



### BRIEF



A businessmen with his new ledger books prays on the occasion of Bengali New Year, in Agartala, Friday.

### Kodanadu case

■ **Coimbatore:** A special investigation team probing into the 2017 Kodanadu heist and murder case questioned former MLA V C Arukutty (AIADMK), who represented Koudanpalayam constituency, for nearly two hours on Friday, police said. Arukutty was interrogated in connection with the death of the key accused in the case, Kanagaraj, a driver who worked with late former chief minister Jayalalithaa. She used the estate in Kodanad as a retreat.

### Woman burnt

■ **Noida:** A partially burnt body of a 55-year-old woman was found in her house in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida on Friday, with the police suspecting the role of her daughter and son-in-law in the case, officials here said. The woman's son has alleged that his sister and brother-in-law had been harassing their mother ever since she got Rs 15 lakh from an insurance policy after the death of their father, said a senior police officer.

### Ambulance capsizes

■ **Erode (TN):** A newborn had a providential escape while one person died and three others were injured in the district on Friday when the ambulance carrying the infant capsized after its driver lost control over the vehicle, police said. The baby survived the mishap while his father was injured, they said. According to the police, Divya (23), wife of Vivekanandhan of Anthiyur in the district, was delivered of a child in a private hospital three days ago.

### Ayushman Bharat

■ **New Delhi:** Tele-consultation facility 'e-Sanjeevani' will start at 1 lakh Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) from April 16, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Friday. Mandaviya had chaired a virtual meeting on Tuesday with health ministers and senior officials of all the states and union territories to review the operationalisation status of AB-HWCs and tele-consultation services.

### Employee held

■ **Chhindwara:** The Lokayukta police on Friday caught the driver of the chief executive officer (CEO) of a Janpad Panchayat while accepting a bribe of Rs 4 lakh on behalf of his employer in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district. The Lokayukta police had received a tip-off that Surendra Kumar, the CEO of Junnardeo, had demanded Rs 4.25 lakh bribe for sanctioning development works in Kukar Pani village under Junnardeo tehsil from the panchayat secretary's son, an official said.

Weather High 41 Low 29

## Ram Navami violence: Bulldozers brought into remove illegal encroachments

Ahmedabad, Apr 15 (PTI):

Days after communal violence rocked Khambhat town of Gujarat's Anand district, the administration on Friday brought in bulldozers to remove illegal encroachments along a road in Shakarpura area of the town where a Ram Navami procession came under attack on April 10.

Apart from 'illegal' encroachments, including wooden cabins and some concrete structures, the administration was also clearing the bushes from the land in Shakarpura, as miscreants had used them to hide after throwing stones at the procession, District Collector M Y Daxini said. "Miscreants had used the bushes and thick vegetation to attack the procession. Hence, we have launched a drive from today

### Top cop says special team formed to trace missing Woman

**Khargone:** A woman has gone missing amid the Ram Navami violence that took place in Khargone in Madhya Pradesh on April 10, with a top police official stating on Friday that a special team had been formed to trace her. Incidentally, she had gone in search of children from her household, who were in the vicinity of the procession, soon after word trickled in of the event being marred by stone-pelting, group clashes and arson, kin said. "Even after six days, there is no trace of my younger brother Dharmendra's wife. The curfew in force is further distressing us. On Ram Navami, my two sons and Dharmendra's son had gone to Jawahar Marg in Sarafa area. Soon, reports of violence started coming in, and she went out to get the children back safely," Pavan Kumar Saronia said.

to clear bushes and illegal structures built on government land alongside a road in Shakarpura. This drive will continue in the coming days till the entire area is cleared," Daxini said.

On March 10, clashes erupted between two communities in Khambhat after stones were pelted on

a Ram Navami procession in Shakarpura.

Anand district superintendent of police Ajit Rajian had earlier said that communal violence in Khambhat town was a "pre-planned conspiracy" hatched by a sleeper module to achieve the dominance of the Muslim com-

munity in the town. The police have arrested 11 persons allegedly involved in the entire conspiracy.

The perpetrators had planned to attack the procession and spread violence to teach the members of Hindu community a lesson to not take out any such procession in the future, the police said.

As planned, some of the accused, including Maulvi Ayyub Malek and Vasim Malek, intentionally started arguments with organisers of the procession over the issue of music and asked them to turn it off when the procession reached Shakarpura.

When the police were busy trying to resolve the issue, other perpetrators, as directed by the main accused, suddenly started stone-pelting from behind, the SP had said.

### BAISAKHI MELA



Nihangs display their skills on the concluding day of Baisakhi mela in Talwandi Sabo town of Bathinda, Friday.

## Mob sets houses on fire

### Residents accuses Muslim man of kidnapping Hindu woman

Agra (UP), Apr 15 (PTI):

Right-wing activists on Friday set ablaze two houses belonging to the family of a Muslim man accused of kidnapping a Hindu woman, who said in a video clip that she went willingly with him.

Police arrested eight people involved in the mob attack, which they said was carried out by members of a group known as Dharam Jagran Samanvay Sangh.

A police post in-charge was suspended for negligence and a probe ordered against the local SHO.

Police said the mob torched the house in the city's Runakta locality, where Sajid, a gym owner, stayed. An adjoining house belonging to the family was also set on fire.

The mob was demanding his arrest for 'kidnapping'

the woman, who police said is 22 years old but still in school. Shops in the local Runakta market also downed shutters, with traders making the same demand.

There were no reports of any injuries in the attack on the gym owner's home. The woman, who is a class 11 student, went missing on Monday. She was traced two days later by police, but Sajid's whereabouts were not known.

Her family members had lodged a missing person's report, prompting a police search. Apparently on the basis of their complaint, a case was also registered under section 366 of the Indian Penal Code.

The section relates to kidnapping of a woman with the intention of compelling or seducing her into sex or marriage. But in a video that surfaced on social media, the woman said she is an adult and had gone willingly with the man, according to police.

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Bar Council of India (BCI) has told the Supreme Court that it has earmarked about 500 law colleges throughout the country which are sub-standard/below standard and a team led by some former judges/senior advocates and others plans to conduct surprise visits of such establishments and in case of any deficiencies, steps would be taken for their closure.

In an affidavit filed in a matter related to reforms in legal education and placements of young lawyers, the BCI said that it is constituting a high powered committee that would look into the issue of compulsory chamber placement of five juniors

### BCI to SC

## 'Earmarked 500 law colleges which are sub-standard'

by senior advocates or advocates having 25 years of standing at the Bar.

The council said it is proposed that the legal education committee of the BCI and the advisory board would consider introducing a State Level Entrance Test for admissions to law colleges in its next meeting.

It said, the appellant (BCI) has earmarked about 500 institutions throughout the country who are sub-standard/below standard and a team led by some former judges/senior advocates, noted academicians and plans to conduct surprise visits of such institutions and if any institution is found to be below standard, having neither the suffi-

cient faculties nor infrastructure then the Legal Education Committee shall take immediate step to close such institutions". The BCI said that it is not an executive body and relies upon the universities to close such colleges and/or upon the government to close such universities which despite the requests have been casual on the use of unfair means in LLB/LLM exams and awarding the LLD.

Thus as a last resolve the BCI is considering withdrawing the approval granted for running courses of legal education to such university, it said and pointed out a slew of difficulties faced by the council in regulating legal education across the country.

## PFI activist hacked to death in front of father

Palakkad, Apr 15 (PTI):

A political killing rocked Kerala on the day of Vishu as a local leader of the Popular Front of India (PFI), an Islamist outfit, was allegedly hacked to death in front of his father in Palakkad district on Friday.

Subair, 43, was allegedly hacked to death at Elappully in the district on Friday afternoon, police said.

He was rushed to the hospital by the locals immediately after the incident but could not be saved.

PFI's president of the Para area committee, Subair, was allegedly hit by a car while on a bike with his father and attacked using sharp-edged weapons.

Subair's father, who allegedly suffered injuries after falling from the bike, has been admitted to a hospital, police said. The incident occurred when they were returning home after offering prayers in a nearby

mosque. After reviewing the situation with top police officials of the district, Palakkad SP R Viswanadh said Subair's father has given a statement regarding the RSS enmity with his son.

He said alerts have been sounded in the district to prevent any retaliatory attacks following the killing of the PFI activist.

Security has been tightened to prevent the occurrence of untoward incidents.

A Prabhakaran, ruling CPI(M) MLA representing Malampuza constituency, condemned the killing of Subair, describing it as an "inhuman act" committed on the day of Vishu.

Police have taken into custody an abandoned car, allegedly used by the assailants to knock down Subair's bike. The assailants allegedly fled the scene in another car immediately after the incident.

### GOOD FRIDAY



Christian devotees take part in a religious procession on the occasion of Good Friday, in Amritsar, Friday.

### Car runs over family of three sleeping on footpath

Kota, Apr 15 (PTI):

A speeding car ran over three members of a family sleeping on a footpath outside the MBS Hospital here in the early hours of Friday, killing one of them, police said. Dinesh Bawariya (45), a vegetable vendor, died on the spot, while his wife and their seven-year-old son are undergoing treatment for critical injuries, the area's DSP, Kaluram Verma, said. He said the driver abandoned the car on the spot and fled. The man is yet to be traced, Verma added. The family used to live in a makeshift accommodation on the footpath outside the hospital, the police said. The hit-and-run took place around 1 am on Friday, Verma added.

### One board exam pattern or split terms

## CBSE yet to decide for class 10, 12 exams for 2022-23 session

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Central Board of Secondary Education is yet to decide whether the 2022-23 academic session will remain split into two terms for class 10 and 12 or it will revert to the single board exam pattern, officials said on Friday.

Bifurcating the academic session, holding two term-end exams and rationalising the syllabus were part of the special assessment scheme for Class 10 and 12 board examinations in 2021-22 announced by the CBSE as a "one time measure" in

view of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, whether or not the same system will continue for the new academic session or not, is yet to be decided.

"The decision to conduct the board exams in two terms was taken in view of the unprecedented situation posed by the pandemic where for the 2020-21 academic session, the students had to be assessed using an alternate assessment scheme as no board exams could be conducted. The move was announced as a one time measure," a senior board official said. "The de-

cision about whether it will be extended to the new academic session or not will be taken in due course of time," he added.

Under the split term system, the first term board examination was held in December last year and the second term board examination is scheduled to start from April 26.

The rising cases of COVID-19 have sparked concerns of possible school closures yet again even as experts have warned against the long term learning losses caused by prolonged closure.

## Divorce complete with AI: Alliance Air shifts to own PSS

### To sell tickets with '9I' code

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

Centre-run Alliance Air said it will sell tickets with "9I" code and has shifted to its own cloud-based passenger service system (PSS) from Friday onwards.

Even though parent airline Air India's control was shifted to the Tata Group on January 27, Alliance Air till date was using the full-service carrier's PSS and its "AI" code to sell tickets. A PSS is used for vari-

ous functions such as ticket reservation and flight scheduling. Regional carrier Alliance Air was not part of the deal when the central government sold off Air India to the Tata Group on October 8 last year.

"Mr Vineet Sood, CEO informed that going forward with absolute efficiency, Alliance Air will now sell its tickets under Alliance Air banner under flight code 9I-XXX," the airline's statement said on Friday.

Alliance Air has migrated to cloud based passenger service system from Friday, it mentioned.

## Pak high court moved to stop govt from issuing diplomatic passport to ex-PM Nawaz Sharif

Islamabad, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) was moved on Friday to stop the new government from issuing diplomatic passport to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and direct the authorities to immediately arrest him upon his return to Pakistan from London.

After the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president and Nawaz's younger brother Shehbaz Sharif was elected the prime minister, there were reports that the Ministry of Interior has been directed to renew the

passports of Nawaz Sharif and his brother-in-law Ishaq Dar.

Nawaz's passport expired in February this year and the previous Imran Khan-led government refused to renew his passport.

Several corruption cases had been launched by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government against 72-year-old Nawaz since his ouster from office by the Supreme Court in July 2017 in the Panama Papers case.

The three-time former premier who is convicted in a corruption case has been living in London on the pretext of ill health since

November 2019, when the Lahore High Court had allowed him to leave the country for four weeks for medical treatment after Shehbaz, the new prime minister, gave an undertaking that he would return within the stipulated time. Later, Nawaz sought extensions to prolong his stay in London on medical grounds.

A lawyer, Naeem Haider Panjutha, filed a petition in the IHC, referring to media reports that Nawaz could be issued a diplomatic passport on the instructions of the newly elected prime minister.

## Delhi govt says free precaution doses at its hospitals soon

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Delhi government Friday said precaution doses of coronavirus vaccines will soon be provided free of cost to people at its hospitals.

The move comes as the national capital witnesses an uptick in coronavirus cases and a rise in positivity rate.

India rolled out precaution dose of COVID-19 vaccines for all people aged above 18 years at private centres on Sunday.

Those who have completed nine months after the second shot are eligible for it. Both Covishield

and Covaxin doses now cost Rs 225, and private vaccination centres can charge up to a maximum of Rs 150 per shot as service fee over and above this cost.

In a statement on Friday, the Delhi government said precaution doses will soon be provided free of cost to people in government hospitals by the city government. "Precaution doses of the same vaccine will be given to the people who have revived the first and second doses of the vaccine and who have completed nine months of taking their second dose," the statement said.

# Police exposes new tactic of online cricket bettors

## Bookies misuse KYC and bank accounts of ignorant people

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** In a first of its kind criminal offence, Durg Police busted a conspiracy of misusing the bank accounts of ignorant people for online cricket betting. Police are investigating whether the account holders were completely ignorant or had given their accounts on rent to the cricket bettors. During preliminary investigation, it was discovered that a single person got dozens of bank accounts opened in the names of other people. Involvement of the employees of the Supela Branch of Yes Bank is being investigated.

Under the leadership of Senior Superintendent of Police (Durg) BN Meena and supervision of Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Sanjay Dhruv and CSPs and DSPs, Durg Police is conducting a special campaign against online cricket betting. In



this sequel, Supela Police received a first of its kind complaint on April 13. The complainant Harikant Dwivedi complained that when he came to know that a huge amount had been deposited without his knowledge in his account at Yes Bank Supela branch, he rushed to the bank and informed the officials that he wants to get his account closed. Instead of considering his request, the bank of

officials misbehaved and thrashed him. Dwivedi further informed that he had opened this account on the insistence of one of his acquaintances, Sahil Mahilang. Dwivedi had given his KYC and other documents to him. On the report of the applicant Harikant Dwivedi, Police Station Supela lodged an FIR against Sahil Mahilang and the officials of Yes Bank Supela branch under



sections 323,294,506, 417, 34 of IPC

During investigation, it was found that on April 13 itself, without the knowledge of the applicant, almost all the money had been withdrawn hurriedly through a cheque of Rs 3.85 lakh. The complainant had not signed any such cheque. Police further discovered that one Manish Mishra had submitted the cheque for withdrawing

money. He was immediately taken into custody and during interrogation, he confessed to have withdrawn the money. Police recovered the entire cash from his possession. During sustained interrogation, Manish Mishra revealed that with the help of Sahil Mahilang, they had opened about 15 to 20 accounts for one Honey Gupta in the same bank.

Honey Gupta provided a new sim card for opening every new account. They used this sim card for receiving OTP and conducting other formalities to open the bank account. The accused misused the KYC details of ignorant people for opening the accounts and then used these accounts for online transactions of cricket betting. Honey and Manish used to pay Rs 10000 to Sahil for each account.

Police are investigating why the bank officials beat the account holder when

he requested to close his account; why an attempt was made to close his account after withdrawing the entire money; who signed the cheque when Manish Mishra asserted that he had given blank cheques, etc.

Police are further investigating the number of such bank accounts in the Supela branch of Yes Bank. Police have launched intensive search operations to trap Sahil and Honey Gupta, who are absconding from their homes. The investigation is likely to reveal other facts and people involved in this conspiracy.

Police have seized Rs 3.85 lakh cash, cheque books of dozens of bank accounts, several ATMs, passbooks etc from the accused Manish Mishra. He has been arrested and sent to jail on judicial remand under the provisions mentioned in sections 420,417 of IPC.

# PCC General Secretary & Risali Mayor perform Bhoomi Pujan

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** About a length of 160 meter drain will be constructed near Maroda Camp Ward 14 Langur Maidan with an expense to the tune of Rs 4 lakh. On Friday, Mayor Shashi Ashok Sinha, PCC General Secretary Jitendra Sahu and Speaker Keshav Banchoore performed Bhoomi Pujan for the same.

Here it needs a mention that in the densely populated area of Ward 14, dirty water coming out of the houses flow in the drain which is not cemented. Therefore, the dirty water gets stagnated and it results in foul smell and favourable spot for mosqui-

toes to multiply. With the effort of Ward Councilor Sarita Devangan, the work of constructing the drain was approved. A large number of local people including MIC members Vilas Rao Borkar, Ishwari Sahu, shadow councilor Somnath Yadav were present in the Bhoomi Pujan program.

Due to being a half unpaved and half cemented drain, the dirty water of the drain was accumulating in the middle. Deputy Engineer Digeshwari said that in this work, the problem will be solved by breaking the old drain and giving new level to the drain. Also, there will be no complaint of water filling the road.

# Sangharsh Ek Jeevan Samiti organises felicitation ceremony

## Honours those working for the welfare of LGBT community

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** A program of honour those who are raising voice against the plight of LGBT or are working for their welfare was organized in a local hotel by Sangharsh Ek Jeevan Samiti. The programme was organised under the leadership of the president of this Samiti representing third gender Kanchan Sendri. Rajya Sabha MP Saroj Pandey was present as the chief guest in the ceremony.

Sharing the plight of the third gender community, President Kanchan



Sendri, demanded a community building for the community. The Chief

guest immediately announced for a well-organized community building

in Durg district. She also assured to stay in touch and work towards solving the problems being faced by the community.

The opportunity was taken to felicitate Devasd Bharti of police department, Dr Sujata Jai Ram, Nimisha, Bhavna Jyotwani for doing excellent work for LGBT community. Also Hasina Kavya Samaira Sharda Zoya Ali of the community were felicitated. Kanchan Sendri, President and other members present shared their problems and demanded benefits of housing, employment and education.

# BSc online exams of Hemchand Yadav University from April 16

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** Online examination of regular and private candidates of Hemchand Yadav University, Durg for undergraduate level B Sc, B Sc. Home Science and B Sc B Ed will start from April 16. Giving this information, Dr Rajamani Patel, Vice-Chancellor of Examinations of the University, said that 9115 candidates will be regular and 5599 private will appear in the B Sc first year examination starting from April 16. Similarly, in B Sc second year, 7924 regular candidates will sit and 4327 candidates will sit pri-

vately. In B Sc third year, 8899 regular and 3213 private candidates will appear. Thus, a total of 39077 candidates will appear in the B Sc examinations starting from April 16. The examinations of these students will be held till May 09.

The Registrar of the University, Bhupendra Kuldeep informed that all the regular and private students appearing in the B Sc examination have been provided answer books from the examination centers set by the university. The question paper of Hindi language will be uploaded on the official website of the uni-

versity at 7:00 hrs by the examination department of the university for B Sc first, second and third year candidates. Students can solve these question papers and submit the answer sheets to their respective examination centers between 12:00 hrs to 15:00 hrs on the same day. It will be mandatory for the candidate to bring his/her examination admit card while submitting the answer sheet. The Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr Aruna Palta, Registrar, Bhupendra Kuldeep have extended best wishes to all the regular and private candidates appearing in

the examination which will start from April 16.

Dean Student Welfare of the University, Dr Prashant Srivastava informed that more than one lakh answer sheets of private postgraduate examinations that ended on April 09 have been received at the University Assessment Center for evaluation. Most of these answer books have been sent to the expert professors for evaluation. This time the remuneration of the assessors will be paid through RTGS. This year about 33 thousand candidates have appeared in the examination as postgraduate private candidates.

# Absconding accused of attempt to murder arrested from Mungeli

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** Police have arrested an absconding accused of attempt to murder from Mungeli. Over a petty dispute of electricity connection, the accused had attacked a man with a sharp knife. Locals had rushed him to hospital for treatment. The accused had escaped to Mungeli and was hiding there. City Kotwali Durg Police chased and arrested the accused.

CSP (Durg) Jitendra Yadav informed that on April 13, Durg City Kotwali received a complaint regarding knife attack on Rohit Sahu (35) son of Kamal Sahu at Rajiv Nagar, Shiv Nagar, Durg. He was attacked by one Bablu Sonkar. Police lodged a complaint under



section 307 of IPC and investigation was launched.

Inspector Bhushan Ekka reached the crime scene with his team and recorded statements of the eye witnesses. Under the guidance of SSP BN Meena, ASP Sanjay Dhruv, CSP Jitendra Yadav and DSP (Crime) Nasarullah Siddhiqui, 05 teams were sent to different areas for tracing the accused.

Police gathered information about the relatives of the accused and police teams were sent to their places in search of the accused. One of his relatives at Raipur informed that Bablu Sonkar was in Mungeli. A special team was immediately sent to Mungeli and the accused was arrested from his in-laws place.

The accused Hemraj

alias Bablu Sonkar (24) son of Raju Sonkar a resident of Rajeev Nagar Durg confessed to have committed the crime. Police have recovered the sharp knife from his possession.

Inspector Bhushan Ekka, Inspector Gaurav Tiwari (I/c Cyber cell), Sub-Inspector Mukesh Sori, Head Constable Yogesh Chandrakar, Harishchandra Chaudhary, Manendra Verma, Chandrashekhar Banjir, Constables Javed Khan, Khurram Baksh, Pradeep Singh, Chitrasen Sahu, Shaukat Hayat Khan, Dharendra Yadav, Keshav Sahu, Tileshwar Rathor, Vikrant Yadu, G Ravi, Gaur Singh, Satish Sahu, Hitendra Kosare and Mithlesh Sahu played a vital role in arresting the accused.

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** Safe and convenient working women's hostel for working women has been constructed by Durg Municipal Corporation in the Civil Lines area located at the heart of Durg city. The women working in non-government, education and public sector undertakings will be able to apply for housing at this hostel. Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure inspected this hostel building the other day. He said that efforts are being made to create a safe environment for women through this hostel. Today, women are working in every field. This fully facilitated hostel will resolve the accommodation problem of working women. The Collector thoroughly examined the construction parameters of the working women's hostel.



Collector also inspected the Prayas school. He visited the hi-tech online interactive class room. For the children of 11th and 12th Mathematics and Biology streams, an attempt will be made to explain complex principles in a simple way through interactive class room. Children will build their bright future by taking education in computer lab through digital medium. Webcams have also been set up in Prayas Hostel from the point of view of safety of girl students. Assistant

Commissioner of Tribal Department, Priyavanda Ramteke detailed about the facilities to the Collector.

Apart from this, to ensure clean drinking water supply during summers, the Collector inspected the water treatment plant located in front of the Science College in Durg. He took information about the water supply connectivity from the concerned officials and instructed for continuous monitoring of the supply chain so that there is no interruption.

Along with this, the Collector also took stock of the condition of the new ward and Hamar Lab built in the district hospital. He also inspected the 70 bed Surgical Wing, 12 bed ICU and 18 bed Burn Unit.

Assistant Collector Hemant Nandanwar, Durg Corporation Commissioner Hareesh Mandavi, Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr JP Menshram, SDM Vinay Poyam, PWD Engineer Ashok Shrivastava and other officers and employees were present.

# Chhattisgarh needs a 'Dry Port' for promoting exports of local products: Jitendra Gupta

**Central Chronicle News**

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** The small and micro industries of Chhattisgarh are facing problems due to lack of marketing facilities. There are several handloom products and forest produce which can find excellent responses in the international market. For promoting the small and micro industries, there is a need to establish a Dry Port in the state, said Laghu Udyog Bharti National Secretary Jitendra Gupta while addressing media persons here at RCET on Friday. He explained the benefits of Dry Port for local industries.

Entrepreneurship and self reliance are the inherent qualities of every Indian. The Bharatiya vedic culture is divided into Dharma - Karma - Arth and Moksha. The basis of entrepreneurship lies in Karma and Arth. In ancient times, Bharat had a share of 33% of the world GDP. However, during the foreign rule, the basic structure of the economy was ruined. Laghu Udyog Bharti is making efforts to revive the nation's lost glory in the new era, he said.

He informed that Laghu Udyog Bharti is the only Pan India organization of small (micro) and small scale indus-



tries with its units functional in almost all the states of the country. The organisation encourages entrepreneurship, sustainable development of the country with all-round development of small scale industries; promotion of indige-

nous technology in small scale industries and much more.

Gupta further spoke about the 'Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan' which has been launched to empower the youth population and multiply the skill development capacity

with a focus on the country's socio-economic development.

Laghu Udyog Bharti (LUB) along with Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), Sahakar Bharati (SB), Akhil Bharatiya Grahak Panchayat (ABGP), Bharatiya Mazdoor

Sangh (BMS), Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Seva Bharati (SB), and Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad (VKP) are the participatory organisations of this campaign launched by RSS. Swavalambi Bharat Abhiyan is a concerted effort to generate employment and self-employment opportunities by equipping and enabling the youth of the country.

LUB State President Purushottam Patel spoke about the opportunities in the state of Chhattisgarh. He emphasised on the need of providing marketing facilities for

local products.

LUB former state president Satya Narayan Agrawal cornered the Congress state government for its unfriendly attitude towards the micro and small scale industries. He said that during the pandemic crisis, the state government must have given relaxation in power and water bills to the industries.

But the state government did not provide any relief for helping the industries to revive after the lockdown. LUB State General Secretary Sipi Dubey, Joint General Secretary Deepak Upadhyay and other office bearers were present.

## OBITUARY

**Achal Kumar Sinha**

**Bhilai:** EWS 22 resident Achal Kumar Sinha left for heavenly abode on April 15. Funeral procession will be taken out from his residence on April 16 around 11:00 hrs and last rites of the mortal remains will be performed at Ramnagar Muktidham. He was the father of Sourabh Kumar Sinha.

## Working for overall benefit of citizens bound to bring good results: Baghel

CM emphasizes on the marketing aspect of the products manufactured in the state

**Says that rural Ch'garh should become a mass production center**  
**CM Bhupesh Baghel attends IAS Conclave-2022**

Raipur, Apr 15:

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel today attended the IAS Conclave organized in private hotel in Naya Raipur. On this occasion, he congratulated the officers for their commendable work in various fields. He further said that 'You all have a vital role in the implementation and monitoring of government plans and I am pleased to see the growth achieved by the state in various fields'. The Chief Minister said that all the government schemes created till now are good but their implementation is very important for the schemes to be fruitful. He said that 'good work can be done by taking people into confidence, it is very important to win the trust



of the people to implement the development plans at the ground level. If you work with the citizens and for the citizens, take them into your confidence, good results are bound to come'. Each village is a Republic in itself, work with them with faith and people will support you', he added.

Emphasizing on the rural economy, Chief Minister further said that villages should be equipped with various facilities targeted at the holistic development of the rural populace, with strong rural economy, more employment can be generated in villages. Villages can be created as centres of mass produc-

tion and the products can be sold in cities. The Chief Minister gave the example of a saying prevalent in Chhattisgarhi, 'Boliyya ke jillo becha jaathe, aau nai bolliya ke chhana ghalo nai bechaaye'. This means that somebody who poses the art of selling can sell any miniscule product but those who are ignorant of this art cannot even sell their valuables.

Referring to Rewa of Arang and Tarighat of Patan area, the Chief Minister said that the history of Chhattisgarh is about 2000 years old. In the past, Chhattisgarh was a big trading center and a large administrative system was prevalent here. At present, there is a need to

carry forward this history and there is a need to carry forward the method of the ancestors.

Addressing the Conclave, Chief Secretary Amitabh Jain said that right advice should always be given to the elected public representatives by the IAS officers. Elected public representatives have a better understanding of the functioning of the officials. IAS Association Chhattisgarh President Manoj Kumar Pingua said that we shall work with team spirit and use positive energy in the progress of the state. Pingua said that the Chief Minister has come to our Conclave today wearing a closed neck black coat, which is

our dress code, this has increased the enthusiasm of all of us. He assured the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on behalf of the association that all of them would continue to work honestly in the interest of Chhattisgarh. On behalf of the association, a painting of MP Rahul Gandhi and Chief Minister made by 'Divyang' children was presented to him. The programme was conducted by IAS. Dr. Priyanka Shukla.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel visited the exhibition organised by the IAS officers at the IAS Conclave, in which the paintings, artworks made by officers and the books written by them were displayed.

Retired IAS Anil Swarup, Suyogya Mishra, BKS Ray, Vivek Dhand, N Bajjendra Kumar, Shishupal Sori, Sushil Trivedi, Indira Mishra, Additional Chief Secretary Subrata Sahoo, Secretary of the Association R. Prasanna, Shri and other IAS officers from all over the state were present in the Conclave.

## COLOURFUL DECORATION



Temple of Lord Shri Hanuman have been decorated with colourful lights for 'Hanuman Jayanti' on Saturday.

## CM greets people on Hanuman Janmotsav

Raipur, Apr 15:

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has greeted the people of the state on the occa-

sion of Hanuman Janmotsav. In his message, the Chief Minister has wished for happiness and prosperity of the general public. He

said that Sankat Mochan Hanuman ji is the one who removes all the troubles. His life inspires us to fight against the evils.

## Seven nabbed for running IPL 'satta'



**Kanker, Apr 15:** Kanker District Police has got a major breakthrough in IPL-satta and nabbed seven accused involved in it and seized cash and assets worth Rs 20 lakh from their possession. There are reports that this group used to operate 'satta' and was having links not only in other parts of India, but also with Dubai and other countries.

The Kanker Police got tip from an informer that three persons are playing 'satta' moving in a car and based upon which the police conducted raid and seized a red-colour car

and found three persons in it viz. Devrabth Vishwas, Kamlesh Mazumdar and Harshit Sarkar in suspicious condition. When the Police interrogated them, all three accused accepted to run IPL 'satta' using 'Mahadev App'. The accused have got a flat in Jagdalpur and it acts as base for all their operations and running IPL 'satta'. Further on disclosing of their location, the police nabbed other colleagues viz. Himendra Kumar R/o UP, Rakesh Kumar R/o Ranchi and Rohit Gupta (Satna-MP) from Jagdalpur itself.

## Rly Police catches three miscreants

**Involved in stealing mobile phone from Cong MLA**

Raipur, Apr 15:

The Railway Police of Raipur has caught three miscreants who stole the mobile phone of Congress MLA Vinay Jaiswal two days ago. Apart from stealing mobile from MLA they had also targeted some other people.

Congress MLA from Manendragarh Vinay Jaiswal had reached Raipur railway station to go to Ambikapur. Seeing the expensive iPhone in his hand, these thieves who were already present in the station carried out theft.

The police have arrested 32-year-old Shiv Kumar Mahato, 20-year-



old Ankit Kumar Paswan and one of their minor accomplices in connection with this incident. All three are residents of Sahibganj district of Jharkhand. After carrying out the incident, their plan was to flee to Jharkhand. But before that the police caught them.

The police have recovered more than two dozen stolen mobile phones from possession of these

mobile thieves. They had stolen such phones from different parts of Raipur. They often used to steal mobile phones by going to crowded areas. Several phones had been stolen from Raipur railway station.

The team of Raipur GRP was constantly on the lookout for thieves who stole the MLA's mobile phone with the help of CCTV footage. The police had also laid a trap of

informers. Meanwhile, tip off was received that some gang of Jharkhand may have a hand in carrying out this incident. Thieves were in hiding after stealing the MLA's mobile phone two days ago and were preparing to flee to Jharkhand after reaching the railway station on Friday. After being caught by the police, the three miscreants confessed to their crime. The miscreants told that when the MLA had reached Raipur railway station, they caught sight of the iPhone kept in his pocket.

They knew that the price of this model of mobile is more than lakh rupees in the market. They were constantly keeping an eye on the mobile and as soon as the crowd of passengers increased, they stole mobile from the MLA.

## Counting for Khairagarh VS by-poll in 21 rounds

Counting to start from 8:00 am; 14 tables laid

Rajnandgaon, Apr 15:

Preparations for the counting for Khairagarh VS by-poll has been completed by the District administration and it will be held in the hall of Beej Nigam office premises on April 16 starting at 8:00 am. First thing in the morning the lock of the strong room will be opened in front of the agents of the political parties and officers. First the counting of postal ballots will be done.

Collector and District Election officer Taran Prakash Sinha informed that a total of 14 tables have been placed at the counting venue and in which duty of three officers each has been fixed. He further informed that there will be total of 21

rounds for the counting. Those on duty at the counting venue are not allowed to carry mobile inside.

Apart from this the duty of employees has been fixed to bring and take back the EVMs from Strong Room to the counting venue and back. Facility of computers, telephone, internet connection and fax has been provided at the counting venue. At the counting venue, even Smart watch has been banned.

Meanwhile Collector informed that there will be videography and photography of every activities at the counting venue.

In view of rising temperature, he informed that reserve team has been kept on the stand-by.

## Bhagwan Mahavir's path should be followed for world peace and mutual harmony in society: Baghel



**Raipur, Apr 15:** Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel attended Bhagwan Mahaveer Swami Janmakalyanak Mahotsav organized at Dadabari, MG Road, here on Thursday. On this occasion, he prayed for the happiness and prosperity of the people of the state by offering prayers at Shri Dharmanath Jinalaya located in Dadabari complex. Chief Minister Baghel congratulated and greeted the people of Jain community on the 2621st birth anniversary of Bhagwan Mahavir Swami.

While addressing the devotees present in the Mahotsav Baghel said that the principles of Bhagwan Mahavir are relevant even today. Today the whole world is standing on the verge of third world war. In times of crisis, it is neces-

sary for all of us to follow the paths of truth and non-violence as preached by Bhagwan Mahavir, said Baghel. Bhagwan Mahavir preached truth, non-violence, asteya, brahmacharya and aparigraha to the whole world, he said.

Moreover, Bhagwan Mahavir gave the great principle of pluralism for mutual respect for each other in the society in which lies the ideal of respect for the views of all. Today, it is very necessary to walk on the paths shown by him for peace, brotherhood and mutual respect in the society, said Baghel. Baghel further said that his government was working continuously for the progress of every society and class in Chhattisgarh. Even during the last COVID crisis, people of

**CM attends Bhagwan Mahavir Swami Janmakalyanak Mahotsav organized in Raipur**

Jain Samaj and all other societies came forward to tackle the situation. He said that his government was committed to the upliftment of all sections of the people like labourers, farmers, traders etc. in the state. To this end, new schemes and programs are being run regularly, he informed.

Money has started coming in the state not only from cow's milk but also from cow dung and cow urine. In this way, an amount of Rs 91 thousand crore has been put in the pockets of the people during the last three years with better implementation of various welfare schemes in the state and as a result the economy of Chhattisgarh remained dynamic even during the Corona crisis and the whole of Chhattisgarh is moving forward in the direction of progress. Parliamentary Secretary Vikas Upadhyay, Chhattisgarh State Housing Board Chairman Kuldeep Singh Juneja, Raipur Mayor Aijaz Dhebar, Bhagwan Mahaveer Janmakalyanak Mahotsav Samiti President Mahendra Kochhar, Kamal Bhansali, Manoj Kothari, Gulab Dastani and people of Jain Samaj were present.

## Clamp of water tank breaks down



**Raipur, Apr 15:** A major incident was averted just in front of RMC's head office when the clamp holding the water tank in the tractor broke down and the tank tumbled. Since the incident took place in the afternoon hours, there was no movement of traffic or people and therefore no untoward incident took place. On the other hand in order to repair the clamp of the tank, a JCB was brought to

lift the filled water tank by holding it from the front and failing to control the same it fell down and gallons of water from the tank went down in drain. It is notable here that RMC supplies water in different wards with arrival of summer season, but prior to running these water tanks RMC should check it as part of annual maintenance and to avoid any such incidents in the near future.

## Chh'garh team announced for National TT tournament

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 15:** Chhattisgarh Table Tennis Association (CTTA) on Friday declared the team for the 83rd Senior National and Inter State Table Tennis Tournament to be held at Shillong in Meghalaya. CTTA President Sharad Shukla presented the track suits to the players after announcing the team for the national event here during which the CTTA Secretary Vinay Baiswade and others were present. Baiswade informed that the team would leave for the tournament on April 16 with the Coach Vimal Nair and Manager Shradha Verma. International Umpire



Pradeep Joshi from Raipur and National Umpire Jaya Sahu from Rajnandgaon have been selected for officiating in the tournament. He said that Abhishek Ran from Raipur would be leading the senior team whereas A Santosh from Durg, Rajiv Sahu and Shlok Soni from Raipur, M Raviraj from Durg are the members. Similarly,

Shilpi Ghosh from Raipur would be leading the Women's team whereas R Devanshi from Bilaspur, Ananya Dubey, Divya Amde and Kajal from Durg are the members. Kunal Dev, Arindum Devnath, Pawan Das, Pranay Chouhan, K Sai Prashant and Shradha Verma are the additional entry in the tournament.

## Create casual atmosphere, motivate juniors: Swarup

**Hails works of all IAS officers in state**  
**Second day of IAS conclave-2022**

**Raipur, Apr 15:** On second day of the IAS Conclave-2022, panel discussions were held and in this subject experts expressed their views. In this the retired IAS officer Anil Swarup, Executive Editor Indian Express P Vishwanathan Iyer, Director 'Nukkad Cafe' and recipient of President's ward Priyank Patel were present as the panelist. In this session Dy. Chairman State Planning Commission Ajay Singh was specially present. Retired senior IAS officer Anil Swarup putting forth his views said that we all have to maintain good courage and grit for the work. IAS of



Chhattisgarh are doing good work and this work is transformable and result oriented. The officers who are doing good work should get all praise and those who are bringing massive changes in the lives of people and society should always be motivated.

The effect of any scheme is due to the IAS officers and therefore their responsibility is also equally important. One should work honestly with dedication and this particular nature motivates one do even

better. The good work by the junior officers should be praised and they should be motivated and provided right direction and on top of all this one should try to develop a more casual talks atmosphere, he added.

Executive Director Indian Express P Vishwanathan said that as to how politics can effect public services is a point to ponder. People have lots of expectation from the bureaucrats, as their sentiments and confidence are closely linked

to those serving in the bureaucracy. What we want is that all should try to meet up their expectation, as the IAS officers have all those capabilities which can be major changes in the lives of common men. Management, working and implementation of the policies in democracy and taking it to benefit and justice to the poorest of the poor is what will ensure first and the last confidence of the people. We need to understand that transformation, for which we all have

gathered here, he added.

Director Nukkad Cafe Priyank Patel said that our efforts should be trying to strike a balance between social groups and institutions by holding talks with them. The society should be provided message that they should always be ready for 'Navachar' and should be motivated for it. IAS is a strong link between the people and the administration and they hold the power for bringing major changes with their farsightedness and core competence.

During the panel discussions, the IAS present raised various questions to expert panelists and which were satisfactorily answered. On conclusion of panel discussions, President of IAS Association of Chhattisgarh Manoj Pingua felicitated the panelists with a memento.

## Baba Saheb's contribution in human welfare, social harmony is unforgettable: Dr. Girish

Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti celebrated in Agricultural University

Raipur, Apr 15:



The birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, the main architect of the Indian Constitution, was celebrated at Indira Gandhi Agricultural University (IGAU) on Thursday. The chief guest of the program organised in the auditorium of Agriculture College, Raipur, Dr. Girish Chandel, Vice Chancellor of Indira Gandhi Agricultural University, while underlining the contribution of Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar in the creation of the Indian Constitution, said that Dr. Ambedkar established social harmony in India throughout his life and fought for social justice of the downtrodden.

Speaking further he said that Dr. Ambedkar continued to strive for

human welfare and upliftment of the country. Dr. Chandel, while paying tribute to Ambedkar, exhorted the students to follow the path and ideals laid down by Baba Saheb and work for the welfare of mankind and the country.

The programme was presided over by the Dean of Indira Gandhi Agricultural University (IGUA), Student Welfare Dr. G.K. Srivastava. On this occasion the winners of Rangoli, Painting,

sketching, slogan writing and quiz competitions organised at Agriculture University Raipur were also awarded. The speakers involved in the programme organized on the occasion of the 131st birth anniversary of Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, highlighting the personality and work of Baba Saheb, underlined his contribution in the making of the Indian Constitution and establishing social harmony

and fraternity in the country.

Agriculture University Registrar, G.K. Nirmam, Dean of Agriculture College, Dr. M.P. Thakur, Dean of Agricultural Engineering College, Dr. V.K. Pandey, Director Research, Dr. P.K. Chandrakar and social activists Ms. Rukhmani Ramteke, Mr. Sunil Ganveer and Mr. Akhilesh Bawangade mentioned Babasaheb's struggle journey and his tireless efforts in providing social justice to the downtrodden and oppressed.

Organising Committee Chairman, Dr. P.K. Sagode delivered the welcome address and Organizing Secretary Dr. P.L. Johnson expressed his gratitude to the guests. Professors and scientists of Agricultural University and a large number of students were present on this occasion.

## Agriculture Minister felicitated with DTSS Ratna Award



Raipur, Apr 15:

In Raipur-Durg-village Pendri (Dhamdha), the 75th Annual General Assembly of Dubelia Teli Sahu Samaj (DTSS) concluded. The Agriculture Minister Ravindra Choubey thanked members of Sahu Samaj on being felicitated with the Dubelia Teli Sahu Samajik Ratna Award and said that the Samajik Ratna Award

received from Dubelia Teli Sahu Samaj is an honour equivalent to the Bharat Ratna award for him as he is fortunate enough to be part of the social organization Sahu Samaj surging on path of progress.

Choubey said that in our country the bonds of social organization and family relationships are very strong and that's why brotherhood is among all in the society. He said he is

happy to see unity of social organization on such a large scale.

The Central President of the society, Shiv Kumar Sahu informed the Minister Choubey in detail about the Samajik Ratna Samman and added that Late Nohar Lal Sahu Bawankuraji of the society used to deliver religious discourse from the epic Ramayana going to different villages of Dhamdha, Khairagarh area and placing the excerpts from the Ramayana before villagers in the 'Chaupal'.

He used to narrate the entire Ramayana to the villagers without looking in the book. He breathed his last on 26 January 2016 and it was in his memory that the society started this Samajik Ratna Samman from the year 2017.

## Naxalites open fire on the soldiers of Cobra

When they were patrolling



Konta, Apr 15:

Firing took place between security forces and Naxalites in Potakpally area under Kistaram police station area of Konta block in Sukma district. However, there was no casualty in this firing. But due to the retaliation of the security forces, the Naxalites fled under the cover of forests. These days TCOC month of Naxalites is going on.

During this, new camps are built in the interior areas and it is a big challenge for the Naxalites. The search operation against the Naxalites is also going on during this time and on Friday the soldiers of Cobra 208 Battalion, who were on routine patrol and were in search in Potkapalli area. During this ambush, Naxalites fired on the soldiers, after which the Naxalites fled away.

## PHOTO EXHIB



CM Bhupesh Baghel inspected the photo exhibition in the IAS Conclave being organised here on Friday. In this the paintings, artifacts and books written by IAS officers have been put on display.

## Free dialysis facility to kidney patients in Ch'garh

Raipur, Apr 14:

Govt is providing reasonable and good medical facilities to the people

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, continuous work is being done to make medical facilities affordable and good in the state. Dr. Khubchand Baghel Swasthya Sahayata Yojana has already been launched to provide cashless treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh to the BPL ration card holders of the state. Now the state government is also providing free dialysis facility to kidney patients.

Under the National Free Dialysis Program under the National Health Mission, free dialysis facility is being provided in eight district hospitals of the state under the name 'Jeevan Dhara'. Patients suffering from kidney diseases have to undergo frequent dialysis for a long time. This causes a huge fi-

nancial burden on them. Due to the availability of dialysis facilities at local level, people suffering from kidney diseases do not have to go far. This is also saving labour, money and time of patients and their families.

Free dialysis facility is being provided by National Health Mission, Chhattisgarh in eight districts of the state namely Durg, Kanker, Korba, Bilaspur, Jashpur, Surguja, Mahasamund and Bijapur. For this, five each in Jashpur, Durg and Kanker districts, four each in Ambikapur and Mahasamund, six in Korba, three in Bijapur and four in Bilaspur (three

in CIMS Medical College and one in Bilaspur Covid Hospital), thus totaling 36 machines have been installed. Under the National Free Dialysis Programme, a total of 23,129 dialysis sessions have been conducted in eight district hospitals so far. Of these, 4885 sessions have been conducted in Durg district, 4872 in Korba, 4230 in Kanker, 3504 in Bilaspur, 2631 in Mahasamund, 1390 in Surguja, 942 in Bijapur and 675 in Jashpur. One time dialysis in private hospitals costs Rs 700 to Rs 1200, while this facility is being provided free of cost by the state government. Due to the free dialysis facility in government hospitals of different districts, people of remote areas do not have to go far for dialysis. This is saving both their money and time.

## Two drug smugglers arrested with 213 kg 'ganja' worth Rs 42 lakh

Kondagaon, Apr 15:

Taking major action against the ganja smugglers by the Anti-Narcotics Cell of the police, they have succeeded in nabbing the inter-state 'Ganja' smugglers of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh by chasing them in film style. The accused were smuggling ganja by making a special chamber in the pickup vehicle. The police have seized 213 kg of Ganja worth Rs 42 lakh from the smugglers.

It was as per orders from Superintendent of Police Divyang Patel, a continuous campaign is being run against Ganja smugglers. Special moni-



toring is being done on the National Highway to stop drug smuggling in the district. Due to which action is being taken against Ganja smugglers continuously for past few months and the smugglers are being arrested and sent to jail. In this series on April 14, the Kondagaon police received tip from an in-

former that Ganja smugglers from Sukma, Jagdalpur of Odisha are going to smuggle Ganja in a pick-up vehicle towards Raipur. Checking was being done by the team of Kondagaon Narcotics Cell by creating barricading near Mardapal Triangle on the National Highway. During checking, an at-

tempt was made to stop the white coloured small elephant pickup coming from Jagdalpur, which did not stop and moved forward rapidly. The Narcotics Cell team chased the pick-up Van in a motorcycle and managed to stop them. When searched, the team found that a separate chamber has been made for smuggling Ganja in the seized vehicle.

On checking the chamber, 36 packets of 213 kg illegal narcotic Ganja, with estimated market value of about Rs 42 lakh was confiscated and two accused were arrested and sent to jail after being produced in the court.

## Culture Minister Bhagat attends Amrit Samagam in Delhi

Amrit Festival of Independence

Raipur, Apr 15:

State Food and Culture Minister Amarjit Bhagat attended the conference organized in Delhi under 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' as a representative of Chhattisgarh Government. The conference was organized by the Union Ministry of Culture. On this occasion, Minister Bhagat informed about the progress of Amrit Mahotsav of Independence in Chhattisgarh. The conference was inaugurated by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The objective of the conference is to ensure significant participation of States and Union



Territories in the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav campaign. Through this the focus is on various activities organized by the States and Union Territories. While discussing the contribution of Chhattisgarh, Minister Bhagat spoke in detail about the program organized in Chhattisgarh under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. Various programs are to be organized in Chhattisgarh from 12 March 2021 to 15 August

2022 under the Amrit Mahotsav of Azadi. Under the Amrit Mahotsav of Azadi, the people of Chhattisgarh were made aware of the contribution of the freedom fighters of Chhattisgarh. Culture Minister Bhagat said that "In order to celebrate the Amrit Mahotsav of freedom in a grand and proper way, in the development journey of our state, the four most important events related to the journey of independence of

the country - District Political Conference of 1921, Non-cooperation Movement, Martyr The details of Veernarayan Singh's rebellion and Jungle Satyagraha have been made available to the Union Ministry of Culture. While appraising the future plans, Minister Bhagat said that there is a plan to include Sirpur and Purkhauti Mukangan in the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav through the film scheme.

## Vipin Sahu accorded warm welcome

On his arrival in Konta by Sahu Samaj



Konta / Sukma, Apr 15:

In front of Sukma municipality, the people of the society including the district president Raju Sahu welcomed Vipin Sahu with a warm enthusiasm and fireworks. A large number of women of the society also participated. District President Raju Sahu said that

Sukma migration of state patron Vipin Sahu is very important in the direction of empowering the society. After discussing with them about the society, we will get strength from their suggestions. State Patron Vipin Sahu expressed happiness on meeting the people of Sahu community at the fag end of Chhattisgarh.

He informed members of Sahu Samaj that he expresses due gratitude to the Minister Kawasi Lakhma and the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

He informed that very soon a milk production committee will be formed in Sukma district and we will motivate farmers to take up animal husbandry. During this Sukma Municipal Vice President Ayesha Hussain, Councillor Pratap Samrat, Gupteshwar Gangber, Chovram Sahu, Sevakram Gurupanch, Gautam Sahu, Doman Sahu Mohd. Husain, Satyabhama Gangber, Bhuneshwari Sahu, Yashoda Sahu, Janki Sahu and members of the Sahu community were present.

## Commemoration of the Last Supper of the Lord held

By the Parishoners of St. Joseph Parish

Bacheli, Apr 15:

Christians across the world observed Maundy Thursday on April 14. The day commemorates the washing of the feet (Maundy) and Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his apostles, as described in the canonical gospels of the Holy Bible.

It is the fifth day of the Holy Week, preceded by Holy Wednesday and followed by Good Friday.

At Bacheli the Parish priest, Rev. Father Sajan along with the Parishoners conducted special services for the day including 'washing the feet' custom, and broke un-



leavened bread in memory of the Last Supper. One hour adoration and thereafter the symbol of love in the form of the unleavened bread was distributed to the parishoners by the priest. Thanking the Almighty God, all the devotees filled with grace and peace dispersed.

## Naxalites blast with the intention of blowing up bridge

DRG arrived before the second blast

Konta, Apr 15:

Naxalites planned to blow up the bridge late at night between Kottacheru and Gorkha on Bheji road of Konta block in Sukma district. However, the Naxalites have failed in their attempt. Because before this the DRG personnel reached the spot and the Naxalites had to run away without blowing up the bridge.

The matter is between Gorkha and Kottacheru under Bheji police station area, where on Thursday night around 9:00 pm, the Naxalites made an explosion with the intention of blowing them up. On hearing the sound of the explosion the DRG personnel



left for the spot. During this the Naxalites were preparing to completely damage the bridge, but the DRG personnel knocked on the spot and the Naxalites had to flee from there.

Sukma SP Sunil Sharma told in the conversation that the Naxalites wanted to blow up the bridge on Bheji Marg so that the material going to

the new camps built in the core belt and interior areas could be stopped and the common people could also be harmed. The Naxalites tried to blow up the bridge but they failed as the DRG personnel foiled their plans. The explosion cause minor damage to the bridge which is being repaired and restored by the jawans.

# Ambedkar Jayanti observed in Nehru Smriti School

**In Birkoni**  
Central Chronicle News



**Birkoni, Apr 15:** The 131st birth anniversary of founder of the Indian constitution Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar was celebrated with pomp and enthusiasm at Nehru Smriti School, near Barbaspur road of Birkoni here on Thursday. On this occasion Director of Samiti Lalit Nishad and teachers garlanded the photo of Baba Saheb and offered rich tributes to him.

Ambedkar made in drafting of the India's constitution is an honour for every citizen and all should take inspiration from it.

Head Master Tupsingh Nishad after garlanding the photo said that the Constitution drafted by Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar is followed by one & all. The intelligence and sacrifice which Dr Bhimrao

Yadav, Poornima Chandrakar, Madhu Sahis, Tekeshwari Yadav, Bharti Yadav, Godawari Nishad, Khemin Sahu, teachers and students of the School were present in large number.

In the programme organised in Gram Barbaspur, Badgaon, Nayapara, Kampa, Muski, Baba Saheb was remembered and all took a pledge to follow on the path shown by him.

# Free of cost medical camp begins in Dhamdha

**Under 'Hamar Elaj-Hamar Dwar' Yojana of state govt**  
Central Chronicle News



**Dhamdha, Apr 15:** As per instructions from the state government to Nagar Panchayat Dhamdha, under Urban Slum Health Scheme (USHS), in order to provide free of cost health and medical services to common men, 'hamar Elaj-hamar dwar' scheme, a medical camp was organised in Dhamdha Nagar Panchayat here on Thursday. Under this the camp was inaugurated by Kalarpara ward no. 15 President Sunita Rajiv Gupta.

people in large number to avail its benefit. The timing of this camp will be from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. The camp will be held at the weekly market area in ward No. 1 on April 15, in Tamepara Mangal Bhavan ward No. 12 on April 28; in Mechuk Mandir Sahu para ward No. 14 on April 29. In

this camp, a mobile medical unit the health of general public will be examined under 'hamar Elaj-hamar dwar yojana' free of cost. Chief Nagar Palika officer has urged the citizens of the above ward to avail benefit of this camp in large number. For this initiative, the denizens of

Dhamdha have hailed the same. In the camp on Thursday, Chief Nagar Palika officer Rajendra Nayak, Sub-Engineer Vinayak Garg, Shashank Tiwari, Gyaneshwar Devdas, team of Nagar Panchayat and entire team of Mobile Medical unit were present.

# Treatment to patients start in Life Line Express



**Jagdalpur, Apr 15:** The treatment of patients through Life Line Express had started near Nakti-Semra, near Jagdalpur. Under this the patients were examined near Livelihood College, near Nakti-Semra and on Friday the surgery of patients diagnosed with some ailment for surgery will be done in the Life Line Express lased with all modern medical equipments.

said that providing free of cost medical services including surgery for complex medical cases in place like Bastar is a big thing. He urged the villagers of the region to avail this facility in large number.

LS MP Deepak Baij inaugurating this project expressed happiness and

On this occasion Mayor Jagdalpur Safira Sahu, JMC Speaker Kavita Sahu, Upper Collector Arvind Ekka, SDM Dinesh Nag, CHMO Dr RK Chaturvedi, and other public representatives, officers and employees and health employees from the health department were present.

# Bike rally, dances mark eve of Ambedkar's Jayanti

Central Chronicle News



**Dongargarh, Apr 15:** Prior to the 131st birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna recipient Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the members of Boudha community took out a massive motorcycle rally in the city and reaching Ambedkar's statue they lighted traditional lamp in his memory and paid rich tributes raising slogans in favour of 'Jai Bhim'.

This rally passed through main thoroughfares of city. On the eve his birth anniversary, a songs dedicated in the memory of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar on 'Bhim' made the entire atmosphere in Baba Saheb's favour and the children presented colourful songs and dance. It was mid-night that a cake was

cut and this started the celebrations of Dr Ambedkar by the members of the society. In the rally taken out by the youth on motorcycle, even girls also participated. Dressed in colourful attire, the girls took part in this rally. The members of the society also enjoyed

orchestra presented by Rajkala and they presented songs based upon 'Bhim'. Young girls and boys presented colourful dance on songs of 'Bhim' and during this members of the society were present in large number. **Piyush Vasnik boosts enthusiasm of artist**

# Water kiosk inaugurated near Police station

Central Chronicle News



**Pandaria, Apr 15:** It was under direction of SPLA Umend Singh, Addl. SP Manish Ravate and SDOP Narendra Vetal, that a water kiosk was inaugurated by TI Mukesh Yadav in front of Pandaria Thana here on Thursday. This facility has been provided so that the denizens can get cold water during this hot summer. At the inauguration, the people were offered squash and jaggery.

quench their thirst. To ensure that people are not thirsty, this water kiosk has been opened. He informed that it will remain functional throughout the day during summer season. During this SDOP Vetal and other employees were also present in large number.

TI Yadav informed that with rise in mercury daily and due to which people need to

# Chairman of CSFC meet reps of urban bodies

Central Chronicle News



**Jagdalpur, Apr 15:** Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission (CSFC) Chairman Serjius Minz and State Finance Commission officials discussed with the representatives of urban bodies of Bastar district on the second day of their stay in Jagdalpur today.

of Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission Satish Pandey, Joint Secretary Dr. JS Virdi, Additional Collector Arvind Ekka and Commissioner Municipal Corporation Prem Patel, representatives of urban bodies and other officials of the district were present.

On this occasion, the Chairman of the State Finance Commission, Serjius Minz, gave information regarding the working of the State Finance Commission and the objectives of the discussions. He said that in the democratic system of the country, discussions are being held with the

representatives of urban bodies to submit suggestions to the state government for making laws for making the urban bodies financially and organizationally strong.

them. He said that according to the wishes of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, the State Finance Commission is organizing meetings with the Panchayat and urban bodies and taking suggestions from them so that the democratic institutions can be strengthened in the state.

# Ambedkar Jayanti observed in Gram Bhaishbod



Central Chronicle News

On this occasion, Mayor Mrs. Safira Sahu also gave important suggestions to the Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission. Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission Secretary Satish Pandey gave information regarding the functions and objectives of the commission through a power point presentation.

**Anwari, Apr 15:** Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar's Jayanti was observed in Gram Panchayat Bhavan in Gram Bhaishbod. First the members of Samaj lighted traditional lamp before Ambedkar's photo and garlanded him. On this occasion Sarpanch's rep Dilip Sahu said that entire life of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar was struggle-some. He gave valuable

contribution in drafting of the India's constitution. Baba Saheb Ambedkar struggled for the welfare and upliftment of weaker sections of the society and for their rights. Dr Ambedkar was the founder of equal society for all and leader for reforms. Ambedkar through education wanted to empower the weaker sections of the society including labourers, women and others. He was a well-known

politician, economist, philosopher and social reformer. He struggle for the rights of Dalits and raised voice against the India's caste system.

# Villagers called off protest in Gram Bechupal

After explanation by local administration  
Central Chronicle News



**Bijapur, Apr 15:** The villagers of Gram Bechupal under Bhairagarh block of Bijapur district are staging protest and movement in support of their different demands since 30 Nov 2022. Prominent among their demands include protest of police camp, development oriented works like bridge, roads, mobile connectivity and others.

gion. They have been provided basic amenities like health, education, ration, roads and others and by which the villagers are getting benefitted through different schemes of the state government. With launching of employment orient-

ed works in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, MGNREGA and others and participation of villagers in it, they are getting more resources for earning livelihood and for this the local administration and state government

is constantly working hard. It was after explanation by the administration that the villagers automatically decided to call off their protest and movement completely and went back to their residence. With this particular support by the villagers, the development works in Gram Bechupal and other parts of the region will gain momentum and it will help in speeding up construction work in the region and it will open up new avenues for employment. SDM Bhairagarh SR Rana informed that the villagers have called off their movement and protest and have given their consent to extend a helping hand to the administration in speeding up development works in the region.

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**Fingeshwar, Apr 15:** Chhattisgarh's MNREGA Employees Federation presently on an indefinite strike since April 4 for their 2-point demands, have condemned the discriminatory approach of the state government and administration toward them. Meanwhile, Congress district president Pushpa Jagannath Sahu and BJP's district member Radheshyam have come to the front to support them.



GA strikers performed a one-day Gayatri Mahayagya and performed a symbolic demonstration on Durga Ashtami too. Union Patron Ms. Reena Dhruve told about this that MGNREGA workers have been cooperating with the gov-

ernment in providing employment to the laborers of the state by working in very meager honorarium for the last 15 years, but today the workers future is not secure.

from the government, mainly all MNREGA workers should be regularized by assimilating and till the completion of the process of regularization, the pay scale of the village employment assistants, the Civil Services Rules, 1966 along with the Panchayat Karmis Rules should be implemented on all MNREGA workers.

Union President Alesh Dev Prasad said that there are two-point demands

Working President Ghasin Sahu alleged that today the government has increased the wages of laborers to Rs 204 but we are being given fewer wage than them, forcing them to demonstrate against the injustice meted.

## BRIEF

### Organised

**Lakhimpur Kheri:** The district authorities here organised 'gram choupal' events in 30 village panchayats to redress public grievances under the 'Prashashan Aapke Dwar' pilot project. "The project, which happens to be the first of its kind in Uttar Pradesh, is primarily focused on redressal of grievances of people living in rural areas at their doorsteps," Chief Development Officer (CDO) Anil Singh, who is steering the project, told PTI.

### Trampled

**Hazaribag:** An elderly couple was trampled to death by an elephant in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, an official said. The incident occurred in Bedmakkhi village under the Chalkusha police station limits when the jumbo attacked Vedlal Pandit (65) and his wife Shanti Devi (60), Forest Range Officer Annand Kumar Singh said. The couple was working in a field when the incident happened.

### Booked

**Bareilly:** Two people have been booked here for allegedly hampering the national integration by playing songs on a mobile phone hailing Pakistan, police said. An FIR has been lodged against Naem and Mustkim of Singhai Murawan village of the Bhuta area of the district, police said. The FIR was lodged against the duo on the complaint of villager Ashish who objected to their playing the song praising Pakistan, they said.

### Found

**Noida:** A 14-year-old girl living in a slum cluster here turned out to be an unlikely hero in reuniting a lost child with his family and bringing to end a search by the Noida Police. The local police were informed that the two-and-a-half-year-old child living with his family in Gijhod village had gone missing, prompting the officials to launch a search.

### Damage

**Shillong:** Over 1000 house in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district were affected in a cyclonic storm that ravaged the district but there was no casualty, an official said. A senior district official told PTI, Prima facie, 47 villages in the district were affected in the storm from where the damages to houses were reported. He said government properties were among those destroyed in cyclonic storm, including BDO office, school, a public works department office and veterinary offices.

### Ticket

**Mumbai:** Mumbai Metro One Private Limited (MMOPL) which operates metro service on the Versova-Andheri-Ghatkopar route in the city launched an 'e-ticket on WhatsApp' facility. Mumbai Metro One is the first MRTS (Mass Rapid Transit System) in the world to offer e-ticket on WhatsApp.

## Nearly 48 percent rise in home isolation cases of COVID-19 in Delhi



People are encouraged to wear mask in Delhi.

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Amid an uptick in daily cases of COVID-19 in Delhi and the positivity rate going beyond two per cent, there has been a rise of nearly 48 per cent in the number of home isolation cases here in the last one week, according to official data. The number of home isolation cases stood at 574 while 325 new coronavirus cases were recorded with a

positivity rate of 2.39 per cent. The daily cases have been on the rise in the last few days while the positivity rate here has been registered in excess of one per cent since April 4 when it had stood at 1.34 per cent.

As the Covid positivity rate in the national capital has jumped from 0.57 per cent on April 1 to 2.39 per cent on April 14, the number of home isolation

### Data from last one week

cases has shown an upward trend in the last one week.

On April 8, the city had reported 146 cases with a positivity rate of 1.39 per cent and 388 patients were under home isolation, according to the data shared by city health department authorities.

The count of home isolation cases has steadily increased in this period, rising to 574 on April 14. The corresponding figures on April 11 was 447 and on April 13 it had stood at 504. There has been a rise of nearly 48 per cent in the home isolation cases in the last one week.

Doctors on Tuesday had said that it was not a panic situation as the count of daily cases was still low, but had cautioned against dropping the guard.

## Keralites celebrate Vishu with traditional fervour

### Observe Good Friday

**Thiruvananthapuram, Apr 15 (PTI):** As the state is slowly coming out of the fear of the COVID-19 pandemic, Keralites on Friday celebrated Vishu, the harvest festival, with traditional fervour and gaiety wishing to have a season of prosperity, plenty and progress.

The scare of the pandemic and lockdown curbs took the sheen out of the traditional festivals including Vishu in the last two years.

While the Hindu families followed ancient customs and rituals as part of the Vishu celebrations, Christians thronged churches across the state in large numbers to attend special prayers and observed fast to mark Good



Traditional Vishu feast.

Friday commemorating the sufferings and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

It is rare that Vishu and Good Friday fall on the same day like this year.

Adhering to tradition, people in Hindu homes woke up in the wee hours to see 'Vishukkani', the custom of looking at aus-

picious articles like rice, fruits, gold and flowers arranged in brass vessels, symbolising hope and prosperity.

Elders presented coins to children as part of the custom of "Vishu kaineetam." In Malabar region in north Kerala, people ushered in Vishu by bursting

## 'POILA BOISHAKH' PRAYER



Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb performs rituals while offering prayers on occasion of 'Poila Boishakh', at Laxmi Narayan Temple in Agartala, Friday.

## Gehlot, Membooba attack center over communal violence

**Jaipur, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ask state governments to take action against elements creating nuisance in the name of religion and make an appeal for peace.

His remarks come against the backdrop of incidents of communal violence in some states during Ram Navami. Voicing concern over increasing incidents of communal tension in the country, Gehlot said development of the country is not possible without peace. "Mahatma Gandhi had said that I am proud to be a Hindu but my Hindu religion is neither intolerant nor the one that boycotts anyone. We are all Hindus but our religion teaches that we should respect all religions. If we all



Ashok Gehlot and Mehbooba Mufti

respect each other's religion by keeping this in mind, then such a situation will not arise," he said. "I again appeal to the honourable prime minister to give a message to the nation to reduce the rising communal tension in the country and to the state governments to take action against mischievous elements who are creating nuisance in the name of religion," he said. Apparently

referring to the recent clash in the Jawaharlal University over serving of non vegetarian food, Gehlot said development is not possible without peace, but if the people of the country keep fighting with each other over food, attire and religious traditions and some unruly elements keep provoking them, then this country will remain entangled in small issues.

## Bihar Congress gets down to finding new president



Congress bhawan in Patna.

**Patna, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The beleaguered Congress' crisis-ridden Bihar unit is now saddled with finding a new president following the resignation of Madan Mohan Jha, who held the post for nearly four years. Jha tendered

his resignation in New Delhi after a meeting with Rahul Gandhi. The state Congress is yet to come out with an official word on the development.

However, AICC national general secretary Tariq Anwar told PTI, "The need for having a new man to

head the Bihar unit was being felt for quite some time. Jha, who is a senior leader, a former state minister and currently a member of the legislative council, has cleared the path by resigning gracefully."

"The party high command is now vetting the names of prospective candidates for the new state president. A final decision will be taken in due course," said the former Union minister.

Anwar did not divulge any names under consideration, but the Sadaqat Ashram here, which has been the state Congress headquarters since before Independence, resembles a beehive, buzzing with speculations about who will fit the bill.

## HC orders reinstatement of physically challenged teacher

**Cuttack, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The Orissa High Court has ordered the reinstatement of a differently-abled junior teacher, who was disengaged from service on charge of faking his disability certificate while joining as a 'Sikshya Sahayak' on April 29, 2011.

After three years of service as a 'Sikshya Sahayak' at Kokodaguda school in Nabarangpur district, Santosh Kumar Padhi was appointed as a junior teacher in the same school with effect from April 28, 2014.

However, Padhi was disengaged on February 5, 2018. He moved the High Court challenging the order and prayed for quashing the order. Justice S K Mishra on his April 5, 2022 order said:



Orissa High Court

"For the foregoing reasons therefore, this court finds that the impugned order of disengagement of the petitioner from service is unsustainable in the eye of law.

The impugned order is hereby quashed." mThe court also directed to reinstate Padhi in service with full back wages and all other service benefits with effect from the date of his disengagement by

passing necessary orders to such effect within a period of four weeks from the date of communication of this order or on production of certified copy thereof by the petitioner.

Justice Mishra also observed that the disability certificate of the teacher was issued by proper authority and therefore proved to be genuine. "The only objection that

could be raised against the certificate is that the same is not in the proper statutory form, but then when the content of the said certificate has been proved to be correct, mere technicality cannot stand on the way of conferring appropriate benefits on the person concerned," Justice Mishra noted in the order.

The court also held that the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, who is statutorily duty bound to ensure protection of the rights of persons with disabilities has in the case at hand, acted entirely contrary to the legislature.

On the question of the teacher's disability, the court observed that: "obviously, the teacher cannot be blamed for the same.

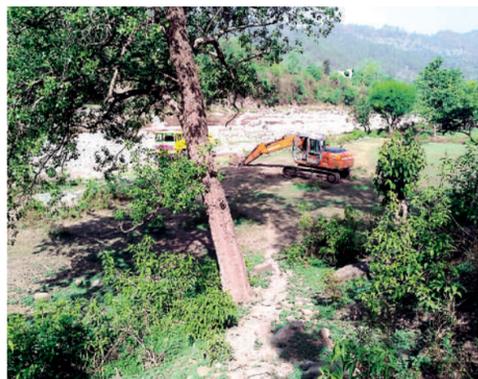
## NGT seeks report on stone crushers in Rajouri district

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The National Green Tribunal has formed a committee and sought a report on a plea against operation of stone crushers in violation of environmental norms in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice A K Goel said it is clear from the report of the district magistrate that there have been serious violations in operation of stone crushers, supported by illegal mining to the detriment of the environment.

"Steps so far taken to prevent illegal mining and further pollution are inadequate. So are the steps to make the violators accountable for past violations. "Serious violations include diversion of



Stone crushing in Rajouri.

flow of the river, lowering of water table, loss of irrigation/crops, damage to the water quality and even death of a person who drowned in the deep pit created by the stone crusher," the bench also comprising Justices

Sudhir Agarwal and Arun Kumar Tyagi said. The committee formed by the NGT comprises Justice Janak Raj Kotwal, former Judge of J-K High Court along with officials from the Central Pollution Control Board,

state pollution control board, nominee of Secretary Irrigation, J-K and District Magistrate, Rajouri.

"The Committee may consider the reports already furnished and if found necessary, undertake a visit to the site and interact with stakeholders. Justice Kotwal may fix his own honorarium to be paid by the State PCB.

The registry may forward a copy of the entire record to Justice JR Kotwal to enable the entire matter to be looked into. The report may be filed within three months by email," the bench said.

The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by village head Arti Sharma against operation of stone crushers in violation of environmental norms in Rajouri district.

## Mahadayi sanctuary not to be declared as tiger reserve

**Panaji, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Goa Forest Minister Vishwajit Rane ruled out the possibility of declaring Mahadayi Wildlife Sanctuary and its surrounding protected areas as tiger reserve.

Rane was responding to the demand made by environmentalists to declare the entire area around Mahadayi wildlife sanctuary, located in the north-eastern part of the state, as a tiger reserve, after big cats were recently spotted in these areas.

The minister said that there were no native tigers in the state. The sightings that were reported are of a tiger that travels from neighbouring Karnataka. The



Goa's Mahadayi Wildlife Sanctuary

tiger is in transit, it is not native to the region, Rane said, quoting the information he had received from the state forest department. There was no use declaring the area as tiger reserve, he said.

The minister further said that the forest department was working to attract more people to wildlife in the state by setting up various activities under hinterland tourism.

## BRIEF

### Approves

**Beirut:** Lebanon's government approved the demolition of the huge grain silos in Beirut's port, gutted in the devastating 2020 explosion that killed 216 people and ravaged parts of the Lebanese capital. Information Minister Ziad Makari made the announcement after a Cabinet meeting, citing the risk of collapse of the once towering cement structure jutting from the Beirut coastline that was shredded by the force of the blast.

### Lawmakers

**Mogadishu:** Somalia inaugurated 290 new lawmakers, bringing the country a step closer to completing a prolonged electoral process marred by alleged corruption and irregularities. The swearing-in ceremony was held in the capital's heavily fortified Halane military camp, protected by sandbagged fences and high concrete walls. Police and African Union troops were deployed, putting Mogadishu under lockdown.

### Convicted

**Alexandria:** A jury convicted a British national for his role in an Islamic State group hostage-taking scheme that took roughly two dozen Westerners captive a decade ago, resulting in the deaths of four Americans, three of whom were beheaded. The jury deliberated for four hours before finding El Shafee Elsheikh guilty on all counts.

### Oversight

**Washington:** US regulators will soon begin cracking down on vaping companies using a now-closed loophole, including a line of fruit-flavoured e-cigarettes that have become teenagers' top choice. Under a law taking effect, the Food and Drug Administration can regulate e-cigarettes and similar products that use synthetic nicotine. The action targets Puff Bar and several other vaping companies that recently switched their formulas to laboratory-made nicotine.

### Arrest

**Arizona:** An Arizona man in US faces animal cruelty charges after 183 dead animals were found in a freezer, including some that were apparently frozen while alive, officials said. Mohave County deputies and animal control officers found the animals in a garage freezer April 3 after a woman reported that Michael Patrick Turland, 43, hadn't returned snakes she'd lent him for breeding, the Sheriff's Office said.

### Killed

**Pomfret:** A man found dead in his home with more than 100 snakes, including cobras and black mambas, died of a snake bite, officials in Maryland said. A medical examiner's office told, the victim died of snake envenomation and the death was accidental. The 49-year-old man was found dead at his home in Charles County in January.

# Zelenskyy hails Ukrainians' resolve

Kyiv, Apr 15 (AP):



Volodymyr Zelenskyy

After Moscow suffer a stinging symbolic defeat with the loss of its Black Sea fleet flagship, Ukraine's president hailed his people for their resolve since Russia invaded in February and for making 'the most important decision of their life to fight.' In his address, Volodymyr Zelenskyy told Ukrainians that they should be proud of having survived 50 days under Russian attack when the invaders 'gave us a maximum of five.'

Back then even friendly world leaders urged him to leave, unsure whether Ukraine could survive, he said: 'But they didn't know how brave Ukrainians are, how much we value freedom and the possibility to live the way we want.'

Listing the ways Ukraine has defended against the onslaught,

Zelenskyy noted 'those who showed that Russian warships can sail away, even if it's to the bottom' of the sea. It was his only reference to the guided-missile cruiser Moskva, named for the Russian capital, which became a potent target of Ukrainian defiance in the opening days of the war. It sank while being towed to port after suffering heavy damage under circumstances that re-

mained under dispute. Ukrainian officials said their forces struck the vessel with missiles, while Moscow acknowledged a fire on board but not any attack. US and other Western officials could not confirm what caused the blaze. In any case, the loss was a symbolic defeat for Russia as its troops regroup for a renewed offensive in eastern Ukraine after retreating from much of the north, including the capital, Kyiv. The Moskva had the capacity to carry 16 long-range cruise missiles, and its removal reduces Russia's firepower in the Black Sea. It's also a blow to Moscow's prestige in a war already widely seen as a historic blunder. Now entering its eighth week, the invasion has stalled amid resistance from Ukrainian fighters bolstered by weapons and other aid sent by Western nations.

## 'Dr Ambedkar's views provide compass for clarity'

World is once again debating virtues of democracy

New York, Apr 15 (PTI):

As India marked the 131st birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said the best way of paying tribute is to advance democracy and freedoms, as he stressed that Babasaheb's views provide a compass for clarity and action at a time when not just in India but the world is once again debating the virtues of democracy.

Like all of you, I'm also humbled to pay my tribute to Babasaheb Ambedkar ji. And the best way of paying tribute is to advance democracy and freedoms because he did so much to institutionalise them in India and especially so because we are now marking 75 years of India's independence - our Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Jaishankar said at a special commem-



EAM S Jaishankar attends function to mark 131st birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar in New York.

orative event held at the Consulate General of India here to mark Babasaheb's birth anniversary. Jaishankar also paid floral tributes to Dr Ambedkar at the event at the Consulate.

He said Dr Ambedkar's legacy as the architect of India's Constitution has become even more valuable with the passage of

time. "Dr Ambedkar's vision, Dr Ambedkar's aspirations, they are actually the blueprint that will guide us as our nation moves towards the centenary of our independence. He emphasised that this is also a time when not just in India but actually the world is once again debating the virtues of democracy and at this

## 'GOOD FRIDAY' RITUAL



Devotees take part in the annual 'Way of the Cross' ritual during a Good Friday service in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Friday.

## US lawmakers signal support for Taiwan in visit

Taipei, Apr 15 (AP):

US lawmakers visiting Taiwan on Friday made a pointed and public declaration of their support for the self-governing island democracy while also issuing a warning to China.

The six lawmakers met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Friday and will also meet with the island's defense minister.

Sen. Robert Menendez of New Jersey gave a speech praising Taiwan's democracy and its global status as a manufacturer of semi-conductor chips used in everything from cars to smartphones, and he warned of consequences if that status were jeopardized.

'It is a country of global significance, of global consequence, of global impact, and therefore it should be understood the security of Taiwan has a global impact for those



American Congressional delegation meet with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen at the Presidential Office in Taipei, Taiwan, Friday.

who would wish it ill,' said Menendez, the head of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, in a speech from Taiwan's Presidential Office.

He emphasized that 'we seek no conflict with China as I believe Taiwan seeks no conflict with China.'

The delegation, led by Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, also includes Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina, Sen. Robert Portman of Ohio,

Sen. Benjamin Sasse of Nebraska and Rep. Ronny Jackson of Texas.

Tsai said she welcomed their visit and hoped it would help to further deepen US-Taiwan cooperation.

'Russia's invasion of Ukraine has proven that democracies must bolster their alliances and collectively we can defend ourselves from the threats posed by authoritarian nations that seek to disrupt regional peace,' said Tsai.

## Expanding drought leaves western US scrambling for water



Sand bars developing in the Rio Grande on the northern edge of Albuquerque.

**New Mexico, Apr 15 (AP):** Tumbleweeds drift along the Rio Grande as sand bars within its banks widen. Smoke from distant wildfires and dust kicked up by intense spring winds fill the valley, exacerbating the feeling of distress that is beginning to weigh on residents. One of North America's longest rivers, the Rio Grande is another example of a waterway in the western US that's tapped out. From the Pacific Northwest to the Colorado River Basin, irrigation districts already are

warning farmers to expect less this year despite growing demands fueled by ever-drying conditions. Climate experts say March marked the third straight month of below-average precipitation across the US and areas of record dryness are expanding in the West. Federal water managers shared their annual operating plan for the Rio Grande, a major water source for millions people and thousands of square miles of farmland in Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and Mexico.

## COVID cases continue to surge record high in Shanghai

Beijing, Apr 15 (PTI):

China on Friday reported more than 3,400 positive and 20,700 asymptomatic coronavirus cases, majority of them in Shanghai as the city of 26 million continued to reel under over fortnight long lockdown to contain the virus amid growing discontent among locals over lack of food and medical supplies.

The positive cases continued to be the highest in Shanghai.

The Chinese mainland reported 3,472 locally transmitted confirmed COVID-19 cases, besides 20,782 asymptomatic cases, according to the National Health Commission (NHC).

China's economic hub Shanghai reported 3,200 confirmed locally transmitted COVID-19 cases and 19,872 local asymptomatic carriers, the municipal health commission said on Friday. The city



Two residents give shares of the garlands and green onions in lockdown, Shanghai on Friday.

has already conducted many rounds of testing and built temporary hospitals, including in stadiums and swimming pools to treat both positive and asymptomatic cases.

On Wednesday China reported 3,020 new confirmed and 26,391 asymptomatic COVID infections as the cases continue the spiral upward challenging the country's zero-virus case policy. Over the past

24 hours, 28,778 close contacts of coronavirus patients were released from medical observation on the mainland, the NHC said. Significantly, the cases of coronavirus, which emerged first in Wuhan 2019 and turned into a global pandemic, are spiralling in China when the rest of the world began relaxing all the controls after bringing the virus under control.

## North Korea marks key anniversary, but no word on parade

Seoul, Apr 15 (AP):

North Korea is marking a key state anniversary Friday with calls for stronger loyalty to leader Kim Jong Un, but there was no word on an expected military parade to display new weapons amid heightened animosities with the United States.

The 110th birth anniversary of Kim's late grandfather and state founder, Kim Il Sung, comes after North Korea conducted a spate of weapons tests in

recent months, including its first full-range intercontinental ballistic missile launch since 2017. Experts say North Korea aims to expand its weapons arsenal and ramp up pressure on the United States amid long-stalled nuclear diplomacy.



People walk past a poster displayed as part of celebrations marking the 110th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang on Friday.

'Let's work harder in devotion to our respected comrade Kim Jong Un and on that path ultimately realize the dreams of our great president (Kim Il Sung) to build a powerful socialist state,' the North's state-run website Uriminzokkiri said in a commentary. The North's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper said North Korea is revering Kim Il Sung as 'eternal president' under the 'outstanding leadership of comrade Kim Jong Un.'

**NMDC Limited**  
(A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISE)  
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CIN: L13100TG1958GO001674

**CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT/Engineering & Project Division**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE (Open Tender Enquiry for Domestic Bidding)**

Tender Enquiry No: HO (Contracts)/Add. Classrooms DAV/Kirandul/2022/821 dated 16.04.2022  
(MSTC Ref. No.: NMDC/HO/3/22-23/ET/52)

NMDC Limited, a "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India invites online bids for "CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL CLASS ROOMS AT DAV SCHOOL, BIOM, KIRANDUL COMPLEX, DANTEWADA (CG)" on item rate basis, from prospective domestic bidders who fulfil the Pre-Qualification Criteria.

Detailed NIT and tender document including pre-qualification requirements can be viewed/downloaded from 16.04.2022 to 17.05.2022 from the following websites:

1. NMDC website: www.nmdc.co.in
2. Public Procurement Portal: http://www.eprocure.gov.in
3. MSTC portal: https://www.mstccommerce.com/eprocure/nmdc/buyer\_login.jsp

For accessing the bid document from NMDC website, the bidder has to register as "New User" at NMDC's website link https://nmcdportals.nmdc.co.in/nmcdtender

For accessing the bid document from MSTC, bidder has to register as "New Vendor" at MSTC website link: https://www.mstccommerce.co.in/eprocure/nmdc/buyer\_login.jsp and search the Tender Number NMDC/HO/3/22-23/ET/52. For further help, refer to "Vendor Guide" given in MSTC website.

The bidders are requested to submit their bids online through MSTC Limited website. The details of submission of bid through online are given in NIT.

The bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC website/ CPP portal/ MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.

For further clarification, CGM (Contracts), NMDC Ltd., Hyderabad can be contacted on fax: 040-23534746, Tel: 040- 2353 2800, email: contracts@nmdc.co.in

**Chief General Manager (Contracts)**



# CENTRAL Chronicle

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## Rice fortification

The Union Cabinet this month has approved a scheme to distribute fortified rice under government programmes which was announced by the Prime Minister in his Independence Day speech. The entire cost of rice fortification - around Rs 2,700 crore per annum - would be borne by the government of India as part of food subsidy till its full implementation upto June, 2024. This is less than 2 percent of national food subsidy. The distribution will happen throughout the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in three phases under Food Security Act (NFSA), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman-PM POSHAN (erstwhile Mid-Day Meal Scheme) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) of Government of India in all States and Union Territories (UTs) by 2024 in a phased manner. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) defines fortification as 'deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in a food so as to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health'. Rice is a staple food for more than half the global population and is widely consumed in many developing countries. India is not only the second-largest producer of rice in the world, accounting for some 20 per cent of global production, it is also among the largest consumers of this grain. More than 50 percent of India's 1.2 billion people depend on rice for sustenance. Per capita rice consumption in India is 6.8 kg per month. Therefore, fortifying rice with micronutrients is an option to supplement the diet of the poor. Despite its high calorie content, rice is a poor supplier of micronutrients and has a low overall nutritional value beyond carbohydrates and protein. This is because the white rice milling process removes both the fat and the more nutrient-rich bran layers.

India continues to grapple with a high rate of under-nutrition. Stunting has lifelong consequences on human capital, poverty and equity. Looking at the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 data released, India needs to act now by enhancing its programme effectiveness and reach. The situation calls for robust policies and strengthened actions to end hunger in the country. Malnutrition has devastating effects on children's health and all other aspects of their growth. As many as 60 percent of child deaths in India are due to malnutrition as weaker children have very low immunity and as a result, these weak children are unable to fight with diseases. Also, in the early years of life, they lag behind other children in schooling and other activities. Various technologies are available for rice fortification, such as coating and dusting. For rice fortification in India, 'extrusion' is considered to be the best technology. This involves the production of fortified rice kernels (FRKs) from a mixture using an extruder machine. The fortified rice kernels are then blended with regular rice to produce fortified rice. Meanwhile, opinion is divided on the efficacy and value of consuming fortified rice. The basic purpose of food fortification is to improve the nutritional quality and provide public health benefits to the population with minimal risks. But there is the need to use food additives in permitted quantities to make it palatable. The technological process also increases costs. The cooking of fortified rice does not require any special procedure. The rice needs to be cleaned and washed in the normal way before cooking. After cooking, fortified rice retains the same physical properties and micronutrient levels as it had before cooking. Seven countries have mandated rice fortification, the United States, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and the Solomon Islands.

## Laser weapons race

Israel revealed that a laser air defence system, it is developing successfully shot down drones, rockets, mortars, and anti-tank missiles in a first series of tests last month. The ministry has been testing the laser-based defence system for several years, shooting down a drone with it last year. The recent tests were the first to be successful against the other threats, including unguided projectiles and anti-tank guided missiles. Its research and development department initially planned to deploy the anti-missile system by 2024, but the military has pushed for an earlier deployment. This Israeli system is called Iron Beam. The US Navy announced this week, that during an Office of Naval Research (ONR) test in February, an all-electric, high-energy laser weapon was employed for the first time to neutralize a target simulating a subsonic cruise missile in flight. The weapon utilized in the test was Lockheed Martin-designed Layered Laser Defence (LLD) that was developed to serve as a multi-domain, multi-platform demonstration system. The LLD testing, according to the US Navy, is part of a larger strategy by the naval research and development community to advance technologies and deploy a line of laser weapons that can counter diverse threats with a multitude of rising options, in collaboration with the fleet.

While the LLD will not be deployed, it does provide a glimpse into the future of laser weaponry, said the Navy. It's compact and potent, yet more efficient than prior models. Researchers in China have developed a microwave machine Relativistic Klystron Amplifier (RKA), that could jam or destroy satellites in space. The device can generate a wave burst measuring 5-megawatts in the Ka-band, a portion of the electromagnetic spectrum increasingly used for both civil and military purposes. Although not powerful enough to shoot targets out of the sky from the ground, the RKA can be mounted onto satellites, which could then be used to attack enemy assets in space by burning out their sensitive electronics. Last month, Royal Navy of UK revealed plans to test a laser weapon for the first time onboard a Type 23 frigate, which will be used to detect, track, engage, and counter unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). In India, DRDO has several directed energy weapons projects but the efforts need to be accelerated. Lack of precision engineering manufacturing will be obstacle for India to develop laser weapons. Directed energy weapons using lasers is new dimension of warfare.

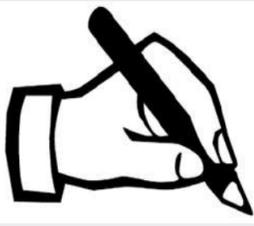
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The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

## FLOWERING OF CHERRY



A woman watches under a flowering Japanese cherry tree on western walkway of Buda's Castle Hill in Budapest.

## Transcending politics with space flight

**DR CHAITANYA GIRI**

As global tensions rise, India's burgeoning space programme could become a tool for peace. The 61st anniversary of the fabled first flight of Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin will prompt mixed feelings. Celebrated every year as the International Day of Human Space Flight was unique in many ways. Ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Myanmar, economic collapse in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, severe drought in Madagascar, and the COVID-19 global pandemic have put tremendous pressure on international trade and relations. Not many human pursuits can take us out of such dire circumstances; human space flight is one. The profession of astronautics is strong on marvel and inspiration. These attributes go far beyond national borders and the agencies that carry them out. Until human space flight becomes as mundane as suburban travel, it will motivate people worldwide. Yuri Gagarin is celebrated as much by the Americans as by the Russians. Black trainee astronaut Edward Dwight is an inspiration not only to African Americans but also to native Africans. Astronauts of Indian descent Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams are muses to Americans and the Indian populace, including the vast 'desi' diaspora.

Flight into the global commons of outer space is flight into open and unowned expanses. Indeed, as the Americans and Soviets raced to the Moon, neither extended their political acrimony into space. However, things have gradually changed. Outer space today is frequently visited by space

agencies and private-sector players. Almost every high- and middle-income economy has at least one satellite orbiting the planet. From foreign space enterprises, nations receive downstream space-utilisation services: satellite telecommunications, meteorology, remote sensing. Satellites are being miniaturised and rocket launches can be done on demand. This conducive environment for frequent small satellite launches has led to constellations of thousands of satellites. Skylab, Mir, Salyut and the International Space Station (ISS) were accustomed to traffic-free orbits. Not anymore. Contemporary human space flight must dodge through the densely packed satellite constellations in Earth's orbit.

In December 2021 China notified the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs that it took evasive action to prevent two Starlink satellites operated by the American aerospace company SpaceX from colliding with the Tianhe module of its nascent space station. Chinese media speculated that the American company might have been deliberately testing Chinese manoeuvrability. A month earlier, operators of the ISS publicised how they had had to manoeuvre the space station to avoid hitting a piece of the defunct Fengyun-1C satellite, which had been blown to smithereens by a 2007 Chinese anti-satellite missile test. India, too, is entering the echelons of human space flight. Its first orbital crewed mission, Gaganyaan, is planned for 2023. The Indian Space Research Organisation is also working to raise

a compact space station by the early 2030s and place it in low Earth orbit. As the Russo-Ukrainian War continues, it is evident that the simpatico between the US and Russia is spiralling into a chasm. The escalation of tensions has led to speculation about their collaboration on the ISS. If they were to divorce, the US and Russia will seek partners that share their vocal disdain for the other bloc. The creation of blocs may dislodge any hotline or détente mechanism that would previously have alleviated differences. In this scenario, the role of neutral nations - those that do not belong to any bloc but work with both - will become vital in cooling off confrontations between the two.

Nations will not be peacekeepers as such, but they will help maintain equilibrium. According to realist theory, a nation's power and status include technology and military power. Space technology is a dual-use technology and a symbol of a country's overall technological and military power. Great powers invest in the space sector in order to gain power and status. Manned flight was the result of the United States-Soviet Union space race during the Cold War. The US and the Soviet Union competed fiercely to land a crewed vessel on the Moon, and ultimately the US won the race. Both Russia and France have immensely assisted India with the Gaganyaan programme: Russia with training for the Indian astronauts, or vyomanauts, and France with its competence in space medicine. In turn, India is likely to invite universities and private space startups from developed and developing economies to participate in the Indian Space Station by contributing cutting-edge scientific payloads and performing groundbreaking experiments. After the 2010s, the space powers began a new race to the Moon. They sought lunar sovereignty under the pretext of mining the Moon for minerals (or at least jurisdiction over the mining areas). Although manned lunar landings and exploitation of lunar resources are beneficial to human society, participating coun-

tries (especially the US) were really aiming to increase their own power and status.

In line with the above, some countries use space technology as an arm of diplomacy and as a tool to advance national interests - for example, by offering or denying space technology to other countries. During the Cold War era, the US provided space technology to its allies, friends and partners to enhance and consolidate US leadership in the West; conversely, the Soviet Union denied space technology to its partners to keep them under its control. As a result, the US and the West won the Cold War-era space competition. India could encourage greater participation from South America, Africa, Eastern Europe, Central and West Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. A diplomatic hand, full of soft power, could be extended to countries from these regions. Encouraging universities and research institutions from developing economies to build payloads would have a progressive impact on the quality of education they impart. India could benefit from bright ideas coming from these countries, and it may lead to fruitful collaborations. The Indian Space Station could become a hallmark of harmonious international scientific progress in the global commons. The International Day of Human Space Flight 2022 will be brimming with constructive developments, from Gaganyaan to Tianhe to the US-led Artemis programme. But the day will also be rife with concerns about space debris, the malignant growth of satellite constellations, and technological competitiveness mutating into conflict in Earth's orbit. India has the task of progressing its space programme thoughtfully, without joining any blocs, and demonstrating stability in stormy waters. Peace can be achieved by forging partnerships with friendly nations from both blocs for the Indian Space Station. Human space flight continues to be an endeavour that can transcend the politics of Earth.

(Dr Chaitanya Giri is space policy and diplomacy consultant at RISDC, New Delhi.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Balancing blocs

The war will end, and leaders will shake hands. That old woman will keep waiting for her martyred son. And those children will keep waiting for their hero father. This famous line for the infamous conducts reverberates every time with a same sense of grief and emotions. Yes we are once again witnessing the crisis of conscience this time from the warzone hotbed, the capital city of Ukraine, Kyiv, where the Russians are bombarding the city. The conflict is not new, it dates back to the Cold War era, where the two blocs led by Capitalist USA on one side and Socialist USSR on the other were on their mission to extend their sphere of influence. Ukraine with a population of 43 million is a huge market. Second Ukraine is industrially most productive. Ukraine is a significantly an important source and supplier of raw materials, including, for instance, semiconductor-grade neon used in semiconductor manufacturing which is sought by the advanced nations as the most important ingredient for the 4th Industrial Revolution. This prompted Russians to take Ukraine under the Eurasian Economic community (EAEU) which is a regional organization led by Russia aimed for the economic integration of its member states. Russia is surrounded by Arctic and Pacific oceans in the north and east respectively so it is relatively safe on these fronts. The probable threat Russia presumes comes from the western border. History also corroborates this fact. Russians were attacked from the western fronts by Napoleonic France in 1812 and Nazi Germany at the time of the Second World War in 1941. This is the geographical ease and convenience the attackers might take into consideration today. The present day Russia is facing economic hardship and the vaccination project has not gone well. All this downgraded President Putin approval rating, so to boost his popularity what could be better than diverting the population to the matter of national importance posed by external treat. New Delhi must be calculative in its approach as any untimely and hasty measures might have serious repercussions. New Delhi has to balance its stand between the blocs. Minister of External Affairs of India S. Jaishankar's efforts for a diplomatic effort is well thought of as Russia is an all-weather friend and a major defense supplier to India, apart from being a major economic trade partner. India's diplomatic balancing act is the need of the hour.

Rajat, via email

### Alternative politics

Before pent up anger takes an ugly turn, the Rajapakas should make way for an alternative political arrangement in Sri Lanka. It is obvious that the country expects the political leadership to rise to the occasion. Perhaps the leader of the Opposition should take the initiative to form an interim government, get the best available economic expertise and formulate a plan of action. The new leader should not hesitate to solicit the help of friendly neighbours. People should be asked to be prepared to face some tough decisions. But the most important task for such a leader is to carry with him all sections of the people, from north to south.

Kosara, via email



## WHAT THEY TWEET!

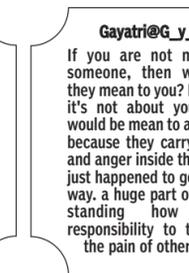


**vasajit@vasajit\_b**  
Some of the same people in Washington, DC who are chanting that there's nothing to worry about China's intervention in Latin America will be the first to scream for overt and covert intervention when the region's pro-China regimes threaten our core interests.

**kaulvivek@kaul\_vivek**  
The fact that banks no longer fund affordable homes is a long term trend. The proportion of priority home loans which fund affordable homes has fallen dramatically over the last 15 years. The proportion of non-priority home loans which funds homes for the rich, has increased.



**Aunindyo@AunindyoC**  
It is the Nehruvian policy of becoming self-sufficient in food production that is going to save India in the coming months, as the world gets ready for a massive food crisis. Import substitution is, and will always be, the only way for a domestic economy to grow.



**Gayatri@G\_y\_tri**  
If you are not mean to someone, then why are they mean to you? Because it's not about you. They would be mean to anybody, because they carry a pain and anger inside them. You just happened to get in the way. A huge part of understanding how much responsibility to take for the pain of others.



**Chandrashekar@cbdhdg**  
Sammruddhi Mahamarg Mumbai Nagpur Expressway PKG 7 Progress.



**Brahma@Chellaney**  
It's raining weapons: Flow of high-tech Western weaponry to Ukraine is turning into a raging torrent, as Biden releases \$800 million more in manned and unmanned systems. The staggering volume and range of war materiel promises to prolong the war and ordinary Ukrainians' misery.

**Vinaya Pai@vinaya\_pai**  
I was a Clothing and Textiles major in my college studies. We had some history of clothing and we were told about how, before stitching came, draped garments were the norm. And the example given was the Roman toga. And so clueless we were, that we never asked why the sari.

## BRIEF

### Launches

**New Delhi:** Agro-chemicals firm Insecticides India Ltd (IIL) on Friday announced the launch of three new crop protection products for paddy, vegetables and maize, and hoped better sales amid the projection of normal monsoon this year. The new products include 'Shinwa', an insecticide for vegetables; 'Izuki', a fungicide for paddy and 'Torry', a herbicide for maize crop. IIL managing director Rajesh Aggarwal said. The company expects good demand for 'Shinwa' and 'Izuki', and sales to cross Rs 100 crore by next year. Aggarwal told PTI. The production of these products will be undertaken at its facilities at Chopanki in Rajasthan and Dahej in Gujarat where brownfield expansion with an investment of Rs 300 crore is going to be completed during first quarter of this fiscal, he said.

### Raises

**New Delhi:** Bike taxi platform Rapido on Friday said it has raised USD 180 million (over Rs 1,370 crore) in a Series D round of funding led by new investor Swiggy. The round also saw investment from TVS Motor Company, along with existing investors Westbridge, Shell Ventures and Nexus Ventures, the company said. The funds would be used to bolster technology, amplify and strengthen teams across diverse sets of capabilities, and increase overall supply to create an enhanced consumer experience across a larger audience base in metros, tier I, II and III cities, it added.

### Power

**Panaji:** The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Goa chapter has said power shortages, outages and unplanned shutdowns were affecting industries in the state though the government has maintained there were no electricity supply constraints. Power Minister Sudin Dhavalikar had claimed Goa does not face any power supply issues like in states such as Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh, industries are not running even for five hours a day sometimes due to load-shedding. He is far better, Dhavalikar had said after attending a meeting of the power department.

### Lease

**New Delhi:** Greenbase Industrial & Logistics Park on Friday said it has given on lease 2 lakh square feet industrial space to Jost India in its township at Chennai. Global firm Jost India manufactures components for commercial vehicles and agricultural equipment. Greenbase Industrial & Logistics Park is a joint venture between Niranjan Hiranandani Group and Blackstone. Greenbase said in a statement it has entered into a "lease deal of 2 lakh square feet built to suit industrial space for Jost India." The lease deal is signed for a tenure of 10 years.

# Foundry industry aiming to double mkt size to USD 32 bn

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The domestic foundry industry is aiming to double its market size to USD 32 billion and annual production capacity to 21 million tonnes (MT) over the next 5-7 years, industry body IIF said on Friday.

The industry is also expected to attract investment of Rs 500 crore from domestic and as well as international players. Institute of Indian Foundrymen (IIF) President Devendra Jain said while announcing the '70th Indian Foundry Congress and IFEX' event.

The three-day event will begin from April 17, 2022 in Gandhinagar, he said in a virtual media interaction.

Jain said the current market size of the Indian foundry industry is at USD 16 billion with capacity of 10.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA). The industry employees around 5 lakh people di-



rectly and 15 lakh indirectly. "Our aim is to double our market size to USD 32 billion in 5-7 years, double our capacity and job opportunities," he said.

Replying to a question on likely investment for the targeted capacity expansion, he said various domestic and international players are looking to set up capacities in India as "we are a growing market. We are receiving a lot of enquiries (for invest-

ment)". Investment of Rs 500 crore is expected by the players in the industry, he added. Jain further said there are certain challenges facing the sector, including raw material prices which have shot up significantly in the past few months. In November 2021, prices of pig iron and steel scrap stood at Rs 44 and Rs 39 per kg, respectively. In March, the rates of the two items have climbed to Rs 68 and Rs 52

a kg. Similarly, one kg of ferro alloy silicon, which was costing Rs 140 in November, is now priced at Rs 240, he noted.

This has impacted production cost which has grown by about 50 per cent, Jain said, adding "70 percent of our production is consumed by the automobile sector." Besides, the foundry industry supplies items to industries like railways, engineering and wind energy generators, among others.

"The 70th Indian Foundry Congress and IFEX 2022 is among the first few large-scale industry events since the pandemic situation started easing. It has received an excellent response with companies from India and overseas. "We are confident it will play the role of a catalyst in helping the foundry industry reach the pre-pandemic levels," Subodh Panchal of the Indian Foundry Congress said.

## Asian shares fall, trading muted with holidays

**Tokyo, Apr 15 (AP):**

Asian shares fell in muted trading as most world markets were closed for Good Friday and other holidays.

Benchmarks declined in Tokyo, Seoul and Shanghai. Sydney, Manila, Bangkok and Hong Kong were among Asian markets observing holidays on Friday. US and European markets also were closed.

After markets closed, China's central bank freed up extra money for lending to support the slowing economy by cutting the amount of reserves commercial banks are required to hold. The move added about 500 billion yuan (\$85 billion) to the pool for lending, a relatively modest sum compared with the size of China's economy.

Shutdowns in major Chinese cities due to coronavirus outbreaks and the war in Ukraine have been weighing on sentiment. "The Russia-Ukraine conflict inflation effects are now more meaningful than direct military developments in a market sense. These consequences have fabricated an uncertain environment that could keep investors wary," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

## Fund raising via debt placement hits 6-yr low at Rs 5.88 lakh crore

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Fund raising by listed companies through private placement of corporate bonds plunged to a six-year low in 2021-22 to Rs 5.88 lakh crore owing to good performance of the equities and aggressive fund disbursement by banks at lower interest rate.

This was 24 per cent lower from a record Rs 7.72 lakh crore mobilised in 2020-21, data with Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed. Unless the high government borrowings and adverse interest rate cycle play spoilsport, the ongoing financial year is expected to be robust in terms of fund raising activities through the debt route on account of higher demand for credit from corporates in light of the improving economic outlook, experts said. "During FY23, there should be some increase in raising of debt through bonds as corporate India presses the pedal on the next major phase of



the capex cycle. Also, with a potentially rising interest rate scenario, these bond issuances should evince good interest from risk seeking investors," Ricky Kirpalani, Lead Sponsor, First Water Capital Fund (AIF) said.

Vibhor Mittal, Chief Business Officer, CredAvenue, believes issuance volumes in the private debt market are improving on account of higher demand for credit from issuers in light of the improving economic outlook. However, dampeners to the cause could be high government borrowings that may crowd out private placements and adverse interest rate cycles.

## Coal supply to power plants rises 25% in FY-22

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Coal supply to electricity generating plants increased by 24.5 per cent to 677.67 million tonnes in FY22 compared to that of the preceding fiscal, the government data said on Friday.

Despite increased supplies, there were reports of fuel shortage at various thermal power units due to soaring energy demand.

The data, however, showed that the supply of coal to power utilities stood at 544.07 MT in FY21, which was less than 567.25 MT recorded in FY20.

"The power utilities despatch has grown by 19.47 per cent to 677.67 MT during FY22 as compared to 567.25 MT in FY20. Fall



in import prices have been observed since the end of October 2021, however, import prices are still at high level to discourage coal import," it said.

The coal dispatch to the power sector increased to 65.36 MT last month from 57.97 MT during the same period in FY21, it added.

The overall dispatch of coal also rose to 818.14 MT in FY22 from 691.39 MT in FY21.

## Maruti Suzuki drives in new Ertiga starting at Rs 8.35 lakh

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The country's largest car-maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Friday said it has launched a new version of its multi-purpose vehicle Ertiga, priced between Rs 8.35-12.79 lakh (ex-showroom).

The model comes with a 1.5 litre petrol engine paired with both manual and automatic transmissions.

The auto major has also launched CNG trims of the vehicle.

The model comes with hybrid technology and driven by an all-new advanced six-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters. Ertiga's launch ten years ago was a significant

moment in the Indian automobile industry, as it created a new segment that has been growing at a CAGR



(compound annual growth rate) of 4.7 per cent," MSI Managing Director & CEO Hisashi Takeuchi noted. The next-gen Ertiga with advanced technology features comes with a new engine and an all-new transmission, he added.

"As it stays true to its

brand vision of providing comfort, technology, and safety features, while being fuel-efficient for customers, the next-gen Ertiga will surely continue to be India's go-to MPV. We are confident

that the next-gen Ertiga will be widely embraced by our customers," Takeuchi stated. Available both in petrol and CNG options, Ertiga offers a mileage of 20.51 km/l (petrol) and 26.11km/kg (CNG). In an interaction with PTI, MSI Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava said the multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) segment has been witnessing growth over the last few years.

## Elon Musk wants to buy Twitter, make it maximally trusted

**San Francisco, Apr 15 (AP):**

In 10 days, Tesla CEO Elon Musk has gone from popular Twitter contributor and critic to the company's largest individual shareholder to a would-be owner of the social platform, a whirlwind of activity that could change the service dramatically given the sometimes whimsical billionaire's self-identification as a free-speech absolutist.

Twitter revealed in a securities filing that Musk has offered to buy the company outright for more than \$43 billion, saying the social media platform 'needs to be transformed as a private company' in order to build trust with its users.

"I believe free speech is a societal imperative for a functioning democracy," Musk said in the filing. "I now realize the company will neither thrive nor serve this societal imperative in its current form."

Later in the day, during an onstage interview at the TED 2022 conference, he went even broader: "Having a public platform that is maximally trusted and broadly inclusive is extremely important to the future of civilization."

Since it burst onto the scene in 2006, Twitter has been home to flourishing social and political commentary, shared news, scandal gossip, cat memes and dress color arguments.

## Services exports to Australia likely to reach USD 5 bn by 2027

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Services exports to Australia are expected to more than double to USD 5 billion in the next five years on the back of the trade pact signed between the two nations, the Services Exports Promotion Council (SEPC) said on Friday.

SEPC Chairman Sunil H Talati said that sectors that will be benefited immensely from the pact include telecommunications, computer, information, travel, research and development, professional and management consulting services.

India and Australia on April 2 inked an economic cooperation and trade agreement (ECTA) to boost economic ties.



"SEPC expects exports to reach USD 5 billion by 2027 from the current USD 1.9 billion," Talati said.

He added that the council will be the nodal organisation for creating and promoting business opportunities for India's services sector in Australia in the given framework of the pact.

## Nepal finance minister calls non-residents to open dollar accounts

**Kathmandu, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The Nepal government has urged Nepalese nationals living abroad to open dollar accounts in banks in the country and make investments amidst the economic crisis in the Himalayan nation.

Nepal's foreign reserves have been hit by a slump in tourism during the pandemic, a problem that has also hit Sri Lanka which is going through a crippling economic crisis since gaining independence from the UK in 1948. Speaking at a virtual interaction organised by the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA), Nepal's Finance Minister Janardan Sharma said that opening dollar accounts in Nepalese banks by Non-resident Nepalese (NRN) would help the country to get rid of the current foreign currency crunch.

## Pharma industry must focus on generic

### Better link between input and output

**Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday asked the domestic pharmaceutical industry to strengthen its generic medicine sector and ensure better linkage between input and output of products to become self-reliant.

Speaking at an event hosted by the Indian Drug Manufacturers' Association (IDMA) to commemorate its Golden Jubilee celebrations here, Goyal also asked the industry to plan for a long-term to tackle challenges related to global supply chain. "The phenomenal growth that we have seen



Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal at Golden Jubilee of IDMA in Mumbai on Friday.

in the last ten years should be carried forward to ensure that we become self-sufficient. Global supply chains are becoming more and more difficult to predict. The challenges are getting unimaginably serious," he said. In this situation, the minister said, "it's

extremely important that we focus not only on our strengths in the generic sector but also ensure our backward and forward linkages."

"We should plan for the long term to become more and more self-sufficient and with that we will go to

the world with the confidence of a powerful nation, engaging with the world on equal terms for a better future for our industry," Goyal said, adding that India's aim should be to become the healthcare custodian of the world.

Stressing on the need for mutual support within the industry, the minister said, "Every country does protect its core industry and I feel our core industry is the pharma industry." Goyal also mentioned government measures like the production-linked incentive scheme for the manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredient and medical devices and said, "I do hope that many of the manufacturers in the pharma industry are taking advantage of the scheme."

## Air India starts restoring salaries in phased manner to pre-pandemic levels

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Air India is restoring salaries of employees in a phased manner to pre-pandemic levels as the aviation sector is recovering with the decline of COVID-19 cases in the country, according to the airline's official document on Tuesday.

Indian aviation sector was badly hit due to the pandemic-induced travel restrictions during the last two years and therefore, all airlines in India had cut salaries.

Air India's document on Tuesday said pilots' flying allowance, special pay and wide body allowance were cut by 35 per cent, 40 per



cent and 40 per cent, respectively, after the onset of the pandemic. From April 1 this year, flying allowance, special pay and wide body allowance of pilots are being restored by 20 per cent, 25 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, the document stated.

Cabin crew members' flying allowance and wide body allowance was cut by 15 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively, during the peak of the pandemic, the document noted. Flying allowance and wide body allowance of cabin crew members are being re-

stored by 10 and five per cent, respectively, from April 1, the document said.

The allowances given to officers' and other staff members were cut by 50 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively, during the pandemic, it mentioned.

While officers' allowances are being restored by 25 per cent from April 1, other staff members' allowances are being restored to pre-pandemic level from April 1, it noted.

Gross emoluments given to Indian employees who are based at foreign locations was cut by 10 per cent at a maximum of USD 300 during the pandemic, it said.

## Egypt approves India as wheat supplier

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said Egypt, which is one of the largest importers of wheat from Ukraine and Russia, has approved India as a wheat supplier.

There is a sharp decline in availability of wheat in the global markets due to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Both the nations are major producers and exporters of wheat.

Egypt imported wheat worth about USD 1.8 billion from Russia and USD 610.8 million from Ukraine in 2020. The African nation is looking to import 1 million tonne of wheat from India and would need 2,40,000 tonne in April. Indian farmers are feeding the world.



Egypt approves India as a wheat supplier. Modi Govt steps in as the world looks for reliable alternate sources for steady food supply. Our farmers have ensured our granaries overflow and we are ready to serve the world, Goyal said in a tweet.

India's wheat exports increased to USD 1.74 billion in April-January 2021-22 as against USD 340.17 million in the same period last year. In 2019-20, wheat exports were worth USD 61.84 million, which rose to USD 549.67 million in 2020-21. India's wheat exports are

mainly to neighbouring countries with Bangladesh having the largest share of more than 54 per cent in both volume and value terms in 2020-21. It has entered new wheat markets such as Yemen, Afghanistan, Qatar and Indonesia.

The top ten countries importing Indian wheat in 2020-21 were Bangladesh, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Afghanistan, Qatar, Indonesia, Oman and Malaysia. India accounts for less than 1 per cent in the world's wheat export. However, its share has increased from 0.14 per cent in 2016 to 0.54 per cent in 2020. India is the second largest producer of wheat with a share of around 14.14 per cent in the world's total production in 2020.

## I am a working woman in real life too: Mansi Parekh

Two years later, the beautiful actress Manasi Parekh, who worked as a co-star of Paresh Rawal in the Gujarati film 'Dear Father' and won much acclaim, will now be seen opposite actor Sharman Joshi. Let us tell you that Mansi has also worked with Vicky Kaushal in 'Uri: The Surgical Strike' earlier, apart from this she has been a part of Gujarati hit film 'Golkeri' and web series. She shared many interesting things.

**After two years you appeared in the Gujarati film 'Dear Father', apart from this, in which upcoming film will you be seen?**

After Dear Father, I am doing a film with Sharman Joshi, in between I have shot a Hindi film with Pankaj ji, Dimple ji which is going to release very soon, apart from this I am also doing a Gujarati film.

**How was the experience of working with Paresh Rawal for the first time in the film 'Dear Father'?**

It was very nice Paresh ji is a very veteran artist, it is every artist's dream to work with him and got to learn a lot by working with Paresh ji, I have fights, emotional scenes with him, he has been very supportive in all of them. And whenever he



comes on the set, he brings with him the experience of one and a half hundred films. But he is so humble and hard working even at this age, so it was great to work with him.

**You worked with Vicky Kaushal in 'Uri', have worked with other big stars, and now you are doing films continuously, how much does the experience of your past films prove to be of help to you for a new project?**

I think you learn something in every project, I made my Bollywood debut with 'Uri', and I had a great experience in them, and then did 'Golkeri' with Malhar Thakar, which did well at the box office. It was quite a hit, and it is said that when you keep working continuously, you get that much experience, and now back to back films are coming, it feels very good, normal people say that the actress career after marriage and children ends but my ca-

reer has been very successful after marriage and kids. Be it television or film.

**You have lived many female characters in TV and movies, how much have you felt those characters in your real life?**

My character Alka in 'Dear Father', in real life, I am also a working woman, and I have also seen and experienced a lot of complications, so I have found a similarity in that character, I believe in the life of an actress. Every character has some part or the other. And you have to figure it out how you get it out.

**The trends of Gujarati films are moving fast towards Bollywood, yet as an actress, what change do you want to see in Gujarati films?**

There are many talented people in the Gujarati film industry, there are good directors and writers, yet sometimes it seems, as it comes to taking risks, very few people take risks. Although I am a producer myself, I have also produced the film 'Golkeri'. And I am producing a new film, at the moment I cannot tell you about it, but you should have fun in any industry you work in. Also, if you feel that there is a need for any change in it, then you should have the ability to bring changes in them.

That's why I am creating the work that I want to see as a producer. And the change that is needed is what we want to do by making our film. What happens in Gujarati films is that either a comedy is made or a film like Romkom is made which has the same set up, so we are trying to show different characters and different stories in our films.

**How are you making the most of your personal life along with your acting career?**

When I am not working, I like to spend time with my family and my daughter and husband, and I work by balancing all these things, there will be many women like me who work by balancing the responsibility of the family. When I am out for months, my daughter is taken care of by my mother or my husband. With my work, I want to show people that you can become a successful actress and you can also have a successful life.

**When a film or project is offered, do you seek your husband's advice?**

I don't take advice because their field is different, but discussions keep happening with them about the project. We have an open and understanding relationship. We always support each other in our career.



Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who will next be seen in Vignesh Shivan's directorial 'Kaathu Vaakula Rendu Kadhal', wraps up dubbing for her role in the movie.

After wrapping up the dubbing part for 'Kaathu Vaakula Rendu Kadhal', the 'Majili' actress took to Instagram to thank her team.

The actress penned a sweet note alongside sharing a picture from the dubbing studio, which reads, "And... Its a wrap for KRK". Dubbing done. So so excited for you guys to see this one."

"And Thank you to the amazing people around me who have made working in this film an absolute breeze.love ya", Samantha wrote, as she tagged her teammates along with director Vignesh.

Vignesh Shivan, who shared Samantha's post, responded, saying, "What a pleasure it has been to collaborate with you!! Thank you for your kind words".

Helmed by Vignesh Shivan, the movie 'Kaathu Vaakula Rendu Kadhal' stars Nayanthara, Vijay Sethupathi, and Samantha in the lead roles.

**Samantha wraps up dubbing for 'Kaathu Vaakula Rendu Kadhal'**

## Alka talks about her role in 'Mose Chhal Kiye Jaaye'

In the previous episodes of Sony Entertainment Television's show Mose Chhal Kiye Jaaye, the viewers witnessed how a few journalists showed up at the Oberoi household to interview Soumya (Vidhi Pandya) for her viral video where she highlighted the importance of wearing sarees in the Indian culture. As the journalists express their appreciation for Soumya's stand in her video, she credits the initiative to be that of her mother-in-law, Sushma (Alka Badola Kaushal). An elated Sushma, shows her pride in her daughter-in-law on camera, calling her 'the best daughter-in-law' in the world. Although this act clearly angers Armaan (Vijayendra Kumeria), the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law duo share a heart-warming moment together. Alka Badola



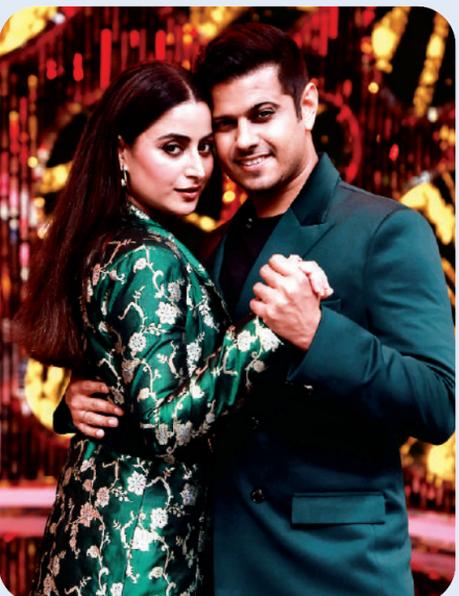
Kaushal, who essays the role of Sushma on the show, talks about how her character has always had trouble with doing what is right. She says, "Sushma has always struggled with picking the right side, mainly because her voice is often trampled in this patriarchal society. Her history of being unable to choose what is right has hurt her multiple times, and she wishes to do right for once by herself and by others."

Star Plus is popular for its great content and has always been known for its great fiction and non-fiction shows. The channels recently launched 'Smart Jodi' show is getting a lot of love from the audience as well as the viewers are getting to know many unseen and unknown facts related to their favorite couple's personal life and their bond, which is very much interesting for the audience. Something similar happened with 'Ghum Hai Kisikey Pyaar Mein' fame actress Aishwarya Sharma and actor Neil Bhatt when they were asked some questions related to their honeymoon in the honeymoon special episode of 'Smart Jodi' show.

Let us tell you that this couple, who tied the knot a few months ago, have not been able to go on honeymoon yet due to work commitments. In such circumstances, when he was talked about his future honeymoon plan, Neil Bhatt told many special things related to it.

Actor Neil Bhatt while talking about his future honeymoon plans with his wife and actress Aishwarya Sharma says,

## 'Neil and Aishwarya' reveal their honeymoon destination



"Both Aishwarya and I want to do everything together in life as we both had decided various activities that we will be doing with our life partner and waiting to be completed. Well, we both haven't seen snow yet. We would love to go on a honeymoon to a place where there is snow

so that we can see it together for the first time. Although there are many places we can go to, but one place we both would love to visit is Norway. It has snow and northern lights, which we haven't seen yet which is a very rare phenomenon and not easily available in all countries.

Actress Mrunal Thakur, who was last seen in an extended cameo appearance in Kartik Aaryan's 'Dhamaka', says that she would love to play a sportsperson on the big screen.

She says, "In India, we don't make as many films on female athletes as much as they deserve to be told and made. It is important because, through our films, aspiring athletes gets encouragement and a whole new world opens up for them. "I would personally love to essay a sportsperson on screen. To ready for it, to train for it, it's inspiring and also extremely challenging. Because you're embodying a person so far off from whom you are. And it will be something for me that would give me a wholesome experience to prepare, play and to hopefully understand getting into the skin of a character that is so different from whom I'm as a person". Mrunal will next be seen alongside Shahid Kapoor in the family sports drama 'Jersey'.



**Mrunal Thakur expresses her DESIRE to play a sportsperson on the silver screen**

### HOROSCOPE SATURDAY APRIL 16

**Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18**

It's likely that you'll receive some unpleasant news today, Aquarius. Perhaps there are changes occurring at work that you read about in the morning newspaper. Or it could be that you get a phone call and receive some upsetting news about an old friend.

**Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20**

This could be a day of technical glitches and malfunctions, Pisces. It's frustrating, to be sure, but a little bit funny, too. Everything you touch, from computer to washing machine, seems to groan and shudder before finally breaking. Apparently, today you have the opposite of the Midas touch. Don't take it personally.

**Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20**

Today is filled with socializing, with a strong emphasis on the exchange of information. If you're attending a party this evening, Aries, be receptive to anyone you meet. It's likely that someone new will arrive who will have a significant impact on your life. It might be that he or she tips you off about a professional opportunity at work.

**Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21**

You might want to make an extra effort to tidy up the house this morning, Taurus. It's likely that you'll have some unexpected guests. Some neighbors could drop by unannounced, or an old friend could call from her car and say she's on her way over. Take it all in stride.

**Gemini: May 22 - June 21**

You'll have to let go of your usual drill-sergeant manner and simply let the day unfold as it will. Try as you might, even you won't be able to direct events today, Gemini. You could find your attention diverted from one project to another. It isn't an unpleasant day but a disjointed one.

**Cancer: June 22 - July 22**

You work hard to reach your goal of financial independence, Cancer. All signs indicate that you're well on your way. Today you could receive some news that makes you realize you aren't there yet. Perhaps a relative calls to say you're no longer his/her sole beneficiary.

**Leo: July 23 - Aug 23**

You're bound to be busy but happy today, Leo. You'll likely spend the morning doing chores and generally putting around the house. Don't be surprised if a friend drops by unexpectedly in the afternoon with some important news to share. Your evening could be occupied doing research at the library or on the computer.

**Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22**

This could be a rather intense day for you, Virgo. Your mind is filled with plots for novels you want to write and ideas for ways to streamline production at work. Don't you have a "pause" switch? You'd benefit from taking some much-needed time off. You'll find that you can quiet your mind simply by sipping some tea and being still for ten minutes.

**Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23**

This is one day for you to be as flexible as possible, Libra. It may be that you begin with a specific list of items that absolutely must be done, but get distracted by some news from a friend or co-worker. What had seemed so important is no longer so, and your day shifts to accommodate this new piece of information.

**Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22**

You can overcome the intensity of today's planetary energies by making a conscious effort stay positive, Scorpio. Distract yourself with necessary household chores and errands. Don't forget to take some time out for fun, too. As you work around the house, stop to indulge yourself every few hours.

**Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 21**

Don't take any information you receive today at face value, Sagittarius. Technical glitches will likely plague you throughout the day. Your bank statement could be incomprehensible. Bills could show up with an extra zero tacked on. Don't panic. Make some phone calls and get all the facts. Whatever you do, don't let this ruin your day.

**Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20**

Don't take anything you read or hear today at face value, Capricorn. It's possible that you'll receive some rather distressing news, but before you react in frustration, read the fine print. The news may not really be so bad. In fact, it may not even be true! Take a deep breath and heave a sigh of relief, then get back to your normal routine.

### CROSSWORD

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45. That thing's

46. River mouths

48. Cat breed

52. Short skirt

55. Be indebted

56. Showing lots of particulars

60. Delay

64. Dodge

65. Domicile

67. Lacks

68. Self-centered

69. Wallet fillers

70. Resource

71. If not

72. Cincinnati baseballers

**DOWN**

1. Exchange

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Kudrow of "Friends"

3. Circle segments

4. Ladybug, e.g.

5. False

6. Pekoe, e.g.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ acid (nutrient)

8. Respect

9. Bother

10. Competent

11. Leg front

12. Agrees silently

13. Sycamore or oak

18. \_\_\_\_\_ beer

22. Designated

25. Saw socially

26. Avoid capture

27. Defame

28. Sub store

30. \_\_\_\_\_ Grande

31. \_\_\_\_\_ Murphy of "Shrek"

32. Vegas machines

33. Succinct

36. TV room

37. Understands

40. Army insect

41. Aromatic herb

47. Among

49. Antiseptic substance

50. Amazed

51. Falling star

53. Gall

54. Best

56. Comedian \_\_\_\_\_ Carvey

57. Nights before holidays

58. Foot digits

59. Staff officer

61. "The Diary of \_\_\_\_\_ Frank"

62. Chilled

63. Scottish loch

66. Brother's sib

**SOLUTION 270**

## RCB need Harshal boost to get campaign back on track against DC

Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):

Their winning streak halted by the defending champions, Royal Challengers Bangalore will hope Harshal Patel returns to the playing XI and contribute in bringing their campaign back on track when they face Delhi Capitals in an IPL match here on Saturday.

RCB were flying high with three successive wins before Chennai Super Kings outwitted them by 23 runs in their last outing.

It was absence of Harshal which hurt the team as skipper Faf du Plessis looked out of options to control the rampaging duo of Shivam Dube and Robin Uthappa, who took the bowlers to the cleaners as CSK posted a huge total on board.

Known for his variations and death bowling skills, Harshal is a vital cog in RCB's wheels and Du Plessis had admitted that the team missed his services after he left the bio-bubble on Sunday following the death of his cousin.

"You see the value of Harshal, and what he offers. He has the ability to stop the game. We missed



that tonight, we had a similar tone to the bowling. We lacked the variety we needed in our attack. Hopefully, we can have him soon again," du Plessis had said after their loss to CSK.

The 31-year-old from Haryana, who had taken 32 wickets in the 2021 edition, has emerged as one of the best T20 bowlers with his variations, which include off-cutters and slower ones, bowled with variable arm speed.

This season too, Harshal has snapped six wickets from four games at an econ-

omy of just 5.50 and remains the go-to-man for du Plessis whenever the going gets tough.

Among others, pace duo of Mohammad Siraj and Akash Deep has been taken for runs, while Wanindu Hasaranga claimed two wickets but he bled 35 in three overs in the last match.

Spin duo of Glenn Maxwell and Shahbaz too was blown away and skipper Du Plessis will expect a better show from his bowlers on Saturday.

In batting, Du Plessis and

young left-hander Anuj Rawat have given the team good starts, while Dinesh Karthik has played the role of the finisher well. Engineer-turned cricketer Shahbaz Ahmed too has impressed with his batting so far.

Former skipper Virat Kohli has blown hot and cold with two 40 plus scores but lacked consistency.

The Capitals, on the other hand, are heading into the match after a massive 44-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders.

With two back-to-back

fifties, opener Prithvi Shaw has been in sensational form, while seasoned Australian opener David Warner has provided the team solidity at the top as he provided the fireworks to set DC's massive win over KKR.

The number three spot, however, remains a concern with none of the batter tried by the team able to grab the chance. Skipper Rishabh Pant too will expect more runs from his batting.

Spinner Kuldeep Yadav has emerged as their top bowler with 10 wickets so far, while pacer Khaleel Ahmed too has taken seven scalps in three games.

South African Anrich Nortje, who looked rusty in his only outing, also remains an option, while Delhi also have plenty of bowling all-rounders such as Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur and Lalit Yadav to count on.

However, Rovman Powell has looked subdued so far and DC would expect more from him. With four out of five matches ending in a win for the team batting second, toss might also be a key factor at the Wankhede stadium.

## MI in rebuilding mode, you will see great players coming out in few years: Surya



Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):

Star batter Suryakumar Yadav urged one and all to show some patience with an out of sorts Mumbai Indians as it is currently undergoing a transition phase and results will only show up in the coming seasons with some great talents turning into finished prod-

ucts. MI have already lost their first five matches and it is now near impossible for them to get back into the reckoning for play-offs as they would need to win at least eight of the remaining nine games.

"As you have seen, it is a fresh auction and we are building this team for the next three-four years,

coming a few years down the line, you will see some great players coming out from this team," Surya said at the virtual pre-match press conference which was an indicator that MI's current season could well be over even before it reaches mid-phase of the league.

In a bold gamble at the IPL mega auction, MI think-tank have spent Rs 8-crore on English star pacer Jofra Archer despite his unavailability for the season, while it let go their left-arm pacer Trent Boult.

Their bowling has lost the sting in absence of the Kiwi pacer and the spin duo of Rahul Chahar and Krunal Pandya.

They workload has come heavily on Jasprit Bumrah as the likes of Daniel Sams, Tymal Mills, Basil Thampi and Jaydev Unadkat have looked pedestrian.

Surya cited emergence of young South African batter Dewald Brevis and young left-handed batter Tilak Varma to prove his point.

"There have been a lot of positives, not only a few; you can see Dewald (Brevis), Tilak (Varma), and many more new faces," he added.

## Zverev, Tsitsipas advance to quarterfinals in Monte Carlo

Monaco, Apr 15 (AP):

Third-ranked Alexander Zverev beat Pablo Carreno Busta 6-2, 7-5 at the Monte Carlo Masters Series quarterfinals of the clay-court season opener in Monaco.

Carreno Busta broke Zverev to open the second set and built a 3-1 lead before the German rallied, setting up a quarterfinal match against Jannik Sinner.

"I have lost focus a little bit in the second set, Zverev said. He then played more aggressively, adding: I am not going to win big titles just by pushing the ball. Defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced by beating Laslo Djere 7-5, 7-6 (1). The fifth-ranked Greek will meet Diego Schwartzman of Argentina in the quarterfinals. "I really had to work hard for this win, Tsitsipas said. Sinner beat eighth-ranked Andrey Rublev 5-7, 6-1, 6-3 to advance, winning



Germany's Alexander Zverev returns the ball to Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta during their Monte-Carlo ATP Masters Series tournament tennis match in Monaco.

six straight games in the second set and dominating the decider before wrapping it up with his seventh break. "I tried to win every play, every point, said the 20-year-old Italian, who reached the quarterfinals in Miami last month before retiring from the match against Francisco Cerundolo.

Indian Wells winner Taylor Fritz reached the

quarterfinals by defeating doubles partner Sebastian Korda 7-6 (4), 7-5.

Fritz will meet Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, who stunned top-ranked Novak Djokovic on Tuesday. The Spaniard beat David Goffin 6-4, 6-1 to advance on Thursday.

Grigor Dimitrov also advanced by upsetting seventh-ranked Casper Ruud 6-3, 7-5.

Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):

An auction botched up by poor planning, Mumbai Indians will continue to grope in the dark in search of an ideal playing eleven with an aim to end their five-match losing streak against Lucknow Super Giants in an IPL match on Saturday.

This is not the first time that MI have had a losing streak of five matches but this is probably the first time that it seems that the team's think-tank do not have an idea of how to stem the rot that has set in.

It is certainly not skipper Rohit Sharma's fault that the five-time champions had bungled big time at the auction table with below-par domestic signings save NT Tilak Varma, which is coming to bite them.

Against Lucknow in the afternoon Mumbai heat, Rohit and his chosen ten would have to put their best foot forward in order to tame the likes of Quinton de Kock, KL Rahul, Krunal Pandya,



Ayush Badoni to name a few. Krunal and De Kock, in particular, would like to pose some serious challenges for the MI brigade and may be compel them to think whether not putting enough efforts to get them back in their roster was a prudent enough thing to do.

There had been some inexplicable team selections and dropping a million

dollar plus buy like Tim David after two games is one of them.

Such has been MI's plight that they haven't been able to field their full quota of foreign players in order to have enough bowlers in their ranks.

However, David might be given a go in place of a Jaydev Unadkat, who has once again come short in the highest level of cricket

and is an example of the yawning gap between standards in domestic cricket and IPL.

One among Unadkat and Basil Thampi need to make way for David as they don't have too many options at the table.

In case of Murugan Ashwin, the only plausible replacement at this time looks to be leg-spinner Mayank Markande, who

not so many moons back had some decent performances for the five-time champion outfit.

Not having a quality spinner like Rahul Chahar or Krunal, who can at times stem the flow of runs is also hurting MI.

Head coach Mahela Jayawardene had already said and rightly so that Rohit's performance isn't a worrying factor.

One of the reasons being his touch which is not out of place but perhaps he needs to curtail down on a few shots and bat deep along with Suryakumar Yadav to put up a challenging score which the weak bowling line-up can defend.

For Lucknow, mentor and brains behind the strategy Gautam Gambhir needs to think whether both Marcus Stoinis and Jason Holder could be a part of same eleven or they would be better off dropping one of them and playing the hard-hitting Evin Lewis in the top-order alongside Rahul and De kock.

## Root quits as England Test cricket captain after 5 years

London, Apr 15 (AP):

Joe Root stepped down as England's Test cricket captain on Friday, ending his five-year spell in a role that became increasingly challenging because of the team's long run of series defeats - including 4-0 in the Ashes over the winter.

"I have loved leading my country," Root said, "but recently it's hit home how much of a toll it has taken on me and the impact it has had on me away from the game."

Root leaves his post holding the record for the number of wins as England Test captain - at 27 - while his status as one of the world's leading batters is secure after scoring eight centuries since the turn of 2021. However, his captaincy has come under scrutiny with England having only won just one of its last 17 Test matches - the country's worst run since the 1980s. Losing heavily in Australia, England's biggest rival, was followed last month with a 1-0 series defeat to the West Indies. That made it four series defeats in a row - and it could



be five unless England can beat India in July in the remaining test left over from their unfinished series from last year.

"It has been the most challenging decision I have had to make in my career," said the 31-year-old Root, who took over as captain from Alastair Cook in 2017, "but having discussed this with my family and those closest to me; I know the timing is right."

## Harmanpreet's brace hand India comfortable 3-0 win over Germany in Pro League

Bhubaneswar, Apr 15 (PTI):

Vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh continued his goal-scoring spree with a brace as the Indian men's hockey team defeated an inexperienced Germany 3-0 in the first match of the two-leg tie to extend its lead in the FIH Pro League standings here on Thursday.

Harmanpreet converted two penalty corners for India in the 18th and 27th minutes, while Abhishek scored from another set piece in the 45th minute.

With a half a dozen of Germany's 22-member squad making their senior debut here, the vast gap between the two sides was evidently visible.

By virtue of this win, India have consolidated their position at the top of the table with 24 points from 11 games, while the Germans are placed second with 17 points from nine matches.

Both the teams will lock horns again in the second match of the tie at the Kalinga Stadium on



Players of India (in Blue) and Germany in action during their Men's Hockey Pro League match at Kalinga Stadium, in Bhubaneswar.

Friday. The Indians started on a bright note and secured a penalty corner early into the first quarter but Jugraj Singh's effort from a penalty corner was kept out by the German defence and from the resultant rebound Nilkanata Sharma shot wide.

India enjoyed a lot of

possession in the first quarter but the forward-line hasn't been clinical enough to bury the chances. India continued in the same vein in the second quarter and took the lead in the 18th minute through none other than Harmanpreet from a penalty corner with a su-

perly executed dragflick. India earned another penalty corner soon but this time German goalkeeper Alexander Stadler denied Harmanpreet.

But Harmanpreet doubled India's lead three minutes from half time, wrong-footing Stadler from another set piece.

## Hardik has kept amazing team environment, taken brave decisions as skipper: Rashid



Navi Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):

Hardik Pandya has been leading from the front with inspirational performances and is also going out of his way to create a happy team environment leading to a good start by Gujarat Titans in its maiden IPL campaign, feels Rashid Khan.

Gujarat are now on top of the table with four wins from five games and Hardik is currently second in list of

run-getters and is also bowling well in every game.

"The way he (Hardik) has led the team, the way he has kept the team environment, inside and outside the field has been amazing so far," Rashid said at the virtual post-match press conference. Rashid, the ace spinner from Afghanistan, said Hardik was someone who always takes brave decisions.

"He (Hardik) is someone who always takes that brave decision, always has confidence and he is someone who is very clear in mind on what he is going to do.

"This is an important thing as a captain when your mind is clear, and you take right decisions, the result will take (care) by itself," added Rashid.

Ability to take right decisions at right time makes him a good leader, feels Rashid. "You take right decisions with confidence, that is something which makes him the best and he has been delivering the best so far and leading from the front (be it) batting, bowling and fielding," said Rashid.

## VASANTHOTSAV



Devotees take part in Sri Malayappa Swamis golden chariot procession on the occasion of Vasanthotsav, in Tirupati, Friday.

# CBI plans to conduct DNA tests in Hanskhali rape case

Kolkata, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is planning to conduct DNA tests in the Hanskhali rape case to check whether the samples collected from the crime spot match with those found on the arrested accused, an officer of the agency said on Friday. A class 9 student was allegedly raped on April 4 in Hanskhali in West Bengal's Nadia district during a birthday party at the house of the prime accused, a local TMC leader's son.

She had died after the incident. Her father filed a police complaint on April 10, and alleged that the accused had snatched the body at gunpoint and cremated her. CBI sleuths visited the house again on



Forensic experts of CBI collect evidences for investigation at the residence of a prime accused in the Hanskhali rape and murder case, in Nadia, Friday.

Friday morning to gather more evidence, after collecting samples from the spot on Thursday night. They plan to collect samples from the arrested accused. "We will collect DNA samples from the arrested accused

and match those with the samples found from the spot. This will be a crucial step in our investigation. We will continue our search operations at different locations in Hanskhali," the officer told PTI over the

phone. CBI sleuths had on Thursday broken open the lock of the prime accused's house and searched the crime spot. They were accompanied by personnel of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory and the entire search operation and evidence collection was videographed.

The search continued till late on Thursday night and was delayed due to a power cut in the area. The central investigating agency has been directed by Calcutta High Court to probe the incident. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had expressed doubt about the cause of the girl's death, which her family attributed to rape, and wondered whether the class 9 student died after falling down upon being slapped by someone.

# Rajnath Singh gives a strong message to China

'If harmed, India will not spare anyone'

Washington, Apr 15 (PTI):

In a strong message to China, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has said that if harmed, India will not spare anyone, as he asserted that India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emerged as a powerful country and is headed to be among the top three economies of the world.

Singh, in his address to the Indian-American community in San Francisco, also sent a subtle message to the US that New Delhi does not believe in a diplomacy of zero-sum game and its relationship with one country cannot be at the expense of the other.

The defence minister was

here to attend the India US 2+2 ministerial in Washington DC. Thereafter, he travelled to Hawaii for meetings at IndoPACOM headquarters and then to San Francisco.

At a reception hosted in his honour by the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, the Defence Minister told the select gathering about the valour shown by Indian soldiers on the border with China.

I cannot say openly what they (Indian soldiers) did and what decisions we (the government) took. But I can definitely say that a message has gone (to China) that India will not spare anyone, if India is harmed. (Bharat ko agar koi chhere-

ga to Bharat chhorega nahi, he said.

The Ladakh border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas. The face-off escalated after the Galwan Valley clashes on June 15, 2020. As many as 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese troops were killed in the clashes.

India and China have held 15 rounds of military talks so far to resolve the eastern Ladakh standoff. As a result of the talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year in the north and south banks of the Pangong lake

and in the Gogra area. Without making any direct reference to the American pressure with respect to Russia because of the Ukraine war, Singh said India does not believe in a zero-sum game diplomacy.

If India has a good relationship with one country, it does not mean that its relationship with any other country will deteriorate, he said. India has never adopted this kind of diplomacy. India will never opt for this (kind of diplomacy). We don't believe in the zero-sum game in international relationships, he said. India, he said, believes in having a bilateral relationship which is based on win-win for both the countries.

## PIL filed before Delhi HC against fraudulent use of 'Judge' parking sticker

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

A public interest litigation has been filed before the Delhi High Court seeking action against persons fraudulently using 'Judge' parking stickers on their vehicles. Petitioner Sanser Pal Singh, a lawyer, has submitted that the fraudulent use of 'Judge' parking stickers is a serious matter and poses a security threat as such vehicles having such stickers are not subjected to the security check at the court premises. In the petition, the petitioner has stated that there are several instances where he noticed the presence of cars with a 'Judge' parking sticker but it was subsequently found that no such sticker was issued by the authorities against the registration numbers of those vehicles.

## MP Ram Navami violence

# Digvijaya points to Vijayvargiya's Twitter video, asks if action will be taken

Bhopal, Apr 15 (PTI):

Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh on Friday said a video uploaded on Twitter by BJP national secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya was from Telangana and not Madhya Pradesh's Khargone, where riots took place on Ram Navami, and sought to know if the latter would be booked.

Vijayvargiya had uploaded the video on April 14 stating it was from Khargone and had asked Singh, whom he

sarcastically called "ambassador of peace", what was police supposed to do besides taking action.

The senior BJP leader had also said in his tweet that these were snakes whose heads needed to be crushed.

Hitting back, senior Congressman Singh said the video may have been sent by someone to "trap" Vijayvargiya into uploading something erroneous.

Singh said the video was of Telangana and not Khargone and asked Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and

state Home Minister Narottam Mishra if action would be taken against Vijayvargiya for the "wrong video".

"I will not do it (complain) as I know these days your not going through 'achhe din', Singh said mocking the BJP leader.

Incidentally, nine FIRs have been registered against Singh for allegedly promoting religious enmity after he tweeted a picture of a mosque in another state while recently commenting on communal violence at Khargone in Madhya Pradesh.

# Contractor's death: File case against Eshwarappa under Prevention of Corruption Act, demands Congress

Bengaluru, Apr 15 (PTI):

Accusing the Karnataka government and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai of trying to protect Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister K S Eshwarappa, the opposition Congress on Friday demanded his arrest and that he should be booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The opposition party also urged that an impartial investigation be conducted by the police under the supervision of a sitting judge of the Karnataka High Court.

Eshwarappa, against whom police have booked a case for allegedly abetting the suicide of contractor Santosh K Patil, will be submitting his resignation to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai later on Friday evening, as a po-



KPCCC President D K Shivakumar and Opposition leader in Assembly Siddaramah with other state legislators address a press conference during a dharna demanding the removal and arrest of Minister KS Eshwarappa, at Vidhanasoudha in Bengaluru, Friday.

litical furore erupted over the issue.

The Congress that has found a fresh ammunition against the ruling party ahead of the assembly election next year, has formed nine teams, and each team will be travel-

ling to at least two to three districts, to inform people regarding "40 per cent commission and rampant corruption" under the current BJP government.

The party that staged an overnight protest at Vidhana Soudha said it

later plans to take its protests to assembly constituency level, to bring to the notice of the people that "Karnataka has been turned into the capital of corruption" by the BJP.

The Congress also plans to hold a protest rally at Hospet in Vijayanagara district, where the ruling BJP state executive committee meeting is slated to be held to be held under the leadership of its national President J P Nadda.

"There is a categorical allegation in the complaint, Santosh Patil has also said it before the media. Despite this, an FIR has not been registered under Prevention of Corruption Act purposefully...cases have been registered only for abatement," Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah said. Speaking to reporters

here, former chief minister Siddaramaiah said there is deliberately a clear omission on the part of the state government and the police.

"We demand that the case be registered under the Prevention of Corruption Act...he (Eshwarappa) has to be immediately arrested as the allegation is of a heinous crime..." he said.

Compensation worth Rs 1 crore should be given to the family of the deceased Santosh Patil and government job to his family, and pending bill of Rs 4 crore should be cleared.

Alleging that attempts are on to somehow shut the case aimed at protecting Eshwarappa, Siddaramaiah said with Chief Minister Bommai himself giving a certificate of innocence to him, there cannot be an impartial investigation.

Colombo, Apr 15 (PTI):

Sri Lanka's state-owned petroleum corporation announced fuel rationing for vehicles with effect from Friday, as an unprecedented economic crisis roils the country. According to the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) statement, now motorcycles and other two-wheelers can purchase fuel upto worth Rs 1,000 per visit to a fuel station.

Similarly, three-wheelers can purchase fuel worth Rs 1,500, cars, jeeps and vans upto Rs 5,000. Buses, lorries and commercial vehicles have been exempted from the rationing. Long queues at fuel stations have resulted in massive public anger.

Further, households are experiencing nearly 12-hour-long powercuts and there is a massive shortage of essentials, due to falling

value of the Sri Lankan rupee. The island nation is in the midst of one of the worst economic crises it has ever seen. It has just defaulted on its foreign debts for the first time since its independence.

The Galle Face protests in Colombo entered their seventh day on Friday with more and more youth joining it every passing day. They urge the resignation of President Gotabaya for his incompetence in handling the island's worst-ever economic crisis.

The protest campaign has been running on social media, urging youths to gather at Galle Face. Besides, there have been continuing protests across the island, blaming the government for its mishandling of the forex. The protesters have rejected talks with the government till the

President and Prime Minister leave office.

CPC chairperson Sumith Wijesinghe last week told reporters the corporation was losing between Rs 800 million to Rs 1 billion every day on fuel subsidies due to high global market prices and the depreciation of the Sri Lankan Rupee. Wijesinghe said the CPC was losing 110 rupees per litre on diesel and Rs 52 per litre on petrol.

# Making efforts to fill up vacancies, improve judicial infrastructure: CJI

Hyderabad, Apr 15 (PTI):

Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana on Friday said he is making efforts to fill up vacancies in the judiciary and to improve judicial infrastructure in the country, besides addressing issues relating to security of judges and others.

Our judiciary is overburdened, he said, while speaking after inaugurating the two-day Telangana State Judicial Officers Conference here.

The CJI said he has taken up filling up vacancies and improving the infrastructure of the judiciary soon after taking over.

"The reason is access to justice is possible only when we provide sufficient number of courts as well as infrastructure," he said. Justice Ramana said he wanted to see that there are no pending vacancies either in the high courts, Supreme Court or the district judiciary.

He also sought to see that the judicial system is strengthened. Chief Justice Ramana added judicial infrastructure was found to be inadequate in different parts of the country. In the case of Telangana, he had cleared the pending file for increasing the number of judges from 24 to 42 with-

out delay, he said.

He requested the judicial officers to create a congenial environment for the litigants and to always remember the human aspects of the dispute. "Law cannot be far from equity. It is important to project the human face of the judiciary whenever you have scope for invoking your discretion," he said.

The judicial officers must sensitize themselves to different vulnerabilities of the parties, including minors, women and persons with disabilities who may have different requirements, and treat everyone with respect, he said.

# Vice-President offers prayers at Ram Janmabhoomi site

Ayodhya, Apr 15 (PTI):

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu along with his wife Usha Naidu reached the temple town of Ayodhya on Friday and offered prayers to Lord Ram at the Ram Janmabhoomi site amidst the chanting of hymns by priests.

The vice-president and his wife reached Ayodhya from Lucknow on a special train. They were received at Ayodhya railway station by Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, Faizabad MP Lallu Singh and other pub-



Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and his wife Usha visit the Hanuman Garhi temple in Ayodhya, Friday.

lic representatives. In a tweet, the Vice President's Secretariat said, "The Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu and his spouse Smt Usha Naidu at

the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple site in Ayodhya today. They were accompanied by the Governor of Uttar Pradesh Smt Anandiben Patel and Uttar

Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Shri Keshav Prasad Maurya." Naidu and his wife went straight to the Ram Janmabhoomi site from the railway station and were welcomed by priests amid the chanting of Vedic hymns. The vice-president was also given a detailed presentation on the construction of the Ram temple. After offering prayers to Lord Ram, Naidu also worshipped the flag installed in the sanctum sanctorum of the proposed Ram temple. In a note in the visitor's book of the Ram temple, Naidu said he felt "blessed" after the visit to the shrine.

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### BRIEF



A businessmen with his new ledger books prays on the occasion of Bengali New Year, in Agartala, Friday.

### Kodanadu case

■ **Coimbatore:** A special investigation team probing into the 2017 Kodanadu heist and murder case questioned former MLA V C Arukutty (AIADMK), who represented Koudanpalayam constituency, for nearly two hours on Friday, police said. Arukutty was interrogated in connection with the death of the key accused in the case, Kanagaraj, a driver who worked with late former chief minister Jayalalithaa. She used the estate in Kodanad as a retreat.

### Woman burnt

■ **Noida:** A partially burnt body of a 55-year-old woman was found in her house in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida on Friday, with the police suspecting the role of her daughter and son-in-law in the case, officials here said. The woman's son has alleged that his sister and brother-in-law had been harassing their mother ever since she got Rs 15 lakh from an insurance policy after the death of their father, said a senior police officer.

### Ambulance capsizes

■ **Erode (TN):** A newborn had a providential escape while one person died and three others were injured in the district on Friday when the ambulance carrying the infant capsized after its driver lost control over the vehicle, police said. The baby survived the mishap while his father was injured, they said. According to the police, Divya (23), wife of Vivekanandhan of Anthiyur in the district, was delivered of a child in a private hospital three days ago.

### Ayushman Bharat

■ **New Delhi:** Tele-consultation facility 'e-Sanjeevani' will start at 1 lakh Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs) from April 16, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Friday. Mandaviya had chaired a virtual meeting on Tuesday with health ministers and senior officials of all the states and union territories to review the operationalisation status of AB-HWCs and tele-consultation services.

### Employee held

■ **Chhindwara:** The Lokayukta police on Friday caught the driver of the chief executive officer (CEO) of a Janpad Panchayat while accepting a bribe of Rs 4 lakh on behalf of his employer in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara district. The Lokayukta police had received a tip-off that Surendra Kumar, the CEO of Junnardeo, had demanded Rs 4.25 lakh bribe for sanctioning development works in Kukar Pani village under Junnardeo tehsil from the panchayat secretary's son, an official said.

**Weather**  
High 41 Low 29

## Ram Navami violence: Bulldozers brought into remove illegal encroachments

Ahmedabad, Apr 15 (PTI):

Days after communal violence rocked Khambhat town of Gujarat's Anand district, the administration on Friday brought in bulldozers to remove illegal encroachments along a road in Shakarpura area of the town where a Ram Navami procession came under attack on April 10. Apart from 'illegal' encroachments, including wooden cabins and some concrete structures, the administration was also clearing the bushes from the land in Shakarpura, as miscreants had used them to hide after throwing stones at the procession, District Collector M Y Daxini said. "Miscreants had used the bushes and thick vegetation to attack the procession. Hence, we have launched a drive from today

### Top cop says special team formed to trace missing Woman

**Khargone:** A woman has gone missing amid the Ram Navami violence that took place in Khargone in Madhya Pradesh on April 10, with a top police official stating on Friday that a special team had been formed to trace her. Incidentally, she had gone in search of children from her household, who were in the vicinity of the procession, soon after word trickled in of the event being marred by stone-pelting, group clashes and arson, kin said. "Even after six days, there is no trace of my younger brother Dharmendra's wife. The curfew in force is further distressing us. On Ram Navami, my two sons and Dharmendra's son had gone to Jawahar Marg in Sarafa area. Soon, reports of violence started coming in, and she went out to get the children back safely," Pavan Kumar Saronia said.

to clear bushes and illegal structures built on government land alongside a road in Shakarpura. This drive will continue in the coming days till the entire area is cleared," Daxini said. On March 10, clashes erupted between two communities in Khambhat after stones were pelted on

community in the town. The police have arrested 11 persons allegedly involved in the entire conspiracy. The perpetrators had planned to attack the procession and spread violence to teach the members of Hindu community a lesson to not take out any such procession in the future, the police said. As planned, some of the accused, including Maulvi Ayyub Malek and Vasim Malek, intentionally started arguments with organisers of the procession over the issue of music and asked them to turn it off when the procession reached Shakarpura. When the police were busy trying to resolve the issue, other perpetrators, as directed by the main accused, suddenly started stone-pelting from behind, the SP had said.

### BAISAKHI MELA



Nihangs display their skills on the concluding day of Baisakhi mela in Talwandi Sabo town of Bathinda, Friday.

## Mob sets houses on fire

■ **Residents accuses Muslim man of kidnapping Hindu woman**

Agra (UP), Apr 15 (PTI):

Right-wing activists on Friday set ablaze two houses belonging to the family of a Muslim man accused of kidnapping a Hindu woman, who said in a video clip that she went willingly with him. Police arrested eight people involved in the mob attack, which they said was carried out by members of a group known as Dharam Jagran Samanvay Sangh. A police post in-charge was suspended for negligence and a probe ordered against the local SHO. Police said the mob torched the house in the city's Runakta locality, where Sajid, a gym owner, stayed. An adjoining house belonging to the family was also set on fire. The mob was demanding his arrest for 'kidnapping'

the woman, who police said is 22 years old but still in school. Shops in the local Runakta market also downed shutters, with traders making the same demand. There were no reports of any injuries in the attack on the gym owner's home. The woman, who is a class 11 student, went missing on Monday. She was traced two days later by police, but Sajid's whereabouts were not known. Her family members had lodged a missing person's report, prompting a police search. Apparently on the basis of their complaint, a case was also registered under section 366 of the Indian Penal Code. The section relates to kidnapping of a woman with the intention of compelling or seducing her into sex or marriage. But in a video that surfaced on social media, the woman said she is an adult and had gone willingly with the man, according to police.

### BCI to SC

## 'Earmarked 500 law colleges which are sub-standard'

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Bar Council of India (BCI) has told the Supreme Court that it has earmarked about 500 law colleges throughout the country which are sub-standard/below standard and a team led by some former judges/senior advocates and others plans to conduct surprise visits of such establishments and in case of any deficiencies, steps would be taken for their closure. In an affidavit filed in a matter related to reforms in legal education and placements of young lawyers, the BCI said that it is constituting a high powered committee that would look into the issue of compulsory chamber placement of five juniors

by senior advocates or advocates having 25 years of standing at the Bar. The council said it is proposed that the legal education committee of the BCI and the advisory board would consider introducing a State Level Entrance Test for admissions to law colleges in its next meeting. It said, the appellant (BCI) has earmarked about 500 institutions throughout the country who are sub-standard/below standard and a team led by some former judges/senior advocates, noted academicians and plans to conduct surprise visits of such institutions and if any institution is found to be below standard, having neither the suffi-

## PFI activist hacked to death in front of father

Palakkad, Apr 15 (PTI):

A political killing rocked Kerala on the day of Vishu as a local leader of the Popular Front of India (PFI), an Islamist outfit, was allegedly hacked to death in front of his father in Palakkad district on Friday. Subair, 43, was allegedly hacked to death at Elappully in the district on Friday afternoon, police said. He was rushed to the hospital by the locals immediately after the incident but could not be saved. PFI's president of the Para area committee, Subair, was allegedly hit by a car while on a bike with his father and attacked using sharp-edged weapons. Subair's father, who allegedly suffered injuries after falling from the bike, has been admitted to a hospital, police said. The incident occurred when they were returning home after offering prayers in a nearby

mosque. After reviewing the situation with top police officials of the district, Palakkad SP R Viswanadh said Subair's father has given a statement regarding the RSS enmity with his son. He said alerts have been sounded in the district to prevent any retaliatory attacks following the killing of the PFI activist. Security has been tightened to prevent the occurrence of untoward incidents. A Prabhakaran, ruling CPI(M) MLA representing Malampuzha constituency, condemned the killing of Subair, describing it as an "inhuman act" committed on the day of Vishu. Police have taken into custody an abandoned car, allegedly used by the assailants to knock down Subair's bike. The assailants allegedly fled the scene in another car immediately after the incident.

### GOOD FRIDAY



Christian devotees take part in a religious procession on the occasion of Good Friday, in Amritsar, Friday.

### Car runs over family of three sleeping on footpath

Kota, Apr 15 (PTI):

A speeding car ran over three members of a family sleeping on a footpath outside the MBS Hospital here in the early hours of Friday, killing one of them, police said. Dinesh Bawariya (45), a vegetable vendor, died on the spot, while his wife and their seven-year-old son are undergoing treatment for critical injuries, the area's DSP, Kaluram Verma, said. He said the driver abandoned the car on the spot and fled. The man is yet to be traced, Verma added. The family used to live in a makeshift accommodation on the footpath outside the hospital, the police said. The hit-and-run took place around 1 am on Friday, Verma added.

### One board exam pattern or split terms

## CBSE yet to decide for class 10, 12 exams for 2022-23 session

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Central Board of Secondary Education is yet to decide whether the 2022-23 academic session will remain split into two terms for class 10 and 12 or it will revert to the single board exam pattern, officials said on Friday. Bifurcating the academic session, holding two term-end exams and rationalising the syllabus were part of the special assessment scheme for Class 10 and 12 board examinations in 2021-22 announced by the CBSE as a "one time measure" in

view of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, whether or not the same system will continue for the new academic session or not, is yet to be decided. "The decision to conduct the board exams in two terms was taken in view of the unprecedented situation posed by the pandemic where for the 2020-21 academic session, the students had to be assessed using an alternate assessment scheme as no board exams could be conducted. The move was announced as a one time measure," a senior board official said. "The de-

cision about whether it will be extended to the new academic session or not will be taken in due course of time," he added. Under the split term system, the first term board examination was held in December last year and the second term board examination is scheduled to start from April 26. The rising cases of COVID-19 have sparked concerns of possible school closures yet again even as experts have warned against the long term learning losses caused by prolonged closure.

## Divorce complete with AI: Alliance Air shifts to own PSS

■ **To sell tickets with '9I' code**

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

Centre-run Alliance Air said it will sell tickets with "9I" code and has shifted to its own cloud-based passenger service system (PSS) from Friday onwards. Even though parent airline Air India's control was shifted to the Tata Group on January 27, Alliance Air till date was using the full-service carrier's PSS and its "AI" code to sell tickets. A PSS is used for vari-

ous functions such as ticket reservation and flight scheduling. Regional carrier Alliance Air was not part of the deal when the central government sold off Air India to the Tata Group on October 8 last year. "Mr Vineet Sood, CEO informed that going forward with absolute efficiency, Alliance Air will now sell its tickets under Alliance Air banner under flight code 9I-XXX," the airline's statement said on Friday. Alliance Air has migrated to cloud based passenger service system from Friday, it mentioned.

## Pak high court moved to stop govt from issuing diplomatic passport to ex-PM Nawaz Sharif

Islamabad, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) was moved on Friday to stop the new government from issuing diplomatic passport to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and direct the authorities to immediately arrest him upon his return to Pakistan from London. After the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president and Nawaz's younger brother Shehbaz Sharif was elected the prime minister, there were reports that the Ministry of Interior has been directed to renew the

passports of Nawaz Sharif and his brother-in-law Ishaq Dar. Nawaz's passport expired in February this year and the previous Imran Khan-led government refused to renew his passport. Several corruption cases had been launched by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government against 72-year-old Nawaz since his ouster from office by the Supreme Court in July 2017 in the Panama Papers case. The three-time former premier who is convicted in a corruption case has been living in London on the pretext of ill health since

November 2019, when the Lahore High Court had allowed him to leave the country for four weeks for medical treatment after Shehbaz, the new prime minister, gave an undertaking that he would return within the stipulated time. Later, Nawaz sought extensions to prolong his stay in London on medical grounds. A lawyer, Naeem Haider Panjutha, filed a petition in the IHC, referring to media reports that Nawaz could be issued a diplomatic passport on the instructions of the newly elected prime minister.

## Delhi govt says free precaution doses at its hospitals soon

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Delhi government Friday said precaution doses of coronavirus vaccines will soon be provided free of cost to people at its hospitals. The move comes as the national capital witnesses an uptick in coronavirus cases and a rise in positivity rate. India rolled out precaution dose of COVID-19 vaccines for all people aged above 18 years at private centres on Sunday. Those who have completed nine months after the second shot are eligible for it. Both Covishield

and Covaxin doses now cost Rs 225, and private vaccination centres can charge up to a maximum of Rs 150 per shot as service fee over and above this cost. In a statement on Friday, the Delhi government said precaution doses will soon be provided free of cost to people in government hospitals by the city government. "Precaution doses of the same vaccine will be given to the people who have revived the first and second doses of the vaccine and who have completed nine months of taking their second dose," the statement said.

## Police exposes new tactic of online cricket bettors

### Bookies misuse KYC and bank accounts of ignorant people

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** In a first of its kind criminal offence, Durg Police busted a conspiracy of misusing the bank accounts of ignorant people for online cricket betting. Police are investigating whether the account holders were completely ignorant or had given their accounts on rent to the cricket bettors. During preliminary investigation, it was discovered that a single person got dozens of bank accounts opened in the names of other people. Involvement of the employees of the Supela Branch of Yes Bank is being investigated.

Under the leadership of Senior Superintendent of Police (Durg) BN Meena and supervision of Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Sanjay Dhruv and CSPs and DSPs, Durg Police is conducting a special campaign against online cricket betting. In



this sequel, Supela Police received a first of its kind complaint on April 13. The complainant Harikant Dwivedi complained that when he came to know that a huge amount had been deposited without his knowledge in his account at Yes Bank Supela branch, he rushed to the bank and informed the officials that he wants to get his account closed. Instead of considering his request, the bank of

officials misbehaved and thrashed him. Dwivedi further informed that he had opened this account on the insistence of one of his acquaintances, Sahil Mahilang. Dwivedi had given his KYC and other documents to him. On the report of the applicant Harikant Dwivedi, Police Station Supela lodged an FIR against Sahil Mahilang and the officials of Yes Bank Supela branch under



sections 323,294,506, 417, 34 of IPC

During investigation, it was found that on April 13 itself, without the knowledge of the applicant, almost all the money had been withdrawn hurriedly through a cheque of Rs 3.85 lakh. The complainant had not signed any such cheque. Police further discovered that one Manish Mishra had submitted the cheque for withdrawing

money. He was immediately taken into custody and during interrogation, he confessed to have withdrawn the money. Police recovered the entire cash from his possession. During sustained interrogation, Manish Mishra revealed that with the help of Sahil Mahilang, they had opened about 15 to 20 accounts for one Honey Gupta in the same bank.

Honey Gupta provided a new sim card for opening every new account. They used this sim card for receiving OTP and conducting other formalities to open the bank account. The accused misused the KYC details of ignorant people for opening the accounts and then used these accounts for online transactions of cricket betting. Honey and Manish used to pay Rs 10000 to Sahil for each account.

Police are investigating why the bank officials beat the account holder when

he requested to close his account; why an attempt was made to close his account after withdrawing the entire money; who signed the cheque when Manish Mishra asserted that he had given blank cheques, etc.

Police are further investigating the number of such bank accounts in the Supela branch of Yes Bank. Police have launched intensive search operations to trap Sahil and Honey Gupta, who are absconding from their homes. The investigation is likely to reveal other facts and people involved in this conspiracy.

Police have seized Rs 3.85 lakh cash, cheque books of dozens of bank accounts, several ATMs, passbooks etc from the accused Manish Mishra. He has been arrested and sent to jail on judicial remand under the provisions mentioned in sections 420,417 of IPC.

## PCC General Secretary & Risali Mayor perform Bhoomi Pujan



Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** About a length of 160 meter drain will be constructed near Maroda Camp Ward 14 Langur Maidan with an expense to the tune of Rs 4 lakh. On Friday, Mayor Shashi Ashok Sinha, PCC General Secretary Jitendra Sahu and Speaker Keshav Banchoore performed Bhoomi Pujan for the same.

Here it needs a mention that in the densely populated area of Ward 14, dirty water coming out of the houses flow in the drain which is not cemented. Therefore, the dirty water gets stagnated and it results in foul smell and favourable spot for mosqui-

toes to multiply. With the effort of Ward Councilor Sarita Devangan, the work of constructing the drain was approved. A large number of local people including MIC members Vilas Rao Borkar, Ishwari Sahu, shadow councilor Somnath Yadav were present in the Bhoomi Pujan program.

Due to being a half unpaved and half cemented drain, the dirty water of the drain was accumulating in the middle. Deputy Engineer Digeshwari said that in this work, the problem will be solved by breaking the old drain and giving new level to the drain. Also, there will be no complaint of water filling the road.

## Sangharsh Ek Jeevan Samiti organises felicitation ceremony

### Honours those working for the welfare of LGBT community

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** A program of honour those who are raising voice against the plight of LGBT or are working for their welfare was organized in a local hotel by Sangharsh Ek Jeevan Samiti. The programme was organised under the leadership of the president of this Samiti representing third gender Kanchan Sendri. Rajya Sabha MP Saroj Pandey was present as the chief guest in the ceremony.

Sharing the plight of the third gender community, President Kanchan



Sendri, demanded a community building for the community. The Chief

guest immediately announced for a well-organized community building

in Durg district. She also assured to stay in touch and work towards solving the problems being faced by the community.

The opportunity was taken to felicitate Devas Bharti of police department, Dr Sujata Jai Ram, Nimisha, Bhavna Jyotwani for doing excellent work for LGBT community. Also Hasina Kavya Samaira Sharda Zoya Ali of the community were felicitated. Kanchan Sendri, President and other members present shared their problems and demanded benefits of housing, employment and education.

## BSc online exams of Hemchand Yadav University from April 16

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** Online examination of regular and private candidates of Hemchand Yadav University, Durg for undergraduate level B Sc, B Sc. Home Science and B Sc B Ed will start from April 16. Giving this information, Dr Rajamani Patel, Vice-Chancellor of Examinations of the University, said that 9115 candidates will be regular and 5599 private will appear in the B Sc first year examination starting from April 16. Similarly, in B Sc second year, 7924 regular candidates will sit and 4327 candidates will sit pri-

vately. In B Sc third year, 8899 regular and 3213 private candidates will appear. Thus, a total of 39077 candidates will appear in the B Sc examinations starting from April 16. The examinations of these students will be held till May 09.

The Registrar of the University, Bhupendra Kuldeep informed that all the regular and private students appearing in the B Sc examination have been provided answer books from the examination centers set by the university. The question paper of Hindi language will be uploaded on the official website of the uni-

versity at 7:00 hrs by the examination department of the university for B Sc first, second and third year candidates. Students can solve these question papers and submit the answer sheets to their respective examination centers between 12:00 hrs to 15:00 hrs on the same day. It will be mandatory for the candidate to bring his/her examination admit card while submitting the answer sheet. The Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr Aruna Palta, Registrar, Bhupendra Kuldeep have extended best wishes to all the regular and private candidates appearing in

the examination which will start from April 16.

Dean Student Welfare of the University, Dr Prashant Srivastava informed that more than one lakh answer sheets of private postgraduate examinations that ended on April 09 have been received at the University Assessment Center for evaluation. Most of these answer books have been sent to the expert professors for evaluation. This time the remuneration of the assessors will be paid through RTGS. This year about 33 thousand candidates have appeared in the examination as postgraduate private candidates.

## Absconding accused of attempt to murder arrested from Mungeli

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** Police have arrested an absconding accused of attempt to murder from Mungeli. Over a petty dispute of electricity connection, the accused had attacked a man with a sharp knife. Locals had rushed him to hospital for treatment. The accused had escaped to Mungeli and was hiding there. City Kotwali Durg Police chased and arrested the accused.

CSP (Durg) Jitendra Yadav informed that on April 13, Durg City Kotwali received a complaint regarding knife attack on Rohit Sahu (35) son of Kamal Sahu at Rajiv Nagar, Shiv Nagar, Durg. He was attacked by one Bablu Sonkar. Police lodged a complaint under



section 307 of IPC and investigation was launched.

Inspector Bhushan Ekka reached the crime scene with his team and recorded statements of the eye witnesses. Under the guidance of SSP BN Meena, ASP Sanjay Dhruv, CSP Jitendra Yadav and DSP (Crime) Nasarullah Siddhiqui, 05 teams were sent to different areas for tracing the accused.

Police gathered information about the relatives of the accused and police teams were sent to their places in search of the accused. One of his relatives at Raipur informed that Bablu Sonkar was in Mungeli. A special team was immediately sent to Mungeli and the accused was arrested from his in-laws place.

The accused Hemraj

alias Bablu Sonkar (24) son of Raju Sonkar a resident of Rajeev Nagar Durg confessed to have committed the crime. Police have recovered the sharp knife from his possession.

Inspector Bhushan Ekka, Inspector Gaurav Tiwari (I/c Cyber cell), Sub-Inspector Mukesh Sori, Head Constable Yogesh Chandrakar, Harish Chandra Chaudhary, Manendra Verma, Chandrashekhar Banjir, Constables Javed Khan, Khurram Baksh, Pradeep Singh, Chitrasen Sahu, Shaukat Hayat Khan, Dharendra Yadav, Keshav Sahu, Tileshwar Rathor, Vikrant Yadu, G Ravi, Gaur Singh, Satish Sahu, Hitendra Kosare and Mithlesh Sahu played a vital role in arresting the accused.

## Working Women Hostel to be inaugurated soon

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** Safe and convenient working women's hostel for working women has been constructed by Durg Municipal Corporation in the Civil Lines area located at the heart of Durg city. The women working in non-government, education and public sector undertakings will be able to apply for housing at this hostel. Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhure inspected this hostel building the other day. He said that efforts are being made to create a safe environment for women through this hostel. Today, women are working in every field. This fully facilitated hostel will resolve the accommodation problem of working women. The Collector thoroughly examined the construction parameters of the working women's hostel.



Collector also inspected the Prayas school. He visited the hi-tech online interactive class room. For the children of 11th and 12th Mathematics and Biology streams, an attempt will be made to explain complex principles in a simple way through interactive class room. Children will build their bright future by taking education in computer lab through digital medium. Webcams have also been set up in Prayas Hostel from the point of view of safety of girl students. Assistant

Commissioner of Tribal Department, Priyavanda Ramteke detailed about the facilities to the Collector.

Apart from this, to ensure clean drinking water supply during summers, the Collector inspected the water treatment plant located in front of the Science College in Durg. He took information about the water supply connectivity from the concerned officials and instructed for continuous monitoring of the supply chain so that there is no interruption.

Along with this, the Collector also took stock of the condition of the new ward and Hamar Lab built in the district hospital. He also inspected the 70 bed Surgical Wing, 12 bed ICU and 18 bed Burn Unit.

Assistant Collector Hemant Nandanwar, Durg Corporation Commissioner Hareesh Mandavi, Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr JP Menshram, SDM Vinay Poyam, PWD Engineer Ashok Shrivastava and other officers and employees were present.

## Chhattisgarh needs a 'Dry Port' for promoting exports of local products: Jitendra Gupta

Central Chronicle News

**Bhilai, Apr 15:** The small and micro industries of Chhattisgarh are facing problems due to lack of marketing facilities. There are several handloom products and forest produce which can find excellent responses in the international market. For promoting the small and micro industries, there is a need to establish a Dry Port in the state, said Laghu Udyog Bharti National Secretary Jitendra Gupta while addressing media persons here at RCET on Friday. He explained the benefits of Dry Port for local industries.

Entrepreneurship and self reliance are the inherent qualities of every Indian. The Bharatiya vedic culture is divided into Dharma - Karma - Arth and Moksha. The basis of entrepreneurship lies in Karma and Arth. In ancient times, Bharat had a share of 33% of the world GDP. However, during the foreign rule, the basic structure of the economy was ruined. Laghu Udyog Bharti is making efforts to revive the nation's lost glory in the new era, he said.

He informed that Laghu Udyog Bharti is the only Pan India organization of small (micro) and small scale indus-



tries with its units functional in almost all the states of the country. The organisation encourages entrepreneurship, sustainable development of the country with all-round development of small scale industries; promotion of indige-

nous technology in small scale industries and much more.

Gupta further spoke about the 'Swavlambi Bharat Abhiyan' which has been launched to empower the youth population and multiply the skill development capacity

with a focus on the country's socio-economic development.

Laghu Udyog Bharti (LUB) along with Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), Sahakar Bharati (SB), Akhil Bharatiya Grahak Panchayat (ABGP), Bharatiya Mazdoor

Sangh (BMS), Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), Seva Bharati (SB), and Vanvasi Kalyan Parishad (VKP) are the participatory organisations of this campaign launched by RSS. Swavalambi Bharat Abhiyan is a concerted effort to generate employment and self-employment opportunities by equipping and enabling the youth of the country.

LUB State President Purushottam Patel spoke about the opportunities in the state of Chhattisgarh. He emphasised on the need of providing marketing facilities for

local products.

LUB former state president Satya Narayan Agrawal cornered the Congress state government for its unfriendly attitude towards the micro and small scale industries. He said that during the pandemic crisis, the state government must have given relaxation in power and water bills to the industries.

But the state government did not provide any relief for helping the industries to revive after the lockdown. LUB State General Secretary Sipi Dubey, Joint General Secretary Deepak Upadhyay and other office bearers were present.

### OBITUARY

Achal Kumar Sinha



**Bhilai:** EWS 22 resident Achal Kumar Sinha left for heavenly abode on April 15. Funeral procession will be taken out from his residence on April 16 around 11:00 hrs and last rites of the mortal remains will be performed at Ramnagar Muktidham. He was the father of Sourabh Kumar Sinha.

## Working for overall benefit of citizens bound to bring good results: Baghel

CM emphasizes on the marketing aspect of the products manufactured in the state

**Says that rural Ch'garh should become a mass production center**  
**CM Bhupesh Baghel attends IAS Conclave-2022**

Raipur, Apr 15:

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel today attended the IAS Conclave organized in private hotel in Naya Raipur. On this occasion, he congratulated the officers for their commendable work in various fields. He further said that 'You all have a vital role in the implementation and monitoring of government plans and I am pleased to see the growth achieved by the state in various fields'. The Chief Minister said that all the government schemes created till now are good but their implementation is very important for the schemes to be fruitful. He said that 'good work can be done by taking people into confidence, it is very important to win the trust



of the people to implement the development plans at the ground level. If you work with the citizens and for the citizens, take them into your confidence, good results are bound to come'. Each village is a Republic in itself, work with them with faith and people will support you', he added.

Emphasizing on the rural economy, Chief Minister further said that villages should be equipped with various facilities targeted at the holistic development of the rural populace, with strong rural economy, more employment can be generated in villages. Villages can be created as centres of mass produc-

tion and the products can be sold in cities. The Chief Minister gave the example of a saying prevalent in Chhattisgarhi, 'Boliyya ke jillo becha jaathe, aau nai bolliya ke chhana ghalo nai bechaaye'. This means that somebody who poses the art of selling can sell any miniscule product but those who are ignorant of this art cannot even sell their valuables.

Referring to Rewa of Arang and Tarigat of Patan area, the Chief Minister said that the history of Chhattisgarh is about 2000 years old. In the past, Chhattisgarh was a big trading center and a large administrative system was prevalent here. At present, there is a need to

carry forward this history and there is a need to carry forward the method of the ancestors.

Addressing the Conclave, Chief Secretary Amitabh Jain said that right advice should always be given to the elected public representatives by the IAS officers. Elected public representatives have a better understanding of the functioning of the officials. IAS Association Chhattisgarh President Manoj Kumar Pingua said that we shall work with team spirit and use positive energy in the progress of the state. Pingua said that the Chief Minister has come to our Conclave today wearing a closed neck black coat, which is

our dress code, this has increased the enthusiasm of all of us. He assured the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on behalf of the association that all of them would continue to work honestly in the interest of Chhattisgarh. On behalf of the association, a painting of MP Rahul Gandhi and Chief Minister made by 'Divyang' children was presented to him. The programme was conducted by IAS. Dr. Priyanka Shukla.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel visited the exhibition organised by the IAS officers at the IAS Conclave, in which the paintings, artworks made by officers and the books written by them were displayed.

Retired IAS Anil Swarup, Suyogya Mishra, BKS Ray, Vivek Dhand, N Bajendra Kumar, Shishupal Sori, Sushil Trivedi, Indira Mishra, Additional Chief Secretary Subrata Sahoo, Secretary of the Association R. Prasanna, Shri and other IAS officers from all over the state were present in the Conclave.

## COLOURFUL DECORATION



Temple of Lord Shri Hanuman have been decorated with colourful lights for 'Hanuman Jayanti' on Saturday.

## CM greets people on Hanuman Janmotsav

Raipur, Apr 15:

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has greeted the people of the state on the occa-

sion of Hanuman Janmotsav. In his message, the Chief Minister has wished for happiness and prosperity of the general public. He

said that Sankat Mochan Hanuman ji is the one who removes all the troubles. His life inspires us to fight against the evils.

## Seven nabbed for running IPL 'satta'



**Kanker, Apr 15:** Kanker District Police has got a major breakthrough in IPL-satta and nabbed seven accused involved in it and seized cash and assets worth Rs 20 lakh from their possession. There are reports that this group used to operate 'satta' and was having links not only in other parts of India, but also with Dubai and other countries.

The Kanker Police got tip from an informer that three persons are playing 'satta' moving in a car and based upon which the police conducted raid and seized a red-colour car

and found three persons in it viz. Devrabth Vishwas, Kamlesh Mazumdar and Harshit Sarkar in suspicious condition. When the Police interrogated them, all three accused accepted to run IPL 'satta' using 'Mahadev App'. The accused have got a flat in Jagdalpur and it acts as base for all their operations and running IPL 'satta'. Further on disclosing of their location, the police nabbed other colleagues viz. Himendra Kumar R/o UP, Rakesh Kumar R/o Ranchi and Rohit Gupta (Satna-MP) from Jagdalpur itself.

## Rly Police catches three miscreants

**Involved in stealing mobile phone from Cong MLA**

Raipur, Apr 15:

The Railway Police of Raipur has caught three miscreants who stole the mobile phone of Congress MLA Vinay Jaiswal two days ago. Apart from stealing mobile from MLA they had also targeted some other people.

Congress MLA from Manendragarh Vinay Jaiswal had reached Raipur railway station to go to Ambikapur. Seeing the expensive iPhone in his hand, these thieves who were already present in the station carried out theft.

The police have arrested 32-year-old Shiv Kumar Mahato, 20-year-



old Ankit Kumar Paswan and one of their minor accomplices in connection with this incident. All three are residents of Sahibganj district of Jharkhand. After carrying out the incident, their plan was to flee to Jharkhand. But before that the police caught them.

The police have recovered more than two dozen stolen mobile phones from possession of these

informers. Meanwhile, tip off was received that some gang of Jharkhand may have a hand in carrying out this incident. Thieves were in hiding after stealing the MLA's mobile phone two days ago and were preparing to flee to Jharkhand after reaching the railway station on Friday. After being caught by the police, the three miscreants confessed to their crime. The miscreants told that when the MLA had reached Raipur railway station, they caught sight of the iPhone kept in his pocket.

They knew that the price of this model of mobile is more than lakh rupees in the market. They were constantly keeping an eye on the mobile and as soon as the crowd of passengers increased, they stole mobile from the MLA.

## Counting for Khairagarh VS by-poll in 21 rounds

Counting to start from 8:00 am; 14 tables laid

Rajnandgaon, Apr 15:

Preparations for the counting for Khairagarh VS by-poll has been completed by the District administration and it will be held in the hall of Beej Nigam office premises on April 16 starting at 8:00 am. First thing in the morning the lock of the strong room will be opened in front of the agents of the political parties and officers. First the counting of postal ballots will be done.

Collector and District Election officer Taran Prakash Sinha informed that a total of 14 tables have been placed at the counting venue and in which duty of three officers each has been fixed. He further informed that there will be total of 21

rounds for the counting. Those on duty at the counting venue are not allowed to carry mobile inside.

Apart from this the duty of employees has been fixed to bring and take back the EVMs from Strong Room to the counting venue and back. Facility of computers, telephone, internet connection and fax has been provided at the counting venue. At the counting venue, even Smart watch has been banned.

Meanwhile Collector informed that there will be videography and photography of every activities at the counting venue.

In view of rising temperature, he informed that reserve team has been kept on the stand-by.

## Bhagwan Mahavir's path should be followed for world peace and mutual harmony in society: Baghel



**Raipur, Apr 15:** Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel attended Bhagwan Mahaveer Swami Janmakalyanak Mahotsav organized at Dadabari, MG Road, here on Thursday. On this occasion, he prayed for the happiness and prosperity of the people of the state by offering prayers at Shri Dharmanath Jinalaya located in Dadabari complex. Chief Minister Baghel congratulated and greeted the people of Jain community on the 2621st birth anniversary of Bhagwan Mahavir Swami.

While addressing the devotees present in the Mahotsav Baghel said that the principles of Bhagwan Mahavir are relevant even today. Today the whole world is standing on the verge of third world war. In times of crisis, it is neces-

sary for all of us to follow the paths of truth and non-violence as preached by Bhagwan Mahavir, said Baghel. Bhagwan Mahavir preached truth, non-violence, asteya, brahmacharya and aparigraha to the whole world, he said.

Moreover, Bhagwan Mahavir gave the great principle of pluralism for mutual respect for each other in the society in which lies the ideal of respect for the views of all. Today, it is very necessary to walk on the paths shown by him for peace, brotherhood and mutual respect in the society, said Baghel. Baghel further said that his government was working continuously for the progress of every society and class in Chhattisgarh. Even during the last COVID crisis, people of

**CM attends Bhagwan Mahavir Swami Janmakalyanak Mahotsav organized in Raipur**

Jain Samaj and all other societies came forward to tackle the situation. He said that his government was committed to the upliftment of all sections of the people like labourers, farmers, traders etc. in the state. To this end, new schemes and programs are being run regularly, he informed.

Money has started coming in the state not only from cow's milk but also from cow dung and cow urine. In this way, an amount of Rs 91 thousand crore has been put in the pockets of the people during the last three years with better implementation of various welfare schemes in the state and as a result the economy of Chhattisgarh remained dynamic even during the Corona crisis and the whole of Chhattisgarh is moving forward in the direction of progress. Parliamentary Secretary Vikas Upadhyay, Chhattisgarh State Housing Board Chairman Kuldeep Singh Juneja, Raipur Mayor Aijaz Dhebar, Bhagwan Mahaveer Janmakalyanak Mahotsav Samiti President Mahendra Kochhar, Kamal Bhansali, Manoj Kothari, Gulab Dastani and people of Jain Samaj were present.

## Clamp of water tank breaks down



**Raipur, Apr 15:** A major incident was averted just in front of RMC's head office when the clamp holding the water tank in the tractor broke down and the tank went down in drain. It is notable here that RMC supplies water in different wards with arrival of summer season, but prior to running these water tanks RMC should check it as part of annual maintenance and to avoid any such incidents in the near future.

lift the filled water tank by holding it from the front and failing to control the same it fell down and gallons of water from the tank went down in drain. It is notable here that RMC supplies water in different wards with arrival of summer season, but prior to running these water tanks RMC should check it as part of annual maintenance and to avoid any such incidents in the near future.

## Chh'garh team announced for National TT tournament

Central Chronicle News

**Raipur, Apr 15:** Chhattisgarh Table Tennis Association (CTTA) on Friday declared the team for the 83rd Senior National and Inter State Table Tennis Tournament to be held at Shillong in Meghalaya. CTTA President Sharad Shukla presented the track suits to the players after announcing the team for the national event here during which the CTTA Secretary Vinay Baiswade and others were present. Baiswade informed that the team would leave for the tournament on April 16 with the Coach Vimal Nair and Manager Shradha Verma. International Umpire



Pradeep Joshi from Raipur and National Umpire Jaya Sahu from Rajnandgaon have been selected for officiating in the tournament. He said that Abhishek Ran from Raipur would be leading the senior team whereas A Santosh from Durg, Rajiv Sahu and Shlok Soni from Raipur, M Raviraj from Durg are the members. Similarly,

Shilpi Ghosh from Raipur would be leading the Women's team whereas R Devanshi from Bilaspur, Ananya Dubey, Divya Amde and Kajal from Durg are the members. Kunal Dev, Arindum Devnath, Pawan Das, Pranay Chouhan, K Sai Prashant and Shradha Verma are the additional entry in the tournament.

## Create casual atmosphere, motivate juniors: Swarup

**Hails works of all IAS officers in state**  
**Second day of IAS conclave-2022**

**Raipur, Apr 15:** On second day of the IAS Conclave-2022, panel discussions were held and in this subject experts expressed their views. In this the retired IAS officer Anil Swarup, Executive Editor Indian Express P Vishwanathan Iyer, Director 'Nukkad Cafe' and recipient of President's ward Priyank Patel were present as the panelist. In this session Dy. Chairman State Planning Commission Ajay Singh was specially present. Retired senior IAS officer Anil Swarup putting forth his views said that we all have to maintain good courage and grit for the work. IAS of



Chhattisgarh are doing good work and this work is transformable and result oriented. The officers who are doing good work should get all praise and those who are bringing massive changes in the lives of people and society should always be motivated.

The effect of any scheme is due to the IAS officers and therefore their responsibility is also equally important. One should work honestly with dedication and this particular nature motivates one do even

better. The good work by the junior officers should be praised and they should be motivated and provided right direction and on top of all this one should try to develop a more casual talks atmosphere, he added.

Executive Director Indian Express P Vishwanathan said that as to how politics can effect public services is a point to ponder. People have lots of expectation from the bureaucrats, as their sentiments and confidence are closely linked

to those serving in the bureaucracy. What we want is that all should try to meet up their expectation, as the IAS officers have all those capabilities which can be major changes in the lives of common men. Management, working and implementation of the policies in democracy and taking it to benefit and justice to the poorest of the poor is what will ensure first and the last confidence of the people. We need to understand that transformation, for which we all have

gathered here, he added.

Director Nukkad Cafe Priyank Patel said that our efforts should be trying to strike a balance between social groups and institutions by holding talks with them. The society should be provided message that they should always be ready for 'Navachar' and should be motivated for it. IAS is a strong link between the people and the administration and they hold the power for bringing major changes with their farsightedness and core competence.

During the panel discussions, the IAS present raised various questions to expert panelists and which were satisfactorily answered. On conclusion of panel discussions, President of IAS Association of Chhattisgarh Manoj Pingua felicitated the panelists with a memento.

## Baba Saheb's contribution in human welfare, social harmony is unforgettable: Dr. Girish

Dr. Ambedkar Jayanti celebrated in Agricultural University

Raipur, Apr 15:

The birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, the main architect of the Indian Constitution, was celebrated at Indira Gandhi Agricultural University (IGAU) on Thursday. The chief guest of the program organised in the auditorium of Agriculture College, Raipur, Dr. Girish Chandel, Vice Chancellor of Indira Gandhi Agricultural University, while underlining the contribution of Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar in the creation of the Indian Constitution, said that Dr. Ambedkar established social harmony in India throughout his life and fought for social justice of the downtrodden.

Speaking further he said that Dr. Ambedkar continued to strive for



human welfare and upliftment of the country. Dr. Chandel, while paying tribute to Ambedkar, exhorted the students to follow the path and ideals laid down by Baba Saheb and work for the welfare of mankind and the country.

The programme was presided over by the Dean of Indira Gandhi Agricultural University (IGUA), Student Welfare Dr. G.K. Srivastava. On this occasion the winners of Rangoli, Painting,

sketching, slogan writing and quiz competitions organised at Agriculture University Raipur were also awarded. The speakers involved in the programme organized on the occasion of the 131st birth anniversary of Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, highlighting the personality and work of Baba Saheb, underlined his contribution in the making of the Indian Constitution and establishing social harmony

and fraternity in the country.

Agriculture University Registrar, G.K. Nirmam, Dean of Agriculture College, Dr. M.P. Thakur, Dean of Agricultural Engineering College, Dr. V.K. Pandey, Director Research, Dr. P.K. Chandrakar and social activists Ms. Rukhmani Ramteke, Mr. Sunil Ganveer and Mr. Akhilesh Bawangade mentioned Babasaheb's struggle journey and his tireless efforts in providing social justice to the downtrodden and oppressed.

Organising Committee Chairman, Dr. P.K. Sagode delivered the welcome address and Organizing Secretary Dr. P.L. Johnson expressed his gratitude to the guests. Professors and scientists of Agricultural University and a large number of students were present on this occasion.

## Agriculture Minister felicitated with DTSS Ratna Award



Raipur, Apr 15:

In Raipur-Durg-village Pendri (Dhamdha), the 75th Annual General Assembly of Dubelia Teli Sahu Samaj (DTSS) concluded. The Agriculture Minister Ravindra Choubey thanked members of Sahu Samaj on being felicitated with the Dubelia Teli Sahu Samajik Ratna Award and said that the Samajik Ratna Award

received from Dubelia Teli Sahu Samaj is an honour equivalent to the Bharat Ratna award for him as he is fortunate enough to be part of the social organization Sahu Samaj surging on path of progress.

Choubey said that in our country the bonds of social organization and family relationships are very strong and that's why brotherhood is among all in the society. He said he is

happy to see unity of social organization on such a large scale.

The Central President of the society, Shiv Kumar Sahu informed the Minister Choubey in detail about the Samajik Ratna Samman and added that Late Nohar Lal Sahu Bawankuraji of the society used to deliver religious discourse from the epic Ramayana going to different villages of Dhamdha, Khairagarh area and placing the excerpts from the Ramayana before villagers in the 'Chaupal'.

He used to narrate the entire Ramayana to the villagers without looking in the book. He breathed his last on 26 January 2016 and it was in his memory that the society started this Samajik Ratna Samman from the year 2017.

## Naxalites open fire on the soldiers of Cobra

When they were patrolling



Konta, Apr 15:

Firing took place between security forces and Naxalites in Potakpally area under Kistaram police station area of Konta block in Sukma district. However, there was no casualty in this firing. But due to the retaliation of the security forces, the Naxalites fled under the cover of forests. These days TCOC month of Naxalites is going on.



CM Bhupesh Baghel inspected the photo exhibition in the IAS Conclave being organised here on Friday. In this the paintings, artifacts and books written by IAS officers have been put on display.

## Free dialysis facility to kidney patients in Ch'garh

Raipur, Apr 14:

Govt is providing reasonable and good medical facilities to the people

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, continuous work is being done to make medical facilities affordable and good in the state. Dr. Khubchand Baghel Swasthya Sahayata Yojana has already been launched to provide cashless treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh to the BPL ration card holders of the state. Now the state government is also providing free dialysis facility to kidney patients.

Under the National Free Dialysis Program under the National Health Mission, free dialysis facility is being provided in eight district hospitals of the state under the name 'Jeevan Dhara'. Patients suffering from kidney diseases have to undergo frequent dialysis for a long time. This causes a huge fi-

nancial burden on them. Due to the availability of dialysis facilities at local level, people suffering from kidney diseases do not have to go far. This is also saving labour, money and time of patients and their families.

Free dialysis facility is being provided by National Health Mission, Chhattisgarh in eight districts of the state namely Durg, Kanker, Korba, Bilaspur, Jashpur, Surguja, Mahasamund and Bijapur. For this, five each in Jashpur, Durg and Kanker districts, four each in Ambikapur and Mahasamund, six in Korba, three in Bijapur and four in Bilaspur (three

in CIMS Medical College and one in Bilaspur Covid Hospital), thus totaling 36 machines have been installed. Under the National Free Dialysis Programme, a total of 23,129 dialysis sessions have been conducted in eight district hospitals so far. Of these, 4885 sessions have been conducted in Durg district, 4872 in Korba, 4230 in Kanker, 3504 in Bilaspur, 2631 in Mahasamund, 1390 in Surguja, 942 in Bijapur and 675 in Jashpur. One time dialysis in private hospitals costs Rs 700 to Rs 1200, while this facility is being provided free of cost by the state government. Due to the free dialysis facility in government hospitals of different districts, people of remote areas do not have to go far for dialysis. This is saving both their money and time.

## Two drug smugglers arrested with 213 kg 'ganja' worth Rs 42 lakh

Kondagaon, Apr 15:

Taking major action against the ganja smugglers by the Anti-Narcotics Cell of the police, they have succeeded in nabbing the inter-state 'Ganja' smugglers of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh by chasing them in film style. The accused were smuggling ganja by making a special chamber in the pickup vehicle. The police have seized 213 kg of Ganja worth Rs 42 lakh from the smugglers.

It was as per orders from Superintendent of Police Divyang Patel, a continuous campaign is being run against Ganja smugglers. Special moni-



toring is being done on the National Highway to stop drug smuggling in the district. Due to which action is being taken against Ganja smugglers continuously for past few months and the smugglers are being arrested and sent to jail. In this series on April 14, the Kondagaon police received tip from an in-

former that Ganja smugglers from Sukma, Jagdalpur of Odisha are going to smuggle Ganja in a pick-up vehicle towards Raipur. Checking was being done by the team of Kondagaon Narcotics Cell by creating barricading near Mardapal Triangle on the National Highway. During checking, an at-

tempt was made to stop the white coloured small elephant pickup coming from Jagdalpur, which did not stop and moved forward rapidly. The Narcotics Cell team chased the pick-up Van in a motorcycle and managed to stop them. When searched, the team found that a separate chamber has been made for smuggling Ganja in the seized vehicle.

On checking the chamber, 36 packets of 213 kg illegal narcotic Ganja, with estimated market value of about Rs 42 lakh was confiscated and two accused were arrested and sent to jail after being produced in the court.

## Culture Minister Bhagat attends Amrit Samagam in Delhi

Amrit Festival of Independence

Raipur, Apr 15:

State Food and Culture Minister Amarjit Bhagat attended the conference organized in Delhi under 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' as a representative of Chhattisgarh Government. The conference was organized by the Union Ministry of Culture. On this occasion, Minister Bhagat informed about the progress of Amrit Mahotsav of Independence in Chhattisgarh. The conference was inaugurated by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The objective of the conference is to ensure significant participation of States and Union



Territories in the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav campaign. Through this the focus is on various activities organized by the States and Union Territories. While discussing the contribution of Chhattisgarh, Minister Bhagat spoke in detail about the program organized in Chhattisgarh under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav. Various programs are to be organized in Chhattisgarh from 12 March 2021 to 15 August

2022 under the Amrit Mahotsav of Azadi. Under the Amrit Mahotsav of Azadi, the people of Chhattisgarh were made aware of the contribution of the freedom fighters of Chhattisgarh. Culture Minister Bhagat said that "In order to celebrate the Amrit Mahotsav of freedom in a grand and proper way, in the development journey of our state, the four most important events related to the journey of independence of

the country - District Political Conference of 1921, Non-cooperation Movement, Martyr The details of Veernarayan Singh's rebellion and Jungle Satyagraha have been made available to the Union Ministry of Culture. While appraising the future plans, Minister Bhagat said that there is a plan to include Sirpur and Purkhauti Mukangan in the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav through the film scheme.

## Vipin Sahu accorded warm welcome

On his arrival in Konta by Sahu Samaj



Konta / Sukma, Apr 15:

In front of Sukma municipality, the people of the society including the district president Raju Sahu welcomed Vipin Sahu with a warm enthusiasm and fireworks. A large number of women of the society also participated. District President Raju Sahu said that

He informed members of Sahu Samaj that he expresses due gratitude to the Minister Kawasi Lakhma and the Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

He informed that very soon a milk production committee will be formed in Sukma district and we will motivate farmers to take up animal husbandry. During this Sukma Municipal Vice President Ayesha Hussain, Councillor Pratap Samrat, Gupteshwar Gangber, Chovram Sahu, Sevakram Gurupanch, Gautam Sahu, Doman Sahu Mohd. Husain, Satyabhama Gangber, Bhuneshwari Sahu, Yashoda Sahu, Janki Sahu and members of the Sahu community were present.

## Commemoration of the Last Supper of the Lord held

By the Parishoners of St. Joseph Parish

Bacheli, Apr 15:

Christians across the world observed Maundy Thursday on April 14. The day commemorates the washing of the feet (Maundy) and Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his apostles, as described in the canonical gospels of the Holy Bible.

It is the fifth day of the Holy Week, preceded by Holy Wednesday and followed by Good Friday.

At Bacheli the Parish priest, Rev. Father Sajan along with the Parishoners conducted special services for the day including 'washing the feet' custom, and broke un-



leavened bread in memory of the Last Supper. One hour adoration and thereafter the symbol of love in the form of the unleavened bread was distributed to the parishoners by the priest. Thanking the Almighty God, all the devotees filled with grace and peace dispersed.

## Naxalites blast with the intention of blowing up bridge

DRG arrived before the second blast

Konta, Apr 15:

Naxalites planned to blow up the bridge late at night between Kottacheru and Gorkha on Bheji road of Konta block in Sukma district. However, the Naxalites have failed in their attempt. Because before this the DRG personnel reached the spot and the Naxalites had to run away without blowing up the bridge.

The matter is between Gorkha and Kottacheru under Bheji police station area, where on Thursday night around 9:00 pm, the Naxalites made an explosion with the intention of blowing them up. On hearing the sound of the explosion the DRG personnel



left for the spot. During this the Naxalites were preparing to completely damage the bridge, but the DRG personnel knocked on the spot and the Naxalites had to flee from there.

Sukma SP Sunil Sharma told in the conversation that the Naxalites wanted to blow up the bridge on Bheji Marg so that the material going to

the new camps built in the core belt and interior areas could be stopped and the common people could also be harmed. The Naxalites tried to blow up the bridge but they failed as the DRG personnel foiled their plans. The explosion cause minor damage to the bridge which is being repaired and restored by the jawans.

# Ambedkar Jayanti observed in Nehru Smriti School

**In Birkoni**

Central Chronicle News

**Birkoni, Apr 15:** The 131st birth anniversary of founder of the Indian constitution Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar was celebrated with pomp and enthusiasm at Nehru Smriti School, near Barbaspur road of Birkoni here on Thursday. On this occasion Director of Samiti Lalit Nishad and teachers garlanded the photo of Baba Saheb and offered rich tributes to him.

Head Master Tupsingh Nishad after garlanding the photo said that the Constitution drafted by Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar is followed by one & all. The intelligence and sacrifice which Dr Bhimrao



Ambedkar made in drafting of the India's constitution is an honour for every citizen and all should take inspiration from it.

On this occasion Saraswati Yadu, Rama

Yadav, Poornima Chandrakar, Madhu Sahis, Tekeshwari Yadav, Bharti Yadav, Godawari Nishad, Khemin Sahu, teachers and students of the School were present in large number.

In the programme organised in Gram Barbaspur, Badgaon, Nayapara, Kampa, Muski, Baba Saheb was remembered and all took a pledge to follow on the path shown by him.

# Free of cost medical camp begins in Dhamdha

Central Chronicle News

**Dhamdha, Apr 15:** As per instructions from the state government to Nagar Panchayat Dhamdha, under Urban Slum Health Scheme (USHS), in order to provide free of cost health and medical services to common men, 'hamar Elaj-hamar dwar' scheme, a medical camp was organised in Dhamdha Nagar Panchayat here on Thursday. Under this the camp was inaugurated by Kalarpara ward no. 15 President Sunita Rajiv Gupta.

President Sunita Rajiv Gupta informed that under 'Hamar Elaj-Hamar Dwar' Yojana, the camps will be organised in different wards of the city and urged

Under 'Hamar Elaj-Hamar Dwar' Yojana of state govt



people in large number to avail its benefit. The timing of this camp will be from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. The camp will be held at the weekly market area in ward No. 1 on April 15, in Tamepara Mangal Bhavan ward No. 12 on April 28; in Mechuk Mandir Sahu para ward No. 14 on April 29. In

this camp, a mobile medical unit the health of general public will be examined under 'hamar Elaj-hamar dwar yojana' free of cost. Chief Nagar Palika officer has urged the citizens of the above ward to avail benefit of this camp in large number. For this initiative, the denizens of

Dhamdha have hailed the same. In the camp on Thursday, Chief Nagar Palika officer Rajendra Nayak, Sub-Engineer Vinayak Garg, Shashank Tiwari, Gyaneshwar Devdas, team of Nagar Panchayat and entire team of Mobile Medical unit were present.

# Treatment to patients start in Life Line Express



**Jagdarpur, Apr 15:** The treatment of patients through Life Line Express had started near Nakti-Semra, near Jagdarpur. Under this the patients were examined near Livelihood College, near Nakti-Semra and on Friday the surgery of patients diagnosed with some ailment for surgery will be done in the Life Line Express lased with all modern medical equipments.

LS MP Deepak Baij inaugurating this project expressed happiness and

said that providing free of cost medical services including surgery for complex medical cases in place like Bastar is a big thing. He urged the villagers of the region to avail this facility in large number.

On this occasion Mayor Jagdarpur Safira Sahu, JMC Speaker Kavita Sahu, Upper Collector Arvind Ekka, SDM Dinesh Nag, CHMO Dr RK Chaturvedi, and other public representatives, officers and employees and health employees from the health department were present.

# Bike rally, dances mark eve of Ambedkar's Jayanti

Central Chronicle News

**Dongargarh, Apr 15:** Prior to the 131st birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna recipient Baba Saheb Ambedkar, the members of Boudha community took out a massive motorcycle rally in the city and reaching Ambedkar's statue they lighted traditional lamp in his memory and paid rich tributes raising slogans in favour of 'Jai Bhim'.

This rally passed through main thoroughfares of city. On the eve his birth anniversary, a songs dedicated in the memory of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar on 'Bhim' made the entire atmosphere in Baba Saheb's favour and the children presented colourful songs and dance. It was mid-night that a cake was



cut and this started the celebrations of Dr Ambedkar by the members of the society.

In the rally taken out by the youth on motorcycle, even girls also participated. Dressed in colourful attire, the girls took part in this rally. The members of the society also enjoyed

orchestra presented by Rajkala and they presented songs based upon 'Bhim'. Young girls and boys presented colourful dance on songs of 'Bhim' and during this members of the society were present in large number.

**Piyush Vasnik boosts enthusiasm of artist**

Having carved an identity in the singing at national level, Piyush Vasnik of Bhakapara of Rajnandgaon took part in the cultural programmes reaching Buddha Vihar in Dongargarh and presented series of Bhim songs and boosted the morale of other artists as well.

# Water kiosk inaugurated near Police station

Central Chronicle News

**Pandaria, Apr 15:** It was under direction of SPL Umend Singh, Addl. SP Manish Ravate and SDOP Narendra Vetal, that a water kiosk was inaugurated by TI Mukesh Yadav in front of Pandaria Thana here on Thursday. This facility has been provided so that the denizens can get cold water during this hot summer. At the inauguration, the people were offered squash and jaggery.

TI Yadav informed that with rise in mercury daily and due to which people need to

quench their thirst. To ensure that people are not thirsty, this water kiosk has been opened. He informed that it will remain functional throughout the day during summer season. During this SDOP Vetal and other employees were also present in large number.



# Chairman of CSFC meet reps of urban bodies

Central Chronicle News

**Jagdarpur, Apr 15:** Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission (CSFC) Chairman Serjius Minz and State Finance Commission officials discussed with the representatives of urban bodies of Bastar district on the second day of their stay in Jagdarpur today.

During this, he had a detailed discussion with the people's representatives of Bastar district regarding the submission of suggestions to the state government for implementation of the recommendations of the State Finance Commission in the year 2025.

On this occasion, Chairman of Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission Serjius Minz, Mayor of Municipal Corporation Jagdarpur Smt. Safira Sahu, President of Nagar Panchayat Bastar Smt. Domay Maurya, Secretary



of Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission Satish Pandey, Joint Secretary Dr. JS Virdi, Additional Collector Arvind Ekka and Commissioner Municipal Corporation Prem Patel, representatives of urban bodies and other officials of the district were present.

On this occasion, the Chairman of the State Finance Commission, Serjius Minz, gave information regarding the working of the State Finance Commission and the objectives of the discussions. He said that in the democratic system of the country, discussions are being held with the

representatives of urban bodies to submit suggestions to the state government for making laws for making the urban bodies financially and organizationally strong.

Its purpose is to review the economic and organizational condition of urban bodies and ensure measures to improve

them. He said that according to the wishes of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, the State Finance Commission is organizing meetings with the Panchayat and urban bodies and taking suggestions from them so that the democratic institutions can be strengthened in the state.

On this occasion, Mayor Mrs. Safira Sahu also gave important suggestions to the Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission. Chhattisgarh State Finance Commission Secretary Satish Pandey gave information regarding the functions and objectives of the commission through a power point presentation.

In the meeting, Commissioner Municipal Corporation Prem Patel and representatives of urban bodies and senior officials gave necessary suggestions to improve the financial management of urban bodies.

# Ambedkar Jayanti observed in Gram Bhaishbod



Central Chronicle News

**Anwari, Apr 15:** Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar's Jayanti was observed in Gram Panchayat Bhavan in Gram Bhaishbod. First the members of Samaj lighted traditional lamp before Ambedkar's photo and garlanded him. On this occasion Sarpanch's rep Dilip Sahu said that entire life of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar was struggle. He gave valuable

contribution in drafting of the India's constitution. Baba Saheb Ambedkar struggled for the welfare and upliftment of weaker sections of the society and for their rights. Dr Ambedkar was the founder of equal society for all and leader for reforms. Ambedkar through education wanted to empower the weaker sections of the society including labourers, women and others. He was a well-known

politician, economist, philosopher and social reformer. He struggle for the rights of Dalits and raised voice against the India's caste system.

On this occasion Homendra Sahu, President 'Parikshetra Sahu Samaj' Semra, Ishwar Sahu Panch, KK Sahu, Ravi Sahu, Kumbkaran Sahu, Tijendra Kumar, Rudra Kumar and others were present.

# Villagers called off protest in Gram Bechupal

After explanation by local administration

Central Chronicle News

**Bijapur, Apr 15:** The villagers of Gram Bechupal under Bhairagarh block of Bijapur district are staging protest and movement in support of their different demands since 30 Nov 2022. Prominent among their demands include protest of police camp, development oriented works like bridge, roads, mobile connectivity and others.

The district administration gave explanation in detail to the villagers that as to how with formation of Police Camp there has been increase in number of development works in the re-



gion. They have been provided basic amenities like health, education, ration, roads and others and by which the villagers are getting benefitted through different schemes of the state government. With launching of employment orient-

ed works in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, MGNREGA and others and participation of villagers in it, they are getting more resources for earning livelihood and for this the local administration and state government

is constantly working hard. It was after explanation by the administration that the villagers automatically decided to call off their protest and movement completely and went back to their residence. With this particular support by the villagers, the development works in Gram Bechupal and other parts of the region will gain momentum and it will help in speeding up construction work in the region and it will open up new avenues for employment. SDM Bhairagarh SR Rana informed that the villagers have called off their movement and protest and have given their consent to extend a helping hand to the administration in speeding up development works in the region.

# Leopard carcass found in the jungles of Barari

Central Chronicle News

**Dhamtari, Apr 15:** A two day old leopard carcass was found here in the jungles of Barari, in suspicious conditions. The Forest Department performed its last rites after autopsy and the cause of death will be known after the arrival of forensic reports. On reports of sighting the carcass by villagers, DFO Mayank Pandey and other officials and SDO Forest TR Verma reached the spot and investigated and sent the dead animal to the forest depot for postmortem. Here a team of three doctors conducted the post-mortem, after which the

dead cat was cremated. It is worth mentioning that for the last fortnight a leopard was reported to be roaming in Siyadehi and adjacent jungles. According to SDO Forest TR Verma, the leopard's cause of death is reportedly due to animal clashes, and its lower back has been eaten, which is usually done by the fox population. He denied any symptoms of poisoning and the viscera have been sent for forensic examination.

**What officer says:** 'A dead leopard has been found in the jungles of Barari, and the cause of death will be known after forensic report comes.' Mayank Pandey, DFO.

NAME CHANGE	NAME CHANGE
General is informed that I, ARWA MOHAMMED SAIFUDDIN HIRANI, D/o MOHAMMED SAIFUDDIN HIRANI Resident JIWAJI ESMAILEJI, TAJNAPETH, OLD KAPDA BAZAR, AKOLA (M.H) swear that I have changed my name to ARWA VANAK W/o. ADNAN VANAK HOUSE NO. 285, WARD NO. 23 OPP BOHRA MADARSA KHAPARGANJ BILASPUR (C.G) I shall henceforth be called as Arwa Vanak.	General is informed that I KALIM VANAK S/o LATE TAHER BHAI VANAK, R/o. House NO. 285, WARD NO. 23 OPP BOHRA MADARSA, KHAPARGANJ BILASPUR swear that I have changed my name. I shall henceforth be known as KALIMUDDIN VANAK S/o LATE TAHER BHAI VANAK, R/o. HOUSE NO. 285, WARD NO. 23 OPP BOHRA MADARSA, KHAPARGANJ BILASPUR (C.G)

## BRIEF

### Organised

**Lakhimpur Kheri:** The district authorities here organised 'gram choupal' events in 30 village panchayats to redress public grievances under the 'Prashashan Aapke Dwar' pilot project. "The project, which happens to be the first of its kind in Uttar Pradesh, is primarily focused on redressal of grievances of people living in rural areas at their doorsteps," Chief Development Officer (CDO) Anil Singh, who is steering the project, told PTI.

### Trampled

**Hazaribag:** An elderly couple was trampled to death by an elephant in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district, an official said. The incident occurred in Bedmakkhi village under the Chalkusha police station limits when the jumbo attacked Vedlal Pandit (65) and his wife Shanti Devi (60), Forest Range Officer Annand Kumar Singh said. The couple was working in a field when the incident happened.

### Booked

**Bareilly:** Two people have been booked here for allegedly hampering the national integration by playing songs on a mobile phone hailing Pakistan, police said. An FIR has been lodged against Naem and Mustkim of Singhai Murawan village of the Bhuta area of the district, police said. The FIR was lodged against the duo on the complaint of villager Ashish who objected to their playing the song praising Pakistan, they said.

### Found

**Noida:** A 14-year-old girl living in a slum cluster here turned out to be an unlikely hero in reuniting a lost child with his family and bringing to end a search by the Noida Police. The local police were informed that the two-and-a-half-year-old child living with his family in Gijhod village had gone missing, prompting the officials to launch a search.

### Damage

**Shillong:** Over 1000 house in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district were affected in a cyclonic storm that ravaged the district but there was no casualty, an official said. A senior district official told PTI, Prima facie, 47 villages in the district were affected in the storm from where the damages to houses were reported. He said government properties were among those destroyed in cyclonic storm, including BDO office, school, a public works department office and veterinary offices.

### Ticket

**Mumbai:** Mumbai Metro One Private Limited (MMOPL) which operates metro service on the Versova-Andheri-Ghatkopar route in the city launched an 'e-ticket on WhatsApp' facility. Mumbai Metro One is the first MRTS (Mass Rapid Transit System) in the world to offer e-ticket on WhatsApp.

## Nearly 48 percent rise in home isolation cases of COVID-19 in Delhi



People are encouraged to wear mask in Delhi.

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Amid an uptick in daily cases of COVID-19 in Delhi and the positivity rate going beyond two per cent, there has been a rise of nearly 48 per cent in the number of home isolation cases here in the last one week, according to official data. The number of home isolation cases stood at 574 while 325 new coronavirus cases were recorded with a

positivity rate of 2.39 per cent. The daily cases have been on the rise in the last few days while the positivity rate here has been registered in excess of one per cent since April 4 when it had stood at 1.34 per cent.

As the Covid positivity rate in the national capital has jumped from 0.57 per cent on April 1 to 2.39 per cent on April 14, the number of home isolation

### Data from last one week

cases has shown an upward trend in the last one week.

On April 8, the city had reported 146 cases with a positivity rate of 1.39 per cent and 388 patients were under home isolation, according to the data shared by city health department authorities.

The count of home isolation cases has steadily increased in this period, rising to 574 on April 14. The corresponding figures on April 11 was 447 and on April 13 it had stood at 504. There has been a rise of nearly 48 per cent in the home isolation cases in the last one week.

Doctors on Tuesday had said that it was not a panic situation as the count of daily cases was still low, but had cautioned against dropping the guard.

## Keralites celebrate Vishu with traditional fervour

### Observe Good Friday

**Thiruvananthapuram, Apr 15 (PTI):** As the state is slowly coming out of the fear of the COVID-19 pandemic, Keralites on Friday celebrated Vishu, the harvest festival, with traditional fervour and gaiety wishing to have a season of prosperity, plenty and progress.

The scare of the pandemic and lockdown curbs took the sheen out of the traditional festivals including Vishu in the last two years.

While the Hindu families followed ancient customs and rituals as part of the Vishu celebrations, Christians thronged churches across the state in large numbers to attend special prayers and observed fast to mark Good



Traditional Vishu feast.

Friday commemorating the sufferings and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

It is rare that Vishu and Good Friday fall on the same day like this year.

Adhering to tradition, people in Hindu homes woke up in the wee hours to see 'Vishukkani', the custom of looking at aus-

picious articles like rice, fruits, gold and flowers arranged in brass vessels, symbolising hope and prosperity.

Elders presented coins to children as part of the custom of "Vishu kaineetam." In Malabar region in north Kerala, people ushered in Vishu by bursting

## 'POILA BOISHAKH' PRAYER



Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb performs rituals while offering prayers on occasion of 'Poila Boishakh', at Laxmi Narayan Temple in Agartala, Friday.

## Gehlot, Membooba attack center over communal violence

**Jaipur, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ask state governments to take action against elements creating nuisance in the name of religion and make an appeal for peace.

His remarks come against the backdrop of incidents of communal violence in some states during Ram Navami. Voicing concern over increasing incidents of communal tension in the country, Gehlot said development of the country is not possible without peace. "Mahatma Gandhi had said that I am proud to be a Hindu but my Hindu religion is neither intolerant nor the one that boycotts anyone. We are all Hindus but our religion teaches that we should respect all religions. If we all



Ashok Gehlot and Mehbooba Mufti

respect each other's religion by keeping this in mind, then such a situation will not arise," he said. "I again appeal to the honourable prime minister to give a message to the nation to reduce the rising communal tension in the country and to the state governments to take action against mischievous elements who are creating nuisance in the name of religion," he said. Apparently

referring to the recent clash in the Jawaharlal University over serving of non vegetarian food, Gehlot said development is not possible without peace, but if the people of the country keep fighting with each other over food, attire and religious traditions and some unruly elements keep provoking them, then this country will remain entangled in small issues.

## Bihar Congress gets down to finding new president



Congress bhawan in Patna.

**Patna, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The beleaguered Congress' crisis-ridden Bihar unit is now saddled with finding a new president following the resignation of Madan Mohan Jha, who held the post for nearly four years. Jha tendered

his resignation in New Delhi after a meeting with Rahul Gandhi. The state Congress is yet to come out with an official word on the development.

However, AICC national general secretary Tariq Anwar told PTI, "The need for having a new man to

head the Bihar unit was being felt for quite some time. Jha, who is a senior leader, a former state minister and currently a member of the legislative council, has cleared the path by resigning gracefully."

"The party high command is now vetting the names of prospective candidates for the new state president. A final decision will be taken in due course," said the former Union minister.

Anwar did not divulge any names under consideration, but the Sadaqat Ashram here, which has been the state Congress headquarters since before Independence, resembles a beehive, buzzing with speculations about who will fit the bill.

## HC orders reinstatement of physically challenged teacher

**Cuttack, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The Orissa High Court has ordered the reinstatement of a differently-abled junior teacher, who was disengaged from service on charge of faking his disability certificate while joining as a 'Sikshya Sahayak' on April 29, 2011.

After three years of service as a 'Sikshya Sahayak' at Kokodaguda school in Nabarangpur district, Santosh Kumar Padhi was appointed as a junior teacher in the same school with effect from April 28, 2014.

However, Padhi was disengaged on February 5, 2018. He moved the High Court challenging the order and prayed for quashing the order. Justice S K Mishra on his April 5, 2022 order said:



Orissa High Court

"For the foregoing reasons therefore, this court finds that the impugned order of disengagement of the petitioner from service is unsustainable in the eye of law.

The impugned order is hereby quashed." mThe court also directed to reinstate Padhi in service with full back wages and all other service benefits with effect from the date of his disengagement by

passing necessary orders to such effect within a period of four weeks from the date of communication of this order or on production of certified copy thereof by the petitioner.

Justice Mishra also observed that the disability certificate of the teacher was issued by proper authority and therefore proved to be genuine. "The only objection that

could be raised against the certificate is that the same is not in the proper statutory form, but then when the content of the said certificate has been proved to be correct, mere technicality cannot stand on the way of conferring appropriate benefits on the person concerned," Justice Mishra noted in the order.

The court also held that the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, who is statutorily duty bound to ensure protection of the rights of persons with disabilities has in the case at hand, acted entirely contrary to the legislature.

On the question of the teacher's disability, the court observed that: "obviously, the teacher cannot be blamed for the same.

## NGT seeks report on stone crushers in Rajouri district

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The National Green Tribunal has formed a committee and sought a report on a plea against operation of stone crushers in violation of environmental norms in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice A K Goel said it is clear from the report of the district magistrate that there have been serious violations in operation of stone crushers, supported by illegal mining to the detriment of the environment.

"Steps so far taken to prevent illegal mining and further pollution are inadequate. So are the steps to make the violators accountable for past violations. "Serious violations include diversion of



Stone crushing in Rajouri.

flow of the river, lowering of water table, loss of irrigation/crops, damage to the water quality and even death of a person who drowned in the deep pit created by the stone crusher," the bench also comprising Justices

Sudhir Agarwal and Arun Kumar Tyagi said. The committee formed by the NGT comprises Justice Janak Raj Kotwal, former Judge of J-K High Court along with officials from the Central Pollution Control Board,

state pollution control board, nominee of Secretary Irrigation, J-K and District Magistrate, Rajouri.

"The Committee may consider the reports already furnished and if found necessary, undertake a visit to the site and interact with stakeholders. Justice Kotwal may fix his own honorarium to be paid by the State PCB.

The registry may forward a copy of the entire record to Justice JR Kotwal to enable the entire matter to be looked into. The report may be filed within three months by email," the bench said.

The tribunal was hearing a plea filed by village head Arti Sharma against operation of stone crushers in violation of environmental norms in Rajouri district.

## Mahadayi sanctuary not to be declared as tiger reserve

**Panaji, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Goa Forest Minister Vishwajit Rane ruled out the possibility of declaring Mahadayi Wildlife Sanctuary and its surrounding protected areas as tiger reserve.

Rane was responding to the demand made by environmentalists to declare the entire area around Mahadayi wildlife sanctuary, located in the north-eastern part of the state, as a tiger reserve, after big cats were recently spotted in these areas.

The minister said that there were no native tigers in the state. The sightings that were reported are of a tiger that travels from neighbouring Karnataka. The



Goa's Mahadayi Wildlife Sanctuary

tiger is in transit, it is not native to the region, Rane said, quoting the information he had received from the state forest department. There was no use declaring the area as tiger reserve, he said.

The minister further said that the forest department was working to attract more people to wildlife in the state by setting up various activities under hinterland tourism.

## BRIEF

### Approves

**Beirut:** Lebanon's government approved the demolition of the huge grain silos in Beirut's port, gutted in the devastating 2020 explosion that killed 216 people and ravaged parts of the Lebanese capital. Information Minister Ziad Makari made the announcement after a Cabinet meeting, citing the risk of collapse of the once towering cement structure jutting from the Beirut coastline that was shredded by the force of the blast.

### Lawmakers

**Mogadishu:** Somalia inaugurated 290 new lawmakers, bringing the country a step closer to completing a prolonged electoral process marred by alleged corruption and irregularities. The swearing-in ceremony was held in the capital's heavily fortified Halane military camp, protected by sandbagged fences and high concrete walls. Police and African Union troops were deployed, putting Mogadishu under lockdown.

### Convicted

**Alexandria:** A jury convicted a British national for his role in an Islamic State group hostage-taking scheme that took roughly two dozen Westerners captive a decade ago, resulting in the deaths of four Americans, three of whom were beheaded. The jury deliberated for four hours before finding El Shafee Elsheikh guilty on all counts.

### Oversight

**Washington:** US regulators will soon begin cracking down on vaping companies using a now-closed loophole, including a line of fruit-flavoured e-cigarettes that have become teenagers' top choice. Under a law taking effect, the Food and Drug Administration can regulate e-cigarettes and similar products that use synthetic nicotine. The action targets Puff Bar and several other vaping companies that recently switched their formulas to laboratory-made nicotine.

### Arrest

**Arizona:** An Arizona man in US faces animal cruelty charges after 183 dead animals were found in a freezer, including some that were apparently frozen while alive, officials said. Mohave County deputies and animal control officers found the animals in a garage freezer April 3 after a woman reported that Michael Patrick Turland, 43, hadn't returned snakes she'd lent him for breeding, the Sheriff's Office said.

### Killed

**Pomfret:** A man found dead in his home with more than 100 snakes, including cobras and black mambas, died of a snake bite, officials in Maryland said. A medical examiner's office told, the victim died of snake envenomation and the death was accidental. The 49-year-old man was found dead at his home in Charles County in January.

# Zelensky hails Ukrainians' resolve

Kyiv, Apr 15 (AP):



Volodymyr Zelensky

After Moscow suffer a stinging symbolic defeat with the loss of its Black Sea fleet flagship, Ukraine's president hailed his people for their resolve since Russia invaded in February and for making 'the most important decision of their life to fight.' In his address, Volodymyr Zelensky told Ukrainians that they should be proud of having survived 50 days under Russian attack when the invaders 'gave us a maximum of five.'

Back then even friendly world leaders urged him to leave, unsure whether Ukraine could survive, he said: 'But they didn't know how brave Ukrainians are, how much we value freedom and the possibility to live the way we want.'

Listing the ways Ukraine has defended against the onslaught,

Zelensky noted 'those who showed that Russian warships can sail away, even if it's to the bottom' of the sea. It was his only reference to the guided-missile cruiser Moskva, named for the Russian capital, which became a potent target of Ukrainian defiance in the opening days of the war. It sank while being towed to port after suffering heavy damage under circumstances that re-

mained under dispute. Ukrainian officials said their forces struck the vessel with missiles, while Moscow acknowledged a fire on board but not any attack. US and other Western officials could not confirm what caused the blaze. In any case, the loss was a symbolic defeat for Russia as its troops regroup for a renewed offensive in eastern Ukraine after retreating from much of the north, including the capital, Kyiv. The Moskva had the capacity to carry 16 long-range cruise missiles, and its removal reduces Russia's firepower in the Black Sea. It's also a blow to Moscow's prestige in a war already widely seen as a historic blunder. Now entering its eighth week, the invasion has stalled amid resistance from Ukrainian fighters bolstered by weapons and other aid sent by Western nations.

## 'Dr Ambedkar's views provide compass for clarity'

World is once again debating virtues of democracy

New York, Apr 15 (PTI):

As India marked the 131st birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has said the best way of paying tribute is to advance democracy and freedoms, as he stressed that Babasaheb's views provide a compass for clarity and action at a time when not just in India but the world is once again debating the virtues of democracy.

Like all of you, I'm also humbled to pay my tribute to Babasaheb Ambedkar ji. And the best way of paying tribute is to advance democracy and freedoms because he did so much to institutionalise them in India and especially so because we are now marking 75 years of India's independence - our Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, Jaishankar said at a special commem-



EAM S Jaishankar attends function to mark 131st birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar in New York.

orative event held at the Consulate General of India here to mark Babasaheb's birth anniversary. Jaishankar also paid floral tributes to Dr Ambedkar at the event at the Consulate.

He said Dr Ambedkar's legacy as the architect of India's Constitution has become even more valuable with the passage of

time. "Dr Ambedkar's vision, Dr Ambedkar's aspirations, they are actually the blueprint that will guide us as our nation moves towards the centenary of our independence. He emphasised that this is also a time when not just in India but actually the world is once again debating the virtues of democracy and at this

## 'GOOD FRIDAY' RITUAL



Devotees take part in the annual 'Way of the Cross' ritual during a Good Friday service in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Friday.

## US lawmakers signal support for Taiwan in visit

Taipei, Apr 15 (AP):

US lawmakers visiting Taiwan on Friday made a pointed and public declaration of their support for the self-governing island democracy while also issuing a warning to China.

The six lawmakers met with Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen on Friday and will also meet with the island's defense minister.

Sen. Robert Menendez of New Jersey gave a speech praising Taiwan's democracy and its global status as a manufacturer of semi-conductor chips used in everything from cars to smartphones, and he warned of consequences if that status were jeopardized.

'It is a country of global significance, of global consequence, of global impact, and therefore it should be understood the security of Taiwan has a global impact for those



American Congressional delegation meet with Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen at the Presidential Office in Taipei, Taiwan, Friday.

who would wish it ill,' said Menendez, the head of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, in a speech from Taiwan's Presidential Office.

He emphasized that 'we seek no conflict with China as I believe Taiwan seeks no conflict with China.'

The delegation, led by Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, also includes Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina, Sen. Robert Portman of Ohio,

Sen. Benjamin Sasse of Nebraska and Rep. Ronny Jackson of Texas.

Tsai said she welcomed their visit and hoped it would help to further deepen US-Taiwan cooperation.

'Russia's invasion of Ukraine has proven that democracies must bolster their alliances and collectively we can defend ourselves from the threats posed by authoritarian nations that seek to disrupt regional peace,' said Tsai.

## Expanding drought leaves western US scrambling for water



Sand bars developing in the Rio Grande on the northern edge of Albuquerque.

**New Mexico, Apr 15 (AP):** Tumbleweeds drift along the Rio Grande as sand bars within its banks widen. Smoke from distant wildfires and dust kicked up by intense spring winds fill the valley, exacerbating the feeling of distress that is beginning to weigh on residents. One of North America's longest rivers, the Rio Grande is another example of a waterway in the western US that's tapped out. From the Pacific Northwest to the Colorado River Basin, irrigation districts already are

warning farmers to expect less this year despite growing demands fueled by ever-drying conditions. Climate experts say March marked the third straight month of below-average precipitation across the US and areas of record dryness are expanding in the West. Federal water managers shared their annual operating plan for the Rio Grande, a major water source for millions people and thousands of square miles of farmland in Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and Mexico.

## COVID cases continue to surge record high in Shanghai

Beijing, Apr 15 (PTI):

China on Friday reported more than 3,400 positive and 20,700 asymptomatic coronavirus cases, majority of them in Shanghai as the city of 26 million continued to reel under over fortnight long lockdown to contain the virus amid growing discontent among locals over lack of food and medical supplies.

The positive cases continued to be the highest in Shanghai.

The Chinese mainland reported 3,472 locally transmitted confirmed COVID-19 cases, besides 20,782 asymptomatic cases, according to the National Health Commission (NHC).

China's economic hub Shanghai reported 3,200 confirmed locally transmitted COVID-19 cases and 19,872 local asymptomatic carriers, the municipal health commission said on Friday. The city



Two residents give shares of the garlands and green onions in lockdown, Shanghai on Friday.

has already conducted many rounds of testing and built temporary hospitals, including in stadiums and swimming pools to treat both positive and asymptomatic cases.

On Wednesday China reported 3,020 new confirmed and 26,391 asymptomatic COVID infections as the cases continue the spiral upward challenging the country's zero-virus case policy. Over the past

24 hours, 28,778 close contacts of coronavirus patients were released from medical observation on the mainland, the NHC said. Significantly, the cases of coronavirus, which emerged first in Wuhan 2019 and turned into a global pandemic, are spiralling in China when the rest of the world began relaxing all the controls after bringing the virus under control.

## North Korea marks key anniversary, but no word on parade

Seoul, Apr 15 (AP):

North Korea is marking a key state anniversary Friday with calls for stronger loyalty to leader Kim Jong Un, but there was no word on an expected military parade to display new weapons amid heightened animosities with the United States.

The 110th birth anniversary of Kim's late grandfather and state founder, Kim Il Sung, comes after North Korea conducted a spate of weapons tests in

recent months, including its first full-range intercontinental ballistic missile launch since 2017. Experts say North Korea aims to expand its weapons arsenal and ramp up pressure on the United States amid long-stalled nuclear diplomacy.

People walk past a poster displayed as part of celebrations marking the 110th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang on Friday.



'Let's work harder in devotion to our respected comrade Kim Jong Un and on that path ultimately realize the dreams of our great president (Kim Il Sung) to build a powerful socialist state,' the North's state-run website Uriminzokkiri said in a commentary. The North's main Rodong Sinmun newspaper said North Korea is revering Kim Il Sung as 'eternal president' under the 'outstanding leadership of comrade Kim Jong Un.'

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**CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT/Engineering & Project Division**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE (Open Tender Enquiry for Domestic Bidding)**

Tender Enquiry No: HO (Contracts)/Add. Classrooms DAV/Kirandul/2022/821 dated 16.04.2022  
(MSTC Ref. No.: NMDC/HO/3/22-23/ET/52)

NMDC Limited, a "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India invites online bids for "CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL CLASS ROOMS AT DAV SCHOOL, BIOM, KIRANDUL COMPLEX, DANTEWADA (CG)" on item rate basis, from prospective domestic bidders who fulfil the Pre-Qualification Criteria.

Detailed NIT and tender document including pre-qualification requirements can be viewed/downloaded from 16.04.2022 to 17.05.2022 from the following websites:

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- Public Procurement Portal: http://www.eprocure.gov.in
- MSTC portal: https://www.mstccommerce.com/eprocure/nmdc/buyer\_login.jsp

For accessing the bid document from NMDC website, the bidder has to register as "New User" at NMDC's website link https://nmcdportals.nmdc.co.in/nmcdtender

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The bidders are requested to submit their bids online through MSTC Limited website. The details of submission of bid through online are given in NIT.

The bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC website/ CPP portal/ MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.

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**Chief General Manager (Contracts)**



# CENTRAL Chronicle

Since 1974 Volume 10 No. 16

## Rice fortification

The Union Cabinet this month has approved a scheme to distribute fortified rice under government programmes which was announced by the Prime Minister in his Independence Day speech. The entire cost of rice fortification - around Rs 2,700 crore per annum - would be borne by the government of India as part of food subsidy till its full implementation upto June, 2024. This is less than 2 percent of national food subsidy. The distribution will happen throughout the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in three phases under Food Security Act (NFSA), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman-PM POSHAN (erstwhile Mid-Day Meal Scheme) and Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) of Government of India in all States and Union Territories (UTs) by 2024 in a phased manner. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) defines fortification as 'deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in a food so as to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health'. Rice is a staple food for more than half the global population and is widely consumed in many developing countries. India is not only the second-largest producer of rice in the world, accounting for some 20 per cent of global production, it is also among the largest consumers of this grain. More than 50 percent of India's 1.2 billion people depend on rice for sustenance. Per capita rice consumption in India is 6.8 kg per month. Therefore, fortifying rice with micronutrients is an option to supplement the diet of the poor. Despite its high calorie content, rice is a poor supplier of micronutrients and has a low overall nutritional value beyond carbohydrates and protein. This is because the white rice milling process removes both the fat and the more nutrient-rich bran layers.

India continues to grapple with a high rate of under-nutrition. Stunting has lifelong consequences on human capital, poverty and equity. Looking at the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 data released, India needs to act now by enhancing its programme effectiveness and reach. The situation calls for robust policies and strengthened actions to end hunger in the country. Malnutrition has devastating effects on children's health and all other aspects of their growth. As many as 60 percent of child deaths in India are due to malnutrition as weaker children have very low immunity and as a result, these weak children are unable to fight with diseases. Also, in the early years of life, they lag behind other children in schooling and other activities. Various technologies are available for rice fortification, such as coating and dusting. For rice fortification in India, 'extrusion' is considered to be the best technology. This involves the production of fortified rice kernels (FRKs) from a mixture using an extruder machine. The fortified rice kernels are then blended with regular rice to produce fortified rice. Meanwhile, opinion is divided on the efficacy and value of consuming fortified rice. The basic purpose of food fortification is to improve the nutritional quality and provide public health benefits to the population with minimal risks. But there is the need to use food additives in permitted quantities to make it palatable. The technological process also increases costs. The cooking of fortified rice does not require any special procedure. The rice needs to be cleaned and washed in the normal way before cooking. After cooking, fortified rice retains the same physical properties and micronutrient levels as it had before cooking. Seven countries have mandated rice fortification, the United States, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, and the Solomon Islands.

## Laser weapons race

Israel revealed that a laser air defence system, it is developing successfully shot down drones, rockets, mortars, and anti-tank missiles in a first series of tests last month. The ministry has been testing the laser-based defence system for several years, shooting down a drone with it last year. The recent tests were the first to be successful against the other threats, including unguided projectiles and anti-tank guided missiles. Its research and development department initially planned to deploy the anti-missile system by 2024, but the military has pushed for an earlier deployment. This Israeli system is called Iron Beam. The US Navy announced this week, that during an Office of Naval Research (ONR) test in February, an all-electric, high-energy laser weapon was employed for the first time to neutralize a target simulating a subsonic cruise missile in flight. The weapon utilized in the test was Lockheed Martin-designed Layered Laser Defence (LLD) that was developed to serve as a multi-domain, multi-platform demonstration system. The LLD testing, according to the US Navy, is part of a larger strategy by the naval research and development community to advance technologies and deploy a line of laser weapons that can counter diverse threats with a multitude of rising options, in collaboration with the fleet.

While the LLD will not be deployed, it does provide a glimpse into the future of laser weaponry, said the Navy. It's compact and potent, yet more efficient than prior models. Researchers in China have developed a microwave machine Relativistic Klystron Amplifier (RKA), that could jam or destroy satellites in space. The device can generate a wave burst measuring 5-megawatts in the Ka-band, a portion of the electromagnetic spectrum increasingly used for both civil and military purposes. Although not powerful enough to shoot targets out of the sky from the ground, the RKA can be mounted onto satellites, which could then be used to attack enemy assets in space by burning out their sensitive electronics. Last month, Royal Navy of UK revealed plans to test a laser weapon for the first time onboard a Type 23 frigate, which will be used to detect, track, engage, and counter unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). In India, DRDO has several directed energy weapons projects but the efforts need to be accelerated. Lack of precision engineering manufacturing will be obstacle for India to develop laser weapons. Directed energy weapons using lasers is new dimension of warfare.

Central Chronicle welcomes, articles, write ups, comments on different issues for editorial page (800-900 words), Letter to editor for this page. It can be sent by e-mail at: editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com  
The letters can be edited or rewritten for clarity of thoughts.

## FLOWERING OF CHERRY



A woman watches under a flowering Japanese cherry tree on western walkway of Buda's Castle Hill in Budapest.

## Transcending politics with space flight

DR CHAITANYA GIRI



As global tensions rise, India's burgeoning space programme could become a tool for peace. The 61st anniversary of the fabled first flight of Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin will prompt mixed feelings. Celebrated every year as the International Day of Human Space Flight was unique in many ways. Ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Myanmar, economic collapse in Sri Lanka and Pakistan, severe drought in Madagascar, and the COVID-19 global pandemic have put tremendous pressure on international trade and relations. Not many human pursuits can take us out of such dire circumstances; human space flight is one. The profession of astronautics is strong on marvel and inspiration. These attributes go far beyond national borders and the agencies that carry them out. Until human space flight becomes as mundane as suburban travel, it will motivate people worldwide. Yuri Gagarin is celebrated as much by the Americans as by the Russians. Black trainee astronaut Edward Dwight is an inspiration not only to African Americans but also to native Africans. Astronauts of Indian descent Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams are muses to Americans and the Indian populace, including the vast 'desi' diaspora.

Flight into the global commons of outer space is flight into open and unowned expanses. Indeed, as the Americans and Soviets raced to the Moon, neither extended their political acrimony into space. However, things have gradually changed. Outer space today is frequently visited by space

agencies and private-sector players. Almost every high- and middle-income economy has at least one satellite orbiting the planet. From foreign space enterprises, nations receive downstream space-utilisation services: satellite telecommunications, meteorology, remote sensing. Satellites are being miniaturised and rocket launches can be done on demand. This conducive environment for frequent small satellite launches has led to constellations of thousands of satellites. Skylab, Mir, Salyut and the International Space Station (ISS) were accustomed to traffic-free orbits. Not anymore. Contemporary human space flight must dodge through the densely packed satellite constellations in Earth's orbit.

In December 2021 China notified the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs that it took evasive action to prevent two Starlink satellites operated by the American aerospace company SpaceX from colliding with the Tianhe module of its nascent space station. Chinese media speculated that the American company might have been deliberately testing Chinese manoeuvrability. A month earlier, operators of the ISS publicised how they had had to manoeuvre the space station to avoid hitting a piece of the defunct Fengyun-1C satellite, which had been blown to smithereens by a 2007 Chinese anti-satellite missile test. India, too, is entering the echelons of human space flight. Its first orbital crewed mission, Gaganyaan, is planned for 2023. The Indian Space Research Organisation is also working to raise

a compact space station by the early 2030s and place it in low Earth orbit. As the Russo-Ukrainian War continues, it is evident that the simpatico between the US and Russia is spiralling into a chasm. The escalation of tensions has led to speculation about their collaboration on the ISS. If they were to divorce, the US and Russia will seek partners that share their vocal disdain for the other bloc. The creation of blocs may dislodge any hotline or détente mechanism that would previously have alleviated differences. In this scenario, the role of neutral nations - those that do not belong to any bloc but work with both - will become vital in cooling off confrontations between the two.

Nations will not be peacekeepers as such, but they will help maintain equilibrium. According to realist theory, a nation's power and status include technology and military power. Space technology is a dual-use technology and a symbol of a country's overall technological and military power. Great powers invest in the space sector in order to gain power and status. Manned flight was the result of the United States-Soviet Union space race during the Cold War. The US and the Soviet Union competed fiercely to land a crewed vessel on the Moon, and ultimately the US won the race. Both Russia and France have immensely assisted India with the Gaganyaan programme: Russia with training for the Indian astronauts, or vyomanauts, and France with its competence in space medicine. In turn, India is likely to invite universities and private space startups from developed and developing economies to participate in the Indian Space Station by contributing cutting-edge scientific payloads and performing groundbreaking experiments. After the 2010s, the space powers began a new race to the Moon. They sought lunar sovereignty under the pretext of mining the Moon for minerals (or at least jurisdiction over the mining areas). Although manned lunar landings and exploitation of lunar resources are beneficial to human society, participating coun-

tries (especially the US) were really aiming to increase their own power and status.

In line with the above, some countries use space technology as an arm of diplomacy and as a tool to advance national interests - for example, by offering or denying space technology to other countries. During the Cold War era, the US provided space technology to its allies, friends and partners to enhance and consolidate US leadership in the West; conversely, the Soviet Union denied space technology to its partners to keep them under its control. As a result, the US and the West won the Cold War-era space competition. India could encourage greater participation from South America, Africa, Eastern Europe, Central and West Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. A diplomatic hand, full of soft power, could be extended to countries from these regions. Encouraging universities and research institutions from developing economies to build payloads would have a progressive impact on the quality of education they impart. India could benefit from bright ideas coming from these countries, and it may lead to fruitful collaborations. The Indian Space Station could become a hallmark of harmonious international scientific progress in the global commons. The International Day of Human Space Flight 2022 will be brimming with constructive developments, from Gaganyaan to Tianhe to the US-led Artemis programme. But the day will also be rife with concerns about space debris, the malignant growth of satellite constellations, and technological competitiveness mutating into conflict in Earth's orbit. India has the task of progressing its space programme thoughtfully, without joining any blocs, and demonstrating stability in stormy waters. Peace can be achieved by forging partnerships with friendly nations from both blocs for the Indian Space Station. Human space flight continues to be an endeavour that can transcend the politics of Earth.

(Dr Chaitanya Giri is space policy and diplomacy consultant at RISDC, New Delhi.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Balancing blocs

The war will end, and leaders will shake hands. That old woman will keep waiting for her martyred son. And those children will keep waiting for their hero father. This famous line for the infamous conducts reverberates every time with a same sense of grief and emotions. Yes we are once again witnessing the crisis of conscience this time from the warzone hotbed, the capital city of Ukraine, Kyiv, where the Russians are bombarding the city. The conflict is not new, it dates back to the Cold War era, where the two blocs led by Capitalist USA on one side and Socialist USSR on the other were on their mission to extend their sphere of influence. Ukraine with a population of 43 million is a huge market. Second Ukraine is industrially most productive. Ukraine is a significantly an important source and supplier of raw materials, including, for instance, semiconductor-grade neon used in semiconductor manufacturing which is sought by the advanced nations as the most important ingredient for the 4th Industrial Revolution. This prompted Russians to take Ukraine under the Eurasian Economic community (EAEU) which is a regional organization led by Russia aimed for the economic integration of its member states. Russia is surrounded by Arctic and Pacific oceans in the north and east respectively so it is relatively safe on these fronts. The probable threat Russia presumes comes from the western border. History also corroborates this fact. Russians were attacked from the western fronts by Napoleonic France in 1812 and Nazi Germany at the time of the Second World War in 1941. This is the geographical ease and convenience the attackers might take into consideration today. The present day Russia is facing economic hardship and the vaccination project has not gone well. All this downgraded President Putin approval rating, so to boost his popularity what could be better than diverting the population to the matter of national importance posed by external treat. New Delhi must be calculative in its approach as any untimely and hasty measures might have serious repercussions. New Delhi has to balance its stand between the blocs. Minister of External Affairs of India S. Jaishankar's efforts for a diplomatic effort is well thought of as Russia is an all-weather friend and a major defense supplier to India, apart from being a major economic trade partner. India's diplomatic balancing act is the need of the hour.

Rajat, via email

### Alternative politics

Before pent up anger takes an ugly turn, the Rajapakas should make way for an alternative political arrangement in Sri Lanka. It is obvious that the country expects the political leadership to rise to the occasion. Perhaps the leader of the Opposition should take the initiative to form an interim government, get the best available economic expertise and formulate a plan of action. The new leader should not hesitate to solicit the help of friendly neighbours. People should be asked to be prepared to face some tough decisions. But the most important task for such a leader is to carry with him all sections of the people, from north to south.

Kosara, via email



## WHAT THEY TWEET!

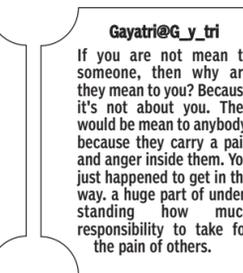


**vasabjit@vasabjit\_b**  
Some of the same people in Washington, DC who are chanting that there's nothing to worry about China's intervention in Latin America will be the first to scream for overt and covert intervention when the region's pro-China regimes threaten our core interests.

**kaulvivek@kaul\_vivek**  
The fact that banks no longer fund affordable homes is a long term trend. The proportion of priority home loans which fund affordable homes has fallen dramatically over the last 15 years. The proportion of non-priority home loans which funds homes for the rich, has increased.



**Aunindyo@AunindyoC**  
It is the Nehruvian policy of becoming self-sufficient in food production that is going to save India in the coming months, as the world gets ready for a massive food crisis. Import substitution is, and will always be, the only way for a domestic economy to grow.



**Gayatri@G\_y\_tri**  
If you are not mean to someone, then why are they mean to you? Because it's not about you. They would be mean to anybody, because they carry a pain and anger inside them. You just happened to get in the way. A huge part of understanding how much responsibility to take for the pain of others.



**Chandrashekhar@cbdhage**  
Sammruddhi Mahamarg Mumbai Nagpur Expressway PKG 7 Progress.



**Brahma@Chellaney**  
It's raining weapons: Flow of high-tech Western weaponry to Ukraine is turning into a raging torrent, as Biden releases \$800 million more in manned and unmanned systems. The staggering volume and range of war materiel promises to prolong the war and ordinary Ukrainians' misery.

**Vinaya Pai@vinaya\_pai**  
I was a Clothing and Textiles major in my college studies. We had some history of clothing and we were told about how, before stitching came, draped garments were the norm. And the example given was the Roman toga. And so clueless we were, that we never asked why the sari.

## BRIEF

### Launches

**New Delhi:** Agro-chemicals firm Insecticides India Ltd (IIL) on Friday announced the launch of three new crop protection products for paddy, vegetables and maize, and hoped better sales amid the projection of normal monsoon this year. The new products include 'Shinwa', an insecticide for vegetables; 'Izuki', a fungicide for paddy and 'Torry', a herbicide for maize crop. IIL managing director Rajesh Aggarwal said. The company expects good demand for 'Shinwa' and 'Izuki', and sales to cross Rs 100 crore by next year. Aggarwal told PTI. The production of these products will be undertaken at its facilities at Chopanki in Rajasthan and Dahej in Gujarat where brownfield expansion with an investment of Rs 300 crore is going to be completed during first quarter of this fiscal, he said.

### Raises

**New Delhi:** Bike taxi platform Rapido on Friday said it has raised USD 180 million (over Rs 1,370 crore) in a Series D round of funding led by new investor Swiggy. The round also saw investment from TVS Motor Company, along with existing investors Westbridge, Shell Ventures and Nexus Ventures, the company said. The funds would be used to bolster technology, amplify and strengthen teams across diverse sets of capabilities, and increase overall supply to create an enhanced consumer experience across a larger audience base in metros, tier I, II and III cities, it added.

### Power

**Panaji:** The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Goa chapter has said power shortages, outages and unplanned shutdowns were affecting industries in the state though the government has maintained there were no electricity supply constraints. Power Minister Sudin Dhavalikar had claimed Goa does not face any power supply issues like in states such as Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh, industries are not running even for five hours a day sometimes due to load-shedding. He is far better, Dhavalikar had said after attending a meeting of the power department.

### Lease

**New Delhi:** Greenbase Industrial & Logistics Park on Friday said it has given on lease 2 lakh square feet industrial space to Jost India in its township at Chennai. Global firm Jost India manufactures components for commercial vehicles and agricultural equipment. Greenbase Industrial & Logistics Park is a joint venture between Niranjan Hiranandani Group and Blackstone. Greenbase said in a statement it has entered into a "lease deal of 2 lakh square feet built to suit industrial space for Jost India." The lease deal is signed for a tenure of 10 years.

# Foundry industry aiming to double mkt size to USD 32 bn

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The domestic foundry industry is aiming to double its market size to USD 32 billion and annual production capacity to 21 million tonnes (MT) over the next 5-7 years, industry body IIF said on Friday.

The industry is also expected to attract investment of Rs 500 crore from domestic and as well as international players. Institute of Indian Foundrymen (IIF) President Devendra Jain said while announcing the '70th Indian Foundry Congress and IFEX' event.

The three-day event will begin from April 17, 2022 in Gandhinagar, he said in a virtual media interaction.

Jain said the current market size of the Indian foundry industry is at USD 16 billion with capacity of 10.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA). The industry employees around 5 lakh people di-



rectly and 15 lakh indirectly. "Our aim is to double our market size to USD 32 billion in 5-7 years, double our capacity and job opportunities," he said.

Replying to a question on likely investment for the targeted capacity expansion, he said various domestic and international players are looking to set up capacities in India as "we are a growing market. We are receiving a lot of enquiries (for invest-

ment)". Investment of Rs 500 crore is expected by the players in the industry, he added. Jain further said there are certain challenges facing the sector, including raw material prices which have shot up significantly in the past few months. In November 2021, prices of pig iron and steel scrap stood at Rs 44 and Rs 39 per kg, respectively. In March, the rates of the two items have climbed to Rs 68 and Rs 52

a kg. Similarly, one kg of ferro alloy silicon, which was costing Rs 140 in November, is now priced at Rs 240, he noted.

This has impacted production cost which has grown by about 50 per cent, Jain said, adding "70 percent of our production is consumed by the automobile sector." Besides, the foundry industry supplies items to industries like railways, engineering and wind energy generators, among others.

"The 70th Indian Foundry Congress and IFEX 2022 is among the first few large-scale industry events since the pandemic situation started easing. It has received an excellent response with companies from India and overseas. "We are confident it will play the role of a catalyst in helping the foundry industry reach the pre-pandemic levels," Subodh Panchal of the Indian Foundry Congress said.

## Asian shares fall, trading muted with holidays

**Tokyo, Apr 15 (AP):**

Asian shares fell in muted trading as most world markets were closed for Good Friday and other holidays.

Benchmarks declined in Tokyo, Seoul and Shanghai. Sydney, Manila, Bangkok and Hong Kong were among Asian markets observing holidays on Friday. US and European markets also were closed.

After markets closed, China's central bank freed up extra money for lending to support the slowing economy by cutting the amount of reserves commercial banks are required to hold. The move added about 500 billion yuan (\$85 billion) to the pool for lending, a relatively modest sum compared with the size of China's economy.

Shutdowns in major Chinese cities due to coronavirus outbreaks and the war in Ukraine have been weighing on sentiment. "The Russia-Ukraine conflict inflation effects are now more meaningful than direct military developments in a market sense. These consequences have fabricated an uncertain environment that could keep investors wary," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

## Fund raising via debt placement hits 6-yr low at Rs 5.88 lakh crore

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Fund raising by listed companies through private placement of corporate bonds plunged to a six-year low in 2021-22 to Rs 5.88 lakh crore owing to good performance of the equities and aggressive fund disbursement by banks at lower interest rate.

This was 24 per cent lower from a record Rs 7.72 lakh crore mobilised in 2020-21, data with Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed. Unless the high government borrowings and adverse interest rate cycle play spoilsport, the ongoing financial year is expected to be robust in terms of fund raising activities through the debt route on account of higher demand for credit from corporates in light of the improving economic outlook, experts said. "During FY23, there should be some increase in raising of debt through bonds as corporate India presses the pedal on the next major phase of



the capex cycle. Also, with a potentially rising interest rate scenario, these bond issuances should evince good interest from risk seeking investors," Ricky Kirpalani, Lead Sponsor, First Water Capital Fund (AIF) said.

Vibhor Mittal, Chief Business Officer, CredAvenue, believes issuance volumes in the private debt market are improving on account of higher demand for credit from issuers in light of the improving economic outlook. However, dampeners to the cause could be high government borrowings that may crowd out private placements and adverse interest rate cycles.

## Coal supply to power plants rises 25% in FY-22

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Coal supply to electricity generating plants increased by 24.5 per cent to 677.67 million tonnes in FY22 compared to that of the preceding fiscal, the government data said on Friday.

Despite increased supplies, there were reports of fuel shortage at various thermal power units due to soaring energy demand.

The data, however, showed that the supply of coal to power utilities stood at 544.07 MT in FY21, which was less than 567.25 MT recorded in FY20.

"The power utilities despatch has grown by 19.47 per cent to 677.67 MT during FY22 as compared to 567.25 MT in FY20. Fall



in import prices have been observed since the end of October 2021, however, import prices are still at high level to discourage coal import," it said.

The coal dispatch to the power sector increased to 65.36 MT last month from 57.97 MT during the same period in FY21, it added.

The overall dispatch of coal also rose to 818.14 MT in FY22 from 691.39 MT in FY21.

## Maruti Suzuki drives in new Ertiga starting at Rs 8.35 lakh

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The country's largest car-maker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Friday said it has launched a new version of its multi-purpose vehicle Ertiga, priced between Rs 8.35-12.79 lakh (ex-showroom).

The model comes with a 1.5 litre petrol engine paired with both manual and automatic transmissions.

The auto major has also launched CNG trims of the vehicle.

The model comes with hybrid technology and driven by an all-new advanced six-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters. Ertiga's launch ten years ago was a significant

moment in the Indian automobile industry, as it created a new segment that has been growing at a CAGR



(compound annual growth rate) of 4.7 per cent," MSI Managing Director & CEO Hisashi Takeuchi noted. The next-gen Ertiga with advanced technology features comes with a new engine and an all-new transmission, he added.

"As it stays true to its

brand vision of providing comfort, technology, and safety features, while being fuel-efficient for customers, the next-gen Ertiga will surely continue to be India's go-to MPV. We are confident

that the next-gen Ertiga will be widely embraced by our customers," Takeuchi stated. Available both in petrol and CNG options, Ertiga offers a mileage of 20.51 km/l (petrol) and 26.11km/kg (CNG). In an interaction with PTI, MSI Senior Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava said the multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) segment has been witnessing growth over the last few years.

## Elon Musk wants to buy Twitter, make it maximally trusted

**San Francisco, Apr 15 (AP):**

In 10 days, Tesla CEO Elon Musk has gone from popular Twitter contributor and critic to the company's largest individual shareholder to a would-be owner of the social platform, a whirlwind of activity that could change the service dramatically given the sometimes whimsical billionaire's self-identification as a free-speech absolutist.

Twitter revealed in a securities filing that Musk has offered to buy the company outright for more than \$43 billion, saying the social media platform 'needs to be transformed as a private company' in order to build trust with its users.

"I believe free speech is a societal imperative for a functioning democracy," Musk said in the filing. "I now realize the company will neither thrive nor serve this societal imperative in its current form."

Later in the day, during an onstage interview at the TED 2022 conference, he went even broader: "Having a public platform that is maximally trusted and broadly inclusive is extremely important to the future of civilization."

Since it burst onto the scene in 2006, Twitter has been home to flourishing social and political commentary, shared news, scandal gossip, cat memes and dress color arguments.

## Services exports to Australia likely to reach USD 5 bn by 2027

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Services exports to Australia are expected to more than double to USD 5 billion in the next five years on the back of the trade pact signed between the two nations, the Services Exports Promotion Council (SEPC) said on Friday.

SEPC Chairman Sunil H Talati said that sectors that will be benefited immensely from the pact include telecommunications, computer, information, travel, research and development, professional and management consulting services.

India and Australia on April 2 inked an economic cooperation and trade agreement (ECTA) to boost economic ties.



"SEPC expects exports to reach USD 5 billion by 2027 from the current USD 1.9 billion," Talati said.

He added that the council will be the nodal organisation for creating and promoting business opportunities for India's services sector in Australia in the given framework of the pact.

## Nepal finance minister calls non-residents to open dollar accounts

**Kathmandu, Apr 15 (PTI):**

The Nepal government has urged Nepalese nationals living abroad to open dollar accounts in banks in the country and make investments amidst the economic crisis in the Himalayan nation.

Nepal's foreign reserves have been hit by a slump in tourism during the pandemic, a problem that has also hit Sri Lanka which is going through a crippling economic crisis since gaining independence from the UK in 1948. Speaking at a virtual interaction organised by the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA), Nepal's Finance Minister Janardan Sharma said that opening dollar accounts in Nepalese banks by Non-resident Nepalese (NRN) would help the country to get rid of the current foreign currency crunch.

## Pharma industry must focus on generic

### Better link between input and output

**Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday asked the domestic pharmaceutical industry to strengthen its generic medicine sector and ensure better linkage between input and output of products to become self-reliant.

Speaking at an event hosted by the Indian Drug Manufacturers' Association (IDMA) to commemorate its Golden Jubilee celebrations here, Goyal also asked the industry to plan for a long-term to tackle challenges related to global supply chain. "The phenomenal growth that we have seen



Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal at Golden Jubilee of IDMA in Mumbai on Friday.

in the last ten years should be carried forward to ensure that we become self-sufficient. Global supply chains are becoming more and more difficult to predict. The challenges are getting unimaginably serious," he said. In this situation, the minister said, "it's

extremely important that we focus not only on our strengths in the generic sector but also ensure our backward and forward linkages."

"We should plan for the long term to become more and more self-sufficient and with that we will go to

the world with the confidence of a powerful nation, engaging with the world on equal terms for a better future for our industry," Goyal said, adding that India's aim should be to become the healthcare custodian of the world.

Stressing on the need for mutual support within the industry, the minister said, "Every country does protect its core industry and I feel our core industry is the pharma industry." Goyal also mentioned government measures like the production-linked incentive scheme for the manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredient and medical devices and said, "I do hope that many of the manufacturers in the pharma industry are taking advantage of the scheme."

## Air India starts restoring salaries in phased manner to pre-pandemic levels

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Air India is restoring salaries of employees in a phased manner to pre-pandemic levels as the aviation sector is recovering with the decline of COVID-19 cases in the country, according to the airline's official document on Tuesday.

Indian aviation sector was badly hit due to the pandemic-induced travel restrictions during the last two years and therefore, all airlines in India had cut salaries.

Air India's document on Tuesday said pilots' flying allowance, special pay and wide body allowance were cut by 35 per cent, 40 per



cent and 40 per cent, respectively, after the onset of the pandemic. From April 1 this year, flying allowance, special pay and wide body allowance of pilots are being restored by 20 per cent, 25 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively, the document stated.

Cabin crew members' flying allowance and wide body allowance was cut by 15 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively, during the peak of the pandemic, the document noted. Flying allowance and wide body allowance of cabin crew members are being re-

stored by 10 and five per cent, respectively, from April 1, the document said.

The allowances given to officers' and other staff members were cut by 50 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively, during the pandemic, it mentioned.

While officers' allowances are being restored by 25 per cent from April 1, other staff members' allowances are being restored to pre-pandemic level from April 1, it noted.

Gross emoluments given to Indian employees who are based at foreign locations was cut by 10 per cent at a maximum of USD 300 during the pandemic, it said.

## Egypt approves India as wheat supplier

**New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):**

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said Egypt, which is one of the largest importers of wheat from Ukraine and Russia, has approved India as a wheat supplier.

There is a sharp decline in availability of wheat in the global markets due to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Both the nations are major producers and exporters of wheat.

Egypt imported wheat worth about USD 1.8 billion from Russia and USD 610.8 million from Ukraine in 2020. The African nation is looking to import 1 million tonne of wheat from India and would need 2,40,000 tonne in April. Indian farmers are feeding the world.



Egypt approves India as a wheat supplier. Modi Govt steps in as the world looks for reliable alternate sources for steady food supply. Our farmers have ensured our granaries overflow and we are ready to serve the world, Goyal said in a tweet.

India's wheat exports increased to USD 1.74 billion in April-January 2021-22 as against USD 340.17 million in the same period last year. In 2019-20, wheat exports were worth USD 61.84 million, which rose to USD 549.67 million in 2020-21. India's wheat exports are

mainly to neighbouring countries with Bangladesh having the largest share of more than 54 per cent in both volume and value terms in 2020-21. It has entered new wheat markets such as Yemen, Afghanistan, Qatar and Indonesia.

The top ten countries importing Indian wheat in 2020-21 were Bangladesh, Nepal, the United Arab Emirates, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Afghanistan, Qatar, Indonesia, Oman and Malaysia. India accounts for less than 1 per cent in the world's wheat export. However, its share has increased from 0.14 per cent in 2016 to 0.54 per cent in 2020. India is the second largest producer of wheat with a share of around 14.14 per cent in the world's total production in 2020.

## I am a working woman in real life too: Mansi Parekh

Two years later, the beautiful actress Manasi Parekh, who worked as a co-star of Paresh Rawal in the Gujarati film 'Dear Father' and won much acclaim, will now be seen opposite actor Sharman Joshi. Let us tell you that Mansi has also worked with Vicky Kaushal in 'Uri: The Surgical Strike' earlier, apart from this she has been a part of Gujarati hit film 'GolKeri' and web series. She shared many interesting things.

**After two years you appeared in the Gujarati film 'Dear Father', apart from this, in which upcoming film will you be seen?**

After Dear Father, I am doing a film with Sharman Joshi, in between I have shot a Hindi film with Pankaj ji, Dimple ji which is going to release very soon, apart from this I am also doing a Gujarati film.

**How was the experience of working with Paresh Rawal for the first time in the film 'Dear Father'?**

It was very nice Paresh ji is a very veteran artist, it is every artist's dream to work with him and got to learn a lot by working with Paresh ji, I have fights, emotional scenes with him, he has been very supportive in all of them. And whenever he



comes on the set, he brings with him the experience of one and a half hundred films. But he is so humble and hard working even at this age, so it was great to work with him.

**You worked with Vicky Kaushal in 'Uri', have worked with other big stars, and now you are doing films continuously, how much does the experience of your past films prove to be of help to you for a new project?**

I think you learn something in every project, I made my Bollywood debut with 'Uri', and I had a great experience in them, and then did 'GolKeri' with Malhar Thakar, which did well at the box office. It was quite a hit, and it is said that when you keep working continuously, you get that much experience, and now back to back films are coming, it feels very good, normal people say that the actress career after marriage and children ends but my ca-

reer has been very successful after marriage and kids. Be it television or film.

**You have lived many female characters in TV and movies, how much have you felt those characters in your real life?**

My character Alka in 'Dear Father', in real life, I am also a working woman, and I have also seen and experienced a lot of complications, so I have found a similarity in that character, I believe in the life of an actress. Every character has some part or the other. And you have to figure it out how you get it out.

**The trends of Gujarati films are moving fast towards Bollywood, yet as an actress, what change do you want to see in Gujarati films?**

There are many talented people in the Gujarati film industry, there are good directors and writers, yet sometimes it seems, as it comes to taking risks, very few people take risks. Although I am a producer myself, I have also produced the film 'GolKeri'. And I am producing a new film, at the moment I cannot tell you about it, but you should have fun in any industry you work in. Also, if you feel that there is a need for any change in it, then you should have the ability to bring changes in them.

That's why I am creating the work that I want to see as a producer. And the change that is needed is what we want to do by making our film. What happens in Gujarati films is that either a comedy is made or a film like Romkom is made which has the same set up, so we are trying to show different characters and different stories in our films.

**How are you making the most of your personal life along with your acting career?**

When I am not working, I like to spend time with my family and my daughter and husband, and I work by balancing all these things, there will be many women like me who work by balancing the responsibility of the family. When I am out for months, my daughter is taken care of by my mother or my husband. With my work, I want to show people that you can become a successful actress and you can also have a successful life.

**When a film or project is offered, do you seek your husband's advice?**

I don't take advice because their field is different, but discussions keep happening with them about the project. We have an open and understanding relationship. We always support each other in our career.

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who will next be seen in Vignesh Shivan's directorial 'Kaathu Vaakula Rendu Kadhal', wraps up dubbing for her role in the movie.

After wrapping up the dubbing part for 'Kaathu Vaakula Rendu Kadhal', the 'Majili' actress took to Instagram to thank her team.

The actress penned a sweet note alongside sharing a picture from the dubbing studio, which reads, "And.. Its a wrap for KRK". Dubbing done. So so excited for you guys to see this one."

"And Thank you to the amazing people around me who have made working in this film an absolute breeze.love ya", Samantha wrote, as she tagged her teammates along with director Vignesh.

Vignesh Shivan, who shared Samantha's post, responded, saying, "What a pleasure it has been to collaborate with you!! Thank you for your kind words".

Helmed by Vignesh Shivan, the movie 'Kaathu Vaakula Rendu Kadhal' stars Nayanthara, Vijay Sethupathi, and Samantha in the lead roles.

**Samantha wraps up dubbing for 'Kaathu Vaakula Rendu Kadhal'**



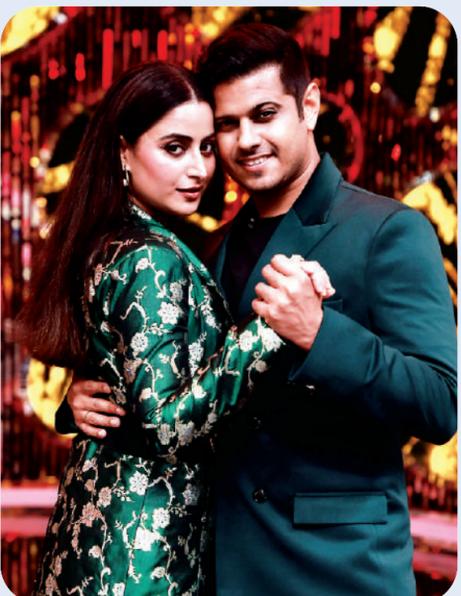
## Alka talks about her role in 'Mose Chhal Kiye Jaaye'

In the previous episodes of Sony Entertainment Television's show Mose Chhal Kiye Jaaye, the viewers witnessed how a few journalists showed up at the Oberoi household to interview Soumya (Vidhi Pandya) for her viral video where she highlighted the importance of wearing sarees in the Indian culture. As the journalists express their appreciation for Soumya's stand in her video, she credits the initiative to be that of her mother-in-law, Sushma (Alka Badola Kaushal). An elated Sushma, shows her pride in her daughter-in-law on camera, calling her 'the best daughter-in-law' in the world. Although this act clearly angers Armaan (Vijayendra Kumeria), the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law duo share a heart-warming moment together. Alka Badola



Kaushal, who essays the role of Sushma on the show, talks about how her character has always had trouble with doing what is right. She says, "Sushma has always struggled with picking the right side, mainly because her voice is often trampled in this patriarchal society. Her history of being unable to choose what is right has hurt her multiple times, and she wishes to do right for once by herself and by others."

## 'Neil and Aishwarya' reveal their honeymoon destination



"Both Aishwarya and I want to do everything together in life as we both had decided various activities that we will be doing with our life partner and waiting to be completed. Well, we both haven't seen snow yet. We would love to go on a honeymoon to a place where there is snow

so that we can see it together for the first time. Although there are many places we can go to, but one place we both would love to visit is Norway. It has snow and northern lights, which we haven't seen yet which is a very rare phenomenon and not easily available in all countries.

Actress Mrunal Thakur, who was last seen in an extended cameo appearance in Kartik Aaryan's 'Dhamaka', says that she would love to play a sportsperson on the big screen.

She says, "In India, we don't make as many films on female athletes as much as they deserve to be told and made. It is important because, through our films, aspiring athletes gets encouragement and a whole new world opens up for them. "I would personally love to essay a sportsperson on screen. To ready for it, to train for it, it's inspiring and also extremely challenging. Because you're embodying a person so far off from whom you are. And it will be something for me that would give me a wholesome experience to prepare, play and to hopefully understand getting into the skin of a character that is so different from whom I'm as a person". Mrunal will next be seen alongside Shahid Kapoor in the family sports drama 'Jersey'.



**Mrunal Thakur expresses her DESIRE to play a sportsperson on the silver screen**

## HOROSCOPE SATURDAY APRIL 16

### Aquarius: Jan 21 - Feb 18

It's likely that you'll receive some unpleasant news today, Aquarius. Perhaps there are changes occurring at work that you read about in the morning newspaper. Or it could be that you get a phone call and receive some upsetting news about an old friend.

### Pisces: Feb 19 - Mar 20

This could be a day of technical glitches and malfunctions, Pisces. It's frustrating, to be sure, but a little bit funny, too. Everything you touch, from computer to washing machine, seems to groan and shudder before finally breaking. Apparently, today you have the opposite of the Midas touch. Don't take it personally.

### Aries: Mar 21 - Apr 20

Today is filled with socializing, with a strong emphasis on the exchange of information. If you're attending a party this evening, Aries, be receptive to anyone you meet. It's likely that someone new will arrive who will have a significant impact on your life. It might be that he or she tips you off about a professional opportunity at work.

### Taurus: Apr 21 - May 21

You might want to make an extra effort to tidy up the house this morning, Taurus. It's likely that you'll have some unexpected guests. Some neighbors could drop by unannounced, or an old friend could call from her car and say she's on her way over. Take it all in stride.

### Gemini: May 22 - June 21

You'll have to let go of your usual drill-sergeant manner and simply let the day unfold as it will. Try as you might, even you won't be able to direct events today, Gemini. You could find your attention diverted from one project to another. It isn't an unpleasant day but a disjointed one.

### Cancer: June 22 - July 22

You work hard to reach your goal of financial independence, Cancer. All signs indicate that you're well on your way. Today you could receive some news that makes you realize you aren't there yet. Perhaps a relative calls to say you're no longer his/her sole beneficiary.

### Leo: July 23 - Aug 23

You're bound to be busy but happy today, Leo. You'll likely spend the morning doing chores and generally putting around the house. Don't be surprised if a friend drops by unexpectedly in the afternoon with some important news to share. Your evening could be occupied doing research at the library or on the computer.

### Virgo: Aug 24 - Sept 22

This could be a rather intense day for you, Virgo. Your mind is filled with plots for novels you want to write and ideas for ways to streamline production at work. Don't you have a "pause" switch? You'd benefit from taking some much-needed time off. You'll find that you can quiet your mind simply by sipping some tea and being still for ten minutes.

### Libra: Sept 23 - Oct 23

This is one day for you to be as flexible as possible, Libra. It may be that you begin with a specific list of items that absolutely must be done, but get distracted by some news from a friend or co-worker. What had seemed so important is no longer so, and your day shifts to accommodate this new piece of information.

### Scorpio: Oct 24 - Nov 22

You can overcome the intensity of today's planetary energies by making a conscious effort stay positive, Scorpio. Distract yourself with necessary household chores and errands. Don't forget to take some time out for fun, too. As you work around the house, stop to indulge yourself every few hours.

### Sagittarius: Nov 23 - Dec 21

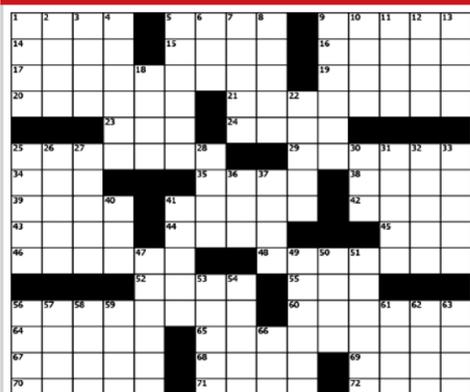
Don't take any information you receive today at face value, Sagittarius. Technical glitches will likely plague you throughout the day. Your bank statement could be incomprehensible. Bills could show up with an extra zero tacked on. Don't panic. Make some phone calls and get all the facts. Whatever you do, don't let this ruin your day.

### Capricorn: Dec 22 - Jan 20

Don't take anything you read or hear today at face value, Capricorn. It's possible that you'll receive some rather distressing news, but before you react in frustration, read the fine print. The news may not really be so bad. In fact, it may not even be true! Take a deep breath and heave a sigh of relief, then get back to your normal routine.

## CROSSWORD

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- ACROSS**
- Thick slice
  - Western state
  - Common contraction
  - Electricity carrier
  - Movie fish
  - Despise
  - Determine for sure
  - Glide
  - Minister
  - Absurdity
  - Yankee \_\_\_\_\_ Gehrig
  - \_\_\_\_\_ hygiene
  - Removed
  - Least
  - Boxer Muhammad \_\_\_\_\_
  - Border
  - Loafing
  - Band instrument
  - Run, as colors
  - Stench
  - Eve's home
  - Isn't, slangily

- That thing's
- River mouths
- Cat breed
- Short skirt
- Be indebted
- Showing lots of particulars
- Delay
- Dodge
- Domicile
- Lacks
- Self-centered
- Wallet fillers
- If not
- Cincinnati baseballers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grande
- Murphy of "Shrek"
- Vegas machines
- Succinct
- TV room
- Understands
- Army insect
- Aromatic herb
- Among
- Antiseptic substance
- Amazed
- Falling star
- Gall
- Best
- Comedian \_\_\_\_\_ Carvey
- Nights before holidays
- Foot digits
- Staff officer
- "The Diary of \_\_\_\_\_ Frank"
- Chilled
- Scottish loch
- Brother's sib



## RCB need Harshal boost to get campaign back on track against DC

Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):

Their winning streak halted by the defending champions, Royal Challengers Bangalore will hope Harshal Patel returns to the playing XI and contribute in bringing their campaign back on track when they face Delhi Capitals in an IPL match here on Saturday.

RCB were flying high with three successive wins before Chennai Super Kings outwitted them by 23 runs in their last outing.

It was absence of Harshal which hurt the team as skipper Faf du Plessis looked out of options to control the rampaging duo of Shivam Dube and Robin Uthappa, who took the bowlers to the cleaners as CSK posted a huge total on board.

Known for his variations and death bowling skills, Harshal is a vital cog in RCB's wheels and Du Plessis had admitted that the team missed his services after he left the bio-bubble on Sunday following the death of his cousin.

"You see the value of Harshal, and what he offers. He has the ability to stop the game. We missed



that tonight, we had a similar tone to the bowling. We lacked the variety we needed in our attack. Hopefully, we can have him soon again," du Plessis had said after their loss to CSK.

The 31-year-old from Haryana, who had taken 32 wickets in the 2021 edition, has emerged as one of the best T20 bowlers with his variations, which include off-cutters and slower ones, bowled with variable arm speed.

This season too, Harshal has snapped six wickets from four games at an econ-

omy of just 5.50 and remains the go-to-man for du Plessis whenever the going gets tough.

Among others, pace duo of Mohammad Siraj and Akash Deep has been taken for runs, while Wanindu Hasaranga claimed two wickets but he bled 35 in three overs in the last match.

Spin duo of Glenn Maxwell and Shahbaz too was blown away and skipper Du Plessis will expect a better show from his bowlers on Saturday.

In batting, Du Plessis and

young left-hander Anuj Rawat have given the team good starts, while Dinesh Karthik has played the role of the finisher well. Engineer-turned cricketer Shahbaz Ahmed too has impressed with his batting so far.

Former skipper Virat Kohli has blown hot and cold with two 40 plus scores but lacked consistency.

The Capitals, on the other hand, are heading into the match after a massive 44-run win over Kolkata Knight Riders.

With two back-to-back

fifties, opener Prithvi Shaw has been in sensational form, while seasoned Australian opener David Warner has provided the team solidity at the top as he provided the fireworks to set DC's massive win over KKR.

The number three spot, however, remains a concern with none of the batter tried by the team able to grab the chance. Skipper Rishabh Pant too will expect more runs from his batting.

Spinner Kuldeep Yadav has emerged as their top bowler with 10 wickets so far, while pacer Khaleel Ahmed too has taken seven scalps in three games.

South African Anrich Nortje, who looked rusty in his only outing, also remains an option, while Delhi also have plenty of bowling all-rounders such as Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur and Lalit Yadav to count on.

However, Rovman Powell has looked subdued so far and DC would expect more from him. With four out of five matches ending in a win for the team batting second, toss might also be a key factor at the Wankhede stadium.

## MI in rebuilding mode, you will see great players coming out in few years: Surya



Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):

Star batter Suryakumar Yadav urged one and all to show some patience with an out of sorts Mumbai Indians as it is currently undergoing a transition phase and results will only show up in the coming seasons with some great talents turning into finished prod-

ucts. MI have already lost their first five matches and it is now near impossible for them to get back into the reckoning for play-offs as they would need to win at least eight of the remaining nine games.

"As you have seen, it is a fresh auction and we are building this team for the next three-four years,

coming a few years down the line, you will see some great players coming out from this team," Surya said at the virtual pre-match press conference which was an indicator that MI's current season could well be over even before it reaches mid-phase of the league.

In a bold gamble at the IPL mega auction, MI think-tank have spent Rs 8-crore on English star pacer Jofra Archer despite his unavailability for the season, while it let go their left-arm pacer Trent Boult.

Their bowling has lost the sting in absence of the Kiwi pacer and the spin duo of Rahul Chahar and Krunal Pandya.

They workload has come heavily on Jasprit Bumrah as the likes of Daniel Sams, Tymal Mills, Basil Thampi and Jaydev Unadkat have looked pedestrian.

Surya cited emergence of young South African batter Dewald Brevis and young left-handed batter Tilak Varma to prove his point.

"There have been a lot of positives, not only a few; you can see Dewald (Brevis), Tilak (Varma), and many more new faces," he added.

## Zverev, Tsitsipas advance to quarterfinals in Monte Carlo

Monaco, Apr 15 (AP):

Third-ranked Alexander Zverev beat Pablo Carreno Busta 6-2, 7-5 at the Monte Carlo Masters Series quarterfinals of the clay-court season opener in Monaco.

Carreno Busta broke Zverev to open the second set and built a 3-1 lead before the German rallied, setting up a quarterfinal match against Jannik Sinner.

"I have lost focus a little bit in the second set, Zverev said. He then played more aggressively, adding: I am not going to win big titles just by pushing the ball. Defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced by beating Laslo Djere 7-5, 7-6 (1). The fifth-ranked Greek will meet Diego Schwartzman of Argentina in the quarterfinals. "I really had to work hard for this win, Tsitsipas said. Sinner beat eighth-ranked Andrey Rublev 5-7, 6-1, 6-3 to advance, winning



Germany's Alexander Zverev returns the ball to Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta during their Monte-Carlo ATP Masters Series tournament tennis match in Monaco.

six straight games in the second set and dominating the decider before wrapping it up with his seventh break. "I tried to win every play, every point, said the 20-year-old Italian, who reached the quarterfinals in Miami last month before retiring from the match against Francisco Cerundolo.

Indian Wells winner Taylor Fritz reached the

quarterfinals by defeating doubles partner Sebastian Korda 7-6 (4), 7-5.

Fritz will meet Alejandro Davidovich Fokina, who stunned top-ranked Novak Djokovic on Tuesday. The Spaniard beat David Goffin 6-4, 6-1 to advance on Thursday.

Grigor Dimitrov also advanced by upsetting seventh-ranked Casper Ruud 6-3, 7-5.

Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):

An auction botched up by poor planning, Mumbai Indians will continue to grope in the dark in search of an ideal playing eleven with an aim to end their five-match losing streak against Lucknow Super Giants in an IPL match on Saturday.

This is not the first time that MI have had a losing streak of five matches but this is probably the first time that it seems that the team's think-tank do not have an idea of how to stem the rot that has set in.

It is certainly not skipper Rohit Sharma's fault that the five-time champions had bungled big time at the auction table with below-par domestic signings save NT Tilak Varma, which is coming to bite them.

Against Lucknow in the afternoon Mumbai heat, Rohit and his chosen ten would have to put their best foot forward in order to tame the likes of Quinton de Kock, KL Rahul, Krunal Pandya,



Ayush Badoni to name a few. Krunal and De Kock, in particular, would like to pose some serious challenges for the MI brigade and may be compel them to think whether not putting enough efforts to get them back in their roster was a prudent enough thing to do.

There had been some inexplicable team selections and dropping a million

dollar plus buy like Tim David after two games is one of them.

Such has been MI's plight that they haven't been able to field their full quota of foreign players in order to have enough bowlers in their ranks.

However, David might be given a go in place of a Jaydev Unadkat, who has once again come short in the highest level of cricket

and is an example of the yawning gap between standards in domestic cricket and IPL.

One among Unadkat and Basil Thampi need to make way for David as they don't have too many options at the table.

In case of Murugan Ashwin, the only plausible replacement at this time looks to be leg-spinner Mayank Markande, who

not so many moons back had some decent performances for the five-time champion outfit.

Not having a quality spinner like Rahul Chahar or Krunal, who can at times stem the flow of runs is also hurting MI.

Head coach Mahela Jayawardene had already said and rightly so that Rohit's performance isn't a worrying factor.

One of the reasons being his touch which is not out of place but perhaps he needs to curtail down on a few shots and bat deep along with Suryakumar Yadav to put up a challenging score which the weak bowling line-up can defend.

For Lucknow, mentor and brains behind the strategy Gautam Gambhir needs to think whether both Marcus Stoinis and Jason Holder could be a part of same eleven or they would be better off dropping one of them and playing the hard-hitting Evin Lewis in the top-order alongside Rahul and De kock.

## Root quits as England Test cricket captain after 5 years

London, Apr 15 (AP):

Joe Root stepped down as England's Test cricket captain on Friday, ending his five-year spell in a role that became increasingly challenging because of the team's long run of series defeats - including 4-0 in the Ashes over the winter.

"I have loved leading my country," Root said, "but recently it's hit home how much of a toll it has taken on me and the impact it has had on me away from the game."

Root leaves his post holding the record for the number of wins as England Test captain - at 27 - while his status as one of the world's leading batters is secure after scoring eight centuries since the turn of 2021. However, his captaincy has come under scrutiny with England having only won just one of its last 17 Test matches - the country's worst run since the 1980s. Losing heavily in Australia, England's biggest rival, was followed last month with a 1-0 series defeat to the West Indies. That made it four series defeats in a row - and it could



be five unless England can beat India in July in the remaining test left over from their unfinished series from last year.

"It has been the most challenging decision I have had to make in my career," said the 31-year-old Root, who took over as captain from Alastair Cook in 2017, "but having discussed this with my family and those closest to me; I know the timing is right."

## Harmanpreet's brace hand India comfortable 3-0 win over Germany in Pro League

Bhubaneswar, Apr 15 (PTI):

Vice-captain Harmanpreet Singh continued his goal-scoring spree with a brace as the Indian men's hockey team defeated an inexperienced Germany 3-0 in the first match of the two-leg tie to extend its lead in the FIH Pro League standings here on Thursday.

Harmanpreet converted two penalty corners for India in the 18th and 27th minutes, while Abhishek scored from another set piece in the 45th minute.

With a half a dozen of Germany's 22-member squad making their senior debut here, the vast gap between the two sides was evidently visible.

By virtue of this win, India have consolidated their position at the top of the table with 24 points from 11 games, while the Germans are placed second with 17 points from nine matches.

Both the teams will lock horns again in the second match of the tie at the Kalinga Stadium on



Players of India (in Blue) and Germany in action during their Men's Hockey Pro League match at Kalinga Stadium, in Bhubaneswar.

Friday. The Indians started on a bright note and secured a penalty corner early into the first quarter but Jugraj Singh's effort from a penalty corner was kept out by the German defence and from the resultant rebound Nilkanata Sharma shot wide.

India enjoyed a lot of

possession in the first quarter but the forward-line hasn't been clinical enough to bury the chances. India continued in the same vein in the second quarter and took the lead in the 18th minute through none other than Harmanpreet from a penalty corner with a su-

perly executed dragflick. India earned another penalty corner soon but this time German goalkeeper Alexander Stadler denied Harmanpreet.

But Harmanpreet doubled India's lead three minutes from half time, wrong-footing Stadler from another set piece.

## Hardik has kept amazing team environment, taken brave decisions as skipper: Rashid



Navi Mumbai, Apr 15 (PTI):

Hardik Pandya has been leading from the front with inspirational performances and is also going out of his way to create a happy team environment leading to a good start by Gujarat Titans in its maiden IPL campaign, feels Rashid Khan.

Gujarat are now on top of the table with four wins from five games and Hardik is currently second in list of

run-getters and is also bowling well in every game.

"The way he (Hardik) has led the team, the way he has kept the team environment, inside and outside the field has been amazing so far," Rashid said at the virtual post-match press conference. Rashid, the ace spinner from Afghanistan, said Hardik was someone who always takes brave decisions.

"He (Hardik) is someone who always takes that brave decision, always has confidence and he is someone who is very clear in mind on what he is going to do.

"This is an important thing as a captain when your mind is clear, and you take right decisions, the result will take (care) by itself," added Rashid.

Ability to take right decisions at right time makes him a good leader, feels Rashid. "You take right decisions with confidence, that is something which makes him the best and he has been delivering the best so far and leading from the front (be it) batting, bowling and fielding," said Rashid.

## VASANTHOTSAV



Devotees take part in Sri Malayappa Swamis golden chariot procession on the occasion of Vasanthotsav, in Tirupati, Friday.

# CBI plans to conduct DNA tests in Hanskhali rape case

Kolkata, Apr 15 (PTI):

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is planning to conduct DNA tests in the Hanskhali rape case to check whether the samples collected from the crime spot match with those found on the arrested accused, an officer of the agency said on Friday. A class 9 student was allegedly raped on April 4 in Hanskhali in West Bengal's Nadia district during a birthday party at the house of the prime accused, a local TMC leader's son.

She had died after the incident. Her father filed a police complaint on April 10, and alleged that the accused had snatched the body at gunpoint and cremated her. CBI sleuths visited the house again on



Forensic experts of CBI collect evidences for investigation at the residence of a prime accused in the Hanskhali rape and murder case, in Nadia, Friday.

Friday morning to gather more evidence, after collecting samples from the spot on Thursday night. They plan to collect samples from the arrested accused. "We will collect DNA samples from the arrested accused

and match those with the samples found from the spot. This will be a crucial step in our investigation. We will continue our search operations at different locations in Hanskhali," the officer told PTI over the

phone. CBI sleuths had on Thursday broken open the lock of the prime accused's house and searched the crime spot. They were accompanied by personnel of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory and the entire search operation and evidence collection was videographed.

The search continued till late on Thursday night and was delayed due to a power cut in the area. The central investigating agency has been directed by Calcutta High Court to probe the incident. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had expressed doubt about the cause of the girl's death, which her family attributed to rape, and wondered whether the class 9 student died after falling down upon being slapped by someone.

# Rajnath Singh gives a strong message to China

'If harmed, India will not spare anyone'

Washington, Apr 15 (PTI):

In a strong message to China, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has said that if harmed, India will not spare anyone, as he asserted that India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emerged as a powerful country and is headed to be among the top three economies of the world.

Singh, in his address to the Indian-American community in San Francisco, also sent a subtle message to the US that New Delhi does not believe in a diplomacy of zero-sum game and its relationship with one country cannot be at the expense of the other.

here to attend the India US 2+2 ministerial in Washington DC. Thereafter, he travelled to Hawaii for meetings at IndoPACOM headquarters and then to San Francisco.

At a reception hosted in his honour by the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, the Defence Minister told the select gathering about the valour shown by Indian soldiers on the border with China.

I cannot say openly what they (Indian soldiers) did and what decisions we (the government) took. But I can definitely say that a message has gone (to China) that India will not spare anyone, if India is harmed. (Bharat ko agar koi chhere-

ga to Bharat chhorega nahi, he said.

The Ladakh border standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas. The face-off escalated after the Galwan Valley clashes on June 15, 2020. As many as 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese troops were killed in the clashes.

India and China have held 15 rounds of military talks so far to resolve the eastern Ladakh standoff. As a result of the talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year in the north and south banks of the Pangong lake

and in the Gogra area. Without making any direct reference to the American pressure with respect to Russia because of the Ukraine war, Singh said India does not believe in a zero-sum game diplomacy. If India has a good relationship with one country, it does not mean that its relationship with any other country will deteriorate, he said. India has never adopted this kind of diplomacy. India will never opt for this (kind of diplomacy). We don't believe in the zero-sum game in international relationships, he said. India, he said, believes in having a bilateral relationship which is based on win-win for both the countries.

## PIL filed before Delhi HC against fraudulent use of 'Judge' parking sticker

New Delhi, Apr 15 (PTI):

A public interest litigation has been filed before the Delhi High Court seeking action against persons fraudulently using 'Judge' parking stickers on their vehicles. Petitioner Sanser Pal Singh, a lawyer, has submitted that the fraudulent use of 'Judge' parking stickers is a serious matter and poses a security threat as such vehicles having such stickers are not subjected to the security check at the court premises. In the petition, the petitioner has stated that there are several instances where he noticed the presence of cars with a 'Judge' parking sticker but it was subsequently found that no such sticker was issued by the authorities against the registration numbers of those vehicles.

## MP Ram Navami violence

# Digvijaya points to Vijayvargiya's Twitter video, asks if action will be taken

Bhopal, Apr 15 (PTI):

Senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh on Friday said a video uploaded on Twitter by BJP national secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya was from Telangana and not Madhya Pradesh's Khargone, where riots took place on Ram Navami, and sought to know if the latter would be booked.

Vijayvargiya had uploaded the video on April 14 stating it was from Khargone and had asked Singh, whom he

sarcastically called "ambassador of peace", what was police supposed to do besides taking action.

The senior BJP leader had also said in his tweet that these were snakes whose heads needed to be crushed.

Hitting back, senior Congressman Singh said the video may have been sent by someone to "trap" Vijayvargiya into uploading something erroneous.

Singh said the video was of Telangana and not Khargone and asked Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and

state Home Minister Narottam Mishra if action would be taken against Vijayvargiya for the "wrong video".

"I will not do it (complain) as I know these days your not going through 'achhe din', Singh said mocking the BJP leader.

Incidentally, nine FIRs have been registered against Singh for allegedly promoting religious enmity after he tweeted a picture of a mosque in another state while recently commenting on communal violence at Khargone in Madhya Pradesh.

# Contractor's death: File case against Eshwarappa under Prevention of Corruption Act, demands Congress

Bengaluru, Apr 15 (PTI):

Accusing the Karnataka government and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai of trying to protect Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister K S Eshwarappa, the opposition Congress on Friday demanded his arrest and that he should be booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The opposition party also urged that an impartial investigation be conducted by the police under the supervision of a sitting judge of the Karnataka High Court.

Eshwarappa, against whom police have booked a case for allegedly abetting the suicide of contractor Santosh K Patil, will be submitting his resignation to Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai later on Friday evening, as a po-



KPCC President D K Shivakumar and Opposition leader in Assembly Siddaramah with other state legislators address a press conference during a dharna demanding the removal and arrest of Minister KS Eshwarappa, at Vidhanasoudha in Bengaluru, Friday.

litical furore erupted over the issue.

The Congress that has found a fresh ammunition against the ruling party ahead of the assembly election next year, has formed nine teams, and each team will be travel-

ling to at least two to three districts, to inform people regarding "40 per cent commission and rampant corruption" under the current BJP government.

The party that staged an overnight protest at Vidhana Soudha said it

later plans to take its protests to assembly constituency level, to bring to the notice of the people that "Karnataka has been turned into the capital of corruption" by the BJP.

The Congress also plans to hold a protest rally at Hospet in Vijayanagara district, where the ruling BJP state executive committee meeting is slated to be held to be held under the leadership of its national President J P Nadda.

"There is a categorical allegation in the complaint, Santosh Patil has also said it before the media. Despite this, an FIR has not been registered under Prevention of Corruption Act purposefully...cases have been registered only for abatement," Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah said. Speaking to reporters

here, former chief minister Siddaramaiah said there is deliberately a clear omission on the part of the state government and the police.

"We demand that the case be registered under the Prevention of Corruption Act...he (Eshwarappa) has to be immediately arrested as the allegation is of a heinous crime..." he said.

Compensation worth Rs 1 crore should be given to the family of the deceased Santosh Patil and government job to his family, and pending bill of Rs 4 crore should be cleared.

Alleging that attempts are on to somehow shut the case aimed at protecting Eshwarappa, Siddaramaiah said with Chief Minister Bommai himself giving a certificate of innocence to him, there cannot be an impartial investigation.

Colombo, Apr 15 (PTI):

Sri Lanka's state-owned petroleum corporation announced fuel rationing for vehicles with effect from Friday, as an unprecedented economic crisis roils the country. According to the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) statement, now motorcycles and other two-wheelers can purchase fuel upto worth Rs 1,000 per visit to a fuel station.

Similarly, three-wheelers can purchase fuel worth Rs 1,500, cars, jeeps and vans upto Rs 5,000. Buses, lorries and commercial vehicles have been exempted from the rationing. Long queues at fuel stations have resulted in massive public anger.

Further, households are experiencing nearly 12-hour-long powercuts and there is a massive shortage of essentials, due to falling

value of the Sri Lankan rupee. The island nation is in the midst of one of the worst economic crises it has ever seen. It has just defaulted on its foreign debts for the first time since its independence.

The Galle Face protests in Colombo entered their seventh day on Friday with more and more youth joining it every passing day. They urge the resignation of President Gotabaya for his incompetence in handling the island's worst-ever economic crisis.

The protest campaign has been running on social media, urging youths to gather at Galle Face. Besides, there have been continuing protests across the island, blaming the government for its mishandling of the forex. The protesters have rejected talks with the government till the

President and Prime Minister leave office.

CPC chairperson Sumith Wijesinghe last week told reporters the corporation was losing between Rs 800 million to Rs 1 billion every day on fuel subsidies due to high global market prices and the depreciation of the Sri Lankan Rupee. Wijesinghe said the CPC was losing 110 rupees per litre on diesel and Rs 52 per litre on petrol.

# Making efforts to fill up vacancies, improve judicial infrastructure: CJI

Hyderabad, Apr 15 (PTI):

Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana on Friday said he is making efforts to fill up vacancies in the judiciary and to improve judicial infrastructure in the country, besides addressing issues relating to security of judges and others.

Our judiciary is overburdened, he said, while speaking after inaugurating the two-day Telangana State Judicial Officers Conference here.

The CJI said he has taken up filling up vacancies and improving the infrastructure of the judiciary soon after taking over.

"The reason is access to justice is possible only when we provide sufficient number of courts as well as infrastructure," he said. Justice Ramana said he wanted to see that there are no pending vacancies either in the high courts, Supreme Court or the district judiciary.

He also sought to see that the judicial system is strengthened. Chief Justice Ramana added judicial infrastructure was found to be inadequate in different parts of the country. In the case of Telangana, he had cleared the pending file for increasing the number of judges from 24 to 42 with-

out delay, he said.

He requested the judicial officers to create a congenial environment for the litigants and to always remember the human aspects of the dispute. "Law cannot be far from equity. It is important to project the human face of the judiciary whenever you have scope for invoking your discretion," he said.

The judicial officers must sensitize themselves to different vulnerabilities of the parties, including minors, women and persons with disabilities who may have different requirements, and treat everyone with respect, he said.

# Vice-President offers prayers at Ram Janmabhoomi site

Ayodhya, Apr 15 (PTI):

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu along with his wife Usha Naidu reached the temple town of Ayodhya on Friday and offered prayers to Lord Ram at the Ram Janmabhoomi site amidst the chanting of hymns by priests.

The vice-president and his wife reached Ayodhya from Lucknow on a special train. They were received at Ayodhya railway station by Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, Faizabad MP Lallu Singh and other pub-



Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and his wife Usha visit the Hanuman Garhi temple in Ayodhya, Friday.

lic representatives. In a tweet, the Vice President's Secretariat said, "The Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu and his spouse Smt Usha Naidu at

the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple site in Ayodhya today. They were accompanied by the Governor of Uttar Pradesh Smt Anandiben Patel and Uttar

Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Shri Keshav Prasad Maurya." Naidu and his wife went straight to the Ram Janmabhoomi site from the railway station and were welcomed by priests amid the chanting of Vedic hymns. The vice-president was also given a detailed presentation on the construction of the Ram temple. After offering prayers to Lord Ram, Naidu also worshipped the flag installed in the sanctum sanctorum of the proposed Ram temple. In a note in the visitor's book of the Ram temple, Naidu said he felt "blessed" after the visit to the shrine.