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

Will amend law to raise 50% quota cap: Congress

"Popularise those jobs. Congress has also promised to introduce women's reservation in assemblies"



NEW DELHI: Formally framing its Lok Sabha pitch as 'welfare vs polarisation', Congress Friday released its 2024 manifesto focused on '25 guarantees' to demographics like women, youth, workers and backward classes, while announcing that in office, it will adopt a 'Nav Sankalp Economic Policy' with a vision of 'work, wealth, welfare'. Called the 'nyay patra', Congress has promised to remove 50% cap on reservations, caste census, extension of 10% EWS quota to all castes as against the present scheme of limiting it to non-SC/ST/OBC, law to extend caste quotas to private educational institutions, a 'diversity commission' to "meas-

ure, monitor and promote diversity in public and private employment and education" and changes in the law to ensure automatic disqualification of defectors. It has vowed Rs 1 lakh/year to poor households, a law on MSP and the abolition of Agnipath defence recruitment scheme. Releasing the manifesto with party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi warned that the Constitution is on the ballot, while claiming that the LS contest is much closer than is being projected and promising an upset like the one in 2004

when BJP, the favourite, had lost. He said BJP would be ousted. Eyes firmly on the young, Congress has pledged to waive all student loans up to March 15, 2024, abolish contractual appointments and regularise those jobs. Congress has also promised to introduce women's reservation in assemblies from 2025, and in Parliament in 2029, reserve 50% jobs in central

govt for women from 2025, end of contractual appointments and regularisation of all those on contract and recruitment for 30 lakh vacancies in central govt and raising the minimum daily wage to Rs 400.

Modi 3.0 may trim ministries, expand elderly pension net

NEW DELHI: In keeping with PM Modi's repeated declarations that he is sure to get a third term and intends to hit the ground running, top govt officials are preparing an action plan for the new regime, focusing, among other things, on "optimisation of ministries" from the current 54, increasing the number of Indian missions overseas by 20% to 150 in the next six years, greater private investment in infrastructure and a mechanism for smoother land acquisition for priority projects. A draft paper, to be discussed during meetings called by cabinet secretary this month, proposes to target more than doubling the share of senior citizens with pension benefits to 50% by 2030, from 22%, while also raising participation of women in workforce from 37% to 50%, higher than current global average of 47%. The thrust on e-



vehicles is evident from the target to raise their share in vehicle sales from 7% to over 30%. Sources said discussions were underway to target reducing case pendency in courts to under 1 crore by 2030, from 5 crore at present, and cutting turnaround of cases in lower judicial system from 2,184 days to 1,000 days. In case of higher courts, target is to reduce turnaround time from current 1,128 days to less than 500 days by 2030, which will require more judges in courts.

The plan is to reduce vacancies in judiciary from 22% to 10% over the next six years. The targets suggest these would be focus areas for policymakers with ministries filling in specifics before the end of polling. The focus is on fixing medium-term targets for 2030 and long-term goals for 2047. Currently, there is discussion also around stepping up defence spending from 2.4% to 3% of GDP and increasing the share of defence budget for R&D from 2% to 3%.

The vision document envisages halving India's share of world-wide arms imports during this period. This would suggest that govt intends to double down on its efforts to push local production of defence equipment. On the economic front, the targets point to focus on sectors such as automobiles, textiles, pharma, tourism and services, and raising share of manufacturing & exports. The target is to increase contribution of industrial sector to GDP from 28% to 32.5% by 2030. While several of these issues have been discussed in the past too, discussions with the PM ahead of the election announcement seems to have put them back on the agenda. For instance, during his meeting with secretaries and ministries, civil servants had called for convergence among transport sector ministries.

Sai joins BJP; 5th BJD MLA to switch to saffron camp



BHUBANESWAR: Odisha MLA Ramesh Chandra Sai, who resigned from BJD on Thursday after he was denied a ticket for the upcoming elections, joined BJP on Friday, making him the fifth legislator of CM Naveen Patnaik's party to switch camps. Two MPs have also moved from BJD to BJP, while from the saffron party, Nilgiri MLA Sukanat Nayak, former legislator Prakash Chandra Behera and Bhruhu Baxipatra have decamped to the other side. BJD had dropped Sai and fielded bureaucrat-turned-politician Nalini Kanta Pradhan from Athamallik assembly seat held by him. Sai cited personal reasons for resigning from BJD and the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi behind his saffron switch. Though BJP has already fielded Sanjeeb Sahoo from Athamallik, it hopes Sai joining the party will help its efforts in both Sambalpur Lok Sabha and Athamallik assembly seats. Athamallik is part of the Sambalpur Lok Sabha constituency where Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan is the BJP candidate. Sahoo, a four-time former BJD MLA and ex-minister, had joined BJP in 2021. Earlier, Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahy, who was expelled from BJD, joined BJP and has been named its Berhampur Lok Sabha nominee. Arabinda Dhali, a BJD MLA who shifted to BJP, will contest from Jayadev assembly seat, from where he was elected in 2019.

RBI rebuilds forex war chest, hits \$645.6 billion high

MUMBAI: The country's foreign exchange reserves logged a record high of \$645.6 billion after rising by nearly \$3 billion in the week ended March 29. RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said, "It is our focus to build a strong umbrella - a strong buffer in the form of a substantial quantum of forex reserves - which will help us when the cycle turns." He

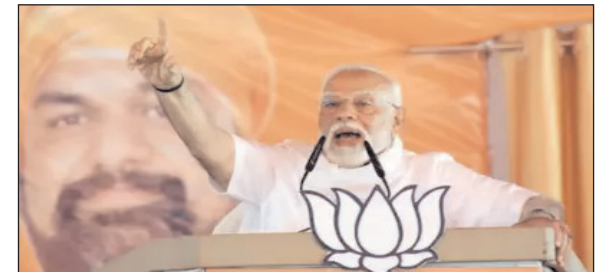


added that the central bank was also continuously buying gold as part of the deployment of forex reserves. "Latest data on vari-

our external financing requirements," Das said in his monetary policy statement. Das said there were concerns when the reserves dipped to \$524 billion in the forex market volatility that followed the Ukraine invasion. "We had said at that time that it was a strong umbrella that we had built up, and we were using it because it was raining heavily.

Others release manifestos, we keep promises, says PM citing 2019 pledges

NEW DELHI: "Others release manifestos (ghoshna patras), we release sankalp patras (we make pledges)," PM Narendra Modi said on Friday as he asserted that his govt had fulfilled a majority of promises made ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections despite the devastation caused by the Covid pandemic. "What Modi had promised in 2019, most of them have been delivered. We left no stone unturned to deliver all



the promises despite innumerable hurdles coming our way due to the Covid crisis," Modi said while addressing an rally. "BJP doesn't just talk, it delivers. Unlike other parties, we don't just release manifestos, we take pledges

JD(U) netas' kin may face off as Congress, LJP(RV) candidates

PATNA: Senior JD(U) minister Maheshwar Hazari's son Sunny Hazari joined the Congress on Friday amid speculations that he could be fielded from Samastipur seat against LJP (Ram Vilas) candidate S h a m b h a v i Choudhary, daughter of another JD(U) minister Ashok C h o u d h a r y . Maheshwar Hazari is the information & public relations department minister in the Nitish govt while Ashok Choudhary holds rural works department portfolio. Both the ministers are considered close to the chief minister. "I had been active in public life during the 17-month tenure of the Grand Alliance. My father might be



upset with my decision to join Congress, but I will try to convince him," Sunny said. "Whether the party fields me or not, I will continue working to strengthen the Congress at the grassroots level. I will work with full dedication," Sunny said. Sources said Maheshwar Hazari, a cousin of LJP founder late Ram Vilas Paswan, had lobbied hard to get LJP

(RV) ticket for his son from Samastipur seat, but the efforts didn't bear fruits. Instead, Chirag Paswan, who heads the LJP(RV), offered party ticket to Ashok Choudhary's daughter Shambhavi Choudhary. Sunny's father said he is with his leader with full dedication. "My son is matured enough to take decision about his political career. I am with the JD(U) and Nitish Kumar," the IPRD minister said. Sunny is the fourth prominent leader from the NDA camp to join the opposition. Earlier, sitting BJP MP from Muzaffarpur Ajay Nishad had joined the Congress after the BJP denied ticket to him. JD(U) MLA from Rupauli Bima Bharti and JD(U)'s Gaya district president Abhay Kushwaha.

'Dhoni blocked...': Former New Zealand cricketer criticises batting approach

NEW DELHI: Calls for Mahendra Singh Dhoni to bat higher up the order have intensified following his dynamic performance against the Delhi Capitals. Despite Dhoni's unbeaten 37 off 16 balls at number eight, the Chennai Super Kings fell short by 20 runs against Rishabh Pant's squad. Dhoni's brief yet impactful innings against the Delhi Capitals featured a resounding six over extra-cover, followed by a one-handed maximum over mid-wicket in the 20th over. Although the 42-year-old, who last represented India in 2019, underwent knee surgery last year, his batting prowess remains undiminished.

President Biden urges Egypt and Qatar for Hamas-Israel hostage deal

NEW DELHI: President Joe Biden urged the leaders of Egypt and Qatar to push Hamas for a hostage deal with Israel. This call came after Biden's plea to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to intensify efforts for a cease-fire in the ongoing Gaza conflict. A senior administration official revealed that Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, will meet with families of the approximately 100 hostages still in Gaza. CIA Director William Burns was dispatched to Cairo for discussions on the hostage crisis. The Mossad chief, David Barnea, and representatives from Egypt and Qatar are expected to participate in the negotiations, while Hamas is engaging indirectly through interme-

diaries. The primary focus is on securing a temporary cease-fire between Israel and Hamas to facilitate the exchange of hostages and humanitarian aid into Gaza. Biden emphasized the importance of releasing hostages, including American citizens, during his conversation with Netanyahu. The initial phase of the proposed deal aims to free vulnerable hostages like women, elderly, sick, and wounded individuals. Biden's optimism for a temporary cease-fire and hostage agreement ahead of Ramadan did not materialize as expected. The White House emphasized the urgency of an immediate cease-fire in exchange for hostages, with Biden expressing frustration.

MUNPL's Aarogyam Hospital concludes free cataract surgery camp



During the occasion, patients appreciated the arrangements for stay, transportation, food, and the free cataract surgery done during the camp

Meja. The closing ceremony of free cataract surgery camp was held at Aarogyam Hospital on 05.04.24. The chief guest of the program was CEO MUNPL Shri Kamlesh Soni. The camp was organised by Aarogyam hospital along with MUNPL CSR team in collaboration with Mahesh Netralaya, Prayagraj, Aarogyam Hospital for project affected villages. The screening camp saw 185 registrations, with 27 patients undergoing surgery at a state-of-the-art eye hospital in Prayagraj. During the occasion, MUNPL CEO, Shri Kamlesh Soni, emphasized the company's commitment to the welfare of surrounding villages. Smt. Anu Soni, President of Aparajita Mahila Samaj also praised hospital's efforts undertaken under

the able guidance of CMO Dr. Manisha Pandey for their successful organization of healthcare initiatives. Blankets were distributed to patients by Smt. Soni and senior members of the executive committee. During the occasion, patients appreciated the arrangements for stay, transportation, food, and the free cataract surgery done during the camp.

Donations surge to Rs 83.8 crore; Kashi Vishwanath temple clocked highest revenue in March



VARANASI: As the Kashi Vishwanath Temple continues to attract devotees from far and wide who are making generous donations, the temple earned Rs 83.34 crore in 2023-24 financial year, registering a jump of 42.43% as compared to collections in 2022-23. The income of Rs 11.14 crore in March was also the highest single-month collection made ever by the temple. Talking to, temple's chief executive officer Vishwa Bhushan said, "Shri Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust (SKVTT) has recorded its highest ever collection as well as expenditure in the 2023-24 financial year. On the income part, its gross earning was Rs 83.34 crore, which was 42.43% more than the figures of the previous financial year." All previous records of income were broken by Feb-end when Rs 69.92 crore was received by the temple even when the value of precious metals received as donation was not included in it. In 2022-23, the temple had recorded income of Rs 58.51 crore while it was over Rs 26 crore in 2018-19 and 2019-20 financial

CAPSULES

Rush at OPDs as heat soars, doctors sound dehydration-exhaustion alert

KOLKATA: The hot and discomfort weather conditions in the past few days are taking a toll on the health of Kolkatans, especially those who have to remain outdoors for hours. Even though none of the city hospitals have recorded any heat stroke cases so far, doctors are getting a good number of people with heat exhaustion and dehydration. Health experts have cautioned people to take all precautions when outdoors to avoid severe consequences.

"Because of such hot and humid weather, the people who are engaged in outdoor activities are prone to develop heat exhaustion when the body starts sweating a lot due to the rise of the core body temperature resulting in dehydration. Heat exhaustion makes the person feel weak, dizzy and thirsty. I have seen two to four such cases in the past one week, mostly middle aged men, probably due to their higher exposure to the sun," said internal medicine specialist Joydeep Ghosh of Fortis Hospital, Anandapur. opd

B P Poddar Hospital had tended to 14 persons in its emergency in the past three days, most of them down with extreme dehydration making them unwell while they were out in the sun. "37 patients came to our OPD with heat related issues. While most of them were middle-aged patients, some were school children. We had to admit two senior citizens because in addition to dehydration they had other issues like BP fluctuation and sodium, potassium imbalance," said Supriyo Chakrabarty, group advisor, BP Poddar Hospital.

Probe Shortage Of Medicines: Bharadwaj To LG

New Delhi: Health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj has written to lieutenant governor VK Saxena demanding strict action against officials responsible for the non-availability of medicines and consumables at Delhi govt health facilities. He also demanded a "time-bound inquiry" against them for misrepresenting facts and misleading govt on the issue. The letter was sent on Thursday in response to a story, 'Boy with broken arm turned away by hosps'. On April 1, an 8-year-old boy with a broken arm was turned away by two state-run



hospitals, Dr Hedgewar Aarogy Sansthan and Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya, a dedicated paediatric facility. While one hospital claimed it did not have cotton, the other said it had no orthopaedic doctor at the time to treat the boy. The boy's father, a guard with a monthly salary of Rs 15,000, had to ultimately take him to a private hospital and pay Rs 13,000, including the doctor's consultation fees, which would have been negligible at a govt hospital. Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya, where Class II student Aditya Kumar was taken by his parents, has now started "emergency ortho" till 8pm on all working days.

He said he had directed the chief secretary and the health secretary multiple times to ensure the supply of medicines and consumables at all

Until now, this facility was available from 9am to 4pm. Bharadwaj wrote about the health secretary misinforming and misleading the minister concerned about the availability of the items. Bharadwaj underlined that either the senior officers of health and family welfare were unaware of the actual situation or were not deliberately resolving this imminent crisis.

He said he had directed the chief secretary and the health secretary multiple times to ensure the supply of medicines and consumables at all

PAT Day 1 marked by shortage of question and answer booklets

Mumbai: As the Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) School heads said despite sending details of the number of students appearing for PAT, the SCERT on Thursday directed schools to take photocopies of the question papers wherever there was a shortage. Schools also complained of not receiving the answer keys to the questions. Teachers assess papers based on answer keys. Mahendra Ganpule, spokesperson of the Maharashtra School Principals' Association

highlighted the need for improved planning by the education department. Ganpule said, "Despite the challenges, teachers managed to distribute papers on the first day, albeit with additional effort and expense. The issue was more pronounced in remote areas and was exacerbated by a lack of manpower at the taluka level for distribution." Over one crore students are participating in these exams, which are part of the Strengthening

Teaching-Learning and Results for States project funded by the World Bank. The PAT aims to enhance the quality and governance of school education and includes a basic test followed by two comprehensive assessments. The mandatory test is to determine the learning outcome of students. It is based on second semester syllabi. Schools that incurred expenses on photocopying question papers last year said they are yet to receive reimbursement.

HC seeks status of criminal cases filed in 2020 Delhi riots

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Thursday sought status of criminal cases registered following riots that broke out in the national capital in Feb 2020. A bench of Justice Suresh Kumar Kait and Justice Manoj Jain asked police to furnish details after noting that over 750 FIRs were registered in the aftermath of violence and the investigation in 273 was still pending. Communal clashes had broken out in northeast Delhi on Feb 24, 2020, after violence between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control leaving at least 53 people dead and around 700 injured. The bench was hearing a public interest litigation by Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind seeking setting up of special investigation team (SIT) to hold an independent probe

into the riots. The petitioner's lawyer said that SIT should be set up at least in those cases where the stage of filing of chargesheet has not even come till now. "How much time will you take? That was 2020 and we have entered 2024... Total cases registered is 757; transferred to Crime Branch 62; number of cases chargesheeted 367; number of cases pending trial 250 and pending investigation is 273. Therefore, pending cases are 273 as on April 2. So many cases," said the bench, relying on the figures furnished. During the hearing, the court observed that the cases were registered in 2020 but several of them were still pending and asked the police the reason behind it. The petitioner had approached the high court in March 2020 seeking several

reliefs, including preservation of the CCTV footage of the riots in northeast Delhi. The PIL claimed that FIRs have not been lodged against persons responsible for the riots and alleged that the police is not accepting the complaint in which the accused are named and they are insisting to give a complaint against unknown persons. The court posted the matter for next hearing on April 29. We also published the following articles recently 2020 Delhi riots: Court rejects Tahir Hussain's bail Former AAP councillor Tahir Hussain's bail plea rejected by New Delhi court in the 2020 Delhi riots case due to prima facie true allegations. and UAPA provisions, including dismissal based on a larger conspiracy.

2 calves born in Kashi farm mark new start for Gangatiri breed

LUCKNOW: UP govt's Varanasi farm has become the country's first conservation centre to breed two high-merit Gangatiri cow calves using embryo transfer technology (ETT) and IVF. The two female calves were born on March 26 and 27. Gangatiri breed is native to eastern UP and Bihar. It got its name after Ganga as it is the belt along the river which is its natural habitat. The breed has low input costs and is resistant to many diseases. "Gangatiri is recognised nationally and has high significance as a source of livelihood to local farmers in the state," said Dr Neeraj Gupta, CEO of the UP Livestock Development Board. The ETT will help produce elite cows at a faster rate as a single mother can produce multiple high-merit progenies, he added. In the current case, four elite females at the farm were selected as egg donors. Semen from a high-merit bull was used to fertilise the eggs in-vivo (inside the body).



After about seven days, the embryos were flushed from the donor cows and transferred into four surrogate cows, which may not have been of high merit. However, only two pregnancies were successful, and two calves were born, said Gupta. The ETT is being extensively used for the improvement of indigenous cow breeds at various

places as elite cows are used as egg and sperm donors. "This technique will increase the efficiency as well as productivity of Gangatiri bovine herds. It has huge potential to multiply the income of farmers," said Ravinder, principal secretary of animal husbandry, dairying and fisheries, and chairman of UPLDB.

Joyride? Man risks life travelling 400km on the train's roof

KANPUR: A man spotted lying on the roof of New Delhi-Gorakhpur bound Humsafar Express (12572) triggered panic at the Kanpur Central railway station on Tuesday. Investigation revealed that the man, identified as Dilip Kumar of Fatehpur, had travelled an astonishing 400km between Delhi and Kanpur by lying on the train's roof. The video of his bizarre act also went viral on social media. Fortunately, Kumar did not stand on the train's roof during the journey and got saved from getting electrocuted by the overhead wires, said GRP personnel. When the train entered platform 9 of Kanpur Central, passengers noticed Dilip on the roof of the B-11 AC coach of the Humsafar Express and raised an alarm. Deputy chief traffic manager Ashutosh Singh, assistant commercial manager railway Santosh Kumar Tripathi, station superintendent.

Dr. Sushil Gupta will win in Kurukshetra with record breaking votes: Sultan Jadaula

Kaithal: Senior Congress leader and former Chief

Parliamentary Secretary Sultan Singh Jadaula said that India Alliance candidate from Kurukshetra Lok Sabha constituency Dr. Sushil Gupta will win with the blessings of the public with record breaking votes in the Lok Sabha elections. Dr. Sushil Gupta has settled in the hearts of the public due to his friendly, clean and neat image.

People from every section of the society are flocking to the public meetings of Dr. Sushil Gupta in every village of Pundri Assembly Constituency and the public is ready to show victory to Dr. Gupta by showing BJP the way out of power. Congress leader Sultan Jadaula is campaigning in various villages of the constituency by appealing to the villagers to vote in favor of the alliance candidate Dr. Sushil Gupta. Jadaula alleged that BJP had promised in



the elections that it would put Rs 15 lakh each in the accounts of the poor, provide employment to 2 crore people, M.S.P. Implement it, make gas cylinders cheaper, implement Swaminathan Commission report, reduce inflation, but after winning the elections, BJP went back on all the promises. Today, rising inflation, unemployment and corruption have made life difficult for people. He said that this time BJP has given the slogan of crossing 400, but looking at the situation in the country today, it is clear that this time BJP will fall face down. The campaign of Congress in every house among the

people shows that the people are in the mood for change. In Haryana too, BJP will win on all the seats. Former Chief Parliamentary Secretary Sultan Jadaula said that there is a difference between the words and actions of BJP. In any case, BJP has become famous all over the world for shunning election promises and announcements by calling them election slogans, hence now the public is not going to be misled by them. Now whether BJP calls the election manifesto a resolution letter or Modi's guarantee. The public is fully prepared to answer them in the elections.

Opt for Hybrid funds to help cut tax outgo - 10 mutual fund

Wealth managers recommend conservative investors to opt for hybrid schemes before the financial year closes to save on taxes in mutual fund investments. The government's removal of indexation benefits for pure debt schemes in Budget 2023-24 shifts focus to hybrid funds with 35%-65% equity allocation for tax efficiency.

Tax planning guide: Opt for Hybrid funds to help cut tax outgo - 10 mutual fund schemes to consider
Tax benefits of hybrid funds: As the financial year comes to an end, it's important to keep

a tab on your tax outgo for FY 2023-24. Wealth managers advise conservative investors to consider hybrid schemes before the financial year ends to save on taxes in mutual fund investments, states an report.

The government's removal of indexation benefits for pure debt schemes in Budget 2023-24 makes hybrid funds with 35% to 65% equity allocation a viable option.

Indexation, which adjusts inflation with the asset's cost, lowers tax liability. Certain schemes like balanced hybrid,

multi-asset, and dynamic asset allocation still offer indexation benefits.

Investors purchasing these schemes before March 31 and holding them till April 1, 2027, will pay a 20% long-term capital gains tax with indexation benefits, gaining an extra year's advantage.

Viral Bhatt, founder of Money Mantra, suggests that moving funds from bank deposits to such schemes can enhance post-tax returns for low-risk investors.

Here's a look at mutual fund schemes where you can get indexation benefit

Bank of Japan ends negative rates, closing era of radical policy

TOKYO: The Bank of Japan ended eight years of negative interest rates and other remnants of its unorthodox policy on Tuesday, making a historic shift away from a focus of reflating growth with decades of massive monetary stimulus. While the move will be Japan's first

interest rate hike in 17 years, it still keeps rates stuck around zero as a fragile economic recovery forces the central bank to go slow in any further rise in borrowing costs, analysts say. The shift makes Japan the last central bank to exit negative rates and ends an era in which

policymakers around the world sought to prop up growth through cheap money and unconventional monetary tools. In a widely expected decision, the BOJ ditched a policy put in place since 2016 that applied a 0.1% charge on some excess reserves financial institutions.

CAPSULES

HDFC Bank's home loan business head to lead Poonawalla Fincorp

MUMBAI: HDFC Bank's mortgage business head Arvind Kapil has filed papers to take charge as MD & CEO of Poonawalla Fincorp. Kapil is a 25-year veteran of HDFC Bank and was placed in charge of the legacy housing finance business of HDFC after its merger with the bank last year.

"Given the sheer size of the mortgage portfolio (Rs 7.5 lakh crore) and the material importance of distribution, we believe there is key managerial personnel risk (for HDFC Bank)," said Suresh Ganapathy of Macquarie. He noted that this is the second major exit in mortgages with the head of HDFC sales Santosh Nair quitting to join Bandhan Bank last month. Poonawalla Fincorp, in a statement to stock exchanges, said that Kapil will join the company on June 24, subject to approvals. Shares of Poonawalla Fincorp rose 1.5% after the announcement. Before taking charge of the Rs 7.5-lakh-crore mortgage business at HDFC Bank, Kapil led the retail lending business at the bank, which included unsecured loan20s, auto loans, two-wheeler loans, retail working capital loans, gold loans, loans against shares, home loans, microfinance, and business loans.

"Given his leadership, execution skills and business acumen, (Current MD & CEO) Abhay Bhutada has been elevated to group level and will be taking up a strategic and larger role at the Cyrus Poonawalla Group for managing its strategy, investment and finance," said Adar

Sivan Public School is the best school in the area in the field of education: Amarendra

Kaithal: The new session was started by performing Havan and Ardaas in Sivan Public School of the city. Principal Dr. Ramnivas Sharma told that today the school's management committee member Principal S. Amarendra Singh Khara, Pawan Sharma, Vivek Goyal, Ankush Gupta and outgoing Sarpanch Pawandeep Kaur Khara along with the staff members first performed Ardaas and then performed Havan to inaugurate the 8th session of the school. He said



that in the field of education, Sivan Public School is the best school in the Sivan area, which has established high dimensions in the field of education in a

short time. Along with education, all-round development of children is done in the school. Amarendra Singh Khara, Pawan Sharma and Vivek Goyal told that the

school was established in 2017.

The only objective behind the establishment of the school was to provide a good educational institution to the Sevan area, in which the children could have all-round development. On this occasion, school vice principal Pratibha, coordinator Kuldeep Kaur, Mamta Gandhi, Vinod, Varsha, innocent, Manish, Sukhbir, Gaurav, Geeta, Ritu, Mamta, Rajni, Shivani, Chanchal, Neetu, Pooja etc.

Dettol Celebrates The Big Dreams Of India With Its New Campaign; Launches New Bigger Dettol Soap

GURUGRAM : Dettol, India's most trusted germ protection brand, launched a new campaign celebrating the India success story. The three films capture the growing Indian ambition, with the promise of continuing to provide protection to consumers and support their growing dreams. The campaign marks the launch of the larger 100g Dettol Bar Soap (multi-pack), which underscores the brand's commitment to promote hygiene amongst everyone, allowing Indian dreams



to keep growing. For decades, Dettol has focused on protecting the consumers from germs, allowing them to work towards their dreams and overcome all obstacles fearlessly.

Consumers in India have shown consistent trust and support in Dettol, making it a household name synonymous with protection and cleanliness. The campaign films talk about the dreams of

young talented kids through the eyes of their mothers and teacher, who envision them successful in their pursuit.

In the new campaign, Dettol reinforces its pledge to support Indian consumers in their pursuit of achieving their dreams. With the new 100g Dettol Bar Soap (multi-pack) offering, Dettol aims to strengthen its partnership with the nation and contribute to the overall growth of India by offering its consumers protection from illness causing germs.

Vi has partnered with Paris headquartered CareGame

GURUGRAM / HISAR : The Gaming industry has witnessed a massive growth in India on the back of mobile-first phenomenon.

Industry reports suggest gaming is likely to become a billion-dollar market in the country and Cloud Gaming will be the next frontier in the world of gaming. To cater to the continuously evolving interests of consumers, leading telecom operator Vi has partnered with Paris headquartered CareGame, to launch mobile cloud gaming service - Cloud Play. Strengthening its mobile gaming proposition, 'Cloud Play' provides a varied selection of premium AAA games across various genres including action,

adventure, arcade, racing, sports, & strategy. The launch catalogue includes mobile games like Asphalt 9, Modern Combat 5, Shadow Fight, Storm Blades, Riptide, Beach Buggy Racing, Gravity Rider and classics like Cut The Rope, Subway Surfers and Jetpack Joyride. There is a strong line up of games that will keep releasing in the coming weeks. Commenting on the launch of Cloud Play, Avneesh Khosla, CMO, Vodafone Idea said "At Vi, we have always believed in a collaborative approach to strengthen our bouquet of customer offerings. We recognize the potential of the fast-evolving Gaming landscape with the smartphone playing a

key role in making Gaming more accessible anytime, anywhere. With Vi Games 'Cloud Play' in partnership with CareGame, we welcome our users to the future of gaming, where the cloud is your playground and the possibilities are limitless. It's not just a game, it's a seamless journey into a world where imagination meets technology. Get ready to elevate your playtime and explore the extraordinary."

Cloud Play is a subscription-based service priced @ 100 per month (104 recharge for prepaid users). Users can sample the service for free as an introductory offer before purchasing the subscription pack.

Sommet Education Foundation to develop the Indian Talent Development Initiative

Chandigarh: Indian School of Hospitality (ISH) and Sommet Education has announced a collaboration with Accor, a global leader in hospitality, to unveil the Indian Talent Development Initiative. The three-year alliance was officialised at the HICSA 2024, 19th Hotel Investment Conference in Bengaluru. This endeavour will be led by the Sommet Education Foundation, with Accor serving as its founding patron. The Indian Talent Development Initiative aims to invest in the skills of the Indian youth and deliver them opportunities for growth in the thriving hospitality industry. Under the initiative, Sommet Education Foundation and Accor will sponsor 16 deserving individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to enrol in ISH's Intensive Culinary Arts Programme and Intensive Pastry and Bakery Programme. Each intake will consist of 5 to 6 students, with the program scheduled to commence in August 2024, followed by sub-



sequent intakes in January 2025 and January 2026. "As a prominent hospitality education institution, we recognise the transformative potential of the ITDI to uplift and inspire individuals aiming to make a difference in the hospitality sector," said Kunal Vasudeva, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Indian School of Hospitality. To address this significant challenge, Sommet Education and Accor are dedicated to promoting sustainable growth, addressing employment gaps, and empowering individuals

from underserved communities to pursue rewarding careers in hospitality. The launch of the Indian Talent Development Initiative is a testament to the shared vision and dedication of Sommet Education, ISH, and Accor towards promoting talent development, fostering social equality, and bolstering economic growth in India. The unique and noble initiative will also create new avenues for development and elevate the standards and prospects of the hospitality sector in India.

Star Health eyes NRI business through GIFT

CHENNAI: Star Health and Allied Insurance Company will offer dollar-denominated insurance from GIFT City for NRIs. The company is launching international insurance product suite from the facility in FY25.

Star Health is the first health insurance company to be granted registration to establish an International Financial Services Centre international office in GIFT City. It plans to commence operations with a branch by the end of this month, facilitating access to health insurance solutions in US dollars for the global Indian community, the company said in a statement on Monday. Noting that the facility will enable the company to significantly expand its global reach and business, it said, the company will offer NRI-focused insurance.

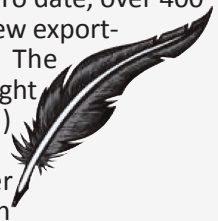
Editorial

HAL is today a major aerospace and defence

HAL is today a major aerospace and defence PSU with headquarters in Bengaluru. HAL currently has 11 dedicated Research and development (R&D) centres and 21 manufacturing divisions under 4 production units spread across India. HAL is managed by a board of directors and works under the direction of India's Ministry of Defence. They are involved in designing and manufacturing fighter jets, helicopters, jet engines and marine gas turbine engines, avionics, software development, spares supply, overhauling and upgrading of Indian military aircraft. The company has nearly 24,500 employees. Its provisional and unaudited revenue from operations exceeding Rs 29,810 crore (\$3.75 billion) for the financial year 2023-24 and registered a double-digit growth of around 11 per cent. Operating income has increased to Rs6,509.50 crore (\$820 million). The net income has increased to Rs5,827.73 crore (\$730 million). HAL's total assets are now worth Rs67,203.80 crore.

(\$8.4 billion). Of HAL's total equity of Rs23,575.89 crore (\$3.0 billion), 71.65 per cent is held by the Government of India. HAL's shares currently trades at Rs3,548 and it saw an increase of nearly 150 per cent last year.

As of 31 March, 2024, the company order book stands more than Rs94,000 crore. HAL expects many more orders in FY 2024-25, announced HAL chairman CB Ananthkrishnan. The company has maintained the growth momentum and has achieved an improved performance. More than 40 per cent of HAL's revenues come from international deals to manufacture aircraft engines, spare parts, and other aircraft materials. IAF had initially ordered 40 LCA Mk-1, out of which 32 fighters were delivered and two squadrons of these are already flying and operational. Eight Mk-1 two-seaters are in the process of being delivered. IAF ordered 83 LCA Mk-1A jets (including 10 two-seat) for Rs48,000 crore in February 2021. IAF has already announced intentions to buy 97 more Mk-1As at a cost of around Rs67,000 crore. The first aircraft was to be delivered to IAF by 31 March but some key certifications will be completed in a month. In October 2023, HAL handed over the first LCA Mk-1 two-seat variant to the IAF chief Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari in Bangalore. With eight LCA Mk1 two-seat aircraft and nearly 10 ordered for Mk-1A variants, the twin-seat aircraft are set to fill a key operational and training role in the IAF. LCA Mk-1A is expected to give a significant operational boost to the IAF. Meanwhile, based on projected performance, IAF has already indicated the initial requirement of nearly 200 LCA Mk-2. This figure is bound to increase when the aircraft begins to fly. Last year, HAL and US engine maker General Electric signed a MoU for transfer and technology (ToT) and manufacturing of GE-414 aero-engines in India for Tejas Mk-2 aircraft. A total of 80 per cent ToT has reportedly been agreed upon, and if it does take place, it should significantly transform the aero-engine manufacturing ecosystem, and promote a level of self-reliance. Meanwhile, HAL keeps looking for opportunities to collaborate and develop newer technologies through joint ventures and alliances with friendly global and Indian technology partners. For long HAL made the Alouette and Lama helicopter variants under license. The Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) 'Dhruv' has been a great success story for HAL. After the first flight in 1992, the helicopter was inducted into the Indian armed forces in 2002. To date, over 400 have been built, including a few exported to foreign customers. The armed variant 'Rudra', the Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) 'Prachand' and Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) have been ordered in significant numbers.



How farmers' protest 2.0 is taking a dangerous turn

Farmers, leaders, and citizenry depending on their political allegiance, believe in different sides of the story. But the real question is: can there be smoke without fire? If there isn't, one must at least relook at the situation. Now, when it comes to Farmers' Andolan 2.0, many things are uncertain, including the fact that who is leading the movement? There are many "rumours" bruited. Some are hinting at the potential infiltration of farmers' camps by fringe fundamentalist groups at the Shambhu and Kannuri borders. But even before we begin to analyse this premise and see its potential conse-

quences for SKM and the larger question of agrarian distress, let us see the situation as it stands now. But when it comes to proving the government right, SKM-NP and KMM are doing a much better job. First of all, the movement is mostly led by Punjabi Sikhs. The camps are highly homogenous, and the religious fervour runs high. Nihangs are present as official bodyguards of the camps and events, while the Gurudwara system offers 'langar' and other support for the farmer groups. One wouldn't put the religious core of the protest against them, as rural folk are usually conservative and have deep

connections with local gurudwaras and other religious bodies, but the problem is much deeper. Rumour has it that the 'hardliner' factions, also credited with breaking barriers during the farmers protest 1.0 and Red Fort incident, have taken shelter under the wings of Kisan Andolan 2.0. Many of them are entrenched in the camps. The proof, of course, is visible in plain sight. Many of the camps and trolleys are openly displaying secessionist propaganda, including references to Khalistan. These also include pictures of Bindrewala and his associates and celebrate their martyrdom for Khalistan.

Hindus, if any, are a clear minority in the camps and are often looked at with suspicion. Most of the messaging is in 'Punjabi', and non-punjabi languages are rarely used.

Kisan Andolan 2.0 fails the test of inclusivity, and instead of promoting harmony between different regions, it is clearly hinting at Punjabi Sikhs first. Again, one may argue that because the cadre is predominantly from rural Punjab, it is only right that they fight for Punjabi issues first. But this is exactly playing into all the earlier allegations made by the government.

A mile long, uninhabited, barren speck in the Palk Bay



The tragedy is that both sides have a strong case to make. It is a legacy of the ambiguity baked into the 1974 agreement (subsequently formalized in 1976) and inability of the then Indian government to secure fishing rights over the waters around the island that were traditionally enjoyed by Indian fishermen. Resultantly, the narrative around Katchatheevu in Tamil politics has settled on a forceful demand for "retrieval" of the islet as the "only solution" with dominant regional powers and interest groups such as fishers' associations using the island as a rentier issue for political expediency. For instance, in 2013, a 'unanimous resolution' was passed in the Tamil Nadu assembly demanding "retrieval of Katchatheevu" by the AIADMK leader and then chief minister, the late J Jayalalitha. Evidently, the entire issue is a manifestation of the complexities of Tamil politics in which though the Centre and the state governments in 1974 had relinquished sovereign rights over the disputed islet, it never received popular sanction, as has been proven by the recently released documents. On 23 July, 1974, DMK MP Era Sezhiyan had walked out of the Parliament protesting Indira Gandhi government's decision to sign the India-Sri Lanka Maritime

Agreement, saying that "this agreement goes against the interests of the country since it amounts to pure surrender of our territory without going through any of the norms. This is an unholy and disgraceful act of statesmanship unworthy of any government. Therefore, we do not want to associate ourselves with the statement...", as reported by. We now know that the DMK lawmaker was then unaware of the fact that his leader Karunanidhi was a party to the decision. Therefore, when AIADMK leader Jayalalitha heightened Katchatheevu activism and vowed to bring it back, regardless of what had transpired between the Indira government and Karunanidhi in 1974, the DMK couldn't be seen as complicit in the decision to relinquish India's

claims over the island and hand on a platter to its Dravidian rival an issue that is so closely linked to local sentiments.

This necessitated political posturing from the DMK, with the hope that its indefensible position on Katchatheevu won't become public knowledge. Except that it has, now. The cache of documents released in public domain via the RTI show that the Katchatheevu island was "ceded" to Sri Lanka in 1974, and subsequently, the fishing rights were granted in 1976. This was done despite advice from government's legal officers at various times that even if sovereign rights over the islet is contestable, India has a strong case for asserting fishermen's access to the waters around the island,

such rights they have traditionally enjoyed through historical ownership by the Raja of Ramnad, who acquired it during the time of the East India Company without paying any taxes to Colombo.

According to the RTI document, then attorney general of India MC Setalvad had suggested in 1958 that though the "matter is by no means clear or free from difficulty but on the assessment of the whole evidence it appears to me that the balance lies in concluding that the sovereignty of India was and is in India," on the issue of zamindari rights over the island.

The document also reveals that Krishna Rao, then MEA joint secretary, Legal and Treaties, had noted in 1960 that "judged purely from the evidentiary value of competing claims, I submitted above that those of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) are more substantial." However, he goes on to write that "on the other hand, it may be noted that India has a good legal case, which could be argued with considerable force. I am not suggesting that we have no case at all. I submit that our legal case in this connection may be used to obtain fishing rights around the island." Despite these legal opinions, as well as historical records on India's territorial claims over the islet, the Indira Gandhi government went ahead with

signing the agreement in 1974 with the Sirimavo Bandaranaike administration in 1974. The agreement had three key clauses. Article 4 held that "Each country shall have sovereignty and exclusive jurisdiction and control over the waters, the islands, the continental shelf and sub soil thereof, falling on its own side of the aforesaid boundary." Article 5 held "Subject to the foregoing, Indian fishermen and pilgrims will enjoy access to visit Kachchativu (sic) as hitherto, and will not be required by Sri Lanka to obtain travel documents or visas for these purposes, and Article 6, that stated: "The vessels of India and Sri Lanka will enjoy in each other's waters such rights as they have traditionally enjoyed therein."

Worth noting that though the issue of fishing rights was not explicitly stated in the 1974 document, it was understood that the rights of Indian fishermen would remain protected. This, however, remained ambiguous and a matter of interpretation. Jaishankar said at the presser Monday that "when this agreement was presented to Parliament on 23rd, July 1974, then-foreign minister Swaran Singh assured that it was fair and equitable for both countries, safeguarding fishing, navigation, and pilgrimage rights."

The Hard Talk host had tried to lecture

Then prime minister Margaret Thatcher said: "I have fought three elections against the BBC and don't want to fight another against it." Inderjit Singh, the chief of Britain's Network of Sikh Organisations, said: "Stations like BBC Asian Network do little to encourage integration and social cohesion because they allow communities to ghettoise themselves." In October 2019, Singh quit 'Thought for the Day' on BBC Radio 4, exposing BBC's "misplaced sense of political correctness". The BBC stopped the broadcast of a show commemorating Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur, who had been beheaded for opposing forced conversion of Hindus to Islam in India in the 17th century, "because it might offend Muslims".

Russia banned the BBC in 2022 accusing it of circulating fake news on the war against Ukraine. China has banned the BBC too. The Beeb has been accused of deep-seated bias against Israel in its coverage of the Palestinian conflict. In India, the BBC's list of transgressions is long. It has always been seen as pro-Pakistan, a stand consistent with Labour's. Recently, the BBC was found guilty of tax evasion. After initially trying to make it seem like vengeance by the Indian government, the BBC admitted that it underreported Rs 40 crore (\$4.8 million) of income in its tax returns. It followed a suspiciously timed documentary in the run-up to the 2024 elections called 'India: The Modi Question'. The documentary, through a slew of opinion and

innuendo, raked up the 2002 Gujarat riots and tried to implicate then Gujarat CM and now Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whom courts had exonerated a decade ago. "Let me stop you right there!" thundered Irfan Ali, President of Guyana, at BBC interviewer Stephen Sackur. The Hard Talk host had tried to lecture President Ali on carbon emissions from Guyana's newfound oil reserves worth \$150 billion in the next decade or two. Stating that his country does more than enough of forest conservation for which it is not paid or given credit while

the developed world enjoyed the fruits of energy since the industrial revolution, he asked the BBC interviewer point blank.

China will not do anything beyond the usual exercise of bullying and threatening

To add to this, the strong statement that came from the US on 09 March is as follows: "The U.S. recognises Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory, and we strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to advance territorial claims by incursions or encroachments, military or civilian, across the Line of Actual Control." This disappointment is reflected in Beijing's recent renaming of thirty places in Arunachal Pradesh. However hard it may try to make such unfounded and subjective claims, India will not succumb to China's synthetic pressures. These unilateral claims do not carry any weight. It is designed to trigger some tension in the region. Reacting to these renaming gimmicks of China, Chief Minister Pema Khandu asserted that Arunachal Pradesh is an 'inalienable integral part of India'. He added, 'Proud citizens and patriots of Arunachal Pradesh are rejecting such antics'. It is now clear that the Chinese indulgences in phantoms are their own making without any empirical relevance.

The McMahon Line decided in 1914, as part of the Shimla Convention, the border demarcation between Tibet and British India, and China and Tibet were party to this discussion and ratification

under the chairmanship of Henry McMahon, foreign secretary of British India. China's disagreement then and now on Tibetan territory sees no foreseeable end. Its annexation of Tibet and the Sino-Indian War in 1962 bolstered Beijing's politics of obscurity. It does not accept any form of determinacy on border space along LAC. The claims it makes are often quite cluttered without any clarity or definitiveness. To perceive the logic behind this kind of whimsical exercise is to constrain India and its developmental goals at the border space. China's border fiction is a geopolitical gimmick to distract India from its economic and developmental aspirations. It cannot bear the rise of a competing power in the neighbourhood. Its bullying tactics and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)-related debt trap did not work with India as it has bullied other South Asian nations to remain in its sphere of influence.

Therefore, the Chinese cosmetic assertiveness in renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh, border skirmishes, cartographic redrafting and verbosity is to restrict India from realising its potential - the potential to rise as a challenging or competing player. There is no shortage of symptoms

in this direction, and it is self-evident from its growth trajectories. In addition, China also knows quite well that in the event of war between the two powerful Himalayan neighbours, there will be no winner. Therefore, Beijing's routine practice is to set some limits against New Delhi, and if the latter goes beyond the Chinese-determined threshold, it devises ways to curb such extra signs of progress made. The main objective is to exercise Chinese relevance and its hegemonic structure and not to allow any other competing power to rise to the heights of challenging it. However, it seems China will not do anything beyond the usual exercise of bullying and threatening.

Its export-driven economy needs the Indian market. Its sinking global image in the event of COVID-19 pandemic, debt trap ingrained BRI structuralism, South China Sea hegemony, conflicts with the US over Taiwan, QUAD formations, etc., develops enough deterrence to ensure slowness of its economy. Economic fragility is likely to cause more internal issues. The geopolitical posturing in the form of renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh may be construed as a distracting mechanism to control.

Aakash Educational Services Limited announces Educational Scholarships for April 2024 Admissions

Panipat : Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), a national leader in test preparatory services, has announced various scholarships prior to the commencement of its new session scheduled to begin in April 2024 to enable students to realise their dream of becoming doctors and engineers. The first scholarship is the Instant Admission Cum Scholarship Test (iACST), offering up to 90% scholarship for admission into Medical, Engineering, and Foundation courses. Additionally, Aakash will provide special discounts to children of martyrs, defense personnel and terrorism-affected individuals. Mr. Anup Agarwal, Chief Business Officer at Aakash Educational Services Limited, stated, "We are dedicated to providing accessible and impactful



educational opportunities for students across India. Through initiatives like iACST and our scholarship programmes, we aim to empower deserving students to achieve their academic and career aspirations. We are proud to continue our tradition of supporting the education of children of our brave Armed Forces personnel and are committed to fostering excellence and inclusivity in education." The Instant Admission Cum

Scholarship Test (iACST) offers students immediate scholarship awards and opportunities for instant admission. Students can take the exam online and receive details of their earned scholarships instantly, enabling them to secure instant admission under the expert guidance of Aakash faculty. The online iACST, lasting 60 minutes, can be taken between 10 AM and 8 PM on designated exam days.

Mr. Abheek Barua, Chief Economist HDFC Bank commented on RBI Policy

AMBALA/HISAR: Given the recent global resilience in economic activity, there has been a tendency to keep monetary policy tight to take on the last mile challenge on inflation by global central banks. The RBI seems to be moving in lock step with that. Despite its emphasis that inflation is moderating, the RBI kept its policy rate and stance unchanged in today's policy announcement. The central bank remained optimistic on growth – pegging it at 7% for FY25 – and said this provides space for monetary policy to remain tight and focus on inflation. Consequently, the chances of a rate cut



have been pushed forward into the second half of FY25. The RBI also reiterated its preference for a stable rupee and therefore significant depreciation due to recent global volatility seems unlikely. On the other hand, the RBI also signalled that it has enough appetite for building FX reserves and therefore expected

rupee appreciation in the coming quarters (due to bond inflows among other things) could also face resistance. On the regulatory front, the announcement of a review of the LCR framework considering the volatility in deposits due to the 24*7 transfer facility is a welcome step. Details on the same are awaited.

Air India pilots write to Tata Group in support of their Vistara counterparts

MUMBAI: The concerns expressed by the Vistara pilots are not isolated incidents but rather indicative of systemic issues that extend across various Tata Group, Air India pilots said in a letter sent to the Tata Group chairman on Thursday. They brought to the fore problems

they have been facing with the Air India HR department as well, such as the use of threats against pilots and coercive tactics. Pilots who feel threatened or intimidated may be reluctant to report safety concerns or speak up about issues that could impact flight oper-

ations, said the letter sent jointly by the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA) and the Indian Pilots' Guild (IPG). In the past four days, Vistara pilots have been in a stand-off with the airline management to protect their salary structure, improved working conditions.

Not asking India to cut down oil imports from Russia: US

NEW DELHI: Two senior treasury department officials, who are in India to discuss what is Phase 2 of the Russian oil price cap, said Thursday the US and others imposing the cap, are seeking to minimise Kremlin's profits and stifle its Ukraine aggression, but without destabilising the global energy market or forcing India to slash its imports from Russia. The officials, however, said allowing unrestricted Russian oil trade will remain unacceptable. Eric Van Nostrand, assistant secretary for economic policy, and Anna Morris, assistant secretary for terrorist financing and financial crimes, said the US isn't asking India to cut down its oil imports from Russia, adding the price cap isn't meant to block the flow of Russian oil. Russia accounted for a third of India's oil imports last month. Nostrand said it's important to keep the oil supply going in the market and that what the US is seeking to do is to limit Putin's profit. Russia has the option of selling under the price cap or to sell at deep discounts if it doesn't follow the Western regulations. The officials were speaking at an event organised by Ananta Centre. The US and an international coalition opposed to Russia's war on Ukraine had implemented a price cap, \$60 per barrel, on Russian oil, allowing them to support trade in Russian oil only if it was sold at or below the price cap. The second phase was launched in Oct last year to tighten the enforcement of the cap and to restrain the Kremlin's ability to export oil through alternative shipping ecosystems. "There is no curbs, we have not asked India to reduce Russian oil buying," said Morris, adding US hasn't sanctioned any Indian entity for importing or refining Russian crude. With India exporting oil products.

Bengal crisis escalates as governor asks government to axe education minister

KOLKATA: West Bengal governor CV Ananda Bose "directed" the Bengal govt on Thursday to sack state education minister Bratya Basu, prompting the latter to say this was "as laughable as myself recommending the removal of the governor to the President".



Basu said governor Bose had not only revealed his true colours but exceeded his constitutional brief in asking for his removal, which is the constitutional prerogative of the chief minister. The latest flare-up has its origins in a complicated legal tangle over the appoint-

ment of vice-chancellors to 31 state-run universities, which is now in the Supreme Court and which has precipitated a barrage of vexed statements and counter-statements by both Basu and Bose. As chancellor of state-run universities, governor Bose has not kept the state in

the loop while appointing officiating VCs and asked them repeatedly not to heed the govt. Governor Bose singled out a "political meeting held in Gour Banga University" in Basu's presence on March 30 and directed the state govt "to take action against the erring

minister who has deliberately violated the election code of conduct, including his removal from the cabinet," a Raj Bhavan release said. It quoted the governor as saying, "Be you (Basu) ever so high, the law is above you." Reacting, Basu said, "...If I have violated the poll code, it is the prerogative of a political party to bring it to the notice of the Election Commission of India, which will take appropriate action. By raising such an accusation, he has misused his constitutional post and proved his political identity.

4 Indian restaurants on list of NY's 100 best of 2024'

Four restaurants serving Indian cuisine figure in the list of New York City's 100 best restaurants of 2024. They were ranked in the New York Times by its food critic, Pete Wells. Located in Greenwich Village, Semma takes the 7th spot, climbing five places from the previous year. The others are: Dhamaka (54), Temple Canteen (80) and Hyderabad Zaika (95). Both Dhamaka and Temple Canteen too have substantially improved their positions. Dhamaka, situated on the Lower East Side, was ranked 74 in 2023 while Temple Canteen, located in



Flushing, Queens, stood at 96. Hyderabad Zaika, stationed in Midtown, Manhattan, is a new entrant. Seema's chef Vijay Kumar, writes NYT, was raised on a rice farm outside Madurai in Tamil Nadu. "At Semma he serves two dishes from his childhood that you'd have a hard time finding at another New

York restaurant. One is nathai pirattal, snails stir-fried with onions and tomatoes, soured with tamarind and served in a small box made of banana leaves. The other is Chettinad-style venison, a shank braised into sticky tenderness with star anise and a lichen called black stone flower that is one

of the prized seasonings of the Chettinad pantry," wrote Wells on Semma in 2022. Mumbai-born Chintan Pandya is the chef at Dhamaka. In a 2021 review, Wells described its biryani as "a polyphonic riot of flavour." He further wrote, "Black peppercorns and green chillies rip through the rice, through the darkly browned chunks of goat neck on the bone and, finally, through your central nervous system. But even as your eyes start to water, the heat is broken by a blast of fresh mint that arrives like a mojito on a humid summer afternoon."

Supreme Court restores Scheduled Caste status to BJP leader Navneet

NEW DELHI: In a relief to BJP leader and MP from Amravati reserved constituency Navneet Kaur Ravi Rana just ahead of general elections, Supreme Court on Thursday quashed Bombay high court order by which her Scheduled Caste certificate of 'Mochi' was cancelled.

A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and Sanjay Karol held that 2017 order of District Caste Scrutiny Committee which validated Kaur's caste claim as 'Mochi' was right and the HC inadvertently undertook an erroneous exercise of appreciating evidence and swayed itself into a roving inquiry which was not expected as per settled legal position. "When the scrutiny committee which is principally tasked with the fact finding exercise for validation of caste claim, had

applied its mind and reached a conclusion, then in such a situation, whether a roving enquiry by HC was required? It is well settled that high courts as well as Supreme Court should refrain themselves from deeper probe into factual issues like an appellate body unless the inferences made by the concerned authority suffers from perversity on the face of it or are impermissible in the eyes of law. In the instant case, the order passed by the committee reflects due appreciation of evidence and application of mind and in absence of any allegation of bias/malice or lack of jurisdiction, disturbing the findings of the committee cannot be sustained," the bench said. Kaur was elected from reserved seat on the basis of the certificate which attested to her being a 'Mochi'

which is Scheduled Caste in the state making her eligible to contest from a reserved seat. The court had in 2021 stayed the HC order, paving the way for her to continue to represent the constituency in Parliament. The HC quashed the order of the scrutiny committee primarily on the ground that the same was obtained fraudulently. Finding fault with the HC order, SC said, "the Scrutiny Committee duly considered the documents placed before it and after due application of mind on being satisfied, accorded reasons for accepting/validating the caste claim of the appellant herein while accepting/rejecting other certain documents. The Scrutiny Committee heard all the parties in detail complying with the principles of natural justice.

Tata AIA launches industry-first payment solutions on WhatsApp New introduction is an outcome of a partnership with Meta and Infobip

Hisar/Rewari: Tata AIA Life Insurance Co. Ltd. (Tata AIA), one of India's leading life insurers, has launched a premium payment service on its WhatsApp platform marking the first-ever launch of its kind in the life insurance sector. Previously limited to UPI-based transactions, Tata AIA consumers can now use a wide range of payment methods within WhatsApp. Using WhatsApp, policyholders can now easily make renewal payments through credit card, debit card, and net banking options. Policyholders can now pay premium up

to INR 1 crore, instead of the earlier limit of INR 2 lakh. There are 27 services offered by Tata AIA on WhatsApp for its consumers. These include soft copies of the Policy document, premium certificate, claims initiation and updates, renewal premium payments, contact information update, service request tracking, NEFT update, unit statement, and fund value updates. The Company also has an interactive service bot called TASHA that responds to consumer queries 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Commenting on this occasion,

Sanjay Arora, Executive Vice President & Head of Operations of Tata AIA, said, "We are excited to set the trend in the industry with the introduction of the new, consumer centric payment options on WhatsApp. This innovative initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to providing consumers with convenience and ease through cutting-edge technologies. We will continue to offer market-leading solutions that will help us always deliver superior customer experience." By using this convenient and seamless

payment process, consumers can now pay renewal premiums from their familiar WhatsApp interface and thereby enjoy more flexibility. Payments can be made quickly within a minute, and consumers receive immediate acknowledgement. Additionally, the integration of credit card, debit card, and net banking options eliminates the need to use the Unified Payment Interface (UPI). More than 2 billion people in over 180 countries use WhatsApp to stay in touch with friend and family, anytime and anywhere*.

New tax regime hits private sector addition to NPS

NEW DELHI: The pension scheme for the corporate and individuals, regulated by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), may have been hit by the new tax regime, which offers lower tax rates but no exemptions, such as, those for investment. Latest data released by PFRDA on Thursday estimated that the growth in overall subscriber base, comprising govt, private sector and Atal Pension Yojana, slowed to 16.3% during the last financial year, with the total number pegged at over 7.3 crore. Within National Pension System (NPS), with under 36 lakh subscribers, the share of private sector contributors, comprising the corporate scheme (where the employer and employee contribute) and individual pension accounts, was estimated at 7.5%. pvt sector In terms of growth, in the last financial year.

BJP candidate Naveen Jindal will win from Kurukshetra Lok Sabha constituency with record breaking votes: Saurabh

Kaithal: BJP Business Cell Haryana Co-Convenor Saurabh Goyal Chaudhary claimed that famous industrialist and BJP candidate from Kurukshetra Lok Sabha constituency Naveen Jindal will create history by winning with record breaking votes. BJP's storm is blowing across the country and this time under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP will create history of crossing 400. BJP leader Saurabh Goel Choudhary was talking to reporters after congratulating BJP candidate Naveen Jindal from Kurukshetra Lok Sabha constituency. BJP Business Cell co-coordinator Saurabh Chaudhary Goyal said that BJP candidate Naveen Jindal is set-

to be elected in the hearts of the people due to his friendly and clean image and is a favorite of 36 communities. Naveen Jindal will hoist the flag of victory on the basis of public blessings and record breaking development works done by the BJP government. He said that the victory of Naveen Jindal will be the victory of the people of Kurukshetra parliamentary constituency and Naveen Jindal will get record breaking work done in Kurukshetra parliamentary constituency by following the policy of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas. Even today, the public is getting full benefit of the public interest works done by Naveen Jindal during his tenure as MP in Kurukshetra parliamentary constituency.

He said that every BJP worker and official should think of himself as Naveen Jindal and get involved in publicity and go door to door about the development works done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and the public welfare measures implemented by him. By publicizing the policies, connect people with BJP and appeal to them to vote in favor of Naveen Jindal. BJP leader Saurabh Goyal Chaudhary claimed that the people of the country that their interests are safe only in the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and for the third time the people have announced to hand over the command of the country to Modi.

DUROPLY CELEBRATES HOLI MILAN WITH ITS SKILL PARTNERS ACROSS INDIA EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO THEM

New Delhi : Duroply, India's premium and most experienced among the leading plywood companies, celebrated the festival of colours Holi, by expressing heartfelt gratitude towards its Skill Partners across India. Duroply Skill Partners (contractors and carpenters) play a critical role in educating customers on the importance of using branded Plywood. Mr. Akhilesh Chitlangia, Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer, Duroply, said, "Our mission at Duroply has been to adorn the home interiors of Indians with quality plywood that lasts generations. Our Skill Partners share our commitment and therefore, most of them are with the Company for generations. As lasting home interiors bring spring of happiness to a fami-

ly's life, we choose Holi to express our gratitude to our Skill Partners as they symbolically bring happiness to a family by explaining to them the enduring advantages of using branded plywood. Duroply Skill Partners play a decisive role in ensuring that the customers buy the right plywood. Holi symbolises the coming together of one and all welcoming vibrant hues of the colourful spring season. We personally visit our Skill Partners across India to celebrate our everlasting bond."

Duroply has over 12,000 committed Skill Partners across India who share a common vision of Duroply to see every household use branded plywood because of several benefits to the customers. Duroply remains steadfast in

its mission to provide innovative plywood and veneer solutions that enhance durability and elevate the standards of interior craftsmanship across the nation. As our nation embraces the festive spirit and looks forward to a prosperous future, Duroply reaffirms its commitment to core values of quality, durability, and partnership. The Holi Milan celebrations underscore the Company's dedication to these principles, offering gratitude to Skill Partners whose unwavering commitment has shaped Duroply's successful journey. Through initiatives like these, Duroply continues to prioritize the well-being and morale of its stakeholders, recognizing the team that shares the same values as that of the brand.

CAPSULES

Bharti Hexacom Limited Initial Public Offer to open on Wednesday

GURUGRAM : Bharti Hexacom Limited ("Bharti Hexacom" or "the Company"), shall open its Bid / Offer in relation to its initial public offer (IPO) of Equity Shares on Wednesday, April 03, 2024. The total offer size of Equity Shares of face value ₹ 5 each comprising an offer for sale of up to 75,000,000 equity shares by Telecommunications Consultants India Limited ("Selling Shareholder") (The "Offer For Sale"). The Anchor Investor Bidding date shall be Tuesday, April 02, 2024. The Bid/Offer will close on Friday, April 05, 2024. The Price Band of the Offer has been fixed at 542 to 570 per Equity Share. Bids can be made for a minimum of 26 Equity Shares and in multiples of 26 Equity Shares thereafter. The objects of the Offer are to (i) to carry out the Offer for Sale of up to 75,000,000 Equity Shares by the Selling Shareholder; and (ii) achieve the benefits of listing the Equity Shares on the Stock Exchanges. (The "Objects of the Offer") This Equity Shares are being offered through the red herring prospectus of the Company dated March 22, 2024 filed with the Registrar of Companies, Delhi & Haryana (The "RHP") and are proposed to be listed on the BSE Limited ("BSE") and the National Stock Exchange of India Limited ("NSE"). (The "Listing"). SBI Capital Markets Limited, Axis Capital Limited, BOB Capital Markets Limited, ICICI Securities Limited and IIFL Securities Limited are the Book Running Lead Managers to the offer ("BRLMs").

LocalCircles Survey: 42% of parents claim school tuition climbed 30-50% post-Covid

Delhi: Parents are concerned about rising tuition rates as schools reopen for the new school year. LocalCircles found that one in two parents reported fees rising by 30% or more in the preceding two years. It indicated that 8 percent of parents reported a fee increase of more than 50%, while 42 percent reported a 30-50% increase.

They said that new books and other educational fees at the start of a session increased this. It indicated that 8 percent of parents reported a fee increase of more than 50%, while 42 percent reported a 30-50% increase. They said that new books and other educational fees at the start of a session

increased this.

Data reveals that reputed private schools in tier 1 and 2 cities charge Rs 1 lakh to Rs 4 lakh for annual all-inclusive fees. Between Rs 50,000 and Rs 2 lakh in tier 3 and 4 cities. However, Action Committee Unaided Recognised Private Schools President Bharat Arora said that fee hikes have been "reasonable".

"The school managing committee decides how much to raise the fee—sometimes 9-10% or even 2%. No school can raise fees without DOE approval, he said.

The LocalCircles study contained 27,000 parent answers from 312 Indian districts.

WFI takes over sports when the panel is dismissed

Delhi: After the suspension on the national federation was lifted, the Indian Olympic Association abolished the wrestling ad-hoc committee, stating that "there is no further need" for it to continue. The national federation now has full administrative control over the sport.

According to IOA, the decision was also influenced by the way the trials for the Olympics qualifying event next month went. Last December, following WFI's suspension by the Sports Ministry, the panel was established.

CBSE removes 20 schools, including 5 in Delhi, for malpractices

Delhi: The CBSE revoked the affiliation of 20 Indian schools after they were found guilty of wrongdoing. Last December 21, the CBSE dispatched a two-member team to 34 schools to prevent sham candidates from being sponsored in the Board Exams. According to officials, 34 schools were inspected in one day, and many were found guilty of negligence. 11 schools received advice and 23 received show-cause warnings from the CBSE Affiliation Unit based on these



complaints. Board endorsed the decision late last year. The following Delhi schools lost affiliation: Siddhartha Public School, Bharat Mata Saraswati Bal Mandir, National Public School, Chand Ram Public Senior Secondary School, and Marigold

Public School. Two Rajasthan schools, Prince UCH Madhyamik Vidyalaya in Sikar and Global Indian International School in Jodhpur, and two Chhattisgarh institutions, Dronacharya Public School and Vicon School in Raipur, have lost their affiliation.

Kathua's Kartar Public School is disaffiliated in Jammu & Kashmir. Rahul International School in Thane, Pioneer Public School in Pune, San RNS Academy in Dispur, and Sardar Patel Public School in Bhopal lost affiliation in Maharashtra. In Uttar Pradesh, Loyal Public School in Bulandshahr, Trinity World School in Gautam Buddha Nagar, and Crescent Convent School in Ghazipur lost affiliation. Ryan Einstein International School in Uttarakhand.

The main causes of the rise of GATE qualifiers is the incorporation of AI and data science

Delhi: The number of people registering for the Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering (GATE) 2024 has increased due to a number of factors, including the return of traditional classrooms following the pandemic, increased knowledge of GATE's future prospects, and a strong desire for further education, research, and career opportunities in public and private sector organizations. With almost 8.26 lakh applications for 30 test papers, the exam saw a 23% rise in registrations over the previous year. 6,53,292 of these candidates showed up for the test. 1,29,268 candidates in total qualified on all GATE test papers in their respective categories, a continuous increase of more than 29,000 above the almost one

lakh candidates from the previous year. Experts speculate that the ability to select two-paper combinations and the addition of Data Science and AI (DA) as a topic paper may

have contributed to the increase. The addition of new and varied fields to GATE over the years has increased its prominence as a route to postgraduate programs in India and abroad by reflecting the changing needs of academia and industry. Therefore, the concentration in 2022 was on Environmental Science & Engineering (ES) and Humanities & Social Sciences (XH), whereas Geomatics Engineering (GE) and Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering (NM) were the new arrivals in GATE 2023. More than 50,000 applications were

received for the recently introduced DA paper, of which about 39,000 appeared and about 8,000 qualified in various categories, according to Chandra Sekhar Seelamantula, the organizing chair of GATE-2024 and a professor in the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore's Department of Electrical Engineering. "There are numerous reasons for the increased subscription to the GATE exam," he says.

The exam is becoming more and more well-liked in PSU (Public Sector Undertaking) and academic circles. According to Prof. Rajive Kumar, member secretary of the AICTE, the rising number of GATE applications is encouraging for postgraduate admissions.

Can Arvind Kejriwal manage Delhi from jail? Legal experts comment

Delhi: After Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal was remanded to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), who will lead the Delhi government? Atishi Marlena, Delhi's finance minister, has often suggested that Kejriwal will rule from prison. How feasible is this legally and practically? The 1951 Representation of the People Act prohibits parliamentarians convicted of certain crimes from office for six years. The Lieutenant Governor (LG) can recommend President's Rule in Delhi under Article 239 AB if there is a 'breakdown of constitutional machinery,' among other conditions. Saket District Court Advocate

Karambir Kamal says that I see no legal obstacle to Kejriwal running the administration from jail. However, being in detention makes public representation harder. When detainees cannot work as public representatives, the law will take effect. Practically every matter and paper requires jail administrator approval. Otherwise, Kejriwal cannot sign. Do not call a cabinet meeting there. Senior Advocate Mohit Bhardwaj says that Chief Ministers meet and sign files with their ministers. He'll accomplish that how? How will you handle the two visits a week jail rules allow? Someone will have to be appointed.

There is no legal, practical, or constitu-

tional way for a Chief Minister to govern from jail. Make a case for President's Rule if the government is headless. Elder Advocate Sumit Yadav Before conviction, MLAs might be suspended for appeal. An MP/MLA in custody can vote and attend the assembly. The presumption is innocence. Since the person is in custody, the court can allow such activities. Government cannot function without court approval. He needs authority to sign files, meet ministers, etc. The Supreme Court ordered Subrata Roy to negotiate the sale of Sahara properties from Tihar Jail, which had conference facilities. The Narada Scam in West Bengal last year led to the arrest and home

imprisonment of various Trinamool Congress politicians. The High Court authorized them to remain as ministers and bring paperwork to their dwellings for review and signing. Practically, it's hard yet achievable. Arvind Datar, Senior Advocate He is simply charged, not convicted. Anyone can be jailed to lose power otherwise. The court. can make provisions for him to serve as CM while he is in custody. The President can take over the administration if they believe it is not being done according to 239AA, but that might be contested in court. Wait and see whether the LG initiates President's Rule. while Kejriwal governs his administration from custody.

Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Hosts

New Delhi: The Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia hosted a heartwarming "Love Walk for Humanity" on the eve of Valentine's Day, February 14, 2024 curated and presented by Dr Sanjanaa JonThe Love Walk for Humanity aimed to transcend the traditional celebration of Valentine's Day by fostering love and compassion for humanity. In a world grappling with conflicts, attacks, and hatred, the event aimed to build a collective love for humanity, extending beyond personal relationships to include care for the environment, animals, and all aspects of life. Distinguished guests in attendance included Raghav Chandra, Managing Director, Audi Delhi South, H.E Demeke Atnafu Ambulo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to India.

Missing party flags at Rahul roadshow: Kerala CM says Congress afraid of BJP

NEW DELHI: Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan and state Congress leaders on Thursday traded barbs accusing each other of being afraid of the BJP. Vijayan said Congress and IUML flags were not used at Rahul Gandhi's road show in Wayanad yesterday as the grand old party was scared of the BJP. This evoked a sharp retort from the Congress leaders who alleged that Vijayan was afraid of Prime Minister Modi and was trying to please him. Chief minister Vijayan questioned the absence of party flags at Rahul's roadshow and said: "The Congress party wants



vote of IUML, but not their flag and for that, it decided to forego even its own flag. This act doesn't augur well."

Targeting the grand old party he said, "They got scared of the BJP because in 2019 when Rahul

came to file his nomination papers, the green flags of IUML and the Congress flags were tied together at the roadshow. The BJP used these pictures during the campaign in north India stating that these were Pakistani flags. Do the Congress

leaders here know what their party flag used to depict during the pre-independence struggle?" Vijayan also accused the Congress of helping BJP gain majority in Rajya Sabha and questioned the decision to field K C Venugopal, who is a

Rajya Sabha member from Rajasthan, from Alappuzha.

"Even though he has two more years before his term ends, he decided to contest from Alappuzha and this was done to ensure that in case he wins, then a by-election to the Upper House from Rajasthan will be held and the BJP will win it. At the moment the BJP doesn't have a majority in the Upper House and is short by four seats. This is being done to help the BJP, but the people at Alappuzha (where Venugopal is contesting) will ensure that his seat is intact in the Upper House as he will be defeated here," CM Vijayan said.

'People of Amethi expect me to represent their constituency,'

NEW DELHI: Robert Vadra, husband of Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi, on Thursday said people of Amethi expect him to contest from the constituency if he decides to take a plunge in electoral politics. Amethi was a traditional Gandhi bastion for a long time. However, in 2019 Lok Sabha elections, BJP's Smriti Irani defeated Rahul Gandhi ending the winning streak of Gandhis from the prestigious seat. "For years, Gandhi family worked hard in Rae Bareilly, Amethi and Sultanpur. Amethi wants a Gandhi family member to return. They expect me to represent Amethi if I decide to contest elections," Vadra told news agency ANI amid suspense over Congress's pick for the prestigious seat.

Vadra claimed that the people of Amethi were unhappy with their present representative Smriti Irani and felt that



they had made a mistake by electing her. The Congress, which will contest 17 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, has not announced candidates for Amethi and Rae Bareilly yet. UP Congress leaders have demanded that members of Gandhi family should contest from the two seats. Congress has already announced Rahul Gandhi's name from Wayanad, but there are demands that he also contest from Amethi.

Meanwhile, Rae Bareilly, which was represented by Sonia Gandhi for a long time, will also have a new Congress candidate as she has opted out of electoral politics

and entered Rajya Sabha. The state Congress leaders want Priyanka Gandhi to contest from Rae Bareilly. Sonia, who had represented Rae Bareilly since 2004, had informed voters that she would not contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls due to health and age issues. In a letter addressed to people, the 77-year-old had also thrown subtle hints of a possible entry of a member of her family from the constituency. "After this decision, I will not have the opportunity to serve you directly but my heart and soul will always remain with you. I know that you will stand by me and my family in the future.

West Bengal: ED conducts searches at TMC minister Chandranath Sinha's residence in Birbhum

KOLKATA: A team from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted searches at the residence of West Bengal minister Chandranath Sinha in Bolpur, Birbhum district.

The search is part of the investigation into an alleged school recruitment scam. The ED team, accompanied by central forces, arrived at Sinha's residence at 9.15 am to begin the search.

Sinha, who serves as the minister for MSME and Textiles in the



Mamata Banerjee government, was not present during the search as he was at his ancestral home in Murarai, 90 km away. "The search is in connection with the investigation of the alleged irregularities in the school recruitment scam. The minister is not present

at his residence, we are talking to his family," an officer said. Sinha had been previously summoned by the CBI in cases of cattle and coal smuggling. Meanwhile, the ED was also conducting raids at the homes of some businessmen in Kolkata.

State poll rout, netas' exodus make KCR go on a Vaastu overdrive

HYDERABAD: A strong believer in Vaastu, former Telangana CM and BRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao has decided to set his own house, party headquarters Telangana Bhavan, in order after last year's assembly election rout and a series of recent defections.

Work has started to shift the main entrance of the 60-room building in Hyderabad's upscale Banjara Hills to make it Vaastu-compliant in the hope this will alter the party's flagging fortunes. BRS bagged only 39 seats in the 119-member assembly last year. What worries it more is the spate of desertions of senior leaders like K Keshava Rao and Kadiyam Srihari to Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

The main entrance of the 40,000sqft Telangana Bhavan, built in 2005, is now on the north-west side. Another gate is now being made on the north-eastern side. A

ramp is also coming up on the north-eastern side for free movement of vehicles.

"Since the Bhavan has veedhi potu or T-junction (three roads meeting at a point right opposite the building which drains massive amounts of energy in Vaastu parlance), modifications are being made now to overcome the negative effect," a BRS leader said.

A senior leader, however, sought to play down the connection, contending that the north-eastern gate was being made to avoid inconvenience to commuters facing traffic jams on the busy Road No. 12, Banjara Hills. Interestingly, BRS (formerly TRS)

top brass had carried out some changes in 2014 and 2017 in the building, which also boasts a meeting hall that can hold 500 people. In 2014, internal walls and doors were removed or according to Vaastu principles.

Plans in place to maximise collection of property tax

New Delhi: With a few days left for this financial year to end, civic bodies, including Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Delhi Development Authority, have made arrangements to maximise property tax collection.

Except for Holi, the property tax offices will remain open on all days. Circulars, messages and notices have also been sent out in large numbers to motivate people to pay their pending dues. Till Friday, MCD's property tax collection was Rs 1,950 crore in comparison to Rs 1,862 crore till this point of time last year. The overall collection last year was Rs 2,417 crore.

"Unlike last year, there is no amnesty scheme in place this time. But, we are still making best efforts.

AP leader Raghav Chadha on extended stay in London; attends PMQs in parliament

CHANDIGARH: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national spokesperson and Punjab Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha has been in London since around March 8, it has emerged, even as opposition parties in Punjab are raising questions about his whereabouts. This comes at such a crucial time with the Lok Sabha elections approaching — and

now the arrest of Delhi chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal. Chadha spoke on March 9 at the London Indian Forum of the London School of Economics, where he himself studied and met his wife, Parineeti Chopra. On March 8, he tweeted: "Namaste England," presumably when he landed. On Wednesday this week, he watched UK PM Rishi

Sunak and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer battle it out at the weekly Prime Minister Questions from the Speaker's private gallery. Labour MP Virendra Sharma told TOI: "There were no meetings, he only attended PMQs. I am not aware of the purpose of his UK visit." Speculation is rife he is in the UK for eye surgery.

Focus on electoral fight, not court battle: SC

NEW DELHI: Supreme Court on Thursday refused to modify its order by which Ajit Pawar was allowed to use the Nationalist Congress Party name and the symbol 'clock' with the condition that wide publicity be given that the matter was sub-judice, while the rival faction headed by his estranged uncle and party founder Sharad Pawar was asked to use 'NCP- Sharadchandra Pawar' and the symbol of man blowing 'turha' (trumpet). A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan directed the warring factions of NCP to abide by its directions on use of party names, symbols and publication of disclaimers in all print and audio/visual advertisements, turning down the Sharad Pawar faction's plea for a fresh judicial intervention in view of Ajit Pawar's alleged non-compliance with the directive to use "disclaimers" about its control over the name and symbol of the undivided party being transient. With the rival factions persisting with their legal feud even when the election process was on, the bench said they should better concentrate on "something else"; that is, wrestle at the hustings. In an interim order on March 19, the court had allowed Ajit's faction to contest the Lok Sabha polls using the NCP name and the 'clock' symbol but directed the Election Commission to recognise the rival faction.

Govt to buy 50L tonnes of wheat from UP, Rajasthan, Bihar this yr

NEW DELHI: Robust wheat procurement during this year riding on a good harvest may put more 'rotis' on the plates of beneficiaries covered under free foodgrain scheme—PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojna (PMGKAY). Govt would review the mix of rice and wheat allocated to states for distribution to the 80 crore poor under the scheme depending on the procurement this year, which is estimated to be at least 310 lakh tonne.

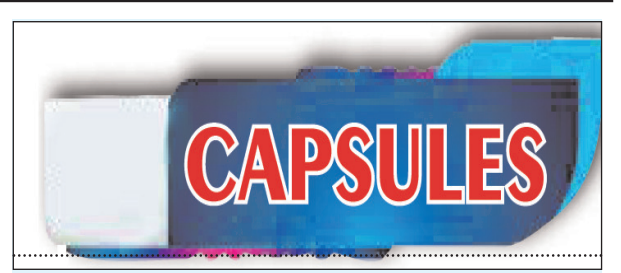
In response to questions on whether the ongoing election would impact wheat procurement, Union food secretary Sanjeev Chopra said they are confident

of achieving the target. On the possibility of more wheat allocation to states for PMGKAY, he said the increase in procurement of the winter crop this year—including from non-traditional states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar—would help govt to restore allocation of the foodgrain under the food security scheme. Govt has estimated procurement of at least 50 lakh tonne wheat from these states, an over seven-fold increase from last year. Govt had reduced wheat allocation and had increased the share of rice in May 2022 to avoid any scarcity-like situation amid sharp decline in

wheat procurement. The overall annual wheat allocation for the food security scheme and other welfare programmes was reduced to 184 lakh tonne from 230 lakh tonne, which has been continuing till date. Officials said the crop this year looks good and the pace of wheat procurement will gather momentum in the next two weeks. So far, 6 lakh tonne have been procured compared to 3.5 lakh tonne for the corresponding period last year. While wheat procurement at minimum support price (MSP) is normally undertaken by FCI and state agencies, this time govt cooperatives

Nafed and NCCF have also been roped in with a procurement target of 5 lakh tonne each.

"UP, Bihar, and Rajasthan have been contributing much less to the central pool than they could have. We have taken several steps to increase procurement from these states," Chopra said. These include starting procurement early, registration of farmers, increasing the number of procurement centres, aggressive targeting of production hotspots and drying facilities have been provided for early harvested crops. This is also being seen as a move to diversify.



Andhra Pradesh elections: TDP announces third list of 13 MP and 11 MLA candidates

VIJAYAWADA: The opposition has revealed its third list, disclosing the names of 13 MP and 11 MLA candidates. The TDP has named most of its candidates for both assembly and Lok Sabha. Out of the 145 assembly and 17 Lok Sabha seats being contested by the TDP in alliance with BJP and Jana Sena, candidates for 141 MLA and 13 MP seats have been announced so far.

Putting an end to the ambiguity over some of the key seats like Penamaluru, Sarvapalli, Narasaraopet, and Palasa, the TDP high command reposed faith in the existing in-charges. After much drama in the Penamaluru constituency in Krishna district, the TDP has finally given the ticket to the current in-charge, Bode Prasad, dashing the hopes of former minister Devineni Umamaheswara Rao, who lost the Mylavaram ticket to his rival and incumbent MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad, who switched sides from YSRC to TDP.

TDP chief N. Chandrababu Naidu did not announce the candidate for the Sarvepalli constituency in Nellore district, which is represented by former minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy.

There has been much speculation over a change of candidate in Sarvepalli given the poor track record of Chandramohan Reddy. However, the former minister managed to convince the high command and finally got the ticket. Similarly, in Narasaraopet, Chirala, and Palasa assembly segments, the TDP high command considered various options but finally reposed faith in the existing in-charges. While the Narasaraopet ticket was given to Dr. Chadalavada Aravind Babu, Chirala has been given to M. M. Kondiah Yadav, and Gouthu Sirisha retained Palasa. Interestingly, all three of them are from BC communities. The TDP is yet to announce its candidates in Etcherla, Cheepurupalli, Bhimili, Darsi, Rajampet, Alur, Guntakal, and Anantapur urban constituencies.

However, there will be some tweaks to these constituencies as the TDP has announced a candidate for the Srikakulam assembly, which was not there in the initial proposal. Jana Sena is likely to get one seat from North Andhra districts as part of the last-minute adjustments, according to sources. Similarly, in Rayalaseema districts also, one or two changes are likely to be made as part of the seat-sharing arrangement with BJP, said sources.

Disciplined Sunrisers Hyderabad cruise past Chennai Super Kings



HYDERABAD: Riding on a fine bowling effort that restricted Chennai Super Kings to 165/5, Sunrisers Hyderabad were well served by Abhishek Sharma's 12-ball 37 (3x4, 4x6) and Aiden Markram's half-century (50; 36b; 4x4, 1x6) as they notched up their second home win here on Friday. In contrast to the CSK innings, when stroke-making was difficult, the hosts feasted on the CSK attack that looked clueless in the Powerplay. SRH finished at 166/4 in 18.1 overs.

Abhishek, who notched up SRH's fastest half-century at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium against MI, changed the complexion of the game by hitting impact player Mukesh Choudhary for 27 in the second over. He then hit Deepak Chahar for a six and a boundary before being dismissed. Markram and Travis Head (31), who was dropped before he opened his account by Moeen Ali at first slip off Chahar, added 60 runs for the second wicket before he fell at

106 in the 10th over. By then, SRH needed less than run a ball. Markram and Shahbaz Ahmed fell to reverse sweeps but Heinrich Klaasen (10*) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (14*) ensured the hosts had no more hiccups. Earlier, Sunrisers bowlers stuck to a plan — take pace off the ball. Bhuvneshwar Kumar struck in the fourth over by dismissing Rachin Ravindra (12). It was Bhuvneshwar's first wicket of the season and he took 79 balls to get there.

One dropped catch and one expensive over...': Gaikwad on CSK's six-wicket loss to SRH

NEW DELHI: After Chennai Super Kings suffered a six-wicket defeat against Sunrisers Hyderabad in the ongoing Indian Premier League 2024, CSK skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad commended the bowling performance of their opponents, emphasizing their effectiveness in the latter stages of the game. Speaking at the post-match presentation, Gaikwad highlighted the challenges posed by the pitch at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium, describing it as slow, particularly due to its black soil composition. Despite starting well, Gaikwad noted SRH's ability to curtail CSK's momentum and prevent them from capitalizing on their early advantage. "I think to be honest, it was a slow pitch. They bowled well in the back end, kept the game in control and didn't allow us to capitalize. I thought we did well in the beginning (of the match), but they came back well later. It was a black soil pitch, so we expected the pitch to be slower, but it became slower and slower, and they used the boundary size well," Gaikwad said. Acknowledging the impact of



the batting powerplay, Gaikwad admitted that CSK conceded too many runs during that phase, further compounded by a dropped catch and an expensive over. However, he praised his team's effort in pushing the match to the 19th over, despite the formidable challenge posed by SRH. "We conceded too many in the batting PP, one dropped catch and one expensive over. Still, to take them to the 19th over was a great effort. I thought anything around 170-175 would've been a good total for us. There was a bit of dew towards the end, but Moeen got the ball to spin even in the

15th-16th over. So I don't think the pitch changed a lot during the course of the game," Gaikwad added. In the match, CSK posted a total of 165/5 in their 20 overs, propelled by contributions from Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, and Ajinkya Rahane. However, SRH chased down the target convincingly, with Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, and Aiden Markram leading the charge. With this victory, SRH climbed to the fifth spot in the IPL 2024 standings, while CSK occupied the third spot with an identical win-loss ratio but a better run rate.

(With inputs from ANI)

'I would not be wanting to be bowling to Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head'

NEW DELHI: Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins praised the formidable batting duo of Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head following their side's impressive six-wicket victory over Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League match. Cummins expressed admiration for their batting performances, admitting he would not relish the prospect of bowling to them given their exceptional form. CSK faced their second consecutive defeat in the ongoing IPL 2024 season after Abhishek's explosive knock and SRH's clinical bowling display led to a convincing win at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium. Reflecting on the match during the post-match presentation, Cummins remarked, "Different soil. It slowed up as the game went on. It was still a fantastic game. We have got plenty of fast bowlers. Shivam (Dube) was hitting the spinners. So we took a chance with the fast bowlers, bowling cutters.

Ask Shah Rukh Khan why did Kolkata Knight Riders not retain me?: Gill

NEW DELHI: India's batting sensation Shubman Gill was part of the Kolkata Knight Riders between 2018 and 2021, featuring in 58 matches for the two-time champions. However, after four seasons with KKR, Shubman wasn't retained by the franchise and was eventually acquired by the Gujarat Titans for a staggering Rs. 8 crore. During the Gujarat Titans' inaugural title-winning campaign, Shubman showcased his batting prowess, amassing 890 runs in 17 matches at an impressive average of



59.33. His remarkable performance included three centuries and four fifties, earning him the Orange Cap for being the leading run-scorer of the sea-

son. In a recent interaction with renowned singer Ed Sheeran, Shubman made a surprising remark that left social media buzzing and fans amused.

During their conversation, Shubman casually mentioned playing cricket for a team in the IPL owned by Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan. In response, Ed Sheeran said that he had plans to meet Shah Rukh Khan later for dinner. Shubman was quick to say: "Ask him why did they not retain me?". Ed Sheeran meets Shubman Gill & Tanmay Bhat. The exchange prompted laughter from Shubman, Ed Sheeran, and the host, creating a light-hearted moment.

'Was it to keep Dhoni indoors?': Former India batter after Cummins withdrew 'obstructing the field' appeal

NEW DELHI: Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins withdrew an appeal for obstructing the field against Chennai Super Kings' Ravindra Jadeja in a dramatic turn of events during the Indian Premier League match at Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on Friday, sparking a debate among cricket pundits. The incident happened in the 19th over of the CSK innings, when SRH pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowled a yorker to Jadeja, who jammed



it out towards the bowler. With Jadeja well outside his crease after playing the delivery, Bhuvneshwar threw the ball back towards the stumps and it hit Jadeja on the back. Jadeja was looking like trying to get out of the way of the throw, rather than getting in

the way to obstruct it. But the on-field umpires decided to refer it upstairs. SRH captain Cummins then came forward and withdrew the appeal. Sent in to bat first, CSK struggled to set a formidable total, managing only 165/5 in their 20 overs. Shivam

Dube's brisk 45 off 24 balls and Ajinkya Rahane's 35 off 30 balls were the main contributions, but the team faltered in the final five overs, adding just 37 runs. Former Indian cricketer Mohammad Kaif raised questions about Cummins' decision, stating, "Two questions to Pat Cummins on withdrawing the obstructing the field appeal against Jadeja. Was it a tactical call to let a struggling Jadeja be at the crease and keep Dhoni indoors?"

Bhuvneshwar surpasses Lasith Malinga, climbs up in IPL wicket-taking charts

NEW DELHI: Sunrisers Hyderabad's seasoned pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar achieved a significant milestone in the Indian Premier League 2024 by surpassing the legendary Sri Lankan bowler Lasith Malinga to become the sixth-highest wicket-taker in the tournament's history.



Bhuvneshwar's noteworthy ascent in the wicket-taking charts occurred during SRH's clash against Chennai Super Kings in Hyderabad. The veteran speedster made a remarkable impact by claiming a crucial wicket while conceding 28 runs in four overs, showcasing his mastery over the art of bowling. With this feat, Bhuvneshwar, who has donned the jerseys of both the now-defunct Pune Warriors India

and SRH in the IPL, has accumulated a tally of 171 wickets in 164 matches at an impressive average of 26.63. His exceptional career-best figures stand at 5/19. In contrast, Malinga, renowned for his lethal yorkers and prolific spells, registered 170 wickets in 122 matches for the Mumbai Indians, boasting an outstanding average of 19.80, with his best bowling performance being 5/13.

Pak prospect Usman Khan banned from UAE cricket for five years

NEW DELHI: Usman Khan, a batsman based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has been handed a five-year ban from Emirati cricket after he attended a Pakistan training camp with the apparent intention of representing his country of birth. Despite residing and playing cricket in the UAE with the aim of representing the Gulf nation, Khan's participation in the Pakistan training camp came after a string of impressive performances in the Pakistan Super League, where he scored back-to-back centuries. The 28-year-old's decision to join the Pakistan camp has resulted in repercussions from the Emirates Cricket Board, which found him in



breach of his obligations. Consequently, Khan has been slapped with a five-year ban from Emirati cricket, reflecting the seriousness with which the governing body views his actions. "After a detailed investigation, Usman was found to have misrepresented to ECB about his decision to play for the UAE team and has used the opportunities and

development provided by the ECB to him to seek out other prospects." The ban imposed on Khan, which comes at a critical juncture reportedly just 14 months short of fulfilling the residency requirement to represent the UAE, effectively sidelines him from participating in domestic tournaments such as the ILT20 and Abu Dhabi T10,

both held in the country. With his pathway to UAE cricket blocked, Khan now sets his sights on representing Pakistan in the upcoming T20 series against New Zealand and securing a spot in the squad for the T20 World Cup scheduled to take place in the United States and the West Indies in June.

(With AFP inputs)

Punjab Kings' Shashank Singh gets platform to express himself

Finally, Shashank Singh is in the news for the right reasons. Last year, during the IPL auction in Dubai, Punjab Kings bid successfully for Shashank but then tried to persuade the auctioneer, Mallika Sagar, that it was a mixup on their part. 'A case of mistaken identity'. The hesitation on the part of Punjab Kings' owners transpired as there was another player by the name of 'Shashank Singh' who went under the hammer and was unsold. The 'other Shashank' was a Bengal player, while the one under the spotlight was Chhattisgarh batsman Shashank, who had played for Sunrisers Hyderabad and been a member of Rajasthan Royals and Delhi Daredevils squads in previous IPLs. The bid was complete and the auctioneer refused to reverse the process. As conjectures and theories started circulating on social media.