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

Ex-Cong leader wept, said forced to join BJP: Rahul Gandhi

Rahul targeted PM Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah and their alleged ties with the Adani group: Rahul



MUMBAI: Rahul Gandhi launched the INDIA bloc's campaign for the Lok Sabha elections with a mega rally at Shivaji Park on Sunday, a day after concluding his Manipur-Mumbai Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra at Chaityabhoomi in Dadar. Flanked by opposition leaders including Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray and M K Stalin, Rahul dwelt on the twin themes of corruption and the autonomy of democratic institutions in a speech that lasted an hour. "Our country is passing through a critical period, democracy is in danger, democratic institutions have been destroyed. It is our duty

to rise to the occasion for the cause of democracy," he said. He said the BJP cannot win elections without EVMs, ED, CBI and the I-T department. He referred to a veteran Congressman and said the man personally spoke to Sonia Gandhi and literally wept while confessing he had no energy to take on BJP and that he feared jail. Though Rahul did not name the leader, he was believed to be referring to former chief minister Ashok Chavan, who joined BJP and was immediately nominated to Rajya Sabha. In the white

paper submitted by NDA govt in Parliament, there was a reference to the Adarsh housing scam during Chavan's tenure as CM. Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin, RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray, NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar, former J&K CMs Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, VBA's Prakash Ambedkar, Jharkhand CM Champai Soren, former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana and Priyanka Gandhi were among those present at the rally.

Earlier in the day, Rahul led a Nyay Sankalp Padyatra from Mani Bhavan, Mahatma Gandhi's residence in Mumbai, to August Kranti Maidan where the Quit India movement started in 1942. Later, while addressing a gathering at an auditorium he said that BJP makes a lot of noise but does not have enough courage to change the Constitution. In his speech at Shivaji Park, Rahul targeted PM Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah and their alleged ties with the Adani group.

Anti-Bharat forces plotting new designs to disrupt: RSS

NEW DELHI: Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha (ABPS) of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh on Sunday extended the tenure of national general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale for another three years even as the highest decision-making meeting of the Sangh also passed a resolution urging people of the country to turn out in large numbers to exercise their franchise. While describing the country's present "national scene" as "encouraging, (with) positive developments", the Sangh in its annual report of 2023-24 stated that the year will be remembered as a "golden year", as it cited construction and consecration of Ram Mandir, success of Chandrayaan 3, and G20 summit which "resonated with 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' — the ancient yet immortal message of Bharat."



Without naming anyone, though indicating the utterances by opposition political leaders on Sanatan Dharma or the playing of "North South divide," the report cautioned that "forces that are inimical to anything that is Bharat, Hindutva or Sangh, are ever active in search of newer plans and designs to disrupt or denigrate these three." RSS also underscored its concern as it highlighted farmers' agitation as an attempt to spread anarchy in Punjab, condemned atrocities in Sandeshkhali, and expressed worry over the ethnic conflict in

Manipur. RSS stated that importance of elections in a democracy cannot be overstated as it said that Swayamsevak not only have to vote as their sacred duty, "but also ensure 100% polling. They should make plans in their area to achieve this". RSS will be celebrating its centenary year in 2025, and it said that its target of spreading its activities across all Mandals is yet to be achieved. It urged its cadres to resolve to fulfil the same in the coming year. "The situation is excellent. The centenary year of Sangh is beckoning us. Let us advance with confi-

dence; let us work with certitude. Time is ours; it is waiting for us." Celebrating the consecration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Jan 22, the report also emphasised the need for unity in the face of divisive forces aiming to disrupt the nation. The report stated, "Although the new Ram Temple is a sign of heralding a new age of social harmony... it is extremely painful and despicable that frequently we get the news of the excesses on the persons of Scheduled Caste ... in some cases vested interests deepen the crisis..." RSS also alleged that attempts "to spread anarchy under the pretext of farmers' agitation have been restarted," and said "separatist terrorism" has raised its "ugly head" through it in Punjab ahead of the elections. On the Sandeshkhali incident in West Bengal.

Count existing investments as incentives, say German car companies

NEW DELHI: German and some other multinational companies are concerned at Govt's new incentive scheme to push investments into electric vehicle manufacturing, fearing that they may not get a "level-playing field" as special import duty rates would be given only to new entrants but may not be extended to existing players. German makers such as BMW, the Volkswagen group and Mercedes-Benz are already mulling their official position on the matter, with their Indian subsidiaries briefing global headquarters about the new tax regime that has been announced by the Indian govt last week, sources told.

The new policy, which mandates a 15% import duty for those who commit at least \$500 million (Rs 4,150 crore) of investment towards local manufacturing, apart from commitments on domestic value addition, is being seen as favourable for new players, such as, Vietnamese as well as American Tesla, both of whom had pitched for lower import rates in the initial part of their India plans. India currently levies a tax of 70% or 100% on imported EVs, depending on their value. German and some other companies such as Korean Hyundai and Kia, apart from some of the Indian homegrown makers, feel their "early investments in the electric space should be counted" retrospectively. "The companies feel that they should not be 'penalised' just because they were the early ones to invest for electric vehicles production and localisation in India in line with govt's thinking. The companies want govt takes into account funds they have already put in towards green technology in their local set-ups here," one of the sources said. "They don't want to be 'left out' of any incentive scheme just because the govt is now rolling out sops to attract new investors. Their early commitment to India should also be factored in," the source said.

Day after bail, CM Arvind Kejriwal gets 2 ED summons

NEW DELHI: With the courts affirming the validity of ED's summons to him, the agency issued a fresh one to Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal to join its investigation into the alleged liquor scam while asking him to also join the probe into alleged money laundering related to Delhi Jal Board (DJB). In the DJB case, Kejriwal has been asked to appear



before the investigators on Monday while the liquor case summons — the ninth one — is for March 21. Kejriwal, who had so far refused to appear before ED dubbing its summons

"illegal and vague", had to appear before the sessions court on Saturday after the agency moved court against him for resisting the probe. He was allowed bail on furnishing a bond of Rs 15,000 and a surety of Rs 1 lakh.

ED started investigating the alleged DJB scam based on a CBI FIR into allegations of bribery against senior officers of DJB and

AAP functionaries for awarding a contract to NKG Infrastructure when the company did not fulfil the technical eligibility norms. In Feb, the agency searched the premises of Kejriwal's personal secretary Bibhav Kumar and AAP treasurer N D Gupta in connection with the DJB probe. Kumar was asked about Kejriwal's visitors and certain mobile phones.

State govts to raise Rs 50,000 crore in a day, set bond record

MUMBAI: On Tuesday, when 17 states together would borrow a little over Rs 50,000 crore through auction of bonds, it would be the highest such borrowing amount on a single day either by central or state govts in India's bond market history. The record high amount, however, is unlikely to disrupt the prevailing yields in the market given the way RBI and central govt together have



managed the gilt auctions this fiscal, bond dealers and fund managers said.

In recent times, the highest amount raised from a single-day gilt auction was on Feb 2 this year when central govt borrowed Rs

39,000 crore. On Friday, March 15, RBI announced that 17 state govts together would borrow Rs 50,206 crore through auctions on Tuesday, March 19. Of the 17, at Rs 8,000 crore, UP is slotted to be the biggest borrower, followed by Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, at Rs 6,000 crore each. The higher borrowing amounts by state govts came in the absence of borrowing.

India & Maldives review troop pullout, discuss economic ties

NEW DELHI: In the middle of the ongoing withdrawal of Indian military personnel from the Maldives, the two countries held another meeting of their high-level core group, reviewing the deputation of Indian technical personnel who are replacing the military staff, to enable continued operation of Indian aviation platforms — naval choppers and a Dornier aircraft used mainly for medical evacuation.

While India has so far replaced military personnel with civilians for one of these platforms, Male said on Sunday that the personnel for the second platform will be replaced by April 10 and the third by



May 10.

The Maldives had earlier given India time till May 10 to pull out its forces involved in the maintenance of the aviation platforms. The core group was formed after a meeting between PM Narendra Modi and President Mohamed Muizzu late last year in Dubai. According to a Maldivian readout, both sides noted

the progress that has been made in replacing Indian military personnel with civilians at the aviation platforms in the Maldives. "To date, military personnel in one such platform have been replaced with civilians, and the remaining two will be replaced by civilians on 10 April and 10 May 2024," it said. "The high level core group covered

broad range of areas in economic and development cooperation between the two countries, and noted the capacity building programs recently concluded. Additionally, discussions covered areas related to bilateral cooperation aimed at enhancing the partnership, including expediting the implementation of ongoing developmental cooperation projects," added the Maldives statement. In a separate statement, Indian govt said both sides reviewed ongoing deputation of Indian technical personnel to enable continued operation of Indian aviation platforms that provide humanitarian.

Congress 2nd-largest gainer from electoral bonds

Recent Election Commission data reveals Congress leading in electoral bond receipts over Trinamool Congress (TMC). Congress received more bonds. The data of 2017-18 and 2018-19 combined put the Trinamool ahead of Congress.

A crucial period before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls showed significant differences in funding amounts. Congress 2nd-largest gainer from electoral bonds, slightly ahead of TMC, shows fresh data. When the Election Commission released the first set of data on electoral bonds last week, one of the more surprising revelations was that Trinamool Congress, a regional party restricted largely to one state.

Baghel named in Mahadev app FIR; political vendetta: Ex-CM

RAIPUR: Chhattisgarh Economic Offences Wing (EOW) has named former CM Bhupesh Baghel in an FIR in connection with alleged Rs 6,000-crore Mahadev Book online betting scam. The FIR, based on complaint by ED, was filed on March 4, but details emerged late on Saturday, a few hours after Lok Sabha elections were announced.

"It is a politically motivated FIR. While my name is included among the accused, contents of the FIR fail to reference me or provide any indication of my involvement. This is a targeted effort to tarnish my reputation through political vendetta," Baghel said in a press meet on Sunday.

EOW remained tight-lipped but a copy of the FIR shows that the case has been registered under IPC sec-

tions 120B, 34, 406, 420, 467, 468 and 471.

NEW DELHI: PM Modi on Saturday came out in strong defence of ED and other agencies and said he had given them a free hand to take up cases of corruption, unlike the trend before 2014 when agencies were not allowed to act freely.

Asserting that he followed a zero tolerance policy towards corruption, Modi said the drive against graft would be further intensified in his next term. Though a reiteration of his backing for ED, the PM's remarks at a media event were significant because they came in the wake of the opposition's accusation that govt had used central agencies to intimidate opponents and coerce businesses to contribute to BJP's political coffers.

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



New Delhi: The tussle between Raj Niwas and elected govt escalated yet again Wednesday after lieutenant governor V K Saxena tagged chief minister Arvind Kejriwal while posting pictures of the dilapidated condition of Qalandar Colony in northeast Delhi on social media. AAP govt responded by asking LG not to play "dirty politics" with the problems of people. "Yesterday evening, I went to Qalandar Colony in Shahdara, northeast Delhi, and saw the condition worse than hell. It is not possible to express in words the plight of the people living amidst potholes, clogged drains, heaps of garbage and bad smell in the name of roads," Saxena posted on social media platform X, formerly Twitter. Stating that as LG, it was his constitutional responsibility to highlight people's issues and to bring CM's attention to the problems they faced,

Saxena said, "Locals complained that 35,000-40,000 people live a brutal life in 4,000 houses. It was the responsibility of DUSIB, of which CM is the chairman, to provide basic public facilities and cleanliness was under MCD." LG's latest post on X came amid continuing tensions between him and CM since Tuesday, when he had complained on the social media platform about the living conditions at Sangam Vihar and posted pictures of the area. In response, CM had said that despite holding a constitutional post, LG was "playing the role of opposition", which was ideally meant for BJP MPs and MLAs.

Kejriwal had also demanded strict action against the officials responsible for the area's upkeep, saying "services" and "vigilance" was under LG. Hitting back at the latest post, AAP govt said it was unfortunate that LG was "playing dirty politics" with the problems of the common people of Delhi. He raised certain issues about Sangam Vihar, Burari and Kiradi, CM, in good faith, directed the chief secretary to immediately solve the problems within a week. CM also urged LG to take strict action against delinquent officials because vigilance and disciplinary matters are under LG's jurisdiction.

IGCC and IFCCI Celebrate women in leadership



The Indo German Chamber of Commerce (IGCC) and Indo French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IFCCI) celebrated women in leadership roles and recognized NGOs supporting women's causes. The event emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive society, investing in women's empowerment, and promoting diversity and inclusion for economic growth. In a joint celebration by the Indo German Chamber of Commerce (IGCC) and Indo

French Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IFCCI), Women in Leadership roles were honored, and the efforts of NGOs supporting women's causes were recognised. The reception took place at Leela Palace, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi,

reflecting the spirit of International Women's Day. This year's theme, 'Inspire Inclusion,' and the overarching theme, 'Invest in women: Accelerate progress,' underscored the importance of creating an inclusive society and investing in women's empowerment. During the event, a White paper on gender inclusivity at the workplace, presented by S.S Rana & Co in collaboration with IFCCI, was unveiled, fostering discussions

on gender equality and celebrating women's achievements in leadership roles. Sonia Prashar, Deputy Director General, IGCC, expressed delight in partnering with the Indo French Chamber of Commerce to celebrate women's achievements, emphasising the event's role in discussing gender equality in the workplace. Payal S. Kanwar, Director General of IFCCI, emphasized the significance of promoting diversity.

Exploring Indian design heritage in graphic design

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

Jaya Jaitly and Dr Dimple Bahl, explores the intersection of graphic design and craft. The book advocates for a shift from the Western-centric approach in graphic design education in India to reconnect with the country's rich design heritage. Emphasising the need for decolonisation in design education, it proposes a seamless integration of Western concepts with traditional Indian practice. From

rekha to bindu, aakaar to trikon, this book explores how references from Indian design history can inspire design in today's world. The co-authors and their commitment to creating a meeting point of timeless craft and modern graphic design stems from a long and dedicated association with the fields. The co-authors bring a wealth of experience to the project. Jaitly, founder of

Dastkari Haat Samiti is deeply involved in heritage and livelihood issues, with a notable career in politics. Dr. Bahl, an academician and graphic designer, focuses on visual brand strategy and publication design, with an emphasis on traditional Indian folk media. Their collaboration has led to initiatives like Kala Manthan, a craft design experience bridging the gap between students.

36-year old shoots himself in South Delhi

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

Celebrating sushi in Delhi

An exhibition titled I Love Sushi by the Japan Foundation, in association with the Embassy of Japan and India International Centre, is on display until March 10 at IIC's Art Gallery. Celebrating sushi in Delhi. Did you know that Japan is not the birthplace of sushi? There are few things that have the ability to bridge cultural differences, remain versatile, and also be everyone's favourite. Sushi is one of them. While sushi with spicy mayonnaise



may be Delhi's own version of the specialty, different parts of the country have modified this classic depending on the taste and local ingredients. It is also an

aspect that makes sushi the best-known example of Japanese cuisine among foodies. But did you know that Japan is not the birthplace of sushi?

Sharing similar interesting facts about sushi and how Japan adopted the dish in its original form and modified it to suit its natural environment, an exhibition titled I Love Sushi by the Japan Foundation, in association with the Embassy of Japan and India International Centre, is on display until March 10 at IIC's Art Gallery. A huge installation, mainly on nigiri-sushi and nori-maki zushi, with an arrangement of 930 sushi pieces, welcomes you to the exhibit.

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

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



when she is learnt to have started speaking to the crew rudely, sources said. When the behaviour persisted, the cabin crew informed the captain. "Some of the other passengers in business class also found her to be rude. Being a long,

nearly nine-hour flight, the captain decided not to take off with what could be a potential troublesome passenger and she was offloaded," a source said. The checked-in baggage of a person not on board an aircraft has to be offloaded and this takes

time. The flight's departure was delayed by about an hour because of this procedure. An AI spokesperson said: "We are aware of an incident on flight AI-161 of March 5, 2024. A passenger travelling in business class was off boarded on the advice of the captain, following some argument with members of the crew before the scheduled push-back. AI accords top priority to the safety and security of all passengers and crew, and strictly adheres to rules governing the same."

2 detained for pasting posters of PM illegally

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



been registered against unknown persons at Tughlaq Road Police Station and the posters have been removed. Inquiry revealed that posters had been stuck at different places in Lutyens' Delhi on Monday and Police said the posters did not carry the name of the publisher. Following the complaint, cops started scanning the CCTV footage of the area and finally were able to track down

the two men who pasted those posters. "We detained them from north Delhi and they are being questioned," the officer said. Meanwhile, an NDMC official said they were not aware of any such complaint. Senior Congress leader Alka Lamba said, "Whether we did it or anyone else, people have the right to protest in democracy. Where is the crime in this? Where is the threat in this?"

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

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

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



clean drinking water, working sewage system, medical facilities and security. After the public exchanges between LG and CM about the colony, some Delhi Jal Board workers started removing the accumulated waste on the D Block lane from Wednesday morning. Santosh, a paan shop owner, grumbled, "For three months, because of sewer work, the lane has been dug up. I don't understand why the work is so slow. But even otherwise, every monsoon the drains are choked and the road get flooded with dirty, stinking water. The garbage vans do not come for

three-four weeks sometimes." The rampant unplanned constructions have left Sangam Vihar congested and the main road of Mangal Bazar is a nightmare for pedestrians. "After the LG's visit, the main road was cleaned up a bit," said Javed Khan, who has a shop in Mangal Bazar. "The internal roads are in poor condition. But Delhi govt has done satisfactory work here in the past few years. Our water problem has been solved and we get potable supply once in the morning. There is, however, a need for more garbage vans." Almost a decade ago, Sangam Vihar

colony was the hub of the illegal water tanker business and many tubewells were sunk without authorisation on public land. After coming to power, AAP govt sealed most of the tubewells and cut electricity supply to curb extraction of groundwater. Every time a truck passes, it raises a cloud of dust to add to the dust everywhere Pawan Kumar said, "The current govt hasn't done much besides opening liquor shops. There is no green park here or a govt school or a playground for children." Salman, an employee of a cycle store near Surya Public School, wasn't too happy either. "When the LG visited the area, some spots were cleaned. But after that the story is the same," he said. "The drains haven't been desilted so water flows into our shops in the monsoons."

Clip of man's stunts in SUV goes viral, cops seize vehicle

New Delhi: After a video of a man performing dangerous stunts with his SUV on the Najafgarh-Rajouri Garden route went viral on social media, police have identified and seized the vehicle. The SUV was flashing a red beacon. The video, which was shot by another driver who also tried to warn the accused, showed the white SUV being driven in a zig-zag manner on the road, endangering safety of others on both carriageways. Police received a complaint from the local residents' welfare association and launched a probe. In the viral video, the person recording the video was heard as saying "this is illegal", to which the accused responded, "We are rogues." The SUV driver also attempted to conceal the vehicle's identity by removing the number plates. Police scanned CCTV footage collected from nearby areas, identified the car and seized it. DCP (West) Vichitra Veer said police were on the lookout.

Editorial

The Architectural Marvel of Gaganyaan

In the pantheon of India's space exploration endeavours, Mission Gaganyaan stands out as a bold and ambitious project. It signifies India's resolve to join the league of nations capable of sending humans to space and safely returning them to Earth. This mission is not merely a testament to India's growing prowess in space technology but also a beacon of its scientific spirit and quest for cosmic knowledge.

Like Carl Sagan said, we, on Earth, are living amidst a shooting gallery of comets and asteroids. The need for humanity to become a multi-planetary being is not a luxury but a necessity. Mission Gaganyaan is an intricate tapestry of cutting-edge technology and innovation, designed to propel India into the elite club of countries with human spaceflight capabilities. The mission's architecture is a triad of crucial components: the Crew Module (CM), the Service Module (SM), and the launch vehicle, GSLV-Mk III. The Crew Module is the heart of Gaganyaan, designed to house the Vyomnauts, providing them with life support and safety throughout the mission. It is a fortress of human ingenuity, equipped with advanced systems to ensure the crew's well-being in the void of space. The Service Module, attached to the Crew Module, is the powerhouse of the mission, equipped with propulsion, power, and life support systems. It ensures that the Crew Module has the necessary resources for survival and mission success. The GSLV-Mk III, India's most potent rocket, serves as the chariot for Gaganyaan. It is tasked with the monumental responsibility of propelling the spacecraft beyond the clutches of Earth's gravity into orbit.

The Chosen Protectors of India's Space Dreams

The selection of the crew, an elite group of Indian Air Force (IAF) pilots, is a narrative of unparalleled rigour and meticulousness. The process was not merely about selecting India's finest pilots but about finding individuals who embody resilience, intellect, and the indomitable spirit of exploration. The chosen Vyomnauts, after a stringent selection process involving medical evaluations, psychological assessments, and rigorous physical tests, are Group Captains Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Angad Pratap, Ajit Krishnan, and Wing Commander Shubhanshu Shukla. These individuals represent the zenith of professionalism and dedication, poised to be the torchbearers of India's manned spaceflight.

Training for the Unknown

The training regimen for these Vyomnauts is as comprehensive as it is intense, designed to prepare them for every conceivable challenge of space travel. From acclimatising to the micro-gravity environment to handling the unforeseen contingencies of space, the training covers every spectrum of the mission. They undergo extensive sessions in specialised facilities like the Human Centrifuge and parabolic flights to adapt to the physiological demands of space travel. Simulators and virtual reality setups provide them with a taste of the space environment, honing their skills in spacecraft operation and emergency procedures. Moreover, their training extends beyond the confines of Earth.

Collaborations with international space agencies provide them with exposure to advanced training modules, including extravehicular activity (EVA) and advanced life support systems, ensuring they are well-versed in the nuances of human spaceflight. Gaganyaan is more than a mission; it's a statement of India's burgeoning capabilities in space technology.

and its unwavering commitment to exploring the final frontier.

The Citizenship Amendment Act is a tiny window of legislation at the intersection

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is a tiny window of legislation at the intersection of a subcontinent's dark-crimson history, tumultuous geopolitics and upwardly spiralling aspirations. For Islamists and their intrepid western 'liberal' allies, this window is where simplistic, anti-India propaganda converges. For the religious minorities who have faced unrelenting discrimination, murders, rapes, conversions, and land grab in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, it is a enough of an opening to climb into sunshine. One cannot imagine what implementation of CAA will do in border states like West Bengal, Rajasthan, Punjab and Kashmir. Pockets of a mute, invisible, exploited and vulnerable population will come alive. Horrors like the one in Bengal's Sandeshkhali — in which many of the victims of rape, murder and land grab by TMC goons like Sheikh Shahjahan were Hindu refugees driven away from Bangladesh — will meet with swift and fierce resistance. If India had the CAA rules in 1979, there would be no Marichjhapi massacre. The then Left Front government and CPM cadre in Bengal presided over the killing of nearly 1,700 persecuted Dalit Hindu



refugees who had fled Bangladesh to settle in West Bengal. They were butchered across 100 islands in the Sunderbans delta. Even their drinking water wells were poisoned. The stock, uninformed attack against the CAA is that it is anti-Muslim. Why should citizenship applications of only persecuted Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and Parsis from these three Islamist countries be expedited? Why shouldn't persecuted Muslims like Shias and Ahmediyyas of Pakistan not be included in CAA? There are six good reasons why India is justified and wise not to include Muslims from these three nations. First, CAA is a nar-

row-window legislation to protect persecuted 'religious' minorities, not 'sects'. Muslims from these countries can still apply under the old Citizenship Act. Former Pakistani singer Adnan Sami got Indian citizenship and is a much loved and respected figure in India today. The US has a similar narrow-window legislation called the Lautenberg-Specter Amendments which give preferential shelter to persecuted minorities from Russia and Iran. Second, the historical premise of CAA is the Liaquat-Nehru pact that was signed after Partition in 1950 to safeguard minorities in the divided subcontinent. India kept its

part of the deal. Minority population has grown by over 5 per cent in seven decades. But Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh didn't keep their word. Percentage of religious minorities have dwindled to single digits in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and close to zero in Afghanistan. Third, now-hounded Islamic sects like Shias and Ahmediyyas were at the forefront of the movement to create Pakistan. India is not obligated to protect them from one another now. Fourth, India has the right to defend itself against demographic and cultural takeover. It has already lost several body parts in the course of

the 1,000-year demographic war unleashed against it by colonisation and Islamic invasions. It has seen large tracts of its territory, especially along the border. It must not accommodate further demographic usurpation. Fifth, India should learn what not to do from the western model of 'liberalism' which the Left and far-Left have long hijacked. In the name of 'multiculturalism' and 'cultural enrichment', Left-leaning parties in the West have facilitated unbridled immigration to grow their vote bank. It has gaslighted white populations to drop all survival instincts against demographic takeover. This model makes 'liberal democracies' ripe for takeover by parasites and the very enemies of democracy. And sixth, India has nothing to prove by being magnanimous vis-a-vis Pakistan, Bangladesh or Afghanistan. All are right now failed or struggling states while India is the fastest rising global economic and military power. India neither needs their validation nor needs to belittle them for liberal brownie points. The CAA is absolutely fine and effective as it stands. It is the first step to making Bharat the natural home for the persecuted people of all Indic religions.

Losing side this time

Many centuries ago when the world at large didn't have much clue about statecraft and strategy, Kautilya had advised Chandragupta Maurya, his disciple, that the country with which his kingdom would share an immediate border will always be its enemy. But the enemy's enemy will be a friend and hence all strategic calculation must be undertaken keeping this basic premise in mind. It seems India was following this exact logic when a set of very interesting images from Afghanistan splashed across the media this week. An Indian delegation led by JP Singh, joint secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, met Taliban's foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi in Kabul. The Indian delegation also met former President Hamid Karzai, officials of the UN Assistance Mission to

Afghanistan as well as some people from the business community. This was the second such public engagement between India and Taliban after the latter returned to power in 2021. The first public engagement took place in 2022 when at that time also, Joint Secretary Singh met Taliban's foreign minister Muttaqi. In the last three years since Taliban has come back to rule the country by establishing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, India's diplomatic engagement with the new rulers has been on a very firm footing. Time and again, India's foreign policy establishment has invoked civilisational ties and the role of history to justify maintaining strong ties with Kabul. Not without Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging Taliban to form an inclusive government in the country. Although,

India has not accorded diplomatic recognition to the state set up by Taliban yet but it has continued to engage the various stakeholders in Afghanistan including Taliban itself. A major part of this engagement is focused on humanitarian aid to people of Afghanistan which is being coordinated by a technical team posted by India since June 2022. As a part of this aid, India had provided Afghanistan with food-grains to tide over an unprecedented food shortage, medical aid that also included Covid-19 vaccines besides continued support for more than 500 projects in critical sectors such as power, water supply, road, connectivity, healthcare, education, agriculture and capacity building. Notably, India had already invested \$3 billion in Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Modi's popularity and his party's strategies

On leap year's leap day, an analysis that can't be leapt. With two articles titled "To see India's Future, go south" and "India's north-south divide", The Economist argues that India's economic rise is over-reliant on South India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trading ideological aims for national unity. Similar arguments have been utilised by a parliamentarian from a major political party to demand a separate nation. This party had organised a movement in New Delhi in February, demanding 'Our Tax Money, Give it to us.' It is being portrayed that the ruling party in the Centre stands for an illiterate, underdeveloped, Hindi-speaking North India, while the opposition stands for a developed, inclusive, and Hindi-opposing South India. This portrayal oversimplifies the complexities of Indian politics and regional dynamics, necessitating clarification to challenge attempts to undermine India's sovereignty.

First things first. The protests against the alleged divide are not economic but political. The analysis of the economy notably excludes the Western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, which collectively contribute to almost 24 per cent of India's GDP. However, a strong demand for separatism still doesn't exist. Among these states, Gujarat has been ruled by the BJP for



nearly three decades. The Economist, not for once, mentions these states and their stats. Political leaders of the opposition in the South are leveraging economic injustice to solidify their political positions, often in response to challenges posed by Prime Minister Modi's popularity and his party's strategies. These leaders also support the farmers' protests in North India despite their purported concerns about tax distribution. This raises questions about the sincerity of their motives regarding the North-South economic divide.

A historical perspective may shed light on why West and South India have experienced more economic growth than the North and East. From 1952 to 1993, the Government of India implemented a freight equalization policy that subsidized the transportation of minerals. This policy incentivised the development of manufacturing facilities near the coastline, where transportation of raw materials was more fea-

sible. Although the policy was eventually revoked, its impact persisted as new investments favoured regions with existing infrastructure. The role of migrants in contributing to GST collections in states like Karnataka, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu is significant. For instance, an IT engineer from Uttar Pradesh settled in Bengaluru contributes to income tax collections, while workers from Bihar purchasing goods in Tamil Nadu contribute to GST revenues. Consider the service they are adding to these states. This commercial activity contributes to state-wise tax collections, which are then redistributed by the union government based on developmental needs. If the argument of using Karnataka's money for UP is made, then the same argument of using Bengaluru's money for Hassan can also be made and similarly, using the billionaire's money to uplift the masses. If the last two would be illogical, then the former would be too.

Agni V with MIRV gets India into global deterrence league

Agni V with MIRV gets India into global deterrence league (File) DRDO conducts first flight test of indigenously developed Agni-5 missile with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology. PTI

The successfully test-fired Agni-V ballistic missile equipped with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology vastly extends India's strategic envelop.

Power of extended range

The Agni-V boasts an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)

range, exceeding 5,000 kilometres. This extended reach significantly alters India's strategic landscape. Traditionally, India's missile arsenal primarily focused on deterring threats from its immediate neighbours. However, the Agni-V's extended range allows India to potentially engage targets across vast distances, encompassing a broader spectrum of potential adversaries. This expanded reach compels any potential aggressor to consider the wider ramifications of a conflict with India. The psycholog-

ical impact of this extended deterrence capability is undeniable. The stakes have just gone up.

MIRV technology: A game changer

The integration of multiple independently targeted re-entry vehicle technology turbocharges India's capability to launch a survivable multiple nuclear attack from a single source. MIRV allows a single missile to carry multiple independently targeted warheads. During the final stages of flight, these warheads separate and manoeuvre towards

pre-designated targets. This capability significantly complicates an enemy's missile defence system. Previously, an enemy could potentially expend a single interceptor missile to neutralise an incoming threat.

However, with MIRV technology, the enemy's defence system would need to engage and destroy each independently targeted warhead, exponentially increasing the defensive burden. This complexity significantly enhances the effectiveness of the Agni-V as a deterrent.

T+0 settlement regime in the stock market



MUMBAI: Markets regulator Sebi on said that it would soon start a pilot project for moving to a T+0 settlement regime in the stock market on an optional basis, limited to 25 stocks and with a select few brokers. The board will again review the roll-out after three and six months from the date of introduction of this proposed faster settlement system. Sebi in its board meeting that lasted till late evening also decided to ease certain disclosure requirements for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), expanded the definition of promoter groups to determine promoter holding levels post and IPO, done away with security deposit requirement for public and rights offer of equities. It also directed to put in place specific rules to deal with market rumours, especially that impact a company's stock price and eased some of the rules governing alternate investment funds (AIFs), Sebi said in a release post its board meeting. The Sebi board also approved a proposal to exempt

additional disclosure requirements for FPIs having more than 50% of their India equity portfolio in a single corporate group but the holding is in a listed company with no identified promoter. However, this exemption would come with certain conditions like the aggregate holdings of all such FPIs is less than 3% of the company's equity capital. Sebi also extended the timeline to provide documentary proof of material changes in an FPI to 30 days from seven days now. It also said that a foreign fund not wanting to renew its registration in India can dispose of their holdings in 180 days, from 30 days now. Even if the fund can't fully liquidate its India portfolio, it would get another 180 days to do so, provided it pays 5% of the

sale proceeds as penalty to Sebi's Investor Protection and Education Fund (IPEF). Sebi board also has done away with the requirement of 1% security deposit for public and rights offer of stocks. It also expanded the definition of promoter group for post-IPO promoter holding by including those non-promoter entities that hold 5% or more in the company after the close of the offer. Relating to market rumours, Sebi said that promoters, directors, key managerial personnel and senior management of the company "should provide timely response to the listed entity for verifying market rumour." The Sebi board also approved the proposal to recognise a stock exchange as the supervisory body for research analysts.

SEBI defers proposed full launch of same-day settlement, to start with Beta version

MUMBAI: Taking into account stakeholder feedback, the Board of India's capital market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approved the launch of a Beta version of optional T+0 settlement, for a limited set of 25 shares, and that too with a limited set of brokers. The decision was taken at its Board meeting held The T+0 system means that the settlements must be done within the same day, of the completion of a transaction. Those 25 shares that would be part of the Beta version

have not been named yet by the regulator. Parallely, the regulator SEBI said it shall continue to do further stakeholder consultation, including with the users of the Beta version. The Board of the SEBI will review the progress at the end of three months and six months from the date of this implementation, and decide on further course of action, SEBI said in a statement. SEBI, in its endeavour to keep pace with the changing times and carry out its mandate of development of securities markets and

investor protection, shortened the settlement cycle to T+3 from T+5 in 2002 and subsequently to T+2 in 2003. Further in 2021, T+1 settlement was introduced in a phased manner which was fully implemented from January 2023. It was of the view that the significant evolution of payment systems in the country in recent years coupled with sophisticated and robust technologies used by market infrastructure Institutions (MIs) appears to present further opportunities for advancing.

Forex reserves jump to 2-year high

MUMBAI: The country's foreign exchange reserves rose for a third straight week and reached a more than two-year high of \$636.1 billion as of March 8, data from the central bank showed on.

The reserves jumped by \$10.5 billion in the reporting week, the biggest jump since the



week ended July 14, 2023. They had risen by a total of \$9.5 billion in the prior two weeks,

edging towards their record high of \$642.5 billion, hit in Sept 2021.

Rs 162 crore mystery: Name's Yashoda, say bonds, but hospitals deny

NOIDA/HYDERABAD: One of the biggest buyers of electoral bonds is a hospital. Its name, State Bank of India data shared with Election Commission shows, is Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital. But which one? Despite the name being known, the identity of this buyer - who sits just outside the top 10 purchasers, at No. 12 - remains a mystery as of now. Between Oct 2021 and Oct 2023, Yashoda Super Speciality Hospitals bought bonds worth Rs 162 crore. There are three hospital chains that operate with this name, in Ghaziabad and Hyderabad. A day after the identities of electoral bond



purchasers was published on the EC website on Supreme Court orders, the hospital managements denied making any such donation. In Ghaziabad, there are three Yashoda hospitals - one in Kaushambi (Yashoda Super Speciality Hospitals), one in Sanjay Nagar (Yashoda

Superspeciality Hospital & Cancer Institutes) and another in Nehru Nagar (Yashoda Hospital and Research Centre). They started off under the same group, managed by Dinesh Arora, a doctor, and his brother-in-law PN Arora, a law graduate in his mid-70s. In 2017, the two

Aroras legally parted ways. The Kaushambi hospital went to PN Arora and the Nehru Nagar and Sanjay Nagar hospitals to Dinesh Arora (both are now managed by his son Rajat). The PN Arora group is building Yashoda Medicity, a new state-of-the-art 1,200-bed hospital in Ghaziabad. Last year, before the UP Global Investors, the group announced an investment of Rs 500 crore. In a statement, PN Arora's hospital management said, "It has come to our attention that there have been speculations regarding Yashoda Super Speciality Hospital, Kaushambi, involving political donations through electoral bonds.

Missing middle in IT firms pose challenges to fulfil cloud deals

BENGALURU: The conspicuous case of missing middle (talent) in IT firms is posing newer challenges in complex outsourcing deals especially in cloud migration projects. The huge vacuum in the installed talent pool of middle management and senior executives in IT firms has led to a decline in decades of institutional knowledge that was integral to a customer's business. This has widened the knowledge gap of using tools, processes, governance, and risk frameworks to architect and replatform solutions. As companies are grappling with ways to restore the institutional knowledge, it has put some large deals under pressure resulting in ramp downs. The depth of the leadership bench has depleted too, forcing customers to build tech skills inhouse marrying core and context. Phil Fersht, CEO of US IT

advisory HfS Research, said, there has never been so much movement for client-facing services talent as what has been going on in the past year, which is causing a significant disruption in the industry. "Simply put, the importance of executive-client personal relationships cannot be understated during these turbulent times when clients are under huge pressure to drive out costs, fix broken cloud migrations and exploit AI opportunities. We will soon see the winners and losers emerge from the IT service providers which can retain and assemble the best quality client-facing executive teams." HfS Research and EY's report showed that 65% of organizations have made strategic investments in cloud, but only 32% are achieving their ambitions. There appears to be a fundamental disconnect between

US court bars Byju's from using \$533mn it borrowed

MUMBAI: In a major setback for troubled startup Byju's, a US bankruptcy court has passed an order in favour of the edtech company's term loan lenders, disabling the firm from transferring or using \$533 million received as part of loan proceeds, essentially freezing the assets. The loan amount - which has been at the centre of dispute between Byju's and its lenders - has been transferred from an obscure hedge fund Camshaft Capital, where it was previously held to an unnamed offshore trust, the group of lenders said in a statement. The court has asked founder and group CEO Byju Raveendran and wife Divya Gokulnath to comply with the ruling. Byju's founder Raveendran borrows money against his



homes to pay staff salary as cash crunch continues it has also ordered the arrest of William Morton, founder of Camshaft Capital, following his repeated refusal to appear in court and provide any information regarding the transfer of \$533 million and the current status and location of the funds. "The fact that the parent company (Think & Learn) is attempting to hide where the assets are is huge. It shows that

they are engaged in what appears to be a potential fraud," the court observed in its ruling. Byju's had recently said that the \$533 million has been parked with a non-US subsidiary of the firm but did not disclose any details. In a statement, Byju's said the court order merely maintains "status quo" because it has always maintained that the said funds are parked in one of its subsidiaries.

Fee dispute: CCI to probe Google's app billing policy

MUMBAI: The Competition

Commission of India on Friday ordered a probe into Google's Play Store billing policy, which has been at the centre of the tech giant's dispute with local app developers who claim that it is discriminatory in nature. In its 21 page order, the fair trade regulator observed that the revenue distribution model within Play Store appears to be skewed in favour of Google, with app developers potentially facing substantial costs. Reviewed a copy of the order. The CCI said that it is of the view that prima facie, Google has imposed unfair price in violation of the Competition Act which warrants a detailed investigation. It has directed the Director General to complete the investigation and submit a



consolidated investigation report within 60 days. The CCI's recent order came in response to fresh complaints filed by People Interactive India which runs Shaadi.com, Mebigoo Labs which owns Kuku FM, Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation and Indian Digital Media Industry Foundation. In a statement, Google said that it is examining CCI's order. "The CCI had previously examined our service fee in detail between 2020 and 2022 and found no illegality. However, we take our

commitment to comply with local laws and regulations in India seriously and will cooperate with the process in every way," the company said. "Service fee charged by Google has been alleged to be excessive in nature and by requiring the app developers to pay such excessive service fee for processing payments through GPBS (Google Play Billing System) as well as ABS (Alternative Billing Systems) under UCB (User Choice Billing), Google is alleged to be imposing an unfair price...."

World Bank maps out plans to further boost lending by \$100 bln-plus over a decade

WASHINGTON: The World Bank on Thursday proposed steps that would boost its lending to developing countries by an additional \$100 billion over a decade as part of an ongoing reform process aimed at helping the bank expand its mission to include climate change. In a 24-page report to the joint ministerial committee that oversees the bank and the International Monetary Fund, the bank's management said it would ask shareholders to approve a hybrid capital measure and a new portfolio guarantee platform that together could boost lending by over \$100 billion. That amount would come on top of measures already being implemented that will boost the bank's lending to developing countries by up to \$50 billion.

Chocolates with betel instead of cocoa, but just as delicious

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 Rajeesh 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.

Two-child norm for govt jobs in Rajasthan gets Supreme Court nod

NEW DELHI: More than 21 years after upholding validity of the mandatory 'two-child norm' eligibility criteria for candidates contesting panchayat polls, the Supreme Court has now put its stamp of approval on an identical norm for public employment, debaring candidates who have more than two children from seeking govt jobs. A bench of Justices Surya Kant, Diapankar Datta and K V Vishwanathan dismissed the appeal filed by ex-serviceman Ram Lal Jat, who had retired from service in 2017 and had applied for a constable's post in Rajasthan Police on May 25, 2018. His candidature was rejected as Rule 24(4) of Rajasthan Police Subordinate Service Rules, 1989 that followed the norm set under the Rajasthan Various Service (Amendment) Rules, 2001, which provides



that "no candidate shall be eligible for appointment to the job who has more than two children on or after June 1, 2002." He had unsuccessfully challenged the rejection of his candidature for constable post in Rajasthan high court, which in Oct 2022 had ruled that the fixation of norms squarely fell in the realm of policy, which could not be interfered with by the court. The Justice Kant-led bench said, "A somewhat similar provision, which was introduced as an eli-

gibility condition to contest panchayat elections, has been upheld by the SC in the case Javed and others vs. State of Haryana in 2003. This court held that the classification, which disqualifies candidates for having more than two living children, was non-discriminatory and intra-vires the Constitution, since the objective behind the provision was to promote family planning." The bench dismissed. Jat's appeal saying the HC judgment did not warrant any interference.

'Bail as a rule' principle losing ground in trial courts: CJ

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on Saturday expressed concern over 'bail as a rule, jail an exception' principle losing ground in trial courts and said district judges must reverse the trend as well as public perception by giving due importance to citizens' personal liberties. Speaking to a pan-India congregation of district judges at Kachchh in Gujarat, he said, "There is rising apprehension that district courts are increasingly reluctant to entertain matters concerning personal liberty." "Long-standing principle that 'bail is a rule, jail is an exception' seems to be losing ground, as evi-



dened by growing number of cases reaching high courts and Supreme Court as appeals against rejection of bail by trial courts.

This trend warrants a thorough reevaluation." Justice Sanjiv Khanna, who will succeed Justice Chandrachud as CJ in Nov, too said district judges must adopt a proactive approach to protect citizens' funda-

mental rights and liberties by pithily questioning prosecution about sanctity of charges levelled against an accused before deciding anticipatory bail or bail applications of incarcerated persons. CJ said judiciary is facing public trust deficit to a certain extent for two major reasons - backlog or huge pendency of cases and culture of adjournment.

To boost operations, naval base to be commissioned at Minicoy

NEW DELHI: A small naval base, INS Jatayu, will be commissioned at Minicoy on March 6, as part of govt's plan to incrementally boost military presence and security infrastructure in the strategically-located Lakshadweep archipelago

in the Arabian Sea. "With the requisite infrastructure and resources, INS Jatayu will enhance Navy's overall operational capability and reach in the region. The base will facilitate efforts towards anti-piracy and anti-narcotics operations in

western Arabian Sea," an officer said Saturday. "It will also augment Navy's capability as the first responder in the region and augment connectivity with the mainland," he added. The move comes even as plans are also afoot to develop.

Myanmar influx has spurred crime in northeast, India tells UNHRC

NEW DELHI: Expressing deep concern over the situation in Myanmar, government said the precarious humanitarian situation and escalation of violence have led to influx of thousands of persons into the northeastern states. The ongoing situation also has direct implications in the form of increased transnational crimes, such as drug and human trafficking, and India is doing its best to deal with this situation, govt said in a statement at the UN Human Rights Council. "India has



always accorded a high priority to maintenance of peace and stability in Myanmar and its economic development. We reiterate our call for the immediate cessation of violence, by all sides, release of

political detainees, humanitarian assistance, and the resolution of the crisis through constructive dialogue," govt said, adding India remains steadfast in its support to Myanmar's transi-

tion towards inclusive federal democracy. "We also reiterate the need for arriving at peaceful solutions that are Myanmar-led and Myanmar-owned," it said. India also called on the international community to work together in pragmatic and constructive ways to support the people of Myanmar and facilitate a return to peace and stability, while pledging to strengthen the democratic processes, people-centric projects and capacity building initiatives in the conflict-ridden country.

Satisfied as interests of Indian farmers & fishermen protected at WTO: Commerce and industry

ABU DHABI:

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday said that India had managed to successfully protect interests of its farmers and fishermen at the WTO meet and sought a quick resolution of the impasse that had rendered the dispute-settlement mechanism dysfunctional. "It is important to get the appellate body back so that disputes can be escalated for resolution. Without an appellate body, no dispute can be taken to its completion. To that extent,



people do feel that it's not worth the while to escalate a concern that many countries may have on practices of others. Given the fact that it's not going to lead to an outcome, a lot of countries will hesitate to get into legal process," he told reporters, while

lamenting slow progress on the issue. As reported by in its late edition, trade talks ended early Saturday, where there was no agreement on key issues - agriculture and fisheries. Member nations, however, agreed to extend customs duty waiver on e-

commerce for another two years. The minister was "satisfied" with the outcome. "A forward movement is always a sign of a possible closure going forward. India continues to retain full policy space for benefit of our farmers and fishermen," he said. While India was pushing to revise formula for calculating subsidies for procurement of grains for the public distribution system, Goyal said, the peace clause that prevents any trade dispute in case of a breach of limit.

AI platforms need permits

NEW DELHI: With general elections on the anvil and following a controversy over unsubstantiated comments on PM Modi by Google's AI platform Gemini, govt on Saturday said it has issued an advisory for artificial intelligence-led internet companies to label any unverified information as potentially false and error prone. Any AI-led public information platform will need to have a permit before being allowed in India, said govt, while warning that it will not hesitate to deny permission in case of potential risks of misinformation or bias. The notice comes almost two-and-a-half months after govt had issued an advisory on the matter of deepfakes after several incidents of synthetically-made content flowing into social media and internet channels. The latest advisory says AI-led platforms should not throw up unlawful, misinformed or biased content that has potential to threaten



the integrity of the nation or of the electoral process. IT & electronics MoS Rajeev Chandrasekhar said AI platforms such as OpenAI and Google's Gemini will have to make disclosures about the nature of their responses to govt as well as India's digital citizens, clearly mentioning that the content can be false, error-prone, and unlawful as the model is still under trial and testing. "If you are an untested platform and you think the platform is still in early stages of training and therefore is unreliable, you need to do three things. Firstly, you need to tell govt that I am deploy-

ing it. Second, you need to inform consumers by having a disclaimer that I am a platform under trial. Third, you need to explicitly mention this to the consumer who is using it, and you need to get his or her consent for using the platform. Take Google Gemini as an example. It will have to tell the government before launching that this is a bit buggy platform." Asked whether govt will have powers to refuse the launch of such a platform in the country if it finds it unreliable, Chandrasekhar told, "We can reject it if we find there is more risk.

The unique registered investors on the National Stock Exchange of India crossed 9 Crore

AMRITSAR/BHATINDA:

The unique registered investors on the National Stock Exchange of India crossed 9 crore (90 million) on February 29th, 2024. The total number of client codes registered with the Exchange stands at 16.9 crores (169 million) (Includes all client registrations done till date; clients can register with more than one trading member). Unique investor registrations at NSE have seen an accelerating trend over the last few years. While the increase from 6 to 7 crore (60 to 70 million) unique investors took about nine months, the next crore (10 million) investors came in eight months, and the jump from 8 to 9 crores (80 to 90 million) took only five months. During this period, daily new unique registrations

Over 46% of all new investor registrations in the last five months originated from districts beyond the top 100 districts (by number of new registrations in the period)

have averaged between nearly 47,000 in October 2023 to 78,000 in January this year. The investor base has seen more than 3x jump in the last five years, facilitated by rapid growth in digitization, rising investor awareness, financial inclusion, and strong market performance. From the beginning of FY24 up to February 29th, 2024, the Nifty 50 returned ~27%, while Nifty 500 delivered 38% return over the same period. Annualised return over the last five-year period ending February 2024 stood at 15.3%

and 17.5% for Nifty 50 and Nifty 500 respectively. Of the new investors that have entered the market since October 2023, nearly 42% hailed from North India, followed by West India (28%), South India (17%) and East India (13%). Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra contributed the largest number of new investors during this period, together accounting for more than a quarter of all new additions. Currently, the highest number of unique registered investors are from Maharashtra

with 1.6 crore (16 million) investors, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 97 lakh (9.7 million) investors and Gujarat with 81 lakh (8.1 million). This increase in new investors has come across states, with all but 33 pin codes having at least one individual directly investing in the market. Over 46% of all new investor registrations in the last five months originated from districts beyond the top 100 districts (by number of new registrations in the period). Indirect participation has also increased meaningfully during this period, as evidenced by almost 1.6 crore (16 million) new SIP accounts opened between Oct'23 to Jan'24, and average monthly SIP inflows of ~Rs 17,600 crores (176 billion) vs. Rs 15,115 crore (151 billion) in the previous six-month period.

Met museum head talks art of repatriation and relevance

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. What kind of collaborations do you foresee with the signing.

Indian cheetah family grows: Kuno welcomes five new cubs, totaling 13

BHOPAL: The population of Indian born cheetahs inside Kuno National Park in Sheopur district of Madhya Pradesh now stands at 13 with five new cubs spotted on Saturday.



Total number of cheetahs, including cubs, in Kuno is now 26, marking a significant milestone for India's ambitious conservation project. Officials say the project is heading towards the right direction as planned. Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav announced on Sunday that five cubs have been born to South African Cheetah Gamini. Also, this is the first litter by a South African Cheetah. Previous ones were by Namibians. "This takes the tally of the Indian born cubs to 13. This is the fourth cheetah litter on Indian soil and the first litter of cheetahs brought from South Africa," Yadav said on X.Vincent van

der Merwe from The Metapopulation Initiative expressed joy on the birth of the cubs and said, "Cheetahs are fragile large predators, and their reintroduction is extremely challenging. Nine of the first 10 reintroduction attempts in South Africa failed. We learned from our mistakes, never gave up, and today South Africa supports a growing wild cheetah population. A big congratulations to our Indian colleagues for persevering. The recent births represent the beginning of the recovery of wild cheetah populations across their historic range in Asia." In January Namibian

Cheetah Jwala had introduced three cubs in its second litter. She had delivered four cubs in its first litter of which one survived. Prior to that Cheetah Aasha had welcomed three members into the Kuno family. Ten Cheetahs have died since this project was launched by PM Narendra Modi. In May 2023, Project Cheetah faced a setback when three of four cubs born to Jwala succumbed to scorching temperatures, reaching up to 46-47 degrees Celsius, making it the hottest day of the summer season. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) responded.

'Bachi Khuchi Shiv Sena chief': Nirupam slams

NEW DELHI: Amid discussions over seat-sharing among the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) parties in Maharashtra, prominent Congress leader Sanjay Nirupam criticised Uddhav Thackeray for prematurely announcing the candidate for Mumbai's North-West Lok Sabha constituency. MVA, a coalition of Shiv Sena (UBT), NCP (Sharad Pawar faction), and Congress, is currently in talks for a poll pact ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Nirupam expressed his disappointment over the decision to announce Amol Kirtikar as the Shiv Sena candidate for the



Mumbai North-West constituency before finalising seat-sharing arrangements within MVA. The Mumbai North-West seat, which Nirupam himself is eyeing, is still a point of contention within the alliance as no official decision has been made. "Yesterday evening, the chief of the remaining Shiv Sena declared MVA

candidate from North West Lok Sabha constituency in Andheri. Calls have been coming since night. How can this happen? Despite two dozen meetings of MVA the final decision on seat sharing has not been taken yet. This seat is also among the 8-9 seats which are pending, this is what the Congress colleagues.

Government likely to appoint two new election commissioners by March 15

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission of India is likely to get two new election commissioners by March 15 to fill the vacancies left after the retirement of Anup Chandra Pandey and the surprise exit of Arun Goel, a PTI report said citing sources. A search committee

under Union law minister Arjun Ram Megwal and comprising the cabinet secretaries of the home department and department of personnel and training will prepare two separate panels of five names each for the two posts. Later, a selection com-

mittee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising a Union minister and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury will then name two persons for appointment as election commissioners before the official appointment by the President.

BJP brass summons top Odisha netas to Delhi

BHUBANESWAR: Amid buzz in political circles that the coalition talk between BJP and BJD could be in the final stages, the saffron party's Odisha leadership was summoned to Delhi by the party's central hierarchy on Sunday. Talks are doing the rounds that state BJP functionaries may be asked by the top leadership to refrain from making misleading comments on the alliance after party's Odisha chief Manmohan Samal strongly ruled out a coalition with BJD upon his return from



Delhi on Friday. Samal along with general secretary (organisation) Manas Mohanty, state election in-charge Vijaypal Singh Tomar, and co-in-charge Lata Usendi reached the national

capital in the evening, their second visit to Delhi in the last four days as part of the strategy to fine-tune the alliance. On the fresh summon to Delhi, Samal said the central leadership

wants to discuss the ground situation for the upcoming Lok Sabha and assembly elections in state. "I am not aware of the agenda of the fresh meeting though it will surely revolve around our preparedness," Samal said before leaving for Delhi. Asked about the alliance, Samal said, "I do not want to comment on the alliance matter." Samal's response comes a day after the emergence of a short video, featuring chief minister Naveen Patnaik and his aide V K Pandian.

'A sinking ship': Expelled Congress leader targets party

NEW DELHI: Expelled Congress leader Acharya Pramod Krishnam on Sunday launched a scathing attack on Rahul Gandhi's recent remarks on 'Modi Ki Guarantee', stating that someone who has lost their mental balance can say anything. In an interview with ANI, Acharya Krishnam expressed his disappointment over the mass exodus of members from the Congress party, attributing it to the party's 'anti-Ram' and 'anti-Sanatan' stance. Responding to Rahul's



claim that there was 'no guarantee' of PM Modi returning for a third term, the expelled leader dismissed it as the ramblings of a person who has lost their mind,

comparing it to the nonsensical statements of children. "See, a person, who has lost his mind, can say anything. As we have seen with children, they often

ramble on without making much sense. One need not take the words of a child or a senseless person seriously," Krishnam told ANI. "The only person responsible for the prevailing ruinous state of the Congress is Rahul Gandhi. As long as Rahul Gandhi is in the Congress, there is no saving the Congress," he added. Acharya Krishnam questioned who would align themselves with a party that stands against Sanatan, despite residing in the country.

Sandeshkhali: Suspended TMC leader Shahjahan sent to 8-day CBI custody

NEW DELHI: Sandeshkhali-accused Shahjahan Sheikh was sent to four-day CBI custody by Basirhat Sub-Divisional Court on Sunday in connection with the January 5 attack on the Enforcement Directorate team in Sandeshkhali.



accused, Shahjahan. Additionally, the court criticized the state police for their inconsistent approach in the matter. "The accused is a political influencer. The investigation should be handed over to the CBI and the custody of the accused by 4:15 pm today," the high court observed. After evading authorities for nearly two months, the suspended TMC leader was apprehended by the West Bengal Police on February 29. Following his arrest, he was presented before the

Basirhat court, which granted a 10-day police remand. Besides being implicated in the assault on an ED team during a raid on his Sandeshkhali residence, linked to an alleged ration scam, Shahjahan faces charges of land encroachment, extortion, and mistreatment of women alongside his accomplices. Outraged by his actions, women from Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district staged violent protests, condemning Shahjahan and his associates for their egregious behavior.

Cover for 43 BJP netas in Bastar after 9 killed by Reds in a year

RAIPUR: Chhattisgarh government has provided Y+, Y, and X category security to 43 BJP leaders in insurgency-affected Bastar ahead of the Lok Sabha elections following a string of murders of BJP netas by Maoists. Nine BJP leaders have been murdered in Bastar division since Feb 2023, the last two in the space of a week this month. Bijapur BJP district president, Srinivas Mudaliar, had written to home minister Amit Shah on March 7, saying party workers need security. On Sunday, police headquarters issued an order listing names of 43 BJP leaders from Bastar who will be guarded by



Chhattisgarh Police and commandos. They include 17 in Dantewada, 10 in Bijapur, six in Sukma, four each in Jagdalpur and Kanker, and one each in Kondagaon and Narayanpur. Sukma BJP district president Dhaniram Barse has been given

the highest level of Y+ security. Four others have got Y-security. In his letter to Shah Mudaliar said: "Naxalites are targeting BJP leaders out of frustration because of the state govt's anti-Naxal campaigns. BJP officials and workers are always in fear of

death in Bijapur. Recently, a party leader was brutally murdered, creating an atmosphere of fear among officials. Several leaders are constantly targeted by Naxals, forcing them to frequently change their residence at night."

Delhi Development Authority auction for Phase-III

Delhi: The DDA will auction Phase III of its Diwali Special Housing Scheme. The program offers 257 penthouse, high-income, and middle-income units in Dwarka's various areas. Sector 19B has two penthouses, 123 HIG units, and 132 MIG in Sector 14. DDA stated their tentative reserve prices. 5 crore, 2.1 crore, 1.44 crore While e-auction registration and online earnest money deposits close on February 28, the auction will be held on March 5. The deposits for MIG flats are 10 lakh, HIG flats 15 lakh, and penthouses 25 lakh. Participants must register on the e-auction portal for Rs 2,500 per flat. It added that this sum is non-refundable and non-adjustable. DDA began e-booking 2,093 premium flats and penthouses in Dwarka Sector 19B, Sector 14 and Loknaya Puram on November 23. It has 170 super HIG, 946 HIG, 14 penthouses in Dwarka 19B, 316 MIG.

Bundelkhand on the way to become the new 'power house' of UP



Bundelkhand Lucknow
Bundelkhand region, which was considered one of the most arid and backward areas of the country for decades, has been making rapid strides in development for the last seven years since Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath took over as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. Besides, with the launch of projects worth more than Rs 10 lakh crore through the ground breaking ceremony recently, the entire Bundelkhand region is set to become the new energy hub of Uttar Pradesh. Around 10 solar energy projects have been launched in Bundelkhand, which will generate over 3,000 megawatts of electricity. The solar energy production plants will be established in Jalaun, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Banda, Chitrakoot and Mahabodhi districts of Bundelkhand. Three

solar power units are being set up in Jhansi district alone. It is worth mentioning here that the Yogi government launched several development and infrastructure projects, one after the other, in Bundelkhand to encourage investors to set up their enterprises in this region since 2017. Law and order was strengthened. As a result, a year after the UP Global Investors Summit, 29 big projects worth about Rs 30,000 crores have been launched in Bundelkhand through ground breaking ceremonies. In Jhansi district, the headquarters

of Jhansi division in Bundelkhand, a 600 MW solar plant is being established by TUSCO at the cost of Rs 3430 crore, which will create 300 employment opportunities. Apart from this, Fourth Partner Energy Private Limited will set up a 100 MW solar plant worth Rs 1200 crore, which will generate 1000 employments. Sun Source Energy will start a 135 MW open access solar power project worth Rs 600 crore, with the potential to create 2000 jobs. A 600 MW solar power plant is being established by Tusco in Lalitpur district.

CM Yogi banks on beneficiaries of welfare schemes to gift all 80 LS seats of UP to PM Modi

Lucknow
Election dates have been officially announced, prompting all political parties to gear up for the upcoming contest. Prime Minister Modi has set an ambitious target of over 400 seats for the NDA. Achieving this goal hinges significantly on winning a substantial number of seats in key states such as Uttar Pradesh. Consequently, both PM Modi and CM Yogi have adopted the slogan of "80 in 80" for the state. CM Yogi Adityanath is banking mainly on the huge population of beneficiaries of central and state government's schemes in the past seven years to achieve 100 percent success rate in Uttar Pradesh in the Lok Sabha elections. This particular demographic, constituting the primary beneficiary class, holds significant sway in Uttar Pradesh, surpassing any other caste or community in numbers. Notably, this demographic openly supported CM Yogi during the 2022 assembly elections and could again play

a pivotal role in ensuring PM Modi's triumphant return to power for the third consecutive term. The path from ration to employment has been paved under the leadership of PM Modi, CM Yogi has endeavored to extend the reach of both Central and State Government schemes to every corner of the state. Up to 15 crore individuals benefit from the free ration provided by the government. The assistance is provided to all the disadvantaged and underprivileged sections of society irrespective of caste or community, they belong to, without any kind of discrimination. Initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic to alleviate hardships, this scheme persists, garnering continued support from the populace who previously backed CM Yogi in the 2022 elections and remain steadfast in their allegiance. Furthermore, approximately 1.75 crore households in the state have received LPG connections through the

Central Government's Ujjwala Scheme. Additionally, the MNREGA scheme has provided immediate employment to a significant number of people in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh. Benefits ranging from housing, toilet to pension. The beneficiary category encompasses families granted permanent residences under the PM Awas Yojana within the state. Approximately 56 lakh houses have been constructed during the tenure of the Yogi government, providing homes to individuals who previously resided in rented accommodations. Furthermore, through the PM SVANidhi Yojna, loans have been extended to 17 lakh street vendors. Additionally, 2.61 crore toilets have been constructed, while ownership certificates have been distributed to 66.59 lakh beneficiaries. The government has supported 32.71 lakh destitute women and 50.21 lakh elderly individuals through old-age pensions.

CAPSULES

CM Yogi pays tribute to former Chief Minister Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna



Lucknow
Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday paid glowing tribute to former Chief Minister Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna on his death anniversary. CM Yogi also garlanded the former CM's statue at Yojana Bhawan. On this occasion, Cabinet Minister Swatantradev Singh, Mayor Sushma Kharkwal, Prayagraj MP Dr. Rita Bahuguna Joshi, Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra etc. were present. In his remembrance, the Chief Minister wrote on X, "On the occasion of the death anniversary of the renowned freedom fighter and former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, late Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Ji, I pay humble tribute and respect to his memories."

Pradeep campaigned under the 'Ghar Ghar Congress, Har Ghar Congress'

Kaithal: Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee executive member and former Chief Minister of Haryana Ch. Pradeep Kumar Chaudhary, a special supporter of Bhupendra Singh Hooda, distributed Congress manifesto letters among the villagers under the 'Ghar Ghar Congress, Har Ghar Congress' campaign in Dhand area and exposed the anti-people policies of the present government. He said that there is no such thing as government in the state. Every class is out on

the streets against the government with their demands, but the government, intoxicated with power, is exploiting every class fiercely. The BJP government will have to be prepared to suffer the consequences of public neglect in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. Due to the loss of public votes, the BJP will take revenge for all the atrocities of the government. Congress state executive member Pradeep Chaudhary said that Congress's storm is blowing in the country

and the state. Former National President of Congress Rahul Gandhi is fighting day and night for the interests of the people and under the able leadership of Rahul Gandhi, Congress is continuously becoming stronger and stronger in the entire country. The increasing popularity of Congress has created panic in the BJP government. With the blessings of the people, all the announcements of the Congress will be implemented if the Congress government is formed in the coun-

try and the state. He alleged that today Haryana has lagged behind in the path of development and employment. The public is regretting handing over power to BJP. Roads in the state are in bad condition. There are no doctors in hospitals, no masters in schools, no employees in departments, but despite this the government is silent in the name of providing employment to the educated youth. The government is exploiting the youth in the name of skilled employment.

Uttar Pradesh to establish Telemetric Weather Stations to monitor drought

Lucknow
In a bid to effectively monitor drought conditions in Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi government will establish Telemetric Weather Stations (TWS) in tehsils across various districts. In the initial phase, TWS will be set up in 100 most drought-prone tehsils across different districts. Notably, priority will be given to setting up of TWS in Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, and seven districts of Bundelkhand where the threat of drought looms large every year.



The Commissioner's office has issued essential guidelines to Additional District Magistrates for this purpose. Furthermore, instructions have been given

to mark the land for establishment during the process. TWS will be installed in all tehsils of Sonbhadra and two tehsils of Mirzapur. Principal Secretary Revenue P.

Guru Prasad said that farmers in the state face significant challenges from drought every year. In light of their predicament, it has been decided to initiate setting up of TWS in 100 tehsils across different districts of the state in the initial phase. Subsequently, TWS will be established in all tehsils within every district of the state. Relief Commissioner GS Naveen mentioned that in the first phase, priority will be given to the tehsils of all seven Bundelkhand districts.

Guidelines issued to make campuses inclusive for transpersons

MUMBAI: In an effort to make college campuses more inclusive, the state govt has for the first time come out with detailed guidelines for transgender students. Initiating action against colleges for refusing admissions on the basis of gender, reserving a section in hostels for transgender students

and establishing cells to address issues of discrimination, mental harassment, sexual exploitation or any other violence against them, are some of the guidelines enlisted in the government resolution (GR) on Friday. The GR has come close on the heels of the govt's first-ever policy for transgender individuals approved by the cabinet earlier this week.

In December last year, the department had asked colleges and universities to offer free-of-cost education to transgender students and bear their entire tuition fees. Institutions have been asked to strictly follow the fee waiver policy in the new guidelines. These are in line with the National Education Policy, 2020, that speaks about making

campuses inclusive for all students. A govt official said the department's policy was ready and since the state came out with its overarching policy, they also decided to release specific guidelines for higher education institutions. To cater to the needs of all transgender students, colleges are expected to appoint coordinators to provide counselling, academic guidance and career advice. All non-agricultural universities, private and deemed universities and affiliated colleges in the state are expected to strictly follow the provisions of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, stated the guidelines. Institutions need to adopt an inclusive policy to tackle issues of gender bias, negli-

S. Amrendra Khara was crowned as the head of Siwan grain market

Kaithal: A meeting of the Grain Market Sewer Association was held in the market, in which discussions were held with the agents regarding making the market head. In which market agent Vivek Goyal proposed to make former Sarpanch representative and social worker Sardar Amarendra Singh Khara the market head for the post of Siwan Mandi head. On which all the commission agents applauded and unanimously appointed former Sarpanch representative and social worker Sardar Amarendra Singh Khara as the head of Siwan Grain Market Association. Specially present on this occasion were Bhushan Midha, Rajkumar Sharma, Krishna Kumar Garg, Krishna Bansal, Sangeet Bansal, Rampal Bansal, Rajesh Singla, Hemant Bansal, Vinod Bansal, Shrawan Sardana,



Jitendra Sardana, Neeraj Gambhir, Harish Anand etc. On this occasion, the newly appointed Mandi Pradhan Sardar Amarendra Singh Khara, while thanking all the commission agents and dignitaries for appointing him as the head, said that he will carry out the responsibility entrusted to him by the Mandi commission agents with full honesty and will take all the Mandi commission

agents along with him and Every problem faced by the market agents during the season will be resolved by informing the government and administration. He said that the interests of the market agents will not be allowed to be harmed and I will always be ready to serve them 24 hours. On this occasion, the market brokers met the newly appointed market head Mr. Amarendra Singh.

Khara was welcomed and congratulated with a garland of flowers. On this occasion, Vedprakash Mittal, Vivek Goyal, Krishna Sharma, Anil Rana, Krishna Radha, Ashok Wadhwa, Kavabhau Fauji, Indramohan Raheja, Karmchand Singla, Ankit Sharma, Tilak Sharma, Anil Saini, Deepak Sharma, Sahil Jangra, Goldie Rana, Balwan Saini. A large number of market agents.

Devotee from Odisha presents CM Yogi with a wooden portrait of him

Arun Kumar Sahu from Odisha presented Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with a Hanuman Chalisa and his portrait carved on wood. Arun had personally crafted both wooden artworks and brought them to Ayodhya. In this regard, Anil Mishra, associated with the Ram Mandir Trust, explained that Arun, a devotee of Lord Ram from Odisha, couldn't meet the Chief Minister directly. Therefore, he entrusted both wooden artworks to the Trust on Wednesday, requesting them to deliver them to the Chief Minister. The Trust cooperated with Arun.