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

Lok Sabha Election 2024: Check voting dates, full schedule

- Nearly a billion people to vote in 1.05 million booths; results to be announced on June 4
- EC prepares to crack down on '4 Ms'



NEW DELHI: The Election Commission of India on Saturday announced the schedule for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The general polls will be held in 7 phases. First phase to be held on April 19, second on April 26, third phase on May 7, fourth phase on May 13, fifth phase on May 20, sixth phase on May 25 and the seventh phase on June 1, said Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar. schedule A total of 22 states will have single-phase voting, including Delhi. Elections in Maharashtra as well as Jammu and Kashmir will be held in 5 phases, while Uttar Pradesh,

Bihar and West Bengal will vote in all 7 phases. Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tripura and Manipur will vote in 2 phases. Chhattisgarh and Assam will see elections in 3 phases, while Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand will witness 4-phase polling. Delhi will be going to the polls on May 25. Phase 1 will be the largest voting bloc. Voting will be done in 21 states/UTs across 102 constituencies on April 19. Elections in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu,

Uttarakhand, Andaman and Nicobar islands, Lakshadweep and Puducherry will start and end on April 19. Phase 2 will see 89 Lok Sabha seats go to the polls across 13 states/UTs. Election to all 20 seats in Kerala will be held during the second phase on April 26. A total of 94 Lok Sabha seats across 12 states/UTs will go to the polls in Phase 3 on May 7. All 26 seats in Gujarat will go to the polls on May 7. Phase 4 will see 96 seats go to the polls in 10 states/UTs. Voters in all 25 seats in Andhra Pradesh and all 17

seats in Telangana will go to the booths on May 13. A total of 49 parliamentary constituencies in 8 states/UTs will vote in the 5th phase on May 20. Lone seat in Ladakh will vote in this phase. Phase 6 will see 57 seats across 7 states/UTs take part in the Lok Sabha elections. All 7 seats in Delhi and 10 seats in Haryana will vote on May 25. The last phase of elections will see 57 seats across 8 states/UTs go to the booths. All seats in Punjab and Himachal will vote on the last day of elections on June 1..

How the EC is planning to ensure 'zero violence'?

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission is set to deploy 3.4 lakh Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) personnel, in addition to state police forces, for the upcoming seven-phase Lok Sabha elections and assembly polls in four states starting from April 19, officials revealed. The highest number of CAPFs personnel, totaling 92,000, are expected to be stationed in the politically charged state of West Bengal, followed by 63,500 personnel in Jammu and Kashmir, which is grappling with militancy issues, and 36,000 personnel in Naxal-affected Chhattisgarh. In response to requests from state Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs), the Election Commission has decided to gradually deploy approximately 3,400 companies of CAPFs across all states and Union



territories to ensure the smooth conduct of free and fair elections. Each CAPF company typically consists of around 100 personnel, with the full mobilization of forces expected to be completed in the coming days. The assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, and Sikkim will coincide with the Lok Sabha polls. It is anticipated that a maximum of 920 companies of CAPFs will be deployed in West Bengal, followed by 635 companies in Jammu and Kashmir, 360 companies in Chhattisgarh, and varying numbers in

other states. The CAPFs encompass agencies like the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), SashastraSeema Bal (SSB), and National Security Guard (NSG), with a combined strength of around 10 lakh personnel. Preparations are already in motion for the deployment of a significant number of CAPFs in states like Gujarat, Manipur, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Assam, T e l a n g a n a , Maharashtra, Madhya

Pradesh, and others. Forces designated for West Bengal, areas affected by Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), and Jammu and Kashmir have already arrived at their designated locations. The mobilization of forces for sensitive and hyper-sensitive constituencies began on March 1, with about 2,000 companies being deployed for pre-poll duties. Approximately 1.5 lakh personnel are expected to travel via roads and railways for this mobilization, with the Railways ensuring seamless transportation with appropriate facilities. The CAPF personnel will undertake various election-related tasks such as area dominance, confidence-building measures, guarding of electronic voting machines, and security at counting and strong room centers during the electoral process.

CEC defends EVMs, says more tech will be deployed as political system 'matures'

NEW DELHI: Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar used some 'shayari' (Urdu poetry) to defend electronic voting machines (EVM), saying those doubting the "100% foolproof" device were merely using EVMs as the fall guy for their "unfulfilled desires". "Adhoori hasraton ka ilzaam har bar hum par lagana theek nahi, wafa khud se nahi hoti, khata EVM ki kehte ho, aur baad mein goya jab parinaam aata hai toh uspe qayam bhi nahi rehte," Kumar said, adding that he had written this couplet only the night before, anticipating a question on EVMs at Saturday's press conference to announce the general election. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar mocks social media EVM experts amid laughs Kumar took a dig at self-claimed experts using questionable prototypes to display the fallibility of real EVMs and VVPATs on social media, reminding them how the Supreme Court and high courts have heard EVM-related challenges 40 times in the past and rejected each of them. The CEC said while he agreed for the need of totaliser for EVMs to maintain voter secrecy and that the technology was ready, "as of now even the result of a single EVM is being doubted". "If I were to combine votes of 14 EVMs, people will be even more suspicious," he said and added that time should be allowed for the political system to mature. Kumar said the technology for migrants from across 72 assembly segments to vote through one EVM had been developed and that EC was ready to start remote voting electronically, "but it takes time to assimilate (new technology)". "Perhaps the time for the idea has not come yet," he conceded. Citing court verdicts upholding EVMs, Kumar said.

Cong vows all-India caste survey, schemes for OBCs

BENGALURU: Hours before Lok Sabha poll schedule was announced, Congress unveiled a series of promises aimed at addressing key socio-economic challenges and disparities across urban and rural India on Saturday. Lok Sabha Elections 2024: Polls to be held in 7 phases from April 19; Counting of votes on June 4 AICC president Mallikarjun



Kharge outlined Congress's commitment to implementing a comprehensive urban employment guarantee scheme. Additionally, the party pledges to raise daily wages

under the rural employment guarantee scheme to Rs 400 per day, aiming to uplift millions of workers across the country. Congress has also proposed conducting a nationwide caste census, termed "Ginati Karo", to assess the socio-economic and political status of all communities. "A comprehensive caste census survey will be conducted,

and a constitutional amendment will be made to raise the 50% cap on reservations for SCs, STs, and OBCs," Kharge said. He highlighted two guarantees: "Shramik Nyay", focusing on welfare of labour classes, and "Hissedaryi Nyay", which aims to extend benefits to communities based on their populations.

Last chance to save democracy: Congress chief Kharge

NEW DELHI: Just after Election Commission announced the schedule for Lok Sabha polls, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge called it "the last chance to save democracy and our Constitution from dictatorship" and hoped that it would open the "door of Nyay" for India. "We the people of India will together fight against hatred, loot, unemployment, price rise and atroci-

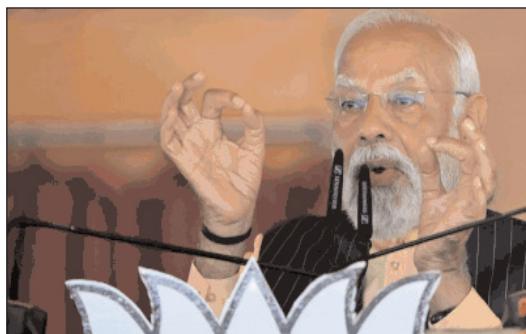


ties. 'Haath Badlega Halaat' (the Hand will change the situation)," Kharge said on X. At a press conference, party spokesperson Pawan Khara said the elections are happening under "a cloud of scams" of electoral

bonds, jailing of opposition leaders and "unprecedented" freezing of funds of the main opposition party. "It is a milestone election because this election will decide whether our democracy will be protected or not, whether Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution will be protected or one man's whims and fancies will decide the direction and future of our democracy.

Modi seeks third term, Congress fights for survival in longest polls

NEW DELHI: Setting the ball in motion to elect the 18th Lok Sabha and four state assemblies, Election Commission on Saturday announced seven-phase polls that will stretch for one-and-a-half-months, between April 19 and June 1, followed by counting for all seats on June 4. These will be the longest general elections since the polls of 1951-52 that lasted more than four months. PM Narendra Modi will be seeking a third straight term based on the govt's "good track record" of the past 10 years and on BJP having delivered on its manifesto promises, including nullification of Article 370 in J&K, Ram tem-



ple construction in Ayodhya and implementation of CAA. For the opposition, it is a 'do or die' battle after tasting defeat in the past two elections. Modi is considered the favourite in the electoral battle spanning 44 days, and a third consecutive term will help him equal the record of first PM Jawaharlal Nehru, and sharpen the fight between contrasting visions - one espoused by the PM and the second

being championed by his opponents who have accused him of subverting the spirit of the Constitution. Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar, flanked by new election commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu at a press conference here, declared that 102 parliamentary constituencies (PCs) will vote in the first phase on April 19, 89 in Phase 2 on April 26, 94 in Phase 3 on May

7, 96 in Phase 4 on May 13, 49 in Phase 5 on May 20, and 57 each in Phase 6 on May 25 and Phase 7 on June 1. With this, model code of conduct has come into immediate effect across the country. Lok Sabha Elections 2024: Polls to be held in 7 phases from April 19; Counting of votes on June 4 Assembly elections in four states - Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim - will follow the same schedule as the Lok Sabha polls, with the constituent assembly segments voting on the same day as the parliamentary constituency, chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar.

In record cut, fuel cheaper by Rs 15/L in Lakshadweep as infra tax ends

NEW DELHI: State-run Indian Oil on Saturday slashed petrol and diesel prices by up to Rs 15.3 per litre in Lakshadweep islands, marking the sharpest fuel price cut ever in the country. Modi posting pictures of his visit to the islands on Jan 24. that went viral on social media and set off buzz govt is moving to develop Lakshadweep as a tourist haven to counter Maldives amid worsening bilateral relations. Indian Oil reduced the prices by removing Rs 6.9 per litre charged for the last three years towards recovery of capital expenditure on infrastructure at Kavaratti and Minicoy for transporting and distributing fuel to the remote islands.

PM Modi backs ED, says agencies given free hand

NEW DELHI: PM Modi on Saturday came out in strong defence of ED and other agencies and said he had given them a free hand to take up cases of corruption, unlike the trend before 2014 when agencies were not allowed to act freely. Asserting that he followed a zero tolerance policy towards corruption, Modi said the drive against graft would be further intensified in his next term. Though a reiteration of his backing for ED, the PM's remarks at a media event were significant because they came in the wake of the opposition's accusation that govt had used central agencies to intimidate opponents and coerce businesses to contribute to BJP's political coffer. The opposition intensified its campaign last week by drawing a linkage between dona-

tions made by a few business houses through electoral bonds and ED's probes facing them. Modi He dismissed the criticism as a reflection of the anxiety that has gripped many because of his thrust on fighting corruption. "That is why they have taken to abusing me," he said. "Properties worth Rs 5,000 crore were attached before 2014 but in the past 10 years, properties worth over Rs 1 lakh crore have been attached. I never interfered with the working of the agencies and instructions were given to act on merit," the PM said and recalled the seizure of cash from opposition leaders to say that action on this scale was bound to disturb them. "Another major aspect of our governance has been zero tolerance towards corruption.

Electoral bonds donor list: Co started by Andhra Pradesh farmer's son is living life Megha-size

HYDERABAD: Many in the country's top business and political circles were stunned Thursday night when the electoral bonds donor list, made public by Election Commission of India, featured the Hyderabad-based Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Ltd (MEIL) group, as the second-largest donor.

MEIL, popularly known as Megha Group, contributed Rs 1,232 crore to political parties between April 2019 and Nov 2023, directly and through associated companies - Rs 966 crore by MEIL, Rs 220 crore by Western UP Power Transmission Co Ltd, Rs 40 crore by SEPC Power and Rs 6 crore by Evey Trans Pvt Ltd. But there



was nothing big about Megha's beginning. The seeds were sown in 1989 by Pamireddy Pitchi Reddy, a farmer's son from Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. It was nurtured to become one of India's largest construction and engineering players by his nephew, Puritipati Venkata Krishna Reddy. MEIL's journey began with a small fabrication

unit, MEE, fabricating pipes for small municipality water projects in the busy by-lanes of Hyderabad's fabrication hub of Balanagar. In early 1990s, Krishna Reddy joined the business and it soon graduated to a contractor for small irrigation and drinking water projects in unified AP in 1996. From here, the firm gradually expanded its

footprint to states like Rajasthan and Karnataka after 2000 before rebranding itself as MEIL in 2006. Those familiar with Megha Group's journey point out that it took the firm about a decade to hit a turnover of Rs 100 crore and about two decades to cross Rs 1,000 crore. The big acceleration came between 2010 and 2018, when MEIL

embarked upon a rapid diversification journey, foraying into new states, sectors and countries. This sent revenues hurtling past the \$1 billion mark in 2014-15, the \$2 billion mark in 2016-17 and \$3 billion in 2017-18. In the last 35 years, MEIL has metamorphosed into a Rs 40,000-crore turnover multinational conglomerate with a footprint in over 20 countries. From just 4-5 employees in 1989, today it provides direct and indirect employment to over 2 lakh people across 25 firms spanning irrigation, drinking water, oil and gas, EV manufacturing, defence, telecom, railway infrastructure, solar and thermal power, and transport, among others.

Centre okays Rs 272 crore for DU women's hostel



NEW DELHI: The Centre has approved a project for construction of residential accommodation for working women and girls pursuing higher education at Delhi University for which Rs 272 crore budget has been sanctioned, MP Manoj Tiwari said on Friday. The hostel, to be constructed in Timarpur near DU's North Campus, will accommodate 1000 women, he said at

Delhi BJP office. Special focus of the hostel would be safety of the women and Rs 72 crore would be spent on that alone, added Tiwari. BJP's candidate from New Delhi constituency, Bansuri Swaraj said that the demand for a hostel was passed by March 15 and the construction will start soon. "This hostel will cost Rs 200 crore and Rs 72 crore worth CCTV cameras are being installed because

women's safety is the priority of the Modi govt," she added. A centre each for Buddhism and Gurmukhi would be constructed in Khalsa College at a cost of Rs 35 crore, Swaraj said, adding that with the construction of women's hostel and student union office in Delhi University, popularity of Modi govt will increase significantly among the youth.

ED summons case: Court grants bail to Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal

NEW DELHI: Delhi's Rouse Avenue Court granted bail to Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday in a case related to him skipping Enforcement Directorate (ED) summonses. The relief to Kejriwal was granted on a bond of Rs 15,000 and a surety of Rs 1 lakh. The ED had filed two complaints seeking Kejriwal's prosecution for skipping multiple summonses in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. The court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Divya Malhotra also allowed



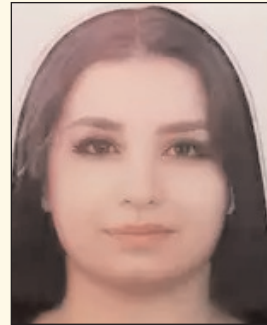
Kejriwal to leave the courtroom. "Offence being bailable, accused Arvind Kejriwal is admitted to bail," it said. Furthermore, the court directed the ED to provide documents related to the complaints to Kejriwal. The latest complaint pertains to him in the honouring summonses

no. 4 to 8 sent by the federal probe agency under Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The ED had earlier moved the magisterial court seeking Kejriwal's prosecution for not attending the first three summonses issued to him in the same case.

Bengaluru hotel staffers killed Uzbek woman for 'lots of cash'

BENGALURU: The mystery shrouding the death of a 27-year-old Uzbek woman inside her room at a hotel on Sankey Road has been unravelled: Two of the hotel's housekeeping staffers were arrested Friday on charges of murdering her.

What is bizarre is the motive: The accused thought the woman, identified as Zarina Utkirovna, had lots of cash and robbing her would make them rich instantly. Zarina had checked into Jagadish Hotel in March after flying in from Delhi and was staying in a room on the second floor. She was found dead on the night of March 13 with injuries on her face and blood in the nose. Her iPhone and cash were missing from the room. Following investigation, city police arrested 22-year-old Amrit Sona and 26-year-old, both hailing from Assam and working in the hotel for nearly a year. The stolen iPhone and



Rs 20,000 cash were recovered from them. The two accused were arrested just before they could escape from the city, an investigating officer said. "The hotel staffers found Zarina's body around 11pm Wednesday and alerted us. During probe, we found that Amrit and Robert were missing and their phones were switched off. After checking their last tower location and scanning CCTV footage of the area, we nabbed them from their hideout," the officer said. Zarina, who had a tourist visa, had flown into the city on 5 from Delhi. Her agent, identified as Rahul, had booked the hotel room for her till March 16.

Drunk UP man shoots friend

MEERUT: A 38-year old man was shot dead by his friend over an argument while they were drinking together in Bulandshahr's Dibai on Wednesday night. Police said the deceased man's family rushed to the place and badly thrashed the accused who succumbed to his injuries in hospital.

It all started around 9.30pm when Nem Singh (38) of Chirauri Rani village in Dibai was with Vinod Kumar (40) of Jarchha in Greater Noida. Kumar used to often visit his maternal house in the village and was known to Singh. SP (Rural), Rohit Mishra, said on Thursday, "An argument broke out between the two over a monetary dispute when an inebriated Kumar took out a country-made pistol and opened fire at Singh.



Country's first LNG buses roll in Mumbai: State eyes Rs 235cr savings on 5,000 buses



Two diesel buses of MSRTC have been converted to LNG (liquefied natural gas). Showcased in Mumbai on Friday, these are the India's first LNG buses, promising a reduction in the carbon footprint of public transport and savings on fossil fuels.

LNG bus plan

The two buses, which are diesel vehicles converted to LNG, will be run on pilot basis for a few days and subsequently deployed on an intercity route to be announced soon by Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) 5,000 diesel vehicles are planned to be converted into LNG buses by MSRTC

Benefits

Reduction in pollution caused by diesel buses LNG vehicles have 30% lower CO2 emissions and 90% lower PM emissions as compared to diesel The existing diesel vehicles can be retrofitted gradually to use LNG

Infra & Savings

MSRTC will set up LNG distribution outlets at 90 bus depots across Maharashtra Maintenance of the retrofitted vehicles will be the responsibility of the converting company, with expenses borne by MSRTC, which has signed an MoU with King Gas Company Rs 235 crore | Projected annual fuel savings by MSRTC if 5,000 buses are converted to LNG 34% Of MSRTC's expenses are on fuel State bus fleet MSRTC buses Buses on road every day **55L Daily ridership** By converting from diesel to LNG, we will offer passengers a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly bus service — Eknath Shinde | chief minister.

Dress code for Maharashtra teachers: Saree or kurta for female, shirt-trousers for male

MUMBAI: Sarees and salwar suits for female teachers and shirt-trousers for male teachers. The state on Friday issued this dress code for teachers of all schools in the state, both govt and private. Currently, every school has its own dress code-western or Indian formals and smart casuals for teaching and non-teaching staff.

Won't allow BJP to win any seat in Maharashtra, says Manoj

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR: Reservation activist Manoj Jarange on Friday warned the BJP to stop defaming him or he won't let the party win any Lok Sabha seat in the state. This is the first time where Jarange has directly challenged the BJP and specifically targeted deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis. By openly

declaring his intent to thwart the electoral success of the BJP candidates, Jarange has set the stage for a potentially contentious battle in the political landscape of Maharashtra. The activist, riding on the support from the Maratha community, has been striving hard to seek reservation within the existing OBC quota and also passing

of Sage Soyare law for which a notification has already been issued by govt. Addressing a large gathering at Wadavni in Beed late on Thursday, Jarange said, "I challenge you from Wadavni, if you try to defame me I will not let you win any of the 48 seats. Fadnavis, I am telling you, I will not let your MPs and MLAs win in Maharashtra.

Customs seize over 2.99 kg gold worth Rs 1.72 crore

MUMBAI: Mumbai Customs uncovered nearly 3 kg of gold worth Rs 1.72 crore in five instances at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport. "On March 14-15, Airport Commissionerate, Mumbai Customs seized over 2.99 kg of gold valued at Rs 1.72 crore in five different cases," Mumbai Customs said in a post on X.

"Gold was found concealed in dates, body cavity, on the body of Pax," it added. Additionally, they seized 4.22 kg of gold, mobile phones, and laptops valued at Rs 2.35 crore in eight cases from March 10-12 at Mumbai Airport. The confiscated items included various gold jewelry, mobile phones like Samsung Galaxy and iPhones, and Dell laptops. These items were cleverly hidden in bags. The authorities are diligently monitoring such smuggling activities to maintain airport security and prevent illegal imports.



Delhi excise policy scam: From policy to proceedings

Delhi Enforcement Directorate has arrested BRS leader K Kavitha in Hyderabad in connection with the Delhi liquor policy case. Here's a chronological breakdown of the events leading up to her arrest:

Nov 17, 2021: AAP govt implemented new liquor policy in Delhi based on expert committee report
July 8, 2022: Delhi chief secretary Naresh Kumar submitted report to Lieutenant governor VK Saxena on alleged irregularities in excise policy.



July 22, 2022: Lieutenant governor VK Saxena recommended a CBI probe into the formulation of excise policy of 2021-22
Aug 17, 2022: CBI reg-

istered a case against 15 people in excise policy
Aug 20, 2022: BJP MP Parvesh Verma dragged BRS chief KCR into row
Aug 22, 2022:

Enforcement Directorate registered a separate money laundering case
Dec 2, 2022: CBI issued summons to BRS chief KCR's daughter Kalvakuntla Kavitha
Dec 11, 2022: CBI recorded statements of Kavitha in Hyderabad after questioning for 7 hours
Dec 22, 2022: Kavitha's name cropped up in a remand report filed by the ED in Delhi court
Mar 11, 2023: Kavitha gets ED summons, appears before ED in Delhi
Mar 21, 2023: Kavitha appears before ED for the second time in Delhi.

Underwater metro: Phones ready, prayers on lips, Kolkata dives under the Hooghly

KOLKATA: At 7.04am, around 2,000 passengers took the plunge under the Hooghly, cellphone cameras on video mode, prayers on their lips and a feverish excitement in their eyes. As the train approached the under-river section marked by blue LED lights and fish motifs on walls, a deafening roar drowned the recorded voice announcing the momentous occasion. Hundreds of smartphones stayed glued to the windows and the faithful folded their hands in reverence to the holy river as the historic 49 seconds went past in a jiffy. "This is a goosebump moment. Whoever imagined that a day would come when we would be travelling below the Hooghly that separates Howrah and Kolkata? I am not a very religious person, but experiencing this remarkable engineering feat brings immense joy," said



Gargi Mitra, whose home is a stone's throw from East-West's Howrah Maidan station. "I was about nine when construction started at Howrah Maidan. Since then, we have heard about the hiccups, hurdles and milestones achieved. Finally, we are on this Metro. It feels surreal," said 21-year-old Soumya Chatterjee, a student of Narasinha Dutt College in Howrah. Most of those on board had queued up more than an hour before the shutters went up at the terminal Howrah Maidan and Esplanade stations. At the Howrah

Maidan end, a scuffle broke out among passengers keen to be the "first to arrive". Gour Chandra Bhandari, 76, had come all the way from Tarakeswar on Thursday evening and slept outside the station to achieve the "honour" of being the first to buy the Metro ticket, but was left much behind by youngsters who raced past him and punched in with their smart-cards. Gour Chandra Bhandari, 76, from Tarakeswar had spent the night outside the station to achieve the "honour" of being the first to buy the Metro ticket, but was piped to the post by youngsters. "

Mall linked to BRS leader B Vinod Kumar raided

HYDERABAD:

Karimnagar police on Friday late night seized nearly Rs 6.67 crores cash from a multiplex, which is linked to BRS party's Karimnagar parliamentary contesting candidate, B Vinod Kumar.

Police stated that the searches were conducted at the commercial establishment based on a tip-off. After receiving consent from the top brass of Karimnagar police, it was confirmed during the searches that the information was accurate. The cash was seized from the accounts room within



the complex. Upon informing the top brass of Karimnagar police, income tax officials were called to the location.

"We are ascertaining the source of the cash to determine whether it is accounted for or unaccounted for. With the support of Income Tax officials, the inves-

tigation is ongoing,' senior officials in Karimnagar police told TOI.

The multiplex is owned by Vinod's family but who manages it is being probed. The raids were conducted in the run up to parliament election and Vinod being the contesting candidate.

IISc study: Bengaluru lakes worth Rs 9.4k crore if unpolluted

BENGALURU: The famed lakes and waterbodies of Bengaluru would be worth a whopping Rs 9,418 crore, had those remained unpolluted over the decades, an estimation by scientists from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) shows. Working on the 'System of Environmental-

Economic Accounting' (SEEA) framework listed by the United Nations, the IISc researchers led by Prof TV Ramachandra have successfully published a scientific model called 'BLIS'- Bangalore Lake Information System. "The more pollution in the lakes, their economic value dimin-

ishes considerably. If you look at the economic worth of each of Jakkur and Rachenahalli lakes, it is Rs 10,500 per hectare per day under normal conditions, but it has reduced to Rs 20 per hectare per day for each lake when they are polluted," Prof Ramachandra .

CAPSULES

Youth should help themselves in making the society drug free by staying away from drugs: Ramchandra Jadaula

Vikas Kumar

Kaithal: Former Director HAFED and famous social worker Ramchandra Jadaula, while calling upon the youth to stay away from drugs, Ramchandra Jadaula said that the youth should stay away from the demon of drugs, because drug addiction can destroy the youth in any case. , is not appropriate for the society and the country. While talking in a meeting at his establishment in New Anaj Mandi Dhand,



Ramchandra Jadaula said that in order to bring out the youth who have sunk in the quagmire of drug addiction, the youth should selflessly come two steps ahead and offer their support. Needed We all should take an oath that we will neither consume drugs under any circumstances nor allow the youth and others living around us to consume drugs. Only then will our society come out of the grip of addiction and a healthy and happy society will be established. Former Director Jadaula said that the entire country is proud of the talent and ability of the youth who have become successful by holding high positions and the youth should take inspiration from the successful youth power and achieve success by holding high positions in the country and the state. And should make an important contribution in the upliftment and development of the society. Ramchandra Jadaula said that if a person has courage, he can achieve every milestone and overcome big difficulties, because the stronger the morale of a person is to overcome the challenges, the sooner success will kiss the person's feet.

Electoral bonds: ITC to Ambuja, 50 companies from Bengal contributed over Rs 1,600cr

KOLKATA: Bengal Inc contributed over Rs 1,600 crore in electoral bonds floated to fund political parties. As per the list published by SBI, over 25 corporate houses - more than 50 companies - from the state contributed. There were also a lot of contributions in the names of individuals and a chunk of those, too, were from the state. Well-known industrial and business houses that contributed include the RP Sanjiv Goenka Group, ITC, Keventer Group, Rungta Group, Rashmi Group, Ambuja, Shyam Steel, IFB Group, Ripley, Shree Cement, Dhunseri Group, Utkarsh Group, Star Cement, WPIL, Tega Industries, Acropolis



Maintenance, SKP Merchants, and Austin Plywoods. The biggest contribution from Bengal came from Keventer

Group (around Rs 600 crore) through group firms like Madanlal Ltd, MKJ Enterprises and Keventer Food Park. It

was followed by RP Sanjiv Goenka Group with close to Rs 500 crore through group companies Haldia Energy, Dhariwal Infrastructure and Philips Carbon Black. Keventer has a presence in food processing, real estate, and logistics, and is considered among the pioneers in food processing in eastern India.

The RP Sanjiv Goenka Group has a presence in the power, retail, entertainment, education, carbon black, sports, IT, and FMCG sectors. The third in the row is Rungta Sons, which contributed Rs 100 crore. Rungta Group is known for mining and steel and is among the oldest private mining entities in the country.

Hindus & Muslims like my two eyes: CM Revanth at iftar

HYDERABAD: Chief minister A Revanth Reddy on Friday said Hindus and Muslims were like his two eyes and sought to assure the Muslim community that the Congress govt would ensure continuation of 4% quota for the socially and economically backward among them in Telangana. Addressing the gathering at the 'Dawat-e-Iftar' hosted by him at the LB Stadium, the CM said: "It is our responsibility to protect the interests of all communities. The Congress govt will take along Hindus, Muslims, Christians and all the communities in its march to develop Telangana and Hyderabad. I want to remind Amit Shahji that there is a now Congress govt in Telangana. Neither Shah nor PM Narendra Modi can scrap the 4% Muslim quota started by then



Congress CM, the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy, in the undivided state."

The CM's direct remarks on Modi came on a day the PM was also in the city to participate in a roadshow. After scoring a duck in the recent assembly elections in Greater Hyderabad which favoured the BRS, the Congress is on mission mode ahead of Lok Sabha polls to win the hearts of city voters.

Woman's account frozen over '150 mystery deposit

When Santhana Selvi, an office assistant residing in Kottivakkam in Chennai, received an unexpected deposit of 150 in her bank account in Jan, she had no idea how that small sum would result in a nightmare. The deposit, which turned out to be part of a larger scam, promptly led Gujarat Police to freeze her account, leaving her unable to access her savings of nearly 50,000. "It all started with a YouTube link that promised money in return for liking certain videos. I did as instructed and received 150 in my account on Jan 3. As it turned out, the money came from a member of a larger cyber fraud gang, resulting in my



account being blocked," Selvi told. With no access to the money intended for loan EMIs and her children's school fees, Selvi's financial stability was thrown into disarray. Surat police wrote to the Cybercell of the CID (crime) to mark a lien on the 150 and unfreeze the remaining amount. In financial fraud cases, cybercrooks often transfer the money they

scammed to separate bank accounts, buy products or invest in various services. To avoid a digital nightmare, officials have clear guidelines: Do not link your primary salary account to your UPI or use it for bitcoin or online transactions. Maintain some funds in an alternative bank account to avoid problems in case your account gets frozen.

Another bid to bring Adyar to life, this time for Rs 4,227 cr

The state government will soon begin a 4,227crore project to restore the 43.9km-long Adyar river by setting up sewage treatment plants and riverside parks. The latest attempt to clean up the river is set to begin in four months, according to Metro Water, which is the implementing agency.

A Mumbai-based company, Khilari Infrastructure Private Limited, along with Chennai-based P&C Projects Private Limited, will restore, maintain, and manage the river for 30 years. Sewage treatment plants to prevent direct sewage outfalls, riverside parks and walkways, and improving the water level and quality will be carried out. The construction work is scheduled to be completed in 30 months. In the 2024-25 state budget, finance minister Thangam Thennarasu announced 1,500 crore for restoring the Adyar. "The amount is just the capital cost. The rest of the money is for energy, operation, and maintenance of the infrastructure," said Metrowater managing director T G Vinay. A new special-purpose vehicle called Chennai Rivers Transformation Company Limited has been formed to fund, monitor, and coordinate the restoration. "The Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust will remain the nodal agency to restore Adyar, Coom,



Kosasthalaiyar, and Buckingham Canal," he added. "This public-private model will be a game changer. We will release the money to the concessionaire only if they satisfy the 14 key performance indicators. Also, a single agency will restore the river. Hence, it will streamline the work done by different departments," said a senior Metrowater official. The key performance indicators include no untreated sewage discharge into the river and water quality maintained as per Central Pollution Control Board standards. Dissolved oxygen, free nitrogen, and biological oxygen demand should be within 10 mg/L each. The dissolved oxygen limit must be within 4 mg/L and the pH must be 6.5 to 8.5. Fourteen sewage treatment plants with a total capacity of 110 MLD will come up at Dr Radhakrishnapuram on Greenways Road, Lock Street East, Chitra Nagar at Kotturpuram, Jothiammal Nagar and Thideer Nagar in Saidapet, Nesapakkam, and Burma Colony.

Priority landing as flyer falls ill

Kolkata: A Kolkata-bound IndiGo flight, 6E 6556, from Ahmedabad made a priority landing around 7pm on Friday after a 64-year-old passenger fell ill inside the aircraft during landing, officials said. The passenger, who had started vomiting and defecating on the seat, was offered necessary medication at the airport before being shifted to a private hospital.

Will run as independent in Shimoga: KS Eshwarappa

SHIVAMOGGA/BENGALURU: Following up on a threat, KS Eshwarappa, former deputy CM and senior BJP functionary, on Friday said he will contest the Lok Sabha polls as an independent from Shimoga segment. The OBC leader's rebellion could pose a serious threat to the party's prospects across the state. Eshwarappa is incensed with BJP parliamentary board member BS Yediyurappa for not securing the Haveri ticket for his son, KE Kantesh. In a mark of retaliation, Eshwarappa now plans to queer the pitch for BY Raghavendra, incumbent Shimoga MP and Yediyurappa's son. Raghavendra is BJP's official candidate. Eshwarappa insisted that it is a fight against "dynastic politics and for Hindutva". "It is not against PM Modi," he said. He made the announcement after a nearly two-hour meeting with supporters in Shivamogga. At the meeting, 76-year-old Eshwarappa targeted Yediyurappa's family reiterating that the former CM had "cheated" him. "While Yediyurappa lobbied for senior BJP functionaries Shobha Karandlaje and Basavaraj, he dumped me," Eshwarappa said. He added: "I am not here for political revenge. Yediyurappa is a member of the parliamentary board, his younger son is an MLA and elder son an MP who is contesting for the fourth time.

Editorial

Russian's Reflexive Control theory has alarmed NATO

"If there is no intention to doom the world to the catastrophe of thermonuclear war, then let us not only relax the forces pulling on the ends of the rope; let us take measures to untie that knot. We are ready for this." The Soviet premier's chilling message to American President John F Kennedy during the 13-day Cuban Missile Crisis brought the world to the precipice of a nuclear Armageddon. However, the crisis was averted after an exchange of messages between the two leaders. Khrushchev eventually removed the R-12 MRBMs and R-14 IRBMs with thermonuclear warheads from Cuba and stopped the construction of their launch sites, but his military and diplomatic manoeuvres hit the bullseye. Kennedy promised never to invade Cuba and withdrew the PGM-19 Jupiter nuclear MRBMs from Turkey. More than six decades later, Moscow again raised the possibility of a nuclear spectre several times, triggering fears of an "Armageddon" in Washington. Vladimir Putin has threatened the use of tactical nukes during the Ukraine War five times and followed it up with some actions alarming NATO. On 24 February, 2022, the day he launched his "Special Military Operation", the Russian president said, "Any further expansion of the North Atlantic alliance's infrastructure or the ongoing efforts to gain a military foothold of the Ukrainian territory is unacceptable for us." Russia "has a certain advantage in several cutting-edge weapons. In this context, there should be no doubt for anyone that any potential aggressor will face defeat and ominous consequences should it directly attack our country". On 21 September, he repeated his N-threat. "In the event of a threat to the territorial integrity of our country and to defend Russia and our people, we will certainly make use of all weapon systems available to us. This is not a bluff." On 30 September, Putin indirectly hinted at the use of nukes to protect Ukraine's illegally annexed regions of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia "with all the forces and means at our disposal". In February 2024, when French President Emmanuel Macron didn't rule out the deployment of NATO troops in Ukraine, Putin said, "Everything that the West comes up with creates the real threat of a conflict with the use of nuclear weapons, and thus the destruction of civilisation." This month, Putin said that if American troops are deployed in Russian territory or Ukraine, Russia would treat the move as an intervention. "From a military-technical point of view, we are, of course, ready [for a nuclear war]," he said. In some cases, Putin's actions indicated that he might resort to a tactical nuclear attack. On 27 February, 2022, he put the Russian Army's deterrence forces on high combat alert as top NATO officials were "indulging in aggressive statements directed" at Russia. On 25 March, 2023, Putin announced plans to deploy Russian tactical nukes in Belarus. In March 2024, Russia tested the nuclear-tipped RS-24 Yars ICBM, which travels at Mach 14 and has a multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle. One month after Putin's September 2022 threat, US President Joe Biden reacted on expected lines. "We have not faced the prospect of Armageddon since Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis," he said. CNN's chief national security analyst and anchor Jim Sciutto's book *The Return of Great Powers*, released this month, claims that an "analysis and highly sensitive new intelligence" showed that Russia wanted to use a tactical nuke against Ukraine in 2022. Sciutto claims that a senior US administration official told him that the fear wasn't "just -hypothetical" but "based on some information that we picked up".

Continuity and change in India's foreign policy: PM Modi's diplomacy

India's foreign policy, as of other countries, is determined by certain permanent factors, as for instance, its size, resources, geographical location and its neighbourhood. Other factors are its understanding of national interest, its historical experience, the composition of its population, its capacity to defend itself, the quality of its leadership, its self-image, and the existence of internal lobbies.

National interest in a broad sense can be defined: peace, security, economic development, prosperity for the people, a friendly neighbourhood. But this is not depending only on national will. The interests of other countries can conflict with the interests of another; the world is becoming interdependent and so instability elsewhere can have a wider impact. A conflict can be inflicted on a country despite its interest in maintaining peace. Its security can be threatened by a powerful neighbour. The definition of national interest is thus subject to variables. India is one of the biggest countries in the world, an old civilisation, it has a self-image of a country that cannot subordinate itself to others and should have an independent role in international affairs. Having emerged from colonial subjugation, it could not align itself with the West and



give it control of its foreign policy. It chose to be non-aligned during the Cold War. This basic foundation of India's foreign policy is reflected today in its attachment to strategic autonomy, friendship with all to the extent possible, and balancing its external relations to increase its freedom of choice. The international situation is not static and therefore changes that occur require adjustments in foreign policy. Take for instance the collapse of the Soviet Union with which we had very strong ties. It was our biggest trade and defence partner. It played a vital role on our behalf on the Kashmir issue in the UNSC and in the 1971 war that led to the creation of Bangladesh.

During the period of US unilateralism when we were subject to huge pressure by the US on Kashmir, human rights, our nuclear and missile programmes, we became part of the RIC dialogue which later evolved into BRICS as a bal-

ancing act, even as we also began to improve our ties with the US in the context of the new geopolitical realities. We have persevered in maintaining close ties with Russia, with regular annual summits from 2000 onwards till 2021. Russia has never imposed sanctions on us. We have resisted western sanctions on Russia. We bought the S 400 air defence system despite the threat of secondary US sanctions. We have desisted from condemning Russia's military intervention in Ukraine. Russia has become our biggest oil supplier. All this while our ties with the US have become stronger, with defence trade with Russia declining and that with the US, France and Israel increasing. An increase in a country's economic growth helps in the pursuit of a more active foreign policy. China's case is instructive. As it has grown economically, it has acquired the economic and financial muscle to pursue a more assertive foreign policy,

beside strengthening its military muscle. India too is rising economically, and as it becomes a \$5 trillion economy and beyond, its ability to pursue its interests on the global stage will increase. Already, India is acting more confidently on the international stage, having become the 5th largest economy and set to become the 3rd largest before 2030. India is today being engaged by foreign powers as never before. The US president says that the relationship with India is a defining one in the 21st century. President Putin pays lavish compliments to Modi and India, stating that India under Modi pursues its national interest and resists pressure to the point that it has even surprised Putin India's foreign policy has been deeply affected by its partition and the creation of Pakistan which has tried to undermine India internally and externally since its creation, with war, terrorism, religious mobilisation of the Islamic world against us, and constantly internationalising the Kashmir issue. India has been on the defensive for decades on the Kashmir issue, accepting, in particular, US and UK interference on Pakistan's behalf. This defensiveness explains why despite continuous provocations from Pakistan, India has engaged Pakistan in a dialogue, even after the attack

on our Parliament and the horrific Mumbai attacks, with a willingness to accept the inclusion of Kashmir as an agenda item in our composite dialogue. Former Prime Minister Vajpayee went to Lahore, Prime Minister Modi invited Nawaz Sharif to his swearing-in ceremony in 2014, and later made an impromptu visit to Lahore in 2015. With PM Modi this defensiveness has finally been discarded. After Uri India conducted surgical strikes and after Pulwama struck at Balakot. With the revision of Article 370, the J&K issue has been taken out as an item of dialogue with Pakistan in the future. India is focusing on the terrorism issue in bilateral and multilateral forums with some result. The power gap that has developed between India and Pakistan, and the disarray in Pakistan that has weakened international support, including in the Islamic world, on its differences with India has enabled India to reduce the salience of Pakistan in its regional strategies. In this regard, India's relations with the Arab world have evolved. India had close relations with the progressive, secular, anti-fundamentalist Arab regimes such as Egypt and Iraq during the heyday of the nonaligned movement, but difficult ties with the conservative Gulf monarchies.

India-EFTA trade pact shows New Delhi can bargain hard

India-EFTA trade pact shows New Delhi can bargain hard and is up for global competition. Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal during the signing of the India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) in New Delhi. PTI

India has culminated a momentous journey by signing a comprehensive Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The group has some of the richest countries in the world: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland. The FTA is a significant milestone, not just for the combined economic potential that it unlocks for going forward but also for the strategic shift it reflects in India's trade

negotiation approach. Here is a confident nation that has shed the baggage of the East India Company. With this agreement, India tells the world that this is the template she will follow. In any agreement, India will take her time to negotiate a good deal. This agreement took almost as long as a routine trial in Indian lower courts—a full sixteen years to conclude. The big story here is that India has learned her lesson in trade negotiations. The India-EFTA TEPA comes on the heels of a not-so-successful free trade agreement (FTA) with the ASEAN bloc. The India-ASEAN FTA, signed in 2009 by the Congress regime, was a disaster. It resulted in a widening trade deficit for India, with a surge in imports from ASEAN countries but minimal growth in

Indian exports. This experience served as a crucial lesson for Indian negotiators. This time, India adopted a more cautious and strategic approach, ensuring a balanced agreement that uniquely links it to the \$100 billion promised investments in India while at the same time safeguarding domestic industries, especially the dairy and agricultural sectors, while promoting exports. Yet India gave ground to some processed food items, so it was willing to trade in a way that left juice for both parties. The India-EFTA TEPA is also a unique agreement in its structure. It includes a binding commitment of \$100 billion in investments from EFTA countries to India over the next 15 years, along with the creation of an estimated one million direct jobs.

Breaking the poverty cycle: Charting India's path to prosperity

There is a World Poverty Clock (WPC). Perhaps I should explain and it is best to use the words of WPC. "The World Poverty Clock provides real-time poverty estimates through 2030 for nearly every country in the world. It monitors progress against Ending Extreme Poverty, which is the UN's first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany, the World Poverty Clock shows the number of people living in extreme poverty worldwide, disaggregated by age, gender and rural/urban location. 'Target Escape Rate' is the average poverty reduction (per second) needed to achieve SDG1 by the end of 2030. The 'Current Escape Rate' is the current speed of poverty reduction between the year before and the year after the current year." Cross-country comparisons of development and deprivation are fraught with problems since comparable data are difficult to get.

This becomes even more so if subjective responses to question-

naires are used. WPC doesn't do that. It uses objective data. SDGs (sustainable development goals) are objectives the world should have attained by 2030 and there is a nested structure of goals, targets and indicators. There are 17 SDGs and the first one is "no poverty". Goals, by their very nature, are at a level of abstraction and need to be pinned down through targets and indicators. The seven targets for SDG-1 are: (1) eradicate extreme poverty; (2) reduce poverty by at least 50 per cent; (3) implement social protection systems; (4) equal rights to ownership, basic services, technology and economic resources; (5) build resilience to environmental, economic and social disasters; (6) mobilise resources to end poverty; (7) create pro-poor and gender-sensitive policy frameworks. I have always been sceptical about the way SDGs were developed, unlike the more precise MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) that preceded them. Many years ago, travellers on trains used holdalls. SDGs are a bit like that, bung everything in, irrespective of whether there is focus or not. To my jaundiced eye, in that list of

seven, the only ones that really matter are (1) and (2). They are precise and progress towards them can be quantified and measured. In passing, no timeline is stated for (6) and (7). They are open-ended, illustrating the vagueness. The others are to be achieved by 2030. In the nested SDG structure, targets are further refined through indicators. On (1) and (2), the indicators are (I) By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day; and (II) By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions. Post-Covid and following geopolitical tensions, all countries have deviated from desired SDG trajectories. But any cross-country tracking shows that India has deviated relatively less. In (1) and (2) there is a reference to a poverty line. A poverty line is a minimum basket required for subsistence. As economies develop and prosper, poverty lines also evolve. For example, in the US, the poverty line depends on the number of individuals in the household. For individuals,

When will DMK's Raja condemn Tamil icons celebrating Sanatana Dharma?

You have gained publicity, nay, notoriety, for expressing hatred towards Sanatana Dharma and everything else associated with it. You have made known your contempt for Hinduism. Your supporters perhaps believe that you have shown remarkable courage. Now, will you show similar 'courage' in condemning the Tamil icons who celebrated our Sanatana culture? Can you? Let us see, for instance, if you can speak a word against the Vaishnavite saint and poet, Nammalwar? In his Tiruvaymoli, Nammalwar sings

praise to Lord Krishna in the following words: 'The Gods that ye fix in your minds, in His name do they grant you deliverance. Even thus to immortality did the sage Markanda attain. Let none be offended, but there is no other God but Krishna. And let all your sacrifices be to them who are but his forms... In all these rising worlds they have thronged and wide they spread, those beautiful forms of Krishna—the unclad Rudra is there, Indra, Brahma, all. The Iron Age shall cease to be—do ye but unite and save them.' (The Coming

Age: Collected English Writings, by C Subramania Bharati.) Despite your contempt for Sanatana Dharma and its followers, you must be knowing that Nammalwar is one of the twelve much-revered Alvar saints of Tamil Nadu, whose verses contain praise of 108 temples considered as divine, or the Divya Desams. Nammalwar is held as the most prominent of those twelve saint-poets, and his literary output comprises more than 1,300 stanzas of a total of around 4,000 in the Naalayira Divya Prabandam. Your arro-

gance, Mr Raja, arrogance reminds one of a story associated with Nammalwar. A Pandya king, who then ruled the region, had passed an edict that all literary works ought to be submitted to his council headed by the court poet, for approval. Nammalwar had not bothered to follow the instruction. As a result, the king's men asked the saint's disciple, Madhurakavi Alwar, to bring Nammalwar to the court. The disciple refused, saying that his master would not budge an inch from where he was seated.

Sebi approves trial run of same-day stock settlement

MUMBAI: Markets regulator Sebi on Friday said that it would soon start a pilot project for moving to a T+0 settlement regime in the stock market on an optional basis, limited to 25 stocks and with a select few brokers. The board will again review the roll-out after three and six months from the date of introduction of this proposed faster settlement system. Sebi in its board meeting that lasted till late evening also decided to ease certain disclosure requirements for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), expanded the definition of promoter groups to determine promoter holding levels post and IPO, done away with security deposit requirement for public and rights offer of equities. It also directed to put in place specific rules to deal with market rumours, especially that impact a company's stock price and eased some of the rules governing alternate investment funds (AIFs). Sebi said in a release post its board meeting. The Sebi board also approved a proposal to exempt



additional disclosure requirements for FPIs having more than 50% of their India equity portfolio in a single corporate group but the holding is in a listed company with no identified promoter. However, this exemption would come with certain conditions like the aggregate holdings of all such FPIs is less than 3% of the company's equity capital. Sebi also extended the timeline to provide documentary proof of material changes in an FPI to 30 days from seven days now. It also said that a foreign fund not wanting to renew its registration in India can dispose of their holdings in 180 days, from 30 days now. Even if the fund can't fully liquidate its India portfolio, it would get another 180 days to do so, provided it pays 5% of the

sale proceeds as penalty to Sebi's Investor Protection and Education Fund (IPEF). Sebi board also has done away with the requirement of 1% security deposit for public and rights offer of stocks. It also expanded the definition of promoter group for post-IPO promoter holding by including those non-promoter entities that hold 5% or more in the company after the close of the offer. Relating to market rumours, Sebi said that promoters, directors, key managerial personnel and senior management of the company "should provide timely response to the listed entity for verifying market rumour." The Sebi board also approved the proposal to recognise a stock exchange as the supervisory body for research analysts.

SEBI defers proposed full launch of same-day settlement, to start with Beta version

MUMBAI: Taking into account stakeholder feedback, the Board of India's capital market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approved the launch of a Beta version of optional T+0 settlement, for a limited set of 25 shares, and that too with a limited set of brokers. The decision was taken at its Board meeting held The T+0 system means that the settlements must be done within the same day, of the completion of a transaction. Those 25 shares that would be part of the Beta version

have not been named yet by the regulator. Parallely, the regulator SEBI said it shall continue to do further stakeholder consultation, including with the users of the Beta version. The Board of the SEBI will review the progress at the end of three months and six months from the date of this implementation, and decide on further course of action, SEBI said in a statement. SEBI, in its endeavour to keep pace with the changing times and carry out its mandate of development of securities markets and

investor protection, shortened the settlement cycle to T+3 from T+5 in 2002 and subsequently to T+2 in 2003. Further in 2021, T+1 settlement was introduced in a phased manner which was fully implemented from January 2023. It was of the view that the significant evolution of payment systems in the country in recent years coupled with sophisticated and robust technologies used by market infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) appears to present further opportunities for advancing.

Forex reserves jump to 2-year high

MUMBAI: The country's foreign exchange reserves rose for a third straight week and reached a more than two-year high of \$636.1 billion as of March 8, data from the central bank showed on.

The reserves jumped by \$10.5 billion in the reporting week, the biggest jump since the



week ended July 14, 2023. They had risen by a total of \$9.5 billion in the prior two weeks,

edging towards their record high of \$642.5 billion, hit in Sept 2021.

Rs 162 crore mystery: Name's Yashoda, say bonds, but hospitals deny

NOIDA/HYDERABAD: One of the biggest buyers of electoral bonds is a hospital. Its name, State Bank of India data shared with Election Commission shows, is Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital. But which one? Despite the name being known, the identity of this buyer - who sits just outside the top 10 purchasers, at No. 12 - remains a mystery as of now. Between Oct 2021 and Oct 2023, Yashoda Super Specialty Hospitals bought bonds worth Rs 162 crore. There are three hospital chains that operate with this name, in Ghaziabad and Hyderabad. A day after the identities of electoral bond



purchasers was published on the EC website on Supreme Court orders, the hospital managements denied making any such donation. In Ghaziabad, there are three Yashoda hospitals - one in Kaushambi (Yashoda Super Speciality Hospitals), one in Sanjay Nagar (Yashoda

Superspeciality Hospital & Cancer Institutes) and another in Nehru Nagar (Yashoda Hospital and Research Centre). They started off under the same group, managed by Dinesh Arora, a doctor, and his brother-in-law PN Arora, a law graduate in his mid-70s. In 2017, the two

Aroras legally parted ways. The Kaushambi hospital went to PN Arora and the Nehru Nagar and Sanjay Nagar hospitals to Dinesh Arora (both are now managed by his son Rajat). The PN Arora group is building Yashoda Medicity, a new state-of-the-art 1,200-bed hospital in Ghaziabad. Last year, before the UP Global Investors, the group announced an investment of Rs 500 crore. In a statement, PN Arora's hospital management said, "It has come to our attention that there have been speculations regarding Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, Kaushambi, involving political donations through electoral bonds.

Missing middle in IT firms pose challenges to fulfil cloud deals

BENGALURU: The conspicuous case of missing middle (talent) in IT firms is posing newer challenges in complex outsourcing deals especially in cloud migration projects. The huge vacuum in the installed talent pool of middle management and senior executives in IT firms has led to a decline in decades of institutional knowledge that was integral to a customer's business. This has widened the knowledge gap of using tools, processes, governance, and risk frameworks to architect and replatform solutions. As companies are grappling with ways to restore the institutional knowledge, it has put some large deals under pressure resulting in ramp downs. The depth of the leadership bench has deplet-



ed too, forcing customers to build tech skills inhouse marrying core and context. Phil Fersht, CEO of US IT advisory HFS Research, said, there has never been so much movement for client-facing services talent as what has been going on in the past year, which is causing a significant disruption in the industry. "Simply put, the importance of executive-client personal relationships cannot be understated during these turbulent times when clients are under huge pressure to drive out costs, fix broken cloud migrations and exploit AI opportunities. We will soon see the winners and losers emerge from the IT service providers which can retain and assemble the best quality client-facing executive teams."

US court bars Byju's from using \$533mn it borrowed

MUMBAI: In a major setback for troubled startup Byju's, a US bankruptcy court has passed an order in favour of the edtech company's term loan lenders, disabling the firm from transferring or using \$533 million received as part of loan proceeds, essentially freezing the assets. The loan amount - which has been at the centre of dispute between Byju's and its lenders - has been transferred from an obscure hedge fund Camshaft Capital, where it was previously held to an unnamed offshore trust, the group of lenders said in a statement. The court has asked founder and group CEO Byju Raveendran and wife Divya Gokulnath to comply with the ruling. Byju's founder Raveendran borrows money against his



homes to pay staff salary as cash crunch continues. It has also ordered the arrest of William Morton, founder of Camshaft Capital, following his repeated refusal to appear in court and provide any information regarding the transfer of \$533 million and the current status and location of the funds. "The fact that the parent company (Think & Learn) is attempting to hide where the assets are is huge. It shows that

they are engaged in what appears to be a potential fraud," the court observed in its ruling. Byju's had recently said that the \$533 million has been parked with a non-US subsidiary of the firm but did not disclose any details. In a statement, Byju's said the court order merely maintains "status quo" because it has always maintained that the said funds are parked in one of its subsidiaries.

Fee dispute: CCI to probe Google's app billing policy

MUMBAI: The Competition Commission of India on Friday ordered a probe into Google's Play Store billing policy, which has been at the centre of the tech giant's dispute with local app developers who claim that it is discriminatory in nature. In its 21 page order, the fair trade regulator observed that the revenue distribution model within Play Store appears to be skewed in favour of Google, with app developers potentially facing substantial costs. Reviewed a copy of the order. The CCI said that it is of the view that prima facie, Google has imposed unfair price in violation of the Competition Act which warrants a detailed investigation. It has directed the Director General to complete the investigation and submit a



consolidated investigation report within 60 days. The CCI's recent order came in response to fresh complaints filed by People Interactive India which runs Shaadi.com, Mebigoo Labs which owns Kuku FM, Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation and Indian Digital Media Industry Foundation. In a statement, Google said that it is examining CCI's order. "The CCI had previously examined our service fee in detail between 2020 and 2022 and found no illegality. However, we take our

commitment to comply with local laws and regulations in India seriously and will cooperate with the process in every way," the company said. "Service fee charged by Google has been alleged to be excessive in nature and by requiring the app developers to pay such excessive service fee for processing payments through GPBS (Google Play Billing System) as well as ABS (Alternative Billing Systems) under UCB (User Choice Billing), Google is alleged to be imposing an unfair price...."

World Bank maps out plans to further boost lending by \$100 bln-plus over a decade

WASHINGTON: The World Bank on Thursday proposed steps that would boost its lending to developing countries by an additional \$100 billion over a decade as part of an ongoing reform process aimed at helping the bank expand its mission to include climate change. In a 24-page report to the joint ministerial committee that oversees the bank and the International Monetary Fund, the bank's management said it would ask shareholders to approve a hybrid capital measure and a new portfolio guarantee platform that together could boost lending by over \$100 billion. That amount would come on top of measures already being implemented that will boost the bank's lending to developing countries by up to \$50 billion.

Chocolates with betel instead of cocoa, but just as delicious

NEW DELHI: Unable to offer any explanations for the unsubstantiated comments on PM Modi made by its AI platform Gemini, American tech giant Google said a 'sorry' to the govt and called the platform 'unreliable', minister of state for IT & Electronics Rajeesh Chandrasekhar has told. "We had sent them a notice, seeking an explanation on the unsubstantiated results thrown up by Gemini regarding a particular query on PM Modi. They replied and said, 'Sorry, the platform is unreliable,' the minister said as the govt announced that AI platforms will now need a 'permit' from the state to operate in the country."

House asks CS to fix problems in govt hospitals within a week

New Delhi: Complaining of shortage of medicines and inadequate lab tests in hospitals, mohalla clinics and dispensaries, Delhi Assembly on Friday passed a resolution demanding a solution to the issue within a week.

The Legislative Assembly directed chief secretary Naresh Kumar to eliminate shortcomings in state-run health facilities and present a daily report to the health minister.

"A meeting of the Delhi Legislative Assembly will be convened on Friday, March 22, at 11 am, where the chief secretary will personally present a detailed report on this matter through the health minister," the resolution read. It was passed by a voice vote in the House. The resolution was brought after govt realised that a similar move last week to address water and sewer-related issues had resulted in Delhi Jal Board acting on a war footing under



direct supervision of the chief secretary and resolving a large number of problems raised by MLAs across the city.

Health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said the city's poor were distressed due to the shortage of medicines and laboratory tests in mohalla clinics, hospitals and dispensaries.

He told the House that medicines and other supplies are procured through a standard process and new tenders are issued every year before the current one expires. "A tender was issued for medicines on Dec 21, 2022. The officials

continued to conduct technical evaluations of that tender while the previous one expired.

The current tender is also expiring in March but the supplies of medicines have not been received," Bharadwaj said. Due to this, medicines are running out. "Why is no action being taken against the health secretary, director-general of health services and officials of the central procurement agency who are obstructing the supply? Such officials should be prosecuted under the Criminal Act," Bharadwaj said.

Polls pitchfork illegal colonies to centrestage

NEW DELHI: It's inevitable that once the poll bugle is sounded in the capital, unauthorised colonies and their residents get the kind of attention they crave for round the year. Regularisation of these colonies and their redevelopment have always been one of the hot button issues raised ahead of parliamentary and assembly elections in the capital.

Unauthorised colonies Since 2008, when Sheila Dikshit-led Congress govt promised regularisation of 1,639 such settlements, spread over govt, private and agri-



cultural land, the assurances of better civic amenities, piped water supply, sewer connection to each household and better road network have been considered as the ticket to electoral success. With the issuing of provisional regularisation certificates to

1,218 colonies, Congress ensured its return to power by winning 43 of 70 seats in the 2008 assembly polls. The subsequent elections saw various political parties making a renewed pitch for better facilities, regularisation and ownership rights.

2 Indian Coast Guard sailors arrested for minor's rape

Mumbai: Two naviks (sailors) of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) were recently arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a colleague's minor daughter in the city. The crime took place in the home of one of the accused last year. The two accused were

arrested following an FIR registered. The case was registered following a complaint by the minor through an email to senior ICG officials on March 8. The two have been booked for gang rape. The two sailors were produced before the court on

Wednesday, which remanded them to four days in police custody. They have been booked under Indian Penal Code sections 376DA (punishment for gang rape of a woman under 16), 506II (criminal intimidation) and 34 (common intention).

Unlock Aaftab for 8 hours a day: HC

New Delhi: Delhi High Court directed the Tihar Jail authorities to allow Aaftab Poonawala, the main accused in the Shradha Walker murder case, to remain out in the open for eight hours in jail premises, before lodging him in a solitary cell at night. A bench of justices Suresh Kumar Kait and Girish Kathpalia granted the accused relief on a petition filed by him, contending that under the garb of security, he cannot be kept in solitary confinement. Aaftab's lawyer claimed that unlike other inmates who are taken out for eight hours a



day, Aaftab is allowed to be out for an hour each in the morning and evening before being sent back to solitary confinement for the remaining time. "We direct the jail authorities to unlock him for eight hours, as applicable to other prisoners, and during the night, he be lodged

in a solitary cell," the court observed, while hearing the plea. Justifying the strict conditions imposed on Aaftab, the counsel for the jail authorities submitted that the accused was not kept with other inmates due to a threat perception as he may be attacked. He said a trial court had earlier

passed directions with respect to giving security to Aaftab after he was attacked while being taken to the forensic science lab in Rohini. However, urging the court to intervene, Aaftab's lawyer said his client is in any case allowed "zero" human interaction in jail. He further informed the court that Aaftab is being kept in solitary confinement even though he has not committed any "jail offence". Aaftab is accused of strangling his live-in partner Walker and chopping her body into pieces in 2022.

ED opposes closure report in Rs 25,000-crore MSCB scam

MUMBAI: Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed an intervention application in court opposing the closure report by Economic Offences Wing (EOW) in the Rs 25,000-crore Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSCB) scam. It is the second time the agency has filed such an application. The first one was rejected four years ago when the case was under investigation. Recently, EOW submitted a closure report in the MSCB scam after further investigation against Dy CM Ajit



Pawar and MLA Rohit Pawar, prompting ED to intervene. ED initial intervention in 2020 came before filing of the chargesheet in the money laundering case that the agency was investigating.

The court had rejected the ED inter-

vention application, stating that the agency was not the complainant or the aggrieved party. Now since the chargesheet has been filed in the case and the court had taken cognisance of it, ED took the stand that it is an 'aggrieved' party

now as the EOW's closure report will affect their case. In 2023, ED filed its first chargesheet against Jarandeshwar Sugar Mills, linked to deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar. The chargesheet mentioned Ajit Pawar's connection to the company but did not name him as an accused. Subsequently, a supplementary chargesheet was filed naming NCP MLA Prajakt Tanpure and others. Recently, ED attached a sugar mill owned by a company of Rohit Pawar.

Guidelines issued to make campuses inclusive for transpersons

MUMBAI: In an effort to make college campuses more inclusive, the state govt has for the first time come out with detailed guidelines for transgender students. Initiating action against colleges for refusing admissions on the basis of gender, reserving a section in hostels for transgender students and establishing cells to address issues of discrimination, mental harassment, sexual exploitation or any other violence against them, are some of the guidelines enlisted in the government resolution (GR) on Friday. The GR has come close on the heels of the govt's first-ever policy for transgender individuals approved by the cabinet earlier this week.



universities to offer free-of-cost education to transgender students and bear their entire

tuition fees. Institutions have been asked to strictly follow the fee waiver policy in the new guidelines. These are in line with the National Education Policy, 2020, that speaks about making campuses inclusive for all students. A govt official said the department's policy was ready and since the state came out with its overarching policy, they also decided to release specific guidelines for higher

education institutions. To cater to the needs of all transgender students, colleges are expected to appoint coordinators to provide counselling, academic guidance and career advice. All non-agricultural universities, private and deemed universities and affiliated colleges in the state are expected to strictly follow the provisions of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, stated the guidelines. Institutions need to adopt an inclusive policy to tackle issues of gender bias, negligence and segregation based on sexuality, it added. ensure equal opportunities for these students, institutions should organise awareness activities for both students and teaching/non-teaching staff.

Cattle traders 'forced to pay protection money', lodge plaint

MUMBAI: The cattle traders have lodged a complaint that despite paying all the government taxes, including cattle taxes, they are forced to pay "protection money" to the goons on the highway. Adil Kathawala, a cattle trader, has lodged an FIR at Deonar police station against four persons, including two transporters who threatened them to book them in false cases and extorted Rs 60 per cattle every time they transported goats to Karnataka traders.

The Deonar police have booked Ganesh Nakate, Vinod Nakate, and Pratik Nanaware, who had been extorting money from the cattle traders for several months. The cattle traders have been regularly paying



the protection money of Rs 60 per goat to transport them out of Mumbai. However, trouble started in January when the extortionists stopped one of Kathawala's trucks carrying 196 goats at Kalamboli in Navi Mumbai for six hours, leading to the death of nine goats, causing a huge loss to the trader. The trader decided not to pay them.

Despite the losses incurred, the extortionists kept calling, threatening, and demanding money, which irked the traders. All traders decided to protest and lodge a complaint, said a police official. Kathawala, in his complaint, alleged that he has been in the cattle trade business since 1997 and supplies cattle to various other parts of the state at

wholesale rates. The cattle traders knew the risks involved in challenging the extortionists, who had until then operated with impunity. However, the traders also recognized the importance of standing up for their rights and the need to send a strong message that they would no longer tolerate such exploitation.

"Karnataka butchers who often come to Deonar abattoir to buy goats decided that we will send them goats, and they will pay for the transportation. So four to five traders supplied them with goats. Six months back, we engaged Nakate and Vinod Nakate for transporting goats to Karnataka. One truck carries around 200 goats at one time

LG nod for special zones at IGI Airport

New Delhi: LG VK Saxena has given the nod for setting up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and Free Trade Zone (FTZ) at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in the capital. SEZ and FTZ will be related to cargo infrastructure and other allied services. Once operationalised, they will give a fillip to the logistics sector and catalyse economic growth apart from spinoffs for generating employment, the LG office said. Officials said LG approved the proposal, taking note of the strategic importance of developing an SEZ at the airport hub after ensuring that DDA would give the go-ahead for the same as per the provisions of the Master Plan of Delhi 2021. To be spread over an area of nearly five acres, the SEZ would create economic activities through exports, warehousing, trading and related services at the airport complex. "It will also liberalise and reduce procedural complexities in terms of application.

Will IPL 2024 second leg be held in the UAE?



MUMBAI: Is there a possibility of the second half of the IPL being held in Dubai, since dates could clash with the general elections?" The Election Commission of India will announce the election schedule on Saturday at 3 pm. After that, the BCCI will decide whether IPL matches should be moved to Dubai. Currently, a few top BCCI officials are in Dubai to explore the possibility of organizing the second half of the IPL in Dubai," sources said.

There are reports in the media, saying some IPL teams have asked their players to submit their passports. This has also led to speculation over a shift of venue outside India. The first half of the 2014 IPL was also held in the UAE due to general elections. The BCCI has announced the schedule of the first half of the IPL, which includes 21 matches, with the last match of this schedule being on April 7 in Lucknow between Lucknow Super Giants and Gujarat Titans. The IPL starts this season with the first match between Chennai Super Kings and Royal Challengers Bangalore on March 22 in Chennai. The last time the IPL was held in UAE was in 2020 when three venues - Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah - staged the matches because of the outbreak of Covid pandemic in India.

Afghanistan fall short as Ireland win first T20I

Ireland secured a victory in the first T20I of their three-match series against Afghanistan, clinching victory by a margin of 38 runs in Sharjah on Friday. Ben White and Josh Little showcased their bowling prowess for the visiting team, while Harry Tector delivered an unbeaten half-century, propelling Ireland to a 1-0 series advantage over the Afghans. "Really happy. It was a fantastic team performance," said Ireland captain Paul Stirling, according to Cricinfo. "We have a big two months ahead. So we've got to put this behind. We have to perform at our best to win games,"



he added, looking ahead to the T20 World Cup starting in June. Afghanistan, requiring 150 for victory, had a disastrous beginning when Mark Adair dismissed Rahmanullah Gurbaz with the very first delivery of the innings. Sediqullah Atal, Gurbaz's opening partner, swiftly followed him back to the pavilion after being

caught off Harry Tector's bowling for just one run. In the second over, Tector bowled Azmatullah Omarzai, setting up a potential hat-trick opportunity. Ben White then took charge of the bowling attack, claiming the wickets of Mohammad Ishaq, Nabi, Ijaz Ahmadzai and Kharote, finishing with impressive figures.

Curtains for Odisha FC in AFC Cup after goalless 2nd leg

Kolkata: It rained for a brief period at Kalinga Stadium on Thursday afternoon. But for Odisha FC, goals seemed to have dried up when they needed to score with all guns blazing to overturn the 0-4 deficit against Central Coast Mariners. The resulting

goalless draw in the return fixture of AFC Cup Inter-zonal semifinal in Bhubaneswar on Thursday meant the Juggernauts failed to roll on in their debut Asian club campaign. The Australian side progressed to the inter-zonal final against Kyrgyz

club Abdysht-Ata Kant with a 4-0 aggregate win thanks to their first-leg thrashing of the Indian Super League (ISL) side. But it was curtains for the Kalinga Warriors. With a mountain to climb, Sergio Lobera's wards looked a distant self on the day.

CAPSULES

It's my 7th season with Delhi Capitals, and we haven't...! - DC coach Ponting

Australian batting legend and Delhi Capitals' head coach Ricky Ponting once again faces a stiff challenge to turn the fortunes of Delhi franchise that is yet to win the IPL title after futile attempts in 16 previous seasons of the league since its inception in 2008. The biggest fillip that the team has received is the return of wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant after a 14-month layoff following a car accident in December 2022, which required extensive surgical intervention and rehabilitation. But Ponting stressed on the importance of each player getting better as an individual to contribute to the team's success. "I am going to have fun with you all. I am going to make you better. But what I want from all of you for the next 10 weeks is to be the best version of yourself each and every day. Nothing more than that. Because I know that if you play to the best of your ability each and every day, and you train as well as you can, you are going to get better. If you get better as an individual, the team gets better," said Ponting in his first address of the season.



'Without Virat Kohli, the Indian team cannot...' Srikanth

The debate around the media report that the BCCI selectors might not consider Virat Kohli for the T20 World Cup in June this year has been one of the hottest in cricket corridors over the past week, and former selector and India opener Kris Srikanth lambasted it as the work of jobless "rumour mongers". The Indian team will be led by Rohit Sharma, as confirmed by the BCCI secretary Jay Shah earlier this month. However, the inclusion of Kohli for the tournament is not certain, according to a report. The report mentioned that India's failure to win an ICC trophy since the 2013 Champions Trophy may force the selectors to take a few tough decisions,



including that of leaving out former captain Kohli. But Srikanth refuted those reports as mere rumours. "No chance. It's not possible to be without Virat Kohli at the T20 World Cup," Srikanth said on his YouTube channel. "He is the one who took us to the semi-

finals in T20 World Cup 2022. He was the 'Man of the Tournament'. Who is saying all this? These rumour-mongers, don't they have any other job? What is the basis for all this chatter? If India have to win the T20 World Cup, Virat Kohli is a must in the squad." The report states that the selectors believe Kohli hasn't been at his best in the T20 format, but that thought may demand a rethink if Kohli comes out all guns blazing this IPL season. The batting icon had taken a break from the five-Test series against England to welcome the arrival of his second child. "You need a guy who can just stay there. India need that sheet anchor, be it T20 World Cup.

Liverpool sail into Europa League quarterfinals, Leverkusen win with stoppage-time

Liverpool dominated with four goals within 14 minutes, securing a resounding 6-1 victory over Sparta Prague to advance to the Europa League quarterfinals. Meanwhile, Bundesliga leaders Bayer Leverkusen required two stoppage-time goals to edge past Qarabag. AC Milan, Marseille, Roma and West Ham United also secured their spots in the quarterfinals draw. Despite already leading 5-1 from the first leg, Jurgen Klopp opted for a strong Liverpool lineup, a decision that paid



off handsomely as they remain in contention for multiple trophies. Darwin Nunez and 19-year-old Bobby Clark initiated the scoring spree for Klopp's side, with Mohamed Salah

adding his 20th goal of the season in his first club start since January 1. Cody Gakpo added the fourth goal before Liverpool eased off the pressure ahead of their upcoming FA Cup clash

with Manchester United. Veljko Birmancevic pulled one back for Sparta, but Dominik Szoboszlai and Gakpo completed the rout in the second half. "It was an amazing win - and an amazing first 15 minutes," said Gakpo after an 11-2 aggregate victory. It's what we had in mind. It shows the confidence in the team at the moment." There has been significant speculation linking Leverkusen manager Xabi Alonso as a potential successor to Jurgen Klopp at Anfield.

Lakshya Sen enters semifinals of All England Championships with hard-fought win over Lee Zii Jia

In a remarkable display of mental fortitude, India's Lakshya Sen secured a stunning victory over former champion Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia, advancing to the men's singles semifinals of the All England Championships. Sen, aged 22, showed resilience throughout the match, employing varied attacking strategies and persevering against Lee to emerge victorious 20-22, 21-16, 21-19 in a captivating quarterfinal that extended for 71 minutes. This triumph comes after Sen's runner-up finish in the 2022 edition of the tournament. "It was a really good match and happy to be on winning side. It was all about keeping the nerve. I knew he has the quality to come-



back and give a tough fight," Sen said. "Even when I was 18-14 up, I knew if I play a little bit lose, he will grab the opportunity. For me, it was important to dictate the pace. In the end, it was about not giving him an open chance to hit and keep the shuttle down." Ranked 18th in the world and the reigning Commonwealth Games champion, Sen will face off against Indonesia's 9th-ranked Jonatan Christie in the semifinals. Sen endured four three-game matches last

week at the French Open, followed by two consecutive lengthy matches over the past couple of days. However, despite this demanding schedule, he managed to maintain a high level of performance. "It (physically) was really good. The way I played last week and now too. Now it is all about recovering as there is not much time. My support team will have to be really on their toes to get me up for next match," Sen said. During their intense battle, both the players engage.

Pant's rehabilitation and recovery at the NCA for IPL 2024

NEW DELHI: Delhi Capitals' wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant, who was declared fit by the Indian cricket board (BCCI) for the upcoming 17th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) on Tuesday, underwent rigorous and intense rehabilitation sessions and training regime at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru. The BCCI, on Saturday, shared the second part of the 'The Greatest Comeback Story' on their official X handle with the caption: In Part 2 of the #MiracleMan, we bring you insights from @RishabhPant17's road to recovery, where determination and perseverance ultimately triumph. From intense rehabilitation sessions, training regime, and nutrition - the coaches at



the National Cricket Academy take us deeper into this inspiring journey. "The video shows Pant undergoing intense exercises and training sessions to attain fitness. In the video, Pant also talks about his time at the NCA. "Mostly rehab is very irritating I would say. Worst thing about rehab is that you have to do the same thing again and again. But at the same time you have to do it because you don't have any other choice. It's boring, you have to do the same stuff, you have to see the same people,

but you have to do it at the end of the day. But the more boring you do, more better you get." Pant also talked about how the staff at the NCA was very welcoming, very supportive and encouraging and they made his rehabilitation schedule according to his needs and wishes. Pant also thanked the BCCI for all the support and confessed that his love for cricket has gone up. Pant added, "Great support from BCCI, whatever I needed, they tried to give me at their best. Really thankful for that, for

the support which I got all over. I really appreciate that. I think I'm really confident on getting back at the field. It's been amazing because I feel so happy when I go to the ground each and every day. I think the love of cricket has gone up, rather than going down I would say. I love cricket more now. I used to love it more than anything before also but still I think there is an increase in that because when I enter the field I feel the energy of the ground. I just love being on the field. That's the best part." The video also shows various doctors, physiotherapists and conditioning coaches at the NCA talking about Pant's efforts and his determination to attain peak fitness.

Did Gambhir disclose IPL 2024 final date in his straight talk with KKR squad?



Kolkata: Returning to the Kolkata Knight Riders' (KKR) camp as a mentor after two years in the same role with the Lucknow Super Giants, KKR's two-time IPL-winning captain Gautam Gambhir set things straight in his first address to the players. But inadvertently, the T20 and ODI World Cup winner possibly gave away the date of the IPL 2024 final while talking. The BCCI has so far finalised the schedule of first 21 matches to be played from March 22 to April 7. The remainder of the schedule is yet to be released and will depend on the schedule of the general elections in the

Whether it's Eid, Diwali, or Christmas, every festival is now celebrated joyously: CM

Rampur/Lucknow

Drawing a stark comparison between the previous governments and the present government, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath emphasized on Saturday that Uttar Pradesh witnessed curfews and riots before 2017. However, he declared, "Aaj no curfew-nodanga, UP mein sab change" (Today there is no curfew, no riot here, because everything is fine in UP). Addressing a public meeting at Mahatma Gandhi Stadium (Physical Ground) in Rampur, the CM said, "All festivals are being celebrated peacefully. Whether it's Guru Purab, Holi, Eid, Diwali, or Christmas, all are celebrated joyously. Everyone has the freedom to celebrate festivals in their own way. There is security and prosperity here. Today, no one can endanger the security of daughters and businessmen. If



anyone tries, he will face consequences." He further emphasized that the government is committed to providing security and facilities. "The government is fulfilling its responsibilities. With such governance, the country is witnessing unprecedented development," he asserted. The Chief Minister also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 84 development projects worth Rs 610 crore in Rampur. A short film showcasing the development works in Rampur was screened during the event. The CM also honoured the beneficiaries of vari-

ous schemes. The Chief Minister highlighted that previously, farmers lacked access to electricity. However, this year, Rs 2600 crore has been allocated in the budget for free tube well irrigation, ensuring better agricultural practices. He stated, "The government is diligently working towards ensuring timely payment of sugarcane prices to our 'Annadata' farmers and providing them with higher prices for their produce. Additionally, efforts are underway to create employment opportunities for the youth.

The double engine government transforms dreams into reality: CM

Moradabad

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asserted on Saturday that the double-engine government doesn't just present dreams but transforms them into reality, "which is why people repeatedly choose Modi ji." The Chief Minister was addressing a large public meeting at Awasth Maidan, Moradabad. During this, he also virtually joined the public meeting organized in Mirzapur. In his address, he said, "Our resolution was that there should be a university in every commissionerate, today this resolution is being fulfilled with the foundation laying of new universities in Mirzapur and Moradabad." The Chief Minister laid the foundation stone of one state university each for Moradabad and Mirzapur. In Moradabad, he inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for 112 development projects worth Rs 513.35 crore, including the Uttar Pradesh State University spread over 50 acres with a cost of Rs 167 crore. Additionally, CM Yogi laid the foundation stone for the Ma-



Vindhyavasi State University, spanning 25,500 hectares with an estimated cost of Rs 155 crore. During the event, he announced that the university in Moradabad would be named after Guru Jambheshwar. In his address, the Chief Minister said that the decades-old demand in Moradabad and Mirzapur is now being fulfilled. Arrangements for funds have been made to make these two universities world-class. He mentioned that along with government universities, private universities will also be promoted. A healthy competitive environment will be created. "However, there will be no compromise on quality in government universities. Along with this, we are also estab-

lishing One District One Medical College. Our resolution is to establish a medical college in every district, which is going to be fulfilled very soon," Yogi added. Attacking the opposition, CM Yogi said that the previous governments first destroyed the education system, then the health system, and failed to ensure the safety of businessmen and daughters. The state was engulfed in riots and curfew, which led to an identity crisis for the youth. Traders left their industries and started migrating. He further mentioned that in the past, nepotism dominated development works and anarchy started spreading everywhere. As a result, this state with unlimited potential was forced to hide its identity.

CAPSULES

'Eliminate dirty cash but also protect donor privacy', says poll body chief

NEW DELHI: Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, while reiterating that Election Commission is all for transparency, acknowledged the need for an institutional mechanism to control "unaccounted" money in donations that also protects donors' privacy and ensures they are not harassed for contributing to a certain political party. Responding to a question on electoral bonds at the EC press conference here, Kumar said there is no scope in a democracy for hiding things. "We (at EC) are all for transparency. (But) the country now has to find solutions through an institutional mechanism where a donor's privacy is also considered," he said. In a landmark verdict on Feb 15, Supreme Court had scrapped Centre's electoral bond scheme that allowed corporate donors anonymity. It ordered EC to publish names of donors, the amount donated by them and their recipients. EC has since complied with the direction. But Kumar on Saturday voiced his fear of unaccounted money making a comeback in political funding with the demise of bonds. "The unaccounted money which is used in elections... during elections, we are very particular to control it. But how we also control donations in the unaccounted form is something on which the entire nation should work... (such that) the donor's privacy is also protected and he is not harassed. How it (donation) is more and more white," he noted. "In the digital age, there must be very less cash economy."

Don't need further custody of Elgar case accused Shoma Sen: NIA to SC

NEW DELHI: National Investigation Agency has told Supreme Court that it does not need further custody of former Nagpur University professor Shoma Sen, who has been in custody in Elgar Parishad case for over five-and-half years. The bail petition is now being heard by apex court. Sen was arrested on June 6, 2018 in connection with Bhima Koregaon - Elgar Parishad case and is presently lodged in Byculla Prison in Mumbai. The activist approached SC after



her bail plea was rejected by trial court and Bombay HC. She told SC that there was no prima facie evidence that she was associated with banned Naxal outfit CPI (Maoist) and the material allegedly recovered by the probe agency from electronic

devices of other accused were "planted". Pleading for her bail, senior advocate Anand Grover and lawyer Paras Nath Singh submitted that the embargo under Section 43-D(5) of UAPA does not attract in her case.

"No material was found from her devices. Even materials which were allegedly found from devices of other accused were planted. I am not going into it as the matter is coming before Bombay high court in March," Grover had contended. He added that Sen, 65, be granted bail as the case against her is weak due to lack of evidence and also as she is suffering from various ailments. "None of the statements in documents are corroborated by any independent evidence."

Due to the police's excellent functioning, public perception of UP has changed: CM

Moradabad

By fostering an excellent environment of law and order, the Uttar Pradesh Police has changed the public's perception of the state, said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday. He emphasized that the exemplary efforts of the UP Police over the past seven years have propelled the state to excel across all sectors, solidifying its reputation as a frontrunner in every domain. Addressing the convocation ceremony organized at Bhimrao



Ambedkar Police Academy, the Chief Minister highlighted, "Over the past seven years, there has been no riot, organized crime is on the decline, and all major national and

international festivals and events have been conducted safely." He further stated, "Moreover, the arrival of esteemed dignitaries and the grand consecration ceremony of

Ram Lalla in Ayodhya were executed with utmost grandeur and joy. This accomplishment reflects the dedication and diligence of the UP Police personnel, setting a benchmark for policing worldwide." The Chief Minister commended the UP Police for their outstanding performance in maintaining law and order, controlling crime, and fostering social harmony, especially during challenging times. The Chief Minister expressed satisfaction as 8362 sub-inspectors.

Yogi govt's master plan of 2031 will incorporate the industrial corridor

Lucknow Bundelkhand, once lagging behind in development due to neglect by previous administrations, is now rapidly advancing under the new policies of the Yogi government. With initiatives like the establishment of BIDA, Uttar Pradesh's second industrial city after

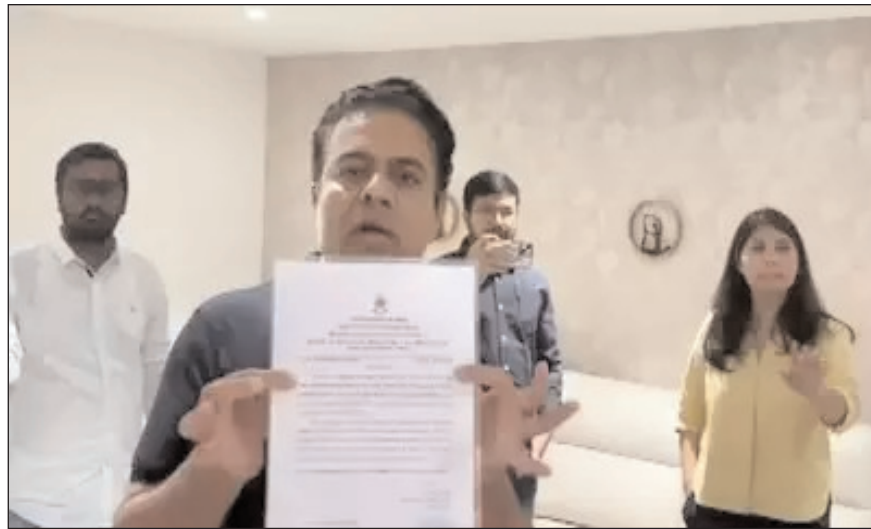
Noida, and projects such as the Lalitpur Drug Park, Bundelkhand is emerging as a hub of industrial growth. In this sequence, the Yogi government is now moving towards expanding the Banda district of Bundelkhand under the master plan. Instructions are given to extend the master plan till the Industrial Corridor in Banda. Master plan will extend to industrial corridor. The Yogi government will implement the development of industrial, commercial, and residential activities in Banda under the master plan in an organized manner. On the instructions of the Chief Minister, a blueprint is being prepared for the expansion of Banda. The expansion of Banda is planned based on an estimated population of

2,34,896 for the Banda urban area and an estimated total population of 85,143 for the rural area by the year 2031. Special emphasis is being placed on bringing industrial and development-oriented investment proposals to the forefront for development under the master plan. Notably, CM Yogi has given instructions to extend the limits of the master plan till the Industrial Corridor in Banda. Connecting the corridor with the B u n d e l k h a n d Expressway has also been instructed. Additionally, concrete steps will be taken to ensure that Municipal Corporation transportation is not affected due to heavy traffic. Local craftsmanship and culture will be promoted. Under the master plan, instructions have been given to the development authorities.

Bizman sold fake artworks: ED raids 6 sites, says evidence of cartel found

MUMBAI: Enforcement

Directorate (ED) conducted searches at six locations in Mumbai as part of a money laundering case involving art dealer Rajesh Rajpal, solicitor Vishwang Desai, and others who were accused of selling fake artworks. ED said it has found evidence which showed operations of a cartel engaged in trading of fake artwork, generation of fake authenticity and provenance certificates, transfer of money through cash and involvement of other prominent art galleries and individuals. ED said the cartel involved an art gallery in Mumbai, a corporate lawyer and bullion traders. Fake replicas of original paintings by renowned artists such as Jamini Roy and M F Husain



were being passed off as authentic with the help of fake certificates; and transfer of payment was done through hawala. The probe exposed a network of individuals claiming fake origins and creating counterfeit art pieces. Money trail revealed that proceeds from selling fake artwork were sent through domestic hawala to cartel members as commissions or free/discounted

artwork. Some cash generated was used to purchase antiques in collaboration with bullion traders and then sold in auctions through reputed auction houses, proceeds of which were received in bank accounts. The case is based on an FIR registered by Tardeo police on complaint of India head of US-based private equity firm TPG Capital, who alleged purchas-

ing fake paintings worth Rs 17.9 crore from leading Indian artists. Complainant, Puneet Bhatia, said he bought 11 paintings of various painters, including M F Husain and S H Raza. Bhatia's friends told him that the paintings appeared to be fake, and he approached a private agency which, upon inspection, informed him that signatures on the paintings were fake.

Devotee from Odisha presents CM Yogi with a wooden portrait of him

Arun Kumar Sahu from Odisha presented Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with a Hanuman Chalisa and his portrait carved on wood. Arun had personally crafted both wooden artworks and brought them to Ayodhya. In this regard, Anil Mishra, associated with the Ram Mandir Trust, explained that Arun, a devotee of Lord Ram from Odisha, couldn't meet the Chief Minister directly. Therefore, he entrusted both wooden artworks to the Trust on Wednesday, requesting them to deliver them to the Chief Minister. The Trust cooperated with Arun.