



Centre defends dropping CJ

From EC selection team Says EC's independence doesn't stem from judicial member's presence

New Delhi, Mar 20 (PTI):

The Centre on Wednesday defended in the Supreme Court the appointment of two new election commissioners

(ECs) under a 2023 law that excludes the Chief Justice of India from the selection committee, saying the independence of the Election Commission does not arise from the presence of a judicial member on the committee.

In an affidavit filed in the apex court, the Union Law Ministry rejected the petitioner's claim that the two election commissioners were hastily appointed on March 14 to "pre-empt" the orders of the

top court the next day, when the matters challenging the 2023 law were listed for hearing on interim relief.

The affidavit has been filed in response to a batch of pleas, including those by Congress leader Jaya Thakur and the Association for Democratic Reforms, challenging the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and

Terms of Office) Act, 2023. "It is submitted that the case of the petitioners is premised on one fundamental fallacy that the independence can only be maintained in any authority when the selection committee is of a particular formulation. It must be noted that the independence of the Election commission, or any other organisation or authority, does not arise from and is not attributable to the presence of a judicial member in the se-

lection committee," the affidavit said.

Refuting the petitioners' claim that no list of probable appointees was shared with the opposition, the Centre submitted that the names of short-listed persons were made available to Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on March 13, 2024, after the Search Committee had finalised six names for recommendation. "It is, therefore, wholly wrong, misleading

and malicious to suggest that the third member of the Selection Committee was given the shortlisted names as an act of pre-meditation on the mind of the two members of the Executive as all the members received the list simultaneously. Furthermore, the list of dates clearly brings out the fact that profiles of all eligible persons were shared with the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha on March 13, 2024.

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Two teenagers held for raping 5-year-old girl

Bilaspur, Mar 20:

About the complaint....

A five-year-old girl was allegedly raped multiple times by two teenage boys living in her neighbourhood in Bilaspur district, police said on Wednesday.

The minor boys, both aged 15 years, were detained on Tuesday evening based on a complaint of the victim's mother, said Gopal Satpathi, Station House Officer (SHO), Koni police station.

As per the complaint, the two accused sexually assaulted the girl multiple times in the last one month after luring her with chocolates and snacks, he said.

The victim and the accused resided in the same neighbourhood, the officer said. Based on the complaint, a case was registered against the duo under provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Protection of Children

As per the complaint, the two accused sexually assaulted the girl multiple times in the last one month after luring her with chocolates and snacks. The victim and the accused resided in the same neighbourhood. The minor boys, both aged 15 years, were detained on Tuesday evening based on a complaint of the victim's mother.

from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, the SHO said. The boys were detained on charges of rape and produced before the Juvenile Justice Board which sent them to remand home, Satpathi said. A three-year-old girl was sexually assaulted and later killed allegedly by a teenage boy in Bilaspur district on Sunday.

Hyd student 'missing' in US, family gets ransom call

Hyderabad, Mar 20 (PTI):

A 25-year-old student from Hyderabad, studying in the US, has gone missing there since March 7 and his family here said they received a "ransom" call.

Mohammed Abdul, a resident of Nacharam here, went to the US in May 2023 to pursue a Masters in IT from Cleveland University, and was staying in Cleveland, his family said.

Mohammed Saleem, Abdul's father, said his son last spoke to him on March 7, and since then he was not in touch with his family and his mobile phone was switched off. Abdul's roommates in



the US informed him that they have lodged a missing complaint with Cleveland Police. However, on March 19, Abdul's family received a call from an unidentified person, who claimed that Abdul had been kidnapped allegedly by a gang selling drugs and demanded USD 1,200 to "release" him. The caller also threatened to sell Abdul's kidneys if the ransom wasn't paid, his father said.

SC recommends transfer of Chh'garh HC judge Arvind Singh Chandel to Patna HC

New Delhi, Mar 20 (PTI):

The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on Wednesday resolved to recommend transfer of Chhattisgarh High Court judge Arvind Singh Chandel to the Patna High Court after he sought reconsideration of the earlier proposal.

On March 15, the collegium had proposed transfer of Justice Chandel to the Madras High Court for better administration of justice. In terms of the Memorandum of Procedure, Justice Chandel was requested to send his response to the recommendation. By a communication dated March 17, he requested

reconsideration of the proposal of his transfer or to consider transferring him to any of five high courts -- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Allahabad, Punjab and Haryana or Delhi. The collegium said in terms of the Memorandum of Procedure, it consulted one of the judges of the Supreme Court who being conversant with the affairs of the High Court of Chhattisgarh is in a position to offer views on the proposed transfer. The chief justice of the high court of judicature at Patna, whose opinion was sought in terms of the Memorandum of Procedure, also conveyed his consent to the proposed transfer of Justice Chandel, it said.

Maiden test-firing of first indigenously-made engine

For Main Battle Tanks

New Delhi, Mar 20 (PTI):

Maiden test-firing of India's first indigenously-made 1500 horsepower engine for Main Battle Tanks was conducted in Mysuru on Wednesday with Defence Secretary Girdhar Aramane terming it as a "transformative moment" which will enhance the country's military capabilities.

The achievement "heralds a new era" in the country's defence capabilities, showcasing the technological prowess and commitment to self-reliance in defence technologies, the Defence



Ministry said in a statement.

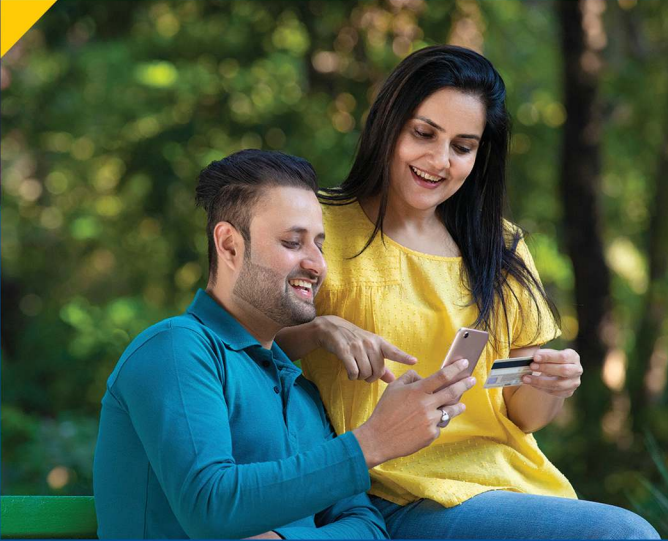
Aramane presided over the "maiden test-firing of India's first indigenously-made 1500 horsepower (HP) engine for Main Battle Tanks at BEML's Engine division in Mysuru complex on March 20," it said.

It is "a transformative moment which will enhance India's military capabilities," Aramane was quoted as saying in the statement.

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Traffic Police takes action on parking violation

Bhilai, Mar 20:

Traffic Police carried out a special operation against the vehicles parked in no-parking areas in markets and main roads. The vehicles were seized and carried to the Traffic Police Office.

On the instructions of Superintendent of Police Jitendra Shukla, and under the leadership of Deputy Superintendent of Police, Traffic, Satish Thakur and Sandanand Vidhyaraj, the Traffic Police Durg took action against vehicles parked in no parking zones in the market areas and on major roads.

Traffic Police took action under the provisions of Motor Vehicle Act against the vehicles



parked in Indira Market, Power House, Akash Ganga and major roads including Nandini Road, Canal Road, Durg Station Road as well as on the National Highway. Two wheelers were carried to

the traffic office by crane and four wheelers were locked at the no parking spot.

India Witnesses Groundbreaking 'Safety Circle' Workshop

Bhilai, Mar 20:

India's manufacturing landscape saw a pioneering milestone with the commencement of the country's first "Safety Circle" workshop, spearheaded by GP Singh, Ex Chief General Manager of Bhilai Steel Plant and Vice President of QCFI. The event, hosted by the QCFI Pune Chapter, drew participants from various esteemed organizations nationwide.

Representatives from industry giants such as Tata Motors, ITC, DelVal, IAC International, WELMADE LOCKING SYSTEM (Europa lock), Adani Ambuja Cement, SMS India, Thyssenkrupp, and Kirloskar Oil Engines converged in Pune to delve into the innovative techniques and methodologies



of Safety Circles.

The workshop garnered exceptional praise from all participants, who lauded its insightful content and practical applicability to workplace safety. With a resounding commitment, attendees pledged to integrate the acquired knowledge into their respective organizational frameworks, ensuring enhanced safety protocols and operational efficiency.

GP Singh, a stalwart in the realm of industrial excellence, expressed his de-

light at the enthusiastic response and emphasized the critical role of continuous improvement in fostering a culture of safety and productivity across industries.

The success of India's inaugural "Safety Circle" workshop marks a significant stride towards achieving holistic safety standards and underscores the nation's dedication to fostering innovation-driven practices within its industrial landscape. QCFI President

Emiratus SJ Kalokhe praised the Safety Circle initiative and said that "This has proved that it is one of the most effective way if involving employees including contract workers."

It's notable that Quality Circle Forum of India (QCFI) is a non-profit organization committed to promoting quality & Safety concepts, principles, and techniques across industries, fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement.

Rain destroys crops; Collector conducts inspection

- Interacts with farmers to assess crop damage
- Officials instructed to initiate proceedings for compensation

Bhilai, Mar 20:

Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary visited rural areas of the district to take stock of the crop damage caused by the rains in the last two days. During this visit, officials of the Agriculture and Revenue Department were also present.

Collector Chaudhary visited rain-affected villages Tumakala and Khilorkala of Dhamdha development block and interacted with the farmers. She took information regarding crop damage. She instructed the field officers of the Agriculture and Revenue Department to immediate-



ly complete the assessment of crop damage in the affected villages and prepare the list of affected farmers. Also, she directed to prepare the cases under Revenue Book Circular 6-4 and Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and complete the process of providing compensation soon. It needs to be mentioned here that under the Prime Minister Crop Insurance

Scheme, irrigated wheat, non-irrigated wheat, gram and mustard crops have been notified for the Rabi season 2023-24. In this category, crop insurance cover has been provided to 29408 farmers having 42253 hectare cultivation area. Due to local disaster in the district, Rabi crops like gram and wheat crops have been damaged due to untimely rain / hail. Out



of 9769.17 hectare area in 127 villages of development block Dhamdha, about 56 percent damage has been caused to gram crop area in 4691.55 hectare area and about 40 percent damage has been caused to wheat crop area in 5077.62 hectare area.

Deputy Director Agriculture LM Bhagat and Joint Director of Agriculture Department

RK Rathore had jointly conducted inspection of the fields in village Gotha, Nandavay and Hiretra of Dhamdha development block and advised the farmers to give information on the toll free number of the insurance company to give information about the damage caused by the local disaster within 72 hours. It is noteworthy that in the Prime

Free health camp organised at Village Ghughsidih



Bhilai, Mar 20:

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Department of Bhilai Steel Plant organized a one-day free Health Camp, at Village Ghughsidih on March 20, 2024. A total of 53 individuals including men, women and children benefited from the free consultation and treatment and availed free health services at the day-long Health Camp. Free medicines were also distributed to villagers attending the camp. The Medical Team from the CSR department and Bhilai Ispat

Kalyan Chikitsalay volunteered their services for the Medical Camp at Village Ghughsidih.

It is noteworthy that conducting Health Camps are one of the prime initiatives, through which BSP's CSR Department has contributed substantially towards Public Health and medical services. The CSR Department of Bhilai Steel Plant, conducts health camps from time to time in the adjoining areas or mines, with the aim of ensuring adequate Medical and health facilities to the communities within which it works.

Spouses of BSP's personnel visit the Plant under 'Aap Bhi Jaaniye' Programme

Bhilai, Mar 20:

Bhilai Steel Plant has set several records in production and profit, with the contribution of its hard-working personnel. The Personnel Department of Bhilai Steel Plant is continuously making efforts towards establishing affinity and family relationship with its employees and their families. The Personnel Department organised the "Aap Bhi Jaaniye" programme for as many as 24 spouses of employees of Rail & structural department on March 16, 2024.

TDastidar, CGM & HoD (RSM) inaugurated the programme in the pres-



ence of S Chatopadhyay, GM (RSM), Sudhir Sortey, GM (RSM), Suraj Kumar Soni, GM (Pers NW Mines), Sunil Kumar Shukla, AGM (RSM), Suraj Kumar Soni (DSO), Rajiv Kumar, DGM (RSM), Sunil Ku Shukla, DSO and other departmental employees and spouses of RSM employees.

Under this programme the visiting spouses of

RSM Employees visited the Plant and witnessed the Steel production process at Blast Furnace 8 - Mahamaya, SMS-III, Universal Rail Mill, Rail & Structural Mill Departments. They also shared their experiences while Chief Guest T Dastidar, CGM & HoD (RSM) interacted with them. The "Aap Bhi Jaaniye"

programme was compered by Rahul Thote (MGR of Personnel Department), and S Shireen (MTA). Jasbir Singh, Bahoran Lal Sahu, Rajesh Kamble, Asma Parveen, Lakshmi Devi Sahu, Bhuvan Lal Sahu and Sonam Ramte were also present on this occasion.

There is always a strong desire of the family members to know how their respective husbands contribute to steel production at SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant, and how the production takes place in different units of the Plant. Along with the employees, their families also play an important role in production and profit indirectly.

Education is the best way to learn in life: Vartika

Bhilai, Mar 20:

Education is the best means of learning in life, there is no alternative to it, said Vartika Srivastava from Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata. She spoke at a lecture organised by the Department of Journalism at St Thomas College, Bhilai on Wednesday. This lecture was organized on 'Past and Present of Women Discourse in Indian Cinema'. She further explained the changing role of women in the film world and the technical aspects of film production.

Dr Prashant Srivastava, Dean of Student Welfare, Hemchand Yadav University, Durg, was the



special guest in the lecture. He said that in today's journalism, it is more of a challenge to work with balance and without personal bias.

College administrator Father Dr Joshi Varghese appreciated and encouraged the Department of Journalism for organising such programs. The principal of the college, Dr MG

Roymon called cinema a medium for journalism students to make their expression more creative.

Dr Reema Dewangan, Head of the Department of Journalism, felicitated Vartika Srivastava with a memento. The program was conducted by assistant professor Mukesh Kumar of the department. In this

program, the welcome speech was given by Assistant Professor Amitabh Sharma, and a vote of thanks was given by Srishti Dube, a student of BAJMC 4th semester. On this occasion, a large number of students including Assistant Professor Chhavi Kiran Sahu were present.

Collector visits primary schools in Dhamdha block

- Instructs to repair dilapidated school buildings

Bhilai, Mar 20:

Collector Richa Prakash Chaudhary conducted inspection at Gram Panchayat Godhi, Tumakala, Ghasra and Murra of Dhamdha development block. Collector visited the Government primary schools in Gram Panchayat Tumakala and Murra, which have been identified as polling stations. During the inspection, she gave instructions to repair the dilapidated school buildings. She asked the officials to make the polling stations equipped with all facilities for the voters. During the inspection of polling stations, she gave necessary directions to the concerned officers. She asked to take special care to ensure that voters do not face

any inconvenience while voting.

The Collector inspected the bari in village Litiya. Crops have suffered damage due to unseasonal rain and hailstorm. In this sequence, the Collector inspected the bari in village Litiya. The Sarpanch of Khilorkala informed the Collector that watermelon and papaya crops were destroyed in rain and hailstorm. The Collector asked the concerned officer to initiate action for compensation. Similarly, in Gram Panchayat Ruha, farmers were assured of compensation due to damage to their gram crop. The Collector said that farmers should be compensated for crop damage under RBC-64.

The Collector assured the deployment of teachers in the primary school in village Tumakala. She inspected Government Girls Secondary School in Godhi, which has been se-



lected as a polling station. She met the women of the self-help group and took information about the fisheries and poultry farming. The Collector gave instructions to install solar plants in Panchayat buildings. She oversaw the water recharge system and gave instructions to complete it soon.

During the visit of Gram Panchayat Murra of Janpad Panchayat Dhamdha, Collector dis-

cussed retrofitting of individual toilets in Gram Panchayat, construction of soak pit, water harvesting, etc. She inspected the sanitation facilities in the school premises. She instructed to construct soak pits in all the wards of the village where there is no drainage facility. Ashwani Dewangan, Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat Durg informed that under Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural), a total of

02 segregation work sheds have been constructed in Gram Panchayat Murra and dependent villages, 07 community soak pits, 10 individual soak pits, 01 Recharge pit, 03 three-stage water purification units, 02 community toilets, 320 individual toilets have been approved. In these works, a total amount of Rs 76.17 lakh has been approved and released.

For grey-water management in Gram Panchayat Murra, WaterAid has established Dewats System with an expenditure of Rs. 9.00 lakh. The water coming out of the houses is being connected to this de-watering system through drains to treat the water and use in three ways. Firstly, the water will be reused for gardening, secondly the ground water level will be improved through leach pits and thirdly it can be used in agricultural work.

Expected COD and BOD of water will be received after being filtered in Dewats system.

During the visit, Sub-Divisional Officer of Dhamdha Development Block Sonal David, Deputy Collector Mahesh Rajput, District Coordinator Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural) GishirMathure, Nagesh Kumar, Sarpanch, Varsha Verma, Sub-Divisional Officer, Shushil Kumar Sahu, Senior Taxation Officer, Saurabh Kumar, District Coordinator, Hema Dewangan, Suresh Kapse, Cluster Coordinator WaterAid R i p u s u d a n U m r e , Development Block Coordinator, Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural), District Panchayat D h a m d h a , HukumchandBanjare, Secretary, Gram Panchayat Murra were present.

Swachhta Programme organised at Sinter Plant -II



Bhilai, Mar 20:

SAIL- Bhilai Steel Plant's Sinter Plant -2 organised Vishesh Swachhta Programme on March 19, 2024. This programme was aimed at keeping the surroundings of the department clean, under the theme of "Swachhata hi Sewa". Collective shramdaan service was rendered by the departmental employees under the guidance of Anup Kumar Dutta, CGM (SPs).

Anup Kumar Dutta, CGM (Sinter Plant -2 &3) in his address stated that

cleanliness should be taken care of by everyone, from your homes to your workplace. Consider this a foremost necessity and include cleanliness practices in your daily lives and also motivate others to do the same, he said.

At the outset, the oath of cleanliness was administered to everyone present.

Jogendra Kumar, Umesh Oudhia, Sukumaran Sunov, Rahul Bijurkar, Jay Dev Das, General Managers (SP-II) and K Joth Kumar (Personnel Officer) were present along with other departmental employees.

Role of sector officers crucial in successful conduct of elections: Collector

Sector officers should work impartially: SP



Raipur, Mar 20: Sector officers play an important role in the successful conduct of elections as they are the link between the polling team and returning officer, said Collector and District Returning Officer Dr Gaurav Singh at the training workshop organized for the sector officers and sector police officers at Red Cross meeting room in the Collectorate here today.

Sector police officers will take special care of law and order and ensure that there is no dispute of any kind anywhere, the Collector said. He told the sector officers to inspect booths well in advance and

arrange basic facilities for Lok Sabha elections to be held in ongoing summer season. He also told them to visit Panchayat buildings and Anganwadi centres to take special care and ensure compliance of code of conduct. The work of webcasting in the booth should be done in a better way and after the complete voting, the EVM machines should be safely transported to the strong room, he said, adding that adequate facilities will be provided

in the Government Engineering College of Sejbahar.

SP Santosh Singh said that officers and employees should do their duty seriously and act peacefully and impartially besides maintaining good conduct during election work. There should not be any kind of chaos even before voting, he said.

Master Trainer Ajit Hundet told the sector officers that there will be no campaigning within 100

meters of the polling station and it will have to be marked. There should be arrangement for lights and fans in the centre, he said. He said that sensitive booths should be identified. Police Sector Officers have to identify vulnerable places and assist in removing obstacles in voting, he said. Master trainer Ajit Hundet also gave training.

Sector officers of assembly numbers 45, 47, 48 were given training in the first shift and assembly numbers 49, 50, 51, 52, 53 and reserve were given training in the second shift for Raipur Lok Sabha elections 2024. Chief Executive Officer of District Panchayat Vishwadeep, ADM Devendra Patel and Master Trainer and other officers were present.

Four arrested in 3 cases of illicit liquor

Raipur, Mar 20: Under the guidance of Collector Gaurav Singh and instructions of Deputy Commissioner Vikas Goswami, the Excise Department is taking action against the sale of illicit liquor in the district. During patrolling on March 19, Excise team Circle Tilda and Circle Kharora took action jointly. Four persons were arrested in three different cases of illicit liquor and an offense has been registered under Section 34(2)-3 against them.

Nearly 45.540 bulk liters of country liquor masala, worth Rs 27830, has been seized from the arrested persons and two motorcycles were recovered from them. Dilip Kumar Prajapati, Excise Sub Inspector Circle Tilda, Preeti Kushwaha Excise Sub Inspector Circle Kharora and Excise Chief Constable Digambar Bhura played important role in action against illicit liquor.

ACTION AGAINST ILLEGAL PARKING



The Traffic Police took action against the vehicles illegally being parked in non-parking areas near Jaistambh Chowk area and seized the vehicles.

Raipur Municipal Corporation lags behind in revenue collection

Will have to collect Rs 7 crore every day to meet the target



Raipur, Mar 20: The Municipal Corporation has again lagged behind in revenue collection. There are only 11 days left for the financial year to end and the revenue collection has reached only Rs 174 crore. In such a situation, to meet the target, the corporation will now have to recover approximately Rs 7 crore every day. Meanwhile, there will be two days of Holi holiday along with two Sundays. This has increased the concern of corporation officers and employees.

This year the corporation has set a target of revenue collection of Rs 250 crore, but so far only Rs 174 crore has been collected. Whereas last year a revenue of Rs 223 crore was collected. Currently, the corporation is lagging behind by Rs 49 crore as

compared to last year. At the same time, to achieve its target, the corporation is left to recover Rs 76 crore. Corporation officials said that the target will be achieved on time. The financial year ends on March 31. There will also be Holi holiday in these 11 days. It is difficult to achieve the target due to this.

The corporation is taking action to collect revenue through all the zones. In this, the revenue officers of the zone along with the corporation central team are continuously taking action of attachment and sealing against the defaulters, but even after this the treasury of the corporation does not seem to be

achieving its target. For this, the Zone Commissioner is also busy on the orders of the Corporation Commissioner. Direct action is being taken by the competent authorities against defaulters who use identity or access to make revenue payments.

The target of the corporation's revenue team are the big defaulters of the city. The corporation team is collecting revenue by preparing a zone-wise list of big defaulters of the city. Even after this the revenue is not being paid by the defaulters.

Revenue officials said that there are some defaulters from whom officials have to make several trips to recover money. If they do not pay even after repeated calls, then action is taken against them. Officials say that everyone has to pay the revenue, but if they are not paying revenue on time, they are charged tax with 17 percent interest.

Governor administered oath of office to Narendra Shukla and Alok Chandravanshi



As State Information Commissioner

Raipur, Mar 20: Governor Vishwabhushan Harichandan administered the oath of office to the newly appointed State Information Commissioner, Narendra Kumar Shukla and Alok Chandravanshi in a ceremony organized in the Durbar Hall of Raj Bhavan here on Wednesday. Chief Secretary Amitabh Jain completed the oath taking process. Secretary to the

Governor, Yashwant Kumar, Secretary of General Administration Department, D.D. Singh were present at the swearing-in ceremony. Former Chief Information Commissioner, M.K. Raut, Sergius Minz, former State Information Commissioner S. K. Tiwari, A.K. Agarwal, Mohan Pawar, Manoj Trivedi, Dhanvendra Jaiswal, Secretary of State Information Commission, Gopal Verma along with I.P. Mishra, Rakesh Chaturvedi, Dr. Surendra

Shukla, L.N. Tiwari, Anjani Kumar Shukla, D.C. Pandey, Anurag Diwan, distinguished citizens and family members of the newly appointed State Information Commissioners were present. It is notable that State Information Commissioner, Narendra Kumar Shukla is a retired IAS. He is an officer and worked on the posts of Collector Balod and Commissioner Town and Country Planning etc. Alok Chandravanshi has been the former Zone Commissioner.

Collector, SP, Municipal Commissioner come out on streets late night



Take information from SST team, review law and order in view of Holi and election

Raipur, Mar 20: Raipur Collector Dr Gaurav Kumar Singh, SSP Santosh Singh and Municipal Corporation Commissioner Abinash Mishra, took stock of the situation on the streets of the capital late Tuesday night and reviewed law

and order situation. They talked to the static team posted at Saraswati Nagar police station, Kota, Shakar Nagar police station, and also took information from them. Superintendent of Police Santosh Singh took stock of the law and order situation in view of Holi festival as well as election. He gave necessary instructions to the police staff to follow the model code of conduct and for the festival.

World's First POSIT based GPGPU center set up



Raipur, Mar 20: National Institute of Technology Raipur, in collaboration with VividSparks sets-up world's first POSIT based general purpose (GP) graphics processing unit (GPU) ViBram R&D Center (<https://gpgpu-soc.org/>) in Raipur. The GPGPUs are used in day to day life in Smart Phones, Laptops, Desktops, servers and any digital devices. The GPGPUs are responsible computing heavy math operations for gaming, video processing, AI/ML, High Performance Computing and many other applications. With this collabora-

tion efforts, Dr. Vijay Holimath, CEO of VividSparks, Dr. N V Ramana Rao, Director of NITRR and Dr. Sonal Yadav, Director of ViBram Silicon Hub said we will build world's first GP GPU based on POSIT number system with RISC-V based architecture for consumer electronics as well as for national computational infrastructure. Dr. Holimath and Dr. Yadav added we will not only address India's computational needs, we will also export our research works, products to other countries also through these collaborative efforts we will also create job opportunities in north India. The signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) took place on Wednesday in presence of Dr. NV Ramana Rao, Director, NIT Raipur, Dr. Vijay Holimath, CEO of VividSparks and Dr. D. Sanyal, Dean (Faculty Welfare).

Kinetic Green unveils Multi-Purpose E-Luna in Raipur

Raipur, Mar 20: Kinetic Green, a leading manufacturer of electric vehicles in India, on Wednesday proudly unveiled the highly anticipated E-Luna in a grand ceremony held in Raipur. The stylish, multi-utility electric two-wheeler boasts advanced technology and features, making it a perfect choice for both personal and commercial use. The E-Luna X1 variant starts at an attractive introductory price of Rs. 69,990 (ex-show-room), is available across Kinetic Green Dealerships in Chhattisgarh. This makes it an excellent option for consumers seeking a reliable and eco-friendly mode of transportation, deliveries for E Luna have commenced from Kinetic Green dealerships across Chhattisgarh. The event was graced by the presence of Brijmohan Agrawal,



Minister of Parliamentary Affairs of Chhattisgarh. On the occasion Ritesh Mantri, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Kinetic Green, and Mr. Pradeep Goel, Owner - Bharat EV- Kinetic Green Dealership, Raipur jointly unveiled the E-Luna, marking a significant moment in the electric mobility landscape of

Chhattisgarh. The E-Luna is packed with features that cater to a variety of needs, offering a range of battery options from 1.7 kWh to 3.0 kWh to meet your budget and travel distance. With a powerful 2.0 kWh battery delivering a 110 km range on a single charge, fast charging capabilities, and even swappable batteries for ul-

time convenience, the E-Luna keeps you going. For a smooth and safe ride, the E-Luna boasts an advanced BLDC mid-mount motor, a CAN-enabled communication system that displays real-time data on a sleek digital meter, water and dust-proof aggregates for all weather conditions, a combi-braking system, telescopic front suspension, and larger 16-inch wheels for enhanced stability. Ms. Sulajja Firodia Motwani, Founder and CEO of Kinetic Green, expressed her enthusiasm, stating, "The launch of E Luna in Raipur is a proud moment for Kinetic Green, as we embark on a journey to redefine electric mobility in the region. E Luna is not merely a vehicle; it represents our commitment to inclusivity, affordability, and sustainability in the realm of e-mobility."

Three-day festival of regional culture of Ch'garh in IGRMS from today



Raipur, Mar 20: The festival of regional culture of Chhattisgarh state will be begin with the Sufi singing of Padmashree Shri Madan Chauhan. The Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) under the celebrations of its 48th Foundation Day is organising various programmes and activities at its premises from March 21 to 23. Museum Director Professor Amitabh Pandey said that under this function in celebration of regional cultures, exhibitions display-cum-sale of art and craft items, presentations of performing arts traditional dishes and 19th annual

IGRMS special lecture etc will be organized in the museum premises. The inauguration ceremony of the program will be held on March 21 at 6:00 pm with the inauguration of the exhibition 'Vastra Katha: Indian Textiles, Stories and Culture' in the Veethi Sankul premises of the Museum. After that, the Foundation Day will be inaugurated by lighting the traditional lamp of Kerala 'Al-Vilakku' with 1001 lights. After this, about 180 traditional artists of Chhattisgarh state will perform in the celebration of regional cultures. In which Sufi singing by Padmashree Shri Madan Chauhan, Danda dance under the direction of Shri Rajendra Verma, Folk drama Dasmata directed by Shri Rakesh Tiwari, Karma dance of Surguja district by Pandit Ram and team, Muria dance of Bastar district by Shri Butulu Ram and team and cultural presentations will be given by the people of Chhattisgarh residing in Bhopal.

KVIC presents certificates to trainees

Raipur, Mar 20: The Samartha Jan Kalyan Samiti, in collaboration with the KVIC as Training Partner, initiated training recently at Megha of Kurud. Approximately 595 women were trained to become self-reliant, along with receiving training, certificates were distributed from the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Mumbai.



esteemed guests including Ajay Tiwari, Gram Seva Samiti President, Dr. Uday Bhan Singh Chauhan, Pandit Vikas Shastri, Basant Jain, and others. The training received support from various dignitaries and members across different districts, fostering collabora-

tion for future endeavors. Dr. Jaya Dwivedi expressed gratitude to Rajesh Kumar, Director KVIC, Nayak, and other officials for their support, ensuring the successful completion of the training with high quality.

Residents irk over erratic power supply in Kamal Vihar

Delegation submit memo to Superintendent Engineer

Raipur, Mar 20: Residents of Kaushalya Mata Kamal Vihar on Wednesday submitted a memorandum to Superintendent Engineer seeking solution to the erratic power supply in various sectors of the Integrated Township. A delegation informed the officials that the fre-

quent power cut in the region has resulted in ire among the residents. They demanded to solve the problem of Voltage Drop in the region which has created problems for the residents. They also reiterated demand for adequate security in the region as darkness on streets due to erratic power supply has also created problems resulting in frequent theft in the region. Delegation urged immediate redressal to the problem faced in the region.

Harsha into quarters of Asian Jr Tour Tennis tournament

Raipur, Mar 20: Harsha Aurogati defeated Vridika Rajput with the score of 7-5, 6-4 to enter into the quarter final of the Asian Junior Tour Under 16 Tournament being organised under the aegis of Chhattisgarh State Tennis Association here on Wednesday.



Similarly, Anjali Meka, Riddhi Sidhi, Parthasarathi, Inshiya Mohwala, Avyakatha from US and Avipasha Dehuri also won their pre-quarter final matches here to advance ahead in the tournament.

In the Boys category matches, Ranvir Singh defeated Ahan Shetty whereas Nishit, Om Patel also won their matches to enter into the semi-final of the tournament.

Providing the above information, the Tournament Co-ordinator Rupendra Singh Chouhan said that Prabin Kumar Nayak in the Tournament Referee and supervisor.

Complaints received during elections will be resolved quickly

Through 'Complaint Monitoring System'



Raipur, Mar 20:

'Complaint Monitoring System' software has been prepared by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to ensure prompt resolution of election related complaints received through various means during the Lok Sabha General Election-2024.

As per the guidelines of Chief Electoral Officer Mrs. Reena Babasaheb Kangale, Additional Chief Electoral Officer Mr. Nileshekumar Mahadev

Kshirsagar and Joint Chief Electoral Officer Mr. P.S. Dhruv organized training on Tuesday and gave detailed information to the departmental nodal officers regarding quick redressal of complaints. IT department officials provided training to nodal officers regarding effective redressal of election related complaints through 'Complaint Monitoring Software'. In the meeting, Mr. Asim Thwait from NIC informed that 'Complaint Monitoring System' (CMS)

has been prepared by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer for quick redressal of election related complaints. Through this system, quick redressal is ensured by sending digitized complaints to the nodal officer of the concerned department. During the training, departmental nodal officers were told that complaints received manually through various means during elections will be digitized. Apart from this, the complaints received

Training given to departmental nodal officers

through C-Vigil or social media will also be printed, digitized and sent to the nodal officers of the concerned department for quick resolution of the complaints.

The nodal officers will promptly resolve the complaints related to their respective departments within the prescribed time limit and will immediately give this information to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

In the training, officers were instructed to ensure resolution of election related complaints on priority. During the training, nodal officers from various departments including senior officers of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer were present.

UPES Dehradun lifts the inaugural HIMCC Moot Cup

Raipur, Mar 20:

The Inaugural edition of the Justice Hidayatullah International Moot Court Competition 2024 (HIMCC) which had a record 40 teams including three international teams witnessed School of Law, UPES Dehradun, winning the coveted trophy of the 1st HIMCC 2024. The team of Muskan Sethi, Ananya Nandwana & Mukul Khandelwal received a record prize of Rs Two Lakhs. The Institute of Law, Nirma University was adjudged as the runner-up with a price of Rs 150000 consisting of Aditi Bhardwaj, Gopal Ved & Shashwat Ranjan. The National Law University, Delhi, won the best memorial award. Muskan Sethi from UPES, Dehradun won the best speaker award, and Bhagyashree Tiwari from National Law University, Jodhpur, won the best researcher award.

Prof Vivekanandan, Vice Chancellor of HNLU remarked, "The Inaugural



edition of HIMCC is the beginning of Internationalization of Moots in India and it is all set to become global in the coming years"

The event had 120 participants of 40 teams and 80 Judges drawn from Academia, Bar and Bench were hosted to stay in the campus with hectic schedules of rounds conducted seamlessly. The Inaugural of the event had Prof. (Dr.) Dilip Uikey, Vice Chancellor of MNLU Mumbai delivering the address. The Final rounds

had eminent Jurist list of Prof. (Dr.) Ranbir Singh, Pro-Chancellor of IILM & Distinguished Jurist Professor of HNLU, Prafull Bharat, Advocate General of Chhattisgarh; Bharat V. Budholiya, Partner at AZB & Partners; Dr. Uday Shankar, Associate Professor, IIT Kharagpur; and Muralidharan R., Patent & Trademark Attorney, Manu Associates and also graced the valedictory ceremony as Guests of Honour. The professional con-

duct of the event was managed by Dr. Anindhya Tiwari, Secretary of HIMCC with Co-Secretaries Amitesh Deshmukh, Abhinav Shukla, Mayank Shrivastava & Dr. Ankit Singh along with Anirudh, Amartya, Rahul & Smita, student conveners & Co-conveners of the HNLU Moot society. The Valediction had the welcome address by Prof. (Dr.) Yogendra Srivastava, Dean-PG Studies and vote of thanks by Dr. Vipan Kumar, Registrar (I/c).

Important link for Master Trainers election: Dr. Singh



Raipur, Mar 20:

Collector and District Election Officer Dr. Gaurav Kumar Singh on Tuesday participated in the training workshop of the master trainer appointed for the Lok Sabha Elections-2024 in the Red Cross Society meeting room located in the Collectorate premises. The Collector said that all the master trainers should understand every aspect in detail during the training.

The more efficiently trained you are, the easier the election process will be. Your efficiency will also help the voters. Dr. Singh said that Master Trainers have to discharge the role of crisis manager. They have to inform how to face the challenge and crisis.

The Collector said that in this election, efforts are being made by the District Election Office to ensure that the basic facilities of the employees on election

Collector participated in the training workshop of Master Trainer

duty are taken care of.

In this training, the master trainer was explained in detail about the marked copy of the voter list, postal ballot paper, EDC, ballot paper account, diary of the presiding officer, EVM, VVPAT, voting process, challenges etc. In the end, a brief test was also taken as per the instructions of the Collector. On this occasion, District Panchayat CEO Mr. Vishwadeep, Deputy District Election Officer Mr. Umashankar Bande, Assistant Nodal Officer for Training Mr. Kedar Patel and Master Trainers Mr. Rakesh Dedghave and Mr. Ajit Hundait were present.

Grace filled Team Celebration at DAVPS Bachel



Bachel, Mar 20:

In a heartwarming gathering at DAV Public School Bachel, Dr. Chetna Sharma Mam, the esteemed principal, delivered an empowering speech on gender equality, inspiring teachers and attendees alike. The event was a celebration of inclusivity and empowerment, highlighting the importance of equality in education and society.

Following the Principal's speech, the event continued with lively musical performances and engaging games, fostering camaraderie and unity among the participants.

The atmosphere was filled with positivity and enthusiasm, marking a significant step towards a more equitable and harmonious community within the school premises.

Anchoring part was beautifully done by Ms. Shama, Ms. Bhanupriya and Ms. Liji under the guidance of the senior most teacher Ms. J. Shailaja. Graciously the entire stage decorated by Ms. Anwant Kaur and Ms. Jasmine. The principal praised the organizing committee and the entire staff for their enthusiastic spirit and team togetherness.

1720 children administered 'Swarnaprashan'

In Ayurveda College Hospital

Raipur, Mar 20:

A total of 1720 children were given 'Swarnaprashan' in Government Ayurveda College Hospital, Raipur for improving their medical capacity, digestive power, memory power, physical strength and prevention from diseases. On every Pushya Nakshatra, 'Swarnaprashan' is given to the children aged between 0 to 16 years by the Celibacy Department of Ayurveda College Hospital. Along with Swarnaprashan, pediatrician Dr. Lavkesh Chandravanshi also examined the health of the children. The 'Swarnaprashan' was held at Government Ayurveda College Hospital premises in the presence of Principal Prof. Dr. G.R. Chaturvedi, Hospital



Superintendent Prof. Dr. Praveen Kumar Joshi and under the direction of Head of the Department of Celibacy, Prof. Dr. Neeraj Aggarwal. Swarnaprashan coordinator Dr. Lavkesh Chandravanshi said that it is very beneficial for the all-round development of children. The postgraduate and undergraduate stu-

dents of the college make important contributions every month. The other Pushya Nakshatra dates of this year, 1235 children were given 'Swarnaprashan' on January 25th and 1402 children were given gold medal on February 21st by Ayurveda College Hospital.

BJP workers conference in Konta Mandal garners enthusiasm

Workers resolve to secure victory for Bastar Lok Sabha candidate



Sukma/Konta, Mar 20:

In a fervent display of solidarity and determination, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) orchestrated a resounding workers' conference in Konta Mandal, underscoring unwavering support for Bastar Lok Sabha candidate Mahesh Kashyap. The event, held on March 19 in Konta Nagar, witnessed an impressive turnout of BJP stalwarts and fervent workers alike. Former MP Dinesh Kashyap, Lok

Sabha hopeful Mahesh Kashyap, and District General Secretary Korsa Sannu graced the occasion as esteemed chief guests, infusing the gathering with zeal and vigor. Addressing the enthralled audience, Dinesh Kashyap articulated a compelling vision, urging workers to rally behind the BJP's endeavor to secure a triumphant third term under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Amidst thunderous applause, Mahesh

Kashyap lauded the transformative impact of Modi government's welfare schemes, resonating deeply with every household. He underscored the pivotal role of diligent workers in realizing victory, emphasizing the imperative of concerted efforts and unwavering commitment.

The conference witnessed a notable influx of support, with 20 individuals, including former Congress district member Poonam Narayya, pledg-

Resolve to take the country forward under the leadership of Modi: Dinesh Kashyap

ing allegiance to the BJP cause. Their allegiance underscores the growing momentum and widening support base for the party.

With palpable excitement reverberating through the crowd, Mahesh Kashyap exuded confidence, assuring victory in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections through tireless dedication and collective endeavor.

In a poignant display of unity and resolve, Konta Mandal's BJP workers reaffirmed their unwavering commitment, epitomizing the indomitable spirit driving the BJP's electoral campaign in Bastar.

CVO (NTPC Limited) reviews NTPC Lara

Raigarh, Mar 20:

VK Adhana, Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) (NTPC Limited) reviews Lara Super Thermal Power Station at Raigarh on 17-18th March 2024. On this occasion Adhana visited Talaipali coal mine, the captive coal mine of NTPC which is linked to the Lara plant by Merry-go-round system. Later-on, Adhana visited the main plant control room, turbine hall and boiler and interacted with power engineers and understood the entire chain of power generation. On this occasion Adhana chaired a review meeting with Akhilesh Singh, Head of Project, general managers, senior officials and engineer-in-charge of various contracts. Addressing the participants, Adhana stressed on preventive and corrective vigilance mecha-



nisms. He also discussed with young executives and gave a brief idea on the role of vigilance for development of an organisation. In his visit to review the Merry-go-round system of Lara station in a small programme Adhana, distributed tricolors to differently abled people of near-by villages. He witnessed the coal transport system of Lara station by its dedi-

cated electrified meri-go-round track. It is the first fully electrified MGR system of NTPC Limited which is 65 KM long connecting Lara station to Talaipali coal mine and is an engineering marvel. This rail line has crossed over Indian rail, big rivers, forest, and hill areas. All possible measures have been taken carefully to maintain ecological balance for a

sustainable development. On this occasion Rajeev Ranjan, GM (Operation & Maintenance), Ravi Shankar, GM (Project), SK Swain, GM (Fuel Management), Pankaj Sekhar, AGM (Vigilance), Himanshu Behera, DGM (HR), Manish Kumar, (Central Vigilance Office) and senior officials of NTPC Lara were present.

BJP condemns Baghel's response to FIR

Srinivas Rao Maddi asserts accountability over allegations

Jagdalpur, Mar 20:

In a press conference held at the BJP district office, Srinivas Rao Maddi, Bastar Lok Sabha convener and former chairman of Forest Development Corporation, denounced Congress leader and former Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's response following the

registration of an FIR against him. Maddi characterized Baghel's public statements as attempts to obfuscate accountability, urging him to address concerns through appropriate legal channels.

Asserting the impartiality of investigative procedures, Maddi emphasized that legal actions against any individual, regardless of stature, are intrinsic to due process. He underscored the ongoing investigation into the Mahadev App controversy, high-



lighting the revelations regarding misappropriation of public funds. "The fraud and exploitation

perpetrated by the Congress against the state's youth is intolerable," remarked Maddi, con-

demning what he perceived as a breach of public trust. He cited the incarceration of several former Congress leaders and officers as indicative of systemic corruption within the previous administration.

Maddi rebuked Baghel's governance tactics, alleging a history of politically motivated prosecutions and frivolous charges. He contrasted this with the BJP's commitment to transparent governance and adherence to the rule of law, asserting that the

current state government prioritizes accountability over political vendettas.

Accompanied by former MLA Baiduram Kashyap, District Minister Narasimha Rao, and other prominent BJP members, Maddi reiterated the party's dedication to upholding integrity and delivering on promises made under Prime Minister Modi's leadership. He affirmed that justice will prevail against those who betray public trust and engage in fraudulent activities.

Classifieds

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Total shutdown, massive rally in Kargil for statehood

Kargil, Mar 20 (PTI):

Shops and business establishments were closed as thousands of people marched on Wednesday in support of their demand for statehood and Ladakh's inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Separately, the hunger strike by climate activist Sonam Wangchuk in Leh to "remind" the BJP-led Centre of its promise to safeguard the Union Territory's fragile ecology and unique indigenous tribal culture entered its 15th day.

Responding to a call from the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), which announced a half-day strike and a protest rally in the town to express solidarity with Wangchuk, a large number of people took out a rally from Fatima Chowk to Hussaini Park via the main market and raised slogans demanding statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion



Reformist Sonam Wangchuk (second from left) along with Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance leaders and supporters on a hunger strike as a protest demanding statehood for Ladakh.

under the Sixth Schedule. All shops and business establishments remained closed while those taking part in the procession held up banners, some of which read "Ladakh demands statehood and Sixth

Schedule" and "Save Ladakh, Save Democracy".

The Apex Body, Leh (ABL), and the KDA - both separate groupings of various political, social and religious organisations representing the two districts -

are jointly spearheading the agitation for various demands. The two groups have been demanding statehood for Ladakh and its inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution over the past four years. The provi-

sions of Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to Jammu and Kashmir, were abrogated on August 5, 2019, and the erstwhile state was bifurcated into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The KDA leadership addressed a huge gathering at Hussaini Park and urged the people to prepare for a long struggle following the failure of its talks with the Centre. They also announced the commencement of a hunger strike in Kargil from March 24. "We want resolution of our main demands through dialogue but the central government closed the door of talks on March 4 by rejecting both our main demands - statehood and (inclusion under) Sixth Schedule - compelling the people to hit the roads," Asgar Ali Karbalai, the KDA's co-chairman, told reporters after the rally.

Rotary Club of Paradip welcomes Jagannath chariot

Paradip, Mar 20:

The Jagannath chariot which was moving with the objective of spreading Jagannath culture & rotary brotherhood being initiated & organized by Rotary Club of Amity & Rotary District 3262 was given warm welcome by Rotary Club of Paradip. This campaign with the movement of jagannath chariot will touch 115 different places of Odisha and move to variety of places of India spreading as well as teaching the message of good will, love, brotherhood, kindness, tolerance & generosity among the mankind. Moreover, it aims at creating awareness about the importance & value of one tree like one child, organ donation, blood donation which are noble endeav-



our of humankind that everyman should learn. The said campaign was organized under the leadership of Rtn. Behera & Rtn. Manmohan Panda. Today, all the Rotarians & inhabitants including the students of Paradip had a chance of having a dashan of the holy chariot and offering puja with devotion. Rtn. Akshaya Chandra Mishra, President, RC,

Paradip, Rtn. Dr. Kailash chandra Moharana, Rtn. Abhas Chandra Choudhury, Rtn. Capt. Premananda Rout, Rtn. Dr. Prashant Mohapatra, Rtn. Capt. Sushant Bag, Rtn. Kaliprasad Mishra & Rtn. Biplal kumar jena were present on the occasion to receive & pay reverence to the chariot. It was a praiseworthy & noble endeavour of Rotary District 3262.

Mohan Raju assumed charge as Secretary of PPA

Paradip, Mar 20:

U.R. Mohan Raju assumed charge as the secretary of Paradip Port Authority (PPA) on Wednesday. Similarly, P.N. Bahekar, Secretary of PPA has been transferred to Mumbai Port Authority.

Mohan Raju possesses a Post Graduate degree in Industrial Relations and Personnel Management and also a degree in Law. Before joining Paradip Port, he was working as the secretary of Mumbai Port Authority.

Mohan Raju served in various Ports, viz., Chennai, Paradip, V.O.



Chidambarnar and Visakhapatnam Port Authority. Shri Mohan Raju has vast experience in HRD, Establishment,

Administration, Legal, ERP matters and wide exposure by virtue of working in 5 major ports in the country.

NEWLY JOINED CONG LEADERS



A combo of photos of newly-joined Congress leaders; (L-R) Former MP Lal Singh, Lok Sabha MP Danish Ali and Jan Adhikar Party chief Pappu Yadav with Congress leader Pawan Khera, at AICC Headquarters, in New Delhi, Wednesday.

'India, world failed to meet WHO End-TB milestone 2020'

New Delhi, Mar 20 (PTI):

India's tuberculosis incidence dropped marginally by 0.5 per cent between 2015 and 2020 and failed to meet the World Health Organization's (WHO's) END-TB milestone for 2020, according to new global research published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases journal.

The WHO End TB Strategy aims for a 90 per cent reduction in TB deaths and an 80 per cent reduction in the incidence rate by 2030, compared to the baseline figures of 2015. The 2020 milestones include a 20 per cent reduction in the TB incidence rate and a 35 per

cent reduction in deaths. The latest study estimated that the incidence of TB across all ages in India was 213 cases per one lakh population in 2020, well above the WHO's milestone figure (for India) of 171 per one lakh population. Deaths due to the bacterial infectious disease in the same year were estimated to be between 3.5-5 lakh, again much above the mortality milestone of 2.7-3.2 lakh set for India.

The study comes ahead of World Tuberculosis Day on March 24. Despite accelerated progress in reducing TB burden over the past decade, the world failed to attain the first interim milestones of the WHO End TB Strategy in 2020, said the

researchers forming the Global Burden Disease (GBD) 2021 Tuberculosis Collaborators. The pace of decline has also differed across age groups, with adults aged 50 years and above having the slowest progress.

Of the 204 countries analysed by the team, 15 met the 2020 TB incidence milestone, while 17 met the mortality milestone. Of the 15, 11 were in sub-Saharan Africa, the researchers said.

Novel case-finding interventions in countries like Nigeria, Tanzania, Cameroon and Kenya helped reduce incidence, and were further supported by improved drug coverage in treating HIV across many countries in the sub-Saharan

African region, they said. Only 17 countries achieved the 2020 End TB mortality milestone and drug resistance could be an important factor, according to the researchers.

An "efficacious, safe, and shorter" regimen for treating drug-resistant TB, endorsed by WHO, could have helped reduce deaths, they said. They were referring to the WHO's updated recommendations on treating drug-resistant TB issued in 2020, amidst anti-bacterial resistance emerging as a major public health threat.

The team also acknowledged the efforts of national social protection interventions in Moldova and Ecuador -

two of the 17 countries - that "markedly increased treatment adherence", and "potentially prevented drug resistance".

Around the world, children under 15 years of age were seen to have the largest reductions in TB burden, with incidence falling by 16 per cent and deaths by 34 per cent between 2015 and 2020, even as the burden still remains high in children, according to the authors.

Citing evidence from recent research, they said most of the bacterial disease's transmission occurs outdoors and hence, integrating contact-tracing with community-based strategies of screening and prevention will be "particularly important for continued progress".

Healthcare workers receive reliable workplace environment

Bhopal, Mar 20:

Hindustan Syringes and Medical Devices (HMD), has launched the most innovative and first-of-its kind Dispojekt single use syringes with safety needle, propelling India towards 'atmanirbhar' and becoming global powerhouse in medical devices.

The launch aligns with India's efforts to become a self-reliant hub for medical device manufacturing and exporting. Dispojekt is expected to bring about a positive financial impact on the healthcare sector by reducing healthcare worker injuries and associated costs. With the revolutionary

Dispojekt safety syringes, HMD aims to reduce prevalence of accidental Needle Stick Injuries (NSIs) among health workers, reduction of infection control cost and that of disposal and training, offering a long term positive financial impact on the healthcare sector.

Domestic manufactured, technologically advanced products will provide India a global edge in the realm of R&D and leapfrog indigenous players to meet the highly demanding global market for sharp injury prevention syringes.

The use of safety needles in healthcare settings offer numerous cost bene-

fits. They reduce healthcare worker injuries, lowering costs from potential disease treatment and potential long-term health issues. By minimizing needle stick injuries, they also decrease expenses for post-exposure prophylaxis and associated healthcare costs.

Moreover, safety needles mitigate compensation claims, absenteeism, and can lead to lower health insurance premiums, while also reducing product and packaging footprints for cost and environmental savings. They assist in creating a safer and more reliable workplace environment for healthcare workers.

SEEKING BLESSINGS



Actor Priyanka Chopra with her husband American songwriter, singer and actor Nick Jonas and daughter visits the Ram Temple, in Ayodhya, Wednesday.

13 students injured as asbestos roof of school gets ripped off

In windstorm

Korba, Mar 20:

At least 13 students were injured after the asbestos roof of a government school got ripped off in a windstorm and pieces of bricks fell on them in a remote village in Korba district on Wednesday, police said.

The incident took place around 3 pm at the primary school in Darripara village under Pasan police station limits when the students were having their mid-day meal, District Education Officer PP

About the incident

The incident took place around 3 pm at the primary school in Darripara village under Pasan police station limits when the students were having their mid-day meal. Due to the strong windstorm, a portion of the asbestos roof got uprooted and pieces of the bricks of the wall fell on children causing 13 of them injuries. The students were immediately shifted to a local hospital, where eight of them were discharged after preliminary treatment.

Upadhyay said.

Due to the strong windstorm, a portion of the asbestos roof got uprooted and pieces of the bricks of the wall fell on children causing 13 of them injuries, he said.

The students were immediately shifted to a local hospital, where eight of

them were discharged after preliminary treatment, he said.

The remaining five were later referred to a nearby hospital in neighbouring Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi district for further treatment and their condition is said to be out of danger, he added.

Woman jumps off trans harbour link

Mumbai, Mar 20 (PTI):

In the first such incident on the newly-built Atal Setu, a 43-year-old woman has jumped off the sea bridge connecting south Mumbai to Navi Mumbai, police said on Wednesday. The police are yet to locate her body, and have recovered a purported suicide note from her house in Mumbai, an official said.

The woman, Kinjal Kantilal Shah, a doctor by profession, had been facing depression and was undergoing treatment, police said. She stayed with her father at the Navin Asha building on Dadasaheb Phalke Road in Parel area of Mumbai, police said. On Monday afternoon, she took a taxi from near her house and asked the driver to take her to Atal Setu, po-

lice said. "After a short distance on the sea bridge, the woman started asking the driver to stop the taxi. The driver was reluctant but she insisted, so the driver stopped the vehicle. She got out and jumped off the bridge," said senior police inspector Rajendra Kote of the Nhava Sheva police station.

The driver then informed the Navi Mumbai police, who, with the help of the coastal police, local villagers, and rescuers, began an operation to trace her. Police said she had called her father on Monday to inform him that she was going out for some work. When her father returned home, he saw her "suicide note", in which she said she was going to Atal Setu to end her life, the official added.

Issue of cheating heats up again in Atmanand Girl's School

In mathematics paper of 10th Board

Khairagarh, Mar 20:

The issue of cheating in Mathematics paper is gaining momentum in Atmanand Girls School of KCG District Headquarters. It is known that on March 9, a complaint memorandum related to the cheating case in the school premises was submitted by the students there to the Collector and the District Education Officer, in which the students specifically informed the Collector and the DEO

about the cheating case and the involvement of some teachers. But after this, despite the formation of the inquiry committee, no meaningful action has been taken till date.

On the complaint by the students regarding the cheating case in Kanya Shala Atmanand School by the District Education Officer, an investigation committee team was constituted by the then District Education Officer Fattaram Ram Kosaria, in which the investigation team has not taken any action till date, giving rise to doubts. Allegedly, when

the students complained, some students received threatening phone calls and some were given verbal threats, in protest against which the students took immediate action by reaching the Collectorate premises and submitting a memorandum to the Collector.

The investigation committee team includes Dr. Rashmi Khare, Assistant Director, District Education Officer; Kishori Lal Amela, Assistant Development Block Education Officer; Khairagarh, Girendra Sudhakar, Assistant

Development and Block Education Officer; C h h u i k h a d a n . Meanwhile, the department has given notice to the center head and four supervisors. Regarding the cheating issue in the board exam, the department has revealed from some reliable sources that the investigation process will be conducted under the leadership of the investigation team in the school premises on March 22 and while further action will be taken mainly by the investigation team by seeking answers from the complaining students.

Applications of 50 women of Tikrapara missing for MVY

Khairagarh, Mar 20:

Women residents of Tikrapara city, who were deprived of the benefits of Mahtari Vandan Yojana reached the Collector office and submitted a memorandum to ADM Premkumar Patel for prompt action in the matter, after becoming ineligible in the scheme.

Women including Priyanka Yadav, Anuradha, Tija, Ganeshiya of Tikrapara ward were present to submit the memorandum, and they said that they are continuously visiting



Anganwadi and Municipality to avail the benefits of Mahtari Vandan Yojana and earn their living by working as laborers. Applicant

women include Parvati, Shantibai, Sati Yadav, Kavita, Vidya, Sushila Yadav, Sandhya Nishad, Uma Yadu, Sharda Yadu, Kesari Yadu, Durga,

Janak Yadu, Kaushal Yadav, Deepika Yadu, Sunita Yadu, Samund, Saraswati, and Lata Namita.

In the memorandum submitted to the Collector, it was told that under the Mahtari Vandan Yojana in Ward 19 Tikrapara of the city, all the beneficiary women had submitted their applications to the local Anganwadi worker, but the names of more than 50 women are completely missing from the beneficiary list. ADM Premkumar Patel talked about taking appropriate action on the matter soon.

Sudden rains brings respite from heat

And brings along seasonal illness



Kurud, Mar 20:

Due to sudden rain, the mood of the weather changed, and the people of the region got a respite from hot and humid weather. At many places, there was thunderstorm and heavy rain along with lightning, which has no doubt provided relief to people from the increasing heat, but with it has brought along many other problems, which includes fear of seasonal ailments

and local traders like vendors troubled in keeping their goods safe.

Regarding the changing weather and sudden rains, BMO Dr US Navratan said that in such weather the health deteriorates and most of the problems come from viral fever, cold and cough. Therefore, he has advised that along with getting prompt treatment, avoid outdoor food and enough intake of fluids, apart from isolating the patient.

'Nyota Bhoj' organized for farewell ceremony

In Beltukari School

Birkoni, Mar 20:

Invitation 'Nyota Bhoj' and farewell ceremony program was organized in Primary and Pre-Secondary School, Beltukri. After Maa Saraswati worship and puja aarti an elaborate invitation 'nyota bhoj' was served to the children prepared by the youth committee of the village.

During the same programme, the students of class V and VIII were bid farewell by giving them pens and notebooks. Teachers Somesh Diwan, Lalit Sahu, Gomeshwari Sahu, Bedram Gilhare, Vijay Sahu, Hemu Patel, Pratima Meshram, Pramod Nishad, Teman Sahu, Santosh Yadav, Khilleshwar Sahu, Umendra Patel, Suresh Nishad, Devsing Patel, Manoj Nishad were instrumental in making the program successful. Ashok



Nishad, Pramod Patel, Narad Nishad Rajendra Sahu, Thakur Ram Nishad, Ratan Dhiwar, Ramesh Patel, Basant Nishad, Mithun Patel, Tikeswar Sahu and all the cooks of both the schools had important contributions.

Rodents causing damage to standing crops



Blast, stem borer also effecting paddy

Anwari, Mar 20:

The increasing population of rats in the fields has given sleepless nights to the farmers of the region, which according to population level of the rodent is on an uncontrolled graph, and interestingly the rat killing medicines are no longer useful. Rats have started eating the paddy crops, which already are getting ruined due to blast, stem borer and aphid attack.

As per information, farmers are continuously spraying medicines to save the paddy crop, yet control is not being achieved. Farmers troubled by the outbreak of moth, cold

blast and aphids are spraying expensive medicines worth thousands of rupees to prevent them, but they are not getting the desired benefits. Farmers of villages Supela, Semra, Seelghat, Rampur, Hanchalpur, Pachpedi, Belvakuda, Korra, Borjhara, Gatapar of Bhakhara area said that along with rats, insect infestation has now started in the fields.

The situation is such that the standing crops of many acres of fields have been ruined due to disease. The major crops affected are of Haruna dwarf varieties of paddy, Mahamaya, 1010, Rajeshwari, Mahindra, 1001 etc. and according to the farmers even the most expensive medicines are not working to prevent the disease.

Every woman will get 1lakh annually: Dr. Daharia

As soon as Cong govt is formed



Lavan, Mar 20:

Giving information about giving Rs. 1 lakh to every woman as soon as the Congress government is formed in the country, Congress candidate from Janjgir-Champa Lok Sabha constituency, former minister Dr. Shiv Kumar Daharia said that the promise will be kept as soon as INC comes to power.

Addressing the Congress workers Dr. Daharia said that every Congress worker should be ready in the elections and should participate in the public welfare

schemes of the Congress Government and the information should reach every home.

In the meeting, area MLA Sandeep Sahu, Congress leader Parameshwar Yadav, Surendra Sharma, District Congress Committee President Jitendra Thakur, Sushil Sharma arrived from Bhatapara, Block Congress Committee Lavan. Chairman Guru Dayal Yadav, Khilendra Verma, Ramchandra Patel, Mrityunjay Pandey, Rameshwar Pandey, Devi Lal and others took part

Wife strangulates her husband with a foot-mattress

She was annoyed over him being habitual drinker

Dhantari, Mar 20:

The Dhantari police in case of body of a person found near the latrine wall took statements of the eye-witnesses and wife of the deceased and she informed that her husband was habitual drinker and she was very much troubled on account of the same. She informed the police that after falling from the terrace, his husband breathing was feeble and finding a foot-mattress nearby she wiped the blood stains on his face and closed his eyes and closing her mouth with her palm, strangulated him to death with the foot-mattress wrapped around his neck



till his breathing stopped.

The police inquired from the wife about the foot-mattress used to strangulate her husband and seized the same before the eye-witness after the statement by wife that she has killed her husband. The accused is Rameshwari W/o Late Pradeep Nirmalkar, (30), R/o Budhadev para, near Nandi Chowk, Nagri Thana,

District Dhantari. Police nabbed the accused and sent her to judicial remand.

In the above action, Inspector Tuman Lal Dadsena, SI Indal Ram Sahu, head constable Tansingh Sahu, constable Dushyant Sinha and Pankaj Pradhan, female constable Aarti Dhruv, Suman Kashyap, Amarita Minj gave valuable support.

Action to be taken against corrupt persons: Kedar Kashyap

Sukma/Konta, Mar 20:

Cabinet Minister Kedar Kashyap has assured the public of decisive action against corruption, shedding light on the FIR filed against former Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh state, Bhupesh Baghel, in connection with the Mahadev Satta App scandal.

Speaking on the matter, Kashyap emphasized the impartiality of the investigation, stating that it had commenced during Baghel's tenure. He affirmed, "This is a legal matter; let the truth come out. If they are guilty then action will be taken against them." He further highlighted the transparency of the process, urging for a fair assessment of the evidence.



Kashyap addressed concerns of politicization, asserting that the FIR was not politically motivated. He stressed, "BJP does not do anything like this," emphasizing the party's commitment to upholding integrity in governance.

The revelation comes amidst allegations of misappropriation of public funds, with Kashyap urging Baghel to present his case to the public. He concluded, "As a former Chief Minister, he should bring his truth before the public."

Pedestrians upset due to slow pace of road construction

Rajim, Mar 20:

Pedestrians and local commuters all over the region have raised concern over the slow construction of the work of widening the main road from Rajim to Gariaband National Highway. It must be mentioned that a high and wide road is being constructed by a contractor on National Highway No. 130C and along with widening, a cesspool has to be put on the bank but due to this work not being done, the pedestrians have raised concern of their safety and transit paths not being drafted out leading to local traders, shopkeepers along the way getting disturbed in their business.



Here it takes a mention that this route is used by thousands of villages from Orissa, Devbhog, Maimpur, Gariaband, Gohrapadar etc. Also many trees have been cut for widening of road construction work and in return no saplings have been planted anywhere, other than the smoke blowing from vehicles dissolves rapidly in the atmosphere and is harming people.

Also the shops in vil-

lages and towns situated on the roadside have gone down in elevation due to the high road and now shopkeepers will have to shell out money to bring it to its level by themselves. It is important to know that the Central Government has sanctioned crores of rupees for constructing this road, but allegedly the sack full of issues related to the construction of the road pours in many questions in itself.

Municipality Kawardha gets 5.90 cr for development

On instructions of Deputy CM Vijay Sharma

Kawardha, Mar 20:

On the instructions and recommendation of Deputy Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Government Vijay Sharma Development in Municipal Council Kawardha urban area by Urban Administration and Development Department is approved with 5 Crore 19 lakh 41 thousand and Rs 71 lakh for 34 works under the 15th Finance Commission Scheme.

As per the demand of councilors, slab construction over drains, Chowpatty construction, drain construction, CC roads, proposals for road construction and other development works has been submitted. In compliance with the instructions received from the Deputy Chief Minister, the body is

providing assistance and prepare estimates as per requirement while visiting cities with architects, after this the proposal was sent to the government and under this item, and other development works including Chowpatty construction.

As per plans new Chowpatty will be built in 2 places for city residents and 5 for city development by the Directorate of Urban Administration and Administration and Development Department. Approval of Rs 19 lakh 41 thousand has been given, which includes the following works and an amount of Rs 1 crore has been allocated for the construction of Chowpatty in front of Municipality Office, Veer Stambh 64.34 lakh for beautification work of Signal Chowk, for construction of Chowpatty in front of Forest

Department 65.67 lakh, 95 lakh for construction of truck parking in Transport Nagar, repair of old Chowk intersection 75 lakh for beautification and renovation work, road widening in front of Karpatri School and 50 lakhs for asphaltting work and 59 lakhs for laying slabs over drains in all wards. Municipality President Manharan Kaushik, BJP City Board P r e s i d e n t C h a n d r a p r a k a s h C h a n d r a v a n s h i , Chairman Umang Pandey, Rinkesh Vaishnav, Pramod Sharma, Mrs. Manisha Anil Sahu, Mrs. Anita Deva Sahu, Councilor Pawan Jaiswal, Sunil Sahu, and all the workers of Bharatiya Janata Party and the city residents met Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma and expressed gratitude towards him.

Three Mechanical Engineering students excel in campus drive

At Chouksey, Bilaspur

Bilaspur, Mar 21:

In a remarkable display of talent and skill, three Mechanical Engineering students Ayush Singh Rathore, Sandeep Shukla & Vijay Kashyap from Chouksey Engineering College, Bilaspur (CG) have been selected at a package of 3.00 LPA CTC, to join the prestigious ranks of Automotive Manufacturers Pvt. Ltd. campus drive, under the banner of AML Business Solutions, following a successful campus drive held in recent past.

The campus drive of Automotive Manufacturers Pvt. Ltd., organized by Chouksey Engineering College, Bilaspur, sought to identify and recruit the brightest minds in Mechanical Engineering, offering them an opportunity to contribute to the innova-



Ayush Rathore



Sandeep Shukla



Vijay Kashyap

tive projects and dynamic work environment that AML is renowned for.

The selected students showcased exceptional aptitude, demonstrating not only theoretical knowledge but also practical problem-solving abilities. Their passion for innovation and commitment to excellence set them apart in a competitive pool of candidates.

"We are thrilled to welcome these talented individuals to our team," said

Jitendra Bhardwaj, HR Manager, North CG at Automotive Manufacturers Pvt. Ltd. "Their passion for Mechanical Engineering and their dedication to pushing boundaries align perfectly with our company values. We believe they will make significant contributions to our projects and further enrich our team dynamic."

This achievement reflects the commitment of

Chouksey Engineering College in nurturing and developing future engineers in the field of Mechanical Engineering. The institution's emphasis on academic excellence, coupled with practical training, has empowered students to excel in real-world scenarios.

"We are immensely proud of our students' accomplishments," remarked Dr. Ashish Jaiswal, Managing Director of Chouksey

Group. "Their success in securing positions at Automotive Manufacturers Pvt. Ltd. is a testament to their hard work and dedication. We are confident that they will continue to shine and make significant contributions to the industry."

On this occasion, TPO, Prof. Vinod S Kharsan, informed that the selected students are poised to embark on an exciting journey at Automotive Manufacturers Pvt. Ltd., where they will have the opportunity to collaborate with industry experts, engage in cutting-edge projects, and further hone their skills.

Dean Academics of College, Dr. Dheeraj Ahirwar, and other HODs and Professors were present on the occasion. They greeted the selected students and wished Good Luck to them for their bright future.

India criticises UfC model for UNSC reform

21st century world desperately needs UN 2.0

United Nations, Mar 20 (PTI):

India has criticised a model for the UN Security Council presented by the Uniting for Consensus group that includes Pakistan, saying it stands against the idea supported by a majority of member states to expand permanent and non-permanent seats and underscored that the world of the 21st century "desperately needs a UN 2.0".

The UfC comprises Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica,



Italy, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, San Marino, Spain, and Türkiye. China, a permanent member, and Indonesia are participating in the group as Observers.

The UfC group is op-

posed to the creation of new permanent members in the Security Council. The UfC model entails a Security Council with 26 seats, with an increase only in the non-permanent, elected members. It proposes creating 9 new

long-term seats with immediate re-election possibilities.

"Threats to international peace and security have become more complex, unpredictable and undefined. The world of the twenty-first century desperately needs a UN 2.0 that is credible, representative, reflecting the needs and aspirations of the member states and capable of maintaining peace and security," India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj said in response to the UfC model presented by Italy at the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) meeting on UNSC reforms on Monday.



A girl with Down Syndrome holds a heart shaped balloon at the end of a sports demonstration marking the upcoming World Down Syndrome Day, in Bucharest, Romania.

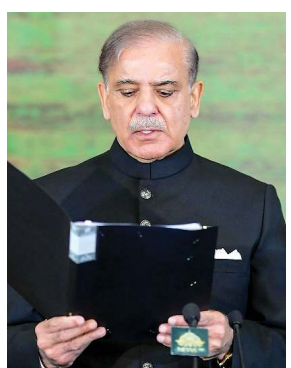
Pakistan not to tolerate cross-border terrorism: PM Shehbaz Sharif

Islamabad, Mar 20 (PTI):

Amidst a spike in terror attacks in Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday asserted that his government will not tolerate any acts of cross-border terrorism and that his country would like to exist in peace with all its neighbours.

Days after what is now known as the Mir Ali attack in the restive northwest Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was addressing the first meeting of the apex committee - a top official civil-military body tasked to tackle militancy - since the new government came to power earlier in the month.

Pakistan is facing a renewed threat by militancy. Over the weekend, two Pakistan Army officers and



five soldiers were killed in a terror attack at Mir Ali in the troubled northwest of the country. Without naming any country, Sharif asserted that his country would not tolerate any cross-border terrorism from the neighbouring countries "under no circumstances."

The prime minister said that Pakistan would like to have peace with all neigh-

bours and urged them to come and sit with Pakistan to devise a plan against terrorism "with sincerity of purpose work towards eradicating it."

"We want to exist in a very peaceful environment with our neighbouring brothers - do trade, commerce and expand our relations - but unfortunately, if a neighbour's land is used for terrorism, this is intolerable" he stated. The premier also hoped that "our neighbouring country will carefully consider my invitation." There has been an uptick in the incidents of terrorism in Pakistan since the Taliban took over the government in Kabul in 2021, dashing hopes in Islamabad that a friendly government in Afghanistan would help to tackle militancy.

7 dead after South Korean tanker capsizes off Japan, 2 still missing

Tokyo, Mar 20 (AP):

A South Korean tanker capsized off an island in southwestern Japan on Wednesday, authorities said, killing seven people on board. One crew member survived, and the fate of three others was unknown.

The Japan Coast Guard said it received a distress call from the chemical tanker Keoyoung Sun, saying that it was tilting while seeking refuge from the weather near Japan's Mutsure Island, about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from Tokyo in southwestern Japan.

The ship was completely capsized by the time rescuers arrived at the scene. Footage on Japan's NHK television showed the ship lying upside down, a rough sea washing over its red underside.

The ship was carrying 11 crew, of whom nine have been found, authorities said. The one crew member confirmed alive was from Indonesia, while the coast guard is still searching for two more. Another person found was in unknown condition, officials said.

The ship was en route from the Japanese port of Himeji to Ulsan in South Korea from, according to NHK. Its captain was South Korean, and its crew included another South Korean national, a Chinese national and eight Indonesians, according to the coast guard.

The tanker was carrying 980 tons of acrylic acid, officials said. No leak has been detected, and officials are studying what environmental protection measures may be needed in case there is a leak.

Imran Khan approaches Supreme Court; seeks judicial commission probe into Feb polls

Islamabad, Mar 20 (PTI):

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan on Wednesday approached the Supreme Court to form a judicial commission comprising serving judges to probe the authenticity of last month's elections marred by allegations of rigging.

The general elections were held on February 8 but Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf refused to accept the outcome by alleging that the results were manipulated.

Senior lawyer Hamid Khan, who is also a leader of PTI, filed the petition on behalf of Khan, stating the commission should investigate, audit and review matters related to the procedure and conduct of the general elections held on February 8, as well as its



results and the investigation should be complete and made public.

"It is further prayed that all the consequential acts of forming the government at the federal and Punjab levels be immediately suspended till the result of the probe by the Judicial Commission appointed on this behalf is made public," the petition stated. Khan's party claims that it had won about 180 seats of the

National Assembly but the results were rigged and it was deprived of dozens of them and won only 92 out of 266 contested seats. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) along with some other political parties have formed a coalition government, denying Khan's PTI from returning to power.

However, the Election Commission of Pakistan rejected the allegation and said that polling was held in a fair manner and results compiled accordingly. Though the PTI has joined Parliament, it has been protesting in the assemblies as well as outside on the streets against the alleged injustice. Khan's party has formed a government in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province after the elections.

12 miners killed in coal mine explosion in Pakistan

Karachi, Mar 20 (PTI):

At least 12 miners were killed and eight others rescued when a coal mine caved in following a powerful gas explosion in Pakistan's Balochistan province, officials said on Wednesday, in the latest accident to hit the resource-rich province in recent months.

The incident happened in the Zardalo area of Harnai district, the Dawn newspaper reported.

Twenty miners were inside the mine when a methane gas explosion took place overnight, the report quoted Chief Balochistan Inspector of Mines Abdul Ghani Baloch as saying.

The rescue operation was completed on Wednesday morning. The rescue teams recovered 12 bodies while the eight

survivors have been taken to hospital, he said.

While two bodies were recovered during the night, the remaining 10 were retrieved early in the morning, Baloch said.

Abdullah Shahwani, the province's director general of mining, also confirmed the death toll, the Dawn report said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed profound sorrow and grief over the loss of lives in the accident.

According to Radio Pakistan, the prime minister directed that all possible medical treatment be provided to the injured miners.

Termining such incidents as "very painful and sad", he said the government would provide all possible relief to the injured and affected families.

Texas' migrant arrest law is back on hold after briefly taking effect

McAllen (US), Mar 20 (AP):

Texas' plans to arrest migrants suspected of entering the US illegally were again on hold on Wednesday after setting off uncertainty along the border and anger from the Mexico flared during a brief few hours that the law was allowed to take effect. A late-night order on Tuesday from a 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals panel temporarily put on hold again Texas' dramatic state expansion into border enforcement. Earlier in the day, the US Supreme Court had cleared the way for the strict immigration law, dealing a victory to Republican Gov. Greg Abbott and encouraging GOP lawmakers in other states that are pushing for similar measures. But later in a 2-1 order, an appeals court panel continued the legal seesaw surrounding the Texas law, again putting it on pause ahead of oral arguments that were scheduled for Wednesday.

US highlights irregularities in Feb 8 polls in Pakistan

Washington, Mar 20 (PTI):

The US has highlighted irregularities in the February 8 general elections in Pakistan and expressed the US commitment to strengthening the cash-strapped country's democratic institutions and cooperating to counter terrorist threats.

Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu, the diplomat whose supposed warning to former Pakistan Ambassador to the US Asad Majeed was the subject of a cipher (secret diplomatic message) sent by the envoy to Islamabad, will on Wednesday be a key witness before a Congressional panel that has called a hearing titled Pakistan After the Elections: Examining the Future of Democracy in Pakistan and the US-

Pakistan Relationship'. The same diplomatic communication was later used by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan to allege a US conspiracy to oust his government in 2022.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder is on trial for mishandling the same confidential document.

In his written testimony uploaded on Tuesday, Lu raised several issues concerning the two countries and what lies ahead for US policy in Pakistan.

He mentioned that the State Department had issued a clear statement a day after the general elections in Pakistan last month, noting undue restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly. The State Department condemned

electoral violence and restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as attacks on media workers and restrictions on access to the internet and telecommunication services, he said.

It also expressed concern about allegations of interference in the electoral process and asked for claims of interference or fraud to be fully investigated, he said. "We were particularly concerned about electoral abuses and violence that happened in the weeks leading up to the elections," he stated. "First, there were attacks against police, politicians, and political gatherings by terrorist groups. Second, many journalists, particularly female journalists, were harassed and abused by party supporters.

Pak-IMF reach staff-level agreement on releasing last tranche of USD 3 billion bailout

Islamabad, Mar 20 (PTI):

The IMF on Wednesday said it has reached a staff-level agreement with the new government in cash-strapped Pakistan on the final review of a USD 3 billion bailout, paving the way for the release of the last USD 1.1 billion tranche from the global lender. The agreement, however, is subject to the approval of the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to be held in April.

Pakistan's new finance minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, who assumed charge last week, had said that his priority was to start negotiations with the Washington-based IMF to bail out the country from its financial woes. Last year,

the IMF Executive Board approved the USD 3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) for Pakistan, the term for which is set to expire next month. So far, two tranches have been issued while the last one is pending the review of the conditions set by the lender.

Led by IMF's Mission chief to Pakistan, Nathan Porter, the team visited Islamabad from March 14 to 19 and discussed the Second Review of Pakistan's economic programme with senior officials. "The IMF team has reached a staff-level agreement with the Pakistani authorities on the second and a final review of Pakistan's stabilisation programme supported by the IMF's USD 3 billion SBA," the IMF said in a statement at Washington.



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, right, greets United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres prior to a meeting at EU headquarters in Brussels, Wednesday.

Doing business in China is growing tougher, more uncertain: European business group

Beijing, Mar 20 (AP):

Uncertainty and "draconian regulations" have drastically raised risks for foreign businesses in China, a report by a European business group said on Wednesday.

The lengthy paper by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China urges China's leaders to do more to address concerns that it says have "grown exponentially" in recent years. "This report comes at a time when the global business environment is becoming increasingly politicised, and companies are having to make some very tough decisions about

how, or in some cases if, they can continue to engage with the Chinese market," it says. The study, compiled by the chamber and the China Macro Group consultancy, echoes concerns that have been raised by European and American companies operating in China. Foreign investment fell 8 per cent last year from a year earlier as companies recalibrated their commitments in the world's second largest economy. EU Chamber officials said China's changing business environment partly reflects moves by Beijing to minimise risks due to trade friction and dependence on imports of key commodi-

ties or industrial products. That's especially the case given trade friction with Washington and discussions about "decoupling" supply chains from China after the disruptions that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But they said European companies also must manage their own risks. China has sought to emphasise its openness to foreign companies and investment. Its commerce ministry spokesperson said the country was working to ensure 100 per cent access to manufacturing by eliminating remaining trade barriers. On Tuesday, the State

Council, China's Cabinet, issued an updated version of an action plan announced in July to promote more foreign investment, especially in high-tech areas favoured for growth such as computer chips, biopharmaceuticals and advanced equipment.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
No. 2024/C/Chg./ATVM(I)/R, Dt. 19/02/2024

CANCELLATION

Tender for the work of appointment of ATVM Facilitators at different stations over Raipur Division for issue of unreserved tickets through smart card based schedule to be opened 26/03/2024 at 15.00 Hrs. is hereby cancelled due to administrative reason.

DRM (Comm.)
SECR/ Raipur

PR/R/Sr.DCM/AN/283
South East Central Railway @secrail

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE FOR ELECTRICAL WORKS

(1) E-Tender No.: Sr. DEE-G-R-OTP-23-24-32, Date: 15.03.2024.
Work: Outsourcing of AC Coach Electrical Attendant (ACEA) in AC Coaches of Durg based primary Trains (ICF & LHB) for One Year.
Tender Value: ₹ 1,09,32,329.00.
Earnest Money Deposit: ₹ 2,04,700/-.

(2) E-Tender No.: Sr. DEE-G-R-OTP-23-24-33, Date: 15.03.2024.
Work: Provision of SCADA system at 33/11 KV Sub-Station of Electrical General Services in Raipur Division.
Tender Value: ₹ 46,00,000.00.
Earnest Money Deposit: ₹ 92,000/-.

Submission of Tender: Upto 11.30 hours on 30.04.2024.

For further details/purchase of tender document, eligibility criteria and the complete details for the above work, please contact office of the Sr. D.E.E.(G)/South East Central Railway, Raipur or refer/download tender document which is available on our website: www.ireps.gov.in Manual offers are not allowed against these tender and any such manual offers received shall be rejected.

Sr.Divil. Elect. Engineer (RS&G) / PR/R/Sr.DEE(G)/IP/278 Raipur.

South East Central Railway @secrail



CENTRAL Chronicle

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Charting the Course for Democratic Voyage

As the Election Commission unveils the roadmap for the 18th Lok Sabha elections, India's democratic machinery springs into full gear. The forthcoming polls mark not just a constitutional duty but a defining moment in our nation's narrative. The journey to this pivotal juncture commenced nearly a year ago, with both the ruling BJP-led alliance and the opposition Congress forging ahead with spirited campaigns. Now, with the Election Commission's comprehensive seven-phase schedule in place, spanning from April 19 to June 1, the stage is set for a monumental democratic exercise. At the heart of this electoral spectacle lies the colossal mandate of 968 million registered voters, a diverse tapestry reflecting the nation's multifaceted identity. Among them, the emergence of 18 million first-time voters underscores the evolving dynamics of our democratic landscape, infused with youthful vigor and fresh perspectives. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks a historic third term, the opposition, though fragmented, remains steadfast in its resolve to challenge his supremacy. While pre-election surveys tip the scales in Modi's favor, projecting a clear mandate, the Congress grapples with dwindling prospects, further exacerbated by internal discord. The allure of opposition unity, often touted as a panacea for electoral success, continues to elude fruition, particularly under the Congress's leadership. Yet, history bears witness to moments when a united opposition forged transformative victories, most notably in 1977, dismantling Indira Gandhi's authoritarian regime. Amidst the electoral fervor, it is imperative to transcend partisan divides and uphold the sanctity of democratic principles. As citizens, we must exercise our franchise judiciously, guided by a discerning appraisal of policies and promises. Moreover, the onus lies not just on political leaders but on every stakeholder to safeguard the integrity of our electoral process. Transparency, accountability, and inclusivity must form the bedrock of our electoral ethos, ensuring a level playing field for all contenders. Beyond the ballot box, the real litmus test lies in the aftermath of elections, where the victors must embrace the mantle of governance with humility and diligence. Addressing the myriad challenges confronting our nation demands not just rhetoric but robust action anchored in public welfare. In this electoral odyssey, let us transcend the cacophony of partisan politics and embrace the spirit of unity and progress. Regardless of electoral outcomes, our collective aspiration for a resilient, inclusive, and prosperous India must remain unwavering.

Inclusive AI Education

Bridging the Divide

Dr Krishna Kumar Vepakomma



The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) in education heralds a profound transformation, poised to revolutionize the landscape of learning and equip students with the skills necessary to navigate the complexities of tomorrow's workforce. With tools such as ChatGPT, Google Bard, Midjourney, and Canva's innovative features seamlessly integrating into educational frameworks, the potential of AI to enhance learning experiences has become increasingly evident. The infusion of AI into education holds promise across multiple fronts, offering myriad opportunities to elevate both teaching and learning practices. One of the most significant advancements facilitated by AI is the concept of personalized learning. By harnessing AI algorithms to analyze students' individual learning preferences and aptitudes, educators can tailor lesson plans to suit diverse learning styles, fostering deeper engagement and comprehension among learners. This personalized approach not only enhances academic outcomes but also instills a sense of empowerment and autonomy within students as they navigate their educational journey at their own pace. Moreover, AI-driven adaptive learning platforms further amplify the efficacy of educational interventions by dynamically adjusting instructional content based on real-time feedback and performance metrics. This iterative process ensures that students receive targeted support and interventions precisely tailored to their evolving needs, thereby optimizing learning outcomes and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. However, the transformative potential of AI in education extends far beyond the confines of academic achievement. At its core, AI education embodies a commitment to promoting inclusivity and equity within educational ecosystems. By democratizing access to AI resources and technologies, educators can empower students from all backgrounds, including those from marginalized communities, to actively participate in the digital revolution and capitalize on the opportunities afforded by AI-driven innovation. Moreover, fostering a culture of digital literacy and ethical reasoning is paramount in navigating the ethical and societal implications of AI technologies responsibly. Educators play a pivotal role in equipping students with the critical thinking skills necessary to interrogate and contextualize AI-driven narratives, thereby fostering a more nuanced understanding of the ethical dilemmas inherent in AI deployment. Furthermore, the acquisition of AI skills holds tangible benefits beyond the realm of academia, equipping students with the proficiencies necessary to thrive in an increasingly digitized and data-driven economy. As AI continues to permeate various industries, individuals adept in AI technologies are poised to emerge as coveted assets in the job market, equipped with the skills necessary to drive innovation and spearhead transformative change. Yet, for AI education to realize its full potential, it is imperative to address the pervasive inequities that threaten to exacerbate existing disparities within educational ecosystems. Championing diversity, equity, and inclusion within AI education is not merely a moral imperative but a strategic imperative essential for fostering a more equitable and just society. By embracing AI education through a lens of inclusivity and equity, we can harness the transformative power of AI to foster a more just, equitable, and prosperous future for all.

(Writer is Professor & Principal (Rtd) and newspaper columnist.)

Central Chronicle invites articles, write-ups, and comments on a wide range of issues for our editorial page. Submissions should be between 800-900 words in length. In addition, we welcome letters to the editor for this page. While letters may be edited for clarity, we aim to preserve the integrity of the original message, and ask that they be kept to around 50-60 words. Submissions can be sent via email to editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com.

RELIGIOUS PROCESSION



Devotees take part in a religious procession of deity 'Khatu Shyam Baba' ahead of the Holi festival, in Beawar, Wednesday, March 20.

Amalaki Ekadashi: A Sacred Ritual Concealing the Message of Tree Conservation



RAJENDER KUMAR SHARMA



Importance of trees in Hindu culture

In Hindu mythological and Vedic culture, the almighty nature and natural resources have always been revered. Among these natural resources, trees have special importance in Hindu religious rituals. Tree worship is an integral part of Hinduism, which believes that Brahma, the ultimate reality, resides in everything.

Out of a total of 27 constellations, 12 zodiac signs and 9 planets, a particular plant or tree is worshipped for each constellation, each zodiac sign and each planet. If we go by the logic of above said fact, we shall find a hidden message of "Tree Conservation". The trees that have been assigned to the constellations, zodiac signs or planets or are asked to serve them, and are asked not to be harmed, are all full of medicinal properties. Lord Vishnu is considered the nurturer of the universe and providing health to the living world is an integral part of that nurturer. Tulsi ji is dear to Lord Vishnu and the medicinal properties of Tulsi ji are not hidden from anyone. Amalaki Ekadashi is also the festival of Lord Vishnu, which is dedicated to Amla, another tree full of medicinal properties.

Ekadashi according to Hindu calendar

According to Hindu calendar, there are total 24 Ekadashi in a year. Every month there are 2

Ekadashi, one in Krishna Paksha and one in Shukla Paksha. In Malmal or Adhikmas, 2 Ekadashi increases and thus the total number of Ekadashi becomes 26 instead of 24. In Hinduism, Ekadashi fast dedicated to Lord Vishnu, the creator of the universe, holds a special place.

Specialty of Amalaki Ekadashi
Amalaki Ekadashi is a Hindu holy day, which is celebrated on the 11th day of Shukla Paksha in the lunar month of Falgun i.e. February-March. This day also marks the beginning of the main celebration of Holi, the Hindu festival of colors. It is a festival dedicated to the Amalaki or Amla tree. The superiority of Amalaki or Amla has been compared to Ganga among rivers and Lord Vishnu among Gods. Amla has been established as the original tree by Lord Vishnu. It is believed that God resides in every part of it. To get the blessings of the God, the Amla tree is duly worshipped on this day. It is believed that Lord Vishnu gave birth to Brahma and the Amla tree to create the universe.

Importance of Amalaki Ekadashi
The main objective is to take a pledge to protect this tree with medicinal properties. Amla is the best source of Vitamin C. It is believed that Lord Hari resides in or around this tree. According to some beliefs, Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, resides in this tree. It is also believed that Vishnu incarnation

, Krishna and his wife Radha live near this tree. Lord Vishnu has said that the fast of Amalaki Ekadashi of Falgun Shukla Paksha is very good for those who wish to attain heaven and salvation.

Story of Amalaki Ekadashi

According to the legend, two stories are read and heard about Amalaki Ekadashi. In one story, there is a story of getting the virtue of the Amalaki Ekadashi fast done in this birth and in another story, there is a story of getting the virtue of this fast done in the previous birth in the next birth. The meaning of both the stories is the same that the fast of Amalaki Ekadashi is auspicious in every birth.

According to the first story, King Chitransen and his subjects kept the fast of Amalaki Ekadashi. During one of his hunting trips, King Chitransen fought with demons and fell unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he found the demons lying around him. He understood that this was the auspicious effect of Amalaki Ekadashi fast, he and his subjects observed.

Version According to Brahmanda Purana, Sage Vasishtha has told that King Chaitrarath of Vaidisa and his subjects were blessed with wealth due to the worship of Vishnu.

Once, on Amalaki Ekadashi, Chaitrarath and his subjects were worshipping Vishnu and the Amla tree near the Vishnu temple on the river bank. The devotees kept fast and stayed awake all night to worship Vishnu ji. A hungry hunter joined the group and unknowingly observed the Amalaki Ekadashi fast. The good deeds of which he received in his next birth. It is said that after his death he was reborn as King Vasurtha.

Rituals to be performed on Amalaki Ekadashi

On this day, devotees take a vow to fast after taking bath and stand in front of the idol or picture of Lord Vishnu with sesame seeds, kusha, mudra and water in their hands. They pray to Lord Vishnu for salvation. After this, Lord Hari is worshipped with full rituals. After worshipping the Lord, the Amla tree is worshipped with the worship material. First of all, the land around the tree is smeared with cow dung and sanctified. A Kalash is placed at the root of the tree and the gods, holy rivers and pilgrimage sites are symbolically invited in this Kalash.

Put Pancha Pallava on the Kalash and a lamp is lit. Sandalwood is applied around the neck of the Kalash and clothes are worn.

Finally, a golden idol of Parshuram, the sage incarnation of Lord Vishnu, is placed on the Kalash and it is worshipped in a proper manner. On the day of Dwadashi, after taking bath in the morning, feed a Brahmin, pray for prosperity, wealth and health and offer as much donation as possible. Only after that, the devotee takes food and water. Although the festival of Holi starts from Vasant Panchami, but the main celebration starts from Amalaki Ekadashi and ends on Poornima. In ancient times, people used to start playing with colors from this day.

Auspicious time for tree conservation resolution

According to astrologers and Hindu calendar, this year Ekadashi of Shukla Paksha of Falgun month will start on 20th March at 12:20 am and will end on 21st March at 02:24 am. Since Udayatithi will be on 20th March, Wednesday, hence fasting will also be kept on this day.

(Writer is Sr. Columnist, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Erosion of Trust

The General Election, once celebrated as a pinnacle of democracy, now evokes widespread apprehension among voters. Revelations regarding electoral bonds and the targeting of Opposition figures fuel concerns about a skewed playing field, essential for democratic integrity. Rahul Gandhi's assertion that PM Narendra Modi relies on EVMs, ED, CBI, and IT Department underscores these fears. Such trends threaten to diminish public confidence in electoral processes. Both the ruling dispensation and the Opposition bear the responsibility of restoring faith in democratic institutions, safeguarding the cornerstone of our democracy: the people's trust.

MK Nair, Raipur

Voter's Power

Elections serve as a crucial juncture for voters to confront power-hungry politicians. The upcoming Lok Sabha polls present an opportunity to hold the ruling establishment answerable for eroding democracy through the misuse of state apparatus against the Opposition. In casting their votes, citizens must prioritize issues like social equity. The pervasive influence of black money, endemic corruption, and the cozy relationship between politicians and corporate interests should weigh heavily on voter decisions. It is imperative for voters to demand accountability and ensure that those in power are held to task for their actions.

Shreyanka Patil, New Delhi

Law's Disregard

The ED and Arvind Kejriwal flout legal norms, showcasing a disturbing mockery of justice. Despite bail granted by a local court, the ED's hasty issuance of fresh summonses to the Delhi CM smacks of vendetta. Such actions tarnish the agency's credibility. Prudence dictates that ED officials refrain from hastily summoning citizens. Equally concerning is Kejriwal's repeated defiance of summons, exhibiting disregard for the law. This behavior undermines the fabric of justice and sets a dangerous precedent. It's imperative for both parties to uphold the sanctity of the law, lest the foundations of justice be eroded.

Keshav Kumar KN, Kannur

Understanding CAA

The unwarranted criticism from America regarding the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) overlooks India's historical context. Washington's ignorance underscores the need for a deeper understanding of the legislation's background, aimed at addressing post-Partition issues. Granting citizenship based on faith or ethnicity isn't unprecedented globally. The CAA represents India's internal affairs, deserving respect from other nations. It's time to recognize the CAA's role in rectifying historical injustices and refrain from unwarranted interference in India's sovereign matters. The world must acknowledge India's unique historical journey and its efforts to address the complexities of citizenship and identity.

Jitin Deshpandey, Jalandhar

Reflections on True Humility

Embracing Oneness and Spiritual Consciousness

Sujit De

A friend of mine invited me to attend an opening ceremony of his wife's art exhibition. A 5-wick traditional oil lamp was to be lit to mark the beginning of the event. Four artists lit four wicks one by one. My friend requested me to light the last one. I was taken aback. "Me! I'm not an artist", I said to myself. Then I thought that I was after all a human being like those four famous artists and my refusal might sound like supporting the practice of casteist categorisation of human beings.

So, I went ahead and did my little job. After that an artist who was to preside the ceremony went to grace his chair on the stage and called the artist of the day, my friend's wife, to sit at the

chair next to him. But she declined saying that she could not sit beside him.

Again I was taken aback. I thought it might hurt the renowned artist the way she was turning down a normal procedure. I thought that some audiences might take a hint that she wanted to cast aspersions on the character of the artist on the centrestage. But I gathered that there was no such misunderstanding. That she was showing her humility and high respect for the artist had been accepted by all including the artist with a grin.

Is it at all humility to belittle our self-esteem and underestimate our potentialities? The answer is simply no. C. S. Lewis rightly said, "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking

of yourself less." Indeed, we must not think that we are less capable. Just like a small banyan seed that has a magic blueprint within it to grow up to become a big tree if it gets a field to grow; every human being has immense potentialities to become a great person if she/he gets a level playing field to nurture her/his talent.

But one must not think only about oneself as it is a falsehood to separate ourselves from the whole universe.

By thinking of ourselves less, we will actually be able to enlarge us to live infinity and live oneness where there is no room for little vanity, little self-complacency and little self-pity. And this will help us say a firm NO to casteist gradation. Unfortunately, humility has

often been abused by two groups of people, hypocrites and defeatists, in two diametrically opposite ways. A hypocrite sometimes says some tongue-in-cheek humble words about herself or himself feigning humility to get puffed up inside with a feel of vanity. On the other hand, a defeatist enjoys masochistic pleasure by uttering a self-lowering remark. It is either superiority or inferiority complex that uses humility in a wrong way. In both of these cases, it is all about humility before human beings. But true humility should only be before the Supreme Consciousness.

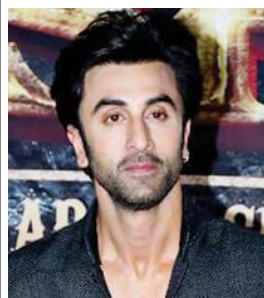
The Mother (spiritual collaborator of Sri Aurobindo) said, "True humility consists in knowing that the Supreme Consciousness, the Supreme Will alone exists

and that the I is not." One can attain such an unalloyed humility if one realises that everything is One in this infinite universe and to mark oneself as a completely separate entity is a falsehood.

We need to reflect on the fact that after our deaths the atoms of our body will become atoms of a matter then again some of them become a part of some trees, animals and/or individuals. Even the atoms of our nails and hair start becoming a part of other things during our lifetime! This reflection helps us erase our ego that separates us from the universe. It gives birth to true humility before the One which we are also a part of. Spiritual humility hatches the ego-egg to break the eggshell of separation to give birth to a psychic conscious being.

BRIEF

Brand ambassador



New Delhi: Tiles and bathware brand Asian Granito India on Wednesday said it has roped in Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor as its brand ambassador. With Ranbir Kapoor on board, the brand expects a further increase in its market presence and connection with a wider audience, especially the youth segment, Asian Granito India said in the statement. The BSE-listed company will launch a brand campaign and TV commercial featuring Ranbir Kapoor. "The campaign will not only highlight its products but also showcase its dedication to creating living spaces that reflect individuality and modern sensibilities," the company said.

AI upskill

New Delhi: L&T Technology Services (LTTTS) on Wednesday said it has partnered with American technology firm Nvidia to provide training in generative AI to its 1,000 employees to create a pool of AI specialists. LTTTS said it is committed to upskilling 1,000 engineers over the next three years on NVIDIA software like NVIDIA AI Enterprise, which includes NVIDIA NeMo, NVIDIA NIM and more. The "LTTTS training initiative is aimed at building a formidable pool of AI specialists and practitioners. Furthermore, LTTTS will implement AI solutions across various sectors, including manufacturing, automotive, and healthcare," a company statement said.

Appointment



New Delhi: Apollo Hospitals Group on Tuesday announced the appointment of Madhu Sasidhar as President & CEO of its hospital division. In this role, Sasidhar will oversee Apollo's hospital business, the group said in a statement. Prior to joining Apollo, he held various roles at Cleveland Clinic, including President of Cleveland Clinic Tradition Hospital.

Independent directors

New Delhi: TVS Motor Company on Wednesday said it has appointed two new independent directors on its board. The two new members are Chennai-based Sanmar Group Chairman Vijay Sankar, and Chairman of Shailesh Haribhakti & Associates Shailesh Haribhakti, the company said in a statement. "I am confident that our two new independent directors have the credentials to guide TVS Motor to new heights.

PM says India to lead world in AI, asks startups to work on Indian solutions for global challenges

New Delhi, Mar 20:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said India will lead the world in AI capabilities, and exhorted young entrepreneurs and startups to work on Indian solutions for global applications to solve challenges faced by nations across the world. Addressing the Startup Mahakumbh, Modi said the three missions on AI, semiconductors and quantum, launched by the government earlier, will generate jobs for youth and investment opportunities for global investors. "We are in a new era of AI technology, and world acknowledges that India will have an upper hand in AI. It is now our priority to ensure that we do not let go of this opportunity," he said. AI offers limitless possibilities for young innovators and global investors. "The leadership of AI capabilities



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the 'Startup Mahakumbh' at the Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi, Wednesday, March 20.

will and should remain in hands of India...I am confident that spirit of 'Indian solutions for global applications' will be a force...solutions by Indian innovators will solve problems for many countries," Modi said. Modi recalled that in his address to the US Senate last year he had mentioned that India would continue to be a leader in AI. The prime

minister also exuded confidence that his government will come out with a full budget after the upcoming general elections. He said numerous jobs are being created for young innovators and investment opportunities for global investors with the advent of the AI industry and mentioned the National Quantum Mission, India AI Mission and Semiconductor Mission.

The Union Cabinet had earlier approved National Quantum Mission with the objective of developing intermediate-scale quantum computers with 50-1000 physical qubits in 8 years in various platforms like superconducting and photonic technology. The prime minister said India has decided to form National Research Foundation with investment of thousands of crores and is also gearing up to create a better mechanism for funding startups.

Kiren Rijiju takes additional charge of food processing industries ministry



New Delhi, Mar 20: Earth Sciences Minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday took additional charge as the Union Minister of Food Processing Industries. Earlier in the day, President Droupadi Murmu accepted the resignation of Union Food Processing Industries Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras. After this, Rijiju was

given the additional charge of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries. In a post on social media platform 'X', Rijiju thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for assigning him the additional responsibility of the Ministry of Food Processing Industries. "While we are in the midst of seeking people's blessings for Modi ji to serve the people of India, we will not waste a single moment to make India 3rd biggest economy of the world in Modi ji's 3rd term and to fulfill his ultimate target to make India a fully developed nation by 2047 #ViksitBharat," he said. In another post on X, Rijiju said, "I have formally assumed the office as Minister of Food Processing Industries.

Award-winning brokerage VT Markets aims to make trading easy for everyone

Mumbai, Mar 20:

Due to the evolving dynamics and growing economy, the South Asian region is witnessing a surge in people opting to trade. The region has drawn the interest of numerous brokers, making it important for traders to find a reliable brokerage firm that can provide a user-friendly trading platform and mobile application as well as a range of trading tools and resources to make smarter trading decisions on the go. VT Markets, a global, multi-asset brokerage firm, has recently introduced its user-friendly platform and mobile application in the South Asian market, to make trading more accessible for novice and experienced users. The company aims to build a reliable and accessible platform to meet the needs of all traders, providing them with real-time market

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das calls on Finance Minister

New Delhi, Mar 20:

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Wednesday met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for a non-agenda courtesy meeting, a fortnight ahead of the central bank's meet to decide on benchmark policy rate. Das-headed Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to meet from April 3-5, the first for 2024-25 fiscal year. The MPC meet is expected to spell out inflation and growth trajectory for financial year beginning April 1. RBI in its last policy released in February projected a growth rate of 7 per cent and inflation outlook at 4.5 per cent for FY25. An RBI bulletin on Tuesday said food price pressure is an obstacle to swifter fall in retail inflation to the Reserve Bank's target of 4 per cent. Retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) is on a decline since December and was at



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das during a meeting, in New Delhi, Wednesday, March 20.

5.09 per cent in February. It further said the global economy is losing steam, with growth slowing in some of the most resilient economies and high frequency indicators pointing to further levelling in the

period ahead. In India, real GDP growth was at a six-quarter high in the third quarter of 2023-24, powered by strong momentum, robust indirect taxes, and lower subsidies. The high visibility of structural de-

mand and healthier corporate and bank balance sheets will likely be the galvanising forces for growth going forward, the article on the 'State of Economy' in the central bank's March bulletin said.

Isuzu Motors India to roll-out 'Isuzu I-Care Pre-Summer Camp'

Chennai, Mar 20: In a constant endeavour to reaffirm ISUZU's commitment to provide best service and ownership experience, Isuzu Motors India will be conducting a nation-wide 'Isuzu I-Care Pre-Summer Camp' for its range of Isuzu D-Max Pick-ups and SUVs. This service camp is aimed at offering customer-exciting benefits and preventive maintenance checks for a hassle-free driving experience during the season across the country. An initiative of 'Isuzu Care', the Pre-Summer camp will be organised across all Isuzu authorised dealer service outlets, between March 19th to 24th, 2024 (both days inclusive). During this period, customers can also avail special offers & benefits for their vehicles. The Pre-Summer

Camp will be organised at all authorised service facilities of Isuzu located in Ahmedabad, Baramulla, Bengaluru, Bimavaram, Bhubaneswar, Calicut, Chennai, Coimbatore, Delhi, Dimapur, Durgapur, Gandhidham, Gorakhpur, Gurugram, Guwahati, Hyderabad (Kukatpally & L.B.Nagar), Indore, Jaipur, Jaigaon, Jalandhar, Jammu, Jodhpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Kolhapur, Kurnool, Leh, Lucknow, Madurai, Mandi, Mangalore, Mehsana, Mohali, Mumbai, Navimumbai, Nagpur, Nashik, Nellore, Noida, Pune, Raipur, Rajahmundry, Rajkot, Siliguri, Surat, Tirupati, Trivandrum, Trichy, Vadodra, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam.

JSW MG Motor India to invest Rs 5,000 cr, to set up second plant at Halol

Mumbai, Mar 20:

JSW MG Motor India will invest Rs 5,000 crore to enhance production capacity and launch one new car every 3-6 months starting September, top company officials said on Wednesday. The newly formed company, a joint venture between China's SAIC and Indian conglomerate JSW Group will also seek to create a "Maruti moment" in the new energy vehicle segment, JSW Group Chairman Sajjan Jindal said here, while announcing the finalisation of the partnership here. The joint venture aims to sell one million units of passenger electric vehicles in India by 2030 when the total market is expected to be 10 million units annually. "We have announced today that we are going to



have our second plant in Gujarat near our existing unit at Halol itself," MG Motor India Chairman Emeritus Rajeev Chhabra told PTI on the sidelines of the event. The company's production capacity will go from over 1 lakh per year to over 3 lakh a year, he said. Asked about the investment, he said, "The total investment from all stakeholders in this space is going to be over Rs 5,000

crore on capacity enhancement and new product introductions." Outlining the roadmap for the company, Jindal in his address said the JSW Group believes in scale when it comes to building capacity. "We are going to churn the whole industry a lot and we will create some sort of disruption in the industry. Our idea is that we will bring one new car every 3-4 months, six months down the line," he said.

September onwards, he said. "We will be bringing the new cars. We will manufacture them in India not only for India but also export these cars to the most developed markets." "Forty years ago when Maruti came to India, it changed the auto industry. It brought very efficient cars, very lightweight cars and the Ambassadors and the Fiats went into oblivion. "Maruti brought in state-of-the-art new cars. Today they are the market leader," he said. "I believe that with MG we can create a new energy vehicle Maruti moment," Jindal said. JSW MG Motor India is seeking to be the market leader in the new energy vehicle (NEV) segment in India, targeting sales of 10 lakh units annually by 2030.

Will roll back 'Pure Veg Mode' in case of negative social repercussions: Zomato CEO



New Delhi, Mar 20: After facing a backlash online from a section of people over the launch of the "Pure Veg Mode" service, Zomato CEO Deepinder Goyal on Tuesday said the food delivery platform will "roll it back in a heartbeat" in case there is a negative social repercussions. In a long late night post on X, Goyal also sought to allay concerns that Zomato's

regular fleet may be barred by some societies and RWAs. "There's an opinion that some societies and RWAs will now not let our regular fleet in. We will stay alert for any such cases and work with these RWAs to not let this happen. "We understand our social responsibility due to this change, and we will not back down from solving it when the need arises," he said. "Please note that this Pure Veg Mode, or the Pure Veg Fleet doesn't serve or alienate any religious, or political preference," he clarified. Goyal elaborated upon the reason behind introduction of the company's "Pure Veg Mode" service.

AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to ever-changing environment: CAG Murmu

New Delhi, Mar 20:

Comptroller and Auditor General of India Girish Chandra Murmu on Wednesday said AI-driven solutions empower auditors to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver actionable insights that drive informed decision-making. Speaking at an MoU signing ceremony between CAG institution and IIT, Delhi here, Murmu said AI-powered tools have the potential to automate routine tasks, liberating auditors to focus on strategic analysis and value-added activities, thereby elevating the quality and relevance of audit outcomes. "Together, we have the opportunity to shape a future



where AI serves as a catalyst for positive change, empowering auditors, and organizations to unlock new insights, drive informed decision-making, and create value for the nation," he said. The MoU was signed by Anand Mohan Bajaj, Chief Technology Officer and Additional Deputy CAG and Rangan Banerjee, Director, IIT Delhi in the presence of the CAG of

Memoir of former RBI governor D Subbarao to release on April 30

New Delhi, Mar 20: A book on the life and times of former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Duvvuri Subbarao will hit the stands on April 30, announced Penguin Random House India (PRHI) on Wednesday. "Just A Mercenary?: Notes from My Life and Career" is touted to be the remarkable journey of a small-town boy from a modest background to the top echelons of India's civil services and then on to the helm of the country's central bank. Subbarao served as governor of RBI for five years (2008-13). Prior to that, he was finance secretary (2007-08) and secretary to the prime minister's Economic



Advisory Council (2005-07). "All through my career, I've tried to do my best. But the question that constantly runs in my mind is what motivated me. Was it just a sense of duty - an obligation to do your best because you are getting paid for it? Or was I driven by a higher calling - the need to give back to

society for all that I have received? "In short, Was I just a mercenary? Or Was I more? The answer will perhaps elude me forever," the author said in a statement. At the start of his career as sub-collector of Parvathipuram sub-division in north-coastal Andhra Pradesh way back in 1974, Subbarao learnt that tribal development requires more than enthusiasm; it requires most of all an understanding of poverty. Nearly 40 years later, in 2013, as the governor of the Reserve Bank of India in the midst of a fierce exchange rate crisis, Subbarao learnt the harsh challenges of emerging economies in an unequal world.

Sensex, Nifty rebound as Reliance, ITC shares rally

Mumbai, Mar 20:

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded on Wednesday, propelled by bargain hunting in index majors Reliance Industries, ITC and SBI amid a largely firm trend in global equities. However, a depreciating rupee and selling pressure in small-cap stocks restricted the gains, traders said. In a highly volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose 89.64 points or 0.12 per cent to settle at 72,101.69. During the day, it jumped 390.62 points or 0.54 per cent to 72,402.67. The benchmark hit its day's low of 71,674.42, down 337.63 points or 0.46 per cent. The NSE Nifty climbed 21.65 points or 0.10 per cent to

finish at 21,839.10. "Lifted by favourable global sentiment and solid direct tax collection, Indian markets rebounded, closing with modest gains. Robust FII and DII inflows sustained the market. "The US Fed is likely to delay the cut rate to the latter part of the year due to a resilient economy. Domestic mid and small caps are likely to lag large caps driven by premium valuations in the short-term," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Gojib Financial Services. From the Sensex basket, Maruti, Nestle, Power Grid, State Bank of India, ITC, Reliance Industries, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank and Asian Paints were the major gainers.

Unseasonal rain and hailstorm cause crop damage

District administration initiates assessment amidst crop loss

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Mar 20: Unforeseen rain and hailstorms have resulted in significant crop damage across the district, raising concerns among farmers. Promptly responding to the situation, the district administration has begun evaluating the extent of the losses incurred.

Reports indicate that approximately 15 percent of the Rabi crops have been adversely affected by the unseasonal weather conditions, while horticultural crops, favoured by modern agricultural practices, have experienced staggering losses of up to 60 percent over the past few days.

Fear of greater damage to horticulture crops

As news of crop losses continues to emerge, Chhuikhadan block stands out as one of the worst-hit areas. Villages including Jangalpur, Pandaria, Oteban, and Manikchauri Jangalpur, among others, have reported heavy damages.

Similarly, villages like Jalbandha, Maroda, Chingli, and Pawantara in the Bazaar Ataria area



have also suffered substantial losses. The devastation extends from Saja Assembly constituency to Market Ataria, affecting over 50 villages and prompting more than 350 farmers to reach out to the administration for assistance.

Waterlogged fields prompt farmer distress

In the aftermath of heavy rains two days ago, fields in the Bazaar Ataria area of Khairagarh block stand inundated, exacerbating the plight of farmers. The sudden downpour, accompanied by hailstorms, has led to significant flooding amidst standing crops.

Genda Pal, a local farmer, laments the complete ruination of the standing Rabi crop in the Bazaar Ataria area, emphasizing the urgent need for government assistance to mitigate losses and aid in recovery efforts.

Farmers appeal for government aid

In Chhuikhadan block, aggrieved farmers unite in seeking redressal for their losses, rallying together to submit a memorandum to the Tehsildar. Villagers, including Tikamram Sahu, Shivprasad, Tularam, Khemlal Sahu, Pyarelal, and Leela, present their demands, highlighting the severity of the situation.

The memorandum underscores the immediate need for compensation and support from the government to alleviate the economic strain inflicted upon the farming community.

Agriculture department extends support

The Agriculture Department has taken proactive steps to assist farmers affected by recent weather adversities, releasing a dedicated helpline number for prompt assistance. Over the last two days, timely rain and hailstorms have inflicted significant damage to crops, particularly impacting Rabi crops such

as wheat and gram.

Deputy Director of the Agriculture Department, Rajkumar Solanki, highlighted that the worst-hit areas are Gandai and Khairagarh tehsils, where recorded rainfall reached up to 4.7 mm and 0.5 mm respectively. Solanki emphasized the provision for compensation to insured farmers, stating that those experiencing loss exceeding 25 percent in the notified unit are eligible for compensation.

Farmers are urged to report crop damage to the insurance company within 72 hours through toll-free numbers 1800-419-0344 or 14447, or by contacting

local revenue, agriculture authorities, or their respective banks in writing.

Crops across the district have suffered extensive damage as a result of hailstorms and heavy rainfall, with reports of crop loss pouring in from more than 350 farmers spanning approximately 50 villages. The Agriculture Department is actively engaged in compiling data regarding the extent of crop damage, a crucial step towards facilitating support for affected farmers.

- Rajkumar Solanki, Deputy Director Agriculture

Horticulture crops, in particular, have borne the brunt of the severe weather conditions, exacerbated by strong storms and relentless rainfall. Reports of crop damage have surfaced from areas including Chhuikhadan and Jalbandha, prompting the Horticulture Department to initiate surveys aimed at assessing the magnitude of the losses incurred.

- Ravindra Mehra, Assistant Director Horticulture

C-Vigil App empowers citizens to uphold electoral integrity

● **Harnessing technology for transparent elections**

Central Chronicle News

Korba, Mar 20: The Election Commission of India's pioneering initiative, the C-Vigil mobile application, is set to revolutionize electoral oversight by empowering citizens to uphold the integrity of the democratic process.

Designed to ensure transparency and credibility in elections, C-Vigil, which stands for Citizen Vigilance, enables swift and efficient reporting of violations of the Model Code of Conduct, thereby safeguarding the sanctity of elections.

The advent of the C-Vigil app heralds a new era of citizen engagement and participation in enforcing electoral norms. Available for download on both Google Play Store and Apple Store, the application enables every citizen within a constituency to report violations of the Model Code of Conduct and ex-

penditure regulations using their smartphones.

By facilitating real-time reporting through photos, audios, and videos, C-Vigil promotes accountability and transparency, fostering a trust-based partnership between citizens and election authorities.

One of the hallmark features of the C-Vigil app is its commitment to protecting the anonymity of users, allowing individuals to lodge complaints without revealing their personal identifying details.

This ensures that citizens can report violations fearlessly, without apprehension of reprisal. Moreover, the app's geo-tagging functionality provides precise location data, aiding authorities in swiftly addressing reported incidents.

With real-time tracking of complaints and progress updates, C-Vigil empowers decision-makers and returning officers to take prompt and decisive action on reported violations, thereby upholding the integrity of the electoral process.

Admn ensures robust security measures for LS polls

Central Chronicle News

Bijapur, Mar 20: As the Lok Sabha general elections draw near, Collector and District Election Officer Anurag Pandey, alongside Superintendent of Police Dr. Jitendra Yadav, spearheaded a thorough evaluation of law and security measures in the district, underscoring a steadfast commitment to ensuring peaceful and fair voting processes.

Emphasizing the para-



mount importance of security at every stage of the electoral process, officials were tasked with implementing necessary protocols to uphold law and order during the elections. A meticulous review en-

compassed various facets of the voting procedure, encompassing the dispatch and return of polling teams, fortification of security measures for polling booths, and safeguarding of the strong

room. The collective effort involved key stakeholders including CEO District Panchayat Hemant Ramesh Nandanwar, Additional Superintendent of Police Chandrakant Gavarna, Joint Collector Kailash Verma, and several other district officials from revenue and police administrations, reaffirming the district's unwavering commitment to democratic principles and ensuring a smooth electoral process.

'Nyota Bhoj' enhances nutritional value of school meals

● **Citizens encouraged to contribute to children's well-being**

Central Chronicle News

Simga, Mar 20: The Block Education Officer of Simga Development Block, S.K. Gendle, unveiled an innovative initiative aimed at enhancing the nutritional quality of school meals through community participation.

This groundbreaking initiative, named Nyota Bhojan, under the Pradhan Mantri

Poshan Shakti Yojana, empowers common people to contribute towards enriching the meals provided to students, fostering a sense of collective responsibility towards children's well-being.

Nyota Bhoj, inspired by the vision of promoting nutrition and fostering community engagement, invites individuals and social organizations to contribute full meals or supplementary nutrition items to school students.

This voluntary initiative, aligned with the guidelines of the Pradhan Mantri

Poshanshakti Nirman Yojana, seeks to infuse school meals with wholesome and nourishing ingredients, ensuring that every child receives a nutritious diet conducive to their growth and development.

Interested donors are encouraged to partake in this noble endeavour by offering meals on significant occasions such as birthdays, marriage anniversaries, or organizational milestones.

By reaching out to the District Nodal Officer at the development block level, donors can coordinate their

contributions and ensure that their generosity directly benefits the students in need. This initiative not only enriches the nutritional landscape of school meals but also instills a sense of community spirit and compassion, underscoring the collective effort towards nurturing the future generation.

For further details regarding Nyota Bhoj under the Prime Minister Poshan Shakti Nirman Yojana, individuals are urged to reach out to the education officer at the block level, facilitating seamless collaboration and impactful contributions.

VHP extend heartfelt support to needy women with saree distribution

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Mar 20: In a display of solidarity and compassion, the women of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) in Rajim embarked on a mission to uplift the spirits of 40 underprivileged women residing in Dewar Basti. Recognizing the challenges faced by those marginalized in society, the dedicated members of VHP extended a helping hand by distributing much-needed sarees, symbolizing hope and support for their fellow community members.

Among those in need. Their thoughtful gesture not only provided essential attire but also served as a beacon of hope, demonstrating the power of collective action in making a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Beyond the tangible support offered through saree distribution, the outreach efforts of VHP women serve as a vital bridge, fostering connections and solidarity within the community. By engaging with residents on a personal level, these dedicated volunteers not only



deliver material assistance but also offer emotional support and encouragement. Moreover, their presence acts as a safeguard against external influences, reinforcing the importance of cultural heritage and spiritual devotion in preserving the fabric of society.

Through acts of service and words of wisdom, VHP women impart a message of resilience and unity, empowering individuals to remain steadfast in their faith and commitment to Sanatani Dharma.

In this spontaneous in-

teraction with nature's spectacle, the community found delight in the simplest of moments, uniting in awe and appreciation for the wonders of the natural world. However, the unexpected weather phenomenon also disrupted daily life, halting traffic on roads and compelling animals and birds to seek refuge from the tempestuous elements. The absence of proper drainage infrastructure led to significant inconvenience as roads in Dharma city succumbed to flooding.

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Mar 20: Tuesday evening in Dharma city witnessed a captivating spectacle as a sudden storm descended at 3:40 pm, accompanied by a symphony of raindrops and the rhythmic drumming of hailstones. For seven minutes, the landscape of Dharmanagari transformed into a blanket of white, as hail adorned every nook and cranny.

As hailstones descended at a rapid pace, residents seized the opportunity to capture nature's marvel. A child, filled with innocent wonder, gathered the icy pellets in a iron basket, while another opted for a mug, eagerly displaying the treasures to family members. The joyous excitement of experiencing hailstones for the first time radiated from a third-grader, while a young man shared the fascination, showcasing the icy jewels to passersby, his hand serving as a makeshift repository.

In this spontaneous in-



teraction with nature's spectacle, the community found delight in the simplest of moments, uniting in awe and appreciation for the wonders of the natural world. However, the unexpected weather phenomenon also disrupted daily life, halting traffic on roads and compelling animals and birds to seek refuge from the tempestuous elements. The absence of proper drainage infrastructure led to significant inconvenience as roads in Dharma city succumbed to flooding.



Particularly affected was the route leading to the revered Mahamaya Chowk temple, where water accumulation hindered transportation, causing frustration among commuters. Similarly, Mahasamund Marg witnessed flooding towards key areas such as Shivaji Chowk, Shri Ram Chowk, and the Gariaband Road bus stand, further disrupting travel routes. Despite the ordeal, the resilience of the community prevailed as the water eventually receded, albeit leaving pedestrians to navigate through residual pools.

Furthermore, the relent-

less force of the storm's strong winds resulted in the uprooting and fracturing of trees and plants, accentuating the challenges posed by the inclement weather conditions. As the storm subsided, residents experienced a palpable shift in weather patterns, with the mercury plummeting from the scorching heights of 36 degrees Celsius to a more temperate 23 degrees Celsius.

The meteorological rollercoaster provided respite from the oppressive heat that had gripped the region just days prior, offering a welcome reprieve to the populace. However, the arrival of cold winds post-rain and hail ushered in a new chill, prompting residents to retrieve their shawls and sweaters from hibernation.

In this oscillation between extremes, Dharma city embraces the unpredictability of nature with characteristic grace and adaptability, finding joy amidst inconvenience and solace amidst change.

Damage to crops

Amidst the onslaught of rain and hail, the agricultural heartland is witnessing widespread devastation, with mango orchards bearing the brunt of nature's fury. Revered as the "king of fruits," mango trees stand vulnerable as small, budding fruits succumb to the relentless assault of wind and water, crumbling before they reach maturity. While the harvesting of wheat continues, the looming threat extends to vegetable crops, amplifying concerns among farmers already grappling with the aftermath of the unyielding elements.

Concerns raised over canal cementing quality in Mungeli village

● **Calls for accountability amid allegations of substandard work**

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Mar 20: Villagers in Mungeli have voiced their grievances regarding the quality of canal cementing work conducted from village Bhurka to Ghanaghat, alleging the use of substandard materials and potential collusion between contractors and departmental officers. Expressing concerns over the compromised quality of the ongoing project, residents have called for heightened scrutiny

and accountability to ensure that infrastructure developments meet requisite standards. The canal cementing work, overseen by the Water Resources Department, has drawn criticism from villagers who assert that the absence of departmental officers at the work site has led to a decline in quality standards. Allegations of corruption and malpractice have surfaced, prompting calls for robust oversight mechanisms to prevent the exploitation of public resources. Concerned residents emphasize the importance of transparent processes and diligent supervision to safeguard the integrity of infrastructure projects and uphold the



trust of the community. During the ongoing canal pitching work spanning approximately 5 kilometers from Semarkona to Ghanaghat, villagers in Mungeli have raised alarm

over the use of inappropriate materials, highlighting lapses in quality control. Instead of the specified mureom soil, red ballast has been employed, indicating deviations from established construction protocols. Upon inquiry, Sub-Divisional Officer in-charge of Irrigation, Srivastava, clarified that mureom is not designated for use in canal lining cementing, emphasizing the suitability of red ballast for the task. Villagers, including Haribhajan Singh, Bhanwar Kashyap, Dooj Ram Yadav, and others, have decried the compromised construction quality, attributing the discrepancies to potential collusion between officers and contractors.

Vibrant preparations underway for Holi festival in Kharora

Central Chronicle News

Kharora, Mar 20: The spirit of Holi, the festival of colors, permeates the air as Kharora gears up for the joyous celebration slated for March 25th. The bustling marketplaces are adorned with vibrant decorations, heralding the onset of Rang Gula festivities. The rhythmic beats of drums and the lively tunes of trumpets echo through the streets, setting the stage for a jubilant occasion. From exquisitely crafted pichkaris to a kaleidoscope of hues in gula, the market is adorned with an array of festive delights. Amidst the festive fervour, preparations for the traditional Holika Dahan ceremony have commenced, adorning the city streets with anticipation and joy. As is customary every year, fer-



vent preparations are underway to commemorate Holi with unparalleled enthusiasm. The sale of Holi essentials, ranging from wholesale outlets to local vendors, has commenced, witnessing a notable shift towards eco-friendly alternatives. With a decline in the demand for chemical-laden gula, herbal alternatives have gained popularity, catering to the evolving preferences of customers.

In response to rising demand, vendors have stocked up on an extensive array of colors, including new shades of red, ensuring a vibrant and eco-conscious celebration. Pichkaris of various designs, from traditional to innovative gun and rifle shapes, adorn the stalls, catering to every reveler's preference. Simultaneously, as Holashtak commenced on March 17th, the community embarks on a period of spiritual reflection and reverence, culminating on March 25th. During this sacred period, known for its auspicious significance, traditional customs dictate abstaining from auspicious ceremonies and undertaking spiritual practices such as puja, penance, and meditation. Devotees pay homage to deities such as Lord Hanuman, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Narasimha, seeking blessings for happiness and prosperity. As the community embraces the solemnity of Holashtak, refraining from commencing new endeavours and undertaking significant life events, the essence of spiritual devotion permeates the atmosphere, fostering a deeper connection with tradition and heritage.

Moment of my life: RCB ace Shreyanka describes meeting idol Virat Kohli

Bengaluru, Mar 20 (PTI):

She was the cynosure of all eyes on Sunday having played a massive role in RCB's WPL triumph but Tuesday night gave 'Purple Cap' winner Shreyanka Patil a chance to enjoy a rare 'Fan Girl' moment with none other than Virat Kohli.

The 21-year-old off-spinner, who had been a revelation in both eliminator and final with her match-winning performances at the death, couldn't stop gushing on social media when she realised that her childhood idol actually knew her name.

"Started watching cricket cos of him. Grew up dreaming to be like him. And last night, had the moment of my life," she wrote on 'X', posting her picture alongside Kohli from the RCB 'Unbox' event.

"Virat said, 'Hi Shreyanka, well bowled.' He actually knows my name," the surreal feeling was yet to sink and it was understandable from her



post. Shreyanka was picked up by RCB during inaugural WPL auctions last year at base price of Rs 10 lakh and she finished with six wickets in seven matches, the most for her team. In September, the 21-year-old offie played in the CPL for Guyana Amazon Warriors, where she fin-

ished with the most wickets (9) in the tournament.

The performances were noticed by the Indian selectors, who called her up for the home T20 series against England in December last year and she made her national team debut on December 6. Since then there has been

no looking back for the youngsters, who battled many a injuries, to stake her claim in the national team with her performances.

Shreyanka has so far represented India in two ODIs and six T20s, picking up four and eight wickets respectively.

Matches against Kuwait, Qatar will tell us everything about qualification to third round: Stimac

Abha, Mar 20 (PTI):

The results against Kuwait and Qatar in June will be the real indicator of the Indian football team's prospects of making a maiden appearance in the third round of the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers, head coach Igor Stimac said on Wednesday.

India will take on lower-ranked Afghanistan in their second round qualifying match here on Thursday, and a win in the hill town will only brighten their chances of progressing to the third round, something the Blue Tigers have never achieved.

"Each game is important from the aspect of self-confidence and rankings. But our priority and the final goal is to qualify for Round 3. There are various options to get there and obviously, nothing will be decided in the next two games. The matches in June against Kuwait and Qatar will tell us everything," Stimac said.

This will be the fourth time in five years that India will face Afghanistan in an official match.



The two meetings in the World Cup Qualifiers in 2019 and 2021 ended 1-1 each, while India ran out 2-1 winners in the Asian Cup Qualifiers in 2022 in Kolkata, thanks to Sahal Abdul Samad's added-time strike.

The Indians arrived here on March 15 and have had five full training sessions ahead of the match, acclimatising to the conditions in the mountain city, which is 2,470 metres above sea level.

"We have been training normally as usual. We came here earlier so the boys can adapt to the different climate in Abha, and things look okay at the moment," said the Croat.

Stimac's counterpart and Afghanistan head coach Ashley Westwood knows Indian football all too well, having coached Bengaluru FC, ATK, and RoundGlass Punjab FC.

He took charge of the Afghanistan national

team last November, right before the World Cup Qualifiers kicked off.

"Ashley knows most of our boys quite well and has been preparing his team for us since the Asian Cup," said Stimac.

"A few months back they had a camp in Abha to work on their game plan and played a friendly with a local team here. But we are sure they will be a much better side than what we have seen in their opening games," he added.

Indian men and women occupy second place in maiden FIH Hockey 5s rankings

Lausanne, Mar 20 (PTI):

Indian men's and women's teams are both placed second in the maiden Hockey 5s rankings issued recently by the world body (FIH).

The Indian men's team occupies second spot jointly with Oman and Malaysia following a three-way tie with 1400 points each.

Having won the Asian Championship, India had finished fifth at the World Cup at Muscat from January 28-31.

Oman on the other hand had won bronze medal in front of their home crowd in their first-ever World Cup appearance.

World Cup runners-up Malaysia improved massively since their fourth-place finish at the Asian Championships.

The Netherlands (1750 points) lead the pack after winning the inaugural World Cup following their victory at the European Championships.

Poland (1350) and Egypt (1350) are tied for fifth place in the world rankings. Poland narrowly

missed out on the bronze medal in the World Cup, while Egypt finished in sixth place.

Following closely behind are Trinidad & Tobago (1200) and Kenya (1200) tied for seventh in the world rankings.

Pakistan (1150) find themselves in ninth place, after winning the Challenger Trophy at the World Cup and Australia (1100) close out the top-10.

The Netherlands once again occupy pole position in the women's rankings with their gold medal at the World Cup as well as the European Championships that secured them 1750 points.

India (1550), who won the silver medal at the World Cup after winning the Asian Championship, are ranked second. World Cup bronze medallists Poland (1450) are placed third. Uruguay (1350) and South Africa (1350) are tied for fourth place after their impressive show at the World Cup.

Malaysia (1250) are ranked sixth following a sixth place finish in the World Cup.

T20I rankings: Surya maintains pole position in batting list

Dubai, Mar 20 (PTI):

Suryakumar Yadav maintained his numero uno position among batters despite being out of competitive cricket for past three months while ace spinner Rashid Khan, back in Afghan jersey after an injury lay-off, is back among top-10 in bowlers' list in the latest ICC T20I rankings published on Wednesday.

Surya, who will make a comeback for Mumbai Indians in the upcoming IPL, is way ahead of the pack with 861 points under his belt. Phil Salt is a distant number two with 802 points. Surya hadn't played any cricket since December, having undergone sports hernia surgery. Afghanistan spin wizard Rashid re-entered the elite list of the ICC men's T20I bowler rankings following his contribution in team's 2-1 series victory over Ireland.

The 25-year-old spinner returned from injury in style, claiming eight wickets and his exploits saw



him jump four places to ninth in the latest rankings. The Afghanistan ace collected a series-high eight wickets over the three matches at an average of 5.62 in what was his first series since he injured his back during last year's ICC Men's Cricket World Cup. Rashid, who first held the No.1 ranking for T20I bowlers at the start of 2018 and has consistently remained near the top, only slipped out of the top 10 recently and will be keen to maintain his position with the premier spots in the lead-up to the T20 World Cup in USA and the Caribbean.

Rashid's Afghanistan teammate Naveen-ul-Haq (up two places to 55th) made some ground following his three wickets during the Ireland series, while Irish trio of Josh Little (up seven spots to 39th), Mark Adair (up two places to 56th) and Barry McCarthy (up 15 spots to 77th) also boosted their T20I bowler ranking that is still being led by England spinner Adil Rashid.

Treesa-Gayatri pair enters second round of Swiss Open



Basel, Mar 20 (PTI):

Indian shuttlers Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand advanced to the women's doubles second round of the Swiss Open Super 300 with a straight game win over USA's Annie Xu and Kerry Xu here.

Treesa and Gayatri, who made a first round exit at the All England Open last week, cruised past the American duo in 39 minutes with a 21-15, 21-12 win in the opening round on Tuesday.

However, the other three Indian pairs com-

peting on Tuesday in the women's doubles main draw made first round exits. Ashwini Bhat and Shikha Gautam went down 13-21, 21-16, 14-21 to the fourth seeds from Hong Kong Yeung Nga Ting and Yeung Pui Lam, while Rutaparna Panda and Swetaparna Panda were ousted 4-21, 6-21 by top seeds Apriyani Rahayu and Siti Fadia Silva Ramadhanti of Indonesia. Simran Singh and Ritika Thaker were brushed aside 17-21, 7-21 by Indonesia's Tria Mayasari and Ribka Sugiarto.

Starc puts on a spirited show in warmup match

Kolkata, Mar 20 (PTI):

Returning to "IPL circus" after almost a decade, Australian left-arm pacer Mitchell Starc bowled with the new ball, and took some hits from Rinku Singh at the death during Kolkata Knight Riders' second warm-up match at Eden Gardens here on Tuesday.

The Aussie, who last played in the IPL for Royal Challengers Bangalore in 2014 and 2015, was bought by KKR ahead of IPL 2018 but an injury had ruled him out of that season.

The Shah Rukh Khan-owned franchise broke the all-time auction record this year to buy him at a price tag of Rs 24.75-crore to bolster their pace attack that had lacked sting in the recent past.

"It's always a bit of a circus when it is the best T20 league in the world. It's definitely a new challenge. Yeah, it's going to be excit-



ing. So, yeah I look forward to it," Starc told cricket.com.au.

"I guess my memories are a few and far between of back in 2014 and 2015 with RCB but yeah, really excited to get stuck in. Obviously, a new group of players. A bunch of guys I certainly haven't met or been able to work with before," he said.

Representing Team Purple in their warm-up match against Team Gold, the 34-year-old appeared very positive.

Starc bowled full tilt

with the new ball, giving Rahmanullah Gurbaz and 18-year-old Angkrish Raghuvanshi some anxious moments in his opening over.

He generated odd bounce from a sluggish Eden wicket, as the 2022 U-19 World Cup winner Angkrish was beaten a few times outside the off-stump.

Starc troubled Afghan batter Gurbaz with an awkward bounce before trapping him LBW in an eventful opening over that read 1-0-1-1.

Rishabh Pant appointed Delhi Capitals captain for IPL 2024

New Delhi, Mar 20 (PTI):

Rishabh Pant was on Tuesday appointed as the captain of Delhi Capitals for the upcoming edition of the IPL, marking a wonderful chapter in his miraculous comeback saga.

The keeper-batter missed cricketing action for 14 months after suffering a horrific car accident in December 2022.

"We are delighted to welcome Rishabh back as our captain. Grit and fearlessness have always dictated his brand of cricket, and not surprisingly, even his road to recovery.

"I can't wait to see him walk our team out once again as we look forward to a new season with renewed passion, vigour and enthusiasm," said DC chairman and co-owner Parth Jindal in a media release.

The left-hander has been a part of the Capitals pre-season preparatory camp in Visakhapatnam, ahead of their first IPL 2024 match against Punjab Kings in



Chandigarh on March 23.

The IPL begins on March 22.

Earlier, Pant was given clearance by the BCCI to play as a wicketkeeper batter in this year's IPL.

"After undergoing an extensive 14-month rehab and recovery process, following a life-threatening road mishap on December 30, 2022, near Roorkee, Uttarakhand, Rishabh Pant has now been declared fit as a wicket-keeper batter for the upcoming IPL 2024," the board had stated in a medical update.

Delhi head coach Ricky Ponting too had given a thumbs-up for the way Pant was playing at nets during the team's camp.

Dhoni understood a long time ago that cricket is important but not everything for him: Zaheer

Chennai, Mar 20 (PTI):

Cricket remains integral but "not everything" for MS Dhoni, says his former India teammate Zaheer Khan of the man with a penchant for catching the world off-guard and an eagerness to explore various avenues.

At 42, the two-time World Cup winning captain Dhoni is gearing up to lead Chennai Super Kings in the upcoming IPL. The charismatic former India skipper had quit international cricket four years back.

"MS Dhoni understood a long time ago that he is passionate about cricket and it is an integral part of his life. But it couldn't be everything," Zaheer said in an episode dedicated to the Dhoni on JioCinema.

Besides his World Cup triumphs and India's march to the world number one position in Tests, Dhoni has led CSK to a joint-record five IPL titles, having taken on the top leadership role from the league's inaugural edition in 2008.

Zaheer said, "When you're playing, switching off (from the game) is very important. Cricket is not everything. Every cricketer has to face this eventually."



'Need to move beyond Nehru era cult worship'

New Delhi, Mar 20 (PTI):

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday took a critical view of some of the key decisions made by the Jawaharlal Nehru government, and said one needs to get out of this "cult worship" that the period from 1946 onwards was "great years" and the country did "splendidly".

In the early years, it was very much "a Nehruvian ideological bubble" when it came to foreign policy and "vestiges of that continue, even today," he said in response to a question during a session at the News18 Rising Bharat Summit here.

A career diplomat turned politician, Jaishankar spoke on a range of issues such as India's role during G20 presidency, the criticism surrounding the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, abrogation of Article 370, and India-China and India-Pakistan relations in the current context and the geopolitical scenario.

Asked about the legacy of the foreign policy of the government in the early years after independence, Jaishankar said, "You got Pakistan wrong, you got China wrong, you got US right, and we had a great foreign policy. So, put that aside."

"I am not saying that today, benefit of 2024, let's look back 1954 or 1950, I am saying, somebody in 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, as you were taking those



S Jaishankar

decisions, stood up and said, 'please, Mr Nehru, what you are doing, have you looked at this aspect of it'. So this is not hindsight, these are Nehru's contemporaries who are questioning decisions which Nehru was taking at that point of time," he said.

The former foreign secretary cited Syama Prasad Mookerjee's views on the Nehru-Liaquat Pact and views of B R Ambedkar on Nehru's decisions to buttress his claim.

"So, this is not hindsight, this is not a political polemic. I am placing before the younger generation, historical situation, which is what I called the 'road not taken', that road was available and that road was marked," he said.

"Now, I am not saying they were no-brainers, there are pluses and minuses, but we need to get out of this cult worship

open mind and a critical mind," he said, adding he would also be very happy to discuss the last 10 years with anyone.

He argued that in the early years after independence, "it was very much a Nehruvian ideological bubble. Nehru was against America, so everybody was against America. Nehru said China is a great friend, everybody said China is a great friend. So, the vestiges of that continue, even today".

"I mean, you have a concept called 'Chindia', and many of you will remember, who put that concept forward," Jaishankar added.

On ties with Pakistan, he said, India's relations with its neighbours at a formal level are "very minimal".

It happened for two reasons, one is that India has "put terrorism fair and square at the centre of the relationship".

Secondly, Pakistan's reaction to the "long-awaited decision" on abrogation of Article 370, he said.

"So what would the opposition want us to do, not do (Article) 370, because it will upset Pakistan. Or talk to Pakistan, ignoring that they do terrorism. Actually, that is what the opposition was doing," the minister said.

Jaishankar asserted that foreign policy is "not run as a global popularity exercise" and said, "if you have an appeasement mentality at home, you will take it outside".

that everything from 1946 till, pick your year... that these were great years, and we did splendidly and if anything went wrong, other people were to blame.

"But Nehru's foreign policy is such an impeccable theology that even today, whoever comes to power must follow it. And, any deviation is somewhere wrong," Jaishankar said.

Asked if India not facing a two-front situation today, he said, "We have...we have always been, it is we who were in denial."

The external affairs minister's strong remarks on the opposition comes ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

"Companies are audited. After all, a country should also be audited, policies should be audited. People should look at what happened in the past with an

EXCHANGING COLOURS



Devotees celebrate with colours during Holi celebration at the Dwarkadhish Temple, in Mathura, Wednesday.

National Theatre Fest CANFEST-2024 kick-starts

Paradip, Mar 20:

The 21st National Theatre Festival CANFEST-2024 kick started on March 19, 2024 Tuesday at Jayadev Sadan in the port city of Paradip in a grand way with the chief guest P.L.Haranadh, Chairman, Paradip Port Authority (PPA) declaring it opens. Several troupes from different parts of the state and country are participating in the fest. Among



others Nilabhra Dasgupta, Dy Chairman, PPA, Basant Biswal, Chairman,

Paradip Municipality, Sambhunath Chakraborty, CGM, A.K.Bose, Advisor,

PPA, Capt. Atulya Kumar Mohapatra, President, CANMASS were present as the guests of honour on the occasion. The event was conducted by Narayan Mishra, secretary, CANMASS. The Darpan Theatre Group from Lucknow presented the inaugural Hindi play 'Swaha' which was directed by Subhdeep Raha. The festival will continue eight days from 19th to 26th March.

NEW STUDY

'Inequality rising since 2000s, top 1 pc in India holds 40 pc wealth'

New Delhi, Mar 20 (PTI):

Inequality in India has skyrocketed since early 2000s, with the income and wealth share of top 1 per cent population rising to 22.6 per cent and 40.1 per cent, respectively, in 2022-23, according to a working paper. The paper titled 'Income and Wealth Inequality in India, 1922-2023: The Rise of the Billionaire Raj' said between 2014-15 and 2022-23, the rise of top-end inequality has been particularly pronounced in terms of wealth concentration.

The paper authored by Thomas Piketty (Paris School of Economics and World Inequality Lab), Lucas Chancel (Harvard Kennedy School and World Inequality Lab) and Nitin Kumar Bharti (New York University and World Inequality Lab). "Between 2014-15 and 2022-23, the rise of top-end inequality has been particularly pronounced in terms of wealth concentration.

"By 2022-23, top 1 per cent income and wealth shares (22.6 per cent and 40.1 per cent) are at their highest historical levels and India's top 1 per cent income share is among the very highest in the world, higher than even South Africa, Brazil, and the US," the paper said. According to the paper, the Indian income tax system might be regressive when viewed from the lens of net wealth. "A restructuring of the tax code to account for both income and wealth, and broad-based public investments in health, education and nutrition are needed to enable the average Indian, and not just the elites, to meaningfully benefit from the ongoing wave of globalisation," it noted. As per the paper, besides serving as a tool to fight inequality, a "super tax" of 2 per cent on the net wealth of the 167 wealthiest families in 2022-23 would yield 0.5 per cent of national income in revenues and create valuable fiscal space to facilitate such investments.

BUDAUN DOUBLE MURDER

Budaun killer had sought Rs 5,000 from boys' mother

Budaun (UP), Mar 20 (PTI):

The man who allegedly murdered two children at their home here knew the family and had gone there seeking money for payment to a hospital where his pregnant wife was admitted, the FIR said.

Hours after the murder on Tuesday evening, the accused Sajid (22) was gunned down in an encounter with the police, IG Bareilly range RK Singh told PTI.

The police on Wednesday detained the father and uncle of the accused.

The other accused, Sajid's brother Javed, is absconding, police said.

Sajid, who had recently opened a barber shop in the locality, allegedly attacked three brothers -- Ayush, 12, Ahaan alias Honey, 8, and Yuvraj, 10, with a knife. Ayush and Ahaan died in the attack, while Yuvraj was rushed to a hospital with grievous wounds.



Mortal remains of two boys who were killed by a local barber on Tuesday being brought to their residence, in Budaun, Wednesday.

After the incident, Sajid's shop was set on fire. Some other shops nearby and a motorcycle were also vandalised by local people and the boys' family members.

The FIR, based on the complaint by the victims' father Vinod Kumar, said Sajid and his brother Javed reached the house at around 7 pm.

Sajid told his wife that he needed Rs 5,000 to pay the hospital for the delivery of his child.

When the wife went inside to get the money, Sajid went to the rooftop of the house. Moments later,

a private contractor, was out of the district at the time of the incident. Apart from his wife Sangeeta, his mother was present at the house.

Police have also not confirmed the motive behind the incident. They have booked both Javed and Sajid for murder (under IPC Section 302 IPC).

"We have detained one Babu, the father of Sajid and Javed and their uncle Kayamuddin for questioning. The move is part of our efforts to arrest Javed who is absconding," said Budaun's Senior Superintendent of Police Alok Priyadarshi.

According to the boys' mother, two men had come to their house. Sajid was upstairs when the incident happened while Javed was waiting outside, she said.

Sajid told her that he was feeling uneasy due to the delivery of his child as five children in his family had previously died and no one survived. "I also offered him tea," she said.

The boys' father, who is

'Can't keep filing chargesheets to keep people in jail'

New Delhi, Mar 20 (PTI):

Keeping an accused in custody without trial is akin to detention which hampers liberty, the Supreme Court said on Wednesday while deprecating the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) practice of filing supplementary chargesheets in SC TO ED

still continuing de-

spite four supplementary chargesheets having been filed.

"We are putting you (ED) on notice. (Under the law) You cannot arrest a person without the investigation in the case being complete. A person cannot be put in custody without the commencement of trial. It is akin to detention and affects the liberty of an individual. In some cases, we have to settle this issue," the bench told Raju.

Justice Khanna said an accused cannot be denied the benefit of default bail by filing supplementary chargesheets.

live rounds and two magazines were claimed to have been found at his home in Ranchi. He was booked for the offences of money laundering and under the Arms Act.

The bench told Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the ED, about the investigation in the case still continuing de-

RELIGIOUS PROCESSION



An artist dressed as Lord Shiva takes part in a religious procession on the occasion of 'Rangbhari Ekadashi', in Varanasi, Wednesday.

'Not upset with NDA; getting one LS seat, plus a council berth'



BJP National General Secretary Vinod Tawde with Rashtriya Lok Morcha President Upendra Kushwaha during a meeting, in New Delhi.

Patna, Mar 20 (PTI):

Rashtriya Lok Morcha

president Upendra Kushwaha on Wednesday rubbished the suggestion

that he was upset with the seat-sharing formula of NDA, which allotted only one Lok Sabha constituency to his party.

The former Union minister, who has been in and out of the BJP-led coalition, also claimed to have received assurance of a Legislative Council berth for his party, besides the Karakat Lok Sabha seat in Bihar.

"It is true we were bargaining for more seats. Just like every other party, we were trying to strike the best bargain. But in an alliance, all constituents

have to make adjustments," said the former Karakat MP.

कालड़ा बर्न एवं प्लास्टिक कॉस्मेटिक सर्जरी सेंटर

राइनोप्लास्टी

नाक को सही (रिशेपिंग) करना

आप, के. सी. के. सामने, चौड़े कालोनी एवं पचपेड़ी नाका, धमतीरी रोड कलकत्ता मॉल के पास, रायपुर कॉल : 9827143060/8871003060

Ajay Advt.

सुयश
हॉस्पिटल

ट्रॉमा केयर यूनिट

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