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

Kejriwal demanded Rs 100cr from 'South Group' for Punjab elections, ED says

"ED in this case, it said to the court that Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was liable for role of his ministers"



Vatika Times
NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate produced Arvind Kejriwal before trial court for remand on Friday. This came after Kejriwal withdrew his petition filed against the arrest from the Supreme Court as it was clashing with the remand, advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi appearing for Kejriwal said. During the ongoing hearing, ED told court that the Delhi CM demanded Rs 100 crore from some accused from 'South group' for Punjab elections. ED is seeking ten day custody of Kejriwal in the case. Referring to the previous arrests made by the ED in this case, it

said to the court that Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was liable for role of his ministers. ED's arrest came hours after Delhi high court turned down Kejriwal's plea seeking protection from any coercive action by the agency, which had issued nine summonses to him to face questions arising from their investigation into the excise policy case. **Here are the key developments in Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest:** AAP won't celebrate Holi, to gherao PM's residence in protest The Aam Aadmi Party

(AAP) declared that they would abstain from celebrating Holi this year and instead organize a protest outside Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence on March 26. Gopal Rai, the party's Delhi convenor, announced that AAP members would gather to protest against Arvind Kejriwal's arrest by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Rai expressed concern over the nationwide sentiment of sorrow and anger following Kejriwal's detention, alleging that AAP MLAs and councillors were prevented from meet-

ing Kejriwal's family. Additionally, Rai outlined protest measures, including burning effigies of PM Modi across all Assembly constituencies on March 24, abstaining from organizing Holi programs on March 25, and gheraoing the PM's residence on March 26. He also mentioned plans for a joint movement against Kejriwal's arrest among the INDIA bloc constituents. Sunita Kejriwal, wife of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, condemned his arrest on Friday, accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of acting out of arrogance of power. She labeled the arrest as a betrayal to the people of Delhi, emphasizing Kejriwal's dedication to serving them, both in office and as a citizen. Referring to him as "Janardan," a protector of the people, she reiterated his commitment to the country and expressed solidarity with her husband's values.

Kriyayoga Guru Swami Shri Yogi Satyam Ji Maharaj's birthday was celebrated

Prayagraj: International Kriya Yoga Guru Swami Shri Yogi Satyam Ji Maharaj's birthday was celebrated in a spiritual way on Friday in the spiritual aura mandal of Mahavatar Baba Ji Vatriviksha. Sadhaks from not only India but also abroad were present on the occasion of the birthday. Let us tell you that as soon as the Kriya Yoga Guru arrived in the spiritual aura mandal of Mahavatar Baba Ji Vatriviksha, the sadhaks already present there welcomed their Guru with rose petals. Kriya Yoga Guru first reached and lit the lamp, after which he



explained about Kriya Yoga in detail to the sadhaks present there. During the program itself, some important moments of the life of Kriya Yoga Guru Swami Shri Yogi Satyam Ji Maharaj were shown through video projec-

tor. In the video, various video clips like Gurudev's childhood, married life, establishment of Kriyayoga Ashram and beginning of Akhand Bharat Sandesh newspaper were shown to the seekers. After this, the Kriyayoga ancient

temple already established in the Kriyayoga Ashram was also shown to the seekers while explaining every point. At the end of the program, Swami Ji asked the seekers to continuously practice Kriyayoga and do service work.

60-odd firms set up after EB scheme was rolled out gave Rs 250 crore to parties

NEW DELHI: Over 60 companies that were set up after the announcement of the electoral bond scheme in early 2017 gave close to Rs

250 crore to political parties through the bonds. Of this, more than Rs 100 crore or over 40% went to BJP, while BRS was the sec-

ond largest recipient with Rs 61 crore or about a fourth of this money. Together BJP and BRS encashed bonds worth Rs 162.2

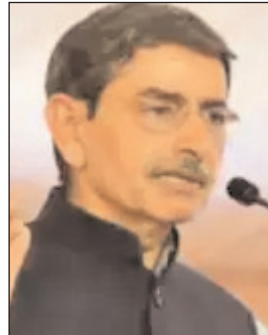
crore from these firms, which translates to over 65% of the donations they made. Congress was third in the list encashing bonds.

'Violates secularism': High Court nixes Uttar Pradesh madrasa Act

LUCKNOW: Allahabad high court on Friday struck down as "unconstitutional" the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education Act, 2004, on the ground that it violated the principles of secularism with its "scheme and purpose" of "only promoting and providing education of Islam", and allows degrees to be awarded in contravention of the UGC Act. Justices Vivek Chaudhary and Subhash Vidyarthi's order upholding petitioner Anshuman Singh Rathore's contention that the legislation was "ultra vires" — Latin for beyond the powers — directly impacts 15.75 lakh students enrolled in 13,329 recognised madrasas in UP. The division bench directed the BJP-led state govt, which has been trying to integrate science and maths into madrasa education, to accommodate students of all such institutes in regular schools affiliated with the primary, high school and intermediate education boards. "The state govt, for the said purpose, shall ensure that per requirement, sufficient number of additional seats are created and further, if required, sufficient number of new schools are established. The state govt shall also ensure that children between the ages of 6 to 14 years are not left without admission in duly recognised institutions," the order states. Board chairperson Iftikhar Ahmed Javed said it wasn't easy to accept that an Act governing madrasa education for 20 years had been suddenly declared unconstitutional. "Obviously, there has been some mistake somewhere. Our lawyers could not present their case properly before the court," he said. All India Muslim Personal Law Board member Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali suggested that the verdict be challenged in Supreme Court. Besides questioning the constitutional legality of the madrasa board,

Day after SC rap, Ravi re-inducts Ponmudy as Tamil Nadu minister

CHENNAI: A day after Supreme Court gave a 24-hour deadline to re-induct Tirukkoilur MLA K Ponmudy into council of ministers, Tamil Nadu governor RN Ravi administered the oath to him at an event at Raj Bhavan here on Friday. Tamil Nadu govt had moved SC challenging Ravi's refusal to re-induct Ponmudy even as a two-judge



bench stayed conviction and sentence of the minister on March 11. A bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud had, on Thursday,

pulled up Ravi for refusing to administer the oath. Earlier in the day, Raj Bhavan, in a press release, said Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin had recommended the re-induction of Ponmudy into the council of ministers. The Governor had approved the recommendation, the release added. Stalin said on X, "On behalf of people of

Tamil Nadu, I thank the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the custodian of the Constitution, for its timely intervention & upholding the spirit of the Constitution and saving democracy." Ponmudy said he got relief due to legal measures taken by 'thalapathy' (CM Stalin) and that he would always be his loyal follower.

Forcing Indian military personnel out, Muizzu seeks debt relief from Delhi

MALE: After his anti-India rhetoric, pro-China Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has said India will continue to remain his country's "closest ally" and urged New Delhi to provide debt relief to the archipelago nation. Maldives owed approximately \$400.9 million to India by the end of last year. Ever since he took oath as president last November, Muizzu has pursued a hardline



stand towards India and made Indian military personnel operating three aviation platforms leave the country. On Thursday, in his first interview with the local media since assuming office, Muizzu said India was

instrumental in providing aid to the Maldives and has implemented the "greatest number" of projects. India would continue to remain Maldives' closest ally, he said and emphasised that there was no question about it. Maldives' proximity to India, barely 70 nautical miles from the island of Minicoy in Lakshadweep and around 300 nautical miles from the mainland's western coast.

'Preventive detention can't be misused for law & order issue'

NEW DELHI: Terming preventive detention a draconian provision, Supreme Court has held that govt's inability to tackle the law and order situation should not be an excuse to invoke it and any capricious or routine exercise of it must be nipped in the bud. A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said preventive detention can be ordered only in case of public disorder and not for law and order problems. Differentiating between these two, the court said that the distinction between them is one of degree and extent of the reach of the act in question on society. "It is the potentiality of the act



to disturb the even tempo of life of the community which makes it prejudicial to the maintenance of the public order. If a contravention in its effect is confined only to a few individuals directly involved as distinct from a wide spectrum of public, it could raise the problem of law and order only," the bench said. The court further said that habituality of committing offence should not be the sole reason for invoking preventive detention.

"This court has time and again reiterated that in order to bring the activities of a person within the expression of 'acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order', the activities must be of such a nature that the ordinary laws cannot deal with them or prevent subversive activities affecting society. Inability on the part of the state's police machinery to tackle the law and order situation should not be an excuse to invoke

the jurisdiction of preventive detention," it said, while coming down hard on Telangana govt for taking recourse to preventive detentions without the necessary justification. The court pulled up Telangana govt for unnecessarily invoking preventive detention and warned the state not to do anything to force the court to observe further against it. It said that the Advisory Board, set up under the Act and which is to approve preventive detention, should not act as a mere rubber-stamping authority and it must play an active role in ascertaining whether the detention is justified under the law or not.

Cos with hand in mining, thermal power are major donors to JMM

RANCHI: The main donors to governing Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) are companies with mining interests and thermal power plants in the state between 2021 and 2023, the latest EC data shows. JMM had got Rs 13.5 crore in donations. through EBS between 2021 and 2023. JMM also voluntarily disclosed in its contribution report to EC in 2021 that it had received Rs 1 crore from Hindalco Ltd in FY 2019-20. However, data uploaded by EC based on EB information shared by SBI has no bond being bought by Hindalco Ltd; this could be because the bond may have been bought prior to April 12, 2019.

AIMPLB may move SC on HC madrasa order

LUCKNOW: The petitioner, whose plea against UP Board of Madrasa Education Act, 2004 was upheld by Allahabad high court on Friday, had argued that the Act fails to provide quality compulsory education up to the age of 14/Class-VIII, as mandated under Article 21-A. "Thus, it violates the fundamental rights of the students of madrasas." Meanwhile, reacting to the verdict, All India Muslim Personal Law Board member Maulana Khalid Rashid Farangi Mahali suggested that it be challenged in Supreme Court. Besides questioning the constitutional legality of the madrasa board, petitioner Anshuman Singh. Rathore objected to minority welfare department being given charge of all such institutes. UP's

madrasas used to function under the education department till 1995, when the baton changed. The Act facilitating the establishment of a madrasa board came nine years later. The govt counsel contended that the state has the authority to permit such education. "Providing religious education and instructions is not barred or illegal. For such religious education, a separate board is required, with members of such particular religion," he said. Some madrasas and their employees' organisations filed an intervention application against the petition. In addition to additional advocate general Anil Pratap Singh and amicus curiae Gaurav Mehrotra, several advocates presented their views on the subject to the bench.

PM Modi backs Brand Bhutan as India doubles assistance



NEW DELHI: With the weather Gods finally smiling upon the Paro international airport, PM Narendra Modi Friday landed in Bhutan for a 2-day state visit that saw him announcing India's decision to double assistance for the Himalayan state's 13th five-year-plan from Rs 5000 crore to Rs 10000 crore. Amid efforts by Bhutan and China to resolve their border dispute, which could have a bearing on India's own security, and Beijing's courting of Bhutan for diplomatic links, India and Bhutan expressed satisfaction with their cooperation on mutual security, agreeing in

a joint statement to continue close coordination on "issues relating to our national interests". The joint statement used the word Bharat in place of India. India and Bhutan also signed 7 MoUs and agreements, while initiating another for rail links between the two countries, as Modi held talks with his counterpart Tshering Tobgay, who received him at the Paro airport, and called on King Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck. The PM was presented with the Order of Druk Gyalpo, Bhutan's highest civilian honour that was conferred on him in 2021, by the king who said India's

future is bright with Modi at the helm. The first foreign national to receive that honour, Modi had committed to stepping up Plan support for Bhutan during Tobgay's visit to India last week. Modi strongly backed the king's initiatives like Brand Bhutan and Bhutan Believe, along with the Gelephu Mindfulness City project which, he said, will act as an inspiration for the world, like the "visionary framework" of Gross National Happiness. These initiatives are important for Bhutan to achieve its aim of becoming a high-income country by 2034.

High Court admits CBI's appeal challenging acquittal of A Raja, others in 2G case

NEW DELHI: Justice Dinesh Sharma of Delhi HC, while hearing a CBI appeal in the 2G case, "noticed some contradictions in the (special court's) judgment itself, which requires deeper examination. The court at this stage is required to have a prima facie helicopter view. There may be a possibility that such contradictions are explained by the defence during the hearing."

In its 120-page verdict, HC said on Friday that the state is the custodian of rights of every citizen of India and in economic offence cases, loss is not to a private

individual, but it trickles down to lakhs of innocent people of the country. It noted 2G scam is not an ordinary criminal offence and is a case of different nature where criminal proceedings were initiated on basis of direction of Supreme Court, which had monitored the investigation. "Question before this court is whether by refusing 'leave to appeal', such ambiguity should be buried without an opportunity to the state for giving an explanation for such. It may not be taken as giving an opportunity to CBI to plug its loopholes. The duty of this court is to ensure that justice is not denied to anyone, including the state, on mere hyper-technicalities."

HC said the trial court judge has repeatedly noted that CBI should have afforded an opportunity to the witness to explain the statement made by them.

This gives rise to the concern as to why the presiding judge did not exercise his jurisdiction under section 165 of Indian Evidence Act to seek any clarity, if there was any ambiguity or obscurity, it said.

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Patients, docs approach PM as lack of anti-TB drugs hits states

On the eve of World TB Day on March 24, TB survivors, patient groups, treating doctors and public health activists are writing to the Prime Minister flagging the widespread stock-out of anti-TB drugs that threatens to undo the gains of 'TB-Mukt Bharat'

programme. The letter to the PM points out that people currently on treatment faced the highest risk of treatment interruption and a high risk of developing resistance, which would increase risk of the disease in the community, adding to the burden of the TB programme.

Co-chair of the India TB Forum, Dr T Sundararaman and Dr Yogesh Jain, have written to Union health secretary and chairperson of India TB Forum, pointing out reports of stock-out from the ground in Rajasthan.

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BJP has 50.1 per cent share of EBs, 46.2 per cent of elected reps

NEW DELHI: To what extent do funds received through electoral bonds by parties reflect their electoral performance? In some cases, quite well in others not at all, an analysis of elections and bond data shows. Among the two biggest national parties, BJP's share of bonds (50.1%) was a little more than its share of elected representatives (46.2%), while Congress got less (11.8%) through EBs than what would correspond to its performance in the last round of Lok Sabha and



assembly polls (12.7%). The biggest differences between the two shares were for regional parties, in particular for BRS, TMC and BJD, all of which had a much larger share of bond funds than of elected lawmakers. BRS had a 0.8% share in lawmakers but an 8.5% share in

bond funds. Trinamool's 10.4% share in bonds was out of proportion to its share of 4.9% in lawmakers. Similarly, BJD got 6.2% of the total money raised through bonds with just 2.6% of lawmakers. What is this "share of lawmakers" being referred to? Since

bonds are meant not just to fund Lok Sabha polls but also assembly elections, we looked at the combined performance of each party at both levels starting with the 2019 LS polls. For this, we converted MLA seats into equivalents of MP seats. For instance, Delhi has seven Lok Sabha MPs and 70 MLAs. Thus, each MLA corresponds to a tenth of an MP. AAP's 62 MLAs in the Delhi assembly would, therefore, translate into just over six MPs. In Maharashtra, the ratio of MLAs to MPs.

Supreme Court: No green nod exemption for infrastructure projects' digging

NEW DELHI: Giving primacy to the environment over expansion of road networks and other linear projects like laying down pipelines, the Supreme Court has quashed a four-year-old central notification exempting digging or sourcing of earth for such infrastructural schemes from prior mandatory environment clearance (EC). In an elaborate 32-page judgment, Justices A S Oka and Sanjay Karol quashed a Covid-time notification, issued with the



object of speeding up road infrastructure to provide sustenance to daily wagers who had lost livelihood due to the pandemic. It said since all projects had come to a grinding halt at that time, there was no hurry for govt to dispense with an impor-

tant environment protection norm. As a result of the judgment, any digging for extracting earth and soil for laying roads, pipelines or similar activities for infrastructure projects would require publication of notice inviting objections from the

public to the digging, followed by a public hearing and a decision by the competent authority that is liable to be challenged before a jurisdictional green tribunal. Writing the judgment, Justice Oka said there was no need for dispensing with such a vital component for protection of the environment. "Article 21 guarantees a right to live in a pollution-free environment. The citizens have a fundamental duty to protect and improve the environment."

Kate Middleton, Princess of Wales, says she has cancer and is undergoing chemotherapy

NEW DELHI: Princess of Wales, Kate Middleton on Friday, made a startling announcement regarding her health, revealing that she is undergoing treatment for cancer. This development poses a significant challenge for the British royal family, particularly as King Charles is also contending with the same illness. Earlier in January, Catherine underwent abdominal surgery, initially believed to be for a noncancerous condition. However, subsequent tests revealed the presence of cancer, prompting her to commence a course of preventative chemotherapy. In a video statement released by The Prince and Princess of Wales on X (previously known as Twitter), the 42-year-old princess

disclosed that she is battling cancer. The princess emphasized that she is in the early stages of treatment. She expressed shock at the diagnosis and highlighted that she and Prince William have been navigating this difficult period privately, prioritizing their young family's well-being. Catherine's absence from royal engagements is particularly notable given her prominence as a beloved figure within the monarchy. This unfortunate turn of events has left the British monarchy grappling with the illness of two of its prominent members, placing added pressure on Prince William to provide leadership during this challenging time. With three children to care for, William has taken on additional

responsibilities, stepping back from public duties to support his wife. Despite the media blackout surrounding her health in recent months, Catherine explained that she needed time to recuperate from surgery and to address the situation with her children. She reassured the public that she is steadily recovering and is focusing on her holistic well-being. Both King Charles and Princess Catherine were diagnosed with cancer following separate medical procedures. While King Charles's cancer was discovered during treatment for an enlarged prostate, details about the specific type and severity of their illnesses remain undisclosed, leaving room.

Islamic state claims responsibility for Moscow concert hall shooting that killed 40

NEW DELHI: The Islamic State group on Saturday claimed responsibility for the attack on Crocus City Hall, in Moscow. The attack resulted in the deaths of 40 individuals and left 145 injured. According to AFP, the group in a statement on the Telegram messaging app said that IS fighters "attacked a large gathering... on the outskirts of the Russian capital Moscow." According to Russian news sources, the gunmen hurled explosives, igniting a large fire at the hall capable of housing 6,000 people. Footage from outside captured the building engulfed in flames, while a sizable plume of smoke billowed into the night sky. The street was illuminated by the flashing blue lights of numerous fire engines, ambulances,



and other emergency vehicles. Emergency services reported that approximately 100 individuals were evacuated from the basement of a Moscow concert hall following a shooting and fire outbreak on Friday. Efforts are underway to assist others seeking refuge on the roof. The spokesperson for Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that he is continuously being briefed on the assault at a concert hall near Moscow, which resulted in numerous casualties

on Friday. Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, "The President is constantly being informed by all relevant services about what is happening and the measures being taken." **International condemnation** House spokesman John Kirby said, "The images are just horrible and just hard to watch and our thoughts obviously are going to be with the victims of this terrible, terrible shooting attack." The German foreign ministry issued a state-

ment stating, "The images of the horrific attack on innocent people at Crocus City Hall near Moscow are horrific. The background must be clarified quickly. Our deepest condolences go out to the families of the victims." Mykhailo Podolyak, Ukrainian presidential adviser denied Ukraine's involvement in the attack stating, "Let's be straight about this: Ukraine had absolutely nothing to do with these events. We have a full-scale, all-out war with the Russian regular army."

Cong questions timing of arrest, claims level playing field denied

New Delhi: Questioning the timing of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest in the excise policy-linked money laundering case, Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh Lovely on Friday said it was evident that the BJP did not want a level playing field in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and was selectively targeting opposition parties. Talking to, Lovely said the Congress was standing "solidly" with Aam Aadmi Party at a time when it was facing a crisis and reaffirmed that the opposition INDIA alliance was "intact". "In which democratic country is the chief minister of a state arrested or accounts of a national party are frozen after elections have already been announced? We used to hear such things happening in Pakistan but never dreamt that it would happen in India too," Lovely said. He, however, added that he was not going into the merits of the excise policy and if there was evidence, the courts should act.

Central Delhi under siege, AAP ministers among 80 detained

New Delhi: Delhi Police on Friday detained 80 protesters, including Delhi govt ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj, in central Delhi for protesting against the arrest of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal.

According to officers, they were taken to various police stations, including Alipur, Bawana, Jafarpur Kalan and Dwarka. "All of them were released later," police said. More than 500 personnel from Delhi Police and paramilitary forces were deployed across central Delhi. A senior officer said ITO, being a bustling intersection, experienced a significant influx of traffic regularly and precautionary security measures were implemented to prevent any congestion. DDU Marg, which has AAP's headquarters, was shut down and CrPC Section 144 was enforced, making it a no-protest zone. At least 150 people were removed from AAP's protest sites in central Delhi. "We also heightened



security along the court route to avoid any disruption," the officer said. By 11.10am, a protest erupted at the ITO intersection and several AAP functionaries, including the Punjab education minister, were detained. A senior officer claimed that no force was used during the action.

At 12.10pm, AAP protesters moved to Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, disrupting vehicular traffic. People were seen de-boarding buses and autos, and walking to their destination. However, the roads at ITO were cleared by the cops by 12.40pm. They also stationed buses at ITO to detain demonstrators if there was any protest on the road. Since Friday morning, police had erected bar-

ricades near the AAP headquarters and along adjacent roads, ensuring strict control over entry and exit points to central Delhi. Security measures around the BJP headquarters were also heightened, with heavy deployment of personnel and multiple layers of barricades surrounding the adjacent roads. Similar steps were taken near Enforcement Directorate's office. Police also used drones to monitor the situation. Around 1.45pm, Kejriwal, AAP's national convener, was taken to Rouse Avenue Court. The route through which he was brought to the court was heavily guarded, with senior officers from both traffic and district police present on key stretches.

Current high interest rates make this the right time to invest in a pension product

Vatika Times Gurgaon/Faridabad:

Several market experts are of the view that interest rates in India will decline over the next few months from the current levels of approx. 7% giving customers an opportunity to now lock-in their investment in an annuity product at the current interest rate. The ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan Flexi stands out among annuity products as it helps customers build a retirement fund by making systematic investments. This ensures a sure and stable income after retirement, which is

particularly beneficial in a market like India where interest rates are predicted to decline. Additionally, a variant of this plan offers a unique feature which provides a 100% refund of all premiums paid, making it the life insurance industry's first such product. So how does investing in an annuity product now benefit customers? Pension or annuity products which are only offered by life insurance companies provide a guaranteed regular lifelong income. The rate of interest is locked-in at the time of purchase. Retirees prefer a steady

income not affected by interest rate movements, annuity or pension products are the best option, which offer regular income enabling them to be financially independent. Since the interest rate is expected to fall going forward, customers buying an annuity product will be able to lock-in their investment at the current interest rate. Let's take the example of Mr. Prajapati, who initially invested his savings of Rs. 1 crore in deposits at 8% interest, earning him Rs. 67,000 monthly, which supported a comfortable lifestyle.

1-day assembly session postponed to March 27

New Delhi: Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel cancelled a sitting of the House, which was scheduled for Friday to discuss the water and sewerage issues in the national capital. A bulletin issued by the legislative assembly secretariat stated that the next sitting of

the House will be held on March 27. The Friday's sitting was cancelled following the arrest of Delhi's chief minister Kejriwal's night by the Enforcement Directorate in the excise policy-linked money laundering case. Senior party leaders and MLAs along with other workers staged

a protest at ITO and other places in the city against the arrest and several of them had been detained. Delhi Assembly on March 15 had passed a resolution that mandated chief secretary Naresh Kumar to continue to monitor the short-and the long-term resolution of water.

Barricades, diversions make commute a nightmare as jams order of the day

New Delhi: With Delhi Police placing curbs on major roads

around ITO and India Gate, traffic in central Delhi was thrown out of gear on Friday. People faced additional difficulties because of the ITO and Lok Kalyan metro stations being shut by police. A police officer said that since Thursday evening when the Enforcement Directorate reached CM Arvind Kejriwal's residence, traffic police deployment on the roads was increased in anticipation of protests. "We are not allowing any gatherings on the road. The deployment will remain the same, depending on each day's situation," the officer said. Motorists in central Delhi were stuck in traffic jams around Mathura Road. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, which has both the BJP and Aam Aadmi Party headquarters, was barricaded off, causing congestion on Ring Road, Vikas Marg and the Delhi Gate-New Delhi Railway Station stretch. Also affected were Mandi House, Kamla Market Road, Minto Road, Connaught Place and Barakhamba Road. The closure of roads meant that people going from Delhi Gate to ITO had to take a long diversion via Nizamuddin and Bhairon Marg to ITO. Delhi Metro Rail Corporation announced via social media that ITO metro station was closed at 8.21am.



PIL in high court seeks removal of Kejriwal from post of CM

New Delhi: A day after his arrest, a public interest litigation was filed in Delhi High Court on Friday seeking Arvind Kejriwal's immediate removal from the post of chief minister. However, it remains unclear when the plea will be heard as it has some defects and can be listed for hearing only once these are cured. Petitioner Surjit Singh Yadav has argued that following his arrest by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in an excise policy-linked money laundering case, the AAP national convener should not con-



tinue as CM. He has demanded that Centre, Delhi govt and the principal secretary to lieutenant governor be asked to explain under what authority Kejriwal is still holding the post of CM. The plea has argued that if CM is allowed to work from prison, any material, irrespective

of its confidential nature, would have to be scanned thoroughly by the prison authorities before it reaches him and such an act would amount to direct breach of oath of secrecy administered to CM under the Constitution. We also published the following articles recently Delhi chief

minister Arvind Kejriwal arrested by ED in excise policy-linked money laundering case Delhi CM Kejriwal arrested by ED in money laundering case. AAP leaders confirm. Kejriwal to govern from jail. Party files urgent case in Supreme Court. Security heightened. BJP accused of conspiracy. Delhi HC PIL seeks Arvind Kejriwal's removal as CM due to a money laundering case. Atishi mentions his intent to govern from jail. Concerns raised over governance in NCT of Delhi amidst legal issues.

Health check-up likely at ED office

New Delhi: Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal is likely to be checked for his health at the ED office only. Sources from Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) hospital, which is designated for medical check-up of those in custody of the investigating agency, said Kejriwal may not be brought to the hospital for security reasons, but a team of specialist doctors will continue monitoring his health at the ED office after being granted remand. Kejriwal, 55, has diabetes. Sources said arrangements will be made to monitor his



blood sugar levels and to provide him necessary medications. We also published the following articles recently Atishi raised concerns about Arvind Kejriwal's safety in ED custody. She

accused BJP of a political conspiracy against opposition leaders and called for a nationwide protest, fortifying the AAP headquarters with police and paramilitary personnel. Delhi Traffic Police issued a pre-protest traffic

advisory for AAP's demonstration over Kejriwal's ED arrest, warning of heavy traffic in central Delhi. ITO Metro station closed, security measures intensified at BJP headquarters and ED office. ED arrests Delhi CM Kejriwal: Who said what Enforcement Directorate arrests Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy case. Kejriwal to govern from jail. Criticism from various leaders. AAP plans Supreme Court case. Trend of opposition arrests highlighted.

Security & curbs key issues; special jail another option

New Delhi: While CM Arvind Kejriwal will be subjected to restrictions while in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate, working as CM could ease for him if he is sent to Tihar Jail in judicial remand provided the court allows him certain privileges. While the rulebook doesn't say anything specific about a CM discharging duty from jail, sources in different establishments said it was entirely up to the court and the lieutenant governor to make this possible. Prison officials recalled the case of Subroto Roy, chief of Sahara group, who was allowed by the Supreme Court to run a full-fledged office from jail via a "special facility", including an internet connection, video conferencing and visitors between 10am and 4pm under police supervision. These allowed Roy to negoti-



ate sales and raise Rs 10,000 crore, but they cost him Rs 31 lakh for two months. Kejriwal might not need an elaborate setup as he does not hold a ministerial portfolio, opined an official. However, without a court order, things will not be so easy. As former law officer in Tihar Jail Sunil Gupta pointed out, "The jail manual states that you can meet your family, friends or associates only twice a week. It will not be easy for Kejriwal to govern under such restrictions." Officials, however, said there wasn't much clarity on the matter because of lack of precedents, with

Kejriwal being the first serving CM to be arrested. In Jharkhand, Hemant Soren resigned as CM before being arrested in January in a money laundering case. Besides the problem of continuation of office, security will be another issue, sources flagged. The Union home ministry has provided Kejriwal with Z Plus security cover by Delhi Police. This includes pilots, escorts, close protection team, house guards, spotters, 47 plainclothes security personnel and search/frisking staff and 16 uniformed police personnel of CRPF besides 4-6 commandos.

AAP worried about CM Arvind Kejriwal's security in ED custody: Delhi minister Atishi

NEW DELHI: Delhi's cabinet minister Atishi expressed concern on Friday about the safety of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal as he remains in ED custody under Z+ security. Kejriwal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday in relation to a money laundering case linked to the excise policy. Atishi said that this is the first instance in India's democratic history where a national party leader has been detained before the Lok Sabha elections. ED has not been able to produce a single evidence. This shows how fearful the BJP is of Arvind Kejriwal," she charged. "They know that only one leader can chal-



lenge them which is why they are making every attempt to trample Arvind Kejriwal and AAP," the minister added. She stressed that "Arvind Kejriwal is an ideology, an inspiration". "He left his Income Tax job to take to the streets to save democracy. You have arrested him to stop him from campaigning in the Lok Sabha polls. Many Kejriwals will emerge

to save the democracy," she said. She raised concerns about Kejriwal's safety in ED custody, questioning the responsibility for his security and criticizing the alleged political conspiracy by the BJP against opposition leaders. "Being the Chief Minister of Delhi, Kejriwal is given Z+ security. Now he is in ED custody. Who will be responsible for

Kejriwal's safety? Who is entering his lock-up in the ED office? The Centre has to answer about his security arrangements there," she said. She accused the BJP of hatching a "political conspiracy" against Kejriwal and the opposition leaders. "If leaders facing corruption allegations join BJP, their cases are not investigated. Hemant Soren is arrested and Congress bank accounts are frozen. This is an attempt to affect elections," the minister said. "Whatever conspiracy you are hatching against opposition and AAP, the people of Delhi, Punjab and this country will give you a befitting reply," she added.

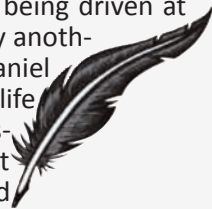
Not reporting ITR on Rs 2 crore income gets a Delhi woman 6 months in jail

Delhi: A Delhi court sentenced a lady to six months in prison for not filing a Rs 2 crore income return. The Income Tax Office (ITO) filed a complaint alleging that TDS (tax deducted at source) of Rs. Two lakh was deducted against the receipt of Rs 2 crore made to the accused, Savitri, during the financial year 2013-14, but the assessee/accused did not file a return of income for 2014-15. In the March 4 ruling, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Mayank Mittal sentenced the convict to six months of simple jail with a Rs 5,000 fine and one month of simple imprisonment in default. Savitri's counsel said she is an ignorant widow with no caregiver. She received 30 days' bail to appeal the order after the court considered her application. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) found that 89 percent of individuals and 88 percent of enterprises believe.

Editorial

Why young Indian students are being targeted in America

Why are so many young Indian students in their early twenties dying in the US? The tally is nine so far in the three months of 2024 alone. Is it an outbreak of racism extended to the brown Indian student? Are they quite thoroughly unwelcome in America? If so, why do their Indian parents send them there in droves and at enormous expense? The expatriate Indian student community is the largest in the US and bigger than that of the Chinese. Generally, it is the American, Caribbean and African people who are subjected to murderous racist attacks. The Black Lives Matter movement is a testament to the fact that rampant racism involving some institutions and police departments persists in America. To prevent violent attacks against Indian students and other Indians, the current Biden administration has provided security, both on and off campus, and in the community at large. But do some Indian students put themselves in harm's way by flouting cautionary advisories on dangerous areas? Four Indian students have been killed in two weeks according to a news report dated 2 February 2024. They were 19-year-old Shreyas Reddy Benigher from the Linder School of Business, Ohio, Neil Acharya of Purdue University, Vivek Saini from Panchkula in Haryana. The latest is Sameer Kamath, an Indian-American pursuing his doctorate in mechanical engineering at Purdue University again. In addition, Akul Dhawan was found dead of hypothermia outside the University of Illinois UIUC in Champaign. G Dinesh of Telangana and Nikesh of Andhra Pradesh were found gassed to death in their flat in Connecticut. Kuchipudi and Bharat Natyam dancer Amarnath Ghosh, age 34, was shot to death in St Louis Missouri. Paruchuri Abhijit of Boston University was found dead in his car, making up the ninth death so far in 2024. There is at least one death of an Indian every day across the US, says an American community leader Mohan Nannapaneni, founder of volunteer-based non-profit organisation TEAM Aid. These are mostly students and H-1B employees who have recently come to America. Are some Indian students lonely and feeling alienated far from home? Do some of them, unable to fit in socially or cope academically, persist in their studies there due to societal and parental pressures emanating from back in India? Though more often than not, Indian students who go to American universities are exceptionally bright and are there on earned scholarships. But are they mature and experienced enough in the Western cultural mores and milieu to avoid bullying and ridicule? Sometimes, there are underlying mental health issues even amongst gifted students which are activated by the pressures of academics and fitting in. Some die of physical illness and natural causes. Perhaps the lack of seeking timely medical attention in an alien medical system is to blame. Again, this is a phenomenon that affects foreign students even here in India, because many tend to neglect themselves in the absence of relatives to keep an eye on them. In January 2024, a young girl graduate student Jaahnvi Kandula was run over by a speeding policeman Officer Kevin Dave in a police car at a street intersection crosswalk in Seattle. To compound matters, the manslaughter caused by the police car being driven at 119 kmph was laughed off by another Seattle Police Officer Daniel Auderer, who said Kandula's life had 'limited value'. He dismissed the proposition that officer Dave was at fault and that a criminal investigation was necessary.



ISRO's Pushpak Viman is India's first Reusable Launch Vehicle. Image courtesy ISRO India's Re-usable Launch Vehicle (RLV) Pushpak Viman made another experimental flight (RLV LEX 02) this morning from Chalakere Runway. The car-sized winged rocket sometimes dubbed the "swadeshi space shuttle" is India's bold attempt to enter the reusable rocket segment. The current flight test is the third of its autonomous landing ability in more complicated circumstances. "The Pushpak launch vehicle is India's bold attempt to make access to space most affordable," said S Somanath, chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). **Pushpak Viman RLV** The "Pushpak Viman" is India's legendary spaceship named in the Ramayana, known to be the vehicle of the Lord of Wealth, God Kubera. Therefore, it is decided to name India's most audacious 21st-century spacecraft Pushpak. The 6.5-metre aeroplane-like spacecraft weighs 1.75 tonnes. The most expensive part, the upper stage, houses all the important electronics and is made reusable by bringing it back safely back to Earth. For the flight test, the craft was hoisted aboard an Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopter. During the descent or glide phase, small thrusters help the vehicle navigate to the exact spot where it is sup-



posed to land. India thought of building its version of the space shuttle nearly 15 years ago. Ten years ago, a dedicated team of engineers and scientists plunged into making RLV a reality. The RLV flew first time from Sriharikota in 2016 and successfully landed on a virtual runway in the Bay of Bengal. The RLV then sank into the sea as per plan and was not recovered. A second test was in April 2023, at the Chitradurga Aeronautical Test Range (ATR). Called the RLV-LEX-01, the winged rocket was taken up under-slung to an altitude by an IAF Chinook helicopter and then released. It thereafter glided and landed autonomously. The test was fully successful. ISRO's objective is to fly a vehicle that is more cost-effective and provides very low-cost access to space. The long-term operational goals

would include positioning satellites in space and supporting their repair and refuelling in orbit. It would be used to retrieve satellites from orbit for refurbishment. It would also be used to reduce space debris. It is expected that in times to come, it could be a money spinner for India when it becomes a commercially available launcher.

India's Aeronautical Test Range

The Aeronautical Test Range (ATR), is an outdoor testing and evaluation facility set up by DRDO exclusively for unmanned and manned aircraft. The ATR is managed by DRDO's Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE). It is located at Varavoo Kaval in Challakere Taluk of Chitradurga district on a 4,290-acre plot. The work on the range began in 2008. The range has a Range Control

Centre (RCC) with an air traffic display system. It is equipped with a mission video distribution and display system. It has a radar centre which houses primary and secondary surveillance radars. It has two hangars which house the unmanned aerial vehicles Rustom-1 and Rustom-2. The runway is currently 2.2 km long and will be expanded to 3 km soon. In addition to unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), the range will be used to test air-to-ground weapons, parachutes and aerostats. The facility was formally inaugurated by the then-Union defence and finance Minister Arun Jaitley on 28 May, 2017. The very closely watched American Space Shuttle programme, a partially reusable low Earth orbital spacecraft system, was operated from 1981 to 2011 by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Initially thought of in 1969, it was officially called the Space Transportation System (STS). The first orbiter, Enterprise, was built in 1976 and used in approach and landing tests but had no orbital capability. The kind of stage India is currently with Pushpak Viman. It began with four orbital test flights in 1981. The first operational flight was in 1982. Five complete Space Shuttle orbiter vehicles were built and flown on a total of 135 missions from 1981 to 2011. They

launched from the Kennedy Space Center (KSC) in Florida. Operational missions launched numerous satellites, interplanetary probes, and the Hubble space telescope, conducted science experiments in orbit, participated in the Shuttle-Mir programme with Russia and participated in the construction and servicing of the International Space Station (ISS). The Space Shuttle fleet's total mission time was 1,323 days. The space shuttle comprised of an Orbiter Vehicle with three clustered main engines; a pair of recoverable solid rocket boosters; and the expendable external tank containing liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen. It was launched vertically, like a conventional rocket. The rocket boosters were jettisoned before the vehicle reached orbit, while the main engines continued to operate, and the external tank was jettisoned after the main engine cutoff and just before orbit insertion. Thereafter, the orbiter's two Orbital Maneuvering System (OMS) engines were used. At the end of the mission, the OMS supported deorbit and reentry into the atmosphere. During the reentry, the orbiter was protected by its thermal protection tiles. It then glided as a spaceplane to a runway landing, usually to the Shuttle landing facility at KSC, Florida, or to Rogers Dry Lake in Edwards Air Force Base, California.

Putin's fifth term will consolidate Russia's position

In the recently held presidential elections in the Russian Federation, two things were foregone conclusions. President Putin will win his fifth election with a wide margin, and the West will junk these elections as undemocratic, corrupt, and stolen. No doubt, dissent and divergence in democracy are natural and a must. This was evident in the large-scale voter turnout both in Russia and among Russians abroad. Occasional protests were witnessed that were germane due to the death of long-time dissident leader Navalny in an Arctic jail, the arrest of some opposition leaders, and the disqualification of others. But the Russians are at war, which might be the key to understanding. Some might oppose

it, as is natural, and would want a change in the leadership. But when the question of Russian nationalism and patriotism confronts them, they want a leader who can withstand the external pressures and win it for them. Russian history attests to that. The Russians have an uncanny ability to handle pain and adversity. This also explains Putin's wide margins of victory, apart from the fact that this has been a trend all along with weak, not so popular, and credible opposition candidates or parties. The there-is-no-alternative (TINA) factor also operates in such a scenario. Regime change agendas of the West and continuous tirades against their strongest opponent add to his appeal. Ironically, the West is equally

responsible for Putin's victory. Well, Russia says it has its own democratic governance model. Apart from the Russian pride and Putin redeeming their pride back after the greatest humiliation in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war is being perceived, at a popular level, as the war by the West against Russia as the Grey Zone warfare and one-sided narratives predominate their respective global spaces. The unprecedented Western sanctions may have definitely impacted the Russian economy and policy. But the Russian 'war economy', which has performed as well, if not better, than their Western partners, growing at over 3 per cent, has gone in Putin's favour.

From Kashmir to CAA: Time for US to shut up and introspect

In a prime-time speech to the nation, he asked Americans to support a military strike against Syria after the Bashar al-Assad regime gassed more than 1,000 people to death in the Ghouta countryside in the ongoing civil war. However, conflating Assad's use of Sarin with United States national security, Obama said, "Our ideals and principles ... I determined that it is in the national security interests of the United States to respond to the Assad regime's use of chemical weapons through a targeted military strike." Since 1776, the US has intervened militarily 393 times in other nations, according to the Centre for Strategic Studies' Military Intervention Project, with 114 in the post-Cold War era. Several such strikes were ordered in the name of restoring democracy, American "ideals and principles" and so on, particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The interventionist policy is not restricted to military action. The US often comments on internal matters of other nations, especially in Asia, that have no relation to its external or internal security. Last week's US comments on "the notification of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019" and close "monitoring" of its implementation is the latest example of American interference. "We are concerned about the notification of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act on



March 11. We are closely monitoring this Act and how it will be implemented," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters. India hit back immediately. The US State Department's statement "is misplaced, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told the media. Similarly, external affairs minister S Jaishankar criticised the US comment. In reply to US ambassador Eric Garcetti's statement that America can't give up on religious freedom and equality, Jaishankar mentioned the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, Lautenberg Amendment and Spector Amendment, which fast-tracked citizenships for specific minorities. "If you are saying you are picking some faiths, not others, I will give you many examples from across the world." Even the European Parliament tried to poke its nose into CAA by introducing a resolution on 28 January, 2020, terming it "discriminatory". US President Joe Biden's predecessor, Donald Trump, for all his flaws, refused to be dragged into CAA row. During his February 2020 visit, he

said, "I don't want to discuss that [CAA]. I want to leave that to India. That is really up to India." Irrespective of the CAA's merits and demerits, the West, especially the US, isn't a stakeholder and has no right to comment. Neither the CAA's implementation will affect Europe's or America's external or internal security nor Muslims staying there.

Time for US to shut up

US interference in India's internal matters in the name of democracy, secularism, religious freedom and human rights in all these decades smacks of hypocrisy. India has its problems, and unless it asks for help solving them, Washington should mind its own business. If the US is the world's largest democracy, India is the biggest. In the last 10 years, India's global image has been boosted by its strong economy, independent and assertive foreign policy and signs of an emerging world power. India doesn't need American guidance or morality lectures on internal and external matters. New Delhi is capable of solving its problems, and the US should stay out of it.

India's Bhutan policy: Balancing regional allies in the Dragon's shadow

Time has proven its relationship with India. However, recent times have witnessed changing dynamics in the Himalayan kingdom's polity. The dissonance in Bhutan can also be attributed to a considerable extent to India's big brotherly attitude. However, corrective and course-correction measures that are being undertaken by India to implement its Neighbourhood First policy are laudable. Bangladesh has been creditably "reclaimed" after Sheikh Hasina's victory and efforts are on to win advantageous space in Myanmar, Sri Lanka and



Maldives. The planned visit to Bhutan on 21-22 March by the Indian prime minister however had to be postponed due to inclement weather conditions over Paro airport. Notwithstanding the sudden intervention by nature, the visit which was otherwise planned

amid an electioneering time, showcases the importance that New Delhi is imparting to an important friend and neighbour. "Due to ongoing inclement weather conditions over Paro airport, it has been mutually decided to postpone the State visit of Prime Minister

to Bhutan on 21-22 March 2024. New dates are being worked out by the two sides through diplomatic channels," a statement from the MEA read. The importance of Bhutan for India can be immediately gauged from the manner in which China is seeking to woo its southern neighbour away from the ambit of Indian influence. A part agreement had been signed between China and Bhutan by which a four-step understanding was undertaken. However robust analyses state that Thimphu has consulted New Delhi before doing business with Beijing.

No-Detention Policy Scrapped For V, VIII

New Delhi: Directorate of Education (DoE) has removed the 'no-detention policy' for classes V and VIII from the academic session 2024-25.

According to the new rule under the 2022 promotion policy, the students of classes V and VIII must score 25% marks in the mid-term exams and 33% in the annual exams to get promoted to the next class. The students who fail to pass can take a re-exam. Those who can't secure 25% marks in the re-exam, too, will be held back in the same class, the guidelines stated. After Parliament abolished the no-detention policy through an amendment to the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 in Jan 2019, Delhi govt implemented its 2022 promotion policy last year. On Friday, DoE instructed all heads of govt, govt-aided and unaided recognised private schools in the city to follow the new norms.



The students of all other classes will still come under the 'no-detention policy'. "The purpose of the policy has failed, hence its withdrawal was necessary. Teachers were expected to conduct comprehensive assessments, but there was a failure on the part of both govt and teachers," Ashok Agarwal, advocate and RTE activist, told TOI. "This failure contributed to dropouts, leading to child labour," he claimed. Sudha Acharya, principal of ITL Public School, however, said, "Students were not truly focused on education as they believed

they would be promoted to the next class regardless of their performance. This led to complacency among parents, students and even teachers, reducing accountability." She added, "It is not true that the removal of the no-detention policy will increase dropouts. Instead, now that students of classes V and VIII must score at least 33% marks to be promoted, they will feel incentivised to strive towards excellence." Acharya also underlined the importance of support classes and vigilance for low-achieving students, along with improve.

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

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

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

under-river stretch for the second time. All on a single ticket," the official said.

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

Temperature starts moving up, air quality still moderate

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

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

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

CAPSULES

Man gets RI for sexually harassing minor online

New Delhi: A court here has sentenced a 34-year-old man to five years of rigorous imprisonment for sexually harassing and criminally intimidating a minor on a social networking site.

The court said it is the responsibility of society to protect children from exploitation by cyberstalkers or cyberbullies, observing that the psychological scars of childhood sexual abuse deeply impact the lives of innocent children. Additional Sessions Judge Susheel Bala Dagar was hearing a case against convict Akhilesh Kumar who was booked under provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Noting the submissions of public prosecutor Yogita Kaushik Dahiya, the court said it was proved that Kumar chatted with the minor after creating a fake identity, made sexually coloured remarks, and contacted or followed her online despite the girl's clear disinterest.

CP Radhakrishnan appointed as governor of Telangana

HYDERABAD: Jharkhand governor CP Radhakrishnan got the additional charge of Telangana, replacing the Tamilisai Sounderajan. The orders were issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday. Radhakrishnan's appointment marks the third instance of Telangana having a governor from Tamil Nadu.

The first governor, Narasimhan, and the second governor, Tamilisai Sounderajan, were also from Tamil Nadu. Radhakrishnan, a two-time member of parliament from Coimbatore as a BJP candidate, assumed the governorship of Jharkhand in 2023.

Poor frequency leads to fewer takers for Ruby & Majerhat lines

Kolkata: The 5.4km new Metro corridor in the Ruby-New Garia and 8 km Joka-Majerhat stretches had less number of commuters during peak hours on Monday as compared to the East-West Metro thrown open to the public last Friday.

One of the key reasons is frequency. While the Ruby-New Garia stretch ran at a 20-minute frequency with two rakes being in operation, Joka-Majerhat had an even worse frequency of 50-minute intervals with one of the two rakes still being non-operational. "Unless the frequency improves, I cannot rely on the Metro. If I buy a ticket and reach the platform, I may need to wait 50 minutes. I can reach my destination in that period," said Arup Sandhukhan who commutes



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

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

Govt collecting reports to develop illegal colonies

New Delhi: Delhi govt has started working on making an elaborate plan to develop unauthorised colonies in the city. It has sought reports from different departments on four parameters—status of solid waste management, condition of roads, nature of borewells and condition of sewer.

Govt has started collecting data from different agencies concerned, including Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Public Works Department, on all these parameters. After the data collection is done, a fresh push on redevelopment will be given.

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

NEW DELHI: Delhi govt has decided to extend the current excise policy for one more year. The excise duty-based policy regime, which transferred the retail liquor business from private entities to govt-run corporations, was implemented in Sep 2022 and was extended twice after that, in Apr 2023 and again in Oct 2023.

A senior Delhi govt official said there was no immediate need to make any changes in the excise policy at this stage when several provisions of the Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22 were under the scanner of investigating agencies. Implemented in Nov 2022, the Excise Policy of 2021-22 was touted as a progressive one but it had to be scrapped after Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered a case against alleged irregularities in its formulation and imple-



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

JNU teachers condemn 'disruption' of lectures

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



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

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

Job fraud haunts OPT students in the US

Amid the global recession, consultancies are cheating Indian students — those on F1 visa in the United States — of their hard-earned money, in the name of jobs. According to some, students who are on Optional Practical Training (OPT) or Curricular Practical Training (CPT) are being made to cough up \$500 to \$700, or even more, under the pretext of getting a job. However, there's no trace of any employment once the fee is paid. Gaming Students on F1 visa have two options — CPT and OPT, to gain practical training. Social networking platforms are flooded with such posts, warning students against this scam. "I lost USD 600 to one such company. They promised to provide training and refund the money once I get placed," said an MS student adding that the company did not do anything except forwarding his profile to a few consultancies. "When I asked for a refund, they stopped responding to my messages and calls," added the student. Another computer science student, who is on OPT, said: "I paid \$600 as I was assured of training and placement within two months. But neither was I trained, nor did I get



placed. I lost my money." Some, however, got lucky — thanks to these online posts. "I had recently submitted my profile and recently I got an email to deposit \$700. But, I chose not to pay the money," the student said, adding how it was because he'd seen posts about it. Reiterating the warning, many students said that it is best to avoid a firm if it asks for a deposit and guarantees a job within a certain period. "As an international student, we are often filled with fear, anxiety, and a sense of urgency leading us to take steps that could cost big bucks. I've been targeted by companies/career coaches/advisors claiming to guarantee a job in 60 days. To me if you are guaranteeing you are bogus," said a student from New York. Another student added, "Some websites target international students by advertising non-existent job opportunities.

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

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



MCM celebrates International Happiness Day with culmination of 2-day International Conference on Happiness

Chandigarh : Mehr Chand Mahajan DAV College for Women, Chandigarh, marked the celebration of International Happiness Day in a befitting manner with the culmination of 'The Soul in Symphony: Journey of Happiness through Self Actualization and Self Realization'- a two-day multidisciplinary international



conference. The valedictory of this enriching conference was graced by accomplished writer and poet Dr. Surjit Patar, Padma Shree Awardee, Dr. Jaspal Singh, Principal (Retd.), Dr. Sarabjit Sohal, Chairperson, Punjab Sahitya Academy, Dr. Gurdip Sharma, General Secretary, SD Pratinidhi Sabha, Dr. Vinod Sharma and Sh. Prem Vij. In his address interspersed with his poetic creations and verses from Gurbani, Dr. Patar impressed upon the therapeutic power of

poetry and showed how poetry teaches the way of living life. Terming true poetry as a sure shot way to self-realization, he asserted that the silences within a human come out as metaphors in the form of poetry, and poetry that is 'satyam', 'shivam', 'sundaram' brings true happiness. His soulful rendition of his poetry exemplified how creativity is a highly potent way to happiness. Categorizing happiness into two types, namely worldly happiness and spiritual happiness, Dr. Jaspal highlighted the fleeting nature of happiness and said

that complete surrender to the divine ensures happiness. Quoting extensively from Gurbani, Dr. Jaspal pointed out the similarities between the scientific and spiritual perspectives of soul as he talked about Darwin's Theory of Evolution and the Big Bang Theory, and how Gurbani makes a mention of these two. He concluded on the note that eternal happiness can be attained through God's name. Dr. Sohal said that self-realization occurs when we become conscious of our thoughts as these shape us into what we are.

Vi Introduces eSIM for its Prepaid Customers in New Delhi

GURUGRAM : Vi, a leading telecom provider, today announced the launch of eSIM services for its prepaid customers in New Delhi. This marks a significant step forward in providing seamless, faster, and eco-friendly connectivity for millions of Indians. eSIM on a compatible smartphone or smartwatch device will enable greater convenience and flexibility for Vi prepaid customers. eSIM supports multiple profiles on a single device, so one can conveniently use a second sim card without removing primary sim. Most importantly,



eSIMs are a step towards sustainability and, overall, leads to faster connectivity and seamless adoption of new technologies. With this launch all Vi customers, both post-paid and prepaid, can now enjoy the eSIM feature on their handsets. Praveg Gupta-Cluster Business Head-Delhi and Rajasthan, Vodafone Idea Limited,

said "At Vi, we believe in introducing services and offerings that bring convenience and value for our customers. Embracing eSIM technology not only reflects our ongoing efforts to meet the evolving needs of our customers but also leverages advanced technologies towards a sustainable future."

Dissent within Mahayuti over likelihood of ticket for Mandlik

Kolhapur: The likelihood of Kolhapur sitting MP Sanjay Mandlik's candidature has caused dissenting voices to emerge within the Mahayuti parties. This time, the local BJP functionaries are opposing Mandlik, who is expected to contest on a Shiv Sena ticket once

again. Sangram Kupekar from Gadhinglaj tehsil, who is a member of BJP state executive council, told his supporters to request local BJP leaders to call deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis, and urge him not to give the ticket to Mandlik again.

Kupekar was with the Shiv Sena (UBT) before joining BJP last year. Speaking to his supporters Kupekar said, "All the local politicians should dial our state leaders. Request them not to let the sitting MP get a ticket once again."

Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Hosts An Evening of Love Walk for Humanity

New Delhi: The Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia hosted a heartwarming "Love Walk for Humanity" on the eve of Valentine's Day, February 14, 2024 curated and presented by Dr Sanjanaa Jon. The Love Walk for Humanity aimed to transcend the traditional celebration of Valentine's Day by fostering love and compassion for humanity. In a world grappling with conflicts, attacks, and hatred, the event aimed to build a collec-



tive love for humanity, extending beyond personal relationships to include care for the environment, animals, and all aspects of life. Distinguished guests in attendance included Raghav

Chandra, Managing Director, Audi Delhi South, H.E Demeke Atnafu Ambassador, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to India, H.E Fleming Raul Duarte

R a m o s Ambassador of Paraguay, H.E Jason Hall, Ambassador of Jamaica to India Ambassador of Venezuela Mrs Capaya Rodriguez Gonzalez, H.E KL Ganju, Honorary Consul of Comoros, Dimitrius, Greek Embassy, Hissain Omar Saiddon Deputy Chad Embassy, Gokul Ji, Nepal Embassy, Dr. Sanjanaa Jon, Social Activist, Fashion Entertainer, Philanthropist, Filmmaker, Philanthropist, Animal Lover.

Tata AIA Life launches Tata AIA Rising India Fund

KARNAL / HISAR: Tata AIA Life Insurance (Tata AIA), one of India's leading life insurers, has launched the Tata AIA Rising India Fund, a Fund that opens a unique avenue for consumers to participate in India's growth story. The New Fund Offering (NFO) will remain open until March 31, 2024, with units being offered at an NAV of Rs. 10 per unit during the NFO period. The Rising India Fund will invest in key sectors and companies, that are driving the Atmanirbhar Bharat



We will continue to strive towards generating the alpha in our fund performance

story. These include infrastructure, manufacturing, banking, digital, defense, etc. The fund will invest in companies across market caps and would be sector agnostic, enabling the fund manager to harness diverse opportunities driving India's growth engine. On the

NFO launch, Harshad Patil, Executive Vice President, and Chief Investment Officer (CIO) of Tata AIA, said, "In the recent years, India has displayed its global influence by becoming the fastest growing major economy. Through this new fund, we would like to offer our consumers

an avenue to participate in and benefit from this incredible journey. Our consumers have always benefited from the long-term growth potential of the Indian equity market by investing in the ULIP funds that Tata AIA offers.

We will continue to strive towards generating the alpha in our fund performance. With a robust driven research process and a bottom-up stock selection approach, we are committed to providing lasting value and returns to our policyholders.

Current high interest rates make this the right time to invest in a pension product

Sonapat/Panipat: Several market experts are of the view that interest rates in India will decline over the next few months from the current levels of approx. 7% giving customers an opportunity to now lock-in their investment in an annuity product at the current interest rate. The ICICI Pru Guaranteed Pension Plan Flexi stands out among annuity products as it helps customers build a retirement fund by making systematic investments. This ensures a sure and stable income after retirement, which is particularly beneficial in a market like India where interest rates are predicted to decline. Additionally, a variant of this plan offers a unique feature which provides a 100%

refund of all premiums paid, making it the life insurance industry's first such product. So how does investing in an annuity product now benefit customers? Pension or annuity products which are only offered by life insurance companies provide a guaranteed regular lifelong income. The rate of interest is locked-in at the time of purchase. Retirees prefer a steady income not affected by interest rate movements, annuity or pension products are the best option, which offer regular income enabling them to be financially independent. Since the interest rate is expected to fall going forward, customers buying an annuity product will be able to lock-in their

investment at the current interest rate. Let's take the example of Mr. Prajapati, who initially invested his savings of Rs. 1 crore in deposits at 8% interest, earning him Rs. 67,000 monthly, which supported a comfortable lifestyle. However, when he tried to renew his deposits after a few years the interest rate dropped to 6%, his monthly income reduced to Rs. 50,000, affecting his standard of living. Let's see what would have happened if Mr. Prajapati had invested his money in an annuity product. Assuming the interest rate of 7%, he will receive approx. Rs. 58,000 per month for the rest of his life. This will remain constant irrespective of the any movement in interest rates.

Congress leader Pradeep speaks on freezing of Congress accounts and arrest of Kejriwal

Kaithal: Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee Executive Member and former Chief Minister of Haryana Ch. Pradeep Kumar Chaudhary, a special supporter of Bhupendra Singh Hooda, reacted strongly to the freezing of Congress accounts by the BJP government, terming it completely illegal and undemocratic. Pradeep Kumar was meeting youth and dignitaries while promoting Congress policies in the area. While talking at the extension grain market located in the town, Congress state executive member Pradeep Kumar said that the code of conduct is in place in the entire country, but right in the midst of elections, such action against the country's largest opposition party



Congress shows political malice. Pradeep Chaudhary said that fair elections are necessary for a healthy democracy. For fair elections, every party should get a level playing field. It is necessary for all parties to get equal opportunities during elections. But the ruling BJP is continuously targeting the opposition with the intention of establishing a monopoly on the

country's politics. He alleged that hasty action is being taken against opposition leaders by independent investigative agencies. Opposition leaders are being sent to jail without proving their guilt. The action taken against Arvind Kejriwal, leader of India Alliance ally Aam Aadmi Party, appears to be part of this series. Congress leader Pradeep Kumar

said that all people should raise their voice unitedly against the opaqueness in the transaction of election donations, freezing of Congress accounts and targeting of opposition leaders, because democratic systems are being tampered with and constitutional institutions are being violated. Loss of credibility is harmful for the democracy of the country.

Courts cannot direct states to implement particular schemes: SC

NEW DELHI: The scope of judicial review in examining policy matters of the government is very limited and the courts cannot direct the States to implement a particular policy or scheme on the grounds that a "better, fairer or wiser" option is available, the Supreme Court has said. The observation came while disposing of a PIL seeking formulation of a scheme on setting up of community kitchens to combat hunger and malnutrition. The top court refused to pass any direction in the matter observing that the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other welfare schemes are being implemented by the Centre and states. A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal said legality of the policy, and not the wisdom,

CM and BJP State President will participate in MP Sports Competition on 24th in Kaithal: Saurabh Chaudhary

Kaithal: BJP Business Cell Haryana co-coordinator Saurabh Chaudhary Goyal said that CM Naib Singh Saini will participate in the MP sports event. Regarding which there is huge enthusiasm among BJP officials, workers and general public. While talking to BJP state president Nayab Singh Saini in a meeting here after a formal meeting at the Chandigarh office last day, Saurabh Chaudhary Goyal said that BJP state president and MP Nayab Singh Saini had organized the MP sports competition at the block level on January 12 in Lok Sabha, Kurukshetra. Was started. In which all the block level teams coming to Kurukshetra Lok Sabha will play and the block level team will come out victorious. He said that this commendable initiative of the MP in the field of sports will prove to be a boon for the players and



through such events, the hidden talent within the players will be exposed and along with getting inspiration to move forward, mutual brotherhood will also increase. BJP leader Saurabh Chaudhary said that the sports policy of the Manohar government of the state is proving to be a milestone for the players and today the players, on the basis of their talent, are making the country and the state proud by winning medals in sports with high standards. Is. On winning medals, players are also being honored by Manohar Government by giving them cash prize money. Co-coor-

dinator Saurabh Chaudhary Goyal said that Kabaddi teams will also play in the MP sports event. Its final will be held at Police Line ground in Kaithal. In which Chief Minister Manohar Lal and BJP State President Naib Singh Saini will participate and the Chief Minister and the State President will honor the teams coming first and second by giving them tractors as prizes on 24th February. BJP Business Cell Co-Coordinator Saurabh Chaudhary said that the wave of BJP is going on in the country and the state and the people of the country.

JAIPUR: Amid speculations flying thick and fast about Congress MLA and former state cabinet minister Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya being all set to switch over to BJP, statements by a close aide of senior Congress leader and former deputy CM Sachin Pilot in support of such crossovers have come as an unsettling development for the grand old party's state unit. Khiladi Lal Bairwa, a former Congress MP and MLA known as a Pilot loyalist, also said several Congress leaders are poised to shift allegiance to the saffron



party in near future. Bairwa, who was expelled from Congress after he contested as an independent candidate from Baseri in last year's assembly elections, held former CM Ashok Gehlot responsible for the unfolding scenario. "Good leaders are moving to BJP. There is a long

list of Congress leaders who are poised to join BJP. You will be surprised to learn the names of those departing the party," said Bairwa. Bairwa has reportedly engaged with BJP leaders in recent weeks with plans to join the party as the chances of his getting a Congress ticket for Dholpur LS seat have diminished lately. Sources said he is among the second rung of Congress leaders likely to join BJP in the next few weeks. "Leaders who know politics also know the benefit of switching sides and how they can be stronger,"

Nagpur 1 of India's hottest cities, getting hotter: Study

Daily maximum temperatures in Nagpur rose by 0.5C, from 39.5C to 40C, between 1969 and 2015, according to a study. Heatwave days-when temperatures exceed 45C-increased in this period from six days in 1969 to 12 days in 2015, reports Vaishnavi

Chandrashekhar. Severe heatwave days- crossing 47C-also increased after 2005, as did the occurrence of night-time minimum temperatures crossing 32C, the study found. "There is a clear trend of rising heat," said Rajashree Kotharkar,

professor of architecture and urban planning at Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, who steered the research. The team mapped urban heat using real-time measurements and computer model simulations and street surveys.

New Delhi to Host 4th edition of India International EV Show

New Delhi: Delhi is poised to host a groundbreaking event in the electric mobility sector with the upcoming 4th India International EV Show 2024 (IIEV Show). From March 15th to 17th, 2024, the India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) in Dwarka, New Delhi, will serve as the venue for this prestigious exhibition. Recognised as India's largest gathering in the electric vehicles industry, the event provides a vital platform for engineers, mechanics, scientists, and decision-makers to come together. The exhibition is organised by Futurex Group along with the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) as the Industry Association Partner. The event is supported by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI), International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT), India Energy Storage Alliance (IESA), IPC International Inc & Electric Mobility Financiers Association of India (EMFAI). The India International EV Show stands as the nation's premier platform for the electric vehicle industry, providing a common ground for engineers, mechanics, scientists, and decision-makers to collaborate and drive innovation across the EV and advanced battery sectors. With a keen focus on the latest EV trends and emerging technologies, the show facilitates the exchange of groundbreaking ideas. It fosters discussions on critical topics such as battery technologies, energy storage solutions, and charging infrastructure development.

People should get their health checked regularly: Alka Chaudhary

Health of 70 people checked in medical camp

Karnal: A free medical camp was organized in Sector-6 by BJP Urban Mandal Mahila Morcha President Mrs. Alka Chaudhary and her team. In which Chief Minister's representative Sanjay Bathla mainly participated as the Chief Guest. Apart from this, many dignitaries like Sector 6 councillor Megha Bhandari, senior worker Kuldeep Sharma, former councillor Yashpal Mittal, Welfare Organization head Satish Goyal, Ravi Chaudhary, Shashi Tandon, Mukta Kalra, Ranju,



Saroj Parashar, Seal Pahwa etc. were present in the program. In this medical camp, health of 70 people was checked, in which BP, sugar and cholesterol tests were also done. On this occasion, Alka Choudhary said that all people should be conscious

about their health and should regularly get medical check-ups and tests done keeping their health in mind from time to time. He said that this camp has been organized to make people aware and such camps will be organized in future too.

See How Amazon Delivers Customer Orders at 4,500 feet above sea level in Indian Himalayas

amazon

Faridabad: Situated in the upper Himalayas, nestled at 4500 feet above sea level, Maharishi Ashram in Gajoli is a serene haven for close to 60 meditation practitioners in India. It's an ashram where people come from around the world to practice meditation and find inner peace. The ashram is isolated and disconnected from the rest of the world to ensure no distraction from the external world. While this is a conducive environment for the practitioners, the location makes it

extremely challenging for them to access daily essentials. This journey is not only difficult but also time-consuming, as there are no shops or delivery options in and around the Ashram area. Things changed in 2020, when Amazon.in became the first and only e-commerce company to deliver to Maharishi Ashram in Gajoli village. It opened a world of possibilities where practitioners could order things from any part of India, and

they were delivered to them right at their doorsteps. Amazon launched its operations in the region with a Delivery Service Partner station in March 2019, catering to the population in and around Uttarkashi. Identifying a specific need for the Maharishi Ashram in Gajoli, the station started delivering to the ashram in early 2020. More than 4 years of being the only e-commerce company delivering in

Maharishi Ashram is a testament to Amazon's customer obsession in India. "In our relentless pursuit of customer obsession, we have built a strong operations network in India," said Dr. Karuna Shankar Pande, Director, Amazon Logistics, Amazon India. "Over the last few years, we have significantly ramped up our infrastructure and delivery technology across all three miles, building a fast, safe, and resilient network to serve the varied needs of our customers."

Varthana Makes Affordable Schools a Reality in Punjab & Haryana

Chandigarh : In an era where education has become a lucrative industry, there are still a handful of schools that use their positive influence to improve the lives of their students and pave the way for a better future for them. While the rich have an abundance of educational choices, the situation is starkly different for the middle-class and lower-income groups. For children from these groups of population, education is the sole gateway to a better future. Students hailing from a financially stable environment enjoy the choice of a wide array of schooling options, including international institutions. However, this landscape does not mirror the entirety of society in India. There are a large number of poor and middle-class people in India who rely entirely on government schools and affordable private schools. Though these schools have

been established with the aim of bringing seminal changes in the lives of students from middle- and lower-income groups, these schools face numerous challenges. Owners face financial constraints, staffing shortages, gender-based reluctance towards education, teaching quality concerns, student dropouts to enter the labour market, technological limitations, and inadequate infrastructure. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic only added to these struggles. While the government has initiated various programmes to aid such schools, the rollout has often proved sluggish, leaving school owners seeking alternative solutions. Enter Varthana, a non-banking financial company (NBFC), which specialises in extending loans to private affordable schools for the develop-

ment of infrastructure and other amenities. Its client base resides across all regions of India. Interestingly, they all have a story to tell of the way Varthana helped them in their growth journey. Attesting to Varthana's impact on the school's growth journey, Mr. Rohit Sharma, School Owner of Rishikul Public School, Hisar, Haryana said: "I found Varthana through a social media ad when my friends and I were discussing loans. Within three days of reaching out, Varthana got in touch with me. I couldn't believe how smooth the process was! It was a massive relief for me when the loan was approved and disbursed. The manager who helped me in the process was awesome. Thanks to the loan, I'm building a second floor for my school, helping us take in 200 more students."

NCERT is likely to continue with rationalised textbooks

"New textbooks for all classes in 2024-25 are 'highly unlikely'. Based on the new national curriculum framework, the council is creating new school textbooks"

Delhi: People familiar with the matter said the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is likely to continue with rationalised textbooks for several classes, including classes 10 and 12, in the upcoming academic year beginning next month. New textbooks for all classes in 2024-25 are "highly unlikely". Based on the new national curriculum framework, the council is creating new school textbooks. Officials acquainted with the subject say new textbooks for numerous classes, including 10 and 12, are unlikely before the new school year. "Textbook drafting is



meticulous and cannot be rushed. All mistakes must be avoided. This year, the NCERT may publish textbooks for various primary classes including class 9. A senior NCERT official stated, asking anonymity, that textbooks with rationalized curriculum will continue in other courses in 2024-25. The council told the CBSE in its previous curriculum committee meeting that the new 9-12 textbooks will not be released this year. "The board must release class 10 and 12 sample papers before a new session. In its last curriculum

committee meeting, the board decided to continue with the NCERT syllabus with a condition that it may be reviewed if the NCERT delivers books of classes 9 to 12 before April 2024, a senior CBSE official said. The books will likely not be issued before then. In June 2022, NCERT rationalised classes 6-12 curricula to "reduce the content load" on children because to the COVID-19 pandemic. In new textbooks published last year, the council eliminated chapters on Mughal courts, 2002 Gujarat riots

Ex-Congress strategist helped stitch up Ashok Chavan's exit plan

A week ago, former CM Ashok Chavan joined BJP in the presence of deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis, his archrival of several years. It was found that Chavan had been planning to join BJP for a long time, and his plan was given the final shape at a meeting with Fadnavis at the residence of political activist Ashish Kulkarni. Kulkarni, once a trusted aide of Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray, had ditched Sena, along with Narayan Rane, for Congress. For a brief period, he worked in AICC as a strategist for Digvijaya Singh. During Chavan's tenure as CM, Kulkarni pulled out all the stops to take over Mhada, but when that didn't work out, he left Congress and joined hands with Fadnavis for better political prospects.

Kejriwal's up & down ride on rough political terrain

New Delhi: When Sheila Dikshit was finding her foot in administration as a first term CM in 1998-2003, Arvind Kejriwal was feeling disillusioned as an Indian Revenue Service officer and pushing for transparency in the public distribution system through his NGO Parivartan in north-east Delhi's Sunder Nagri. A decade later, the revenue officer not only defeated the three-term CM from her home constituency of New Delhi by over 20,000 votes, but also replaced the Congress leader as the head of the state govt. Kejriwal's journey, of course, hasn't had a straight trajectory.



Reflecting the complexities of navigating Indian politics while striving for systemic change, he now faces allegations of corruption, the very issue that had brought him into the limelight. The year was 2011 and the ruling Congress

was sinking with back-to-back allegations of scams — from the Commonwealth Games in Delhi to allocation of 2G spectrum at the national level. The overall sentiment was against the ruling dispensation, only there wasn't a party to

channel the mass ire. Then in April, the India Against Corruption movement began with the demand for the creation of a Lokpal with powers to charge govt officials accused of corruption. Anna Hazare was the face of the movement

but everyone knew that the backroom boy was Arvind Kejriwal, who was leading a team from different ideological and social backgrounds — poet Kumar Vishwas, lawyer Shanti Bhushan, psephologist Yogendra Yadav, to name a few. IAC drew instant popularity and with it emerged Kejriwal. His knack for oratory was established in TV studios, where he explained the complexities of the Lok Pal concept with ease. In one of these debates, Kejriwal said he would never enter politics. This changed in Nov 2012, when facing criticism from the intelligentsia.

We have seen gangs running from jail, not any govt: BJP

New Delhi: BJP MP Manoj Tiwari on Friday said gangs were run from jail, not administration, and demanded chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's resignation after his arrest by Enforcement Directorate (ED) in an excise policy-related case. Earlier, AAP minister Atishi had said Kejriwal would continue as chief minister and run Delhi government from prison after his arrest by ED in the money laundering case. "We have seen gangs running from jail, not any govt," said the North East Delhi MP, who is BJP's candidate from the constituency for this Lok Sabha election, too. "BJP has always stood, against corruption, no matter how big a position the corrupt person holds," Tiwari claimed.

Leader of opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, who is contesting from South



Delhi, said AAP came to power in Delhi with the promise of opening 500 schools and colleges, but Kejriwal broke all the promises as he was busy with the alleged liquor scam. "Instead of providing water to the people, he opened liquor vends in every street," he alleged. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva claimed, "Today after the 10th summons when ED has arrested Arvind Kejriwal, now AAP MLAs, corporation councillors and even his close ones are not supporting him." Sachdeva said BJP had been protesting since the day Kejriwal brought the liquor policy and kept saying that it was

brought for personal gain. "Kejriwal used to call the liquor policy beneficial but as the layers were revealed after investigation, it became clear that it is a game of corruption," he alleged. BJP's New Delhi candidate, Bansuri Swaraj, said Kejriwal had kept running away from the investigation. "Since a long time, investigating agencies were trying to question him as he was the ultimate beneficiary of the liquor 'scam'." For the past two years, Kejriwal had been flirting with the law and trying to prolong the case, but now he has to understand that the law has reached him and he will be punished, too, she claimed.

West Bengal: ED conducts searches at TMC minister Chandranath Sinha's residence in Birbhum

KOLKATA: A team from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted searches at the residence of West Bengal minister Chandranath Sinha in Bolpur, Birbhum district.

The search is part of the investigation into an alleged school recruitment scam. The ED team, accompanied by central forces, arrived at Sinha's residence at 9.15 am to begin the search. Sinha, who serves as the minister for MSME and Textiles in the



Mamata Banerjee government, was not present during the search as he was at his ancestral home in Murarai, 90 km away. "The search is in connection with the investigation of the alleged irregularities in the school recruitment scam. The minister is not present

at his residence, we are talking to his family," an officer said. Sinha had been previously summoned by the CBI in cases of cattle and coal smuggling. Meanwhile, the ED was also conducting raids at the homes of some businessmen in Kolkata.

Lottery banned in AP but lottery king made YSRCP rich

Visakhapatnam: The company Future Gaming and Hotel Services has emerged as the key figure in electoral bond financing in Andhra Pradesh with its purchase of electoral bonds worth Rs 154 crore in favour of YSRCP between April 2019 and Feb 2024. Future Gaming, with a total contribution of Rs 1,368 crore, is also the biggest purchaser of bonds in the country.

This contribution accounted for nearly half the Rs 328 crore received by the governing party in Andhra Pradesh from various individuals and corporations during that period (April 2019 to February 2024). It is remarkable to note the substantial contribution of Future Gaming to YSRCP despite the company's absence from Andhra Pradesh. Lottery is banned in the state. Following closely is Hyderabad-based conglomerate Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Ltd (MEIL), with bond purchases amounting to Rs 37 crore for YSRCP.



MEIL is engaged in several significant projects in Andhra Pradesh, including the nearly Rs 50,000 crore Polavaram project. It has diversified interests spanning across sectors such as power, irrigation, highways, ports, and manufacturing. Ramco Cement, with a presence in Andhra Pradesh, made a gesture by donating Rs 24 crore. Ostro Jaisalmer Pvt Ltd (Rs 17 crore) and Ostro Madhya Wind Pvt Ltd (Rs 17 crore) secured the subsequent positions. The YSRCP-led government of Andhra Pradesh, working on a renewable energy mission, has secured close to Rs 60 crore in funding through bonds from various solar and wind energy.

Plans in place to maximise collection of property tax

New Delhi: With a few days left for this financial year to end, civic bodies, including Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Delhi Development Authority, have made arrangements to maximise property tax collection. Except for Holi, the property tax offices will remain open on all days. Circulars, messages and notices have also been sent out in large numbers to motivate people to pay their pending dues. Till Friday, MCD's property tax collection was Rs 1,950 crore in comparison to Rs 1,862 crore till this point of time last year. The overall collection last year was Rs 2,417 crore. "Unlike last year, there is no amnesty scheme in place this time. But, we are still making best efforts."



Andhra Pradesh elections: TDP announces third list of 13 MP and 11 MLA candidates

VIJAYAWADA: The opposition has revealed its third list, disclosing the names of 13 MP and 11 MLA candidates. The TDP has named most of its candidates for both assembly and Lok Sabha. Out of the 145 assembly and 17 Lok Sabha seats being contested by the TDP in alliance with BJP and Jana Sena, candidates for 141 MLA and 13 MP seats have been announced so far.



Putting an end to the ambiguity over some of the key seats like Penamaluru, Sarvapalli, Narasaraopet, and Palasa, the TDP high command reposed faith in the existing in-charges. After much drama in the Penamaluru constituency in Krishna district, the TDP has finally given the ticket to the current in-charge, Bode Prasad, dashing the hopes of former minister Divineni Umamaheswara Rao, who lost the Mylavaram ticket to his rival and incumbent MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad, who switched sides from YSRC to TDP.

TDP chief N. Chandrababu Naidu did not announce the candidate for the Sarvepalli constituency in Nellore district, which is represented by former minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy.

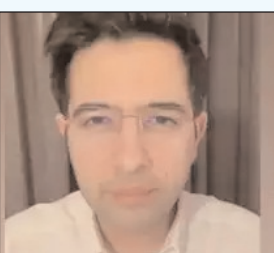
There has been much speculation over a change of candidate in Sarvepalli given the poor track record of Chandramohan Reddy. However, the former minister managed to convince the high command and finally got the ticket.

Similarly, in Narasaraopet, Chirala, and Palasa assembly segments, the TDP high command considered various options but finally reposed faith in the existing in-charges. While the Narasaraopet ticket was given to Dr. Chadalavada Aravaid Babu, Chirala has been given to M. M. Kondaiah Yadav, and Gouthu Sirisha retained Palasa. Interestingly, all three of them are from BC communities. The TDP is yet to announce its candidates in Etcherla, Cheepurupalli, Bhimili, Darsi, Rajampet, Alur, Guntakal, and Anantapur urban constituencies.

However, there will be some tweaks to these constituencies as the TDP has announced a candidate for the Srikakulam assembly, which was not there in the initial proposal. Jana Sena is likely to get one seat from North Andhra districts as part of the last-minute adjustments, according to sources. Similarly, in Rayalaseema districts also, one or two changes are likely to be made as part of the seat-sharing arrangement with BJP, said sources.

AP leader Raghav Chadha on extended stay in London; attends PMQs in parliament

CHANDIGARH: Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national spokesperson and Punjab Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha has been in London since around March 8, it has emerged, even as opposition parties in Punjab are raising questions about his whereabouts. This comes at such a crucial time with the Lok Sabha elections



approaching — and now the arrest of Delhi chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal. Chadha spoke on March 9 at the London Indian Forum of the London School

of Economics, where he himself studied and met his wife, Parineeti Chopra. On March 8, he tweeted: "Namaste England," presumably when he landed. On Wednesday this week, he watched UK PM Rishi Sunak and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer battle it out at the weekly Prime Minister Questions from the Speaker's private gallery.

UP police paper leak: 1 arrested from Haryana

LUCKNOW: The Special Task Force (STF) of Uttar Pradesh arrested Satish Dhankad, the owner of a resort in Manesar, Haryana, in connection with the recent UP police constable paper leak.

He was apprehended from Nature Valley resort located under Prem Nagar police station in the Manesar area of Haryana.

Dhankad's arrest follows investigations that revealed his involvement in aiding the distribution of leaked exam papers for the police constable recruitment test, as reported by the STF.

STF officials disclosed that an elusive Delhi police constable, Vikram Pahal, escorted approximately 1,000 aspirants to Dhankad's resort on February 15. There, they were provided with exam questions to memorize.

Two-tier security ring, drones for surveillance at CM Kejriwal residence

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police put a two-tier security ring in place and used drones for surveillance at the residence of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on Thursday night.

Around a dozen Aam Aadmi Party workers, including MLA Rakhi Birla, were briefly detained from outside Kejriwal's home in Civil Lines after they engaged in sloganeering and tried to create a ruckus, police said, adding that they were let off later at night. The cops are anticipating large-scale protests at several places by AAP



workers on Friday. Police have stepped up security outside the ED offices at Akbar Road and APJ Abdul Kalam Road. The cops will also throw in multi-layer security when Kejriwal is likely to be produced in court on Friday afternoon. "If protests break out, ED may take a call

on insisting on production via videoconferencing," a senior cop said. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC may be imposed in different areas of the city on Friday. Apart from police personnel from north Delhi, reserved forces and the Rapid Action

Force were deployed at the Flagstaff Road residence of Kejriwal soon after ED sleuths landed there with a search warrant. Barricades were also put up on the lane leading to the chief minister's official residence in north Delhi. As soon as the news of the arrest came out, workers started protesting on the road. Cops swung into action and started removing and detaining them. They were sent to different police stations in north Delhi. The Special Branch is learnt to be keeping a close tab on the chatter pertaining to demonstrations, etc, officials said.