

BRIEF



Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan with Royal Thai Navy Commander-in-Chief Admiral Aduong Pan-lam at a meeting, in New Delhi, Monday.

Boat capsizes

Guwahati: A four-year-old child died and two persons were reported missing after a boat capsized in the Brahmaputra in South Salmara-Mankachar district, amid heavy rain and hailstorm across Assam, a senior official said on Monday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah dialled Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to enquire about the situation in the state, and assured of all assistance, he said.

Arrested

Gurugram: The Gurugram cyber police has arrested an employee of the RBL Bank for his alleged involvement in cyber fraud. The accused allegedly used to provide bank account details to cyber thugs by taking Rs 15,000 to Rs 20,000, said the police. According to the police, the arrested accused is identified as Amit Kumar, a resident of Sangam Vihar in Delhi. He was arrested from Delhi on March 28 and the police took him on four-day remand after producing him in a city court.

Security review

Jammu: A security review meeting on Monday discussed strategy to ensure a conducive and secure environment for voters to exercise their franchise in Jammu Lok Sabha constituency without fear or intimidation, a police spokesman said. The Jammu parliamentary seat is going to polls in the second phase on April 26.

Arrested

Thane: A police inspector was arrested on Monday in connection with a Rs 2 crore dacoity in Navi Mumbai, an official said. Six persons posing as policemen had looted the amount from a businessman near Palm Beach Road in Vashi on March 29 and a probe zeroed in on Inspector Nitin Bhikaji Vijaykar (55) of the security branch of Thane rural police, he said.

Bail

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday confirmed its interim order of granting bail to Rajendra Bihari Lal, vice chancellor of Uttar Pradesh's Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS), in connection with two criminal cases pertaining to offences including that of alleged illegal religious conversions.

Weather
High 39 Low 24

MARKET
NIFTY 22,462.00
SENSEX 74,014.55

BULLION
GOLD 68,300
SILVER 75,517

SC refuses to stop Hindu prayers at Gyanvapi

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stay the Hindu prayers in the southern cellar of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi even as it ordered a "status quo" on the religious observances by both the Hindu and Muslim sides inside the mosque premises.

The court was hearing a fresh plea of the Gyanvapi mosque management committee against an Allahabad High Court decision upholding a lower court's order allowing Hindu prayers in the southern cellar of the mosque.

The top court noted that both the Muslim and Hindu sides have been conducting their respective religious observances "unhindered" inside the mosque premises and, therefore, a status quo would serve the ends of justice for now. A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud also



sought the response of priest Shailendra Kumar Pathak Vyas by April 30 on the plea of the mosque committee.

"Bearing in mind the fact that the namaz is offered by the Muslim community unhindered after the orders dated January 17, 2024 and January 31, 2024, and the offering of pooja by Hindu priest is confined to the area of tekhana, it is appropriate to maintain status quo so as to enable both the communities to offer worship in the above terms.

"The religious observances by the Hindus shall be in terms of directions

contained in the order dated January 31, 2024... Status quo as obtained from the above terms shall not be disturbed without obtaining the previous sanction and leave of this court," the bench, also comprising justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said.

The apex court, after seeing the Google Earth images of the structures, noted that the entry to the cellar is from the southern side while the entry to the mosque for the purposes of offering namaz is from the steps on the northern side.

At the outset, senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, appearing for Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee, sought a stay on the civil court's order and submitted that puja was being allowed to take place within the mosque premises. Ahmadi said this will only fester some discord. "History has taught us some other lessons where violence has happened despite assur-

ances. This is an egregious order. Communities have lived peacefully. Why this insistence on having this now? For 30 years the situation has been very normal," he submitted.

Ahmadi alleged that Hindu parties filing multiple applications for different reliefs and and there is serious apprehension that bit by bit the Muslim side will lose out the whole mosque.

Referring to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute, Ahmadi said, "We are in your hands and we know what happened at Ayodhya and despite of interim orders the mosque Babri Masjid could not be protected. This is what history taught us."

Senior advocate Shyam Divan, representing the Hindu parties, submitted that the orders do not warrant any intervention by the apex court at this stage as there are detailed reasons in the trial court and the high court orders.

SC refuses to stay 'scientific survey'

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Monday refused to stay a "scientific survey" of Bhojshala, a medieval-era structure in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district which both Hindus and Muslims claim as their own, but said no action should be taken without its permission on the outcome of the exercise.

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Kejriwal taken to Tihar jail

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was brought to Tihar Jail here on Monday after a city court sent him to judicial custody till April 15, officials said. Kejriwal was arrested on March 21 by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with an excise policy-linked money laundering case.

"He was brought to Tihar jail and will be lodged in Jail number 2. He was taken for a medical examination. He will be kept in a separate cell," a jail official said. AAP



Arvind Kejriwal being taken to the Tihar Jail.

leader Sanjay Singh, who was arrested in October last year in the same case, is lodged in jail number 1, while BRS leader K Kavitha is in Jail number 6 of the women's jail.

SETBACK TO CONG

Cong mayor from Chhindwara joins BJP

Bhopal: In another setback ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, its leader and Chhindwara mayor joined the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Madhya Pradesh on Monday morning.

Vikram Ahake, the mayor of Chhindwara, joined the BJP in the presence of MP Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and state party chief VD Sharma in state capital Bhopal.

Last week, Kamlesh Shah, the Congress legislator from Amarwada in Chhindwara district and a close associate of party stalwart Kamal Nath, had joined the BJP.

Naxalite killed in encounter with security personnel



Sukma, Apr 01:

A Naxalite was killed in an encounter with security personnel in Sukma district on Monday morning, a police official said.

The gunfight took place in a forest under Kistaram police station area when a joint team of security personnel was out

About the incident...

The gunfight took place in a forest under Kistaram police station area when a joint team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran G Chavan told PTI. Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard and Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA - an elite unit of the Central Reserve Police Force) were involved in the operation, he said.

on an anti-Naxal operation, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran G Chavan told PTI. Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard and Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA - an elite unit of the Central Reserve Police Force) were involved in the operation, he said.

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

In a relief for the Congress, the Income Tax department on Monday told the Supreme Court that it will not take any coercive action against the opposition party for tax demand notices of Rs 3500 crore approximately in view of Lok Sabha elections. A bench of justices BV Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih recorded the statement of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the IT department, that no precipitative action will be taken in the prevailing circumstances till the final adjudication of the matter.

I-T BREATHERS FOR CONG

'No coercive action over Rs 3,500 cr demand'

"At the commencement of the hearing on this application, the solicitor general appearing for the respondent department, submitted that there is no dispute that on several dates in the month of March 2024, demands have been raised as against the appellant herein totalling approximately Rs 3500 crore," the bench noted.

It further recorded, "It is further submitted (by SG Tushar Mehta) that issues which arise in these appeals are yet to be adjudicated upon but having regard to the situations now, the department does not wish to precipitate the matter as much as no coercive

steps shall be taken by the respondent department with regard to the aforesaid demand of Rs 3500 crore approximately."

The bench posted the Congress' plea against different tax demand notices for hearing on July 24, 2024. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for the Congress party, appreciated the gesture terming it "gracious" and said that all demand notices were issued in February and March for different years totalling Rs 3500 crore approximately.

"I am very rarely rendered speechless. By my learned friend's intervention, I have been rendered

speechless. Kindly have it in July," he said. At the outset, Mehta said, "To balance the equity. The petitioner is a political party. Based upon the 2016 judgement, which is under challenge, we have raised the demand of Rs 1700 crore. Since the election is going on, we would not like any problem to arise for any party and therefore, till the matter is heard after the election, we will not take any action for recovery of Rs 1700 crore." He said that the impugned judgement of the Delhi high court is of March 23, 2016, and based upon the parameters set by it, a tax demand was raised against the party in 2021.

PILGRIMAGE SERVICES



Pilgrims pose for photos after the launch of helicopter services to the peaks of Adi Kailash and Om Parvat, in Pithoragarh, Monday.

Oppn cites 2015 RTI reply, jabs govt over 'change in stance' on Katchatheevu island

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

Hitting back at the Centre over the Katchatheevu island issue, opposition leaders on Monday cited a 2015 RTI reply, which stated that the agreements in 1974 and 1976 did not involve either acquiring or ceding of territory belonging to India, and asked whether the "change" in Modi government's stance was for "election politics".

The opposition's response came after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday claimed that prime ministers from the Congress displayed indifference about

Katchatheevu island and gave away Indian fishermen's rights despite legal views to the contrary. Jaishankar's remarks at a press conference were made a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi cited a media report to assert that new facts reveal that the Congress "callously" gave away Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka.

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram hit out at the government over the issue. "Tit for tat is old. Tweet for Tweet is the new weapon. Will Foreign Minister Mr. Jaishankar please refer to the RTI reply dated 27-1-2015..The

Reply justified the circumstances under which India acknowledged that a small island belonged to Sri Lanka," Chidambaram said. Why is the Foreign Minister and his ministry doing a somersault now, he asked.

"How quickly can people change colours. From a suave liberal Foreign Service officer to a smart Foreign Secretary to a mouthpiece of the RSS-BJP, life and times of Mr Jaishankar will be recorded in the annals of acrobatic sports," Chidambaram said "It is true that fishermen were detained in the last 50 years.

Summer heat to add to election fever, warns IMD

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

India is set to experience extreme heat during the April to June period, with the central and the western peninsular parts expected to face the worst impact, the IMD said on Monday as the country prepares for the seven-phase general elections starting April 19.

Addressing a press conference, Union Minister for Earth Sciences Kiren Rijiju said India is anticipated to experience extreme weather conditions in the upcoming two-and-a-half months and this coincides with the general elections in which around a billion people are expected to exercise their franchise.



File Photo

"It is going to be very challenging for all of us. Since we are the most populous country in the world and face extreme weather conditions, it makes it absolutely necessary for India to prepare in advance," he said. India Meteorological Department (IMD)

Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the anticipated increase in outdoor activities during the 2024 general elections could heighten public vulnerability to heat waves. With greater exposure, there's an elevated risk of heatwave-related health issues among the

electorate and election staff, he said. The IMD chief said above-normal maximum temperatures are likely over most parts of the country during the April-June period, with a high probability over central and western peninsular India. Normal to below-normal maximum temperatures are likely over some parts of the western Himalayan region, north-eastern states and north Odisha, he said.

Above-normal heatwave days are likely over most parts in the plains during April-June. Ten to 20 days of heat wave are expected in different parts of the country against a normal of four to eight days, he added.

Wife and friend arrested for man's murder

Bhilai, Apr 01:

With the arrest of a woman and her friend, Durg Police claimed to have solved the blind murder mystery of a 28-year-old man. The joint team of Anti Crime and Cyber Unit Durg and Police Station Newai discovered that the incident was an outcome of domestic violence.

While addressing media persons here at Police Control Room on Monday, SP Jitendra Shukla informed that Lomendra Sahu (28) son of Mevaram Sahu a resident of Risali Sector had died in suspicious condition on the intervening night of December 14, 2023. According to his wife Sangeeta Sahu, Lomendra had slept after having dinner on December 13 and did not wake up the next morning. Police reached the crime scene and conducted an investigation. The autopsy report revealed that the cause of death was suspicious.

Taking the matter into serious consideration and joint team of ACCU and Newai Police Station led



by Inspector Kapil Dev Pandey (I/c ACCU) and Inspector Anand Shukla (SHO, Newai) conducted further investigation under the guidance of Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Sukhnanand Rathore, Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime) Richa Mishra, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Crime) Hem Prakash Nayak and City Superintendent of Police

(Bhilai Nagar) Satyaprakash Tiwari.

The team explored technical aspects and activated the network of informers. They received a tip off that the wife of the deceased - Sangeeta Sahu, earlier worked as a computer operator in BSP. She was very close to Sunil Dahriya, who was a driver in the same office. Technical inputs confirmed the intimacy between Sangeeta and Sunil.

During interrogation, Sunil Dahriya confessed to committing murder with Sangeeta Sahu. Later, Sangeeta Sahu was interrogated in the presence of female staff. During sustained interrogation, Sangeeta Sahu revealed that her husband Lomendra Sahu was a habitual drinker and used to beat her daily after consuming liquor. Sunil Dahriya had also intervened many times to save

her. Tired of domestic violence, Sangeeta plotted a conspiracy with Sunil Dahriya and strangled Lomendra Sahu on the intervening night of December 13-14 after he spent in drunken state. Sangeeta confessed to holding the leg of her husband and the accused Sunil Dahriya has confessed to strangling him with the telephone cable wire.

Police arrested the accused Sangeeta Sahu (28) wife of Late Lomendra Sahu, a resident of 23/L, Risali Sector, Police Station Newai, and Sunil Kumar Dahriya (34) son of Deenbandhu Dahriya, a resident of village Khopli, Utai, District Durg. ASI Purna Bahadur, Constable Anup Sharma, Upendra Yadav, Jugnu Singh, Santosh Gupta, Panne Lal, Shiv Mishra, Meghraj Chelak, Tileshwar Rathore, Nikhil Sahu, Constable Aarti Singh, ASI Ramchandra Kavar, Head Constable Suraj Pandey, Constable Ajit Yadav and Lakshmi Yadav played vital roles in solving the case.

Employees of URM felicitated with Karm Shiromani Awards

Bhilai, Apr 01:

SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant employees of Universal Rail Mill (URM) were awarded the 'Karm Shiromani' Awards for their exemplary work performance under the 'Shiromani Puraskar Yojana' by Bhilai Steel Plant. Anish Sengupta, CGM (URM) was the chief guest of the Award Ceremony.

Satish Kumar, OCT (URM), and Bhesh Ram, OCT (URM) were awarded the 'Karm Shiromani Award' for their exemplary performance at the Workplace. Chief Guest

Anish Sengupta appreciated the awardees for their achievements and contributions to the Plant and felicitated them with Mementoes and Certificates along with Letters of Appreciation and Gift Voucher of Sweets to their respective Spouses.

Present in the programme were, Shishir Shukla, Rajat Mukherjee, Sanjay Kumar, SK Oswal, and Debendranath Behra, General Managers of URM were present on this occasion, along with Birendra Kumar, Sr Mgr (URM), Akshay Kumar, Manager (URM),

Bahoranlal Sahu, ALWO, and other Senior Officials and departmental employees of URM.

The main objective behind awarding the Plant's employees with Shiromani Awards is to acknowledge and honour the sincere efforts and hard work displayed by them at the workplace by meeting the organizational objectives while adhering to the standard parameters of safety.

The programme was completed by Rahul Thote, Mgr (Personnel-URM), while Shirin, MTA proposed the Vote of Thanks.



17th 'SAIL-Khel Mela' concludes at Narayanpur

Bhilai, Apr 01:

The 17th edition of the SAIL-Khel Mela organised jointly by Ramakrishna Mission, Narayanpur, and SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant concluded on March 30, 2024. JY Sapkale, CGM (TSD&CSR) was the Chief Guest at the Valedictory Function of Khel Mela, while Swami Puranand Maharaj, Acharya (Brahmachari Training Centre, Belur Math) presided over the programme.

Chief Guest JY Sapkale in his address congratulated all the participants and wished them a bright future in academics and sports.

As many as 1400 students, from various resi-



dential and non-residential schools of Narayanpur district and nearby areas participated in this four-day sports festival from March 27 to March 30, 2024. Chief Guest JY Sapkale felicitated the winners in various categories of sports events organized under the SAIL-Khel Mela-2024 including Football, Badminton, volleyball, Kho-Kho,

Athletics, Archery, etc. Ramakrishna Mission was awarded the title of 'Winner of the Championship'.

The team of Narayanpur was the winner in the football competition, and the team of Ramakrishna Mission was the winner in Kho Kho, in both boys and girls categories, while Government Higher

Secondary School, Chheribera was the runner-up in the boys category and Maa Sarada Vidyamandir, Orchha in the girls category. In the volleyball competition, Government Higher Secondary School Chheribeda stood as the winner, and Ramakrishna Mission was runner-up in the boys category, whereas in the girls category,

Ramakrishna Mission was the winner, and Kasturba Gandhi Vidyalaya, Sulenga was the runner-up. The team of Government Higher Secondary School Chheribera was the overall champion in the athletic competition.

Senior Officials from Bhilai Steel Plant were present on this occasion. Anupam Bisht, GM

(MINES-RG) & MHQ, Sushil Kamde, Sr Mgr (CSR), Jacky Kashyap, Swami Krishnamritananda, Swami Muktyananda, Swami Pranatpalananda, and other Brahmacharis of RKM Narayanpur Ashram were also present on this occasion, along with children including participants and teachers, and villagers from nearby areas in large numbers.

In the program, Swami Vyapatnanda Maharaj, Secretary (Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, Narayanpur) gave Welcome Address on this occasion, while the Vote of Thanks was proposed by Swami Krishnamritananda, Principal (Vivekananda Vidyapeeth).

Chemical-laden tanker catches fire; blaze engulfs factory

Bhilai, Apr 01:

A major fire mishap occurred at a factory in Light Industrial Area of Bhilai on Monday evening. A factory was engulfed in flames after a chemical-laden tanker came in contact with electric wires and caught fire. Huge flames and thick smoke erupted at the factory when chemical drums and tanks exploded due to blaze.

According to information, the incident occurred at the premises of Steel Infra Solutions Private Limited (SISCOL) located in the Light Industrial Area. A chemical-laden truck tanker was being unloaded in the factory prem-



ises when it came in contact with the electric wires. The electric sparks triggered fire and soon the entire tanker was engulfed in flames. The blaze spread in the entire factory after which the chemical drums and tanks exploded one after another. Fire tenders reached the spot and were carrying out fire fighting operations till filing of this report.

SAIL achieves highest ever annual production and sales in FY'24

Bhilai, Apr 01:

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL), a Maharatna Public Sector Unit under the Ministry of Steel, has achieved its highest-ever annual production milestones in hot metal, crude steel and saleable steel during the Financial Year 2023-24. SAIL recorded a 6% surge in hot metal production, 5% increase in crude steel output and 7% rise in saleable steel output in FY'24 as compared to FY'23. For the fiscal year 2023-24, SAIL achieved production figures of 20.5 Million Tonnes (MT) of



hot metal, 19.2 MT of crude steel and 18.4 MT of saleable steel. The company achieved its highest-ever sales volume of 17.1 MT during FY'24, registering a growth of more than 5% over CPLY.

Amarendu Prakash, Chairman, SAIL attributed this outstanding per-

formance to the company's strategic alignment with the increasing demand in the steel market. He emphasized SAIL's commitment to enhance the company's production capabilities further while remaining responsive to the changing market requirements.

Two day national conference held on 'Bank Audit & Company Audit Compliance'

■ CAs discuss intricacies of forensic audit and points to be kept in mind while doing bank audit

Bhilai, Apr 01:

A two-day national conference on the topic "Bank Audit and Company Audit Compliance" was inaugurated at CA Bhavan Civic Centre. In the Conference organised under the auspices of ICAI Bhilai branch, the speakers discussed the intricacies of forensic audit and also gave information about how NPA is done in banks. Speakers from different places including those from Delhi, Noida, Mumbai participated in



the program and shared important information.

The program started by lighting the lamp in front of the oil painting of Goddess Saraswati. Thereafter, CS Nitin Aggarwal delivered his speech on the provision of demat brought for private limited companies. CA Chetan Dalal explained in detail about how fraud and

forensic angle should be looked at during audit. CA Anshu Vyas, CA Lokesh Gupta explained about the bank audit, how NPA is done in banks and what things should be kept in mind while doing bank audit. CA Inderjeet Kaur explained the change in the format of non-reporting entities in the Companies Act and CA

Aseem Trivedi explained most important topic of audit trail and audit log which has become mandatory for private limited companies or for any company. The results of the work were given in detail in the report.

Chief guest and speaker of the program CA Abhay Chhajed explained the long form audit report of the bank by discussing it point by point. Also, CA LN Aggarwal and CA SC Lekhwani were present as panel speakers in the two-day program and they answered all the small and big questions of the entire audience. CA G Venkata Raman, CFO of Atomastco was also given special ap-

pearance in this program. CA Chetan Dalal Mumbai, CA Abhay Chhajed Indore, CA Lokesh Gupta Delhi, CA Aseem Trivedi Indore were present as speakers in the program. The Program was coordinated by CA Rakesh Dhodhi and CA Arvind Surana, branch chairman CA Rahul Batra, CA Dhawal Shah, CA Rajat Aggarwal Bilaspur, CA Anshu Sinha, CA Pradeep Pal, CA Payal Jain, CA NK Tank, CA Srikant, CA Harsh Jain, a large number of CA members including CA Minesh Jain, CA Karan Gangwani, CA Priyesh Lekhwani, CA Talbinder Saini, CA Prabhjit Singh, CA Chinay Solanki were present.

Police busts interstate gang of cyber thugs; six held

■ Gang duped Rs 1.29 crore from retired cop in pretext of share trading

Bhilai, Apr 01:

With the arrest of six persons; Durg Police claimed to have busted an interstate gang of cyber thugs. The accused had duped Rs 1.29 crore from a retired cop in pretext of share trading. A joint team of Anti Crime and Cyber Unit and Police Station Padmanabhpur nabbed the accused from Jhansi (UP).

While addressing media persons here at the Police Control Room on Monday, SP Jitendra Shukla informed that they had received a complaint from the victim Rohit Baghel (62) a resident of Adarsh Nagar Durg. He complained that one Siddharth Saxena of RK

Technology Company, duped him of Rs 1.29 crore in pretext of opening a Demat account and trading in the stock market. Police lodged an FIR under section 420, 467, 468, 471, 406, 34 of IPC.

Taking the matter into serious consideration and joint team of ACCU and Padmanabhpur Police Station led by Inspector Kapil Dev Pandey (I/c ACCU) and Probationary IPS Akshay Sabadra (SHO, Padmanabhpur) conducted further investigation under the guidance of Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Sukhnanand Rathore, Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime) Richa Mishra, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Crime) Hem Prakash Nayak and City Superintendent of Police (Durg) Chirag Jain.

The team collected detailed information from



the victim and analysed the call details of mobile numbers and statements of accounts of various banks used in the fraud. Police discovered the location of the accused in Jhansi city of Uttar Pradesh. Money was withdrawn from one account and deposited in another account and the same amount was withdrawn

through ATMs in Chattarpur, Gwalior, Rajnagar, Bhopal and Jhansi. The accused were constantly changing their locations. A special team was sent to Bhopal under the leadership of Inspector Amber Singh. Location of the accused was changing from Bhopal to Gwalior, Shivpuri, Indore and then

to Jhansi. The team reached Jhansi and with the help of local support, discovered that some suspicious persons were present in an apartment of Chavda Builders in Sarv Nagar, Jhansi. The location of the mobile numbers related to the fraud case was also found at the same place, the team raided an apartment located

on the third floor of the building. Police nabbed Aakash Chauhan, Amit Yadav, Gaurav Singh Parmar, Digvijay Singh Bundela, Shivam Yadav and Babu Rankwar from this apartment and recovered the mobile phone and SIM card used in the crime. During sustained interrogation, Aakash alias Lucky with pseudonym Siddharth Saxena, Amit Yadav with pseudonym Rahul Gupta and Vikrant Gupta duped the victim by talking to him on mobile phone. Gaurav Singh Parmar alias Hameed alias Amit Sharma, Digvijay Singh, Shivam Yadav alias Ram Upadhyay, Babu Rankwar alias Aman admitted to arranging bank accounts, withdrawing money from the bank through ATM and maintaining the bank accounts in the fraud. The absconding accused Jitendra Parmar and

Yashvardhan Singh Parmar were the directors who provided details of bank accounts, SIM cards, mobile phones, computer systems and personal details of people. Police recovered 17 nos mobile phones of different companies, 19 nos SIM cards of different companies, 13 nos mobile phone chargers, 09 nos ATM cards of different banks, 01 pass book, voter ID card, PAN card, documents as well as vehicle number MP 09 WM 6238 (Renault Triber) and vehicle number UP 93 CC 0806 (Mahindra SUV) from them. The absconding accused Jitendra Singh Parmar and Yashvardhan Singh Parmar are being traced. Police arrested the accused Aakash Chauhan alias Lucky (23) son of Ram Bharosa Chauhan, a resident of village Baktra, Tehsil Budhni, District Sihore (MP); Amit Yadav

(25) son of Mahendra Yadav, a resident of Satgua, District Tikamgarh (MP); Digvijay Singh Bundela (28) son of Buddha Singh Bundela, a resident of Ranganwa, Rajnagar (MP); Shivam Yadav (24) son of Pramod Kumar Yadav, a resident of Naupharia, Chhatarpur (MP); Babu Rankwar (24) son of Akshay Rankwar, a resident of Harpalpur, Chhatarpur (MP) and Gaurav Singh Parmar (24) son of Satyabhan Singh Parmar, a resident of Harpalpur, Chhatarpur (MP). Further action is being taken from Padmanabhpur Police Station.

Inspector Amber Singh, SI Nirmal Yadav, ASI Ganga Ram Shriwas, Constable Trilok Yadav, Head Constable Santosh Mishra, Chandrashekar Banjee, Constable Rinku Soni, Pankaj Chaturvedi played a vital role.

Cong assures justice for women, youth, labourers: Baij

● If voted to power, women to get Rs 8333 per month
Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 01: PCC Chief Deepak Baij said that Congress is going to provide many guarantees for the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls and added that Congress strongly believes that in order to bring it the women, youth, farmers and labourers to mainstream of development, they need to be given legal protection and for this Congress has promised 'Kissan Nyay', 'Yuwa Nyay', 'Nari Nyay', 'Shramik Nyay' and 'Hissedari Nyay'.

Addressing a press conference at Rajiv Bhavan on Monday, Deepak Baij said that Congress make a promise that with formation of its government at the Centre, they would introduce 'Mahalaxmi Yojana' for women and under this every woman will get Rs 1 lakh i.e Rs 8333 per month. The Chhattisgarh government in the state is only paying Rs 1000 per month and this will come to Rs 12000 only. But the Congress government is going to pay 8 times of this to every



woman. On formation of Congress government, half of the recruitment in the central government jobs will be kept reserved for women. The honorarium of the Asha workers, Anganbadi workers and Mid-way meal workers will get just the double of it. For legal rights of women, there will be an appointment of legal assistant in every Panchayat and women's hostel will be constructed in every district headquarter's for the working women.

Speaking further Deepak Baij Congress will be providing five guarantees for the peace and prosperity of farmers. On formation of Congress government, MSP will be given the legal status and for his a special bill will be passed in the Parliament. As per the formula of Dr MS Swaminathan, MSP will be finalized. To waive off loans of the farmers and for waiver of special

loans, permanent 'Krishi Rin Mafi Aayog' will be formed.

In case of damage to crops of farmers and subsequent loss, the guaranteed amount will be directly transferred into farmer's account within 30 days and for this PM Fasal Beema Yojana will be redesigned. For agriculture producers, Congress will formulate import-export policy and would introduce it, so that the interest and concerns of farmers are safeguarded and it remains priority of the government. It will be based upon temporary and permanent situations and would be in favour of the farmers. Farmers will be made GST-free and all equipments used in agriculture will also tax rebate and for this GST system will be amended, he added.

Similarly Baiji informed that under Shramik Nyay, it was the UPA government which

introduced MNREGA law to provide legal rights to labourers and in turn provided legal rights to every labourer to get minimum of 150 working days of labour.

On formation of Congress government, the minimum labour charges for each labourer will be increased from Rs 200 to Rs 400 and this will solve the financial problems being faced by the labourers and would raise their standard of living. Promising health right, the government would provide free of cost essential diagnostic medicines, treatment, surgery, rehabilitation and palliative health care facilities. In urban areas, Rojgar Guarantee Yojana will be implemented and labourers from unorganized sector will be provided life and accidental insurance. Contract system in the government works will be stopped, he added.

School timings changed from 7:30 am to 11:30 am

Raipur, Apr 01: In view of the rise in temperature, the school timings all over the state has been changed. The School Education department as per instructions from the government has issued orders to all the Education officers of all the districts to run the Schools as per the new timings and issue orders to Principals of private and government schools.

As per the order issued, now the school timings will be from 7:30 am to 11:30 am. In view of this there will not be any change in the examination timings and the exams will be conducted in the same timing as scheduled earlier.

SUMMER SAFETY



With start of April month, the girls have started taking all precautions in order to avoid any problems due to high temperature.

Forms for admission to nursing courses to be filled by April 7th



● Entrance exam to be held on June 13, Candidates will be able to apply online on Vyapam's website till 7th April
Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 01: The last date to apply for admission to undergraduate nursing course in government and private colleges in Chhattisgarh for the year 2024-25 academic session has been fixed as April 07, 2024. Candidates

wishing to take admission in B.Sc Nursing course can fill their applications online on the website of Professional Examination Board, vyapam.cgstate.gov.in and vyapamaar.cgstate.gov.in / till April 07. B.Sc Nursing entrance exam will be held on June 13, 2024.

According to the information received from J Singh, Joint Controller of Professional Examination Board, no online examination fee will be charged from the candidates for admission to B.Sc Nursing courses.

After filling the online application, the candidates will also have the facility of error correction from April 08th to 10th.

The scrutiny and admission process will be done under the provisions of Chhattisgarh Nursing Course Admission Rules 2019 and Amendment Rules 2022.

Detailed information regarding this, counselling, allotment etc. is available on the website of Chhattisgarh Professional Examination Board.

Complaints received through C-Vigil resolved

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 01: Under Lok Sabha Elections - 2024, rapid action is being taken on the complaints received from the people on the C-Vigil App (Citizen Vigil App) of the Election Commission of India. As of April 1, 2024, all 197 complaints received through C-Vigil have been resolved.

It is noteworthy that complaints of violation of code of conduct are being received from common citizens through C-Vigil. To resolve the complaints received on C-Vigil, a separate control room has been set up in the office of the Chief Electoral Officer. Chief Electoral Officer Reena Babasaheb Kangale herself was monitoring the action taken on the complaints received daily.

Every possible effort is being made to ensure adherence to the Model Code

of Conduct in the state during the Lok Sabha Elections - 2024. The C-Vigil application created by the Election Commission of India has been further strengthened to increase citizen participation and speedy redressal of complaints in cases of violation of code of conduct. Now common citizens will be able to complain about code of conduct violation cases through live photographs and videos as well as audio clips. If any citizen witnesses any incident of code of conduct violation in the state, he can make a complaint through the application by taking a photo or making a 2-minute video or audio clipping of the incident using the C-Vigil application.

The complaint can be made anonymously or can be made by registering in the app. If the complaint is made as a registered user,

the user will also be informed about the same after the complaint is resolved. This application is available for common citizens on both Android/iOS. In normal cases, the action on complaints will be completed within 100 minutes and the complainant will be informed about it.

Using the CVigil app, citizens can lodge online complaints regarding violation of the Model Code of Conduct during the election period without visiting the office of the Returning Officer. C-Vigil is a simple app that is user friendly and easy to use.

This application connects the alert citizen with the District Control Room, Returning Officer and Field Verification Units (flying squads/static surveillance teams) thereby creating a fast and accurate reporting, action and monitoring system.

● Experts will inform about 50 plus career options, 12th class student will get a cheque of Rs 20 thousand
Central Chronicle News

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 01: For the first time in the state of Chhattisgarh, such a unique program is going to take place, where experts will provide free career guidance to the students of 12th class of CBSE and ICSE board. Renowned subject experts of the country will give information to children about more than 50 courses and career options and satisfy their curiosities. This program is being organized on April 7 at 12 noon at the Medical College Auditorium located near Ambedkar Hospital, Raipur.

Students of CBSE and

Shiksha Utsav to be held in Raipur on April 7th



ICSE boards of the state, who have given the 12th board exam this year, can participate in this education fest i.e. Shiksha Utsav organized by Tilak Bharat Foundation. To participate in the program, students can register

for free by clicking on the link bit.ly/cgedufest. Students can also get free registration by sending their name, stream, school name to WhatsApp number 88789 10118.

Saurabh Kumar of Tilak Bharat Foundation

said, our aim is to motivate students for higher education.

For this purpose, a cheque of Rs 20,000 will be given to the 12th class students of CBSE and ICSE board participating in the program. One and

a half thousand students will benefit from this initiative. With the help of this cheque, students will be able to take help in further admission.

All the children participating in the program will also be given a cheque of Rs 20,000 for higher education and graduation, so that there is no hindrance in their studies. In the program, students will get a chance to win an iPad for technical support in their studies. Experts have been invited from the metropolitan cities of the country in the program, who will inform students what kind of courses the students they should study and what they should not do according to the changes coming in the country's economy and industry in the next five years.

Along with students, their parents can also participate in the program. Entry will be free for all.

RUSH FOR BOOKS, COPIES



With the opening of Schools today, the rush of parents to book stalls has increased and each had to wait for long to get the books and uniforms for their wards.

Ghingra elected CGSOWA President unanimously



Raipur, Apr 01: Retired Chief Engineer of Public Health Engineering (PHE) HS Ghingra has been unanimously elected new President of Chhattisgarh Sikh Officers Welfare Association (CGSOWA) at the annual meeting held here recently.

Convenor of the Association GS Bhabra proposed the name of TS Jabbal for the post of Advisor and Retired Professor BS Chhabra as Working President, Retired

Insurance Officer BS Saluja as Secretary, Executive Engineer of Raipur Development Authority (RDA) Tejpal Singh Hanspal as Joint Secretary and Vikram Singh as Treasurer which was unanimously approved by the members present on the occasion.

Apart from them, Dr Kuldeep Singh Chabra and Professor BS Chabra have been unanimously elected Chairman of Medical Committee and Education Committee respectively.

Arsh creates upset defeating No. 2 player in Asian Tennis championship

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 01: Pradnesh Shalke, Riskhikesh Mane, Sumit Undre, Vivan Mirdha, Varad Undre, Ranbeer Singh Sandhu, Manan Rai, Rohit Kondoria, Pranjay, Madhav Dadhich, Ishan Sudarshan, Uday Reddy, Yash Kumar and Arsh Valke won their matches to advance into next round of the Under 14 Asian Tennis Tournament being organised under the aegis of Chhattisgarh State Tennis Association (CSTA) here on Monday.

Similarly, Anushka Mandalwar, Anvesha Dhar, Parinita Kutty, Udaya Chaurasia, Jahanavi



Choudhary, Shruti Bandupalli, Kaniska Gohil, Pradmapriya and Harsha ARungati won their matches to enter into round 2 of the championship.

Touching farewell given to HC peon on his retirement

● Chief Justice Ramesh Sinha honoured him by gifting him 'shawl' and 'shreefal'
Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 01: On the occasion of the retirement of High Court 'Ardali' Anant



Ram Gautam, Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court, Bilaspur, Ramesh Sinha honored him by pre-

senting memento, shawl and 'shreefal' for his devotion, dedication and excellent service and extended best wishes for his future healthy life.

'Ardali' Gautam was given an emotional farewell in a program organized in the High Court on his retirement on March 31. It is noteworthy that Gautam started

his service from the Indore bench of M.P. High Court in the year 1995 and after division of the state, he was serving in the Chhattisgarh High Court. Joint Registrar cum PPS, M.V.L.N Subramaniam and Protocol Officer, R.S. Negi, officials and employees of the High Court were present on the occasion.

State INTUC advocates for workers' rights

Proposal highlights for better worker welfare

Raipur, Apr 01:

In a landmark move aimed at championing the rights of both organized and unorganized workers, the executive meeting of Chhattisgarh State INTUC witnessed the passage of a pivotal proposal advocating for increased salaries, enhanced facilities, and improved pensions.

Under the stewardship of Dr. Sanjay Kumar Singh, National General Secretary of INTUC and President of Chhattisgarh Pradesh Inter, and with fervent support from various labor unions including the Steel Contract Workers Union INTUC Bhilai, the 44th Executive meeting convened at SNG Vidyapeeth Sector 4 today. Sanjay Kumar Sahu, President of the Steel Contract Labor Union INTUC, emphasized the



critical need to safeguard the interests of workers amidst evolving industrial landscapes.

The resolution underscored several key demands, including the call for the expansion of the contract system within industries, equal opportunities for contract workers, and the regularization of those engaged in permanent nature work. Moreover, echoing the recent Supreme Court decision that led to the regularization of contract workers in Mahanadi Coalfield, the meeting stressed the imperative of extending similar rights to contract workers in public sector undertak-

ings.

In a resolute stand against anti-labor policies, the meeting voiced opposition to the withdrawal of four labor laws without consultation with labor organizations. To ensure a dignified livelihood for retired workers, the minimum pension under EPS 95 should be substantially raised to Rs 9000 per month, coupled with a provision for linkage with dearness allowance. Upholding the integrity of public sector undertakings, the proposal stands firm against disinvestment and privatization initiatives. Moreover, a concerted

effort is advocated for the strengthening of MNREGA, aiming to guarantee 200 days of employment per person annually, accompanied by a fixed wage of Rs 600 per day. Additionally, the resolution calls for the elimination of the ceiling on bonuses in both public sector undertakings and private industries, emphasizing the imperative of providing workers with a rightful share in profits. The minimum wage in all industries should be increased to Rs 26,000 per month.

Furthermore, the meeting highlighted the necessity of

abolishing the contract system, new unions should be formed for the unorganized sector like Asha workers Anganwadi, mid-day meal workers Gig Works etc. and they should be organized under the flag of INTUC.

Amidst unanimous support for these resolutions, the executive members also expressed concern over salary delays in SAIL and pledged to address pending issues effectively. The meeting concluded with a commitment to fortify the organization and intensify efforts to amplify the voice of workers across various sectors. In attendance were esteemed representatives, including MLA Rajendra Pargania, who stood as a beacon of support from the legislative front. With unwavering determination and a collective spirit of solidarity, Chhattisgarh State INTUC reaffirmed its dedication to advancing the welfare and rights of workers, heralding a new era of empowerment and prosperity.

WIRING NETWORK



The wiring in majority of the city areas is still very complicated and poses risk specially during summer season and need to be sorted out immediately.

JR Dani School conducts voter awareness campaign



Rangoli and poster chart competition engage students in electoral education

Raipur, Apr 01:

In a fervent endeavour to cultivate a culture of robust electoral participation, a vibrant voter awareness campaign unfolded at J.R. Dani Government Girls Excellent Higher Secondary School in Raipur. Spearheaded by Raipur Collector and District Election Officer Dr. Gaurav Kumar Singh and under the astute leadership of Vishwadeep Chief Executive Officer and District Nodal Officer-

SVEEP, the event showcased innovative approaches to engage the community.

Under the overarching theme of "Voter Awareness," a series of engaging activities were orchestrated. Rangoli painting and poster chart-making competitions took center stage at Sankul Kalibari, under the diligent direction of Principal Hitesh Kumar Dewan. Principal Dewan reiterated the solemn duty of voting as a cornerstone of democratic strength, administering the pledge to all participants.

Dr. Kamini Bawankar inspired attendees to embrace the upcoming elec-

tions as a celebration of democracy. With the rallying cry of "Festival of Elections - Pride of the Nation," she encouraged a commitment to achieving 100% voter turnout.

A unique highlight of the event was the captivating rendition of the Chhattisgarhi song "Main Bharat Hav..." that captivated the audience's attention. Under the tutelage of B.Ed student teacher Hemdhar Sahu, the students of JR Dani School employed a medley of rhythmic spoons, claps, wooden gutkas, and drums to create a resonating call for voter participation. This innovative initiative, inspired by the traditional Chhag Band tune, was conceptualized by Dr. Kamini Bawankar and showcased the fusion of tradition with contemporary civic engagement.

CAC Aarti Sharma, Principal Kranti Chandrakar, along with the dedicated faculty and enthusiastic students, graced the occasion, amplifying the impact of the SVEEP program through their enthusiastic participation.

Aditya Raje receives India Excellence Award' 24



Raipur, Apr 01:

10-year-old Aditya Raje Singh (PhD Environment & Yoga) received India Excellence Award'24 held at Goa Villagio Resort, South Goa on 31st March 2024.

This award was presented to him by Adileela Foundation (REGD) in association with Media House at Goa for his outstanding achievements and marvellous support to the mankind in the field of Environment and Yoga.

Also this award was felicitated to 15 Most merito-

rious and aspiring people of India amongst which Aditya Raje was the youngest.

He has also recently received his PhD Doctorate degree in the field of Environment & Yoga from the Maryland State University, USA.

He shared with us that it was a great feeling to receive this award and he feels glad to represent his state and make everyone proud through his continuous achievements. He also aims to make his country proud and green, clean and healthy to live in.

IndiGo commences operations from Jagdalpur

Raipur, Apr 01:

IndiGo, India's preferred carrier, has commenced operations from Jagdalpur, making it its 87th domestic and 120th destination overall, to join the extensive 6E network. The airline has started operating flights to Hyderabad from March 31, 2024, and to Raipur from April 01, 2024. This strategic launch will enhance interstate accessibility and foster economic growth in the region, providing enhanced flight options to travellers during the upcoming summer

season.

Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales, IndiGo, said, "We are pleased to commence operations from the vibrant city of Jagdalpur. These new routes, connecting Jagdalpur to the commercial and cultural hubs of Hyderabad and Raipur, will bolster tourism, trade, and provide increased accessibility to the rest of the nation. Customers can now travel to their favourite destinations within the country and also explore international hotspots, via Hyderabad. As India's

leading carrier, we remain committed to providing our customers with seamless connectivity through the 6E network and delivering on our promise of providing affordable, on-time, courteous, and hassle-free travel experiences."

Jagdalpur, located in the Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, is a picturesque city known for its natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. It is home to several waterfalls, wildlife sanctuaries, and ancient temples, making it a popular tourist destination.



SPORTS ROUND UP

Grace filled Easter celebration held At St. Joseph Parish Bachel



Bachel, Apr 01:

Easter marks the Resurrection of Jesus, three days after his death by crucifixion. The devotees of St. Joseph Parish

with the devotees recreated and remembered the pious day with great hope and faith.

In his sermon Rev. Fr. Joseph well quoted the examples of one Bishop Mar Francis and his utter faith in the supreme Lord and how he had chosen Jesus Christ rather than his position or rank. He also said that, one should have staunch faith in their own beliefs and remain in faith, hope and love as the resurrected Lord shows the way.

He asked to stay in peace and unity so that positivity prevails everywhere. The Holy Mass ended with a procession and veneration towards the risen Lord. Easter egg was distributed to all by the priests. The moment was really blissful to witness.

Bachel too celebrated this joyful, the day of hope and love with much devotion. The Parish priest Rev. Fr. Thomas, the main celebrant priest, Rev. Fr. Joseph, Rev. Sisters along

Chess selection trials on April 6-7

	e	q	c	p	e	j	b	y	
8	a8	b8	c8	d8	e8	f8	g8	h8	8
7	a7	b7	c7	d7	e7	f7	g7	h7	7
6	a6	b6	c6	d6	e6	f6	g6	h6	6
5	a5	b5	c5	d5	e5	f5	g5	h5	5
4	a4	b4	c4	d4	e4	f4	g4	h4	4
3	a3	b3	c3	d3	e3	f3	g3	h3	3
2	a2	b2	c2	d2	e2	f2	g2	h2	2
1	a1	b1	c1	d1	e1	f1	g1	h1	1
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 01: Raipur District Chess Association (RDCA) is organizing Under 17 Chess selection tournament on April 6 and 7 at Anand Samaj Library. Providing the above information in a statement issued here, the RDCA Secretary Navin Shukla

said that the tournament would be held to select 2 Boys and 2 Girls to represent Raipur in the State-level Chess tournament to be held at Durg. More than 100 players are likely to participate in the above tournament. He further said that the above selection tournament is an exercise to promote chess among youth.

Vishal, Surabhi win Monthly TT League titles

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 01: Vishal Decate defeated Andrew T Williams with the score of 2-0 to win the 9th Raipur District Monthly League Table Tennis tournament being organized under the aegis of Rajdhani Table Tennis Association at Sapre School-based TT Hall here. Providing the above information in a statement issued here, the RTTA Secretary Vinay Baiswade said that Arjun Malhotra secured third position in senior category.

Similarly, Surabhi Modi defeated Ahana Singh with the score of 2-0 to win the senior Women' championship. Shreshth Mishra defeated Kavis Kala to win the Cadet Under 13 championship whereas Samya Pandey defeated Vedi Kachwaha by 2-1 to win



the girls championship title. All the winners were provided Trophies at the end of the Monthly League season. Chhattisgarh Olympic Association (COA) Vice President Sharad Shukla was chief guest of the prize distribution ceremony during which CSTA senior Vice President Kishore Jadwani presided over the function. Pradeep Janwade, Vinay Baiswade and Pranay Nand Majumdar were also present on the occasion, informs a press release issued here.

the girls championship title. All the winners were provided Trophies at the end of the Monthly League season. Chhattisgarh Olympic Association (COA) Vice President Sharad Shukla was chief guest of the prize distribution ceremony during which CSTA senior Vice President Kishore Jadwani presided over the function. Pradeep Janwade, Vinay Baiswade and Pranay Nand Majumdar were also present on the occasion, informs a press release issued here.

Parents seek redress for failed students

30 children who did not write anything in answer sheet were failed : Principal

Jadgalpur, Apr 01:

In the wake of uproar among parents at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Jagdalpur, over the failure of 30 students in recent examinations,

Principal RK Aslani has shed light on the situation, offering transparency and resolution.

The commotion arose after parents raised objections, alleging deliberate failure of their children in three subjects. However, Principal Aslani clarified that the failed students, totalling 30, had left their answer sheets blank, resulting in



their failing grades. Dismissing accusations against the teacher as baseless, Principal Aslani assured that the school's actions were in accordance with fair assessment practices.

In response to parental concerns, Principal Aslani has extended an offer to publicly disclose the answer sheets of the failed students, emphasizing

ing the school's commitment to transparency and accountability.

Reports indicate that the students, enrolled in the commerce stream of Class 11 at Kendriya Vidyalaya, were dismayed to discover the examination results, with 30 students failing and an additional 10 awaiting supplementary exams. Amidst the unprecedented num-

ber of failures, parental agitation ensued, with allegations leveled against Teacher Rajesh Kumar for unfair treatment.

This incident follows prior complaints against Teacher Rajesh Kumar, alleging mistreatment of students. Despite these grievances, no statement has been issued by Teacher Rajesh Kumar regarding the matter.

DAWAT-E-IFTAR



Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury with Muslim devotees at 'Dawat-e-Iftar' during the holy month of Ramzan, at Rangamati Chandpara village in Murshidabad district, Monday.

Paradip Port becomes numero uno among Indian major ports

In cargo

Paradip, Apr 01:



PPA's remarkable journey has reached new heights with the recent record-breaking achievement of clocking incredible 145.38 MMT cargo throughput in FY 2023-24 and thus by nudged passed Deendayal Port, Kandla to emerge as the highest cargo handling major port of the country. For the first time in the 56 years history of operation, PPA has surpassed previous records, set by Deendayal Port. Paradip Port has also recorded growth of 10.02 million metric tonnes (7.4%) of traffic on YoY basis. During the financial year the Port has achieved highest ever

coastal shipping traffic of 59.19 million metric tonnes, with a growth of 0.76 million metric tonnes i.e. 1.30% over the previous year. The thermal coal coastal shipping has reached 43.97 million metric tonnes i.e. 4.02% over the previous year cargo handling. Thus, the Paradip Port is emerging as a hub for coastal shipping in the

country. Paradip Port has been able to improve its berth productivity to 33014 MT from 31050 MT of previous financial year, thus registering 6.33% growth. The berth productivity achieved by Paradip Port is the highest among all the ports of the country. During the financial year, the Port has handled 21,665 numbers of rakes,

registering a growth of 7.65% over the previous financial year. During the financial year, the Port has handled 2710 ships, registering an increase of 13.82% over the previous financial year. P.L. Haranadh, Chairman has congratulated the entire team comprising of Exporters & Importers; who patronize the Port, Officers, Staff Unions, PPP Operators, Stevedores, Shipping Agents etc. whose combined effort has resulted in this stupendous achievement.

Today, Paradip Port stands tall as a shining star in the Indian maritime domain, earning accolades and setting unprecedented records that underscore its unwavering commitment to excellence.

'Will file nomination papers from Purnea'

Patna, Apr 01 (PTI):

Former MP Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav on Monday said he will file his nomination papers for Purnea in Bihar later this week, and urged RJD president Lalu Prasad to forego the Lok Sabha seat for ally Congress. Yadav, who joined the Congress less than a fortnight ago, made the announcement on X, a day before Bima Bharti, the RJD candidate, was likely to file her nomination from the seat. Yadav, who has merged his Jan Adhikar Party with the Congress, wrote "people from across the country, hailing from Purnea, want to join me during filing of nomination papers. For their convenience, proposed date has been deferred, from June 2 to June 4". Neither the RJD, which has been distributing tickets, nor the Congress has formally declared candidates for any of the 40 seats in Bihar.

BJP offered me Rs 25 cr to join party: AAP MLA

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

AAP MLA Rituraj Jha on Monday alleged in the Delhi Assembly that he was approached by the BJP to join them with an offer of Rs 25 crore to break away from the party and bring 10 MLAs along with him. Speaking in the Delhi Assembly, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of "wanting to crush the Delhi government".

"Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is the only leader who has defeated Prime Minister Narendra Modi four times in Delhi -- 2013, 2015, 2020 Assembly elections and 2022 MCD polls. They have started a cheap trick once

again," he said. Jha said that he was approached with an offer to join the BJP on Sunday. "Yesterday, I went to Bawana's Daryapur to attend a wedding after the INDIA maharally. There were some people who were trying to approach me over phone for the last three to four days," Jha said.

"When I reached there at 9.15 pm, three-four people took me to one side and said 'see if you will not agree, you will not get anything. President's rule will be imposed. You bring 10 MLAs and we will give Rs 25 crore to each one of you. You will be made a minister in the BJP government'," he added. Asserting the AAP MLAs will not leave the party, Jha escalat-



Rituraj Jha

ing his attack on the BJP said that Operation Lotus has begun again. BJP MLA Vijender Gupta asked Jha whether he filed a police complaint after receiving a call for joining the saffron party. "The AAP MLAs have alleged a dozen times before that money was offered to them. Saying any-

thing using sanctity of the House is not done. How long will you speak lies?" he said. AAP legislator Somnath Bharti, while speaking in the House, said it was duty of the Election Commission "to ensure free and fair elections but it kept mum even as the convener of a national party was sent to jail ahead of the Lok Sabha polls". "A sitting chief minister was arrested on the statement of such a person who in his previous six statements said nothing against him. I will tansure my head and go door to door telling people how (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi and the BJP have murdered democracy if President's rule is imposed in Delhi," he said.

PDA candidate Murry will be voice of Nagas in Lok Sabha if elected

Kohima, Apr 01 (PTI):

People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) consensus candidate, Chumben Murry said he would be the voice of the people in matters relating to Naga political issue, concerns over CAA, UCC, FMR and developmental requirements if voted as next Lok Sabha MP from Nagaland. Elections to the lone Lok Sabha seat in Nagaland will be held on April 19. Three candidates - Murry, Congress nominee S Supongmeren Jamir and Independent candidate Hayithung Tungoe Lotha - are in the fray.

"If elected being the consensus candidate of the 60 legislators of the state, I will represent their wisdom and also be the voice of the people on the issues concerning the state with the primary focus on facilitating the Naga political issue," Murry

told PTI in an interview. On the Naga issue, Murry the official nominee of the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) for the lone parliamentary seat said, "We will not be directly negotiating with the Centre but at the same time we have to keep the yearning of the people for a solution alive."

He said the Congress is banking on alleged Christian atrocities across India and its slogan is more or less anti-BJP but "We (NDPP) are a regional party and we will represent Nagaland for its people and the issues that concern all of us". "BJP-led NDA government is a centralist government so it formulates law according to the needs of the country but sometimes such decisions do not go well with the unique structure like ours. We have a unique history and also a to-

tally different culture and customary system," he said.

On state Congress' accusation that the BJP-backed candidate would not be able to oppose the BJP government's decision to implement Uniform Civil Code (UCC) and Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Murry said Nagas are protected to have their own ways of living through Article 371(A) of the Constitution but the UCC conflicts with that and therefore Nagas have to be exempted from it.

He expressed confidence and happiness that the Centre has assured to exempt Nagaland from UCC. "Issues like UCC and scrapping of Free Movement Regime along Indo-Myanmar border will have to be taken up in Parliament, apart from the Naga Political Issue," he said.

PPL DAV School celebrated 37th Annual Day 'AARAVI'

Paradip, Apr 01:



Sahu presented the Annual Report that echoed with the glorious achievements of the students in different spheres highlighting the splend

trajectory of the school from its humble beginning to its majestic presence till date.

In his address to the gathering, the Chief Guest Shri Haranadh commended the steady growth of the school in all areas of academic brilliance and laid importance on the role played by the school for preparing students in Sports and other Co-curricular activities.

The Guest of Honour emphasised on the important role played by school in general and DAV institutions in particular in providing quality education to students and for their upliftment in all spheres of excellence. On this occasion, the Chief Guest and other dignitaries felicitated the

Scholarship Awardees of the Odia Medium, the staff members who have completed 25 years of service in school.

The guest unveiled the Annual School Magazine 'Abhilasha' for the session 2023-24 with a musical release to mark the memorable moment. The cadence went along to felicitate the Alumnus Major Prabhjanjan Padhy by the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour for achieving the rare and historic award of becoming the first Odia army officer to receive the prestigious Gallantry Award of Sena Medal.

It was followed by a colourful cultural extravaganza meticulously prepared on the theme 'Peace' and presented by more than 300 students from all classes.

MARTYRDOM ANNIV



Chairman of Moderate faction of Hurriyat Conference and Chief Cleric of Jammu and Kashmir Mirwaiz Umar Farooq delivers a sermon on the occasion of martyrdom anniversary of the 4th Caliph of Islam, Hazrat Imam Ali, for the first time since 2019, at the famous Shrine of Dastgeer Sahib Saria Bala, at Lal Chowk in Srinagar, Monday.

'Rahul Gandhi does not know definition of democracy'

Mandi, April 01 (PTI):



BJP candidate actor Kangana Ranaut during a visit to Bhimakali temple, in Mandi, Monday.

Actor Kangana Ranaut, who is the BJP candidate from Mandi Lok Sabha seat, on Monday said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi does not know the definition of democracy.

"Rahul ji does not know the actual definition of democracy. He is talking about which democracy. We are contesting the elections in a democracy and this is called the real democracy," she told the media persons on the sidelines of a meeting with the BJP workers.

Ranaut, who met all the party workers of her constituency here for the first time, said the BJP will win all four Lok Sabha seats in Himachal Pradesh and will achieve the target of "400 par" in the upcoming

elections. All the BJP MLAs and the candidates from various assembly segments were present in the meeting.

However, former MP and scion of Kullu Maheshwar Singh was absent from the meeting. Former chief minister Jai Ram Thakur later met him at his residence.

Accompanied by Leader of Opposition and state BJP chief Rajeev Bindal, Ranaut visited Bhima Kali

temple in Mandi town and interacted with people and workers over a cup of tea at Indira market.

Attired in a sari and Himachali cap, the actor was also seen serving tea to the BJP leaders. Born in a Rajput family in Bhambla in Mandi district, she began her election campaign with a road show and rally on Friday.

Ranaut said the voters of Mandi will give a befitting reply to the Congress leaders' derogatory remarks against women of Mandi. Congress leaders Supriya Shrinat and H S Ahir have kicked up a huge political row with derogatory comments on the actor and Mandi posted on their social media handles. Later, Shrinat had said that her account was hacked.

Delhi village's close encounter with leopard

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

The family of Mahender Singh, a retired government employee, woke up on Monday morning to find an unexpected guest in their house -- a leopard. While the animal injured his two sons, Singh, his two daughters-in-law and four grandchildren had a narrow escape.

Besides Singh's sons, the leopard attacked six people in Jagatpur village in north Delhi's Wazirabad before the villagers managed to lock it in a room in Singh's house. The big cat was later rescued by Forest Department officials.

Singh said he was alerted when commotion erupted in his street. "Around 6 am, people started screaming that a leopard had been seen in our village. I came outside and saw people



Forest Department personnel capture a leopard which entered a house, in New Delhi, Monday.

standing on their terraces. The leopard went to three-four houses before entering our street. "Around 8 am, I saw the leopard and went to my neighbour's house. I did not notice that the main gate of my house was open and that the animal went inside," he said.

"When my elder son Vipin came out of the

washroom, he was attacked by the leopard from behind. Later, the animal attacked my younger son Nitin. After this, we went outside and tried to attack the leopard but it entered a room which we locked from outside," said Singh, who sustained minor injuries in the incident. Singh said his four grand-

children were asleep inside the house when the leopard went in but they were unharmed as their room was locked from outside.

"My daughters-in-law had left for a nearby temple in the morning and had locked the room in which my four grandchildren were sleeping from outside. Fortunately, the children are safe. Had they not locked the door, my grandchildren could have been fatally injured," he said.

Vipin and Nitin are undergoing treatment at a hospital. While Vipin works with Delhi Police, Nitin is an employee of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). According to officials, the leopard jumped from the terrace of a house in Jagatpur early in the morning and barged into the next building.

First phase of training of polling parties' organized

At Swami Atmanand School
Bijapur, Apr 01:

The first phase training of polling parties for Lok Sabha General Elections training of total 1500 polling officers including presiding officers and other polling officers will be conducted in two phases on 29th March and 02nd April at Swami Atmanand School, Bijapur.

In the training, a total of 750 polling officers received training and became aware of the entire process of voting which included EVM machines, ballot counting, mock poll,



use of different types of envelopes, voter list and detailed training on the entire process of voting was given by the master trainers.

Doubts regarding the use of machines were resolved through videos and PPT and hands on proce-

dures like sealing of EVM machines etc. were given one by one, giving all the necessary information including information about the duties of Presiding Officer, Polling Officer No. 01, 02 and 03, Collector and District Election Officer Anurag

Pandey, after observing the training, gave necessary guidance to the polling officers and advised them to understand all the procedures thoroughly, follow the guidelines of the Election Commission and discharge their duties impartially.

Joint Collector Kailash Verma, Assistant Returning Officer Jageshwar Kaushal, Deputy District Election Officer Narayan Prasad Gawai, Deputy Collector Uttam Singh Panchari, Dilip Uike, Master Trainer CK Ranhgadale and District Education Officers were present.

Agrawal Mahila Mandal hosts Holi milan utsav



Kharora, Apr 01: In a delightful celebration of colourful life and love, the Agrawal Mahila Mandal organized a vibrant Holi Milan Utsav at the Lakshminarayan Temple in Kharora, Agrasen Chowk. Amidst the colourful festivities, the bonds of blessings and affection were strengthened, creating an atmosphere of joy and unity that resonated throughout the gathering. Participants, including women, daughters-in-law, and girls, immersed themselves in the spirit of the festival, engaging in games and relishing refreshments with fervent enthusiasm.

Aastha Pandey brings laurels to the city

DAV exam result declared
Masturi, Apr 01:

DAV Chief Minister Public School Ved Parsada has declared the results of Class 9th exam. In which the students jumped with joy after giving their exam results. Miss Aastha Pandey of Nagar Panchayat Malhargarh has brought glory to Nagar Parivar Shala by scoring the highest marks of 79% in class ninth.

Let it be known that Aastha has been brilliant in all classes from first to ninth class. She is the daughter of teacher Upasana Pandey, post master Rajesh Pandey, posted in Malhar



District East Secondary School. School Principal Shweta Srivastava encouraged Aastha by giving her a pen copy and chocolate.

He also said that start preparing for board class 10th now because all the students get a golden opportunity to prepare during the summer vacation.

On this occasion, Rajshree Dubey, Usha Patel, Fakeha Nudrat, Yashoda Sahu, Kunti Sahu, Mohit Ram Kaushik, Sudipta Jana, Pushpesh Kaushik, Vishal Mishra of the school family were present in the school premises. In Palakgarh, all the students including Rakesh Roshan Pandey, Kesar Dewangan, Sukhmandan Shriwas, Sanjay Tiwari, Vinod, Narendra Singh Thakur, Anurag Shriwas, Dinesh Verma greeted each other with sweets in the school premises.

Local product stalls enhance commuter experience across stations

Facility of 17 local product stalls across 15 stations under One Station One Product scheme

Bilaspur, Apr 01:

Embracing the spirit of promoting local entrepreneurship and regional products, the Railway Administration has introduced the "One Station One Product" scheme across 15 stations within the division. This initiative aims to showcase the diversity and richness of local craftsmanship and culture to passengers trav-

eling through these stations.

A total of 17 stalls have been designated at railway platforms across Korba, Janjgir-Naila, Anuppur, Pendra Road, Uslapur, Vishrampur, Shahdol, Burhar, Sakti, Ambikapur, Akaltara, Champa, Raigarh, and Brajrajnagar railway stations, along with Bilaspur. These stalls offer passengers the opportunity to purchase a wide array of locally-made products, contributing to the promotion of indigenous crafts and industries.

Operated by local self-help groups and producers, the stalls have become hubs for showcasing the

region's unique craftsmanship and heritage. This initiative not only supports the economic self-reliance of local artisans but also fosters recognition and appreciation for indigenous products.

For those interested in operating stalls at Vishrampur, Akaltara, and Burhar railway stations, applications are now open. Prospective entrepreneurs and producers are encouraged to submit their applications to the respective station managers, seizing the opportunity to showcase their products and contribute to the success of the "One Station One Product" scheme.

MLA's dream project turned nightmare for city residents

Citizens grapple with dust and safety hazards

Dongargaon, Apr 01:

A dream project for the local MLA has turned into a nightmare for city residents as the widening of the main road brings a slew of challenges. With crores invested in the project, pedestrians and roadside dwellers are now grappling with excessive dust and safety hazards, while authorities seem indifferent to their plight.

Despite the hefty investment of Rs 15 crore 43 lakh, the road widening lacks proper planning and execution, exacerbating the problems for the community. The construction, initi-



ated without considering the demands of the residents, has led to chaos with roads being dug up without proper coordination or drainage system planning.

The arbitrary actions of the contractor have further compounded the issues, with concerns raised over the safety of pedestrians and the integrity of

existing infrastructure. The lack of urgency from officials and public representatives in addressing these issues has only added to the frustration of residents.

Pedestrians navigating the uneven terrain face risks of accidents, while the absence of drainage exacerbates the challenges

The contractor has been instructed to expedite the asphalt work and to address the issue of dust by sprinkling water on the road. However, due to the Holi festival, there was a delay as workers and drivers were unable to report for duty. Nonetheless, the contractor has been urged to complete the asphalt work within the month of April. Additionally, the tender process for electricity pole shifting has been finalized, and site inspections have been carried out. Concerns have been raised with the PHE department regarding pipelines laid under the road without proper authorization. Discussions with the Nagar Panchayat regarding the management of the old pipeline are underway, with progress expected soon.

Harshad Sahu, SDO, PWD Department, Rajnandgaon.

during excavation. Questions loom over the project's oversight, particularly regarding the relocation of utilities and addressing critical infrastructure needs such as water supply pipelines.

In the face of mounting grievances, residents are

demanding swift action, urging authorities to expedite road surfacing, initiate drainage works, and accelerate the relocation of electric poles. However, with the contractor's negligence and departmental apathy persisting, a resolution seems distant.

Election preparations heat up in Mungeli district

BJP forges ahead, Congress struggles for direction

Mungeli, Apr 01:

With the commencement of Lok Sabha elections and the subsequent enforcement of the code of conduct in Mungeli district, political fervour has gripped the region as parties vie for voter support. While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has launched into election mode with gusto, the main opposition party, Congress, appears to be grappling with a leadership vacuum as the crucial position of District President remains unfilled.

Amidst the election buzz, BJP has swiftly mobilized its election machinery, announcing candi-

dates well ahead of the code of conduct and actively engaging in campaign activities. The party's strategic approach involves setting up election offices, conducting organizational meetings, and embarking on extensive village-to-village tours to connect with voters and bolster election preparedness.

In contrast, the Congress organization in the district faces significant challenges, with neither a district president nor a candidate selected yet. The absence of a clear leader has left the party lagging in election preparations, prompting concerns about its competitiveness in the Lok Sabha elections.

As BJP solidifies its election management and campaign strategy, dissent within the Congress

ranks has begun to surface, particularly in Bilaspur following the announcement of candidates. Bhilai MLA and Bilaspur Lok Sabha constituency candidate, Devendra Yadav, faces the task of rallying disgruntled party workers and galvanizing their support.

While political parties strategize and search for their electoral voice, voters remain focused on pressing local issues, hoping for progress on stalled development projects. The lack of a decisive leader in Congress has left the district's development agenda in the hands of administrative officials, prompting calls for renewed focus on infrastructure initiatives such as railway expansion, city bus services, auditorium construction, and riverfront beautification.

Collector gives pension authorization letter to 30 retiring employees



Jagdalpur, Apr 01:

Collector Vijay Dayaram K expressed his commitment to ensuring retiring government employees receive their rightful entitlements promptly. With a focus on honoring their years of service, Collector Vijay presented pension authorization letters to 30 retiring officers and employees.

Amidst the ceremony, each retiree was adorned with flower garlands and shawls, symbolizing gratitude for their dedication

and commitment to public service. The event, graced by the presence of Joint Director Kamlesh Raist from the Office of Joint Director Treasury, Accounts, and Pension, along with Deputy Director Bharti Korram, underscored the collective appreciation for the retirees' contributions.

Collector Vijay emphasized the importance of recognizing the invaluable contributions made by government servants throughout their careers.

Vibrant Rangpanchami celebrations illuminate Rani Mandir

Rajnandgaon, Apr 01:

The timeless traditions of Rangpanchami came alive at the historic Rani Mandir in Chhuikhadan as devotees gathered to celebrate the vibrant festival on March 30. Amidst the majestic surroundings of the ancient queen temple from the princely era, devotees adorned the deities, including Lord Shri Lakshmi Narayan and Lord Bhole Shankar, with colorful offerings of gulal, red flowers, and coconut.

Latarani Lal JK Vaishnav, a prominent member of the temple committee and daughter-in-law of the royal family, shared the joyous occasion, recounting how every Teej festival is celebrated with fervor and enthusiasm. On this auspicious day marking the culmination of the Holi festivities, devotees exchanged Prasad and ap-



plied gulal to Lord Shri Radhakrishna, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie.

National Vice President of Vaishnav Samaj, Lal JK Vaishnav, seized the opportunity to elucidate the significance of Rangpanchami, narrating tales of Lord Bhole Shankar, Maa Parvati, and Lord Shri Radhe Krishna. His heart-

felt congratulations resonated with the spirit of the festival, adding to the jubilant atmosphere.

The festivities saw a diverse congregation of devotees, including Prahlad Mahobia, Bharti Yadav, Nandini Yadav, Yogesh Mahobia, and many others, alongside priests and children, who joyfully participated in Rangpanchami rituals.

Municipal Corporation removes BJP hoardings



Jagdalpur, Apr 01:

In a significant move towards ensuring fair and transparent elections, the Municipal Corporation swiftly responded to a complaint lodged by Congress District President Sushil Maurya, resulting in the seizure of 22 unauthorized banners, posters, and hoardings belonging to the BJP.

Following a complaint lodged by Congress District President Sushil Maurya regarding the premature installation of BJP campaign materials prior to the allocation of election symbols for the Bastar Lok Sabha elections, the Municipal Corporation took prompt action. Despite initial inaction, Maurya escalated the issue to the Central Supervisor, leading to the decisive removal of the

unauthorized advertisements. According to the Central Observer, the premature publication of election symbols by any candidate or political party is a violation of the electoral code of conduct. Consequently, the Municipal Corporation acted to remove 22 offending hoardings, ensuring compliance with election regulations.

Expressing satisfaction with the outcome, Maurya emphasized the importance of adhering to electoral guidelines, stating that candidates and political parties are permitted to publish campaign materials only after the official allocation of election symbols. Despite previous complaints to the District Election Officer, the unauthorized advertisements remained in place until the intervention of the Central Supervisor.

Lack of oversight hinders bridge construction

Concerns arise over delayed infrastructure

Mainpur, Apr 01:

As the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana endeavours to link remote rural villages with urban hubs, concerns mount over stalled progress in Gariaband district. Despite significant funds allocated by the Central Government, oversight lapses have led to substandard construction practices and prolonged delays in vital infrastructure projects.

Construction of a crucial bridge over the Sendamuda Tel river, earmarked at approximately Rs 10 crore, has languished for five years under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. While intended to benefit over 20 thousand villagers across a dozen villages, including



Sendamuda, Parevapali, Nishthiguda, and others, only 60 percent of the project has been completed thus far. The lack of responsible officers overseeing the construction timeline has left locals uncertain about project completion.

The sluggish pace of construction has not only sparked frustration among villagers but also drawn criticism from political leaders across party lines. BJP and

Congress representatives alike have voiced concerns over the inefficiency plaguing infrastructure development, with grievances over the impact on local communities and the potential connection to neighboring Odisha left unaddressed.

Despite continuous complaints and demands for accountability, the absence of swift action against errant contractors has emboldened ir-

regular practices. Villagers continue to bear the brunt of compromised construction quality, with roads deteriorating shortly after completion, exacerbating travel woes for residents.

As calls for greater transparency and accountability reverberate, urgent action is imperative to ensure the timely completion of infrastructure projects under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

Will complain about the matter to CM : Damrudhar Pujari

Former BJP MLA from Bindranavagarh assembly constituency, Damrudhar Pujari, voiced his concerns regarding the lack of oversight in the ongoing construction works under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. He highlighted the prolonged delay in the completion of the bridge construction, which was originally slated for completion three years ago. Pujari attributed this delay to alleged collusion between officials of the concerned department and the contractor. Expressing his intention to address the matter directly, Pujari stated his plan to meet with Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai. He asserted his intent to file a complaint and demanded action against both the negligent officers and the construction agency responsible.

MLA Janak Dhruv assures to raise matter in Assembly

Bindranavagarh assembly constituency MLA Janak Dhruv stated his intention to address the sluggish progress of the Tel River Sendmuda bridge construction in the assembly. Having personally inspected the site twice, he expressed concern over the absence of both departmental officers and contractors, attributing this to the delayed pace of work.

What official says....

RB Soni, Executive Engineer overseeing the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in Gariaband, provided an update on the ongoing bridge construction. Soni confirmed that the project commenced four years ago and reported that 70 percent of the bridge work has been successfully completed. He further revealed that the project's target completion date is set for June.

Pak court suspends 14-year jail term of Imran Khan and his wife

In Toshakhana corruption case

Islamabad, Apr 01 (PTI):

In a major relief to jailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan, a high court on Monday suspended the 14-year sentence given to him and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana corruption case.

The two were sentenced to 14 years in jail each by an accountability court on January 31 for alleged corruption in state gifts they got from the state depository, days before the general elections.

They challenged the conviction in the Islamabad High Court where a two-member bench headed by IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case.

On Monday, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) gave temporary relief to the couple in the



case by suspending their sentences and granting them bail in the case.

However, the court announced that their appeals against the conviction would be heard after the Eid festival next month.

But Khan may not be released as he is convicted in other cases and cannot be released until absolved from charges in other cases. Similarly, Bushra is also convicted in another case and may not be released after her sentence

has been suspended.

In the Toshakhana corruption case, the 71-year-old former cricketer-turned-politician is accused of retaining expensive state gifts they received during his tenure as Pakistan's premier.

Under the rules governing Toshakhana - a Persian word meaning "treasure house" - government officials can keep gifts by paying a price for them but first the gift should be deposited. Khan

and his wife either failed to deposit the gift or got it for a low price by allegedly using their authority.

The conviction of Khan in the Toshakhana case had come a day after he was awarded 10 years in jail in the cipher case on January 30.

Earlier, he was also convicted in a different Toshakhana case in August 2023, leading to his arrest.

The latest conviction was based on the charges of misusing his authority as prime minister to retain gifts he or his spouse got during his tenure. It was filed by the National Accountability Bureau.

The previous Toshakhana graft case was filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan in the charges of hiring the sale of state gifts.

Khan so far has been convicted in four different cases losing power in April 2022. He has got bail in both Toshakhana cases.

ERDOGANS RALLY SUPPORTERS



Turkish President and leader of the Justice and Development Party, or AKP, Recep Tayyip, left, and his wife Emine Erdogan gesture to supporters at his party headquarters in Ankara, Turkey, early Monday, April 1.

Overseas Friends of BJP in US organises car rallies in 20 American cities



Members and supporters of the Overseas Friends of BJP take part in a car rally in support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of upcoming Lok Sabha elections in India, in USA.

Overseas Friends of BJP in US organises car rallies in 20 American cities

Washington, Apr 01 (PTI):

The Overseas Friends of BJP in the US has held car rallies in 20 different American cities to express their support for a third term for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and urge the people of India to give a decisive mandate of 400 plus seats to the BJP-led NDA alliance in the general elections.

"Indian American community is extremely enthusiastic and motivated to see the Modi-led BJP and NDA cross 400 seats," said Adapa Prasad, president of OFBJP-USA. Indian Americans want the NDA to achieve "Ab ki Baar 400 Paar" in the Lok Sabha Elections.

He said he had never seen such enthusiasm among the Indian-American diaspora.

Vasudev Patel, national general secretary of OFBJP-USA said, "The community has participated enthusiastically in the OFBJP organised car rallies from east coast to west coast and north to south in

about 20 cities in a coordinated fashion."

In the Washington DC metro area, rallies were conducted in Virginia and Maryland. In New Jersey, about 200 cars participated in a carnival atmosphere.

In Silicon Valley, a caravan of solidarity embarked from Fremont Warm Springs/South Fremont BART Station to the Indian Community Center (ICC) in Milpitas, covering significant ground literally and metaphorically in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area. The rally saw an overwhelming turnout with about 200 cars and 300 participants from various parts of the Bay Area, signalling a strong wave of support for the Modi government and its bid for reelection in 2024, a media release said.

The participants, showcasing an array of banners, flags, and slogans, created a vibrant spectacle that drew attention and admiration from onlookers, emphasising the deep-rooted enthusiasm and commitment of the Indian diaspora towards India's progress and leadership on the global stage.

In Atlanta, Georgia, about 150 cars have participated.

Pakistan witnessed 245 terror attacks, counter-terror operations in first quarter of 2024

Islamabad, Apr 01 (PTI):

Pakistan witnessed as many as 245 incidents of terror attacks and counter-terror operations during the first quarter of 2024, resulting in 432 fatalities and 370 injuries among civilians, security personnel and rebels, according to a think tank report.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan provinces, both bordering Afghanistan, accounted for over 92 per cent of all fatalities and 86 per cent of attacks (including incidents of terrorism and security forces operations) during this period. Individually, the former suffered 51 per cent and the latter 41 per cent of all fatalities in the first quarter of 2024, according to the security report issued by the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS).

The data indicates that the remaining regions were relatively peaceful, suffering less than 8 per cent of all fatalities.

Interestingly, militant organisations claimed responsibility for less than 20 per cent of the total casualties attributed to terrorism in the first quarter

of 2024.

A new militant group named Jabhat Ansar al-Mahdi Khorasan (JAMK), affiliated with the Gul Bahadur group, has emerged.

In addition to the casualties of terrorism and counter-terrorism, there were 64 incidents of sabotage in the country targeting properties of the government, politicians, and private and security properties.

In the first quarter, Balochistan recorded a staggering 96 per cent surge in violence, with fatalities jumping to 178 from 91 in the last quarter of 2023. Sindh saw a nearly 47 per cent rise in violence, though the number of fatalities was very low. However, the regions of KP, Punjab, and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) recorded encouraging decreases in violence by 24 per cent, 85 per cent, and 65 per cent, respectively. Despite a notable decrease in violence observed in GB during the period under review, the GB home minister issued a terror threat alert on March 31, 2024, on the possibility of attacks by the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

France presses China on trade and Ukraine ahead of upcoming Xi Jinping visit

Beijing, Apr 01 (AP):

The French foreign minister pressed China on trade issues and the war in Ukraine on Monday ahead of a planned visit to France by Chinese leader Xi Jinping later this spring.

Stéphane Séjourné, in talks with his counterpart Wang Yi in the Chinese capital, largely echoed positions that have been laid out by European leaders, including Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on a visit to Beijing last week.

"The rebalancing of our economic partnership is a priority, as it is for our European partners," Séjourné said at a joint news conference with Wang. "The European Union is a very open market, the most open in the world. But the current deficits with a certain number of countries, including China, are not sustainable for us."

European officials have expressed concern that a flood of low-priced Chinese-made electric vehicles could disrupt production and displace jobs in Europe. The EU is investigating whether Chinese government subsidies for EVs give an unfair advantage to Chinese



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, right, shakes hands with French Foreign Minister Stéphane Séjourné, left, after a joint press conference at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, China, Monday, April 1.

auto exporters. European companies operating in China are complaining that recent changes to national security laws have made it riskier to invest and do business in the country.

On the Chinese side, officials have raised concern about a "de-risking" strategy being pursued by the EU to ensure that it is not overly dependent on any one country for vital supplies and minerals. Wang expressed understanding for the European position but said he hopes it doesn't negatively affect business sentiment.

"I believe the facts have proved and will continue to prove that China consti-

auto exporters. European companies operating in Europe, rather than risks," he said. "The two sides are partners not opponents."

He also said that China is willing to import more "high-quality French products and services" and is working to resolve the concerns raised by European companies, including restrictions on the transfer of data overseas.

Séjourné insisted that Europe is not becoming protectionist and remains open to investment, a possible reference to attempts to woo Chinese automakers and other companies to create jobs by building factories in Europe rather than exporting their products from China.

FIRE AT ST. STANISLAUS CHURCH



Firefighters battle a four-alarm fire at St. Stanislaus church, Easter, in the Brooklyn borough of New York. The fire, which broke out on Siegel Street between Bushwick Avenue and White Street, resulted in the collapse of one of the floors of the building.

Pakistani police arrest 12 people over suicide bombing

That killed 5 Chinese workers

Islamabad, Apr 01 (AP): Pakistani counterterrorism police in multiple raids arrested at least 12 suspects in connection with last week's suicide bombing that killed five Chinese workers and their Pakistani driver in the volatile northwest, officials said Monday.

The detainees were not directly involved in the attack but they helped those who orchestrated Tuesday's bombing targeting the Chinese, three police and security officials said.

They said some of the detainees had links with Pakistani militants, adding that the suspects were still being questioned and other raids were ongoing.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to media on the record. The officials said some of the detained suspects transported an explosive-laden car to Shangla, a district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where a suicide bomber rammed it into another vehicle, killing the Chinese workers.

Israeli troops withdraw from Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest, after 2-week raid

Deir Al-Balah, Apr 01 (AP):

Palestinian residents say the Israeli military has withdrawn from Gaza's main hospital after a two-week raid, leaving behind a vast swath of destruction. Hundreds of people returned to Shifa Hospital and the surrounding area after the withdrawal early Monday, where they found bodies inside and outside of the facility. The mili-

tary has described the raid as one of the most successful operations of the nearly six-month war, saying it killed scores of Hamas and other militants, as well as seizing valuable intelligence.

Mohammed Mahdi, who was among those who returned, described a scene of "total destruction." He said several buildings had been burned down. He counted six bodies in the

area, including two in the hospital courtyard.

Another resident, Yahia Abu Auf, said there were still patients, medical workers and displaced people sheltering inside the medical compound. He said several patients had been taken to the nearby Ahli Hospital. He said army bulldozers had plowed over a makeshift cemetery inside the hospital compound.

2 Pak soldiers killed as armed men open indiscriminate fire

Karachi, Apr 01 (PTI):

Unidentified armed men opened indiscriminate fire on a Pakistan Army bomb disposal team near the port city of Gwadar in the restive Balochistan province, killing two soldiers and injuring four others.

The bomb disposal team of the Pakistan Army was busy clearing landmines in the Ankara Dam area of

Gwadar district when gunmen opened fire on them on Sunday, the Dawn newspaper reported on Monday.

Two security personnel were killed and four others injured in the attack in the Ankara Dam area on Sunday, officials said.

"The firing incident took place some 25km from the port city [Gwadar], which claimed two lives and injured four others," said Gwadar SSP Mohsin

Zohaib, adding that after the incident, the bodies and the injured were shifted to a nearby hospital.

Security forces have launched a sea-rch operation in the area to trace the attackers.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The separatist Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) has, in the past, claimed most of the attacks in Gwadar.



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China's Assertive Tactics

The actions by China, including the release of a fourth list of standardized geographical names in Arunachal Pradesh, demand a critical examination of Beijing's assertive stance in the region. Against the backdrop of escalating tensions and diplomatic posturing, it becomes imperative to dissect the implications of these maneuvers on regional stability and India-China relations. China's persistent efforts to rename places in Arunachal Pradesh, under the guise of standardization, represent a calculated move to reinforce its disputed territorial claims. Despite India's steadfast rejection of such attempts and reaffirmation of Arunachal Pradesh's integral status within its sovereign boundaries, Beijing continues to pursue its agenda unabated. The timing of these actions raises eyebrows, particularly in light of recent events such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Arunachal Pradesh and the inauguration of the strategically significant Sela Tunnel. The tunnel, designed to bolster all-weather connectivity and enhance military mobility in the frontier region, evidently unsettles China, prompting a flurry of diplomatic protests and assertive rhetoric. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's unequivocal dismissal of China's claims as "judicious" underscores India's resolute stance on the matter. His remarks, delivered at a prestigious academic forum, reaffirm India's commitment to defending its territorial integrity and resisting external coercion. Moreover, Beijing's dissatisfaction with the United States' recognition of Arunachal Pradesh as Indian territory further complicates the geopolitical landscape. China's swift rebuke of the US statement underscores its sensitivity to external interventions and underscores the intricacies of great power dynamics at play in the region. The Chinese Civil Affairs Ministry's insistence on adhering to standardized translations and regulations governing place names underscores Beijing's meticulous approach to shaping the narrative surrounding Arunachal Pradesh. By exerting control over linguistic representations and cultural narratives, China seeks to bolster its territorial assertions and undermine India's sovereignty claims. However, amidst Beijing's concerted efforts to assert its dominance, India remains undeterred in its defense of Arunachal Pradesh's territorial integrity. The resolute stance adopted by Indian policymakers reflects a commitment to upholding national interests and safeguarding the rights of its citizens in the face of external pressures. As tensions simmer and diplomatic maneuvers intensify, it is essential for stakeholders to exercise restraint and prioritize dialogue over confrontation. The Arunachal Pradesh dispute serves as a litmus test for India-China relations, highlighting the complexities and challenges inherent in managing bilateral ties amidst competing territorial claims and geopolitical ambitions.

Reading for Children's Success

Regardless of Background

Dr. Krishna Kumar Vepakomma



In today's fast-paced digital landscape, where distractions abound, the cultivation of foundational soft skills and social abilities in children is more crucial than ever. Despite the myriad of online resources vying for attention, the timeless practice of reading remains an unparalleled avenue for shaping young minds positively. Regardless of socio-economic backgrounds, instilling a love for reading from an early age is paramount for unlocking children's full potential and paving the way for their future success. India stands proud as the third-largest publisher of books globally, yet a significant gap persists in the reading population, particularly among children. Encouraging reading habits among the youth transcends mere literacy; it is a catalyst for cognitive development, vocabulary enrichment, and critical thinking skills. As we commemorate International Children's Book Day (ICBD) annually on April 2nd, we are reminded of the transformative power of literature in shaping young lives and fostering a lifelong love for learning. This year's ICBD theme, "the small is big in a book," encapsulates the profound impact that literature can have on young minds, regardless of its size or scope. It emphasizes the importance of celebrating the intricate worlds that books unlock, sparking imagination, empathy, and intellectual curiosity in children. Through the magic of storytelling, children embark on adventures, explore new ideas, and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. However, creating a reading culture requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders: parents, teachers, and society at large. Parents play a pivotal role in nurturing a love for reading by integrating books into everyday life and serving as role models for their children. Teachers, too, have a significant influence in the classroom, selecting engaging books and fostering interactive learning experiences that ignite students' passion for literature. Moreover, the broader community has a responsibility to support and promote literacy initiatives that make books accessible to all children, regardless of their family situation or financial status. By providing access to libraries, organizing book drives, and supporting literacy programs, communities can create environments that value and prioritize reading as an essential tool for personal and academic growth. Schools, as educational institutions, play a central role in shaping reading habits and cultivating a love for learning among students. By creating vibrant and inclusive reading environments, schools can inspire a lifelong appreciation for literature and equip children with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in an ever-changing world.

(Author: Professor & Principal (Retd.) 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.

VOTER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



Volunteers create a 'rangoli' during a competition organised to create voter awareness ahead of upcoming Lok Sabha elections, in Chikkamagaluru, Monday, Apr

How science and religion came together to build a 'new Pompeii'

JESSICA HUGHES



The history of how a new city of Pompeii was built in the 19th century is little known, but a new exhibit reveals its story. The exhibition, held in the Catholic shrine of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary of Pompeii, sheds new light on the relationship between science and religion in the late 19th century. The exhibition tells the story of the Meteorological-Geodynamic-Volcanological Observatory that was set up at the shrine in 1890 to monitor the activity of Mount Vesuvius.

This Pompeii isn't the famous ancient Greco-Roman city, which was destroyed by an eruption of Vesuvius in AD79, but rather the modern city down the road from the excavations. The city centres around the huge Catholic shrine, which was founded in the 1870s by an energetic lawyer called Bartolo Longo, on a plot of land next to the ancient Roman amphitheatre. During his lifetime, Longo built a "new Pompeii" which attracted pilgrims and visitors from all over Italy and beyond. As

well as the magnificent church with its treasured painting of Our Lady of Pompeii, the city was home to several charitable institutions and pioneering urban projects, including an orphanage for girls, a residential home for the sons of prisoners, an industrial-scale printing press – and the observatory.

The new exhibition is displayed in a room with high ceilings in the shrine archives. A neat display of antique photographs, documents and original scientific instruments tells the story of this important but little-known episode in the history of science.

The development of the new city all started with a miracle. In 1886, Francesco Denza (a Barnabite priest and eminent astronomer, who was the first director of the Vatican's Observatory) recovered from paralysis after praying to Our Lady of Pompeii.

Denza came to Pompeii to give thanks for this healing miracle, and asked what he could do for the shrine in return. Longo proposed setting up an observatory on site, with Denza as director. A tower was constructed above the girls' orphanage, and filled with state-of-the-art modern instruments.

Longo then organised a grand festival of science to coincide with the observatory's inauguration on the Feast of the Ascension on May 15 1890. Reports of the event suggest 20,000 people attended. They listened to speeches in praise of the observatory and the broader

union of the science, faith and charity that it represented.

Longo's own speech contrasted the new Christian Pompeii with the ancient Greco-Roman city next door: It pointed to the bloody slaughter that took place in its amphitheatre, where brutal gladiatorial combats and staged animal hunts had been the favourite forms of entertainment in the ancient city.

The new observatory's significance

The new Pompeii observatory monitored the activity of Mount Vesuvius, keeping track of seismic movements and meteorological changes. Its regular data bulletins – which were dispatched to other observatories around Italy, as well as to individual scientists and shrine benefactors – now constitute a valuable record of geological events in this unique volcanic terrain.

For instance, the bulletin for September 1 1890 records how: "The lava at the base of the main channel of Vesuvius has formed into a horseshoe shape: on the south-south-eastern side the lava is flowing more abundantly ... The crater is emitting occasional flares and a calm jet of projected materials."

Longo saw the observatory as proof of how religion and science could exist in happy union – contrary to the widespread conviction that "science and faith must of necessity be in eternal disagreement" (to cite from his inaugural speech).

That is the driving message of the shrine's current exhibition as

well. I spoke with the curator, Salvatore Sorrentino (himself both a mathematician and member of the Pompeian clergy). He explained that the observatory itself was born from a scientist's act of faith, that is, Denza's prayers to God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin.

Sorrentino also drew a comparison with the work of the great Pisan scientist Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), who saw his own experimental methods as a means of asking questions of God, and of discovering the footprint of the creator in the physical world.

The observatory is a landmark in the history of science, that changed the way that the land around Pompeii was understood at the end of the 19th century. Yet at Pompeii, as elsewhere, there was still room for older religious understandings.

An inscription chiselled into the shrine façade commemorates how Pompeii was delivered from the major eruption of April 1906. The inscription records "for posterity" how the painting of Our Lady was taken out of the church during the eruption, and carried in a procession "in view of the fiery peak".

The surrounding towns "were terrified by the darkness and ruins", but at Pompeii "the sky became calm, and all souls were reassured".

The news bulletin published by the shrine narrates how, by the end of this violent eruption, the new Pompeii had received only the gentlest sprinkling of ashes.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Financial Barrier

The decision of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to abstain from the electoral contest due to financial constraints is striking, underscoring the pervasive influence of money in Indian politics. While the BJP could easily fund her candidacy, the incident highlights the necessity to liberate elections from financial dominance. Electoral reforms are imperative to ensure equitable participation, allowing individuals from all walks of life a fair chance at victory. The call to dismantle the grip of money power on elections resonates as a crucial step towards fostering a truly democratic electoral process.

Krishna Kumar Nair, Kollam

Tackling India's Job Crisis

Enhancing job opportunities is vital for uplifting the impoverished. Access to income is essential for meeting fundamental needs such as food, shelter, and healthcare. India's longstanding job crisis, particularly concerning youth unemployment, demands urgent attention. Implementing stimulus packages, investing in burgeoning sectors like technology and healthcare, and bolstering manufacturing and infrastructure development are imperative steps to mitigate this crisis. Such initiatives hold the potential to ameliorate the plight of the jobless and pave the path towards inclusive growth and prosperity.

MK Nair, Raipur

Heed the Warnings

As most part of the country braces for a scorching summer, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) warns of above-normal temperatures and looming heatwaves in coming months. It's crucial for state governments to heed these warnings, prepare for heatwaves, and address long-term climate change impacts. Sustainable solutions like improved water management and increased green cover are essential. Additionally, awareness about heatwave preparedness and access to cooling shelters must be prioritised, especially for vulnerable populations. Beyond discomfort, heatwaves pose significant risks to public health, agriculture, and the economy, exacerbating existing health conditions and straining healthcare systems. To tackle these challenges, proactive climate adaptation and mitigation measures are essential, including investment in sustainable infrastructure and renewable energy sources.

Dr. Vijaykumar H K, Raichur, Karnataka

Exploring India's Political Legacy

Prof. Vasishth

In the labyrinthine corridors of academia, where the pursuit of knowledge often takes precedence, there exists a unique repository that delves into the annals of India's political landscape. Known as "Neta's Gallery," this extraordinary library curated by me stands as a testament to the rich tapestry of political history woven throughout Independent India.

Within the hallowed confines of Neta's Gallery, one discovers a treasure trove of literature dedicated to the stalwarts and statesmen who have shaped the destiny of our nation. From the towering figure of Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of modern India, to the dynamic leadership of Narendra Modi, each volume encapsulates the ethos and essence of their respective eras.

As the political landscape undergoes seismic shifts with the impending Lok Sabha elections, Neta's Gallery emerges as a beacon of enlightenment, fostering dialogue and discourse on the intricacies of governance and democracy. To this end, I am honored to announce a series of exhibitions to be held across various institutions in Kerala, offering patrons a glimpse into the captivating narratives that define our political heritage.

The inaugural exhibition, held on February 29th and March 1st, 2024, at Providence Women's College, Calicut, marked the commencement of this enlightening journey. It served as a platform for students, scholars, and citizens alike to engage with the myriad narratives encapsulated within the pages of history.

Building upon the success of the inaugural event, the second exhibition is slated to take place at a distinguished library on April 6th and 7th, 2024. This continuation of the series underscores our commitment to fostering a deeper understanding of India's political evolution and the individuals who have shaped its trajectory.

At the heart of Neta's Gallery lies a collection of nearly a hundred books, spanning a panoramic spectrum of political luminaries. From the



visionary leadership of K. Kamaraj to the astute statesmanship of Mallikarjun Kharge, each volume serves as a window into the lives and legacies of these iconic figures.

As custodian of this invaluable repository, my mission is not merely to preserve history but to illuminate minds, inspiring a new generation of scholars and statesmen to uphold the principles of democracy and governance. Neta's Gallery stands as a testament to the enduring power of knowledge and the profound impact of political leadership on the fabric of our nation.

In the pursuit of truth and enlightenment, let us embark on this odyssey through the corridors of power, guided by the wisdom and insights contained within the pages of Neta's Gallery. Together, let us celebrate India's political legacy and honor the indelible contributions of those who have charted its course through the annals of time.

(Writer is a former head of the department, history, Malabar Christian College, Calicut.)

BRIEF

Elected President



New Delhi: Industry body Indian Staffing Federation on Monday said Lohit Bhatia and Manmeet Singh have been re-elected as its President and Vice-President, respectively. Bhatia, the President of Workforce Management, has been re-elected for a period of two years from April 2024 to 2026, Indian Staffing Federation (ISF) said in a statement. The body further said Manmeet Singh, the CEO of FirstMeridian Global Services, has been elected as its Vice-President. He replaces Pramod Pachisia. "India is the third largest market employing 5.4 million formal contract workforce in 2023. The Rs 1.34 trillion contract/flexi staffing industry in India plays a crucial role in driving the formal employment growth across various sectors," Bhatia said.

Solar project

New Delhi: Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd on Monday said it has commissioned a 200 MW solar project in Bikaner, Rajasthan. The project is expected to generate around 485 million units of green energy annually offsetting over 3,88,000 tonnes of carbon footprints, Tata Power Renewable Energy Ltd (TPREL) said in a statement. Subsidiary TP Saurya Ltd (TPSL) has commissioned a 200 MW solar project located in Bikaner, Rajasthan, for Tata Power Trading Company Ltd (TPTCL).

Signs contract



Mumbai: Mahindra Aerostructures on Monday announced it has signed a multi-year contract worth around USD 100 million with Airbus Atlantic for the manufacturing and delivery of metallic components for the entire Airbus commercial aircraft family, including the A320 family planes. Under the contract, the company will supply close to 2,300 varieties of metallic components to Airbus Atlantic in France from its manufacturing base in India, Mahindra Aerostructures Pvt Ltd (MASPL) said in a statement. "This new contract from Airbus Atlantic opens a new frontier in our existing relationship with the Airbus Group, said, Vinod Sahay, President, Aerospace and Defense Mahindra Group. The contract adds to existing MASPL programmes to deliver parts directly to Airbus at their facilities in France and Germany, it said.

Growth should be RBI's top most priority next decade: PM

Mumbai, Apr 01:

The Reserve Bank has to accord "top-most priority" to growth and at the same time focus on trust and stability, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday. Addressing the inauguration of the event commemorating 90 years of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) here, Modi said the next decade is as important for attaining the goal of developed India as it is for the RBI, which will complete 100 years of existence in 2035. Modi said as per the "mantra" of the central bank, "The RBI should make fast growth its top-most priority, along with focusing on trust and stability." Since 2016, keeping inflation under check has become the primary goal of the RBI. Often, there are voices who have pitched for additional at-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das during a ceremony marking 90 years of the Reserve Bank of India, in Mumbai, Monday, April 1, 2024.

tention to growth through measures like rate cuts. The comments come days ahead of the first monetary policy review of the new fiscal year. Modi said the "reflection" of double-digit inflation rate was not visible in the financial policies earlier, and claimed credit for giving the RBI the rights to

take decisions to curb inflation. The six-member monetary policy committee (MPC) has also done some very good work on its mandate over the years, Modi said. The government's efforts, including delivering on fiscal consolidation and active price monitoring, also helped in the cooling of inflation, he

added. Modi said inflation is at a "moderate level", despite the Covid pandemic or the challenges posed by wars in various countries. India followed a path where it took care of both financial prudence concerns and also the requirements of the common man during the pandemic, he said. At a time when many countries of the world are still struggling to come out of the shocks suffered during the pandemic, the Indian economy is creating new records, Modi said. He said balancing inflation control and growth is a unique need for every developing country and urged everybody to study the right monetary tools to wrestle with this challenge. The PM said the RBI can create a model and play a leadership role that will help the broader Global South.

NMDC's iron veins produce 45 million tonnes in FY24

Hyderabad, Apr 01:

India's largest iron ore producer, NMDC is now the first mining company in the country to cross the 45 million tonne mark. The company delivered unprecedented volumes in FY24, producing 45.1 MT and selling 44.8 MT of iron ore in the fiscal that closed this Sunday. Proving its mettle as the nation's Navratna, NMDC achieved a 10% growth in production and 16% growth in sales compared to FY23 volumes. The industry leader, NMDC achieving its best ever yearly physical performance inspired confidence in the future of India's iron and steel industry. The state-run mining company recorded 13.31

MT production and 12.54 MT sales in the fourth quarter of FY24, with 4.86 MT produced and 3.96 MT sold in the month of March 2024. In the runup to this milestone, NMDC's major iron ore mines - Kirandul and Bachel in Chhattisgarh, and Donimalai in Karnataka delivered their highest-ever annual production in company history. The bottlenecks in pellet production were resolved leading to the company's peak volume of 2.65 lakh tonnes pellet production.

With strategic agility towards capacity building, NMDC also outperformed in CAPEX with an expenditure of Rs. 2,014 crores against the target of Rs. 1,769 crores in FY24, which is up by 14%.

Sebi launches SCORES 2.0 to strengthen investors' complaint redressal system

New Delhi, Apr 01:

Markets regulator Sebi on Monday launched the new version of SCORES in a bid to strengthen the investor complaint redressal mechanism by introducing auto-routing of complaints and monitoring such grievances by designated bodies. SEBI Complaint Redress System (SCORES) is an online system where investors in the securities market can lodge their complaints through web URL and an app. It was launched in June 2011. "The new version of SCORES strengthens the investor complaint redress mechanism in the securities market by making the process more efficient

through auto-routing, auto-escalation, monitoring by the designated bodies and reduction of timelines," Sebi said in a statement. Sebi said that investors can lodge complaints only through a new version of SCORES from April 1, 2024. In the old SCORES, investors would not be able to lodge any new complaint, however, investors can check the status of their complaints already lodged in old SCORES. Further, the disposed of complaints filed in the old SCORES can be viewed at SCORES 2.0. The regulator said that the old app has been discontinued and a new app in its place will be launched soon. Under the new version of SCORES, the regulator

India must focus on manufacturing: Jaishankar

To compete with China on economic front

Surat, Apr 01:



To compete with China on the economic front, India should focus on manufacturing, a key sector which was ignored by governments before Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday. He noted that tension at the border with China has caused "abnormality" in New Delhi-Beijing relations, and added India's thinking is absolutely clear that unless there is peace and stability in the border areas, the ties between the two Asian powers will not improve. "If we have to compete with China, which we should, then its solution is that we should focus on manufacturing here. Our approach towards manufacturing has changed after Modi came to power. Before that, people did not give much emphasis on manufacturing," Jaishankar said during his interaction with industry lead-

ers at a programme in Surat. There is no other way to counter China on the economic front, insisted the career diplomat-turned-politician while replying to questions from audience members on how he saw India's relationship with the world's second largest economy as it moves towards becoming a USD 5 trillion economy. Jaishankar was speaking at a corporate summit on "Bharat's Economic Rising," organised by the Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SGCCI). "If we talk of rising

Bharat, it will rise through technology. You cannot build strong technology on weak manufacturing. At any cost, we should put special emphasis on manufacturing, because that is the only economic response," the Union minister maintained. Jaishankar, a former Ambassador to China, emphasised that tension at the border has affected Sino-Indian ties. "As you know, there is tension at the border (with China). And this has caused abnormality in our relations. For that our thinking is very clear that unless there is peace and stability at the border, the relations will remain in the same deteriorated condition," he noted. Asked about relationship with Pakistan which remains strained and New Delhi's fight against terrorism sponsored from across the border, Jaishankar asserted India should never compromise on terrorism. "For us to tolerate, justify (terrorism) -- are all wrong.

All Adani group stocks in heavy demand

Adani Energy jumps over 8 pc

New Delhi, Apr 01:

All listed Adani group stocks were in the limelight on Monday, with Adani Energy climbing over 8 per cent, as investors flocked to the counters amid a positive trend in the broader market. Shares of Adani Energy Solutions jumped 8.40 per cent, NDTV zoomed 6.16 per cent, Adani Wilmar advanced 5.92 per cent, Adani Power surged 4.99 per cent, Adani Total Gas soared 4.81 per cent, Adani Green Energy rallied 2.93 per cent, Adani Ports climbed 2.56 per cent and ACC (2.38 per cent) on the BSE. The stock of Adani Enterprises went up by 1.80 per cent and Ambuja Cements climbed 1.49 per cent. The combined market valuation of all the group firms stood at Rs 16,30,648.23 crore. The 30-

share BSE Sensex climbed 363.20 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 74,014.55 and the NSE Nifty advanced 135.10 points or 0.61 per cent to 22,462. Both the benchmarks hit their all-time high levels in intra-day. Adani group opened a USD 1.2 billion copper plant, bought a port in Odisha, raised stakes in a cement company and stitched an alliance with rival Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries, all in a matter of one week in signs that the apples-to-airport conglomerate has shrugged off the Hindenburg effect and is back to rapid expansion spree. In the last week, Adani group has through regulatory filings and press statements announced expansions and investments in its mainstay ports business, diversification into metal refining, fund infusion into a two-year-old cement foray and continuing progress in the commissioning of its mega solar project.

97.69 pc of Rs 2000 currency notes returned: RBI

Mumbai, Apr 01:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday said nearly 97.69 per cent of the Rs 2000 denomination bank notes have returned to the banking system, and only Rs 8,202 crore worth of the withdrawn notes are still with the public. On May 19, 2023, the RBI announced the withdrawal of Rs 2,000 denomination bank notes from circulation. The total value of Rs 2000 banknotes in circulation, which was Rs 3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of Rs 2000 banknotes was announced, has declined to Rs 8,202 crore at the close of business on March 29, 2024, the Reserve Bank of India said in a statement. "Thus, 97.69 per cent of the Rs



Kolkata: Rush of people outside Reserve Bank of India to exchange Rs. 2000 currency notes, on the day of the presentation of the Interim Budget 2024 by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament, in Kolkata, Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024.

2000 banknotes in circulation as of May 19, 2023, has since been returned," it added. The Rs 2,000 banknotes continue to be legal tender. People can deposit and/or exchange Rs 2000 bank notes at 19 RBI offices across the country.

People can also send Rs 2000 bank notes through India Post from any post office to any of the RBI Issue Offices for credit to their bank accounts in India. Public and private entities holding such notes were initially asked to ei-

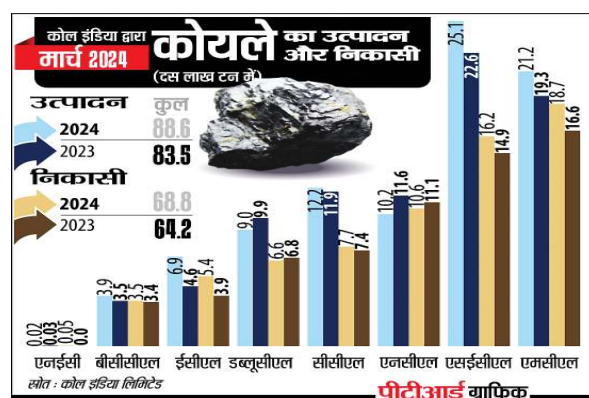
ther exchange or deposit them in bank accounts by September 30, 2023. The deadline was later extended to October 7, 2023. Deposit and exchange services at bank branches were discontinued on October 7, 2023. Starting October 8, 2023, individuals have been provided with the choice of either exchanging the currency or having the equivalent sum credited to their bank accounts at the 19 offices of the RBI. The 19 RBI offices depositing/exchanging the bank notes are in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Belapur, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, New Delhi, Patna and Thiruvananthapuram.

Coal India output rises 10pc to 773.6 MT in FY24

Misses annual production target

New Delhi, Apr 01:

State-owned Coal India's production rose by 10 per cent to 773.6 million tonnes (MT) in 2023-24 but fell short of its production target of 780 MT for the fiscal, according to an exchange filing. Coal India Ltd's (CIL) production was 703.2 MT in the preceding 2022-23 fiscal, the miner said in an exchange filing. CIL's production and off-take are pegged at 838 MT for FY 2025, it said. In March 2023, the company reported its highest-ever monthly production at 88.6 MT coal, up 6.1 per cent over 83.5 MT in the same



month last year. The coal offtake rose by 8.5 per cent to 753.5 MT during the fiscal ended March 31, from 694.7 MT in 2022-23. The offtake in March was at 68.8 MT as compared to 64.2 MT last year, up 7.2 per cent. The supplies to the power sector reached

618.5 MT, up 5.4 per cent over 586.6 MT in FY23. The company supplied 8.5 MT more coal to power plants against its commitment of 610 MT. The supplies to non-power sectors (NPS) rose by 25 per cent to 135 MT from 108.1 MT in FY23.

Stock markets start new fiscal on a high

Sensex, Nifty scale new lifetime highs



Mumbai, Apr 01:

Stock markets started the new fiscal on a high with benchmark Sensex and Nifty scaling fresh record high levels in intra-day trade before settling in the green on Monday, backed by firm trends in Asian markets and foreign fund inflows. Extending its winning momentum to the third day in a row,

the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 363.20 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 74,014.55. During the day, it zoomed 603.27 points or 0.81 per cent to hit its record intra-day high of 74,254.62. The NSE Nifty climbed 135.10 points or 0.61 per cent to 22,462. During the day, it jumped 203.05 points or 0.90 per cent to hit the all-time peak of 22,529.95. Realty and

metal shares performed well while FMCG and auto traded subdued. From the Sensex basket, JSW Steel, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, NTPC, Larsen & Toubro and HDFC Bank were the major gainers. Titan, Nestle, Bharti Airtel and IndusInd Bank were among the laggards. "The Indian market boarded on a strong trajectory at the onset of the new financial year, with indications pointing towards a continuation of this favourable momentum, in the near term. This confidence is supported by a global rally in expectation of a Fed rate cut in June and a healthy domestic earnings growth forecast in Q4FY24," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said. Metal stocks excelled, owing to the swift pace of Chinese PMI data, indicating traction in the economic recovery, Nair added.

New Delhi, Apr 01:

Investors' wealth soared by Rs 10.58 lakh crore in three days of the market rally, where the BSE benchmark jumped over 2 per cent, and hit an all-time high on Monday. Extending its winning momentum to the third day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 363.20 points or 0.49 per cent to settle at 74,014.55. During the day, it zoomed 603.27 points or 0.81 per cent to hit its record high of 74,254.62. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumped by Rs 10,58,034.42 crore to Rs 3,93,15,471.18 crore (USD 4.74 trillion) in three days. The BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,544.25

Markets rally make investors richer by Rs 10.58 lakh cr in three days



points or 2.13 per cent in three days. Equity markets were closed on March 29 for Good Friday. "Markets were in an upbeat mood after a prolonged holiday session last week as both Sensex & Nifty propelled to fresh highs on the back of bargain hunting, which shows that appetite for equity assets continues to re-

main strong for investors despite hiccups at regular intervals. "Although there are challenges related to delayed rate cuts and uncertainty surrounding geopolitical tensions, India's strong reform path and expectations that the ruling party could come back to power in the upcoming general elections has been

prompting investors to take bullish bets," Prashanth Tapse, Senior VP (Research) at Mehta Equities Ltd, said. From the Sensex basket, JSW Steel, Tata Steel, UltraTech Cement, NTPC, Larsen & Toubro and HDFC Bank were the major gainers. Titan, Nestle, Bharti Airtel and IndusInd Bank were among the laggards. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge jumped 2.98 per cent and the mid-cap index climbed 1.64 per cent. Among the indices, realty zoomed 4.18 per cent, telecommunication jumped 3.44 per cent, metal by 3.39 per cent, commodities by 2.91 per cent, utilities by 2.62 per cent and industrials by 2.16 per cent.

Ajay Jamwal outlines strategy for Lok Sabha elections

Santosh Pandey accuses Bhupesh Baghel of undermining democratic process

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 01: Regional Organization General Secretary Ajay Jamwal convened a crucial meeting of BJP key workers, including members of the core committee and election management committee, at Ram Mandir. In a forward-looking address, Jamwal underscored a significant shift in perspective for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in Rajnandgaon.

He asserted that voters in the constituency are not merely electing Members of Parliament (MPs) but potential ministers for the Modi government. Stressing the



weight of responsibility that comes with victory, Jamwal urged party workers to prioritize strengthening their respective polling booths and diligently execute all organizational programs.

The meeting was attended by key workers from Khairagarh, Dongargarh, Pandariya,

and Kawardha assembly segments. Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma lauded MP Santosh Pandey's relentless efforts towards the constituency's development, highlighting Pandey's active engagement from grassroots to parliamentary levels and initiation of significant projects. Sharma expressed con-

fidence that victory in the Lok Sabha elections would usher in a new era of development, citing upcoming road projects as evidence. In contrast, he accused the Congress of betraying the people of the region.

MP and Lok Sabha candidate Santosh Pandey directed criticism at Bhupesh Baghel, accus-

ing the latter of inciting his party workers against the democratic process. Pandey alleged that Baghel was orchestrating the submission of hundreds of nominations by his own party members, only to backtrack out of fear of defeat.

Minister for Organization Pawan Sai also addressed the core committee meeting, providing insights into forthcoming action plans. Lok Sabha in-charge Narayan Chandel, convener Madhusudan Yadav, co-convenor Neelu Sharma, Kawardha MLA Bhavana Bohra, and other party members were present at the meeting.

Urgent action needed to avert water crisis in Mungeli

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Apr 01: Concerns are mounting in Mungeli District as the water levels continue to plummet, exacerbated by a lack of social awareness and administrative action. Despite governmental directives, initiatives to address the impending water crisis remain conspicuously absent, leaving the district vulnerable to severe shortages in the near future.

Efforts to implement water harvesting initiatives, both in public and private spaces, have languished due to bureaucratic apathy, relegating essential plans to mere paper exercises. The fail-

ure to enforce these measures has led to a steady decline in the district's water reserves, exacerbating concerns for the impending summer months.

The municipality's lax oversight and failure to ensure compliance with water harvesting regulations have compounded the issue. While building permits are contingent on water harvesting provisions, inadequate follow-up and record-keeping have rendered these mandates ineffective. The absence of accurate records poses significant challenges in monitoring compliance and holding violators accountable, further exacerbating the crisis.

Moreover, the munici-

pal corporation's negligence extends to its employees, who have failed to maintain accurate records or conduct necessary investigations. Despite being entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing water harvesting initiatives, officials have neglected their duties, allowing discrepancies to persist unchecked for years.

The consequences of this negligence are dire, with once-abundant wells now dried up and the groundwater table sinking to alarming depths. What was once a thriving network of wells has dwindled, leaving the city reliant on increasingly deep boreholes for water access.

Kudhurtal and Sawatpur villages embrace SVEEP program



Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Apr 01: With the Lok Sabha elections 2024 on the horizon, a comprehensive voter awareness campaign has been launched in villages across Mungeli, including Kudhurtal and Sawatpur. Aimed at achieving 100% voter participation, the campaign is part of the Systematic Voters'

Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program.

Emphasizing the importance of every vote, various engaging activities have been organized to mobilize and educate voters. From spirited rallies to vibrant street plays, and from colorful painting sessions to catchy slogans and inspiring songs, the campaign seeks to

capture the attention and enthusiasm of citizens of all ages.

Furthermore, innovative approaches such as quiz competitions and administering oaths at prominent locations, including MNREGA workplaces, are being employed to instill a sense of responsibility and commitment towards the democratic process.

New SHO takes charge to tackle crime

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Apr 01: In a promising development for the residents of Mungeli, Tejnath Singh has assumed the role of the Station House Officer (SHO) at City Kotwali police station.

With a background marked by dedication and service, Tejnath Singh brings a wealth of experience to his new position, having previously served as the Police Station Officer in Fastpur.

Expressing his commitment to upholding law and order, Tejnath Singh wasted no time in outlining his plans to address prevalent issues plaguing the area. Chief among his priori-



Tejnath Singh

ties is the crackdown on illegal liquor sales, gambling, and betting, which have been persistent concerns in the community.

Khairagarh Univ VC appointment unconstitutional, says Yadav

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 01: The appointment of Khairagarh University Vice Chancellor Mamta Chandrakar has been termed unconstitutional by BR Yadav retired teacher honored with the President's Award in a press conference organized here.

While presenting the facts regarding the appointment of Vice Chancellor Mrs. Chandrakar, Yadav said that the issue issued by Raj Bhavan Raipur

As per the advertisement, the person appointed to the post of Vice-Chancellor must be an ac-



ademician and there should be 10 years of work experience in the post of professor.

Regarding appointment of Vice Chancellor Section 7 of University Ordinance 171 also provides that the

person appointed to the post of Vice-Chancellor will be selected only from the panel of names recommended by the specially constituted selection committee.

Yadav also said that according to Article 254 of the Indian Constitution, state rules and central in case of contradiction between the rules, the Central rules will be supreme and valid.

Mr. Yadav also told that the writ petition civil of the Supreme Court according to the decision No. 1525 of 2019, due to conflict with the central regulations, the government, the above provision of the rules will not apply.

Blaze devours police officer's parked Creta car

Mystery surrounds arson of newly purchased car

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, April 01: In an unfortunate incident, the brand-new Creta belonging to a dedicated police officer was reduced to ashes in Naya Tikrapara of the city over the weekend. The incident, which occurred late on Saturday night around 2 a.m., has left the community in shock.

According to sources, Vibhash Singh, a resident of Naya Tikrapara and a member of the KCG District Police, had returned home from Rajnandgaon around



11:30 p.m. on Saturday, parking his Creta car (registered as CG 08 AW 6421) near his residence. After a brief time at home, Singh ventured out for a stroll around 12:30 a.m., leaving his car safely parked.

However, at 3 a.m.,

neighbours alerted Singh and his family that his car was engulfed in flames. Despite their efforts to douse the fire with sand and water, the intensity of the blaze proved insurmountable, leaving the vehicle completely destroyed.

Authorities have launched an investigation into the incident, with suspicions pointing towards potential acts of vandalism by unidentified individuals. A complaint has been lodged at the Khairagarh police station, and authorities are leaving no stone unturned to uncover the truth behind this senseless act.

Singh, who had purchased the car through installments in last year April 6, is devastated by the loss. The Khairagarh police have assured the public that every effort will be made to apprehend those responsible for this reprehensible act, and measures will be taken to prevent such incidents in the future.

Three-day state level Ramayana conference concludes

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Apr 01: Three-day state level Ramayana conference organized in Chaubandha, concluded here with Yagya under the mentorship of Pandit Gulab Sharma's Yagya Kund in Hanuman Temple courtyard. The oblation was offered with chanting of mantras and the village deities were invoked.

Jai Maa Sharde Balika Manas member Sapna Sahu, interpreter of village Marri Mohla Manpur Ambargarh outpost, said that due to the husband, the wife is proud.

The way a child remains certain after finding his parents, in the same way, a wife becomes secure after getting her husband. Sharda Manas Sudama



Sen Gatriha of Manas family Amodi Arang said that the work of saving the entire family belongs to all and even one person in the family does a good deed, its results will be beneficial to the entire family. Jai Chandhi Leela Devi

Sahu of Mahila Manas Parivar Singdehi Bhakhara said on the occasion of Sunderkand that Surasa kept increasing her form and Hanuman became very small while giving the message of cleverness and it went into his

mouth and came back and big talkers get deceived like Sursa.

Pragya Suman Manas Family Ratanpur Bilaspur's lecturer Janak Ram Sahu said that a knowledgeable person should not be afraid.

BJP candidate Tokhan Sahu receives warm welcome



Tokhan Sahu

Mungeli, Apr 01: The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Bilaspur Lok Sabha candidate, Tokhan Sahu, continues to garner widespread support through his intensive public relations campaign. Today, Sahu embarked on a bustling tour of the city, accompanied by MLA Purnimal Mohale from the Mungeli assembly constituency. The vibrant streets of Mungeli came alive as workers welcomed BJP candidate Tokhan Sahu with open arms at Daupara Chowk. Commencing their outreach efforts on a spiritual note, Sahu and Mohale offered prayers at the revered Mahamai temple in Daupara, setting the tone for a day of enthusiastic engagement. Traversing through key landmarks of the city, including Pulpara, Old Bus Stand Parshuram Chowk, Sadar Bazaar, Gol Bazaar, and more, the dynamic duo interacted with residents and supporters, sharing their vision for the constituency. The journey culminated at Padav Chowk after traversing through Basir Khan Ward, Kali Mandir, Ramayan Chowk, and other significant locales.

Viplav Sahu criticizes BJP candidate's performance as MP

Dissatisfaction among BJP workers over Santosh Pandey's tenure

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 01: In a scathing critique, District Panchayat Chairman Viplav Sahu lambasted BJP candidate Santosh Pandey for his lackluster performance during his five-year tenure as a Member of Parliament (MP). Speaking at a program organized in Nawagaon, Sahu highlighted the absence of any significant development initiatives under Pandey's leadership.

"Despite a lengthy five-year tenure, MP Santosh Pandey's record remains blank in terms of development," remarked Sahu. He expressed disappointment over the unfulfilled expectations of the public, who had hoped for progress given the BJP's position at the Centre. However, Pandey's tenure failed to deliver even partially



Viplav Sahu

on these expectations.

Sahu pointed out the absence of tangible development projects or infrastructure improvements during Pandey's tenure. He emphasized that mere announcements by ministers remained confined to media headlines and failed to materialize into concrete actions. Sahu stressed that the electorate expects tangible

progress and delivery of promises from their representatives, a standard which Pandey failed to meet.

The Lok Sabha constituency, historically known for its active and progressive MPs, has witnessed a stark contrast in Pandey's lack of initiative. Sahu revealed dissatisfaction among BJP workers, citing a survey indicating greater popularity for other potential MP candidates within the party.

Sahu criticized the selection process that overlooked more popular and proactive leaders in favour of Pandey, who lacked effective public relations and a track record of welfare programs. Consequently, the BJP finds itself trailing behind the Congress in the electoral race due to poor implementation and lack of progress under current MPs.

Emotional tributes pour in following advocate Bhatt's untimely death

Suresh Bhatt remembered as a prominent advocate and community leader

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 01: The Khairagarh community is reeling from the sudden and tragic passing of Suresh Bhatt, President of the Advocates Association Khairagarh and a respected figure in the district's legal fraternity. Bhatt, aged 53, succumbed to complications arising from paralysis and brain disease on Sunday, March 31.

Reports indicate that Bhatt experienced paralysis symptoms on Saturday



Suresh Bhatt

night, prompting his family to rush him to Rajnandgaon for urgent medical attention. However, medical examinations revealed severe complications, including stroke and brain hemorrhage, leading to his untimely demise while en route to the capital around 1 p.m. on Sunday. The tragic incident occurred near vil-

lage Somni. Following his passing, Bhatt's mortal remains were brought back to Khairagarh, where preparations are underway for his final rites at Ganjipara Muktidham at 10 a.m. on Monday.

Suresh Bhatt, known for his humble nature and dedicated service to the legal profession, leaves behind a legacy of integrity and commitment. His sudden departure has left a void in the legal community and the wider district.

In recognition of his contributions, the Advocates Association and esteemed citizens of the district have come together to offer heartfelt tributes to Bhatt, honoring his memory and mourning the loss of a beloved leader.

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Faltering RCB eye collective improvement

Bengaluru, Apr 01 (PTI):

An inconsistent Royal Challengers Bengaluru would be eager to hit the turnaround button when they host Lucknow Super Giants, who will keep an eye on regular skipper KL Rahul's fitness, in the IPL here on Tuesday.

The Royal Challengers are currently eighth on the table with two points from three matches, and alarmingly, their net run rate too has dipped to -0.71 after a heavy defeat against Kolkata Knight Riders here last week.

This is not to undermine the side under Faf du Plessis, who himself is struggling for big runs, but its ability to dish out consistent cricket is a matter of debate at this point.

Several reasons are there for that overbearing feeling. It starts with the RCB batting line-up in which Virat Kohli is the only constant with two fifties from three matches.

But Du Plessis, Glenn Maxwell, Rajat Patidar and Cameron Green, who constitute the cream of RCB's top and middle-order, have so far made up for a faltering coalition.

The quartet's collective returns from three matches stand at - Du Plessis (46, Avg: 15.33), Maxwell (31, Avg: 10.33), Green (54, Avg:



18) and Patidar (21, Avg: 7), and terming them underwhelming is an understatement. It meant that RCB had to often rely on their late-order batters like Dinesh Karthik, Anuj Rawat and Mahipal Lomror to add meat to the total. In that context, the RCB might give a break to

Patidar for this game and bring in someone like Suyash Prabhudessai, who can also roll his arm for an over or two. The senior batters' struggles have percolated to their bowling department too. Mohammed Siraj offers the most glaring example. The lead pacer has

taken just two wickets in three matches, conceding 10 runs an over and he needs to step up immediately.

Siraj's lack of bite has robbed RCB of a chance to take some early wickets in the Power Play and put the opposition under pressure, something he had done quite consistently during IPL 2023.

The situation has turned even grimmer as Siraj's new-ball partner Alzarri Joseph, RCB's Rs 11.5 crore buy in the auction, has been totally rudderless, taking a solitary wicket and leaking 9.4 runs per over.

So, the hosts might ponder the inclusion of either Reece Topley or Lockie Ferguson against Lucknow in place of the West Indian.

The spin unit of RCB offers an even more bewildering view as none among Glenn Maxwell, Karn Sharma and Mayank Dagar, the most impressive of the lot, have bowled their full quota of four overs in any of the three previous matches.

In fact, Maxwell's off-spin was not even employed in their last match against the Knight Riders.

To make matters worse, they don't have many reliable choices in the dugout too.

Pant fined RS 12 lakh for slow over rate

Visakhapatnam: Delhi Capitals skipper Rishabh Pant has copped a Rs 12 lakh fine for maintaining a slow over rate during the IPL game against Chennai Super Kings here.

Delhi Capitals pulled off a comfortable 20-run win over defending champions CSK here on Sunday.

"Rishabh Pant, the Delhi Capitals captain, has been fined after his team maintained a slow over rate during their IPL match against Chennai Super Kings," an IPL statement read.

"As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Pant was fined Rs 12 lakhs," it added.

Openers Prithvi Shaw and David Warner provided a thunderous start to the Capitals before Pant provided the final flurry to post a challenging target with a gutsy fifty.

The DC bowlers, especially pacers Khaleel Ahmed and Mukesh Kumar, then rattled the CSK batters and despite veteran Mahendra Singh Dhoni's cracking 16-ball 37 not out, the defending champions suffered their first loss of the season.

The win on Sunday was Delhi Capitals' first this season.

Indians are a long shot in Candidates: Viswanathan Anand

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

Giving prominence to experience over youthful exuberance, five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand feels the three Indian participants remain far from winning the Candidates chess title, saying they "should first settle into the tournament."

The tournament, which will determine the challenger for the next World Championship, will be held in Toronto from April 3-22.

The immensely talented R Praggnanandhaa, D Gukesh and Vidit Gujrathi are the three Indians competing in the meet's open category.

"The Indians are a long shot. If they can keep the tournament going that's good enough. If a late opportunity presents itself, they can grab it. They should first settle into the tournament and try to play good games. Let the big decisions come later," said Anand in a webcast published on a popular chess portal. The Indian stalwart was referring to those who have played at this level before. And it is only the first time that all the three have qualified and Anand singled out Gujrathi as someone who could fit on both sides - being experienced as well



as a debutante. The opinion is not much divided among the world elite as Anand also felt, like many others, that Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura of the United States are the clear favourites while terming Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia and Alireza Firouzja of France as the unpredictable players of the tournament. According to Grandmaster N Srinath, one of the country's top trainers, Praggnanandhaa has the best chance among Indians but picked Fabiano Caruana of

United States as the clear favourite for the title. Just a few days ahead of the elite event world number one and former world champion Magnus Carlsen said both Caruana and Nakamura have "excellent chances".

Carlsen thought that Nepomniachtchi could do well too. The Russian has been a World Championship challenger in the last two attempts but, apart from that, he does not have any great result to boot.

Despite that, according to Carlsen, "Ian has enough pedigree to be among the top contender."

Mirabai finishes 3rd in group B of World Cup

Qualifies for Paris Olympics

Phuket, Apr 01 (PTI):

Tokyo Olympics silver-medallist Mirabai Chanu all but qualified for the 2024 Paris Games after she finished third in the women's 49kg Group B event of the IWF World Cup here on Monday.

Returning from a six-month injury lay off, Chanu lifted a total of 184kg (81kg+103kg) at the tournament, which is the final and a mandatory qualifier for the Paris Olympics.

With the completion of her event, Chanu has fulfilled the criteria for the Paris Olympics, which is participating in two compulsory events and three other qualifiers.

The 2017 world champion is currently ranked second in the women's 49kg Olympic Qualification Ranking (OQR) behind China's



Jian Huihua.

The official announcement for the qualification will come after the conclusion of the World Cup when the OQR will be updated. The top 10 lifters from each weight class

will qualify for the Paris Olympics.

Chanu, who last competed at the Asian Games in September where she suffered a hip tendonitis injury, was not at her best, but was able to make five clean lifts.

Her lifts in the snatch and clean and jerk sections were nowhere close to her personal best efforts.

The 29-year-old has a personal best of 88kg in snatch while she had lifted the then world record of 119kg in clean and jerk at the Asian Championships in 2021.

But given that she is coming off an injury and rehab, Chanu still has time to peak in July and her progress looks good. Chanu will be the lone Indian weightlifter at the Paris Games, which will be her third appearance at the Olympics.

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

Calls for Mahendra Singh Dhoni batting higher up the order have grown after his whirlwind effort against Delhi Capitals but Michael Clarke feels the former Chennai Super Kings captain will continue to bat at no.8 and will only promote himself if the game "is on the line".

Dhoni's unbeaten 37 off 16 balls at number eight did not prove to be enough but his loyal fans believe the outcome would have been different had he batted higher up the order.

Clarke, who like Dhoni is a World Cup-winning captain, said the Indian legend will continue to perform the finisher's role.

"I don't think he will. I think he'll stay where he is. I think every MS Dhoni fan wants to see him as high up the order as possible. We've all said through-

out his career, he should open the batting," Clarke told Star Sports.

"But look, he's at a stage of his career where he's down from the captaincy. I don't think he'll come up the order. I think if there's a game on the line and he needs to go up the order because it's what's best for the team, I'm sure he will."

Dhoni's cameo against the Delhi Capitals included a thundering six over extra-cover before he unleashed a one handed maximum over mid-wicket in the 20th over.

The 42-year-old, who last played for India in 2019, had undergone a knee surgery last year.

"...just because he's hitting the ball so well, I don't think you'll see him batting in the top five or top six. I think he's a genius at the dance. He's probably the best finisher I've ever seen. So, I think they'll continue to utilize him in that role," said Clarke.

Lots of new faces in Hockey India's 60-strong women's assessment squad

Bengaluru, Apr 01 (PTI):

Veterans like goalkeeper Savita Punia and forward Vandana Katariya made the cut among a host of new faces in Hockey India's jumbo assessment squad of 60 for a seven-day camp starting Monday, at the end of which trials to pick 33 national probables would be conducted.

The assessment camp will be held at the Sports Authority of India centre here and selection trials to prune down the squad to 33 for future coaching camps and international exposure tours will be conducted on the April 6 and 7.

"The 60-player core group has been shortlisted following the stellar performances at the recently concluded 14th Hockey India Senior Women's National Championship in Pune," Hockey India said in a statement. Hockey india



had promised a revamp of the national camp after the team's failure to make the cut for Paris Olympics despite being the hosts of the qualifying tournament earlier this year.

"This selection identifies promising talent from

across various states based on their impressive performances throughout the tournament," the HI stated.

"These players will now be closely monitored as they vie for a spot in the final 33-member core

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

If Rishabh Pant's journey from a near death car accident to hitting one handed sixes in a space of 15 months does not inspire someone then they are probably "not true human beings", feels former Australia all-rounder Shane Watson.

The 26-year-old returned to competitive cricket in this IPL after recovering from a horrifying car crash in December 2022. The flamboyant batter had suffered multiple injuries, which required a major knee surgery and an extensive rehabilitation.

After two scratchy innings in the opening two games, Pant gave a glimpse of his devastating best as he hammered four boundaries and three maximums, including his trademark hand-off-the-bat six, to notch his maiden fifty of the season. "It's inspirational,



no question about it. To think that Rishabh had the ability to do this tonight, after the injuries that he sustained is unbelievable," Watson said on JioCinema.

"You're not a true human being if you're not inspired by Rishabh Pant, the way he was able to come out and turn it on like that. It took him a little while to find his feet

but once he let those shackles off, he played some 'Rishabh Pant' shots, and they were extraordinary.

His knock helped Delhi Capitals register a 20-run win, their maiden victory of the season, over defending champions Chennai Super Kings in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

"It really was something special. I thought it might take him a few games, if not towards the backend of the IPL, to be able to play an innings like that.

Watson, who worked with Pant during his stint at Delhi Capitals' assistant coach added "But knowing him, that doesn't surprise me. He's so desperate to be the best he possibly can, and that showed tonight," Watson added.

It was Pant's resilience and mental strength that helped him make an early recovery.

Always had self-belief that I'll come back to ground: Pant

Visakhapatnam, Apr 01 (PTI):

After making an excellent fifty against Chennai Super Kings in their IPL game, Delhi Capitals skipper Rishabh Pant on Sunday said he always had the self-belief of making a comeback to top-tier cricket.

Pant clobbered four boundaries and three maximums, including his trademark hand-off-the-bat six, during his 32-ball 51 that powered DC to a competitive 191 for 5 against CSK, and eventually to a 20-run win.

Pant returned to competitive cricket in this IPL after recovering from a life-threatening road mishap in December 2022, and this was his first fifty in three games this season.

"One and a half years...this is something I have built my life on. I still have to keep learning as a cricketer," Pant said when asked if he ever thought that he might not be able to play such shots



again.

"I had self-belief that whatever happens, I have to come back to the ground and I didn't think about anything else," he said during the post-match presentation.

Pant seemed to struggle a bit initially but he accelerated in the final overs as 43 runs came in the last three overs.

Kejriwal called AAP national treasurer confused: ED

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called his party's national treasurer "confused" when he was confronted with his statement on issues related to the affairs of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Enforcement Directorate claimed before a court on Monday.

The special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court of Judge Kaveri Baweja sent the 55-year-old Kejriwal, also the national convener of the AAP, to judicial custody till April 15 in connection with the money laundering probe linked to alleged irregularities in

the Delhi excise policy for 2021-22, which was later scrapped.

The ED also alleged that Kejriwal, during his questioning, said AAP communication in-charge Vijay Nair "did not report to him" but to his cabinet colleagues Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj and that his interaction with Nair was "limited".

Nair was arrested in this case by the ED.

The federal agency charged Kejriwal, in its application filed while seeking his judicial custody, of being "evasive", giving "misleading replies" and "concealing information" during his questioning in the re-

mand period after his arrest on March 21.

It has earlier called him the "kingpin and key conspirator" of the alleged scam.

The AAP and its leaders have repeatedly denied the charges of wrongdoing, with Kejriwal alleging that the case was built by the BJP-led Centre to create a "smokescreen" that the AAP is a corrupt party.

"The arrestee (Kejriwal) has even given false and contrary evidence vis-a-vis other members of the AAP. When he was confronted with the statements given by his own party leaders he has called them confused," the ED

told the court.

"National Treasurer of AAP N D Gupta (practising CA and former president of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India) in his statement has revealed that it is the national convener Sh Arvind Kejriwal who appoints the state election in-charge/prabhari," it said. "State prabhari is supposed to manage all election campaign related matters. In case of Goa elections Sh Durgesh Pathak (AAP MLA) was chosen. However, Sh Arvind Kejriwal states that it is the PAC (Political Affairs Committee) which decided the state election in-charge," it said.

FLAG MARCH



Police and paramilitary forces conduct a flag march ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, in Amritsar, Monday.

My life is an 'open book', says Naveen Jindal

Chandigarh, Apr 01 (PTI):

Industrialist and BJP leader Naveen Jindal said that his life is an "open book", adding that people trust him and he has faith in the judiciary.

His response came on the charges related to the alleged coal scam.

Jindal, who recently quit the Congress to join the ruling BJP, was campaigning in Kaithal on Sunday. He has been fielded by the BJP as a candidate from the Kurukshetra Lok Sabha seat. He was asked by reporters about his response regarding people taking his name in the alleged coal scam. Replying to the question, Jindal said people and the media have the right to ask all kinds of questions.

"My life is like an open book. We are simple people. My (late) father (O P Jindal) worked hard. My brothers also worked very hard and we set up many factories in which lakhs have got employment. During the past 20 years, we have paid taxes to the



government in crores and lakhs of rupees.

"Having taken birth in the land of Haryana, we have contributed a lot to the country's development. We have done work in every field. And when anyone does work, sometimes some (people) raise issues. But in the end, the truth comes before all. I think the truth is before you all. It has been more than ten years. One can level allegations on anyone, but I know people have trust in me and I have faith in the judiciary. And in the end it will become clear to all that I have done nothing wrong," Jindal

said.

Earlier this year, a Delhi court had allowed Jindal, accused in three cases related to alleged irregularities in the allocation of coal blocks, to travel to several countries, including the US, UK from February 1 to 20.

Jindal, who represented the Kurukshetra constituency in Lok Sabha from 2004-14 as a Congress MP, quit the opposition party and joined the BJP on March 24. Polling for all ten parliamentary seats in Haryana will be held in the sixth phase on May 25.

Immediately after Jindal had joined the BJP, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh took a swipe at the ruling party and said this had to happen "when you need a giant-size washing machine".

"When you need a giant-size washing machine, this had to happen. And after making ZERO contributions to the party in the last 10 years, saying I am resigning from it is a big joke," Ramesh had said in a post on X.

'Inter-island flight connectivity to Shibpur, Car Nicobar in Andaman'

● To start in July'

Port Blair, Apr 01:

The construction of terminal buildings at Shibpur in North Andaman and Car Nicobar in Nicobar has been completed to enhance inter-island connectivity, with flight operations expected to commence in July, an official said on Monday.

A 19-seater fixed-wing aircraft will operate between Port Blair-Shibpur and Port Blair to Car Nicobar, with a private company already chosen as the designated operator for these routes, he added.

During the celebration of the Airports Authority of India's 29th foundation day at Veer Savarkar International here, airport director Devender Yadav said, "Both these sectors will be connected with Port Blair under UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) schemes, benefiting tourists and enabling exploration of exotic places in North

Andaman and Nicobar districts. We anticipate flight operations to begin in July."

Yadav also mentioned plans for an in-line baggage handling system to streamline passenger processing and enhance efficiency and experience at the terminal buildings of Shibpur and Car Nicobar airports.

"Airports serve as a major catalyst for economic development of a region by aiding both tourism and trade. According to an International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) study, every Rs 100 spent on air transport contributes to Rs 325 worth of benefits and every 100 direct job creation in air transport results in 610 job creation in the region," Yadav said.

Cultural programmes including flash dance, live music, a poetry competition, and sports tournaments such as volleyball, badminton, table tennis, and tug of war were organised by AAI employees and stakeholders during the celebration.

Distinguished WW-II veteran Subedar Thanseia no more: Army



New Delhi: People pay their last respects to Subedar Thanseia, a World War II veteran of the Indian Army's Assam Regiment, who passed away at the age of 102 on Sunday, March 31.

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

Subedar Thanseia, a distinguished World War II veteran of the Indian Army, whose actions at the crucial Battle of Kohima against formidable odds, contributed to a pivotal victory for the Allied forces, has died at the age of 102 in Mizoram, officials on

Monday said.

The Army veteran, who belonged to the state of Mizoram, breathed his last on March 31.

"His remarkable life was defined by his valour at the Battle of Kohima, a crucial confrontation in World War II, and his significant role in establishing the legacy of the 1st Assam Regiment during

their critical deployment at Jessami," a senior official said.

Throughout his service, Subedar Thanseia demonstrated a commitment to the nation that "went beyond the call of duty, earning him a revered place in the annals of India's military history".

"His actions at Kohima, against formidable odds, contributed to a pivotal victory for the Allied forces, marking a turning point in the conflict in the East," the official added.

India mourns the loss of Subedar Thanseia, a "distinguished World War II veteran of the Indian Army's Assam Regiment", the Army said. After his retirement, Subedar Thanseia continued to inspire with his dedication to community and country, actively participating in veteran affairs and educational initiatives.

TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION



A woman attempts to salvage her belongings after her house was destroyed due to a hailstorm, at Boko in Kamrup district, Assam, Monday.

EMPLOYING INCLUSIVITY

Corporate doors open for transgender community at employment mela

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI) Dressed in a bright green saree, bedecked with shining stones, Prerna Kumari strutted from one booth to another, handing out her resume and talking about her future prospects with potential employers.

Kumari, a Delhi-based transwoman, was one of the over 230 hopeful candidates from the transgender com-

munity at the recently-held Trans Employment Mela that were looking for a better life, more inclusive work environment and to be counted as equal members of the society.

A history graduate from the Delhi University, Kumari wants to become a professor of the subject at some point in the future, but for now an immediate need to leave a

toxic workplace hangs heavy over her head. "At my current job, they single me out. Nobody likes to sit with me, they feel embarrassed. There is no transgender policy and even after telling them so many times they continue to misgender me," Kumari, 23, told PTI.

"Here (at the mela), everyone has been meeting me with a smile. Everyone is so

welcoming," she added. The second edition of the Trans Employment Mela was organised by Transgender Welfare Equity and Empowerment Trust (Tweet) Foundation and InHarmony in association with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD). It was held on March 22 here.

'Restrain central agencies from action against opposition till LS polls'

● TMC TO EC

New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

The Trinamool Congress on Monday urged the Election Commission to immediately restrain central agencies like the ED, CBI, Income Tax Department and NIA from

taking action against candidates, leaders and workers of the Trinamool Congress and other parties opposed to the BJP till the conclusion of Lok Sabha elections.

A delegation of TMC leaders that included Derek O'Brien, Dola Sen, Saket Gokhale and Sagarika Ghose met the Chief



TMC leaders Derek O'Brien, Dola Sen, Saket Gokhale and Sagarika Ghose leave after meeting the Election Commission of India, at Nirvachan Sadan in New Delhi, Monday.

Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners and submitted a memorandum alleging misuse of central agencies by the BJP against the opposition parties. They also urged the poll panel to transfer the directors of ED, CBI, I-T department and the NIA to ensure a level playing field for political parties in the Lok Sabha elections.

The TMC leaders cited

incidents where central agencies have taken action against their party candidates.

SC slams petitioner for 'reckless' allegations



New Delhi, Apr 01 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Monday came down heavily on a petitioner who has filed a public interest litigation concerning death of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, saying the plea contains "reckless and irresponsible allegations" against leaders who are no longer alive.

Observing that the petitioner has not even spared Mahatma Gandhi in the plea, the apex court said the bona fide of the petitioner is required to be

tested. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan asked petitioner Pinak Pani Mohanty, who has said in his plea that he is the Cuttack district secretary of World Human Rights Protection Organisation (India), what work he has done for public interest and human rights of people.

"Who is behind you?" the bench asked, adding, "What have you done for public interest?"

"What have you done for human rights of people? We have to test your bona fide," the bench observed.

The top court asked him to file an affidavit indicating the activities so far undertaken by him for society at large, particularly in the field of human rights. It has posted the matter for hearing after four weeks.

राइनोप्लास्टी
नाक को सही (रिश्पिंग) करना

कालड़ा बर्न एवं
प्लास्टिक कॉस्मेटिक सर्जरी सेंटर
आर.के.सी.के.सामने, चौथे कालनी एवं पंचवटी
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कॉल: 9827143060/8871003060
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