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At opposition rally, RJD chief Lalu hits back at PM Modi on 'dynasty'

● " He questioned if the JD-U chief feels ashamed about changing sides after the recent return to the NDA fold. "We never abused him when he broke the alliance with us"



PATNA: A day after PM Narendra Modi slammed INDIA bloc partners RJD and Congress on 'parivaarvad' (dynastic politics), RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav launched a scathing attack on PM on this issue at opposition's 'Jan Vishwas Maharally' at Gandhi Maidan. "Who is Narendra Modi? He accuses us of doing dynastic politics. What can we do if Modi does not have a family of his own? Why is he childless? He is not even a true Hindu. In Hindu tradition, a son must get his head and beard shaved upon demise of his parent. Modi did not do so when his mother died," Lalu said at the rally,

which was the first show of solidarity by opposition parties after Bihar CM Nitish Kumar's recent exit from Mahagathbandhan alliance. Appealing to voters to remove Modi-led NDA from power at Centre, Lalu said: "We will pulverise BJP in Lok Sabha elections. Delhi ke upar kabja karna hai (We have to capture Delhi)." Slamming Nitish, Lalu said: "Nitish will get a dhakka if he again comes to us." Congress' Rahul Gandhi, who took a break from his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra to attend the rally, described Bihar as "nerve-centre of politics". He accused Centre of working for

only "two-three super-rich people" and neglecting marginalised sections of society. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said removing Modi from Centre is a must to save the country. SP chief Akhilesh Yadav appealed to people to defeat BJP in UP and Bihar. Bihar's ex-deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav claimed RJD stood for 'Rights, jobs and development'. Lalu Prasad Yadav also took on Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar, pointing out that Kumar wasn't criticised by his party when he broke the alliance in 2017. He questioned if the JD-U chief feels ashamed about chang-

ing sides after the recent return to the NDA fold. "We never abused him when he broke the alliance with us. We just called him Paltu-Ram at that time. But we made the same mistake again, and Tejashwi made the same mistake again. We knew something was happening in Raj Bhawan. There was nothing wrong with that government (previous Bihar govt). Does he not feel ashamed?" He appealed to the public to defeat the BJP in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, saying that the opinion of Bihar resonates with the entire country. RJD's 'Jan Vishwas Maha Rally' was also attended by other opposition leaders such as Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Congress president Kharge, and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav. Bihar has given lots of great personalities. In the same Gandhi Maidan, leaders of the country have held rallies and meetings.

Pilots were watching cricket on phone when trains crashed: Railway minister

VISAKHAPATNAM: The two drivers of a train were engrossed in watching a cricket match on their phones when it rear-ended another passenger train in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh on October 29 last year, resulting in the loss of 14 lives, according to railway minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. He referred to the Vizianagaram accident while speaking in New Delhi on Saturday about new safety measures for the railways. Vaishnaw said: "Now we are installing systems that can detect any such distractions and make sure that pilots and assistant pilots are fully focused on running the train." The minister reiterated the railways' commitment to safety and pledged to investigate the root cause of accidents to prevent future occurrences. The accident occurred



when the Visakhapatnam-Rayagada passenger train overshot a signal and collided with the Visakhapatnam-Palasa passenger train, which had reportedly slowed down, between Katakapalle and Alamanda. The Rayagada train's driver, his assistant, and the guard of the Palasa train, were among those killed, while around 50 passengers were injured. Following the accident, railway authori-

ties suspected human error as the likely cause of the collision, but did not rule out other possibilities. A preliminary investigation found the Rayagada train drivers ignored two defective automatic signals, thus violating safety regulations. Survivors recalled experiencing sudden jerks as the train applied its brakes before the collision. The Rayagada train was traveling at a speed of around 80kmph. A committee

conducted an inquiry into the collision, with the report awaited. This was the third big train accident since June 2 last year when Coromandel Express crashed into a stationary freight train in Odisha's Balasore, leading to the loss of 296 lives and 1,200 suffering injuries. On Oct 11, five passengers died and 30 were injured when the Delhi-Kamakhya North East Express derailed in Buxar district of Bihar.

Supreme Court plans to incentivise 'super performer' trial court judges



NEW DELHI: Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and top judges of Supreme Court are in the process of devising a mechanism to objectively identify 'super performers' among judicial officers in trial courts, which at present is groaning under a massive load of nearly 4.5 crore cases. With around 20,000-odd trial judges across India disposing 13 lakh cases last month as against new filings of 19 lakh cases, CJ and senior most SC judge Sanjiv Khanna as well as Justices Surya Kant and Bela M Trivedi told a pan-India congregation of district judges at Kachchh in Gujarat that time has come to invent a mechanism to incentivise performers among judicial officers. CJ said, "Why should a good judicial officer be equated with a non-performing judicial officer? We must find a mechanism by which the performers get motivated through additional incentives." This would mean that there will be a graded incentive system for judicial officers depending on several parameters including disposal of cases, quality of judgements and demeanour in the courtroom. Boldness to handle difficult and sensitive cases will be another component of evaluation mechanism for giving incentives to trial judges. Fielding questions from trial judges, CJ Chandrachud said, "When I was appointed as a judge of the Bombay HC, I was told by a senior colleague that if I wanted to remain non-controversial in my long career as a constitutional court judge.

'Government's anti-drug steps behind drastic rise in arrests and seizures'

NEW DELHI: Home minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the Modi administration's relentless stance against narco-trafficking had yielded significant outcomes, evidenced by a notable surge in arrests and seizures. "The strategy has resulted in an increased number of drug seizures and cases registered," he wrote on X. Underscoring the Centre's ruthless approach towards



narco trade and stating that a drug-free India constituted the most valuable legacy for future generations, Shah said an invincible anti-narcotics apparatus had been built nationwide through coordination, cooperation and collaboration among govts and agencies under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi. "The upshot of this approach is the drastic rise in the number of

arrests and seizures," he said. "Our nation is speeding to achieve this goal through the detection of drugs, destruction of drug networks and detention of culprits while rehabilitating addicts under the leadership of PM Modi," he added. On Feb 28, Shah had praised Narcotics Control Bureau, Navy and Gujarat police for seizing 3,132 kg of drugs in a joint operation.

Delhi Chalo 2.0 back from Wednesday, but no tractors

BALLO: Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM), the two farm outfits spearheading 'Delhi Chalo' 2.0 protest, have asked farmers across country to head for Delhi on March 6 through any mode of transport other than tractors and disrupt rail traffic for four hours from 12 noon to 4pm on March 10. Farmers from Punjab will continue camping at Punjab-Haryana



borders. These decisions were taken on Sunday at 'antim ardas' of farmer Shubhakaran Singh, who was killed at Khanauri border in clashes with Haryana Police on Feb 21. Various constituents of SKM (NP) attended the ceremony. KMM convener Sarvan Singh Pandher said protests will continue at both Punjab-Haryana border sites (Khanauri and Shambhu).

Evasion fight: FM Sitharaman to meet GST enforcement chiefs

NEW DELHI: FM Nirmala Sitharaman will inaugurate a conference of GST enforcement chiefs on Monday and the meeting will discuss combating evasion, among other issues. The one day conference will also discuss combating fake invoicing. It will address this primary form of GST evasion and strategise effective methods to combat it collaboratively. The meeting is also expected to encourage knowledge exchange through presentations by state and central enforcement heads, showcasing their most successful strategies and innovative approaches for tackling tax eva-



sion. It will also examine current challenges and delve into successful methodologies employed by both state and central enforcement authorities to combat evasion. "Embracing the spirit of cooperative federalism as exemplified by GST, this conference serves as a valuable platform for

both Centre and state GST enforcement authorities to share best practices, foster mutual learning, and collectively strengthen the GST administration," according to a statement from the finance ministry. It will also foster building deeper collaboration and foster greater synergy between state and central enforcement authorities, ensuring a unified and comprehensive approach. The meeting is also expected to explore the potential of advanced technological tools and data analytics to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of enforcement efforts. The revenue department has been using big data.

PM Modi to launch projects in 5 states in 3 days

PM Narendra Modi will be on a whirlwind visit to five states including Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, West Bengal and Bihar for three days from Monday onwards dedicating and laying the foundation for multiple development projects. On Monday, PM Modi will inaugurate, dedicate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth more than Rs. 56,000 crore in Adilabad, Telangana. Thereafter, he will visit BHAVINI in Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu. PM Modi will inaugurate, dedicate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth Rs. 6,800 crore in Sangareddy, Telangana.

'Lollipop' in hot water: Asansol BJP candidate backs out of poll

KOLKATA: Bhojpuri singer Pawan Singh, who was nominated as BJP candidate for Asansol Lok Sabha constituency in Bengal, decided to withdraw his candidacy within 24 hours of the announcement, following relentless attacks from Trinamool Congress and rumblings within BJP's state unit over his "misogynistic music videos, objectifying and denigrating Bengali women". Singh took to his official social media handle to express his gratitude to the BJP leadership but stated that due to unspecified reasons, he would not be contesting the LS elections from Asansol, which has a significantly large Hindi-speaking electorate. His nomination had surprised many in the political arena, given his popularity for songs like "Lollypop Lageli" and "Raja Ji". The controversy surrounding Singh's nomination erupted after TMC leaders and other parties criticised his songs, labelling them as "misogynistic". Opposition also emerged from within BJP ranks, with some workers vocal against Singh's selection over other contenders like Asansol South MLA Agnimitra Paul and former Asansol MLA Jitendra Tiwari. Former Asansol MP Babul Supriyo, who was with BJP before switching to TMC, was the first to protest Singh's nomination, highlighting the disrespectful portrayal of Bengali women in his songs. The intensified on social media, with Congress leader Abhishek posting that the "doomsday of democracy.

Bengaluru cafe blast: Bomber must have done recce multiple times, suspect cops

BENGALURU: The masked man, who planted the bomb at The Rameshwaram Cafe where nine persons were injured on Friday afternoon, is suspected to have conducted reconnaissance of the place multiple times before executing his mission.

Police, who examined the CCTV footage of his arrival at the restaurant, said: "It looks like he had studied the place beforehand; he doesn't waste time loitering around and instead walks briskly after alighting from a bus, has his mask on, and leaves the place within minutes. In fact, he isn't seen in the vicinity when the blast takes place." Cops are trying to study the CCTV footage over the past few days to figure out if any masked man was moving around near or inside the restaurant. "This is how lone-wolf operators work," a senior police officer said. "The miscreant who placed the bomb in the



cafe ensured he would be far away from the place before the explosion; he knew the bomb would go off around 1pm. Perhaps he had plans to cross the city border too. KR Puram railway station is around 10km away. Or, he would've taken public transport in the Hoskote direction and continued his journey thereafter in a different mode," he said. City police strongly believe it was a lone-wolf attack, where a single person carries out the task to avoid the risk of working in groups. The opinion was arrived at after carefully studying four previous blast cases in the city - the Kerala module (serial blasts of 2008),

Darbhanga-Indian Mujahideen module (Chinnaswamy Stadium blast of 2010), Al-Umma module (Malleswaram BJP office blast of 2013), and lone-wolf module (Church Street blast of 2014). In the Church Street blast, only one person had placed the explosives. "In the other three explosions, we had seen a bunch of miscreants working together..."

Later, one or the other would run into police, resulting in the arrest of the others. From the time of the Church Street blast (December 28, 2014), such acts are carried out by single persons to avoid the risk of being traced or caught.

Aircraft glitch holds up 170 flyers in Mumbai for two days

MUMBAI: For over 48 hours now, 170 passengers booked on an Air Arystan flight to Almaty have been stranded in Mumbai after their Thursday flight was cancelled at the last moment due to a technical problem with the aircraft.

Among the passengers onboard are tourists booked on group holidays and medical students who stand to miss lectures. The flight KC-7858 was scheduled for a 2.50 pm departure. Passengers boarded and the aircraft pushed back to commence taxiing for departure when the pilots decided to postpone the flight. "For two hours they kept us waiting inside.



The afternoon heat was unbearable, the air conditioning was poor. We couldn't even get drinking water. Later they gave us an option of buying water bottles, provided we paid with a credit card or... the Kazakhstan currency," said Dr Tasneem Sakerwala, a passenger. The passengers later went through immigration process again to

cancel their immigration. The airline accommodated them in a hotel in Andheri. An Air Arystan official said that the A320 aircraft is grounded for want of spare parts. The airline has now sent another aircraft to fly the stranded passengers to Almaty, he said, adding that the airline has provided meals to all passengers.

Girders launched between Kalyan & Kasara till early Sunday morning

MUMBAI: The Central Railway launched a girder on the bridge between Khadavli and Vasind stations shortly till early Sunday morning and also girders for FOB between Asangaon and Atgaon. Due to the girder

work and related rail blocks, passengers were inconvenienced with late night suburban train cancellations for Kasara. Six Mail and Express trains were rescheduled while ten other long distance trains were regulated due to

the girder work. Girders were also launched for FOB between Shahad and Ambivali station. As a result, the suburban local train for Kasara leaving CSMT at 12.15am on Sunday was short terminated at Thane.

Delhi police sub-inspector found dead in apparent suicide

NEW DELHI: A sub-inspector of Delhi Police died by allegedly shooting himself with a pistol at his flat in east Delhi, in a suspected case of suicide, officials said on Sunday.

The deceased has been identified as K Ganesh, a resident of Telangana who was currently posted at the Madhur Vihar police station here. According to police, the incident occurred in the early hours of Sunday when the family members of the sub-inspector called the police, stating



that he was not responding to their calls. Upon arrival, the local police discovered the sub-inspector's locked apartment and found him

dead inside with a pistol on his lap. Crime and forensic teams were summoned to the scene, and preliminary investigations suggest that the sub-

inspector took his own life using the firearm. No suicide note has been found at the location, and the investigation is ongoing.

Killer caliber: Meet BSF's first woman sniper

INDORE: The sniper stealthily crawls into position, smoothly works the bolt and slides a round into the chamber. Target in crosshairs. And a glass ceiling pierced at 3,200kmph... It's only when the sniper gets up and takes off the camouflage ghillie suit that you realise it's a 'she'. Meet BSF's first woman sniper, sub-inspector, Suman Kumari, also the first woman to get 'instructor grade' in the grueling eight-week BSF sniper course at Central School of Weapons and



Tactics (CSWT), Indore. Suman joined BSF in 2021 and was commanding a platoon in Punjab when she realized, with fury, the threat of sniper attacks from across the border. Determined to pay back in kind, Suman volunteered for the sniper course and

wrote to her superiors. Encouraged by her steely resolve, they readily gave the go-ahead. "She was the lone woman among 56 men and she put up an amazing performance in every activity. We are hoping that more female recruits will take up this course,"

CSWT IG Bhaskar Singh Rawat told TOI on Saturday.

"Trainees who perform exceptionally well get Alpha and Bravo grading, but a separate screening test is done for 'instructor grade' that Suman has achieved. She is the first woman sniper in BSF and will be an inspiration for other women to come forward. This course is one of the toughest after the commando training," Rawat said. She is now eligible to get posted as a sniper instructor.

Megablocks on Central Railway suburban to inconvenience commuters, no blocks on W.Railway



Mumbai The Central Railway will carry out megablock on slow lines between CSMT Mumbai and Vidyavihar from 10.55am to 3.5 pm today on Main line. On the Main line, during the rail blocks, the Up slow services departing Ghatkopar from 10.41am to 3.52pm on Sunday will be

diverted on Up fast line between Vidyavihar and CSMT stations and will halt at Kurla, Sion, Matunga, Dadar, Parel and Byculla stations, an official said. On the Harbour line, the rail blocks will be carried out between Mankhurd and Nerul from 11.15am to 4.15pm. Special suburban trains will run on the

CSMT Mumbai-Mankhurd section during the block period. Harbour line passengers are permitted to travel on Trans Harbour / Main Lines from 10am to 4.30pm during the block period, the official said. There will be no megablock on the Western Railway suburban section on Sunday, bringing relief to citizens.

Jamia Hamdard organises Cultural and Sports Week

Jamia Hamdard University wrapped up its Sports and Cultural Week recently. Over eight days, the university grounds bustled with a myriad of activities, offering a platform for students to display their diverse abilities.

Under the leadership of Vice Chancellor M Afshar Alam and with support from Chancellor Janab Hammad Ahmad and Sajid Ahmed, CEO HNF HECA, the festivities commenced with an inaugural ceremony. DSW Prof Reshma Nasreen ignited the spark for an exhilarating journey filled with literary, cultural, musical, and sports performances, encapsulating the essence of Jamia Hamdard. At the helm of the seamless execution was the core coordination committee, led by Reshma Nasreen, and comprising



ing faculty members such as Dr Kursheed Ansari, Prof Sohrab Ahmad Khan, and the renowned academician and media personality Prof Farhat Basir Khan. Their collective expertise underscored the university's commitment to excellence, ensuring every moment of the event was a success. Students during Salman Ali's performance

Students during Salman Ali's performance From captivating calligraphy to vivid rangoli displays, students unleashed their artistic prowess, infusing the

atmosphere with vibrancy and color. Entertainment soared as participants engaged in activities like Dumb Charades and delivered soul-stirring musical performances, ranging from solo acts to ensemble renditions. Meanwhile, on the literary front, intellectual discourse flourished with stimulating debates, insightful essay writing, and moving poetry recitations, fostering a culture of understanding and intellectual growth. Throughout the week-long celebration, the dedication

and hard work of Jamia Hamdard's youth resonated with the ethos of sportsmanship and camaraderie. The grand finale witnessed the crowning of champions in sports and cultural events, graced by distinguished guests like B Shankar Jaiswal and Danish Ashraf. Adding to the grandeur was the electrifying performance by Indian Idol 10 winner Salman Ali, marking a fitting conclusion to the festivities. The event reached its crescendo with Salman Ali's mesmerising performance at the sports complex, blending sportsmanship with cultural vibrancy. Known for his soulful voice and dynamic stage presence, Salman Ali took the audience on a musical journey, leaving a lasting impact with his renditions of iconic hits and sufi melodies..

Met museum head talks art of repatriation and relevance

Vatika Times

It's not easy running one of the world's largest museums with more than 1.5 million works spanning 5,000 years. And certainly not easy amidst heightened scrutiny over looted objects and mounting pressure for repatriation. Max Hollein—who took charge of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met), New York as director in 2018 and CEO last July—knows this all too well. Fresh from signing an MoU with India's Ministry of Culture, being "blown away" by the Sanchi Stupa, Jantar Mantar and the Kanheri Caves and ahead of delivering a lecture at the CSMVS on Friday, Hollein remained composed as he sat down for a chat about policing its art and artefacts with a problematic past. recent restitutions and keeping the museum relevant in an age of sensory overload.

540 dists across India already under water stress: IMD data



PUNE: At least 540 districts across India, including Palghar, Solapur, Sangli, Pune and Mumbai, have already started experiencing water stress or dry conditions in varying degrees with summer barely beginning, IMD data showed on Saturday. Of these, 98 districts were facing extreme to severe to moderately dry conditions as on Feb 28, the Met department's Standardized Precipitation Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI) showed. "The data is indicative

of water stress and faster evaporation because of hotter Feb days, especially in parts of peninsular, central and west India. The effects include crop stress and water shortages as we head further into the summer season. The affected districts include coastal district Palghar, Solapur, Sangli, Pune, Rajkot, Junagadh, Dwarka, Mysore, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Belgum, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Trivandrum, Madurai and Vellore, among others," IMD scientist Rajib Chattopadhyay told. He said another

442 districts have also begun showing dry conditions, including Mumbai, though not as severe as the 98. "The early onset of dry conditions is a worrying sign. This means that evaporation rates are likely to be even higher in the coming months with above-normal temperatures expected in parts of central and peninsular India. Despite being a coastal district, Palghar has started showing moderately dry conditions because of high day temperatures even in the west coast," Chattopadhyay said.

Traffic diversions to facilitate metro work

Chennai: Traffic police have announced traffic changes near Anna Flyover, Nungambakkam, and Sterling Road on a one-day trial basis on Mar 3. This is to facilitate the construction of metro stations at Anna Flyover, Nungambakkam and Sterling Road. Vehicles coming from Chetpet towards Gemini Flyover will be diverted to College Road, Haddows Road, and Uthamar Gandhi Salai to reach Gemini Flyover.

This diversion will function as one-way traffic. Similarly, vehicles coming from Gemini Flyover will proceed via Uthamar Gandhi Road and Dr. MGR Road towards Valluvar Kottam to reach their destination. Vehicles headed towards Aminjikarai will be diverted at Tank Bund Road (left turn) to proceed via Nelson Manickam Road to reach Aminjikarai and other destinations.

All vehicles from Valluvar Kottam bound for Gemini Flyover will be diverted at Valluvar Kottam junction towards Valluvar Kottam High Road and Uthamar Gandhi Salai. Other interior roads will be diverted corresponding to the said one-way diversions. We also published the following articles recently Traffic Police issue road restrictions



Darjeeling BJP MLA writes letter to PM in blood to remind him of his promise

SILIGURI: Darjeeling BJP MLA Neeraj Zimba on Saturday wrote a letter with his blood to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, purportedly reminding him of his "the dreams of Gorkhas are my dreams" statement, and appealed for high-level intervention in the Gorkha issues. Zimba wrote that the pledge "Gorkha ka sapna mera sapna" (the dreams of Gorkhas are my dreams), which PM Modi proclaimed on April 10, 2014, while addressing a public rally at Khaprail near Siliguri, remained unfulfilled. "I pen down this letter using my own blood to implore your attention on a matter of grave significance... The commitment to resolve the... issues of the Gorkhas by finding a political permanent solution and granting Scheduled Tribe status to the 11 left out communities of the Gorkhas is yet to materialise," the letter read. "While justice has been served to Ladakhis, Kashmiris, Mizos, Nagas and Bodos, the Gorkhas continue to languish in neglect.

for Shab-e-Baraat Traffic Police issued road restrictions for Shab-e-Baraat from 6 pm on Sunday to 6 am on Monday. No vehicular movement on Sant Sawata Road, Rambhau Bhogle Marg, and Dr Mascarenhas Road. Vehicles on BA Road can take alternative routes. Leaving For Work? Dodge A Labyrinth Of Barricades & Traffic Mess On Roads Nagpur, aspiring to be a Smart City, faces severe traffic congestion. Road closures and

poor engineering worsen the situation, leading to fuel, time, and energy wastage. Traffic cops fail to regulate traffic, blaming infrastructure works. Chaos on roads prompts third tweak in traffic plan for bridge demolition Regular changes in traffic plan for Sadhu Vaswani Bridge caused confusion and increased travel time. Commuters urge authorities to devise an effective and feasible plan. The bridge work will continue for two years after onset.

Students to get playgrounds at 29 Tambaram schools

CHENNAI: All 29 municipal corporation schools under Tambaram corporation will now have a sports ground. In 2019, the state govt made it mandatory for all state board schools to dedicate an hour to physical education every day. "Our students play in the available space. With better facilities and grounds, students can excel in sports too," said Geetha S, a teacher at a Tambaram corporation school. Tournaments such as



Khelo India are encouraging students to enter sports, but schools need better infrastructure, teachers said. This year, Tambaram Corporation has allocated 5.6 crore for the maintenance of schools, and an additional 1.6 crore to

enhance infrastructure within these schools. "Besides new initiatives, we want to focus on maintenance too," said R A Lagumena, Tambaram corporation commissioner. Besides finding space for sports grounds, schools are being sur-

veyed for space crunch in classrooms. The civic body has already begun constructing additional classrooms for all students. Some schools have begun to witness upgrades. Among them are the Corporation Higher Secondary Schools in Sembakkam and Kadaperi in Tambaram. The corporation has already started modernising classrooms, said K. "We have installed smartboards in six schools in Tambaram."

Court notices to chief secy, others on Samagra Shiksha

HYDERABAD: A division bench comprising Chief Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice J Anil Kumar has issued notices to chief secretary and others directing them to file counter-affidavits within four weeks, furnishing reasons for not implementing vocationalisation of education under Samagra Shiksha in Telangana. Notices were issued to the principal secretary to govt, school education department, project director, Telangana Samagra Shiksha State Project, and the govt



of India, represented by secretary, ministry of education, department of school education and literacy, Delhi. The bench was adjudicating a PIL filed by social worker Kora

Aravind of Sangareddy, seeking directions to the govt of India and the state govt to implement the Samagra Shiksha programme in proper timeframe as per the guidelines and by following the due process

as mandated by the department of school education. Counsel for the petitioner informed the court that the state govt was not implementing the Samagra Shiksha programme in a proper manner.

5th guarantee: Govt to roll out Indiramma housing on Mar 11

HYDERABAD: With the election schedule for Lok Sabha polls likely to be issued soon, Congress govt in the state is getting ready to roll out 'Indiramma Indlu' (houses) scheme for the poor on March 11.



here on Saturday. As part of the scheme, the govt will extend 5 lakh for construction of houses to the eligible poor who have a piece of land.

The govt will also allot land for those not having it and provide 5 lakh. The CM directed officials to identify the beneficiaries, work out modalities and guidelines for implementation of the scheme. Priority will be given to the eligible poor who submitted applications in the Praja Palana programme. The CM cautioned

officials not to repeat the mistakes committed during the previous govt in construction of double bedroom houses and ensure genuine poor who do not have own house are covered under the scheme. Officials were also instructed to prepare the guidelines for release of funds in a phased manner. "Strict guidelines should be laid down and implemented to prevent misuse of funds meant for construction of Indiramma houses," Revanth said.

'CM likely to lay stone for Old City Metro on Mar 7'



HYDERABAD: AIMIM president, Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Saturday said chief minister A Revanth Reddy is likely to lay the foundation stone for metro rail works at Falaknuma in the Old City on March 7. Slamming the BJP for accusing the AIMIM of not developing the Old City and claiming

that it would develop it if voted to victory in Hyderabad Lok Sabha seat, Owaisi said he had asked the chief minister to come to Old City to lay foundation stone for metro rail project for MGBS-Falaknuma corridor. Owaisi "Welcome to the Old City. Who is stopping

anyone? The state govt should give more funds for road-widening in this part of the city, get works started immediately on metro rail corridor, shift Chanchalguda jail and establish a KG to PG campus in its place, take up and complete Musi rejuvenation project, shift the

Armed Reserve section from Petlaburz and utilise the place for development projects. AIMIM wants development," he said addressing a gathering of party leaders, MLAs, MLC and corporators on the occasion of 66th annual revival day celebrations of AIMIM.

CB gets Rs 48cr under transfer of property tax

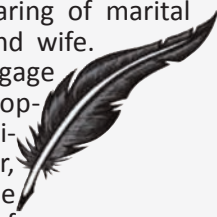
SECUNDERABAD: In a breather to the Secunderabad Cantonment Board (SCB), the state government on Saturday transferred 48 crore under 'transfer of property tax' (TPT) charges.

Confirming this, the SCB chief executive officer D Madhukar Naik told STOI that: "The state govt has credited 48 crore in Board's account on Saturday. The state govt is supposed to credit the surcharge of the stamp duty for the property registration in the Cantonment limits, every month. These arrears have been pending for a very long time, as the govt did not credit them since 2014. Though we have put extensive efforts to clear the pending dues of TPT, due to various reasons, it did not happen." The CEO added that another 20 crore is even now pending with the state govt and urged the govt to release the remaining TPT charges.'

Editorial

Uttarakhand UCC delivers status quo for wives & mothers, while promising 'gender justice'

Does the Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code actually ensure gender justice? The government of Pushkar Singh Dhama would have you believe so. It points to the abolition of polygamy and all forms of out-of-court divorce among Muslims, and equal succession rights within the legislation. The Uttarakhand government would have you believe that only the Muslim personal law is uniquely discriminatory towards women and that compelling Muslims to follow Hindu law—disguised as a “uniform” civil code—is all that is needed for gender equity. The truth is quite something else. Personal laws across religions in India discriminate against women in several ways. The Uttarakhand government has reproduced these gender unjust laws in the name of “uniformity”. Here, we pick three areas where the Uttarakhand UCC (UCC) perpetuates gender injustice. First, it does not protect women already in polygamous marriages. Second, it denies women their fair share of assets after the dissolution of marriage. And third, it treats mothers as inferior to fathers regarding guardianship of children. The UCC prohibits polygamy across religions, effectively extending the ban that existed for Hindus and other religions to Muslims. However, data shows that rates of polygamous marriages in India are comparable across religions. For instance, the National Family Health Survey 2019-2020 found that 1 out of every 70 surveyed women was in a polygamous marriage. In Uttarakhand, the rates of polygyny were 1.5 per cent for Muslims and 0.7 per cent for Hindus. Given Uttarakhand's Hindu majority, more Hindu women are likely to be in polygynous marriages than Muslim women. The fact is that women in extra-legal polygamous marriages may be worse off than those in legally valid ones. Under Muslim personal law, all wives enjoy equal status regarding maintenance and inheritance. However, in extra-legal marriages, such rights are not available to subsequent wives. While recognising polygamy as a legitimate practice is not the way to safeguard women's interests, it is critical to account for persisting extra-legal “marriages” and the vulnerability of women. While the UCC improves inheritance rights for wives in valid polygamous marriages, it lacks adequate protection mechanisms for women in extra-legal marriages, as the practice persists despite being outlawed. Merely prohibiting polygamy isn't a sufficient safeguard for second wives. The UCC states that if a man had more than one wife before the code's enactment, each would have a claim to maintenance. But it fails to clarify whether marriages must be legally valid. As courts hesitate to extend maintenance rights to second wives in extra-legal marriages, it is uncertain whether the UCC will protect them. Another major area in family law that requires reform is extending robust protections for wives after marriage dissolution. Under current law, maintenance and alimony are the only safeguards for protecting women in such cases. However, maintenance laws, informed by the outdated principle of preventing destitution rather than ensuring dignity, fall short. The Supreme Court has attempted to address this by outlining factors to consider when determining maintenance, to ensure equal sharing of marital assets between husband and wife. But the UCC fails to engage with such judicial developments, missing an opportunity to codify them. Further, India presently follows the doctrine of separation of assets upon marriage dissolution.



Stubble pollution will not become a source of income for farmers in UP

Pollution becomes a major problem in the National Capital Region of New Delhi and its surrounding areas as winter sets in. This has become a big problem for the last several years not only in Delhi but for the residents of the surrounding areas. In view of this problem, the Yogi government of Uttar Pradesh has tried to provide relief to the citizens and to provide a source of income to the farmers instead of loss from the stubble generated from the paddy crop other than rice. It is noteworthy that in some areas of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, administrative action is being taken continuously against farmers due to stubble burning. In which, apart from imposing fine on paddy farmers by the local administration, action is being taken to send them to jail. Due to which farmers are troubled. Seeing this problem of farmers, the Yogi government of Uttar Pradesh is trying to get rid of the pollution caused by stubble burning. For which the government is working on the technology of producing compressed gas (CNG) from stubble in the state, which will provide income as well as employment to a large number of people of the state. Along with this, pure organic fertilizer (green energy) will also be produced, the con-



sumption of the produce will ensure better health. In fact, in view of this problem in the state, CM Yogi had already released the Bio Energy Policy 2022 to encourage bio energy. Under this policy a target of large scale investment was set. In which many big investors of the country had signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the state government in the Global Investors Summit, which is now going to come to fruition. The Yogi government had set a target of biogas plant in every tehsil, some of which are ready to start soon. Among the plants which are ready to start is Buland Biogas of Bulandshahr district, which is being established in village Lauhgala tehsil. Buland Biogas had signed an MoU worth Rs 18 crore 75 lakh with the state government, the price of which has now increased to around Rs 21 crore. According

to government representatives, this plant will start its production in December. This plant will produce 3 tonnes of CNG per day, which will reduce the dependence on petrol and diesel in the state. 80 to 100 people will also get employment. In these, both skilled and unskilled people will get employment. While talking to Dainik Bhaskar, owner of Buland Bio Gas, Athar Ahmed said that the plant produces not only stubble but also compressed biogas from degradable waste like straw, cow dung, chaff, sugarcane dung, municipal waste or a mixture of all the gases.

Is made. With the help of this technology, CNG is purified. License for this plant has been obtained from PSU Indian Oil of the Ministry of Petroleum, Government of India. However, the government and the people running the institute believe that the

best thing about this project is that it will produce organic fertilizer in large quantities. The waste generated in the production of compressed gas will be 100 percent organic. This waste will be solid as well as liquid. The liquid organic fertilizer produced by the plant will be given to the farmers free of cost for 3 years. These farmers will be identified by the DM or CDO of the districts. This will benefit those farmers who are not able to buy fertilizer, DAP, urea. The advantage of organic fertilizers and liquid fertilizers is that a thick layer of fertilizers has been spread in the fertile lands. It takes time to reach the roots of trees and plants. At the same time, if organic fertilizer is added to it, it will reach the roots in 2 to 3 hours.

This will not only benefit the farmers but also the common people will be able to get pure organic food. People's health will be benefited by pure eating habits. It is believed that considering the need of the hour, the Yogi government of the state has taken this project forward very rapidly and brought Bio Energy Policy-2022 for it. The government provided all the facilities in this. The first facility is that those who have received a LOI license can apply for it. Apart from this, along with the Central Government, the State Government is also providing

a maximum subsidy ranging from Rs 75 lakh to Rs 20 crore. Not only this, the surcharge on electricity has been exempted for 10 years. Stamp duty has also been exempted for 10 years and land development charges have also been made free for 10 years. Apart from this, a discount of 50 plus 30 i.e. total 80 percent is being given on machinery. Not only this, arrangements are also being made for raw material i.e. degradable waste. For this, long term agreements have been made with sugar mills for sugarcane flour. The Animal Husbandry Department has been asked to make agreements with all the government cowsheds for cow dung. Not only this, if the project is worth Rs 50 crore or more then the government is providing a 5 km road. The Yogi government has deployed entrepreneur friends to help investors. Looking at the spell and desire of the government, it seems that soon the paddy producing farmers in Uttar Pradesh will get relief and till now those who were being harassed by the administration in the name of stubble burning will get relief and this type of plants will be set up in Uttar Pradesh. By starting in the state, his income will increase and he will be happy.

The Third Eye: Intelligence is a prime security weapon

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's regime, aided by a brilliant National Security Advisor, has boosted the confidence of national Intelligence agencies about doing their job of protecting the security and integrity of India on a proactive, apolitical and professional note. Intelligence Bureau (IB), the 'mother' organisation that fostered the family of Intelligence entities including SSB, ARC and R&AW, traced its origins in the Central CID established by the British some 135 years ago and the fact that it saw an essential continuity of its functioning after Independence, is an affirmation of its belief that by and large its goal had been to safeguard the country against the doings of its perceived 'adversaries'

at any point of time. IB's charter multiplied a great deal with the emergence of India as a sovereign nation and as the largest democracy that happened also to inherit the destabilising legacy of a religion-based Partition accompanying its freedom. The Bureau derives strength from three basic principles of its working. First is the freedom it exercises in the matter of covering an activity or an entity that - in its 'own judgement' - amounted to a threat to national security. Secondly, the government at the Centre can task the IB which is only appropriate but it never influences its findings - IB may be the only reliable agency to tell the government what is adverse in the public environment disapproving the notions that

Intelligence only reported what the political masters 'liked to hear'. Thirdly, the IB's communications with the government are not only confidential but are marked as 'unofficial' notes meant only for the benefit of the recipients and not available for scrutiny by an outsider. Working of India's Intelligence agencies is in line with the principle that they are not police organisations. The IB is led by IPS officers who join the organisation giving up on the 'glamour' of uniform and accepting 'anonymity' by choice in lieu of the rare satisfaction they had of directly working for the national cause - with full confidence that good work was always given credit for and with a belief that the nation acknowledged.

The meaning of the Sangh chief's message of Hindu-Muslim unity?

In India, people of more castes and religions live together than in any other country in the world. If we look at history, we will find that people from all over the world came to India and most of them stayed here. But today, Manipur has been burning for many months due to the hatred and bitterness that is prevalent among people of different religions in India. The leaders of the ruling party, especially the Prime Minister, are silent about this violence. Meanwhile, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (Sangh) chief Mohan Bhagwat, expressing concern over the Manipur violence, has taught the country to live with unity and love. But the Sangh chief's statement about living in unity in the country is being interpreted in different ways. The reason for this is that apart from the Manipur violence, Mohan Bhagwat has said many other things which need to be considered at this time. In fact, the Sangh chief gave a big message of unity in the Nagpur parade on the day of Vijayadashami regarding the increasing tension between Hindus and Muslims. The way the Sangh chief said in a questioning tone, how did people living in the same country become so alien? Political people, intellectuals, journal-

ists and political analysts are trying to find out the meaning of everything Mohan Bhagwat says from this question. No one is able to understand its true meaning? The simple meaning of this question of Bhagwat is that hatred towards the people of one's own country is not a good thing. But the question is arising for whom did Mohan Bhagwat say this? But before this it is important to understand that the Sangh chief also said that there should not be indiscretion and imbalance. There is a need to take our mind seriously and bind the country in the threads of unity. Because I believe that by expressing concern over the violence in Manipur, the Sangh chief has also hinted at Prime Minister Narendra Modi not speaking on Manipur. However, Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat also said that we have to be cautious in elections and we have to accept everyone as our own and keep everyone's influence cool. This is the call of belonging, whoever listens to it will be benefited. It will not be known what will happen to those who still do not listen. Many analysts have their own views on this statement of the Sangh chief, some are saying that he is threatening the government, some

are saying that he is warning the opposition, some are saying that he is giving advice to Muslims. So some are saying that they are giving advice to Hindus. At the same time, some are saying that Mohan Bhagwat is calling extremist people, no matter which religion they belong to. At the same time, some people are also saying that this statement of Mohan Bhagwat is just politics, which is for vote bank politics under the guise of religion. Its Indian meaning is also that Mohan Bhagwat has been accused of supporting the Janata Party. Is. However, I believe that Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat has been talking about unity in the country for the last several years. He is the first Sangh chief who went to mosques as well as madrassas and gave a big message of unity and brotherhood to the country. Before this, no Sangh chief had shown the courage to take such an initiative. In such a situation, instead of doing politics on the statement of the Sangh chief, do not come and vote for his statement. We have to vote for who is better. Along with this, Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat also praised some of the works of the government. It is clear from this that he has not spoken against the government.

Maryam Nawaz's journey to 'Takht-e-Lahore' is no small feat

After Maharani Jind Kaur, Maryam Nawaz Sharif will rule the Takht-e-Lahore. Jind Kaur, popular as Rani Jindan, took over as queen regent in 1843, ruling on behalf of her five-year-old son Duleep Singh, who ascended the throne after the death of his father Maharaja Ranjit Singh. She remained queen until the end of the First Anglo-Sikh War in 1846. Nearly 180 years later, Pakistan Punjab is finally getting its first female chief minister. No mean achievement in a male-dominated political setup where women are often

relegated to the sidelines. And certainly not a small feat in a family where every third person has been or wants to be the chief minister of Punjab province. Maryam's first prominent appearance was in a BBC interview, where she detailed her father's incarceration by General Pervez Musharraf in the October 1999 coup. While Nawaz and other male members of the family were imprisoned, his fearless wife Kulsoom and daughter Maryam rallied for public support. "I can smell the danger, but who is on the wrong side?"

Ultimately Gen Musharraf is going to be in trouble," Maryam had said. First lesson learnt - dictators die politically, but civilian leaders live through generations. Facing political persecution with resilience and defiance made Maryam Nawaz a political force long before she began her parliamentary career. The 'How to Become a Successful Politician in Pakistan' guide will have one chapter, really - let thyself be persecuted at the hands of the real rulers of this land. In the case of Maryam, this persecution began years before she

fought her first provincial and national election in 2024. If Nawaz was targeted by the Pakistan Army, Maryam was hounded with trumped-up political court cases that only served to enhance her popularity. Let's rewind to July 2018, when hundreds of paramilitary soldiers apprehended the father and daughter at Lahore airport, taking them into custody just days before the general election that year. The imagery of a defiant daughter, standing next to her father and willingly accepting arrest, is what catapulted Maryam.

Exercise restraint in poll speeches: PM to mantris

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday asked secretaries of central ministries to press ahead with work on preparing a blueprint for a "developed India" regardless of the country's preoccupation with politics while urging them to continue with progressive agenda of development. He said there was a need to "reset" things and systems for India to be developed by 2047. At a marathon interaction with his council of ministers and top bureaucrats where he appeared supremely confident of getting a third tenure, PM Modi said, "We have to keep working on the full Budget to be presented in June. It has to be a transformational one," he said, adding Niti Aayog will finalise Vision India@2047. Addressing the ministers, PM said, "Come back as winners (jeet kar aao)." He asked them to exercise restraint while speaking, in what appeared to reflect the leadership's concern about a



pattern of provocative utterances deflecting attention from Modi's focus on development and growth and senior members allowing themselves to be baited into making allegedly divisive comments. "Elections don't mean a break from governance. The goal of turning India into a developed country is a non-partisan goal which will remain an aspiration even as governments come and go," PM Modi said. His meeting of the council of ministers, which lasted for more than eight hours, was held in two sessions. The first session was attended by ministers and all secretaries, and the second session only had ministers. PM spoke about how BJP has encouraged many ministers who are members of

Rajya Sabha to be in the Lok Sabha fray. The first list released on Saturday has 34 ministers. PM's advice to ministers to exercise caution while speaking came a day after the party benched firebrand Bhopal MP Sadhvi Pragya as well as Ramesh Bidhuri and Pravesh Varma, both two-termers from Delhi, for making statements that many considered to be hate speeches. The PM's other suggestions to ministers included being mindful of whom all they should meet, another potential boobytrap. "He asked all of us to speak more about welfare schemes and development programmes undertaken by this govt and also advised us to be careful about fake news and deep

Can't ask son's widow to return gift given to him by parents: high court

MUMBAI: Bombay high court has set aside an order of a senior citizens tribunal that revoked two gift deeds made by a couple in favour of their son before his death in proceedings filed against their daughter-in-law. "The real dispute which senior citizens raised was not about their maintenance and care but claim to assets of partnership firm... Merely because senior citizens happen to be partners of a firm, the same does not bestow jurisdiction on the maintenance tribunal to decide their entitlement to assets acquired through income of partnership firm," said Justice Sandeep Marne. In 1996, the couple



included their elder son as a partner in their firm. After his marriage, the son and his wife set up two companies. The son bought 18 properties from the partnership firm's income, and mortgaged them to get credit from a bank. In 2013-14, his parents gifted him a flat in Chembur and a gala in Byculla. In July 2015, he died. After the son's wife "denied" them shares in the properties, his par-

ents moved the tribunal. In March 2018, the tribunal cancelled the gift deeds and directed the wife to give them possession of the properties. It also directed her to pay them monthly maintenance of Rs 10,000 from Dec 2016, the date of the complaint. Justice Marne agreed with advocates Sanjiv Sawant and Heramb Kadam that the tribunal had no jurisdiction in deciding entitlement of a partner. He also agreed that maintenance cannot be sought from a daughter-in-law as she is not included in the definition of 'children' under Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act.

Man takes daughter to cops over phone 'addiction', held after she reveals rape

The teenage girl then spoke about a traumatic incident that had occurred with her.

A man was arrested on

charges of sexually assaulting his minor daughter after the matter came to light during a counselling session with the police. The girl is 17 and lives with her parents. Recently, her father came to the police station to seek help from the police. He said his daughter was

glued to social media and her phone all the time and said she no longer listens to her parents and yells back at them. He requested the police to counsel her. Subsequently, the girl and her mother came to the police station. The teenage girl spoke about a traumatic incident.

Not Nitin Gadkari but graft accused Kripashankar Singh on BJP's first list: Uddhav Thackeray

MUMBAI: Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray took a dig at the BJP after it released its first list of 195 candidates for the Lok Sabha polls. Uddhav said that it was very surprising that 'veteran leader and party loyalist Nitin Gadkari's name was not on the BJP's list but disproportionate assets case accused Kripashankar Singh's name was on the first list. Uddhav said that if the BJP wins because of an EVM scam, then there will be massive unrest in the country. Uddhav said that there was misunderstanding being spread among the people that the BJP was anyway going to win because of EVMs. "The BJP released its list of 195 candidates, forget about the dynasty but I was very surprised that their veteran, even before we heard the names of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah, we have heard Nitin Gadkari's name and have worked with him. He is BJP's loyal worker. He even completed the Mumbai-Pune Expressway in record time. Such a person's name is not in the BJP's first list but the one against whom they had alleged to have disproportionate assets, Kripashankar Singh's name is there in the list. This is today's BJP," Uddhav said. 72-year-old Kripa Shankar Singh has been nominated from his hometown Jaunpur. A hardcore Congress activist, Singh joined BJP on July 7, 2021 around the time he was facing probe by income tax and anti-corruption bureau in disproportionate assets and arms cases. Although he got a clean chit in the arms case after the probe found he had a valid licence for the cartridges at his home, investigations by ACB.

Murder FIR against 10 cops after lawyer falls to death during raid

AGRA: An FIR has been registered against ten policemen, including a station house officer (SHO) and a sub-inspector, in connection with death of lawyer Sunil Sharma, during a police raid. Police commissioner J Ravinder Goud also suspended New Agra police station SHO Rajeev Singh and sub-inspector Anurag Singh following the incident. Sharma, 48, had died after falling from eighth floor of Mangalam Aadhar Apartments in Sikandra during a police raid. Cops claimed Sharma was attempting to escape



from the balcony of an adjacent flat when he slipped and fell. The incident sparked protests by legal fraternity, who demanded action against the policemen involved. According to FIR regis-

tered based on a complaint filed by Sharma's wife, Sunita, 10 cops forcibly entered their residence by breaking open the door and started abusing the occupants. "They dragged my husband to

flat number 802, adjacent to our own, where he died after being pushed from the balcony. The policemen also took away important documents from our apartment and destroyed evidence.

They tied up my husband as I was raped: Spanish woman

DUMKA/RANCHI: The Spanish woman, who was gang-raped in Dumka on Friday night, mentioned in the FIR that all the seven offenders took turns to commit the crime after raining kicks and punches on her. Throughout the crime, the rapists kept the hands of the survivor's husband tied and also assaulted him. In her last social media video post on Saturday night, she said, "I thought they were going to kill me. Thank God I am still alive." Dumka police on Sunday



evening officially announced the arrest of three culprits while raids to nab the remaining four were under way. While Jharkhand State Legal Services (JHALSA) took cognizance of the crime and pressed separate

team for extending legal and other assistance to the survivor, the National Commission for Women also took separate cognizance and sought a detailed report, expressing concern over law and order

in Jharkhand. Talking to reporters, Dumka SP Pitamber Singh Kherwar said all three arrested were sent to judicial custody on Sunday. "All the accused belonged to Kunju and adjoining villages under Hansdiha police station. As per the probe so far, all are first-time offenders but a detailed inquiry is under way," the SP said. The survivor, in her FIR, also mentioned that some of the offenders uttered a few English words while approaching them that night. Kherwar said.

'Sorry, we are unreliable': Google apologised to govt. on Gemini's results on PM Modi



NEW DELHI: Unable to offer any explanations for the unsubstantiated comments on PM Modi made by its AI platform Gemini, American tech giant Google said a 'sorry' to the govt and called the platform 'unreliable', minister of state for IT & Electronics Rajeev Chandrasekhar has told. "We had sent them a notice, seeking an explanation on the unsubstantiated results thrown up by Gemini regarding a

particular query on PM Modi. They replied and said, "Sorry, the platform is unreliable," the minister said as the govt announced that AI platforms will now need a 'permit' from the state to operate in the country. "That is not a defence you can take," the minister said on the Google response, as he criticised a section of AI platforms that have been offering 'consumer solutions' even

when they are in a trial phase. The minister said that India cannot be used as a test ground by AI platforms, especially when they are increasingly facing flak across the world for giving out unsubstantiated, biased, misinformed or unverified results to users. "The AI data is coming out straight from the lab on to the public internet, without any testing, and without any guardrails.

Shehbaz raises Kashmir, India wants focus on terrorism

● "Shehbaz's remark may suggest Pakistan is unlikely to climb down from its maximalist position that India roll back the August, 2019, decision"

PM Shehbaz Sharif lost no time in raking up the Kashmir issue after being elected PM for the second time, as he called for a resolution in the National Assembly for the freedom of the Kashmiri people, clubbing them with the Palestinians. Shehbaz Sharif Sworn In as New Pakistan PM Amidst Resounding 'Vote-Thief' Chants in Parliament While a congratulatory message from PM Narendra Modi to Shehbaz isn't ruled out, India's message to Islamabad remains that it should focus on creating an environment free of terror in the region, instead of meddling in India's internal affairs. "Let's



all come together...and the National Assembly should pass a resolution for the freedom of Kashmiris and Palestinians," said Shehbaz in his maiden address, even as he pledged to improve ties with neighbours. Shehbaz's remark may suggest Pakistan is unlikely to climb down from its maximalist position that India roll back the August, 2019, decision to revoke the special status of the erstwhile state of J&K, despite the message of peace from his elder brother Nawaz Sharif, who is expected to hold the reins of the Shehbaz government. However, the Indian side also realises Shehbaz is leading a shaky coalition and it's important for him to keep all con-

stituents happy. Shehbaz also didn't bring up his party PML-N's official position, as mentioned in its election manifesto, that normalisation is possible only if India restores Article 370 that gave special status to J&K. If not for the army, the Sharifs wouldn't have made a comeback and unlike in 2015, the season of outreach that culminated in Modi's maiden visit to Pakistan, the brothers can be expected to constantly look over their shoulders while formulating Pakistan's India policy. In any case, India's own policy of zero tolerance for terrorism, which has meant no substantive bilateral engagement with Pakistan since 2015-2016, has served it well.

Moto Hero wants e-bikes over 4 lakh

Delhi: "The benefit with EVs is that we not only sell them in India, but also target global markets with them." The Vida electric scooter costs Rs 1.2 lakh (ex-showroom), but Gupta claimed the company will introduce cheaper models. "Vida will be mid-priced and cheap. A last-mile B2B commercial is under consideration. We consider it a promising and substantial segment." He stated Zero will be a premium, performance-oriented offering for 400cc-plus petrol motorbike buyers. "We are working on it and expect the motorcycle to be priced at around Rs 4-5 lakh." Gupta said the two-wheeler sector, which had been under pressure for years due to onerous circumstances for entry-level customers, is improving. "First, the category is underdeveloped and has great potential. As consumer confidence rises, the segment is showing green shoots. Capital expenditures by the government are also increasing revenue and employment.

'It's not as if he refused to play Ranji at all': Sunil Gavaskar



NEW DELHI: Cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar has stepped forward to support Shreyas Iyer after the right-handed batsman was excluded from the BCCI's central contract for the 2023/24 season. Gavaskar highlighted Iyer's participation in the Ranji Trophy before the commencement of the ongoing Test series against England. On February 28, both Iyer and Ishan Kishan found themselves absent from the 30-member BCCI Central Contracts list, covering the period from October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. The cricket board stated that the duo was not recommended for

the annual retainer-ship. In the previous season, Iyer held a Grade B contract, while Kishan had a Grade C contract. Iyer participated in Mumbai's Ranji Trophy match against Andhra at the BKC Ground in January before the Test series against England commenced. However, his performance in the first two Tests against England didn't leave a significant impact, as he posted scores of 35 and 13 in Hyderabad, followed by 27 and 29 in Visakhapatnam. Subsequently, Iyer found himself excluded from India's squad for the final three Tests against England and withdrew from

Mumbai's Ranji Trophy quarterfinal against Baroda citing a back issue. Presently, Iyer is actively participating for Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy semifinal against Tamil Nadu, where he registered a dismissal for just three runs in the first innings. On the other hand, Kishan had been out of action after pulling out of India's Tests against South Africa last year due to personal reasons. He was reported to be training in Baroda and missed the entire Ranji Trophy campaign for Jharkhand. He recently returned to action at the ongoing DY Patil T20 tournament in Navi Mumbai.

Former India batter hopes IPL can revive Ishan career

NEW DELHI: Former India opener Aakash Chopra reckons the upcoming IPL will be a perfect opportunity for Ishan Kishan to revive his career after BCCI excluded him from the central contract list for 2023-24.

The 25-year-old Kishan did not turn up for Jharkhand throughout the team's campaign in Ranji Trophy despite not being on national duty since leaving from the tour of South Africa in December last, citing personal reasons. "Ishan Kishan will be hungry, as he has not got a central contract. This is the only thing he is playing. What else is he play-



ing?" Chopra said in his YouTube video. Chopra also talked about Kishan's absence from the England Test series and emphasised that if he makes good use of IPL, he will have an opportunity to progress in his career. "Either he has himself opted not to play, or he won't be selected now. So this is his chance. If you make

the IPL your own, you have chances of going forward. Then there is, of course, Wankhede's flat pitch. The ball will come nicely onto the bat and go far," Chopra added. While announcing the central contracts for 2023-24 on February 28, the BCCI once again advised all India cricketers to play domestic games.

Faiz Fazal, Vidarbha's most successful captain, hangs up his boots

NAGPUR: The face of Vidarbha cricket for over a decade. The opener who blunted rival new-ball attacks for as long as one can remember. The elegant left-hander who scripted victories and saved matches with his bat more often than not. The skipper who took his

team to the top of the domestic circuit twice, will walk out on to the field at a match for the last time on Monday. Faiz Fazal, Vidarbha's most successful captain, on Sunday announced his retirement from domestic cricket. Monday, Day 4 of the

Ranji Trophy match against Haryana at the VCA Civil Lines Stadium, will mark the end of an illustrious career spanning over two decades. "Faiz bhai informed us about the decision during the team huddle on Day 1 of the Haryana match.

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka ready for series eyeing World Cup

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto expressed on Sunday his desire for the team to hone their skills in the Twenty20 format during the upcoming three-match series against Sri Lanka, aiming to perfect their performance ahead of the World Cup in June. The series commences on Monday in Sylhet, marking the initiation of Sri Lanka's month-long tour of Bangladesh, which encompasses three one-day internationals and two Tests. Najmul emphasized the importance of cohesive teamwork, highlighting that significant victories in the past year were attributed to the collective contributions of every player.



It's worth noting that Bangladesh have never secured a victory over Sri Lanka in a Twenty20 series. Sri Lanka coach Chris Silverwood said he was expecting a "very competitive series between two good sides". Bangladesh defeated world

champions England 3-0 at home in 2023, and also won series against Ireland and Afghanistan, before drawing a three-match series 1-1 against New Zealand. Najmul said he wanted to keep the momentum going into the World Cup, hosted this year.

Kerala lad Abijith smashes six sixes in an over

KOCHI: Hitting six sixes in an over isn't a rare phenomenon in modern day cricket. A week after Andhra opener Vamshii Krishna hit six maximums in an over in the CK Nayudu Trophy, it was the turn of Kerala youngster Abijith Praveen to do an encore. Playing for Masters CC, Thiruvananthapuram in the semifinal of Navio Youth Trophy U-22 Cricket Tournament at Athreya Cricket Academy ground in Thrissur on Saturday, Abijith clobbered leg-spinner Joe Francis



from Trident Cricket Academy, Thrissur, for six sixes in the 21st over of the match. Abijith was already past his fifty and was batting on 69 when Joe came on to bowl his second

over in the 30 over-per-side game. Abijith smashed the first two balls from Joe over the long-off fence while the third one cleared deep mid-wicket. The fourth ball was deposited over

the cow corner while the last two deliveries were hit over long-on as he galloped to 105 by the end of the over. However, Abijith could only add one more run to his total as his attempt to hit another six of Akshay TK saw him being caught at long-on by Abhiram. His 106 came from just 52 balls and was studded with 10 sixes and two fours as Masters went on to win the match by 106 runs. A native of Pachalloor in Thiruvananthapuram, Abijith said he enjoyed reaching his hundred.

Shardul Thakur-led Mumbai's rearguard puts Tamil Nadu on mat in Ranji Trophy semifinal

NEW DELHI: All-rounder Shardul Thakur's (109) scintillating maiden first-class ton and Tanush Kotian's unbeaten 74 helped Mumbai take a commanding 207-run first-innings lead over Tamil Nadu on the second day of the Ranji Trophy semifinal on Sunday, despite R Sai Kishore's impressive six-wicket haul. Thakur's aggressive century, which included 13 fours and four sixes off just 104 balls, rescued Mumbai from a precarious position of 106 for seven. By the end of the day's play, Mumbai had reached 353 for 9 in response to Tamil Nadu's first innings total of 146, with Sai Kishore being the most effective bowler for Tamil Nadu. Sai Kishore (6/97) ran through a chunk of



Mumbai's batting lineup, while Shreyas Iyer (3) fell to pacer Sandeep Warrier as Tamil Nadu levelled up with the hosts for the first time in the game. But Thakur launched a stunning onslaught, putting each of Tamil Nadu bowlers under severe pressure while forging vital partnerships along the way to take Mumbai far ahead in the game. Thakur teamed up with Hardik Tamore (35) for a crucial 105-run stand for the eighth wicket and took Mumbai further ahead in the company of Kotian, adding

another 79 runs for the ninth wicket. Using his blade to perfection, Thakur was adroit with his hands to pierce gaps at will and did not miss out clearing the field with disdain four times for maximums — one of which also brought up his maiden century across formats. Thakur, who also struggled with an ankle-related issue along the way, finally fell to Kuldeep Sen (2/65) in the third session, which brought the pair of Kotian and Tushar Deshpande together again.

Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez score twice as Inter Miami hit five past Orlando City

NEW DELHI: Inter Miami thrashed Orlando City 5-0 in Major League Soccer on Saturday. Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez were the stars of the match, both scoring two goals each. Orlando, who finished second in the Eastern Conference last season, were no match for Miami's superior performance. Suarez, who had struggled with form and fitness in his first two games, silenced any doubts about his abilities with his remarkable performance. Messi expressed his delight for Suarez, saying, "We were calm anyway, we know what Luis is and what he is capable of doing and everyone knows



it. He is like that, when you least expect it he solves a game for you like he did today, with the goals and the assists." Suarez wasted no time in making an impact, scoring his first goal

for Miami just four minutes into the game. It was a powerful first-time shot from a low cross by Julian Gressel. He then doubled his tally in the 11th minute with another well-taken

goal, assisted by Gressel. Miami continued to dominate the match, with Robert Taylor adding a third goal in the 29th minute after an excellent pass from Gressel.

All India Football Federation makes exception for Gurmeet transfer

PANAJI: In a first for Indian football, the player status committee of the All India Football Federation (AIFF) has allowed Gurmeet Singh to unilaterally terminate his contract with Hyderabad FC on a just cause and make a move outside the transfer window. The Hyderabad goalkeeper had complained to the AIFF about unpaid dues and sought urgent relief, after the club failed to pay his salary for multiple months. During the oral hearing last week, Hyderabad representative Ranganath Budumooru and counsel for the club, Hemant Phalpher, did not dispute the termination, prompting the committee to give the green signal. Gurmeet signed a long-term 4.5-year contract with NorthEast United on Saturday. "It's truly special to be back where it all started for me," the India under-23 goalkeeper said after completing his move.

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, ranging

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.

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 subscrip-

tions 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 customer's order data to offer them a customised AOV which will enable broader discounts if they are willing to match.

Non-life insurance companies to offer price data

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

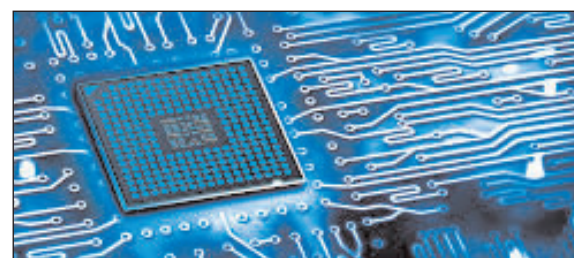


to impact of patchy monsoon rains. CEA said prospects of robust rabi harvesting and expectations of fading away of El Nino and forecast of a normal monsoon augured well for a better-than-normal kharif sowing. He said strong growth was linked to vibrant underlying demand and conditions, adding economy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

A good government's priority is serving people: CM Yogi

Gorakhpur Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, said that a good government's priority is serving people. He praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, stating that the double-engine government focuses on both development and the welfare of the poor, ensuring prosperity along with security, prosperity, livelihood, and respect for faith. The Chief Minister performed the bhoomi-pujan and laid the foundation stone of the first Veterinary Science College of Eastern Uttar Pradesh at Tal Nador, Gorakhpur. The construction of this college, to be built on 80 acres, will cost around Rs 350 crore. Addressing the crowd, CM Yogi said, "In the previous governments, people were troubled by goons and mafia. Only a few benefited from the schemes, while the majority of the public kept watching helplessly." He emphasized that under the current



government, everyone is benefiting from the schemes without any discrimination. The Chief Minister mentioned that under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the strength of the new India is resonating worldwide. Such a government has never been seen before, and it is essential to understand this and support the Modi government once again in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, realizing the slogan of "Abki Baar, Chaar Sau Paar", he stated. CM Yogi assured the people that the Veterinary Science College being built at Tal Nador will be transformed into a

university in the future. This would make Gorakhpur home to five universities. He mentioned that the college will not only focus on animal healthcare but also undertake breed improvements. Fisheries related programs will also be taken forward here. The college aims to provide education for aspiring veterinarians, offering them a new platform to build their careers. The Chief Minister explained that the design of the college is inspired by the vision of King Shalihotra of Shravasti, who, in the third century, composed the Shalihotra.

CM Yogi takes stock of preparations in Azamgarh ahead of PM Modi's arrival

Azamgarh Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed visit to Azamgarh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited the city on Sunday afternoon to take stock of the preparation at the possible venue of the Prime Minister's public meeting at Manduri Airport. After the inspection, the Chief Minister held a meeting with officials and directed them to ensure foolproof arrangement at the proposed program venue within the stipulated time. He stated, "At Manduri Airport, permanent digital boards should be installed, showcasing One District One Products, including the famous Mubarakpur sarees and black pottery, as well as highlighting important places at the local level." Furthermore, Yogi emphasized the need for prior arrangements for the inauguration of completed projects worth Rs 10 crores in the district as part of the upcoming program. He stressed the importance of conduct-



ing a cleanliness campaign on an urgent basis throughout Azamgarh city and key locations. The entire urban area should be adorned with greenery through plantation, and adequate route diversions should be arranged to facilitate public movement during the event, he added. He also underscored convenient location of parking spaces near the proposed program venue. CM Yogi said, "Parking areas should be established in sufficient areas to facilitate movement of vehicles and to avoid traffic jams. Considering the possibility of rain, ensure the installation of water-proof German hangar tents", he stated fur-

ther. The Chief Minister said that arrangements should be made to provide lunch packets and water to the public at the proposed program venue. "Install large water jars instead of providing bottled water. Make arrangements for toilet facility for men and women, including mobile toilets", CM remarked. Yogi further mentioned that a robust security system should be ensured, with continuous patrolling by police department officials, activating the public address system at the program venue for the general public. Through the public address system, necessary directions should be provided to the public.

'The party trusted me but..': Bhojpuri singer Pawan Singh says won't be able to contest elections for BJP from Asansol

NEW DELHI: Popular Bhojpuri singer of 'Lollypop Lagelu' fame on Sunday informed that he'll not be contesting the Lok Sabha elections. The singer was picked by the BJP as its candidate from the Asansol seat in West Bengal, currently represented by TMC's Shatrughan Sinha. Singer Pawan Singh tweeted, "I express my heartfelt gratitude to the top leadership of Bharatiya Janata Party. The party trusted me and declared me as the candidate from West Bengal's Asansol but due to some reason, I will not be able to contest the elections from Asansol" While he refrained from elucidating on why he took the decision to step back, his candidacy had faced criticism from the ruling TMC in West Bengal. The TMC contended that many of his songs were explicit and portrayed women, particularly those from the state, in an offensive manner. In an apparent move to mitigate the controversy, the BJP encouraged Singh to withdraw from the elections, especially considering the party's focus on targeting the TMC leadership on the Sandeshkhali row. Asansol's current representative is the veteran actor-politician Shatrughan Sinha, an incumbent MP from the TMC. While TMC is yet to announce its candidate, BJP had hoped that Singh could serve as a potent opposition to Sinha, who remained a prominent member of the saffron party for many years before parting ways in 2019. Responding to Pawan Singh's candidature, Shatrughan Sinha had remarked, "This is an internal affair of their party (BJP).

At least this time he should stick to his word': Tejashwi after Nitish said he will remain with NDA

NEW DELHI: Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav criticised chief minister Nitish Kumar for his frequent switchovers and emphasised consistency and asked him to stick to his word. "We wish him (Nitish Kumar) all the best. This time he said that he would remain where he is. At least this time he should stick to his word," Tejashwi said. This statement came after Nitish, in the Aurangabad rally, on Saturday assured Prime Minister Narendra Modi that he will not leave BJP's side, high-



lighting their longstanding partnership since 1995. "You (Modi) had come to Bihar earlier as well but I disappeared (from NDA) for some time. Now I am again with you and assure you that I will remain with the NDA forever," Bihar CM said.

Kumar who again came back as CM has a history of shifting political alliances. In 2013, he parted ways with the NDA due to disagreements regarding the BJP's choice for the PM candidate and resigned. However, he later formed a grand alliance

with the RJD and Congress, becoming Chief Minister once again in 2015. In 2017, Nitish Kumar severed ties with the grand alliance, citing corruption allegations against the RJD and a decline in governance. The following year, he reunited with the BJP, only to break away again in 2022, accusing the party of conspiring against him. Throughout his political journey, Kumar has demonstrated his ability to adapt to changing circumstances, making him a key player in Bihar politics.

'My ENT clinic awaits my return': Harsh Vardhan quits politics

NEW DELHI: Former union health minister Harsh Vardhan on Sunday announced his decision to step away from electoral politics. This comes after the BJP released its first list of candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, which included dropping four sitting MPs, including Harsh Vardhan. In the first list of 195 candidates declared by BJP on Saturday, Praveen Khandelwal has been fielded from Chandni Chowk, a seat which Vardhan holds at present.



Vardhan took to X to announce his intention to return to his ENT clinic in Krishna Nagar after a successful electoral career spanning over thirty years. "After over thirty years of a glorious electoral

career, during which I won all the five assembly and two parliamentary elections that I fought with exemplary margins, and held a multitude of prestigious positions in the party organisation and

the governments at the state and centre I finally bow out to return to my roots," he said. "Service to mankind was my motto when I joined MBBS in GSVM Medical College, Kanpur fifty years back with a desire to help the poor and needy. A swayamsewak at heart, I have always been an ardent admirer of Deen Dayal Upadhyay ji's Antodaya philosophy of striving to serve the last man in the queue. It was at the insistence of the then RSS leadership that I jumped into the electoral fray.

India stops Pak-bound ship from China carrying 'military-grade'

NEW DELHI: Indian security agencies stopped a Pakistan-bound ship from China at Mumbai's Nhava Sheva port over suspicions that it contained 'dual-use consignment' that could be used by Islamabad in its nuclear and ballistic missile programme. Based on an

intelligence input, the customs officials halted a Malta-flagged merchant ship, CMA CGM Attila, en route to Karachi on January 23 at the port and inspected the consignment which included a Computer Numerical Control machine by an Italian company. The consignment was also inspected by a team of DRDO which certified that the CNC machine could be used in manufacturing critical parts for Pakistan's missile development programme. The officials said there have been concerns that Pakistan might be utilising China as a conduit to acquire restricted items from Europe and the US, masking identities to evade detection. According to documents such as bills of lading and other details of the consign-

ment, the consigner was mentioned as "Shanghai JXE Global Logistics Co Ltd" and consignee was "Pakistan Wings Pvt Ltd" of Sialkot. However, a deeper investigation by the security agencies indicated that the consignment, weighing 22,180 kilogrammes, was shipped by Taiyuan Mining Import and Export Co Ltd and was meant for Cosmos Engineering in Pakistan, the officials said. The port officials, with specific intelligence, had alerted the Indian defence authorities who inspected the heavy cargo and reported their suspicions, after which the consignment was seized, the officials said, adding that the seizure falls under the prevention of possible proliferation.

'Married Muslim woman's live-in amounts to 'zina' & 'haram' in Islam as per Shariat'

PRAYAGRAJ: While denying any protection to a married Muslim woman in a live-in relationship with her Hindu friend, Allahabad HC has observed that a legally wedded Muslim wife cannot go outside marriage and her live-in relationship with another man would amount to "zina (fornication)" and be "haram (forbidden)" as per Shariat. While rejecting a protection plea filed by a married Muslim woman and her Hindu live-in partner fearing a threat to her life from her father and other relatives, a bench of Justice Renu Agarwal added that the "criminal act" of the woman "cannot be supported and protected" by court. As per case facts, the woman started living with another man after her husband deserted her to marry another woman. But, observing



that the petitioner woman had not acquired any divorce decree from appropriate authority from her husband and was engaged in a live-in relationship, HC said, "The first petitioner is living with second petitioner in contravention of provisions of Muslim law (Shariat) wherein a legally wedded wife cannot go outside marriage, and this act of Muslim women is defined as zina and haram." "If we go into

criminality of the act of first petitioner, she may be prosecuted under IPC Sections 494 (marrying again during lifetime of husband or wife) and 495 (same offence with concealment of former marriage from person with whom subsequent marriage is contracted). As such, the relationship is not covered within the phrase live-in relationship or relationship in the nature of marriage," it added.

When her husband, Mohsin, remarried two years ago, the petitioner moved to her matrimonial home and then opted to reside with a Hindu man in a live-in relationship. State's counsel opposed her plea by submitting that since she had not obtained any decree of divorce from her husband and started living with second petitioner in adultery, their relationship could not be protected by law.

Indian Navy launches massive search operation for missing sailor

NEW DELHI: An Indian Navy seaman, Sahil Verma, has been reported missing from a naval ship since February 27. The Western Naval Command in Mumbai has launched a comprehensive search operation to locate him. A high-level board of inquiry has also been ordered to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident. Updates will be provided as the investigation progresses. Western Naval Command posted on X (officially known as Twitter), "In an unfortunate incident, Sahil Verma, Seaman II, has been reported missing at sea from Indian Naval Ship whilst on deployment since 27 Feb 24." "The Navy immediately launched a massive search operation with ships and aircraft, which is still continuing." Another tweet stated, "Naval Board of Inquiry has been ordered for detailed investigations."