

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Monday 11 March, 2024

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

## Azamgarh now 'vikas ka garh': PM Modi in SP den

“While SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav represented Azamgarh in 2014, his son Akhilesh Yadav replaced him as an MP”



**AZAMGARH:** In a scathing attack on Samajwadi Party in its political bastion Azamgarh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said venom of appeasement was weakening with Uttar Pradesh touching a new height of development. Virtually inaugurating and laying foundation of projects worth Rs 42,000 crore across India - with Rs 34,700-crore projects in UP alone -- the PM recalled how "people of Azamgarh helped a youth like Dinesh (Bhojpuri singer-actor Dinesh Lal Nirahua) demolish the fiefdom of a family to send out a message that the SP fort could be breached." While SP

patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav represented Azamgarh in 2014, his son Akhilesh Yadav replaced him as an MP in 2019. However, the SP candidate, Akhilesh's cousin Dharmendra Yadav, lost to BJP's Dinesh Lal Nirahua in the 2022 Lok Sabha bypoll. It's widely expected that Akhilesh will contest again from this seat. "They are so frustrated that they abuse Modi and say Modi doesn't have a family. They forget that the 140-crore population of the country is Modi's family," he said, responding to RJD president Lalu Prasad, who

in a recent rally said that he (Modi) accuses opposition parties of practising 'parivaravaad' as he did not have a family of his own. "Once a victim of extremism, casteism and appeasement politics, this district has now emerged as 'Ajanmagarh' -- an epitome of unending march of development. It will be 'vikas ka garh' (bastion of development) forever," the PM said. While Modi used 'Ajanmagarh' for Azamgarh, UP CM Yogi Adityanath has referred to it as 'Aryamgarh' in his past speeches.

Mentioning how UP's progress aligns with the nation's growth trajectory, Modi praised Yogi for exemplary implementation of Central schemes under the double engine government and positioning the state among top performers. Modi highlighted UP's rising profile, fuelled by mega investments, ground-breaking ceremonies, and the expansion of expressway networks and highways. He praised the state's focus on improving law and order, exemplified by the completion of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

## Ultimate goal of Modi is ...': Rahul slams 'hidden intentions' of 'Sangh'

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said that Karnataka BJP MP Anant Kumar Hegde's recent alleged remarks about needing "400 seats to change the Constitution" had revealed the "hidden intentions of Narendra Modi and his Sangh parivar". "The statement of the BJP MP that he needs 400 seats to change the Constitution is a public declaration of the hidden intentions of Narendra Modi and his 'Sangh Parivar'. The ultimate goal of Narendra Modi and BJP is to destroy Baba Saheb's Constitution," Rahul said on X. "They hate justice, equality, civil rights and democracy. By dividing the society, enslaving the media, guarding the freedom of expression and crippling independent institutions, they want to turn India's great democracy into a narrow dictatorship by conspiring to



eliminate the opposition," he said, adding: "We will not let these conspiracies succeed along with the dreams of the freedom heroes and will continue to fight for the democratic rights guaranteed by the Constitution till our last breath. Every soldier of the Constitution, especially Dalits, tribals, backward and minorities, wake up, raise your voice - INDIA is with you." "There is a need to rewrite majority of

Constitution' The BJP MP had sparked a controversy after he said there is a need to "rewrite the majority of the Constitution". He had alleged that Congress leaders in the past had amended the Constitution to "downgrade Hinduism". He further said the BJP alone would need 400 Lok Sabha seats in the upcoming general election "to change the Constitution". According to several media reports, the sit-

ting MP from Uttara Kannada, had said: "You all must help BJP to win over 400 seats. Why does the BJP need 400+ seats? Congress leaders in the past made changes to the constitution and made it in a way that it doesn't put Hinduism in front. We need to change it and save our religion. We already have a two-thirds majority in Lok Sabha, and we do not have that in Rajya Sabha to amend the constitution.

## Congress can't be trusted in fight against BJP: Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Setting the tone for LDF's Lok Sabha campaign, Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday said Congress cannot be trusted in taking on BJP as the former has lost political credibility. "Left is the only force that will not yield to any pressure (from BJP). Its stand against communalism is unwavering. Only Left could protect Indian Constitution and parliamentary democracy," Vijayan said after inaugurating LDF Lok Sabha constituency conventions of Attingal and Thiruvananthapuram. He added that the only political front voters in Kerala could repose their faith in the fight against communal forces was LDF. The Kerala CM said Congress leaders either supported BJP or remained silent when BJP gov't at Centre took important decisions with wide-ranging implications. This, he said, was because economic policy of both parties was same. Vijayan, who criticised Congress for not protesting enough against abrogation of Article 370 by BJP gov't, said the grand old party failed to react strongly against Centre when it introduced NRC Bill in Parliament or when BJP amended UAPA Act. Both legislations, Vijayan said, were aimed at targeting a particular section in society and Congress could raise little effective resistance, he said. He said the trend of Congress leaders joining BJP has started to pick up in Kerala too.

## Samudrayaan to explore ocean bed by 2025-end, says Rijiju

**NEW DELHI:** Samudrayaan mission set to explore ocean bed by 2025-end, the earth sciences minister Kiren Rijiju has said. The announcement came after an underwater acoustic telephone, developed by National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) for the submersible project, was successfully tested at a depth of about 500



metres in the Bay of Bengal. The ministry, in a tweet on Saturday, said, "Underwater acoustic telephone board Sagar Manjusha (research vessel). Deployment preparation, operation and functional

testing of underwater acoustic telephone was successfully conducted." Similar to the Gaganyaan mission in which 2-3 astronauts will be sent to space in 2025, India will send its scientists to study the deep ocean 6,000 metres in its own Samudrayaan by the end of next year. Acoustic Telephone deployment

## NHRC notice to govt. over 'soldier in Pakistan prison since 1965 war'

**BHUBANESWAR:** Fifty-nine years since he went missing after the India-Pakistan war and 21 years after his photograph surfaced in a newspaper advertisement, the NHRC has sent fresh notice to the ministry of home affairs (MHA) and ministry of external affairs (MEA) to submit action taken reports within four weeks about Indian Army jawan Ananda Patri, said to be in a Pakistan prison since 1965. Friday's



directive comes following a fresh petition submitted by rights activist and lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy on the basis of a letter sent to the secretary of Zilla Sainik Board, Balasore, by Dhamanagar police

station on February 19. Ananda, a native of Gandhighat Sasan under Dhusuri block of Bhadrak district, was a sepoy in the Corps of Engineers Personnel. He was part of the 1962 and 1965 wars against China and Pakistan. Ananda did not come back home after the 1965 war. Family members thought he had died in the war till his son Bidyadhar came across his father's photograph in a newspaper.

## 'Naidu has stitched an alliance with parties which rendered injustice to AP'

**ADDANKI:** Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Sunday said that TDP supremo Chandrababu Naidu had stitched up an alliance with parties which had rendered "serious injustice" to the state by bifurcating it unscientifically. Claiming that the TDP is gripped with panic to face the YSRCP alone, Reddy said Naidu had spent sleepless nights in New Delhi to seal the deal with parties that got fewer votes than NOTA, in an indirect reference to the BJP. He said that all the opposition parties have ganged up only to render injustice to the poor getting benefitted under



YSRCP regime. Jagan addressed a massive public meeting held as part of Siddham series at Medarametla in Addanki assembly constituency on Sunday. He dedicated almost his entire speech to take on principal rival Naidu dubbing him as "unethical and unreliable" leader in the public

life. Reiterating that the upcoming elections would be a war between poor people led by YSRCP and feudal forces led by Naidu, he appealed party activists to create awareness among the people that bringing Naidu back is nothing but giving green signal to stoppage of welfare schemes. He said that Naidu would not only stop

## Uddhav close aide Waikar joins CM Shinde's Shiv Sena

**MUMBAI:** Days before the election code of conduct is to be announced for Lok Sabha elections, Shiv Sena (UBT) MLA from Jogeshwari Ravindra Waikar joined CM Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena on Sunday. Waikar was accused of using BMC land reserved for gardens to build a luxury hotel. He was alleged to be involved in a Rs 500 crore scam and was raided by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in January. On Saturday, Waikar welcomed Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray at a party meeting, but 24 hours later, he jumped ship, dealing a huge blow to Thackeray. Waikar switched sides a day after Thackeray announced the candidature of Amol Kirtikar as the Lok Sabha candidate from the Mumbai North-West parliamentary constituency.

## Himachal: Independent legislator, rebel Congress MLA's dad booked

**SHIMLA:** Himachal Pradesh police on Saturday booked Ashish Sharma, the independent MLA from Hamirpur, and Rakesh Sharma, the father of Chaitanya Sharma, the disqualified Congress MLA from Gagret who along with five other party MLAs had cross-voted in the recent Rajya Sabha election for the BJP candidate in the state, under charges of influencing the election, bribery and criminal conspiracy beside provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act. In the Rajya Sabha poll held on Feb 27, a total of nine MLAs, including six from Congress and three independents, had cross-voted, resulting in the defeat of Congress candidate Abhishek Manu

Singhvi and victory of BJP's Harsh Mahajan. The FIR was registered on a complaint of Congress MLAs Sanjay Awasthy and Bhuvneshwar Gaur alleging buying of votes and transactions worth crores in the election. "It needs to be investigated who is bearing the expenses for the nine MLAs for their stay in luxury hotels and travel in helicopters and chartered planes," said Gaur, the Congress MLA from Manali. Shimla SP Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi said the case was registered under Sections 171 C (undue influence in elections), 171 E (bribery) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of IPC and Sections 7 and 8 of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

## Flyer handling capacity set for 6 crore jump after newly inaugurated airport projects



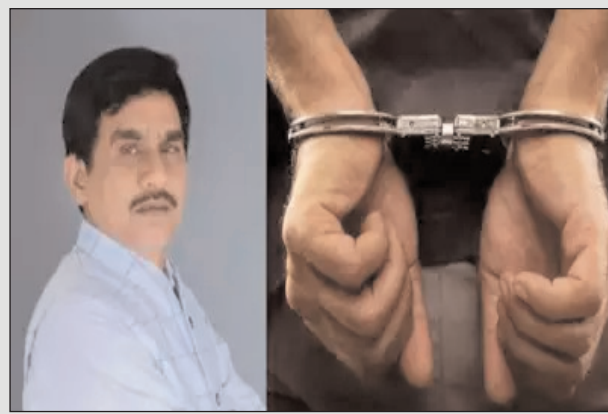
**LUCKNOW:** India's annual air passenger handling capacity will rise by over 6 crore over the next 1-2 months after PM Modi on Sunday inaugurated airport projects worth Rs 9,800 crore, from UP's Azamgarh, reports Saurabh Sinha. These include new and expanded terminals at 12 places, including Delhi, Pune, Kolhapur, Lucknow, Gwalior and Azamgarh. He also laid the foundation stones for new terminal buildings for Kadapa, Hubballi and Belagavi airports. Airports across India have a capacity to handle 48 crore flyers annually, and the expansion will increase it by 12.5%. Now, projects initiated are completed too: PM "Inauguration of these airports, highways and railway lines today should not be seen through the prism of elections. This is my journey of development that aims to see India as a developed

nation by 2047. Earlier, only announcements used to be made and forgotten. People were bluffed earlier. Aaj desh ne dekh liya Modi doosri mitti ka insaan hai. Whatever project is initiated now, is completed now", PM said. Airports across country have a capacity to handle 48 crore passengers annually, and expansion at the dozen airports will increase it by 12.5%. PM spoke about speed at which development is taking place. The Gwalior terminal, for instance, was built in a record 16 months. "Five places in UP that have got new terminals today, including Aligarh, Moradabad, Shrawasti and Azamgarh were

once considered small and backward towns. Now these places will get connected by flights," Modi said. Pune, Kolhapur, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Delhi, Lucknow, Aligarh, Azamgarh, Chitrakoot, Moradabad, Shrawasti and Adampur airports have got new terminals. These terminals are equipped with passenger facilities like check-in counters, aerobridges, baggage conveyors and concessionaire area. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has also undertaken development of three new terminal buildings at Kadapa, Hubballi and Belagavi airports at a cost of Rs 908 crore.

## ED arrests RJD supremo Lalu Prasad aide in money laundering

**PATNA:** Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested Subhash Yadav, a close aide of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad, in connection with a money laundering case involving illegal sand mining. Yadav was arrested late Saturday night under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) following raids carried out by ED sleuths at several locations in Patna linked to him. Sources in ED said Yadav was produced before a special PMLA court on Sunday morning before being sent to judicial custody. Yadav had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Lok Sabha elections on RJD symbol from Chatra



in neighbouring Jharkhand. Sources said Yadav was arrested following questioning by ED officials who raided his residence in Danapur locality on Saturday. The agency also carried out simultaneous raids on his other residential locations in Patna. ED officials scanned docu-

ments related to sand mining and other financial transactions of Yadav before taking him into custody, sources said. The money laundering case stems from a clutch of 20 FIRs registered by Bihar police against a firm, Broadsons Commodities Private Ltd (BCPL).

## Plot to junk Ambedkar's Constitution, says Congress on BJP MP's remarks

**NEW DELHI:** Seizing Anant Hedge's comment that Prime Minister Narendra Modi requires 400 seats in Lok Sabha to rewrite the Constitution, Congress Sunday alleged that the BJP MP has "given away his party's conspiracy" to junk Ambedkar's Constitution because it abhors social

justice and equality. Congress warned people to be wary of BJP and made a special appeal to Dalits and tribals to side with the opposition in the coming elections, launching a hashtag on twitter "Save Constitution, Remove BJP". Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said

RSS, BJP and the Narendra Modi govt want to establish dictatorship, through which they will impose "manuwadi mindset" on people and snatch away the rights of SCs, STs and OBCs, and ensure there are "no elections or sham elections", "compromising.

## 'Outsiders, BJP discards in TMC Congress' Lok Sabha polls list'

**KOLKATA:** Soon after Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee announced party candidates for 42 Lok Sabha constituencies in West Bengal, BJP said that the list is loaded with "outsiders" many of whom are "BJP discards". BJP's information technology cell chief and party's central observer for West Bengal Amit Malviya ridiculed certain names which featured in the list in his X post. Malviya targeted Shatrughan Sinha (Asansol), Kirti Azad



(Bardhaman-Durgapur), Yusuf Pathan (Baharampur), Krishna Kalyani (Raiganj), Mukut Mani Adhikari (Ranaghat), Sujata Mondal (Bishnupur), Biswajit Das (Bangaon) and Biplob Mitra (Balurghat). "TMC doesn't have

enough candidates of its own? Shatrughan Sinha, Kirti Azad and Yusuf Pathan are Bohiragotos (outsiders). TMC didn't find enough sons of the soil for the election" Malviya said in the post. Sujata Mondal, who is the Trinamool Congress candidate from

Bishnupur Lok Sabha constituency is the estranged wife of the sitting BJP Lok Sabha member Saumitra Khan from the same constituency. The remaining four named by Malviya in his post are turncoat MLAs and leaders. Malviya has also criticised Trinamool for re-nominating the sitting party MP from Murshidabad constituency, Abu Taher Khan. "Abu Taher Khan, whose SUV dragged and killed a 6-year-old child, has been fielded from Murshidabad.

## Congress avoids strong words for TMC over West Bengal list, says doors of alliance still open

**NEW DELHI:** Stung by Mamata Banerjee's announcement of all 42 candidates for West Bengal, Congress eschewed strong words for the Trinamool Congress leader, and instead said the party is trying hard to keep all INDIA allies together, and that doors of partnership between them have still not been shut. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said an alliance would be preferable, claiming that alliance can happen any time till the date of withdrawal of candidatures.



Congress spokesman Jairam Ramesh, however, betrayed bitterness by remarking, "I don't know what pressure was there on TMC, but as far as we are concerned, we want to strengthen INDIA alliance in West Bengal... So let's see

what happens." State Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Sunday claimed that Mamata is fearful of PM Modi. "Mamata is worried that if she joins INDIA Alliance, she will have to face Modi. She is worried that if ED and

CBI start visiting TMC on Modi's orders, it could pose a risk to TMC. So, by distancing herself from the alliance, Mamata is sending a message to Modi's office: Don't be upset with me; I'm not part of the alliance and I won't compete with BJP," he said. The comments reflected disappointment with TMC, with which Congress has been trying hard for a tie-up in Bengal and has been demanding six seats. However, Mamata has repeatedly said that she will not join hands with Congress.

## 400-seat target to amend Constitution: Karnataka BJP MP Anantkumar Hegde

**KARWAR:** Uttara Kannada BJP MP Anantkumar Hegde has ignited controversy by saying his party needed to win 400 Lok Sabha seats this time to "amend" the Constitution and erase the damage wrought by Congress over the years. He had made similar comments in 2019. Addressing BJP workers in Siddapur taluk on Saturday, Hegde said Congress had amended the Constitution "many times" and adopted "anti-people" policies. "We can undo this damage only by winning two-thirds majority in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, and we must hold power in at least 20 states to amend the Constitution," Hegde said. The MP stressed this as the "intent" behind BJP's current slogan of "Ab ki baar, 400 paar (this



time, more than 400 seats)". Congress seized on the comment, saying Hegde had "given away his party's conspiracy" to junk "BR Ambedkar's Constitution". BJP distanced itself from the remarks, describing them as "Hegde's personal views and not of the party". In a post on X, BJP said it would seek explanation from the MP and reaffirmed its "unwavering commitment" to upholding the Constitution. In 2019, Hegde had declared that "we have come to change the Constitution". Following a blowback,

mainly from Congress, the MP was forced to apologise. Some believe the row cost him a Union cabinet berth. Hegde's current statement comes amid a strong pitch by that BJP was preparing the ground to change the character of the Constitution and "deny the dented rights of their rights enshrined in the document prepared by Ambedkar". Hegde pointed out how BJP fell short in implementing the Citizenship Amendment Act. He said it faced stiff opposition in the Rajya Sabha.

## Women now account for nearly 48% of Ayushman hospitalisations

**NEW DELHI:** Women account for nearly 48% of authorised hospitalisations under Ayushman Bharat-PM Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), data accessed by TOI show. Top officials in National Health Authority (NHA), implementing agency of the scheme, told TOI that since its launch in 2018, 6.5 crore hospitalisations have been made under the scheme which involved treatment cost of Rs 81,979 crore. Of this, 3.2 crore hospitalisations for Rs 39,349 crore involved women. Officials said scheme utilisation by women beneficiaries has been higher than that of men in 10 states/UTs - Meghalaya (68%), Arunachal Pradesh (57%), Chhattisgarh (56%), Mizoram (54%),



Nagaland (53%), Jharkhand (51%), Tripura (51%) and J&K (50%). According to NHA documents, top specialties under PMJAY which were utilised more by women than men are - cancer (56%), ophthalmology (54%), otorhinolaryngology or ENT-related (51%), and neonatal care packages (57%). "Enrolment under AB-PMJAY scheme is steered by thousands of ASHA and aanganwadi workers across states/UTs.

Women also constitute a significant percentage of healthcare providers at local units (AB-Health Wellness Centres). This has helped increase utilisation of the scheme among women, who have traditionally lagged behind in health-seeking behaviour," a senior health ministry official said. He added that another key change brought in by the scheme which helped increase women's involvement in healthcare scheme

was individual enrollment. "Before AB-PMJAY, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana or RSBY was used to provide health insurance coverage to the unrecognised sector workers belonging to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category and their family members. Only one card was issued to each family, mostly the men who were the breadwinners. We realised this made women in such households dependent on the men to take them to hospital for treatment. However, in case of AB-PMJAY, individual Ayushman cards are issued to each member of families covered under the scheme which means now the women do not have to depend on anyone to seek treatment.

## When is Ramzan 2024 beginning in India

**NEW DELHI:** From next week, Muslims around the globe will engage in the tradition of fasting daily from dawn until dusk with the onset of the holy month of Ramzan. Here is all you need to know about Ramzan: What is Ramzan and how do Muslims observe it? Ramzan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and is considered the holiest month for Muslims worldwide. It is observed by fasting from dawn to sunset, engaging in increased worship, charity, and community activities. During Ramzan, Muslims refrain from consuming food and drink during daylight hours, and focus on spiritual growth, reflection, and community. Fasting (Sawm): Fasting is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. From dawn (Fajr) until sunset (Maghrib), Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, and other physical needs. The fast is broken each day with a meal called Iftar at sunset.

CAPSULES

## Indian cheetah family grows: Kuno welcomes five new cubs, totaling 13

**BHOPAL:** The population of Indian born cheetahs inside Kuno National Park in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh now stands at 13 with five new cubs spotted on Saturday.



Total number of cheetahs, including cubs, in Kuno is now 26, marking a significant milestone for India's ambitious conservation project. Officials say the project is heading towards the right direction as planned. Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav announced on Sunday that five cubs have been born to South African Cheetah Gamini. Also, this is the first litter by a South African Cheetah. Previous ones were by Namibians. "This takes the tally of the Indian born cubs to 13. This is the fourth cheetah litter on Indian soil and the first litter of cheetahs brought from South Africa," Yadav said on X.Vincent van

der Merwe from The Metapopulation Initiative expressed joy on the birth of the cubs and said, "Cheetahs are fragile large predators, and their reintroduction is extremely challenging. Nine of the first 10 reintroduction attempts in South Africa failed. We learned from our mistakes, never gave up, and today South Africa supports a growing wild cheetah population. A big congratulations to our Indian colleagues for persevering. The recent births represent the beginning of the recovery of wild cheetah populations across their historic range in Asia." In January Namibian

Cheetah Jwala had introduced three cubs in its second litter. She had delivered four cubs in its first litter of which one survived. Prior to that Cheetah Aasha had welcomed three members into the Kuno family. Ten Cheetahs have died since this project was launched by PM Narendra Modi. In May 2023, Project Cheetah faced a setback when three of four cubs born to Jwala succumbed to scorching temperatures, reaching up to 46-47 degrees Celsius, making it the hottest day of the summer season. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) responded.

## 'Bachi Khuchi Shiv Sena chief': Nirupam slams

**NEW DELHI:** Amid discussions over seat-sharing among the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) parties in Maharashtra, prominent Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam criticised Uddhav Thackeray for prematurely announcing the candidate for Mumbai's North-West Lok Sabha constituency. MVA, a coalition of Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (Sharad Pawar faction), and Congress, is currently in talks for a poll pact ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Nirupam expressed his disappointment over the decision to announce Amol Kirtikar as the Shiv Sena candidate for the



Mumbai North-West constituency before finalising seat-sharing arrangements within MVA. The Mumbai North-West seat, which Nirupam himself is eyeing, is still a point of contention within the alliance as no official decision has been made. "Yesterday evening, the chief of the remaining Shiv Sena declared MVA

candidate from North West Lok Sabha constituency in Andheri. Calls have been coming since night. How can this happen? Despite two dozen meetings of MVA the final decision on seat sharing has not been taken yet. This seat is also among the 8-9 seats which are pending, this is what the Congress colleagues.

## Government likely to appoint two new election commissioners by March 15

**NEW DELHI:** The Election Commission of India is likely to get two new election commissioners by March 15 to fill the vacancies left after the retirement of Anup Chandra Pandey and the surprise exit of Arun Goel, a PTI report said citing sources. A search committee

under Union law minister Arjun Ram Megwal and comprising the cabinet secretaries of the home department and department of personnel and training will prepare two separate panels of five names each for the two posts. Later, a selection com-

mittee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising a Union minister and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury will then name two persons for appointment as election commissioners before the official appointment by the President.

## BJP brass summons top Odisha netas to Delhi

**BHUBANESWAR:** Amid buzz in political circles that the coalition talk between BJP and BJD could be in the final stages, the saffron party's Odisha leadership was summoned to Delhi by the party's central hierarchy on Sunday. Talks are doing the rounds that state BJP functionaries may be asked by the top leadership to refrain from making misleading comments on the alliance after party's Odisha chief Manmohan Samal strongly ruled out a coalition with BJD upon his return from



Delhi on Friday. Samal along with general secretary (organisation) Manas Mohanty, state election in-charge Vijaypal Singh Tomar, and co-in-charge Lata Usendi reached the national

capital in the evening, their second visit to Delhi in the last four days as part of the strategy to fine-tune the alliance. On the fresh summon to Delhi, Samal said the central leadership

wants to discuss the ground situation for the upcoming Lok Sabha and assembly elections in state. "I am not aware of the agenda of the fresh meeting though it will surely revolve around our preparedness," Samal said before leaving for Delhi. Asked about the alliance, Samal said, "I do not want to comment on the alliance matter." Samal's response comes a day after the emergence of a short video, featuring chief minister Naveen Patnaik and his aide V K Pandian.

## 'A sinking ship': Expelled Congress leader targets party

**NEW DELHI:** Expelled Congress leader Acharya Pramod Krishnam on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Rahul Gandhi's recent remarks on 'Modi Ki Guarantee', stating that someone who has lost their mental balance can say anything. In an interview with ANI, Acharya Krishnam expressed his disappointment over the mass exodus of members from the Congress party, attributing it to the party's 'anti-Ram' and 'anti-Sanatan' stance. Responding to Rahul's



claim that there was 'no guarantee' of PM Modi returning for a third term, the expelled leader dismissed it as the ramblings of a person who has lost their mind,

comparing it to the nonsensical statements of children. "See, a person, who has lost his mind, can say anything. As we have seen with children, they often

ramble on without making much sense. One need not take the words of a child or a senseless person seriously," Krishnam told ANI. "The only person responsible for the prevailing ruinous state of the Congress is Rahul Gandhi. As long as Rahul Gandhi is in the Congress, there is no saving the Congress," he added. Acharya Krishnam questioned who would align themselves with a party that stands against Sanatan, despite residing in the country.

## Sandeshkhali: Suspended TMC leader Shahjahan sent to 4-day CBI custody

**NEW DELHI:** Sandeshkhali-accused Shahjahan Sheikh was sent to four-day CBI custody by Basirhat Sub-Divisional Court on Sunday in connection with the January 5 attack on the Enforcement Directorate team in Sandeshkhali.



accused, Shahjahan. Additionally, the court criticized the state police for their inconsistent approach in the matter. "The accused is a political influencer. The investigation should be handed over to the CBI and the custody of the accused by 4:15 pm today," the high court observed. After evading authorities for nearly two months, the suspended TMC leader was apprehended by the West Bengal Police on February 29. Following his arrest, he was presented before the

Basirhat court, which granted a 10-day police remand. Besides being implicated in the assault on an ED team during a raid on his Sandeshkhali residence, linked to an alleged ration scam, Shahjahan faces charges of land encroachment, extortion, and mistreatment of women alongside his accomplices. Outraged by his actions, women from Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district staged violent protests, condemning Shahjahan and his associates for their egregious behavior.

## Cover for 43 BJP netas in Bastar after 9 killed by Reds in a year

**RAIPUR:** Chhattisgarh government has provided Y+, Y, and X category security to 43 BJP leaders in insurgency-affected Bastar ahead of the Lok Sabha elections following a string of murders of BJP netas by Maoists. Nine BJP leaders have been murdered in Bastar division since Feb 2023, the last two in the space of a week this month. Bijapur BJP district president, Srinivas Mudaliar, had written to home minister Amit Shah on March 7, saying party workers need security. On Sunday, police headquarters issued an order listing names of 43 BJP leaders from Bastar who will be guarded by



Chhattisgarh Police and commandos. They include 17 in Dantewada, 10 in Bijapur, six in Sukma, four each in Jagdalpur and Kanker, and one each in Kondagaon and Narayanpur. Sukma BJP district president Dhaniram Barse has been given

the highest level of Y+ security. Four others have got Y-security. In his letter to Shah Mudaliar said: "Naxalites are targeting BJP leaders out of frustration because of the state govt's anti-Naxal campaigns. BJP officials and workers are always in fear of

death in Bijapur. Recently, a party leader was brutally murdered, creating an atmosphere of fear among officials. Several leaders are constantly targeted by Naxals, forcing them to frequently change their residence at night."

## Delhi Development Authority auction for Phase-III

**Delhi:** The DDA will auction Phase III of its Diwali Special Housing Scheme. The program offers 257 penthouse, high-income, and middle-income units in Dwarka's various areas. Sector 19B has two penthouses, 123 HIG units, and 132 MIG in Sector 14. DDA stated their tentative reserve prices. 5 crore, 2.1 crore, 1.44 crore While e-auction registration and online earnest money deposits close on February 28, the auction will be held on March 5. The deposits for MIG flats are 10 lakh, HIG flats 15 lakh, and penthouses 25 lakh. Participants must register on the e-auction portal for Rs 2,500 per flat. It added that this sum is non-refundable and non-adjustable. DDA began e-booking 2,093 premium flats and penthouses in Dwarka Sector 19B, Sector 14 and Loknayak Puram on November 23. It has 170 super HIG, 946 HIG, 14 penthouses in Dwarka 19B, 316 MIG.

## Editorial

### The role of state fiscal capacities in national growth

India's economic progress is a composite reflection of the growth trajectories of its states. Given the federal structure of the country, each state operates with a degree of autonomy in implementing policies that drive their individual economies. This results in a broad spectrum of growth rates across states, highlighting significant disparities. For the nation to achieve holistic growth, it is imperative for all states to experience economic advancement. Despite this, there is a notable discrepancy in the attention paid to fiscal matters at different levels of government. The Union Budget, detailing the central government's finances, often garners substantial scrutiny and debate for its potential impacts on the nation's economic direction. In contrast, state budgets, which are crucial for addressing local needs and fostering regional development, do not attract a similar level of public and analytical scrutiny. Fiscal capacity, the government's ability to generate revenue from available tax and non-tax bases, is crucial for several reasons. First, it underpins a government's ability to provide essential public goods and services. These range from healthcare and education to infrastructure and defense, which are fundamental for the welfare of the citizenry and the smooth functioning of the economy. Without adequate fiscal capacity, governments may struggle to maintain these services at levels that meet public demand and expectations, potentially leading to social unrest or a decline in the quality of life. Second, fiscal capacity is vital for economic development and growth. Governments need resources to invest in infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, and digital networks, which are critical for enhancing productivity and competitiveness. Such investments not only improve current living standards, but also set the stage for future economic expansion. The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) in 2017 and the World Bank in 2015 highlighted the risk of economies falling into a 'middle-income trap' where they are unable to transition to high-income status due to inadequate fiscal capacity among other factors.

Moreover, fiscal capacity is essential for macro-economic stability. It allows governments to manage economic cycles more effectively, applying fiscal stimulus in downturns and restraint in booms to maintain economic stability. The Covid-19 pandemic's impact on Indian states underscored this point, as reduced fiscal capacities constrained their ability to respond effectively to the crisis and its economic repercussions. Finally, a robust fiscal capacity enables equitable social development. It allows for redistributive policies that can mitigate income inequality and fund social safety nets for the vulnerable. Studies have shown that factors such as high per capita income, education levels, and low corruption contribute to higher fiscal capacity, which in turn can be used to foster a more inclusive society. Given that state governments account for over 60 per cent of general government expenditure in India, enhancing their revenue-generating capacity is imperative for the needed investment in areas such as education, research and development, and skill development. The Reserve Bank of India recently released a report on state finances, which gives an insight into the state budgets of 2023-24. It has some important findings. First, revenue mobilisation in Indian states comprises both tax and non-tax revenues, with a significant portion coming from state's own tax revenues (SOTR). Over the years, there has been a noticeable increase in SOTR, growing from 5.7 per cent of GDP in 2003-04 to 6.9 per cent in 2022-23. This growth, particularly in the post-GST era, reflects a shift in the composition of tax revenues.

with the State Goods and Services Tax.

# Why military interventions will never let Pakistan become a democracy?

Presently, the military finds itself entangled in a subsequent confrontation with Imran Khan, the favourite of the masses. Image Courtesy: Reuters

What facet of the military's participation in the nation's political apparatus contributes to its operational dysfunction? Alternatively, what constituent of the military's involvement propels society towards the precipice of civil conflict?

From a subjective standpoint, the military's influence on decision-making processes, notably in formulating foreign and internal security policies, does not inherently manifest as problematic.

Given its precarious geopolitical surroundings, the contextualisation of Pakistan as a security state from its inception underscores the historical roots of such a paradigm. The 1990s witnessed the ascendancy of a military-oriented perspective, accentuating assumed internal threats to the nation's survival. This perspective gained further traction in the aftermath of the post-9/11 security paradigm. The substantial role assumed by the military in shaping foreign and security policies finds its justification in these historical antecedents. Critics of the military's pervasive role in



these processes must proffer pragmatic alternatives, implying the establishment of alternative institutional frameworks to curtail the involvement of military bureaucracy. However, complications arise when the military bureaucracy exploits international linkages forged during policy formulation to consolidate its influence within the country's power structures.

In the post-Musharraf epoch, military leadership assumed the mantle of de facto diplomats for Pakistan. The security landscape emerged as the preeminent foreign policy concern for successive governments in Islamabad, prompting foreign leaders, including foreign ministers and heads of state from Western and Muslim nations, to seek consultations primarily with the Chief of Army Staff (COAS).

The high-profile international visits undertaken by the Army chief were extensively publicised in domestic and international media during this time. This heightened visibility finds rationale in the geopolitical reality that Pakistan and its adjacent Afghanistan were focal points in global terrorist networks, hosting the headquarters of major international terror organisations.

A historical context is pertinent, wherein the nexus between the Pak-Afghan border areas and mainland Afghanistan was implicated in major terrorist incidents worldwide. In such scenarios, the discernment of a foreign leader is of manageable complexity; the point of contact for addressing such difficulties is perceived to be the Army chief rather than the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The irony is underscored by

the conspicuous absence of institutional capacity within the prime minister or the civilian government to formulate policies germane to these concerns. Despite the technical attribution of military capacity within the ambit of the prime minister's executive powers, the unequivocal proclamations of the military's media wing regarding its intent to support civilian governments on diverse policy matters substantiate the de facto institutional autonomy exercised by the army. This nuanced interplay unfolds within Islamabad's structured and disciplined bureaucratic milieu, characterised by an absence of tumult or disorder. The constitutional powers of the prime minister are willingly ceded, facilitating the encroachment of the Chief of Army Staff and the military bureaucracy, particularly in scenarios where civilian governments lack the independent capacity for policy formulation and execution. However, it is essential to note that this singular dynamic does not make Pakistan's political system dysfunctional. Comparable instances of military leadership involvement in the formulation and execution of foreign and security policies are observable in other nations. The difficulty associ-

ated with the military's engagement in Pakistan lies primarily in its role as a partisan actor in the nation's internal political contentions.

This predicament is further underscored by the extensive historical record depicting the Pakistani military's involvement as a participant in ideological, religious, sectarian, and political conflicts. The epoch of General Zia-ul-Haq's military regime stands out as a significant period wherein the military was ostensibly positioned as the guardian of the state's ideological frontiers. During this tenure, the military administration actively contributed to the cultivation and reinforcement of profound religious and sectarian divisions within society through legislative measures, persisting as unresolved issues within the broader Pakistani political landscape. Since its inception, Pakistan has manifested itself as an ideologically diverse society, accommodating various political, religious, sectarian, and ideological factions, a characteristic dating back to British colonial rule. However, the Zia-led military sought to impose an ideological homogeneity on Pakistani society, endeavouring to enforce a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam.

## Happy to see Indian girls coming up in golf,' says India's first ever female golfer

Among the longest hitters, at 25 years of age, this girl has been wowing golfing fans across the world. Her straight hits cover much ground, leaving onlookers agape. For world no. 41, Aditi Ashok, who has had a spectacular run in the 2023 LET, opens with a much-cherished win on European soil, winning the Ladies Open 2023 season-ending tournament at the Andalucia Costa Del Sol Open (Spain). It's total surrender to the game: she won her fourth Ladies European Tour title at the Kenya Ladies Open, came third in Morocco, and was runner-up in Saudi Arabia (2023).

Scratch the calm demeanour, and there is a girl with a plan who wants to hit straighter and longer. Golf consumes her. She recently

reconnected with her childhood coach, Gaurav Diwan, and is "working on my swing speed and distance". From those early years, she turned pro in 2016 and was also rookie of the year, and Ashok is the first Indian female golfer to enter the top 50 world ranking. On a journey that began at age five, she accompanied her father, Ashok Gudlamani, onto the Karnataka Golf Course in Bangalore. One swing and another, and soon she was hooked. Over the years, her resolve, passion, and stoic stance have seen her climb deftly along the ranks of ladies' golf. Putting, she believes, is her strength, and often birdie-ing to perfection, the ramrod straight serious girl with her lips pursed in concentration has beaten

men, trumped tournaments, and is eyeing 2024 as the greens promise victories ahoj. "Finishing in the top 5 in Spain has been heartening after the work I have put in. It has been completely different when compared to where I was in 2022. Then, I was ranked 99 at the LPG. So, the first win (in Kenya) got the ball rolling," smiles Aditi. A miss at the 2020 Olympics (she came fourth), a silver at the Asian Games 2023, she dug deep after an off-kilter season. Having crossed the finish line with wins, she feels failure teaches, victories not so much. "In August, I took a month or two off to prepare for the Asian Games. Even though it had no ranking points and had nothing to do with my LPGA.

In the Indian culture, at one time, there used to be 365 festivals in a year. Almost every one of these festivals is connected to the lunisolar calendar. The solar system is working like a potter's wheel to generate this body. Who we are and the way we are structured physically is the consequence of the way the planetary system is made. If you are sensitive, for different days of the month, there are different things happening in nature, and whatever is happening in nature is also happening in this body. In this tradition, what is happening in the solar system on a given day has been very keenly observed, and accordingly, we have crafted different kinds of celebrations for each day. The fourteenth day of every lunar month, or the day before the new moon, is known as Shivratri. Among the twelve or thirteen Shivratri that occur in a calendar year, Mahashivratri, the one that occurs in February-March, is the most significant. Planet Earth is spinning with a certain precision. It is not simply rotating on its axis - there is always a wobble. That wobble creates a certain situation on the planet where, on the night of Mahashivratri, there is a natural upsurge of energy in the Northern Hemisphere. On this day, every life-form experiences a certain upsurge of energies within themselves. This upsurge of energies can be truly made use of only by those crea-



tures who have their spine erect. Our fortune of being human is that we are the only species here that graduated to the level of an erect spine. If you look at the evolutionary development of various species, you will notice that moving from invertebrate to vertebrate is one significant step. Another significant step in the evolutionary process is the spine moving from a horizontal position to a vertical position. The true development of the brain happened only after the spine became vertical.

The Puranas say blessed are those whose spines are erect because they can move their energies upward effortlessly. All evolution in a human being is fundamentally an upward movement of energy. By making use of this natural upsurge on the nightlong festival of Mahashivratri, we can move one step closer to the Divine. The raising of energies takes place even if there is no sadhana in a person's life, but especially for people who are into some kind of Yogic sadhana, keeping

the body in a vertical position - in other words, not sleeping on this night - is very important. When everything is being pulled up on Mahashivratri, if your spine takes a horizontal position, it will cause imbalances in your system. This is why the culture told you not to sleep on Mahashivratri. If you can stay awake and be conscious, you will benefit most. But if that is not possible, somehow stay awake - at least watch a movie in a cinema theatre, play cards with your friends or run around on the street. Do whatever, but do not put your spine into a horizontal position. This is why, at Isha, we celebrate Mahashivratri as a nightlong festival. If you just ask people to sit for a few hours, they will not.

They have to be entertained. So, on that night, we have a celebration from 6:00 in the evening to 6:00 in the morning - twelve hours of non-stop music, dance, meditations and various other things - so that everyone stays alert.

## Trump as the Republican presidential candidate

With his three-time nomination as the Republican presidential nominee, Trump's hold over the party is incontrovertible. FILE PHOTO: Republican presidential candidate and former US President Donald Trump. REUTERS Donald Trump and Narendra Modi are both considered conservative or right-wing leaders. But they could not be more dissimilar. One is flamboyant, the other sober; one shoots his mouth off, the other cannot be found making a single indiscreet statement. Though both are constantly in

the news and are international media personalities in their own right, one is constantly controversial, the other consistently charismatic. One was born well-to-do, already a tycoon in his twenties, the other rose from stark poverty to the heights of political and social power. One is extravagant, living lavishly, the other is abstemious and frugal. One has had a colourful, some would say scandalous love life, with multiple marriages and several children from different spouses, the other is known as a lifelong celibate, despite

being married. One embodies the capitalistic, consumeristic ethos, the other is practically a renunciate. Without disrespecting one, we might even say they are as different as chalk and cheese. But there is one respect in which they are similar.

They have totally upended their respective political parties, the very vehicles of their spectacular success. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is as different from Atal Bihari Vajpayee's as Trump's is from Ronald Reagan's Republican Party. In my last

column I wrote about how Reagan rode to power in 1980 and in two terms established the United States as the dominant power in the world. He adopted a tough foreign policy against the erstwhile Soviet Union, pushing it to what some would say its overdue demise. He also championed free-market capitalism and globalization. Reagan was socially and culturally conservative, coming down heavily against abortion and LGBTQ activism in the name of supposedly traditional American values.

## 'Test cricket is hard, you are going to need...': Rahul

**NEW DELHI:** Rahul Dravid emphasised the significance of unity and cohesive teamwork for success in the challenging realm of Test cricket during an inspiring address in the dressing room following India's remarkable 4-1 series victory over England in Dharamsala.

Despite a setback in the initial Test in Hyderabad, the home team staged a remarkable comeback, securing victories in the subsequent four matches to clinch the series.

"Series like this have to be earned and this is tough. Test cricket is hard at times. It's hard in terms of your skill. It's hard physically, as you've seen, it's hard mentally," Dravid said in a video posted on BCCI.tv.

"But it's great satisfaction at the end of it. The satisfaction that you get winning a series like this coming from one behind to be able to win four. I think it's just phenomenal," he added.

In the absence of key



players such as Virat Kohli, Mohammed Shami, and KL Rahul, the Indian team discovered unsung heroes among several young talents during the series. The home side introduced five debutants – Rajat Patidar, Dhruv Jurel, Devdutt Padikkal, Sarfaraz Khan, and Akash Deep – in this high-stakes series.

Furthermore, even seasoned players like Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja had to sit out a Test each. The Indian coach expressed immense satisfaction as many of these emerging talents showcased exceptional performance and rose to the occasion

during the series. "For a lot of you young guys, especially coming into this group, you are going to need each other to succeed. Whether you're a batsman or bowler or whatever you are, your success is tied in with other people's success. "All of you are invested in each other's success. And that's really important going forward. It's not about your success, but it's about how you can help other people succeed, which will also help you succeed," he said.

The 51-year-old was delighted to see the players finding ways to turn the tide whenever they were put under pressure.

## Ranji Trophy Final: Shreyas, Ajinkya fail again

**NEW DELHI:** Seasoned duo of Shreyas Iyer and Ajinkya Rahane disappointed yet again but Shardul Thakur starred with both bat and ball as Mumbai clawed their way back against Vidarbha on the opening day of the Ranji Trophy final on Sunday. Thakur's impactful 69-ball 75 knock injected some much-needed momentum into Mumbai's innings, lifting them to a respectable total of 224 despite a below-par start. Additionally, Thakur crucial dismissal of veteran opener Dhruv Shorey, aided by a well-judged DRS call, further tilted the balance in Mumbai's favor on a 13-wicket day.



At stumps, Vidarbha found themselves at 31 for 3, trailing by 193 runs in the first innings.

Atharva Taide remained unbeaten on 21, accompanied by night-watchman Aditya Thakare at the crease. Playing the last first-class game of his career, medium pacer Dhawal Kulkarni

bowled his customary late outswingers which had Aman Mokhadde (8) and Test triple centurion Karun Nair (0) nicking it to Hardik Tamore behind stumps. Mumbai's top guns Rahane and Iyer were both dismissed for identical scores of 7 in a shocking collapse.

## Rishabh all set to play for Delhi Capitals after obtaining fitness certificate

**NEW DELHI:** Rishabh Pant is all set to make his long-awaited return to competitive cricket for the Delhi Capitals (DC) in the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) after obtaining the fitness certificate from the National Cricket Academy (NCA).

Sources tracking the development have told IANS that Pant, who has been undergoing extensive rehabilitation at the NCA in Bengaluru since April last year, got his fitness clearance and left the NCA two to three days ago.

The IPL 2024 season will mark Pant's return to

competitive cricket action since the two-match Test series in Bangladesh ended in December 2022. A couple of days after the series ended, Pant miraculously survived a near-fatal car crash while on the way to his hometown Roorkee on December 30, 2022.

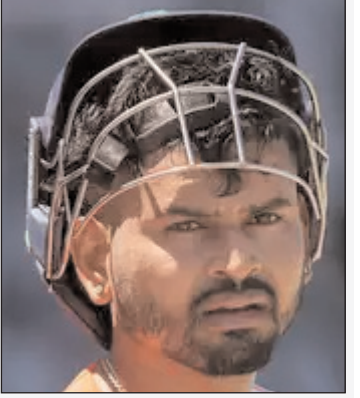


## Shreyas Iyer gets a special mention in Team India dressing room after series triumph

**NEW DELHI:** Sidelined from the Indian team for the last three Tests against England with an injury, a recent central contract snub and a couple of poor outings in domestic cricket, middle-order batter Shreyas Iyer has been going through a tough period.

But on Saturday, Iyer had a special mention in the Indian team dressing room as

he was one of the nominees for the fielding medal for the series award. Iyer, who featured in the first two Tests against England was superb on the field, taking brilliant catches and was also involved in an outstanding run out as coach T Dilip lauded the 29-year-old. Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill were however jointly given the fielder of the series award for taking the most number of catches. Left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav too got an award for his superb work in the outfield. Team India on Saturday completed a 4-1 series sweep over England, winning the fifth and final Test in Dharamsala by an innings and 64 runs. Yashasvi Jaiswal was adjudged Player of the Series for scoring 712 runs in 5 matches.



## Harmanpreet Kaur's sensational 95 propels MI to WPL playoffs

**NEW DELHI:** Captain Harmanpreet Kaur played a blistering unbeaten innings of 95, propelling Mumbai Indians to a convincing seven-wicket victory over Gujarat Giants in their Women's Premier League (WPL) match in Delhi on Saturday.

This triumph secured Mumbai Indians' spot as the first team to qualify for the playoffs. Chasing Gujarat's total of 190 for seven, Harmanpreet's explosive knock came in just 48 balls, featuring 10 fours and five sixes.

Alongside opener



Yastika Bhatia, who contributed 49 runs in 36 balls, the defending champions successfully chased down the target, reaching 191 for three with a ball to spare.

Despite losing wickets before reaching 100 within 13.3 overs, Mumbai faced a challenging task of needing

72 runs off 30 balls. Harmanpreet, dropped on 40, switched to "beast mode" and took charge of the innings, forming a crucial partnership of 93 runs with Amelia Kerr. Harmanpreet's boundary-laden onslaught, especially in the 18th over against off-spinner

Sneh Rana, reduced the required runs to a manageable 23 off 12 balls. Mumbai Indians sealed the win, placing them at the top of the chart with 10 points.

Earlier, Gujarat Giants had posted a competitive total of 190 for seven, driven by dynamic fifties from skipper Beth Mooney (66 runs) and D Hemalatha (74 runs). The duo's explosive second-wicket partnership of 121 runs set a strong foundation for Gujarat's innings, but Mumbai's successful chase secured their dominance.

## UP Warriorz's Sophie Ecclestone, Kiran Navigre fined for breaching WPL Code of Conduct

**NEW DELHI:** UP Warriorz players Sophie Ecclestone and Kiran Navigre were fined 10 percent of their match fees on Sunday for violating the Women's Premier League (WPL) Code of Conduct during their team's match against Delhi Capitals.

The sanctions were imposed for breaching Article 2.2 of the WPL's code of conduct during the match held on Friday. "Both Sophie and Kiran admitted to the Level 1 offence under Article 2.2 which relates to the abuse of



cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during a match," stated a WPL media release. "For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match

Referee's decision is final and binding," the release further said. The Warriorz secured a nail-biting one-run victory over the Delhi Capitals, fueled by a remarkable all-round performance

by Deepti Sharma. Deepti not only contributed with a half-century but also achieved a historic feat by becoming the first Indian and only the second player ever.

## 'Kohli's greatness reduced...': Harbhajan warning for RCB megastar ahead of IPL 2024

**NEW DELHI:** Despite being an unstoppable run-machine in the IPL, Virat Kohli has yet to conquer the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai while representing the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB).

Kohli holds a significant lead over other players in the IPL, amassing 7263 runs from 237 matches with an impressive seven centuries and a striking rate of 130. However, this dominance takes a dip at the Chepauk, where his average is just 30, and his strike rate is 111. In light of these statistics, former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh emphasised the importance of Kohli producing a stronger performance when the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) face the defending



Chennai Super Kings in the inaugural match of this year's IPL at the Chepauk on March 22.

"The greatness of Virat has been reduced in terms of his overall performance at that venue. It is a tricky venue to bat, especially as an opening batsman against a sort of weird tennis ball type bounce." They've got the great (Ravindra) Jadeja bowling stump to stump. He'll get the oddball to turn and then the oddball to stay low. It's really tricky," Harbhajan told Star Sports. In fact,

Kohli has been dismissed in the Powerplays three times in his last five innings against CSK, and Harbhajan pointed out that the star batter will need to find a way to extend his time at the crease. "If he's actually prepared to bat about 20 overs, then he can put together a match-winning performance because two hundreds at the accessible Chinnaswamy do not necessarily guarantee the same at Chepauk," he said. Kohli has yet to score an IPL century at Chepauk.

## Delhi Capitals hold nerves to beat RCB in last-ball thriller, qualify for WPL playoffs

**NEW DELHI:** In front of a vociferous nearly-packed Arun Jaitley stadium, Sunday night was about celebrating the youth of Indian women's cricket. If Jemimah Rodrigues offered the pleasure of watching clean T20 batting with her 36-ball 58, Richa Ghosh was a show of brutal power-hitting with her 29-ball 51. In the end, Jemimah's effort helped Delhi Capitals prevail over Richa's late onslaught as Royal Challengers Bangalore fell short of Capitals' 181/5 by just one run.

It meant Capitals secured a place in the top-three in the WPL. Richa nearly did an encore of Harmanpreet Kaur's extraordinary chase the previous night but she fell short of the



crease in the last ball of the 20th over. She made a mockery of the big boundary on one side even with 17 runs needed off the final over bowled by the experienced left-arm spinner Jess Jonassen.

Richa's distraught pictures at the end may go viral but the night was dominated by Jemimah. It's hard to miss Jemimah on a cricket field. When her contagious energy, classy touch with

the bat and game awareness come together, Jemimah becomes an unstoppable force. And it did on Sunday night as Delhi Capitals reaped benefits.

The stadium was about 75 percent full and the biggest cheers usually came for RCB. However, Jemimah decided to put on a show that set the tone for Capitals' to put up a commanding total of 181/5. Her knock of 58 runs off 36 balls was a

masterclass in clean T20 batting. Her ability to find gaps with impeccable timing played with RCB captain Smriti Mandhana's field. The innings may have just one six in it but that was enough to announce the efficacy of the vertical bat.

Jemimah found an able partner in Alice Capsey. The duo added 97 runs off 61 balls for the third wicket. If Jemimah dominated with her touch play, Capsey added muscle to the partnership with a 48 off just 32 balls. The partnership negated Shreyanka Patil's spell of 4/26. It was an intelligent stand which played out Asha Sobhana's spell of wily leg-spin before taking on the rest of the RCB attack.

## 'Ageing' Shami needs to take cue from Anderson: McGrath

**NEW DELHI:** Legendary Australian pacer Glenn McGrath believes that the current Indian pace attack has much to offer before the next generation can take over. McGrath also encouraged Mohammed Shami to draw inspiration from the longevity of England veteran James Anderson. McGrath made these remarks on the day when India secured an impressive 4-1 Test series victory over England at home. "We have to wait and see the next generation coming through. (Jasprit) Bumrah has still got a bit to go, (Mohammed) Shami is a little older, and (Mohammed) Siraj has been around for a little while but still has plenty left. So, the (current Indian) bowling attack has still some life left," McGrath told PTI.

On the sidelines of an MRF Pace Foundation event in Chennai.

## Mobile phone manufacturing jumps 21 times to Rs 4.1 lakh crore

**NEW DELHI:** Mobile phone manufacturing in value terms jumped 21-fold to Rs 4.1 lakh crore in India in the last 10 years as government policy measures like PLI played a critical role in attracting global players to boost local production, industry body ICEA said in a statement. India now produces 97 per cent of its total mobile phone demand locally and 30 per cent of the total production in financial year 2024 is meant for export, the India Cellular and Electronics Association said. "Mobile phone production surged from Rs 18,900 crore in 2014-15 to an estimated Rs 4,10,000 crore in FY'24, registering an increase of 2000 per cent. In 2014-15, mobile phone exports from India were a mere Rs 1,556 crore. The industry expects to end FY24 with an estimated export of Rs 1,20,000 crore. This would mean a 7500 per cent increase in exports over a



decade," ICEA said. According to a note on manufacturing, in the field of smartphones, Apple and Samsung, have played a crucial role in boosting mobile phone exports from the country. India manufactured devices are being exported in large volumes to the UK, Netherlands, Austria, and Italy besides Middle East and North Africa and South American markets, the note said. "30 per cent of production in FY'24 will now be meant for exports. The industry expects to end FY'24 with an estimated export of Rs 1.2 lakh crore. Driven by this

export growth, mobile phones have now become India's 5th largest export as an individual commodity," the industry body said. In May 2017, the Indian government announced the Phased Manufacturing Programme (PMP) to promote the domestic production of mobile handsets. This initiative helped build a robust indigenous mobile manufacturing ecosystem in India and incentivized large-scale manufacturing. From just 2 mobile phone factories in 2014, India now has become the second largest mobile phone producer in the world.

## How India-EFTA trade pact will benefit Indians

**NEW DELHI:** India on Sunday signed a trade and economic partnership agreement with the four-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA) to boost trade and investments between the two regions. Under this trade pact, EFTA commits 100 billion dollar investment in India for the next 15 years. After a hiatus of nearly 16 years, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) members — Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland—finally reached an agreement. Negotiations, initiated in 2008, were halted in November 2013 but resumed in October

2016. Over 21 rounds of negotiations, the parties worked towards their conclusion. This agreement marks a milestone in FTA history, as it includes a dedicated legal commitment to promoting targeted investment and job creation.

**'Watershed moment'** Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the signing of the trade agreement as a 'Watershed moment', underscoring a collective dedication to fostering open, fair, and equitable trade.

"The Tenth of March 2024 marks a new turn and a watershed moment in the bilateral relationship between

India and EFTA countries," PM Modi said.

He said the global leadership of the four nations in innovation, R&D across diverse areas such as digital trade, banking and financial services, transport and logistics, industrial machinery, biotechnology, pharma, chemicals, food processing, and clean energy, will open up new doors of collaboration. "Heartiest Congratulations and best wishes to the negotiators and signatories involved in the signing of India-EFTA Trade and Economic Participation Agreement (TEPA)," Modi said in a written message.

## AU Small Finance Bank aims to become universal bank in 3-5 years

**NEW DELHI:** AU Small Finance Bank, which received RBI's approval to merge Fincare Small Finance Bank with itself last week, aims to become a universal bank or full-scale bank in the next 3-5 years. "This year we want to stabilise the merger first and really

want to showcase to the world that the team can manage complex issues of merger in terms of technology integration, people management, product availability, customer service and offerings," AU Small Finance Bank MD and CEO Sanjay Agarwal said. Although the Fincare

branches would become outlets of AU Small Finance Bank from April 1, the entire integration process would take 9-12 months, he said. "The way we have grown ourselves in the last 28 years, the ultimate destination is universal (banking licence).

## India signs free trade agreement with European Free Trade Association; 'win-win situation for all'

**NEW DELHI:** India and the four-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA) on Sunday signed free trade agreement in the presence of Union commerce & industry minister Piyush Goyal. Speaking about the agreement Goyal said, "EFTA commits \$100 billion investment in India under free trade pact in the next 15 years."



15 years of hard work, tremendous energy, and effort," he added. Federal councillor Guy Parmelin, speaking on behalf of the EFTA Member States, said, "EFTA countries gain market access to a

major growth market. Our companies strive to diversify their supply chains while rendering them more resilient. India, in return, will attract more foreign investment from EFTA, which will ultimately

translate into an increase in good jobs...All in all, the TEPA will allow us to make better use of our economic potential and create additional opportunities for both India and the EFTA States," Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, speaking on behalf of the EFTA Member States, said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a written message also congratulated everyone involved in the negotiations saying, "Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to the negotiators and signatories involved.

## Bonds: Court to hear SBI's plea seeking extension to disclose details on Monday

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court is set to hear application filed by State Bank of India (SBI) on Monday, seeking extension till June 30 to disclose details of each electoral bond encashed by political parties before the scheme was scrapped last month. In a separate plea, contempt action has been sought against SBI alleging, it "wilfully and deliberately" disobeyed the apex court's direction to submit details of the contributions made to political parties through electoral bonds to the Election

Commission by March 6. A five-judge Constitution bench, led by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, will hear these two petitions. The bench, which also includes justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavi, J B Pardiwala, and Manoj Misra, will convene at 10.30 am to discuss the matter. In a ruling on February 15, a five-judge constitution bench scrapped the Centre's electoral bonds scheme that allowed anonymous political funding, calling it "unconstitutional" and ordered to disclose the

donors, donated amounts, and recipients by March 13. The top court then directed SBI, as the authorized financial institution under the scheme, to submit the details of electoral bonds purchased from April 12, 2019, until the present to the Election Commission. The information was asked to be published on the Commission's official website by March 13. On March 4, SBI filed an application with the apex court seeking an extension until June 30 to disclose the details of

the electoral bonds encashed by political parties. The bank argued that retrieving information from "each silo" and matching the data would be a time-consuming process. Due to the measures taken to protect donor anonymity, decoding the electoral bonds and matching donors to their contributions would be complex. "The data related to the issuance of the bond and the data related to the redemption of the bond was kept recorded in two different silos. No central database.

## All is stationery on these four cramped streets in Chennai's George Town

**Want** some stationery products at attractive prices, but can't be bothered to browse online? Just head to Chennai's George Town. Dotted on either side of Pachaiyappa's College Higher Secondary School in the area are about 500 outlets offering everything from calculators to writing instruments, guidebooks and notebooks, most of them lying unpacked, at discounts that few e-commerce giants can match. Spread over Badrian Street, Bunder Street, Anderson Street and Thambu Chetty Street, the area is a consumer's delight with more than 1,000 varieties available. It's also a revenue spinner. Sales of account books and notebooks alone touch

₹150 crore annually, while diaries account for more than ₹75 crore. The USP of this stationery hub, in existence for more than a century, is the pricing —account books and notebooks cost 20%-40% less than other markets, other stationery material comes for 10%-15% cheaper — that draws wholesalers and retailers from across TN and neighbouring states. A S Jayabasker, manager of Jayalakshmi Binding Works on Badrain Street, says about 2,500 tonnes of account books manufactured here every year are sold in the four southern states and Odisha. We have different kinds for office use and educational institutions." But technology has taken a heavy toll on the seg-

ment. "At least 120 manufacturers have shut down in the past 15 years since information technology replaced the practice of making entries in account books. The annual volume of account books production has dropped by 500 tonnes over the past one decade," adds Jayabasker. Notebook manufacturing has also suffered, but for different reasons. A Abdul Rahaman, honorary president of Chennai Bunder Street Notebook, Stationeries & General Merchant Association, says the area now has only 20% of locally produced notebooks, five times the size of the figure of decades ago. "The entry of corporates and emergence of exclusive manufacturers for private school.

## Adani Group looks to expand airports in Rs 30k crore push

**LUCKNOW:** Adani Group will invest Rs 30,000 crore on expanding seven existing airports in its portfolio over the next five years - apart from building the Rs 18,000-crore Navi Mumbai greenfield airport. In addition, the infra conglomerate will invest Rs 30,000 crore over 5-10 years on city side development at its airports, Adani Ports MD Karan Adani told TOI. This will be funded through internal accruals of the parent company Adani Enterprises. The group operates airports in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Mangaluru, Jaipur, Guwahati & Thiruvananthapuram. "The current capacity of our airports is 10-11 crore passengers



annually (CPA). This will be increased by up to three times. Lucknow has got a new terminal. Navi Mumbai will open next (by next March). Then Guwahati airport will get a new terminal. We are planning new terminals for Ahmedabad and Jaipur also. Overall, we are looking at a combined capacity of 25-30 CPA

by 2040," Karan, who is Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani's son, said. The capacity will grow in a phase-wise manner. Lucknow Airport's new terminal, for instance, has a capacity of 80 lakh passengers per annum which will increase to 1.3 crore in the next phase and then 3.8 crore annually by 2035.

Why is the group so bullish on flyer numbers? "In coming times, we foresee non-metros bypassing hubs and providing flyers direct connectivity across the world. Their connectivity within the country will also improve," he said. Direct international connectivity out of India to distant continents is primarily from the big metros. Tier II cities are connected to hubs nearby from where passengers take connecting flights to rest of the world now. This plan to develop smaller airports as international hubs is in sync with govt's plan to make Indian airports, with the network connectivity of airlines like Air India and IndiGo, the hub for transfer passengers.

## Youth to Support 'Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye'

**Delhi:** University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman M Jagadesh Kumar called on Wednesday to encourage and motivate young, especially first-time voters, and invite people from all walks of life to disseminate the "Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye" campaign. Jagadesh stated, "UGC is organizing activities with the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Election Commission of India (ECI) to motivate young, especially first-time voters, and emphasize the importance of voting for national welfare. HEIs worldwide should run the "Mera Pehla Vote Desh Ke Liye" campaign from February 28 to March 6, 2024. He said universities/colleges/HEIs will hold voter awareness programs in specific locations. Colleges/Institutions will use ECJ and Ministry of Education videos, banners, selfie points, and voter commitments to drive the campaign.

## UP CM Yogi introduces 'MYUVA Scheme' to empower youth entrepreneurs



**Delhi:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will launch the "Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan (MYUVA)" plan to encourage young entrepreneurship. This ambitious project shows the government's commitment to empowering young entrepreneurs and encouraging innovation and enterprise. Through MYUVA, enterprising youth will obtain support and tools to establish their entrepreneurial endeavors, boosting Uttar Pradesh's economy. CM Yogi has ordered MSME Department staff to speed up the initiative's action plan. The

directive emphasizes the government's determination to quickly adopt MYUVA. Officials must submit the action plan quickly to promote entrepreneurship and youth development in Uttar Pradesh. The Yogi administration provides interest-free financing for projects up to Rs 5 lakh to prepare one lakh young entrepreneurs each year. The 2024-25 budget includes Rs 1,000 crore for this endeavor. This unique program empowers educated and skilled youngsters across the state to create self-employment and MSMEs. The initiative promotes entrepre-

neurship to create rural and urban jobs. The plan offers interest-free loans up to Rs 5 lakh to industry and service ventures. Finance 1,00,000 units annually to directly benefit one million units (10 lakh units) over 10 years. Participants in the Vishwakarma Shram Samman Yojana, One District One Product Training and Toolkit Scheme, Scheduled Caste, Tribe, Other Backward Class Training Scheme, and Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission Skill Upgradation (Kaushal Unnayan) will be eligible for assistance. This program also

## Embark on a thrilling expedition into the heart of India with an unforgettable rendezvous at Forever Global Rally 2024

**New Delhi:** Forever Living Products marks a significant milestone with the upcoming Forever Global Rally 2024, a pinnacle event in its annual calendar. Taking center stage in the vibrant city of New Delhi from April 9th to April 14th, 2024, this rally promises an unparalleled experience. Crafted by Forever with precision, this extraordinary event beckons participants with transformational training, engaging workshops, accolades for dedicated



efforts, and a grand rally show. The Global Rally will unite over 12,000 individuals hailing from 100 countries to commemorate yet another

triumphant year for Forever Living Products. The event is known for its awe-inspiring setting and an elaborate itinerary capturing every moment. The hosting of the Forever Global rally in India this time is expected to bring significant advantages to the country, including a boost in tourism and benefits for thousands of Indians involved in the hospitality and tourism sectors, with thousands of people anticipated to attend the program.

## Research Internships from UGC Give Students Stipends, Insurance, and Academic Credits

**Delhi:** Stipends, insurance, and academic credits are awarded to fourth-year undergraduates who complete research internships. Participating enterprises must pay interns a set amount, according to UGC norms provided to higher education institutions. Nodal officers for research internships will negotiate

with corporations for the program at higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions may also seek group internships. The Four Year Undergraduate Programme's fourth year will include the research internship. Every student will have an internship supervisor to help them finish

their work on time. The UGC solicited stakeholder input on this guidelines draft. UGC chairperson M Jagdish Kumar said it implemented a credit framework at the undergraduate level following the National Education Policy 2020. He claimed the internship is mandatory to boost student employability.

Educational institutions will survey local market demand for research internships. Surveys and courses will inform internship projects. Educational institutions must publish internship projects and mentor information. Industry representatives should have been in career counseling, it said.

## Over 1,300 beggars got skills

**Delhi:** The economic survey says the Delhi government started skill development for homeless beggars last year. It claims 1,312 of Delhi's 16,000 homeless and pavement residents were taught between March and September 2023. The government said an interdepartmental committee would train city homeless before the 2023 G20 Summit. The lieutenant governor and chief secretary ordered.

## Within two months, Physics Wallah's 'Alakh AI' had 1.5 million users

**Delhi:** In less than two months, Physics Wallah's indigenously-built AI education package 'Alakh AI' has seen over 1.5 million users. It debuted the suite in late December 2023. Alakh AI offers AI Guru: Personalised Tutor, Sahayak: Smart Companion Powered by AI, and NCERT Pitara. At its flagship event, Vishwas Diwas, Physics Wallah launched innovative educational technolo-



gy projects. With the theme 'Padhai Ka Naya Andaaz (A New Era in Education)', the edtech platform featured innovations to make learning more personalized, effective, and engaging.

"'Padhai Ka Naya Andaaz' is more than a theme; it is our commitment to provide a learning experience that transcends traditional boundaries, making education more personalised,

effective, and engaging for every student," Physics Wallah CEO and Founder Alakh Pandey stated. This effort centers on Physics Wallah 2.0, a futuristic strategy that employs technology to improve student achievements. Physics Wallah has launched new technologies and offered up to 80% off most online courses. Its FY23 sales was Rs 798 crore, growing 3.4 times from the previous year.

## Congress leader Pradeep Chaudhary welcomed MP Deepender Hooda on his arrival in Kaithal

**Kaithal:** Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee member and former Chief Minister of Haryana Ch. Pradeep Kumar Chaudhary, a special supporter of Bhupendra Singh Hooda, said that in Haryana Ch. If the Congress government is formed under the leadership of Bhupendra Singh Hooda, monthly pension of Rs 6000 to the elderly, 300 units of electricity free to every family, gas cylinder for women at Rs 500, confirmed recruitment on 2



lakh vacant government posts for the youth, for poor families. By implementing the free plot scheme of 100-100 yards, along with building houses on that plot, the old pension scheme will be implemented for the employees. Pradeep Chaudhary was talking

to Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Singh Hooda last day in the office located near the bus stand in Kaithal after a formal meeting in Kaithal. Congress state executive member Pradeep Choudhary said that before 2014, during the Hooda

regime, Haryana which was number 1 in per capita income, per capita investment, law and order, sports players and providing employment, today Haryana is the worst in unemployment, crime, drugs and corruption.

Has become number 1 in. The government is sending the youth here to war-torn areas like Israel by giving them contract jobs through Skill Employment Corporation. Whereas other countries.

## MG Motor India introduces new Hector variants Shine Pro and Select Pro

**HISAR :** MG Motor India has announced the launch of two new variants of India's first Internet SUV - MG Hector. Named Shine Pro and Select Pro, the new variants pack many new features, intuitive technology, safety, and driving convenience. With a bold-striking exterior and interiors standardised with best-in-segment offerings and unique design elements, MG Hector now starts at an attractive price of INR 13.99\* Lakh (ex-show-room). With a host of best-in-class offerings like its dual-pane panoramic sunroof\*, MG Hector is a great value proposition for SUV enthusiasts who prefer to lean towards technology and top-notch performance in their vehicles. Both new variants, Shine

Pro and Select Pro, offer a superior in-car infotainment experience with India's largest 14-inch HD portrait infotainment system, complete with Wireless Apple CarPlay & Android Auto and a Wireless Phone Charger. The new variants of the Hector feature LED Projector Headlamps, Floating Light Turn Indicators, LED Blade Connected Tail Lamps, and Chrome Outside Door Handles. With an All-Black theme in premium upholstery and leather-wrapped steering, along with a brushed metal finish (CVT 5-seater), both Shine Pro and Select Pro variants come with a Full Digital Cluster with a 17.78 cm Embedded LCD Screen. On the comfort and convenience front, the Shine Pro

and Select Pro offer a Push Button Engine Start/Stop with a Smart Key. The new variants also offer the first-in-segment Digital Bluetooth® Key and Key Sharing capability\*. "Since its launch in 2019, the MG Hector has made a bold statement with its commanding presence and has redefined the SUV landscape with a multitude of tech features and superior driving comfort. With ADAS Level 2 and Connected features. Each subsequent variant has set new benchmarks in the segment by offering a harmonious blend of comfort, advanced technology, and ergonomic design. Using insights from our market research, industry analysis, and customer feedback.

## Galore of cricket, entertainment and cine starts as CCL reaches Chandigarh and Mohali

**Chandigarh:** The Celebrity Cricket League (CCL) will witness its zenith at the Punjab Cricket Association (PCA), Mohali when home team 'Punjab De Sher' serves spectators a blend of Cricket, Fun and Cine stars. Team Punjab De Sher reaches Chandigarh for its last league matches and sweating hard during practice sessions. Team will face Bengal Tigers, Captained by Jisshu Sengupta on the glittering evening on March 8 followed by yet another clash against Mumbai Heroes, captained by Ritesh Deshmukh on March 9 under floodlights. Team captain Sonu Sood is confi-



dent that they will make a comeback in the tournament by winning both the league matches. Meanwhile, a match will be between Bengal Tigers and Bhojpur Dabangs captained by Manoj Tiwari, Member of Parliament on the afternoon of March 9. This match will also witness popular Bollywood faces such

as Sohail Khan, Suniel Shetty, Jenelia Deshmukh and many more. Puneet Singh and Navraj Hans, Co-owners, Punjab De Sher, extended his Punjabi liberty by serving an open invitation to cricket and cine fans. According to them, Punjabis are always cheerful and open hearted, hence they expect a massive

fan base with their complimentary passes. Punjab De Sher hopes that fans will turn in numbers to cheer for their favourite team - Punjab De Sher. Fans need to register on Punjab De Sher's website and social media platforms to grab the complimentary passes and in lieu they will have a memorable evening. Along with their practice, the Punjab De Sher team will also be visiting college campuses, popular hangouts and malls of Chandigarh Tricity to perform promotional activities and meet their fans to distribute free VIP passes and gift hampers.

## Computerized EWS lottery determines school entrance.

**Delhi:** The Delhi High Court ruled that schools must follow the Directorate of Education (DoE)'s computerized draw of lots for economically weaker section (EWS) admissions. Justice C Hari Shankar noted that the computerized draw of lots is based on the class strength communicated by the schools, and if a school does not have enough general students, it must apply to the DoE to reduce the number of EWS students. A pupil seeking admission to a private school's pre-primary class after a successful DoE computerized draw of lots petitioned the court. The school denied admission to the petitioner because the actual number of general category admissions was less than what was communicated to the DoE, and it had already admitted 25% of the actual number under the EWS category per legal mandate. "Once a school communicates the number of general category and EWS seats available with it for being filled in an ensuing academic year.

# Five-century-long wait has ended with the power of one vote: Yogi Adityanath



**Kushinagar** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, said that India has changed its destiny with the help of technology in recent years and the world has been witness to the emergence of new India. He emphasized the contribution of each citizen's vote in bringing an end to the five-century-long wait with the completion of Lord Shri Ram in Ayodhya. Addressing a public gathering in Kasia, the Chief Minister said, "Our India doesn't bow down to anyone today, nor does it deviate from its goals." On this occasion, he inaugurated and laid foundation stone of 483 development projects worth Rs

2,134 crore in Kushinagar. He further inaugurated the distribution of selection letters to 20,000 farmers of the state for installation of solar pumps under PM Kusum Yojana. Additionally, he laid the foundation stone of Farmer Welfare Centers in 49 development blocks across 25 districts, at the cost of Rs 60 crores. CM Yogi mentioned that Kushinagar is a district blessed by nature and God. However, it faced the situation of migration due to lack of infrastructure and technology, he added. He further said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the double-engine government has solved all the

issues facing the people of Kushinagar. As a result, today the University of Agriculture and Technology is going to be built here. Additionally, a modern college for the Sugarcane Seed Institute will be constructed in Tamkuhi. "Through these modern technologies, farmers' income will significantly increase. Today, we bring you a Holi gift ahead of the festival of colours with the establishment of the Agricultural University named after Mahatma Buddha in Padrauna", CM Yogi added. He also mentioned that having an airport in Kushinagar was something no one had ever thought of.

# Yogi govt allocates 2.75 lakh houses to the underprivileged in last 6 years Houses allocated to various communities

**Lucknow** In a significant effort to address the housing needs of the underprivileged, the Yogi government has allocated a substantial 2.57 lakh houses from the fiscal year 2018-19 to 2023-24 under the Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana (Rural). Notably, the scheme places a special focus on the welfare of underprivileged, Dalit communities. Numerous individuals from Musahar, Kol, Vantangiya, Tharu, Sahariya, Chero, Baiga, Nat, and Boxa communities have benefited from the housing provisions. The scheme also extends support to Divyangjans and those impacted by natural disasters. Individuals suffering from diseases like leprosy, kala-azar, and Japanese encephalitis/acute encephalitis syndrome have also been provided with housing. According to available information, the government has allocated 47,795 houses to the Musahar community,

29,923 to Kol, 4,838 to Van-tangiya, 3,233 to Tharu, 6,979 to Sahariya, 5,367 to Chero, 1,584 to Baiga, 2,220 to Nat, 164 to Boxa, 17 to Pachhiya Lohar, and 11 to Gadhiya Lohar communities under the scheme between 2018-19 and 2023-24. Additionally, 71,257 houses have been allocated to those displaced due to natural disasters. Housing has also been allocated to individuals affected by diseases like leprosy (5,021 houses), JE/AES (674 houses), and kala-azar (249 houses). Instructions to achieve targets by March 20 for all districts. A total of 2,57,433 houses have been allotted under the Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana (Rural) from the year 2018-19 to 2023-24. Out of the targeted 257,000 houses, 227,000 have already been completed, while the remaining 30,150 houses are still under construction. To fulfill the set targets, the state government

has allocated a budget of Rs 3136.04 crore, with 94.52 percent (Rs 2964.36 crore) already spent. It is expected that the construction of the remaining houses will be completed soon, and the government will hand over the house keys to the beneficiaries. Among the districts in the state, Amroha, Shamli, Bareilly, Bijnor, and Bhadohi have topped the list in completing the highest number of houses in line with the targets. Other districts have also been directed to achieve their targets by March 20. State-funded initiative launched in 2018. The scheme, a completely state-aided one, was initiated on February 2, 2018. It aims to provide housing support to individuals or families who have lost their homes due to natural disasters. Additionally, families affected by kala-azar, housing-deprived families from Van-tangiya and Musahar communities, Sahariya, Kol, Tharu, Nat, Chero.

# CAPSULES

## CM Yogi warns officials against negligence in resolving people's issues Chief Minister listens to problems of 500 people at Janata Darshan

**Gorakhpur** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday warned officials against any laxity, or negligence in resolving people's issues, emphasizing that addressing problems of people and ensuring its prompt, transparent and satisfactory disposal is the priority of his government. CM Yogi issued these instructions to officials while hearing problems of around 500 people at the Janata Darshan held outside Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan in Gorakhnath temple complex. Referring people's applications to the concerned authorities, he gave instructions for prompt disposal of all their issues. He assured people that no injustice would be done to anyone during his tenure, underscoring the government's determination to solve the problems of every victim. Furthermore, CM Yogi instructed officials to take strict legal action against those bullying the poor and encroaching on people's lands illegally. To those seeking financial aid for treatment, CM Yogi pledged complete government's support. He forwarded their applications to the concerned officials and directed them to expedite the cost estimation process and submit it to the government at the earliest. The Chief Minister also directed officials to resolve matters related to revenue and police with complete transparency and impartiality, emphasizing that no injustice to anyone should be tolerated.

# PM Narendra Modi is showering Azamgarh with money: CM Yogi

**Azamgarh** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stated that seven years ago, Azamgarh was rife with crime and mafia activities, but today, the Prime Minister is the district with money, bringing forth projects worth thousands of crores of rupees. Speaking at the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony of 782 development projects worth Rs 34,700 crore at the Manduri Airport complex in Azamgarh on Sunday, the CM expressed gratitude to the PM for providing a



better security environment to Azamgarh over the past decade and for spearheading its development, modernizing infrastructure, and implementing various public welfare initiatives. Furthermore, the CM assured that in 2024, Azamgarh, Lalganj, and Ghosi would continue to sup-

port the Modi government. The Chief Minister highlighted the pivotal role of the P u r v a n c h a l Expressway, constructed at a cost exceeding Rs 22,000 crore, in the development of Azamgarh. He emphasized that it has transformed the economy of Eastern Uttar Pradesh,

enabling Azamgarh residents to reach Lucknow in just two hours. He further explained that the Azamgarh airport is set to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister, marking the beginning of air services. Today, Uttar Pradesh is going to get five new airports. The double engine government has tried to provide the best facilities here. "The Prime Minister's vision of ensuring that even those who wear slippers can travel by plane is now a reality in Uttar Pradesh.

# India set to become world's third largest economy in PM Modi's third term: CM Yogi

**Deoria** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath stated on Sunday that India is poised to become the world's third-largest economy during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third term. Addressing the Nari Shakti Vandan program held at Sugar Mill Ground, the Chief Minister remarked, "With India becoming the third-largest economy, the income of every individual in the country will rise, leading to enhanced prosperity in people's lives." During the program, the CM



inaugurated/laid the foundation stone of 673 development projects worth Rs 679 crore. He emphasized that the entire nation is committed to realizing the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India), with widespread support for

'Fir ek bar Modi Sarkar' (Modi government once again). He expressed confidence that the NDA would secure more than four hundred seats in the upcoming elections. Moreover, he emphasized that the dream of having Ramlala seated in

Ayodhya, cherished by our ancestors, has finally come true. The five-century-long wait has concluded with the arrival of Ramlala. "The Congress and SP governments would never have been able to accomplish this task. Double engine government means the development of the state and the country while honoring our heritage." CM Yogi highlighted that Deoria, once renowned as a sugar bowl in the country, suffered due to the negligence of previous administrations, causing Deoria and Kushinagar.

# UP govt provides Rs 111.61 crore to 2.74 lakh pregnant women

**Lucknow** Effectively implementing the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana 2.0, initiated by the Central Government to address the health and nutrition needs of pregnant and lactating women in the state, the Yogi government has disbursed Rs. 111.61 crore to 2.74 lakh pregnant women

within a year. In the first phase, Rs 2534.11 crore has been paid to 47.53 lakh beneficiaries from 2017-2023. Subsequently, in the second phase spanning from April 2023 to the present, over Rs. 111.61 crore has been provided to 2.74 lakh beneficiaries. It is noteworthy that the scheme has been implemented by the Health Department through the State Family Planning Innovation Service Agency (SIFPSA) since the year 2017. The Government of India has decided to launch PMMVY 2.0 as part of the Mission Shakti initiative, effective from April 2022. Several modifications have been introduced under the scheme to enhance ease and effectiveness for the beneficiaries. In the initial phase, women will receive Rs. 5,000 in

three installments for the first child. In the subsequent phase, a total of Rs. 11,000 will be provided, comprising Rs. 5,000 in two installments for the first child and Rs. 6,000 for the second child (if it's a girl). Special registration campaign conducted in various phases in the second phase of the scheme, a total of 541,782 women registered by March 4, 2024, out of which 2.74 lakh have received its benefits, totaling Rs. 111.61 crore. Bahrach ranked first in terms of maximum registrations with 25,678 registered women, followed by Varanasi (19,667), Ghaziabad (18,131), Rampur (15,057), and Basti (12,760). To accelerate progress, the Health Department conducted special registration drives in accordance with the Government of India's

# Adopting technology is essential for making both ourselves and our city 'smart': Chief Minister

**Gorakhpur** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath emphasized on Sunday the crucial need to embrace technology for the advancement of both individuals and cities, making them 'smart' in today's era. The CM was addressing the gathering after laying the foundation stone and inaugurating 253 development projects worth Rs 482 crore of Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation as a pre-Holi gift. He also inaugurated the Integrated Control and Command Centre, released the Gorakhpur News Letter, and flagged off 34 sanitation vehicles. During this, the CM said, "By integrating technology, Gorakhpur has established an Integrated Control and Command Center within the Municipal Corporation,



monitoring cleanliness, street lighting, water supply, traffic, and security measures. This initiative propels Gorakhpur towards the status of a 'smart city.'" He further said: "We should try to make our country and our cities appear 'smart.' Rather than seeking inspiration from elsewhere, our cities should set the benchmark for the world to follow. There is a need to make

cities 'smart' for ease of living." He praised Gorakhpur for its exemplary efforts in becoming a 'safe city,' achieved through the installation of numerous cameras across the city with the cooperation of all sections of society. With this extensive surveillance network, any untoward incident can be promptly detected and addressed. The CM noted the transformation of public behavior,

citing how the presence of CCTV cameras has deterred people from littering on the streets. CM Yogi highlighted the government's commitment to constructing durable infrastructure by mentioning the development of two-lane and four-lane roads in Gorakhpur, built to last for 50 years. Highlighting the transformation of the Goddhoiya drain, CM Yogi expressed that it is evolving into a picturesque location akin to Ramgarhtal, attracting people to capture its beauty through selfies. He emphasized, "Goddhoiya drain will be developed in the form of a river and it will look like heaven on earth. The area around it will be made green by planting trees on both its sides."

# After drilling into shop at Chromepet, gang flees with goods worth 30 lakh

**Chennai:** An unidentified gang drilled a hole in the wall of a textile shop and a mobile shop run by two brothers at Chromepet and escaped with cell phones and clothes worth more than 30 lakh early on Thursday. Police said Ansari runs a mobile phone shop and his brother Mansoor run a garment store adjacent to each other on GST Road near Chromepet signal. Though Ansari checked the CCTV footage of the shop on his mobile phone till 1.30 a.m on Thursday morning, Madhavan, a staffer of the clothing shop, found garments and accessories strewn around.

English Daily  
**AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH**  
Title Code  
**UPENG04488**  
Prayagraj  
Printer, Publisher &  
Owner Swami Shree  
Yogi Satyam for  
Yog Satsang Samiti  
Printed at  
**PARASHAKTI OFFSET**  
118A/2A Chaukhandi  
Kydganj, Prayagraj-211003  
Uttar Pradesh  
Published from  
Kriyayoga Asharam  
& Anusandhan Sansthan  
Jhansi, Prayagraj-211019  
Editor:  
**SWAMI SHREE YOGI SATYAM**  
All disputes of news and  
publication against the  
AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH  
are the subject matter of  
Allahabad Jurisdiction.  
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