



FIRST INDIA

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CLICK FOR MORE GLIMPSES OF BJP'S NATIONAL MEETING



HAR Kaam DESH KE Naam!

The Indian Air Force (IAF) on Saturday displayed its firepower capability at a mega exercise featuring over 120 aircraft, including frontline fighter jets & attack helicopters in Pokhran near Jaisalmer. In the 'Exercise — Vayu Shakti 2024, theme 'Lightning Strike from the Sky', IAF also demonstrated the capabilities of its long-range drones and air-to-air missiles as well as its increasing strength in the rapid deployment of combat assets by airlifting weapons like M-777 ultra-light howitzers.

P3



IN BRIEF

Gulzar, Rambhadracharya chosen for Jnanpith Award



New Delhi: Renowned Urdu poet Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagad-guru Rambhadracharya have been named the recipients of the 58th Jnanpith Award, the Jnanpith selection committee announced on Saturday.

Dangal actor, who played young Phogat, dies at 19



Mumbai: Suhani Bhatnagar, who played a young Babita Phogat in Aamir Khan's movie Dangal, passed away at 19 on Saturday. She had ill for some time and was taking treatment at AIIMS Delhi.

ISRO's GSLV-F14/Insat-3DS mission successful



Sriharikota: The ISRO on Saturday successfully launched Insat-3DS, a third-generation weather satellite that will augment meteorological services and improve accuracy of weather forecasts in nation.

10 killed and 10 injured in cracker factory explosion

Chennai: At least 10 died, 10 others were injured on Saturday in an explosion at a firecracker factory in TN's Virudhunagar district. Blast was so high that 4 buildings were destroyed.

BJP's 2-day national convention begins at Bharat Mandapam

PM SETS STAGE FOR MODI 3.0

- BJP winning 370 seats will be true tribute to Syama Prasad Mookerjee, stresses Modi
- Stick to issues of development, pro-poor policies, says PM Modi to the BJP members
- The BJP will launch campaign to promote central schemes to beneficiaries from Feb 25

Moni Sharma
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday set the tone for the BJP's Lok Sabha poll campaign, urging party members to focus on the government's pro-poor initiatives and the nation's development trajectory. PM Modi asserted that winning 370 seats will be a true tribute to its key ideologue Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

Mookerjee was a strident opponent of Article 370, which granted J&K

BJP's candidate for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections is not a face but 'Kamal Ka Phool'.
NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

special rights. Modi govt scrapped the article in August 2019. PM said every booth worker should now focus on polling booths, ensure atleast 370 more



Prime Minister Narendra Modi being garlanded by Rajnath Singh in presence of Amit Shah, JP Nadda & others during BJP National Council meeting at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Saturday. (Inset) PM Modi gets his pass scanned at the registration counter.



votes for BJP in upcoming polls than in 2019. Modi told Opposition will raise unnecessary and emotional issues during polls but we should stick to issues

of country's rising global standing. 'PM Modi has been the head of a govt, including over 12 years as Gujarat CM, for nearly 23 years and there has been

no allegation of corruption. It is an 'Aarop Mukh' & 'Vikas Yukt' period under Modi', BJP General Secretary Vinod Tawde said in media briefing. P6

Kamal Nath, son Nakul likely to join BJP: Sources

First India Bureau
New Delhi/Bhopal

Kamal Nath, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, and his son Nakul might join the BJP, sources told on Saturday. The speculations of a party switch started after Congress leader Nakul Kamal Nath removed the party name and symbol from his social media bio. Nakul's move further sparked rumours that Kamal Nath may also join the BJP.

On the other hand, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh said that he is confident Kamal Nath would never leave the party. Kamal Nath is in Delhi for further discussions, as per reports and the meeting is expected to take late on Saturday night.



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HARYANA, RAJASTHAN SIGN MoU ON YAMUNA WATER SHARING

Bhajan Lal bane 'Bhagirath'!

Aishwary Pradhan, Aditi Nagar & Vinod Singh Chouhan
New Delhi/Jaipur

A tripartite MoU was signed in New Delhi on Saturday in the presence of CM Bhajan Lal Sharma, Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar. Under this MoU signed between the Central Government, Haryana Government and Rajasthan Government, it



CM Bhajan Lal Sharma with Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar after MoU between Rajasthan and Haryana for making DPR to get water for 3 districts of Rajasthan, in New Delhi on Saturday.

was agreed to prepare DPR for the flow system from Tajewala. After the implementation of this

scheme, Rajasthan will be able to get Yamuna river water from Tajewala head-works and the water that gets wasted during rains will also be utilized properly. Expressing happiness after the MoU, CM Sharma said that the project will provide Yamuna river water to 3 districts of the state namely Sikar, Churu and Jhunjhunu through underground pipelines. He said that this project will prove beneficial for both the states. More on P8

CM'S MEETINGS & GREETINGS



CM Bhajan Lal Sharma calls on Union Minister of Coal and Mines Pralhad Joshi at New Delhi on Saturday. Duo held talks over important issues related to the development of the State.



CM Bhajan Lal Sharma greets Union Minister of I&B, Youth Affairs & Sports Anurag Thakur at Delhi on Saturday. The CM and Thakur delved into youth initiatives, IT and sports infra in Raj.

Promoted by
Rays Power Infra Limited

Mines dept lost revenue worth crores of rupees

Tonk: ₹17.17 cr penalty imposed on miners

In statewide drive against illegal mining discrepancies were found in stocks

Nirmal Tiwari
Jaipur

Irregularities in gravel stocks among mining lease holders in the Tonk district have resulted in a loss of government revenue amounting to crores of rupees. Mines Dept has taken action, imposing a penalty of ₹17.17 crore on miners in Palara, Dodwari, Mundian, Saidabad, and Mandawar. Following a statewide campaign against illegal mining, discrepancies were discovered during a probe.

In Mandawar, 1,40,580.93 tonnes of excess stock were found, warranting a penalty of ₹7.02 crore. In Dodwadi and Mundiya faced penalties of ₹41 lakh 54 thousand 580 and ₹5.31 crore respectively. In Palda, a shortage of 1801.09 tonnes led to a ₹9 lakh penalty, while Saidabad faced penalty of ₹2.67 cr for excess stock. Mundiya also incurred penalties amounting to ₹1.63 cr. Total compound penalty in three locations amounts to ₹12.76 crore, reflecting govt's resolve to address mining irregularities.



FILE

₹37L seized in ED raids on sand contractor Meghraj

First India Bureau
Jaipur

In the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raid on gravel contractor **Meghraj Singh**, the Enforcement Directorate seized cash worth Rs 37.16 lakh under the The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Notably, ED raids were conducted in Jaipur, Ajmer and Nagaur on February 14 on a total of 16 locations.

The ED officials, during the raid seized many documents including electrical equipment,



ED raids at Meghraj Singh's offices.

FILE

laptop and mobile phones. Detailed investigation of seized documents is also being done. It has come to light that the investigation was started on the basis of the FIR registered by Rajasthan Police.

It was alleged that Meghraj Singh is involved in illegal mining on agricultural land, cremation land and gauchar land.

Father rapes minor in Jaipur, probe on

Mother of the minor victim filed a complaint against accused husband



Satyannarayn Sharma
Jaipur

A 12-year-old daughter was raped by her father in Jaipur. When his wife protested, he threatened to murder and beat her. The mother of the minor victim filed a complaint against the accused husband at the Bhattabasti police station. It is claimed that for the past two months, the accused man has exploited his little daughter whenever he found her alone at home. The police have filed a report under the POCSO Act and initiated an inquiry. SHO Kailash Kumar Vishnoi is now investigating the case.



BRIBERY SCANDAL: CHITTORGARH ASI FLEES AS ACB LAUNCHES PROBE, ASI SUSPENDED

Chittorgarh: A bribery case involving a Rs 40,000 bribe has been lodged with the Anti-Corruption Bureau. Complainant captured ASI Premaram Jat accepting bribe on video. ACB initiated a probe based on mobile footage. ACB made inquiries, leading to filing of FIR. Incident occurred on Feb 7, after which complainant visited ACB on Feb 12. ACB conducted probe in Bhainsrodgarh, where ASI Premaram Jat fled. SP Rajan Dushyant promptly suspended Jat, who allegedly accepted the bribe to undermine a POCSO Act case.

PK Agrwal

JAIPUR POLICE BUST CAR RECOVERY GANG, CCTV FOOTAGE LEADS TO ARREST OF CARJACKERS

Jaipur: The Mansarovar police station has detained four criminals involved in car recovery. They used to have passengers sit in the car under the guise of asking for the address. Then they would take them to a remote location, beat them up, and film recordings to extort money and threaten those individuals.



Gang's mastermind Mohsni Khan, Sonu Yadav, Anish Khan, and Mohammad Idrish has been arrested. After reviewing hundreds of CCTV video, the police searched and apprehended all four suspects. During investigation, it came to light that all four miscreants roam around in Jaipur city at night. SI Surendra Singh said-Churu resident Mohit Singh (20) has lodged the report.

ASHOK NAGAR POLICE BUST ILLEGAL HOOKAH BAR. 2 DETAINED

Jaipur: Ashok Nagar police station conducted a huge raid on a hookah bar operating under the guise of a club. Police raided the blackout club and recovered hookahs and flavors from the location. Police detained Shahrukh and Amin Khan. The case is being investigated by the Ashok Nagar Police Station.



POLICE DEPLOY DRONES TO SEARCH IDOL OF DEITY, STOLEN IN JODHPUR, LOCALS DEMAND ACTION

Jodhpur: An instance of the disappearance of the Chamunda Mata deity from the city's old temple on a hillside has been reported. Based on the temple's condition, it is believed that some form of vandalism occurred. In addition, miscreants have strewn filth throughout the temple. In addition, a black fabric was discovered there. Considering the gravity of the situation, the police have created squads to take urgent action. Drones were used to search for the statue. A hundred police officers have been dispatched to locate the statue. The locals have issued a 24-hour ultimatum to the authorities in protest of the occurrence. The Chamunda Mata temple was built during the fourth century.

Shivprakash Purohit

Jaipur Discom implements weekend workdays till Mar



Vikas Sharma
Jaipur

Now electricity offices will remain open on holidays as well as Jaipur Discom has adopted this strict measure for revenue collection. Orders have been issued for all offices of Jaipur city.

All AEN offices will have to be open until March 31. Work related to revenue collection will be done in the office even on

Saturdays and Sundays. Meanwhile, previously approved leaves of officers and employees have been cancelled. SE Vijay Kumar issued orders in JCC South Circle. In case of any emergency, leave will be sanctioned with permission from higher officials.

This will speed up the work of revenue collection so that maximum revenue can be collected by the end of March.

Fatal accident near Dholpur claims three young lives

Vinod Tiwari
Dholpur

Three young people died on the spot as a result of a severe collision between a tractor and a tempo near Dholi on Rajkheda Dholpur Road in the Dholpur district. Police have retained the bodies of all three in the district hospital's mortuary. The clash was so strong that the tempo exploded on the spot, killing all three. The police transported them to the district hospital via ambulance. The tractor driver escaped, leaving the tractor behind. The tractor has been seized into their custody.

Dihauli police station in-charge Suman Kumar said that tempo driver



Mangled remains of the auto at the accident spot in Dholpur on Saturday.

Ajodhya (38), son of Kundal Lodha, Hariom (22), son of Jagdish Lodha, resident of Maraina and Jaswant (30), son of Babulal Lodha died in the accident. Jaswant and Hariom were going to visit Kaila Devi.

Both deceased Jas-

want and Hariom were neighbors and friends. The family members told that both of them used to go to Kaila Devi darshan every month. Even on Saturday morning, he had gone out for darshan, when this accident happened.

JDA office open for scanning of files, documents

Abhishek Shrivastva
Jaipur

The JDA offices were open even on Saturday. Zone offices were open for scanning of files and documents. As per the orders, offices will remain open tomorrow also.

This is being done as the filing process is to be done on the government portal and classification will be done as per the requirement. Classification is to be done into A, B, C and D classes. Scanning of A and B category files will be done in these two days.

JDA Commissioner, JDA Secretary and additional commissioner administration, however, did not reach the JDA office on Saturday.

Kirori Bainsla's statue unveiled by son Vijay

First India Bureau
Sawai Madhopur

Gurjar leader Vijay Bainsla unveiled the statue of his father Colonel Kirori Singh Bainsla unveiled in Devnarayan temple complex in Ghata Nainwadi Baunli of Sawai Madhopur. Thousands of people gathered during the programme.

Vijay Bainsla's wife Pooja Bainsla was also present in the programme. Rajendra Meena, social worker Murliram Gurjar, Pradhan Krishna Poswal, Kishan Nekadi were also present.

Bainsla in his address said that there should be awareness about education in the society and people should avoid unnecessary expenditure.



Vijay Bainsla unveils the statue of his father Colonel Kirori Singh Bainsla in Devnarayan temple complex in Ghata Nainwadi Baunli of Sawai Madhopur on Saturday.

He gave the message of good education, good health and that mothers should be educated.

JOINT CAMPAIGN AGAINST SQUATTERS

JDA, JMCG raze over 80 encroachments on Kalwar Road

First India Bureau
Jaipur

Under a collective campaign by the Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) and the Jaipur Municipal Corporation Greater, about 80 encroachments on either side of the Kalwar Road were removed.

Chief Controller of Enforcement Dharmendra Kumar Yadav said that the action was taken as part of the collective campaign. Due to these encroachments, the com-



Joint teams of JDA and JMCG in action at Kalwar Road on Saturday.

mon people faced traffic-related problems.

He said that regarding the remaining encroachments, the representatives of the local business

association said that we would remove them at their own levels. Temporary squatters were ordered to remove the encroachments.

They were also warned that if the encroachments were not removed, then action would be taken as per the rules.

The action was taken

As regards remaining encroachments, representatives of local business assn said they would remove them at their own levels. Temporary squatters were told to remove encroachments

on the instructions of Deputy Controller Enforcement-III, Enforcement Officer Zone-12, 10, 13, 02, PRN (South), and other officers.

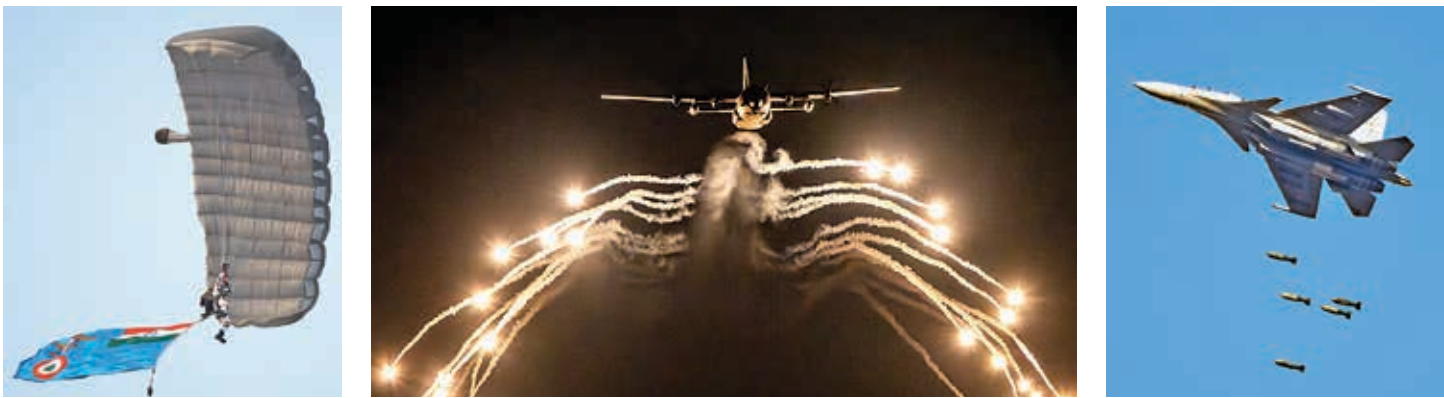
JDA STARTS REGULATION PROCESS OF SCHEMES OF SOCIETIES

The Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) has started regulation proceedings of schemes of societies. It has started giving leases for the schemes which have been approved. Discounts will be applicable till March 31 and leases are being given in accordance with the exemptions applicable in the Prashasan Shehron ke Sang campaigns. Besides, action has been initiated regarding the plans that have not been



approved. Earlier, there was a situation of indecision in the JDA regarding

this matter but the work of regulation started after orders from higher ups.



The indigenous Air Defence Systems, Akash and SAMAR missile systems were also showcased, destroying multiple aerial targets.

'Shakti-Pradarshan' The event showcased IAF's precision targeting capability

Lightning Strike from Sky: IAF's show of power in Vayushakti '24

First India Bureau
Pokhran

Pokhran range near Jaisalmer reverberated with thunderous explosions and applause, on 17 February 2024, as the Indian Air Force showcased its offensive capabilities through an enthralling and formidable display of its firepower.

The event commenced with three Chetak helicopters proudly displaying the National Flag.

Aligned with the theme 'Lightning Strike from Sky,' the Exercise showcased IAF's offensive prowess with over 120 aircraft participating during both day and night. Fighter jets, including Rafale, Su-30, MiG-29, Mirage-2000, Tejas, & Hawk, executed attacks on simulated enemy targets using various munitions.



During the display, approximately 50 tonnes of ordnance was dropped in a short span of 2 hours over an area of 2 square km.

Ravikanth inspects Garbage Disposal Systems in Jaipur



T Ravikanth monitors taking stock of waste management situation in Jaipur on Saturday.

First India Bureau
Jaipur

Principal Secretary UDH T. Ravikanth conducted a cleanliness inspection for 4 hours to check the hygiene system in Jaipur. During this, he examined the arrangements from

door-to-door garbage collection to disposal. He inspected the dumping yards and waste-to-energy plants built in Sevapura, Ma-thuradaspora, and Langariawas and gave instructions to start the 100 per cent disposal of the

waste process by June 25 next year to keep the city clean and make it garbage-free. Ravikanth checked the RFID system and its monitoring process made for door-to-door garbage collection in the Murali-pura zone.

HC gives relief to divyang in matter of recruitment

First India Bureau
Jaipur

The petitioner got relief from the single bench of High Court senior judge Justice Arun Monga in a case related to recruitment of contract pharmacists in the medical department. The disabled person got justice after seven years.

It came to light that the medical department kept different provisions for reservation for disabled for the same post. In recruitment to the post of Pharmacist (permanent), both one leg and both leg candidates are eligible in



the specially abled category but in recruitment to the post of Pharmacist (contract), only one leg specially abled person is considered eligible under the rules.

State medical department in its argument in court instructed the petitioner to appoint his counterpart.

Rajasthan aims for unforgettable visitor experience

First India Bureau
Jaipur

Principal Secretary Gayatri Rathore expressed that Rajasthan is the top choice for tourists, emphasizing efforts to ensure every visitor has memorable experiences.

A campaign promoting respectful interactions with tourists, especially women, was launched across major districts. The campaign encourages feedback through both online & offline feedback forms, allowing tourists to share their experiences.

PWD speeds up ropeway work in Raj following Dy CM's order

First India Bureau
Jaipur

Following instructions of Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari, the PWD department has started development of the ropeway in the state on a war footing. PWD and NHAI will work together to develop ropeways in Sawai Madhopur, Bundi, Jaipur, Udai-pur, Rajsamand, Sikar, Jodhpur, Dausa, Baran, Banswara, Ajmer and Chittorgarh in the first phase.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari in his meeting with Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal



Sharma and Diya Kumari on February 12 emphasised on the need for speeding up ropeway scheme-Parvat Mala.

The Chief Secretary handed over the work to PWD Rajasthan and under the leadership of Ad-

Principal calls girls 'Dacoits of Chambal' over Hijab row

First India Bureau
Jodhpur

There was a commotion over hijab in a government school in Jodhpur on Saturday. The matter pertains to Government Higher Secondary School in Pipar, Jodhpur. The families asked the principal why their children were called "dacoits of Chambal".

The principal, however, clarified that the children were asked to come to the school in the prescribed dress code, but their families came and started protesting. There was commotion for about



half-an-hour. Police said that as per the orders of the government, the principal had asked the children to come to school only in the dress code. Most of the girls in the school agreed, but around seven girls from Class 8 to 12 did not agree to it.

JDA meets stakeholders of the Land Pooling Scheme

Abhishek Shrivastva
Jaipur

A meeting was at the Jaipur Development Authority to discuss the proposed draft Land Pooling Scheme under Section 7(1) of Land Pooling Scheme Act, 2016, and the provisions of Rajasthan Land Pooling Scheme Rules, 2020, pertaining to the creation of approximately 163.5 hectares of land in Revenue Villages Shivadaspora, Chandalai, and others.

The meeting was attended by stakeholders,



Vinay Kumar Dalela and Subhash Sharma in a meeting with JDA officials and land owners in Jaipur on Saturday.

including sarpanches, to provide information on the provisions and proposals of the draft layout plan for the beneficiaries of proposed LPS.

During the meeting, detailed information re-

garding the provisions and proposals of the draft plan was given by the Director, JVP, Addl Chief Town Planner, Senior Town Planner, Deputy Commissioner, Zone-14 and other officers.

Tourists flock City Palace



A sea of tourists converges upon City Palace, eager to immerse themselves in its cultural allure. The historic site becomes a vibrant hub, attracting a multitude of visitors eager to explore its grandeur.

NAIM KHAN

GOOD NEWS SOON

RVT 3 in Ramgarh Vishdhari to give birth

Nirmal Tiwari
Bundi

A good news from Ramgarh Vishdhari is expected in the beginning of March. Successful mating of tiger RVT 1 and tigress RVT 3 (T 119) had been reported. Now changes are visible in the physical structure of tigress RVT 3. The tigress mostly remains around Bandra Pole.

Tiger RVT 1 is usually found hanging around Govardhan Mountain. Tigress T 119



was shifted from Ranthambore to Ramgarh on August 20 last year and got its new name RVT 3 in Ramgarh Vishdhari.

This will be the second time that cubs will be born to a tigress in such a short time of shifting to the new reserve.

Tigress RVT 3, who was shifted from Ranthambore to Ramgarh last August, is showing visible changes in her physical structure due to being pregnant. Currently, the sanctuary is home to a growing tiger family of six

Earlier RVT 2 had delivered three cubs here. At present, there is a family of six tigers, including a tiger, two tigresses and

three cubs. One more tigress will be shifted here from Ranthambore next week to encourage the increase in Tiger Population. Dy Forest Conservator Sanjeev Sharma is monitoring all this. Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary was designated a tiger reserve on 5th July 2021 as it was granted in-principle approval by NTCA. It was given a status of wildlife sanctuary in 1982 under a state act named Rajasthan Wild Animals and Birds Protection Act, 1951.



Dr PS Vohra

The writer is a columnist and financial thinker

INDIAN UPI IS NOW GLOBAL



PM Narendra Modi and UAE President Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan introduce the India's UPI RuPay card service, in Abu Dhabi on February 13, 2024.

REVOLUTIONISING PAYMENTS

Now, it is also required to realize that the Indian govt is making aggressive expansion of Indian UPI towards global acceptance to get more NRI funds in India. According to the World Bank report, India's remittance inflows reached US\$125 billion in 2023, which is the highest in the world. After India, Mexico is in the second position and China is in the third. If India easily gets these remittances, it would definitely be a great help in increasing forex collection.

This will also help to control USD appreciation, resulting in relief from high inflation in the domestic market due to various global issues such as high crude oil prices, etc., caused by the high USD value. Furthermore, it would be great assistance to Indian people living overseas to send funds very easily to their relatives living in India.

The other benefits from UPI's global status will come in the Indian tourism sector as it will reduce the requirements of currency conversion while traveling overseas or when foreigners visit India, especially from neighbouring countries. UPI will also provide trade benefits in exports and imports, particularly from neighbouring countries including China, by reducing material costs, transportation costs, etc., thereby enhancing the profitability of businesses.

But it is for sure that the UPI mode has given a new life to Indians and has made them relaxed from the conventional or traditional approach of always keeping cash. Now the time has come to expand this system globally to accelerate the economy and to have hope for increased per capita income and more job opportunities in the future, especially in the IT and banking sectors.

Indian Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is receiving global appreciation on a vast scale. It's indeed a phenomenal accomplishment and sense of great feeling because when you look at the story of less than a decade of UPI, you find that our Country has given a new shape to the entire globe for digital payments. This has emerged as a game-changer in India's expedition for a digital future by enabling secure and inclusive financial transactions. This system has also transformed the way Indians conduct transactions, making millions financially empowered while driving Indian economic growth.

The good news is that Indian UPI now is gaining international currency status. Currently Seven countries including France, UAE, Mauritius, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Bhutan, and Nepal are already conducting UPI payments. Bhutan was the first country to enable UPI transactions. In February 2024, UPI was launched first in France and then in Sri Lanka & Mauritius. Many other Countries are in the process of accepting UPI for money transaction in collaboration with India. The present Modi Govt. holds a strategic political agenda with many countries for mutual agreement because this revolutionises India's payment sector and makes it more accessible to Non-resident Indians (NRIs) in several nations.

We certainly remember that India used a number of different systems like RTGS, IMPS and NEFT to transfer money between banks. All those online banking forms had a strin-

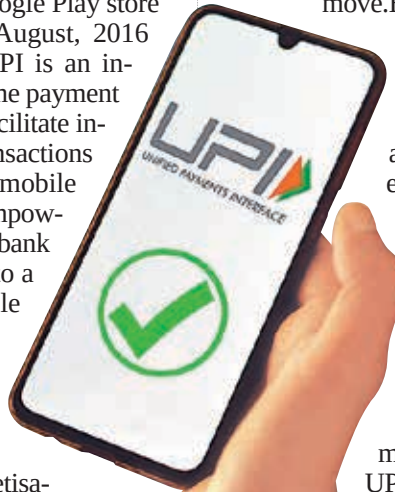


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gent banking rule and a typical paper burden process, which never provided ease to the customer. Therefore, there was always a need for an Innovation in online banking system to standardise India's payment platforms. Accordingly, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) conducted a pilot launch with 21 member banks on 11th April 2016 under the leadership of Dr Raghuram Rajan (Governor, RBI, 2013-2016) in Mumbai. Later Banks started uploading their UPI enabled Mobile Apps on Google Play store from 25th August, 2016 onwards. UPI is an instant real-time payment system to facilitate inter-bank transactions through mobile phones. It empowers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application.

It is also very important to assess the post demonetisa-

tion period and the growth of UPI. Demonetisation occurred on 8th November 2016, with Indian government banning Rs 500 and 1000 notes, which at that time used to account 86 percent of cash in the circulation, with immediate effects by PM Modi during his first tenure. Definitely the intention behind this strategic move was to curb corruption. But till now, despite several discussions and various arguments in public forums, it has still not been proven whether the government succeeded in that move. But it is quite certain and unanimously accepted that after demonetization, Indians started giving priority to online transactions, which gave huge momentum to UPI. According



to one report in the year following demonetisation (2017), the Year on Year growth of UPI transactions was 900 percent. In 2018 UPI facilitated transaction worth more than Rs 1.5 trillion. Even during Covid-19 pandemic UPI had greatly supported Indian financial system and society as a whole. Data reports that between March 2020 and March 2022, UPI transactions grew over 3 times both in volume and value terms. During the lockdown period, it grew to around 3 lakh cr in volume, signifying that Indians largely used UPI for financial exchanges or transactions during Covid.

Now a days UPI has become almost indispensable in the Indian system. You find this everywhere, starting from the vegetable seller in the streets, the puncture repair shop for bicycles and two wheelers, getting prasad from a shop outside a temple, making payment after getting fuel on petrol pumps, paying toll taxes through fast tag, etc. or transactions at other places like PVR, Malls, etc. According to NPCI data, in a comparative analysis for the year ended on January 2024, 167 new banks have been added to the listing for UPI transactions. This accounts for over 4 billion financial transactions with a value of over Rs 19 lakh crore. This represents an increase of more than 7 lakh crores in a year. Additionally, based on a report, it is a fact that currently, 46% of global digital payment transactions are happening in India, which certainly describes India as the incubator of innovation in the field of digitalization of financial transactions.

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE AUTHOR ARE PERSONAL

IN-DEPTH

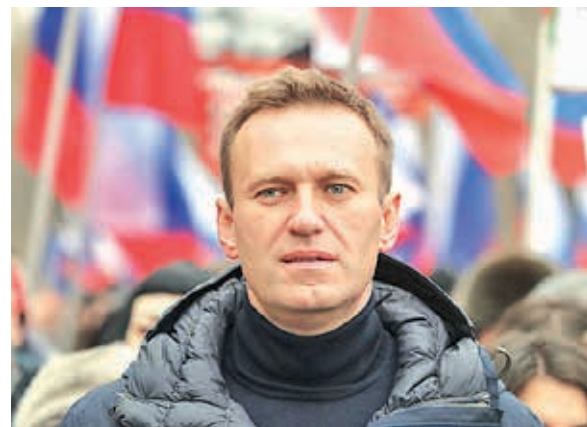
LEGAL HURDLES LIE AHEAD FOR VERDICT ON ELECTORAL BONDS

The Supreme Court's judgment striking down the electoral bonds scheme is still being debated for the effect it may or may not have on curbing the use of black money in elections. But the immediate hurdle that the judgment may face in its implementation is from banks which are meant to protect a customer's privacy. Revealing the identity of the buyers of electoral bonds can be interpreted as violation of their privacy and hence a breach of trust.

A clause in the Reserve Bank of India's Master Circular, which was released in 2015, reads, "The bankers' obligation to maintain secrecy arises out of the contractual relationship between the banker and customer and, as such no information should be divulged to third parties except under circumstances which are well-defined."

Even if the banks are made to divulge details, the electoral bond buyers could move court to prevent their identity from being disclosed as they were guaranteed anonymity. This would render the judgment ineffective.

DISSENT IN RUSSIA HAS A HEAVY PRICE TAG



Russian President Vladimir Putin's harshest critic, Alexei Navalny, has tragically passed away at the Polar Wolf penal colony in the Arctic, where he was serving a 19-year prison sentence. Navalny's demise follows closely on the heels of his recent court appearance and merely a month before the highly anticipated national elections. His death is expected to heavily favour Putin, effectively granting him another six-year term in office.

This untimely event has sparked a storm of allegations from Western nations, who suspect Putin's involvement in Navalny's death. In response, the Kremlin has vehemently denied any wrongdoing, urging patience until the investigations are concluded.

Navalny's demise adds another somber chapter to the list of unnatural deaths of Putin's critics. From the nerve-agent poisoning survival in 2020 to his subsequent imprisonment in 2021, Navalny's ordeal mirrors a disturbing pattern of dissent suppression. Tragically, he is not alone in his fate; predecessors like Yevgeny Prigozhin, Viktor Yushchenko, Alexander Perepilichin, Alexander Litvinenko, and Anna Politkovskaya met similar untimely ends, all of whom were vocal critics of Putin's regime.

As the world mourns Navalny's demise, his passing serves as a stark reminder of the challenges faced by dissenting voices in Russia and its implications for freedom of speech and democracy in the country. As per the 1993 constitution Russia is a "democratic, federative, law-based state". Vladimir Lukin, a former Human Rights Ombudsman, once dismissed claims about freedom of speech being non-existent in Russia as an exaggeration. There is no institutionalized censorship and the right to speech freedom is basically observed, he said. Except that dissenters meet with untimely deaths.



As the world mourns Navalny's demise, his passing serves as a stark reminder of the challenges faced by dissenting voices in Russia and its implications for freedom of speech and democracy in the country

TOP TWEETS



I pay my respects to the great freedom fighter and pioneer of social justice, 'Bharat Ratna' Karpoori Thakur ji on his death anniversary. His life full of simplicity, purity and sacrifice is an inspiration for all of us. Under the leadership of respected Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji, the decoration of Karpuri ji with the highest civilian honor is immortalizing his contribution in the upliftment of the nation.

Jagat Prakash Nadda @JPNadda

Humble tribute to the great freedom fighter and symbol of social harmony, former Chief Minister of Bihar, Bharat Ratna Shri Karpoori Thakur ji on his death anniversary. His commitment towards education, social justice, upliftment of the backward and deprived and women's rights is an inspiration for every Indian.

Jyotiraditya M. Scindia @JM_Scindia

SPIRITUAL SPEAK



As a water bead on a lotus leaf, as water on a red lily, does not adhere, so the sage does not adhere to the seen, the heard, or the sensed.

BUDDHA



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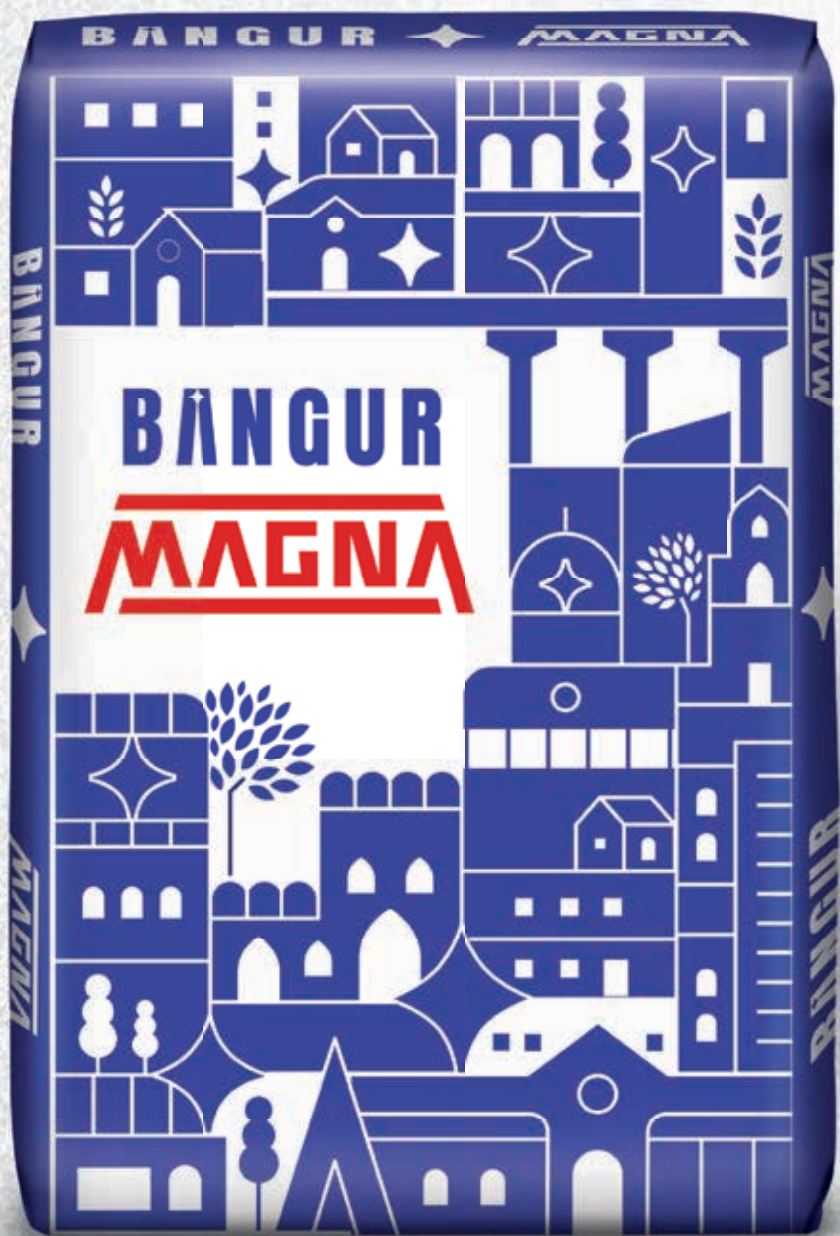
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Meteoric rise

Saffron party chief hails PM Modi's leadership for party's big rise

BJP will score hat-trick of Lok Sabha victories, says JP Nadda

PTI

New Delhi

BJP chief JP Nadda on Saturday underlined the party's meteoric rise since PM Narendra Modi took office and lauded his leadership in the past decade that has been full of new achievements for the organisation.

The Modi government will score a hat-trick and retain power for a third straight term after the Lok Sabha polls, expected in April-May, he told nearly 11,500 party delegates who have assembled at Bharat Mandapam here for the two-day national convention.

"We have to cross 370 seats and the NDA has to cross 400," he said in his inaugural address, exhorting party members to put all their energy in achieving the target so



PM Narendra Modi with Union Ministers Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah and BJP chief JP Nadda lights lamp to inaugurate the BJP National Council meet in New Delhi, on Saturday.

PTI

BJP'S 2-DAY NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING BEGINS IN DELHI

New Delhi: A two-day meeting of nearly 11,500 delegates of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) drawn from across the country began here on Saturday, as the party's top brass led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi gets set to outline its campaign themes for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. From its elected panchayat heads to district presidents and Union ministers, the BJP's 'national council' meeting is going to be the ruling party's biggest organisational get-together in recent memory — an exercise aimed at galvanising its cadre for the polls. The meet was preceded by a meeting of the party's national office-bearers, who will finalise some of the key agenda items for the convention.

Farmers' Protest Continues

Dharnas against Punjab BJP leaders, march in Haryana



Farmers at the Punjab-Haryana Shambhu border during farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' protest, near Patiala district, on Saturday.

PTI

PTI

Chandigarh

The Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) on Saturday held dharnas outside the residences of three senior BJP leaders in Punjab on the fifth day of the farmers' protest over their various demands, including a legal guarantee for MSP.

Apart from holding dharna outside the homes

of former Punjab CM Amarinder Singh, BJP's Punjab chief Sunil Jakhar and senior leader Kewal Singh Dhillon, the union also held protests at toll plazas in the state.

On the fifth day of their 'Delhi Chalo' march — called by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha — the Haryana farmers took out a tractor march.

100 FARMERS HELD AT TN RAILWAY STATION

Thanjavur (Tamil Nadu): Around 100 farmers from different farmers associations were arrested at Thanjavur Railway station on Saturday when they tried to stage a 'rail roko' protest in front of the Cholan Express. The group was protesting the police action against the farmers' agitation in New Delhi.

Ghulam Nabi Azad hints at not contesting Lok Sabha elections



Ghulam Nabi Azad at a public rally at Nagrota on Saturday.

PTI

Jammu

Senior politician Ghulam Nabi Azad on Saturday indicated that he would not be contesting in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls as he would be campaigning for the candidates of his newly formed DPAP candidates.

Azad, who has refrained from contesting Lok Sabha polls after his defeat in 2014 Lok Sabha polls, asked his party men to gear up as 2024 would be poll year for J&K. Talking to media, Azad, who resigned from Congress, also appealed to PM Narendra Modi to resolve the issues of agitating farmers "once for all" as the protest is neither good for the government nor the farmers.

Avalanche warning issued in 8 dists of Jammu & Kashmir

Agencies

Srinagar

With the Meteorological centre here predicting heavy snowfall, eight districts of Jammu and Kashmir received avalanche warning on Saturday. The Jammu and Kashmir Disaster Management Authority (JKDMA) said avalanche with low danger level is likely to occur above 2,200 metres over districts of Bandipora, Baramulla, Kupwara, Ganderbal in Kashmir and



Doda, Kishtwar, Poonch and Ramban in Jammu region in the next 24 hours. People living in these areas are advised to take precautions and avoid venturing out into avalanche prone areas, JKDMA added.

15 commercial units, houses gutted in fire in Mumbai, nobody injured

ANI

Mumbai

Around 15 commercial units and some houses were destroyed in a massive fire that broke out in a chawl in Mumbai's Govandi early on Saturday. No injuries or casualties were reported in the fire incident that took place at Baiganwadi in Adarsh Nagar locality at 3.50 am. According to Mumbai Fire Brigade (MFB) officials, 15 galas (commercial units) on the ground floor and some houses on



Fire fighters douse a major fire that broke out at Sujan Chemoplast company, in Navi Mumbai, on Saturday.

PTI

the first floor were damaged in the fire. Upon receiving information, around nine fire brigades

reached the spot and started the operation. The exact cause behind the fire was not clear, officials added.

Nitish downplays Lalu's 'doors are open' remark

PTI

Patna

A day after Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) president Lalu Prasad caused a flutter by saying "doors were always open for Nitish Kumar", the Bihar Chief Minister on Saturday downplayed the issue, but said he "maintained good relations with allies as well as opponents". The Janata Dal (United) president was replying to questions from journalists on the remark



Nitish Kumar pays tribute to Karpoori Thakur in Patna.

by Lalu Prasad Yadav, with whom he was seen warmly shaking hands and exchanging pleasantries inside the assembly premises on Thursday.

IIM Lucknow hosts Awanish Kumar Awasthi, advisor to UP CM Yogi

First India Bureau

Lucknow

IIM Lucknow on Saturday hosted Awanish Kumar Awasthi, advisor to Hon UP CM Yogi Adityanath, for an interactive session titled "Destination Uttar Pradesh." Awasthi addressed the students in this engaging session, touching upon the importance of entrepreneurs and AI in the development of the nation. He focused on the main initiatives taken by the UP govt for the fu-



(R to L) Prof Priyanka Sharma, Chairman SA&P, Prof Archana Shukla, Director IIM Lucknow, Awanish Awasthi, Chief Advisor UP Govt, Alok Kumar Pr Secy Secy Education, Prof Suresh Jakhar, Chairman PGP.

ture development of the state. This included Start-up and skill development support and the development of Bundelkhand to

be a future investment destination. Awasthi also invited the institute to be a partner for the UP development project.

RaGa heads to Wayanad after elephant attack

PTI

New Delhi

Rahul Gandhi left for Wayanad from Varanasi as he was urgently required in his Lok Sabha constituency and will resume his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra from Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj on Sunday afternoon, the party said on Saturday. Gandhi's visit to Wayanad comes a day after a man, who was seriously injured in another wild elephant attack on Friday morning, died at the Kozhikode medical college during the day.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's convoy during the 'Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra', in Varanasi, on Saturday.

PTI

The victim was an eco-tourism guide of the Forest department and was stationed at the Kuruva Island here which is a well known tourist destination, a Forest official said.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said, "Rahul Gandhi's presence is required urgently in Wayanad. He is leaving this evening from

Varanasi at 5PM. The Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra will resume at 3PM tomorrow, February 18th, at Prayagraj."

In Wayanad, a district-wide bandh was called by the ruling LDF, Opposition UDF and BJP to seek permanent solutions to the man-animal conflicts in the region. Shops and business establishments remained closed while vehicles kept off the roads across the district. The Congress yatra entered Uttar Pradesh on Friday and will traverse through the state before entering Rajasthan.

PROBLEMS IN RED SEA

EAM, Blinken discuss need to ensure free navigation

PTI

Washington

Secretary of State Antony Blinken during his meeting with External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar in Germany discussed the need to ensure freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, highlighting how the US and India play important roles in safeguarding economic stability in the volatile region. The two leaders met on Friday on the sidelines



EAM Jaishankar, US Secy of State Antony Blinken and German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, (from L) in Munich, on Saturday.

PTI

of the prestigious Munich Security Conference in the German city.

"Blinken and Jaishankar discussed the need to ensure freedom

EAM MEETS CANADIAN COUNTERPART IN GERMANY, DISCUSSES 'PRESENT STATE' OF BILATERAL TIES

Munich: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said that he discussed the "present state" of bilateral ties and the current global issues with his Canadian counterpart Melanie Joly, amidst a diplomatic row between the two countries over the killing of a Sikh separatist in Canada. The two leaders met on Friday on the sidelines of the prestigious Munich Security Conference here in Germany. The meeting comes amid bitterness in bilateral ties over the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil last year. "Met my Canadian counterpart FM @melaniejoly on the sidelines of #MSC2024. Our conversation understandably focused on the present state of our bilateral ties. Was also useful to exchange views on the global situation," Jaishankar posted on X.

of navigation in the Red Sea," State Department Spokesperson Matthew

Miller said in a readout of the meeting. Secretary of State

Blinken highlighted that the respective US and Indian approaches to maritime security in the Red Sea are mutually reinforcing and play important roles in safeguarding economic stability in the region, he said. They also discussed ongoing work to ensure lasting peace and security in the Middle East, Miller said. Since November, Yemen's Houthi rebels have targeted ships in the Red Sea to demand a ceasefire in Israel's war with Hamas.

Our govt is providing opportunities to farmers to progress: UP CM Yogi

First India Bureau

Lucknow

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday emphasised the unwavering commitment of the double-engine government to empower farmers, ensuring opportunities for progress in every circumstance. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the 55th Regional Fruit, Vegetable and Flower Exhibition 2024 at Raj Bawan, the CM said that UP, despite constituting only 11 percent of India's



UP Gov Anandiben Patel & CM Yogi Adityanath at the event.

total cultivable land, contributes over 20 percent to the country's overall food grain production. He inaugurated the exhibition with Governor Anandiben Patel.

डबल इंजन सरकार का संकल्प



मोदी की गारंटी हो रही साकार

“मजबूत विकास परियोजनाएं अर्थव्यवस्था की धुरी हैं। विकसित राजस्थान के निर्माण के लिए गांव-गांव, ढाणी-ढाणी तक बेहतर रोड कनेक्टिविटी स्थापित करने के लिए प्रदेश सरकार संकल्पित है।”

भजनलाल शर्मा, मुख्यमंत्री राजस्थान



श्री भजनलाल शर्मा
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, राजस्थान

श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी
माननीय प्रधानमंत्री

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स्टेट हाईवे का सुदृढ़ीकरण

₹1000 करोड़
की लागत से पुलों और सड़कों
का उन्नयन

2 लाख 45 हजार किमी से अधिक लम्बाई का सड़क नेटवर्क दे रहा राजस्थान के विकास को गति



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सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, राजस्थान

FIRST INDIA 2ND FRONT

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

The only way to change is to break the boundaries and embrace the uncertain and uncomfortable.
Dr JACDEESH CHANDRA, CMD & Editor-in-Chief



08

Mirch Masala

FIRST INDIA SUNDAY SPECIAL

By Tridib Raman

The author is a journalist and political commentator and views expressed are his personal

BJD CHIEF NAVEEN PATNAIK FINALLY GETS HIS SUCCESSOR?

Biju Janata Dal chief Naveen Patnaik, due to his age and health, is making efforts for a 'change of guard' in Odisha and wants to declare his political successor as soon as possible. If reliable sources are to be believed, recently Naveen called Arun Patnaik, son of his elder brother Prem Patnaik, and Aditya Singh Mehta, son of his late sister Geeta Mehta, together and said, 'Biju Janata Dal is the party of your grandfather and maternal grandfather. Now is the time. It's time for you to take charge.' Naveen's elder brother Prem Patnaik is an industrialist who lives in Delhi with his son Arun, while Aditya Singh Mehta lives in Singapore. So, Arun and Aditya asked Naveen in one voice, "We do not live in Odisha, then how will the people of the state accept both

of us." Naveen's answer was, 'Who was I before entering politics? Did I used to live in Odisha? I came here, stayed here and the people here gave me so much love.' Earlier, there were speculations that Naveen would appoint his most trusted IAS officer, VK Pandian, who had left his job to join Biju Janata Dal, as his successor, but somewhere in Naveen's mind it was already going on that the people of Odisha would hardly be able to accept this Tamil Brahmin Pandian hailing from Tamil Nadu. When Naveen came to Odisha in 1997, after death of his father, Biju Patnaik, he had no experience in politics. His elder brother, Prem, had no interest in politics. Naveen also supported his nephew Arun during the 2019 Assembly elections and offered to contest the elections from the Hinjili Assembly seat, but Arun was not ready for it then.

WILL PIYUSH GOYAL CONTEST 2024 LOK SABHA ELECTIONS FROM MEERUT?

Union Minister Piyush Goyal's connection with Haryana and Maharashtra is understandable, as his ancestral village is in Haryana and the workplace of his father and his mother was in Maharashtra. If reliable sources are to be believed, this time Piyush Goyal was the architect of bringing RLD's Jayant Chaudhary to the BJP. Goyal may also have his own personal motive behind this. If sources are to be believed,



Goyal can contest the 2024 Lok Sabha elections from Meerut. The current MP from there, Rajendra Aggarwal, has won a trio of victories on the Meerut-Hapur seat. Bania voters have a lot of influence on this seat, while there is a bulk of farmers' votes. Dalit and Muslim voters also have a significant influence here. So, Piyush Goyal, who has become one of the expert players in politics, had to break the RLD-SP-Congress alliance so that he could win this seat with a huge majority. As far as Dalit votes are concerned, BSP's behaviour till now has been like that of the BJP's 'B' party, so anyway, there is no wrinkle visible on the saffron foreheads regarding Dalit votes.

FOR WHOM DELHI IS FAR AWAY IN BJP

BJP has conducted several opinion polls one after the other regarding its Delhi MPs, on the basis of which the final report card of Delhi MPs has been prepared. The MPs whose numbers are less are looking more active in their parliamentary constituencies these days. Indications have been given to people



like Gautam Gambhir, Manoj Tiwari, Pravesh Verma, Meenakshi Lekhi, Harshvardhan, Hansraj Hans that this time their seats can be changed or they can be put in the service of the organization. The only complaint of the people of the area about most of the BJP MPs is that 'they do not meet people easily, nor do they answer their calls.' When there was a grand event of 'Shri Ram Pran Pratishtha' in Ayodhya, Pravesh Sahib Singh Verma had a grand statue of Shri Ram placed at the government residence in Delhi so that he could meet his people on this pretext.

WHY IS THERE SO MUCH TURMOIL IN THE GANDHI FAMILY?

After Sonia Gandhi's announcement of going to Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan, Priyanka Gandhi's core team which includes Sandeep Singh, Mohit Pandey and Taukeer, reached Delhi to meet Priyanka and told her that 'now they are moving to Rae Bareilly and for the next three months they will camp there.' But it is said that Priyanka refused them saying that 'she has no desire to contest the Lok Sabha elections.' Actually, earlier it was absolutely certain that Priyanka would come to the Rajya Sabha from Himachal. Himachal CM Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu had also sent a proposal in Priyanka's name to Congress President

Kharge in this regard. It is said that after this, when Kharge talked to Sonia, she did not agree to this proposal. After this, Sonia talked to Priyanka and told her that 'I was forced to go to Rajya Sabha because my health is not good these days, if you also go to Rajya Sabha, it will not send the right message. You should contest elections from Rae Bareilly on my seat.' Priyanka was distressed by this decision of Sonia. After this, Sonia issued an emotional open letter to the people of Rae Bareilly, so that the Gandhi family's emotional relationship with Rae Bareilly could be expressed and pressure could be put on Priyanka to contest elections from Rae Bareilly.

CM, other State BJP leaders in Delhi; issues of Raj discussed

CM Sharma discusses centrally sponsored schemes with Union FM Sitharaman

CM to inaugurate Pali's 'Om' shaped temple on Monday

First India Bureau

Jaipur

On Saturday, CM Bhajan Lal Sharma visited Delhi to attend BJP's national convention. Sharma also held a series of meetings with union ministers, including Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman regarding various issues of Rajasthan. Sharma also held discussion on centrally sponsored schemes related to the welfare of the state. During the day, CM Sharma also held meetings with the leaders of Barmer and Jaisalmer. This meeting took place at the Delhi residence of Kailash Choudhary.

Meanwhile apart from the CM, several other BJP leaders of the state are also in Delhi to attend the BJP meet. Former CM Vasundhara Raje, several MLAs Of the party from Rajasthan are in Delhi for the same.

On Monday, the CM Bhajan Lal Sharma will be on a one-day visit to Pali. He will participate in the consecration ceremony of the world's first 'Om' shaped temple in Jadan of Pali.



Raj CM Bhajan Lal Sharma with Madhya Pradesh CM Mohan Yadav & Chhattisgarh CM Vishnu Deo Sai during the BJP National Convention held at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Saturday.



CM Bhajan Lal Sharma held a meeting at the residence of Union MoS for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Kailash Choudhary in New Delhi on Saturday. Madan Rathore and others are also seen here.

CM meets Union Ministers



CM Bhajan Lal Sharma paid a courtesy visit to Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi on Saturday.



CM Bhajan Lal Sharma with Union Minister of Education and Skill Development Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi on Saturday.

DIYA TO VISIT BERLIN FOR INT'L TOURISM BOURSE TO PROMOTE TOURISM



Deputy CM Diya Kumari on her visit to New Delhi met Arjun Meghwal and his wife on Saturday.

→ Jaipur: Deputy CM Diya Kumari will start tourism promotion from Berlin. Rajasthan Tourism will be represented at the International Tourism Bourse to be held in Berlin from March 5 to 7. Chief Secretary Sudhansh Pant, Principal Secretary Gayatri Rathore and DOT Rashmi Sharma will also accompany the deputy CM. This would be Diya Kumari's first foreign trip after becoming the Deputy CM. Renowned travel agents and tour operators from around the world will participate in ITB Berlin. A strong team under the leadership of Diya Kumari of Raj Tourism will go to Berlin. Diya Kumari will meet German ministers and diplomats from other countries which might boost tourism. **Nirmal Tiwari**

CP JOSHI LAUDS DOUBLE ENGINE GOVT OF BJP

→ BJP State Prez CP Joshi has expressed gratitude to PM Modi, Union Min GS Shekhawat, CM Bhajan Lal Sharma and Haryana CM Khattar for the agreement regarding Yamuna water between Rajasthan and Haryana. Joshi said that the double engine govt of BJP in the state is taking many historic decisions in public interest with Modi guarantee. "This scheme remained pending for so long due to lack of attention by the previous govt. Now, after agreement, Haryana will give excess water of Yamuna to Rajasthan during rainy days and State will store this water so that it can be used for drinking purposes," he said.



CP Joshi, PC Bairwa and Dushyant Singh during BJP event at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Saturday.

Congress seminar in Bikaner over Lok Sabha poll preps on Feb 24

First India Bureau

Jaipur

Congress conference will be held again in Bikaner and conference is proposed on Feb 24th. State Incharge SS Randhawa, PCC Chief Govind Singh Dotsara and LoP Tikaram Jolly will be present. Interestingly, in the previous session, Dotsara had expressed his displeasure over lack of crowd in the last conference. In such a situation, it has now been decided to hold the conference again.

City Congress Organi-

DOTASRA-JULLY COMBINATION TO PLAY CRUCIAL ROLE IN LOK SABHA ELECTION FOR CONGRESS

→ PCC Chief Govind Singh Dotsara and LoP Tika Ram Jolly will be playing big role in Congress party's Lok Sabha Poll preps. Both will be involved in the ticket distribution and it being said that these two leaders wont be fielded as candidates of party. This has been decided at the level of party high command it is learnt. Notably the party in a surprise move had appointed a three-time MLA from Alwar Rural and cabinet minister in the previous Gehlot government, Tikaram Jolly, as the LoP. Both these leaders have been taking on the BJP govt actively.



zation General Secretary Nitin Vats told that an urgent meeting of Bikaner City Congress has

been scheduled on 17th Feb at 11 am in the City District Congress Committee office.

CS Pant conducts surprise inspection at Psychiatric Centre, miffed over absentees

Dr. Rituraj Sharma

Jaipur

Chief Secretary Sudhansh Pant reached the psychiatric hospital in Jawahar Nagar. As soon as the CS reached the hospital around 11:15 without any prior notice, there was panic among the medical workers. The Chief Secretary looked at all the arrangements in the hospital for about an hour. Chief Secretary Pant first reached the OPD and saw the overall arrangements to analyse



CS Sudhansh Pant

The CS looked at all arrangements in the psychiatric hospital for about an hour; he also took opportunity to solicit feedback from patients present within the hospital, he also issued directives regarding cleanliness in hosp

the working conditions.

After that, Pant proceeded to examine the emergency services, the RRC (Rehabilitation and Recovery Centre), and

the telepsychology services offered by the institution. During his visit, he also took the opportunity to solicit feedback from patients present

Amidst speculation about the possibility of Cong leader and former minister Mahendrajeet Malviya joining the BJP, The Cong leaders of the tribal belt are meeting former CM Ashok Gehlot. On Saturday Cong MLA Ganesh Ghogra also met Gehlot and discussed the issues related to Malviya.

Notably as per sources Malviya is likely to join the ruling BJP which will be a major blow to the congress party. Malviya had recently targeted



Ganesh Ghogra with Ashok Gehlot in Jaipur on Saturday.

Congress and had claimed that the grand old party has been surrounded by some people. "Congress is surrounded by some people. The vision that Congress had earlier is not there today," he said.

Public has faith in justice system: Devnani to lawyers

First India Bureau

Jaipur

Rajasthan Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani has stated that advocates must understand their roles. They should not go on strike or get arrested. The public has faith in the justice system; they should contribute to preserve that faith.

Vasudev Devnani spoke at the District Bar Association's swearing-in ceremony on Saturday in Dausa. Vasudev Devnani administered the oath to the newly elected officials.



JANHVI'S CULINARY SURPRISE

In the glamorous world of Bollywood, Ananya Panday and Janhvi Kapoor stand out not only for their achievements but also for the heartwarming camaraderie they share. **P11**

📷 MUKESH KIRADOO

Timeless Beauty!

Discover the inspiring journey of Alifirdoush Khan, a model from Jaipur. From her childhood in a military family to her aspirations in fashion, City First highlights her story that embodies resilience and determination!



Mohit Choudhary

cityfirst@firstindia.co.in

Alfirdoush Khan, standing at a statuesque height of 5'7", hails from the vibrant city of Jaipur, embedded in the rich tapestry of an army family. Armed with a Master's degree in English Literature, her journey transcends the conventional norms of the fashion industry. Beyond the glitz and glamour, she dedicates her time to philanthropy, working tirelessly with an NGO to provide free education to underprivileged children.

Belonging to the village of Chotti Chapri and growing up in the quaint streets of Jhotwara, Jaipur, Alifirdoush's childhood was adorned with a passion for sports, particularly badminton and basketball, alongside a deep-rooted love for animals. Inspired by the illustrious journey of her school senior, Rubal Shekhawat, who clinched the title of Miss India 1st Runner-Up in 2022, Alifirdoush embarked on her own path in the world of fashion and lifestyle. Supported by her pillars of strength, supermodel and mentor Akanksha Bhalla, and EMR Director Gaurav Gaur, she learned that unwavering self-belief can turn dreams into reality. I'd also extend my heartfelt

support to my sister, who has been through all ups and downs of life.

Born into a family where her father served in the army and her mother dedicated herself to homemaking, Alifirdoush found solace in the unwavering support of her elder brother, engaged in the private sector, and her younger sister, currently pursuing her LLB degree. Despite societal apprehensions stemming from her Muslim background, Alifirdoush's family and friends rallied behind her, illuminating her path with unwavering support. Balancing her aspirations as a model with her responsibilities as a working woman, Alifirdoush advocates for a holistic approach to life. Her

mantra revolves around doing what brings peace to the heart, cultivating positivity, nourishing the body with ample water, fruits and juices and embracing the transformative power of daily exercise and yoga.

Her journey is adorned with accolades, including being crowned as the Runner-Up in Pride Rajasthan 2023, a Finalist and Top 15 contender in Elite Miss Rajasthan, and the title of Miss Beautiful Smile 2023. Yet, amidst these triumphs, Alifirdoush envisions herself not just as a successful model but as an emblem of perseverance and grace, inspiring countless others to chase their dreams with unwavering determination.



