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

## President Murmu confers Bharat Ratna on 4 luminaries posthumously

● "Singh, a West UP Jat leader, served as Prime Minister from July 28, 1979, to Jan 14, 1980"



**NEW DELHI:** President Droupadi Murmu conferred the Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian honour of the country, on former PMs P V Narasimha Rao and Charan Singh, agricultural scientist M S Swaminathan, and former Bihar CM Karpooi Thakur, posthumously, at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan Saturday. President Murmu, accompanied by PM Modi, home minister Amit Shah and party leaders will visit former deputy PM L K Advani at his house Sunday to confer him with the prestigious award in view of the veteran leader's ailing health. Awards for Rao, Singh, Thakur, and

Swaminathan were accepted by their family members. P V Prabhakar Rao, Rao's son, received the award on behalf of his father. Jayant Chaudhary, Singh's grandson and RLD chief, accepted the honour, while Swaminathan's daughter, Nitya Rao, and Thakur's son, Ram Nath Thakur, received the award. Rao, who served as PM from 1991 to 1996 and was often referred to as the Chanakya of Indian politics, is renowned for initiating far-reaching economic reforms. Untitled design (7)

On the occasion of former PMs PV Narasimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan Singh receiving the Bharat Ratna posthumously, TOI brings the past and present together, collapsing the time continuum through photo-imaging of the two leaders being presented India's foremost honour by President Droupadi Murmu Singh, a West UP Jat leader, served as Prime Minister from July 28, 1979, to Jan 14, 1980. He passed away in 1987. On the occasion of former PMs PV Narasimha Rao and Chaudhary Charan

Singh receiving the Bharat Ratna posthumously, TOI brings the past and present together, collapsing the time continuum through photo-imaging of the two leaders being presented India's foremost honour by President Droupadi Murmu Swaminathan, who passed away on Sept 28, 2023, at the age of 98, is widely celebrated for transforming India from a drought-stricken nation dependent on the United States for food-grain imports in the 1960s to achieving self-sufficiency in food production by 1971.

## RTI reply shows how Indira Gandhi ceded island to Sri Lanka

**NEW DELHI:** As the decision of Indira Gandhi's govt to hand over Katchatheevu to Sri Lanka in 1974 promises to take centre stage in Lok Sabha campaign in Tamil Nadu and beyond, official documents and records of Parliament show how a vacillating India lost the battle for control of the island in Palk Strait to a smaller country determined to wrest it. The documents, obtained by TN BJP chief K Annamalai through an RTI application, bring out Sri Lanka making up for its lack of size with tenacious pursuit of the 1.9 square km of land about 20km from Indian shore based on claims which New Delhi contested for decades only to acquiesce to finally. Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, pressed its claim right after Independence, when it said Indian Navy (then Royal Indian Navy) could not conduct exercises on the island without its



permission. In Oct 1955, Ceylon Air Force held its exercise on the island. Its stance was reflected in a minute by first PM Jawaharlal Nehru on May 10, 1961, who dismissed the issue as inconsequential. I would've no hesitation in giving up claims to the island, Nehru wrote I attach no importance at all to this little island and I would have no hesitation in giving up our claims to it. I do not like this pending indefinitely and being raised again in Parliament, Nehru wrote. Nehru's minute is part of a note prepared by then commonwealth secretary Y

D Gundevia, and which the ministry of external affairs (MEA) shared as a backgrounder with the informal Consultative Committee of Parliament in 1968. The backgrounder is revealing in terms of the indecision that marked India's response until 1974, when it formally gave up its claim altogether. "The legal aspects of the question are highly complex. The question has been considered in some detail in this ministry. No clear conclusions can be drawn as to the strength of either India's or Ceylon's claim to sov-

ereignty," the ministry said. This, despite the opinion of the then attorney general M C Setalvad, in 1960, that India had a stronger claim on the island formed by a volcanic eruption. "The matter is by no means clear or free from difficulty but on the assessment of the whole evidence it appears to me that the balance lies in concluding that the sovereignty of India was and is in India," wrote the well-regarded law officer in a clear reference to the zamindari rights given by the East India Company to Raja of Ramnathpuram over the islet and fishery and other resources around it. The rights enjoyed "continuously and uninterruptedly" from 1875 to 1948, which got vested in the State of Madras after the abolition of zamindari rights, were exercised by the Raja independently, without having to pay tributes or taxes to Colombo.

### Q4 growth set to push FY24 GDP up by 8% or more: Sitharaman



**MUMBAI:** The country's economic growth in the March quarter is likely to be 8% or more, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said. "If this is how inflation management is happening, macroeconomic stability being what it is, you had three-quarters of growth above 8%, and hopefully, the fourth quarter, which ends tomorrow, will also be 8% or over 8%, resulting in 2023-24 having a GDP growth of 8% or over 8%," FM said at an event organised by Mint Saturday. GDP growth in the Oct-Dec quarter was a scorching 8.4% led by robust manufacturing sector expansion. Data for the March-quarter GDP will be released on May 31. "Three-quarters of growth over 8% is good news, and I thank the people of India for being very energetic and ensuring that India remains the fastest-growing economy," said Sitharaman. She said the commentary on consumption was because of a sequential comparison of consumption numbers. "Do you think we would have had 8% growth without consumption?" she asked. The minister said that the recent spike in income tax notices was because of a new rule driving the tax department to send notices out before they became time-barred and because of digitisation. "Every time through the year, notices are sent so that the assessment does not get time-barred before the six-year limitation sets in on March 31. So, they are rushing a lot of these notices to say, 'Hey, I have asked you a question; reply, and we will take it up further.' It is not harassment.

## Governors should do their duty, not sit on bills: SC judge

**HYDERABAD:** SC judge Justice BV Nagarathna Saturday questioned the way some governors were withholding assent to bills sent by state govts and said it was embarrassing for courts to tell governors to do their duty. Delivering the inaugural address at the 'Courts and Constitution-2023 in Review' conference at Nalsar University, the judge also criti-



cised the demonetisation move, saying it helped black-money hoarders while the common man suffered. A new trend of governors is being

seen in country now. It is embarrassing for courts to tell governors to do their specified duties under the Constitution and also not to delay assent to bills," Justice Nagarathna said. It is embarrassing for courts to tell governors to do their specified duties under the Constitution and also not to delay assent to bills...

It is not a healthy trend under the Constitution to drag guys to courts. Their post is a serious constitutional post. They must discharge their duties responsibly

## Fresh notices: Total tax demand on Congress Rs 3.5k crore

**Vatika Times**  
**NEW DELHI:** After an income tax demand of Rs 1,823 crore as of Friday, Congress received three more notices Saturday, taking the total demand on the party to Rs 3,567 crore, an "astronomical figure" that is bound to complicate the party's political operations during the Lok Sabha elections. The latest demands of over Rs 1,744 crore pertain to 2014-15 (Rs 663.05 crore), 2015-16 (Rs 663.89 crore) and 2016-17 (Rs 417.31). The total demand is more than two-and-a-half times the cash and assets disclosed - over Rs 1,385 crore - by the party at the end of March 2023. In a sign of



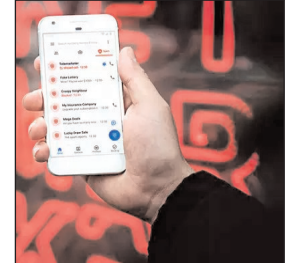
the urgency in the opposition party, Congress has approached Supreme Court against a Rs 135 crore recovery notice issued by income tax dept, and sought to club the matter with a special leave petition filed in 2016, which relates to a 1994-95 case in which the department recently raised a Rs 53 crore demand. I-T dept is likely to contest the

clubbing of the cases when it comes up for hearing Monday, arguing the two are separate and Congress has jumped the queue and not gone to commissioner (appeals). Tax demands of Rs 3,567cr in 3 days 'brazenly compromised' to target BJP's rival: Congress. In the earlier special leave petition (SLP) filed in SC, the original

demand was around Rs 26 crore, which was reduced to Rs 11-12 crore during the appeals stage, which has now crossed the Rs 50 crore mark after adding interest. "This is height of insanity. A demand of tax on Congress of an astronomical figure of Rs 3,567.3 crore in last 3 days. This is in addition to Rs 135 crore already recovered from Congress.

## Govt. issues warning to mobile users for calls coming from these numbers

**NEW DELHI:** The Department of Telecommunication (DoT), under the Ministry of Communication, has warned citizens about WhatsApp calls that people are receiving claiming to be from DoT. According to the advisory, callers impersonating the telecom departments are threatening mobile users. These cyber criminals are threatening innocent citizens that their numbers will be "dis-



connected or their numbers are being misused in some illegal activities". The DoT has also issued advisory about WhatsApp calls from foreign origin mobile numbers (like +92-xxxxxxx) impersonating government officials and duping people. According to the government advisory, scammers try to get personal information by threatening people via these calls to carry out financial fraud. The Telecom department has clarified that "DoT does not authorise anyone to make such calls on its behalf and has advised people to stay vigilant and asked not to share any information on receiving such calls".

### Shelter home kids not visited by kin to be added to adoption pool

**NEW DELHI:** Central Adoption Resource Authority (Cara) has written to states and Union Territories laying out the step-by-step procedure under the modified registration process to bring into foster care and adoption pool children living in child care institutions identified to have not been visited by any family members for a certain stipulated time or whose guardians are found to be unfit to care for them due to any mental or terminal illness. They will be included in the adoption pool under two new categories - "no visitation" and "unfit guardian". On March 28, Cara, which comes under ministry of women and child.

## Join BJP, case closed: Congress on Praful clean chit



**NEW DELHI:** Questioning CBI's clean chit to former Union minister and NCP Ajit Pawar faction leader Praful Patel, Congress Saturday said he is the 21st big leader who was accused of corruption by BJP but has been washed clean after joining BJP's washing machine. It sought an apology from PM Modi. Using a press conference for a theatrical demonstration of its charge, Congress dipped into a washing machine a whitest-shirt with allegations of cor-

ruption and enforcement agencies written on it and took it out with BJP embossed on it. AICC spokesperson Pawan Khera said that this is how BJP has been functioning to force the opposition leaders to join the BJP fold. "BJP's fully automatic washing machine works on the principle - join BJP, case closed," Khera said, adding that the BJP machine costs over Rs 8,500 crore, a reference to the money the party received via electoral bonds.

## DDA waiting for HC's order on remaining deer

"Taking note of residents' sentiments, DDA decided to approach the CZA to permit habitation of some deer in the park. "However, with high court intervening in the matter, we decided to move as per the court's direction"



**New Delhi:** Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has so far relocated 203 out of the approximately 600 deer from the Deer Park in Hauz Khas to Kota in Rajasthan and is awaiting Delhi High Court's decision on the matter to shift the remaining deer.

The case was scheduled to be heard in court on March 21 but has now been adjourned for hearing on July 18, said DDA officials. In the last hearing in Feb, the court asked DDA to conduct a comprehensive

census of deer inhabiting the park. The court intervention came after a petition challenged the Central Zoo Authority's (CZA) decision last year to revoke Deer Park's licence as a "mini zoo". The CZA mandated

translocation of the animals due to their rapidly increasing numbers and inadequate staffing. According to CZA's order dated June 8, 2023, the animals were to be released in the natural habitats of

Rajasthan (Kota) and Delhi (Asola) in the ratio of 70:30. "While we had pursued CZA to shift the deer earlier because of their increasing numbers, they asked for closure as the population of the animals was growing rapidly and space was limited. While some deer were shifted, locals were against the move," said an official earlier. Taking note of residents' sentiments, DDA decided to approach the CZA to permit habitation of some deer in the park. "However, with high court intervening in the matter, we decided to move as per the court's direction," said the official.

## HDFC Bank Parivartan impacts 5,700 people across 15 villages through rural development project in Nuh Haryana

**Chandigarh :** HDFC Bank, India's leading private sector bank, through its flagship CSR program #Parivartan has collaborated with S M Sehgal Foundation, a rural development NGO for the socio-economic development of 15 villages of Nuh district of Haryana, positively impacting 5,700 people. The Holistic Rural Development Program under the HDFC #Parivartan banner covers themes of natural resource management, promotion of education, livelihood and skill development, and healthcare and sanitation. The project was implemented from January 2021 to March 2024. Speaking on the initiative, Ms. Nusrat Pathan, Head-CSR, HDFC Bank said, "HDFC Bank #Parivartan is



committed to empowering the rural households through its holistic programs. This project is a testament to our Bank's dedication to supporting the well-being of the communities we serve. By partnering with the local community, we are confident that this community handover ceremony will have a lasting positive impact on the lives of people in Nuh. We are proud to be a part of this initiative and look

forward to witnessing the positive changes it brings." The Deputy Commissioner, Nuh; Sub Divisional Magistrate, FirezpurJhirkha; officials from district and block level line departments such as horticulture, women and child development, education, animal husbandry, public health and engineering, and others, alongside scientists from Krishi Vigyan Kendra were present at the event.

## Lutyens' to get new water ATMs

**New Delhi:** With the pay-and-use water ATMs installed at various places in the Lutyens' Delhi not working, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) is planning to install new machines. "The decision in this regard was taken some time back as we were receiving complaints from locals about the water ATMs not working properly. Our maintenance agency was also facing difficulty in getting non-operational machines repaired. Moreover, people had difficulty in getting the right denomination coins (for example Rs 1 coin) to dispense water from



the machines. We are expecting to provide the upgraded machines which will dispense water soon," said an official.

These machines are installed at busy markets and commercial places across Lutyens' Delhi and market associations have been demanding replacement or repair as the summer is approaching. Four water ATMs

installed at Sarojini Nagar Market haven't been operational for months now and shopkeepers have slammed NDMC for this. "Earlier shopkeepers were facing a lot of problems regarding drinking water in Sarojini Nagar Market. They consistently raised the matter with NDMC and finally it installed four water ATMs last year (2023).

## Social media influencer nabbed for traffic violation

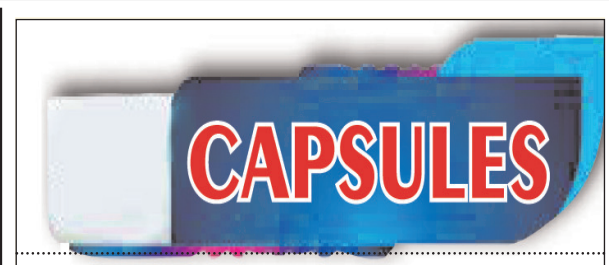


**New Delhi:** A social media influencer was caught for disrupting traffic by parking his vehicle in the middle of Paschim Vihar flyover while filming a reel. Apart from the arrest, he was issued a challan of Rs 36,000 for traffic violation and the offending vehicle was impounded under sections of the Motor Vehicles Act. Police said they came through his another reel in which he had allegedly set barricade on fire. Cops have also booked him for damaging govt property. The accused was identified as Pradeep Dhaka (25), resident of Nangloi. Deputy commissioner of police (outer) Jimmy Chiram said the video, circulated on X, showed a modified golden car blocking traffic on the

Outer Ring Road in Paschim Vihar. They identified the driver and caught him. The car, along with a few fake plastic weapons found inside, has been seized. Police found another video in which he had allegedly set barricade on fire. Another case was registered for resisting official duties and damaging govt property. "The offender is reportedly a YouTuber who uploaded these videos. We emphasises the importance of following traffic rules and obtaining necessary permissions before shooting such videos," the officer said. Recently, there have been several incidents causing a stir on the internet. Just a few weeks ago, cops seized a vehicle and booked its driver for reckless driving.

## Teenager stabbed to death in NW Delhi, 2 held

**New Delhi:** A 19-year-old has been stabbed to death by allegedly two people, including a juvenile, in northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri. Both the suspects have been apprehended, police said. The victim, Prakash, lived in Jahangirpuri and his mother - a vegetable vendor - had a verbal altercation with suspect Krishan alias Gattu and the minor over an issue on Tuesday, a police officer said. While neighbours calmed down the tempers, but the duo threatened to teach her a lesson, the officer said, adding that on Wednesday, around 10pm, Prakash's mother heard people quarrelling, and upon reaching the spot she found that her son was being held captive by the suspects.



## AIIMS gives touts complaints WhatsApp no.

**Delhi:** AIIMS Delhi has a WhatsApp contact for reporting touts exploiting patients. Starting February 29, 9355023969 will be dedicated. The administration ordered on Wednesday that the hotline would only be for reporting such incidents, including soliciting bribes, and that the security department would monitor it 24/7. The number will be publicly displayed in English and Hindi around the institution. We send a rapid response team to verify complaints immediately. If a complaint is valid, outsourced security professionals will be relieved and regular guards suspended pending investigation. Supervisors in each region will likewise be held accountable.

## Government allows donor egg & sperm in surrogacy

**NEW DELHI:** There is new hope for couples dreaming to become parents via surrogacy. The Centre has amended Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022 to allow use of a donor gamete - ova or egg cells and sperm - if one of the partners is certified to have a medical condition that prevents use of his or her own gametes. In usual circumstances, a couple undergoing surrogacy must have both gametes from the intending couple. But Surrogacy Amendment Rules, 2024, that have been notified by the government, state that the district medical board must certify that either spouse is suffering from such a condition. It further says that "surrogacy using donor gamete is allowed subject to the condition that the child to be born through surrogacy must have at least one gamete from the intending couple". It adds, "Single women (widow or divorcee) undergoing surrogacy must use self-eggs and donor sperm to avail surrogacy procedures."

## Political Parties Use WhatsApp, Influencers for Poll Campaign

**Delhi:** Ad gurus and political analysts believe political parties are using WhatsApp and social media influencers to influence voter psychology ahead of the world's largest election. Political parties are heavily exploiting social media to promote their successes and seek voter support for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP is sending electors a customized 'Letter from the Prime Minister' on WhatsApp, which has over 500 million monthly users in India, to highlight the Narendra Modi government's successes and request feedback. The BJP developed the website 'My First Vote For Modi,' where users may commit to vote for Modi and submit a video explaining why. The website has several short videos about NDA-era development. The Congress' Rahul Gandhi WhatsApp group is reported to allow the leader to answer questions.

## Report cases of e-waste burning on NDMC 311 app & toll-free number

**New Delhi:** New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has issued a public circular asking all residents to dispose of their e-waste as per prescribed guidelines. Referring to a Supreme Court order, the council warned against burning of e-waste, issued a toll-free number to lodge complaints in case anybody is found burning such waste openly. NDMC

has also given links of vendors approved by Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) or Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). "In light of the SC recent order of Dec last year regarding burning of e-waste in Delhi NCR, where the court observed that e-waste continues to be burnt in the open despite curbs, a firm warning is hereby

issued against the burning of e-waste in New Delhi. We urge all residents, businesses, and organisations in the NDMC area to follow proper e-waste disposal methods including recycling and responsible disposal through authorized channels. People can also find an updated list of CPCB or DPCC vendors on the NDMC website.

## MCD pushes process for new toll plaza contractor

**New Delhi:** To choose a new agency for collecting toll from the 154 plazas on the city's borders, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has completed the process for inviting technical bids. "We have received bids from three agencies and financial bids will be finalised too. The agency offering the highest rates for running the toll plazas will be selected to run the 154 plazas. However, the final decision on rate and agency will be taken by Standing Committee, which has not been

formed yet," said an official. The three-year contract of the current toll contractor will get over on April 10. "Considering that the process for finalising the new contractor will take months, we have decided to give extension to the existing contractor for six months," said the official. "However, this is the maximum extension we can give. If Standing Committee is formed before six months and it approves a new agency, the latter will automatically take over.

## Woman targeted by snatchers falls off auto, severely hurt

**New Delhi:** A 23-year-old woman in northeast Delhi's Karawal Nagar was injured after falling from a moving autorickshaw during a scuffle with phone snatchers on Friday. The victim lives in a beauty parlour. Police said the incident took place at 11 pm and a complaint was filed by the auto driver, Hari Om Singh (49), a resident of Karawal Nagar. Singh was taking the woman passenger to DDU Hospital from Karawal Nagar. "Around 11 pm, we reached the road near Shyamgiri Mandir in Shastri Park. Two boys who were riding a black

scooter and were without helmets came from behind and tried to snatch the woman passenger's phone. She grabbed the hand of the boy riding pillion and hung out of the auto. After a brief scuffle, the boy pulled his hand away forcefully and escaped with her phone. She fell on the road and sustained injuries," the driver stated. Singh further stated that the two boys were in their mid-twenties and of medium build. "I could not note the number of the scooter due to darkness. I took her to hospital," he stated in the complaint. Joy DCP (northeast) Joy

Tirkey said that the woman was later referred to another hospital where her condition was stable. A case under sections 392 (robbery) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code was registered. To crack the case, several teams have been formed. These teams are scanning CCTV footage from the spot and nearby areas to ascertain the sequence of events and the escape routes taken by the accused. This was not the first incident where a woman received injuries during snatching. In March, a 23-year-old Delhi Police woman con-

stable was injured after being dragged during a snatching attempt in northeast Delhi's Bhajanpura. Last year, a 66-year-old woman from Arunachal Pradesh died when she fell from an e-rickshaw while resisting a snatching attempt in north Delhi's Civil Lines. In Sept, two men on a bike dragged a 26-year-old woman off an e-rickshaw in Sultanpuri while trying to snatch her mobile phone. In Aug, a 24-year-old woman teacher fell off an auto and got dragged for some distance after being targeted by snatchers in south Delhi's Saket.

## Lured with promise of Russian bride & job, 2 tortured for refusing to join army

**KARNAL:** Cousins Mukesh (21) and Sunny (24), from Haryana, have claimed that more than 200 men, mostly from South Asia, are trapped in camps set up by fraudulent immigration agents in a Russian forest on the border between Russia and Belarus. These agents then force them to join the Russian army, they claimed. The cousins said they were fraudulently sent to Bangkok instead of Germany, where they had been promised jobs in a hotel. From Bangkok, they were taken to Belarus by air and from there they entered Russia through the border forests where the camps were set up. In Russia, these so-called immigration agents first try and tempt these South Asian men by offering them Russian work permits, Russian brides, and even Russian passports if they join the army, the cousins said. The men,



who displayed injuries all over their bodies, claimed they were kept hungry, thirsty, and were harassed both physically and mentally by immigration agents in these camps. When they refused to join the army and fight in Ukraine, they were jailed in Moscow for entering Russia without valid travel permits, they said. A lawyer in Moscow helped them get out of jail and return home. They said the Russian lawyer, who charged Rs 6 lakh for his work, told them his country has immigration agents on its payroll. We were not given food for 15 days, say Karnal cousins

These agents are paid up to Rs 2 lakh each when they get young men from other countries to join the Russian army and fight in the Ukraine war, the Moscow lawyer said. Their families ended up spending Rs 35 lakh and Rs 25 lakh on failed endeavours to send Mukesh and Sunny, respectively, to Germany. "We were tortured," said Mukesh as he showed some injury marks on his body. "They burned us with heated wood and matchsticks, made us lie on ice, pointed guns and knives at us," he added. Displaying a knife injury on his arm, Sunny said, "We were not given food for about 15 days.

## Kangana Ranaut says think of me as daughter, not actor

**KULLU:** Kicking off her election campaign with a road show at her paternal village of Bhambla in Mandi district on Friday, BJP's candidate for Mandi parliamentary seat and Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut said she was contesting the elections on the issue of development. "Development is the main poll plank of the BJP and we will do whatever our leadership guides us to do," said Kangana, adding that she was fortunate to have got the BJP ticket from Mandi. "You can see how the people here are feeling pride in the fact that the daughter of Mandi and a nationalist voice is going to represent them



in the elections," she said. Switching from Hindi to the local dialect of Mandiali, Kangana asked the people not to think of her as an actor or a star but as their daughter and sister. "I will leave no stone unturned to serve the people of Mandi. You should never think about how you will approach me or talk to me. I am just one of you. Don't think that I am a heroine or star but think of me as

your daughter and sister," Kangana said in Mandiali. The actor-turned-politician said she was from Mandi and the people didn't need to go to Mumbai to meet her. "All my relatives are in Mandi and I have a house in Manali.

I grew up here, in this village. When some people tell you that you will have to go to Mumbai to meet me they are just trying to confuse you," she added.

## Traffic restrictions, diversions in place for opposition rally today

**New Delhi:** Delhi Traffic Police has issued an advisory to commuters for the INDIA bloc's rally at Ramlila Maidan on Sunday. Traffic police will curb traffic movement on the Ranjeet Singh Flyover from Barakhamba Road to Guru Nanak Chowk;

Vivekanand Marg from Minto Road to Kamla Market roundabout; Kamla Market roundabout to Guru Nanak Chowk; Guru Nanak Chowk to Turkman Gate; Hamdard Chowk; JLN Marg from Delhi Gate to Barakhamba Road to Ajmeri Gate; and

Chaman Lal Marg near VIP Gate. These restrictions will be in effect from 9am to 3 pm. Vehicular movement will be diverted at Rajghat Chowk, Minto Road, DDU Marg, Mirdard Chowk, Paharganj Chowk, A Point, and Delhi Gate.

## 'Act may fall under UAPA', court rejects Tahir bail plea

**New Delhi:** A Delhi court on Saturday dismissed the regular bail application of Mohammad Tahir Hussain, an accused in a Northeast Delhi riots case, stating that the allegations against him "may fall in the definition of terrorist act". Rejecting the contention of Hussain's counsel that his alleged acts cannot be termed as "terrorist" and fail to constitute offences under sections 13, 16, 17 and 18 of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Additional sessions judge Sameer Bajpai observed, "the allegations against the applicant, as mentioned earlier are such that his acts may fall in the definition of terrorist act". The court observed that Hussain allegedly funded the riots, participated in the other activities resulting in the riots and the alle-



gations against him were prima facie true. Special public prosecutor Amit Prasad cited a 2023 Supreme Court verdict which says that under UAPA, rejection of bail is a rule and allowing the bail is an exception. The court rejected Hussain's plea seeking bail on parity as three co-accused in the case - Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal and Asif Iqbal Tanha - were granted bail by Delhi High

Court stating that the HC had specifically concluded that their role was not within the purview of restrictions under the UAPA provision. Rejecting Hussain's submission for parity with another accused Ishrat Jahan, it said that the main consideration to grant bail to Jahan was that she was a woman. The court noted the witness statements against Hussain revealed how he was instigating the protesters, gathered the protesters on the roof of his house and was himself involved in throwing petrol bombs. The court stated that Hussain allegedly got converted approximately Rs 1.5 crore in cash which was used in the rioting which has been confirmed through the statements of different witnesses and examination of relevant bank accounts.

## Man murders live-in partner for insisting to marry him, arrested from Bengal

**KOLKATA:** A 22-year-old woman was found dead in Palghar district, Maharashtra, allegedly strangled by her live-in partner for pressuring him to marry her. The accused, Minazuddin Abdul Ajjij Mulla, also known as Ravindra Reddy, was apprehended in West Bengal. The victim, Anisha Barasta Khatun, was found dead on March 15 in a rented room in Dahanu town. Initially thought to be an accidental death, the



autopsy revealed strangulation, leading to a murder investigation.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Ankita Kanse led the inquiry, uncovering that the accused used a false identity to rent the

room and pose as the victim's husband. The crime was exposed when neighbors reported a foul odor emanating from the room, prompting the discovery of the woman's decomposed body. Following a week-

long search, Ajjij Mulla was captured on March 22 in South 24 Parganas district, where he and the victim originated. The accused confessed to the crime, stating that he killed the victim due to her persistent desire to marry him against his wishes.

District Superintendent of Police Balasaheb Patil emphasized the tragic nature of the incident, highlighting the collaborative efforts of the police in solving the case.

## DJB 'Corruption': ED Files Chargesheet

**New Delhi:** Enforcement Directorate has filed its first chargesheet in the case related to a money-laundering probe linked to alleged irregularities in Delhi Jal Board (DJB), official sources said on Saturday.

The chargesheet, that's about 8,000-pages long and includes 140 operational pages apart from annexures, was filed by the central agency before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Delhi on March 28, sources told PTI.

The court has listed the matter for April 1 for taking cognisance of the chargesheet, they said. Four individuals and a company are learnt to have been named as accused in the chargesheet. They are former DJB chief engineer Jagdish Kumar Arora, contractor Anil Kumar Agarwal, former



NBCC general manager D K Mittal, one Tejinder Singh and NKG Infrastructure Limited. The agency has sought prosecution of these accused under PMLA and informed that it might file supplementary chargesheets in the future. The ED had earlier alleged that bribe money paid in a contract issued by DJB was "passed on" as election funds to AAP in Delhi. The agency had summoned chief minister Arvind Kejriwal for questioning in the case but he did not appear before it. ED had raided

the premises of Kejriwal's personal assistant, Bibhav Kumar; AAP's Rajya Sabha MP and treasurer N D Gupta; former DJB member Shalabh Kumar; chartered accountant Pankaj Mangal; and some others as part of the probe in Feb. An FIR lodged by CBI, which accuses Arora of awarding a DJB contract to NKG Infrastructure Limited for a total cost of Rs 38 crore despite the fact that the company "did not meet" the technical eligibility criteria, is the basis of the ED case.

## Haryana govt stops Rs 500 crore sale of land it owns, finds fake cabinet note & letter

**GURGAON:** Two prime plots worth Rs 500 crore that were acquired by the state over a decade ago were almost sold off by some property dealers who allegedly spun an elaborate fraud with the help of govt employees to deceive the buyer with a fake cabinet note and a letter. Haryana govt land The fraud came to light earlier this week after senior govt officials received a tip-off about some individuals trying to 'release' the two govt-owned plots, located in Badshapur and Rajiv Chowk. The sale was stopped just in time. A govt official aware of the development said on Friday that 2-3 property dealers are under the scanner and four employ-



ees of the Haryana secretariat, Gurgaon and Panchkula administrations, and revenue department are being questioned. "An FIR is yet to be filed. We are probing," the official said. Sources said the bid to sell the land was flagged to revenue secretary TVS Prasad, the vigilance department, CID chief Alok Mittal and Haryana Police chief Shatrughit Kapoor this week. On checking

the documents, officials found three giveaways that proved the documents were counterfeit. One, the letter that permitted 'release' of the two plots said that the topic was discussed in cabinet meetings held on December 15 and 21 last year. No cabinet meetings were chaired that month by then CM Manohar Lal Khattar. The last time Khattar

held a cabinet meeting as CM was in November 2023. The second gap was in the details of the forged cabinet note. A cabinet note is a document that chronicles all discussions and decisions taken at a cabinet meeting. Officials noticed that the revenue secretary's signature was directly after the CM's in the note. Usually, cabinet notes are signed by officials of every concerned department in a sequence based on seniority. The revenue secretary does not rank second to the CM in the govt setup and would not have signed the note after the CM. The two who would normally sign after the CM would be the CM's principal secretary.

## PWD to inspect 100 flyovers in city for repair

**New Delhi:** Public Works Department (PWD) has directed officials to carry out inspections of 100 flyovers in the city for any structural defect for their timely repair and maintenance. According to its latest order, PWD's maintenance wing will be given responsibility after the flyover construction work is completed in some cases and for rest of the existing ones as well. "Routine maintenance works like painting, desilting, re-carpeting, pothole repair, road marking, signage etc should be done by the maintenance team. Maintenance unit should continue to inspect the flyovers, underpasses, bridges in general and intimate any defect in the structure to the flyover unit," stated PWD. Public Works Department usually replaces the expansion joints of the flyovers in a bid to strengthen.

## Editorial

### Change in Kyiv's approach, but there's a catch

New Delhi has an interesting guest this week. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba is paying a visit to India, marking the first time after seven long years that a leader from Ukraine is visiting the country. The last official visit to India was paid by then-Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin in 2017 when he met his Indian counterpart, Late Sushma Swaraj. Since then, so much has changed, not only in Ukraine due to the breakout of a war with Russia but also between India and Ukraine as well. This mostly has to do with India's refusal to join the West in condemning Russia for its invasion of Ukraine and its emphasis on maintaining an independent stand. Since the animosity took the shape of a full-fledged war between Russia and Ukraine in 2022, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has made multiple trips to western countries, including the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Italy, as well as other countries such as Turkey.

These foreign visits were, on one level, part of various multilateral summits, but all these visits had one key goal: gaining international support for Ukraine in its war with Russia. Whether it was the visuals coming from inside the Canadian parliament or from Zelensky's visit to Washington, each of them contained a Ukrainian appeal for aid and material support besides their call to the global community to be on the 'bright side of history'. While Ukraine's top leader was shoring support for his cause across the world, India got nothing but a volley of attacks being launched by Ukrainian leaders, including their foreign minister, Kuleba, who is in India currently for a two-day visit. While responding to India, a developing country that was buying discounted oil to meet its energy needs, Kuleba said in August 2022, "When India purchases Russian crude oil (at a discount), they have to understand that the discount has to be paid by Ukrainian blood." Then again, after the G20 summit held in New Delhi, while reacting to India's hard work in securing a declaration at the end of the summit, Ukraine responded with a cold remark, saying "it is 'nothing to be proud of'". In 2023, Ukraine crossed all limits when its presidential adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, said India doesn't have an understanding of the modern world and is actually a country with 'weak intellectual potential'. Not just this, a senior Ukrainian lawmaker and head of the Ukrainian parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, Oleksandr Merezhko, even called for sanctions against India for buying Ukrainian oil. Fast forward to March 2024, and Ukraine has suddenly changed its tune with regards to India. The visiting foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, has not only praised India as a global power that rightfully deserves a seat at the United Nations Security Council but also as an important 'global voice'. What can be the reason for this sudden change of heart if not Ukraine's own self-interest? Firstly, Kuleba is visiting India with a broader goal to mend bridges, deepen bilateral ties, and also place a request for humanitarian aid, but the most important agenda item is to secure India's presence at a high-level peace conference being organised by Switzerland based on Zelensky's peace formula in the next few months. Ironically, the same Ukraine, which failed to understand India's energy security needs as a developing country in procuring discounted oil from Russia at a time of volatile energy prices, is now requesting India to use its credentials in the 'global south' to support Ukraine at the peace table in Switzerland.



## Rethinking global clean energy transition

**Embracing** decentralised systems, empowering grassroots communities and women, and reimagining finance are pivotal steps towards charting a path to a more sustainable and equitable energy future for all. Image: Wikimedia Commons

As the urgency of addressing climate change grows, it is increasingly apparent that we are not headed in the right direction. Despite our heightened consciousness and efforts, the stark reality is that global temperatures continue to rise. Worsening climate-related disasters and escalating greenhouse gas emissions all underscore the inadequacy of our current approaches. Rather than

quick fixes or temporary solutions, there is a need to fundamentally re-evaluate our approach. This is particularly important considering technological advancements that are providing new opportunities to transcend the limitations imposed by traditional models. Centralised energy production and distribution systems have remained inefficient and insufficient in ensuring access to energy for all. According to the World Energy Outlook report by the International Energy Agency, 745 million people globally still lack access to energy. As renewable technologies such as solar and wind power mature, they are paving ways for decentral-

ized energy systems that can deliver greater accessibility, reliability, and sustainability in energy provision, particularly in underserved regions. From rooftop solar installations and community solar projects to microgrids and virtual power plants, they are empowering individuals and communities globally to actively generate and consume energy locally. This distributed energy landscape is not only democratizing clean energy access, but it is also empowering communities to take control of their energy future. Enhancing energy resilience and fostering local economic development remain additional yields. By embracing this transformative

shift more openly, we stand to construct a more equitable and sustainable energy system that serves the interests of both humanity and the planet. If 47% of the global population live below the poverty line of \$6.85 per day, and nearly half of this demographic being females, it is clear that achieving Net Zero without an inclusive clean energy transition framework is not attainable. Grassroots communities and women have an important role to play in the global clean energy transition, not only because they represent a significant proportion of the global population, but also because they possess invaluable local knowledge and perspective.

# Uncle Sam, fellow democracies should be respected and not scorned



**The dominant** Western powers have lost the capacity to introspect about the deficiencies in their own polities and societies, the glaring double standards that animate their external policies and the willingness to discard their "values based" foreign policies if they clash with their parochial national interests. Image: Wikimedia Commons

Western countries have dominated the rest of the world for centuries. This has ingrained in them some pernicious habits of lecturing the non-Western world, assuming superior moral positions, imposing their own ways of thinking on them, expecting them to accept their political, economic and social models, and so on.

The West still dominates global institutions established after World War II. The Western countries are the richest, the most advanced in technology, the strongest militarily, and they control the international media. This gives them the tools to exert power over the non-Western world, intervene militarily to oust governments or even change the maps of countries, employ the tools of sanctions to coerce others to fall in line with their policies, intervene in the internal affairs of other countries on grounds of promotion of human rights, democracy

and protection of minorities. The dominant Western powers have lost the capacity to introspect about the deficiencies in their own polities and societies, the glaring double standards that animate their external policies and the willingness to discard their "values based" foreign policies if they clash with their parochial national interests. Lately, of course, the challenge to the power of the West has grown. The biggest challenge has come from China, a country that Western capital built up on the assumption it could be co-opted in the West-dominated international system. China's huge store of cheap labour and its massive market drove the West's investment in China, trade with it and use of the country as an export base. Its authoritarian government provided the assurance that they could do business and invest without having to worry about trade unions, rights of workers, strikes, questioning by local

interests, and the like. It was a win-win formula which the Chinese now repeat on every occasion to promote cooperation with the West in the face of moves by Western governments to reduce over dependence on China. China's mercantilist policies, its unfair trade practices, forced technology transfers, the systematic control over critical raw materials and technologies that China has acquired through state controlled industrial policies has created a backlash. More than that, it is China's open challenge to the dominating power of the US in the international system that has led to the West seeking to "reshore" manufacturing, pursue "de-risking strategies", questioning globalisation and imposing restrictions on technology transfer to China, and so on. Relations between the West and Russia have collapsed over the Ukraine conflict, although it was clear for some time that treating

Russia as a security threat, seeking democratisation of Russia before it could be considered a worthy partner of the West, accusing it of human rights violations, promoting colour revolutions in Russia's periphery to instigate a similar revolution in Russia, portended a breakdown of the West's ties with Moscow. Unlike in the case of China, the West, led by the US has intervened in Russia's internal affairs, promoting select opposition leaders, as in the case of Navalny, to put pressure on President Putin internally. The West's international agenda of promoting democracy, protecting minorities, highlighting human rights violations, and markets, and so on, has not been limited to what it calls "authoritarian" regimes. It is extended to even friendly democracies like India. Ever since Prime Minister Modi has come to power, even as the West has engaged India and built productive ties, it has not been able to shed its ingrained patronising habits of lecturing India, accusing it of violating human rights, democratic backsliding, persecution of minorities, and so on. This is largely done by the mainstream press, the think tanks and their associated journals, academics, NGOs, etc. At the official level, the US State Department in its annual report on human rights at the global level

highlights violations of human rights in India. Other than this, quite often the State Department comments on sporadic incidents in India of communal tensions, rioting, and legislation seen as anti-minority such as the CAA, etc. The latest provocation comes from Germany which gratuitously commented on the arrest of Kejriwal by the ED, patronisingly asking for the standards relating to independence of judiciary and basic democratic principles to be applied to his case, and for him to get a fair and impartial trial and make use of all available legal avenues without restriction as well. This implies that all this may not be available in the normal course. This is a presumptuous statement that calls into question India's political and legal system. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) summoned the German Deputy Chief of Mission to lodge a strong protest which was made public. The US State Department then jumped into the fray by also patronisingly "encouraging" a fair and transparent trial of Kejriwal by India. This was in response to an emailed question, which suggested that the US was keen to quickly back its ally Germany, ignoring that India had already made public its strong displeasure to Germany for interfering in our judicial process etc.

## Now, India's diplomatic reach and military outreach cover extended

**It is a coincidence,** yes, but almost overnight, India's defence and diplomatic outreach have separately taken wings all at the same time to cover the extended neighbourhood where the nation's presence has mostly been confined to bilateral trade, diplomacy and even security cooperation outside of larger regional concerns and interests. In a quick turn of events, New Delhi's reach and outreach have spread militarily in the west and diplomatically in the east. One involves a non-state actor (in the east) and the other relates to a dominant State player in the east. What makes it even more interesting and even more important is that India did not initiate either. In terms of defence and security, the Indian Navy has

been out at sea on the Indian Ocean, all the way closer to the mouth of the Red Sea, to protect ships from attacks by the pro-Palestinian Houthi rebels which has been targeting merchant shipping since the outbreak of violence and war in Gaza. The action is to the west of the Indian mainland. In the east, India is not directly involved, yes. However, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar was visiting three ASEAN member nations, namely, Singapore, Malaysia and Philippines. In all three capitals, he had discussions with his counterparts and other senior officials. Yet, it was in the Filipino capital of Manila that he spoke about regional and geopolitical politics by extending India's support for Philippines to

protect the nation's sovereignty.

### Short or selective

Jaishankar did not name it, but the reference was to China, which lately had been back to its old game of irritating Filipino merchant vessels in the South China Sea. China claims the whole territorial waters as its own. On this issue, many Southeast Asian nations have disputes with China. Among them, Philippines even has an international arbitration award in its favour – but to no avail. It is anybody's guess what Jaishankar meant by India's support for Philippines to protect its sovereignty, but he did discuss the expansion of political, defence and security cooperation between the two countries. He did not name China, either, in his public statements

## Al Qaeda, Taliban and the pledge that binds them in 2024

**Taliban** may have signed the Doha Agreement with the United States, committing to sever all possible connections with Al Qaeda, perpetually pledging to deny its soil to any terror activity against any country. That said, monitoring Taliban's security and governance apparatus in two years and five (almost) months, the authors identify the presence of numerous Islamist factions (many sympathetic to the Taliban with some shared experiences during their fight against the US-led coalition forces), one such being the Al Qaeda network, which continues to thrive in Afghanistan, today. Interacting with former and current Taliban members (on the condition of anonymity), the authors found substantial evidence indicating junior Taliban leadership (including provincial governors and commanders) providing potential recruits (for basic weapons training), passports (in the name of erstwhile Islamic Republic of Afghanistan) to key members of Al Qaeda, granting them access to natural reserves (minerals, ores and one mine), enabling them to strengthen existing networks of drug trafficking. This reflects a systematic engagement (curated) between Al Qaeda and the Taliban, pointing towards its continued relevance in the Rahbari Shura, making Al Qaeda perpetually inseparable even after 24 years. What appears to be a



blatant disregard to the Doha Accord, the authors opine the group is retaining (even strengthening) its relationship with Al Qaeda. While interacting with experts focussing on Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, many unanimously agreed to Afghanistan becoming a safe haven of terrorism after the Taliban's rule. Taking into account their extent of relationship (in the region) there is no doubt, it is highly likely for the Taliban to employ Al Qaeda fighters against hostile neighbours.

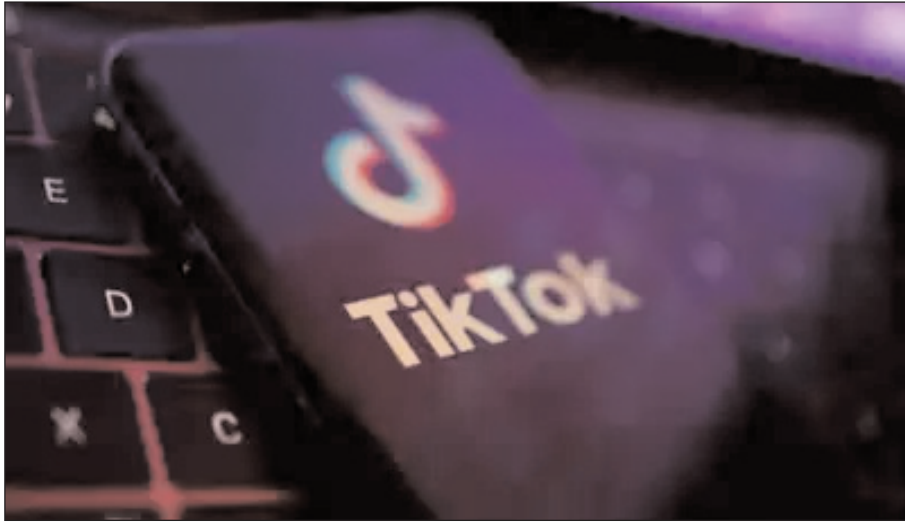
The relationship (between Taliban and Al Qaeda) which was exposed after the killing of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the former leader of the Islamist terror group, housed in one of many guesthouses owned by Sirajuddin Haqqani, the acting Minister of Interior Affairs for Taliban, appears to have evolved in 2024.

The fabric of relationship: Al Zawahiri's pledge To understand the extent of the existing relationship between Al Qaeda and the Taliban, the author referred to the letter written by Ayman al-Zawahiri to Osama bin Laden then, which not only demonstrated Afghanistan's

importance as a territory/topography suitable to Al Qaeda's survival but a perpetual playground, with the potential to provide seamless recruitment opportunities, then anywhere else in South Asia. In the letter, Al-Zawahiri also reiterated his position on Al Qaeda's commitment to the Taliban and strived to build greater partnership and trust. To understand Taliban's perspectives, the authors interviewed current and former members of the Taliban, who not only echoed Taliban's commitment to the group but detailed the need to preserve and support Al Qaeda. That said, the Taliban has always denied Al Qaeda's presence in Afghanistan, a statement that has echoed repeatedly since the latter's takeover of Kabul. To confirm the extent of the Taliban's commitment to the group, the author interviewed a former provincial governor, who not only confirmed Al Qaeda's presence in the eastern, southern and southeastern provinces of Afghanistan but also detailed the privileges enjoyed by the group. He further confirmed Al Qaeda's existing safe havens in the region and provided detailed.

## India's Tiktok ban has set gold standard for the world on how to deal with Chinese threats

"He also emphasized the need for India and the US to maintain a shared vision of an open and inclusive internet, as an alternative to China and its allies who have created a version of the 'splinter net.'"



US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) commissioner Brendan Carr is on his very first visit to India. During the visit, he reportedly acknowledged India's proactive measures against cybersecurity threats from Chinese companies or those associated with its polit-

ical ideology. In an exclusive interaction with Economic Times, he said that India's actions against potential commercial and security risks in the growing digital economy could serve as a model for the world. He said that India's

actions on the short-video platform TikTok and telecom equipment suppliers Huawei and ZTE have "set the gold standard in terms of appropriate and strong actions to deal with the threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)."

Carr suggested that the US could learn from India's approach to device safety and security, and the authorization process to ensure only trusted devices are used in telecom networks. He also emphasized the need for India and the

US to maintain a shared vision of an open and inclusive internet, as an alternative to China and its allies who have created a version of the "splinter net."

Carr reportedly expressed concern about countries allied with China potentially engaging in heavy censorship and creating a closed Internet. He stressed the importance of monitoring data localization to ensure it does not hinder the free flow and operation of the internet. Carr also highlighted the need for 'common sense guardrails' to regulate tech companies, especially those working with emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI).

## Domestic equities hit fresh highs on stronger GDP

Delhi: Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said domestic stocks rose to record highs after India's Q3 GDP grew 8.4% due to strong manufacturing, demonstrating the economy's strength and potential. The Sensex reached a new all-time high of 73,819.21 in intra-day trade and closed 1.72 percent or 1,245.05 points higher at 73,745.35, while the Nifty closed at 22,338.75, up 355.95 points or 1.62 percent. Materials, financials, banking, oil & gas, and



auto sectors supported the rally, Khemka said. Global markets were hopeful after US core PCE inflation fell to 2.8%. He claimed robust domestic statistics helped Nifty reach a new high above 22,300. Geojit Financial Services Head of Research Vinod Nair

said better-than-expected Q3FY24 GDP and lower US inflation boosted domestic and global markets. He said strong economic growth figures gave investors confidence for a pre-election rally as the general elections approached. He noted that in-line

## The sealing action continues to annoy traders



Delhi: The Connaught Place businessmen met NDMC vice-chairman Satish Upadhyay over the drive to shut businesses for property tax nonpayment. The traders requested a uniform tax assessment method (UAM) for tax calculation and filed a representation. Upadhyay agreed to talk to chairman Amit Yadav. The New Delhi Traders Association (NDTA) claimed they supported recovering proper dues but not the recovery campaign, which violated the NDMC Act. "NDMC assesses, and after 30 days if payment is not made, the council can issue notice for recovery, seal bank account, attach premises, or rent. NDTA's Atul Bhargava argued the act doesn't seal stores.

NDTA noted that landlords and tenants had suffered for years due to unclear assessment, resulting in crores of rupees in unpaid dues. Huge liabilities prevented tenants from running shops, resulting in closures. "I assured traders to address the issue in collaboration with key stakeholders, including senior council officials, the lieutenant governor and the ministry of home affairs," Upadhyay stated, committing to a single tax system. "MCD has embraced the UAM, which is convenient and the right choice for all. Two years ago, the council proposed amending the NDMC legislation to implement UAM to the home ministry. "Later some observa-

## Blood donation camp held at Basanti Mata Mandir, Dangar Khera

Abohar: Nojawan Ekta Sabha, Dangar Khera was organised blood donation camp at Basanti Mata Mandir, Dangar Khera. In this drive, more than 85 people visited the blood donation camp.

The camp was joined with all enthusiastic approach who motivated community to donate blood. Vinod Kiroriwal spoke to donors. He highlighted the importance of blood donation. "Blood is essential to help patients survive surgeries, cancer treatment, chronic illnesses, and traumatic injuries. This lifesaving process starts with one person making a generous donation. Donating one pint of blood can save three lives, he said. He also asked students not to believe in some myths about

donating blood causing harm to the donor. Blood donation is a selfless act that not only helps others in need but also provides several health benefits for the donors themselves.

Regular blood donation helps maintain healthy blood viscosity and reduces the risk of heart attacks and strokes. It helps in controlling the levels of iron in the blood, which can be beneficial for the cardiovascular system. Donating blood helps in maintaining good blood flow and prevents the accumulation of excessive iron in the body. This can reduce the risk of various health conditions related to iron overload, such as hemochromatosis. When you donate blood, your body

works to replenish the lost blood by producing new blood cells.

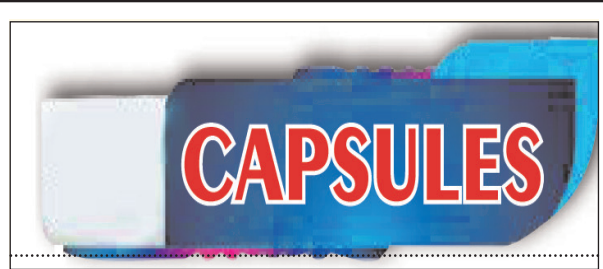
This process stimulates the production of new red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets, which can help improve overall blood cell function. Rajinder Kiroriwal, Surinder Sangwal, Jagdev Kiroriwal and Vinod Kiroriwal, praised all donors and volunteers who made the camp a success by selfless act of blood donation, promotion, and motivation.

Raju, DK, Dhiraj, Sandeep, Mainpal, Sanjay, Kuldeep, Surinder, Ashwani, Rampal, Rakesh, Rajesh and Vicky, Ravinder, Prabhu Dyal, Vinod Kumar, Prem, Andeep, Parveen, Sita Ram, Mainpal and Arvind Jalandhara are special participated.

## Ex-model held for stalking motivational speaker for 6 months

Delhi: Police arrested Deepesh Thakur, 26, for stalking a motivational speaker on her multi-city tours over a period of six months. A fashion model and son of a prominent hotelier in Maharashtra, Thakur had been relentlessly following the speaker to her events, aspiring to marrying her. According to police, Deepesh meticulously tracked the speaker's movements, attending all her programmes across the country.

His obsession escalated to the extent that he would book rooms in five-star hotels in advance ahead of her scheduled appearances, even flying from Mumbai to attend the events in different cities.



## AIIMS gives tout complaints WhatsApp no.

Delhi: AIIMS Delhi has a WhatsApp contact for reporting touts exploiting patients. Starting February 29, 9355023969 will be dedicated. The administration ordered on Wednesday that the hotline would only be for reporting such incidents, including soliciting bribes, and that the security department would monitor it 24/7. The number will be publicly displayed in English and Hindi around the institution. We send a rapid response team to verify complaints immediately. If a complaint is valid, outsourced security professionals will be relieved and regular guards suspended pending investigation. Supervisors in each region will likewise be held accountable.

## Government allows donor egg & sperm in surrogacy

NEW DELHI: There is new hope for couples dreaming to become parents via surrogacy. The Centre has amended Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022 to allow use of a donor gamete – ova or egg cells and sperm – if one of the partners is certified to have a medical condition that prevents use of his or her own gametes. In usual circumstances, a couple undergoing surrogacy must have both gametes from the intending couple. story But Surrogacy Amendment Rules, 2024, that have been notified by the government, state that the district medical board must certify that either spouse is suffering from such a condition. It further says that "surrogacy using donor gamete is allowed subject to the condition that the child to be born through surrogacy must have at least one gamete from the intending couple". It adds, "Single women (widow or divorcee) undergoing surrogacy must use self-eggs and donor sperm to avail surrogacy procedures."

## Political Parties Use WhatsApp, Influencers for Poll Campaign

Delhi: Ad gurus and political analysts believe political parties are using WhatsApp and social media influencers to influence voter psychology ahead of the world's largest election. Political parties are heavily exploiting social media to promote their successes and seek voter support for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP is sending electors a customized 'Letter from the Prime Minister' on WhatsApp, which has over 500 million monthly users in India, to highlight the Narendra Modi government's successes and request feedback. The BJP developed the website 'My First Vote For Modi,' where users may commit to vote for Modi and submit a video explaining why. The website has several short videos about NDA-era development. The Congress' Rahul Gandhi WhatsApp group is reported to allow the leader to answer questions.

## 2 Cong MLAs join BJP in Arunachal Pradesh

Delhi: Congress suffered a blow in Arunachal Pradesh as two of its legislators Ninong Ering and Wanglin Lowangdong, along with National People's Party's (NPP) Mutchu Mithi and Gokar Ba joined BJP in the presence of CM Pema Khandu in Itanagar. TNN 4 Congress, National People Party

MLAs join BJP in Arunachal Pradesh ahead of elections in Arunachal Pradesh, Congress legislators Ninong Ering and Wanglin Lowangdong, along with NPP's Mutchu Mithi and Gokar Basar, joined BJP. BJP had 49 MLAs, Congress and NPP had four each. Ering expressed regret for not being able to

join BJP in 2019. Mutchu fulfilled supporters' wish to join BJP. 4 opposition MLAs join BJP in Arunachal Pradesh. Senior Congress MLA Ninong Ering, former union Minister Wanglin, NPP's Mutchu Mithi and Gokar Basar joined the ruling BJP in Arunachal Pradesh ahead of the upcoming elections.

## Three Naxalites were killed in a clash with security forces

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

with the District Reserve Guards (DRG) in Chhattisgarh's Sukma on Saturday. The exchange of fire took place in the Burkalanka jungle area. The body of the Naxal was found during a search operation conducted by the DRG. The state has been hit by violence recently. Earlier this week, two men were killed in Sukma village allegedly by Naxals who suspected them of being police informers. The deceased were identified as Sodi Hunga and Madvi Nanda, residents of Dullid village.

## PFL Wins Bid for APEDA approved Packhouse for a 5 year Lease

Chandigarh: Prime Fresh Limited (BSE: 540404) is pleased to update & inform that it has been selected as a winner during the process of TENDER BIDDING & SELECTION (On a lease/rental for 5 years) for the APEDA Approved Fully Integrated Agro Packhouse in Gujarat-Ahmedabad. This is a Multipurpose, Multi Products & Omni sales channel facility having peak potential to generate a sale of 25 TPD of Fruits, vegetables & other Agro Products. The said facility is situated very strategically closure to Ahmedabad Airport & Wholesale fruits market at Naroda (Ahmedabad).

This facility also connects to major Agri belts, Port and Domestic City Business opportunities. The facility is spread across close to 60000 sq.fts of land area along with massive construction & modern packhouse infrastructure approved by APEDA. The Development is a major landmark achievement for PRIME FRESH LIMITED as it helps strengthen the Exports Capabilities of PFL and also it can help improve revenues from other verticals such as Domestic F&V Supply chain, Ripening, Storages and other packing & repacking services. The Facility is equipped

with all the modern facilities, cold storages, ripening chambers and other infrastructure such as sorting, Grading & packing facilities. The cumulative capacity has a potential for 40 TPD of inwards and outwards of Agro produce once it starts stabilizing & operating at full capacity over the coming few years. This achievement supports company's assets light growth model saving almost 15 crores (Rs.15,00,00,000) of future capex and providing a huge impetus to PFL's ambitious growth plans over the coming 3 years. Prime Fresh Limited, listed on BSE SME platform is a fully

integrated Agri value chain company, established in 2007. Prime Fresh operates Pan India across 17 states and 85 districts for its Fruits and Vegetables Supply chain Business. PFL has multiple collections centre. s and Distribution Centres spread across Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Telangana & Delhi.

PFL is one of its kind an only national player in its space and business model. Prime Fresh follows Omni Channel Sales Strategy for its post-harvest & market linkages. business model for Fruits & vegetables supply chain business segments.

## DUROPLY CELEBRATES WITH ITS SKILL PARTNERS ACROSS INDIA EXPRESSING GRATITUDE



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

customers buy the right plywood. Holi symbolises the coming together of one and all welcoming vibrant hues of the colourful spring season. We personally visit our Skill Partners across India to celebrate our everlasting bond." Duroply has over 12,000 committed Skill Partners across India who share a common vision of Duroply to see every household use branded plywood because of several benefits to the customers. Duroply remains steadfast in its mission to provide

customers buy the right plywood. Holi symbolises the coming together of one and all welcoming vibrant hues of the colourful spring season. We personally visit our Skill Partners across India to celebrate our everlasting bond." Duroply has over 12,000 committed Skill Partners across India who share a common vision of Duroply to see every household use branded plywood because of several benefits to the customers. Duroply remains steadfast in its mission to provide

## GHMC nod for porous concrete

**Hyderabad:** To enhance groundwater levels in city by allowing rainwater to seep into ground, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is going to introduce pervious concrete. In collaboration with Re Sustainability Limited, an C&D management agency, GHMC has developed pervious concrete blocks and tiles. GHMC commissioner Ronald Rose directed officials and waste management agencies to produce porous concrete and tiles using recycled materials from construction and demolition sites.

A successful demonstration was held and a pilot project to lay porous concrete footpaths will be initiated. tnn Shree Cement forays into RMC segment with new plant in Hyderabad, launches Bangur Concrete Shree Cement expands into RMC segment with Bangur Concrete plant in Hyderabad. The company aims to boost brand equity, cost efficiency, and R&D efforts to emerge as a modern, green building materials firm. 'Concrete' evidence against Congress with income tax department, says Delhi high

court Delhi High Court dismisses Congress' petitions challenging income tax reassessment, citing late filing and substantial evidence of Rs 520 crore unaccounted transfers. Details include tax raid on MEIL, payments to MPs/MLAs, and violation of statutory provisions by the tax authority. SpaceX collaborates with US intelligence agency on \$1.8 Billion spy satellite project SpaceX and a US intelligence agency are working on a \$1.8B project to deploy spy satellites, improving surveillance capability.

## Delhi tourism to organise heritage walks at 50 places

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi's tourism department is organising heritage walks at 50 different locations across the capital from Saturday. These walks will continue till March 31 with the first inaugural walk scheduled at Mehrauli Archaeological Park. According to the tourism

department's website, Mehrauli Archaeological Park, which is uniquely dotted with ruins from early medieval times to the 19th century, is one of the most popular heritage sites in the city. The major attractions at Mehrauli Archaeological Park include the mosque and tomb of Jamali, a

royal tomb which is the first building in the sub-continent to use the true arch, a beautiful step well with subterranean rooms and residence of a British official (which was built out of a tomb). The site is adjacent to another historically important place, the Qutub complex.



## 'Covid lungs' continue to plague survivors

**Kolkata:** Four years after the state recorded its first Covid death on March 23, 2020, a significant number of Kolkatans are contracting respiratory infections with Covid survivors forming a chunk of such patients. 'Post-Covid lung' continues to plague these patients, making them susceptible to asthma, COPD and upper and lower respiratory tract infections, including pneumonia, often in a more severe form, say doctors. Several city private hospitals still have many pneumonia and some Covid patients, though most have a mild disease. Many of these patients have suffered long-term scars on their lungs from Covid, say experts. Covid survivors have been suffering from frequent bouts of cough and cold and chest infections, which point to the fact that their immune system has weakened and they need to be cautious, said CMRI Hospital pulmonology director Raja Dhar. "Any respiratory illness, be it upper respiratory tract infection, pneumonia, influenza-triggered chest infection, bronchitis, Covid or adenovirus, affects the lungs. In most cases, the condition is reversed with treatment but those in the 50-plus age group remain at risk, especially if they have comorbidities. A significant number of them have suffered a permanent damage or lung fibrosis due to Covid. They remain susceptible to frequent infections," said Dhar. He added that as temperature drops, polluting particles multiply at the lower levels and trigger lung and upper respiratory tract ailments. "Since last winter, we have come across a significant number of Covid survivors who have had severe exacerbations of asthma, COPD and respiratory infections."

## BJP may offer MNS RS seat vacated by Goyal, MLC nomination for Raj's son

**Mumbai:** In the event no arrangement works out to attain the 45+ seats goal in the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP may offer Rajya Sabha seat to an MNS nominee, preferably Bala Nandgaonkar, who had defeated OBC leader Chhagan Bhujbal from Mazgaon, said a top BJP leader. He further said Raj Thackeray's son Amit may be appointed on the legislative council from Governor's quota. Incidentally, one Rajya Sabha seat will be vacant as Union minister Piyush Goyal is contesting LS polls from Mumbai North. The top BJP leader spoke at length on the unexpected meeting between Thackeray and Union home minister Amit Shah on the possibility of an alliance between



BJP and MNS. The meeting was reportedly facilitated by deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis. "We do not know if BJP has offered a seat to MNS, but the sudden meeting assumes significant political importance," said the BJP leader. "BJP is expecting to reach an amicable deal and

ensure MNS supports the BJP for reaching the 45-plus goal," he said. Elaborating on his contention, the BJP leader said there's no doubt that Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde not only engineered split in the Shiv Sena, but also secured party symbol and name. However, despite securing support of 44 of 55 Shiv Sena legislators, there are doubts over the present status of Shinde's voter base. "We feel most legislators are with Eknath Shinde, but voters at the grassroots level, both in urban and rural areas, still owe allegiance to UBT president Uddhav Thackeray. BJP leadership believes that if voters prefer Uddhav Thackeray, it will be difficult to achieve the goal of 45-plus.

## VBA to back Cong's Shahu Maharaj for Kolhapur

**Mumbai:** Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) chief Prakash Ambedkar said on Saturday his party would support the head of Kolhapur's royal family and Congress's official candidate for Kolhapur Lok Sabha (LS) seat Shahu Chhatrapati Maharaj. Ambedkar said based on his party's ideology, it has been decided that VBA will give him full support and ensure his win. "We will take all efforts to ensure his win. VBA will work towards

it. We will take care that there are no instances like in the past," Ambedkar said. Ambedkar said he wasn't aware of seat-sharing talks in Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA). "They haven't communicated with us about what decision they have taken. Let them first solve their problem, only then can they talk to us. We will wait till March 26 and then make our stand public. We have already offered to support Congress on seven seats. So we are already

moving forward and there is no standstill. We have written to the Congress president and not to regional leaders. We expect them to inform us. Dislodging BJP is our target and we will not mind any small tussles or delays," Ambedkar said. "We don't have to inform anyone, we will inform the voters and the public... We are already taking meetings and protests and have a well-oiled election machinery... We have already galvanised voters and built the

party at district and city levels," Ambedkar said. Shahu Chhatrapati (76) is the 12th generation heir of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and great grandson of social reformer Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. Ambedkar last Tuesday offered VBA's support to Congress candidates in any seven Lok Sabha seats in a letter to its president Mallikarjun Kharge. The offer came even as it became apparent its chances of entering MVA were unravelling.

## MCOCA wrongly applied, four acquitted of charges

**Mumbai:** Observing that there was no evidence to prove that the robbery even took place, a special court acquitted four men accused of being part of an organised crime syndicate and stabbing with a cutter and robbing a jewellery firm's office boy of 19 pieces of diamond ornaments at Andheri (E) in 2019. In the 74-page judgment copy, the judge also said both the then police commissioner and additional commissioner had granted sanction for invoking provisions of the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) without application of mind, While retired officer, Sanjay Barve, was the then police commissioner, DIG Manoj Kumar Sharma was the additional commissioner of police,

west

**For charges under MCOCA to be invoked, a requirement under the Act is that there has to be more than one chargesheet against the head of the alleged crime syndicate in the preceding ten years**

region. Both deposed as witnesses. For charges under MCOCA to be invoked, a requirement under the Act is that there has to be more than one chargesheet against the head of the alleged crime syndicate in the preceding ten years. Among

those acquitted are watchman Iqbal Isak (34), businessman Firoz Malik (37), auto driver Ramjan Khan (41) and Rakesh Singh (33) who was unemployed. Malik was alleged to be the gang's head. Referring to Sharma's deposition, special judge BD Shelke said that it was incumbent upon him to verify nature of offence registered against the accused and assess all investigation papers and also, assess chargesheet in respect of preceding crimes registered against them in last 10 years. "...the evidence came on record from his mouth referred above demonstrates that he has not taken this exercise and mechanically issued prior approval order. Thus, the prior approval order is not valid," the judge said.

## Tamil Nadu's electricity demand crosses peak of 2023, touches 19,409MW

**CHENNAI:** Tamil Nadu's electricity demand surged to a record high of 19,409MW on Friday, surpassing last year's peak demand (19,387MW on April 20, 2023) a month earlier than expected. By April, Tangedco officials expect the state's demand to go up by another 8%. Officials say the early spike in demand is due to rising temperatures pushing up use of fans and air conditioners, and sanction of a three-phase power supply for irrigation. "The maximum demand was recorded around 11 am on Friday, coinciding with peak solar hours. We met the need without any difficulty as solar power generation was good," said an official. When demand peaked, generation



from solar energy was 4,162MW, nearly touching the maximum capacity of 4,200MW. Tangedco officials anticipate the peak may exceed 20,000 MW by the month-end or early April, and go up to 21,000 MW this summer. The surge in demand began in Jan. Officials say it is normal to see an 8% year-on-year increase in power demand. The power demand in Jan went up

by 11% compared to Jan 2023. In Feb there was a 9% increase compared to Feb 2023. In March and April, the surge is likely to hover over 9%, officials said. To meet demand, Tangedco has entered into short-term power purchase agreements with gencoms and power swapping agreements with northeastern states, securing an additional 4,321MW for April. To keep costs in check, power swap agree-

ments have been signed. North Chennai Thermal Power Station Stage III, which was recently inaugurated with an 800MW capacity, has commenced production at 260MW. This output is expected to increase after March 26, following the arrival of imported coal. Additionally, Vallur thermal plant units 1 and 2, which together have a capacity of 700 megawatts, will start generating power by March-end. Kudankulam Unit 1 will start generation in April second week. "By the time unit 2 of Kudankulam is shut down for fuelling in May, the wind season will begin and we should be able to manage the demand without much trouble," said officials.

## Singer Anupam Roy is an alum of Texins

**Instruments** India campus. Naman Bafna, analog design lead at TI India, says music has always been his passion, and at TI, he found a way to connect over it with his colleagues. "Our jamming sessions are woven with laughter, collaboration, and shared passion, and this has given many the confidence to start their own YouTube channels and also perform both on and off campus on various occasions." The Music Room in Texins is a treasure trove of instruments catering to every musical whim - from the serene melodies of classical Hindustani and Carnatic to the energetic beats of fusion, jazz, pop, rock, and even progressive rock. There are drum kits, electric and bass guitars, amplifiers, pianos, tablas, flutes, violins - the list goes on. Arindam Chatterjee, HR leader at TI India, says the space pulsates with creativity and camaraderie.

## How cops played cat and mouse with Mukhtar Ansari?

**NEW DELHI:** The winter had almost arrived in 2009 when Delhi Police's Special Cell was ordered to crack down on the criminal empire of UP's mafia don Mukhtar Ansari. In a chilling move, Delhi cops booked Ansari and accomplices under stringent MCOCA. Delhi Police's move had puzzled many at that time. But there was apparently an interesting rationale behind the action, sources said on Friday, a day after Ansari died of an alleged heart attack at a jail in Uttar Pradesh. An intelligence agency had at that time flagged the mysterious disappearance of case-related documents, including original FIRs pertaining to Ansari from UP courts' record rooms, suggesting that Ansari, who was in judicial custody at the time, would soon walk out of jail. Ansari was in prison then in connection with the horrific killing of BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai in 2005. Over 400 bullets were fired by Ansari's men, including Munna Bajrang, who even cut off a portion of the hair



off Rai's head as a mark of their supremacy. Delhi cops were brought into the picture probably to ensure Ansari remained behind bars. Bail was difficult under MCOCA. But after registration of an FIR in Nov 2009, even Delhi cops took almost six months to get their hands on the gangster. Ansari was arrested and taken on 14 days remand for interrogation only in May 2010, said an official. Five months later, Special Cell tightened its noose around Ansari's Man Friday, Bajrang, and arrested him in Oct 2010 for extorting money from a south Delhi businessman, Ashok Tebriwal, an officer recalled. In Nov 2010,

Delhi Police charged Ansari a year after it kicked off its probe against him. Ansari, an MLA from Mau in UP at the time, was accused of running an organised crime syndicate involved in contract killings and extortion. "We had also listed 45 cases pending against him in different parts of the country," an investigator recalled. In May 2012, charges were framed against Ansari, Bajrang and others and the trial commenced. However, scenes changed in less than a year later when Ansari's arch rival and another UP-based mafia don Brijesh Singh was booked by Special Cell under MCOCA in Feb 2013.

## Cricketer, IITian: How a bright lad's path spun towards a dark 'terror' alley



**NEW DELHI:** Tauseef Ali Farooqui was a promising cricketer. Known for his left-arm spin in the neighbourhood and the cricket academy, the lad even aspired to play for India one day. He distinguished himself academically too

- it took him just a single attempt to crack the IIT entrance exams after passing out from Sanskriti School in Chanakyapuri. He enrolled as a student of biotechnology at IIT Guwahati.

In his final year at IIT, the

22-year-old has been arrested by Assam Police under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for openly expressing his goal of joining terror outfit IS on emails and a LinkedIn post.

## 'More than Z+': Odisha BJP asks EC to downsize Pandian security

**BHUBANESHWAR:** BJP moved poll authorities on Saturday seeking withdrawal of "unnecessary security benefits" given to VK Pandian, Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik's aide and BJD leader, claiming his squad of 74 personnel outstripped even Z+

cover of 55 guards. The move came a day some RTI activists shared the information about security of Pandian, who currently holds cabinet rank. Pandian is protected by two SIs, 12 havildars, 56 constables and four women constables. A

BJD spokesperson declined to comment on the matter. As per a memorandum submitted by BJP leader Surath Biswal and others to chief electoral officer Nikunja Bihari Dhal, such huge deployment using public money violates model code.

## NC set to hand Ladakh Lok Sabha seat to Congress

**NEW DELHI:** Congress is likely to contest Ladakh parliamentary seat in upcoming 2024 elections, which will make it the third seat of erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state to come to the party's kitty. Sources said partner National Conference has agreed to Congress's claim on Ladakh seat of the newly-carved UT. It will be some consolation for the principal opposition party which was keen on securing Anantnag constituency in Kashmir region, only to be rebuffed by ally NC which asked Congress to contest two seats in Jammu region, a difficult turf in view of ruling BJP's stranglehold on the area. A senior Congress leader said, "We will contest the Ladakh seat. It has been decided. We were also keen on Anantnag where we performed well last time, but National Conference is unwilling. Congress is making sacrifices for the larger cause of opposition unity."

## PWD to inspect 100 flyovers in city for repair

**New Delhi:** Public Works Department (PWD) has directed officials to carry out inspections of 100 flyovers in the city for any structural defect for their timely repair and maintenance. According to its latest order, PWD's maintenance wing will be given responsibility after the flyover construction work is completed in some cases and for rest of the existing ones as well. "Routine maintenance works like painting, desilting, re-carpeting, pothole repair, road marking, signage etc should be done by the maintenance team. Maintenance unit should continue to inspect the flyovers, underpasses, bridges in general and intimate any defect in the structure to the flyover unit."

## Snatcher held nearly a week after youth loses a leg in fall from train

**NEW DELHI:** Ankit Beniwal (18) was going back home from Delhi for Holi celebrations but met with a life-changing mishap. Beniwal lost a leg after he fell off the train while being targeted by a mobile phone snatcher on March 18. Nearly a week later, police cracked the case and nabbed the snatcher after an extensive CCTV-enabled technical analysis and a cat-and-mouse chase. Beniwal had boarded Kisan Express from Old Delhi railway station to go to Sirsa on March 18. He was accompanied by



his cousin and his friend and the trio was travelling in the general coach. "The train had left the Nangloi railway station around 3pm. I was standing near the train door and a boy snatched the mobile

phone from my hand. He then jumped from the moving train and ran away. I also fell from the train and my leg came under the wheels," Beniwal said in his statement. His cousin then pulled the

chain and stopped the train. A policeman came to his rescue and he was rushed to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital from where he was referred to Maharaja Agrasen Hospital for treatment. The doctors had to amputate one of his legs while the other sustained fractures. Police recorded Beniwal's statement and began an investigation. DCP KPS Malhotra formed three teams to work on different leads. Cops scanned the footage of cameras around the spot and found a young boy running on the street.

**NEW DELHI:** Delhi witnessed a rise of 22% in the number of lost and stolen mobile phones in 2023 compared with the previous year. From 2.8 lakh such cases in 2022, the figure jumped to 3.4 lakh last year. Police have not revealed the details of the recovery, but sources said it was miniscule. The reasons behind the spurt and the dismal recovery are many. Gangs use technology to make the police's job of tracing these phones difficult. These criminals operate in an organised network. Snatchers,



robbers and thieves work together, selling stolen phones at discounted prices to mobile shop owners. These shopowners then tamper with the phones' IMEI numbers and resell them to unsuspecting customers

or even ship them to other countries, allowing them to earn significant profits from this criminal activity, cops say. Lost & Not Found: 22% Rise In Misplaced, Stolen Phones Last year, Delhi Police's

Crime Branch busted a gang that employed a sophisticated smuggling method. The gang prepared and packed several bundles, each containing 40 phones, into bags. These bags were then handed over to drivers or cleaners of tourist buses plying on the Delhi-Nepal route. The gang would inform their accomplices in Nepal about the bus numbers beforehand. A key member of the gang received between Rs 1,500 and Rs 2,500 per phone, depending on its condition, through hawala channels.

## Battered & burned, teen help flees captivity

**NEW DELHI:** A teen domestic worker was allegedly beaten with rods and subjected to burns by her employer in Ghaziabad. The girl who managed to escape from the house of her employer on the eve of Holi is undergoing treatment for injuries at a Ghaziabad hospital. Police have registered an FIR in the case. The girl came to the city around a year ago from Siliguri in West Bengal. A relative had got her a job as a domestic worker in the house of Reema Sharma, a single mother, in Ghaziabad's Vasundhara. "My mother is a labourer in a tea garden and the only one with an income. I wasn't attending school, so my family and I decided it would be best if I worked in the city and contributed to the family finances," said the 17-year-old girl. The torture started soon after, she alleged.

"My employer beat me with rods and made me work from 6am to two at night. Once she poured boiling water on my leg when I couldn't finish a task," the teenager said, showing scald marks on her left leg and a swollen right ear on Tuesday. She couldn't tell her parents about this because she did not have a phone. "Once, when my employer let me speak to my mother on her phone, I tried telling my mother about my ordeal. That night, I was mercilessly beaten for trying to inform my mother about my mother about my state," claimed the girl, whose body showed numerous injury marks. On March 24, her employer allegedly beat her mercilessly over household chores. "I somehow mustered courage and escaped," the traumatised girl said. She hid herself under the stairs of the building all

night. In the wee hours the next morning, the colony security guard noticed her and alerted the housing society secretary, who contacted Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), a child's rights NGO. BBA took the girl to the hospital, where she is undergoing treatment. Police have filed an FIR against Sharma. Unable to speak properly due to injuries and seeking justice, the girl said, "I want my employer to be punished in the same way she punished me." Manish Sharma, director, BBA, said, "As if stripping them of their childhood isn't enough, girls brought from distant places from vulnerable families are tortured, abused and made to live in horrifying conditions. We need stricter laws and monitoring of placement agencies if we want to save our children from such abuses."

## Delhi: 'Chachu' behind rape and murder of 5-year-old

**NEW DELHI:** The five-year-old girl who was allegedly raped and murdered in Bawana fondly called her assaulter "chachu". Nine years ago, Totan Lohar came to Delhi looking for work and frequented the tea shop run by the girl's parents. He saw her being born and often played with her. Police were stunned at the brutality he inflicted upon the child. Having worked in different factories for years, he knew they would all be shut for Holi and thus took the girl to one. During interrogation, he blamed alcoholism for his actions. Police sources said the accused knew the girl for 3-4 years as he used to come to her parents' small tea shop. "The girl used to remain with her parents in the daytime and was known to the accused. On the day of the incident, he took the girl away on some pretext. As the kid knew Lohar, she also went with him. He raped and murdered her," a police source said. Investigators suspect that the accused had planned the crime as he had kidnapped the child the day



before Holi, knowing that factories in the area would be shut for at least two days. So, the movement of people in the area would be less and no one would hear her scream. He had chosen an abandoned factory as the location beforehand. "He murdered her to hide his identity or because he suspected that the girl would have informed her parents about him," the source said. Police are probing whether the accused had his eyes on the girl for a long time. They are also investigating whether he had been luring her with candies. After the crime, Lohar remained in the area, then took a train the next morning. "The

whole sequence of events looks like it was a planned thing. He knew where to commit the crime, how to escape," an officer said. When police caught him at Asansol station, he denied committing any crime and claimed that he was going to his native place. However, when police presented him with the evidence of his involvement in the crime, he broke down and confessed. "He initially said he was drunk and lost control but his testimony being probed," the officer said. So far, police have not found any past criminal record against Lohar, but officers may reach out to West Bengal Police to check his records.

## Landlord, nephew kill man for using 'foul language' in northeast Delhi

**NEW DELHI:** A 47-year-old man, employed as a marshal with the DTC, has been killed allegedly by his landlord and landlord's nephew for using foul language in northeast Delhi's Karawal Nagar area. While suspect Rahul (30) was arrested, landlord Sunil (50) remains at large, police said on Wednesday. After receiving a PCR call at 12.15am on Monday regarding the incident, a police team was rushed to the spot to find that victim Satvir had been rushed to the hospital. "When admitted, the victim was unconscious, displaying injuries to his limbs but none on vital areas" said Joy Tirkey, DCP (north-east).

## Pace sensation Mayank rattles Punjab Kings in Lucknow Super Giants' first win



**Mayank** Yadav emerged as India's latest fast-bowling sensation, showcasing his searing pace with figures of 3/27, as Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) convincingly defeated Punjab Kings (PBKS) by 21 runs in the Indian Premier League match on Saturday in Lucknow. Opting to bat first, LSG benefited from a late onslaught by Krunal Pandya, who hammered a quickfire 43 off just 22 balls, propelling the team to a competitive total of 199/8. Quinton de Kock led the batting charge

with a brisk 54 off 38 balls, while Nicholas Pooran's aggressive 42 off 21 balls injected vitality into the innings during the middle overs. Krunal's aggressive innings, peppered with two sixes and four boundaries, at a strike rate of 200, provided LSG with a crucial cushion. LSG's total proved to be sufficient as Mayank's exceptional bowling performance guided LSG to their first victory of this IPL season, restricting Punjab Kings to 178/5. The absence of Liam Livingstone, who couldn't bat at No.4

due to injury, further hindered Punjab's chase. Mayank's express pace proved to be the decisive factor, troubling PBKS batsmen, including Jonny Bairstow, Prabhsimran Singh and Jitesh Sharma. Clocking consistently above 150 kmph, Mayank emerged as the hero of the night. Earlier, Punjab's aggressive start, led by the dynamic duo of Shikhar Dhawan (70 off 50 balls) and Bairstow (42 off 29 balls), hinted at a formidable chase. Dhawan's audacious reverse sweep.

"I was surprised at his pace, but I wanted to use his pace against him, but he bowled the bouncers and the yorkers well," Punjab Kings captain Dhawan said at the post match presentation"

**NEW DELHI:** Young speedster Mayank Yadav claimed three wickets on his IPL debut as Lucknow Super Giants defeated Punjab Kings by 21 runs in their IPL 2024 clash at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow. After winning the toss and opting to bat first, Lucknow Super Giants posted a mammoth 199 for 8, thanks to Quinton de Kock's belligerent fifty (54 off 38 balls) and classy knocks from stand-in skipper Nicholas Pooran (42) and Krunal Pandya (43). Chasing a 200-run target for victory, Punjab Kings captain Shikhar Dhawan smashed a 50-ball 70, while Jonny Bairstow scored a 29-ball 42



as the duo amassed 102 runs for the opening wicket. But the debutant Mayank had some other plans. He struck when things were starting to look bleak for LSG, getting rid of Bairstow, Prabhsimran Singh and Jitesh Sharma to return figures of 3/27. Punjab Kings could only manage 178/5 in their 20 overs and suffered a 21-run defeat. This was Punjab Kings' second loss in three matches. "They played well, pity that Livi (Livingstone) got injured, that hurt us, he would have come at 4. We started off well, but Mayank bowled well with his pace. It was nice facing him, I was surprised at his pace, but I wanted to use his pace against

him, but he bowled the bouncers and the yorkers well," Punjab Kings captain Dhawan said at the post match presentation. "I was quite mindful, asked the batters to use the short side and use his pace, but he bowled into his body (on Bairstow's dismissal) and got him OUT, I said the same to Jitesh as well. But Mohsin bowled really well, he kept a good length and suffocated us. We will have to analyse these defeats, the drop catch did cost us some momentum. That's something we'll have to improve going forward," Dhawan said. Punjab Kings will next face Gujarat Titans on April 4 at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

## Rohit takes charge of field placements as MI struggle against SRH onslaught

**NEW DELHI:** The dynamics shifted within the Mumbai Indians camp as Rohit Sharma, the former captain, took charge of fielding instructions from current skipper Hardik Pandya during their IPL 2024 clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Wednesday. Just days after a video surfaced showing Pandya directing Sharma to field in the deep, the tables turned as the pressure mounted on the five-time champions in Hyderabad. Sunrisers's relentless onslaught saw them smashing a record-breaking total of 277 for 3, the highest-ever in IPL history. This incredible feat saw them break the 11-year-old record for the highest-ever team total in an IPL innings, previously held by Royal Challengers Bengaluru - 263/5 in 20 overs against now-defunct Pune Warriors India in 2013.

## 'Virat Kohli played 59 balls..': Former India cricketer slams Virat's strike rate and applauds Gambhir

**NEW DELHI:** Despite Virat Kohli's exceptional unbeaten innings of 83, Royal Challengers Bengaluru suffered a defeat against Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League match on Friday. Continuing his impressive form, Virat played a pivotal role with a 59-ball knock, guiding RCB to a total of 182 for 6 on a pitch that offered varying conditions but eased up for batting as the game progressed. KKR's Sunil Narine, in



his 500th Twenty20 appearance, alongside Phil Salt, provided a blazing start, amassing 85 runs within the pow-

erplay. With KKR comfortably chasing down the target with 3.1 overs to spare, they secured a convincing

victory. After RCB's defeat, former India cricketer Aakash Chopra took a dig at Virat Kohli and his strike rate. Speaking on his YouTube channel, Aakash explained how Narine and Salt's dominance in Powerplay overshadowed Virat's stellar knock. "When Sunil Narine opens, the template is absolutely clear - 'Either I or you will not remain'. He plays in that fashion, tries to hit sixes.

## Revealed: The brain behind making LSG skipper KL Rahul an 'Impact Player'

**NEW DELHI:** Lucknow Super Giants head coach Justin Langer took the initiative to designate KL Rahul as the 'Impact Player' and appointed Nicholas Pooran as captain for their Indian Premier League match against Punjab Kings in Lucknow on Saturday. Although the 'Impact Player' rule was introduced last season, it's a rarity to witness a captain being bestowed with this title. IPL 2024 Points Table The decision to have Pooran emerge for the toss left everyone taken aback. "KL is coming



back from injury and we're looking to give him a break in such a long tournament, but he'll play as an impact player today. Everyone must take the opportunities and perform at their best," Pooran said at the toss. Rahul, who missed four

Tests against England due to a quadriceps injury which healed "90 percent" (as per a BCCI release), was declared fit by the National Cricket Academy (NCA) before the IPL, and the LSG skipper opened and kept wickets in their first match against Rajasthan

Royals. However, sources tracking the development at LSG explained the rationale behind the decision. "KL is absolutely fit and remains very much in charge. It is a decision taken by coach," the source said.

It is understood that on days when LSG bat first, Rahul could be the only player in the top order, who could be replaced in order to bring in a bowler. Marcus Stoinis, Ayush Badoni and Krunal Pandya can all bowl while Quinton De Kock can keep.

## 'I am putting all my cheer behind...': Australian High Commissioner

**NEW DELHI:** Australia's High Commissioner to India, Philip Green, expressed his prediction on Saturday that the Rishabh Pant-led Delhi Capitals (DC) would clinch the IPL crown this season. Despite not securing a single IPL title in the history of the tournament and facing defeats in their first

two matches of the ongoing season, the Delhi franchise has consistently demonstrated strong performances. In the 16 seasons of the lucrative Indian domestic T20 league, the Capitals reached the final only once, in 2020, where they faced a loss to the Mumbai Indians (MI) in the title clash. Taking to his official X handle on Saturday, the Australian High Commissioner to India posted an image of himself along with three others as they took turns predicting the probable champions of the ongoing 17th IPL season.

"United by #cricket, divided by @IPL! The #IPL2024 has divided our #TeamAustralia in India as our Consuls General back their city IPL teams, and I am putting all my cheer behind @DelhiCapitals. This is

going to be an exciting competition, who do you think will win @ChennaiIPL," Green posted from his X handle. In what has been a familiar underwhelming start to their IPL campaign, the DC lost their opening clash with the Punjab Kings (PBKS) by 4 wickets and then followed up with another agonising defeat to the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) by seven wickets on Friday. The Capitals are currently placed at the bottom of the IPL points table. The 17th season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) kicked off on March 22, with defending champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) coasting to a win over the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in a South derby IPL teams, and I am putting all my cheer behind @DelhiCapitals. This is

## Young pace sensation Mayank bowls the fastest delivery of IPL 2024

**NEW DELHI:** Young pace sensation Mayank Yadav made a remarkable IPL debut, playing a pivotal role in guiding Lucknow Super Giants to a comfortable 21-run victory over Punjab Kings in Lucknow on Saturday. The right-arm fast bowler stole the limelight with astonishing figures of 3/27 that turned the momentum in Lucknow's way after Punjab cruised in a 200-run chase. Mayank's blistering pace saw him unleash the fastest ball of the season, clocking at 155.8 km/hr while bowling to Punjab skipper Shikhar Dhawan. Mayank broke the stand with his maiden wicket of Jonny Bairstow before dismissing Prabhsimran Singh and Jitesh Sharma to flatten Punjab's chase.



Upon receiving the Player of the Match award, Mayank expressed that the nervousness dissipated the moment he bowled his first ball. "I've always heard from others there's nervousness in debuts but that goes away after the first ball. Plan was to not be under

too much pressure and to bowl at the stumps and use the pace as much as possible. There was the thought to mix up the pace initially but the wicket helped and the skipper told me to bowl gas. The debut wicket was the favourite. Coming off the injury last season was tough, I'd set

my goal to debut at a young age but injuries were a setback." Bairstow showcased his aggressive prowess by launching two consecutive sixes off Krunal's bowling, propelling the visitors past the 100-run mark in the 11th over. However, Bishnoi's economical 11th over .

## Most Maiden Overs in IPL History

**Delve into the artistry of bowling** excellence with TOI's dedicated page on the Most Maiden Overs in IPL (Bowler). Witness bowlers dominate the game with precision, control, and unyielding determination. Stay informed about the bowlers who consistently apply pressure and stifle opposition batsmen. Follow this page for analysis, player profiles, and statistical breakdowns of the IPL's most miserly bowlers. In the high-octane environment of the Indian Premier League (IPL), bowlers play a crucial role in stifling opposition batsmen and turning the tide of the game in their team's favour. And if it is a maiden over, it means six balls are wasted on the batsman's end, but for a bowler, it is a pot of gold. The record for the most maiden overs (14) in IPL history is held by none other than Praveen Kumar, the swing master who has represented five different franchises, including Gujarat Lions, Kings XI Punjab, Mumbai Indians.