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

## EVM petitions just to create uncertainty, says EC in court

● "The aperture is an especially as the EC had itself admitted that the system was not perfect. on changes introduced in EVMs"



**NEW DELHI:** Ruling out any possibility of returning to ballot paper, Supreme Court on Thursday said there was a huge drawback with that system and use of EVMs had stood the test of time with rising voting percentage reflecting voters' faith in them. As questions were raised on functioning of EVMs and the possibility of them being tampered with, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta asked the petitioners not to be "over-suspicious" and appreciated the Election Commission's efforts to clarify doubts about the functioning of the machines. The bench thereafter

reserved its verdict. "Ballot paper has a huge drawback. We do not want to even think about it," the bench said when senior advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for the EC, said the EVM system must continue. Asked by the bench at the outset to "allay the apprehension of everyone inside the courtroom and outside" about EVMs, deputy election commissioner Nitesh Vyas gave a technical presentation on their functioning and answered a volley of questions from the bench. Maninder Singh

stoutly defended the prevailing system and told the bench that there were people with vested interests who kept doubting EVMs at the time of polls. Singh said all allegations levelled by the petitioner were baseless and there was no need for the court to interfere as a similar plea was rejected earlier. "EVM system must stay here. Human intervention has been minimised in the system. Petitions are filed in court just to create uncertainty which is not good for democracy. There are people

with vested interests who create suspicion to discredit the system," he said. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan and Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioner, told the bench they were not doubting the EC but any doubts had to be cleared, especially as the EC had itself admitted that the system was not perfect. When Bhushan raised a question on changes introduced in EVMs and VVPAT machines, the bench told him, "You are going too far.

## Sule owes rival Sunetra Rs 35 lakhs, latter's son Rs 20 lakhs: Affidavit

**PUNE:** NCP (SCP) chief Sharad Pawar's daughter and outgoing Baramati MP Supriya Sule is a crorepati 100 times over but owes opponent and sister-in-law Sunetra Pawar Rs 35 lakh, their poll affidavits reveal. Also, Sule carries the debt despite being richer. In her affidavit filed Thursday, Sule says she also owes Rs 20 lakh to Parth Pawar, the son of Sunetra and Ajit Pawar, Maharashtra deputy CM and Sule's cousin. The debt had found a mention in Sule's 2019 affidavit as well, which means it has still not been cleared. In her affidavit as the NCP candidate, Sunetra has confirmed Sule's loan. That's not all. Sunetra also claims she lent Rs 50 lakh to Sule's mother Pratibha (Sharad Pawar's wife) and that it is yet to be repaid. Both Sule and Sunetra have declared wealth of more than Rs 100 crore. Sule's family's total assets (movable and immovable)



stand at Rs 166.5 crore, up from Rs 127.8 crore in 2019. Sunetra's family assets went up to Rs 127.5 crore from Rs 75.4 crore in the same period. Another catch in the Baramati battle is that several leading lights owe Sunetra a whopping Rs 2.3 crore. Besides Sule and her mother Pratibha, the others include Sunetra's husband Ajit and her mother-in-law Ashatai. While Sunetra's assets include vehicles such as a tractor and two trailers, Sule and her spouse seem to have opted out of the vehicular vroom. Both candidates trace their

incomes back to farming and business. Sunetra has seen a surge in her immovable assets from Rs 26.8 crore in 2019 to Rs 58.3 crore in 2024. Her movable assets, however, took a dip from Rs 20.3 crore to Rs 12.5 crore in the last five years. On the other hand, Sule's movable assets nearly doubled from Rs 21.2 crore to Rs 38 crore but her immovable assets decreased by half from Rs 18.4 crore in 2019 to Rs 9.1 crore in 2024. Sule's spouse's movable assets went up from Rs 83 crore in 2019 to Rs 114.7 crore in 2024.

## 2 Indian students found dead at Scottish sightseeing spot

**LONDON:** Two Indian students were Wednesday found dead in the water at a popular sightseeing spot in Scotland. The bodies of the two men were recovered on Wednesday night by emergency services from the water at the Linn of Tummel, picturesque roaring waterfalls surrounded by rocks situated northwest of Pitlochry in Perthshire, where the rivers Garry and Tummel meet.

## At his Gandhinagar bastion, Shah promises 2036 Olympics

**GANDHINAGAR:** Home minister Amit Shah headlined three roadshows in his bastion Gandhinagar on Thursday with PM Narendra Modi's "guarantee" to bring home the 2036 Olympics and an appeal to the electorate to give BJP a 26/26 in Gujarat. Sanand, Kalol and Ahmedabad, all segments of Shah's constituency, had large crowds waving BJP flags and shouting slogans of "Jai Shri Ram" and "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" as their local MP waved at them from an open-top vehicle. He will file his nomination papers at the Gandhinagar collectorate on Friday. Videos "Today, I will appeal to my brothers and sisters of Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency to make BJP victorious and give their blessings to Modi so that he becomes the PM once again to make the country No. 1 in every sector and to make Gandhinagar one of the most developed Lok Sabha constituencies in the country," Shah wrote on X ahead of the road show in Sanand. A home guard who was part of the security deployment there collapsed before Shah's arrival and died in hospital. Pravin Patel had complained of uneasiness and chest pain before fainting, deputy SP Neelam Goswami said. Flanked by CM Bhupendra Patel and state BJP chief C R Paatil, the home minister's Ahmedabad route included the assembly segments of Sabarmati, Ghatlodia, Naranpura and Vejalpur. At the end of the journey, Shah worked the crowd with a poser, "People of Ahmedabad, PM Modi has given a guarantee that the 2036 Olympic games will be held in India. Tell me where the event will be held?" As shouts of "Ahmedabad" rent the air, he declared, "It will be held in Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency." "During my road show, everybody was talking about breaking the record (of his victory margin in the last election to the Gandhinagar seat).

## Indian women on board ship seized by Iran released

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian woman crew member on board the container vessel, which was seized by Iran for its links with Israel, has been released by Iranian authorities. The Indian embassy in Tehran is in touch with the remaining 16 Indian crew members and is hopeful that they will also be released soon. "With the concerted efforts of Indian mission in Tehran and the



Iranian govt, Indian deck cadet Ms Ann Tessa Joseph from Thrissur, Kerala, who was among the Indian crew members of con-

tainers vessel MSC Aries, has landed safely at the Cochin International Airport today afternoon. At the airport, Ms. Joseph was received by the Regional Passport Officer, Cochin," said the Indian govt in a statement. The Indian embassy in Tehran remains seized of the matter and is in touch with the remaining 16 Indian crew members of the container vessel, it added. The crew members are in good health and in contact with their family members.

## Rahul does not dare to contest from Amethi, says Rajnath

**KOTTAYAM:** Defence minister Rajnath Singh took a dig at Rahul Gandhi Thursday, saying that after Rahul's defeat in Amethi in 2019 he does not dare to stand from there this time. While campaigning for BJP's Pathanamthitta Lok Sabha constituency candidate Anil Antony in Kerala, Singh said Rahul migrated to Kerala from Uttar Pradesh following his defeat. He said while various



space programmes and developmental projects were being launched in the country, "the launching of Congress' young leader has not happened for the last 20 years". "Congress' 'Rahulyaan' has nei-

ther been launched nor has it landed anywhere," Singh added. The defence minister said nothing can prevent BJP from securing double-digit seats in Kerala in the polls. "Not even a single corruption charge has been levelled against BJP govt in the past 10 years. It is a clean govt and only BJP can provide such a government," Singh said, adding that it is the world's most credible party.

## India tests long-range cruise missile for precision-strike capabilities

**NEW DELHI:** India on Thursday tested the indigenous technology cruise missile (ITCM), with a strike range of 1,000-km, from the Chandipur integrated test range off the Odisha coast. This subsonic long-range land-attack cruise missile, with a canister-launch system, will eventually be one of the mainstays of the tri-service Integrated Rocket Force to be raised for conventional (non-nuclear) combat capabilities and deterrence. The missile's performance on Thursday, powered by the indigenous Manik turbofan engine instead of the earlier Russian one, was monitored by several radars, electro-optical tracking systems and telemetry sensors



deployed at different locations to ensure complete coverage of the flight path. The flightpath of the missile, which is a derivative of the original Nirbhay missile with indigenous systems, was also monitored by Sukhoi-30MKI fighters. "All subsystems performed as per expectation. The missile followed the desired path using waypoint navigation and demonstrated a very low altitude sea-skimming flight," a DRDO official said.

"This successful flight-test also established the reliable performance of the indigenous propulsion system developed by the Gas Turbine Research Establishment, Bengaluru. The missile is equipped with advanced avionics and software to ensure better and reliable performance. After one more test, it will be offered for user-trials," he added. With conflicts like the ongoing Russia-Ukraine one underscoring the need for long-range.

## Election Commission rubbishes reports of EVMs helping BJP in Kerala drill

**NEW DELHI:** Election Commission on Thursday rubbished media reports that EVMs erroneously registered votes in favour of BJP during mock polling in Kerala days before the general election. It told Supreme Court that till date, only one instance of mismatch between EVM and VVPAT counting was detected - in 2019 because of human error. At the start of the hearing, the "glitch" in Kerala was brought to the court's notice and a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta asked EC to verify it.

## Tata Motors to make Land Rover cars at new 1 billion dollar

**NEW DELHI:** Tata Motors will manufacture Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) luxury cars at a \$1 billion plant that it is planning to build in Tamil Nadu, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said. The plan would mark the first time that JLR-branded cars would be manufactured from scratch in India. The cars would be sold domestically and also exported, according to one of the sources, who declined to be identified as the plans were private. Tata Motors, which acquired JLR in 2008, declined to comment on what it called speculation. It announced plans for the Tamil Nadu plant in March but did not disclose what vehicles would be manufactured there or the plant's.

## 12 jurors picked for Trump's hush money trial, selection of alternates

**NEW DELHI:** Former President Donald Trump's hush money trial in New York saw the seating of a jury of 12 people on Thursday. Following this, the court swiftly moved to select alternate jurors. The quick progress signifies the case's advancement towards opening statements and an extended period of testimony. The trial charges the Republican ex-president with falsifying business records to hide stories about his sex life in the closing days of the 2016 election. The jury consists of a sales professional, a software engineer, an English teacher, and several lawyers. The case revolves around \$130,000 that Trump's lawyer, Michael Cohen, paid to porn actor Stormy

Daniels. Trump is up against 34 felony counts and maintains his innocence. Earlier today, two jurors were dismissed. One expressed doubts about being fair after details about her identity were disclosed. Another juror was let go due to concerns that some of his courtroom answers may have been inaccurate. Meanwhile, prosecutors requested Trump be held in contempt due to recent social media posts. Additionally, the judge prohibited reporters from revealing jurors' employers for privacy reasons. The jury selection process gained momentum Tuesday with seven jurors chosen. However, on Thursday, Judge Juan Merchan disclosed in court that one of them, a cancer.

# Congress is running the agenda of SP Rashtra and Sanatan opponents: Rajendra Mishra

Prayagraj. In preparation for the Phulpur Lok Sabha elections, a meeting of former BJP councilor candidates and councilors of City North and City West Assembly was organized in the BJP office on Thursday. On this occasion, Lok Sabha in-charge Balendu Mani Tripathi and Metropolitan President Rajendra Mishra said that all the councilors and all the former councilor candidates should make all the programs of Bharatiya Janata Party successful by establishing public relations and communication with the public in all their wards. The



schemes of Modi Government and Yogi Government

of the Center should be delivered to them. He said that

our fight is against anti-national forces and the political

parties included in Congress, SP, Left and Indi Alliance are running the agenda of Sanatan and anti-national forces. We have to stop such forces which want to disintegrate India. BJP workers will defeat such forces at the booths and destroy their agenda. Media in-charge Rajesh Kesarwani said that in the meeting, preparations and discussions were held to successfully organize Nukkad Sabha at the ward level. Selection of speakers was discussed keeping in mind the social equation in street meetings. Phulpur parliamentary constituency convenor

MLA Guru Prasad Maurya presided over the meeting. The meeting was conducted by Sanjay Gupta and concluded by Anuj Parihar. On this occasion Rajesh Kesarwani Vivek Mishra Anand Vaishya Sudarshan Neeraj Pandey Anand Jaiswal Prashant Shukla Rakesh Bharti Councilor Gyanendra Mishra Anupam Pandey Chandan Prakash Shukla Ashish Dwivedi Akash Sonkar Natwarlal Bharti Umesh Mishra Sunita Srivastava Mithilesh Singh and former councilor candidates of City North and City West Assembly and Councilors were present.

## Govt notifies specifications of Iffco's 'Nano Urea Plus' fertilizer India's IFFCO to launch Nano urea with higher nitrogen content

Prayagraj: The government has notified a new product 'Nano Urea Plus' fertilizer to be manufactured by cooperative IFFCO in the country for the next three years. Nano Urea Plus is a new version of Nano Urea to meet the nitrogen requirements of the crop at critical growth stages. According to the gazette notification, the government has approved Nano Urea Plus in liquid form with 16 percent nitrogen. It said the product would be manufactured by cooperative major IFFCO for a period of three years.

IFFCO's Nano Urea Plus is an advanced formulation of Nano Urea with redefined nutrition to meet the nitrogen requirements of the crop at critical growth stages. It is used in place of traditional urea and other nitrogenous fertilizers to promote soil health, farmer profitability, and a sustainable environment. IFFCO Managing Director Dr Uday Shanker Awasthi said on his social media platform X.



It also increases the availability and efficiency of micronutrients. He said that it is a chlorophyll charger, increasing yields and helping in climate-smart farming. IFFCO Managing Director Dr. Uday Shanker Awasthi said that Nano Urea Plus has been notified for three years by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. Under which the production of IFFCO Nano Urea Plus has been approved.

There will be no increase in the price of Nano Urea Plus and it will be available in 500 ml bottles at the rate of Rs 225. Nano Urea Plus will help in plant growth without harming the environment. Its objective is to benefit the farmers of the country and promote self-reliant India and self-reliant agriculture. Senior Executive Director (Unit Head) Sanjay Kudesia of IFFCO Phulpur Unit, said that the production of Nano Urea Plus will be started in the Phulpur unit soon as soon as instructions are received from the IFFCO.

## VBPS Champion, NFA Runner Up : "Goal" U19 Football Competition

Prayagraj: VBPS emerged as Winners of "Goal" football competition which was played under the aegis of Northern Football Academy. In the final match of Under-19 boys category today at the football field of Vishnu Bhagwan Public School, Jhalwa, Vishnu Bhagwan School Boys Jhalwa defeated Northern Football Academy in an exciting final match with the help of sudden

death by 4-3.

According to the Head Coach of the academy, Indranil Ghosh, both the teams remained tied at 1-1 throughout the match. The first goal of the match was scored by Northern's Vedant Tripathi from a pass of Adarsh in the second half of the game, while Vishnu Bhagwan's Kundan Singh scored the goal. The score was tied at 1-1.

Even in the tiebreaker,



the score of both the teams was 3-3, after which they had to resort to sudden death in which VBPS won. Kundan Singh, Shivam, Shubhankar, Karthik scored goals for the winning team while Harshit Ojha, Shivam Singh, Aditya Raj scored goals for the runner-up team. Coach Indranil Ghosh presided the program and awarded the winners and runners-up trophies to both the teams & individual awards to the players. VBPS Director Abhishek Tiwari & Principal Dinesh Kumar Srivastava congratulated the team.

## Children made aware about voting by zonal officer at G Singh Law College

Prayagraj: Shailendra Mohan (zonal officer) said that India is a democratic country where the means of electing the central government or any state is through voting. That is why the importance of vote is very high in this country. Keeping this importance in mind,



we all should exercise our franchise. Use your vote properly to keep the reputation of the country and democracy paramount. By voting we can exercise our rights and elect good representatives to run the country. By voting we can elect good MPs, MLAs, Councilors, District Panchayat members, District members, all elections are important, hence use your right to vote in every election. The Municipal Corporation team included Zonal Shailendra Mohan of Zone-8, Sanitation Inspector Dev Singh, Supervisor Mayank Tripathi, Principal of the same college, PC Saroj, Vice Principal Ashutosh Shukla, the staff there, Preeti Vijay, Vivek Pradeep and the students present there included Vinod Kumar Sharma, Rishabh, Yogita, Shraddha, Preeti and other companions.

## Important meeting of LS Election Management Summit held in District Office

Prayagraj: Regional President Dilip Patel said that the upcoming elections are very important, for this all the workers have to get it done together. Bharatiya Janata Party wants to contest the elections on the strength of development. The central and state governments will continuously work for the welfare of the public. Regional President Dilip Patel said that the way SP, BSP, Congress has collapsed, the Bharatiya Janata Party will come again in the 2024 elections and will form the government at the Center under the leadership of



Narendra Modi for the third time. District President Deepak Mishra said that the Bharatiya Janata Party

has a The seat will also help in strengthening the strength of Delhi from Bhadohi. Our workers are

very excited. They are working hard day and night. BJP candidate Dr. Vinod Bind is achieving a historic victory.

We all are working hard to make the lotus bloom from Bhadohi. In the 2024 elections, the deposits of SP, BSP and Congress will be confiscated. The candidate of a party like TMC has been fielded here. The situation of Bengal will not be possible here. Both the public and the common man are intellectuals here. People of every class are here. Only lotus flower will blossom here. Bhadohi History will be created by present MLA Aurai Dinanath Bhaskar Former MLA Ravindra Nath Tripathi District Panchayat

President Anurudh Tripathi Ashish Singh Baghel Senior BJP leader Nagendra Singh Chhatrapati Singh Veeru Shukla Ashok Jaiswal Sushmita Maurya Amit Singh Pradeep Singh Santosh Tiwari Lalta Prasad Sonkar Satya Sil Gupta Govardhan Rai Manish Pandey Mrityunjay Shivam Akash Deepak Priyanka Jaiswal Brijesh Gupta Goralvi Pandey Saurav Malviya Akhilendra Singh Baghel Chandulal Chandrakar Mahavir Gupta Vistarak Ajit Singh Alok Singh etc. senior BJP workers were present.

## Ticket checking campaign started at Prayagraj Junction Railway Station

Nearly five hundred passengers charged, a fine of Rs 3 lakh was collected

Prayagraj. North Central Railway Prayagraj Division is continuously making its best efforts to provide high quality service to the passengers. Prayagraj Division keeps running special ticket checking campaigns in stations and trains to provide safe, pleasant and comfortable journey with good food to the passengers and to

curb ticketless and irregular travel. In the same sequence, under the guidance of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Himanshu Shukla, under the leadership of Assistant Commercial Manager Sanjay Gautam, a special intensive ticket checking campaign was carried out against the passengers without tickets, irregular

tickets and illegal vendors spreading litter in the station premises by fortifying the Prayagraj Junction Railway Station. During this period, twelve trains passing through Prayagraj Junction station were thoroughly checked. During this ticket checking campaign, the commercial staff also made the passengers aware

about not smoking and littering in the train and railway station while traveling by purchasing tickets. In this campaign, Chief Ticket Inspector Red Shri Diwakar Shukla worked along with thirty employees of the Commerce Department, Railway Protection Force and Government Railway Police. In the ticket checking cam-

paign, Rs 322920 was recovered from a total of 489 passengers by charging them as per rules. Out of these, 237 passengers were caught without tickets and a recovery of Rs 194450 was done and 250 passengers were caught traveling irregularly and a recovery of Rs 128270 was done. Two people who littered were charged and

Rs 200 was recovered. North Central Railway has appealed to the railway passengers to travel with proper and valid railway tickets to avoid inconvenience and travel with dignity. This information was given by Amit Kumar Singh, Public Relations Officer, Prayagraj Division, North Central Railway.

## The overloaded bridge: A race against time

Varanasi: The Shastri Bridge, situated in the heart of Mirzapur, is a vital link connecting bustling cities. However, beneath its sturdy exterior lies a ticking time bomb. With each overloaded truck that rumbles across, the bridge's very existence feels precarious, as if it's on the brink of collapse. Despite multiple repairs, the bridge remains strained and groaning under the weight.

Now the question arises: will all the engineers responsible for its maintenance be able to save it from a major catastrophe before it's too late? Continuous overloading has turned the Shastri Bridge into a

significant threat, necessitating the establishment of active monitoring posts to ensure its safety. Immediate action is imperative in this regard.

In light of the precarious state of the Shastri Bridge in Mirzapur, commuters must consider safer alternatives, such as NH2 (currently named National Highway 19 or NH19), leading towards the Varanasi Toll. This alternate route offers a viable option for travellers to divert from the overloaded Shastri Bridge, thereby reducing the risk to their safety and that of their loved ones.

There's no denying that the government is actively focused on the

development of foundational structures. Consequently, development and connectivity in the region are on the rise. However, the success of development projects heavily relies on vigilance and timely maintenance to ensure the longevity and safety of crucial assets. Shastri Bridge in Mirzapur is also one such property. Regular inspections of the bridge are necessary to keep its structure secure over the long term.

The Shastri Bridge over the Ganga in Mirzapur is currently facing the challenge of overloading, despite undergoing several repairs. This raises serious concerns about

the safety of both the bridge itself and the lives of those who use it. The bridge, constructed in 1976, is now nearly 50 years old and has undergone three rounds of repairs. In the year 2021, the bridge was repaired for Rs 4.62 crore. The repairs included the replacement of bearings and beam grouting. Additionally, the work of carbon fibre wrapping and cable grouting has been completed on 28 spans (parts) of the bridge.

Mr. R.S. Upadhyay, the Project Manager of the Bridge Corporation, revealed that according to the load testing report of 2021, the traffic was

deemed safe as per standards. Despite all efforts, a malfunction occurred within four months. The result was that the movement of empty trucks was stopped. Eventually, in November 2022, the bridge was closed. Considering the situation, an additional budget of 7.48 crore was allocated for further repairs, and the restoration commenced in June 2023. After five months of work, the bridge reopened on 23 November, with previous issues reportedly resolved. However, concerns persist regarding the bridge's long-term maintenance and safety. Even now overloaded vehicles continue to

move on the bridge without any proper inspection, posing a serious risk to the safety of the bridge and its users.

Taking into account the current issues with the existing bridge, the government has recently approved the construction of a six-lane bridge and a bypass. This bridge will connect Mirzapur to several major cities in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. This underscores the necessity for officials to establish regular inspection checkpoints and maintain continuous monitoring to ensure the safety of the bridge's structure and the communities around it.

## Indian Overseas Bank Enables Online Donations for Kashi Vishwanath Temple

Varanasi: Indian Overseas Bank has launched an online facility for donations to Shree Kashi Vishwanath Mandir Trust. This initiative marks as a significant milestone for the bank towards embracing technology to preserve and enhance the sanctity of the cultural heritage site. On the sidelines of the online facility launch, the bank has opened its first saving bank account for the Shree Kashi Vishwanath Mandir Trust at Varanasi Cantonment to facilitate donations to the temple. Devotees who wish to donate online can visit the bank's website: <https://www.ioab.in/> or can also opt for NEFT/RTGS transfers to the Mandir Trust's Savings Bank account.

Commenting on this initiative, Mr. Ajay Kumar Srivastava, MD & CEO at Indian Overseas Bank, said, "This initiative reflects our commitment and dedication towards supporting sacred institutions and preserving our rich cultural legacy. In our endeavour towards constantly providing seamless banking services to customers across the world, we are happy to launch this new service as well for all the devotees who wish to donate to Kashi Vishwanath Mandir Trust." Furthermore, donors can also avail the benefits of income tax deduction under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961, for their contributions.

# DEO inspected the first day training program of polling personnel

Prayagraj: District Election Officer/District Magistrate Navneet Singh Chahal reached Bishop Johnson Girls School and College and Mary Lucas School and College on Thursday and inspected the training program of the first day of polling personnel in view of the Lok Sabha General Elections-2024. He asked the polling personnel to receive training with full dedication and concentration.

He said that the better you get information about the voting process, the more smoothly and efficiently you will be able to complete the voting process, hence, get in-depth information about the details related to the voting process being explained in the training. Do it. On this occasion, the polling personnel



were given detailed information about the voting process and guidelines of the Election Commission by the master trainers.

In the training, polling personnel were given de-

tailed information regarding EVM machines, CU, BU, mock poll and sealing and filling of forms properly after completion of voting. Chief Development Officer Gaurav Kumar has

asked the polling personnel who were absent on the first day of training to attend the training at the same place on Friday, April 19. On this occasion, District Development Officer

Bholanath Kanojia, Project Director AK Maurya, District School Inspector PN Singh, Basic Education Officer Praveen Tiwari and all the concerned officers were present.

# Over 50 students of Mahendra Coaching, selected in govt jobs honored

Prayagraj: A felicitation ceremony for the selected students was organized by Mahendra Coaching Institutions on Thursday. Students who got jobs in various government departments including various banks, SSC Railways, UPP etc. were honored with certificates and medals in the branch. This time, more than 500 children were selected, out of which some children were able to come to the branch and were felicitated. Further programs will be organized for the remaining children and the students were encouraged through inspiring examples. The program started at Mahendra Coaching Institutions located at Tej Bahadur Saghu Marg on Thursday morning at 11 am. Along with all the selected students, their parents also arrived. Through the ceremony, the students taking coaching in the institutes welcomed the students of

the institute who got the job by garlanding them. After this, the guests honored them by giving them citations, medals, selection bags and pens etc. At the scheduled time, the coaching auditorium was packed with students and everyone looked excited. Chief guest

Upadhyay Sir, Ajit Kumar Raman, Pradeep Sir, Adarsh Sir Amit Sir, Shobhit, Sonali, etc. Gave guidance to the motivated children and also told them about their upcoming exams and also gave Guru Mantra to achieve their goals. Mahindra Coaching has more than 160 branches



Shri Santosh Sir (Chief Manager SBI Prayagraj) lit the lamp. The program was formally inaugurated. During this, the branch head of the institutions, Atul Singh Sir, the experienced teachers imparting education, Vivke Pandey Sir Mantu Sir Neeraj

all over India in which many children get selected every year. Last year, more than 200 children were honored at Mahindra Allahabad branch, Prayagraj. They were told inspiring stories and advised to move forward by setting goals.

# Kareli Police arrested one person with 6 illegal country bombs

Prayagraj: In view of security and law and order, during the suspicious person/vehicle checking operation by Karaili Police, Karaili Police has arrested an accused, from whose possession 6 illegal country bombs were recovered. went. The name of the person arrested in this case is Syed Asaf, who is a resident of Garhi Kala Leader



Road police station Shahganj. Who was arrested from Bakshi Modha Pul police station area. After the arrest, advance legal action was taken as per rules. On the basis of this arrest, a case has been registered at the local police station under the Explosive Substances Act. Criminal history is also registered against the arrested accused. During this arrest, the police team included Inspector Amar Nath Rai, in-charge of Karaili police station, Sub Inspector Harishankar Mishra, Sub Inspector Ashok Kumar, Sub Inspector Manish Kumar Rai, Sub Inspector Banwari Lal, Trainee Sub Inspector Amit Mishra, Ravi Kumar, Constable Mukesh Kumar, and Pankaj Kumar were included. Such action by the police will improve social security and promote safety of people.

# In A First, UP Govt Prepares Question Banks For Students

Prayagraj: In a first, the Uttar Pradesh (UP) basic education department has prepared question banks for more than 25 lakh students of classes 9 and 10 studying in more than 27,000 schools affiliated with the UP Board. These question banks aim to enhance students' preparation for competitive examinations such as engineering and medical entrances.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, along with the State Institute of Science Education (SISE) and subject experts from select universi-

ties, colleges, and secondary schools, has jointly prepared these question banks for science and mathematics, according to officials of the state secondary education department.

Former state project director of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, Vijay Kiran Anand, had entrusted the responsibility of creating the question banks to the State Science Education Institute, Prayagraj, officials said. Manjusha Gupta, the science coordinator at SISE-Prayagraj, said that 12 and 13 chapters had been included in the science question bank of classes 9

and 10, respectively.

Each chapter comprised around 70 questions, including various multiple choice, very short, short, and long answer questions of cognitive, perceptual, applicational, and skill types. Thus, there was a compilation of about 840 questions for class 9 and another 910 questions for class 10 students, she said.

All the questions in the question bank will reinforce the vital concepts of science in the students, and they will be able to understand and practice them automatically, she said.

SISE-Prayagraj's math-

ematics coordinator, Arvind Kumar Gautam, said that the mathematics question bank for classes 9 and 10 consisted of 12 and 14 chapters, respectively. There was a compilation of approximately 912 questions for class 9 and 1,064 questions for class 10 students. At the beginning of each type of question, sample questions had also been given to generate interest among the students, he added.

The question banks prepared based on the NCERT syllabus have been sent by SISE-Prayagraj to the State Council of Educa-

tional Research and Training (SCERT) of Uttar Pradesh in Lucknow.

They are expected to become available to students soon. At present, only question banks prepared and published by private publishers are available in the market.

These question banks aim to provide practice opportunities to achieve desired teaching-learning outcomes and assist students in succeeding in exams. Undoubtedly, these exercises will help clarify concepts among students and enhance their understanding of the subjects.

# Atiq's sons to be interrogated over missing Beretta pistol used in Umesh Pal murder

Prayagraj: Prayagraj police are preparing to interrogate the sons of the late Mafia-politician Atiq Ahmed, Ali and Umar, currently held at Naini Jail and Lucknow Jail respectively, regarding the whereabouts of a missing Beretta pistol allegedly used in the murder of Umesh Pal.

During a police raid on March 21, 2023, a sophisticated foreign-made Colt firearm was discovered in

Atiq's office, alongside other firearms and ammunition. Subsequently, British Bulldog and Walther pistols also were recovered from Atiq's son Asad Ahmed and his associate Gulam after they were killed in an encounter in Jhansi on April 13, 2023. However, the Beretta pistol remains unaccounted for, prompting police interest in its retrieval. Ali and Umar will now face questioning concerning the

missing pistol and the origin of the firearms found.

Sophisticated firearms, among them a rifle used by the assailant Sabir, who is rewarded with Rs.5 lakh, were utilised in the murder of Umesh Pal and his two police guards. Additionally, Asad used an automatic pistol during the incident.

Following the incident, police teams unearthed a substantial cache of firearms and ammunition from

Atiq's partially demolished office at Chakia, which included a Colt pistol among other seized firearms. Moreover, just before Atiq and Ashraf were killed on April 15, another Colt pistol was recovered from a deserted location in the Kasari Masari area. This discovery also yielded ammunition, including cartridges of Pakistani origin.

Atiq in his statement had also mentioned that the

same pistol was utilised in Umesh Pal's murder, a fact corroborated by ballistic reports. Police officials said that Atiq's gang-maintained contacts with arms smugglers who provided foreign-made firearms. These smuggled firearms, originating from Pakistan, were reportedly dropped by drones near the Punjab border. Investigations into this aspect of the case are ongoing, the officials added.

# Formation of Cong Election Coordination Steering Committee

Prayagraj: In view of the Lok Sabha elections, Phulpur and Bhadohi Lok Sabha Election Coordination Steering Committee has been formed on the instructions of the State Congress Committee. Vijay Prakash, Ch. in the committee. There are 51 members including Jitendra Nath, Manish Mishra, Mukund Tiwari, Vivekananda, Shyam Pandey, Fuzail Hashmi, Kishore Varshney, Harikesh Tripathi, Sanjay Tiwari, Ramkishun. According to Gangapur District President

Suresh Yadav, all these prominent Congressmen will play an important role in ensuring the victory of the India Alliance candidates. The committee includes Sudhakar Tiwari, Pramod Patel, Taslimuddin, Dr. Satya Pandey, Ajay Srivastava, Raees Ahmed, Manoj Pasi, Haseeb Ahmed, Jitesh Mishra, Anshuman Patel, Nafees Anwar, Lal Singh Patel, Arshad Ali, Siddha Nath Maurya, Khushnaveeda Farooqui, Reena Devi Bind, Nadeem Ahmed,

Omprakash Tripathi, Chhote Lal Patel, Vinay Dubey, Ram Manorath Saroj, A.K. Pandey, Madhusudan, Parvez Siddiqui, Satyam Kushwaha, Ehtesham Ahmed, Akshay Yadav, Haleem Ansari, Rajesh Rakesh, Parvez Ashfaq, Om Prakash Saroj, Sudhir Dixit, Rakesh Patel, Ajit Bharatiya, Sachchidanand Pandey, RB Singh Patel, Achyutanand Pandey, Vijay Yadav, Saadab Ahmed, Abhay Saroj are included.

# SCHOOL CHALE HUM Twin effort to educate kids and elders in UP

Prayagraj: In the current academic session, 2024-25, adults too will repeat the slogan of School Chale Hum, besides small children. Officials of the UP Basic Education Department have instructed teachers and officials to run the Nav Bharat Literacy Program alongside the School Chalo Abhiyan in schools from Classes 1 to 8, for the first time. The Nav Bharat Literacy Program is aimed at imparting basic education, digital and financial literacy and critical life skills to citizens aged 15 and above, who lost the opportunity to go to school, while the School Chalo Abhiyan is a campaign to enroll children into regular schooling.

Following the decision, during the household survey that is undertaken as part of these initiatives, the government primary and

upper primary school teachers will have to record children aged between six and 14 years and enroll all the children not going to school, while also collecting the details of illiterate people above the age of 15 years in the households.

Instructions have been given to complete the household surveys by May 2024, officials of the state Basic education department said. A target has been given to make 25 lakh illiterate people literate across the state. For this, the scheme will be publicised on a wide scale in all 75 districts, officials added. Principal secretary, basic education, MK Shanmuga Sundaram, has given instructions to pay special attention to the survey of illiterate women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, minorities and disabled

people, they said.

A favourable environment in support of the initiatives will be created by putting up slogans, organising street plays, taking out rallies, putting up posters, banners and hoardings at the Gram Panchayat level in all the districts. Nav Bharat Literacy Program and School Chalo Abhiyan will also be promoted through LED vans.

Confirming the development, Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA)-Prayagraj Praveen Kumar Tiwari said that all headmasters have been instructed to maintain a register in school which will contain the report of the household survey undertaken by the teachers. Along with children aged six to 14, illiterate people above 15 years of age will also be identified so that they can be made literate, he added.

# Contractual services depend on terms of contract: All HC

Prayagraj: The Allahabad high court has held that an employee whose services are entirely contractual has no right to the post, and his service depends on the terms of the contract. Dismissing a writ petition filed by one Mahesh Kumar, a Safai Karamchari appointed on a contract basis, Justice JJ Munir observed, "In this case, the petitioner is not a temporary employee. He is an employee whose services are entirely contractual. Once that is the case, even if he has been selected through some kind of mechanism under a Government Order and appointed on contract, he has no right to the post. There is no lien. In fact, the Uttar Pradesh Government Servant Conduct Rules, 1956 would not apply to him because he is not an employee of the Nagar Palika, governed by those statutes or statutory rules. His terms of service are governed by the contract alone." "The



petitioner's rights are governed exclusively by a contract that does not have any statutory flavour. It is a purely contractual appointment accepted by the petitioner without the rules and

without a lien on any post. The issue of whether the termination is in accordance with the contract or contrary to it, in the absence of a violation of any statute or statutory rules, or at least a statu-

tory contract, is not fit to be determined by this court in the exercise of our writ jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution," he said.

The petitioner was appointed as a Safai

Karamchari, engaged on a contract by the Nagar Palika Parishad, Modi Nagar, Ghaziabad. He has challenged the order dated April 29, 2023, passed by the executive officer, Nagar Palika Parishad, Modi Nagar, Ghaziabad, by which his contract was terminated, and consequently, his service was terminated.

However, while dismissing the writ petition, the court, in its decision dated March 11, said that if the petitioner believed that his services had been terminated in violation of the contract between him and the Nagar Palika, or if the Nagar Palika had engaged in any unfair labour practices in terminating the petitioner's services, it would be open to the petitioner to raise an industrial dispute under the Uttar Pradesh Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. No relief, however, could be provided to the petitioner in the present writ petition.

## Editorial

### India's security and the fencing of the Myanmar border

There are many naysayers who are of the vehemence that the fencing of the entire 1,643 km India-Myanmar border is not a good idea. Such personages — and they unfortunately include people such as a former Indian envoy to Myanmar — cite aspects ranging from the virtual end of the Free Movement Regime (FMR) which permits people living along the border on either side to travel 16 km into each other's country, without visa, for primarily trade to the human aspect pertaining to the demographic contiguity, that characterises both India and Myanmar in the borderlands. But if a dispassionate cost-benefit analysis of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's decision to fence the border is undertaken, then the pros will outnumber the cons. The ongoing turmoil in Manipur is a direct result of the open border with Myanmar. As I have written earlier in these columns, the Valley-Based-Insurgent Groups (VBIGs), including the United National Liberation Front (Koirang), the People's Liberation Front (Manipur), the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak, the Kangleipak Communist Party and the Kanglei Yawol Kanna Lup (collectively known as the Group of Five (G-5), which is the new avatar of the Coordination Committee (CorCom) after the return of the United National Liberation Front (Pamei) to the mainstream, are billeted in three neat clusters in Myanmar's Sagaing Division. After the military takeover of February 1, 2021, the above underground groups came to an understanding with the Myanmar Army (MA). The VBIGs will no longer be touched, harassed or ousted from their safe havens in what has come to be known as the Northern, Central and Southern clusters in Sagaing Division. In return, the VBIGs would have to aid the MA to quell the civil unrest that erupted after the coup d'état. The development not only led to an end to the modicum of military cooperation that had been witnessed in the years preceding the military takeover by way of Operations Sunrise-I and Sunrise-II, which demolished several India Insurgent Groups' (IIGs) camps in and around Taga (a hunting ground for IIGs just West of the Chindwin river), but the unprecedented situation in Manipur saw hordes of VBIG cadres entering Manipur to battle the Kukis and the security forces. The fact that the porous border also facilitated illegal migration, drugs and arms smuggling from Myanmar by social formations that had affiliations with people in Manipur and have begun to occupy forest lands in the state seems to be borne out by a plethora of facts. Also, several thousand anti-Junta rebels have fled to India since the February 1, 2021 military coup in Myanmar. Of late, even MA personnel had begun to enter Mizoram in a bid to escape the pursuing People's Defence Force (the National Unity Government's armed wing) and various ethnic militias. It is in this backdrop that I wish to examine the issue of the India-Myanmar border fence. At the very outset, it must be understood that fences are not walls. They are created to manage legal, regulated movement. I was an international visitor to the United States at the invitation of the US Department of State in 2003. One of the tours took 25 other law enforcers and conflict theorists from around the world as well to many places in the US including the US-Mexico border in San Diego. The manner in which the completely (and concretely, not merely fenced) sealed border is run has to be seen to be believed. We watched as US law enforcers carefully checked the credentials of Mexicans entering the US territory for a day's work.

# India and the problems with Chinese manufacturing overcapacity

Manufacturing overcapacity is a cause of concern for any economy. However, it has wider global ramifications. For instance, the US steel industry also went through this phase. In the 1970s and 1980s, the US steel industry experienced significant overcapacity. Despite declining demand for steel in the United States due to various economic and technological changes, steel manufacturers continued to produce at high levels. This overproduction led to a glut of steel in the market, causing prices to plummet and profits to erode. The industry's overcapacity resulted in severe consequences, including widespread plant closures, job losses, and a long period of economic hardship for communities reliant on steel production. The situation was exacerbated by the industry's slow response to global competition and technological innovation, which made it difficult to adjust to the changing market conditions. Relating this to the current situation of manufacturing overcapacity in China, we see parallels in the potential for economic disruption. Like the US steel industry, China's aggressive expansion in manufacturing capacities, particularly in green goods like EVs and solar panels, is creating a surplus that exceeds both domestic and global



demand. This overcapacity risks leading to similar outcomes as those experienced by the US steel industry, including price pressures, reduced profitability for manufacturers, and potential trade tensions as other countries respond to the influx of cheap Chinese products. The situation is compounded by subsidies and state support, which can distort market signals and lead to inefficient allocation of resources. But why is this happening now? The answer is simple. Chinese lending is shifting from the property sector to manufacturing, leading to concerns about overcapacity. Within a span of less than four years, Chinese banks have transitioned from granting over one trillion dollars in new loans annually to the property sector to observing a net reduction in

outstanding debt for the first time since records began in 2005. In contrast, the third quarter of 2023 saw these banks extend nearly \$700 billion in new loans to the manufacturing sector, often at interest rates below market levels. This surge in lending has facilitated the rapid expansion of new manufacturing facilities across China, specializing in products like electric vehicles (EVs) and batteries.

However, with domestic consumption not being able to fully absorb this increased production, there are reports of China dumping this overcapacity in the international markets. In the lithium-ion battery cell industry, for example, the expansion has surpassed demand, leading to predictions of industry consolidation. The utilisation rates of gigafactories, which

are crucial for battery production, were at 45 per cent in 2022 and have further declined in the first half of 2023, highlighting the extent of the overcapacity problem. The oversupply has led to drastic price reductions in key components, such as lithium carbonate, a critical material for rechargeable batteries. Prices have plummeted more than 80 per cent from their peak, which has had a significant impact on the profitability and sustainability of companies within the sector. It's becoming increasingly evident that this maneuver may not be merely an economic realignment but could also be construed as a calculated move by China to unsettle global market dynamics. This development demands a closer examination, as its repercussions extend beyond national borders, challenging the equilibrium of international trade and industry competition. In fact, the US has recently warned Beijing against dumping goods on global markets as it fears China would be easing domestic overcapacity with cheap exports. However, addressing overcapacity has become a persistent challenge within Chinese industrial strategies. This issue, akin to a resilient virus, proves tough to eradicate and necessitates ongoing

efforts to manage. Typically, this involves state-led consolidation of industries, which results in the elimination of less competitive firms. The survivors, having weathered the storm, emerge stronger and more aggressive, particularly in international markets, thereby intensifying the original problem. BYD is greatest example. It has become world's largest EV company, overtaking Tesla. The impact of this overcapacity is multifaceted. In Europe, the influx of cost-competitive Chinese EVs, for example, is threatening the continent's nascent EV production, prompting the European Commission to launch anti-subsidy investigations into imports of Chinese-made passenger battery electric vehicles. Similar concerns are arising in other green technology sectors, with potential for further trade disputes and investigations into China's dominance in clean energy supply chains, including wind turbines and heat pumps. Moreover, the situation in China's manufacturing sector is characterised by heightened volatility, with industries like steel and automobiles experiencing significant fluctuations in demand and profit margins. This volatility, exacerbated by the uncertain global economic environment since 2008.

### Modi government's move to regulate and elevate online gaming

India's online gaming industry, despite being the world's second-largest market for online gamers, grapples with regulatory inconsistencies. These challenges hinder not only investments but also talent retention, innovation, and growth projections. Yet, there is a palpable sense of optimism within the ecosystem. In their last two terms, the Modi administration has introduced many progressive reforms including - GST which unified the complex indirect tax structure into a single tax system; UPI and Jan Dhan Yojna, which revolutionised the way payments are made in India; or the recently announced Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, that establishes a comprehensive legal frame-

work for data protection, aligning with global standards for privacy and data security. As it embarks on a third term, the government seems intent to regulate the online gaming space, despite the challenges in defining an ideal regulatory framework. There are ongoing efforts with the formation of an 'informal Group of Ministers' (GoM) to resolve these issues comprehensively. This group, according to media sources, encompasses key ministries that are directly or indirectly involved with the sector i.e. MeitY, MIB, MoF, MHA and PMO. Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar's remarks at a recent event underscore the government's commitment to an open, trans-

parent, and consultative approach to regulation. As the government embarks on its ambitious journey to transform India into a Viksit Bharat by 2047, it's imperative to recognise a sunrise sector such as online gaming as a pivotal force in this quest. The economic impact of the online gaming industry is already evident. With the implementation of the new tax framework in October 2023, the sector's GST contribution surged by 400 per cent to Rs. 1,200 crore per month. Regulating skill-based real-money games, which are a major revenue driver, could further enhance government earnings and job creation. Currently employing over one lakh professionals directly and indirectly.

### India and Greece: Millennia-old dialogue between two civilisations

Since childhood, we have started learning about the Indian and Greek sages, from Kautilya and Manu to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. In antiquity, both countries had magical and universal shared values of time, space, ideas, and philosophies. Prime Minister of Greece Kyriakos Mitsotakis was on a state visit to New Delhi and was also the chief guest of the well-known Raisina Dialogue organised by the Observer Research Foundation, a Delhi-based India's premier think tank. PM Mitsotakis came to New Delhi along with the business delegation for the two-day visit starting February 21. This was the first head-of-state visit from Greece to India in 15 years. The last prime ministerial visit from Greece to India occurred in 2008, when former Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis visited India. PM Mitsotakis's visit came after India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Athens on August 25, 2023, at the invitation of the Greek prime minister. Modi's visit to Athens filled the 40-year drought of bilateral visits from the Indian side in 2023. The last prime minister's visit to Greece occurred in September 1983, when Indira Gandhi travelled to the country.



Sharing traditions across cultures

Modi's visit in August 2023, he interacted with the Indian diaspora, where the famous songs of Shahrukh Khan's movies were sung. **Building bridges** In the past, following India's nuclear tests in May 1998, when most Western countries were contemplating sanctions against India, the Greek defence minister visited India in December 1998. The visit was important because it was the first defence minister from a NATO country after the tests, and it signed an MOU on defence cooperation. In defence, high-level dialogues and MoUs are at the ministerial level. India-Greece defence cooperation gained momentum after 1994 ministerial visits, leading to a 1998 MoU. Interactions were limited to occasional ship and aircraft visits until 2017, when renewed engagement included joint exercises and industry participation. During

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### From West to India, reversing the brain drain

Western media is full of stories of Indian entrepreneurs "fleeing" to the West. Sections of the Indian media parrot this narrative. In a globalised world, Indian startup entrepreneurs obviously seek global markets. Hubs in Dubai, Singapore, London and San Francisco have long attracted talented Indian entrepreneurs. But the "brain drain" theory is now being turned on its head.



According to several startup entrepreneurs, the fear of missing out (FOMO) is about missing India's digital, financial and infrastructure boom. Europe is in recession and traumatised by the grinding

Russia-Ukraine war. Japan slipped into recession in the October-December 2023 quarter. China's economic slowdown and geopolitical tensions with the West have alarmed foreign businesses.

Dubai and other Gulf entrepots remain a hub for global Indian firms but the Gaza conflict could disrupt trade in the region, especially around the Red Sea. India in contrast is a picture of economic stability

and opportunity. It's not only the business environment that draws successful Indian entrepreneurs back home. As Hemant Mohapatra, who worked for several years in the West for AMD, Google and Andreesen Horowitz, wrote in a blog on Medium: "For those that don't know me well, I went to the US in 2003 and have been visiting India 1-2 times a year till 2014 and often 3+ times a year since 2014. So I've been able to observe the small shifts better than most locals did, and of course, the macro-trends that are now obvious to most. "India fintech is way, way ahead of the US/EU.

## We have delivered on Syama Prasad Ji's slogan - One Nation, One Emblem, One Leader: Amit Shah

**Chandigarh:** Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Amit Shah, during campaigns for Lok Sabha elections, is addressing election rallies across the country. Amit Shah, while addressing a massive public gathering in Paloura, Jammu, stated that, "Syama Prasad Ji gave the slogan - one nation, two emblems, two constitutions, and two leaders will not work. After the abolition of Article 370, today this slogan has been fulfilled. Like the entire country, the tricolour is waving with pride and honour in Jammu and Kashmir today."

Congress, PDP, and NC kept Jammu and Kashmir away from democracy, their representatives coming as family heirs, and sometimes there were no elections in the villages. For decades, Jammu and Kashmir suffered from separatism, terrorism, and stone-pelting. During the times of Farooq Abdullah and PDP, there were the

most fake encounters in Jammu and Kashmir, and the youth had guns in their hands. In the shadows of Article 370, strikes were announced in Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the skilled guidance of Home Minister Amit Shah, the decision to repeal Article 370 was taken on August 5, 2019, after which terrorism is taking its last breaths. Those youth who were pelting stones, today have laptops in their hands. Today, the slogan is not of Pakistan but resonates with 'Bharat Mata ki Jai!' in Jammu and Kashmir. Elections have been held in nearly 40,000 panchayats and the residents there have received democratic rights. The opposition's allegation also proved baseless that giving reservations to others meant reducing reservations for the Gujjars. The Modi government has provided reservations to the deprived

without reducing reservations for the Gujjars. It should be clearly understood that Amit Shah, the guardian of India's unity and integrity, believes that Kashmir is ours and we are ready to sacrifice for it. Amit Shah, who has revealed the dark truth of the past to the opposition, is ready with full preparation to win the electoral battle. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have seen how after independence, for decades, Kashmir suffered the scourge of terrorism. The duo of Modi and Shah has worked to truly make Kashmir heaven on earth. The track record of the Modi government's 10 years clearly indicates that the first choice of the country is the Bharatiya Janata Party. The people of Jammu and Kashmir know that the Bharatiya Janata Party is not among those who grab. After the removal of Article 370, there has been development in Jammu and Kashmir. and more than 2 crore

## PAT Day 1 marked by shortage of question and answer booklets

**Mumbai:** As the Progressive Assessment Test (PAT) for class 3 to 8 students of government and aided schools in the state began on Thursday, a number of schools complained of shortage of question-cum-answer booklets. On the very first day, schools had to take photocopies of the first language paper. The maths and third language English papers will be held on Friday and Saturday, respectively. The question papers were set by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT). School heads said despite sending details of the number of

students appearing for PAT, the SCERT on Wednesday directed schools to take photocopies of the question papers wherever there was a shortage. Schools also complained of not receiving the answer keys to the questions. Teachers assess papers based on answer keys. Mahendra Ganpule, spokesperson of the Maharashtra School Principals' Association highlighted the need for improved planning by the education department. Ganpule said, "Despite the challenges, teachers managed to distribute papers on the first day, albeit with additional effort and expense. The issue was more

pronounced in remote areas and was exacerbated by a lack of manpower at the taluka level for distribution." Over one crore students are participating in these exams, which are part of the Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States project funded by the World Bank. The PAT aims to enhance the quality and governance of school education and includes a basic test followed by two comprehensive assessments. The mandatory test is to determine the learning outcome of students. It is based on second semester syllabi. Schools that incurred expenses on photocopying question papers last year.

## Girders launched between Kalyan & Kasara till early Sunday morning

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

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

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

## CAPSULES

### Rush at OPDs as heat soars, doctors sound dehydration-exhaustion alert

**KOLKATA:** The hot and discomfort weather conditions in the past few days are taking a toll on the health of Kolkatans, especially those who have to remain outdoors for hours. Even though none of the city hospitals have recorded any heat stroke cases so far, doctors are getting a good number of people with heat exhaustion and dehydration. Health experts have cautioned people to take all precautions when outdoors to avoid severe consequences. "Because of such hot and humid weather, the people who are engaged in outdoor activities are prone to develop heat exhaustion when the body starts sweating a lot due to the rise of the core body temperature resulting in dehydration. Heat exhaustion makes the person feel weak, dizzy and thirsty. I have seen two to four such cases in the past one week, mostly middle aged men, probably due to their higher exposure to the sun," said internal medicine specialist Joydeep Ghosh of Fortis Hospital, Anandapur. opd B P Poddar Hospital had tended to 14 persons in its emergency in the past three days, most of them down with extreme dehydration making them unwell while they were out in the sun. "37 patients came to our OPD with heat related issues. While most of them were middle-aged patients, some were school children. We had to admit two senior citizens because in addition to dehydration they had other issues like BP fluctuation and sodium, potassium imbalance," said Supriyo Chakrabart.

## NSE to launch derivatives on Nifty Next 50 Index (NIFTYNXT50) from April 24, 2024



**HISAR :** National Stock Exchange of India (NSE), the world's No 1 derivatives exchange in the year 2023 based on contracts traded, has received approval for Derivatives on Nifty Next 50 index (NIFTYNXT50) from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and will launch these contracts from April 24, 2024.

Exchange will offer 3 serial monthly index futures and index options contract cycle. The cash settled derivatives contracts will expire on the last Friday of the

expiry month. The Nifty Next 50 Index represents 50 companies from Nifty 100 after excluding the Nifty 50 companies. As on March 2024, the index had top sector representation from financial services sector with 23.76% weight followed by capital goods sector with 11.91% and consumer services with 11.57%. The index was introduced on January 1,

1997, with base date and base value being November 03, 1996, and 1000 respectively. Over the years, the index methodology has undergone revision. The index computation methodology was revised to Free Float Market Capitalisation weighted method from May 4, 2009.

Subsequently, weight capping was introduced for con-

stituent stocks on which derivatives were not available. This was revised in 2023 to cumulative weight of non-F&O stocks capped at 10% and non-F&O stocks in the index are individually capped at 4.5% on quarterly rebalance dates. The market capitalization of index constituents stands at Rs 70 trillion representing about 18% of total market capital of the stocks listed on NSE as on March 29, 2024. The aggregate daily average turnover of index constituents stood at Rs 9,560 crores accounting for around 12% of cash market turnover in FY24.

## Bangur Cement launches an innovative multimedia campaign inspiring citizens



**PANIPAT / ROHTAK :** Bangur Cement unveiled a new multimedia campaign inspiring the citizens of the nation to exercise their right to vote. The campaign, 'Vote Solid, Desh Solid', highlights the importance of each individual's vote in making the nation more solid. The campaign is innovative because it is a sequel to the previous brand launch campaign featuring popular Bollywood star Sunny

Deol. The key message of the campaign is 'Vote Solid, Desh Solid.' Just as Bangur Cement helps you build a solid home, you can help build a solid nation by exercising your right to vote. Further, the brand encourages citizens to take a pledge to vote,

through its "Vote ka Vachan" button on its website [votekavachan.bangurcement.com](http://votekavachan.bangurcement.com). Bangur Cement has pledged to donate 1 KG of cement for every pledge to vote which would be used for social welfare purposes. Bangur Cement is

tying up with relevant NGOs and Self Help Groups to help fulfil this pledge. Speaking about the campaign, Mr Neeraj Akhoury, Managing Director, Shree Cement, said, "Bangur Cement's 'Vote Solid Desh Solid' campaign and the 'Vote Ka Vachan' pledge are a continued reflection of our commitment for building a progressive nation with inclusive growth through our brands, products and network."

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Exchange will offer 3 serial monthly index futures and index options contract cycle. The cash settled derivatives contracts will expire on the last Friday of the expiry month. On the occasion, Shri Sriram Krishnan, Chief Business Development Officer, NSE said "The introduction of derivatives on the Nifty Next 50 index (NIFTYNXT50) will

### The Nifty Next 50 index will represent the space between the Nifty 50 index comprising the top large & liquid stocks and the Nifty Midcap Select index comprising the top large & liquid mid capitalised stocks".

well complement the existing index derivatives product suite. The Nifty Next 50 index will represent the space between the Nifty 50 index comprising the top large & liquid stocks and the Nifty Midcap Select index comprising the top large & liquid mid capitalised stocks". The Nifty Next 50 Index represents 50 companies from Nifty 100 after excluding the Nifty 50 companies. As on March 2024, the

index had top sector representation from financial services sector with 23.76% weight followed by capital goods sector with 11.91% and consumer services with 11.57%. The index was introduced on January 1, 1997, with base date and base value being November 03, 1996, and 1000 respectively. Over the years, the index methodology has undergone revision.

## Congress fired bullets at unarmed youth demanding Uttarakhand: Amit Shah

**Chandigarh:** Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation and senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Amit Shah, fully committed to ensuring party's victory and making Modi the Prime Minister for the third time, while addressing a massive public gathering in Kotdwar, Uttarakhand, reminisced about the past, saying, "When the demand for Uttarakhand was being made, the Congress government fired bullets at unarmed youth."

The country knows that during the demand for Uttarakhand, the opposition opposed it and bullets were fired at the youth. Despite all opposition, Atal Ji created Uttarakhand and

now Modi Ji is developing Uttarakhand. Tourism is being promoted today to stop migration from Uttarakhand. Roads, railways, transportation, and airports are being developed in Uttarakhand at a cost of crores of rupees. The Vibrant Village program is being extended to every village in Uttarakhand.

The visionary Prime Minister Modi is leaving no stone unturned to make the millets of Uttarakhand globally famous.

The Modi government guarantees that within five years, each village bordering China will have a population of more than 1980. If the Modi government is guaranteeing, who will not believe it? In the past

10 years, under the leadership of Modi Ji and the skilled guidance of Amit Shah, the BJP government has fulfilled every promise it made. Whether it was the removal of Article 370, bringing in the Uniform Civil Code, abolishing triple talaq, ending poverty, or building the Ram temple - the Modi government has fulfilled its guarantee in every field. Uttarakhand is the first state in the country where the Uniform Civil Code was implemented first, and now plans are underway to implement the UCC in all states across the country. The Ram Janmabhoomi issue was resolved during the Modi government, and after years, when Ram Lalla celebrates his

birthday in his grand temple on Ram Navami, the entire country will shed tears of joy. The allegation of the Congress party is also baseless that if the BJP gets 400 seats, reservation will be abolished.

For 10 years, the Bharatiya Janata Party has had a full majority, but no such step has been taken. Amit Shah's Chanakya policies have expanded the BJP's sphere across the country. Uttarakhand is already waving the saffron flag, which is an indication that in 2024, with more than 400 seats, the Bharatiya Janata Party's flag will wave higher, and Modi Ji will become Prime Minister for the third consecutive time.

### Met museum head talks art of repatriation and relevance

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

## Air India was fined Rs 1.10 crore by the DGCA for safety infractions

The aviation regulator DGCA fined Air India Rs 1.10 crore for operating Boeing 777 aircraft that were leased to the United States in breach of safety regulations. This is Air India's second penalty in a week from the regulator. A former Air India pilot filed a complaint with the regulator, claiming that the airline was operating Boeing 777 aircraft to the US without the necessary emergency oxygen supply system in place. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) conducted a thorough inquiry into the situation and served the airline with a show-cause notice. "Since the said operations of the leased aircraft were not in line with regulatory/ OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) performance limits, DGCA has initiated enforcement action and imposed a penalty of Rs 1.10 crore on Air India," according to a notification from DGCA. Air India did not immediately



respond to inquiries regarding the punishment. The announcement said that following receipt of a voluntary safety report by an airline employee accusing Air India aircraft on specific long-range terrain-critical routes of safety violations, the regulator conducted a thorough investigation. A show-cause notice was sent to Air India, according to the DGCA, since the investigation's first findings suggested the airline was not in compliance.

The press release omitted certain details. Before pursuing enforcement action, the DGCA examined the airline's answer to the show

cause notice in light of the performance limitations outlined in the documents provided by the OEM and the requirements outlined under applicable statutory provisions, according to the announcement. The pilot, who had been a B777 commander, lodged a complaint with the airline on October 29, 2023, over its policy of not having the necessary emergency oxygen supply equipment on board. According to reports at the time, the issue was that Air India was using leased B777 aircraft on flights that had a chemically manufactured oxygen system that lasted for around 12 minutes.

## The government is seeking proposals to establish ACC units for battery storage under the PLI program

Delhi : The Center declared that selected bidders would be able to establish massive battery production facilities with a 10 GWh capacity and an estimated budget of Rs 3,620 crore by participating in rebidding under a PLI initiative for Advanced Chemistry Cells (ACC). Starting on Wednesday, the global tender documents can be seen online. Bids will be accepted on April 23, 2024, and the deadline is April 22, 2024. Manufacturing of technology-neutral ACC in India is encouraged by the PLI project "National



Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell Battery Storage'. "With this bidding process, the prospective applicants can submit their bids to set up a domestic manufacturing facility for ACC, which will help them qualify for incentives under the PLI ACC scheme," the ministry of heavy industry

said. The country's capital goods, automotive, and heavy electrical equipment industries are the three that the ministry supports in their development and expansion. Mahendra Nath Pandey, the Union Minister of Heavy Industries, stated that the ministry is fully committed to advancing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a developed and self-sufficient India. It is also supporting the expansion of India's manufacturing capabilities and exports in the automotive and automobile component sector.

## Punjab National Bank Q3 Results: Tripled net profit, improved asset quality

Delhi: Punjab National Bank (PNB) recorded a net profit of Rs 2,222.8 crore for the December quarter of FY 2023-24, increasing 253.49 percent from the previous year. The bank's gross NPA dropped from 9.76 percent last quarter to 6.24 percent. Net NPA for the quarter was 0.96

percent, up from 3.30 percent year-over-year. The stock rose 0.84 percent to Rs 102 on BSE at 2.50 pm. In Q3 FY24, the bank's net interest income (NII) rose 12.13 percent to Rs 10,293 crore and operating profit rose 10.75 percent to Rs 6,331 crore. PNB credit cost rose 61 bps to

1.26 percent in Q3 FY'24 from 1.87 percent in Q3 FY'23. As of December 23, New Delhi bank provision coverage ratio (PCR) rose 911 bps YoY to 94.28 percent. As of December 31, 2023, the Bank has 10,108 domestic branches with 12,455 ATMs and 29,768 BCs.

## The Centre places a 15% import charge on gold and silver findings

Delhi: "Gold or silver findings" are little components like hooks, clasps, clamps, pins, catches, and screw backs that hold jewelry. A Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs announcement boosted gold, silver, and coin import duty to 15% through 5% Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC). The move is meant to prevent gold and silver import duty abuse. According to the notification, "gold or silver findings" denote a minor component such as a hook, clasp, clamp, pin,



catch, or screw back used to hold jewelry in place. In addition, the finance ministry raised import tariffs on precious metal-containing

used catalysts. The duty has been raised to 14.35 percent, including 10 BCD and 4.35 AIDC (Agriculture Infrastructure

Development Cess) with SWS exemption. Since gold imports have increased in the last two months, a government official told Reuters that the action intends to prevent tariff circumvention on gold and silver bars. Just click here Financial minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed an agriculture infrastructure and development cess (AIDC) on alcohol, gold, silver, cotton, peas, apples, petrol, and diesel in the 2021-22 budget. Government imposed 2.5% AIDC on gold, silver, and dore bars.

## HDFC Bank expects ROE to return to pre-merger levels in 4-5 years

Delhi: HDFC Bank's return on equity was above 17% before the merger with Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (HDFC), but it dropped to 15.8% as of December-end. It expects to restore a key financial metric to pre-merger levels after 4-5 years. "We will see a period of consolidation for 4-5 years during which growth rates and some metrics will differ from what we were used to in the bank, but this is a different institution after the merger," Reuters said. "We



are focused on profitable growth and will see return on equity return to pre-merger levels in 4-5 years," the person said. The source added the economic environment and the bank's strategy deci-

sions to adapt will affect other indicators including net interest margin, deposit and loan growth. HDFC Bank shares have fallen more than 15% since the institution released its third-

quarter FY24 earnings on January 16. The bank saw a 33% YoY increase in net profit to ₹16,372 crore and a 24% YoY increase in net interest income to ₹28,470 crore. Analysts worry about the bank's profitability and deposit growth. Retail deposits increased 2.9% QoQ while the bank's deposit base grew 1.9%. Since March 2023, management has prudently lowered the wholesale deposit base from ~17% to 16% of total deposits in December 2023.

## Tata Steel reports a profit in Q3 despite losses in Europe's operations

Delhi: Despite its European business continuing to lose funds, Tata Steel managed to turn the corner in the quarter that concluded on December 31 because of improved profitability in its India operation. In comparison to a loss of ₹2,502 crore in the same quarter last year and ₹6,511 crore in the previous quarter, the company recorded a consolidated profit of ₹522 crore during the quarter. The domestic division of Tata Steel, which posted a pre-tax, depreciation, and interest profit of 8,257 crore as opposed to 5,335 crore the previous year, was the main driver of the turnaround. A loss of 2,872 crore before tax, depreciation, interest, and special items was declared by Europe in



the meantime. "The end-of-life state of several of its heavy end assets continues to cause production shortfalls for the UK business," stated Koushik Chatterjee, executive director and chief financial officer of Tata Steel.

He added that the margins of the better performing Netherlands company were also affected by the muted demand. Tata Steel's managing director and chief

executive, T.V. Narendran, insisted that the business climate remained challenging even if the company made progress during the quarter.

"Global operating environment has been complex, with economic slowdown in China and geopolitics weighing on commodity prices in general," he stated. According to him, China exported 7-8 million tonnes of steel per month during the December quarter, the most since 2015. This has hurt profitability as well as global steel pricing, he claimed. "Despite this context, Tata Steel India has delivered better margins aided by higher deliveries as well as realisations on a QoQ basis," he stated.

## Payments Bank banned from selling new FASTags

● "During the audit, various complaints were received from the auditor that the bank did not cooperate with them in carrying out the audit"

Delhi: After an audit discovered that Paytm Payments Bank was not complying with the service level agreement, Indian Highways Management Company (IHMCL), NHAI's toll division, prevented the bank from issuing new FASTags. New toll plazas in the National Electronic Toll Collection, which covers the whole NH network, are also prohibited. IHMCL has also asked why Paytm Payments Bank should not be penalized for non-compliance.

However, the bank's FASTag customers will be unaffected. Paytm is a major Electronic



Tolling Tool issuer. Paytm Payments Bank ignored inquiries and requested delays. NHAI officials said other businesses are under investigation and may face similar action in the coming weeks. After the RBI froze savings bank account openings, the move was made. IHMCL said it imposed limitations after an audit after many customer complaints.

"During the audit, various complaints were received from the auditor that the bank did not cooperate with them in carrying out the audit," the agency acknowledged as "a matter of concern".

## Beauty industry expanding more quickly than fashion: CEO of Myntra

Delhi: In the beauty market, where well-funded competitors like Reliance and Tata Group have been rapidly expanding, Walmart's Myntra is placing its bets. There is a noticeable rivalry in the area. Huda Beauty, a Dubai-based brand, was added to Reliance's Tira and Myntra's lineup last week. Nandita Sinha, the CEO of Myntra, projects that the personal care and beauty sector would reach \$30 billion by

## Moto Hero wants e-bikes over 4 lakh

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



## In FY22, Byju's losses exceeded 8, or, up 80%

Delhi: Due to delayed MCA filings, failed edtech startup Byju's consolidated losses rose to Rs 8,245 crore in FY22. The company lost Rs 4,564 crore in FY21. In FY22, operations revenue rose to Rs 5,014 crore from Rs 2,280 crore.



The startup's auditor, BDO (MSKA & Associates), called the firm's continuous losses and disputes with lenders over a \$1.2 billion term loan B "material uncertainty" that "may cast significant doubt on the group's ability to continue as a going concern". "However... The management has undertaken various measures to improve its operating financial condition, is also in the process of securing necessary funding arrangements and exploring sale of assets as needed, and hence is confident regarding the future viability of the group," stated the auditor. According to reports, Byju's is in talks to raise \$150-300 million through a rights issue at a valuation of about \$2 billion, nearly 90% lower than its peak valuation of \$22 billion, due to a liquidity shortage. The company's FY22 losses climbed by over 80% due to rising expenses, which rose to almost Rs 13,000 crore from Rs 7,027 crore in FY21. Byju's noted that WhiteHat Jr. and Osmo's performance affected its financials. Two of the company's key acquisitions lost around Rs 3,000 crore in FY22. "These businesses were scaled down significantly

## House asks CS to fix problems in govt hospitals within a week

**New Delhi:**

Complaining of shortage of medicines and inadequate lab tests in hospitals, mohalla clinics and dispensaries, Delhi Assembly on Friday passed a resolution demanding a solution to the issue within a week.

The Legislative Assembly directed chief secretary Naresh Kumar to eliminate shortcomings in state-run health facilities and present a daily report to the health minister.

"A meeting of the Delhi Legislative Assembly will be convened on Friday, March 22, at 11 am, where the chief secretary will personally present a detailed report on this matter through the health minister," the resolution read. It was passed by a voice vote in the House. The resolution was brought after govt realised that a similar move last week to address water and sewer-related issues had resulted in Delhi Jal Board acting on a war footing under



direct supervision of the chief secretary and resolving a large number of problems raised by MLAs across the city. Health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said the city's poor were distressed due to the shortage of medicines and laboratory tests in mohalla clinics, hospitals and dispensaries.

He told the House that medicines and other supplies are procured through a standard process and new tenders are issued every year before the current one expires. "A tender was issued for medicines on Dec 21, 2022. The officials

continued to conduct technical evaluations of that tender while the previous one expired.

The current tender is also expiring in March but the supplies of medicines have not been received," Bharadwaj said. Due to this, medicines are running out. "Why is no action being taken against the health secretary, director-general of health services and officials of the central procurement agency who are obstructing the supply? Such officials should be prosecuted under the Criminal Act," Bharadwaj said.

## Polls pitchfork illegal colonies to centrestage

**NEW DELHI:** It's inevitable that once the poll bugle is sounded in the capital, unauthorised colonies and their residents get the kind of attention they crave for round the year. Regularisation of these colonies and their redevelopment have always been one of the hot button issues raised ahead of parliamentary and assembly elections in the capital.

unauthorised colonies Since 2008, when Sheila Dikshit-led Congress govt promised regularisation of 1,639 such settlements, spread over govt, private and agri-



cultural land, the assurances of better civic amenities, piped water supply, sewer connection to each household and better road network have been considered as the ticket to electoral success. With the issuing of provisional regularisation certificates to

1,218 colonies, Congress ensured its return to power by winning 43 of 70 seats in the 2008 assembly polls. The subsequent elections saw various political parties making a renewed pitch for better facilities, regularisation and ownership rights.

## 2 Indian Coast Guard sailors arrested for minor's rape

**Mumbai:** Two naviks (sailors) of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) were recently arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a colleague's minor daughter in the city. The crime took place in the home of one of the accused last year. The two accused were

arrested following an FIR registered. The case was registered following a complaint by the minor through an email to senior ICG officials on March 8. The two have been booked for gang rape of a woman under 16), 506II (criminal intimidation) and 34 (common intention.

Wednesday, which remanded them to four days in police custody. They have been booked under Indian Penal Code sections 376DA (punishment for gang rape of a woman under 16), 506II (criminal intimidation) and 34 (common intention).

## Unlock Aaftab for 8 hours a day: HC

**New Delhi:** Delhi High Court directed the Tihar Jail authorities to allow Aaftab Poonawala, the main accused in the Shradha Walker murder case, to remain out in the open for eight hours in jail premises, before lodging him in a solitary cell at night. A bench of justices Suresh Kumar Kait and Girish Kathpalia granted the accused relief on a petition filed by him, contending that under the garb of security, he cannot be kept in solitary confinement. Aaftab's lawyer claimed that unlike other inmates who are taken out for eight hours a



day, Aaftab is allowed to be out for an hour each in the morning and evening before being sent back to solitary confinement for the remaining time. "We direct the jail authorities to unlock him for eight hours, as applicable to other prisoners, and during the night, he be lodged

in a solitary cell," the court observed, while hearing the plea. Justifying the strict conditions imposed on Aaftab, the counsel for the jail authorities submitted that the accused was not kept with other inmates due to a threat perception as he may be attacked. He said a trial court had earlier

passed directions with respect to giving security to Aaftab after he was attacked while being taken to the forensic science lab in Rohini. However, urging the court to intervene, Aaftab's lawyer said his client is in any case allowed "zero" human interaction in jail. He further informed the court that Aaftab is being kept in solitary confinement even though he has not committed any "jail offence". Aaftab is accused of strangling his live-in partner Walkar and chopping her body into pieces in 2022.

## ED opposes closure report in Rs 25,000-crore MSCB scam

**MUMBAI:** Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed an intervention application in court opposing the closure report by Economic Offences Wing (EOW) in the Rs 25,000-crore Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (MSCB) scam. It is the second time the agency has filed such an application. The first one was rejected four years ago when the case was under investigation. Recently, EOW submitted a closure report in the MSCB scam after further investigation against Dy CM Ajit



Pawar and MLA Rohit Pawar, prompting ED to intervene. ED initial intervention in 2020 came before filing of the chargesheet in the money laundering case that the agency was investigating.

The court had rejected the ED inter-

vention application, stating that the agency was not the complainant or the aggrieved party. Now since the chargesheet has been filed in the case and the court had taken cognisance of it, ED took the stand that it is an 'aggrieved' party

now as the EOW's closure report will affect their case. In 2023, ED filed its first chargesheet against Jarandeshwar Sugar Mills, linked to deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar.

The chargesheet mentioned Ajit Pawar's connection to the company but did not name him as an accused. Subsequently, a supplementary chargesheet was filed naming NCP MLA Prajakt Tanpure and others. Recently, ED attached a sugar mill owned by a company of Rohit Pawar.

## Guidelines issued to make campuses inclusive for transpersons

**MUMBAI:** In an effort to make college campuses more inclusive, the state govt has for the first time come out with detailed guidelines for transgender students. Initiating action against colleges for refusing admissions on the basis of gender, reserving a section in hostels for transgender students and establishing cells to address issues of discrimination, mental harassment, sexual exploitation or any other violence against them, are some of the guidelines enlisted in the government resolution (GR) on Friday. The GR has come close on the heels of the govt's first-ever policy for transgender individuals approved by the cabinet earlier this week.



In December last year, the department had asked colleges and universities to offer free-of-cost education to transgender students and bear their entire tuition fees. Institutions have been asked to strictly follow the fee waiver policy in the new guidelines. These are in line with the National Education Policy, 2020, that speaks about making campuses inclusive for all students. A govt official said the department's policy was ready and since the state came out with its overarching policy, they also decided to release specific guidelines for higher

education institutions. To cater to the needs of all transgender students, colleges are expected to appoint coordinators to provide counselling, academic guidance and career advice. All non-agricultural universities, private and deemed universities and affiliated colleges in the state are expected to strictly follow the provisions of The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, stated the guidelines. Institutions need to adopt an inclusive policy to tackle issues of gender bias, negligence and segregation based on sexuality, it added. ensure equal opportunities for these students, institutions should organise awareness activities for both students and teaching/non-teaching staff.

## Cattle traders 'forced to pay protection money', lodge plaint

**MUMBAI:** The cattle traders have lodged a complaint that despite paying all the government taxes, including cattle taxes, they are forced to pay "protection money" to the goons on the highway. Adil Kathawala, a cattle trader, has lodged an FIR at Deonar police station against four persons, including two transporters who threatened them to book them in false cases and extorted Rs 60 per cattle every time they transported goats to Karnataka traders.

The Deonar police have booked Ganesh Nakate, Vinod Nakate, and Pratik Nanaware, who had been extorting money from the cattle traders for several months. The cattle traders have been regularly paying



the protection money of Rs 60 per goat to transport them out of Mumbai. However, trouble started in January when the extortionists stopped one of Kathawala's trucks carrying 196 goats at Kalamboli in Navi Mumbai for six hours, leading to the death of nine goats, causing a huge loss to the trader. The trader decided not to pay them.

Despite the losses incurred, the extortionists kept calling, threatening, and demanding money, which irked the traders. All traders decided to protest and lodge a complaint, said a police official. Kathawala, in his complaint, alleged that he has been in the cattle trade business since 1997 and supplies cattle to various other parts of the state at

wholesale rates. The cattle traders knew the risks involved in challenging the extortionists, who had until then operated with impunity. However, the traders also recognized the importance of standing up for their rights and the need to send a strong message that they would no longer tolerate such exploitation.

"Karnataka butchers who often come to Deonar abattoir to buy goats decided that we will send them goats, and they will pay for the transportation. So four to five traders supplied them with goats. Six months back, we engaged Nakate and Vinod Nakate for transporting goats to Karnataka. One truck carries around 200 goats at one time

## LG nod for special zones at IGI Airport

**New Delhi:** LG VK Saxena has given the nod for setting up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and Free Trade Zone (FTZ) at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in the capital. SEZ and FTZ will be related to cargo infrastructure and other allied services. Once operationalised, they will give a fillip to the logistics sector and catalyse economic growth apart from spinoffs for generating employment, the LG office said.

Officials said LG approved the proposal, taking note of the strategic importance of developing an SEZ at the airport hub after ensuring that DDA would give the go-ahead for the same as per the provisions of the Master Plan of Delhi 2021. To be spread over an area of nearly five acres, the SEZ would create economic activities through exports, warehousing, trading and related services at the airport complex. "It will also liberalise and reduce procedural complexities in terms of application.

## IFFCO is continuously working to realize the vision of self-reliant India, self-reliant agriculture, doubling the income of farmers



**PHULPUR :** Under the valuable guidance of IFFCO Managing Director Dr. Uday Shanker Awasthi and to fulfill the vision of Prime Minister Sahkar se samridhi, self-reliant India, self-reliant agriculture, doubling the income of farmers, IFFCO is continuously working in this regards. New records are established in IFFCO Phulpur unit in the last financial year 2023-24. The lowest ever annual energy consumption in Urea-I plant was 5.818 Gcal/MT, which is less from its previous lowest record of 5.820 Gcal/MT in the year 2020-21. The lowest ever annual energy consumption in Urea-II plant is 5.132 Gcal/MT

was less than its previous record of 5.134 Gcal/MT in the year 2022-23, whereas the IFFCO Phulpur plant minimum record is 5.386 Gcal/MT for the entire year. On the one hand, it is a conservation of national energy and is important from the environmental point of view. With this, there is direct revenue saving of about Rs 32 crore of the country. The production of urea plant was 19 lakh MT against the target of 18.35 lakh MT, which is approximately 110 percent of its capacity. In the last financial year, IFFCO Phulpur unit received many

awards at the national level in various fields like energy management, safety, environment and occupational safety and health management system. IFFCO Officers Association President Anurag Tiwari and General Secretary Swayam Prakash, IFFCO Employees Union President Pankaj and General Secretary Vinay Yadav wishes Senior Executive Director (Unit Head) Sanjay Kudesia on this success on record production with minimum energy consumption. Unit Head Sanjay Kudesia extended best wishes for the new financial year 2024-25 and gave credit for this success to his entire team.

## Opt for Hybrid funds to help cut tax outgo - 10 mutual fund

Wealth managers recommend conservative investors to opt for hybrid schemes before the financial year closes to save on taxes in mutual fund investments. The government's removal of indexation benefits for pure debt schemes in Budget 2023-24 shifts focus to hybrid funds with 35%-65% equity allocation for tax efficiency.

**Tax planning guide:** Opt for Hybrid funds to help cut tax outgo - 10 mutual fund schemes to consider

**Tax benefits of hybrid funds:** As the financial year comes to an end, it's important to keep a tab on your tax outgo for



FY 2023-24. Wealth managers advise conservative investors to consider hybrid schemes before the financial year ends to save on taxes in mutual fund investments, states a report. The government's removal of indexation benefits for pure debt schemes in Budget 2023-

24 makes hybrid funds with 35% to 65% equity allocation a viable option. Indexation, which adjusts inflation with the asset's cost, lowers tax liability. Certain schemes like balanced hybrid, multi-asset, and dynamic asset allocation still offer indexation benefits.

## Bank of Japan ends negative rates, closing era of radical policy

**TOKYO:** The Bank of Japan ended eight years of negative interest rates and other remnants of its unorthodox policy on Tuesday, making a historic shift away from a focus of redefining growth with decades of massive monetary stimulus. While the move will be Japan's first

interest rate hike in 17 years, it still keeps rates stuck around zero as a fragile economic recovery forces the central bank to go slow in any further rise in borrowing costs, analysts say. The shift makes Japan the last central bank to exit negative rates and ends an era in which

policymakers around the world sought to prop up growth through cheap money and unconventional monetary tools. In a widely expected decision, the BOJ ditched a policy put in place since 2016 that applied a 0.1% charge on some excess reserves financial institutions.

## CAPSULES

### HDFC Bank's home loan business head to lead Poonawalla Fincorp

**MUMBAI:** HDFC Bank's mortgage business head Arvind Kapil has filed papers to take charge as MD & CEO of Poonawalla Fincorp. Kapil is a 25-year veteran of HDFC Bank and was placed in charge of the legacy housing finance business of HDFC after its merger with the bank last year. "Given the sheer size of the mortgage portfolio (Rs 7.5 lakh crore) and the material importance of distribution, we believe there is key managerial personnel risk (for HDFC Bank)," said Suresh Ganapathy of Macquarie. He noted that this is the second major exit in mortgages with the head of HDFC sales Santosh Nair quitting to join Bandhan Bank last month. Poonawalla Fincorp, in a statement to stock exchanges, said that Kapil will join the company on June 24, subject to approvals. Shares of Poonawalla Fincorp rose 1.5% after the announcement. Before taking charge of the Rs 7.5-lakh-crore mortgage business at HDFC Bank, Kapil led the retail lending business at the bank, which included unsecured loan20s, auto loans, two-wheeler loans, retail working capital loans, gold loans, loans against shares, home loans, microfinance, and business loans.

"Given his leadership, execution skills and business acumen, (Current MD & CEO) Abhay Bhutada has been elevated to group level and will be taking up a strategic and larger role at the Cyrus Poonawalla Group for managing its strategy, investment and finance," said Adar

## LIC shares slip after 17% salary hike

**MUMBAI:** Shares of LIC were down by over 2% on Monday after the corporation announced a 17% wage revision. The salary increase was announced by govt on Friday before the election code of conduct kicked in a day later.

The corporation's shares are now down 23% from the 52-week high of Rs 1,175 on Feb 9. On Friday, the country's largest insurance company said that govt approved a wage revision for LIC employees, effective August 1, 2022.



The corporation explained the hike, stating that a revision occurs once every five years. The statement said that due to the hike, there will be a 17% upward revision in the overall wage bill.

The increase aligns with the wage negotiation deal signed between the Indian Banks' Association and bank employees. LIC's wage revision incorporates an enhancement in NPS contribution from

10% to 14% for nearly 24,000 employees who joined after April 1, 2010. TNN We also published the following articles recently Noida revises fee for three parking clusters

Noida Authority approved three contractors for surface parking in city clusters with revised fees. New tender initiated after scrapping previous contract. Residents get relief with revised parking fees. Multilevel facilities accommodate 12,000 vehicles.

## China accuses Evergrande of \$78 billion fraud, among worst ever

**China** Evergrande Group's alleged \$78 billion revenue overstatement escalates the legal peril of founder Hui Ka Yan, who now stands at the center of one of the biggest financial fraud cases in history. The nation's top securities regulator said the developer's onshore unit inflated revenue by recognizing sales in advance in the two years through 2020 that led up to its default. It imposed a 4.18 billion yuan (\$581 million) fine against the unit. Evergrande's alleged fraud dwarfs that of



Luckin Coffee Inc. and Enron Corp., dealing a blow to the reputation of its former auditor and the country's financial oversight. It fuels concern about how widespread such accounting issues are,

just as the new China Securities Regulatory Commission chairman is trying to tighten oversight. "The CSRC fines may serve as a warning to owners of other defaulted developers that failing to collabo-

rate with authorities over debt restructuring could mark the latest blow for Hui, once among Asia's richest tycoons, who oversaw a sprawling empire that spanned real estate to electric vehicles. Evergrande was one of China's biggest developers, taking on massive debt to expand across the country as condo sales boomed. The group received a liquidation order from a Hong Kong court in January, marking the largest collapse in China's three-year real estate crisis.

## ED issues summons to Bengali actor in connection with money laundering case

**KOLKATA:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday issued summonses to two Trinamool Congress leaders, including MP and popular Bengali actor Dev, for questioning in connection with its probes in money laundering cases, an official said.

The probe agency summoned TMC Ghatal MP Dev aka Dipak Adhikari over his alleged involvement in a money laundering case linked to a cattle smuggling scam, asking him to appear before its officers in New Delhi on Feb 21. The ED also asked senior TMC leader Mukul

Roy to be present for questioning in the national capital on Feb 19 in connection with its investigation into siphoning of funds in a chit fund case. Actor Dev had appeared before the CBI at its Kolkata office in Feb 2022 for questioning in the same case. The CBI had arrested the TMC leader from Birbhum district Anubrata Mondal in connection with the cattle smuggling scam

### Kantapur crash: Pillion rider succumbs to injuries

**Kolkata:** The accident that took place near Kantapur CISHF parade ground on Saturday afternoon, killing one person and injuring four others, claimed another person later on Saturday night. Arif Hossain (32), a pillion rider who was seriously injured following the accident, succumbed to injuries at SSKM Hospital. Earlier, a 17-year-old was killed in the accident. On afternoon, at least one scooterette rider died and two scooterettes — were seriously injured after all three crashed into one another.

## Adani calls report on bribery probe by US prosecutors false

**Adani Group companies have denied** receiving any notice from the US Department of justice regarding bribery allegations. US prosecutors investigate potential bribery involving Adani entity and founder Gautam Adani, including Indian renewable energy company Azure Power Global Ltd. Adani Enterprises and Ports refute allegations, stressing commitment to high governance standards and anti-corruption laws.

Adani calls report on bribery probe by US prosecutors false Adani Group companies haven't received any notice from the US Department of justice regarding a probe into whether the Indian conglomerate may have engaged in bribery, according to exchange filings. Bloomberg News reported last week, citing people with direct knowledge of the matter, that US prosecutors have widened their prob-

le of the Adani Group to focus on whether an Adani entity may have engaged in bribery as well as the conduct of the conglomerate's billionaire founder Gautam Adani. The probe, which is also looking at Indian renewable energy company Azure Power Global Ltd., is being handled by the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York and the Justice Department's fraud unit in Washington.

### Star Health eyes NRI business through GIFT

**CHENNAI:** Star Health and Allied Insurance Company will offer dollar-denominated insurance from GIFT City for NRIs. The company is launching international insurance product suite from the facility in FY25.

Star Health is the first health insurance company to be granted registration to establish an International Financial Services Centre international office in GIFT City. It plans to commence operations with a branch by the end of this month, facilitating access to health insurance solutions in US dollars for the global Indian community, the company said in a statement on Monday. Noting that the facility will enable the company to significantly expand its global reach and business, it said, the company will offer NRI-focused insurance.

## China accuses Evergrande of \$78 billion fraud, among worst ever

**China** Evergrande Group's alleged \$78 billion revenue overstatement escalates the legal peril of founder Hui Ka Yan, who now stands at the center of one of the biggest financial fraud cases in history. The nation's top securities regulator said the developer's onshore unit inflated revenue by recognizing sales in advance in the two years through

2020 that led up to its default. It imposed a 4.18 billion yuan (\$581 million) fine against the unit. Evergrande's alleged fraud dwarfs that of Luckin Coffee Inc. and Enron Corp., dealing a blow to the reputation of its former auditor and the country's financial oversight. It fuels concern about how widespread such accounting

issues are, just as the new China Securities Regulatory Commission chairman is trying to tighten oversight. "The CSRC fines may serve as a warning to owners of other defaulted developers that failing to collabo-

rate with authorities over debt restructuring could mark the latest blow for Hui, once among Asia's richest tycoons, who oversaw a sprawling empire that spanned real estate to electric vehicles. Evergrande was one of China's biggest developers, taking on massive debt to expand across the country as condo sales boomed. The group received a liquidation order from a Hong Kong court in January, marking the largest collapse in China's three-year real estate crisis.