



BRIEF



People take a stroll under umbrellas during hailstorm in Shimla, Sunday.

Lifer

■ Mathura: A court here has sentenced three people to life imprisonment in connection with the murder of a former village head here. Additional District and Sessions Judge Nitin Pandey on Saturday held Satiram, Pradeep and Dharamveer guilty and sentenced them to life imprisonment. He also imposed a fine of Rs 5,000 on each of them, said prosecution advocate Ashok Kumar Singh on Sunday.

Quit

■ Patna: In a setback to the Congress in Bihar ahead of Lok Sabha polls, former state president Anil Sharma on Sunday quit the party, claiming that it was stuck in a "disastrous" partnership with the RJD. Making the announcement at a press conference here, Sharma also voiced disgust over the recent induction, "with much fanfare", of controversial former MP Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav.

CUET-UG deadline

■ New Delhi: The application deadline for Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-UG has been further extended till April 5, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced on Sunday. The first deadline was March 26, which was initially extended to March 31.

CBI custody

■ Barasat: A court in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district on Sunday remanded Sheikh Alamgir, the brother of Sandeshkhali fiasco key accused Shajahan Sheikh, to five days in CBI custody. The court of additional chief judicial magistrate of Basirhat sub-divisional court also sent Mafjur Molla, another associate of Shajahan, to CBI custody for a similar duration.

GI tag

■ Agartala: Two indigenous products of Tripura the Pera' of Tripureswari temple and the Rignai Pachra', have been accorded the geographical indication (GI) tag, Chief Minister Manik Saha said on Sunday. "I am glad to inform that Pera' (prasad) of Tripureswari temple and Rignai Pachra', a traditional cloth for women of indigenous tribes, have been given the GI tag," he said in a post on Facebook.

Fire

■ Mumbai: A fire broke out at a salon operating from a commercial building in Mumbai's Worli area on Sunday, officials said. The fire started at the first floor of a one-storey industrial estate, in the afternoon and affected wiring and wooden materials, including sofa and chairs there, an official said.

Weather

High 38 Low 25

PM AT MEERUT RALLY

'Fighting big battle against corrupt'

■ Won't be intimidated by attacks

Meerut (UP), Mar 31 (PTI):

Lashing out at the opposition INDIA bloc, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the attacks on him will not stop the fight against corruption and action will be taken against those involved in graft irrespective of their status.

"When Modi is fighting the battle against corruption with full strength, these people have formed the INDIA alliance. They think they will intimidate Modi, but for me, my Bharat is my family and I am taking steps to protect it from the corrupt," the prime minister said addressing his first rally in Uttar Pradesh after the announcement of the Lok Sabha election schedule. Modi's counter-offensive came as the stalwarts of the INDIA bloc held a rally at the Ramlila Maidan in



PM Modi addresses during an election campaign rally ahead of Lok Sabha polls, in Meerut, Sunday.

New Delhi in support of AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and JMM leader Hemant Soren, arrested on graft charges, and accused the prime minister of adopting dictatorial policies.

The prime minister said some people are rattled because he is taking action against corruption.

"I am fighting a big battle to save my country from the corrupt. That is why they are behind bars today and not getting bail even from the Supreme Court," Modi said.

"The election is a fight

between two camps. On one side you have the NDA committed to eradicating corruption, on the other side is the INDIA Alliance focused on protecting corrupt leaders. You have to decide whether corruption should be removed or not," he said at the rally in Meerut. "Corrupt people should listen... no matter how many attacks you make on Modi, this is Modi, he is not going to stop. No matter how big the corrupt person is, action will definitely be taken. The one who has looted the country will have to give it back. This is Modi's guarantee," he said.

Raising the Katchatheevu island issue, Modi accused the Congress and the opposition alliance of trying to harm the country's unity and sovereignty.

"Today, yet another anti-India conduct of Congress has been exposed. The island of Katchatheevu, which lies between India and Sri Lanka and is ex-

tremely important from the perspective of national security, was given away by Congress after independence.

"India is still paying for the misdoings of the Congress government," he said.

The 2024 Lok Sabha election is not just for making a government but to make a 'Viksit Bharat', Modi said, adding his government was preparing the roadmap for the next five years. Modi lauded Meerut as the land of "revolution and revolutionaries" that gave leaders like Chaudhary Charan Singh to the nation. "Our government has already started preparations for the third term. We are making a roadmap for the coming five years. Work is going on rapidly on what major decisions we have to take in the first 100 days.

"In the last 10 years, you have seen only a trailer of development, now we have to take the country much further," he said.

'Gravest disrespect' to Prez: Cong

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

The Congress on Sunday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had committed "gravest disrespect" to President Droupadi Murmu by not standing up while she was presenting Bharat Ratna to BJP veteran L K Advani.

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Naxalites torch four trucks engaged in iron ore transportation

Narayanpur, Mar 31:

Naxalites have set ablaze four trucks engaged in the transportation of iron ore from a mine in Narayanpur district, police said on Sunday.

No person was reported to be injured in the incident which took place late Saturday night, they said.

The four trucks carrying iron ore from the Aamдай Ghati mine, allotted to a private company, were stopped by Naxalites near Chhotedongar police sta-

About the incident..

The four trucks carrying iron ore from the Aamдай Ghati mine, allotted to a private company, were stopped by Naxalites near Chhotedongar police station on Orchha-Narayanpur road. They asked drivers to get down from the trucks, then set the vehicles on fire and fled from the spot.

fled from the spot, he said.

After being alerted, a police team reached the spot but by then the trucks were completely gutted, the official added. Naxalites have been opposing the Aamдай Ghati mine project since a long time and they have in the past also burnt vehicles engaged in work at the site. Narayanpur district comes under the Bastar Lok Sabha constituency, where polling will be held in the first phase of the general elections on April 19.

SC to hear today Gyanvapi committee's plea

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on April 1 a Gyanvapi mosque management committee's plea against an Allahabad High Court decision upholding a lower court's order allowing Hindu prayers in the southern cellar of the mosque.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra will hear the plea of Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee, which manages the affairs of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi, challenging the HC's February 26 decision. The high court had dismissed the committee's plea in which it had challenged the district court's January 31 order allowing Hindus to offer prayers in

the cellar. While dismissing the plea of the mosque committee on February 26, the high court had observed that the Uttar Pradesh government's 1993 decision of stopping worship rituals inside the "Vyasa Tehkhana" -- located at the southern cellar of the Gyanvapi -- was "illegal". It had said that the worship rituals were stopped by "illegal action of the state without there being any order in writing" and rejected two appeals filed by the mosque management committee challenging the Varanasi district judge's January 17 order -- that appointed the district magistrate as the receiver of the "Vyasa Tehkhana" -- and the January 31 order by which the judge allowed 'puja' to be performed there.

Oppn puts up united front at INDIA's Delhi rally

■ Leaders assemble at Ramlila Maidan in solidarity with Kejriwal, Soren

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

Top INDIA bloc leaders gathered at the Ramlila Maidan here on Sunday to express solidarity with arrested Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, and urged people to vote out the BJP in the Lok Sabha polls to "save democracy and the Constitution".

The leaders who were on the stage at the 'Loktantra Bachao' (save democracy) rally included Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, for-



Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, NCP (Sharad) leader Sharad Pawar and AAP leader Bhagwant Mann during I.N.D.I.A. bloc's 'Loktantra Bachao' rally at the Ramlila ground, in New Delhi, Sunday.

mer presidents Sonia and Rahul Gandhi; NCP's Sharad Pawar, NC leader Farooq Abdullah, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray; Left leaders Sitaram Yechury, D Raja, Dipankar Bhattacharya; Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav; RJD's Tejashwi Yadav and TMC's

Derek O'Brien.

Chief Minister Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal and JMM leader Hemant Soren's wife Kalpana Soren were also addressed the gathering, castigating the Central government over the arrest of their husbands in corruption cases.

'Ensure level-playing field in LS polls'

The opposition INDIA bloc on Sunday urged the Election Commission to ensure a level-playing field in the Lok Sabha polls and asserted that despite the BJP creating "undemocratic obstacles", the alliance is committed to fight, win and save the country's democracy. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra read out the demands of the opposition alliance at the 'Loktantra Bachao Rally' at the Ramlila ground here. She said the Election Commission should ensure a level playing field for all parties in Lok Sabha elections. The poll panel should stop the Enforcement Directorate, CBI and the Income Tax department's actions against opposition parties being taken to adversely impact the elections, the Congress leader demanded, adding that former Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal be immediately released. During the elections, action to forcefully scuttle the finances of opposition parties should be immediately stopped, she said, reading out the INDIA bloc's demands at the rally. The opposition alliance also demanded that a Supreme Court-monitored SIT be set to probe the BJP's "extortion" of funds through the electoral bonds scheme.

Sunita Kejriwal read out a letter from her husband which she said he sent from the Enforcement Directorate's custody. Thackeray alleged the

country has become an "autocracy" under the Modi government, and appealed to the people to throw the BJP out of power.

TIGER TRIUMPH 2024



Helicopters during the closing ceremony of the Bilateral Tri-Service Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Amphibious Exercise between India and US, Tiger Triumph 2024.

'PM trying to do match-fixing in LS polls'

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of trying to do "match-fixing" in the Lok Sabha polls and asserted that if the BJP succeeds in its endeavours, the country's Constitution will be changed and people's rights taken away.

Addressing the INDIA bloc's 'Save Democracy' rally at the Ramlila Maidan here, the former Congress chief said this is not an ordinary election but one to save the country's democracy and Constitution. "When pressure is put on umpires and captain, players are bought off and the match is won, in cricket, it is called match-fixing. We have Lok Sabha polls before us. Who selected the umpires?"



Rahul Gandhi waves as he addresses I.N.D.I.A. bloc's 'Loktantra Bachao Rally' at Ramlila Maidan, in New Delhi, Sunday.

Before the match started, two players were arrested... Narendra Modi is trying to do match-fixing in these polls," Gandhi said. The BJP is raising the slogan of getting 400 seats, but without EVMs, match-fixing, pressure on opposition leaders and buying media, they will not be able to cross even 180 seats, he claimed.

'Your family had done deal-fixing'

The BJP on Sunday hit back at Rahul Gandhi over his "match-fixing" accusation against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that the Congress government in the past handed over Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka clinching a "deal" with the neighbouring country to benefit the party's first family. The BJP's reaction came after Gandhi accused Prime Minister Modi of trying to do "match-fixing" in the Lok Sabha polls and asserted that if the BJP succeeds in its endeavours, the country's Constitution will be changed and people's rights taken away. Addressing a press conference here, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla also slammed the Congress over Gandhi's claim that the entire country will be on fire if the saffron party returns to power and the Constitution is changed, saying that divisive politics is in the "DNA" of the main opposition.

Storm wreaks havoc in WB

Jalpaiguri, Mar 31 (PTI):

Four persons were killed and at least 70 people injured as a storm wreaked havoc in parts of Jalpaiguri district in northern West Bengal on Sunday, officials said.

Several houses were damaged, trees uprooted and electric poles fell as strong winds devastated most parts of the district headquarters town and many areas of neighbouring Mainaguri, they said. Among the most affected areas were Rajarhat,

Barnish, Bakali, Jorpakdi, Madhabdanga and Saptibari, they said.

The deceased were identified as Dijendra Narayan Sarkar (52) of Senpara, Anima Burman (45) of Paharpur, Jagen Roy (72) of Putimari and Samar Roy (64) of Rajarhat, they added. "A rescue operation is underway," a disaster management officer said.

Dhupguri MLA Nirmal Chandra Roy told PTI that several people were admitted to hospital with injuries. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said per-

sonnel of the civil administration, police and disaster management have been deployed for the relief works.

Quick response teams (QRTs) have also been deployed, and the affected people were being shifted to safer places, she said.

"Sad to know that sudden heavy rainfall and stormy winds brought disasters today afternoon in some Jalpaiguri-Maynaguri areas, with loss of human lives, injuries, house damages, uprooting of trees and electricity poles etc," she posted on X.

Cong eyes win in six seats which BJP never lost

Raipur, Mar 31:

Six out of the 11 Lok Sabha seats in Chhattisgarh have been the Bharatiya Janata Party's bastions where it never lost the elections since the state's formation in 2000.

While the Congress has expressed confidence of breaching the saffron citadels this time, the BJP is hopeful of retaining them and also pocketing the other Lok Sabha seats in the state.

Of these six seats, Kanker, Surguja and

Raigarh are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes, Janjgir-Champa for the Scheduled Castes, while Raipur and Bilaspur are for the general category candidates.

In Rajnandgaon Lok Sabha seat, the BJP never tasted defeat since 2000 but in a 2007 bypoll, the Congress emerged victorious. This time, the Congress has fielded former chief minister Bhupesh Baghel from Rajnandgaon.

After Chhattisgarh was carved out of Madhya Pradesh, the BJP fared

well in both the assembly and Lok Sabha elections in the state.

The saffron party ruled the state uninterrupted for 15 years from 2003 to 2018 and came to power for the fourth term in the 2023 assembly polls.

The BJP won 10 Lok Sabha seats in 2004, 2009, and 2014. Despite a severe loss in the 2018 assembly elections, the BJP won nine seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Both the parties have declared their candidates for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls in the state, to be held

in three phases on April 19, April 26 and May 7.

The Congress has pinned hopes on a sitting MLA, two former legislators including a minister, two fresh faces and an experienced leader to breach the BJP's six strongholds.

In Raipur Lok Sabha seat, the BJP has fielded Brijmohan Agrawal, an eight-term MLA and minister in the Vishnu Deo Sai-led present state government, dropping sitting MP Sunil Soni. In 2019, Soni defeated Congress' Pramod Dubey by a margin of 3,48,238 votes.

Guilty in State PSC scam would go behind bars: Sai

● Appeals people of Keshkal region to root out Congress in next LS polls

Keshkal, Mar 31:

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai charged that the erstwhile Congress government in the state by not giving 'pucca' houses to poor under PMAF for last 5 yrs has left them homeless and done gross injustice. But the BJP government in the state has granted sanction for construction of 18 lakh houses under PMAF for the poor families. It is by doing corruption in the state PSC the Congress government has played with the future of the talented youths of the state and as per the promises made by the government, the CBI inquiry into the scam has been started and soon the guilty will be behind the bars. The people of the state have ousted such a corrupt Congress government in last VS polls and now it has to be rooted out in forthcoming LS polls, he added.

CM Sai was addressing huge public meeting in



Harwel of Keshkal here on Sunday. CM said that all the people of Keshkal region had elected BJP MLA posing confidence on BJP and for which he expressed his gratitude and made an appeal to all to ensure victory of BJP candidate so as to bring BJP government at the Centre and repeat PM Modi as the Prime Minister of India. After which we all can say with pride that the people of Kanker LS seat extend

ed whole hearted support in making Modi as the PM for the third time. CM Vishnu Deo Sai said that with the blessings of people of the region, BJP formed its government in the state and it is just 3 months of coming to power, the government completed the main promises made under Modi-ki-Guarantee on priority basis. CM said to people of Keshkal region that tendupatta will now be pur-

chased at Rs 5500 per standard lot and orders in this regard have been issued and the BJP government has fixed 15 days for its purchase. CM Sai further said that on formation of double engine government, due attention will be paid on development of railway line from Raipur to Jagdalpur and there will be permanent solution to the low voltage problem in the region and development of

Highway roads of Keshkal will be done at high-level.

Speaking further CM Sai said that with BJP government coming to power, the state's share of houses for 18 lakh poor families was released. Congress had not paid the balance amount of bonus as mentioned in their manifesto and with BJP government coming to power, the government paid Rs 3716 cr to 12 lakh farmers on occasion of Atalji's jayanti. The government purchased record 145 lakh MT of paddy on MSP and the farmers were paid Rs 3100 per quintal, apart from the difference amount of two year's bonus worth Rs 13,320 cr to 24.72 lakh farmers. Under Mahatari Vandan Yojana, a total of 655 cr was deposited into the account of 70 lakh women directly.

CM Sai that to ensure that all the residents in sensitive areas of Bastar region gets basic amenities, for this the government has launched 'Niyad Nellanar Yojana' and under this the villagers are getting facilities of ration, road, pure drinking water, electricity, school and hospital services.

EASTER CELEBRATED



Christians in city celebrated Easter rejoicing and many people attended church services, exchange gifts, and enjoy festive meals with family and friends and flowering the cross as per the rituals here on Sunday.

Sao hits back at Priyank Kharge

● Calling central agencies as BJP's frontal organizations

Raipur, Mar 31:

Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao has hit back at Congress MLA from Karnataka Priyank Kharge's statement that the central investigative agencies are frontal organizations of the BJP. Congress leaders have been saying this for the last several years, Sao said and added that when ED took action, no one got bail.

Action has been taken on the basis of evidence and facts, he said, adding that



BJP does not need to implicate anyone without any basis.

Commenting over the rally of INDIA Alliance held in Delhi today, Deputy CM Sao said that they came together in support of those in jail on

corruption charges. The public will give them the answer for this, he said. Meanwhile on the issue of end of 30 per cent discount in land registry fees today, the Deputy CM asked 'for whom did Congress work in the last 5 years?' Congress had made arrangements to provide benefits to its people, he alleged and said that the Finance Minister clarified why and for whom it was done.

On Congress' statement that ED will take action during the election time, Deputy CM Arun Sao said that action of ED and other central agencies had been going on across the country for a long time.

Two chain mountain machines, 3 Hywas seized

● Involved in illegal murrum excavation

Raipur, Mar 31:

The Revenue Department conducted a raid under the leadership of SDM Ravi Singh in village Ghorbhatti under Gobra Navapara tehsil area. Two chain mountain machines and 3 Hywa vehicles used in illegal murrum excavation have been seized. The action stirred protest among those involved in illegal excavation of murrum.

SDM Singh told that he reached the village after



receiving a complaint about illegal murrum excavation. Illegal mud excavation was found in Khasra No-128. No valid documents were found with the people doing the excavation. Subsequently 2 chain mountains and 3 hywa vehicles engaged in illegal murrum excavation have been seized.

During the action, Gobra Navapara Tehsildar Suraj Banchhor, Naib Tehsildar Alok Verma, Revenue Inspector, Patwari etc. were present.

According to the information, illegal excavation and transportation of murrum was being done 24 hours a day for the last 15 days.

Cong set to project Modi govt's failure in 10 yrs of its rule

● Chalks out strategy for LS Polls

Raipur, Mar 31:

Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) President Deepak Baij and co-in-charge Vijay Jangid held two important meetings at the PCC Headquarters 'Rajiv Bhawan'. The first meeting was held with PCC spokespersons and the second meeting was held with the district in-charges and office bearers. PCC Chief Baij said that party would approach people on two important issues. He said that party would raise issue of Modi government's failure in 10



years of its tenure and its broken promises. Congress has given 5 guarantees for every section of the public and so it is necessary to make people aware of all such guarantees from every platform, he said.

Congress has guaranteed to give Rs 1 lakh annually to every woman in women's justice, Baij said, adding that Congress will make a law to give MSP to farmers.

Congress guarantees to increase the wages of MN-

REGA workers from Rs 200 to Rs 400 and provide employment to 30 lakh youth, he said and added that Congress will make a budget of Rs 5000 crore in every district to help youth in their pursuit for self-employment.

Describing spokesperson as party's face co-in-charge Vijay Jangid in his address said every spokesperson must aggressively convey Modi government's failure in 10 years of its tenure to the public. Inflation, unem-

ployment, farmers' plight and women are our big issues in this election, he said. He said that BJP will try to divert attention from such issues.

In the meeting of district in-charge officials, election campaign work and organizational activities in all the districts were reviewed. Everyone was instructed to actively monitor the booth committees in their respective districts and to speed up the campaign of the candidates.

General Secretary in-charge Malkit Singh Gaidoo, PCC Communication head Sushil Anand Shukla, Senior Spokesperson Surendra Sharma, Dhananjay Singh Thakur, Ghanshyam Raju Tiwari, Surendra Verma, Vikas Tiwari, Shrikumar Menon, spokesperson Nitin Bhansali, Abhay Narayan Rai, Vandana Rajput, Amit Srivastava, Ajay Gangwani, Satyaprakash Singh, Parvez Ahmed, Rishabh Chandrakar, Anubhav Shukla, Javed Khan, Ravi Gavalani, Anshul Mishra, Satnam Panag, Sharique Raees Khan, Deepak Pandey and Sujit Ghidode were present.

Water samples being tested daily



Raipur, Mar 31:

With the aim of supplying pure water to the residents of Ravanabhatha, about 25 to 35 water samples obtained from various water sources from tail end tanks, power pumps, hand pumps are being tested every day in both the

laboratories of Ravanabhatha Filter Plant.

Executive Engineer of Municipal Corporation Water Works Department, Nar Singh Farendra directly observed the process of sample testing in both the labs of Ravanabhatha Filter Plant.

ARO Pushendra Sharma inspects polling stations Of Arang Assembly Constituency

Raipur, Mar 31:

ARO of Arang Assembly Constituency Pushendra Sharma inspected the polling stations under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024, on the instructions of Collector and District Returning Officer Dr. Gaurav Singh.

He have instructions to make available basic facilities in four polling stations in Narhada, three polling stations in Chandkhuri, Mungesar, Bhansol, three polling stations in Kosrangi, three polling stations in Kagdehi, four polling stations in Kusmand, Gullu, two in Jaraud, two in Sandi, two in Kukda, two polling sta-



tions in Seoni, eight polling stations in Mandir Hasaud, two in Parsada,

four polling stations in Palaud, two in Rasni and Bodra, two in Paragaon

and four polling stations in Arang.

He said that arrangements for drinking water, electricity, toilets and ramps should be made in the polling booths. Since the voting is going to be held in May during peak summer arrangements should be made for pandals for shade keeping in mind high temperature, he said. He also instructed to conduct voter awareness activities from time to time. Also present were Tehsildar, Naib Tehsildar, Development Block Education Officer, BRC, SDO RES, CMO, Police Station Incharge and Revenue and Nagar Panchayat officials.

LS polls: ARO inspects polling stations of Rural Legislative Assembly



Raipur, Mar 31:

ARO of Rural Assembly Constituency Nandlal Choubey inspected the polling stations on the instructions of Collector and District Returning Officer Dr. Gaurav Singh under Lok Sabha Elections 2024. He gave instructions to provide basic

facilities in polling stations Saddu, Urla, Acholi. He said that arrangements for drinking water, electricity, toilets and ramps should be made in the polling booth. Besides, voter awareness activities should also be done from time to time, he said. Other officials were also present on this occasion.

Power demand reaches record 6300 MW in March itself

■ Demand likely to go up in the coming days; CSPDCL purchase power to fulfill the demand

Raipur, Mar 31:

With mercury on the rise, the power consumption too is increasing each day and on Saturday it reached record 6300 MW and it is a new record in the state. In order to avoid power cut purchased 200-300 MW and fulfilled the demand. But in the coming days, the chances of demand going higher cannot be denied.

It is just end of the

Power at Rs 8-9 per unit

With increasing demand, CSPDCL is purchase power daily and with higher the demand in all the states, the power is available at higher rates. It is learnt that the cost of power purchase is Rs 8-9 per unit. It is notable here that the Central government has fixed Rs 10 per unit as the upper limit for power purchase and nobody can sell power at rate higher than this.

March and the maximum temperature has reached around 40 Deg Celcius and due to this mercury is also on the rise. For the summer crop where the agriculture pumps are being run on regular basis, at the same time the use of fans, coolers, ACs in the residence, offices and other buildings

too has increased manifold. Due to this there is sudden rise in demand for power in the state. As per information in this regard, the power demand on Saturday reached to a record 6300 MW and this happened for the first time in March that the demand for power got such an es-

State getting 570 MW of power from banking

As per information in this regard, at present due to banking in Rajasthan and Punjab, the state is getting 570 MW of power. Both these states were supplied power by the state from October to January last. After April 16, around 300 MW of power supply would stop and in such conditions, if the demand for power increases, then people can face power crisis. Still the CSPDCL management has done all preparations to fulfill the increasing demand and to purchase power in order to avoid power cut like situation.

calation. Few days back the demand was around 5947 MW and the same demand last year was 4946 MW. In this way there is increase of 1300 MW of demand for power this year and with increase in demand for power each

day, has brought concern for CSPDCL. The officials of the Company informed that it was last in September also the demand shot upto 6100 MW and with mercury on the rise, the same is expected to shoot up further in the

coming days and if this remains the demand, then there are chances of power crisis in some parts of the state.

To fulfill this demand is becoming a big challenge for CSPDCL, as in comparison of demand, the availability in the state is 6200 MW and still the CSPDCL management claims that despite higher demand, there is no condition of power cut at present. In order to avoid power cut, CSPDCL is purchasing 200-300 MW. But if the demand does not reduces, then the chances of power supply in other sectors may get affected.

DDEO administers oath of voter awareness

● Hundreds of citizens participated in Marine Drive located in Telibandha

Raipur, Mar 31:

A voter awareness program was organized today at Marine Drive in Telibandha under the Lok Sabha Elections 2024. Hundreds of citizens participated in this program. Deputy District Election Officer (DDEO) Umashankar Bande administered the oath of voter awareness to all the citizens. He also appealed to more and more people to vote in the Lok Sabha elections. On this occa-



sion, Tehsildar of Raipur Kosma and a large number of distinguished citizens were present.



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Stunt biker caught on camera; fined

Bhilai, Mar 31:

Traffic Police took action against a biker on the basis of video received on traffic helpline number (94791-92029). The video of reckless driving while performing stunts on Central Avenue road was uploaded on social media. The stunt biker was made to pledge not to drive with negligence in future. The stunt biker boys appealed to their other youth not to perform stunts on bikes as it is dangerous for themselves and others. Traffic Police urged the people to send the photos and videos of such violators to traffic help number



9479192029.

On the instructions of Superintendent of Police (Durg) Jitendra Shukla

and under the leadership of Deputy Superintendent of Police, Traffic, Satish Thakur and Sadanand

Vindyaraj, Traffic Police Durg has issued a helpline number for complaints and suggestions related to traffic. A citizen shared a video of stunt bikers performing stunts and driving recklessly on the Central Avenue road and other roads. On the basis of the vehicle number visible in the video, Police searched for the rider of the vehicle and thereafter the rider and the bike were brought to the traffic headquarters. The traffic cops counselled the biker and advised him not to do such careless acts in future. The rider pledged to ride carefully in future and appealed to his friends and

common citizens not to drive in such a careless manner. The rider was punished with a fine of Rs 3000 for over speeding and riding with license under the provisions of Motor Vehicle Act.

Traffic Police appealed to the common citizens that if they come across such careless drivers or spot a vehicle using a modified silencer, they can send the photo and video along with the vehicle number to the traffic helpline number. Traffic Police will take necessary legal action against the violator and the name of the informer will be kept confidential.

Police conducts flag march across city

Bhilai, Mar 31:

In view of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, flag marches are being conducted continuously in different areas by Durg Police. In this sequence, a flag march was conducted in Padmanabhpur, Potiya, Kelabari and surrounding areas under the leadership of Superintendent of Police Jitendra Shukla. Police station incharges and gazetted officers accompanied by companies of Border Security Force, Chhattisgarh Armed Force and District Police Force conducted the flag



march. The flag marches were conducted earlier in sensitive areas like Durg, Mohan Nagar police station and Bhilai Nagar, Chhawani and Khursipar from the election point of view. Through the flag

march, the cops made their presence felt and tried to create a sense of security among the citizens so that they can exercise their franchise without any fear in the upcoming election.

CSV TU signs MoU with Ayush University



Bhilai, Mar 31:

Chhattisgarh Swami Vivekanand Technical University (CSV TU), Bhilai recently signed a MoU with Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay Memorial Health Sciences and AYUSH University, Chhattisgarh. Vice Chancellor of CSV TU Bhilai, Dr MK Verma and AYUSH University Vice Chancellor Dr PK Patra were present. The objective of this agreement is to make joint efforts by both the institutions on development of research and academic activities. Under this MoU, faculty and students can travel to both the institutes for research activities and do academic and research work. The objective of this agreement is to encourage

students to study by working with each other to improve educational quality, establish new technology ideas for innovation and start-up cells. The important objective is to establish technology centers and promote innovative research for each other, as well as promote short-term educational activities and training programs. Both the institutions can jointly organize conferences, seminars and workshops. In this program, Pro Vice Chancellor of the University Prof Sanjay Agrawal, Registrar in-charge Dr Ankit Arora, Registrar of AYUSH University Dr Rajesh Hishikar, Deputy Registrar Dr SK Chatterjee and Assistant Registrar Dr Manish Rathod were present.

Agitation of retrenched health workers completes three years

Bhilai, Mar 31:

On Sunday, the agitation of health workers, who were retrenched from Chandulal Chandrakar Hospital and Medical College Kachandur, completed its three years. They are continuously staging agitation at a pandal outside the hospital premises for the last three years. The agitators conducted a meeting in the Dharna Pandal and reviewed the movement that has been going on for the last three years. During this period, they staged dharna, demonstration, hunger strike, fast unto death, met the Ministers, MLAs and also sought the support of the Opposition Parties. Later, they approached the High Court and are still waiting for justice. The retrenched workers are disappointed but are fighting this battle



as a part of their life. In these difficult times, the health workers have also approached the Supreme Court, New Delhi. The Supreme Court conducted a hearing on this case on March 15 and issued a notice to the Chhattisgarh Government and those who sold the hospital. Both the parties have been asked to submit their

reply within 4 weeks. The Supreme Court is looking at this matter very seriously for the health workers. Six advocates appeared before the court for the aggrieved health workers.

After the Congress rule, the BJP has formed the state government. In the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the aggrieved work-

ers are going to question all the leaders whether they will consider the demands of retrenched health workers seriously. Sumit Parganiha, Devraj Sahu, Leela Devgan, Manta Mahesh Sahu, Laxman Sahu, Anita Sahu, Kaladas Dahariya, Mohan Baghel and others were present in the meeting.

Merchant Mill sets new day record in production of Angles



Bhilai, Mar 31:

SAIL -Bhilai Steel Plant's Merchant Mill has set a new day record of rolling 2005 Tonnes of Angle in 75x75x6 mm dimension and profile on March 28, 2024, surpassing previous best of 1910 T in the same profile produced on February 04, 2024.

Besides rolling out light structural range of products including angles and channels in different dimensions for use in different applications, Merchant Mill also rolls out several

special value added steel grades including high-corrosion resistant HCRM grade of TMT bars, TMT bars in 550 D grade, TMT (SEQR-550 D) and TMT (Fe-500D). It is worth mentioning that Merchant Mill has during the April to Feb period of current fiscal year, rolled out 6.07 lakh tonnes of TMT bars and light structural products as against production of 5.43 lakh tonnes in corresponding period of last fiscal year, thereby registering a growth of 11.9% over previous year.

'Swachhata Pakhwada' organised at Material Recovery Department

Bhilai, Mar 31:

Under the Swachhata Pakhwada initiative, Plant's Material Recovery Department (MRD) organised a special cleanliness programme and awareness campaign under the guidance of Sushil Kumar, CGM (MRD) on March 28, 2024.

At the outset "Swachhata Shapath-Oath of Cleanliness" was administered to all the individuals present in the programme by Sajid Khan, (ALWO), followed by collective Shramdaan by the departmental employees for cleaning the Material Recovery Department premises and adjoining areas.

Dinamani Nayak, Alok Mathur, GMS (MRD), Avnish Dubey DSO, Prashant Yadav, Mgr (MRD), Kuldeep Tomar, JO (MRD), Dr Upendra Sharma, JO, Kamlesh Rajput, Charge Man and Union Representative (BMS), were also present on



this occasion, along with Ajay Sharma, Vijay Verma, Manish Srivastava, Chain Singh Sahu, Aslam, Mukesh, trainees, and contract workers.

Cleanliness is equally significant for promoting a Safety Culture among employees and achieving the goal of "zero accidents". A comprehensive housekeeping programme was organised, and scrap and unwanted materials were cleaned under the Swachhata Pakhwada initiative to create a risk-free work environment at

the department. Along with maintaining cleanliness in the household and surrounding areas, it is very important to keep the workplace clean and organized. It is noteworthy that SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant organizes similar cleanliness and safety initiatives and tree plantations from time to time, to promote the spirit of cleanliness and safety practices and better upkeep of the environment, among the Plant employees and township residents.

'Demystifying Industry 4.0' awareness programme organised at BMDC

Bhilai, Mar 31:

"Demystifying Industry 4.0" Mass Awareness Programme for the cross-section of Executives of SAIL-Bhilai Steel Plant was organised at Bhilai Management Development Centre (BMDC), Russian Complex, Sector-7, on March 28, 2024. Asit Saha, CGM (M & U) was the Chief Guest on this occasion, while Ravi Shankar, GM (INCOS) who is also head of the Digitalization Teams of BSP, was present as Special Guest. A total of 22 executives from various departments of the Plant took part in the one-day programme, which is second in this series. The objective of this programme is to create awareness amongst the employees of Bhilai Steel Plant on Industry 4.0- its key components, its relevance in the manufacturing industry like SAIL, and its impact on the

current manufacturing processes and technologies. A Mass Awareness Programme Module has also been designed by BMDC, which is purported to be conducted by BMDC (HRD), in the form of a series for the cross-section of as many as 500 Executives as well as non-executives of Bhilai Steel Plant. The first awareness programme in this series was held on February 27, 2024, and was attended by 27 executives from various departments of the Plant. Members of the DX Digitalization Teams were the faculties in various sessions who made the programme interactive through various AI tools. Sandeep Sahu, Shubhashish Nandi, SP Rajkumar, JPS Chauhan, Neeraj Sharma and Saroj Kumar participated in this program as faculty members from the DX team.

Dr Ambedkar Square to be the state's most beautiful square

Bhilai, Mar 31:

A delegation of Dr Ambedkar Pratima Prabandh Samiti, Power House, Bhilai met the Chhattisgarh National Highway and Public Works Department (EnC) Mr Pipri at his office in Raipur. The delegation led by patron of the organization, Dilip Wasnikar demanded to complete the beautification work of Power House Dr Ambedkar Chowk before Dr Ambedkar Jayanti on 14th April. Taking the demand into immediate consideration, Mr Pipri instructed all the officers of the National Highway Division to complete the work on time.

President of the Samiti, Sunil Ramteke said that like every year, a program of Jayanti Mela Mahotsava



is being organized at Dr Ambedkar Chowk in Bhilai Power House on 14th April. Chief Minister of the State, Cabinet Ministers, MPs and MLAs and other public representatives will attend the programme. Rallies from different areas of the region will arrive here to offer floral tributes to Babasaheb. Ramteke further said that the work of beautification of Ambedkar Chowk is going on under the guidance of famous social

worker Ashok Dhawale. The first statue of Babasaheb installed in the country will soon become the most beautiful square of the state. The delegation included State Departmental Inquiry Commissioner Dilip Wasnikar, President of All India Federation Sunil Ramteke, General Secretary of Sarva Ravidas Samaj - Balram Kolte, Ashok Dhawale (Architect) and Yashwant Ramteke were present.

ISKCON Durg celebrates Gaura Purnima Mahotsav

Bhilai, Mar 31:

The ISKCON outreach center in Durg transformed into a Vrindavan abode as thousands of devotees adorned themselves with flowers and colors. The religious occasion of Gaura Purnima Mahotsav was celebrated at ISKCON Preaching Center, Durg under the leadership of Anant Shyam Das. The main attraction of the Gaura Purnima Mahotsav was the abhishek of Lord Jagannath Baldev Subhadra and Lord Gaur Nitai. Devotees sang various Vaishnav bhajans during the festival.

The arrival of Lord Jagannath Baldev Subhadra Maharani and Radha Mahasundar Lord Gaur Nitai was celebrated with great enthusiasm. The hall was adorned with an exquisite temple where the divine idols were

bathed amidst a shower of colorful flowers. The ceremony marked the beginning of Gaura Purnima and Pushpotsav. This event signifies respect and devotion towards Indian culture, promoting unity and harmony in society.

The program commenced with mangalcharan, offering a warm welcome to the deities. This was followed by the welcome of Tamal Krishna Das, Director of ISKCON Youth Forum, Chhattisgarh, and the presentation of the first drama.

The first drama depicted how Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu rescued Chand Kazi, the ruler of Bengal, who attempted to stop the chanting of the holy names. It portrayed how Chaitanya Mahaprabhu explained to Chand Kazi the efficacy of chanting the holy name in



this age of Kali, ultimately forgiving him and involving him in the Hari naam sankirtan movement.

An unique Holi celebration in the name of Lord in Durg was organized by ISKCON Preaching Center, portraying the sig-

nificance of Gaura Purnima. It explained that when Lord Krishna appeared as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in this age, the entire universe was filled with joy, with showers of flowers from the sky. Thus, we celebrate by play-

ing Holi with flowers, welcoming the Lord. Under the guidance of Jiva Goswami Prabhu Das (King of Chhattisgarh Kirtan) and Swaroop Damodar Das, a spirited and devotional Kirtan team presented a unique spiritual experience. Through Vaisnava songs, they glorified the holy name of the Lord, invoking spiritual peace and love among the attendees.

An elaborate abhishek of Lord Jagannath Baldev Subhadra and Radha Mahasundar Gaur Nitai was conducted using gallons of water, flowers, and 30 kg of herbal colors. After the abhishek, more than 500 devotees played Holi with flowers and herbal gulas as prasad. The kirtan festival continued for over 5 hours, with devotees immersed in spiritual ecstasy, dancing and singing with joy. The event depicted a

unique and spiritual celebration of Holi, strengthening religious and social unity, and highlighting the spiritual significance of the festival. A long queue was seen where more than 150 devotees waited, and from a distance of 50 meters, the offerings were carried from Radha Rani's kitchen to Lord Jagannath. 1008 offerings were presented for Lord Jagannath, consisting of various special foods. Among them were 11 types of cakes, 11 types of pizzas, 51 types of sweets, 10 types of bread, 21 types of fritters, and 201 types of dishes made from dry flour. In addition, 201 other types of offerings were available, including a variety of 250 offerings suitable as Mahaprasad for Lord Jagannath. These included various dishes such as puris, rasgullas, gulab jamuns, rice papads, potato parathas, sweet co-

riander chickpeas, cauliflower Manchurian, paneer tikka, potato curry, masala dosa, royal paneer, fenugreek parathas, gram flour barfi, rasgullas, mango juice, pomegranate juice, dates, almonds, and various fruits. All these diverse and delicious offerings were dedicated to Lord Jagannath's worship, providing devotees with a rich and spiritual experience. These offerings were enriching, nutritious, and tasty. They were offered to Lord Jagannath with prosperity and devotion, bringing him joy and satisfaction. After this, the grand Aarti of the Lord was performed, and all the devotees danced in the chanting of the Aarti.

All devotees were seated and served the Mahaprasad. In this religious festival, nearly hundreds of devotees enjoyed the Mahaprasad of Lord Jagannath Gaur Nitai.

Every devotee's face radiated with joy and contentment with the Lord's holy Prasad. This wonderful experience filled everyone with spiritual enthusiasm, providing them with peace and happiness.

Among the devotees who participated were special guests Payal Jain, Arun Vora, Gopal Agrawal, Sanjay Pandey, Piyush Varma, Pappu Roongta were honoured by offering Tulsi Maharani and presenting the book "Shikshamrit" by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The entire program was organized by Anant Shyam Das, Sankirtan Chaitanya Das, Bhakt Vatsal Das, Dayanidhi Das, Yash Gupta, Kirti, Sateesh, Lala Mahendra, Pankaj, Radheshyam Das, Harshal, Rohit, Krishna Radhika Devi Dasi, Yogita, Chanda, Reshma, Anita Sahu Mataji, and other devotees.

Deepak Baij slams Modi government over 'rising debt'

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Mar 31: The Government of India is going to take a loan of more than Rs 14 lakh crore in the current financial year. State Congress President Deepak Baij said that in the 67 years since independence till 2014, the total debt of the country was Rs 55 lakh crore.

In the last 10 years, Modi alone increased it to Rs 205 lakh crore. Modi government took about Rs 150 lakh crore loan in the last 10 years. Today, every citizen of the country has an average debt of about Rs 1.5 lakh. Modi government should tell how this huge loan money was used for nation building? State Congress

President Deepak Baij said that were jobs created on the same scale on which loans were taken? In reality, jobs did disappear in last 10 years? Has the income of farmers doubled? Neither schools nor hospitals shine? Apart from this, the public sector has been weakened.

Nor were big factories and industries set up? Then why did Modi government take loan? Core sectors of the economy are deteriorating, if the labor force has declined, if small and medium businesses

**Deepak Baij**

have been shut down - where has this money gone? On whom was it spent? How much money was written off in this? How much money was spent on loan waiver of big billion-

aires? Modi government is not in a position to answer. State Congress President Deepak Baij said that now the government is preparing to take a new loan, the question arises that instead of providing relief to the general public for the last 10 years, when the burden of unemployment, inflation

and economic crisis is increasing, then how can BJP government takes new loan pulling the people and country in huge debt?

Cash flow is historically lowest under Modi rule. 90 percent of MSMEs are closing within 3 years. Agricultural growth rates are historically low. The price of dollar was Rs 59 in 2014 which has reached Rs 83.60 paise.

Since the coming of Modi government, the country's public enterprises and resources are being sold to a few capitalist friends. More than 30 big public sector undertakings including banks, insurance, railways, ports and airports were sold during the last 10 years of Modi rule.

Indrasen honoured for blood donation awareness campaign

Chhattisgarhi Agarwal Samaj celebrates remarkable achievement

Central Chronicle News

Raipur, Mar 31: In a commendable display of dedication to a noble cause, Indrasen Agarwal, a resident of Raipur, was felicitated by the Chhattisgarhi Agarwal Samaj Shankar Nagar unit for his extraordinary feat.

Embarking on a solo cycling expedition from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, spanning 37 days, Agarwal aimed to raise awareness about the importance of blood donation. His remarkable journey not only brought honor to his family but also garnered appreciation from the society and the state of Chhattisgarh.

The Holi Milan ceremony, held on March 30 at



Gomti Tower in Shankar Nagar, Raipur, served as the backdrop for this momentous occasion. Indrasen Agarwal, aged 55 and a resident of Purani Basti, Raipur, shared his inspiring experiences with attendees,

highlighting the significance of community service and altruism.

During the event, Agarwal was bestowed with a shawl and Shriphal by esteemed members of the Shankar Nagar unit, including pa-

tron Mukund Lal Agarwal, president Sanjay Agarwal, and other prominent figures such as secretary Sudhanshu Agarwal, treasurer Sandeep Agarwal, and vice presidents Sushil and Santosh Agarwal.

Holi Milan ceremony organized



Under SVEEP program

Central Chronicle News

Bijapur, Mar 31: As per the instructions of the Election Commission of India, to increase the voting percentage, a large scale voter awareness campaign "SVEEP Program" is being conducted under the guidance of Collector and District Election Officer Anurag Pandey.

In the same sequence, SVEEP Holi was organized on a large scale in the District Panchayat in the presence of Nodal Officer

and CEO District Panchayat Hemant Ramesh Nandanwar, in which voters were appealed to use their franchise to create a strong and powerful democracy.

CEO District Panchayat and Nodal Officer of SVEEP, Hemant Ramesh Nandanwar appealed to the voters of the district to exercise their franchise impartially and without fear. On this occasion, officers, employees and voters, drenched in colours, took a pledge to exercise their franchise in a free, fair and fear-free manner and an appeal has been made to all the voters to vote 100 per cent.

40 children selected in National Co-Method Examination

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Mar 31: Forty students of Khairagarh district have been selected in the National Secondary Means Examination (NMMSE). BEO Ms. Neelam Thakur had made the participating students have special preparation for the examination, by organizing a special workshop in June 2023, with special guidance from the upper class teacher of Dhamdha block, Pawan Singh.

After the workshop, the students in the schools were made to prepare from the unsolved papers of the last 8-10 months. In this regard, Block Education Officer Ms. Neelam Singh Rajput said that the result of National Co-Method Examination has been possible only with the contribution of dedicated teachers and every effort will be made to bring better results



in the upcoming session.

It is noteworthy that applications of 1081 students from the block were submitted to appear in the examination, and only children studying in eighth grade whose parents' annual income was less than Rs 1.5 lakh were included in the competitive examina-

tion. Under the scheme run by the Central Government and implemented by the State Government, children who have passed and selected in the examination will be given a scholarship of Rs 1,000 every month. The question paper of the exam was based on measuring logical, mental ability and subject based like mathematics, science, social science. It is noteworthy that four children each from Prakashpur and Baihatola have been selected in the examination, in which MS Prakashpur students are Neha Korram, Jiya Tadekar, Ankit Sahu and Shubham Banjare and four students from MS Baihatola are Khushboo Reshma, Deepthi Verma and Hina Verma, the entire development block.

The selected students were honored by Collector Chandrakant Verma, District Education Officer Lalji Dwivedi, Development Block Education Officer Ms. Neelam Singh Rajput, Assistant Development Block Education Officer KL Amela, Block Resource Coordinator Sujit Singh Chauhan, Bakshi School Principal Roshan Lal Verma, Kamleshwar Singh and respective teachers.

'Meeting emphasizes essential elements for victory'

Workers unite to support Prime Minister Modi

Central Chronicle News

Raipur/Tilda, Mar 31: In the pursuit of electoral success, the importance of strategic planning, sound decisions, and unwavering confidence cannot be overstated. Recognizing this, a meeting convened at the office of former MLA Pramod Kumar Sharma today underscored the necessity of these elements for achieving victory in the upcoming elections. Former Alderman Ajay Tiwari also played a crucial role in organising this meeting and uniting the workers.

With a firm resolve to secure an impressive tally of 400 seats for the BJP in the upcoming polls, the meeting

**Pramod Kumar Sharma**

witnessed a united front of dedicated workers. They pledged their steadfast allegiance to the party's cause, committing to remain unwaveringly dedicated until May 7th. Their collective aspiration is to propel Narendra Modi to the esteemed position of Prime Minister, with a fervent dedication not only to gain power but to foster the welfare and progress of society.

Preparation for Chaitra Navratri begins



Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Mar 31: After celebrating Holi festival, preparations for Navratri have started in the region with both temple priests and committee member's charting the preparatory schedule.

This year Chaitra Navratri will last for 9 days and Chaitra Navratri will start with the establishment of Ghat on

Tuesday, April 9 and will conclude with Jawara immersion on Wednesday, 17th April.

Meanwhile, Lalita Panchami will be held on Friday, 12th April, and Ashtami Havan Puja will be held on Tuesday, 16th April. Paddbhog will be distributed in Maa Mahamaya Temple of the city on Thursday, 18th April, and Paddbhog will be distributed in Maa Shitala

Devi Temple on Saturday, 20th April.

In preparation for this, the priests in the Devi temples and the people of the temple committee are taking into preparations.

In the ancient Maa Mahamaya temple of the city, the work of dyeing, painting and coloring is being done by labourers, at the same time, the people of the Temple Seva Samiti are catering to the re-

ceipts of the goddess devotees who wish to lit the Manokamana Jyot in Maa Mahamaya Temple and Maa Shitala Devi Temple.

Similarly, in the temples of Mata Ghatrani, Mata Jatmai, Mataramaipath, Maa Kali, established in the forests and mountains, devotees of the goddess and members of the temple service committee are busy preparing for Chaitra Navratri.

Manas troupes performing in Ramayana conference

At Ch'garh state-level

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Mar 31: Manas troupes from across the state are presenting their performances in the Chhattisgarh state level Ramayana conference going on in Chaubandha. People of Gariaband, Raipur and Dhamtari districts including Rajim, Nawapara, Patharra, Nawadih, Piparchedi, Beltukari, Rawad, Bhainsatara, Bakli, Sindhuri, Baronda, Shyamnagar, Sursabandha, Tarra, Kurusekera, Navagaon, Badeni, Bhendri, Chandana Chandrasur are



among the audience.

The program is being conducted by Santosh Kumar Sonkar, Ganesh Sahu and Sudama Pal and on the first day, commentator Rampravesh Parkar of Shradha Suman Manas Parivar Karmapatpar of Orissa Border said the occasion of Ram's birth itself was to bring happiness and prosperity to the earth, as when Ram came, he

brought 12 arts with him, and similarly, Krishna was perfect with 16 arts. On drug addiction, he said that addiction is the root of destruction, consuming alcohol and other intoxicants makes the body weak.

Lead singer Sanjana Tiwari enthralled with religious songs and commentator Raveena Raote of Aradhana Balika Manas Parivar Balod said on Sita

Swayamvar that marriage ceremony is a unique tradition of uniting two families. Anita Dewangan, singer and interpreter of Hari Om Manas Mandali Bhagwan Bhathagaon R Gunderdehi, said through the context that trees and plants protect the environment but also keep human life healthy and cheerful and every person needs to plant trees for a happy life.

The programs will run for three consecutive days and Bhandara has been arranged every day in which Prasad is being received. Along with Shri Ram Darbar Manas Mandali, people of the entire village are engaged with enthusiasm in this event.

Rang Panchami celebrated with great enthusiasm

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Mar 31: The sacred festival of Rang Panchami was celebrated by the Sahu community at the Sahu Sangh Bhawan, after worshipping Lord Shri Rajiv Lochan and Rajim Bhaktin Mata. Phag Utav was also organized on the occasion of Rang Panchami and senior officials of the society were honoured.

Chief guests Rajim Bhaktin Mata Samiti President Lala Sahu, Treasurer Bhole Sahu, General Secretary Ramkumar Sahu were specially present. Chief Guest



of the programme, Lala Sahu, while congratulating and wishing Rang Panchami, said that Holi is a festival of mutual brotherly love and the regrets in the mind should be released by applying gulal to each other and unity, love and brotherhood should be maintained among them-

selves. On this occasion, community heads Chamru Ram Sahu, Santosh Bandhu Sahu, Bhole Sahu, Ramkumar Sahu, Raju Sahu, Leela Ram Sahu, Gajanan Sahu, Tikam Society including Sahu, Kamal Sahu, Tarun Sahu, Naresh Sahu and others were present.

Indiscriminate illegal tree cutting rampant in the region

Central Chronicle News

Kurud, Mar 31: Illegal tree felling, due to the exploits of the Central Consumer Grievance Department, Kurud has come to fore in the region, with dozens of trees being felled for commercial and consumer purpose. As per information, as soon as the Kharif crop is harvested, the involved wood brokers get active and at the price of Rs. 500-700 per tree the farmers allow the axing the trees in their respective fields.

On one hand, concerns have been raised in the world about the lack of oxygen due to climate change and pollution, but here in the region the cause is publicly violated with no responsible trying to intervene and stop the situation. When asked in the villages, it was



found that for years, neither the Forest Department had taken any action to save trees, nor any camp was organized, nor did any staff officer of the Forest Department visit the villages, whereas the Forest Department office is in Kurud city itself. Despite this, the brokers are ruthlessly cutting down live and young trees right under their noses and in such a situation, it seems natural to suspect the Forest Department's collusion with these brokers.



According to experts, it is easy to get promotion in the forest department even if lakhs of trees are cut in that area, as the Forest Department office is just 200 meters away from the National Highway and the SDOP office is situated on the highway itself, yet how all these brokers are taking away the dumb and young trees by cutting down them is questionable. Due to the construction of National Highway 30 and Visakhapatnam National

Highway, thousands of trees have been cut in the Kurud area already. Moreover, indiscriminate and ruthless cutting of trees in the plains without permission will definitely prove helpful in spoiling the environment of this area. As per rules, in Panchayati Raj, it is the responsibility of Forest Committee in Gram Panchayat, District Panchayat and District Panchayat to monitor it, but perhaps these committees have remained limited to the pages

of paper only. Almost all areas including Darba, Kalle, Mulle, Birejhar, Charra, Kokadi, Banagar Bhalujhulan, Kanharपुरi, Dandesara, Bhusarega, Chorbhathi, Semra, Dahi, Rakhi, Bhathagaon, trees are being cut indiscriminately. In Section 240, 241 of the Land Revenue Code, there is a clear mention of permission for cutting of various timber and fruit bearing trees, in which even for cutting Arjuna tree, permission will be required from the Sub-Divisional Officer Revenue. But in Abhanpur and Kurud areas, millers, coal makers and brick kiln brokers are easily getting the green trees cut by giving contracts to them. Villagers of the area have demanded from the administration to take strict action against the trespassers.

Youth rally behind Congress, boost Jyotsna's campaign in Korba

Korba, Mar 31:

In a resounding show of support, a multitude of youth has flocked to the Congress camp, rallying behind Lok Sabha MP and Congress candidate Jyotsna Charandas Mahant in Korba. Motivated by her dedicated service and unwavering connection with the grassroots, these young individuals have pledged their allegiance to the Congress, marking a significant surge in the party's ranks. Addressing the enthusiastic gathering, MP Jyotsna expressed gratitude, acknowledging the pivotal role of the youth in her campaign. "Your support is paramount; it's what drives us forward. Together, we are unstoppable," she proclaimed, amidst cheers and applause.



Highlighting the momentum building around the Congress, MP Jyotsna outlined ambitious plans for the future, including significant welfare measures for the underprivileged. "With your backing, we are poised to form a Congress government, committed to uplifting every section of society," she declared, igniting hope among the attendees. She said that if the Congress

government is formed, it has been decided to give Rs 8333 per month to a woman from every poor family. The event witnessed a wave of new members joining the Congress fold, representing various communities and constituencies across Korba. Among them were names like Rakesh Gupta, Munna Gupta, Ishwar Banjare, and many others from different neighborhoods,

showcasing the diverse support base behind MP Jyotsna's candidacy. The atmosphere reverberated with optimism as present MP Jyotsna Mahant, Mayor Rajkishore Prasad, and other prominent leaders adorned the iconic Congress gamchha, symbolizing their unity and determination to secure victory in the upcoming elections.

Junk to Jugad competition celebrates eco-friendly art at Hasdeo Thermal Power Station

Korba, Mar 31:

In a remarkable display of creativity and environmental consciousness, Hasdeo Thermal Power Station, Korba West, recently hosted the "Junk to Jugad" competition, organized by the Safety Department. On March 29, the plant's officers and employees showcased their ingenuity by crafting beautiful artworks from scrap materials, conveying a powerful message of environmental protection and sustainability.

The competition saw a diverse array of sculptures, including a striking rendition of the Chandrayaan satellite accompanied by the Vikram Lander and Pragyan Rover, as well as depictions of national pride such as Pragati Chakra and the indigenously built Light Combat Aircraft - Tejas. These prototypes captivated the attention of onlookers, highlighting the fusion of artistry and recycling.

Furthermore, the competition featured innovative mod-



els representing elements of the plant's operations, such as the silo model of the ash handling plant and a relay test board, demonstrating the integration of safety measures into everyday practices. The judging panel, comprised of esteemed experts Sudhir Rege (Retd.), Chief Engineer, CSEB), Nalini Rao (Civil Engineer, Sustainability Project, Singapore), and Madhulika Dabe (Manager, Power Grid, Bilaspur), meticulously evaluated each entry, paying close attention to detail and creativity. Turbine Maintenance Department 1 and 3 of the

plant claimed the joint first position for their exceptional Turbine Model, showcasing their technical prowess and dedication to excellence. Meanwhile, the Boiler Maintenance Department 2, Electrical and Testing Department 1, and Ash Handling Department 1 secured the joint second position for their impressive displays of Pragati Chakra, Canon the Pride, and a rotating replica of Sunflower, underscoring their commitment to innovation and teamwork. Ash Handling Department 2 earned the third position with their meticulously crafted replica of

the Light Combat Aircraft - Tejas, demonstrating their skill and attention to detail. Acknowledging the efforts of all participants, several departments were awarded consolation prizes for their commendable contributions, reinforcing the spirit of camaraderie and collaboration fostered by the competition.

Executive Director (Production) Sanjay Sharma, joined by Niharika Sharma, President of Sankalp Mahila Mandal, Hasdeo Thermal Power Station, Korba West, commended all participants for their dedication and creativity. They emphasized the importance of efficient waste management and recycling in mitigating environmental harm, underscoring the significance of initiatives like the Junk to Jugad competition in promoting sustainability.

The event concluded with the distribution of waste materials, symbolizing the station's commitment to reducing its environmental footprint.

Joyful Holi milan celebrations unite Pandariya community

Pandariya, Mar 31:

The spirit of colours and festivity was alive in Pandariya as the Sanskriti Mahila Group organized its annual Holi Milan ceremony. Bringing together members of the community, the event was a vibrant celebration of unity and joy.

As tradition dictates, participants adorned each other with colors and gull, immersing themselves in the festive atmosphere. Laughter and merriment filled the air as colorful Holi songs echoed through the gathering, including the timeless favorite "Holi Khele Raghuvra...Awadh Me Holi Khele Raghuvra." Adding to the jubilation, a variety of entertaining games were organized, cap-



enhancing the audience and enhancing the festive spirit. From playful competitions to cultural performances, every moment of the Holi Milan program was brimming with excitement and laughter.

The celebration was inclusive, with women and children alike actively participating in the festivities. Children were not only entertained but also educated

about the significance of mutual harmony and brotherhood, embodying the true essence of the Holi festival.

The event witnessed the enthusiastic presence of members of the Sanskriti Mahila Group, including Shail Bisen, Urvashi Chandravanshi, Archana Thakur, and many others, whose dedication and spirit contributed to the success of the Holi Milan celebration.

Facility of two additional coaches in Humsafar express

Railway administration enhances passenger experience

Bilaspur, Mar 31:

In a move aimed at enhancing the travel experience for passengers, the Railway Administration has announced the temporary provision of two additional coaches on the Indore-Puri-Indore Humsafar Express. This initiative seeks to ensure a more comfortable journey for travellers and to accommodate a greater number of passengers with confirmed berths.

The decision entails the inclusion of one extra AC3 coach and one additional sleeper coach in train number 20917/20918, which operates on the South East Central Railway route.

Passengers travelling on train number 20917 Indore-Puri Express on April 2 and train number 20918 Puri-Indore Express on April 4 will benefit from this temporary arrangement. This move is expected to cater to the increasing demand for travel on this route, thereby providing greater convenience and comfort to passengers aboard the Humsafar Express.

Government Pre-Secondary School Malaud hosts Nyota Bhoj

Kharora, Mar 31:

A spirit of joy permeated the atmosphere at Government Pre-Secondary School Malaud on March 28, as the school community came together for a Nyota Bhoj. Led by village Sarpanch Bhola Ram Verma and Chairman of the School Development Committee Mahendra Dewangan, along with dedicated committee members and village citizens, the event exemplified unity and fellowship.

Under the guidance of organizers Madhu Nishad, Arun Verma, and Lata Dewangan, along with the support of Anganwadi worker Sarojini Dhurandhar and others, children of the school were treated to a sumptuous meal of Kheer Puri, Grapes, Banana, and Balusai. The collective effort of the



School Development Committee and the Midday Meal Committee ensured that every child was served with care and warmth. The event also served as an opportunity to bid farewell to the students of class 8, who were wished a bright future ahead. Led by the

school's head teacher Chandras Verma and supported by dedicated staff members, including Govind Sonwani and Tarachand Adil, the farewell program was filled with enthusiasm and blessings, symbolizing the school's commitment to nurturing the next generation.

Class VIII students give touching farewell



Kharora, Mar 31:

At Government Pre-Secondary School, Sararidih, the spirit of warmth filled the air as students of class 6th and 7th bid a heartfelt farewell to their seniors in class 8th. The farewell ceremony, attended by all teachers of the primary and pre-secondary school, was a joyous occasion marked by enthusiasm and fond

memories. Amidst the festivities, teachers organized various engaging activities including acting performances, puzzle solving challenges, and lively dance and singing performances. These programs were specially curated to celebrate the achievements and cherished moments of the departing students, creating an atmosphere of celebration and camaraderie.

Voter awareness campaign conducted in Baiga village for 100% voting

Collector administered oath in Chhattisgarhi language for 100 percent voting

Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi, Mar 31: The Election Commission of India's SVEEP program received a significant boost with a district-level voter awareness initiative in Dahibhara, a Baiga-dominated Gram Panchayat in the Gaurela development block. Led by Collector and District Election Officer Leena Kamlesh Mandavi, the program aimed to ensure maximum participation in the upcoming Lok Sabha General Elections. Addressing the gather-



ing, Collector Mandavi emphasized the importance of 100 percent voting and administered an oath in Chhattisgarhi language to uphold the democratic tradition and principles of free, fair, and peaceful elections. Expressing her commitment to democracy, she

urged attendees to exercise their voting rights without succumbing to external influences.

The ceremony also served as an occasion to honor exemplary voters, including veteran individuals like Sukhlal (100 years), Chhirkin Bai (85

years), Koli Bai (73 years), and Fagnu Bai (70 years), as well as new and newly-wed voters. Their dedication to democratic participation was celebrated as a testament to the community's commitment to electoral engagement.

In attendance were esteemed dignitaries including Additional Collector Namrata Anand Dongre, District Nodal Officer of SVEEP KP Tendulkar, Joint Collector Priya Goyal, SDM Marwahi Dileram Dahire, Pendra Road Amit Beck, District CEO HL Khotel, along with officials from various departments. The event garnered participation from women's self-help groups, Anganwadi workers, Mitansins, and a large contingent of villagers.

SVEEP initiative spurs inter-departmental tug-of-war contest

Bijapur, Mar 31:

In a bid to bolster voter engagement and awareness ahead of the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections 2024, the District Administration of Bijapur has announced an innovative initiative under the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) program. An inter-departmental tug-of-war competition is scheduled to take place on April 1 at the mini stadium in Bijapur, aimed at rallying community spirit and promoting electoral participation.

The event, slated to commence at 10:00 am, will witness enthusias-

tic participation from officers and employees representing various departments. With the overarching goal of enhancing voter turnout, this sporting spectacle seeks to instill a sense of civic duty and responsibility among citizens.

Participants are required to adhere to a designated dress code, underscoring the spirit of unity and camaraderie that characterizes the electoral process. By fostering a friendly atmosphere of competition, the event aims to harness the collective energy and enthusiasm of participants towards the common goal of strengthening democracy.

Voter awareness campaign to be organized

To ensure hundred per cent voting

Bijapur, Mar 31:

As per the instructions of the Election Commission of India, various programs will be organized from 01 to 12 April under the SVEEP program to increase the percentage of voting, to make the voters aware of the importance of each vote and to make them aware of their voting rights. The event will be organized under the guidance of the Collector and District Election Officer, in a pre-scheduled calendar, in which a tug-of-war competition of all district level departmental officers/employees will be held on 01 April, a cycle rally on 02 April from 7:30 am from the bus stand to



the Collector premises, and a massive rally on 03 April.

As per the cleanliness program and voter awareness program for disabled people in all public places, Municipality/Nagar Panchayat, Gram Panchayats, on 04th April, women voters will be given Rangoli,

Mehndi, sports competition, fancy dress, tug of war, Matka race, Kho-Kho, Matka burst, Jalebi race, human chain voting oath program, organization of painting, essay, slogan competition on 05th April (up to college level), cricket competition for men/women under SVEEP program on April 6th and 7th,

painting on 8th April, Prize distribution of essay, slogan competition, Scooty rally for all women employees on 09 April, men's sports competition for all department wise football, volleyball, kabaddi on 10 and 11 April and lighting of lamp and human chain in mini stadium on 12 April 2024.

Students of class VIII given touching farewell

Teachers encourage students to uphold values

Kareli Badi, Mar 31:

The halls of Saraswati Shishu Mandir Secondary School resonated with emotions as students of Class VIII were bid a heartfelt farewell, marking their transition towards high school education. The farewell ceremony, a cherished tradition at the school, honored students for their academic journey and celebrated the values instilled by their teachers.

Amidst nostalgic reflections, students such as Ananya Sonwani, Meenakshi Sahu,



Giteshwari Bharti, Gayatri Sahu, Sunaina Sahu, Tania Sahu, Manisha Sinha, Chetana Sahu, Kiran Kumar, Manish Kumar, Kabir Sahu, Himanshu Sahu, Bhavesh Kumar, Digeshwar Kumar shared their heartfelt experiences and gratitude for the guidance received from their teachers. Some reminisced about the cherished values and

prayers that enriched their educational experience.

In a touching gesture, students from lower classes adorned their seniors with Chandan tilak and presented them with tokens of appreciation. Class VIII students, in turn, offered a symbol of gratitude by presenting a picture of Maa Saraswati, symbolizing the school's ethos of knowledge and wisdom.

Addressing the gathering, Principal Nutan Sahu and esteemed faculty members emphasized the importance of upholding the school's values, culture, and discipline in their future endeavors. They encouraged students to embrace their identity as ambassadors of Saraswati Shishu Mandir and to strive for excellence in their academic pursuits.

Israeli airstrike on hospital tent camp in Gaza kills 2 Palestinians

Deir al-Balah, Mar 31 (AP):

An Israeli airstrike hit a tent camp inside a hospital in central Gaza on Sunday, killing two Palestinians and wounding another 15.

The strike hit one of several tents in the courtyard of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, where thousands of people have been sheltering for months after fleeing their homes elsewhere in the war-ravaged territory.

Journalists were working from tents nearby, and an Associated Press reporter witnessed the strike and aftermath. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military. Tens of thousands of people have sought shelter in Gaza's hospitals since the start of the war, viewing them as relatively safe from airstrikes. Israel accuses



Hamas and other militants of operating in and around medical facilities, and troops have raided a number of hospitals.

Israeli troops have been raiding Shifa Hospital, Gaza's largest, for nearly two weeks and say they have fought heavy battles with militants in and around the medical compound. The military says

it has killed scores of fighters, including senior Hamas operatives. Palestinian families who fled from the area, including many who had already been displaced earlier in the war, say they were ordered to march south by Israeli soldiers after days of heavy fighting. Only a third of Gaza's hospitals are even partially func-

tioning, even as Israeli strikes kill and wound scores of people every day. Doctors say they are often forced to treat patients on hospital floors because all the beds are taken, and to operate without anesthetic and other crucial medical supplies. An international team of doctors who had recently visited Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where Sunday's strike occurred, said they were horrified by the war's gruesome impact on Palestinian children. The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed across the border on Oct. 7 and rampaged across southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people and dragging around 250 hostages back to Gaza. Over 100 captives were freed last year in exchange for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel.

Harvard says it's removed human skin from binding of 19th century book

Cambridge, Mar 31 (AP):

Harvard University said it has removed human skin from the binding of a 19th century book about the afterlife that has been in its collections since the 1930s. The decision came after a review found ethical concerns with the book's origin and history.

The book, "Des Destinées de L'âme," meaning "Destinies of the Soul," was written by Arsène Houssaye, a French novelist and poet, in the early 1880s. The printed text was given to a physician, Ludovic Bouldan, who "bound the book with skin he took without consent from the body of a deceased female patient in a hospital where

he worked," Harvard said in a recent statement. The book has been at the university's Houghton Library. Bouldan included a handwritten note inside the book. It said "a book about the human soul deserved to have a human covering," associate university librarian Thomas Hyry said in a published question-and-answer segment online Wednesday. The note also detailed the process behind preparing the skin for binding.

Scientific analysis done in 2014 confirmed the binding was made of human skin, the university said. In its statement, Harvard said the library noted several ways in which its stewardship practices failed to meet its ethical

standards. "Until relatively recently, the library has made the book available to anyone who asked for it, regardless of their reason for wishing to consult it," Harvard said. "Library lore suggests that decades ago, students employed to page collections in Houghton's stacks were hazed by being asked to retrieve the book without being told it included human remains."

When the testing confirmed the book was bound by human skin, "the library published posts on the Houghton blog that utilized a sensationalistic, morbid, and humorous tone that fueled similar international media coverage," the university said in its statement.

7 people killed as houses collapse

● Due to torrential rains in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Peshawar Mar 31 (PTI):

At least seven people, including five children, were killed as their houses collapsed due to torrential rains and hailstorms in northwestern Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province over the past 24 hours, authorities said.

Heavy rain and hailstorms battered large parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the second consecutive day on Saturday.

Five people, including three children, were buried in the rubble after their house collapsed due to rain in Bajaur tribal district. In Shangla district, two children died when



A student of Kyiv State Arts Academy paints as other students and volunteers clear the rubble after the Academy was partly ruined during the Russian missile attack a few days ago in Kyiv, Ukraine, Saturday.

Mega pre-election survey indicates even UK PM Rishi Sunak's seat at risk

London, Mar 31 (PTI):

A new so-called mega poll released by a civil society campaign organisation indicates that the governing Conservative Party is in for a major drubbing in the general election expected later this year, with even British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's seat in North Yorkshire hanging in the balance.

The 15,029-person MRP poll conducted by Survation on behalf of Best for Britain puts the Opposition Labour Party on 45 per cent of the vote share with a 19-point lead over the Conservatives, up three points from the group's previous poll at the end of last year. "The



Sunday Times' analysis of the major seat-by-seat survey claims Tory prospects have hit a record low, which means they are on track for their worst election result, winning fewer than 100 seats. Labour could win 468, giving Opposition leader Sir Keir Starmer's party a whopping 286-seat majority. "Our MRP forecast shows that, if the election were held tomorrow,

Sunak's Conservatives would lose 250 MPs across the country and the Labour Party would win with 468 seats. This would be the worst ever result for the Conservatives at a General Election," claims the Best for Britain analysis.

"The extent of the damage to the Conservative Party doesn't stop there either. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's seat of Richmond and Northallerton becomes a hyper-marginal, with the Labour Party just 2.4 per cent behind him.

The same is true in Chancellor Jeremy Hunt's new seat of Godalming and Ash in which the Liberal Democrats trail by just 1 per cent," it adds.

ROYAL EASTER ARRIVAL



Britain's King Charles III, left, and Queen Camilla arrive to attend the Easter Matins Service at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, England, Sunday, March 31.

51 Imran Khan supporters sentenced to RI in connection with May 9 violence

Lahore, Mar 31 (PTI):

A Pakistani court on Saturday convicted 51 supporters of former prime minister Imran Khan for five years of rigorous imprisonment on two counts for their involvement in attacking key military installations last year.

In May last year, Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters had allegedly attacked several military installations, including the army headquarters in Rawalpindi and the ISI building in Faisalabad, to vent their anger against the arrest of their party founder in a corruption case.

This is the first conviction in the cases registered against the PTI leaders, workers and supporters in

connection with the May 9 riots in the country, mostly in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. The convicts include PTI lawmaker Kaleemullah Khan.

The anti-terrorism court (ATC), Gujranwala handed down a year jail term to 51 supporters of PTI on two counts for attacking the Gujranwala Cantonment (some 80 km from Lahore), law enforcement agencies personnel and torching police vehicles. According to a court official, the court also imposed a fine of PKR 10,000 on each of them.

ATC Judge Natasha Naseem held the proceedings in the Central Jail, Gujranwala amid high security outside the jail and announced the verdict.

The proceedings of the cases against the convict remained in-camera.

In the May 9 violence in Gujranwala, one PTI worker was killed and scores of PTI workers and policemen were injured.

The PTI claims that over 10,000 of its leaders and workers, and supporters of Imran Khan have been languishing in different jails of Punjab and KP provinces since May last and they are not provided a fair chance to defend themselves against phoney charges.

Imran Khan, himself, has been in jail since August last year and just before the February 8 polls, he was sentenced to a 31-year jail term in three different cases. In total, he is facing over 200 cases.

3 UN military observers, a Lebanese interpreter wounded in blast

Beirut, Mar 31 (AP):

Three United Nations military observers and a Lebanese interpreter were wounded Saturday while patrolling the southern Lebanese border after a shell exploded near them, the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon said. The military observers are part of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, which supports the UN peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon, UNIFIL.

UNIFIL spokesperson Andrea Tenenti told The Associated Press that the four wounded were in stable condition. Tenenti said UNIFIL had informed all warring par-

ties of their patrols as usual and the observers' vehicle was carrying clear UN markings. The three military observers, from Chile, Australia, and Norway, were unharmed, he said.

The blast came as clashes between the Israeli military and Hezbollah militants escalated in recent weeks. Both sides have been exchanging fire since the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza broke out, prompting concerns that the near-daily clashes along the border could escalate into a full-scale war.

Local Lebanese media, citing security officials, said an Israeli drone strike targeted the observers in the southern

village of Wadi Katmoun near the border town of Rmeich. The Israeli military on social media platform X, formerly Twitter, said: "Contrary to the reports, the IDF did not strike a @UNIFIL — vehicle in the area of Rmeish this morning."

Tenenti said UNIFIL was "investigating the origin of the explosion" but it was difficult to put investigators on the ground immediately because of the ongoing exchange of fire. "The targeting of peacekeepers is unacceptable," Tenenti told The Associated Press. "We repeat our call for all actors to cease the current heavy exchanges of fire before more people are unnecessarily hurt."

Iran-backed Palestinian leader vows victory over Israel in the war in Gaza

Tehran, Mar 31 (AP):

The leader of the Iran-backed Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad vowed victory over Israel in the war in Gaza as he met Iran's foreign minister for talks in Tehran on Saturday.

"I promise you that we will be the victors in the war," Ziad al-Nakhalah told reporters, according to the official IRNA news agency.

He called his meeting with Iran's foreign minister Hossein Amirabdollahian "important" and thanked Iran for its support for the Palestinians.

Iran hasn't directly intervened in the Israel-Hamas war, despite long describing Israel as its

archenemy. However, experts say Iran provides both financial and political support to Islamic Jihad and Hamas, the militant group that runs Gaza and that launched the October 7 attack on Israel in which more than 1,200 people were killed and about 250 were taken hostage.

"Active diplomacy by Islamic Republic of Iran has had a great role in defining the stance of Palestinian resistance," al-Nakhalah was quoted as saying.

The two sides discussed the latest development in the war, and Israel's "war crimes and genocide," IRNA reported.

Also in Tehran was the leader of Hamas, Ismail Haniyeh, who met with

al-Nakhalah, as well as holding separate talks with the Iranian leadership over the past few days.

Iranian media reported that al-Nakhalah and Haniyeh, during their bilateral meeting Friday in Tehran said the success of any indirect negotiation with Israel depends on the end of Israel's war on Gaza, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the territory, the return of displaced people and the continued delivery of humanitarian aid.

They also stressed the need for "intensifying resistance in all fields" and thanked Yemen's Houthis for their support, as well as Iraqi and Lebanese anti-Israeli militant groups.

Pak PM Shehbaz Sharif bans red carpets at official events

Islamabad, Mar 31 (PTI):

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has banned the use of red carpets at government events, reserving them exclusively for diplomatic receptions, as part of austerity measures to cut down unnecessary expenditures in the cash-strapped nation. Sharif expressed annoyance over the use of red carpets during the visits of federal ministers and senior authorities at government functions.

According to the Cabinet Division, a ban has been imposed on the use of red carpet on the prime minister's directives.

According to a notification issued by the Cabinet division, the prime minis-



ter has instructed that the red carpet will not be used for federal ministers and government figures at official events in the future.

However, it could be used as a protocol only for foreign diplomats, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

The decision to ban red carpets is more than just a symbolic gesture. It represents a tangible effort to curb unnecessary expen-

ditures and redirect resources to more critical areas of governance.

By eliminating the use of red carpets, the government aims to save funds and promote a more responsible and prudent approach to public finances.

Last week, Prime Minister Sharif and members of the Cabinet decided to voluntarily forego their salaries and perks as part of the government's efforts to promote austerity.

Last month, the prime minister stated that austerity measures were the government's top priority. Earlier, President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari decided against taking salary and perks, owing to economic challenges being faced by the country.

Sri Lanka and India to review bilateral projects for timely implementation: Statement

Colombo, Mar 31 (PTI):

Sri Lanka and India will review all the existing bilateral economic projects to ensure their timely implementation in a bid to enhance the bilateral economic ties, according to a statement issued by the office of President Ranil Wickremesinghe. The joint move was agreed upon by the two neighbouring nations two days after the visit to India by

Senior Advisor to President Wickremesinghe and the Chief of Presidential Staff Sagala Ratnayaka during which he held discussions with Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra. "It was mutually agreed to engage in this review process on a quarterly basis, demonstrating a commitment to ensuring effective progress in bilateral economic cooperation," said the statement.

PM SHRI KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA KHAIIRAGARH
Dist. - Khairagarh-Chhukhadan-Gandai (C.G)

ADMISSION NOTICE FOR BALVATIKA-3

- Applications for admission to class BALVATIKA-3 for the academic session 2024-25 in PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya Khairagarh are being invited through offline mode.
- Minimum age of the child should be five years and less than six years as on 31.03.2024. Please visit the school website: <https://khairagarh.kvs.ac.in/> for more information.
- Parents can get the registration form free of cost from the school premises from 08.00 am to 02.00 pm.
- Registration will start on 01.04.2024 (Monday) at 10.00 am and will end on 15.04.2024 (Monday) at 05.00 pm.

Note: There is no vacancy for admission in PM SHRI K.V. Khairagarh for class 2 to 9 for the session 2024-25.

Principal



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Satellite-Based Toll Collection

Challenges Ahead

Revolutionizing toll collection methods has been a priority for the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) as it gears up to introduce a satellite-based system, promising a seamless journey for highway travelers. However, the road ahead is riddled with speed bumps, primarily stemming from technological integration challenges and the sluggish pace of highway expansion projects. The envisioned system proposes to charge tolls based on distance traveled, directly debiting the vehicle owner's bank account. This move aims to eliminate the bottleneck of physical toll plazas, easing traffic congestion and ensuring uninterrupted vehicular flow along highways. While the intent is noble, the execution faces several hurdles. Integral to the system is the installation of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) in all vehicles, allowing satellite tracking upon entering national highways. This ambitious feat follows the mandatory implementation of Radio Frequency Identification Tag (FASTag), which expedited toll collection but still required vehicles to queue up for scanning. In contrast, the GPS-based system promises automatic fee deduction as vehicles pass through, eradicating wait times and enhancing travel efficiency. An assessment of the FASTag system underscores the efficacy of technology-driven solutions, significantly reducing average waiting times at toll plazas. However, concerns loom over privacy infringements, with the Parliamentary Standing Committee advocating for robust cybersecurity measures to safeguard against unauthorized tracking. The committee's report sheds light on the mounting debts of the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), emphasizing the need for accelerated road monetization efforts. Yet, clarity eludes the objectives of such monetization, whether aimed at revenue generation, infrastructure development, or maintenance funding. To address these challenges, the ministry must broaden its approach, seeking insights from countries like Germany and Belgium, experienced in GPS-based tolling systems. However, the transition won't be without its share of teething problems, including privacy apprehensions and concerns over toll fee rationalization. Ensuring the reliability and transparency of deployed systems will be paramount in bolstering public trust. Additionally, universal adoption of tracking devices remains a prerequisite for a seamless transition, preventing vehicular exclusion and revenue decline. Consultation on toll fee rationalization and road quality assessments will be vital in ensuring a fair and efficient system. Ultimately, the success of the satellite-based toll collection system hinges on overcoming these challenges. As we journey towards a digitalized future, let us tread cautiously, prioritizing privacy, transparency, and inclusivity every step of the way.

Guarding Judicial Integrity

Yash Pal Raihan



The communication from 600 legal professionals to Chief Justice DY Chandrachud, expressing concerns over perceived threats to judicial integrity, warrants a careful examination. While their apprehensions regarding vested interest groups attempting to influence judicial processes and tarnish the judiciary's reputation are valid, a closer scrutiny reveals gaps in their argumentation. The letter's vague references to a particular group defaming courts lack substantiation, raising questions about its credibility. It is imperative to provide concrete examples to support such serious allegations, rather than relying on vague assertions. Moreover, attributing such trends solely to post-2014 political dynamics oversimplifies a complex issue. In a democratic setup, the judiciary's independence is sacrosanct. However, it is equally crucial to acknowledge the dynamics of power and its potential to influence legal processes. As Julius Caesar aptly remarked, the law can be a tool for empowerment or manipulation, depending on one's position. Hence, maintaining a vigilant eye on power dynamics within legal frameworks is imperative. The concern raised regarding the purported "bench-fixing" phenomenon warrants serious consideration. Any attempts to compromise the composition of judicial benches undermine the very foundation of justice. It is not just a matter of disrespect but a grave threat to the rule of law and the principles of justice that our democracy upholds. However, the response from the Prime Minister, dismissing the concerns as a relic of "vintage Congress culture," is equally dismissive. This attempt to politicize a legitimate concern diminishes the gravity of the issue at hand. Rather than engaging in political mudslinging, addressing the root causes of such apprehensions should be the priority. Reflecting on past episodes, such as the Emergency era, provides valuable lessons on safeguarding civil liberties and judicial independence. However, it is essential to avoid selective memory and acknowledge the complexities of historical contexts. Painting a one-sided narrative does a disservice to the nuanced reality of judicial dynamics. Moreover, the recent politicization of judicial integrity amidst the upcoming Lok Sabha elections is concerning. The incarceration of political figures, including the Chief Minister of Delhi, on charges like the alleged Delhi liquor scam, raises pertinent questions. While legal processes must prevail, selective targeting and political vendettas undermine public trust in the judiciary. Additionally, the silence of the legal fraternity on critical issues, such as the refusal of summons by political figures and the implications thereof, is conspicuous. A neutral and balanced approach is indispensable in addressing concerns related to judicial integrity. Any attempts to politicize or sensationalize such matters only erode public confidence in the legal system. Ultimately, the integrity of the judiciary is paramount in upholding democratic values. It is incumbent upon all stakeholders, including legal professionals, to uphold the highest standards of integrity and impartiality. Constructive dialogue, grounded in evidence and reasoned arguments, is the cornerstone of a robust judicial system.

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

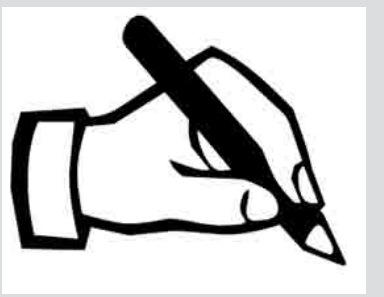
EASTER IN PRAYAGRAJ



Christian devotees pray at St. Joseph's Cathedral church on Easter, in Prayagraj, Sunday, March 31.

The Science of Sheetla Ashtami: Understanding Rituals and Health Welfare

RAJENDER KUMAR SHARMA



If we understand the scientific logical mysteries hidden in the depth of Hindu Sanatan culture and Vedic culture, then perhaps this question can be resolved from our mind that the religious rituals described in the Puranic (Mythical) and Vedic culture are not myths or superstitions in any way. All these rituals are for the welfare of the entire universe. According to the Hindu calendar & famous Astrologer Pt. Suresh Chand Sharma, Sheetla Ashtami festival will be celebrated on 2 April 2024. Mothers and sisters will worship Maa Sheetla by sitting near a pitcher filled with cold water in the kitchen of the house, will offer sweet gulgula and puri baked a day before to Devi Shitla and will pray to the Goddess for the good health of the entire family. On this day fire is not lit in the kitchen, fresh food is neither cooked nor eaten. Stale food prepared a day before is consumed. That is why this festival is also called "Basoda" literally it is Basi or stale. This festival is celebrated throughout North and Central India. In Gujarat, this festival is celebrated as "Sheetala Satam" a day before Janmashtami, according to the season. Only stale food is consumed on this day.

Scientific logic behind Sheetla Ashtami (Basoda)
Chickenpox and Smallpox are the names of epidemics in the past which caused great havoc on mankind before their vaccine came. According to Hindu beliefs in India, these diseases are called "Choti Mata" and "Badi Mata" respectively and are associated with Goddess Sheetla Mata. And it is believed that when the Goddess is angry, she causes suffering in the form of disease. Modern and western thinking has distorted the meaning. Chickenpox and Smallpox are viral diseases, which had no cure in ancient times and it was believed that by taking health precautions, taking balanced and easily digestible food, our body gradually makes antigens for this disease, increases immunity and automatically eliminates the disease. It is also believed that once the antigen of this disease is formed in the body, the disease does not occur again in life. The main symptoms of this disease are fever, headache, as well as small

blisters or rashes appearing on the skin. During this disease, the doctor does not give any specific medicine; only medicine is given to control the symptoms. In this disease, the doctor forbids the patient from taking fried, greasy, and spicy food because spicy food can increase itching in the smallpox rashes and when the patient scratches, the virus-laden fluid coming out of the rashes becomes the main reason for spreading the infection and the disease can also spread to other people. The patient is advised not to go out of the house so that the infection does not spread to other people.

Small Pox (Mata) - Hindu Religious Opinion
In Hinduism, our sages have told about this disease that in case of this disease, consumption of garlic, onion and their seasoning is prohibited, this makes Goddess Sheetla angry. It is forbidden to go out of the house. Rock salt and mustard are tied in a cloth and tied on the arm of the patient. Neem leaves are kept outside the house and under the pillow of the patient. Munakka (resins), Chiku (naseberry) etc. are given in food. After the patient's recovery, there is a ritual of worshipping Devi Sheetla while expressing gratitude to her. In the above religious prohibitions in case of Small Pox and chicken pox (Mata) the health of the patient has been kept at the center, such as not seasoning garlic and onion at home because these elements are tamsic and will increase itching in the rashes on the skin of the patient and if the patient scratches these rashes,

the infection can spread to other people. The purpose behind asking the patient to be wrapped in a cloth or not allowing him to go out is to prevent the spread of infection. In Ayurveda, neem is considered a blood purifier, infection and germ killer. Mustard is a cure for blood disorders, itching, cough, bile disorder and leprosy. Similarly, rock salt is useful in cough, skin diseases and depression. Munnaka and saponilla are a complete diet for smallpox and measles patients, which are sources of energy. When the patient of smallpox does not feel like eating anything, eating a little Munnaka with rock salt gives the patient abundant energy and provides great relief from the itching in smallpox blisters. The summary of the above logical analysis is that our Ayurvedic scholars, sages and Mumis associated the religious festival of Sheetla Ashtami with a disease like smallpox (mata) so that people remain safe from this disease due to fear of religion and by preventing its infection, the entire human race can be provided health. Blessed is the Hindu Sanatan culture in which the welfare of all human beings is kept at the center of every religious ritual. Say with pride that we live on the land of Hindu Sanatan culture established for human welfare. Let us together celebrate the great festival of Sheetla Ashtami with full faith and devotion and save the human race from all infections.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tiger deaths

From January 2024, 39 tiger deaths have been reported in India out of which 22 occurred in tiger reserves and the rest in unprotected areas. The same old story of tiger-habitat destruction due to urbanisation continues although some of the latest tiger casualties is attributed to territorial fight as 22 tigers succumbed inside the reserves. It is important to remember, however, any tiger death is attributed to poaching unless proved otherwise. The tiger also needs large space to overcome peer-competition. Diseases also lead to their deaths. However, death outside the tiger reserves will always be a cause of concern. Tigers have lost lives when they have ventured out of their way in search of water or habitat. The need for overbridges and underpasses on highways is more pronounced now. Dedicated officers should be made incharge of tiger projects. Increased patrolling, camera traps and conviction rates to pin the poachers are vital. Safeguarding ecological sensitive areas, forest, water and grasslands cannot be overlooked. Tiger relocation also has to be prioritised.

Dr Ganapathi Bhat, Akola

Doctor AI

Every day, enthusiasm surrounds artificial intelligence's ability to revolutionise health care services. It can help with quicker medication discovery, individualised patient care, more accurate diagnosis, and increased productivity. Thus, it has the potential to save countless lives worldwide. It has already been demonstrated that it can improve disease tracking, diagnoses with greater accuracy, and therapy recommendations. It simplifies medical administration as well. To get the most out of AI, integration must therefore be boosted. However, there are some concerning reasons to be concerned. First, AI requires a sizable database in order to train itself to eliminate bias. Consequently, patient medical records and privacy should be securely shared. In the end, finding safe channels for health data to travel would enable individuals to make educated decisions.

Arka Goswami, Durgapur, West Bengal

Easter Essence

Easter, a Christian festival commemorating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, holds profound religious significance. Despite its Christian roots, many Easter traditions trace back to pre-Christian customs. This year, on March 31st, Easter will be observed worldwide. The Holy Week, encompassing events like Maundy Thursday and Good Friday's crucifixion of Jesus, precedes Easter Sunday, marking the culmination of these solemn observances.

Sebastain George, Goa

Quantum computing just got hotter: 1 degree above absolute zero

Andrew Dzurak

For decades, the pursuit of quantum computing has struggled with the need for extremely low temperatures, mere fractions of a degree above absolute zero (0 Kelvin or -273.15°C). That's because the quantum phenomena that grant quantum computers their unique computational abilities can only be harnessed by isolating them from the warmth of the familiar classical world we inhabit. A single quantum bit or "qubit", the equivalent of the binary "zero or one" bit at the heart of classical computing, requires a large refrigeration apparatus to function. However, in many areas where we expect quantum computers to deliver breakthroughs – such as in designing new materials or medicines – we will need large

numbers of qubits or even whole quantum computers working in parallel. Quantum computers that can manage errors and self-correct, essential for reliable computations, are anticipated to be gargantuan in scale. Companies like Google, IBM and PsiQuantum are preparing for a future of entire warehouses filled with cooling systems and consuming vast amounts of power to run a single quantum computer. But if quantum computers could function at even slightly higher temperatures, they could be much easier to operate – and much more widely available. In new research published in Nature, our team has shown a certain kind of qubit – the spins of individual electrons – can operate at temperatures around 1K, far hotter than earlier examples.

The cold, hard facts

Cooling systems become less efficient at lower temperatures. To make it worse, the systems we use today to control the qubits are intertwining messes of wires reminiscent of ENIAC and other huge computers of the 1940s. These systems increase heating and create physical bottlenecks to making qubits work together. The more qubits we try to cram in, the more difficult the problem becomes. At a certain point the wiring problem becomes insurmountable. After that, the control systems need to be built into the same chips as the qubits. However, these integrated electronics use even more power – and dissipate more heat – than the big mess of wires.

A warm turn

Our new research may offer a way forward. We have demonstrated that a particular kind of qubit – one made with a quantum dot printed with metal electrodes on silicon, using technology much like that used in existing microchip production – can operate at temperatures around 1K. This is only one degree above absolute zero, so it's still extremely cold. However, it's significantly warmer than previously thought possible. This breakthrough could condense the sprawling refrigeration infrastructure into a more manageable, single system. It would drastically reduce operational costs and power consumption. The necessity for such technological advancements isn't merely academic. The stakes are high in fields like drug design, where quantum computing promises to revolutionise

how we understand and interact with molecular structures. The research and development expenses in these industries, running into billions of dollars, underscore the potential cost savings and efficiency gains from more accessible quantum computing technologies. A slow burn "Hotter" qubits offer new possibilities, but they will also introduce new challenges in error correction and control. Higher temperatures may well mean an increase in the rate of measurement errors, which will create further difficulties in keeping the computer functional. It is still early days in the development of quantum computers. Quantum computers may one day be as ubiquitous as today's silicon chips, but the path to that future will be filled with technical hurdles.

BRIEF**Panasonic**

New Delhi: Panasonic Group will form a joint venture with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), the nation's biggest oil firm, to manufacture cylindrical lithium-ion batteries. Panasonic Energy Co Ltd, a group firm of Japan-based multinational electronics company, has signed a binding term sheet and initiated discussions with IOCL "to draw a framework for the formation of a joint venture" to manufacture cylindrical lithium-ion batteries, said a statement on Sunday.

Zomato

New Delhi: Zomato on Sunday said it has received a tax demand, interest, along with penalty, to the tune of Rs 23.26 crore from the Assistant Commissioner of Commercial Taxes (Audit), Karnataka. The online food delivery platform said it will appeal against the order before the appropriate authority.

IndiGo

Thiruvananthapuram: Leading airline IndiGo has announced new direct flights between Abu Dhabi and north Kerala district Kannur from May 9. Extending its international presence, the airline will operate daily non-stop flights from the coastal city of the southern state to the capital of the United Arab Emirates, the airline said in a release on Friday. Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales, IndiGo said with the addition of these flights, the airline will operate 56 weekly flights to Abu Dhabi from 8 cities in India, promoting travel, trade, and tourism between the two countries.

New launch

New Delhi: realme, the most reliable smartphone service provider in India, unveiled the newest addition to their super successful NARZO By realme line-up - NARZO 70 Pro 5G. NARZO By realme is a stylish line of smartphones that delivers a comprehensive user experience. With a rapidly growing user base of over 16 million in India, NARZO By realme represents the next generation of smartphones.

Royal Orchid Hotels

New Delhi: Royal Orchid Hotels is planning to add 30-35 new properties with about 2,000 rooms in the 2024-25 fiscal as part of its expansion plans across India, according to its Chairman and Managing Director Chander K Baljee. The company, which operates hospitality properties under the Royal Orchid and Regenta brands, is also looking to expand its wedding destination portfolio by adding four to five locations every year.

Bol

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of India (BoI) has announced a hike in lending rate by 10 basis points, a move which will make loans, including retail, expensive. The lending rate increase comes ahead of the monetary policy announcement by the Reserve Bank of India on April 5.

RBI may hold rate yet again to focus on inflation management: Experts

Mumbai, Mar 31 (PTI):

The RBI may again keep the key interest rate unchanged in April as it is likely to focus more on bringing down inflation to the 4 per cent target after concerns over economic growth abated with GDP growth estimated at nearly 8 per cent, said experts.

Also, the Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel - Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) - may take cues from the central banks of some major economies like the US and UK, which are apparently in wait-and-watch mode on interest rate cuts.

Switzerland has become the first major economy to cut interest rates, while Japan, the world's third-largest economy, ended its



eight-year period of negative interest rates regime.

The meeting of the Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das headed MPC is scheduled for April 3-5. The decision will be announced on April 5 (Friday). It will be

the first bi-monthly monetary policy of fiscal 2024-25. A total of six MPC meetings are scheduled for the fiscal beginning April 1, 2024.

The Reserve Bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023

and since then it has held the rate at the same level in its last six bi-monthly policies.

"Given that inflation is still in the 5 per cent range and there is a possibility of future shocks on the food inflation front, the MPC is expected to maintain the status quo on rate and stance this time," said Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda.

He further said there can be a revision in the GDP forecast, which will be eagerly awaited.

"The growth in FY24 has been much better than expected, and hence, the central bank will have less concerns here and will continue focusing on targeting inflation," Sabnavis added.

Adani shrugs off Hindenburg effect, back to rapid expansion spree

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

Adani group opened a USD 1.2 billion copper plant, bought a port in Odisha, raised stakes in a cement company and stitched an alliance with rival Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries, all in a matter of one week in signs that the apples-to-airport conglomerate has shrugged off the Hindenburg effect and is back to rapid expansion spree.

In the last one week, Adani group has through regulatory filings and press statements announced expansions and investments in its mainstay ports business, diversification into metal refining, fund infusion into a two-year-old cement foray and continuing progress in the commissioning of



its mega solar project.

It started with the March 26 announcement of Adani Ports acquiring a 95 per cent stake in Gopalpur Port for Rs 3,350 crore, taking the number of seaports under its control to 15 - the highest with any private firm in the country.

This was followed by Adani Enterprises Ltd - the group's flagship firm and business incubator - announcing on March 28 the first phase of the world's largest single-location copper manufacturing

plant at Mundra in Gujarat, marking the conglomerate's foray into metals refining. The USD 1.2 billion (about Rs 10,000 crore) plant helped India join China and other nations that are rapidly expanding production of copper, a metal crucial for transition away from fossil fuels.

Technologies critical to the energy transition like electric vehicles (EVs), charging infrastructure, solar photovoltaics (PV), wind and batteries, all require copper. On the same day, group promoter Gautam Adani and his family invested Rs 6,661 crore in Ambuja Cements to raise a stake in the country's second-largest cement company to 66.7 per cent as it looked well-positioned to benefit from the country's infrastructure boom.

Dr. Reddy makes major presence in vaccine segment

Mumbai, Mar 31:

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd., a global pharmaceutical company, today announced that it has entered into an exclusive partnership with Sanofi Healthcare India Private Limited ("SHIPL") to promote and distribute their vaccine brands across private markets in India.

Under the arrangement, Dr. Reddy's will have exclusive rights to promote and distribute Sanofi's well-established and trusted paediatric and adult vaccine brands Hexaxim, Pentaxim, Tetraxim, Menactra, FluQuadri, Adacel and Avaxim 80U. These brands saw combined sales of approx. Rs 426 crores (approx. USD 51 million) as per IQVIA MAT

February 2024. Sanofi will continue to own, manufacture, and import these brands to the country.

Preeti Futnani, General Manager India for Vaccines, Sanofi, said, "Vaccine confidence has reached its highest in India in the last few years. Yet, there is much to be done for the rest of the country's large unvaccinated cohort. To fulfil our long-term commitment to India and expand our geographic reach, we're pleased to partner with Dr. Reddy's Laboratories (Dr. Reddy's) for exclusive distribution and promotion. We're confident this partnership will further bolster our promise of saving millions of lives against vaccines-preventable diseases with improved vaccination coverage."

"In this backdrop, we expect FY25 to also very strong year from a primary capital perspective as companies will continue to look to raise capital for capex post-election results."

Businesses have responsibility to build stronger, more inclusive India: Ambani

Mumbai, Mar 31 (PTI):

Richest Indian Mukesh Ambani on Saturday said the business community has the responsibility to build a stronger and more inclusive India.

Addressing an event organised by the Gems and Jewellery Exports Promotion (GJEPC) here, the chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries also exuded confidence that the industry will reach its goal of touching USD 100 billion in exports in the next few decades.

"All of us collectively in the business community



have a responsibility to build a stronger, better and more inclusive India to fulfil the vision and the goal that our PM has set for us, that of a Viksit Bharat, a fully developed India in the next decades," he said.

Ambani congratulated the gems and diamonds industry for the work they have done over the past

few decades to reach USD 40 billion in exports and create over 50 lakh jobs in the country. From modest beginnings, the industry led by people from Palanpur made big strides, Ambani said, stressing that he is "proud" of the work.

He said the Ambani family has its roots in Kathiawad and also hinted at the possibilities of working together with the Palanpuris.

"Sometimes partnership between the Kathiawadis and Palanpuris can make the opportunity bigger. The bigger the pie, the better for us," he said.

Vicks continues to innovate for India

Mumbai, Mar 31:

With a legacy of powerful relief and care of over 125 years, Vicks the World's #1 selling cough and cold brand continues its effort to innovate towards providing superior products that allow families and friends to care for one another. The brand today, announced the launch of the New Vicks Roll-On for fast relief from headaches - it's 3rd innovation in India over the last 12 months after the launch of Vicks ZzzQuil Natura (from the World's #1 Sleep Aid Brand) for occasional sleeplessness, and New Vicks VapoRub Steam Pods, its first steam inhalation capsules globally.

Sahil Sethi, Category Leader, Consumer Healthcare, P&G India, "Vicks has helped relieve cough, cold, and flu symptoms for generations of Indians.

Citroen unveils first images of 'Citroen Basalt Vision'

Chennai, Mar 31:

Citroen today unveils the first images of the Citroen Basalt Vision, a new SUV Coupé concept that will join the brand's range in India and South America in the second half of 2024. Powerful and stylish, this new model blends several automotive codes to offer customers the very best. It combines the fluidity and dynamism of a Coupé, the advantages and robustness of an elevated SUV, and the balance and space onboard of a 5-door saloon. Developed with the direct involvement of teams at headquarters and in each region, and benefiting from strong local integration, Basalt will support Citroen's international growth alongside the C3 and C3 Aircross in major markets. All three models are part of the same program to bring to market models with a strong character and a distinctive on-board comfort experience. Basalt is a faithful reflection of the model that will be offered to customers in the second half of 2024.

Luxury car sales could breach 50,000 units mark: Audi India head

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

Luxury car sales in India could cross the milestone of 50,000 units for the first time in a year in 2024 amid growing demand for such models, according to Audi India head Balbir Singh Dhillon.

The overall domestic luxury car segment grew by 28 per cent annually last year to record sales volume of around 48,500 units. Luxury car volumes in India currently account for less than 2 per cent of the overall passenger vehicle sales annually and the sector has been more or less at the same level for the past decade. "Even if the sales grow by around 10 per cent and we do not face issues like disruptions like issues with global supply chain, we (industry) could cross the 50,000 volume mark in a year for the first time ever in 2024," Dhillon told PTI in an interaction.

Audi reported an 89 per



cent growth in retail sales in India at 7,931 units last year as compared to a total of 4,187 units in 2022.

Similarly, Mercedes-Benz India recorded its best-ever year in its history in India with sales of 17,408 units, registering a growth of 10 per cent over 15,822 units in 2022.

BMW India sold a total of 14,172 units across BMW and MINI brands last year. When asked when the industry volume could touch 1 lakh-unit mark annually, Dhillon said: "This year if we cross the 50,000 unit mark and the growth continues to be double digit in the coming years then we could see it happening."

Market valuation of 7 most valued firms climbs Rs 67,259.99 cr; Reliance top gainer

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

The combined market valuation of seven of the 10 most valued firms climbed Rs 67,259.99 crore in a holiday-shortened last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainer, amid an overall optimistic trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 819.41 points or 1.12 per cent. Markets saw just three trading sessions last week, as they were closed on Monday for Holi and Good Friday on March 29. The valuation of Reliance Industries jumped Rs 45,262.59 crore to reach Rs 20,14,010.63 crore. State Bank of India added Rs 5,533.26 crore, taking its market valuation to Rs 6,71,666.29 crore. The valuation of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)



climbed Rs 5,218.12 crore to Rs 5,78,484.29 crore, and that of ICICI Bank advanced Rs 4,132.67 crore to Rs 7,69,542.65 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank went up by Rs 4,029.69 crore to Rs 11,00,184.60 crore, and that of Hindustan Unilever climbed Rs 2,819.51 crore to Rs 5,32,946.04 crore. ITC added Rs 264.15 crore, taking its mcap to Rs 5,35,032.74 crore. However, the mcap of Tata Consultancy Services

(TCS) declined by Rs 10,691.45 crore to Rs 14,05,102.38 crore, and that of Infosys went lower by Rs 4,163.13 crore to Rs 6,22,117.38 crore. Bharti Airtel's valuation dipped by Rs 3,817.18 crore to Rs 6,95,038.48 crore. Reliance Industries continued to rule the chart of the most valued firms, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Infosys, LIC, ITC and Hindustan Unilever.

Fundraising via QIP hits Rs 78,000 crore in FY24 on strong market sentiment

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

Fuelled by improved market sentiments and robust underlying demand, fundraising by issuing shares/units to institutional investors soared to Rs 78,000 crore in 2023-24, a more than seven-fold surge year-on-year.

The 2024-25 fiscal is expected to be very robust as companies will continue to garner capital for capex post-election results.

"In an unprecedented era of economic development aided by pro-business reforms and macro-economic stability, India is set to become the third largest economy globally by 2027 and will continue to see strong flows.

"In this backdrop, we expect FY25 to also very strong year from a primary capital perspective as companies will continue to look to raise capital for capex post-election results."



Neha Agarwal, MD & Head of Equity Capital Markets at JM Financial Ltd, told PTI. "Financial companies raise funds through qualified institutional placement (QIP) to meet their additional capital requirement buffer to support their growth plans and enhance their business."

HDFC Bank proposes to sell its subsidiary HDFC Education

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

HDFC Bank has decided to sell its 100 per cent stake in HDFC Education and Development Services Private Ltd. The transaction will be undertaken through the Swiss challenge method, HDFC Bank said in a regulatory filing on Saturday. "In this regard, HDFC Bank has, on March 30, 2024, entered into a binding term sheet with an interested party, and the offer contained in such term sheet shall serve as the anchor/base bid to seek counter offers from other parties interested in participating in the aforesaid Swiss challenge process," it added.

Healthy, tough competition in Indian aviation market; price sensitive too: IndiGo CEO

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

There is healthy and tough competition in the Indian market, which is also price sensitive, the country's largest airline IndiGo's chief Pieter Elbers said and emphasised that there is an enormous demand for travel.

At the helm of the airline having a domestic market share of little over 60 per cent and more than 360 aircraft in its fleet, Elbers also mentioned that overall price levels in India are "very very competitive", something that he thinks one should take "as part of the change in



India itself and the diversity of India". While air traffic continues to rise and airlines expand their operations by connecting new destinations, there are also concerns in cer-

tain quarters about airfares being higher, especially during peak seasons. Air ticket prices in the country are deregulated, and fares are mostly a function of supply and demand.

In a recent interview with PTI, Elbers said there is healthy and tough competition in the Indian market. "Indian consumers are really eager to travel, but it is also a price-sensitive market. What I see is that whenever a new route is announced, there is enormous demand from consumers to travel," the IndiGo CEO said.

IKSU addresses concerns amidst grading controversy

- Administration clarifies NAAC grading situation from A to C
- Factionalism challenges unity in University governance

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Mar 31: Indra Kala Sangeet University finds itself under scrutiny following the recent NAAC grading of A to C. Amidst ongoing criticism, the university administration has taken a proactive step by issuing a comprehensive clarification regarding the grading outcome.

In response to the NAAC evaluation results spanning the academic session 2017-2022, the university administration, represented by Vinod Dongre, the Public Relations Officer, has addressed the concerns raised. The NAAC

team, while awarding a C grade to the university, commended various aspects including the library facilities, Mahtari Janan program, tree plantation initiatives, and community engagement efforts. However, areas for improvement such as research, teaching quality, and curriculum expansion have been identified, signaling a constructive path forward for the institution.

It is noteworthy that the grade was given by NAAC in 2014 but grading was not done for these five years. Its duration ended in 2019. After 2019, the NAAC team was to be invited for evaluation for the next session. Meanwhile, in July 2020, Padmashree Dr. Mamta Chandrakar was appointed as the Vice Chancellor of the university.

Amidst the tumultuous backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, Indra Kala Sangeet University persevered in its commitment to academic excellence, navigating through unpre-



cedented challenges with resilience and determination. Under the visionary leadership of Vice Chancellor Dr. Chandrakar, the university accelerated its academic endeavours, launching numerous initiatives and projects aimed at fostering educational, social, research, and innovation advancements.

As the academic session spanning 2017 to 2022 came under evaluation, the tenure of the current Vice Chancellor, Dr. Chandrakar, was marked by a mere six months. The onset of the Covid-19 pan-

dem cast a shadow over the first one and a half years, with subsequent years continuing to grapple with its ramifications. Despite these challenges, the university persisted in its mission, adapting to the evolving circumstances and pressing forward with unwavering resolve.

In a significant development, the peer team of NAAC conducted physical verification of the university in March 12, 13 and 14, under the revised evaluation process. The integration of theoretical information and document submissions through the

Internal Quality Assurance Cell streamlined the evaluation process, facilitating a comprehensive assessment of the institution's performance.

While the university grapples with the fallout of the grading outcome, deeper issues of factionalism cast a long shadow over its governance. The traditional divide between local and external stakeholders has persisted, exacerbating tensions and hindering collective progress.

Despite these challenges, the university remains steadfast in its commitment to unity and collaboration, recognizing that only through collective effort can it overcome the obstacles and emerge stronger than ever before.

In a commendable acknowledgment, the NAAC team has lauded the diligent efforts of Indra Kala Sangeet University across various domains including cleanliness, infrastructure development, canteen facil-

ities, gym amenities, and environmental conservation initiatives. Of particular note is the esteemed recognition bestowed upon the university's Mahtari Janan program, signifying its impactful contributions to societal welfare.

Following the receipt of the NAAC report, Vice-Chancellor Chandrakar presided over a comprehensive review meeting, wherein department heads, faculty members, and staff collectively deliberated on the feedback provided.

Emphasizing the centrality of the NAAC recommendations, the Vice-Chancellor urged all university stakeholders to redouble their commitment to their respective roles and responsibilities.

Through concerted dedication and unwavering devotion, the university aims to enhance its quality standards and bolster its global standing, aligning with the visionary objectives outlined by NAAC.

Safety concerns raised as minors drive tractors



Central Chronicle News

Pandariya, Mar 31: Concerns have been raised in Pandariya and surrounding areas as minors are observed operating tractors without proper supervision.

This alarming trend has led to an increase in accidents, posing risks to both the young drivers and other road users.

In rural regions, it's common to see children taking on the responsibility of driving tractors, despite lacking the necessary skills and legal authorization.

With no valid driver's license and limited control over the vehicles, these minors are susceptible to accidents, endangering themselves and others.

Festive spirit soars as liquor sales thrive

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Mar 31: Residents of Khairagarh embraced the Holi festivities with spirited enthusiasm, marking a record-breaking surge in liquor sales. Despite the Collector's declaration of a dry day, which saw liquor shops shuttered in the district headquarters, anticipation ran high among liquor aficionados who flocked to the shops a day before Holi.

Traditionally, liquor sales peak at Rs 17-18 lakhs, but on March 24, the eve of Holi, the community's fervor propelled sales to an astounding Rs 60 lakhs in a single day. The festivities, which commenced days prior to Holi, witnessed crowds thronging the liquor shops from afternoon till night, creating an atmosphere of jubilant celebration that is expected to



continue throughout the week. According to the information received, on just one day on March 24, country liquor worth Rs 28 lakh and English liquor worth Rs 30 lakh were sold. Last year, country liquor was Rs 1264960 and foreign liquor was Rs 600770, which is higher than the average of the current year. Even in the rural areas including the district headquarters, illegal liquor vendors kept selling English liquor from their own devices. The po-

lice had deployed force to ensure that there was no ruckus in the liquor shop. According to the information received from the sources, a day before the Holi festival, the liquor shopkeepers have taken full advantage of the crowd of people and sold liquor for more than the prescribed rate. Information has been received that about Rs 50 more per bottle of foreign and domestic liquor has been charged from the customers.

Even before the issuance of the election code of conduct, Tehsildar Preeti Larokar, who was stationed in Khairagarh, was replaced by Surendra Urvashi from Jashpur and Bhanu Pratap.

However, a petition filed by several Tehsildars and Naib Tehsildars in the High Court led to a significant development. The court's intervention resulted in orders to cancel the transfers of Tehsildars and Naib Tehsildars statewide,

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Mar 31: In a bid to uphold discipline and efficiency within the administrative framework, Collector Chandrakant Verma has taken decisive action against instances of indiscipline within the Revenue Department, ensuring accountability and adherence to protocol.

prompting Preeti Larokar's return to Khairagarh. Despite this resolution, further upheaval ensued when Surendra Urvasha departed from his duties at the district headquarters without notifying the relevant authorities.

Prompted by reports of Tehsildar Surendra Urvasha's unauthorized departure from his assigned duties, Collector Verma swiftly penned letters to the government and the Bastar Commissioner, urging appropriate action to address the breach of protocol.

In response to the disruption caused by Tehsildar Surendra Urvasha's unexplained departure, Collector Verma swiftly initiated action, urging government intervention and demanding accountability from the Bastar Commissioner. Simultaneously, to miti-

Collector takes swift action against indiscipline

Negligence halts revenue department operations

gate the impact of the stalled revenue work in Khairagarh, Additional Tehsildar responsibilities were entrusted to Pritam Singh Chauhan, ensuring continuity in administrative operations.

Stepping up to address the backlog of pending applications, SDM Tankeshwar Prasad Sahu assumed responsibility, diligently working to clear pending matters related to income, caste, and residence certificates.

Through meticulous investigation and resolution of over half the cases, hopes are now high for the swift resolution of remaining revenue matters, signifying a return to administrative efficiency.

The absence of a Tehsildar posed significant challenges for applicants seeking income, caste, and residence certificates, as well as for tasks such as transfer, division, and demarcation within the Revenue



Department. With the Tehsil office functioning without proper leadership, individuals were left to navigate bureaucratic hurdles, exacerbating delays and frustrations. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the district administration swiftly appointed Tehsildar Preeti Larokar to oversee operations in Gandai Tehsildar, restoring order and providing much-needed relief to the affected individuals and parties.

Swift action ensures administrative stability

Amid administrative upheaval, the sudden departure of newly appointed Tehsildar Urvasha without prior notice has raised concerns within the administration. Responding promptly, the District Magistrate has penned a letter urging necessary action in the matter. Meanwhile, in adherence to established protocols, arrangements for an additional Tehsildar have been swiftly implemented to ensure uninterrupted handling of revenue matters.

- Tankeshwar Prasad Sahu, SDM Khairagarh

GRLPGC hosts inspiring voter awareness campaign

Central Chronicle News

Rajim, Mar 31: In an initiative to foster a culture of active citizenship, Government Rajeev Lochan Post Graduate College organized a vibrant voter awareness campaign. Spearheaded by Principal Prof. ML Verma, the event, held under the joint auspices of the National Service Scheme Unit and the SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) initiative, aimed to instill the importance of fair and democratic voting practices among students.

Under the guidance of Prof. ML Verma, Program Officer of the National Service Scheme, Tameshwar Markande,



and SVEEP in-charge of the college, Prof. Kshama Shilpa Masih, the campaign garnered enthusiastic participation from students. Principal Prof. ML Verma, who actively engaged with the students during the campaign, emphasized the significance of exercising the right to vote and urged students to motivate their families to do the same.

Dr. KR Matawale, another key figure in the event, encouraged students to approach voting with impar-

tiality, highlighting the pivotal role each vote plays in shaping the democratic process. Prof. Bhanu Pratap Nayak echoed similar sentiments, stressing the value of every eligible individual's vote and urging them to fulfill their civic duty by participating in the electoral process.

The voter awareness campaign witnessed a strong turnout, with students actively engaging in discussions and pledging their commitment to vote

responsibly. Notable attendees included Nikhil Banjara, Tikeswar Bharti, Santoshi, Lisha, Kavita, Neelam, Kala, Jyoti, Khushi, Neeraj, Kusum, Kunkum, Poonam, Geetshwari, Varsha, Pooja, Ajay, Somesh, Nutan, Kshama, Luvkumar, Kusumlata, Muskaan, Gayatri, Jitendra, and Ganeshwari, reflecting the widespread enthusiasm for promoting civic engagement and electoral participation among the student community.

19 polling booths get major upgrades

Municipality takes charge for smooth voting process

Central Chronicle News

Khairagarh, Mar 31: In a bid to enhance the voting experience and ensure a smooth democratic process, significant upgrades are underway in 19 polling booths across Khairagarh city.

Led by CMO Pramod Shukla, the municipal administration is leaving no stone unturned to ensure that all necessary facilities are in place for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Under the supervision of CMO Pramod Shukla, accompanied by municipal engineer Deepali

Tamboli, revenue sub-inspector Manoj Shukla, and sanitation in-charge Todar Singh, a comprehensive inspection was conducted to assess the preparations at various polling stations across different wards of the city.

The team meticulously reviewed the initial arrangements at polling stations in Pipariya, Civil Line, Bakshi School, Girls School, Primary School No. 01, Dharampura, Amlipara Sonesara, and Dauchaura wards.

During the inspection, CMO Shukla emphasized the importance of

improving facilities such as electricity, water, sanitation, and toilets in these polling stations. Instructions were issued to ensure that all necessary arrangements are completed well in advance of the voting day.

Notably, polling centers have predominantly been established within school premises. Additionally, directives were given to arrange accommodations for polling parties and provide adequate furniture and equipment required during the voting process.

Furthermore, the city has taken an inclusive

approach by establishing Adarsh, women, and disabled polling centers. In line with the practices observed during assembly elections, model polling stations operated by women and disabled personnel will be set up.

CMO Shukla has directed school authorities and personnel to ensure that these centers are fully equipped to cater to the diverse needs of voters. Special emphasis is being placed on ensuring that model polling stations are furnished with additional equipment for a seamless voting experience.

SBI legal awareness camp enlightens citizens

- District Judge inspires trainees

Central Chronicle News

Korba, Mar 31: In line with the good measures outlined by the Chhattisgarh State Legal Services Authority Bilaspur, a legal awareness camp was recently organized at the Rural Self-Employment Training Institute in Korba. Under the esteemed guidance of Honorable Satyendra Kumar Sahu, District Judge and Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority Korba, the event aimed to empower citizens with essential legal knowledge.

Spearheaded by the State



Bank of India in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority Korba, the camp witnessed the participation of trainees undergoing skill development training.

Honorable Judge Jyoti Agarwal, Additional District and Sessions Judge (FTC) Korba, imparted invaluable guidance to all trainees undergoing train-

ing. She emphasized their crucial role as the future of the country and urged them to remain vigilant in fulfilling their civic duties.

Judge Agarwal highlighted the importance of immediate action in the event of an incident or accident, urging trainees to assist the injured and cooperate with legal proceedings by providing testimony when neces-

sary. She stressed the significance of their alertness in ensuring justice and preventing perpetrators from evading accountability.

Furthermore, Agarwal directed the trainees to ensure compliance with legal requirements, including obtaining valid licenses and vehicle insurance as mandated by the Motor Vehicle Act. She provided compre-

hensive information on various legal provisions, including procedures for filing FIRs, the Witness Protection Act, and the Free Legal Services Act.

Participants were also briefed on women's rights and the upcoming National Lok Adalat scheduled for May 11, 2024, aiming to facilitate speedy resolution of pending cases.

The event witnessed the presence of esteemed dignitaries, including Ganesh Oraon, Director of RSETI Korba, Suranjana Viswal, Gautam Jangde, Pradeep Singh, Instructor of RSETI Korba, and Paralegal Volunteer Ahmed Khan, reaffirming the collaborative efforts towards legal empowerment within the community.

Central Chronicle News

Kurud, Mar 31: In a spirited display of unity and solidarity, Kurud MLA Ajay Chandrakar spearheaded the statewide initiative of the Bharatiya Janata Party Chhattisgarh by inaugurating the hoisting of BJP flags in every household across the Kurud assembly constituency.

The campaign, titled "Har Ghar Jhanda, Ghar Ghar Jhanda Vijay Sankalp Divas Ka Samridhee Aur Sushasan Ka Sankalp Hai Vikas Bharat Ka Jhanda Har Ghar Pe Shaan Se Laharai Vishv Guru Mera Bharat Bane," symbolized the commitment to prosperity, good governance, and the development of a proud Bharat.

MLA Ajay Chandrakar ignited the fervor of the campaign by raising the BJP flag high, accompanied by esteemed digni-



taries including Bhakhara Mandal President Anand Yadu, District Minister Ramswaroop Sahu, and other dedicated members. Simultaneously, in Gram Panchayat Bagod, the BJP's message of unity and progress echoed through the efforts of senior worker Malakram Sahu and BJP program in-charge Bhanu Chandrakar. With unwavering dedication, flags

adorned every home in Avari and Bhaibod villages, with men and women volunteers enthusiastically participating in the initiative. The campaign underscored the grassroots engagement of BJP's sector in-charges, power center representatives, booth organizers, and dedicated volunteers, sending a powerful message of solidarity and commitment to the party's ideals.

Mohit's masterclass, Miller's brilliance propel Gujarat Titans to win

Ahmedabad, Mar 31 (PTI):

Dishing out an all-round show, Gujarat Titans brought down high-flying Sunrisers Hyderabad with a clinical seven-wicket win in the Indian Premier League (IPL) here Sunday.

Veteran seamer Mohit Sharma was at his deceptive best in the last over for his splendid figures of 3/25, while Afghan spin twins Rashid Khan and Noor Ahmad bossed the middle overs as GT restricted the marauding SRH to a modest 162/8 after Pat Cummins opted to bat.

SRH must be disappointed with themselves after putting on board an astonishing 277 for five in their last outing.

South African batter David Miller found his flair in his 44 not out from 27 balls to anchor the small chase despite suffering cramps and finished the game with a six off Jaydev Unadkat in the first ball of the final over.

Sai Sudharsan also lifted his game, top-scoring for GT with his 45 from 36 balls as



Gujarat Titans' Rashid Khan with teammates celebrates the wicket of Sunrisers Hyderabad's Heinrich Klaasen.

GT won with five balls to spare. GT now have won both their matches at home. Their only loss came against Chennai Super Kings in an away match.

SRH have suffered two losses and with one win they have two points from three

matches. GT had things under control in pursuit of the small target at their home venue and Wriddhiman Saha did his job to set the tone. He stepped out to Bhvishwar Kumar for a boundary, and then pulled Jaydev Unadkat

over square leg. But Saha could not convert his start and mistimed Shabbaz Ahmed to be dismissed for 25. From going at nine runs per over, GT suddenly struggled to pace the innings with Sai Sudharsan typically slow at one end.

Gill was looking fluent at the other end but Sudharsan was unable to rotate the strike and ate up a lot of deliveries, putting pressure on his skipper. Gill eventually threw his wicket away, holing out to Abdul Samad at long on in a soft dismissal.

With Miller also struggling to get going, the Cummins-led side fancied their chances at the halfway mark where GT were 78/2, needing 85 from the back-10.

With 18 from 20 balls, the Tamil Nadu youngster Sudharsan once again found himself at the receiving end as he broke free against Unadkat in the 12th over, hitting the leftarm pacer for a boundary.

Miller too soon got into the act and the small target didn't help the cause for SRH. Fresh from smashing a record 277 in their last game, SRH were going great guns with 56/1 inside the power-play but the young and experienced Afghan duo of Noor (1/32) and Rashid (1/33) turned the match on its head in the crucial 7-15th over phase.

Mumbai, Mar 31 (PTI):

IPL's perennial slow-starters Mumbai Indians under new captain Hardik Pandya will hope for a happy homecoming when they take on a confident Rajasthan Royals at the Wankhede Stadium here on Monday.

Despite the change at the helm with Pandya replacing five-time title-winning skipper Rohit Sharma - a move that has sparked brutal attack on the former - Mumbai Indians have once again made a familiar disappointing start to their IPL campaign as they lost their first two matches.

A six-run defeat to Pandya's former team Gujarat Titans was followed by a walloping by Sunrisers Hyderabad who won the record run-fest by 32 runs in Hyderabad, with Mumbai Indians plummeting to the last spot in the 10-team points table.

These are still early days in the 17th edition of the T20 league but Pandya's Mumbai Indians will need to end their losing streak and improve their Net Run Rate which is the worst



Mumbai Indians players during a practice session.

among all teams at -0.25. Among the odds stacked up against them is the absence of Suryakumar Yadav, who remains on the sidelines as he is recovering from two separate injuries which have kept him away from the MI camp this IPL.

Even though Mumbai Indians enjoy a 4-1 head-to-head record in their last five meetings with Rajasthan Royals, the home side will have a tough task at hand given Sanju Samson's team has turned up all guns blazing to begin their IPL season with two wins. A big score

is due from Rohit who has provided strong starts to Mumbai but what they truly need is Pandya to get his decisions right. Pandya has evidently not used Jasprit Bumrah to the best way possible and Mumbai Indians will have a chance to iron out such flaws.

Bumrah and Piyush Chawla bring the element of experience to the table in the MI bowling attack which has shown trust on local boy Shams Mulani, who is relatively new at the IPL stage but immensely experienced when it comes to playing at the Wankhede Stadium.

Mayank Yadav: God-fearing West Delhi boy from Sonnet Club stable

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

Mayank Yadav guarantees instant destruction of batting line-ups. But growing up with the aspirations and anxieties of ordinary Indians, he had his fair share of struggles while transforming from a frail 15-year-old to a frighteningly quick fast bowler.

His father Prabhu Yadav was always determined to embrace the struggles usually associated with the middle class, in order to see Mayank excel on the cricket field.

Life has changed overnight for the Yadav family from West Delhi's Punjabi Bagh with the 24 deliveries that their 21-year-old son bowled for Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL game against Punjab Kings on a Saturday evening.

Mayank has become the



toast of the nation in 15 minutes flat and every Indian cricket fan would pray that he brings glory to the country for the next 15 years. "If Ustaadji and Devender bhai had not been around, my son wouldn't have come this far. I wanted him to play cricket but they prepared him for all the big tests," Prabhu couldn't thank the late Tarak Sinha (Ustaadji) and current head coach (Sharma) of the famous Sonnet Club enough for their contribution in his son's development.

Bopanna-Ebden clinch Miami Open title, return to world No. 1 ranking

Miami (US), Mar 31 (PTI):

Ace Indian tennis player Rohan Bopanna rewrote his own record to continue to be the oldest ATP Masters 1000 champion as he and his Australian partner Matt Ebden clinched the men's doubles crown at the Miami Open here.

Continuing their fine run this year, the 44-year-old Bopanna and Ebden fought back from a set down to pull off an exhilarating 6-7(3), 6-3, 10-6 win over Croatia's Ivan Dodig and American Austin Krajicek at the Hard Rock Stadium on Saturday.

With the win, Bopanna surpassed his record created last year when he won the Indian Wells title at the age of 43, and also reclaimed the top spot in the



doubles ranking. "It's amazing. As long as you are doing well in these big events, it's what we play for," Bopanna said after the win. "I want to do well in the Masters 1000s and the Grand Slams. It's good to keep that record going and keep giving everyone else a run for their money," added Bopanna, who won his maiden doubles Grand Slam title at the Australian Open earlier this year.

This was Bopanna's 14th ATP Masters 1000 final. Overall, it was the veteran Indian player's 63rd ATP Tour level final and 26th doubles title.

Bopanna also achieved a rare feat as he became the second Indian after Leander Paes to reach the final of all nine ATP Masters events.

Mirabai to return to competitive action after 6-month injury layoff



Phuket, Mar 31 (PTI):

Tokyo Olympics silver medalist lifter Mirabai Chenu will return to competitive action after a six-month injury layoff when she participates at the IWF World Cup to confirm her Paris Games berth here on Monday.

The World Cup is not only the final Olympic qualifying event but also a mandatory qualifier for the Paris Games. Chenu, who has been recuperating from hip tendonitis she suffered during the Asian Games in September last year; has all but qualified for the Paris Olympics. An appearance at the World Cup on Monday will be enough for her to seal her passage to Paris as the former world champion is ranked second in the women's 49kg Olympic Qualification Ranking (OQR) behind China's Jian HuiHua.

Under the 2024 Olympics qualification rules, the 2023 World Championships and the 2024 World Cup are compulsory events.

Apart from these two tournaments, a lifter must participate in at least three of the following events - the 2022 World Championships, the 2023 Continental Championships, the 2023 Grand Prix I, the 2023 Grand Prix II and the 2024 Continental Championships. Chenu has fulfilled the criteria. She competed at the 2022 World Championship and the 2023 Asian Championships, finishing second and sixth respectively.

At the 2023 Worlds and Grand Prix II, she did not heave the barbell due to her injury but completed all the necessary formalities to remain eligible for the Paris Games.

Star midfielder Hardik wins HI Player of the year award

Salima bags honour in women's category

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

Star Indian midfielders Hardik Singh and Salima Tete were on Sunday conferred with the Player of the Year awards in men and women categories respectively during the sixth Hockey India Annual Awards here.

Both the awards, in the



name of legendary Balbir Singh Sr, carries a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh each.

India vice-captain Hardik also bagged Ajit Pal Singh Award for Midfielder of the Year, which carries a prize purse of Rs 5 lakh.

India captain Harmanpreet Singh won the Pargat Singh Award for Defender of the Year and took home Rs 5 lakh, while veteran custodian PR Sreejesh was honoured

with the Baljit Singh Award for Goalkeeper of the Year.

Dhanraj Pillay Award for Forward of the Year went to young striker Abhishek.

Asunta Lakra Award for Upcoming Player of the Year (Women, Under-21) was bagged by Deepika Soreng, while the recognition in the men's division, which is in the name of former India drag-flicker Jugraj Singh, went to

Arajjeet Singh Hundal. Both the awards carry a prize money of Rs 10 lakh each.

The final award of the day, the prestigious Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award, which carries a prize money of Rs 30 lakh, was won by his son, Ashok Kumar.

This year, the total prize pool was Rs 7.56 crore.

"I guess the responsibility increases when you win

Danielle Collins wins Miami Open

Miami Gardens, Mar 31 (AP):

Danielle Collins had the perfect send-off at her final Miami Open, beating Elena Rybakina 7-5, 6-3 to capture the title in her home state before an adoring crowd that included Andre Agassi and Martina Navratilova.

The 30-year-old Collins announced at the Australian Open that this season would be her last because she's suffering from endometriosis, a painful ailment that affects the uterus.

On her fourth match point, Collins hit a backhand crosscourt winner, then bent over for 10 seconds without moving.

"That game took a lot out of me and Elena was pushing me all around the court," Collins said. "At the end I was just like, 'Thank God.' It all caught up to me."

Collins was teary-eyed



Danielle Collins of the United States poses with the trophy after winning the Women's Final.

during the on-court trophy ceremony.

"To the fans, I've played a lot of tennis, a few finals, and nothing close to this," Collins said. "In my home state, to come out here in front of thousands of my best friends pushing me to get over this hurdle, I was getting very emotional. It was an incredible environment. I've never experienced anything like it."

Babar Azam reappointed as Pakistan's white-ball skipper ahead of T20 World Cup

Lahore, Mar 31 (PTI):

Star batter Babar Azam was on Sunday reappointed as Pakistan's white-ball captain, two months ahead of the T20 World Cup.

Babar replaces fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi as the T20 captain. The pacer has been removed after just one series which Pakistan lost 1-4 to New Zealand in January.

The decision to reinstate Babar was taken after a unanimous recommendation from the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) selection committee.

"Following unanimous recommendation from the PCB's selection committee, Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi has appointed Babar Azam as white-ball (ODI and T20I) captain of the Pakistan men's cricket team," the PCB said in a



media release. During a recent meeting in Lahore with PCB Chief Naqvi, Babar allegedly sought assurances about his tenure and asked to be appointed captain of the Test side as well.

However, a reliable source within the PCB disclosed that Naqvi clarified the board's stance, indicating that while Babar would be given a proper run in the white-ball formats a decision on the Test captaincy will be made later.

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Prez confers Bharat Ratna on L K Advani

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

President Droupadi Murmu conferred Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honour, on BJP stalwart and former deputy prime minister L K Advani at his residence here on Sunday.

The ceremony was attended by Vice President Jagdeep Thakkar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and the family members of Advani, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a post on X.

Prime Minister Modi sat next to Advani as the President honoured the veteran leader with Bharat Ratna.

Modi said on X that it was very special to witness the conferring of the Bharat Ratna on Advani and this honour is a recognition of his enduring contributions to the nation's progress.

"His dedication to public service and his pivotal role in shaping modern India



President Droupadi Murmu confers Bharat Ratna on veteran BJP leader L K Advani at his residence, in New Delhi, Sunday.

have left an indelible mark on our history. I am proud to have got the opportunity to work with him very closely over the last several decades," the prime minister said.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan described Advani as a doyen of Indian politics and said that he has served the nation with unwavering dedication and distinction for over seven decades. As a parliamentarian, his emphasis on dialogue enriched parli-

mentary traditions, it said. Whether as home minister or as deputy prime minister, Advani always prioritised national interest above all, earning him respect and admiration from across party lines, it said in a series of posts on X.

"His long and tireless struggle for India's cultural regeneration culminated in the reconstruction of Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya in 2024," it said.

Among the handful of

post-Independence political leaders who succeeded in reshaping the national agenda and placing it on the path of development, Advani's accomplishments provide the best articulation of the genius of India and its inclusive traditions, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said and shared pictures of the ceremony on X.

Born in Karachi (now in Pakistan) in 1927, Advani migrated to India in 1947 during Partition.

The 96-year-old BJP stalwart served as deputy prime minister from June 2002 to May 2004 and as Union home minister from October 1999 to May 2004. He was BJP president multiple times - from 1986 to 1990, 1993 to 1998, and 2004 to 2005.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan said that with his vision of cultural nationalism, Advani toiled hard for decades, across the length and breadth of the country and brought about a transformation in the socio-political landscape.

BEATING THE HEAT



Children play in water to beat the heat during a hot day in Ranchi, Sunday.

'Battle for Baramati, a BJP ploy to finish off Sharad Pawar' Guv presents Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Awards

Pune, March 31 (PTI):

Lok Sabha MP Supriya Sule claimed on Sunday that the fight between her and her sister-in-law Sunetra Pawar in Baramati constituency is a design of the BJP to politically finish off NCP founder Sharad Pawar.

Sule said the intra-family duel in the Lok Sabha polls will not waver her respect for Sunetra Pawar as she is her "elder brother's wife and like a mother".

Baramati, the home turf of Sharad Pawar, is set for a high-profile battle after the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Saturday fielded Sunetra Pawar, wife of Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, against Sule.

The NCP (SP) has fielded three-term MP and Sharad Pawar's daughter Sule in the constituency.

The Pawar-versus-Pawar tussle is the fallout of a split in the original NCP last year when Ajit Pawar sided with the ruling BJP and Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena along with his loyalist MLAs.

Speaking to PTI, Sule said Sunetra Pawar is the wife of her "elder brother and the elder sister-in-law is considered as mother".

"So this ploy (to pit Sunetra against Sule) is against the Pawar family and Maharashtra. The BJP wants to finish off Pawar Saheb. I am not saying this. A senior BJP leader made such a re-



Supriya Sule

mark after visiting Baramati," Sule said.

The move to nominate Sunetra Pawar (60) shows that it is not for development. "It is a fight only to finish off Pawar saheb,"

claimed Sule (54). Baramati goes to polls in the third phase on May 7.

She expressed sadness over BJP's involvement in "dirty politics" in Maharashtra and in their family matters. "Let bygones be bygones, but for me, my sister-in-law, whom we call 'vahini' in Marathi, will remain in the position of mother, and my respect for her will remain as before," she said. The Baramati constituency in Pune district comprising Baramati, Daund, Purandar, Bhor, and Khadakwasla assembly segments has been a bastion of Sharad Pawar since the 1960s.

Ajit Pawar has been an MLA from Baramati since

1991, with his victory in 2019 being among the most crushing in the state's poll history.

It was Ajit Pawar, the sitting MLA from the Baramati assembly segment, who used to play a key role in Sule's victory in the past polls by ensuring that the vote bank of the Pawars remained unaffected.

Besides Sule, Sharad Pawar (83) has also been touring the constituency and holding meetings with various groups to leave nothing for chance.

Polis to the 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra will be held in five phases between April 19 and May 20 and votes will be counted on June 4.



Mumbai, Mar 31:

The 50th Gem and Jewellery Export Awards instituted by the India Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council were presented to various exporters at a glittering cere-

mony at Hotel Trident Mumbai on Saturday (30 Mar). Maharashtra Governor Ramesh Bais presented the awards in presence of Reliance Group Chairman Mukesh Ambani. Diamentaire Russell Mehta, Managing

Director of Rosy Blue was presented with the Life Time Achievement Award of the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council. Awards in different categories such as highest turnover, industry performance, fashion jewellery, socially responsible company awards were presented to different companies.

President of the India Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council Vipul Shah, Vice President Kirit Bhansali, Award Committee Convener Milan Choksi, Bharat Diamond Bourse President Anup Mehta were prominent among those present.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS



Students celebrate their success after the declaration of the class 10th results of the Bihar Board, in Patna, Sunday.

ED attaches assets of kin of gangster who 'managed' crime money of Bishnoi

New Delhi, Mar 31 (PTI):

Cash, bank deposits and land worth Rs 17.82 crore belonging to the family members of "gangster" Surender Singh alias Chiku have been attached as part of a money laundering investigation against the Lawrence Bishnoi gang and others, the Enforcement Directorate said on Sunday.

The immovable assets are located in Haryana's Narnaul and Rajasthan's Jaipur, the central agency said in a statement.

It said Chiku was "managing the crime money of Lawrence Bishnoi through his gang members and acquired properties in the names of his

family members and relatives".

Chiku is currently lodged in Tihar jail and was arrested in this case by the ED in February after the agency conducted searches against his family members and linked persons in Rajasthan and Haryana.

The probe found, the ED said, alleged "illegal" involvement of Chiku in mining businesses in Narnaul through a company called Nimawat Granites Pvt. Ltd.

"Surender Singh Chiku wielded his criminal clout and introduced his brother-in-law Vikash Kumar as a director and a shareholder in this company that was awarded a mining tender at Bakhriga mines in Narnaul.

CBI records statement of family of JK man tricked into fighting

■ For Russian army

Srinagar, Mar 31 (PTI):

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has recorded the statements of the family members of Azad Yousuf Kumar, a Kashmiri man who was allegedly unwittingly thrust into the Russia-Ukraine conflict after being deceived.

The agency recorded their statements recently after filing an FIR against 19 people and visa consultancy firms linked to the exploitation of Indian youth. Azad's elder brother Sajad Ahmed Kumar told PTI that the CBI questioned him about his brother's situation and

wanted his presence at their New Delhi office. However, he was unable to comply due to current financial circumstances.

Sajad also said the families of 12 other affected Indian men have been contacted by the CBI and they emphasised their desire for the safe return of their loved ones.

The CBI had on March 8 dismantled a human trafficking network funnelling Indian individuals into the war zone and identified key facilitators, including agents based in Russia.

These agents allegedly enticed Indian youths with promising job offers in Russia, only to coerce them into military involvement in the conflict. Azad, a 31-year-old engi-

neering graduate from Pulwama, initially sought job opportunities in Dubai but was misled by false promises, ultimately finding himself embroiled in the war as a mercenary for the Russian army.

His family narrated his perilous situation at the Ukraine border and implored the government to intervene for his safe return.

According to the family, Azad left for Dubai on December 14 last year in search of a decent job after being lured by a YouTuber, Faisal Khan. But little did the young man know that he would be fighting a war.

"He was promised a job in Dubai by the YouTuber. However, he ended up being a mercenary for the

Russian army," the family said, urging the central government to step in and rescue him from the war he never desired to fight.

"He is right now at the Ukraine border. We spoke to him a few days ago and he told us that his life is in danger. He was forcibly told to sign a contract which was in Russian language and that's how he landed up at the Russia-Ukraine border. Then he was sent to the frontline with other Indians," Sajad said.

He said Azad manages to call the family during evening time for two to three minutes. "They are constructing bunkers in the forests right now. They have moved further from Black Sea.

ECI express concern over dip in number of voters in Kolkata(N) LS seat

Kolkata, Mar 31 (PTI):

Amid the Election Commission of India's (ECI) persistent calls to electors to exercise their franchise, the voter turnout at Kolkata Uttar Lok Sabha constituency has been dipping since the past two elections, a senior poll official said on Sunday.

In both the 2014 and 2019 general elections, nearly 1,000 out of over 1,800 booths in the Kolkata Uttar Lok Sabha constituency reported below-average voter turnout, the official added. While the turnout in the constituency was 9,55,778 in 2014, the figure came down to 9,50,639 in 2019. "The decrease in turnout

in the constituency started from the 2014 general elections," the ECI official told PTI. In the 2019 polls, the voter turnout in the constituency, comprising seven assembly segments Chowranghee, Entally, Belegkata, Jorasanko, Shyampukur, Maniktala, and Kashipur-Belgachhia, was slightly over 65 per cent, down from 67 per cent in the 2014 elections.

This declining trend in voter participation was also evident in the last two assembly elections in 2021 and 2016, the official added. In the 2021 assembly polls, voter turnout in Chowranghee was around 53 per cent compared to over 56 per cent in 2016, the

officer said. Similar declines were observed in the other six assembly constituencies.

"Entally observed a turnout of nearly 68 per cent in 2021, slightly lower than 70.60 per cent recorded in 2016. Belegkata had a turnout of over 63 per cent in 2021, compared to over 66 per cent in 2016," according to EC data.

"Jorasanko saw 50 per cent turnout in 2021, down from 54 per cent in 2016. Shyampukur witnessed a turnout of over 58 per cent in 2021, down from 68 per cent in 2016. Similarly, Maniktala had a turnout of nearly 63 per cent in 2021, compared to nearly 70 per cent in 2016. Kashipur-

Belgachhia recorded a turnout of 60 per cent in 2021, lower than 65 per cent in 2016," poll panel data says.

The reasons for this dip, according to the official, include migration of voters to other parts of the city and youth seeking employment opportunities outside the state. "Moreover, the addition of new voters in these assembly constituencies is not significant enough to offset the declining turnout," the official added. Additionally, the gender ratio of voters in some constituencies shows a notable disparity, with fewer female voters compared to male voters.

Landslides triggered by rains block Jammu-Srinagar N-H

Banihal/Jammu, Mar 31 (PTI):

Vehicular movement was suspended on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway on Sunday following landslides, triggered by overnight rains, at a few places in Ramban district, officials said.

A traffic department official said road clearance work at Kishtwari Pather and Mehar-Cafeteria Morh has been going on since morning to ensure early restoration of traffic on the 270-km-long highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country.

A massive landslide hit Kishtwari Pather near Nachalana in the Banihal area around midnight, while a

mudslide and shooting stones from a hillock blocked the road at Mehar-Cafeteria Morh near Ramban town, the officials said.

कालड़ा बर्त एव

कार्टिक कांस्लेटिक सजरी सेंटर

- कमर
- जांघ
- आर्म
- बक्ष स्थल
- शरीर के अन्य हिस्सों का लेजर द्वारा लाइपोसक्शन

डॉ. अ. लखनवी वी. भास्कर प्रसाद

अर. के. सी. के. लखनवी, एम. बी. एस. के. लखनवी, एम. बी. एस. के. लखनवी, एम. बी. एस. के. लखनवी

व्यक्तिगत चिकित्सा के लिए संपर्क करें।
पता: चमकरी रोड, कालड़ा बर्त, जम्मू।
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