



BRIEF



Artists take part in a procession as part of the Kettukazhcha rituals at Mulakkulam temple, in Chengannoor, Thursday.

Disqualified

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Raipur, Apr 11:

ACB/ EOW has conducted raids at 21 places all over Chhattisgarh and seized cash of Rs 19 lakh and also seized many electronic devices. The raids were conducted at 9 places in Raipur, 7 in Bhilai-Durg, 1 in Rajnandgaon and 4 in Bilaspur, totaling 21 places. In the search conducted at these places, ACB/ EOW seized cash of Rs 19 lakh and many electronic devices viz. laptops, pen drive, bank statements, documents related to moveable and immovable assets, ornaments worth crores and details of investment worth crores in Banks and other important documents. ACB/ EOW would be conducting examining these documents and prepare final report. It is learnt that through these documents, the persons by generating disproportionate and illegal money from Excise have made investment in general and Shell companies in layering, taken unsecured loans and others.

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leaders Vijay Reddy, Lokesh Salame, Rupesh, Mangesh, Vinod and Raje and used to ferry their money, the official said. "Last month,

businessmen in Devendra Nagar and Sadar Bazar and Pandri Raipur. In this entire raid and search, more than 30 officials from ACB/ EOW were present. **AP Tripathi taken into arrest:** ACB/ EOW in its action has taken into arrest former Special Secretary AP Tripathi from Bihar. An FIR has already been lodged against him in EOW. Prior to this ACB/ EOW has taken into arrest Anwar Debhar and Arvind Singh. **Raid in Raipur, Bilaspur as well:** The ACB/ EOW team had conducted raids at Devendra

Reddy had allegedly given him Rs 2 lakh and some Maoist pamphlets to be dropped in Raipur. Andhia delivered the money to an unidentified person in front of a university near Saraswati Nagar police station in Raipur on March 20," he said. "The person who received the money gave a sealed envelope to Aandhia and it was delivered to Reddy. Aandhia also bought a memory card from Raipur for Reddy as per his instruction. Aandhia got Rs 5000 for the work. He was also asked to distribute Maoist pamphlets and posters," the official added.

Nagar, Sadar Bazar, Pandri in Raipur and at the residence of Chartered Accountant Sanjay Mishra in Bilaspur. It is notable here that ACB/ EOW conducted raids and searches at many places in state on Thursday and in this the team reached Bilaspur and two member team raided the house of Sanjay Mishra in Bilaspur and held interrogation with him. It is learnt that Sanjay Mishra is CA of liquor businessman Atul Singh, as he owns FL 10A liquor license. The last government in the state by linking A in FL10, made a new system and made a dozen liquor businessmen as licensed owners. Actually as per the new system, all licensed FL10A owners used to get liquor stocked from godown of State Beverage Corporation and it was done only to get commission from the Companies. As result of this ACB/ EOW is conducted investigations in all such aspects involved in liquor scam.

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Leeladhar Kenvat (45), all relatives, he said. After the accident, the driver of the truck fled the scene, leaving his vehicle behind, he said. Enraged over the incident, several local residents staged a protest and blocked the path of vehicles engaged in coal transportation. They also damaged some vehicles. Subsequently, senior police and administration officials reached the spot and pacified them, he said. In another accident, a man identified as Tejlal Yadav (49) was killed and his brother Sukhram (26) in-

jured after the motorcycle they were riding collided with a tractor engaged in the transportation of sand, he said. The victim duo was returning home in Kudmura village from Korba when the accident happened in Rampur area under Civil Lines Police Station limits, he said. In the third incident, a man identified as Ritesh Kumar (24) was killed and his friend Pradip Kumar injured after their motorcycle crashed into a stationary truck at a toll plaza near Mohanpur village on Korba-Katghora road, he said.

'Modi's guarantee that the corrupt will go to jail'

Jaipur, Apr 11 (PTI):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asserted that the corrupt will have to go to jail and that he would not be deterred by any threats. Addressing a rally in Rajasthan's Karauli ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, Modi said strict action is being taken against the corrupt not only in the state but across the country. This is why the opposition has formed the "INDI alliance" against him, he said. "On one side there is Modi, who says remove corruption. On the other side are those who say save the corrupt. All these people who have set out to save



PM Modi being felicitated during a public meeting, ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, in Karauli, Thursday.

the corrupt listen carefully, no matter how many threats you give to Modi, the corrupt will have to go to jail. This is Modi's guarantee," he said. Modi said the 2024 Lok Sabha elections are not about who will become an

MP and who will not. "This election is about giving a new energy to the resolve of 'Viksit Bharat'," he said. Hitting out at the Congress, Modi said the party raised the slogan of 'Gareebi Hatao' for decades but it was he who worked

to bring 25 crore people out of poverty. The Congress, which is steeped in nepotism and corruption, seeks profit in people's compulsions. It found opportunities to loot even in jobs for the youth and a paper leak industry flourished under the patronage of its erstwhile government in Rajasthan, the PM said. Modi said every moment of his life is dedicated to the country. "Every moment in your name, every moment in the name of the country and that is why I say, 24x7 for 2047," he said. "Modi was not born to rest or have fun. Modi works hard because Modi has very big goals connected to the people of the country," he said.

Six kids killed after school bus overturns

■ 20 injured

Chandigarh, Apr 11 (PTI):

Six schoolchildren were killed and around 20 sustained injuries after a bus carrying them overturned in Haryana's Mahendragarh on Thursday, police said. The Haryana government has ordered a probe into the incident following the registration of an FIR, officials said. The bus belonged to a private school and was being driven rashly at a high speed due to which the driver lost control and rammed the vehicle into a tree after which it overturned, police said, citing reports. Reports also suggest that the driver



Wreckage of a school bus after an accident near Mahendragarh, in Narnaul district, Haryana, Thursday.

was under the influence of alcohol, police said, adding that he has been arrested and his medical report is awaited. The bus was carrying 30 children and the accident occurred near Unhani

village in Kanina, they said. Officials also said that the district authorities are ascertaining why the school was functioning despite a holiday owing to Eid festival.

Principal among three arrested....

The principal of the school whose bus overturned in Haryana's Mahendragarh, killing six children, is among three people who have been arrested in connection with the incident. The driver, who allegedly jumped out of the bus just before it rammed into a tree, has also been taken into custody, along with the secretary of the school. A senior police official said the medical test conducted on the driver has confirmed that alcohol was present in his bloodstream.

SBI refuses to share electoral bonds info under RTI

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100 crore was allegedly paid to Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in kickbacks to swing the now-scrapped excise policy in favour of a liquor lobby. The CBI arrested Kavitha in jail number 6 of Tihar prison around 12 noon on Thursday under Section 120-B (criminal conspiracy) read with Section 477-A (falsification of accounts) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 7 (offence relating to public servant being bribed) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, the officials said.

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On March 11, the court dismissed the SBI's petition seeking an extension of the deadline and ordered it to disclose the details of the electoral bonds to the EC by the close of business hours on March 12. RTI activist Commodore Lokesh Batra (retired) approached the SBI on March 13 seeking the complete data of the electoral bonds in the digital form, as provided to the EC after the Supreme Court's order.

The bank denied the information citing two exemption clauses given under the Right to Information (RTI) Act - section 8(1)(e) that is related to records held in a fiduciary capacity and section 8(1)(j) that allows withholding personal information.

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ACB sealed the residence of Pappu Bansal in Khursipar



Residence of Vijay Bhatia in Nehru Nagar (East)

Bhilai, Apr 11:

The Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) and Economic Offences Wing (EOW) conducted simultaneous raids at seven places in Durg - Bhilai in connection with the alleged liquor scam in Chhattisgarh.

Early in the morning, the ACB sleuths reached the residences of two close aides of the former Chief Minister. The EOW teams reached the residence of Pappu Bansal in New Khursipar and Vijay Bhatia at Nehru Nagar (East). The EOW also con-

ducted raids at the places of some other people associated with liquor business.

A team of about one dozen officers conducted a search at the bungalow of Vijay Bhatia in Nehru Nagar, East. Another team raided the house of Pappu Bansal alias Lakshmi

Narayan Bansal, in New Khursipar. According to information, Bansal's house was found locked and no one was inside. The sealed the house and pasted the notice at the main gate

The raids were conducted in connection with a case registered under

Section 7, 12 of Anti-Corruption Act as well as Sections 420, 467, 468, 471, 120B of IPC. The ACB teams recovered cash, electronic devices like laptop, pen-drive, bank statements, movable and immovable property documents, jewellery, etc.

Publication of notification for LS Election today

- Last date for filing nomination is April 19
- Voting on May 07 and counting on June 04

Bhilai, Apr 11:

Collector and District Election Officer Richa Prakash Chaudhary is going to publish the notification for Parliamentary Constituency 07 Durg under Lok Sabha Elections-2024 at 11:00 hrs on April 12. With the publication of notification, the nomination process will start. The work of filing nominations will be done from 11:00 hrs to 15:00 hrs except public holidays. The last date for filing nominations is Friday, April 19, 2024 till 15:00 hrs. Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place from 11:00 hrs on Saturday, April 20, 2024. The candidates will be able to withdraw their nominations till 15:00 hrs on Monday April 22, 2024. Voting will be held from

7:00 hrs to 18:00 hrs on Tuesday, May 7, 2024. Counting of votes will begin at 8:00 hrs on Tuesday, June 4, 2024. The election work will be completed before Thursday, June 6, 2024.

Nomination room has been established in the Collector's Court, Room No 04 (First Floor) and Office of Collector Durg for Parliamentary Constituency 07 Durg. Only a maximum of 5 persons including the candidate, his proposer and election agent will be able to enter the Returning Officer's room. Only three vehicles of the candidate and his agent will be allowed within the radius of 100 meters. It will be mandatory to obtain prior permission from the Additional District Magistrate for the use of vehicles. Collector staff will be able to enter their office room in the Collectorate till 10:00 hrs.

The deposit amount for general candidates con-

testing elections is fixed at Rs 25000, for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates it is fixed at Rs 12500. Nomination letter format 2A can be obtained from Nodal Officer Raghavendra (Senior Treasury Officer) or the appointed employee, in the Mineral Branch of the Collector's office. The voter list can be viewed through the nodal officer in the Excise Branch of the collector's office, Aditya Kunjam (Superintendent of land records) or the concerned employee. Receipts can be obtained by depositing the deposit amount in cash. For election, the candidate will have to open a separate bank account at least 1 day before filing the nomination and the candidate will have to mention this separate bank account while filing the nomination form. The limit of election expenditure to be incurred by a candidate during the election will be Rs 95 lakh.

Postal ballot training organised for Patwaris

Bhilai, Apr 11:

As per the instructions of Collector and District Election Officer Richa Prakash Chaudhary, training programme has been organised under Lok Sabha Elections-2024 for presiding officers and Voting Parties Numbers 1, 2 and 3 at BIT on 12 and 13 April. A training session was organised for Patwaris on April 11. Patwaris were given training for the distribution and collection of Form-12 for voting through postal ballot. DS Rajput, Nodal Officer Postal Ballot, Assistant Professor Dr Kushmanjali Deshmukh and Dr Sunita B Mathew



conducted the training at Tagore Hall, Science College, Durg. Pawan Thakur Additional Tehsildar, CB Sahu Assistant Nodal,

Aishwarya Kumar Dewangan Assistant Grade-2, Hemshankar Yadav Assistant Grade-3, Prakash Yadav Assistant Grade-3 were present.

Training of polling parties begins today

Bhilai, Apr 11:

Under the Lok Sabha Elections-2024, training of presiding and polling party numbers 1, 2, 3 has been organised at BIT Durg on 12 and 13 April 2024. The training has been organised in two shifts. Training will be given to the officers and employees included in the polling team in the first shift from 10:00 hrs to 14:00 hrs and in the second shift from 14:00 hrs to 17:00 hrs. According to the information received from Ashwani Dewangan, CEO of District Panchayat and Polling Team Training Nodal Officer, the officers and employees involved in the training should compulsorily bring a photocopy of the Election Duty Order and EPIC Card (Voter Identity Card) for postal ballot application on the training day.

Multifarious events organised for voter awareness

Bhilai, Apr 11:

Kalyan PG College, Sector 7 organised multifarious events for cleanliness and voter awareness. On the last day of the three-day voter awareness programme, the students conducted a sanitation drive and swept the entire market of Sector 7 in the morning. Later, a Rangoli competition was organized in which all the students made rangolis on the themes of cleanliness and hygiene as well as voter awareness. The rangolis on the theme of voting awareness were appreciated by the chief guest of the closing ceremony. Vice Chancellor of Hemchand Yadav University, Dr Arun Palta graced the closing ceremony as chief guest.



Principal of Kalyan Post Graduate College and Coordinator of National Service Scheme of Hemchand Yadav University, Dr RP Agrawal, Chairman of the Faculty of Arts of Kalyan Post Graduate College and National Service Scheme District Organization of Hemchand Yadav University, Dr Vinay

Sharma and NSS Program Officer Student Unit of Kalyan Postgraduate College, Dr Anirban Chaudhary lit the lamp and offered prayers to Goddess Saraswati.

Dr RP Agrawal welcomed the chief guest with a sapling and memento. Thereafter, Vice Chancellor Dr Aruna Palta and Kalyan College

Principal Dr RP Agrawal distributed certificates among all the participants. In his address, Dr RP Agrawal explained to the students about the importance of voting and appealed to them to vote in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. He also explained the importance of keeping the environment clean. In her address, Vice Chancellor Dr Aruna Palta asked the students to realise their energy and use it in the development of the country. She said that voting is not only a right but also their responsibility. She praised all the participants for their hard work and determination. The program concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr Vinay Sharma.

Two bike lifters nabbed with four stolen vehicles

Bhilai, Apr 11:

With the arrest of two ruffians, police claimed to have busted an inter-district gang of bike lifters. 04 stolen motorcycles worth approximately Rs 2.5 lakhs were recovered from the possession of the accused.

Considering the frequent incidents of vehicle thefts, SP Jitendra Shukla had directed his subordinates to trace and arrest the accused. Acting on his instructions, ASP (City Bhilai) Sukhnanandan Rathore, ASP (Crime) Richa Mishra, CSP (Chhawani) Harish Patil, CSP (Bhilai) Satyaprakash Tiwari and DSP (Crime) Hemprakash Nayak constituted at joint team of ACCU and various police stations led by ACCU I/c Inspector Kapil Dev Pandey, Bhilai Bhatti SHO Inspector Vipin Rangari,



Supela SHO Inspector Rajesh Mishra and Jamul SHO Inspector Keshav Koshale.

The team maintained vigil on the suspects and the network of informers was activated. Habitual criminals released from jail were also monitored. Meanwhile, Police received a tip off regarding

two boys who were looking for customers to sell a bike near Bachat Chowk in Sector 01.

Acting on this tip off, police nabbed the suspects Rahul Mahanand and Jagnesh Kumar Babu. During sustained interrogation, they confessed to stealing a bike from Nehru Nagar about one ago.

Thereafter, they lifted a bike about 15-20 days ago from near Railway Tracks in Sector 2; one Activa scooter from Atal Awasthi and about 04-05 days ago, they lifted a bike from Professor Colony, Raipur. The accused had concealed the stolen vehicles in the bushes near their house.

Police arrested the accused Rahul Mahanand (20) son of Vicky Mahanand a resident of Reshne Awasthi, Supela and Jagnesh Kumar Babu (20) son of Late Manoj Kumar Babu a resident of Balangir Orissa. Sub Inspector SN Singh, Head Constable Purushottam Sahu, ASI Shamit Mishra, Head Constable Sagor Khan, Santosh Mishra, Constable Rinku Soni, Rakesh Anna and Rakesh Chaudhary played a vital role.

Bhilai Steel providing strength to Sela Tunnel in Arunachal

Bhilai, Apr 11:

SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant has supplied more than 7,300 tonnes of steel for use in construction of the strategic Sela Tunnel Project in Arunachal Pradesh. Constructed at an altitude of 13,700 feet in West Kameng district on the road connecting Tezpur to Tawang, the Tunnel project, consisting of two tunnels and a link road, is aimed at providing all-weather connectivity to Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang region.

The project will not only provide a faster and more efficient transport route in the region but is of strategic importance to the country. Executed by the Border Road Organisation (BRO), the tunnel will cut down the travel time to Tawang by at least one hour. As of now, Sela Pass stays closed for a few winter months. The



project will provide a new alignment on the axis towards the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with easier movement for military personnel and equipment throughout the year.

While other integrated steel plants of SAIL have also supplied steel for the project, Bhilai Steel Plant has supplied 6545 Tonnes of TMT Bars, 512 Tonnes of TMT Bars in Coils, 88 tonnes of Wire Rods, 46 Tonnes of angles and channels, 94 Tonnes of Plates and 22 tonnes of Joists - all in the specified grades for use in construction of the

Sela Tunnel Project.

The total volume of steel supplied by SAIL is 24,216 Tonnes. Durgapur Steel Plant and IISCO Steel Plant at Burnpur, the other two Plants of SAIL that produce TMT Bars and rods have also supplied 8937 Tonnes and 3118 T of TMT Bars, respectively. DSP has also supplied 3662 Tonnes of Joists for the tunnel project.

Bokaro Steel Plant and Rourkela Steel Plant, both units of SAIL that primarily produce flat products have also supplied steel for the Sela Tunnel Project. BSL supplied 55 tonnes of

GC Sheets, 145 tonnes of HR Sheets and 146 Tonnes of HSM Plates. RSP has supplied 51 tonnes of HSM plates and 522 tonnes of plates from its Plate Mill.

It is worth mentioning that SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant has provided steel for several infrastructure projects and other projects of national importance. Bhilai has so far supplied over one lakh ninety thousand tonnes of TMT Bars from its Bar & Rod Mill for use in construction of the upcoming Ahmedabad-Mumbai bullet train project and about 8500 Tonnes of TMT Bars in HCR grade, both from Bar & Rod Mill and Merchant Mill for use in the prestigious ongoing Central Vista Project in the national capital. Bhilai Steel Plant has also supplied 15,900 Tonnes of steel for India's longest bridge over sea, the Atal Setu in Mumbai.

Placement drive conducted at CCET

Bhilai, Apr 11:

Christian College of Engineering and Technology organised a campus placement drive on April 10, 2024 for undergraduates of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Engineering. The Campus Drive provided a platform to the talented pool of graduates to showcase their skills and capabilities to esteemed companies seeking to recruit top-tier talent. The event serves as a bridge between academia and industry, facilitating meaningful connections and opening doors to promising career paths for the graduates.



Placement Drive. Their success is a testament to the quality of education and holistic development fostered at Christian College of Engineering and Technology Bhilai.

The College management extended heartfelt congratulations to all the students who secured placements and wished them continued success in their professional endeavours.

Gyanoday Hostel to be merged with Rajhara Boys' Hostel

Bhilai, Apr 11:

Gyanoday Hostel at Bhilai, run by SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant under its Corporate Social Responsibility Department (CSR) shall be merged with the Chitrakote Boys' Hostel at Rajhara Mines. This decision has been taken in view to provide better facilities to the hostel students. It is noteworthy that most of the residents at Gyanoday belong to the Vananchal areas, and with the merger of hostels, it will be more convenient for students, especially from the forest regions surrounding SAIL-BSP's Mines.

To provide better education to underprivileged students, the Gyanoday Hostel at Bhilai Sector-5 and the Chitrakote Hostel at Rajhara were established



by the CSR Department of the Plant. Besides, free coaching during the evening for competitive exams like IIT, JEE, and NEET, at Gyanoday Hostel. The hostellers are provided free accommodation, education, food, and other facilities.

A scholarship of Rs 24,000 is also provided to the students annually, to pursue Higher Education. Students having scored more than 80 percent marks in Class 10 are eligible to seek admission at

Gyanoday Hostel to pursue their 11th and 12th Class education, while the Chitrakote Hostel of Rajhara Mines present caters to students from Classes 6th to 10th.

Gyanoday Hostel in-charge Vijaynath Verma said that in the current session, there are a total of 26 students in the hostel, out of which only 10 students are left, who are preparing for the exam and shall stay in the hostel till the JEE Exam. The BSP management takes care of all the

requirements of the students so that they can study well.

After the examination, the Gyanoday Hostel of Bhilai will be merged with the Rajhara Hostel, where children from class 6th to 12th will be provided free accommodation along with education, food, and other facilities in the same hostel. Along production of steel, Bhilai Steel Plant has always taken firm steps to ensure quality education in its townships and adjoining areas, including mines and nearby forest regions, so that children of every class, caste, and community can receive good education and have a bright future. BSP also runs two Ispat Vikas Vidyalay Schools at Bhilai, where students from Economically Weaker Sections are provided a

quality education. As a result of these efforts, Bhilai has emerged as an Education Hub in the country.

SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant is one of those Public Sector Undertakings that has been continuously striving to improve the level of education along with contributing to the economic development of India. Gyanoday Hostel in Bhilai is one of BSP's several initiatives for success and public welfare. Among the students who graduated from this hostel, many are serving in some of the state's prestigious organizations, departments, and also the State Police Department. These genuine efforts have transformed the lives of numerous youths from Rowghat region, Rajhara, and the adjoining areas of the Plant.

Congmen have lost their mental balance: Sai

Assures people that reservation will never get cancelled; Congress creating rumour on the same

Commenting over Lakhm's cheap statement against PM

Mainpur, Apr 11:

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai came down heavily against Kawasi Lakhma said that Congmen have lost their mental balance and most of them have turned mental. CM addressing a public meeting at Mainpur came out strongly against the cheap language being used by the Congress leaders against PM Modi and said that with Congmen not having much of hopes in forthcoming LS polls, they all have lost their mental balance. Citing about Lakhma's comment in Goundi dialect, CM questioned the people present, as to whether the Congmen should go down so low for the PM of the country and added that this only shows that they all have become mental. CM Sai said that Congmen have failed to digest as to how a son of a poor and tea-seller can become the Prime Minister of India.

CM Vishnu Deo Sai was addressing a huge public meeting in Mainpur and replied on rumour being



spread about efforts being made by BJP to call-off the reservation system. CM charged that the Congmen in the name of votes are trying to spread this rumour among tribals that their reservation is going to be cancelled.

He assured the people present that the reservation of tribals will never be closed down and no power on this earth can stop reservation. Sai said that since Congmen are not having any issues, they are now trying to spread rumour and doubts that reservation would be cancelled. He appealed the people present not to get

influenced by wrong messages of Congmen and said that they need to be taught a lesson and ensure that they do not even open their account in forthcoming LS polls in the state.

Speaking further CM Sai said that wherever Modi visit, people starts shouting his name loudly. Modiji works day and night for 140 cr people of India and he works 18 hours out of daily 24 hours. On death of Modiji's mother, he performed the funeral in the morning and was back to work for the nation by evening hours. PM Narendra Modi has in-



creased the honour, name and fame of India all over the world and to pass such cheap comments against the most popular public leader of the world, Congmen have no rights.

CM further said that he luckily got opportunity to work with PM Modi during his 2014 term as Union Minister of State in his cabinet and said that he closely saw him and found that his first priority is the development of poor and make them economically strengthened. Modiji provided houses for poor, LPG cylinders, opened Jandhan Bank accounts and toilets for the poor in his

first term and in his second term fulfilled many a big promises including construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, removing of Article 370 from Kashmir peacefully; provided justice to female muslim woman by removing complex law that of 'triple talaq'.

It was PM Narendra Modi who got the Ram temple constructed for Lord Shri Ram left in a tent for 100 yrs and got a massive temple constructed for him. CM Sai said that this is the most important of LS polls for the country, has he has to be made PM for the third time, as in his last 10 yrs term as PM, he has provided recognition to India's talent and rich cultural heritage and made the poor, labourers, farmers, youth and women financially strong.

Today India is again on the path of becoming Vishwa Guru and for which we will have to re-elect him as the PM for the third time and for which he has come to seek people's blessings.

BROKEN BRANCHES



Strong winds accompanied with light showers left many branches broken at many places here on Thursday morning.

Rajnath to hold public meeting at Balod under Kanker constituency

Central Chronicle News

Cluster in-charge holds meeting over preparations

Raipur, Apr 11: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Union Defence Minister Rajnath would be on day-long visit to Chhattisgarh on April 13. During his visit, he would be holding a public meeting at Balod region under the Kanker Lok Sabha segment seeking vote in favour of the party candidate Bhojraj Nag against the Congress candidate which goes to

polling on April 26.

According to the information received, the Cluster in-charge and senior MLA Ajay Chandrakar on Thursday held meeting with the party rank and file to oversee the preparations for the public meeting to be held at Balod School on April 13. Party office-bearers were given

instructions to make essential arrangements for the public meeting. Meanwhile, the Congress leader Rahul Gandhi too would be in Kanker Lok Sabha segment to campaign in favour of the party candidate Bires Thakur on April 13. Apart from Rajnath, the senior BJP leader Amit Shah too would be holding a public meeting to campaign in favour of the party candidate in Rajnandgaon on April 14.

Several People's Representatives join BJP

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 11: Several People's Representatives including Sarpanch, Panch and District Panchayat members on Thursday joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in presence of the BJP candidate from Raipur Lok Sabha segment Brijmohan Agrawal here.

Prominent among those who joined the saffron brigade include Dwarika Prasad Verma, Dr Ganeshram Rawate who is Sarpanch from Amakoni, Jitendra Gahari, Rohsn Verma, Shanti Joshi, Deval Jangade, Budhrum Dhruv, Bharati Baghel, Vedram Banjare, Tilak



Ram Verma and several others from various section of society.

Speaking on the occasion, the BJP leader Brijmohan Agrawal said that Congress is a sinking ship with people avoiding to remain with the old

party. He further said that the rampant corruption during the Congress regime, has further promoted people to quit Congress and join the BJP with the objective to ensure development of the country.

'Congress becoming an object of hatred for public'

Central Chronicle News

Continuous statement against PM Modi is conspiracy

Raipur, Apr 11: State Vice President of Bharatiya Janata Party and State Convener of Lok Sabha Election Management Committee Shivratna Sharma has said that the continuous statements being made by Congress leaders against Prime Minister Narendra Modi have been termed as a conspiracy. He said that the silence of top Congress leaders shows that these controversial statements have their tacit approval and encouragement. The statements of Congress leaders are a matter of concern for the civilized society of the entire country.

BJP State Vice President Shivratna Sharma said that Kawasi Lakhma broke the democratic norms in the election meeting and gave a statement using words like 'Marega' for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In Bastar, Kawasi Lakhma is encouraging the youth to drive away the police personnel by killing them with bows and arrows.

Earlier, while addressing the nomination rally of Bhupesh Baghel in Rajnandgaon, Leader of Opposition Charan Das Manhat said that Modi's



head should be broken with a stick, such an MP should do it.

Sharma said that Naxalite Surju Tekam of Mohalla Manpur of Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha (arrested this week) had given a call to the Congress MLA while he was on the stage that those coming to ask for

votes for BJP should be killed. Later a BJP worker was also murdered. Isn't all this Congress sponsored?

During the stay of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Punjab, a conspiracy was hatched to surround and kill him. The Prime Minister had a narrow escape. Slogans of

'Mar Ja Modi Mar Ja Modi' have also been raised in the rallies of Khalistanis. Recently a newspaper has reported that Naxalites are intimidating people to vote for Congress. After all, what is the matter that the statements of Congress are becoming like not only Pakistan, Khalistani but also Naxalites. They are all speaking the same language.

He said that Congress has been badly defeated in the last two elections or it can be said that it has been badly defeated in a democratic manner. The panic of Congress is so much that its leaders are praying for the death of Modi.

NAMAZ OFFERED



Muslim brethren offered 'Namaz' on occasion of 'Id-ul-Fitr' in masjids here on Thursday.

Congress coalition govt will be formed this time: Baij

Raipur, Apr 11:

There is widespread opposition to the Modi regime. Deepak Baij, the President of the State Congress, stated that this time a Congress coalition government will be formed at the Centre.

Just as the phrase 'India Shining' failed, so will the slogan of crossing 400. In the ten years of the Janata Modi government, Modi and the BJP have governed solely through pronouncements. This time, the mandate will follow Modi's comments, and the public is prepared to hold him accountable for his lies.

Deepak Baij, President of the State Congress, stated that inflation has affected the distribution of the ordinary man's household budget. Modi entered the administration pledging to decrease

inflation in 100 days. Under Modi's leadership, inflation has hit an all-time high. Even basic goods such as bread, lentils, and mustard oil have grown out of reach of the average person. The Modi government is imposing GST on vital commodities. In the last ten years, the central government has failed to deliver on the promises made during elections. After winning the people's votes by promising them good days and Rs 15 lakh in their accounts, the Modi government is now taxing basic necessities such as milk, curd, rice, pulses, wheat, flour, gram flour, books, copies, stationery, and footwear. The imposition of arbitrary excise duties on fuel and diesel cost the taxpayer Rs 27 lakh crore. Looting is done by artificially raising the price of LPG. RSS and its asso-



ciated groups are just as culpable for the Modi government's broken promises as the BJP is for misleading the people. RSS and its affiliated organizations prevent the BJP from discussing government firms, sinking banks, LIC disinvestment, and social harmony. Deepak Baij, President of the State Congress, stated that while central government only talked about zero toler-

ance for corruption, the Modi government was also complicit in wrongdoing in the Rafale defense contract. The Modi government failed to appoint Lokpal in accordance with UPA law. The Modi government continues to safeguard Adani's corrupt practices.

Modi vowed that better days would come. The days of Modi's departure have arrived, but the golden days are yet to come. Promised to bring illicit money back from abroad. Vijay Mallya, Lalit Modi, and Nirav Modi stole money from the country with the Modi administration's knowledge, and the Modi government kept watching. Black money did not come from abroad. Vote was taken by guaranteeing 15 lakh rupees in each person's account, not a single penny came into account, he alleged.

No Summer Holidays for College Professors

Commissioner instructs Principals to ensure early declaration of exam results

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Apr 11: In a significant step, the state government would not give Summer Holidays to the Professors and Assistant Professors of Colleges with the objective to ensure early declaration of the results of University exams.

Commissioner of Higher Education Department has issued a circular to all the Principals in this regard in which it has been diverted the attention of non

availability of Professors and Assistant Professors for the valuation of the Answer sheets of the various exams due to Summer Holidays. Valuation work has been declared mandatory for the Professors and Assistant Professors who have been assigned responsibilities to check the Answer Sheets. College Principals have been directed to make additional arrangements in case the Professors and Assistant Professors are on any emergency Leave. Principals have been directed to inform the Directorate after canceling the Summer Holidays of the Professors and Assistant Professors.

Efforts made to innovate training for better retention: Collector

Raipur, Apr 11:

Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, innovations are being made for election-related training in the Raipur district. On the initiative of Collector and District Election Officer Dr. Gaurav Singh, audio-visual mediums are being used for training. By imbibing this, the trainees are becoming skilled in election work. The training for the first phase has been completed, and the training for the second phase will begin soon.

The training sessions starts with a message from Collector Dr. Singh. State-level master trainers show videos, and the district's master trainers explain the content of the videos. Along with the traditional method, audio-visual content is also being provided in the training. Flow charts, info sheets, and checklists as per the Election Commission's standards are included in the train-



ing. The trainees themselves are learning to handle the EVM machines so that no mistake happens at the polling booths. At the end, a link is provided which opens a QR code. Scanning this QR code opens an online test of 25 questions. This is followed by a detailed discussion, and master trainers resolving all doubts. The question paper for the voting teams has been prepared by Kedar Patel, Employment Officer and

Assistant Nodal Officer Remarkably, the polling process has been framed into a poem. This has been provided to the staff in the form of a song. The aim is to make it easier to memorise the process through songs, as poll duty teams find it easier to recall the voting process through these catchy tunes. A feedback form is also provided, inviting suggestions to improve the training. The addition of audio-visual techniques and a

one-minute song related to the voting process is helping the polling teams grasp the basics easily. The training material has been prepared under the guidance of District Panchayat CEO Vishwadeep, with contributions from IT Nodal, Ujjwal Porwar and DEO, P. C. Verma. Trainees praise innovative training methods and appreciate the district administration's efforts. Dr. Ritu Shrivastava, a lecturer from Government School, Dumartarai, who attended the training, said there were many changes in this year's training. Collector Dr. Singh's video message was very motivating. The trainers explained the processes in a structured manner through audio-visual content. Durga Devi Nirmalakar from Dharmapura Primary School said that the trainers explained everything through videos, and urged them to treat this as a festival, which removed their fear.

GRP seized 79 Kg 'Ganja' worth Rs 16 lakhs

Raipur, Apr 11:

GRP has seized 'Ganja' worth Rs 16 lakh from three smugglers at the Raipur Railway Station here on Thursday. The three smugglers who were nabbed include PK Lima S/o Nabin Lima (30), R/o Manikpur Thana, Mohana, District Gajapati, Odisha; Chitranjan Pike S/o Judhishthir Pike (29), R/o Chandragiri Thana Mohana, District Gajapati, Odisha and Tarang Rana S/o Gajapati Rana, (38), R/o Gram Choura, Thana Sinapali, District Nuapuda, Odisha. As per reports from SP GRP Raipur JR Thakur, it is in view of the forthcoming LS

polls that instructions have been received to take more and more action against smuggling of drugs through running trains. It is in view of the same, GRP Raipur police is conducting regular checking in trains and with the passengers alighting at the platform. It was during one such checking on April 10, Anti-Crime and GRP nabbed three with 'ganja' worth Rs 16 lakhs at Platform No.2 towards Bilaspur side over-bridge. The three have brought the drugs in 12146 Puri-LTT Superfast Express and it weighed total 79 kg. Ganja was packed in 8 cloth bags, so as to avoid any doubts in the mind of the police.

BJP complains to EC over controversial remarks on PM by Lakhma

Raipur, Apr 11:

The BJP delegation on Wednesday lodged a complaint with the Election Commission regarding the controversial statements of Kawasi Lakhma. The BJP delegation included state general secretary Sanjay Srivastava, MLA Motilal Sahu, election committee chief Vijay Shankar Mishra, state media in-charge Amit Chinnani and election committee co-convenor Mohan Pawar.

The delegation said that, Congress candidate from Bastar, Chhattisgarh, Kawasi Lakhma appealed to the people in Gondi dialect. He said "Kwasi



Lakhma will win, Narendra Modi will die", use of inappropriate language for the Prime Minister. A controversial statement has been given by Congress's Bastar Lok Sabha candidate Kawasi Lakhma on April 9 in Kutru, Bijapur, Chhattisgarh. During the election rally in Kutru, he

was instigating the local people against the police and the government by talking about killing the police with bows and arrows from the tin mine. On this occasion, Bijapur MLA Vikram Mandavi and other Congress officials were also present on the spot, who supported the controversial state-

ment of Kawasi Lakhma.

Kawasi Lakhma is continuously violating the election code of conduct by making such provocative and controversial statements during the Lok Sabha elections and in other ways. Despite repeated complaints, no meaningful action has been taken against him. In the past Kawasi Lakhma has also violated the election code of conduct by committing many illegal acts like openly distributing money during a religious event and making statements about voting after drinking alcohol. Complaints have also been made about this in the past.

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, April 11: National Institute of Technology (NIT) Raipur witnessed a vibrant celebration of Hindu Nav Varsh, the Hindu New Year, organized by Think India NIT Raipur. The event, held on Wednesday, brought together students, faculty members, and esteemed guests to commemorate the cultural significance of the occasion.

The event commenced with a traditional welcome of guests including Dr. NV Ramana Rao, Director of NIT Raipur; Dr. Suresh Kumar Rajana, Faculty In-charge of Bhaskaracharya Study Circle; Dr. Anuj Kumar Shukla, Chhattisgarh



State In-charge of Think India; Dr. Ashutosh Mandavi, HOD of Advertising and Public Relation Department in KTUJM; and Shivam Goel, Chhattisgarh State Convener of Think India.

Dr. Suresh Kumar Rajana delivered an insightful speech, highlighting the rich diversity of Indian culture and providing an overview of the Bhaskaracharya Study Circle.

Addressing the audience, Dr. NV Ramana Rao commended the initiative of the Bhaskaracharya Study Circle, emphasizing its role in promoting awareness among students and reconnecting them with Indian roots. Dr. Anuj Kumar Shukla emphasized the importance of unity and nationalism among Indian students, while Dr. Ashutosh Mandavi applauded the efforts of the Think India

team and encouraged students to actively participate in such initiatives for their holistic development. Overall, the Hindu Nav Varsh Programme organized by Think India NIT Raipur served as a platform for cultural celebration, intellectual discourse, and community engagement, reflecting the institute's commitment to nurturing a well-rounded educational experience for its students.

MNREGA workers take oath to vote under voter awareness program

For Lok Sabha Elections 2024**Korea, Apr 11:**

Under the guidance of Collector and District Election Officer Vinay Kumar Langeh, a massive voter awareness campaign is being run in the district under SVEEP. Under the direction of District Panchayat CEO and Sweep Nodal Dr. Ashutosh Chaturvedi, various programs and activities are being organized in the villages of Baikunthpur and Sonhat development blocks for 100 percent voting.

In this series, workers working under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MNREGA) in Janpad Panchayat, Gram Panchayat Salwan Kala of Sonhat and Rajauli took oath to vote in large numbers. Nandlal Rajwade, Surendra Rajwade, Ramkaran and Jayakaran



working here said that voting is necessary for the development of our district and country and all voter brothers and sisters must vote. The Collector also said that it is necessary for everyone's participation in the biggest Mahadan voting of democracy and has told the new and young voters that just as education is necessary for an informed society, similarly voting is necessary for a healthy democracy and the development of

the country. He appealed to the youth to vote themselves and also motivate the voters around them to vote. Manoj Singh Jagat, Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat, Sonhat, said that a voter awareness campaign is being run to encourage all sections of people to vote in the Lok Sabha elections so that the voting percentage can increase in District Panchayat Sonhat.

Power disruption continues due to bad weather

Kurud, Apr 11:

There was disruption in power supply in the villages and surrounding areas of Kurud, Bhakhara and Magarlod blocks in the past days (08th and 09th) due to bad weather heavy rains and storms. Consumers of villages supplied from Garadih and Seldeep sub-stations were affected due to damage to pin insulators and similarly, in Bhakhara sub-division, 02 pin insulators malfunctioned and 01 pole broke due to breakage in Khamhariya line.

The lines supplied from Bhakhara sub-stations were affected, which was immediately rectified on the same day and the power system was restored. Whereas in Magarlod Subdivision area on 09.04.24, villages like Singapore, Anjora etc. were affected due to failure of 05 pin insulator in 33 KV Pond feeder, 03 No. 11 KV Bhendri Basti feeder and Rakadih feeder on 08th and 09th. Due to

damage to pin insulator and lightning at one place, power supply was disrupted in which villages like Bhendri, Chamsur, Rakadih, Bhotidih, Chandana, Parasathi, Khairjiti etc. were affected.

All the defected lines were rectified by the department and closed lines were restarted. Executive Engineer of Kurud Division G.K. Banjare has informed that in all the above mentioned places affected by disruption in power lines due to bad weather, the officers and employees of the Electricity Department showed promptness, found the fault and carried out the rectification work and normalized the disrupted power system. The Executive Engineer has appreciated the working style of the team of all the electrical workers engaged in electricity improvement in the Kurud division area and has said that in the future too, the power company employees will always be ready to deal with such sudden challenges.

Centuries from Neel and Krishna help Raipur reach 351 runs

U-19 Cricket tournament of CSCS**Central Chronicle News**

Raipur, Apr 11: Neel Chandrana and Krishna Taunk scored centuries to help Raipur score 351 runs against Janjgir-Champa in the Under 19 match being organized under the aegis of Chhattisgarh State Cricket Sangh (CSCS) at Rajnandgaon Ground on Wednesday.

Neel Chandrana scored maximum 138 runs for the team whereas Krishna Taunk too scored 109 runs to ensure Raipur scores 351 runs against Janjgir-Champa team. Anubhav claimed maximum 4 wickets for Janjgir whereas Md Shad too claimed 2 wickets for his team. In a separate match, half centuries from Ashutosh Kasyap (56



runs) and Lakshya Goswami (54 runs) helped Dhamtari score 253 runs against Dantewada. Similarly, Kshitij Tiwari scored 106 runs for Durg to help team score 313 runs against Bastar

whereas Samarth Mulwani too scored 60 runs for the team. Shanidhya Singh Thakur claimed 4 wickets for Bastar whereas Rudra Pratap too claimed 3 wickets for his team.

Workers condition will improve if Cong govt is formed at Center: Baij

Congress promises to increase MNREGA wages from Rs 200 to Rs 400**Raipur, Apr 11:**

The condition of workers in the country will improve if the Congress government is formed at the Centre. State Congress President Deepak Baij said that when Congress was in power in the country, Congress had given legal guarantee to employment. For this, Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee (MNREGA) was created in which it became the legal right of every labourer to get work for 100 days. The Modi gov-



ernment has maliciously cut the MNREGA budget by a huge 15 to 25 percent every year, due to which it has become difficult to get employment for even 20 days. If the Congress government is formed again at the Centre, the Congress has promised to start Shramik Nyay Yojana for the workers. Congress will increase the wages under

MNREGA from Rs 200 to Rs 400 per day. The scope of MNREGA wages will expand. MNREGA funds and workers can also be deployed for the construction of public assets such as classrooms, libraries and primary health centres. Congress will launch an Urban Jobs Program, which will guarantee work in rebuilding and renewing urban infrastructure.

State Congress President, Deepak Baij said that Congress will bring equal rights for women workers. Congress will address issues of gender discrimination and gender inequality in the workplace and access to economic opportunities. Congress will ensure that

the principle of 'equal pay' is implemented to prevent discrimination in the pay of women. The unfair and unjust amendments made by the Modi government in the labour laws against the interests of the workers will be improved in the interest of the workers. State Congress President Deepak Baij said that Congress will also work to organize the work of delivery boys. Congress shall enact a law to specify and protect the rights of unorganized workers and to enhance their social security. Congress will propose laws to regulate the employment of domestic workers and migrant workers and ensure their basic legal rights.

Chaitra Navratri festival begins with devotion

Nine forms of Goddess Durga will be worshiped for nine days**Kharora, Apr 11:**

Chaitra Navratri, the great festival of devotion to Shakti, has started from 9th April which will continue till 17th April. During these nine days of Navratri, nine forms of Goddess Durga will be worshipped and here in the region, all the small and big goddess temples of Tal Kharora area have been illuminated and decorated with the best fineries. Chaitra Navratri starts with the establishment of Ghat in Abhijeet Muhurta and on this occasion, the Manokamana Jyoti Kalash has been lit in



all goddess temples of the region and besides, Janwara has also been sown in homes, with people abstaining from prohibited food for nine days.

A lot of enthusiasm is being seen among the devotees regarding Navratri till Janwara immersion the devotion and

festivity is to continue. On the day of Panchami, special adornment of the Mother Goddess will be done and on Ashtami, Yagya Havan will be performed with Vedic chanting. For the convenience of the devotees, the temple committees have also made special preparations

this time, as devotees will be able to go directly to the sanctum sanctorum and worship the Mother Goddess. From morning till evening the Devi temples are resounding with Jas Seva songs, apart from chants rituals and vedic mantras to mark the nine day splendour.

School bus conductor kidnaps and rapes minor girl

Anwari, Apr 11: A 14-year-old minor student, resident of Bhakhara area, was kidnapped and raped by a school bus conductor while she was on her way to her home. Bhakhara police took action against the accused under Section 363,366,376 and POCSO Act 4 8 (10), arrested him and produced him in the court and sent him to jail. According to the information received from the police, the minor girl is a student of class ninth and she used to go to the private school of Bhakhara by bus from her village.

Young man takes Samadhi for 9 days

Administration and health department takes stock**Dongargaon, Apr 11:**

A rare case of a youth named Harichandra father Ghanshyam, age 22 years taking Samadhi has come to light in the nearby village of Margaon. The young man has accepted this samadhi state as per the orders of his guru and thereafter after receiving complaints from the villagers and family members regarding this matter, the administration, Gram Panchayat representative and the Health Department team took stock of the situation.

Tehsildar PL Nag said that the youth has taken Samadhi from 9th, the first day of Navratri, which will continue for 9 days, and as soon as the information was received, a team of Revenue and Health Department was sent to the spot in the presence of the villagers, where a conversation



was held with the youth. Along with this, the health department team has also been asked to conduct a health test in two days. At present the young man is healthy and fine and a Panchnama has been prepared in the presence of the villagers,

in which the youth Harichandra father Ghanshyam, age 22 years, resident of Margaon, has taken full responsibility of the matter. Also the young man has kept a person with him for his care and other needs who is present 24 hours to take care of him.

BJP determined for development and good governance: Bohra

Pandaria, Apr 11:

MLA Bhavna Bohra is continuously reaching out to the public in the assembly constituencies and doing public relations giving information about the achievements and schemes of the 10 years of the Modi government. Chhattisgarh Cabinet Minister and Pandaria Assembly in-charge Minister Lakhlan Dewangan along with Bhavna Bohra did public relations in village Mohgaon, Jangalpur and Kunda and campaigned in favor of Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha candidate Santosh Pandey for the elections to be held on April 26. Addressing the public Lakhlan Dewangan said that Bharatiya Janata Party is a party

working for public interest with the aim of development and good governance and in the last 10 years, India has presented its distinct identity in the whole world due to the historic actions and decisions taken by the Modi government at the Centre, including many announcements and schemes for the development of Chhattisgarh. In the same meeting Bohra said that today our India is progressing continuously due to the foresight and spirit of national service of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his efforts for developed India and developed Chhattisgarh have given new impetus to the development of Chhattisgarh and his efforts to empower women through Ujjwala Yojana, Awas

Yojana, Matritva Vandana Yojana, Izzat Ghar, Lakhpati Didi and Drone Didi schemes are bearing fruit today.

Appealing to the public, Bhavna Bohra said that Santosh Pandey has been continuously raising the voice of the public in the Lok Sabha. Be it a matter of public interest or public convenience, he expressed his views vocally in the Parliament and presented the problems of Chhattisgarh and seeing the work done in our Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha today, the party has again made him a candidate and as an aware voter, your voting will give impetus to the development of Chhattisgarh and the country including Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha.

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'Will not accept CAA, NRC, UCC'

Kolkata, Apr 11 (PTD):

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said she will not allow implementation of the CAA, NRC and the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the state. Addressing a gathering here at the Red Road on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, she claimed that some people will try to "engineer riots" during elections and urged those who participated in the programme "not to fall prey to the plot".



WB CMMamata Banerjee addresses people on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr festival, in Kolkata, Thursday.

Eid-ul-Fitr marks the culmination of the fasting month of Ramzan. "We will not accept the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, National Register of Citizens and Uniform Civil Code. We will not accept any forcible implementation of these. I do not know how to hate people. I do not deliver hate speeches. I want everybody to live like

brothers, in peace and harmony. If we will live unitedly, nobody will be able to cause harm to us. Do not let anybody break this unity," Banerjee said while addressing the gathering at the Red Road. "Till I am alive, nobody will be able to cause harm to you. I will keep fighting them. I have learnt from you people not fearing death, but it's the

other way round," she added. "... there will be people who will be trying to engineer riots in the name of religion. You keep your cool and we will not let them to succeed in initiating riots here," Banerjee said. In an apparent reference to the BJP, Banerjee alleged that with the elections closing in, the central government agencies are

being "used" to scare the people, mainly the opposition leaders. "A few people want that during this election to scare people in the name of agencies.

Drive the CBI, ED, Income Tax, and NIA after them. I will tell them (BJP) to construct a jail and put everyone behind the bars. But will you be able to put the entire population of 130 crores in jail? I am ready to give blood for the country, but not ready to allow this torture go on," she said. Banerjee without taking any name further alleged that at the moment when the election is around, a selected few Muslim leaders in the country were getting calls with offers. "Today, during this election time, you are selecting and calling chosen Muslim people asking them what they want... I tell you they do not want anything," she elaborated.

RELIGIOUS PROCESSION



Tribal community people participate in a procession during 'Sarhul' festival celebrations, in Ranchi, Thursday.

NDMC launches 'tree ambulance' to protect green cover

New Delhi, Apr 11 (PTD):

The NDMC has launched a 'tree ambulance' for treating ailing trees and maintaining the green assets in the areas falling under it, officials said. The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has customised an eco-friendly CNG-run 'tree ambulance' equipped with two water tanks, having storage capacities of 750 litres and 250 litres, and a high-pressure pump with a jetting hose.

It also has space for carrying equipment, pesticides, fungicides, insecticides and so on. A team will be deployed in the ambulance to check the health of trees and to attend to complaints or reports received from field

staff related to pest infestation, hollow or drying trees on a regular basis for need of treatment, washing of trees on regular basis, a statement said.

The tree ambulance will be used to treat the ailing trees for infestation of diseases, pests, termites, etc. The hollow trunk of trees shall be provided a new lease of life through surgery, the statement added.

The procedure of tree surgery involves removing the infested or hollowed-out part, cleaning it with a brush, washing it properly, applying insecticides, and fungicides on the infested portion and filling the hollow trunk with inert material like foam and covering it with

chicken mesh followed by sealing it, it explained.

The NDMC area has green assets including approximately 1.80 lakh trees. The council maintains approximately 1500 acres of green area and 135 green avenues, 10 major parks, 1400 residential colony parks, 50 roundabouts, 10 departmental nurseries including three hi-tech nurseries, and three international relationships memorial parks.

It also maintains several 'happiness areas' and prestigious gardens like Nehru Park, Lodi Garden, Talkatora Garden and Sanjay Jheel, Children's Park - India Gate, Central Parks at Connaught Place, CWG Park, Shanti Path etc.

Mumbai, Apr 11:

Star Bharat's gripping fantasy thriller, "Shaitani Rasmlein," continues to captivate audiences with each episode, viewers are taken on a journey into the depths of suspense and mystery, leaving them spellbound. Vibhav Roy, portraying the character of Piyush, is lauded for his captivating performances across a range of television shows, showcasing his undeniable charisma.

Despite his academic pursuits in Australia, Roy's deep-rooted connection to Indian culture shines through in his excitement and cultural approach, particularly during the Navratri celebrations with his family.

Vibhav Roy offers insights into the significance of Navratri

Recalling the cherished memories of Kanjak Puja from his childhood, Vibhav Roy emphasizes its pivotal role in his family's devotion to Durga Maa. "Kanjak Puja has always been a cornerstone of our Navratri celebrations, symbolizing our unwavering devotion and reverence for the divine feminine.

I have vivid memories of my sister eagerly participating in the rituals, her innocent enthusiasm adding an extra layer of joy to the occasion. These moments of togetherness, especially during the puja, hold a special place in my heart and serve as a reminder of the importance of faith and family bonds," he fondly reminisces.



Vibhav Roy

In the midst of the vibrant Navratri celebrations, Roy sheds light on the profound significance of this sacred festival within his family. He shares, "Navratri holds a special place in our hearts, as it's not just about the festivities but also a time for deep intro-

spection and spiritual growth.

From lighting the diya to engaging in Bhagvat Geeta readings, these rituals have transformed from mere traditions to invaluable moments of enlightenment, guiding us on our spiritual journey and fostering a profound sense of connection with the divine."

As fans eagerly await the unfolding drama of "Shaitani Rasmlein," they're invited to immerse themselves in the mystical world of the show. Tune in to Star Bharat, airing Monday to Friday at 10 pm, and witness Vibhav Roy's spellbinding performance, as he brings depth and intrigue to the captivating storyline.

Bengaluru beware: Summer of 2024 is just a sneak peek

Bengaluru, Apr 11 (PTD):

Bengaluru's summer of 2024 is just a sneak peek into the future, if you go by what the experts predict. The city, which lost its green cover by 66 per cent, water bodies by 74 per cent, and witnessed a growth of 584 per cent in built-up area - as per Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) of Indian Institute of Science - buckled under the El Nino's assault this summer. Things will get worse if the trend continues: By 2038, CES predicts that forests will be reduced to 0.65 per cent (as per last census in 2022, it is 3.32 per cent). Bengaluru city will be choked with paved surfaces (more than 98 per cent) and 69.90 per cent (from 55.71 per cent in 2022) in Bengaluru Urban will be paved areas by 2038, said a study by the CES.

'GANGAUR' FEST



Devotees participate in a religious procession on the occasion of the 'Gangaaur' festival, on the banks of river Brahmaputra, in Guwahati, Thursday.

Six children of ministers spice up LS poll scene in Karnataka

Bengaluru, Apr 11 (PTD):

With six children of Karnataka Ministers in the Lok Sabha poll arena, the campaign scene is getting spiced up in the high-stakes elections for the ruling Congress in the state. Prabha Mallikarjun, wife of Minister S S Mallikarjun, is also in the poll fray. The grand old party tried its best to make several ministers enter the Lok Sabha election fray but none of them agreed and, instead, they proposed the candidature of their family members.

"Now, deliver" is the stern message of the Congress leadership to the ministers, putting the onus on them to ensure the victory of their kin, according to party sources. The

Congress secured only one seat in Karnataka in the 2019 general elections, and has now set an ambitious target of winning in 15 to 20 constituencies in the coming polls.

Elections in 28 constituencies in the State will be held in two phases on April 26 and May 7. Sons of Laxmi Hebbalkar, Eshwar Khandre and H C Mahadevappa -- Mrinal Ravindra Hebbalkar, Sagar Khandre and Sunil Bose -- have been fielded from Belagavi (Belgaum), Bidar and Chamarajanagar, respectively. Daughters of Satish Jarkiholi, Shivanand Patil and Ramalinga Reddy - Priyanka Jarkiholi, Samyukta Patil and Sowmya Reddy -- are in contention in Chikkodi,

Bagalkot and Bangalore South respectively.

Prabha Mallikarjun, wife of Minister S S Mallikarjun and daughter-in-law of veteran party leader Shamanur Shivashankarappa, is the party's nominee from Davangere. "In this 'do or die' situation, the ministers have found the Lok Sabha election a launch pad for their children and relatives. We have to see how these ministers succeed in their mission," a Congress insider said.

Barring Sowmya Reddy, who is a former MLA, none of them have any legislative experience in elections. Stakes are high for some other ministers as well. The party has fielded Radhakrishna Doddamani, son-in-law of Congress

President M Mallikarjun Kharge in the family's home turf of Kalaburagi (Gulbarga), a seat held by the BJP.

Kharge's son and Minister Priyank Kharge has taken charge of spearheading the campaign in this segment, where his father had lost in the 2019 general elections. "Priyank has taken this election as a prestige issue given the fact that the Congress president hails from here and had represented this constituency in the past in the Lok Sabha," a Congress leader said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had last month launched the BJP's formal campaign in Kalaburagi in what was seen as an aggressive message to the Congress.

Leaders quit MNS over Raj Thackeray supporting Modi

Mumbai, Apr 11 (PTD):

Many office-bearers of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) have resigned in protest after their party chief Raj Thackeray declared support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance in the state. MNS general secretary Kirtikumar Shinde, one of those who have quit, took to Facebook to explain his decision. In a post on the social media platform on Wednesday, he said MNS chief Thackeray had taken a stand against PM Modi and BJP in 2019. "Today, after five years, Raj saheb has changed his political role at the most crucial moment in the his-

tory of the country. Political analysts will tell how wrong he is and how right. "Nowadays leaders can play the political role they want, whenever they want. But the fighters (a reference to party workers) who believe in their thoughts are crushed. What about that," he asked in the post.

In his annual Gudi Padwa (the first day of Marathi New Year) rally on Tuesday, Thackeray announced his unconditional support to PM Modi and the Mahayuti alliance comprising the BJP, Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and the NCP under Ajit Pawar. Formed in 2006, the MNS backed Modi's candidature for the PM's post in

2014. However, Thackeray, a firebrand leader known for his oratory, became a bitter critic in 2019 and attacked Modi's policies. He has now backed Modi just before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Mihir Dave and office-bearers of MNS' student wing in Dombivli, on the outskirts of Mumbai, also quit the party citing Thackeray's inconsistent positions.

Dave said they exited the party in protest after Thackeray declared his support to PM Modi. "We found it difficult to cope with the changing stances of Raj saheb. The difference of opinion over Raj saheb's decision has also led to disagreements among the workers, so it is better to part ways," he said.

AM/NS India observes World Health Day

Paradeep, Apr 11:

World Health Day was celebrated at ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) with the aim of promoting awareness about both physical and mental health among employees and workers, fostering a healthier and happier lifestyle.

Aligned with this year's theme, 'My Health, My Right', a series of programs were organised throughout the week. Employees, workers, business partners, and their family members actively participated in the programs.

On 5th April 2024, a drawing and colouring competition on the theme 'Healthy Habits' saw huge participation of children of pre-nursery to class 7.



On 6th April, a walkathon was organised from the Plant gate to the medical campus in which more than 150 participants took part.

The event was flagged off by Suresha G, Executive Director, Odisha Operations, AM/NS India. Post-walkathon, Dr. Ajit Jena, Chief Medical Officer, Odisha Assets, AM/NS India, shared valuable tips on heart health.

As part of the celebrations, renowned guest invitees, Dr. Ashish Panda, physiotherapist from Kalinga Hospital conducted a session on ergonomics while Dr. Deepak Behera, Senior Cardiologist of CARE Hospital conducted a cardiac clinic for the employees.

Well-known dietician Dr. Guru Prasad Das emphasised the benefits of millets and a heart-healthy diet. There was

also a wellness workshop by psychologists from MindPeers, focusing on mental health.

On World Health Day on April 7, 2024, a specialised health camp for adolescent girls was held at G.C. High School in Nuagarh which was attended by 56 adolescent girls. Dr. Niranjan Dwivedy led the medical team in providing health check-ups and essential medications, along with guidance on maintaining

optimal health practices.

An awareness camp on diabetes and blood pressure care was organised catering to villagers and Self-Help Groups, thus benefiting over 135 participants. Continuing the initiative, on 9th April a fitness camp organised by AM/NS India's Health & Safety team featured external trainers conducting workout sessions emphasizing the importance of exercise.

Highlighting the significance of observing World Health Day, Suresha G, said, "World Health Day is a reminder for us to prioritise health, adopt conscious lifestyle changes, and lead disease-free lives. At AM/NS India, we are committed to holistic well-being of our employees, partners, and the community at large".

Voter awareness initiatives ramp up in Korba

■ SVEEP core committee gathers to strategize outreach

Korba, Apr 11:

In a concerted effort to enhance voter awareness and engagement, SVEEP Nodal Officer and District Panchayat CEO, Sambit Mishra, convened a meeting of the SVEEP Core Committee members at the District Panchayat meeting room, under the guidance of Collector and District Election Officer, Ajit Vasant.



During the meeting, CEO Mishra emphasized the importance of organizing programs under SVEEP to encourage participation among new voters, employees, workers, women, and senior citizens. He outlined a comprehensive strategy, urging the conduct of voter awareness campaigns through initiatives such as foot rallies in both urban

and rural areas.

Furthermore, Mishra advocated for the involvement of public and private enterprises in conducting SVEEP activities including human chains, bike rallies, cycle rallies, rallies for persons with disabilities, street dramas, poster and rangoli competitions, and slogan writing contests. He underscored the significance of engaging organizations such as NSS, NCC, scout guides, college students, and self-help groups' women in these endeavors.

Recognizing the contributions of participants, Mishra instructed the issuance of certificates and awards to individuals excelling in various competi-

tions. He also emphasized the involvement of public and private enterprises in conducting SVEEP activities to broaden outreach and maximize impact.

The meeting witnessed the presence of esteemed dignitaries including Principal Dr. Sadhna Khare, Deputy Director of Agriculture Ajay Anant, Additional Commissioner of Municipal Corporation Mishra, Deputy Director of Social Welfare Siniwali Goyal, District Education Officer T.P. Upadhyay, Deputy Director of Panchayat Julie Tirkey, and District Public Relations Officers, among others.

Congress mobilizes for electoral victory in Lahoud

■ Party leaders rally support for Shivkumar Dahria

Lavan, Apr 11:

The Zone-level Congress meeting convened in Lahoud village, Lavan block of Kasdol assembly constituency, concluded with fervent pledges to ensure the triumph of Dr. Shivkumar Dahria, the Janjgir Champa Lok Sabha constituency candidate.

State Secretary of Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee and former Raipur District Panchayat Vice President, Parmeshwar Yadu, orchestrated the pivotal meeting as the Damru Zone in-charge. Addressing the gathering, Yadu emphasized the imperative of securing a Congress government at the center, pledging significant



welfare measures for women upon victory. He rallied attendees to unite in their efforts to dislodge the incumbent Bharatiya Janata Party government in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, endorsing Dr. Shivkumar Dahria as the candidate primed for success.

Notable attendees included Lalita Yadu, the city president of Baloda Bazar Mahila Congress, Gurudayal Yadav, the block

president of Lavan Block Congress Committee, and several esteemed district members from Baloda Bazar. The gathering witnessed a robust presence of dedicated Congress workers and Mahila Congress members, alongside sector in-charges and booth in-charges, collectively reaffirming their commitment to securing electoral victory for the party's chosen candidate.

Collector emphasizes officers' attendance for election program



■ Call for diligence in assigned duties amidst preparations

Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Apr 11: In a bid to ensure maximum participation in the Lok Sabha General Election 2024, Collector and District Election Officer Leena Kamlesh Mandavi urged all district officers to attend the district-level SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) program diligently. This directive was issued dur-

ing the weekly deadline meeting held at the Arpa meeting room of the Collectorate, where preparations and departmental tasks related to the elections were comprehensively reviewed.

Highlighting the significance of their roles, the Collector emphasized that officers should study the instructions of the Election Commission of India meticulously and discharge their assigned responsibilities with utmost seriousness. Stressing the importance of headquarters' presence, the Collector mandated

that no officer should depart without prior authorization.

Moreover, the Collector issued directives to ensure uninterrupted power supply and the provision of clean drinking water across the district under essential services. Deliberations also encompassed the resolution of pending cases on a departmental basis, with a call for prompt resolution of inter-departmental matters through effective coordination.

The meeting, attended by Additional Collector Namrata Anand Dongre, Project Director DRDA Kaushal Prasad Tendulkar, Joint Collectors Priya Goyal and Dileram Dahire, Deputy Collector Prafulla Rajak, and other district officials, underscored the collective commitment to executing electoral duties efficiently and facilitating seamless election processes.

Hafiz Sultan Raza leads Eid-ul-Fitr prayers in Katgi



Katgi, Apr 11:

The community of Adarsh Gram Panchayat Katgi came together today to observe Eidul Adha prayers, marking a joyous occasion for Muslims in the region. Led by Hafiz Sultan Raza, who traveled from Jharkhand, the Eidul Fitr namaz commenced promptly at 9:30 AM.

After the prayers, Hafiz Sultan Raza delivered a Khutba, emphasizing messages of peace and unity. The congregation then offered prayers for the de-

ceased, seeking forgiveness from Allah Almighty for those resting in the cemetery.

Among the notable attendees were Ghulam Khan, Gulzar Khan, Sattar Khan, Maulana Salman Raza, Sheikh Azam, Zahoor Qureshi, Takim Qureshi, and many others from the local Muslim community. The gathering witnessed a significant turnout, with individuals like Martyr Mohammad, Tariq Mohammed, Islam Khan, and several others participating fervently.

Voting machines commissioned in the strong room

■ Of Model College

Jagdalpur, Apr 11:

The Sector Officer should understand the work of commissioning very seriously and get it done, so that if there is any problem related to the machines on the voting day, the initiative to resolve it should be taken by the Sector Officer at the first level. The above instructions were given by Collector and District Election Officer Vijay Dayaram K while inspecting the commissioning work of voting machines in the Strong Room located at Model College. He also took stock of the activities of commissioning work, rejection of machines and mockpole of machines.

During the commissioning work, the District Election Officer asked the Sector Officers and Master Trainers to personally



check the machines coming in each table. Along with this, he said that the commissioning work of all the machines is to be completed by Thursday evening by increasing the commissioning work to more than fifty percent on Wednesday. The Collector also discussed with the engineers who had arrived from Hyderabad for the commissioning work and gave necessary instructions.

It may be noted that under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, the voting

machines EVM, VVPAT and ballot unit used in all three assembly constituencies of Bastar district are being commissioned.

On this occasion, Deputy District Election Officer Praveen Verma, Joint Collector Sunil Sharma, Assistant Returning Officer Bharat Kaushik, Subrata Pradhan, AR Rana and other officials were present. The Collector inspected the security arrangements of the strong room, CCTV and other arrangements.

Santosh Sonkar honoured for dedication to Manas forums

Rajim, Apr 11:

The ongoing three-day state-level Ramayana conference at Kopra witnessed a momentous occasion as Santosh Kumar Sonkar, the President of Shri Ram Darbar Manas Mandali Chaubandha, was bestowed with a prestigious honor. On the second day of the event, held at Manas Manch, Sonkar was felicitated by stage director and President Awarded teacher Dr. Munnalal Devdas, renowned folk singer Faguram Tarak from Chhattisgarh, and esteemed lit-



terateur Phanendra Sahu.

In recognition of his unwavering dedication to Manas forums, Sonkar was presented with a Shriphal amidst applause from the audience. Noteworthy is Sonkar's consistent presence and contributions to the promotion of Manas literature and cul-

tural heritage.

Among those extending their congratulations and best wishes to Sonkar were prominent figures including Tikamchand Sen, President of Prayag Sahitya Samiti; Jitendra Sukumar Sahr, President of Ratnanchal District Sahitya Parishad; and Acharya Tularam Sahu of Shri Ram Sangeet Kala Kendra. Singer Deepak Shriwas of Lakshmi Narayan Manas Mandali also joined in conveying their regards, anticipating a promising future for Sonkar in his endeavors.

Sukma district gears up for peaceful Ram Navami

Sukma, Apr 11:

A district-level peace committee meeting convened in the Collectorate meeting room under the guidance of Collector Haris S, witnessed proactive discussions on ensuring the peaceful observance of Ram Navami. In attendance were Additional Collector Gajendra Singh Thakur, Joint Collector Suraj Kashyap, Additional Superintendent of Police Abhishek Verma, and esteemed committee members.

Emphasizing the impor-



tance of maintaining tranquility amidst the ongoing Lok Sabha elections and the enforcement of Section 144, Additional Collector Thakur underscored the need to uphold the sanctity of festivals devoid of political undertones. Stressing the necessity of obtaining

requisite permissions for events and rallies, Thakur urged strict adherence to protocol.

Members of the Peace Committee unanimously resolved to celebrate Ram Navami with goodwill and mutual respect. Thakur highlighted the essence of

Ram Navami, emphasizing its significance in fostering communal harmony. The collective effort was aimed at ensuring a peaceful and secure celebration, with additional police presence and adequate volunteer arrangements being discussed.

An appeal was made to the public to promptly report any untoward incidents to the police control room, with special considerations given to facilitating emergency services and pedestrian movement. Guidelines regarding the use of loudspeakers, ad-

herence to religious sentiments, procession route charts, and community integration were issued, underscoring the importance of noise pollution control and cleanliness.

The meeting, attended by community leaders, eminent citizens, SDM Vijay Pratap Khes, SDM Sabab Khan, SDOP Parmeshwar Tilakwar, Tehsildar CMO, and other officials, concluded with a unified commitment to ensuring a harmonious and respectful celebration of Ram Navami in Sukma district.

Infrastructure upgrade enhances accessibility to Amamora, Odh area

Mainpur, Apr 11:

The once remote village of Amamora and the Odh area, nestled under the shadow of the Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve in Gariaband district, is now witnessing improved accessibility, thanks to ongoing road construction efforts. Previously, reaching this tribal settlement, home to the Kamar tribes, required navigating rocky and uneven paths, often hindered by challenging terrain and lack of proper infrastructure. However, with the initiation of construction on a 31.65 km road from Dhawalpur National Highway to Kukur, residents can now traverse the distance in just 40 minutes.

Under the Prime Minister Rural Roads Scheme, the Department has commenced work on this vital roadway, slated to be built at a cost of Rs 20 crore, with five separate tenders issued for its construction. Progress has been notable, with 10 km of road already completed, including the construction of a 5 km stretch of cement concrete road from Chikhali Plateau to Odh, a particularly steep sec-



tion of the mountains. Remaining portions have been treated with Murum soil, facilitating smoother movement and enhancing accessibility to the region.

EE BR Soni of the Prime Minister's Rural Roads Department provided updates on the construction efforts, highlighting the ongoing pace of work and addressing challenges, including objections from the Forest Department in some areas. Efforts to resolve these issues are underway, with construction anticipated to conclude by June-July.

CRPF supervised road construction boosts development

The road construction, meticulously supervised by CRPF



Battalion 65, signifies a significant stride towards development in the region. With CRPF camps established in Chhindaula and Odh just a year ago, the presence of the battalion has facilitated the construction process, ensuring safety and security in the area.

Under the guidance of Gariaband SP Amit Tukaram Kamble, successful joint operations conducted by DRG and CRPF have effectively driven out Naxalites, paving the way for infrastructural development. This initiative holds paramount importance from a tribal perspective, with the region earmarked for road construction as early as 2007.

Concerns. Tragic incidents, including the martyrdom of soldiers in Naxal ambushes in 2011 and 2015, underscored the challenges faced in executing the construction project.

Following a strategic decision to deploy security forces in 2022, the path to road construction was finally cleared. Despite numerous hurdles, the concerted efforts of CRPF and local authorities have culminated in the realization of this essential infrastructure project, heralding a new era of development eagerly awaited by the villagers.

Anticipated transformation

With the completion of the road project under Amamora Panchayat, a transformative



wave is expected to sweep across the region. Spanning seven villages, including Amalor, Hathora Dih, Kukrara, Nagarar, and Odh, approximately 1500 residents residing in 350 families have long endured the absence of essential amenities due to the lack of connectivity. As the road nears completion, envision the imminent positive impact poised to unfold, promising a long-awaited change in the lives of the local populace.

Healthcare challenges

The healthcare infrastructure in the area faces significant challenges, with a sub-health center serving the community but lacking a dedicated building. Additionally, the absence of accommodation for health

workers necessitates their residence in Dhawalpur, located 30 km below.

Educational struggles in remote villages

In seven villages of the region, access to education beyond middle school remains a challenge, with only two ashram schools catering to students up to the middle school level. Despite 12 to 15 eligible children passing each year, the absence of a high school poses a significant hurdle to their educational advancement. Concerned individuals like Panch Lakhan Yadav and Bhagwan Yadav, along with other community members, express apprehension about the future prospects of the children. Limited accessibility due to the lack of a smooth road further exacerbates the situation, with only a handful of students able to travel for higher education. The construction of the road holds promise for addressing this issue, potentially bringing educational opportunities closer to home for the students in the area.

Hope for economic stability

Ramsingh Kamar, the Sarpanch of Odh, belonging to the Kamar tribe, lamented the minimal development in the region compared to other Panchayats, attributing it to limited accessibility. The area's classification as a forested region restricts opportunities for work under MNREGA, leading to an annual migration of over 100 Qamar laborers from Hathoradih and surrounding areas to Andhra Pradesh for employment in brick kilns. Even students from local ashram schools often flee in search of better opportunities elsewhere. However, with the anticipated improvements in infrastructure, there is renewed optimism that migration due to lack of work will cease, fostering economic stability and development within the community.

Anticipated access to electricity

With the ongoing road construction, significant progress is being made in installing elec-

tric poles along the roadside. Previously, transportation challenges hindered the installation of power infrastructure in the upper village. However, with the road project advancing, the administration is now actively preparing to extend electricity to the area, heralding a new era of accessibility and development for the community.

Potential for tourism growth

Situated at a high altitude, this area maintains a pleasant climate even during the summer months and transforms into a snowy landscape in winter. Additionally, the presence of two captivating waterfalls, promoted by the Udanti Sitanadi Sanctuary, adds to its allure. The commencement of road construction has already attracted foreign tourists to the region, with anticipation for further growth in tourism upon completion of the project. This influx of visitors promises to bolster the income of local forest committees, signaling a significant boost to the area's economy.

Current developments in Pakistan may lead to another 'Dhaka tragedy': Imran Khan

Islamabad, Apr 11 (PTI):

Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan drew a parallel between the political developments in Pakistan now and the circumstances leading to the 1971 Dhaka tragedy, warning that the present situation in the cash-strapped country could result in economic collapse.

The Dawn newspaper reported that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman in a message from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail reminded the current dispensation that "countries and institutions could not survive without a stable economy".

PTI Central Information Secretary Raof Hasan relayed Khan's message to the media during a press conference after the



party's legal team met the 71-year-old cricketer-turned-politician in jail on Wednesday, the day Eid was celebrated in Pakistan.

Barrister Raja told the media that Khan looked determined, though worried for the country and its people.

Raja, who narrated Khan's message, said, "When you don't give

rights to the people, you cannot say the economy will grow."

"In 1970, army chief Yahya Khan wanted a hung Parliament, but when Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's party got a clear majority, the army held a fraud by-election in which 80 seats of Awami League were snatched as Yahya Khan wanted to become president," he said, referring to the political developments in the then East Pakistan.

"I want to remind the Hamoodur Rahman Commission report that we are again going to repeat the same blunders which we made in the past. In 1970, there was the London Plan and today again a government has been imposed through the London Plan," Raja quoted Khan as saying.

INDIA-US EXECUTIVE MEET



Lt Gen TK Aich DCOAS (Strategy) being briefed by the US Army personnel during the India-US Executive Steering Group (ESG) meeting, at the US Army Pacific Headquarters, in Hawaii, USA.

Israeli strike kills 3 sons of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh

Jerusalem: An Israeli airstrike in Gaza killed three sons of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, according to Israel's army and the militant group's official media, with Haniyeh accusing Israel of acting in "the spirit of revenge and murder." The Israeli military confirmed it carried out the attack Wednesday, saying the men conducted militant activity in central Gaza, without elaborating. Hamas said four of the leader's grandchildren were also killed. In an interview with the Al Jazeera satellite channel, Haniyeh said the killings would not pressure Hamas into softening its positions amid ongoing cease-fire negotiations with Israel, brokered by international mediators. Haniyeh left Gaza in 2019 and lives in exile in Qatar. The top Hamas leader in Gaza is Yehya Sinwar, who masterminded the October 7 attack on Israel that sparked the war.

12 Indians arrested in UK visa raids on bedding, cake factories

London, Apr 11 (PTI):

Eleven men and one woman, all said to be Indian nationals, have been arrested by the UK's immigration authorities in a series of raids on suspicion of being in breach of their visa conditions and working illegally at a bedding and cake factory.

According to a statement from the UK Home Office on Wednesday, Immigration Enforcement officers descended on the bedding and mattress business in the West Midlands region of England following intelligence that illegal work was taking place on-site.

They arrested seven men - all Indian nationals - for suspected illegal

working," the Home Office said. "Four more Indian men were arrested at a nearby cake factory. They were found to be in breach of their visa conditions, and one was also working illegally. An Indian woman was then arrested for immigration offences at a private home, with further raids planned throughout the afternoon," it said.

The officials said four of the offenders were detained pending consideration for removal from the UK or deportation to India, and the remaining eight have been bailed on the condition they report regularly to the Home Office. Meanwhile, the two businesses could now face substantial fines if it is established they employed ille-

gal workers at their factories and failed to conduct relevant pre-employment checks. "This operation is a clear example of the way we are stepping up immigration enforcement activity across the country," said Michael Tomlinson, UK Minister for Countering Illegal Migration. "Employers found to be breaching the rules can expect significantly increased fines, and if workers are found to have no right to live or work here, we will not hesitate to act and remove them from the country," he said. In February this year, the Home Office tripled fines for employers who allow illegal migrants to work for them. For a first breach, this has gone from

GBP 15,000 to GBP 45,000 per illegal worker, and for repeat breaches within three years, the fines have increased from GBP 20,000 to GBP 60,000. "Illegal working causes serious harm to communities, puts vulnerable people at risk and defrauds the public purse. The arrests send a clear message that we are clamping down on this dangerous practice," said Eddy Montgomery, Director of Enforcement, Compliance and Crime at the Home Office. "People smugglers sell migrants the lie that they can work in the UK. The reality is that they can't - and those found to be working illegally or facilitating this crime will face the full weight of the law," he said.

Hungary will impose new restrictions on agricultural imports from Ukraine

Budapest, Apr 11 (AP):

Hungary's government will place new restrictions on the import of Ukrainian agricultural products, the country's agricultural minister said Thursday, a move designed to protect Hungarian farmers from market fluctuations caused by cheaper Ukrainian imports.

Agricultural Minister István Nagy told a news conference that a 2022 European Union decision to allow for duty-free imports from Ukraine, meant to help keep its economy afloat after Russia's invasion, had led to "severe oversupply and significantly low prices" in the European agricultural market.

He blamed the EU and its executive commission for failing to protect European farmers who could not compete with the cheaper imports, and said Hungary would pass additional protections "in its national competence".

"Brussels and the European Commission have betrayed Hungarian farmers and are supporting Ukrainian oligarchs instead," Nagy said.

Hungary has had a fraught relationship with neighbouring Ukraine, and is among the EU countries that has offered the least support to Kyiv during its war with Russia.

Soon after the full-scale Russian invasion in February 2022, Hungary declared it would not pro-

vide weapons to Kyiv or allow their transfer across its eastern border. It has also argued against sanctions on Moscow and threatened to derail EU financial assistance to its war-ravaged neighbour.

On Thursday, Nagy said the government had decided on a five-point plan to assist Hungarian farmers, including a requirement for sellers and logistics companies to report to Hungary's government on restricted products being imported via Ukraine regardless of those products' country of origin.

Nagy added that processed products made from Ukrainian grain would also be subject to the restrictions. Hungary last year intro-

duced a ban on the import of 24 Ukrainian agricultural products, but said it would allow their transfer across its territory. The ban applied to grains, oil seeds, flour, cooking oil and several meat products. The government removed Ukrainian natural honey from the list last month.

In March, the EU struck a deal to renew its temporary suspension of import duties and quotas on Ukrainian agricultural exports to the bloc. But the deal comes with a reinforced safeguard that will force the European Commission to reintroduce tariff-rate quotas if imports of various staples surpass the average volumes imported in 2022 and 2023.

AFTERMATH OF SEVERE STORMS



A woman walks amidst rubble of a heavily damaged building in the aftermath of severe storms that swept through the region in Slidell, La.

Imran Khan's wife meets him at Adiala Jail on Eid

Islamabad: Imran Khan could meet his wife Bushra Bibi at the Adiala Jail on the Eid-ul-Fitr day after a Pakistani court allowed her to meet the former prime minister in prison, a media report said on Thursday. While Khan, also the founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, has been lodged at the Adiala Jail since August last year, Bushra Bibi was imprisoned at Khan's Bani Gala residence that had been turned into a sub-jail since she was sentenced in the 'un-Islamic nikah' case in February. The police scheduled the meeting and shifted Bushra Bibi from the Bani Gala sub-jail to the Adiala Jail on the occasion of Eid on Wednesday. The Adiala Jail Conference Room served as the venue for the meeting. To facilitate Bushra Bibi's visit, one side of the road heading to the jail was blocked, The Friday Times reported.

Sound and stable ties' serve common interests

China reacts to PM Modi's border row comments

Beijing, Apr 11 (PTI):

China on Thursday said that "sound and stable ties" serve the common interests of China and India as it reacted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that for New Delhi, ties with Beijing are important and the "prolonged situation" at the borders should be addressed urgently. In an interview with Newsweek magazine, which described India's rise as "unstoppable", Prime Minister Modi expressed hope that through positive and constructive bilateral engagement at the diplomatic and military levels, the two countries will be able to restore and sustain peace and tranquillity at their borders. "China has noted the remarks by the prime minister," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here when

asked for her reaction to Modi's statement. "We believe that sound and stable China, India relations serve the common interests of both sides and are conducive to peace and development of the region and beyond," she said.

In his interview, which is the first to be given to a US magazine in the recent past, Modi said that for India, the relationship with China is important and significant.

"It is my belief that we need to urgently address the prolonged situation on our borders so that the abnormality in our bilateral interactions can be put behind us. Stable and peaceful relations between India and China are important for not just our two countries but the entire region and world," he said. Foreign ministry spokesperson Mao said the boundary question "does

not represent the entirety of the India-China relations. It should be placed appropriately in the bilateral relations and managed properly".

The two sides are in close communication through diplomatic and military channels, she said. "We hope India will work in the same direction with China, handle the bilateral relations from the strategic heights and long-term perspective, enhance mutual trust, stick to dialogue and cooperation, handle differences properly and put the bilateral relations forward on sound and stable track," she said. The relations between India and China have been frozen except for trade ties ever since the eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong Tso (lake) area.

Mali's junta suspends all political activities until further notice

Bamako (Mali), Apr 11 (AP):

Mali's ruling junta issued a decree suspending all political activities until further notice late on Wednesday, citing a need to preserve public order, a move that follows last year's decision to call off elections indefinitely.

Junta spokesman Abdoulaye Maiga read out the statement on state television in the evening, while the country was celebrating Eid al-Fitr, the holiday marking end of the holy month of Ramadan in which observant Muslims fast from dawn until dusk. Mali has experienced two coups since 2020, setting off a wave of political instability that has swept across West and Central Africa. The country has battled a

worsening insurgency by jihadi groups linked to Al Qaeda and the Islamic State group for over a decade. Col Assimi Goita, who took charge after a second coup in 2021, promised to return the country to democracy in early 2024. But in September, the junta canceled elections scheduled for February 2024 indefinitely, citing the need for further technical preparations. Mali previously relied on French troops to help push back the insurgents. Amid growing frustration over the lack of progress, the ruling junta ordered French troops out and turned to Russian contractors instead for security support. The last French forces departed in August 2022 after almost a decade of operations in Mali.

Biden to meet with Philippines, Japanese leaders

Worry grows about Chinese action in Indo-Pacific

Washington, Apr 11 (AP):

President Joe Biden is bringing together Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the White House on Thursday as the three nations use their first-ever trilateral summit to try to show they are in lockstep about countering China's military assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific. The leaders are expected to announce that their coast guards will hold a joint patrol in the Indo-Pacific in 2024, a follow-up on law enforcement drills carried out last year by the allies in waters near the disputed South China Sea. The US Coast Guard will also welcome Filipino and Japanese coast guard members onto a US Coast



President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida toast during a State Dinner at the White House, in Washington.

Guard vessel during the patrol for training, according to senior Biden administration officials who requested anonymity to preview the talks. The summit comes a day after

Biden held one-on-one talks with Kishida and feted the Japanese premier with a glitzy state dinner at the White House, a diplomatic honour meant to recognise

Tokyo's growing clout on the global stage. It was also designed to send a clear signal that the Democratic administration remains determined to build what it calls a "lattice-work" of alliances in the Indo-Pacific even as it grapples with the Israel-Hamas war and Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine. Biden on Wednesday reflected on the fact that Japan, once a fierce US enemy, has become one of the closest American partners and an indispensable ally in a shared push for peace, security and prosperity in the Pacific and beyond.

"Just a few generations ago, our two nations were locked in a devastating conflict," Biden said with Kishida by his side for a pomp-filled arrival ceremony at the White House.

China sanctions 2 US companies over 'support for arms sales to Taiwan'

Beijing, Apr 11 (AP):

China on Thursday announced sanctions against two US defence companies over what it says is their support for arms sales to Taiwan, the self-governing island democracy Beijing claims as its own territory to be recovered by force if necessary. The announcement freezes the assets of General Atomics Aeronautical Systems and General Dynamics Land Systems held within China. The measure also bars the companies' management from entering the country.

Filings show General Dynamics operates a half-dozen Gulfstream and jet aviation services operations in China, which remains heavily reliant on

foreign aerospace technology even as it attempts to build its own presence in the field.

The company helps make the Abrams tank being purchased by Taiwan to replace outdated armour intended to deter or resist an invasion from China.

General Atomics produces the Predator and Reaper drones used by the US military. Chinese authorities did not go into details on the company's alleged involvement with supplying arms to Taiwan.

Beijing has long threatened such sanctions, but has rarely issued them as its economy reels from the COVID-19 pandemic, high unemployment and a sharp decline in foreign investment.



CENTRAL Chronicle

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Climate Justice

Collective Responsibility Need of the Hour

The verdict by the European Court of Human Rights, in response to a case filed by older Swiss women challenging government inaction on climate change, signifies a pivotal moment in climate litigation. Asserting that protection from climate impact is a fundamental human right, this landmark ruling sets a precedent not only for Europe but for the global community. However, the effectiveness of such legal actions hinges on governments' willingness to implement robust climate policies. While legal victories are significant, they must be complemented by sustained public pressure and activism to ensure accountability from European governments. Grassroots movements play a crucial role in driving meaningful change. The resonance of the European court's decision reverberates globally, particularly in light of a recent judgment by India's Supreme Court. Recognizing that climate change directly impacts the right to life, the Indian judiciary has emphasized the imperative for clean energy initiatives and the protection of citizens from the adverse effects of the climate crisis. Similar legal victories in the Netherlands and the United States are reshaping climate policies and setting new standards for climate justice. These rulings underscore the inseparable link between climate change and human rights, highlighting how environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized communities and exacerbates existing inequalities. From indigenous tribes in remote regions to impoverished communities facing food and water shortages, the impacts of climate change are far-reaching and severe. Transitioning to renewable energy emerges as a crucial solution in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. By reducing reliance on fossil fuels and ensuring access to clean and affordable energy for all segments of society, renewable energy initiatives promote social equity and environmental sustainability. These legal judgments signal a paradigm shift in climate litigation, compelling nations to take decisive action to combat climate change and safeguard the rights of both present and future generations. The intersection of climate change and human rights demands urgent attention and action from governments, policymakers, and individuals alike. It is imperative that we prioritize sustainability, justice, and equity in our response to the climate crisis. Only through concerted efforts and collective action can we hope to address the urgent challenges posed by climate change and secure a better future for all.

Eco-Anxiety

A Growing Concern

Arka Goswami



The modern world is plagued by various stressors—poverty, conflict, illness—that weigh heavily on the collective psyche. However, there's a new addition to this list that demands our urgent attention: eco-anxiety, born from the escalating concerns surrounding climate change. The frequency of wildfires, droughts, and other climate-related disasters has surged in recent years, painting a grim picture of our planet's future. As environmental scientists warn, these events are only set to increase in severity and frequency. Defined by the escalating concerns surrounding climate change and its far-reaching consequences, eco-anxiety represents a paradigm shift in our understanding of psychological distress. No longer confined to the realms of personal or social strife, this modern affliction stems from the growing realization of our planet's precarious state and our own complicity in its decline. The evidence is irrefutable: wildfires rage with unprecedented fury, droughts parch the earth, and hurricanes batter coastlines with increasing frequency. Each natural disaster serves as a grim reminder of the ecological upheaval wrought by human hands. According to environmental scientists, the incidence of climate-related disasters is set to escalate in the coming years, leaving a trail of devastation in their wake. Organizations like 'The Climate Psychology Alliance' have been at the forefront of efforts to understand the psychological impact of climate change. Their research reveals a fundamental distinction between natural disasters and those exacerbated by climate change. While the former may elicit temporary distress, the latter breeds a profound sense of powerlessness and despair—a sentiment echoed by those grappling with eco-anxiety. Recent studies conducted by the University of Bath shed light on the alarming prevalence of eco-anxiety, particularly among the younger generation. From bustling metropolises to remote rural communities, the echoes of eco-anxiety reverberate far and wide. In a survey conducted in 2021, 28 percent of first-world countries like America and England and a staggering 70 percent of Global South countries including India and Pakistan reported experiencing eco-anxiety—an epidemic that knows no borders. The rise of eco-anxiety can be attributed, in part, to the increasing awareness among people of the dire state of our planet. As knowledge spreads, so too does the burden of responsibility on policymakers. Environmental researcher Caroline Hickman underscores the urgency of the situation, emphasizing the need for swift and decisive action to protect our planet—the only living child of this solar system. While individual efforts to address environmental concerns are commendable, they are ultimately insufficient in the face of such a monumental challenge. The responsibility lies squarely with governments to enact meaningful reforms in areas such as energy, infrastructure, and conservation. By formulating and implementing environment-friendly policies, governments can mitigate the impacts of climate change and alleviate the burden of eco-anxiety on current and future generations.

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 emailto:editorcentralchronicle@gmail.com.

EID-UL-FITR FESTIVAL



Children greet each other at the Jama Masjid on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr festival, in New Delhi, Thursday, April 11.

One More National Election To End A Fractured Mandate

M.R.LALU



Nearly one billion voters in the world's largest democracy will walk to their respective polling booths to vote and elect a new government. This momentous journey of India as a democracy has been tremendously meaningful throughout its post-colonial life. Upholding its defined democratic values enshrined in the constitution, India has made a place among the comity of nations that have chosen to adhere to the path of democracy. There have always been divergent views on its democratic essence, especially criticizing its evolutionary practices. We were always under scanner from agencies and groups and countries across the globe that looked at India as a wonder, a landscape that houses the world's largest population and the one that has been faced with unspeakable instances of colonial aggression and invasion for centuries. Still it never failed to grow as a democracy that according to Narendra Modi is a glorious wonder that, in his case, made a 'chaiwala' its Prime Minister. Yet its growth as a unique society that holds the largest cultural and regional diversity with its civilizational unity underpinning its essential existence was denounced. There have been consistent efforts to demean, manipulate and disproportionately discourage its pride as a great civilization and its efforts to regain and revitalize its cultural roots have been viewed as a majoritarian belligerence. Though India's aspiration to emerge as a global power has been gaining momentum under the regime of Narendra Modi, it has also been deliberately vilified for this aspirational growth. The national election we are marching for is expected to further strengthen the aspirations of

India and give it a fresh fillip. Being Indians we have credible reasons to stay humble in a world that is deeply polarized in the name of religion, region and ideological differences. And being the largest population and the fastest growing economy, we still have reasons to remain resoundingly joyful and distressingly concerned as well. The diversity that we are and the unity that we drumbeat about while ravages of war and ethnic conflicts cripple the dreamy fortunes of a large segment of the world population, India still survives on what it consciously calls its civilizational alignment that is by habit and principle accommodative and the collective wellbeing of the populace is being set as a reason for its survival. India's G20 Presidency was of course an indication, a journey that we decided to take the world which is infested by a mix of bullying, intransigence and greed through the glorious wisdom of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (World is one family). The world is shaken by political turmoil and sectarian dissonance and many more destructive factors and at times what we face in India is a replica of what the world is reeling under. There is a new mood of confrontation sweeping through its underbelly and all that has been disruptive cannot be solved with political activism alone. For that even democracy sometimes fails to bring actual solutions. There, we as a nation need to grow beyond petty political gambles and understand our value as a peaceful civilization that holds the power to console the perils of people across the globe. Elections every term put India through tremors of disenchantments and excitements. But there is an un-

questionable enthusiasm spiraling through our metaphorical motherland Bharat that houses almost 18% of the total world's population in every election season.

In truth electoral democracy of India remains undisrupted with a large number of the country's population turning out for casting its votes. Almost a turnout of 960 million voters will be controlled and helped exercise their franchise by 15 million or more polling officials through more than a million polling booths under the country's powerful Election Commission. Democracy by all means especially in the season of election is a festive occasion for its people irrespective of diverging political views acrimoniously staying face to face admonishingly screeching on one another. Above all, the supreme judicial establishment on which the country has full faith frequently pulls up the politically authoritarian demeanor of the executive asking it fierce questions. The latest interventions by the judiciary had shaken the political parties off their saga of electoral bonds, asking them to be accountable and also commanding the bank to reveal the real line of contributors. By the apex court scrambling it forever, the parties are turned a mirror on to reflect as to what should be the depth of clarity and integrity and alertness that the electorate seeks through the process of democracy. In the lead up to the parliamentary elections, every term we witness an unsolicited combination of parties shamelessly teaming for relevance and the government piling up cases against opposition parties with an attitude of deliberate warmongering. Apart from that, there is a harsh temperament active in the air throughout this period. That even a mild disagreement and verbal clash on religious matters grow into severe conflagration exposing its volatility as a fraught society.

Though democracy is expected to hold a sway on disruptive tendencies, it sometimes fails to maintain amiability. There are instances of instant provocation leading to the destruction of public property, while collective and revengeful collaboration of aggressive people block life of common man extensively with riots and riotous

behavior, India is still known for its best democratic credentials. Again, there are instances wherein the disenchantment goes deeper as its democratic practices fail to deliver justice to its citizens equally. Given such realities, we have to also appreciate its attempts to shed imprints of colonialism. The present government, in a remarkable display of determination, began to change our approach to our true existence. Its efforts to democratically bring India's suppressed cultural ethos to recognition, has infused more confidence in the collective thoughts of its people. It is democracy and democracy alone is helping the country in its march towards progress. And it will be the single reason that would ensure its growth. Its development for all is its criteria for survival. Pakistan that chose to become a theocratic state has perished almost everywhere while India kept its momentum of progress exponentially smooth. Politics apart, India's demography and its cultural values definitely go hand in hand with its largest segment of population evolving through a momentous transformation. It considers the nation supreme and it does not allow rattling subjects of dissonance to dig deeper. Shedding colonial imprints one by one, we still have a long road to walk.

National Elections 2024 seem to seek support for forces that relentlessly work for India's transformation. The elections and the results should once again restore the momentum of our cherished goal of togetherness and a sense of coexistence needs to flourish uninterrupted. This festival of democracy is a reminder that at least should help us see the country through the prism of a nation, which survives beyond the petty arguments of the union of states theory. An ideal feeling of nationalism helps a voter to choose an ideal candidate from among a crowd of aspirants. Once again, this election does not seek a fractured mandate. Starting from individuals to families to the nation, this thought for the collective wellbeing of its people should protrude into effect. In practice, electoral democracy can make it happen and that is its strength. And a fractured mandate topples this dream.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safe mothers

"National Safe Motherhood Day" highlights the critical importance of maternal safety in a nation's socioeconomic development. While India has seen a slight decline in maternal mortality rates, concerns persist, particularly in rural areas where access to healthcare is limited. Addressing cultural factors like child marriage and promoting institutional deliveries are essential steps toward ensuring maternal well-being. The World Health Organization aims to further reduce maternal mortality rates by 2030. Prioritizing the care of expectant mothers is not only a moral imperative but also crucial for the health and prosperity of future generations.

Dr Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

Kejriwal's Approach

The Delhi High Court's rejection of AAP leader Kejriwal's petition challenging his arrest and dismissal of political vendetta claims ahead of the Lok Sabha elections is significant. The court's criticism of Kejriwal for insinuating BJP connections to an approver, thereby questioning the judicial process, is appropriate. Such tactics undermine public trust and must cease. Kejriwal should focus on constructive governance rather than resorting to divisive strategies. It's imperative for him to mend his ways and prioritize the welfare of Delhi's citizens over political maneuvers.

MK Nair, Raipur

Justice Denied

The Delhi High Court's dismissal of Arvind Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest in a graft case is troubling. It undermines justice and raises doubts about the fairness of our legal system. Kejriwal's arrest, timed just before the General Election, smacks of political vendetta rather than genuine pursuit of justice. The Supreme Court must step in to ensure fair treatment of leaders, irrespective of their political affiliations. Allegations of 'tax terrorism' and politically motivated investigations underscore the urgent need for accountability and transparency in governance.

Shiv Kumar Mishra, Raipur

Legal Loopholes

Fake encounters in India are on the rise, with law enforcement often complicit under political pressure. Perpetrators, hailed as heroes, and complicit politicians gain from these acts. However, accountability is scarce as officials rarely face consequences. These incidents expose systemic flaws in law enforcement and judicial inefficiencies.

Rakesh Gupta, Korba

Retain the Inherent Humanity

Kajal Chatterjee

In the 17th century, the local Hindu King Madan Roy had donated the land to Pir Ghazi Mubarak Ali for setting up the iconic mazaar in Ghutiari Sharif --- Bengal's South 24 Parganas district --- after the latter cured the former from a serious bout of illness. Every year a large fair is organized in Ghutiari Sharif in June coinciding with the famous Ambubachi Mela at the Kamakhya temple. Today the mazaar forms a revered pilgrimage or happy meeting ground of Hindus and Muslims alike.

Or the concept of Bonbibi in the Sunderbans --- the deity bearing the essence of a syncretic culture with the rituals shared by the people of both communities. Or the Patachitra art (hand scroll painting) of Bengal's Medinipur where Durga Shiva Ram Sita come alive through the brush of Muslim artists since centuries!

Indeed this has been the tradition of Bengal since centuries bearing the humanitarian legacy of Bangalians --- handed through generations by Lalon Fakir Rabindranath Tagore Kazi Nazrul Islam to name a few.

As a matter of fact such bonhomie transcending religious barriers used to dominate the Bengali society in the last few decades also which seems a "distant dream" right at this juncture. Whenever the holy festival of Eid- Ul-Fitr/ Eid-Ul-Adha knocks at the horizon, my mind promptly goes in a flashback mode when I was studying in college in Hooghly district, West Bengal. We used to live in our college hostel where a significant percentage of the boarders happened to be Muslims. An extremely cordial and friendly environment used to dominate our hostel premises.

The home of two of our close friends, Younas Ali Seikh and Basir

Ali, were comparatively nearby and so they used to invite us to their village to celebrate Eid. And when that much cherished D-Day arrived, our group of 4 boys used to start our journey. After reaching our destination station by train, a remarkable journey on the roof of the bus through the green fields of rural Bengal.

And after descending, a walk of about 2 kilometer along ponds and plantations. And thereafter we could locate the village of our friends at a far distance amidst coconut trees and bamboo groves. A small simple white mosque surrounding which villagers of all ages used to be in their cheerful best! Not to forget the unfathomable warmth, love and hospitality of the parents, family members and neighbors of Younas and Basir.

In this context, I feel proud to recollect how our seniors like Abdul Jalal, Wazed Hussain or Qazi

Imdadullah used to lead or guide us during the celebration of Saraswati Puja in our hostel. Also I remember how the Muslim acquaintances used to visit the home of my cousin sister to celebrate Bhai-Phonta.

Yes, this was my Bengal enriched in the secular humanitarian legacy of our illustrious greats! Rogue elements exist in each and every society of the world who vitiate the environment to meet their vested interests. Such elements are pathetically increasing and have started dominating in Bengal also tarnishing the secular humane ambience of the state and threatening it's long nourished tradition of Bangalians (just like Kashmiriyat) transcending all petty barriers of religious divide.

Even a minimum trace of sanity and rationality demands that Bengalis remain extremely cautious so that those rabid communal elements do not succeed in conquering

the inherent humanity embedded within the traditional culture of the state. Ending with an excellent anecdote revolving around pre-Eid celebration in Shibpur of Howrah district. In an iftar gathering comprising more than 500 people, food were arranged by the Hindu women! Fruits for the iftar spread were chopped through bnotis (iron blades) which are used by the ladies during preparation of Lakshmi Puja bhog at their homes.

One of the leading lady asserts -- "When the forces of division and communal bigotry are coming at you with full force, you have to resist them with the full might of communal amity". Let this shared living be the only antidote to the marauding juggernaut of communal polarisation. Let the merchants of hatred, going all-out to divide humanity in terms of man-made religion, be exterminated from the soil of Bengal and India for ever.

BRIEF

Appointment



New Delhi: Commvault, a provider of cyber resilience and data protection solutions for hybrid cloud organisations, on Thursday named Ashley Baird as its new vice president and managing director of market expansion. Baird will also serve as Chief of Staff to Commvault's President and CEO, Sanjay Mirchandani, according to a release. In a release announcing Baird as the new Vice President and Managing Director of market expansion, the company said with extensive cloud and go-to-market experience, she will extend Commvault's leadership and accelerate its growth further into new markets with leading cloud providers.

Construction work

New Delhi: Auto components maker Uno Minda on Wednesday said it has commenced construction work on a passenger vehicle alloy-wheel plant in Haryana, entailing an investment of Rs 542 crore. The facility is located at IMT Kharkhoda in Haryana, and it will have a production capacity of 1.2 lakh wheels per month. The plant, with a capital outlay of Rs 542 crore, will be set up in a phased manner over the next five years, with the first phase expected to be commissioned in the second quarter of FY26, Uno Minda said in a statement.

Machine tools

Chennai: Global technology company Zoho Corp would enter into the production of machine tools under a new brand name 'Karuvi', a top official here said. The company's Founder-CEO Sridhar Vembu attributed the decision to enter into a new vertical after his interaction with a Middle East-based customer of Zoho two years ago, who encouraged him to take up production of hand-held tools as it would lead to job creation in rural areas.

ADB raises India's GDP growth forecast for FY25 to 7%

To remain major growth engine in APAC region

New Delhi, Apr 11:

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday raised India's GDP growth forecast for the current fiscal to 7 per cent, from 6.7 per cent earlier, saying the robust growth will be driven by public and private sector investment and improvement in consumer demand. In its April edition of the Asian Development Outlook, ADB said India would remain "a major growth engine" in the Asia and Pacific region. For the 2025-26 fiscal, ADB has projected India's growth at 7.2 per cent. Growth will be robust despite moderating in FY2024 and FY2025, it said. The growth estimates for the current fiscal



is lower than 7.6 per cent estimated GDP expansion in 2022-23 fiscal. Strong investment drove GDP growth in the 2022-23 fiscal as consumption was muted, ADB said.

The Manila-based multilateral institution in December last year projected the Indian economy to expand by 6.7 per cent in the 2024-25 fiscal. "The economy grew robustly in fiscal 2023 with strong momentum in manufacturing and services. It will continue to grow rapidly over the

forecast horizon. Growth will be driven primarily by robust investment demand and improving consumption demand. Inflation will continue its downward trend in tandem with global trends," said the Asian Development Outlook.

ADB's growth forecast for the current fiscal is in line with the projections made by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The RBI last week had said GDP growth in the current fiscal is projected at 7 per cent on expectations of normal mon-

soon, moderating inflationary pressures and sustained momentum in manufacturing and services sectors.

The triggers for growth in FY2024 will come from higher capital expenditure on infrastructure development both by central and state governments, rise in private corporate investment, strong service sector performance and improved consumer confidence.

Growth momentum will pick up in FY2025, backed by improved goods exports and an increase in manufacturing productivity and agricultural output, the ADB said. "Notwithstanding global headwinds, India remains the fastest growing major economy on the strength of its strong domestic demand and supportive policies," said ADB Country Director for India Mio Oka.

Unfazed by impending entry of Tesla, new EV policy has safeguards: Mercedes-Benz India

New Delhi, Apr 11:

German luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz is unfazed by the likelihood of Tesla entering India with imported electric cars at much lower duty and believes that the country's new EV policy has safeguards for existing players, a senior company official said on Thursday.

While the entry of the likes of Tesla and VinFast will help expand the market and accelerate EV adoption in India, Mercedes-Benz is confident to maintain leadership in the luxury EV space as the new entrants would play in the lower segment. "I think new competitors and new players are always welcome. It helps to expand the market, spread

more awareness, which is also the need of the hour to get more EV penetration," Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director & CEO Santosh Iyer told PTI. He was responding to a query on the implications of India's new EV policy and if it puts manufacturers which have already invested in the country at a disadvantage.

"Any duty-free or any reduced-duty tariffs are always welcome because we have always been advocating free trade in India and globally. So for us, any such things are welcome," he said. Iyer further said, "We have to go deeper into the policy and check the implications but there are caps and ceilings and there are safeguards put in by the

government. So at this stage it is not a major threat that we see for our business."

Under the new EV policy, companies that would set up manufacturing facilities for EV passenger cars will be allowed to import a limited number of cars at lower customs/import duty of 15 per cent on vehicles costing USD 35,000 and above for a period of five years from the date of issuance of the approval letter by the government. At present, cars imported as completely built units (CBUs) attract customs duty ranging from 70 per cent to 100 per cent, depending on the type of fuel, engine size and cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value below or above USD 40,000.

Q4 earnings: IT pack seen bracing for muted show amid weak global macros, tight spends

New Delhi, Apr 11:

Indian IT companies are seen signing off FY24 on a subdued note with an uncertain global macroeconomic environment dragging tech demand and client spends, analysts said, forecasting modest commentary and cautious tone by the tech pack on FY25 outlook. The grand IT earnings season opens on Friday with results of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), followed by Infosys scorecard on April 18 and Wipro on April 19. Tech Mahindra is scheduled to announce Q4 and full-year numbers on April 25, whereas HCL Technologies will declare its numbers on April 26. Emkay in its quarterly preview recently said subpar growth should persist in Q4 as muted demand trends continue on



account of weak discretionary spending and cautious behaviour by clients amid uncertain macros. It predicted FY24 ending on a "weak footing", and noted that recovery hope has shifted to the second half of FY25. "Global companies such as ACN (Accenture), CTSI (Cognizant Technology Solutions), and CAP (Cappgemini) have also guided for muted growth, particularly during H1CY24 (first half of calendar year 2024), with recovery expected towards the end of CY24," it said.

Govt's focus on infra development to nurture sustained revival in investment cycle: RBI report

Mumbai, Apr 11:

The government's focus on infrastructure development, coupled with buoyant business optimism, could nurture a sustained revival in the investment cycle, according to a Reserve Bank report. According to the RBI's Monetary Policy Report-April 2024, domestic economic activity, backed by strong fundamentals, remained robust in the first half of 2023-24, weathering challenges from muted global demand. The report further said that while the fixed investment and the lower drag from net external demand propelled real GDP growth, private con-

India's economic performance good, efforts needed to sustain it: EAC-PM member Sanjeev Sanyal

New Delhi, Apr 11:

India's economic growth performance is 'good' and efforts now will be needed to sustain it, as there are concerns about the external environment, which are not quite settled, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) member Sanjeev Sanyal said on Thursday. Sanyal noted that if the weather condition and the monsoon turns out to be favorable, then food prices will hopefully get tempered as well. This will lay out conditions that will be quite conducive for a growth momentum of 7 per cent or so, to be carried through even under somewhat uncer-



tain global situations. "Our current economic growth performance, I would argue, (is) rather good. And the game now from here on is to be able to sustain it," he told PTI in a video interview. India's economy grew by better-than-expected 8.4 per cent in the final three months of 2023 -- the fastest pace in one-and-a-half years. The

Comm Min may seek 5 year extension of interest equalisation scheme for exporters

New Delhi, Apr 11:

The commerce ministry is likely to seek further extension of the interest equalisation scheme on pre- and post-shipment rupee export credit for another five years to promote the country's outbound shipments, an official has said. The scheme will end on June 30 this year.

"The ministry will do re-vamping of some schemes like interest equalisation scheme. We would propose an extension of the scheme for five years. The scheme is doing good, and it is helping the exporters," the official said. On December 8, 2023, the Union Cabinet approved an additional allocation of Rs 2,500 crore for the continuation of the scheme up to June 30. The scheme helps exporters from identified sectors and all MSME manufacturer exporters to avail of rupee export credit at competitive rates at a time when

the global economy is facing headwinds. Exporters get subsidies under the Interest Equalisation Scheme for pre and post-shipment rupee export credit. The additional outlay of Rs 2,500 crore, over and above the current outlay of Rs 9,538 crore under the scheme, was made available to bridge the funding gap to continue the plan up to June 2024. The scheme was started on April 1, 2015, and was initially valid for five years up to March 31, 2020. It has been continued thereafter, including a one-year extension during COVID-19, and with further extensions and fund allocations.

Currently, the scheme provides an interest equalisation benefit at the rate of 2 per cent on pre and post-shipment rupee export credit to merchant and manufacturer exporters of 410 identified tariff lines at 4 digit level and 3 per cent at all MSME manufacturer exporters.

growth rate in October-December was higher than 7.6 per cent in the previous three years, and it helped take the estimate for the previous fiscal (April 2023 to March 2024) to 7.6 per cent. Recently, the Reserve Bank retained the GDP growth forecast of 7 per cent for 2024-25 financial year.

"... While we are very confident of our domestic growth momentum in our economy, there are certainly concerns about the external environments, which are not quite settled," he said. Sanyal explained that exports continue to be quite weak, and there is not yet any momentum in global exports. Moreover, "very recently,

there was spike in oil prices... going up to USD 91 per barrel because of tensions in the Middle East, destruction of Russian oil facilities by Ukrainian attacks and a variety of other reasons," the EAC-PM said. Asked about long-term solutions to high food prices, Sanyal said high food prices to a large extent is not a production problem, but actually a storage problem. "After all, Singapore and Dubai do not grow tomatoes and onions. Their onion and tomato prices don't go spiking in the way we have this and every year. Some vegetable or the other, onion, tomato, potato, whatever, something will go spiking off the charts," he said.

Digi Yatra likely to be rolled at 14 more airports in April



New Delhi, Apr 11:

Digi Yatra is likely to be rolled out at 14 more airports by the end of this month and efforts are on to make the facility more user friendly with certain changes in the architecture, according to a top executive.

Based on Facial Recognition Technology (FRT), Digi Yatra provides for contactless, seamless movement of passengers

at various check points at airports and currently, there are nearly 5 million users. The facility is now there at 14 airports for domestic passengers and discussions are ongoing with various stakeholders concerned to make it available for international travellers as well. Digi Yatra Foundation CEO Suresh Khadkabhavi told PTI that Digi Yatra is expected to be available at 14 more airports by the end of April.

Apple warns of Pegasus-like spyware attacks on select individuals

New Delhi, Apr 11:

iPhone maker Apple has warned its users about ongoing Pegasus-like sophisticated spyware attacks that target a very small number of individuals often journalists, activists, politicians and diplomats. Though deployed against a small number of individuals and often involve exceptional costs, mercenary spyware attacks are "ongoing and global", according to an Apple threat notification. Apple in the threat notification issued on April 10 indicated that such attacks have historically been associated with state actors as per past research and reports. "Apple threat notifications are designed to inform and assist users who may have



been individually targeted by mercenary spyware attacks, likely because of who they are or what they do. Such attacks are vastly more complex than regular cybercriminal activity and consumer malware, as mercenary spyware attackers apply exceptional resources to target a very small number of specific individuals and their devices," the notification said. The notification

has come at a time when around 60 countries, including India, are going for elections this year.

The Cupertino-based firm said that mercenary spyware attacks cost millions of dollars and often have a short shelf life, making them much harder to detect and prevent. Besides, the vast majority of users will never be targeted by such attacks.

Elon Musk confirms India visit, says looking forward to meet PM Modi

New Delhi, Apr 11:

American electric car maker Tesla CEO Elon Musk on Wednesday confirmed his visit to India and his planned meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In a post on X, he wrote, "Looking forward to meeting with Prime Minister @NarendraModi in India." Earlier in the day, sources said Musk is expected in India the week of April 22. He is likely to announce the company's investment plans in the country during his visit, the sources said. In June last year, Musk had met Modi during the prime minister's US visit. The Tesla CEO had then said that he planned to visit India in 2024 while expressing confidence that the company would enter

the Indian market soon. His planned visit comes weeks after the government announced a new electric vehicle policy under which import duty concessions will be given to companies setting up manufacturing units in the country with a minimum investment of USD 500 million, a move aimed at attracting major global players like US-based Tesla. According to the policy, the companies that would set up manufacturing facilities for EV passenger cars will be allowed to import a limited number of cars at lower customs/import duty of 15 per cent on vehicles costing USD 35,000 and above for a period of five years from the date of issuance of the approval letter by the government.

World goods trade growth in volume terms may dip 1.2 pc in 2024: GTRI

New Delhi, Apr 11:

The growth in the global merchandise trade is likely to decline by 1.2 per cent, in value terms, due to the ongoing geopolitical uncertainties, economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said on Thursday. The US dollar value of world merchandise trade fell 5 per cent in 2023 to USD 24.01 trillion, but this decline was mostly offset by a strong increase in commercial services trade, which rose 9 per cent to USD 7.54 trillion, it said. This allowed world goods and commercial services exports on a balance of payments basis to slip 2 per cent in

2023 to USD 30.8 trillion. "Despite the World Trade Organization (WTO) expecting a 2.6 per cent rise in trade volume for 2024, the value of world merchandise trade is still seen to decline by 1.2 per cent in 2024 from 2023, continuing the trend of trade values falling behind the trade volumes," the think tank said. The WTO has projected that the world merchandise trade volume will grow by 2.6 per cent in 2024 and 3.3 per cent in 2025.

"The WTO forecast does not include impact on trade values, which is a commonly used parameter to measure trade performance. Calculating the trade value is straightfor-

ward, as it involves adding up the values of all transactions. However, calculating trade volume is not as simple as just adding up quantities of different goods like iron ore and diamonds, which could lead to inaccurate conclusions," GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said.

He said the WTO employs a complex method to calculate changes in trade volumes. He added that "probably" the WTO did not want to be the harbinger of bad news about slowing merchandise trade. "The WTO adjusts the value of trade to account for changes in prices, a process known as deflation.

60th company-level BMSC meeting held in SECL

Central Chronicle News

Korba, Apr 11: The 60th company level Bilateral Mine Safety Committee (BMSC) meeting was held at SECL Headquarters Bilaspur under the chairmanship of Director Technical (Operations) S.N. Kapri, Director Technical (Project & Planning) Franklin Jayakumar in the presence of General Manager (Mine Safety/Rescue) GP Sharma, Member of Safety Committee Anand Mishra (HMS), B. Dharmarao (AITUC), Sanjay Singh (BMS), Kamlesh Sharma (SEKMC), Indradev Chauhan (CITU), P. Chandrakant (CMOAD), Area General Managers and Area Security Officers of all operational areas of SECL and various heads of departments of the Headquarters.



The meeting started with the lighting of the safety lamp. After that, a two-minute silence was observed to pay homage to those labourers engaged in coal production who attained martyrdom between the last meeting and this meeting.

Coal India corporate song was played in the meeting after which a safety oath was taken by all the attendees. All the visitors to the meeting were welcomed with a bouquet.

While giving the welcome address, GP Sharma, General Manager (Mine Safety/Safety) provided information regarding safety. The security report

was presented in the meeting through PowerPoint.

Emphasis on new technology in mines: SECL management informed that the system of man-riding system is being promoted to facilitate the movement of workers in underground mines.

3 new man-riding systems are being installed in SECL's Khairaha and Vindhya mines, while 4 more have been tendered and an additional 2 are at the approval stage.

In man riding system, instead of walking on foot, workers reach near the

mine face through mechanized transportation system, which increases productivity.

As a result of the efforts being made by the company towards safety awareness, the number of serious accidents has decreased by more than 54% in the year 2023-24, while the fatal accidents have decreased by 25%.

Reflectors have been installed on vehicles traveling in open mines in night shifts, while red patrolling flags are being installed on light motor vehicles during the day. In mega projects like Gevra, Dipka, separate lanes have been created inside the mines for the operation of light vehicles so that heavy machines can move freely.

In the meeting, the members of the Security Committee discussed the Mission Sudesh started by CMD Dr. Prem Sagar Mishra and described it as very useful. Everyone congratulated team SECL for recording the highest coal production in its history of 187.4 million tonnes with an increase of more than 20 million tonnes for the second consecutive year, OBR - 323.2 million cubic meters and dispatch - 180.5 million tonnes during the recently concluded financial year 23-24.

At the end of the meeting, Sanjeev Aggarwal, Chief Manager (Mining) gave a presentation through power point and General Manager, Mine Safety and Security, GP Sharma proposed the vote of thanks.

Community health initiative benefits locals

- Free health checkup and medication drive organized
- n Sadvipra social service continues welfare efforts

Central Chronicle News

Kharora, Apr 11: On the occasion of the Hindu New Year, a free health checkup and meditation camp was conducted by Sadvipra Social Service and Shri Sadguru Kabir Seva Chhattisgarh, yielding beneficial results for approximately 100 patients.

Dr. MBBS Pramil Patel, stationed at the Community Health Center, emphasized the intrinsic connection between physical health and mental well-being, commending the efforts of



Sadvipra Samaj in promoting holistic wellness.

Hemant, President of Sadvipra Samaj Seva Chhattisgarh, expressed appreciation for the continuous endeavors of Sadvipra Social Service and Sadguru Kabir Sena in adhering to the teachings of Sadguru Dev ji, aimed at self-improvement and global welfare. The initiative aims to fulfill the vision set forth by Sadguru Dev ji for the betterment of humanity.

Among the dignitaries present at the event were Acharya Hemant, First Pracharak Digeshwar, Vice President Yogesh Verma, Pradeep Nayak, Director of Sadgurudham Ashram Gaurkheda, Ramkrishna Bharti, Sadhvi Ma Sharda, Sadhvi Ma Ananteshwari, Preacher Chhaya Verma, and other members of the Sadvipra community, demonstrating collective commitment to community health and well-being.

Expenditure Observer assesses media monitoring for elections

Central Chronicle News

Kawardha, Apr 11: Praveen Ranjan, designated as the Expenditure Observer by the Election Commission of India for the Rajnandgaon Parliamentary Constituency-6 Lok Sabha Elections 2024 in Chhattisgarh, conducted a thorough inspection today. The focus of his scrutiny was the District Level Media Certification and Monitoring Committee (MCMC) room specifically established for the ongoing Lok Sabha Elections 2024.

Ranjan meticulously examined the electronic media unit, print media unit, and social media unit within the MCMC room. He underscored the piv-



otal role of the Media Certification and Monitoring Committee in overseeing the expenditure limits designated by the Election Commission of India for the candidates vying for electoral positions.

The scrutiny extended to reviewing newspaper clippings of political party-related coverage in print media, meticulously

compiled by the monitoring team. Additionally, Ranjan closely observed the operations of social media platforms, providing essential directives to ensure compliance with electoral regulations.

Addressing the officers and staff assigned to duty, Ranjan emphasized the necessity for their unwavering presence and diligent execution of responsibilities.

He conducted a comprehensive review of the MCMC's operations, noting the formation of distinct teams for the electronic media, print media, and social media units, each operating under constant surveillance to ensure transparency and adherence to electoral guidelines.

Present during the observation were key officials including Additional Collector Avinash Bhoi, Joint Collector Alok Srivastava, Deputy District Election Officer Geeta Raist, Assistant Public Relations Officer Gulab Dadsena, and Assistant Information Officer Nikhalesh Dewangan, all actively participating in the electoral oversight process.

- District officials lead Zumba dance and race
- Participants inspired by health and civic awareness

Central Chronicle News

Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Apr 11: A spirited voter awareness marathon unfolded today at the Pendra Multipurpose School Ground, jointly organized by the district administration and the District Police Administration under the SVEEP program. With active participation from various segments of society, the event aimed to instill civic responsibility and promote voter awareness among citizens.



Approximately 600 individuals from across the district converged at the High School grounds of Pendra to partake in the marathon. District Superintendent of Police Bhavna Gupta expressed satisfaction with the turnout, emphasizing the significance of spreading awareness on crucial is-

ssues such as voter registration, traffic safety, and cyber awareness. Gupta highlighted the importance of maintaining physical health, linking it to overall well-being and productivity.

In a show of solidarity, District Collector Leena Kamlesh Mandavi underscored the role of youth in fostering awareness with-

in their communities. Mandavi emphasized that initiatives like the voter awareness marathon serve not only to empower youth but also to encourage voter participation on Election Day, slated for May 7th.

The marathon commenced and concluded with energetic Zumba dance sessions, involving not only the participants but also district officials, including the District Collector and Superintendent of Police. The spirited atmosphere was further enhanced by the participation of the Chhattisgarh Lok Kala Manch Devi Singh Group, showcasing the community's collective commitment to promoting civic engagement and healthy living.

Vibrant Hindu new year celebrations at Keshla school



Kharora, Apr 11: The Chaitra Pratipada Hindu New Year 2081 was joyously celebrated at the Government Primary School in Keshla, resonating with fervour and enthusiasm.

Head of the institution, Santosh Kumar Verma, initiated the festivities by garlanding the image of Maa Bharti, leading prayers, and extending warm wishes to all students for the New Year.

Subsequently, the teaching staff, students, and cooks joined in performing rituals and offering prayers, fostering a sense of communal celebration.

Class 3 and 4 students captivated the audience with an enthralling dance performance extolling the virtues of Maa Bharti. Additionally, students showcased their musical talents, with Class III students singing "Sar Par Himaalay Ka Chhat Rahe," and Class IV students rendering "Ram Siyaram Siyaram Jai Jai Ram," accompanied by a lively dance routine. The event witnessed full attendance from the teaching staff and support staff, underscoring the collective spirit and camaraderie within the school family.

Jyoti Singh vows to enhance Atal Bihari Vajpayee stadium



Central Chronicle News

Kurud, Apr 11: Naib Tehsildar and national basketball player, Jyoti Singh, has taken a proactive stance towards revitalizing the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Stadium in Kurud city, expressing astonishment at its current state and pledging to improve conditions for aspiring young athletes.

Upon visiting the stadium, Jyoti Singh, who honoured with the Rajiv Pandey Award for her achievements in basketball, was dismayed by the neglect and disarray

plaguing the once-beautiful sports facility. Determined to provide better opportunities for budding talents, especially from rural areas like Kurud Nagar, Singh embarked on a mission to transform the stadium into a safe and conducive environment for sports activities.

Recognizing the emotional attachment players have towards their fields, Singh, driven by her own passion for sports, immediately initiated efforts to clean up the stadium premises. With the support of the Nagar



Central Chronicle News

Panchayat administration and sports enthusiasts like Rajesh Pawar, who contributed by levelling the ground using a road roller, significant progress has been made within a matter of days. The remarkable initiative led by an international player and administrative officer has garnered praise from Bhupendra Chandrakar, a former player and convener of Ajay Friends Club. Chandrakar commended Singh's dedica-

Central Chronicle News

tion and urged fellow sportspersons, friends, and young players in Kurud to join hands in enhancing the stadium's facilities further, fostering a culture of community-driven sports development.

Devotees commence Navratri celebrations in Mungeli

Temples witness festive atmosphere with worship rituals

Central Chronicle News

Mungeli, Apr 11: The auspicious occasion of Navratri Paksha commenced on Tuesday, heralding the beginning of worship rituals in temples across Mungeli. As per tradition, Kalash installations adorned the revered Mahamaya temple, marking the initiation of the Navratri festival with the worship of Goddess Shailputri on the first day and Goddess Maa Brahmacharani on the second day.

Devi temples, accompanied by the ceremonial sowing of barley seeds during Ghat Sthapana. The Mahamaya Temple Sonarpara alone witnessed the installation of 538 Kalash, attracting a steady stream of devotees throughout the day.

The fervour of Navratri continued on the second day with the worship of Mata Brahmacharani, drawing crowds of devotees to the temples. The nine-day religious festival unfolded with devotional bhajans, kirtans, and aartis held from dawn till dusk, enriching the atmosphere with spiritual fervour.



Devotees also adorned Devi temples with vibrant decorations and performed rituals as per tradition, culminating in the lighting of Jyoti Kalash accompanied by Vedic chants. Temples such as Shaktimaai Temple, Kharripara Maa

Kali Temple, Daupara Mahamaya Temple, and others across Devgaon witnessed devout worship ceremonies during Navratri.

Meanwhile, the onset of Navratri brought a bustling ambience to the market, with devotees

flocking to purchase materials for Goddess Mata's worship. The demand for makeup items, Mother's clothes, chunaris, and puja essentials surged as people prepared for the festive celebrations.

Business owners reported brisk sales of Mata idols, photo frames, and puja items, with grocery shops witnessing high demand for oil and fruit items required for the rituals. The fervent atmosphere in both temples and markets underscores the community's deep-rooted devotion and festive spirit as Navratri unfolds in Mungeli.

Admissions open for Swami Atmanand schools

Central Chronicle News

Fingeshwar, Apr 11: The process of admission for the upcoming academic session at Swami Atmanand Excellent English and Hindi medium schools commenced on April 10, allowing all interested parents to apply online. Applicants seeking admission to Class I must ensure that the child's age falls between 5 years 6 months and 6 years 6 months as of May 31.

In a compassionate move, children who have

lost parents to the COVID-19 pandemic will be granted direct admission under the Mahtari Dular Yojana. Furthermore, 25% of the seats are reserved for children from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, with an additional 50% of the total seats reserved for girls. In cases where vacancies are unavailable, admission will be conducted online for those reserved seats. Parents facing difficulties in applying online have the option to submit offline applications along

with the previous class's marksheets. Admission to Class 2 and above is exclusively for English medium students. Following online application submission, parents are required to provide the child's birth certificate and poverty line certificate for verification purposes. Principal of Swami Atmanand English School in Fingeshwar, emphasized the importance of adhering to the outlined admission process to ensure transparency and fairness in the selection procedure.

Sindhu loses in pre-quarters



Han Yue

Badminton Asia Championships

Ningbo (China), Apr 11 (PTD):

Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu fought valiantly but was outperformed by sixth seed Han Yue of China in a gruelling pre-quarterfinal of the Badminton Asia Championships here on Thursday.

Sindhu, who is desperately seeking to rediscover her form ahead of the Paris Olympics, fought hard for an hour and nine minutes before losing 18-21 13-21 against Yue, against whom she had a flawless 5-0 record before Thursday's contest.

In other Indian results, the women's doubles combination of Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa also lost in the pre-quarterfinals, going down 17-21 12-21 against third seeded Japanese pair of Nami

Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida. The Indian started on a bright note in the first game and used her experience to race to a 8-4 lead, which she increased to 14-8 before the Chinese made a gallant comeback as errors started to creep up in Sindhu's game. The Chinese engaged Sindhu in long rallies, tiring her up to draw level at 15-15. With the momentum on her side, Yue never looked back from there on, keeping control of the proceedings to wrap up the first game in her favour.

A jolted Sindhu was in attacking mode in the next game and played aggressively, using her reach and experience to good effect to race to a 16-8 lead.

Although Yue tried her best to claw her way back into the contest, Sindhu did not give any chance to her opponent and pocketed the second game comfortably to level the contest.

DC eye improvement; LSG look to keep winning

Lucknow, Apr 11 (PTD):

Delhi Capitals' bowling unit will have to punch above its weight against an in-form Lucknow Super Giants, who will start as overwhelming favourites in an Indian Premier League match here on Friday.

LSG, who sit on the third spot on the points table, seem to have all their bases covered even though rookie pacer Mayank Yadav, who bowls thunderbolts in excess of 150 kmph, is likely to miss the match because of an abdominal niggle.

The 21-year-old bowled just one over against Gujarat Titans before walking off the field, complaining of soreness last week.

In Yadav's absence, another rookie pacer, Yash Thakur starred with a five-wicket haul against GT. He will have the company of Naveen-ul-Haq, Krunal Pandya and leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi among others.

LSG boasts of a strong opening pair of Quinton de Kock and KL Rahul. The South African has scored two half-centuries but the captain is yet to convert his starts into something meaningful. The flamboyant Nicholas Pooran has been in sensational form, adding meat to LSG's total at the fag end of the in-



Delhi Capitals' Ishant Sharma during a practice session.

nings. The major concern for the Lucknow outfit, however, remains Devdutt Padikkal who is yet to reach double digits.

The visitors, on the other hand, are looking like an outfit bereft of a Plan B as it became apparent in their

106-run hammering by Kolkata Knight Riders. The latest loss to a struggling Mumbai Indians has left them languishing at the bottom of the points table with the worst net run rate of -1.370. The primary worry is the composition of

the Indian pace attack, which just lacks spunk.

The onus will be on Khaleel Ahmed and old warhorse Ishant Sharma once again but the duo hasn't been able to deliver consistently. Mukesh Kumar is expected to be back from injury but he has also not set the stage ablaze with his performance.

And, medium pacers Sumit Kumar and Rasikh Dar could well be lambs for slaughter against the likes of de Kock, Stoinis and Pooran.

To add to their woes, pace spearhead Anrich Nortje has been unable to shrug off the rust since coming off his injury, leaking runs at an economy of 13.43 in four outings. DC has struggled to find the silver lining in their 2024 campaign barring skipper Rishabh Pant and Tristan Stubb's form.

The main issue is the team's lack of depth in Indian talent on the bench. This deficiency does not instil confidence in the team.

Prithvi Shaw got some much-needed runs but he needs to do more at the top. But, save Abhishek Porel, none of the uncapped Indian players have measured up, which has led to over-reliance on their overseas recruits who have also been stuttering.

Riyan Parag's potential is there for everyone to see: Sangakkara



Jaipur, Apr 11 (PTD):

Rajasthan Royals director of cricket Kumar Sangakkara has praised the inform Riyan Parag, saying his potential is there for everyone to see but the Sri Lankan legend fell short of stating that the youngster deserves a place in India's T20 World Cup squad.

The 22-year-old is second only to Virat Kohli in the leading run-getter's list this IPL season having scored 261 runs, with a top score of 84 not out and a strike rate exceeding 158.

The hard hitter's 76 off 48 balls went in vain as Gujarat Titans overhauled the imposing 196-run total off the last ball of the innings here on Wednesday to break the Royals' four-match winning streak on Wednesday.

"I think his (Parag's) potential is there for everyone to see. I think for Riyan it's really about concentrating on Rajasthan and this season, and whatever happens (being considered for T20 World Cup) will happen after that," said Sangakkara in response to a question about whether the Assam cricketer could be in line for an India berth for the World Cup later this year in the West Indies and the USA. "I think you should never get too ahead of looking at things to find the future. As long as he keeps his head down, he is working hard, he is batting well, he is very organised, he's worked hard in the off-season, he just needs to keep doing those good things and, if he does all that, good things will happen," added the charismatic former Sri Lankan, one of the greatest batters with more than 12,000 Test and 14,000 ODI runs.

I might breach the 90m mark before Paris Olympics: Neeraj Chopra

New Delhi, Apr 11 (PTD):

Olympic gold-medallist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra is aiming to breach the 90m mark before the Paris Olympics and says the way his preparations are going, it could happen anytime soon.

Chopra's best throw in competition came during the 2022 Stockholm Diamond League, where he hurled the spear to a distance of 89.94m. While he has breached 90m in training, he has yet to match it in competition.

The 26-year-old, who will be aiming to retain his Olympic gold in Paris, said on Thursday, "I will try to breach the 90m mark before that (Paris Olympics). Hopefully, it happens before Paris, everything is going on smoothly, so (people) might not have to wait till the Olympics, it might hap-



pen before that. The preparation is good."

The reigning world champion's confidence stems from the fact that he has had a good off season, where he focused on fitness and strength, coupled with the success he has achieved after winning gold in 2020

Tokyo. "During the start of the season, the focus was on fitness and strength and no specific javelin training. I think I got a lot of improvement in technique because of that. Besides, the strength and conditioning training in South Africa and Turkey has also gone well," said Chopra during a virtual interaction from Turkey.

Chopra added that following the Tokyo Olympics success his "self-confidence" had really gone up, which will help him tremendously going into Paris.

"After Tokyo, the self-confidence has definitely gone up. Besides, I have also played quite a few events... two world championships, a silver and a gold there, won the Diamond League trophy, made some good throws, then retained the Asian Games gold (in Hangzhou) as well.

Praggnanandhaa, Vidit score crucial victories

Toronto, Apr 11 (PTD):

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa and Vidit Gujrathi scored crushing victories, while D Gukesh held on to the joint top spot with a draw in a brilliant sixth-round outing for the Indian men's team at the Candidates Chess Tournament here.

Praggnanandhaa prevailed over Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan, while Gujrathi got the better of Frenchman Alireza. Gukesh's draw came against American Hikaru Nakamura.

With eight rounds still remaining, the 17-year-old Gukesh and Ian Nepomniachtchi continue to share the lead in the men's section with four points each in their kitty.

Russian Nepomniachtchi, who is playing under the FIDE



flag, played out a draw with top seeded American Fabiano Caruana.

There was disappointment for India in the women's competition as R Vaishali suffered a reversal, losing to Kateryna Lagno of Russia. Vaishali, who is the elder sister of Praggnanandhaa, now has a lot of ground to cover if she has to come back in the tournament. Koneru Humpy also lost, to Tingjie Lei of China, while Nurgul Salimova of Bulgaria found her nemesis in Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia.

Asian Games medallist Jyothi Yarraji to train in Spain



New Delhi, Apr 11 (PTD):

Asian Games medallist sprinter Jyothi Yarraji's proposal to train in Tenrife, Spain ahead of the upcoming season and Paris Olympics was on Thursday cleared by the

government.

The 24-year-old, who won the silver medal in the 100m hurdles event at the Hangzhou Asian Games, will fly to Spain for 45 days, according to a statement by the Sports Ministry's Mission

Olympic Cell (MOC).

The government will bear the cost of her airfare, boarding/lodging cost, visa application fees, facility access cost, sports massage expenditure, local transportation cost and out-of-pocket allowance, among other expenditures.

MOC also approved India shuttlers Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy's proposal for financial assistance towards sparring partners to train ahead of the Paris Olympics. The star shuttlers will train with Alexander Dunn and Adam Hall of Scotland in Mumbai in June followed by the Indonesian pair of Rain Agung and Berry Agriawan in Hyderabad in July. TOPS will fund the pair's airfare and boarding/lodging costs.

RR skipper Sanju Samson fined Rs 12 lakh for slow over rate

Jaipur, Apr 11 (PTD):

Rajasthan Royals skipper Sanju Samson has been fined Rs 12 lakh after his team maintained a slow over rate during the Indian Premier League match against Gujarat Titans here.

The Royals' four-match winning streak was broken by the Shubman Gill-led Titans, who won the match by three wickets in a last-ball thriller on Wednesday.



"Sanju Samson, the Rajasthan Royals captain, has been fined after his team maintained a slow over rate during their TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2024 match against Gujarat Titans at the Sai Man Singh Stadium, Jaipur on April 10," said an IPL statement.

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

laks," the statement added.

Samson scored an unbeaten 68 off 38 deliveries and was ably assisted by Riyan Parag (78) as the Royals scored an imposing 196 for 3.

However, GT skipper Gill's fine 72 at the top and a cameo innings by Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan (24 off 11 deliveries) at the back end took the former IPL champions past the finish line off the last delivery.

I was nervous about returning to tennis: Simona Halep

Miami, Apr 11 (AP):

Flying to Florida for the Miami Open, where she would be playing in a professional tennis match for the first time in 1 1/2 years after a doping ban was reduced on appeal. Simona Halep turned to her mother and offered a bit of a confession.

"I'm very nervous," Halep, a two-time Grand Slam champion, recalled telling Mom. She wasn't sure what it would be like — on the court or off. And as she prepares to resume what she called her ca-



reer's "second part" during a video interview with The Associated Press from

her home in Bucharest, Romania, Halep is more comfortable with her surroundings but not quite certain how close she can get to her old self as an athlete. "I felt like I don't know what to expect from people (in Miami). How it's going to be — to be in the locker room again. Players' dining (area). All this routine that I didn't do for almost two years, it looked new for me," said Halep, whose upcoming tournaments are next week in Oeiras, Portugal, and the week after that in Madrid.

Billie Jean King Cup: India beat Chinese Taipei 2-1

New Delhi, Apr 11 (PTD):

Rutuja Bhosale won the singles rubber while the duo of Prarthana Thombare and Ankita Raina prevailed in the doubles contest as the Indian women's team defeated Chinese Taipei 2-1 in a Billie Jean King Cup Asia-Oceania Group-1 tie in Changsha, China, on Thursday. India are currently placed third in Pool A following two wins and a loss in three outings.

China and South Korea are first and second after winning all their three matches so far.

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PILGRIMAGE TO PAK



Sikh pilgrims after collecting their passports from the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) officials, as they prepare to travel to Pakistan to celebrate the Baisakhi festival, at the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, Thursday.

First time ever Eid namaz not on roads: Delhi LG

New Delhi, Apr 11 (PTI):

Lt Governor VK Saxena said this year's Eid was perhaps for the first time in the history of Delhi that 'namaz' was offered inside mosques and not on the roads, and added that it was an excellent example of harmony and co-existence. Saxena greeted people on the occasion of Eid on Thursday and said this showed that all the issues could be solved with mutual discussions and goodwill.

In a series of posts on X, Saxena said nowhere in Delhi namaz was offered on the road and that there was no "untoward incident" anywhere.

"Reiterating the greetings of Eid-ul-Fitr, I heartily thank the Imams of all



Devotees assemble to offer 'namaz' at the Jama Masjid on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr festival, in New Delhi, Thursday.

the mosques and Eidgahs of Delhi and all our Muslim brothers for offering prayers inside the mosque premises," L-G Saxena wrote on X in

Hindi. He said that by organising and offering prayers inside the mosque premises, albeit at staggered timings, the 'imams' and members of the

Muslim community "ensured that traffic on the roads was not affected, and no untoward incident took place and the common people did not face any problem."

"This is perhaps the first time in the history of Delhi that people offered 'namaz' entirely inside the mosques and Eidgahs and not on the roads. By doing this today, Delhi has set a great example of harmony and cooperation for the country," he said.

The L-G said that on April 4, he had discussed and appealed in this regard in a meeting with several 'imams' of Delhi. The community welcomed his suggestion of staggered timings of 'namaz' and assured him that it will be implemented.

2010 BAREILLY RIOTS CASE

SC relief for Muslim cleric Tauqeer Raza Khan

New Delhi, Apr 11 (PTI):

In a relief to prominent Muslim cleric, Maulana Tauqeer Raza Khan, the Supreme Court has granted an interim stay on the execution of the non-bailable warrant issued against him in the 2010 Bareilly communal riots case.

On March 2, 2010, riots had broken out in the Uttar Pradesh town over a religious procession route. Many were injured and shops and vehicles burned and attacked.

"Issue notice limited to the impugned order having been passed without assigning any reason. In the meanwhile, there shall be stay of operation of the impugned order," a bench of Justices MM Sundresh



and SVN Bhatti ordered after taking note of the submissions made by lawyer Asad Alvi, appearing for the cleric.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by the cleric against the March 19 order of the Allahabad High Court. The high court had refused to grant

any "indulgence" for the time being to Tauqeer Raza Khan over the warrant.

"So far as a non-bailable warrant against the revisionist (the cleric) is concerned, I am not inclined to grant any indulgence to the revisionist at this stage.

"However, keeping in view the ensuing Holi vacations, the revisionist is directed to appear before the learned trial court on or before March 27, 2024 and apply for bail and his bail application shall be disposed of strictly in accordance with law. It need not be impressed that a non-bailable warrant shall not be executed against him by March 27, 2024 only with a view to give him an opportunity to appear before the court below," the single judge HC bench of Justice Ram Manohar Narayan Mishra had ordered.

The top court took note of the submissions of Alvi that the high court had passed the order without assigning reasons and granted the interim stay.

India, US to reactivate observation system for Indian Ocean

New Delhi, Apr 11 (PTI): India and the US have decided to reactivate the Indian Ocean Observing System (IndOOS), a network of 36 moored buoys in the high seas to collect high-resolution ocean and atmospheric data for weather forecasts.

The IndOOS array of buoys fell into neglect and disrepair during the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to gaps in observational data considered crucial by weather forecasters, particularly since the links between the Indian Ocean Dipole phenomenon and monsoon were established.

The reactivation of IndOOS was discussed last month during a meeting of Earth Sciences Secretary M Ravichandran with Rick Spinrad, Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) of the US.

The moored buoys are part of the Research Moored Array for African-Asian-Australian Monsoon Analysis and Prediction (RAMA) programme that was born out of a collaboration between the Ministry of Earth Sciences and NOAA in 2008.

Exhibition showcases modernist KG Subramanyan's wide-ranging works

Across seven decades

Kolkata, Apr 11 (PTI):

Over 200 works by Indian modernist KG Subramanyan, including his iconic reverse paintings on acrylic and the maquettes for his powerful mural 'The War of the Relics', are part of a new retrospective-scale exhibition here at Emami Art.

'One Hundred Years and Counting: Re-Scripting KG Subramanyan', curated by Nancy Adajania and organised by Emami Art in collaboration with Seagull Foundation for the Arts, and Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University, Baroda, marks the artist's birth centenary year.

Spanning more than seven decades of



Subramanyan's practice, the exhibition features his early paintings from the 1950s, his impressions of his Chinese travels from the 1980s in postcard-size drawings, toys made for the Fine Arts Fairs at the MS University, Baroda, and a significant amount of archival material such as handcrafted mock-ups of children's books, and preparatory sketches for

murals. The show aims to "situate and re-assess the artist in the larger cultural scenario of postcolonial India's unfolding modernism and affirm the continuing relevance of his practice".

"Widely revered for his profound erudition and wit, he was a versatile and multifaceted artist who made the most original

'Still associated with socialist ideology'

Ballia (UP), Apr 11 (PTI):

Former prime minister Chandra Shekhar's son Neeraj Shekhar, who has been fielded by the BJP from Ballia in Uttar Pradesh in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, on Thursday said he is still associated with the socialist ideology and slammed the Samajwadi Party (SP) for allegedly doing away with the ideas of Ram Manohar Lohia.

"The socialist ideology should not be linked with the SP. I am still personally associated with the socialist ideology," Neeraj Shekhar told PTI over the phone.

The assertion by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate assumes significance as his late father was a proponent of the socialist ideology and a vocal critic of the saffron



Neeraj Shekhar

party. Chandra Shekhar's entire family is currently in the BJP. His elder son Pankaj Shekhar as well as younger son Neeraj Shekhar are in the saffron party while his grandson Ravi Shankar Singh Pappu is a BJP member in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council. Neeraj Shekhar, who has

been an SP MP from Ballia in the past, said a wrong perception is being created about the socialist ideology.

"The SP claims to be associated with the socialist ideology, but it has actually abandoned it. Dr Ram Manohar Lohia had raised the slogan of breaking caste barriers, whereas the SP today is hoisting the flag of a caste census," he said.

In its Lok Sabha polls manifesto released by party president Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday, the SP has promised that a caste census will be conducted by 2025 if it comes to power.

Neeraj Shekhar, who lost the 2014 Lok Sabha poll contest from Ballia to the BJP's Bharat Singh, was denied a ticket by the SP in the general election five years later.

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Northwest India braces for rains, storms this weekend

New Delhi, Apr 11 (PTI):

A spell of moderate rainfall is expected over the mountains and the plains of northwest India this weekend due to two back-to-back western disturbances and high moisture incursion from the Arabian Sea, the India Meteorological Department said on Thursday. States and Union territories, including Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, and northwest Uttar Pradesh,

could also experience thunderstorms, lightning strikes, hailstorms, and gusty winds between April 13 and 15.

"An intense western disturbance as a cyclonic circulation lies over west Iran in middle and upper tropospheric westerlies, and another one in middle tropospheric westerlies runs along longitude 72 degrees east to the north of latitude 32 degrees north. High moisture feeding from the Arabian Sea into northwest India is likely during April 13-15," the IMD said in a statement.

India-born researcher led NASA's sounding rockets mission

During solar eclipse

Mumbai, Apr 11 (PTI):

NASA's mission that launched sounding rockets during the recent total solar eclipse was led by Aroh Barjatya, an India-born researcher who studied in cities across the country before moving to the United States, his family said. The US space agency on April 8 launched three sounding rockets during the solar eclipse - visible in North America - to study how Earth's upper atmosphere is affected when

sunlight momentarily dims over a portion of the planet. "The mission was led by Aroh Barjatya, a professor of engineering physics at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida, where he directs the Space and Atmospheric Instrumentation Lab," NASA said in a statement.

The Atmospheric Perturbations around Eclipse Path (APEP) sounding rockets were launched from the agency's Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia.

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