

**BRIEF**



A devotee holding a bunch of bananas performs rituals on the occasion of Chaiti Chhath Puja at the bank of river Brahmaputra, in Guwahati, Thursday.

**Watery grave**

**Jashpur:** Two children, including a girl, drowned while bathing at a pond in a village in Jashpur district, police said on Thursday. The incident took place on Wednesday afternoon when the children, Gayatri Singh (10) and Anurag Yadav (9), residents of Bokhi Bartoli village, had gone to the pond to take a bath, an official here said.

**Fire**

**Nagpur:** A fire erupted at a saw mill in Lakadganj area of Maharashtra's Nagpur city on Thursday, partially damaging 10 establishments, while no casualties were reported in the incident, an official said. The blaze broke out at a saw mill on Old Bhandara Road around 8.20 am, and it spread to 10 establishments, which were partially damaged, chief fire officer of NMC Rajendra Uchake said.

**Lifer**

**Shravasti:** A court in Uttar Pradesh's Shravasti district on Thursday convicted a woman of strangulating her children to death and awarded her life imprisonment. On March 27, 2016, Meera Devi, wife of Pradeep Verma and a resident of Madhavapur village, choked her sons Anurag (4) and one-year-old Aryan to death with bare hands, prosecutor K. P. Singh told PTI.

**Resign**

**Amaravati:** All 24 Ministers of the Andhra Pradesh cabinet on Thursday submitted their resignation to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy ahead of the proposed reorganisation of the Council of Ministers. The incumbent Ministers put-in their papers at the meeting of the Cabinet, which was their last, official sources said. They remained in their posts for exactly 34 months.

**Mishap**

**New Tehri:** Two people were killed and three others injured after their vehicle fell into a deep gorge here, officials said on Thursday. The passengers were returning from Vikas Nagar late on Wednesday night when the driver lost control and the vehicle plunged into a 250 metre deep gorge on Bel-Parogi motor road, killing two persons on the spot, Dhanolti SDM Lakshmi Raj Chauhan said.

Weather	
High	38
Low	26
MARKET	
NIFTY	17,639.55
SENSEX	59,034.95
BULLION	
GOLD	51,960
SILVER	66,700

**Rs 1 CRORE BRIBERY CASE**

## CBI gets sanction to prosecute ex-CMD of HSCL

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The government has accorded sanction to the CBI to prosecute Moyukh Bhaduri, former chairman-cum-managing director of Hindustan Steelworks Construction Limited (HSCL), in a Rs 1-crore bribery case in the construction work of National Sports University in Manipur, officials said on Thursday.

The CBI had filed a charge sheet against Bhaduri and other accused on January 5 under IPC sections related to criminal conspiracy and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act even as further probe into the allegations against him was underway.

The government has now given the go-ahead to prosecute Bhaduri in the case registered two years ago, they said, adding that the special court has been apprised of this development clearing the way for taking cognisance of charges against the official.

Besides Bhaduri, the CBI has named in the charge sheet Zillion Infraprojects Pvt. Ltd MD Anant Saxena, Vijay Nirman Company Pvt Ltd's Managing Director V Ajay Kumar and Director N Krishna Rao, authorised signatory of NT Enterprises in Imphal T Nimai Singh, and Chalke alias CH Srinivas, a contractual employee of the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

The agency had carried out searches in New Delhi, Kolkata, Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad after registering the FIR on July 2,

2020, they said. The alleged corruption pertained to work related to the sports university for which tender was floated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2015, they said.

During the tendering process, Chalke had introduced Rao to Bhaduri and Saxena.

After the selection of HSCL as project management consultant for the university work, Bhaduri and Saxena allegedly demanded a bribe of Rs 1 crore, besides 5.5 per cent of the total project cost, from Rao and Kumar of Vijay Nirman Co Pvt Ltd for providing an undue favour in the award of construction work for NSU, Imphal.

The CBI filed the FIR after conducting a preliminary enquiry into the matter and had obtained sanc-

tion to proceed against Bhaduri from competent authorities.

During the enquiry, it emerged that Chalke played an important role in convincing Rao to give an illegal gratification of Rs 1 crore to Bhaduri for getting the work for National Sports University, the FIR had alleged.

Rao and Kumar allegedly arranged the money from T Nimai Singh of Imphal-based NT Enterprises by involving him in the work, it said.

Singh, on the instructions of Rao, transferred a total of Rs 55 lakh in May 2015 in three tranches - Rs 25 lakh on May 13, Rs 20 lakh on May 25 and Rs 10 lakh on May 27 - into the account of Zillion Infra Projects owned by Saxena, it alleged.

## CBI makes first arrests in Birbhum killings

**Nabs four suspects from Mumbai**

**Rampurhat (WB), Apr 07 (PTI):**

CBI sleuths on Thursday nabbed four West Bengal residents from Mumbai for their alleged involvement in the Birbhum killings, an officer of the agency said.

These were the first arrests made by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) since it took over the probe into the March 21 killings in Bogtui village as per the Calcutta High Court's order.

The four accused had fled from Bogtui to the Maharashtra capital soon after the killings, and they were apprehended from their hideout early on Thursday morning.

"Of the four arrested accused, two persons - identified as Bappa and Shabu Sheikh - were named in

the FIR lodged in connection with the killings. We will produce them before a court in Mumbai and plea for a transit remand to West Bengal," he said.

Eight people were burnt alive, and one succumbed to injuries later, after as-

sailants firebombed several houses in the village hours after the murder of local TMC leader Bhadu Sheikh. A Special Investigation Team constituted by the state government was earlier probing the case.

## NITI Aayog to roll out 'Battery Swapping Policy'

**New Delhi:** Government think tank NITI Aayog is likely to roll out a 'Battery Swapping Policy' by December this year, a senior government official said on Thursday. "The Battery Swapping Policy is likely to be rolled out by December," Sudhendu Jyoti Sinha, adviser (Infrastructure Connectivity-Transport and Electric Mobility), NITI Aayog told PTI. Sinha also said that the Aayog is working on a proposal to prod railways to set up electric vehicle charging stations at railway stations in cities whose population is more than 10 lakhs. The policy was announced by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her 2022-23 Budget speech and is being prepared by NITI Aayog. "Considering the constraint space in urban areas for setting up (electric vehicles) charging stations, a battery swapping policy will be brought out and interoperability standards will be formulated," Sitharaman had said. She had stated that the private sector will be encouraged to set up sustainable business models for battery or energy service and this will improve efficiency in the EV (electric vehicle) ecosystem.

## Kailash-Mansarovar yatra unlikely to resume this year

**Pithoragarh, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The resumption of the Kailash-Mansarovar yatra, which was suspended after COVID-19 broke out two years ago, looks uncertain this year too as the nodal agency for the pilgrimage has received no instructions from the government regarding its preparations.

Normally, the Ministry of External Affairs holds a meeting with the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) Limited, the nodal agency for the yatra, and the Pithoragarh district administration in January itself to discuss the preparations for the pilgrimage. The yatra which goes through the Lipulekh Pass in Pithoragarh district was suspended in 2020 after the pandemic struck, and the suspension contin-

ued through 2021. With a drop in COVID-19 cases in recent months, officials were hoping that the yatra might begin this year.

"Earlier, preparations for the yatra used to begin from January onwards after receiving instructions from the external affairs ministry, but this year we are still waiting for it. No more time is left for preparations now," KMVN general manager A P Bajpai said.

"Till date, we have received no instructions regarding the yatra from anywhere," Pithoragarh District Magistrate Ashish Chauhan added.

"Even if we receive the instructions now, it will be difficult to meet the deadline as the yatra begins from the first week of June," he said.

**LEGAL EXPERTS OPINE**

## 'Decriminalisation of minor offences welcome step'

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

Decriminalisation of minor offences is a welcome step as it will help unclutter the criminal justice system in the country and the element of criminality should be replaced by the imposition of civil liability, legal experts said on Thursday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked bureaucrats to expedite the decriminalisation of minor offences and violations and in a letter dated April 4, Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba has asked the secretaries to initiate action on certain suggestions made by the prime minister which included reviewing such crimes and accordingly taking action to repeal or amend these provi-

sions in a time-bound manner. Senior advocate and SCBA President Vikas Singh said that decriminalisation of minor offences was a good idea, especially considering how our judicial system is so overburdened. Even in the context of the central government's ease of doing business mantra, he said, every and any step in that (decriminalisation of minor offences) direction is always welcome. Echoing similar views, another senior advocate Vikas Pahwa said, There are various minor offences which are clogging the system and the government can think and try to decriminalise them. We have to see the larger picture. Because of these offences, major of-

fences are the ones which get delayed, where trials are pending for a long time because the courts don't have the time to deal with them.

Advocate Ruby Singh Ahuja, Senior Partner, Karanjawala & Co stated that such a move will help promote the government's endeavour of making the country a business-friendly destination.

Decriminalization of minor offences is a step to ease the backlog in courts and to take off the burden of overloaded prison infrastructure. Legislation must be brought in to deal with minor acts and omissions differently as compared to serious offences, especially for the corporate world, she said.

## Ganjam tops country in MGNREGA jobs

**Berhampur, Apr 07 (PTI)**

Odisha's Ganjam district has topped the country in providing 100 days work to rural households under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee ACT (MGNREGA) during 2021-22, a senior official said.

As many as 1,29,290 households in the district were provided 100 days employment in the 2021-22 fiscal, followed by Barmer (1,19,938) and Nagaur (1,12,903) in Rajasthan.

Over 4,00,000 migrant workers had returned to Ganjam when a national lockdown was imposed in 2020 to check the spread of coronavirus. Several workers stayed back when the workers returned to their workplaces, leading

to an increase in demand for MGNREGS jobs, the official said. The district in south Odisha has also generated 2,99,00,497 person-days of work under the rural employment scheme during the period, ranking fourth in the country.

Ganjam collector Vijay Amruta Kulange thanked the team of the district rural development agency (DRDA) and block officials for achieving the first position in the country in providing 100 days of work under MGNREGA.

He also asked them to maintain the same spirit in 2022-23. The jobs created under the MGNREGA has helped rural people to sustain their livelihood at the time of the pandemic, said Shinde. Dattatraya Bhausaheb, project director, DRDA.

## ATTEMPT FOR GUINNESS RECORD



Children with special needs perform during an event for the Guinness World Book of Records at Karampura Government School in Amritsar, Thursday.

## Mask mandate may not be necessary for now: Experts

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

Setting at rest fears over Covid restrictions being relaxed, several experts say the two-year stringent mask mandate has led to fatigue and can be removed from public spaces for now just as many countries have done.

While the message around the benefits of masking should continue, it would be wise to lift the mandate and reintroduce it if there is another Covid wave for better compliance, experts said, pointing to the futility of ill-fitting masks and lack of community consensus on the matter.

The issue is of compliance fatigue, Ramanan Laxminarayan, director of Washington's Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy, told PTI while noting that many countries around the world have removed mask restrictions.

I would urge messaging around the usefulness of masking in closed spaces, but would not suggest that it needs to be enforced punitively, added Gautam Menon, professor, Departments of Physics and Biology, Ashoka University in Haryana.

The assurance comes as India reports a low number of cases on Thursday

1,033 new coronavirus infections were recorded and also one case of a new Covid strain in Mumbai.

On Wednesday the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) reported India's first case of the Omicron recombinant strain XE. However, IN-SACOG, which monitors genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2 in India, has decided to take up another round of genomic sequencing at a national lab for confirmation.

Recombinant means the genome of XE is a combination of the genomes of the BA.1 and the BA.2 sub-variants of Omicron.

With India seeing the

lowest number of COVID-19 cases in two years, several states, including Delhi, Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana, have done away with the mandatory use of masks.

Epidemiologist Laxminarayan said it may be necessary for the public to start using masks again in the future if there is another variant and wave. But keeping these requirements in place indefinitely causes the public to not take them seriously. It is therefore better to remove them and then reintroduce them when necessary, Laxminarayan explained.

Scientist and modeller Menon agreed.

**CAG REPORT**

## 55-kmph benchmark to classify trains as 'superfast' quite 'low'

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The 55-kmph benchmark is quite "low" for classifying trains as "superfast", the CAG has said while highlighting that many such trains run below the minimum speed.

In May 2007, the Indian Railway decided that if the average speed of a train, in both up and down directions, is a minimum of 55 kmph on broad gauge and 45 kmph on metre gauge, it would be treated as a 'superfast'.

In November last year, the Railways had stated the extant policy for categorisation of services into 'super-

fast' stipulates that such trains should have an average end-to-end speed of above 55 kmph.

"The reply is silent on the fact that 123 trains categorised as superfast were actually scheduled for running at an average speed less than 55 kmph fixed under the extant policy," the Comptroller and Auditor General of India stated.

It noted that the "benchmark of 55 kmph for classifying a train as superfast is itself low, given the MPS of rolling stock and sectional speed". The criteria for classifying trains as 'superfast' has not been changed since 2007, the CAG stated.

## ED questions Omar Abdullah in J&K Bank case

**NC terms it 'vicious vilification'**

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The ED questioned NC leader Omar Abdullah on Thursday in connection with the purchase of a building by J&K Bank some 12 years ago when he was Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, a move the party termed a "political exercise" ahead of the Assembly elections in the union territory.

After spending more than five hours at the ED office here in response to summons sent last week, Abdullah told reporters that he had not been accused of anything



and that he had "answered them as much as I could". He would further help them "if they need me", he added.

According to officials, the case pertains to the purchase of a building by the J&K Bank, in which the government has 68 per cent equity, at Bandra Kurla in 2010. A property measuring around 65,000 square feet was acquired at a cost of Rs 172 crores. Sources said the board of directors of

the bank had set up a two-member committee headed by its chairman Haseeb Drabu which recommended the purchase of the property, in which another leading bank was also interested. The purchase was approved by the bank board, and the chief minister had no say in the matter, the sources added.

While Abdullah refused to divulge details about his questioning by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the National Conference (NC) slammed the move as a "vicious vilification" and "fishing expedition" ahead of the Assembly elections expected to be held later this year in Jammu and Kashmir:

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# Green manure enhances inherent fertility; farmer cultivates second crop without fertilizer

## Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** Under the Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana, farmers are being encouraged for crop diversity. In this sequel, the farmers of village Matra have cultivated aromatic rice in their fields.

The innovative initiatives are bearing exciting results. The joy and excitement is clearly visible on the face of farmers as they get better prices for the crop. The most significant outcome is that the inherent fertility of the soil has been enhanced.

The farmers of village Matra did two types of experiments on their fields. The first experiment was organic farming in which they used green manure. Just before the rain, they spread Sunn Seeds (Sunn

Hemp) in the fields. It grew rapidly within a month. Soon after the first rains, the farmers ploughed and levelled the land. In this manner, they prepared the best organic fertilizer. The farmers then cultivated aromatic rice on this land.

It needs to be mentioned here that the excessive use of chemical fertilizers results in deterioration of immunity of the crops. Due to this reason, the farmers had to use pesticides for protecting the crops. The green manure eliminated this problem. The enhanced inherent fertility of the soil not only ensured increased crop yield but also



suppressed the weeds.

The local farmers stated that the normal paddy production range is between 15 to 18 quintals. Under typical conditions, up to 18 quintals are produced.

Farmer Narayan Prasad

Sahu informed that the production of aromatic paddy proved to be a profitable deal. He took two crops successively without using fertilizers due to the increased soil fertility. The produce was sold at the



rate of Rs 2500 per quintal. Also, he found local customers who were ready to purchase the rice at Rs 50 per kg. Sahu has also kept aromatic paddy for his family consumption. Sahu stated that the experience

of using organic manure is wonderful. There is a great demand for organic products in the market.

Local Rural Agriculture Extension Officer Dipankar Mandal said that the department pro-

vided sunn seeds to the farmer. He also took vermi compost from the society. Two quintals of extra aromatic paddy were cultivated as compared to production by chemical fertilizers. He informed that the farmers are very excited by this experiment and want to practice the same in future also.

Senior Agriculture Extension Officer NP Ahirwal informed that with the government's encouragement, the farmers are adopting innovations and are getting the benefits. This will encourage crop diversity and organic farming as well.

The soil health is a very important factor for a good crop. If the organic component in the soil is 3 percent to 6 percent, the crop yield will be good. After the

rapid use of chemical fertilizers, the organic component in the soil has decreased significantly. Increased use of chemical fertilizers can completely neutralize the fertile potential of the soil. According to research, the biological properties in an orange have reduced by 90% in the last one century.

It happened due to the reduced soil fertility. In Chhattisgarh, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's decision to encourage organic farming will not only reinstate the soil health, but will also maintain food security for the coming generations. This initiative has become even more relevant in view of the emerging chemical fertilizer crisis across the country.

## Visually impaired Lalit to work as customer care executive

### Collector provides laptop to the talented Divyang

#### Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** District Administration has provided a laptop to a visually impaired youth. This device will help this talented youth to work as a customer care executive. A few days ago, Lalit Sharma, a visually impaired youth from Khursipar, visited the Collector Jandarshan and apprised Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure about his future plans.

He informed that he has received training for 'customer care executive' and now there are possibilities of online work. He was willing to become em-



ployed and needed a laptop to do this work. The Collector inquired about the nature of his work and his educational background. Considering his application in a sensitive manner, he directed the Industries Department to help the youth through CSR funds of the industries. Later, Vossloh Beekay Casting Limited came forward and offered

to provide a laptop for the youth. Lalit said that a laptop is important for his job as it has a large storage space. He will work with the help of the interactive voice system of the laptop. On Thursday, the Collector presented a laptop and wished him a bright future. Additional Collector Nupur Rashi Panna and GM (DIC) Simon Ekka were also present.

## Public Health Department celebrates 'World Health Day'

### Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** 'World Health Day' was celebrated by BSP's Public Health Department on Thursday at a function organised in Mahatma Gandhi Kala Mandir, K K Singh, ED (P & A) was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Dr Ravindranath, CMO (M & HS) was the Special Guest. K C Tripathi, GM (TSD) presided over the function. Dr R L Kamble was also present at the function.

K K Singh, ED (P & A) in his address emphasised on the importance of 'Safai Mitra' workers in segregating dry and wet waste. He urged the audience to become part of the Swachhata Abhiyan launched by the Government of India and work towards making India among the top-ranked clean nations in



the world. The programme began with lamp lighting and a welcome song. At the outset, Dr G K Dubey, GM (TSD) in his welcome address stated that the theme is 'Our Planet Our Health' this year. Sunil Chaurasia, AGM (Public Health) presented the Annual report highlight-

ing the activities of the Public Health Department.

Cleaning jobs were carried out in the Township on a continuous basis during the trying COVID times. Sanitisation was carried out; Fogging for Dengue and Larvae control was done on a large scale. He appealed to all



residents of the Township to keep dry and wet waste separately.

A play on cleanliness and amiable environment directed by Kaushal Upadhyay was performed during the programme.

Dr Ravindranath and Dr Kamble also addressed the gathering. Employees

of the Public Health Department and members of the Skit group were felicitated by Chief Guest K K Singh.

Radhika Srinivasan, GM (TSD) proposed the vote of thanks. Over 300 'Safai mitra' and employees of the Town Services department took part in the programme.

## Contract labour killed in road mishap



### Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** A contract labour of Bhilai Steel Plant was killed in a road mishap which occurred inside the plant premises on Thursday evening. Speeding earth

moving equipment crushed the cyclist labour to death.

The incident occurred around 16:00 hrs on the road between Gas Holder Square to Oxygen Plant 2. Police have lodged an FIR and the body has been sent to the mortuary after preparing an inquest.

The deceased was Leeladhar Swarnakar (53) a resident of Prem Nagar, Camp-2, Chhawani. He worked as a painter for the contractor GP Electricals. He was travelling on a bicycle when a speeding Fowler Crane crushed him to death. He is survived by a son, daughter and family.

## 162 Gauthans inspected on first day of 'Gauthan Pahuch' programme

### Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** On the first day of the 'Gauthan Pahuch', the nodal officers inspected 162 Gauthans of the district. On the second / concluding day, they are scheduled to inspect 150 gauthans. Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure also visited Gauthan to inspect the programme.

He inspected the urban Gauthan located in Durg and the Gauthan located in village Konari. He oversaw the quality of vermicompost at Konari. District Panchayat CEO Ashwini Dewangan and Durg Municipal Commissioner Hareh Mandavi accompanied him during the inspection. Collector interacted



with the women of SHGs at the Gauthans. The women informed the Collector that they are regularly producing cow dung vermicompost. They are maintaining continuity of the vermin-compost production process so that the purchase of cow dung is not hindered.

The Collector took information from the SHGs

about other livelihood activities. The women informed him that they are also engaged in poultry farming. They are getting a production of 50 eggs per day which are sold in Thanaud's hatchery.

They raise Sonali variety chickens. They have received proper training and are able to conduct the activities successfully.



Collector appreciated the women and suggested them to expand the livelihood-oriented activities for increasing their income.

He asked them to work to make their group financially strong. For this purpose, they have to expand the business in view of the potential of the local market. Collector also saw the oil extraction unit. The

women stated that oil produced here is consumed in the village itself.

Everyday people visit here to get oil extracted from oil seeds. The women added that there is enough work for the oil extraction machine. Considering the increased work, the Collector assured to provide another unit of Oil Extraction machine.

He further also inquired about the activities of paddy straw donation etc. During the visit of Urban Gauthan in Durg, Collector oversaw the quality of vermicompost. Along with this, activities like poultry farming are also being conducted under Godhan Nyay Yojana. He also inquired about the implementation of Godhan Nyay Yojana and checked the accounts register.

He interacted with the women of Kalyani Self Help Group and said that the government is developing Gauthans as livelihood oriented centres. He urged the women to expand their livelihood activities so that they can become financially strong and Gauthan becomes a self-supporting institute.

## Scales of pay fixed for BSP employees after wage revision

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** The NJCS Sub Committee has finalised the scales of pay for the SAIL employees after the revision of wages. After stretched discussion, the unions agreed for the highest pay scale of 28500 - 107900 for the S-11 grade. The starting grade S-1 will get a scale of Rs 25070 - 35070.

In the first half of the meeting of NJCS Sub Committee of scale and allied issues, the unions raised the demand to withdraw all the vindictive suspension and transfer orders immediately.

They demanded to finalise the issue of Designation change in NJCS without any delay. They also demanded full arrears and gratuity without any ceiling. The

unions reiterated the demand to renegotiate in NJCS with special additional increment and HRA should be paid as per govt guideline on revised basic pay.

In spite of highest cash collection and net profit, management remained reluctant to share the profit. While discussing the issue of scale, management initially offered Rs 85,574 as the end point of S-11. The union leaders argued that this amount which will still lead to stagnation for majority of the workers. All the unions stuck to the demand of Rs 1,15,000 as the end point.

During discussion of scale, the unions demanded to ensure 3 percent increment on revised actual basic pay retrospectively



for all workers. Later the management placed an offer of Rs 90,785 as their last proposal. But all the trade unions unitedly put the logic of stagnation and rejected the proposal. Under the pressure of unions, the management increased the proposal to Rs 96,314. This offer was also far short of the demands of the workers' side. The union leaders stated that this amount

cannot end the huge perpetual loss due to various types of stagnation. This offer was also rejected by all the trade unions. Thereafter the management went upto Rs 1,00,000.

The unions refused to sign the MoU and continued to bargain firmly. The unions continued to bargain and finally management offered Rs 1,07,900. The unions unanimously accepted this offer and signed the MoU. However, other issues like full arrears from 1-1-2017, additional special increment, ceiling less gratuity and other vital wage-agreement related issues are still pending. The unions opined that wages of contract workers must be settled immediately.

## Children play 'Snakes and Ladders' to overcome vaccine fear

### Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** On the occasion of World Health Day, a unique vaccination camp was organized here at Vishwadeep Senior Secondary School in Durg. With the help of the snakes and ladders game, efforts were made to eliminate the vaccine fear of the children. This camp was organized with support of JCI and Samarthan Centre for Development for the children of 12 to 14 years age group. 300 children were vaccinated in this camp. All the teachers as well as the parents participated in the programme. Team of Urban Health Mission and Samarthan gave information to parents about registration and vaccines.

A selfie zone was created in the school where the children



took selfies with their parents. Apart from this, the children were made aware about Covid 19 through games and activities. MLA Arun Vora, Mayor Dheeraj Bakliwal, BMO Urban RK Khandelwal and DIO BS Banjare were present as special guests. Manisha Khilendra Negi, Roshiva Jain and Urmila played vital role in organising the programme. Another health awareness program at

Panchayat level was organized by Rajiv Yuva Mitra Club in Village Teligundra. The members of Rajiv Yuva Mitra Club made the villagers aware of the prevention of heat stroke. District Panchayat Vice President Ashok Sahu said that due to climate change, human health is getting adversely affected. The possibilities of various diseases are increasing. At present, keeping in view the

possibility of heatstroke, the Health Department, Panchayat Department, Revenue and Disaster and Relief Department along with the members of Rajiv Yuva Mitra Club are doing commendable work for health awareness. Health and Wellness Center Ranitarai RMA Sushma Mishra apprised the villagers in detail about the symptoms, prevention, first aid at home, and treatment in health centres. BMO Dr Ashish Sharma informed that under the guidance of Collector Durg Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure, District Panchayat CEO Ashwani Dewangan, SDM Vipul Gupta, CEO Janpad Panchayat Manish Sahu, awareness programmes are being run in the community for prevention of heat stroke.



## Governor meets PM, discusses 5th schedule, PESA law and other issues

● Demands special package for Bastar and Sarguja divisions

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Governor Ms Anusuiya Uikey called on the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in New Delhi today. Informing about the present situation of the state the Governor discussed with Prime Minister various problems of tribes of Chhattisgarh and other issues in the state. She requested for the implementation of PESA law in the urban areas falling under the 5th Schedule saying that with the implementation of PESA law tribes will get their constitutional rights.

Apart from this, she discussed about making rules regarding PESA law for rural areas. During the discussion, the Governor apprised the Prime Minister about the problems of the tribes. Apprising the Prime Minister about the quantitative errors in the caste names of tribes Ms Uikey said that it was making it difficult for eligible persons to obtain caste certificates.

Governor Ms Uikey said that during her visit to dif-



ferent districts of the state, she interacted with the tribes there and got to know their problems. She emphasized many decisions regarding the development of the tribals of the state. She requested that the universities located in tribal dominated districts should be upgraded as Central Tribal University for the benefit of tribal communities. During the discussion, Ms Uikey told that there was also a need to preserve the art culture of the tribes of these areas. For this, she requested that such tribes should be researched and documented so that their

culture can be recognized throughout the country.

Governor Ms Uikey has also requested Prime Minister Modi to give a special package for proper development of tribals living in Bastar and Sarguja divisions. According to her special package will help expand education and health related facilities in these areas and youth will get employment and tribal community will get better development.

Ms Uikey also discussed with the Prime Minister Modi about the Anganwadi workers, Urban Social Workers (USHA) and ASHA workers of the country and said that these workers are dili-

gently performing their work in the rural areas of the country including the state. They have been working continuously even during the COVID situation. While appreciating the work of these workers, Ms Uikey requested Modi to increase their honorarium. The Governor thanked Modi for including four districts of Purvanchal of Uttar Pradesh - Chandauli, Kushinagar, Sant Kabir Nagar, Sant Ravidas Nagar among the tribal districts. The Governor Ms Uikey honored the Prime Minister with a memento and shawl.

### Guv discusses Naxalism, other issues with Union HM

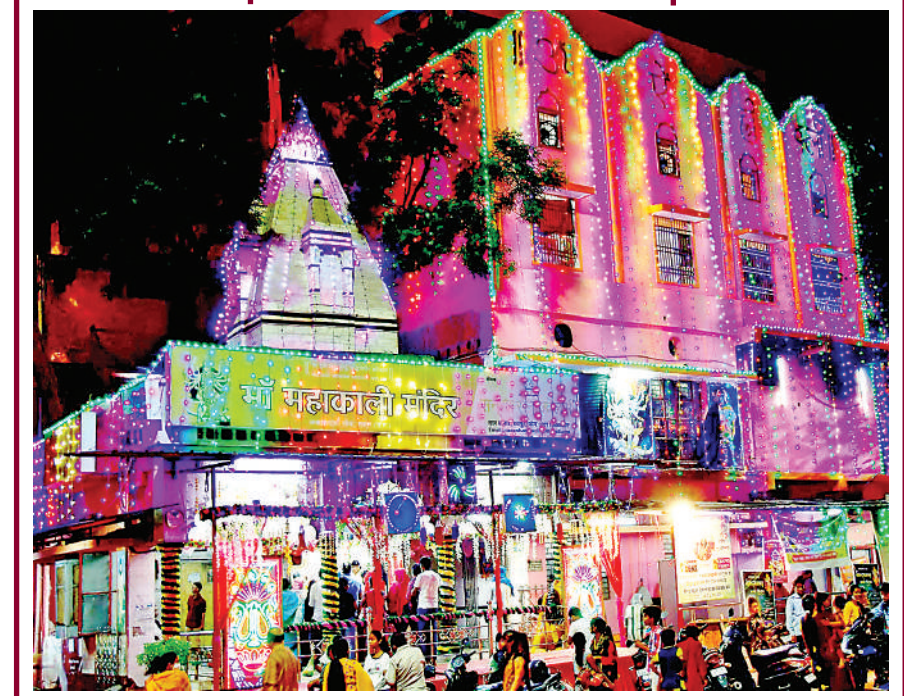
**Raipur:** Chhattisgarh Governor Ms Anusuiya Uikey met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi today. The Governor held discussion with Union Home Minister over Naxal activities and other problems in Naxal affected districts of Chhattisgarh. Ms Uikey said that she visited various districts of the state. She informed the Union Home Minister of the grievances of the people in tribal and rural areas of the state.



Ms Uikey discussed with Shah special package for Bastar and Sarguja divisions. According to her special package would ensure speedy development of the people in such areas.

The Governor said that special package was needed for expansion of health services, promotion of education among youth in such areas and providing employment opportunities to them. The Governor also honoured the Union Home Minister Shah with memento and shawl. The second part of a book titled 'Nai Soch-Nai Pahal', based on the works of Governor was also presented to Union Home Minister.

### COLOURFUL LIGHTING



The temple of Goddess has been decorated with colourful lights on occasion of 'Navratri'.

### Special Mental Health OPD to be organized

● In Raipur and Bilaspur Ayurvedic College Hospital every Friday

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 07:** The special mental health unit has started functioning in Government Ayurvedic Colleges in Raipur and Bilaspur every Friday from April 1, 2022. Special mental

health OPD will be organized at Government Ayurvedic College Hospital located in Raipur and Bilaspur on April 08, like last Friday. Dr. Vijay Sahu, Assistant Director, Directorate of AYUSH said that in the special OPD will be organized every Friday, people suffering from mental health issues would be provided free of cost guidance, suitable treatment and healthy

lifestyle through Ayurveda. Panchkarma services will also be provided to these patients as per the requirement. He said that the initiative has been started in Government Ayurvedic College Hospital, Raipur and Bilaspur from last Friday i.e. on April 01. Free-of-cost guidance and treatment was provided to people suffering from mental health issues in this special OPD.

### CM Baghel to attend the closing ceremony of Shivrinarayan

Eminent national and regional artists to perform in the ceremony  
Competition will be arranged for Manas Singing for Ramayana troupes

**Raipur, Apr 07:** On the occasion of Ram Navami, a state level singing competition of Ramayana Troupes has been organized from 8 to 10 April at Shivrinarayan, a famous pilgrimage site in Janjgir-Champa district. On this occasion, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will attend the closing ceremony of the competition and

will inaugurate various development works under Ram Van Gaman tourism circuit. During the competition, eminent artists of the country and the state will also perform Manas singing.

According to the information received from the Department of Culture, in this three-day event, the vocal nightingale of Chhattisgarh, Padmashree Mamta Chandrakar will perform on April 8. Mumbai's famous playback singer Anuradha Paudwal will perform on April 9. Jas Geet Samrat Dilip Shadangi, alumni of Music University Chhattisgarh will perform on April 10. A dance drama and hymn based on

the Ram-Shabri episode will be presented by Samrat Padmashree Anup Jalota.

In the state level Manas singing competition being organized in Shivrinarayan, about 350 artists from selected Manas circles of 25 districts will give their performances in the state level competition on 8-9 and 10 April. At the conclusion of the competition, on April 10, Chief Minister Mr. Baghel will give prizes to the Ramayana troupes that come first three places in the competition. The first prize will be given for Rs 5 lakh, the second prize will be given for Rs 3 lakh and the third prize will be Rs 2 lakh.

### Shivraj to campaign in Khairagarh today

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh will be on day-long visit to Chhattisgarh on Friday to campaign in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Komal Janghel in the Khairagarh by-elections scheduled to be held on April 12.

According to the information received, Shivraj Singh Chouhan would be arriving at Raipur Airport on Friday afternoon. He would reach Khairagarh in Helicopter from Airport. As per the scheduled declared, the MP Chief

Minister Chouhan would be addressing public meeting at Salhevara Khairagarh and at village Kopebhanta before returning back to Bhopal in the evening.

BJP has speeded up the campaign for the Khairagarh by-elections. After Prahlad Patel and Faggan Singh Kulaste, the Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is the third senior leader from neighbouring Madhya Pradesh to campaign for Khairagarh by-elections to woo the electoral, particularly, the voters from Other Backward Communities in the region.

### Commercial Tax (Registration) Department saw record revenue collection

Of Rs 1955.95 cr in the year 2021-22

23.06% increase as compared to last year

Positive environment created by the steps taken by the government

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Commercial Tax (Registration) Department saw a record revenue collection of Rs 1955 crore 95 lakhs in the year 2021-22. There has been an increase of 23.06 per cent in revenue collection as compared to the previous year. Similarly, there has been an increase of 12.43 per cent in the number of registered documents as compared to the pre-

vious year.

The Chhattisgarh government under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has decided to provide special relaxation in the registration rules. Under this, the department has given a rebate of 02 per cent in the registration fee on the documents related to the sale of residential houses up to Rs 75 lakh, which came into effect from August 2019. Similarly, the guideline rates of land were reduced by 30 per cent from July 2019. In this year, a total of 40 per cent reduction was done in urban bodies by giving an additional 10 per cent exemption. Meanwhile, the ban on the sale of small plots was also lifted. A positive environment was created by these steps taken by the state government. This has resulted in an increase in pur-

chase and sale of land than before, thereby increasing the revenue received by the government.

Inspector General of Registration and Superintendent Ms. Iffat Ara informed that revenue collection of Rs 1113.16 crore was recorded in the year 2018-19, Rs 1640.66 crore in the year 2019-20, and Rs 1589.42 crore in the year 2020-2021. Record revenue collection of Rs 1955.95 crore was witnessed in this year (2021-2022). Compared to the target fixed, 108 per cent revenue collection has been received. Similarly, over 2.01 lakh documents were registered in the year 2018-19, 2.20 lakh in the year 2019-20 and 2.66 lakh in the year 2020-21. As many as 2.99 lakh documents were registered in the financial year 2021-22.

### Newly-appointed Regional Director of RBI Raipur pays visit to CM

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Newly-appointed Regional Director of Reserve Bank of India, Raipur Mrs. Reeni Ajeet paid courtesy visit to Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel at his official residence here on Thursday. On the occasion, RBI Raipur DGM SM



Mishra, SGM SP Soni and Manager Naveen Tiwari were also present.

### Women's Chamber donates 11 beds for patients



At Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Hospital Raipur

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 07:** The Mahila Chamber of

and Dr. Netam for sharing the problem with the women's chamber in the hospital. Women's Chamber President Mrs. Madhu Arora thanked Narendra Harchandani for the cooperation and expressed gratitude to all the members of the Mahila Chamber team for giving their valuable time. On this occasion, Women Chamber Patron Mrs. Abha Mishra, President Mrs. Madhu Arora, General Secretary, Pinky Agarwal, Vice President-Neelam Diwakirti, Hemal Shah, Sakshi Bajaj, Secretary Soma Ghosh, Media In-charge Indira Jain and Ritu Salot were prominently present.

Mahila Chamber thanked Dr. Meera Baghel, Chief District Medical Officer, Raipur (CMHO)

### Fill the posts of principals, teachers in Swami Atmanand schools soon: Dr Alok Shukla

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Principal Secretary School Education Dr. Alok Shukla reviewed the schemes run by the School Education Department in Mantralaya on Thursday. He instructed the District Education Officers to fill up the posts of principals and teachers in Swami Atmanand excellent English and Hindi medium schools at the earliest. Dr. Shukla said that proposals for posting in schools without teachers should be sent by April 11. In the meeting, the District Education Officers were directed that Swami Atmanand should have the principals and English medium teachers in Hindi medium schools, Hindi medium teachers for Hindi subject for the English medium schools and Hindi medium schools starting from the upcoming academic session. He instructed that the recruitment of the posts of principal and teachers should be done soon. He said that the posts of teachers should not remain vacant in these schools. The officers of the Education Department should ensure the fulfillment of these posts with mutual coordination. The posts of Hindi medium teachers in English medium schools are the same as those proposed by the District Education Officers. If you want any other position, you can offer. Principal Secretary School Education directed the officers not to



engage teachers. Wherever they get their salary, they will work there. He said that these schools are being run by a committee headed by the Collector. He asked to send proposals for filling up the posts of principals in Swami Atmanand Hindi medium schools by April 11 and proposals of teachers by April 18. These posts should be filled by the last week of this month so that the principals can be trained in the coming month. He directed the State Council of Educational Research and Training to prepare for the training of the principals and teachers of these schools. Information related to these schools should be kept updated in the portal. Principal Secretary School Education Dr. Shukla said that in the same way, the proposals for posting in teacher less schools should be sent by April 11. He asked the District Education Officers to take necessary action on the complaint of increase of more than 8 per cent fee by

private schools against the rules. The officials of the Education Department inspect the schools. Monitoring of schemes should be done on the basis of department's portal. He said that under the Right to Education, private schools should be verified and paid according to their eligibility. The District Education Officer should ensure that the child who is being paid is eligible and is studying in the school. For this, take out the school wise list of children from the portal and do 100% physical verification within two weeks. If irregularities are found, recovery action should be taken against the concerned institution. Secretary School Education Dr. Kamalpreet Singh, Joint Secretary School Education Mr. Rajesh Singh Rana, Director Public Education Mr. Sunil Jain and all the Divisional Joint Directors and District Education Officers were present in the meeting.

### Players felicitated on World TT Day

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Chhattisgarh Table Tennis Association (CTTA) and Rajdhani Table Tennis Association (RTTA) jointly organized World Table Tennis Day function on Thursday evening to honour the senior players including those who represented Chhattisgarh at National Tournaments. Office-bearers also celebrated the Day by cutting Cake and releasing the Souvenir in the form of News Letter related with activities held in the year



2021-22. Providing the above information in a statement issued here, the CTTA Secretary Vinay Baiswade said that Raipur North MLA and Chhattisgarh Housing

Board Chairman Kuldeep Juneja was chief guest of the event whereas CTTA President Sharad Shukla presided over the function. Senior players Giriraj Bagdi, Pradeep Janwade,

Vimal Nair, Harish Pandey, Pradeep Dasgupta and Renuka Subba were felicitated for their outstanding contribution to the Table Tennis over the years. Similarly, Dr Malvika Chatterjee, Dr Viplov Chatterjee and Deepshri Solanki were felicitated with memento for their contribution in the Educational Sector apart from Table Tennis. National Table Tennis tournament players Sagar Ghatge, Rajiv Sahu, Shlok Soni, Abhishek Raj, Surabhi Modi, Shilpi Ghosh in senior category

and Ramji Kumar, Vishal Decate, Karan Malhotra, Pranay Chouhan, Arjun Malhotra, Andrew T Williams, Yashwant Decate, Chahak Kataria, Haritima Agrawal, Vihan Agrawal and Lavanya Pandat were honoured for their outstanding performance in Junior category. Mayor-in-Council member Akash Tiwari, CTTA Secretary Vinay Baiswade and Treasurer Harjit Hura were also present whereas Joint Vice President Shakil Sajid conducted the proceedings.



**COOL DIP**



Children are taking a dive into a pond to beat the scorching heat here on Thursday.

## Cong govt has not done anything for state: Patel

Central Chronicle News

**Rajnandgaon, Apr 07:** Union minister Prahlad Singh Patel on Wednesday hit out at the Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government in Chhattisgarh, alleging that it has not done anything in the three-and-a-half years of its rule on the basis of which it can seek votes in Khairagarh bypoll.



Khairagarh assembly seat in state's Rajnandgaon district, which fell vacant in November last year following the death of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (J) MLA Devvrat Singh, will witness a by-election on April 12. Patel, a BJP MP from neighbouring Madhya Pradesh, on Wednesday launched his

two-day campaign for the party's candidate, Komal Janghel, who is contesting the bypoll. The Congress has fielded its Khairagarh block unit chief Yashoda Verma, while Narendra Soni is the JCC (J) candidate. Talking to reporters on the sidelines of his campaign in Amlidihkala village, the food process-

ing industries minister said, the bypoll will determine the scale of the failures of the Congress government in the state. Exuding confidence over the victory of BJP's nominee, he said, "We will do a better job like a 'chowkidar' (watchman). We will expose the hypocrisy of Congress. In the last three-and-a-half years, Congress has done nothing on the basis of which it can seek votes."

Slamming the Congress for its bypoll promise of declaring Khairagarh as district if it wins, Patel said, "Who had stopped Baghel earlier from making it a district...There is no objection in making Khairagarh a district. Congress has made this promise out of fear."

Over a query on Congress leaders' claims that farmers who are getting Rs 2,500 per quintal on selling their paddy could get Rs 2,800 per quintal in the coming days, he said, "I feel that Congress intends to turn the state bankrupt. If they wanted to spend money, then we have allocated funds under the Jal Jeevan Mission."

Patel attended the party's programme in Amlidihkala and then campaigned in Pipariya area before addressing a rally in Udaipur in Chhuikhadan area.

Besides, Union Minister of State for Steel and Rural Development Fagga Singh Kulaste also campaigned in Khairagarh for the party candidate on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, former chief minister and BJP national vice president Raman Singh released a 26-point 'chargesheet' against the ruling Congress, accusing it of failing on all fronts.

Singh also released a separate document which mentions 36 development works done by the previous BJP government in Khairagarh area.

Reacting to Patel's remarks on paddy procurement, state Congress spokesperson Dhananjay Singh Thakur said his statement shows the anti-farmers face of the BJP.

"Why can't BJP tolerate if farmers get good returns for their produce," Thakur said and demanded an apology from BJP for Patel's statement.

## Delegation from Commonland Foundation pays courtesy call on CM

It is working on a pilot project in two Baiga-populated gram panchayats



**Dholbajja and Shambhupipar** of Bodla development block of Kabeerdham district of Chhattisgarh as pilot project. Under this project, the organization is working with the tribal people for their traditional knowledge, convergence of various schemes and using modern technology for environment conservation and development of means of livelihood of the tribal community.

Chief Minister Baghel had a detailed discussion with Mr. William about the schemes related to environment conservation, mitigating the ill-effects of

climate change and regarding the livelihood of tribal community in the state. During the discussion, Chief Minister Baghel informed him about Narva, Garva, Ghurua, Bari program, Godhan Nyay Yojana and Chief Minister's Tree Plantation Promotion Scheme being run under Suraji Gaon Yojana in the state. Chief Minister said that these schemes have created employment for local people and have also proven to be beneficial for the environment.

In order to provide profitable means of livelihood to the tribal community,

Chief Minister suggested promoting commercial production of climate-friendly fruits and starting their processing in the Gram Panchayats selected by Commonland Foundation. He said that different gardens should be developed for different fruits suited to the local climate and simultaneously arrangements should be made for processing of these fruits. Besides, nursery of fruit plants should also be developed nearby, as the fruits grown here will not only improve the nutritional status of the tribals, but will also provide a good source of income from the sale of fruits and processed fruit products. On this occasion, Lawrence, Director of Commonland Foundation, Harma, Sushil of Delhi, Aditya, Manjeet Kaur Bal of Foundation for Ecological Security and Ms Shubhangi from Samarth Sanstha were present.

## Urban Adm deptt commences implementation of CM's announcement

**Sanction of Rs 5 cr to municipalities and Rs 3 cr to Nagar panchayats under the head of infrastructure development recommended**

**Approval given for FY 2021-22**

**Municipalities and nagar panchayats directed to send proposals via special carriers within 15 days**

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Urban Administration and Development Department has commenced the im-

mediate implementation of Chief Minister's announcement for sanction of Rs.5 crore and Rs.3 crore respectively to all the municipalities and nagar panchayats. Recommending the aforementioned financial sanction, Urban Administration and Development Department have directed the municipalities and nagar panchayats to send proposals for the works to be done under this item within 15 days via a special carrier. It is noteworthy that this announcement was made by Chief Minister Mr. Baghel on March 31. In the same sequence, at the meeting of the Finance Committee held on April 4, Urban Administration Department recommended the allotment of Rs 5

crores for municipal councils and Rs 3 crore for nagar panchayats under the infrastructure development head in financial year 2021-22. Urban Administration and Development Department has directed all the municipalities and nagar panchayats except the urban bodies of Rajnandgaon district to send their proposals via special carrier. In the letter sent by the Urban Administration Department to the Chief Executive Officers in this regard, instruction has been given to include the works to be done as per the announcement of the Chief Minister, Departmental Minister in the proposal for the works of infrastructure development, besides the propos-

al for road repair, maintenance, new road construction, drainage system, construction of bridges and culverts, construction of roads, drains under the head of infrastructure in deprived areas, proposals for distribution of drinking water through pipelines in deprived areas, proposals for 30 percent amount of works in scheduled caste, scheduled tribe areas and street lights proposals. Chief executive officers have been directed to send technical approval regarding proposals, resolution of PIC, council and photographs of the proposed sites for work within 15 days to the Directorate of Urban Administration and Development Department through special carrier.

## Ch'garh Govt making consistent efforts to put state on world tourism map

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Chhattisgarh has its own identity in the world as the 'maternal home of Lord Ram'. During his exile period, Lord Shri Ram spent a significant amount of time here. On the initiative of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, Chhattisgarh Government is developing important locations on Ram Van Gaman Path as major tourist spots in an effort to ensure that Chhattisgarh will emerge as a global tourist destination.

about places of pilgrimage and tourism. The 9 sites being developed in the first phase include Sitamarhi Harchoka (Korea), Ramgarh (Surguja), Shivrinarayan (Janjgir-Champa), Turturiya (Balodabazar), Chandkuri (Raipur), Rajim (Gariyaband), Sihawa Saptarishi Ashram (Dhamtari), Jagdalpur (Bastar) and Ramaram (Sukma). The work of development of tourism in these areas is going on as per the instructions of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel at a cost of about Rs 133 crore 55 lakh. This will not only promote rural tourism in state but also boost global opportunities in the tourism sector. Along with increasing employment opportunities in tourism, the initiative will strengthen rural economy of state.

On the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami Chief Minister will inaugurate the project works of Shri Ram Van Gaman Tourism Circuit at Shivrinarayan Dham on April 10. On this

occasion, along with the eminent artists of the country, cultural presentations will be showcased by the eminent artists of Chhattisgarh in a three-day grand event to be held at Shivrinarayan. Nearly 350 artists of 'Manas Mandalis' of 25 selected districts will give their presentations in the state level competition to be held from April 8 to April 10 in Shivrinarayan. Ram Vanagaman tourism circuit Shivrinarayan will be commenced on April 8 by Mahant Dr. Ramsunder Das, Chairman Chhattisgarh State Cow Service Commission. On April 9, Speaker of the Assembly Dr. Charandas Mahant will be present in Shivrinarayan Mahotsav as the chief guest. Ram Vanagaman tourism circuit Shivrinarayan will conclude on April 10 in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel as chief guest. Tourism Minister Mr. Tamradhwaj Sahu and other distinguished dignitaries will also be present along with the Chief Minister.



## Bicycle distribution at Shri Gujarati School

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 07:** As part of 'Saraswati Cycle Yojana', 44 girls of Class IX studying in Shri Gujarati Hindi Medium Higher Secondary School received bicycles. These bicycles were given by SGSS secretary duo Tulsi Das Patel and Ashok Bhai Patel. In his speech secretary Tulsi Das Patel while making aware of the beneficiaries about the government schemes asked the girls to study

with full concentration and reach school every day on time.

On this occasion Shri Gujarati Higher Secondary School Principal Anis Memon, Shri Gujarati English Medium Principal Dr Shailesh Sharma, Primary School HM Prakash Patel, SGSS Registrar Ashok Jachak, Administrator V K Mishra, other teachers and beneficiary girls, informs release issued by Anis Memon Principal.

## Officials listen to problems at public redressal camp



**Konta, Apr 07:** The administration is now reaching the doorsteps of the villagers and listening to their problems and demands. Through the 'Jansamsya' camp, the villagers are giving their demands and problems to the departmental officers. In these camps, along with the departmental officers themselves, the concerned SDM, Tehisaldar and Janpad Panchayat CEO are getting acquainted with the people and getting aware of their problems. Taking quick action on many of these cases, they are being resolved on

the camp day itself. In this sequence, Jansamsya camps were organized in all the three blocks of Sukma district in which hundreds of villagers submitted applications. Caste certificate distribution and ayushman registration in Injaram camp. Apart from receiving the applications, the officials distributed caste certificates to 14 school students at the Jansamsya Shivir organized at village Injaram in Konta block. The children received their caste certificates from the hands of the people's representatives of

the area. Along with this, Ayushman card registration of 15 villagers was also done. District CEO Konta Kailash Kashyap told that the villagers of Dhondhara, Banda, Injaram, Mulakisoli and Kotacheru Gram Panchayats participated in the Injaram camp. A total of 150 applications were received in the camp, out of which 84 were resolved promptly. There is an appeal to all the common people, villagers, citizens to attend the camp in maximum numbers and keep their problems.

## HC gives verdict in favour of woman for child's custody

Quashes family court's order

Central Chronicle News

**Bilaspur, Apr 07:** Quashing a family court's order that granted custody of a child to the father, the Chhattisgarh High Court has observed that if a woman "does not squeeze into the mould" as per the desire of her husband, it does not become a decisive factor for her to lose the custody of her child. A division bench of Justices Goutam Bhaduri

and Sanjay S Agarwal, while delivering the judgement in a case related to the custody of a 14-year-old boy, also said the character certificate by the society's few members with "ostrich mindset" should not be allowed to decide the character of a woman.

The judgement, which was passed on March 28, was uploaded on the high court's website on Monday, according to which the custody of the child was granted to his mother; the woman's lawyer Sunil Sahu said on Wednesday. The couple had got mar-

ried in 2007 and their son was born in December the same year. They got divorced with mutual consent in 2013, following which the custody of the child was given to his mother; a resident of Mahasamund district, he said.

"In 2014, the woman's husband, who hails from Raipur district, filed an application in Mahasamund district family court seeking the custody of the child on the ground that the woman is in company of different male and used to travel along with other

male member and her attire was not befitting to which would reflect that she had lost her chastity. The man also said, if the child is kept in her custody, there would be an ill effect on his mind," Sahu said.

The family court in 2016 had handed over the custody of the child to his father, he said. The woman then challenged the family court's order citing it was passed only on the basis of presumption, which requires interference. Setting aside the family

court's order, the high court said, "...The evidence on behalf of father, it appears that the witnesses have stated according to their own opinion and thought. If the lady is required to do a job that too in the field for her livelihood, naturally she would be required to move from one place to other and only because of the fact that she is required to rub her shoulder with public at large or male i.e. to accompany them in the car, there cannot be an inference that she has lost her chastity."

"Only bald oral statement is made that she is addicted to consume liquor and smoke, etc. It is important to set a red line when the attack is made to assassinate the character of the lady. The statement of witnesses of plaintiff would show that they are largely influenced by attire of women as she wears jeans and T-shirt along with the fact that she is marching along with male members of society," it said. We are afraid that if such ill-conceived exercise is given a spotlight,

then to protect the right and freedom of women would be a long arduous battle. If the wife does not squeeze into the mould as per desire of husband, it would not be a decisive factor to lose custody of the child by her; the high court observed. "By attacking the character of the wife to impress upon that it would have an adverse impact on the mind of the child, the degree of nature of evidence should have been much more and severe to hold that continuous a kind of behaviour of wife

would be detrimental to the interest of child. The character certificate by few of the society members, who might have ostrich mind set, should not be allowed to decide the character of a woman and to draw an inference while deciding the custody of the child that because of the behaviour of mother it would have an adverse impact on the mind of the child," it said. The high court also granted visitation and contact rights to the father and issued directions in this regard.



## MGNREGA officials and employees on long strike

Nagari Sihawa, Apr 07:

With the blessings of Maa Danteshwari on the auspicious occasion of Navratri, thousands of MGNREGA employees of the state started indefinite strike in Ravan Bhatia ground here.

As per information, the regularization promised in the public manifesto of the Congress government, which has not been fulfilled till date, is being vehemently opposed by all MGNREGA workers. At the end of 2021-22, 54 lakh 92 thousand 693 workers of 28 lakh 48 thousand 792 families in the state were provided employment by MGNREGA scheme on demand basis.

Meanwhile due to the strike of Chhattisgarh



MNREGA Employees Federation which started from April 4, employment crisis has arisen in front of these 54 lakh 92 thousand 693 workers. The state government has 9 thousand 364 gauthans in the state under Narwa, Garuwa,

Ghuruwa, Bari, Yojana, where the important responsibility of conducting the activities is on the shoulders of the village employment assistants, but the gauthans are on verge of collapse due to the strike.

MGNREGA workers are bound to carry out indefinite agitation for their demands for implementation of the 1966 Act by fixing the pay scale of employment assistants including their regularization. The MGNREGA union has alleged that even after more than 3 years have elapsed since the update, no regularization action is being taken by the government. The indefinite agitating MGNREGA officials and employees said that the government should seriously consider their demands and give the gift of regularization as soon as possible, or they will be compelled to carry out violent agitation, for which the entire responsibility will be with the government.

## People from SKKS are talented, capable: Ashish

Dedicates social building of SKKS of Samaj

Takathpur, Apr 07:

'There are many a talented and capable persons from 'Sanadhya Kurmi Samaj', who have paid special attention towards social unity, apart from health and education as well. The Samaj always surging ahead with public awareness has many sitting in important government posts.' The above are the words of PCC secy. Ashish Singh Thakur while speaking as chief guest at the dedication of Mangal Bhavan of 'Sanadhya Kurmi Kshatriya Samaj' (SKKS). AS Thakur said that this building will definitely mark its position in Takathpur. He



also assured the people present about fulfilling of expectations of people related to construction of boundary wall, entrance gate and other construction work.

This programme was chaired by SKKS Chotelal Kaushik. Special guest on the occasion was Treasurer SKKS Chandraprakash

Sanadya, Nagar Panchayat Chairperson Pushpamunna Sriwas, V-P Vandanabala Singh and other corporators. In the beginning of the programme, 'Vastupuja' and 'Grih Pravesh' puja was held and after which the Secretary PCC Ashish Singh Thakur handed over the building to the President. General

Secy Manharan Sharma gave the welcome speech and apprised about the construction work on 'Samajik Paitrik' land.

President SKKS Chotelal Kaushik in his address said that SKKS is known for its specialties not only in Chhattisgarh, but in other states as well. The Samaj is well-ahead in the field of politics, culture, education, economically and socially strong and united. There is long list of political leaders, be it that of state or national level. There is residence of people from SKKS in around 100 villages in the state. Every citizen of the Society is honoured to be a part of it and many persons in the field of engineering, doctors, teacher, Police administration are working, as aside the administrative works as well.

## SP supervises road construction work



Konta, Apr 07:

People used to think many times to go to Naxal affected area like Jagargunda under Konta block of Sukma district. But today a person is standing in such a place and is getting construction work done for the

service of the public. IPS Sunil Sharma of Sukma district is commendable.

Seeing this road construction work of Sukma district's SP Sunil Sharma, the public expressed their gratitude and thanked them wholeheartedly.

## 25 women from SGH imparted training in fish farming

By Fisheries Polytechnic, Rajpur Dhamdha

Dhamdha, Apr 07:

A training in fish farming in ponds concluded under the guidance of VC Fisheries Polytechnic, Rajpur (Dhamdha) Dr NP Dakshinkar here on April 4. This Polytechnic is functioning under the Dau Shri Vasudev Chandrakar K a m d h e n u Vishwavidyalaya, Durg. Training to 25 women from a Self-Help Group (SHG) of Gouthan Rajpur adopted by this Fisheries Polytechnic, Rajpur (Dhamdha) were imparted training at Gram Panchayat Rajpur bhavan in fish farming.

Dr N Sarang, Principal and senior scientist Fisheries Polytechnic, Rajpur (Dhamdha) informed that in ponds there



is generally fish farming of species 'Katala', 'Rohu' and 'Mrigul' done. In this 'Katala' species of fishes live on the surface of the pond and 'Rohu' in the middle of the pond and 'Mrigul' in the bottom of the pond and likewise they take feed from the food available in that surface. It is only upon the need that the fishes need to be given additional supplements viz. 'Sarson ki Bhusi', 'Chawal ki Bhusi', 'Chokar' (Gehu ki Bhusi), 'Mungfalli ki Khali' and

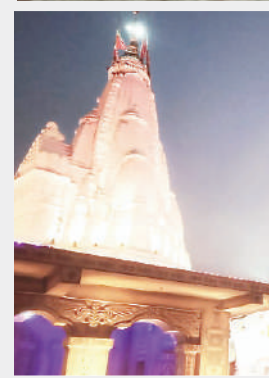
others. The Scientist Fisheries Polytechnic Rajpur Dhamdha Rohitash Yadav in the training informed that as to how fish farming is done in the ponds and what all precautions should be taken in the pond. Kashti Prerna, Adhoc teacher informed as to why women should come forward in this field of fish farming and should motivate others to do so. Tameshwar Adhoc teacher gave information about different types of products of fishes. On this occasion Vaibhav Chourasiya, regional expansion officer, Gutam Khute Nodal Officer Gouthan and Netam and other citizens of the village were present.

## CM to attend different programs in Shorinarayan

Sheorinarayan, Apr 07:



As part of Ram Wan Gaman Paripath, three day state level Ram Charit Manas singing competition will start from April 08 and in the concluding day on April 10, Chief Minister will take part in this concluding day function. Chief Minister will lay stone and dedicate many development works and take part in Ganga Aarti to be organized by Mahant Ram Sunder Das.



## Youth found hanging

Dhamtari, Apr 07:

Death of a young man, who went to pick up Mahua, was reported here in the region. According to the police, Ravi Kumar Markam (26), a resident of village Vapathra Barpani, father Santosh Markam had gone to collect Mahua on Sunday morning. After failing to return he was searched and his body was found hanging on a tree. Meanwhile the police was informed and after the Panchnama action, the Rudri police sent the dead body to the district for post-mortem. Incharge DrUtkarsh Nanda said that being a suspicious case of death, post-mortem will be done, for further investigation.

## Person arrested with banned cough syrup worth Rs 16000



Jagdalpur, Apr 07: Police has recovered huge quantity of banned cough syrup worth Rs 16000 from Gulam Mustafa Raja alias Karri (47), S/o Shekh Mahmud, R/o Hatkachora here on Wednesday. A case under section 21 of NDPS Act has been filed against him and he was produced in the court and from there he was sent to jail. It is notable here that it is right since two decades that Jagdalpur city is facing problems related to use of banned cough syrup and psychotropic drugs and with this many a youth are falling prey to it and have lost their life becoming addict. Jagdalpur Police was reg-

ularly getting information that this person is involved in some business of banned cough syrup and psychotropic drugs and had arrested his younger brother and both the brothers are involved in this illegal business for last many years and after Gulam Raja being sent to jail, it has come a big blow to other peddlers involved with it and to the addict as well. At the same time there are many peddlers who acting as agents have become underground, as they were involved in selling such banned cough syrups in lanes & by-lanes of city. At present also the illegal business of banned cough syrup and psychotropic

drugs in city is flourishing and even after nabbing many involved in this the Police has not being able to put a check in this illegal trade and activity and arrest of Gulam Raja stands testimony to it. It is notable here that this person had been arrested earlier also in the same charges and prior to him his brother Mukeem Raja too was arrested with 80 cough syrup and sent to jail. Both the brothers are involved in this illegal activity for last many years and their brother Gulam Mustafa Raza used to supply banned cough syrups to Jagdalpur and nearby areas. In Jagdalpur his peddlers are known to be selling these banned cough syrups. In Jagdalpur it is at Dharampura, Nayamunda, Mahadevghat, Pandaripani and at Nail factory in industrial area, the agents of the Peddlers can be seen selling the banned drugs and syrups openly. It was on arrest of two brothers, this entire illegal business of banned cough syrup and psychotropic drugs was running behind the Nail factory in Bodhghat.

## 'Tuhar Duar' camps calls on resolution of public apathy

Koriya, April 07:

Under the guidance of Collector Kuldeep Sharma, for resolving revenue matters and listening to the demands and problems related to public interest, the district administration is reaching out to the common people through the solution 'Tuhar Duar' camp at the panchayat level.

A Google sheet has been prepared for the smooth operation and online monitoring of drinking water, electricity system, where the CEO will register the district problem and the department will solve it. In the weekly time limit meeting, the Collector reviewed and reviewed the resolution by asking for the register prepared for the maintenance of the applications received in the camp from the panchayats. In the meeting itself, the collec-



tor spoke to Dharamjit Singh of Keshagwan Gram Panchayat through phone and inquired about the acceptance of the pension case application.

The Collector said that the beneficiary must be informed about the disposal of the applications or the necessary action and procedure so that there is no doubt about the disposal of the application. It is noteworthy that so far 753 applica-

tions for pension have been received in the camp, out of which 431 cases have been approved.

In the meeting, the Collector also inquired from the Public Health Engineering Department about the progress of hand pump improvement work for the provision of drinking water. EE PHE said that 268 hand pumps have been improved in the last one week. The Collector himself con-

firmed the completion of handpump improvement work in Gram Panchayat Chhindiya with the Secretary on the call.

Collector gave strict instructions to CEO, Janpad Panchayat and PHE department to complete all hand pump improvements within the deadline of April 15. He said that proper arrangement should also be made in the supply of drinking water from solar energy.

## Problems of public will be resolved through camps: Collector

Bilaspur, Apr 07:

District Collector Dr. Saransh Mittar took a meeting of district level officers here and directed to implement the government schemes seriously. In connection with the upcoming proposed visit of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel to the district, the Collector did a thorough review of the working of the departments.

The Collector said that a roster of Gram Panchayats would be prepared and camps would be set up where Gram Panchayat Secretary, Patwari, REO, Anganwadi workers and field level staff would solve the problems of the villagers on the spot. Collector Dr. Mittar said that the cases related to revenue should be resolved by running a campaign; and no laxity would be tolerated. He instructed the Public Health Engineering Department

to make suitable arrangements for drinking water during the summer season. Along with expediting the work of Jal Jeevan Mission, he also asked to take full care of the quality. The Collector directed to ensure all necessary preparations including maintenance of hand pumps, pipeline expansion.

Dr. Mittar while reviewing the implementation of Dhanwantri Yojna said that the district is at the forefront of the entire state in this scheme. He instructed to implement this scheme in the same way in future also.

The Municipal Commissioner informed that people have saved about Rs. 2 crore 77 lakh by buying medicines from Chief Executive Officer of District Panchayat Shri Haris S, ADM Smt. Jaysree Jain, Municipal Commissioner Shri Ajay Tripathi, all SDM and departmental officers were present in the meeting.

## Employees agitate for DA



Gaurella-Pendra-Marwahi, Apr 07: This is the first state government so far in the history of which the employees have to take the path of agitation to get dearness allowance. Earlier, during the tenure of any state

government, the employees did not have to agitate for dearness allowance. The above were said by the office bearers of all the employees' organizations present in the meeting of Dearness Allowance Sangharsh

Morcha (DASM) held at Pendra.

The officials said that 34 percent dearness allowance is being given by the central government to the central employees, while according to the rules of the government,

the state employees should also get the same allowance as the center, but in Chhattisgarh only 17 percent dearness allowance is being given to the employees.

There is no other option left than agitation because the budget of the employees' household has deteriorated due to skyrocketing inflation.

All the organizations said that all the employees of their department would join the agitation by taking casual leave from April 11 to 13, for which the state government would be responsible.

On the other hand, the officers present appealed to all the organizations to join the movement for the benefit of the employees.

## F&DA Deptt taking action against traders without license

Dhamtari, Apr 07:

After campaigning on behalf of the Food and Drug Administration Department against traders and business houses operating without license, strict action is being taken against those trespassing the rules.

As per information, hundreds of other establishments are operating in the district including grocery shops, without a valid license.

In such a situation, under Section 31 1) of the Food Safety Standards Act, 2006, the traders are required to mark and register the traders on behalf of the Food and Drug Administration Department before operating the shop. If sources are to be believed, they are taking outstanding

contracts for applying for license including not registering by going to the shops. After receiving continuous complaints, the Department of Food and Drug Administration has started a campaign to curb them.

The status of the year - 2021 - 22 is about 6 hundred registered businessmen in Dhamtari region alone. Apart from this, licenses have been issued to more than 300 businessmen; meanwhile there is no need to register the businessmen doing less 12 lakh businesses annually.

What officer says: Complaints has been received. Action will be taken as per rules for violation of sub-ordinates. Akshay Soni, Inspector, Food and Drug Administration Department.



## BRIEF

### Thrashed

■ **Indore:** A 30-year-old man was allegedly abused and thrashed for sporting a moustache in Madhya Pradesh's Indore. The man, Ravi Tirodia (30), lodged a complaint at Malharganj police station in connection with the incident, a police officer said. The accused in the case, Bunty Godha, his brother Naveen Godha and an accomplice Tarachand alias Bam, were agitated over Tirodia's moustache, and used abusive words against him.

### Re-unite

■ **Noida:** A 20-year-old mentally challenged woman from Assam who had reached Noida in 2019 has been re-united with her family with help from the Uttar Pradesh Police, officials said. The woman arrived in Noida on Oct 19, 2019 after which her case reached the local authorities, who got her admitted to a government run shelter home after due procedures. The woman hails from Udalgiri district of Assam. She had been at the shelter home.

### Arrest

■ **Panaji:** Officials of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) arrested a man from Rajasthan and allegedly seized a huge quantity of ganja and two pistols from his possession at the Margao Railway Station in Goa. Thaneram Barmer, the accused, was in possession of 4.3 kg of ganja, two pistols and 18 live rounds, said a senior RPF official.

### Heroin

■ **Aizawl:** Two persons, including a Myanmar national, were arrested after heroin worth Rs 1.8 crore was seized from their possession in Champhai district near the Indo-Myanmar border. A patrolling party seized 314 grams of heroin on the outskirts of Melbuk village. The contraband worth Rs 1.5 crore in the international market was concealed in 23 soap cases.

### Installed

■ **New Delhi:** The Guru Harkrishan Polyclinic at the Bangla Sahib Gurudwara here will conduct various medical tests at 50 per cent of the market rates, Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC) president Harmeet Singh Kalka said. New advanced testing machines have been installed at the facility run by the DSGMC. We got ECG in beginning. Thereafter, more machines were brought. I express my gratitude, Kalka said.

### Posed

■ **Pune:** A woman allegedly posed as a patient's wife so that she could have a kidney transplant through an exchange, Pune Police said. The authorities at the private hospital where the kidney transplant took place last month brought the matter to the police's notice, officials said. The woman too approached police, complaining that a middleman had promised her Rs 15 lakh.

## Ensure disaster alerts reach remote areas timely

Engage all agencies: Shah



Union Home Minister Amit Shah presents awards at the NDRFs Annual Conference on Capacity Building Disaster Response - 2022, in New Delhi, Thursday.

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

Agencies involved in disaster management should ensure that alerts generated for calamities should timely reach the remotest panchayat location in the country and organisations like NCC, women groups and home guards should be brought on board for this task, Union Home Minister Amit Shah

said on Thursday. He asked the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the federal agency to train and undertake operations during such emergencies, to take a leadership role in this context so that whenever such an emergency strikes, a trained personnel can work as a "stop gap arrangement" till professional rescuers reach the

spot. He was speaking while inaugurating a two-day 'annual conference on capacity building for disaster response 2022' being held here. The meeting has been organised by the NDRF with representatives of various central and state disaster response forces and other related agencies participating. The NDRF should make sure that the alerts generated for an impending disaster reach the intended location, village and panchayat in time, he said. The minister said special focus should be given to cases of lightning strikes where time is less and it should be ensured that accurate alert reaches the intended village and its inhabitants.

"We have made many apps (mobile applications) for a variety of disasters but a definite mechanism should be made so that the alerts reach in time to the remotest location," Shah said.

## Case against Somaiya, his son for fund misappropriation

Of funds collected for INS Vikrant

Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):

Mumbai police have registered a case against BJP leader Kirit Somaiya and his son Neil for alleged misappropriation of over Rs 57 crore funds reportedly collected to save decommissioned aircraft carrier INS Vikrant from being scrapped, an official said on Thursday.

The case against them was filed based on a complaint lodged by Baban Bhosale, a 53-year-old former Army personnel at the Trombay police station in suburban Mankhurd, he said. Rejected the allegation, Kirit Somaiya told reporters on Thursday that the funds collected under the 'Save INS Vikrant' campaign were



Kirit Somaiya and his son Neil.

not misused, and added that he was ready face any inquiry against him. Commissioned in 1961, INS Vikrant, a Majestic-class aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy, had played a key role in enforcing the naval blockade of East Pakistan dur-

ing the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971. It was decommissioned in 1997. There was a demand to convert the warship into a museum. But in January 2014, the ship was sold through an on-line auction and scrapped in November that year.

The complainant said that Somaiya had started a campaign to raise funds for saving the ship and the BJP leader had collected more than Rs 57 crore for the purpose.

However, instead of depositing the amount to the Maharashtra governor's secretary office, he misappropriated the funds.

"The warship had played a key role in the 1971 war. So when efforts to save it began, I thought of donating some money for the cause," Bhosale said in his complaint.

"I had donated Rs 2,000 in 2013 under the campaign launched by Somaiya," he added.

## Don't need lessons on law and order from Shah: TMC

Kolkata, Apr 07 (PTI):

The TMC on Thursday slammed Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his remarks on the law and order situation in West Bengal and said that the party doesn't need lessons from him. Speaking on the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill at Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, Shah had recalled that he was attacked with firebombs in Bengal during his campaigns for 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

"I had gone there in 2019 and was attacked with firebombs (aag ke gola). Our party president JP Nadda's convoy was also targeted (in the run-up to the assembly polls)," he



Sougata Roy

had said. The home minister further continued his attack on the West Bengal government, stating that its acts "changed even the harshest definition of the word Fascist". Reacting to Shah's comment, senior TMC leader Sougata Roy said that neither the party nor the state government needed lessons from Shah on maintenance of law

and order. "Amit Shah should be the last person to talk about law and order. We are very well aware of his track record as a minister in Gujarat and in the Union government.

"We have seen how he failed to control the riots that shook Delhi in February 2020. We have also seen lawlessness in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh. The situation in Bengal is far better than any other state of the country," Roy said. Echoing him, TMC state general secretary Kunal Ghosh said Shah's comments reflected his "frustration" over his party's defeat in assembly polls despite a high-pitched campaign.

## More sweeping machines needed to tackle dust pollution

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

Centre's air quality commission on Thursday directed various road construction and maintenance agencies in Delhi and NCR to procure more mechanical road sweeping machines to tackle the menace of air pollution arising from road dust.

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas, also asked the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to carry out a study on the efficacy of dust-suppressants and apprise the panel by the May end this year.

The CAQM reviewed the progress of action taken by road construction/ maintenance agen-



Road sweeping machine

cies and Dust Control and Management Cells (DCMCs), set up in 2021 to monitor the progress of dust control measures, and was informed that out of Delhi's total road length of around 18,540 km, nearly 5,000 km has been identified for mechanical sweeping. It noted that the south, east

and north Delhi municipal corporations were in the process of procuring 12, 10 and 6 mechanical road sweeping machines (MRSMs) by September this year. "For effective and efficient functioning, MRSMs have to be deployed at an average speed of about 5 km/hour. For an 8-hour

shift, one machine can sweep about 40 km of roads in a day. Therefore, more MRSMs need to be procured by road construction and maintenance agencies.

"The agencies were advised to ensure strict enforcement and implementation of road dust control measures and timely submission of monthly reports," the panel said.

For mechanical cleaning of narrow roads, the panel was informed that smaller size machines were being procured.

"South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) and East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) are planning to procure additionally 16 and 10 water sprinkling machines respectively in the current year," it noted.

## PROTESTING PRICE HIKE



Congress members stage a protest over the hike in prices of fuel and other essential commodities, in Srinagar, J-K on Thursday.

## 'Al-Qaeda indulging in polarisation in India'

■ **BJP in Karnataka is scared of real issues**

Bengaluru, Apr 07 (PTI):

The Congress on Thursday lashed out at Al-Qaeda for wading into the hijab controversy in Karnataka and said the banned terrorist organisation has no business to comment about the internal affairs of the country. The grand old party also strongly condemned Al-Qaeda chief Ayman Al-Zawahiri's for praising college student Muskan Khan for defending the headscarf.

It also charged the BJP and right wing organisations with trying to 'polarise' and 'vitiating' the atmosphere of Karnataka



Ajay Maken

with an eye on the 2023 Assembly polls.

"Let me make it amply clear in most unequivocal terms that we condemn the statement of Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda is a terrorist organisation, it is a banned organisation, and it has no business to comment anything about the internal affairs of our coun-

try. Congress party strongly condemns it," Congress General Secretary Ajay Maken told reporters here.

Maken said his party condemned the behaviour of the Karnataka Home Minister and demanded the sacking of Araga Jnanendra besides booking a case against him, alleging that he tried to disturb peace.

"Both of them are doing the same thing, their statements are polarising and vitiating the atmosphere of the country.... Karnataka has a composite culture and that is why Bengaluru and the state is the most favoured destination for businessmen, investors throughout the world.

## Chandigarh MC passes resolution to maintain UT status

Chandigarh, Apr 07 (PTI):

The municipal corporation here passed a resolution on Thursday which states that Chandigarh should remain a union territory, and should also get its own legislative assembly. The development comes as Punjab and Haryana engage in a tussle to stake claim over Chandigarh.

Both Punjab and Haryana state assemblies recently passed their respective resolution reiterating their claim over the Union Territory of Chandigarh, their joint capital.

The resolution also said the Centre should intervene and direct Haryana and Punjab governments "to develop their own independent capital cities".



Chandigarh municipal corporation

Only BJP councillors were present in the Municipal Corporation House when the resolution

was passed, with the councillors of the Aam Aadmi Party, Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal staging a walkout.

Chandigarh Municipal Corporation Mayor Sarabjit Kaur, who is from

to enable the residents to decide about the policies and future of the city themselves," according to the resolution read out by BJP councillor Maheshinder Singh Sidhu in the House.

The House also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for implementing Central service rules in the city, thus "benefiting" its employees.

BJP councillor Harpreet Kaur Babla said that Chandigarh belongs to the people of Chandigarh. "It is not a political agenda. It is the voice of the people of Chandigarh."

Before the resolution was passed, BJP and AAP councillors sparred over the recent hike in water tariff.

## Ajit Pawar speaks against Raj Thackeray's warning

■ **Against use of loudspeakers at mosques**

Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has attacked MNS president Raj Thackeray over the latter's demand for removal of loudspeakers from mosques, saying the state cannot afford the alleged divisive call given "to please someone eyeing polls". Without naming Thackeray, Pawar asked what the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief was going to achieve by making such statements and whether "provoking" people will solve the issue of their livelihood. "The



Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar at a function in Shirdi.

Maharashtra of Shahu, Phule, Ambedkar cannot afford the speeches made to please someone keeping eye on elections," Pawar said at an event in Shirdi in Ahmednagar district. He said that Maharashtra has ensured communal harmony for years, but "leaders of some parties" have of late been talking about installing loudspeakers "here and there". "Some people

are trying to create confusion in the society. We have been living in harmony for years now. We have been able to keep the communal harmony intact in the society by not allowing any rift in communities and religions. But leaders of some parties are making a pitch for installing counter-loudspeakers (to play Hanuman chalisa)," the senior NCP leader said.



## BRIEF

### Scrutiny

**Nashville:** Tennessee's top leaders in US only began increasing scrutiny over a small town's finances after a predominantly Black administration took over key positions, a move that attorneys argued strays significantly from how the state has treated white-majority jurisdictions. Earlier this year, Comptroller Jason Mumpower raised eyebrows when he announced the state would take over financial supervision of Mason, at proposed factory.

### Witness

**Alexandria:** By May 2014, American hostage Peter Kassig was losing hope that he would survive his captivity at the hands of the Islamic State group. Dad, I'm paralyzed here, I'm afraid to fight back. Part of me still has hope. Part of me is sure I'm going to die, he wrote to his father, Ed Kassig, who read the letter from the witness stand at the terrorism trial of British national El Shafee Elsheikh. Testimony left many in the courtroom fighting.

### Sentenced

**New Orleans:** A former Louisiana sheriff was sentenced to 10 years in prison for a federal bribery conviction, to be served at the same as his four life sentences for earlier convictions for raping boys. US District Judge Jane Triche Milazzo also ordered Rodney J Jack "Strain to pay a USD10,000 fine, federal prosecutors said. Strain pleaded guilty to one of 16 federal charges against him on Dec 1, 2021, and prosecutors dropped the others.

### Charges

**Washington:** The Biden administration has charged a Russian oligarch with violating US government sanctions and has disrupted a cybercrime operation launched by a Russian military intelligence agency. The action came as the Justice Department said it was accelerating efforts to track down illicit Russian assets and as US prosecutors helped European counterparts gather evidence on potential war crimes committed by Russia.

### Probe

**London:** European health officials say they are investigating a rapidly evolving outbreak of salmonella in 134 children that appears to be linked to chocolate Easter eggs that normally contain a surprise toy inside. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control said chocolate products were identified as likely route of infection, adding that children mainly under 10 years of age were affected. The first case was detected in Britain.

### Concerned

**Cairo:** The UN envoy for Yemen expressed concerns about violations of a cease-fire in the war-wrecked country, urging the warring sides to uphold the first nationwide truce in six years.

# Civilians try to flee east Ukraine amid Russian offensive

### Russia denies responsibility for any civilian deaths

Kyiv, Apr 07 (AFP):

Desperate evacuation attempts from eastern Ukraine were under way Thursday as authorities warned of an imminent Russian offensive, following the devastation around Kyiv that has shocked the world.

Russian troops have been withdrawing from around the capital and Ukraine's north, leaving a trail of destruction behind them, as they prepare for an expected assault on the country's southeast.

The scenes of carnage left behind by retreating troops in towns like Bucha have caused outrage and led to a wave of fresh sanctions against Moscow.

But on Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that Moscow was undeterred and continued "to accumulate fighting force to realise their ill ambitions in (eastern) Donbas".

"They are preparing to resume an active offensive," he said.

Begging civilians to leave the region "while it is still possible", local officials in Donbas' Lugansk and Donetsk said the re-



A local woman carries belongings from a damaged house in the town of Borodianka, northwest of Kyiv.

gion was already facing constant indiscriminate shelling.

"We can see clearly that before the enemy goes to full attack, they will just destroy places completely," local governor Sergiy Gaiday in Lugansk told Ukrainian broadcaster Channel 24.

Gaiday said on Facebook that more than 1,200 people had been evacuated from Lugansk, but that efforts were being hampered by artillery fire, with some areas already inaccessible.

For those that unable to leave, he said, tonnes of food, medicine and hygiene products were being delivered as part of a massive humanitarian effort.

The head of the Donetsk Regional Military Administration said strikes had targeted aid

points.

"The enemy aimed directly there with a goal to destroy the civilians," Pavlo Kyrylenko wrote on Facebook.

He added that people were heeding calls to flee and he would be coordinating evacuation to make it "faster and more effective."

Shells and rockets were also slamming into the industrial city of Severodonetsk, the easternmost city held by Ukrainian forces. "We have nowhere to go, it's been like this for days," 38-year-old Volodymyr told AFP standing opposite a burning building in the city.

More than 11 million people have been displaced since Russia invaded on February 24, aiming to seize the capital. With that

goal thwarted, it is instead trying to create a land link between occupied Crimea and Moscow-backed separatist statelets in Donbas.

Ukrainian forces are also regrouping for the offensive, including on a two-lane highway through the rolling eastern plains connecting Kharkiv and Donetsk.

Trench positions were being dug, and the road was littered with anti-tank obstacles.

"We're waiting for them!" said a lieutenant tasked with reinforcing the positions, giving a thumbs up.

The evacuation calls are being fuelled by fears of fresh atrocities, after chilling discoveries in areas from which Moscow's troops have withdrawn.

US President Joe Biden said "major war crimes" were being committed in Ukraine, where images have emerged in recent days of bodies with their hands bound or in shallow graves.

"Civilians executed in cold blood, bodies dumped into mass graves, the sense of brutality and inhumanity left for all the world to see, unapologetically," Biden said.

In one of the worst affected towns, Bucha, some residents were still trying to learn the fate of loved ones, while others were hoping to forget.



People take part in a protest against Guatemalan Attorney General Consuelo Porras, who is seeking re-election, in Guatemala City.

# China ship shadows research vessel, Filipino scientists wary

Manila, Apr 07 (AP):

A Chinese coast guard ship last month maneuvered for days near a research vessel deployed by Philippine and Taiwanese scientists to undertake a crucial survey of undersea fault lines west of the northern Philippines, sparking concerns among the scientists on board, officials said Thursday. The scientists on the R/V Legend, including five Filipinos, proceeded with their research despite the presence of the Chinese coast guard ship in the vicinity of the waters straddling the undersea Manila Trench from March 25 to March 30 off the northwest-



Research ship R/V Legend.

ern Philippine city of Vigan in Ilocos Sur province.

The Chinese coast guard's proximity sparked concerns because the research vessel was towing a survey cable in the sea, a Filipino scientist told The Associated Press. The ongoing offshore survey a joint project of the National

Institute of Geological Sciences at the University of the Philippines and the National Central University in Taiwan aims to help map offshore faults and other geologic features that could set off future earthquakes, tsunamis and other potentially catastrophic hazards in the region.

# Hong Kong activists fade from view as national security case drags



Protester standing behind a mock jail with photos of 47 pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, Apr 07 (AFP):

Hong Kong's most prominent democracy activists have disappeared from view as their prosecution under a security law drags into its second year, with lawyers and family members warning the defendants are losing faith in the courts.

The 47 activists make up a swathe of the city's depleted democracy movement, from veteran former lawmakers to young firebrands and community organisers as well as academics and unionists. Charged with subversion, the majority have been held in custody for more than a year and the few granted bail

must adhere to strict speech curbs.

Most of what has occurred during pre-trial hearings is blanketed by reporting restrictions, even though the defendants want them lifted. And their trial is not expected to begin until at least 2023. "The prosecution and the court are making the defendants invisible in plain sight," legal scholar Eric Lai of Georgetown University told AFP. Using the national security law Beijing imposed in 2020 following huge democracy protests, authorities targeted the activists for organising an unofficial poll to choose opposition candidates.

Some observers have voiced alarm about how lengthy pre-trial proceedings under the law have generated precedent-setting decisions without public scrutiny.

# Number of Indian students in US rose by 12 percent

Washington, Apr 07 (PTI):

The number of Indian students in the United States increased by over 12 per cent in 2021, while those from China which accounts for the largest number, dropped by more than eight per cent, a governmental report said.

In its annual report, US Citizenship and Immigration Services said the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact international student enrolment in the United States in 2021. The total number of SEVIS records for active F-1 and M-1 students was 1,236,748 in the calendar year 2021, a decrease of 1.2 per cent from the calendar year 2020. SEVIS stands for Students and Exchange Visitor Information System. F-1 and M-1 are the two non-immigrant student visas. J-1 is also a non-immi-



US Citizenship and Immigration Services.

grant student visa but is mostly given to scholars exchange programs.

In 2021, 8,038 SEVP-certified schools were eligible to enrol international students, registering a decrease by 280 schools from 8,369 eligible schools in 2020. The number of students from China and India made Asia the most

popular continent of origin. However, China sent fewer students in 2021 in comparison to 2020 (-33,569) while India sent more students (+25,391), the report said. As many as 37 per cent of Indian students are females.

Overall, China continues to top the list of countries sending 348,992 stu-

dents to the United States. India follows China with 232,851 students. China and India are followed by South Korea (58,787), Canada (37,453), Brazil (33,552), Vietnam (29,597), Saudi Arabia (28,600), Taiwan (25,406), Japan (20,144) and Mexico (19,680). According to the report, only Asia and Australia/Pacific Islands saw an overall decline in the number of students coming to the United States last year as all other continents saw an increase. International F-1 and M-1 students came from every continent in the world other than Antarctica and from more than 224 countries and territories. Students from China and India made Asia the most popular continent of origin, accounting for 71.9 per cent of the international student population.

# Yemen's president steps aside amid efforts to end war

Sanaa, Apr 07 (AP):



ARM Hadi

Yemen's exiled president stepped aside and transferred his powers to a presidential council on Thursday, as international and regional efforts to end the country's long-running civil war gained momentum with a two-month truce.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, major players in the conflict appear to have played a role President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi's de-

cision, quickly welcoming it with a pledge of 3 billion in aid. The head of the new council has close ties to Riyadh. Whether the switch will

expedite an end to the grinding war remains to be seen, as UN-sponsored negotiations have been at an impasse and fighting, airstrikes and missile attacks continued until late last month. The Houthis did not immediately comment on Hadi's announcement. Hadi said the newly established council will run the internationally recognised government and lead negotiations with the Iranian-backed Houthis, according to a statement aired on state-

run media. The move is meant to unify the anti-Houthi camp after years of fighting and disputes, and was almost certainly orchestrated in Riyadh, where Yemeni factions were meeting over the past week to discuss efforts to end the war. With this declaration a Presidential Leadership Council shall be established to complete the implementation of the tasks of the transitional period. Irreversibly delegate to the Presidential Leadership Council my

full powers, Hadi declared on Yemen's state-run TV.

Hadi also sacked Vice President Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, a powerful military figure, and also delegated al-Ahmar's powers to the presidential council.

The presidential council is chaired by Rashad al-Alimi, an advisor to Hadi and former interior minister with the government of late strongman President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

# Indo-US ties entering uncharted territory post-Ukrainian war

Washington, Apr 07 (PTI):

Due to the problematic position taken by India on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the India-US bilateral relationship is entering uncharted territory, a top former official of the Trump Administration said.

Lisa Curtis, who was the Trump Administration's point person for India during his four years of presidency, made the remark cautioning that in the absence of a course correc-

tion by New Delhi, it would become increasingly difficult for the two countries to expand their defence and security ties beyond a certain level.

I think the US India relationship is entering uncharted territory. The issue of India's close ties with Russia has always been an irritant in the US-India partnership. But with Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country, there are expectations that India would adjust its relationship

with Russia, Curtis told PTI in an interview. Curtis, who is now a senior fellow and director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Centre for a New American Security think tank, said February 24 which marks the Russian invasion of Ukraine has changed everything in terms of what the expectations of the United States are of India moving forward. I think there has been some understanding of India's very difficult position that it

can't change its reliance on Russian military equipment overnight and

that India has real security interests that it needs to protect, she said.

**कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)**  
ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना  
क्र.01/न.पा.नि./प्रकारा विभाग/2022-23 दिनांक 06/04/2022  
नगर पालिक निगम बिलासपुर के प्रकारा विभाग अंतर्गत सड़क बत्ती मरम्मत हेतु लाईनमेन एवं हेल्पर प्रदायकर्ताओं से श्रमिक प्रदाय कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है :-

सिस्टम नंबर	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)	निविदा डाउनलोड/सबमिट करने की अंतिम तिथि
96862	Supply of Linemen & Helper for Electrical Department in Municipal Corporation Bilaspur.	21.29	27/04/2022

उपरोक्त प्रदाय कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेबसाइट <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।  
कार्यालय अभियंता  
नगर पालिक निगम बिलासपुर (छ.ग.)

**कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग रायपुर मण्डल क्रमांक 1 (छत्तीसगढ़)**  
**निविदा सूचना**  
एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है :-

एन.आई.टी. क्र./सिस्टम नंबर	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)
1	2	3
196/96181	Ordinary Maintenance Of Road and Culverts Under Sub Div. Tilda Kodwa-Janjira-Nakti-Khapri-Bartori-Rajja-Chhapora-Manpur-Tuisi-Bhatthara Road Km 1, 2, 6, 7 = 4 Km, Chicholi-Raikheda-Sontara-Deogaon-Khauna Road Km 2, 3, 4 & 12 Km, Tilda-Bhursuda-Gujra-Mohda-Silpatti Road Km 11, 12 & 15 Km, Khairkut-Tarapongi-Kirna-Jaiso-Kundaru Road Km 17, Tarashiv-Chhataud Road Km 1 & 2, Kharora-Kathiya Road Km 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 & 12 Km, Pachari-Patharakundi Road Km 1, 2, & 3 Km, Bharuadih Approach Road Km 1, Nahardih Approach Road Km 1, Tilda-Neora-Kota-Champa-Manpur-Mohra Road Km 1 To 21, Singa-Tildara-Khara Road Km 6 To 35/6, Tiwariyya-Raita-Kirna Road Km 14, 15, 20, 21 & 22 Km, Madhi-Deogaon Road Km 1 & 2, Neora-Sinodha-Khapharika-Hathbandh Road Km 1 To 11/6, Otgan-Kesda-Mohadi-Mohgaon-Satbhawa-Boirihiti Road Km 6, 7 & 8 Km. (वर्तुष आमंत्रण)	रु. 49.40 लाख
232/96182	Construction of Chandandih Internal Road, Length 1.050 Km., Raipur (द्वितीय आमंत्रण)	रु. 130.53 लाख
209/96184	Road Marking, Sign Board, Rpm At Various Road Divider Under Construction Sub Division No-1 Raipur (द्वितीय आमंत्रण)	रु. 40.00 लाख

एन.आई.टी. क्र. 196 सिस्टम नंबर नं. 96181 निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 15.04.2022 समय सायं 5:30 बजे तक एवं एन.आई.टी. क्र.232 सिस्टम नंबर नं. 96182 एवं एन.आई.टी. क्र.209 सिस्टम नंबर नं. 96184 निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 20.04.2022 समय सायं 5:30 बजे तक

उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर देखी जा सकती है एवं डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।

**अधीक्षण अभियंता**  
**लो.नि.वि. रायपुर मंडल क्र.-1**  
**रायपुर (छ.ग.)**  
G-90129/1





# CENTRAL Chronicle

Since 1974 Volume 10 No. 08

## Power grid protection

Suspected state-sponsored Chinese hackers have targeted the power sector in India in recent months as part of an apparent cyber-espionage campaign, the threat intelligence firm Recorded Future Inc said in a report. In recent months, Chinese hackers observed likely network intrusions targeting at least seven Indian State Load Despatch Centres (SLDCs) responsible for carrying out real-time operations for grid control and electricity dispatch within these respective states. Notably, this targeting has been geographically concentrated, with the identified SLDCs located in North India, in proximity to the disputed India-China border in Ladakh. The prolonged targeting of Indian power grid assets by Chinese state-linked groups offers limited economic espionage or traditional intelligence-gathering opportunities. Analysts believe this targeting is instead likely intended to enable information gathering surrounding critical infrastructure systems or is pre-positioning for future activity. The objective for intrusions may include gaining an increased understanding into these complex systems in order to facilitate capability development for future use or gaining sufficient access across the system in preparation for future contingency operations. In the present world, power grid is part of critical infrastructure, which needs to be protected from threats involving national security. Last year, CERT-In had reported from a trusted source that China-based 'Threat actor Group Command and Control' servers are trying to communicate with systems belonging to Telangana State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC), TS Transco (Transmission Corporation of Telangana Ltd) and advised taking suitable precautionary measures to ensure the security of the power system, official sources said. Cyberattacks are becoming as troublesome to the electrical power grid as natural disasters, and the problem is growing worse as these grids become more connected and smarter. Unlike in the past, when a power outage affected just the electricity supplied to homes and businesses, power grids are becoming core elements of smart cities, infrastructure, and safety-related services. Without power, none of this works, and sophisticated hacking operations can hold large regions hostage until they pay enormous ransoms or give into other demands.

Ukraine's grid was attacked in 2015, leaving 200,000 households without power. A similar attack happened the following year. And the cyber criminals who breached Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power, the South Korean nuclear and hydroelectric company, in 2014 posted plans and manuals for two nuclear reactors online and exposed 10,000 employees' personal data. Cyber warfare is more complicated. State sponsored hackers have a mission to steal, disrupt, and more importantly, cause damage to the victims' operations and critical infrastructure. Connectivity makes the security issue much worse. Traditionally, the power grids have been predominantly isolated infrastructures. Digitalization has changed that. Modern, connected power grids provide the convenience of remote monitoring, decentralized control, load balancing for alternative sources, and data analytics. Smart cities can take advantage of remote IoT capabilities to increase efficiency and provide insight for future city planning. However, the network-based, interconnected infrastructure often raises security concerns. Hackers target the critical infrastructure of a modern city to cause disruption. Stopping the electricity supply not only causes inconvenience to the users, it would also disrupt operations in an emergency situation. For example, hospitals have to rely on backup power generators, if available. Government agency operations will be severely impacted in their normal day-to-day activities when service is interrupted. In some cases, this may even threaten national security. Therefore, protection of these critical infrastructures as well as all end points is vitally important to prevent large scale outages. There are multiple issues facing the power grids today that make it more vulnerable. Among the top three are the age of systems, a lack of cohesive planning and action, and the number of stakeholders involved. Overcoming these issues requires using technology to fight hackers, better and more centralized leadership, and a mindset change that recognizes the immediacy of cyber threats.

## Minimising inflation risk

Modern Monetary Theory (MMT) is a macroeconomic lens which prescribes that monetarily sovereign countries like the US are unaffected by financial constraints as long as they control their currencies. With roots dating back to the early 20th century, MMT was first popularized in its modern form by Warren Mosler, an American investment fund manager. Under MMT, the risk of inflation is considered minimal as governments that fully control their fiat currencies are believed to be able to control price levels, provided they can meet consumer demand. The past few months have seen inflation skyrocket to 40-year highs, with the latest consumer price index report showing an annual price increase of almost 8 percent. Public debt has soared since the 2008 financial crisis, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the International Monetary Fund, the ratio of public debt to GDP in advanced economies increased from around 70 percent in 2007 to 124 percent in 2020. But the fear that rising public debt will fuel future financial crises has been subdued, partly because government bond yields have been so low for so long. Advocates of MMT contend that as long as debt is denominated in a country's own currency, there is no reason to fear a fiscal crisis, because a default cannot happen.

Any withdrawal of fiscal stimulus therefore should be gradual. And in the meantime, new issues of public debt can be used to fund infrastructure investments, income-support programs, and other items on progressives' agenda, provided that the inflation rate remains below the central bank's target. MMT's boosters cite Japan as proof of concept. Even though Japan's debt to GDP ratio (including both central and local government) is above 250 percent, compared to 160 percent in the United States, its ten-year government bond yield has remained at around zero throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and its average inflation rate has barely exceeded zero for 20 years. Annual new bond issues and soaring debt levels have not had any apparent impact on borrowing costs. But before other countries rush to emulate Japan, they should bear in mind that Japanese government bonds are issued in yen, and almost all are held by Japanese residents, both directly and indirectly through financial institutions and the central bank.

## VERMICELLI PREPARATION



A worker arranges prepared vermicelli which are used in making dishes and consumed during the holy month of Ramzan, at a workshop on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

## Russia putting rouble on gold standard is unlikely to last

**ALEXANDER MIHAILOV**

The Bank of Russia, the country's central bank, has surprisingly announced a fixed price for buying gold with roubles. With a price of RUB 5,000 (Great Britain Pound 45.12) for a gram of gold, to my knowledge it's the first time that a nation's currency has been expressed in 'gold parity' since Switzerland decided to stop doing so in 1999. Enacting gold parity was common practice by the world's major powers for facilitating international trade payments in the era of the gold standard in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The same was true in a slightly different way during the Bretton Woods era from 1944 until 1971, which was when US President Nixon decided to end the system by removing the link between gold and the US dollar. Putin's new arrangement is envisaged, initially, to hold from March 28 to June 30. It is the latest in a series of rouble-related moves by the Russians, starting with the announcement on March 23 that they would only accept roubles for European gas instead of euros and US dollars. I predicted that Russia would at least extend this policy to oil, but it has gone further and signalled an intention to make it apply to all the commodities it exports (others include wheat, nickel, aluminium, enriched uranium and neon).

The main goal of these moves is to try to ensure the credibility of the rouble by making it more desirable in the forex market, though it also fits into

longstanding attempts by Russia and China to weaken the US dollar's dominance as global reserve currency (meaning it's the currency in which most international goods are priced and which most central banks hold in their foreign reserves). The rouble collapsed in late February and early March when western sanctions were imposed in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine (the collapse looks like a rise in the chart because it's showing the number of roubles to the US dollar rather than the other way around). After the big drop, the rouble recovered somewhat, which is typical in such situations (known in the literature as 'exchange-rate overshooting'). However, the currency strengthened further after the roubles-for-gas announcement (no matter how serious or implementable the plan actually is - so far, there has been resistance to Putin's new rules).

On the back of the gold announcement, the currency has continued to strengthen to about RUB83 to the dollar. As precious metals analyst Ronan Manly has said, this makes sense if you reflect that the market price of a gram of gold is currently about USD 62. That's fairly close to Putin's announcement that 1 gram of gold equals RUB 5,000, which effectively creates a gold-based exchange rate of RUB 81 to USD 1. To give a sense of the similarities with the gold standard and the Bretton Woods system, let me draw a historical parallel. The UK's

Coinage Act of 1816 fixed the value of the pound sterling to 113 grains of pure gold, while the US Gold Standard Act of 1900 determined that the dollar should maintain a value of 23.22 grains of pure gold. Taken together, the two acts implied an official gold parity exchange rate of GBP 1 = USD 4.87. It was similar during the post-war Bretton Woods era: 1 ounce of gold was said to be worth US\$35, and all other currencies were fixed to and convertible into the US dollar. Gold was at the centre of the system as a way of making money credible. Of course, attaching the rouble to a gold standard comes with certain 'rules of the game' that Russia will have to abide by. It should be willing to exchange gold for roubles with anyone who wants to do so.

This was what the US did during the Bretton Woods era, and it led to the system's demise: with US expenditure rising to wage the Vietnam war, dollar holders became increasingly nervous about the dollar's value and sought to exchange it for gold. Nixon's unilateral decision to end convertibility was for fear that the US would run out of gold, which would have destroyed the credibility of the dollar. Since that decision, the world has moved to a system of floating exchange rates and the price of gold has steadily risen as world currencies have become weaker in relation to it. The system has effectively been supported by a deal that the Americans struck in the early 1970s to buy oil from the Saudis and give them military support in exchange for the Saudis using the dollars to buy US government bonds. Western financial thought has this idea that if they cheapen Russian gold by sanctioning it, they're hurting Russia by lessening the amount of stuff they could potentially buy with that gold. In fact, they're actually helping Russia by encouraging gold inflows into the country and making it much cheaper for the Bank of Russia to amass much more gold to back the Ruble at a cred-

ible rate when the time comes.

The problem for Russia is that if it is willing to exchange roubles for gold, it could soon end up in a similar situation to the US circa 1971. Wars are an abnormal state of affairs which come with huge uncertainty: no reliable forecasts are possible, and markets are liable to overreact to new developments - particularly in the short term. If confidence in the rouble falls again, many investors might decide to withdraw gold from the central bank, which could be extremely destabilising for Moscow. The real money question at the heart of this theme is how did the Biden administration and its allies not anticipate for such a scenario to play out? Simple: because the West's myopic thought process is fixated on devaluing Russian gold with the hopes of limiting the amount of stuff the country can buy with it. In fact, Washington is so infatuated with preventing Russia from selling gold that it's completely forgetting that gold is money, rather than the fiat paper created by a few strokes on the Fed's keyboard that only has value in the first place because it can be traded for gold. The viability of Russia maintaining a fixed rate of roubles for gold is closely related to what happens to demand for Russian energy. If the west can only slowly substitute away from its dependence on Russia's oil and gas, then demand for roubles will help to keep the currency propped up (especially if the west does end up paying in roubles). But if politicians listen to economists and immediately stop importing Russian gas, oil and other commodities, the rouble could fall dramatically - along with the whole Russian economy. As much as this would cause a further spike in prices and pain all round, it may be the most efficient and perhaps even safest way to induce Russia to stop the war.

(Alexander Mihailov is Associate Professor in Economics, University of Reading in UK.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Kudos

We are all aware how the minimum voice of protest be it a peaceful slogan shouting or simple inscription of "NO WAR" are being tamed with iron hand in Russia with even children, women or senior citizens not getting spared from detention, imprisonment and severe punishment. The Novaya Gazeta newspaper, Muratov is the editor-in-chief of which was already facing the ire of Kremlin for long for daring to criticise the policies of the State or Vladimir Putin. Now in these times of "Special Military Operation" (actually barbaric unilateral aggression) with all sane countries of the world providing all forms of support to the brutally-attacked Ukraine, the "super-sensitive" Russian State is in no mood to view "dissent" in the light of forgiveness. So Muratov is well aware of the severe consequences he might have to encounter, thanks to his unique sacrifice of even the prized Nobel medal drawing international attention. Yet he has not hesitated to take this extreme bold step despite residing in Russia and thereby endangering his freedom, safety, career, future and even life just to respond to his Call of Conscience and offer financial and moral assistance towards assaulted people of foreign vintage i.e. the Ukrainian refugees. Dmitry Muratov has practically proved through sheer action that Humanity is infinite times Greater than blind rabid "Nationalism". So instead of uttering zealous rhetoric of "My Russia is Great" and supporting the aggression akin to Dark Medieval Ages, Muratov can protest against his very own (in terms of mere passport) so as to embrace the God's own ie human beings of the world (that too persecuted) by transcending narrow definition of "Nation". And Javed Akhtar. While attending the Kolkata Literary Meet, Akhtar sang paens of Urdu revolving its secular literature and Indian credentials surpassing all divides of Hinduism and Islam. But on the other hand, Akhtar also stressed "Languages belong to regions, not religions. Ten crore Muslims (of erstwhile East Pakistan) told seven crore Muslims (of erstwhile West Pakistan) that we will not learn Urdu at the cost of Bengali. I love Urdu the way you love Bengali but I respect and salute those people who defended Bengali. For them, that was their mother tongue, which was far more important than their religion". Are the harbingers of "Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan" listening who are not only hell bent on according "Islamic" stamp upon Urdu, but also dare to impose Hindi upon multi-lingual democratic India in the name of "national integrity". How many people raise their voice to speak up for the "alien" victims with the perpetrators of violence being of their own national or linguistic stock and herein lies the special significance and greatness of the thought process of Muratov and Akhtar. Let people of all demographic credentials equally bloom and prosper in God's boundaryless world with mutual respect and love.

Kajal Chatterjee, Kolkata



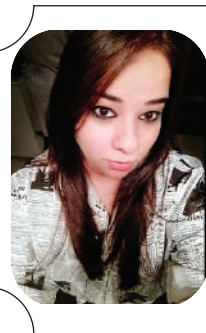
## WHAT THEY TWEET!

**Saurav Jha@SJha1618**

You can literally induct an indigenous Pralay SRBM battery by the time the procurement file for some gazillion dollar fighter jet \*import\* deal moves between two desks. Instead of crying about IAF squadron strength, the need of the hour is to build the rocket force.

**Vir Das@theviridas**

Personal random achievement unlocked. My 30th city and fifth country on the #WantedTour with zero check in luggage. Two sweaters, five tees, two trousers, running shoes, show shoes, a laptop bag. And if you think about the time I've saved at airports, it is probably days.



**Naila Inayat@nailainayat** enters Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan: 'Imran Khan is conspiring against the Constitution of Pakistan. TLP stands by the 1973 constitution, which is the result of eternal sacrifices. We will not let any conspiracy to repeal it, succeed.'

**Vidya@VidyaG88**

#FinancialFreedom means having the ability to choose the best use for your time. It doesn't mean early retirement! My dad got FI around 2000. Still works at 72 to keep his mind & body sharp & loves it! Find your Ikigai & pursue it sincerely. Don't waste your life doing nothing.

**DK Sharma@CaptDKS**

DYK that one of the best Naval Aviation Museums in Asia.

**Raunak@raunakmahajan**

So true! I started to think for myself when I turned 30! And by then I had already completed my engineering, MBA, and a job stint. I so wish I had developed this maturity when I was 18 but our education system never gave us that chance.

**Baba Sehgal@OnlyBaba**

Jawab chahiye toh sawaal karo. Appointment chahiye toh kaal karo. Brush chahiye toh baal karo. Colour chahiye toh laal karo. Lathi chahiye toh babaal karo. Baby kiss chahiye toh gaal karo??



**BRIEF**

**Invest**



**Mumbai:** Omega Seiki Mobility (OSM) and battery technology startup Log9 Materials will jointly invest Rs 150 crore in charging infrastructure by financial year 2024.

**Expects**

**New Delhi:** FMCG maker Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCP) expects to deliver a "close to double-digit sales growth" in the domestic market in the January-March quarter driven entirely by pricing. Overall, short-term challenges such as unprecedented global commodity inflation and the performance of its Indonesia business, continued to play out during the quarter, impacting consumption and margins.

**Pacts**



**New Delhi:** Macrotech Developers has signed multiple joint development agreements (JDAs) with land owners to construct real estate projects. CEO Abhishek Lodha said we believe that the housing sector will grow by 3-4x (3 to 4 times) in this decade (2021-2030).

**Sell**

**New Delhi:** Two entities — Tamara and Pace have offloaded shares of casual dining chain Barbeque Nation Hospitality for an estimated Rs 669 crore through open market transactions. Those who picked up the shares of the Bengaluru based casual dining chain are — ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund, Motilal Oswal Mutual Fund, BNP Paribas Arbitrage, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and TNTBC as The Trustee of Nomura India Stock Mother Fund.

**Operations**



**New Delhi:** JSW Energy on Thursday announced that its subsidiary has commenced operations of a 225 MW solar plant at Vijayanagar in Karnataka. JMD CEO Prashant Jain said it remains upbeat to commence operations of under-construction pipeline.

**Completes**

**Mumbai:** Auto components major Mutherson Sumi Systems Ltd (MSSL) said it has successfully completed the acquisition of a majority stake in Bengaluru based CIM Tools Private Ltd.

## 10 states given permission to borrow additional Rs 28,204 cr

For power sector reforms last fiscal

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The finance ministry on Thursday said 10 states were given the permission to borrow an additional Rs 28,204 crore in FY22 for undertaking power sector reforms. The 10 states are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

"Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, has granted additional borrowing permission of Rs 28,204 crore to 10 states for undertaking the stipulated reforms in



power sector in 2021-22," it said in a statement.

In the financial year 2022-23 too, the states can avail the facility of additional borrowing linked to reforms in power sector. An amount of Rs 1,22,551 crore will be available as incentive to the states for undertaking these reforms in 2022-23, it added.

The finance ministry,

based on the recommendations of 15th Finance Commission, had decided to grant additional borrowing space of upto 0.5 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) to the states every year for a four year period from 2021-22 to 2024-25 based on the reforms undertaken by them in the power sector.

The objective of granting financial incentives as additional borrowing permissions for taking up reforms in power sector are to improve the operational and economic efficiency of the sector, and promote a sustained increase in paid electricity consumption.

## Indo-Aussie trade expansion to provide opportunities for students

**Sydney, Apr 07 (PTI):**

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said the trade pact between India and Australia would help expand the economies of both countries, thus providing huge opportunities for students. He said education is an important element both in the current and future engagements with Australia.

So as trade and economy expand, the opportunities for students also naturally expand and that's what we have aimed for, he said while interacting with students here at the University of New South Wales. He called for taking India-Australia partnership in education to greater heights and invited the university to ex-



**Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held talks at University of New South Wales in Australia on Thursday.**

and its footprints in India. As we expand our services offerings to each other. As we expand trade in goods, in startups, obviously there is going to be a need for all of you (Indian students in Australia) in a bigger way, Goyal added.

Australia has over one lakh students from India.

Speaking at the event, Australian Trade Minister Dan Tehan said whether Indian students studying in Australia should also get opportunities to work here, is a very popular

## Rupee falls 11 paise at 75.95 against USD, gold price rises

**Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The rupee declined 11 paise to close at 75.95 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday as the hawkish stance of the US Federal Reserve affected investor sentiments in global markets and bolstered the American currency. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened lower at 75.88 against the US dollar, then slipped further to quote 75.99. It finally settled at 75.95, down 11 paise over its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee tanked 55 paise, its steepest single-day fall in a month, to close at a one-week low of 75.84 against the US dollar.

## Sensex tanks 575 points, Nifty skids below 17,700

**Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):**



Equity benchmark Sensex tumbled over 575 points on Thursday, tracking heavy losses in index-heavyweights HDFC twins, TCS and Reliance Industries amid a weak trend in global markets.

Declining for the third straight day, the 30-share Sensex slumped 575.46 points or 0.97 per cent to settle at 59,034.95. During the day, it tanked 633.06 points or 1.06 per cent to 58,977.35.

The broader Nifty-50 also declined 168.10 points or 0.94 per cent to close at 17,639.55. From the 30-share pack, Titan, HDFC, HDFC Bank, Wipro, TCS,

Reliance Industries Limited, and Power Grid were the major laggards.

In contrast, Axis Bank, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, M&M, and Dr Reddy's were among the gainers.

In Asia, markets in Hong Kong, Seoul, Shanghai, and Tokyo settled lower. Stocks in the US also ended lower in the

overnight session. "Recent market weakness is partly due to the increasingly hawkish commentary from the US Fed," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

International oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 0.93 per cent to USD 102 per barrel.

## Govt mandates vehicles' fitness testing via automated stations

**In phased manner from Apr 2023**

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The government has made fitness testing of vehicles through Automated Testing Stations (ATS) mandatory in a phased manner starting April next year.

In an official statement, the Road Transport and Highways Ministry (MoRTH) said that fitness testing for heavy goods vehicles and heavy passenger motor vehicles through an ATS will be mandatory from April 1, 2023. While in the case of medium goods vehicles and medium passenger motor vehicles and light motor vehicles (transport), the requirement will be made compulsory from



**Automated Testing Station**

June 1, 2024. An Automated Testing Station (ATS) uses mechanical equipment to automate the various tests required to check the fitness of a vehicle. "The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a no-

tification dated 5th April 2022, regarding mandatory fitness of motor vehicles only through an Automated Testing Station, registered in accordance with rule 175 of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules 1989," it said.

## EESL to tie up with agencies to increase adoption of energy efficient products

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

State-owned Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) is looking to tie up with central and state agencies across the country with an aim to maximise the adoption of energy efficient products and services in India.

The company has opened registrations for the empanelment of demand aggregators for Channel Partners Programme Phase II under which it will collaborate with central and state agencies in designing, implementing, and maintaining their energy efficiency projects.

The registration process will be open till May 31, 2022 and the successful empanelled parties will be announced on July 1, 2022. With Channel Partners Programme Phase II, EESL is looking to increase the uptake of its energy efficient appliances like LED tubelights,



bulbs, BLDC fans, super-efficient ACs and chillers, among others. The programme will provide various growth opportunities to both EESL and its channel partners.

Through this initiative, EESL will benefit from an extensive sales network, which will enhance the reach and proliferation of energy efficient products and services. The partners, on the other hand, will be able to leverage EESL's credible market presence and high-quality solutions. With the phase II of this programme, EESL aims to increase its

turnover from energy efficient appliances to Rs 100 crore in next one year. "Through the improvised second phase of our Channel Partners Programme, we seek to further stimulate our various initiatives, by involving the private players in our energy efficiency journey," Animesh Mishra, Head - Sales and PR, EESL said in the statement.

Through its schemes like Streetlighting National Programme (SLNP), Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA), Super-Efficient Air Conditioner Programme and Building Energy Efficiency Programme, EESL has actively worked towards enabling a low carbon future with significant economic and social impact.

The organization aims to introduce a wide array of new energy efficient appliances in the future that can help in mainstreaming energy efficiency in India.

## ASBM University hosts its 8th IMCon-22

**Bhubaneswar, Apr 07:**

ASBM University, Bhubaneswar hosted its 8th International Management Conference (IMCon-22) on 'Building Resilience-The Way Forward' on April 2. This event was in collaboration with ACBSP, USA, Lobachevsky University, Russia and IIM Sambalpur. The inaugural session had an august presence of Governor of Odisha, Prof. Ganeshi Lal as the Chief Guest who inaugurated the conference.

In his address, Chief Guest and Governor of Odisha Prof. Ganeshi Lal said on the vitality of self-inspection for building resilience and to carry it forward. Quoting instances from Bhagavat Gita and Mahabharat, he focused on the apprehension of internal root mapping is the ultimatum to recover quickly from any



difficult situations.

Prof. Biswajeet Pattanayak, Founder and President of the University addressed the gathering and gave prelude to the conference. Earlier the welcome address was given by Vice Chancellor ASBM University, Prof. Kalyan Shankar Ray. In his key-

note address Mr. Richard Rekhy, Board Member KPMG Dubai and Former CEO, KPMG, stressed on the all-round development is the key to a resilient future.

Guest of Honor, Prof D.P. Agarwal, Former Chairman, Union Public Service Commission spoke about the impor-

tance of resilience in this modern world and gave emphasis on overcoming of all the odds, particularly in the COVID-19 period. After the felicitation there were releases of book, 'Building Resilience - The Way Forward', ASBM newsletter, 'Phoenix' and the conference compendium by the Governor.

## New Maruti Suzuki Ertiga bookings open

**Launch next week**

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India on Thursday announced opening of bookings for the upcoming new generation version of its multi purpose vehicle, Ertiga.

The next-gen Ertiga, powered by a 1.5 litre petrol engine with a smart hybrid technology, will be launched next week.

The company said it can be booked with a payment of Rs 11,000.

Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Shrivastava said the Ertiga has sold over 7.5 lakh units and has been a "game-changer in India's MPV market".

"The next-gen Ertiga will have thoughtful new-age features, an upgraded powertrain and advanced 6-speed automatic transmission," he said.

## Bounce Infinity begins rollout of its first e-scooter

**Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):**

Smart mobility firm Bounce Infinity on Thursday said it has commenced rollout of its first consumer e-scooter E1 from the Bhiwadi facility in Rajasthan and deliveries of the vehicle will start from April 18. The company also said it is looking to set up a new half-a-million per annum capacity manufacturing facility for e-scooters in South India later this year. Bounce Infinity is backed by marquee investors such as Accel, Accel US, Sequoia Capital India, B Capital, Falcon Edge, Qualcomm, Chirate, Omidyar Network, Maverick Capital, among others. It had launched E1 with dual options in swappable battery - scooter with Battery-as-a-Service (BaaS) — and scooter with battery and



**Rollout of e-scooter E1 begins in Bhiwadi on Thursday.**

charger. It had also announced that deliveries of the e-scooter will commence from early 2022. With the rollout of Bounce Infinity E1 from our plant, we are thrilled that the first batch of our electric scooters will soon make its way to eagerly awaiting customers across the country, said Vivekananda Hallekere, Co-Founder and CEO, Bounce Infinity. With current capacity at the

## Koo launches Voluntary Self-Verification for all users

**Mumbai, Apr 07:**

The Koo App launches Voluntary Self-Verification, becoming the first social media platform in the world to do so. Any user can now self-verify their profile on the platform within seconds by using their Government-approved ID card. This move empowers users to prove the authenticity of their accounts on the platform, hence lending credibility to the thoughts and opinions that they share. Voluntary self-verification promotes visibility of genuine voices. A visible marker in the form of a green tick will identify an account as being self-verified. Koo is the first 'Significant Social Media Intermediary' to enable this feature in accordance with Rule 4(7) the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics

Code) Rules, 2021. Users enter the Government-ID number, enter the OTP, and on successful authentication, get self-verified with a green tick in their profile. The whole process is completed within a few seconds. The validation process is carried out by Government-authorized third-parties. Koo would not store any information during the process. In addition to empowering users on the platform, voluntary self verification - by promoting authenticity - will also hopefully result in curbing online misinformation, hate speech, abuse and bullying. Aprameya Radhakrishna, Co-founder & CEO Koo said, "Koo is at the forefront of promoting trust and safety on social media. We are very proud to be the first social media platform in the world to launch a Voluntary Self-Verification system.





## JoJo Siwa exits Will Smith-backed film 'Bounce'

Dancer and digital sensation JoJo Siwa will no longer be making her feature film debut with the screen adaptation of 'Bounce', reports 'Variety'. Insiders familiar with the project said that Paramount Pictures has also removed the project from its development slate.

Siwa told 'Variety' at the GLAAD Media Awards that she is no longer attached to the movie adaptation of the YA book by Megan Shull. She said, "That project got put on hold, and then went away. It wasn't the one."

As per the sources of 'Variety', the project fell apart months ago and its demise is not related to Smith's assault of comedian Chris Rock at this year's Academy Awards. First announced in the summer of 2020, the film was brought to the studio by producer Caleb Pinkett ('Cobra Kai', 'Charm City Kings').

His sister Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith were reported to be attached as producers at the time, before the formation of their content company Westbrook. One person familiar with Westbrook said Pinkett Smith and her husband were not leads on the project, rather lending support to Caleb Pinkett.

The project also made waves last July when Siwa, who came out as asexual months prior, revealed that the script for 'Bounce' included a kissing scene with a male costar. 'Variety' later reported that the studio happily removed the kissing scene in light of Siwa's objection.

## Alefiya Kapadia: We step into relationships with baby steps which gradually make us fall in love

'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2' actress Alefiya Kapadia talks about the ongoing track and how the show brings out the reality of two strangers gradually falling in love with each other in an arranged marriage.

The show revolves around Nakuul Mehta and Disha Parmar, who are playing onscreen couple Ram and Priya respectively. In the ongoing track, the lead characters are shown facing the dilemma to express their feelings for each other. Alefiya spoke about the quandary Ram (played by Nakuul Mehta) and Priya (played by Disha Parmar) are now facing. She says: "We step into relationships with baby steps which gradually make us fall in love. Love is not some quick scheme that two people can fall into. It takes time, you have to know the person that you want to love. Certainty is the keyword here. Sure, the heart wants what it wants, but there are always doubts." The actress adds about the upcoming episodes in which both Ram and Priya will confess their love for each other.

"Priya still has to come to terms with her own feelings for Ram even though Ram is already head over heels in love with her. Love is an experience that is unique to each individual. What is important is that you enjoy the journey and the show is inviting viewers to be a part of this journey of Priya to Ram," she adds.



## Tushar Dalvi highlights importance of education

Ever since its launch, Sony Entertainment Television's popular show Mere Sai: Shradha Aur Saburi has not only narrated stories of perfect humility, purity, self-control, equality and generosity but also continuous life teachings to its viewers. Taking this thought forward, the upcoming track narrates a heartfelt story of a lower caste girl residing in Shirdi who bears the brunt of the deeply entrenched caste system, and a free-thinking man who believes in equality for all and stands up for her rights. Sawari works in the local Kulkarni household where she isn't given the respect she deserves, only because she was born in a lower caste family. However, Kulkarni's son Mahesh who has come back to Shirdi after finishing his higher studies in London is a fervent believer of equality of human rights and treating all alike. He believes in treating everyone the same regardless of their race, social status, disability, religion or caste. Upon his return to Shirdi, he witnesses Sawari getting humiliated in his own house and decides to take a stand for her. Eventually, both fall for each other and develop feelings towards one another.



## An award winning feature film by India's Talented Filmmaker Praveen Whitefield

Essentials - The feature film idea was born during the initial days of the pandemic when the globe was reeling under strict lockdowns. The story was set with limited characters, locations, and budget. The pandemic threw an array of unique challenges that was tactfully dealt with, during the production. The production schedule was planned well in advance and was completed in just 17 days. 80% of the plan was done on paper first and then executed accordingly with a minimal yet fantastic crew of just 8 on sets and 20 professionals in total. The film got completed in a year's time which is an achievement on its own in comparison to many big budget films that get stuck and remain incomplete due to various reasons. The feature film has won many awards at various International Film Festivals. You can watch this award winning film on Movie Saints and Youtube.



## 'K.G.F. Chapter 2 poster' has a rugged Rocky in a fierce look



IMAX releases its exclusive poster for Kannada language period action drama K.G.F. Chapter 2. Written and directed by Prashanth Neel, and produced by Vijay Kiragandur under Hombale Films, K.G.F. Chapter 2 stars Kannada superstar Yash in lead role along with Sanjay Dutt, Srinidhi Shetty, Raveena Tandon and Prakash Raj. The story is based on the happenings in the blood-soaked land of Kolar Gold Fields and is a continuation of K.G.F. Chapter 1. K.G.F. Chapter 2 will release across IMAX screens in Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, on April 14, 2022.

IMAX's exclusive poster features a determined Rocky with an even fiercer look with weapons in both hands with chaos and goons in the background. The poster reflects Rocky's thoughts as he braces himself while his enemies are clamouring for revenge and conspiring for his downfall. Speaking on releasing K.G.F. Chapter 2 in IMAX, Christopher Tillman, VP, International Development and Distribution said, "IMAX is known for offering audiences a larger than life experience and it is only apt for us to release an action-packed film like K.G.F."

## Ajay Devgn reveals how 'Runway 34' took flight

Ajay Devgn, who is gearing up for his next film 'Runway 34', recently shared how the idea behind the film came into being.

The script of 'Runway 34', which will see Ajay doubling up as a director in addition to his portrayal of the lead character, was conceived during the first nationwide lockdown following the first wave of the pandemic in India. Talking about how the special journey of 'Runway 34' began, Ajay Devgn shared, "Two years ago, barely a month into the pandemic, when things seemed to be going slow, the writer-duo Sandeep Kewlani and Aamil Keeyan Khan narrated the script of 'Runway 34' to me. I liked the script but I wanted certain changes. As promised, they worked on it during the lockdown and came back to me with a refreshed version."

Keeping the essence of the thriller intact, the actor-director further mentioned that the film is inspired by true events. "What I heard, I liked. The script is inspired by true events and they had made some changes for the big-screen adaptation. The first half has an element of thrill which the audience must experience."

"In fact, each and every one of us will identify with the turbulence and that hollow feeling in the stomach when a flight hits an air pocket. I can't tell you more because

it's a thriller and must be experienced." "Coming back to the script, Sandeep and Aamil had brought in the excitement and the drama. Then we worked on the script for another four months with my regular inputs. I was happy with the end result and also absolutely drawn to it. I decided this would be my third directorial. In December, 2020, we launched the film and started to shoot it as soon as the lockdown was partially withdrawn. Here we are today with a film that I am truly proud to represent," he added.

Directed by Ajay Devgn, 'Runway 34' is produced by Ajay Devgn Films and is co-produced by Kumar Mangat Pathak, Vikrant Sharma, Sandeep Harish Kewlani, Tarlok Singh Jethi, Hasnain Husaini and Jay Kanujia. The film, which also stars Amitabh Bachchan, Rakul Preet Singh, Boman Irani, Aakanksha Singh and Angira Dhar, is set to hit theatres on April 29, where it will clash with Tiger Shroff and Nawazuddin Siddiqui-starrer 'Heropanti 2'.



### HOROSCOPE FRIDAY APRIL 08

**Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18**  
Money problems could be on your mind, Aquarius, perhaps more so than necessary. You might have a tendency to blow them out of proportion and think they're worse than they are. Try to make a special effort to be objective.

**Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20**  
Today you could look in the mirror and panic about your appearance, Pisces. You might be feeling a little under the weather and look a little tired. Nonetheless, you probably look a lot better than you think you do. Don't fall into the trap of blowing every little flaw out of proportion. A little rest is probably all you need in order to look like yourself again.

**Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20**  
Your artistic abilities could seem a bit blocked today, Aries. You could be anxious to complete a half-finished project, but at this point you may have no idea where to go with it. Don't panic! Do something else for a day or two and ideas will probably flow as if by magic. If you don't have a tight deadline, there's no rush to complete the work now.

**Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21**  
Today you could have a strong desire to get out and socialize, Taurus. You could well spend a lot of time on the phone trying to reach some friends, but not have much luck with it. If they're busy, a frustrating game of phone tag could result. You might try just dropping by. Even if he or she can't see you right then, you can make arrangements for later.

**Gemini: May 22 - June 21**  
Today you could receive an invitation to a social event that you'll really want to attend, Gemini. People could be there who might turn out to be important contacts. Nonetheless, you might find that other responsibilities interfere with your plans, and experience a wave of disappointment.

**Cancer: June 22 - July 22**  
An opportunity to travel to a place you've always wanted to visit, perhaps for business reasons, could come your way today, Cancer. This could be very exciting, but you might have some difficulty making the arrangements. Flights could be full, hotels too costly, and responsibilities at home might need attention.

**Leo: July 23 - Aug 23**  
Daydreams full of adventure, perhaps involving travel, could take up a lot of your time today, Leo. You're probably bored with your situation and longing to do something to break your routine. You might have no idea how you can escape from everything right now. Don't force it. Spend the afternoon in a place you don't usually visit.

**Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22**  
Your desire to see a romantic partner could be very strong today, Virgo. However, if you ask, you might be turned down. Don't jump to the conclusion that your friend doesn't want to see you. If he or she says there are responsibilities to attend to, believe it! You might have to wait until another day, but that's probably the worst that will happen.

**Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23**  
Overindulgence in food and drink over the past few days could be causing you to feel a little out of sorts today, Libra. You might even wonder if the fun was worth it! A little careful attention to yourself will have you back to normal in no time. Don't be surprised, however, if another opportunity to live it up presents itself! Take care.

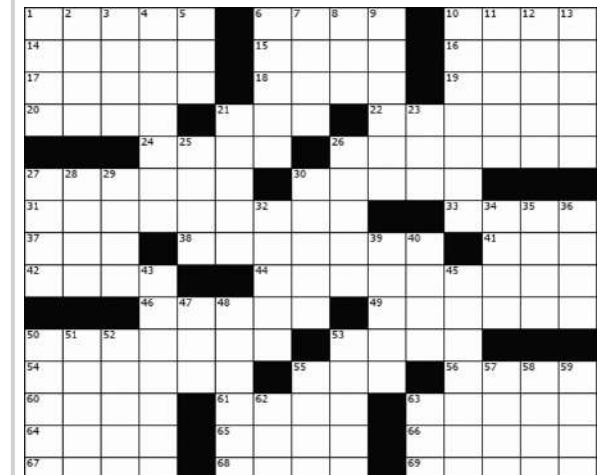
**Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22**  
A moody family member could have you confused, Sagittarius, and you might not be able to discern the best way to find out what's bothering him or her. Don't overanalyze the situation. The best way is probably just to come right out and tactfully speak your mind.

**Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 21**  
A moody family member could have you confused, Sagittarius, and you might not be able to discern the best way to find out what's bothering him or her. Don't overanalyze the situation. The best way is probably just to come right out and tactfully speak your mind.

**Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20**  
You might want to spend most of today outside, Capricorn, perhaps taking a walk through a park. You could have some serious thinking to do and feel the best recourse is to be by yourself for a while. Decisions won't come easily today, so don't try to force them. Just enjoy being out in the fresh air. Sometimes things come together more quickly if you forget about them for a while.

### CROSSWORD

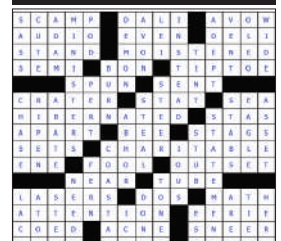
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- ACROSS**
- Inferior
  - Flour factory
  - And
  - Make joyous
  - Between ports
  - Penn or Conery
  - Lawful
  - Cincinnati baseballers
  - Window section
  - Active person
  - Dessert choice
  - Afternoon snooze
  - Correct
  - Hide
  - Come into sight
  - Common contraction
  - Cutting user's tool
  - Knife tools
  - Feel pain
  - Adolescent
  - Pod inhabitant
  - Petition

- Aardvarks
  - Heidi's cousin
  - Dodges
  - Soundrels
  - Employs
  - Verify
  - Compass dir.
  - Fair (hyph.)
  - Benefit
  - Curved doorway
  - TV repeat
  - Ink spot
  - Uncommon
  - Sound loudly
  - Evils
  - Prod
  - The British
- DOWN**
- Join metal
  - Bogus butter
  - Anger
  - Appetizer
  - Lamprey
  - Antoinette
  - Words of understanding (2 wds.)
  - Went first
  - Cowboy's tools
  - Facets
  - Rent contract
  - Christmas visitor
  - Basketball's Shaquille
  - Thick soup
  - Tavern
  - Attentive
  - Diamond weight
  - Urgent acronym
  - Dr. of TV
  - Colorless
  - Hair coloring
  - Advances
  - Was a copycat
  - "The Way We"
  - Brushness
  - Honking birds
  - Roof edge
  - Emphasizes
  - Loafer ornaments
  - "Viva Vegas"
  - Comunion tables
  - Jewish cleric
  - Coral island
  - Bar seat
  - Theater employee
  - Unbleached color
  - Uttered
  - Certain
  - Walllet fillers
  - Sharp knock
  - Batter's stat

### SOLUTION 262





## PBKS vs GT: Could be one of IPL's hottest battles

Mumbai, Apr 07:

Gujarat Titans' lethal pace attack is all set to ask some probing questions to the dynamic Punjab Kings top-order when the two teams lock horns in an IPL match on Friday. In terms of composition and balance, both Gujarat and Punjab are very different and that makes for an enticing contest on a Brabourne Stadium track where runs are always on offer. Punjab in their three games have shown that the approach this year would be to go hammer and tongs during the Powerplay overs and set the tempo for the rest of the innings.

In IPL however, there are some intriguing subplots that make it an engaging Friday. It will be a battle between Punjab's costliest buy (apart from skipper Mayank Agarwal's retention) Liam Livingstone and New Zealand's speed merchant Lockie Ferguson.

Having literally terrorised Delhi Capitals' Mandeep Singh with his pace and steep bounce in the earlier game, expect Ferguson to unleash his thunderbolts on Livingstone, who had taken the CSK attack to cleaners in the previous game with his 32-ball-60.

Ferguson and Mohammed Shami make for the most potent new ball pair after the first two



It will be a battle between Punjab's costliest buy (apart from skipper Mayank Agarwal's retention) Liam Livingstone and New Zealand's speed merchant Lockie Ferguson.

weeks. With head coach Anil Kumble they would like to devise a strategy to keep Punjab Kings under check during the Powerplay overs.

Hardik Pandya again bowling full tilt and touching 140 clicks also adds to the potency of the Gujarat attack but their batting still looks a bit questionable save Shubman Gill and skipper Pandya.

While senior openers Shikhar Dhawan and skipper Agarwal are yet to make significant contributions, it would be an onerous job against the Titans attack.

It is the middle-order of Bhanuka Rajapaksa,

Livingstone and newcomer Jitesh Sharma, that is expected to provide fireworks with M Shikhar Khan and Odean Smith at the rear.

They would like to target the weak Indian bowlers like Rahul Tewatia and Varun Aaron, who is known for leaking runs in all these years of IPL. However where Gujarat might face problems is in the batting front. Shubman Gill is the only assured batter they have till now.

In the first match against Lucknow, they didn't have to chase much and the second game saw them defend 170 odd purely be-

cause of their opening bowling depth.

Vijay Shankar as a top-order batter has looked far from convincing and Matthew Wade hasn't yet hit the rhythm although he is capable of big hits.

Abhinav Manohar is very new at this stage while Tewatia and David Miller aren't exactly known for their consistency.

In case of Punjab, they have two match-winning bowlers in Kagiso Rabada and leg-spinner Rahul Chahar but Arshdeep Singh, debutant Vaibhav Arora and Livingstone himself did a commendable job against Chennai.

**We need to be ruthless in finishing off games, says MI coach Jayawardene**



Pune, Apr 07 (PTD):

Mumbai Indians have endured a torrid start to the season, losing three games in a row and the team's head coach Mahela Jayawardene feels the five-time IPL champions need to adopt a ruthless attitude to finish off games.

A lacklustre MI lost by five wickets to Kolkata Knight Riders here on Wednesday night to slump to their third consecutive defeat of the season. The Rohit Sharma-led side had lost to Delhi Capitals and Rajasthan Royals in its opening two games.

"We were in the game pretty much all the way but then in the last few games we have not been ruthless enough to close games off," Jayawardene said at the virtual press conference.

"It's always tough when you have a start like this but we need to look at the positives. We are playing some good cricket but it's just that we are not closing games off. All three games we were in it but we were not able to finish it off."

"So these are concerns, specially with the ball we are not executing at the back end under pressure. Our execution has been poor so we need to make sure we brush up on that," he added.

## In-form India to start favourite against Korea in Women WC quarterfinal



Pocheefstroom, Apr 07 (PTD):

Unbeaten so far in the tournament, a confident India team is expected to steamroll lower-ranked Korea and seal the semifinal spot in the Junior Women Hockey World Cup, here on Friday.

The Indians finished on top of Pool D with maximum nine points from three victories. After humbling Wales (5-1), Germany (2-1) and Malaysia (4-0), India go into the quarterfinals with a superior 11-2 record. On the contrary,

with just three points in their kitty, Korea finished second in Pool C on account of a better goal difference.

Korea's pool was headed by Argentina with maximum nine points while Uruguay and Austria lost out on a quarterfinal berth on goal difference after finishing with same points as their Asian rival.

With three Olympians in the squad in skipper Salima Tete and strikers Sharmila Devi and Lalremsiami, the Indians looked a completely domi-

nant side, rich with big match experience.

Salima has led the side from the front with her superlative runs from the flanks, creating chances for the forward line, while Sharmila and Lalremsiami too lived up to their expectations with their attacking game up-front. But the star of India's performance so far in the tournament has been young striker Mumtaz Khan, who has scored five goals so far, including a hat-trick against Malaysia on Wednesday.

## Kumble felt he was unfairly treated: Vinod Rai

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTD):

Anil Kumble felt that he was treated "unfairly" and forced to resign as head coach of the Indian team but then skipper Virat Kohli opined that players were not happy with his "intimidating" style of enforcing discipline, according to former Committee of Administrators head Vinod Rai.

In his recently published book, 'Not Just A Nightwatchman: My Innings with BCCI', published by 'Rupa', Rai touched upon various issues that he dealt with during his 33-month tenure.

One of the issues and perhaps the most controversial, was when Kohli complained about his breakdown of relationship with Kumble, who announced his resignation publicly just after Champions Trophy in 2017. Kumble was handed a one-year contract in 2016. "In my conversations



with the captain and team management, it was conveyed that Kumble was too much of a disciplinarian and hence the team members were not too happy with him," Rai has written in his book.

"I had spoken to Virat Kohli on the issue and he did mention that the younger members of the team felt intimidated by the way he worked with them," Rai reveals that the then Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, VVS Laxman

had recommended Kumble's re-appointment.

"Soon, the CAC met in London and interacted with the two separately in a bid to resolve the issue. After deliberations over three days, they decided to recommend Kumble's reappointment as the head coach."

However it was evident from what followed was that Kohli's point of view was given more respect and hence Kumble's position became untenable.

"We had long conversations with Kumble after he had returned from the UK. He was obviously upset about the manner in which the entire episode had panned out. He felt he had been unfairly treated and a captain or team should not be given so much importance.

"It was the duty of the coach to bring discipline and professionalism into the team and as a senior, his views should have been respected by the players."

## Top pistol shooters Vijay, Jitu back in national squad



New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTD):

Olympic silver medallist Vijay Kumar and World Championship silver winner Jitu Rai on Thursday returned to the national squad after being away for a prolonged period.

Vijay, who claimed a historic silver in 25m rapid fire pistol event at the 2012 London Olympics, made a comeback to competitive shooting after five years when he participated in the national championships last November at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range here.

The 36-year-old shooter, who is now a deputy superin-

tendent of police in his home state of Himachal Pradesh, had been dogged by a recurring shoulder injury since winning the Olympic medal. Asian Games gold medallist Rai, 34, took part in the national shooting selection trials at the Madhya Pradesh Academy last month. In the 50-metre free pistol, Rai, a multiple-time World Cup gold medallist, shot 562 to top the field. He was one point ahead of Saurabh Chaudhary. Subedar Major Rai, who has been training at the Army Marksman Unit in Mhow, has placed the 2024 Olympics as one of his major goals.

## I think I am most surprised by this innings: Pat Cummins



Pune, Apr 07 (PTD):

He wanted to hit every delivery out of the park but even by his own big-hitting standards, Australian Test captain Pa Cummins is "more surprised" than any-

one else after his 15-ball-56 not out blitzkrieg for KKR in an IPL match against Mumbai Indians. Regarded as one of the world's best in contemporary cricket, Cummins smashed a record-equalling fastest fifty to

power Kolkata Knight Riders' to a comfortable five-wicket win over MI here on Wednesday. Cummins reached his half-century in just 14 balls, to equal KL Rahul, to help KKR chase down MI's total of 161 with 24 balls to spare. "I probably think I'm most surprised by that innings. I'm glad that it came off. I was thinking of having a swing if it was in my area. Wasn't trying to overthink it," Cummins said. "When I come into bat, it is at the end of the game. So I have a clear thinking to just clear the ropes. Whenever I am facing him (Jasprit Bumrah), I just try to hit as hard as possible and fortunately it came off few times." He is the world's finest fast bowler but Cummins is no mug with the bat and he proved his worth on Wednesday night, as KKR, needing 35 from 30 balls, got them all in just six deliveries with the Australian Test captain hitting six sixes and four boundaries during his explosive knock.

## Sindhu, Srikanth storm into quarters; Sen, Bansod out of Korea Open

Suncheon, Apr 07 (PTD):

Ace Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth progressed to the quarterfinals but Lakshya Sen was ousted after losing his second round match at the Korea Open Super 500 badminton tournament here on Thursday.

World number seven Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, got the better of world number 26 Japan's Aya Ohori 21-15 21-10 in a lop-sided contest to take her head-to-head count against the Japanese to an overwhelming 12-0.

The third seeded Indian will next face familiar foe in Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan, whom she had defeated in the final of the Swiss Open last month. The former world champion, who has claimed two Super 300 titles this season at Syed Modi International and Swiss



Open, enjoys a 16-1 lead in 17 meetings against the world number 11 Thai. World championship silver medallist Srikanth saw off Israel's Misha Zilberman 21-18 21-6 to set up a clash with local hope and former world no 1 Son Wan ho. Commonwealth Games silver medallists and world no

seven pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty defeated Singapore's Hee Yong Kai Terry and Loh Kean Hean 21-15 21-19 in 36 minutes to also advance to the quarterfinals. World championship bronze medallist Sen, ranked ninth in the world, went down 20-22 9-21 to world

number 24 Shesar Hiren Rhustavito in 33 minutes. The country's other fast-rising shuttler Malvika Bansod also failed to advance to the quarterfinals as she was brushed aside by Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong 8-21 14-21 in a second round women's singles clash that lasted 39 minutes.

## Du Plessis has earned respect in RCB change room: Maxwell

Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTD):

Australian dasher Glenn Maxwell is confident that new RCB captain Faf du Plessis will do a great job with the franchise as the respect he garners from his colleagues in the change room is there to be seen.

Maxwell, who missed the first few games due to his marriage, is expected to play against Mumbai Indians on April 9. However the big-hitting Australian was effusive in his praise for the former Proteas skipper who has replaced Virat Kohli as the skipper this season.

"We think he's (Du Plessis) going to do a great job for the franchise and even the way he started, you can tell he's got the respect of everyone in the room. Not only does he lead by



example, with his actions, but he also performs really well," Maxwell told RCB 'Bold Diaries'.

But Maxwell made it clear that it's not just Du Plessis but even the other seniors need to help the skipper out as part of leadership group for smooth functioning.

"To have a guy of his quality and caper up the top of the order is something that's great for the franchise. And hopefully, the senior guys around can help him out as well," he said.

"So, it's not just him shouldering all that workload we'd potentially have seen in the previous years at RCB. To have, I suppose, a solid leadership group behind him to sort of feel like it's not just him out there having to shoulder all the load.



## MCD began journey from historic Town Hall

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

The erstwhile unified Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) had come into being exactly 64 years ago and began its eventful journey from the historic Town Hall at Chandni Chowk. The over 150-year-old Town Hall in the heart of Delhi was the power centre of the civic body whose first mayor was freedom fighter Aruna Asaf Ali, and which administered a majority portion of the national capital.

The MCD had come into being on April 7, 1958, evolving out of the municipal administration system that began around 1860s. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi had come into being under the Municipal Corporation Act, 1957, passed by Parliament.

According to old documents and reports accessed by PTI, and views of many experts, the MCD was modelled on the lines of the 'Bombay Municipal Corporation', when it was being envisaged by politicians around a decade after India's independence.

The first municipal commissioner of Delhi, P R Nayak, had also taken charge on April 7, 1958, and his tenure ended on December 15, 1960, according to an old succession board hung in the old commissioner's office at the



View of the over 150-year-old Town Hall, at Chandni Chowk, in New Delhi, Thursday.

Town Hall. From 80 councillors in 1958, through successive delimitation, the number of wards was expanded to 134 and eventually to 272 in 2007. On Thursday, when PTI visited this iconic landmark, municipal staff present there were unaware of the day's significance, but expressed hope that new unified civic body will "bode well for the financial health of the corporation" which was not doing well since it was trifurcated into North Delhi, South Delhi and East Delhi municipal corporations in 2011. While the NDMC and SDMC have 104 wards

each, the EDMC has 64 wards, spanning 272 wards across the city. After a decade, Delhi is now again set to get a unified civic body, as Parliament on Tuesday passed the Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, with the Rajya Sabha giving its nod to it through a voice vote after negating all amendments sought by the opposition. The number of seats in the merged municipal corporation of Delhi will not exceed 250, and a special officer may be appointed to oversee its function till the first meeting of the body is held

under the reunification law, according to the bill. The MCD was set up after amalgamating several local bodies and administrative committees, according to archival records. Lutyen's Delhi area governed by the New Delhi Municipal Committee (later New Delhi Municipal Council) and Delhi Cantonment areas were kept out of the ambit of the new corporation. The headquarters of the newly-formed civic body was at the historic Town Hall in Chandni Chowk area, in which the earlier Delhi municipality was also housed, and where the MCD was housed from 1958 till about 2009 before moving base to the swanky Civic Centre in front of the New Delhi railway station.

## MP govt launches medical knowledge sharing mission

To improve health facilities

hopal, Apr 07 (PTI):

Madhya Pradesh Minister Vishwas Sarang on Thursday inaugurated "medical knowledge sharing mission" to better health facilities and upgrade knowledge of doctors and medical students with latest technologies.

Speaking to reporters on the occasion, the state medical education minister said under the mission, memoranda of understanding will be signed with hospitals, medical centres and research facilities across

the country and abroad. The mission aims to facilitate new techniques, knowledge and valuable research findings among other things to doctors and medical students in the state, Sarang said. Under the mission, memoranda of understanding will be signed with renowned hospitals, medical centres, research facilities across India and abroad to upgrade medical knowledge with latest techniques, researches and treatment procedures, he said.

## 'Over 30 per cent Indian districts vulnerable to extreme forest fires'

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

More than 30 per cent of Indian districts are vulnerable to extreme forest fires, said a study released on Thursday, warning such wildfires have risen by over 10 times in the last two decades. The study conducted by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), highlighted that in the last month alone, significant forest fires were reported in states like Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The CEEW study also found that Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra are the most prone to high-intensity forest fire events caused by

rapid change in the climate. "As global temperatures rise, instances of high-intensity forest fires have surged across the globe, especially in areas with dry weather.

Over the last decade, there has been a sharp rise in forest fires across the country. Some of these fires have had severe impacts on fragile ecosystems and local economies.

"We need to strengthen our predictive and forest fire alert systems further to limit the damage caused by forest fires. State and district-level government officials must also prioritise enhancing the capacity of frontline forest officials and forest-dependent communities to prevent forest fires.

Scaling up training on

creating effective forest fire lines and using drones, especially in known forest fire hotspots, could significantly reduce loss and damage" said Arunabha Ghosh, CEO, CEEW.

The study also found that over the last two decades, more than 89 per cent of total forest fire incidents have been recorded in districts that are traditionally drought-prone or have been witnessing weather swapping trends i.e., flood-prone areas turning drought-prone and vice-versa.

Kandhamal (Odisha), Sheopur (Madhya Pradesh), Udham Singh Nagar (Uttarakhand), and East Godavari (Andhra Pradesh) are some of the forest fire hotspot districts that are also showing a swapping trend from flood

to drought.

"Sharp increase in forest fires over the last two decades calls for a significant course correction in our approach to managing forest fires. The recent incident at Sariska forest reserve, the fourth such incident in a week, shows why managing forest fires in a changing climate scenario is a national imperative.

"Going forward, we should recognise forest fires as a natural hazard and earmark more funds for mitigation-related activities. Restoration of forest lands and efficient mitigation of forest fires could also help protect the food systems and livelihoods of communities traditionally dependant on forests, said Abinash Mohanty, Programme Lead, CEEW.

## RISKING LIVES



Commuters travel in a ferry as they cross the Brahmaputra river, in Guwahati, Thursday.

Jamia Professor Bribery Case

CBI officer accused of seeking Rs 60 lakh bribe; agency orders probe

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI) In a new twist to the bribery case involving Jamia Millia Islamia professor Khalid Moin, the CBI has started an inquiry into allegations by an accused that its officer had demanded Rs 60 lakh bribe to let him off the case.

Sachin Sachdeva, the owner of Vyom Architects who was arrested in the case, claimed before a special court that a CBI officer, believed to be posted in the Special Unit of the agency, had demanded Rs 60 lakh bribe for not naming him in the case and had already collected Rs 10 lakh through his conduit.

## RELIEF TO INDIAN STUDENTS

### Ukrainian medical varsities allow foreign students get hands-on training in own countries

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI)

Ukrainian medical universities have allowed their foreign students to gain practical training at hospitals and clinics in their own countries, giving relief to thousands of Indian students who have fled the war-hit nation. The universities have also urged foreign governments to provide practical training opportunities to their students so that they can gain requisite skills.

After being shut due to the deteriorating security situation in Ukraine in the face of intense the Russian offensive, univer-

sities of the eastern European country have begun online classes since last month. But the major cause of concern for foreign students was gaining clinical expertise in absence of practical classes.

Coming to the rescue of such students, several hospitals and private clinics here have started offering practical classes and internships.

"In the current situation in Ukraine, students are taught with the help of technologies. But students do not have the opportunity to learn practical skills directly at the clinical departments of the

University and treatment and prevention facilities of the Dnipro city," a Dnipro State Medical University (DMSU) said in a notice.

The DSMU has appealed to public institutions of the countries of foreign students "to provide medical practice opportunities for students of the university in the spring semester 2021/2022 academic year in public and private clinics in your country".

The V N Karazin Kharkiv National University has also issued a letter requesting the governments in other countries to allow its students get practical training in

private as well as government colleges. "We ask local government officials to allow all international students of Ukrainian universities to go through practical works in local private or government hospitals as depends on student's courses in their country," the letter read.

The university stated that if the students can furnish a certificate indicating the amount of acquired practical skills, signed by a doctor on a form of a medical institution, it will be considered as practical training for the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year.

## Vegetable prices soar due to high transportation cost

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI)

Vegetable prices in Delhi and adjoining areas have shot up due to an increase in the transportation cost following the fuel price hike, leaving the customers as well as the sellers struggling.

Vegetable sellers say they are facing shrinking profits and reduced sales as due to the increased transportation cost and the ultimate hike in the buying price, they are bound to sell vegetables at a higher price, which means either a low margin for them or limited sales.

Dharmendra Singh, a vegetable vendor in

Lajpat Nagar, said the prices of vegetables have gone up.

"Tomatoes are now being sold for Rs 40 per kg whereas earlier, the price was between Rs 25 and Rs 30. Bottle gourd is now being sold for Rs 40 per kg. Even the price of potatoes has gone up. It is now available for Rs 25 per kg. Earlier, it used to be sold for Rs 10 per kg.

"The prices of most of the vegetables have gone up. We hardly make any profit. We buy the vegetables paying a fixed price from the market. Another problem is that we do not get to choose the vegetables at the mandis. We are given a fixed slot and

some times, inferior quality vegetables get mixed up. With the prices going up, people have also reduced the quantity of vegetables they buy," he said.

Akhilesh, another vendor in Lajpat Nagar, said the prices of fruits too have also gone up.

"It is the summer season and watermelons are always in demand. Earlier, we used to sell it for Rs 20 or Rs 25 but now, it is being sold for Rs 30. We get watermelons for Rs 27 from the mandis, so we hardly make any profit," he said. Some vendors said they have stopped giving coriander leaves and green chilies to customers for free.

## NATURE'S GIFT



Tulips bloom inside Asias largest tulip garden on the foothills of Zabarwan Mountains overlooking Dal Lake, in Srinagar, Thursday.

## FISSURES IN CONG

### Thomas announces decision to take part in CPI(M) seminar

Congress warns of stern action

Kochi (Ker), Apr 07 (PTI)

Defying the edict of the Congress high command, senior party leader and former union minister K V Thomas on Thursday said he would take part in a seminar being organised by the ruling CPI(M) as part of its ongoing party congress in Kannur, but made it clear that he would not quit the party and remain as a Congressman till his last breath.

An agitated Congress condemned the anti-party act of Thomas and said he will face stern action for violating the order of the high command. The party high command had directed both Thomas and Thiruvananthapuram MP



K.V. Thomas

Shashi Tharoor not to attend the CPI(M) seminar considering the protest by party's state unit which is at loggerheads with the Left government in the state over its move to implement semi-high speed railway project. Announcing his decision at a press conference here, Thomas, who held coveted

posts like union minister and minister in the state government when the Congress was in power both at the Centre and in the state, alleged that he was humiliated to the core and subjected to harsh social media campaigns by certain partymen. "I have decided to take part in the seminar. I will go there. I am not going to take part in a political programme of the CPI(M) but in a national seminar. Issue is more important for me, not politics," said the senior leader, who had a strained relationship with the party leadership after he was denied tickets to contest in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and in the State Assembly polls held last year. Justifying his decision to attend the seminar in Kannur, Thomas said various Congress leaders in-

cluding Rahul Gandhi had taken part in several programmes in connection with the Marxist party and so there was nothing wrong for him to attend the programme on centre-state relations, which has great national significance in the present political scenario.

Gandhi had even led an election campaign for the CPI(M) in Coimbatore recently and then why objection was raised against this seminar and his participation, the multi-time MP said. Thomas, once a close confidant of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, said Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin is also taking part in the seminar with him and sought to know whether the Congress leadership would decide not to have any further relationship with the DMK supremo over that.



**BRIEF**



A devotee holding a bunch of bananas performs rituals on the occasion of Chaiti Chhath Puja at the bank of river Brahmaputra, in Guwahati, Thursday.

**Watery grave**

■ **Jashpur:** Two children, including a girl, drowned while bathing at a pond in a village in Jashpur district, police said on Thursday. The incident took place on Wednesday afternoon when the children, Gayatri Singh (10) and Anurag Yadav (9), residents of Bokhi Bartoli village, had gone to the pond to take a bath, an official here said.

**Fire**

■ **Nagpur:** A fire erupted at a saw mill in Lakadganj area of Maharashtra's Nagpur city on Thursday, partially damaging 10 establishments, while no casualties were reported in the incident, an official said. The blaze broke out at a saw mill on Old Bhandara Road around 8.20 am, and it spread to 10 establishments, which were partially damaged, chief fire officer of NMC Rajendra Uchake said.

**Lifer**

■ **Shravasti:** A court in Uttar Pradesh's Shravasti district on Thursday convicted a woman of strangulating her children to death and awarded her life imprisonment. On March 27, 2016, Meera Devi, wife of Pradeep Verma and a resident of Madhavapur village, choked her sons Anurag (4) and one-year-old Aryan to death with bare hands, prosecutor K. P. Singh told PTI.

**Resign**

■ **Amaravati:** All 24 Ministers of the Andhra Pradesh cabinet on Thursday submitted their resignation to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy ahead of the proposed reorganisation of the Council of Ministers. The incumbent Ministers put-in their papers at the meeting of the Cabinet, which was their last, official sources said. They remained in their posts for exactly 34 months.

**Mishap**

■ **New Tehri:** Two people were killed and three others injured after their vehicle fell into a deep gorge here, officials said on Thursday. The passengers were returning from Vikas Nagar late on Wednesday night when the driver lost control and the vehicle plunged into a 250 metre deep gorge on Bel-Parogi motor road, killing two persons on the spot, Dhanolti SDM Lakshmi Raj Chauhan said.

Weather	
High	38
Low	26
MARKET	
NIFTY	17,639.55
SENSEX	59,034.95
BULLION	
GOLD	51,960
SILVER	66,700

**Rs 1 CRORE BRIBERY CASE**

## CBI gets sanction to prosecute ex-CMD of HSCL

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

The government has accorded sanction to the CBI to prosecute Moyukh Bhaduri, former chairman-cum-managing director of Hindustan Steelworks Construction Limited (HSCL), in a Rs 1-crore bribery case in the construction work of National Sports University in Manipur, officials said on Thursday.

The CBI had filed a charge sheet against Bhaduri and other accused on January 5 under IPC sections related to criminal conspiracy and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act even as further probe into the allegations against him was underway.

The government has now given the go-ahead to prosecute Bhaduri in the case registered two years ago, they said, adding that the special court has been apprised of this development clearing the way for taking cognisance of charges against the official.

Besides Bhaduri, the CBI has named in the charge sheet Zillion Infraprojects Pvt. Ltd MD Anant Saxena, Vijay Nirman Company Pvt Ltd's Managing Director V Ajay Kumar and Director N Krishna Rao, authorised signatory of NT Enterprises in Imphal T Nimai Singh, and Chalke alias CH Srinivas, a contractual employee of the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.

The agency had carried out searches in New Delhi, Kolkata, Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad after registering the FIR on July 2,

2020, they said. The alleged corruption pertained to work related to the sports university for which tender was floated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2015, they said.

During the tendering process, Chalke had introduced Rao to Bhaduri and Saxena.

After the selection of HSCL as project management consultant for the university work, Bhaduri and Saxena allegedly demanded a bribe of Rs 1 crore, besides 5.5 per cent of the total project cost, from Rao and Kumar of Vijay Nirman Co Pvt Ltd for providing an undue favour in the award of construction work for NSU, Imphal.

The CBI filed the FIR after conducting a preliminary enquiry into the matter and had obtained sanc-

tion to proceed against Bhaduri from competent authorities.

During the enquiry, it emerged that Chalke played an important role in convincing Rao to give an illegal gratification of Rs 1 crore to Bhaduri for getting the work for National Sports University, the FIR had alleged.

Rao and Kumar allegedly arranged the money from T Nimai Singh of Imphal-based NT Enterprises by involving him in the work, it said.

Singh, on the instructions of Rao, transferred a total of Rs 55 lakh in May 2015 in three tranches - Rs 25 lakh on May 13, Rs 20 lakh on May 25 and Rs 10 lakh on May 27 - into the account of Zillion Infra Projects owned by Saxena, it alleged.

## CBI makes first arrests in Birbhum killings

■ **Nabs four suspects from Mumbai**

Rampurhat (WB), Apr 07 (PTI):

CBI sleuths on Thursday nabbed four West Bengal residents from Mumbai for their alleged involvement in the Birbhum killings, an officer of the agency said.

These were the first arrests made by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) since it took over the probe into the March 21 killings in Bogtui village as per the Calcutta High Court's order.

The four accused had fled from Bogtui to the Maharashtra capital soon after the killings, and they were apprehended from their hideout early on Thursday morning.

"Of the four arrested accused, two persons - identified as Bappa and Shabu Sheikh - were named in

the FIR lodged in connection with the killings. We will produce them before a court in Mumbai and plea for a transit remand to West Bengal," he said.

Eight people were burnt alive, and one succumbed to injuries later, after as-

sailants firebombed several houses in the village hours after the murder of local TMC leader Bhadu Sheikh. A Special Investigation Team constituted by the state government was earlier probing the case.

## NITI Aayog to roll out 'Battery Swapping Policy'

New Delhi: Government think tank NITI Aayog is likely to roll out a 'Battery Swapping Policy' by December this year, a senior government official said on Thursday. "The Battery Swapping Policy is likely to be rolled out by December," Sudhendu Jyoti Sinha, adviser (Infrastructure Connectivity-Transport and Electric Mobility), NITI Aayog told PTI. Sinha also said that the Aayog is working on a proposal to prod railways to set up electric vehicle charging stations at railway stations in cities whose population is more than 10 lakhs. The policy was announced by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her 2022-23 Budget speech and is being prepared by NITI Aayog. "Considering the constraint space in urban areas for setting up (electric vehicles) charging stations, a battery swapping policy will be brought out and interoperability standards will be formulated," Sitharaman had said. She had stated that the private sector will be encouraged to set up sustainable business models for battery or energy service and this will improve efficiency in the EV (electric vehicle) ecosystem.

## Kailash-Mansarovar yatra unlikely to resume this year

Pithoragarh, Apr 07 (PTI):

The resumption of the Kailash-Mansarovar yatra, which was suspended after COVID-19 broke out two years ago, looks uncertain this year too as the nodal agency for the pilgrimage has received no instructions from the government regarding its preparations.

Normally, the Ministry of External Affairs holds a meeting with the Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) Limited, the nodal agency for the yatra, and the Pithoragarh district administration in January itself to discuss the preparations for the pilgrimage. The yatra which goes through the Lipulekh Pass in Pithoragarh district was suspended in 2020 after the pandemic struck, and the suspension contin-

ued through 2021. With a drop in COVID-19 cases in recent months, officials were hoping that the yatra might begin this year.

"Earlier, preparations for the yatra used to begin from January onwards after receiving instructions from the external affairs ministry, but this year we are still waiting for it. No more time is left for preparations now," KMVN general manager A P Bajpai said.

"Till date, we have received no instructions regarding the yatra from anywhere," Pithoragarh District Magistrate Ashish Chauhan added.

"Even if we receive the instructions now, it will be difficult to meet the deadline as the yatra begins from the first week of June," he said.

## 'Decriminalisation of minor offences welcome step'

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

Decriminalisation of minor offences is a welcome step as it will help unclutter the criminal justice system in the country and the element of criminality should be replaced by the imposition of civil liability, legal experts said on Thursday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked bureaucrats to expedite the decriminalisation of minor offences and violations and in a letter dated April 4, Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba has asked the secretaries to initiate action on certain suggestions made by the prime minister which included reviewing such crimes and accordingly taking action to repeal or amend these provi-

**LEGAL EXPERTS OPINE**

sions in a time-bound manner. Senior advocate and SCBA President Vikas Singh said that decriminalisation of minor offences was a good idea, especially considering how our judicial system is so overburdened. Even in the context of the central government's ease of doing business mantra, he said, every and any step in that (decriminalisation of minor offences) direction is always welcome. Echoing similar views, another senior advocate Vikas Pahwa said, There are various minor offences which are clogging the system and the government can think and try to decriminalise them. We have to see the larger picture. Because of these offences, major of-

fences are the ones which get delayed, where trials are pending for a long time because the courts don't have the time to deal with them.

Advocate Ruby Singh Ahuja, Senior Partner, Karanjawala & Co stated that such a move will help promote the government's endeavour of making the country a business-friendly destination.

Decriminalization of minor offences is a step to ease the backlog in courts and to take off the burden of overloaded prison infrastructure. Legislation must be brought in to deal with minor acts and omissions differently as compared to serious offences, especially for the corporate world, she said.

## Ganjam tops country in MGNREGA jobs

Berhampur, Apr 07 (PTI)

Odisha's Ganjam district has topped the country in providing 100 days work to rural households under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) during 2021-22, a senior official said.

As many as 1,29,290 households in the district were provided 100 days employment in the 2021-22 fiscal, followed by Barmer (1,19,938) and Nagaur (1,12,903) in Rajasthan.

Over 4,00,000 migrant workers had returned to Ganjam when a national lockdown was imposed in 2020 to check the spread of coronavirus. Several workers stayed back when the workers returned to their workplaces, leading

to an increase in demand for MGNREGS jobs, the official said. The district in south Odisha has also generated 2,99,00,497 person-days of work under the rural employment scheme during the period, ranking fourth in the country.

Ganjam collector Vijay Amruta Kulange thanked the team of the district rural development agency (DRDA) and block officials for achieving the first position in the country in providing 100 days of work under MGNREGA.

He also asked them to maintain the same spirit in 2022-23. The jobs created under the MGNREGA has helped rural people to sustain their livelihood at the time of the pandemic, said Shinde Dattatraya Bhausaheb, project director, DRDA.

## ATTEMPT FOR GUINNESS RECORD



Children with special needs perform during an event for the Guinness World Book of Records at Karampura Government School in Amritsar, Thursday.

## Mask mandate may not be necessary for now: Experts

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

Setting at rest fears over Covid restrictions being relaxed, several experts say the two-year stringent mask mandate has led to fatigue and can be removed from public spaces for now just as many countries have done.

While the message around the benefits of masking should continue, it would be wise to lift the mandate and reintroduce it if there is another Covid wave for better compliance, experts said, pointing to the futility of ill-fitting masks and lack of community consensus on the matter.

The issue is of compliance fatigue, Ramanan Laxminarayan, director of Washington's Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics & Policy, told PTI while noting that many countries around the world have removed mask restrictions.

I would urge messaging around the usefulness of masking in closed spaces, but would not suggest that it needs to be enforced punitively, added Gautam Menon, professor, Departments of Physics and Biology, Ashoka University in Haryana.

The assurance comes as India reports a low number of cases on Thursday

1,033 new coronavirus infections were recorded and also one case of a new Covid strain in Mumbai.

On Wednesday the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) reported India's first case of the Omicron recombinant strain XE. However, IN-SACOG, which monitors genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2 in India, has decided to take up another round of genomic sequencing at a national lab for confirmation.

Recombinant means the genome of XE is a combination of the genomes of the BA.1 and the BA.2 sub-variants of Omicron.

With India seeing the

lowest number of COVID-19 cases in two years, several states, including Delhi, Maharashtra, Punjab and Haryana, have done away with the mandatory use of masks.

Epidemiologist Laxminarayan said it may be necessary for the public to start using masks again in the future if there is another variant and wave. But keeping these requirements in place indefinitely causes the public to not take them seriously. It is therefore better to remove them and then reintroduce them when necessary, Laxminarayan explained.

Scientist and modeller Menon agreed.

**CAG REPORT**

## 55-kmph benchmark to classify trains as 'superfast' quite 'low'

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

The 55-kmph benchmark is quite "low" for classifying trains as "superfast", the CAG has said while highlighting that many such trains run below the minimum speed.

In May 2007, the Indian Railway decided that if the average speed of a train, in both up and down directions, is a minimum of 55 kmph on broad gauge and 45 kmph on metre gauge, it would be treated as a 'superfast'.

In November last year, the Railways had stated the extant policy for categorisation of services into 'super-

fast' stipulates that such trains should have an average end-to-end speed of above 55 kmph.

"The reply is silent on the fact that 123 trains categorised as superfast were actually scheduled for running at an average speed less than 55 kmph fixed under the extant policy," the Comptroller and Auditor General of India stated.

It noted that the "benchmark of 55 kmph for classifying a train as superfast is itself low, given the MPS of rolling stock and sectional speed". The criteria for classifying trains as 'superfast' has not been changed since 2007, the CAG stated.

## ED questions Omar Abdullah in J&K Bank case

■ **NC terms it 'vicious vilification'**

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

The ED questioned NC leader Omar Abdullah on Thursday in connection with the purchase of a building by J&K Bank some 12 years ago when he was Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, a move the party termed a "political exercise" ahead of the Assembly elections in the union territory.

After spending more than five hours at the ED office here in response to summons sent last week, Abdullah told reporters that he had not been accused of anything



and that he had "answered them as much as I could". He would further help them "if they need me", he added.

According to officials, the case pertains to the purchase of a building by the J&K Bank, in which the government has 68 per cent equity, at Bandra Kurla in 2010. A property measuring around 65,000 square feet was acquired at a cost of Rs 172 crores. Sources said the board of directors of

the bank had set up a two-member committee headed by its chairman Haseeb Drabu which recommended the purchase of the property, in which another leading bank was also interested. The purchase was approved by the bank board, and the chief minister had no say in the matter, the sources added.

While Abdullah refused to divulge details about his questioning by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the National Conference (NC) slammed the move as a "vicious vilification" and "fishing expedition" ahead of the Assembly elections expected to be held later this year in Jammu and Kashmir:

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# Green manure enhances inherent fertility; farmer cultivates second crop without fertilizer

## Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** Under the Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana, farmers are being encouraged for crop diversity. In this sequel, the farmers of village Matra have cultivated aromatic rice in their fields.

The innovative initiatives are bearing exciting results. The joy and excitement is clearly visible on the face of farmers as they get better prices for the crop. The most significant outcome is that the inherent fertility of the soil has been enhanced.

The farmers of village Matra did two types of experiments on their fields. The first experiment was organic farming in which they used green manure. Just before the rain, they spread Sunn Seeds (Sunn

Hemp) in the fields. It grew rapidly within a month. Soon after the first rains, the farmers ploughed and levelled the land. In this manner, they prepared the best organic fertilizer. The farmers then cultivated aromatic rice on this land.

It needs to be mentioned here that the excessive use of chemical fertilizers results in deterioration of immunity of the crops. Due to this reason, the farmers had to use pesticides for protecting the crops. The green manure eliminated this problem. The enhanced inherent fertility of the soil not only ensured increased crop yield but also



suppressed the weeds.

The local farmers stated that the normal paddy production range is between 15 to 18 quintals. Under typical conditions, up to 18 quintals are produced.

Farmer Narayan Prasad

Sahu informed that the production of aromatic paddy proved to be a profitable deal. He took two crops successively without using fertilizers due to the increased soil fertility. The produce was sold at the



rate of Rs 2500 per quintal. Also, he found local customers who were ready to purchase the rice at Rs 50 per kg. Sahu has also kept aromatic paddy for his family consumption. Sahu stated that the experience

of using organic manure is wonderful. There is a great demand for organic products in the market.

Local Rural Agriculture Extension Officer Dipankar Mandal said that the department pro-

vided sunn seeds to the farmer. He also took vermi-compost from the society. Two quintals of extra aromatic paddy were cultivated as compared to production by chemical fertilizers. He informed that the farmers are very excited by this experiment and want to practice the same in future also.

Senior Agriculture Extension Officer NP Ahirwal informed that with the government's encouragement, the farmers are adopting innovations and are getting the benefits. This will encourage crop diversity and organic farming as well.

The soil health is a very important factor for a good crop. If the organic component in the soil is 3 percent to 6 percent, the crop yield will be good. After the

rapid use of chemical fertilizers, the organic component in the soil has decreased significantly. Increased use of chemical fertilizers can completely neutralize the fertile potential of the soil. According to research, the biological properties in an orange have reduced by 90% in the last one century.

It happened due to the reduced soil fertility. In Chhattisgarh, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's decision to encourage organic farming will not only reinstate the soil health, but will also maintain food security for the coming generations. This initiative has become even more relevant in view of the emerging chemical fertilizer crisis across the country.

## Visually impaired Lalit to work as customer care executive

### Collector provides laptop to the talented Divyang

## Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** District Administration has provided a laptop to a visually impaired youth. This device will help this talented youth to work as a customer care executive. A few days ago, Lalit Sharma, a visually impaired youth from Khursipar, visited the Collector Jandarshan and apprised Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure about his future plans.

He informed that he has received training for 'customer care executive' and now there are possibilities of online work. He was willing to become em-



ployed and needed a laptop to do this work. The Collector inquired about the nature of his work and his educational background. Considering his application in a sensitive manner, he directed the Industries Department to help the youth through CSR funds of the industries. Later, Vossloh Beekay Casting Limited came forward and offered

to provide a laptop for the youth. Lalit said that a laptop is important for his job as it has a large storage space. He will work with the help of the interactive voice system of the laptop. On Thursday, the Collector presented a laptop and wished him a bright future. Additional Collector Nupur Rashi Panna and GM (DIC) Simon Ekka were also present.

## Public Health Department celebrates 'World Health Day'

### Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** 'World Health Day' was celebrated by BSP's Public Health Department on Thursday at a function organised in Mahatma Gandhi Kala Mandir, K K Singh, ED (P & A) was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Dr Ravindranath, CMO (M & HS) was the Special Guest. K C Tripathi, GM (TSD) presided over the function. Dr R L Kamble was also present at the function.

K K Singh, ED (P & A) in his address emphasised on the importance of 'Safai Mitra' workers in segregating dry and wet waste. He urged the audience to become part of the Swachhata Abhiyan launched by the Government of India and work towards making India among the top-ranked clean nations in



the world. The programme began with lamp lighting and a welcome song. At the outset, Dr G K Dubey, GM (TSD) in his welcome address stated that the theme is 'Our Planet Our Health' this year. Sunil Chaurasia, AGM (Public Health) presented the Annual report highlight-

ing the activities of the Public Health Department.

Cleaning jobs were carried out in the Township on a continuous basis during the trying COVID times. Sanitisation was carried out; Fogging for Dengue and Larvae control was done on a large scale. He appealed to all



residents of the Township to keep dry and wet waste separately.

A play on cleanliness and amiable environment directed by Kaushal Upadhyay was performed during the programme. Dr Ravindranath and Dr Kamble also addressed the gathering. Employees

of the Public Health Department and members of the Skit group were felicitated by Chief Guest K K Singh.

Radhika Srinivasan, GM (TSD) proposed the vote of thanks. Over 300 'Safai mitra' and employees of the Town Services department took part in the programme.

## Contract labour killed in road mishap



## Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** A contract labour of Bhilai Steel Plant was killed in a road mishap which occurred inside the plant premises on Thursday evening. Speeding earth

moving equipment crushed the cyclist labour to death.

The incident occurred around 16:00 hrs on the road between Gas Holder Square to Oxygen Plant 2. Police have lodged an FIR and the body has been sent to the mortuary after preparing an inquest.

The deceased was Leeladhar Swarnakar (53) a resident of Prem Nagar, Camp-2, Chhawani. He worked as a painter for the contractor GP Electricals. He was travelling on a bicycle when a speeding Fowler Crane crushed him to death. He is survived by a son, daughter and family.

## 162 Gauthans inspected on first day of 'Gauthan Pahuch' programme

### Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** On the first day of the 'Gauthan Pahuch', the nodal officers inspected 162 Gauthans of the district. On the second / concluding day, they are scheduled to inspect 150 gauthans. Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure also visited Gauthan to inspect the programme.

He inspected the urban Gauthan located in Durg and the Gauthan located in village Konari. He oversaw the quality of vermicompost at Konari. District Panchayat CEO Ashwini Dewangan and Durg Municipal Commissioner Hareh Mandavi accompanied him during the inspection. Collector interacted



with the women of SHGs at the Gauthans. The women informed the Collector that they are regularly producing cow dung vermicompost. They are maintaining continuity of the vermin-compost production process so that the purchase of cow dung is not hindered.

The Collector took information from the SHGs

about other livelihood activities. The women informed him that they are also engaged in poultry farming. They are getting a production of 50 eggs per day which are sold in Thanaud's hatchery.

They raise Sonali variety chickens. They have received proper training and are able to conduct the activities successfully.



Collector appreciated the women and suggested them to expand the livelihood-oriented activities for increasing their income.

He asked them to work to make their group financially strong. For this purpose, they have to expand the business in view of the potential of the local market. Collector also saw the oil extraction unit. The

women stated that oil produced here is consumed in the village itself.

Everyday people visit here to get oil extracted from oil seeds. The women added that there is enough work for the oil extraction machine. Considering the increased work, the Collector assured to provide another unit of Oil Extraction machine.

He further also inquired about the activities of paddy straw donation etc. During the visit of Urban Gauthan in Durg, Collector oversaw the quality of vermicompost. Along with this, activities like poultry farming are also being conducted under Godhan Nyay Yojana. He also inquired about the implementation of Godhan Nyay Yojana and checked the accounts register.

He interacted with the women of Kalyani Self Help Group and said that the government is developing Gauthans as livelihood oriented centres. He urged the women to expand their livelihood activities so that they can become financially strong and Gauthan becomes a self-supporting institute.

## Scales of pay fixed for BSP employees after wage revision

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** The NJCS Sub Committee has finalised the scales of pay for the SAIL employees after the revision of wages. After stretched discussion, the unions agreed for the highest pay scale of 28500 - 107900 for the S-11 grade. The starting grade S-1 will get a scale of Rs 25070 - 35070.

In the first half of the meeting of NJCS Sub Committee of scale and allied issues, the unions raised the demand to withdraw all the vindictive suspension and transfer orders immediately.

They demanded to finalise the issue of Designation change in NJCS without any delay. They also demanded full arrears and gratuity without any ceiling. The

unions reiterated the demand to renegotiate in NJCS with special additional increment and HRA should be paid as per govt guideline on revised basic pay.

In spite of highest cash collection and net profit, management remained reluctant to share the profit. While discussing the issue of scale, management initially offered Rs 85,574 as the end point of S-11. The union leaders argued that this amount which will still lead to stagnation for majority of the workers. All the unions stuck to the demand of Rs 1,15,000 as the end point.

During discussion of scale, the unions demanded to ensure 3 percent increment on revised actual basic pay retrospectively



for all workers. Later the management placed an offer of Rs 90,785 as their last proposal. But all the trade unions unitedly put the logic of stagnation and rejected the proposal. Under the pressure of unions, the management increased the proposal to Rs 96,314. This offer was also far short of the demands of the workers' side. The union leaders stated that this amount

cannot end the huge perpetual loss due to various types of stagnation. This offer was also rejected by all the trade unions. Thereafter the management went upto Rs 1,00,000.

The unions refused to sign the MoU and continued to bargain firmly. The unions continued to bargain and finally management offered Rs 1,07,900. The unions unanimously accepted this offer and signed the MoU. However, other issues like full arrears from 1-1-2017, additional special increment, ceiling less gratuity and other vital wage-agreement related issues are still pending. The unions opined that wages of contract workers must be settled immediately.

## Children play 'Snakes and Ladders' to overcome vaccine fear

### Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 07:** On the occasion of World Health Day, a unique vaccination camp was organized here at Vishwadeep Senior Secondary School in Durg. With the help of the snakes and ladders game, efforts were made to eliminate the vaccine fear of the children. This camp was organized with support of JCI and Samarthan Centre for Development for the children of 12 to 14 years age group. 300 children were vaccinated in this camp. All the teachers as well as the parents participated in the programme. Team of Urban Health Mission and Samarthan gave information to parents about registration and vaccines.

A selfie zone was created in the school where the children



took selfies with their parents. Apart from this, the children were made aware about Covid 19 through games and activities. MLA Arun Vora, Mayor Dheeraj Bakliwal, BMO Urban RK Khandelwal and DIO BS Banjare were present as special guests. Manisha Khilendra Negi, Roshiva Jain and Urmila played vital role in organising the programme. Another health awareness program at

Panchayat level was organized by Rajiv Yuva Mitran Club in Village Teligundra. The members of Rajiv Yuva Mitran Club made the villagers aware of the prevention of heat stroke. District Panchayat Vice President Ashok Sahu said that due to climate change, human health is getting adversely affected. The possibilities of various diseases are increasing. At present, keeping in view the

possibility of heatstroke, the Health Department, Panchayat Department, Revenue and Disaster and Relief Department along with the members of Rajiv Yuva Mitran Club are doing commendable work for health awareness. Health and Wellness Center Ranitarai RMA Sushma Mishra apprised the villagers in detail about the symptoms, prevention, first aid at home, and treatment in health centres. BMO Dr Ashish Sharma informed that under the guidance of Collector Durg Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure, District Panchayat CEO Ashwani Dewangan, SDM Vipul Gupta, CEO Janpad Panchayat Manish Sahu, awareness programmes are being run in the community for prevention of heat stroke.



## Governor meets PM, discusses 5th schedule, PESA law and other issues

**Demands special package for Bastar and Sarguja divisions**

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Governor Ms Anusuiya Uikey called on the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in New Delhi today. Informing about the present situation of the state the Governor discussed with Prime Minister various problems of tribes of Chhattisgarh and other issues in the state. She requested for the implementation of PESA law in the urban areas falling under the 5th Schedule saying that with the implementation of PESA law tribes will get their constitutional rights. Apart from this, she discussed about making rules regarding PESA law for rural areas. During the discussion, the Governor apprised the Prime Minister about the problems of the tribes. Apprising the Prime Minister about the quantitative errors in the caste names of tribes Ms Uikey said that it was making it difficult for eligible persons to obtain caste certificates. Governor Ms Uikey said that during her visit to dif-



ferent districts of the state, she interacted with the tribes there and got to know their problems. She emphasized many decisions regarding the development of the tribals of the state. She requested that the universities located in tribal dominated districts should be upgraded as Central Tribal University for the benefit of tribal communities. During the discussion, Ms Uikey told that there was also a need to preserve the art culture of the tribes of these areas. For this, she requested that such tribes should be researched and documented so that their

Governor Ms Uikey has also requested Prime Minister Modi to give a special package for proper development of tribals living in Bastar and Sarguja divisions. According to her special package will help expand education and health related facilities in these areas and youth will get employment and tribal community will get better development. Ms Uikey also discussed with the Prime Minister Modi about the Anganwadi workers, Urban Social Workers (USHA) and ASHA workers of the country and said that these workers are dili-

gently performing their work in the rural areas of the country including the state. They have been working continuously even during the COVID situation. While appreciating the work of these workers, Ms Uikey requested Modi to increase their honorarium. The Governor thanked Modi for including four districts of Purvanchal of Uttar Pradesh - Chandauli, Kushinagar, Sant Kabir Nagar, Sant Ravidas Nagar among the tribal districts. The Governor Ms Uikey honored the Prime Minister with a memento and shawl.

### Guv discusses Naxalism, other issues with Union HM

**Raipur:** Chhattisgarh Governor Ms Anusuiya Uikey met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi today. The Governor held discussion with Union Home Minister over Naxal activities and other problems in Naxal affected districts of Chhattisgarh. Ms Uikey said that she visited various districts of the state. She informed the Union Home Minister of the grievances of the people in tribal and rural areas of the state.



Ms Uikey discussed with Shah special package for Bastar and Sarguja divisions. According to her special package would ensure speedy development of the people in such areas.

The Governor said that special package was needed for expansion of health services, promotion of education among youth in such areas and providing employment opportunities to them. The Governor also honoured the Union Home Minister Shah with memento and shawl. The second part of a book titled 'Nai Soch-Nai Pahal', based on the works of Governor was also presented to Union Home Minister.

### COLOURFUL LIGHTING



The temple of Goddess has been decorated with colourful lights on occasion of 'Navratri'.

### Special Mental Health OPD to be organized

**In Raipur and Bilaspur Ayurvedic College Hospital every Friday**

**Central Chronicle News**  
**Raipur, Apr 07:** The special mental health unit has started functioning in Government Ayurvedic Colleges in Raipur and Bilaspur every Friday from April 1, 2022. Special mental

health OPD will be organized at Government Ayurvedic College Hospital located in Raipur and Bilaspur on April 08, like last Friday. Dr. Vijay Sahu, Assistant Director, Directorate of AYUSH said that in the special OPD will be organized every Friday, people suffering from mental health issues would be provided free of cost guidance, suitable treatment and healthy

lifestyle through Ayurveda. Panchkarma services will also be provided to these patients as per the requirement. He said that the initiative has been started in Government Ayurvedic College Hospital, Raipur and Bilaspur from last Friday i.e. on April 01. Free-of-cost guidance and treatment was provided to people suffering from mental health issues in this special OPD.

### CM Baghel to attend the closing ceremony of Shivrinarayan

**Eminent national and regional artists to perform in the ceremony**  
**Competition will be arranged for Manas Singing for Ramayana troupes**

**Raipur, Apr 07:** On the occasion of Ram Navami, a state level singing competition of Ramayana Troupes has been organized from 8 to 10 April at Shivrinarayan, a famous pilgrimage site in Janjgir-Champa district. On this occasion, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will attend the closing ceremony of the competition and

will inaugurate various development works under Ram Van Gaman tourism circuit. During the competition, eminent artists of the country and the state will also perform Manas singing. According to the information received from the Department of Culture, in this three-day event, the vocal nightingale of Chhattisgarh, Padmashree Mamta Chandrakar will perform on April 8. Mumbai's famous playback singer Anuradha Paudwal will perform on April 9. Jas Geet Samrat Dilip Shadangi, alumni of Music University Khairagarh will perform on April 10. A dance drama and hymn based on

the Ram-Shabri episode will be presented by Samrat Padmashree Anup Jalota. In the state level Manas singing competition being organized in Shivrinarayan, about 350 artists from selected Manas circles of 25 districts will give their performances in the state level competition on 8-9 and 10 April. At the conclusion of the competition, on April 10, Chief Minister Mr. Baghel will give prizes to the Ramayana troupes that come first three places in the competition. The first prize will be given for Rs 5 lakh, the second prize will be given for Rs 3 lakh and the third prize will be Rs 2 lakh.

### Shivraj to campaign in Khairagarh today

**Central Chronicle News**

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh will be on day-long visit to Chhattisgarh on Friday to campaign in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Komal Janghel in the Khairagarh by-elections scheduled to be held on April 12. According to the information received, Shivraj Singh Chouhan would be arriving at Raipur Airport on Friday afternoon. He would reach Khairagarh in Helicopter from Airport. As per the scheduled declared, the MP Chief

Minister Chouhan would be addressing public meeting at Salhevara Khairagarh and at village Kopebhanta before returning back to Bhopal in the evening. BJP has speeded up the campaign for the Khairagarh by-elections. After Prahlad Patel and Faggan Singh Kulaste, the Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is the third senior leader from neighbouring Madhya Pradesh to campaign for Khairagarh by-elections to woo the electoral, particularly, the voters from Other Backward Communities in the region.

### Commercial Tax (Registration) Department saw record revenue collection

**Of Rs 1955.95 cr in the year 2021-22**  
**23.06% increase as compared to last year**  
**Positive environment created by the steps taken by the government**

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Commercial Tax (Registration) Department saw a record revenue collection of Rs 1955 crore 95 lakhs in the year 2021-22. There has been an increase of 23.06 per cent in revenue collection as compared to the previous year. Similarly, there has been an increase of 12.43 per cent in the number of registered documents as compared to the pre-

vious year. The Chhattisgarh government under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has decided to provide special relaxation in the registration rules. Under this, the department has given a rebate of 02 per cent in the registration fee on the documents related to the sale of residential houses up to Rs 75 lakh, which came into effect from August 2019. Similarly, the guideline rates of land were reduced by 30 per cent from July 2019. In this year, a total of 40 per cent reduction was done in urban bodies by giving an additional 10 per cent exemption. Meanwhile, the ban on the sale of small plots was also lifted. A positive environment was created by these steps taken by the state government. This has resulted in an increase in pur-

chase and sale of land than before, thereby increasing the revenue received by the government. Inspector General of Registration and Superintendent Ms. Iffat Ara informed that revenue collection of Rs 1113.16 crore was recorded in the year 2018-19, Rs 1640.66 crore in the year 2019-20, and Rs 1589.42 crore in the year 2020-2021. Record revenue collection of Rs 1955.95 crore was witnessed in this year (2021-2022). Compared to the target fixed, 108 per cent revenue collection has been received. Similarly, over 2.01 lakh documents were registered in the year 2018-19, 2.20 lakh in the year 2019-20 and 2.66 lakh in the year 2020-21. As many as 2.99 lakh documents were registered in the financial year 2021-22.

### Newly-appointed Regional Director of RBI Raipur pays visit to CM

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Newly-appointed Regional Director of Reserve Bank of India, Raipur Mrs. Reeni Ajeet paid courtesy visit to Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel at his official residence here on Thursday. On the occasion, RBI Raipur DGM SM



Mishra, SGM SP Soni and Manager Naveen Tiwari were also present.

### Women's Chamber donates 11 beds for patients



**At Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar Hospital Raipur**

**Central Chronicle News**  
**Raipur, Apr 07:** The Mahila Chamber of

Chhattisgarh Chamber of Commerce and Industries informed that donated 11 beds to help patients at Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Hospital, Raipur. Mahila Chamber thanked Dr. Meera Baghel, Chief District Medical Officer, Raipur (CMHO) and Dr. Netam for sharing the problem with the women's chamber in the hospital. Women's Chamber President Mrs. Madhu Arora thanked Narendra Harchandani for the cooperation and expressed gratitude to all the members of the Mahila Chamber team for giving their valuable time. On this occasion, Women Chamber Patron Mrs. Abha Mishra, President Mrs. Madhu Arora, General Secretary, Pinky Agarwal, Vice President-Neelam Diwakirti, Hemal Shah, Sakshi Bajaj, Secretary Soma Ghosh, Media In-charge Indira Jain and Ritu Salot were prominently present.

### Fill the posts of principals, teachers in Swami Atmanand schools soon: Dr Alok Shukla

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Principal Secretary School Education Dr. Alok Shukla reviewed the schemes run by the School Education Department in Mantralaya on Thursday. He instructed the District Education Officers to fill up the posts of principals and teachers in Swami Atmanand excellent English and Hindi medium schools at the earliest. Dr. Shukla said that proposals for posting in schools without teachers should be sent by April 11. In the meeting, the District Education Officers were directed that Swami Atmanand should have the principals and English medium teachers in Hindi medium schools, Hindi medium teachers for Hindi subject for the English medium schools and Hindi medium schools starting from the upcoming academic session. He instructed that the recruitment of the posts of principal and teachers should be done soon. He said that the posts of teachers should not remain vacant in these schools. The officers of the Education Department should ensure the fulfillment of these posts with mutual coordination. The posts of Hindi medium teachers in English medium schools are the same as those proposed by the District Education Officers. If you want any other position, you can offer. Principal Secretary School Education directed the officers not to



engage teachers. Wherever they get their salary, they will work there. He said that these schools are being run by a committee headed by the Collector. He asked to send proposals for filling up the posts of principals in Swami Atmanand Hindi medium schools by April 11 and proposals of teachers by April 18. These posts should be filled by the last week of this month so that the principals can be trained in the coming month. He directed the State Council of Educational Research and Training to prepare for the training of the principals and teachers of these schools. Information related to these schools should be kept updated in the portal. Principal Secretary School Education Dr. Shukla said that in the same way, the proposals for posting in teacher less schools should be sent by April 11. He asked the District Education Officers to take necessary action on the complaint of increase of more than 8 per cent fee by

private schools against the rules. The officials of the Education Department inspect the schools. Monitoring of schemes should be done on the basis of department's portal. He said that under the Right to Education, private schools should be verified and paid according to their eligibility. The District Education Officer should ensure that the child who is being paid is eligible and is studying in the school. For this, take out the school wise list of children from the portal and do 100% physical verification within two weeks. If irregularities are found, recovery action should be taken against the concerned institution. Secretary School Education Dr. Kamalpreet Singh, Joint Secretary School Education Mr. Rajesh Singh Rana, Director Public Education Mr. Sunil Jain and all the Divisional Joint Directors and District Education Officers were present in the meeting.

### Players felicitated on World TT Day

**Central Chronicle News**  
**Raipur, Apr 07:** Chhattisgarh Table Tennis Association (CTTA) and Rajdhani Table Tennis Association (RTTA) jointly organized World Table Tennis Day function on Thursday evening to honour the senior players including those who represented Chhattisgarh at National Tournaments. Office-bearers also celebrated the Day by cutting Cake and releasing the Souvenir in the form of News Letter related with activities held in the year



2021-22. Providing the above information in a statement issued here, the CTTA Secretary Vinay Baiswade said that Raipur North MLA and Chhattisgarh Housing

Board Chairman Kuldeep Juneja was chief guest of the event whereas CTTA President Sharad Shukla presided over the function. Senior players Giriraj Bagdi, Pradeep Janwade,

Vimal Nair, Harish Pandey, Pradeep Dasgupta and Renuka Subba were felicitated for their outstanding contribution to the Table Tennis over the years. Similarly, Dr Malvika Chatterjee, Dr Viplov Chatterjee and Deepshri Solanki were felicitated with memento for their contribution in the Educational Sector apart from Table Tennis. National Table Tennis tournament players Sagar Ghatge, Rajiv Sahu, Shlok Soni, Abhishek Raj, Surabhi Modi, Shilpi Ghosh in senior category

and Ramji Kumar, Vishal Decate, Karan Malhotra, Pranay Chouhan, Arjun Malhotra, Andrew T Williams, Yashwant Decate, Chahak Kataria, Haritima Agrawal, Vihan Agrawal and Lavanya Pandat were honoured for their outstanding performance in Junior category. Mayor-in-Council member Akash Tiwari, CTTA Secretary Vinay Baiswade and Treasurer Harjit Hura were also present whereas Joint Vice President Shakil Sajid conducted the proceedings.



## COOL DIP



Children are taking a dive into a pond to beat the scorching heat here on Thursday.

# Cong govt has not done anything for state: Patel

Central Chronicle News

**Rajnandgaon, Apr 07:** Union minister Prahlad Singh Patel on Wednesday hit out at the Bhupesh Baghel-led Congress government in Chhattisgarh, alleging that it has not done anything in the three-and-a-half years of its rule on the basis of which it can seek votes in Khairagarh bypoll.



Khairagarh assembly seat in state's Rajnandgaon district, which fell vacant in November last year following the death of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (J) MLA Devvrat Singh, will witness a by-election on April 12. Patel, a BJP MP from neighbouring Madhya Pradesh, on Wednesday launched his

two-day campaign for the party's candidate, Komal Janghel, who is contesting the bypoll. The Congress has fielded its Khairagarh block unit chief Yashoda Verma, while Narendra Soni is the JCC (J) candidate. Talking to reporters on the sidelines of his campaign in Amlidihkala village, the food process-

ing industries minister said, the bypoll will determine the scale of the failures of the Congress government in the state. Exuding confidence over the victory of BJP's nominee, he said, "We will do a better job like a 'chowkidar' (watchman). We will expose the hypocrisy of Congress. In the last three-and-a-half years, Congress has done nothing on the basis of which it can seek votes."

Slamming the Congress for its bypoll promise of declaring Khairagarh as district if it wins, Patel said, "Who had stopped Baghel earlier from making it a district... There is no objection in making Khairagarh a district. Congress has made this promise out of fear."

Over a query on Congress leaders' claims that farmers who are getting Rs 2,500 per quintal on selling their paddy could get Rs 2,800 per quintal in the coming days, he said, "I feel that Congress intends to turn the state bankrupt. If they wanted to spend money, then we have allocated funds under the Jal Jeevan Mission."

Patel attended the party's programme in Amlidihkala and then campaigned in Pipariya area before addressing a rally in Udaipur in Chhuikhadan area.

Besides, Union Minister of State for Steel and Rural Development Fagga Singh Kulaste also campaigned in Khairagarh for the party candidate on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, former chief minister and BJP national vice president Raman Singh released a 26-point 'chargesheet' against the ruling Congress, accusing it of failing on all fronts.

Singh also released a separate document which mentions 36 development works done by the previous BJP government in Khairagarh area.

Reacting to Patel's remarks on paddy procurement, state Congress spokesperson Dhananjay Singh Thakur said his statement shows the anti-farmers face of the BJP.

"Why can't BJP tolerate if farmers get good returns for their produce," Thakur said and demanded an apology from BJP for Patel's statement.

## Delegation from Commonland Foundation pays courtesy call on CM

It is working on a pilot project in two Baiga-populated gram panchayats



**Dholbajja and Shambhupipar** of Bodla development block of Kabeerdham district of Chhattisgarh as pilot project. Under this project, the organization is working with the tribal people for their traditional knowledge, convergence of various schemes and using modern technology for environment conservation and development of means of livelihood of the tribal community.

Chief Minister Baghel had a detailed discussion with Mr. William about the schemes related to environment conservation, mitigating the ill-effects of

climate change and regarding the livelihood of tribal community in the state. During the discussion, Chief Minister Baghel informed him about Narva, Garva, Ghurua, Bari program, Godhan Nyay Yojana and Chief Minister's Tree Plantation Promotion Scheme being run under Suraji Gaon Yojana in the state. Chief Minister said that these schemes have created employment for local people and have also proven to be beneficial for the environment.

In order to provide profitable means of livelihood to the tribal community,

Chief Minister suggested promoting commercial production of climate-friendly fruits and starting their processing in the Gram Panchayats selected by Commonland Foundation. He said that different gardens should be developed for different fruits suited to the local climate and simultaneously arrangements should be made for processing of these fruits. Besides, nursery of fruit plants should also be developed nearby, as the fruits grown here will not only improve the nutritional status of the tribals, but will also provide a good source of income from the sale of fruits and processed fruit products. On this occasion, Lawrence, Director of Commonland Foundation, Harma, Sushil of Delhi, Aditya, Manjeet Kaur Bal of Foundation for Ecological Security and Ms Shubhangi from Samarth Sanstha were present.

## Urban Adm deptt commences implementation of CM's announcement

**Sanction of Rs 5 cr to municipalities and Rs 3 cr to Nagar panchayats under the head of infrastructure development recommended**

**Approval given for FY 2021-22**

**Municipalities and nagar panchayats directed to send proposals via special carriers within 15 days**

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Urban Administration and Development Department has commenced the im-

mediate implementation of Chief Minister's announcement for sanction of Rs.5 crore and Rs.3 crore respectively to all the municipalities and nagar panchayats. Recommending the aforementioned financial sanction, Urban Administration and Development Department have directed the municipalities and nagar panchayats to send proposals for the works to be done under this item within 15 days via a special carrier. It is noteworthy that this announcement was made by Chief Minister Mr. Baghel on March 31. In the same sequence, at the meeting of the Finance Committee held on April 4, Urban Administration Department recommended the allotment of Rs 5

crores for municipal councils and Rs 3 crore for nagar panchayats under the infrastructure development head in financial year 2021-22. Urban Administration and Development Department has directed all the municipalities and nagar panchayats except the urban bodies of Rajnandgaon district to send their proposals via special carrier. In the letter sent by the Urban Administration Department to the Chief Executive Officers in this regard, instruction has been given to include the works to be done as per the announcement of the Chief Minister, Departmental Minister in the proposal for the works of infrastructure development, besides the propos-

al for road repair, maintenance, new road construction, drainage system, construction of bridges and culverts, construction of roads, drains under the head of infrastructure in deprived areas, proposals for distribution of drinking water through pipelines in deprived areas, proposals for 30 percent amount of works in scheduled caste, scheduled tribe areas and street lights proposals. Chief executive officers have been directed to send technical approval regarding proposals, resolution of PIC, council and photographs of the proposed sites for work within 15 days to the Directorate of Urban Administration and Development Department through special carrier.

## Ch'garh Govt making consistent efforts to put state on world tourism map

**Raipur, Apr 07:** Chhattisgarh has its own identity in the world as the 'maternal home of Lord Ram'. During his exile period, Lord Shri Ram spent a significant amount of time here. On the initiative of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, Chhattisgarh Government is developing important locations on Ram Van Gaman Path as major tourist spots in an effort to ensure that Chhattisgarh will emerge as a global tourist destination.

about places of pilgrimage and tourism. The 9 sites being developed in the first phase include Sitamarhi Harchoka (Korea), Ramgarh (Surguja), Shivrinarayan (Janjgir-Champa), Turturiya (Balodabazar), Chandkuri (Raipur), Rajim (Gariyaband), Sihawa Saptarishi Ashram (Dhamtari), Jagdalpur (Bastar) and Ramaram (Sukma). The work of development of tourism in these areas is going on as per the instructions of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel at a cost of about Rs 133 crore 55 lakh. This will not only promote rural tourism in state but also boost global opportunities in the tourism sector. Along with increasing employment opportunities in tourism, the initiative will strengthen rural economy of state.

On the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami Chief Minister will inaugurate the project works of Shri Ram Van Gaman Tourism Circuit at Shivrinarayan Dham on April 10. On this

occasion, along with the eminent artists of the country, cultural presentations will be showcased by the eminent artists of Chhattisgarh in a three-day grand event to be held at Shivrinarayan. Nearly 350 artists of 'Manas Mandalis' of 25 selected districts will give their presentations in the state level competition to be held from April 8 to April 10 in Shivrinarayan. Ram Vanagaman tourism circuit Shivrinarayan will be commenced on April 8 by Mahant Dr. Ramsunder Das, Chairman Chhattisgarh State Cow Service Commission. On April 9, Speaker of the Assembly Dr. Charandas Mahant will be present in Shivrinarayan Mahotsav as the chief guest. Ram Vanagaman tourism circuit Shivrinarayan will conclude on April 10 in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel as chief guest. Tourism Minister Mr. Tamradhwaj Sahu and other distinguished dignitaries will also be present along with the Chief Minister.



## Bicycle distribution at Shri Gujarati School

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 07:** As part of 'Saraswati Cycle Yojana', 44 girls of Class IX studying in Shri Gujarati Hindi Medium Higher Secondary School received bicycles. These bicycles were given by SGSS secretary duo Tulsi Das Patel and Ashok Bhai Patel. In his speech secretary Tulsi Das Patel while making aware of the beneficiaries about the government schemes asked the girls to study

with full concentration and reach school every day on time.

On this occasion Shri Gujarati Higher Secondary School Principal Anis Memon, Shri Gujarati English Medium Principal Dr Shailesh Sharma, Primary School HM Prakash Patel, SGSS Registrar Ashok Jachak, Administrator V K Mishra, other teachers and beneficiary girls, informs release issued by Anis Memon Principal.

## Officials listen to problems at public redressal camp



**Konta, Apr 07:** The administration is now reaching the doorsteps of the villagers and listening to their problems and demands. Through the 'Jansamsya' camp, the villagers are giving their demands and problems to the departmental officers. In these camps, along with the departmental officers themselves, the concerned SDM, Tehisaldar and Janpad Panchayat CEO are getting acquainted with the people and getting aware of their problems. Taking quick action on many of these cases, they are being resolved on

the camp day itself. In this sequence, Jansamsya camps were organized in all the three blocks of Sukma district in which hundreds of villagers submitted applications. Caste certificate distribution and ayushman registration in Injaram camp.

Apart from receiving the applications, the officials distributed caste certificates to 14 school students at the Jansamsya Shivir organized at village Injaram in Konta block. The children received their caste certificates from the hands of the people's representatives of

the area. Along with this, Ayushman card registration of 15 villagers was also done. District CEO Konta Kailash Kashyap told that the villagers of Dhondhara, Banda, Injaram, Mulakisoli and Kotacheru Gram Panchayats participated in the Injaram camp. A total of 150 applications were received in the camp, out of which 84 were resolved promptly.

There is an appeal to all the common people, villagers, citizens to attend the camp in maximum numbers and keep their problems.

## HC gives verdict in favour of woman for child's custody

Quashes family court's order

Central Chronicle News

**Bilaspur, Apr 07:** Quashing a family court's order that granted custody of a child to the father, the Chhattisgarh High Court has observed that if a woman "does not squeeze into the mould" as per the desire of her husband, it does not become a decisive factor for her to lose the custody of her child.

and Sanjay S Agarwal, while delivering the judgement in a case related to the custody of a 14-year-old boy, also said the character certificate by the society's few members with "ostrich mindset" should not be allowed to decide the character of a woman.

The judgement, which was passed on March 28, was uploaded on the high court's website on Monday, according to which the custody of the child was granted to his mother; the woman's lawyer Sunil Sahu said on Wednesday. The couple had got mar-

ried in 2007 and their son was born in December the same year. They got divorced with mutual consent in 2013, following which the custody of the child was given to his mother; a resident of Mahasamund district, he said.

"In 2014, the woman's husband, who hails from Raipur district, filed an application in Mahasamund district family court seeking the custody of the child on the ground that the woman is in company of different male and used to travel along with other

male member and her attire was not befitting to which would reflect that she had lost her chastity. The man also said, if the child is kept in her custody, there would be an ill effect on his mind," Sahu said.

The family court in 2016 had handed over the custody of the child to his father, he said. The woman then challenged the family court's order citing it was passed only on the basis of presumption, which requires interference. Setting aside the family

court's order, the high court said, "...The evidence on behalf of father, it appears that the witnesses have stated according to their own opinion and thought. If the lady is required to do a job that too in the field for her livelihood, naturally she would be required to move from one place to other and only because of the fact that she is required to rub her shoulder with public at large or male i.e. to accompany them in the car, there cannot be an inference that she has lost her chastity."

"Only bald oral statement is made that she is addicted to consume liquor and smoke, etc. It is important to set a red line when the attack is made to assassinate the character of the lady. The statement of witnesses of plaintiff would show that they are largely influenced by attire of women as she wears jeans and T-shirt along with the fact that she is marching along with male members of society," it said. We are afraid that if such ill-conceived exercise is given a spotlight,

then to protect the right and freedom of women would be a long arduous battle. If the wife does not squeeze into the mould as per desire of husband, it would not be a decisive factor to lose custody of the child by her; the high court observed. "By attacking the character of the wife to impress upon that it would have an adverse impact on the mind of the child, the degree of nature of evidence should have been much more and severe to hold that continuous a kind of behaviour of wife

would be detrimental to the interest of child. The character certificate by few of the society members, who might have ostrich mind set, should not be allowed to decide the character of a woman and to draw an inference while deciding the custody of the child that because of the behaviour of mother it would have an adverse impact on the mind of the child," it said. The high court also granted visitation and contact rights to the father and issued directions in this regard.



## MGNREGA officials and employees on long strike

**Nagari Sihawa, Apr 07:**

With the blessings of Maa Danteshwari on the auspicious occasion of Navratri, thousands of MGNREGA employees of the state started indefinite strike in Ravan Batha ground here.

As per information, the regularization promised in the public manifesto of the Congress government, which has not been fulfilled till date, is being vehemently opposed by all MGNREGA workers. At the end of 2021-22, 54 lakh 92 thousand 693 workers of 28 lakh 48 thousand 792 families in the state were provided employment by MGNREGA scheme on demand basis.

Meanwhile due to the strike of Chhattisgarh



MNREGA Employees Federation which started from April 4, employment crisis has arisen in front of these 54 lakh 92 thousand 693 workers. The state government has 9 thousand 364 gauthans in the state under Narwa, Garuwa,

Ghuruwa, Bari, Yojana, where the important responsibility of conducting the activities is on the shoulders of the village employment assistants, but the gauthans are on verge of collapse due to the strike.

MGNREGA workers are bound to carry out indefinite agitation for their demands for implementation of the 1966 Act by fixing the pay scale of employment assistants including their regularization. The MGNREGA union has alleged that even after more than 3 years have elapsed since the update, no regularization action is being taken by the government. The indefinite agitating MGNREGA officials and employees said that the government should seriously consider their demands and give the gift of regularization as soon as possible, or they will be compelled to carry out violent agitation, for which the entire responsibility will be with the government.

## People from SKKS are talented, capable: Ashish

**■ Dedicates social building of SKKS of Samaj****Takathpur, Apr 07:**

'There are many talented and capable persons from 'Sanadhya Kurmi Samaj', who have paid special attention towards social unity, apart from health and education as well. The Samaj always surging ahead with public awareness has many sitting in important government posts. The above are the words of PCC secy. Ashish Singh Thakur while speaking as chief guest at the dedication of Mangal Bhavan of 'Sanadhya Kurmi Kshatriya Samaj' (SKKS). AS Thakur said that this building will definitely mark its position in Takathpur. He



also assured the people present about fulfilling of expectations of people related to construction of boundary wall, entrance gate and other construction work.

This programme was chaired by SKKS Chotelal Kaushik. Special guest on the occasion was Treasurer SKKS Chandraprakash

Sanadya, Nagar Panchayat Chairperson Pushpamunna Sriwas, V-P Vandanabala Singh and other corporators. In the beginning of the programme, 'Vastupuja' and 'Grih Pravesha' puja was held and after which the Secretary PCC Ashish Singh Thakur handed over the building to the President. General

Secy Manharan Sharma gave the welcome speech and apprised about the construction work on 'Samajik Paitrik' land.

President SKKS Chotelal Kaushik in his address said that SKKS is known for its specialties not only in Chhattisgarh, but in other states as well. The Samaj is well ahead in the field of politics, culture, education, economically and socially strong and united. There is long list of political leaders, be it that of state or national level. There is residence of people from SKKS in around 100 villages in the state. Every citizen of the Society is honoured to be a part of it and many persons in the field of engineering, doctors, teacher, Police administration are working, as aside the administrative works as well.

## SP supervises road construction work

**Konta, Apr 07:**

People used to think many times to go to Naxal affected area like Jagargunda under Konta block of Sukma district. But today a person is standing in such a place and is getting construction work done for the

service of the public. IPS Sunil Sharma of Sukma district is commendable.

Seeing this road construction work of Sukma district's SP Sunil Sharma, the public expressed their gratitude and thanked them wholeheartedly.

## 25 women from SGH imparted training in fish farming

**■ By Fisheries Polytechnic, Rajpur Dhamdha****Dhamdha, Apr 07:**

A training in fish farming in ponds concluded under the guidance of V.C Fisheries Polytechnic, Rajpur (Dhamdha) Dr NP Dakshinkar here on April 4. This Polytechnic is functioning under the Dau Shri Vasudev Chandrakar K a m d h e n u Vishwavidyalaya, Durg. Training to 25 women from a Self-Help Group (SHG) of Gouthan Rajpur adopted by this Fisheries Polytechnic, Rajpur (Dhamdha) were imparted training at Gram Panchayat Rajpur bhavan in fish farming.

Dr N Sarang, Principal and senior scientist Fisheries Polytechnic, Rajpur (Dhamdha) informed that in ponds there

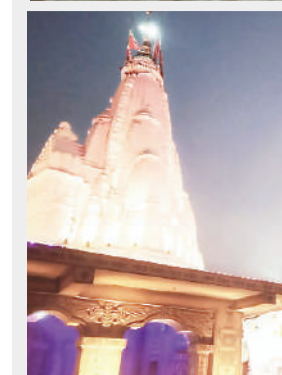
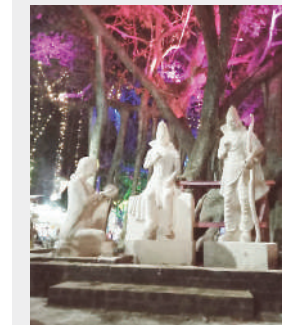


is generally fish farming of species 'Katala', 'Rohu' and 'Mrigul' done. In this 'Katala' species of fishes live on the surface of the pond and 'Rohu' in the middle of the pond and 'Mrigul' in the bottom of the pond and likewise they take feed from the food available in that surface. It is only upon the need that the fishes need to be given additional supplements viz. 'Sarson ki Bhusi', 'Chawal ki Bhusi', 'Chokar' (Gehu ki Bhusi), 'Mungfalli ki Khali' and

others. The Scientist Fisheries Polytechnic Dhamdha Rohitash Yadav in the training informed that as to how fish farming is done in the ponds and what all precautions should be taken in the pond. Kashti Prerna, Adhoc teacher informed that first the water hyacinth and other type of plants in the pond should be removed and using a net, the insects should also be removed. Another Adhoc teacher Devati gave

information on how to check the quality standards of water in the pond and also about the collection of fishes and siez, viz. 'Jeera', 'Pouna', 'Angulika' should be immersed in the pond during morning hours, as the morning temperature is favourable and there is no tension among fishes and it reduces their mortality rate. Omkar Sahu, Adhoc teacher informed about different species of fishes and Umar Ratre informed as to why women should come forward in this field of fish farming and should motivate others to do so. Tameshwar Adhoc teacher gave information about different types of products of fishes. On this occasion Vaibhav Chourasiya, regional expansion officer, Gutam Khute Nodal Officer Gouthan and Netam and other citizens of the village were present.

## CM to attend different programs in Shorinarayan

**Sheorinarayan, Apr 07:**

As part of Ram Wan Gaman Paripath, three day state level Ram Charit Manas singing competition will start from April 08 and in the concluding day on April 10, Chief Minister will take part in this concluding day function. Chief Minister will lay stone and dedicate many development works and take part in Ganga Aarti to be organized by Mahant Ram Sunder Das.

## Youth found hanging

**Dhamtari, Apr 07:**

Death of a young man, who went to pick up Mahua, was reported here in the region. According to the police, Ravi Kumar Markam (26), a resident of village Vapathra Barpani, father Santosh Markam had gone to collect Mahua on Sunday morning. After failing to return he was searched and his body was found hanging on a tree. Meanwhile the police was informed and after the Panchnama action, the Rudri police sent the dead body to the district for post-mortem. In charge DrUtkarsh Nanda said that being a suspicious case of death, post-mortem will be done, for further investigation.

## Person arrested with banned cough syrup worth Rs 16000



**Jagdalpur, Apr 07:** Police has recovered huge quantity of banned cough syrup worth Rs 16000 from Gulam Mustafa Raja alias Karri (47), S/o Shekh Mahmud, R/o Hatkachora here on Wednesday. A case under section 21 of NDPS Act has been filed against him and he was produced in the court and from there he was sent to jail. It is notable here that it is right since two decades that Jagdalpur city is facing problems related to use of banned cough syrup and psychotropic drugs and with this many a youth are falling prey to it and have lost their life becoming addict. Jagdalpur Police was reg-

ularly getting information that this person is involved in some business of banned cough syrup and psychotropic drugs and had arrested his younger brother and both the brothers are involved in this illegal business for last many years and after Gulam Raja being sent to jail, it has come a big blow to other peddlers involved with it and to the addict as well. At the same time there are many peddlers who acting as agents have become underground, as they were involved in selling such banned cough syrups in lanes & by-lanes of city. At present also the illegal business of banned cough syrup and psychotropic

drugs in city is flourishing and even after nabbing many involved in this the Police has not being able to put a check in this illegal trade and activity and arrest of Gulam Raja stands testimony to it. It is notable here that this person had been arrested earlier also in the same charges and prior to him his brother Mukeem Raja too was arrested with 80 cough syrup and sent to jail. Both the brothers are involved in this illegal activity for last many years and their brother Gulam Mustafa Raza used to supply banned cough syrups to Jagdalpur and nearby areas. In Jagdalpur his peddlers are known to be selling these banned cough syrups. In Jagdalpur it is at Dharampura, Nayamunda, Mahadevghat, Pandaripani and at Nail factory in industrial area, the agents of the Peddlers can be seen selling the banned drugs and syrups openly. It was on arrest of two brothers, this entire illegal business of banned cough syrup and psychotropic drugs was running behind the Nail factory in Bodhghat.

## 'Tuhari Dwar' camps calls on resolution of public apathy

**Koriya, April 07:**

Under the guidance of Collector Kuldeep Sharma, for resolving revenue matters and listening to the demands and problems related to public interest, the district administration is reaching out to the common people through the solution 'Tuhari Dwar' camp at the panchayat level.

A Google sheet has been prepared for the smooth operation and online monitoring of drinking water, electricity system, where the CEO will register the district problem and the department will solve it. In the weekly time limit meeting, the Collector reviewed and reviewed the resolution prepared for the register received in the camp from the panchayats. In the meeting itself, the collec-



tor spoke to Dharamjit Singh of Keshagwan Gram Panchayat through phone and inquired about the acceptance of the pension case application.

The Collector said that the beneficiary must be informed about the disposal of the applications and procedure so that there is no doubt about the disposal of the application. It is noteworthy that so far 753 applica-

tions for pension have been received in the camp, out of which 431 cases have been approved.

In the meeting, the Collector also inquired from the Public Health Engineering Department about the progress of hand pump improvement work for the provision of drinking water. EE PHE said that 268 hand pumps have been improved in the last one week. The Collector himself con-

firmed the completion of handpump improvement work in Gram Panchayat Chhindiyia with the Secretary on the call. Collector gave strict instructions to CEO, Janpad Panchayat and PHE department to complete all hand pump improvements within the deadline of April 15. He said that proper arrangement should also be made in the supply of drinking water from solar energy.

## Problems of public will be resolved through camps: Collector

**Bilaspur, Apr 07:** District Collector Dr. Saransh Mittar took a meeting of district level officers here and directed to implement the government schemes seriously. In connection with the upcoming proposed visit of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel to the district, the Collector did a thorough review of the working of the departments.

The Collector said that a roster of Gram Panchayats would be prepared and camps would be set up where Gram Panchayat Secretary, Patwari, REO, Anganwadi workers and field level staff would solve the problems of the villagers on the spot. Collector Dr. Mittar said that the cases related to revenue should be resolved by running a campaign; and no laxity would be tolerated. He instructed the Public Health Engineering Department to make suitable arrangements for

drinking water during the summer season. Along with expediting the work of Jal Jeevan Mission, he also asked to take full care of the quality. The Collector directed to ensure all necessary preparations including maintenance of hand pumps, pipeline expansion.

Dr. Mittar while reviewing the implementation of Dhanwantri Yojna said that the district is at the forefront of the entire state in this scheme. He instructed to implement this scheme in the same way in future also.

The Municipal Commissioner informed that people have saved about Rs. 2 crore 77 lakh by buying medicines from Chief Executive Officer of District Panchayat Shri Haris S, ADM Smt. Jayshree Jain, Municipal Commissioner Shri Ajay Tripathi, all SDM and departmental officers were present in the meeting.

**NAME CHANGE**  
My old name is Prakash kumar rai F/N Subhash rai is change new name Prakash rai F/N Subhash rai Add.-Sector- 5, Street-17, H.No. 6/A Bhilai Civic centra Durg. In future my all official documents & other documents is New name Prakash rai F/N Subhash rai should be known and Recognizd By.  
**Deponent Prakash rai**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
(In Relation of Immovable Property Residential House bearing Plot No. D-68, Comprising Area 1,500 Sq. Ft., Comprised in Part of Kharsa No. 293, Situated at Raipur Vikas Pradhikaran, at Village Tikrapara, Shalendra Nagar, P. H. No. 114, R.I.C. Raipur-1, Tahsil & District Raipur (C.G.)  
This is inform to General Public that the Original Renewal of Lease Deed Dated 03.08.2013, bearing Document Si. No. 2201, Registered in the Office of Sub-Registrar, Raipur (C.G.) executed by M/s Raipur Vikas Pradhikaran in favour of Smt. Chandra Devi Golechha S/o Late Kanwar Lal Golechha, the above Deed has been lost/Misplaced by Present owner Smt. Chandra Devi Golechha W/o Shri Mahaveer Kumar Golechha and Written Intimation duly given in the Police Station, City Kotwali, Raipur (C.G.) on 05.04.2022, for Lost of above Renewal of Lease Deed by the property owner Shri Mahaveer Kumar Golechha S/o Late Kanwar Lal Golechha.  
Now, Smt. Chandra Devi Golechha S/o Late Kanwar Lal Golechha has applied for Loan from My Client, Axis Bank Ltd., Raipur (C.G.), if any Person/Bank/Corporation/Society/Institution/ Govt. or No Govt. Authority etc., having an interest in the said Property or any part thereof may make their claim/objections with documentary proof to the undersigned office within 07 Days from the Date of Publication, without any reference to such claim and the same, if any shall be considered as waived & My client shall be enable to create mortgage on said property.  
Place- Raipur Date - 07.04.2022  
Ashutosh Mishra  
Office Address - Flat No. F-3, Modern Complex, Motibag Chowk, Raipur (C.G.)  
Landline No. 0771- 2222042  
Mobile - 9425548998

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
(In Relation of Immovable Property Residential House bearing Plot No. D-69, Comprising Area 1,500 Sq. Ft., Comprised in Part of Kharsa No. 293, Situated at Raipur Vikas Pradhikaran, at Village Tikrapara, Shalendra Nagar, P. H. No. 114, R.I.C. Raipur-1, Tahsil & District Raipur (C.G.)  
This is inform to General Public that the Original Renewal of Lease Deed Dated 16.08.2013, bearing Document Si. No. 2284 (Kha), Registered in the Office of Sub-Registrar, Raipur (C.G.) executed by M/s Raipur Vikas Pradhikaran in favour of Smt. Chandra Devi Golechha W/o Shri Mahaveer Kumar Golechha, the above Deed has been lost/Misplaced by Present owner Smt. Chandra Devi Golechha W/o Shri Mahaveer Kumar Golechha and Written Intimation duly given in the Police Station, City Kotwali, Raipur (C.G.) on 05.04.2022, for Lost of above Renewal of Lease Deed by the property owner Smt. Chandra Devi Golechha W/o Shri Mahaveer Kumar Golechha.  
Now, Smt. Chandra Devi Golechha W/o Shri Mahaveer Kumar Golechha has applied for Loan from My Client, Axis Bank Ltd., Raipur (C.G.), if any Person/Bank/Corporation/Society/Institution/ Govt. or No Govt. Authority etc., having an interest in the said Property or any part thereof may make their claim/objections with documentary proof to the undersigned office within 07 Days from the Date of Publication, without any reference to such claim and the same, if any shall be considered as waived & My client shall be enable to create mortgage on said property.  
Place- Raipur Date - 07.04.2022  
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Office Address - Flat No. F-3, Modern Complex, Motibag Chowk, Raipur (C.G.)  
Landline No. 0771- 2222042  
Mobile - 9425548998

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Be it known to all people that Shri Ram S/o Shri Parau Satnami R/o Village Sonpur, Tah. Kurud, Distt. Dhamtari has Sold the property an Open land bearing the part of Kh. No. 383/4, Area 0.08 Hect., Situated at, Sonpur, P. H. No. 07 Tah. Kurud & Distt. Dhamtari (C.G.) to Shri K. Venkat Reddy, S/o Shri K. Subbi Reddy, S/o Shri K. Sanjay Nagar Kurud, (C.G.), by registered Sale Deed Dt. 26.03.2008.  
After that Shri K. Venkat Reddy has Sold the above said property to Geeta Laxmi Rice Mill Pvt. Ltd. Kurud, by registered Sale Deed Dt. 24.11.2021.  
The original Previous Sale Deed date 26.03.2008 is lost somewhere. Whose report is complained in related police station Sarwasai Nagar, Raipur Dt. 15.03.2022.  
That Geeta Laxmi Rice Mill Pvt. Ltd. Kurud desires to mortgage the same property forgetting loan to my Client Bank of Baroda, Pandri, Raipur.  
Whose ever whether individual society, Association, Bank or housing board, have any claim right authority are title over it, he should within 05 days of publication of this public notice approach and apprise this office under the following address of his claim and objections.  
After expiry of 05 days no objection shall be entertained, such objection deemed invalid and void and shall be not tenable.  
Please take notice Date - 06.04.2022  
Yours truly,  
Vijay Rathore, Advocate  
Off. Cum Res. - Behind of Barat Gas Godam Laxmi Nagar, Pachpadri Naka, Raipur (C.G.)  
Mob. 9425202167

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Be it known to all people that Shri Ravikanth S/o Late Shri Balbhadra R/o Village Sonpur, Tah. Kurud, Distt. Dhamtari has Sold the property an Open land bearing the Kh. No. 408/3, Area 0.31 Hect., & Shri Banshal S/o Late Shri Balbhadra R/o Village Sonpur, Tah. Kurud, Distt. Dhamtari has Sold the property an Open land bearing the Kh. No. 408/1, Area 0.31 Hect., & Shri Narendra S/o Late Shri Balbhadra R/o Village Sonpur, Tah. Kurud, Distt. Dhamtari has Sold the property an Open land bearing the Kh. No. 408/2, Area 0.32 Hect., Situated at Sonpur, P. H. No. 07 Tah. Kurud & Distt. Dhamtari (C.G.) to Shri K. Subbi Reddy, S/o Shri K. Gani Reddy R/o V-9, Sai Vatika, Devpuri, Raipur (C.G.), by registered three Sale Deeds Dt. 24.09.2007.  
That the original Previous three Sale Deed date 24.09.2007 is lost somewhere. Whose report is complained in related police station Sarwasai Nagar, Raipur Dt. 04.04.2022.  
That Geeta Laxmi Rice Mill Pvt. Ltd. Kurud desires to mortgage the same property forgetting loan to my Client Bank of Baroda, Pandri, Raipur.  
Whose ever whether individual society, Association, Bank or housing board, have any claim right authority are title over it, he should within 05 days of publication of this public notice approach and apprise this office under the following address of his claim and objections.  
After expiry of 05 days no objection shall be entertained, such objection deemed invalid and void and shall be not tenable.  
Please take notice Date - 07.04.2022  
Yours truly,  
Vijay Rathore, Advocate  
Off. Cum Res. - Behind of Barat Gas Godam Laxmi Nagar, Pachpadri Naka, Raipur (C.G.)  
Mob. 9425202167

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
It is informed to the general public that I, SAKINA KAKOSIWALA W/o. Mohammed Kakosiwala resident of LIG E-42, Sector3, Devendra Nagar, Raipur (C.G.) have changed my old name Sakina W/o. Mohammed Kakosiwala so in future I should be recognized by my new name that is SAKINA KAKOSIWALA W/o. Mohammed Kakosiwala in all government and all documents.  
SAKINA KAKOSIWALA W/o. Mohammed Kakosiwala LIG E-42, Sector 3, Devendra Nagar, Raipur (C.G.)



**BRIEF**

**Thrashed**

■ **Indore:** A 30-year-old man was allegedly abused and thrashed for sporting a moustache in Madhya Pradesh's Indore. The man, Ravi Tirodia (30), lodged a complaint at Malharganj police station in connection with the incident, a police officer said. The accused in the case, Bunty Godha, his brother Naveen Godha and an accomplice Tarachand alias Bam, were agitated over Tirodia's moustache, and used abusive words against him.

**Re-unite**

■ **Noida:** A 20-year-old mentally challenged woman from Assam who had reached Noida in 2019 has been re-united with her family with help from the Uttar Pradesh Police, officials said. The woman arrived in Noida on Oct 19, 2019 after which her case reached the local authorities, who got her admitted to a government run shelter home after due procedures. The woman hails from Udalgiri district of Assam. She had been at the shelter home.

**Arrest**

■ **Panaji:** Officials of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) arrested a man from Rajasthan and allegedly seized a huge quantity of ganja and two pistols from his possession at the Margao Railway Station in Goa. Thaneram Barmer, the accused, was in possession of 4.3 kg of ganja, two pistols and 18 live rounds, said a senior RPF official.

**Heroin**

■ **Aizawl:** Two persons, including a Myanmar national, were arrested after heroin worth Rs 1.8 crore was seized from their possession in Champhai district near the Indo-Myanmar border. A patrolling party seized 314 grams of heroin on the outskirts of Melbuk village. The contraband worth Rs 1.5 crore in the international market was concealed in 23 soap cases.

**Installed**

■ **New Delhi:** The Guru Harkrishan Polyclinic at the Bangla Sahib Gurudwara here will conduct various medical tests at 50 per cent of the market rates, Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC) president Harmeet Singh Kalka said. New advanced testing machines have been installed at the facility run by the DSGMC. We got ECG in beginning. Thereafter, more machines were brought. I express my gratitude, Kalka said.

**Posed**

■ **Pune:** A woman allegedly posed as a patient's wife so that she could have a kidney transplant through an exchange, Pune Police said. The authorities at the private hospital where the kidney transplant took place last month brought the matter to the police's notice, officials said. The woman too approached police, complaining that a middleman had promised her Rs 15 lakh.

## Ensure disaster alerts reach remote areas timely

Engage all agencies: Shah



Union Home Minister Amit Shah presents awards at the NDRFs Annual Conference on Capacity Building Disaster Response - 2022, in New Delhi, Thursday.

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

Agencies involved in disaster management should ensure that alerts generated for calamities should timely reach the remotest panchayat location in the country and organisations like NCC, women groups and home guards should be brought on board for this task, Union Home Minister Amit Shah

said on Thursday. He asked the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), the federal agency to train and undertake operations during such emergencies, to take a leadership role in this context so that whenever such an emergency strikes, a trained personnel can work as a "stop gap arrangement" till professional rescuers reach the

spot. He was speaking while inaugurating a two-day 'annual conference on capacity building for disaster response 2022' being held here. The meeting has been organised by the NDRF with representatives of various central and state disaster response forces and other related agencies participating. The NDRF should make sure that the alerts generated for an impending disaster reach the intended location, village and panchayat in time, he said. The minister said special focus should be given to cases of lightning strikes where time is less and it should be ensured that accurate alert reaches the intended village and its inhabitants.

"We have made many apps (mobile applications) for a variety of disasters but a definite mechanism should be made so that the alerts reach in time to the remotest location," Shah said.

## Case against Somaiya, his son for fund misappropriation

Of funds collected for INS Vikrant

**Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):**

Mumbai police have registered a case against BJP leader Kirit Somaiya and his son Neil for alleged misappropriation of over Rs 57 crore funds reportedly collected to save decommissioned aircraft carrier INS Vikrant from being scrapped, an official said on Thursday.

The case against them was filed based on a complaint lodged by Baban Bhosale, a 53-year-old former Army personnel at the Trombay police station in suburban Mankhurd, he said. Rejected the allegation, Kirit Somaiya told reporters on Thursday that the funds collected under the 'Save INS Vikrant' campaign were



Kirit Somaiya and his son Neil.

not misused, and added that he was ready face any inquiry against him. Commissioned in 1961, INS Vikrant, a Majestic-class aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy, had played a key role in enforcing the naval blockade of East Pakistan dur-

ing the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971. It was decommissioned in 1997. There was a demand to convert the warship into a museum. But in January 2014, the ship was sold through an on-line auction and scrapped in November that year.

## PROTESTING PRICE HIKE



Congress members stage a protest over the hike in prices of fuel and other essential commodities, in Srinagar, J-K on Thursday.

## 'Al-Qaeda indulging in polarisation in India'

■ **BJP in Karnataka is scared of real issues**

**Bengaluru, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The Congress on Thursday lashed out at Al-Qaeda for wading into the hijab controversy in Karnataka and said the banned terrorist organisation has no business to comment about the internal affairs of the country. The grand old party also strongly condemned Al-Qaeda chief Ayman Al-Zawahiri's for praising college student Muskan Khan for defending the headscarf.

It also charged the BJP and right wing organisations with trying to 'polarise' and 'vitiating' the atmosphere of Karnataka



Ajay Maken

with an eye on the 2023 Assembly polls.

"Let me make it amply clear in most unequivocal terms that we condemn the statement of Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda is a terrorist organisation, it is a banned organisation, and it has no business to comment anything about the internal affairs of our coun-

try. Congress party strongly condemns it," Congress General Secretary Ajay Maken told reporters here.

Maken said his party condemned the behaviour of the Karnataka Home Minister and demanded the sacking of Araga Jnanendra besides booking a case against him, alleging that he tried to disturb peace.

"Both of them are doing the same thing, their statements are polarising and vitiating the atmosphere of the country.... Karnataka has a composite culture and that is why Bengaluru and the state is the most favoured destination for businessmen, investors throughout the world.

## Don't need lessons on law and order from Shah: TMC

**Kolkata, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The TMC on Thursday slammed Union Home Minister Amit Shah for his remarks on the law and order situation in West Bengal and said that the party doesn't need lessons from him. Speaking on the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill at Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, Shah had recalled that he was attacked with firebombs in Bengal during his campaigns for 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

"I had gone there in 2019 and was attacked with firebombs (aag ke gola). Our party president JP Nadda's convoy was also targeted (in the run-up to the assembly polls)," he



Sougata Roy

had said. The home minister further continued his attack on the West Bengal government, stating that its acts "changed even the harshest definition of the word Fascist". Reacting to Shah's comment, senior TMC leader Sougata Roy said that neither the party nor the state government needed lessons from Shah on maintenance of law

and order. "Amit Shah should be the last person to talk about law and order. We are very well aware of his track record as a minister in Gujarat and in the Union government.

"We have seen how he failed to control the riots that shook Delhi in February 2020. We have also seen lawlessness in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh. The situation in Bengal is far better than any other state of the country," Roy said. Echoing him, TMC state general secretary Kunal Ghosh said Shah's comments reflected his "frustration" over his party's defeat in assembly polls despite a high-pitched campaign.

## Chandigarh MC passes resolution to maintain UT status

**Chandigarh, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The municipal corporation here passed a resolution on Thursday which states that Chandigarh should remain a union territory, and should also get its own legislative assembly. The development comes as Punjab and Haryana engage in a tussle to stake claim over Chandigarh.

Both Punjab and Haryana state assemblies recently passed their respective resolution reiterating their claim over the Union Territory of Chandigarh, their joint capital.

The resolution also said the Centre should intervene and direct Haryana and Punjab governments "to develop their own independent capital cities".



Chandigarh municipal corporation

Only BJP councillors were present in the Municipal Corporation House when the resolution was passed, with the councillors of the Aam Aadmi Party, Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal staging a walkout.

Chandigarh Municipal Corporation Mayor Sarabjit Kaur, who is from

to enable the residents to decide about the policies and future of the city themselves," according to the resolution read out by BJP councillor Maheshinder Singh Sidhu in the House.

The House also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for implementing Central service rules in the city, thus "benefiting" its employees.

BJP councillor Harpreet Kaur Babla said that Chandigarh belongs to the people of Chandigarh. "It is not a political agenda. It is the voice of the people of Chandigarh."

Before the resolution was passed, BJP and AAP councillors sparred over the recent hike in water tariff.

## More sweeping machines needed to tackle dust pollution

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

Centre's air quality commission on Thursday directed various road construction and maintenance agencies in Delhi and NCR to procure more mechanical road sweeping machines to tackle the menace of air pollution arising from road dust.

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas, also asked the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to carry out a study on the efficacy of dust-suppressants and apprise the panel by the May end this year.

The CAQM reviewed the progress of action taken by road construction/ maintenance agen-



Road sweeping machine

cies and Dust Control and Management Cells (DCMCs), set up in 2021 to monitor the progress of dust control measures, and was informed that out of Delhi's total road length of around 18,540 km, nearly 5,000 km has been identified for mechanical sweeping. It noted that the south, east

and north Delhi municipal corporations were in the process of procuring 12, 10 and 6 mechanical road sweeping machines (MRSMs) by September this year. "For effective and efficient functioning, MRSMs have to be deployed at an average speed of about 5 km/hour. For an 8-hour

shift, one machine can sweep about 40 km of roads in a day. Therefore, more MRSMs need to be procured by road construction and maintenance agencies.

"The agencies were advised to ensure strict enforcement and implementation of road dust control measures and timely submission of monthly reports," the panel said.

For mechanical cleaning of narrow roads, the panel was informed that smaller size machines were being procured.

"South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) and East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) are planning to procure additionally 16 and 10 water sprinkling machines respectively in the current year," it noted.

## Ajit Pawar speaks against Raj Thackeray's warning

■ **Against use of loudspeakers at mosques**

**Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):** Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar has attacked MNS president Raj Thackeray over the latter's demand for removal of loudspeakers from mosques, saying the state cannot afford the alleged divisive call given "to please someone eyeing polls".

Without naming Thackeray, Pawar asked what the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief was going to achieve by making such statements and whether "provoking" people will solve the issue of their livelihood. "The



Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar at a function in Shirdi.

Maharashtra of Shahu, Phule, Ambedkar cannot afford the speeches made to please someone keeping eye on elections," Pawar said at an event in Shirdi in Ahmednagar district. He said that Maharashtra has ensured communal harmony for years, but "leaders of some parties" have of late been talking about installing loudspeakers "here and there". "Some people

are trying to create confusion in the society. We have been living in harmony for years now. We have been able to keep the communal harmony intact in the society by not allowing any rift in communities and religions. But leaders of some parties are making a pitch for installing counter-loudspeakers (to play Hanuman chalisa)," the senior NCP leader said.



## BRIEF

### Scrutiny

**Nashville:** Tennessee's top leaders in US only began increasing scrutiny over a small town's finances after a predominantly Black administration took over key positions, a move that attorneys argued strays significantly from how the state has treated white-majority jurisdictions. Earlier this year, Comptroller Jason Mumpower raised eyebrows when he announced the state would take over financial supervision of Mason, at proposed factory.

### Witness

**Alexandria:** By May 2014, American hostage Peter Kassig was losing hope that he would survive his captivity at the hands of the Islamic State group. Dad, I'm paralyzed here, I'm afraid to fight back. Part of me still has hope. Part of me is sure I'm going to die, he wrote to his father, Ed Kassig, who read the letter from the witness stand at the terrorism trial of British national El Shafee Elsheikh. Testimony left many in the courtroom fighting.

### Sentenced

**New Orleans:** A former Louisiana sheriff was sentenced to 10 years in prison for a federal bribery conviction, to be served at the same as his four life sentences for earlier convictions for raping boys. US District Judge Jane Triche Milazzo also ordered Rodney J Jack "Strain to pay a USD10,000 fine, federal prosecutors said. Strain pleaded guilty to one of 16 federal charges against him on Dec 1, 2021, and prosecutors dropped the others.

### Charges

**Washington:** The Biden administration has charged a Russian oligarch with violating US government sanctions and has disrupted a cybercrime operation launched by a Russian military intelligence agency. The action came as the Justice Department said it was accelerating efforts to track down illicit Russian assets and as US prosecutors helped European counterparts gather evidence on potential war crimes committed by Russia.

### Probe

**London:** European health officials say they are investigating a rapidly evolving outbreak of salmonella in 134 children that appears to be linked to chocolate Easter eggs that normally contain a surprise toy inside. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control said chocolate products were identified as likely route of infection, adding that children mainly under 10 years of age were affected. The first case was detected in Britain.

### Concerned

**Cairo:** The UN envoy for Yemen expressed concerns about violations of a cease-fire in the war-wrecked country, urging the warring sides to uphold the first nationwide truce in six years.

# Civilians try to flee east Ukraine amid Russian offensive

### Russia denies responsibility for any civilian deaths

Kyiv, Apr 07 (AFP):

Desperate evacuation attempts from eastern Ukraine were under way Thursday as authorities warned of an imminent Russian offensive, following the devastation around Kyiv that has shocked the world.

Russian troops have been withdrawing from around the capital and Ukraine's north, leaving a trail of destruction behind them, as they prepare for an expected assault on the country's southeast.

The scenes of carnage left behind by retreating troops in towns like Bucha have caused outrage and led to a wave of fresh sanctions against Moscow.

But on Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that Moscow was undeterred and continued "to accumulate fighting force to realise their ill ambitions in (eastern) Donbas".

"They are preparing to resume an active offensive," he said.

Begging civilians to leave the region "while it is still possible", local officials in Donbas' Lugansk and Donetsk said the re-



A local woman carries belongings from a damaged house in the town of Borodianka, northwest of Kyiv.

gion was already facing constant indiscriminate shelling.

"We can see clearly that before the enemy goes to full attack, they will just destroy places completely," local governor Sergiy Gaiday in Lugansk told Ukrainian broadcaster Channel 24.

Gaiday said on Facebook that more than 1,200 people had been evacuated from Lugansk, but that efforts were being hampered by artillery fire, with some areas already inaccessible.

For those that unable to leave, he said, tonnes of food, medicine and hygiene products were being delivered as part of a massive humanitarian effort.

The head of the Donetsk Regional Military Administration said strikes had targeted aid

points.

"The enemy aimed directly there with a goal to destroy the civilians," Pavlo Kyrylenko wrote on Facebook.

He added that people were heeding calls to flee and he would be coordinating evacuation to make it "faster and more effective."

Shells and rockets were also slamming into the industrial city of Severodonetsk, the easternmost city held by Ukrainian forces. "We have nowhere to go, it's been like this for days," 38-year-old Volodymyr told AFP standing opposite a burning building in the city.

More than 11 million people have been displaced since Russia invaded on February 24, aiming to seize the capital. With that

goal thwarted, it is instead trying to create a land link between occupied Crimea and Moscow-backed separatist statelets in Donbas.

Ukrainian forces are also regrouping for the offensive, including on a two-lane highway through the rolling eastern plains connecting Kharkiv and Donetsk.

Trench positions were being dug, and the road was littered with anti-tank obstacles.

"We're waiting for them!" said a lieutenant tasked with reinforcing the positions, giving a thumbs up.

The evacuation calls are being fuelled by fears of fresh atrocities, after chilling discoveries in areas from which Moscow's troops have withdrawn.

US President Joe Biden said "major war crimes" were being committed in Ukraine, where images have emerged in recent days of bodies with their hands bound or in shallow graves.

"Civilians executed in cold blood, bodies dumped into mass graves, the sense of brutality and inhumanity left for all the world to see, unapologetically," Biden said.

In one of the worst affected towns, Bucha, some residents were still trying to learn the fate of loved ones, while others were hoping to forget.



People take part in a protest against Guatemalan Attorney General Consuelo Porras, who is seeking re-election, in Guatemala City.

# China ship shadows research vessel, Filipino scientists wary

Manila, Apr 07 (AP):

A Chinese coast guard ship last month maneuvered for days near a research vessel deployed by Philippine and Taiwanese scientists to undertake a crucial survey of undersea fault lines west of the northern Philippines, sparking concerns among the scientists on board, officials said Thursday.

The scientists on the R/V Legend, including five Filipinos, proceeded with their research despite the presence of the Chinese coast guard ship in the vicinity of the waters straddling the undersea Manila Trench from March 25 to March 30 off the northwest-



Research ship R/V Legend.

ern Philippine city of Vigan in Ilocos Sur province.

The Chinese coast guard's proximity sparked concerns because the research vessel was towing a survey cable in the sea, a Filipino scientist told The Associated Press. The ongoing offshore survey a joint project of the National

Institute of Geological Sciences at the University of the Philippines and the National Central University in Taiwan aims to help map offshore faults and other geologic features that could set off future earthquakes, tsunamis and other potentially catastrophic hazards in the region.

# Hong Kong activists fade from view as national security case drags



Protester standing behind a mock jail with photos of 47 pro-democracy figures in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, Apr 07 (AFP):

Hong Kong's most prominent democracy activists have disappeared from view as their prosecution under a security law drags into its second year, with lawyers and family members warning the defendants are losing faith in the courts.

The 47 activists make up a swathe of the city's depleted democracy movement, from veteran former lawmakers to young firebrands and community organisers as well as academics and unionists. Charged with subversion, the majority have been held in custody for more than a year and the few granted bail

must adhere to strict speech curbs.

Most of what has occurred during pre-trial hearings is blanketed by reporting restrictions, even though the defendants want them lifted. And their trial is not expected to begin until at least 2023.

"The prosecution and the court are making the defendants invisible in plain sight," legal scholar Eric Lai of Georgetown University told AFP. Using the national security law Beijing imposed in 2020 following huge democracy protests, authorities targeted the activists for organising an unofficial poll to choose opposition candidates.

Some observers have voiced alarm about how lengthy pre-trial proceedings under the law have generated precedent-setting decisions without public scrutiny.

# Number of Indian students in US rose by 12 percent

Washington, Apr 07 (PTI):

The number of Indian students in the United States increased by over 12 per cent in 2021, while those from China which accounts for the largest number, dropped by more than eight per cent, a governmental report said.

In its annual report, US Citizenship and Immigration Services said the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact international student enrolment in the United States in 2021. The total number of SEVIS records for active F-1 and M-1 students was 1,236,748 in the calendar year 2021, a decrease of 1.2 per cent from the calendar year 2020. SEVIS stands for Students and Exchange Visitor Information System. F-1 and M-1 are the two non-immigrant student visas. J-1 is also a non-immi-



US Citizenship and Immigration Services.

grant student visa but is mostly given to scholars exchange programs.

In 2021, 8,038 SEVP-certified schools were eligible to enrol international students, registering a decrease by 280 schools from 8,369 eligible schools in 2020. The number of students from China and India made Asia the most

popular continent of origin. However, China sent fewer students in 2021 in comparison to 2020 (-33,569) while India sent more students (+25,391), the report said. As many as 37 per cent of Indian students are females.

Overall, China continues to top the list of countries sending 348,992 stu-

dents to the United States. India follows China with 232,851 students. China and India are followed by South Korea (58,787), Canada (37,453), Brazil (33,552), Vietnam (29,597), Saudi Arabia (28,600), Taiwan (25,406), Japan (20,144) and Mexico (19,680). According to the report, only Asia and Australia/Pacific Islands saw an overall decline in the number of students coming to the United States last year as all other continents saw an increase. International F-1 and M-1 students came from every continent in the world other than Antarctica and from more than 224 countries and territories. Students from China and India made Asia the most popular continent of origin, accounting for 71.9 per cent of the international student population.

# Yemen's president steps aside amid efforts to end war

Sanaa, Apr 07 (AP):



ARM Hadi

Yemen's exiled president stepped aside and transferred his powers to a presidential council on Thursday, as international and regional efforts to end the country's long-running civil war gained momentum with a two-month truce.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, major players in the conflict appear to have played a role President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi's de-

cision, quickly welcoming it with a pledge of 3 billion in aid. The head of the new council has close ties to Riyadh.

Whether the switch will

expedite an end to the grinding war remains to be seen, as UN-sponsored negotiations have been at an impasse and fighting, airstrikes and missile attacks continued until late last month. The Houthis did not immediately comment on Hadi's announcement. Hadi said the newly established council will run the internationally recognised government and lead negotiations with the Iranian-backed Houthis, according to a statement aired on state-

run media. The move is meant to unify the anti-Houthi camp after years of fighting and disputes, and was almost certainly orchestrated in Riyadh, where Yemeni factions were meeting over the past week to discuss efforts to end the war. With this declaration a Presidential Leadership Council shall be established to complete the implementation of the tasks of the transitional period. Irreversibly delegate to the Presidential Leadership Council my

full powers, Hadi declared on Yemen's state-run TV.

Hadi also sacked Vice President Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, a powerful military figure, and also delegated al-Ahmar's powers to the presidential council.

The presidential council is chaired by Rashad al-Alimi, an advisor to Hadi and former interior minister with the government of late strongman President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

# Indo-US ties entering uncharted territory post-Ukrainian war

Washington, Apr 07 (PTI):

Due to the problematic position taken by India on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the India-US bilateral relationship is entering uncharted territory, a top former official of the Trump Administration said.

Lisa Curtis, who was the Trump Administration's point person for India during his four years of presidency, made the remark cautioning that in the absence of a course correc-

tion by New Delhi, it would become increasingly difficult for the two countries to expand their defence and security ties beyond a certain level.

I think the US India relationship is entering uncharted territory. The issue of India's close ties with Russia has always been an irritant in the US-India partnership. But with Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion of a sovereign country, there are expectations that India would adjust its relationship

with Russia, Curtis told PTI in an interview. Curtis, who is now a senior fellow and director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Centre for a New American Security think tank, said February 24 which marks the Russian invasion of Ukraine has changed everything in terms of what the expectations of the United States are of India moving forward. I think there has been some understanding of India's very difficult position that it

can't change its reliance on Russian military equipment overnight and

that India has real security interests that it needs to protect, she said.

**कार्यालय नगर पालिक निगम विलासपुर (छ.ग.)**  
ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना  
क्र.01/न.पा.नि./प्रकारा विभाग/2022-23 दिनांक 06/04/2022  
नगर पालिक निगम विलासपुर के प्रकारा विभाग अंतर्गत सड़क बन्ती मरम्मत हेतु लाईनमेन एवं हेल्पर प्रदायकर्ताओं से श्रमिक प्रदाय कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है :-

सिस्टम नंबर	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)	निविदा डाउनलोड/सबमिट करने की अंतिम तिथि
96862	Supply of Linemen & Helper for Electrical Department in Municipal Corporation Bilsapur.	21.29	27/04/2022

उपरोक्त प्रदाय कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेबसाइट <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।  
कार्यालय अभियंता  
नगर पालिक निगम विलासपुर (छ.ग.)

**कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियंता, लोक निर्माण विभाग रायपुर मण्डल क्रमांक 1 (छत्तीसगढ़)**  
**निविदा सूचना**  
एकीकृत पंजीयन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सक्षम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु ऑनलाइन (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है :-

एन.आई.टी. क्र./सिस्टम नंबर	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)
1	2	3
196/96181	Ordinary Maintenance Of Road and Culverts Under Sub Div. Tilda Kodwa-Janjira-Nakti-Khapri-Bartori-Rajja-Chhapora-Manpur-Tuisi-Bhatthara Road Km 1, 2, 6, 7 = 4 Km, Chicholi-Raikheda-Sontara-Deogaon-Khauna Road Km 2, 3, 4 & 12 Km, Tilda-Bhursuda-Gujra-Mohda-Silpatti Road Km 11, 12 & 15 Km, Khairkut-Tarapongi-Kirna-Jaiso-Kundaru Road Km 17, Tarashiv-Chhataud Road Km 1 & 2, Kharora-Kathiya Road Km 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 & 12 Km, Pachari-Patharakundi Road Km 1, 2, & 3 Km, Bharuadih Approach Road Km 1, Nahardih Approach Road Km 1, Tilda-Neora-Kota-Chhapra-Manpur-Mohra Road Km 1 To 21, Singa-Tildara-Khara Road Km 6 To 35/6, Tiwraiyya-Raita-Kirna Road Km 14, 15, 20, 21 & 22 Km, Madhi-Deogaon Road Km 1 & 2, Neora-Sinodha-Khapharika-Hathbandh Road Km 1 To 11/6, Otgan-Kesda-Mohadi-Mohgaon-Satbhawa-Boirihiti Road Km 6, 7 & 8 Km. (वर्तुष आमंत्रण)	रु. 49.40 लाख
232/96182	Construction of Chandandih Internal Road, Length 1.050 Km., Raipur (द्वितीय आमंत्रण)	रु. 130.53 लाख
209/96184	Road Marking, Sign Board, Rpm At Various Road Divider Under Construction Sub Division No-1 Raipur (रु.ग.) (द्वितीय आमंत्रण)	रु. 40.00 लाख

एन.आई.टी. क्र. 196 सिस्टम नंबर नं. 96181 निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 15.04.2022 समय सायं 5:30 बजे तक एवं एन.आई.टी. क्र.232 सिस्टम नंबर नं. 96182 एवं एन.आई.टी. क्र.209 सिस्टम नंबर नं. 96184 निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि दिनांक 20.04.2022 समय सायं 5:30 बजे तक

उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्य की निविदा की सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर राशि विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> पर देखी जा सकती है एवं डाउनलोड की जा सकती है।

**अधीक्षण अभियंता**  
**लो.नि.वि. रायपुर मंडल क्र.-1**  
**रायपुर (छ.ग.)**  
G-90129/1





# CENTRAL Chronicle

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## Power grid protection

**S**uspected state-sponsored Chinese hackers have targeted the power sector in India in recent months as part of an apparent cyber-espionage campaign, the threat intelligence firm Recorded Future Inc said in a report. In recent months, Chinese hackers observed likely network intrusions targeting at least seven Indian State Load Despatch Centres (SLDCs) responsible for carrying out real-time operations for grid control and electricity dispatch within these respective states. Notably, this targeting has been geographically concentrated, with the identified SLDCs located in North India, in proximity to the disputed India-China border in Ladakh. The prolonged targeting of Indian power grid assets by Chinese state-linked groups offers limited economic espionage or traditional intelligence-gathering opportunities. Analysts believe this targeting is instead likely intended to enable information gathering surrounding critical infrastructure systems or is pre-positioning for future activity. The objective for intrusions may include gaining an increased understanding into these complex systems in order to facilitate capability development for future use or gaining sufficient access across the system in preparation for future contingency operations. In the present world, power grid is part of critical infrastructure, which needs to be protected from threats involving national security. Last year, CERT-In had reported from a trusted source that China-based 'Threat actor Group Command and Control' servers are trying to communicate with systems belonging to Telangana State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC), TS Transco (Transmission Corporation of Telangana Ltd) and advised taking suitable precautionary measures to ensure the security of the power system, official sources said. Cyberattacks are becoming as troublesome to the electrical power grid as natural disasters, and the problem is growing worse as these grids become more connected and smarter. Unlike in the past, when a power outage affected just the electricity supplied to homes and businesses, power grids are becoming core elements of smart cities, infrastructure, and safety-related services. Without power, none of this works, and sophisticated hacking operations can hold large regions hostage until they pay enormous ransoms or give into other demands.

Ukraine's grid was attacked in 2015, leaving 200,000 households without power. A similar attack happened the following year. And the cyber criminals who breached Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power, the South Korean nuclear and hydroelectric company, in 2014 posted plans and manuals for two nuclear reactors online and exposed 10,000 employees' personal data. Cyber warfare is more complicated. State sponsored hackers have a mission to steal, disrupt, and more importantly, cause damage to the victims' operations and critical infrastructure. Connectivity makes the security issue much worse. Traditionally, the power grids have been predominantly isolated infrastructures. Digitalization has changed that. Modern, connected power grids provide the convenience of remote monitoring, decentralized control, load balancing for alternative sources, and data analytics. Smart cities can take advantage of remote IoT capabilities to increase efficiency and provide insight for future city planning. However, the network-based, interconnected infrastructure often raises security concerns. Hackers target the critical infrastructure of a modern city to cause disruption. Stopping the electricity supply not only causes inconvenience to the users, it would also disrupt operations in an emergency situation. For example, hospitals have to rely on backup power generators, if available. Government agency operations will be severely impacted in their normal day-to-day activities when service is interrupted. In some cases, this may even threaten national security. Therefore, protection of these critical infrastructures as well as all end points is vitally important to prevent large scale outages. There are multiple issues facing the power grids today that make it more vulnerable. Among the top three are the age of systems, a lack of cohesive planning and action, and the number of stakeholders involved. Overcoming these issues requires using technology to fight hackers, better and more centralized leadership, and a mindset change that recognizes the immediacy of cyber threats.

## Minimising inflation risk

**M**odern Monetary Theory (MMT) is a macroeconomic lens which prescribes that monetarily sovereign countries like the US are unaffected by financial constraints as long as they control their currencies. With roots dating back to the early 20th century, MMT was first popularized in its modern form by Warren Mosler, an American investment fund manager. Under MMT, the risk of inflation is considered minimal as governments that fully control their fiat currencies are believed to be able to control price levels, provided they can meet consumer demand. The past few months have seen inflation skyrocket to 40-year highs, with the latest consumer price index report showing an annual price increase of almost 8 percent. Public debt has soared since the 2008 financial crisis, and especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the International Monetary Fund, the ratio of public debt to GDP in advanced economies increased from around 70 percent in 2007 to 124 percent in 2020. But the fear that rising public debt will fuel future financial crises has been subdued, partly because government bond yields have been so low for so long. Advocates of MMT contend that as long as debt is denominated in a country's own currency, there is no reason to fear a fiscal crisis, because a default cannot happen.

Any withdrawal of fiscal stimulus therefore should be gradual. And in the meantime, new issues of public debt can be used to fund infrastructure investments, income-support programs, and other items on progressives' agenda, provided that the inflation rate remains below the central bank's target. MMT's boosters cite Japan as proof of concept. Even though Japan's debt to GDP ratio (including both central and local government) is above 250 percent, compared to 160 percent in the United States, its ten-year government bond yield has remained at around zero throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and its average inflation rate has barely exceeded zero for 20 years. Annual new bond issues and soaring debt levels have not had any apparent impact on borrowing costs. But before other countries rush to emulate Japan, they should bear in mind that Japanese government bonds are issued in yen, and almost all are held by Japanese residents, both directly and indirectly through financial institutions and the central bank.

## VERMICELLI PREPARATION



A worker arranges prepared vermicelli which are used in making dishes and consumed during the holy month of Ramzan, at a workshop on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

## Russia putting rouble on gold standard is unlikely to last

**ALEXANDER MIHAILOV**

**T**he Bank of Russia, the country's central bank, has surprisingly announced a fixed price for buying gold with roubles. With a price of RUB 5,000 (Great Britain Pound 45.12) for a gram of gold, to my knowledge it's the first time that a nation's currency has been expressed in 'gold parity' since Switzerland decided to stop doing so in 1999. Enacting gold parity was common practice by the world's major powers for facilitating international trade payments in the era of the gold standard in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The same was true in a slightly different way during the Bretton Woods era from 1944 until 1971, which was when US President Nixon decided to end the system by removing the link between gold and the US dollar. Putin's new arrangement is envisaged, initially, to hold from March 28 to June 30. It is the latest in a series of rouble-related moves by the Russians, starting with the announcement on March 23 that they would only accept roubles for European gas instead of euros and US dollars. I predicted that Russia would at least extend this policy to oil, but it has gone further and signalled an intention to make it apply to all the commodities it exports (others include wheat, nickel, aluminium, enriched uranium and neon).

The main goal of these moves is to try to ensure the credibility of the rouble by making it more desirable in the forex market, though it also fits into

longstanding attempts by Russia and China to weaken the US dollar's dominance as global reserve currency (meaning it's the currency in which most international goods are priced and which most central banks hold in their foreign reserves). The rouble collapsed in late February and early March when western sanctions were imposed in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine (the collapse looks like a rise in the chart because it's showing the number of roubles to the US dollar rather than the other way around). After the big drop, the rouble recovered somewhat, which is typical in such situations (known in the literature as 'exchange-rate overshooting'). However, the currency strengthened further after the roubles-for-gas announcement (no matter how serious or implementable the plan actually is - so far, there has been resistance to Putin's new rules).

On the back of the gold announcement, the currency has continued to strengthen to about RUB83 to the dollar. As precious metals analyst Ronan Manly has said, this makes sense if you reflect that the market price of a gram of gold is currently about USD 62. That's fairly close to Putin's announcement that 1 gram of gold equals RUB 5,000, which effectively creates a gold-based exchange rate of RUB 81 to USD 1. To give a sense of the similarities with the gold standard and the Bretton Woods system, let me draw a historical parallel. The UK's

Coinage Act of 1816 fixed the value of the pound sterling to 113 grains of pure gold, while the US Gold Standard Act of 1900 determined that the dollar should maintain a value of 23.22 grains of pure gold. Taken together, the two acts implied an official gold parity exchange rate of GBP 1 = USD 4.87. It was similar during the post-war Bretton Woods era: 1 ounce of gold was said to be worth US\$35, and all other currencies were fixed to and convertible into the US dollar. Gold was at the centre of the system as a way of making money credible. Of course, attaching the rouble to a gold standard comes with certain 'rules of the game' that Russia will have to abide by. It should be willing to exchange gold for roubles with anyone who wants to do so.

This was what the US did during the Bretton Woods era, and it led to the system's demise: with US expenditure rising to wage the Vietnam war, dollar holders became increasingly nervous about the dollar's value and sought to exchange it for gold. Nixon's unilateral decision to end convertibility was for fear that the US would run out of gold, which would have destroyed the credibility of the dollar. Since that decision, the world has moved to a system of floating exchange rates and the price of gold has steadily risen as world currencies have become weaker in relation to it. The system has effectively been supported by a deal that the Americans struck in the early 1970s to buy oil from the Saudis and give them military support in exchange for the Saudis using the dollars to buy US government bonds. Western financial thought has this idea that if they cheapen Russian gold by sanctioning it, they're hurting Russia by lessening the amount of stuff they could potentially buy with that gold. In fact, they're actually helping Russia by encouraging gold inflows into the country and making it much cheaper for the Bank of Russia to amass much more gold to back the Ruble at a cred-

ible rate when the time comes.

The problem for Russia is that if it is willing to exchange roubles for gold, it could soon end up in a similar situation to the US circa 1971. Wars are an abnormal state of affairs which come with huge uncertainty: no reliable forecasts are possible, and markets are liable to overreact to new developments - particularly in the short term. If confidence in the rouble falls again, many investors might decide to withdraw gold from the central bank, which could be extremely destabilising for Moscow. The real money question at the heart of this theme is how did the Biden administration and its allies not anticipate for such a scenario to play out? Simple: because the West's myopic thought process is fixated on devaluing Russian gold with the hopes of limiting the amount of stuff the country can buy with it. In fact, Washington is so infatuated with preventing Russia from selling gold that it's completely forgetting that gold is money, rather than the fiat paper created by a few strokes on the Fed's keyboard that only has value in the first place because it can be traded for gold. The viability of Russia maintaining a fixed rate of roubles for gold is closely related to what happens to demand for Russian energy. If the west can only slowly substitute away from its dependence on Russia's oil and gas, then demand for roubles will help to keep the currency propped up (especially if the west does end up paying in roubles). But if politicians listen to economists and immediately stop importing Russian gas, oil and other commodities, the rouble could fall dramatically - along with the whole Russian economy. As much as this would cause a further spike in prices and pain all round, it may be the most efficient and perhaps even safest way to induce Russia to stop the war.

(Alexander Mihailov is Associate Professor in Economics, University of Reading in UK.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Kudos

We are all aware how the minimum voice of protest be it a peaceful slogan shouting or simple inscription of "NO WAR" are being tamed with iron hand in Russia with even children, women or senior citizens not getting spared from detention, imprisonment and severe punishment. The Novaya Gazeta newspaper, Muratov is the editor-in-chief of which was already facing the ire of Kremlin for long for daring to criticise the policies of the State or Vladimir Putin. Now in these times of "Special Military Operation" (actually barbaric unilateral aggression) with all sane countries of the world providing all forms of support to the brutally-attacked Ukraine, the "super-sensitive" Russian State is in no mood to view "dissent" in the light of forgiveness. So Muratov is well aware of the severe consequences he might have to encounter, thanks to his unique sacrifice of even the prized Nobel medal drawing international attention. Yet he has not hesitated to take this extreme bold step despite residing in Russia and thereby endangering his freedom, safety, career, future and even life just to respond to his Call of Conscience and offer financial and moral assistance towards assaulted people of foreign vintage i.e. the Ukrainian refugees. Dmitry Muratov has practically proved through sheer action that Humanity is infinite times Greater than blind rabid "Nationalism". So instead of uttering zealous rhetoric of "My Russia is Great" and supporting the aggression akin to Dark Medieval Ages, Muratov can protest against his very own (in terms of mere passport) so as to embrace the God's own ie human beings of the world (that too persecuted) by transcending narrow definition of "Nation". And Javed Akhtar. While attending the Kolkata Literary Meet, Akhtar sang paens of Urdu revolving its secular literature and Indian credentials surpassing all divides of Hinduism and Islam. But on the other hand, Akhtar also stressed "Languages belong to regions, not religions. Ten crore Muslims (of erstwhile East Pakistan) told seven crore Muslims (of erstwhile West Pakistan) that we will not learn Urdu at the cost of Bengali. I love Urdu the way you love Bengali but I respect and salute those people who defended Bengali. For them, that was their mother tongue, which was far more important than their religion". Are the harbingers of "Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan" listening who are not only hell bent on according "Islamic" stamp upon Urdu, but also dare to impose Hindi upon multi-lingual democratic India in the name of "national integrity". How many people raise their voice to speak up for the "alien" victims with the perpetrators of violence being of their own national or linguistic stock and herein lies the special significance and greatness of the thought process of Muratov and Akhtar. Let people of all demographic credentials equally bloom and prosper in God's boundaryless world with mutual respect and love.

Kajal Chatterjee, Kolkata



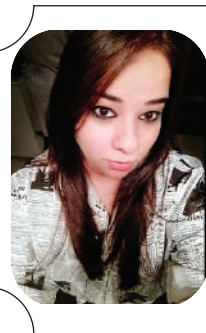
## WHAT THEY TWEET!

**Saurav Jha@SJha1618**

You can literally induct an indigenous Pralay SRBM battery by the time the procurement file for some gazillion dollar fighter jet \*import\* deal moves between two desks. Instead of crying about IAF squadron strength, the need of the hour is to build the rocket force.

**Vir Das@theviridas**

Personal random achievement unlocked. My 30th city and fifth country on the #WantedTour with zero check in luggage. Two sweaters, five tees, two trousers, running shoes, show shoes, a laptop bag. And if you think about the time I've saved at airports, it is probably days.



**Naila Inayat@nailainayat** enters Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan: 'Imran Khan is conspiring against the Constitution of Pakistan. TLP stands by the 1973 constitution, which is the result of eternal sacrifices. We will not let any conspiracy to repeal it, succeed.'

**Vidya@VidyaG88**

#FinancialFreedom means having the ability to choose the best use for your time. It doesn't mean early retirement! My dad got FI around 2000. Still works at 72 to keep his mind & body sharp & loves it! Find your Ikigai & pursue it sincerely. Don't waste your life doing nothing.

**DK Sharma@CaptDKS**

DYK that one of the best Naval Aviation Museums in Asia.

**Raunak@raunakmahajan**

So true! I started to think for myself when I turned 30! And by then I had already completed my engineering, MBA, and a job stint. I so wish I had developed this maturity when I was 18 but our education system never gave us that chance.

**Baba Sehgal@OnlyBaba**

Jawab chahiye toh sawaal karo. Appointment chahiye toh kaal karo. Brush chahiye toh baal karo. Colour chahiye toh laal karo. Lathi chahiye toh babaal karo. Baby kiss chahiye toh gaal karo??



**BRIEF**

**Invest**



**Mumbai:** Omega Seiki Mobility (OSM) and battery technology startup Log9 Materials will jointly invest Rs 150 crore in charging infrastructure by financial year 2024.

**Expects**

**New Delhi:** FMCG maker Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCP) expects to deliver a "close to double-digit sales growth" in the January-March quarter driven entirely by pricing. Overall, short-term challenges such as unprecedented global commodity inflation and the performance of its Indonesia business, continued to play out during the quarter, impacting consumption and margins.

**Pacts**



**New Delhi:** Macrotech Developers has signed multiple joint development agreements (JDAs) with land owners to construct real estate projects. CEO Abhishek Lodha said we believe that the housing sector will grow by 3-4x (3 to 4 times) in this decade (2021-2030).

**Sell**

**New Delhi:** Two entities — Tamara and Pace have offloaded shares of casual dining chain Barbeque Nation Hospitality for an estimated Rs 669 crore through open market transactions. Those who picked up the shares of the Bengaluru based casual dining chain are — ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund, Motilal Oswal Mutual Fund, BNP Paribas Arbitrage, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and TNTBC as The Trustee of Nomura India Stock Mother Fund.

**Operations**



**New Delhi:** JSW Energy on Thursday announced that its subsidiary has commenced operations of a 225 MW solar plant at Vijayanagar in Karnataka. JMD CEO Prashant Jain said it remains upbeat to commence operations of under-construction pipeline.

**Completes**

**Mumbai:** Auto components major Mutherson Sumi Systems Ltd (MSSL) said it has successfully completed the acquisition of a majority stake in Bengaluru based CIM Tools Private Ltd.

## 10 states given permission to borrow additional Rs 28,204 cr

For power sector reforms last fiscal

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The finance ministry on Thursday said 10 states were given the permission to borrow an additional Rs 28,204 crore in FY22 for undertaking power sector reforms. The 10 states are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

"Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, has granted additional borrowing permission of Rs 28,204 crore to 10 states for undertaking the stipulated reforms in



power sector in 2021-22," it said in a statement.

In the financial year 2022-23 too, the states can avail the facility of additional borrowing linked to reforms in power sector. An amount of Rs 1,22,551 crore will be available as incentive to the states for undertaking these reforms in 2022-23, it added.

The finance ministry,

based on the recommendations of 15th Finance Commission, had decided to grant additional borrowing space of upto 0.5 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) to the states every year for a four year period from 2021-22 to 2024-25 based on the reforms undertaken by them in the power sector.

The objective of granting financial incentives as additional borrowing permissions for taking up reforms in power sector are to improve the operational and economic efficiency of the sector, and promote a sustained increase in paid electricity consumption.

## Indo-Aussie trade expansion to provide opportunities for students

**Sydney, Apr 07 (PTI):**

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday said the trade pact between India and Australia would help expand the economies of both countries, thus providing huge opportunities for students. He said education is an important element both in the current and future engagements with Australia.

So as trade and economy expand, the opportunities for students also naturally expand and that's what we have aimed for, he said while interacting with students here at the University of New South Wales. He called for taking India-Australia partnership in education to greater heights and invited the university to ex-



**Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held talks at University of New South Wales in Australia on Thursday.**

and its footprints in India. As we expand our services offerings to each other. As we expand trade in goods, in startups, obviously there is going to be a need for all of you (Indian students in Australia) in a bigger way, Goyal added.

Australia has over one lakh students from India.

Speaking at the event, Australian Trade Minister Dan Tehan said whether Indian students studying in Australia should also get opportunities to work here, is a very popular

## Rupee falls 11 paise at 75.95 against USD, gold price rises

**Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The rupee declined 11 paise to close at 75.95 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday as the hawkish stance of the US Federal Reserve affected investor sentiments in global markets and bolstered the American currency. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened lower at 75.88 against the US dollar, then slipped further to quote 75.99. It finally settled at 75.95, down 11 paise over its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee tanked 55 paise, its steepest single-day fall in a month, to close at a one-week low of 75.84 against the US dollar.

## Sensex tanks 575 points, Nifty skids below 17,700

**Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):**



Equity benchmark Sensex tumbled over 575 points on Thursday, tracking heavy losses in index-heavyweights HDFC twins, TCS and Reliance Industries amid a weak trend in global markets. Declining for the third straight day, the 30-share Sensex slumped 575.46 points or 0.97 per cent to settle at 59,034.95. During the day, it tanked 633.06 points or 1.06 per cent to 58,977.35.

The broader Nifty-50 also declined 168.10 points or 0.94 per cent to close at 17,639.55. From the 30-share pack, Titan, HDFC, HDFC Bank, Wipro, TCS,

Reliance Industries Limited, and Power Grid were the major laggards.

In contrast, Axis Bank, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, M&M, and Dr Reddy's were among the gainers.

In Asia, markets in Hong Kong, Seoul, Shanghai, and Tokyo settled lower. Stocks in the US also ended lower in the

overnight session. "Recent market weakness is partly due to the increasingly hawkish commentary from the US Fed," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

International oil benchmark Brent crude jumped 0.93 per cent to USD 102 per barrel.

## Govt mandates vehicles' fitness testing via automated stations

**In phased manner from Apr 2023**

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The government has made fitness testing of vehicles through Automated Testing Stations (ATS) mandatory in a phased manner starting April next year.

In an official statement, the Road Transport and Highways Ministry (MoRTH) said that fitness testing for heavy goods vehicles and heavy passenger motor vehicles through an ATS will be mandatory from April 1, 2023. While in the case of medium goods vehicles and medium passenger motor vehicles and light motor vehicles (transport), the requirement will be made compulsory from



**Automated Testing Station**

June 1, 2024. An Automated Testing Station (ATS) uses mechanical equipment to automate the various tests required to check the fitness of a vehicle. "The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a no-

tification dated 5th April 2022, regarding mandatory fitness of motor vehicles only through an Automated Testing Station, registered in accordance with rule 175 of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules 1989," it said.

## EESL to tie up with agencies to increase adoption of energy efficient products

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

State-owned Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) is looking to tie up with central and state agencies across the country with an aim to maximise the adoption of energy efficient products and services in India.

The company has opened registrations for the empanelment of demand aggregators for Channel Partners Programme Phase II under which it will collaborate with central and state agencies in designing, implementing, and maintaining their energy efficiency projects.

The registration process will be open till May 31, 2022 and the successful empanelled parties will be announced on July 1, 2022. With Channel Partners Programme Phase II, EESL is looking to increase the uptake of its energy efficient appliances like LED tubelights,



bulbs, BLDC fans, super-efficient ACs and chillers, among others. The programme will provide various growth opportunities to both EESL and its channel partners.

Through this initiative, EESL will benefit from an extensive sales network, which will enhance the reach and proliferation of energy efficient products and services. The partners, on the other hand, will be able to leverage EESL's credible market presence and high-quality solutions. With the phase II of this programme, EESL aims to increase its

turnover from energy efficient appliances to Rs 100 crore in next one year. "Through the improvised second phase of our Channel Partners Programme, we seek to further stimulate our various initiatives, by involving the private players in our energy efficiency journey," Animesh Mishra, Head - Sales and PR, EESL said in the statement.

Through its schemes like Streetlighting National Programme (SLNP), Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA), Super-Efficient Air Conditioner Programme and Building Energy Efficiency Programme, EESL has actively worked towards enabling a low carbon future with significant economic and social impact.

The organization aims to introduce a wide array of new energy efficient appliances in the future that can help in mainstreaming energy efficiency in India.

## ASBM University hosts its 8th IMCon-22

**Bhubaneswar, Apr 07:**

ASBM University, Bhubaneswar hosted its 8th International Management Conference (IMCon-22) on 'Building Resilience-The Way Forward' on April 2. This event was in collaboration with ACBSP, USA, Lobachevsky University, Russia and IIM Sambalpur. The inaugural session had an august presence of Governor of Odisha, Prof. Ganeshi Lal as the Chief Guest who inaugurated the conference.

In his address, Chief Guest and Governor of Odisha Prof. Ganeshi Lal said on the vitality of self-introspection for building resilience and to carry it forward. Quoting instances from Bhagavat Gita and Mahabharat, he focused on the apprehension of internal root mapping is the ultimatum to recover quickly from any



difficult situations.

Prof. Biswajeet Pattanayak, Founder and President of the University addressed the gathering and gave prelude to the conference. Earlier the welcome address was given by Vice Chancellor ASBM University, Prof. Kalyan Shankar Ray. In his key-

note address Mr. Richard Rekhy, Board Member KPMG Dubai and Former CEO, KPMG, stressed on the all-round development is the key to a resilient future.

Guest of Honor, Prof D.P. Agarwal, Former Chairman, Union Public Service Commission spoke about the impor-

tance of resilience in this modern world and gave emphasis on overcoming of all the odds, particularly in the COVID-19 period. After the felicitation there were releases of book, 'Building Resilience - The Way Forward', ASBM newsletter, 'Phoenix' and the conference compendium by the Governor.

## New Maruti Suzuki Ertiga bookings open

**Launch next week**

**New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):**

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India on Thursday announced opening of bookings for the upcoming new generation version of its multi purpose vehicle, Ertiga.

The next-gen Ertiga, powered by a 1.5 litre petrol engine with a smart hybrid technology, will be launched next week.

The company said it can be booked with a payment of Rs 11,000.

Maruti Suzuki India Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Shrivastava said the Ertiga has sold over 7.5 lakh units and has been a "game-changer in India's MPV market".

"The next-gen Ertiga will have thoughtful new-age features, an upgraded powertrain and advanced 6-speed automatic transmission," he said.

## Bounce Infinity begins rollout of its first e-scooter

**Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTI):**

Smart mobility firm Bounce Infinity on Thursday said it has commenced rollout of its first consumer e-scooter E1 from the Bhiwadi facility in Rajasthan and deliveries of the vehicle will start from April 18. The company also said it is looking to set up a new half-a-million per annum capacity manufacturing facility for e-scooters in South India later this year. Bounce Infinity is backed by marquee investors such as Accel, Accel US, Sequoia Capital India, B Capital, Falcon Edge, Qualcomm, Chirate, Omidyar Network, Maverick Capital, among others. It had launched E1 with dual options in swappable battery - scooter with Battery-as-a-Service (BaaS) — and scooter with battery and



**Rollout of e-scooter E1 begins in Bhiwadi on Thursday.**

charger. It had also announced that deliveries of the e-scooter will commence from early 2022. With the rollout of Bounce Infinity E1 from our plant, we are thrilled that the first batch of our electric scooters will soon make its way to eagerly awaiting customers across the country, said Vivekananda Hallekere, Co-Founder and CEO, Bounce Infinity. With current capacity at the

## Koo launches Voluntary Self-Verification for all users

**Mumbai, Apr 07:**

The Koo App launches Voluntary Self-Verification, becoming the first social media platform in the world to do so. Any user can now self-verify their profile on the platform within seconds by using their Government-approved ID card. This move empowers users to prove the authenticity of their accounts on the platform, hence lending credibility to the thoughts and opinions that they share. Voluntary self-verification promotes visibility of genuine voices. A visible marker in the form of a green tick will identify an account as being self-verified. Koo is the first 'Significant Social Media Intermediary' to enable this feature in accordance with Rule 4(7) the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics

Code) Rules, 2021. Users enter the Government-ID number, enter the OTP, and on successful authentication, get self-verified with a green tick in their profile. The whole process is completed within a few seconds. The validation process is carried out by Government-authorized third-parties. Koo would not store any information during the process. In addition to empowering users on the platform, voluntary self verification - by promoting authenticity - will also hopefully result in curbing online misinformation, hate speech, abuse and bullying. Aprameya Radhakrishna, Co-founder & CEO Koo said, "Koo is at the forefront of promoting trust and safety on social media. We are very proud to be the first social media platform in the world to launch a Voluntary Self-Verification system.





## JoJo Siwa exits Will Smith-backed film 'Bounce'

Dancer and digital sensation JoJo Siwa will no longer be making her feature film debut with the screen adaptation of 'Bounce', reports 'Variety'. Insiders familiar with the project said that Paramount Pictures has also removed the project from its development slate.

Siwa told 'Variety' at the GLAAD Media Awards that she is no longer attached to the movie adaptation of the YA book by Megan Shull. She said, "That project got put on hold, and then went away. It wasn't the one."

As per the sources of 'Variety', the project fell apart months ago and its demise is not related to Smith's assault of comedian Chris Rock at this year's Academy Awards. First announced in the summer of 2020, the film was brought to the studio by producer Caleb Pinkett ('Cobra Kai', 'Charm City Kings').

His sister Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith were reported to be attached as producers at the time, before the formation of their content company Westbrook. One person familiar with Westbrook said Pinkett Smith and her husband were not leads on the project, rather lending support to Caleb Pinkett.

The project also made waves last July when Siwa, who came out as bisexual months prior, revealed that the script for 'Bounce' included a kissing scene with a male costar. 'Variety' later reported that the studio happily removed the kissing scene in light of Siwa's objection.

## Alefiya Kapadia: We step into relationships with baby steps which gradually make us fall in love

'Bade Achhe Lagte Hain 2' actress Alefiya Kapadia talks about the ongoing track and how the show brings out the reality of two strangers gradually falling in love with each other in an arranged marriage.

The show revolves around Nakuul Mehta and Disha Parmar, who are playing onscreen couple Ram and Priya respectively. In the ongoing track, the lead characters are shown facing the dilemma to express their feelings for each other. Alefiya spoke about the quandary Ram (played by Nakuul Mehta) and Priya (played by Disha Parmar) are now facing. She says: "We step into relationships with baby steps which gradually make us fall in love. Love is not some quick scheme that two people can fall into. It takes time, you have to know the person that you want to love. Certainty is the keyword here. Sure, the heart wants what it wants, but there are always doubts." The actress adds about the upcoming episodes in which both Ram and Priya will confess their love for each other.

"Priya still has to come to terms with her own feelings for Ram even though Ram is already head over heels in love with her. Love is an experience that is unique to each individual. What is important is that you enjoy the journey and the show is inviting viewers to be a part of this journey of Priya to Ram," she adds.



## Tushar Dalvi highlights importance of education

Ever since its launch, Sony Entertainment Television's popular show Mere Sai: Shradha Aur Saburi has not only narrated stories of perfect humility, purity, self-control, equality and generosity but also continuous life teachings to its viewers. Taking this thought forward, the upcoming track narrates a heartfelt story of a lower caste girl residing in Shirdi who bears the brunt of the deeply entrenched caste system, and a free-thinking man who believes in equality for all and stands up for her rights. Sawari works in the local Kulkarni household where she isn't given the respect she deserves, only because she was born in a lower caste family. However, Kulkarni's son Mahesh who has come back to Shirdi after finishing his higher studies in London is a fervent believer of equality of human rights and treating all alike. He believes in treating everyone the same regardless of their race, social status, disability, religion or caste. Upon his return to Shirdi, he witnesses Sawari getting humiliated in his own house and decides to take a stand for her. Eventually, both fall for each other and develop feelings towards one another.



## An award winning feature film by India's Talented Filmmaker Praveen Whitefield

Essentials - The feature film idea was born during the initial days of the pandemic when the globe was reeling under strict lockdowns. The story was set with limited characters, locations, and budget. The pandemic threw an array of unique challenges that was tactfully dealt with, during the production. The production schedule was planned well in advance and was completed in just 17 days. 80% of the plan was done on paper first and then executed accordingly with a minimal yet fantastic crew of just 8 on sets and 20 professionals in total. The film got completed in a year's time which is an achievement on its own in comparison to many big budget films that get stuck and remain incomplete due to various reasons. The feature film has won many awards at various International Film Festivals. You can watch this award winning film on Movie Saints and Youtube.



## 'K.G.F. Chapter 2 poster' has a rugged Rocky in a fierce look



IMAX releases its exclusive poster for Kannada language period action drama K.G.F. Chapter 2. Written and directed by Prashanth Neel, and produced by Vijay Kiragandur under Hombale Films, K.G.F. Chapter 2 stars Kannada superstar Yash in lead role along with Sanjay Dutt, Srinidhi Shetty, Raveena Tandon and Prakash Raj. The story is based on the happenings in the blood-soaked land of Kolar Gold Fields and is a continuation of K.G.F. Chapter 1. K.G.F. Chapter 2 will release across IMAX screens in Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, on April 14, 2022.

IMAX's exclusive poster features a determined Rocky with an even fiercer look with weapons in both hands with chaos and goons in the background. The poster reflects Rocky's thoughts as he braces himself while his enemies are clamouring for revenge and conspiring for his downfall. Speaking on releasing K.G.F. Chapter 2 in IMAX, Christopher Tillman, VP, International Development and Distribution said, "IMAX is known for offering audiences a large than life experience and it is only apt for us to release an action-packed film like K.G.F."

## Ajay Devgn reveals how 'Runway 34' took flight

Ajay Devgn, who is gearing up for his next film 'Runway 34', recently shared how the idea behind the film came into being.

The script of 'Runway 34', which will see Ajay doubling up as a director in addition to his portrayal of the lead character, was conceived during the first nationwide lockdown following the first wave of the pandemic in India. Talking about how the special journey of 'Runway 34' began, Ajay Devgn shared, "Two years ago, barely a month into the pandemic, when things seemed to be going slow, the writer-duo Sandeep Kewlani and Aamil Keeyan Khan narrated the script of 'Runway 34' to me. I liked the script but I wanted certain changes. As promised, they worked on it during the lockdown and came back to me with a refreshed version."

Keeping the essence of the thriller intact, the actor-director further mentioned that the film is inspired by true events. "What I heard, I liked. The script is inspired by true events and that had made some changes for the big-screen adaptation. The first half has an element of thrill which the audience must experience."

"In fact, each and every one of us will identify with the turbulence and that hollow feeling in the stomach when a flight hits an air pocket. I can't tell you more because

it's a thriller and must be experienced." "Coming back to the script, Sandeep and Aamil had brought in the excitement and the drama. Then we worked on the script for another four months with my regular inputs. I was happy with the end result and also absolutely drawn to it. I decided this would be my third directorial. In December, 2020, we launched the film and started to shoot it as soon as the lockdown was partially withdrawn. Here we are today with a film that I am truly proud to represent," he added.

Directed by Ajay Devgn, 'Runway 34' is produced by Ajay Devgn Films and is co-produced by Kumar Mangat Pathak, Vikrant Sharma, Sandeep Harish Kewlani, Tarlok Singh Jethi, Hasnain Husaini and Jay Kanujia. The film, which also stars Amitabh Bachchan, Rakul Preet Singh, Boman Irani, Aakanksha Singh and Angira Dhar, is set to hit theatres on April 29, where it will clash with Tiger Shroff and Nawazuddin Siddiqui-starrer 'Heropanti 2'.



### HOROSCOPE FRIDAY APRIL 08

**Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18**  
Money problems could be on your mind, Aquarius, perhaps more so than necessary. You might have a tendency to blow them out of proportion and think they're worse than they are. Try to make a special effort to be objective.

**Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20**  
Today you could look in the mirror and panic about your appearance, Pisces. You might be feeling a little under the weather and look a little tired. Nonetheless, you probably look a lot better than you think you do. Don't fall into the trap of blowing every little flaw out of proportion. A little rest is probably all you need in order to look like yourself again.

**Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20**  
Your artistic abilities could seem a bit blocked today, Aries. You could be anxious to complete a half-finished project, but at this point you may have no idea where to go with it. Don't panic! Do something else for a day or two and ideas will probably flow as if by magic. If you don't have a tight deadline, there's no rush to complete the work now.

**Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21**  
Today you could have a strong desire to get out and socialize, Taurus. You could well spend a lot of time on the phone trying to reach some friends, but not have much luck with it. If they're busy, a frustrating game of phone tag could result. You might try just dropping by. Even if he or she can't see you right then, you can make arrangements for later.

**Gemini: May 22 - June 21**  
Today you could receive an invitation to a social event that you'll really want to attend, Gemini. People could be there who might turn out to be important contacts. Nonetheless, you might find that other responsibilities interfere with your plans, and experience a wave of disappointment.

**Cancer: June 22 - July 22**  
An opportunity to travel to a place you've always wanted to visit, perhaps for business reasons, could come your way today, Cancer. This could be very exciting, but you might have some difficulty making the arrangements. Flights could be full, hotels too costly, and responsibilities at home might need attention.

**Leo: July 23 - Aug 23**  
Daydreams full of adventure, perhaps involving travel, could take up a lot of your time today, Leo. You're probably bored with your situation and longing to do something to break your routine. You might have no idea how you can escape from everything right now. Don't force it. Spend the afternoon in a place you don't usually visit.

**Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22**  
Your desire to see a romantic partner could be very strong today, Virgo. However, if you ask, you might be turned down. Don't jump to the conclusion that your friend doesn't want to see you. If he or she says there are responsibilities to attend to, believe it! You might have to wait until another day, but that's probably the worst that will happen.

**Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23**  
Overindulgence in food and drink over the past few days could be causing you to feel a little out of sorts today, Libra. You might even wonder if the fun was worth it! A little careful attention to yourself will have you back to normal in no time. Don't be surprised, however, if another opportunity to live it up presents itself! Take care.

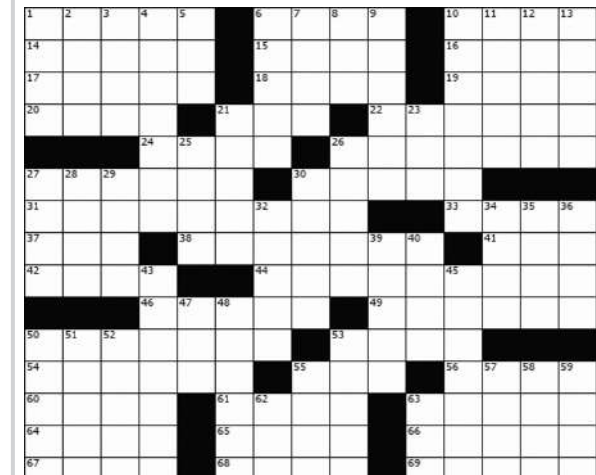
**Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22**  
A moody family member could have you confused, Sagittarius, and you might not be able to discern the best way to find out what's bothering him or her. Don't overanalyze the situation. The best way is probably just to come right out and tactfully speak your mind.

**Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 21**  
A moody family member could have you confused, Sagittarius, and you might not be able to discern the best way to find out what's bothering him or her. Don't overanalyze the situation. The best way is probably just to come right out and tactfully speak your mind.

**Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20**  
You might want to spend most of today outside, Capricorn, perhaps taking a walk through a park. You could have some serious thinking to do and feel the best recourse is to be by yourself for a while. Decisions won't come easily today, so don't try to force them. Just enjoy being out in the fresh air. Sometimes things come together more quickly if you forget about them for a while.

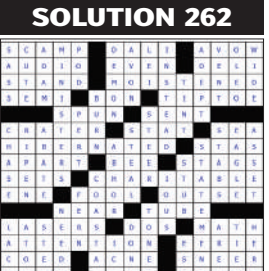
### CROSSWORD

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- ACROSS**
- Inferior
  - Flour factory
  - And
  - Make joyous
  - Between ports
  - Penn or Conery
  - Lawful
  - Cincinnati baseballers
  - Window section
  - Active person
  - Dessert choice
  - Afternoon snooze
  - Correct
  - Hide
  - Come into sight
  - Common contraction
  - Cutting user's tool
  - Knitting tools
  - Feel pain
  - Adolescent
  - Pod inhabitant
  - Petition

- Aardvarks
  - Heidi's cousin
  - Dodges
  - Soundrels
  - Employs
  - Verify
  - Compass dir.
  - Fair (hyph.)
  - Benefit
  - Curved doorway
  - TV repeat
  - Ink spot
  - Uncommon
  - Sound loudly
  - Evils
  - Prod
  - The British
- DOWN**
- Join metal
  - Bogus butter
  - Anger
  - Appetizer
  - Lamprey
  - Antoinette
  - Words of understanding (2 wds.)
  - Went first
  - Cowboy's tools
  - Facets
  - Rent contract
  - Christmas visitor
  - Basketball's Shaquille
  - Thick soup
  - Tavern
  - Attentive
  - Diamond weight
  - Urgent acronym
  - Dr. of TV
  - Colorless
  - Hair coloring
  - Advances
  - Was a copycat
  - "The Way We"
  - Brushness
  - Honking birds
  - Roof edge
  - Emphasizes
  - Loafer ornaments
  - "Viva Vegas"
  - Comunion tables
  - Jewish cleric
  - Coral island
  - Bar seat
  - Theater employee
  - Unbleached color
  - Uttered
  - Certain
  - Walllet fillers
  - Sharp knock
  - Batter's stat





## PBKS vs GT: Could be one of IPL's hottest battles

Mumbai, Apr 07:

Gujarat Titans' lethal pace attack is all set to ask some probing questions to the dynamic Punjab Kings top-order when the two teams lock horns in an IPL match on Friday. In terms of composition and balance, both Gujarat and Punjab are very different and that makes for an enticing contest on a Brabourne Stadium track where runs are always on offer. Punjab in their three games have shown that the approach this year would be to go hammer and tongs during the Powerplay overs and set the tempo for the rest of the innings.

In IPL however, there are some intriguing subplots that make it an engaging Friday. It will be a battle between Punjab's costliest buy (apart from skipper Mayank Agarwal's retention) Liam Livingstone and New Zealand's speed merchant Lockie Ferguson.

Having literally terrorised Delhi Capitals' Mandeep Singh with his pace and steep bounce in the earlier game, expect Ferguson to unleash his thunderbolts on Livingstone, who had taken the CSK attack to cleaners in the previous game with his 32-ball-60.

Ferguson and Mohammed Shami make for the most potent new ball pair after the first two



It will be a battle between Punjab's costliest buy (apart from skipper Mayank Agarwal's retention) Liam Livingstone and New Zealand's speed merchant Lockie Ferguson.

weeks. With head coach Anil Kumble they would like to devise a strategy to keep Punjab Kings under check during the Powerplay overs.

Hardik Pandya again bowling full tilt and touching 140 clicks also adds to the potency of the Gujarat attack but their batting still looks a bit questionable save Shubman Gill and skipper Pandya.

While senior openers Shikhar Dhawan and skipper Agarwal are yet to make significant contributions, it would be an onerous job against the Titans attack.

It is the middle-order of Bhanuka Rajapaksa,

Livingstone and newcomer Jitesh Sharma, that is expected to provide fireworks with M Shahrulkh Khan and Odean Smith at the rear.

They would like to target the weak Indian bowlers like Rahul Tewatia and Varun Aaron, who is known for leaking runs in all these years of IPL. However where Gujarat might face problems is in the batting front. Shubman Gill is the only assured batter they have till now.

In the first match against Lucknow, they didn't have to chase much and the second game saw them defend 170 odd purely be-

cause of their opening bowling depth.

Vijay Shankar as a top-order batter has looked far from convincing and Matthew Wade hasn't yet hit the rhythm although he is capable of big hits.

Abhinav Manohar is very new at this stage while Tewatia and David Miller aren't exactly known for their consistency.

In case of Punjab, they have two match-winning bowlers in Kagiso Rabada and leg-spinner Rahul Chahar but Arshdeep Singh, debutant Vaibhav Arora and Livingstone himself did a commendable job against Chennai.

**We need to be ruthless in finishing off games, says MI coach Jayawardene**



Pune, Apr 07 (PTD):

Mumbai Indians have endured a torrid start to the season, losing three games in a row and the team's head coach Mahela Jayawardene feels the five-time IPL champions need to adopt a ruthless attitude to finish off games.

A lacklustre MI lost by five wickets to Kolkata Knight Riders here on Wednesday night to slump to their third consecutive defeat of the season. The Rohit Sharma-led side had lost to Delhi Capitals and Rajasthan Royals in its opening two games.

"We were in the game pretty much all the way but then in the last few games we have not been ruthless enough to close games off," Jayawardene said at the virtual press conference.

"It's always tough when you have a start like this but we need to look at the positives. We are playing some good cricket but it's just that we are not closing games off. All three games we were in it but we were not able to finish it off."

"So these are concerns, specially with the ball we are not executing at the back end under pressure. Our execution has been poor so we need to make sure we brush up on that," he added.

## In-form India to start favourite against Korea in Women WC quarterfinal



Pocheefstroom, Apr 07 (PTD):

Unbeaten so far in the tournament, a confident India team is expected to steamroll lower-ranked Korea and seal the semifinal spot in the Junior Women Hockey World Cup, here on Friday.

The Indians finished on top of Pool D with maximum nine points from three victories. After humbling Wales (5-1), Germany (2-1) and Malaysia (4-0), India go into the quarterfinals with a superior 11-2 record. On the contrary,

with just three points in their kitty, Korea finished second in Pool C on account of a better goal difference.

Korea's pool was headed by Argentina with maximum nine points while Uruguay and Austria lost out on a quarterfinal berth on goal difference after finishing with same points as their Asian rival.

With three Olympians in the squad in skipper Salima Tete and strikers Sharmila Devi and Lalremsiami, the Indians looked a completely domi-

nant side, rich with big match experience.

Salima has led the side from the front with her superlative runs from the flanks, creating chances for the forward line, while Sharmila and Lalremsiami too lived up to their expectations with their attacking game up-front. But the star of India's performance so far in the tournament has been young striker Mumtaz Khan, who has scored five goals so far, including a hat-trick against Malaysia on Wednesday.

## Kumble felt he was unfairly treated: Vinod Rai

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTD):

Anil Kumble felt that he was treated "unfairly" and forced to resign as head coach of the Indian team but then skipper Virat Kohli opined that players were not happy with his "intimidating" style of enforcing discipline, according to former Committee of Administrators head Vinod Rai.

In his recently published book, 'Not Just A Nightwatchman: My Innings with BCCI', published by 'Rupa', Rai touched upon various issues that he dealt with during his 33-month tenure.

One of the issues and perhaps the most controversial, was when Kohli complained about his breakdown of relationship with Kumble, who announced his resignation publicly just after Champions Trophy in 2017. Kumble was handed a one-year contract in 2016. "In my conversations



with the captain and team management, it was conveyed that Kumble was too much of a disciplinarian and hence the team members were not too happy with him," Rai has written in his book.

"I had spoken to Virat Kohli on the issue and he did mention that the younger members of the team felt intimidated by the way he worked with them," Rai reveals that the then Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, VVS Laxman

had recommended Kumble's re-appointment.

"Soon, the CAC met in London and interacted with the two separately in a bid to resolve the issue. After deliberations over three days, they decided to recommend Kumble's reappointment as the head coach."

However it was evident from what followed was that Kohli's point of view was given more respect and hence Kumble's position became untenable.

"We had long conversations with Kumble after he had returned from the UK. He was obviously upset about the manner in which the entire episode had panned out. He felt he had been unfairly treated and a captain or team should not be given so much importance."

"It was the duty of the coach to bring discipline and professionalism into the team and as a senior, his views should have been respected by the players."

## Top pistol shooters Vijay, Jitu back in national squad



New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTD):

Olympic silver medallist Vijay Kumar and World Championship silver winner Jitu Rai on Thursday returned to the national squad after being away for a prolonged period.

Vijay, who claimed a historic silver in 25m rapid fire pistol event at the 2012 London Olympics, made a comeback to competitive shooting after five years when he participated in the national championships last November at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range here.

The 36-year-old shooter, who is now a deputy superin-

tendent of police in his home state of Himachal Pradesh, had been dogged by a recurring shoulder injury since winning the Olympic medal. Asian Games gold medallist Rai, 34, took part in the national shooting selection trials at the Madhya Pradesh Academy last month. In the 50-metre free pistol, Rai, a multiple-time World Cup gold medallist, shot 562 to top the field. He was one point ahead of Saurabh Chaudhary. Subedar Major Rai, who has been training at the Army Marksman Unit in Mhow, has placed the 2024 Olympics as one of his major goals.

## I think I am most surprised by this innings: Pat Cummins



Pune, Apr 07 (PTD):

He wanted to hit every delivery out of the park but even by his own big-hitting standards, Australian Test captain Pa Cummins is "more surprised" than any-

one else after his 15-ball-56 not out blitzkrieg for KKR in an IPL match against Mumbai Indians. Regarded as one of the world's best in contemporary cricket, Cummins smashed a record-equalling fastest fifty to

power Kolkata Knight Riders' to a comfortable five-wicket win over MI here on Wednesday. Cummins reached his half-century in just 14 balls, to equal KL Rahul, to help KKR chase down MI's total of 161 with 24 balls to spare. "I probably think I'm most surprised by that innings. I'm glad that it came off. I was thinking of having a swing if it was in my area. Wasn't trying to overthink it," Cummins said. "When I come into bat, it is at the end of the game. So I have a clear thinking to just clear the ropes. Whenever I am facing him (Jasprit Bumrah), I just try to hit as hard as possible and fortunately it came off few times." He is the world's finest fast bowler but Cummins is no mug with the bat and he proved his worth on Wednesday night, as KKR, needing 35 from 30 balls, got them all in just six deliveries with the Australian Test captain hitting six sixes and four boundaries during his explosive knock.

## Sindhu, Srikanth storm into quarters; Sen, Bansod out of Korea Open

Suncheon, Apr 07 (PTD):

Ace Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth progressed to the quarterfinals but Lakshya Sen was ousted after losing his second round match at the Korea Open Super 500 badminton tournament here on Thursday.

World number seven Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, got the better of world number 26 Japan's Aya Ohori 21-15 21-10 in a lop-sided contest to take her head-to-head count against the Japanese to an overwhelming 12-0.

The third seeded Indian will next face familiar foe in Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrungphan, whom she had defeated in the final of the Swiss Open last month. The former world champion, who has claimed two Super 300 titles this season at Syed Modi International and Swiss



Open, enjoys a 16-1 lead in 17 meetings against the world number 11 Thai. World championship silver medallist Srikanth saw off Israel's Misha Zilberman 21-18 21-6 to set up a clash with local hope and former world no 1 Son Wan ho. Commonwealth Games silver medallists and world no

seven pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty defeated Singapore's Hee Yong Kai Terry and Loh Kean Hean 21-15 21-19 in 36 minutes to also advance to the quarterfinals. World championship bronze medallist Sen, ranked ninth in the world, went down 20-22 9-21 to world

number 24 Shesar Hiren Rhustavito in 33 minutes. The country's other fast-rising shuttler Malvika Bansod also failed to advance to the quarterfinals as she was brushed aside by Thailand's Pornpawee Chochuwong 8-21 14-21 in a second round women's singles clash that lasted 39 minutes.

## Du Plessis has earned respect in RCB change room: Maxwell

Mumbai, Apr 07 (PTD):

Australian dasher Glenn Maxwell is confident that new RCB captain Faf du Plessis will do a great job with the franchise as the respect he garners from his colleagues in the change room is there to be seen.

Maxwell, who missed the first few games due to his marriage, is expected to play against Mumbai Indians on April 9. However the big-hitting Australian was effusive in his praise for the former Proteas skipper who has replaced Virat Kohli as the skipper this season.

"We think he's (Du Plessis) going to do a great job for the franchise and even the way he started, you can tell he's got the respect of everyone in the room. Not only does he lead by



example, with his actions, but he also performs really well," Maxwell told RCB 'Bold Diaries'.

But Maxwell made it clear that it's not just Du Plessis but even the other seniors need to help the skipper out as part of leadership group for smooth functioning.

"To have a guy of his quality and caper up the top of the order is something that's great for the franchise. And hopefully, the senior guys around can help him out as well," he said.

"So, it's not just him shouldering all that workload we'd potentially have seen in the previous years at RCB. To have, I suppose, a solid leadership group behind him to sort of feel like it's not just him out there having to shoulder all the load.



## MCD began journey from historic Town Hall

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

The erstwhile unified Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) had come into being exactly 64 years ago and began its eventful journey from the historic Town Hall at Chandni Chowk. The over 150-year-old Town Hall in the heart of Delhi was the power centre of the civic body whose first mayor was freedom fighter Aruna Asaf Ali, and which administered a majority portion of the national capital.

The MCD had come into being on April 7, 1958, evolving out of the municipal administration system that began around 1860s. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi had come into being under the Municipal

Corporation Act, 1957, passed by Parliament.

According to old documents and reports accessed by PTI, and views of many experts, the MCD was modelled on the lines of the 'Bombay Municipal Corporation', when it was being envisaged by politicians around a decade after India's independence.

The first municipal commissioner of Delhi, P R Nayak, had also taken charge on April 7, 1958, and his tenure ended on December 15, 1960, according to an old succession board hung in the old commissioner's office at the



View of the over 150-year-old Town Hall, at Chandni Chowk, in New Delhi, Thursday.

Town Hall. From 80 councillors in 1958, through successive delimitation, the number of wards was expanded to 134 and eventually to 272 in 2007. On Thursday, when PTI visited this iconic landmark, municipal staff present there were unaware of the day's significance, but expressed hope that new unified civic body will "bode well for the financial health of the corporation" which was not doing well since it was trifurcated into North Delhi, South Delhi and East Delhi municipal corporations in 2011. While the NDMC and SDMC have 104 wards

each, the EDMC has 64 wards, spanning 272 wards across the city.

After a decade, Delhi is now again set to get a unified civic body, as Parliament on Tuesday passed the Delhi Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, with the Rajya Sabha giving its nod to it through a voice vote after negating all amendments sought by the opposition. The number of seats in the merged municipal corporation of Delhi will not exceed 250, and a special officer may be appointed to oversee its function till the first meeting of the body is held

under the reunification law, according to the bill. The MCD was set up after amalgamating several local bodies and administrative committees, according to archival records.

Lutyen's Delhi area governed by the New Delhi Municipal Committee (later New Delhi Municipal Council) and Delhi Cantonment areas were kept out of the ambit of the new corporation. The headquarters of the newly-formed civic body was at the historic Town Hall in Chandni Chowk area, in which the earlier Delhi municipality was also housed, and where the MCD was housed from 1958 till about 2009 before moving base to the swanky Civic Centre in front of the New Delhi railway station.

## MP govt launches medical knowledge sharing mission

To improve health facilities

hopal, Apr 07 (PTI):

Madhya Pradesh Minister Vishwas Sarang on Thursday inaugurated "medical knowledge sharing mission" to better health facilities and upgrade knowledge of doctors and medical students with latest technologies.

Speaking to reporters on the occasion, the state medical education minister said under the mission, memoranda of understanding will be signed with hospitals, medical centres and research facilities across

the country and abroad. The mission aims to facilitate new techniques, knowledge and valuable research findings among other things to doctors and medical students in the state, Sarang said. Under the mission, memoranda of understanding will be signed with renowned hospitals, medical centres, research facilities across India and abroad to upgrade medical knowledge with latest techniques, researches and treatment procedures, he said.

## 'Over 30 per cent Indian districts vulnerable to extreme forest fires'

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI):

More than 30 per cent of Indian districts are vulnerable to extreme forest fires, said a study released on Thursday, warning such wildfires have risen by over 10 times in the last two decades. The study conducted by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), highlighted that in the last month alone, significant forest fires were reported in states like Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The CEEW study also found that Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra are the most prone to high-intensity forest fire events caused by

rapid change in the climate. "As global temperatures rise, instances of high-intensity forest fires have surged across the globe, especially in areas with dry weather.

Over the last decade, there has been a sharp rise in forest fires across the country. Some of these fires have had severe impacts on fragile ecosystems and local economies.

"We need to strengthen our predictive and forest fire alert systems further to limit the damage caused by forest fires. State and district-level government officials must also prioritise enhancing the capacity of frontline forest officials and forest-dependent communities to prevent forest fires.

Scaling up training on

creating effective forest fire lines and using drones, especially in known forest fire hotspots, could significantly reduce loss and damage" said Arunabha Ghosh, CEO, CEEW.

The study also found that over the last two decades, more than 89 per cent of total forest fire incidents have been recorded in districts that are traditionally drought-prone or have been witnessing weather swapping trends i.e., flood-prone areas turning drought-prone and vice-versa.

Kandhamal (Odisha), Sheopur (Madhya Pradesh), Udham Singh Nagar (Uttarakhand), and East Godavari (Andhra Pradesh) are some of the forest fire hotspot districts that are also showing a swapping trend from flood

to drought. "Sharp increase in forest fires over the last two decades calls for a significant course correction in our approach to managing forest fires. The recent incident at Sariska forest reserve, the fourth such incident in a week, shows why managing forest fires in a changing climate scenario is a national imperative.

"Going forward, we should recognise forest fires as a natural hazard and earmark more funds for mitigation-related activities. Restoration of forest lands and efficient mitigation of forest fires could also help protect the food systems and livelihoods of communities traditionally dependant on forests, said Abinash Mohanty, Programme Lead, CEEW.



Commuters travel in a ferry as they cross the Brahmaputra river, in Guwahati, Thursday.

Jamia Professor Bribery Case

CBI officer accused of seeking Rs 60 lakh bribe; agency orders probe

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI) In a new twist to the bribery case involving Jamia Millia Islamia professor Khalid Moin, the CBI has started an inquiry into allegations by an accused that its officer had demanded Rs 60 lakh bribe to let him off the case.

Sachin Sachdeva, the owner of Vyom Architects who was arrested in the case, claimed before a special court that a CBI officer, believed to be posted in the Special Unit of the agency, had demanded Rs 60 lakh bribe for not naming him in the case and had already collected Rs 10 lakh through his conduit.

### RELIEF TO INDIAN STUDENTS

## Ukrainian medical varsities allow foreign students get hands-on training in own countries

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI)

Ukrainian medical universities have allowed their foreign students to gain practical training at hospitals and clinics in their own countries, giving relief to thousands of Indian students who have fled the war-hit nation.

The universities have also urged foreign governments to provide practical training opportunities to their students so that they can gain requisite skills.

After being shut due to the deteriorating security situation in Ukraine in the face of intense the Russian offensive, univer-

sities of the eastern European country have begun online classes since last month. But the major cause of concern for foreign students was gaining clinical expertise in absence of practical classes.

Coming to the rescue of such students, several hospitals and private clinics here have started offering practical classes and internships.

"In the current situation in Ukraine, students are taught with the help of technologies. But students do not have the opportunity to learn practical skills directly at the clinical departments of the

University and treatment and prevention facilities of the Dnipro city," a Dnipro State Medical University (DMSU) said in a notice.

The DSMU has appealed to public institutions of the countries of foreign students "to provide medical practice opportunities for students of the university in the spring semester 2021/2022 academic year in public and private clinics in your country".

The V N Karazin Kharkiv National University has also issued a letter requesting the governments in other countries to allow its students get practical training in

private as well as government colleges. "We ask local government officials to allow all international students of Ukrainian universities to go through practical works in local private or government hospitals as depends on student's courses in their country," the letter read.

The university stated that if the students can furnish a certificate indicating the amount of acquired practical skills, signed by a doctor on a form of a medical institution, it will be considered as practical training for the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year.

## Vegetable prices soar due to high transportation cost

New Delhi, Apr 07 (PTI)

Vegetable prices in Delhi and adjoining areas have shot up due to an increase in the transportation cost following the fuel price hike, leaving the customers as well as the sellers struggling.

Vegetable sellers say they are facing shrinking profits and reduced sales as due to the increased transportation cost and the ultimate hike in the buying price, they are bound to sell vegetables at a higher price, which means either a low margin for them or limited sales.

Dharmendra Singh, a vegetable vendor in Lajpat Nagar, said the prices of vegetables have gone up.

"Tomatoes are now being sold for Rs 40 per kg whereas earlier, the price was between Rs 25 and Rs 30. Bottle gourd is now being sold for Rs 40 per kg. Even the price of potatoes has gone up. It is now available for Rs 25 per kg. Earlier, it used to be sold for Rs 10 per kg.

"The prices of most of the vegetables have gone up. We hardly make any profit. We buy the vegetables paying a fixed price from the market. Another problem is that we do not get to choose the vegetables at the mandis. We are given a fixed slot and

some times, inferior quality vegetables get mixed up. With the prices going up, people have also reduced the quantity of vegetables they buy," he said.

Akhilesh, another vendor in Lajpat Nagar, said the prices of fruits too have also gone up.

"It is the summer season and watermelons are always in demand. Earlier, we used to sell it for Rs 20 or Rs 25 but now, it is being sold for Rs 30. We get watermelons for Rs 27 from the mandis, so we hardly make any profit," he said. Some vendors said they have stopped giving coriander leaves and green chilies to customers for free.

### NATURE'S GIFT



Tulips bloom inside Asias largest tulip garden on the foothills of Zabarwan Mountains overlooking Dal Lake, in Srinagar, Thursday.

## Thomas announces decision to take part in CPI(M) seminar

● Congress warns of stern action

Kochi (Ker), Apr 07 (PTI)

Defying the edict of the Congress high command, senior party leader and former union minister K V Thomas on Thursday said he would take part in a seminar being organised by the ruling CPI(M) as part of its ongoing party congress in Kannur, but made it clear that he would not quit the party and remain as a Congressman till his last breath.

An agitated Congress condemned the anti-party act of Thomas and said he will face stern action for violating the order of the high command. The party high command had directed both Thomas and Thiruvananthapuram MP



K.V. Thomas

Shashi Tharoor not to attend the CPI(M) seminar considering the protest by party's state unit which is at loggerheads with the Left government in the state over its move to implement semi-high speed railway project. Announcing his decision at a press conference here, Thomas, who held coveted

posts like union minister and minister in the state government when the Congress was in power both at the Centre and in the state, alleged that he was humiliated to the core and subjected to harsh social media campaigns by certain partymen. "I have decided to take part in the seminar. I will go there. I am not going to take part in a political programme of the CPI(M) but in a national seminar. Issue is more important for me, not politics," said the senior leader, who had a strained relationship with the party leadership after he was denied tickets to contest in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and in the State Assembly polls held last year. Justifying his decision to attend the seminar in Kannur, Thomas said various Congress leaders in-

cluding Rahul Gandhi had taken part in several programmes in connection with the Marxist party and so there was nothing wrong for him to attend the programme on centre-state relations, which has great national significance in the present political scenario.

Gandhi had even led an election campaign for the CPI(M) in Coimbatore recently and then why objection was raised against this seminar and his participation, the multi-time MP said. Thomas, once a close confidant of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, said Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin is also taking part in the seminar with him and sought to know whether the Congress leadership would decide not to have any further relationship with the DMK supremo over that.