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

Lower turnout not a worry, we'll get more seats than last time': Amit Shah



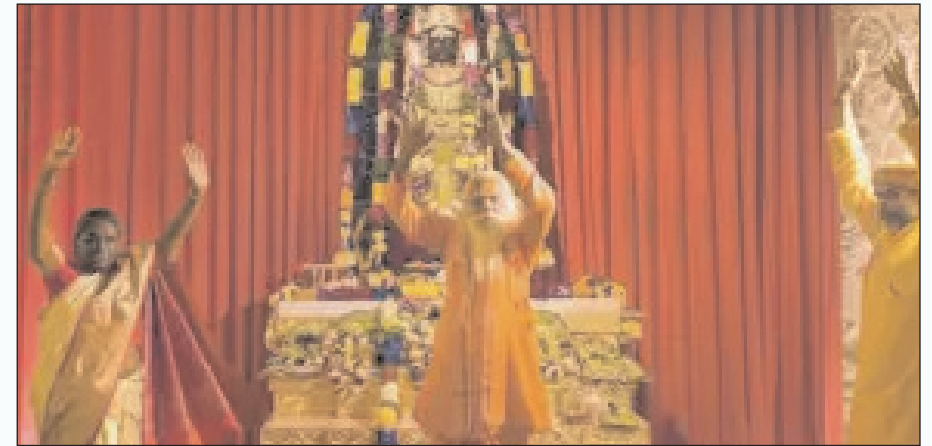
New Delhi Amit Shah said that we have entirely eliminated Naxalism in Jharkhand, Bihar, Telangana, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Four cities in Chhattisgarh were left since the previous Congress government never supported the Centre. BJP returned to office, and within four months 90 Naxals were apprehended, 123 were arrested, and 250 surrendered themselves. Ten more Naxals were killed only yesterday, and Maoists from Chhattisgarh surrendered in Odisha at 9am today. Along with security, we are increasing and delivering education, health, food, energy, and communication. I would like to urge individuals to lay down their weapons and surrender and get included in the mainstream. EC has released polling data for the two phases after a delay. The opposition has been saying that EVMs will

be manipulated? If you had contested elections, you would not have said this. The machine is sealed from all polling agents. It can't be tampered with. They are just looking for excuses. Then how did Rahul Gandhi know that we will get 150 seats? Has Rahul tampered with the EVM? Those who work on ground have their assessments. It's just that our assessments are mostly accurate. In Raebareilly, we have decided that after their candidate is announced, we will do it. We have 3 candidates. As soon as they make their announcement, we

will do it. They are finding a candidate who is ready to lose. This time, on one side there was talk of mangalsutra and infiltrators and on the other side there was talk of vote jihad. Who do you think is doing such a polarising election? There is a need to make India the third largest economy, there is 'one nation, one election' and there is also a need to introduce uniform civil code in the country. But the media doesn't like this creative agenda, so it picks up things with controversy. No one can divide this country; BJP has become very strong and who-

ever tries to divide the country will get a strong answer. This is not Indira Gandhi's era but Narendra Modi's time. Modi ji has freed us from all four diseases - dynastic politics, casteism, corruption and appeasement. The Election Commission should take cognizance of this matter. When Indira Gandhi came then Emergency was implemented but BJP has no intention of 'One Nation, No Election'. We don't know about Congress, but we are crossing 400 seats in this Lok Sabha. We are getting more than 100 Lok Sabha seats. The turnout reduced after the first phase, which means BJP's support and cadre has reduced? Congress does not know the ground reality. Congress supporters have not come out to vote. According to me we will get more Lok Sabha seats this time than in the previous election.

President Murmu visits Ram Mandir amid Rahul Gandhi's remark row



AYODHYA: President Droupadi Murmu offered prayers and performed aarti before Ram Lalla's idol amid chanting of mantras Wednesday, a day after Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai denied the allegation made by Congress MP Rahul Gandhi that she was not invited to the consecration of the Ram temple "as she is a tribal". Later, the President's official handle on 'X' described the temple as "an embodiment of the cultural values of our society". 'Prez got access to area reserved for priests' Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai had described Rahul's remark as "completely false, baseless and misleading" and asserted that Prez was indeed invited for the Jan 22 ceremony. After Murmu's visit - her first to the newly-built Ram temple - the Trust said in a statement that in its

own way it had given a "befitting reply" to those alleging that she was not invited for the consecration ceremony. "Under a special arrangement, Prez got the opportunity to be next to the idol inside the sanctum sanctorum, a place reserved only for the priests and where the prime minister was present during the consecration ceremony," the Trust said. After the Ayodhya visit, a post on the official handle of Prez of India on 'X' quoted her, recalling Lord Ram's encounters with Kewat and Shabri, the two mythological characters in Ramayan belonging to

MBC and tribal communities, respectively. "I am unable to describe my feelings in words after witnessing Ram Lalla in his majestic form around 4pm at the Ayodhya airport, Murmu's first stop was the Hanuman Garhi temple. Next, she visited the banks of the Saryu and attended the grand evening aarti, offering a garland of flowers to the river. She visited as part of the aarti. After the aarti Prez visited the Ram temple. Before leaving for Delhi, Murmu also paid obeisance at Kuber Teela and to the statue of celestial bird Jatayu in the temple town.

Temple trust members presented a miniature replica of Ram temple and a framed photo of the Ram Lalla idol to Murmu. After her arrival around 4pm at the Ayodhya airport, Murmu's first stop was the Hanuman Garhi temple. Next, she visited the banks of the Saryu and attended the grand evening aarti, offering a garland of flowers to the river. She visited as part of the aarti. After the aarti Prez visited the Ram temple. Before leaving for Delhi, Murmu also paid obeisance at Kuber Teela and to the statue of celestial bird Jatayu in the temple town.

Maldives foreign minister likely to visit India next week



Maldives foreign minister Moosa Zameer's visit to India amid shifting alliances and strained relations. The visit holds geopolitical significance during the Indian elections. The visit will come around May 10, a deadline that Male set for India to withdraw its troops. Discussions may include future visits, debt relief, and defense cooperation, reflecting the evolving dynamics between the countries. Maldives foreign minister Moosa Zameer is likely to visit India this month, has learnt. Both sides are in touch diplomatically to finalise the dates for Zameer's visit but official sources suggested it could happen as early as next week. If it happens, it will be the first high-level visit by either side since the Maldives' pro-China prez, Mohamed Muizzu, took office last year, defeating his India-friendly predecessor Ibrahim Solih. India's ties with the Indian Ocean neighbour have taken repeated hits since then with Muizzu working to limit defence and security cooperation with India, most notably by asking New Delhi to pull out troops operating Indian choppers in the archipelago and walking out of a bilateral agreement that allowed Indian Navy to carry out hydrographic surveys in Maldivian waters. The visit will take place in the middle of the Indian parliamentary elections, making Zameer likely the last high-profile foreign di gnitary India.

Accused of delay, EC clears air on turnout data drill

NEW DELHI: Overall voter turnout data for the first two phases of Lok Sabha polls, which was officially released by Election Commission on Tuesday, is the same as what was collated from constituency-wise polling figures on EC's voter turnout app on April 20 evening for Phase 1 and April 27 evening for Phase 2, according to EC sources. EC sources told copies of



Form 17C - which statutorily records turnout at every polling station in absolute numbers at the end of polling - are shared by presiding officers with all polling agents of the candidates present to ensure transparency. After close of poll, first priority of the presiding officer is to return to the headquarters and deposit the electronic voting machines (EVMs) and all statutory and non-

statutory papers. Due to late arrival of polling parties or difficult geographical or weather conditions, returning officers have time available till midnight to fill up estimated voter turnout in the VTA. Such updation in many cases is not complete even till midnight as some parties from the remote stations may take more time to return.

Bomb hoax at 200 Delhi-NCR schools leads to panic



NEW DELHI: Delhi-NCR witnessed an unprecedented situation on Wednesday morning with at least 200 schools receiving an email warning them about a bomb on their premises, leading to widespread panic. Responding to messages from the schools, parents rushed to pick up their wards even as a massive exercise was launched by multiple agencies, including police, fire units and bomb and dog squads,

to comb the premises. Students were evacuated and a stretched police force searched every nook and corner of the schools. Even school bags were examined. The mails had been received by around a dozen schools

till 9 am but slowly the number rose, eventually leading to virtually all schools being shut for the day. The special cell has begun an investigation after filing an FIR and is trying to trace the sender. The ministry of home affairs and lieutenant governor have asked the police commissioner for a report. Multiple agencies, including National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Cert-IN, have been roped in for the probe.

GST April mopup soars 12.4%, crosses Rs 2 lakh crore for 1st time

NEW DELHI: Yearend sales and better compliance helped goods and services tax (GST) collections soar past the Rs 2-lakh-crore mark for the first time, with experts suggesting that this could be a tipping point for the nearly-seven-year-old indirect tax regime. Based on transactions in March, the latest data released by the finance ministry estimated a 12.4% increase in GST collections, pegged at over Rs 2.1 lakh crore in April, driven largely by domestic demand. The mop-up from domestic transactions was seen to have risen 13.4%, while the figure from imports was up 8.3%. After accounting for refunds, the



net GST revenue went up 15.5% to Rs 1,92,000 crore. The numbers buoyed the mood in govt. Post-Covid there has been a consistent rise in collections. 'GST mop-up reflection of better biz compliance' Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman tweeted, "GST collection crosses Rs 2 lakh crore benchmark, thanks to the strong momentum in the economy and efficient tax collections. Congratulations to the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, dept of revenue, all officers at the state and central levels. Their sincere and collaborative efforts have achieved this landmark". It started with the crackdown on bogus registration and fake invoices along with tightening of norms, with data analytics playing a key role.

"These collections could be the tipping point in the GST collection trajectory. While some part of the increased collections are attributable to the financial yearend upswing, it is also reflective of significant improvements in compliance by businesses. The relentless focus on audits by central and state GST authorities together with periodic drives to stamp out evasion has led to this," said M S Mani, partner at D e l o i t t e India. Among states, Mizoram led the growth charts with a 52% jump in April, while Sikkim (down 5%), Nagaland (3% lower), and Meghalaya and J&K (2% fall) lagged. Among the bigger states.

Blinken meets Bibi to stave off Rafah op

US secretary of state Antony Blinken met with PM Netanyahu in Israel on Wednesday, his latest stop on a West Asia tour undertaken as President Biden tries to stop Israel from invading Rafah, a city in southern Gaza where Palestinians have sought shelter during the war. Blinken and other top Biden administration aides are also calling for Hamas to agree to a deal to free some hostages taken in the Oct. 7 attacks in exchange for a six-week ceasefire and the release of some Palestinian prisoners. US officials say they hope a temporary ceasefire would lead to a permanent one. On Tuesday, Netanyahu said that he plans a major assault on Rafah "with or without" a deal.

'Hindu marriage invalid without customary rituals'

NEW DELHI: Observing that a Hindu marriage is a sacred process and not a "song and dance" and "wining and dining" event, Supreme Court has held that customary rituals and ceremonies prescribed under the Hindu Marriage Act must be assiduously, strictly and religiously followed, failing which a marriage would be declared invalid even after it has been registered. A SC bench said Section 7 of the Act lists 'ceremonies of a Hindu marriage', which have to be complied with for validity of the marriage and if it is not done, then the marriage is not deemed valid in the eye of the law. Section 7 says a Hindu marriage may be solemnised. in accordance with the customary rites and ceremonies of either party thereto. A Hindu marriage is not an event for

"song and dance", "wining and dining" or a commercial transaction, the Supreme Court has observed and said it cannot be recognised in the "absence of a valid ceremony" under the Hindu Marriage Act. A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih said a Hindu marriage is a 'samskara' and a sacrament which has to be accorded its status as an institution of great value in Indian society. In its recent order passed in the matter of two trained commercial pilots, who sought a divorce decree without performing a valid Hindu marriage ceremony, the bench urged young men and women to "think deeply about the institution of marriage even before they enter upon it and as to how sacred the said institution.

International Labour Day organized

Prayagraj: All the branches of North Central Railway Men's Union Prayagraj Division, under the guidance of Comrade RD Yadav and under the leadership of Comrade DS Yadav, Divisional Head and Divisional Minister in the entire Prayagraj Division, like every year, this year also all the local branches have organized their- International Labour Day was organized in its branch area. On this occasion, May Day/Labor Day/Laborer's Day was celebrated during lunch break at the Union Office in Prayagraj Division's Ministerial Branch DRM Office, Prayagraj. Similarly, other branches of North Central Railway Men's Union in Prayagraj, Loco Branch,

Junction Branch, Engineering Branch, Headquarters Branch and Carriage and Wagon Branch, celebrated May Day with great enthusiasm. Comrade DS Yadav in his address on this occasion said that we all have to be more determined and while paying tribute to the martyrs who were shot by the police in Chicago in 1886, we should always follow in their footsteps and fight for the solution of the problems. One should always be prepared for this because when the union exercises its democratic rights and despite that, if the problems are not solved then the workers' union All India Railway Men's Federation and North Central Railway Men's Union are forced to fight. In this way,



you people should be ready to fight for the restoration of the old pension scheme by abolishing the new pension system. Thereafter, Comrade Saeed Ahmed, the energetic and flamboyant Joint Divisional Minister of

Prayagraj Division, said in his address that we are laborers, we do not like to fight, but the government and administration should also think that they should not force us and our rights are justified. And problems should be solved by supporting reasonable demands. When the problems are not solved then strike is the only option as a last resort due to which the people of the country have to face a lot of problems including

inconvenience. This program of May Day was presided over by Comrade Gulab Singh and conducted by Comrade Nagendra Bahadur Singh, Branch Minister.

On this occasion, mainly Gulab Singh, Vijendra Kumar, Ashish Kumar, SK Singh, AK Singh, Raju Prasad, Shamsul Ram Singh, BP Singh, RK Rai, Anil Kumar, Anil Kumar Singh, Harvendra Singh, Sanjay, Ram Bachan Ram, Deepak Alka Devi, Anandi Verma, Damini, Kanchan, Ruchi Sushma, Pushpa, Renu, Veena Mohibulla, Vipin Mishra, Ved Prakash, Mahesh, Asha Chandra, Deepak Kumar, Shobha, Shashi, Geeta, Gayatri, Meera, Seema Yadav, Nisha, Sneha, Sheela etc. were present.

Bareilly-Prayagraj Sangam express train derailed, no casualty

Prayagraj: The Bareilly-Prayagraj Sangam express train, number 14308, derailed on Wednesday morning only a few meters before arriving at Prayagraj Railway Station. Initial indications indicate that the train's engine and three carriages have derailed. There were no recorded casualties or injuries during the incident. More information is awaited, said North Central Railway officials.

Major General Rajesh Bhat assumes command of Purva UP and MP Sub Area

Prayagraj: On Wednesday, Major General Rajesh Bhat has taken over as General Officer Commanding, Purva UP and MP Sub Area. The handing taking over ceremony was held at Prayagraj New Military Station wherein Major General Jai Bainsla, Sena Medal has handed over command and has moved to Shillong as ADG Assam Rifles. Commissioned in the Corps of Engi-



neers in June 1993, Major General Rajesh Bhat brings extensive experience to his new role. Major General Rajesh Bhat has a distinguished career encompassing prestigious command, staff, and instructional appointments. Major General Rajesh Bhat's leadership promises to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and excellence, ensuring continued security and well-being of the regions served by the Sub Area, informed Samir Gangakhedkar, Group Captain, Public Relations Officer, Ministry of Defence, Prayagraj.

Football players sweat out in hot conditions

Uttar Pradesh (Under-17) football team selection trials started

Prayagraj: Under-17 National Football Championship is being organized by Physical Education Foundation of India (PEFI) in Vardaman West Bengal in the coming month of June in which Uttar Pradesh state football team will also participate. Physical Education Foundation of India (PEFI) is a national sports promotion organization certified by the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs,



Government of India. According to Nandini Rawat, Secretary of PEFI Uttar Pradesh, the first phase of trials for the selection of Uttar Pradesh football team has been organized in Prayagraj on 1st and 2nd May at Vishnu Bhagwan Public School, Jhalwa, in which today a total of 38 football players participated from different parts of city including Naini, Jhansi, Phaphamau, & Varanasi, Kaushambi as well. Chief Selector football coach Indranil Ghosh said that trials of single skill dribbling, shooting and receiving technique of the players have been conducted in which all the players gave their best performance. May 2 will be the last day of the first phase selection trials and the players selected in it will participate in the final trials.

Lucknow Univ takes unique initiative to increase voting awareness

Lucknow: In view of the Lok Sabha General Elections-2024, Lucknow University has taken an innovative initiative to increase voting awareness. Under the leadership of Lucknow University Vice-Chancellor Professor Alok Kumar Rai, the University has called upon all its affiliated colleges to adopt one village or ward each in rural and urban areas. The initiative aims to educate all sections of the society about the importance of voting. Have to explain and ensure 100% voting. For this, active participation of teachers, students, NSS volunteers and distinguished citizens of the society is being done. The Vice Chancellor said that voting is our moral and national duty, and to strengthen and strengthen it, we have to make everyone aware. He informed that the colleges performing excellently in this campaign will be rewarded and honored by the University. Under this initiative, work was done to spread voting awareness in rural and urban areas of Lucknow, Hardoi, Sitapur, Lakhimpur Kheri and Rae Bareilly districts. Through this campaign, the University is working towards its participation and contribution in building a strong nation. Through this innovative initiative, Lucknow University has not only contributed in the field of education but also in the field of social awareness and national duty. It has also shown the commitment.

Dr. N Singh honoured with National Talent Award- 2024

Prayagraj: Senior litterateur Dr. N. Singh was felicitated for his literary services, especially his successful efforts to include Hindi Dalit literature in the curriculum of universities, at a grand function organized on 24 April 2024 at Trimurti Auditorium, New Delhi, under the joint aegis of Mata Narayani Devi Charitable Trust, Pune and Golden Sparrows Gurugram. The chief guest of the program, Bollywood actress and famous Bharatanatyam dancer Sudha Chandran, presented the "National Talent Award - 2024". Along with this, the special guest, Mahamandaleshwar Mahant of Juna Akhara, Shri Veerendranand Giri Maharaj also honored him by giving him a gift hamper. Trustee of Mata Narayani Devi Trust Shri Ishwar Krishnalal Aggarwal and officials of Golden Sparrows Dr. Tilak Tanwar and RJ Aarti Malhotra were also present in the program. Let us tell you that Dr. N. So far, Ph.D. on Singh's life and literature has been conducted in eight universities. And M.Phil has been done in four universities. Translations of his books have also been published in English, Urdu, Marathi and Punjabi languages.

Neem tree staged by artists of Samanvay Rang Mandal

Prayagraj: Drama- Neem tree staged by the artists of Samanvay Rang Mandal Prayagraj Today, the play - Neem tree was staged at Jagat Taran Girls Degree College Prayagraj. It was done in the auditorium Ravindralay. The program started by lighting the lamp by chief guest Atul Dwivedi and special guest Zafar Bakht. The incident of July 10, 1857 is shown in this play written about the Revolution of 1857. East India Company officer Colonel Neel had hanged 864 innocent Indians in one day on seven neem trees located in the Chowk. This is the story of the culmination of Colonel Neel. Syed Liaquat Ali Khan, who was leading the Indian movement, had launched a campaign to liberate Allahabad by uniting farmers, small masters and the general public. When the Company government could not arrest Liaquat Ali Khan, he resorted to suicide. Innocent children, men, women and bystanders were hanged, nearby villages were set on fire and many were shot. About 6000 people died in this entire incident. The agitators had declared Allahabad independent and had also formed an independent non-governmental council. Mr. Alok Nair in the role of Liaquat Ali Khan, the main hero of the movement, Rammani Tripathi in the role of Colonel Neel, Himanshi Chaurasia in the role of Sutradhar, Arnav Rai, Shivam Pratap Singh, Vaishali Shukla played effective roles. The script of the play was conceptualized and directed by Sushma Sharma. Theater artists and theater lovers from the city were present on the occasion.

Naini Industrial Training Center organized tour for students

Prayagraj: On the Occasion of Labour Day 2024 Naini Industrial Training Centre Prayagraj had organized an industrial visit for the students, the Zoya Engineering, Prayagraj which is mandated to engage in socio-economic and New Product Development. It was founded by social worker, B.L.Khan in



2023. The company's vision flows from these basic principles feed the hungry Bharatiya ethos and tries to fulfill the desires of body, mind and soul. The culmination of this well researched endeavour, with industry as the laboratory, the machine replacing high tech machines, labour and their families turning technologist, 'a unique model' was evolved by the Industry was awarded ISO: 9001-2008 for its replicability. This Industrial visit is very helpful in our future for students of Naini industrial training centre.

Kinnar performed Yagya, Havan and puja

Prayagraj: People of the Kinnar community today performed Yagya, Havan and puja in Sangam city Prayagraj with the hope of another massive victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the Lok Sabha elections under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This program of Yagya and Havan took place under the leadership of Mahamandaleshwar of Kinnar Akhara and Swami Kaushalya Nandan Giri alias Tina Ma, senior member of UP Kinnar Welfare Board. Through this event of yagya and havan held amid the pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a strong vic-



tor of BJP was wished and a prayer was made for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take charge of the country for the third time. All the eunuchs participating in the event wore the same color dress. Swami Kaushalya Nandan Giri said on this occasion that the way Prime Minister Narendra Modi has served the country in the last 10 years is unmatched. He should get another chance to

serve the country. On this occasion, the eunuchs took a pledge to make Bharatiya Janata Party win four hundred seats and decided to campaign with all their might to score a hat-trick of victory for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Manoj Bajpayee Joins Nand Ghar Movement

Varanasi: Nand Ghar, which aims to transform 14 lakh anganwadis across India, unveiled a national movement - Agar Bachpan Se Poocha Khaana Khaaya, Toh Desh Ka Kal Banaya with Actor Manoj Bajpayee. This movement by Nand Ghar is aimed at nourishing India's future generation by ensuring holistic healthcare, quality nutrition and ensuring best-in-class preschool education for children.

Welcoming Manoj Bajpayee in joining this movement, Mr. Anil Agarwal, Chairman, Vedanta said, "Project Nand Ghar is a national movement that supports the overall well-being of children and women with a focus on health and nutrition. We are delighted that Manoj Bajpayee ji has extended his support to this growing movement. His personal life story deeply resonates with Nand Ghar's cause to nourish and transform the lives of our future generations."

In the heartwarming movement's launch today, Manoj Bajpayee was seen narrating his personal journey as a young theatre actor and outlined the invaluable support of his friends in ensuring regular nutritious meals for him while pursuing the acting dream. Bajpayee poignantly describes an artist's struggle, acknowledging that the strength to pursue one's dreams comes from a full stomach and wholesome food. Bajpayee further urged people to extend their support by visiting www.nandghar.org and to donate, volunteer or partner with Nand Ghar.

Enthusiastic about his association with Nand Ghar, Mr. Manoj Bajpayee said, "As someone who has lived with hunger pangs, I understand the deep impact it can have on physical, mental and emotional well-being. That's why

initiatives like Project Nand Ghar are so crucial. It not only ensures that children receive proper nutrition but also brings hope, opportunity, and a chance for a brighter future. Let's all join hands with the Nand Ghar movement to ensure that we nourish the potential of children, and together, prepare for a brighter India."

Sharing his thoughts on the movement conceptualised by McCann, Mr. Prasoon Joshi, CEO & CCO at McCann Worldgroup India and Chairman, Asia Pacific said "If we want to give our children a genuine chance at realizing

their true potential, then well-rounded nutrition is essential. What better way to highlight this than to bring forth some of India's most famous sons and daughters who have faced this hurdle in their journey."

Nand Ghar is the flagship project of Anil Agarwal Foundation (AAF) and has been working towards ensuring that no child goes to bed hungry - a dream of Chairman Anil Agarwal. In a milestone moment for Nand Ghar, we have been successful in reducing malnutrition levels while increasing pre-schoolers' attendance at Nand Ghars across 14 states in India. Last year, AAF also launched multi-millet nutri bars which are currently being distributed daily to 50,000 children between 3-6 years across 1364 Anganwadis in Varanasi. These bars, rich in protein, fibre, and antioxidants have not only improved the daily nutrient intake of children, but also, reduced absenteeism.

With credible voices joining the #KhaanaKhaayaKya movement, Nand Ghar is inviting citizens and like-minded organisations to partake in this journey of transformation. It is paving the way to realise the dream of a better tomorrow for our nation.



Himalaya Re-Hydrate: Ultimate Electrolyte Drink for Summer Revival

Varanasi: Himalaya Wellness Company, one of India's leading wellness brands, unveils its latest product, Himalaya Re-Hydrate, to combat rehydration and fatigue, available in two flavors - Apple and Orange. This electrolyte drink is meticulously crafted to replenish lost nutrients swiftly, leaving consumers feeling refreshed and invigorated. Himalaya Re-Hydrate is scientifically designed with 40% less added sugars and 50% more Vitamin C for health-conscious individuals. Vitamin C aids in faster recovery from fatigue, while the reduced sugar content aligns with the preferences of today's discerning consumers.

Containing a blend of five essential electrolytes-Sodium, Chloride, Potassium, Magnesium, and Calcium-



alongside Zinc, Himalaya Re-Hydrate ensures rapid restoration of vital nutrients. Additionally, the infusion of super fruits like Amla and Pomegranate, rich in antioxidants, supports the body's natural recovery process. Commenting on the new product, Vikas Bansi, Business Head-OTC, Himalaya Wellness Company, expresses, "Our endeavor with Himalaya Re-Hydrate is to offer consumers a revitalizing solution that combines the goodness of nature with the assurance of science. As we enter the health drinks market,

we aim to outpace the category's growth trajectory through our innovative formulation and unwavering commitment to quality." Himalaya plans to reach 30,000 doctors and 75,000 retail stores across the country with this new launch.

Theatre workshop kicks off today, participants to learn tricks of acting

Prayagraj: North Central Zone Cultural Centre, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, to generate interest in theatre, will start a 40-day presentational theater workshop from Thursday in the Cultural Center premises, in which the selected participants will be given theater training by the senior trainers of the National School of Drama. Tricks will be taught. The workshop will run from 8 am to 6 pm. In this, the participants will be given training in stage decoration, costume design, acting and theater lan-

guage. Center Director Prof. Suresh Sharma said that 247 applications were received from different states for this theater workshop, in which 40 participants have been selected through interviews by a two-member committee. In which 18 participants have been selected from Rajasthan, Bihar, Mumbai, Bhopal, Orissa and 22 trainees have been selected from various districts of Uttar Pradesh namely Prayagraj, Jaunpur, Balrampur, Lucknow, Auraiya, Pratapgarh, which also includes 8 female participants.

Keshav Maurya embarked on road show post-garlanding Chandrashekhar Azad

Prayagraj: Allahabad has always made history in Haavijay Yatra, it will make it this time too. Phulpur and Prayagraj will be ahead. Does anyone give a boat to the cyclists, to the claw-footed ones, to the elephants? Giving them a boat means putting them in a well, pressing the lotus button means giving a boat for the welfare of the country, press the lotus button for the welfare of farmers, Uttar Pradesh and Prayagraj, these were said by Allahabad Lok Sabha candidate Neeraj Tripathi and Phulpur Lok Sabha candidate Praveen. The chief guest of the road show organized in support of Patel, Deputy Chief Minister of the State Government, Keshav Prasad Maurya, while addressing the crowd of people and workers, said and appealed that for the welfare of the country and the state, Allahabad candidate Neeraj Tripathi and Phulpur candidate Praveen Patel should be nominated. Modi government has once again

achieved the goal of crossing four hundred by giving boats. The development that Modi ji has done for the poor, farmers, businessmen, women, Dalits and the state, has SP, Congress and BSP done it? SP meaning hooliganism once seemed like a slogan. The vehicle carrying the SP flag, the goon sitting in that vehicle, SP means giving certificate of hooliganism, now if the bicycle gets punctured then the condition of the Saifai people will become worse. The SP slogan was that the property is vacant, understand that the plot is ours. The Deputy Chief Minister of the state government said all the above things that due to the huge crowd, the account of SP Congress will not be opened anywhere in Uttar Pradesh, we have won Amethi, we will win Rae Bareilly, we will win Kannauj and Mainpuri also, we are winning 80 out of 80 seats in UP. BJP alone is winning 370 seats and the alliance is winning more than 400 seats. And you have to work hard day and

night to win. Are you guys ready? Everyone raised their hands and said yes in unison. Modi ji has removed Article 370. The people of Prayagraj



have faced a lot of lathi charge for Ramlala. The temple was constructed after five hundred years, so we all have to work hard to get more than 370 or 500 votes at each booth. You can understand what it means that the opposition has remained cool even in such heat. In 2019, SP and BSP were one, this time they are different. Sapanath, Nagnath and Kaliya Nath will not be known to anyone, don't worry, the lotus

will bloom, Modi government will be formed again for the third time. In the end, Keshav Prasad Maurya appeared and said that prosperity should reach every house, fulfill this duty, Modi will do everything, just press the lotus button. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, Cabinet Minister Anil Rajbhar, Cabinet Minister Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi, Kashi Region General Secretary and Yamunapar District Incharge Sushil Tripathi, MP Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi, Keshari Devi Patel, District Panchayat President Dr. VK are ahead on three chariots

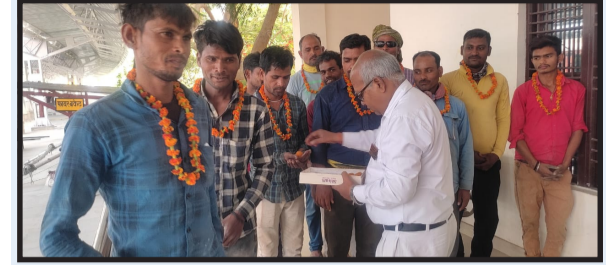
on the road. Singh, Mayor Ganesh Kesarwani, MLA Piyush Ranjan Nishad, Surendra Chaudhary, Nirmala Paswan, KP Srivastava, Yamunapar District President Vinod Prajapati, Gangapar District President Kavita Patel, Lok Sabha in-charge Allahabad Manoj Jaiswal, Phulpur Balendu Mani Tripathi, State Minister Kavita Yadav Tripathi, Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra conducted the road show. Media in-charge Rajesh Kesarwani said that everyone took a pledge for historic victory by paying floral tributes at the statue of martyr Chandrashekhar Azad in Chandrashekhar Azad Park. Yamunapar and Lok Sabha district media in-charge Dilip Kumar Chaturvedi said that the road show took place with a huge crowd from Colonel Ganj intersection, Allahabad University Road, Jhan intersection, Katra, Netram intersection to Kachari. Workers were seen raising slogans in an enthusiastic manner, Bharat

Mata ki Jai Vande Mataram also resonated. Before this, Allahabad Lok Sabha candidate Neeraj Tripathi and Phulpur Lok Sabha candidate Praveen Patel filed nominations in the court.

Public representatives and workers welcomed Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya at the police line by presenting him books. On this occasion, Lok Sabha Convener Phulpur MLA Guru Prasad Maurya, MLA Rajmani Kol, Allahabad Lok Sabha Convener Shivdutt Patel, former MLA Neelam Karwaria, Awadhesh Chandra Gupta, Prabha Shankar Pandey, Deepak Patel, Abhilasha Gupta, Rahish Chandra Shukla, Vijay Vaish, media in-charge Rajesh Kesarwani, media in-charge Yamunapar Dilip Kumar Chaturvedi, Anand Vaishya Sudarshan, Bhola Tiwari, Ratnakar Singh Patel, Vikas Chandra Shukla, Dharendra Mishra, Praveen Mishra etc. along with thousands of people and workers of Yamunapar, Mahanagar, Gangapar were present.

Labour Day celebrated at Subedarganj Railway Station

Prayagraj: Station Superintendent/Subedarganj, Shri Rajesh Kumar Gupta celebrated Labor Day at Subedarganj Railway Station. On this occasion, Rajesh Kumar Gupta honored all the workers engaged in cleanliness and construction work at the station by wearing garlands and distributed sweets. Employees and more



than 15 workers working at the station participated in this program. Every year in all the countries of the world, 01 May is also known as Labor Day / Labor Day. The purpose of celebrating this day is to honor laborers and workers. Labor Day is known as Labor Day, Shramik Diwas, Mazdoor Diwas, May Day. On this special occasion, the contribution made by the workers is also remembered. On this day, awareness is spread about the importance and rights of workers.

3rd day of nomination: 15 nomination papers taken for 2 LS seats

Prayagraj: On the third day of nomination, a total of 3 candidates filed their nomination under the Lok Sabha General Election-2024 on Wednesday, the third day of nomination. Nomination papers were taken by 07 people for Constituency 51-Phulpur and 08 people took nomination papers for Parliamentary Constituency 52-Allahabad. Thus far, a total of 39 people have taken nomination papers for Parliamentary Constituency 51-Phulpur and 38 people have taken nomination papers for 52-Allahabad. On the third day of nomination, nomination was made by Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Shri Praveen Kumar Singh for parliamentary constituency 51-Phulpur and Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Shri Neeraj Tripathi for 52-Allahabad and Rashtriya Samaj Dal (R) candidate Shri Rajdhar Singh.

2.2k troublemakers under surveillance, "red card" issued

Prayagraj: In a bid to ensure free and fair parliamentary polls, the Prayagraj police have identified over 2,200 troublemakers in the district and would issue them "red card". Such people will be issued challan and kept under strict vigil. "Police are leaving no stone unturned to ensure peaceful polling and in the same regard, notices are being served to identified law breakers, and precautionary measures are being taken against them under section 107/16 and Goondas Act.

Prayagraj police will keep a strict eye on possible troublemakers to ensure that they remain neutral and red cards to be issued to them ahead of polls," said a senior police official. The official added that so far 1,150 red cards have been issued across the district. Cops suspect that these elements will not only try and cause disturbance during the polls but also influence the voters. After submission of guarantees by many of them, police are identifying troublemakers who have a history of causing a disturbance during polls.

Shahi Idgah row: Hindu side rejects 1968 compromise, says deity wasn't a party

Prayagraj: The Hindu side in the Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute submitted in Allahabad High Court Wednesday that the deity was not a party in the claimed compromise between the two sides in 1968 or in the court decree passed in 1974. The counsel for the Hindu side also said that the claimed compromise was made by Sri Krishna Janasthan Seva Sansthan, which was not empowered to enter into any such pact. The object of the Sansthan was only to manage day-to-day activities of the temple and had no right to enter into such compromise, the Hindu side argued. The submissions were made during the hearing of the suit seeking "removal" of the Shahi Idgah mosque adjacent to the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple in Mathura.

The matter is being heard by Justice Mayank Kumar Jain on a plea moved by the Muslim side regarding the maintainability of the suit. Arguments from the Hindu side will continue on Thursday. During the earlier hearing, advocate Taslima Aziz Ahmadi, appearing for the Muslim side, had submitted before the court that the suit is barred by limitation.

As per Ahmadi, the parties had entered into a compromise on October 12, 1968. She had said the compromise has been confirmed in a civil suit decided in 1974. The limitation to challenge a compromise is three years but the suit has been filed in 2020 and thus the present suit is barred by limitation, she had argued. During the hearing on Tuesday, the Hindu side said the provisions of Waqf Act will not apply as the property in dispute is not a waqf property. It said the suit is maintainable and its non-maintainability can only be decided after the leading evidence.

RTO starts acquiring vehicles for poll duty

Prayagraj: As the nomination process for the two Lok Sabha seats in the Prayagraj district including Allahabad and Phulpur parliamentary constituencies began, the district administration and the regional transport office (RTO) have started the process of procuring vehicles needed for election duties for the polling staff. The district administration will require approximately 1,200 heavy vehicles, including buses and trucks, for polling staff and around 1,400 four-wheelers, such as jeeps and cars, for police and district administration officials, according to district officials.

The two Lok Sabha seats in Prayagraj will go to the polls on May 25, during the sixth phase.

To meet this demand, RTO-Prayagraj has sent letters to vehicle owners through the district police, indicating a specific date when

vehicle owners must bring their vehicles for inspection and possible use during the elections.

"The administration has set compensation for vehicle owners who provide their vehicles for election work, ranging from Rs. 1,697 to Rs. 2,510 for buses, Rs. 1,572 to Rs. 2,140 for trucks, Rs. 537 for tractors, and Rs. 1,264 to Rs. 2,140 for jeeps/cars," said ARTO (administration) Rajeev Chaturvedi. However, the RTO has been inundated with applications from vehicle owners seeking exemption, citing that their vehicles are unfit for road use.

"A vehicle can be exempted from poll duty only on valid grounds, but at the same time, strict action will be taken against vehicle owners if they give false excuses or show a callous attitude in providing their vehicles for this national cause," added Chaturvedi.



People showered flowers during BNP candidate's nomination procession

Labour Day celebrated with great enthusiasm and gratitude at St. Joseph's College

Prayagraj: Labour Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and gratitude with all the supporting staff in the premises of St. Joseph's College. The honoured employees were felicitated with the Principal Father Thomas Kumar along with the Principal, Father Melvin Payas, Administrator, A. Magavan, Chief Coordinator, Jyoti Dubey reached the venue. Program director Aditya Mishra welcomed him on the stage, after which S. Lyal read the Bible. College Choir presented a prayer song. After this all the workers were welcomed with garlands of beautiful fresh flowers by the students of class 9G, which shows the sweetness of appreciation and gratitude towards our support staff. The students

displayed their reverence by touching the feet of the staff members with respect and honor. In his speech, Aditya Mishra of Class 12A highlighted the fact that no nation is able to move ahead without the help and support of its working class. And our college workers are like our own "Frontline Warriors" because of their constant and persistent hard work. This was followed by the song "We the Laborers" highlighting the importance and dignity of honest labor by the college choir under the able guidance of Shri S Nayak. "A beautiful rendition of the song was given.

An impassioned speech in Hindi given by Pranav

Tripathi of 11F touched the hearts of all present, in which he emphasized all the work done by the support staff - how they work be-



hind the scenes to clean the classrooms, corridors and grounds. Work tirelessly, which provides facilities to

the students. He encouraged the attendees to live in such a way that all levels and classes of workers are respected and respected for the progress of the society as a whole. A poetry recitation by the students of the primary section, in which our supporting staff members it was a pleasure to see him praised for his hard work and dedication. After this, the speech of senior section Hindi spokesperson Dr. Raghavendra Dwivedi was given. In which Sir highlighted the duty of workers and their self-respect, he emphasized on how the society is completely dependent on them and should treat them with respect and harmony. He concluded his tribute by

singing Shri Ramdhari Singh's poem "Mazdoor" in a melodious voice.

Assistant Staff Coordinator, Peter Kumar, speaking on behalf of all the workers, expressed his emotional gratitude for the immense expression of love and respect he received throughout the year and especially on this special day. He met Principal Father Thomas Kumar and Principal Rev. Giving special thanks to Father Melvin Pius, he thanked everyone who worked in organizing this beautiful event. In his address, Principal Father Thomas Kumar praised all the efforts for the safety of the students, from securing the entry gates of the college to cleaning the entire campus. , gave his blessings to the support staff praising

their perseverance, hard work and dedication in making all the arrangements for each function. He praised the incredible work ethic of Manoj, who worked at the school, and described how he was back at work within a short time despite having a serious accident and undergoing surgery. Recognizing their true dedication towards their work, he blessed them and prayed for their good health and continued happiness. The program concluded with the singing of the National Anthem by all present. Additionally, children outside the school were To protect themselves from the sun, caps, towels and food items were also distributed to about 200 vehicle drivers taking them to and from school.

Charges filed against assassins of Atiq, Ashraf

Prayagraj: The Court of Additional Sessions Judge has filed charges against three murders of dead gangster Atiq Ahmad and his brother Ashraf. Three suspects, who are now detained at Chitrakoot prison, appeared in court via

video conference. Following the drafting of charges, Additional Sessions Judge Dinesh Gautam set May 2 for the recording of evidence.

Gulab Chandra Agrahri, the district government's (criminal) attorney, represented the

prosecution. On July 13, 2023, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) filed a charge sheet against three individuals suspected of shooting and killing gangster-turned-politician Atiq Ahmad and Ashraf on April 15, 2023. The charge sheet

was produced against three accused: Lavlesh Tiwari, 22, Mohit Singh alias Shani, 23, and Arun Maurya, 18.

The SIT, which was formed to investigate this murder case, presented a charge sheet to the Chief Judicial Magistrate after con-

ducting an investigation under Section 302 (murder) and various other sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Arms Act. At one point, the SIT team had taken the trio into police custody to interview them about the deaths of Atiq and Ashraf and

gather all available evidence.

The three accused reportedly shot the brothers dead on the night of April 15 when they were being escorted for a medical checkup at Prayagraj's Colvin Hospital as required by law.

Editorial

Why Iran, Israel avoided crossing red lines

Ritu Walia

The Israeli reaction took place within the week. On April 19, they struck a military airbase near the city of Isfahan, and Iranian officials also claimed to have shot down small drones near the northern city of Tabriz, but this was downplayed. Isfahan Province, in the centre of Iran, is home to significant Iranian military infrastructure, including a large air base, a major missile production complex, and nuclear facilities. As per reports in the Jerusalem Post, the Israelis were targeting an air defence radar site near Isfahan that's part of the protection of the Natanz nuclear facility. The choreography of missile strikes once again ensured that there were no casualties and, moreover, no targeting of Iranian nuclear facilities. Iranian media and officials described a small number of explosions, which they said resulted from air defences hitting three drones over Isfahan. They referred to the incident as an attack by "infiltrators" rather than by Israel, obviating the need for retaliation. The Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, downplaying the attack, said, "They're ... more like toys that our children play with, not drones." He also added, "As long as there is no new adventurism by Israel against our interests, we are not going to have any new reactions." With Israel remaining deadlocked in Gaza, where around 130 Israeli hostages remain but have inflicted more than 34,000 civilian casualties, including women and children, the Iranian strikes must have seemed like a welcome relief as the narrative shifted from the humanitarian crisis Israel is causing in Gaza. Further, in a timing that cannot be a mere coincidence, the US House of Representatives quickly passed an aid package of \$26.38 billion for Israel. With no hostage deal or ceasefire mechanisms apparent, the risk of miscalculation remains high. The region remains in a uniquely dangerous position, in which Prime Minister Netanyahu may feel that he has little choice but to escalate with Iran in order to maintain public support. But responses to the strike within Israel have exposed the country's political fissures. Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir described the strike on Iran as "feeble" or "lame". In response, Israeli opposition leader Yair Lapid called for him to be sacked and said his remarks had ridiculed and embarrassed Israel.

Things were going Iran's way

Since the 1979 revolution, Iran has taken an anti-Israeli posture and, as part of its deterrence strategy, has cultivated and financed support for the 'axis of resistance' network in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Palestine, surrounding Israel's borders.

The Hamas attack on October 7 suited Iran's agenda. Israel had suffered an unprecedented and humiliating setback; its much-lauded intelligence and defences had failed. Its subsequent actions in Gaza had received widespread condemnation and aligned the Middle Eastern countries against Israel. Israel's war was steadily harming its image, simultaneously exposing the hypocrisy of its Western backers. Israel was getting increasingly isolated internationally due to its disastrous war in Gaza.

The Palestinian cause in the region and around the world had been resurrected. Sympathy for Palestinian, particularly in the West, was more voluble. Iran did not need to intervene; its proxies acted on its behalf. Hezbollah had been routinely shelling Northern Israel, and the Houthis in Yemen have launched numerous unsuccessful missile and drone strikes against Israel, disrupting global shipping. However, Israel's attack against the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Damascus forced Iranian officials to make a more difficult choice. Iran had two choices, it could refrain from overt retaliation and continue to benefit from the present situation.



Maryam Kartarpur Sahib overture points at new Pak thinking

The election results also showed that Imran, despite all that the army and the People's Democratic Movement government had thrown at him, retained a substantial measure of support in Punjab. At the same time the Pakistan Peoples Party did well in Sindh. Very difficult PML(N)-PPP negotiations, clearly overseen by the army, from behind the scenes, followed. The arrangement that emerged saw Shehbaz Sharif as prime minister forming the government with outside PPP support, Asif Zardari becoming president of Pakistan, and Maryam becoming the first woman CM of the Punjab. In this the person who has temporarily lost out is Hamza Sharif

but the final word has not been said on how the reconciliation of political interests between Maryam and Humza will eventually occur.

Now, to return to Maryam's visit to Kartarpur Sahib, she made an impressive speech to the san-gat. She struck the right notes. She spoke in chaste Punjabi and projected herself as the daughter of Punjab who was the first woman to become CM in either Pakistani or Indian Punjab. She stressed her family's background in the village of Jati Umra in the Amritsar district from where her grandfather had migrated to Pakistan in 1947. Three other points that she made deserve special mention. One, that Pakistan was a

place where the minorities had the freedom to practice their faith and only recently the country had marked Eid, Easter, Holi and now she had come to be with the Sikh pilgrims at Baisakhi. Maryam's reference to this aspect is part of Pakistan's current endeavour to project itself as a moderate and liberal Muslim country. This is, of course, at variance with the prevalence and growth of extremist Islamist forces which want the country's governance to be strictly in accordance with the Sharia. The second point — and one of great significance — was Maryam's mention of the commonalities between Muslims and Sikhs. She took care to use the formulation

"you" and "us"; thus, carefully avoiding mentioning either Islam or Sikhism or Muslims and Sikhs. Obviously, she did not want to ruffle the feathers of the Pakistani ulema. She said that both "you" and "us" believe in one power which is the supreme power of the universe. She added that both "you" and "us" believe in honest living and earning through righteous means and giving to charity. Finally, Maryam referred to her father Nawaz Sharif's conviction that neighbours should open their hearts to each other and live in peace and also cooperate and trade with each other. It is true that Nawaz has always wanted to trade with India.

Analysing Raisi's Islamabad visit and its impact on India



What adds an intriguing dimension to Raisi's visit is his distinction as the first foreign leader to initiate diplomatic relations with Pakistan, particularly against the backdrop of the recent contentious general elections held in the country on February 8. This context imbues Raisi's visit with heightened significance, revealing the intricate nuances and delicate balancing acts inherent in regional diplomacy. President Raisi's diplomatic journey warrants careful consideration, occurring amidst the backdrop of his designation as a target of sanctions under Executive Order 13876 by the US Office of Foreign Assets Control. This layer of complexity adds a nuanced dimension to his diplomatic engagements, underscoring the delicate balancing act required in navigating international relations. Moreover, Raisi's trip is shadowed by grave allegations of human rights abuses, with numerous international bodies and United Nations special rapporteurs highlighting these concerns. Such allegations have previously led to the cancellation of his planned trip to Geneva in 2023, indicating the significant scrutiny surrounding his diplomatic activities and the challenges they entail.

Recent developments in Iran-Pakistan diplomacy

The Iranian president's visit to Pakistan arises against a backdrop of recent hostility

amid talks covering religious, cultural, investment, and diplomatic spheres. Iran reportedly launched missile strikes on two strongholds of the anti-Iranian rebel organisation Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice) on January 16 in the province of Baluchistan, Pakistan. A major actor in the ongoing tensions between Iran and Pakistan is Jaish al-Adl, which was founded in 2012 by Abdul Rahim Mollazehi as a breakaway faction of Jundullah. As an "unprovoked violation" of its airspace, Pakistan denounced the bombing. The assault posed a threat to Pakistan's formidable army chief, Gen Asim Munir, whose reputation for toughness and resolve has been a point of contention in his relations with other nations as well as at home. This made political analysts wonder if Iran respected Pakistan's sovereignty. Retaliating quickly, Pakistan launched a surprise

attack two days later using fighter jets and missiles directed at the purported hideouts of anti-Pakistan ethno-nationalist insurgents in the Sistan-Baluchistan region who were allegedly operating from Iranian soil. In light of worries about regional security, these incidents do highlight the complex and unstable dynamics that define Iran and Pakistan's relationship, especially as root causes of terrorism, smuggling, and border infiltration are not addressed. Pakistan serves as Iran's primary regional ally against adversaries such as Saudi Arabia and other Western powers. Iran's keen interest in joining China's economic corridor initiative aligns with Pakistan's close ties to Beijing. Notably, over 70 per cent of the electricity in Pakistan's Gwadar port city is sourced from Iran. The proposed gas pipelines, including the "peace pipeline" intended to

supply Iranian gas to India via Pakistan, have faced setbacks, notably India's withdrawal in 2009 due to US sanctions on Iran. However, Iran and Pakistan remain committed, signing a separate gas supply agreement. Notably, in June of that year, both nations entered into a multibillion-dollar agreement to develop a gas pipeline. However, while Tehran successfully completed construction of a 900-kilometre pipeline on its side by 2011, Islamabad still grapples with the task of installing 80 kilometres of pipeline on its territory. This discrepancy has sparked tensions, with Tehran issuing warnings of potential legal action and threats of an \$18 billion fine due to missed deadlines. Despite Islamabad's recent pledge to finalise the project by September of this year, doubts linger over its feasibility. The primary obstacle remains Pakistan's apprehension of invoking U.S. sanctions, a concern that has consistently hindered progress, echoing previous justifications for delays. Conversely, assuming a hostile stance towards Iran upsets the delicate equilibrium of Pakistan's already complicated neighbourly ties. Tensions with India continue despite a current cease-fire along the border. The Taliban's support for the TTP's anti-Pakistan insurgency has caused relations between the two parties to

deteriorate dramatically on Pakistan's western border. The recent deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan has further caused tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. During Raisi's visit, the Pentagon warned of sanctions for those engaging in business with Iran. Three Chinese firms aiding Pakistan's missile programme were recently sanctioned for WMD proliferation. Iran immediately shot back, stating that Israeli aggression on Iranian soil will result in a drastic shift in the balance of power. Raisi warned Israel on Tuesday: "Things will be different if the Zionist regime commits an error once again. If Tel Aviv attacks Iran once more, 'Israel will be completely different' and 'there will be nothing left of the Zionist regime.' According to Iranian Ambassador to India, Iraj Elahi, Tehran is optimistic that India will start purchasing crude from them again, as it did prior to May 2019, when the purchases stopped due to US sanctions against the West Asian nation. In order to advance the Chabahar Port project and strengthen bilateral relations, President Ebrahim Raisi might visit India later this year. Bypassing Pakistan completely, India will have access to Afghanistan through the Chabahar port, a symbol of strategic and economic cooperation between Iran and India.

Defence spending shoots up as conflicts rise globally

Total global military expenditure reached an all-time high of \$2443 billion in 2023, an increase of 6.8 per cent in real terms from 2022. This was the steepest year-on-year increase since 2009. The 10 largest spenders in 2023 were led by the United States, China, and Russia, all of whom increased their military spending. It was the ninth consecutive year of a rise in military spending. Also, it was the first time since 2009 that military expenditure went up in all five of the geographical regions. Particularly large increases were seen in Europe, Asia, Oceania, and West Asia. Clearly, there is a deterioration in peace and security. As the states prioritise military expenditure and strength, there is a risk of a spiral effect in the

neighbourhood. Russia's military spending increased by 24 per cent to an estimated \$109 billion in 2023, marking a 57 per cent rise since 2014, the year that Russia annexed Crimea. The Russian 2023 military expenditure was 16 per cent of total government spending and 5.9 per cent of GDP. Russia's military and war-related spending is set to rise sharply in 2024 under new federal budget plans for 2024-26 signed into law by President Vladimir Putin in November 2023. The plans suggest that the Russian government is committed to pursuing the war to a successful conclusion. Some have questioned the economic assumptions, though. Russia's rising debt burden has also meant reduced allocations to some key social

spending, including housing, education, and healthcare. Ukraine was the 8th largest military spender in 2023. Yearly spending surged 51 per cent to reach \$64.8 billion. It represented 58 per cent of total government annual spending. Interestingly, this spending was 59 per cent of Russia's defence expenditure. Ukraine also received at least \$35 billion in military aid during the year, including \$25.4 billion from the USA. When combining the two, it became

91 per cent of Russian spending. The US remains NATO's major spender, but European members have increased their share. In 2023, the 31 NATO members accounted for \$1,341 billion, equal to 55 per cent of the global military expenditure.

Pro-India hare and hunting with anti-India hounds

India has not just become the "only bright spot" economically, as the IMF wants us to believe, but also diplomatically and geostrategically, the country has started behaving like a global power. Image: REUTERS In 2021, The New York Times posted an online advertisement for the job of a South Asia business correspondent based in New Delhi. One of the requirements sought for the position even startled the staunchest of NYT supporters. For, the American newspaper, quite categorically, sought the candidate to be critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his "muscular nationalism". Explaining its stand, the newspaper wrote, "India's future now stands at a crossroads. Mr (Narendra) Modi is advocating a self-sufficient, muscular nationalism centred on the country's Hindu majority. That vision puts him at odds with the interfaith, multicultural goals of modern India's founders." Interestingly, the NYT has never put such preconditions for postings in Hong Kong or in mainland China. It has never asked the applicants to prove their pro-democratic credentials for a position in Hong Kong, or to publicly criticise Emperor Xi Jinping for a job in Beijing. If one thought the problem was NYT-centric, then hang on. Others in the West, too, aren't behind in targeting Prime Minister Modi and India. The Time magazine, for instance, just when Prime Minister Modi landed in Washington, DC, for his first official state visit in June 2023, questioned the very idea of India being an American ally. "India is not a US ally, and has not wanted to become one," a Time article thundered on 21 June. Interestingly, an even more scathing article appeared in the magazine a day earlier—on 20 June: "India's Worsening Democracy Makes It an Unreliable Ally." The Economist isn't behind either. It has often reproached Prime Minister Modi for stoking "divisions in the world's biggest democracy". It has singled out the Modi government

for its "flagrantly biased approach to citizenship" and delivering "collective punishment" for the people of the Kashmir Valley. It goes on to say that the "electoral nectar for the BJP" has become "political poison for India". It would, however, be wrong to assume that Western prejudice is only Modi-centric. Although it is today largely influenced and inspired by anti-Modism, prejudice is deeply entrenched against India and its rising global influence. This explains why the West has very rarely celebrated India's dance with democracy in the past seven decades. This despite the fact that India since Independence has been a case of democratic miracle—the only genuine democracy in the region between Israel and South Korea. Moreover, no other country, despite socio-political advancements and economic prosperity, comes even closer to India's democratic successes. What the country could achieve in 75 years, it took Britain and the United States centuries to reach there. Interestingly, in the given timeframe, the US found itself amid the Civil War which almost tore the country into two halves, but for Abraham Lincoln's sagacious leadership. It took the US another 50 years to make voting gender neutral and 100 years to give the Blacks the basic voting rights—something that India bestowed upon its citizens in one go in 1947 despite unprecedented poverty and astounding illiteracy. Yet, in the 1950s and '60s, the West was busy writing democratic India's obituaries: Its balkanisation was a foregone conclusion, and the only thing keeping the country together was Nehru! "What after Nehru?", was the most obvious question being asked during those times. After Nehru, during Indira Gandhi's time, the democrats of America and Britain found great comfort in Mao's company and had even dispatched an aircraft carrier, Enterprise, to bully India at the height of the Bangladesh war!

Vi got a new lease of life, says Birla

MUMBAI: Aditya Birla Group chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla said the Rs 18,000-crore fund-raise has given Vodafone Idea a "fresh lease of life", and set the stage for a "smart turnaround". "Vi is not just a telecom company, it's a national asset with 215 million users and about 8,000 MHz spectrum," said Birla. Investors in Vodafone Idea made a 26% return within a week as the shares of the telecom services company, which were offered at Rs 11 apiece in an FPO, closed at Rs 13.9 on the BSE. The proceeds from the fund-raise, which was garnered through a follow-on public offering (FPO), will be used to upgrade the loss-making and debt-saddled network's infrastructure, which will enhance operational efficiencies leading to better performance. Vi got a new lease of life, says Birla. "The cycle of investment will trigger the cycle of growth," said



Birla at the company's fund-raise, India's largest FPO, marks one such turning point for the industry," said Birla. Vi's journey to this point has been shaped significantly by govt's reform package, which has been encouraging a competitive three-player market. "A nation of 1.4 billion people deserves three private telecom players," said Birla. A few years ago, the company had inched towards bankruptcy. The govt, then, converted the company's dues into equity, thus becoming its largest shareholder. Birla, who had given up his directorship in 2021, returned to the board of Vi in 2023 after govt's rescue package.

Chandrasekhar accused Tharoor of engaging in "third-rate politics" by spreading falsehoods

NEW DELHI: Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar, the BJP candidate for Thiruvananthapuram, warned his Congress rival Tharoor against resorting to personal attacks during the election campaign. Chandrasekhar accused Tharoor of engaging in "third-rate politics" by spreading falsehoods and instilling fear in the minds of the people. He acknowledged the importance of free speech under Article 19, Chandrasekhar emphasized that crossing the line into personal attacks

on his integrity would not be tolerated. He asserted his determination to take legal action against such attempts, ensuring that consequences are served under the law. "He (Dr Shashi Tharoor) relies upon this type of third-rate politics, putting fear in people's minds and telling lies. In any case, I have clearly said that everybody is free to do politics. Article 19 protects everybody's free speech. But, if you trespass into lying about my personal integrity, then I will come after you. I will

ensure under the law that the consequences will be served on you," he stated. Earlier in April, Rajeev Chandrasekhar issued a legal notice to sitting MP Shashi Tharoor for levelling cash-for-vote allegations against him. , who expressed shock over the allegations made by Tharoor on a television show, demanded that he withdraw his statement and tender an unconditional apology. The notice further suggested that Tharoor had concocted these allegations to influence voters in Thiruvananthapuram.

Landslide hits Arunachal road to China border

Guwahati: A stretch of NH-313 linking Hunli and Anini in Arunachal Pradesh's Anini district caved in due to a landslide triggered by heavy rains Wednesday, disrupting traffic and surface communication. Diband Valley district,



bordering China, was

cut off from the mainland following the incident. This crucial highway segment, connecting Roing in Lower Dibang Valley to Anini, located approximately 83km from India-China border, sustained heavy damage.

Confident of achieving the target of 370 seats set by PM

NEW DELHI: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Wednesday she had decided against contesting the Lok Sabha elections from Tamil Nadu or Andhra Pradesh as she lacked funds to fight polls and may not meet the 'winnability criteria' in the two states. "The party did ask me but after thinking over it for a week or 10 days, I went back and said, 'maybe, not'... I don't have the kind of money to contest. I also have a problem because, whether it is Andhra or Tamil Nadu, it's also going to be a question of... are you from this community or are you from that religion," she said while responding to a question at the Times Now Summit 2024. She said BJP president JP Nadda had suggested that she could contest from one of the two states. When asked how the finance minister didn't have funds, she said, "My salary, my earnings, and my savings are mine and not the Consolidated Fund of India". Several ministers in Modi's cabinet, such as Dharmendra Pradhan, Piyush Goyal and Bhupender Yadav, who are from the Rajya Sabha, are in the fray for a Lok Sabha seat this time. Sitharaman said the party was confident of achieving the target of 370 seats set by PM Modi and was working towards that goal. "PM has set the target. We will strive for it. He is confident that people have seen what this govt has given," she said, adding that the Modi govt has provided stability, a period of no strife, no corruption, free food and investment in creating assets that will last 100 years. "Every section has seen visible development happening. The way people respond to him, these aren't a mobilised.

Stretched resources for his tuition, says farmer whose son topped JEE

NAGPUR: Nilkrishna Gajare, who secured the all India rank 1 in JEE (Mains) exam Thursday, said studying computer science at IIT Bombay was his dream. The 18-year-old prepared for the exam at a coaching institute in Nagpur with a 75% scholarship. Maintaining a balance between studies and personal well-being, Nilkrishna said he exercises and meditates in his free time and stays away from social media. "I only had WhatsApp to communicate with teachers. I would



wake up at 5am and hit the bed by 10pm. Apart from attending tuition classes, I would study for seven hours," he said. Supporting him every step of the way is his father Nilkumar

Gajare, who had to drop out after class 12. Despite relying on farming for a livelihood, Nilkumar ensured Nilkrishna had access to education, even mobilising extra funds for his son's accommodation in Nagpur. "In our younger days, achieving our aspirations was impossible. Farming is my livelihood, and I barely earn Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 2 lakh annually. This income supports my family of six. We've had to stretch our resources to ensure his education," Nilkumar said.

Explain the basis on which the entire Muslim community was included in the OBC category

NEW DELHI: National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) chairperson Hansraj Ahir has summoned Karnataka's chief secretary to explain the basis on which the entire Muslim community was included in the OBC category in the state even as BJP sharpened its charge of Muslim appeasement against Congress. While PM Narendra Modi accused Congress of trying to "snatch" the reservation rights of OBCs and give it to their "vote banks", Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi

Adityanath said it was very unfortunate and an attempt at "Islamisation of India". "This is a part of despicable attempts at Islamisation of India and pushing it towards divisions. When the UPA govt came to power, it made such attempts at that time too. BJP had carried out a massive agitation. So, be it Justice Verma committee report or the Sachar committee report, they were all attempts by Congress to loot the reservation of OBCs, SCs and STs," Adityanath said. NCBC has summoned

the Karnataka chief secretary and sought a detailed report on what basis the Muslim community as a whole was being treated as educationally and socially backward for the purpose of 4% reservation in education and appointments under category 2B. Moreover, the state govt is providing reservation to 17 socially and educationally backward Muslim castes under category 1 and 19 backward Muslim castes under category 2A. The commission has sought survey reports from the

state to understand the basis for giving reservation to the Muslim community as a whole under category 2B. Ahir said replies received from the state were "not satisfactory" and the commission was of the view that "the rights of actual backward classes are being taken away". The total quota in Karnataka for backward classes for admission in educational institutions and appointments to posts in state services as per the constitutional mandate is 32% across five categories.

CM to contest for 6th term; Birla ex-exec for Lok Sabha

BHUBANESHWAR: Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik will seek re-election from Hinjili for a record sixth term, BJD announced Wednesday as it named candidates for 15 Lok Sabha and 72 assembly constituencies ahead of simultaneous polls in four phases from May 13 to June 1. BJD nominated Santrupt Mishra, former HR head of Aditya Birla Group, for Cuttack parliamentary seat. Santrupt joined BJD in Feb after opting for voluntary retirement from Aditya Birla Group, which donated more than Rs 250 crore in electoral bonds to the party. He was speculated to contest from Cuttack, after six-time MP Bhartruhari Mahtab resigned from BJD. Sources said Mahtab may seek re-election from Cuttack. Odisha comprises 21

Lok Sabha and 147 assembly seats. BJD has replaced 10 of 15 LS candidates from its 2019 roster, including 6 sitting MPs. Mumbai's ex-CP Arup Patnaik pitted against Sambit Patra in Puri. A diverse line-up of candidates, including a former top cop, a doctor, a hockey player, and a software engineer, has been unveiled by BJD for LS and assembly polls. Former Mumbai police commissioner Arup Patnaik will contest from Puri against BJP's Sambit Patra. Patnaik, who lost the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in Bhubaneswar, aims to secure victory this time. BJD general secretary (organisation) Pranab Prakash Das has been nominated to contest against Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan of BJP in Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat, setting

the stage for a high-stakes political showdown. Das, a three-time MLA from Jajpur and former minister, enjoys close ties with Naveen and his key associate V K Pandian. Sambalpur has historically been a BJP stronghold. In 2019, BJP's Nitesh Ganga Deb defeated BJD's Nalini Pradhan. Manmath Routray, son of Congress veteran Suresh Routray, joined BJD and will contest from Bhubaneswar. His political debut is anticipated to leverage his father's influence in Jatani. , a key constituency. Dilip Tirkey, president of Hockey India, aims for victory in Sundargarh after an unsuccessful attempt in 2014. Abhinash Samal, a doctor who recently joined BJD, will contest from Dhenkanal Lok Sabha seat.

Siddaramaiah slams PM, defends 4% Muslim quota in Karnataka

NEW DELHI: Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah on Wednesday criticised PM Narendra Modi for making "illegal allegations" against Congress regarding transfer reservation quota from backward classes to Muslims calling it a "blatant lie". "Prime Minister Modi's claim that the Congress has transferred the reservation quota from backward classes and Dalits to Muslims is a blatant lie," he said in a post on X. "It stems from ignorance but also indicative of his desperation born from a fear of defeat. No leader in the history of our country has ever demeaned the office of the Prime Minister to such a



low level", he added. Highlighting that the reservation for Muslims has been in place for the "past three decades", he said, "It's true that in Karnataka, Muslims have been included in the 2B category for backward classes. This is not something done now. based on the reports of the Backward Classes Commissions starting the L. G. Havanur

in 1974. This reservation has been in place for the past three decades." Calling out PM Modi to "apologise to nation", he said, "Being in a position of responsibility, Prime Minister Modi must either these irresponsible allegations with evidence or apologise to the nation." PM Modi said at a rally in Tonk Rajasthan that the

'Kejriwal being monitored 24 hours by PMO and LG'

NEW DELHI: Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh on Thursday wrote two separate letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Delhi LG VK Saxena.

Congress tried to extend reservation.

Kalpna to contest bypoll from Gandey assembly seat

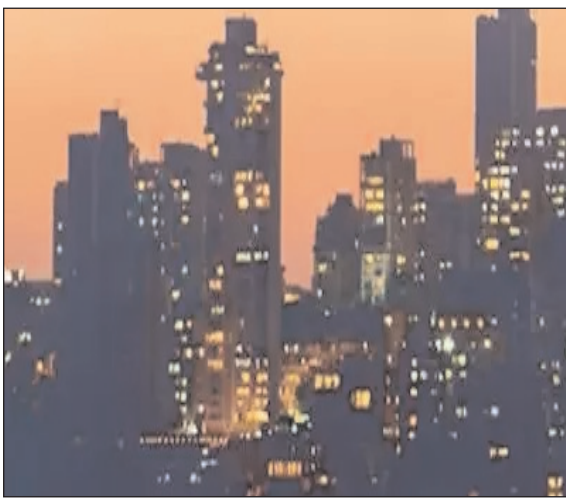
NEW DELHI: The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) announced that Kalpana Soren, the wife of former chief minister Hemant Soren who is currently in jail, will be contesting the bypoll for the Gandey assembly seat. The seat, located in Giridih district, became vacant after JMM MLA Sarfaraz Ahmad resigned. Kalpana, who is a homemaker, holds both MTEch and MBA degrees. During her address, she alleged that a conspiracy had been hatched by opponents since the formation of the Hemant Soren-led coalition govt. She also stated that Jharkhand would provide a fitting response to the forces responsible for her husband's imprisonment. Hemant Soren was taken into custody by the Enforcement Directorate on January 31 in connection with a money laundering case.

Govt takes Third Mumbai plan another step closer to reality

MUMBAI: The urban development department (UDD) has invited suggestions and objections from the general public from 124 villages that have now been made a part of the proposed Third Mumbai.

Third Mumbai largely consists of area that falls under the influence zone of the recently opened Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), or Atal Setu.

MTHL is expected to have a major impact on the economic development and growth of the region and the state govt has decided to tap the potential that will emanate from this project. On Dec 12, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) was appointed the New Town Development Authority (NTDA) for area that falls under the MTHL influence zone. MMRDA has envisaged Third Mumbai as a liveable and environment-friendly greenfield sustainable business cen-



tre with smart city features. It will have regional-level amenities with mixed-use and integrated residential areas for job creation and economic growth of Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). Of the 124 villages, 80 villages are from Navi Mumbai Airport Influence Notified Area (NAINA), 33 villages from the Khopta New Town Notified Area, two villages from Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Plan and nine from the Raigad Regional Plan. Since some of the areas from NAINA and Khopta New Town

Notified Area have been moved to NTDA, UDD has decided to seek suggestions and objections about the modifications. A notification issued by state UDD said: "The suggestion and/or objections in respect of the proposed modification [are sought] from the general public within 30 days (April 3). The suggestions and/or objections shall be addressed to the joint director of town planning, Konkan Division, 3rd floor, main building, room no. 305, Konkan Bhavan, Navi Mumbai-400601."

NEW DELHI: Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar, the BJP candidate for Thiruvananthapuram, warned his Congress rival Tharoor against resorting to personal attacks during the election campaign. Chandrasekhar accused Tharoor of engaging in "third-rate politics" by spreading falsehoods and instilling fear in the minds of the people. acknowledging the importance of free speech under Article 19, Chandrasekhar emphasized

that crossing the line into personal attacks on his integrity would not be tolerated.

He asserted his determination to take legal action against such attempts, ensuring that consequences are served under the law.

"He (Dr Shashi Tharoor) relies upon this type of third-rate politics, putting fear in people's minds and telling lies. In any case, I have clearly said that everybody is free to do politics. Article 19 protects everybody's

free speech. But, if you trespass into lying about my personal integrity, then I will come after you. I will ensure under the law that the consequences will be served on you," he stated. Earlier in April, Rajeev Chandrasekhar issued a legal notice to sitting MP Shashi Tharoor for levelling cash-for-vote allegations against him. , who expressed shock over the allegations made by Tharoor on a television show, demanded that he withdraw his state-

ment and tender an unconditional apology. The notice further suggested that Tharoor had concocted these allegations to influence voters in Thiruvananthapuram and subvert the process of free and fair elections. Chandrasekhar expressed shock over the allegations made by Tharoor on a television show and demanded that he withdraw his statement.

and apologize unconditionally. (With inputs from agencies)

Will come after you if ...': Rajeev warning to Tharoor

Karya, NGO create Kannada Q&A bot for TB

Bengaluru: Not-for-profit organisation Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) has teamed up with Bengaluru-based data cooperative Karya to develop a voice-based tuberculosis Q&A bot in Kannada. Currently, the app is in beta. A patient can ask in Kannada, "What types of food are okay to eat with my TB medicines?". And get the response in the same language: "You don't

have to worry too much about what you eat with your medication. Most things are okay, but it's good to eat lots of Vitamins A, C and E. You can get this by adding more fruits and vegetables to your diet! Here are some examples of what you can add: orange, mango, sweet pumpkin and carrots, guava, amla, tomato, nuts and seeds."

The app has a call to action button which

connects them to a helpline when necessary. The Global TB (tuberculosis) Report 2022 showed that 21.4 lakh TB cases were notified in India in 2021, 18% higher than 2020. KHPT has built a digital Kannada repository in ten dialects including Mangaluru Kannada, Sirsi Kannada, Belagavi Kannada, Mandya Kannada and Ballari Kannada through an exhaustive data collection exercise. This

includes data anonymised from those affected with TB, caregivers, social workers, frontline healthcare workers and communities to improve health outcomes of TB patients. KHPT and Karya interviewed 1,600 people to obtain 1,000 hours of data. They collected details on symptoms, treatment adherence, side effects, cost of treatment and benefits of the direct benefit transfer programme.

Court orders CBI probe into Manipur woman's 2013 murder

Supreme Court said unresolved crimes tend to erode public trust in institutions, which have been established for maintaining law and order, and ordered a CBI probe into the death of a 25-year-old Manipuri woman 11 years ago that has remained unsolved till date, reported. Delhi Police have failed to bring to light.

Kalyan Jewellers solidifies its presence in Haryana with all-new showroom at Kurukshetra

Kurukshetra: Kalyan Jewellers, one of India's most-trusted and largest jewellery companies, today launched its brand new showroom in Kurukshetra. The new and luxurious showroom aims to strengthen company's market presence in Haryana, which features an extensive range of designs from various collections. This is the company's 8th showroom in the state of Haryana. Patrons can expect state-of-the-art



facilities with world-class ambiance, providing an unparalleled shopping experience. Talking about the new showroom, Mr. Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director of Kalyan Jewellers, said, "As a

company, we have achieved huge milestones and taken major strides towards creating a holistic ecosystem to enhance the customer shopping experience. As we embark on this next phase of our growth journey, we are

delighted to announce the launch of our new showroom in Kurukshetra. With this launch, we aim to consistently expand our geographical footprint in the state of Haryana and are committed to continue offering best-in-class shopping experience to our customers while staying true to the company's core values of trust and transparency." This season, customers can avail flat 25% off on making charges on all jewellery purchases.

Brief court on steps taken to control noise pollution: HC

Hyderabad: Asking TSPSB and govt officials to be honest in their communication, Telangana high court on Tuesday directed director general of police and Hyderabad police commissioner to brief the court within two days the steps they are taking to control noise and sound pollution at function halls in Hyderabad and all over the state. The court, while making Secunderabad Cantonment Board as a respondent to the case, issued notices to the state govt, municipal,

police and pollution control officials. The case was posted to Thursday for further hearing. A bench of Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice J Anil Kumar, which took up a letter written to them by an additional chief engineer (environment) from the military's research and development wing as a PIL, wanted to know from the officials how they were implementing the noise pollution control and regulation rules, which were notified in a GO issued in

2010. The military engineer in his letter pointed out the inaction of officials in controlling unbearable noise levels from two function halls in Tadbund in Secunderabad Cantonment. He named Bantia Gardens and Imperial Gardens for violating the rights of the people residing in the vicinity. "These function halls collect lakhs of rupees towards rent for conducting marriages and other functions.

but show scant regard towards the

noise pollution norms," he said.

The advocates representing the state and civic bodies were quick to point out to the notices issued to the two function halls and also instances of penalties of Rs 5,000 collected from them. The bench turned critical towards the state counsel and said this kind of action will not yield any result. "We want effective steps to rein in the errant halls. Tell us what you are doing to keep the noise within the prescribed levels.

Chocolates with betel instead of cocoa, but just as delicious

Bengaluru: How about chocolates made out of betel leaf instead of cocoa beans? If you are wondering how they'd taste, here is what researchers at Bengaluru-based Indian Institute of Horticulture Research (IIHR) said: "They are quite yummy... you won't miss the cocoa much."

IIHR has been working on chocolate bars made out of betel leaf powder, betel leaf oil extract, sugar and preservatives. Prototype of the betel chocolate-making technology, along with the chocolates, were showcased at the National Horticulture Fair, which was inaugurated on IIHR cam-

pus in Hessarghatta Tuesday. Principal scientist Hima Bindu told TOI: "We wanted to make this crop a value-added product which benefits farmers and is also welcomed by urban residents. We want to highlight its medicinal properties too — antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, etc." The idea of a betel leaf chocolate was born when betel vine growers in Ramanagara and surrounding areas, along with Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, faced problems during the Covid lockdown. "Betel vine is a heritage crop. We got appeals from farmers to come up with solutions as they didn't know how to sell

the produce. While we were exploring options, the idea of betel-flavoured chocolates was conceived." the process, Bindu said the leaves are dried, converted into powder and laced with other ingredients. These chocolates are not only tasty but also healthy as they contain medicinal properties and protect consumers from oral bacteria," she said, adding: "This could be one of the reasons why our ancestors used to have betel leaf in the form of paan. The leaves contain compounds that can help fight various bacteria and fungi, making them useful for oral hygiene and wound healing."

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Mask name of man cleared of Pocso case in e-records: HC

Bengaluru: The high court ordered deletion from its records the name of a man cleared of Pocso charges after a police report concluded that it was a false case. The HC cited "the right to be forgotten" principle upheld in several other cases and "the right to live with dignity". "Article 21 of the Constitution mandates that no person shall be deprived of his life or liberty except in accordance with law. The expression 'life' cannot seem to connote a mere animal existence, it has a much wider meaning. It takes within its sweep right to live with dignity," the HC's Justice M Nagaprasanna noted. The man had moved the HC for the deletion. Earlier, he was booked in Tumakuru district under sections 354A



and 354B (sexual harassment) of the IPC and Section 12 of the Pocso Act in a complaint filed in Sept 2021. The complainant had alleged that the petitioner was sending sexually intimidating WhatsApp messages to his daughter, a minor, and trying to force her into a physical relationship. However, the cops conducted a probe and submitted a "B report" — police's terminology for a false

case. In the meantime, the petitioner filed a criminal petition challenging the proceedings, and in Feb 2022, they were disposed of on the strength of the B report. Later, when the petitioner searched the internet and found his name still mentioned as an accused, he moved the HC seeking deletion/masking his name from the records. Justice Nagaprasanna noted that the right to be for-

gotten had been recognised in Supreme Court's Aadhaar judgment, and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023, also recognised the right to erasure of personal data. Further, the judge pointed out that in NT 1 vs Google LLC case, the Queen's bench in the UK, too, had recognised the principle in 2018.

"In a crime, once the accused gets acquitted - honourably discharged by a competent court of law, or this court quashes the crimes in exercise of its jurisdiction under Section 482 of the CrPC, those orders become final..."

The shadow of crime, if permitted to continue in place of shadow of dignity, on any citizen.

Techie working for MNC ends life in hostel room



Hyderabad: A 28-year-old woman identified as M Vidhya Sri, working as a techie with an MNC and residing in a private hostel at Kothaguda attempted suicide in the hostel on evening. She died while undergoing treatment in the early hours of . Gachibowli police registered a case under section 174 of the CrPC and started a probe. SI K Bhanu Prasad said they did not find any suicide note and that they are yet to ascertain the reason behind her suicide.

"We are also verifying her call data records for any suspicious activity. Based on PME report, the probe will proceed," he said.

Hooda gets 7 of 8 Cong Haryana votes



Delhi: The Congress's list of eight Haryana Lok Sabha candidates revealed included at least seven allies and supporters of former chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda. The Congress is running nine Lok Sabha seats in Haryana but has not yet chosen a Gurgaon candidate. The opposition INDIA bloc's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has declared Sushil Gupta as their Kurukshetra candidate per the seat agreement. Hooda's son and Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Singh Hooda will again run from Rohtak, while Kumari Selja will run from Sirsa. Selja faces former Haryana Congress president and BJP candidate Ashok Tanwar in Sirsa. Deepender will challenge BJP MP Arvind Kumar Sharma. Sharma narrowly defeated Deepender by 7,500 votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. The Congress unexpectedly nominated youth leader Divyanshu Budhiraja to challenge former chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar in Karnal Lok Sabha. Budhiraja is Punjabi like Khattar. The Congress replaced Shrutika Choudhry (granddaughter of previous CM Bansi Lal) with Rao Dan Singh in Bhiwani-Mahendragarh Lok Sabha. Rao is Hooda-friendly. The Bansi Lal family has traditionally lived in Bhiwani-Mahendragarh. However, the party appears to have revised its tactics by standing an OBC candidate against Jat-majority BJP MP Dharambir Singh. Despite public expectation, the Congress did not field Brijendra Singh from Hisar.

Agra politics are Dalit-dominated

Delhi: Politics, history, and tourism mix in Taj Mahal. The monument symbolizes the city's previous splendor, but Dalit influence shapes contemporary politics. Agra is known as the 'Dalit capital of northern India' due to its 25% SC population. BJP has ruled this region since 2009, with former Union minister Satya Pal Singh Baghel in charge. Party fielded him again. This stronghold illustrates the region's complex Dalit politics., BJP organized the 'Anusoochit Jaati Mahasammelan' to highlight Dalit politics' influence on Agra's politics. The convergence of Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav and Congress' Rahul Gandhi in Agra emphasizes Dalit voter outreach. Their united demonstration during the 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra' addressed Dalit welfare concerns to get support. As part of the seat-sharing mechanism in India, SP fielded shoe baron Suresh Chandra Kardam, a former BSP worker. Since its 1984 founding, the Mayawati-led BSP has failed to win this SC seat. BSP nominating Pooja Amrohi as its Agra candidate shows a renewed push to challenge the political system. Pooja is the daughter of former UP Rajya Sabha member Satya Behan, a Congressman. The city's footwear market supremacy, which employs Dalits and Jatavs, highlights economic undercurrents shaping political inclinations. Past assembly elections have reflected these changes. When Mayawati became CM in 2007, BSP won six of nine Agra assembly seats. Even without her, it won six of nine in 2012. BJP won all nine seats in 2017, with BSP second in seven. It happened again in the 2022 assembly elections. BR Ambedkar's 1956 last speech underscores

Centre removes 5-month onion export restriction

Delhi: To relieve onion producers, especially in Maharashtra, the Centre permitted the shipment of nearly one lakh tonnes of the kitchen staple to six neighboring countries: Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Bahrain, Mauritius, and the UAE. The Centre has also allowed the export of 2,000 tonnes of white onions grown for Middle Eastern and European markets. For onion exports to these nations, National Exports Ltd. (NCEL) sourced domestic produce through an e-platform at L1 (lowest quoted) rates, according

to the ministry of consumer affairs. NCEL is given to the destination country's government-nominated agencies at the stipulated rate on a 100% advance payment basis. In 2023-24, kharif and rabi crops were expected to be lower and foreign demand.

CAPSULES

Harsimrat from Bathinda, ex-Cong MP Kaypee from Jalandhar are SAD candidates

Delhi: The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) named five additional Punjab Lok Sabha candidates SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal stated that his wife and sitting MP Harsimrat Kaur Bada would be the Bathinda candidate during his visit to Jalandhar to induct former Congress MP Mohinder Singh Kaypee. In Ferozepur, Sukhbir's party nominated Nardev Singh Bobby Mann. Newcomer Kaypee will run in Dalit-dominated Jalandhar Lok Sabha, while Ranjit Singh Dhillon will run in Ludhiana. Sukhbir nominated former cabinet minister Sohan Singh Thandal for Hoshiarpur, another Doaba reserved parliamentary constituency. Former Chandigarh deputy mayor Hardeep Singh Saini is running for the party. Our party is the only regional one battling divisive national parties. The SAD president said these parties want to divide communities and cause conflict. Former Congress MP Mohinder Singh Kaypee, 67, joined the SAD earlier in the day, jolting the party. Kaypee was welcomed into the party by Sukhbir in the afternoon at his home. Sukhbir named Kaypee the Jalandhar reserved Lok Sabha candidate minutes after entering. Kaypee, a former PCCD president and three-time MLA, had been in touch with Sukhbir for days and attended many closed-door meetings since the Congress denied him the ticket. He ran in this Dalit-dominated parliamentary segment, but the Congress chose former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi.

YSRCP manifesto: Rythu rise, Vizag executive capital

Delhi: YSRCP supremo YS Jagan Mohan Reddy vowed to boost Rythu Bharosa farmers' annual financial aid to Rs 16,000 from Rs 13,500 and Amma Vodi women's benefit for sending their children to school to Rs 17,000 from Rs 15,000. Jagan released his party's manifesto, which included some adjustments to the 2019 manifesto's 'Navaratnalu' promises and was renamed 'Navaratnalu Plus'. After taking power, YSRCP pledged to establish



Visakhapatnam the executive capital, Amaravati the legislative capital, and Kurnool the judicial capital. It pledged to maintain all welfare programs. Jagan vowed not to make unattainable promises. "Political parties should not make empty pledges that harm the poor. The party committed to raise the welfare pen-

sion to Rs 3,500 from Rs 3,000. He said the welfare pension will rise by Rs 250 in January 2028 and Rs 250 in January 2029 to Rs 3,500.

Jagan did not waive farmer loans despite party officials and cadre's appeals, considering the exchequer's burden. He pledged to expand self-help group interest-free loans to Rs 3 lakh from Rs 1. The chief minister also pledged to offer YSR Cheyutha financial help to women aged 45-60 for five years.

Vadra's poll entry plan for Amethi

Delhi: Robert Vadra, the husband of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the general secretary of the Congress, has once again expressed his intention to run for the Lok Sabha from the Amethi seat. He has cited "widespread support from people" for his decision to enter politics. After completing Ganga aarti at Triveni Ghat, Vadra addressed the media in Rishikesh and stated, "I have been engaged in Amethi since 1999 and played a part in the 2004 elections when Sonia ji won the seat. The people there have always wanted me to visit and have a great



affection for me." Vadra also made fun of Smriti Irani, the current Amethi BJP MP. "The electorate is calling for change because she (Irani) has not lived up to the promises she made to the people of Amethi. In Parliament, she also turned to unfounded accusations against me in an attempt to get attention, but I publicly challenged her on social media to provide evidence for her assertions. "I'm extending this challenge once more," declared Vadra.

The 48-person MVA list contains no Muslims

Delhi: A day after Arif Naseem Khan resigned from the panel of campaigners, Congress chairman and party candidate from Mumbai North Central Varsha Gaiwad met the former minister at his office.

The star campaigner, however, defended his decision. "There is a great deal of anger among Muslims and other minorities in North India for not even one Muslim candidate being nominated for the 48 seats the MVA is running for.

Election Commission urges AAP to change Lok Sabha campaign



Delhi: The Election Commission of India (ECI) directed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to amend its Lok Sabha campaign song according to the Advertising Codes under the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 and ECI guidelines and resubmit for approval. The statement "jail ke jawaab me hum vunde" depicts a violent mob carrying Arvind Kejriwal's prison portrait, casting doubt on the Judiciary. ECI stated that the advertising violates ECI Guidelines and Rule 6(1)(g) of Programme and Advertising Codes under the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 by repeating the phrase many times. Senior AAP leader Atishi told a press conference, "It is probably the first time that the EC has imposed a ban on a party's campaign

Ramayan Actor Explains Why He Left Meerut For Mumbai Post-Polls

Delhi: Shirt and trousers replace kurta-pyjama on campaign. The BJP scarf is replaced by a cap. Shoes replaced sandals. Arun Govil, BJP's Meerut candidate, is leaving Uttar Pradesh for Mumbai after a month. The actor-politician, who played Ram in Ramayan, topped the trending list Congress' UP chairman Ajay Rai calls this a "parachute politician". "After the elections, Meerut BJP candidate Arun Govil went for Mumbai the next day. He may have struggled in public "Rai claims in a Hindi X post. The 66-year-old lawmaker clarified that he was going to Mumbai on party directives. My esteemed Meerut



voters, sisters, brothers, and workers, Hello. Completed election. I appreciate your love, support, and respect. On the party's orders, I'm here in Mumbai to do my job "Mr. Govil wrote in Hindi on X. When the work is done, the politician will be among Meerut residents, but the party plans to send him elsewhere for election campaigning. Another accusation against Mr. Govil is his ignorance of Meerut concerns. "When a journalist asked him about Meerut concerns during the election campaign, he was clueless. His response was to wait till the elections were completed before addressing the concerns "Mr. Rai said, "Most BJP leaders follow this policy. They care nothing about people or the ground. They only support parachute politics. " Mr. Govil told a New Minute reporter he is "not exactly aware what kind of issues are prevalent here" in Meerut. Roads, energy, water, education, employment, and medical are the biggest issues everywhere, not just Meerut.

Congress Leader: "Not Joining Another Party" Regarding Leaving Delhi Unit

Delhi: Arvinder Singh Lovely made it clear that he is not planning to join any political party. Lovely resigned as the Delhi Congress chairman Mr. Lovely stated that he merely left his position in protest of Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party, not because he had abandoned his basic Congress membership. Mr. Lovely had brought up the imprisonment of multiple AAP ministers in relation to corruption matters in a letter to Congress chairman Mallikarjun Kharge. Nevertheless, for the Lok Sabha elections, the Congress forged a coalition with Arvind Kejriwal's party. He said that he was leaving the position because he was unable to defend the rights of the Delhi Congress workers.

'Unwarranted': MEA slams Washington Post report on plot to kill Pannun

NEW DELHI: The Washington Post report which alleged involvement of top Indian officials, including former RAW chief Samant Goel, in the Pannun murder-for-hire plot makes unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations on a serious matter, govt said on Tuesday in its first reaction to the story that also identified the Indian official who allegedly ordered the foiled attempt on Khalistan leader Gurbatwant Singh Pannun's life. In a statement, govt said there is an ongoing investigation by the 'high-level committee' set up by India to look into the security concerns shared by US govt on "networks of organised criminals, terrorists and others". "Speculative and irresponsible comments on it are not helpful," said Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson, ministry of external affairs. India had formed the committee in Nov, but has so far not revealed anything about the outcome of



the probe. The foreign ministry had earlier said India is probing the information shared by US authorities on the plot because it has a bearing on India's security as well. The US had last year indicted an Indian national, Nikhil Gupta, for his role in the Pannun murder plot and said in the indictment he was working for an Indian official it then identified as 'CC-1'. The Washington Post report has now named the official who allegedly ordered the hit as Vikram Yadav.

Indian govt is yet to confirm the identity of this official. While Gupta is currently awaiting extradition in

Prague, the report said Yadav had been transferred to CISF after the Pannun plot unravelled. Following the report, the White House said India is taking the allegations regarding the assassination plot seriously and that the US expects accountability. **Expect accountability from India on Pannun case:** US Indian govt is yet to confirm the identity of this official. While Gupta is currently awaiting extradition in Prague, the report said Yadav had been transferred to CISF after the Pannun plot unravelled. Pannun, wanted in India on terror charges, holds dual citizenship of US and Canada.

'I get anxious without a job'

China's once booming economy is now grappling with a significant downturn, marked by the slowest GDP growth in decades and rising unemployment rates. Multiple factors are fueling this crisis, including the global economic slowdown, ongoing trade tensions with the United States, and the government's stringent measures against the private sector. The collapse of the real estate giant Evergrande, which was saddled with over \$300 billion in liabilities, has triggered a ripple effect across various economic sectors. This downfall has severely impacted the construction industry, local government finances, and consumer confidence, with a sharp 20% decline in property sales year-on-year in major cities. Adding to the turmoil, Beijing's regulatory crackdown on leading technology firms and private businesses.

NEW DELHI: Supreme Court on Tuesday said Enforcement Directorate would have to give an explanation on the timing of Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's arrest, which was carried out just before general elections, and observed that the gap between initiation of proceedings in the alleged Delhi excise scam case and his arrest was "bothering" the court. At the conclusion of Kejriwal's submission by senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta asked additional solicitor general S V Raju to be ready with answers on Friday to five questions it raised on the basis of Singhvi's arguments, including on the timing of arrest and the time-gap in proceedings against the CM. Screenshot 2024-05-01 032410 The five questions put to the ED by the bench are: "Without initiating

Why arrest Kejriwal right before Lok Sabha polls, SC asks ED



adjudicatory proceedings (attachment action), can you initiate criminal proceedings?" The court noted that there were no attachment proceedings in the case so far. "As far as the judgment in Manish Sisodia case is concerned, there are findings in his favour and against him also. Tell us which side this case (Kejriwal's) lies." "How is Section 19 of PMLA to be interpreted, as he (Kejriwal) is coming against his arrest...instead of applying for bail, because he will have to face the higher threshold under Section 45 of PMLA if he takes the

latter course? So how do we interpret it? Do we make the threshold much higher and ensure the standard is same to find the person who is guilty?" CM arrested 18 months after case was filed, says counsel. What is bothering us is the time gap between the initiation of proceedings and repeated complaints being filed after some time. If you see Section 8, there is a limit of 365 days. Other option is to not arrest... life and liberty are exceedingly important." "Why was the arrest made right before Lok Sabha polls?"

Put your house in order or face consequences, Delhi HC

NEW DELHI: Delhi high court on Tuesday took a dim view of Meta's complaints redressal mechanism and said its functioning was "far worse than a govt department." It was hearing a plea by a media house against blocking of its Instagram page by Meta, the parent company of Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, for alleged copyright violations. "Please be careful.

Court takes cognisance of chargesheet against NewsClick



NEW DELHI: A Delhi court took cognisance on Tuesday of the chargesheet filed against news portal NewsClick and its founder-editor, Prabir Purkayastha, under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, or UAPA.

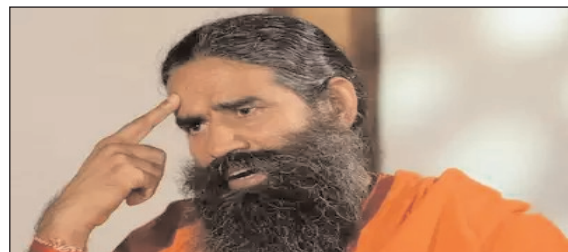
Additional sessions judge (ASJ) Hardeep Kaur's court took cognisance of the chargesheet and listed the matter for arguments on charge and scrutiny of documents on May 31.

Special public prosecutors (SPP) Akhand Pratap Singh and Suraj Rathi, appearing for the police, submitted that the chargesheet has been filed based on documentary evidence retrieved during investigation, statements given by witnesses, and the statement of Amit Chakravarty (the company's HR head) who turned approver. SPP Singh also told the court that there are eight protected witnesses in the case and that all the rights of the accused will be protected by the court. Purkayastha, who was present in court, responding to this, said, "By the court, yes. By you, no." The SPP said also that the

investigation related to others whose names are in the FIR and whose names surfaced later was still on. Delhi police's special cell had submitted in court that it

Patanjali told to pay 27.5cr for GST infraction

DEHRADUN/HARIDWAR: In a double blow to Patanjali, the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) in Chandigarh has imposed a hefty penalty of Rs 27.5 crore on Patanjali Foods for an irregularity in Input Tax Credit (ITC). The notice comes a day after the Uttarakhand govt suspended the licences for 14 products sold by Patanjali Ayurved and Divya



Pharmacy, including popular offerings Swasari Gold, Mukta Vati Extra Power, and BP Grit. The penalty by DGGI Chandigarh stems from the detection of a Rs 20-crore irregularity in ITC, as GST

officials revealed. According to GST officials, in case of a fake ITC claim, a penalty can be imposed up to the amount of the ITC claim along with interest. They said that in this case, the wrong ITC claim was Rs 20 crore, and the penalty amount is Rs 27.5 crore — inclusive of interest — hence, the total amount stands at Rs 47.5 crore. Despite attempts by TOI, Patanjali officials remained unresponsive for comment. Meanwhile, legal tussle escalated as Uttarakhand suspended licences for 14 Patanjali products, including those mentioned above.

In Maha's sugar belt, Modi vs Pawar battle enters a not-so-sweet territory

PUNE: A day after alluding to him as a "bhatakti aatma" (wandering soul) who spooks even his family members' plans because he couldn't fulfil his, PM Narendra Modi resumed his tirade against NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday with a call to show the "kaddaavar neta" (political stalwart) his place for repeatedly failing his voters. The PM, who attended three rallies in Maharashtra, also questioned how Congress could aspire to form the next govt at the Centre without fielding candidates in enough seats. "A party that once had 400 MPs doesn't have a presence in 250 seats. It isn't even in the race," he said in Osmanabad. "Please tell me, in our country, if any party wants to form govt, won't it need to win more than 272 seats?"

They do not have (strong) candidates in that many



seats, yet are dreaming of coming to office." At Malshiras in Solapur district, the focus of Modi's speech was Pawar and his legacy. "It is said that looking at the setting sun, he had taken a vow to ensure water supply to drought-hit areas of this constituency. Was he able to supply you with water," the PM asked the gathering thrice. "Unko saja deneka samay aa gaya hai (time has come to punish him)," he then declared to a chorus of agreement

from the crowd. Modi recalled that 15 years ago, the stalwart he was referring to contested Madha Lok Sabha seat, where BJP has fielded sitting MP Ranjitsinh Naik Nimbalkar against NCP (SP) candidate Dhairyasheel Mohite Patil in this election. "People in Maharashtra never hold themselves back when they shower someone with their love. But if that person fails to fulfil promises, the public settles scores when the time comes," Modi said.

Pawar, whom he didn't name once, also let down farmers whose grievances he had promised to redress as Union agricultural minister in the erstwhile UPA govt. "Modi also recalled the period when several sugar mills in Maharashtra and Gujarat were allegedly harassed over income tax. "The 'kaddaavar neta' was then agriculture minister, and I was CM of Gujarat. I wrote to him and also met him with a request to resolve this issue.

SC allows Patanjali to file contempt plea against IMA chief

NEW DELHI: After Patanjali Ayurved founders Baba Ramdev and Acharya Balkrishna, who had to face contempt proceedings on a plea by the Indian Medical Association (IMA), it now seems to be the turn of the IMA chief to face the music with Supreme Court on Tuesday allowing filing of a contempt application against him for allegedly making disparaging remarks against the court.



Appearing before a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi said he had come across a "very disturbing" interview of IMA president R V Asokan in a newspaper

and it must be considered by the court. "The IMA president says why is the court pointing fingers at us. This is direct interference with the court. He says these are unfortunate, vague comments by Supreme Court," Rohatgi said. "Bring it on record.

This will be more serious than what has been happening till now. Be prepared for more serious consequences," the bench said.

Kantapur crash: Pillion rider succumbs to injuries

Kolkata: The accident that took place near Kantapur CISF parade ground on Saturday afternoon, killing one person and injuring four others, claimed another person later on Saturday night. Arif Hossain (32), a pillion rider who was seriously injured following the accident, succumbed to injuries at SSKM Hospital. Earlier, a 17-year-old was killed in the accident. On afternoon, at least one scooterette rider died and five others — travelling on one bike and two scooterettes — were seriously injured after all three crashed into one another. Ever since the death of a councillor's son a few years ago, the road usually remains shut and its gates are now manned by CISF personnel. Several persons were injured in different road accidents across the city in the last 24 hours. In the early hours of, a 22-year-old.

HC allows couple who lost son to suicide to go for IVF despite man crossing age bar of 55

KOLKATA: Calcutta HC has allowed an older couple who lost their 19-year-old son to suicide last year to become parents again through assisted reproductive technology, even though the husband — aged 59 — has crossed the upper age limit of 55 specified in the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021. The court said it was making an exception in this case because the man's wife, at 46, did not cross the age limit, and because the law did not distinguish between married and unmarried women. The couple, the court said, was free to have a baby through IVF using external sperm and ova. After the couple lost their only child to suicide in Oct 2023, they approached a private clinic to become parents again. Doctors at the clinic diagnosed the woman "medically fit and eligible to give birth to a child by the process of IVF with ovum donation." The legal wrangle

was with the husband who, at 59, had passed the age bar, prompting the couple to move high court.

In its order on April 26, Justice Sabyasachi Bhattacharyya noted that the Act says pregnancy can be achieved by handling sperm or oocyte (a cell in an ovary) outside the human body. "There is no restriction to the effect that either of the two must come from the couple themselves," he said. The judge said while the Act lays out duties of assisted reproductive technology clinics using human gametes, nowhere has it been specified that gametes have to be provided by the couple. He noted that since the couple planned to use sperm from a "third-party donor", the question of a legal age bar on the husband in seeking assisted reproductive services did not arise. HC noted that since the couple planned to use sperm from a "third-party donor.