

PUBLISHED FROM Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Chandigarh, Himachal and Jammu

The Sikh Times National Daily

VISIT: www.thesikhtimes.in Email:sikhtimesindia@gmail.com

Vol. 15 No. 294 RNI NO. DELENG/2008/25465 New Delhi, Thursday, 7 March 2024 sikhtimesindia@gmail.com 9654077232 12 pages ₹ 3

Odisha BJP leaders meet Amit Shah, JP Nadda amid possibility of alliance with BJD

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi, March 6: Odisha BJP leaders on Wednesday met Home Minister Amit Shah and the party's national president J P Nadda here amid indications that it may enter an alliance for the Lok Sabha and assembly polls, which are held simultaneously in the state, with the BJD. Sources said there is a strong possibility of an alliance between the BJP and the BJD but noted that a final call has to be taken by the top brass of the national party depending on various aspects, most importantly the number of seats it will get to contest. In case of an alliance, the BJP will definitely contest a majority of Lok Sabha seats in the state while the regional party will contest a majority of assembly seats, they said. Odisha has 21 Lok Sabha seats and 147 assembly seats. The BJD and the BJP won 12 and eight parliamentary constituencies and 112 and 23 assembly constituencies respectively in 2019. There has been a growing buzz about the alliance between the two parties, which have been allies in the past too. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik have publicly praised each other, most recently during Modi's rally in the state on Tuesday. The BJD has also been mostly supportive of the Modi government's agenda in Parliament. Leaders from other states are also meeting Shah and Nadda, including Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh among others. The BJP's Central Election Committee, which includes Prime Minister Modi and other senior leaders, will hold its second meeting later this week for finalising the party's candidates for the Lok Sabha polls.

'Storm of Sandeshkhali will reach every part of West Bengal'; PM Modi

Simmi Kaur Babbar Barasat, March 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday tore into the Trinamool Congress, asserting that the "storm of Sandeshkhali" will echo throughout West Bengal, where 'Nari Shakti' (woman power) would play a pivotal role in decimating the ruling party in the Lok Sabha polls. Addressing a rally in Barasat, the headquarters of North 24 Parganas district where Sandeshkhali is located, Modi said whatever happened with women in Sandeshkhali "is a matter of shame". The riverine island of Sandeshkhali has been on the boil over allegations of sexual atrocities on women and land grabbing by suspended TMC leader Shajahan Sheikh and his cohorts. He accused the TMC government of prioritising appeasement politics over ensuring the safety of women in the state. "TMC leaders are committing atrocities against sisters and daughters of poor, Dalit and tribal families

at various places. The women of Bengal and the country are incensed. This storm of Sandeshkhali will reach every part of West Bengal, and decimate the TMC across the state," Modi said. The PM highlighted the historical significance of West Bengal as a beacon of women's empowerment, lamenting that under the

TMC rule, the state has witnessed "grave atrocities" against women. "The land of Bengal has been a source of inspiration for women's power. But on this very land, women have been subjected to atrocities under the TMC rule. Whatever has happened in Sandeshkhali will lower anybody's head in shame. But, the TMC government here does not care about the sorrows of women," he said. Alleging that the TMC was shielding criminals, Modi said that despite legal intervention, the state authorities resisted the arrest of those responsible for the Sandeshkhali incidents. "The TMC used all its power to protect the criminals. However, the state government suffered a setback, first from the high court and then from the Supreme Court," he said. Hitting out at the TMC for acting at the behest of touts and playing appeasement politics, Modi said, "The TMC government, working

under the pressure of touts, can never provide security to sisters and daughters. On the other hand, there is the BJP-led central government, which has made provisions for even death penalty in case of serious crimes like rape." The prime minister also slammed the Mamata Banerjee-led party for its failure to implement central initiatives such as a women's helpline, designed to aid them in distress. "We had created this helpline so that our sisters can easily complain in times of crisis. However, the TMC government is not allowing this system to be implemented here. Such an anti-women government can never do any good for women," he said. He described the TMC as a hindrance to Bengal's development and urged the electorate to reject the opposition bloc INDIA and vote in favour of the BJP. "Bengal is faced with an eclipse called TMC. Therefore, all of you, the sisters and mothers, have to defeat the opposition alliance and make the lotus bloom in every corner of the country," the prime minister said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking at a podium during a rally in Barasat.

Karnataka High Court stays proceedings to hand over Jayalithaa's jewellery to Tamil Nadu in DA case

Bengaluru, March 6: The Karnataka High Court has stayed the process of handing over gold and diamond jewellery belonging to former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister late J Jayalithaa to the neighbouring state Government till March 26. The stay was granted by a single judge bench of Justice Mohammed Nawaz on a plea by Jayalithaa's niece J Deepa on Tuesday. The valuables were confiscated in a disproportionate assets case against the late AIADMK leader and slated to be handed over to the Tamil Nadu authorities from Wednesday by a special court. The petitioner ques-



tioned the July 12, 2023 special court order contending that Jayalithaa should be treated as "acquitted" as the Apex court had stopped the proceedings against her. The special court here had said 27 kg of gold and diamond jewellery—part of the material evidence in the case against Jayalithaa and others—would be handed over to the Tamil Nadu government on March six and seven, paving the way for unlocking value of the assets to mobilise Rs 100 crore fine imposed on her. While 20 kg were allowed to be sold or auctioned, the remaining seven kg had been exempted by the Court considering the fact that it was inherited from her mother. The Tamil Nadu Government will then take necessary action on the disposal of these gold and diamond jewellery, it had said. The trial was held in Karnataka on the direction of the Supreme Court and therefore all material evidence is in the Karnataka treasury now under the custody of the court. Ordering the transfer of the jewellery to the Tamil Nadu Government, the Special Court judge had said, "Instead of auctioning the jewels, it is better to transfer the same to Tamil Nadu by handing over the same through the Department of Home, State of Tamil Nadu." The Court had then issued the direction that the Tamil Nadu Home Department authorise "competent persons preferably in the rank of Secretary along with police to come and collect the jewels." In the same order, the special court had ordered the payment of Rs five crore to Karnataka for the expenses of the trial conducted in

Everything is possible in politics, all doors are open

Shimla, March 6: All doors stay open in politics, Himachal Pradesh minister Vikramaditya Singh said on Wednesday, days after meeting the state's rebel Congress MLAs who were disqualified from the Assembly under the anti-defection law. The six Congress rebels had cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha election last week, leading to the defeat of the party's official candidate. This triggered a crisis, prompting the party's central leadership to rush a team of observers. Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania disqualified the six MLAs for allegedly defying a party whip on voting for the state Budget. Asked about the possibility of the rebels returning to the party fold, the public works department minister said, "Everything is possible in politics and all doors are open." Singh recently met senior Congress leaders in New Delhi, including Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, after holding talks with the six rebel MLAs in Panchkula. "I was officially assigned the responsibility of meeting the rebels and have done my duty," he said here. "Appraising the Congress high command of the current situation was my moral duty, which I have fulfilled, and now, the ball is in their court..." Singh said.

Himachal Pradesh CM Sukhu trains guns on Congress rebels from Hamirpur

Navdeep Singh Sahni Shimla/Hamirpur, March 6: Training his guns on Congress rebels, Chief Minister Sukhvir Singh Sukhu on Wednesday said he never imagined that a few MLAs from Hamirpur will go against the party and hinder the pace of development in the district. Addressing a gathering at Pakka Bharo after laying the foundation stone of Hamirpur bus stand, he targeted Rajinder Rana (Sujanpur Assembly seat) and Inder Dutt Lakhnpal (Barsar Assembly segment) without naming them and said they have not only deceived the government but also the people of their respective constituencies. Six Congress MLAs and three independents who were supporting its government voted in favour of BJP candidate Harsh Mahajan in Rajya Sabha polls held on February 27. Of the total nine, Congress MLAs Rajinder

Huge traffic jam at Delhi-Haryana's Singhu border

New Delhi, March 6: Commuters may face traffic jams due to farmers' protest on Wednesday, police said. In morning, a huge jam was already witnessed at Delhi-Haryana's Singhu border, according to reports. The Delhi Police said it will be keeping a strict vigil at the Tikri, Singhu, and the Ghazipur borders, as well as railway and Metro stations and bus stands. "We have stepped up security at all three borders. However, we are not shutting any border or route but vehicle checking will take place," an officer said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Jimmy Chiram said force is already deployed at the Delhi-Haryana border. "We are keeping a tab on the situation in the wake of this call given by the farmers." Another officer said, "We had temporarily removed barriers for commuters at the Singhu and the Tikri borders. The deployment of police and paramilitary personnel is still there and (they) will ensure strict, round-the-clock vigil." Additional police and paramilitary forces have been deployed at railway and metro stations and bus stands as the farmers would also be coming in public transport

Panauti jibe at PM Modi: Election Commission asks Rahul Gandhi to be more careful in public utterances

Tejinder Kaur Babbar New Delhi, March 6: The Election Commission has asked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to be more careful and cautious in his public utterances in the wake of his "panauti" (bad omen) and "pickpocket" jibes at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, sources said. Acting on a Delhi High Court directive of December last year, the poll panel also asked Gandhi to follow its recent advisory for star campaigners and political leaders in the right earnest during election campaign. In the advisory dated March 1, the Election Commission (EC) had warned that parties, candidates and star campaigners will face stern action, rather than just 'moral censure' for any violation of the Model Code of Conduct. It also said that the star campaigners and candidates who have received notices in the past will face stern action for repeat violation of the model code. The EC had issued a notice to Gandhi last year after the Congress leader used terms like "panauti" and "pickpocket" for the prime minister. The commission was also asked on December 21 by the Delhi High Court to decide on the notice it had issued to

Centre can't insist on withdrawal of suit by Kerala as it has right to move top court under Article 131: Supreme Court

Naresh Malhotra New Delhi, March 6: Noting that it's a state's right to approach it under Article 131 of the Constitution, the Supreme Court on Wednesday disapproved of the Centre insisting on withdrawal of a suit filed by the Kerala Government as a precondition for giving consent to the state for additional borrowing. "What we only want to suggest to you right now is that you don't insist on the condition of withdrawal of the suit... You can't say withdraw the suit. That's a constitutional right under Article 131," a Bench led by Justice Surya Kant told Attorney General R Venkataramani and Additional Solicitor General G Venkataraman, who represented the Centre. The Bench — which also included Justice KV Vishwanathan — however, said the Centre could impose other conditions for improved fiscal management. Article 131 deals with the Supreme Court's original jurisdiction in a dispute between the Centre and one or more states; or a dispute between two or more states. The Bench praised the Indian economy, saying, "The entire world is recognising India as a robust economically sound country. There is no doubt about it. Even when we go out of the country on judicial platforms, we find this kind of feeling there. And it's not a feeling based on perception. It's based on correct facts and figures and the strong pillar on which the economy is thriving..." Noting that the Centre should be concerned about fiscal mismanagement by states as it impacted the nation's economy, the top court advised the Centre and the Kerala Government to iron out their differences over a cap on net borrowing by the latter. The dialogue between the Centre and the state must not stop merely because of the pending suit, the court said while stressing on the need to resolve the issue. "Let

Centre to spend over Rs 1L cr on Himachal Pradesh's road infra: Nitin Gadkari

Hamirpur, March 6: The Union Government will spend over Rs 1 lakh crore for developing road infrastructure in Himachal Pradesh. This was stated by Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Roads, Transport and Highways, while addressing a gathering at Police Ground here after inaugurating and laying foundation stones of various development works of over Rs 4,000 crore today. He said roads play important role in improving economy of any region and as tourism was major economic activity of Himachal Pradesh, strengthening road infrastructure would boost economy of the state. Gadkari said in past 10 years, the country had set new milestones in the development of road infrastructure. He said the highest and biggest bridges and tunnels were constructed like tunnel below Zoila and Atal tunnel below Rohtang Pass. "More tunnels will

Centre to spend over Rs 1L cr on Himachal Pradesh's road infra: Nitin Gadkari

be constructed between Manali and Leh that will reduce distance and cut travel time considerably," he said. He said the list of development works in the state was long and the major works on priority were completion of the Kiratpur-Manali four-lane highway, construction of bridges over Govind Sagar near Lathiani and Swan river, both in Una district, and the construction of the Matour-Shimla four-lane highway. Speaking on the occasion, Anurag Thakur, Minister for Information and Broadcasting, said of Rs 4,000 crore works that were dedicated by Gadkari, Rs 3,000 crore were in Hamirpur parliamentary constituency. He said he was thankful to the minister for sanctioning development works generously. PWD minister Vikramaditya Singh requested Gadkari to release funds committed by him during his previous visit to the disaster-affected areas.



Rahul Gandhi speaking at a podium during a public event.



Hands, legs tied, missing girl's body found in Puducherry drain

Puducherry. The body of a nine-year-old girl who had been missing for two days was recovered from a drain in Puducherry. Her hands and legs were found tied with ropes.

The girl had gone missing on Saturday while playing, after which her parents, Narayanan and Mythili, searched for her but failed. Subsequently, they filed a missing complaint with the police and teams were formed to track the girl. However, two days later, the girl's decomposed body was found dead in a drain near her residence with her hands and legs tied. Soon after the body was retrieved, protests broke out as locals blocked roads demanding immediate arrest of the accused, assuring safety for women and children. Paramilitary forces were called in to the scene to maintain law and order.

Meanwhile, police, after scanning CCTV footage, detained five people for questioning.

Fake medicines containing chalk powder worth Rs 33.3 lakh seized in Telangana

Hyderabad. The Drug Control Administration (DCA) of Telangana seized fake medicines containing chalk powder and starch valued at Rs 33.35 lakh. It was detected that fake medicines containing chalk powder and starch, were being sold in medical shops by a non-existent company, "Meg Lifesciences". Following detection, all medications purporting to be produced by "Meg Lifesciences" were subject to a "Spurious Drug Alert and Stop-Use Notice" from the DCA. Earlier, in a similar case, a drug manufacturing unit in Uttarakhand was busted for producing and selling counterfeit drugs containing chalk powder with labels of reputed pharmaceutical companies such as Cipla and GlaxoSmithKline.

Karnataka govt releases textbook revision report for 2024-25

For political science books, new developments such as the Women's Reservation Bill, India's international relations and information on local bodies in the legislative system have been added.

BENGALURU. The Karnataka Textbook Society on Tuesday released a report on changes made to textbooks for classes 1-10 for the year 2024-25. The notification came late in the evening without the officials making a big announcement.

The textbook revision committee formed by the government was led by Manjunath Hegde, a retired professor of history, who made several changes in the syllabus following the National Curriculum Framework-2005. At the onset, more emphasis has been given to Kannada literature with a focus on cultural leaders from the state and works by Jnanpith



awardees have also been included for classes 8-10. The notification highlighted that the revision was carried out keeping in mind only the educational interests of the students without changing the basic framework of the revised textbooks. All the requests made by various organisations, individuals and government departments regarding inclusion and omission have been reviewed and appropriate suggestions were considered, it stated. To reduce the burden on students due to the weight of textbooks, the education department previously also passed an order to divide textbooks into two parts. Appropriate context of the contents has been given in both sections. As per the release, social science textbooks have been revised keeping in mind the Constitution, gender sensitivity, information on child rights and democratic and secular values of the country.

For political science books, new developments such as the Women's Reservation Bill, India's international relations and information on local bodies in the legislative system have been added. Several minor changes have been made in titles and various chapters: 'Religions' have been changed to 'Dharmas', and more information was added to the Sanatan Dharma chapter. According to the relevant content, maps, taluk and district-related figures have also been updated.

The revision included Kannada language textbooks for both first and second languages for classes 1-10, third language Kannada textbooks for classes 9-10 and social science textbooks spanning classes 6-10.

'False': South actor on reports of Stalin's son buying Rs 50 crore house for her

► **Nivetha Pethuraj criticises**

false news about lavish

expenditure on her

► **Accusations made by**

Youtuber about Udhayanidhi

Stalin buying her a property

► **Pethuraj requests journalists**

to verify information before

damaging reputations

Chennai South Indian actor Nivetha Pethuraj, who has appeared in several Telugu and Tamil movies, criticised "false news about money being lavishly spent" on her and asked journalists to first "verify the information before spoiling a family's reputation".

The 31-year-old actor's remarks came after YouTuber Savuku Shankar alleged that



Udhayanidhi Stalin, the Tamil Nadu Sports Minister and Chief Minister MK Stalin's son, bought his "crazy fan" Pethuraj an expensive property in Dubai. "He bought her a 2,000 sqft house worth Rs 50 crore where the Lulu Mall owner resides as she was very possessive about him," Shankar said. He also claimed that Pethuraj would visit Tamil Nadu



twice to meet the DMK leader. A video of Shankar's interview went viral on social media, with the hashtag #NivethaPethuraj. In response to the allegations, the actor said in a lengthy post on X that she and her family have been "under extreme stress since few days" as a result of the rumours. "Lately there has been false

news circulating about money being lavishly spent on me. I kept quiet because I thought people who are speaking about this will have some humanity to verify the information they receive before mindlessly spoiling a girl's life." "My family and I have been under extreme stress since few days. Please think before spreading such false news." Pethuraj also said that she comes from "a very dignified family". "I have been financially independent and stable since the age 16. My family still resides in Dubai. We've been in Dubai for over 20 years." "She went on to say that "I'm not as important as you are making it look". "I lead a very simple life. After facing a lot of struggles in life I'm finally in a good place mentally and emotionally. I want to continue leading a dignified and peaceful life. Just like any other woman in your family would want." The actor also said that she is not taking up the matter legally "because I still believe there's some humanity left in journalism, that they won't continue to defame me like this".

"I request journalists to verify the information you receive before spoiling a family's reputation and not put our family through any more traumas."

Blame-game between BJP, Stalin's DMK over drug menace in Tamil Nadu

Chennai. The BJP has slammed Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin's DMK party, claiming that the party leaders were involved in the massive international drug cartel busted recently by the Delhi Police and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). During his recent visit to Chennai, Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed that drugs had penetrated deeply into Tamil Nadu and said he worried about the future of youngsters in the state. The development came after Jaffar Sadiq, the DMK NRI wing's Chennai West Deputy Organiser, also associated with the Tamil film industry, was identified during investigations in connection with the case. Later, it was revealed Sadiq also allegedly had links with a gang.

As the investigations progressed, Sadiq's pictures with several top leaders of the DMK were shared by the BJP, following which the party expelled Sadiq.

Further, the recent drug seizures by agencies like the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and Coast Guard—36 kg of drugs worth Rs 180 crore on March 1



and 99 kg of drugs worth Rs 108 crore on March 5—have given more fuel to the BJP's criticism. Meanwhile, responding to the BJP's allegations, on behalf of the Tamil Nadu government, Law Minister S Reghupathy held a press briefing in Nagercoil on Tuesday, claiming that the BJP shouldn't single out just Tamil Nadu for the growing drug menace across the country. "Blaming others for the drug menace is what we call the Modi formula. Drugs are being seized across the country in several states. But they are blaming only Tamil Nadu as elections are nearing. People of the state won't be fooled," he

said. In addition to pointing out how huge quantities of drugs have been seized off the Gujarat coast in the recent past, Reghupathy also highlighted that 16 BJP functionaries have also been booked under anti-drug laws in Tamil Nadu. "Mr Narendra Modi's Gujarat coast and the 'Divine Dwarka' have become a haven for smuggling of drugs worth thousands of crores of rupees into the country. Mr Modi is accusing the 'land of peace' with a stable government. The Union government's Narcotics Control Bureau, which should weed-out drug smuggling, is unable to do it," S Reghupathy alleged.

He further claimed that the DMK government under Chief Minister Stalin has been making efforts to crack down on the sale and distribution of drugs.

To expand on this, the minister gave statistics of the quantities of drugs seized since the time DMK came to power and also claimed that they had over an 80 per cent conviction ratio in drug-related cases.

TDP, YSRC intensify electioneering in Guntur LS segment

► **Despite its many efforts, YSRC**

failed to turn the Congress

voters in their favour and lost

to TDP with slight vote

difference in the past two

elections.

GUNTUR. Both ruling YSRC and Opposition Telugu Desam have intensified their campaigns to reach out to the public and solidify their winning chances in Guntur Lok Sabha constituency. Since its inception, in 1952, Guntur Lok Sabha segment had been a bastion to the Congress party. However, in the past two decades, TDP managed to maintain a strong hold in the constituency. Despite its many efforts, YSRC failed to turn the Congress voters in their favour

and lost to TDP with slight vote difference in the past two elections. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has reportedly asked Narasaraopet MP Lavu Sri Krishnadevarayulu to contest from



Guntur Lok Sabha constituency as he wanted to field a BC candidate from the segment. However, Krishnadevarayulu changed loyalties and joined TDP.

Recovering from the blow, YSRC top brass named Ummareddy Venkata Ramana, a leader from Kapu community and son of

veteran leader and MLC Ummareddy Venkateswarlu. As Ramana was reportedly unkeen to contest the election, after several discussions, the party high command announced Ramana's brother-in-law and sitting legislator from Ponnur, Kilari Rosaiah.

On the other hand, to give a tough competition to YSRC candidate NRI medical professional Dr Pemmasani Chandrasekar is almost certain to contest as TDP nominee, after sitting MP Galla Jayadev decided to stay away from politics. Though Chandrasekar was initially tipped to contest from Narasaraopet Lok Sabha constituency, TDP shifted him to Guntur after MP Krishnadevarayulu jumped to TDP.

To prevent Galla's departure to affect TDP's winning chances in Guntur, the principal Opposition party is likely to field the financially strong Dr Chandrasekar. After reportedly getting a nod from TDP high command, he met Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan and sought his support.

Mumbai Boy's Skull Recovered Day After His Headless Body Found In Mangroves

Mumbai. Mumbai Police on Tuesday recovered the skull of a 12-year-old boy whose headless body was found in mangroves in Wadala area nearly 35 days after he went missing, an official said. The boy, identified as Sandeep Yadav, had been missing since January 28 after he went out with one Bipul Sikari, also a resident of Wadala. A day before Sandeep's headless body was found. Police said when Sandeep's father Bechai Yadav and others had confronted Sikari, he had told them that he handed over the boy to a transgender person. "Sikari was thrashed and was subsequently taken to Wadala Truck Terminus police station. A cop told him to wash the blood but Sikari fled taking advantage of the circumstances," the official said. Sandeep was the only child of the Yadav couple born 14 years after their marriage. Meanwhile, police registered a case of kidnapping and continued the search for the boy. Police were informed on Monday that a



headless body was lying in mangroves in the Wadala creek area, the official added. He was identified by his father with the help of his clothes, footwear, and a 'kada' he was wearing. During a search on Tuesday, police found the skull lying 15-20 feet away from the spot where the corpse was found earlier. Police have added sections 302 (Punishment for murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of the evidence of the offence) of the Indian Penal Code and formed teams to nab Sikari. According to the official, Sikari is a resident of West Bengal and was arrested in a murder case earlier. He had jumped parole in the previous murder case and came to Mumbai, the official said.

Three arrested deny shouting 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogans in Karnataka Assembly

BENGALURU. The Central division police, questioning Mohammed Shafi Nashipudi (35) from Byadagi in Haveri district, Munawar Ahmed (29) from Jayamahal in Bengaluru and Mohammed Itaz (31) from Krishnaganj in Delhi for reportedly raising "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans in the corridors of Vidhana Soudha are finding them hard nuts to crack. It is said that the three are denying raising pro-Pakistan slogans and are claiming that they had come to Vidhana Soudha only to celebrate their leader's victory on February 27. The main suspect, Nashipudi, told the police that after Congress Rajya Sabha candidate Syed Naseer Hussain's victory, he shouted Naseer Saab Zindabad and Naseer Hussain Zindabad, but not Pakistan Zindabad. He reportedly claimed that neither he shouted such anti-national slogans, nor heard anybody shouting and if anyone raised such slogans, they should be strictly punished. Nashipudi has stated that he is worth around Rs 100 crore and is a reputed chilli merchant from Byadgi and is aware of the consequences of shouting such a slogan. It is said that Nashipudi is also trying to contest the next Assembly elections on a Congress ticket. All

the three are being questioned by an assistant commissioner of police-rank officer attached to the Central division.

The police have seized the mobile phones of all three and will send them to the Forensic Science Laboratory for tests. The police custody of the three has been granted till Wednesday. "Munawar Ahmed and Itaz claim to be just Congress party workers. Their detailed statements are being recorded," DCP (Central) HT Shekhar said. Munawar Ahmed, who was earlier in RT Nagar, recently moved to Jayamahal Extension. He is said to be a small-time businessman and a close friend of Nashipudi and had gone along with him to Vidhana Soudha to celebrate Hussain's victory.

Itaz told the police that he is an active worker of the party in Delhi and has participated in the Bharat Jodo Yatra. He further claimed that he is a Hussain's follower and had come to Bengaluru on his own to celebrate his leader's victory. All three were arrested on Monday based on the findings of the FSL report.

Congress ministers supporting accused: Bommai



Belagavi: It is clear that some people raised pro-Pakistan slogans at Vidhana Soudha after Congress leader Naseer Hussain's election as Rajya Sabha member, but it is an irony that some ministers are trying to defend such anti-national persons, said former chief minister and BJP senior leader Basavaraj Bommai, here on Tuesday. "Standing in support of anti-national elements is a dangerous development. Three persons were arrested after the National Investigation Agency took over the case and filed a complaint two days ago. Those who are supporting the accused should now apologise," he said, criticising the ruling

Congress government. Will write to Vice-

THE SIKH TIMES

Edited, Printed, Published
Owned by Simmi Babbar
N - 31, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Delhi-110009

Printed at Quami Patrika Printing
Press, A-4/A-144, Tronica City
(Loni), Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)

Corporate Office:
5, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,
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RNI No. DELENG/2008/25465

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NEWS BOX

Houthi attack two US warships in Red Sea with naval missiles, drones

Cairo. Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis carried out a military operation in which they targeted two US warship destroyers in the Red Sea, the group's military spokesman, Yahya Sarea, said in a televised speech on Tuesday. He said the ships were targeted by a number of naval missiles and drones.

Houthi's Red Sea attacks have disrupted global shipping, forcing firms to re-route to longer and more expensive journeys around southern Africa, and stoked fears that the Israel-Hamas war could spread to destabilise the wider Middle East. Houthi militants have repeatedly launched drones and missiles against international commercial shipping since mid-November, saying they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians against Israel's military actions in Gaza.

US revises draft UN resolution, calls for 'immediate ceasefire' in Gaza

Washington. The US on Tuesday revised the text in a draft UN Security Council resolution to back "an immediate ceasefire of roughly six-weeks in Gaza together with the release of all hostages", according to the text seen by Reuters.

The third revision of the text -- first proposed by the US two weeks ago -- now reflects blunt remarks by Vice President Kamala Harris. The initial US draft had shown support for "a temporary ceasefire" in the Israel-Hamas war. The US wants any Security Council support for a ceasefire to be linked to the release of hostages held by Hamas in Gaza. Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, killing 1,200 people and taking 253 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

Washington had been averse to the word ceasefire.

It has vetoed three draft council resolutions -- two of which would have demanded an immediate ceasefire -- during the five-month-long war. Most recently, the US justified its veto by saying that such council action could jeopardise efforts by the US, Egypt and Qatar to broker a pause in the war and the release of hostages.

US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday it was in the hands of Hamas whether to accept a deal for a ceasefire as delegations held a third day of talks with no sign of a breakthrough. The US traditionally shields Israel at the United Nations, but it has also abstained twice, allowing the council to adopt resolutions that aimed to boost aid to Gaza and called for extended pauses in fighting.

In retaliation for the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas, Israel launched a military assault on Hamas in Gaza that health authorities say has killed more than 30,000 Palestinians with thousands more bodies feared lost amid the ruins. Washington has been stepping up pressure on its ally Israel to do more to allow humanitarian aid into Gaza, where the UN has warned that a quarter of the 2.3 million people in the enclave are on the brink of famine. The US has said it plans to allow time for negotiations on its draft and will not rush to a vote. To pass, a resolution needs at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes by the US, France, Britain, Russia or China.

Michelle Obama 'will not be running' for US President, says office

World. Former First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama, has no intentions to run for President in the upcoming 2024 elections, her office has revealed, as per a report in NBC News. "As former First Lady Michelle Obama has expressed several times over the years, she will not be running for president," said Crystal Carson, director of communications for her office. "Mrs Obama supports President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris' re-election campaign." The development comes after a poll revealed that Michelle Obama was the leading choice to replace President Joe Biden as the Democratic party's candidate for the presidential elections.

Nikki Haley wins a Super Tuesday election in Vermont despite losing elsewhere to Trump

WASHINGTON. Former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley has scored a surprise victory on Super Tuesday, upsetting Donald Trump to win Vermont.

That victory will do little to dent Trump's primary dominance, however. The former president won 11 other states on Super Tuesday. Haley is the last major rival to Trump standing in a once-crowded primary field. She has increasingly stepped up her attacks on the former president, arguing that he will lose in November to President Joe Biden if he clinches the party's nomination. On the Democratic side, Biden also ran up the score with wins all around the country against only token primary opposition all but cementing the long-expected November rematch between him and Trump.

Taiwan Labour Minister Hsu Ming-Chun Apologises After 'Racist' Remark On Indians Draws Flak

World. Taiwan Labour Minister Hsu Ming-chun issued a formal apology on Tuesday after her remarks on preferring migrant workers from Northeast India for their "similar skin colour and dietary habits" drew criticism from across the globe, reported news agency ANI citing Central News Agency, Taiwan. Her remarks regarding the planned recruitment of Indian migrant workers were dubbed 'racist'. During an interview, Hsu had stated that the ministry would initially focus on recruiting workers from northeastern India because "their skin colour and dietary habits are closer to ours". She had stated that "individuals in this region, mostly Christians, are skilled in manufacturing, construction, and farming, as per Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) assessments," as per Central News Agency. At a legislative hearing Tuesday morning, Hsu expressed regret for her "inaccurate" comments, clarifying that Taiwan's labour policies aim for equality, devoid of discrimination, be it for local or foreign workers. According to the Central News Agency, she emphasized her intention to highlight the abilities and performance of Indian workers, dissociating from any discriminatory motives.

Tesla Germany halts work as Elon Musk calls suspected arson 'extremely dumb'

Power outage due to suspected arson nearby Tesla's Berlin factory halts work at the gigafactory

The outage will cost Tesla estimated losses in the high hundreds of millions of euros, with 1,000 vehicles left unfinished on Tuesday alone

Emergency services have extinguished the blaze, and power to the surrounding communities has mostly been restored

Berlin/Frankfurt. Tesla's European Gigafactory near Berlin has halted work until further notice after what CEO Elon Musk called an "extremely dumb" suspected arson attack nearby left it without power on Tuesday.

The attack southeast of the German capital set an electricity pylon close to the site ablaze, but the fire did not spread to the Tesla facility - the US electric vehicle maker's first manufacturing plant in Europe. It has, however, shuttered production at least until early next week,

the company said. The outage will cost Tesla estimated losses in the high hundreds of millions of euros, with 1,000 vehicles left unfinished on Tuesday alone. A company official was noncommittal on whether this would affect plans to double capacity at the site, but condemned what he saw as negative sentiment towards it. Emergency services have extinguished the blaze, and power to the surrounding communities has mostly been restored. Joerg Steinbach, the economy minister of Brandenburg, the German state where Tesla's plant is based, condemned the suspected attack as having "terrorist markings", and hitting tens of thousands of people. "This includes hospitals, homes for the elderly, where people may also be dependent on oxygen supply or similar, which is electricity-based," he said at a briefing outside the factory. The Tesla site, which employs around 12,500 people, was evacuated and most employees sent home. Tesla shares were down 3% at 1522 GMT. Local media published a letter purportedly from a far-left activist organisation called the Volcano Group



that claimed responsibility for the incident, in a 2,500-word attack on Tesla and its billionaire CEO Musk. Police said they were aware of the letter, which was signed "Agua De Pau", the name of a volcanic mountain in the Azores, and said they were checking its authenticity. "These are either the dumbest eco-terrorists on Earth or they're puppets of those who don't have good environmental goals," Musk said on X. "Stopping production of electric vehicles, rather than fossil fuel vehicles, is extremely dumb," he said, using the German for "extremely dumb". The attack was the latest setback for Tesla, which has had a bumpy ride in Europe of late, facing

union pressure for collective bargaining agreements in the Nordics and supply disruptions as a result of attacks on shipping in the Red Sea.

Germany has championed new big-ticket foreign investments at a time when Europe's largest economy is facing recession and grappling with higher inflation and weaker foreign demand.

"If a left-wing extremist motive is confirmed, then this is further evidence that the left-wing extremist scene does not shy away from attacks on critical energy infrastructure," Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said. The consequences can affect thousands of completely uninvolved people, as they do today. This shows enormous criminal energy."

'WE SABOTAGED TESLA'

Police are investigating the possible arson attack in the area around the plant, which has been the focus of environmental protests since it was launched by Musk two years ago. "We are shocked by what happened today. It's the second direct attack on power supply to the factory and there was a third attack on the railway nearby."

Joe Biden says Gaza ceasefire deal in Hamas's hands as Ramadan nears

Cairo. US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that a deal for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip in exchange for the release of Israeli hostages was in the hands of Hamas, as delegations held a third day of talks with no sign of a breakthrough. Negotiators from the Palestinian militant group, Qatar and Egypt - but not Israel - are in Cairo trying to secure a 40-day ceasefire in Hamas' war with Israel in time for the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which begins early next week. The deal presented to Hamas would let some hostages captured by Palestinian militants in the October attack that precipitated the war go free, while aid to Gaza would be increased to try to avert famine as hospitals treat acutely malnourished children, and Hamas would provide a list of all the hostages held in Gaza. But in Beirut, Hamas official Osama Hamdan repeated his group's main demands: an end to the Israeli military offensive, withdrawal of Israeli forces, and the return of all Gazans to the homes they had been forced to flee. He said any exchange of prisoners could not take place except after a ceasefire, reflecting Hamas' view that a ceasefire must, above all, be a step towards a



settlement of the conflict. Israel, for its part, wants merely a pause in fighting to get hostages out of Gaza and more aid in, insisting that it will not end the conflict before Hamas is "eliminated". Government spokesman Avi Hyman told a briefing before Hamdan spoke that the Islamist movement would have to "come down from their delusional positions and come into our orbit". He added: "Hamas understands military pressure and we are bringing it to them." Washington, Israel's main political and military backer and a sponsor of the talks, also put the onus squarely on Gaza's rulers. "It's in the hands of Hamas right now. Israelis have been cooperating. There's been a rational offer," Biden told reporters. "If

we get to the circumstance that it [fighting] continues into Ramadan... it's gonna be very dangerous." Palestinian-Israeli violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories often spikes during Ramadan, as does hostility towards Israel in the Arab and Muslim world, creating a strong incentive for leaders to clinch a deal before then.

HAMAS SAYS IT HAS PRESENTED OWN DRAFT

Hamas says Washington's stance is designed to deflect blame from Israel if the talks collapse. Senior Hamas official Bassem Naim said Hamas had presented its draft deal and was awaiting a response from Israel, adding: "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu doesn't want to reach an agreement and the ball now is in the Americans' court." A source had told Reuters earlier that Israel was staying away because Hamas had refused to furnish a list of hostages who are still alive. Naim said this was impossible without a ceasefire as hostages were scattered across the war zone and held by separate groups.

Goose intestines hidden under rattlesnakes & duck blood illegally imported from China, federal authorities say

The complaint says 1,966 cartons of goose and duck intestines were shipped in August 2022 from China to the Port of Long Beach, where they were identified as nail clippers and other pet grooming products on customs forms.



NEW YORK. Six people were arrested in New York on Tuesday on charges of illegally importing goose and duck intestines from China, in some cases by hiding them under packaged rattlesnakes or mislabeling them as pet grooming products on customs forms, federal officials announced. The

scheme, which also included illegal imports of duck blood and hawthorn fruit, involved transporting the restricted food items from China to California and then on to New York, where they were sold to customers, including restaurants, authorities said in a complaint filed Monday. The six, who were expected to appear in federal court in Brooklyn later Tuesday, are charged with importing, storing and

selling hundreds of pounds of illegal food items between August 2022 and May 2023. Messages seeking comment were sent to their attorneys. Federal law prohibits importing any raw poultry products from China, and hawthorn fruit from China is also restricted, the authorities said. According to the complaint, 1,966 cartons of goose and duck intestines were shipped in August 2022 from China to the Port of Long Beach, where they were identified as nail clippers and other pet grooming products on customs forms. The cartons were dropped off at Los Angeles International Airport and flown to John F Kennedy International Airport in New York via a major US air carrier's cargo service, federal officials said. Another shipment of illegal poultry products in November 2022 was incorrectly labeled as frozen seafood.

Who is Jason Palmer A previously unknown Democrat beats Biden in American Samoa's Democratic caucus

Out of 91 ballots cast in the territory's caucus, Palmer won 51 and Biden won 40, according to the local party.



WASHINGTON. President Joe Biden was sweeping every Democratic contest on Super Tuesday -- except for American Samoa. He fell short there to a previously unknown candidate named Jason Palmer. Out of 91 ballots cast in the territory's caucus, Palmer won 51 and Biden won 40, according to the local party. "I found out that I had won because my phone started blowing up with friends and campaign

staffers texting me," Palmer said in an interview late Tuesday. Palmer, 52, said he never visited the territory before the caucus. "I have been campaigning remotely, doing Zoom town halls, talking to people, listening to them about their concerns and what matters to them," he

said. The outcome will hardly derail Biden's march toward his party's nomination. Only six delegates were at stake in the U.S. territory, a tiny collection of islands in the South Pacific with fewer than 50,000 residents. Palmer won four delegates and Biden two. On the

day before the caucus, Palmer posted on X that "Washington D.C. is long overdue for a president who will be an advocate for American Samoa." His account includes pictures of young people holding homemade campaign signs. Palmer is a Baltimore resident who has worked for various businesses and nonprofits, often on issues involving technology and education. He said voters want "someone who is more of the 21st century than Joe Biden" to serve as president.

According to campaign finance records, Palmer has loaned his campaign more than \$500,000 of his own money. "You can't take the money with you when you die," he said. "But you can change the world while you're here." Residents of U.S. territories vote in primaries but do not have representation in the Electoral College. American Samoa has been the site of quixotic victories before. During the 2020 Democratic primaries, billionaire Michael Bloomberg's only win came in the territory.

Top Haitian gang leader warns of civil war, genocide

PORT-AU-PRINCE. A powerful Haitian gang leader warned Tuesday that the chaos engulfing the capital Port-au-Prince will lead to civil war and "genocide" unless Prime Minister Ariel Henry steps down. The stark comments from Jimmy Cherizier, known as "Barbecue," came as Henry appeared to be struggling to fly home, with the main airport under attack and neighboring Dominican Republic refusing permission for him to land.

Henry -- who was supposed to step down last month -- was out of the country last week when armed criminal gangs, who control large swaths of the country, launched a coordinated assault to oust him. "If Ariel Henry doesn't resign, if the international community continues to support him, we'll be heading straight for a civil war that will lead to genocide," Cherizier, a former police officer who is under UN sanctions for human rights abuses, told reporters in the capital. "Either Haiti becomes a paradise or a hell for all of us. It's out of the question for a small group of rich people living in big hotels to decide the fate of people living in working-class neighborhoods," the 46-year-old added.

As the latest crisis in the violence-wracked Caribbean nation spiraled, gunfire shut down some flights at Toussaint Louverture International Airport in Haiti's capital.

Henry was denied entry into the neighboring Dominican Republic, according to Dominican news group CDN.

On Tuesday evening a spokesperson for the governor's office in nearby Puerto Rico confirmed his plane had landed there, at least briefly. "I don't know if he's still in Puerto Rico," Sheila Anglero told AFP by telephone.

In power since the 2021 assassination of president Jovenel Moise, Henry was due to step down in February but instead agreed to a power-sharing deal with the opposition until new elections are held. Earlier Tuesday, a police academy in the capital where more than 800 cadets are training came under attack by an armed gang. The attack was repelled after the arrival of reinforcements, said Lionel Lazzarre of the Haitian police union.

The unrest has left 250 Cubans stranded in Port-au-Prince after their flights were canceled, according to the Havana office of Sunrise Airways. "When we were about to board the plane, they realized that the plane had a bullet hole," a 34-year-old Cuban passenger told AFP via WhatsApp, on condition of anonymity.

Cherizier, who leads a group of gangs known as the "G9 Family and Allies," cites as a chief inspiration Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, who ruled Haiti with ruthless brutality in the 1960s and 70s. He said gunmen had committed harmful acts, but "I believe that society must forgive them and unite to rethink a new Haiti." Haitian officials have been pleading for months for international assistance to help their overwhelmed security forces, as gangs push beyond the city and into rural areas.

UP Couple Arrested For Involvement In Naxal Activities: Cops

Lucknow. The Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terror Squad on Tuesday arrested a married couple in Prayagraj for their alleged involvement in Naxal activities.

The Anti-Terror Squad said in a statement that Kripashankar Singh (49) and his wife Binda Sona alias Manju alias Suman (41) were members of the banned CPI(Maoist) and were involved in plans to wage war against the nation. According to the statement, the couple had in 2017-2018 given shelter to Naxalite Qunthan Srinivasan, who was carrying a reward of ₹5 lakh on him.

The duo provided shelter to Srinivasan in Karmahia village of Maharajganj where they got him to work in a school under a false name, the ATS said.

The ATS said an FIR was lodged against seven people in July 2019 for indulging in Naxal activities and some arrests were made. It added that forensic analysis of electronic gadgets seized from them showed Kripashankar Singh and his wife's connections with the banned outfit.

Kripashankar Singh had come in contact with Binda Sona while working in an NGO in Raipur and they got married and joined the banned outfit, the ATS said.

Kanimozhi to contest again from Thoothukudi, submits application to DMK top brass

THOOTHUKUDI. Expressing her intent to contest again from Thoothukudi parliamentary constituency, Thoothukudi MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi filed an application with the DMK's top brass at the party headquarters in Chennai, putting an end to speculations about her candidature.

Kanimozhi, a two-time Rajya Sabha MP, won the Lok Sabha elections in 2019 from Thoothukudi constituency, defeating the BJP's Tamilisai Soundarajan by a margin of 3,47,209 votes.

Kanimozhi was also recently elevated as the DMK's deputy general secretary.

"During the historic floods that ravaged Thoothukudi district in December last year, Kanimozhi travelled to all flood-hit villages and disbursed relief materials, besides ensuring restoration of the flood-hit areas on a war footing," a party leader said, adding that her hard work would definitely boost her goodwill. In a bid to connect with people from rural areas, she organised Makkal Kalams at all panchayats, taking 10 departmental officials along to address public grievances in the presence of district collectors. After 100 events, the programme was stopped due to floods.

A senior DMK functionary acquainted with Kanimozhi told TNEI that she would emerge victorious as the INDIA bloc has an edge during this election. "If the INDIA bloc win, Kanimozhi would become a minister and will get an influential portfolio," he said.

She was flanked by Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Minister Geetha Jeevan, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry Minister Anitha R Radhakrishnan, MLAs GV Markandeyan and MC Shanmugaiah and Thoothukudi Corporation Mayor Jegan Periyasamy as she submitted her application at Anna Arivalayam.

Tamil Nadu: Two held for assaulting doctor at Vellore GH

VELLORE. A patient and her visitor were arrested from Government Vellore Medical College and Hospital on Monday on charges of assaulting a doctor. The arrested were identified as Subha (36) of Sathumadurai in Vellore and her relative Diwakar (35), from Mallavadi village in Tiruvannamalai.

According to the complaint lodged by Dr



Vishal, Subha was admitted for a urinary tract infection in the in-patient care since February 27. Diwakar used to visit her and also attended to the patient on Monday. The incident happened when Diwakar was found lying on the patient's bed in the women's ward. Dr Vishal, who noticed this, asked him to vacate the bed. However, Diwakar refused which led to a verbal altercation. The argument escalated into a physical confrontation involving Diwakar, Subha and the doctor, said police. A video of the incident, which was circulated on social media, showed the Diwakar assaulting the doctor and Subha joined in the attack, and the doctor retaliating. Police arrested both Diwakar and Subha under IPC sections 294(b), 323, 353, 506 (1), and Section 3 of the TN Medicare Service Persons and Medicare Service Institutions (Prevention of Violence and Damage or Loss to Property) Act, 2008.

Diwakar has been placed in remand, while Subha is currently undergoing treatment. She will be remanded once her treatment is complete, police said. Hospital dean S Pappathi said that an inquiry is being conducted internally.

Manipur Looks At One Last Step To End Hereditary Chieftainship

Imphal. The Manipur government will take "appropriate steps" to enforce a law that will end the system of hereditary chieftainship in the hills areas of the state, BJP MLA Rajkumar Imo Singh said in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

The state is seeking to scrap the chieftainship system to end the rule of village chiefs, who are the sole leaders of settlements and own entire villages, and pave the way for setting up a democratic way of rural governance.

Referring to Chief Minister N Biren Singh's statement in the assembly on Monday that the government will enforce an Act, which was passed in 1967 to abolish hereditary chieftainship, Imo Singh said the then President had also given assent to the bill in June 1967. What remains to be done is to notify the Act in the official gazette, government sources told.

"A very important statement by the Chief Minister on the floor of the Manipur assembly that the state government will consult and take appropriate steps for the implementation of The Manipur Hill Areas (Acquisition of Chiefs' Rights) Act, 1967. This Act was passed by the Manipur assembly on January 10, 1967 to abolish hereditary chieftainship," Imo Singh, who is also the son-in-law of the Chief Minister, said in the post. "However this Act has not been enforced till now, thus enabling the



chieftains to continue with their rights and establish villages as per their hereditary practices. One can see the exponential growth of villages in these places," Imo Singh said.

"Manipur is the only state in the North East where this Act isn't implemented. Even a state like Mizoram had implemented a similar act for abolishing chieftainship way back in 1954 when it was a part of Assam. (The) need of the hour is to implement this Act at the earliest date, which we are hopeful now," the BJP MLA said. The hereditary chieftainship system has faced severe criticism over its allegedly exploitative

nature in modern times. The feudal system often leads to nepotism and autocracy - when the current chief dies, only his son can become the next chief. Power struggles among siblings have led to mushrooming of villages in Manipur.

The state bordering Myanmar - the junta nation that's struggling for its own survival - is yet to see peace 10 months after violence broke out between the hill-majority Kuki-Zo tribes, who follow the chieftainship system, and the valley-majority Meiteis over serious disagreements on sharing land, resources, political representation, and affirmative action policies. Since the clashes began, 10

Kuki-Zo MLAs have been asking the central government to carve out a "separate administration" from Manipur. Why Act Not Enforced On why Manipur never enforced the Act to scrap hereditary chieftainship for decades since the bill was passed by the assembly and cleared by the President, state government sources said the fault lies with successive Congress governments in the state. "The Congress has ruled Manipur for the most part of the decades since Independence. Other parties came and went briefly, like blips on a screen. They never got the opportunity to treat the deep wounds inflicted by the Congress party," a government source told NDTV on phone from Imphal, requesting anonymity.

"Notifying the Act in the official gazette would not have been a problem. But the past governments didn't do it because some leaders probably benefitted from the system. And now in these violent times, any major decision would not be easy," the source said.

After the British left, India passed the Zamindari Abolition Act, 1951, and ended the zamindari system, but in Manipur the Kuki-Zo tribes still practice it in the form of chieftainship. Even neighbouring Mizoram, where the tribes share ethnic ties with the Kuki and Chin people, had scrapped chieftainship.

Jabalpur university 'forgets' to conduct exam after issuing admit cards

When students of MSc computer science reached Rani Durgavati University, they were informed that the exam would not be held as the university was not prepared.



Jabalpur A university in Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh "forgot" to conduct the exam for a subject despite releasing the timetable and issuing admit cards to

students. When students of MSc computer science course reached Rani Durgavati University, they were informed that the exam would not be held as the university

was not prepared.

The university administration has ordered an investigation into the matter after the National Students' Union of India, the student wing of the Congress, created a ruckus. The university had announced the timetable for the M.Sc. Computer Science first-semester exam in February. The exam was scheduled to be held on Tuesday but the candidates, who had also come from nearby districts, were surprised to find that the university had not made any preparation.

Elephant attack: Congress intensifies stir, Satheesan slams police action

KOCHI. The endless man-animal conflicts have snowballed into a hot political debate after the Congress intensified its protests seeking justice for Indira Ramakrishnan, the elderly woman who died in an elephant attack on Monday at Kanjiravelli, near Neriamangalam, in Idukki district.

Congress leaders Ramesh Chennithala and V D Satheesan reached Kothamangalam extending support to the stir as MLAs Mathew Kuzhalnadan and Eldose Kunnappillil, along with the party's Ernakulam district president Mohammed Shiyas, started a hunger strike at Gandhi Square in the town on Tuesday. The Congress also took out a protest march.

Dramatic scenes unfolded in Kothamangalam on Monday night when the police arrested Kuzhalnadan and Shiyas for staging protests carrying the body of Indira. Kuzhalnadan was arrested from a tent put up at the Post Office Junction where he was staging an indefinite hunger strike along with Kunnappillil seeking justice for the deceased and a permanent solution to the

man-animal conflicts across the state. Shiyas was picked up from an eatery near the protest venue when he went out for tea. However, by around 3.30am, the magistrate granted interim bail to the arrested when they were produced before the magistrate. On Tuesday, the Kothamangalam Judicial First Class Magistrate Court, which considered the case, adjourned the bail hearing to Wednesday. The police have registered another case against Congress leaders, including Kuzhalnadan and 16 others, based on a complaint from the Kothamangalam Taluk Hospital superintendent for creating ruckus at the hospital and taking the body out of the mortuary. On Monday, the police had booked the MLAs and Idukki MP Dean Kuriakose for causing a road blockade and showing disrespect to a body. The Kothamangalam police have so far launched three FIRs, booking around 30 Congress workers. The protesters had taken out Indira's body from the Taluk Hospital mortuary after pushing aside the police to stage a demonstration. The police

later took over the body forcibly and facilitated a postmortem examination after which the mortal remains were handed over to the relatives. Indira was cremated at her residence on Tuesday with hundreds of people in attendance. Meanwhile, allegations that the body was taken out without the consent of her relatives sparked a controversy. Suresh, her brother, alleged that protesters carried the body for demonstration without consent and he did not agree to the politicisation of the issue. At the same time, Indira's husband, Ramakrishnan, downplayed the allegations saying the protests were carried out with the consent of the family. Coming down heavily on the police high-handedness against the Congress leaders, Leader of Opposition Satheesan said the police action was brutal. "The government is not sparing any opportunity to act against Mathew Kuzhalnadan. He was arrested from the tent. And it was the police who dragged the dead body," he said in Aluva. Kuzhalnadan demanded a permanent solution to the wild animal attacks.

TDP-JSP promise BC Protection Act, Rs 1.50 lakh cr funds

Stating that 300 BCs were brutally killed during the regime of Jagan Mohan Reddy, the TDP chief said the Special Protection Act was aimed at protecting the BCs from the attacks and atrocities.

VIJAYAWADA. TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan released the BC Declaration during a programme 'Jai Ho BC' held near Mangalagiri on Tuesday.

Formulating a Special Protection Act for the Backward Classes (BCs), providing monthly pension of Rs 4,000 to BCs from the age of 50 and allocation of Rs 1.50 lakh crore for the BC sub-plan in five years were among some of the promises made by the alliance leaders to "uplift the community".

Stating that 300 BCs were brutally killed during the regime of Jagan Mohan Reddy, the TDP chief said the Special Protection Act was aimed at protecting the BCs from the attacks and atrocities. Accusing the ruling YSRC of diverting Rs 75,000 crore sub-plan funds, he announced that once the TDP-JSP

come to power, Rs 1.50 lakh crore will be spent through BC sub-plan in five years. He asserted that steps will be taken to ensure that the sub-plan funds are used only for the BCs. Alleging that the Jagan government reduced BC reservation in local bodies to 24% from 34%, resulting in 16,800 BCs losing their positions, Naidu said besides restoring the 34% reservation to BCs in local bodies, a resolution will be made and sent to the Central government for implementing 33% reservation for BCs in Legislative bodies. TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan take part in the 'Jaiho BC' meeting held at Mangalagiri on Tuesday | Express

TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan take part in the 'Jaiho BC' meeting held at Mangalagiri on Tuesday | Express

Naidu promises Rs 10k cr for BC self-employment BC communities with low population, which cannot contest the elections, will be given the opportunity to become co-opted members, he added. Stating that the TDP - JSP government will set up BC Corporations on the basis of population, the former chief minister assured that the funds will be allocated proportionally. Further, he announced that Rs 10,000 crore will be spent in five years for self-employment of BCs. Charging the YSRC government with cancelling 30 schemes, including Adharana for BCs, Naidu



said the scheme will be restored and work tools worth Rs 5,000 crore will be given to the BCs. Promising to conduct caste census legally, he said permanent caste certificates will also be provided. Chandrababu Naidu will be restored with Rs 10 lakh and Pelli Kanuka amount will be hiked to Rs 1 lakh. Restoration of fee reimbursement for PG students, study circles and Vidyannathi scheme were among some of the other assurances given to the BCs. The TDP supremo also pledged that construction of BC buildings and community halls will be completed within a year after the alliance comes to power. Besides upgrading residential schools as junior colleges, the Videsi Vidya scheme will be implemented without any riders, Naidu added. Stating that the BC Declaration was prepared after holding thorough consultations with stakeholders for the past three years, Naidu called on the TDP rank and file to visit every house and explain people about the promises. Speaking on the occasion, JSP

president Pawan Kalyan accused Jagan of betraying the BCs by not allocating Rs 15,000 crore per year as promised before the 2019 elections. Claiming that the funds were not allocated for the BC Corporation by the YSRC government, he said the JSP is committed for the development of 153 BC castes and underscored the need for unity among all the BCs. "Since coming to power, 30 lakh construction workers have lost their

livelihood because of the sand policy of the government. The YSRC government ignored requests from BC organisations to recognise all 153 castes. Despite promising to set up 139 corporations, only 56 were introduced with zero budget," the actor-politician pointed out. Stressing that atrocities against BCs necessitated the BC Protection Act on the lines of SC & ST Atrocity Act, he alleged that the YSRC government has filed cases against 26,000 BC individuals in the past five years. Asserting that the TDP is committed to the welfare of the BCs since its inception, party general secretary Nara Lokesh noted that while NTR created several opportunities for BCs to occupy various positions in the government, Naidu has successfully continued to encourage the community. Recalling his interactions with people from the BC communities during his Yuva Galam Padayatra, Lokesh said a report of their issues has been submitted to senior TDP leaders.

Finding a better way to shape our future

POLICY pundits say that we are facing a poly-crisis. They disagree about many things. How much will the GDP grow next year, and even how much it grew last year? How much poverty has been reduced, and even what is poverty? Whether, with growth, employment and incomes have been going up sufficiently for the 90 per cent below or only for the 10 per cent on top? While economists debate how much GDP is required to create adequate employment, we are losing the ground beneath that supports our economic growth and our lives. India has 17 per cent of the world's population living on 2.4 per cent of the world's land. In 2014, India ranked 155 out of 178 countries on the global Environment Performance Index. In 2022, India slipped to the very bottom: 180th out of 180. India's pattern of growth is not sustainable.

We cannot rely any longer on economists who are debating whether the present government or the previous one is responsible for the ship sinking slowly. We need a new ship — a new paradigm of inclusive and sustainable growth — to take everyone to a safer future. How will we change the ship's design while we are sailing on it together? Our existence depends on answers to these fundamental questions. The scientific revolution began in 17th-century Europe with Francis Bacon and Rene Descartes among its founders. Descartes promoted the concept of a 'rational man'. Bacon declared that science would give man the power to control unruly nature. The modern scientific method of objectively studying all phenomena with data, pushing aside emotions and faith in mystical forces, was applied in the natural sciences to begin with, and then in the social sciences. Economics, the most mathematised social science, emerged as the emperor of social sciences in the 20th century. It is the only social science with a Nobel Prize, first awarded in 1969, following the five other Nobels — for physics, chemistry, medicine, literature and peace — which were instituted in 1895.

Science has advanced by fragmenting into many specialisations. As science advances, experts know more and more about less and less. There are many specialisations within medicine alone. The effects of the disappearance of general physicians on health are visible. The cost of healthcare is rising, while overall wellbeing is declining. Though biological bodies can be kept alive longer with modern science, anxiety and mental depression on account of poor health are increasing, even in countries with the most advanced medical systems. Existential anxiety is growing among youth in the 21st century. They are concerned about the health of the planet, and about the condition of economies that are not creating enough opportunities for them to work with dignity and earn enough. Depression is increasing in young people, as well as the use of drugs and resort to violence, to release their frustration. A higher GDP will not solve these problems. Just as the health of a human being cannot be measured by the size of the body, nor health improved by making only the stomach stronger, the health of human society and its natural environment cannot be improved by increasing the size of its economy or measured by the GDP. Social, environmental, economic and political systems must work together to improve the wellbeing of the whole. A new science of systems is required to enable experts in diverse sciences to understand the whole of which each is only a part. They must listen to each other and learn together. The world is divided into fragments by walls rising among people with different beliefs, different life experiences and formal education in different subjects. Rich people live in physically gated communities separated from the poor outside. They travel around the world and meet other people like themselves. They are global citizens who belong nowhere. Social media has created higher walls between people we like and those we don't. All hurl abuse at others over the walls.

On a record-setting spree, BRO scales new heights

The world records achieved by the BRO symbolise cutting-edge leadership and the government's foresight & support.

THE Border Roads Organisation (BRO), an emblem of the nation's engineering prowess and determination, has put Bharat on the global infrastructure map by creating eight world records — and all during the past three years. Today, the Tricolour flies high with pride on the highest road (at an altitude of 19,024 ft) in the world.

Building roads in the plains and in the mountains are two entirely different activities. The latter was neglected by previous governments, thereby stunting the progress of the mountainous region and remote areas along the northern borders. Due to the lack or absence of infrastructure in many border villages, the people got deprived of the fruits of progress, to the extent that a large proportion of them were not even getting access to Central Government schemes. The government has played a pivotal role in the transformation of the BRO through enhanced budgetary support and the sanctioning of ambitious projects. BRO Karmyogis have responded well against all odds of the harshest terrain and the most inclement weather conditions and created seven out of eight world records at freezing heights in Ladakh alone.

The 52-km-long road connecting Chisumle to Demchok passes through Umling La at 19,024 ft, which is not only higher than Siachen Glacier but also pips both the base camps of Mount Everest in Nepal and Tibet. The Atal tunnel is another engineering marvel that represents a significant milestone in India's infrastructure development. It is the world's longest highway tunnel, situated above 10,000 ft, stretching for 9.02 km to connect Manali to Lahaul & Spiti Valley. The world's highest Bailey suspension bridge at Shyok village at an altitude of 11,960 ft is a critical link on the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) Road. However, this has been supplemented by a 120-metre-long 'class 70' permanent iron bridge which was inaugurated by the Defence Minister from the bridge site on October 28, 2022. The world's highest oxygen café has come as a boon for the bikers and tourists who started visiting the world's highest road at Umling La of late, and has become a social media sensation. The BRO inducted 755 Task Force/Himank at Hanle, situated at 15,000 ft, to construct the world's highest road connecting Likaru to Fukche. This task force at Hanle has been declared the world's highest construction task force; it is also responsible for the construction of the world's highest fighter airbase at Nyoma (13,700 ft). The 78 RCC (Road Construction Company) of 50 TF/Himank located at Burtse (16,200 ft) is responsible for the construction/maintenance of the strategically most critical Darbuk-Shyok-DBO and SBG roads in the harshest terrain of the Sub-Sector North.

The world's highest workshop, which is located at Sultan Chushku (14,650 ft), is responsible for the repair and maintenance of a huge number of machines and equipment involved in construction of roads and bridges



in the DBO sector. Sultan Chushku is situated south of Murgo ('Gateway to death'). To deal with medical emergencies involving tourists, locals as well as security personnel, the BRO has constructed a medical centre equipped with modern facilities at Umling La. This is the world's highest medical centre. The Sela tunnel, the world's longest bi-lane tunnel above 13,000 ft, would ensure all-weather connectivity between Guwahati and Tawang. The BRO started constructing the world's highest road on August 15, 2023, connecting Likaru, Migla (19,400 ft) and Fukche through a stretch of 64 km. This road will break the BRO's own record of Umling La. Of the 14 highest roads in the world, 11 are in India. Work is going on in full swing at Nyoma airbase, which will provide strategic edge to the Indian Air Force over China and extend operational and logistic reach of the Army in Eastern Ladakh. The BRO has completed work on the world's highest bridge located at an altitude of 15,300 ft at Saser Brangsa over the Shyok river in just one working season last year. This 345-metre-long bridge is 'class 70' and has seven piers resting on a total of 329

micropiles. The bridge is awaiting dedication to the nation. The Shinkun La tunnel at an altitude of 15,855 ft will connect 36 villages of Zaskar to 137 villages of Lahaul & Spiti and would be the world's highest tunnel, beating the record of China's Mila tunnel (15,584 ft). The BRO has completed three tunnels during the past three years, while 10 are under construction. The organisation is poised to take up at least eight more tunnels in the near future, for which planning process is near complete. Six of these tunnels would be higher than Mont Blanc (15,771 ft) — the highest peak in the Alps. Till now, the world used to look with awe and admiration at mountain tunnels in the Alps, but the focus will soon be shifting to India when it comes to the construction of tunnels at super-high altitudes. The world records achieved by the BRO are more than engineering marvels; these symbolise human grit and resilience, cutting-edge leadership as well as the government's foresight and support. Demonstrating exceptional skills in various construction sectors, the BRO is emerging as a source of inspiration for the global construction industry.

Stripped of immunity

SC shows zero tolerance for corrupt lawmakers

EMPHASISING the importance of probity in the lawmaking process, a seven-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has ruled that MPs and MLAs taking bribes to vote or make a speech in the House are not immune from prosecution. The landmark unanimous verdict overrules the 1998 judgment of the court's five-judge Bench in the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) bribery case, whereby lawmakers were granted immunity under Articles 105 and 194 of the Constitution. These Articles deal with the powers and privileges of members of Parliament and legislative assemblies. Five JMM MPs had allegedly accepted bribes to help the PV Narasimha Rao government survive a no-confidence motion in 1993.

The court has rightly observed that corruption and bribery of members of the legislature erode the foundation of Indian parliamentary democracy,



even as PM Narendra Modi has asserted that the verdict will ensure clean politics and deepen the people's faith in

the system. The judgment comes weeks after the SC annulled the electoral bond scheme, saying that it violated the constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression as well as the right to information. The scheme, whose avowed aim was to cleanse political funding, had run into rough weather from the outset due to a glaring lack of transparency.

It's laudable that the SC is making interventions to clean the Augean stables of Indian politics. Voters expect their representatives to raise issues of public interest in the House, not sell themselves to the highest bidder. The 1998 ruling was flawed as it had given unscrupulous lawmakers the licence to misuse parliamentary privileges to save their skin. The latest judgement is a significant step towards curbing the rampant role of money power in horse-trading and other legislative malpractices.

The corrosive influence of meritocratic hubris

Quite often, the poor and the downtrodden get carried away by the rhetoric of populist politics.

HARVARD University's Prof Michael Sandel recently visited India. What sets him apart from others is his ability to rescue philosophy from mere conceptual abstraction and relate deep thoughts — say, the debates on 'justice' — to contemporary social, political and existential issues. He also inspires his students and even 'non-academic' citizens to think and re-examine the world they live in. The lectures he delivered and the interviews he gave in India aroused interest among the cultural and intellectual elite. However, the real challenge lies in enquiring whether his thoughts can help us do something meaningful about the social and political reality prevailing in contemporary India.

Think of the insights we can derive from his marvellous book *The Tyranny of Merit*. To begin with, let us accept the fact that in a country like ours, known for heightened caste and class inequalities, there is no fair race or competition in the game of 'meritocracy'. Those who are already privileged — say, the students whose upper-caste or affluent parents can send them to elite or exclusivist 'international' schools or spend a huge amount of money for sending them to branded coaching centres or paying the exorbitant 'capitation fee' for admission in medical/engineering/management colleges — are likely to prove their 'merit' more comfortably than the children of Dalit wage earners or lower middle-class factory workers. But then, Sandel argues that even a 'fair meritocracy' (say, everybody starting from the same position without caste or class inequalities) is a bad idea because it is 'corrosive of civic responsibilities'. The reason is that those who win the race and see themselves as 'meritorious' are likely to think that they are self-made and self-sufficient, and hence, it becomes exceedingly difficult for them to learn gratitude and humility. Without these



sentiments, as Sandel reminds us, "it is hard to care for the common good". In fact, this 'dark side' of meritocracy erodes the dignity of work and makes many people — delivery workers, grocery store clerks, warehouse workers, lorry drivers, farmers and artisans who have not been to universities — feel that the elites look down on them. In fact, humility as a civic virtue is a necessary "antidote to the meritocratic hubris that has driven us apart". In a society characterised by the oppressive duality of 'mental' vs 'manual' labour, are we ready to accept what the professor is pleading for: the need for redistribution of esteem as well as money?

Another disturbing thing that characterises our society is the heavily polarised political culture. The secular, liberal, left and progressive intelligentsia continue to speak of democracy, equality and scientific reasoning. Yet, it seems almost impossible to resist the dramatic rise of Narendra Modi as the most populist and

powerful Prime Minister, or, for that matter, the politics that sustains him — the politics based on hyper-nationalist emotions and passions for restoring the 'lost' Hindu symbols and identities. Quite often, the poor and the downtrodden get carried away by the rhetoric of this populist politics. Why does this happen? Well, while reflecting on the rise of Trumpism in the US, Sandel regarded this sort of populist politics as a 'rebellion' against 'technocratic liberalism', which he feels is more congenial to the professional classes than to the blue-collar and middle-class voters. The question is whether, in contemporary India too, 'nationalist' politics based on religious symbols is appealing to the poor and the downtrodden more than what the liberal or left politics offers — say, the need for scientific reasoning, or the primacy of 'secular' needs like jobs, shelter and education. Possibly, one important reason for the failure of progressive politics is the inability of its

ideologues or intellectual proponents to understand the reasons for the anger and grievances of the masses. Likewise, they fail to acknowledge the tendency of the 'meritorious' cultural elites to degrade the 'non-educated' masses. The question is whether the progressive politico-intellectual elites in India are willing to go in for rigorous introspection and ask themselves whether they have ever made an effort to understand the emotions, anger and cultural longing of those who, for instance, have almost been hypnotised by the chant of 'Jai Shri Ram'.

As Sandel reminds us, it is important on the part of the progressive class to learn from the populist protest, "not by emulating its xenophobia and strident nationalism, but by taking seriously the grievances with which these sentiments are entangled, and these sentiments are about social esteem — not only about wages and jobs". After all, democracy is a public culture of deliberation and dialogue, and hence, to quote Sandel, "the ability to listen is a necessary condition for both liberals and conservatives". However, the question is whether, in this terribly toxic and polarised political milieu, we are ready to learn this lesson of democratic deliberation.

And finally, in his book *What Money Can't Buy*, he has reminded us of the danger of living in a 'market society' that allows the expansion of market values into spheres of life where they should not belong. For instance, when 'spiritual' lessons are sold as marketable commodities, it indicates the poor moral health of our society. As the champions of neoliberalism or proponents of market fundamentalism are becoming immensely powerful in contemporary India, is it possible for us to walk with Sandel and assert that "there are certain moral and civil goods that markets do not honour and money can't buy"?

5 historical sites you must visit near Dharamsala

When you think of Dharamsala, you think of the massive Dhauladhar Ranges, and of the Dalai Lama. There is so much to see and do here; whether you go trekking in the mountains or visit monasteries. Another aspect of Dharamsala is its rich heritage comprising impressive monuments and forts. Ruled by Katoch Dynasty for centuries and then passing into Mughal hands and later the British, the Kangra valley has many impressive monuments built by successive rulers. There are forts and temples galore, which take you back into the past. Here are five historical monuments you must visit, if you are visiting Dharamsala or the Kangra Valley.



Baijnath Temple

The Baijnath Temple, built in the 12th century, is one of the most impressive and important temples in the Kangra Valley. Built by two brothers over a shrine already present here, the Baijnath Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva as Vaidyanath, the healer. The temple legend refers to Ravana's penance, in which he cuts off his heads and offers them to the Lord, and Shiva eventually relents and restores him the 10 heads, and also blesses him. It is also believed that the lingam housed here is one given to Ravana by Shiva himself, and that the Gods tricked Ravana into placing it here instead of taking it home to Lanka. The temple is an impressive monument, with scores of interesting depictions of Gods. The sculptures are incredibly beautiful and

detailed. One of the most interesting festivals here is Dussera, where, unlike the rest of North India, effigies of Ravana are not burnt or beheaded, as a mark of respect to him!

Location:

The Baijnath Temple is about 51 km away from Kangra.

Nurpur Fort

The Nurpur Fort, located on the route from Pathankot to Dharamsala, is not on any tourist's itinerary. The impressive fort stands on a hillock just off the main highway, but is only visited by locals, that too, for a temple within the fort premises. The name of the fort comes from the town, which was once called Dhameri. Its name was changed to Nurpur when the empress Nur Jahan visited, and was enamored by the place! The fort must have been once the stronghold of the Katochs, and then the Mughals, but today, it is in use as various government offices and a primary school! The Brij Raj Swami Mandir inside the fort was once the royal court. Once the king visited Chittorgarh and brought home the idol of Krishna once worshipped by Meera. He converted his court into a temple for the lord, and decorated the entire temple with paintings, depicting the various leelas of Lord Krishna, but today, it is in use as whitewashed, a clear sign of its state today. Outside are more impressive structures—the queen's quarters, an old well, and ancient temple—with amazingly beautiful and detailed sculptures. Sadly, only the base of the temple stands today! The fort is a must-visit for heritage enthusiasts.

Information:

Nurpur is 28 km from Pathankot and 60 km from Dharamsala.

How to reach:

Pathankot is the nearest city, and is well connected to the rest of the country by the railways. Nurpur Road is a small railway station on the Kangra Valley railway, between Pathankot and Dharamsala. The nearest airport is at Gaggal (Kangra/Dharamsala) 45 km away.

St. John in the Wilderness church

The church of St. John in the wilderness is one of the oldest Anglican churches in Dharamsala/McLeod Ganj. Nestled in a cove of mighty Deodar trees, the church is rather aptly named, and even today, is an island of wilderness in a rapidly growing tourist destination. The church was built in 1852, to provide a place of worship for the British soldiers posted here, and the church

is full of memorial stones of those who passed away here. One memorial speaks of death due to a bear attack, while the most impressive



one is just behind the church. It is dedicated to Lord Elgin, the Viceroy of India from 1862-1863. The church also boasts of two magnificent stained glass panels, and a bell, cast by Mears and Stainbank, and brought all the way from England!

Information:

Location:

The church of St. John in the Wilderness is located just before McLeod Ganj on the road from Dharamsala. It is within walking distance of the main market and the bus stop.

Masroor Temple

The Masroor Temples are rock cut temples, sometimes called the Ellora of Himachal. They are believed to have been first built by Pandavas while they were travelling through these mountains; historically they belong to the 7th and 8th centuries. They must have been built by the Katoch Dynasty; the information available is very less though. The temples are magnificent structures, carved into the rock and rising towards the heavens. These are covered with amazingly detailed carvings depicting Shiva, Kartikeya, Indra, Surya, as well as many forms of the goddesses. The main shrine today has idols of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana found here during the excavation though it is believed to have been a Shiva Temple. Steps cut into a mountain nearby and lead to a sort of store house, where some broken idols were found. This hillock also provides a superb view of the temples against the Dhauladhar Ranges in the background.

Location:

Masroor is 32 km away from Kangra and 51 km from Dharamsala

How to reach:

By air: The nearest airport is at Gaggal, about 15 km away from Dharamsala. There are regular flights from New Delhi.

By train: The nearest well-connected railway station is at Pathankot, (87 km from Dharamsala). The Kangra Railway Station is only connected by a narrow gauge train from Pathankot to Joginder Nagar.

By road: Dharamsala is well connected to Pathankot by road, and there are frequent buses ply on the route. Masroor is on the road to Nagrota, and there are few buses here. It is best to hire a vehicle from Dharamsala or Kangra.

Kangra Fort

The Kangra Fort is one of the oldest forts in India, and has a history going back centuries. Built by the Katoch Kings, who trace their lineage back to the goddess Ambika, Kangra

Fort was also the capital of Raja Parmanand Chandra, better known as Porus, whose clash with Alexander the

Great is something we all have read about, in our history books. Located atop a hill at the confluence of two rivers, the gorge around the hillock provides a natural moat for the fort, further strengthening it, and rendering it difficult to capture. The fort remained invincible till Mahmud of Ghazni invaded, and carried away much of the wealth of the fort, and the temple inside. Today, the temple has no idol of Ambika, but has one of Mahavir, considered to be one of his oldest ones, and is a place of pilgrimage for Jains. One of the best things about the Kangra Fort is the superb audio guide, which makes the fort and its stories come alive.

Information:

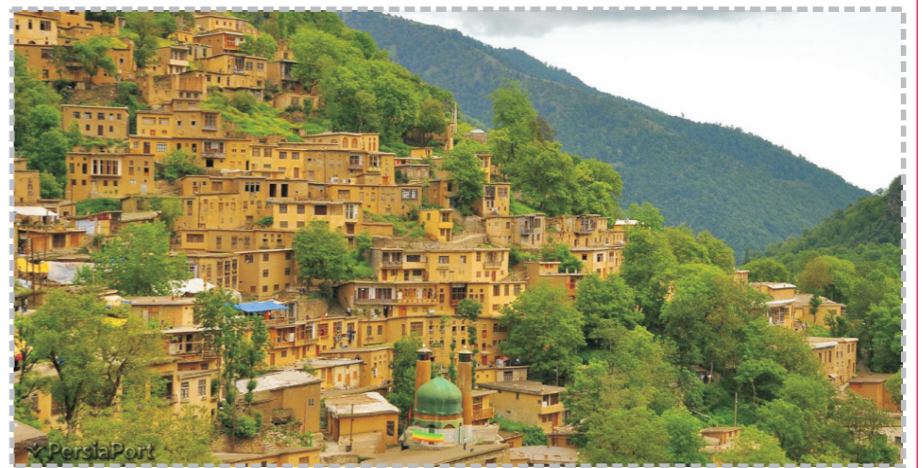
Location:

The Kangra Fort or Nagarkot, as it is called, is located in Old Kangra town, just 1 km from the Kangra Railway Station, and 21 km from Dharamsala.

How to reach:

If you stay at Kangra, you can hire autos to take you to the fort and back. Buses are infrequent. If you stay at Dharamsala, hire a car.

The historic village of Masouleh



The village of Masouleh is located in Gilan Province in Iran, perched high on a densely forested mountainside about 60 km inland from the Caspian Sea. Forever covered in fog, which barely leaves the village, Masouleh is an incredible spectacle—a series of cottages built on a slope, such that each house's courtyard is another house's rooftop.

The village is located about 1,050 m above sea level, but the range of elevation varies by over a hundred metres in the village. Because of this, houses are constructed in stepped terraces and are interconnected. The terrace of each house functions as the courtyard of the house above. In some cases, public streets are laid out along interconnected roofs. Due to its unique layout, Masouleh does not permit any motor vehicles to enter as the small streets and many stairs make it impossible for vehicles to operate in the village. Masouleh's peculiar architecture can be compared, to some extent, to the Libyan village of Ghadames, where interconnected rooftops create a network of passageways.

The village buildings are mostly two storeys and made of adobe, rods and bole. Between these houses are narrow, meandering steps that lead to the upper

level of the city. Given that these old houses are mostly made out of clay and wood, it is truly amazing that the roofs can also serve as sidewalks and walkways. Moreover, they are constantly exposed to wear and tear of the weather, such as deluges of rain and heaps of snow. Due to its high location, the climate of Masouleh is different from the rest of Iran, which is hot and dry. Here, warm, moist air blowing southwest from the Caspian is blocked by the Alborz Mountains, creating heavy precipitation and fog on the seaward side of the mountains. The abundant rainfall has spawned dense forests and gushing rivers in the area.

The first village of Masouleh was established more than a thousand years ago, around 6 km northwest of the current village and is called Old Masouleh. Masouleh had once been the 'Silk Road of the Gilan' region and people from far and near gathered here for business to sell and buy merchandise; however, as of late, there are fewer signs of the young and old selling dream dolls and colourful socks in the alleys of Masouleh as people have migrated from this once trade centre due to unemployment and lack of income. As of recent, Masouleh is developing into a popular tourist destination.

Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot test drives prototype of mohalla bus

Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot inspected and took a test drive of the prototype of the mohalla bus at Raj Ghat bus depot. In a post on X, he said these soon-to-be-launched buses were a game changer.

New Delhi. Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot rode and inspected the Prototype 9-meter-long Mohalla bus at Rajghat depot on Tuesday. These 9-meter mohalla buses have 23 passenger seats and are designed for shorter

routes within Delhi, serving as a vital mode of first and last-mile connectivity. He highlighted the technological specifications of the prototype, stating, "The bus I rode in today is equipped with a 196kW battery, providing a range of 120-130 km on a full charge, allowing it to easily complete 10-15 round trips on a single charge." The Mohalla buses have been coloured greenish for easy passenger identification. Additionally, 25 per cent of the seats (6 seats) are pink, reserved exclusively for women passengers. Women can also avail free rides on these buses through Pink passes. Speaking to ANI, Gahlot said, "We had announced the scheme last year. It is the vision of CM Arvind Kejriwal that public transport be strengthened. The Mohalla bus was delayed because of the process of official formalities was time-consuming. The buses we have ordered are 9 meters long and have been offered for inspection. From April, we hope that these buses will be commissioned by the



Delhi government. These buses will ply on routes which have narrow roads and those areas that suffer connectivity issues..." The Mohalla Bus Scheme aims to deploy 9-

meter-long electric buses to provide neighbourhood or feeder bus services. The AAP government plans to introduce a total of 2,180 such buses by 2025, catering

specifically to areas with limited road width or overcrowding. A total of 2,080 such buses are being procured by the Delhi Government as part of its mission to go electric. These buses will help boost first and last-mile connectivity, particularly in areas like unauthorised colonies, villages, and sub-cities like Dwarka or Rohini, where standard 12-meter buses face operational challenges due to their size and turning radius. Delhiites can expect to see these buses on city roads by next month. The Transport Minister claimed that by the end of 2025, Delhi aims to have a total of 10,480 buses, out of which 80% will be electric. Additionally, efforts are underway to electrify over 60 depots, with 16 depots already fully operational. In Delhi, more than 40 lakh bus trips are completed by commuters daily, utilising the 7,582 buses operated by the Delhi government.

Following the inspection, he boarded the bus and reached Vidhan Sabha to attend the ongoing Budget session.

5 killed as car rams truck in Andhra Pradesh

New Delhi At least five people were killed in a road accident in Andhra Pradesh's Nallagatla village on Wednesday. The accident occurred at nearly 5 am when a family was on its way from Hyderabad to Tirupati Devasthanam. The car reportedly rammed a truck on the national highway, thus killing all members of the family on the spot. Allagadda Rural CI Hanumantha Naik arrived at the spot soon after receiving information about the accident. However, the five people succumbed to their injuries.

Didn't get any call': Siddaramaiah on blast threat in Bengaluru on Saturday

New Delhi, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday denied having received any threat calls amid blast claims to rock Bengaluru. "I haven't received any threat calls," Siddaramaiah told reporters. His statement came amid reports that the Karnataka Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, State Home Minister G Parameshwara and the Bengaluru Police Commissioner, had received a bomb threat via email. In the bomb threat mail, the



sender, Shahid Khan, warned that an explosion would rock Bengaluru at 2.48 pm on Saturday. A case was soon registered after the sender warned of planting bombs at public events and busy places in the city, including restaurants, temples, buses, or trains. The accused even demanded a ransom of 2.5 million dollars (more than Rs 20 crore) to refrain from carrying out the explosion. Meanwhile, talking about the Bengaluru's Rameshwaram Cafe blast, Siddaramaiah said that the anti-terror agency is doing investigation. "The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is doing its investigation. They have also arrested five people. I do not know whom they have arrested," said the Chief Minister. The blast took place at the cafe on March 1 in Bengaluru's Whitefield area, leaving 10 people injured.

Tarot Reader, On The Run After Raping Woman In Delhi, Arrested In Himachal Pradesh

New Delhi. A 35-year-old tarot card reader was arrested in Himachal Pradesh for allegedly raping a woman in Delhi last year, police said on Tuesday. They said the woman informed police on March 1 that Sidhant Joshi allegedly raped her on the false promise of marriage after she approached him to resolve a grievance with her friend. She also claimed that Joshi clicked private photos and videos of her to threaten her. Deputy Commissioner of Police (southwest) Rohit Meena said. The officer said an FIR was registered and a team was formed to nab the accused. "Based on surveillance of the mobile phone of the accused, the team started chasing him.



Our team chased him in Uttar Pradesh from Uttarakhand to Punjab and he was finally apprehended from Kasauli in Himachal Pradesh," the DCP said. "The accused confessed his crime and disclosed that he exploited the victim multiple times. An FIR under sections 376 (rape) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC has been registered and further investigation is under progress," he added.

'Public trust in wastebin': What Supreme Court said on Jim Corbett deforestation

The Supreme Court said public trust had been thrown into the 'waste bin' as it took note of illegal construction and felling of trees at the Jim Corbett National Park.



New Delhi. The Supreme Court slammed the political-bureaucrat nexus over illegal construction and felling of trees at the Jim Corbett National Park in Uttarakhand, saying public trust had been thrown into the "waste bin". Justice BR Gavai asked the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to submit a status report within 3 months and came down heavily on former Uttarakhand Forest Minister Harak Singh Rawat and then divisional forest officer for causing heavy damage to the environment for political and commercial gains. Rawat was a minister in the previous BJP

government and was expelled from the party in 2022 for "anti-party" activities. He later joined the Congress. The top court asked the Environment Ministry to constitute a committee comprising representatives from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and the wildlife authority to recommend measures to restore the damages. "Identify officers who are liable, and the cost shall be recovered from them," the court further said.

JIM CORBETT NATIONAL PARK CASE: WHAT THE SUPREME

Probed Sheikh Shahjahan case with 'promptness': Bengal to Supreme Court

New Delhi The West Bengal government told the Supreme Court that it proceeded with the investigation into suspended Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan with "utmost importance".

The government said the Calcutta High Court's order to hand over Shahjahan to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was "perverse, illegal and arbitrary". The government moved the Supreme Court on Tuesday shortly after a division bench of the High Court ordered the police to hand over Sheikh Shahjahan to the CBI in connection with the January 5 attack on Enforcement Directorate officers in Sandeshkhali. However, the state government's matter is yet to be listed in the Supreme Court despite a call for an urgent hearing as they were in contempt following the High Court's order. The Supreme Court asked the Bengal government to wait for the Chief Justice of India to pass

appropriate orders, without providing immediate relief. Shahjahan is currently under CID custody. In its plea to the Supreme Court, the West Bengal government sought an ex parte



stay on the High Court order. It said Shahjahan was arrested immediately after the High Court clarified that there was no restraint on his arrest, adding that it "proceeded with the investigation with the utmost promptness." The High Court's order

is perverse, illegal and arbitrary and deserves to be set aside. It frustrates the state's right to avail a remedy available to it under law," the plea said. The state government also said that the transfer of the investigation to the CBI "in a cursory manner is in violation of the law" laid down by the Supreme Court. "The scope of an appeal against an interim order cannot be stretched to dispose of the main petition... Orders of the division bench in the matter are self-contradictory, and place the blame on the state government for inaction," it said, adding that the extensive steps taken by the West Bengal Police in the case were "completely ignored".

Sheikh Shahjahan was arrested by the state police on February 29 after absconding for 55 days since the attack on the ED team in Sandeshkhali. The ED team had gone to conduct searches in his premises in connection with an alleged ration scam.

Russian forces arrest two Punjab men, force them into fight against Ukraine

Two men from Punjab, who had gone to Russia on a tourist visa, were arrested by the Russian forces and forced to fight against Ukraine.

New Delhi. Two families in Punjab's Gurdaspur district have appealed to the Central government to safely bring back their children from Russia, where they went on a tourist visa, and were arrested by the Russian military and forced to fight in the war against Ukraine. Talking to India Today TV, the family of one Ravneet Singh said he, along with one Vikram, obtained a tourist visa by paying Rs 11 lakh to an agent, who assured them of jobs. The two reached Russia and were apprehended by the local police as they left for



sightseeing. The family also alleged the Russian forces arrested the two men and handed them over to military officers, who forcibly recruited them into the army to fight against Ukraine, amid the war. Ravneet Singh's family said they received a call from him, who informed them about the sequence of events that led to their arrest.

He also claimed both of them were made to sign an agreement which they could not understand due to language barriers. Ravneet Singh said some others, who had arrived in Russia earlier, were forcibly being made to fight Ukraine. The Russia-Ukraine war entered its third year in February 2024. In recent months, Ukraine has stepped up attacks in the Black Sea and on Crimea, which Russia seized and annexed in 2014. Kyiv has reported a series of strikes, including the sinking of a large landing ship by naval drones in mid-February.

Indian onions in simmering 'boycott' pot of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is witnessing a 'boycott India' campaign since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned to power. Amid this, India has made an exemption just for Bangladesh and the UAE, allowing export of onions ahead of Ramzan and Eid. What is the anti-India campaign and the onion diplomacy all about?

New Delhi Diplomacy is layered, exactly like the layers of an onion. What one sees on the outside is far removed from what makes the core. The same is true for the India-Bangladesh relationship. India, which has been in favour of a Sheikh Hasina government in Dhaka, has faced stray boycott calls since the Awami League leader returned to power in the January parliamentary election. Parties and individuals opposed to Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League have tried to give shape to an 'India Out' campaign on the lines of the one in the Maldives. India-baiter Mohamed Muizzu won the Maldivian presidency with his 'India Out' campaign, and bilateral relations between the countries have nosedived since.

Even as some social media handles try to promote the "boycott India" sentiment, the Modi government on Monday allowed the export of 50,000 tonnes of onions, a key kitchen staple, to Bangladesh ahead of Ramzan and Eid. Onion is a key ingredient, especially for dishes during the Ramzan period of feasting and fasting, which culminates in Eid celebrations. Though onion exports are banned, the government made an exemption for two friendly countries -- Bangladesh and the UAE. India banned the export of onions in December 2023, which resulted in a steep rise in the commodity in Bangladesh and several other countries.

'BOYCOTT INDIA' CAMPAIGN AND IMPACT IN BANGLADESH

In February, Al Jazeera reported how shops in Dhaka's Panthapath area, which generally stocked Indian products, were refusing to take fresh deliveries. Staff at several shops in Dhaka and Chittagong told the Voice of America in February that they saw a drop in sales of Indian products like cooking oil, processed foods, toiletry, cosmetics and clothing. The online campaign in Bangladesh, led mostly by the Bangladeshi diaspora and those in exile, has led to the boycott of Indian products



in some localities, according to reports. Toxic anti-India posts have surged online. One of the key drivers of the 'Boycott India' campaign is Paris-based Pinaki Bhattacharya. Pinaki, a trained doctor who describes himself as an "exiled blogger, online activist and human rights defender from Bangladesh", announced the 'India Out' campaign in mid-January. Pinaki, who once ran a pharmaceutical company, was allegedly hounded out of Bangladesh in 2019. An India Today analysis of over 4,000 tweets shows #BoycottIndianProducts along with some other low-volume hashtags like #IndiaOut and #BoycottIndia started gaining traction on social media platforms in Bangladesh a week after Hasina took oath. Online news portal Dhaka Post reported in March that 12 Bangladeshi parties had banded together

to call for a boycott of Indian products. The main opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, and the main Islamist party, Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, weren't among those giving the boycott call. The impact of a boycott of products wouldn't be much economically as exports to Bangladesh were 2.6% of India's total exports in 2022-2023.

However, it is the sentiment that

Delhi needs to be alert to, given the

historical ties between the neighbours.

India not only helped liberate Bangladesh,

it also gave shelter to Sheikh Hasina and

her sister after the assassination of her

father and Bangladesh President Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman. China has been

desperately trying to woo the government

in Bangladesh, whose location is

strategically important.

'NOT MUCH RESONANCE OF INDIA OUT CAMPAIGN'

People, however, have said that there isn't

much resonance to the 'Boycott India'

campaign on the ground.

"We can't see any such campaign or its

impact on the ground in Bangladesh,"

Muntassir Mamoon, Bangabandhu Chair

of Chittagong University, tells

India Today. In.

What tour Guides won't tell you

You need to carry your passport to any nightclub if you're planning to party hard in Sydney. Local beverages are more affordable in Oz Land. Tipping isn't recommended. Here's all that cricket fans and travellers need to know about Australia. Plane loads of Indian tourists visit Australia for cricket, annual vacation or honeymoon. We list a few must dos in and around major Australian cities Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. We also suggest some of the must dos and don'ts in and around these cities so that you save money and avoid all roadblocks while planning your holiday. Have an amazing Australian experience the

Aussie way.

Sydney, New South Wales

Trike Ride on Harley Davidson Bikes: How about soaking in Sydney while roaming across popular attractions like The Opera House, The Harbour Bridge, Central Business District and suburbs on an open Harley 'rickshaw'? Rather than riding pillion behind a burly rider, why not opt for a trike ride? There are several bike tour operators such as Troll Tours in the city offering a trike ride. This bike has three wheels instead of two, and a bigger seating

area at the back. **Cafe and Pub Hopping:** You've ogled at every Master Chef preparation; this is your chance to feast on them. Sydney is the food capital of Australia. Ample cafes, pubs and clubs run by celebrity chefs dot the city. Darling Harbour, Darlinghurst and Cowper Wharf Road have some of the best dine out spaces. There are ample Indian restaurants and other eateries have enough vegetarian options too.

Melbourne, Victoria

Colonial Tramcar Restaurant: This is a city

tour like no other. Nibble on gourmet fare for lunch or dinner inside an old tram refurbished as a Victorian rail bogey. Among the best tramcar restaurants, these trams take you on a three-hour journey around the city and its suburbs while you enjoy a three-course meal and sights of the city from your tram window. 12 Apostles, Great Ocean Road: The road and rock formations are hailed as an Aussie wonder worth a visit. The four-hour drive along the sea takes you to majestic rock and limestone formations named 12 Apostles. Some of the arches emerging out of the sea are as high as 45 metres. These formations change colour right through the day with the changing colours of the sun.

Adelaide, South Australia

Country Homes for Stay: Adelaide is an ideal city to experience both the bustle of Sydney and Melbourne, as well as the calm countryside that this place offers. Many locals rent out their country homes. Book one of these cottages and experience a staycation with an Australian family. Most of the houses have kitchen gardens from where you can source your basic ingredients. Do remember to go fishing with locals too. **Winery Tour:** Seppeltsfield and Jacob's Creek are two of the biggest vineyards of the region and close to the city. A wine educator takes you through the history of the vineyard and the region and offers professional wine-tasting sessions at each winery.

Checklist

Club rules

Your passport is a must for entry into any

club or a pub. Sydney has a lockout hour where the entry to a club closes at 1 am. The clubs would stay open till 3 am but no new entry or re-entry is allowed. Tipping is not the norm and not encouraged either.

House rules

Cabs are expensive. Trams and walking are the usual modes chosen by locals. Locals take their kitchen gardens very seriously. Don't run amok. Pluck only what's needed

Road rules

Australia enforces strict speed limits. Empty stretches are tempting but resist pushing the accelerator.

Local flair

Beer and wine of the state you are in will be more affordable. A South Australian beer will be cheaper in Adelaide than Melbourne and vice versa. The menus mention which states the beverages are from. Try local brews.

Right gear

Your bermudas or denim shorts are NOT swimming shorts. Wear proper swimming or surf gear that dries quickly rather than roam around in drenched lowers post a swim.

Safety first

Australia has strict traffic rules. Wear seat belts even while riding trike bikes. Seat belts on rear seats of cars are also a must

Civic sense

Smoking in public places is allowed in Australia but stubbing the butt on streets is an offence. While you will not be punished for smoking, you can be fined for littering! Always stub it in trays installed.



With a medley of steep red cliffs, swaying palm trees and the deep blue Arabian Sea, it isn't hard to imagine why Varkala is described as one of the most beautiful beaches in India. A more laid-back alternative to Kovalam, Varkala is fast catching up to its more popular cousin, thanks to its stunning beaches and an assortment of restaurants and hotels clustered around the North Cliff.

6 reasons to visit Varkkala

Papanasham Beach

Synonymous with Varkala, this is the town's most popular beach. With waves lapping its sun-kissed white sands at one end and breaking against the imposing red cliffs on the other, Papanasham is quite a sight to behold. While swimming is allowed, visitors need to watch out (as with all the other beaches at Varkala) for strong underwater currents.

Besides lounging about on the sands at Papanasham, visitors can try their hand at parasailing, scuba diving and paragliding, while anglers can go deep-sea fishing. The beach is lined with a surfeit of restaurants serving up fresh-from-the-ocean seafood and small shops hawking souvenirs. The panoramic bird's eye view from the top of the cliff (easily accessed via a winding path) is highly recommended. The beach also attracts a steady stream of the faithful: Hindus believe a dip in the water here can absolve sins, and the immersion of cremation ashes leads to salvation for the deceased.

Thiruvambadi Beach

If isolation is what you seek then this stretch of sand, also known as the Black Sand Beach, fits the bill to a tee. One of the quietest beaches in Varkala, this beach has, as the name suggests, black sand. Accessible by climbing down from the North Cliff, or driving down Thiruvambadi Road. If isolation is what you seek then this stretch of sand, also known as the Black Sand Beach, fits the bill to a tee. One of the quietest beaches in Varkala, this beach has, as the name suggests, black sand. Accessible by climbing down from the North Cliff, or driving down Thiruvambadi Road.

Yoga at the beach

Yoga and Ayurveda have always been big draws in Kerala and Varkala is no exception. Most seaside resorts offer yoga sessions on the beach: the trick is identifying which type of yoga you'd like to practice and picking a resort that offers it. Hotel Green Palace hosts 'hatha yoga' classes by Haridas, a teacher trained in the Sivananda school. Sharanagati Yogahaus is a yoga retreat that offers

Sivananda yoga classes twice a day and Vipassana meditation sessions. The family-run Eden Garden hotel couples yoga with traditional Ayurvedic therapies.

Anjengo Fort

History buffs will find the 20-minute drive out of town to this fort, located in a fishing village, entirely worth the effort. This 17th century fort was initially used by the Portuguese as a depot for trading goods and arms, and later served as a signalling station and a trading depot for pepper and coir, for the British. Briefly besieged by the locals during a local rebellion in 1721, the fort also served as a British ammunition store during the Anglo-Mysore Wars in the 18th century. Soak in the gorgeous views from the ramparts and don't forget to check out the 130-foot tall lighthouse that once guided ships arriving from

Britain. There are some old churches and a cemetery nearby, while the beach remains clean and unspoiled.

Kappil Beach and Lake

Still flying under the tourist radar, serene and picturesque Kappil is the one of the few beaches in Kerala that hasn't been inundated by shops and

eateries. The secluded beach is at the confluence of the Kappil Lake and the Arabian Sea, and is also one of the cleanest in the state. Visitors can take a boat on the backwaters adjunct to the ocean; stroll on the bridge that runs across the lake; or even climb up the Kodi Cliff for a panoramic glimpse of the Arabian Sea.

Janardhana Swamy Temple

Believed to be around 2,000 years old, this Vaishnavite temple, perched on a hilltop near Papanasham Beach is an important pilgrimage centre for Hindus. Devotees often take a dip in the sunken water tank inside which is fed by a perennial spring. Note that non-Hindus are not allowed in the inner sanctum, and there's a strictly enforced dress code of saris for women and 'mundus' for men.



Bharat Highways InvIT IPO allotment status: Step-by-step guide

New Delhi. The allotment for Bharat Highways InvIT IPO is set to be finalised on Wednesday, March 6.

Investors who applied for this IPO can check their allotment status on the registrar's portal, managed by Kfin Technologies Ltd, the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) website, and the National Stock Exchange (NSE) website. The IPO subscription window was open from February 28 to March 1, with the subscription getting oversubscribed 6.74 times on the final day of the public issue. The listing date for Bharat Highways InvIT IPO is scheduled for Tuesday, March 12. The IPO raised Rs 2,500 crore through a fresh share sale of up to 25 crore units. Steps to check allotment through Kfin Technologies Ltd's portal

Visit the website by clicking here

Choose the IPO from the dropdown menu, which will appear only if the allotment process is completed.

You might need to pick one of three options: Application number, Demat Account number, or PAN ID.

IIFL Finance shares hit 20% lower circuit for 2nd day. Here's why

New Delhi. Shares of IIFL Finance crashed for the second consecutive day after hitting its 20 per cent lower circuit on Wednesday. IIFL Finance shares declined 20 per cent to Rs 382.80 in early trade, hitting a 52-week low. The development comes after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took strict action against the non-banking financial company (NBFC). Recently, the RBI took action against the NBFC citing "serious deviations" in the evaluation of gold loans used as collateral. Additionally, the RBI indicated that there were breaches in the maximum allowed loan-to-value ratio, along with a lack of transparency regarding fees charged to customers. "These practices, apart from being regulatory violations, also significantly and adversely impact the interest of the customers," said RBI. However, the company said in an analyst call on Tuesday that RBI's action "came as a surprise and was quicker than expected". It added that the immediate impact on profitability should not be "significant".

Prolonged restrictions may impact earnings

Following the RBI's action against IIFL Finance, brokerage firm Jefferies said prolonged restrictions could impact earnings and lower co-lending income. Moreover, the brokerage indicated the possibility of increased financial costs. Jefferies projected a decline in IIFL Finance's earnings per share by 25-30 per cent if the restriction persists for nine months. The RBI has stated that these regulatory restrictions will undergo review following the completion of a special audit and the necessary rectifications by the company.

The outcome of this situation remains uncertain, and it remains to be seen how IIFL Finance will manage this challenging period and address the concerns raised by the RBI.

JM Financial responds after RBI action, shares slide over 15%

New Delhi. Shares of investment banking firm JM Financial shares declined over 15 per cent on Wednesday despite the company saying that there were no deficiencies in the loan sanctioning process of its unit. The company's statement comes a day after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) barred it from giving out loans against shares and debentures. "We strongly believe that there have been no material deficiencies in our loan sanctioning process. Further, the company has not violated applicable regulations," a company spokesperson said in a statement. "We also wish to reaffirm that there have been no governance issues whatsoever, and we conduct all our business and operational affairs in a bonafide manner," the spokesperson added.

JM Financial shares tanked 15.40 per cent to Rs 80.82 apiece at 9:50 am.

Why did RBI take action against JM Financial?

The RBI took action against JM Financial Products, citing regulatory violations and governance concerns.

A review of the company's books revealed instances where it facilitated a group of customers to participate in various IPO and non-convertible debenture offerings using borrowed funds. This raised concerns about compliance with regulatory norms and protecting customer interests. It may be noted that the RBI has intensified its oversight of banks and non-bank finance companies to ensure adherence to regulatory requirements.

Gopal Snacks IPO: 10 things to know before subscribing

New Delhi. The initial public offering (IPO) of Gopal Snacks Limited will open for public issue on Wednesday, March 06, 2024. The FMCG company has fixed the price band for its equity shares at Rs 381 to Rs 401 each, aiming to raise up to Rs 650 crore. Investors keen on participating in the IPO can do so between March 06 and March 11, 2024. The minimum bid starts at 37 equity shares, with further bids to be made in multiples of 37 shares. Here are 10 key points about the IPO of Gopal Snacks Limited as it opens for subscription. Subscription period: The IPO will open for subscription on March 6 and close on March 11, 2024. Price band: The price range for the IPO is set at Rs 381 to Rs 401 per equity share. Fundraising target: The company aims to raise Rs 650 crore through this IPO. Grey Market Premium: The GMP for Gopal Snacks limited stand at Rs 65, representing a listing premium of nearly 16 per cent over the issue price. Lot size: Investors can apply for the IPO in lots, with each lot consisting of 37 company shares. The issue comprises solely of an offer for sale of 1.62 crore shares. Allotment date: Finalisation of share allocation for the IPO is expected on March 12, 2024. Listing date: The shares are proposed to be listed on both the BSE and NSE on March 13, 2024. Book running lead managers: Intensive Fiscal Services Private Limited, Axis Capital Limited, and JM Financial Limited serve as the book running lead managers for the Gopal Namkeen IPO. Registrar: Link Intime India Private Ltd has been appointed as the official registrar for the IPO. Financial performance: Between the financial years ending on March 31, 2023, and March 31, 2022, Gopal Snacks Limited saw a 3.1 per cent increase in revenue and a significant rise of 170.52 per cent in profit after tax (PAT).

Consumers now prefer 3BHK over 2BHK: Survey

The survey further highlighted that real estate as the best asset class option has seen a 3% decline compared to the previous survey.

NEW DELHI. Despite a sharp increase in property prices, more consumers are willing to buy bigger and more expensive apartments. According to the FICCI-Anarock Consumer Sentiment Survey (H2 CY2023) released on Tuesday, 50% of Indians now prefer a 3BHK home as against 37% of people who want to buy a 2BHK. In the second half of CY2022, the preference for 2BHK at 45% was greater than 3BHK (42% in H2CY2022). The survey noted that 3BHKs are particularly in vogue in Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Delhi-NCR. In the hyper-pricey Mumbai market, 44% of respondents preferred 2BHKs.

While preference for 4BHKs & above units has grown from 4% in H2 CY2024 to 6%



in H2 CY2023, it has for 1BHKs – from 9% to 7%, the survey conducted between July to December 2023 with approx. 5,510

online respondents. According to the survey results, even while the budget range of Rs 45 lakh to Rs 90 lakh remained the

most favourable budget for over 33% of prospective homebuyers, premium and luxury homes are gaining traction. At least 26% of respondents now prefer homes in the range of Rs 90 lakh to Rs 1.5 crore. The demand for luxury homes priced above Rs 1.5 crore has also gained more traction. At least 20% of the H2 2023 survey respondents prefer to buy homes in this price bracket, against 12% in H2 2021. The survey further highlighted that real estate as the best asset class option has seen a 3% decline compared to the previous survey.

Over 57% of respondents now consider real estate as the best investment option, followed by the stock market which is favoured by 29% in the current situation. On an annual basis, housing prices in the last one year rose between 10% and 24% across the top 7 cities.

Anuj Puri, Chairman - ANAROCK Group, says, "ANAROCK data indicates that average flat sizes in the top 7 cities grew by 11% annually last year – from 1,175 sq. ft. in 2022 to 1,300 sq. ft. in 2023. The survey also finds that for the first time, the demand for ready-to-move homes is lower than new launches."

Gold, silver price : Precious metals witness dip on MCX

New Delhi. For the second day in a row, both gold and silver prices recorded a dip on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) on Wednesday, March 6, 2024.

Gold futures, maturing on April 5, 2024, stood at Rs 64,735 per 10 grams on the MCX, after recording a marginal dip of Rs 145 or 0.22 per cent. The previous close was recorded at Rs 64,845. Meanwhile, silver futures, maturing on May 3, 2024, witnessed a dip of Rs 291 or 0.40 per cent and were retailing at Rs 73,203 per kg on the MCX against the previous close of Rs 73,374. The gold and silver prices in India depend on several factors, including the value of the rupee against the dollar. Global demand also plays a key role in determining the trends



observed in the rate of precious metals. GOLD, SILVER RATES IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET

Gold sealed a record high on Tuesday, moving further above \$2,100 per ounce in a rally sparked by growing bets for a US interest rate cut in June and on safe-

haven demand due to the conflict in the Middle East, news agency Reuters reported. According to the latest metal report, spot gold gained 0.8 per cent to \$2,132 per ounce, having hit a record \$2,141.59 earlier.

US gold futures settled about 0.7 per cent higher at \$2,141.9. Gold, often used as a safe store of value during times of political and financial uncertainty, has climbed over \$300 dollars since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. Gold is pressured when high interest rates to tame inflation raise returns on competing assets such as bonds and boost the dollar, making the precious metal costlier for overseas buyers. Among other precious metals, spot silver eased 0.8 per cent to \$23.70 per ounce.

RBI's New Guideline On Credit Card; Directs Banks To Allow Customers To Choose From Multiple Card Networks



New Delhi. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday came up with new guidelines on credit cards. RBI has directed banks that they must provide availability of choice for customers to choose from multiple card networks at the time of issue. RBI has said that Card issuers shall not enter into any arrangement or agreement with card networks that restrain them from availing the services of other card networks. The central bank has also added that card issuers shall provide an option to their eligible customers to choose from multiple card networks at the time of issue. For existing

cardholders, this option may be provided at the time of the next renewal, RBI said. The directions above shall not be applicable to credit card issuers with number of active cards issued by them being 10 lakh or less in number. The directions shall be effective six months from the date of this circular, RBI added. "The authorised card networks tie-up with banks / non-banks for issuance of credit cards. The choice of network for a card issued to a customer is decided by the card issuer (bank / non-bank) and is linked to the arrangements that the card issuers have with card networks in terms of their bilateral agreements. On a

RBI has come up with new guidelines on credit card, asking banks to give them options to choose from multiple card networks at the time of issue.

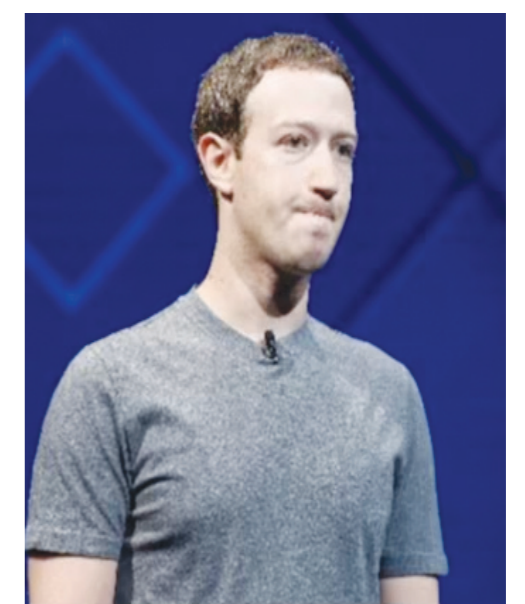
review, it is observed that some arrangements existing between card networks and card issuers are not conducive to the availability of choice for customers," said the RBI circular.

RBI has, for the purpose of these directions, defined authorised card networks as American Express Banking Corp., Diners Club International Ltd., MasterCard Asia/Pacific Pte. Ltd., National Payments Corporation of India-Rupay, and Visa Worldwide Pte. Limited. RBI has said that Card issuers and card networks shall ensure adherence to the above requirements in existing agreements at the time of amendment or renewal thereof, and fresh agreements executed. The central bank further added that card issuers who issue credit cards on their own authorised card network are excluded from the applicability of the circular.

Mark Zuckerberg loses \$3 billion after Facebook, Instagram global outage

New Delhi. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg lost nearly \$3 billion in a day after the company's flagship platforms Facebook and Instagram faced a global outage.

Zuckerberg's net worth declined by \$2.79 billion in a day to \$176 billion on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, but he maintained his position as the world's fourth-richest person. Following the hour-long global outage, Meta shares declined 1.6 per cent, leading to the erosion in Mark Zuckerberg's net worth. Meta shares closed the overnight trading session on Wall Street at \$490.22 apiece. Users of Facebook, Instagram, and Threads experienced difficulties accessing the social media platforms on Tuesday night. Additionally, Meta Quest users encountered issues logging in to their headsets. Many YouTube users also noted encountering an error while using the platform. The outage persisted for approximately one hour before all applications returned to normal



functionality. During the outage, users reported encountering "failure to load" error pages on both Instagram and Facebook. Some Instagram users noted that they could still view older stories despite the error. However, many Facebook accounts were automatically logged out during the outage. During the outage, social media platform X was flooded with posts from affected individuals. X owner Elon Musk even mocked rival Meta after its flagship platforms suffered the outage.

Didn't siphon off funds, \$533 mn with our 100 pc non-US subsidiary: Byju's

New Delhi. Embattled edtech company Byju's on Tuesday said that no funds have been siphoned off and around \$533 million are currently in a 100 per cent non-US subsidiary of the company. US-based hedge fund manager Camshaft Capital is no longer managing the funds which are part of \$1.2 billion Term Loan B (TLB), the company said in a statement.

Camshaft has disclosed in court filings that \$533 million it managed for Byju's Alpha, a US unit of Byju's, was transferred to another 100 per cent and US-based subsidiary of Byju's. Byju's had taken a loan from certain US-based lenders in November 2021. For that purpose, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) named Byju's Alpha was incorporated in Delaware. "Byju's Alpha was never an operating company. Its sole role was to receive the funds and then disburse them through the group. Under the loan agreement, there is no restriction on the use of funds, except that for regulatory reasons the funds cannot be brought to India," the edtech company argued.

Byju's alleged that "in an attempt to extract better and unbargained-for terms, the lenders accelerated the loan in March 2023". The company further alleged that



the lenders relied on concocted non-monetary "events of default", such as the failure of one of Byju's Indian subsidiaries, Whitehat, to accede to the loan agreement as an additional guarantor. "That is the case even though it had become legally impossible for Whitehat to provide the additional guarantee due to amendments to certain RBI regulations that came into effect in August 2022". This is currently contested in the New York Supreme Court and the Delaware Supreme Court. "In the meantime, lenders took control over Byju's Alpha by purporting to replace Byju's nominee with their own designee," alleged the Byju Ravendran-run company which is yet to pay salaries of its

more than 20,000 employees for the month of February. In early 2023, the funds were transferred from Byju's Alpha to Inspilearn, another US based fully owned subsidiary of the company. Inspilearn, thereafter, transferred those funds from

Camshaft to a non-US based fund.

"More recently, and on receipt of advice from counsel, those funds have been transferred from Inspilearn to a non-US based 100 per cent subsidiary of Byju's," said the company.

Ezmall To Launch 10 More Brands This Year; Plans To Expand Its Direct-to-Consumer Brand Portfolio

New Delhi. Ezmall, India's leading player in home shopping & omni channel commerce announced a significant leap into the direct-to-consumer (D2C) space. Recognizing the tremendous growth potential of the D2C industry in India, Ezmall has said that it has introduced five brands in 2023 -- Blue Eagle Appliances, Elicacy Appliances, Kremlin Cosmetics, Dekornest & Sachveda Ayurved. Vishal Srivastava, Business Head at Ezmall has said that Ezmall has built its D2C brands Launchpad dedicated help Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and manufacturers to build and grow their D2C brands. By leveraging Ezmall's own marketplace, marketing, content,

business intelligence, customer service, logistics, and operational capabilities, Ezmall empowers new age brands to navigate the complexities of the D2C landscape and accelerate their growth. Srivastava added. We started D2C Brands vertical in April 23 and are already witnessing tremendous growth month on month, to further accelerate the growth, we aim to launch 10 new brands in partnership with manufacturers / MSMEs. Work on the same has already started," Srivastava said. He further added that Ezmall intends to further build on its omni channel presence with launch of Direct Sales vertical in April 24. Direct sales vertical will not only add.

NEWS BOX

PCB chairman instructs Pakistan cricketers to train with army to improve fitness

New Delhi. PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistan cricketers will train with the army in March and April with an eye to improving their fitness. The chief addressed a few players at a hotel in Islamabad on Tuesday, March 5 where he talked about the 10-day training camp after the ongoing edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL). Naqvi said that he was disappointed with Pakistan's batters' six-hitting abilities and talked about the need to focus on strength and fitness. "When I was watching the matches in Lahore, I don't think a single one of you hit a six that went into the stands. Whenever a six like that



was hit, I used to think a foreign player must have hit that. I have asked the board to make a plan that gets every player's fitness up to speed. You'll have to make a proper effort for that," Naqvi said.

Pakistan Army will help you out?

Before the T20 World Cup to be held in the West Indies and the UAE, Pakistan have a chock-a-block schedule with bilateral series also coming up. It's also pertinent to note that the second-half of the camp will clash with the holy month of Ramzan, when players will be fasting and follow rituals.

"We have New Zealand coming up, then Ireland, England and the T20 World Cup. I wondered, 'When will we train?' but there was no time. However, we've found a window where we've organised a camp in Kakul (military academy) from March 25 to April 8. The Pakistan Army will be involved in your training, and hopefully, they'll help you out," Naqvi said.

Ranji Trophy 2024: Vidarbha beat MP to set up blockbuster final vs Mumbai

New Delhi. Vidarbha defeated Madhya Pradesh by 62 runs in the semi-final and made their way through to the final of the Ranji Trophy 2024. The team, led by Akshay Wadkar, will now lock horns with Mumbai, who will be playing their 48th final in the history of the first-class tournament.

Back in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 editions of the championship, Vidarbha played in the finals and won both times, beating Delhi and Saurashtra respectively. It also happened to be the 2nd time that teams from the same state advanced to the Ranji final.

Vidarbha roll over MP

As far as Vidarbha's semi-final against MP at the VCA Stadium in Nagpur was concerned, the match was fairly in the balance going into the last day. MP needed 93 runs with 4 wickets in hand. However, the Vidarbha



bowlers made light work of MP's lower order in the morning session of the last day. It took them only 10.3 overs to pick up the last 4 wickets.

The duo of Aditya Thakare and Yash Thakur picked up 2 wickets apiece as Vidarbha bowled their opponents out for 258 in 81.3 overs. Kulwant Khejroliya threw his bat around to score 11 off 19 before Thakur dismissed him to pull the curtains down on the game. Thakur and Akshay Wakhare were the pick of the bowlers for Vidarbha after they accounted for 3 scalps apiece. At the stroke of Stumps on Day 3, MP lost the crucial wicket of Yash Dubey and that turned out to be a crucial factor in the context of the match.

Had Dubey been there in the middle of Day 4, MP would have harboured hopes of beating Vidarbha. The final between Vidarbha and Mumbai will get underway on Sunday, March 10. While Vidarbha are looking for their 3rd title, Mumbai are aiming for their 42nd title and their 1st since 2015-16.

Champions League: Mbappe, Kane shine as Bayern Munich, PSG reach quarter-finals

PSG and Bayern Munich reached the quarter-final of the Champions League

Harry Kane and Kylian Mbappe scored a brace each

Mbappe keeps PSG's Champions League dreams alive

New Delhi. Bayern Munich top scorer Harry Kane struck once in either half to steer the Germans to a 3-0 win over Italy's Lazio on Tuesday and into the Champions League quarter-finals with an 3-1 aggregate victory, reigniting title hopes among their fans. Kane headed in for the lead in the 38th minute to cancel out the Lazio's first leg 1-0 advantage and then tapped in their third goal on the rebound in the 66th after Thomas Mueller's first half stoppage time effort had made it 2-0. The win provides instant relief for coach Thomas Tuchel, who will leave at the end of the season, and his team as they had won just one of their last five matches in all competitions prior to Tuesday and are

currently 10 points off the top in the Bundesliga. It's a perfect evening for us. It was a big game," said Kane, who has scored six goals for Bayern in the competition and another 27 in the Bundesliga this season. "We were 1-0 down in the first leg. It's obviously a big moment in our season. It was a top performance. Of course we know we have to improve, but nights like this can really change the season. I'm really proud of the boys and we just have to keep this momentum going. Lazio were on the backfoot from the start and waited to hit the Germans on the break. Ciro Immobile's header was their best chance but it sailed narrowly wide a minute before Kane bagged his first knockout stage goal in the competition in five years with a diving header. The Italians, bidding for their first quarter-final spot in 24 years, had succeeded for half an hour in keeping Bayern outside the box but could do nothing when Kane, who had missed an earlier chance, headed in from team mate Raphael Guerreiro's freekick.

Mbappe Fires PSG Into Quarters

Paris St Germain's Kylian Mbappe scored twice to lead them into the Champions



League quarter-finals with a comfortable 2-1 win away to Real Sociedad in their last-16 second leg that wrapped up a 4-1 aggregate victory on Tuesday. Bidding to win their first Champions League title, a disciplined PSG made the most of their chances from counter attacks, with the lightning fast Mbappe a constant menace. After a remarkable group stage when they went unbeaten to finish ahead of last-year's finalists Inter Milan in Group D, LaLiga side Real Sociedad, who are struggling with injuries and have won one of their last 10 matches in all competitions, ran out of steam. Mbappe was enjoying an inspired night and his speed and agility were too much for the hosts' defence

to handle. He was virtually unstoppable down left channel and Tuesday's brace means he has scored 11 of PSG's last 15 Champions League knockout goals. "We knew right away that we couldn't go to sleep. If they had opened the scoring, they would have pushed on with their fans' backing," Mbappe told Canal Plus. "We had to dampen their hopes early on. That's what we did, and we're very happy to be back in the quarter-finals." Mbappe created a couple of opportunities early on before scoring the opener with a fabulous curling strike in the 15th minute. After receiving a long pass from Ousmane Dembele, he surged into the box, darting in from the byline and feigning to shoot, before shifting the ball out of his feet again and creating just enough space to fire a curling effort into the far corner. The goal silenced a sold-out Reale Arena, who were seemingly stunned by the vision and technique of the France captain, who had a similar effort later denied by keeper Alex Remiro. But Mbappe scored again in the 56th minute as he took a Lee Kang-in through ball in his stride before bursting into the box and beating the goalkeeper at his near post.

Suryakumar praises Jemimah after 69 vs MI in WPL 2024: Byproduct of her process

Jemimah Rodrigues scored 69 runs against Mumbai Indians

Jemimah won the Player of the Match award in Delhi

DC beat MI by 29 runs at the Arun Jaitley Stadium

New Delhi. Suryakumar Yadav was delighted after Jemimah Rodrigues put behind the agony of her missed opportunities and fired on all cylinders in the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2024 match against Mumbai Indians (MI) on Tuesday, March 5. With Delhi Capitals (DC) playing their first home match at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, Jemimah ran away with the Player of the Match award after her team won by 29 runs. Jemimah scored an unbeaten 69 runs off 33 balls with 8 fours and 3 sixes. On the back of her knock, the Capitals scored 192 for 4 after



which they restricted the defending champions to 163 for 8. After starting with a knock of 42 last month against MI, Jemimah fell cheaply against Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) and Gujarat Giants (GG). However, she looked at her very best on Tuesday and Suryakumar said that the knock was a "byproduct of her process and good wishes." "First few games she missed the opportunity but was very happy for her friends and other teammates who were doing well. Last night was definitely a

byproduct of her process and good wishes from everyone around," Suryakumar wrote. Jemimah puts Capitals in a position of strength. In 5 matches in WPL 2024, Jemimah has scored 122 runs at an average of 40.66 and a strike-rate of 169.44. The Capitals, in the meantime, strengthened their grip on top of the table with 8 points and a net run rate of +1.301.

The Capitals will next be up against Alyssa Healy's UP Warriorz on Friday, March 8 with an eye to qualifying directly for the final. As far as Suryakumar is concerned, he hasn't played any form of cricket due to injuries and surgery after scoring his 4th T20I hundred in the Johannesburg T20I against South Africa last year. He is expected to return later in March while playing for the Mumbai Indians (MI) in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

What good is entertainment if you sit at No. 8 in WTC points table: Nasser Hussain

England are set to play their final match of the Test series against India

England have lost their series and will play for crucial points in the WTC cycle

Nasser Hussain has rued England's position in the WTC points table

New Delhi. Former England captain Nasser Hussain has rued the fact that England are placed 8th in the World Test Championship points table. England have won three out of their 9 Test matches, lost 5, and drawn 1. The Ben Stokes side's high-risk high-reward cricket has seen its advantages and disadvantages of result-oriented Test cricket. England have won 2 and lost 2 and drawn 1 Test against Australia, while they have won 1 and lost three against India so far. The team has a win percentage of just 19.44 in the ongoing WTC cycle and are tottering below the likes of Pakistan, West Indies and South Africa. Hussain, in his



column at the Daily Mail has questioned the balance between entertainment and results, ahead of the team's final Test match against India in Dharamsala. "For all the good things that this England team have done in making people want to watch their matches, right now they sit second bottom in the World Test Championship table and to me results remain the most important currency. In the end, all sports teams are judged on their statistics. How they end up at the end of a season or a series. In cricket, how many runs you scored, the wickets you

took," Hussain has written in his column. England set the stage abuzz with their innovative approach in Hyderabad in the first Test match, but have failed to win big moments in the last three Test matches. There were several instances where England were poised to take lead in the Test matches against India, but the team failed to capitalise on those moments. "This England side have provided great viewing over the past two years, too, but the win-loss ratio is the most important thing in my eyes, so they must get the scoreline versus India back to 3-2 in Dharamsala this week," Hussain said. "Of course, they'll still have lost the series, but they can then point to the third days of the third and fourth Tests, when they let things slip on each occasion, as a justification that they were competitive across the entire five-match tour. That they simply failed to take their opportunities," he further added. India currently lead the WTC points table with 5 wins in 8 matches. The Rohit Sharma side is followed by New Zealand and Australia in the second and the third place.

Hopman Cup cancelled for 2024 after clash with Paris Olympics, to return in 2025

New Delhi. March 5 (Reuters) - This year's Hopman Cup has been postponed until 2025 because of its proximity to the Paris Olympics, the International Tennis Federation said on Tuesday. The mixed team event was due to take place again in Nice after its successful return last year when Croatia beat Switzerland in the final. "With both the Hopman Cup and Olympic Games due to take



place in France this year, hitting pause on the Hopman Cup until 2025 is a sensible decision," ITF President David Haggerty said. The players who had committed to this year's event have been informed and we look forward to seeing them in the Cote d'Azur next year

Is Rinku Singh set for a Test debut in Dharamsala Aakash Chopra clarifies

Rinku Singh has been spotted in Dharamsala with the Indian team

Speculations arose if Rinku Singh will get his debut in Test cricket

Aakash Chopra has clarified the situation in his latest YouTube video

India batter Rinku Singh was spotted with Brendon McCullum in Dharamsala ahead of the fifth and final Test match in the India vs England series. This gave rise to speculation if Rinku Singh was going to be announced as a late entry into the Indian Test team. The lower middle-order batter was named in the Indian A side against England Lions but had not been named in the Indian squad for the final three Test matches. Former



India cricketer Aakash Chopra took to his YouTube channel to clarify the situation and said that Rinku had visited Dharamsala for an Adidas ad shoot and had nothing to do with the Test series. "Out of nowhere, Rinku

Singh's photo emerged from Dharamsala. Everyone was speculating if Rinku Singh had been named in the India squad vs England. However, I need to clarify that Rinku has not been named in the India squad, there will be

no debut," Aakash Chopra said in his video. "Rinku Singh was in Dharamsala for an Adidas shoot. This could have been for the T20 World Cup 2024. There are several India cricketers in Dharamsala and that's why Rinku Singh was also called upon," Aakash Chopra added.

Rinku Singh's Meteoric Rise

Rinku Singh has been sensational since his debut in the Indian team. The batter has scored 356 runs in 11 T20I innings at an average of 89 and strike rate of 176+. Rinku recently scored two fifties in the T20I format, with the latest one coming in the series against Afghanistan. It is expected that Rinku will be one of first choice in the Indian T20I squad for the T20 World Cup 2024, set to be held in June this year. The batter has been in phenomenal touch since his breakout season in the 2023 Indian Premier League. Rinku scored 474 runs at an average of 59.25 and a strike-rate nearing 150.



Ananya Nagalla

Dazzles In Her Ethnic-meets-modern Outfit



Ananya Nagalla knows how to keep her Insta fam engaged with her sartorial choices. The actress keeps sharing glimpses of different attire from various photoshoots and red-carpet events. Those who are ardent fans of the actress know how she can ace ethnic looks like no one else. Her recent pictures are proof that she has a stellar fashion sense, especially when it comes to traditional outfits. This time, Ananya Nagalla has impressed her fans with a fusion of modern and traditional. One of the well-known faces in the Telugu film industry, Ananya Nagalla's recent addition to her fashion diary displayed her in a beautifully designed royal blue salwar suit. The unique part about her outfit was that it was a complete combination of modern and traditional style. The outfit had long and open frills on the sleeves that added a touch of style, while it followed the traditional design of a suit. The actress paired it with smart palazzo pants as she candidly posed for the cameras. She kept her hair open and opted for a light makeup look. To accessorise, Ananya wore a pair of elegant earrings and a ring. She captioned the post, "Vibingggg with you." She also gave credit to her stylist, hair and makeup team, and photographer in the caption. As soon as Ananya Nagalla uploaded the pictures on social media, they went viral. Many of her fans were in awe to see her beauty and went to the comment section to praise her. One of her fans wrote, "Mind blowing. You miss universe". Another fan commented, "Since love grows within you, so beauty grows"

Ananya Nagalla also donned a pista-coloured saree along with a maroon blouse earlier. The saree had beautiful floral designs on it. The actress was seen posing candidly amid greenery. She kept her hair open and opted for a light makeup look. She also wore a pair of jhumkas. She captioned the post, "Looking at you. Ananya Nagalla has impressed the audience with her outstanding work in films like Vakeel Saab, Malleshram, and Play Back. She was last seen in the film Anveshi that was released in November last year."

Krushna Abhishek Reveals He Made Rs 3 Lakhs Per Episode On Comedy Circus: 'Because I Was Govinda's Nephew..!'



Krushna Abhishek is one of the most prominent comedians in the country. He has had an illustrious comedy career on television so far and will now be making waves on Netflix. Recently, he recalled his days on Comedy Circus and revealed how much he used to make on the show. He also spoke about how there was a special interest in him because he is Govinda's nephew. Speaking on Bharti TV, he said, "I signed Comedy Circus only for money. I was very happy with it. They were giving me Rs. 1.5 lakh per episode." Krushna mentioned that they were shooting two episodes in a day, which meant that he was earning Rs. 3 lakh per day. "At that time, I was doing Bhojpuri films, and I would get paid Rs 3 lakh per film. I would shoot for 30 days, day and night, and then make that much money," he added. "They gave me a lot of respect because I was Govinda's nephew. I was so in awe of the fact that I would be making Rs. 3 lakh per day," he added. Krushna was paired with Sudesh and they won four seasons of the show.

Krushna will soon be seen on Kapil Sharma's show on Netflix, The Great Indian Kapil Show. "We all have come together for a new show now. Sunil Grover has also resumed the show. Sunil is a fantastic actor and to watch him performing live is something else. He is very good and par excellence. Bahut mazaa aayega sabko unko dekh kar, joh Sunil ne Ek naya character kiya hai abhi is amazing, it is very good. I really loved it and I told him also that you are really good," Krushna told E-Times earlier. While not many details about the show are known as of now, the rest of the cast includes Rajiv Thakur, Kiku Sharda, Sunil Grover, and Archana Puran Singh.

On Ibrahim Ali Khan's Birthday, Aunt Saba Pataudi Shares Then & Now Photos



Ibrahim Ali Khan is celebrating his 23rd birthday today and has been inundated with wishes from his family and friends. Among these heartfelt messages, Saba Pataudi, his aunt and sister of Saif Ali Khan, took a nostalgic journey and shared a collection of "Then & Now" pictures of Ibrahim, providing his fans with a glimpse into his childhood. The first picture captures Ibrahim in his little toy car, while the subsequent image displays young Ibrahim and Sara Ali Khan alongside Saba. The third photo shows older Ibrahim alongside his aunt, offering a "Then and Now" comparison. An unseen picture depicts veteran actress Sharmila Tagore with her daughter Saba, as well as young Sara and Ibrahim.

Following that, there's an image showcasing the matured Ibrahim alongside his radiant grandmother, Sharmila, adorned in a maroon saree. Another picture depicts Ibrahim and Sara cradled in their father Saif's arms, while the subsequent snapshot features a recent image of Sara and Ibrahim with their father in Jamnagar, where the family attended the pre-wedding festivities of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant. The throwback photos are accompanied by a caption that read, "THEN & NOW. Masha'Allah. Our Iggy potter turns 23! Happy Birthday Ibrahim. Wishing you a life of happiness and success. You were made to shine.

Lots of love...always and forever. Memories...baby ibu...to the adult today. Here are a few moments captured along the way..."Fans couldn't help but notice Ibrahim's striking resemblance to his father Saif and his younger brother, Taimur Ali Khan. One user wrote, "Gosh if I hadn't read Ibrahim's name, I would've thought I'm in a time-lapse and Tim is suddenly a 23-year-old! Happy birthday Ibrahim," while another user commented, "Taimur is completely like Ibrahim. Happy Birthday Ibrahim."

Saba frequently shares glimpses of the Pataudi family on social media, delighting Instagram users with unseen pictures. Recently, she posted a picture with Sara Ali Khan, followed by an old photograph featuring a young Sara and Ibrahim with Saba. Sara and Ibrahim are the eldest children of Saif Ali Khan with his former wife, Amrita Singh. Saif is currently married to Kareena Kapoor Khan, with whom he shares two children, Taimur and Jehangir.



Katrina Kaif

Says She Doesn't Want To 'Repeat' Herself In Films: 'I Am Feeling Bored Of Myself'

Katrina Kaif is one of the biggest stars in Bollywood today. She is not only loved by her fans for her talent but also for her candour. She recently opened up about not signing films repetitively and only if she can bring something to the table. Speaking to Mid-day, Katrina Kaif said, "I want to portray myself in a new way. The reason behind that is that I don't want to repeat myself too much anymore because, in certain scenarios, I am feeling bored of myself. If I am feeling bored of myself, I'm pretty sure the audience is going to be feeling bored. If I'm feeling repetitive, they're going to feel it repetitive."

She continued, "That's the instinct that I try to go by. It's not out of trying to predict the future, its out of being genuine and honest to myself. In certain spaces, I'm questioning myself, 'Am I feeling joy in this moment? Am I feeling alive here? Do I have something to give here?' Something new to give to myself as an experience and something new to give to the film in that space." "This is a kind of period of a certain transition in a way. As in, we all need to evolve and change over the years. I'm not the same 19-year-old who came into the film industry," she added.

She said that the Tiger franchise brings her joy. Katrina Kaif mentioned that she loves the action genre, especially women-centric action films. She added that the backstory given to her character, Zoya, added an interesting dimension for her. Katrina Kaif's Tiger 3 became a huge hit upon its release. The film saw Katrina Kaif and Salman Khan reprise their roles as Zoya and Tiger for a third time. Other than that, Katrina was also seen in Merry Christmas with Vijay Sethupathi. Katrina's performance was lauded in the film. The thriller movie will be released on Netflix this month.

