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UNIQUE GIFT OF KRIYAYOGA ASHRAM AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE TO GIVE IMPETUS TO WORLD BUILDING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

Poverty level significantly down to 5%, says Niti CEO

NEW DELHI: The latest survey of household consumption expenditure released by the statistics office has shown that rural consumption has remained robust, narrowing the gap with urban, and the numbers could mean a sharp reduction in the poverty level in the country, the Niti Aayog CEO said. "Based on this data, poverty levels in the country could be closer to 5% or less," B V R Subrahmanyam said, adding that rural deprivation has almost disappeared going by the data. The numbers could have an implication for interest rate setting by RBI as the share of food and cereals is lower in the retail inflation index, he said, asserting the data has dispelled doubts about the state of the rural economy. Poverty level is calculated on the basis of consumption expenditure data and there has



been a sharp debate about the number of poor. Data for 2017-18 was not released, so this is the latest data after 2011-12. 'Food spend in rural India 46.4% in 2022-23 from 53% in 2011-12' Latest data on household consumption expenditure showed significant shifts in rural and urban consumption, with share of food and cereals coming down. Spending on non-food items such as fridge, television, beverages and processed food, medical care and transportation have increased in this period while expenditure on

food such as cereals and pulses has slowed. The survey showed that at current prices, rural monthly per capita consumption spending rose 164% from Rs 1,430 in 2011-12 to Rs 3,773 in 2022-23 while in urban centres, it shot up 146%, from Rs 2,630 in 2011-12 to Rs 6,459 in 2022-23. In rural areas, the share of food in monthly consumption has slowed to 46.4% in 2022-23 from 53% in 2011-12 while spending on non-food items rose to 54% from 47.15. In urban centres the same trend was visible with spending on food

slowing to 39.2% in 2022-23 from 43% in 2011-22 while non-food expenditure rose to 60.8% in 2022-23 from 57.4% in 2011-12 according to the survey. "In food, consumption of beverages, processed food, milk and fruits is growing - an indication of more diverse and balanced consumption," said Niti Aayog CEO B V R Subrahmanyam. He said the latest data would lead to a recasting of the consumer price index which measures retail inflation, as the share of cereals and food will go down. "This means the contribution of food to CPI inflation will be lower and probably was lower in earlier years also. This means inflation was being overstated and is probably less as food has been a major contributor," said Subrahmanyam, adding that this could have implications for RBI's monetary policy.

Can't outsource national security, self-reliance must: Army chief

NEW DELHI: The nation's security can neither be outsourced, nor be dependent on the largesse of others, Army chief General Manoj Pande has said, reiterating the strategic imperative of self-reliance in defence production. Army is currently working with 340 indigenous defence industries for "fructification" of 230 contracts by 2025, which entails an outlay of Rs 2.5 lakh crore, Gen Pande said at a conclave, underlining the force's push for self-reliance as part of



its "transformation" in meeting operational and functional requirements. The impact of external dependency for critical components, supply chain disruptions and weaponisation of denial regimes came to

the fore during the pandemic, which was also reinforced by the lessons learnt from the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. "The need to be self-reliant in meeting our defence needs, both in acquir-

ing new weapon platforms or equipment and sustenance of existing ones, by meeting ammunition, spares and maintenance demands and achieving self-sufficiency in critical technologies, is hence an imperative. Atmanirbharta is an inescapable requirement," he said. It's "extremely essential" for the nation to have a robust and effective defence industry ecosystem, which includes indigenous research, design, development and production capacities.

Gujarat human smuggling case's 'Dirty Harry' nabbed in US

AHMEDABAD: US authorities have arrested from Chicago Harshkumar Patel alias "Dirty Harry", a key accused in Gujarat's Dingucha human smuggling case in which four of a family froze to death in Jan 2022 while trying to

enter US illegally from Canada. According to Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC) News' Fifth Estate segment, Harshkumar was held at Chicago airport. The deaths of Jagdish Patel, 39, wife Vaishali, 37, daughter Vihangi, 11,

and son Dharmik, 3, had shaken Gujarati community in Canada and US. The family was from Dingucha, near Gandhinagar. Harshkumar was allegedly in contact with Steve Shand, a van apprehended by US authorities on the

fateful night of Jan 19, 2022. Shand has been accused of smuggling seven persons from Gujarat illegally, including the four who perished near the US border. Investigators have found WhatsApp exchanges between Harshkumar.

4 Congress, National People Party MLAs join BJP in Arunachal Pradesh ahead of elections



GUWAHATI: Congress suffered a blow in Arunachal Pradesh as two of its legislators Ninong Ering and Wanglin Lowangdong, along with National People's Party's (NPP) Mutchu Mithi and Gokar Basar, joined BJP in the presence of CM Pema Khandu in Itanagar on Sunday. Lok Sabha elections and assembly polls in the northeastern state will be held simultaneously this year. The four MLAs submitted their resignation letters to the assembly speaker. Prior to this, BJP had 49 MLAs in the 60-member assembly, while Congress and NPP had four each. Three were independents. Screenshot 2024-02-26 013730 Congress has already suffered setbacks in neighbouring Assam, where two legislators extended support to BJP recently, while another party MLA backed BJP's ally AGP.

Ering, a former Union minister in Manmohan Singh's govt, expressed regret for not being able to join BJP during 2019 elections due to some "technical reasons". Associated with ABVP during his school days, Ering said he has finally chosen to reconnect to Sangh Parivar. He said that he would be happy to get a BJP ticket for the assembly polls. NPP's Mutchu said: "My supporters wanted me to join BJP. I am fulfilling their wish." Speaking on the occasion, Khandu said the people of Arunachal have made up their minds to vote for BJP again. "BJP is the only party...Others have nearly lost their existence before BJP.

Haryana INLD chief, bodyguard shot dead in moving car at Jhajjar

ROHTAK: Unidentified gunmen shot and killed two-time former Haryana MLA and INLD's state president Nafe Singh Rathee along with one of his three bodyguards inside a moving car at Bahadurgarh in Jhajjar district on Sunday. INLD legislator Abhay Chautala said Rathee recently met CM Manohar Lal Khattar, home minister Anil Vij and the IGP to report threats to his



safety, but the BJP-led state govt did not provide him official security "for political reasons". Although the motive behind the

fatal attack remains unclear, jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and his associate Kala Jathedi are suspected of having a hand in it, sources said. Rathee, who was MLA of Bahadurgarh from 1996 to 2005, was in the front seat of his car when the assailants fired from an i10 at Barahi Gate Road. He took bullets in the neck, waist and thigh, doctors said after he was declared

dead on arrival at a nearby hospital. INLD spokesperson Rakesh Sihag confirmed that a wounded security guard died, too. A video of the attack and the state INLD chief's bullet-riddled SUV was circulating on social media by the time. Jhajjar SP Arpit Jain reached the crime scene. The officer said two crack teams had been deployed to trace the killers.

Adani looks to partner Uber for foray into electric cars

MUMBAI: Adani Group, India's third biggest business house in terms of market value, is working on a strategic partnership with Uber Technologies to roll out its electric passenger cars on the latter's ride hailing platform and ratchet up traction on the conglomerate's super app Adani One. The partnership also plans to bring the services of Uber under Adani One,



which was launched in 2022. These formed part of the discussions between Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani and Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi during

their Feb 24 meeting. The Ahmedabad-based infrastructure major plans to get into electric passenger vehicles and a collaboration with Uber helps to fasten its play. It already has a presence in electric commercial vehicles like buses, coaches and trucks. Though it is not into vehicle manufacturing, it has huge in-house requirements in its ports and airports businesses.

Uttarakhand set to be 3rd state to pass bill making rioters pay up

DEHRADUN: Days after large-scale violence erupted during an anti-encroachment drive in Banphoolpura locality of Haldwani, Uttarakhand govt will table a bill that makes rioters accountable for damages to govt and private property. Uttarakhand Public



and Private Property Damage Recovery Bill will be presented in the state assembly session starting on Monday. Yogi Adityanath govt in Uttar Pradesh passed a similar bill in 2020 and Haryana followed suit.

Uttarakhand will be the third state to enact such a law. Govt sources indicated that they are keen on 'swift passage of the bill in upcoming session'. Under the proposed law, individuals causing harm during protests or strikes will be "financially responsible for losses".

PM Modi inaugurates newly constructed AIIMS in different states of the country

Rae Bareli Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated the newly constructed All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in different states of the country, including Rae Bareli (Uttar Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Mangalgiri (Andhra Pradesh), Bathinda (Punjab), and Kalyani (West Bengal). Virtually joining the inauguration ceremony of Rae Bareli, he said that he had promised AIIMS to Rae Bareli and today the guarantee was being fulfilled. He also lashed out at Congress Party for doing dynastic politics. "They only did politics in Rae Bareli, while the work was done by Modi.

Playing with youth's future a national sin: UP CM Yogi Adityanath

LUCKNOW: Terming injustice done to youth as no less than 'rashtriya paap' (national sin), CM Yogi Adityanath Sunday pledged to take stringent action against "elements" who are trying to play with the future of youngsters seeking employment in Uttar Pradesh. "If appointment of deserving candidates is not conducted honestly, it forces youth to migrate from the state. It is 'rashtriya paap' if youth face injustice," Yogi said after distributing appointment letters to 1,782 candidates selected by the Uttar Pradesh Subordinate Services Selection Commission for various departments, including Ayush, irrigation, UP

Housing and Development Board, health department, home department, energy and secretariat services. Yogi's assertion came a day after he ordered cancellation of UP police constable recruitment exam, conducted on Feb 17-18, after allegations of paper leak. In the last few days, police have arrested or detained over 240 people suspected of using unfair means during the exam, prompting CM to take a perceptibly strong step. "The elements playing with the future of youth will have no place to go. Wo ab na ghar ke rahenge na ghaat ke," he said, adding his govt has decided to take action to set a 'nazeer'.

Fact-finding team barred from Sandeshkhali

KOLKATA/SANDESKHALI: Trinamool Congress isn't shielding fugitive party strongman Sheikh Shahjahan, Calcutta HC's stay on SIT probe into the happenings in Sandeshkhali is responsible for him being on the loose, MP and party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said on Sunday. The remark blaming judicial action for status quo in the restive North 24-Parganas

pocket coincided with TMC removing Shahjahan's associate Ajit Maity as regional president, less than 24 hours after he was given that post. Trigger for the move was Maity's detention by police after he locked himself up for four-and-a-half hours to escape women protesters in Sandeshkhali. In Kolkata, an independent six-member fact-finding team led by

Justice (ret'd) L Narasimha Reddy was stopped and arrested en route Sandeshkhali on charges of "breach of peace". They were released on bail after being escorted back to the city. "We know Section 144 is imposed there. We intended to go in groups of two, and there should not be any problem in allowing that. Media has reported that political workers.

'Stunning Sudarshan Setu!': PM Modi shares photos of India's longest cable-stayed

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated the 'Sudarshan Setu,' a cable-stayed bridge spanning 2.32 km over the Arabian Sea in Gujarat. This remarkable infrastructure connects Beyt Dwarka island to the mainland in Okha, situated in Gujarat's Devbhumi Dwarka district. The Sudarshan Setu, formerly known as the 'Signature Bridge,' is a four-lane cable-stayed bridge featuring a distinctive design. Notably, its footpath is adorned with verses from the Srimad Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna. The bridge, constructed at a cost of Rs 979 crore, comprises a central double span cable-stayed portion of 900 meters and a 2.45 km long approach road. With a width of 27.20 meters, the bridge includes 2.50-meter wide footpaths on each side. Previously



referred to as the 'Signature Bridge,' it has been officially renamed 'Sudarshan Setu' or Sudarshan Bridge. Beyt Dwarka, the island near Okha port, is approximately 30 km from Dwarka town, housing the famous Dwarkadhish temple dedicated to Lord Krishna. The Sudarshan Setu holds immense significance for pilgrims, simplifying travel between Okha and Bet Dwarka. Prior to the bridge's construction, pilgrims had to rely on boat transport to reach the Dwarkadhish Temple in Beyt, Dwarka. The bridge's design incorporates solar panels on the upper sections of the footpath, contributing to the generation of one megawatt of electricity. The local community and pilgrims were eagerly awaiting the bridge's inauguration, anticipating enhanced accessibility to the sacred Beyt Dwarka. Priests and local residents express gratitude to Prime Minister Modi, emphasising the spiritual and practical significance of the Sudarshan Setu. Beyond its symbolic value, the bridge is expected to boost tourism, save time for travelers, and improve access to quality healthcare.

WTO meet: India seeks permanent solution to food security

NEW DELHI: India will strongly oppose a China-led proposal for an investment facilitation pact besides pressing for finding a permanent solution to public stock holding of grains for food security and protection of the interests of fishermen at the WTO ministerial meeting beginning Tuesday. The Indian delegation is led by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. The four-day 13th ministerial conference (MC13) will start on February 26 in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Trade ministers of 164 member countries of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are meeting against the backdrop of the uncertain global economic situation due to the Red Sea crisis, the Ukraine-Russia war and the Israel-Hamas conflict. The key issue of India's interests at the meeting relates to finding a permanent solution for its minimum support price (MSP) issue for food security, agricultural reforms, fisheries subsidies, e-commerce moratorium on import duties, dispute settlement, and WTO reforms. **Food security issues** The public stock-holding (PSH) programme is a policy tool under which the government procures crops like rice and wheat from farmers at MSP, and stores and distributes



foodgrains to the poor. India stresses the need for PSH for its large, vulnerable population and wants a permanent solution from the MC13. Food procurement, stockholding, and distribution are crucial to India's food security strategy. MSP is normally higher than the prevailing market rates and sells these at a low price to ensure food security for over 800 million beneficiaries. However, the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture limits the ability of a government to purchase food at MSP. Under global trade norms, a WTO member country's food subsidy bill should not breach the limit of 10 per cent of the value of production based on the reference price of 1986-88. As part of the solution, India has asked for measures like amendments in the formula to calculate the food subsidy cap. Developed nations are of the view that such programmes distort global trade prices of

food grains. **Joint Support Initiatives (JSIs) or plurilateral agreements** India opposes this move being pushed for certain nations. For example, India is strongly opposing efforts of a group of countries led by China to push a proposal on investment facilitation for development agreement at the WTO. The country has maintained that this agenda falls outside the mandate of the global trade body. According to experts, the attempt of the group to integrate the proposal into the WTO has systemic concerns for the organisation and it would impact developing nations in pursuing their interest in future. **Agricultural reforms** India's stance is to protect farmer livelihoods and ensure equitable market access. However, developed nations are pushing to reduce domestic support and increase market openness irrespective of the

fact that they themselves provide large subsidies to their rich farmers. **WTO reforms** India advocates for inclusive reforms that consider developing countries' interests, against the backdrop of developed nations' proposals for flexible negotiation processes, dropping of decision-making by consensus and the integration of non-trade issues into WTO without consensus. India supports efforts to improve the working of the WTO but its key pillars like special and differential treatment for less developed and developing nations, equal voice and dispute settlement mechanism should be retained while undertaking reforms, an official said. India also seeks a revamp of the Appellate Body to ensure fairness, facing off against the USA's reluctance to do so and EU's proposal for alternate mechanisms. The US, a frequent participant in WTO disputes, has been obstructing the process due to dissatisfaction with inefficiencies and perceived overreaches by the WTO's judiciary. The members have already reached the first part of the agreement in 2022 under which subsidies will be prohibited for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

BJP's slams 'cruel' Mamata for not arresting key accused

NEW DELHI: Suwendu Adhikari, the West Bengal BJP chief, launched a stinging attack on chief minister Mamata Banerjee over the delay in the arrest of key accused Sheikh Shahjahan in the Sandeshkahli sexual assault case. Hitting out at Mamata Banerjee for lodging 42 cases against him and failing to arrest Sheikh Shahjahan, Suwendu Adhikari on Saturday said, "She is a cruel lady". Suwendu said Mamata Banerjee would never arrest



Shahjahan as doing so would cost ruling TMC the Basirhat seat. "Mamata Banerjee's police will not arrest Sheikh Shahjahan because he controls the votes. If he is arrested, then TMC will lose the Basirhat seat. The hearing is on March 6 on

She lodged 42 cases against me. She is a cruel lady," said BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari at Jawaharlal Nehru University while addressing a panel discussion on political violence in Bengal at Jawaharlal Nehru University. The BJP leader also pointed out that section 144 imposed by the state government is only to prevent BJP leaders. "Strictest action should be taken. Sheikh Shahjahan should get capital punishment.

Indian national Faizal Khan killed in New York building fire

NEW DELHI: A 27-year-old Indian national, who worked as a journalist in New York, tragically lost his life in a fire incident in an apartment building in Manhattan ignited by a lithium-ion battery. Fazil Khan lost his life in the fire that erupted in a six-story residential building located at 2 St. Nicholas Place in Harlem, Manhattan. The fire accident resulted in injuries to approximately 17 other individuals. According to the New York City Fire Department, the fire



was caused by a lithium-ion battery. Khan, a journalist affiliated with the New York-based media company The Hechinger Report, focused on exploring innovation and inequal-

ity in education. The Consulate General of India in New York conveyed their condolences on Khan's passing and assured that they are providing all possible assistance to facilitate the repatriation of his remains to his family in India. "Saddened to learn about the death of 27-year old Indian national Fazil Khan in an unfortunate fire incident in Harlem, NY," the Consulate said in a post on X Saturday. The Consulate said it is in touch with Khan's fami-

ly and friends. "We continue to extend all possible assistance in repatriation of his mortal remains to India," the Consulate said. Khan served as a data reporter at The Hechinger Report, and as per his profile on X, he was an alumnus of Columbia Journalism School. The Hechinger Report shared a post on X stating that they received the tragic news on Saturday regarding Khan's passing in a fire at his residence in New York City.

IT minister to Google India: I repeat for 'attention'



Google responds to controversy over Gemini AI chatbot's biased response to a question on PM Narendra Modi. Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar warns Google India not to experiment with unreliable platforms/algorithms/models for India's Digital Nagriks. "We've worked quickly to address this issue. This is something that we're constantly working on improving," a Google spokesperson said in an email statement. IT minister to Google India: Government has said this before, I repeat for 'attention' Soon after Google responded to the controversy over its Gemini AI chatbot's 'biased' response to a question on PM Narendra Modi, Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar warned the Indian arm of the search giant that India's Digital Nagriks must not be experimented on with "unreliable" platforms/algorithms/models. "Govt has said this bfr [before] - I repeat for attn of @GoogleIndia," the IT minister said in a post, sharing a news report by The Times of India. "Our Digital Nagriks are NOT to be experimented on with 'unreliable' platforms/algorithms/models; Safety & Trust is [the] platform's legal obligation; and 'Sorry Unreliable' does not exempt from law," he said in the post.

Indian tycoon Yohan Poonawalla buys late Queen Elizabeth II's Range Rover

Yohan Poonawalla, the managing director of Poonawalla Group, has acquired the late Queen Elizabeth II's Range Rover, which still retains its original registration number. Poonawalla expressed his delight in acquiring this remarkable piece of automotive history. The car, a 2016 Range Rover SDV8 Autobiography LWB edition, was privately purchased by Poonawalla. Rich piece of British royal history! Indian tycoon Yohan Poonawalla buys late Queen Elizabeth II's Range Rover; check unique features The 2016 Range Rover SDV8 Autobiography LWB edition, painted in Loire blue with ivory upholstery, has covered approximately 18,000 miles. Yohan Poonawalla, the managing director of Poonawalla Group, has recently acquired a unique piece of British royal history. This acquisition comes in the form of the late Queen Elizabeth II's Range Rover,



which was put up for resale online. What sets this car apart is that it still retains the same registration number, OU16 XVH, as used by the late Queen. Poonawalla expressed his delight in acquiring this remarkable piece of automotive history and mentioned that the retention of the original registration number was an added bonus. "I am delighted to have acquired this remarkable piece of automotive history," ET quoted Poonawalla as saying. "Once a car leaves the royal household, the number plate changes. What is unique about this car is the fact that it still

retains the same registration number, OU16 XVH, as used by the late Queen. (That has turned out to be an added bonus," he said. The 2016 Range Rover SDV8 Autobiography LWB edition, painted in Loire blue with ivory upholstery, has covered approximately 18,000 miles. The reserve price set for this car on the Bramley's Auctioneers website was 224,850 pounds (over Rs 2.25 crore). Poonawalla chose to purchase the car privately, avoiding the auction process. This Range Rover was specifically designed for royal use and features unique modifications, including covert lighting, specially adapted fixed steps, and police emergency lighting. One notable modification made for the Queen is the addition of grab handles in the rear for ease of entry and exit. Poonawalla stated that he intends to retain all the modifications made to the car.

BJP fires 'revenge' jibe as Congress gives Bharuch seat to AAP

NEW DELHI: After Congress on Saturday announced giving away Bharuch seat in Gujarat to AAP as part of its seat-sharing deal, BJP said it showed Rahul Gandhi's "use and throw" policy and 'revenge of Prince' in what was seen as a hint at differences between the Gandhian and late Ahmed Patel. The seat-sharing arrangement and giving up Bharuch, which is Patel's legacy seat, didn't go down well within a section of Congress as well, with Patel's daughter Mumtaz expressing disappointment on social media. Patel's son Faisal too said party workers were not happy that the seat had been given to AAP. Former Congress leader and now BJP spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill said: "Handing over long standing stronghold of Ahmed Patel.

Lok Sabha polls: No 'Mann Ki Baat' for next three months, says PM Modi



NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday announced that his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat' will not be aired for the next three months in order to adhere to political decorum ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. Addressing the 110th episode of the programme, PM Modi said that there is a possibility that the Model Code of Conduct to be enforced in March, as it was done during the previous elections. PM Modi said that the success of the programme has been kept away even from the shadow of the government, stating that the broadcast focused on the collective strength and achievements of the nation. "It is a programme of

the people, for the people and by the people," the prime minister said. "When we meet the next time, it will be the 111th episode of the Mann Ki Baat," PM Modi said, noting the auspiciousness associated with the number. What can be better than this, he added. The program was postponed prior to the 2019 general elections as well.

BSP MP Ritesh Pandey joins BJP after dumping Mayawati led-party

NEW DELHI: In a major setback for Mayawati led-BSP ahead of general elections, its Lok Sabha MP from Ambedkar Nagar Ritesh Pandey joined BJP on Sunday. Pandey joined the saffron party in the presence of Uttar Pradesh deputy CM Brajesh Pathak and other BJP leaders.

He resigned from the primary membership of BSP earlier today. The development came after reports from Uttar Pradesh alleged that BJP initiated back-channel talks with at least four



BSP MPs for a possible switch over to the saffron camp ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

Sec 144 near Siliguri after jumbo intrusion

SILIGURI: The forest department has imposed Section 144 at Teepark and Bhola More on the outskirts of Siliguri after an elephant ventured into the area from Baikunthpur forest. The department sounded an alert in surround-

ing villages urging people not to step out of their homes at night. The jumbo, seen at Bhola More area on Saturday, had probably entered through Canal Road and Bhalobasha More, said a forest official, adding that they

were trying to drive back the jumbo into the forest. "Forest teams from Baikunthapur division and Sukna elephant squad have been deployed," said principal chief conservator of forests Niraj Singhal.

CAPSULES

'Women can't become leaders in Congress': Tamil Nadu MLA Vijayadharani joins BJP

CHENNAI: In a setback for Tamil Nadu Congress party's Vilavancode MLA S Vijayadharani on Saturday resigned from its primary membership and joined BJP in New



Delhi in the presence of Union minister of state for fisheries L Murugan. Vijayadharani expressed displeasure over recent appointment of S Rajesh Kumar, Congress MLA from Killiyur constituency, as TN Congress Legislative Party (CLP) leader.

"At present, women cannot become leaders in Congress. I was chief whip of Congress in (Tamil Nadu) assembly and even then, I was refused post of CLP leader. The post was given to an MLA, who is junior to me. I was feeling discontented for a long time," she said.

Chauffeurs of VIPs must retake driving test: Min

Hyderabad: Transport minister Ponnamp Prabhakar on Saturday said the govt has decided to hold driving and fitness tests for drivers working with ministers, MPs, MLCs, MLAs, IAS, IPS officers and other VIPs. "It could be due to inexperienced drivers, some VIPs lost their lives in road accidents in the past.

BJP fires 'revenge' jibe as Congress gives Bharuch seat to AAP

NEW DELHI: After Congress on Saturday announced giving away Bharuch seat in Gujarat to AAP as part of its seat-sharing deal, BJP said it showed Rahul Gandhi's "use and throw" policy and 'revenge of Prince' in what was seen as a hint at differences between the Gandhis and late Ahmed Patel. The seat-sharing arrangement and giving up Bharuch, which is Patel's legacy seat, didn't go down well within a section of Congress as well, with Patel's daughter Mumtaz expressing disappoint-



ment on social media. Patel's son Faisal too said party workers were not happy that the seat had been given to AAP. Former Congress leader and now BJP spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill said: "Handing over long standing stronghold of Ahmed Patel, who gave his life to Congress, to AAP is revenge of

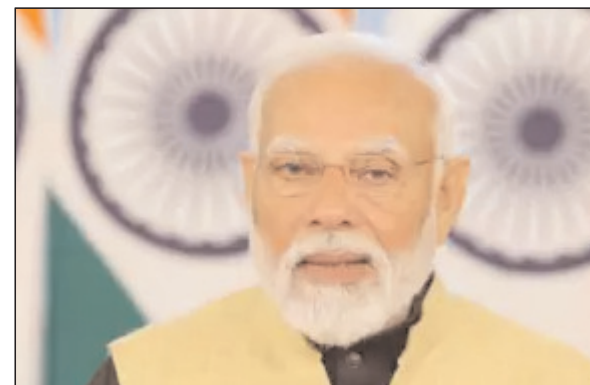
'Prince'!" BJP's IT-cell head Amit Malviya shared Mumtaz's post in which she apologised to local party workers for not being able to hold Bharuch. In Gujarat, Congress has agreed to give Bhavnagar to AAP besides Bharuch. Malviya said: "In Congress, one dynasty

is more equal than others. Everyone knows of differences between late Ahmed Patel and Rahul. Giving away Bharuch to AAP is Rahul's attempt to erase his legacy and humiliate the family. Gandhis believe in use and throw." Mumtaz wrote, "Deeply apologise to our district cadre for not being able to secure Bharuch Lok Sabha seat in alliance. I share your disappointment. Together, we will regroup to make @INIndia stronger. We won't let @ahmedpatel 45 years of legacy go in vain."

Mann ki Baat: PM Modi appeals to first-timer voters to exercise right in record numbers

NEW DELHI: In his Mann ki Baat address on Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to first-timer voters to exercise their right in record numbers, with the Lok Sabha elections taking place later this year. PM Modi acknowledged the role of youth in content creation, be it related to tourism, social causes or public participation.

First vote should be for the country: PM Modi Making an appeal to first-time voters, PM Modi urged them to exercise their voting rights in record numbers, emphasising that the



18th Lok Sabha will symbolize their hopes and aspirations. PM Modi said that young people should not only engage in political activities but also stay informed about debates and discussions during this period. "Remember,

your first vote should be for the nation," he urged, calling on influencers and prominent figures to inspire first-time voters. **No Mann Ki Baat for three months: PM Modi** PM Modi also announced on Sunday that his monthly radio

programme will not be broadcast for the next three months in adherence to political decorum in light of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. During the 110th episode of the programme, PM Modi mentioned the likelihood of the Model Code of Conduct being enforced in March, just as it was during the previous elections. "When we meet the next time, it will be 111th episode of the Mann Ki Baat," PM Modi added, noting the auspiciousness associated with the number. What can be better than this, he said.

Chhattisgarh: Three Naxalites killed in Kanker

NEW DELHI: Three Naxalites were killed in a clash with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Sunday. The encounter occurred in a forest area in Koyalibeda during an anti-Naxal operation led by the District Reserve Guard and the Border Security Force. The bodies of three Naxalites and two weapons have been recovered so far, with the operation still ongoing, confirmed superintendent of police Indira Kalyan Elesela. This comes a day after a Maoist was killed in an encounter with the District Reserve Guards (DRG) in Chhattisgarh's Sukma on Saturday. The exchange of fire took place in the Burkalanka jungle area. The body of the Naxal was found during a search operation



conducted by the DRG. The state has been hit by violence recently. Earlier this week, two men were killed in Sukma village allegedly by Naxals who suspected them of being police informers. The deceased were identified as Sodi Hunga and Madvi Nanda, residents of Dullid village. This comes after a Naxalite camp on the Bijapur-Dantewada border was busted by

security forces following two encounters with the ultras. The operation was part of an anti-Naxal operation launched by a joint team of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) of Bijapur and Dantewada, Special Task Force (STF) and 202nd battalion of CRPF's elite Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) on Tuesday, an official said.

Quad a message that others can't veto our choices: EAM Jaishankar

NEW DELHI: Foreign minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday that Quad - which seeks to promote free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific - is here to stay, grow and contribute, calling it a laudable initiative that makes not just the region, but the world as a whole more free, open and much more respectful of international law and a rules-based order. Speaking at the inaugural Quad Think Tank Forum, the minister said Quad comprises five messages, one of which is a statement that in this day and age, others "cannot have a veto on our choices". The minister also said that the foundation group reflects the growth of a multipolar order and that it's a post-alliance and post-cold war thinking. According to



Jaishankar, Quad is against spheres of influence and expresses the democratising of the global space and a collaborative, not unilateral, approach. "The natural question that greets any new arrival is the reason for their existence. So let us look at why the Quad? The answer is very simple. It is there for global good and it is there for the global commons. It is facilitated by the emergence of the Indo-Pacific," said the minister, adding that Quad is propelled by a change in the global order that requires

more, not less, collaboration among the like-minded. Jaishankar said Quad seeks to build resilient supply chains in telecom, cyber security, semiconductors and artificial intelligence (AI), promoting cyber awareness and capacity building in the Indo-Pacific, which is vulnerable to cyber threats. Detailing his expectations of the Forum, which was launched in partnership with the Raisina Dialogue, the minister said it should generate new ideas, promote the Quad and also counter any negative

propaganda about the group. Jaishankar described the coalition of India, US, Japan and Australia as an "overhead light" that is a "creative, flexible, nimble, responsive and open-minded" enterprise. Joining through virtual mode, Australian foreign minister Penny Wong said Quad stands for a region that is "free from intimidation and coercion", where competition is managed responsibly and disputes are settled in accordance with international law. Japanese foreign minister Yoko Kamikawa, in a brief video message, said the world is facing deep divisions and it is necessary to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Andhra Pradesh MLA Nimmakayala Chinrajappa escapes unhurt in car accident

KAKINADA: Former home minister of Andhra Pradesh and MLA Nimmakayala Chinrajappa had a narrow escape when the car he was traveling in hit a divider in his constituency of Peddapuram, Kakinada district on Saturday. Chinrajappa, declared TDP candidate for Peddapuram assembly constituency for the third time by the TDP-Janaseena combine, was taking part in a rally when the incident occurred. As the rally reached Durga center, a sudden obstruction caused the driver to apply sudden brakes, resulting in the car hitting the divider. Chinrajappa remained alert and emerged from the accident unscathed. The timely intervention and the slow pace of the rally contributed to averting a potentially serious.

Editorial

Telangana Martyrs' Memorial: World's largest stainless steel structure

Hyderabad now has the world's largest seamless stainless-steel memorial—the Telangana Martyrs Memorial, or Amara Jyoti. Dominating the landscape for miles and close to the State Secretariat, the elliptical-shaped structure has a giant, yellow flame in carbon steel atop it. The memorial has been built as a tribute to those brave people who gave up their lives over the past five decades, or so, for the statehood of Telangana. This international distinction didn't come easy. Amara Jyoti has been four years in the making. Prior to this, the conceptualisation and ironing out of the logistics took two years; hence, it necessitated altogether six years. The construction began in 2019, and it was inaugurated in June, 2023. It also took a huge amount of manpower. Over 5,000 construction labourers (approx), around 100 engineers, and 500 technicians contributed to making this memorial plan a reality. About 4,500 stainless-steel plates, weighing over a hundred tonnes, were used for the structure, along with other materials. Finally, it cost nearly Rs 180 crore. However, it was an investment eminently worth the cost and effort for the state government and the workforce, considering that it holds so much symbolic value. The steady stream of visitors that are pouring in is also appreciating this monument. The crowds are getting bigger considering it is located in the central part of the city and beside the famous Hussain Sagar Lake. The memorial is spread over a total area of 3.29 acres of land. There is a large, well-landscaped garden, and the memorial structure with its highly polished, reflective exterior stands within this green space. The built-up area of the memorial, including the garden, is about 2.88 lakh sq feet (26,800 sq metres). The artist-sculptor who developed the concept, designed the memorial, and also supervised the project from start to finish, K Venkata Ramana Reddy, explains that he already had exposure to many famous monuments, including memorials around the world in 80 countries, but, for the purpose of this project, visited many countries to study the kind of war memorials they had. "I submitted five designs, of which the one you see was approved by the Telangana state government," he reveals. The stainless-steel material (316 L) was procured from Sweden. The 4,500 sheets were assembled into approximately 450 large plates in Dubai and shipped to Hyderabad in containers. Here, onsite, these stainless-steel plates were assembled, i.e., welded together with flawless precision and laser technology, to create a smooth, seamless exterior with a mirror-like finish. Of course, the interior walls and slabs used concrete. Globetrotters may find the Amara Jyoti somewhat reminiscent of the famous Chicago Bean or Cloud Gate and the Bubble at Karamay in China. However, Ramana Reddy is quick to rebut the comparisons, though he does appreciate the Chicago Bean. As he points out, "The Chicago Bean or Cloud Gate is a public art project and not a memorial. Moreover, it is smaller in length, breadth, and width." The Bubble is widely considered a copy of the Chicago Bean design. Making Amara Jyoti was a very tough task and required painstaking attention to detail, explains Ramana Reddy, reeling off more statistics. The base of the lamp, or diya, has an elliptical shape with a major axis length of 54 metres and a minor axis length of 37 metres. From the terrace, the diya rises to a height of 26 metres and is 45 metres from ground level.

How two villages along India-China border is Sardar Patel's dream fulfilled

Though historically intimately linked, two separate events took place recently, nearly 1,000 miles away from each other. The central sector of the Indo-Tibet boundary in Uttarakhand, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan directed Army formations to work for the rehabilitation of the border villages of Nelang and Jadung, near the Line of Actual Control in Chamoli district. During the 1962 Indo-China war, both villages were abandoned, and their residents were relocated to safer nearby areas.

Far away in the east, at the Tawang War Memorial in Arunachal Pradesh, the Indian Army, along with the Tawang administration and the local Monpa population, commemorated the 74th anniversary of the arrival of Maj Bob Khathing in the area. In 1951, the Manipuri Naga officer took over the administration of the border town of Tawang, south of the McMahon Line; a communiqué of the Defense PRO in Guwahati thus explained, "After the valiant Major undertook a treacherous march from the plains of Assam to Tawang, negotiating Sela and Bomdila passes during peak winters, leading a contingent of 200 Assam Rifles troops and 600 porters for a difficult maiden mission, thus materialised the formal



establishment of Indian civil administration at Tawang." The above two events are linked as the takeover of both places' administration is the result of a decision of the Himmasinghji Border Defence Committee created by the Army Headquarters on November 12, 1950. **Let us remember the facts** On October 7, 1950, the communist troops advanced in eastern Tibet, and after smashing the ill-trained and ill-equipped Tibetan army, Chamdo, the capital of Kham Province, fell to the invaders. On November 7, Sardar Patel, the deputy prime minister, despite his poor health, sent a long letter to the prime minister about the implications of the Chinese invasion of Tibet for India's northern border. Five days later, the dying Sardar (who passed away on December 15) constituted

this committee to examine the possibility of Chinese communist troops occupying the areas south of the McMahon Line or elsewhere on the Indo-Tibet border and "to consider the feasibility of advancing outposts of the Assam Rifles in order to forestall such ingress". Maj Gen Himmatsinghji, deputy minister of defense (chairman), it included Lt Gen Kulwant Singh, K Zakaria, head of the Ministry of External Affairs' historical division, SN Haksar, joint secretary also from MEA, Group Captain MS Chaturvedi from the Indian Air Force, and Waryam Singh, deputy director of the Intelligence Bureau. After discussing at great length the advisability of pushing forward a post to Tawang, it was decided to go ahead. It was also decided to send troops

to Nelang (then written Nilang) and Jadung (then Jadhung), two tiny villages south of the Tsangchok-la, the pass marking the watershed in the area, in the Chamoli district.

The Role of Jairamdas Daulatram

One man was central in the setting up of Maj Khathing's expedition to Tawang; it was Jairamdas Daulatram, the governor of Assam. It is sad that his role has been more or less forgotten today. On December 10, 1950, he managed to get the concurrence of the Ministry of External Affairs headed by Nehru; a Joint Secretary concurred with the Committee, "We cannot agree to a unilateral occupation of Tawang by the communists." The ball then started rolling, and preparations for the expedition began. Maj Khathing received detailed instructions from Nari Rustomji, the advisor to the governor, on behalf of Daulatram himself.

Eight Tasks

Precise tasks were given to the young and bold officer.

The first task was to occupy Tawang. Khathing was asked to explain to the local population and Tibetan officials that he was "doing no more than is being done by the administration in other parts of Indian territory;" in 1914, Tibet had agreed to the McMahon Line, north of

Tawang being the boundary. The major was ordered to "treat any Tibetan or other officials you may meet with courtesy, but nevertheless let them understand that jurisdiction in the area vests in you and not in them." He was directed to submit detailed reports about the Tibetan 'influence' in the area and the nature of taxes collected. He was further told to abolish all existing taxes and substitute them with lighter taxes to be paid to the Political Officer, representing the Indian government: "There will be no forced labour and everything needed will be duly paid for." An important task was to communicate to the local people that "none of their religious practices The sixth point was that in case Khathing met with armed opposition, he was to cable Shillong (the governor's office) immediately, "indicating the strength and position of opposing forces." Fortunately, due to Khathing's intelligence and diplomatic skills, this would not be necessary, and

74 years later, he was still considered by the Monpas as their liberator. Khathing was also asked to keep daily wireless telegraphic contact with Daulatram after crossing the Se-La pass. It is what Khathing did, and his dispatches and cables still make fascinating reading.

Why Somalia asked Turkey to defend its territorial waters

Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Reuters File In Somalia, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has made a strategic play. The Somali government has approved a maritime security pact with Turkey. Ankara has been authorized to build up, train, and equip the Somali navy. Not just that—they will also defend Somalia's territorial waters. Turkish warships could be patrolling Somalia's coast, and they could be active in the Indian Ocean for the duration of ten years. There are many reasons why Somalia selected Turkey. Somalia has been dealing with a terror insurgency for almost two decades. Recently, there has been a rise in piracy along the Somali coast.

Also, there is chaos in the Red Sea with the Yemen-based Houthis disrupting global trade. All these are important reasons, but Somalia's primary target is different. Ethiopia is Somalia's neighbour and nemesis. The maritime deal is aimed at countering Ethiopia and stopping it from executing its port plan. Ethiopia is landlocked. But the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, wants it. He believes that a port is essential for Ethiopia's growth. So on January 1 of this year, Ethiopia struck a deal with Somaliland to allow it to use its coast to build a navy. Somaliland is not officially an independent nation. It is considered a breakaway part of Somalia. In the entire international community, no country

has recognised Somaliland. It tried to separate from Somalia in 1991. Since then, it has been de-facto independent. Of course, Somalia was outraged by their port deal, too, because it won't end there. Reports say that Ethiopia could officially recognise Somaliland's independence, and Mogadishu will never allow this. It wants Ethiopia to rescind the offer, and that's where Turkey comes in. The new maritime deal could help Somalia. The deal could "convince" Ethiopia to back down. After all, would Abiy Ahmed dare to take on the Turkish navy? As Turkey is a NATO member, an attack on one member is an attack on all of NATO. So Ethiopian aggression is almost out of the question.

UPI in UAE: The changing face of cross-border payments

The recent development concerning the UPI affects international banking and finance systems at their most fundamental level.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his recent visit to the UAE announced the extension of the service of the UPI payment system in UAE which is a significant development not only between India and the UAE, but in the West Asian region as a whole. India's relations with the West Asian region could not realise the true potential immediately after independence, owing mainly to the countries of the region being bound by their obligatory Muslim solidarity with Pakistan. This, however, has changed dramatically over the past two decades, especially after the 9/11 incident and the global war on terror. India's West Asia policy is rooted in four important pillars that include the people, energy security, trade and security. It was in 2005 that the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh formulated the 'Look West' policy and then in 2014, PM Modi announced the need for 'Link West' along with the 'Look East' Policy. Within the region, it is UAE which has slowly emerged as India's key partner and a trusted ally. UAE, by its location and its stature in the region, forms a key pillar of India's West Asia policy. UAE is an



integral part of all-important regional forums including the GCC, Arab League etc. It is also part of the I2U2 or the West Asia Quad comprising India, Israel, the US and the UAE. India's bilateral relations with the UAE rest on three important pillars including trade and investments, energy and the Indian community in UAE. The landmark CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership) signed on February 18, 2022, laid the foundation for an exponential increase in trade and economic partnership and is an example of a special relationship between the two nations. The recent development concerning the UPI affects international banking and finance systems at their most fundamental level. This involves two elements: cross-border financial transactions and associated payments, as well as the cross-border establishment of premises. There are many international agreements signed to

making the international banking system more effective. The International Banking law was also developed to stop large amounts of bank fraud. Banking law involves a wide number of private agreements among the private parties. In recent years, there has been an explosion in both types of activity and, with it, the need for international agreements as to how the business of international banking and finance should be conducted. These agreements which are signed among the sovereign countries are enforced using domestic legislation. There are three purposes. First, they may serve to facilitate the conduct of cross-border business. In this category, one finds agreements on technical standards, standardised contracts (master agreements), codes of conduct, harmonised accounting and disclosure standards, arrangements for cross-border payment, netting and custodial services.

Russia-Ukraine war enters third year: Bloody stalemate, no signs of breakthrough

In the book 'The Fathomless Caves', Kate Forsyth, the author, describes war as, "An unpredictable beast. Once unleashed, it runs like a rabid dog, ravaging friends and foes alike. It can drag on for years, a slow attrition of nerve and fortitude, or be over in one brilliant flash, an extravagant configuration of flame and blood and sweat." The Russian-Ukraine War fits well into the above description. When President Putin launched 'special military operations' to 'demilitarise and denazify' Ukraine on

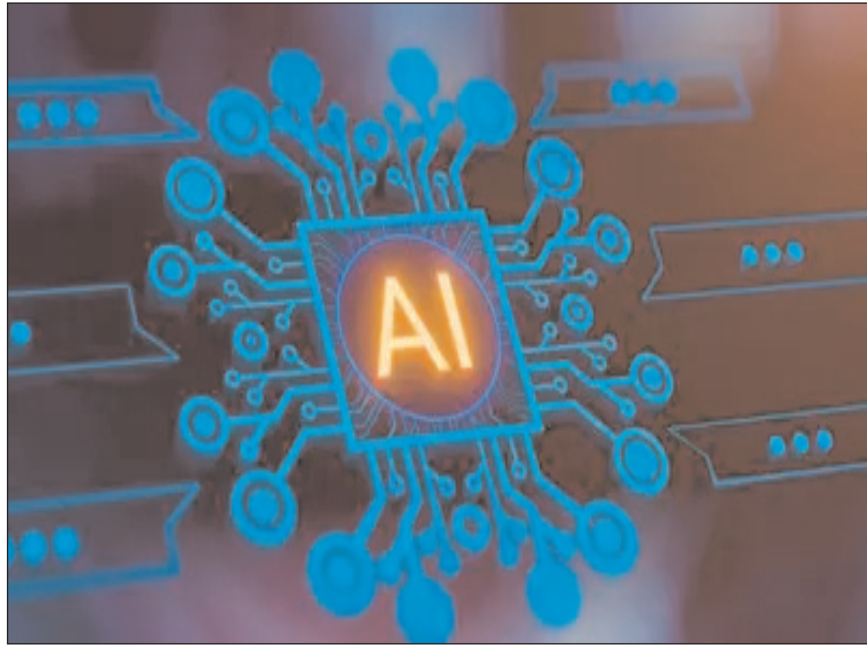


February 24, 2022, it was universally given that the war would be over in a few days, with Russia inflicting a crushing defeat on Ukraine. Ironically, two years

later, the conflict rages on, degenerating into a state of stalemate with little change in the ground situation. Although a classic limited war, its politico-economic impact

has been felt far and wide, with serious geo-strategic ramifications. Militarily, it has gone on to redefine the very nature of warfare. The Russian offensive commenced as a typical military campaign, preceded by missiles and airstrikes, followed by a large-scale ground invasion along multiple fronts. The northern thrust was launched from Belarus towards Kyiv, the southern one was from Crimea, and the south-eastern push was from Luhansk-Donetsk towards Kharkiv.

Sebi using Artificial Intelligence for investigations, says official



NEW DELHI: The Security Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has been using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for its investigations, said the body's whole time member Kamlesh Chandra Varshney on Saturday. Varshney emphasised that entities should keep track of technological development. Referring to the instances of stock market manipulations,

Varshney said adhering to the law will be more beneficial and violation will cause problems. When asked if Sebi was using AI, Varshney said, "We are using AI for investigations... and also using for a lot of things". He was speaking on the sidelines of the 13th international convention of the Association of National Exchanges

Members of India (ANMI) in the national capital. As long as the market is transparent and no manipulation is happening, that is fine with the regulator, he said. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has been taking action against violators as well as measures to enhance transparency and curb misdoings.

Amazon says repays \$1.9 million to workers in Saudi over unlawful fees

DUBAI: Online retailer Amazon said Friday it had paid \$1.9 million to more than 700 contracted workers in Saudi Arabia as reimbursements for unlawful recruitment fees, among other alleged violations.

In October, Amnesty International accused Amazon of a range of abuses against workers in the oil-rich Gulf kingdom, prompting the US-based multinational to launch an investigation.

"We found instances where contracted workers were required to pay fees, including recruitment fees and other costs" by Saudi recruit-



ment agents and labour supply companies, Amazon said in a statement posted on its website.

The investigation revealed other violations of its company policies including "substandard living accommodations, contract and wage irregularities, and delays in the resolution of worker complaints," it said.

As a result, "Amazon paid \$1.9 million in reimbursements to over 700 contracted workers", the statement added.

The Amnesty report drew on the accounts of 22 men from Nepal who worked in warehouses in Riyadh or the Saudi coastal city of Jeddah going back to 2021, according to the London-based human rights organisation. It found that migrant workers employed in Amazon warehouses in Saudi Arabia suffered "appalling" living conditions, on-the-job safety risks and wage theft.

Trai seeks view on enabling virtual network operators tie-up with multiple telcos

NEW DELHI: Telecom regulator Trai on Friday invited views on enabling virtual network operators to tie up with more than one telecom operators for providing wireless and wireline services. At present, a virtual network operator (VNO) is allowed to partner with only one telecom

operator for providing services which need numbering and unique identity of the customers like mobile connection etc. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has issued a consultation paper on "Connectivity to Access Service VNOs From More Than one NSO (network

service operator)" following reference made by the Department of Telecom based on representation made by VNOs. "The Authority is issuing this consultation paper for soliciting comments of stakeholders on the issues related to connectivity to access service VNOs.

Brokers need to be cautious against manipulations in stock market: Sebi

NEW DELHI: Sebi Whole Time Member Kamlesh Chandra Varshney on Saturday cautioned against manipulations in the capital market and urged brokers to keep a tab and prevent such instances. Besides, he said that the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for investigations. There is a trend of rising participation of investors in the securities market, which is also expected to contribute significantly to the country's pursuit to become a developed economy. Total demat accounts rose to 13.9 crore at the end of December 2023, a growth of 20 per cent in nine months and doubled the number in two-and-half years. Speaking at an event in the national capital, Varshney emphasised the importance of investor trust and said that if there is no trust of investors, "everything will fail".

India's forex reserves hit two-month low

BENGALURU: India's foreign exchange reserves dropped for a second straight week and stood at a two-month low of \$616.10 billion as of Feb 16, data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed. The reserves fell by \$1.13 billion in the reporting week, after having fallen by \$5.3 billion in the prior week. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) intervenes in the foreign exchange market to curb excess volatility in the rupee. Changes in foreign currency assets are caused by the RBI's intervention as well as the appreciation or depreciation of foreign assets held in the reserves. Foreign exchange reserves also include reserve tranche position in

Buffett's Berkshire posts record cash as operating earnings rise

Berkshire Hathaway Inc. reports increased operating earnings of \$8.48 billion for Q4, attributed to higher interest rates and fewer catastrophes in its insurance business. Despite a record cash pile of \$167.6 billion, Buffett struggled to find major deals. Net earnings reached \$37.6 billion, with significant share repurchases totaling \$9.2 billion for the year. Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. posted an increase in operating earnings as higher interest rates and fewer catastrophes benefited



the conglomerate's insurance business. The firm reported fourth-quarter operating earnings of \$8.48 billion, versus \$6.63 billion for same period a year earlier. The results were helped by a jump in insurance underwriting earnings and investment income amid higher interest rates

and milder weather. The firm's cash pile also set a fresh record at \$167.6 billion, as the billionaire investor continued to confront a scarcity of larger deals. Berkshire's earnings are always closely watched as a proxy for US economic health because of the expansive nature of his businesses —

ranging from railroad BNSF, Geico and Dairy Queen. That also makes the company particularly susceptible to higher interest rates, which can crimp demand, and Buffett warned in May last year that earnings at most of its operations would fall in 2023 as an "incredible period" for the US economy draws to an end. "Our insurance business performed exceptionally well last year, setting records in sales, float and underwriting profits," Buffett said in his annual shareholder letter.

Kalyani Steel signs MoU with Odisha Government for multi-billion project

BHUBANESWAR: In a stride towards advancing Odisha's industrial landscape, KalySteel has inked a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Odisha, underscoring their joint commitment to establish a state-of-the-art Titanium Metal and Aerospace Components Manufacturing, and Integrated Advanced Specialty Steel and Automotive Components Manufacturing Complex in the region.



The MoU signing ceremony, presided over by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, marks a milestone in Odisha's journey towards becoming a hub for cutting-edge manufacturing and high-tech industries. The strategic collaboration between Kalyani Steel and the Odisha

government entails the development of a comprehensive manufacturing complex situated at Gajamara, Dhenkanal. According to a release by the Odisha CM's office, with an investment infusion of a staggering Rs 11,750 Crores, the project is

poised to catalyze economic growth and generate over 10,000 job opportunities, thereby driving socio-economic development in the state.

CM Patnaik said, "By welcoming Kalyani Steel's project, including a Titanium Metal and Alloy Mill, an Aerospace Components Facility, and an Integrated Automotive Component Unit, Odisha marks its grand entry into a highly advanced and precision manufacturing sector".

RBI sets out roadmap for Paytm UPI transition

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has outlined a plan for the seamless transition of UPI users and merchants with QR codes from Paytm Payments Bank to its parent company, One97 Communications. This move aims to ensure uninterrupted UPI services for app users and merchants and will require One97 Communications to obtain a service provider license from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

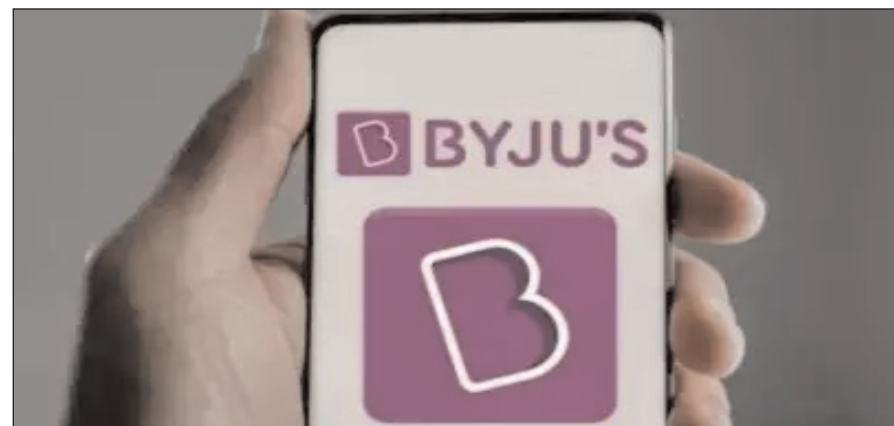


after March 15, 2024, additional measures are necessary to ensure smooth digital payments for UPI customers using the '@paytm' handle operated by Paytm Payments Bank. RBI said these measures aim to minimize concentration risk in the UPI system by promoting multiple payment app providers. Had customers been forced to stop using the Paytm virtual payment address, they would have likely migrated transactions to Google Pay or PhonePe, increasing their dominance of UPI.

The RBI has advised the NPCI to assess One97 Communication Ltd's (OCL) request to become a Third-Party Application Provider (TPAP) for the UPI channel, allowing Paytm app users to continue UPI transactions. If granted TPAP status, the migration of '@paytm' handles from Paytm Payments Bank to a set of newly identified banks will be carried out seamlessly to avoid disruptions. During this migration process, no new users will be added until all existing users are satisfactorily migrated to a new handle.

'EGM a farce; did not stick to established rules': Byju

MUMBAI: A day after a majority of Byju's investors voted to remove founder Byju Raveendran as CEO and restructure the board that includes his wife Divya Gokulnath and brother Riju Ravindran, the founder wrote a letter to employees stating that the extraordinary general meeting (EGM) was a "farce" and only 35 of 170 shareholders, representing around 45% of the shareholding voted in favour of the resolution. "That in itself shows the very limited support that this irrelevant meeting received. Our Shareholder Agreement grants the authority to modify the board's composition, the management team, and the CEO's role exclusively to the board, not to a group of shareholders.



Recognising this, these few select investors have framed their resolution in a manner that requests the board to merely consider changes to the current board structure, rather than directly mandating it," Raveendran said in the letter which was sent to employees on Saturday evening. TOI has reviewed a copy of the letter. Investor sources said that shareholders collectively holding over 60% stake in the firm voted

in favour of the resolutions. Raveendran said that he will "challenge" these illegal and prejudicial actions and assured employees that he continues to remain the CEO, the management remains unchanged and the board remains the same. "Put differently, it is business as usual at Byju's," he said, adding that the group of select minority shareholders are intent on "spreading misinformation" in the

media. "Regardless of this uncalled-for drama, the management is devoting its full attention to the company's operations....this order (Karnataka High Court's interim order stating EGM resolutions to be ineffective until the next hearing), coupled with numerous procedural irregularities and deficiencies, invalidates the resolutions passed by a select, narrow group of shareholders.

Zee sets up advisory panel to tackle 'market rumours'

MUMBAI: Amid market rumours and media reports about its accounting and financial issues, among others, Zee Entertainment has set up an advisory committee to guide its board on how to tackle such issues. Embattled Paytm too has set up an advisory panel recently. Zee's committee will be headed by retired Allahabad HC judge Satish Chandra and two independent directors, Uttam Agarwal and P V Ramana Murthy. Zee noted that there has been a "widespread circulation of misinformation, market rumour and speculation leading to the formation of negative public opinion about the company" and as a result, impacts its share price and "erodes investor wealth". Although the company's share rose 3% to close at Rs 173 on the BSE, it has crashed 36% in the last six months and has lost 25% of its value since Sony called off a merger with Zee in late Jan.

'It is like a circus': Bangladesh coach Chandika criticizes BPL

NEW DELHI: Chandika Hathurusinghe, the coach of the Bangladesh cricket team, has raised concerns about the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), asserting that it has not contributed significantly to the development of T20 cricket in the country.

Hathurusinghe highlighted a lack of local participation in key roles such as batting and bowling, with clubs overly reliant on foreign players during critical moments of the game. He urged the International Cricket Council (ICC) to intervene and implement regulations to address the issue of players participating in multiple tournaments within the same window.

"We [Bangladesh] don't have a proper T20 tournament. This sounds very odd. When I am watching the BPL, I sometimes turn off the TV. Some players are not even of the [required] class. I have a big issue with the current system. The ICC need to step

in," Hathurusinghe expressed in an interview with ESPNcricinfo. "A player is playing one tournament and then he is playing another tournament. It is like a circus. Players will talk about opportunities, but that's not right. People will lose interest. I have lost interest." Hathurusinghe emphasized the importance of providing Bangladesh players with significant responsibilities within the BPL, such as batting in the top order and bowling in crucial stages of the game. He suggested that a separate tournament for local players should be organized by the



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) before the BPL to enhance their T20 experience. "We need to have a tournament where our players can do things like batting in the top three... Bangladesh bowlers bowling in the death. Where will we learn these things otherwise? We have only one tournament," Hathurusinghe remarked. While some teams in the current BPL season have relied heavily on foreign players in their top three positions, Hathurusinghe advocated for greater involvement of local talents to elevate the standard.

'I love challenging myself...': Yashasvi Jaiswal credits his success to insights from Rahul and Rohit

NEW DELHI: Yashasvi Jaiswal's remarkable journey in Test cricket has reached new heights, with the young batsman emerging as the leading run-scorer in the ongoing series between India and England. Since his debut last year, Jaiswal's performance graph has been a roller-coaster ride, marked by resilience and adaptability. In a recent conversation with broadcasters ahead of day three's play in the fourth Test at the JSCA International Stadium on Sunday, Jaiswal shed light on his approach to the game, emphasizing the impor-



tance of playing for the team's cause in varying match situations. He credited his success to the valuable insights gained from discussions with cricketing stalwarts Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma. "It's been really nice and really challenging to play on different types of pitches," Jaiswal

remarked, highlighting the dynamic nature of Test cricket. "I speak a lot with Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma about how I can change my style throughout the innings and try to make sure that I am always playing for the team and what the team needs," he added.

New Zealand Cricket to send security delegation to Pakistan ahead of T20I series

NEW DELHI: New Zealand Cricket (NZC) is set to dispatch a security delegation to Pakistan in preparation for their upcoming five-match T20I series scheduled for April this year. A reliable source within the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)

revealed that the delegation will comprise private security expert Reg Dickason, along with Heath Mills, a senior official of the NZ players association. Dickason, a seasoned security consultant, has previously worked with the International

Cricket Council (ICC) and various cricket boards during high-profile tours to Pakistan in recent years. "The delegation is due in early March to visit Lahore and Rawalpindi where the matches will probably be held," the source stated.

CAPSULES

Ranji Trophy: Musheer Khan's double century keeps Mumbai ahead

MUMBAI: Driving Ninal Rathva to longoff for a single, Musheer Khan, batting on 128 overnight, celebrated floating on 'Cloud 200,' raising both his hands up in the air, looking towards his father-cum-coach Naushad Khan, who was applauding his son's major milestone at the Mumbai Cricket Association's ground in BKC. Consuming 350 balls and stroking 18 fours to convert his first First-Class century into a double century in Mumbai's Ranji Trophy quarter-final against Baroda, the 18-year-old on Saturday proved that he had the same penchant for scoring 'daddy hundreds' that his elder brother, India's Test batsman Sarfaraz Khan has in red-ball cricket. The youngster also justified being pulled out for this match from Mumbai's Under-23 team at the last minute. "It's a special feeling to score my maiden First-Class double ton. I've scored double hundreds (250 each) against Baroda at the Under-14 and U-16 level, and now in the Ranji Trophy. I only missed out scoring a double century against them at the Under-19 level, because I didn't play there," Musheer told. For almost a day and a session, Musheer's marathon knock (203 not out, 357b, 18x4), and a superb support act by 'keeper-bat Hardik Tamore (57, 248b, 3x4), put Mumbai on top of Baroda with their mammoth 443-ball 181-run stand for the sixth wicket.



Suhas, Pramod Bhagat, Krishna win gold medals at Para Badminton World Championships

NEW DELHI: India celebrated a remarkable triumph at the Para Badminton World Championships as Suhas Yathiraj, Pramod Bhagat, and Krishna Nagar secured gold medals in their respective categories on Sunday. Suhas Yathiraj, ranked world No. 3 and a Paralympic silver medalist, claimed his maiden world title by defeating Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan 21-18, 21-18 in the men's singles SL4 final. Expressing his joy, the 40-year-old Yathiraj, also an IAS officer of the 2007 batch from Uttar Pradesh cadre, tweeted, "Gold it is, Happy and proud to



be World Champion." Pramod Bhagat, a Paralympic gold medalist, emerged victorious in the men's singles SL3 final by defeating England's Daniel Bethell 14-21, 21-15, 21-14, securing his third consecutive world title after triumphs in Stoke Mandeville in 2015 and Basel in 2019. Bhagat,

35, had also clinched a gold medal at the 2022 Tokyo Paralympics. In the men's singles SH6 category, Krishna Nagar, another Paralympic gold medalist, clinched the gold medal by defeating China's Lin Naili 22-20, 22-20 in the final. Manisha Ramadass secured a silver medal in

the women's singles SU5 category after losing 16-21, 16-21 to China's Yang Qiu Xia in the final. Additionally, the men's doubles pair of Chirag Baretha and Raj Kumar, and the women's doubles combination of Rachana Shaileshkumar and Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan, settled for silver medals in their respective categories, SU5 and SH6, after losing their final matches. The singles event featured a draw of 16 players, while the doubles comprised 8 pairs, showcasing the competitive spirit and talent of para badminton players on the global stage.

3rd T20I: Australia sweep series against New Zealand with 27-run victory

NEW DELHI: Australia completed a clean sweep of the T20I series against New Zealand with a 27-run victory in a rain-shortened third Twenty20 match in Auckland on Sunday.

After Australia set a target of 126 off 10 overs, under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method, New Zealand managed 98/3 in their chase, falling short despite Glenn Phillips' unbeaten knock of 40 off 24 balls. Australian pace bowler Spencer Johnson made an impressive debut in



the series, claiming figures of 1-10 off his two overs. Rain interruptions affected Australia's innings, which saw them post 118/4 from 10.4 overs after being asked to bat first at Eden Park. Travis Head top-scored

with 33 off 30 balls, while Matthew Short and Glenn Maxwell provided quick runs with 27 off 11 balls and 20 off nine balls, respectively. The series saw Australia dominate, winning the opener by six wickets

in Wellington and securing a 72-run victory in the second game in Auckland.

New Zealand faced challenges due to injuries that sidelined key batsmen Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra, and Devon Conway at various stages, while veteran Kane Williamson was absent due to the birth of his child. Both teams utilized the series as preparation for the upcoming T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in the United States and the West Indies in June.

PSL: Karachi Kings clinch a thrilling victory against Lahore

NEW DELHI: Karachi Kings secured a thrilling victory on the last ball of the match against Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League. This is Lahore's fourth consecutive loss in the tournament. Karachi won by two wickets, chasing down Lahore's target of 175. Lahore Qalandars were put into bat first by Karachi Kings. Opener Sahibzada Farhan played a crucial role in anchoring the innings, scoring an unbeaten 72 off 45 balls. George Linde contributed with a quickfire 26 not out off 13 balls towards the end of the innings. In response, Karachi's Kieron Pollard and Shoaib Malik led the chase with a 95-run partnership for the fifth wicket. It was a remarkable comeback for Karachi after losing four early wickets.



However, both Pollard and Malik were dismissed in successive overs, bringing Lahore back into the game. Haris Rauf, who had struggled in the previous matches, found his rhythm and picked up a wicket before sustaining a shoulder injury. Zaman Khan also made a crucial breakthrough by dismissing Daniel Sams. With 11 runs to defend in the final over, Ahsan Hafeez bowled Hasan Ali, but he managed to hit a six off the first ball to level the scores. In a thrilling finish, Rauf took a spectacular diving

catch to dismiss Hasan, but injured his shoulder in the process. Mir Hamza then hit the final ball for a boundary, securing Karachi Kings' second win in the tournament. Sahibzada Farhan's counterattacking innings in the second half of Lahore's innings kept them in the game. However, Karachi's pace and spin bowlers restricted Lahore's scoring rate in the first half of the innings. Shai Hope provided some momentum with a quickfire 21 runs, and Farhan and Linde added valuable runs towards the end.

'With the experience & talent of Kohli missing...'

NEW DELHI: Former England seamer Stuart Broad has voiced his opinion on India's batting lineup for the ongoing five-match series against England, advocating for the inclusion of experienced batter Cheteshwar Pujara in the absence of former captain Virat Kohli. Kohli's absence from the series due to personal reasons has left a void in the Indian batting order, prompting Broad to express his views. "With the experience & world-class talent of Kohli missing, would there have been temptation to bring back Pujara into this India batting lineup? Or is his international career over? Feels like he could have brought some consistency and an anchor," Broad shared



on X, highlighting Pujara's potential role as a stabilizing force in the team. Pujara, renowned for his solidity in the middle-order, boasts an impressive Test record, having amassed 7,195 runs at an average of 43.60 in 103 matches. Despite his recent struggles, particularly since India's historic triumph over Australia at The Gabba in January 2021, where he played a pivotal role, Pujara's experience and track record cannot be overlooked. Since the Gabba victory, Pujara's form has witnessed a decline, managing only 1,084 runs at an average of 29.29 in 22 Tests. However, his consistent performances in

domestic cricket, notably in the Ranji Trophy where he scored 783 runs at an average of 71.18, suggest he still has plenty to offer at the international level. Meanwhile, in the ongoing Test match between India and England, England posted a respectable total of 353 in their first innings, anchored by an unbeaten century from captain Joe Root. In response, India ended day two at 219/7 in their first innings, with Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill making significant contributions with the bat. However, England spinners Shoaib Bashir and Tom Hartley dominated proceedings, leaving the Three Lions with a lead of 134 runs heading into the next day's play.

Soreness rules David Warner out of final T20I clash with New Zealand

NEW DELHI: Cricket Australia on Saturday announced opener David Warner will not be participating in the third and final match of the T20 series against New Zealand in Auckland due to adductor soreness. The 37-year-old, who will retire from all forms of international cricket after the T20 World Cup in June, was also absent from Friday's 72-run victory over the Black Caps as the Australians secured consecutive wins. "Warner will require a brief recovery period, which is not expected to affect his availability for the upcoming Indian Premier League leading into the ICC Men's T20 World Cup," Cricket Australia said in a statement. Warner hit 32 runs off 20 balls in the opening win over New Zealand in Wellington on , but was booed off the field by the home fans in what was his final appearance in the bilateral international series.

In Sandeshkhali, govt starts work to turn bheris back into farmland

SANDESHKHALI: In a bid to resolve the vexed issue at the heart of Sandeshkhali unrest - grabbing of farmlands and converting them into highly lucrative fish farms by Shiekh Shahjahan and his aides - the Bengal govt on Saturday set itself a pre-monsoon target of reconverting the fish farms or bheris into farmlands.



The process would involve flushing out salt water from the bheris and breaching river embankments to flood them with fresh water to convert them back into agricultural land. The state has till now received 258 complaints of land-grab, of which 100 landowners have been returned their land rights.

"As a first step, we have sealed all possible inlets that allowed influx of saline water into the bheris. More than 100 people in Sandeshkhali have already got back land rights. The land restoration process has begun and we

hope the entire process to convert the bheris into farmlands would be completed by one month," state irrigation minister Partha Bhowmick said. However, experts feel given that Sandeshkhali is barely 58km from Sundarbans, a month could be a stiff target to drain out salinity. But the state insists it wants to complete the process before monsoons sets in.

Bhowmick, state minister Sujit Bose and a 10-member team of irrigation department officials visited Sandeshkhali on Saturday and held a meeting on ways to

reclaim illegally blocked irrigation canals, open sluice gates and restore the farmlands. "The public health and engineering department has already started work on installing pipelines," Bhowmick said. While the two ministers heard complaints of villagers, officers inspected sites adjacent to Raimangal, Choto Kalagachi, Viddyadhari, and Betni rivers in Sandeshkhali-Dhamakhali-Minakhali belt. "We have surveyed several bheris in Sandeshkhali-II. The restoration process has been started," a senior irrigation official said.

NGT takes cognisance of Alipur paint factory tragedy, issues notices

New Delhi: After 11 people died in a paint factory in Alipur on Thursday, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has taken suo motu cognisance of a report and issued notices to Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health, District Magistrate (north Delhi), and Central Pollution Control Board for a report in the matter. The report 'Paint factory fire in Delhi's Alipur claims 11 lives, 4 injured' was published on Feb 16. The tribunal observed that the news item raised substantial issues relating to non-



compliance with environmental norms. "As per the news item, a massive fire broke out at a paint factory at Dayalpur market in north Delhi's Alipur, in which at least 11 people died and four others were injured. As per the news item, apart from the paint factory, a few shops and a rehabilitation centre running inside the structure have

also collapsed, and in the factory there was no firefighting equipment," said the bench headed by Justice Prakash Shrivastava in an order dated Feb 19. The copy of the order was shared on Feb 24.

The tribunal said the incident seemed to have involved hazardous substances and violated the Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991.

Gandhi family can't vote for Cong now

New Delhi: In an interesting turn of events, the Gandhi family will not be able to vote for Congress in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. With the New Delhi parliamentary constituency falling under the kitty of Aam Aadmi Party as per the seat-sharing arrangement, Congress will not be able to field



its candidate for the

seat. Both Sonia and Rahul Gandhi are residents of Lutyens' Delhi, and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is also said to be living in the area that falls in the New Delhi Lok Sabha area. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is also a resident of New Delhi and won't be able to vote for his party. tnn

Fire breaks out in house in Delhi, three rescued

NEW DELHI: Three people were rescued after a fire broke out in a house in Lajpat Nagar area of southeast Delhi. The Delhi Fire Services received a call about the blaze at 1:57 am and deployed five fire engines to the scene.

A senior DFS official said, they rescued three individuals, including two senior citizens, one of whom is differently-abled. The rescued individuals were taken to a nearby hospital to receive treatment for minor burn injuries.

The official also mentioned that the incident was reported to the police and it is believed that the fire was caused by a short circuit.

Traffic checks in place for marathon

New Delhi: Special traffic arrangements will be in effect for the 43rd National Championship Marathon today. The marathon is scheduled to be flagged off at 4:15am at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. For this, the traffic movement will be regulated between 4am and 10am.

The marathon has three events: the 21-km full marathon, one 10-km marathon, and a 5-km half-marathon.

The full marathon will go around India Gate and lap around the Kartavya Path. Road diversions are expected in this area. The entirety of Lodhi Road will have traffic restrictions for the 10-kilometer marathon. Other major stretches, such as Sher Shah Road, Mathura Road, Kotla red light, Tilak Marg, Pandara Road, Maharishi Raman Marg, and Lala Lajpat Rai Marg, will also be affected.

Age no barrier: These hockey players get a second wind in their 40s

Chennai: Off a dusty lane in Besant Nagar, excitement is rising on a small ground as a game of hockey between two women's teams is ending. A player dribbles across the field, dodging one rival after the other and takes a shot, but it's saved and the hooter sounds. Then, the players quickly disperse to their homes and families. All the players including housewives, police personnel, and teachers are members of the TN Masters squad who represented University of Madras and the state in their



prime. In 2018, after a gap of 20 years, they found their passion for the game hadn't diminished and they picked up the sticks again. Some members of the TN team, which won the gold in this year's nationals in Goa, also represented India in the European and

Australian Masters Games, World Masters Hockey World Cup, and Asian Continental Cup. Rekha Janardhan, the TN team skipper, recalls how in 2018 she and another player met during a tournament and decided to start playing again. "Many of us had stopped playing

after marriage. We played our first masters nationals in Dehradun in 2018 and won gold. Some of us then represented the country at the European Masters and won the bronze," she says. After this, things began to turn around as several members of the TN squad began to represent the country at the international level. But it has not been a smooth journey, as all the players are married and have families to take care of. "It costs at least 70 lakh to go on an international hockey tour.

Sealed since Feb 13, Singhu and Tikri borders to partially reopen

New Delhi: Delhi Police has initiated the process of partially opening Singhu and Tikri borders.

"We have started removing barricades from the Singhu border and intend to open two lanes for both incoming and outgoing traffic by Sunday evening," a police source said. The border is the gateway to Haryana and Punjab. A senior officer said they had opened one lane in Tikri. "We are planning to open more lanes, but it will take some time," the officer



added. Tikri borders Mundka on one side and Bahadurgarh on the other. The decision to open lanes for traffic will offer relief to the residents who have been getting inconvenienced due to block-

as protesting farmers from Punjab began their Delhi Chalo march. At the Tikri border, iron barriers, jersey barricades, shipping containers, barbed wire fences and iron spikes have been used to create a security jungle. While hydraulic cranes were used to fortify this makeshift border, the Haryana police, along with paramilitary units armed with sophisticated weaponry, were strategically deployed. Similar scenes were there at the Singhu too.

Delhi records minimum temperature of 8.3 degrees Celsius



Delhi experienced a chilly morning with a minimum temperature of 8.3 degrees Celsius, four degrees below the average. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecasted partly cloudy skies and the possibility of thunderstorms with rain throughout the day. Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 203, falling in the 'poor' category. Delhi records minimum temperature of 8.3 degrees Celsius, rain likely during day The

IMD has forecasted partly cloudy skies and the possibility of thunderstorms with rain throughout the day. **NEW DELHI:** The national capital, Delhi, experienced a chilly Sunday morning with a minimum temperature of 8.3 degrees Celsius, which is four degrees below the average for this season, as reported by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). At 8:30am, the humidity levels were recorded at 81 percent. The IMD has forecasted partly cloudy skies

and the possibility of thunderstorms with rain throughout the day. On Monday, there is a chance of drizzle in the night with generally cloudy skies. According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) was at 203, falling in the 'poor' category at 9am. The AQI scale ranges from 0 to 500, with values between 0 and 50 considered 'good' and values between 401 and 500 considered 'severe'.

Police arrest four thieves posing as deaf & mute

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested four men who allegedly posed as deaf and mute orphans or students and committed thefts for over a year in the city. The accused would come to the capital from Tamil Nadu by train, roam around various parts of the city, and target paying guest accommodations (PGs) in densely populated areas that house students. While visiting these PGs, they capitalised on moments when students were distracted, leaving their doors open and valuables unguarded. They would allegedly leave their own phones in their place of accommodation to avoid being traced. After spending at most a month in the city, the accused returned to Tamil Nadu and sold



the stolen electronics. The accused were identified as P Sathyavelu (22), Shiva (22), Kumar (24) and Prabhu (24). They are residents of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Police said they received complaints about burglary and thefts at students' PGs. During investigation, they found that a gang

was involved in the crime. Deputy commissioner of police (south) Ankit Chauhan said they received information that the four men would come to Press Enclave Road near the Malviya Nagar bus stand to execute a plan. A team led by inspector Dheeraj Mahlawat conducted the raid and nabbed the four men.

"When questioned about their whereabouts, the suspects feigned deafness and muteness, communicating solely through gestures. They presented a letter with entries of charitable donations supposedly received from various individuals, complete with signatures and other details," said an officer.

Advocacy is public profession, says attorney-general

Chennai: In the legal profession self-interest must always remain secondary as advocacy is a public profession, attorney-general for India R Venkataramani said on Saturday. Speaking at the 13th convocation of the Tamil Nadu Dr Ambedkar Law University here, he said: "This is an event which takes you from private life to public life, as advocacy is a public profession. Though I am the chief of advocates representing the government in the Supreme Court, this is the first time I am participating in a convocation of a law university, that too in Tamil Nadu." Jurisprudence is the study of the dynamics of social action. Study of law today is a techno-constitutional study. Legal education will be different in future, it will be more and more conditioned and liberated by technology, he said in his special address to the gathering. Vice-chancellor of the university NS Santhosh Kumar presided over the event while chancellor of the university and governor.

ED team conducting raids in West Bengal attacked by over 100 locals

NEW DELHI: A team of Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials was attacked on Friday morning in the Sarberia area of Sandeshkhali, where locals and followers of local TMC leader Sheikh Shajahan beat them up in the presence of CRPF jawans. The officials, conducting raids at 18 places, including Sarberia, in connection with the ration scam had to run for their lives. The ED officials knocked on Sheikh Shajahan's door, who was not present at his Sandeshkhali home. The locked door prompted the officials to attempt to break it open in the presence of CRPF jawans. Locals soon arrived at the scene, leading to argu-



ments. The situation escalated quickly, with around 200 villagers becoming hostile. The armed forces were soon outnumbered,

and attackers, reportedly armed with firearms and other weapons, began chasing them away. Bengal ration case: ED team

raiding TMC leader's house attacked, windowpanes of cars smashed Bengal ration case: ED team raiding TMC leader's house

attacked, windowpanes of cars smashed. The investigating team's vehicles were vandalized, and one official sustained a head injury. The officials and jawans scattered, using bikes and autos to flee the spot and save their lives. "It was an orchestrated attack," said the BJP in response to the incident.

West Bengal BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar said, "There is a complaint & corruption charges against all of them. It is natural that ED will take action. It is quite obvious. The attack on ED in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali shows what the Rohingya are doing to the law & order in the state.

BBMP lists out 58 'stressed' areas, lines up water tankers

BENGALURU: Alarm bells are going off at 58 locations across the city, which according to BBMP have begun reporting drinking water scarcity in the run-up to summer. These locations are largely concentrated in the tech corridors of Mahadevapura and Bommanahalli along with RR Nagar, Yelahanka, and Dasarahalli zones. The challenges faced by residents of these localities (mostly on the city's periphery) took centre stage at a coordination committee meeting convened by Rakesh Singh, additional chief secretary of urban development department, with BBMP and BWSSB officials. While the situation is grim in these 58 locations, including those dotted with upscale apartment complexes, another 257 points across Bengaluru have been identified as water-stressed by



BWSSB. Ram Prasath Manohar, chairman of BWSSB, said the board has initiated steps to supply potable water through the existing 68 tankers. "We're also in the process of procuring 18 new tankers and hiring an additional 200 private tankers to meet the demand during this summer.

The situation across the city is likely to improve by the end of April as we complete works under Cauvery V Stage," he said. Not to be left behind, BBMP has also geared up to face summer challenges. "Wherever there is severe shortage, additional borewells have to be

dug at the earliest. Wherever the RO water plants have become defunct or dried up, they shall be repaired and commissioned again by linking them to the nearby borewells. Officials must ensure potable water is dispensed on a 24x7 basis," said Rakesh Singh, who is also administrator of BBMP, after the joint coordination meeting with all the civic bodies of Bengaluru. Tushar Giri Nath, BBMP chief commissioner, instructed all officials to list out water-stressed areas and submit estimates for speedy disbursement of funds to resolve the crisis.

India go down to Oz in shoot-out

Kolkata: For the first time in this edition of the Pro League, Australia failed to register a win as India held them 2-2 in regulation time in Rourkela on Wednesday. But Australia did prevail 3-0 in the shoot-out to grab the bonus point as Johan Durst denied all the Indian attackers from sounding the board. On the other hand, PR Sreejesh failed to make a single save. As for India, who were leading 2-1 at half-time, they did get a couple of chances to increase their lead in the third quarter but on both the occasions

Durst did well to deny them. And one of them was just too good. Abhishek took a reverse hit, not too far away from the right, and Durst dived on his right and kept the ball out with his stick. On the other occasion, he kept out the ball after a brilliant run by Hardik Singh down the right flank. In the other match of the day, Ireland went down to Spain 0-7. India took the lead in the 20th minute after Harmanpreet Singh converted India's second PC of the match. However, the hosts failed to hold on to the lead for too long

as Australia won a penalty stroke three minutes later after Rohidas fouled Tom Wickham from behind. Govers took it and slammed it towards the left of Sreejesh, who went on the right, to make it 1-1. But India were back in the lead six minutes later as they grabbed their 4th PC of the match in the second quarter. This time Rohidas found the target after he slotted the ball towards the same zone as Harmanpreet did. However, Australia scored towards the end and grabbed the bonus point.

ED issues summons to Bengali actor in connection with money laundering case



KOLKATA: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday issued summonses to two Trinamool Congress leaders, including MP and popular Bengali actor Dev, for questioning in connection with its probes in money laundering cases, an official said. The probe agency summoned TMC Ghatal MP Dev aka Dipak Adhikari over his alleged involvement in a money laundering case linked to a cattle smuggling scam, asking him to appear before its officers in New Delhi on Feb 21. The ED also asked senior TMC leader Mukul Roy to be present for questioning in the national capital on Feb 19 in connection with its investigation

into siphoning of funds in a chit fund case. Actor Dev had appeared before the CBI at its Kolkata office in Feb 2022 for questioning in the same case. The CBI had arrested the TMC leader from Birbhum district Anubrata Mondal in connection with the cattle smuggling scam. Mondal is in ED custody at present. Subhranshu Roy, the son of Mukul Roy, said his father is unable to walk properly and would not be able to reach New Delhi for questioning. "My father has been keeping unwell for several years and he is unable to walk. It is difficult for him to go to New Delhi. But, we have no problem if ED officers visit our residence," Subhranshu said.

Man hurls 6-month-old son on floor after tiff with wife, held

Kolkata: A man was arrested from Posta for allegedly throwing his six-month-old son in a fit of rage after he had an argument with his wife. Police said the incident was reported on Thursday night from Cotton Street area on Thursday night. According to police, accused Biswanath Sharma, an employee at a wholesale grocery



shop, had returned home in an inebriated condition when he had an argument with his wife. The accused lost his

cool and began to shout. When his wife tried to protest, he misbehaved with her. "The accused reportedly snatched the sleeping child from his mother and threw him down. Neighbours rushed the child to hospital where he is said to be serious but stable so far. Based on a complaint from Sharma's wife, he was arrested.

Kantapukur crash: Pillion rider succumbs to injuries

Kolkata: The accident that took place near Kantapukur CISF parade ground on Saturday afternoon, killing one person and

injuring four others, claimed another person later on Saturday night. Arif Hossain (32), a pillion rider who was seriously injured following the accident, succumbed to injuries at SSKM Hospital. Earlier, a 17-year-old was killed in the accident. On afternoon, at least one scooterette rider died and five others — travelling on one bike and two scooterettes — were seriously injured after all three crashed into one another.

Ever since the death of a councillor's son a few years ago, the road usually remains shut and its gates are now manned by CISF personnel.

NCW chairperson leads delegation to Kolkata amidst unrest in Sandeshkhali

KOLKATA: A delegation led by the National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Rekha Sharma has left for Kolkata ahead of her Sandeshkhali visit. The area has been witnessing unrest for over 10 days as women protestors seek justice against alleged atrocities committed by TMC leader Sheikh Shajahan and his aides. Speaking to ANI, the NCW chief expressed her concern about the injustice done to women and her intention to visit every street and talk to the women to assure them of her support. During her visit, she plans to meet the governor of



West Bengal and later meet President Droupadi Murmu. Rekha Sharma stated, "Very disturbing news is coming from Sandeshkhali. My member went to investigate but could not meet many victims due to the police. So I am going. I have spoken to the vic-

tims, and I want them to get full justice. So I will go myself. I will meet the directorate general of police and the local police there. A lot of injustice has been done to women, and I want to go to every street and talk to all the women and assure them that I stand with them so that

they can have the courage to come forward and speak up. I will also take action and meet the governor. When I come back, I would like to meet the President." Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla criticized West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee for her handling of the situation in Sandeshkhali. Poonawalla expressed his disappointment with Banerjee's statements, calling them insulting and obnoxious. He highlighted the need for justice for the women who have been victims of

Vector-control tips for college students

Kolkata: Zoology students at Scottish Church College received a lesson on mosquito breeds, the diseases they spread and vector-control measures at a workshop conducted by the KMC on Friday. The students visited the KMC lab, where civic vector-control chief Debasish Biswas and other health officials helped them identify various types of mosquito larvae and spoke about how to prevent dengue and malaria. "We hope they will create awareness and help us fight dengue, malaria and other vector-borne diseases," said Biswas. Scottish Church principal Madhumanjari Mandal, who had approached KMC deputy mayor Atin Ghosh to arrange for the lesson, said, "We have requested them to allow our students to do their internship there." KMC plans to hold more such workshops.



PCB flags green concerns ahead of AIIMS launch

Kolkata: On the eve of the formal inauguration of the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Kalyani by PM Narendra Modi, the state pollution control board on Saturday flagged the project's environment clearance violation status. Construction on the 180-acre project situated 50 km from Kolkata, began in 2015. The medical college started functioning in Sept 2019. Thereafter, OPD services began and now the hospital is set to commence in-patient departments. West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) chairman Kalyan Rudra said the project's environmental clearance status was under question due to its violation category designation.

A senior official at AIIMS said all necessary documents had been forwarded to competent authorities.

Kolkata: Five Bangladeshi fishermen were arrested from the periphery of the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve on Saturday morning for allegedly carrying out illegal fishing activities in the Indian waters. A few guitarfish, considered critically endangered on IUCN Red List, were also recovered from them. Deputy field director of STR, Justine Jones, said that the five have been identified as Md Jamal, Md Golam Rabbi, Md Yasin Khan, Md Masum Billa and Md Hussain. "All guitarfish are part of Appendix II of the CITES and most of them are critically endangered," he added. According to sources, two different species of guitarfish were seized from them but none of it were scheduled species. According to Dipani Sutaria, an ecologist studying marine cetaceans in India, said it could either be a Galucostegus granulatus or Galucostegus younholei, both giant guitarfish and both critically endangered. "Like all other fish, these too are seen as fish by fishers. They are usually caught on hooks," she added. Another source said that it could be a Glaucoctegus typus also known as a common shovelnose ray.

KMC, cops fail to seal bldg after resistance from owners

Kolkata: A team of KMC officials and Kolkata Police made futile attempts to seal a Keshab Chandra Sen Street address on Saturday evening to execute the Calcutta High Court order which had directed the civic body to seal 10 new or upcoming constructions in the city by 2 pm on Saturday. Till late in the evening, the officials could not make much progress as owners of flats in the G+6 building in ward 37 "put up resistance" and said they had nowhere to go. A KMC buildings department official said the civic body couldn't seal the building as they found the building fully occupied.