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Jolt to Kejri as minister quits



Raaj Kumar Anand

AAP 'mired in quicksand of graft'

Addressing a press conference at his residence after tendering his resignation to party general secretary Sandeep Pathak, Raaj Kumar Anand said, "I had entered politics when Kejriwal had said that if its politics changes, the country will change. But today, I say with much regret, that politics did not change but political leaders did. The AAP was born out of a movement against corruption, but today this party is mired in the same quicksand of graft."

'It's our agnipariksha'

Addressing a press conference soon after Anand resigned, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh lashed out at the BJP, alleging it was misusing probe agencies against Aam Aadmi Party MLAs and ministers. "It is 'agnipariksha' (trial by fire) of AAP ministers and MLAs," Singh said at a press conference. "The reason behind Arvind Kejriwal's arrest is the destruction of AAP. The sole reason behind the investigations and raids by ED is to destroy the AAP."



Sanjay Singh

Minister Arvind Kejriwal who is in Tihar jail after being remanded in judicial custody in an excise policy-linked money laundering case and has failed to get any relief from the Delhi High Court.

"From the Jantar Mantar, Arvind Kejriwal had said that the country will change once politics changes. The politics hasn't changed but the politician has changed," Anand, who is an MLA from the Patel Nagar constituency, said.

"This party doesn't respect Dalit MLAs, councillors and ministers. In such circumstances, all Dalits feel cheated. We live in an inclusive society, but it is not wrong to talk about proportion. It is difficult for me to remain in the party with all these things, hence I am resigning from the post," Anand said. He also took a swipe at Delhi Chief

BRIEF



Women offer 'namaz' during Eid-al-Fitr celebrations, at the historic Aali Masjid Eidgah, in Srinagar, Wednesday.

Hospitalised

Mathura (UP): Thirty-six people were taken ill at different places here after consuming food items prepared from poor quality buckwheat flour used during fasting in Navratri, officials said on Wednesday. With nine-day fasting for 'Chaitra Navratri' beginning on Tuesday, several people who consumed 'puris' and 'pakodis' made of 'kutua' complained of vomiting, nausea and diarrhoea and were admitted to different hospitals, they said.

No regrets

Bengaluru: Senior Congress leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister M Veerappa Moily said on Wednesday the party has given him everything and he has no regrets over quitting electoral politics. The former union minister was keen to contest from Chikballapur – from where he had won in 2009 and 2014 Parliamentary polls but lost in 2019.

Close shave

Mumbai: Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole on Wednesday said he escaped unhurt after a truck hit his car in Bhandara district of the state, with his party alleging that it was an attempt on his life. The incident took place on Tuesday night, Patole said, adding that the police were trying to find if it was sabotage.

Crack down

New Delhi: The Election Commission on Wednesday directed clear identification of the printer and publisher on printed election-related material, including hoardings, to ensure accountability and transparency in poll campaigning. The poll authority said the decision was taken after representations were received stating that in hoarding spaces controlled by municipal authorities, hoardings without the identity of the printer or publisher have been noticed.

Weather

High 35 Low 22

MARKET

NIFTY 22,753.80

SENSEX 75,038.15

BULLION

GOLD 71,116

SILVER 82,211

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI):

Delhi minister Raaj Kumar Anand on Wednesday resigned from the cabinet and quit the AAP, alleging Dalits were not given representation in the party.

Addressing a press conference here, Anand, who was holding various portfolios including Social Welfare, alleged that there was no Dalit among the top leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).



Bijapur, Apr 10:

Two personnel of the Special Task Force were injured on Wednesday when a pressure improvised explosive device (IED) planted by Naxalites exploded in Bijapur district, police said. The incident occurred between 5 am and

Two STF personnel injured in IED blast

6 am at a forest in Itwar village under Gangaloor police station area when a team of security personnel was out on a search operation, a police official said.

During the exercise, two STF personnel, Shivlal Mandavi and Mithlesh Markam, came in contact with the pressure IED, triggering the blast that left them injured, he said.

The two personnel were shifted to a local hospital and their condition was reported to be out of danger, the official said.

JCB operator injured.....

Dantewada: A JCB operator was injured on Wednesday when he stepped on a pressure improvised explosive device (IED) in Sukma district, police said. The JCB machine was engaged in road construction work between Kamraguda and Kormeta villages under the Jagargunda police station limits bordering Dantewada, a police official said. "The driver got down from the JCB machine and was walking along the road when he inadvertently stepped on the pressure IED, triggering an explosion which left him injured," he said. Personnel of CRPF's 231st battalion reached the spot immediately after the incident and shifted the injured driver to the Dantewada district hospital in an ambulance, the official said.

KALASH YATRA



Tribals in traditional attire take part in a 'Kalash Yatra' on the eve of 'Sarhul' festival, in Ranchi, Wednesday.

CBSE to launch pilot for NCrf

For classes 6, 9 and 11

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI): The CBSE will launch a pilot of the National Credit Framework for classes 6, 9 and 11 from the 2024-25 academic session and has invited its affiliate schools to participate, officials said on Wednesday.

The government last year launched the National Credit Framework (NCF) as part of the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, to ensure seamless integration of school, higher and vocational education, and allow students to accumulate their credits from the primary to the PhD level. Subsequently, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) also developed its draft guidelines to implement the framework. "The CBSE developed and circulated draft NCF implementation guidelines, discussed them

PM slams 'Constitution in danger' claim

Says Ambedkar soul must be blessing him for Art 370 move

Nagpur, Apr 10 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday attacked the opposition for saying that the Constitution and democracy would be in danger if he wins a third term in office and asserted abrogation of Article 370 ensured the statute book was implemented throughout the country.

Addressing a rally at Kanhan town of Nagpur district in support of ruling alliance candidates from Nagpur, Ramtek, Bhandara-Gondiya Lok Sabha seats of Maharashtra, the PM said chief Constitution maker B R Ambedkar's soul must be blessing him for nullifying Article 370 which provided special status to Jammu and

Will rip you apart: SC to authorities in Patanjali case

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to accept the affidavits of yoga guru Ramdev and his close aide Balkrishna of Patanjali Ayurved tendering unconditional apologies for publishing "misleading" advertisements, asserting the court doesn't want to be "so generous" as they were issued after the duo was caught with their "back against the wall". The apex court also came down hard on the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority for its inaction on the issue and said it is not going to take it lightly as the authority appeared to have kept its "eyes shut deliberately".

"We will rip you apart," a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah told the counsel representing the authority in an unusually



Yoga guru Ramdev and Patanjali MD Acharya Balkrishna arrive at the Supreme Court for hearing on the Patanjali misleading advertisements case, in New Delhi, Wednesday.

stern reprimand. The top court observed that after the notices to show cause were issued to Ramdev and Balkrishna, they "attempted to wriggle out" of their personal appearance before the court which is "most unacceptable". "Having regard to the entire history of the matter and the past conduct of

note that except for pushing the files", the competent authority within the office of State Licensing Authority did nothing and was in "deep slumber" over the issue for four-five years. The bench, which interacted with the joint director of the authority during the hearing, said he should have acted in accordance with law. It said his predecessor will file an affidavit explaining the inaction on his part during his tenure. The bench also directed that the district Ayurvedic and Unani officers, Haridwar, who were posted there from 2018 till date, shall also file affidavits explaining the inaction on their part.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Ramdev and Balkrishna, referred to the affidavits filed by them tendering unconditional and unqualified apology.

Raj Thackeray to rally for PM 6 years after Modi-mukt call

Sambhajanagar, Apr 10 (PTI):

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray will address rallies in support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, a Shiv Sena leader said on Wednesday.

A day after the MNS chief declared his unconditional support for the ruling Mahayuti alliance, Sanjay Shirsat, the spokesperson for the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, claimed the move would avoid the potential vote division in elections.

"There was a possibility of vote division which could have resulted in us (Mahayuti) slightly missing our target to win 45 plus seats in Maharashtra. Now, we will definitely achieve our target," Shirsat told reporters.



Raj Thackeray on Tuesday announced unconditional support to the 'Mahayuti' alliance of the BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP in the state and backed PM Modi, a move that is expected to bolster the ruling bloc's prospects in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

When asked whether the MNS chief will campaign for Mahayuti, Shirsat replied in the affirmative.

"Yes, he will hold rallies across the state, including Chhattrapati Sambhajanagar city. We will organise his rallies as per his schedule," he said.

Magisterial probe launched to explore cause of mishap

**12 killed; 13 admitted to hospitals****Bhilai, Apr 10:**

After the death of 12 passengers of a staff bus in an accident, the District Collector has ordered a magisterial investigation in connection with the mishap which occurred on Mahamayapara - Kedia

Road in Kumhari. On April 09, at 20:10 hrs, the bus bearing registration number CG 07 C 7783 of Kedia Distillery, ferrying employees of the distillery, fell into the stone quarry at Mahamayapara. This stone quarry also belongs

to the Kedia Group. All the passengers travelling in the bus got injured and 12 of them succumbed to their fatal injuries. Sub-Divisional Magistrate Bhilai-3 Mahesh Singh Rajput has started a magisterial inquiry into the incident. His investigation would explore that under what circumstances did the road accident occur?, Was

adequate medical care provided to the dead and injured immediately after the incident?, People responsible for this road accident, etc. The investigation officer would give suggestions to avoid recurrence of such an incident in future.

Immediately after receiving the information of the bus accident in Kumhari, the district administration and police department officials swung into action and launched the rescue operation. The Collector and Superintendent of Police

also reached the spot and supervised the rescue operation. All the injured were rushed to hospitals in Raipur for treatment. The injured passengers Ramesh Yadav, Gurmukh Singh, Nirmal Singh, Devendra Singh, Monica Verma, Usha Sahu, Hastina Sikka, Kunti Yadav, Urmila Kaushal and Sarjit Kaur have been admitted to AIIMS, Raipur. Bihari Lal Dubey has been admitted to Medical College Hospital Raipur and Kavita Chaudhary and Pradeep Wadhi have been admitted to Om Hospital.

Those who lost their lives in the accident were Shanti Bai Dewangan (60) wife of Late Bihari Lal Dewangan, a resident of Mahamayapara Ward 03, Kumhari; Satya Bai Nishad (60) wife of Abhay Nishad, a resident of Ramnagar Kumhari; Raju Ram (49) son of Ramvriksh, a resident of Seva Samiti Camp 02

Bhilai; Pushpa Devi Patel (50) wife of Phoolchand Patel a resident of Zone 03 Khursipar; Kamlesh Deshlhara (35) son of Tulsu Ram Deshlhara a resident of Sector 04, Street 28, Bhilai; Nikhu Bhai Patel (63) son of Madan Bhai Patel a resident of Sector 02, Bhilai Nagar; Parmanand Tiwari (55) son of Late Vasudev Tiwari a resident of Housing Board Colony, Dadar Road Charoda; Tribhuvan Pandey (55) son of Late Jai Kisan Pandey a resident of Pragati Nagar Resali Bhilai; Bihari Yadav (60) son of Bhukhan Yadav a resident of Shastri Nagar Bhilai; Manoj Kumar Dhruv (43) son of Manaram Dhruv a resident of Dream City, Ward 07, Umda Road, Old Bhilai; Amit Sinha (40) son of Mohan Lal Sinha a resident of Shankar Nagar, Durg; Krishna Sahu (45) son of Tonka Sahu a resident of Canal Road, Zone 02, Khursipar.

LOK SABHA ELECTION 2024

'Matdaan Rath' facility for disabled and senior citizen voters

Bhilai, Apr 10:

Election Commission of India, has given instructions to provide free transport facility to the voters belonging to the disabled and senior citizen category above 80 years of age on the voting day for Lok Sabha Elections-2024 which happens to be on May 07, 2024 for Durg district. In view of the above instructions, under the guidance of Collector and District Election Officer Richa Choudhary, disabled and senior citizens are being identified polling center-wise, and on the demand of these voters, they will be provided transportation

from their residences on the polling day. This vehicle facility being named "Matdaan Rath" will ferry such voters from the residence to the polling station and then drop them back to their residence after voting.

Collector and District Election Officer Richa Choudhary has appointed the Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department as the nodal officer for the "Matdaan Rath" program to ensure availability of free transport facility to the disabled and senior citizen voters for voting. The Nodal Officer would collect centre-wise information about the beneficiaries of Matdaan Rath from

ARO, send the demand for vehicles to RTO as per route and time. Instructions have been given to the Nodal Officer to demand the flex list from the District Election Office and to coordinate with the RTO to obtain the vehicles and to provide guidance and operation on the entire polling day.

Similarly, all AROs will be required to do marking of voters availing the benefit of Rath by BLO and Supervisor (only on demand) and provide it to the Nodal Officer. After getting the centre wise information of the identified voters/beneficiaries the Nodal Officer has been directed to put up

demand for the vehicle as per the route and as per the requirement. Instructions have been given to the RTO to provide vehicles as per the need of the Nodal Officer. The Deputy Director Public Relations has been asked to display banners and posters on the chariot vehicles as prescribed by the Election Commission.

Keeping in view the convenience and accessibility of voters belonging to the disabled and senior citizen age group, a suitable vehicle will be used as chariot during this period. Auxiliary equipment like wheel chair and crutches etc. will also be kept in the Matdaan Rath as per requirement.

'Shaheed Vinod Choubey Award' to SKD Mishra

Bhilai, Apr 10:

The Department of Sports & Youth Welfare, State of Chhattisgarh felicitated SKD Mishra, an employee of Bhilai Steel Plant, with the prestigious 'Shaheed Vinod Choubey Award' at the Chhattisgarh Rajya Khel Alankaran Samaroh organised recently. Mishra was awarded for the year 2020-21, for his contributions in the field of Sports.

It is noteworthy that 'Shaheed Vinod Choubey Award' which includes a cash prize worth Rs 25,000, is bestowed upon Veteran Players of the state who are 55 years of age or above, have taken part in international sports competitions, have won a medal in a National Competition or have ren-



dered any notable service in the field of sports.

Currently working as a senior Section Assistant in the Project Section of the Finance & Accounts Department of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant, SKD Mishra is an internationally acclaimed Handball Player. He joined Bhilai

Steel Plant under Sports Quota, in the year 1986 as a Junior Assistant. Mishra has so far participated in several State, National, and International level Handball Tournaments and has brought laurels to SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant and the Country from his victories. He represented

India in the Senior National Handball Championship held in Russia in the year 1990, represented Bhilai Steel Plant in the SPSB Inter Steel Plant Championship, and many other prestigious sports tournaments. Mishra has received many Medals and accolades during his sports career. SKD Mishra has left his mark in the sports world as a good Player, Coach, and Referee.

Chhattisgarh Rajya Khel Alankaran Samaroh is a prestigious State Level Award Ceremony to recognize the achievements of Chhattisgarh's talented players and promote the sports culture in the state. The winners were awarded a Cash Prize, an Award Certificate, a Plaque, a Blazer, and a Tie.

New scheme for arranging annual get-together of employees introduced

Bhilai, Apr 10:

SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant firmly believes that the key driver for achieving desired levels of production and productivity is the work culture and team spirit among the workforce, which in turn helps to achieve the Annual Production & Productivity (APP) targets. BSP is also committed to provide employees with the resources and support they need to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

As a step towards this and also to inculcate team spirit amongst employees, a new scheme named 'Scheme for payment of amount towards Annual get-together' has been

introduced for employees, including trainees, in Bhilai Steel Plant. Under the scheme, employee and family get-togethers would be arranged at any location in and around Bhilai once in a financial year, during the winter months from October to January.

The scheme is aimed at motivating employees and also instilling a feeling of commitment among the team members as they work together towards fulfilling organisational goals. Under the scheme, budget will be allocated on a per employee basis to the CGM/HOD of the concerned area, for the purpose of arranging get-together.

'Pyau Ghar' inaugurated in Collectorate premises

Bhilai, Apr 10:

Under the auspices of Bharat Scouts and Guides Durg, a Pyau Ghar (water kiosk) has been inaugurated in the Collectorate. Neeta Jain, President District Bar Association and Sunita Sanjay Vohra, State and District Vice President jointly inaugurated the water kiosk. Neeta Jain appreciated the work of starting Pau Ghar by the Scouts and Guides as well as promised to extend full cooperation in future. She added that the role of Scout Guide has always been leading in various fields of social service.

Here it needs a mention that as per the instructions of Brijmohan Agrawal, State President,



Bharat Scouts and Guides Chhattisgarh State Headquarters, Raipur; Dr Somnath Yadav, the State Chief Commissioner; Richa Prakash Chaudhary, Patron and Durg Collector; and as per the orders of Arvind Mishra, District Commissioner and

District Education Officer, the Pyau Ghar was inaugurated in the Collectorate premises. Special financial support for this water kiosk was provided by Govind of Block Education Office Durg and Advocate Ajit Rajput.

Present were Arvind

Mishra District Education Officer, Ravi Shankar Singh General Secretary District Bar Association, Uma Bharti Woman Vice President, Ramesh Sharma Former President, Prashant Joshi, Mahendra Delhiwar, Ashok Singh, Ashish Tiwari, Gopal Sahu, Dhal Singh, Neeraj Rathore, Guru Darshan Singh, Sohan Sharma and Bar Association members. On behalf of Bharat Scouts and Guides Durg Awadhesh Vishwakarma District Commissioner (Scout), Neha Rajput District Commissioner (Guide), Ranger Aakriti Manikpuri, Rover Tushar Sahu, Gaurav Sahu, Bhupendra Sahu, Jeet Yadav.

Revised order of sector officers issued for Durg City Assembly constituency

Bhilai, Apr 10:

For the smooth conduct of Lok Sabha elections-2024 in the district, a revised order has been issued by appointing sector officers for assembly constituency number 64 i.e. Durg city.

According to the information received from Additional Collector and Deputy District Election Officer, Sector Number 02 and Sector Number 21 under Assembly Constituency 64 Durg City have been divided into 2 parts. Sanjay Singh, Labour Officer, Assistant Labour

Commissioner Office, District Durg has been appointed for 11 polling stations of Sector 2 and Hridesh Sharma, Marketing Officer, District Cooperative Central Bank, Durg has been appointed as Sector Officer for 8 polling stations of Sector 2A. Similarly, for 6 polling stations in Sector 21, Rajesh Kumar Sharma, Assistant District Excise Officer, and for 12 polling stations in Sector 21A, Ishwari Lal Deshmukh, Deputy Engineer of Setu Sub-Division, Durg has been appointed Sector Officer.

Risali Commissioner inspects door to door garbage collection system

Bhilai, Apr 10:

The allotment of those shops whose rent is not being deposited should be cancelled after serving notice. This instruction was given by Monica Verma, of Risali Municipal Commissioner who on Wednesday visited Azad Market area under her morning visit programme. She first inspected the 10 shops allotted by the corporation. On coming to know about non-payment of rent for a long time, the Commissioner questioned as to why the officials have not taken action till now. The commissioner asked to issue notice immediately. Instructions were given to cancel the shop allotment if the rent amount is not deposited even after the



notice. It is noteworthy that before the formation of the corporation, 10 shops had been allotted on Krishna Talkies Road under the Mukhyamantri Swalamban Yojana.

Risali Commissioner Monica Verma then visited the ward to inspect door to door garbage collection system. She spoke to the employees of the Public Health Department engaged in garbage collec-

tion work and instructed each employee to report the number of houses left to the supervisor every day either due to lack of time or poor availability. The supervisor should start the work of collecting garbage from the missed houses on the next day.

During the inspection, the Commissioner also saw the measures taken to deal with the situation of

water logging during monsoon. After seeing Parameshwari Bhawan near Pragati Nagar, the Commissioner said that a temporary drain should be made on the side of the building to prevent accumulation of water. The Commissioner asked to make a roster for drain cleaning, so that the drain cleaning work is completed before the rains. In Pragati Nagar, she inspected the main drain which has become narrow at many places. Drain cleaning work is affected due to illegal construction. After seeing the situation, the Commissioner instructed to prepare a list of encroachments. Eviction campaign should be launched after completing the demarcation process, she instructed.

BSP's Merchant Mill products get QR Code Tags

Bhilai, Apr 10:

As a result of sincere hard work and the valuable contributions of the Plant's spirited employees, Bhilai Steel Plant has achieved several benchmarks in production and performance in the past. Plant's employees have time and again explored innovative interventions to further systematize Plant's work and achieve maximum production while adhering to the safety protocols.

In one such initiative at Merchant & Wire Rod Mill, under the guidance of Munish Kumar Goyal, CGM (MWRM) and Sushil Kumar Hariramani, GM (MM) & HoD, Sunil Kumar, DGM (Operation-MWRM), Vimalkant Pandey, Master Operative, Santosh Kumar Dubey, Satish Kumar Verma, Sr Shipper, DS Chandel, Sailesh Kumar, Sailesh Soni, Rajiv Reddywar, and Anil



Kumar Singh have made commendable interventions at the workplace.

This team with the support of A&D, and other associated departments has worked efficiently to get the Merchant & Wire Rod Mill Department's products tagged with Quality Council of India (QCI) approved links and QR Codes. These tags have been prepared with the help of MES software.

This MES-enabled QR Code and link shall not only provide detailed in-

formation on the product quality and dimensions, date of production, material, batch number, company name, production area, and production time but also provide options for the customers to share their grievances and suggestions for the improvement of the product.

The MWRM team also carried out a detailed yard mapping to identify and mark the products lying in the yard, for ensuring adequate maintenance, expedite loading and dispatch

of the products. Alpha-numeric tags have also been installed in each section of the yard, to systematically arrange and identify the products present in the yard.

Quality Council of India is an autonomous body established by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, aimed to establish and operate a National Certification Framework and promote quality through a National Quality Campaign.

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CEO flags off bike rally, SVEEP Express



For voters awareness

Raipur, Apr 10: In view of the Lok Sabha elections 2024, a bike rally was organized this afternoon to create awareness among the voters in Raipur district. The rally was flagged off by Chief Electoral Officer of Chhattisgarh, Smt. Reena Baba Saheb Kangale. Collector and District Returning Officer Dr. Gaurav Singh, Additional Chief Electoral Officer Nilesh Kshirsagar SSP Santosh Singh, Municipal Corporation Commissioner Abinash Mishra, District Panchayat CEO Vishwadeep participated

in five years and that people must use their voting rights. The bike rally, began at Collectorate Complex and passed through Akashvani Chowk, White House, Shyam Talkies, Lily Chowk, Purani Basti Vivekananda Ashram and NIT Campus culminated at Nalanda Complex. The rally was led by Mrs. Reena Baba Saheb Kangale and Collector and District Returning Officer

in five years and that people must use their voting rights. The bike rally, began at Collectorate Complex and passed through Akashvani Chowk, White House, Shyam Talkies, Lily Chowk, Purani Basti Vivekananda Ashram and NIT Campus culminated at Nalanda Complex. The rally was led by Mrs. Reena Baba Saheb Kangale and Collector and District Returning Officer



Dr. Gaurav Singh. Mrs. Kangale herself, wearing a helmet, was riding on an e-scooter iCube, which had a placard saying 'Chunav Ka Parv, Desh Ka Parv' attached to it. Collector Dr. Gaurav Singh was riding on the Bullet wearing a

helmet and Municipal Corporation Commissioner Abinash Mishra was sitting behind him. At the end a small program was organized in Nalanda campus, in which Zumba based on voter awareness was presented

by AIG Sanjay Sharma and his team. Tejram Sahu also presented a folk dance and appealed to the voters to cast their votes. Mrs. Kangale administered the oath to vote. Books based on the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda were presented to the artists of Zumba and Lok Kalapathak Dal. Posters and photographs related to voter awareness were put up all around the SVEEP Express. Women and men were wearing Chhattisgarhi costumes in the rally. Officers and employees participated in the bike rally carrying placards related to voter awareness.

NAVRATRI RUSH



Devotees thronged for the 'prasad' in the temple after offering prayers to Goddess Durga in the temple. Large numbers of 'Jyoti Kalash' of the devotees have been lighted up completely in all the temples.

BJP seeks action against Congress MLA Lakhma

Over his violent statement during election campaign

Raipur, Apr 10:

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday registered complaint with Election Commission of India (ECI) seeking action against the Congress nominee from Bastar constituency Kawashi Lakhma over his alleged violence statement. A delegation led by BJP General Secretary Sanjay



Shrivastava, BJP MLA Motilal Sahu, Vijay Shanker Mishra, Amit Chimmani and Mohan Pawar submitted a memorandum to Chief Election Officer Dr. Reena Babasaheb Kangale in support to the demand. BJP termed the statement of Kawashi Lakhma during the election campaign, to be aggressive and violent in nature which it stated that is a violation of model code of conduct of election. BJP sought action against him over his statement in local Gandhi dialect which appeals to vote for him.

AIIMS-R successfully manages bus accident patients with prompt response

Raipur, Apr 10: All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Raipur played a pivotal role in Bus accident at Kumhari by promptly activating the emergency response system at the institute and providing emergency services to 10 patients referred from Durg. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai also praised the efforts by the AIIMS during his visit. AIIMS Raipur received information regarding a mass-casualty incident involving a bus accident carrying passengers on the night of 09.04.2024. In response to this unfortunate incident, the Executive Director and CEO of AIIMS Raipur, Lt Gen Ashok Jindal (Retd), promptly activated mass casualty protocols and the emergency response system of the institute. He conveyed the information to the Head of the Department (HOD) of Trauma and Emergency, Prof. (Dr) Debendera K. Tripathy, to mobilize the necessary resources and manpower. Hospital administration, along with other relevant departments including HOD, faculties, and resident doctors of orthopedics, neurosurgery, oromaxillofacial surgery, ophthalmology, urology, general medicine, general surgery, cardiothoracic vascular surgery, and transfusion medicine, helped at the floor of the Trauma and Emergency Department in efficiently treating the mass-casualty. Ten patients were shifted to AIIMS Raipur and received in the midnight at the Department of Trauma and Emergency, where each patient was promptly triaged and provided with appropriate emergency care. Lt Gen Ashok Jindal personally oversaw the allocation of resources and treatment procedures. Two patients were immediately triaged as "red," requiring critical care, and were treated in the red zone, while the remaining eight were stabilized at the red zone before being transferred to the yellow zone for further management. Medical Superintendent Prof. (Dr.) Renu Rajguru, along with Additional MS Dr. Nitin Borkar, facilitated the logistics and supplies, and liaised with heads of other concerned departments to streamline patient care. Deputy-MS of Trauma and Emergency, Dr. Nitin Kashyap, coordinated with other departments to optimize bed allocation and overall patient management. Furthermore, the radiology department, under the guidance of the HOD Prof. N. K. Bodhey ensured prompt CT scans and X-rays to aid in timely diagnosis and treatment. Prof. Tripathy, along with his team of faculties, senior residents, and academic resident doctors, remained dedicated on the floor, working seamlessly to address the mass casualty incident right from the arrival of the patients. Lt Gen Ashok Jindal, supervised the emergency team, assessing the situation firsthand, interacting with the patients and relatives, and issuing directives to enhance support for the mass casualty incident. AIIMS efficiently managed the influx of all the mass-casualty patients at AIIMS hospital. As of the latest update, two patients are critical and under ventilator support, while eight are relatively stable and receiving appropriate treatment. A multidisciplinary team comprising orthopedic surgeons, neurosurgeons, oro-maxillofacial surgeons, ophthalmologists, urologists, general medicine and surgery specialists, as well as cardiothoracic vascular surgeons, are collectively and continuously managing the trauma patients, ensuring comprehensive care and support.



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Brijmohan floats mobile no to seek public suggestions

Raipur, Apr 10:

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate for the Raipur Lok Sabha segment Brijmohan Agrawal on Wednesday released his official mobile number to seek suggestions from people over the progress and development of the Parliamentary segment. Addressing a press conference here on Wednesday afternoon, the senior BJP leader Agrawal said that he would seek direct suggestions from people of



Raipur Parliamentary segment for the progress of the region. He informed that people can contact him directly on his mobile no 9238727200 to give suggestion. He said it would be a significant step for the progress of the region and added that voice of Raipurians would reach to Delhi easily. He added that he has been working for the people of Raipur for the last 8 tenure as Member of Legislative Assembly which prompted the central leadership to give him opportunity to work for the Raipur Lok Sabha segment.

Charismatic personality sets bench mark of humanitarian service

Sandeep Bhattacharyya

Raipur, Apr 10: In this materialistic world when people are busy in amassing wealth by all possible means, there is one person who is selflessly offering humanitarian touch to the poor and downtrodden sections of the society who still are away from the light of development. The personality in discussion is Dr. C Sreenivas, Chairman of the Sri Sathya Sai Health & Education Trust. Dr. Sreenivas (68), has been associated with Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and his various service projects in Healthcare, Education, Drinking Water Supply and Rural Service Initiatives for over 40 years. A selfless worker he has built and run several Institutions of Service most notably in recent years the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospitals - Centres for Child Heart Care, where in all services are provided totally free of cost to all. His late mother Dr C Rajeshwari was instrumental in founding the

first General Hospital of Sri Sathya Sai Health & Education Trust. He is presently the Chairman of the Trust. He was awarded Honorary Doctorate Degree in 2022. SSSSH has completed record 30, 000 surgeries on April 08 (Tuesday). In an exclusive interview with Central Chronicle Dr Sreenivas said, Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital, Nava Raipur has completed 11 years whereas, Palwal in Haryana and Kharghar in Maharashtra have completed 8 and 6 years respectively. We have Mother & Child Hospitals across the country also. With the first surgery way back in Raipur Centre on December 28, 2012; we have reached the MILESTONE of 30,000 surgeries. Our Slogan on this occasion is "Saving Lives, Changing Lives." He added, what we are doing in Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospitals is only CURATIVE which we will continue to do. But we are equally focussed on the areas of Prevention, Training, Research & Innovation.

Dr Sreenivas underlined, "Our guiding principle is: Reaching the Unreached, Serving the Unserved. Hence, we have to go a long way ahead". He called upon Sarkaar (The Government), Sansthaa (The Institutions) and Samaaj (The Society) to join in this initiative in fulfilling Swami's Mission. In the line of "VIKSIT BHARAT", we should speak of "VIKSIT CHHATTISGARH". I foresee Raipur as the CHILD HEART CAPITAL OF INDIA." reflected Dr. C. Sreenivas. He was optimistic that Naya Raipur has the potential to become the Manufacturing Hub in the field of Paediatric Cardiac Care. This will endorse the concept of "Atmanirbhar Bharat." Dr. C Sreenivas, Chairman of the Sri

Sathya Sai Health & Education Trust, advocates for a profound shift in the perception and function of hospitals. According to him, hospitals should transcend the mere role of treatment centers and embrace their potential as promoters of holistic wellness. In his view, when patients step into a hospital, they should not feel a sense of illness but rather be enveloped by faith and confidence in their journey towards healing and well-being. Dr. Sreenivas elaborated on the transformative impact of hospitals, particularly exemplified by the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital. This institution, operating across 12 states in India, stands out for its unique approach to medical care—a blend of compassionate service and unconditional love. Sreenivas emphasizes that investing in health-

care is tantamount to investing in the nation's prosperity. He perceives health not merely as the absence of disease but as a powerful catalyst for nurturing human values and societal goodness. At the heart of Sreenivas's vision lies the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Hospital in Naya Raipur, where children afflicted with congenital heart disease receive treatment free of charge. Sharing his views for the development of tribal dominated Bastar region, Dr Sreenivas mentioned that his team would love to serve in naxal-infested Bastar and they are continuously holding free of cost medical camps in remote Darbha region. Further they have plans to open a permanent health centre in this remote area. He added, hospitals should be the institution of transformation which SSSSH ideally follows and it is their ultimate motto. Further SSSSH which is continuously performing heart surgeries to correct the heart ailments of children believes that sutures and other medical proce-

dures required are mostly imported. Dr Sreenivas stressed upon the fact that SSSSH is planning to enter into the manufacturing of medical instruments which they can easily manufacture. Further skill developments of local talents is another area where SSSSH is playing a crucial development and already the tribal talents have started receiving skill development training and later are absorbed in SSSSH or elsewhere where they get opportunities. Another area where SSSSH is planning to explore is Artificial Intelligence (AI) technique in different areas of medical advancement. Dr. C Sreenivas's lifelong dedication to serving humanity through healthcare embodies the spirit of selflessness and compassion. His vision for hospitals as agents of holistic wellness and societal transformation serves as a guiding light towards a healthier, more prosperous future for India and beyond.



Dr. C Sreenivas

Swadeshi Khadi Mahotsav gets massive response



Exhibition to continue for limited days at Chhattisgarh Haat Pandari Bazaar

Raipur, Apr 10:

Heavy rush of people are coming daily to Swadeshi Khadi Mahotsav at Chhattisgarh Haat Pandari market in which the handicrafts of weavers from almost all the states of the country have been displayed. A unique collection of handloom and handicraft items is the center of special attraction for Raipurians. In view of the scorching heat, various products like Khadi kurtas of Meerut, Lucknow Chikan, Kashmiri sarees, Banarasi sarees, Hyderabad cotton sarees were displayed in the exhibition. A huge range of cotton clothes has been brought by the exhibition organizers, which is attracting a lot of city dwellers. 'Swadeshi Khadi' is the only place for tremendous purchase of summer cotton clothes. It is indeed a unique experience for the city dwellers to get products from all the states under one roof at very affordable prices. Credit and debit card facilities are available at all places in the exhibition. 10 percent discount on handloom items and special discount of up to 20 percent on handicraft items. Director, Anurag Mishra has appealed to the people of city to come in maximum numbers and take advantage of this discount. The timing of the exhibition is from 10:00 am to 10:00 pm. This exhibition will continue till April 15th.

BUS ACCIDENT

'Kin of deceased to get Rs 10 lakh compensation'

From pvt firm and job to one member

Raipur, Apr 10:

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Wednesday said the kin of the persons killed in the bus accident in Durg district will get financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh each from the private firm they were employed with and job.

Sai visited the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Raipur where the injured persons are undergoing treatment.

At least 12 people were killed and 14 injured - all



employees of a private firm - when the bus they were travelling in fell into a 'murum' soil mine pit in Durg district on Tuesday night, officials said.

The mangled bus was removed from the mine pit

on Wednesday afternoon.

Durg Collector Richa Prakash Choudhary had said the bus was carrying workers of Kediya Distilleries located in Kumhari area.

"As per my knowledge,

the company has decided to give Rs 10 lakh compensation to the kin of each deceased and a job. The company and the government have been taking care of the treatment of the injured," Sai told reporters.

The chief minister said he met the 10 injured persons admitted at AIIMS.

"I pray for their speedy recovery. Best possible medical care is being provided to them," he added.

Meanwhile, state Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma visited the accident site on Wednesday morning.

Add SP encourages children to stay away from drugs

Under the guidance of SSP Santosh Singh

Raipur, Apr 10:



A public awareness workshop was successfully organised at Sandipani Vidya Mandir, Daldal Seoni School with the aim of providing proper guidance and safe life to the children under the guidance of Additional Superintendent of Police, Mamta Dewangan.

Additional Superintendent of Police Mamta Dewangan, while explaining the objective of the 'Nijaat' programme, gave important information to the children about the adverse effects of drug addiction and also informed them ways to avoid drug addiction. Considering the po-

lice as their friends, she encouraged them to give information about criminal matters to the police and also gave important information about number 112. Social worker B Shailja, Director Saya Foundation, highlighted five important points to the children for the purpose of exam preparation: discipline, encouraged to become a good citizen by studying hard, diligently and honestly to achieve the

goal, by living a disciplined life by having goals, complete education, good thoughts and self-determination, staying away from drugs and crime. Police Bal Mitra, Roshana David, Udaan GS Society gave information about cyber crime. She gave information about the crimes committed through mobile and gave information about the correct utility of mobile. She gave special informa-

tion about good touch and bad touch.

ASI Meena Yadav told the children that whenever you feel unsafe in any way in school or college, then without any fear or doubt, call the police helpline 112 and inform them and keep your life safe. Head Constable Padma gave information about traffic rules and encouraged them to follow the rules compulsorily. Principal Arvinda Juluri, Sandipani Vidya Mandir provided her full support to the workshop. Prizes were given to the students who gave correct answers by Additional SP, Mamta Dewangan and social worker B Shailja. Poems and slogans were recited by the students against drug abuse.

Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research to get a boost: V-C

Approval obtained from AERB for operating accelerator for research

Bilaspur, Apr 10:

Under the capable leadership and skilled guidance of esteemed Vice-Chancellor, Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (Central University), has successfully obtained the highly anticipated approval from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), Mumbai, for the establishment of the 3 MV Pelletron Accelerator machine in the Department of Physics. This approval is a significant milestone for various interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research areas, aimed at



strengthening India's Accelerator based research.

On the occasion of receiving approval for research on the accelerator, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Chakrawal extended his congratulations to the members of the Physics Department and the entire university family. He expressed his pleasure, emphasizing that the establishment of an accelerator-based research facility

is a moment of pride for Indian universities. This single accelerator machine, sanctioned by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board, Mumbai, is the only one of its kind in India, capable of operating at 50 microampere high current.

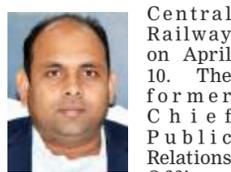
Prof. Chakrawal stated that this machine will provide research facilities to universities, colleges, and scientific research institutions in the central region.

Additionally, in the near future, practical services along with unique consultancy services for quality testing will also be provided to industries. He mentioned that Chhattisgarh is a mineral-rich region with minerals such as coal, iron ore, and bauxite, among others, and this facility will enable purity checks on minerals.

It is noteworthy that this approval has been obtained initially for the next three months, and upon successful completion, regular permission will be granted. With this approval, rapid progress is expected in research in various scientific fields such as Physics, Chemistry, Agriculture, Forensic Sciences, Pharmacy, Archaeology, Biotechnology, and Environmental Sciences.

Vikas Kumar, new CPRO of SECR

Raipur/Bilaspur, Apr 10: Vikas Kumar Kashyap has taken charge as the Chief Public Relations Officer of South East



Central Railway on April 10. The former Chief Public Relations Officer, Saket Ranjan, has been transferred as Senior Safety Officer in the Bilaspur Railway Division. Vikas Kumar Kashyap is an officer of the Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) batch of 2011. Previously, Kashyap was serving as the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager in the Bilaspur Railway Division. He has also served as the Divisional Commercial Manager in the Nagpur Division of South East Central Railway.

Steel prices up by Rs 5000 per tonne

Raipur, Apr 10:

With the elections, steel prices-which had been steadily down for the previous four to five months, now has started to rise. Just in the last five days, their costs have climbed by Rs 5,000 per tonne. According to iron market experts, the emergence of the speculative market and election funding are the primary causes of the sharp price increase. According to reports, SMS betting has taken over the iron market these days, and this game is the only reason why prices are growing. Rebar increased in price on Monday to Rs 55,000 per tonne in factories and Rs 59,000 per tonne in retail trade. According to industry insiders, given how the speculative market now controls the iron market, there are indications that prices may climb in the



near future. It is known that the rebar achieved its minimum level of Rs 50 thousand per tonne, which it had been at for four years, barely two weeks ago. The prices are now starting to rise once more. Anil Nachrani, President of the Chhattisgarh Sponge Iron Association, commented on the rise in steel prices, stating that prices had been declining for a while because of the market's weak demand. As demand

in the iron market has begun to grow, prices are reflecting this. In this approach, merchants in Raipur's iron market are receiving alerts instructing them to buy and sell wisely according to the iron market's current rising prices. As elections approach, there will be less money moving through the market. As a result, starting in the first week of April, there will be speculative trading in the iron market through SMS prices.

WHSG Bodli, ITI students take out voter awareness rally

Jagdalpur, Apr 10:

Under the SVEEP program being run with the aim of ensuring 100 percent voter participation in the voting under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, on Wednesday, the female members of the women self-help group (WSHG) in the remote area Bodli under Lohandiguda block of the district encouraged the voters to vote. Voter awareness rally was organized to create awareness. During this, along with the members of women self-help groups, health workers, Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi assistants and Mitanins and villagers took active participation in the rally.



Voter awareness rally was taken out in Nagarnar by the students of Government Industrial Training Institute (ITI) Nagarnar under Jagdalpur development block and through slogans, voters were encouraged to use their franchise in the Lok Sabha elections. On this occasion, the didis of the women's group of Bodli along with the Panchayat Secretary, health workers, Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi assistants,

Mitanins and villagers and training officers and employees of ITI Nagarnar along with the trained students, having full faith in the democratic system of the country. To strengthen the democratic system of India, an oath was administered to exercise one's right to vote in every election without discriminating on the basis of religion, caste, class, region and language and without being influenced by any inducement.

Court is important for development and upgradation: Prof Chakrawal

First meeting of the Court held after the establishment of the Central University

Bilaspur, Apr 10:

Under the proficient guidance and forward-thinking, positive, development-centric approach of the Vice-Chancellor of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (Central University), Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal, a meeting of the Court, the apex constitutional body of the Central University, convened after fifteen years since its transition from a State University to a Central University. Vice Chancellor Prof. Chakrawal remarked that this marks a historic occasion as we participate and bear witness to the inau-



gural meeting of the Court. Under the Chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor Professor Alok Kumar Chakrawal, the court convened in the conference hall of the Administrative Building on April 09, 2024, at 11 am. Five agenda items, including those related to the Executive Council, Finance Committee, and Annual Report, were ratified. Prof. Chakrawal emphasized that the universi-

ty's organs are functioning seamlessly, contributing to its advancement. He further said that in line with the ethos of the National Education Policy 2020, various initiatives have been launched for the holistic development of students, including the Swavalambi Chhattisgarh Yojna, Guru Ghasidas Swabhiman Thali (GST), Guru Ghasidas water provision Service (GPS), Healthy University Movement (HUM), NSS,

and NCC, receiving commendation from members. The meeting saw the endorsement of the establishment of new departments and centers within the university, along with the approval of several policies and guidelines. Proposals for grants from governmental and private entities under Corporate Social Responsibility were sanctioned. Additionally, proposals concerning the Bio Resource Development and Training Center were approved. External members joined the session. External members joining the session included Prof. Bhimaraya Metri, Director of IIM Nagpur, Prof. R. N. Kharwar from the Department of Botany,

BHU, Prof. P.C. Patanjali, Former Vice-Chancellor of VBS, New Delhi, Prof. Saket Kushwaha, Vice-Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh, Prof. Pratibha Goyal from SBS, PAU Ludhiana, Mr. Raj Kumar Patel, Alumni (B.Sc Forestry), Mr. Vedansh Mishra, Alumni, and Mr. Rajan Tiwari, Alumni (B.A. Hons Political Science), University Registrar, Prof. Manish Shrivastava was present as the Member Secretary Members of the Executive Council, Deans, and appointed members from various universities attended the meeting. Thirty-seven members participated in the court session, with thirty-two attending physically and five virtually.

Woman killed in bear attack

Korba, Apr 10: A 70-year-old woman was mauled to death by a bear in Chhattisgarh's Korba district on Wednesday, a forest official said. The incident took place around 6.30 am when the victim, Mangali Bai, a resident of Golabaha village, was attacked by the animal in Pasan forest range, Katghora Divisional Forest Officer Kumar Nishant said. "She had gone to collect mahua flowers when the bear suddenly came out of the bushes and attacked her. Some villagers present there later rushed the victim woman to a nearby health centre at Pasan and also alerted the forest personnel," he said. The woman succumbed to her injuries during treatment, the official said. The victim's family was given an immediate assistance of Rs 25,000, he said, adding that the remaining Rs 5.75 lakh will be handed over once the formalities are completed.

'Stop sacrifice of animals in the name of Alimighty'

Raipur, Apr 10:

Every living being, whether human or animal, has the fundamental right to live, and no one has the right to take its life in the name of any religious tradition or ritual. However, animal sacrifice is just a superstitious tradition in which any animal, be it a cow, buffalo, or goat, is sacrificed. It is hoped that by offering sacrifice, Allah/God will be pleased and all the desires of the sacrificer will be fulfilled. How can such cruelty, which even a compassionate human being cannot tolerate, be acceptable to the merciful gods? How can they accept such barbaric acts?, questions Dr Dinesh Mishra, President of Anddha Shraddha Nirmoolan Samiti.

Efforts have been made in some religious places in Chhattisgarh to stop this practice, but in some places, it still continues as part of tradition. Citizens should be aware of this. Direct observation regarding animal sacrifice reveals a gruesome scene where innocent animals, whether buffalo, cow, or



goat, are forcefully taken to supposedly holy places. These places are considered sacred and religious, but for these animals, they are neither holy nor religious. Instead of being sanctuaries, they become slaughterhouses where innocent animals are bathed, cleaned, and then slaugh-

tered. Sweets are offered, and in the next moment, their heads are severed with sharp weapons, and their blood is offered on altars or idol images. This barbaric act is justified by distributing the animal's body as a religious offering. It presents a horrifying scene of blood, screams, flesh, and struggling bodies.

Similarly, during Eid al-Adha, millions of innocent animals lose their lives every year. Every religion emphasizes that every living being, whether an animal, bird, or human, is a part of God and is equal in His eyes. Then why would God be pleased with killing his own creation? How can any part of the body be happy when one part is destroyed?

Due to inadequate spread of education in rural areas, awareness about health is lacking. Such people, when they fall ill, visit local quacks who attribute all diseases to black magic or evil eye and demand sacrifices of animals like chickens, goats, or alcohol to cure them. Mentally ill people are subjected to rituals like animal sacrifice, considering them possessed by ghosts or

jinns. In some areas, people conduct animal sacrifices to find hidden treasures or to become rich without working hard. Some time ago, two individuals lost their lives while attempting to obtain a treasure near Jashpur due to the lure of hidden wealth and performing sacrifices. Incidents of animal sacrifices for obtaining magical powers, like obtaining a twenty-nailed turtle near Jashpur, are also reported.

Efforts have been made to stop animal sacrifice in various famous religious places in South India, Kolkata, Kamakhya, and Varanasi, including in Chhattisgarh, by social activists, but in places like Bastar, Champa, Chandrapur, Turaturla, Raigarh, traditional practices still continue. In some states of South India like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, where there are anti-animal sacrifice laws, effective implementation is hindered due to lack of public awareness, mentioned Dr Dinesh Mishra, Chairman, President of Anddha Shraddha Nirmoolan Samiti.

Anurag Singh joins as Sr DCM of Bilaspur Div

Bilaspur, Apr 10: Anurag Kumar Singh has assumed the position of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of the Bilaspur Divisional

Railway Manager's Office on April 10, 2024. Singh is an officer of the Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) of the 2014 batch. Previously, Anurag Kumar Singh was working as the Senior Divisional Safety Officer in the division. After assuming the responsibility, he had informal discussions with the officials and employees of the Commercial Department to gather information about various activities and projects underway in the division. Newly appointed Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Singh, has also worked on various positions such as Divisional Commercial Manager and Divisional Operations Manager in the DRM offices of ARMS Shahdol and Nagpur divisions.



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SC stays trial against 'lottery king' Santiago Martin

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the proceedings before a special court in a money laundering case against 'lottery king' Santiago Martin, whose company donated the most to political parties through the controversial electoral bonds scheme.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan issued notice on a plea by Martin challenging the March 16 order of a special PMLA court in Kerala's Ernakulam dismissing his petition for keeping in abeyance the trial in the money laundering case registered by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Senior advocate Aditya Sondhi and advocate Rohini Musa, who appeared for Martin, said that the special court ought to have considered that the trial in the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) case can commence only after the conclusion of the trial in the predicate (main) case.



The ED usually registers a money laundering case on the basis of an FIR or probe conducted in corruption or tax evasion cases by relevant central agencies like the CBI and the Income Tax department which constitute the predicate or scheduled offence.

On March 16, the special court had dismissed Martin's application for keeping in abeyance the trial in the ED case until the trial in the matter involving the predicate offence registered by the CBI in an alleged lottery scam case has concluded. He has moved the apex

court against the PMLA court's order. Referring to the 2022 verdict in the Vijay Madanlal Chaudhary case, he said proceedings under PMLA cannot continue once there has been an acquittal or discharge in the predicate case.

The appeal, filed through advocate Rohini Musa said, "The present petition raises a significant question of law that in the event of the trial of the predicate case being transferred to the jurisdictional Court in seisin of the trial of the PMLA case, then in the sequence of trial, which case

should take precedence."

The plea said the CBI case is the alleged predicate case and it has been transferred/committed to the Special Court vide order dated September 28, 2023.

"The application for discharge in the predicate case was filed by the Petitioner and is pending consideration. That in the event of the petitioner being discharged in the predicate case, there will be no question of continuation of PMLA proceedings," it said.

Martin said, based on the 2022 judgement of the apex court in the case of

Vijay Madanlal Choudhary, an acquittal in the predicate case would automatically result in non-continuance of proceedings under the PMLA and therefore, in the sequence of trial, it ought to be the trial of the predicate case that needs to be given precedence.

He said the apex court, in judgments relevant to the case, has held that in the event of acquittal or discharge or quashing of the scheduled offence, the prosecution for the offence of money laundering will automatically be deemed to be non-est (cease to exist).

The trial of a predicate case can commence only after the conclusion of the trial in the predicate case, he said. "No prejudice will cause to the complainant by keeping further proceedings in abeyance till the disposal of the predicate case.

If further proceedings in this case are not kept in abeyance, it would cause serious prejudice, irreparable injury and harm to the Petitioner," Martin said in his plea.

In 2014, the CBI had

registered the case in the alleged lottery scam and filed chargesheet against Martin and others. Based on the chargesheet, the Enforcement Directorate filed a complaint against seven people including Martin for money laundering on June 11, 2018. On September 30, 2019, Martin filed a discharge application in the CBI case which is pending consideration.

He had moved a petition before the PMLA court on November 16, 2023, urging it to keep in abeyance all further proceedings in the money laundering matter till the disposal of the CBI case. The application was dismissed on March 16.

Coimbatore-based Future Gaming and Hotel Services, owned by Santiago Martin was the biggest buyer of electoral bonds worth Rs 1,368 crore.

The Supreme Court had in February struck down as "unconstitutional and manifestly arbitrary" the electoral bonds scheme, which provided blanket anonymity to individuals and corporate entities making donations to political parties.

Shruti and Muskan receive honours from Sania Mirza



Muskan Chandrakar from Raipur receiving honours from tennis icon Sania Mirza.

New Delhi/Raipur, Apr 10:

IIT JEE and NEET UG toppers Shruti Singh and Muskan Chandrakar from Raipur were among the few whose dreams came true, all thanks to Unacademy. Unacademy learner Shruti Singh had expressed her dream of gifting a Kedarnath trip to her family.

Another Unacademy learner Muskan Chandrakar aimed to buy a gold ring for her mother. Unacademy surprised these learners and their parents by gifting them these gifts on stage. The students who were not expecting this, were also honoured and motivated by the prominent personalities present at the event.

Unacademy, India's largest learning platform, hosted Aarambh 2024, the biggest event of the year for IIT JEE and NEET UG aspirants. The occasion celebrated the academic achievements of Unacademy's top performers, with distinguished personalities in attendance including Kartik Aaryan, popular Bollywood celebrity; Karan Johar, acclaimed filmmaker; Anupam Mittal, visionary business leader; and Sania Mirza, tennis icon. At Aarambh 2024, Unacademy welcomed its IIT JEE and NEET UG toppers, alongside top Unacademy Educators, to celebrate the success of Learners and fuel the aspirations of students nationwide.

EID SHOPPING



A Muslim woman shops at a market, ahead of Eid-al-Fitr, in Kolkata, Wednesday.

100 Madhubani paintings by women artists depict Ramayan on canvas

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI):

It is a belief among the people of Bihar's Mithila region that Raja Janak, the father of Sita, asked artists and citizens alike to paint the walls to celebrate his daughter's wedding to lord Ram.

"From the depiction of the wedding of the bride and the groom in bright, contrasting colours was born the art of Mithila paintings, or Madhubani paintings," said Manisha Jha, artist and founder of Madhubani Art Centre.

Hundred such colourful paintings, depicting stories and events from the Hindu epic of Ramayan, have been featured at an exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademi here.

Organised by Madhubani Art Centre and the Akademi, 'Mithila



An exhibition titled 'Mithila Ramayan' at Lalit Kala Akademi in New Delhi features 100 Madhubani paintings by award-winning women artists from Bihar's Mithila region.

Ramayan' features works by veteran and young women artists from Bihar and has taken Jha 20 years in the making.

"In Bihar, every bride is

Sita and every groom is Ram. In our wedding songs, we call our daughters Sita.

The exhibition shows the whole concept of Sita

and Ram being in the psyche of people. It is an in-depth documentation of a culture and how Ramayan is imbibed in that culture," Jha told.

* LITTLE JOYS OF RELIEF CAMPS

Over 180 babies born in shelters for displaced in Manipur

Imphal/Churachandpur, Apr 10 (PTI):

Cradling her newborn, Hatneu says she has named her baby, born in a shelter for the displaced in Manipur, Nghanthoibi which means shining light. Amid the trauma of 11 months of conflict, violence and continuing uncertainty, for nearly 200 displaced women like Hatneu, who is from the Kuki tribe, who have taken shelter in different relief camps across the state, the period is unforgettable for a different reason -- they welcomed their newborns. "When I held my twins in my arms, all my miseries melted away," a 26-year-old woman at a relief camp in Kakching district told PTI, requesting not to be identified or photographed. Her twin boys are now four months old. "When they grow up, I will tell them these stories." "This is an unforgettable period for me for a different reason and I want to remember it that way years later. I don't want any memory of this period to haunt my children when they grow up," she said.

When she landed at the relief camp, she knew it was going to be very tough. "Pregnancy is a period when we are suggested to take extra care of ourselves, not do any heavy-lifting, not take stress, and eat well. However, for me this period was all about survival." The hill state has witnessed sporadic, sometimes intense, ethnic clashes since May 3 last year when the majority Meitei community and Kukis, resulting in loss of over 200 lives. While Meiteis population is concentrated in Imphal city, Kukis have shifted



People displaced due to ethnic violence, at a relief camp in Manipur.

to the hills.

The violence displaced thousands of people, with officials saying more than 50,000 people are living in camps following the unrest. Lu Lamva Ngahjemkim, a Kuki-zo woman, was eight-month pregnant when the clashes broke out in May 2023. She and her family landed at a relief camp in Churachandpur, the epicentre of the violence then.

A month later, she gave birth to her daughter Christy who became the "silver lining in these grim times". "We were having dinner at home when the clashes broke out and everybody started rushing out... We had to hide in the nearby hills for several hours until the forces rescued us. For once, it felt our world was crashing down... bit by bit we had built our house and livelihood and within a day all was gone," she told PTI. Nine-month-old Christy has now begun crawling and is a centre of attention at the relief camp.

PTI visited six relief camps in the Meitei-dominated Imphal Valley and Kuki-zo dominated Churachandpur district. Among the women who are counting their blessings in form of their newborns at the relief camps are four who gave birth to twins. Hatneu, who has found shelter at a different camp in Churachandpur, used to run a bamboo goods shop in Imphal valley earlier. She is in an alien set up, but is loving her motherhood.

"I am a Kuki but I have always lived in the Valley only. Now we were forced to relocate here due to circumstances. Last month I gave birth to my baby at a nearby health facility. I have named my baby girl -- Nghanthoibi which means shining light," she said. Hatneu said there had been a dedicated camp set up for pregnant women in Imphal valley saw the birth of 168 babies. The facility, which

was opened on May 21 last year, hosted 164 women, who were brought there from different relief camps around the state. The camp was wound up in February when no pregnant women were found in the relief camps in the valley.

"Earlier, pregnant women were staying in the same camps as other women and it was felt they will not get the adequate space and care needed during the period. So a dedicated camp was set up...where 168 children were born between May 2023 till February this year," said Manipur BJP President Sharda Devi who spearheaded the initiative. "We allowed one person to stay with each pregnant or lactating woman to serve as an attendant while the rest of the family members stayed in other camps," she added.

As Manipur goes through a period of uncertainty, there is an anti-poll sentiment in the state among the displaced. But the elections for the two Lok Sabha seats in Manipur has been announced alongside the general elections. They will be held in Manipur in two phases on April 19 and 26. While Inner Manipur and some segments of Outer Manipur will vote in the first phase on April 19, the remaining segments of Outer Manipur will vote in Phase 2 on April 26. Ngahjemkim says she wants to remember this period for the gift she got in her baby. "Despite all odds, my daughter was born here and is healthy today. At a time when I thought none of us would survive... this seems like a miracle," Ngahjemkim says.

At polling booths

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI):

The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a plea seeking a breathalyser test of voters in queue at every polling booth during the elections. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta refused to interfere with the Andhra Pradesh High Court order dismissing the petition and said, "It is more of a publicity interest

litigation".

Counsel appearing for the Andhra Pradesh unit of the Janavahini Party said since the model code of conduct is imposed, no voter should be allowed to vote under the influence of alcohol. The bench said, "What is this? It is for publicity. On polling day it is a dry day and police personnel are deployed everywhere. We will not entertain this. Dismissed." The Andhra Pradesh unit of the Janavahini Party has initially moved the high

court, which had dismissed the plea on February 28. The high court has said the petitioner has failed to draw its attention to any specific legal provision which would make it obligatory for the Election Commission of India, to ensure that every person who enters a polling booth is subjected to a breathalyser test before a person is permitted to cast his/her vote. The political party has challenged the inaction on the part of the Election Commission on its repre-

sentation dated January 6 seeking the arrangement of a breathing analyser at the entry point of the queue being maintained at every polling booth and allowing only those voters to exercise their voting right, who are uninfluenced by alcohol. It has sought direction to the poll panel to arrange a breathing analyser at the entry point of queues at polling booths and allow only those voters to exercise their voting right, who are uninfluenced by alcohol.

AFFIDAVIT

I Mrs. Sukriti Dubey, age 33 yrs, W/o Mr. Rahul Dubey, R/o G. No. C-170 NTPC, Seepat, Post Ujjwal Nagar, Thana and Tehsil Seepat, District Bilaspur (C.G.), do hereby make the following statements:

- I got married to Mr. Rahul Dubey R/o G. No. C-170, NTPC, Seepat, Post Ujjwal Nagar, Thana and Tehsil Seepat, District Bilaspur, (C.G.) on 15/12/2018.
- Prior to my marriage my name was Sukriti D/o Mr. Hariganga Prasad, R/o Azamgarh, Post Mangrura, Thana Gantighir and Tehsil Mangrura and District Azamgarh (U.P.). The same name is registered in all my educational records and government offices.
- That after marriage with my husband Mr. Rahul Dubey, my name has now got changed to Mrs. Sukriti Dubey, W/o Mr. Rahul Dubey.
- So from now onwards I should be known and identified as Mrs. Sukriti Dubey and in all my government/semi-government/non-government documents and in bank, my name should be registered as Mrs. Sukriti Dubey.
- I am submitting this affidavit in support of change in my surname and name/ address.

CERTIFY

I Mrs. Sukriti Dubey, W/o Mr. Rahul Dubey, do hereby certify that in the above affidavit the statements made from Sl. No. 1-5 are true to the best of my knowledge and to which I have signed in front of Notary public on date 02/04/2024, place-Seepat.

DEPONENT

Canara Bank

Regional Office: Ramapatt, 3rd Floor, Vyapar Vihar Bilaspur (C.G.) 495001, Mob.- 9516009413 Email: recrobsp@canarabank.com

POSSESSION NOTICE [Appendix IV under the Act-Rule-8(1)]

Whereas, the under signed being the Authorised officer of the Canara Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued a Demand Notice was issued on the dated in the given following table calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days of receipt of said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property, described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the said Act on the dates mentioned against the account. The Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the CANARA BANK (Below mentioned Branches) for the amount and interest mentioned thereon.

The Borrowers / Guarantors / Mortgagee's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (3) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

| S. No. | Borrower/Guarantor Branch Name | Detail of Possessed Property | Demand Notice Amount | Demand Notice Date |
|--------|---|--|---|--|
| 1. | Mr Riyaz Ali S/o, Shri Niyamat Ali Branch: Champa (CG) | EMT of Residential House situated at House No LIG-6/E (2nd Floor) in 192 Nos (S+3), Khaira No 296/1, Doot Dayal Awasth Yojana Kharmora within the limits of Korba, Tahsil & District-Korba, Chattisgarh. Area: 477 Sq Ft (44.33 Sq Mt) Boundary: North: LIG-06/F, South: LIG-05/F, East: Road, West: LIG-05/G. | ₹ 6,63,133.75 with interest and applicable charges thereon. | 31.01.2024 Possession Notice Date: 05.04.2024 |
| 2. | Sushila Swarnakar Branch: Rajkishor Nagar Bilaspur (CG) | All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Land and Building Kh. No. 3750/2, PH. No. 41, RNM, D.D. upnagar, Janjgir, Distt- Janjgir-Champa, Chhattisgarh-495668. Boundary: North- House of Ramaramesh, South- Land of Dayaram, East- Road, West-Road. | ₹ 3,05,861.99 with interest and applicable charges thereon. | 31.01.2024 Possession Notice Date: 09.04.2024 |

Date: 10.04.2024 Place: Bilaspur (CG) Authorized Officer, Canara Bank

Baghel and Pandey come face-to-face during election campaigning

Khairagarh, Apr 10:

Ex-M Bupesh Baghel of state and Santosh Pandey of BJP, who are fielded against each other for Lok Sabha Election 2024, came face-to-face in a campaigning meeting here in the region. As per information, both the candidates of Congress and BJP faced each other face-to-face while on campaigning in village Biranpur Kala in Gandai area of Khairagarh assembly.

Congress candidate Mr. Baghel was going to the village with the workers to hold a meeting, while BJP candidate Mr. Pandey was



returning after addressing a street meeting in the village. While the workers of both the parties were enthusiastically shouting slogans in their respective favours when both the candidates came face to face, but the rivals themselves

smiled, shook hands and did courtesy etiquette. It is worth noting that during elections, this warm meeting of the two candidates, who usually have an aggressive and sharp attitude against each other, has become a topic of discussion.

SP line attaches two police personnel on indiscipline

Khairagarh, Apr 10:

SP Trilok Bansal has attached the line to two police personnel an ASI and a head constable on indiscipline, in a bid to maintain departmental strictness and maintaining discipline among the subordinate police personnel. The SP has clearly said that no police personnel will be spared for complaints and indiscipline and will also be given rewards to encourage the police personnel doing good work. Police personnel who render selfless service to the general public will be given appreciation letters and incentives from time to time, he said.

As per information, the SP had received a com-

plaint from the general public about continuous misconduct by Assistant Sub Inspector Suresh Karunik and Head Constable Siyaram Dhruve of Khairagarh police station, on which the SP took strict action and ordered both of them to be immediately attached to the Khairagarh Line Protected Centre. After the action taken by the SP, there is fear among the corrupt subordinate employees of the department, after this it can be expected that the system of police administration will be even better for the common people in the district and the distance between the police and the common people will reduce.

W&CD crusading to stop child marriage

Korba, Apr 10:

Women and Child Development Department is actively crusading to stop child marriage, as many auspicious dates are falling ahead to solemnise weddings in rural Chhattisgarh. As Ram Navami is falling on 17 April and Akshaya Tritiya on 10 May, these dates call for marriages, therefore the Department is actively persuading the regions to stop child marriages. As per information, tribes and special backward tribes like Pandas, Birhors, Pahari Korwa etc. live in abundance in rural areas and due to lack of education, there is a possibility of ill

effects of child marriage like malnutrition, birth of underweight babies, anemia etc. in women.

Village level child protection committee is constituted in every village for the care and protection of children, whose Sarpanch is the President and Village Secretary (Member Secretary), Anganwadi workers, Mitans and other distinguished citizens, public representatives etc. are its members. Also, if information is received about child marriage in the district, information can be given to the Supervisor, Child Development Project Officer, District Child Protection Unit, Women

and Child Development Department, Police Station Incharge/Outpost Incharge, emergency number 112 or child helpline number 1098.

The Women and Child Development Department has appealed to all the distinguished citizens, community leaders, religious service providers, tent houses, DJ bands, printing press operators and public representatives who conduct religious and marital rituals, not to allow marriages without age certificate, so that the evil practice like child marriage can be ended in the district and care and protection of children can be ensured without fail.

Voters to decide fate as campaigning in silent mode

Rajim, Apr 10:

Though the Election Commission has announced the announcement of the prestigious Lok Sabha elections which will decide the future of the country, campaigning is on a silent mode in the region with meagre percentage of campaigning and advertisement both. Among the 11 Lok Sabha seats of Chhattisgarh, Mahasamund Lok Sabha constituency has its own identity and importance, because this Lok Sabha constituency has given ministers in the cabinet many times.

Mahasamund Lok Sabha constituency was formed in 1952 and since then, MPs elected from political parties like BJP, Congress, Janata Dal etc.



have reached the central berth. In the 2009 general elections, BJP's Chandulal Sahu has set a record of winning the elections twice consecutively and after that, Chunnilal Sahu of BJP won, by defeating senior Congress leader Dhanendra Sahu. But this time BJP did not play the Sahu card but gave a chance to the Agariya community by giving tick-

et to Roopkumari Choudhary.

Congress has given tickets to Motilal Sahu, Dhanendra Sahu and now Tamradhwaj Sahu and sent them directly from Durg to Mahasamund Lok Sabha constituency. Here the election dates are coming closer and only 16 days are left for counting; however in such a situation, both these national parties have neither invested their strength in publicity. There is no stringent campaigning and neither rallies nor poster banners are seen. Even the Congress office has not yet opened in the headquarters Rajim and more or less, the same situation is being seen with BJP also.

BJP office has been opened at a distance of 400 yards from Pandit

Sunderlal Sharma Chowk towards Gariaband Road and this office appeared to be open on the same day it was inaugurated, and since then it has been continuously closed. However in spite of all the voters will seal the fate of the candidates in fray to glory or loss. The Election Commission has announced to conduct voting in all 11 Lok Sabha seats of Chhattisgarh in three phases. Elections will be held on one seat on April 19, three seats on April 26 and seven seats on May 7. Voting will be held on Mahasamund, Rajnandgaon and Kanker Lok Sabha seats on April 26, while voting will be held in Bastar on 19 April, Surguja, Raigarh, Janjgir Champa, Korba, Bilaspur, Raipur and Durg on 7 May.

Home voting initiative empowers elderly and disabled

Collector leads efforts, encourages voter participation**Bijapur, Apr 10:**

In compliance with the directives of the Election Commission of India, home voting arrangements were made for voters aged 85 and above, as well as for disabled individuals. A palpable sense of enthusiasm pervaded as elderly and disabled voters exercised their democratic right from the comfort of their homes.

Collector and District Election Officer, Anurag Pandey, personally oversaw the home voting process in Bhairamgarh and Nelsnar, emphasizing the significance of each vote in bolstering democracy. Encouraging the voters,



Pandey underscored the importance of their participation and urged all constituents to prioritize voting on April 19.

Among those who exercised their franchise at home was 96-year-old Dayawati Injapujari of Bijapur, assisted by her granddaughter. Expressing satisfaction at fulfilling her

civic duty, Injapujari urged fellow citizens to cast their votes on polling day, lauding the home voting system for facilitating her participation in the electoral process.

Meanwhile, disabled siblings Jairam Sonwani and Anjali Sonwani of Nelsnar, Bhairamgarh block, echoed sentiments of

joy and gratitude as they exercised their franchise at home. They seized the opportunity to convey a message of voter awareness and civic responsibility to the community.

In total, 24 senior citizens and disabled voters availed themselves of the home voting option in the district. Six polling teams were deployed to ensure the smooth conduct of the voting process. Following the completion of home voting, Collector Anurag Pandey, along with Assistant Returning Officer Jageshwar Kaushal, Nodal Officer Deputy Collector Uttam Singh Panchari, and SDM Tehsildars, visited the locations to encourage and commend the voters for their participation in shaping democracy.

Voter awareness program continues under SVEEP

**Korba, Apr 10:**

Under the direction of Collector and District Election Officer Ajit Vasant and the guidance of Sweep Nodal Officer Sambit Mishra, during the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, all the students of schools and colleges including youth, elderly, women and men from urban and rural areas are being made aware about voting.

The voters are being made aware through various pro-

grams like street plays, rallies, slogan-writing, essays, speeches, mehndi competition, poster making etc. In this series, here in the region, the women of self-help groups of village Kesla and Dhelwadhi visited their respective villages on foot and made the voters aware and appealed to the voters to vote on polling day 07 May, explaining the importance of voting, and to vote consciously in building democracy.

Manokamana Jyoti Kalash installed in all prominent Devi temples

Rajim, Apr 10:

The entire region is immersed in devotion, with the coming of Chaitra Navratri, and Manokamana Jyoti Kalash were lit in Abhijeet Muhurta, in all the prominent goddess temples of the region. Apart from the Devi temples, Manokamna Jyoti Kalash has also been made popular at the places where Janwara is sown in homes, bringing in chants of devotion and bakti alike. The devotees are engaged in spiritual practice as per their own, and some have given up food for 9 days and some have given up Charan Paduka too.

Maa Mahamaya Sheetal Mata Managing Committee Chairman Lileshwar Yadu, Patron



Mahesh Yadav, Lal Sahu, Ashok Srivastava, Secretary Fagu Ram Nishad, Valmiki Dhiwar, Treasurer Raju Sahu, Vice President Ram Narayan Sahu, Chief Advisor Bhavani Shankar Sahu, Pawan Soni, Ashok Sharma, Govardhan Soni,

Ramkumar Sahu, Sadhu Nishad, Lakhan Lal Mahobia, Bhole Sahu, Rakesh Gupta informed that 84 kalash have been lit in Adishakti Maa Mahamaya Temple, 4, 111 Jyoti Kalash have been lit in the ancient Shitala temple, 34 in the Satti temple

and one Jyoti Kalash in the Chandi temple.

Nagar Panchayat President Rekha Sonkar, Councilor Arvind Yadu, Uttam Nishad, along with a large number of people including Jitu Soni, Ramesh Sahu, Lakhan Lal Nirmalkar, Bharat Sen,

Raju Nishad, Narayan Dhiwar, Chovaram Sahu were present as Pandit Vijay Sharma completed the holy rituals. On the first day, worship was done in the name of Mother Shailputri and Mata Seva songs were being presented by the Sevak Dal since evening. Similarly, in the nearby villages too, an atmosphere of devotion along with installation of Jyot Jwara is being seen.

Maa Mahamaya, present since ancient times

Adi Shakti Devi Maa Mahamaya has been residing here since ancient times and it is said that earlier there were trees and forest like environment at this place and people were afraid to come here. The form of Goddess

Mahamaya was extremely formidable and oriented towards the east and ordinary people could not see this statue, then with the advice of sages and saints, the form of the statue was changed and it was made to face west from east and henceforth the form of the mother appears to be very charming.

Goddess Kali has appeared on the right side of Mother Mahamaya in the sanctum sanctorum itself and Mavali Mata and Danteshwari Devi are present on the parikrama path. According to information, first the temple was built with straw and later a grand temple was built and people of the region said that the idol of the Mother Goddess has been present here since ancient times.

Anganwadis lack basic facilities: Children suffer in scorching heat

Corruption plagues water provision in Anganwadis**Mainpur, Mar 10:**

In the tribal development block of Mainpur and Devbhog area in Gariaband district, thousands of newly born children aged up to 5 years are facing significant challenges due to the lack of facilities in Anganwadi centers operated by the Women and Child Development Department. Especially during the scorching summer days, these children are enduring hardships, evident in their visible discomfort and perspiration. The severe shortage of basic amenities within Anganwadi centers exacerbates their plight, highlighting the urgent need for intervention.

As per data provided by the Women and Child Development Department, the Mainpur development block area of Gariaband district hosts a total of 342 functioning Anganwadi centers. Similarly, the

**Wash basin in anaganbadi with no water connection.**

Devbhog development block area accommodates 220 Anganwadi centers. Within these centers, over 23 thousand children are enrolled. Tragically, as of November 2023, 2467 children fall into the category of malnutrition, shedding light on the pressing issue of child welfare in the region.

Despite the government's allocation of substantial funds, amounting to lakhs of crores of rupees, for the construction of Anganwadi buildings in the Mainpur and Devbhog development block areas, critical deficiencies persist. Shockingly, 78 Anganwadi buildings have

remained incomplete for four to five years, forcing 187 centers to operate out of inadequate private structures such as community buildings or rented premises. Furthermore, only 82 Anganwadi centers have access to electricity, with a mere 64 having the luxury of fans to alleviate the oppressive heat. As temperatures soar, over 23 thousand children in these areas endure the scorching conditions, exacerbated by the absence of basic amenities. Most alarmingly, 235 Anganwadi centers lack even the most basic toilet facilities, compounding the challenges faced by the vulnerable children in

**Water connection lying unattended.**

Mainpur and Devbhog development block areas.

In addition, the absence of running water in 90 percent of Anganwadis highlights the widespread mismanagement and indifference of responsible authorities. This negligence has drawn criticism, especially from the tribal communities, as children continue to suffer amidst soaring temperatures.

The sorry state of Anganwadi buildings poses significant risks to the lives of children, with dilapidated structures threatening collapse. Despite repeated warnings from villagers and local authorities, little action

has been taken, raising concerns of potential disasters.

Children deprived of drinking water

The implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission scheme, aimed at providing clean drinking water to children in Anganwadi centers, has turned into a tale of corruption and neglect in the Mainpur and Devbhog areas of Gariaband district. Despite millions of rupees spent by the Public Health Engineering (PHE) department, the reality is grim. Out of the 148 Anganwadi centers in Mainpur and 84 in Devbhog, only a handful

What do the officers say?

Ashok Pandey, the District Program Officer of the Women and Child Development Department, stated that proposals have already been made and sent to provide electricity, fans, and other facilities in Anganwadi centers in Mainpur and Devbhog areas. He mentioned that only 64 Anganwadi centers in Mainpur and Devbhog development block areas currently have fan facilities.

have received functioning water systems, leaving hundreds parched.

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission Scheme, PHE entrusted the task to a private firm for water provision in schools and Anganwadis. However, lack of accountability has led to a state of disrepair. Taps are broken, tanks lie empty, and pipes are damaged, rendering the water systems useless.

From Mainpur Bazar Chowk to remote villages like Karkalot and Budhupara, the situation remains dire. Over 130 gov-

What does President of Sarpanch Sangh say?

Baldev Raj Thakur, the District President of Gariaband Sarpanch Sangh, highlighted the financial discrepancies faced by Panchayats. Despite undertaking the task of providing running water in numerous Anganwadis, they have yet to receive any funds, even though the work was commissioned by the PHE department more than a year and a half ago.

ernment buildings across 30 Panchayats await water, while more than 100 connections suffer from broken infrastructure. Lack of electricity exacerbates the problem, hindering the supply of water even further.

We did not do the work, why repair it: Sarpanch

Under the water provision scheme, each connection for schools received a sanctioned amount of Rs 1.20 lakh, while Rs 1.5 lakh was allocated for Anganwadis. The responsibility for executing the

work was entrusted to the Public Health Engineering department. The scheme was designed to allocate 85 percent of the expenditure from the Jaljeevan Mission funds, with the remaining 15 percent sourced from the 15th finance item received by the Panchayats.

However, it has emerged that a significant portion of the work was subcontracted to agencies, with funds withdrawn accordingly. This has prompted many Sarpanches to question the logic of taking responsibility for repairs when they were not directly involved in the construction process.

Furthermore, it has been revealed that numerous Gram Panchayats undertook the water provision work but have yet to receive the promised funds. Despite more than a year passing since project completion, these Panchayats continue to chase the elusive reimbursement, further exacerbating their financial woes and highlighting the bureaucratic hurdles hindering effective implementation of essential projects.

India benefiting from growing interest from multinationals: UN report

United Nations, Apr 10 (PTI):

India is benefiting from growing interest from multinationals, which see it as an alternative manufacturing base in the context of developed economies' supply chain diversification strategies, a flagship report by the UN has said, underlining that investment in the country remains strong.

The '2024 Financing for Sustainable Development Report: Financing for Development at a Crossroads (FSDR 2024)'

launched Tuesday said that urgent steps are needed to mobilise financing at scale to close the development financing gap, now estimated at 4.2 trillion dollars annually, up from 2.5 trillion dollars before the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining that investment in the country remains strong.

Meanwhile, rising geopolitical tensions, climate disasters and a global cost-of-living crisis have hit billions of people, battering progress on healthcare, education, and other development

targets. The report said that investment is expected to remain subdued globally. "In contrast, investment in South Asia, particularly in India, remains strong. India is benefiting from growing interest from multinationals, which see the country as an alternative manufacturing base in the context of developed economies' supply chain diversification strategies," it said, in an apparent reference to China.

The report noted that prospects in most developing countries are also

weak due to softer external demand, volatile commodity prices, high borrowing costs and fiscal consolidation pressures. "High levels of debt amid subdued growth continue to constrain fiscal space, making it harder for governments to borrow and invest. Conflicts hamper investment in parts of Africa and Western Asia," it said.

It added that the past 20 years have been marked by several large crises alongside major shifts in the geopolitical and economic landscape.

Trans children are being let down by toxic debate and lack of evidence

● A major UK report says

London, Apr 10 (AP):

Children who question their gender identity are being let down by lack of evidence and a toxic political debate, according to a report Wednesday from a senior doctor in England. Dr. Hilary Cass said there is "no good evidence on the long-term outcomes of interventions to manage gender-related distress," and young people have been caught up in a "stormy social discourse" about the issue.

"Ideology on all sides has directed care, rather than care being directed by normal principles of pediatrics and mental health," said Cass, a retired clinical pediatrician appointed to lead a review of gender services for young people by the state-funded National

Health Service. On April 1 doctors in England's public health system stopped prescribing puberty-blocking hormones to children and young people with gender dysphoria. The decision came after recommendations in Cass' earlier interim report, which said there is not enough evidence about the potential benefits and harms of the blockers, which help prevent people from developing physical features not in line with their gender identity, such as beards or breasts. The decision — which is not an outright ban on puberty blockers — was criticized by some transgender campaigners and is being closely watched in the United States. Transgender medical care for minors is endorsed by major U.S. medical associations, but several Republican-led states have banned puberty blockers and other treatment for

transgender youth — and, in some cases, adults.

Cass' report, which runs to almost 400 pages, said that "for most young people, a medical pathway" is not the best way to deal with gender-related issues. Cass said young people questioning their gender identity should be given "a holistic assessment" including screening for neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism, and a mental health assessment. She urged "extreme caution" about giving children or teens masculinizing or feminizing hormones — testosterone or estrogen — to people under 18.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak welcomed the review's recommendation of caution. "We simply do not know the long-term impacts of medical treatment or social transitioning on them, and we should therefore exercise extreme caution," he said.

Increasing deposits in Pak's central bank among Saudi Arabia's \$5bn plan

Islamabad, Apr 10 (PTI):

Days after Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, the two countries have agreed to increase Saudi deposits in the Central Bank of Pakistan from USD 3 billion to USD 5 billion, a media report said on Wednesday.

Sharif was on an official visit to Saudi Arabia from April 6 to 8 and a joint statement after the conclusion of his visit, among other issues, said that emphasis was placed on the Gulf Kingdom's supportive role in Pakistan's cash-strapped economy and the mutual desire to strengthen trade and investment ties.

"Both parties affirmed their commitment to expediting the first wave of investment package worth USD 5 billion

which was discussed previously," the statement read. The proposed Saudi investments come when Pakistan is facing a severe economic crisis, with high inflation rates and a shortage of foreign currency.

Incidentally, the quantum of the proposed increase in deposits by Saudi Arabia in the Central Bank of Pakistan is equal to or more than the USD 3 billion standby arrangement approved by the International Monetary Fund in July last year.

Apart from increasing the Saudi deposits in Pakistan's central bank, "the agreements also included injecting investments into a new oil refinery and copper mines," The News International said, quoting a post by Mohammad Al-Qahtani, CEO of Saudi Arabia Holding Company.

Water levels rise and homes flood in Russia

● After a dam bursts near the Kazakhstan border

Moscow, Apr 10 (AP):

Russian officials scrambled to help homeowners displaced by floods as water levels rose in the Ural River, authorities said Wednesday. Floods in the Orenburg region near Russia's border with Kazakhstan sparked the evacuation of thousands of people following the collapse of a dam on Saturday. Russia's government has declared the situation a federal emergency.

Although President Vladimir Putin is frequently shown on Russian state television meeting officials and travelling across the country, the Kremlin said he is not yet planning to visit the flood-hit region. The river's water level in the city of Orenburg was above 10 metres (almost 33 feet) Wednesday, state news

agency Ria Novosti reported, citing the regional governor. Photos shared by Russian news outlets showed roads covered in water, submerged fields and partially submerged houses. The water was approaching high-rise buildings, Ria Novosti said, and more than 300 homes were flooded overnight, according to state news agency Tass.

People in the city of Orsk gathered in a rare protest Monday, calling for compensation after their homes were damaged. Protests are unusual in Russia, where authorities have consistently cracked down on any form of dissent following Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Hundreds of people gathered in front of the administrative building in Orsk on Monday, and videos posted on Russian social media showed people chanting "Putin, help us!" and "Shame!"

Other videos on social media showed angry Russians refusing to leave the areas near their homes because they said thieves were looting abandoned houses with boats. The floods prompted the Orsk oil refinery to suspend operations, Interfax said. The floods had forced over 4,000 people, including 885 children, to evacuate in the Orenburg region, the regional government said Sunday. Tass said Monday that around 10,000 homes, including some 7,000 in Orsk, were flooded.

Following the protest, Tass reported that the governor of the Orenburg region, Denis Pasler, promised compensation payments to those affected, including 10,000 rubles (\$108) a month for six months to people forced out of their homes by the floods. The total damage from the floods in the region is estimated at about 21 billion rubles (\$227 million), the regional government said Sunday.

Sri Lanka to set up hotline to track visa-abusing Russians and Ukrainians

Colombo, Apr 10 (PTI):

Sri Lanka's Parliament has stressed the need to track down Russian and Ukrainian tourists who are carrying out businesses in the country's southern resorts by abusing their tourist entry visas.

The Committee on Public Accounts (COPA) on Tuesday asked the Department of Immigration and Emigration to track them down for necessary action.

The parliamentarians had pointed out that both nationalities, and in certain cases the Israeli tourists, were doing business illegally, depriving the local communities of opportunities.

The officials told COPA that their locations were hard to track down and they welcomed information from the locals. It was then decided to set up a hotline for the purpose so that relevant officials could be promptly activated to take action.

In March, immigration authorities said the extended visas of Russian and Ukrainian tourists to stay in Sri Lanka due to the Ukrainian war would no longer be extended. Immigration authorities said there had been complaints of abuse of tourist visas by Russians and Ukrainians running illegal businesses, employing foreigners, and deploying payment methods for services by passing local systems.

ELECTION IN SEOUL



National Election Commission officials sort out ballots for counting at the parliamentary election in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, April 10.

UML's Ghimire elected Nepal's National Assembly vice chair

Kathmandu, Apr 10 (PTI):

Bimala Ghimire from the ruling alliance CPN (UML) was elected as the vice chair of the National Assembly on Wednesday with a clear majority. Out of the total 55 votes polled, Ghimire secured 39 votes as she defeated Nepali Congress candidate Bishnu Devi Pudasaini, who received 16 votes.

National Assembly chairman Narayan Prasad Dahal declared Ghimire as elected. Ghimire was supported by the CPN (Maoist Centre), the CPN (Unified Socialist) and the Janata Samajbadi Party. The election was necessitated after last month's changes in

the ruling dispensation.

Prime Minister Pushpakamal Dahal 'Prachanda' of the CPN (Maoist Centre) dumped the Nepali Congress and forged a new alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist - CPN-UML) — the second-biggest party — led by former premier KP Sharma Oli on March 4. On March 6, Prachanda appointed four ministers from his party, seven from the CPN-UML, three from the Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP) and two from the CPN (Unified Socialist). The fifth party in the coalition is the Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP).

SHARING EID GREETING



Muslim women share Eid greeting after performing an Eid al-Fitr prayer, marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, at historical Badshahi mosque in Lahore, Pakistan, Wednesday, April, 10.

Sri Lankan President Wickremesinghe expected to contest presidential poll under new symbol

Colombo, Apr 10 (PTI): Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe is expected to contest the presidential election later this year under a new symbol, according to his top aide. Wickremesinghe, 75, will represent several parties as a national candidate, Senior Presidential Advisor and UNP senior leader Ashu Marasinghe told reporters on Tuesday. The veteran politician has led the United National Party (UNP) since 1994. He has served as prime minister on five occasions, leading six governments. In May 2022, Wickremesinghe replaced Mahinda Rajapaksa as prime minister following anti-government protests over the unprecedented economic crisis in the island nation. Two months later, he replaced Gotabaya Rajapaksa as the President to serve the balance term until the end of 2024.

EU lawmakers to decide on migration law overhaul

● Hoping to deprive the far-right of votes

Brussels, Apr 10 (AP):

Lawmakers are to vote later Wednesday on a major revamp of the European Union's migration laws, aiming to end years of division over how to manage the entry of thousands of people without authorization and deprive the far-right of a vote-winning campaign issue ahead of June elections.

Members of the European Parliament will vote on 10 reform topics that make up the Pact on Migration and Asylum. The regulations and policies lay out who should take responsibility for migrants when they arrive and whether other EU member states

should be obliged to help. The plan was drawn up after 1.3 million people, mostly those fleeing war in Syria and Iraq, sought refuge in Europe in 2015. The 27-nation bloc's asylum system collapsed, reception centers were overwhelmed in Greece and Italy, and countries further north built barriers to stop people entering.

But few say they're happy with the new policy response to one of Europe's biggest political crises, and even the lawmakers who drafted parts of the new regulations are not willing to support the entire reform package.

"I'm not going to open a bottle of champagne after this," Dutch lawmaker Sophie in't Veld, who drew up the assembly's position on migrant reception conditions,

told reporters on the eve of the plenary session in Brussels. She plans to abstain from some of the 10 votes. In't Veld described the pact as "the bare minimum" in terms of a policy response, but she does not want to torpedo it by voting against. "We will not have another opportunity to come to an agreement," she said.

Swedish parliamentarian Malin Bjork, who worked on refugee resettlement, said that the pact does not respond to "any of the questions it was set to solve." She said the reform package "undermines the individual right to seek asylum" in Europe because it would build on plans that some EU countries already have to process migrants abroad. Italy has concluded one such deal with Albania.



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Sync for Security

Pioneering Joint Military Integration

The inaugural 'Parivartan Chintan,' a seminal tri-service conference convened in New Delhi, marks a significant stride towards realizing the dual objectives of jointness and integration within the armed forces. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Anil Chauhan, in his address, underscored the imperative of fostering a cohesive 'joint culture' among the forces, aimed at synthesizing the strengths of the army, navy, and air force while preserving their distinctive identities. He outlined sweeping reforms geared towards augmenting the combat capabilities and interoperability of the services. The cornerstone of the government's vision for rendering the armed forces 'future-ready' lies in jointness and integration. Yet, the rollout of theatre commands—comprehensive operational frameworks envisaging unified action by all three branches under a single military commander—has encountered significant delays. A primary obstacle to this transformative defense reform stems from apprehensions within the navy and air force, particularly regarding potential dominance by the army within these commands. Striking a delicate balance between establishing joint structures and safeguarding the individual ethos of each service remains a formidable challenge for both policymakers and military leadership. It is envisaged that the deliberations held during the conference will facilitate the delineation of a roadmap for seamless integration, mindful of the turf battles impeding progress. Situated between two adversarial neighbors, India cannot afford complacency in modernization, adaptation, and collaboration. The warfare paradigm of the 21st century pivots on maximizing efficiency and minimizing resource wastage. Swift consensus-building on jointness and integration is paramount to expediting the implementation of theaterization—an imperative for enhancing India's combat readiness and fortifying its borders against all forms of military incursions. The imperative of jointness and integration in India's defense architecture cannot be overstated. By synergizing the diverse capabilities of the army, navy, and air force, the armed forces can operate in a coordinated manner, leveraging their collective strengths to confront multifaceted security challenges effectively. The vision of theater commands represents a transformative leap towards achieving this objective, fostering a unified command structure that enhances operational efficiency and responsiveness. However, the path to realizing this vision is fraught with challenges. The concerns raised by the navy and air force regarding the equitable distribution of power within theater commands necessitate careful deliberation and negotiation. Preserving the distinct character and operational autonomy of each service while fostering a spirit of collaboration and mutual respect is paramount. It is imperative to strike a delicate balance between centralization and decentralization, ensuring that theaterization does not undermine the professional ethos and operational effectiveness of individual services. The successful implementation of theater commands requires robust institutional mechanisms and a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. Effective coordination and communication channels must be established to facilitate seamless integration and interoperability across different branches of the armed forces. Additionally, investments in training, infrastructure, and technology are essential to enable smooth transition and ensure the optimal utilization of resources. The 'Parivartan Chintan' conference represents a significant milestone in India's journey towards achieving jointness and integration in its defense apparatus. By fostering a shared vision and collaborative ethos among the armed forces, India can strengthen its national security and safeguard its strategic interests effectively.

Summer Beware

Stay Hydrated, Stay Healthy

Dr. Krishna Kumar vepakomma



Despite the recent start of summer, temperatures have already surged, bringing suffering for those working outdoors and raising the risks of dehydration, heatstroke, and heart failure. As summer progresses, the soaring temperatures pose challenges for outdoor workers, heightening the risk of dehydration, heatstroke, and heart complications. Dehydration, in particular, becomes a significant concern, leading to heat-related illnesses when the body loses more fluids than it absorbs, disrupting its delicate balance. During the summer months, excessive sweating exacerbates the body's fluid loss, which is a natural response to regulate its temperature. This sweating causes not only water but also essential electrolytes like sodium, potassium, and chloride to be lost. Without adequate replenishment of these fluids and electrolytes, dehydration can rapidly occur, leading to symptoms such as fatigue, dizziness, headaches, and in severe cases, heatstroke. To reduce the likelihood of dehydration in the summer, it's crucial to focus on hydration throughout the day. This includes deliberately increasing fluid intake, beginning with drinking plenty of water upon waking and maintaining a steady consumption of fluids, even if not feeling thirsty. While water remains the best option for hydration, other beverages such as herbal teas, coconut water, and diluted fruit juices can also help replenish fluids. Furthermore, integrating hydrating foods into your diet is essential for sustaining hydration levels. Fruits and vegetables abundant in water content, like watermelon, cucumbers, oranges, and strawberries, offer excellent choices for replenishing fluids and electrolytes. Adding these foods to your meals and snacks can enhance hydration levels and promote overall well-being throughout the summer season. When participating in outdoor activities, it's vital to plan the timing wisely to avoid peak sun hours and choose cooler times of the day, like early morning or late evening. Taking regular breaks in shaded areas, wearing lightweight and breathable clothing, and applying sunscreen to prevent sunburn all help minimize fluid loss from sweating. Moreover, individuals should be cautious of their alcohol and caffeine intake, as these substances can worsen dehydration. While moderate consumption is acceptable, it's crucial to balance these beverages with adequate water intake and electrolyte-rich foods to maintain hydration levels. It's crucial to recognize dehydration signs, like thirst, for timely intervention. Mild dehydration is often reversible with increased fluid intake, while severe cases may require medical attention. Proactively addressing dehydration risks and prioritizing hydration during the summer are essential for sustaining bodily functions and overall well-being, especially in intense heat. Stay hydrated, stay healthy.

(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.

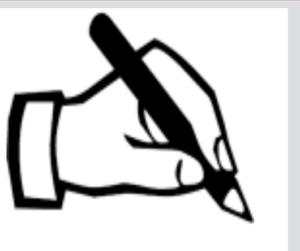
EID-AL-FITR



Muslim children celebrate Eid-al-Fitr, at an Eidgah, in Jammu, Wednesday, April 10.

Green Governance: The Missing Mandate in Election Manifestos

DR. DUGGARAJU SRINIVASA RAO



Elections during the scorching summer time are in a way a blessing for voters to confront the politicians with their daily problems of water supply and other basic health needs. It also gave, in way, the chance to the contesting candidates to know the pulse of the voters during the unbearable atmosphere and their reactions to the demands of people. To grab the votes all political parties are guaranteeing the women centric freebies as they are seen as committed voters on freebie offer. The manifestos of all the parties are full of competitive freebies aiming at the short term political gain while ignoring the issues of long term impact especially issue of environment protection. While women are enjoying the pensions, free rations, free-bus rides etc., the same women are suffering by spending huge amount of time in procuring few pots of water for the family and spend more time in attending to the sick family members. The frequency of sickness in the families increased due to the polluted air, water and chemical treated food items. The governments, instead of promising to supply clean water and pure air, are offering free medical treatment to the sick. Thus the basic cause of suffering is not addressed but superficial solutions are implemented in the form of various schemes. The people's representatives receiving a cut in the allocated social welfare funds is no secret. No political party ever took protection of the environment seriously so far. On the other hand they joined hand with illegal, greedy over exploiting groups through lax environmental laws. Either the political parties are ignorant of the importance of environmental balance are more interested in the money, once in power, ignoring the long term negative impact on the country's progress and human sufferings. Many international reports warned India with the impending catastrophe through the climate change and global warming. The consequences are on social, economic as well health. While we are aiming at super power status by the 100th Independence Day 2047, the World Bank report 2019 warned us of likely situation of severe climatic hotspots formation in India by 2050 hitting 148 millions of this country. The melting of Himalayan glaciers, the environmental destruction in the 'DevBhoomi'. Uttarakhand is visible. The massive floods, rivers changing the course are causing permanent damage

to the Gangetic plains. If the 'destructive developmental spree' continues the area becomes unlivable for over 300 millions people abetting the Ganges, warned one such report. Climatic impact, experienced through unusual extreme temperature, predicted hot waves impacting the health and productivity of the Indian workforce is estimated to be very high. Extreme weather conditions are impacting the health. Delhi is declared the top polluting city, the Bangalore city is experiencing the unprecedented water shortage. We are losing forests, we are losing the fertile agricultural land and through anthropogenic activity India is becoming unsafe even for the animals. The IUCN figures present the increased number of endangered species in India. The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Report of 2024 has stated that its monetary policy also faced the climate challenge with the frequency of and ferocity of weather shocks. The policy identified the climate change impacting the inflation through adverse weather events affecting the agricultural production and global supply chains. It further conceded the likely weakening of the transmission of monetary policy actions to financing conditions faced by households and firms. No section of the society is left unaffected in some or other and everyone needs some sort of relief through the governmental policies. And that is what exactly what Supreme Court three judge bench said in its ruling given recently. It ruled that "Right against adverse effects of climate change part of rights to life, equality", thus expanded the scope of Articles 14 and 21. The SC has reminded the government of Art. 48A which mentioned the State's endeavor to protect and improve the forests and wildlife of the country. It also reminded the citi-

zens their duty to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion to the living creatures as said through the clause G of Article 51A of Indian constitution.

Unfortunately these alarming reports, court observations and judgments seems to have not impacted the political class. Not many parties uttered a word on 'Green' in their manifestos. The parties talk about the economic growth and top economic position in the world, top position in the ease of doing business index, distributing freebies and more to certain communities to build vote banks, but they fail to realize that they are aiming at their popularity and positions at the cost of environment and people's health. Our environmental performance rank is steadily going down. Can a country which has already lost 25-30% through degradation and heading for desertification and having already having over 65 blocks water stressed, pollution getting worsened ever have sustainable growth?

In a democracy they say people get the government they deserve and unless the Indians leave their many other difference, based on religion, caste, region, language, and take on the political parties cashing on the division in society not only their own future but even the country's standing in the comity of nations go down. The green agitations are not fancy of the educated but environmental is everybody's concern. The educated should educate the masses on environmental issues and through them force the parties to include the environmental protective agenda into their politics. It is an immediate necessity and let us make 2024 as the year of such beginning as the current elections are fortunately, for voters, scheduled in the summer.

Dr Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Inclusive Ideals

It is nice to know that promise of delivering economic and socio-political justice to every section of the society including farmers youth labourers women health-workers, assuring health insurance to all along with equal treatment of the countrymen through promotion of diversity and sharing of resources formed the core principles of the Muslim League. If the accusation is indeed true; then along with all parties, BJP should also draw inspiration from the alleged manifesto of Muslim League to uplift the vulnerable and downtrodden lot and create an egalitarian society through provisions of such welfare measures for all-round development.

Kajal Chatterjee, Kolkata

IPL, a hit

When the Indian Premier League (IPL) took off in 2008, cynics scoffed at the format. Everything associated with the game was ridiculed, and the players were berated. Some scandals indeed rocked the league. Now, it's no secret that the IPL is a roaring hit. The latest edition, in 2024, has proved to be one of the most watched global television events. A staggering 350 million viewership was recorded for the first ten matches according to the IPL's official broadcaster. 16.8 crore viewers witnessed the inaugural match between the two immensely popular teams, CSK and RCB. Inclusivity, accessibility and multilingual broadcasting of matches have clicked big. The league has grown from strength to strength to navigate through all hurdles. A league that was mocked at for its "nonsensical approach" not long ago transforming itself into a testing ground for team selection for important overseas tournament can be a lesson or two to big-time sport organisers.

Dr Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

Climate Justice

The Supreme Court has affirmed climate justice as a fundamental right, aligning it with Articles 14 and 21. Recognizing citizens' entitlement to protection against climate change impacts, the ruling extends constitutional duties for environmental preservation. Despite governmental acknowledgments, a cohesive legislative framework is lacking. The verdict underscores the inseparable link between a clean environment and the right to life, imperiled by climate-induced crises. This landmark decision signals a pivotal shift towards broader societal engagement in combating climate challenges, echoing past judicial assertions of environmental rights.

Yash Pal Ralhan, Jalandhar

Kashmir is back to its good old days



R. K. Sinha

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has often proved predictions wrong. The story was no different in case of Kashmir. After Article giving special status to the "jannat on earth" was abrogated some of its leaders predicated a doom. One of them had said, it is "nothing less than a death sentence", adding that it marked the defeat of the idea of India with which the Muslim-majority state had acceded in 1947. Another echoing a similar sentiment had said, by downgrading it to a Union territory, the Modi government has

turned the erstwhile state "into hell". Yet another had said, if someone tinkered with Article 370 and 35 A there would be no one in Kashmir to hold tricolour. Nothing of the kind happened.

The mammoth crowd at the rally in Kashmir a couple of days ago was a proof, if proof was needed. There was no stone throwing. No pro-pak slogan. The extremists who were attacking some part or the other almost every day have either gone back to Pakistan or are hiding in nearby jungles. The crowd listened to Modi with rapt attention, occasionally clapping and cheering him. Such crowd was seen only about 40 years back, when late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Srinagar. The difference is that most of the crowd was brought by the party and government machinery. This time it was a spontaneous act of mass of Kashmir valley.

Thousands of people had lined up on the road leading to the venue of the meeting in Srinagar. They also clapped and cheered Prime Minister Modi. Some of them women even waved at him. The reason could be reports reaching them from neighbour area which has been occupied by Pakistan. The conditions there are appalling. People are facing acute water and food scarcity. Most of the areas have no

electricity for at least ten hours a day. There is no employment, entertainment or social media. The people of Kashmir Valley are also aware that in PoK anti-government -protests have been going on for last six months against inflation and other concerns including higher taxes.

Ghulam Bhatt who has been residing there since long, summed up the present situation well. "I am sure Modi jee alone can accomplish difficult tasks. He can only provide jobs and happiness to Kashmiris. Till now all the governments in Jammu and Kashmir have been making made us only empty promises", said he. The local police managed the crowd well. The people were also cooperative. Jammu and Kashmir Police Sub-Inspector Suleman Khan said, "this has happened because of PM Modi. Now our uniform is respected. I have also seen those days when policemen did not carry their identity cards due to fear of stone pelters and anti-national elements. They had no fear for anyone".

Many friends living in Kashmir told me that after the rally, Modi was a talking point in the drawing rooms all over Kashmir. None had a complaint. The people had come to the meeting in large numbers on their own, voluntarily. Modi also had nothing but praise for the people and the region. He de-

scribed Jammu and Kashmir as the "crown of the country". At the rally he disclosed the development plan of the state. He said the development of the area is his priority. Also, that this is a new Jammu for which all have waited for decades.

It was clear that Article 370 was no more an issue in Jammu and Kashmir. It was more so because of the Supreme Court judgement which had held the abrogation valid. People are now looking for development of the region which has been promised by Modi. It is possible now because the trouble makers are no more active. The Prime Minister has already met 14 top leaders of the state, ignoring what the Congress men have said and have to say. Playing to the gallery Congress Rajya Sabha member Digvijay Singh has said that if his party's government comes to power at the Centre it revoke Article 370 and maintain statuesque-ante.

Whatever may happen after the Lok Sabha polls to be held in April and May, the changes in social and economic conditions are visible. Passengers going to Goa in a flight from Delhi's the Indira Gandhi International Airport are an indicator. Since there is no direct connection from Srinagar to Goa, they go there from Delhi. The rest of the people also go to Goa for holidays. This

only means that they are as well economically. The Kashmiris stay with their relatives in Delhi for a few days before going to Goa. On returning they do the same. Some Kashmiris have told me that they have a liking for the environment in Goa. Different weather conditions suit them. Kashmir freezes in winter but not Goa. The sea beaches there attract many to Goa. However, many Kashmiri families can be also seen in hotels in South and North Goa in other seasons as well.

Raja Karan Singh also has said the Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha when he met him that "I have not seen Dull Lake so clean as he saw in these days." This is a big compliment from a senior most 93 years old Raja Dr. Karan Singh. Clearly, Jammu and Kashmir has changed the way no one even thought. There is no longer a room for separatists there. The anti-national forces no longer dominate the area. Everybody wants development gainful employment and peace. All these people have now come to realise that it is the key. India can become a developed nation by 2047 only by creating additional infrastructure and large capital investments by government and private players.

(The writer is a senior editor, columnist and former MP)

BRIEF

Career planning



Kolkata: Economist noted economist Sanjeev Sanyal on Tuesday emphasised the need for flexibility and innovative thinking during career planning. The member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister was addressing the 21st medal award function of the Army Institute of Management Kolkata (AIMK) graduates. Adaptability is important in navigating the ever-changing landscape of professions in the era of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML), he said.

New branch

Mumbai: Largest private sector lender HDFC Bank on Wednesday inaugurated a branch in Lakshadweep's Kavaratti island. The bank becomes the first private sector lender to have a presence in Lakshadweep, according to a statement. The bank seeks to serve customers wherever they are and looks forward to serving the financial needs of individuals, families, and businesses in Lakshadweep, the bank's retail branch banking group head S Sampathkumar said.

Resignation



New Delhi: Beleaguered Paytm Payments Bank's managing director and CEO Surinder Chawla has resigned from the company, a regulatory filing said on Tuesday. Chawla's resignation comes amidst Paytm Payments Bank facing prohibitory action from banking regulator RBI. "Surinder Chawla, Managing Director and CEO of PPBL, has tendered his resignation on April 8, 2024, on account of personal reasons and to explore better career prospects.

Coal mines

New Delhi: Twenty coal mines are likely to become operational by the end of this year, a move that will reduce coal imports and help meet rising power demand. Peak power demand in the country is likely to cross 400 GW by 2030. According to an official source, these 20 coal blocks include seven of Coal India and three of Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL). They will contribute another 100 million tonne (MT) in three to four years. State-owned Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output. SCCL is jointly owned by the Telangana government and the Centre on a 51:49 equity basis.

Markets rally makes investors richer by Rs 2.27 lakh crore

New Delhi, Apr 10:

Investors' wealth climbed Rs 2.27 lakh crore on Wednesday as the benchmark Sensex closed above the 75,000 mark for the first time.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 354.45 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 75,038.15. During the day, it advanced 421.44 points or 0.56 per cent to 75,105.14. In the previous trade on Tuesday, the benchmark hit its all-time intra-day peak of 75,124.28.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms climbed Rs 2,27,024.52 crore to reach its all-time high of Rs 4,02,19,353.07 crore (USD 4.83 trillion). The market valuation of BSE-listed companies has gone past the coveted Rs 400 lakh crore mark for the first time on Monday. "Even as FII investment in local equities has been



volatile over the past few months, domestic flows have been strong which has been a key catalyst behind markets touching record highs.

"Backed by strong growth prospects going ahead and poll fever steadily gripping up, investors are maintaining their bullish stance resulting in the Sensex closing above the 75k mark for the first time, while the Nifty scaling fresh intra-day high," said Prashanth

Tapse, Senior VP (Research), Mehta Equities Ltd.

Among the Sensex firms, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Asian Paints, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries and JSW Steel were the major gainers. Maruti, HDFC Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra and Larsen & Toubro were among the laggards. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.89 per cent and smallcap index advanced 0.46 per cent.

Among the indices, oil & gas jumped 1.74 per cent, energy (1.71 per cent), metal (1.66 per cent), commodities (1.30 per cent) and services (1.15 per cent). Utilities and auto were the laggards.

As many as 1,961 stocks advanced while 1,869 declined and 103 remained unchanged.

Sensex settles above 75,000-mark for first time, Nifty closes at record high

Mumbai, Apr 10:

Benchmark Sensex climbed 354 points to close above the record 75,000 mark for the first time while broader Nifty scaled a fresh lifetime high on Wednesday on gains in FMCG, energy and metal shares. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 354.45 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at an all-time high of 75,038.15. During the day, the index spurred 421.44 points or 0.56 per cent to hit a high of 75,105.14. Broader Nifty of the NSE advanced by 111.05 points or 0.49 per cent to close at a record peak of 22,753.80. During the day, it jumped 132.95 points or 0.58 per cent to reach a lifetime



intra-day peak of 22,775.70. Key indices hit intra-day lifetime high levels on Tuesday with Sensex scaling the historic 75,000 mark for the first time but closed in the red following profit booking in index major Reliance Industries. "Indian markets sustained their upward momentum,

buoyed by a robust performance in the broader market, albeit slightly lagging behind its Asian and European counterparts," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said. Investors' attention remains fixated on the release of the FOMC minutes and US inflation

Gold, silver scale record high for third straight session

New Delhi, Apr 10:

Gold and silver prices hit fresh lifetime high levels for the third straight session on Wednesday, with the yellow metal breaching Rs 72,000 per 10 grams level in the national capital, amid strong cues in the overseas markets, according to HDFC Securities. Gold prices rose Rs 160 to hit its lifetime high of Rs 72,000 per 10 grams in the national capital. It had settled at a record Rs 71,840 per 10 grams on Tuesday. Similarly, silver prices climbed Rs 200 to hit a record Rs 84,700 per kg. "Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs



72,000 per 10 grams, up by Rs 160, amid a bullish trend in the overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, spot gold was trading at USD 2,356 per ounce, up USD 6 from the previous close. Gold prices extended gains in the European trading hours on Wednesday, Gandhi said. Navneet Damani, Senior VP of Commodity

Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said, "Gold and silver continue to hover around the all-time high mark, as safe-haven demand for the metals remained upbeat amidst the geo-political tensions and in anticipation of more cues on US CPI inflation for March and interest rates." "Along with the US Consumer Price Index (CPI), the minutes of the Fed's March meeting is also due later on Wednesday, while the bank had offered up some dovish signals on interest rate cuts during the meeting, a string of Fed officials will be speaking after warned regarding sticky inflation, that could delay the interest rate cut."

India fastest growing market, 25pc revenue growth expected in 2024-26: Bridgestone

New Delhi, Apr 10:

Japanese tyre major Bridgestone expects to clock 25 per cent growth in revenue between 2024 and 2026 in India, which is its fastest-growing market globally, according to senior company officials. The company, which on Wednesday launched its 'Turanza 6i' premium range of passenger vehicle tyres developed specifically for the Indian market, will be increasing its tyre production to 40,000 per day in the next four to five years from the current 30,000 per day. "The size of the business (in India) out of our total global portfolio today is limited. However, it is the fastest-growing business portfolio in our global business. So that's why huge attention is there and strategic attention is here in India," Bridgestone India Managing Director Hiroshi Yoshizane told PTI in an interview. He said Bridgestone is already a leader in the aftermarket segment of passenger vehicle tyres in India with around 20 per cent share and the company's goal is to strengthen its position further.

Anil Ambani suffers another setback

New Delhi, Apr 10:



He was ranked the sixth richest person in the world in 2008 but a series of setbacks - the latest being the Supreme Court setting aside a Rs 8,000 crore arbitral award that was granted in favour of a firm in his group - reversed his fortunes. An MBA from Wharton School, Anil Ambani, 64, the younger son of legendary business tycoon, Dhirubhai Ambani, was known for his flamboyant nature - he married Bollywood actress Tina Munim and was a Rajya Sabha MP for two years - as much as for his unbeatable business acumen. But over the past few years, he has had setbacks across businesses that pushed him out of the billionaire list. The Supreme Court on Wednesday set aside a Rs 8,000 crore arbitral award granted in favour of Delhi Airport Metro Express Pvt (DAMEPL). The award was in relation to a dispute arising out of a "conces-

sion agreement" that was entered into between DAMEPL (a subsidiary of Anil Ambani's Reliance Infrastructure) and Delhi Metro Rail Corp in 2008. The court asked DAMEPL to refund all sums previously paid by the Delhi Metro Rail in accordance with the arbitral award. DMR had paid Rs 3,300 crore to the Reliance Infra arm, which now needs to be refunded. Anil Ambani's Reliance Infrastructure Ltd in a stock exchange filing that no liability has been imposed on it by the Supreme Court order. "Reliance Infrastructure wishes to clarify that the Order dated April 10, 2024, passed by the Supreme Court

does not impose any liability on the company and the company has not received any money from DMR/DAMEPL under the arbitral award," it said. While DAMEPL is a subsidiary of Reliance Infrastructure, it is a separate entity and the liability falls on it.

After Dhirubhai suffered a stroke in 1986, Anil took on day-to-day management of Reliance's financial relationships under his father's oversight. He and his elder brother, Mukesh, assumed joint leadership of the Reliance companies after their father's death in 2002. But soon after they feuded over control, leading to split - Mukesh got control of flagship oil and petrochemicals, while Anil gained control of the newer businesses such as telecommunications, power generation, and financial services through a 2005 demerger. The two brothers, who had diverging fortunes thereafter, did not stop feuding.

Maruti Suzuki hikes Swift prices by up to Rs 25,000



New Delhi, Apr 10: Maruti Suzuki India on Wednesday said it has hiked the price of its hatchback Swift by up to Rs 25,000 along with an increase on a select variant of SUV Grand Vitara. The prices of Swift have been raised by up to Rs 25,000, Maruti Suzuki India said in a regulatory filing. Similarly, the

price of the Sigma variant of Grand Vitara has been increased by Rs 19,000, the company said. Now, Swift is available at a price range of Rs 5.99 lakh to Rs 8.89 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi). The Sigma variant of Grand Vitara is priced at Rs 10.8 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi), as per the company's website.

Rupee rises 12 paise to close at 83.19 against US dollar

Mumbai, Apr 10: The rupee appreciated 12 paise to close at 83.19 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, as equity benchmarks climbing to all-time high levels and a weak greenback against major currencies overseas boosted investor sentiment. Forex traders said the rising appetite for riskier assets supported the local currency. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local



unit opened at 83.23 against the greenback. The unit hit an intraday high of 83.15. The domestic unit finally settled at 83.19 (provisional) against the dollar, 12 paise higher from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee settled flat at 83.31 against the US dollar.

Forex and money markets were closed on Tuesday on account of 'Gudhipadwa'. "We expect the rupee to trade with a slight positive bias on positive tone in the domestic markets and some softness in the US Dollar. The easing of crude oil prices from higher levels may also support the domestic currency. "However, any re-escalation of tensions in the Middle East may cap the upside. Traders may remain cautious ahead of inflation data and FOMC meeting minutes from the US.

Govt extends deadline for comments on draft digital competition bill till May 15

New Delhi, Apr 10:

The government has extended the deadline for submitting stakeholder comments on the draft digital competition bill by one month to May 15. It has also extended the deadline for submission of comments by stakeholders on the report of Committee on Digital Competition Law (CDCL). The initial deadline is to end on April 15. Earlier, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) had invited comments of stakeholders on the report of CDCL as well as draft digital competition bill under e-consultation module by April 15. However, in a notice on Tuesday the ministry said



it had considered "the requests received from various stakeholders, and the last date of submitting the comments/suggestions is extended till 15th May, 2024". It also said stakeholders could send in their comments via email, apart from the e-consultation module. In March this year, fair trade regulator proposed digital competition bill which seeks to put in place several obliga-

tions for large digital enterprises, including news aggregators, as part of efforts to ensure a level-playing field and fair competition in the digital space. After being set up in February last year, the Committee on Digital Competition Law came out with its report and a draft bill wherein the focus is on having ex-ante regulations to prevent possible anti-competitive practices. The draft bill has put several obligations on Systemically Significant Digital Enterprises (SSDEs) in Core Digital Services (CDS) to operate in a fair and non-discriminatory way with end users and business users.

Anil Kapoor, Sonam Kapoor emphasize importance of partnership at home

Mumbai, Apr 10:

Over the last 9 years, Ariel India has continuously sparked conversations around the unequal division of domestic chores within households and urging more and more men to #ShareTheLoad.

As society progresses, men have increasingly recognized the importance of supporting their partners equally. Since we began this journey in 2015, the percentage of men who believed that household chores, like laundry, are solely a woman's job has drastically decreased from 79% to 25%. However, acknowledging the need for further progress, Ariel is driving the conversation forward to encourage men to not only accept the physical aspect of household



chores but also to act as a team at home to share the mental load. This collective effort will significantly contribute to men earning the trust of their partners by stepping up, ensuring that she can confidently step out into the world. This year, Ariel poses a pertinent question - How strong is your HomeTeam? By

urging men to #ShareTheLoad, Ariel aims to foster a culture of equal ownership and accountability of household chores between husbands and wives, seamlessly integrating both the physical and mental aspects of running a household. The campaign launch event that happened yesterday brought

together a distinguished panel comprising of Bollywood icon Anil Kapoor, actress Sonam Kapoor, Mukta Maheshwari, Chief Marketing Officer at P&G India and Vice President - Fabric Care, P&G Indian sub-continent; and Josy Paul, Chairman & Chief Creative Officer at BBDO India. During the campaign launch event, Mukta Maheshwari, Chief Marketing Officer, P&G India, and Vice President - Fabric Care, P&G Indian sub-continent, said, "At Ariel, we are committed to creating an ecosystem at home that empowers and enables women. Our mission goes beyond providing superior cleaning products; we aim to foster genuine partnership and equality within households."

Demand for retail space in malls, high-streets may dip up to 15pc in 2024: CBRE

New Delhi, Apr 10:

Demand for retail spaces in shopping malls and high-street locations may decline up to 15 per cent this year from a record 71 lakh square feet in 2023 calendar year with retailers being cautiously optimistic, according to CBRE. Leasing of retail spaces in shopping malls and high street locations rose 48 per cent to 71 lakh (7.1 million) square feet in 2023 across eight major cities as against 48 lakh (4.8 million) square feet during the 2022 calendar year. In its report '2024 India Market Outlook', real estate consultant CBRE has projected that the leasing of retail space is expected to sustain between 6-6.5 million (60-65 lakh) square feet in 2024.

MoRTH builds 12,349 km of highways in FY24, 2nd highest so far



New Delhi, Apr 10:

The Road Transport and Highways Ministry constructed 12,349 km of national highways in 2023-24, the second highest in its history, a senior government official said on Tuesday. Previously, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) had constructed a record 13,327 kilometres

of national highways in 2020-21. National highways of 10,331 kilometres were constructed in 2022-23 against 10,457 kilometres in 2021-22. Highways of 10,237 kilometres were built in 2019-20. The official further said that the ministry awarded 8,581 national highway projects in 2023-24. He said capital expenditure (including private investment) during the last fiscal touched an all-time high of Rs 3,01,200 crore. The official said total length of national highways increased 1.6 times from 91,287 km in 2014 to 1,46,145 km in 2024. The government has launched a pilot project to provide cashless treatment to road accident victims.

HDFC bank managers accused of fund embezzlement

Farmers victimized: Funds diverted, credit cards manipulated

Central Chronicle News

Kurud, Apr 10: Startling revelations have emerged implicating HDFC Bank in a spate of fraudulent activities. In a sequence of troubling events, the bank finds itself embroiled in allegations of orchestrating deceitful schemes that have left both farmers and agricultural markets reeling from financial exploitation.

In the first instance, farmers found themselves ensnared in debt traps as funds were illicitly siphoned from their credit cards to the personal accounts of HDFC Bank personnel. The insidious maneuver left many struggling to comprehend the betrayal of trust.

Adding to the distress, the Agricultural Produce Market in Kurud fell prey to a sophisticated scam, wherein forged Fixed Deposit Receipts (FDRs)



amounting to a staggering total of Rs 48 lakhs were presented, leading to substantial losses.

The gravity of the situation implicates HDFC Bank manager Shrikant and his alleged accomplice Tejendra, suggesting a web of deceit woven to embezzle substantial sums, including funds belonging to account holders and government entities.

Expressing his ordeal, farmer Nand Kumar Sahu of Gram Panchayat Seldeep recounted how Rs 2,70,000 vanished from his credit card without consent. Despite efforts

Rs 48 lakh FDR fraud allegations

The intricacies of the alleged malpractice unfold with revelations that two Fixed Deposits (FD) amounting to Rs. 24,00,000 each were purportedly issued to Branch Manager Shrikant Teniti on February 12. Despite the apparent issuance, discrepancies emerge when the transactions fail to reflect in the bank's official records.

An inquiry conducted on April 9 sheds light on the irregularities, confirming the existence of the FD in question but raising serious concerns regarding its absence from the bank's account records. Agricultural Produce Market Secretary Rajkumar Ratri's formal complaint further underscores the gravity of the situation, prompting assurances from Branch Manager Piyush Rathore that the matter will be promptly addressed.

However, attempts to glean clarity from HDFC Bank's management hit roadblocks as Manager Piyush Rathore deflects inquiries, citing the need for input from senior officer Abhay Kumar. Despite repeated attempts to contact HDFC Raipur Cluster Head Abhay Kumar for insight into the complaint, communication remains elusive, deepening the veil of uncertainty surrounding the unfolding scandal.

to seek redress, bureaucratic stonewalling hindered any resolution, leaving victims in despair.

Similarly affected, Bhupendra Kumar Sahu of Gram Panchayat Semra (D) shared his harrowing experience, re-

counting unauthorized withdrawals totaling Rs 116,000, leaving him burdened with unwarranted debt.

MSK Foundation employs muslim youth on Shab-e-Qadr



E-Rickshaw gifted as Ramadan employment initiative

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 10: In a goodwill gesture during the sacred month of Ramadan, the MSK Foundation extended employment opportunities to two unemployed Muslim youths on the auspicious night of Shab-e-Qadr, adhering to Muslim traditions.

The foundation, spearheading a noble initiative, bestowed e-rickshaws upon the deserving individuals with the aim of facilitating their entry into the workforce and uplifting their socio-economic

status. Committed to aiding marginalized segments of society, the foundation has dedicated itself over the past two years to empowering unemployed youth, ensuring they can lead dignified lives and support their families without hindrance.

Established in 2023 by esteemed figures including Jama Masjid Secretary Advocate Syed Altaf Ali, Salim Solanki, Mohammad Kaleem Ashrafi, Ayub Solanki, and Suleman Khan under the guidance of Zafar Hussain Khan, a senior cooperative bank officer and current Naib Sadar of Jama Masjid, the foundation operates on the noble principles of social welfare and community up-

liftment.

Utilizing Zakat funds collected during Ramadan, the foundation initiated its employment drive, providing an e-rickshaw to an unemployed Muslim youth in 2023. Building on this success, the foundation resolved to extend support to two individuals this year, marking another milestone in their ongoing mission to alleviate unemployment and foster societal well-being.

Founding members Zafar Hussain Khan, Syed Altaf Ali, and Ayyub Solanki reiterated the foundation's commitment to future endeavors aimed at addressing pressing social issues and enriching community life.

Brazen daylight robbery at Katgi liquor shop

Masked assailants strike, police launch manhunt

Central Chronicle News

Katgi, Apr 10: A brazen daylight robbery unfolded in Katgi, Balodabazar district of Chhattisgarh, as two masked assailants targeted a liquor shop, making off with loot valued at lakhs. The incident occurred at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

CCTV footage capturing the audacious robbery has since emerged, providing crucial leads for investigators. According to reports, three salesmen had congregated at the Katgi liquor shop to tally cash collected from various liquor outlets in the vicinity.

In a swift and daring



move, a masked perpetrator brandishing a knife stormed into the establishment, threatening the salesmen and coercing them to surrender the bag filled with money. Without hesitation, the assailant

seized the loot and swiftly made their escape.

Upon receiving word of the robbery, police swiftly mobilized, dispatching teams to the scene to commence investigations and launch a manhunt for the

perpetrators. The community remains on edge as authorities work tirelessly to bring the culprits to justice and restore a sense of security in the wake of this brazen act of criminality.

MLA Marpacchi rallies support for BJP's Saroj Pandey

Central Chronicle News

Gaurela-Pendra- Marwahi, Apr 10: Marwahi MLA Pranav Kumar Marpacchi engaged in public relations efforts on Tuesday, advocating for BJP's Lok Sabha candidate, Dr. Saroj Pandey, in several villages under the Marwahi North assembly division, including Karhania, Katra, Kansabara, Beljhiriya, and Ushadh.

Appealing to the villagers, Marpacchi urged them to rally behind Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aiming for a resounding victory for the BJP candidate. Mandal President Kishan Singh Thakur, along with senior workers and officials, accompanied



the MLA during these interactions.

Expressing confidence in the electorate's unwavering support for Prime Minister Modi, Marpacchi predicted a significant lead for BJP candidate Saroj Pandey from the Marwahi Assembly.

Highlighting develop-

ment disparities, Marpacchi underscored the need for transformative change in Chhattisgarh, emphasizing the pressing issues of unemployment and inadequate infrastructure plaguing the region. He attributed these challenges to the failure of past Congress MPs and MLAs

to address the needs of the populace effectively.

Pledging to collaborate with Saroj Pandey, Marpacchi vowed to prioritize the area's development and welfare, promising to work diligently towards addressing the community's needs and aspirations.

NSS students lead voter awareness rally

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Apr 10: In compliance with the directives of the Collector and District Election Officer, a vigorous campaign to foster voter awareness in preparation for the Lok Sabha elections on May 7 is underway in the district. A significant step in this initiative was marked by a spirited rally spearheaded by NSS students from the prestigious Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium in Mungeli.

Under the vigilant eye of Deputy District Election Officer Maneka Pradhan, the rally commenced, res-

onating with slogans such as "Rakhho Mungeli ke Maan, Sabho Jhan Karbo Voting" and "Mungeli ke Maan, 100% Voting." Embarking from Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium, the enthusiastic participants traversed through Government SNG College and Bus Stand, culminating the rally back at the stadium. The fervent gathering took a collective pledge to form a human chain and commit to 100% voter turnout, underscoring the indispensable role of every citizen in fortifying democracy. Deputy District Election Officer emphasized the imperative of

widespread voter participation, urging all constituents to exercise their franchise diligently on May 7.

In tandem with the rally, a quiz competition on voter awareness and electoral processes was conducted, with participants showcasing their knowledge and acumen. Distinguished personalities including Mungeli SDM Parvati Patel, Deputy Collectors Ajay Shatranj and N.K. Purle, along with other esteemed officials graced the occasion and felicitated the victorious participants, amplifying the ethos of informed and engaged citizenship.

Devotees illuminate Goddess temples for Navratri

Chaitra Navratri festivities inaugurated with devotion

Central Chronicle News

Kurud, Apr 10: The sacred aura of devotion enveloped the Devi temples in Kurud as devotees flocked to mark the commencement of Chaitra Navratri. Illuminated by the lights of faith, the temples resonated with prayers and reverence on the auspicious first day of the festival.

Chaitra Navratri was ceremoniously inaugurated with the lighting of the Manokamna Jyot at the auspicious time in Jai Mahakali Chhattisgarh



Mahtari, alongside the worship of goddesses Maa Chandi and Maa Shitala. As a symbol of devotion, a



total of 705 lamps adorned the Chandi temple, 569 illuminated the Kali temple, and 55 graced the Shitala

temple, casting a radiant glow across the sacred spaces. The temples were

adorned with intricate light decorations and vibrant bouquets, enhancing the spiritual ambiance and drawing devotees from far and wide. The melodious strains of Jaseva songs echoed through the temple halls, initiating nine days of continuous worship and celebration in honor of the Goddess.

Lamps were also lit in the Shitala temples of every village, accompanied by fervent Mata Seva. Devotees, immersed in prayer and rituals, embarked on the nine-day journey of Navratri, beseeching the Goddess for blessings and the fulfillment of their heartfelt wishes.

Bridge construction accelerates in Phundri panchayat

Central Chronicle News

Bijapur, Apr 10: Significant progress has been made in the construction of a crucial high-level bridge spanning the Indravati river in Phundri Panchayat, located 5 km from Bhairamgarh.

This vital infrastructure project aims to enhance transportation for villagers residing in 12 Panchayats of Bijapur, as well as the inhabitants of Maad area in Narayanpur and Orcha.

Collector Anurag Pandey and SDM Jageshwar Kaushal conducted a thorough inspection of the bridge construction site on Monday.



In a pivotal development, girder installation commenced under the vigilant supervision of Collector Pandey. Sub Engineer SR

Dugre provided insights into the project, revealing that the Phundri bridge spans a length of 648 meters, with plans for the in-

stallation of 42 girders.

Expressing a commitment to expedite the construction process, Collector Anurag Pandey engaged in discussions with local villagers to address their concerns regarding basic amenities and facilities.

The commencement of girder installation marks a significant milestone in the project's advancement, promising improved connectivity and accessibility for residents across the region. As construction progresses, the bridge holds the promise of facilitating smoother transportation and fostering socio-economic development in the area.

Exam papers evaluation nearing finish

District's first evaluation at Bakshi School

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Apr 10: As the academic year progresses, the evaluation process for the district's 10th and 12th board examinations draws to a close, marking a significant milestone in educational administration. Notably, Dr. Padumlal Punnalal Bakshi School in Khairagarh serves as the epicenter for this crucial evaluation endeavour, a first since the district's inception.

With meticulous care, evaluators have diligently assessed a substantial portion of the answer sheets, exemplifying their commitment to maintaining academic standards. Of the 69,047 Class 10 answer sheets



received, a remarkable 67,182 have been thoroughly reviewed, leaving only 1,860 copies of Sanskrit and English subjects pending evaluation. Similarly, out of the 41,158 Class 12 answer sheets dispatched, the evaluation of 39,208 has been completed, with only 1,950 copies of Hindi, History, and Political Science subjects

awaiting assessment.

Evaluation center officials Roshanlal Verma and Sanjay Srivastava express confidence that by April 11, all pending assessments will be finalized, ensuring timely completion of this critical task. The commendable effort to streamline the evaluation process has seen active participation from

institutional teachers, notably Kiran Singh, Sunil Guni, Anurag Singh, Ashish Mishra, and Pukeshwar Nishad, who have facilitated essential arrangements for smooth operations.

Amidst the evaluation hustle, disruptions caused by renovation work momentarily posed challenges, yet the dedication of 250 to 300 teachers enlisted daily ensured that progress remained steadfast. Despite the initial deadline extension to April 14, recent directives from the Board of Secondary Education, prompted by impending Lok Sabha elections, necessitated a new timeline, compelling stakeholders to expedite the evaluation process.

Candidates Chess

Gukesh downs Abasov to jump into joint lead

Toronto, Apr 10 (PTI):

Grandmaster D Gukesh grabbed a share of the lead alongside Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi by becoming the only Indian to post a win in the fifth round of the FIDE Candidates Chess Tournament, outwitting Azerbaijan's Nijat Abasov in a hard-fought contest here.

With nine rounds still to come in the double round-robin event, the 17-year-old Gukesh and Nepomniachtchi share the top spot with 3.5 points and they are followed by top-seeded American Fabio Caruana half a point behind.

American Hikaru Nakamura was the other winner on the day against Firouza Alireza of France while Indian teen R Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with overnight sole leader Nepomniachtchi. Vidit Gujrathi also put an end to his losses by settling for a draw with Caruana. Praggnanandhaa and



Grandmaster Koneru Humpy of India during her match against Grandmaster Aleksandra Goryachkina at the FIDE Women's Candidates 2024 chess tournament, in Toronto, Canada.

Nakamura share the fourth spot with 2.5 points followed closely by Gujrathi on two points. Alireza and Abasov share the last position on 1.5 points apiece.

In the Women's competition, nothing changed in

terms of standings with all the four games ending in draws.

Praggnanandhaa's sister R Vaishali could not defend the defenses of Anna Muzychuk and Koneru Humpy recovered with a draw against Aleksandra

Goryachkina of Russia. Tournament leader Zhongyi Tan of China was held to a draw by the continuously improving Nurgul Salimova of the Azerbaijani on the 83rd cast the die decisively in Gukesh's favour with an extra pawn in the queen and pawn endgame. The game lasted 87 moves and went on for a marathon six hours.

Lakshya Sen loses to Qi, bows out in opening round of Badminton Asia Championships

Ningbo, Apr 10 (PTI):

Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen bowed in the opening round of men's singles at the Badminton Asia Championships after suffering a straight-game loss to local favourite and top seed Shi Yu Qi here on Wednesday.

World Championships bronze medallist Sen gave a good account of himself and fought tooth and nail but the higher-ranked Chinese eventually proved to be too strong as the Indian lost 19-21 15-21 in the gruelling opener that lasted 53 minutes.

The Indians didn't have the desired start in the tournament as the talented Priyanshu Rajawat also crashed out in the men's singles opening round.

Rajawat was no match for eight-seeded Lee Zii Jia of Malaysia, losing 9-21 13-21 in 39 minutes. It was also curtains for the Panda sisters -- Rutuparna and Swetaparna -- in the opening round of women's doubles, losing 8-21 13-21 against seventh seeds Zhang Shu Xian and Zheng Yu W of China.

Contrary to the final result, Sen gave his Chinese opponent a run for his



money in the first game and didn't allow him an aggressive start. Sen showcased brilliant court coverage and indulged the Chinese in long rallies before picking up points with his smashes and inch-perfect drop shots to lead 11-7 at the change of ends. Sen kept his nose ahead till 14 points even as Qi started to claw back into the contest, tiring out Sen with long rallies and then finishing the points with cross-court smashes. The world No. 2 Qi eventually took the lead at 16-14 by securing five points in a row. But Sen was in no mood to give up without a fight as he drew level at 19-

19 before Qi pocketed the first game. The script was similar in the second game, as both the shuttlers were going neck and neck till the halfway break.

Sen worked hard to keep the rallies alive and made some brilliant diving saves to not allow easy points to his opponent, and at one point led 9-8. Sen didn't give up and dived deep to save a point and then brought the equation down to 11-12. But then unforced errors started to creep into the Indian's game. He lost steam and conceded easy points as Qi regained control and ran away with the second game.

Sreejesh fails to save India from losing 1-2 against Australia



Perth, Apr 10 (PTI):

Veteran goalkeeper PR Sreejesh's heroics went in vain as India squandered a goal lead to go down 1-2 against Australia in the third men's hockey Test to hand the home team an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series here on Wednesday. The Indians, who lost 1-5 and 2-4 in the first two Tests, produced a much-better show on Wednesday with the defensive unit leading from the front. It was a classic battle between the ever-attacking Australians against the Indian defence, which the latter narrowly lost eventually. India took the lead through Jugraj Singh's penalty corner

conversion in the 41st minute, but Jeremy Hayward (44th and 49th) dashed the visitors' hopes by scoring a brace to hand Australia their third win on the trot. India played cohesively and with a lot more intensity to frustrate the Kookaburras, who secured as many as six penalty corners in the opening quarter but failed to get past the resolute defence of the visitors.

Credit must go to both Indian goalkeepers -- Sreejesh and Krishan Bahadur Pathak -- for their brilliant display in the first half. It was the hosts who had the first scoring chance in the form of a penalty corner in the fourth minute but Sreejesh made a lovely low diving save to his right to keep out Hayward's shot. Five minutes later, Australia secured three more penalty corners but they failed to get past the 'The Great Indian Wall' in Sreejesh. The Australians secured two more penalty corners in the final quarter and from the second chance, Hayward finally broke Sreejesh's defence with a powerful flick.

Billie Jean King Cup: India go down 0-3 to China

Changsha: The Indian women's tennis team suffered a 0-3 loss to China in a group stage match of the Billie Jean King Cup here on Wednesday. In the opening match, Sahaja Yamalalpalli faced a 2-6, 3-6 defeat to 43rd-ranked Xinyu Wang, in a contest that lasted an hour and 33 minutes.

In the second match, Ankita Raina was thrashed 6-0, 6-0 by world number seven Qinwen Zheng, as the Indian failed to win a single game. The match lasted an hour and three minutes.

Then, in the final match, the Indian doubles pair of Rutuja Bhosale and Prarthana G Thombare was beaten 6-1, 6-1 by Hanyu Guo and Xiyu Wang in 56 minutes.

Thanks to the heavy defeat, India are now ranked fourth in their pool. They are clubbed alongside Pacific Oceania, South Korea, New Zealand, Chinese Taipei and China.

Desperate times for RCB as they take on equally struggling MI

Mumbai, Apr 10 (PTI):

Desperate Royal Challengers Bengaluru will be under tremendous pressure to get their act together against an equally struggling Mumbai Indians when the two teams face-off in an Indian Premier League match here on Thursday.

Four losses in five matches have not only vindicated how poor RCB were in the last IPL auction, but they have also missed the opportunity to make it up with better on-field showing. However, there is nothing much to separate the two teams as RCB are just a rung below MI in the points table at the ninth position with MI winning just one (29-run victory over Delhi Capitals) out of their four games so far.

Virat Kohli's brilliance, notwithstanding, RCB's campaign is under threat



of falling apart even before they could register enough wins to have a real shot at the knockouts.

With the halfway mark of the ongoing IPL approaching rapidly, it is imperative for RCB's overseas stars, including skipper Faf du Plessis (109 runs), Glenn Maxwell (32) and Cameron Green (68) to find form. Kohli's imperious form -- 316 runs with one century and two fifties at a strike rate of 146.29 --

has been the lone bright spot for RCB. With the memories of his 50th ODI century in the World Cup semifinal at the Wankhede Stadium just five months ago still fresh, Kohli would be keen to flourish again at the same venue on Thursday.

Any bowling attack would be left searching for answers if one of their part-timers is topping the list of wicket-takers. And in RCB's case, whose bowl-

ing looked threadbare even before they hit the ground running, Maxwell's four scalps neither provide any respite nor assurance. But their recent record against MI could boost RCB, who have won four of their last five games. The overall record in 32 matches, however, is tilted in favour of the five-time champions, who enjoy 18 wins against RCB's 14. MI would know present circumstances provide them with a ripe opportunity to build up on their recent success and move further up in the points table after a rough start. For a side which invariably starts IPL with a few losses, MI know their way around these lanes. A contest against a floundering RCB could bring about their second win on the trot and some further boost in confidence, before facing defending champions Chennai Super Kings.

Sarita Mor headlines India's challenge at Asian Championships

Bishkek: With India's star wrestlers not in contention, the country's next-generation players will look to prove themselves on the big stage, even as the accomplished Sarita Mor will also be closely watched when the Asian Championships begin here on Thursday.

It was decided during the March 21 trials that winners in 17 Olympic weight categories will attempt to qualify for the Paris Games during the Asian Qualifiers in Bishkek from April 19, while the runners-up in these categories will be given the opportunity to compete in the Asian Championships.

Since Olympic-quota winner Anitm Panghal, who was given a direct entry into the Championships, has pulled out of the event, Anju will represent India in the women's 53kg category.

Suryakumar Yadav: Overcoming injuries, striving for excellence



Mumbai, Apr 10 (PTI): India and Mumbai Indians batter Suryakumar Yadav on Wednesday revealed that he battled three different injuries in the past three months but worked hard to become a "better version" of himself while going through a "boring" recovery process.

The world No.1 T20 batter, who made his comeback last week in the Indian Premier League, revealed that apart from sports hernia for which he had to undergo a surgery and an ankle problem, he also endured an injury to his right knee. "I had two-three niggles together, sports hernia, ankle and then right knee. I had to take one step at a time, follow the small things and here I am, really happy to be on the ground," Yadav said in a video released by IPL.

The 33-year-old said it was "boring" for him to follow the same routine during rehab work at the start but he decided to make the most of the opportunity. "It's actually a little difficult to describe the last three (or) three-and-a-half months.

Self-belief, hard work at domestic level matter a lot: Shashank

Mullanpur, Apr 10 (PTI):

Self-belief and the rigours of domestic cricket are the reasons behind lesser-known players' success in the ongoing Indian Premier League, said Punjab Kings cricketer Shashank Singh, who made yet another statement with the bat against Sunrisers Hyderabad here.

Chasing 183 for victory, Shashank smashed an unbeaten 46 off 25 deliveries to nearly pull off another heist for PBKS partnering Ashutosh Sharma (33 off 15 balls) but the team fell short by two just runs



on Tuesday. Shashank's plucky innings came on the back of an unbeaten 61, which had helped PBKS pull off a thrilling three-wicket win against Gujarat Titans on April 4 in a high-scor-

ing match. Despite the loss, Shashank received praise from all quarters for showing faith in his abilities.

"The only thing is self-belief. Like the way we play domestic cricket. Like you see SRH's Nitish (Reddy) here. He usually scores and takes wickets in white-ball and red-ball cricket (in domestic competitions)," said Shashank, decoding the mantra behind his and the performance of a lot of youngsters in the ongoing edition of the IPL. Young Reddy scored a vital 37-ball 64, which lifted Sunrisers Hyderabad to a challenging 182/9.

Neeraj Chopra to compete in Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland on June 18

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI):

Superstar Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra will compete in the prestigious Paavo Nurmi Games in Turku, Finland on June 18, where he will be up against 19-year-old sensation Max Dehning of Germany, the latest entrant in the 90m club, the organisers said.

The 26-year-old Chopra, who will begin his season in the Doha Diamond League Meeting on May 10, had won a silver in the 2022 edition of the Paavo Nurmi Games with a throw of



89.30m -- his career second best -- while he pulled out of the event in 2023 as he was recovering from an injury then.

Chopra has a personal best of 89.94m. The Paavo Nurmi Games are named after the legendary Finnish middle and long distance runner. It is a World Athletics Continental Tour Gold series event, one of the most prestigious single-day competitions outside the Diamond League Meeting series. "Javelin throw Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra will return to Turku in June. Chopra will compete in the Paavo Nurmi Games after a year's break and will meet a high-quality group of competitors.

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Polls divide families as fathers, sons take different political routes

Bhubaneswar, Apr 10 (PTI):

At least three veteran politicians in Odisha are facing a strange situation at home in this election time since their sons are contesting the polls with tickets from rival political parties.

Sons of Congress leaders Suresh Routray and Chintamani Dyan Samantaray, and BJP's Bijoy Mohapatra are contesting elections from parties not linked to their fathers.

Senior Congress leader and Jatani MLA Suresh Routray has been issued a show cause notice by the disciplinary committee of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) for allegedly campaigning for his son Manmath Routray, who is a

ruling BJD candidate from Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha seat.

Routray (80), a six-time MLA from Congress, who announced not to contest the elections this time, was found campaigning for his son Manmath in different parks in the state capital.

"I have not told anyone to vote for my son, but when people are asking me if they should cast their votes for my son, I am telling them yes," Suresh said.

"Yes, I have told people to vote for my son because they ask me what to do. If AICC or the PCC wants to punish me, I will accept it. But I will be a Congressman till my death," Routray said.

He further claimed that he is a man of principles.

For former Odisha Assembly Speaker and vet-

eran Congress leader from Ganjam district, Chintamani Dyan Samantaray, the situation is a little bit difficult.

His sons are in the fray, one from the Congress and another from the BJP.

He is in a fix as he does not know whom to vote for since his sons are the main contestants. While the opposition BJP has fielded his younger son Manoranjan Dyan Samantaray, his elder son Ravindranath Dyan Samantaray has been fielded by the Congress.

Chintamani Dyan Samantaray, a senior Congress leader, was elected three times from Chikiti - twice as an independent (1980 and 1995) and once on a Congress ticket (1985).

While junior Samantaray unsuccessfully contested

the assembly elections twice - on a Congress ticket (2014) and a BJP ticket (2019), his elder brother is contesting for the first time this year.

"I have been active in Congress since my father's period. As a result, I got a ticket from the party to contest. It will be a contest between two ideologies, and not between two brothers," said Ravindranath.

Manoranjan claimed that he was very active in politics for the last several years and got the BJP ticket to contest the election.

"Some vested interests might have instigated my brother to contest in Congress ticket to create disturbance in the family. However, it would have no impact on my poll prospects," he said.

CELEBRATION TIME



Vidyalakshmi celebrates with her parents on securing the first rank in the science stream of 2nd PUC (pre-university) result 2024, in Karnataka, Wednesday.

'Encouraging scientific rigor will bolster people's confidence in homeopathy'

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI):

President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said research and proficiency will play an important role in further increasing the acceptance and popularity of homeopathy.

Inaugurating a two-day symposium organised by the Central Council for Research in Homeopathy here on World Homeopathy Day, Murmu said homeopathy has been adopted in many countries as a simple and accessible treatment method.

All over the world, many institutions at international, national and local levels have been promoting homeopathy, she said while appreciating the Ministry of AYUSH, Central Council for Research in Homeopathy, National Commission for Homeopathy, National Institute of Homeopathy and other such institutions for their contribution in the promotion of homeopathy in India.



President Droupadi Murmu addresses during the inauguration of a two-day Homeopathic Symposium, organized by Central Council for Research in Homeopathy on World Homeopathy Day, in New Delhi, Wednesday.

search is continuously increasing in the 21st century.

Therefore, the theme of this symposium 'Empowering Research, Enhancing Proficiency' is very relevant," she said emphasising that research and proficiency will play an important role in further increasing the acceptance and popularity of homeopathy. The President said many people share the experiences of those who

have benefited from homeopathy after trying other treatment methods.

"But such experiences can be recognised in the scientific community only when presented with facts and analysis. Such factual analysis done on a large scale is called authentic medical research. Encouraging scientific rigour will further increase people's confidence in this medical system," Murmu said.

Bhojpuri singer Pawan Singh throws his hat in the ring

● Names seat but keeps mum on party

Patna, Apr 10 (PTI):

Bhojpuri singer Pawan Singh, who had turned down a BJP ticket for Asansol in West Bengal, on Wednesday said he will contest Lok Sabha polls from Karakat in his home state of Bihar.

Singh made the announcement on X but did not disclose whether he would be contesting as an Independent or as the candidate of a political party.

"One's mother carries greater weight than this earth. I had promised my mother that I would contest elections this time. I will stand from Karakat, Bihar, in the Lok Sabha polls. Jai Mata Di," Singh wrote in Hindi.

Notably, the announcement comes on a day the BJP has declared SS Ahluwalia, its sitting MP from Bardhaman Durgapur, as the candidate from Asansol, where actor



turned politician Shatrughan Sinha is seeking re-election on a Trinamool Congress ticket. Singh, who hails from Bhojpur district in Bihar, and was said to be eyeing the Arrah seat where Union minister RK Singh is seeking re-election for a third consecutive term.

The Bhojpuri singer was named the party candidate from Asansol but he withdrew from the contest following a backlash over some of his songs with misogynistic lyrics that also denigrated the Bengali community.

Karakat goes to polls in the seventh phase of Lok Sabha elections and filing of nomination papers will begin in about a month from now.

'BJP represents 103 Lok Sabha seats where FRA is key issue'

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI):

RECENT REPORT

BJP MPs represent 103 of the 153 Lok Sabha seats in the country where the implementation of the Forest Rights Act 2006 is a major issue, according to a recent report.

The Congress, which enacted the FRA, and the Biju Janata Dal represent 11 seats each, Shiv Sena 6, Telangana Rashtra Samithi and YSRCP 5 each, and the National Congress Party 4, the analysis by independent organisation Vasundhara found. Considered a milestone in redressing the historical injustice done to Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers, the Forest Rights Act 2006 aims to recognise forest rights of such communities living in forests for generations.

According to the analysis, there are 86 Lok Sabha seats where people demanding forest rights account for over 30 per cent of the electorate.

Similarly, there are 45 seats where FRA eligible

voters comprise over 40 per cent of the electorate. These include the Khunti Lok Sabha seat where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has repeated Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda as its candidate.

Out of the 153 core FRA constituencies, the BJP and the Congress ran directly against each other in 74 constituencies in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, of which the Congress won only 5. There are 47 ST reserved seats in India, out of which 42 are core FRA constituencies. The BJP won 31 ST seats in 2019 and the Congress only 3. According to government data, the FRA claim disposal rate in the last five years has come down from 87.72 per cent to 84.44 per cent. While 7,88,948 new claims were filed in the last five years, 5,21,143 titles were distributed, and 5,827 claims were rejected during this period.

A total of 50,26,801 claims (48,36,013 individ-

ual) have been filed until February 29, 2024. Of this, 24,85,191 titles (49.44 per cent), including 23,70,011 individual titles, have been distributed, the official data showed.

Five years ago, the total number of claims filed stood at 42,37,853 (40,89,035 individual), and the number of titles that had been already distributed stood at 19,64,048 (18,87,894 individual). While officials say the Covid-19 pandemic hampered the implementation of the Forest Rights Act 2006, which recognises rights of forest-dwelling scheduled tribes and other traditional communities, in 2020 and 2021, experts said lack of political will and corruption is the primary obstacle. Over 50 per cent of the claims filed so far in eight states and Union territories, including Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, have been rejected, according to the official data.

Tissue sample transported mid-surgery for advanced pathological testing

New Delhi, Apr 10 (PTI):

As part of ICMR's trial run, a tissue sample was transported mid-surgery from a peripheral hospital in Karnataka for advanced pathological testing at a tertiary setting for deciding if the resected tissue was cancerous.

In continuance with the national mission of expanding drone ecosystem in the country, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) successfully conducted the trial run of transporting onco-pathological samples by drones under its i-Drone initiative

ICMR TRIAL RUN

on Wednesday.

The drone efficiently transported intraoperative surgical biospecimens surgically excised from the patient from Dr TMA Pai Hospital, Karkala to Kasturba Medical College, Manipal Academy of Higher Education Manipal (tertiary care hospital), covering a distance of approximately 37 km in 15-20 minutes, which takes around 50-60 minutes by road, an official statement said. Upon arrival, the sample was promptly analysed, and the

report was electronically conveyed back to the peripheral hospital. Subsequently, the surgeon proceeded with the surgery based on the received report, it said.

The trial run as part of a validation study has been undertaken for the first time in the country by the collaborative efforts of ICMR, Kasturba Medical College (KMC) and Dr TMA PAI Rotary Hospital.

Drones play a crucial role in agriculture, defence, disaster relief and healthcare,

especially during emergency situations by enabling rapid delivery of vaccines, medications, and vital supplies to remote and inaccessible areas, the statement stated. The ICMR along with Kasturba Medical College is currently conducting a feasibility study in Manipal, Karnataka. The study aims to evaluate the potential use of aerial transportation systems (drones), to transport items such as pathology samples from secondary healthcare facilities to tertiary-level hospitals, the statement said.

Fortune tellers predict PMK candidate's win in poll

● But fail to foresee impending trouble

Cuddalore, Apr 10 (PTI):

Two roadside astrologers who predicted the PMK candidate's victory in the April 19 Lok Sabha election with the help of their parakeet but failed to foresee their impending trouble, were arrested for keeping parakeets caged.

They were later released and four of their parakeets were freed, a forest department official said on Wednesday.

Parakeet fortune telling is a kind of astrology practised in Tamil Nadu and it involves these trained birds

to pick up a fortune card for the prediction. The parakeet is instantly rewarded by its owner with a grain of paddy or a piece of fruit for selecting the ideal card from among a bunch of cards each containing the images of gods and goddess. And with the good deed done, the bird is sent back to its cage.

While on a campaign tour on April 7, film director-politician Thankar Bachan, the PMK candidate for Cuddalore constituency, consulted two such astrologers, who are brothers, to know about his fate in electoral politics. The astrologers used one of their four parakeets to select a card and read out the prediction that Bachan would

win in the election. In the video of Bachan's consultation that went viral in social media, the candidate could be seen requesting the astrologer to feed the particular bird and offering it a banana after the consultation. The viral video caught the attention of forest department officials who immediately launched a hunt to trace and arrest the brothers for keeping caged birds.

On Tuesday, the forest department team located the brothers - Selvaraj and Srinivasan - near the Azhagu Muthu Ayyanar temple at Thennampakkam near Cuddalore where they were consulted by Bachan, and arrested

them, a senior official said. Four parakeets kept in two cages were seized under the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act and were released into the forest. The astrologer brothers were later let off with a warning, the official said.

During the consultation, one of the astrologers released the parakeet from a cage and allowed it to pick up a card. And when the bird selected a card with an image of the presiding deity of Azhagu Muthu Ayyanar temple, the fortune teller interpreted it as an auspicious sign and said Bachan would win the elections.

RELIGIOUS RITUAL



Devotees take part in 'Garudan Thoorkkam', a ritual art form, at the Sarkara Devi Temple, in Thiruvananthapuram, Wednesday.

Church in Kerala opens gates for Eid prayers

Malappuram (Ker), Apr 10 (PTI):

In a heartwarming display of communal harmony, the gates of a church compound in Kerala's Malappuram district were opened for Muslim faithful to offer Eid prayers on Wednesday.

Hundreds of Muslim faithful gathered on the spacious grounds in front of the Nicholas Memorial CSI Church in Manjeri on Wednesday morning.

They came together to participate in the Eid prayers organised by the Joint Eid Committee, Manjeri.

The decision to open the church gates for Eid prayers stemmed from the closure of the Government UP School



HEARTWARMING DISPLAY

ground, which usually served as the venue for Eid prayers in the predominantly Muslim town.

The closure was due to preparations for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Fr Joy Maslamani, the vicar of the church, expressed happiness at the

gesture, stating that such secular spaces offer a powerful response to divisive forces seeking to sow discord among secular-minded individuals.

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