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

PM Modi backs lawyers' letter on 'bid to pressure judiciary'

“Sources explained the unprecedented letter was prompted by the pattern in which certain high-profile lawyers start writing articles in media”



NEW DELHI: In an unusual development, PM Modi on Thursday endorsed a protest of 600 lawyers against what they called an attempt by "lawyers with vested interests" to pressure judiciary and defame courts, especially in corruption cases involving politicians, by defaming judges. "To browbeat and bully others is vintage Congress culture. Five decades ago, they had called for a 'committed judiciary' - they shamelessly want commitment from others for their selfish interests but desist from any commitment towards the nation," the PM said in a post on X, which followed leading

lawyer Harish Salve, Bar Council chairman Manan Kumar Mishra and others writing to CJI D Y Chandrachud, flagging alleged attempts to influence judiciary's decisions. The lawyers from across the country wrote that pressure tactics adopted by some other lawyers who defend politicians by the day, and then try to influence judges at night is "troubling". The letter pointed out this was being done at "very strategic timings" - now, ahead of Lok Sabha polls and also in 2018-'19, when "false narratives were floated".

Lawyers claim bid to damage public's trust in judiciary. Sources explained the unprecedented letter was prompted by the pattern in which certain high-profile lawyers start writing articles in media about judiciary's "declining standards and loss of independence" in lead up to influential judgments to counter the narrative of "golden past" by recalling the public advocacy of "committed judiciary" by late M o h a n Kumaramangalam, senior Congress leader and a close confidant of ex-PM Indira Gandhi.

supposed 'better past' and 'golden period of the courts', contrasting it with happenings in present. They are nothing but intentional statements, made to sway court decisions and to embarrass the courts for certain political gains," the lawyers wrote. PM's reference to "committed judiciary" was also aimed at countering the narrative of "golden past" by recalling the public advocacy of "committed judiciary" by late M o h a n Kumaramangalam, senior Congress leader and a close confidant of ex-PM Indira Gandhi.

No further talks with Congress on seat allocation or swap: Raut

MUMBAI: Taking a reconciliatory tone, Congress veteran Prithviraj Chavan on Thursday said he expected the dispute with Shiv Sena (UBT) over a few seats to be resolved amicably. The statement came soon after MVA leaders Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray, Congress legislature party leader Balasaheb Thorat and Chavan met on Thursday to take stock of the situation and differences that had emerged between the allies over nomination of candidates for Sangli and Mumbai South Central. "We discussed the current political situation. The consensus was that MVA must remain intact, and all out efforts should be made to defeat BJP," he said. According to sources, the two veteran Congressmen did express strong displeasure over the



manner in which UBT Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray unilaterally announced a list of candidates for the seats on which discussions were still on. Congress was keen to contest both Sangli and South Central. However, there are indications that the Sena (UBT) is unlikely to budge. Party spokesperson Sanjay Raut told the media on Thursday that seat-sharing talks within the MVA were over and that the discussions had now moved on to the strategy that needed

to be adopted. Chavan said there were prolonged discussions at the meeting on the need for a coordination committee among the three parties for effective coordination during the Lok Sabha polls. "It has been proposed to set up a coordination committee comprising representatives of all three constituents of MVA," he said. Chavan said in a day or two senior leader of the MVA will address the media, declare the final list of nominees, and unveil an action plan for the polls.

CBI files closure report in AI case against Praful

NEW DELHI: CBI has filed a closure report in a case of alleged irregularities in leasing aircraft for Air India that involved former civil aviation minister Praful Patel among others. The agency is learnt to have filed the report in a court on March 19 after no evidence was found to establish charges of corruption. The court has summoned the investigating officer of the case on next date of hearing on April 15. The special court will decide whether to accept the report or direct the agency to probe further. Last year, Patel, along with Ajit Pawar, orchestrated a split in the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and joined the Maharashtra govt.

Jailed don Mukhtar Ansari dies after cardiac arrest



LUCKNOW: Gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari, 63, went into cardiac arrest and died during treatment at Banda medical college on Thursday night. A senior police officer said he was taken unconscious to the emergency department of Rani Durgavati Medical College, Banda, by jail staff on Thursday after he complained of nausea. He was provided immediate medical care by a team of nine doctors but, despite their best efforts, Ansari could not be saved, the hospital's medical bulletin said. A five-time former MLA from Mau Sadar seat, Ansari had been behind bars in UP & Punjab since 2005. There was heavy police deployment outside the hospital shortly after Ansari was taken there. Prohibitory orders under CrPC Sec 144 were imposed across UP following Ansari's death, UP DGP Prashant Kumar said, adding there was special deployment of cops in Banda, Mau, Ghazipur and Varanasi districts. Ansari being slow poisoned: Lawyer in plea last week On Tuesday morning, Mukhtar Ansari was found unconscious and was referred to the district hospital. He had complained of pain in the abdomen and constipation. He was provided treatment and discharged 15 hours later. His brother, Ghazipur MP Afzal Ansari, had gone on Tuesday to the hospital and alleged that his brother had been poisoned in jail. Last week, Mukhtar's lawyer Randheer Singh Suman had moved an application before a Barabanki court seeking a proper medical examination and alleging that "slow poisoning" was being administered to him by Banda prison staff.

No breakthrough in India-China dialogue



NEW DELHI: India and China held another round of diplomatic talks to complete the disengagement process in eastern Ladakh and, in absence of any breakthrough, agreed to maintain regular contact through diplomatic and military channels for border peace. According to China, both sides agreed to have another meeting of the corps command-

ers soon to resolve the remaining issues. This was the 29th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on

two countries have also held 21 rounds of India-China corps commander level meetings to resolve the military standoff that erupted in April-May 2020. According to an Indian readout, the two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on how to achieve complete disengagement and resolve the remaining issues along LAC in the western sector.

I-T serves Congress Rs 1, 700 crore notice after HC rejects its plea on reassessment



NEW DELHI: The Income Tax department has served a notice of around Rs 1,700 crore on Congress party, compounding its financial worries at the stroke of the crucial 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the party claimed hours after Delhi high court turned down its petition challenging the reassessment proceedings for four assessment years. The fresh demand is for assessment years 2017-18 to

2020-21, and includes penalty and interest. The party now awaits reassessment of its income for three other assessment years, to be completed by Sunday, the cut-off date. Congress lawyer and Rajya Sabha MP

Vivek Tankha, who argued the case in HC seeking stay on the action, confirmed the notices, and said the party will take the legal challenge further as he dubbed the I-T move undemocratic and unreasonable. RS MP and Congress lawyer Vivek Tankha alleged that the fresh I-T notice of nearly Rs 1,700 crore was served on the party on Thursday without key accompanying documents.

US remarks on Kejriwal case unacceptable: Govt



NEW DELHI: With US reiterating its call for a fair trial for Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal despite "strong" objections raised by India, the Centre said Thursday that such remarks are "unwarranted" and "unacceptable", recalling the protest it had lodged with a senior US diplomat a day earlier. "As you are aware, yesterday [Wednesday], India lodged its strong objection and protest with the senior official from the US embassy with regard to the comments made by the US State Department. The recent remarks by the State Department are

unwarranted. Any such external imputation on our electoral and legal processes is completely unacceptable," said ministry of external affairs (MEA) spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. Hours after India summoned a senior US diplomat to register a protest, the State Department had further escalat-

ed the issue by reiterating its call for a fair, transparent and timely legal process not just for Kejriwal but also over Congress's allegations that its bank accounts had been frozen to prevent it from campaigning effectively in the upcoming elections. The MEA said in India, legal processes are driven only by rule of law.

India's stern rebuke to U.S. on its comments Over 'Kejriwal's arrest': 'Unwarranted, Unacceptable' "Anyone who has similar ethos, especially fellow democracies, should have no difficulty in appreciating this fact. India is proud of its independent and robust democratic institutions.

Setback for Azam, EC rejects aides' nominations for Rampur

BAREILLY: The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday rejected nomination papers of senior SP leader Azam Khan's close aides, Asim Raja and Abdul Salam who wanted to contest from Rampur. Raja and Salam had filed their papers as SP and independent candidates respectively. after the party declared Muhibullah Nadwi, an imam of a mosque in Delhi's Parliament Street, as its official candidate on the last day of poll nomination on Wednesday amid high drama. Muhibullah's papers were cleared even as about 12 candidates' nominations were cancelled by EC after scrutiny, said Rampur district magistrate Jogindra Singh. "Eighteen nomination forms were submitted.

Power pact: Ambani takes 26% in Adani's MP project

MUMBAI: In a first, the sub-continent's wealthiest billionaires who are also among world's richest industrialists, Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani, are entering a 'power' deal. Ambani will pick up a minority stake in a power unit of Adani, their companies announced Thursday. Ambani's Reliance Industries will purchase 26% in Mahan Energen, a wholly owned subsidiary of Adani Power, for Rs 50 crore, and will source 500 megawatt of electricity from the Madhya Pradesh plant for its requirements. The development, thanks to India's electricity rules, brings the two corporates into an exclusive power arrangement. Adani Power said one unit of the 600MW capacity of its Mahan thermal power plant in MP will be designated

as a captive unit in line with rules. RIL needs to buy strategic stake to benefit from rules. In order to avail of the benefit of the rules, Reliance Industries will have to take a strategic 26% stake in the captive unit and accordingly, make an investment. Reliance Industries did not disclose where it intends to use the power sourced from Mahan Energen. The deal is expected to be completed within two weeks of receiving all regulatory approvals. Reliance Industries already has captive power plants in its oil refining and petrochemical complex in Gujarat. The two industrialists, both hailing from Gujarat, are often considered rivals by industry commentators and are seen slugging it out on various rich lists.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi of opposition in Maharashtra has hit a roadblock

● "This even as the three MVA partners are engaged in discussions to finalise seat-sharing in the state"



NEW DELHI: The Maha Vikas Aghadi of opposition in Maharashtra has hit a roadblock that threatens to derail their stated objective of putting up united fight against the BJP in Lok Sabha elections. Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) on Wednesday snubbed its allies - Congress and Sharad Pawar's NCP - as it unilaterally released first list of 17 candidates.

This even as the three MVA partners are engaged in discussions to finalise seat-sharing in the state.

The Congress reacted strongly to Shiv Sena (UBT) move and urged its ally to stick to "coalition dharma". Senior Congress leader

Balasaheb Thorat said the unilateral announcement was not right. "Unfortunately, coalition dharma hasn't been followed. Shiv Sena (UBT) must reconsider its decision," Thorat said.

Thorat asserted that Congress was firm on contesting three seats - Sangli, Bhiwandi and Mumbai South Central - which are in the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s list. "Discussion was ongoing, on the seats of Sangli, Bhiwandi and South Central Mumbai. In such a situation, how can candidates' names be announced in a one-sided manner. This

issue will be discussed in the next meeting of Mahavikas Aghadi," Thorat said.

The differences over seat sharing could prove costly for the opposition alliance as they face a formidable opposition in the ruling Mahayuti of the BJP, Eknath Shinde led Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar led NCP. Ajit Pawar had on Tuesday claimed that there was no confusion in their alliance over seat sharing and had said that an announcement in this regard will be made on March 28.

"There is no confusion among Mahayuti. We sat together and decid-

ed on seat sharing. The BJP and Shiv Sena cooperated with us to decide the seats. 90 per cent of the decisions have been made. On March 28, all announcements will be made at a joint press conference with the BJP and Shiv Sena. Mahayuti will contest on all 48 seats," Ajit Pawar said while addressing a press conference. Earlier today, the MVA suffered another jolt when Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) chief Prakash Ambedkar announced to go solo and declared candidates for 8 Lok Sabha seats.

No interim relief for Kejriwal, Delhi HC to hear plea on April 3

NEW DELHI: The Delhi high court on Wednesday refused to grant any relief to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, who had filed a plea against his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the excise policy case.

The court granted ED seven days to respond and fixed April 3 as the next date for hearing. Kejriwal, in his plea before the Delhi high court, had asserted that the ED's actions violated his fundamental rights.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief has contended in his plea that the ED has not been able to prove his guilt. "The DOE has at the time of arrest failed to establish that Petitioner is guilty of committing activities stipulated under Section 3, i.e., be it one of concealment, possession, acquisition, use of proceeds of crime as much as projecting it as untainted property or claiming it



to be so," Kejriwal's legal team pleaded. Kejriwal has further criticized his arrest without being questioned, suggesting a pre-meditated and political motive behind the proceedings. Earlier today, Kejriwal's wife Sunita, in a video message, said that her husband would do a "big expose" on the alleged excise policy scam in court on March 28 and also present evidence. She said that when she met the Delhi CM in the ED custody, Kejriwal told her that the central agency has conducted more than 250 raids in connection with the "so-called liquor scam" in the last two years but "not a single paisa" has been

found in any of the raids so far. The ED arrested Kejriwal on March 21 in connection with the Delhi Excise Policy case linked to a money laundering case and remanded the next day to the ED till March 28. The case pertains to alleged irregularities and money laundering in framing and implementing the Delhi excise policy case 2022, which was later scrapped. Former deputy chief minister Sisodia and AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Singh were arrested last year in relation to the Excise Policy case, while former minister Jain was arrested in a case related to money laundering.

Prez Rule in city? LG says govt won't be run from jail

NEW DELHI: Lieutenant governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Wednesday said the govt in Delhi would not be run from jail, hinting at a possible imposition of President's Rule if Aam Aadmi Party insisted that Arvind Kejriwal would continue to remain chief minister despite his arrest by Enforcement Directorate in the excise policy case. Saxena was speaking at Times Now Summit 2024 when he was asked about the current political situation in the capital. "I can assure the people of Delhi that the govt will not run from jail," Saxena replied. Kejriwal was arrested on March 21 in an alleged money laundering case linked to Delhi govt's excise policy.

India objects to state department's comments on Kejriwal's arrest

NEW DELHI: India on Thursday summoned US Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Gloria Berben over remarks on Enforcement Directorate arrest of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. The meeting lasted for approximately 40 minutes. "We take strong objection to the remarks of the Spokesperson of the US State Department about certain legal proceedings in India. In diplomacy, states are expected to be respectful of the sovereignty and internal affairs of others," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

"This responsibility is even more so in case of fellow democracies. It could otherwise end up setting unhealthy precedents. India's legal processes are based on an independent judiciary which is committed to objective and timely outcomes. Casting aspersions on that is unwarranted," the MEA added. This comes a day after the United States responded to the arrest of Kejriwal, advocating for a fair legal process in the case. In a statement, a spokesperson from the US state department had highlighted the importance of ensuring fairness, transparency, and timeliness in Kejriwal's legal proceedings. This marked the second international commentary on Kejriwal's arrest, following Germany's response last week. Germany had emphasized the right to a fair and impartial trial for Kejriwal, with George Enzweiler, the deputy head of mission of the German embassy, being summoned by India's ministry of external affairs to officially express their concerns. Kejriwal's arrest stems from allegations of corruption related to the excise policy case. A Delhi court has extended his custody until March 28, following his arrest for corruption in the liquor policy.

'Won't compromise': Jaishankar on boundary issue with China

NEW DELHI: External affairs minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday took a jibe at China and said that Beijing has failed to uphold longstanding written agreements with India. Responding to a question on the current state of India's relations with China during an interaction with the Indian diaspora in Malaysia, the external affairs minister emphasised on



the paramount importance of securing India's borders. "India, China relationship is difficult. For reasons which are still not clear to us, the boundary agreements were broken by China in 2020. We actually had violence and bloodshed," Jaishankar said.

"My first duty to Indians is to secure border. I can never compromise on that. Normalcy in terms of troop deployment at the border will be the basis for the relationship going forward with China," he added.

The clash in the Galwan Valley in June 2020 marked the most serious military conflict between the two countries in decades.

Taxiing IndiGo aircraft grazes against stationary AI Express plane

NEW DELHI: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Wednesday ordered probe into an incident at Kolkata Airport where an Indigo plane grazed against a stationary Air India Express aircraft while taxiing. The incident caused a delay for IndiGo flight 6E 6152 heading to Darbhanga, but passengers were accommodated on another aircraft. Both IndiGo pilots have been off-

rostered, and the flights have been grounded for thorough inspection. "We have ordered a detailed investigation into the matter and both the pilots of IndiGo airlines have been off-rostered. The ground staff will also be questioned during the investigation. Both the flights have been grounded for detailed inspection," DGCA official said. Speaking about the incident, an Air India Express

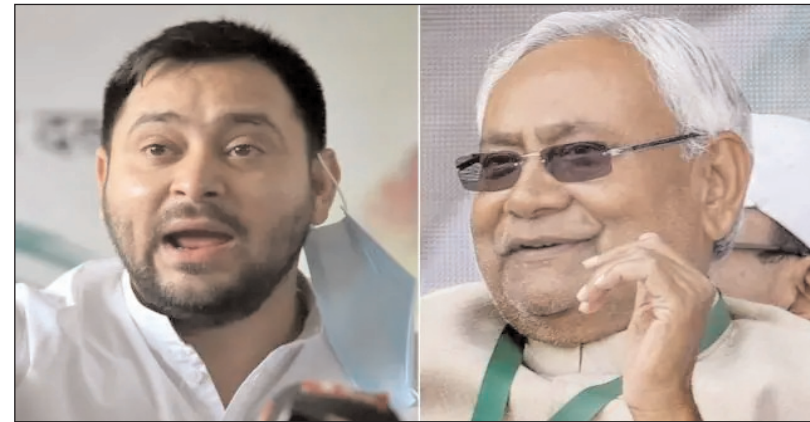
spokesperson said, "The wingtip of a taxiing aircraft of another airline grazed one of our aircraft, which was stationary and awaiting clearance to enter the runway at Kolkata for a scheduled operation to Chennai.

The aircraft has since returned to the bay and further investigation is underway, for which we are coordinating with the regulator and airport authorities."

'Sensed RJD's plans': JD(U) leader on why Nitish dumped INDIA bloc

Vatika Times

NEW DELHI: Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's decision to end the alliance with the RJD was a strategic move to prevent any attempts by RJD president Lalu Prasad to "humiliate" their allies before the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, claimed a senior JD(U) leader. Neeraj Kumar, the MLC and chief spokesperson of JD(U), made the claim referring to the RJD riding roughshod over the Congress. "The Congress has been a dependable ally of the RJD, though the alliance has caused it to lose its own vote share over the years. The only time the Congress saw a rise in its vote share in recent times was in the 2015 Bihar assembly polls when we too were part of that alliance," said Neeraj Kumar. Neeraj Kumar questioned the nature of the



alliance between the RJD and the Congress, expressing surprise over the RJD's decision-making process that disregards the Congress's interests. "What type of alliance do the RJD and the Congress have that the former is giving away party tickets to people at will, paying scant regard to the interests of the latter?" he asked. Neeraj Kumar lauded Nitish Kumar's foresight in seeking early seat-sharing within the alliance, anticipating the RJD's intentions to marginalize its allies. Neeraj Kumar

said, "It was not for nothing that our leader Nitish Kumar had been seeking early seat-sharing in the INDIA bloc. He had sensed the RJD's plans to humiliate allies. So he taught them a lesson". The JD(U) leader went on to highlight the repercussions of Nitish Kumar's withdrawal from the opposition alliance, which led to the loss of power for the RJD and the removal of Tejashwi Yadav from the deputy chief minister's position. "It is now for the Congress to show that it has spine.

Rahul Gandhi has undertaken a country-wide padayatra becoming the first leader to have done so since the 1990s," he further said. Meanwhile, leaders of the RJD and the Congress maintained that seat-sharing will be "announced in an amicable fashion". The joint statement by Tejashwi Yadav and BPC president Akhilesh Prasad Singh in Delhi hinted at a collaborative decision-making process for candidate declarations upon their return to Patna. (With agency inputs)

Woman accuses Air India of giving mother's business class seat to another

NEW DELHI: A woman slammed Air India in a post on X claiming that the airline gave the business class seat booked by her mother to another passenger. Coming down heavily on the airline through a series of posts, she called the incident 'ridiculous' and advised the airlines. 'to do better'. X user with username Vitasta wrote, "Air India, how dare you give my mom's business class seat to someone else on a long haul flight from Delhi to Washington DC? First, telling her the seat doesn't recline, then saying the seat is for the crew, and then she finds someone else sitting there as she is sent to economy?" "Absolutely ridiculous behaviour and no regard for your customers! We will be complaining about this. Air India, do better!" she added. The post on the social has garnered more than 8 lakh views and around 9,000 likes after being shared just a few hours ago. Netizens have also reacted to the post.

Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk ends his 21-day hunger strike

NEW DELHI: Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk ended his 21-day hunger strike to demand statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, on Tuesday. Earlier Sonam Wangchuk made a fresh appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fulfil promises made to the people. In a post on X, Sonam wrote, "21st Day OF MY #CLIMATEFAST 350 people slept in -10 °C. 5000 people in the day here. But still not a word from the government. We need statesmen of integrity, farsightedness & wisdom in this country. & not just shortsighted characterless politicians. And I very much hope that Narendra Modi ji and Amit Shah ji will soon prove that they are statesmen..." Sonam Wangchuk, an engineer and education reformer, began his protest on March 6, demanding statehood for Ladakh. His



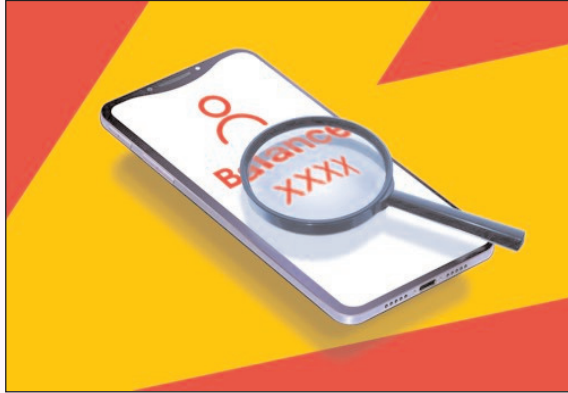
protest on March 6 was held at an altitude of 3,500 metres with sub-zero temperatures. He has been highlighting the damage from industrialization to the region's fragile ecology and the impact on glaciers. One of his demands is the implementation of the sixth schedule to ensure land protection and autonomy for tribal areas in Ladakh. Gradually, his protest is gathering support and media attention across India. In the last 20 days, Wangchuk said, around 60,000 of Ladakh's 3 lakh residents have participated in the hunger strike demonstrating their pain but "no word came from this government".

Vi Announces the Ultimate Entertainment App; Unveils Vi Movies & TV in its New Avatar

GURUGRAM / HISAR :

Vi, a leading telecom operator, today introduced the ultimate entertainment app, Vi Movies & TV, a one-stop entertainment destination for all Vi subscribers. The all new avatar of Vi Movies & TV provides an unmatched entertainment experience to its users, with access to 13+ OTT apps, 400+ live TV channels, and complimentary access to several content libraries – all under one roof.

Priced at just Rs. 202 for Prepaid and Rs. 199 for Postpaid, Vi Movies & TV aims to simplify the viewing experience with only one subscription for multiple platforms and provide the best value for money to its users by saving multiple subscription costs. Commenting on this, Avneesh Khosla, Chief Marketing Officer, Vi said "India is watching content like never before - multiple formats, multiple sub-



scriptions, and multiplying hours on the screen everyday. However, this unlimited choice also brings fatigue and complexity. We take immense pride in announcing Vi Movies & TV – one app, one subscription with best of OTTs and TV content. We are committed to providing an entertaining experience to our consumers by empowering them to access entertainment in a simple, affordable, and accessible way. We will soon add new partners and more curated options for ease of choice for our viewers."

With Vi Movies and

TV, there's something to watch for everyone! Be it the popular shows like The ShowTime, Karma Calling, Lootere, Save The Tiger2 and blockbuster movies like 12th Fail, Salaar (Hindi), Patna Shukla, and many more on Disney+ Hotstar; SonyLiv's Shark Tank India, Scam 2023, The Telgi story, Raisinghani VS Raisinghani or the thrill of F1 and live cricket from Fan code. Vi Movies & TV will also stream 400+ live TV channels including Discovery, Aaj Tak, Republic Bharat, ABP, India Today at their fingertips.

Upstox launches 'Cut the Kit Kit' campaign; to help users invest wisely

GURUGRAM/FARID

ABAD: Upstox, India's fastest-growing and highest-rated trading and investment platform, today unveiled its innovative brand campaign, 'Cut the Kit Kit, Get in the Market'. With this campaign, Upstox aims to help retail investors cut through the clutter, noise, and overload of information to invest right. Through its research, Upstox has recognised that the journey to investment success is often cluttered with challenges - mis-selling financial products, misleading advice, information overload, and complex jargon. This can often lead to decisions that may not align with an individual's financial goals.

For example, users often prioritise returns over essential risk and expense metrics when investing in mutual funds. Similarly, they might opt for a Rs. 1 crore term insurance plan without proper

assessment, succumbing to a one-size-fits-all approach. Such practices result in poorly informed decisions, leading to underconfidence among investors. Recognising these challenges, Upstox has taken the initiative to handle the heavy lifting and complexities for its users. The company wants to "Cut the Kit Kit" (noise) of the market and encourage users to start creating wealth by investing in what's right for them. To effectively communicate its message to investors, Upstox has launched a campaign film encapsulating the theme "Cut the Kit Kit, Get in the Market." The film place in a theatre setting, where an individual expresses interest in mutual fund investing. This query triggers a cacophony of comical "kit kit" responses from others, symbolising the overwhelming banter and noise

prevalent in the market. This noise serves as a metaphor for the confusion caused by the deluge of information available to investors. The plot progresses until the protagonist, initially bewildered by the array of advice, is introduced to the Upstox Mutual Fund interface. This moment marks a turning point, offering the protagonist—and, by extension, the viewer—clarity and simplicity in the investing process. Similarly, the second ad film features a salon situation, and the third film features a waiting area at a hospital. The company is also planning to launch two more campaign videos over the next few weeks. The films will depict how people often struggle with the right information when it comes to investing. , but with Upstox; users can cut to the chase and get the guidance that lets them Invest Right.

CAPSULES

Registration started for three - workshop beginning from th March

Chandigarh : A three - workshop beginning from th March between am am would be organised by . The workshop will be held in association with Panjab university Campus Students Council (PUCSC) at. Anyone who have obtained the minimum age of can attend the workshop. The whole workshop is first of its kind and would be conducted by ! in English. This workshop helps to. Anyone wishing to attend this workshop would be required to registration on .

Court rejected anticipatory bail plea filed by BJP MLA's son in firing case

KALYAN: The Kalyan session court on Wednesday have rejected anticipatory bail application filed by Vaibhav Gaikwad, son of BJP MLA Ganpat Gaikwad, into firing case on Shiv Sena neta Mahesh Gaikwad. Vaibhav is on run after his father Ganpat on February 2 of this year, one land related dispute made firing on Shiv Sena neta Mahesh Gaikwad inside senior inspector's cabin at Hill line police station while Vibhav was outside cabin of senior inspector with his supporters. In this case, the police had filed FIR under attempt to murder charges against many persons and had arrested five person including Ganpat Gaikwad. Ganpat later while produced in court had claimed his son Vaibhav was not involved into crime and had claimed he is falsely fabricated into case. Vaibhav who is on the run through his lawyer had filed application for anticipatory bail and on Tuesday more than two hours argument .

BJP demands probe into 'letters' being sent by CM Kejriwal to ministers from ED custody

NEW DELHI: A delegation from the Delhi BJP met with Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora to request an investigation into the 'letters' allegedly sent by chief minister Arvind Kejriwal to his ministers while he is in custody of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Kejriwal, who was arrested on March 21 in connection with a money laundering case linked to the Delhi excise policy, remains in ED custody until March 28. The BJP delegation, led by Virendra Sachdeva, raised concerns about the authenticity of the letters and the involvement of Kejriwal's ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj, who claim to have received them. Delhi BJP president Sachdeva stated, "There is a procedure for



such letters to be sent from someone in ED custody, and based on the information available, these letters appear to be fabricated."

Minister Atishi revealed that Kejriwal directed her on water supply and sewer issues, while Minister Bharadwaj mentioned receiving instructions on free medicines and lab tests at healthcare facilities.

Karnataka: Against rookie, Jagadish Shettar faces a do-or-die battle

BENGALURU: It is hard to be in Jagadish Shettar's shoes. The former CM had riled many in BJP by joining Congress ahead of assembly elections last year. Now, on his return, he has been 'rewarded' with a Lok Sabha election ticket which, by many accounts, he wasn't very keen on. Shettar had hoped to be BJP's candidate in Dharwad, but instead finds himself front and centre of a high stakes battle in Belgaum.

P N GADGIL JEWELLERS LIMITED FILES DRHP WITH SEBI

GURUGRAM : P N Gadgil Jewellers Limited, the second largest among the prominent organised jewellery players in Maharashtra, in terms of the number of stores as on January, 2024, which is the largest market for BIS-registered outlets in India has filed its Draft Red Herring Prospectus ("DRHP") with market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI"). The Company's initial public offering comprises a fresh issue of equity

shares of face value of 10 each aggregating up to 8,500 million and an offer for sale of equity shares of face value of 10 each aggregating up to 2,500 million. The total offer size comprises of equity shares of face value of 10 each aggregating up to 11,000 million. The offer for sale comprises of equity shares of face value of 10 each aggregating up to 2,500 million by SVG Business Trust (Promoter Selling Shareholder). The funds raised through

the IPO are proposed to be utilized for the funding of expenditure towards setting-up of 12 new stores in Maharashtra, repayment or pre-payment, in full or part, of certain borrowings available by the Company; and general corporate purposes. P N Gadgil Jewellers Limited is the second largest among the prominent organised jewellery players in Maharashtra, in terms of the number of stores as on January, 2024, which is the

largest market for BIS-registered outlets in India. The company is also the fastest growing jewellery brand amongst the key organised jewellery players in India, based on the revenue growth between FY21 and FY23.

The company achieved an EBITDA growth of 56.50% between FY21 and FY23 as well as the highest revenue per square feet in FY23, which the highest among the key organised jewellery players in India.

HD Kumaraswamy set for Mandya Lok Sabha fight, Prajwal Revanna from Hassan

BENGALURU: HD

Kumaraswamy, former CM and the president of the state unit of JD(S), has reportedly made up his mind to fight the Lok Sabha polls from the Mandya seat.

A formal announcement to this effect is likely to come through on Wednesday, along with the names of JD(S) candidates for Hassan and Kolar - the three constituencies in Karnataka for which the party has struck a seat-sharing arrangement with the BJP.

On Tuesday, HD Kumaraswamy cited mounting pressure from party workers as the key factor influencing his decision. Prajwal Revanna, the incumbent MP from Hassan, is likely to contest again from the seat.



HDK: Party wants to field me against Star Chandru. So far as Kolar is concerned, the JD(S) is currently weighing three options: Mulbagal MLA Manjunath, former MLA Nisarga Narayanaswamy, and party leader Mallesh Babu. Kumaraswamy told mediapersons he faced pressure from both party workers and leaders in Mandya to contest from that constituency as they perceive him as the most fitting candidate to challenge Congress

nominee Venkataramane Gowda, alias Star Chandru. "Previously, our strategy was to consider either former minister CS Puttaraju or my son Nikhil [for Mandya]. However, the party believes I am the most suitable option," HDK said, adding that he would make his decision public after deliberations within the party. Sources said following a unanimous decision in the party not to field Puttaraju owing to his perceived lack of competitiveness against Star Chandru, Kumaraswamy proposed his son Nikhil as an alternative. However, Nikhil refused to contest, considering the two consecutive defeats he had suffered earlier:

Delhi HC cautions against protest by lawyers against CM Arvind Kejriwal's arrest

NEW DELHI: Delhi high court acting chief justice Manmohan warned lawyers against protesting on court premises regarding the arrest of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal. "Consequences would be severe for organising protest in court. Courts cannot be withheld. Courts cannot be stopped. We cannot take away someone's right to approach the court," justice Manmohan said. "If someone does it, they would do it at their own peril," he asserted. Justice Manmohan addressed the matter, expressing hope for a sensible resolution and indicating readiness for action if necessary. Kejriwal, arrested on March 21 in a money laundering case linked to Delhi's excise policy, was remanded to ED custody until March 28. He is accused of involvement in a conspiracy



related to the formulation of the excise policy benefiting specific individuals. The Aam Aadmi Party's legal cell planned a protest in district courts following Kejriwal's arrest by the Enforcement Directorate. Advocate Vaibhav Singh raised the issue before the acting chief justice, stating that courts should not be used for political purposes.

7 die in 2 drowning incidents in 48 hours in Mysuru region

MANDYA: Seven people drowned in two separate incidents in Mysuru region over the past two days. In Muthathi, four relatives drowned in the waters of Cauvery river on Tuesday while in Nanjangud three youths from north India drowned in Kapila river on Monday afternoon. According to Halaguru police, who registered an FIR in connection with the Muthathi incident, 40 members of a family from Mysuru & Bengaluru had come to the local Muttattiraya temple to offer prayers. Tourists, unaware of currents, take a dip, drown After taking darshan, some of them ventured into the river for a bath during which the tragedy took place.

Sion ROB demolition postponed for the third time

MUMBAI: The demolition of Sion ROB has been postponed for the third time since the date for first for its closure was first declared in January. CR had first announced that the demolition will take place on Jan 20 but it was postponed till Feb 28. The fresh date was declared was March 28. But it has been postponed again. CR sources said that demolition may now happen after May 20 when Mumbai I scheduled to vote for Lok Sabha elections. The bridge is to be demolished and widened for the laying of the fifth and sixth railway lines between Parel and Kurla. The lines will be laid to the west of the tracks at Sion station, which are currently obstructed by the bridge's pillars. The new bridge's span will be increased from 30m to 49m, while the width will be maintained at 29m. Central Railway (CR) estimates that the demolition will take at least six months and reconstruction another 18 months.

Editorial

Significant demographic changes underway in the country?

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



The ambitious dreams of the grand US-India strategic partnership and bonhomie always get punctured by Washington's discomfort with New Delhi's stance on issues of critical geopolitical importance to the US. REUTERS/File Photo

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



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

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

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

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End of Swedish 'neutrality'

On March 7, 2024, Sweden became the 32nd country to join NATO, giving up on its 200-year-long policy of neutrality in wartime. Sweden's policy of neutrality was deeply rooted in the minds of all Swedish citizens. The Cold War politics were animated by ideological differences between the US and Soviet Union. The ensuing bipolarity in the structure of international politics wasn't enough to bring Sweden on board with its European counterparts in NATO. While various political crises and military conflicts have struck so many parts of the world—from Korea, the Soviet-Chinese border, Afghanistan, and Iran to Central Europe and Berlin—Northern Europe has existed in a state of relative calm (Astrom, 1989). Sweden had successfully sailed through two World Wars and the Cold War on the

policy of neutrality. Sweden's foreign policy has a moral orientation. Sweden's active foreign policy of international peace, developmental aid, activism for disarmament, and criticism of human rights abuses provides its foreign policy with a normative international outlook. Sweden's aggressive great power past stands in marked contrast to its peaceful small power status today. It was only after the defeat at the hands of the Russians in 1809 and the subsequent installation of Baptiste Bernadotte that Sweden began to transform its role from an aggressive military power to a more modest actor in international relations (Kruzal, 1989). The principle of neutrality strived to create the best possible conditions for Sweden to stay out of the military conflict in Northern Europe. The other purpose of the

neutrality policy was to stabilise Northern Europe. The geography has doomed tough foreign policy choices for Sweden. The country has to avoid coming under the influence of a nearby superpower while also not becoming an outpost of the other superpower (Astrom, 1989). Neutrality, scholar John Logue states, has become so much a part of the national tradition as to be virtually beyond political dispute. Among significant Swedish policies, neutrality particularly enjoys the broad-based support of all of the political parties and major interest groups (Logue, 1989). Even the day before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Minister for Foreign Affairs Ann Linde declared to parliament that membership in NATO was unthinkable, even in the light of increasing Russian hostility.

Delimitation is the final barrier to real democracy in India

As a result, every Kerala is now worth approximately 1.8 Rajasthanis, and every one in Tamil Nadu has the vote of 1.6 Biharis. Andhra, Odisha and Telangana similarly get extra votes, while Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh come up short. Proponents of unequal representation in India claim that states should be rewarded for limiting population growth. By that reasoning, they must also be penalised for having dynamic economies that attract internal migrants. That's the story in Delhi, Haryana and Maharashtra. The entire fertility argument is as specious as it is anti-democratic. After 1977, fertility fell no faster in the south than in the north. It started out lower and it ended up lower. In fact, the decline in fertility rates—the policy outcome that was used to justify unequal representation—has actually been more rapid in the north than in the south. In reality, everyone knows why India's political class has agreed to freeze representation at 1977 levels. It's to ensure that no politician's seat will be pulled out from under his or her you-know-what. And it keeps the peace by buying off petulant southerners who would otherwise raise a fuss over tax transfers. There is, after all, a strong correlation between per capita income and Lok Sabha overrepresentation. Richer people pay more taxes and it's easy



for them to believe that that entitles them to more representation. In a plutocracy, it would. In a democracy, it doesn't. India is the world's only democracy that violates the principle of one person, one vote. Strangely, the international democracy rankings don't seem to mind. Like India's own intellectuals, they seem happy with the idea of unequal representation, as long as the people getting the extra representatives are relatively rich, relatively well-educated and relatively on their side of politics. Unequal representation is nothing new. The English Parliament used to be famous for its "rotten boroughs"—electorates that still returned representatives based on Medieval populations who no longer lived there. They were eliminated by the Great Reform Act of 1832. The redrawing of constituencies is always controversial in the UK, but it is always done as the population changes, as it is in every other democracy. Except India. Nearly two centuries after England's Great Reform, India still has not returned to the principle of one person,

one vote. India's founding fathers understood this principle and embraced it. It is the one major blot on the record of Indian democracy that the current crop of Indian politicians cannot see their way to embracing the wisdom of their predecessors. Some overrepresentation in very small states and Union Territories is inevitable. That's part and parcel of the workings of a federal system. But for states and Union Territories that are large enough to have five or more representatives, equality of representation should be the rule. India needs a census and it needs a properly democratic delimitation exercise. "One person, one vote" is the fundamental principle on which all democracies are based. That fundamental principle was enshrined in the Indian Constitution adopted on 26 January, 1950. But in a clear contradiction of the wisdom of India's founding fathers, it no longer applies today. Indira Gandhi ended the equal representation of the people of India in 1977, India's politicians endorsed unequal representation in 2002, and the Supreme Court.

Shehbaz Sharif government at great peril to their primary responsibility

In the 371-member Punjab Assembly, the PML(N) obtained 193 seats while PTI/SIC could get 98 seats, the PPP 13 and the PML (Quaid e Azam) (PML-Q) 10 seats. Nawaz Sharif's daughter, Maryam was appointed Chief Minister. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the PTI/ SIC had a landslide 87 seats out of 145, with the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazlur Rehman) emerging as the next largest party with only 17 seats. Cocking a snook at the military establishment, Imran Khan nominated Ali Amin Gandapur, one of his

party's prominent hardliners involved in the 9 May, 2023 anti-Army demonstrations, as the new KP Chief Minister. The 168-member Sindh house saw the PPP comfortably win again with 84 seats, with MQM-P emerging second largest (28 MPAs). Murad Ali Shah was appointed CM again. The 65-member Balochistan Assembly has a PPP-led (17 seats) coalition government led by Sarfaraz Bugti, comprising 16 PML(N) MPAs and five Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) members. Noting with satisfaction the smooth democratic

transition of power in the Centre and provinces, as also the role played by the armed forces of Pakistan to provide a safe security environment for the conduct of the general election 2024 at great peril to their primary responsibility, the Inter Services Public Relations issued a stern press release after the 263rd Corps Commanders' Conference, warning agitators engaged in "malicious efforts" to spread "organised misinformation and fake news" and "create distortions, confusion and disinformation" about the February 8

verdict. This was condemned as "part of an organised campaign" "launched for narrow political interests, to blur the abhorrent activities that took place", on May 9, 2023, whose "planners, instigators, abettors, perpetrators and desecrators of martyrs' monuments and attackers", the ISPR insisted, would "certainly be brought to justice under the relevant provisions of the law and Constitution". Rather than focus on real issues such as good governance, economic recovery, political stability and public wellbeing.

HDFC Bank and TD Bank Group sign an agreement to simplify banking experience for Indian students in Canada

Ambala/HISAR: HDFC Bank and TD Bank Group (TD) today announced an expanded relationship supporting Indian students planning to study in Canada. With this agreement, TD and HDFC Bank are announcing a new referral program. HDFC Bank will refer students planning to study in Canada to TD's International Student GIC Program, which enables students to conveniently comply with the Government of Canada's Student Direct Stream (SDS) study permit pathway. This referral partnership builds on the two banks' existing relationship where TD has acted as HDFC Bank's main correspondent banking partner for Canadian Dollar clearing since 2015. As part of the Canadian government's requirements to apply for an

expedited study permit, students are required to provide proof of financial support, which is accomplished via a Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) from a participating Canadian financial institution. The TD International Student GIC Program is designed to enable students to open accounts digitally and help them meet their study visa and living expense requirements. HDFC Bank is India's leading private sector bank. As of December 31, 2023, the Bank's distribution network was at 8,091 branches and 20,688 ATMs across 3,872 cities / towns. TD is the second largest Bank in Canada and sixth largest in North America by assets, and serves over 27.5 million customer.

TD has over 1,000 branches across Canada, with advisors speaking more than 80 languages, including Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, Gujarati, and Urdu. "We continue our focus on helping Indian students to navigate the process to study abroad," said Mr. S Sampath Kumar, Group Head Retail Branch Banking, HDFC Bank. "Canada is a leading education market and our relationship with TD aims to simplify the process for students and Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) who want to study there." Ms. Smita Bhagat Group Head Retail Branch Banking, HDFC Bank further added, "The association is designed to support the study permit requirements of Indian students planning to study in Canada. The curated program also offers a wide range.

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

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

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

under-river stretch for the second time. All on a single ticket," the official said. If Metro Railway general manager P Uday Kumar Reddy was aware of the "missing" ridership, he chose not to say anything about it. "It's such a momentous occasion for Metro Railway - having opened East-West Metro's most significant section despite the multiple setbacks. We are happy to provide a meaningful Metro line, connected to two interfaces," he said. The ridership mismatch struck officials while noting down Friday's passenger count at Esplanade: 12,384, compared to Howrah Maidan.

Temperature starts moving up, air quality still moderate

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

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

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



Man gets RI for sexually harassing minor online

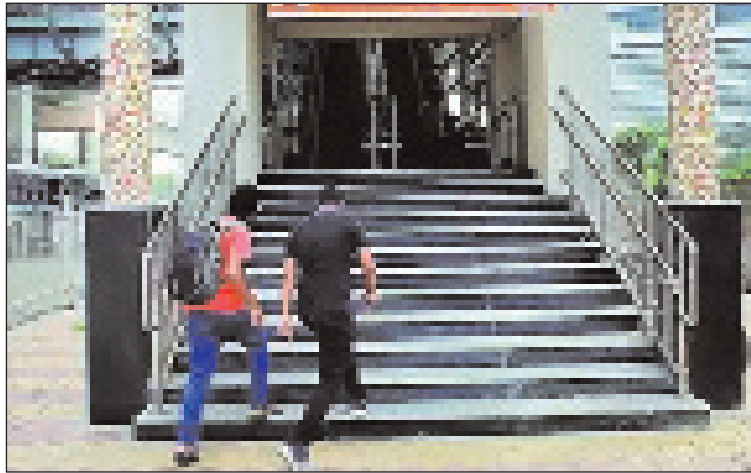
New Delhi: A court here has sentenced a 34-year-old man to five years of rigorous imprisonment for sexually harassing and criminally intimidating a minor on a social networking site. The court said it is the responsibility of society to protect children from exploitation by cyberstalkers or cyberbullies, observing that the psychological scars of childhood sexual abuse deeply impact the lives of innocent children. Additional Sessions Judge Susheel Bala Dagar was hearing a case against convict Akhilesh Kumar who was booked under provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Noting the submissions of public prosecutor Yogita Kaushik Dahiya, the court said it was proved that Kumar chatted with the minor after creating a fake identity, made sexually coloured remarks, and contacted or followed her online despite the girl's clear disinterest.

CP Radhakrishnan appointed as governor of Telangana

HYDERABAD: Jharkhand governor CP Radhakrishnan got the additional charge of Telangana, replacing the Tamilisai Sounderajan. The orders were issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday. Radhakrishnan's appointment marks the third instance of Telangana having a governor from Tamil Nadu. The first governor, Narasimhan, and the second governor, Tamilisai Sounderajan, were also from Tamil Nadu. Radhakrishnan, a two-time member of parliament from Coimbatore as a BJP candidate, assumed the governorship of Jharkhand in 2023.

Poor frequency leads to fewer takers for Ruby & Majerhat lines

Kolkata: The 5.4km new Metro corridor in the Ruby-New Garia and 8 km Joka-Majerhat stretches had less number of commuters during peak hours on Monday as compared to the East-West Metro thrown open to the public last Friday. One of the key reasons is frequency. While the Ruby-New Garia stretch ran at a 20-minute frequency with two rakes being in operation, Joka-Majerhat had an even worse frequency of 50-minute intervals with one of the two rakes still being non-operational. "Unless the frequency improves, I cannot rely on the Metro. If I buy a ticket and reach the platform, I may need to wait 50 minutes. I can reach my destination in that period," said Arup Sandhukhan who commutes



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

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

Govt collecting reports to develop illegal colonies

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

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

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



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

JNU teachers condemn 'disruption' of lectures

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



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

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

ICICI Bank's iMobile Pay is used by over one crore customers from other banks

GURUGRAM / FARIDABAD : ICICI Bank announces that its retail mobile banking app, iMobile Pay, has on-boarded over one crore customers of other banks. This significant achievement comes just over three years after ICICI Bank made the app open for customers of other banks. ICICI Bank was the pioneer in launching mobile banking app in 2008, expediting the way for digital banking in India. In December 2020, it became the first bank to make the app interoperable by extending the benefit of its services to customers of other banks. Since then, customers of any bank can use iMobile Pay by following a few simple steps: link their savings bank account with the app, generate a UPI ID and enjoy a wide range of convenient services. These include making payments to any UPI ID or merchants, paying bills, recharging online and transferring money to any bank account, payment app and digital wallet. Further, users can also open a savings account, apply for a home loan or credit card among other banking services provided by ICICI Bank. With over one crore customers of other banks using iMobile Pay, there has been 26% growth in the overall transactions value in this financial year till the end of

February 2024 (April- February), compared to the same period last year. During this period, the average ticket size increased by 16%. Commenting on this remarkable achievement, Mr. Sidhartha Mishra, Head- Digital Channels and Partnerships, ICICI Bank stated, "We have consistently aimed to innovate and simplify banking for our customers. The fact that our retail banking app has on-boarded over one crore customers from other banks in just three years is a testament to iMobile Pay's significant role in providing seamless digital banking experiences. With iMobile Pay, we are revolutionising the way customers manage their finances and conduct transactions. We have built a simple, seamless, secure, and accessible banking platform that offers over 400 services. anytime and anywhere. We are thrilled to witness the widespread adoption and eagerly look forward to enhancing users' banking convenience through continuous innovations." Since its launch, iMobile Pay has gained immense popularity among users for its diverse features. Services like UPI transactions, fund transfers, credit card payments, mobile recharges, and bill payments are most used by users.

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

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



The group of students at a primary school in Chhattisgarh's Bastar

NEW DELHI: The group of students at a primary school in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district took a stand against a teacher who arrived intoxicated. The viral video depicts the intense scene as the teacher hastily starts his motorbike amidst a barrage of slippers thrown by the students, ultimately fleeing the premises. This dramatic confrontation sheds light on the challenges faced by students in accessing quality education and the pressing need for accountability within the education system. As per the 'X' post, the incident took place at Pilibhatta Primary School, where the teacher's recurrent presence in class while under the influence of alcohol had become a growing concern. Rather than fulfilling his teaching duties, he frequently resorted to sleeping on the floor, disregarding the needs of his students. Frustrated by his behavior, the students confronted him,

Such incidents not only tarnish the reputation of the education system but also have detrimental effects

only to face verbal abuse in return. Matters reached a tipping point when the teacher arrived intoxicated once again last week, prompting the students to take decisive action. This incident is not isolated, as another disturbing event recently surfaced in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district. A teacher was caught on camera openly carrying alcohol onto school premises, displaying a blatant disregard for the standards of conduct expected in such settings. The footage serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for enhanced oversight and accountability measures within edu-

cational institutions. Such incidents not only tarnish the reputation of the education system but also have detrimental effects on the well-being and academic progress of students. As these videos continue to circulate online, they serve as a clarion call for authorities to address systemic issues and ensure that students are provided with a safe and conducive learning environment. Reactions on post in response to the viral video, social media users have expressed admiration and support for the students' actions. With comments such as "Well done, children," "Bright future with these kids," and "Salute to students," there is widespread praise for the students' courage and determination in standing up against perceived injustice. One user highlighted the inspirational aspect of the students' actions, stating, "These kids must

MP: Woman stripped, paraded and beaten up in Indore's village; four arrested

INDORE: Four women were arrested for allegedly beating up, stripping and parading a 30-year-old woman over a dispute at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Indore district on Wednesday. A video of the purported incident that occurred during the Holi celebrations also surfaced on social media. "On Monday, four women forcibly pulled the victim out of her house, beat her up and humiliated her by stripping her naked in public at Bachhora village of Gautampura police station area," Superintendent of Police (Rural) Sunil

Mehta said. All four accused women were later arrested, he said. The victim, belonging to the Scheduled Caste (SC) category, was left traumatized and sought refuge at her parents' home. One of the accused suspected that the victim was instigating her mother-in-law against her. She also suspected that the victim had taken her mother-in-law to Mandsaur without informing her, the police official said. Eyewitnesses said the accused women dragged the victim out of her house and stripped her. They said that the victim woman

kept pleading for mercy at the time of the incident, but the accused did not relent and they openly stripped her by tearing her clothes. They also took her to some distance on the common road of the village in the same condition. SP Mehta assured that those who filmed the incident will also face legal consequences. A police officer said that a case has been registered under Indian Penal Code (IPC) sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 354-A (sexual harassment) and 452 (wrongfully restraining and assaulting).

High court confirms death to man who killed his son, sister & her family members

NAGPUR: The Nagpur bench of the Bombay high court on Thursday confirmed the death penalty for Vivek Palatkar, who was convicted of killing his son, sister, and three other family members. Palatkar's victims included his son Krishna, his sister Archana Pawankar

(45), her husband Kamlakar (48), her mother-in-law Meerabai (73), and her daughter Vedanti (12). The sessions court had sentenced him to death after recording the testimonies of 29 witnesses. The accused also had other crimes registered against him. Additional

government pleader Sanjay Doifide, who argued the case on behalf of the prosecution, drew the court's attention to statements from witnesses, including the accused's daughter and sister's daughter, who miraculously survived the bloody attack.



'My husband will reveal truth in so-called liquor scam in court on March 28': Delhi CM's wife Sunita Kejriwal

NEW DELHI: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife, Sunita, on Wednesday said that her husband, who is in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with the alleged excise scam, will reveal the truth regarding the case in court on March 28. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener was arrested by the ED on March 21 in an excise policy-linked money laundering case and subsequently remanded to the agency's custody till March 28. In a video message, Sunita Kejriwal hit out at the Centre and central probe agency, saying that the ED could not find a single penny in its more than 250 raids conducted in the "so-called liquor scam". "Despite two years of probe, the ED has not been able to find even one paisa in evidence. They raided chief minister's residence but got just Rs 73,000," she said. "I met Arvind Kejriwal in jail yesterday, he has diabetes and sugar level is not under control. However, his determination is strong. Two days ago, he directed Delhi Minister Atishi to resolve the water and sewer-related issues. What wrong did he do? The Centre has filed a case against Arvind Kejriwal even for this. Do they want to finish Delhi?" Sunita Kejriwal said, adding that her husband was very sad over the issue. "In the so-called liquor scam, ED has conducted more than 250 raids. They are searching for the money of this so-called scam. They have found nothing yet. Arvind Kejriwal has said that he will reveal everything in court on March 28.

Odisha: Congress MLA Suresh Routray's son Manmath joins BJD

BHUBNESWAR: Six-time Congress MLA Suresh Routray's son Manmath Routray has officially joined the ruling BJD in Odisha on Wednesday. Manmath, a former commercial pilot, made his entry into the BJD at the party headquarters in a procession accompanied by his supporters. He was inducted into the party by its MPs Manas Mangaraj and Sasmit Patra. "I will work for the ideology of my father and also Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Both leaders have one agenda in life and that is development. I will work for the development of Odisha," he said. Suresh Routray had on Tuesday said that he wanted

his son to contest elections as a Congress candidate. "I accept Manmath's decision of joining the BJD as he is mature enough to make decisions on his political career," said Routray, the MLA of Jatani. Stating that he would not contest the ensuing polls due to his age, the 80-year-old leader, Suresh Routray declared that he would not run in the upcoming elections but would support the Congress candidate over his son, Manmath said he has his father's "blessings". "My father wanted me to join the Congress, but I decided to start my political journey under Naveen Patnaik's leadership," he said.

Hockey India chief Dilip Tirkey named BJD candidate for Sundargarh Lok Sabha seat

BHUBANESWAR: Chief minister of Odisha and BJD president Naveen Patnaik announced BJD's first list of nine Lok Sabha candidates and 72 assembly contestants for the simultaneous polls scheduled from May 13. Naveen is set to re-contest from Hinjili seat for a sixth term. BJD general secretary (organization) Pranab Prakash Das has been pitted against Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan of BJP.

Four men thrashed for 'cow smuggling' in Rajasthan's Alwar

ALWAR: Four men from Haryana were allegedly beaten up by locals on suspicion of cow smuggling in Rajasthan's Alwar district early Wednesday. The incident occurred near Honda chowk in Khushkhera police station area of Alwar around 3 am. SHO of Khushkhera Police Station, Virendra Yadav, said the patrolling officer received information that some locals had stopped a pickup vehicle in which cows were being allegedly smuggled. While



police sources said the suspected cow smugglers were allegedly beaten up by the locals, residents claimed that the four got injured while trying to flee from the spot. When the police reached the spot, the four suspected cow

smugglers were found in an injured state, he said, adding they were admitted to district hospitals. Seven cows were rescued from the spot and relocated to a cow shelter. "It was alleged that they were smuggling cows.

Locals who caught the vehicles said the four persons got injured while trying to escape from there. However, it will become clear in investigation whether the locals were involved in thrashing them," the SHO said. Yadav said a case against the four will be registered for alleged cow smuggling. The four accused, all from Haryana's Nuh district, were identified as Aarif, Gaffar, Salim and Habib. Further investigation is going on.

TDP chief launches Praja Galam yatra, vows to end YSRCP's autocratic rule in the state

TIRUPATI: Former Chief Minister and Telugu Desam chief Nara Chandrababu Naidu launched the "Praja Galam" poll campaign amidst much fanfare at Palamaner in his home district of Chittoor on Wednesday and vowed to end the autocratic rule of the YSRCP in the state in the 2024 polls. Addressing an impressive rally at Palamaner, Naidu denounced the manner in which the YSRCP government neglected the irrigation projects in the water-parched and perennially drought-prone Rayalaseema region of the state. Telugu Desam founder and former Chief Minister NT Rama Rao had a vision to bring Krishna waters to address the drinking and irrigation water needs of the

Rayalaseema region. "It was during the Telugu Desam Party regime in the state that various irrigation projects such as the Telugu Ganga, Handri Neeva, Galeru Nagari, etc., were taken up. While 90% of the works of the irrigation projects were completed by the TDP, the YSRCP government couldn't complete the pending 10% of the works in the last five years," Naidu lamented. "During the TDP regime between 2014-2019, about 62 irrigation projects were initiated, and 24 were completed. While the TDP spent Rs. 68,000 crore on irrigation projects across the state, Rs. 12,000 crore was allocated for the completion of irrigation projects in the Rayalaseema region alone. The Jagan

Reddy government allocated only Rs. 2,125 crore for irrigation projects in the Rayalaseema region in the last five years, reflecting the government's lack of resolve for the completion of irrigation projects in the state," the TDP chief observed. Highlighting the six guarantees of the TDP, Naidu promised the people that the state would be brought back on the path of development and wealth creation in the next five years. The YSRCP government has led every section of society to a state of crisis, and only an able government with vision could bring a turnaround in the lives of the people of the state. "There is widespread unemployment. Farmers are in distress.

Ex-army man from Kalimpong 'tricked' into Russian Army

KALIMPONG: A 47-year-old man from Kalimpong allegedly tricked into a job in the Russian army has appealed to the government in a video message to rescue him before he is sent to fight Ukraine. Urgan Tamang, a resident of Chibo-Purbung in Kalimpong, speaking in Hindi in the 3-minute video, has blamed recruitment "agents" for duping him promising employment opportunities abroad as a security guard but recruited him in the Russian Army without his consent and that he is now compelled to fight the ongoing war against Ukraine. In the video, Tamang claimed that he was misled by agents regarding the job, as he was initially informed that the job was for a security guard position in Moscow, Russia. He



had reached Moscow on January 19 this year where he was received by a Gorkha/Nepali individual who subsequently accommodated him in a hotel for a night. The next day he was sent to a group of Tamil agents where he stayed for a night. He was then lodged in a hotel for about 10 days before being relocated to an army camp. "I was taken to the army camp for normal training for approximately 18 days. There, I was asked to sign a bond. Thereafter, I was transferred to a jungle camp where I received training on handling guns

and ammunition. It became evident that we were being prepared for frontline combat for the Ukraine War," Tamang had said in the video requesting the Government of India to help and rescue him. Speaking to TOI, his 44-year-old wife, Ambika Tamang said she has not spoken to her husband since March 22. In their last communication, Tamang had mentioned that the Russians were taking them somewhere further from the camp. "I don't know which camp, I don't know if he meant the jungle camp or the army camp. He cannot

6 Maoists killed; toll 37 since BJP assumed office

RAIPUR: Forces gunned down six Maoist insurgents, including two women, in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur Wednesday morning, reported. Deputy CM Vijay Sharma, who also holds the home portfolio, said the operation was launched following the murder of three villagers by suspected Maoists on Holi. They were hacked and stabbed to death near Basaguda. Seventeen Reds have been killed in Bastar this month.

even understand the language there and he is alone, I don't know what to do".

"Show Raturaj's Face Too, He Is The Captain": Sehwaq quips

Delhi: The five-time winners Chennai Super Kings upset Royal Challengers Bengaluru by six wickets in Chennai to start their campaign under new captain Raturaj Gaikwad on a positive note. Batting first, RCB scored 173/6, and CSK easily met the mark. It's never easy to replace a significant individual like MS Dhoni, and Raturaj Gaikwad is no exception. "You should feel honored. However, I want to attempt to walk in my own shoes, not someone else's," he stated prior to the competition. Irfan Pathan was also delighted by Raturaj Gaikwad's leadership, noting on X: "CSK pulled off a fantastic comeback after the first 26 balls. Raturaj made some amazing bowling adjustments when under duress. #RCB vs. CSK" Images of Dhoni preparing the field were shown during the game.

BJD list out: 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 its 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.

FM: Don't have money to fight Lok Sabha polls

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 crowd. All of us are confident that there is resonance on the ground."

Sadhguru discharged after brain surgery

New Delhi: Spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev was discharged from Delhi's Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals on Wednesday after undergoing an urgent major brain surgery following excessive bleeding within his skull. The Isha foundation stated that he underwent emergency brain surgery on March 17. He had

been experiencing severe headaches for a few weeks before undergoing brain surgery at Apollo hospitals in the city. His treating doctor, Dr Vinit Suri, senior consultant neurologist, told TOI that Sadhguru had recovered completely. He can resume all activities. Though no physiotherapy is required, some restrictions will

have to be undertaken for a short while. Dr Sangeeta Reddy, joint managing director, Apollo Hospitals group, who met Sadhguru in the hospital, said, "Doctors have expressed satisfaction with his recovery and healing. Sadhguru has maintained the same spirit. His commitment to the global good, his sharp mind.

CAPSULES

Top court orders CBI probe into Manipur woman's 2013 murder that's still unsolved

Supreme Court on Wednesday 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 the circumstances that led to the death of the woman in her rented house in south Delhi in 2013. She was working in a call centre at Delhi. A bench of Justices J K Maheshwari and Sudhanshu Dhulia passed the order on a plea filed by the family of the deceased seeking probe by CBI as Delhi Police failed to catch the killer and accused the cops of shielding the accused. The bench said, "...Criminal investigation must be both fair and effective. We say nothing on the fairness of the investigation... but the fact that it has been ineffective is self-evident. The kith and kin of the deceased who live far away in Manipur have a logistical problem while approaching authorities in Delhi, yet they have their hope alive, and have shown trust and confidence in this system. We are therefore of the considered view that this case needs to be handed over to CBI for a proper investigation and also to remove any doubts in the minds of the appellants, and to bring the real culprits to justice." The court noted that the woman's death was not a case of suicide as the crime scene had blood spattered on the floor and the bed sheet was completely drenched in blood. "It appears to be a homicidal death and therefore the culprits must be apprehended," the bench added.

Delightful Eight: Coming Soon, Octopus Theme Park In Rohini

New Delhi: To arouse curiosity among children about marine life, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) plans to develop an octopus theme park in Rohini. The civic body started the process for inviting tender on Wednesday and is looking to complete the Rs 2.5-crore project by the end of this year. The park will be built on 3.24 acres of land in Sector 21. The central attraction will be a 22-foot-high, 3-metre-wide replica of a colourful octopus, its 1.45-metre-long tenta-

cles spread out. The structure will welcome visitors at the entrance of the park and children can climb it using stairs constructed next to the tentacles. "Next to the replica, there will be slides for recreational purposes and artificial grass will be placed for children's safety. There will also be a provision for stone climbing and rope climbing," said an official. The initiative aims to motivate children to spend time in parks rather than gadgets for recreation, he

added. Around the structure of the octopus will be a dark blue rubberised floor divided into six parts, each with a provision for modern playing equipment. "As part of the project, octopus-shaped swings and seating areas or gazebos in five places will be developed. There will be 3D sculptures as well to attract children," said the official. The civic body also plans to develop an open amphitheatre on one side of the park, where people can sit

and relax. "We aim to utilise the place for holding events and programmes. It will be surrounded by a 3-metre-wide pathway and people will be able to reach the place easily," said the official. MCD will plant indigenous saplings of trees and a variety of flowering plants and shrubs to ensure greenery, he added. The civic body also started work recently on developing an insect theme park in Rohini's Sector 23, which would have swings.

32-year-old restaurateur shot in NE Delhi, no arrests yet

New Delhi: A 32-year-old restaurant owner died on Tuesday after a group of unidentified assailants fired on him while he was returning home on his motorcycle in northeast district's Usmanpur area. No arrest has been made so far, police said on Wednesday. In a suspected case of personal enmity, multiple rounds were fired at victim Sanjay, who was pierced by at least five bullets during the attack, a senior police officer said, adding that the deceased, a resident of New Usmanpur,



owned restaurant 'Goa Bar' in the locality. Police received information about the shooting incident during the wee hours of Tuesday. "The complainant stated that he found his brother bleeding with multiple

bullet injuries and rushed him to the hospital where he was declared dead on arrival. The victim sustained injuries on his head, shoulder, elbow and abdomen area." said Joy Tirkey, DCP

(north-east). A police team rushed to the spot and found seven empty shells, four lead pieces and one live round of 7.65 mm there, said DCP Tirkey. A case was registered under relevant sections of murder and the Arms Act. During investigation it was found that Sanjay was allegedly involved in a murder. "He along with his three associates had murdered a resident of the same locality a few months back and it is suspected personal enmity may be the motivation behind.

MP HC grants protection to teen live-in couple but advises caution on hardships

INDORE: While granting protection to a live-in couple, both 19-year-olds, Madhya Pradesh HC added a word of caution about the hardships and complications youngsters may face while getting into relationships so early in life, away from their families.

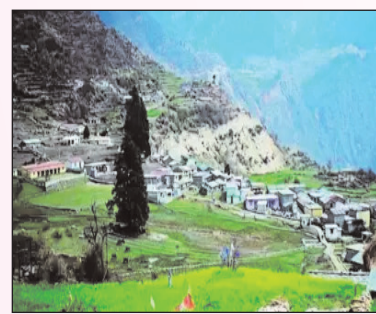


Justice Subodh Abhyankar, in an order dated March 14, observed that the petitioners were adults and had exercised free will in staying together against the wishes of their families. HC directed police to ensure the couple's protection, noting: "This court is inclined to allow the present petition... as he is a major and is entitled to reside as per his own will, and if he so decides, his choice needs to be protected from external forces." Justice Abhyankar added: "Having held so, this court must record its concern on the choices youngsters are making these days... It must be remembered that even though certain rights have been conferred by the Constitution, it is not necessary to enjoy, and enforce them as well." "India is not a country where the State provides any allowance to the unemployed ones,

thus, if you are not dependent on your parents, you have to earn your own and your partner's livelihood... and if you get into this struggle of life at an early age, not only your chances of enjoying the other opportunities are affected but your acceptance in society is also reduced, and it is more difficult for a girl who can become pregnant at an early age, leading to further complications," he said.

No road, no vote, says village in Uttarakhand bordering China

DEHRADUN: Nestled near the border areas of Chamoli district in the Garhwal Himalayas 6,000 ft above sea level, Dumak village, housing around 250 voters, finds itself entangled in an impasse ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. The crux of the matter? A 17-year-old promise of a road that remains unfinished leading voters here to boycott polls. The over 32-km road project, under the Pradhan Mantri



Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), started back in 2007-08. Villagers say that till now, around 50% of the road has

been constructed by spending at least Rs 15 crore. Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar, who was then election commissioner, had trekked to Dumak village before the 2022 state polls and soon after that, the poll panel decided to double the honorarium of polling officials tasked with reaching remote polling stations. "The CEC trekked over three days to reach the polling station.

Peak electricity demand for MSEDCL crossed 25000 MW on Wednesday

MUMBAI: The MSEDCL peak power demand crossed 25000 MW for the first time this year on Wednesday, indicating that several interior regions in the state were witnessing high day temperatures. MSEDCL in a huge purchase by the state utility, bought 10385 MW electricity from

the power exchange at prevailing market prices to cater to the peak demand. The peak demand in Mumbai hovered between 3400 MW and 3500 MW while the overall across state also touched a new high this year at 28500 MW. After being at an all time low for seven months,

the BEST fleet finally crossed the 3000 mark on Wednesday as new buses arrived in the fleet - taking the fleet to 3008 buses. A senior official said that the undertaking expects to increase the fleet size to 3500 in the next 3 months - catering to the demand from 35 lakh

daily commuters who now have to wait in long queues for a bus during peak hours. The fleet had gone below 3000 last year, and this was for the first time in the past 15 years, leading to acute shortage of buses on roads and affecting the frequency on busy routes.

200 waterholes in Asola to help wildlife battle the heat

New Delhi: With the rising heat, the forest department has decided to dig up around 200 waterholes across Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary. According to forest officials, the waterholes will be filled artificially with treated water or with water from Neeli Jheel. With almost all small and big ponds inside the sanctuary running dry and natural streams without water, over 20 species in the area will rely on the waterholes, which will also discourage their migration in search of water, they said. "We have recognised the areas where the waterholes will be created and they cover almost all regions of the sanctuary. They will be filled with the help of small tankers. As the heat is on the rise, we will begin the work soon as part of our conservation plan," said an official at Asola.

Sunrisers Hyderabad clinched a thrilling victory over Mumbai Indians by 31 runs



NEW DELHI: Hyderabad witnessed a historic day as Sunrisers Hyderabad clinched a thrilling victory over Mumbai Indians by 31 runs in a high-scoring encounter at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Wednesday. Batting first, Sunrisers embarked on a record-breaking spree, posting an astounding 277/3 in their allotted 20 overs. This remarkable total shattered the IPL record for the highest-ever team total, previously held by Royal Challengers

Bangalore (263/5 vs Pune Warriors India) in 2013. In reply, Mumbai Indians launched a valiant pursuit but fell short, accumulating 246/5 in their 20 overs. Nonetheless, their total became the highest second-innings score in IPL history. The combined total of 523 runs marked a new milestone in T20 cricket, becoming the highest match aggregate ever recorded, surpassing the previous record set in a T20I between South Africa and West Indies. It was the first time

the match aggregate crossed the 500-run mark in IPL history. Sunrisers' formidable batting lineup, led by Heinrich Klaasen (80* off 34), Abhishek Sharma (63 off 23), and Travis Head (62 off 24), propelled them to their historic total. Aiden Markram's contribution of 42 off 28 balls added to Mumbai Indians' woes.

Despite a spirited effort from Mumbai's Tilak Varma (64 off 34) and Tim David (42* off 22), Sunrisers' monumental total proved insurmountable.

NEW DELHI: It was not the best of starts for star all-rounder Hardik Pandya as Mumbai Indians (MI) captain after his team lost the second successive match in the 17th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) on Wednesday. Playing against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), MI lost the plot in the first innings itself after SRH posted a record 277 for three, the highest total in IPL history, after being invited to bat first. This extraordinary batting performance by the home team surpassed the previous highest total of 263 for five, achieved by the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) back in 2013, setting a new milestone in IPL history. Pandya, who was quite happy with the effort of his batters while chasing a mammoth total, accepted the fact that it was tough out in the middle.

"The wicket was good but 277, no matter how good or bad you bowl, if the opposition get 277 that means they batted very well. [Bowlers] were good. It was tough out there. Close to 500 runs were scored so the wicket was helping the batters. We could have tried a few different things, but we have a young bowling attack and I liked what I saw today," Pandya



said at the post-match presentation. "If the ball goes this much in the crowd, it's definitely different to run around and complete the overs in time. Everyone batted really well, counting Tilak, Ro, Ishan. There are just few things we need to do right and we'll be alright. [On Maphaka] I think he was fantastic you know. Coming into your first game and getting overwhelmed by this kind of crowd. He showed great heart. He has the skillset," Pandya added. In a spectacular display of batting prowess, Travis Head marked his first IPL appearance of the season with a blistering 24-ball 62, while Abhishek Sharma contributed a rapid-fire 63 off just 23

deliveries, setting a solid foundation for their team. Heinrich Klaasen remained unbeaten with an impressive 80 runs, while Aiden Markram provided valuable support with a quickfire 42 not out to propel the hosts past the monumental 250-run mark. In response, MI put up a valiant effort, scoring 246 for five in their allotted 20 overs.

Tilak Varma led the charge with a quickfire 64 off just 34 balls, while Tim David contributed an unbeaten 42 off 22 deliveries to keep their team in contention till the end. MI ended the match with a commendable but ultimately unsuccessful pursuit despite their impressive batting display.

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

NEW DELHI: The dynamics shifted within the Mumbai Indians camp as Rohit Sharma, the former captain, took charge of fielding instructions from current skipper Hardik Pandya during their IPL 2024 clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Wednesday.

Just days after a video surfaced showing Pandya directing Sharma to field in the deep, the tables turned as the pressure mounted on the five-time champions in Hyderabad. Sunrisers's relentless onslaught saw them smashing a record-breaking total of 277 for 3, the highest-ever in IPL history. This incredible feat saw them break the 11-year-old record for the highest-ever team total in an IPL innings, previously held by Royal Challengers Bengaluru - 263/5 in 20 overs against now-defunct Pune Warriors India in 2013.

Rishabh Pant will get better as the season progresses, says Sourav Ganguly

JAIPUR: Returning to the cricket field after a long gap of 15 months following a horrific car crash, Rishabh Pant did reasonably well against Punjab Kings during the IPL match in Chandigarh last Saturday. The wicket keeper-batter scored 18 runs off just 13 balls and effected the smart stumping of Jitesh Sharma but could not make it a memorable one as Delhi Capitals lost the opener by four wickets. However, DC's director of cricket



Sourav Ganguly is optimistic about Pant's resurgence in the IPL. "Rishabh did brilliantly in his comeback match.

He showed glimpses of his earlier talent with both bat and gloves. I am confident he will get better as the sea-

son progresses. With Rishabh back, the batting has got stronger than what it was last year because in IPL if you lose a major Indian player, it becomes a big hole to fill," said Ganguly. Notwithstanding the defeat in the opener, Ganguly is backing his team to bounce back against hosts Rajasthan Royals in their second outing at the SMS Stadium here on Thursday. "It's just the early part of the tournament.

Carnage in Hyderabad! SRH rewrite IPL history with highest-ever total

NEW DELHI: Sunrisers Hyderabad unleashed a barrage of power-hitting to shatter records and leave fans in awe during their Indian Premier League clash against Mumbai Indians at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad. Led by the explosive performances of Heinrich Klaasen (80 not out off 34), Abhishek Sharma (63 off 23), and Travis Head (62 off 24), SRH amassed a staggering total of 277/3 in their allotted 20 overs. This incredible feat saw them break the 11-year-



old record for the highest-ever team total in an IPL innings, previously held by Royal Challengers Bengaluru - 263/5 in 20 overs against now-defunct Pune Warriors India in 2013. Aiden Markram also made a significant contribution to the SRH

onslaught with a well-compiled 42 off 28 balls. Moreover, SRH set a new record for the highest total at the midway stage of an IPL innings, amassing 148/2 after 10 overs. The Hyderabad crowd witnessed a spectacle of record-breaking performances as

Abhishek Sharma also stole the spotlight with his sensational innings. Following an explosive start by SRH opener Travis Head, who blazed his way to a record-setting 18-ball fifty, Sharma continued the onslaught, reaching his fifty in just 16 balls—a new benchmark for the fastest fifty by an SRH batter in the tournament. Sharma's onslaught was relentless as he hammered seven towering sixes and three fours during his whirlwind knock of 63 runs off just 23 balls.

'That was insane': Pat after registering record-breaking win

NEW DELHI: "Insane" was the only word that Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Pat Cummins could conjure up to describe the six-hitting slugfest against Mumbai Indians in the IPL match in Hyderabad on Wednesday. The game witnessed several unprecedented milestones as SRH

hammered a colossal total of 277 for three, marking the highest total in IPL history. Mumbai Indians put up a spirited fight, keeping themselves in contention before concluding at 246 for five. This match was a game of many firsts, with a total of 500 runs scored for the first time in IPL history, including a record-breaking 38 sixes that added to the electrifying spectacle witnessed on the cricket field. "That was insane. The ball was really ping around. Not until we bowled, it got a bit too close for comfort. They found a boundary whenever they needed it, but we finished it off well," said Cummins at the post-match presentation. It was a batting beauty but Cummins did not envisage such a big total. "You never play for 270, but we

wanted to be positive and be aggressive, take the game on. It was a good wicket, so we have to suck it up knowing we would go for a few boundaries. "What's important is to have clear plans with the ball. There was amazing atmosphere in the ground, enjoyed playing here, was incredibly loud," said the skipper after SRH's first win of the season. Opposition skipper Hardik Pandya could only doff his hat to the opposition batters, acknowledging their incredible performance, even as his own team put up a spirited fight with the bat. Despite Mumbai Indians' valiant efforts, the sheer dominance of the Sunrisers Hyderabad's batting lineup left Pandya and his team in awe, demonstrating the unparalleled skill and determination.

'Simply remarkable...': Sachin and Hardik doff their hats to Rohit

NEW DELHI: Rohit Sharma has become the first player to feature in 200 matches for Mumbai Indians, solidifying his status as one of the franchise's most iconic figures in a historic moment for the Indian Premier League. The milestone was celebrated by cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar, who reminisced about his role in bringing Rohit to Mumbai Indians, stating, "Long time ago, I was having a discussion with Mrs Ambani that we have to bring Rohit to Mumbai Indians." Tendulkar hailed Rohit's achievements, calling them "simply remarkable." Mumbai Indians captain Hardik Pandya also expressed his admiration for Rohit, saying, "You've been one of the pillars of this franchise who has achieved so much



under your belt. Ro, you're known for your double centuries, I'm sure this will also be special." Rohit's 200th appearance for Mumbai Indians marks his 245th IPL match overall, a testament to his enduring presence and impact in the tournament. With over 5000 runs to his name, Rohit stands as the all-time leading run-scorer for Mumbai Indians in the IPL, showcasing remarkable consistency and loyalty since

joining the team in 2011. His leadership has been instrumental in Mumbai Indians' success, with Rohit featuring in 111 victories for the franchise, the most by any player. He has also captained the team to victory on 87 occasions, setting a new benchmark for leadership excellence. Rohit's ability to deliver under pressure is evident in his tally of 35 scores of 50 or more for Mumbai Indians, a record

unmatched by any other player in the franchise's history. Additionally, his outstanding performances have earned him 16 Player of the Match awards, cementing his status as a talismanic figure for Mumbai Indians. With Rohit Sharma continuing to script new chapters in his illustrious IPL career, his legacy as one of the greatest players in the tournament's history remains unparalleled.

Rajasthan Royals hope to build on strong start as they face Delhi

JAIPUR: Rajasthan Royals would like to build on a strong start when they take on Delhi Capitals in their second IPL match at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Thursday. It was a perfect outing for Royals skipper Sanju Samson as he led from the front to guide his team to a 20-run victory against Lucknow Super Giants in the opening game on Sunday. On the other hand, Delhi Capitals need to get their act together quickly after the false start against Punjab Kings, when Shikhar Dhawan's side spoiled Rishabh Pant's comeback party at the new venue, Mullanpur last week. Despite the strong beginning, Royals head coach Kumar Sangakkara believes there's a lot of scope for improvement. They are also wary of a Capitals onslaught. "We did quite well to start the long season on a winning note.