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

## Congress, DMK insult Hinduism, stay mum on other faiths: PM Modi

“The INDIA alliance is repeatedly and deliberately insulting Hinduism. They are planting thoughts about Hinduism...”



**SALEM:** PM Narendra Modi hit the campaign trail in Tamil Nadu on Tuesday with a double takedown of Congress and DMK, calling them “two sides of the same coin” and wondering why they “insult” Hinduism at every opportunity but choose not to say anything about other religions. “The INDIA alliance is repeatedly and deliberately insulting Hinduism. They are planting thoughts about Hinduism...How can we tolerate this, how can we allow this?” he said in Salem, a day after his diatribe against Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi for his allegedly disparaging references to ‘Shakti’. “Those who set out to

eradicate Shakti (manifestation of the female divine) will get destroyed. Their end will begin on April 19 (polling day in TN).” DMK proceeded to highlight everything that he said was fundamentally wrong with the two parties’ alliance in TN. “DMK-Congress means big corruption, DMK-Congress means one-family rule,” he said. “Congress being routed at the Centre allowed India to progress to 5G technology. But in Tamil Nadu, DMK is running its own 5G scheme, which is basically one family

maintaining its grip on the state for the fifth generation.” “Muqabla 4 June ko ho jaaega”: Modi’s fiery response to Rahul Gandhi’s ‘shakti’ remark sparks political showdown. The PM said this was the same ‘5G family’ that once ‘sullied India’s name’ with the 2G scam. “If I had to list DMK’s misdeeds, it would require an entire day. Our BJP-led govt at the Centre has been sending crores for TN’s development, only to see all of it looted by the DMK regime,” he said. Picking up from where he left off at Karnataka’s Shivamogga on Monday, Modi said Congress and its allies, such as DMK, were set to be decimated in the Lok Sabha polls starting next month. Modi’s Salem visit saw him share the dais with NDA ally and PMK founder S Ramadoss, his son and party president Anbumani Ramadoss, former AIADMK coordinator O Panneerselvam, AMMK founder T T V Dhinakaran and Tamil Maanila Congress president G K Vasan. PMK will contest 10 of 39 Lok Sabha seats in TN as part of a deal finalised on the sidelines of the rally.

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## No stay on CAA process, but SC seeks govt’s view

**NEW DELHI:** Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to interrupt the fast-tracked grant of citizenship to members of six persecuted minority communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, ignoring a chorus of passionate pleas from petitioners who sought a stay of the recently notified Citizenship (Amendment) Act Rules. These 20-odd petitioners have also challenged the validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Mishra calmly heard a crowd of counsel including Kapil Sibal, Indira Jaising, Rajeev Dhavan, Vijay Hansaria, Sidharth Luthra and Mohd Nizamuddin Pasha, who vied with each other to get the court to pause the process, but declined to come in the way of the govt. The court refused to stay the process and



sought the Union govt’s response in three weeks. It posted the applications seeking stay of operation of CAA Rules for detailed hearing on April 9. Sibal argued that that processing of applications under CAA for grant of citizenship be put on hold during the interregnum. “There should not be any hurry to grant citizenship under CAA as govt itself waited for four years and three months to notify CAA Rules,” he said. He requested the court to at least incorporate in the order issuing notice to the Union govt that any grant of citizenship during pendency of the petitions would be sub-

ject to the court’s final decision. “Otherwise, it is very difficult to reverse citizenship granted to a person. Therefore, the process should not start. If they waited for this long, why can’t they wait till July when the petitions can be heard fully and finally. Otherwise, make it subject to the decision of the court,” Sibal said. But the court did not incorporate the requested line in its order issuing notice. Solicitor general Tushar Mehta questioned the locus of the petitioners, and said none of them was going to either lose citizenship or be affected by implementation of CAA, which is meant to grant

citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians from the three neighbouring Islamic countries who have entered India before Dec 31, 2014. ‘Diwali’ in Pakistani Hindu refugee camps across the country as Centre notifies CAA rule. If there was a host of senior counsel for those opposing CAA, the SG got support from senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi, Ranjit Kumar and Mahesh Jethmalani. Kumar said he was appearing for a Hindu from Balochistan, who had entered India before Dec 2014. “What harm will it cause to anyone’s rights if he is granted citizenship?” he asked. Jethmalani said he would file a response on behalf of a Hindu organisation from a neighbouring country. Indira Jaising appeared to articulate the petitioners’ real fear when she raised her voice and said, “If these people are granted citizenship under CAA.

## In first such conviction, encounter specialist gets life for killing gangster

**MUMBAI:** Citing a ballistic expert’s cogent evidence and holding that former Mumbai police officer Pradeep Sharma headed an “illegal squad”, Bombay high court on Tuesday convicted him in the 18-year-old fake encounter killing of Ramnarayan Gupta, alias Lakhan Bhaiya, an alleged Chhota Rajan gang member. Sentencing Sharma to life imprisonment, HC directed him to surrender in three weeks. It is the first conviction of a police officer in an encounter case in Maharashtra. “The prosecution on its own steam and merit has also proved that Ramnarayan was killed by police, by trigger-happy cops... It is crystal clear that a fake encounter was given the colour of a genuine one,” said the court. Screenshot 2024-03-20 024624 Can’t let guardians of law act as criminals in uniform, says HC A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Gauri Godse set aside as perverse Pradeep Sharma’s 2013 acquittal by the sessions court. “The guardians of law cannot be permitted to act as criminals in uniform. If this is permitted, it would lead to anarchy.” The sessions court failed to see the “overwhelming evidence” against Sharma, said HC, holding the acquittal unsustainable. On Nov 11, 2006, Ramnarayan (33) and his friend Anil Bheda were abducted from Vashi, five bullets were pumped into the former and the alleged encounter was shown to occur at a park in Versova, Andheri (W), a special investigation team said. Ramnarayan’s brother, advocate Ramprasad, said: “Finally justice has prevailed. By using muscle and money power one can delay justice but cannot deny it.” The case and trial against the 22 accused were for abduction, murder and criminal conspiracy, among other offences.

## India had world’s 3rd worst air in ’23, Delhi foulest capital

**NEW DELHI:** India was ranked the third most polluted country and New Delhi the most polluted capital by the 2023 World Air Quality report by Swiss technology company, IQAir. The latest report by the company that provides live information on major air pollutants globally, also found Begusarai in Bihar as the most polluted city globally last year. The report, released Tuesday,



showed Bangladesh and Pakistan were the top two most polluted countries in 2023. India showed a relative decline as the country was ranked 8th in 2022, an improvement from

2021 when it had the 5th rank. IQAir said 13 of the 15 most polluted cities in the world in 2023 were in India with Begusarai, Guwahati and Delhi being the top three. At the same time, some Indian cities made the list for the right reasons. Silchar in Assam (7th), Aizawl in Mizoram (8th) and Damoh in Madhya Pradesh (15th) figured in the list of the least polluted cities in the

central and south Asia region, home to many polluted cities in the world. In 2023, only 10 out of the reporting 134 countries succeeded in achieving the WHO annual particulate matter PM2.5 standards of 5 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m3). Exposure to PM2.5, one of the key pollutants, leads to and exacerbates numerous health conditions, including asthma.

## Indian Air Force activates another road stretch as an emergency airstrip

**NEW DELHI:** Activating another road stretch to function as an airstrip for military purposes if required, IAF has conducted operations of supersonic fighter jets and transport aircraft on an emergency landing facility (ELF) on national highway-16 in Andhra Pradesh. Sukhoi-30MKI fighters and Hawk advanced jet trainers successfully carried out “low over-shoots”, while AN-32 and Dornier transport aircraft landed and sub-



sequently took off from the airstrip near Addanki in Bapatla district on Monday. Such ELF airstrips with “reinforced cement concrete construction” on national highways or expressways can provide operational flexi-

bility during conflicts, alternate runways for emergency landings and help humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) missions in far-flung areas, a senior officer said. The 4.1-km long and 33-meter wide airstrip on NH-16 was constructed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) as per IAF specifications. It’s the fourth such ELF out of the 28 identified by IAF for military operations.

## Salon owner kills two minor brothers, accused killed in encounter

**BAREILLY:** A salon owner barged into the house of his neighbour and killed his two minor sons aged 13 and 6, in UP’s Budaun district. Soon after the incident, a heavy crowd gathered and set a few shops on fire while demanding action against the accused. Later, the accused was killed in a police encounter. The incident was reported at around 8 pm when Mohd Sajid (22), who runs a salon shop in Baba colony of Budaun city barged into the house of contractor Vinod Thakur and killed his sons--Ayush (13), Ahaan alias



Honey (06) -- with a sharp weapon. Vinod’s third son Piyush (8) was also attacked and was slightly injured. He was taken to the hospital. Since the accused belongs to another community, tension prevailed in the city and locals gathered

towards a place of worship in anger however, the situation was timely controlled by police. The reason behind the incident is still unknown. Later SSP Alok Priyadarshi informed the protesters that Sajid was killed in a

police encounter. Sources in police said that there was some dispute over money which led to the incident. SSP told, “Sajid, a resident of Alapur area of Budaun, had brutally murdered two minor siblings and was hiding in a forest area.

## ‘Mockery of voters’: SC on rebels getting party name on House tally

**NEW DELHI:** SC in an interim order Tuesday allowed the former to hit the hustings using party name and the symbol ‘clock’ but directed EC to recognise the rival faction as ‘NCP- Sharadchandra Pawar. and reserve symbol of ‘man blowing turba (trumpet)’ for it. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan also directed Ajit’s faction to give notice in newspapers stating that the matter pertaining to legal fight over the symbol is sub judice and is subject to the final outcome of the case. It said that the faction should mention it in all its pamphlets or audio/video advertisement meant to attract voters.

## Inflation isn’t down to 4% yet due to food prices: RBI

**MUMBAI:** RBI is yet to achieve its target inflation rate of 4% despite bringing down core inflation driven by frequent food price hikes, the central bank’s State of the Economy report said. It said that inflation readings for Jan and Feb show that the easing of vegetable prices in the winter was short-lived. Meanwhile, meat and fish have registered a surge, and cereal prices have maintained their strong momentum. “Fuel prices remain in deflation, and this may get pronounced in March due to reduction in the price of LPG. Overall, headline inflation’s momentum turned positive in Feb 2024, offsetting a favourable base effect. Accordingly, monetary policy has to remain in a risk-minimisation mode, guiding inflation towards the target while sustaining the momentum of growth,” the report said. Screenshot 2024-03-20

042501. According to the report, inflation is likely to be impacted by changes in per capita consumption patterns. “The share of food items in the monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) has declined from 52.9% to 47.5% in rural areas and from 42.6% to 39.7% in urban areas between 2011-12 and 2022-23, with cereals recording the most significant decline. Within food, however, there has been a rise in the share of high value food products such as fruits, milk and prepared meals. “Since the shares of consumption form the weights for calculating CPI (the current CPI derives its weight from the 2011-12 HCES), these changes could impact the measurement of retail inflation,” the report said. “The global economy is losing steam, with growth slowing in some of the most resilient .

## Lok Sabha elections: PMK gets 10 seats in NDA's Tamil Nadu seat sharing

**CHENNAI:** Ending several days of speculation, the PMK on Tuesday signed an agreement with the BJP to contest in 10 constituencies for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The agreement was signed hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to address a public rally in Salem, in which all the political leaders who are in alliance with the BJP are expected to share the stage with the PM.

The agreement was signed by PMK founder S Ramadoss, PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss, and BJP state president K Annamalai in the presence of Union minister of state for fisheries L



Murugan at the Thailapuram residence of Ramadoss.

The decision to join the NDA was taken by the PMK at their district secretaries' meeting held late on Monday in Thailapuram. After the meeting, PMK's general secretary Vadivel Ramanan, while speak-

ing to reporters, confirmed the alliance with the BJP.

In the 2014 election, PMK contested in eight constituencies in NDA and won a single seat from Dharmapuri. However, in 2019, the PMK was part of the AIADMK-led alliance in which the BJP was also

part. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the PMK contested in seven seats and drew a blank. After the confirmation of the alliance, the BJP leaders went all the way from Coimbatore to sign the agreement with the PMK leaders. After signing the agreement, Anbumani,

speaking to reporters, said, "PMK has been part of the NDA in Delhi for 10 years from 2014. In the upcoming Lok Sabha election, the PMK has decided to be part of the alliance in Tamil Nadu."

"Considering the good governance of PM Modi and for positive changes in Tamil Nadu, we have taken the decision. There is hatred among the people against the parties who have been ruling the state for over 60 years and to change the scenario we have decided to join hands with the BJP," Anbumani said. The PMK president also expressed confidence that Modi will be elected as the PM for the third time.

## NCB grills Jaffer Sadiq to ascertain fund diversions



**CHENNAI:** Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) sleuths, who brought the alleged international drug cartel kingpin Jaffer Sadiq to Chennai on Monday, grilled him, his relatives and friends on where and how he had invested the proceeds from his illicit drug business. On Saturday, NCB recorded the statement of Jaffer Sadiq's brother Saleem in Delhi, sources said. The NCB team took him to a few locations in Triplicane before taking him to NCB headquarters in Ayapakkam near Ambattur. All these locations were used by Jaffer and his team, they said.

After hours of questioning, he was taken to the airport on Monday evening, so he can produce before the court in Delhi on Tuesday, said official sources. The Patiala Court, on Saturday, extended Jaffer Sadiq's custody to NCB till Tuesday. Besides the Saleem, NCB also inquired another suspect in the same case on Saturday. "We recorded his statement for further investigation," said NCB sources. NCB recently arrested Sadiq's close aide Sadanandam and searched a house in Perungudi. Sources said

Jaffer Sadiq's men used the house to pack pseudoephedrine along with packets of ragi and cocoa powder. They seized shipment bills of several consignments from Tamil Nadu to Delhi. NCB's operations team and Delhi police used a godown they used to hoard pseudoephedrine and arrested three persons. Based on their confession, NCB arrested Jaffer Sadiq, who spearheaded the network, from a hideout. Until then, he was known as a movie producer and businessman, holding a party post in DMK's NRI wing.

## Kolkata building collapse: 9 and still counting: Parade of bodies comes out from Garden Reach rubble

**KOLKATA:** Syed Mustafa Ali (48) was unable to fathom whether he should thank his luck or cry over his destiny as a last-minute nudge by his wife to head to the market saved him when the neighbouring illegal building on Garden Reach Road crashed on his home, killing his wife, brother and sister-in-law.

"I just went out to buy some food for Sehri around 11 pm. When I was returning, I got a call from a neighbour that this building had collapsed on our home and that all my



family members are trapped inside. I ran home but it was nowhere visible. I sat right there for three hours before they pulled out my wife's body around 3am. My sister-in-law was the next to be pulled out in another hour and by Monday afternoon, they pulled out my brother," said

Ali, sitting on the pavement of Unipon Hospital in Paharpur where his niece and her son were admitted. Ali's wife Shama Begum (44) and his sister-in-law Haseena Khatun (55) were the first two to be pulled out dead. Bodies of Rizwan Alam (23) and Akbar Ali (34), who lived next doors, were pulled out by Monday morning. By afternoon, the death toll increased to seven when rescuers had pulled out bodies of Md Wasik (19), Md Imran (27) and Mustafa's brother Ramzan Ali (60).

## Curious case of the 'missing' East-West Metro passengers in Kolkata

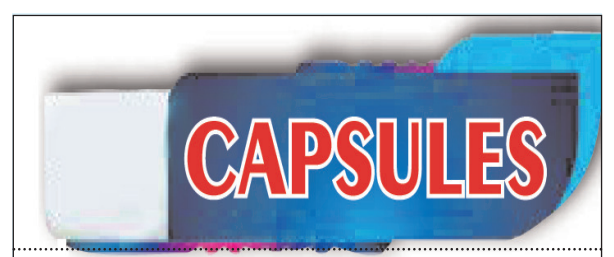


**Kolkata:** A curious case of passenger mismatch has emerged underground with Metro Railway officials noticing a significant disparity in the number of people buying tickets to ride in the East-West Metro and the actual riders on its trains. That is because thousands entering through Howrah Maidan for joyrides are buying single journey tickets but taking multiple rides without disembarking from the train. Officials said even if the registered ridership on Day One was 70,204, the actual number of rides could have been well past a lakh. "On Saturday, an ideal weekend for joyrides on India's first under-river Metro, the

actual passenger count must have been around 80,000 and not 67,240," mused an official. A train on the Esplanade-Howrah Maidan line takes the same tunnel (either the Sector V-bound or the Howrah-bound) on returning from Esplanade to Howrah Maidan because there is no crossover for switching tracks at Esplanade. "The passengers from Howrah Metro station continue to sit in the train after it reaches Esplanade and halts for a few minutes. Then they return to Howrah Maidan or Howrah, viewing the blue LED-lid under-river stretch for the second time. All on a single ticket," the official said.

**Got Congress invite: Karnataka ex-CM Sadananda Gowda as fresh wave of dissent hits BJP**

**BENGALURU:** Yet another wave of discontent ran across Karnataka BJP ranks as former chief minister and Bangalore North MP, DV Sadananda Gowda, openly voiced his dissatisfaction after being denied a ticket by his party for the Lok Sabha elections. Gowda's dissent follows another senior party functionary, KS Eshwarappa, recently. Gowda, 71, said he would make his next course of action known on Tuesday, adding that there is nothing more left to justify the claim that BJP is a "party with a difference". Addressing reporters on Monday, Gowda revealed he had been approached by Karnataka Congress leaders with an invitation to join their ranks.



## Poor frequency leads to fewer takers for Ruby & Majerhat lines

**Kolkata:** The 5.4km new Metro corridor in the Ruby-New Garia and 8 km Joka-Majerhat stretches had less number of commuters during peak hours on Monday as compared to the East-West Metro thrown open to the public last Friday. One of the key reasons is frequency. While the Ruby-New Garia stretch ran at a 20-minute frequency with two rakes being in operation, Joka-Majerhat had an even worse frequency of 50-minute intervals with one of the two rakes still being non-operational.

"Unless the frequency improves, I cannot rely on the Metro. If I buy a ticket and reach the platform, I may need to wait 50 minutes. I can reach my destination in that period," said Arup Sandhukhan who commutes from Barisha to Dalhousie daily. Sk Tajuddin, a resident of Dum Dum, who had come to Paribahan Bhavan-2 near Ruby intersection for a work, said, "I took the Metro along EM Bypass for the first time. It is easier to reach my home by taking the Metro. But the frequency of the Metro services in the Ruby-New Garia stretch needs to be improved. I can reach the nearest station of the North-South corridor by the time a Kavi Subhas-bound train comes at Hemanta Mukhopadhyay station."

Some students of schools in Kasba were found availing the Metro. Sayam Chandra, a class XII student of DPS Ruby Park and a resident of Mukundapur, said, "When I came to school around 6.30 am, there was no Metro. I rode the Metro for the first time on Monday. But this service won't be of much help till the waiting time to get a train is reduced." Sudipta Chakraborty, a Southern Avenue resident and an IT employee, said, "I took a ride in the new Metro today to see whether I could reach office in a short time. I came to Kavi Subhas station from Rabindra Sarobar and then took the Ruby-bound Metro. I will take a shuttle from Ruby intersection to reach my office in Sector V. The Ruby-New Garia Metro service is good but the 20-minute wait after the departure of a train is a problem."

## You have a responsibility to your art, to ask difficult questions

**T M Krishna** reflects on receiving Sangita Kalanidhi award, his efforts to democratize Carnatic music, and advocating for cultural change. He emphasizes humility, impact measurement, and coping with resistance while staying true to art.

## Bengaluru cops seize explosives from vehicle moving close to school: TV

**Bengaluru:** Bengaluru Police said on Tuesday morning that they seized explosive items and gelatin sticks in a major haul after the city was struck by an IED blast three weeks ago.

According to TV reports, the explosive materials were dis-



covered on Sunday night, concealed within a tractor locat-

ed dangerously close to a school.

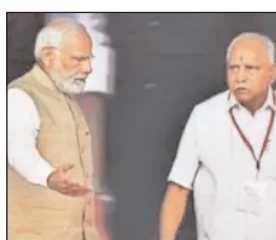
Electronic detonators were also uncovered, all found to be unregistered.

An FIR has been registered against the tractor owner at the Bellandur police station. Authorities are currently investigating the incident.

## To keep or discard, BJP's dilemma over BS Yediyurappa

**BENGALURU:** Former chief minister BS Yediyurappa has long been both a strength and a weakness for BJP, presenting the party with a perplexing challenge as the current turmoil over ticket distribution shows.

Senior functionaries say the party high command has given him control since it knows that, without him, the party is unlikely to fare well in the Lok Sabha elections. But his elevation has led to much resentment this time. "The Yediyurappa factor is a double-edged sword," a senior BJP functionary said. "His influence within the party and among voters, especially from the Lingayat community, is undeniable. Yet, this very influence has led to conflicts within and accusations of nepotism, which have caused rifts." Yediyurappa's leadership and his political acumen and mass appeal have helped BJP secure victories but reliance on his leadership has also exposed the party's vulnerability, particularly when efforts to broaden its social base have been less successful.



## Maharashtra specifies role of govt nominees in autonomous colleges' board

**MUMBAI:** In a govt resolution issued on Monday, for the first time, the state has enlisted the role of government nominees in autonomous colleges in the state. While govt nominees were always there on the board of autonomous colleges, their roles were never explicitly defined. From attending every meeting of the governing body to ensuring their budget comprehensively reflects all aspects, the nominee is now expected to be the eyes and ears of the government in the truest sense. There are over 70 autonomous colleges affiliated to



Mumbai University alone. A govt nominee is usually an educationist, not below the rank of a professor or a govt officer in the directorate of higher education or the state council of higher education. They are expected to be the link between the institutions and the govt. The GR mentioned that

specifying their duties and responsibilities was being considered for a long time by the govt and therefore the guidelines have been issued. An official from the department said that the idea is to bring in more efficiency in the process and to get proper feedback from the nominees about

what is happening on ground. The official added that the govt is defining the role of their nominees even in private universities and not autonomous colleges alone. The nominees are expected to attend all the board meetings and also to inform the govt in advance if they are unable to. It also seeks their participation in the strategic decision-making processes with regards to enhancing colleges' academic quality. They should convey the govt's vision and priority areas to the board and also ensure the compliance of government policies

## Four Naxalites killed in encounter with security forces in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli

**NEW DELHI:** Four Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security forces in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra on Tuesday. The superintendent of police in Gadchiroli, Nilotpal, said that the security teams encountered gunfire from the Naxals during an early morning search operation in the Kolamarka mountains.

"A credible intelligence was received on Monday afternoon that some members of Telangana state committee have crossed Pranhita river from Telangana into Gadchiroli with an aim to carry out subversive activities during the Model code of conduct period of upcoming Lok Sabha elections," Gadchiroli SP said. In response, multiple teams including C60 and CRPF QAT were dispatched from Aheri Sub Police headquarters led by Additional SP Ops Yatish Deshmukh for area searches.



"One of the teams comprising of 4 C60 parties while searching today early morning in Kolamarka mountains 5 km SE of SPS Repanpalli were fired indiscriminately by Naxals, which was retaliated strongly by our C60 teams. After the firing stopped and the area was searched, 4 male naxal dead bodies have been recovered," Gadchiroli SP added. The recovered items included weapons and personal belongings.

Among the deceased were high-ranking Naxal leaders DVCM Vargeesh and DVCM Magtu. The operation also targeted platoon members Kursang Raju and Kudimetta Venkatesh, all of whom carried a combined cash reward of 36 Lakhs as declared by the Maharashtra government, SP said. Following the encounter, search and anti-naxal operations are underway in the region.

## Paytm acquires five UPI addresses

**Delhi:** The parent firm of Paytm, One97 Communications, a prominent fintech business, has partnered with four banks to acquire five UPI handles. State Bank of India (SBI), Yes Bank, Axis Bank, and HDFC Bank are these four banks. An update to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) website earlier this week indicated that this calculated step guarantees the continuation of UPI transactions for Paytm users. Of these, the well-known and currently in use @paytm is still up and running, so users can carry on with their transactions as usual. In addition, in collaboration with Yes Bank, NPCI has approved the



creation of the closed user group UPI handle @ptyes. The NPCI has also approved two additional handles: @ptsbi (in conjunction with State Bank of India) and @pthdfc (in association with HDFC Bank). These handles won't become active right away, though. Users can utilize the @paytm handle

without any issues, according to a Paytm representative. This event follows the clearance of Paytm's third-party application (TPAP) provider permit by NPCI. SBI, Axis Bank, Yes Bank, and HDFC Bank are collaborating to provide continuous UPI services for Paytm's user base.

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## CAPSULES

### Rahul Gandhi lying, says Ashok Chavan reacting to 'weeping' claim

**MUMBAI:** A day after Congress politician Rahul Gandhi's critical remarks, former chief minister Ashok Chavan, now a Rajya Sabha member from BJP, described the comments as baseless and illogical. "Rahul Gandhi did not mention my name. If he is referring to me, then I will describe his remarks as baseless and illogical. Let me make it clear, before joining BJP I did not meet Congress leader Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi. In fact, till the last moment, I was working in the Congress office, working on the seat-sharing formula. What Rahul Gandhi said is a lie. Rahul Gandhi's remarks are factually incorrect. It is just a political stunt in view of the forthcoming Lok Sabha election and to embarrass me," Chavan said. Chavan said that before joining BJP, he resigned from the assembly and, a few hours later, quit the primary membership of the party. Addressing a public meeting at Shivaji Park, Rahul Gandhi said a senior leader from Maharashtra, whom he did not want to name, left Congress and wept in front of his mother, Sonia Gandhi.

### Fire safety steps missing, JLN Stadium told not to host events

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi fire department has written to the administrator of Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (JLN) to stop using the premises for sporting events and functions due to a lack of fire safety measures. The fire safety certificate of Samrat Hotel in Chanakyapuri has also been cancelled over non-compliance with fire safety regulations. The hotel management, however, said it hasn't received any notice.

## Kolhapur-Gaganbawda h'way work to hit trees

**Kolhapur:** Over 1,250 trees on the Kolhapur-Kale stretch will be felled for the first phase of the ongoing road widening works of the Kolhapur-Gaganbawda national highway (166-B). Many important medicinal and rare trees like terminalia, pinnata, bur-flower, shalmali, jamun, fig, banyan, peepal, baheda will be cut for this activity. The Kolhapur to Gaganbawda route was recently transferred from the Public Works Department (PWD) to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for the four-laning of the highway. Large scale passenger traffic from Kolhapur to Konkan-Goa occurs on this route. Shubham Patil, junior engi-



neer of NHAI said, "More than 1,250 trees between Shingnapur phata till Kale section of Kolhapur-Gaganbawda NH will be cut in the first phase of road widening works in the district. The forest department has also approved of the same.

The assigned contractor for the works has shortlisted reserved forest land at Bazarbhogaon village where he will be planting saplings. The contract will not complete unless the plantation is done. We will look to it that the trees get planted accordingly."

The assigned contractor for the works has shortlisted reserved forest land at Bazarbhogaon village where he will be planting saplings. The contract will not complete unless the plantation is done. We will look to it that the trees get planted accordingly."

A villager from Kale, Sachin Patil said, "It is said that five trees will be planted in place of one tree getting cut during the highway works. But in reality, the authorities plant saplings which does not grow. This road stretch offers a canopy of trees that should be preserved."

Anil Chougale from Nisarg Mitra, an NGO for the environment said, "The banyan trees on this stretch are nearly a 100 years old. Plantation should be done from the seeds of different tree varieties. The social forestry department should consider this on priority. Mass plantation of various Indian native trees should be carried ahead of the monsoon."

## Switched to 'patriot' to save democracy: Uddhav

**Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar:** Amid criticism from opponents, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Monday defended his opening remarks of "patriot" at the Mumbai rally. "Since we have to save democracy and the country, I switched to 'deshbhakt (patriot) and deshpremi (country-loving) brothers and sisters'. As soon as I said this, the BJP got rattled. Modi-bhakt is claiming that my language has changed. I want to ask these bhakts whether they are patriots or not," he said, while addressing a public rally at Basmat in Hingoli district. Thackeray usually starts his addresses with the phrase: "Hindu brothers and sisters". However, on Tuesday, Thackeray had started his speech with "brothers and sisters of my family". Chief minister Eknath Shinde is among those



who have criticized Thackeray over his opening remarks during the Mumbai rally. Terming it a "black day", Shinde questioned why Thackeray omitted the 'Hindu' reference. Targeting BJP over the electoral bond issue, Thackeray said a "big hammer" has dealt a blow to the party, but it is shameful. "The BJP has become a gang that officially uses govt machinery to extort money.

## Dissent within Mahayuti over likelihood of ticket for Mandlik

**Kolhapur:** The likelyhood Kolhapur sitting MP Sanjay Mandlik's candidature has caused dissenting voices to emerge within the Mahayuti parties. This time, the local BJP functionaries are opposing Mandlik, who is expected to contest on a Shiv Sena ticket once again. Sangram Kupekar from Gadhinglaj tehsil, who is a member of BJP state executive council, told his supporters to request local BJP leaders to call deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, and urge him not to give the ticket to Mandlik again.

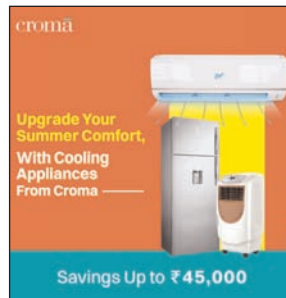


a big mistake by supporting him against Dhananjay Mahadik. The sitting MP never visited many of the villages even once after the 2019 polls." Recently, district BJP leaders claimed they have sought one of the two seats — either Kolhapur or Hatkanangle — for BJP in Mahayuti's seat sharing arrangement. They said BJP has never contested from any of these seats before, and if it does contest this time, it would help

expand the party's base. The name of district BJP president Samarjitsinha Ghatge was also doing rounds for some time as a possible Mahayuti candidate against Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaj, who is likely to contest on a Congress ticket. Dhananjay Mahadik, BJP Rajya Sabha MP, told the media: "All Mahayuti parties should refrain from making such statements. The Mahayuti parties have decided to contest the polls together and everyone must think before issuing any statement. There is no need to panic. There is still some time to go for the Kolhapur polls as the voting will take place in May. There is adequate time to think about seat distribution and candidate selection." Mahadik said that as per his knowledge, both seats are likely to stay with Shiv Sena.

## Unlock the Magic with Croma's Summer Campaign 2024 - Spectacular Offers on Air Conditioners, Refrigerators, Room Coolers, and more!

**Gurugram:** Croma has announced its Summer Campaign, till May 2024. With the onset of summer, the most awaited Summer Sale presents the perfect opportunity for customers to prepare their homes to combat the rising temperatures with the latest gadgets with irresistible deals and ease of payment. Consumers will find 1.5 Ton Split ACs starting at just Rs 1,500 across stores and croma.com. Customers can bring any electronics and take home a new AC. Enjoy the benefits up to INR 45,000 and other benefits on an extensive range of 250+ air conditioners, 300+ refrigerators, room coolers, and fans with attractive exchange and upgrade options, cashback offers, and flexible EMI plans of up to 24 months. The offers



include Inverter Split ACs starting from just INR 24,990, providing an affordable way to keep your home cool and comfortable, and also has exchange benefits of up to INR 6,500 on ACs. Room Coolers are available from Rs.4,500 ideal for those looking for cost-effective cooling solutions. For those interested in premium cooling, the LG INV/AC 1.5 Ton 5-star AC, originally priced at INR 91,990, is now available for just INR 53,490, delivering savings up to INR 45,000. Additionally, the Bajaj PMH 18 DLX Room Cooler is now offered

starting at INR4,500, making high-quality cooling more accessible, convenient, and affordable. Customers can also take advantage of up to 24 months of Easy EMI on refrigerators, making it easier than ever to upgrade your kitchen appliances. Croma Own Label offers mega deals on its host of cooling appliances. Get a Croma BLDC Fan complimentary with every Croma Inverter AC for efficient cooling. With a Croma Side-by-Side Refrigerator, get Croma Coffee Maker at no extra cost. Choose a Croma Water Purifier and get a Croma Air Fryer complimentary, for healthier cooking. Buy a Croma Cooler and get a complimentary Croma 750W Mixer Grinder. Additionally, enjoy No Cost EMI for up to 18 months.

## Jaleel to contest from Aurangabad, says Owaisi

**Jaleel to contest from Aurangabad, says Owaisi** Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: Putting an end to speculations of Aurangabad MP Imtiaz Jaleel contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Mumbai, All India Majlis-E-Itehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi on Monday announced Jaleel's candidature from Aurangabad again. Owaisi took to X and announced that his party's candidate from Kishanganj (Bihar) and Imtiaz Jaleel would contest from Aurangabad. Owaisi himself will contest from Hyderabad. During a media interaction in Hyderabad, Owaisi said: "In addition to these three candidates, party's state presidents in Maharashtra, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are working on finalising the number of seats to be contested. We will make an official announcement." When contacted, Jaleel said: "I thank the people of my constituency for letting me represent them in Parliament for five years. I did my best to raise the voice of the common people and fought hard against the wrong govt policies. Now, I will again approach people and if they feel I have done good work, then they would definitely stand with me. My initial two years as MP were lost because of Covid. Hope people will give me an opportunity to continue serving them." Jaleel, after winning the MLA elections in 2014, contested and won the LS elections against Shiv Sena's Chandrakant Khair with a narrow margin in 2019 elections. He had openly expressed desire to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls from Mumbai (North Central). Jaleel had cited communal violence on Thane's Mira Road during the Ram temple consecration, followed by civic body's action of demolishing several 'encroachments' that mostly belonged to Muslims, as the reasons for his desire.

## Editorial

### Why is Mamata going after CAA?

Does a forensic analysis of 'district-wise' data on 'religious composition in India' give us a better understanding of the significant demographic changes underway in the country? Does it enhance our grasp of the ground realities that might not be perceptible solely through national-level or state-level aggregate figures? A recent paper published in EPW by scholars Shamika Ravi, member of the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to the Prime Minister, Mudit Kapoor of Indian Statistical Institute, Sunil Rajpal of Flame University, Pune and SV Subramanian of Harvard University, provides an empirical answer to the question by scrutinizing the differential in growth rates across religions at the district-level. For their research, the scholars have considered Indian census data on religion from 2001 to 2011, which remains the latest and only available set of data on the population of religious groups. This is also the set of data used by American think tank Pew Research Center for its 2021 study of India's religious demography in states and Union territories. We already know going by the relevant Census data from 2001 and 2011, that India's population grew by 17.7 per cent during this period. Hindus remained the dominant religious group. Their population share dropped from 80.46 per cent in 2001 to 79.8 per cent in 2011, a decline of approximately 0.7 per cent. The decline seems negligible. In comparison, Muslims grew 13.43 per cent in 2001 to 14.23 per cent in 2011, an increase of 0.8 per cent which again appears marginal. In terms of rate of population growth, Muslims were the fastest at 24.6 per cent, followed by Hindus at 16.8 per cent. These numbers, however, argues the paper, conceal more than they reveal. To dissect the religious composition of a billion-plus people, the authors pore over the changes in religious composition across all 640 districts in the country, to "find that the share of the population of a religious group appears to depend on the differences in growth rates across religions (and not on the absolute growth rates of any given religion) and the baseline share of religion in the previous period." They add that "similar growth rates across religions will still generate different compositions in the districts, underscoring the importance of understanding religious composition in contextual terms." With general elections approaching in weeks, what better than the unfolding political theatre to illustrate the points being made by the authors? Let's turn to the ongoing debate over the recently implemented Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) to demonstrate how demographic changes in India are affecting social and political narratives. I'll need to digress a little. The CAA was passed in 2019 but on March 12 this year, the Narendra Modi government at the Centre notified the rules for its implementation and has made operational a web portal through which applicants may apply for Indian citizenship. The CAA facilitates the granting of Indian nationality to non-Muslims (Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians) from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan who suffered religious persecution in the Muslim-majority Islamic nations and were forced to migrate to India before December 31, 2014. Religious persecution, crimes against women, forced conversion and daily discrimination are well-documented realities in these countries neighbouring India. For instance, according to a 2013 report by the US-based think tank Hudson Institute, "At the time of Partition in 1947, almost 23% of Pakistan's population was comprised of non-Muslim citizens. Today, the proportion of non-Muslims has declined to approximately 3%."



## Shehbaz Sharif government slowly gritting its teeth to tackle economic crisis

As the dust settles from Pakistan's most controversial and least credible general elections in a while, the Shehbaz Sharif-led coalition government of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), supported by the People's Party of Pakistan (PPP) from outside, is slowly gritting its teeth to tackle the difficult economic crisis facing the nation. While the delay in declaring results by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), involving alleged fudging of tallies from Form 45 (Polling Officer's initial count) to Form 47 (Returning

Officer's compilation), contributed to lack of the February 8 election's credibility, majorities could be cobbled in the National Assembly (NA) and provinces, especially Punjab comfortably enough. In the 336-member NA, the PML(N) has 122 seats (with 73 directly elected, 34 Women and 5 Minority members), the PPP 71 (54 direct, 16 Women and 3 Minority), the Mohajir/Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM - Pakistan) 22 seats (17 elected, 4 Women, 1 Minority) while in the Opposition, the Sunni

Ittehad Council (SIC)/ Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has 87 seats (all elected). The latter's claim for reserved seats was rejected, both by the ECP and the Peshawar High Court. Eight MNAs preferred to continue as Independents. In the 371-member Punjab Assembly, the PML(N) obtained 193 seats while PTI/SIC could get 98 seats, the PPP 13 and the PML (Quaid e Azam) (PML-Q) 10 seats. Nawaz Sharif's daughter, Maryam was appointed Chief Minister. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the PTI/ SIC

had a landslide 87 seats out of 145, with the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazlur Rehman) emerging as the next largest party with only 17 seats. Cocking a snook at the military establishment, Imran Khan nominated Ali Amin Gandapur, one of his party's prominent hardliners involved in the 9 May, 2023 anti-Army demonstrations, as the new KP Chief Minister. The 168-member Sindh house saw the PPP comfortably win again with 84 seats, with MQM-P emerging second largest (28 MPAs). Murad Ali Shah was appointed CM again.

# Why America needs a nuanced understanding of Indian diplomacy?

The ambitious dreams of the grand US-India strategic partnership and bonhomie always get punctured by Washington's discomfort with New Delhi's stance on issues of critical geopolitical importance to the US. REUTERS/File Photo During the early phase of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, India faced tremendous pressure from the West, particularly the US, to align with the US-led Western bloc and condemn Russia in unequivocal terms. However, India maintained its principled stand of strategic neutrality, calling both sides for the 'immediate cessation of hostilities', 'end to the violence,' and to 'return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue'. India's position discomforts many Western capitals, particularly Washington. In today's polarised geopolitical discourse, India's hallmark diplomatic behaviour on various global conflicts, which turns out to be a tightrope balancing between the rival power blocs and nations, does not sit well with the Western International Relations theoreticians and foreign ministries. The discomfort and unease in bilateral relations can be witnessed in the India-US relationship. Despite an array of technological and strategic agreements like BECA, LEMOA, and COMCASA, and



the common consensus on the emerging challenge of Chinese revisionism, one finds that there is an acute sense of misunderstanding and lack of trust between New Delhi and Washington. These frictions are visible in several instances, be it the US sermonising India on so-called democratic backsliding, press freedom, minority issues, and human rights; or the recent diplomatic stand-off between Canada and India over the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar with alleged Indian involvement; or US accusations of the Indian agencies conspiring to kill Khalistani extremist Gurupatwant Singh Pannun. The ambitious dreams of the grand US-India strategic partnership and bonhomie always get punctured by Washington's discomfort

with New Delhi's stance on issues of critical geopolitical importance to the US. Today, when Chinese revisionism presents a common challenge to both the US and India, both countries do not see eye to eye on many issues, and one hardly finds any steam in the India-US partnership besides purely transactional technology, defence, and intelligence sharing agreements. On closer scrutiny of the facts, it seems that the US is not able to understand the nature and roots of India's diplomatic behaviour. This lack of understanding comes from the fundamental difference in the geopolitical thought of India and the Western world. The expert voices in the Indian establishment feel that due to this lack of understanding on the part of the US, the US is not able to

accept India's geopolitical posturing. At the same time, in crosshairs with India on issues of democracy, human rights, minorities, and the recent Canada-India row, it is perceived as a bully in Indian popular perception. The US needs to understand that India's stance on the Ukraine issue is not a novelty; instead, in essence, it has always been there, after the emergence of India as a sovereign nation. During the Cold War, India adopted a non-alignment policy, refusing to align with the Western and Soviet power blocs. However, by the 1970s, India came closer to the USSR because of the overt American support to Pakistan over the Bangladesh issue and the resultant India-Pakistan war. Also, with Russia, India shared socialist sentiments and a rich civilisational connect. Despite this tilt towards the Soviets, India reasonably maintained its strategic autonomy. Deeper analysis of India's history and civilisational ethos suggests that in the Indian world view on statecraft, foreign policy, diplomacy, and war, there is hardly any place for seeing the world in terms of the binaries. India's historical and civilisational experience has not witnessed the division of the world into alliances and blocs based on ideological

differences. The concepts of 'isms' and 'us' versus 'them' were not entirely absent; however, they were never the dominant vectors. Likewise, the hegemon exercising an overarching influence over the weaker states based on sheer and brute power is also not a characteristic feature of Indian strategic thought. Indian thought places a high premium on multipolarity in global affairs, where the states retain strategic autonomy and the freedom to pursue independent foreign policy based on their geography, core national interests, and values. In such a set-up, the powerful states, or so-called hegemon in Western parlance, do exist, but one rarely comes across the hegemon exercising overriding powers over the weaker states, conquering them by force, blatantly interfering in their internal affairs, forcing humiliating treaties and alliances upon them, and dictating values and beliefs on them. Not that such aggressive hegemons have not existed and conquered territories in ancient Indian history, but such behaviour was not accepted as the standard and mainstream behaviour of a powerful state. The best example of India's multipolar international relations set-up comes from the 16 Mahajanapadas of the Vedic era.

## End of Swedish 'neutrality': NATO's eastward expansion further antagonises Putin's Russia

On March 7, 2024, Sweden became the 32nd country to join NATO, giving up on its 200-year-long policy of neutrality in wartime. Sweden's policy of neutrality was deeply rooted in the minds of all Swedish citizens. The Cold War politics were animated by ideological differences between the US and Soviet Union. The ensuing bipolarity in the structure of international politics wasn't enough to bring Sweden on board with its European counterparts in NATO. While various political crises and military conflicts have struck so many parts of the world—from Korea, the Soviet-Chinese border, Afghanistan, and Iran to Central Europe and

Berlin—Northern Europe has existed in a state of relative calm (Astrom, 1989). Sweden had successfully sailed through two World Wars and the Cold War on the policy of neutrality. Sweden's foreign policy has a moral orientation. Sweden's active foreign policy of international peace, developmental aid, activism for disarmament, and criticism of human rights abuses provides its foreign policy with a normative international outlook. Sweden's aggressive great power past stands in marked contrast to its peaceful small power status today. It was only after the defeat at the hands of the Russians in 1809 and the subsequent

installation of Baptiste Bernadotte that Sweden began to transform its role from an aggressive military power to a more modest actor in international relations (Kruzel, 1989). The principle of neutrality strived to create the best possible conditions for Sweden to stay out of the military conflict in Northern Europe. The other purpose of the neutrality policy was to stabilise Northern Europe. The geography has doomed tough foreign policy choices for Sweden. The country has to avoid coming under the influence of a nearby superpower while also not becoming an outpost of the other superpower (Astrom, 1989).

## 'A Keralian is worth 1.8 Rajasthanis': Delimitation is the final barrier to real democracy in India

"One person, one vote" is the fundamental principle on which all democracies are based. That fundamental principle was enshrined in the Indian Constitution adopted on 26 January, 1950. But in a clear contradiction of the wisdom of India's founding fathers, it no longer applies today. Indira Gandhi ended the equal representation of the people of India in 1977, India's politicians endorsed unequal representation in 2002, and the Supreme Court of India seems to believe that unequal representation is consistent with the basic structure of the Constitution. As a result, every Keralian is now worth approximately 1.8 Rajasthanis, and everyone in Tamil Nadu has the vote of 1.6 Biharis. Andhra, Odisha and Telangana similarly get extra votes, while Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh come up short. Proponents of unequal representation in India claim that states should be rewarded for limiting population growth. By that reasoning, they must also be penalised for having dynamic economies that attract internal migrants. That's the story in Delhi, Haryana and Maharashtra. The entire fertility argument is as specious as it is anti-democratic. After 1977, fertility fell no faster in the south than in the north. It started out lower and it ended up



lower. In fact, the decline in fertility rates—the policy outcome that was used to justify unequal representation—has actually been more rapid in the north than in the south. In reality, everyone knows why India's political class has agreed to freeze representation at 1977 levels. It's to ensure that no politician's seat will be pulled out from under his or her you-know-what. And it keeps the peace by buying off petulant southerners who would otherwise raise a fuss over tax transfers. There is, after all, a strong correlation between per capita income and Lok Sabha overrepresentation. Richer people pay more taxes and it's easy for them to believe that that entitles them to more representation. In a democracy, it doesn't. India is the world's only democracy that violates the principle of one person, one vote. Strangely, the international democracy rankings don't seem to mind. Like India's own intellectuals, they seem happy with the idea of unequal representation, as long as the people getting the extra representa-

tives are relatively rich, relatively well-educated and relatively on their side of politics. Unequal representation is nothing new. The English Parliament used to be famous for its "rotten boroughs"—electorates that still returned representatives based on Medieval populations who no longer lived there. They were eliminated by the Great Reform Act of 1832. The redrawing of constituencies is always controversial in the UK, but it is always done as the population changes, as it is in every other democracy. Except India. Nearly two centuries after England's Great Reform, India still has not returned to the principle of one person, one vote. India's founding fathers understood this principle and embraced it. It is the one major blot on the record of Indian democracy that the current crop of Indian politicians cannot see their way to embracing the wisdom of their predecessors. Some overrepresentation in very small states and Union Territories is inevitable. That's part and parcel of the workings of a federal system.

## No-Detention Policy Scrapped For V, VIII

**New Delhi:** Directorate of Education (DoE) has removed the 'no-detention policy' for classes V and VIII from the academic session 2024-25.

According to the new rule under the 2022 promotion policy, the students of classes V and VIII must score 25% marks in the mid-term exams and 33% in the annual exams to get promoted to the next class. The students who fail to pass can take a re-exam. Those who can't secure 25% marks in the re-exam, too, will be held back in the same class, the guidelines stated. After Parliament abolished the no-detention policy through an amendment to the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 in Jan 2019, Delhi govt implemented its 2022 promotion policy last year. On Friday, DoE instructed all heads of govt, govt-aided and unaided recognised private schools in the city to follow the new norms.



The students of all other classes will still come under the 'no-detention policy'. "The purpose of the policy has failed, hence its withdrawal was necessary. Teachers were expected to conduct comprehensive assessments, but there was a failure on the part of both govt and teachers," Ashok Agarwal, advocate and RTE activist, told TOI. "This failure contributed to dropouts, leading to child labour," he claimed. Sudha Acharya, principal of ITL Public School, however, said, "Students were not truly focused on education as they believed

they would be promoted to the next class regardless of their performance. This led to complacency among parents, students and even teachers, reducing accountability." She added, "It is not true that the removal of the no-detention policy will increase dropouts. Instead, now that students of classes V and VIII must score at least 33% marks to be promoted, they will feel incentivised to strive towards excellence." Acharya also underlined the importance of support classes and vigilance for low-achieving students, along with improve.

## Curious case of the 'missing' East-West Metro passengers in Kolkata

**Kolkata:** A curious case of passenger mismatch has emerged underground with Metro Railway officials noticing a significant disparity in the number of people buying tickets to ride in the East-West Metro and the actual riders on its trains. That is because thousands entering through Howrah Maidan for joyrides are buying single journey tickets but taking multiple rides without disembarking from the train. Officials said even if the registered ridership on Day One was 70,204, the actual number of rides could have been well past a lakh. "On Saturday, an ideal weekend for joyrides on



India's first under-river Metro, the actual passenger count must have been around 80,000 and not 67,240," mused an official. A train on the Esplanade-Howrah Maidan line takes the same tunnel (either the Sector V-bound or the Howrah-bound) on returning from Esplanade to Howrah Maidan because there is no crossover for switch-

ing tracks at Esplanade. "The passengers from Howrah Maidan or Howrah Metro station continue to sit in the train after it reaches Esplanade and halts for a few minutes. Then they return to Howrah Maidan or Howrah, viewing the blue LED-lid under-river stretch for the second time. All on a single ticket," the official said.

## Temperature starts moving up, air quality still moderate

**NEW DELHI:** The city saw a warm day with dry winds and clear sky. The weather department expects the maximum temperature to rise further as the warming trend of summers advances. The minimum temperature too increased slightly. India Meteorological

Department (IMD) expects the maximum temperature to reach 33 degrees Celsius within a day or two. "Temperature will not rise rapidly but gradually. There is possibility that the maximum temperature may reach 33 degrees Celsius within next four days. The rea-

sons are majorly clear sky and no western disturbance which will cause rain or clouding," said Kuldeep Srivastava, weather scientist, IMD. On Monday, the minimum temperature was 12.2 degrees Celsius, four notches below normal against 11.9 degree Celsius a day earlier.

## CAPSULES

### Man gets RI for sexually harassing minor online

**New Delhi:** A court here has sentenced a 34-year-old man to five years of rigorous imprisonment for sexually harassing and criminally intimidating a minor on a social networking site.

The court said it is the responsibility of society to protect children from exploitation by cyberstalkers or cyberbullies, observing that the psychological scars of childhood sexual abuse deeply impact the lives of innocent children. Additional Sessions Judge Susheel Bala Dagar was hearing a case against convict Akhilesh Kumar who was booked under provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Noting the submissions of public prosecutor Yogita Kaushik Dahiya, the court said it was proved that Kumar chatted with the minor after creating a fake identity, made sexually coloured remarks, and contacted or followed her online despite the girl's clear disinterest.

### CP Radhakrishnan appointed as governor of Telangana

**HYDERABAD:** Jharkhand governor CP Radhakrishnan got the additional charge of Telangana, replacing the Tamilisai Sounderarajan. The orders were issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday. Radhakrishnan's appointment marks the third instance of Telangana having a governor from Tamil Nadu.

The first governor, Narasimhan, and the second governor, Tamilisai Sounderarajan, were also from Tamil Nadu. Radhakrishnan, a two-time member of parliament from Coimbatore as a BJP candidate, assumed the governorship of Jharkhand in 2023.

## Poor frequency leads to fewer takers for Ruby & Majerhat lines

**Kolkata:** The 5.4km new Metro corridor in the Ruby-New Garia and 8 km Joka-Majerhat stretches had less number of commuters during peak hours on Monday as compared to the East-West Metro thrown open to the public last Friday.

One of the key reasons is frequency. While the Ruby-New Garia stretch ran at a 20-minute frequency with two rakes being in operation, Joka-Majerhat had an even worse frequency of 50-minute intervals with one of the two rakes still being non-operational. "Unless the frequency improves, I cannot rely on the Metro. If I buy a ticket and reach the platform, I may need to wait 50 minutes. I can reach my destination in that period," said Arup Sandhukhan who commutes



from Barisha to Dalhousie daily. Sk Tajuddin, a resident of Dum Dum, who had come to Paribahan Bhavan-2 near Ruby intersection for a work, said, "I took the Metro along EM Bypass for the first time. It is easier to reach my home by taking the Metro. But the frequency of the Metro services

in the Ruby-New Garia stretch needs to be improved. I can reach the nearest station of the North-South corridor by the time a Kavi Subhas-bound train comes at Hemanta Mukhopadhyay station." Some students of schools in Kasba were found availing the Metro.

## Govt collecting reports to develop illegal colonies

**New Delhi:** Delhi govt has started working on making an elaborate plan to develop unauthorised colonies in the city. It has sought reports from different departments on four parameters—status of solid waste management, condition of roads, nature of borewells and condition of sewer. Govt has started collecting data from different agencies concerned, including Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Public Works Department, on all these parameters. After the data collection is done, a fresh push on redevelopment will be given.

## Delhi govt decides to extend excise policy again by one more year

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi govt has decided to extend the current excise policy for one more year. The excise duty-based policy regime, which transferred the retail liquor business from private entities to govt-run corporations, was implemented in Sep 2022 and was extended twice after that, in Apr 2023 and again in Oct 2023. A senior Delhi govt official said there was no immediate need to make any changes in the excise policy at this stage when several provisions of the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22 were under the scanner of investigating agencies. Implemented in Nov 2022, the Excise Policy of 2021-22 was touted as a progressive one but it had to be scrapped after Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered a case against alleged irregularities in its formulation and imple-



mentation. The excise department on Saturday issued an order saying that the competent authority had granted its approval to extend the policy for the year 2024-25 for granting the wholesale licences. Sources said asimilar order for the retail licences will be issued soon. Under the current policy regime, there are 684 liquor vends in the capital run by Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC)

## JNU teachers condemn 'disruption' of lectures

**NEW DELHI:** Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association (JNUTA) on Monday strongly condemned the alleged disruption caused during the lectures of Nivedita Menon at Gangadhar Meher University and Sambalpur University in Odisha. She was invited to deliver the lectures at these universities on March 12 on the occasion of International Women's Day. Nivedita Menon is a writer and a professor of political thought at JNU. "While her talk at GMU titled 'Feminisms for the 21st century' was disrupted after she had spoken for about 15 minutes of her inaugural talk by a handful of people—mostly outsiders to GMU—who shouted slogans to intimidate Menon and



prevented her from speaking, her online talk at Sambalpur University was not allowed to be streamed," JNUTA stated. In its statement, the association voiced concerns over "the increasing trend of intimidation targeting scholars across the country, particularly in Odisha". "The disruption and intimidation of Menon by anti-academic elements is a grave

assault on academic freedom," JNUTA stated, adding that "it is extremely worrying that attendees were forced to leave, depriving them of the opportunity for dialogue and exchange of ideas." The teachers' association further demanded police action against the perpetrators and urged the two universities to issue strong statements over the incidents.

## Job fraud haunts OPT students in the US

**Amid** the global recession, consultancies are cheating Indian students — those on F1 visa in the United States — of their hard-earned money, in the name of jobs. According to some, students who are on Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Curricular Practical Training (CPT) are being made to cough up \$500 to \$700, or even more, under the pretext of getting a job. However, there's no trace of any employment once the fee is paid. Gaming Students on F1 visa have two options — CPT and OPT, to gain practical training. Social networking platforms are flooded with such posts, warning students against this scam. "I lost USD 600 to one such company. They promised to provide training and refund the money once I get placed," said an MS student adding that the company did not do anything except forwarding his profile to a few consultancies. "When I asked for a refund, they stopped responding to my messages and calls," added the student. Another computer science student, who is on OPT, said: "I paid \$600 as I was assured of training and placement within two months. But neither was I trained, nor did I get



placed. I lost my money." Some, however, got lucky — thanks to these online posts. "I had recently submitted my profile and recently I got an email to deposit \$700. But, I chose not to pay the money," the student said, adding how it was because he'd seen posts about it. Reiterating the warning, many students said that it is best to avoid a firm if it asks for a deposit and guarantees a job within a certain period. "As an international student, we are often filled with fear, anxiety, and a sense of urgency leading us to take steps that could cost big bucks. I've been targeted by companies/career coaches/advisors claiming to guarantee a job in 60 days. To me if you are guaranteeing you are bogus," said a student from New York. Another student added, "Some websites target international students by advertising non-existent job opportunities.

## Man lures astrologer with property deal, rapes her in Delhi; non-bailable warrant issued

**NEW DELHI:** A 36-year-old astrologer has alleged that she was sexually assaulted by a man on the pretext of a property deal in south Delhi. A non-bailable warrant has been issued against the suspect and raids are on at different places to arrest him. The woman, in her complaint filed last month, stated that her family is known to the accused's family. "In Jan, she contacted the 40-year-old suspect regarding the sale of a property of someone she knew. He then visited the woman's house and assured her that he could help in selling the property," a police officer said. The suspect claimed to be a property dealer, which is being investigated. The suspect learned that the woman was an astrologer. He then gained her trust by calling her under the pretence of wanting to learn more about astrology. One day, he contacted the woman and took her to his friend's house in Neb Sarai, apparently to finalise the property deal. "The woman claimed that he mixed something in her drink and then sexually assaulted her," the officer said. A case under sections of 328 (causing hurt by means of poison, etc., with intent to commit an offence), 376 (sexual assault) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of IPC was registered. "We are conducting raids to nab the accused," he added. (The victim's identity has not been revealed to protect her privacy as per Supreme Court directives on cases related to sexual assault)



## 'Virat crucial for T20 World Cup, will make runs in IPL'

**HYDERABAD:** Former chief selector of the Indian cricket team MSK Prasad opined that Virat Kohli would be crucial for India's fortunes in the upcoming T20 World Cup, beginning in June.

With news of selectors mulling to ignore the former Indian captain doing rounds, Prasad debunked the theory and said that Kohli and Rohit Sharma will have a crucial role to play in the mega event.

"Kohli is crucial for India in the T20 World Cup. The selectors can't think that IPL is a place for him to prove his quality. He was never out of the team for his form. He missed India matches because of family reasons. He has been in form for a long time. He will make runs in this IPL as well," Prasad told the official broadcasters of IPL, on Monday. He also added that everyone wants to see MS Dhoni for as many years as possible. "At 42, Dhoni is still playing for CSK which shows his commitment to the team.



**"He will make runs in this IPL as well," Prasad told the official broadcasters of IPL. He also added that everyone wants to see MS Dhoni for as many years as possible"**

Playing for a single franchise for so many years, he has made a huge impact on the team and on fans. He played the entire league with injury to his leg and won the title," he added. Former Indian women's captain Mithali Raj said that 2016 champions Sunrisers Hyderabad have a very good side, but it would be crucial for them to pick the right playing XI for desired results. "With

new captain (Pat Cummins) and new players coming in, there will be expectations from SRH. However, it is important to choose the right overseas players. They have quality players," she added. MSK asserted that the current SRH team is the best they have had so far. "Playing four foreign players from a pool of such talent is tough. The present team has the best overseas players. The good domestic bowling unit can allow balance to the side by bringing foreign batters into the playing XI," he explained. Meanwhile, former India cricketer Y Venugopal, who is also part of the commentary panel for the season.

## Mumbai Indians sweat over Suryakumar Yadav's fitness

**MUMBAI:** The Mumbai Indians are clearly worried about Suryakumar Yadav's availability for the initial matches of the IPL.

Suffering from a sports hernia injury which required surgery, Surya has been out of action since the T20I series against South Africa in December. The world's No 1 T20I batsman is currently recuperating at the NCA in Bengaluru. "He has been batting in the nets. Tomorrow (Tuesday), he will have his first 'open net' session. He will go through some fielding drills too. Depending on how his body reacts to it, the BCCI's medical team



will then assess whether he's fit to return to action," a source told. MI will play their first match against Gujarat Titans on March 24 in Ahmedabad. 'Match made in heaven' Meanwhile, MI coach Mark Boucher felt that the equation between Sri Lanka's pacer Nuwan Thushara, who was bought by MI for Rs

4.8 crore in the auction, and their new bowling coach Lasith Malinga was a "match made in heaven," since they possess a similar action. "They come from the same country, they have the same action, it's a match made in heaven. He is the perfect coach for Nuwan and I think they both are in a very good space," Boucher said.

## Perth to host India's first Test against Australia in November: Report

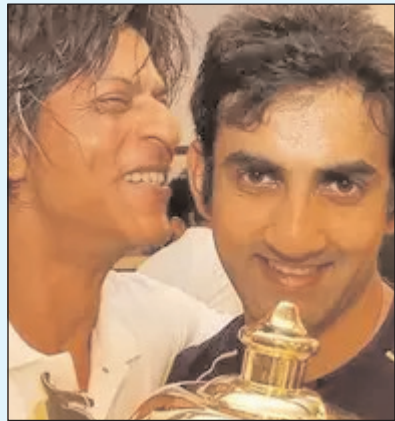
**NEW DELHI:** Perth has been selected as the venue for the opening Test of the eagerly awaited five-match series, scheduled for India's tour of Australia later this year. As reported by the 'Sydney Morning Herald', Adelaide, Brisbane,

Melbourne, and Sydney have also been chosen as venues for this highly anticipated blockbuster series. "Adelaide will host the second Test and Brisbane the third, with the Boxing Day and New Year's Tests keeping their traditional time slots in Melbourne and

Sydney," the report said. Also See: Watch IPL Live in USA The Adelaide Test will be a day-night affair. Cricket Australia is yet to come out with its schedule for the next season but a final announcement is expected by the end of this month.

## 'I am a very tough guy...': Gautam Gambhir reveals conversation with Shah Rukh Khan

**NEW DELHI:** Gautam Gambhir's leadership was instrumental in the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) emergence as a dominant force, clinching two IPL titles over the past decade. Now, Gambhir, who is known for being "tough to handle," is determined to reignite joy among their devoted yet somewhat disheartened fans. Gambhir took over the reins of KKR during the fourth IPL season in 2011, following the team's lackluster performances in the initial three years. Under his guidance, KKR made it to the knockouts in his first year and went on to secure two titles between 2012 and 2014. After consecutive seventh-place finishes in recent sea-



sons, Gambhir's return is anticipated to infuse renewed vigor and discipline into the squad. With KKR's seventh-place finishes in the last two seasons, mentor Gambhir's presence is expected to inject fresh vigour and discipline into the squad.

## Pakistan cricketer Imad Wasim caught smoking in dressing room

Following his stellar performance in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) final against Multan Sultans at Karachi's National Bank Stadium on Monday, Pakistan all-rounder Imad Wasim was discovered smoking in the dressing room. Wasim played a pivotal role in Islamabad United's clinching of their third PSL title. He delivered a five-wicket haul, restricting Multan Sultans to 159/9, and later contributed an unbeaten 19 runs to secure the successful run chase.

## AC Milan consolidate second spot in Serie A, match at Atalanta postponed

AC Milan solidified their grip on second place in Serie A with a 3-1 victory over Verona, capitalizing on Juventus's draw with Genoa. Meanwhile, Fiorentina's match against Atalanta was postponed due to the sudden illness of their general manager, Giuseppe 'Joe' Barone. Goals from Theo Hernandez and Christian Pulisic before and after halftime respectively put Milan in a commanding position, with Samuel Chukwueze adding a third late in the game.



The win pushed Milan three points clear of Juventus in the race for Champions League qualification. Despite trailing Inter by 13 points, Milan are on track to secure a spot in next season's revamped Champions League. With Italy likely to earn

an additional spot in the competition, Milan's 11-point cushion over fifth-placed AS Roma appears comfortable with nine games remaining.

Milan's manager, Stefano Pioli, praised his team's performance, stating, "We played very

well as a team and we created a huge amount. It was a really positive performance," after securing their fifth consecutive win. Verona fought admirably, with Tijjani Noslin scoring a superb goal in the 64th minute.

However, they remain just two points above the relegation zone, facing a crucial match against Cagliari after the international break. Juventus, on the other hand, continued their disappointing run with a goalless draw against Genoa.

## Jaydev Unadkat to return to county side Sussex this year

**NEW DELHI:** Left-arm pace bowler Jaydev Unadkat is set to rejoin the English club side Sussex for the final five matches of the County Championship season. During the previous season, the 32-year-old, who boasts four Test appearances for India, participated in three out of the last four County Championship fixtures for Sussex. His contribution of 11 wickets at an average of 24.18 significantly bolstered the team, leading to a commendable third-place finish in Division 2. Unadkat's standout performance came against Leicestershire at Sussex's home ground, where he claimed six crucial wickets in the second innings, guiding the team to a narrow 15-run victory. Having last represented India during the



two-Test series against the West Indies in 2023, Unadkat, who captained Saurashtra to their inaugural Ranji Trophy triumph in the 2019-20 season, expressed his anticipation to return to Hove. "It was at Hove last season when we won a last-day thriller against Leicestershire, that gave me a sense of belongingness to county cricket, and to Sussex as my home," said Unadkat in a statement. "When (head coach) Farby (Paul Farbrace) offered me a contract this season for the last leg of the championship, I was sure I wanted to

come back and hopefully win games with the guys.

"While my first county season was good, I can't wait to be back and push for that promotion this summer which everyone at Hove is rooting for!" he added. Sussex head coach Farbrace said Unadkat had shown his class during the last season and hoped the Indian would continue in the same vein this season. "We are all delighted that Jaydev is returning to The 1st Central County Ground for the final five championship matches of the coming season.

## How Women's Premier League stepped up a gear in 2024

**NEW DELHI:** It was a cathartic moment. When Richa Ghosh hit the winning runs in the final, the entire fan base of Royal Challengers Bangalore must have felt a burden being lifted off their shoulders. After all, the men's team had tried hard for 16 long years to win the IPL, but could not.

In between, there was the dash of the Champions League T20 tournament. RCB couldn't win that either. The girls in red and black, however, got the job done in the first final they played. Skipper Smriti Mandhana's eyes were moist, some other players too had tears rolling down their cheeks. It was indeed a big relief and the emotions expressed were strong. RCB's performance was a much-improved show from last year, when they fin-



ished fourth. Just like RCB going up a gear, the 2024 WPL also gave several eye-catching performances. The tournament was full of high-octane batting and close games, many of which went till the last over. Indian players have been at the forefront, both youngsters and internationals. Out of the top 10 run-getters in the tournament, six have been Indians. And out of the top 10 wicket-takers, five are Indians. Analysing the 2024 WPL, Smriti told TOI, "I feel this year has

been brilliant for Indian players. Last year, in the list of top-scorers there were a lot of overseas names, but this year the stats show that we (Indian players) have almost tripled in every department. "That's exactly what we want. WPL will be held every year, but what we get out of it will be really valuable. It was therefore great to see all the Indian players, youngsters as well as the internationals, to step up and play the way they did," she added. The tournament also

saw Indians hitting big sixes. Harmanpreet Kaur and Shafali Verma were renowned to smack those big ones earlier, but others have upped the ante too. As a result, enhanced strike-rates were witnessed. Shafali scored her runs at a breakneck speed, coming up with a strike-rate of 156.85. Jemimah Rodrigues too hit some big sixes, often clearing the boundary ropes by a good margin. Her strike-rate in the tournament was 153.59. Kiran Navgire (146.66), Richa Ghosh (141.98), Harmanpreet Kaur (141.05) and Deepti Sharma (136.57) also returned with impressive strike-rates. Kaur, in fact, managed to pull off an improbable chase for Mumbai Indians against Gujarat Giants in the league stage. MI required 91 in the last six overs.

## Simona Halep set for Miami Open return after doping suspension

**NEW DELHI:** Tennis fans around the world eagerly anticipate the return of Simona Halep to competitive action this week as she makes her comeback at the Miami Open following a successful appeal over a doping suspension. The Romanian star, whose four-year ban was reduced to nine months by the top court for global sport, accepted a wild card entry into the prestigious tournament. Halep's first test on her return to the court will come against Paula Badosa of Spain in the opening round on Tuesday. The clash marks Halep's first match since her upset loss in the first round of the 2022 U.S. Open. The former Wimbledon and French Open champion vehemently denied allegations of doping after testing positive for roxadustat during the 2022 U.S.

CAPSULES

## Inter Milan's unbeaten streak halted with Napoli draw in Serie A

**NEW DELHI:** Inter Milan's commanding lead in Serie A was momentarily halted as they settled for a 1-1 draw against Napoli, with Matteo Darmian's first-half goal canceled out by Juan Jesus' late header. Despite the draw, Inter maintains a significant 14-point lead over second-placed AC Milan, with Napoli currently sitting in seventh position with 45 points. Inter displayed early dominance, with goalkeeper Alex Meret denying Darmian's diving header and subsequent attempt from Lautaro Martinez. Napoli, missing key striker Victor Osimhen due to injury, struggled to break through Inter's sturdy defense. Inter broke the deadlock just before halftime, with Alessandro Bastoni's cross finding Darmian unmarked in the box, who finished clinically to put the hosts ahead. However, Inter's defensive solidity was breached in the 81st minute when Juan Jesus capitalized on a defensive lapse to head in the equalizer from a Napoli corner, denying Inter victory. Expressing his disappointment, Inter manager Simone Inzaghi acknowledged the missed opportunity for victory, stating, "There is a little disappointment, especially considering how the game was going, we were up against the reigning Champions of Italy and Napoli have a lot of quality but unfortunately, we made a naive error that cost us the victory." "There are nine games left, 27 points up for grabs, we must maintain concentration." Simone Inzaghi added. Meanwhile, Napoli coach Francesco Calzona praised his team's performance against the league leaders, highlighting their resilience against a formidable opponent.

## Tata Sons looks to sell Rs 9,000 crore TCS shares to reduce debt



**MUMBAI:** Tata Sons is looking to raise about Rs 9,362 crore (\$1.1 billion) from selling the shares of its cash cow unit Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Tuesday as it plans to reduce debt on its books. The holding company of the \$150-billion salt-to-software conglomerate aims to restructure its balance sheet to avoid a mandatory public listing under RBI's 'upper layer' NBFC norms. The 'upper layer' NBFC tag requires companies to follow a stringent disciplinary structure with a mandatory listing within three years of being notified. According to Tata Sons' FY23 report, it has debt of Rs 21,909 crore and cash & bank balances of Rs 451 crore on its books. RBI rules require

Tata Sons, which is registered as a core investment company with the banking regulator, to be listed by Sept 2025. But the company, controlled by a group of public foundations, Tata Trusts, has been exploring options to avoid the IPO. According to RBI, for the CIC status, a firm has to meet two conditions: First, it has to have an asset size of more than Rs 100 crore, and second, it has to have public funds. If either of the two conditions fail, then it cannot continue to be registered as a CIC with the regulator. Tata Sons' assets are mainly its investments in operating companies like TCS, Tata Motors and Tata Steel, and they are worth more than Rs 100 crore.

## Elon Musk defends ketamine use, says it's beneficial for Tesla investors

**Elon Musk defends ketamine use, says it's beneficial for Tesla investors** "For investors, if there's something I'm taking, I should keep taking it," Musk said on his usage of ketamine. In an interview released on Monday, Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk openly discussed his use of ketamine, a drug known for treating depression and managing pain. The entrepreneur, aged 52, acknowledged his use of the anesthetic—commonly utilized for pain relief and depression treatment—after US media reports suggested his drug consumption was unsettling investors. Musk suggested that his prescribed usage of ketamine plays a role in his effective management and subsequently benefits Tesla investors. "Ketamine is helpful for getting one outside of a negative frame of mind.

## 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 a 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.

## 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 redefining 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.

## LIC shares slip after 17% salary hike

**MUMBAI:** Shares of LIC were down by over 2% on Monday after the corporation announced a 17% wage revision. The salary increase was announced by govt on Friday before the election code of conduct kicked in a day later. The corporation's shares are now down 23% from the 52-week high of Rs 1,175 on Feb 9. On Friday, the country's largest insurance company said that govt approved a wage revision for LIC employees, effective August 1, 2022.



The corporation explained the hike, stating that a revision occurs once every five years. The statement said that due to the hike, there will be a 17% upward revision in the overall wage bill.

The increase aligns with the wage negotiation deal signed between the Indian Banks' Association and bank employees. LIC's wage revision incorporates an enhancement in NPS contribution from

10% to 14% for nearly 24,000 employees who joined after April 1, 2010. TNN We also published the following articles recently

Noida revises fee for three parking clusters

Noida Authority approved three contractors for surface parking in city clusters with revised fees.

New tender initiated after scrapping previous contract. Residents get relief with revised parking fees. Multilevel facilities accommodate 12,000 vehicles.

## China accuses Evergrande of \$78 billion fraud, among worst ever

**China** Evergrande Group's alleged \$78 billion revenue overstatement escalates the legal peril of founder Hui Ka Yan, who now stands at the center of one of the biggest financial fraud cases in history. The nation's top securities regulator said the developer's onshore unit inflated revenue by recognizing sales in advance in the two years through 2020 that led up to its default. It imposed a 4.18 billion yuan (\$581 million) fine against the unit. Evergrande's alleged fraud dwarfs that of



Luckin Coffee Inc. and Enron Corp., dealing a blow to the reputation of its former auditor and the country's financial oversight. It fuels concern about how widespread such accounting issues are,

just as the new China Securities Regulatory Commission chairman is trying to tighten oversight. "The CSRC fines may serve as a warning to owners of other defaulted developers that failing to collabo-

rate with authorities over debt restructuring could mark the latest blow for Hui, once among Asia's richest tycoons, who oversaw a sprawling empire that spanned real estate to electric vehicles. Evergrande was one of China's biggest developers, taking on massive debt to expand across the country as condo sales boomed. The group received a liquidation order from a Hong Kong court in January, marking the largest collapse in China's three-year real estate crisis.

## Millionaire grandchildren! Not just Narayana Murthy's grandson, these Infosys co-founders' grandkids also hold stake in company

**Millionaire grandchildren of Infosys founders!** Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy gifted his four-month-old grandson shares worth over Rs 240 crore, making him one of India's youngest millionaires. The transfer of 15,00,000 Infosys shares reduced Murthy's stake from 0.40% to 0.36%. But did you know that other grandchildren of Infosys co-founders also hold stakes in the company. Millionaire grandchildren! Not just Narayana Murthy's grandson, these Infosys co-founders' grandkids also hold stake in company



his four-month-old grandson. Ekagrah is the third grandchild of Narayana Murthy and his wife, author-philanthropist Sudha Murthy. Ekagrah was born to Rohan Murthy and Aparna Krishnan in November last year. The 0.04% stake is valued at over Rs 240 crore, making Ekagrah Rohan Murthy one of the youngest millionaires in India. He is the youngest in the Infosys promoter group. Following this transaction, which was revealed in an exchange filing, Narayana Murthy's stake in Infosys

has come down to 0.36%. The stock exchange filing specified the transfer of shares "from Narayana Murthy-promoter to master Ekagrah Rohan Murthy-promoter group." Narayana Murthy's daughter Akshata Murthy, also the First Lady of the UK, has two daughters, Krishna and Anoushka. Within the Murthy family, Akshata holds a 1.05% stake in Infosys, while her brother Rohan has a 1.64% stake, and their mother, Sudha Murthy, owns a 0.93% stake.

## Adani calls report on bribery probe by US prosecutors false

**Adani Group companies have denied receiving any notice from the US Department of justice regarding bribery allegations. US prosecutors investigate potential bribery involving Adani entity and founder Gautam Adani, including Indian renewable energy company Azure Power Global Ltd. Adani Enterprises and Ports refute allegations, stressing commitment to high governance standards and anti-corruption laws.**

Adani calls report on bribery probe by US prosecutors false

Adani Group companies haven't received any notice from the US Department of justice regarding a probe into whether the Indian conglomerate may have engaged in bribery, according to exchange filings. Bloomberg News reported last week, citing people with direct knowledge of the matter, that US prosecutors have widened their prob-

le of the Adani Group to focus on whether an Adani entity may have engaged in bribery as well as the conduct of the conglomerate's billionaire founder Gautam Adani. The probe, which is also looking at Indian renewable energy company Azure Power Global Ltd., is being handled by the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York and the Justice Department's fraud unit in Washington.

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issues are, just as the new China Securities Regulatory Commission chairman is trying to tighten oversight. "The CSRC fines may serve as a warning to owners of other defaulted developers that failing to collabo-

rate with authorities over debt restructuring could mark the latest blow for Hui, once among Asia's richest tycoons, who oversaw a

## 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.

## Tapping into Nutritional Richness: Tocotrienols and Antioxidants of Palm Oil

NEW DELHI:

Tocotrienols, a form of vitamin E, are renowned for their powerful antioxidant properties.

Antioxidants are substances capable of preventing or slowing down cell damage caused by oxidation, harmful molecules produced in the body due to environmental factors such as pollution and radiation. Tocotrienols and other antioxidants are believed to offer potential health benefits, including reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and cancer. Research suggests that tocotrienols found in palm oil



may offer various health advantages. They have been associated with protecting the heart, reducing inflammation, and potentially preventing cancer. Tocotrienols function by halting damage caused by oxidation. Malaysian Palm Oil, renowned for its versatility and widespread use across

diverse industries, stands out as a comprehensive source of tocotrienols and tocopherols. As consumers increasingly prioritize their health, Malaysian palm oil represents a practical choice for those seeking to incorporate tocotrienols into their daily nutritional intake. Dr. Meena

Mehta, an Associate professor who is currently working as a visiting Faculty in Department of Post Graduate Studies and Research in Home Science & Department of Food Science and Nutrition, S.N.D.T Women's University emphasizes the remarkable health benefits of tocotrienols and antioxidants found in palm oil. These natural wonders not only safeguard well-being by combating oxidative stress but also underscore the nutritional prowess of sustainable palm oil. By promoting awareness and responsible consumption, individu-

als are empowered to make choices that prioritize personal health.

Incorporating palm oil, rich in tocotrienols, into one's diet is a prudent way to reap the benefits of these antioxidants. It is not just a cooking oil – rather, it serves as a natural source of tocotrienols that support the body's defense against stress. As scientists continue to study this area, it becomes increasingly evident that palm oil's role in providing tocotrienols and fortifying the body's defenses is crucial for maintaining good health.

## Tata Motors inaugurates state-of-the-art registered vehicle scrapping facility near Delhi

**Faridabad:** Tata Motors, India's leading automobile manufacturer, today inaugurated its fifth Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF), near Delhi; marking a significant stride in its commitment to advancing sustainable mobility. Named 'Re.Wi.Re – Recycle with Respect,' the facility was inaugurated by Mr. Girish Wagh, Executive Director, Tata Motors. The cutting-edge facility deploys environmentally friendly processes and has the capacity to safely disassemble 18,000 end-of-life vehicles annually. Developed in partnership with Johar Motors, the RVSF is adept at responsibly scrapping passenger and commercial vehicles of all brands. This significant milestone follows the resounding success of Tata Motors' four pre-



ceding RVSFs in Jaipur, Bhubaneswar, Surat and Chandigarh, reiterating the company's commitment to advancing sustainable initiatives. Reflecting on the momentous launch, Mr. Girish Wagh, Executive Director, Tata Motors, said "Tata Motors has been at the forefront of driving innovation and sustainability to shape the future of mobility. The launch of our fifth scrapping facility marks a significant step forward in making sustainable practices and responsible vehicle disposal more accessible. Creating value from

scrap aligns with our vision of a building a circular economy. It also contributes to the Government's efforts to promote sustainable automotive practices. This state-of-the-art facility will set new benchmarks in disposing vehicles responsibly and pave the way towards a cleaner, more sustainable future for all." Re.Wi.Re. is a cutting-edge facility, purpose-built for dismantling end-of-life passenger and commercial vehicles across all brands, with a focus on employing environmentally friendly practices.

## HDFC Bank inaugurates 60 Banking Outlets pan-India, run by VLE's across RBI notified Unbanked Rural Centers

**Hisar/Ambala:** HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector bank, today announced the inauguration of 60 Business Correspondent (BC) Banking Outlets across RBI notified unbanked rural centers (URCs) pan-India. These new outlets now increase HDFC Bank's URC network presence to 5,020 outlets. Notably, 34% of the Bank's BC Agent network now caters to providing formal financial products and services across 10,602 vil-

lages. The initiative was undertaken in collaboration with CSC eGov. It will help deliver essential banking services to the last mile, directly through physical centres of village-level entrepreneurs (VLEs) acting as micro-entrepreneurs and in turn empowering communities in underserved regions. Customers will benefit from a comprehensive suite of Bank's financial solutions including: Convenient cash deposit & withdrawal

through AEPS-enabled transactions Neighborhood locations for EMI collection of loans Government-backed social security schemes to create insurance safety net Opening Bank accounts for directly receiving government scheme transfer benefits Fixed and recurring deposit options for financial planning Access to credit through loans like SLI and Kisan Gold Card to fulfill household aspirations. Centre details:

## Narendra Modi and Nayab Saini settled in the hearts of the people of the country and the state: Saurabh

**Kaithal:** State Co-Convenor of Bharatiya Janata Party Haryana Business Cell, Saurabh Chaudhary Goyal said that the BJP government of the state has taken the initiative to improve the future of the youth by providing employment to lakhs of youth without any slip and expense. The results of D Group category have provided a path to a golden future for all those eligible candidates who had applied with full honesty. He said that development man Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini is a true well-wisher and sympathizer of the people of Haryana, who is selflessly engaged in serving the people of the state day and night. The business class of the state is joining the party by expressing faith in the policies of BJP. While talking to journalists here, Saurabh Goyal Choudhary said that this government of Haryana is the first BJP government during whose tenure the children of rural areas have got most of the employment. The important thing is that for the



future of the children of rural areas, the government has provided them an opportunity to progress in the field of education by setting up e-libraries in every village. Like cities, development in villages has also gained momentum in the last ten years and basic facilities have been provided to the people. Saurabh Goyal Chaudhary said that the opposition, which used to spread false propaganda in the name of employment in connection with BJP, has made the opposition issueless by providing employment to thousands of youth across the state under Group D. He said that today, under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naib Singh Saini, development works worth thousands of crores of rupees are being done in the country.

## MCA secretary Bhandarkar resigns for 'personal reasons'

**Pune:** Shubhendra Bhandarkar has resigned as secretary of the Maharashtra Cricket Association (MCA). The 55-year-old told TOI that he put in his papers for "personal reasons". It is understood that Bhandarkar tabled his resignation during an Apex Council meeting at the Gahunje stadium on Saturday. He had served as treasurer in the previous setup which had Riyaz Bagwan as the secretary. Bhandarkar was in Nashik last week to attend fast-bowling talent spotting programme 'Maha Speed Star'. Kamlesh Pisal of Satara District Cricket Association has been 'nominated' as caretaker secretary. As per the MCA constitution, either a Special General Meeting or an Annual General Meeting needs to be called to elect a replacement.



## 'Don't shout at me': CJI DY Chandrachud scolds lawyer during electoral bond hearing

**NEW DELHI:** Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud reprimanded senior advocate Mathews Nedumpara after a heated exchange during a hearing on electoral bonds on Monday. "Don't shout at me," the CJI said, adding, "This is not a Hyde Park corner meeting, you are in the court." Nedumpara was questioning the SC's ruling, stating that "the entire electoral bond judgement was delivered behind the citizens back." This prompted disagreements from the bench and when CJI tried to intervene the lawyer continued arguing over him and raised his voice, prompting a stern reaction from the CJI. "You want to move an application, file an application. You have got my decision as Chief Justice, we are not hearing you," the CJI added. The Supreme Court pulled up the State Bank of India for not disclosing all the details related to electoral bonds, calling its attitude "unacceptable". The 5-judge bench led by CJI D Y Chandrachud directed the directed SBI chairman to file an affidavit by Thursday 5pm, confirming that all details of the Electoral Bonds including the unique alphanumeric and serial numbers of redeemed bonds have been disclosed.



## Congress Working Committee meets to finalise Lok Sabha election manifesto

**NEW DELHI:** The Congress working committee, the party's top decision-making body, met on Tuesday to discuss and approve the party's manifesto for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former party chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi were present at the meeting. Other senior leaders, including Ambika Soni, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, P Chidambaram, Digvijaya Singh, Ajay Maken, and Kumari Selja, also attended. The manifesto committee had sent the draft document to the CWC for approval. The CWC will finalise the draft manifesto with five 'guarantees' for justice. The party is focusing on 'five nyay' (justices) - 'Bhagidari Nyay', 'Kisan Nyay', 'Nari Nyay', 'Shramik Nyay', and 'Yuva Nyay', each with five guarantees. Congress president Kharge and Rahul Gandhi announced these guarantees. The party's central election committee, led by Kharge, will discuss and finalize candidates for the remaining seats.

## Passenger attempts suicide on Bangkok-London flight, plane makes emergency landing

**NEW DELHI:** A flight on Monday encountered a distressing situation when a passenger allegedly attempted suicide in the aircraft restroom, prompting an emergency landing. The incident took place during an EVA Air journey from Bangkok, Thailand, to London on Friday, as reported by the Sun. As the plane descended, crew members discovered the



individual in the restroom, where it was suspected they were attempting self-harm. The flight attendants and onboard medical personnel promptly assisted the person.

Upon landing at an airport in London, approximately at 7:30 pm, the passenger received initial medical attention before being transported to a hospital for further treatment. EVA Air confirmed the occurrence on the BR67 Bangkok-London flight on March 15, though the specific London airport involved was not disclosed.

## Political Parties Use WhatsApp, Influencers for Poll Campaign

**Delhi:** Ad gurus and political analysts believe political parties are using



WhatsApp and social media influencers to influence voter psychology ahead of the world's largest election. Political parties are heavily exploiting social media to promote their successes and seek voter support for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP is sending electors a customized 'Letter from the Prime Minister' on WhatsApp, which has over 500 million monthly

## Unlock the Magic with Croma's Summer Campaign 2024 - Spectacular Offers on Air Conditioners, Refrigerators, Room Coolers, and more!

**CHANDIGARH/LUDHIANA/PATIALA:** Croma has announced its Summer Campaign, till May 2024. With the onset of summer, the most awaited Summer Sale presents the perfect opportunity for customers to prepare their homes to combat the rising temperatures with the latest gadgets with irresistible deals and ease of payment. Consumers will find 1.5 Ton Split ACs starting at just Rs 1,500 across stores and croma.com. Customers can bring any electronics and take home a new AC. Enjoy the benefits up to INR 45000 and other benefits on an extensive

range of 250+ air conditioners, 300+ refrigerators, room coolers, and fans with attractive exchange and upgrade options, cashback offers, and flexible EMI plans of up to 24 months. The offers include Inverter Split ACs starting from just INR 24990, providing an affordable way to keep your home cool and comfortable, and also has exchange benefits of up to INR 6500 on ACs. Room Coolers are available from Rs.4,500 for those looking for cost-effective cooling solutions. For those interested in premium cooling, the LG INV/AC 1.5 Ton 5-star AC, origi-

nally priced at INR 91,990, is now available for just INR 53,490, delivering savings up to INR 45,000. Additionally, the Bajaj PMH 18 DLX Room Cooler is now offered starting at INR4,500, making high-quality cooling more accessible, convenient, and affordable. Customers can also take advantage of up to 24 months of Easy EMI on refrigerators, making it easier than ever to upgrade your kitchen appliances.

Croma Own Label offers mega deals on its host of cooling appliances. Get a Croma BLDC Fan complimentary

with every Croma Inverter AC for efficient cooling. With a Croma Side-by-Side Refrigerator, get Croma Coffee Maker at no extra cost. Choose a Croma Water Purifier and get a Croma Air Fryer complimentary, for healthier cooking. Buy a Croma Cooler and get a complimentary Croma 750W Mixer Grinder. Additionally, enjoy No Cost EMI for up to 18 months on purchases over INR 5,000. This is a perfect chance to enrich your home with Croma Branded products with advanced technology with ease of payments and complimentary products.