

# AKHAND BHARAT SANDESH

Title Code - UPENG04488

NATIONAL ENGLISH DAILY

MORNING EDITION PRAYAGRAJ

Sunday 25 February, 2024

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

## PM Modi launches Rs 1.2 lakh crore grain storage plan

**NEW DELHI:** PM Modi on Saturday inaugurated and laid foundation stone of multiple initiatives, including a pilot project for world's largest grain storage plan for cooperative sector, and said modernisation of agriculture systems is must for making India a developed country. Currently, there exists a huge gap between grain production and storage capacity in the country. Data shows that storage capacity with regards to food-grain production is only 47% in India, whereas it is 161% in the US, 149% in Brazil, 130% in Canada and 107% in China. Other key projects, whose foundation stones the PM laid, include additional 500 primary agricultural credit societies (PACS) for construction of godowns and other agri-infrastructure. He also inaugurated a project for computerisation in 18,000 PACS under overall digitalisation plan with a financial



### Quad a message that others can't veto our choices: EAM Jaishankar

**NEW DELHI:** Foreign minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday that Quad - which seeks to promote free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific - is here to stay, grow and contribute, calling it a laudable initiative that makes not just the region, but the world as a whole more free, open and much more respectful of international law and a rules-based order.

outlay of Rs 2,500 crore. The pilot project of mega storage plan is

Speaking at the inaugural Quad Think Tank Forum, the minister said Quad comprises five messages, one of which is a statement that in this day and age, others "cannot have a veto on our choices". The minister also said that the foundation group reflects the growth of a multipolar order and that it's a post-alliance and post-cold war thinking.

being carried out in 11 PACS in 11 states - Uttar Pradesh (Mirzapur),

Madhya Pradesh (Balaghat), Tamil Nadu (Theni), Tripura (Gomati), Uttarakhand (Dehradun), Rajasthan (Sri Ganganagar), Maharashtra (Amravati), Assam (Kamrup), Gujarat (Ahmedabad), Karnataka (Bidar) and Telangana (Karimnagar).

Thousands of PACS from across the country will join it in the next couple of years with an aim to reach 100% storage capacity before 2027. Pointing to the losses incurred by farmers due to lack of storage infrastructure, the PM drew attention to the world's largest storage plan of 700 lakh metric tonnes which is to be completed in the next five years at a cost of Rs 1.2 lakh crore. The PM underlined that the move would enable farmers to store their produce and sell it at the right time according to their own needs while also helping to avail loans from banks.

## Eternal importance of Maghi Purnima in the holy festival Kalpavas : Swami Shri Yogi Satyam

**Prayagraj:** On Saturday, at the Kriyayoga camp located on Akshaya Vat Marg in the Magh Mela area, Kriyayoga Guru Swami Shri Yogi Satyam Ji Maharaj told the seekers that the importance of Maghi Purnima in the holy festival Kalpavas is infinite and limitless. For thousands of years, the tradition of Kalpavas was established by the sages and sages in the confluence of the three sacred rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati in the holy place Prayag. The importance of Kalpavas increases even more because the sages and sages have proved that by doing Prakrishta Yagya for 12 years in Triveni and Sangam area, a person becomes completely free from ignorance. Due to the establishment of the famous Yagya tradition, Allahabad was named



Prayagraj. This Prayagraj is also called Teerthraj Prayag." The above views were expressed by Kriyayoga scientist Swami Shri Yogi Satyam in the Kriyayoga camp located at Akshayavat Marg. Swami ji further said, the Yagya discussed by the sages and sages is

mentioned in the Vedas. The 'Yagya' described in Sanatan Dharma by Gyanavatar Swami Shri Yukteswar Giri ji is described in the well-known, best Sadragantha 'Kaivalyadarshanam'. In the third chapter 'Saadhanam' of Kaivalyadarshanam,

the Yagya has been described as follows "TapahsvadhyayBrahmanidhanani YagyaH". In Kalikal. The wrong form of 'Yagya' action had become popular. 'Yagya' is the path of walking on truth and non-violence. Due to ignorance, violent acts like human sacrifice, animal sacrifice started being performed under the act of 'Yagya'. Due to this, Mrityunjay Shri Mahavatar Babaji replaced the word 'Yagya' with 'Kriyayoga'.

In the Kriyayoga Ashram and Research Institute, sacred Yagya is performed every day for 12 months (throughout the year). Along with India, America, Canada, Brazil, Singapore also participate in the Kriyayoga program. Seekers from countries like Europe, Ukraine, Switzerland, Ireland, Germany etc. participated.

## US takes aim at China-made cranes in latest executive order



**NEW DELHI:** US President Joe Biden has signed an executive order aimed at bolstering US ports, strengthening maritime cybersecurity and fortifying supply chains amid growing worries over cyber security threats from China.

In 2022, the US administration had banned the sale and import of new telecom equipment from five Chinese companies. The latest executive order also targets cranes manufactured in China and has outlined plans to invest \$20 billion over the next five years to produce port cranes in the country with trusted partners.

PACECO Corp, a US-based subsidiary of Japan's Mitsui E&S Co. Ltd, is planning to onshore US manufacturing capacity for its crane production, according to an official statement. "So while it certainly ties to particular concerns about Chinese cyber activity, we also have concerns regarding criminal activity. One of Japan's largest ports, the port of Nagoya, was disrupted by a criminal ransomware attack for several days," Anne Neuberger, deputy national security advisor for cyber and emerging technologies told a briefing.

## Sandeshkhali villagers file 73 complaints at police camp

**SANDESHKHALI:**

Trinamool Congress announced Saturday its investigation into complaints against fugitive party leader Sheikh Shahjahan and revealed the removal of his brother Sheikh Sirajuddin Akhtar as Sandeshkhali anchal president, reports Sanjib Chakraborty. The decision follows escalating tensions in Bermajur in North 24 Parganas'



Sandeshkhali, marked by three consecutive days of protests led by women, as complaints against Siraj flooded in, predominantly related to land grabbing.

Acknowledging international criticism, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said: "The anger is against certain individuals for their wrong attitude, highhandedness and personality-driven

politics." Sandeshkhali has been witnessing protests and retaliatory attacks since Feb 7 against associates of Shahjahan, who has evaded authorities since Jan 5 when a mob attacked and wounded three ED officers during a search operation at his home as part of an investigation into an alleged Rs 550-crore ration scam. The associates have been accused.

## Truckers welcome move to put hit-and-run penalty provision in abeyance

**NEW DELHI:**

Truckers and transporters have welcomed govt putting the implementation of Section 106(2) of Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita in abeyance even as all other provisions of the three criminal laws will come into force from July 1. "Govt has kept its commitment to AIMTC, driv-



ers, truckers and the transport fraternity by refraining from implementing the contentious Section 106(2) of BNS.

The decision is a significant relief to entire transportation sector. This clause has been a subject of concern

and debate within the industry due to its potential implications on operations and compliance," chairman of All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) Bal Malkit Singh said. The All India Transporters Welfare Association said, "This issue had caused a nationwide stir amongst

## Navy comes to aid of another under-fire ship in Gulf of Aden

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Navy has come to the aid of yet another merchant vessel that had caught fire after being hit by a drone or a missile in the Gulf of Aden, in seventh such instance past couple of months. Destroyer INS Kolkata, which was mission-deployed in the Gulf of Aden, responded swiftly to the distress call by Palau-flagged merchant vessel Islander after it was hit by a drone or missile.

on Thursday. "Navy's EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) specialists then boarded the vessel and sanitised it for residual risks. After a thorough inspection, they cleared the vessel for onward transit," an officer said. "On the vessel's master's request, a medical team also embarked the vessel and provided assistance to an injured crew member. Such relentless efforts by Indian warships reaffirm the Navy's steadfast commitment towards safety and security of merchant shipping and seafarers."

## CM Yogi orders cancellation of UP Police Constable Recruitment Examination-2023

**Lucknow**

In a major decision, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Saturday, ordered cancellation of the Police Constable Recruitment Examination-2023



held on February 17th and 18th. He directed for a fresh examination to be conducted within the next 6 months with utmost transparency. The decision came following a thorough review of the ongoing investigation by the STF and the actions taken thus far regarding the examination. Reiterating his firm stance on transparency and fairness of exams, the Chief Minister stated, "Playing with the hard work of the youth and compromising the integrity of examinations will not be toler-

ated. Stringent action will be taken against those responsible." Following the Chief Minister's directive, the Home Department has also issued an order to cancel the examination. As per the issued order, after careful examination of the facts and information pertaining to the police recruitment examination held on February 17 and 18, 2024, the government has decided, in accordance with the highest standards of integrity and transparency, to cancel this examination.

## TDP-Jana Sena seal seat-sharing deal, no clarity yet on BJP tie-up

**VIJAYAWADA:** TDP and Jana Sena on Saturday finalised electoral alliance for Andhra Pradesh assembly and Lok Sabha polls. While TDP will contest in 151 assembly and 22 Lok Sabha constituencies, Jana Sena will put up candidates in three Lok Sabha and 24 assembly seats. The seat adjustment was finalised after a meeting between

TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan. It's not clear yet if BJP would join TDP-Jana Sena alliance or contest on its own in Andhra Pradesh. If BJP joins the alliance, TDP and Jana Sena may have to forgo a few constituencies in favour of BJP candidates. Later, the two parties

announced the first list of candidates for some of the constituencies. Though Jana Sena got three Lok Sabha seats under the pact, it is yet to be decided which three seats would be allotted to Pawan's party. Naidu and Pawan addressed a press conference and said the alliance was arrived at in the "broader interests."



## Jamnagar jugalbandi: Rihanna, Arijit to rock Ambani pre-wedding bash

The pre-wedding bash of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant will be attended by a star-studded guest list including Mark Zuckerberg, Sundar Pichai, Bob Iger, Larry Fink, and more. The event in Jamnagar, known for nature conservation and animal rescue work, will take place at Reliance Greens complex. Move over, Davos. The who's who of the global elite is converging on Jamnagar on March 1-3 for pre-wedding celebrations of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant. It's an event that - in characteristic Ambani style - blends stunning scale and meticulous attention to detail.

The guests, who include world's super affluent - billionaires, CEOs of mega-corporations, tech tycoons, and A-list entertainers and sports stars - can look forward to power-packed performances. Barbadian



superstar Rihanna will bring out her 'Umbrella' and other monster hits. Other attractions include Arijit Singh, whose soulful songs dominate charts & playlists, Diljit Dosanjh and music composer duo Ajay-Atul. And just when the guests think they've seen it all, legendary illusionist David Blaine will make the impossible happen.

At Ambani bash, global elite to mingle with homegrown heroes. The mega celebrations for Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's pre-wedding bash are testimony both to India's soft power and rising interest in the country, as well as the worldwide connec-

tions of the Ambanis. Invitees include Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Bill Gates, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai, Walt Disney CEO Bob Iger, BlackRock chairman Larry Fink, Blackstone founder Stephen Schwarzman, Mexican business magnate Carlos Slim, Saudi Aramco chairperson Yasir Al Rumayyan, Morgan Stanley CEO Ted Pick, Berkshire Hathaway vice chairman Ajit Jain, Ivanka Trump, entrepreneur Yuri Milner, Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen, the king and queen of Bhutan, Qatar PM Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, and WEF chairperson Klaus Schwab.

## India asks US to review freeing police officer behind Andhra student Jaahnavi Kandula's death

NEW DELHI: India has formally requested a reconsideration of the recent US court ruling that dismissed criminal charges against Seattle police officer Kevin Dave, who was behind the death of 23-year-old Indian student Jaahnavi Kandula. The King County Prosecutor's Office announced on Wednesday that they would not pursue criminal charges against Dave, citing a "lack of sufficient evidence."

"On the recently released investigation report of the King County Prosecution



Attorney on the unfortunate death of Jaahnavi Kandula, Consulate has been in regular touch with the designated family representatives and will continue to extend all possible support in ensuring justice for Jaahnavi and her family," Indian Consulate in Seattle posted on X. "We have also raised the

matter strongly with local authorities, including Seattle Police for appropriate redress. The case has now been referred to Seattle City Attorney's office for review. We await completion of Seattle Police's administrative investigation and will continue to monitor progress on the case.

## Naxalite killed in encounter with police in Sukma district

SUKMA: A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district on Saturday, a police official said. The face-off took place around 6 am in a forest near Burklanka village within the jurisdiction

of Bheji police station during an anti-Naxal operation by the District Reserve Guard (DRG), Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran G Chavan told PTI. After the exchange of fire stopped, the body of a

Naxalite along with a muzzle-loading gun was recovered from the spot, he said. The identity of the Naxalite was yet to be ascertained, he said, adding that a search operation was still underway in the area.

## Kamal Nath says Rahul Gandhi leading decisive fight against injustice and exploitation

NEW DELHI: Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath, who had kept Congress on the edge amid reports that he and his son Nakul were planning to dump the grand old party for the BJP, on Friday put to rest all speculations and praised Rahul Gandhi for leading a decisive fight against injustice, exploitation and oppression. "People of Madhya Pradesh and Congress workers of the state are excited to welcome Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. I urge everyone to join the yatra in large numbers



to provide strength and courage to Rahul Gandhi," Kamal Nath said in a post on X. The rumours of political switch came amid reports that Madhya Pradesh chief minister was unhappy over being denied a Rajya Sabha nomination by the party leadership. Earlier, Kamal Nath was

also removed as the state Congress chief after the party's debacle in the assembly elections. Last week, when Kamal Nath visited the national capital with his son, it led to speculations that the senior Congress leader was in talks with the BJP. The presence of several Congress MLAs

from the Chindhara region added fuel to the fire.

When asked by reporters about the rumours doing the rounds, Kamal Nath instead of denying it outright, asked the scribes not to get excited. Asked if he is joining the BJP, Kamal Nath said, "If there would be any such thing, I would inform you first." When a reporter asked if he was not denying a possible switch, Nath said, "It is not about denying, you are saying this, you people are getting excited. I am not getting excited, this side or that side.

## 'Leave it to ...': Jaishankar's witty retort to a question on India's UN permanent seat bid

NEW DELHI: External affairs minister S. Jaishankar had the audience in stitches with his quick-witted response to a question about India's bid for permanent membership at the United Nations Security Council, during the ongoing Raisina Dialogue 2024 in New Delhi. In a session at the conference, Michael Fullilove, the Executive Director of Australia's Lowy Institute, proposed that UNSC membership should be based on the International Cricket Council (ICC) Test rank-



ings. He suggested that this would benefit India and Australia and promote the growth of cricket in other parts of the world. Jaishankar responded by calling it "the kernel of a good idea" but said that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) should handle it. "I had a fresh idea on this panel during the inter-

esting conversation about UN security reform. I'm glad to hear there's been some progress at the margins. But sometimes, with these difficult diplomatic negotiations, you just need an out-of-the-box idea. So, my out-of-the-box idea is that we could base Security Council membership on ICC test

rankings," Fullilove said. "And this would be great for India, it would be fabulous for Australia. And it would encourage the growth of cricket in other parts of the world. So, would you support me on that, minister?" he went on to ask Jaishankar. Jaishankar said, "Yes, I think it's called the kernel of a good idea. But I think the better solution would be to leave it to BCCI." India has long been seeking a permanent seat on the UNSC to better represent the interests of the developing world.

## Assam takes big step towards introducing Uniform Civil Code

NEW DELHI: In a late night development, the Assam cabinet on Friday took the first big step towards introducing the Uniform Civil Code in the state by scrapping the Assam Muslim Marriage & Divorce Registration Act 1935. The move comes less than three weeks after Uttarakhand became the first state to pass the Uniform Civil Code. Cabinet minister Jayanta Mallabarua termed it as a step towards achieving UCC. He stated that now all matters pertaining to Muslim marriages and divorces would be taken care of under the Special Marriages Act. The decision was taken today in a cabinet meeting which was chaired by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. "The CM had recently



stated that we are moving towards Uniform Civil Code (UCC). In this journey, a very important decision has been taken. The Assam Muslim Marriage & Divorce Registration Act 1935, under which 94 Muslim registrars are still functioning, has been repealed today. The cabinet has today ended this Act and

now under this act no Muslim marriage or divorce would be registered. Since we have a Special Marriages Act, hence we want all matters settled through that particular Act," said Mallabarua. The cabinet minister further said that through this decision they are also trying to curb child marriage in the state.

## 'Exercise caution': Govt to Indians trapped, drafted into private army in Russia

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has issued a warning to Indian citizens regarding the ongoing conflict in Ukraine after reports emerged of Indian nationals being recruited for support roles in the Russian army. The MEA has taken up the matter with Russian authorities to ensure the early discharge of these individuals. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaishwal said in a statement, "We are aware that a few Indian nationals have signed up for support jobs with the Russian army. The Indian Embassy has regularly taken up this matter with the relevant Russian



authorities for their early discharge. We urge all Indian nationals to exercise due caution and stay away from this conflict." One such individual is Mohammad Sufiyan from Hyderabad, who was allegedly deceived by agents and forced to fight for Russia in the conflict against Ukraine. Sufiyan's family has called on the central

government and the MEA to safely evacuate the trapped youths and take strict action against the agents involved. Asaduddin Owaisi, an MP from the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM), has also raised this issue and urged the government to engage with the Russian government to bring back the trapped youths.

## Odisha approves 27 new industrial projects worth Rs 6,134 crore

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha government has approved 27 new industrial projects to the tune of Rs 6,134 crore across sectors, a senior official said on Saturday. The proposals got the state government's nod at a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary P K Jena on Friday. The potential sectors include aluminium, renewable power, manufacturing.

## Notice

My son Pranjal Bharatiya's high school Institutional Year 2023 Unique ID Date of birth in certificate number 7804797, 11.10.2005 was entered wrongly whereas Original and correct in Aadhar Card Date of birth is 11.10.2007 hence correct Date of birth recorded in my marks certificate It would be in the interest of justice to go. Mrs. Sheela Devi Wife-Shri Ram Milan Bharatiya No. 289/ 6A/13B Malakraj Rambagh Prayagraj.



## No last rites until he gets justice: Farmer leader Pandher over death of youth in protest

**PATIALA:** After the death of a youth in the ongoing farmers' protest, farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher has said that they will not cremate the person until he gets justice.

Pandher told that a First Information Report (FIR) should be lodged against the Haryana Police.

"Case under Section 302 IPC should be registered against those who are responsible for the death (of a farmer).

We will not cremate that youth until he gets justice. There should be a complaint against the Haryana police and paramilitary who shot him," he said. Responding to the resumption of the farmers' march, Sarwan Singh Pandher said that a decision will be taken after a meeting that was slated to be held on Friday. Earlier on Wednesday, Shubhkar Singh died of an injury to the back of his neck while



protesting at Khanauri border, prompting farm leaders to suspend talks with the Centre.

Meanwhile, another protesting farmer has died at the Khanauri border, bringing the toll to 4 during the ongoing protest under the call for Delhi Chalo, farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said on Friday.

The 62-year-old farmer, Darshan Singh from Amargarh village in Bathinda district, had been staying at the Khanauri border since February 13. The General Secretary of Punjab Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, Sarwan Singh Pandher

said that Darshan Singh died of cardiac arrest.

"He was at the Khanauri border and is the fourth martyr of this farmers' agitation. He has been identified as Darshan Singh (62). He died of a heart attack," Pandher said. Following the death of Subhkar, the farmers observed 'black' today. To press the Centre to accept their demands, including a legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) for crops and farm debt waiver, the farmers have been camping at the border points since February 13 along with their tractor-trolleys, mini-vans and pickup trucks.

## Lok Sabha polls: Doors still open for alliance, Congress says after Mamata's seat-sharing snub

**NEW DELHI:** Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Saturday cleared the air on seat-sharing possibilities with Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal, saying 'discussions are under way'. Reaffirming the opposition's objective to strengthen the INDIA bloc against BJP-led NDA ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, the Congress general secretary in-charge communications said, "Mamata Banerjee and TMC have said that they want to strengthen INDIA Alliance and the biggest motive is to defeat the BJP". The chances of an alliance between Congress and the TMC in West Bengal have been hanging in limbo ever since chief minister Mamata Banerjee asserted that her party would fight it alone in its home state. CM Mamata Banerjee announces TMC will contest Lok Sabha polls alone in West Bengal Mamata made the announcement after Congress refused to accept TMC's offer of two Lok Sabha seats in the state. She, however, kept doors for post-poll adjustments open on the "all-India level" and insisted the Trinamool would do "whatever is needed to defeat the BJP". Speaking on the Mamata's earlier discontent with the Congress party over the seat-sharing, Jairam



Ramesh said, "heated discussions keep taking place between the two parties but we respect Mamata Banerjee". "There are occasional flare-ups and heated exchanges during such discussions. But we respect Mamata Banerjee as one of our leading Opposition leaders," Jairam Ramesh said. Other than TMC in West Bengal, Congress and Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi are close to finalising a deal. "Today, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress will officially announce a seat-sharing deal for Delhi (for the Lok Sabha polls). A lot was being said

about the Congress dragging its feet and not interested in an electoral tie-up (with the AAP). However, as I have always maintained, these things take time," the Jairam Ramesh said on Saturday. According to reports, AAP will contest four Lok Sabha seats in the national capital, while the Congress will get the remaining three. AAP national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Wednesday that the talks over the alliance were delayed and hinted at fresh developments in the next one or two days. In the 2004 elections, the Congress won 6 seats and the BJP 1 while

in 2009, the Congress won all 7 seats in the national capital. Meanwhile, it was learnt that the Congress is likely to give AAP one seat in Haryana while the latter will support the former in the battle for the prized Chandigarh Lok Sabha seat. The AAP swept the 2015 Assembly elections in the national capital, winning 67 of the 70 seats. In a near-repeat of its performance in 2020, the Arvind Kejriwal-led party ruled the roost, bagging 62 of the 70 seats in the Assembly. In BJP-ruled Gujarat, the AAP is believed to have demanded three seats from the Congress in the ongoing seat-sharing talks. However, a final agreement on this is awaited. In Uttar Pradesh, where Samajwadi Party supremo Akhilesh Yadav will be joining Rahul Gandhi during his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, INDIA bloc registered its first breakthrough in politically crucial Uttar Pradesh where Samajwadi Party and Congress agreed to 63-17 division of 80 Lok Sabha seats in the state. The Congress wanted 20 seats, but eventually settled for 17. According to Congress, party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi played a key role in breaking the deadlock between the two parties by talking to Rahul Gandhi and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav.

## States must work with ED in its probe: SC to Tamil Nadu

**NEW DELHI:** Supreme Court on Friday said state govt officials should cooperate with Enforcement

Directorate in its probe in money laundering cases and questioned the Madras high court order staying ED's summonses to five district collectors of Tamil Nadu in illegal sand mining cases. The observation could have implications for cases being probed by the agency in opposition-governed states. At the outset of hearing, a bench of Justices



Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal said, "How can the state file this writ petition? Under which law... You satisfy us on how the state is interested and how it can file this writ petition against Enforcement Directorate. How is the

state aggrieved?" ED filed a petition against TN in SC, the other side pointed out. State bound to protect officials from 'illegal' ED probe, Tamil Nadu government tells Supreme Court. Tamil Nadu government was bound to

protect its officials from "illegal" Enforcement Directorate (ED) probe, the state told Supreme Court on Friday as the court said the state must cooperate with the agency in its probe into money laundering. ED summoned Vellore, Tiruchirappalli, Karur, Thanjavur and Ariyalur district collectors on Nov 17, but Tamil Nadu govt, along with the aggrieved bureaucrats, filed writ petitions in Madras high court (HC) alleging violation of their fundamental rights by ED.

**NEW DELHI:** Government is set to issue Google a notice after the firm's AI platform Gemini threw up unsubstantiated allegations in response to a query on PM Modi. Minister of state for IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar took a serious view of the matter after it was flagged by a user on X. "These are direct violations of Rule 3(1)(b) of Intermediary Rules (IT rules) of IT act and violations of several provisions of the criminal code," he posted on X, in a clear indication that



govt intends to initiate action. Gemini attributed allegations of rising authoritarianism and communalism under Modi to unnamed "experts", as per the X post. The

response contrasted starkly with the platform's reluctance to engage with similar queries on former US president Trump and Ukraine president Zelenskyy. Who are the 'experts' quoted in answer to Modi query, asks government. Social media users flagged the stark difference in responses of Google's AI platform Gemini to similar queries on PM Modi on the one hand, and former US prez Donald Trump and Ukraine prez Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the other.

"Elections are a complex topic with fast-changing information. To make sure you have the latest and most accurate information, try Google search," Gemini said seeking to lob the question about Trump, currently facing a trial for allegedly inciting an insurrection, out of its quote. The same reluctance came forth with regard to Zelenskyy. "Whether Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy is a fascist is a complex and highly contested question, with no simple answer," said.

## Red violence down 52% under Modi government, says Shah

**NEW DELHI:** Stating that violence related to Left-wing extremism in country has declined by 52% and fatalities by 69% between 2004-14 and 2014-2023, home minister Amit Shah on Friday attributed it to PM Modi govt's "holistic approach" that has combined an offensive strategy against Naxalism with a development push in affected regions. In a series of posts on X, Shah said Naxalism is "breathing its last" as a result of the body blow dealt to it by security forces. An attached video listed concerted and coordinated action by central and state forces, strengthened intelligence apparatus, crackdown on Naxal funding, tackling of sympathisers or 'urban Naxals', and firm legal



action in Naxal-related cases as components of this strategy. Shah said "Modi govt has won hearts of the poor living in Naxalism-affected areas by building adequate healthcare and education infrastructure". He said thanks to PM's "visionary policies" to counter Naxalism, which were implemented by taking state govt along, trust of local people was gained. "Left-wing extremism has lost its breeding ground," he added. As per home ministry

data, violence linked to Left-wing extremism declined by 52% and deaths by 69% between 2004-14 and 2014-23. While incidents linked to Left-wing extremism fell to 7,128 from 14,862, fatalities were down to 1,868 from 6,035. Deaths of security forces in Naxal attacks or encounters fell by 72% to 485 during 2014-23 from 1,750 in 2004-14 and number of civilian deaths declined by 68% to 1,383 from 4,285 in the corresponding period.

## There should be a solution through dialogue: Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait

**HARIDWAR:** After rounds of inconclusive talks between Centre and farmers over their demands, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait said that there should be a solution through dialogue and continuous talks with Centre are going on. "People living in the forests protect the environment. From Bihar to Andhra Pradesh, which is a forest area, Adivasis worship the 'Jungle'. No army and farmers are standing face to face. We have people in the army also who comes from the farming background. There should be a solution through dialogue. Continuous talks are going on with the Centre," he said. Meanwhile, another protesting farmer has died at the Khanauri border, bringing the toll to 4 during the ongoing protest under the call for Delhi Chalo, farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said. The 62-year-old farmer, Darshan Singh from Amargarh



village in Bathinda district, had been staying at the Khanauri border since February 13. The General Secretary of Punjab Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, Sarwan Singh Pandher said that Darshan Singh died of cardiac arrest. "He was at the Khanauri border and is the fourth martyr of this farmers' agitation. He has been identified as Darshan Singh (62). He died of a heart attack," Pandher said. He also said that a job to a member of

the victim's family should be given. Union Finance Minister Nirmala announced on that the Centre has established a three-member committee of ministers and is holding negotiations with farmers. Speaking to on the farmer's protests, the Finance Minister said, "The centre has formed a 3-member committee of ministers and is conducting discussions and negotiating with farmers." Sitharaman also said that the Prime Minister had left no stone unturned to ensure farmers' welfare and that PM Modi worked even for the small and marginal farmers. "I can provide a series of lists of all that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done for the farmers. From increasing their income to assisting with the smallest of expenses, PM Modi has taken every step for the welfare of the farmers. He works for even the small farmers," said the Finance Minister.

## Government to send Google notice over AI reply to query on PM Modi

## Mumbai hospital confirms Jet founder has malignancy

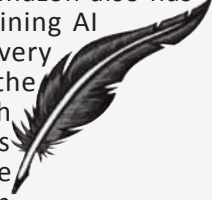
**MUMBAI:** During arguments on Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal's interim bail plea before a special PMLA court on Friday, lawyers for the 74-year-old submitted that JJ Hospital medical board confirmed that he has malignancy and the proposed treatment was unavailable in jail. After hearing arguments from both sides on Friday, special PMLA court judge MG Deshpande reserved the order. The matter will come up for hearing on Feb 27. Last week, Goyal had sought the relief, citing recent diagnosis of "malignancy" in his intestines and other health issues.



## Editorial

### How Nvidia became 'envy' of the world

The year was 1993, when Jensen Huang was sitting at California Diner. He had two other people with him, and together, they were starting a new company. They wanted to make a graphics chip—one that would make competitors green with envy. They chose the name NVision, but the name was already taken. So, Huang suggested Nvidia. It is from the Latin word invidia, which means envy. About 30 years later, Nvidia is truly the envy of the world. The company reported its earnings in the fourth quarter, and that was over \$22 billion—22 percent higher than the last quarter. When you compare it to last year, revenue is up by 265 percent. Nvidia is already a Wall Street darling. Its stocks have tripled in value since last year. This time, Wall Street had lofty expectations. Nvidia managed to beat that too, and it sent the markets rallying. Nvidia's shares jumped 12 percent in pre-market trade. It caused other tech stocks to soar. Asian markets joined the sentiment. Japan's Nikkei hit a record high. It was the first time since 1989. Traders in Tokyo even broke out in applause. Europe's Stoxx 600 hit a two-year high. It rose to almost 496 points in early trade. So, the mood in the markets, driven by artificial intelligence, is bullish. Investors believe AI is the future, and leading that wave is Nvidia. Here is what founder Jensen Huang said: "Accelerated computing and generative AI have hit the tipping point; demand is surging worldwide across companies, industries, and nations." So Huang says AI is at a tipping point. AI systems need millions of powerful chips to run, which means Nvidia will only keep growing. This company is the world's most valuable chipmaker. It dominates the market for chips especially used in AI systems. For example, ChatGpt was trained on thousands of Nvidia chips from companies like Microsoft, OpenAI, Amazon, Meta, and Google. All of them have deals with Nvidia. They are buying chips in bulk. This is because it's the only player offering what they want. Nvidia has had a headstart in this race; it took a bet years ago, which has paid off. Nvidia became a \$1 trillion company. It is America's third-most valuable company after Apple and Microsoft. Right now, Nvidia is the most-traded stock on Wall Street. It is planning to ship a new chip called B100. It is said to be exponentially more powerful, and it has further raised expectations. But it is not like they have no challenges; top on their list are restrictions. The US has restricted the export of high-end AI chips to China. Nvidia is still selling to China, but the numbers have dropped significantly. Then, there is supply, and the company is scaling at a record pace. Yet, it is struggling to keep up with the demand, and the third challenge is competition. Nvidia has a target on its back. Everyone wants to make chips now. As of today, their biggest rival is a company called Advanced Micro Devices (AMD). It has released a new AI chip. Meanwhile, OpenAI is toying with the idea. It wants to start its own AI chip venture, and it wants \$7 trillion for that. Intel is investing in space. It has struck a deal with Microsoft that could be worth billions of dollars. Amazon also has a custom-built chip for training AI models. So, the race is very much on. At this point, the others are trying to catch up, but this is a high-stakes game, and Nvidia will have to work very hard to remain on top of the curve.



# How Kibithoo, India's first village, shows a shift in geostrategic perception

Act East Policy (AEP), a significant shift in policy formulation under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and customised for India's North East, has shifted the border perception from a restrictive space to a participatory one. The participatory space combines developmental, geopolitical, and geostrategic resetting. This redefining process conceptualises border space as not the nondescript last mile of the country's geography but, most importantly, its effective beginning. Hence, terming Kibithoo in Arunachal Pradesh 'not as India's last village' but as 'India's first village' demonstrates the altered perception of the border as a space of activity, unity, and interconnection. The convention of binary formation—centre and margin—has become irrelevant in the new Bharat we see today. The response to China's acts of territorial intervention at Doklam, Galwan Valley, and Tawang and its designs of shifting cartography has been equally swift and definitive. The scale of retaliation has been specific enough not to indulge in provocative acts along the border. This retaliation has been possible because of the robust infrastructural developments that have gone into making the border space stronger,



resilient, and effective. This indicates that every inch of Bharat's land is essential, and the negative metaphor of 'not a blade of grass grows' holds no merit anymore. Kibithoo, 'India's first village' is located in the Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh at a height of 1,305 metres above sea level. The Lohit River finds its winding course through the district. It is the first circle headquarters, situated at the border of India and the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). The unceasing trade and cultural communication the people of Anjaw district had with their Tibetan counterparts was disturbed in the event of Chinese aggression in Tibet and its subsequent annexation in the 1950s. The disturbed geopolitics of the region under Chinese brinkmanship made every

scope of possible reconnection remote. The event of annexation followed by the India-China War in 1962 complicated the geopolitics in the region to an irreparable extent. The Chinese territorial desire and the streak of expansionism have not seen any possible reduction since then. It takes every potential scope for conflict intensification and expects to get some dividend out of it. This has been the standard practice that Beijing has followed with great meticulousness. This cunning of China has finally reached a fitting reply in the form of solid responses from India whenever such territorial and diplomatic excesses have been made since 2014. The rising Bharat is competitive enough to derail China's scope of global significance in manufacturing, supply chain, science

and technology, and diplomacy. Under AEP, the areas that have received the most attention are infrastructure and capacity building.

This capacity building has not been confined to any specific location. This has been quite comprehensive, and the northeast has taken massive infrastructure attention because it has not gotten the required depth for a long time. Arunachal Pradesh, in particular, has become the centre of geopolitical gravity as China continues its conventional practice of salami slicing. Apart from building airports and roads to enhance the communication and transport infrastructures, the 1,700 km long frontier highway along the McMahon Line connecting the bordering districts of Tawang, East Kameng, Upper Subansiri, West Siang, Tuting, Mechuka, Upper Siang, Dibang Valley, Desali, Chaglagam, Kibithoo, Dong, Hwai, and Vijaynagar from Bhutan to Myanmar is a geostrategic milestone. The work in this direction has already begun, and it might take just a few years, considering the climatic conditions and geographic impediments. With the scale with which China has enhanced the infrastructural depth on the other side of the border, competitive infrastructural developments have become

a geostrategic imperative. Apart from playing a significant role in augmenting India's strategic and defence readiness, it will also act as a catalyst for inducing development and economic well-being. India's competitiveness in response to China's infrastructural power along the McMahon Line has unsettled the latter and its expansionist proclivities. The required deterrence from the Indian side keeps China on uncertain ground. The territorial integrity of India is its priority. This has been made evident through the response given to China as and when it indulges in official claims and irrational acts of interference. This shift in attitude suggests the emergence of a new India where every inch of its land is indispensable because it constitutes territorial integrity. The reversal of the conceptual understanding of border space from peripherality to activity indicates the renewal of the territorial imagination. The binary between the border and the hinterland has collapsed.

There is only one territory, and quality assessment as a defining criterion for allocating importance is suspended. The subjective claims of quality should not be underlined to exercise determination of territoriality and grading processes.

## How Afghans are losing their rich heritage and culture to looters

Afghanistan is being ruled by the Taliban. They have been in power for over two years now, taking over after the US withdrew its forces in 2021. But the promise of a different Taliban—supposedly a softer, more social media-savvy version—seems to be untrue. They took control and then proceeded to oppress women and crush resistance. All these went as per the expected lines, as was also the death of Afghan culture. During their first stint in power, back in 2001, the Taliban destroyed the Bamiyan Buddhas—the largest standing Buddha statues in the world. Now, they are said to be ruining Afghan heritage again. The dry, sandy wasteland of Balkh, located in the north of the country at the

crossroads of western and central Asia, was in the center of an ancient kingdom also known in the west as Bactria. It was a major stop along the silk route, which brought the region its riches. That was a long time ago, though. Today, it is in ruins, dotted with artifacts and monuments that remain of the region's ancient culture. Afghans have been trying to protect these sites for years, but their heritage is at risk. The sites are a hunting ground for looters, and the thieves have been growing bold. Bulldozing monuments to scour through the remains, a study is being conducted by the University of Chicago that says hundreds of Bactrian sites are being looted at a pace of one a week. This has been

the trend for years. Under the Taliban, at least 37 sites have been looted since it took over Afghanistan, and there seems to be no end in sight. The Taliban say they aren't involved. But either the guards are ineffective or they are involved in the looting, and there are incentives for this as well. Afghanistan's economy has tanked since the Taliban took over, people are looking for ways to make ends meet, and there is a lucrative black market for looted artifacts. Researchers believe anything that is found is smuggled out via Iran and Pakistan. The artifacts then make their way to west or east Asia. Where they are sold to private collectors in illegal auctions or even make their way to museums.

## Russia-Ukraine war enters third year: Bloody stalemate, no signs of breakthrough

Russia-Ukraine war enters third year: Bloody stalemate, no signs of breakthrough. Protesters gather to demonstrate against the war in Ukraine. Source: REUTERS



In the book 'The Fathomless Caves', Kate Forsyth, the author, describes war as, "An unpredictable beast. Once unleashed, it runs like a rabid dog, ravening friends and foes alike. It can drag on for years, a slow attrition of nerve and fortitude, or be over in one brilliant flash, an extravagant configuration of flame and blood and sweat." The Russian-Ukraine War fits well into the above description.

When President Putin launched 'special military operations' to 'demilitarise and denazify' Ukraine on February 24, 2022, it was universally given that the war would be over in a few days, with Russia inflicting a crushing defeat on Ukraine. Ironically, two years later, the conflict rages on, degenerating into a state of stalemate with little change in the ground situation. Although a classic limited war, its politico-economic impact has been felt far and wide, with serious geo-strategic ramifications. Militarily, it has gone on to redefine the very nature of warfare. The Russian offensive commenced as a typi-

cal military campaign, preceded by missiles and airstrikes, followed by a large-scale ground invasion along multiple fronts. The northern thrust was launched from Belarus towards Kyiv, the southern one was from Crimea, and the south-eastern push was from Luhansk-Donetsk towards Kharkiv. In the wake of heavy losses and stiff Ukrainian resistance on the outskirts of Kyiv, the Russian Northern thrust stalled within a month, towards the end of March. By April, the Russian Army had retreated to consolidate gains around the Luhansk and Donetsk areas. However, the Russians did succeed in capturing Mariupol in May after a prolonged siege.

Having stabilised the situation, in August, the Ukrainian forces launched a limited counterattack in the south and a month later in the north-east, succeeding in recapturing Kharkiv and Kherson by November, thus forcing the

Russians to withdraw east of the Dnieper River. With winters setting in, the pace of operations had slowed down. The Ukrainians resorted to launching a number of drone strikes against the Russian bases. A period of lull was used by the belligerents to consolidate their positions and gear up for the next phase. By the end of 2022, around 8 million refugees had fled Ukraine. Both sides had suffered heavy casualties; more than half a million Russian and Ukrainian soldiers were killed or wounded, besides over 10,000 civilian fatalities. Towards early 2023, Ukraine launched a major counter-offensive on a wide front. However, it soon went awry.

The frontal assaults by the Ukrainian mechanised forces against the Russian multi-layered field fortifications complemented with minefields made no headway, and the offensive soon petered out.

## Maldives: Joint sea-exercises with India

As if putting the differences of the past weeks behind, possibly for good, the Maldives joined India's biennial 'Milan' naval exercise in the eastern coastal city of Visakhapatnam, from 19-27 February. Not stopping there, the archipelago-nation has also been hosting the 'Dosti-16' Coast Guard exercises, also involving Sri Lanka forming the third arm and Bangladesh participating as an 'observer'. Started in 1995, this was the 10th edition of the Milan exercise and was among the largest assemblage of international navies in the Indian Ocean, not far away from the Maldivian



coast. The Maldivian participation gave the nation's navy greater exposure and experience. Against this, Maldives and India launched the Dosti series in the aftermath of the 1987 coup-bid against

President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, which the Indian forces helped, thwart through 'Operation Cactus' in 1988. The aim was to synergise bilateral strengths to meet future eventualities but it

soon expanded the scope to focus more on non-formal security concerns, starting with ecology and maritime environment. Sri Lanka joined in on invitation in 2011, two years after the end of the LTTE War. This evolved into what is euphemistically called the 'Colombo Security Conclave' (CSC), with Mauritius too becoming a full member and Seychelles and Bangladesh signing in as observers. The permanent secretariat of the CSC is located in the Sri Lankan capital, thus indicating that the Indian influence on the apparatus is limited to being only one of the sovereign members.



## RBI lays out road map for Paytm's UPI transition



**MUMBAI:** RBI has outlined a plan for the seamless transfer of the UPI virtual payment address (@paytm) and the merchant QR codes from Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) to its parent One97. This move ensures customers can continue to scan and pay using their Paytm app and merchants can display the Paytm QR code for accepting payments even after March 15, as long as the underlying bank account is not PPBL. RBI said that additional measures are necessary to ensure smooth digital payments for UPI customers using

the '@paytm' handle operated by Paytm Payments Bank. The RBI had previously imposed certain business restrictions on Paytm Payments Bank, which resulted in a ban on all deposits into any bank account, whether savings, current, wallet or Fastag after March 15. To continue providing UPI services through its app, One97 (which owns and operates under the Paytm brand) must obtain a third-party application provider licence from NPCI. RBI said that to facilitate the smooth migration of '@paytm' handles, the NPCI must certify 4-5 banks

as Payment Service Provider banks capable of processing high-volume UPI transactions. These banks will step into the shoes of PPBL for processing transactions. During the transition period, Paytm will not be able to onboard new customers for UPI. In the case of PhonePe and GPay, big banks - HDFC, ICICI, SBI, Axis and Yes Bank are the processing banks. Although there is not much revenue for the transaction processing banks, by participating in the transaction chain they can get visibility on customer transactions which can.

## Bengaluru airport ties up with CleanMax for solar-wind energy

**MUMBAI:** Bangalore International airport has signed a 25-year long-term power purchase agreement with renewable energy company, Clean Max Enviro Energy Solutions (CleanMax) for the generation and supply of renewable energy from a 45.9 MW Solar-wind Captive Power Project. The initiative will enable yield of approximately 90 GWh of renewable energy annually with a CO2 reduction of 642 lacs kg [64,200 metric tonnes], according to CleanMax. The captive power project set up in the solar-wind farm located in Jagaluru, Karnataka, owned and operated by CleanMax,



will consist of 36 MWp of solar power and 9.9 MW of wind power plants, said CleanMax, in a press statement. "An estimated requirement of 90 million units of energy (kilo watt hours) on an annual basis, is being planned to be sourced from the captive renewable energy power plant. The project will ensure annual supply of approx. 58.3 million units of solar power and

31 million units of wind power utilising the existing grid infrastructure," it added. The annual yield of 90GWh renewable energy is equivalent of planting close to 11 lacs trees annually, it said, adding that the Jagaluru wind-solar farm in Karnataka has a total capacity of 290 MW and is a powerhouse for reducing carbon emissions.

## Trai seeks view on enabling virtual network operators tie-up with multiple telcos

**NEW DELHI:** Telecom regulator Trai on Friday invited views on enabling virtual network operators to tie up with more than one telecom operators for providing wireless and wireline services. At present, a virtual network operator (VNO) is allowed to partner with only one telecom

operator for providing services which need numbering and unique identity of the customers like mobile connection etc. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has issued a consultation paper on "Connectivity to Access Service VNOs From More Than one NSO (network

service operator)" following reference made by the Department of Telecom based on representation made by VNOs. "The Authority is issuing this consultation paper for soliciting comments of stakeholders on the issues related to connectivity to access service VNOs.

## CAPSULES

### Genuine' penny stock investors get court relief

The income tax department views the sale proceeds of such shares as "unexplained cash credit" or "unexplained money", subjecting it to a flat tax rate of 60%. When combined with a surcharge of 25%, penalty, and cess, the aggregate tax rate can soar past 80%. If such individuals can prove they are genuine investors, they do succeed at the appellate level - be it at the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) or in further appeal to high courts. It is best to be armed with proper documentation, aver tax experts. I-T sleuths across the country are vigilant against penny stock scams (see table), which facilitate money laundering and allow investors to claim tax benefits such as long-term capital gains (LTCGs) or short-term capital losses or business losses. These losses which can be offset against income help reduce the overall tax liability. In cases where a penny-stock scam is uncovered, the I-T officer, by relying on the investigation report, holds the LTCGs arising on sale of such shares to be unaccounted income subjecting it to high tax rates - genuine investors who have traded in such shares get hit. While gains from listed shares held for over a year are considered long-term, these gains are no longer tax-free. Since April 1, 2018, LTCGs exceeding Rs 1 lakh is taxed at 10%, but it is still a sharp contrast to the 80% rate, which causes nightmares to genuine investors who are inadvertently caught in the net. Tax experts emphasize that the I-T department can successfully challenge LTCGs claimed by the investor only if they have evidence linking the taxpayer to the penny-stock scam.

## India to contribute to 20% of global growth in next five years: KKR

**Mumbai:** A report by KKR's chief investment officer said that India is likely to contribute a fifth of the global incremental growth for the next five to seven years. The report estimates \$4-\$5 billion of annual infrastructure transfers from the government to the private sector, adding an efficiency edge to the growth. "India could be one of the largest investment arenas to deploy capital in Asia over the next five to seven years if the country continues to stay the course on its current reform-minded path," said Henry H. McVey, KKR's balance



sheet CIO. McVey's visit to India comes in the wake of KKR closing its \$6.4 billion Asia Pacific Infrastructure Investors II fund earlier this month. KKR has invested an additional \$250 million in Serentica Renewables - a decarbonisation platform which it acquired for \$400mn earlier. A KKR-backed InvIT picked

up 12 road projects for Rs 9000 crore last month, and last year, KKR acquired the majority stake in LEAP India - a pallet pooling platform. "KKR has been an investor in India for close to 20 years, and our investment, which stands at upwards of \$10 billion, continues to ramp upward," said

Shah. Of the \$10bn, \$3bn is in infrastructure. "Of our infrastructure funds, one-third are in roads, another one-third in renewables, and the rest in everything else," said Shah. "India is probably the deepest market for infrastructure in Asia because there is so much infrastructure build happening, and a lot of it is in the private sector, and the government has the national monetization pipeline which brings a lot of public sector assets into private hands on a 20-30-year basis," said Hardik Shah, a partner in KKR's infrastructure team in India.

## Razorpay's shift to India may entail \$100 million in tax

**BENGALURU:** Fintech unicorn Razorpay plans to go public in two years as it aims to turn profitable before the listing, its founders Harshil Mathur and Shashank Kumar said on Friday. As it gears up for an IPO, the fintech firm is moving its domicile to India, which Mathur said should be completed in 6-10 months. "The tax implications would be over \$100 million and most of it will be applicable in the US," Mathur told TOI. Razorpay is moving its



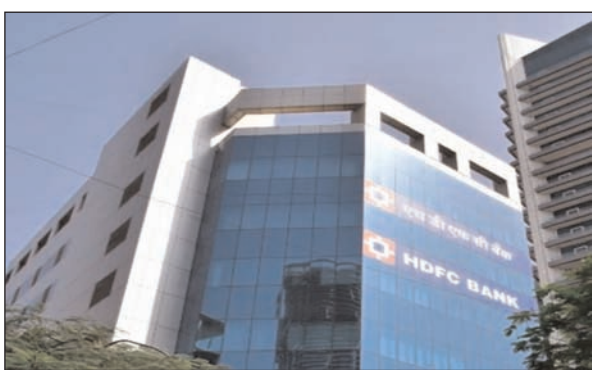
parent entity back to India from the US. Last year, new agency Reuters reported that Walmart paid the government nearly \$1 bil-

lion in taxes after digital payments company PhonePe shifted its headquarters from Singapore to India. Razorpay has raised

over \$740 million till date. The gross value of the payments made on an annualised basis has crossed \$150 billion. Founded in 2014, the company provides technology payment solutions to over 10 million businesses. Meanwhile, it is launching new solutions leveraging AI. Razorpay has developed a fraud detection tool that will detect a fraudulent transaction through pattern detection. If it fails to detect a fraud, Razorpay will pay the merchant.

## HDFC ERGO asserts its commitment to build an inclusive India

**HDFC ERGO** General Insurance Company, India's leading non-life insurance company, asserts its commitment to build an Inclusive India with the launch of Love All initiative. The Company has been working towards crafting a workplace that works for all, channelling the inherent recognition that as a country, everybody is organically diverse in ethnicity, language, food habits, abilities and more. The Love All campaign, which has been showcased as a film, is an initiative to harness this diversity with one language - one understood by each and every citizen of the country. This is hinged on the meta-emotion of love. It appeals to people to acknowledge that the emotion of love enables one to create space to include everyone without any con-



scious or subconscious bias. Launching this initiative, Anuj Tyagi, Joint Managing Director, HDFC ERGO General Insurance, mentioned "Inclusion today has gone beyond a mandate of Human Resources and is now a priority for organisation to cement their status as future ready. At HDFC ERGO, our commitment towards inclusion has shown clear results in form of having a better gender balanced workforce - one that has representation from different parts of the country and people with differ-

ent abilities. We have also built a workplace that rewards ideas and suggestions based on merit, moving beyond identity - thereby making it a place for everyone to thrive. Be it the industry first initiative like enrolling women motor surveyors or a unique proposition of forming an all women cluster of Digital Offices, which are the single employee run offices, to foster insurance inclusion to the last mile - these display our commitment to break the glass ceiling and foster an inclusive work place in a true sense.

## 'Use only milk-based real cheese,' McDonald's says

**NEW DELHI:** Amid allegations of using substitutes instead of real cheese, McDonald's asserted they use quality cheese and also emphasised its commitment to ingredients transparency as well as high quality meals. In a statement released by McDonald's India (West & South) stated that "Amid recent reports about the removal of 'Cheese' from our menu at McDonald's locations in Maharashtra, we want to assure our valued customers that only genuine, high-quality cheese is used in all our cheese-containing products. Collaborating with suppliers adhering to global standards ensures top-quality cheese in our product offerings and not cheese analogues or any substitute. We are actively



engaging with the competent authorities on this issue and awaiting their final clarification. We have always been adhering to stringent food standards and are fully compliant with all applicable food laws. Our commitment to transparency in our ingredients and dedication to providing delicious, high-quality meals to our customers remain unwavering." On Thursday, the Maharashtra FDA has suspended the license

of a McDonald's outlet in Ahmednagar after discovering the use of substitutes in burgers and nuggets instead of real cheese. In response, the chain removed the term "cheese" from various items at the affected location. The FDA is urging McDonald's to expand the corrective measures beyond the specific outlet, advocating for a state-wide and potentially national implementation.

McDonald's took to X officially known as Twitter, asserting they use only real, quality cheese and emphasising their commitment to ingredient transparency and high-quality meals. However, the accuracy of these claims may require further scrutiny through independent investigations or regulatory actions. The unfolding events will determine how McDonald's addresses the concerns raised by the FDA.

## Zee sets up advisory panel to tackle 'market rumours'

**MUMBAI:** Amid market rumours and media reports about its accounting and financial issues, among others, Zee Entertainment has set up an advisory committee to guide its board on how to tackle such issues. Embattled Paytm too has set up an advisory panel recently. Zee's committee will be headed by retired Allahabad HC judge Satish Chandra and two independent directors, Uttam Agarwal and P V Ramana Murthy. Zee noted that there has been a "widespread circulation of misinformation, market rumour and speculation leading to the formation of negative public opinion about the company" and as a result, impacts its share price and "erodes investor wealth". Although the company's share rose 3% to close at Rs 173 on the BSE, it has crashed 36% in the last six months and has lost 25% of its value since Sony called off a merger with Zee in late Jan.



## Rohit might be a 'bit uncomfortable' playing under Hardik



**NEW DELHI:** With Hardik Pandya set to lead Mumbai Indians in the upcoming edition of the Indian Premier League, former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar feels Rohit Sharma will be a 'bit uncomfortable' playing under the all-rounder. In a surprising move in December last year, the Mumbai Indians replaced a highly-successful Rohit, who led the franchise to five IPL titles, with Hardik. Hardik returned to his former franchise MI in November from Gujarat Titans. While the franchise made the decision keeping in mind the transition, Rohit's removal as skip-

per did not go well with some. With the swagger Hardik brings alongside him, Manjrekar felt the likes of Rohit and Suryakumar Yadav playing under the swashbuckling all-rounder will be entertaining to watch. "It's going to be tricky. Hardik Pandya is a guy who has got a bit of a swag. He will carry that into the Mumbai Indians dressing room as well. And it will be a bit uncomfortable (thoda uncomfortable hoga) because Rohit Sharma might have thought, he will get one more year as captain. Suryakumar Yadav might also have something similar in his mind, that he might

have been able to lead Mumbai Indians this season. But Hardik Pandya won't let that affect him. It will be entertaining," Manjrekar said in a Star Sports show. Earlier, former India stumper Parthiv Patel also pointed out Hardik will be under tremendous pressure while leading Mumbai in the upcoming IPL but termed his appointment as captain "a well thought-out decision" by the franchise. "There will be a lot of pressure on Hardik. It will be challenging; replacing a five-time title-winning captain and a team that is used to playing a certain way for 10 years.

## ISL: Odisha host Mohun Bagan in top-of-the-table clash

**KOLKATA:** In a bid to consolidate their position atop Indian Super League (ISL) roster, a well-rested Odisha FC will host an in-form Mohun Bagan Super Giant in a top-of-the-table early kickoff on Saturday. The battle of the Spanish coaches at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar will see the home side, on a remarkable 11-match unbeaten streak in ISL, take on the Kolkata giants, who have won three of their last four games on the trot post resumption of the league after Super Cup. The only match MBSG drew in this period was the Kolkata Derby against arch-rivals East Bengal three weeks



ago. Naturally, the Antonio Habas-coached side will be eager to leapfrog Odisha to the top. Odisha, meanwhile, have drawn their last game against FC Goa 15 days ago and had won the four ISL games prior to that. The Juggernauts top the chart with 31 points from 15 games with MBSG on their

heels with 29 points, having played a game less. Emphasizing on the importance of maintaining their momentum and approach, Odisha head coach Sergio Lobera said ahead of the clash on Friday, "We've worked well before this break, and there's no reason to expect differently now.

## Harmanpreet, Yastika fifties help MI beat DC in final-ball thriller

**NEW DELHI:** Defending Champions Mumbai Indians clinched a thrilling victory in the Women's Premier League (WPL 2024) opener in Bengaluru on Friday, successfully chasing down Delhi Capitals' of 171 on the final ball of the match,

winning by four wickets. Captain Harmanpreet Kaur played a forceful innings, scoring 55 runs (34 balls, 7x4, 1x6), and received substantial support from Yastika Bhatia, who contributed significantly with 57 runs off 45 balls (8x4, 2x6). Despite the

impressive power-packed 75 by 19-year-old Alice Capsey (53 balls, 8x4, 3x6), guiding Delhi Capitals to a total of 171 for five, Mumbai Indians managed to stay in the game through the noteworthy efforts of Yastika and captain Harmanpreet Kaur.

## PCB looking to appoint foreign coaches, support staff for T20 World Cup

**LAHORE:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), led by new chairman Mohsin Naqvi, is looking to appoint foreign coaches and support staff to guide the national team through to the T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in USA and West Indies in June. "The new Chairman, Mohsin Naqvi is keen to look at the available coaching options for Pakistan and is more inclined to appoint foreign coaches and support staff," a well-informed source in the board said. "Naqvi has already



asked chief selector, Wahab Riaz to speak to some of the available options and short list candidates as he is aware foreign coaches might be reluctant to

join the Pakistan team because of the way Mickey Arthur, Grant Bradburn and Andrew Puttick were removed from their positions after the World Cup

and their contracts cut short." Veteran administrator Naqvi was appointed as PCB chief for a three-year term early this month.

## Rajasthan sports council seals RCA

**JAIPUR:** Eventually the inevitable happened on Friday as Rajasthan State Sports Council (RSSC) sealed the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA) office and its academy along with Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Stadium cricket ground. The RSSC secretary Sohan Ram Choudhary had sent a notice to the RCA on Friday (February 23) to handover the aforementioned property to the council, but when it did not happen, the former sealed the entire space. The state cricket association had earlier this month sent a letter to the RSSC with regard to the



renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), but the latter did not take the matter forward. Under the MoU, the state cricket association gets the permission to use the SMS cricket ground along with the North and South Blocks which

belong to RSSC. Its five-year term ended on Wednesday (February 21). It has been learnt that the RSSC secretary had sent a letter to the RCA officials on February 19 in which he mentioned about the cricket body failing to honour the MoU conditions and not

making the payment on several occasions. The letter also mentions that RCA is under a debt of Rs5 crore. Purportedly this became the reason for the sports council to not renew the MoU. Since there was no communication from the RCA on this front, registrar Archana Singh appointed additional registrar (processing) Jitendra Prasad Sharma to investigate the matter. "The investigation will be carried out on February 29 and all the involved parties are requested to submit their replies in writing..." read the letter by Sharma.

## Santosh Trophy: Kerala lose the plot against Goa, go down 0-2

Kerala have played numerous Santosh Trophy matches without proper back-up plans. While they have often got away with that tactic, it wasn't the case against Goa at the Golden Jubilee Stadium, Yupia in Arunachal Pradesh on Friday night. A lack of plan 'B' hurt Kerala dear as they lost the plot after their skipper and right winger Nijo Gilbert walked off the pitch in the 22nd minute. Necio Fernandes beat Kerala's offside trap twice to score a goal each in either half to help Goa down Kerala 2-0 in the 77th Santosh Trophy National Football Tournament. Necio's opener in the 45th minute was controversial. The assistant referee had raised his flag for an offside but the refer-



ee decided to overrule his deputy and allowed the goal in favour of Goa despite protests from Kerala players and coach Satheevan Balan. Kerala's Muhammed Ashiq was also shown a yellow card for showing dissent. However, there were no complaints when Necio got his second in the 59th minute. Though similar to the first, Necio timed his run perfectly this time to beat the off-

side trap and get the better of Sidharth Rajeevan Nair, the Kerala goalkeeper. However, the match began with Kerala showing more promise in the early minutes. Goan players were wandering on the field as Kerala made back-to-back raids into the Goan box. They even came close to taking the lead in the third minute with Abdu Raheem's header hitting the post.

## 4th Test: Alastair Cook lauds Joe Root for Bazball-defying hundred

**NEW DELHI:** Joe Root's century in the fourth Test, which defied the Bazball, was praised by England legend Alastair Cook, who also made the inevitable comparison with India captain Rohit Sharma. Day 1 of the ongoing fourth Test in Ranchi saw the 33-year-old Root come back to form with an undefeated 122, lifting England to 353 in their first innings after they had been reduced to 112 for 5 in the morning session. "When you see someone go through a little trouble, it's always great to see them out the other end. When great players don't score runs it's only a matter of time until they do," Cook told TNT Sport after day 1 on Friday. "What Joe Root did today (Friday) was go back to basics. This is a



clip of someone with the shots you'd expect Joe Root to play (Cook was speaking while a video of Root's innings was being played). All the talk about the reverse scoop being unusual, this is a very typical Joe innings. "Slightly slower than normal but the tempo and his rhythm of batting is what makes him stand out. When he's in fine flow he's got such a nice easy way about him, Rohit (Sharma)-like. Pure and utter class, great player of

spin and he has all the options covered." One of the best batsmen of the world of cricket, Root, came under fire after England lost the third Test when they were bowled out for 319 after his reverse lap against Jasprit Bumrah. It was his first century in the five-match series following scores of 29, 2, 5, 16, 18, 7 in his last six Test innings. "Root has played beautifully today. It has been a very different Root to what we have seen in

the series, one who has been playing with control...It has been very un-Bazball, for those who like the entertainment, but very effective," Cook, a former England skipper, said. "It was a very emotionless Root. It will be interesting to see what he says about this hundred, given all of the stuff that has gone on before, the talk about his shot selection and the way he has played. Great players respond and he has responded with runs."

## Soreness rules David Warner out of final T20I clash with New Zealand

**NEW DELHI:** Cricket Australia on Saturday announced opener David Warner will not be participating in the third and final match of the T20 series against New Zealand in Auckland due to adductor soreness. The 37-year-old, who will retire from all forms of international cricket after the T20 World Cup in June, was also absent from Friday's 72-run victory over the Black Caps as the Australians secured consecutive wins. "Warner will require a brief recovery period, which is not expected to affect his availability for the upcoming Indian Premier League leading into the ICC Men's T20 World Cup," Cricket Australia said in a statement. Warner hit 32 runs off 20 balls in the opening win over New Zealand in Wellington on , but was booed off the field by the home fans in what was his final appearance in the bilateral international series.

## CAPSULES

### Marquee India vs Pakistan showdown drives US ticket demand for T20 World Cup

**NEW DELHI:** The organizers of the T20 World Cup scheduled for June have reported an overwhelming demand for tickets among cricket lovers in the United States.

According to the International Cricket Council, the marquee showdown between arch-rivals Pakistan and India in New York has seen an astonishing demand, with ticket requests exceeding capacity by 200 times in the public ballot. Despite the ongoing construction of the 34,000-seat temporary venue, Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in Long Island, it is already guaranteed to host a sold-out crowd for the June 9 match. The tournament is being co-hosted by the West Indies and the United States. While big crowds are expected in the traditional cricket countries in the Caribbean, this will be the first time that an international tournament is held in the United States with the 16 games in the country also including matches in Lauderhill, South Florida and Grand Prairie Stadium, near Dallas. "We had amazing ticket interest. The ballot process showed there's a really big demand," T20 World Cup USA, Inc. chief executive Brett Jones told AFP. "India-Pakistan is obviously a game that at every World Cup carries great interest.





## Bengal DGP admits to lapses, inaction in restive Sandeshkhali



**SANDESHKHALI:** Fresh violence rocked Sandeshkhali on Friday as villagers in Bermajur II panchayat area attacked yet another bheri (fish farm) owned by Siraj, brother of absconding TMC strongman Sheikh Shahjahan, and thrashed a local party functionary, reported. While district administration imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144, Bengal DGP Rajeev Kumar rushed back to Sandeshkhali from Kolkata. Talking to reporters, Kumar admitted to police lapses and inaction on complaints against land-grabbers.

Police also started marches to instill confidence among people. Kumar had crisscrossed Sandeshkhali on Wednesday before leaving for Kolkata on Thursday. But less than 24 hours after his return, men and women from Kachhari village on Friday morning stormed Siraj's bheri and torched the thatched structures adjacent to the water body. They then ransacked Bermajur president Ajit Maity's house and assaulted the TMC functionary and his wife. The villagers alleged Maity had grabbed their farm-

lands and converted them into fish farms for Shahjahan and Siraj. Police reached the spot and detained 11 people, but women mobbed the vehicles to stop them from being ferried to Sandeshkhali police station. Some of the women lay on the road while other villagers used logs to block the road and burnt tyres, demanding immediate release of the accused. DGP Kumar said action would be taken against those who indulged in vandalism but assured the villagers that their land-grab complaints would be investigated.

## Citizenship not an issue, says high court, gives kid's custody to Bangladeshi mom

**VADODARA:** A Bangladeshi woman living in Godhra fought an 18-month legal battle to win custody of her four-year-old daughter from her mother-in-law. Gujarat HC ordered Tasnim Presswala's mother-in-law on Friday to hand over the child to her within two days. HC said mother cannot be deprived of her right to custody of her child merely because she does not hold Indian citizenship. Tasnim had married Habib Presswala in 2017 and gave birth to twins in 2020. While her son died within two days, her daughter survived. In Nov 2021,



Habib died by suicide, after which she went to her mother's home for the "iddat" period (waiting period a Muslim woman must observe, under Islamic law, after a divorce, or after the death of her husband, during which she may not remarry). "Her mother-in-law, Saifiya Presswala, convinced her to leave her daughter with her. But when

Tasnim returned to take custody of her daughter, Saifiya refused to hand over the child," said advocate Hitesh Gupta, who represented Tasnim in HC. Tasnim then approached a Godhra court seeking custody of her daughter. Her mother-in-law gave an undertaking that she would hand over the girl to Tasnim.

## Court nixes Karnataka CM Siddharamaiah bribery case closure report

**BENGALURU:** In a setback to Karnataka CM Siddharamaiah, a special court for MPs and MLAs rejected the closure report filed in a bribery case involving him, and directed Lokayukta police to conduct further probe. Special judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat

nixed the closure report (B report) dated June 7, 2023, saying a "fair" probe had not been conducted, and directed the IO to submit a fresh report within six months. Complainant N R Ramesh, an ex-BBMP corporator, had alleged that Siddharamaiah, dur-

ing his first stint as CM, nominated one L as a member of the managing committee and steward of Bangalore Turf Club Ltd, after receiving a payment of Rs 1.3 crore from him through cheque on July 28, 2014. Lokayukta police later filed a closure report.

## CAPSULES

### Dawood Ibrahim kin Iqbal Kaskar's brother-in-law shot

**SHAHJAHANPUR/MUMBAI:** A 35-year-old man from Mumbai who came to attend a wedding reception of his nephew at Jalalabad in UP was allegedly shot dead over a "heated argument" on Wednesday. Nihal Khan was the brother-in-law of fugitive-don Dawood Ibrahim's brother Iqbal Kaskar, sources in his family said on Thursday. Nihal was also the brother-in-law of Jalalabad's chairman Shakeel Khan. In 2016, Nihal had purportedly eloped with Shakeel's niece. The matter was settled in a "compromise". "Nihal had missed his flight on Feb 15 and came here by road. It seems my brother Kamil was still upset with Nihal over 2016 episode and wanted to take revenge," said Shakeel.

### Assets bought by man in wife's name is family property: High court

**PRAYAGRAJ:** Allahabad high court has held that property purchased by a husband in the name of his wife who is a homemaker and has no independent source of income "will be the property of the family." While dealing with a son's claim for declaration of co-ownership of his deceased father's property, Justice Arun Kumar Singh Deshwal held it would be treated as family property "because in the common course of natural events, a Hindu husband purchases a property in the name of his wife... for the benefit of family". Court observed that unless it was otherwise proved the property was purchased using income earned by the wife, it is deemed to have been purchased by the husband using his own income.

## Court to cops: Such a big plot, but just 2 held in NewsClick case?

**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi court extended on Friday the judicial custody of NewsClick founder Prabir Purkayastha and human resources head Amit Chakraborty by 21 days - till March 15 - in a case lodged under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for allegedly receiving illegal funding from China routed through the United States. It also hauled up police for a slow investigation. Additional sessions judge (ASJ) Pawan Kumar's court granted police 20 days, from Feb 29, to file a chargesheet.



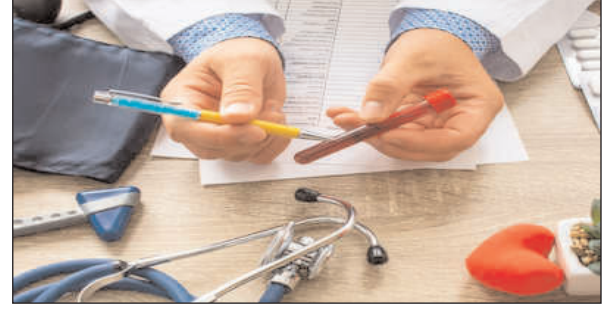
Upbraiding Delhi police, court asked: "Such a large conspiracy and you have arrested just two people? You caught no one else in 150 days? ... One person has turned approver, is the other accused Superman who did all this alone? Will you be arresting more sus-

pects?" Delhi police's special cell had sought a 30-day extension to file a chargesheet against the two accused. On Dec 22, court had granted Delhi police a further 60 days to complete its investigation against Purkayastha and Chakraborty. The special cell submit-

ted before court that in their application requesting an extension they have given details of progress along with reasons for seeking more time. Police said there were around four lakh emails to be investigated, 100 digital documents to be assessed, and people living abroad were suspects. Arshdeep Khurana, counsel for Purkayastha, told court that agencies have had all the material for the past two years and that court must ask them what they have done in the last two months.

## Medical body updates guidelines, expands lipid profile test

**PUNE:** Lipid Association of India (LAI) has updated its guidelines on cardiovascular risk assessment and lipid management, building upon 2016 guidelines with new data on heart disease in Indians. The new guidelines have stratified patients into various risk groups. "The guidelines recommend LDL cholesterol should be less than 70mg/dL in patients with metabolic syndrome and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)," Dr Raman Puri, cardiologist and founder chairman of



LAI said. "Additionally, a new category termed 'Extreme Risk Group Category C' has been established for a small number of patients, who continue to experience chest pain despite all possible treatments. In this category, LDL cholesterol levels

should ideally be within the range of 10-15 mg/dL," said interventional cardiologist Dr Vinod M Vijan. LAI has also been pushing for routine lipid profile screenings from age 20 and at the age of two for individuals with a family history of high cholesterol or prema-

ture coronary heart disease (in men aged less than 55 years and women aged less than 65 years). For adopted children or those in families with elevated lipoprotein (a), lipid profiles screening should start at the age two, or if not possible, as early as possible, Puri said.

New guidelines recommend lipid profile tests to include lipoprotein (a) assessment for initial screening of an individual, given its [lipoprotein (a)] higher prevalence among 25% of Indians.

## MCD plans to develop fifth C&D waste disposal plant

**NEW DELHI:** Municipal Corporation of Delhi plans to develop a construction and demolition (C&D) waste plant - its fifth - at Tehkhand in Okhla. The project includes collection, transportation, processing and disposal of waste collected from MCD's central and south zones. The concessionaire, to be appointed for 25 years, will process up to 1,000 tonnes of waste initially on a daily basis. "The recycling facility, to be developed on seven acres of land, will begin operations with processing and disposal of minimum 1,000 tonnes per day (TPD) of C&D waste provided by MCD at Okhla sanitary landfill from south and central zones. It will be extended to 2,000 TPD within two years of the project's implementation," stated MCD's request for



proposal. Officials said the plant will be compact, fully computerised and have an integrated unit with a log washer for coarse and fine aggregate. The end products will comply with relevant specifications and standards fixed by the authority concerned. "The concessionaire will take the department's approval before placing the order for installation of the plant. The site is targeted to be developed within 12 months from the date of allotment of project," said an official. The project will also include procure-

ment of an adequate number of vehicles fitted with GPS for waste transportation, site survey to assess hydrological data and flooding potential of sites, soil investigation for design and drawing of the facility in compliance with laws, digital weighbridge with CCTVs and appropriate safety arrangements, said MCD. Last year, the civic body's fourth C&D waste plant, in Burari, was made operational with a capacity to process 1,000 tonnes of waste every day, which will be eventually extended to 2,000 tonnes per day.

## Make blood transfusion free for thalassaemic kids: NCPDR

**NEW DELHI:** Taking note of the challenges faced by a father in getting blood transfusion done for his three year old son suffering from thalassaemia at a hospital in MP's Raisen district, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights chief has asked all states and UTs to issue circulars to hospitals to provide blood transfusion therapy to such patients free of cost and step-up compliance with the health ministry guidelines on treatment. In his letter addressed to principal secretaries of the health department of all states and UTs, NCPDR chairman Priyank Kanoongo highlighted that the Commission has also taken cognizance of a case wherein the family of the child was asked to provide the



### Odisha man dies of heart attack after accident kills brother, nephew

**KEONJHAR:** A man, unable to bear the loss of his brother and nephew in an accident on Friday, died of heart attack later in the day. The incident was reported from Barigaon village in the district. Kande Munda (57) and his son Laxman (35) had left home early on their two-wheeler.

hospital the required quantity of blood bag for initiating the therapy during the treatment in MP. TOI spoke to the father who is a farmer. He said his son has been

undergoing blood transfusion since he was five months old. "My son needs transfusion after about one and half months and on most occasions when we have to take him to the hospital they ask us to arrange a donor first to replenish the blood which is not easy," the father shared.

### Things looking good for Modi ahead of polls, says Greek PM

**NEW DELHI:** The first Greek PM to visit India in 16 years, Kyriakos Mitsotakis on Friday said things were "looking good" for his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi ahead of the 2024 polls and he was sure he would have an opportunity to meet Modi again and develop the relationship. When asked about the importance of personal chemistry in diplomacy in an interview to Times Now, he said, "What countries need to see is their interests being aligned. But on top of that, I think if there is a good personal chemistry, we can drive change at a much faster pace, especially as we are both convinced regarding the strategic nature of this partnership." The Greek PM, who upgraded India-Greece relationship to a strategic partnership last year, was chief guest at Raisina Dialogue this year. On IMEC and Greece's role in the landmark infrastructure and connectivity initiative.

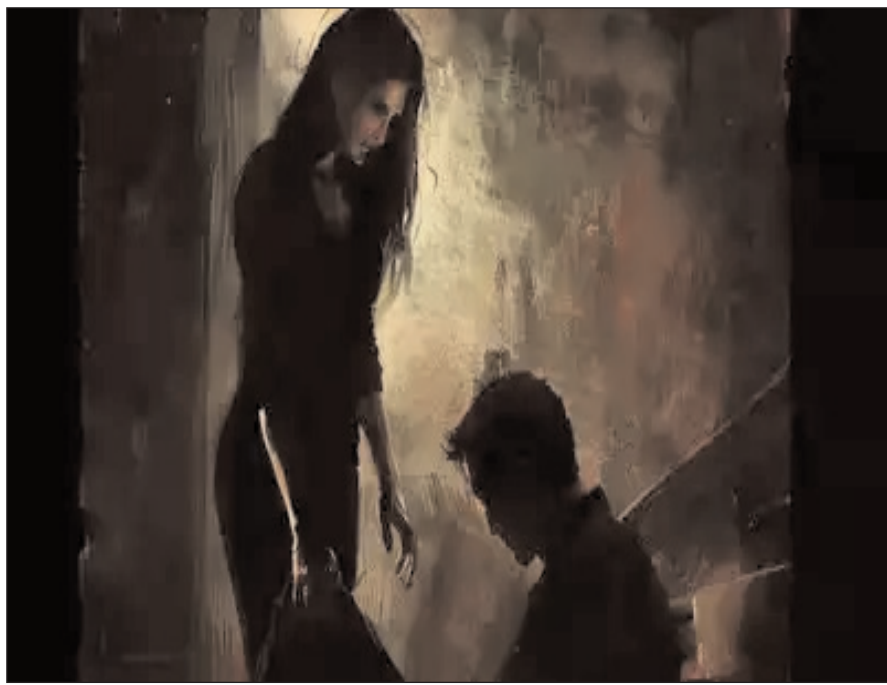


## How 'obsession and desire for intimacy' led woman to stalk, kidnap TV anchor

**HYDERABAD:** Uppal police apprehended a 31-year-old business-woman along with her four accomplices for their alleged involvement in cyber stalking and kidnapping of a man. The accused, B Trishna, who specialises in digital marketing, is a resident of Madhapur.

According to police, Trishna found out that Chaitanya Reddy, with whom she had interacted on a matrimonial website two years ago, had another person Pranav's photograph as his matrimony profile picture.

She was seething with rage that Chaitanya had deceived her. Upon discovering that Pranav was the 'victim' in this impersonation case,



Trishna reached out to him on WhatsApp. However, he had already lodged a complaint with cyber crime police station.

Despite being told, Trishna was persistently messaging Pranav, with the latter blocking her number. She could not digest this. She hired an

employee from her office offering him a sum of Rs 50,000 for kidnapping Pranav. Trishna along with four others took away

Pranav from near a private college in the early hours of Feb 11.

They took him to Trishna's office, where he was physically assaulted. However, Pranav managed to convince Trishna to release him, assuring her that he would 'cooperate' with her. With Pranav approaching police, a case was registered and the accused were arrested on Thursday.

Trishna's actions were driven by 'obsession and desire for intimacy', police said. An iPhone Pro Max-15 from Trishna was recovered. An Apple AirTag was also recovered from Pranav's car, which had been used to track his movements, police said.

## State finance panel report affirms 'economic injustice' to Karnataka

**BENGALURU:** In what appears to be an affirmation of the govt's stand on devolution of taxes by the Centre, the fifth State Finance Commission, in a report presented in the legislative assembly on Friday, said Karnataka received Rs 25,435 crore less than what was recommended by the 14th Finance Commission.

In its report for 2024-25, the commission said Karnataka suffered a significant reduction in its share of central taxes and duties, plummeting from 4.7% to 3.6% due to a decision of the 15th Finance Commission. It says Karnataka faces further deprivation of approximately Rs 16,000 crore until the conclusion of 2025-26. The commission emphasised the importance of equitable distribution of finances to states in the spirit of cooperative



federalism, stating that it should be "just, fair and appropriate". It criticised the 14th and 15th Finance Commissions for basing devolution solely on population (90%) and geographical area (10%), while neglecting other crucial indicators considered by previous commissions. It said this approach favoured states with larger populations and geographical areas, disadvantaging those who have managed population growth and achieved higher human development indices.

The panel, established in Nov 2023, also recommended the Bruhat

Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) adopt updated guidelines for value-based assessment of property tax to bolster its revenue. This suggestion follows a marginal rise in BBMP's own source revenue and a notable decline in nontax revenue over the past six years, dropping to Rs 1,161 crore from Rs 1,307 crore. The panel proposed the expansion of grama thana areas in villages and regularisation of house construction and other development activities within those areas to generate additional revenue for gram panchayats.

## State set to draft action plan to save 'farmers of forest'

**Kolkata:** Organizations, researchers, individuals specialising and interested in bird conservation and the state forest department have joined hands to prepare a conservation action plan for hornbills in north Bengal. The state that leaps to mind when discussing hornbills is Nagaland due to the popularity of its annual Hornbill Festival. But, West Bengal has more species of the hornbills in north Bengal's Buxa forest, Gorumara and Mahananda wildlife sanctuaries and Neora Valley National Park,

adjoining territorial forests of Jalpaiguri, Kurseong, Kalimpong and Baikunthpur. The five types of hornbills that are found in north Bengal are oriental pied hornbill, great hornbill, rufous-necked hornbill, wreathed hornbill and Indian grey hornbill.

Hornbills are distinct with large bills, often with horn-like structures on top called casques. They have prominent long eyelashes and distinctive calls, often harsh and loud. They are known as "farmers of the forest" for their ability to

disperse seeds over long distances.

"Of the five species found in Bengal, three — great, rufous-necked and wreathed hornbills — are globally threatened and listed as 'Vulnerable' on IUCN Red List. The conservation action plan attempts to chart out strategies to ensure that hornbill species in the region are protected," said Arjan Basu Roy, principal investigator of the Hornbill Project of Nature Mates-Nature Club, in association with Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF.)

## Meet Mumbaikar Shatbhi Basu, India's first woman bartender



Shatbhi Basu, India's first woman bartender, has had a remarkable career in the industry. From accidental beginnings to becoming a mixologist and opening her own bartending academy, Basu has pushed boundaries and made a name for herself in the field.

Meet Mumbaikar Shatbhi Basu, India's first woman bartender. Two weeks into her first job as a restaurant supervisor, Shatbhi Basu found herself behind the bar and there's been no looking back since. The name's Basu, Shatbhi Basu. Unlike James Bond, though, this Sean Connery "superfan" prefers her martini stirred, not shaken. And while her favourite fictional British assassin owns the licence to kill, Basu-India's first woman bartender must often clarify she

does not have the licence to drink. "That's the most common misconception about bartending," says the Mahim-based wine and whisky lover, who began serving cocktails four decades ago when Mumbai rarely saw men behind the bar, let alone a woman with a lethal smile and a diploma in hotel management. The city's textile mills were shutting and its bars were importing shiny disco balls from Europe in 1981 when this "through and through Bombay girl" became a bartender by accident. Clad in a sari that day, she was standing by the sideboard of a Chinese restaurant in Bandra, hoping to be a "Chinese chef". By then, her dream of becoming a veterinarian had long been diced and discarded. Since age 10, Basu had copiously

## DKS: No mandate for int'l firms to display number of Kannadiga staff

**BENGALURU:** The Karnataka government on Friday dropped its move that required global companies to prominently display on notice boards the number of Kannadiga employees they have on the rolls. The backpedalling comes days after Kannada and culture minister Shivaraj Tangadagi had made the proposal, which invited sharp criticism from industries and entrepreneurs. With this statement, government aims to allay concerns among businesses operating within the state regarding potential regulatory burdens. Deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar rejected any official mandate in this regard. "I'm on record: There is no such order in the state," he added. The deputy CM clarified that while Kannada activists had approached the minister for such a proposal.



## 'Trapped' flyers develop breathing issues on snag-hit Mumbai-Mauritius flight

**NEW DELHI:** Several infants and a 78-year-old passenger developed breathing issues due to non-functioning AC onboard a Mumbai-Mauritius flight early Saturday, reported news agency ANI quoting a passenger. The flight, MK749 of Air Mauritius, scheduled to depart at 4.30am, developed an engine snag and the passengers were allegedly not allowed to disembark for over five hours.

## Three Bangladeshi nationals living illegally in Mumbai arrested

**MUMBAI:** Three Bangladeshi nationals have been apprehended by the police for allegedly residing illegally in the Vikhroli Park Site area of Mumbai. The arrests were carried out based on information about the presence of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh near the Lower Depot in the Park Site area of Vikhroli. Acting swiftly upon receiving the information, the police set a trap in the area two days ago and successfully detained all three individuals. The arrested individuals have been identified as Yusuf Sofan (58), Mominullah Sheikh (52), and Umedullah Noorulhaq (69), according to the police. Investigations have revealed that Yusuf had entered India a few years ago and his visa expired in 2020. Similarly, Sheikh was found to be residing illegally. Noorulhaq, on the other hand, is believed to have illegally entered India 25 years ago and has been living in Mumbai ever since. The police suspect that there may be a significant number of Bangladeshi nationals residing illegally in the area and are currently conducting further inquiries.



## GHMC may bank on AI to end misuse of attendance system

**HYDERABAD:** Instances of civic employees coming late or leaving work early are set to end if Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has its way. The civic body is planning to roll out AI-based facial recognition biometric attendance to stop misuse of the current system. The GHMC has invited expression of interest from agencies for implementing and maintaining AI-driven mobile-based facial recognition biometric attendance management system.

## Deocha Pachami basalt mining tender likely in 'mid-March'

**KOLKATA:** Bengal govt will soon float a global tender for mining of basalt from a portion of Deocha Pachami coal block in Birbhum. This was disclosed on Friday by state power minister Aroop Biswas during an interaction with a Polish delegation led by Jakub Chelstowski, marshal of Silesia - a region in Poland - in Kolkata. The meeting

was also attended by power secretary Shantanu Bose.

According to sources, the tender will be floated in mid-March. Deocha Pachami is the second largest coal block in the world with an indicative reserve of 1,198 million tonnes and is spread over 12.3 sq km. The mining of basalt is considered to be the first step

before extracting coal from the block. WBPDCL owns the Deocha Pachami coal mine. Incidentally, state govt has so far identified 420 acres for the mining of basalt. In this particular area, coal has been found 100-200 m under the basalt layer. A total of 142 million tonnes of basalt could be extracted from the area.

## Chennai cop harasses woman, says burqa hides 'her beautiful face'

**CHENNAI:** A head constable was suspended on Thursday for harassing a woman and asking her to remove her burqa as it hid "her

beautiful face". The woman had visited the station to find out the status of a complaint about a vehicle theft. The woman had lodged a complaint after her two-wheeler went missing on Feb 14. A case was registered and the vehicle was recovered after she told the police two days later that it was spotted at Puduket.

As the case was registered, the head constable, Velmurugan told Fathima to get her scooter through the court. When she was hesitant and broke down, he told her that she looked beautiful even when she was crying and told her to remove the burqa as it hid her face.

## With Mayawati going solo, 4 of 10 BSP MPs in touch with BJP?

**Lucknow:** The BJP is learnt to have initiated back-channel talks with at least four BSP MPs for a possible switch over to the saffron camp ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Another BSP MP from the west UP region is reported to be in touch with Jayant Chaudhary's RLD, which is expected to join the BJP-led NDA in the next few days. Sources said that of the four BSP MPs who are reportedly in touch with the BJP, three are from the Kashi region while one happens to be from Awadh. In fact, one of them recently met PM Narendra Modi who also happens to be an



MP from Varanasi parliamentary constituency in Kashi. The development comes amid reports of BJP finalising its first list of candidates, essentially for the 16 seats, which it lost to the SP-BSP combine in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. The BJP is likely to announce the list just

around the issuance of poll notification expected in the second week of March.

While senior BJP leaders refused to comment, party spokesperson Anand Dubey said that the leaders of the opposition parties know that their defeat in the forthcoming Lok Sabha

polls is imminent. "Therefore, the opposition leaders are scrambling for safer seats or greener pastures. As far as BJP is concerned the party draws its strength from the popularity of PM Modi and its grassroots organisational machinery. We are confident of registering a landslide victory in the upcoming elections," he maintained.

Political experts said that the BSP MPs apprehend a setback to their electoral fortunes in the wake of the poll contest turning into a direct square off between the BJP-led NDA and the SP-Congress combine.