs to be understood that neither the Preamble nor the Constitution exists in a vacuum, the progressive values embedded in the Constitution are themselves a culmination of thousands of years old tradition of learning and re-learning. The laws and the Constitution are meant for the people and not the vice versa. The truth and reconciliation within any society should always be supreme.

The Gyanvapi Mosque-Kashi Vishwanath temple issue is another instance where we, as a society, need to move towards better sense and better communal harmony. In a pivotal development in the legal dispute over Varanasi's Gyanvapi Masjid, a district court has granted permission for members of a family of priests to offer prayers in one of the cellars within the mosque complex. This particular cellar, known as Vyasji ka Tehkhana, was unsealed last night, and a puja ceremony took place around 3 am.

The Gyanvapi mosque, constructed in the 17th century, features four cellars, with 'Vyas ji ka Tehkhana' being one of them. Situated in the southern area of the mosque's fortified complex, it stands opposite a statue of the Nandi bull within the adjacent Kashi Vishwanath temple premises. The cellar, measuring about 7 feet in height and covering an area of 40 square feet, allegedly contains idols that were worshipped before its sealing in 1993, as claimed by petitioner Shailendra Pathak Vyas. The Muslim side refuted this assertion in court, stating that the petitioner failed to provide evidence of prayers being conducted there and denying the presence of any idol in the cellar. Following the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, President's Rule was imposed in the state, and the following year, a government led by Mulayam Singh Yadav assumed office.

Citing concerns about law and order, Yadav prohibited prayers within the cellar temple. The petitioner contends that regular prayers were conducted by Somnath Vyas before the cellar was sealed. The mosque committee has expressed its intention to challenge the court's decision in the high court. Lawyer Akhlaq Ahmed asserted that the order overlooked the Advocate Commissioner's 2022 report, the ASI's report, and a 1937 decision favouring their stance. He argued that the Hindu side failed to provide evidence of prayers before 1993 and that there is no idol in the designated place. Advocate Merajuddin Siddiqui accused district officials of colluding with the district magistrate, suggesting a political agenda. He drew parallels to the Babri Masjid case, claiming that the Commissioner's and ASI's reports previously confirmed the absence of any contents inside the cellar. While it requires nothing more than a pair of eyes to establish that a temple existed at the site where the structure of the mosque today stands, there is ample architectural and textual evidence to back up this claim as well. According to Yugeswar Kaushal, a PhD scholar specialising in South Asian Studies, Maharaja Jayachandra erected an elaborate temple at the site following his coronation around 1170-89 AD.

During Maharaja Jai Singh's reign, Aurangzeb, motivated by religious zealotry, demolished the Kashi Vishweshwar temple in 1669.



Opening up to broader economic participation.

In the pursuit of economic growth, the Maldives seems to have missed a crucial lesson: relying solely on a handful of major players isn't a sustainable strategy. The key to sustainable growth lies in opening up to broader economic participation.

India is a case in point

India stands on the brink of sealing a significant trade deal that could have far-reaching implications. Negotiations with Europe are nearing completion, with the potential for India to attract a staggering \$100 billion in investment. This proposed agreement with Europe is noteworthy for several reasons. Unlike conventional trade deals

focused on tariff reduction, India is poised to open up its markets in exchange for substantial investment, a move that could inject significant capital into its economy over the next 15 years. The pact, unlike typical free trade agreements, comes with binding investment guarantees, a rare feature that could set a precedent for future trade negotiations. The investment is slated to originate from a special bloc of European nations known as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), comprising Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. While negotiations involve this bloc rather than the entire European Union, the agree-

ment could serve as a model for broader regional trade engagements. The potential investments are earmarked for both new and existing manufacturing projects, promising to create over a million jobs and bolster India's industrial landscape. Beyond the economic windfall, the deal offers additional perks for India, including enhanced visa provisions for Indian professionals seeking access to the EFTA countries. In return, the EFTA nations seek expanded market access for their goods in India, spanning processed foods, beverages, electrical machinery, engineering products, pharmaceuticals and

medical devices. While the deal holds immense promise, its fruition has been a long time coming, with negotiations spanning back to 2008. However, recent reports indicate that key issues have been resolved, paving the way for a potential agreement, pending finalization. India's proactive engagement extends beyond this agreement, with ongoing discussions involving up to 50 nations, signalling its openness to global trade and investment. In essence, India's approach sends a clear message: it is open for business, embracing a strategy of economic openness and diversification for sustainable growth.

Plan to drop sitting MLAs, MPs backfires on Jagan YSR

The YSR Congress Party's strategy to drop several sitting MLAs and MPs in Andhra Pradesh for the forthcoming polls has triggered a spate of resignations. Machilipatnam MP Balasouri Vallabhaneni resigned from the party amid indications that he might be dropped. Balasouri is likely to join the Jana Sena Party (JSP) led by actor-politician Pawan Kalyan. This is the latest resignation to hit the Jagan Mohan Reddy-led party ahead of the simultaneous polls to the state Assembly and the Lok Sabha, likely to be held in April-May. Kurnool MP S. Sanjeev Kumar resigned from the party. The general surgeon and urologist resigned both as MP and also from the primary membership of YSRCP. This followed the party's decision to field sitting MLA and state minister Gummanur Jayaram as the party candidate from the Kurnool Parliament seat. The MP, who remained low profile throughout his stint, alleged that there is no respect for backward classes in the party. He is likely to join the Telugu Desam Party (TDP). Two MLAs have also quit the ruling party over the denial of tickets. Last week, Rayadurgam MLA Kapu Ramchandra Reddy resigned from YSRCP. He alleged that



the party leadership betrayed him despite his loyalty to the party. Alla Ramakrishna Reddy was the first YSRCP MLA to quit the party. The MLA from Mangalagiri has declared his support to Y. S. Sharmila, who recently merged her YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) with the Congress. Sharmila, the sister of Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy, will likely get a key position in the party. A couple of MLCs have also quit YSRCP in the last few days. While MLC and senior leader C. Ramachandraiah joined the TDP, another MLC Srinivas Varma joined the Jana Sena. Earlier, cricketer Ambati Rayudu resigned from YSRCP. He quit the party 10 days after joining it. The cricketer

said that he resigned from the YSRCP as their ideologies were not aligned. Rayudu met Pawan Kalyan on January 11. He claimed that he and Pawan Kalyan share the same ideologies and vision, hinting that he may join Jana Sena. The spate of resignations has come as a blow to the YSRCP. However, these were not unexpected considering the change of tactic by the YSRCP. YSRCP, which has 151 MLAs in the 175-member Assembly, has so far released three lists for Assembly polls. The party has announced candidates for 59 seats. It has denied tickets to as many as 23 sitting MLAs. The ruling party was earlier planning to go for elections with a majority of the sitting MPs and MLAs.

Political analysts say the defeat of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in the recent Assembly elections in neighbouring Telangana forced the YSRCP to reconsider its strategy. Like YSRCP, BRS too had an overwhelming majority in the 119-member Telangana Assembly. Aiming for a third term in power, BRS had renominated almost all sitting MLAs. However, 65 out of its 104 sitting MLAs were defeated. Analysts say unlike BRS, YSRCP may not be facing voter fatigue but still it does not want to take any chances. It is not only dropping the sitting MLAs and MPs but also fielding some sitting MPs in Assembly elections and shifting some MLAs to Lok Sabha constituencies. The revolt in the YSRCP camp in some constituencies is likely to benefit the TDP-Jana Sena alliance. A few legislators have already defected to either TDP-JSP. The revolt may also benefit the Congress, which is hoping for a reversal of its political fortunes in the state following the victories in Karnataka and Telangana. The joining of Jagan Mohan Reddy's sister Y.S. Sharmila into the party has infused optimism among the Congress ranks. However, the grand old party has not yet announced any party position for Sharmila. If she

is appointed president of the Congress' state unit, the party may attract a section of the disgruntled leaders from YSRCP. As most of the leaders in YSRCP were earlier part of the Congress, they may throw their weight behind Sharmila. Congress leaders believe that this may at least place the party on the recovery path after drawing a blank in two successive elections. With the party's vote share dropping to less than two per cent, it is facing a huge challenge to bounce back. "If the Congress party succeeds in having some representation in the Assembly and improves its vote share to 10-12, it will be a significant improvement," says political analyst Reddy. YSRCP is not the only party facing disaffection over the denial of tickets to sitting MLAs and MPs. The TDP also faced the same situation in the Vijayawada Lok Sabha constituency, where the sitting MP Kesneni Srinivas alias Nani quit the party and crossed over to YSRCP after the party leadership hinted that it plans to give the ticket to his brother Kesineni Srinath alias Chinni this time. Nani, who was elected to Lok Sabha on TDP ticket in 2014 and 2019, defected to YSRCP and Jagan Mohan Reddy swiftly rewarded him with a party ticket from the same constituency.

The Left-Islamist ecosystem has been shaken by the Pran Prathista

Haldwani, a small but bustling town in Uttarakhand, is the gateway to the Himalayas and ascent to tourist spots like Nainital and Bhimtal. Today, it is a far more dramatic dot on Bharat's map. On February 9, the town with an 18.55 percent Muslim population erupted with violence which left two dead and 250 injured. Islamist mobs attacked a demolition squad with accompanying cops and mediapersons when it went to demolish an illegally built mosque and madrasa. The mob hurled petrol bombs and stones, nearly set policemen on fire, and used women and children as human shields. Drone shots later revealed that the violence was unprovoked and planned. Images showed heaps of stones stored on rooftops. The very next day, 100 km away in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly, another Islamist mob attacked the police

with stones after Muslim cleric Tauqeer Raza was detained for giving a 'jail bharo' over the Gyanvapi mosque issue. Raza did not forget to mention the Haldwani mosque demolition as ghee on fire. Earlier in the week, a mob surrounded a police station in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh after a dispute between a tailor, his customer, and a cleric who intervened. A man in the crowd, Akram Khan, took a loudspeaker and threatened violence. The Left-Islamist ecosystem has been shaken by the Pran Prathista at the Ayodhya Ram Mandir. The legal challenge to the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, built after demolishing a part of Kashi Vishwanath temple, has created further flutter. The mood of the nation after the Ram temple opening and a fast-crumbling Opposition alliance point to another election victory for Narendra Modi.

One takes to the streets, of course, and with wanton violence, tries to overturn court orders or people's verdict. For seven decades since Independence, a perverted secularism actively supported by political parties have signalled to Muslims that they should never peacefully coexist with the majority, must always be in victimhood mode, and heed the law of the land only if it suits them. The community has been told that its power lies in existing as an impoverished and irascible mass. And right before the general elections 2024, street mobs springing alive could point to a concerted attempt at polarisation, and to provoke the Modi government and BJP state government into making a mistake. Activists like Harsh Mander and Yogendra Yadav had in clear words urged street action to counter the legitimate electoral mandate.

The Israel-Hamas war are now also spilling over to South Asia

By carrying out back-to-back rescue operations in the past month, the Indian Navy has emerged as the bright spot in the otherwise unstable waters of the Red Sea. The Israel-Hamas war has not only thrown the Middle East into a flux but its effects are now also spilling over to South Asia and the wider expanse of the Indian Ocean Region. The worsening security concerns in the Red Sea due to constant attacks from the Yemen-based Houthis on cargo ships have further been exacerbated with Somali pirates also targeting the ships passing through this region. As the security situation in the Red Sea and also in the Arabian Sea has deteriorated, the Indian Navy has now emerged as the net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region. Indian Navy has always been exemplary in its duty and in particular, has always been proactive in benign causes like Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations. However, with the spill-over effects of the war in the Middle East threatening the security of the Indian Ocean Region, India is asserting its position as the resident power and as the primary stakeholder in the security architecture of the region. India's rescue

operations and in particular the role of the Indian Navy not only correspond to the existing global order. The current security concerns may have pronounced the role of the Indian Navy. But there is also a strong civilisational undertone to India's naval operations. This undertone could be considered from decolonisation and indigenisation perspectives. The decolonisation narrative has been a major issue in the Indian political discourse for a long time. However, in the past few months, there has been a tangible and accelerated effort towards decolonisation and indigenisation across different spheres. Some important steps in this direction include the use of the name Bharat instead of India. This was the highlight when India hosted the G20 Summit in September 2023 as the placard in front of Prime Minister Narendra Modi displayed the name Bharat. Besides, three criminal justice laws, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Act, recently passed by the Indian parliament also seek to replace the colonial-era Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian

Evidence Act. The recent consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya is projected as one of the most prominent steps towards decolonisation. Also, the scope of the decolonisation narrative has now expanded. For decades, only the 200-year British rule in India was earmarked as the colonial period in the collective memory of the Indian people. Now the 200-year period is being replaced by a period of about 1,000 years which includes the Islamic invasions in India. This indigenisation process which is becoming visible in the political, legal and cultural domains is gradually gaining emphasis in the security domain as well. Just as the decolonisation debate had been restricted to British rule, the same principle was evident in Indian strategic thought as well for a long time. As one of the relics of British rule, the continental mindset had remained a norm in Indian strategic thought for a long time. The continental mindset crept into India's security outlook as a legacy of the British who were engaged in the Great Game with Russia. It led to the British focusing more on the territorial aspect of security to stop Russia's advances against India.

Feel the rhythm and heal your soul with Abir's "Memory Lane", a musical therapy

Karnal: The maestro of emotions, Abir, is set to enchant the music lovers with the latest EP "Memory Lane". Featuring five soulful tracks - "Meri Hoyi Ni", "Jaane Kyun", "Main Ni Tera", "Jaane Ke Baad" and "Last Flight", each track is a testament to Abir's ability to transform heartbreak into an immersive and unforgettable experience. Sung and penned by Abir, "Memory Lane" is a musical journey that speaks to the soul, redefining the experience of heartbreak. His songs are a fusion of meaningful lyrics and infectious beats, creating a cool and contemporary vibe. In "Memory Lane" Abir fuses Hindi-Punjabi flair in the EP allowing the listeners to feel all the emotions while bobbing their heads to the music. His ability to convey emotions of love, loss and self-discovery in the most unique and groovy way connects with the audience on a universal level, offering a fresh perspective on heartbreak and resilience. "Creating 'Memory Lane' was a journey of emotions that



reflect my personal journey. The EP is a collection of stories that I believe will connect with the listeners on a profound level. Every note of the track tells a piece of our shared human narrative. It is a piece of my heart and I am thrilled to share this EP with the world. I hope listeners connect with my music on a personal level." Shared singer songwriter Abir. Listen to "Memory Lane" here - <https://smi.lnk.to/MemoryLaneSony> Music Entertainment is a global recorded music company that has on its roster a rich and storied history of iconic artists like Beyonce, Michael Jackson, Shakira,

Mariah Carey and Britney Spears and today's superstars like Harry Styles, Camila Cabello, Travis Scott and Khalid, pan-Indian pop sensation AKASA, new age artists like OAFF-Savera, Aditya A, Talwiinder, Simran Choudhary, QK and South India's biggest acts like Anirudh, A.R. Rahman, GV Prakash, Yuvan Shankar Raja, Devi Sri Prasad, Thaman S, Vivek-Mervin, Darbuka Siva and Ghibran including several decades-long relationships with Dharma Productions, Maddock Films, Red Chillies Entertainment, Vishesh Films, Madras Talkies, Raaj Kamal Films International

Woodside, Santos scrap talks on \$52 billion merger

Australia's Woodside Energy and Santos said on Wednesday they had ended talks to create a possible A\$80 billion (\$52 billion) global oil and gas giant, and Santos flagged it would look for other ways to bolster its value. Woodside, which is more than twice as large as Santos by revenue and market capitalisation, said it would only pursue a deal that would clearly benefit its shareholders. Santos shares fell nearly 9% after the announcement and closed down 5.8% while Woodside's stock ended up 0.5%. The talks, first announced in

December, fell apart as the two companies could not agree on a valuation level, according to two sources with direct knowledge of the matter who could not be named discussing confidential information. A firm bid did not emerge from Woodside following the almost two months of due diligence and negotiations that the parties undertook, one of the sources said. Woodside declined to comment on those points and Santos did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Santos said in a statement that after "an initial exchange of

information, sufficient combination benefits were not identified to support a merger that would be in the best interests of Santos shareholders". If the merger had taken place, it would have created a major global liquefied natural gas (LNG) producer that could attract more offshore investors as gas is seen as a key bridging fuel in the shift to cleaner energy. "While the discussions with Santos did not result in a transaction, Woodside considers that the global LNG sector provides significant potential for value creation.

Dollar slips, Fed policy path on interest rates in focus

NEW YORK: The dollar slid against major currencies on Tuesday, a day after it rose to its highest level in almost three months, as strong economic data and a hawkish stance on interest rates by Federal Reserve officials bolster the US currency. Robust

US economic data, including a blowout unemployment report on Friday, and recent remarks from Fed Chair Jerome Powell have quashed speculation about early and steep rate cuts by the US central bank that the market had widely anticipated.

Cleveland Fed President Loretta Mester said on Tuesday that if the US economy performs as she expects, it could open the door to rate cuts. But Mester said she was not ready to provide timing for easier policy amid ongoing inflation uncertainty.

After a 'cold' start, India renews \$78 bn Qatar gas deal with \$6 bn savings

BETU (GOA): India has renewed for 20 years a 1999 contract for shipping gas from Qatar at a lower rate and more favourable terms that will lead to an estimated savings of \$6 billion over the extended period, assuming the current Brent crude price of \$80 per barrel. India's largest gas importer Petronet-LNG and QatarEnergy on signed on the sidelines of India Energy Week here the agreement extending the contract, which expires in 2028, for importing 7.5 million tonne of LNG (liquefied natural gas) annually for an estimated \$78 billion. India meets 40% of its gas needs through imports. The contract with

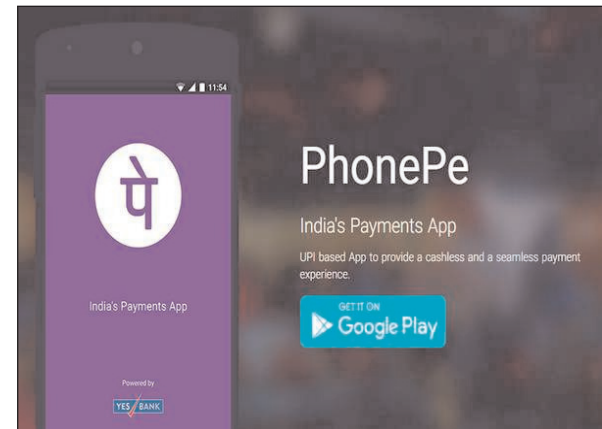
● Sources said the fixed charge has been scrapped under the revised contract, while the slope largely remains the same as before

QatarEnergy accounts for 35% of total gas imports. Qatar began supplying LNG from 2003-2004 under the existing deal that is priced at a 'slope' (per cent) of 12.67% of the current Brent crude futures rates and a fixed charge of 52 cents per unit (million British thermal units or mmbtu) of gas. Sources said the fixed charge has been scrapped under the

revised contract, while the slope largely remains the same as before. The revised terms will also save shipping cost as QatarEnergy will bear the cost of delivering gas at the port designated by Petronet under DES (delivered basis) against FOB (free on board) arrangement, where buyer arranges shipping, in the existing contract. Altogether, the saving will come to \$0.8 per unit of gas. The favourable terms in the renewed contract indicates India's rising clout as the pivot of global energy demand growth. Indian negotiators leveraged this fact to drive a hard bargain during long-drawn negotiations.

PhonePe appoints former revenue secretary Tarun Bajaj, two Walmart executive

MUMBAI: Walmart-owned PhonePe has appointed former revenue secretary Tarun Bajaj to its board as an independent director. Bajaj will also assume the position of the chairman of the risk committee, a company spokesperson said on Tuesday. Besides Bajaj, John D Rainey, executive vice president and chief financial officer at Walmart and Donna Morris, executive vice president, chief people officer at



Walmart have also joined the fintech startup's board as non-executive directors. With glaring compliance and corporate governance

lapses surfacing in two of India's biggest startups Byju's and Paytm, companies are getting more vigilant and seem to be taking steps to

strengthen their corporate governance practices. Besides, PhonePe is also preparing for a potential public listing. The company is currently valued at \$12 billion and is India's most valued privately held fintech startup. The PhonePe board will now include co-founders Sameer Nigam and Rahul Chari, Walmart executive Leigh Douglas Hopkins, industry expert Rohit Bhagat, Flipkart co-founder Binny Bansal

Transforming employee commute with machine learning

Deepesh Agarwal and Akash Maheshwari's MoveInSync has helped transform the commute for employees in India. The two had founded MoveInSync in 2019, in the backdrop of the global economic meltdown, and at a time when transportation was unorganised and unsafe. "Employee commute was the third largest cost to a company. With Google (in India) as our first client, we started building a track record for cost effective, safe and on time performance," says Deepesh. He and Akash were batchmates at IIT BHU. Deepesh went on to work at Infosys, Tech Mahindra and Motorola, and Akash at Infosys, Impulsesoft, and Microsoft, before the two founded MoveInSync. Their flagship Employee



Transportation Solution (ETS) today is a SaaS solution that is used to track employee cab usage records, provides automated billing with reduced discrepancies, and carries safety features for female passengers. It provides transport administrators complete control and visibility over their transport operations in real time. Deepesh Agarwal (R) and Akash Maheshwari The entire architecture is hosted on the cloud, and is based on Java 17,

Angular 15 and SQL/NoSQL technologies and framework. "Using such technology has enabled us to scale fast for over 300 enterprise requirements including 70 of Fortune 500 companies," says Deepesh. Machine learning based systems learn the traffic and employee clubbing patterns to ensure an average of three employees in every trip. In 2014, they received funding from Saama Capital, Athera Ventures, and Qualcomm.

Paytm crisis: One 97 Communications shares surge 9% after Vijay meets FM Nirmala

Despite reports of potential probes into money-laundering and KYC violations, Paytm's stock saw an upturn today.

Paytm share price today: The roller-coaster journey of One 97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, continued as its shares surged up to 9% to reach Rs 495.75 on the BSE. This increase followed meetings between company CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma and officials from the RBI and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. At 10:58 AM, shares of One 97 Communications were trading at Rs 490.20, up almost Rs 40 or 8.66%. Despite reports of potential probes into money-laundering and KYC violations, Paytm's



stock saw an upturn today. After experiencing three days of continuous decline, resulting in a 42% crash, the shares ended 3% higher yesterday. Currently, investor sentiment regarding regulatory issues and Paytm's ability to address them remains the main driving force behind its shares, according to an report. During the meeting with

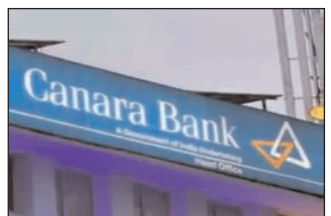
the Finance Minister, Sharma reportedly discussed the company's stance on RBI's concerns. Sitharaman emphasized the need for dialogue between Paytm and the RBI to address the flagged non-compliances. Sharma also sought an extension of the February 29 deadline and presented a transition plan during the RBI

meeting, outlining efforts to meet regulatory compliances. While some speculate that the stock may have bottomed out, analysts caution long-term investors against hasty decisions.

They warn of potential downsides if UPI payments cease after February-end. "I think there are better opportunities in the market and acting when you know there is regulatory action impending is speculation.

So I would avoid till more clarity comes. It (Paytm) is at an all-time low but in these things you do not know what the bottom is, especially when it comes to regulatory action, Gurmeet Chadha of Complete Circle Consultants was quoted as saying.

Canara Bank board to consider stock split on February 26



NEW DELHI: Canara Bank on Wednesday said it is planning split of the equity shares of the state-owned bank to boost the stock's liquidity.

The decision in this regard will be taken by the bank's Board of Directors in a meeting, which is scheduled on February 26, Canara Bank said in a regulatory filing.

The meeting's agenda is "to seek in principle approval from the board of directors for sub-division/split of the equity shares of the bank, subject to prior approval of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and other statutory/regulatory/Government of India approvals, as may be required," it said.

Paytm's billionaire founder-CEO bets on young wealth to hit profit

Delhi : Paytm plans to revamp its online wealth management services and hire more than 50,000 salespeople to get more merchants on its network, aiming to hit profitability sooner than targeted.

Billionaire founder-CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma is overhauling its suite of money management products to better tap growing wealth among younger users, who're warmer to the idea of investing online. At the same time, it's orchestrating a campaign to boost its salesforce more than 60% to try and sign up more merchants across smaller Indian cities and towns. The twin initiatives mark an ambitious effort to turn around Paytm, officially called One 97 Communications Ltd., once hailed as a new-economy symbol of India's startup scene. The company has fallen roughly 70% since a \$2.5 billion 2021 IPO as investors fret about persistent losses, while rivals such as Walmart Inc.'s PhonePE and regulatory



● "The company has fallen roughly 70% since a \$2.5 billion 2021 IPO as investors fret about persistent losses

curbs threaten to sap growth. Sharma says the wealth and merchants push, coupled with cost savings from AI automation, could help Paytm generate an operating profit in under a year. That would be faster than previous internal projections or analysts' estimates, the CEO said without elaborating.

We have learned and we will amplify our

ability to serve India, its small merchants and businesses," he told Bloomberg News in his company's chrome-and-glass headquarters on the outskirts of New Delhi. "We should be crossing about 50 million merchant-base signed up on the Paytm platform in the year," he said from offices overlooking condominiums on one side and a large construction site on the other. The Noida-based company merchants as of September, nearly 10 million of whom were paying for offerings such as QR codes, Soundboxes or audio payments confirmation machines and card machines.

Tatas may run Jamshedpur as state gives nod

Delhi : Jamshedpur, India's first planned city built by Tata group founder Jamsetji Tata, may finally come under administrative control of the Tatas, clearing a decades-old legal cloud over the place where India's first steel mill stands. The Jharkhand government last week gave the go-ahead for turning Jamshedpur, a town with a population of 1.69 million, into an industrial township under special provisions of the Indian Constitution, two people aware of the matter said. The Tata group is also in advanced talks with the central government for final approval. A five-year-old public interest litigation (PIL) in the Supreme



Court—which has proved to be a hurdle until now—is expected to reach a conclusion by January. The discussions are in final stages.

The verdict in the PIL is expected by January. The idea is to nominate a municipal council comprising Tata Steel representatives, government nominees and local peo-

ple in the nominated municipal council," said one of the people cited above. For all practical purposes, the Tata group has been providing local civic amenities for the past century, but there were a lot of grey areas legally since the Jharkhand government didn't notify the establishment of the township," he added.

Google to pay \$700 million to US consumers, states in Play store settlement

Delhi : Alphabet's (GOOGL) Google will pay \$700 million and revamp its Play app store to allow for greater competition as part of an antitrust settlement with U.S. states and consumers, according to the company and filings in San Francisco federal court. Google will pay \$630 million into a settlement fund for consumers and \$70 million

into a fund that will be used by states, according to the settlement, which still requires a judge's final approval. The settlement said eligible consumers will receive at least \$2 and may get additional payments based on their spending on Google Play between Aug. 16, 2016 and Sept. 30, 2023. All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and

the Virgin Islands, joined the settlement. Google was accused of overcharging consumers through unlawful restrictions on the distribution of apps on Android devices and unnecessary fees for in-app transactions. Wilson White, Google vice president for government affairs and public policy, in a statement said the settlement "builds on Android".

CAPSULES

FMCG stock jumps up to 17% after it expands business in South Africa by investing 1,320 Cr

Delhi : Shares of this beverage stock under the 'large-cap' category spiked approximately 11 percent in the trading session after the company's exchange filing provided multiple business updates. The company's stock jumped close to 60 percent in the last six months. With a market capitalization of Rs 1.69 lakh crores, the stocks of Varun Beverages Limited started their trading session at Rs 1,350 and currently trades at Rs 1,302.55, gaining around 11 percent compared to the previous closing levels of Rs 1,172 apiece. Such sharp stock price movements are witnessed today after the company, through a regulatory filing with the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), provided a couple of business updates. Firstly, the company intimated that its Board, in a meeting held on 19th December 2023, approved the acquisition of a 100 percent stake in "Beverage Company (Proprietary) Limited", a South Africa-based company engaged in the business of manufacturing and distributing non-alcoholic beverages. In addition to the above update, another exchange filing of the large-cap company intimated about a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the 'Government of Jharkhand' for a manufacturing plant in the state with a total capital outlay of around Rs 450 crores subject to necessary approvals. During the recent financial quarters, the company faced a dip in the basic business parameters such as operating revenues and net profits. The former moved down from Rs 5,699.

Bandhan Bank Selling Stressed Home Loan

● The sale of its stressed assets will enable the bank to reduce the level of bad loans on its books

Delhi : Bandhan Bank said it will sell its stressed housing finance portfolio to an asset reconstruction company (ARC) in order to reduce the bad loans on its books. The Bank informed the stock exchanges that its board of directors has approved the transfer of Rs 775.72 crore in home loans, overdue by more than 180 days, to an ARC. The Bank will recover 36% of this amount which works out to



Rs 280.39 crore in hard cash as part of the sale. Bandhan Bank had a gross non-performing assets (NPA) ratio of 7.32% at the end of the July-September quarter this year.

The sale of its stressed assets

will enable the bank to reduce the level of bad loans on its books and consequently it will have to set aside less money against the bad loans which can then be given out to earn interest instead.

Ola Electric first Indian EV maker to file for IPO

Delhi : Ola Electric Mobility, the Bhavish Aggarwal-led electric vehicle company, filed papers with Sebi to go public via an IPO that is estimated to be worth about Rs 10,000 crore. Ola Electric is the first EV company in India planning to go public. It would also be the first automobile company to go for IPO in over 20 years, since Maruti Suzuki (then Maruti Udyog) went public in mid-2003. IPO documents filed by Kotak Mahindra Capital showed that the com-



pany would raise Rs 5,500 crore through issuance of new shares. In addition, 10 shareholders are selling part of their holdings, aggregating a little over

9.5 crore shares, through this offer. The money raised through the issuance of new shares would primarily be used for the expansion of Ola Electric's

cell manufacturing plant, repayment or pre-payment of debt by one of its subsidiaries, and investments in R&D. The selling shareholders in the IPO include promoters Aggarwal and Indus Trust, and some early backers of the EV company — private equity firms like SoftBank, Matrix Partners and Tiger Global. Among Ola Electric's top shareholders are Aggarwal (37%), SoftBank (22%), employees (7.7%) and Tiger Global (6%).

Adani family plans \$1bn investment in green unit

Billionaire Gautam Adani and his family plan to inject \$1 billion into the group's renewable energy unit, people familiar with the matter said, as the group races to reach ambitious green goals while facing maturing bonds next year.

Adani Green Energy aims to issue preferential shares to the company's founders for meeting expansion and refinancing needs, according to people familiar with the discussions who didn't want to be identified as the talks are private. An Adani Group representative didn't offer an immediate comment on the founders' investment. The company board will consider fundraising proposals, including evaluating options such as selling shares or convert-



ible securities, it said without sharing any more details. "An equity raise could boost deleveraging and lower refinancing risk, though governance concerns may linger," Sharon Chen, a Bloomberg Intelligence analyst, wrote in a December 15 note. The company also has bond maturities worth \$1.2 billion coming up next year and it has already

begun outlining plans for repaying or refinancing those. All these efforts underscore Adani Group's attempts to draw a line over damaging allegations of corporate fraud levied by Hindenburg in January. Despite strongly denying these allegations, Adani companies lost over \$150 billion in market value at one point.

Insurance drive: Govt may consider health regulator

● "There is the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers, and there is a unique health identifier for every citizen"

Delhi : After repeated complaints by the insurance sector over the cost of treatment in private hospitals, the finance ministry has written to the health ministry suggesting that health secretary Sudhansh Pant meet representatives from the insurance industry to consider their suggestion for a regulator for healthcare services. The letter by financial services secretary Vivek Joshi is part of the government's objective of "insurance for all" and was written last week. "The ongoing efforts of the National Health Authority to build the National Health Exchange have been wel-



comed by the insurance industry. A health regulator would play a vital role in ensuring that this digital transformation aligns with the efficiency of the provider's ecosystem," the letter said. The NHA is the apex body responsible for implementing the flagship public health insurance scheme 'Ayushman Bharat PM Jan Arogya Yojana'. The authority has been entrusted with designing strategy, building technological infrastructure and implementing the 'National Digital Health Mission'. The National Health Exchange is a platform set up to standardise insurance claims processes. The objective is to make the cashless claim settlement more efficient and transparent. According to insurers, the

framework for digitising health services is already in place. There is the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers, and there is a unique health identifier for every citizen called the Ayushman Bharat Health Account or ABHA, which allows individuals to store their health records in digital form and share them with healthcare providers. However, these are yet to be fully implemented.

The biggest challenge is that the central government cannot issue a directive because health is a state subject. There have been suggestions that insurance companies can drive implementation by insisting on registration and accreditation.

LIC exempted from public stake rule

Vatika Times Delhi : The government has granted a one-time exemption to LIC to achieve 25% minimum public shareholding (MPS) within 10 years, the state-owned insurer said. The country's largest insurer LIC was listed in May 2022. The government had sold over 22 crore shares, or a 3.5% stake in LIC, through an IPO. The government currently holds 96.5% stake in the company. Earlier this year, the government had amended the regulation so that listed state-run companies, including banks, will not need to comply with the rule requiring an MPS of 25% even after their privatisation, if the government decides so "in public interest". The exemption to the MPS rule was earlier available only to government-controlled companies.

De Villiers emphasized the importance of proper communication on Ishan

NEW DELHI: Former South African batting legend AB de Villiers has weighed in on the absence of Indian wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan from international cricket, emphasizing the need for clear communication between players and team management during such challenging situations.

Kishan, who last played a T20I match against Australia in November, requested a break from the Test squad during the South Africa series due to personal reasons.

Despite being in the T20I squad for the South Africa tour, he did not feature in any matches and has been absent from the ongoing Ranji Trophy as well. Reflecting on this situation, de Villiers, speaking on a YouTube channel, shared his own experiences with managing career challenges, particularly towards the end of his playing days.

He highlighted the complexity of managing career priorities



amidst the proliferation of T20 leagues like the IPL, which demand significant attention from players.

De Villiers emphasized the importance of proper communication between players and team management or the board, stating, "Whether Ishan is doing it wrong or other players are doing it right or wrong, I do not know but what needs to happen is proper communication." Acknowledging the difficulties associated with managing one's career, de Villiers extended his best wishes to all players grappling with similar challenges. "Managing the

career is something I found extremely difficult in the backend of my career," he admitted, underscoring the necessity of clear and regular communication to ensure players are aware of their standing and roles within the team.

The former South African batter's comments come in the wake of Indian head coach Rahul Dravid's statement regarding Kishan's absence, where Dravid emphasized the player's choice in deciding when to make a comeback and the importance of playing some cricket before returning to the national side.

Bengaluru Open: Ramkumar Ramanathan shocks top seed Luka Nardi to enter quarterfinals

BENGALURU: Indian Davis Cupper Ramkumar Ramanathan made a remarkable comeback to shock top seeded Luka Nardi to enter the singles quarterfinals of the Bengaluru Open here on Wednesday. Ramkumar, a wildcard entrant, prevailed over the Italian 1-6, 6-4, 6-4 in little over two hours in their pre-quarterfinal match at the KSLTA Stadium.

The match began on an ominous note for the Indian star as Nardi broke his serve in the very first game of the opening set. From that point onwards, Ramkumar was not able

to offer any kind of fight to his higher-ranked opponent, who used a heavy first serve and precise ground shots to choke his opponent. While Nardi landed a whopping 86 percent of his first serve inside the box, Ramanathan barely managed to cross the 50 percent mark. But Ramkumar seemed a totally transformed player in the second set as he engaged Nardi more effectively in rallies, exploring the deeper areas of the court to keep the Italian pinned on the baseline. After the first four games went by the serve,

Ramkumar earned a crucial break in the fifth game to go 3-2 up and he consolidated the position with a hold to make it 4-2.

The salient feature of Ramkumar's transformed game was the improvement in his first and second services, as he found more zip in them in this set.

Nardi struggled to return Ramkumar's serves that often breached the 200 kmph barrier. It was evident in the 10th game when Ramkumar served out the second set, as two big serves down the T helped the Indian go level at a set apiece.

Ashwin withdraws from third Test due to family medical emergency

RAJKOT: India's ace off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Friday night, withdrew from the ongoing third Test against England at the Niranjan Shah Stadium due to a "family medical emergency." Earlier in the day, Ashwin had completed the landmark of 500 Test

wickets. "Ravichandran Ashwin has withdrawn from the Test squad, effective immediately due to a family medical emergency. In these challenging times, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the team fully supports

Ashwin. The BCCI extends its heartfelt support to the champion cricketer and his family. The health and well-being of the players and their loved ones are of utmost importance. The Board requests respect for the privacy of Ashwin and his family.

Ben Duckett leads England's strong reply with blazing ton on Day 2

NEW DELHI: England's opener Ben Duckett blazed his way to a magnificent hundred off just 88 balls in response to India's first innings total of 445 on the second day of the third Test in Rajkot. Duckett's unbeaten 133, coming off 118 deliveries and adorned with two sixes and 21 fours, propelled England to 207-2 at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium.

Although Ravichandran Ashwin achieved the milestone of becoming the second Indian bowler, after Anil Kumble, to claim 500 Test wickets, it was a day of toil for India as England scored briskly, almost at a run-a-ball rate.

At stumps, Joe Root was unbeaten on nine, with England trailing India by 238 runs in the third match of the five-Test series, which stands at 1-1. Earlier in the day, debutant Dhruv Jurel (46) and Ashwin (37) staged a spirited resistance, while Jasprit Bumrah (26) provided a late flourish to guide India close to the 450-mark.

England's sloppy fielding allowed Jurel two reprieves, first by Ollie Pope at midwicket and then by England captain Ben Stokes at leg slip. Rehan Ahmed halted Jurel's charge towards a fifty on his debut Test, and Mark Wood (4-114) eventually dismissed Bumrah, the last Indian wicket to fall.

England commenced their innings at 5-0 after India were penalized five runs for Ashwin's infringement on the protected area of the pitch. Although Duckett initially struggled against Mohammed Siraj's pace, he quickly settled into his groove and took on the Indian spinners with confidence.

British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe's purchase of a 25 per cent stake

LONDON: British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe's purchase of a 25 per cent stake in Manchester United has been approved by the Football Association.

Ratcliffe's deal had received the backing of the Premier League on Monday evening and the FA have now also given the green light to his investment. A US Securities and Exchange Commission statement revealed the FA's approval "has already been obtained" as Ratcliffe edges closer to sealing his place in the Old Trafford boardroom. Ratcliffe's invest-



ment, which will give him control of football operations at the 20-time English champions, cannot be completed until the tender offer for Class A shares is finalised. The period in which holders of Class A shares can ten-

der them for sale has been extended from February 14 until 23:59 on February 16. It was announced on Christmas Eve that INEOS chairman Ratcliffe had agreed to buy a 25 per cent stake in United from unpopu-

lar owners the Glazer family in a deal worth around £1.02 billion (\$1.3 billion).

Ratcliffe will also invest a further £238 million in the club's infrastructure. The 71-year-old has conducted a series of meetings with club staff and associates in recent days as the investment nears completion. Ratcliffe has met leaders of the independent Manchester United Supporters' Trust and spoken with local leaders, including senior representatives of Trafford Council.

Rahul will remain in his role as India's head coach until the T20 World Cup

NEW DELHI: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has confirmed that Rahul Dravid will remain in his role as India's head coach until the upcoming T20 World Cup scheduled for June 2024. The announcement was made by BCCI secretary Jay Shah, who affirmed the decision following discussions with Dravid.

Dravid's contract had initially ended after the ODI World Cup final last year, but he was asked to continue his duties along with other support staff for the tour to South Africa in December-



January, with the tenure yet to be finalized. Speaking on the matter, Shah revealed, "After the (2023) World Cup, Rahul bhai had to leave for the South Africa tour immediately. We did not get to meet in between which finally happened today." He further asserted,

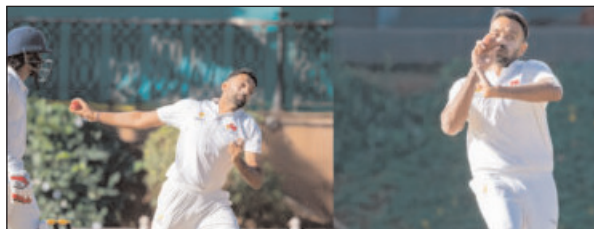
"Why are you worried about a contract for such a senior person like Rahul Dravid? Rahul bhai will remain the coach in the T20 World Cup." However, Shah hinted at further discussions to be held ahead of the marquee event, acknowledging the busy schedule of

the Indian cricket team. "I will speak with him whenever there is time, there are back-to-back series happening right now," he stated. In addition to Dravid's extension, Shah emphasized the BCCI's mandate regarding workload management for centrally contracted players during the Indian Premier League (IPL) season. This is the BCCI's mandate. The BCCI is the supreme body and whatever it decides the franchises will have to follow — we are above the franchises," he asserted, underlining the importance.

Dhawal is likely to announce his retirement from the game after Mumbai's last Ranji league

RAJKOT

He has also taken 223 wickets in 130 List A matches at an average of 22.13, and 154 wickets in 162 matches at an average of 27.99 in T20s. The 35-year-old took 19 wickets (4-34 best figures) at an average of 26.73 in ODIs, and three wickets at an average of 18.33 in T20Is for India. He also played for the Mumbai Indians, Rajasthan Royals and (now defunct) Gujarat Lions in the IPL. The veteran pacer has featured in just three Ranji Trophy matches this season, in which he took seven wickets. Kulkarni made his first-class debut for India A against Australia at Bangalore in September 2008, and was immensely successful in his debut season for Mumbai, striking regularly with the new ball. While he



wasn't very quick, Kulkarni was a master of beating the batsmen with his swing and movement, with his outswinger being his biggest forte.

Notably, some of Kulkarni's best performances came for Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy finals.

In the 2008-09 final at Hyderabad against Uttar Pradesh, he took five for 76 in the second innings to star in Mumbai's 243-run win. In the 2009-10 final against Karnataka at Mysore, he took 2-52 & 3-80 as Mumbai scored a thrilling six-run win. In the 2012-13 final against Saurashtra on a

seaming track at the Wankhede Stadium, he took nine for 56 (four for 24 & five for 32) to bowl Mumbai to an emphatic innings & 125-runs victory.

In the 2015-16 Ranji Trophy final against Saurashtra at Pune, he took five for 42 & two for 34 to bowl Mumbai to their 41st Ranji Trophy title. : **In what will certainly** be an emotional occasion for him, veteran pacer Dhawal Kulkarni, who played 12 ODIs and two T20Is for India between 2014-16, is likely to announce his retirement from the game after Mumbai's last Ranji Trophy league.

Real Madrid clinched a vital 1-0 victory away at RB Leipzig

NEW DELHI: The match commenced with RB Leipzig showcasing vigor but lacking the finishing touch, while Real Madrid's goalkeeper Andriy Lunin proved pivotal with numerous crucial saves, notably after Leipzig's contentious disallowed goal for offside.

In the early stages of the second half, Diaz's moment of brilliance broke the deadlock. The stand-in for the injured Jude Bellingham demonstrated exceptional skill, maneuvering past three Leipzig defenders before delivering a precision strike into the net. Reflecting on his remarkable goal, Diaz remarked, "I'm intuitive... It was a nice goal."

Toni Kroos, Real Madrid's midfielder, lauded Diaz's individual contribution, acknowledging, "a piece of individual skill decided the game." Conversely, Leipzig goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi expressed frustration, stating, "a lucky punch decided the game." Despite the absence of key players like Bellingham and makeshift defensive arrangements, Real Madrid continued their impressive Champions League campaign with a seventh consecutive victory. Leipzig coach Marco Rose highlighted his team's fearless approach against Real Madrid, drawing upon their previous triumph over the Spanish giants. Kroos criticized.

'Cricket has increased these days': Jadeja

RAJKOT: Returning after a hamstring injury forced him to miss the second Test against England at Visakhapatnam, for the third Test of the series in his hometown Rajkot, Jadeja, now 35 and perhaps realising that he isn't getting any younger, made it clear that he now wants to protect his body, no matter how. Considering that hamstrings take time to heal, the ace allrounder's early return to action is almost miraculous. "I would like to give my 100% and save my body and keep away from diving when not required. That's it. I don't think about that too much because it has happened before. As the match progresses, the body will get used to the flow and you will forget that there was an injury. I will get into rhythm in one or two days," Jadeja told the reporters. Even though he asserted that he would protect his body on the field, there's no guarantee that Jadeja won't get injured yet again. "I can get injured again tomorrow. I can work on my body more smartly and do it carefully and hope there will be no problem. But there is no guarantee.

A momentary lapse allowed Copenhagen to equalize

NEW DELHI: De Bruyne's clinical finish from Foden's pass handed them an early advantage, signaling their intent. Despite Jack Grealish's early departure due to injury, City seamlessly adapted, with Jeremy Doku making an impactful substitute appearance.

However, Erling Haaland's acrobatic effort narrowly missed the target, denying Copenhagen a chance to level the score earlier. A momentary lapse allowed Copenhagen to equalize through Mattsson's debut goal, but City swiftly regained control.

Silva capitalized on a fortunate deflection off De Bruyne to put City back in front before the break.

Despite Copenhagen goalkeeper Kamil Grabara's heroic efforts to keep his side in contention, denying numerous City chances, Foden's late goal extended City's lead, effectively sealing the tie. With the second leg sandwiched between crucial Premier League fixtures against Manchester United and Liverpool, City aimed to secure a comfortable advantage, further solidifying their unbeaten streak in European competitions to 21 games.

A momentary lapse allowed Copenhagen to equalize

Residents of UP have witnessed the importance of law and order over the past seven years: CM Yogi

Lucknow Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Friday, said that the citizens of the state have witnessed the importance of law and order over the past seven years. "Their decision to re-elect this government stems from witnessing the improved law and order situation and security environment in the state," he added. Addressing the closing ceremony of the 67th All India Police Duty Meet, the Chief Minister said, "The robust law and order situation in the state has resulted in receiving investment proposals of Rs 40 lakh crores in GIS-23. Whereas before 2017, no one wanted to invest in the state." He mentioned that on February 19, in



the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, investment proposals of more than Rs 10 lakh crore are going to be implemented through a Ground Breaking Ceremony (GBC@IV). This will directly provide jobs to 35 lakh youths, demonstrating that when law and order is applied with determination, positive results

follow. Earlier, he launched the souvenir of the Meet. He also presented trophies to the winners of various competitions. CM Yogi further mentioned that various police forces play a crucial role in creating a better environment for the country's internal security, law and order, and safety. Not only that, but the police force also

has a vital role in determining public perception. They face significant challenges in creating this perception and have to work with a dual mindset. He emphasized that the police forces operate under a zero-tolerance policy towards anti-social and anti-national elements while actively engaging in dialogue and delivering justice to the common man. This creates a new confidence in the minds of common people. It also reflects the sensitivity of the police force. "The event is being attended by officers and staff of various forces from across the country. They have their own experiences. Understanding and benefiting from these experiences is essen-

tial," Yogi added. He mentioned that the tradition of exchange of knowledge in our country has been ancient. Naimisharanya, located 70 kilometers from the capital Lucknow, was a center of exchanging the knowledge of sages thousands of years ago. It played a significant role in documenting the tradition of Vedic knowledge of India, with 88,000 sages and saints from across the country being part of it. He said that the All India Police Duty Meet carries forward this heritage. Knowledge is not just what is written in books but what you experience during field duty. "We all have to prepare ourselves according to the changing nature of crime.

'First requirement for good governance is 'rule of law'

Prayagraj Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath emphasized on Friday that the rule of law is fundamental to good governance. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University, held at the Medical Association's auditorium, the CM underscored the crucial role of the Bar and Bench in achieving this objective. "Bar and Bench always supported in establishing the good governance model of Uttar Pradesh." Adityanath emphasized the significance of maintaining public trust in the judicial system, stating that a loss of faith in democracy could lead to unrest. "We all should always strive to further strengthen all the pillars of India's democracy." Furthermore, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stressed the importance of dialogue in a democracy, high-



lighting that individuals with grievances have various avenues to directly communicate their concerns to the government. He assured that the government is committed to addressing the issues brought forth by the public. CM Yogi highlighted that the Constitution of India, enacted on January 26, 1950, played a pivotal role in unifying the nation from all corners, fostering unity from North to South and from East to West. Moreover, he emphasized its global impact, inspiring democratic progress worldwide. "When the

Constitution of the country was being prepared, there was a long discussion regarding the Preamble. At that time, Baba Saheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar emphasized that our challenge lay not in merely expanding or concluding the Constitution." M Yogi said "We are apprehensive about the outcome of the function. A successful ceremony and favorable results hinge upon a strong and auspicious beginning." He urged the Dr. Rajendra Prasad National Law University to initiate a specialized training program for young advocates statewide.

Modi govt implemented management principles in governance

Lucknow Union minister Piyush Goyal said that the Narendra Modi government is a classic example of use of good management principles in governance. He said whenever faced with any problem Modi government did detailed 'root cause' analysis of the problem came up with robust sustainable solutions. While virtually addressing a 'Flagship Leader Interactive Session ICONS' at IIM Lucknow's Manifest-Varchaska 2024, Goyal said that Modi government used managerial

skills of partnering with all the stakeholders. He said prime Minister Narendra Modi has prepared a roadmap (blueprint) how to take India forward. "But Modi alone didn't prepare it alone. He took ideas and feedback from 15 lakh people to make a roadmap for future of India," Goyal said. "Partnership of all the stakeholders is another example of decisive leadership that is keen to listen to what people say. Outcome oriented action defines our government. Outlay of money is not important

but it's the outcome that holds the key," he said. Goyal said that the rule of the law is the key. "There is transparency and sincerity in every action that we take. We prioritise as we understand that everything will not happen overnight. Swachta (cleanliness) was one of the priorities of the government. Time bound execution is another focused area to define performance. Innovative financing models are being used to fund big development and welfare expenditure.

Industries will be set up and job opportunities will be generated: CM Yogi

LUCKNOW: Retired officers and educationists to visit universities, introducing youth to CM's vision and mission? Ahead of the Ground Breaking Ceremony for industrial projects valued at over Rs 10 lakh crores, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has constituted a special team. This team includes 12 retired officers from the Indian Administrative Service, 04 from the Indian Police Service, and 07 from the Indian Forest Service (all retired), along with 19 senior educationists. This team will introduce young people to the various dimensions of the Global Investors Summit-2023 and GBC@IV through a series of interactions with them. On February 17-18, this team will engage in discussions with youth at different universities/colleges, addressing their queries related to jobs, employment, and career planning. Additionally, they will raise awareness about the Global Investors Summit-2023 and GBC@IV. In a special event held at the

Chief Minister's residence on Friday, the Chief Minister engaged in a dialogue with the 42-member special team, comprising retired officers and senior educationists. Highlights of the Chief Minister's address on this occasion: You are all aware of the unprecedented success of the Global Investors Summit held from February 10-12 last year. We received investment proposals of nearly Rs 40 lakh crores, and now, within a year, these proposals are being implemented. This will immensely contribute to the overall development of the state and provide abundant employment and career opportunities for our youth. You all have witnessed and contributed to the success of this state, and you have been supportive collaborators in this journey. Uttar Pradesh is a state of immense possibilities. To achieve the overall development of the country and the state, we must materialize these opportunities on the ground.

Rahul Gandhi's yatra to skip west UP, cut short by 5 days

LUCKNOW: Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra has been curtailed by five days and will skip most of the scheduled stops in western UP. While the party said the decision was taken because of the UP Board examinations from Feb 22, it was viewed as linked to Jayant Chaudhary's RLD quitting INDIA bloc and joining NDA. RLD's base is western UP, where it was supposed to have been the bulwark of the opposition resistance to BJP. There was also a tiff between Congress and Jayant in RS when he was called to speak about the Bharat Ratna to his late grand father and farmer leader Charan Singh, creating bitterness. The yatra will now touch upon western UP only at the exit point to MP, sources said.

Our decision to join government has been upheld, says Ajit camp

MUMBAI: State NCP president Sunil Tatkare on Thursday welcomed Speaker Rahul Narwekar's order, saying the decision taken under the leadership of Ajit Pawar to join the BJP-Shiv Sena govt has been upheld. "Our contention was that the recognition of the party depends on legislative strength. Of 53 legislators, 43 are with us. Our arguments have

been accepted by Speaker and he has delivered a verdict in our favour. Speaker's order is very elaborate and based on constitutional issues," Tatkare told. Tatkare also rebutted comments by Supriya Sule who said Speaker's order was a virtual replica of the ruling in the Shiv Sena case and showed that "an invisible power" was at work against

Pawar and his NCP. Tatkare said Sule was speaking out of mere frustration without considering past events, which establish NCP's stand. "After 2014 assembly elections, NCP had given outside support to BJP. In 2016-17, NCP decided to join govt with BJP. A discussion was even held within the party and all 53 MLAs supported it.

Uber rolls out 1st buyback plan after profitable year

Uber repurchases \$7 billion in shares, boosting shareholder returns. Stock surges 11% in New York. Meta and Airbnb also

enhance shareholder returns. CEO Khosrowshahi sees 2023 as a turning point for Uber's financial health. Uber rolls out 1st buyback plan after profitable year. Uber Technologies will buy back as much as \$7 billion in shares to return capital to shareholders after reporting its first full year of operating profit and consistent positive free cash flow in 2023. The repurchase plan "is a vote of confidence in the company's strong financial momentum," chief financial officer Prashanth Mahendra-Rajah said in a statement. "We will be thoughtful as it relates to the pace..

GBC@IV will be organized in all 75 districts, along with Lucknow

Lucknow Final preparations are underway for the Ground Breaking Ceremony (GBC@IV) by the Yogi government, marking a significant milestone in Uttar Pradesh's economic landscape. This mega event, aimed at implementing investments of Rs 10 lakh crores, will witness the presence of prominent industrialists from India and abroad. On the other hand, on February 19, GBC will also be organized in all 75 districts of UP. Scheduled from February 19 to 21 at the Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Lucknow, the GBC will witness the esteemed presence of the Prime Minister and

Chief Minister. The District Magistrates will play a crucial role in organizing the event in the districts. Through the Ground Breaking Ceremony, a total of 14,537 projects with an investment of Rs 10 lakh 15 thousand 583 crores are fully prepared to be implemented in the state. This includes 300 projects with an investment of Rs 500 crores, 895 projects with an investment ranging from Rs 100 to 500 crores, 4,577 initiatives with investments ranging from Rs 10 to 100 crores, and the majority being 8,735 projects with an investment of Rs 1 to 10 crores. After the implementation of all these

projects, more than 34 lakh jobs will be generated. GBC@IV is poised not only to expedite industrial growth across the entire state but also to inject fresh momentum into industrial development within every district. CM Yogi has directed that during the district-level Ground Breaking Ceremony events, exhibitions showcasing the 'One District One Product' (ODOP) initiative be set up. Additionally, the ground verification for ready projects for GBC@IV should be completed with 100 percent accuracy. Additionally, presentations during the district events will offer glimpses of the evolving

landscape of Uttar Pradesh, transforming into 'Udyam Pradesh,' before investors and local entrepreneurs. Moreover, the main program of GBC@IV in Lucknow will be broadcast live during the district events, ensuring wide spread coverage. The state government organized the UPGIS -2023 in February last year. Prior to this summit, government ministers and officials initiated dialogues with industries through roadshows held in major global industrial hubs and metropolitan cities. As a result, the state has received investment proposals of approximately Rs 40 lakh crores.



UP Constable Civil Police Recruitment Exam: Entry will be given after biometric verification

Lucknow The Yogi government has implemented stringent security measures to conduct the UP Constable Civil Police Direct Recruitment Examination, scheduled to take place in two shifts on Feb 17 and 18 at 2385 centers across all 75 districts of the state. For this purpose, Static magistrates have been deployed at every exam center, and there will be police officers ranging from Deputy Superintendent of Police to Sub Inspector as center supervisors based on the number of candidates at each center. Furthermore, comprehensive surveillance will be maintained through CCTV cameras, and all candidates will undergo biometric verification before being granted entry into the exam center. The state government is recruiting 60,244 police constables to further strengthen the police force, the examinations for which are being conducted on February 17 and 18 at 2385 centers in all 75 districts of the state. Administrative and police officers will be deployed. Uttar Pradesh Police Recruitment and Promotion Board (UPPRPB) Chairperson DG Renuka Mishra informed that as per the intention of CM Yogi Adityanath, various administrative and police officers and employees have been deployed for the examination. At the district level, District Magistrates will function as District Supervisors (Magistrates), overseeing various duties such as managing exam centers, coordinating sector magistrates, and deploying static magistrates, among other administrative tasks. The District Magistrates have appointed Assistant Center Supervisors along with Static Magistrates at each center. In addition, Additional District Magistrates have been appointed as Assistant Nodal Officers (Administration), and a Sector Magistrate has been deployed at three examination centers. The flying squad will also remain vigilant to ensure a cheating-free examination. Simultaneously, officials ranging from Deputy Superintendent of Police to Sub Inspector will serve as center supervisors. Deputy Superintendents of Police will oversee centers with more than a thousand candidates, while Inspectors will be deployed at centers with up to a thousand candidates, and Sub-Inspectors at centers with up to five hundred candidates. To ensure the integrity of the examination, 50 percent of the personnel appointed at the examination center have been appointed by the District Magistrates and the remaining 50 percent have been appointed by Center Administrators (Principal). Among them, first and second exam assistants will be appointed by the District Magistrates and Center Administrators. Additionally, one invigilator will be assigned for every 12 candidates. Along with this, an assistant inspector will also be deployed.