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

## PM Modi attacks TMC over 'torture of Sandeshkhali women'

● "The alliance between TMC and Congress follows a similar pattern. TMC members are concerned about securing positions for their relatives"



**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 'Viksit Bharat Viksit West Bengal' public event in Siliguri on Saturday. During the event, he inaugurated and dedicated several developmental projects in the rail and road sectors, with a total worth exceeding Rs 4500 crore in West Bengal. Addressing the 'Viksit Bharat Viksit West Bengal' program, the Prime Minister emphasised the commitment of the central government to the state's development. He criticised the Congress, pointing out that the progress of eastern India had been neglected for an extended period post-

independence. Here are the key quotes from the Prime Minister's address at the 'Viksit Bharat Viksit West Bengal' event: There was a period during which trains entering the northeast experienced a reduction in speed. However, the government has been making concerted efforts to enhance train speed in North Bengal, aligning with the nationwide push for increased railway speeds. Following independence, the development of Eastern India was neglected for an extended period.

First the left did not listen to your concerns, and subsequently, the TMC also overlooked your needs. They were preoccupied with exploiting the resources of the underprivileged. Consequently, when presented with the chance, I gave back all those facilities to you all. TMC government is looting you at every step. Modi sends the money for MNREGA wages from Delhi but the TMC government here has looted you at every step. To benefit the TMC's 'tolabaz', 25 lakh fake job cards were made and given to the peo-

ple. If Modi sends money to the poor's houses, then the TMC government gives your money to the people chosen by 'tolabaz'. Modi is creating opportunities for the impoverished, a move met with disapproval by family members who entered politics solely for power. Consequently, they conspire to maintain their family's dominance in politics. The alliance between TMC and Congress follows a similar pattern. TMC members are concerned about securing positions for their relatives.

## BJP clinches pact with Chandrababu Telugu Desam Party and Jana Sena

**NEW DELHI:** BJP on Saturday sealed a seat-sharing agreement with Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena Party (JSP) in Andhra Pradesh, in what can fetch it important gains in Lok Sabha and assembly elections to be held simultaneously in a state where it is weak.

While the joint statement said modalities of seat-sharing would be deliberated soon, sources in state circles told TOI BJP okayed Naidu's offer of 30 assembly (out of 175) and eight LS seats (25) to allies.

As Jana Sena has already been given 24 assembly and three LS seats, BJP is likely to get six assembly and five LS seats. In Odisha, BJP's talks with BJD are delicately poised as the former resorted to muscle-flexing by signalling it could go it alone. BJD leaders, however, are optimistic and headed



for Delhi Sunday. BJD leader set to meet Shah & Nadda, attend NDA dinner. The latter (BJD), which has been in office in the state for more than two decades, projected reasonableness and optimism about alliance. BJP state in-charge Vijay Pal Tomar went to the extent of saying that the two parties never discussed an alliance. The denial, unconvincing to many, was seen as trigger of video of Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik's cryp-

tic conversation with his aide, V K Pandian where the BJD chief is seen describing "rumours and lies as worst things in politics". In Andhra, the alliance partners said PM Modi has been working tirelessly for development and progress of the nation for past 10 years and BJP's coming together with TDP and JSP will help in fulfilling aspirations of people of the state. The alliance, which brings to an end the coordination

between BJP and YRSCP in Andhra Pradesh where the governing party consistently helped the saffron outfit in Rajya Sabha, is rooted in the estimate about CM Y S Jagan Reddy battling huge anti-incumbency. This is the second time TDP has walked back to NDA. In the last instance it walked out on an aggressive note, with the party boss, then the CM of AP, taking the lead to rally opposition parties against BJP.

## Indian tourists in Maldives decline by 33% amid diplomatic row



**NEW DELHI:** Amid an ongoing diplomatic row, the number of Indian tourists visiting the Maldives has dropped by 33 per cent as compared to last year, Maldivian website Adhadhu reported, citing data from the Maldives Tourism Ministry.

**Decrease in market share**  
According to Tourism Ministry statistics for the year 2023, the number of Indian tourists visiting the Maldives by March 4 last year was 41,054. However, as of March 2 this year, the number has decreased to 27,224, which is 13,830 less than the previous year, as reported by Maldives-based Adhadhu. Last year, India was the second largest source market for tourists to the Maldives, accounting for 10 per cent of market share during the same period. However, India has now dropped to the sixth position on the list, with a market share of 6%. India was the top tourist market for the Maldives, with over 200,000 tourists per year from 2021 to 2023. Diplomatic row led to decline in Indian tourist market in Maldives. The diplomatic row began hours after President Mohamed Muizzu, a pro-China leader, took oath in November 2023 and vowed to ensure Maldives' 'sovereignty' and one of the first steps was to demand India to withdraw all its troops. He also broke from tradition and decided to go to Beijing on his maiden foreign trip instead of New Delhi.

## Congress alleges government pressure, lack of transparency in EC

**NEW DELHI:** Expressing shock at the resignation of election commissioner Arun Goel just ahead of the announcement of Lok Sabha elections, Congress alleged govt pressure and lack of transparency prevailing in the poll watchdog, and demanded that the Centre explain the issue. It said then election commissioner, Ashok

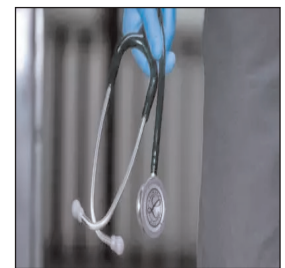


Goel has resigned on the cusp of the Lok Sabha elections. There is absolutely no transparency in how a constitutional institution like the ECI has been functioning and the manner in which govt pressurises them," said Congress general secretary KC Venugopal. Venugopal added, "During the 2019 elections, Ashok Lavasa had dissented against a clean chit to the PM for violating the model code of conduct. It is concerning for the health of the world's largest democracy that Election Commissioner Arun Goel has resigned on the cusp of the Lok Sabha elections. There is absolutely

no transparency in how a constitutional institution like the ECI has been functioning and the manner in which govt pressurises them," said Congress general secretary KC Venugopal. Venugopal added, "During the 2019 elections, Ashok Lavasa had dissented against a clean chit to the PM for violating the model code of conduct.

## Record registration in NEET-UG with 25 lakh application

**MUMBAI:** NEET-UG registration has crossed 25 lakh for the first time, 4.2 lakh more than last year. While Saturday was the last day of registration for the May 5 medical entrance examination, National Eligibility cum Entrance Exam (NEET-UG-2024) being conducted by National Testing Agency, a large number of students were still applying until late in the evening. "Even on the last day [Saturday], a large



number of students are getting registered and are also demanding extension of the last date as several aspirants could not apply due to lack of Aadhaar card and mobile link. Some are not able to get OTP as their old

number is linked to their Aadhaar card. Also, the other option is PAN card but that too is not available to many students," said Allen Career Institute's career counselling expert Parijat Mishra said. Over 13 lakh applications have been made by women candidates for about 2 lakh seats, including 1.09 lakh MBBS, 26,000 dental, along with Unani, Homeopathy, Veterinary.

## Dharavi youth who fought poverty now an Army officer

**MUMBAI:** The industrious inhabitants of Dharavi-Sion Koliwada were a proud lot Saturday. A tenacious 26-year-old named Umesh Dillirao Keelu became the first youth from the precinct to be commissioned in Indian Army. Nine members of his family, including his mother and married sister, attended Saturday's passing out parade at OTA (Officers Training Academy) in Chennai. Years before wearing the olive uniform, Umesh fought hand-to-hand combat with poverty and misfortune. "My father, a painter, became paralysed in 2013 and died of heart



attack a day before I had to report for Army training, in March 2023," Umesh said by phone from Chennai. "Today I completed my 11-month training and become a commissioned officer in the Army." His sunburnt upbringing, in fact, fuelled his appetite for success. Right from his teens, the

determined student self-funded his education, acquiring scholarships, working at a local cyber cafe. He received assistance from Tata Trusts, PF Davar Trust and Mahalaxmi Trust. Umesh completed his BSc in IT and took a Masters degree in computer science. "I also worked at Tata Consultancy Services

for three years followed by a stint at British Council on the weekends." What the youth modestly does not mention is that he shouldered the responsibility of his entire family and funded his father's treatment by this multitasking. Early training in the NCC had set his sights on a career.

## Tea, timber, tourism: PM Modi woos North Bengal

**PM Modi** touched on the three Ts close to North Bengal's heart - tea, tourism and timber - while intertwining them with broader issues plaguing Bengal, including allegations of "corruption" and "misrule" by TMC, as he made another targeted appeal to women. at his first election rally in Siliguri on Saturday.

In his fourth speech within nine days in the state, the PM reiterated themes from his previous addresses, aiming to sustain BJP's momentum in North Bengal, where it won seven of eight LS seats in 2019. Speaking on BJP's commitment to the region's progress, Modi outlined plans for enhancing business opportunities.

## Asked to choose Gandhi or Godse, HC ex-judge says 'need time to think'

**NANDIGRAM:** Former Calcutta HC judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay, who joined BJP on Thursday, came under fire on Friday after a question from a TV anchor to choose between Mahatma Gandhi and Nathuram Godse prompted him to say he "needed to think about it". Gangopadhyay's name appeared in poll graffiti in Nandigram as BJP's prospective Lok Sabha candidate for Tamluk. During an interview with a Bengali news channel, Gangopadhyay was asked to pick between "Gandhi and Godse". He took a deep breath and said: "I will not reply to this now. I need to think over it." In another reply, while referring to his family's long links with Left, Gangopadhyay said that

he had "asked" for a job, but while others got it, he did not. He then dubbed CPM a party of "slogans and dogmas". The two statements kicked off a social media storm, with senior TMC leaders singling them out for their sharpest attacks. TMC MP Saket Gokhale said: "A man who was a high court judge until four days ago can't decide between Gandhi and Godse. Imagine how this man must have delivered his judgments in court and what his mindset has been." Unfazed by this, local BJP workers started canvassing support for Gangopadhyay as the party's Tamluk candidate in Nandigram 2 block's Haripur anchal. Nandigram is state leader of opposition Suvendu Adhikari's assembly constituency.



## Radhe Radhe group created a blast in Nageshwar temple on Mahashivratri



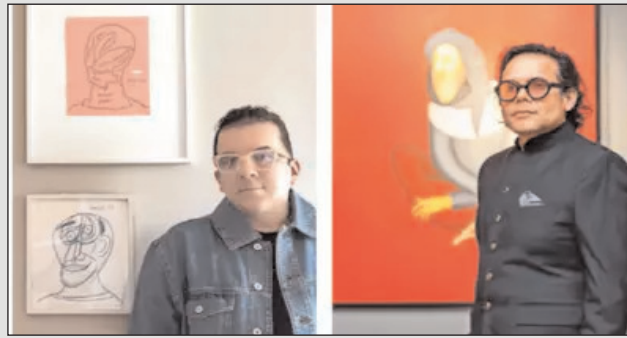
**Prayagraj.** On the occasion of Shivratri, the famous bhajan singer Surya Prakash Dubey ji, who came from Mumbai, enthralled the entire temple council by chanting 'Har Har Mahadev' at the Nageshwar temple in Chhatnag. Let us tell you that bhajan singer Surya Prakash Dubey ji, honored with Prayag Gaurav Run, has created a distinct identity not only in the region but also in

the city of Maya, Mumbai. On the occasion of Shivratri festival, many bhajans were presented on Friday in the Nageshwar temple located in Chhatnag area. Lyrics of bhajans like Mera Bhola Hai Bhandari Kare Nandi Ride, O Shambhu Baba Mere Bholenath, Get milk from the whole village and give Pindi a bath, Mangal Bhavan Amangal Hari, many bhajans were presented. Let us tell

you that Surya Dubey ji has released many albums under the banner of T-Series while living in Mumbai. During the same program, along with him, singer Roma ji and famous singer Prem Prakash Dubey ji also sang many bhajans. During the program, organizers Kishan Chaurasia, Bablu Yadav, and Preeti Hospital owners Amit Tripathi and Preeti Tripathi honored all the artists.

## Canvas and connections: Indian galleries think global

Rakesh Kumar collects both Indian and Emirati art, (right) Volte's Tushar Jiwrajka shows works of Manjit Bawa in Dubai. 'International' Dubai, with its multitude of accents, is now keen to broaden the conversation about art. At the recently concluded Art Dubai, there wasn't just a bigger Indian representation but also a greater focus on the Global South. The booths of Indian galleries reflected that global flavour. Besides their roster of desi artists, Mumbai-based gallery Chemould was showing Saudi-Palestinian artist Dana Awartani. Shireen Gandhi, director of Chemould, says she recently signed Awartani.



"I have been following her work for a while and her themes strike home." The series on show was titled 'Let Me Mend Your Broken Bones', in which the artist displays fragile silk dyed and darned in India.

Each rafu (darned) bit of silk represented a heritage site in Gaza that had been destroyed by Israeli forces. Delhi's

Vadehra Gallery showed two canvases by Amsterdam-based Indian artist Praneet Soi that juxtaposed a view of a playground with one of a Gazan landscape. There were other artistic connections established that went beyond borders. While it's difficult to ship Pakistani artists to India and vice versa, here there's a meeting ground.

## Several countries possibly planning nuclear testing, India & Pakistan may also follow

**MUMBAI:** Nuclear-armed nations are not just upgrading their atomic weapons, but also possibly planning a test explosion, and India and Pakistan, too, "may seek any opportunity to test another nuclear device", says a report in the current issue of 'Bulletin Of The Atomic

Scientists', a journal started in 1945 by Albert Einstein and scientists associated with the Manhattan Project — the design and development of the first atomic bomb. The report has been prepared by Francois Diaz-Maurin, scientific adviser to the European Parliament on

nuclear affairs, and a nuclear security expert. According to the report, despite an international treaty banning nuclear detonations, the issue of nuke weapons testing "is taking centre stage" once again. Satellite imagery has shown increased construction activities happening.

## CAPSULES

### Officer-in-charge of Sandeshkhali police station transferred

**NEW DELHI:** The officer-in-charge of Sandeshkhali police station in West Bengal, Biswajit Shanpui, has been transferred by the state government amid the ongoing controversy surrounding allegations of sexual abuse and land grabbing



against local TMC leaders. Gopal Sarkar, who previously served as the OC in the Basirhat police district, has been appointed as Shanpui's replacement. While police authorities claim that these transfers are routine administrative actions due to a reorganisation of additional officials in the district, it is worth noting that on March 1, two officers from the Basirhat police district were also removed following the arrest of TMC leader Shajahan Sheikh. Sheikh, who was on the run for 55 days, was apprehended by the West Bengal Police for his alleged involvement in sexual assault and land grab cases in Sandeshkhali. The state government subsequently handed over the case to the CID after Sheikh's arrest. Recently, the CBI obtained custody of Sheikh from the West Bengal CID, following orders by the Calcutta High Court. The Sandeshkhali region, located on the fringes of the Sunderbans, has been engulfed in turmoil for over a month due to the allegations against Sheikh and his associates. These allegations include sexual abuse and land usurpation. It is important to note that the Basirhat police district has jurisdiction over this area.

## Lok Sabha elections: DMK finalises seat-sharing pact

**NEW DELHI:** The ruling DMK on Saturday announced it had reached a seat-sharing deal with the Congress in Tamil Nadu ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. The Congress will be fighting on 9 seats in Tamil Nadu and the lone seat in Puducherry. The seat formula is a rerun of the DMK's 2019 formula. The Congress had won nine out of the 10 seats it fought in 2019. DMK president and chief minister M K Stalin and TNCC chief K Selva Perumthagai



finalised the deal, in the presence of AICC leaders KC Venugopal and Ajoy Kumar. Addressing reporters, Venugopal exuded confidence of the DMK-led combine win-

ning all 40 seats in TN and Puducherry and said the 'bonding' between the Congress and the DMK "is intact". "We are happy to declare a formal

alliance with Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Congress will contest elections on 9 seats in Tamil Nadu and one seat in Puducherry. On the remaining seats, we will support the candidates of DMK and alliance parties.

We will win all 40 seats of Tamil Nadu," said Congress MP KC Venugopal. Kamal Haasan's Makkal Needhi Maiam is also part of the DMK-led alliance but has not been allotted any Lok Sabha seats.

## Where women are worshipped, gods also reside there: Ahlawat

**Karnal :** On the occasion of International Women's Day, Jitendra Singh Ahlawat, Managing Director of Genesis Classes, while extending hearty greetings to all the countrymen on the auspicious occasion of International Women's Day, said that where women are worshipped, gods are also there. Live and where women are not worshipped, doing all the work is futile. Today women are walking shoulder to shoulder with men



and making their dreams come true. Shri Ahlawat said that today women are becoming dominant in every field, be it education, sports or poli-

tics, in our country women have shown their talent on all the key positions from President to Chief Minister. In which names like Mrs. Indira

Gandhi, Sushma Swaraj, Sonia Gandhi, Nirmala Sitharaman, Mayawati, Smriti Irani, Sumitra Mahajan, Vasundhara Raje can be taken.

## Himachal crisis: 11 lawmakers, including 6 from Congress reach Uttarakhand

**NEW DELHI:** A total of 11 MLAs, including six rebel Congress legislators who were suspended from the party for cross-voting for BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan in the Rajya Sabha polls, arrived in BJP-ruled Uttarakhand on Saturday.



Delhi and gave a report about the current political situation in the state. "Some MLAs are sad. They have been kept under CRPF security. Is this how democracy will remain strong? Horsetrading weakens the democracy," Himachal Pradesh minister Sikhvinder Singh Sukhu said on Friday. "I have just come to know through social media that they (rebel MLAs) were taken away from the hotel in Panchkula and a charter plane flew from Chandigarh airport. I don't know

where it will land. This is because their family members were putting pressure on them to return," Sukhu added. Disqualified by Himachal assembly speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania, the six Congress members - Rajinder Rana, Sudhir Sharma, Inder Dutt Lakhnani, Devinder Kumar Bhuttoo, Ravi Thakur and Chetanya Sharma - were ousted after they abstained from voting on the budget soon after they had cross-voted against their party candidate Abhishek.

## Rain or snow, new tunnel will take troops to China frontier anytime

**Rain or snow,** new tunnel will take troops to China frontier anytime. The road to Tawang, where Indian and Chinese troops clashed in December 2022, passes through Sela, a mountain pass in Arunachal Pradesh set at almost 14,000 feet. The temperature drops to -20 degrees C sometimes, even diesel freezes, and it snows so heavily that getting through becomes impossible. But now, with the completion of the all-weather Sela Tunnel, Indian Army will have year-round connectivity between Guwahati in Assam and Tawang. The Sela Tunnel is actually two tunnels - or three if you count the escape tunnel built along the longer of the



two main tunnels. The tunnels have been bored through the mountain at 13,116 feet. They will reduce the distance between Tawang and Dirang in Arunachal's West Kameng district by 12km, saving almost 90 minutes one way. The project is said to be the longest bi-lane (two-lane) tunnel in the world at such altitude. The shorter tube

(T1) measures 1003.34m and the longer tube (T2) 1594.90m. Because of T2's length, a 1584.38m-long but narrower tunnel has been built parallel to it to let users escape if there's a cave-in. Sela tunnel For the safety of users, the tunnels have a ventilation system, powerful lighting, and fire-fighting systems. They

have the capacity to let 3,000 cars and 2,000 trucks pass daily. They are of strategic importance as they will allow speedy troop deployment along the eastern sector of Line of Actual Control (LAC). Moving troops, weapons, supplies and heavy machinery to forward areas in winter had become a priority after the Army's skirmishes with People's Liberation Army (PLA) between 2020 and 2022. Army has recently ordered Zorawar light tanks for deployment along LAC as the terrain is unsuitable for main battle tanks like T-90, T-72 and Arjun. Zorawar would be able to use such roads for faster deployment along the border. Topography

### 'Government doesn't want free and fair election': KC

**CHENNAI:** Congress General Secretary, KC Venugopal, expressed shock over the abrupt resignation of the Election Commissioner ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, saying that the entire nation is anxious about the upcoming elections. He also said that the government doesn't want a "free and fair election." Earlier, Election Commissioner Arun Goel resigned from his post on Saturday, with his resignation being accepted by the President. "This is quite shocking; just before the declaration of elections, the Election Commissioner has resigned. Now, only one Election Commissioner is there... What is happening in this Election Commission? The entire country is anxious. The government of India doesn't want a free and fair election," said Venugopal while speaking to ANI. "Earlier, they removed the Chief Justice of India from the selection body of the Election Commission and Election Commissioner.



## Corporate honcho offloaded at Delhi's IGI airport for 'being rude' to Air India crew



**NEW DELHI:** In a possible first, the head of a prominent financial services company was offloaded from an international flight out of India for allegedly speaking rudely to the crew and arguing with them. It was only after receiving an assurance about her behaviour that the airline agreed to accommodate the passenger on the next available flight. The executive, also in the midst of a controversy, had boarded the business class of Air India's Delhi-London flight on Tuesday (March 5) when she is learnt to have started speaking to the crew rudely, sources said. When the behaviour persisted, the cabin crew

informed the captain. "Some of the other passengers in business class also found her to be rude. Being a long, nearly nine-hour flight, the captain decided not to take off with what could be a potential troublesome passenger and she was offloaded," a source said. The checked-in baggage of a person not on board an aircraft has to be offloaded and this takes time. The flight's departure was delayed by about an hour because of this procedure. An AI spokesperson said: "We are aware of an incident on flight AI-161 of March 5, 2024. A passenger travelling in business class was off-

boarded on the advice of the captain, following some argument with members of the crew before the scheduled push-back. AI accords top priority to the safety and security of all passengers and crew, and strictly adheres to rules governing the same." "Following the off-boarding, flight AI-161 departed after a delay of about an hour. The passenger who was off-boarded was travelling for some compelling reasons and was accommodated on a subsequent flight following a written assurance. We regret any inconvenience caused to the other passengers due to the delay," the spokesperson

## Duty to flag people's woes, says LG; dirty politics, claims AAP

**New Delhi:** The tussle between Raj Niwas and elected govt escalated yet again Wednesday after lieutenant governor V K Saxena tagged chief minister Arvind Kejriwal while posting pictures of the dilapidated condition of Qalandar Colony in northeast Delhi on social media. AAP govt responded by asking LG not to play "dirty politics" with the problems of people. "Yesterday evening, I went to Qalandar Colony in Shahdara, northeast Delhi, and saw the condition worse than hell. It is not possible to express in words the plight of the people living amidst pot-holes, clogged drains, heaps of garbage and bad

smell in the name of roads," Saxena posted on social media platform X, formerly Twitter. Stating that as LG, it was his constitutional responsibility to highlight people's issues and to bring CM's attention to the problems they faced, Saxena said, "Locals complained that 35,000-40,000 people live a brutal life in 4,000 houses. It was the responsibility of DUSIB, of which CM is the chairman, to provide basic public facilities and cleanliness was under MCD." LG's latest post on X came amid continuing tensions between him and CM since Tuesday, when he had complained on the social media platform about the living con-

ditions at Sangam Vihar and posted pictures of the area. In response, CM had said that despite holding a constitutional post, LG was "playing the role of opposition", which was ideally meant for BJP MPs and MLAs. Kejriwal had also demanded strict action against the officials responsible for the area's upkeep, saying "services" and "vigilance" was under LG. Hitting back at the latest post, AAP govt said it was unfortunate that LG was "playing dirty politics" with the problems of the common people of Delhi. He raised certain issues about Sangam Vihar, Burari and Kiradi, CM, in good faith, directed the chief secretary.

## Man crashes on to car from train, dies

**BENGALURU:** A white hatchback moving towards Mehri Circle on Ballari Road direction was about to emerge from the road underbridge near Windsor Manor around 1.30pm on Tuesday when the driver's vision went blank as the car's windshield was shattered. The driver applied the brakes immediately and it took a

while for him to realise that a man had fallen on his car's front windshield from the railway tracks above. The passenger, Gourishwaran, was a resident of Vellore in Tamil Nadu. He rolled on to the road from the car's bonnet. As passersby began trying to resuscitate him by pouring water into his mouth, High Grounds

police reached the spot. They shifted the man on to the pavement even as an ambulance arrived. However, the man had already died of severe head injuries. High Grounds police, who alerted the railway police, searched the man's pockets and found a mobile phone that was switched off.



## Online friendship costs woman Rs 12 lakhs

**BENGALURU:** A 35-year-old married woman's friendship with another man from her community has proved costly. The friend took Rs 5 lakh cash and 118 grams of gold ornaments worth Rs 7.2 lakh from her by promising to return them but began demanding money by threatening her that he would inform her husband about their secret friendship. Charmi (name changed), mother of two and wife of a businessman, told police she and the accused Suvesh (name changed) became friends in Jan 2022. The duo used to text each other and talk over phone. After they became close, Suvesh started visiting her home when her husband was away on work. She claimed that despite her opposition, he forced her to be intimate with him. He then borrowed Rs 5 lakh from Charmi, claiming that he owed it to someone. After a few weeks, he approached her for more money. When she told him that she didn't have cash, he convinced her to give him gold ornaments to clear his loan. Charmi gave him three necklaces, six bangles and a pendant worth Rs 7.2 lakh. When Charmi asked him to return her ornaments and cash, he kept borrowing time. Two weeks ago, Suvesh visited Charmi's house and sexually harassed her, and later demanded Rs 1 lakh. When she refused, he threatened her that he'd inform her husband about their friendship. An alarmed Charmi shared her ordeal with her brother, and with his help, lodged a complaint with police. A senior police officer said, "We registered a case under IPC Sections 354 C (voyeurism), 384 (extortion) and 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property), and questioned Suvesh."

## 36-year old shoots himself in South Delhi, family claims murder

**NEW DELHI:** A 36-year-old man allegedly shot himself to death in Jawahar Park area of South Delhi's Neb Sarai, police said on Wednesday. According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Ankit Chauhan, a distress call reporting the incident in Jawahar Park was received at the Neb Sarai Police Station at 11 pm on Tuesday. Both the Crime Team and Forensic units were immediately dispatched to the site. "A call was received at the Neb Sarai Police station in which the



caller said someone had come to meet his brother and bullets were fired. Police on arriving at the scene find that Bharat Sachdeva, around 36 years old, had taken his own life. He used

to drive and auto and had recently lost his job," the DCP said. According to preliminary investigation, the DCP said, "it seems the man shot himself as there is an entry and exit wound. We are

investigating further." The body has been sent to the mortuary at the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS) for a post-mortem examination. However, the family of the deceased has alleged murder. "I have come here, but the police is not letting me see the body of my son," the dead man's father claimed. "With two young children left behind, why will my son take his own life by shooting himself? It is a murder," said the deceased's father.

## Exploring Indian design heritage in graphic design

The book 'Inspirations for Graphic Design from India' by Jaya Jaitly and Dr. Dimple Bahl explores the intersection of graphic design and craft in India. It advocates for decolonisation in design education and proposes a seamless integration of Western concepts with traditional Indian practice. Ms Jaya Jaitly and Dr Dimple Bahl 'Inspirations for Graphic Design from India,' a collaborative effort by Jaya Jaitly and Dr Dimple Bahl, explores the intersection of graphic design and



craft. The book advocates for a shift from the Western-centric approach in graphic design education in India to reconnect with the country's rich design heritage. Emphasising the need for decolonisation in design education, it proposes a seamless

integration of Western concepts with traditional Indian practice. From rekha to bindu, aakaar to trikon, this book explores how references from Indian design history can inspire design in today's world. The co-authors and their commitment to creating a

meeting point of timeless craft and modern graphic design stems from a long and dedicated association with the fields. The co-authors bring a wealth of experience to the project. Jaitly, founder of Dastkari Haat Samiti is deeply involved in heritage and livelihood issues, with a notable career in politics. Dr. Bahl, an academician and graphic designer, focuses on visual brand strategy and publication design, with an emphasis on traditional Indian folk media. Their collaboration has led to

## Water woes grip Bengaluru as city faces severe crisis ahead of summer



**BENGALURU:** India's Silicon Valley, is facing a water crisis. As the sweltering summer approaches, the plea for government intervention grows louder, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable solutions to address the escalating water shortage in the tech hub. Speaking to ANI, resident Suresh emphasized the rising costs and inadequate water supply, expressing concerns about potential health risks in the upcoming hot

weather. 'It's been 6 months, we have not received corporation water, and Kaveri water pipe connections have been provided, but still the water connection is not been given, causing difficulties. For water tankers, booking has to be done two days in advance, and the cost of water delivery has increased from 1600 to 2000. Even after paying this amount, the water doesn't arrive on time. The water scarcity is

severe, and people are struggling even to bathe. In a few days, people won't be able to bathe due to the water shortage. The situation will worsen during the upcoming hot weather, and people might face health risks. We request the government to address the water problem and provide a solution to the scarcity issue.' Another resident Deepa highlighted the severity of the situation stating that for the last 3 months,

## A sangam of filth and apathy: This wasteland actually exists in Delhi

**NEW DELHI:** Because Sangam Vihar is in the news, it is being looked at with special scrutiny. Indeed, it would appear that the south Delhi locality isn't part of the capital. On Wednesday, TOI found the internal lanes there broken, garbage strewn nonchalantly on every available vacant land, a pervasive foul smell in the air and unusable roads. But is it really all that different from other unauthorised areas in the city?

**Wasteland in Delhi** In Aam Aadmi Party's election manifesto of 2020, basic amenities for unauthorised colonies was one of the 10 promises of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, just as other political parties too have canvassed votes on the promise of delivering civic development. But despite these claims, these residential areas lack good roads,



clean drinking water, working sewage system, medical facilities and security. After the public exchanges between LG and CM about the colony, some Delhi Jal Board workers started removing the accumulated waste on the D Block lane from Wednesday morning. Santosh, a paan shop owner, grumbled, "For three months, because of sewer work, the lane has been dug up. I don't understand why the

work is so slow. But even otherwise, every monsoon the drains are choked and the road get flooded with dirty, stinking water. The garbage vans do not come for three-four weeks sometimes." The rampant unplanned constructions have left Sangam Vihar congested and the main road of Mangal Bazar is a nightmare for pedestrians. "After the LG's visit, the main road was cleaned up a bit," said Javed Khan, who

has a shop in Mangal Bazar. "The internal roads are in poor condition. But Delhi govt has done satisfactory work here in the past few years. Our water problem has been solved and we get potable supply once in the morning. There is, however, a need for more garbage vans." Almost a decade ago, Sangam Vihar colony was the hub of the illegal water tanker business and many tubewells were sunk.

## 2 detained for pasting posters of PM illegally

**New Delhi:** Delhi Police has launched an investigation in connection with the posters that were put up in New Delhi carrying a picture of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with fugitive businessmen Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya. Cops have detained two people in the case. The posters had the caption "Modi ka asli pariwar" (real family of Modi) with "Bhartiya Yuva Congress" written at the bottom. A senior police officer said they got a complaint from an official from New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) that some posters were put up in unauthorised areas. A case under Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Property Act has been registered against unknown persons at Tughlaq Road Police Station and the posters have been removed. Inquiry revealed.







## India thrash England by an innings to seal series 4-1

NEW DELHI:

Premier off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin grabbed a famous fiver in his landmark 100th Test as India hammered England by an innings and 64 runs in the fifth and final game in Dharamsala to seal the series 4-1 on Saturday.

Handing England their heaviest defeat in the 'Bazball' era, India wrapped up the contest inside eight sessions as England self-implored on the third day. Veteran James Anderson reached 700 Test wickets early in the morning session to be just the third bowler to achieve the feat, but the tourists were never in the game after India took a massive 259-run lead. Ashwin then returned figures of 5 for 77 to help bowl out England for 195 in the afternoon session at the picturesque Dharamsala stadium.

As It Happened  
With the series already in bag, India were playing for crucial World Test Championship points and England made their job simpler



with yet another reckless batting performance.

Joe Root was the lone ranger for his team and batted beautifully for his 84 off 128 balls. He was the last batter to be dismissed. England's second innings moved at a rather frenetic pace as the batters went on the offensive in their bid to survive against the Indian spinners but failed yet again.

The game appeared to be going only one way when India took a huge 259-run first innings lead in the morning session by posting 477 all out in response to England's 218 on day one. Ahead of the final game of their long tour, Stokes had dismissed

theories of the departure lounge syndrome but with the way his batters performed, it seemed they were in a hurry to get back home.

The attack at all costs approach clearly did not work for them in India and the debacle has given them plenty to ponder before the start of the English summer. For India, the series was a remarkable success considering they had the likes of Virat Kohli and Mohammed Shami unavailable throughout. The youngsters, led by Yashasvi Jaiswal, grabbed the opportunities in the seniors' absence to give the team management more options.

## When I feel I am not good enough, I will retire, but...': Rohit Sharma

NEW DELHI: Former England batter Geoffrey Boycott might have opined that Rohit Sharma is past his best but the Indian skipper made it clear that he is currently playing the best cricket of his life. Rohit led his team from the front in the absence of match-winners like Virat Kohli and KL Rahul in the five-match Test series against England. India inflicted an innings and 64 runs defeat on England to wrap up the Dharamsala Test inside three days and win the series 4-1. Talking about his own performance after the match, Rohit stated that the day he believes he is not up to the mark, he won't hesi-



tate to retire. "One day, when I wake up and feel, I am not good enough then I will retire straight away but in the last few years I am playing the best cricket of my life," Rohit said.

Head coach Rahul Dravid also lavished praise on Rohit, saying the skipper stepped up and bailed

the team out of the trouble on many occasions in the series.

"Rohit Sharma has been exceptional in this series. In Rajkot, when we were 3 down inside the first hour, we needed someone to get us that hundred. In Ranchi also, he batted amazingly," Dravid said.

## Nasser Hussain lambasts England's 'Bazball' approach

NEW DELHI: Former England captain Nasser Hussain offered reflections on England's 1-4 series loss in India, particularly highlighting the importance of individual performances in challenging conditions. Despite facing criticism for the pitches, Hussain defended them and

commended a depleted Indian team for securing their 17th consecutive home series victory. Ravichandran Ashwin's five-wicket haul in his 100th Test played a pivotal role in breaking down England's batting line-up, leading to India's comprehensive win by an innings and 64

runs in Dharamsala. The defeat served as a setback for England's 'Bazball' school of cricket, and Hussain acknowledged the challenges posed by the Indian team in their home conditions. "The final Test was like the old-school England in India in the last decade.

## Harmanpreet Kaur's sensational 95 propels MI to WPL playoffs

NEW DELHI: Captain Harmanpreet Kaur played a blistering unbeaten innings of 95, propelling Mumbai Indians to a convincing seven-wicket victory over Gujarat Giants in their Women's Premier League (WPL) match in Delhi on Saturday. This triumph secured Mumbai Indians' spot as the first team to qualify for the playoffs. Chasing Gujarat's total of 190 for seven, Harmanpreet's explosive knock came in just 48 balls, featuring 10 fours and five sixes. Alongside opener



Yastika Bhatia, who contributed 49 runs in 36 balls, the defending champions successfully chased down the target, reaching 191 for three with a ball to spare. Despite losing wickets before reaching 100 within 13.3 overs, Mumbai faced a challenging task of needing

72 runs off 30 balls. Harmanpreet, dropped on 40, switched to "beast mode" and took charge of the innings, forming a crucial partnership of 93 runs with Amelia Kerr. Harmanpreet's boundary-laden onslaught, especially in the 18th over against off-spinner

Sneh Rana, reduced the required runs to a manageable 23 off 12 balls. Mumbai Indians sealed the win, placing them at the top of the chart with 10 points. Earlier, Gujarat Giants had posted a competitive total of 190 for seven, driven by dynamic fifties from skipper Beth Mooney (66 runs) and D Hemalatha (74 runs). The duo's explosive second-wicket partnership of 121 runs set a strong foundation for Gujarat's innings, but Mumbai's successful chase secured their dominance.

## Rohit and I don't decide contracts, we only select playing XI: Rahul on Iyer, Kishan omission

NEW DELHI: The fate of sidelined cricketers Shreyas Iyer and Ishan Kishan has sparked widespread debate following their omission from the BCCI central contract list. However, India head coach Rahul Dravid expressed reluctance to shut the door on their prospects.

Ishan Kishan, absent from the two-Test series against South Africa, has been diligently preparing for the upcoming IPL alongside Mumbai Indians' teammate Hardik Pandya at a private facility in



Baroda. In defiance of the BCCI's directive to participate in domestic matches, Iyer initially withdrew from Mumbai's Ranji Trophy quarterfinal, citing back spasms. However, he subsequently played in

the semifinal against Tamil Nadu and is slated to feature in the final against Vidarbha starting Sunday. "They are always in the mix. Nobody is out of picture. Everyone who's playing domestic

cricket is in the mix. It's just a question of, hopefully, them getting back and fit, playing cricket, and forcing the selectors to pick them again." However Dravid steered cleared when the sensitive issue of central contract cropped up. "I don't decide contracts, right? Contracts are decided by the selectors and the board. I don't even know what is the criteria (for inclusion). Me and Rohit select the (playing) 11. We have never discussed whether somebody has a contract or not.

## Mooney fifties power Gujarat Giants to 190/7 against MI in WPL

NEW DELHI: Dynamic fifties by skipper Beth Mooney and D Hemalatha propelled Gujarat Giants to a competitive 190 for seven against defending champions Mumbai Indians in their Women's Premier League match on Saturday. Mooney (66, 35b, 8x4, 3x6) and Hemalatha (74, 40b, 9x4, 2x6) added 121 runs for an electrifying second-wicket alliance in a little over 11 overs after the Gujarat side elected to bat first. Their power walk started after the early departure of opener Laura Wolvaardt (13), who was cleaned up by Hayley Matthews.



Both Mooney, who struck his second fifty in a row, and Hemalatha slipped into overdrive straightaway. While Hemalatha was severe on MI spinners, the veteran Mooney focused on the opposition pacers. A straight six of pacer Nat-Sciver Brunt and back-to-back fours off Shabnim Ismail, who recently breached the 130 kmph-barrier, helped Mooney to chug along at a scoring rate of over 200. The introduction of pacer Pooja Vastrakar prompted Mooney to take her batting to another level as two scoops behind wicket-keeper gave her as many maximums. At the other end, Hemalatha picked up leg-spinner Amelia Kerr for punishment as the right-hander smashed her for 4, 6, 4 in the 10th over to collect 15

runs. Mooney reached her fifty in 27 balls and minutes later Hemalatha too crossed the mark off 28 balls as the Giants moved ahead in a brisk clip. But the dismissal of Mooney in the 14th over, right after the Strategic Time Out, applied breaks on Gujarat scoring. The attempt to pull off-spinner Sajana Sajeevan made her hear the deathly clatter of stumps. Hemalatha soon fell to Ismail as the Gujarat side lost four wickets while adding 28 runs but they have already reached.

## Pietersen, Gambhir hail BCCI secretary Jay Shah for new Test incentive scheme

MUMBAI: BCCI's announcement of introducing a new Test incentive scheme for India's senior men's team has come in favour of Kevin Pietersen with the former England captain lauding BCCI secretary Jay Shah for the "highly commendable" action. Shortly after India thrashed England by an innings and 64 runs to win the fifth and final Test at HPCA Stadium in Dharamsala to clinch the series 4-1, BCCI secretary Jay Shah announced the initiation of the 'Test Cricket Incentive Scheme' for the senior men's team. According to the new initiative, the BCCI will give an additional match fee to India's senior men's team regulars who play more than 75



per cent of Test matches in a season for India set to receive an additional fee of Rs 45 lakh per Test match. Hailing Jay Shah as a "powerful leader" Pietersen said, "NOW WE TALKING! Highly commendable that @JayShah is doing his utmost to protect Test Cricket! We need powerful leaders to stand up for Test Cricket like this? Thank you!" Pietersen wrote in a post on X (formerly Twitter). The incentive

scheme serves as a financial boost for the players who prioritise playing Test cricket and comes on top of the existing match fee of INR 15 lakh per match. "I am pleased to announce the initiation of the 'Test Cricket Incentive Scheme' for Senior Men, a step aimed at providing financial growth and stability to our esteemed athletes." "Commencing from the 2022-23 season, the 'Test Cricket

Incentive Scheme' will serve as an additional reward structure on top of the existing match fee for Test matches, set at INR 15 lakh," wrote Shah on his 'X' account. According to the incentive structure posted by Shah, players featuring in more than 50 per cent of Tests in a season since 2022/23, will benefit the most. A player who plays five to six Tests in a nine-match season will receive INR 30 lakh per match as a playing eleven incentive, while 15 lakh per match is kept as a non-playing eleven incentive. Every player who features in at least 75 per cent of matches (which is seven or more matches in a nine-game season), will get a playing incentive.

## 'Ageing' Shami needs to take cue from Anderson: McGrath

NEW DELHI: Legendary Australian pacer Glenn McGrath believes that the current Indian pace attack has much to offer before the next generation can take over. McGrath also encouraged Mohammed Shami to draw inspiration from the longevity of England veteran James Anderson. McGrath made these remarks on the day when India secured an impressive 4-1 Test series victory over England at home. "We have to wait and see the next generation coming through. (Jasprit) Bumrah has still got a bit to go, (Mohammed) Shami is a little older, and (Mohammed) Siraj has been around for a little while but still has plenty left. So, the (current Indian) bowling attack has still some life left," McGrath told PTI. On the sidelines of an MRF Pace Foundation event in Chennai.



## Bombay HC reserves for order plea for stay on Centre's FCU rule

**MUMBAI:** Justice A S Chandurkar of the Bombay high court on Thursday concluded hearing interim applications for a stay on the Centre's fact check unit (FCU) and reserved it for orders. The Centre through its Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sharing video clips of 'deep fakes' and instances of online posts and news he said were found to be fake and related to government departments, said no stay was required as the rule only flags as 'fake, false or misleading' content on social media related to the Centre's working. It requires initially at best a disclaimer to be added, and protects the interest of the public at large from incorrect facts in relation to the Central government, said the SG adding not just India, the world is now dealing with a medium which has no geographical limits, and posts instantly can be accessed by millions. Mehta said while he did last April make a



statement before the HC that the Centre would not notify the FCU till next date and continued it till the split verdict last month, now has had no instructions from the Indian government to extend it. On Jan 31, the division bench of Justices Gautam Patel and Neela Gokhale after hearing at length a challenge raised originally by standup comic Kunal Kamra, and others including Editors Guild of India, News Broadcasters & Digital Association, Association of India Magazines to a 2023 amendment to intermediary guidelines

under the Information technology Act, delivered two differing opinions. The issue of constitutional validity of the rule that enables Centre to set up the FCU thus was sent to a third Judge. Pending the final hearing Kamra's senior counsel citing the 'marketplace of ideas' jurisprudence of Celebrated US Justice Oliver Holmes sought stay on notifying the FCU, arguing that the rule, though meant for intermediaries has a 'chilling effect' on users and would flout their right to free speech. SG Mehta, disagreeing with Seervai, said a few individuals.

## Research Internships from UGC Give Students Stipends, Insurance

**Delhi:** Stipends, insurance, and academic credits are awarded to fourth-year undergraduates who complete research internships. Participating enterprises must pay interns a set amount, according to UGC norms provided to higher education institutions. Nodal officers for research internships will negotiate with corporations for the program at higher education institutions.

Higher education

institutions may also seek group internships. The Four Year Undergraduate Programme's fourth year will include the research internship. Every student will have an internship supervisor to help them finish their work on time.

The UGC solicited stakeholder input on this guidelines draft. UGC chairperson M Jagdish Kumar said it implemented a credit framework at the undergraduate level following the

National Education Policy 2020. He claimed the internship is mandatory to boost student employability. Educational institutions will survey local market demand for research internships. Surveys and courses will inform internship projects. Educational institutions must publish internship projects and mentor information. Industry representatives should have been in career counseling, it said.

## ED attaches flats-plots worth Rs 64 crore of Kamla Landmarc

**MUMBAI:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth Rs 64 crore belonging to Kamla Landmarc group companies, owned by builder Jitendra Jain and partner Parvath Shetty, in connection with a money laundering case.

In a press release issued on Thursday, the ED stated that Jitendra Jain, in a criminal conspiracy with Parvath Shetty, transferred ownership of Kamla Landmarc Builders (one of the Kamla Landmarc group companies) to Parvath Shetty through forgery.

Subsequently, Parvath Shetty transferred ownership of the assets created in Kamla Landmarc to his relatives in order to conceal the original ownership. The attached assets include various flats worth Rs 33 crore in the city, agriculture lands worth Rs 16 crore.

## Touch of Gond: Solo exhibition by Ram Singh Urveti celebrates artistic legacy of Pradhan Gond

'Another Master' exhibition, featuring more than fifty works by Ram Singh Urveti, in various mediums, including paper and canvas are on display till March 10 at Delhi's Ojas Art Gallery. One of the senior-most artists from the Pradhan Gond tribe, Urveti started his career in 1991, incorporating his folk traditions in a contemporary and evocative style, and the paintings on display cover more than three decades of his prolific working life. One of the highlights of the exhibition is Sur aur Taal ki Kahani (The Story of Divine Music),



a unique and rare 12 folio-set from 2008-2009, narrating the age-old Gond legend of the divine music and how it was brought to earth. In all his works, Urveti's captivating visuals and intuitive storytelling

fuse his perceptions of the modern world with his tribe's unique symbolism. Rife with the tree-of-life motifs and curved silhouettes, his primitive imagery transcends the canvas, inviting you to closely

observe the natural world in all its plenitude. In his book, Indian Contemporary Art, Herve Perdrille observes, "With Jangarh Singh Shyam, Ram Singh Urveti is one of the most important figures in contemporary Indian tribal art. Encouraged by Jagdish Swaminathan, he was one of the first to make the transition from ephemeral art to painting on canvas in the early 1990s." His pieces exude an otherworldly quality: buffalos, soul-searching, serpents and Mahua trees commingle in a striking outburst of animism.

## Gaganauts' ground suit designed by NIFT Bengaluru team has asymmetry as theme

**BENGALURU:** A NIFT team from Bengaluru, led by two faculty members and three students, had the prestigious task of designing the ground uniform for the Gaganyaan astronauts. They presented 70 designs to Isro, with the asymmetrical theme turning out to be the head-turner. The team said they studied the uniform of various space agencies including Nasa and SpaceX. Gaganyaan's ground suit designed by NIFT Bengaluru team has asymmetry as theme. When the four astro-

nauts selected for mission Gaganyaan proudly stood on the dias, displaying the wings the prime minister had just pinned on their ground suits on Tuesday, it was a team at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Bengaluru, that was beaming in pride. For, the dark and light blue ground uniform of the astronauts was designed by a team of two faculty and three students in the tech capital. Prof Jonalee D Bajpai and Prof Mohan Kumar V, under the guidance of the then

NIFT director Susan Thomas, and assisted by three students of knitwear design batch 2022 - Lamia Anees, Samarpan Pradhan and Tuliya D - were assigned with the prestigious task of designing the suit. Of the 70 designs they had presented to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the one that the gaganauts wore was selected. Asymmetry is the theme that the NIFT team has played with. "Gaganyaan has the potential to create excitement in the 1.4 billion people of India

and also create a very positive outlook towards the indigenous capabilities. The appearance of the astronaut should reflect that excitement with a strong visual impact. Very bold and unusual panelling on the garment is a head-turner and a loud announcement of India's entry to the elite club of space travel capability," Mohan Kumar said of the design. "The standing out design boldly states the arrival of India in the world of human space flight. The use of uncon-

## No rift in Hockey India, say Tirkey, Bhola Nath

**BENGALURU:** The skeletons have begun to tumble out of the Hockey India closet with two top officials - a coach and CEO - both foreigners, handing in their resignations in quick succession and both pointing towards administrative bungling as the primary cause. Senior women's team chief coach Janneke Schopman accused the federation of gender discrimination, lack of respect and a non-conducive working environment while Elena Norman, the CEO of 13 years, was more forthcoming when she said she was the victim of power struggle and factions in Hockey India. Since the start of the new regime in 2022, it hasn't been a smooth ride for former India skipper Dilip Tirkey, who assumed office as president with Bhola Nath Singh as HI secretary. It is



learnt that Bhola Nath, who is a close aide of FIH president Tayyab Ikram, has been undermining the powers of the president. A few exchanges of emails, in possession of TOI, suggest the same. But on Thursday, the men in power issued a joint statement to defuse the situation. "Hockey India is an autonomous and professional body dedicated to the development of Indian Hockey. Our primary objective as an organisation has been and continues to remain the welfare and progress of the sport of Hockey and our athletes. In this

spirit, our entire focus remains on growing our talent, ensuring all hosted events are conducted with utmost professionalism and our national teams are receiving the best support to support their performance on the global stage," they stated. Reacting to Norman's comments, they said, "Recently there have been statements by outgoing officials, claiming that there are divisions within the organization. This is not correct. We remain united in working together, and as always in the best interest of the sport."

## Ahead of polls Persons with disabilities release 'manifesto'

**NEW DELHI:** With the Lok Sabha polls round the corner, persons with disabilities came together on Thursday to release a manifesto demanding that political parties must prioritise mainstreaming of people with disabilities in their 5-year action plans for the upcoming elections. From health insurance cover to making way for 5% reservations in governance to policies around pension, health and employment - the manifesto also calls for making way for representation of persons with disabilities in the upper House of Parliament as nominated members. The 'Manifesto For and By Citizens with Disabilities' - was launched by disability rights groups,



led by National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) in collaboration with the National Disability Network (NDN). "As the Lok Sabha Elections 2024 draw near, citizens with disabilities, who form 7% of the population of India and there are more than 1 crore registered voters as

per the Election Commission, it is essential that the voices of persons with disabilities are heard in the discussions around the 2024 General Elections," Arman Ali, executive director of NCPEDP emphasised. He shared that the disability manifesto represents the culmination of extensive national and regional

consultations. NCPEDP, in collaboration with the National Disability Network (NDN) and the National Committee on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD), invited inputs from more than 10,000 people with and without disabilities across the country. The disability manifesto addresses a wide spectrum of issues ranging from budgetary allocation to health insurance, accessibility, social security, socio-political inclusion, economic participation, climate change, gender equality, sports, and education. Some of the key demands include greater focus on persons with disabilities in the budget with a minimum of 5% of the total budget.

## Digantara gets additional \$2 million

**Bengaluru:** Space Situational Awareness (SSA) startup Digantara Wednesday announced the closure of an extended \$2 million financing to its previously raised \$10 million Series A round. The new funding saw participation from investors like Aditya Birla Ventures, the venture capital arm of the Aditya Birla Group, and the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI). "This marks the first time both these investors have ventured into the space technology sector, showing their commitment to Digantara's vision of enabling safe and sustainable space operations," the Bengaluru-headquartered company said. Digantara CEO Anirudh Sharma said the support from leading institutions indicates accelerating momentum in India's space ecosystem poised for global leadership in innovation.



## GDP growth at 8.4% in 3rd quarter, fastest in 1.5 years



**NEW DELHI:** The economy grew at its fastest pace in six quarters in the three months to Dec, led by robust manufacturing and construction sector growth. The strong growth has boosted govt's track record of handling the economy against the backdrop of global challenges ahead of general elections. Data released by National Statistical Office (NSO) showed the economy grew by a faster-than-expected 8.4% in Oct-Dec, higher than upwardly revised 8.1% in the previous quarter and above 4.3% in the third quarter of 2022-23. Now, NSO estimates 2023-24 GDP

growth at 7.6%, above earlier estimate of 7.3%, making India world's fastest-growing major economy. NSO has revised upwards the second and first quarters while revision to 2022-23 quarters also led to a favourable effect. GDP growth for FY23 was revised to 7% from 7.2%. The Q3 growth was also higher than RBI's projection of 6.5%. The central bank had revised its projection to 7% for 2023-24 from 6.5%. **Capture 2 Growth broad-based, driven by investment demand: Finmin** Robust 8.4% GDP growth in Q3 2023-24 shows the strength of

Indian economy and its potential. Our efforts will continue to bring fast economic growth which shall help 140 crore Indians lead a better life and create a Viksit Bharat," PM Modi posted on microblogging site X after the data release. The finance ministry said India continues to be an outlier and remains the fastest-growing major economy in the Oct-Dec 2023 quarter and it builds on the momentum of the previous quarter. It said growth was broad-based, driven by robust investment demand. The manufacturing sector recorded a double-digit growth of 11.6%.

## Core sector growth slows to 15-month low of 3.6% in January

**NEW DELHI:** Growth in the country's key infrastructure sector slowed to a 15-month low in January, dragged down by contractions in refinery products and fertilisers, while steel and cement sectors remained strong. Data released by the commerce and industry ministry on Thursday showed eight core sectors, spanning coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity, grew 3.6% in January, slower than 4.9% in the previous months and below 9.7% recorded in January last year. "Core



sector growth slid to a 15 month low of 3.6% in January 2024, with contractions emerging in refinery products and fertilisers, and a sub-1% rise in natural gas. Encouragingly, the other five components displayed a moderate-to-healthy expansion, rang-

ing from 5.2% to 10.2% in January 2024," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist at ICRA. Separate data showed fiscal deficit at January-end was at Rs 11 lakh crore or 63.6% of the revised annual estimates, narrower than 67.8% in the corresponding period.

## SoftBank cuts stake in Paytm

**MUMBAI:** SoftBank has cut another 2.1% stake in Paytm, reducing its shareholding in the fintech firm to 2.8%, the company said in a recent stock exchange filing. The Japanese investment behemoth which bets heavily on tech firms had invested over \$1 billion into Paytm and held about

18% stake in the Noida-based company at the time of its initial public offering in 2021. Even as SoftBank has been offloading its stake in the firm, the developments come at a time when Paytm Payments Bank has come under regulatory scrutiny due to persistent non-compliance. Paytm founder

and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma is the largest shareholder. In PPBL with a 51% stake while Paytm parent One97 Communications holds 49% stake in the banking entity whose operations have been restricted by RBI. The central bank has directed PPBL to stop accepting money.

## Zepto launches subscription programme for users as competition in quick commerce space

**MUMBAI:** At a time when consumers are taking to the idea of instant grocery deliveries and competition in the space is rising with deep-pocketed players Swiggy and Zomato betting big on their grocery businesses, Zepto is launching a price war with its subscription programme Zepto Pass. The pass, which will be available to most of the customers at a monthly fee of Rs 19-39 will give users access to unlimited free deliveries besides an additional discount of up to 20% on all grocery products. For now, the benefits can be unlocked only when

customers make orders worth Rs 99 and above. Co-founder and CEO Aadit Palicha claimed that the company has been able to leverage its low operating cost structure to roll out the benefits for customers. The idea is to get a larger share of the consumer's wallet and speed up adoption of quick commerce. "We are about two quarters away from being close to PAT (profit after tax) positive even with Zepto Pass because our cost structures on the back end have reduced dramatically," Palicha told TOI. The service which had

been piloted with 5% of the startup's user base prior to a broader roll out showed that consumers with Zepto Pass subscriptions spent 30% more on groceries and their monthly retention improved by 10%, the company said. "The pass is like an avenue to offer more value to customers and as a result, they are spending more with Zepto," said Palicha. The company also expects average order value (AOV) to get a boost with the service. The level of discounts will depend on the size of shopping baskets and the company will analyse every cus-

tomers' order data to offer them a customised AOV which will enable broader discounts if they are willing to match. (if their purchases total that AOV) it. "We want to become an attractive option even when compared to best discount grocers in the offline space. If we can give consumers access to better prices, 10-minute deliveries, why won't they buy from Zepto?" Palicha said. Rival Swiggy Instamart already offers customers the benefits of free deliveries and discounts to consumers on orders above.

## The insurance industry settled Rs 80,000 crore of health insurance

**MUMBAI:** Non-life insurance companies have said they can help government by providing standardised rates for medical procedures. On, the SC asked cenral govt to consult with states and implement a law that would mandate notification of standard rates for medical procedures. "The insurance industry settled Rs 80,000 crore of health insurance claims regarding bills from nearly 40,000 hospitals. This data is available if the ministry wants to bring in data trans-



parency to curb high charges," said Tapan Singhel, chairman of the General Insurance Council and MD & CEO of Bajaj Allianz General

Insurance. According to Singhel, even if hospitals were required to disclose their schedule of charges for various pro-

cedures, it would significantly enhance transparency. "We have initiated the effort to provide cashless treatment in all hospitals..."

## Strong momentum to continue in Q4, says CEA Anantha

**NEW DELHI:** The strong momentum of the economy is expected to continue in fourth quarter of current financial year, chief economic advisor V Anantha Nageswaran said on Thursday and hoped the farm sector will stage a rebound in next quarter. "So the actual performance of the economy has continued to defy expectations and do better than what many had projected, underscoring the fact that a structural transformation of the economy is indeed underway, both in terms of physical infrastructure and digital infrastructure as well as inclusion agenda, boosting the purchasing power of Indian households," Nageswaran told reporters after release of GDP data. The farm sector contracted 0.8% during Q3 of 2023-24 largely due

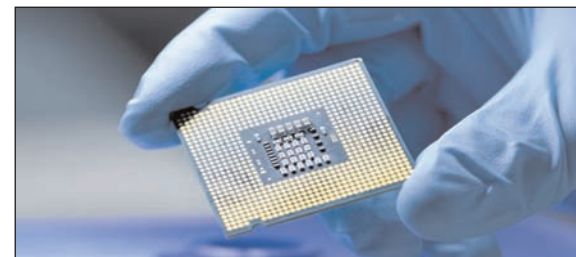


to impact of patchy monsoon rains. CEA said prospects of robust rabi harvesting and expectations of fading away of El Nino and forecast of a normal monsoon augured well for a better-than-normal kharif sowing. He said strong growth was linked to vibrant underlying demand conditions, adding economy has shown strong resilience to global vulnerabilities

and there has been a decline in India's uncertainty index. Nageswaran said moderation in overall inflation and core inflation (minus food and fuel) is expected to boost consumption. He said prospects of healthy rabi harvesting, sustained manufacturing profitability and underlying service resilience to support economic activity in 2024-25.

## Government clears 3 semiconductor manufacturing projects worth Rs 1.3 lakh crore

**NEW DELHI:** Government on Thursday cleared proposals for three semiconductor manufacturing units worth Rs 1.3 lakh crore, including the country's first fab manufacturing plant by Tata Group and Taiwanese Powerchip Semiconductor Manufacturing Corp (PSMC) in Gujarat. This will be a big push to India's electronics manufacturing set-up as the chips will be made within the country for the first time. The Cabinet nod, which also includes a project involving Japanese Renesas Electronics, follows Rs 22,000 crore testing and packaging unit project of US company Micron, that was approved in June last year (production is



expected to happen by close of this year). Untitled design (94) "India has taken a giant leap today in gaining a foothold in the coveted chip manufacturing eco-system. With these units, semiconductor manufacturing and its ecosystem will get established in India," communications minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said. Tata Electronics will set up a Rs 91,000 crore semiconductor fab project with PSMC at Dholera in Gujarat. The plant will have a capacity to produce 50,000

wafers per month. PSMC is renowned for its expertise in logic and memory foundry segments. Tata Electronics said it is proud to lead India's entry into global semiconductor fabrication, and said construction for the project will begin this year. "This will also accelerate our progress towards providing high-technology employment opportunities for the youth," Randhir Thakur, CEO and MD of Tata Electronics, said. Minister of state for IT & electronics Rajeev

Chandrasekhar said a slew of new proposals are in the pipeline and added that govt expects a total investment outlook of nearly Rs 2.2 lakh crore. Cabinet has also approved semiconductor unit of Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test (TSAT) in Assam at an investment of Rs 27,000 crore. Renesas Electronics and Thailand's Stars Microelectronics's project in Sanand in Gujarat at an investment of Rs 7,600 crore has also got green signal. Govt is close to approving a Rs 90,000 crore proposal of Israel's chipmaker Tower Semiconductors. Vaishnaw said all the units will create nearly 26,000 direct jobs and another one lakh indirect ones.

## Drop in share of imported coal in consumption saves Rs 82 k crore forex outgo

**NEW DELHI:** The share of imported coal in overall consumption in the country has come down to 19.3% in the April-December period of the financial year ending March 31 from 21% in the previous corresponding period, translating into Rs 82,264 crore worth of forex savings, the coal ministry said on Thursday. The decline in the consumption of imported coal is a result of rising domestic production on the back of a concerted government push garnished with a slew of reforms to clean up the system and incentives announced since 2014. The steady rise in coal production and improved availability has seen the CAGR (compounded annual growth rate) of imported coal consumption plummeting to about -2.7% between 2014 and 2024 from 13.7%.



## Pre-2014 era marked a 'dark age' in the country: Yogi



**Chandauli** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Saturday, drew a comparison between India before Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over in 2014 and after to highlight the transformation witnessed in the country in the recent years. He characterized the pre-2014 era as a 'dark age' and contrasted it with the emergence of a 'New India' under the current leadership. Addressing a public meeting organized in Rampur Machiya on Saturday, the Chief Minister said, "There was an atmosphere of distrust, declining respect for Indians, a string of

scams, and widespread anarchy. Naxalism, and extremism prevailed across the country. However, he highlighted the transformation, stating, "But, the India you are witnessing today is a New India. Security is guaranteed here, culture is being promoted and the nation is achieving unprecedented economic prosperity." On this occasion, the CM inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 78 development projects worth Rs 743 crore. He expressed confidence that, under Prime Minister Modi's third term, India is poised to become the world's third-largest power. CM Yogi empha-

sized that the double-engine government would prioritize the welfare of the youth and uphold the trust of the citizens. "It is the result of the strength of the government that the medical college is ready in Chandauli." Attacking the previous governments, he highlighted that despite the Chandauli district being established in 1997, essential infrastructure such as a police line and residential and non-residential buildings for the tehsil was not provided even after 27 years. "Today, the foundation stone for the construction of residential and non-residential buildings,

## By formulating over 40 policies in 10 years, PM Modi has presented an exemplary model of a policy-driven state, shaping the country's economy: Amit Shah

**New Delhi:** Basanti, the celebrated fashion house, is set to make waves with its debut at the Jaipur Times Fashion Week on the 10th of March 2024, hosted at the luxurious Jaipur Marriott. The event promises to be a spectacle, showcasing the brand's commitment to innovation and growth through its groundbreaking collection, "Renaissance: A Rebirth for BASANTI." Divided into two distinct chapters, each segment captures the essence of Basanti's evolution and the brand's deep understanding of the modern Indian woman's diverse lifestyle. Chapter One: Prints and Resort Wear, Continuing the journey, the collection moves into a captivating array of prints and resort wear, where Basanti has long been a pioneer in India's fast fashion landscape. This chapter embodies freedom and exploration, offering a fusion of style



and comfort for the contemporary woman who seeks both elegance and ease. Chapter Two: Glamour and Sophistication for the Modern Bride, The grand finale unfolds with a chapter exuding glamour and sophistication, dedicated to the modern bride and tailored for special occasions. Drawing inspiration from the desires and aspirations of their clientele, this segment is a tribute to accessible luxury that resonates with the mod-

ern Indian woman. "Basanti's creative process is deeply rooted in the preferences and evolving needs of their clients. The collection seamlessly blends style, quality, and accessibility, ensuring that each piece becomes a timeless wardrobe essential for the modern woman. This collection is not just a reflection of our brand's journey; it's a celebration of the modern Indian woman and her boundless spirit of reinvention.

## CAPSULES

### CM Yogi warns officials against negligence in resolving people's issues Chief Minister listens to problems of 500 people at Janata Darshan

**Gorakhpur** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday warned officials against any laxity, or negligence in resolving people's issues, emphasizing that addressing problems of people and ensuring its prompt, transparent and satisfactory disposal is the priority of his government. CM Yogi issued these instructions to officials while hearing problems of around 500 people at the Janata Darshan held outside Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Bhawan in Gorakhnath temple complex. Referring people's applications to the concerned authorities, he gave instructions for prompt disposal of all their issues. He assured people that no injustice would be done to anyone during his tenure, underscoring the government's determination to solve the problems of every victim. Furthermore, CM Yogi instructed officials to take strict legal action against those bullying the poor and encroaching on people's lands illegally. To those seeking financial aid for treatment, CM Yogi pledged complete government's support. He forwarded their applications to the concerned officials and directed them to expedite the cost estimation process and submit it to the government at the earliest. The Chief Minister also directed officials to resolve matters related to revenue and police with complete transparency and impartiality, emphasizing that no injustice to anyone should be tolerated.

## Acid attack survivors felicitated in Kolkata on the eve of International Women's Day

**KOLKATA:** Even after surviving acid attacks the survivors continue to battle with physical deformity. On Friday on the eve of International Women's Day few such brave acid attack survivors who had defied deformities to go ahead in life, were felicitated in Kolkata. They said that support from organisations like Brave Soul Foundation (BSF) has made their journey easier. Poly Debnath, one such survivor has been left blind in one eye after an acid attack in 2014. After days in hospital care she survived. But the attack



had also left her with deformities and with dental issues. "The journey ahead after the acid attack would have been tough if it was not for organisations standing behind us," said Debnath. Doctors said that acid attack survivors often grapple with intricate dental issues, including

deranged bite, malocclusion, and injuries to the jaws that may necessitate maxillectomy or mandibulectomy. The psychological toll is equally extensive, manifesting as dental anxiety. Moreover, in the aftermath of such traumatic incidents, victims may experience physical deformations, with

oral manifestations ranging from a shrunken and narrow mouth to a loss of its full range of motion. These challenges significantly impact essential functions like eating and speaking. "As dental professionals, we are aware of the profound impact that acid attacks can have on oral health. Acid attacks often lead to severe dental erosion, compromising not only the physical well-being but also the emotional and psychological aspects of survivors," Dr Biswajit Panda during the event on Friday.

## NCC plays vital role in disciplining youth & discipline is essential for achieving success: CM Yogi

**Gorakhpur** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Saturday, said that the National Cadet Corps (NCC) plays vital role in disciplining the youth, emphasizing the significance of discipline in achieving success in life. Addressing a gathering after performing the bhoomi-pujan and laying the foundation stone for the National Cadet Corps (NCC) Training Academy in Siktaur (Talkandla), Gorakhpur, Yogi added: "Discipline is essential for achieving success in any sphere of life. Discipline is born out of

self-discipline, inspiring a person to walk the right path to achieve their goals. From this perspective, NCC plays a crucial role in imparting practical knowledge of discipline to the youth." Notably, The Training Academy of NCC Group Headquarters, Gorakhpur, will be constructed in an area of 10 acres at the cost of Rs 55 crore. The Chief Minister stated further, "NCC, formed by an Act of Parliament in 1948, is the largest uniformed organization in the world to inspire youth

for unity and discipline." He stressed Prime Minister Modi's vision of integrating the NCC into the lives of today's youth. He said that to carry forward this vision of PM in mission mode, NCC Training Academy is being established in Gorakhpur. This academy will serve as a hub for fostering unity and discipline, nurturing social cohesion to strengthen national unity, he remarked. The Chief Minister asserted that when an individual or organization initiates efforts, the government extends its cooperation

by taking two steps forward. The Gorakhpur Headquarters demonstrated this cooperative spirit in establishing the NCC Training Academy. Given Uttar Pradesh's status as the state with the largest population in the country, this academy holds immense significance for UP, CM Yogi remarked. He said that out of the 11 districts falling under NCC Group Headquarters, 4 districts namely Siddharthnagar, Balrampur, Shravasti and Bahraich are aspirational districts.

## UP govt provides Rs 111.61 crore to 2.74 lakh pregnant women

**Lucknow** Effectively implementing the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana 2.0, initiated by the Central Government to address the health and nutrition needs of pregnant and lactating women in the state, the Yogi government has disbursed Rs. 111.61 crore to 2.74 lakh pregnant women

within a year. In the first phase, Rs 2534.11 crore has been paid to 47.53 lakh beneficiaries from 2017-2023. Subsequently, in the second phase spanning from April 2023 to the present, over Rs. 111.61 crore has been provided to 2.74 lakh beneficiaries. It is noteworthy that the scheme has been implemented by the Health Department through the State Family Planning Innovation Service Agency (SIFPSA) since the year 2017. The Government of India has decided to launch PMMVY 2.0 as part of the Mission Shakti initiative, effective from April 2022. Several modifications have been introduced under the scheme to enhance ease and effectiveness for the beneficiaries. In the initial phase, women will receive Rs. 5,000 in

three installments for the first child. In the subsequent phase, a total of Rs. 11,000 will be provided, comprising Rs. 5,000 in two installments for the first child and Rs. 6,000 for the second child (if it's a girl). Special registration campaign conducted in various phases in the second phase of the scheme, a total of 541,782 women registered by March 4, 2024, out of which 2.74 lakh have received its benefits, totaling Rs. 111.61 crore. Bahraich ranked first in terms of maximum registrations with 25,678 registered women, followed by Varanasi (19,667), Ghaziabad (18,131), Rampur (15,057), and Basti (12,760). To accelerate progress, the Health Department conducted special registration drives in accordance with the Government of India's

**Lucknow** **The Ground Breaking Ceremony (GBC@4.0)**, organized by the Yogi government, has played a pivotal role in attracting substantial investments, shaping the economic landscape of Uttar Pradesh. Private industrial parks have emerged as key contributors to this economic boom, with investors pouring capital into various districts across the state. Notably, the establishment of 13 major industrial parks is currently in progress, promising a substantial investment of Rs 14,634 crores and the creation of employment for 2.70 lakh people in the state. The Industrial Park being established in Kanpur alone is expected to generate 2.5 lakh employment opportunities. Additionally, industrial parks are being set up in

## Stage set for establishment of big industrial parks in UP

Baghpat, Barabanki, Bareilly, Chandauli, Ghaziabad, Hapur, Meerut, Saharanpur, and Shahjahanpur. It is noteworthy that in February, the Yogi government through GBC@4.0 introduced over 14,000 projects with an investment of over Rs 10 lakh crores across the state, potentially creating 34 lakh employment opportunities. Creation of job opportunities in Kanpur in a significant achievement regarding private industrial parks, Kanpur is gearing up to provide the most employment opportunities. The Mega Leather Cluster Development (UP) Pvt. Ltd. is establishing a private industrial park in Kanpur at a cost of Rs 5,850 crores. This industrial park is set to generate employment for a record 2.5 lakh people. This is the largest number of jobs

being created through the industrial park. This initiative will strengthen Kanpur's industrial identity and establish it as a hub for employment. Crescendo Interiors is setting up a private industrial park in Ayodhya at a cost of Rs 500 crore, creating employment for 100 individuals. Additionally, Lucknow H.M. Green City Pvt. Ltd. is setting up a private industrial park in Barabanki at a cost of Rs 150 crores, providing employment for 200 people. Shahjahanpur is also contributing to these establishments with LatestPlus Apparel Pvt. Ltd. investing Rs 5,000 crores in an industrial park that will offer jobs to 1,000 people. Furthermore, in Bareilly, Realyly Plywoods LLP is launching a project worth Rs 408 crores,

aiming to employ 1,000 people. In Chandauli, DRS Developers is managing employment for 150 people through a project funded with an investment of Rs 50 crores under the Pledge Scheme. Industrial park will provide thousands of jobs in Paschimanchal. Industrial parks are also being established on a large scale in the western part of the state. Under this, BMR Buildcon Projects Pvt. Ltd. is setting up a 30-acre industrial park in Baghpat with an investment of Rs 200 crores, expected to create jobs for 1,200 individuals. Additionally, Kalindi Estate Pvt. Ltd. is establishing a 25-acre industrial park in Baghpat itself with an investment of Rs 200 crores, providing employment.

## After drilling into shop at Chromepet, gang flees with goods worth 30 lakh

**Chennai:** An unidentified gang drilled a hole in the wall of a textile shop and a mobile shop run by two brothers at Chromepet and escaped with cell phones and clothes worth more than 30 lakh early on Thursday. Police said Ansari runs a mobile phone shop and his brother Mansoor run a garment store adjacent to each other on GST Road near Chromepet signal. Though Ansari checked the CCTV footage of the shop on his mobile phone till 1.30 a.m on Thursday, he did not find anything amiss. On Thursday morning, Madhavan, a staffer of the clothing shop, found garments and accessories strewn around.